



UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI VERONA

*DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SCIENCES*

*GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
HUMAN SCIENCES*

*DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN
HUMAN SCIENCES*

Cycle / year XXXV / 2019

TITLE OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

The Socratic dialogue as a ritual of emotional purification

IN CO-TUTELLE DE THÈSE WITH THE Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen

S.S.D. M-FIL/07 STORIA DELLA FILOSOFIA ANTICA

Coordinator: Prof.ssa Chiara Sità
Signature _____

Coordinator: Prof. Jürgen Leonhardt
Signature _____

Tutor: Prof. Alessandro Stavru
Signature _____

Tutor: Prof.ssa Irmgard Männlein-Robert
Signature _____

Doctoral Student: Dott. Stefano Pone

Signature _____

Stefano Pone, 2023. All rights reserved

THE SOCRATIC DIALOGUE AS A RITUAL OF EMOTIONAL PURIFICATION

PhD thesis
Verona, 6 March 2023

University of Verona
Research Office – National and International PhD programmes
ph: 045.802.8608 – fax 045.802.8411 – Via Giardino Giusti 2 – 37129 Verona

Abstract

In the present paper, the role that emotions play in Socratic self-care, as it can be reconstructed from Plato's dialogues, is investigated and explored. In highlighting the fundamental role that emotions play in such a care, which is not mere repair of a fault (reparative care), but an active and constant attending to self- and others' improvement, it is emphasized how the Socratic care that is enacted in the Selected Dialogues exhibits marked religious qualities, which make Socrates a kind of priestly and demonic figure, as the reader can infer in particular from the two chapters devoted to the Critique and the Apology, respectively. The intent underlying this focus on the religious and especially initiatory aspects of Socratic care in the Platonic dialogues is, as explained at the beginning of the introduction to this work, to deepen the link between the emotional aspect of self-care, explored in depth by Professor L. Napolitano, and my personal interest in the relationship between philosophy and religion. In the present work this link has been found in the theme of 'aporia; this is interpreted in the introduction and in the following chapters as ritual death, that is, as an 'experience in which the initiate (in this case Socrates' interlocutor) witnesses his own death, that is, the disappearance of the firm attachment to his unreflective opinions. It follows that 'aporia is a positive element of self-care, since this ritual death makes it possible, if it is accepted and not rejected, to get rid of those obstacles from within that prevent one from looking forward to one's own improvement and the pursuit of happiness. Aporia is not only a logical impasse, but also an emotionally very dense moment; it therefore holds together the two fundamental components of this work, the focus on emotions in the Socratic dialogue and the focus on the initiatory aspects with which Plato cloaks this dialogue. Plato alludes to these initiatory aspects from time to time in the selected dialogues by appropriating now from Coribantism (*Euthydemus*), now from Orphism (*Phaedo*), now even from the rituals of transition from one age to another (the ephebia, as in the case of the *Alcibiades*); all these disparate experiences have in common the idea of a ritual death, a liminal phase between one life (the one about to leave) and the new one (about to embark on). In the Socratic dialogue enacted in Plato's works, precisely this initiatory death (the *aporia*) is

achieved; if the interlocutor accepts it, he or she will progress on the path of self-care; if he or she is afraid or annoyed by it, he or she will derive no benefit. The introduction outlines the assumptions on which the following analysis are based: the first is the ritual and initiatory nature of refutation and the characterization of aporia as an emotionally connoted moment; the second, based on the analysis of the first book of the Republic, is the relational nature of caring and thus of the good that caring/caretaking pursues; therefore, one who cares for others necessarily also cares for himself. The intertwining of the ritual and emotional aspects, as well as the communal and relational nature of the good pursued by Socratic caring, is explored throughout the introduction and, more importantly, eight chapters, devoted to *Euthydemus*, *Charmides*, *Alcibiades I*, *Lysis*, *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Critique*, and *Phaedo*, respectively. In the introduction to the thesis, the reason for the choice of these dialogues is explained and what are the relationships between them in this work. In the conclusion, the scientific and especially moral reasons for the importance of emphasizing the role of emotions in Plato's Socrates and the ritual aspects of it are made clear.

Summary (Italian)

Nel presente lavoro viene indagato ed esplorato il ruolo che le emozioni svolgono nella cura di sé socratica, così come può essere ricostruita dai dialoghi di Platone. Nell'evidenziare il ruolo fondamentale che le emozioni giocano in tale cura, che non è mera riparazione di un guasto (cura riparativa), ma un'attiva e costante attenzione al miglioramento di sé e degli altri, si sottolinea come la cura socratica che viene messa in atto nei dialoghi scelti mostri spiccate qualità religiose, che fanno di Socrate una sorta di figura sacerdotale e demoniaca, come il lettore può desumere in particolare dai due capitoli dedicati rispettivamente alla Critica e all'Apologia. L'intento di questa attenzione agli aspetti religiosi e soprattutto iniziatici della cura socratica nei dialoghi platonici è, come spiegato all'inizio dell'introduzione a questo lavoro, quello di approfondire il legame tra l'aspetto emotivo della cura socratica, approfondito dalla professoressa L. Napolitano, e il mio personale interesse per il rapporto tra filosofia e religione. Nel presente lavoro questo legame è stato individuato nel tema dell'"aporia"; questa viene interpretata nell'introduzione e nei capitoli successivi come morte rituale, cioè come un'"esperienza in cui l'iniziato (in questo caso l'interlocutore di Socrate) assiste alla propria morte, cioè al venir meno del saldo attaccamento alle proprie opinioni non riflessive". Ne consegue che "l'aporia è un elemento positivo della cura di sé, poiché questa morte rituale permette, se accettata e non rifiutata, di liberarsi di quegli ostacoli interni che impediscono di guardare al proprio miglioramento e alla ricerca della felicità. L'aporia non è solo un'impasse logica, ma anche un momento emotivamente molto denso; essa tiene quindi insieme le due componenti fondamentali di questo lavoro, l'attenzione alle emozioni nel dialogo socratico e l'attenzione agli aspetti iniziatici di cui Platone ammanta questi dialoghi. A questi aspetti iniziatici Platone allude di volta in volta nei dialoghi selezionati appropriandosi ora del Coribantismo (*Eutidemo*), ora dell'Orfismo (*Fedone*), ora addirittura dei rituali di passaggio da un'età all'altra (l'efebia, come nel caso dell'*Alcibiade*); tutte queste esperienze disparate hanno in comune l'idea di una morte rituale, di una fase liminale tra una vita (quella che sta per lasciare) e la nuova (che sta per intraprendere). Nel dialogo socratico messo in scena nelle opere di

Platone, si realizza proprio questa morte iniziatica (l'aporia); se l'interlocutore la accetta, progredirà nel cammino della cura di sé; se ne ha paura o fastidio, non ne trarrà alcun beneficio. L'introduzione delinea i presupposti su cui si basa le analisi dei singoli capitoli: il primo è la natura rituale e iniziatica della confutazione e la caratterizzazione dell'aporia come momento emotivamente connotato; il secondo, basato sull'analisi del primo libro della Repubblica, è la natura relazionale del prendersi cura e quindi del bene che il prendersi cura persegue; pertanto, chi si prende cura degli altri si prende necessariamente cura anche di se stesso. L'intreccio tra gli aspetti rituali ed emotivi, nonché la natura comunitaria e relazionale del bene perseguito dalla cura socratica, viene esplorato nel corso dell'introduzione e, soprattutto, degli otto capitoli, dedicati rispettivamente a *Eutidemo*, *Charmide*, *Alcibiade I*, *Liside*, *Eutifrone*, *Apologia*, *Critica* e *Fedone*. Nell'introduzione alla tesi, viene spiegato il motivo della scelta di questi dialoghi e quali sono le relazioni che li legano tra loro in questo lavoro. Nella conclusione, si chiariscono le ragioni scientifiche e soprattutto morali dell'importanza di enfatizzare il ruolo delle emozioni nel Socrate di Platone e gli aspetti rituali e iniziatici che Platone gli attribuisce.

Zusammenfassung

In diesem Beitrag wird die Rolle der Emotionen in der sokratischen Selbstfürsorge, wie sie aus Platons Dialogen rekonstruiert wird, untersucht und erforscht. Durch die Hervorhebung der grundlegenden Rolle, die die Emotionen in der Fürsorge spielen, die keine bloße Reparatur eines Fehlers (reparative Fürsorge) ist, sondern eine aktive und ständige Sorge um das eigene Wohlergehen und das der anderen, wird hervorgehoben, wie die sokratische Fürsorge, die in den ausgewählten Dialogen inszeniert wird, ausgeprägte religiöse Qualitäten hat, die Sokrates zu einer Art priesterlicher und dämonischer Figur machen, wie der Leser insbesondere in den beiden Kapiteln sehen kann, die der Kritik bzw. der Apologie gewidmet sind. Die Absicht, die hinter dieser Konzentration auf die religiösen und insbesondere die initiatorischen Aspekte der sokratischen Fürsorge in den platonischen Dialogen steht, ist, wie zu Beginn der Einleitung zu diesem Werk erklärt, die Verbindung zwischen dem emotionalen Aspekt der Selbstfürsorge, der von Professor L. Napolitano eingehend untersucht wurde, und meinem persönlichen Interesse an der Beziehung zwischen Philosophie und Religion zu vertiefen. In der vorliegenden Arbeit findet sich diese Verbindung im Thema der Aporie; diese wird in der Einleitung und in den folgenden Kapiteln als ritueller Tod interpretiert, d. h. als eine Erfahrung, bei der der Eingeweihte (in diesem Fall der Gesprächspartner von Sokrates) Zeuge seines eigenen Todes wird, d. h. des Verschwindens der festen Bindung an seine unreflektierten Meinungen. Daraus folgt, dass die Aporie ein positives Element der Selbstfürsorge ist, denn dieser rituelle Tod ermöglicht es, wenn er akzeptiert und nicht abgelehnt wird, sich von jenen Hindernissen zu befreien, die einen von innen her daran hindern, sich auf die eigene Verbesserung und das Streben nach Glück zu freuen. Die Aporie ist nicht nur eine logische Sackgasse, sondern auch ein emotional dichtes Moment; sie hält daher die beiden grundlegenden Komponenten dieses Werks zusammen, nämlich die Konzentration auf die Emotionen im sokratischen Dialog und die Konzentration auf die initiatorischen Aspekte, mit denen Platon diesen Dialog umgibt. Platon spielt in den ausgewählten Dialogen immer wieder auf diese Initiationsaspekte an, mal aus dem Koribantismus (Euthydemus), mal aus dem Orphismus (Phaidon), mal sogar aus

den Ritualen des Übergangs von einem Zeitalter zum anderen (die Ephebia, wie im Fall des Alkibiades); all diese unterschiedlichen Erfahrungen haben die Idee eines rituellen Todes gemeinsam, einer Schwellenphase zwischen einem Leben (dem, das man verlässt) und dem neuen (das man beginnt). Im sokratischen Dialog, wie er in Platons Werken dargestellt wird, wird genau dieser Initiations-Tod (die Aporie) verwirklicht; wenn der Gesprächspartner in der Lage ist, ihn zu akzeptieren, wird er auf dem Weg der Selbstfürsorge vorankommen; wenn er sich davor fürchtet oder sich darüber ärgert, wird er keinen Nutzen daraus ziehen. Die Einleitung umreißt die Voraussetzungen, auf denen die Analysen der folgenden Kapitel beruhen: die erste ist der rituelle und initiatorische Charakter der Widerlegung und die Charakterisierung der Aporie als ein emotional konnotiertes Moment; die zweite, die auf der Analyse des ersten Buches der Republik beruht, ist der relationale Charakter der Fürsorge und damit des Gutes, das die Fürsorge verfolgt; wer sich um andere kümmert, kümmert sich also notwendigerweise auch um sich selbst. Die Verflechtung der rituellen und emotionalen Aspekte sowie der gemeinschaftliche und relationale Charakter des Gutes, das die sokratische Fürsorge anstrebt, wird in der Einleitung und vor allem in den acht Kapiteln untersucht, die jeweils *Euthydemos*, *Charmides*, *Alkibiades I.*, *Lysis*, *Euthyphro*, *Apologia*, *Critius* und *Phaedo* gewidmet sind. In der Einleitung zur Dissertation wird der Grund für die Auswahl dieser Dialoge erläutert und die Beziehungen zwischen ihnen in dieser Arbeit dargestellt. In den Schlussfolgerungen werden die wissenschaftlichen und vor allem moralischen Gründe für die Bedeutung der Betonung der Rolle der Emotionen in Platons Sokrates und der rituellen Aspekte, die ihn charakterisieren, deutlich gemacht.

Table of contents

Abstract	I-II
Summary (Italian)	II-IV
Zusammenfassung	V-VI
Table of Contents	VII-XIII
Acknowledgements	XIV-XV

<i>Introduction</i>	1-42.
---------------------	-------

Chapter I: the <i>Euthydemus</i>	43-98.
---	--------

The <i>Euthydemus</i> and Socrates' care: an example of ritual death.	43.
The <i>Euthydemus</i> and eristics.	43-45.
Euthydemus and Dionysodorus; the war and the indifference to truth.	45-51.
Protreptic and care (273b-275c)	51-63.
Failure of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus to exhort Cleinias; Socrates as priest.	63-73.
The exhortation	73-78.
Wisdom and correct use	78-87.
Dionysodorus' counterattack: wisdom and death	87-94.
Socrates takes the floor: the longing for the regenerative death	94-96.
Conclusions	96-98.

Chapter II: the <i>Charmides</i>	99-159.
---	---------

The <i>Charmides</i> and self-knowledge	99-100.
The Prologue	100-105.
Socrates as healer and priester	
The dialogue as a death-like experience.	105-107.
The remedy for the headache	107-109.
The tale of Zalmoxis	109-116.
Charmides' definitions of virtue	116-118.
Σωφροσύνη as αἰδώς	118-122.
Σωφροσύνη as τὸ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν	122-124.
Critias invades the discussion	124-128.
Critias' Apollo	128-131.
σωφροσύνη as knowledge of itself	131-134.
The question of the apperception	134-139.
Σωφροσύνη and its object	139-142.
The reappearance of what is good: the last chance of the dialogue	142-148.
Critias and the science ruling over the science of good and evil: the failure of the dialogue	148-151.
Conclusions	
The Care and the Whole	151-154.
The Care and the good: the self of the Care	154-157.
The <i>Charmides</i> as a "holy war".	157-159.
Chapter III: the <i>Alcibiades</i>	160-229.
Alcibiades and the initiatory nature of the care for oneself and the others	160.
Alcibiades and the separation from his milieu	160-164.
Διαλέγεσθαι and self-reflection	164-172.
The courage and the just	172-185.
Alcibiades initiated into kingship?	185-193.
The god Apollo and self-knowledge	193-202.
Ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ: the discovery of the self	202-203.

as a regressive movement from the many to the one.	
The argument of the user	203-208.
The σωφροσύνη as the skill of making oneself emerge	208-210.
Socrates' love as love for what one can become	210-211.
Σωφροσύνη as antidote	211-213.
Towards the eye analogy	213-215.
The longing for happiness as the most divine instance of the human soul	215-220.
God as a compass	220-222.
The presence of the Divine and the dialectic	222-223.
After the marge, the aggregation;	223-226.
from the heights of the divine realm into the city anew	
On the daimonic nature of Socratic love: connect human and divine	226-227.
Conclusive remarks	
Kings and Creator of kings	227-228.
Σωφροσύνη as apollonian virtue	228-229.
Chapter IV: the <i>Lysis</i>	230-283.
Lysis as a dialogue on care	230-232.
The ritual context	232-238.
Φιλία, σωφροσύνη, ἐπιμέλεια	239-240.
The dialogue with Lysis: Parents' φιλία	240-248.
The eristic distruction of the Eristics	248-253.
The (intentionally provoked) failure	253-255.
of the eristic way: the lack of κοινά	
The destruction goes on: the poetical tradition	255-260.
The poetical approach to the issue of friendship:	260-263.

its strenghts and its weaknesses.	
Out of the aporia: the Oracle	263-269.
The πρῶτον φίλον	269-274.
A good without the evil	274-276.
Φίλον as οἰκεῖον	276-279.
Ὄμοιον and οἰκεῖον: the decisive step of the dialogue	279-282.
The final <i>aporia</i> and the end of the Anthesteria.	282-283.
Chapter V: the <i>Euthyphro</i>	284-338.
Euthyphro: holiness as supreme form of care	284.
Euthyphro and Socrates: similarities and differences	284-293.
The Holy is what the Gods love	293-302.
Holy as what is loved by all the gods: love and its object	302-306.
Euthyphro's aporia: the beginning of the initiation?	306-307.
Holiness and justice	308-312.
Holiness, piety and <i>θεράπεια</i>	312-315.
Holiness as service and the task of gods	315-317.
The task of the Gods	317-320.
Holiness as serving gods caring for the world in its totality	320-325.
Doing what pleases the gods: Holiness as ἐμπορικὴ τέχνη	325-328.
Euthyphro as bargainer. Gods als instruments of one's self-interest	328-333.
The failure of the dialogue	333-335.
Dialectic as art of serving the gods	335-338.
Chapter VI: the <i>Apology</i>	339-372.
Daemonic and Care: the philosophical appropriation of the old religion.	339-341.
Hesiod and the Daimons	341-342.
<i>Works and Days</i> : daimons as custodians of humankind	342-349.

Daimonion as the feature of a daimon	349-354.
The accusation of atheism	354-360.
Daemons and Care: the meaning of the Oracle	360-364.
The Oracle	364-367.
Care as daimonic task	367-368.
The protreptic side of Socrates' wisdom	368-372.
The exemplary nature of the courage before death	372-376.
The end of the trial	376-381.
Conclusive remarks: on Socrates' self-awareness	381-382.

Chapter VII : the *Crito*

Socrates and his own death: the <i>Crito</i>	383-385.
The ritual frame of the <i>Crito</i>	385-388.
The Many: the negative pole of the <i>epimeleia heautou</i>	388-395.
Socrates and the consistency before death	395-399.
The One and the Many. The Many and the ruin of the soul	399-402.
The one and the Many. Is Socrates the "one" who knows?	403-405.
The dialogue goes on: a good life is better than mere life	406-407.
Towards the speech of νόμοι	407-409.
The consistency of the custodian	409-416.
Feeling ashamed for betraying oneself: the dialogue with the νόμοι as a mirror of the dialogue with Crito	416-421.
The other Thessaly. Νόμοι as totenpasse	421-424.
Conclusive Remarks.	
Still on the shame for betraying oneself. Remembering and healing	424-427.
Socrates ἄτοπος and faithful to a place	427-428.

Chapter VIII: the *Phaedo*

The <i>Phaedo</i> . Caring for those who remain:	429-431.
--	----------

Socrates' bequest and the life of self-care after Socrates' death.	
The ritual frame: μελέτη as keeping things alive	431-433.
Pleasure and pain: Socrates as mytograph	433-435.
Humans in a φρουρά. An other case of Apollonian ambiguity	436-438.
Toward the apology	438-440.
The apology: the death, the body and the soul	440-444.
The true philosopher and pleasures	444-450.
The philosopher and the knowledge: the soul, the pleasures and the senses.	450-452.
Pleasures and pains; chains of soul created by the soul itself.	452-462.
Μελέτη θανάτου and music. Μελέτη θανάτου as the practice of standing before oneself.	462-470.
Dialectic and death. The art of dying and revive	470-475.
The death of the speech. Μελέτη θανάτου as the art of killing and reviving the λόγος.	475-482.
The recollection argument. Μελέτη θανάτου as learning to see the invisible.	482-488.
Beyond the inquiry into nature: the aporia of Socrates	489-492.
Beyond the inquiry into nature: Anaxagoras and the turn to λόγοι	492-501.
The third argument and the role of Μελέτη	
The likeness to the divine	501-507.
The deification of the philosopher. Self-care as μελέτη θανάτου	507-514.
Soul as both changeless and changeable. Self-care as dynamic balance of distruction and preservation.	514-526.
The myth of the <i>Phaedo</i>	
The myth and the exhortation tot he courage before life	526-534.
The relationship between dialectic and myth in the <i>Phaedo</i>	534-540.
The cock for Asclepius. Socrates as initiate and initiator	540-544.
The kinds of immortality. Self-care and Socrates' legacy	544-547.
Conclusions	547-548.
Conclusive Remarks.	

What hides behind Hades. Philosophy as apollonian mystery	548-552.
<i>Conclusion</i>	563-561.
<i>Literature</i>	562-621.

Acknowledgements

It is fitting that I thank L. Palumbo, my professor in Naples, who has “initiated” me into the reading of Plato’s texts; it could be said that, without her, not even a word of this thesis would have been written. I would like to thank L. Napolitano for the time she has spent reading the maybe too lengthy chapters of this doctoral thesis and for her valuable remarks and suggestions for strenghtening my reading of the dialogues. I am thankful also to I. Männlein-Robert, my german tutor, for her helpfulness during my stays in Tübingen and for reading my chapters in spite of the

impressive number of PhD. students she had to follow; a special thanks is addressed also to the Italian PhD. students whom I have met at the Eberhard Karls Universität, who have made my stays there more agreeable and profitable. It is due to thank A. Stavru, my tutor since the second year of PhD., for involving me in the workshop he has organised and the volumes he has planned. I would like to thank also S. Chame, my colleague in Verona, for his nice company and his skilled work on *Metaphysics* Θ .

Introduction

Before outlining the themes discussed in this work it will be useful to highlight the historic and theoretical perspective from which the chapters devoted to the reading of Plato's dialogues origin, The backbone of this perspective is the idea, originating from Hadot's works, according to which ancient philosophy, before becoming a discipline subdivided into several subjects (metaphysics, ethics, and so on), has to do with the kind of existence one wants to live; as a consequence, philosophy is that by means of which its practitioners shape their life in a certain way. If philosophy is not a mere theoretical discipline taught in universities, but a way of life willingly chosen, it follows that those who commit to philosophy are not (or not only) "experts", but practitioners, people whose existence is shaped by that to which they have chosen to commit themselves. This understanding of philosophy as a way of living one's existence is also the theoretical womb from which the interest for the *epimèleia heautoù* has come to light. Within the field opened by such research the character of Socrates plays an essential role; the role of the champion of *spirituality*, of that tending to oneself which at a certain point Western culture has ended up forgetting¹. Given that, the following close readings are founded on the assumption that Plato's Socrates is not the expert of a discipline, but the practitioner of a lifestyle. Socrates' lifestyle is shaped by *selfcare*, a notion which, starting from Hadot's works, has never failed to draw scholars' interest². The *epimèleia heautoù* has a feature in particular, its transformative power; thus, those who practice this *selfcare* make themselves better. This understanding of care as a practice aimed at improving and not at restoring an endangered condition, as L. Napolitano rightly points out, is an essential feature of the Socratic *selfcare* which distinguishes itself from the merely *restoring* cure³. This promotive care, albeit aimed at improving its

¹ According to Foucault, it is Cartesian philosophy which marks this change in western culture: cf. M. Foucault, 2011, pp. 22-28.

² P. Hadot, 2005; 2010; see also L. Napolitano, 2018, pp. 158-190.

³ The difference between a merely restorative model and the kind of care aimed at improving what is cared is outlined by L. Napolitano in the second chapter of her forthcoming commentary to the

practitioners' souls, does not neglect the body and seems to care for its wellness⁴. This transformative power of the *epimèmeleia heautoù* is also that which founds the modern philosophical practices, interested in using the Socratic dialogue as a means of therapy⁵. It goes without saying that a question arises when people, some of whom without an appropriate knowledge of the subject, attempt to revitalise a practice such as the Socratic dialogue; the question is: which Socratic dialogue?⁶ A question which is to trace back to another one: which Socrates? Obviously, the understanding of the Socratic dialogue cannot be detached from the opinions or the unaware biases one has on the character of Socrates. This is important to know, because Socratic dialogue and Socrates are not obvious notions: there is a Socrates of Xenophon, a Socrates of Plato, one of the Socratics and also one of Aristophanes. Now, it is Plato the main source from which the philosopher of the last century and the supporter of the philosophical practices draw their knowledge of Socrates. Given that, it is from Plato that they draw their understanding of the Socratic dialogue. Furthermore, there is an aspect of Plato's Socratic dialogue, the refutative one, which does not seem to receive the proper attention in some of these modern and *modernising* readings. This is not negligible; in fact, if these modern readings find an intimate bond between Socratic dialogue and philosophy as practice of life, this means that the role ascribed to the refutative aspect of the Socratic dialogue has an important bearing on the understanding of refutations in philosophy intended as a way of life to practice. Even if it is true that none of these modern readings deny the presence of an elenctic moment in the Socratic dialogue (on the other hand, this would be undeniable), all of them seem to share a common feature, the scarce

Alcibades which she kindly has allowed me to read. Any other reference to this work will be indicated with the word "forthcoming".

⁴ Cf. L. Napolitano, 2013, pp. 41-47.

⁵ Cf. L. Napolitano, 2018, pp. 13-26.

⁶ The Socratic dialogue was a proper *genre*, practiced by numerous author: cf. L. Rossetti, 2007, pp. 33-51; V. Höslle, 2012. It is unavoidable that the understanding of Socrates is implicitly influenced by Plato, the most studied, even at school, of the authors who talk of Socrates. This must be kept in mind in order to evaluate the readings of those authors, such as H. Arendt, who, attempting to discriminate between Plato and Socrates, nonetheless rely only on Plato's texts. Cf. L. Napolitano, 2018, pp. 121-137.

attention to the *aporetic* moment: thus Nelson, who sees in the Socratic dialogue (enacted in Plato's works) an essential tool of mediation and resolution of conflicts, thus Arendt, who, influenced by the *only Platonic* image of midwifery, sees the Socratic dialogue as the procedure through which people's thoughts come to light⁷; thus Nussbaum, who regards the Socratic dialogue as the true basis of a democratic education⁸. All these readings, albeit different from each other, share the interest in the wonderful consequences that practicing Socratic method may have on individual development and community's life; however, they do not show the same interest for the means which the Socratic dialogue uses in order to trigger beneficial consequences. In Plato's dialogues an essential role is played by the elenctic procedure, the refutative moment and the subsequent *aporia*; on the other hand, the *aporetic* moment is fundamental not only in the so called *aporetic* dialogues, since *aporetic* moments are present also in those dialogues such as the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*. *Aporia* characterises not only the early dialogues; it is everywhere, even in those dialogues which come to positive conclusions; actually, it could be said, as Parmenides himself says in the dialogue bearing his name, that is impossible to find solutions unless one has come through the *aporia* in the proper way⁹. Plato seems to consider *aporia*, the impasse, the (temporary) inability to move, a necessary step in Socrates' way of thinking, so that Socrates himself says that he is not free from the *aporia* he provokes in his interlocutors¹⁰. Thus, how it is possible that so an

⁷ L. Nelson, 1931. By means the Socratic dialogue those "transcendentals" implicit in our experience come to awareness.

⁸ M. Nussbaum, 2010. Cf. L. Napolitano, 2018, pp. 191-212, who thoroughly analyses the merits and the limits of this readings.

⁹ *A-poria* is intended throughout this work as a lack of movement, an inability to move which the interlocutor experiences by means of Socratic refutation; the interlocutor is somehow paralysed (cf. *infra*, note 10). However, the *aporia* can be fruitfully compared also to a lack of route (L. Napolitano, 2014, pp. 127-178; 2018, pp. 234-237); in fact, there is a deep connection between lack of route and lack of movement: so, a pilot may end up somehow paralysed because a seestorm impassable the previous route and has not found a new one yet. Likewise, the Socratic refutation is like a seestorm which compells to abandon a previous route (one's own lifestyle) and to find a new one. Cf. *infra*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁰ Cf. *Men.* 80c1-d1

essential aspect of the Socratic dialogue enacted by Plato fails to receive the proper importance in the modern readings which, after all, are grounded on Plato's dialogues? Several answers could be given to this not easy question; however, the scarce importance attributed to the *aporetic* moment to the advantage of the only *euporetic* one originates in my opinion from three reasons: *aporia*, as it will be clear in the chapters of this work, is painful and bewildering; the loss of certitudes the interlocutors experience in the *aporia* is not a merely lack of solution to a problem; it is a moment in which the life itself of the refuted interlocutor seems to be wiped away and the only way to overcome this condition is to accept it and be ready to abandon the certitudes one has been resorting on until Socrates' refutations, so that one undertakes a different way of living one's existence. This means also that *aporia* is a criterion of selection; not all of Socrates' interlocutors are ready to accept Socrates' refutations of their opinion and *their lives itself*; thus, some of them end up running away from Socrates, some come so far as to hate him. This could be the first reason of the scarce importance attributed to the *aporetic* moment: the way the interlocutors face the *aporia* discriminates among them those who live up to Socrates' dialogic communication from those who are not. On the contrary, modern readers and philosophical practices seem to be interested in stressing how Socratic dialogue is something which everyone should learn; as a consequence, they are interested in showing how Socratic method of thinking can be (and should be) used by everyone, that which is not Plato's interest, who appears to show that not everyone can benefit from a dialogue with Socrates. Accordingly, if one attempts to eliminate the selective nature of the Socratic dialogue, one is led to eliminate the *aporia*, or, at least, to mitigate its destructive and emotionally bewildering power; power whose presence in Plato's dialogues is undeniable. A further reason for which the refutative side of the Socratic dialogue and the subsequent *aporetic* moment is not too stressed depends, in my opinion, on the scarcely acknowledged role of the negative emotions in Socratic dialogue enacted in Plato's works. In Nelson's reading, Socratic dialogue seems to be but a procedure of discursive mind and Arendt and Nussbaum follow this same implicit approach; the Socratic dialogue enacted by Plato is emotionally loaded and in particular the *aporia* triggers the explosion of these emotions: interlocutors cry, feel ashamed at themselves, some

hate Socrates, some are at the same time annoyed and scared; some love Socrates and some want him to die. If one reads Plato's dialogues unbiased, one can notice that the Socratic dialogue is quite far from being the placid exercise of the discursive minds of those who participate in it. During the Socratic dialogue one not only tests his opinions but *faces also his emotions*; on the other hand, every opinion, intended as cognitive content, is always *emotionally loaded* and it is impossible to refute opinions without somehow questioning one's feelings. For instance those who support the thesis: "might is right" are not only rationally persuaded of this thesis, but are also *emotionally bound to it*, maybe because they regard themselves as the mighty men who by nature deserve power and, as a consequence the thesis: "might is right" is loaded with pleasure to them, because this thesis seems to justify the opinion they have of themselves. Therefore, if one refutes them and leads them to admit that they are not those who deserve power, they are not only rationally refuted, but also *emotionally attacked*, because the refutation has made clear that they feel pleasure for something false, the belief in their own superiority. *Aporia* in Plato's works is emotionally loaded; accordingly, a reading which underestimates the importance of negative emotions in the Socratic dialogue enacted by Plato is led to underestimate the importance of the *aporia* or play down its emotionally loaded nature¹¹. As said above, Socratic dialogue and selfcare, intended as self-improvement, are deeply interconnected, so that the understanding of the Socratic dialogue has unavoidable bearing on the understanding of selfcare; as a consequence if one decides to follow those readings which are interested only in the positive consequences of the Socratic dialogue and underestimate or are even annoyed by the presence in Plato's dialogues of a Socrates who mercilessly refutes and triggers fearful and powerful emotions; if one follows these readings, one is also led to consider *aporia* something useless or harmful in a proper selfcare. This leads to consider refutations and the subsequent *aporia* a fault of the Socratic

¹¹ That Socratic dialogue is emotionally loaded involves that also *negative* emotions play an essential role; this may have led readers such as G. Vlastos, 1980, pp. 16-17 to consider Socrates a despotic logician indifferent to his interlocutors' emotions (see also M. Nussbaum, 2010). As it will be seen, arousing negative emotion matches the idea of caring for others; by making them feel ashamed, Socrates helps them to improve themselves.

dialogue, something which must be wiped away in a modern implementation of it or something whose role must be contained in order to shape a kind of Socratic dialogue which must be as *euporetic* as possible, and everyone can practice¹².

Aim of the present work is to cast a light on the essential role played by refutation and *aporia* in the Socratic dialogue in Plato's work: it is not a fault, something which must be eliminated or contained; as it will be argued in the following chapters, *aporia*, provoked by Socrates' refutations, is the moment in which Socrates' interlocutor must take a decision: run away or go ahead. Only those who have accepted to face Socrates' refutations and decide to face the *aporia* into which they have fallen can practice self-improvement. One of the assumptions underlying the following analysis is that, to improve oneself, sometimes it is necessary to abandon the opinions and, what is more important, *the attitude according to which one has lived until Socrates' refutations*. The existence of the *aporia* in Socratic dialogues shows something important to all those deal with *selfcare*: improving oneself is not a peaceful and placid advance which does not know shocks; on the contrary, caring for oneself means changing deeply rooted customs or do away without something or someone always present. What is more, improving oneself means also doing away without that natural attitude according to which one tends to hold for true what one has learned from the cultural milieu and family. It is possible that people around us have taught us wrong things that, once adult, we have trouble to remove. Accordingly, *aporia* is maybe the most important, but also the most ambiguous moment in the Socratic dialogue: Socrates' interlocutor sees his previous convictions fade away; he sees *himself fade away*. However only when the interlocutor sees himself fading away it becomes possible to him to undertake a new life, one in which he commits to caring and ruling himself and is no more

¹² One of the few who seems to ascribe an essential role to the refutative moment of the Socratic dialogue is I. Patocka, 1999, pp. 359-373; in fact, only by means of the elenctic procedure it is possible to care an "hypertrophic ego", such as that of Alcibiades, who thinks that he deserves political power all over the Greece, and Ippias, who thinks that he knows everything. It has been several times remarked that Socrates' refutations are deceitful and fallacious. However, although Socrates masters and uses the weapons of Eristics (Cf. *infra*, pp. 78ff; 248ff), his aim is not the mere getting the better of his interlocutor, *but lead him to face a transformative experience*.

passively and unconsciously ruled by tradition, family and others' opinions. However, *aporia* is also an ambiguous moment for two reasons: the interlocutor could choose, in spite of Socrates' refutation, to carry on believing what has always believed and behaving in the way he has always behaved. Accordingly, the *aporia* is the moment in which the interlocutor has the possibility to undertake a new life; however, nothing obliges him to do it; if too scared, he may decide to run away instead of going ahead. The second reason for which *aporia* is ambiguous is that it is not sure that the interlocutor, once left the old way, will take a better one; for instance the young Alcibiades faces the limits of the democratic education he has received from Pericles and Athens (*Symp.* 215e4-b3); he must abandon this part of his life; however, nothing assures that, once abandoned his democratic education, he will become a true politician; he would turn also to a tyrannical attitude and betray his homeland. This means that it is up to the interlocutor to decide to face the *aporia* and find a way out of it and take the good one. Accordingly, selfcare is not a peaceful advance made up only of successes; it involves also learning to remove from us those things which, albeit deep-rooted, are hindrances to self-improvement and happiness. This means that selfcare is not only an art of living, but somehow also an art of killing oneself, an art of overcoming one's own limits; an art of overcoming oneself. This means that the idea of μελέτη θανάτου (practice of death) used in the *Phaedo* to describe philosophy is something which concerns not only a single dialogue, but all the dialogue which have been examined in this work; if the *aporia* is that moment in which the interlocutor witnesses to his own death and must decide to undertake a new life, this means that interlocutor facing *aporia* faces his "death". This characterization of the *aporia* leads to the issue of the religious features of the Socratic dialogues in Plato¹³; what I set out to show is that *the Socratic dialogue works as a ritual of initiation*, in which the transformation

¹³ Obviously, aim of this work is not only to state that in Plato's Socrates several religious features are to find. What is stated in this work is that the Socratic dialogue itself enacted by Plato works like a ritual of initiation, that which has been suggested by Chr. Riedweg, 1987, although he dwells only on the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*. What is more, it is also aim of this work to show that the Platonic Socrates has undeniable priestly features (cf. *infra*, chapters V; VI and VIII): cf. J. L. Pérellé, 2014, *passim*.

of interlocutors should have place. As it is clear from what said above, the transition from a previous phase of life into another one is made possible (not necessary) by the “deathlike” experience of the *aporia*, which can be considered as a ritual death which marks a transition; a transition which the initiator (Socrates) helps to start, and it is only up to the initiate (the interlocutors) to bring to an end. In each of the chapters in this work it will be shown how this ritual of initiation works and which kind of transition Socrates wishes his interlocutors to undertake; what concerns this introduction, it is to be pointed out that apart from Hadot and, to some extent Foucault, not many of modern readers of Plato’s works seem to be interested in the religious aspect of the Socratic dialogues and, as a consequence of the *epimèleia heautoù*; maybe this could be the result of a laical mindset which tends to see in everything closeness to religion as a limit or a fault. However it must be stressed that initiations, in every time and place, is the most ancient means that human societies have used to rule their own life. One of the common mistakes that must be avoided is to link initiation with mysteries, as if the only way to be initiated were by participating in them. The experience of the initiation was common and widespread throughout all the members of human societies, and somewhere it still is¹⁴; Ephebia was a ritual of initiation into manhood, as the *krypteia* at Sparta; they were not mystic paths and nonetheless they were initiation because they marked the transition from a phase of life (childhood) into another one (manhood); or, one can say, they marked the *death* of the child and the *birth* of the man¹⁵. It could be said that mysteries imply initiation, but initiations do not imply mysteries; this means that Socratic dialogue has an initiatory feature even when no reference to Eleusinian mysteries and Orphism occurs. Accordingly, what I want to argue is that the *aporia*, quite far from being a mere impasse of the dialogue, could be fruitfully regarded as the ritual and deathlike condition in which the separation from a previous life becomes possible and the birth in a new one must be chosen. The aim of the present work is to cast light on the importance of the *aporetic* moment in Socratic selfcare and show how it is deeply bound to an initiatory and ritual mindset which is not taken into consideration in the majority of the modern readings of

¹⁴ Cf. A. van Gennep, 1909.

¹⁵ Cf. E. Samter, 1901, pp. 71ff.

Plato's Socrates. This allows to reach some accomplishments: first of all, the *aporetic* moment, as said above, is not a merely logical impasse, but a powerful emotional upheaval within Socrates' interlocutors; accordingly, highlighting the importance of the *aporia* as an emotional condition matches the understanding of Socratic care as emotionally loaded¹⁶; therefore this care is not an intellectualistic advance of one's own knowledge, *but the holistic care for the person in its entirety, which necessarily involves emotions*. Secondly, considering *aporia* a ritual "death" opens to considering the *epimèleia heautoù* an initiatory path which, just like any other initiatory path, lasts the entire life: in fact, those who overcome the ritual "death" have not only brought a transition to an end, but also commit to a life-long challenge. For instance, the young ephebe who has overcome the ritual death which marks the separation from childhood is adult not only from the biological point of view, but also from the political and moral one; therefore, he commits to all those challenges and duties which belong to the new phase of his life and must do that until his death. Likewise, those who have accepted to face the *aporia* and the ritual death triggered by Socrates' refutations commit themselves to a life-long challenge; if it is possible to undertake self-care only after facing the *aporia*, self-care and his challenges last the entire life. To be an adult, the young Athenian had to die as a boy and, thanks to the ephebia, rise again as a man; yet the ephebia is not sufficient, even if it is necessary. Likewise, those who overcome the ritual death of the *aporia* have died as childish people who do not care for themselves and rise again as adults capable of self-care; however this self-care must be practiced throughout the entire life; otherwise the *aporia* itself becomes useless. It can be said that the *aporia* is the baptism by fire of self-care; the unavoidable step, which is not a fault of the Socratic dialogue, but one of his essential moments. *Aporia* is essential both within the approach to Plato's works which valorises the role of emotions and within the research concerning the religious aspect; accordingly, a desirable result of this work

¹⁶ Cf. L. Napolitano, 2020, *passim*. The reading I am going to suggest is grounded in the idea that this care concerns the person as a whole; a whole which involves also the emotional instances: cf. L. Napolitano, 2013, pp.131-136; L. Candiotta, O. Renaut, 2020 *Soul is a hierarchised whole* (L. Napolitano, 2010, pp. 161-166); this means that caring this whole does not mean annihilating not rational instances but ruling them so as to make them exist harmoniously within the whole.

would be open up to the possibility to lay a bridge between research on the value of the emotions and research on the religious aspects of the ancient thought; that which this work pursuit regarding Plato's works. Given that, I am going to outline the accomplishments pursued in this introduction, which the reader of this work will need as assumptions. Firstly, it will be shown what "overcoming the ritual death of the *aporia*" means and that this is necessary for self-care. Secondly, it will be argued that Socratic care has a relational structure; accordingly, caring for oneself involves caring for others and *vice versa*. Thirdly, it will be explained the criteria underlying the choice of the dialogues examined within the following chapters.

Overcoming ritual death: aporia and second birth in the Sophist.

Even if refutations and *aporia* are present in numerous places in Plato's works, there is a dialogue in which Plato not only enacts *aporia* but explains also in essential role in care. This work is the *Sophist* and in particular the section concerning the elenchus (226c5-231b8)¹⁷. The *Sophist*, just like several dialogues analysed in this work, is traditionally not considered a dialogue from which an understanding of Socratic care can be drawn; however, if one changes perspective about the *aporia* and ceases to regard it as a failure and starts considering it as the moment when a new beginning becomes possible, one finds out that also the *Sophist* has something important to say about care. According to the Stranger from Elea and Theodorus, there is an art of discrimination (226c5-8) which is subdivided into two species: the former separates the better from the worse, the latter the similar from the similar (τὸ μὲν χεῖρον ἀπὸ βελτίονος ἀποχωρίζειν ἦν, τὸ δ' ὅμοιον ἀφ' ὁμοίου). The second kind of discrimination is that which is further subdivided. As a separation of the better from the worse, this kind of discrimination is to consider as a sort of purification (καθαρμός τις, 226d10). The cathartic kind of discrimination can be subdivided into two kinds: the purification concerning body and that concerning soul (227c2-6). If one considers that the elenctic procedure belongs to the purificatory kind of discrimination and concerns soul, refutation and the subsequent

¹⁷ L. Napolitano, 2018, pp. 281-292.

aporia are necessary parts of care. In fact, elenctic procedure, it will be clear below in the section, is a *purification of soul* aimed at removing from it the worse in order to preserve the better; this removing the worse perfectly matches the idea of care as improvement of what is cared, in this case soul (one's own soul and others' souls). But removing the worse from soul can be of two kinds; just like the purification of body can be of two kinds; there is a purification from illness (medicine) and a purification from deformity (gymnastic); accordingly, purification of soul can be of two kinds because of two kind is the evil which affects soul; as a consequence there will be a purification which will be a medicine of soul and a purification playing the role of a training of soul. This division recalls to some extent *Gorg.* 464b2-c5, where gymnastic and medicine are the two arts aiming at the best condition of body, whereas lawgiving and justice are the two arts concerning the soul. There is no difference between the passage of the *Gorgias* and the line of the *Sophist* under examination with regards to the arts concerning body; difference are to be found with regard to soul: in particular in the *Sophist* it is education (*παιδεία*) which occurs as gymnastic of soul, whereas in the *Gorgias* this role is played by lawgiving (*νομοθετική*); however, this difference does not involve different in contents and also in this case the *νομοθετική* of the *Gorgias* and the *παιδεία* of the *Sophist* are consistent with each other¹⁸. Before going ahead, it is important to spend some words about the relationship between medicine and gymnastic; they are two different skills; yet they are deeply interconnected since they care for the same thing (body) and cannot be detached from each other. For instance, when arm is broken, gymnastic is useless because only a healthy arm can be reinforced; as a consequence, only a healthy body can be trained and, in case health is endangered, it must be restored and then it is possible to reinforce body. Accordingly, it is unreasonable to expect obedience to laws from unjust people; one should beforehand make them just and capable of obedience and then demand their obedience. This true, it follows that, in case of the lines of the *Sophist* under examination, to remove deformities (by means of gymnastic), one must remove illness (by means of medicine). It is true that gymnastic in turn helps body to keep

¹⁸ In fact, if one intends the *νομοθετική* not as the mere imposing laws, but as prescribing rules which are aimed at shaping a virtuous soul, such a *νομοθετική* is part of the education.

the health which it is incumbent on medicine to restore; however, this does not make medicine and gymnastic equal: although gymnastic makes body healthier, no gymnastic can be practiced if health is endangered; accordingly, medicine provide the very condition of gymnastic. True the comparison between arts of body and arts of soul. Also, lawgiving would be useless without justice; lawgiving can strengthen an *already existing* justice, but it cannot provide it when justice is lacking; likewise gymnastic strengthens health, but where health is lacking, it is medicine which must restore it. This asymmetrical relationship exists also in the *Sophist* between purification of soul from illness and purification of soul from deformity. This means that it is not possible to remove deformity without removing illness. Now, the illness of soul is wickedness, which is a kind of civil war within soul:

Stranger: “Well then; do we not see that in the souls of worthless men opinions are opposed to desires, anger to pleasures, reason to pain, and all such things to one another? (έν ψυχῇ δόξας ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ θυμὸν ἡδοναῖς καὶ λόγον λύπαις καὶ πάντα ἀλλήλοις ταῦτα τῶν φλαύρως ἐχόντων οὐκ ἠσθήμεθα διαφερόμενα)”. Theaetetus: “Yes, they are, decidedly”. Stranger: “Yet they must all be naturally related”. Theaetetus. “Of course,”. Stranger. “Then we shall be right if we say that wickedness is a discord and disease of the soul (στάσιν ἄρα καὶ νόσον τῆς ψυχῆς πονηρίαν λέγοντες ὀρθῶς ἐροῦμεν)”. Theaetetus. “Yes, quite right” (228b2-10, tr. N. North Fowler).

Wickedness depends on soul’s inner conflict between its several instances. These inner conflict depend on the fact that pleasures, pains and anger and reason pretend each of them to be satisfied; they are, to say it with the *Laws*, strings which pull in different directions¹⁹. Anger, pleasures and pains are representative of the not rational life of soul; accordingly, a soul freed from wickedness is one in which the emotional and rational coexist harmoniously. To use an image of *Republic*, such a soul is one in which reason is like a gardener in soul, growing what must be grown (good desires) and removing what must be removed (bad desires), so that every instance of soul is cared, and their cooperation and friendship is established (*Resp.* IX, 589a5-b6). These lines are important because they make the so-called Socratic-

¹⁹ Cf. *Leg.* I, 644e2-645a5. Cf. F. Fronterotta, 2007, p. 260 note 64.

Platonic intellectualism hardly sustainable. Wickedness is not a mere lack of knowledge, is a civil war of soul; a civil war in which pleasures, pains and anger play an essential role; accordingly true education is not one which annihilates emotional life, but *one which makes emotional life and reason harmoniously coexist, obviously under the guidance of the latter*. Noteworthy are the words of the Athenian in *Leg. II 653a5-c3*:

What I state is this,-that in children the first childish sensations are pleasure and pain, and that it is in these first that goodness and badness come to the soul (παιδικὴν εἶναι πρώτην αἴσθησιν ἡδονὴν καὶ λύπην, καὶ ἐν οἷς ἀρετὴ ψυχῆ καὶ κακία παραγίγνεται πρώτον, ταῦτ' εἶναι); but as to wisdom and settled true opinions, a man is lucky if they come to him even in old age and (φρόνησιν δὲ καὶ ἀληθεῖς δόξας βεβαίους εὐτυχῆς ὄτῳ καὶ πρὸς τὸ γῆρας παρεγένετο); he that is possessed of these blessings, and all that they comprise, is indeed a perfect man. I term, then, the goodness that first comes to children “education.” *When pleasure and love, and pain and hatred, spring up rightly in the souls of those who are unable as yet to grasp a rational account; and when, after grasping the rational account, they consent thereunto that they have been rightly trained in fitting practices* (ἡδονὴ δὴ καὶ φιλία καὶ λύπη καὶ μῖσος ἂν ὀρθῶς ἐν ψυχῆς ἐγγίγνονται μήπω δυναμένων λόγῳ λαμβάνειν, λαβόντων δὲ τὸν λόγον, συμφωνήσωσι τῷ λόγῳ ὀρθῶς εἰθίσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν προσηκόντων ἐθῶν) : this consent, viewed as a whole, is goodness, while the part of it that is rightly trained in respect of pleasures and pains, so as to hate what ought to be hated, right from the beginning up to the very end, and to love what ought to be loved, if you were to mark this part off in your definition and call it “education,” you would be giving it, in my opinion, its right name (*Leg. II 653a5-c3*, tr. R. G. Bury).

True education must be aimed at establishing a consent between soul’s several instances; education must start from emotion and sensation, because these are those parts of soul which accompany human experience from the beginning of life, whereas reason’s intervention occurs later; or, as the Athenian ironically seems to suggest, never. This is consistent with the path of king philosopher of the *Republic*; they start learning mathematical disciplines and then dialectic only when they are adult; but, during their childhood, their education is based on music (which educates

sensation and emotions) and gymnastic (which educates body)²⁰. The not rational instances of soul must be educated in order to make them coexist harmoniously with each other and with reason; otherwise, people devoid of the proper education come as far to fulfill desire which harm not only others, but also themselves; people whose reason is so weak that it is oppressed by their self-destructive emotions²¹. Education's task is to make the harmony within soul possible; so, it avoids wickedness. In the lines of the *Sophist* under examination the Stranger does not take into consideration the means to avoid wickedness (this is possible when there is no wickedness yet), but the means to remove it when it is already present in soul. These means of purification from wickedness (civil war within soul) is an art of containing (κολαστική) dealing with injustice, cowardice and haughtiness (229a4-6)²². When there is disorder in soul, it is necessary to establish that order and harmony which should exist in a healthy soul; accordingly, the κολαστική is a medicine of soul because, like medicine, it provides health, in this case to a sick soul. As in a civil war, in the sick soul there is an upheaval of its instances, and the least suitable ones claims to be able to rule²³. Injustice, cowardice and haughtiness, as kinds of wickedness, origin from the lack of harmony among soul's instances. So, the unjust is one whose desire to subject others is so strong that the other instances of soul cannot help but following it. The coward is one whose fear to die is so strong that he would make the vilest things in order to preserve his life; the haughty is one whose self-satisfaction is so strong that he cannot even notice that the superiority he boasts of may be an illusion. These three men are enslaved by pleasure and fears which harm in first place themselves. The κολαστική is aimed at containing these instances and making them loose their power in soul, so that a balanced coexistence may rise in soul. Given that, it is to conclude that purification of soul from its illness is the purification of soul from its inner disordered state; a disorder in which the

²⁰ Cf. J. Wilburn 2021, pp. 141-165.

²¹ This is what happens to the tyrant: *Resp. IX passim*: cf. S. Gastaldi, 2005, pp. 519-526.

²² The adjective κολαστική is in general intended as referring to punishment. I prefer to stress the idea of containing present in the verb κολάζειν, since the punishment itself is but a means to *contain* socially dangerous attitudes.

²³ Cf. S. Gastaldi, 2005a, pp. 599-604.

peaceful coexistence of the several instances of soul is not possible. This shows how important is to tend to the not rational life, to those sensations, pleasures, pains, anger and so on, which, if not educated and *cared*, become source of unhappiness. Disorder is one of the two evils from which soul must be purified; the other one is its deformity and its deformity is ignorance. Ignorance makes soul fail to reach his objectives:

Stranger: “But if things which partake of motion and aim at some particular mark pass beside the mark and miss it on every occasion when they try to hit it (καθ’ ἐκάστην ὀρμὴν παράφορα αὐτοῦ γίγνηται καὶ ἀποτυγχάνη), shall we say that this happens to them through right proportion to one another (ὑπὸ συμμετρίας τῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα) or, on the contrary, through disproportion (ὑπὸ ἀμετρίας)?”. Theaetetus: “Evidently through disproportion. Stranger”: “But yet we know that every soul, if ignorant of anything, is ignorant against its will (ἀλλὰ μὴν ψυχὴν γε ἴσμεν ἄκουσαν πᾶσαν πᾶν ἀγνοοῦσαν)”. Theaetetus: “Very much so”. Stranger: “Now being ignorant is nothing else than the aberration (οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν παραφροσύνη) of a soul that aims at truth, when the understanding passes beside the mark”. Theaetetus: “Very true”. Stranger: “Then we must regard a foolish soul as deformed and ill-proportioned (ψυχὴν ἄρα ἀνόητον αἰσχρὰν καὶ ἄμετρον θετέον)”²⁴. Theaetetus: “So it seems” (228c1-d5).

This state of soul, its deformity, which causes it to fail to reach its aims, can be removed by means of the art teaching (διδασκαλικήν, 229a9-10), which plays in soul the same role as gymnastic plays in body. True this analogy, it must be recalled that there is an asymmetric relationship between these two arts. Gymnastic can work only when body is health; however, when it is not the case, it is incumbent upon medicine to assure that health which gymnastic needs to be useful. This involves that illness may be a cause of body’s weakness; in fact, when body is weak, but health, it only needs training; but when body is weak because of illness, it needs to heal, that is to say, it needs medicine. Let us come back to soul. Ignorance, as a

²⁴ The ignorance as incapability of reach one’s own aims appears to be the condition of those who lack the *metretic art* of *Prot.* 356d4. Actually, the undisciplined men of the *Protagoras* fall prey of ephemeral pleasures and exposes themselves to lasting pains (353b1-353c8). They, as everyone, want to be happy; however, they, like the ignorants of the *Sophist*, are doomed to fail to reach this aim because of their lack of measure; which is not only theoretical, but also practical (cf. L. Napolitano, 2013, pp. 67-82): even if they know that some choices will lead them to evil consequences, nonetheless they take them; *they are not merely ignorant; they are unable to learn how to reach their aims; they are ἀμαθεῖς*. Cf. *infra*, pp. 16ff.

lack of the knowledge suitable for soul's aims, can be of two kinds: in fact, there are ignorant who only lack knowledge and are able to learn if one teaches them: children, for instance, may be ignorant about mathematics; but, if one teaches them, they learn. However, there is another kind of ignorance, the ἀμαθία, the condition of those who lack knowledge, but think they they have (229c5-d10). If there are a weakness of body depending on the mere lack of training and one depending on body's illness, it means that there are an ignorance depending on the mere lack of learning and one depending on *soul's illness*. Accordingly, the ἀμαθία is that kind of ignorance originating from soul's illness. As said above (228b2-9), soul's illness is that condition of disorder and "civil war" on account of which the hypertrophic uneducated desire sizes the power and shapes one's conduct. If this is true, it follows that there is a kind of ignorance which is not a mere cognitive condition, *but a cognitive condition rising from the inner disorder of soul; a disorder in which emotions play an essential role*. The ἀμαθής *par excellence* is Alcibiades; his longing for power and prestige is so strong that he does not even notice that he has not yet what he needs to be a good politician²⁵. Alcibiades' soul is not proportioned to its aim (to rule Athens); consequently, it is affected by soul's deformity, the ἀμαθία. Ἀμαθεῖς are also the oligarch, the democrats and the tyrant of the *Republic*; all of them share a feature: because of their disordered soul, they themselves provoke their own end. Oligarchs are so eager for money that they themselves provoke the end of the oligarchic regime²⁶. On account of their longing for limitless freedom the democrats themselves pave the way to the tyrant²⁷. The tyrant, whose longing for absolute power is also limitless, cannot help but grow the number of his enemies; in this way and because of his uneducated desires the man who wants to have power over everyone end up fearing everyone²⁸. All of them has an aim (preserving their supremacy) for which their own soul is unsuitable; consequently, they are doomed to fail. The only way to preserve power would be by ruling with justice and intelligence. However, they are unable to do that. They are not only

²⁵ Cf. J. De Romilly, 1997, pp. 99-113.

²⁶ Cf. L. Bertelli, 2005, pp. 371-379.

²⁷ *Ivi.* 389-394.

²⁸ Cf. S. Lavecchia, 2021, pp. 291-304.

ignorant, *but they are also unable to learn*. This inability is inferable from alpha privative of the word ἀμαθία: the alpha privative in Greek refers not only to a lack of something, but also to an opposition. For instance, ἀ-όρατος (in-visible) refers only to a lack of visibility; on the contrary ἀ-δικία (in-justice) is not a mere lack of justice, but something which is *against justice*. Accordingly, ἀ-μαθία is not the mere lack of learning, but *what is against learning, what makes it difficult or impossible*²⁹. Above it has been said that ἀμαθία is the kind of ignorance originating from the inner disorder of soul, which is an *emotional disorder*³⁰. This emotional disorder prevents from learning; for this reason ἀ-μαθία is a condition rising from an emotional disorder; as a consequence one cannot remove ἀ-μαθία if one does not remove the emotional disorder: in-fact it is useless to try to educate Alcibiades without caring for its overgrown desires; one must in first place care for his inner disorder (which prevents him from learning what he, as a politician, should be tend to); only then Alcibiades starts to learn what he must. Now it is medicine which removes illness from body so that gymnastic may remove deformity; thus, if ἀμαθία is the ignorance rising from emotional disorder, the illness of soul, and the κολαστική, the art of containment, removes illness from soul, it follows that what purifies soul from ἀμαθία, which rises from illness, needs κολαστική, which removes the illness. Now what removes ἀμαθία from soul is education (παιδεῖα, 229d2-3). In the lines of the *Laws* quoted above it is said that παιδεῖα provides harmony among soul's instances; in the *Sophist* it is said that παιδεῖα must remove ἀμαθία which rises when harmony in soul is lacking. This means that the *Laws* and the *Sophist* are quite close on this point: παιδεῖα uses κολαστική when the inner harmony of soul which it must preserve is endangered. The arts aimed at purifying from the mere lack of knowledge are those typical of the craftsmen (229d1-2). Παιδεῖα differs from these arts because these arts provide a kind of knowledge which does not modify the character of their practitioner, whereas παιδεῖα, aiming

²⁹ For the difference between *agnoia* and *amathia* cf. G. Cusinato, 2013, pp. 62-64, who considers *amathia* as a hindrance to learning and L. Napolitano, 2018, pp. 285-286, who renders *amathia* into “incultura”, which can be translated as “lack of education”. As it will be seen, *amathia* is the consequence of this lack.

³⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 10-11.

at shaping a harmonious soul, *transforms those who receive it*. Accordingly, it may be that a skilled carpenter is a wicked person, who cannot rule his desires of fears and has of himself an opinion which is far from truth; on the contrary παιδεῖα modifies soul and makes it harmonious and, consequently, *better*. To make soul better and devoid of inner war, παιδεῖα uses κολαστική, which as technique of containment, is the technique to give measures to emotions. This is clear in the first kind of παιδεῖα, the harsher one (ἡ μὲν τραχυτέρα), the way of educating typical of fathers who educate their children; sometimes fathers reproach them harshly, sometimes console them more softly (2301-2). This way of educating can be called art of admonition (νουθετητική). The νουθετητική, compound of νοῦς and τίθημι, is the capability of making someone judicious or sensible, that at which admonitions are aimed. A telling example of this νουθετητική are Lysis' parents in the *Lysis*³¹: they prevent their son from doing whatever he wants to do and allow him to do only what he can do. Reproaches and prohibitions are means of the κολαστική, the art of containing aimed at disciplining desires; in fact, if a boy were always allowed to do whatever he wanted and none of his longings were never *contained* by means of prohibition, reproach or also soft persuasion, the soul of this boy would fall into a state of disorder in which the instances of soul, made unable to coexist harmoniously because of lack of proper education, tear apart from inside³². The νουθετητική, by means of reproach, prohibitions and softly persuasion, *contains* and disciplines the emotional life of soul and gives measures to it. It seems that the νουθετητική uses κολαστική as a preventive medicine more than as a purification from an actual disease: νουθετητική appears to protect children from a not yet existing disorder more than purifying them from an already existing one; accordingly, it is more similar to a vaccine than to a purification. This means that νουθετητική loses his effectiveness when the illness which it should avoid has already arisen: for instance, Alcibiades is convinced that he knows what is just and what is not and nobody has never attempted to show to him that he does not know.

³¹ Cf. *Lys.* 207d3ff.

³² The extreme case of the uneducated emotional life is the tyrannical man; he comes so far as become unable to bear his longings. In the end they become so implacable that he does not manage anymore to satisfy them. Cf. M. Solinas, 2005, pp. 471-474.

As a consequence he is self-satisfied and thinks that his desire to size the power is justified by the fact that his knowledge (an illusory one) has never been questioned by nobody. In this case νουθετητική is useless: it can preserve a child from an illness, but not purify someone affected by it. At this point the question turns out to be: can παιδεῖα work not only as a prophylaxis, *but also as a proper purification of people whose inner condition has already been endangered?* The answer is: yes, it can. However, it is not νουθετητική which is used in these cases, but another kind of παιδεῖα, the ἔλεγχος. In the following lines the Stranger speaks of how those who use refutations work and their effectiveness:

They question a man about the things about which he thinks he is talking sense when he is talking nonsense; then they easily discover that his opinions are like those of men who wander, and in their discussions they collect those opinions and compare them with one another, and by the comparison they show that they contradict one another about the same things (καὶ συνάγοντες δὴ τοῖς λόγοις εἰς ταὐτὸν τιθέασι παρ' ἀλλήλας τιθέντες δὲ ἐπιδεικνύουσιν αὐτὰς αὐταῖς ἅμα περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν πρὸς τὰ αὐτὰ κατὰ ταῦτ' ἐναντίας), in relation to the same things and in respect to the same things. But those who see this grow angry with themselves and gentle towards others (ἐαυτοῖς μὲν χαλεπαίνουσι, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ἄλλους ἡμεροῦνται), and this is the way in which they are freed from their high and obstinate opinions about themselves (καὶ τούτῳ δὴ τῷ τρόπῳ τῶν περὶ αὐτοὺς μεγάλων καὶ σκληρῶν δοξῶν ἀπαλλάττονται). The process of freeing them, moreover, affords the greatest pleasure to the listeners and the most lasting benefit to him who is subjected to it. For just as physicians who care for the body believe that the body cannot get benefit from any food offered to it until all obstructions are removed (πρὶν ἂν τὰ ἐμποδίζοντα ἐντός τις ἐκβάλῃ), so, my boy, those who purge the soul believe that the soul can receive no benefit from any teachings offered to it until someone by cross-questioning reduces him who is cross-questioned to an attitude of modesty, by removing the opinions that obstruct the teachings, and thus purges him and makes him think that he knows only what he knows, and no more (πρὶν ἂν ἐλέγχων τις τὸν ἐλεγχόμενον εἰς αἰσχύνην καταστήσας, τὰς τοῖς μαθήμασιν ἐμποδίους δόξας ἐξελών, καθαρὸν ἀποφήνη καὶ ταῦτα ἡγούμενον ἅπερ οἶδεν εἰδέναι μόνον, πλείω δὲ μή) (230b4-d4).

The passage is telling; it shows that the removal of false opinions (the cognitive side of the elenchus) necessarily involves arousing the emotions which accompany

those opinions. Those who refute try to remove deep-rooted opinions which the refuted one has about himself; these opinions are *emotionally* loaded and grow out of an inner disorder; once again, Alcibiades is an enlightening example: his longing for power and prestige is so strong that he thinks *that he deserves that power and that prestige*; an overgrown and uneducated desire has originated a *false opinion* (*Symp.* 216b2-c3). Accordingly, as the ἔλεγχος, just like νοουθητική, is a kind of παιδεῖα and παιδεῖα is not the mere transmission of knowledges, but *the shaping of soul and making it harmonious*, it follows that, to fulfill the aim of παιδεῖα, the ἔλεγχος must remove from soul its disorder. Above it has been said that ἀμαθία is that ignorance rising from uneducated emotions; an emotional disorder which has bearing on knowledge³³. Necessarily the ἔλεγχος affects those instances of soul which are not rational³⁴. In the aforementioned lines it is said that strong and deep-rooted opinions on oneself are obstruction which must be removed; but these opinions have grown out of an uneducated emotional life; as a consequence, it is impossible to remove those false opinion without affecting the emotional ground from which they have risen. The fact that false opinions are obstructions shows once more that ἀμαθία is not a mere lack of knowledge, but a *hindrance to knowledge*; it is not a void to fill, *but a wall to tear apart*. This wall is made up of pleasures, pains, fears, self-satisfaction and so on. To tear apart this wall, which is a hindrance to learning, the refuter tries to trigger in the refuted one a powerful emotion, shame. By means of shame the refuted one ceases to adhere to what he thinks that is right or not and to his opinions on himself; so, self-satisfaction steps aside and dissatisfaction for oneself sets in. Accordingly, the ἔλεγχος is aimed at triggering powerful and awkward emotions (shame for instance) in order to remove that *emotional disorder which prevents the refuted one from learning*. As said above,

³³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 13-14.

³⁴ Regarding the role of the emotions in the elenctic procedure cf. L. Napolitano, 2018, pp. 306-309. It is true that not only a disordered emotional life leads to false opinion (the cognitive consequence of an emotional condition), but also false opinions may lead to a disordered emotional state (the *emotional* consequence of a *cognitive* condition); everyone, to say it in Scheler's terms, is an *ordo amoris*, a living hierarchy of values in which cognitive contents and emotions are the inseparable faces of the same coin.

παιδεία purifies from deformity which depends on illness of soul and to do that it uses the κολαστική in order to give measures to not rational instances of soul³⁵. Accordingly, the ἔλεγχος can act as a measure of *containment*; for instance, when self-satisfaction for one's own superiority turns out to be illusory, self-satisfaction fades away and the longing for power and prestige looses much of his power in soul. Only then becomes possible for the refuted one to undertake a new course of life and leave behind his previous illusions. These remarks on the emotional power of the ἔλεγχος enlighten the initiatory nature of the *aporia*³⁶. Ἐλεγχος triggers an ἀπαλλαγή, a removal from those false opinions which prevent from learning; however, if these opinions are deep-rooted in a disordered emotional state, removing them means also going beyond the emotional condition connected to these opinions. As a consequence, the refuted one distances himself not only from false opinions, but also from the emotions connected to them; therefore, those who accept refutation give up not only their deep-rooted opinions on themselves, but also the longings, the fears, the pleasures and pains and on the whole all the emotional life connected to those opinions. This means that those who accept refutation give up not only their opinions on themselves, but they also *give up themselves*, or, more exactly, *they give up the persons they were before the refutation*. However, this happens only when people accept refutation, that which rarely happens. Ἐλεγχος should be a measure of containment; yet when some of the characters (like Callicles or Thrasymachus) are refuted, their opinions (and the emotions connected to them) are quite far from being contained; on the contrary, the more insistent is the ἔλεγχος, the more stubborn is the loyalty to their opinions. The ἔλεγχος triggers in the refuted one a condition of *aporia*; it is a deathlike condition not only because the refuted one sees his opinions fading away but also the emotional life connected to those opinions, which are strong and deep-rooted; and they are because they are emotionally loaded; accordingly, the refuted one sees *himself in his entirety* fading away. However, he can decide to run away from this deathlike experience and carry on believing on himself the same things as before and *feeling in the same way as before*. Now it is possible to answer to the question

³⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 14-16.

³⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 7-8

to which this examination of the ἔλεγχος in the *Sophist* must answer: “what does *overcoming the ritual death of aporia* mean³⁷”? Overcoming the ritual death means accepting to give up the person refuted, its opinion and its emotions and commit to become a new person, with different opinions and, therefore, different emotions. In the *aporia* the refuted one has the possibility to go through this threshold, leave behind the person he has been until the refutation and become a new one; but, as said above, this is up to the refuted one. He can go ahead and accept the “death” of the person he has been, or come back to the safety of what he knows. According to this reading, the ἔλεγχος is not a fault, something to remove; it is that by means of which the refuted one is led to take a decision; it is as if the refuter said: “I have shown that your opinions are contradictory, and your emotions are contradictory; there is a disorder in you. Now, if you accept this refutation and undertake this initiatory death, you will leave behind you the hindrances which prevent you from learning what you must; otherwise, you will not suffer from the pain of changing your lifestyle; however, you will be as you are now, far from the possibility of becoming better than you are now. But it is up to you to come back or go ahead”. Therefore, overcoming the ritual death of the *aporia* does not mean get the better of the refuter and state that we are wrong; on the contrary, the only way to overcome the *aporia* is by admitting that *we are wrong and by leaving behind our refuted self and committing to the way which leads us out of the aporia into a new life*.

This art of refuting is the noble sophistry (ἡ γένει γενναία σοφιστική, 231b8). It may be that Plato here refers to several philosophers or also some sophists; however, it is undeniable that he refers also, even if not only, to Socrates³⁸. Socrates, as a practitioner of this noble sophistry, is he himself a sophist, a noble one. However, that Socrates is a noble sophist is appreciable not in the *Sophist*, but in the *Euthydemus*; as it will be seen in the chapter devoted to this dialogue, Socrates uses the same techniques as Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, but for a *noble* aim: by means of these techniques he tries to help the young Cleinias make the *initiatory*

³⁷ Cf. *supra*, p. 8.

³⁸ Cf. J. Solana, 2013, pp. 80-85.

transition from a child cared by others to an adult caring for himself³⁹. The ἔλεγχος is a form of education and, consequently, of transformation; this means that the ἔλεγχος, albeit destructive and negative itself, is aimed at a constructive and positive aim. Removing false opinions and the emotional disorder from which they rise is like removing scrub from a field before seeding. For this reason, the ἔλεγχος is to be considered a fundamental step of the *epimeleia heautoù*: only those who are aware of their condition can commit to improve it. This leads to a further point which will be explained throughout the analysis of the dialogues, the link between *aporia* and self-awareness; it has been said that the refuted one sees himself fading away; that is to say, he sees what he thinks of himself fading away and the person he really is coming to light. Once destroyed the idea one has of himself, one is compelled to see what hides behind that curtain; so, Alcibiades sees his illusory superiority fading away and emerging what he is: a self-satisfied young man who does not know anything about ruling and, what is more important, about himself (*Symp.* 216a4-6; cf *infra*, pp. 168). Thanks to the *aporia* one comes to see what one would like not to see and for this reason it is an initiatory death; who does not run away from the person one really is and does not try to support the person one thinks one is after being refuted accept to enter *into a new life*; a life in which one commits to know oneself and care for oneself in order to improve oneself. Thanks to the ἔλεγχος and the subsequent *aporia* something new happens in the life of the refuted one; his eyes, always directed at what is outside, in the *aporia* are for the first time directed at himself. So, one like Alcibiades, who has never been refuted before the encounter with Socrates, has his eyes always directed at what is outside, prestige, power, glory and so on; thanks to the refutation and *aporia* one starts seeing himself and understanding if one really deserves what one wants or not and what one must do to reach it. So, this initiatory death, if accepted and, marks a change in one's look; from a life in which one looks only what is outside to a life in which one looks, not only, but in first place, and what is inside⁴⁰. As said above, the ἔλεγχος is

³⁹ Cf. *infra*, pp. 62-72.

⁴⁰ The elenchus and the consequent *aporia*, compelling to look at oneself, make possible to start practicing self-examination, without which, according to *Ap.* 38a2-8, life would not deserve being lived: cf. L. Napolitano, 2018, pp. 237-246.

not a mere logic procedure whose aim is to detect logical fallacies in reasoning; it is the procedure by means of which the emotional disorder of soul, from which false opinions on oneself rise, is detected and opposed⁴¹. Since, according to our reading, the ἔλεγχος and the *aporia* are the anteroom of selfcare and the ἔλεγχος and the *aporia*, as said above, are emotionally loaded, it follows that self-care must involve care for emotionality. Accordingly Plato's Socrates is interested in caring people in their wholeness; as a consequence, a theoretical man with a childish emotionality could never be the desirable result of such a self-care; on the contrary even the most theoretical knowledges must have as a ground the inner balance of soul instances: for instance, an expert in philosophy addicted to alcohol or a mathematician whose only interest is money would be a failure in the perspective of such a kind of care. In fact, providing new knowledges without improving soul is not what Socratic care is aimed at; and it is not true education that which provides technical skills and leaves soul unchanged⁴².

What makes Socratic dialogue similar to the other initiations.....

Above it has been said that initiatory does not mean necessarily mystic⁴³; Indeed, as it will be seen in the chapters on *Euthydemus* and *Alcibiades* also the initiation into manhood takes place. This does not mean that it is wrong to read the sixth definition of the sophist in the *Sophist* as a transposition in philosophical terms of the orphic language⁴⁴; this means only that to reduce the presence of the initiatory sphere in Plato to the only Orphism or the Eleusinian Mysteries might be restricted. In Plato also Corybantism plays a not negligible role and, what is more Socrates' devotion to Apollo can be considered a further religious experience which cannot be traced back to the aforementioned traditions. Accordingly, Plato appropriates the languages of different traditions, and the religious experience of Greek world is well represented, although it must be admitted that in some dialogues some

⁴¹ The "positive" value of the Socratic elenctic procedure has been pointed out by J. Patocka, 1999, pp. 369-371; enlightening on the importance of the *elenchus* for protreptic aims is also Th Tuozzo's commentary on the *Charmides* (2011).

⁴² Cf. *supra*, pp. 15-16.

⁴³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁴ Cf. A. Bernabé, 2013, pp. 40-57.

religious experiences are more present, like Orphism in the *Phaedo* for instance. All these traditions and practices differ from each other and different are the people who practice it (all the young males had to become ephebs, where only few will come to the highest degree of the Eleusinian Mysteries). However, there is at least an element which the Socratic method shares with all the initiatory practices (may they be mysteric or not): the presence of a ritual *deathlike* experience. In the Socratic dialogue this experience is the *aporia* triggered by the ἔλεγχος. Ἐλεγχος, according to *Soph.* 230d8-9, is the greatest and most proper of purification; it can be said that what the purification must remove is the person refuted and help the birth of a renewed one. Such was the aim of those purifications which marked a transition between different steps of the same mysteric path⁴⁵. Purification can be considered that which helps a transition happen. This transition from a previous condition into a new one is also a destruction, as the word καθαρός (purification) suggests; it is etymologically bound to the verb καθαίρειν (to purify). However, καθαίρειν means also wiping away; on the other hand, the verb αἶρειν, from which the verb καθαίρειν comes, means also destroying, wiping away, tearing down and so on. That καθαρός has a destructive side is clear from *Soph.* 230b4-d4⁴⁶: here the deep-rooted opinions on oneself are considered *hindrances which must be removed*. The condition of inner disorder can be so strong and deep-rooted that remove it is to some extent removing oneself. For this reason, the ἔλεγχος, as a καθαρός, is a kind of καθαίρεσις (destruction)⁴⁷. However, as it is clear from what has been said, this destruction/purification is aimed at constructive/promotive aim, the entering in a new life or a second birth; the ephebe spends a year (or two) out of the walls in order to purify himself from the child he still is and *prepare to become an adult man*⁴⁸. Likewise, ἔλεγχος is not a purification/destruction which restores a previous condition; *but one which permits a transition*. Accordingly, those who accept the ἔλεγχος and manage to face the *aporia* in the proper way *die* as people whose look is directed only at the outside and *come to world anew* as

⁴⁵ Cf. Chr. Riedweg, 1987, pp. 17-21.

⁴⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁷ Καθαίρειν and καθαίρειν, albeit similar, come from different roots.

⁴⁸ J. N. Bremmer, 2021, pp. VII-XXIV.

people able to look at themselves. Initiatory traditions, mysteric or not, are founded on that which Burkert calls *verwandelnde Erfahrung*⁴⁹; a transformative experience which marks also an end (of the previous life) and a beginning (the second birth in the new one).

..... *and what makes it different.*

However, the Socratic dialogue is also different from the other initiatic traditions, and this because *it is a dialogue, a way of communicating between two people based on questioning and answering*. In the other tradition the initiated have to perform some codified acts which every generation of initiates repeats in the same way; they constitute a heritage which must be transmitted unchanged and which is the same for all the initiates. This does not mean that language had no place in these traditions and only action were performed; in fact during the great mysteries at Eleusis a mimetic ritual (*tà deiknùmena*) was enacted which was accompanied by the explanation (*tà legòmena*) of the initiator⁵⁰. Also this use of the language is codified; a ritual and identical explanation is transmitted by a generation of priests to the other and remains unchanged while initiates and initiators change. This does not apply to Socratic dialogue: Socrates wants to lead the interlocutor to a transition from a person who does not see himself and does not care for himself into a person who sees himself and cares for himself; however, the ways of this transitions are not the same in any case. Socrates can tailor his strategies to the interlocutor and does not use the same strategies to everyone; this means, for instance that, to help Charmides, a shy boy intimidated by his guardian, Socrates cannot speak to him as to Alcibiades, an overconfident young man who is not intimidated by anyone. Accordingly, dialogue is not a form of language unchanged throughout the centuries, *but a way of communicating which adjusts every time to the interlocutors*. This is also the reason for which dialogues fail or not; thus, a character like Callicles or Trasymachus lets foreshadow that Socrates will not manage to lead the

⁴⁹ Cf. W. Burkert, 2003, pp. 75-99; J. Assman, 2010, pp. 343-362.

⁵⁰ Cf. N. A. Evans, 2002, pp. 227-254.

interlocutor toward the aforementioned transition. A further important difference or, maybe, the most important one is that in the Socratic dialogues language is not what accompanies a performed action; *it is the performed action*. The ἔλεγχος takes place in λόγοι (*Soph.* 229e1-2); it is in λόγοι that the interlocutors reveal the true condition of their souls and it is in λόγοι that the ritual death, the purification/destruction takes place⁵¹. Accordingly, Socratic dialogue is a *dialogic ritual* in which an initiator (Socrates) officiates a ritual of transition and the initiate (the interlocutor) actively cooperates to his own initiation by his answers and accounting for them. In this way within the dialogue, a ritual officiated by means of language, not only the removal of false opinion, but also an emotional transformation takes places; by revealing the contradiction in opinions and, as a consequence, an emotional disorder, the dialogue plunges Socrates' interlocutor into the *deathlike aporia*, the only way out of which is to accept it and undertake one's second birth. Given that, this does not mean that in the reading proposed it is suggested that the entire Socratic dialogue is the refutative procedure; in fact, this would be at odds with what has been said thus far: the ἔλεγχος is not a mere destruction, but a destruction aimed at construction. This means that there is also an exhortative and promotive part of the Socratic dialogue, which will be examined in relation to the single dialogues analysed in this work; however. It can be said that, if the refutation is what leads to the deathlike experience of the *aporia*, the exhortation shows the way to undertake to those who accept the *aporia* and are willing to leave their refuted self behind. However, it is not my aim to dwell on the exhortative side of the Socratic dialogue in this introduction; my aim was to show the importance of the ἔλεγχος in the Socratic dialogue and that it is not (or not only) a merely logical procedure, but an emotionally loaded technique aimed at triggering an emotional transformation. This makes the ἔλεγχος and the *aporia* necessary to a conception of Socratic care which must be not a merely intellectualistic advancement of one's theoretical knowledges, but the *holistic improvement of the person in its wholeness*. Furthermore, the aim of this section was to highlight the importance and the high moral value of the ἔλεγχος and the *aporia* against those modern reading which fails to acknowledge it.

⁵¹ Cf. J. Patocka, 1999, pp. 357-379.

Thus far it has described the ἔλεγχος from the point of view of those who undergo it; it leads to the *aporia* and triggers a transformation that it is incumbent upon the refuted one to undertake and carry on. However, it may be turn out from this analysis that the ἔλεγχος and care concerns only Socrates' interlocutors and not also Socrates; it could seem that Socrates help his interlocutor to improve themselves, but he himself remains always the same. What I am going to show in the second section of this introduction is that *care* is by nature relational and not only the cared people, but also the caring one are benefitted by their caring. This means that the structure of *care* involves that benefitting others means benefitting oneself and one cannot benefit oneself without benefitting others.

Caring benefits those who care: the common good pursued by Socratic care.

The well-known passage of the *Alcibiades I* about others' eye as mirror of oneself is usually the most suitable of Plato's lines for showing the intrinsically relational nature of self-knowledge and, consequently, of self-care⁵². However, there is another passage of Plato's works equally important which argues for the relational nature of the good pursued by means of caring. The text is the first book of *Republic*; here Socrates argues that one cannot benefit himself if one fails to benefit others. The frame of this section is the refutation which Socrates tries to oppose to the thesis supported by Trasymachus, that according to which justice is but that which is useful to the rulers (338e1-339a4); democracy, oligarchy, tyranny share the same idea of justice: justice is aimed at reinforce and preserving the power of the ruler and it is not aimed at benefitting the subjects, who has to obey. According to this thesis, which is a version of the thesis "might is right", justice benefits in first place a group of individuals (the rulers), whereas the other are just only inasmuch they obey to the rulers⁵³. Socrates has no troubles detecting the weakness of this thesis: it may be that the rulers ignore what is the best to themselves and, consequently, may order to their subject to do something which harms them. In this case the subjects would be just and unjust at the same time: they would be just because they

⁵² Cf. *infra*, chapter III, note 1.

⁵³ Cf. M. Vegetti, 2018, p. 47.

have obeyed to rulers' command; but they would be also unjust because, by obeying to rulers' command, they would harm the rulers themselves, that which is at odds with Trasymachus' thesis (339d5-e8). Trasymachus' idea of justice is contradictory; it could be not contradictory if Thrasymachus stated that rulers are infallible, what he himself has denied (339c1-3), or if he stated that justice is not what is useful to rulers, but *what seems to them to be useful*, that which is suggested by Cleitophon (340b6-8): if this were the meaning of Trasymachus' words, his idea of justice would be, if not true, at least consistent: subjects who obey to rulers are always just because it is not their fault if rulers do not know if what they order may be useful or harmful. Trasymachus does not agree; in his opinion a ruler deserving this name cannot be mistaken on what is the best to him (341a1-4); likewise, it is not a doctor deserving this name the one who is mistaken on his patients (340d2-4) and it is not an expert in calculation the one who errs in calculation (340d-45). These lines are quite important because two implicit assumptions are stated which will lead the discussion. First of all, to be a true ruler, it is not enough to give order to the ruled one: a true ruler must know what is the best to him; in second place the comparison to arts (medicine and calculation) involves that, according to Trasymachus, the ruler is not who rules, but *the one who knows how to rule*. What is more, the example of medicine is telling, because medicine is a kind of skill which more than others is aimed at others' good; accordingly, as Thrasymachus himself admits, it is not a doctor deserving this name that who is mistaken on his patient: to be a doctor, a doctor should help his patients heal and not harm them. As a consequence, the example of medicine shows the case of an expert who benefits himself only if he benefits others too; thus, medicine shows that *the good is relational* and that one's own good needs others' good. Thrasymachus has not noticed that, by implicitly comparing the rulers to doctors, he has given to Socrates a powerful weapon; in fact, a doctor, as a doctor, and not as a moneymaker (χρηματιστής) is a healer of sick (341c5-7) and the pilot is pilot because of a knowledge which sailors do not possess and make him able to rule over them (341c10-d4). Every art is by nature aimed at providing what is advantageous (341d8-9); medicine is aimed at providing what is advantageous to body. It is not enough to body to be a body (341e2-4); it must be healthy and health of body is the aim for which medicine has been found

out and improved. The example of the sick body suggests that the kind of advantageous Socrates has in mind is what is advantageous to needy. However, if the true experts, as Thrasymachus himself suggest, are infallible about their own good, this means, Socrates infers, that their arts do not seek what is advantageous to themselves: they are faultless, and, as faultless, do not need anything advantageous to themselves (342a8-b8). It follows those arts, as faultless, do not need the advantageous to themselves, but only provide the advantageous to that with which they deal; accordingly, medicine provides the advantageous not to medicine, but to body (343c1-2); likewise horsemanship provides the advantageous to horses, not to itself (342c4-5). These skills rule and have power on their object (ἀλλὰ μὴν, ὃ Θρασύμαχε, ἄρχουσί γε αἱ τέχναι καὶ κρατοῦσιν ἐκείνου οὐπὲρ εἰσιν τέχναι, 342c7-8). This leads to conclusion that no science seeks the advantageous of the stronger (the expert), but of that which is weaker and ruled by it (342c10-d2); as a consequence, anyone who, due to an expertise, rules and has power (therefore also the political rulers), as a ruler, seek the advantageous to what is ruled and for this purpose does what he does and says what he says (342e7-11). The most important words in these lines are καθ' ὅσον ἄρχων ἐστίν “as a ruler”. Socrates means to say that ruling by its own nature involves benefitting that which is ruled; accordingly, if rulers in a city imposed reckless taxes to their subjects, they would do that not as rulers, but as moneymakers. Socrates is using Thrasymachus’ assumption against Thrasymachus himself; it has been Thrasymachus who has established the comparison between rulers and experts (340d1-341a4) and now Socrates is using this comparison to prove the rulers, as rulers, cannot benefit from a justice which harms the ruled ones. Socrates has come to the opposite of what Thrasymachus says: the ruler, as a ruler, does not pursue the advantageous for himself, but for those whom he rules. However, this is not Socrates’ true thought or, more exactly, it is not Socrates’ *entire* thought: he has argued that rulers, as rulers, benefit the subjects; he must show now that those who *benefit others benefit themselves*. Thus far Socrates has only led the discussion to a conclusion contrary to Thrasymachus’ idea of justice, but not brought it to an end. On the other hand, Thrasymachus has still strings to his bow: he does not deny that it may seem that rulers benefit ruled; however, they do that like the shepherd, who fattens and tends

to his sheeps only to benefit from them (by eating them or selling) (343b1-c3). According to Thrasymachus, justice is still the advantageous of the ruler (343c3-4) and harmful to those who must obey (the sheeps/subjects). As a consequence, the happiest of conditions is that of the tyrants. Tyranny is a blessed condition because those who exhort it are not subject to justice, since they are not subject to a superior authority; they can steal, kill and enslave their own citizens and for this reason are considered happy; justice is but an imposition which one has to accept not because one wants, but because one fears what could happen if one disobeyed (344a4-c4). Therefore, if it were possible, every citizen would like to have tyrannical power on the others. However also the shepherd eats his sheeps not as a shepherd, but as banqueter (345c5-6); so he sells his sheeps not as a shepherd, but as a moneymaker (345c6-d1). Insofar as he is shepherd and *rules* over his sheeps, his only purpose is but the best for that which is ruled and cared by him (345d2-e3). The shepherd can kill or sell his sheeps; however, he does that not as a shepherd. Likewise, every art is endowed with its own task, which is pursuit the best for that which is ruled by them (346d5-8). Once again, experts, as experts acting according to the ἐργον of their art, have no aim but the best for what they rule. On the contrary, when they need salary for their performances, they act not according to their arts, but according to the μισθαρνητική (346b11; d1-4), an “art of salary” which Plato creates in order to distinguish the proper task of every skill from the financial aspect, shared by each of them⁵⁴. According to Thrasymachus, justice is but a hindrance to those who are compelled to obey, whereas they also would turn to injustice if they could; as a consequence, an unjust life is to prefer to a just one. This does not means that every kind of injustice is to pursue: as it is clear from his praise of tyranny, Thrasymachus considers φρόνιμοι only those who can commit the greatest injustice, against men and cities themselves, whereas crimes like stealing purses do not even deserve mention (348d5-9). Socrates has undertaken a very hard challenge; he wants to persuade Thrasymachus that a just life is to prefer to an unjust one. Socrates notices that Thrasymachus is much more consistent than those who, even admitting that injustice is profitable, says nonetheless that it is wickedness as shameful (348e5-9).

⁵⁴ Cf. S. Campese, 2005, pp. 257-268; M. Vegetti, 2019, p. 312, note 23.

If this were the case, Socrates would not have troubles leading Thrasymachus to self-contradiction⁵⁵; however Thrasymachus would say that injustice is also honorable and strong; he would attribute to injustice all the features Socrates attributes to justice (348e9-b3). Thrasymachus comes across as the spokesperson of a lifestyle based on *πλεονεξία* and at the same time supports the idea according to which the unjust is *φρόνιμος* as if the unjust possessed an expertise, a sort of technical skill of bullying the others⁵⁶. Given that, Socrates' first move consists in leading Thrasymachus to acknowledge that *πλεονεξία* and a *φρόνιμος* conduct are at odds with each other. To do that Socrates draws upon the arts, the powerful weapon that Thrasymachus himself has given to him⁵⁷. In fact the *φρόνιμος* is a kind of person which, endowed with refined skills, is able to do in the best way that which pertains to his/her domain and as a consequence is good at that about which he/she is *φρόνιμος*, whereas the *ἄφρων* is devoid of such an expertise and is bad at that which he ignores. What is more, experts, when they have to carry out a task, do not act according to *πλεονεξία*, neither towards their colleagues nor towards the laypeople; accordingly, a musician tuning his lyre has no interest in exerting *πλεονεξία* neither against his colleagues musicians nor the ignorant (349e10-12). In the same way, a physician has no interest in exerting *πλεονεξία* on his colleagues and on those who are not doctors (350a1-5). This is quite easy to understand; each expert, as an expert, acts according to the laws ruling his domain and there is no need to use violence or abuse one's power. What is more, behind Socrates' reasoning lays an assumption which he has never given up throughout the discussion with Thrasymachus: arts, as arts, are always devoted to the pursuit of the *βέλτιστον*, the best condition, of that which they rule⁵⁸. Accordingly, experts aim at benefitting, not at harming. On the contrary, from Thrasymachus' reasoning and words it is to infer that an art aimed at

⁵⁵ It is what those who practice the *ἐλεγχος* do: leading the interlocutors/initiates to the awareness of their contradiction: cf. *supra*, pp. 16ff. The lines of the *Republic* quoted above allude to Polus, who admits that it is worse to be subject to injustice than commit it and then he states that it is more shameful to commit it (*Gorg.* 474c2-9).

⁵⁶ Cf. M. Vegetti, 2005, pp. 240-247; B. Fissel, 2009, pp. 35-43; K. M. Nielsen, 2020, pp. 1-24.

⁵⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 25-26.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Gorg.* 503d5-504a4.

harming those who ignore it in order to benefit its experts is possible. This art would be in Thrasymachus' perspective the art of ruler, the art by means of which rulers benefit themselves at the expenses of their subjects and justice would be the means which allows rulers to exert and preserve their supremacy. Socrates' reasoning leads to conclude that the unjust, by acting with *πλεονεξία*, acts not like an expert, but like an *ἀμαθής* (350c5). Above it has been said that *ἀμαθία* is not a mere lack of knowledge, but is an incapability of learning rising from an inner, emotionally loaded disorder⁵⁹. In fact the *πλεονέκτης* is a telling example of *ἀμαθής*, as the life of the tyrannical man incisively shows. On account of the lack of proper education, in the soul of this man the pleonectic desires connected to appropriation and power grow more and more, whereas his good dispositions have wasted; in the end, his overgrown longing for power and the subsequent disorder of his soul make him an *ἀμαθής*, an individual whom overgrown desires and fears lead to make always the same mistakes; an individual who learns nothing from his suffering⁶⁰. The unjust, as a *πλεονέκτης*, is necessarily *ἀμαθής*, unable to learn; that which the unjust, due to *πλεονεξία*, is unable to learn is that *πλεονεξία* cannot make him happy. Injustice, as *πλεονεξία*, brings about disorder and lack in those who practice it, so that, if there were any justice, even injustice would be impossible: even a gang of thieves would not last, if each of its member acted unjustly towards the others (351c6-6); nor could any other group carry on existing if there were complete injustice among its members. Injustice causes the members of the group to be unable to work together (351e5-6); it brings about hate and inner war and make a peaceful coexistence impossible. Socrates' idea of injustice as *πλεονεξία* matches the medical view of illness as disorder of body appreciable in the *Sophist*⁶¹; it is an illness which destroys its host: thus, a group in which each member acts in a pleonectic way is doomed to fall apart. It goes without saying that this injustice sets in because the members of the group do not adjust to the *oikeioprachia*: each of them wants to have more power than the others, even when they do not deserve it; this brings about an inner war which harms not only the group, but also each member fallen

⁵⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 13ff.

⁶⁰ Cf. *supra*, note 24.

⁶¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 9-11.

prey of injustice. The unjust acts with *πλεονεξία* not only toward the just, but also toward his like (349c1-10); this means that each of them fears the others and when one harms another, one has to expect that the same may happen to oneself. Therefore, injustice destroys the whole group and harms those members who thought that they would benefit from their *πλεονεξία*. The self-destructive spiral of injustice tears apart not only groups, but also individuals, and brings about disorder within them, as Socrates says:

Then in the individual too, I presume, its (*scil.* of injustice) presence will operate all these effects which it is its nature to produce. It will in the first place make him incapable of accomplishing anything because of inner faction and lack of self-agreement (πρῶτον μὲν ἀδύνατον αὐτὸν πράττειν ποιήσει στασιάζοντα καὶ οὐχ ὁμονοῦντα αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ), and then an enemy to himself and to the just. Is it not so? (352a6-9).

These words become clearer after reading the IV book, where Socrates outlines the threefold soul. Not only groups, but also the soul of the individuals should be a balanced multiplicity of instances ruled by the most suitable for ruling (reason). As said above, it is education which should shape soul in such a way as to make it as harmonious as possible⁶²; however, if this education is lacking, soul may come so far as lose its inner balance. In this case one may end up disagreeing with oneself. For instance, everyone wants to be happy and does everything in order to be happy; however the inner disorder of the *πλεονέκτης* makes him unable to understand that his lifestyle cannot lead to the aim he is pursuing⁶³; in fact, the *πλεονέκτης* is an ignorant of the worst kind, an *ἄμαθής*, and it is the main feature of ignorance to fail to reach one's own aims⁶⁴. Accordingly, the unjust, as ignorant, pursues an aim which he cannot reach.

Trasymachus has to assent to Socrates' conclusions, but he does not believe even a word of what Socrates is saying; he is compelled by the consistency to his own answers to Socrates' questions; in the end Trasymachus says that he will assent to

⁶² Cf. *supra*, p. 11.

⁶³ Cf. *Gorg.* 468d1ff.

⁶⁴ Cf. *supra*, p. 13.

Socrates' words only because he does not want to displease the bystanders (353b4-5). Socrates has argued that the unjust cannot be φρόνιμος because πλεονεξία does not belong to the φρόνιμος' conduct. What is more, Socrates has shown that injustice is but a parasite; something which would immediately perish as long as its host were destroyed; as a consequence injustice not only cannot subjugate justice, but does need justice to exist. Trasymachus assents but has not been convinced, nor will he be persuaded by the following Socrates' move. However, although Socrates fails to convince Trasymachus that a just life is more profitable than an unjust one, the last lines of the first book are essential since Socrates eventually goes beyond the idea of the good as something which concerns only one of those who partake in a relationship. This idea underlies Trasymachus' conception of justice, according to which only rulers benefit from it, whereas subjects are harmed by their obedience. In 347a1-5 Socrates says that ruling is aimed at the βέλτιστον of what is ruled, as if only the ruled one benefitted from this relationship; in this relationship it is still only one which is benefitted; the difference is that this time it is the ruled one, not the ruler. In the last lines Socrates goes beyond this opposition in order to show that good cannot concern only one individual or one group; the good is always *common*; to show that, Socrates draws on the idea of ἔργον, the activity which a thing by its own nature performs.

The ἔργον of soul: benefitting from caring others.

The word ἔργον occur for the first time in the first book of *Republic* only in 352e3; it is the notion of ἔργον, the essential activity typical of a thing, which underlies the notion of *oikeioprachia*; in fact, *oikeioprachia*, doing one's on things, is based on the fact that there are ἔργα, tasks or activities, which things (artificial objects and living being) by nature carry out and each thing has its own, which nothing could carry out better; accordingly seeing is the natural ἔργον of eyes and hearing that of ears (352e5-11). In the same way, also artificial tools have their ἔργα (353a5-8)⁶⁵.

⁶⁵ The intimate connection between tasks and ἀρετή is to find also in Arist. *Eth. Nic.* I, 6: cf. M. Vegetti, 1998, p. 87, note 64 and L. Napolitano, 2014, pp. 35; 87ff. The notion of ἔργον it is implicitly present in Socrates' words on the aim of technical skills (346ab1 ff.); they are aimed at

The notion of ἔργον is deeply bound to the ἀρετή, the performing one's own ἔργον in the best way (353b2-4)⁶⁶. Each thing (no matter if artificial or organic) has an ἀρετή which allows it to perform its task in the best way, whereas the wickedness (κακία) prevents from performing one's own ἔργον in the best way (353b6-d2). Since each thing has its own ἔργον and, as a consequence, its own ἀρετή, it follows that also soul has and its ἀρετή allows it to perform its tasks in the best way:

Socrates: "The soul, has it a work which you couldn't accomplish with anything else in the world, as for example, management (τὸ ἐπιμελεῖσθαι), rule (καὶ ἄρχειν), deliberation (καὶ βουλευέσθαι) and the like (καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα πάντα), is there anything else than soul to which you could rightly assign these and say that they were its peculiar work?". Trasymachus: "Nothing else" (353d3-8).

In these lines the verb ἐπιμελεῖσθαι occurs, whose meaning is not specified. That it is the task of soul, not only the human soul, but also the world soul, is said in *Phaedr.* 246b3-4 and in *Leg. X* 896e8-897a1. It cannot be stated, but only guessed that also the occurrence of ἐπιμελεῖσθαι in these lines of the *Republic* has the meaning of "making better" which the verb has, for instance, in the *Alcibiades I*; on the other hand, it must be kept in mind that the lines on the ἔργα of soul grow out of the attempt to show that a just life is to prefer to an unjust one; as a consequence, this ἐπιμελεῖσθαι is also politically loaded. Given that, it is not unreasonable that the ἐπιμελεῖσθαι of these lines may have the meaning of "making better" considering that making better his own fellow-citizens is the ἔργον of a true politician, as it is inferable from *Gorg.* 515a1ff. However, Socrates is speaking not only of the soul of the ruler, but of soul in general; every soul, not only those of the rulers, has as essential ἔργα the ἐπιμελεῖσθαι and the ἄρχειν; what is more soul cares and rules not only the other souls, but also and in first place itself (*Ap.* 36c1-d1; *Gorg.* 491d4-992c8; *Alc.* 128a1 ff); furthermore, soul has to rule and tend to the body it ensouls (*Phaed.* 94c10-e6; *Alc.* 129e3-130c9; *Leg. X* 896c1-3). Ἐπιμελεῖσθαι and ἄρχειν are tasks which everyone has to tend to, even when one is not ruler of one's own

pursuing the best condition of that with which they deal; so, it is essential to them to pursue this aim, that which is their ἔργον; otherwise, they would cease to be true arts: cf. *supra*, p. 26.

⁶⁶ Cf. N. Blössner, 2011, pp. 47-49.

city⁶⁷; as a consequence, the true difference between rulers and commoners should be not what they do (both must perform the same ἔργα), but the bearing of the performing them; so, a commoner may practice the ἐπιμελεῖσθαι toward himself and his friend or his family, whereas a ruler has to practice it toward all his fellow-citizens and his wrong choices are much more dangerous than those taken by a commoner. Let's dwell on the case of the ruler; in fact it shows that ruler's good and happiness is inextricably bound to those of the ruled ones. Soul may carry out his tasks well or badly it depends on the ἀρετή; if soul lacks it, it is doomed to fail and to perform its natural task in the wrong way (353e1-6). Now the ἀρετή, the condition which enables soul to carry out its natural tasks in the best way, is the justice, soul's inner balance and harmony, whereas injustice is the wicked condition of soul, its inner disorder, that which prevents it from performing its tasks in the proper way (353e7-8). If one is unjust, shaken by inner disorder, one commits injustice towards others; that is to say, one, with one's actions, brings about the same disorder and conflicts existing inside oneself. On the contrary, those whose soul is harmonious and just propagate this harmony also among people around themselves, that which a true ruler should be able to do. What is more, a soul unable to carry out its natural task in the proper way is doomed to unhappiness:

Socrates: "The just soul and the just man then will live well and the unjust ill?" "So it appears," he [Trasymachus] said, "by your reasoning." Socrates: "But furthermore, he who lives well is blessed and happy, and he who does not the contrary (ἀλλὰ μὴν ὃ γε εὖ ζῶν μακάριός τε καὶ εὐδαίμων, ὁ δὲ μὴ τάναντία)." Trasymachus: "Of course." Socrates: "Then the just is happy and the unjust miserable (ὁ δ' ἄδικος ἄθλιος)." "So be it," he said. Socrates: "But it surely does not pay to be miserable, but to be happy." Trasymachus: "Of course not." Socrates: "Never, then, most worshipful Trasymachus, can injustice be more profitable than justice (οὐδέποτ' ἄρα, ὧ μακάριε Θρασύμαχε, λυσιτελέστερον ἀδικία δικαιοσύνης)" Trasymachus: "Let this complete your entertainment, Socrates, at the festival of Bendis" (353e10-354a11)⁶⁸.

Justice in soul is what enables soul to perform its tasks in the best way. Performing tasks in the best way leads soul to happiness; but soul's happiness involves the

⁶⁷ Cf. L. Napolitano, forthcoming, pp. 69-71. Cf. *supra*, n. 2.

⁶⁸ Cf. S. Campese, S. Gastaldi, 2005, pp. 117-133.

others' wellness. Accordingly, it is true ruler the one who does not behave with *πλεονεξία* and tends to what is the best for the fellow-citizens⁶⁹. This should be the task of a ruler. But when the ruler manages to reach what is the best for his fellow-citizens, he has benefitted not only his fellow-citizens, but also himself because, performing his *ἔργον* in the best way, he is happy⁷⁰. By caring for his fellow-citizens in the proper way, which is his *ἔργον*, the ruler actively contributes to his own happiness. Accordingly, a disordered and pleonectic soul cannot rule and care properly because it cannot help but act unjustly toward the others; as a consequence, it is doomed to unhappiness because it cannot perform its task in the proper way. This reasoning can be applied also to skills, in particular medicine; in fact, if the *ἔργον* of the doctors, as ruler of bodies, is to pursue patients' health, a true doctor cannot be happy if his patients do not heal, even if his salary is high⁷¹. The case of the ruler and the doctor shows that the natural *ἔργα* involves also others' good and one cannot be truly happy if one cannot benefit others or actively harms them. However, this does not mean that patients and fellow citizens are passive targets of expert's beneficial action; they must help on their turn; so, the patient helps the doctor not only by obeying to his provisions, but also by becoming more careful about his health; and the citizens help the ruler not only by passively obeying to laws, but also by becoming themselves juster. In the last lines of the first book Socrates overcomes the idea that good is unilateral: it is neither only the ruler who are benefitted by community life, nor only the ruled ones; on the contrary good is always common and happiness cannot be reached at others' expenses. By means of the notion of *ἔργα*, Socrates has shown that by its own nature there are some tasks which soul must perform in order to be happy and this task involves others' good. So, the *ἐπιμελεῖσθαι*, as a *ἔργον* of soul, benefit not only those who are cared, but also those who care. Above it has been said that caring and ruling are natural tasks of soul; however, the word natural is to explain. Every soul is by its own nature capable of ruling and caring; yet, this does not mean that every soul is able to do that; to perform its task in the proper way soul should be just, that is to say

⁶⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 29-31.

⁷⁰ Cf. A. Edwards, 2015, pp. 92-95.

⁷¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 27.

harmonious and balanced. If this inner justice is lacking, soul will never be able to carry out those ἔργα which it should be able to perform; as a consequence, these ἔργα are natural, but not in the same way as it is natural to fishes to swim; they are natural in the same way as it is natural to *humans* to swim. Humans are naturally shaped so as to swim; their body allows them to do that; however, if they never dive into the water and nobody helps them to develop a good technique, they will never learn to swim or to swim in the best way. In the same way, caring for oneself and for others is something which it is incumbent upon every soul to do since every soul has some sort of disposition to do that; however, if this disposition is not reinforced, if disorder sets in within soul, soul may also come so far as to become unable to carry out those tasks which it by its own nature should perform. If performing those tasks in the best way makes soul happy and soul may also fail to perform them properly, it follows that happiness itself may be never reached and for some it is out of reach. However, this means only that one must not think that one has nothing to learn; that one must be always willing to be refuted when it is the case and go beyond the illusory certitudes one has about oneself⁷²; otherwise, if one insists in denying one's inner conflicts and limits and conceal them under an illusory self-confidence, one ends up falling prey of the ἀμαθία, the ignorance which prevents from learning⁷³; and in the worst cases ἀμαθία could prevent soul from learning to carry out its ἔργα in the best way; that which leads soul to unhappiness.

Given that, the two assumption underlying this work on the Socratic *epimèleia heautoù* in Plato have been explained: the former is that *aporia* is not a merely logical *impasse*, but emotionally loaded, “deathlike” moment beyond which the interlocutor can go only if he accepts to undergo a “second birth” and rise again as a new person. The latter assumption is that the ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, as an ἔργον of soul, never pursue an unilateral good, but always a common one; accordingly those who care others benefit also themselves and those who care themselves, for instance by making themselves wiser and juster, benefit also the others because a just and wise

⁷² Cf. *supra*, pp. 19-20.

⁷³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 16-17.

person, a φρόνιμος, cannot think that he will be happy by harming others⁷⁴. The ἐπιμελεῖσθαι has a relational nature and pursues a good which is common and not unilateral; the reason of this relational nature lies in the relational nature of soul, which, to be happy, needs also others' good⁷⁵. Now it is time to explain the reasons which have led to the selection of the dialogues analysed in this work.

The selected dialogues.

Plato's dialogues analysed in this work are eight: *Eutydemus*, *Charmides*, *Alcibiades*, *Lysis*, *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*. These dialogues outline a narrative path based on the accusations to Socrates in the *Apology*, that of corrupting young men and that of not worshipping the civic gods and, as a consequence, the selected dialogues show Socrates' relationship with young Athenians (in particular *Eutydemus*, *Charmides*, *Alcibiades*, *Lysis*) and Socrates' religiosity (*Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*). One of the criteria underlying the selection of these dialogues is the aim to show that also those dialogues usually not taken into account as sources of the understanding of Socratic care are essential to the comprehension of it in Plato; one of the assumptions of this work, as said above, is that *aporia* is not failure, but the moment in which self-transformation becomes possible; accordingly the majority of the chosen dialogues are *aporetic* in order to argue that *aporia* is necessary to self-care. The *Eutydemus*, the first of the dialogues, and the *Phaedo*, the last one to be analysed, are bound to each other because of the importance ascribed to death intended not as an irrevocable annihilation, but as transformative moment. So, as it will be argued in the chapter on the *Phaedo* the μελέτη θανάτου is not a mere focusing on one's mortality, but the active practice of self-transformation: transforming oneself means dying as the person one was before and reviving as a new one. The *Eutydemus* shows a tangible example of this actively practiced "death"; in fact, Dionysodorus says that becoming better means dying and being destroyed; that which Socrates himself does not deny. Transforming oneself

⁷⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 31-32.

⁷⁵ This will be seen in particular in the chapters devoted to the *Charmides* and the *Alcibiades*.

in order to become better is a process unfolding through a sort of death; a death which must be pursued and not feared. The *Alcibiades* and the *Charmides* play an essential role in the reading of the Socratic care suggested in this work; in fact, both dialogues stresses the intimate connection between refutation, *aporia* and self-knowledge⁷⁶. What is more, in the *Charmides* and *Alcibiades*, but also in the *Lysis*, great importance is attributed to the notion of τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν, “doing one’s own on things”; these three dialogues show the truth of the second assumption of this work, that doings one’s own things involves benefitting others⁷⁷. The *Euthyphro* and the *Apology* have been selected because in both the link between religiosity and care, which is the backbone of this work, is appreciable; in particular, both dialogues let infer that Socrates is a daimonic man, tasked with caring the Athenians; this caring involves refuting them and exhorting to become better; in this way Socrates attends to his daimonic task, that is to say to help Gods make world as good as possible. The importance of the *Crito* lies in the fact that it is a telling example of the ductility of Socratic dialectic; contrary to what happens in the *Euthydemus*, the *Charmides* and the *Alcibiades* Socrates does not try to lead Crito to a deathlike *aporia* from which he has to rise as a new person; on the contrary, Socrates uses with Crito a softer strategy. Crito is neither a young man who must carry out the transition from childhood to manhood, nor a prominent intellectual, like Trasymachus or Calicles; he is an average man, even if quite rich. Accordingly, the *Crito* shows how Socrates can adjust to his interlocutor and tailor to the interlocutor the reasoning he develops. The *Phaedo* is the dialogue in which the deep meaning of death is revealed; it is a transition, an unavoidable step of self-transformation and self-improvement. This is also the reason for which the true philosopher does not fear it; in fact, the true philosopher throughout his life does nothing but practice this transformative and regenerative death and lead others to face it. The *Euthydemus*, with its case of regenerative death, and the *Phaedo*, with its μελέτη θανάτου, constitute a sort of overarching frame of a work in which the idea of death as transformative and improving experience is the alpha and the

⁷⁶ Cf. *supra*, note 71.

⁷⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 33-35.

omega: the regenerative death of Cleinias opens the following analysis and the initiatory death of Socrates brings them to an end.

At the end of the chapters devoted to the single dialogues, it will be explained which may be the usefulness of a work on the Socratic care in Plato which stresses so strongly its ritualistic ground: it resides in the possibility to lay a bridge between Greece, the cradle of western culture and other cultures (cf. *Conclusion*).

Chapter I: the *Euthydemus*.

The Euthydemus and Socrates' care: an example of ritual death.

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of the *Euthydemus*, a dialogue usually not considered a source for the understanding of Socratic care in Plato. The analysis in this chapter, arriving to 285c4, are aimed at showing how important the *Euthydemus* is for the comprehension of care in Plato. In 285a2-c4, the reader finds Socrates' praise of the "regenerative death", thanks to which self-improvement becomes possible. Self-care is not possible unless one accepts this regenerative death and decide to undergo its purificatory, even if destructive power

1

The Euthydemus and eristics.

Diogenes Laertius in his *Vitae Philosophorum* says that ἐριστικός was the alternative title of *Euthydemus*, the title which provides the main issue of the work; this lets figure out that the insidious speeches of the two erists and their technique of latching on to words were felt as the most relevant features of this peculiar dialogue². Besides the title of ἐριστικός, Diogenes ascribes to the *Euthydemus* that of ἀνατρεπτικός, that is to say: "capable of overturning or pertaining to overturning". While ἐριστικός is an adjective concerns the content of the work, ἀνατρεπτικός hints at the method employed, as one can infer from Socrates' words

¹ Cf. *Introduction, passim*. This ritual death is that which makes the Socratic care a practice of going beyond oneself: cf. S. Lavecchia, 2013, pp. 158-162.

² The custom to consider the battle against the eristic way of reasoning as the core of the entire dialogue ought to be long-standing already in Diogenes' times, since Alcinous in his *Didaskalikòn* argues that, to refute adversaries such as Euthydemus and Ippias, Plato makes use of eristic syllogisms (*Alc.* 6). It goes without saying that the ἐριστικός συλλογισμός is one of the categories into which Aristoteles subdivides syllogisms; more precisely, the eristic syllogism, according to Aristoteles' definition, is one made up of premises which seems to be commonly accepted, although they are not (ἐριστικός δ' ἐστὶ συλλογισμὸς ὁ ἐκ φαινομένων μὴ ὄντων δέ, *Top.* 100b3-4). Alcinous' words are relevant because they testify to the use of peripatetic categories in the exegesis of Plato's dialogues. What is more, Alcinous' witness seems to suggest that ancient commentators ascribed to Plato's Socrates an eristic way of reasoning in some dialogues, such as *Euthydemus* in this case. Owing to the scarce rest of Alcinous' work, one cannot but hypothesise which passages of Socrates' speeches in *Euthydemus* he regarded as particularly eristic.

in 278b6-c2, where the related verb is used twice, firstly in present participle and then in the past one. The passage follows the first eristic display, in which the two brothers pose to Kleinias questions about learning and knowledge³. Socrates addresses Cleinias, expressing his evaluation of the brothers' performance; consequently the philosopher advises the young man not to attach too much importance to what the brothers carried out before their audience, as all this would be but a prank:

I tell you these men are making game of you; I call it sport because, although one were to learn many or even all of such tricks, one would be not a whit the wiser as to the true state of the matters in hand, but only able to make game of people, thanks to the difference in the sense of the words, by tripping them up and overturning (ἀνατρέπων) them; just as those who slyly pull stools away from persons who are about to sit down make merry and laugh when they see one sprawling on one's back (ἀνατετράμμενον) (278b6-c2, tr. W.R. M. Lamb).

The two brothers exploit the ambiguity in the words they use in order to replace a meaning with another one, so as to entrap their interlocutor making him unable to escape from the net thrown over him⁴. Anyway, the verb ἀνατρέπειν and its derivative ἀνατρεπτικός also hint at the act of bringing the adversary to the ground, which pertains to the sphere of the wrestling. Taking into consideration how often Socrates emphasises the two brothers' skills as soldiers and wrestlers, one can conclude that it is the dimension of the war and the struggle in general which unifies the several aspects of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus' lives and the speeches they put forth throughout the dialogue; unrelated as these speeches may seem, all of them are instantiations of the brothers' will to defeat their opponents, or, more precisely, *their interlocutors, who, according to this way of experiencing the dialogue as struggle, are regarded as opponents to "bring to the ground"*⁵.

³ These lines, as they are essential to argue the relevance of the *Euthydemus* for the issue of the philosophic care, will be thoroughly discussed below.

⁴ For the metaphor of the hunting in Plato's dialogues cf. Cf. K. Thein, 2007, pp. 82-96.

⁵ In the *Sophist* the interconnection between sophistry and struggle is stressed in the fifth division (225a-226a). Eristics is that part of the *antilogikòn* concerned with "what is just and unjust in itself and other thing examined in their wholeness" (περὶ δικαίων αὐτῶν καὶ ἀδίκων καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὅλως ἀμφισβητοῦν, ἄρ' οὐκ ἐριστικὸν αὖ λέγειν εἰθίσιμεθα). As pointed out by M. Narcy, 2013, pp. 66ff., dealing with what is just and unjust in their wholeness, that in to say beyond the multiplicity of the cases in which they instantiate themselves, this attention to what is the just in all the actions

Although it is undeniable that the description of the eristic as a deceptive technique aimed at overcoming one's opponents is a momentous aspect of the dialogue, the excessive attention paid to this feature risks concealing, as it has done so far, what is the principle underlying the entire unfolding of this work, even the attack, on the Plato's part, against the eristic method⁶; that is to say the question on how young man must be educated; which is the *epimèleia* they must undergo to become wise and virtuous people.

*Euthydemus and Dionysodorus*⁷; *the war and the indifference to truth.*

Before facing the link between protreptic and *epimèleia*, it is useful to focus on the portrait of Euthydemus and Dionysodoros emerging from the first lines of the dialogue, so as to cast a different light on their connection to the war and fight in general. As it has been said above, in the ancient reception of the dialogue conflict

considered just, is an essential feature of philosopher's way of reasoning, as it clearly emerges in *Theaet.* 175b8-c8: there Socrates argues that he who engages in forensic speeches does not live up to a discussion where justice in itself and other general concepts such as royalty or happiness are under investigation, whereas the philosopher is the only one able to dive in such demanding tasks. Given that the capability of elevating oneself towards the consideration of general ideas is typical of the philosopher in *Theaetetus*, while the same capability belongs to the sophist intended as erist in *Sophist*, it is reasonable to see an affinity between philosophy and sophistry, even in its eristic variant; an affinity which Plato himself seems to acknowledge in *Soph.* 226a-231b, notwithstanding all the differences between them which he highlights throughout his works: cf. Chr. Rowe, 2015, pp.149-167. Taking into account this affinity and that eristic belongs to the wider category of the art of the fight, it is not pointless to wonder if the war-like attitude belongs to the features shared by both philosophy and eristic. As we will try to argue, an aggressive part is present also in the Plato's Socrates. Anyway, the aggression and war-like attitude in discussing have in *Euthydemus* a role different from that which eristic attribute to them. Cf. L. Palpacelli, 2004. pp. 317-352.

⁶ It is Socrates himself who tells his friend Crito that he set out to master the knowledge transmitted by Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, namely the Eristic method. It may not be out of purpose to glimpse in the Socrates' willingness to acquire the eristic method the awareness, on the Plato's part, of the necessity for the philosophy itself to master the tools of the eristic, but to make them to serve different purposes: cf. A. Brancacci, 2019, p. 46. Bringing on war is not the aim philosophers try to pursue; however they must face it if their interlocutors want to "bring him to the ground" at all costs. Since the philosopher, as Brancacci claims, sometimes ends up dealing with such argumentative people, he is to some extent obliged to know how to defend himself from their assaults. To do it, he will make use of their own weapons: cf. A. Brancacci, 2017, pp. 35-47.

⁷ Cf. G. Bowe, 2008, pp. 121-128.

and victory at all costs are features vastly acknowledged so as to sensibly influence the way in which it has been classified, as Diogenes Laertius attests. The war is obviously present in the dialogue; however, what is essential to our purposes is not to face the war as the major feature of the dialogue; actually, what really matters is to show why in Socrates' perspective an education founded in the ideal of overcoming opponents as the only and noblest aim fails to fulfil the task to make better those who devotes themselves to it.

The dialogue begins with an exchange between Crito and Socrates, who talks to his friend about the speeches the two brothers held the day before. Crito, having never heard of these two sophists, asks Socrates where they come from and which kind of wisdom (*sophia*) they profess (272c1-2). The response Socrates gives to Crito sums up the two brothers' personality and lets the reader foreshadow what their speeches will be like until the end of the dialogue. Socrates tells Crito that:

By birth I believe they belong to these parts, that is to say, Chios; they went out as colonists to Thurii, but have been exiled thence and have spent a good many years now in various parts of this country. As to what you ask of their profession, it is a wonderful one, Crito. These two men are absolutely omniscient: I never knew before what "all-round sportsmen" were. They are a pair of regular all-round fighters-not in the style of the famous all-round athletes, the two brothers of Acamania; they could fight with their bodies only. But these two, in the first place, are most formidable in body and in fight against all comers-for they are not only well skilled themselves in fighting under arms, but are able to impart that skill, for a fee, to another (271c3-272a2).

First of all, it is worth noting how in detail Socrates lists all the places where the two brothers have lived or practised. Actually Crito asked him to say where Euthydemus and Dionysodorus come from; however Socrates holds to be necessary to list all the places having somehow to do with them. Probably Plato's intention in these lines is to stress to which degree these two sophists, as sophists, are indifferent to the places where they live: for some years, Socrates says, they have lived and practised in Athens and in the surroundings of the city, but before Athens they lived elsewhere and it is probable that they will move from Athens to go to live and teach in other cities. Certainly, they were born in Chios, this city is their homeland; nevertheless, this circumstance does not have any meaning to them. They have no bonds with any city or man or woman. Moving from a place to another one to earn

as much as possible from the art they practice, they belong nowhere; they are ἄτοποι⁸.

What concerns their profession, their skills, as it has been said above, to the sphere of fighting in general, for they know any kind of fight; consequently, they know how to get the better of their opponents irrespective of the martial art these opponents practice; indeed the two brothers master the art of “fighting under arms” (*hoplomachia*), an art which makes them unbeatable⁹. Obviously, the bodily fight is not the only kind of fight in which they are indisputable experts; besides it they possess the art of declaiming speeches suitable for courts as well as that of composing them for others; moreover, they can impart their knowledge to their pupils upon payment (272a2-4). Then Socrates adds:

Formerly they had merely some ability for this; but now they have put the finishing touch to their skill as all-round sportsmen. The one feat of fighting yet unperformed by them they have now accomplished, so that nobody dares stand up to them for a moment; such a faculty they have acquired for wielding words as their weapons and confuting any argument as readily if it be true as if it be false (272a4-b1).

“The final touch” mentioned here is the eristic itself, which is hinted at as “a faculty for wielding words as weapons” which renders the Greek words ἐν τοῖς λόγοις μάχεσθαι. The Greek words precisely trace the phrase ἐν ὄπλοις μάχεσθαι, where ἐν plus dativ indicates the tool through which a certain action is carried out; as a consequence if the one phrase echoes the other, the instrumental function of the syntagma ἐν ὄπλοις will apply also to ἐν τοῖς λόγοις, so that words themselves end up becoming anything but an instrument for fighting. It is essential to bear in mind that, as it has been said, the dimension of conflict and war is what sums up Euthydemus and Dionysodorus lives; they were devoted to the ἐν ὄπλοις μάχεσθαι,

⁸ Since sophists are only interested in increasing their profits completely irrespective of which kind of people will benefit from their teaching, Plato often compares them to merchants, who are equally indifferent to which kind of people and in which country they sell their wares, provided that they will benefit from their sale. Regarding the lines of Plato’s dialogues where the comparison between merchants and sophists is explicitly established cf. H. Tell, 2009, pp. 14-18.

⁹ In *Laches* Nicias claims that the one who practises the *hoplomachia*, once he knows the art well, will desire to master all the other sciences pertaining to the war, as the science of the lineup and then the art of the general (182b4-c2). Therefore, the *hoplomachia*, according to Nicias’ words, constitutes an access to all the martial disciplines, so that mastering the fighting in arms means to some extent possessing all the others.

afterwards they dived in ἐν τοῖς λόγοις μάχεσθαι: before the weapons, then the speeches. Instruments change, while that μάχεσθαι is what persists.

It can be concluded that for the two brothers undertaking the eristic has meant nothing but adding a new weapon to their arsenal; whence an understanding of the language as something merely instrumental can be inferred. The understanding of anything as a mere instrument implies that the user is not bound to it in anyway; thus, if they find a more efficient instrument to carry out the same action, they will throw away the previous one as useless. If this is true for the speeches, this means that speakers use their speeches to reach their aim (the victory in a debate) and, if a speech is too weak to obtain the victory, they abandon it to take on a stronger one. This entails also that, according to such an understanding of language, speeches have few or nothing to do with the speaker's personality: the contents of these speeches do not manifest the inner world of them who pronounce them, they do not mirror their soul, in the same way as using a washing machine or a chair to seat down do not reveal anything relevant to understand the personality of the users. Accordingly, in the most extreme cases, speakers, in order to gain victory in the debate, can uphold an opinion which they do not agree upon; however, given what has been said thus far, it is not important for speakers to be consistent with what they said, provided that their words bring them what they long for (in the case of the sophist reputation and money).

Apart from this fighting with words as weapons, the brothers have acquired the skill to confute any argument, true or false it may be; this is a new kind of indifference which is added to the previous ones: the indifference to the truth of their interlocutors' speeches. To sum up, it can be argued that Euthydemus and Dionysodorus' lives and profession are characterised by three kinds of indifferences deeply entangled with each other: indifference to the city where to live, as long as it is possible to financially benefit from staying there; indifference to one's consistency with one's words; indifference to the validity of the interlocutors' speeches¹⁰.

¹⁰ This indifferent conduct has been correctly pointed out by A. Brancacci, according to whom it is grounded on a more general ontological view. Accordingly, the indifferent conduct rests upon the idea that there is no link between being, human mind and language; thus reality ends up being broken into dimensions completely unrelated to each other. Conversely other scholars tend to regard Euthydemus and Dionysodorus as upholders of the Eleatic thesis of the impossibility of a reality including changes, that is to say passages from a condition into another one; as a consequence, the

The last feature of the eristic which Socrates hints at is that this kind of knowledge is quite easy to assimilate. Socrates reveals that he would like to ask the Sophists to teach him their wisdom, that is to say the eristic. Crito underlines that Socrates could be too old to commit himself to such a wisdom; however, Socrates reveals that his age will not prevent him from pursuing his aim:

Not at all, Crito: I have enough proof and reassurance to the contrary. These same two persons were little less than old men at the time of their taking up this science, which I desire to have, of disputation. Last year, or the year before, they were as yet without their science (272b5-c1)

Euthydemus and Dionysodorus are expert in a science which they themselves have practiced no longer than for two years. This last feature provides the reader with a portrait which underlies any word ascribed to the brothers: absolute

process of learning, which belongs to the realm of these transitions, becomes unexplainable. In another recent work on the fragment attributed to Euthydemus in *Crat.* 386e, Brancacci interprets the thesis of the fragment as rooted in the Protagoras' gnoseological stance. The words in 386 ought to be rendered like this: for all humans (πᾶσι) all the beings (πάντα) are in the same way (ὁμοίως) together (ἅμα) and always (ἀεὶ). According to this rendering, which is founded on a gnoseological understanding of the sentence, things are always true for the subject experiencing them in any one of his cognitive states and throughout his entire life (A. Brancacci, 2018, pp. 19-20). Even if grounded in the Protagorean relativism, the thesis attributed to Euthydemus reaches some extreme results. First of all, although Plato claims that for Protagoras every being is as it appears to everyone, it seems reasonable to think that Protagoras acknowledged that it is possible to compare two opinions and decide which is the most useful to follow: Cf. *Theaet.* 167A-b3. According to Brancacci's reading, Euthydemus, as Protagoras, does not think that something is true while something is not; however, contrary to Protagoras, he does not think that an opinion is better and another is worse. This involves that in Euthydemus' world thoughts and actions are incomparable because everyone is always right; *indifferently* right. This does not involve that, according to this view, men are equal; indeed, what makes some men more convincing than the others is neither their sticking to the truth, nor their usefulness in ethical domain, but their ability to impose the speech they put forth. Anyway Brancacci in his analysis regards as most relevant influences for the Euthydemus conception of language and truth the Sophists as Protagoras or Gorgias, while seeming to deny the existence of an Eleatic matrix of the Sophists' views. Th. Chance, 1992, pp. 41ff. adopts a more prudent view. In his opinion, in the speeches of the Erists there are some arguments betraying an Eleatic influence (as for instance, that of the impossibility of lying); however this does not mean that they are committed to the Eleatic views; they just use an Eleatic logic to win in the debate, in the same way as anyone can use a chair to sit down, even if they are not carpenters. Some scholars state that behind Euthydemus and Dionysodorus hide the Megarians; accordingly, the *Euthydemus* would mirror the debates on the dialectic among Socrates' disciples: cf. M. Gardella, 2014, pp. 47-67; F. Marion, 2015, pp. 2-4.

indifference to anything which does not lead to victory and the practice of a wisdom quick to learn. That of quickness or, more precisely, that of spending as little time as possible learning something new, teaching it or bringing the adversary to the ground, is an essential characteristic of the brothers, so that the time itself, intended as the unfolding of events subsequent and logically linked with each other, seems to disappear from their speeches. Their performances must be so quick that logical consistency itself must be banned, if it can make their speeches, that is to say, their weapons, slower and thus weaker¹¹. From the few lines Plato devotes to the depiction of the two brothers an interesting connection has emerged: that between the indifference to the truth and victory in war, or in any other kind of conflict, as an aim in itself. The two brothers have been said to be able to refute their interlocutors' speeches, true or false they may be; besides, it is stressed that their skills as generals and in everything pertain to war. Indifference to truth and will to overcome the opponents at all costs; the connection between these two conditions is a present issue in Plato's works, although it materialises in different ways according to the context and the particular issue the philosopher is dealing with. In *Republic* the tyrannical man is depicted as the most distant from the truth; besides this distance, he is the most ambitious and violent, as he does not acknowledge any principle to his conduct but the satisfaction of his desire of domination¹². However, while the tyrant is the most distant from truth, the two brothers are simply indifferent to it. In the case of the two sophists, indifference to truth seems to be the final outcome of their ideas on the human experience and language as well and it is deep-rooted in the speculations of eminent sophists, such as Protagoras and

¹¹ Cf. A. Brancacci (2018, p. 21). It is essential to bear in mind that Socrates presents the brothers as expert in declaiming speeches in the courts of law, a feature which clarifies the relationship between speech and time in the perspective of the two sophists. In *Theaetetus* (172d9-e4) it is said that they who are used to speaking in the courts of law always have to subordinate their speeches to the flow of the water in the hourglass, which represents the time their speeches cannot exceed; they have to convince a crowd as quickly as possible. Conversely the truly philosophical discussion unfolds in an undisturbed quiet, because it is subordinate to nothing but the interlocutors willingness to carry it on. What is more, mastering the eristic wisdom has taken only one or two years as Socrates said in *Euthyd.* 272c1, while, as one can see in *Republic* VII, those who will become philosophers, that is to say dialecticians, commit themselves to this wisdom throughout their entire life.

¹² The hint at the tyrannical man does not mean that it is possible to consider Euthydemus and Dionysodorus as tyrannical themselves, but only that both the two brothers and the tyrannical man of the *Republic* share a distance from truth which is accompanied by the tendency to ongoing conflicts.

Gorgias. The tyrannical man is but the outcome of the lack of the right education, victim of the inexorable deterioration of the political life of his community as well as the resulting loss of control and balance in his soul¹³. In a certain way, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus are indifferent to truth out of a choice rising from their reasoning, whereas the tyrannical man inherits the indifference to truth existing in his environment, transforming this indifference into a definitive, unredeemable distance¹⁴. However, despite the differences between the sophists' attitude and that of the tyrannical man, it is undeniable that Plato seems to suggest that the lack of interest in truth, both in philosophy and in politics, is always accompanied by a warlike and, in the worst cases, violent attitude, as if lack of truth in one's life were intimately connected to a scarce consideration for the other people.

*Protreptic and care (273b-275c)*¹⁵

Before facing the scene of the initiation, which constitutes the core of this work, it is useful to recall that is *care* that underlies the necessity of the initiation and of the transformation of the individual, in this case Clinias, into a better person; indeed, as we will see below, there would be no need for transformation through initiation, if this transformation were not aimed at making the people transformed better than they were before. The passage in the *Euthydemus* in which the *epimèleia* appears deserves the attention of the reader because of the unexpected shift from the dimension of war and struggle into that of the *care*. To stress the relevance of this shift it is useful to reconstruct the context in which the lines under examination are embedded.

¹³ Cfr. G. Giorgini, 2005, p. 425; F. L. Lisi, 2005, pp. 645-650.

¹⁴ One has to take into account that the tyrannical man is the son of a democrat. In *Republic VII* it is said that in the democratic regime one always does what one pleases. The possibility to do what one pleases is somehow in ethical sphere the same as the indifference to truth is in gnoseological domain; indeed, their destructive effects in the respective spheres are evident. If indifference to truth in speeches involves that only the ability to bring to the ground one's opponent is the only thing that matters; in political domain the limitless freedom turns into whim, provoking troubles and in the extreme cases, civil war: cf. I. Jordovic, 2019, pp. 65-73. Eventually the democrats choose the tyrannical man as their champion. Thus, they do not do anything but replacing the instability rising from the whims of the many with the slavery to the whim of one man.

¹⁵ For the reading of the dialogue as a protreptic work cf. C. Gill, 2000, pp. 133-143; V. Höhle, 2004, pp. 247-275; A. R. Benjamin, 2012, pp. 208-228. L. Palpacelli, 2017, pp. 865-908.

In 272d6-e4 Socrates starts narrating to his friend Crito the discussions held the day before. Socrates says that he was sitting in the *apodytèrion* of the Lyceum¹⁶; he intended to go away and stood up to exit the room when, all of a sudden, his daemonic sign prevented him from leaving; after a while Euthydemus and Dionysodorus turned up¹⁷. Afterwards Cleinias entered the room with numerous lovers of him, among whom Ctesippus appears. As soon as Cleinias sees Socrates, the young man goes sitting by him; the two brothers notice it and decide Euthydemus to sit by Cleinias and Dionysodorus at Socrates' left (273b)¹⁸. Socrates introduces Euthydemus and Dionysodorus to Cleinias, depicting them as expert in anything pertaining to war:

My dear Cleinias, these two men, you know, are skilled not in little things, but in great¹⁹. For they understand all about war, that is, as much as is needful for him who is to be a good general²⁰; both the tactics and the strategy of armies, and all the teaching

¹⁶ This word, which in English could be translated as “changing room” will turn out to be essential in the description of the initiatory scene of the *Euthydemus* for the reasons explained below.

¹⁷ It can be inferred from the unfolding of the dialogue that the daemonic sign prevented Socrates from leaving because he had to face the two brothers and above all meet Cleinias, in order to exhort him to pursue wisdom. It seems that in this case Socrates has to avert that the two brothers get the better of Cleinias, making him one of their pupils. To some extent this intervention of the daemonic sign recalls that in *Phaedrus* at the end of the first Socrates speech

¹⁸ Euthydemus and Dionysodorus sit down in such a way as to surround Socrates and Cleinias, so as to leave no way out to them, as if they were preys. In the very way of sitting down they behave in the same way as in the discussion. In 276e4 Dionysodorus tells Socrates that their questions are *aphykta*, they left no way out, that to say in this case: their questions are devised so as to make the interlocutor unable to overcome the brothers. Thus, the interlocutor is somehow captured in a net from which it is impossible to escape. In the very depiction of their physical attitude Plato can let the reader understand what the discussion with the two brothers will be like, because their conduct in the debate is summed up in their behaviour. Even if they are not telling anything, just in their sitting down, they are revealing themselves.

¹⁹ According to L. Palpacelli, 2009, p. 152, here Socrates is not ironical; he really thinks that the wisdom of the two brothers is great. This is true to some extent: in fact, the two brothers, it will be seen below, are able to refute, that which it is necessary for transforming soul (cf. *Introduction, passim*); however, the two brothers use this ability only in order to get the better of their adversaries, whereas Socrates uses the elenctic procedure in order to make Cleinias ready to be exhorted. As a consequence, it can be said that Socrates is serious and ironical at the same time; he is serious because the ability to practice the elenctic procedure is something great. However, he is ironical because he thinks that the two brothers use it for wrong aims.

²⁰ The Greek word for “general” is *stratègòs*, that is to say “army leader”. During the second half of the 5th century B.C. the *stratègoi* became always more influential in political life of Athens, as the case

of troops under arms; and they can also enable one to get redress in the law courts for a wrong that one may have suffered (273c2-7).

As is has been said above, one should not consider the skills as warriors and general and those as speakers in the courts of law as different ones; both sets of skills pertain to the art of bring the opponents to the ground, because both warring and defending oneself in courts of law have to do with the ability to assault the enemies and defend oneself from their attacks. However, the two brothers laugh at Socrates' eulogizing words. In fact, they possess a new skill; moreover, they are so proud of their new ability as to consider their expertise in what concerns war (carried out through of arms or speeches) as something of secondary importance. Their new ability consists in "providing *virtue (aretèn)* in the best and *spediest way (tàkista)*" (273d8-9).

From what has been said in the previous pages, it can be argued that the virtue they hint at in these lines is the ability to hatch speeches impossible to refute, regardless of the truth or the inner soundness. It is essential to remember that at the beginning of the dialogue Socrates talks to Crito about the conversations which took place the day before. In his conversation with Crito, which constitutes an overarching frame of the dialogue, Socrates claims that Euthydemus and Dionysodorus have put the finishing touch to their skill as all-round sportsmen (272a4-5)²¹: he regards eristics, which he alludes at in these lines, as the final touch to their skills as *panchratiàstai*. *Panchràtion* in ancient Greece was a kind of fight in which the contendants were allowed to use the blodiest techniques in order to defeat the opponents. Accordingly, Socrates' first words about the brothers' new skill are his interpretation of it: eristics, according to Socrates' understanding, is but the completion of their expertise as fighters, an ability not different from war.

of Pericles indicates. Therefore it is possible that, when Socrates tells Clinias that the two brothers are able to teach what one needs to become a good general, he means that thanks to their teachings one can seize the power in the democratic regime or, at least, become one of its most powerful and influent citizens. To some extent, it could be said that Socrates in this passage in tempting Cleinias; he is telling him: "if you become pupil of the two brothers, you will be a *stratègòs* as Pericles was, with unlimited power in the city". This interpretation turns out to be more probable if one take into consideration that, as son of Axiochus, Alcibiades' uncle, Cleinias belongs to the Alcmeonides, the aristocratic clan whose most relevant member in the second half of the Vth century was Pericles himself: cf. A. Havlicek, 2007, pp. 97-115.

²¹ Regarding the function of the dialogue with Crito cf. S. Diop, 2004, pp. 123-135.

In 273d8-9 there are two further aspects to point out. The Greek word translated above as “provide” is παραδοῦναι, which could be translated also as “hand over” or “supply”. It is hardly probable that this verb is a fortuitous choice; according to Plato’s purpose, the sophists in these lines are attributing to themselves the ability to transfer virtue from a point (themselves) to another one (their pupils), as if virtue itself were a material possession; that of a transferable virtue is an idea against which Plato’s Socrates polemicises²². Besides, in 273d8-9 the brothers claim to be able to provide this virtue in the speediest way (τάχιστα). This pretension to “hand over” virtue in the speediest way is perfectly consistent with what Socrates had claimed in 272c1, that is to say that they assimilated their new ability in only one or at most in two years. Their apprenticeship to master a new skill has been pretty brief; it is right to expect that their teaching will not last too much time²³.

Socrates congratulates the two brothers on their new acquisition, apologising to them for saying that their expertise was limited to fight; in his defense he argues that it is not easy to believe in the truth of their pretension to possess such a science (273e-274a3)²⁴. The brothers affirm that they actually possess it; thus Socrates asks them if they intend to exhibit their wisdom; thus they reveal that they are there for this very purpose, so as to exhibit their ability and teach it to anyone willing to learn it (274a6-b1). That being said, Socrates guarantees his own readiness, and that of

²² In *Meno* 71a Socrates, ironically answering to Meno’s questions on virtue, claims that neither himself nor his citizens are able to answer nothing about virtue, since Gorgias, their supplier of wisdom, one could say, left Athens, bringing about a dryness of wisdom in that city (70c3). As Gorgias moved to Tessaly, it goes without saying that wisdom itself has migrated to Tessaly (ἐκ τῶνδε τῶν τόπων παρ’ ὑμᾶς οἴχεσθαι ἡ σοφία, 70a1). Cf. J. Cardoso de Castro, R. Siqueira-Batista, 2017, pp. 288-310.

²³ At the end of the dialogue Socrates advises Crito to become pupil of the two brothers (304b5-c4). The reasons put forward by Socrates are: age is not an hindrance if one wants to frequent their lessons; neither the lack of natural inclinations is a reason to reject anyone, if they are willing to pay for their lessons; furthermore, one is not compelled to abandon one’s business (in politics or in finance), if one wants to assimilate eristics (304c1-4). The fact that eristics can be learned without abandoning other activities is explained considering that it does not take too much time to be mastered and understood (obviously Socrates thinks that Crito has no will to dive in something which could bring him too far from his business). On the contrary, philosophy, as a more demanding activity, requires an unconditional dedication, otherwise, it would be impossible to become a true philosopher. Cf. L. Palpacelli, 2017, pp. 884-888.

²⁴ In 273d5 Socrates names ἐπιστήμη the skill the two brothers claim to possess. It is quite relevant that thus far the sophists have not claimed to master a science, even if they do not deny when Socrates attributes to them this kind of knowledge.

Cleinias' lovers as well, to learn this wisdom; consequently, both Cleinias' lovers and Euthydemus and Dionysodorus' pupils place themselves around Socrates and the two brothers, who are sitting by each other. Everyone is eager to listen to the forthcoming exhibition. However Socrates, although it was him who begged the brothers to exhibit their wisdom, prevents them from starting the discussion as they set out, posing a question to them:

On this I remarked: my good Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, you must do your very best to gratify my friends and, for my sake also, to give us an exhibition. To do it in full, of course, would obviously be a lengthy performance: but tell me one thing - will you be able to make a good man of him only who is already convinced that he should learn of you, or of him also who is not yet so convinced, owing to an absolute disbelief that virtue is a thing that can be learnt or that you are teachers of it? Come now, is it the business of this same art to persuade such a man that virtue is teachable and that you are the men of whom one may best learn it, or does this need some other art? (274d3-e4).

Particularly noteworthy in these lines is Socrates' attitude towards the brothers, especially if one recalls 272b2-3, where Socrates intends to hand himself over to the brothers, to become their pupil. Pupils are expected to listen patiently to their teachers so as to benefit from whatever they say; conversely Socrates in these lines acts like the master of the brothers themselves: before the exhibition starts, he dismisses it as too lengthy to be performed in detail; moreover, through his question at the end of the passage, steers the discussion towards his own aim; that is to say, the protreptic wisdom²⁵.

²⁵ T. Chance, 1992, pp. 25-26 argues: "By linking the persuasive or protreptic discourse to virtue-teaching in general, and by restricting the brothers' instruction to that part in particular, Socrates has forced them to display their knowledge of human psychology; for the ability to persuade requires a knowledge of soul. As will become abundantly clear, the *Euthydemus* is designed to portray two "philosophers" unconcerned about the restrictions demanded by the protreptic discourse, unconcerned about how to produce arguments, unconcerned about when, where, and how to use the arguments they have produced, and, most important, unconcerned about what, as protreptic masters, they should be most concerned about, namely, the soul of that individual whom they are attempting to exhort in their protreptic discourse". Steering the focus of the discussion to protreptic is aimed both at stressing the relevance of knowledge of human soul and showing how inadequate is the brothers' knowledge of soul. This reading explains why in 295b Euthydemus harshly scolds Socrates. In fact Euthydemus asks Socrates if he knows by means of that whereby he has knowledge or by means of something else (πότερον οὖν ᾧ ἐπιστήμων εἶ, τοῦτο καὶ ἐπίστασαι, ἢ ἄλλῳ τῷ;); to this question Socrates replies that he knows what he knows with soul (295b4), thus triggering

Dionysodorus states that persuading and teaching those who are already persuaded are tasks of the same art (an art he is convinced to master). Thanks to this Statement Socrates can bring to an end his maneuver, posing this question to Dionysodorus:

Then you two, Dionysodorus, I said, would be the best persons now on earth *to incite one to the pursuit of knowledge and the practice of virtue?* (προτρέψατε εἰς φιλοσοφίαν καὶ ἀρετῆς ἐπιμέλειαν;) (274e6-275a1).

By means of this question, to which Dionysodorus answers in the affirmative, Socrates has completed his maneuver, without the brothers even noticing it; in fact, if one compares what the Sophists claim to be able to do (hand over the virtue in the speediest way) to what Socrates asks them in this passage, it is impossible not to note how far Socrates has steered the discussion from the brothers' original purposes. Socrates asks them if they are able to exhort; however, this ability is at odds with the skill they are proud of: in fact exhorting involves the active commitment of those who are exhorted, since the only successful exhortation is the one which brings about in the exhorted individual the willpower to accomplish one's aims independently. What the Sophist should be able to exhort to is *philosophia*, translated by Burnet as "pursuit of wisdom"; this constitutes a further dismissal of the idea of "handing over". In fact, when one pursues anything, one does it because one does not possess yet what they long for; Socrates is suggesting that the Sophists should be able to exhort not to the accomplishment of a given aim; actually, they should exhort to undertake the search for wisdom. What the Sophist should be able to do is not handing over wares to their pupils (or to those who need to be persuaded), but bringing about in them the desire to search by themselves. By means of the words ἀρετῆς ἐπιμέλειαν the rejection of the brothers' way of thinking

Euthydemus' annoyance. In 295d 9-10 Socrates mentions the soul once again, irritating Euthydemus, who does not want to know by means of what Socrates knows, but if he knows by some means (296a1-2). Euthydemus wants to avoid talking about soul as subject of knowledge; Socrates notices it and mentions the soul a second time on purpose in order to embarrass Euthydemus: cfr. A. German, 2017, p. 303. argues that this awkwardness on Euthydemus' part grows out of the Eleatic way of thinking: "But why should the soul present a special problem for Euthydemus? Surely because the soul's mode of being scandalizes the basic Eleatic undergirding of so much of the brothers' display. On the one hand, the soul is a power of particularization. It can perceive, feel, imagine and know a seemingly limitless multiplicity of determinate things at different times. And yet, no one of these moments exhausts its nature, since the soul retains a unity throughout each moment of its activity".. Soul is one and many at the same time and this is unconceivable to the brothers. Regarding the Eleatic grounds of Euthydemus' way of thinking cf. *supra*, note 10.

continues: virtue is not something to hand over to a buyer, but something one must care for by practicing it²⁶. In the following lines Socrates brings to an end the rejection of the idea of handing over virtue:

Well then, please defer the display of all the rest to some other occasion, I said, and exhibit this one thing. *You are to persuade this young fellow here that he ought to ensue wisdom and practice virtue* (τουτονὶ τὸν νεανίσκον πείσατον ὡς χρηὴ φιλοσοφεῖν καὶ ἀρετῆς ἐπιμελεῖσθαι), and so you will oblige both me and all these present. This youth happens to be in just the sort of condition I speak of; and I and all of us here are at this moment anxious for him to *become as good as possible* (ὡς βέλτιστον αὐτὸν γενέσθαι). He is the son of Axiochus, son of the former Alcibiades, and is own cousin to the Alcibiades that now is: his name is Cleinias. He is young; and so we have fears for him, as well one may for a young man, lest someone forestall us and *turn his inclination to some other course of life, and so corrupt him* (ἐπ’ ἄλλο τι ἐπιτήδευμα τρέψας αὐτοῦ τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ διαφθείρη). Hence your arrival now is most happy. Come now, if it is all the same to you, make trial of the lad and talk with him in our presence (275a3-b4).

In the first lines of the passage what has been said before is restated: the Sophists have to persuade Cleinias to pursue wisdom and to care for virtue; however this time the nominal phrase φιλοσοφίαν καὶ ἀρετῆς ἐπιμέλειαν is replaced by two infinitives. This could be not insignificant; in fact the infinitive, as a verb, compared to the nominal form, emphasises the idea of the action: the persuaded individual (Cleinias in this case) should be persuaded to commit actively to the search for wisdom and care for virtue. Thus, infinitive form, as a verb, stresses that the persuaded individual undertakes an effort they must carry out through an ongoing practice.

Socrates reveals that he wants Cleinias to become as good as possible; anyway, this is possible only if the brothers manage to exhort the young man to pursue wisdom and care for virtue. According to Socrates, bringing about in Cleinias the willpower to pursue wisdom and care for virtue independently is the only way of making him as good as possible, since (Socrates never says it explicitly, although it can be inferred from the analysis of this passage) the safest way of making a person better is making that person actively desires to become better. However, this becoming better is possible only if one accepts to undertake the *care* of virtue.

²⁶ Among its numerous meanings, the prefix *epi* has that of “in addition to, besides”. Thus the word *epimeleia* involves that the *care* is not limited to one act; *epimèleia* is a *care* which lasts over time.

Care, for anything and for anyone, is the ongoing devotion to the task one has undertaken and only through this devotion it is possible to becoming better at anything one commits to; therefore, when Socrates asks the brothers to exhort Cleinias to the ἀρετῆς ἐπιμέλειαν, he asks them to persuade him to devote himself to an ongoing practice of virtue; otherwise virtue is bound to be lost²⁷. Socrates justifies his asking for exhortation because he fears that someone turns Cleinias ἐπ’ ἄλλο τι ἐπιτήδευμα. Ἐπιτήδευμα, translated as *course of life*, means also “profession, job” or “habits, customs, way of behaving”; to sum up, ἐπιτήδευμα is what, owing to its persistence, constitutes a relevant feature of one’s personality. Socrates seems to fear for the future development of Cleinias’ personality, in case he bumps into someone who could corrupt him irredeemably²⁸.

Socrates’ concern for the young Cleinias is more significant if one takes into consideration that he is son of Axiochus and cousin of Alcibiades. The latter is the example of a gifted nature corrupted through the closeness to the wrong people, while the former was involved in the mutilation of the herms; hence it seems that

²⁷ The idea of a *care* intended as a steady devotion to what one has undertaken involves that if one fails to properly care for something (or somebody), one will lose them; accordingly, one will lose one’s skills in playing piano, if one fails to practice every day, in the same way as one will lose the loved persons if one neglects them. *Care* involves that nothing belongs to us absolutely and everything (or everyone) can be lost, if we neglect it.

²⁸ Cleinias, it goes without saying, is a talented young and it is on account of his talents that it is essential that he does not spend his time with the wrong people. In *Resp.* VI, 492a the people of the democratic Athens is depicted as the primary danger for the young naturally inclined to philosophy; in fact people’s opinions exert a miseducating influence, which even the most gifted individuals often fail to resist: “Why, when, I [Socrates] said, “the multitude are seated together in assemblies or in court-rooms or theaters or camps or any other public gathering of a crowd, and with loud uproar censure some of the things that are said and done and approve others, both in excess, with full-throated clamor and clapping of hands, and thereto the rocks and the region round about re-echoing redouble the din of the censure and the praise. In such case how do you think the young man's heart, as the saying is, is moved within him? What private teaching do you think will hold out and not rather be swept away by the torrent of censure and applause, and borne off on its current, so that he will affirm the same things that they do to be honorable and base, and will do as they do, and be even such as they?” (492b6-c9, Burnet). This concern on Socrates’ part for the gifted young rests in the fact that the most gifted natures, not receiving the proper education, turn out to be the most dangerous both for themselves and for others. Socrates’ concern for the young Cleinias is more significant if one takes into consideration that he is son of Axiochus and cousin of Alcibiades. The latter is the example of a gifted nature corrupted through the closeness to the wrong people, while the former was involved in the mutilation of the herms; hence it seems that some of the damaging models who could corrupt the young man are in his own family.

some of the damaging models who could corrupt the young man are in his own family. Finally Euthydemus accepts to undertake the exhortation of Cleinias and talk to him in presence of the numerous bystanders. The only condition posed by Euthydemus is that Cleinias has to be able to answer to his questions (275c1). When Socrates asks Euthydemus to talk to Cleinias before the bystanders, he uses the verb *dialègesthai*; what is going to take place is not a normal conversation, but a dialectic exchange with codified roles, in which one poses questions and the other answers²⁹. The exhortation will have a form of a dialogue. Socrates guarantees that Cleinias is ready to answer. Cleinias' initiation is going to take place.

Euthydemus initiates his exhortation asking Cleinias if the learners are the wise or the ignorant (275d3). Cleinias feels awkward with this question on account of its complexity; anyway Socrates, noticing his embarrassment, exhorts him *to have no fear and bravely answer* (θάραρει, [...] καὶ ἀπόκριναι ἀνδρείως) which seems to him to be the right answer, *because answering to this question gives you the greatest benefit* (275d5-e2)³⁰. At this point Dionysodorus reveals to Socrates that Cleinias will be refuted whatever he may answer (275e3-5); Socrates does not manage to warn Cleinias against the brothers' tricks and Cleinias gives his answer: the learners are the wise (276a1). Euthydemus' refutation of Cleinias rests upon the interpretation of the verb *μανθάνειν* as assimilating new knowledges not possessed in advance:

Euthydemus: "And are these persons whom you call teachers, or not?" He [Cleinias] agreed that there were. Euthydemus: "And the teachers of the learners are teachers in the same way as your lute-master and your writing-master, I suppose, were teachers of you and the other boys, while you were pupils?" He assented. Euthydemus: "Now, of course, when you were learning, you did not yet know the things you were learning?" "No", he said. Euthydemus: "So were you wise, when you did not know those things?"

²⁹ Euthydemus knows the rules of the dialectic. This makes arguable that in the dialogue Plato tries to face the dialectic practiced by other philosophers, maybe other Socratics. According to that reading in the *Euthydemus* what is at stake is not only that philosophy gets the better of eristics but also which kind of dialectic is the most suitable for teaching.

³⁰ Lamb translates this line: "for perchance he is doing you the greatest service in the world". He obviously thinks that it is the questioner, in this case Euthydemus, who can benefit Cleinias. However, considering that in Socrates' exhortation to Cleinias there is no mention of Euthydemus and, on the contrary, it is the courage in answering which is emphasized, it seems to me more sound to translate as I did above. Answering itself is beneficial because through answer Cleinias shows his own thoughts to himself; thus, he can know his own opinions better than before and correct them when they are wrong.

“No, to be sure”, he said. Eutydemus: “Then if not wise, foolish?”. “Certainly”. Eutydemus: “So when you learnt what you did not know, you learnt while being foolish”. To this the lad nodded assent. Eutydemus: “Hence it is the foolish who learn, Cleinias, and not the wise, as you suppose” (276a2-b7).

In this first refutation, as said above, the verb *μανθάνειν* is understood as learning from the beginning³¹; only assuming this meaning it is possible to claim that only the ignorant (foolish in Lamb’s translation) can learn³². Concluding his reasoning, Eutydemus asks Cleinias if it is foolish/ignorant who is not wise; Cleinias answers yes and thanks to his positive answer Eutydemus can get the better of him.

Eutydemus manages to impose a binary logic according to which there is nothing between wisdom and ignorance so as to induce Cleinias to make the same mistake as Socrates in *Symp.* 203e6: Socrates asks Diotima if Eros is ugly and bad, since Diotima denied that Eros was good and beautiful. Socrates, posing this question, seems to share the same binary logic as that of the two brothers in the *Euthydemus*³³. This binary logic has an extraordinary bearing on the idea of *care*, defined as persistent devotion to something; in fact it is the pursuit of wisdom and *care for*

³¹ In the following refutations the verb *μανθάνειν* will be used in the meaning of “learning something new on the ground of a knowledge acquired beforehand”. This insinuating oneself into the ambiguities of the words in order to steer the discussion where one wants complies with the technique of *latching on to the words*, in which the Brothers are expert: cf. G. Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi, 2014, pp. 68ff.

³² Besides verb *μανθάνειν*, even the words *ἄμαθής* (ignorant) and *σοφός* (wise) are ambiguous; in fact, as M. Erler says, 1987, p. 218: “Das Wort *σοφός* kann ‚verständlich und ‚mit einer guten Begabung versehen heißen, aber auch denjenigen bezeichnen, der etwas gelernt hat und deshalb kundig ist. Andererseits ist ein *ἄμαθής* auch der, welcher keine Befähigung zum Lernen hat, und der, welcher keine Kenntnisse erworben hat, obgleich er dies kann” The same ambiguity in the meaning of the two adjectives was pointed out also by other scholars, such as K. Praechter, 1932, p. 130 and H. Keulen, 1971, pp. 15-16. Anyway, it is clear, that the meaning of the adjectives depends on the meaning of the verb *μανθάνειν*; accordingly, if the verb is intended as “start learning” *σοφός* will be the naturally gifted pupil and *ἄμαθής* the one who knows nothing. On the other hand, if *μανθάνειν* is “learning on the ground of assimilated knowledges”, *σοφός* will be the pupil who masters the art and *ἄμαθής* the one who, even if not completely ignorant, is unable to reach good outcomes.

³³ Socrates had rushed to ask whether she [Diotima] then held him [Eros] to be shameful and bad. Diotima explained that whatever is not fair need not be shameful, and that the same applies also to wisdom and ignorance; in the middle ground between these two lies true opinion. A little later in the dialogue Diotima places Eros, and the philosophers, among those lying between wisdom and ignorance (204a8–b1). So, in the *Symposium*, the philosopher is placed precisely in the middle between two extremes: cf. G. Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi, 2014 p. 113.

virtue that to which Socrates persuades the brothers to exhort Cleinias; exhortation to undertake this *care* is Socrates' first aim. However, this binary logic, as it will be seen below, is the principal hindrance to the care. Anyway, it can be concluded that it is through this binary logic that Euthydemus succeeded in overcoming Cleinias. After Euthydemus' refutation of Cleinias, Dionysodorus takes the floor, asking Cleinias if are the wise or the ignorant to learn when the writing master dictates something (276c2-5). Cleinias answers that are the wise who learn what is dictated by the master; thus, Dionysodorus can conclude that Cleinias gave the wrong answers to Euthydemus, as the wise learn, not the ignorant. This refutation, a very short one compared to Euthydemus' refutation of Cleinias, rests upon another essential strategy of the eristic way of reasoning: the immediate shift from a particular statement to a general one. Hence, if the wise (those who knows letters) can learn what is dictated, only *the wise* can learn. This immediate shift is possible through the removal of the known object³⁴: accordingly, those who knows letters become those who know *in general*³⁵. A noteworthy point in this short refutation is the idea of the language emerging from Dionysodorus' words; he does not discriminate between the elements of which the words are made up and their meaning. The lack of this difference is obviously deliberate; in fact, if Dionysodorus made this difference, he should acknowledge that it is possible to know the elements of the words and, at the same time, ignore what the writing master is going to say. However, acknowledging this possibility means acknowledging that there are intermediate levels in knowledge, whereas the lack of middle ground between the extremes is the backbone of their speeches.

From these two refutations two essential principles of the eristic reasoning have come to light. In the two last refutations the focus shifts from those who learn to the contents of the learning. In fact Euthydemus asks Cleinias if those who learn learn what they know or what they do not know (276d6-7)³⁶. Cleinias answers that those

³⁴ M. Erler, 1987, p. 218. This mistake is described by Aristotle in *El. Soph.* 166b1-3.

³⁵ G. Sermamoglou-Soulmaidí, 2014, p. 110-111. The brothers' mistake does not reside in the will to reach a totalising definition, but in the way in which they intend to do it. According to their way of thinking a particular case is sufficient to reach general statements. This perfectly matches their will to achieve the aims as quick as possible. Besides, this attitude reveals a lack of patience which is at odds with the idea of *epimèleia* Socrates is trying to suggest.

³⁶ Dionysodorus whispers to Socrates that this question will have the same outcome as those before (276e1-2), that is to say, Cleinias will be refuted whatever he may answer.

who learn learn what they do not know; consequently he undergoes the same course of questions as before:

Euthydemus: “Well then, asked the other, do you not know your letters?”. “Yes”, he [Cleinias] said. Euthydemus: “All of them?”. He admitted it. Euthydemus: “Now when anyone dictates some piece or other, does he not dictate letters?”. He admitted it. Euthydemus: “And he dictates things of which you know something, since you know all of them?”. He admitted this too. Euthydemus: “Well now, said the other, surely you do not learn whatever such a person dictates; it is rather he who does not know his letters that learns?”. “No”, he replied, “I learn”. Euthydemus: “Then you learn what you know, since you know all your letters”. He agreed. “So, your answer was not correct”, he [Euthydemus] said (277a1-b2).

Cleinias answered that one learns what one does not know probably because in the previous refutation Euthydemus stated that the ignorant learns; in fact the answer given by Cleinias is consistent with the thesis previously put forward by Euthydemus, but the Sophist is not interested in being consistent with himself; therefore he contradicts himself so that he can refute Cleinias, whose answer matches what he said before. Despite the inconsistency with himself, Euthydemus is consistent with Dionysodorus: in fact in his second refutation he resumes the example of the letters, using it in the same way as Dionysodorus did. In so doing, he inherits from Dionysodorus’ speech the same mistake observed before: Euthydemus also does not differentiate between the elements which make up the words and the information vehiculated through them and this is due to the reason explained above.

Dionysodorus’ second refutation is also the last one of this first eristic exchange. This time it is Dionysodorus who states that those who learn learn what they do not know; thus he is inconsistent with himself, but consistent with what Euthydemus said at the beginning of the dialogue with Cleinias:

Dionysodorus: “Euthydemus is deceiving you, Cleinias. Tell me, is not *learning the reception of knowledge of that which one learns* (τὸ μαθάνειν οὐκ ἐπιστήμην ἐστὶ λαμβάνειν τούτου οὗ ἂν τις μαθήνη)?”. Cleinias agreed. Dionysodorus: “And is not knowing, he went on, just having knowledge at the time?” He assented. Dionysodorus: “So that not knowing is not yet having knowledge?” He agreed with him. Dionysodorus: “Then are those who receive anything those who have it already, or those who have it not?”. Those who have it not. Dionysodorus: “And you have admitted that those who do not know belong also to this class of those who have it not?”. He nodded assent. Dionysodorus: “And the learners belong to the class of the

receiving and not to that of the having?”. He agreed. Dionysodorus: “Hence it is those who do not know that learn, Cleinias, and not those who know” (277b6-c6).

This time it is Dionysodorus who contradicts himself: in his previous refutation he claimed that only the wise learns, whereas now he states that the ignorant learns. What comes to light from this section of the *Euthydemus* is that both Euthydemus and Dionysodorus contradict themselves, even if they are consistent with each other so that their speeches turn out to be embedded into *a walk which at its end comes back to the beginning*³⁷.

Failure of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus to exhort Cleinias; Socrates as priest.

Socrates, perceiving that the young at this point is unable to reply to the brothers, as he has going under downed by their refutations (277d2), addresses these words to Cleinias to let him rest as well as encourage him to keep on answering:

Cleinias, do not be surprised that these arguments seem strange to you; for perhaps you do not discern what our two visitors are doing to you. They are acting just like the celebrants of the Corybantic rites, when they perform the enthronement of the person whom they are about to initiate. There, as you know, if you have been through it, they have dancing and merrymaking: so here these two are merely dancing about you and performing their sportive gambols with a view to your subsequent initiation. You must now, accordingly, suppose you are listening to the first part of the professorial mysteries (277d3-e2).

In my opinion, it is quite interesting that Socrates likens this first section to the Corybantic initiation; consequently, it is essential to take this comparison seriously in order to better understand Socrates' subsequent behavior at the end of the lines under examination in this chapter. First of all, it is useful to spend some words on the Corybantic ritual. This ritual involves, as several others in Greece, such as

³⁷ This circular walk of Euthydemus' and Dionysodorus' speeches recalls the movements of *strophe* and *antistrophe* in the Greek chorus; in addition, the numerous mentions of the laughter on the part of the two brothers' pupils recalls the unfolding of a comedy. Facing the theme of the laughter in the *Euthydemus* would divert us from the purposes of this pages, wherefore, to face this interesting theme in the *Euthydemus* I refer to M. Narcy, 1984, p. 40, G. Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi, 2014, pp.155-185 and S. M. Ewegen, 2014, pp. 15-32. Anyway, the presence of the comedy in this dialogue is essential, especially if one takes into consideration the relationship between comedy and ritual concealed in the folds of the dialogue.

Eleusis, a ceremony of initiation. The initiation is always intended as a procedure through which an initiated undergoes an examination or a challenge, thanks to which he can access a higher level of knowledge and in general a phase of life superior to that previous to the initiation. The initiation involves a ritual of purification which should bring about in the initiate a condition similar to death, achieved by provoking in him the loss of consciousness³⁸. Overcoming this awkward condition marks initiate's access into a new and higher condition³⁹. In the following pages I will try to argue that Socrates is acting here as a priest; anyway, before facing this issue, it can be arguably stated that Plato shaped the frame of the conversation with Cleinias so as to make an initiation out of it, even before Socrates mentions Initiation. There are at least two elements shoring up this thesis: the first one is the room itself in which the conversation takes place. As said before, the conversation takes place in *the changing room*, ἀποδυτήριο in Greek. Ἀποδυτήριο comes from the verb ἀποδύω which means “undress”. In the ἀποδυτήριο one undresses to be able to work out, that is to say one deprives oneself of something which could be an hindrance to what one is going to; therefore the ἀποδυτήριο is the place where one prepares for the tasks one is undergoing. This significance of the *changing room* as an initiatory place is emphasized by the request Socrates addresses to Euthydemus and Dionysodorus: he asks them to persuade Cleinias to *pursuit wisdom and care for virtue*. As Socrates' desire is that Cleinias becomes as good as possible and the *pursuit wisdom and care for virtue* serves this purpose, the exhortation which Socrates asks the brothers to perform must have a *transformative power*, because it is aimed at wiping away the last resistences on Cleinias parts and persuading him to commit to *philosophy* and *care for virtue*. As explained above, thanks to this *transformative power* of the exhortation, Cleinias should desire to actively devote himself to this commitment; what this exhortation is supposed to do is *to transform Cleinias' attitude itself towards his future lifetime*.

³⁸ Cf. E. Wasmouth, 2015, pp. 69-84 and J. L. Périllé, 2019, pp. 267-285, who highlights the initiatic nature of the *Euthydemus* and the importance of the Corybantic ritual; In particular he stresses the role of Aristophanes' *Clouds* as polemical target of the *Euthydemus*: cf. *infra*, note 44. Cf. M. Eliade, 1975, *passim*.

³⁹ An unaware bias could suggest that Initiatory necessary means “sectarian” or “concealed”. To better understand what is here intended as Initiation, one has to take into account that Initiation comes from the latin verb *ineo*, that is to say “enter”, “access”. Therefore, Initiation is a procedure through which the Initiate “enter” a new dimension of life. The rituals of puberty or the royal investiture have initiatory nature; despite that, they are not sectarian.

The second element to point out is that Socrates on the verge of going away decides to stay because his daemonic sign prevents him from leaving⁴⁰. Besides, Socrates claims in 272e1 that he was sitting in the ἀποδυτήριον “by divine arrangement” (κατὰ θεόν τινα)⁴¹. This presence of the divine sphere already at the beginning of the dialogue makes arguable that Plato intended to shape it as ritual of purification⁴². Corybantic dance is supposed to provoke a sort of collapse in those who undergo this ritual; confusion, loss of consciousness and control over themselves, a condition similar to death. However this death is aimed at preparing the initiate to “enter” a new condition⁴³. Regarding the Corybantic purification itself, Socrates says that the Initiate sits on a throne while the Corybants are dancing around him⁴⁴.

⁴⁰ In *Phaedr.* 242b6-c3 the daemonic sign prevents Socrates from leaving the discussion with Phaedrus on the nature of love. In *Apol.* 40a3-c3 The philosopher reveals that his daemonic sign prevented him from defending himself in the trial against him. In both cases daemonic sign occurs in relevant moments of Socrates' life. Owing to the prohibition of the daemonic sign Socrates decides to face death; in the other case, Socrates cannot leave the discussion with Phaedrus because he must persuade the young of the true nature of love. Even in *Euthydemus* the presence of the daemonic sign is crucial; thanks to it, Socrates is prevented from leaving. Thus, he will be able to exhort Cleinias.

⁴¹ Burnet's rendering “by some providence” seems to me to be too weak, because it does not emphasize properly the importance attached here to the divine element; importance hardly deniable, if one takes into account that in the same lines Socrates mentions the daemonic sign.

⁴² Considering other works, such as the *Apology* and the *Alcibiades*, the God to whom Socrates refers is Apollo: cf. C. E. Swanson, 2011, p. 1. This does not mean that the *Euthydemus* must be read only as a ritual of purification. In the dialogue a lot of problems are faced: that of the language and its ambiguity and that of knowledge, which will be thoroughly faced in other dialogues, such as the *Meno* and the *Thaetetus*. Plato here is also concerned with the issue of the discrimination between philosophy and other educational procedures. The *Euthydemus* is a multi-layered work; stressing its ritual dimension serves the purpose of bringing to light the relevance of the care.

⁴³ In *Leg.* 790d Plato attributes to Corybantic dance the power to heal those who have got crazy as a result of the Bacchic ritual. This power to remove madness well matches the purifying nature of the Corybantic frenzy: cf. C. Levenson, 1999, pp. 67-68.

⁴⁴ According to a suggestive etymology proposed by J. Hillman, 1973, pp. 115-116 the Greek words θρόνος and θεραπεία share the same Indo-European root *dher*, so that the relationship between *throne* and *care* turns out to be more ancient than one can expect. “We strike an etymological root of the analytical relationship. The chair of the therapist is indeed a mighty throne constellating dependency and numinous projections. But the analysand also has his chair...”. Obviously Hillman is interested in the relationship between care and chair from the point of view of psychology. In J. Pokorny's dictionary the word θρόνος is related to the root *dher* which means “hold”, “carry” (1927-32, p. 690). Θρόνος comes from the same roots as θρησκεία, “divine cult”, “ceremony”. Accordingly the *throne* ought to be the chair on which the god (its simulacrum) is carried during a ritual in its honor.

This somehow mirrors Cleinias' actual situation; in fact, he is sitting, surrounded by Euthydemus' and Dionysodorus' refutations. The corybantic frenzy is aimed at purifying so as to make the initiation possible⁴⁵; in the same way confusion and loss of himself experienced by Cleinias should make easier to him to accept the exhortation to be as better as possible.

The rapid succession of the refutations is the means by which the brothers triggers in Cleinias the condition of loss of himself mentioned above; anyway their ability to provoke this condition is do effective because they are two in agreement with each other, asserting opposite statements on the same subject (who are those

In any case, *thronos* seems to be the tool of *the care for the godness* or, at least, a *care* undertaken on divine behalf.

⁴⁵ Cf. A. N. Michelini, 2000, pp. 509-535; L. Palpacelli, 2009, pp. 243-245. In Aristophanes' *Clouds* there is a scene quite similar to the enthronement depicted in the lines of *Euthydemus* under examination: Socrates: "Seat yourself, then, upon *the sacred couch* (τὸν ἱερὸν σκίμποδα)". Strepsiades: "Well, I am seated!". Socrates: "Take, then, this chaplet". Strepsiades: "For what purpose a chaplet? Ah me! Socrates, see that you do not sacrifice me like Athamas!". Socrates: "No; we do all these *to those who get initiated* (τοὺς τελουμένους)" (*Nub.* 254-260). Here the throne is replaced through a couch, obviously in order to devalue the solemnity of the initiation to Socrates' school. Besides it, Strepsiades receives a crown, whereas Cleinias does not. Aristophanes also speaks of initiated, who have to sit necessary on the couch to complete their initiation. In Aristophanes' scene there is no mention of the Corybants, although the precence of the enthronement and the initiation makes plausible to regard *Euthydemus* as Plato's reply to this comedy (Cf. G. Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi, 2014, pp. 131-133). Even if there is no hint at the coronation in *Euthydemus* lines, Porphyrius in *VP* 17 attests that Pythagoras was initiated by the Corybants and only at the end of this process he was crowned; therefore, the lack of the coronation is easily explainable considering that Cleinias' initiation is not yet completed. What concerns Pythagoras' initiation to the Corybantic mysteries, it would be to lengthy to face here the soundness of Porphyrius' testimony; in any case, the mention of the enthronement in *Euthydemus* does not allow hypothesise the Pythagorean precence in the *Euthydemus*, whereas the presence of Pythagorean themes, even in the lines of the comedy mentioned above, is more appreciable in the Socrates depicted by Aristophanes in *Clouds* an in other comedies as well (A. Stavru, 2018, pp.144-153). A further interesting point is that Aristophanes attributes to Socrates what Plato attributes to the sophists, that is to say: officiate a ritual. In my opinion, Aristophanes' considering in a very derogatory way the ritual officiated by Socrates in the comedy still influences experts in ancient philosophy; ritual, religion, initiation and purification must be banished from the purely rational kingdom of philosophy or, at least, interpreted in a metaphorical sense. A philosopher cannot be priest, because it should be ridiculous. To sum up, Aristophanes' opinion on Socrates not only influenced Athenians at the trial, but also today scholars perception of the ritualistic dimension in Plato's dialogues.

who learn; what is learnt). The ability to maintain opposite thesis on the same subject is a skill praised by sophists, especially in the late 5th century, as it is inferable from a work such as the Δίσσοι λόγοι⁴⁶; depicting the brothers as stating contrary thesis in the same subject, Plato is representing the antilogic trend in the sophistry at the end of the 5th century b. C. However, this “twoness” of the two brothers, in the light of the reading here suggested, can be interpreted as a tool aimed at the *transformative ritual* Cleinias is undergoing.

In the *Republic* Plato says that experiencing the contraries of the same object forces the soul to reach a higher level of consciousness:

In the first place, the sensation that is set over the hard is of necessity related also to the soft and it reports to the soul that the same thing is both hard and soft to its perception”. “It is so,” he [Glaucón] said. “Then,” said I [Socrates], “is not this again a case where the soul must be at a loss as to what significance for it the sensation of hardness has, if the sense reports the same thing as also soft? And, similarly, as to what the sensation of light and heavy means by light and heavy, if it reports the heavy as light, and the light as heavy?”. “Yes, indeed,” he said, “these communications to the soul are strange and invite reconsideration”. “Naturally, then,” said I, “*it is in such cases as these that the soul first summons to its aid the calculating reason and tries to consider whether each of the things reported to it is one or two* (ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις πρῶτον μὲν πειρᾶται λογισμὸν τε καὶ νόησιν ψυχὴ παρακαλοῦσα ἐπισκοπεῖν εἴτε ἓν εἴτε δύο ἐστὶν ἕκαστα τῶν εἰσαγγελλομένων).” “Of course.” “And if it appears to be two, each of the two is a distinct unit.” “Yes.” “If, then, each is one and both two, the very meaning of ‘two’ is that the soul will conceive them as distinct (VII, 524a2-b8, tr. P. Shorey).

Experiencing “twoness” potentially provokes *transformations in the subject who experiences it*. In the lines of *Republic*, the contradiction in the simultaneous twoness of perceptions is able to trigger both *confusion* and the will to go beyond it through higher cognitive faculties. In *Euthydemus* the twoness of the refutations should serve the same purpose; it is aimed at bringing about loss of oneself and inability to go on. However, inducing this state serves the purpose of making better Cleinias; the loss of oneself and the feeling of going under are but the effects of the purification, which makes easier the *transformation through the exhortation*. The question to be posed now is: are the brothers able to exhort Cleinias or are they at least able to prepare him for the exhortation, making easier to him to accept it? The answer to this question is in 277d1, where Socrates says that Euthydemus was going

⁴⁶ Cf. S. Maso, 2018, *passim*.

to assault the young men for the third time “as in a fight” (ἔτι δὴ ἐπὶ τὸ τρίτον καταβαλῶν ὥσπερ πάλαισμα ὄρμα ὁ Εὐθύδημος τὸν νεανίσκον). Socrates must stop Euthydemus; otherwise he would have carried on refuting Cleinias until his surrender. However Socrates’ aim is not make Cleinias surrender, but persuade him to undertake the devote commitment to his own enhancement. Before stopping Euthydemus, Socrates lets Cleinias be refuted four times, although he knew already at the beginning of the discussion what the brothers’ behaviour would be like; therefore one can conclude that Socrates has no problems in allowing the brothers excruciate Cleinias with their refutations, provided that this torture can make easier to persuade Cleinias to improve himself. However Socrates, it can be argued, notices that the brothers have no interest in persuading Cleinias, but only in destroying him, decides to stop their refutations.

Socrates has proved not to scorn fight or war in discussions, as long as this could be useful. Conversely, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus refute Cleinias not to help him, but because refutation itself is their own aim. The twoness of the contradiction, as emerged from the passage in the *Republic* mentioned above is necessary to awaken the higher cognitive skills in human soul, but it is not contradiction as a mere means of victory (the kind of contradiction which the brothers attempt to trigger) which can help the subject to go beyond it. In the same way, it is not possible to avoid facing the brothers’ refutations, but only overcoming this twoness can make Cleinias better. The war, in which Euthydemus and Dionysodorus are experts, is the kingdom of the twoness and contradiction. This war cannot be avoided; actually it must be bravely faced; on the other hand, Socrates’ attitude seems to suggest, war is useful only if facing it helps become better than before; both war against real enemies and in the enemies within ourselves must be faced if facing it will allow us to become better. Facing war in this way means that our aim is beyond war and war itself is a necessary tool to reach that aim; on the contrary, if the twoness of war becomes the aim itself, it becomes impossible to go beyond it; thus Euthydemus cannot stop refuting because he does not acknowledge anything apart from the twoness of the contradiction; Socrates instead, as inferable from his attitude, acknowledges the importance of the twoness of war and contradiction in the educative process; otherwise he would have not allowed Cleinias be so wildly refuted by the brothers. However he abhors this twoness in case it is the aim itself;

otherwise he would have not prevented Euthydemus from keeping on refuting Cleinias. A well educated person must face twoness, not embrace it⁴⁷.

The brothers are not able neither to exhort nor to prepare to the exhortation, because if they were able, they would carry on refuting without stopping; what makes their refutations useful is Socrates' prohibition to go ahead. Socrates has decided that the refutations are enough. To summarise, this Socrates, who in 272b2 wanted to become pupil of the brothers, has decided that they had to persuade Cleinias; then, at a certain point, he decides that Euthydemus has to stop refuting him; Socrates who so humbly addresses to the brothers, is acting like their master. Besides, it is Socrates who proposes regarding Euthydemus' and Dionysodorus' refutations as the first step of the Corybantic initiation; however it is clear from what has been said that the brothers never would consider their refutations in this way: in fact in the Corybantic ritual the initiate must face the confusion of the twoness in order to go beyond it, whereas the two brothers are completely unable to go beyond it⁴⁸.

Thus, what makes the brothers Corybants? The answer is: Socrates himself, and this not only because it is Socrates who regards their refutations as a Corybantic dance, but also because Socrates is appointing them a task: as they are unable to go beyond war and contradiction, their task in the ritual will be enacting war and fight. This means that the exhortation itself, that is to say the completion of the initiation will be someone else's task. Obviously it is Socrates who undertakes this task.

Socrates takes the floor, explaining to Cleinias that the trick underlying the refutations consists in using the verb *μαυθάνειν* in the first refutation in the meaning of "acquiring a knowledge not possessed before" and in the second one in the meaning of "deepening one's knowledge" (277e2-a1). It is not negligible that it is Socrates who reveals the tricks used by Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, not the brothers themselves. Socrates refers to Prodicus (277e3) to remind Cleinias how essential is to know the meanings of the words. This knowledge obviously serves the purpose of better facing the ambiguities of the human language, in order not to fall in its intricacies. From this point of view, the refutations put forward by the brothers are useful, because they allow Cleinias to experience this traps in the

⁴⁷ It can be said that Euthydemus and Dionysodorus are unable to go beyond contradiction because they think that it is not possible.

⁴⁸ The only way to go beyond contradiction to them is by winning, that is to say by overturning their adversaries: cf. *supra*, p. 45-51.

speech; however it is not the brothers who explain to Cleinias this usefulness, but Socrates. Socrates not only tells the brothers what they have and do not have to do, ordering them to start and to stop when he decides; he seems even to know the value and the usefulness of their art better than they do; the brothers are completely powerless. Socrates goes ahead:

Such things are the sport of the sciences (ταῦτα δὴ τῶν μαθημάτων παιδιὰ ἐστίν)- and that is why I tell you these men are making game of you; I call it sport because, although one were to learn many or even all of such tricks, one would be not a whit the wiser as to the true state of the matters in hand, but only able to make game of people, thanks to the difference in the sense of the words, by tripping them up and overturning them; just as those who slyly pull stools away from persons who are about to sit down. make merry and laugh when they see one sprawling on one's back. So far, then, you are to regard these gentlemen's treatment of you as mere play: but after this they will doubtless display to you their own serious object, while I shall keep them on the track and see that they fulfil the promise they gave me. They said they would exhibit their skill in exhortation (τὴν προτρεπτικὴν σοφίαν); but instead, I conceive, they thought fit to make sport with you first (278b1-c5).

Socrates' evaluation of the brothers' art is derogatory; it is but the ability to "make game of people". This is true only to the extent that this art of refutation is an aim in itself. As said above, it is Socrates who makes the brothers' refutations useful, deciding to stopping them at a certain point; otherwise they would become a purposeless destruction. Socrates stops the refutations because the time of the exhortation has arrived. In the comparison with the Corybantic rites, Euthydemus' and Dionysodorus' refutations are likened to a purification. Purification is itself a destructive procedure, because it is aimed at removing what hinders the *transformation which must lead to the personal enhancement*. However the distruction triggered by the purification is fruitful, since it opens up to an enhancement otherwise unreachable. On the other hand, as showed by Socrates, destruction is useful only to same extent; that is to say that, at a certain point, it has to stop. In the same way the brothers are useful only if at a certain point someone else prevent them from going ahead.

The purifying destruction of the Corybantic dance has to step aside and give the way to the *transformation which only the exhortation can bring about*. The προτρεπτικὴ σοφία, to which the refutations should give way, must persuade Cleinias to *desire to actively commit to virtue*. From what has been said above it is clear that the brothers do not master the wisdom Socrates asks them to exhibit;

despite that he insists on asking them to show what they themselves do not possess. How overcome this *impasse*? Socrates takes over from Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, showing them how to exhort Cleinias:

So now, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, let us have done with your sport (ταῦτα μὲν οὖν, ὧ̃ Εὐθύδημέ τε καὶ Διονυσόδωρε, πεπαίσθω τε ὑμῖν, καὶ ἴσως ἰκανῶς ἔχει): I daresay you have had as much as you want. What you have next to do is to give us a *display of exhorting this youth as to how he should devote himself to wisdom and virtue* (προτρέποντε τὸ μειράκιον ὅπως χρηὴ σοφίας τε καὶ ἀρετῆς ἐπιμεληθῆναι). But first I shall explain to you how I regard this matter and how I desire to hear it dealt with. If I strike you as treating it in a crude and ridiculous manner, do not laugh me to scorn; for in my eagerness to listen to your wisdom I shall venture to improvise in your presence. So both you and your disciples must restrain yourselves and listen without laughing; and you, son of Axiochus, answer me this (278c5-e2).

In 278c3 Socrates offers to show the brother how they should exhort Cleinias: καὶ ἐγὼ ὑφηγήσομαι αὐτοῖν ἵνα μοι ὁ ὑπέσχοντο ἀποδώσιν. Lamb translates the verb ὑφηγήσομαι with “explain”. In my opinion this translation risks wiping away the idea of “leading” and “guiding” implicit in the Greek verb; in addition, stressing the idea of leadership implicit in the Greek verb mirrors Socrates’ general attitude towards the brothers; attitude which is far from humble. To definitively bring the refutations to an end, Socrates uses the imperative form πεπαίσθω, passive perfect of παίζω, in English: “play”, “joke” or “enact a show”. Brothers’ refutations are a *παιδία*; this word has two meanings which coexist in this context: in fact *παιδία* can hint at the scarce value attributed by Socrates to the eristics, when it is practiced as an aim in itself; or, the word can allude to the ritual dance, which itself is a *χορεία τῆς καὶ παιδία* (277d6), officiated by the Corybants. That the dance is linked to the sphere of the play as well as the theatrical enactment is not strange to the Greek culture; equally a ritual dance as that of the Corybants.

Furthermore, if one takes into consideration that the eristic refutations, compared by Socrates to Corybantic dance, in the same way as this dance, are aimed at provoking a state of confusion and loss of one self similar to death, but indispensable to the completion of the ritual, a relevant link between *παιδία* and death present in the Greek civilisation, as the phenomenon of the funeral games attests⁴⁹. The relation to death of the Corybantic dance performed through the eristic

⁴⁹ The funeral games in honor of Patroclus are the most famous literary example of this custom in the Greek world. It is not negligible to point out that amongs the disciplines in which the heroes test

refutations comes to light in 277e1-2: τούτω οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ χορεύετον περὶ σὲ καὶ οἷον ὀρχεῖσθον παίζοντε, ὡς μετὰ τοῦτο τελοῦντε. The verb τελέειν, in these lines usually rendered as “initiate”, means “accomplish”, “bring to an end”, “finish”. The initiate, ὁ τελοῦμενος, is the person who has been brought to the end of the previous phase of his life, so as to be able to enter the new one. For this reason the initiation (τελέτη) involves necessarily the idea of death, as the initiate is the person who has died as the person he was before entering a new condition beyond the previous one⁵⁰.

Cleinius is in the age suitable for the initiation to the world of the adult; he is on the verge to fulfil his lifetime as a youth; anyway, he is not properly a man yet. What is more, he cannot access the world of the adults, facing the political and military tasks which this world involves, as a mere youth; he must enter this new world as someone different from the person he was until that moment. Therefore the Corybantic dissolution of oneself is necessary; through it Cleinius loses his certainties, the self-confidence and the courage itself; through the delirious dance of the refutations Cleinius has been annihilated. However, only the youth in him has been destroyed, in order to give the way to the man. If the two erists can make the

themselves there is also the wrestling; the following lines describe a moment of the fight between Odysseus and Ajax son of Telamon: “Then the twain, when they had girded themselves, stepped into the midst of the place of gathering, and laid hold each of the other in close grip with their mighty hands, even as the gable-rafters of a high house, which some famous craftsman joineth together, that he may have shelter from the might of the winds. And their backs creaked beneath the violent tugging of bold hands, and the sweat flowed down in streams; and many a weal, red with blood, sprang up along their ribs and shoulders; and ever they strove amain for victory, to win the fashioned tripod” (*Il.* XXIII, 710-718 A. T. Murray). An interesting comparison can be established between this fight within the funeral games for Patroclus and Euthydemus’ and Dionysodorus’ refutations, regarded as a Corybantic dance. In the lines of the *Iliad* mentioned above the ritual fight follows Patroclus’ death and is performed in his honor; the Corybantic dance of the erists should *provoke* Cleinius’ death. In spite of this noteworthy difference, what keeps unchanged in the two contexts is the ritual and purifying value of the fight. In the *Iliad* are the survivors to the war who must purify themselves; they manage to do it through sportive contests, by means of which they *purify* themselves from the violence and the pain of the war. In the case of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, their refutations, considered as a Corybantic dance, are supposed to dissolve his ingenuous and daily way of thinking in order to prepare him to receive Socrates’ exhortation. In both contexts fight is performed as a *game* in order to purify the participants.

⁵⁰ Whence the word τελέτη is also connected to the word τέλος “end”, but also “accomplishment”, “completion”, “aim”.

youth vacillate, they are completely unable to let the man rise. Until this point Cleinias, as a young man, has been but “the son of Axiochus”, someone whose talents are not yet enough to make him something more than the member of an aristocratic family. On the contrary, to become a man, Cleinias must abandon this condition as “son of someone famous” and become able to decide on his own the person he wants to be.

This is a crucial passage that the initiation marks; the passage from a person who has to obey others (his family) to a person able to take decisions on one’s own. This is the reason why Socrates desires that Cleinias himself actively commits *to pursuit of wisdom and care for virtue*; he perfectly understands the initiatic nature of the period of life in which Cleinias finds himself. Therefore, he holds to be necessary that Cleinias passes this moment of his life as a man who actively and ongoingly devotes himself to being as good as possible; because the best way to benefit someone, Socrates seems to suggest, is make them actively want to benefit themselves. This initiation to the devote *care* of the person one wants to be is beyond the powers of the brothers. These two guys, who in order to refute Cleinias, were willing to contradict themselves, cannot exhort him to take devote and lasting care for the person he wants to be. Only Socrates can perform this kind of exhortation and thus finally trigger the *transformation from a youth to a man*.

The exhortation.

So far, Socrates acted so as to make a purifying/destructive ritual out of the mere wordplays of the brothers. Thanks to the confusion and lack of certitude brought about in Cleinias by their merciless attacks, the young man has no unshakable belief to oppose to the Socratic exhortation; now Socrates can steer Cleinias’ desire so as to reach his own aim, that is to say, make Cleinias desire to become as good as possible⁵¹. Before facing the text of this exhortation, it is important to keep in mind

⁵¹ Numerous readers of this section of the dialogue have focused only on understanding if wisdom is sufficient or not to achieve happiness: cf. M. T. Ferejohn, 1984, pp. 111-112; G. Vlastos, 1991; J. Annas, 1993; G. Santas, 1993, p. 46; T. C. Brickhouse and N. D. Smith, 1994, pp. 103-103; R. D. Parry, 2003; R. Jones, 2013, pp. 11-20; G. Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi, 2014, pp. 40-47. However, what all of them fail to properly emphasise is that Socrates is trying to steer Cleinias desire towards love for wisdom and care for virtue. In order to do that, he must convince Cleinias that wisdom is worth loving and virtue is worth caring. To convince Cleinias, it is useless to provide him with a rational description of wisdom and care as well; actually Socrates in this dialogue never states what

that it also in structured in a dialogic way, that is to say, unfolding through questions and answers. Socrates now addresses Cleinias:

Socrates: “Do all we human beings wish to prosper (εὖ πράττειν)? Or is this question one of the absurdities I was afraid of just now? For I suppose it is stupid merely to ask such things, since every man must wish to prosper”. “Everyone in the world”, said Cleinias. Socrates: “Well then, I asked, as to the next step, since we wish to prosper, how can we prosper? Will it be if we have many good things? Or is this an even sillier question than the other? For surely this too must obviously be so”. He agreed. Socrates: “Come now, of things that are, what sort do we hold to be really good? Or does it appear to be no difficult matter, and no problem for an important person, to find here too a ready answer? Anyone will tell us that to be rich is good, surely?”. “Quite” true, he said. Socrates: “Then it is the same with being healthy and handsome, and having the other bodily endowments”. (278e3-279b1).

The Greek locution εὖ πράττειν is not easy to translate, and only an attentive understanding of the context can suggest what its meaning is. In fact, this locution can have the meaning of “be successful in an undertaking”⁵². In different contexts, on the contrary, the same locution can have the sense of “being lucky”, “benefitting from fortune”. In the lines above, the locution seems to have the latter meaning. It is reasonable to think that the possession of wealth (τὸ πλουτεῖν) listed as the first of the good things, hints not at the wealth which one earns by one’s own, but at the wealth of one’s family; that wealth one does not acquire with one’s efforts. Reading the wealth of this line as the inherited one is consistent with the other good things listed in this passage (bodily endowments in fact are something one finds himself to benefit from, they are not the outcomes of one’s efforts). Moreover, it is correct to understand the wealth of this lines as the inherited one because it is Cleinias the person whom Socrates is exhorting. In fact Cleinias is wealthy because his family is; in addition he is handsome. He benefits from both wealth and beauty, but he has done nothing to get them. Socrates is trying to exhort Cleinias by using Cleinias’ own life and characteristics; if this exhortation has to be considered as the

wisdom is, nor does he for happiness (For the happiness in the *Euthydemus* cf P. Dimas, 2002, pp. 1-27). The only way to convince Cleinias is to show him how he can practically benefit from wisdom and virtue. Given that, it can be inferred that the entire Socratic exhortation appeals to Cleinias’ desire. Stressing this point is essential to relativise the potential readings of the wisdom in this section of the dialogue in an intellectualistic perspective. In fact, even given that wisdom is sufficient to happiness, one must acknowledge that, Socrates seems to suggest, only thanks to desire (that is to say, the emotional part) of it is possible to pursue such a wisdom.

⁵² In the titles of some of the letters ascribed to Plato εὖ πράττειν is used in sense, as is Πλάτων Δίῳνι εὖ πράττειν. “Plato to Dion with wishes for success”.

accomplishment of a ritual of initiation, it must be added that this initiation is *ad personam*⁵³. The following list of the goods is apparently consistent with what said above; they are not goods things in general, but good things which are part of Cleinias' life:

Socrates: "Again, it is surely clear that good birth (εὐγένεια) and talents (δυνάμεις) and distinctions in one's own country (τιμαὶ ἐν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ) are good things". He [Cleinias] admitted it. Socrates: "Then what have we still remaining, I asked, in the class of goods? What of being temperate (σώφρονα), and just (δίκαιον), and brave (ἀνδρεῖον)? I bay you tell me, Cleinias, do you think we shall be right in ranking these as goods, or in rejecting them? For it may be that someone will dispute it. How does it strike you?". "They are goods" said Cleinias (279b3-9).

Cleinias is the member of one of the noblest family in Athens, he is naturally gifted and their relatives often have been assigned to public charges⁵⁴. What concerns his temperance, his bravery and his justice, it is probable that they are but moral dispositions present in Cleinias, but maybe not so well-established as to be impossible to loose; otherwise Socrates would not fear that anyone could corrupt him. Socrates goes ahead, asking Cleinias if wisdom too is to list among goods things; the young man, it goes without saying, says yes (279c1-4). However, Socrates seems not to be satisfied; in his opinion, he and Cleinias have forgot an essential good they have to add to their list (279c5-7). This good, which everyone, even the silliest of the man, claims to be the greatest, is good fortune (εὐτυχία); that is to say, the lucky outcomes of one's undertaking. Even in this case, this good fortune is something that happens regardless of the efforts one makes to reach a good outcome. Cleinias agrees. In the following lines Socrates argues that this good fortune is but wisdom:

Once again I [Socrates] reconsidered (μετανοήσας) and said: "We have almost made ourselves laughing-stocks, you and I, son of Axiochus, for our visitors". "What is wrong now?" he [Cleinias] asked. Socrates: "Why, after putting good fortune in our former list, we have just been discussing the same thing again. What is the point? Surely it is ridiculous, when a thing has been before us all the time, to set it forth again and go over the same ground twice". "To what are you referring?" he asked. "Wisdom", I replied, "is presumably good fortune: even a child could see that (ἢ σοφία

⁵³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 40-41.

⁵⁴ Cleinias is too young to have been assigned to public charges; probably this mention of public charges is an allusion to the members of his family.

δήπου, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, εὐτυχία ἐστίν: τοῦτο δὲ κἄν παῖς γνοίη)”. “He wondered at this-he is still so young and simple-minded (οὕτως ἔτι νέος τε καὶ εὐήθης)” (279c11-d8).

Worth noting is the use of the verb μετανοεῖν, which means “perceive afterwards or too late”, “change one’s opinion” or “repent”. This change of mind in Socrates’ exhortation stands more out if compared to the certainty of the brothers’ refutations; they had no uncertainty on how to bring down their young interlocutor, whereas Socrates at this point has a change of mind; he thinks that, to persuade Cleinias to commit to wisdom, he should use a different way. We will try to explain below what could provoke this “change of mind” in Socrates. Anyway, what can be said so far is that, after this change of mind, Socrates states that good fortune is wisdom. Why? The answer is in the following lines:

then I [Socrates], perceiving his surprise, went on: “Can you be unaware, Cleinias, that for success (εὐπραγίαν) in flute-music it is the flute-players that have the best fortune (εὐτυχέστατοι)?”. He [Cleinias] agreed to this. Socrates: “Then in writing and reading letters it will be the schoolmasters”. Cleinias: “Certainly”. Socrates: “Well now, for the dangers of a sea-voyage, do you consider any pilots to be more fortunate, as a general rule, than the wise ones (εὐτυχεστέρους τινὰς εἶναι τῶν σοφῶν κυβερνητῶν, ὡς ἐπὶ πᾶν εἰπεῖν)?”. Cleinias: “No, to be sure”. Socrates: “Well, then, suppose you were on a campaign, with which kind of general would you prefer to share both the peril and the luck—a wise one, or an ignorant (μετὰ σοφοῦ στρατηγοῦ ἢ μετὰ ἀμαθοῦς)?”. Cleinias: “With a wise one”. Socrates: “Well then, supposing you were sick, with which kind of doctor would you like to venture yourself—a wise one, or an ignorant?”. Cleinias: “With a wise one”. “And your reason”, I said, “is this, that you would fare with better fortune in the hands of a wise one than of an ignorant one?”. He assented. Socrates: “So that wisdom everywhere causes men to be fortunate (ἢ σοφία ἄρα πανταχοῦ εὐτυχεῖν ποιεῖ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους): since I presume she could never err, but must needs be right in act and result; otherwise she could be no longer wisdom” (279d9-280a9).

In the first lines of this section Socrates says that flute players are εὐτυχέστατοί, but their being fortunate has nothing to do with the εὐτυχία in 279c8. This good fortune is the lucky outcome of one undertakings, regardless of the efforts and the qualities of the lucky person; whereas the εὐτυχία in case of flute-players is the good outcome deriving from the mastery (wisdom) of the instrument; in the same way, the εὐπραγία occurs now in the meaning of “correctness in the execution of one’s tasks”, whereas before it had the meaning of “inherited and not personally conquered goods”. Εὐτυχία and εὐπραγία are used now in quite opposite meanings;

now are the outcomes of the mastery⁵⁵; before, they were but chance. The use of the same words in the same arguments in two different meanings recalls the use the brothers have made of the verb *μανθάνειν*, so that Socrates proves quite similar to the them⁵⁶. As it has been said above, Socrates does not refuse to benefit from the same devices used by sophistry; however, his aim is different: he wants to steer Cleinias' desire towards the pursuit of wisdom; therefore, he must convince the young man that wisdom always provides good outcomes; he must present wisdom as something desirable. Moreover, the change of meaning in *εὐτυχία* and *εὐπραγία* mirrors the transformation Cleinias must undergo; as *εὐτυχία* and *εὐπραγία* from mere consequences of a blind chance become the products of the wisdom one has acquired through one's own efforts and determination, in the same way Cleinias: from a *young man* who, by chance (*εὐτυχία*), benefits from the wealth and prestige of his family, he must transform himself into a *man* who makes correct use of what he has available and thus can achieve good outcomes (*εὐτυχία* as success deriving from skills).

Using different meanings for the same terms, even if a sophistic device, is used to suggest the aim of the Cleinias' transformation: from a *youth lucky by chance* into a *man successful thanks to wisdom*. However, it must be recalled that Socrates does not initiate Cleinias into wisdom, but into *the desire of wisdom*. At the end of his initiation, Cleinias will have assumed not a knowledge, but a commitment. Given that, it can be understood what causes Socrates to change his mind in 279c11. In 279 c8-9 he had claimed that *εὐτυχία*, intended as unexpected good luck, was the greatest of the goods, and claiming this triggers Socrates' change of mind. As it has been said above, Socrates addresses to Cleinias an exhortation which he would not address to anyone; this exhortation is tailored to Cleinias, to his personality and to his characteristics. Cleinias is a young man from one of the most prestigious family

⁵⁵ Claiming that "wisdom is presumably good fortune" seems to suggest that wisdom and good fortune are the same. However, as R. Jones correctly argues, the example of flute-players and school masters provide evidence that wisdom is not the same as the good fortune, but its source; wisdom can bring about *Εὐτυχία*, it's not identical to it; cfr. R. Jones, 2013, pp. 1-8.

⁵⁶ That several times only the aims, not the method, make Socrates different from the sophists is something which Weiss, 2001, pp. 68-75 has pointed out. As it is clear to the reader, my reading is based on the assumption that Socrates is aware of using sophistic tactics (cf. R. Robinson, 1942, pp. 97-114; R. K. Sprague, 1962, pp. 1-33). For the reading according to which Socrates does not use eristic tricks or even is unaware of using them cf. R. Jackson, 1990, pp. 386-388; I. J. Campell, 2020, pp. 67-92).

in Athens, he is wealthy and naturally gifted; but he is still too young and thus someone could convince him to embrace bad customs. He possesses all those goods which an average Athenian takes to be the most important in life. This is the reason why Socrates regrets claiming that εὐτυχία is the greatest of the goods; in fact, if Cleinias convinced himself that εὐτυχία, intended as a blind and unexpected good luck, is the greatest of the good, he would never make an effort to acquire wisdom, which on contrary demands an active commitment. The young man could believe that blind luck, wealth and prestige are the only things that matter in life; Socrates must avoid it; therefore, he must convince Cleinias that it is wisdom that provides εὐτυχία, intended this time as good outcomes deriving from wisdom.

Wisdom and correct use.

Before going ahead, Socrates says that he and Cleinias agreed “somehow or other” that when wisdom is present, the wise does not need εὐτυχία, intended as blind good fortune (συνωμολογησάμεθα τελευτῶντες οὐκ οἶδ’ ὅπως ἐν κεφαλαίῳ οὕτω τοῦτο ἔχειν, σοφίας παρουσίας, ᾧ ἂν παρῆ, μηδὲν προσδεῖσθαι εὐτυχίας, 280b1-2). The Greek words οὐκ οἶδ’ ὅπως, in english: “I do not know how”, should hint at the scepticism of Socrates himself on their conclusion. Even Socrates would not believe that a wise does not need chance⁵⁷. Besides, in the lines of the exhortation so far examined some other hints can be found that Socrates does not take his reasoning to be always compelling. When he claimed that εὐτυχία is wisdom Cleinias wondered; because, Socrates says, he is still young and simple minded. Socrates’ comment probably means that a more expert interlocutor would refute his statement, or, at least, would not accept it so easily, as instead Cleinias does.

Anyway, that Socrates does not find his reasoning compelling, does not involve that he thinks that its content is wrong. What is more important, Socrates’ aim is not deliver to Cleinias a flawless and irrefutable speech from the logical point of view, but, as we have seen, a speech able to steer his desire towards wisdom; to reach this aim, it could be useful to convince Cleinias that wisdom goes beyond chance, even

⁵⁷ Cf. T. H. Irwin, 1995, pp. 55-56; R. McPherran, 2005; G. Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi, 2014, pp. 17-21.

if Socrates himself does not believe it⁵⁸. Socrates, like the brothers, does not need to believe something to convince other to believe it; the difference is that Socrates' aim is to benefit Cleinias, convincing him to commit actively to wisdom and his own enhancement; the brothers instead want to refute Cleinias as an aim in itself.

Being established that the wise does not need chance, Socrates goes ahead:

And as we had agreed on this I [Socrates] began to inquire of him over again what we should think, in this case, of our previous agreements. For we agreed, said I, that if many goods were present to us we should be happy and prosper (ὠμολογήσαμεν γάρ, ἔφην, εἰ ἡμῖν ἀγαθὰ πολλὰ παρείη, εὐδαιμονεῖν ἂν καὶ εὖ πράττειν). “Yes”, he [Cleinias] said. Socrates: “Then would we be happy because of our present goods, if they gave us no benefit, or if they gave us some (εἰ μηδὲν ἡμᾶς ὠφελοῖ ἢ εἰ ὠφελοῖ)?”. “If they gave us benefit”, he said.(280b3-8).

In 280b4 for the first time in the dialogue the verb εὐδαιμονεῖν is used. This is relevant because from now on it will become clear that what Socrates is exhorting Cleinias to, is happiness; in fact wisdom, as so far it has been depicted, does not seem to be an aim in itself; it must be pursued because it only provides εὐτυχία and εὐπραγία. In the following lines Socrates will try to argue how it only provides also εὐδαιμονία, which is the true aim of Socrates' exhortation. The goods one needs to be happy obviously must benefit those who possess them, as said in the aforementioned lines. However, to be benefitted from these goods, one not only should have them available, but also use them; in the same way craftsmans could not prosper (εὖ πράττοιεν) if they had available the tools and the material they need, but failed to use them⁵⁹. Using goods is an indispensable condition for happiness:

⁵⁸ Making other believe something indemonstrable, but useful because of its positive consequences is a not negligible feature of Plato's philosophy. The γενναῖον ψεῦδος in *Resp.* III 414c4-d3, for instance, serves the purpose of keeping the city as unified as possible, in order to avert from it civil wars and coups. In the *Meno* the belief in the immortality of the soul is aimed at making those who believe it more courageous and willing to commit to the pursuit of knowledge (81a-81e2). It is worth believing these three speeches, not because of their logical flawlessness, but because they make better the life of those who believe them.

⁵⁹ In 280c6-d1 Socrates uses carpentry as example. Using arts as example is far from negligible; someone who masters an art has decided to devote himself to the learning and the persistent practice of that art he possesses; this art is not a mere part of his life among the other ones; devoting oneself to an art is somehow choosing who one wants to be in one's life. The kind of happiness deriving from good outcomes in his own field is not the mere joy of the moment; it is rather the sense of fullness rising from the awareness that one's own perseverance and care for one's art has allowed to achieve important outcomes in the past, as it will allow to achieve in future. This kind of happiness goes

Socrates: “Well now, suppose a man had got wealth and all the goods that we mentioned just now, but made no use of them; would he be happy because of his possessing these goods (τί δέ, εἴ τις κεκτημένος εἴη πλοῦτόν τε καὶ ἄ νυνδὴ ἐλέγομεν πάντα τὰ ἀγαθὰ, χρῶτο δὲ αὐτοῖς μή, ἄρ’ ἂν εὐδαιμονοῖ διὰ τὴν τούτων κτῆσιν τῶν ἀγαθῶν;)?”. Cleinias: “Surely not, Socrates”. Socrates: “So it seems one must not merely have acquired such goods if one is to be happy, but use them too; else there is no benefit gained from their possessio” (280c3-7).

The first lines of this passage are quite interesting because Socrates hints at the good “mentioned just now”, but he explicitly recalls only wealth. However among the goods things Socrates mentions in 279b there are also social goods, such as noble birth and prestige and, what is more important, the goods of the soul, namely being just, courageous and temperate⁶⁰. In the case of these goods of the soul, claiming that they must be used to be beneficial means that one must act courageously, justly and in a temperate way; these goods qualities must be embodied by ones conduct, otherwise they are useless. Nevertheless, using these goods is not enough, Socrates argues; one must use them correctly to be really happy:

Socrates: “Cleinias, for making a man happy (πρὸς τὸ εὐδαιμόνα ποιῆσαι τινα) - is the possession of these goods and using them?”. Cleinias: “I think so”. “Shall we say”, I [Socrates] asked, “if he uses them rightly, or just as much if he does not (πότερον, ἢν δ’ ἐγώ, ἐὰν ὀρθῶς χρῆται τις ἢ καὶ ἐὰν μή;)?” Cleinias: “If rightly”. “Well answered”, I said; “for I suppose there is more mischief when a man uses anything wrongly than

beyond disappointments and pains because practitioners of any arts, through their efforts and their devotion, give to their life a sense, that nothing and nobody can take away. Accordingly, happiness turns out to reside in the ongoing fulfillment of the person one has chosen to be. This conception of happiness emerging from the examined lines and the subsequent ones of the dialogue is fundamental, because it suggests that it does not happen to be happy. Happiness depends on the right choice of life one undertakes and on the efforts one makes to carry it on.

⁶⁰ (τί ἄρα ἐστὶν τὸ σῶφρονά τε εἶναι καὶ δίκαιον καὶ ἀνδρεῖον; 279b5-6): Plato is here revealing in advance the virtues typical of the *Republic*. While justice is somehow the common virtue shared by the three classes in the *Kallipolis*, courage is the virtue typical of the warriors and temperance of the farmers and merchants. If it is legitimate to interpret the *Euthydemus* as a sort of preview of some important issues concerning education and politics faced later in the *Republic* (R. Parry, 2003, pp. 1-28; H. Tarrant, 2003, pp. 7-22), it could be said that the wisdom searched in *Euthydemus*, without being found, is the virtue proper of the king-philosopher. In the second protreptic scene of the *Euthydemus* the searched wisdom is named by Socrates βασιλικὴ τέχνη (292c5): cf. D. Cürsgen, 2004, pp. 22-38. Therefore, it is not out of purpose to infer that probably Socrates is searching for the wisdom proper of a ruler, not obviously a democratic ruler, but a royal one.

when he lets it alone. In the one case there is evil; in the other there is neither evil (280e1-281a1, tr. Burnet)”.

In 280e1 Socrates still mentions happiness, which is the aim Cleinias must pursue. Using rightly goods and not just the mere use of them, can provide happiness. This is quite clear in the case of wealth; however, if among good things the goods of soul must be included, in these lines Socrates implicitly is arguing that temperance, justice and courage are beneficial only if used rightly. This makes arguable a comparison between these lines of the *Euthydemus* with *Men.* 88d6-e2, where Socrates claims:

Then as to the other things, wealth and the like, that we mentioned just now as being sometimes good and sometimes harmful-are not these also made profitable or harmful by the soul according as she uses and guides them rightly or wrongly: if they are to be good; and so by this account the profitable will be wisdom, and virtue, we say, is profitable (οὕτως αὖ καὶ τούτοις ἡ ψυχὴ ὀρθῶς μὲν χρωμένη καὶ ἡγουμένη ὠφέλιμα αὐτὰ ποιεῖ, μὴ ὀρθῶς δὲ βλαβερά;) ? (88d6-e1, tr. Burnet).

In 88a13-88e1, Socrates had listed justice, temperance and courage among those tendencies of the soul that are neither good nor bad, but which can become actual good thanks to the φρόνησις. In these lines of *Meno* it is possible a right use of courage, justice and temperance are not considered as perfect virtues in themselves, but somehow as mere tendencies, unthinking dispositions acquired in one’s social environment; such dispositions are not actual goods, even if they can potentially become⁶¹. Justice, courage and temperance in *Meno* are not perfect virtues in themselves because it is only the φρόνησις, the virtue itself, which transforms them from potential virtues into actual ones. I would suggest that even in these lines of *Euthydemus* justice, courage and temperance are to understand as unthinking dispositions which can become actual goods; in fact, if they were to be intended as actual goods, it would be impossible to figure out how one could use them wrongly.

A second reason is provided by the very nature of the exhortation. Given that Socrates has tailored it to Cleinias, it is reasonable to take Socrates to hint at the courage, the justice and the temperance proper of Cleinias, which are not complete virtues, but unreflective tendencies absorbed by family and cultural environment;

⁶¹ This is clear in case of courage. In the *Meno* Socrates says that courage without νοῦς is damaging (88b6-8); in fact courage, as a mere unthinking disposition without intelligence is but a sort of boldness which can bring about much more damages than benefits.

this could be the sort of courage, temperance and justice possessed by someone as young as Cleinias. Thanks to Socrates' exhortation Cleinias will desire to transform these tendencies into actual goods. As during this exhortation εὐτυχία, from luck due to the chance has become success due to wisdom, in the same way unreflective tendencies must be transformed into actual virtues.

Meanings of the words change in this exhortation, because it represents a transformative process; hence, even words, changing of their meanings, must represent the wished transformation. Language is here used in a *transformative way*. The *transformative* power of φρόνησις depends on the circumstances that the so-called good things even justice, temperance and courage, are neither good, nor bad; the same conclusion will be reached in Socrates' exhortation in *Euthydemus*.

In the subsequent lines, Socrates resumes the analogy to the carpentry:

Socrates: "To proceed then: in the working and use connected with wood, is there anything else that effects the right use than the knowledge of carpentry (ἢ ἐπιστήμη ἢ τεκτονική)?" "Surely not", he [Cleinias] said. Socrates: "Further, I presume that in the working connected with furniture it is knowledge that effects the right work". "Yes", he said. "Then similarly", I went on, "in the use of the goods we mentioned at first - wealth and health and beauty was it knowledge that showed the way to the right use of all those advantages and rectified their conduct, or was it something else (τὸ ὀρθῶς πᾶσι τοῖς τοιούτοις χρῆσθαι ἐπιστήμη ἢ ἡγουμένη καὶ κατορθοῦσα τὴν πράξιν, ἢ ἄλλο τι)?" (281a1-b1).

The English word "knowledge" in the text is the rendering of the Greek word ἐπιστήμη, usually translated as "science": it is important to clarify the exact meaning of this word in this context, because it could draw misunderstanding. The ἐπιστήμη here is not to be intended as a theoretical knowledge of the laws ruling a specific domain. If the analogy to the carpentry is to take seriously, as it actually is, it must be inferred that in the ἐπιστήμη mentioned by Socrates there has an irreplaceable practical element. A carpenter is not only able to theoretically explain how to build a bench; he is also able to build one on his own. In the same way, this ἐπιστήμη, since it must provide the right use of the goods available, cannot be only theoretical; actually, it is bound to include in itself a practical feature; otherwise it could not have a bearing on actions; what Socrates is arguing from the beginning of this exhortation. The second aspect of the analogy to the carpentry to keep in mind is the gradable nature of this skill: nobody is an expert carpenter as soon as

they approach the tools of the trade for the first time; however, persisting in practicing and never giving up, they learn to use those tools better and better. Accordingly, those who long for the ἐπιστήμη depicted by Socrates will not immediately be able to use what is available to them (included the qualities of souls) in the best way; nevertheless, through practice and perseverance, they will advance in this skill. From this comparison with carpentry, it can be concluded that the wisdom to which Socrates exhorts Cleinias so that he becomes happy has: 1) an undeniable practical feature, 2) is gradable, 3) is perfectible. The gradable nature of this kind of wisdom conforms to Socrates' concerns for Cleinias' course of life; in fact, if the wisdom depicted by Socrates were acquirable immediately, once and for all, it would not make any sense to be concerned for the whole life for Cleinias; in fact, he would have already available what he needs in order to be as good as possible.

Established that ἐπιστήμη provides human beings with correct use (εὐπραγία) and good outcomes (εὐτυχία) in every undertaking (281b3-5), Socrates poses to Cleinias the following question:

Socrates: “Then can we, in Heaven's name, get any benefit from all the other possessions without understanding and wisdom (ἄνευ φρονήσεως καὶ σοφίας)? Shall we say that a man will profit more by possessing much and doing much when he has no sense, than he will if he does and possesses little? (νοῦν μὴ ἔχων, ἢ μᾶλλον ὀλίγα νοῦν ἔχων;)” (281b6-8).

This passage makes more arguable a comparison with *Meno*; here it is said that without φρόνησις it is impossible to benefit from one's possessions⁶²; in *Men.* 88c10-d1 Socrates claims that the qualities of the soul become beneficial when φρόνησις is present. A similar use can be observed in case of the word νοῦς. In the lines quoted above νοῦς makes possible to profit from one's possession; in *Men.* 88b12-12 νοῦς is what makes beneficial those qualities of the soul such as temperance and aptitude to learn (εὐμαθία)⁶³. In both *Meno* and in the lines of the

⁶² In these possessions, according to the reading proposed so far, also temperance, justice and courage, that is to say the qualities of the soul, must be included.

⁶³ The νοῦς intended as the intelligence which provides good to what it is not good in itself is an essential feature in Plato's middle dialogues and in the later ones as well. Apart from *Meno* and *Euthydemus*, noteworthy are Socrates' words on νοῦς intended as the intelligence which organises everything in the best way in *Phaed.* 97c-98b4. In *Leg.* 897a1-2 it is claimed that soul, *endowed with* νοῦς, guides everything in the most correct and happiest way; in particular in this passages, the link

exhortation quoted above, νοῦς and φρόνησις occur in similar contexts in a very similar sense. In 281c Socrates argues that, in case νοῦς and φρόνησις are lacking, it is better to act as less as possible, because those who act without νοῦς and φρόνησις are bound to undergo the unavoidable drawbacks of their actions due to the lack of them. Cleinias agrees on everything, so Socrates can come to a conclusion:

“To sum up then, Cleinias”, I [Socrates] proceeded, “it seems that, as regards the whole lot of things which at first we termed goods, the discussion they demand is not on the question of how they are in themselves and by nature goods, but rather, I conceive, as follows: if they are guided by ignorance (ἀμαθία), they are greater evils than their opposites, according as they are more capable of ministering to their evil guide; whereas if understanding and wisdom (φρόνησις τε καὶ σοφία) guide them, they are greater goods; but in themselves neither sort is of any worth (αὐτὰ δὲ καθ’αὐτὰ οὐδέτερα αὐτῶν οὐδενὸς ἄξια εἶναι)” (281d3-e1).

In the end, Socrates has come to the same conclusion as in *Men.* 88d6-e2; wealth, health, prestige, even the qualities of soul such as courage, temperance and justice are good in themselves, because only φρόνησις makes them good and profitable, whereas ἀμαθία makes them bad and harmful⁶⁴. The opposition in these lines between φρόνησις and ἀμαθία seems to some scholars to be as immovable as those used by Euthydemus and Dionysodorus in their refutations, so that even here Socrates is more similar to the brothers than one would like to admit; however this is probably the aspect in which the Socrates of this dialogue is less comparable to the brothers. It is true that for Socrates φρόνησις and ἀμαθία are opposites, but, contrary to the Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, he believes that there is something between these two opposites, a scale of levels which one can traverse to move from a pole to the other one. Furthermore, if there were nothing between these two poles, the whole exhortation did not make any sense; in fact, it were be impossible for Cleinias to become wise from ignorant, because there were no middle ground he can traverse to reach wisdom. Neither is wisdom something that can be handed over immediately like the skill the brothers boast about; the wisdom Socrates talks about is a commitment which lasts the entire lifetime; even in case it is acquired, what is uncertain, one must commit not preserve it by means of ongoing practice. What is more, there is something else that is between φρόνησις and ἀμαθία; that is to say,

between νοῦς and happiness is unmistakable. For the numerous occurrences of the term νοῦς in Plato’s works cf. R. Radice, 2003. pp. 631-632.

⁶⁴ In *Meno* instead of ἀμαθία the word ἀπροσύνη is used.

Cleinias' desire itself. Thanks to his desire to become wise, Cleinias can decide to move to wisdom, even starting from ignorance; desire is that which lays a bridge between ignorance and wisdom, because only thanks to desire it is possible move from an opposite to the other one⁶⁵.

Before going ahead, an issue must be faced, that the reader of the *Euthydemus* cannot help but noticing. In 275a4-5 the aim of the exhortation was to convince to pursue wisdom and *care for virtue*. In the following exhortation, Socrates only deals with showing how important is to pursue wisdom, but nothing is said about virtue to care for. Why this relevant lack? The solution here suggested once again rests on the comparison between these lines of the *Euthydemus* and what is said in the *Meno* about φρόνησις. In *Men.* 89a6 Socrates, before moving to refute even this conclusion, suggests that φρόνησις is virtue. Considering that in both dialogues φρόνησις is understood in a very similar way, it could not be out of purpose to suggest that virtue to care about in *Euthydemus* is but φρόνησις itself. Moreover, since in 281d6-7 there is no straightforward difference between φρόνησις and σοφία, the hypothesis can be put forth that φρόνησις/σοφία and virtue are the same; accordingly the aim of the exhortation should be understood in this way: pursue φρόνησις/σοφία and commit to the devote practice of it during one's entire life. This is only an hypothesis, which demands much more lines to be accurately discussed. Anyway that in the exhortation virtue and φρόνησις/σοφία are the same helps to some extent readers explain why Socrates deals with wisdom, never with virtue. After restating 281e3-4 that wisdom is good and ignorance is bad, whereas other things are neither bad nor good, Socrates comes to the subsequent outcome:

⁶⁵ This is a reason why Euthydemus and Dionysodorus cannot exhort anyone; for them learners are the mere receivers of a skill handed over by them. The brothers do not take into consideration that learners could actively desire to improve themselves. In their vision desire is absent, and when the possibility of desire has been banned, no exhortation can take place. It can be said that desire is the subjective condition of this bridge: if one does not desire wisdom, one never will reach it. However there is also an *objective condition* of this bridge; a condition of which Socrates does not speak in the *Euthydemus*, but in the *Meno*. This condition is the interconnection (*Men.* 81d) which makes reality not an amount of separated entity, but *a totality of interconnected beings*. It is thanks to this interconnection that it is possible that someone who can learn that which they do not know, or, more exactly, that which they do not remember yet. *It is thanks to this interconnection that the impossibility of inquiry* (80e) *is overcome*: cf. F. Ferrari, 2020, pp. 127-135. On the contrary, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus regard reality as a mere amount of separated things. Accordingly, in Euthydemus' and Dionysodorus' world there is no place neither for the subjective, nor for the objective condition of learning.

Socrates: “Since we are all eager to be happy (ἐπειδὴ εὐδαίμονες μὲν εἶναι προθυμούμεθα πάντες), and since we were found to become so by not only using things but using them aright, while knowledge, we saw, was that which provided the rightness and good fortune (τὴν δὲ ὀρθότητα καὶ εὐτυχίαν ἐπιστήμη ἦν ἡ παρέχουσα), it seems that *every man must prepare himself by all available means so that he may be as wise as possible* (ἐκ παντὸς τρόπου ἅπαντα ἄνδρα τοῦτο παρασκευάζεσθαι, ὅπως ὡς σοφώτατος ἔσται). Is it not so?”⁶⁶. “Yes”, he [Cleinias] said (282a1-6).

Once again, the final aim of Socrates is Cleinias’ happiness; however, this happiness, as well as the wisdom necessary to reach it, is not something that Socrates delivers to Cleinias as if it were available to anyone who wants it; also this happiness is something Cleinias actively must be willing to pursue; accordingly, the very aim of this exhortations to make Cleinias *desire to be happy thanks to the correct use of goods and the subsequent good outcomes provided by wisdom*. This is the aim Cleinias must pursue; therefore, he should not feel ashamed of asking his father, his guardians and those who claim to be his lovers to share their wisdom with him, or help him in his pursuit of wisdom (282a7-b5). If it is arguable that the wisdom depicted in the exhortation has in itself a practical feature, is gradable and perfectible, it is not unreasonable to understand happiness itself as something which needs practice and devotion; accordingly happiness should not be understood as a big prize which lays at the end of a path, acquired once and for all; therefore those who have decided to commit to wisdom are happy every day; nevertheless they can be a little bit happier than the day before, if they persist in their pursuit for wisdom.

According to this exhortation, happiness is possible only provided that wisdom is possible, that is to say teachable (διδασκτόν, 282c2). Socrates asks Cleinias if he thinks that wisdom is teachable or happens of itself (ἀπὸ ταῦτομάτου) to human beings⁶⁷. Cleinias answers that, in his opinion, wisdom is teachable (ἀλλ’ ἔμοιγε,

⁶⁶ Instead of the word εὐπραγία, which so far has occurred together with εὐτυχίαν, the word ὀρθότης is here used. The main meaning of this word is correctness; also εὐπραγία, after occurring at the beginning of the exhortation in the meaning of “prosperity due to chance”, has been understood in the meaning of “correctness of the action”; why the word used so far to mean “correctness” has been replaced. In my opinion, the use observed above of words in *a transformative way* underly this replacement. In fact the εὐπραγία still keeps something of its affinity to chance, whereas ὀρθότης has nothing to do with chance; it is the correctness of the action due only to one’s mastery in a field.

⁶⁷ If there were the case, the wisdom itself would be part of the realm of the unpredictable chance; this possibility would frustrate the entire exhortation, because it would confirm the power of the

ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες, διδακτὸν εἶναι δοκεῖ. 282c5). Socrates is satisfied with this answer and, without deepening the reasons which have pushed Cleinias to claim that wisdom is teachable, thanks Cleinias for preventing the demanding inquiry as whether wisdom is teachable or not⁶⁸. The exhortation has come to an end. Only wisdom can provide good outcomes and happiness and, as wisdom is teachable, wisdom is possible. Therefore, it is necessary to pursue wisdom (φιλοσοφεῖν 282d1).

Dionysodorus' counterattack: wisdom and death.

Socrates is now ready to give the floor to the two brothers, because he has delivered the example of what an exhortatory speech would be like (οἶον ἐπιθυμῶ τῶν προτρεπτικῶν λόγων εἶναι, 282d5). Anyway, Socrates claims to be sure that the brothers would be able to deliver an exhortatory speech much better than they have done thus far; then he invites either of the brothers to show an exhortative speech delivered in a skilled way⁶⁹. Socrates' attitude towards the brothers is quite noteworthy. He says:

If you do not want to show your exhortatory skills let your display begin where I left off (ὅθεν ἐγὼ ἀπέλιπον), and show the lad whether he ought to acquire every kind of knowledge, or whether there is a single sort of it which one must obtain if one is to be both happy and a good man (πότερον πᾶσαν ἐπιστήμην δεῖ αὐτὸν κτᾶσθαι, ἢ ἔστι τις μία ἣν δεῖ λαβόντα εὐδαιμονεῖν τε καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα εἶναι) and what it is. For as I was saying at the outset, it really is a matter of great moment to us that this youth should become wise and good (τόνδε τὸν νεανίσκον σοφόν τε καὶ ἀγαθὸν γενέσθαι) (282e1-4)⁷⁰.

If the brothers are not willing to show their skills in the exhortatory speech, the only alternative they have is to show whether every kind of knowledge or only one can provide happiness; however, also this alternative has been established by Socrates.

chance in human life, whereas Socrates tries to convince Cleinias that thanks to wisdom this power can be sensibly reduced, even if not abolished.

⁶⁸ The absence of a discussion about the teachability of wisdom in *Euthydemus* constitutes for someone evidence that this dialogue is posterior to the *Meno* itself, where this discussion is thoroughly faced; cfr G. Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi, 2014, p. 58.

⁶⁹ It is useful to remind that Socrates' words have nothing humble in themselves; the Greek word translated as example is παράδειγμα, which means the model that artists, such as painters or sculptors, look at to build their work. The exhortation held by Socrates is not a mere outline, is a model, and providing other with a model to imitate is typical of a teacher, not of a pupil.

⁷⁰ The second protreptic scene of the *Euthydemus* is devoted to the identification of this science.

The brothers have no choice; they have to serve Socrates' desire Cleinias becomes wise and good. Socrates, on the other hand, is not interested in what the sophists would say, if they were allowed to say what they set out; on the contrary, Socrates want to master the brothers in order to steer their eristic method towards his own aims and make it serve an higher purpose, that is to say, *transform Cleinias by leading is desire to the pursuit of wisdom*; in the same way as when, interrupting the brothers in 277d1-3, Socrates transformed their refutation into the initial step of an initiatic ritual, *aimed at transforming Cleinias' desire*. Socrates stops talking; he looks forward to knowing who of the brothers will took the floor and how he will exhort Cleinias to "to practice wisdom and virtue" (σοφίαν τε καὶ ἀρετὴν ἀσκεῖν)⁷¹. Eventually Dionysodorus takes the floor; Socrates looks at him, expecting to hear some wonderful speeches (283a5). Socrates invites Crito, to whom he is narrating the conversations held the day before, to pay the closest attention to Dionysodorus' speech, as it is pushing to virtue (ὡς παρακελευστικὸς ὁ λόγος ἦν ἐπ' ἀρετὴν, 283b2)⁷².

Dionysodorus starts by posing a strange question; he asks Socrates and those desiring Cleinias to become wise (ὅσοι φατέ ἐπιθυμεῖν τόνδε τὸν νεανίσκον σοφὸν γενέσθαι, 283b3-4) if they are jesting or seriously desire it. Socrates restates that he seriously desires that Cleinias become wise⁷³.

A dialectical exchange between Socrates and Dionysodorus starts, where the sophist is going to use his well-known tricks:

⁷¹ The verb ἀσκεῖν, as well as the verb ἐπιμελεῖσθαι used in 275a5 and 278d2, referring to the dimension of the exercise, the devotion to an aim and the perseverance, provides further support to the idea that both wisdom and virtue in *Euthydemus* are not to understand as threshold concepts, but as something that is gradable and perfectible thank to one's tireless will to improve oneself. Besides, that the wisdom is exercisable is the logical consequence of the assumption that it is teachable; in fact, if wisdom is διδακτόν for those who teach it, it follows that it will be ἀσκητόν for those who learn it.

⁷² This time Socrates mentions virtue, while omitting wisdom, predominant in the exhortation to Cleinias; this could reinforce the suggestion that wisdom and virtue are the same. Anyway, as it will be clear below, Dionysodorus' words are far from encouraging; on the contrary, they seems to suggest that becoming wise is impossible.

⁷³ Actually Socrates said that one should commit to become as wise as possible (ὡς σοφώτατος, 282a4); this seems to mean that one should devote oneself to reach a degree of wisdom as high as one can, whereas the perfect and unshakable wisdom does not seem to be an achievable aim. Dionysodorus on the other hand, as it will be evident, does not conceive this degree of wisdom; for him one is completely wise or completely ignorant.

Then Dionysodorus said: “Yet be careful, Socrates, that you do not have to deny what you say now”. “I know what I am about”, I [Socrates] said: “I know I shall never deny it”. “Well now”, he proceeded; “you tell me you wish him to become wise (φατὲ βούλεσθαι αὐτὸν σοφὸν γενέσθαι)?”. Socrates: “Certainly”. Dionysodorus: “And at present, be asked, is Cleinias wise or not (νῦν δέ, ἦ δ’ ὅς, Κλεινίας πότερον σοφός ἐστιν ἢ οὐ)?”. Socrates: “He says he is not yet so-he is no vain pretender (οὐκοῦν φησί γέ πω: ἔστιν δέ, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, οὐκ ἀλαζόν)”. “And you”, he went on, “wish him to become wise, and not to be ignorant (βούλεσθε γενέσθαι αὐτὸν σοφόν, ἀμαθῆ δὲ μὴ εἶναι)?”. We agreed. Dionysodorus: “So you wish him to become what he is not, and to be no longer what he now is (οὐκοῦν ὅς μὲν οὐκ ἔστιν, βούλεσθε αὐτὸν γενέσθαι, ὅς δ’ ἔστι νῦν, μηκέτι εἶναι)” (283c2-d3).

After asking Socrates if he wishes Cleinias to be wise or not, Dionysodorus asks if “at present” (νῦν) Cleinias is wise or not. The use of the adverb νῦν is crucial, since using this word starts Dionysodorus’ maneuvers to refute the very possibility of that “becoming as wise as possible” strongly stated by Socrates. As well as the brothers, through their eristic attacks, tried to freeze wisdom and ignorance in a mutual isolation, so as to make the gap between them unbridgeable, so Dionysodorus uses the adverb “now” to make out of it a prison which Cleinias cannot break out of⁷⁴. Dionysodorus asks Socrates if Cleinias is wise or not, and Socrates replies that Cleinias himself claims not to be wise. From Dionysodorus’ subsequent question to Socrates, it is clear how the sophist tries to establish the same opposition underlying his and his brother’s display: if one is not wise, one is necessarily ignorant; Dionysodorus carries on destroying the middle ground between ignorance and wisdom which Socrates has tried to bring to light.

The conclusion of Dionysodorus’ reasoning rests upon the meaning of the verb “to be”. In this conclusion one witnesses to the shift from a predicative use of the verb “to be” to the existential one; consequently the relative ὅς does not begin an attributive clause, so that the rendering in English of the last sentence would be: “you want who not exists to be and who exists now not to exist any longer”⁷⁵. According to Dionysodorus’ reasoning Cleinias now is ignorant and the only way

⁷⁴ Cfr. Th. Chance, 1992, p. 82.

⁷⁵ Th. Chance, *ivi*, p. 83; M. Canto, 1987, p. 137. The elimination of the predicates in the relative clauses has allowed Dionysodorus to insinuate the existential use of the Greek verb: cf. G. Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi, 2014, pp. 73-74. In Greek in a predicative clause it is possible to omit the predicate when the context suggests its implicit presence. Dionysodorus draws on this possibility. Cf. S. Zeppi, 1969, pp. XXVII-XXIX.

to break out of this “now”, a now in which he is ignorant, is that Cleinias cease to be (*scil.* to exist).

Socrates at this point has understood what Dionysodorus is getting at. However the sophist goes ahead, reaching his conclusion:

Of course, then, since you wish him to be no longer what he now is, you wish him, apparently, to be dead (ἐπεὶ βούλεσθε αὐτὸν ὃς νῦν ἐστὶν μηκέτι εἶναι, βούλεσθε αὐτόν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀπολωλέναι). And yet what valuable friends and lovers they must be, who would give anything to know their darling was dead and gone! (καίτοι πολλοὶ ἂν ἄξιοι οἱ τοιοῦτοι εἶεν φίλοι τε καὶ ἐρασταί, οἵτινες τὰ παιδικὰ περὶ παντὸς ἂν ποιήσαιτο ἐξολωλέναι) (283d4-7).

Once again, no middle ground between the opposites is possible; in Dionysodorus’ view, shaped by war, wisdom and ignorance lay in front of each other like two enemy armies which get closer only to destroy each other. Anyway, if the reading of the section analysed so far as *a transformative ritual aimed at leading Cleinias to desire of wisdom* is right or at least arguable, it follows that what Dionysodorus claims is not so far from true. As it has been observed above, it was Socrates himself who allowed the brothers to tear apart Cleinias by means of their refutations; through their refutations Socrates aims at killing Cleinias; however this killing serves the purpose of getting rid of the young man in order to allow the man longing for wisdom to come to light. Therefore even for Socrates between ignorance and wisdom there is death; what changes is the idea of death Dionysodorus and Socrates have. The former takes death to be but mere annihilation in which everything disappears once and for all; the latter instead thinks that death is the obliged destruction of the person one has been to allow a better one to come out, and anyone who wants to become better than one is must undergo this destruction. At the end of the day, this is the very idea of the becoming better which underlies this difference in the understanding of the death. Socrates believes that becoming better is possible; accordingly death, intended as the removal of the hindrances in oneself to one’s improvement, is something to accept and even to search. On the contrary, in Euthydemus’ and Dionysodorus’ view people and things as well neither improve nor worsen; everything is bound to be what has always been, frozen in an unchangeable “now”. It goes without saying that in this vision the only way to change is to cease to exist.

It has been said above that between the two opposites there is the desire; therefore between the opposites there are both desire and death. In this case the desire of those

longing for wisdom give them the strength to undergo the death they will find during the path. In the middle ground between ignorance and wisdom the individual is led by desire to face the death, because the desire to become better involves dying as the person one was before⁷⁶.

At this point of the dialogue Ctesippus invades the conversation to harshly tell off Dionysodorus, who has dared to claim that Socrates and Cleinias lovers (he is one of the) wish Cleinias to perish:

Ctesippus, on hearing this, was annoyed on his favorite's account, and said: Stranger of Thurii, were it not rather a rude thing to say, I should tell you, ill betide your design of speaking so falsely of me and my friends (ὅτι μαθῶν μου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων καταψεύδη τοιοῦτον πρᾶγμα) as to make out - what to me is almost too profane even to repeat - that I could wish this boy to be dead and gone (τόνδε βουλοίμην ἂν ἐξολωλέναι) (283e1-4).

The use of the verb καταψεύδεσθαι, “to lie”, allows Euthydemus to intervene in the discussion, starting the section concerning the possibility of stating the false. The entire section deserves much more lines than those which can be devoted to it in these pages; however, it will be examined until 284a.

Euthydemus starts by asking Ctesippus whether he thinks that it is possible to lie or not. Ctesippus obviously says that lying is possible (283e5-6). Euthydemus replies:

Do you mean, when one tells the thing about which one is telling, or when one does not? (πότερον λέγοντα τὸ πρᾶγμα περὶ οὗ ἂν ὁ λόγος ᾗ, ἢ μὴ λέγοντα)? When one tells it, he [Ctesippus] said. Euthydemus: “Then if you tell it, you tell just that thing which you tell, of all that are, and nothing else whatever (οὐκοῦν εἴπερ λέγει αὐτό, οὐκ ἄλλο λέγει τῶν ὄντων ἢ ἐκεῖνο ὅπερ λέγει)?”. Of course, said Ctesippus. Euthydemus: “Now the thing that you tell is a single one, detached from all the others there are (ἔν μὴν κάκεινό γ’ ἐστὶν τῶν ὄντων, ὃ λέγει, χωρὶς τῶν ἄλλων)⁷⁷”. Ctesippus; “Certainly”. (283e7-284a6, tr. Burnet)

⁷⁶ The link between death and desire is particularly highlighted in *Phaedo*. The philosopher is ready to undergo death because death will lead him to what he always loved when he was still alive (67e3-68a1). In *Phaedo* the hints at death as the necessary step in a transformative ritual are quite numerous; cf. K. Clinton, 2003, pp. 54-58; A. Dietrich, 1893, pp. 73-80. Thus, the desire to accede to a superior condition and the experience of death underly every authentic initiation.

⁷⁷ In the Greek text χωρίς. I have modified Burnet's translation in this point, because, in my opinion, his rendering conceals the idea of the isolation of beings from each other stressed by the Greek adverb; Euthydemus' words refer not to a mere distinction, *but to an actual separation*.

Euthydemus claims that it is possible to lie only about the thing one is talking about. This is obvious and we have no troubles accepting it. By his second question Euthydemus starts insinuating his tricks in the conversation. First of all, he takes for granted that the thing one is talking about always belongs to the realm of being; however what conception of being underlies his question, Euthydemus does not explain; it will be up to the reader to infer in which way Euthydemus conceives being. Anyway, Euthydemus says something useful to gain this understanding: when one talks about something, one is talking only about it and anything else. This statement becomes clear when compared to the subsequent one: the thing one is talking about is a being detached from the other; this is the very core of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus ontological conception: everything exists isolated in itself, ignoring the existence of the other beings; thus, being is not a weave of relationships, but a chaotic amount of unrelated entities⁷⁸. This conception of being implies that everything, being isolated in itself, is always true in itself; since everything exists frozen in his segregation, no falsehood is possible. Thus, a sentence as: “my car is red” is true even if my car is not; in fact, my car exists, the red color exists; thus the sentence is true⁷⁹. This conception of being has an

⁷⁸ For the links between the *Euthydemus* and the *Sophist* cf. L. Palpacelli, 2004, pp. 317-352; in particular, regarding the links between the *Euthydemus* and the *Sophist* regarding the nature of falsehood cf. F. Villar, 2020, pp. 12-37. In *Sophist* Plato tries to outline the concept of being as relational weave, on which the possibility of the speech as a weaving of logical relationships rests: on the interweaving of Forms in *Soph.* 259e5-6 cf. J. M. E. Moravcsik, 1960, pp. 117-129; L. M. de Rijk, 1986, pp. 187-190; Chr. Shields, 2013, pp. 211-230; M. G. Mouzala, 2019, pp. 35-75. The foremost opponents of this conception of being as a relational wave are obviously those who set out to detach everything from everything (259d9-e1). In fact if the speech must mirror being and being is conceived as an unrelated amount of entities, it follows that the speech rising from this conception of being is unable to weave different concepts, since in the reality, which the speech must mirror, there is no communication among beings; therefore, accepting such a conception of being will involve a definitive destruction of all speeches (τελεωπάτη ἀφάνισις τῶν λόγων, 260a3), and, what is the most important, the destruction of the philosophical speech: cf. Chr. Iber, 2007, pp. 323-327. Even if the Stranger does not report the names of those who want to get rid of the relationships among beings, it is not unreasonable to argue that even Euthydemus and Dionysodorus should be included among them, since every reasoning of them is based on the idea that concepts are unrelated and isolated in itself.

⁷⁹ Cf. A. Eckl, 2002, pp. 25-33; G. Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi, 2014, p.76. From an ontological vision in which everything is isolated, it follows that the only way to talk about existing things is through tautological propositions, such as A is A und anything else. However, if non tautological predication becomes impossible, the very possibility of falsehood disappears, for it is only in the possible wrong union of different concepts that the falsehood lurks. The use of the language only in a tautological

impressive bearing on the ethical field; if every exists petrified in its isolation, this involves that there is no possibility to become wise from ignorant; the very idea of ἐπιμέλεια intended as the devote practice promoting the personal improvement is impossible, because improvement itself, intended as a transition from a condition into another one, is, according to Euthydemus view, ontologically impossible.

Form the assumption that everything, existing isolated in itself, is also true in itself, Euthydemus infers the necessary conclusion:

Then the person who tells that thing tells that which is? Yes. But yet, surely he who tells what is, and things that are, tells the truth (ἀλλὰ μὴν ὁ γε τὸ ὄν λέγων καὶ τὰ ὄντα ἀληθῆ λέγει): so that Dionysodorus, if he tells things that are, tells the truth and speaks no lie about you (*scil.* Ctesippus) (284a7-10).

The participle τὸ ὄν is always used in its existential meaning, while completely absent is the predicative one. Thanks to the possibility in greek to intend what is also as what is true⁸⁰, Euthydemus can shift the focus from existence to truth; accordingly, an entity, intended as something unrelated and isolated from other beings exists and it is always true⁸¹. Consequently, Dionysodorus must not have lied, and Socrates and Ctesippus truly wish Cleinias to die. This has a great relevance from the educational point of view. If lying it is impossible, that to say, if it is impossible convince people of wrong things, because the wrong does not exist, it is impossible for an educator to miseducate their pupil, because he always will tell them the truth. Consequently, it will be impossible to corrupt anyone; in fact, wrong not existing, there are no false believes which could harm those who believe them. The very fear of Socrates that Cleinias can be corrupted, according to Euthydemus' and Dionysodorus' assumptions, turns out to be completely unfounded. There is not

way rising from the conception of being under examination led some readers to see through Strangers' criticisms a clear allusion to Antisthenes, to whom a thesis of the only tautological use of speech is ascribed: cf. P. Natorp, 1903, pp. 118-119; R. Wiehl, 1967, pp. 193-194, note 90, who includes the Megarians among the supporters of the tautological speech; L. M. de Rijk, *ivi*, pp. 113-117. C. Iber instead understands this wiping away the relationships among beings as a "Versuch, in vulgäreleathischer Manier alles von allem zu trennen" (p. 327). If the thesis of the possibility of the only tautological predication as an eleatic origin and to what extent this eleatic heritage influenced Antisthenes and the other socratic, is an historiographic issue we have not deal with in this work. A. Brancacci, 1999, pp. 381-396 sees Euthydemus and Dionysodorus behind the ὀψιμαθεῖς in *Soph.* 251b7.

⁸⁰ Cfr. G. Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi, 2014, p. 77.

⁸¹ Therefore, in this vision falsehood is non-existence.

corruption, where there is not wrong, and there is no wrong, where there is no falsehood.

Socrates takes the floor: the longing for the regenerative death.

At the end of the section on the possibility of falsehood, Ctesippus is still angry with Dionysodorus for claiming that he wants Cleinias, his beloved, to die; Dionysodorus on his turn has noticed that Ctesippus talks to him threateningly (284e7-285a1). Thus, Socrates intervenes to mitigate the tension between Dionysodorus and Ctesippus, addressing to Ctesippus probably the words which are the most significant for the reading of the dialogue suggested in these pages:

Socrates: “Ctesippus, my feeling is that we ought to accept from our visitors what they tell us, if they are so good as to give it, and should not quarrel over a word (καὶ μὴ ὀνόματι διαφέρεσθαι)⁸². For if they understand how to do away with people in such sort as to change them from wicked and witless to honest and intelligent (εἰ γὰρ ἐπίστανται οὕτως ἐξολλύναι ἀνθρώπους, ὥστ’ ἐκ πονηρῶν τε καὶ ἀφρόνων χρηστούς τε καὶ ἔμφονας ποιεῖν), and that too whether they have discovered for themselves or learnt from somebody else this peculiar kind of destruction or undoing, which enables them to destroy a man in his wickedness and set him up again in honesty (φθόρον τινα καὶ ὄλεθρον τοιοῦτον, ὥστε ἀπολέσαντες πονηρὸν ὄντα χρηστὸν πάλιν ἀποφῆναι); if they understand this - and obviously they do; you know they said that their newly discovered art was to turn wicked men into good - let us then accord them this power; let them destroy the lad for us, and make him sensible, and all the rest of us likewise (ἀπολεσάντων ἡμῖν τὸ μειράκιον καὶ φρόνιμον ποιησάντων, καὶ ἅπαντάς γε ἡμᾶς τοῦς ἄλλους)” (285a2-b5, tr Burnet).

In 285a1-2 it is said that Socrates says these words to Ctesippus as a joke, in order to calm him down. However, considering what has been argued above, Socrates’

⁸² Socrates seems to underplay this quarrel over the words”: yet, it could not be more important. Socrates’ understanding of the verb ἐξολλύναι is completely different from that of Dionysodorus (and Ctesippus as well): he intends this “killing” as a *transformative process which the killed/transformed undergoes*. This implies that also the understanding of death is quite different: if for Dionysodorus (and Ctesippus) death is a definitive end, for Socrates death is a *transformation/transition from a condition into another one*. This true, the *Euthydemus* shows the same contrast between two different ways of thinking of death which occurs in *Ap.* 40c4ff and in particular in *Phaed.* 64c7ff. In the latter dialogue this difference will become the difference between an unphilosophical way of understanding death and a truly philosophical way of understanding and *facing* it.

words in these lines could not be more serious; every word of his exhortation, every word starting from the comparison of the eristic refutations to the first step of a Corybantic ritual (277d) is grounded in the idea that self-destruction is necessary to self improvement; and this way of thinking, which in the Greece of the classic age still survives in the mystic cults, such as the corybantic one, underlies every initiatic experience in different civilisations⁸³. The death-like and painful experience is also present in the corybantic mysteries⁸⁴, and in the dialogue this destructive power should be provided through Euthydemus and Dionysodorus' refutations. However, as it has explained above, if Socrates did not have interrupted them, the two brothers would have carried on refuting Cleinias answers, until that he, disheartened and terrified, would have stopped answering and have run away. Furthermore they could not believe that such a destruction as that searched by Socrates exist, because according to their ontological view things are detached from each other; they exist safe only in their segregation, so that the only way to die is to completely disappear once and for all. Death cannot be a step towards self-improvement, because no improvement, intended as a transition from a state into another, is possible. Yet Socrates, ironically we must think, ascribes to the brothers the power to kill, so as to make the killed person better; however, the brothers, on account of their ontological view, cannot possess this power; the only one who is able to exert it is Socrates himself. Socrates has bridled destructive power of the brothers/corybants to steer it towards Cleinias to predispose him to the exhortation; then he carries out the exhortation in order to *transform Cleinias from a well gifted, but still naive youth into a young man longing for happiness through the pursuit of wisdom and care for virtue*. Socrates cannot be pupil of the sophists, because it is him who possesses the protreptic wisdom, although he pretends to want to learn it from the brothers, who on the contrary are devoid of it. The Socrates of this section of *Euthydemus* is an high priest, who uses the unaware brothers as his attendants and officiates a rite to transform the young Cleinias. Socrates claims to be willing to undergo himself to this destruction, provided that he becomes better thanks to it:

for I, being an elderly person, am ready to take the risk and put myself in the hands of Dionysodorus here, as if he were the famous Medea of Colchis. *Let him destroy me,*

⁸³ Cf. M. Eliade, 1975, p. 105. H. Kraft, 1995, pp. 47-68 highlights the fruitful power of death-like experiences as promotive of the entrance of the initiate into the new condition. The death-like experience as a necessary step on the path towards self-transformation is well attested in Peru as well as in Siberia.

⁸⁴C. Levenson, 1999, pp. 88-93

and if he likes let him boil me down, or do to me whatever he pleases: only he must make me good (ἀπολλύτω με, καὶ εἰ μὲν βούλεται, ἐψέτω, εἰ δ', ὅτι βούλεται, τοῦτο ποιεῖτω: μόνον χρηστὸν ἀποφηνάτω) (285c1-4. tr. Burnet).

Being killed and boiled in the water recalls the myth of Dionysos dismemberment by the Titans⁸⁵. Dionysos is the initiatic God *par excellence*. From the beginning of his existence he undergoes several experiences of destruction to become who he is⁸⁶. Resurrection is the trait typical of this god. Socrates longs for this resurrection as someone god and is ready to offer himself to Dionysodorus⁸⁷. Socrates ironically keeps on ascribing to Dionysodorus a power he is clearly devoid of, whereas is Socrates himself the master of resurrection. If one wanted to ascribe to the character the corresponding role in the myth, one could argue that Cleinias is the young Dionysos dismembered by the Titans, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus are the Titans who have dismembered him, and Socrates is Apollo, who collects Cleinias' pieces and reunifies them instilling in him the desire of wisdom.

Conclusions.

From what has been argued so far, it can be concluded that the *Euthydemus*, far from being exclusively aimed at the refutation of the eristic method, is a relevant dialogue for those dealing with the idea of *care*, both for self and for others, in Plato's philosophy. One of the most relevant points emerged through the analysis carried out in this work is the peculiar relationship between care for self and care for others in this dialogue. Socrates' *care for* Cleinias, since he desires that the young aristocrat becomes as good as possible. What is more, at the end of Socrates'

⁸⁵ Cfr. *Men.* 81B, where the Titans were destroyed by Zeus, and by the ashes of their body the god shaped men, beings made up of a titanic element and a divine one. In another version of the myth transmitted by Olympiodorus (p.111, 14= Kern, 209) in his Comment to the *Phaedo*, the pieces of the dismembered god are collected by Apollo, who regenerates Dionysos. In the myth of the dismembered god the idea of initiatic death is present: a state of death and disintegration preceding the entrance in a new life. In the shamanic tradition the phase preceding the initiation is represented as a dismemberment of the body and a death-like experience; cfr M. Eliade, 1983, pp. 38-42.

⁸⁶ In the most accepted version of the Myth, Zagreus, son of Ades, is torn apart by the Titans; Zeus melts his pieces, making out of them a drink which he makes Semele to drink (Ps. Apoll. III, 4). After Semele's death for which sources report different reasons, Zeus, to avoid his child's death, sewed him on his leg and carried on the gestation until Dionysos' birth. The third experience of destruction is the dismemberment by the Titan and the subsequent resurrection, although not all the versions attest Dionysos' rebirth.

⁸⁷ Dionysodorus in Greek means "gift of Dionysos" and this gift is exactly the resurrection.

exhortation, the true aim Cleinias must achieve is happiness, so that being as good as possible and being happy are deeply connected to each other. Anyway, Socrates does not set out to hand over to Cleinias the wisdom which could make him happy; he is not a supplier of knowledges, as the two brothers claim to be. In the *Euthydemus* Socrates is not a supplier of knowledge, but an educator of desires. In the exhortation Socrates has tried to arouse in Cleinias himself the desire to be as good as possible and commit to pursuing wisdom in order to be happy. Socrates wants Cleinias to be as good as possible, because he *cares for him*; however, the only way to take proper care for Cleinias, Socrates seems to suggest, is to instill in him the desire to take care for himself. Not the painless delivery of an available knowledge, but the incitement of a powerful and even painful desire is what will allow Cleinias to persevere in his pursuit of happiness. Consequently, the best way to care for someone else is to make them to desire to care for themselves. A further interesting remark concerns wisdom and happiness; as argued above, neither wisdom nor happiness are to consider as “threshold concepts”. They are both gradable and perfectible, and the more one commits to pursuing them properly, the higher will be the outcomes of this pursuit. Other interesting point emerged is the relationship between death and care. Before trying to steer Cleinias desire towards the pursuit of wisdom, Socrates lets the brothers wildly refute Cleinias. Cleinias is a well gifted boy, but still naive; what is more important, he does not long actively for wisdom yet. Socrates manages to make out of the brothers’ refutations the destructive power he takes advantage of, so as to trigger in Cleinias the ritual, death-like experience of confusion and loss of control over what he had deemed to know. Only in this condition Cleinias desire, anew made manipulable, can be shaped and steered towards a new aim. This Socratic strategy can be fruitfully compared to what occurs in metallurgy: Cleinias desire is the metal to reshape, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus’ refutations are the fire necessary to melt the metal and Socrates is the blacksmith who will give a new shape to the melted metal (Cleinias’ desire). This involves that those who want to improve themselves and take proper care for themselves must not fear painful and death-like experiences, because often self-improvement requires the removal of traits of our personality, opinions, behavior we are attached to, even if it is clear that they are detrimental to us. Therefore those who want to be as good as possible must not avert pain and death, but make out of them useful tools to foster their improvement. The proper care for oneself and for others as well is not aimed at averting pain and death forever, but at using them as tools to reach a higher well-being. Noteworthy is the double power of words that

in this dialogue comes to light. Euthydemus and Dionysodorus performed their refutations through words; Socrates exhorted Cleinias to pursuit wisdom through words. Inbuilt in the language are both the power to kill and that to revive. The brothers have proved to be acquainted only with the former of these two powers, whereas Socrates, as his use of the refutations carried out by the brothers attest, masters both. Only he knows how to kill properly and revive; he is a sophist better than the brothers themselves, because he masters language in its whole ambiguity, whereas the two brothers know only one side of the coin.

Chapter II: the *Charmides*

The Charmides and self-knowledge

Throughout this difficult work Plato enacts Socrates engaged to discuss, before with Charmides and then with Critias, the virtue of σωφροσύνη, word usually translated as temperance. The traditional notion of σωφροσύνη is an ample one, and it can be said that this virtue traditionally indicates the ability to behave appropriately depending on the kind of social relationship in which one is involved; σῶφρων is, for instance, a son obeying his parents, or a soldier holding the assigned position in the formation, and so on

This virtue of “temperance” involves in addition the ability to show a composed attitude when one finds himself among the others, avoiding that one’s emotions came out in an uncontrolled way¹. The traditional understanding of σωφροσύνη constitutes the ground of the discussion, which heads towards a redefinition of the traditional virtue; in fact Socrates and Critias attempt to redefine σωφροσύνη as self-knowledge, attributing to the virtue an introspective feature which seems to be absent in its traditional understanding². If one considers the examples mentioned

¹ W. Th. Schmidt, 1998, pp. 20-21. In Ap. 28d6-29a1 not living one’s place in the formation is an example of bravery (ἀνδρεία) rather than σωφροσύνη. However, there is no contradiction in considering the same conduct an example of two different virtues; in fact it is an example for different virtues for different reasons. Not living the formation is an example of σωφροσύνη insofar as soldiers stay at their place because they obey to their commander (σωφροσύνη as sticking to one’s role in a relationship). On the other hand, not living the formation is also an example of ἀνδρεία insofar as soldiers do not live the formation because they are ready to risk their life (the readiness to risk one’s life is the feature of the bravery more than σωφροσύνη); this is the reason for which not living the formation occurs in the Apology as an example of bravery; in fact there Socrates stresses the readiness to risk life. Even if σωφροσύνη and bravery are not the same, they cannot be detached from each other: if a soldier were ready to risk his life, but never obeyed his commander and did whatever he wanted, he would not be a good soldier; at most, he would be a bold man or, what is worse, a warlike man who loves war more than peace.

² Cf. K. J. Dover, 1983, pp. 371-385. Charmides, as other early dialogues, is a precious witness of that cultural upheaval which the Athenian society underwent after the Persian wars. Sophists, one of the most relevant offspring of this transformation, started a critic debate on Greek religious and

here, one can conclude that even in the archaic concept of “temperance” is to some extent present, at least *in nuce*, the idea of the importance of knowing oneself; in fact a son obeying his parents realises somehow that he is expected to honor his parents, as well as a soldier is expected to stick to his superior’s orders. In these example people involved act in accordance to the role they play in definite relationships; they know themselves as they know the duties they are expected from others to observe. This self-knowledge of the σωφροσύνη is the knowledge of one’s own role within a relationship and the ability to adjust to the duties deriving from this role. The knowledge of one’s own duties in relation to others is the theoretical frame in which the dialogue is developed; nevertheless the path Socrates tries to open in the context of *Charmides* must lead to intend σωφροσύνη as the knowledge of oneself in relation to what is good for oneself. Critias’ conception of what is good is what causes his definitions of σωφροσύνη to fail to find Socrates’ consent. Even if the relation of σωφροσύνη to the good emerges only in the last definition proposed by Socrates, this relation could provide the key to understand what brings about the final failure of the dialogue. In fact, despite the *aporetic* conclusion of *Charmides*, it can be argued that the dialogue actually provide more answers than the doubts it raises, provided that the relation of the σωφροσύνη to the *good* is not neglected.

The Prologue

Before facing Critias’ attempt to redefine the traditional virtue and its final failure, it may be useful to spend few words about Socrates’ relation to the traditional ideal of the σωφροσύνη. Several hints at this relation emerge even in the first lines of the dialogue; at the beginning of the narration Socrates informs an unnamed friend that he, “arrived from the army at Potidea, and, after some time of absence, he resumed his habitual conversations” (153a1-3, tr. W. R. M. Lamb). The mention of Socrates’ presence at the battle of Potidea in the first year of the war could hint at Socrates’

moral heritage; whence several discussions on traditional values (the custodian of which were Homer and Hesiod’s poems) arose. Telling examples of this climate can be considered the long discussion on the unity of virtues in the *Protagoras* (331a-333b), or the comparison between Ulixes and Achilles in the *Ippias Minor*.

σωφροσύνη as a soldier; this kind of σωφροσύνη belongs to the archaic ideal of the virtue³. The Greek archaic ideal of one's duties as soldier is embodied also in the famous lines of *Apology* in which Socrates states his loyalty to the god Apollo and the mission the divinity assigned to him. This loyalty to the divinity is revealed through Socrates' sticking to the position assigned by the god, τάξιμ μὴ λιπεῖν (28e4-29a1), which symbolises the virtue of the archaic soldier. The respect of the military discipline is a feature of the archaic ideal of "temperance" which Socrates, here as elsewhere, appears to possess. However, the bravery and the observance of military code of behavior does not seem to be the only feature of the archaic σωφροσύνη present in the characterization of Socrates. After bumping into Chaerephon at the entrance of Taureas' gym, who asks Socrates to recount what happened during the battle, the philosopher is led into the gym, where Critias is waiting for Charmides, his pupil and cousin (154a9-10). After answering Chaerephon and other bystanders' questions about the battle, Socrates asks what is the situation of the philosophy like and whether there are some young who stand out in wisdom, in beauty or in both (153d3-5)⁴. Critias states that it is Charmides, his own cousin, who appears to be the most beautiful young among his fellows (154a3-6). Socrates asks Critias who Charmides parents are; Critias answers that the young is son of his uncle Glaukon (154b1). Asking who one's parents are can be considered as a Socrates stratagem to capture Critias' trust, who, as a leading exponent of the Athenian aristocracy, tends to ascribe a relevant role to notions such as ancestry and bloodline; by posing this question, Socrates pretends to hold Critias aristocratic values, what is not the case⁵. Socrates, who was acquainted with Charmides before the beginning of the war, says that he was a beautiful child, but

³ Cf. H. North, 1966, *passim*.

⁴ Socrates' interest in outstanding young people matches the initiatory nature of the Socratic dialogue, as it will be seen below. Charmides, Alcibiades and Cleinias are μαιράκια; they are in that age in which the young Athenians become epebes; that is to say, when the transition from childhood to manhood occurs.

⁵ This does not entail that Plato's Socrates is a sympathiser of democracy. Plato's Socrates never states that a good nature is the consequence of a noble bloodline. Without the proper education, even the best nature can be corrupted; actually, a talented person who fail to receive the proper breeding ends up becoming much more dangerous than someone less gifted.

Critias states that Socrates does not imagine how beautiful Charmides has become now that he is a youth (μειράκιον, 154b3-7). Socrates admits that he is not able to measure beauty and all those who have grown up (οἱ ἐν τῇ ἡλικίᾳ) seem to him to be beautiful; yet, as soon as Charmides turns up in the gym accompanied by a multitude of lovers, the philosopher must acknowledge that Charmides appeared to him “admirable for stature and beauty” (θαυμαστὸς ἐφάνη τό τε μέγεθος καὶ τὸ κάλλος, 154c1). In the following lines, which deserve full quotation, the other feature of traditional “temperance” in the depiction of Socrates straightforwardly comes out:

and all the rest, to my thinking, were in love with him, *such was their astonishment and confusion when he came in, and a number of other lovers were following in his train* (οὕτως ἐκπεπληγμένοι τε καὶ τεθορυβημένοι ἦσαν, ἡνίκ’ εἰσήει—πολλοὶ δὲ δὴ ἄλλοι ἐρασταὶ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὀπισθεν εἶποντο). On the part of men like us it was not so surprising; but when I came to observe the boys I noticed that none of them, not even the smallest, had eyes for anything else, *but that they all gazed at him as if he were a statue* (ἀλλὰ πάντες ὥσπερ ἄγαλμα ἐθεῶντο αὐτόν). (154c1-6, tr. W.R. M. Lamb).

The attitude of the lovers towards Charmides could not be furthest from the traditional σωφροσύνη; contrary to the code of σωφροσύνη, which would impose a dignified behavior and composed attitude, even in presence of the object of one’s desire, they do not even try to conceal their enslavement to Charmides beauty; actually they let the bedazzlement inspired by Charmides emerge, as if they were not afraid of coming across as μανικοί⁶. In his second speech on love in *Phaedrus* Socrates says that the lover would offer sacrifices to his beloved, as if he were a god and a statue (ὡς ἀγάλματι καὶ θεῷ), if he did not feared the reputation for madness (τὴν τῆς σφόδρα μανίας δόξαν, 251a5-6). Both the lovers of Carmides and the lover of Socrates’ second speech in *Phaedrus* consider the beloved as a god; nevertheless, the former make no attempt to assume a moderate behavior, avoiding making fool of themselves, whereas the latter, even if enthusiastic, manages to keep

⁶ The Greek adjective means in this case something between passionate and insane; it can be understood as “so passionate and enthusiastic as to border on the madness”. Chaerephon is described as μανικός at the beginning of the dialogue.

his “public modesty”, refraining from the public display of his passionate feelings⁷. At this point, Chaerephon, as μανικός as the crowd accompanying Charmides, asks Socrates if he does not find that Charmides has a fine face (154d3). Socrates agrees and Chaerephon goes on:

Yet if he would consent to strip (εἰ ἐθέλοι ἀποδύναι), he said, you would think he had no face, he has such perfect beauty of form (154d4-5).

Chaerephon says something quite interesting: Charmides’ body is so beautiful that he who looks at it, would forget Charmides’ face. These lines are relevant; the face, πρόσωπον in the Greek text, is the region of the eyes, that is to say, the part of human body which looks at the others (at others’ behavior); others’ eyes are somehow the origin of traditional σωφροσύνη: the look one directs at the others and that others direct at them make possible the conduct imbued with self-restraint and respect for others’ reactions to one’s behavior. Therefore, regarding Charmides as someone without face means regarding him as someone who cannot exert his social gaze at the others⁸; consequently, there should be no reason to be a “temperate” lover with Charmides, because he cannot demand temperance from his lovers, as he, being faceless to them, lacks that part (the eyes) through which he could demand σωφροσύνη from them⁹. The bystanders agree on Chaerephon’s

⁷ In Socrates’ second speech on love σωφροσύνη, intended as “prudent self-restraint” is an essential aspect of the white steed (253d4-5), that part of the soul which represents values linked to the traditional moral code of Greek world, such as self-restraint, love for a good reputation and the subsequent fear of the loss of others’ respect. The values the white steed symbolizes are based on the others’ gaze; their existence implies the presence of a human community in which everyone is bound to undergo the assessment of his fellows. The white steed represents the desire to enjoy the esteem of the community and to be a model of moral conduct for its members. If one takes into consideration that the black steed yearns to pounce on the beloved because of his bodily beauty and the charioteer desires to be close to the beloved because he can grasp the intellegible beauty through him, it emerges that the only part of the loving soul for which other humans apart from the loved one still exist is the white steed, the only one which care for others’ esteem. It seems to some extent that the white steed is the most sociable part of the human soul.

⁸ J. Schamp, 2000, pp. 103-116.

⁹ The ethical and political value of the others’ look is the theoretical assumption on which the story of Gyges’ ancestor, narrated by Glaukon in *Resp.* II 359b6-360a2. The invisibility would make the

remark; however, Socrates says that, to be truly irresistible, Charmides, besides bodily beauty, should have one more thing (154d8-10). Critias asks what; Socrates answers:

If in his soul, I replied, he is of good grain (εἰ τὴν ψυχὴν, ἣν δ' ἐγώ, τυγχάνει εὖ πεφυκώς). And I should think, Critias, he ought to be, *since he is of your house* (155e1-3).

The appearance of the soul in these lines is essential for at least two reasons: first of all it is thanks to the mention of the soul that the dialogue with Charmides, as we will see below, turns into an initiatory ceremony, and σωφροσύνη is a virtue to acquire through a transformation of the soul itself, as it will be clearer from the analysis of the history of Zalmoxis. The second reason for which the mention of the soul is essential, is that it helps explain in what Socrates' attempt to redefine archaic virtues consists. Socrates himself acknowledges that Charmides' beauty is admirable; nevertheless, Socrates does not join in Chaerephon's intemperate praises of Charmides' beauty, because only the good nature of his soul could make him praiseworthy. Socrates has behaved with temperance, intended as traditional self-restraint, since he has refrained from espousing Chaerephon's excessively passionate attitude; however, his self-restraint differs from that of the traditional ideal of σωφροσύνη. He behaves in a self-controlled way not because he wants to avoid appearing as μανικός – the fear of others' assessment makes no sense in this case, since everyone in the gym proves to be intemperate – but because he believes

justest of the men a criminal who follows only his desires, regardless of what is just or not, since he, as invisible, would not be compelled to account for the wrongdoing he commits. Being visible to someone else seems to be the only thing which prevents humans from following their whims and acting unjustly. This opinion is shared by Antiphon (DK 87 B44) and Critias (DK 88 B25). Critias thought that, to prevent humans from acting against laws, rulers had to invent gods who punish the wrongdoers. Accordingly, humans are always visible to someone else (the gods), even when there is nobody (no human being) looking at them: cf. Casertano, 1985, pp. 447-457; L. Napolitano, 1994, pp. 56-61; G. J. Pendrick, 2002, pp. 32-39.

that it is the beauty of the soul that makes a person irresistible¹⁰. It is this belief (the existence of the soul and the superiority of its beauty to the bodily one) that causes Socrates to behave in such a temperate way; thus, Socrates' temperance does not depend on the others' look, but on his personal view of the supremacy of the beauty of the soul. What is more, this personal view is not only a theoretical achievement, but also a concrete way of behaving. Socrates proves to possess the archaic virtue of self-restrained attitude towards young people; however, the foundation of this virtue in Socrates is different from the traditional one: he is self-restrained not because others expect him to behave like this, but because he ascribes to soul a more important role. This involves that Socrates does not need others' look to act in a temperate way towards Charmides: even if he were alone with him, he equally would act in a temperate way. This is a very important feature of Socratic personality, as it will emerge in the chapter on *Alcybiades I*: proving to be able to behave in accordance with a traditional moral code, but on the grounds of different reasons from the traditional ones. In these few lines of *Charmides* Socrates has shown that he has not provided a merely theoretical redefinition of a traditional virtue, but also practically refounded it on a different basis (no more on others' look, but on soul's supremacy)¹¹.

Socrates as healer and priest

The dialogue as a death-like experience.

Critias assures Socrates that Charmides' soul is naturally gifted; at this point, Socrates proposes examining the young man:

Why then, I said, let us strip that very part of him and view it first, instead of his form
(τί οὖν, ἔφην, οὐκ ἀπεδύσαμεν αὐτοῦ αὐτὸ τοῦτο καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα πρότερον τοῦ

¹⁰ This is an example of Socrates' love for souls: cf. F. Karfik, 2001, pp. 209-222. Socratic care for souls has an undeniable erotic trait; in fact, it is love for gifted souls which leads Socrates to associate the promising young: cf. R. Arbe, 2017.

¹¹ On the internalisation of morality in the Greek culture cf. A. W. H. Adkins, 1972, pp. 60-99; M. Vegetti, 1998, *passim*. This internalisation is a phenomenon which concerns Greek culture overall and the *Charmides* can be considered a witness of it.

εἶδους); for anyhow, at that age, *I am sure he is quite ready to have a discussion* (πάντως γάρ που τηλικούτος ὢν ἤδη ἐθέλει διαλέγεσθαι) (154e6-8).

The verb ἀπεδύσαμεν echoes the infinitive ἀποδῦναι used by Chaerephon; Socrates, contrary to Chaerephon, wants to admire the beauty of a soul, not of a body. If one who wants to admire a body should remove the clothes covering it, what should one remove to admire a soul? The answer is: the body and what pertains to the bodily existence. The removal of the body from the soul, in Plato's terms, is but the death itself according to *Phaed.* 64c4-8¹². Socrates wants Charmides to undergo a “deathlike” procedure which allows the true condition of soul to come to light; this is possible by means of the διαλέγεσθαι. The verb διαλέγεσθαι, rendered as have a discussion, does not mean a mere exchange of opinions; it indicates, as it has already been seen in the case of *Euthydemus*, a procedure in which Socrates poses questions and his interlocutor, often younger than him, has to answer, accounting for his beliefs and his behavior¹³. This kind of διαλέγεσθαι is more similar to a judgement than a mere conversation¹⁴; wherefore the lines of *Charmides* under examination parallel what Socrates says about the judgement of souls in *Gorgias*. Gods have noticed that often wicked people end up in the islands of the blessed, while just people are sent to the Tartarus (523b5-c1). Zeus puts down this situation to the fact that human beings were judged while they were still alive; this involves that they still have their own body when they undergo the judgement; therefore, their bodily beauty, their wealth, their nobility and, in general, what pertains to the worldly life can mislead judges' evaluation (523c3-5). Consequently, Zeus states that human beings must be judged after death when their souls cannot conceal themselves behind earthly seductions and are naked before divine judgement (523d1-e2). Furthermore, also judge's soul must be devoid of any bond to the bodily sphere, because a judge captivated by earthly beauties would emit false sentences; therefore, neither judges nor the judged ones must be bound to the body and bodily life. This comparison helps explain why the διαλέγεσθαι must be a deathlike experience: Socrates must remove Charmides body from his soul to judge him

¹² Cf. *infra*, pp. 452ff.

¹³ Cf. E. Berti, 1987, p. 71; L. Napolitano, 2018.

¹⁴ Cf. H. W. Ausland, 2002, pp. 36-60.

rightly. In *Gorgias* it is said that the judge too must set himself free from bodily bonds, a soul judges another soul.

If the parallel established between *Gorgias* and the lines of *Charmides* quoted above is valid, one could infer that Socrates takes himself to be able to go beyond bodily conditioning to face the very nature of his interlocutor's soul. Accordingly, on account of its being an intercourse between naked souls, the *διαλέγεσθαι* is an afterlife experience. This ability to induce a sort of death-like experience, as it has been argued in the chapter on *Euthydemus* is a priestly feature, which Plato ascribes to Socrates even in *Charmides*. Also, in this dialogue Socrates will try to officiate an initiation, Charmides' initiation to *σωφροσύνη*.

The remedy for the headache

The hint at the death-like experience lets foreshadow Socrates' priestly nature. Now he will be presented also as a healer. Critias agrees with Socrates on letting him have a discussion with Charmides; then he orders a slave to lead the young to them. Before Charmides arrives, Critias suggests that Socrates should pretend to have a remedy for the headache from which Charmides is suffering (155b2-7). Socrates agrees to pretend to have this remedy and in the meanwhile the handsome Charmides has come¹⁵. When Socrates is before Charmides, his previous confidence in his ability to go beyond bodily beauty vacillates (155c6-7). Socrates too ends up seeing inside Charmides cloak; beauty of his body is so dazzling that Socrates feels as a prey before a lion (155d5-e1); Socrates risks failing as a judge, because Charmides bodily charm is swallowing up Socrates' gaze. By looking at Charmides' body, Socrates does not look at his face; the look he is directing at the young cousin of Critias could make the boy *ἀπρόσωπος*, "faceless", devoid of the

¹⁵ Begging Socrates to pretend to have a remedy for headache serves the purpose of developing the theme of the healing power of Socratic dialectic: cf. F. P. Coolidge, 1993, pp. 23-36; A. Pichanick, 2016, pp. 47-66 G. Korobili, K. Stefou, 2020, pp. 201-219. Nevertheless, it also complies with the characterization of Charmides. Throughout the conversation with Socrates, Charmides appears to be quite shy. Probably it is for this shyness that Critias and Socrates must lie; in fact, if Charmides knew that Socrates wants talk to him in order to assess his soul, he probably would not accept to have a dialogue with the philosopher, even so more before his numerous lovers.

right to demand self-restraint from the others (his lovers, in this case). By looking at Charmides like this, Socrates risks becoming as immoderate as Chaerephon and the other admirers of the boy. Before testing the nature of the young, Socrates must test himself; before removing bodily conditionings from Charmides' soul, Socrates must do the same with his own soul; only under this condition he can judge the boy¹⁶.

Charmides asks Socrates if he knows the remedy; Socrates hardly say yes, and when the boy asks him what it consists in, Socrates reveals that:

the thing itself was a certain leaf, but there was a charm to go with the remedy; and if one uttered the charm at the moment of its application, the remedy made one perfectly well; but without the charm there was no efficacy in the leaf (155e6-10).

The word ἐπωδή is quite interesting here because it provides hints at Socratic dialectic and what Socrates is going to do with Charmides. Ἐπωδή, in most ancient times, was a sort of ritual lullaby through which the γοῆς facilitated the entrance of deads' souls in the other world¹⁷. This is consistent with what Socrates is going to do; in fact, he wants to help Charmides to understand what σωφροσύνη is. To do that, the boy must set himself free from bodily conditionings; he must 'die' to undergo the dialectic examination and pass it. Socrates' ἐπωδή, as that of the γοῆς is aimed at helping Charmides in his dialectic travel beyond bodily existence. Ἐπωδή may hints also at Socrates' midwifery. In *Thaetet.*149c9-d1 Socrates says that midwives sing lullabies (ἐπαδούσαι) to facilitate the birth. Accordingly, the act of singing has a high initiatory significance, because it seems to make the passage between words easier¹⁸. In case of Socrates' ἐπωδή is not so hard to see how ἐπωδή as lullaby for deads and ἐπωδή as tool of midwifery can be the same. In fact, in the

¹⁶ Cf. *infra*, pp. 64ff. Cf. M. Eisenstadt, 2011, pp. 84-84.

¹⁷ Cf. W. Burkert, 1962, pp. 36-55.

¹⁸ The so-called Orphic leaves provide a relevant archeological testimony of this significance. Some of them are ritual verses which initiates' souls must spell in the other world; These spells, for instance are aimed at convincing chthonic gods to allow the soul to stay in the other world escaping the cycle of reincarnations. Thus, this charm helped the initiate to complete the transition from a bodily being into an incorporeal soul. Cf. A. Dieterich, 1893, pp. 84-86; Ch. A. Faraone, 2008, pp. 127-134; A. A. Bernabé, 2008.

Theaetetus it is said that Socrates helps males give birth to their opinions. Actually, he wants to help also Charmides bring his opinions to light; however, to do that, Charmides must ‘die’, that is to say, become indifferent to anything (material desires and others’ assessment) which may prevent him from revealing his true condition (his soul’s condition). Consequently, if one espouses this way of thinking, it does not seem unreasonable that one must die to bring to light one’s own children (one’s most intimate beliefs).

Socrates reveals that the ἐπωδή he is going to perform can heal not only the head. This ἐπωδή complies with the approach to illnesses proper of the good doctors, who, when want to heal the eyes, heal also the head together¹⁹. However, since it is useless to heal the head without the body, every doctor deserving this name will always tend to the whole body in order to cure the part appropriately (156b2-c6). Socrates asks Charmides if this method for the treatment of illness seems to him to be correct. The boy claims to agree on this approach. This is essential to Socrates that Charmides agrees; being established that the part cannot be treated without the whole which it belongs to, Socrates regains his previous confidence (156d2-3). He has passed the examination which he had submitted himself; he has managed to set himself free from the bodily conditioning which threatened to enslave him to the seduction exerted by Charmides’ body. Now Socrates can be a right judge of Charmides’ soul and can help the young enter the other world of the Socratic dialectic.

*The tale of Zalmoxis*²⁰

Socrates starts narrating how he came to know this ἐπωδή. It happened during the Athenian expedition to Thracia, when Socrates was serving in the army:

ὥσπερ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἄνευ κεφαλῆς οὐ δεῖ ἐπιχειρεῖν ἰᾶσθαι οὐδὲ κεφαλὴν ἄνευ σώματος, οὕτῃ
learnt it on campaign over there, *from one of the Thracian physicians of Zalmoxis, who
are said to make one immortal* (παρά τινος τῶν Θρακῶν τῶν Ζαλμόξιδος ἰατρῶν, οἱ
λέγονται καὶ ἀπαθανατίζειν). The Thracian said that the Greeks were right in advising

¹⁹ Caring for the whole is the distinguishing feature of the experts: cf. *Gorg.* 503e8-504a3.

²⁰ Z. Petre, 2007, pp. 47-72.

as I told you just now: “but Zalmoxis”, he said, “our king, who is a god, says that as you ought not to attempt to cure eyes without head, or head without body, so you should not treat body without soul (ως οὐδὲ σῶμα ἄνευ ψυχῆς); and this was the reason why most maladies evaded the physicians of Greece that they neglected the whole, on which they ought to spend their pains, for if this were out of order it was impossible for the part to be in order (ὅτι τοῦ ὅλου ἀμελοῖεν οὗ δέοι τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν ποιεῖσθαι, οὗ μὴ καλῶς ἔχοντος ἀδύνατον εἶη τὸ μέρος εὖ ἔχειν) (156d5-e8).

Scholars generally acknowledge the dependence of these lines on Herodotus’ report on Salmoxis, a god worshipped by Getae, a Thracian tribe²¹. In IV, 94,1 Herodotus says that “the Getae believe in immortality (ἀθανατίζουσι) in this way: they hold that they will not die and who is dead goes to the God Salmoxis”. The verb ἀθανατίζειν is rendered, correctly in my opinion, as believe in immortality. However, those who stress too much Plato’s dependence on Herodotus’ report read also the verb ἀπαθανατίζειν as “believe in immortality”, making it intransitive. The correct significance of the verb ἀπαθανατίζειν affects also the reading of οὗ; in fact, if ἀπαθανατίζειν means “believe in immortality”, it would be reasonable that not the doctors, but all the Thracians of Zalmoxis (the Gaetae) share this belief, as it is the case in Herodotus lines; conversely, if ἀπαθανατίζειν means “make immortal”, it is more correct to think that not all the Thracians of Zalmoxis were able to make immortal, but only a minority of them. In my opinion, the subject of the relative clause cannot be but “doctors”, as this is inferable from the role Socrates is playing in this moment. Socrates acts towards Charmides as a healer, as someone who possesses a remedy for the headache; it is arguable that Plato wants to establish a link between Socrates and the “doctors of Zalmoxis”; consequently, it is more probable that the subject of the relative clause is not the Thracians of Zalmoxis, a

²¹ In IV, 95, 1, Herodotus, according to an everemistic perspective, claims that Salmoxis was a man, slave of Pythagoras. The sources used by Herodotus aim at establishing a link between Salmoxis’ acquaintance with Pythagoras and the existence of the belief in the immortality in Thracia. However, the sources available attest Pythagoras’ belief in the immortality of the soul, while nothing is said about the soul in Herodotus’ report; his Salmoxis speaks of immortality in general, maybe an immortality which, contrary to the Pythagorean one, includes also the body.

people, but the “doctors”, those to whom Plato wants to connect his Socrates²². Regarding the meaning of the verb ἀπαθανατίζειν, my opinion is that it means “make immortal”. The dependence on Herodotus ought not prevent from ascribing a transitive meaning to the verb, since Plato is using Herodotus, not reporting him. Now it would be useful to wonder in which meaning these doctors can make immortal. Herodotus reports simply that Gaetae believe that after death they will be by their God Zalmoxis; but no difference is made between a body undergoing annihilation and an eternal soul. However, Herodotus’ text provides at least one hint at the belief in soul’s separation from body. In IV, 95, 4 it is said that Zalmoxis had a subterranean room built, from which he re-emerged after three years. The long stay in a subterranean room (usually a cave) is attributed to shamans²³. In Greek tradition long stays in a cave are attributed to Epimenides²⁴ and, what is more important, to Pythagoras, to whom Herodotus’ sources explicitly connect Zalmoxis. During the journeys ascribed to this legendary features, soul wanders alone in the other world, while the body is abandoned. During this journey, soul is similar to Gods because it knows without the mediation of bodily perceptions; it is, to some extent similar to the immortals, who are incorporeal. This remark can apply also to Plato’s lines under examination. Accordingly, ἀπαθανατίζειν turns out to mean “make immortal” in the meaning of “make someone exist in the same way as the immortals do” in our case without a body. Socrates also, as the doctors, can make

²² Socrates would turn out to be a sort of priest-physician, just like Zalmoxis and his disciples. It is noteworthy that in Thracia and in the black sea area Apollo’s and Asclepius’ cult were strong: cf. M. Konstantinos, 2013, pp. 73ff; this could be connected to the presence in that area of a kind of medicine deeply bound to its ritualistic origins, or, at least, much more than the kind of medicine which was developed by the Hippocratic school. In any case, in the prologue of the *Charmides* Socrates acts as representative of the ritualistic and religiously loaded kind of medicine.

²³ The Katabasis, the descend into a subterranean room, is the place where the shamans have their visions and dreams and their spirit can access another world different from this one: cf. Eliade, 1968, pp. 48-51. Caves are extraordinarily important because of their role in the initiation of the medicine-men in Australia: the future healer of their people, who, to become healer, must undergo a death-like experience of ritual assassination (*ivi*, 53-56): this ritual assassination of the future healers performed in a cave is extremely interesting and casts light over the link between medicine and initiatory death which hides in Plato’s lines.

²⁴ Cf. P. Scarpi, 2002, pp. 25-35.

immortal, that is to say, is able, through dialectic process, to remove his and others' body from their souls, so that these souls can exist, even if for a while, as immortal beings, that is to say, as beings living beyond bodily conditionings²⁵. The further important point of this passage is the asymmetric relation between soul and body. In the analogy the soul is to the body what the head is to the eyes; one could glimpse in this comparison the instrumental relationships developed in *Alcibiades I*: as eyes are not what sees, but that through which it is possible to see²⁶, so the body is not what acts but that through which the soul acts. In this analogy also a dependence relationship is outlined: in fact, head continues to exist and to work, even if eyes are removed, as Oedipus' story shows²⁷; on the contrary if head is badly damaged eyes stop working out. Thus, it can be inferred that a damaged body does not necessarily affect the soul, whereas a damaged soul (a wicked one) can affect the body.

So far the analogy has proven fruitful; nevertheless there is one aspect under which the relation of the soul to the body and that of the body to his parts are more difficult to compare. Body contains its parts; may this suggest that *soul contains body*²⁸? Soul can contain body in the meaning that it provides body with its functions, in the same way as the body as wholeness provides every part with its function²⁹. In both case *it is the entire that establishes what every part has to do to benefit the entire and itself as well; accordingly, only by knowing the entire it is possible to know if the part is healthy or sick.*

²⁵ The interpretation here proposed of the verb ἀπαθανατίζειν is grounded on what is argued in Ferrari, 2013.

²⁶ Cf. *Theaetetus*. 184c1-e5. Essential references to the importance of the head are to find in the *Timaeus* (44d3-45a2; 90a2-7); furthermore this dialogue provides a thorough description of the phenomenon of sight (45b2ff.). Cf. F. G. Hermann, 2013, pp. 281-307.

²⁷ Actually, it seems that blindness is accompanied by a knowledge and a wisdom unreachable to the sighted people, as the case of Tiresias and Homer (considered blind in the antiquity) suggest.

²⁸ In *Tim.* 36d7-e5 it is said that the soul world contains and envelops the body of the universe. This does not mean that soul *physically* envelops something just as wrapping envelops a gift. In fact, soul not only envelops the universe, *but also pervades it.*

²⁹ This can be inferred also from *Alc.* 130a1ff. In fact soul, as user and ruler of body, makes body work and carry out those tasks which it could not fulfill, if it were not ensouled.

This principle is stated in the following lines: all the good and the evil (καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ τὰ ἀγαθὰ) to the body and to the *entire man* (παντὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ) derives from the soul; therefore, it is essential to take care for it (the soul) more than the body, as said in *Ap.* 30a5-b3, because its good state depends on soul's conditions (156e8-157a). Human soul is superior to body not because it cannot be damaged, but because its evils harm the body³⁰. To avoid that a soul get sick, it is necessary to *care it with charms* (θεραπεύεσθαι δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐπωδαῖς τισιν); these charms, Socrates claims:

are words of the right sort (τοὺς λόγους εἶναι τοὺς καλοὺς): by the use of such words is temperance engendered in our souls, and as soon as it is engendered and present, we may easily secure health to the head, and to the rest of the body also (σωφροσύνη ἐγγίγνεσθαι, ἧς ἐγγενομένης καὶ παρουσίας ῥάδιον ἤδη εἶναι τὴν ὑγίειαν καὶ τῇ κεφαλῇ καὶ τῷ ἄλλῳ σώματι πορίζειν).

The beautiful speeches are but the Socratic dialectic³¹. In these lines we have a hint at the Socratic refoundation of the traditional concept of σωφροσύνη; it is engendered through Socrates' speeches³², intended as ἐπωδαί, which, as seen above, facilitate the transition between different worlds (this world and the other one, mother's womb and city). According to these lines, the abode of the σωφροσύνη is one's own soul, not others' look (although in the Socratic refoundation this look is no more the origin of the virtue, this does not involve that for Socrates is unimportant). This σωφροσύνη cannot only provide health to body, but also to soul itself. As we have seen also the soul can get sick; if σωφροσύνη dwells in the soul, it means that in the soul resides the virtue through which the soul can *care for itself, so as to be able to care for the body*. It is implicitly outlined already in these lines the question of the existence of beings endowed with reflexive power, that is to say, to direct at themselves the same act as they direct at other beings³³. Socrates appears

³⁰ Accordingly, if one satisfies one's desires in an unrestrained way (the case of a disordered soul: cf. *infra*, pp. 448-450; 458-459), sooner or later one will end up harming one's own body

³¹ Cf. Th. Tuozzo, 2011, pp. 123-132.

³² As it will be seen below, these *logoi* are Socrates' refutations.

³³ Soul's ability to direct its faculty at itself is summed up in the power to move itself. It is indeed by means of this self-movement that soul can move also beings different from itself (the bodies)

to suggest that σωφροσύνη is the virtue through which soul cares for itself and consequently other things in the world (included the body). This reflexive virtue is the true remedy (φάρμακον) Socrates advises Charmides to assume.

Socrates ἐπωδαί are aimed at making easier to Charmides the passage from a traditional ideal of σωφροσύνη to the Socratic one based on the ability to evaluate oneself impartially. Charmides is temperate in a traditional meaning; he acts in a certain way only because of the fear inspired by others' assessment, without ever questioning it. To acquire the σωφροσύνη in the Socratic meaning, Charmides must have the courage to undergo *a judgement in the other world, the world of Socratic dialectical praxis, a world in which bodily beauty, wealth, public honors and nobility does not matter anymore*³⁴. The remedy to find is different from any other traditional remedy. Remedies administered by doctors restore the conditions of the body before the illness; the patient will be always dependent on doctors' wisdom. Σωφροσύνη is a remedy through which soul becomes able to care for itself; therefore the patient will be able to know the illnesses of his soul when they occur. Socrates therefore tries to officiate a ritual of passage in which Charmides must die as shy boy dependent on his tutor and intemperate lovers, reviving as a free man able to appreciate to what extent his soul is good or bad and consequently deal with his defaults. In this ritual the role of priest and that of healer become one thing, since the initiatory process should culminate in the acquisition of a remedy. Socrates, as the doctors of Zalmoxis, will make Charmides immortal because, by leading him to the discovery of his reflexive σωφροσύνη, he will help him to acquire that virtue through which men become able to judge themselves, appreciating their own defaults and dealing with them irrespective of any bodily

Phaedr. 245c1-246e2; *Leg. X*, 896e-897a. Cf. S. Gertz, 2010, pp. 73-87; A. Vasiliu, 2021, pp. 395-403. The two mentioned passages are essential, since they show the relationship between the capability of moving and that of caring.

³⁴ This does not mean that Socrates wants Charmides to give up his nobility or his riches; what he wants is that, during the dialogue, things like nobility, wealth and others' assessment must not play any role in Charmides' answers. The Socratic dialogue is an afterlife experience because soul cannot hide behind those things, such as bloodline, wealth, political power, and even charm, which make blind those who are attracted by them. In the Socratic dialogue the interlocutor's soul cannot hide: it is naked as if it found itself before the other world judge. However, if soul is scared and refuses to undertake this "afterlife" judgment of Socratic dialectic, the dialogue is doomed to fail.

conditioning (included others' intemperate admiration) which could persuade men to be indulgent with themselves³⁵. All this, it goes without saying, it is possible only if Charmides accepts to be destroyed as a bodily being and be evaluated only just a soul. However, as it will be seen, Charmides will lack the courage.

Socrates restates Thracian's prohibition to administer the remedy to someone who is not ready to submit their soul to the ἐπωδαί/*logoi* (157b2-4); what is more, Socrates claims to have sworn to the Thracian that nobody, as beautiful and noble they may be, will persuade him to give them the remedy before the charm. Socrates has implicitly told Charmides that he must undergo the charm, if he wants the remedy (157b9-c6). Critias correctly understands that Socrates is going to do so that Charmides become better in his understanding (τὴν διάνοιαν [...] βελτίων γενέσθαι). Socrates' care for Charmides (pointed at in the text by means of the verb θεραπεύειν) is not aimed at restoring a previous state; instead, Socrates wants Charmides to become better than he is now; *Socrates' care, as aimed at helping the patient to acquire a virtue, has a transformative power, not a mere restorative one*. However, Critias claims that, at least among his peers, Charmides is σωφρονέστατος as well as he is the most beautiful (157d7-9).

Socrates ironically puts Charmides' excellence down to the excellence and nobility of his bloodline (157e10-158a8)³⁶. However, although his beauty is undisputable and can rightly be connected to his ancestors, there is no guarantee that Charmides is also σώφρων. There are only two ways: Charmides is σώφρων and needs neither Zalmoxis' nor Abaris' charms³⁷; thus, he can immediately get the leaf; or he is not σώφρων enough and must undergo the charm ordered by the Thracian. To resolve the question Socrates asks the boy if he regards himself as sufficiently σώφρων or not (157c3-5).

³⁵ Regarding the indulgence with oneself, originating from *an excessive and wrong* self-love cf. *Leg. V*, 731d6-e5 (Cf. G. Cusinato, 2021, pp. 200-203). Such a self-love is dangerous because it makes unable to evaluate oneself; it leads to *amathia* (cf. *supra*, pp. 15ff.)

³⁶ The reader of *Charmides* must keep in mind that Critias and Charmides were Plato's relatives. By criticising the naive confidence in someone's excellence due to that of the ancestors, without any education, Plato is distancing himself from a certain kind of aristocratic way of thinking which he saw embodied by some members of his own family.

³⁷ Cf. *infra*, pp. 157-158.

Charmides admits to feeling uncomfortable with the question; in fact, if he denies being σώφρων, Critias and those who claim that he is σώφρων turn out to be liars; on the other hands by claiming to be σώφρων, he would come across as odious (because of his *hybris*) (158d1-4).

Charmides' definitions of virtue

Socrates understands Charmides' embarrassment; nevertheless, he exhorts him to inquire together if he possesses the virtue or not, so that Socrates will not resort to his medical art (e1-2). Charmides is willing to submit to the examination Socrates takes to be the most profitable. The best way to start the inquiry is asking Charmides himself as what he holds that σωφροσύνη is; in fact, if this virtue is present in the young, it can provide some perception (αἴσθησίν τινα παρέχειν) from which the boy can derive an opinion (δόξα)³⁸ of what σωφροσύνη is (159a2-4). Knowing interlocutors' perceptions is essential to Socrates, for, as it has been observed in the *Euthydemus*, his elenctic strategy is not an impersonal process, but one which Socrates accurately tailors to his interlocutors' life and ways of thinking. Secondly, asking the interlocutor, even so more a young one, to provide a definition based on his own experience serves the purpose of encouraging him as well as obtaining some rough material from which to start developing the discussion³⁹.

Charmides, still hesitant, suggests that σωφροσύνη is “doing everything orderly and quietly (τὸ κοσμίως πάντα πράττειν καὶ ἡσυχῇ) walking in the streets,

³⁸ The connection between perceptions and opinions are emphasized in *Soph.* 264a4-b3 and *Phil.* 39b2-c2. Opinion, due to its dependency on sensible perceptions and memories, which could be false, is an unreliable form of knowledge; whence also the expectations of pleasure and pain based on this unstable material need ongoing examination, since pain and pleasure could direct at erroneous targets; J.A. Jimenez, 2016, pp. 155-160. It is true that opinion, when correct, can be a criterion for the action as effective as knowledge; however, contrary to knowledge, opinion, albeit correct, cannot give account of its correctness. Besides, Socrates' posing questions to Charmides about his perceptions mirrors medical procedure of questioning the patient on what he complains, that is to say, what the patient perceives.

³⁹ Cf. M. Tuozzo, 2011, pp. 44-47. On the therapeutic power of Socrates' *elenchos* in the *Charmides* see also W. Schmid, 2002, pp. 235-240, who stresses also how the elenctic procedure affects not only the cognitive dimension of the interlocutors, but also their emotional world.

talking, and doing everything else of that kind” (159b3-5). In this first attempt σωφροσύνη is a feature of behaviours. This is the kind of σωφροσύνη people expect Charmides and his peers to show in public; it is something observable by others⁴⁰. To refute this first attempt, Socrates asks his interlocutor if he thinks that σωφροσύνη belongs to admirable things (οὐ τῶν καλῶν μέντοι ἡ σωφροσύνη, 159b10-c1). Charmides cannot help but agree; in fact, he displays σωφροσύνη in order to be admired from others. At this point Socrates, in a sophistic way, gives to the word ἡσυχιότης the meaning of “slowness” and on this ground provides several counterexamples to Charmides’ definition: it is more admirable (καλλίον) to write quickly (ταχύ) than slowly (ἡσυχῆ); more admirable to read quickly than slowly (βραδέως). And the same applies to playing the lyre, fighting, and so on (159c1-d3)⁴¹. Socrates can conclude: “I said, that in the body, at least, it is not quietness, but the greatest quickness and nimbleness that is most honorable” (159d5-7). Therefore at least in the body, quickness appears to be σωφρονέστερον than slowness, provided that σωφροσύνη must be something admirable. This kind of refutation works only as long as one ascribes, as Socrates does, to the word ἡσυχιότης the meaning of “observable slowness in performing actions”⁴².

Socrates goes on to deal with the qualities of the soul in order to prove that also in soul ἡσυχιότης cannot be σωφροσύνη; the previous slowness applies to this second part of the refutation and this time σωφροσύνη becomes slowness in learning, slowness in remembering and being reminded; slowness in understanding

⁴⁰ Charmides’ answer is influenced also by Socrates statement according to which the presence of this virtue should produce some perception, αἴσθησίν τινα. The most perceptible from the outside kind of σωφροσύνη is that which comes out in behaviors. Accordingly, Socrates words themselves seem to have led Charmides to this tentative definition.

⁴¹ Reading, writing, fighting and playing the lyre were the necessary requirements in the education of every young Athenian aristocrat.

⁴² Charmides probably by ἡσυχιότης means also “absence of efforts”, “ability to perform without showing difficulties”. In this meaning it is not impossible that an action be performed ἡσυχῆ and fast at the same time; an expert guitarist for instance can play fast and nonetheless be calm during the performance.

what is said by one's teachers⁴³. Hence, states Socrates, "in all which pertains to body and soul as well actions of quickness are more admirable than those of slowness and quietness" (160b2-4).

The ἐπωδὴ Charmides must undergo is the elenctic process itself; Socratic refutations are the beautiful logoi which allow the patient to assume the remedy; they are the ritual charms which facilitate the passage from a world to another. Accepting to be refuted means noticing one's own false and unfounded opinions; one comes to look at oneself as at someone else. By accepting refutations, one loses the immediate adhesion to what he has believed so far and gains that distance from oneself through which one can see oneself more clearly than before. What is more, this first refutation represents in itself the same itinerary Charmides must go through: in the refutation Socrates has moved from the body to the soul; in the same way Charmides must leave the idea of σωφροσύνη based on the perceptible attitude to move closer to the soul, which is the true abode of the virtue under examination. Since ἡσυχιότης never or in few cases is more admirable than quickness⁴⁴, it can be concluded that ἡσυχιότης cannot be σωφροσύνη, because σωφροσύνη is always admirable, not only sometimes (160c1-d3).

Σωφροσύνη as αἰδώς

Charmides consents to this refutation. Socrates exhorts the young interlocutor to try again:

Once more then, I went on, Charmides, attend more closely and look into yourself (μᾶλλον προσέχων τὸν νοῦν καὶ εἰς σεαυτὸν ἐμβλέψας); reflect on the quality that is given you by the presence of temperance, and what quality it must have to work this

⁴³ Apart Charmides and his parents, teachers are the most important people in this period of boy's life. It is to them that Charmides must display his σωφροσύνη; being admired by them as sophron is what matters to Charmides most.

⁴⁴ In the cases in which slowness is more admirable the Socratic dialogue can be included. In fact, this kind of dialogue cannot be finished quickly and needs time so that both interlocutors can benefit from it; On the importance of time in dialectic discussion cf. *Theaet.* 172d4-e4. On this passage of the *Theaetetus* cf. P. Butti de Lima, 2002, pp. 91-96; E. Spinelli, 2002, pp. 201-215.

effect on you. Take stock of all this (πάντα ταῦτα συλλογισάμενος) and tell me, like a good, brave fellow, what it appears to you to be (160d5-10).

The presence of the verb ἐμβλέπειν is quite interesting, since this verb plays an important role also in *Alcibiades I*, in those famous lines where Socrates says that “the face of him who looks into his own eye (τοῦ ἐμβλέποντος εἰς τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν) appears in the eyes of person in front of him, as in a mirror” (132 e5-a1). Socrates refutation works as a mirror that sends back to the interlocutor his own thoughts so that he can see them and assess them rightly as a mirror sends back to the person before it his own image⁴⁵. Socrates puts a mirror before Charmides; this is the necessary (not sufficient) condition so that Charmides can *internalize* this mirror and look at himself independently. Thanks to the mirror provided by the first refutation Charmides can now direct, still in a rudimentary way, his look at himself. This is important for two reason: firstly, by acquiring this still rudimentary ability to look at himself, Charmides prepares to die as mortal young men bound to bodies and revive as someone who, by looking at himself, accedes the “afterlife world” of Socratic dialectic since Charmides, by looking into himself starts undressing his soul; that is to say, he starts distancing himself from those conditioning which prevent him from seeing who he really is. Furthermore, Socrates, by exhorting Charmides to look at himself, means implicitly to tell the young that he has eyes and a face and consequently the possibility to require σωφροσύνη from the others; on the contrary Charmides’ admirers and Critias himself, as it will be clearer below, look at him as a faceless. Now Socrates’ questioning starts a regressive move into the soul⁴⁶: he asked Charmides as which *perceptions* σωφροσύνη produces; now he wants to know what σωφροσύνη must be to produce such behaviors. Socrates has shifted the focus from the body to soul; Charmides must prepare to abandon the observable realm to dive into the depths of his soul. The other interesting point is that Socrates advises Charmides to look into himself to grasp what σωφροσύνη must be. In the prologue Socrates said that thanks to beautiful speeches σωφροσύνη

⁴⁵ Cf. C. A. de Bravo Delorme, 2019, pp. 169-180. Thanks to his refutations Socrates compels his interlocutors to look at themselves. Thus, he helps them develop that ability, looking at oneself, without which self-care would be impossible : cf. V. Sukàv, 2016, pp. 357-368.

⁴⁶ Cf. Chapter III, note 36.

is engendered in the soul. Then if the soul is the abode of σωφροσύνη and Charmides must look into himself to answer as what σωφροσύνη is as to cause him to act in a certain way, it is reasonable to glimpse in these lines the identification between self and soul developed in *Alc.* 131a1-c11.

Charmides tries to examine himself (πρὸς ἑαυτὸν διασκεψάμενος). Now he can put forth his second definition:

Well, I think, he said, that temperance makes men ashamed (αἰσχύνεσθαι) or bashful (αἰσχοντηλόν), and that temperance is the same as modesty (αἰδώς) (160e5-6).

Charmides seems to proceed in the right way; he has moved from the observable feature of behaviors to αἰδώς, the invisible cause which brings them about. Nevertheless, even this definition is not enough, although it indicates that Charmides is gradually setting himself free from bodily and observable behavior to move to their origin in soul. Socrates refutes this attempt in a remarkable way. First of all he makes Charmides consent that σωφροσύνη is not only admirable, but also good (ἀγαθόν, 160e5-6); that is to say, σωφροσύνη must make good those who practice it (160e12). To state that this does not apply to αἰδώς, Socrates uses a verse from Homer: “αἰδώς is not good for a needy man” (*Od.* XVII 347)⁴⁷. Charmides proves to agree on what Homer says. Therefore, it follows that αἰδώς cannot be the searched virtue, since σωφροσύνη is always good and makes good those who practice it, whereas αἰδώς can be good as well as no good according to cases.

Nevertheless, αἰδώς can be damaging; it is damaging for instance when one cares about what may think immoderate men such as Charmides lovers; displaying modesty and shame for this kind of men is useless, since they do not seem to be able to use this modesty on their turn⁴⁸. Αἰδώς is not good in itself; it is good, for instance, when one knows with whom one should associate. It is the link to what is good that could help Socrates and Charmides to find an acceptable definition of σωφροσύνη; neglecting the relation of σωφροσύνη to the good is what determine

⁴⁷ Αἰδώς and δίκη are the pillars of human society in *Prot.* 320c-322d: cf. G. Kerferd, 1953, pp. 42-45.

⁴⁸ Cf. *supra*, 103-104. This does not mean that one should be unrestrained with unrestrained people; it only means that one should avoid their company.

the failure of the dialogue. Besides, the use of a verse from Homer to refute Charmides' definition is far from casual; this is a hint at the inclination of the young men to poetry, but it is also a tool through which Socrates tries to arouse in him the pain of the contradiction. Defining σωφροσύνη as modesty/shame, despite focusing more on the inner world than the previous one, nonetheless complies with traditional moral code. This shame, to put it in Nietzschean terms, is the presence of the others in oneself⁴⁹; a feature which humans, as sociable beings, possess. Socrates submits to Charmides a line in which Homer seems to contradict that moral code; Homer, which is regarded as the backbone of this moral code. Charmides adjusts to tradition inasmuch he adjusts to Homer; however now it appears that Homer and traditional education sometimes do not agree with each other. Through this contradiction Charmides should become aware of the contradictions present in his own education and the cultural heritage bequeathed to him.

Furthermore, this is the first serious attempt from Socrates to kill Charmides in an initiatic way⁵⁰. Charmides in fact is a young aristocrat whose personal identity rests upon loyalty to Homeric heritage; the possibility that Homer contradicts the same moral code which is traced back to the poet himself threatens Charmides in the scariest way. The person itself he has been so far becomes something dubious. This shows once again that the Socratic dialogue is not a merely theoretical activity: the possibility that some convictions, even those which have shaped our personality until a certain point, are to be given up, it something extraordinarily stressful and emotionally demanding. This emotional upheaval accompanying the death-like experience of Socrates' refutations scares a lot of people and numerous interlocutors would rather continue hold on to his past life until death than kill the person they have been for all their life. The contradiction with oneself makes oneself visible to oneself, and this becoming visible to oneself is necessary to pursue σωφροσύνη intended in the Socratic way.

⁴⁹ F. Nietzsche uses similar words in the aphorism 116 of the *Gay Science* in order to describe morals.

⁵⁰ This arousing contradictions in the soul of the interlocutor/initiate is the aim pursued by means of the elenctic procedure: cf. *supra*, pp. 19ff. However, the inner contradiction is not the aim itself, as it is for Euthydemus and Dionysodorus (cf. *supra*, pp. 45ff.). In the Socratic dialectic, discovering one's contradiction is that which triggers the will to improve oneself.

However, at this point Charmides is too scared to go on. He gives up, although so far he has been a good interlocutor; he is not ready to set himself free from his body, from the social conditionings, and from himself; that is to say, from the self he is so proud to be⁵¹.

*Σωφροσύνη ας τὸ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν*⁵²

Therefore, to avoid facing this internal tension, Charmides diverts Socrates focus to a third definition, according to which σωφροσύνη should be doing one's own things (τὸ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν, 160b7). Charmides admits that he has heard this definition from someone else⁵³. The young man has failed to face Socratic dialectic; nevertheless, Socrates accepts to examine this new definition; however it will not be easy to grasp the true meaning of these words, since they look like *a riddle* (αἰνίγματι, c10)⁵⁴. They have a meaning which is not immediately evident. Socrates asks Critias if he thinks that the scribe does something when he writes and reads; Charmides says yes. Socrates goes on: the scribe writes and reads not only his own name and teaches boys to read and write non only their own names, but also enemies' names as well as their friends' names and their own (161d5-8). Charmides consents to these remarks. Socrates argues that pupils learning to write others' names are not meddling and do not lack σωφροσύνη. This applies also to other productive crafts, such as medicine, carpentry and weaving (e7-10); in fact a

⁵¹ For the ethical value of the *aporia* cf. J. Szaif, 2017, pp. 35-47. It could be that Socrates is demanding too much from Charmides who, after all, is just a teen-ager. This could be true if Socrates' aim were to receive a definition of σωφροσύνη. However, Socrates' aim is not to know this definition from Charmides but make his certitudes vacillate so that he is compelled to give them up. Cf. V. Politis, 2008, pp. 1-34.

⁵² L. Kucera, 2007, pp. 112-122; J. Jinek, 2007, pp. 86-111; K. Thein, 2007, pp. 67-85.

⁵³ That is to say from Critias. However, if it is arguable that Critias himself heard these words from Socrates, the entire dialogue would turn out to be as Socrates' self-defense against the distorted interpretations of his words given by some prominent personalities, Critias in this case. If this were true, Charmides should be regarded as another Socrates' apology.

⁵⁴ From now on Plato starts to disseminate hints at the god Apollo, the tutelary deity of philosophical commitment. Apollo's words are riddle, since they convey the truth, but this truth is not immediately graspable. They must be interpreted, as Socrates in *Ap.* 23a-b5 does.

doctor caring *others' bodies* and *not only his own*, a carpenter building *others' houses* and *not only his own*, a tailor weaving *clothes for others* and *not only for oneself* are σώφρονες.

Socrates remarks do not indicate that τὸ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν is an erroneous definition; they indicate that it is essential to give to the words ἑαυτοῦ the correct meaning. If one reads τὰ ἑαυτοῦ in the meaning of what pertains to a singular individual bodily separated from the others, with individual interests having nothing to do with others' interests, then a doctor, for instance, is not doing his own things when he cares for others. However, σωφροσύνη must make people good and someone doing his own business in this way cannot be good. In the same way a city in which everyone acts like this is not well ruled:

Well then, I went on, do you think a state would be well conducted (εὖ οἰκεῖσθαι) under a law which enjoined that everyone should weave and scour his own (ἑαυτοῦ) coat, and make his own shoes, and his own flask and scraper, and everything else on the same principle of not touching the affairs of others (τῶν μὲν ἀλλοτρίων) but performing and doing his own for himself? (161e8-162a1).

A city ruled like this could not be well ruled; however, σωφροσύνη must be good, as Charmides himself agrees; therefore, doing one's own things intended in that sense (οὔτω) cannot be σωφροσύνη (162a8-9). The use of the adverb seems to suggest that not the definition, but its understanding could be erroneous. Therefore, there is no contradiction between this refutation and what Socrates said in *Republic*. Firstly, Socrates takes for granted that individuals are not self-sufficient (*Resp.* II, 369b5-6). Therefore one must provide one's own work to others and others will do the same; everyone provides his own expertise to those who not have the same skills, so that the principle of τὸ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν in *Republic*, being based on the lacking nature of individuals, leads to collaboration; conversely in these lines of Charmides the same principle, being based on the self-sufficient nature of individual, leads to mutual isolation⁵⁵.

⁵⁵ The principle of the οἰκειοπραγία, defended in *Resp.* IV, 434a-435a, serves the purpose of avoiding that in the city people do not try to usurp eachothers' competences. Usurping others' competences

This difficulty, Socrates says, demonstrates that he who uttered these words was riddling, for nobody could be so silly to regard σωφροσύνη as this sort of doing one's one business (a11-13). Charmides himself consents that he heard these words from someone who seems to be quite wise; Socrates suggests that he drew upon this riddle owing to the fact that it is difficult to know what τὸ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν is. However, Charmides says, it can be that even the speaker of the words under examination does not know their meaning. As it will be clear below, Charmides heard these words from Critias and saying that the speaker himself did not know their meaning cannot but bother Critias. However, there may be in these lines even a concealed significance. Socrates undertakes the interpretation of these words as they were a riddle; this is the first definition in the dialogue Socrates takes so seriously. He suggests that it is not erroneous, but it can be misunderstood; hence it needs interpreting. Plato in these lines of *Charmides* has Socrates facing this third definition as if it were an oracle of the god Apollo, the *enigmatic god par excellence*. In this case here Socrates is not only refuting the understanding of some words, but refuting an interpretation of the words under examination on Apollo's behalf, the god whom in the *Apology* he swears to serve. The speaker of the third definition is Critias to Charmides and *Apollo himself to Socrates*.

Critias invades the discussion.

Critias, bothered by Charmides' insinuation, decides to intervene in the discussion; he do not even try to conceal his rage and harshly reproaches Charmides for saying that the speaker of the definition himself ignores the meaning of the words. He mistreats Charmides, "as a poet does with an actor who mishandles his verses on the stage" (162d3-5, tr. W.R. M. Lamb). Critias, by acting so rudely towards Charmides before other people, displays his lack of calmness and shame/modesty, which above appeared as features of the traditional σωφροσύνη⁵⁶.

is πολυπραγμοσύνη, the meddling in what is beyond one's skills. This kind of οικειοπραγία is aimed at improving relationships, not at making them unnecessary.

⁵⁶ Critias' rude attitude recalls that of Thrasymachus and Callicles, the spokespersons of tyranny: cf. I. Jordovic, 2019, pp. 105-108; 139-151. Cf. M. Centanni, 1997.

At the beginning of this analysis, it has been argued that Socrates tries to refound σωφροσύνη; nevertheless he includes in his refoundation the features of the traditional ideal. Critias' attempt, on the contrary, does not contemplate this inclusion; his attitude indicates that he has done away with traditional σωφροσύνη⁵⁷. Charmides on the other hand is happy to step aside and back out of the challenges of Socrates' dialectic, which he has not been able to face. Now Socrates' interlocutor is Critias. The philosopher resumes the inquiry:

That is good, then, I said. Now tell me, do you also concede what I was asking just now that all *craftsmen make something* (τοὺς δημιουργοὺς πάντα ποιεῖν τι)? Critias: "I do". Socrates: "And do you consider *that they make their own things only, or those of others also* (τὰ ἑαυτῶν μόνον ποιεῖν ἢ καὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων)?" Critias: "Those of others also". Socrates: "And are they temperate in not making their own things only?" "Yes: what reason is there against it?" he said. "None for me", I replied; "but there may be for him who, after assuming that temperance is doing one's own business, proceeds to say there is no reason against those also who do others' business being temperate". "And have I, pray", he said, "admitted that *those who do others' business* (οἱ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων πράττοντες) are temperate? Or was my admission *of those who make* (τοὺς ποιοῦντας) things?" "Tell me", I said, "do you not call making and doing the same?" (162e5-163b1).

Socrates replaces the verb πράττειν with ποιεῖν, which Critias does not fail to notice. This replacement is aimed at showing Critias' closeness to the contemporary sophistic culture, in particular to Prodicus, whose famous distinctions of words are echoed in these lines⁵⁸; besides, through this distinction it is possible to introduce in the dialogue the theme of the relation of σωφροσύνη to the good, which Charmides failed to grasp.

Resorting to Hesiod's authority⁵⁹, Critias explains that some jobs, such as shoemaking, pickle-selling and serving the stews (163b5-7), are blameworthy to

⁵⁷ Cf. G.A. Press, 2001, pp. 255-256.

⁵⁸ Cf. DK 84 A9; A11; A13; A14; A16; A19.

⁵⁹ For Critias' use of Hesiod's verse (*op.* 309) and its distortion, cf. N. Van der Ben, 1985, pp. 35-39 and Th. Tuozzo, 2011, pp. 171-178; it is to note that Critias regards as blameworthy craftsmen's

those practicing them. Hence it follows that *the poet held that making is different from doing and working* (ποίησιν πράξεως καὶ ἐργασίας ἄλλο ἐνόμιζεν). Making in fact can be blameworthy *if it is detached from the admirable* (ὅταν μὴ μετὰ τοῦ καλοῦ γίγνηται), whereas work is never blameworthy. Only such a making can be working and doing. Therefore, one's own business would be, in Critias' reading of Hesiod, things admirably and usefully (καλῶς τε καὶ ὠφελίμως) made. Socrates allows Critias to use the words he likes the most; however, he asks him if he says that σωφροσύνη is this doing of good things (τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν πράξιν, 163e1). Critias says yes.

This is an important step in the discussion; this definition is not a new one, but an interpretation of “*doing one's own things*”. Now one's own things turns out to be *good things*. This good has *always a relational structure* as it is clear in the case of crafts; every craftman always produces for his own as well for other's sake. These are maybe the lines of the dialogue in which a potential solution to the question of σωφροσύνη seems to come to light: it might be doing one's one thing in the meaning of doing what is good both for oneself and others as well. In these lines the necessary relational structure of the “*self*” is emerging, moreover Socrates himself acknowledges that Critias could be right (164a1). However, Socrates asks Critias “if he holds that men, when act temperately (σωφρονοῦντας ἀνθρώπους) ignore that they are acting temperately (ἀγνοεῖν ὅτι σωφρονοῦσιν, a2-3). Critias says not.

Socrates puts forth as example the relationship *doctor/patient*: a doctor in fact, by healing someone else, does what is good and useful both for himself and for the patient (164a9-b2). However, if a doctor, not knowing if he is curing his patients well or not, accomplished a good outcome (patient's recovery), nevertheless this doctor, Socrates suggests, would act with σωφροσύνη; he would act usefully, since acting with σωφροσύνη and acting usefully (both for oneself and for others) are, according to Critias, the same. This involves that sometimes doers can be σώφρονες without knowing it. In everyday life it is not unusual that good outcomes descend from unaware actions; however, if crafts, as in this case, are the paradigm of σωφροσύνη, unaware accomplishments of good outcomes are to rule out, since no

activity; that is to say, those who need to work for living. This reveals the aristocratic biases of this character.

craftman obtains good outcomes ignoring how to obtain them. Nevertheless, there are some crafts more exposed than others to others' behaviors. A potter for instance produces vases and obtains good outcomes regardless of those who buy them. Doctors instead sometimes need patients' help to obtain patients' healing: a doctor in fact can administer remedies, prescribe a diet; however, the patient may decide not to comply with doctor's orders, so that the treatment fails despite doctor's skills. Doctor and patient are not equal, since doctor possesses the skills the patient needs; nevertheless the patient has the power to help doctor with his collaboration. *Therefore, health is the outcome of a common effort towards a relational good.*

This feature of the *cure* is present also in *Socrates' care*. Socrates in the prologue acts as a doctor towards Charmides, because he wants to administer to the young a *remedy the young needs*. Σωφροσύνη, as it has been said above, is not a remedy like the others; thanks to it in fact one becomes aware of one's own (of one's soul) diseases and can treat them; this obviously does not involve that σωφροσύνη makes others unnecessary; a good doctor must benefit others to benefit himself⁶⁰. The same applies to σωφροσύνη. So far it has come to light that doing one's own good is doing also other's good; this ideal of σωφροσύνη as *a production of a relational good* is hinted at throughout the dialogue; a dialogue which, despite such a fundamental point, is anyway regarded as aporetic. If benefitting others is a feature of σωφροσύνη, it follows that Socrates, to be really σόφρων and benefit himself, must benefit others, Charmides in this case, helping him to become σόφρων. However, σωφροσύνη, in spite of being a remedy superior to everyone else, shares a feature with other remedies: if the patient refuses to take it, it will not work, even if the doctor (Socrates in this case) is the most skilled in the world. Charmides has escaped the pain of the death-like experience; the pain of removing from himself

⁶⁰ In *Resp.* 346d1-4 Socrates suggests that what makes useful and beneficial medicine (and any other art) to its practitioners is the fee they receive, whereas the carrying out the task of medicine, caring for sick people is useless. However, in the lines about the ἔργον of soul (353e1-354a8). A soul devoided of the virtue which allows it to carry out his tasks cannot be happy. If soul must rule and care (for others and itself as well), being unable to carry out this task in the proper way leads it to unhappiness. Accordingly, it is reasonable to think that Socrates' true opinion is that a doctor unable to carry out his job (benefit sick people) cannot be truly happy, even if he earns a lot. Cf. *Introduction*, pp. 26ff.

the bodily conditionings, such as his beauty, his reputation, his attachment to what has learnt and what people expects him to say and do as well; all of this belongs to bodily conditionings and pertains to what the others can see.

Critias' Apollo

Critias cannot accept that doing what is good and useful sometimes is not accompanied by the awareness of this doing; consequently, he claims to be ready to retract what he said (164c8-d4). Thus, Critias suggests that σωφροσύνη is knowing oneself (τὸ γινώσκειν ἑαυτόν):

and I am at one with him who put up the inscription of those words at Delphi. For the purpose of that inscription on the temple, as it seems to me, is to serve as the god's salutation to those who enter it, instead of Hail! this is a wrong form of greeting, and they should rather exhort one another with the words, "Be temperate!". And thus the god addresses those who are entering his temple in a mode which differs from that of men; such was the intention of the dedicator of the inscription in putting it up, I believe; and that he says to each man who enters, in reality, "Be temperate" (164d3-e4).

Connecting the necessity of the self-knowledge to a command of the God Apollo is a move appreciable in *Alcibiades I*⁶¹; so that it seems that Socrates and Critias are closer than one could expect⁶². However, the differences between Critias and

⁶¹ Cf. L. Napolitano Valditara, 2007, pp. 114-116. The same connection between selfknowledge and the Delphic Apollo is to be found in the famous oracle the Pythia gave to Chaerephon, according to which no human being is wiser than Socrates (*Apol.* 21b1-9). In order to grasp the meaning of the Oracle, Socrates examines those who claim to be wise; by means of this examination he comprehends that his wisdom resides in the acknowledgement that human wisdom is nothing compared to divine wisdom, echoing to some extent Heraclitus' words (DK 22 B83).

⁶² As argued above, even if Critias upholds thesis, as a society ruled through the principle of doing one's own things, which in this dialogue is rejected from Socrates, whereas Socrates himself espouses the same principle in *Republic*, there is no contradiction between the dialogues, although some scholars support this view (T. G. Tuckey, 1951, p. 30; C. Kahn, 1988, pp. 541-549). Socrates and Critias use the same words and ascribe to the word ἑαυτόν quite opposite meanings. It is not unreasonable that Plato willingly has Socrates and Critias use the same words in order to demonstrate how misleading is the evaluation of two different individuals' words without knowing the meaning they ascribe to these words.

Socrates are relevant. First of all, Critias in 164e3 uses the verb *διανοεῖσθαι*, which means “think, meditate on”, but also “plan, devise” or even “plot”. This variety makes the meaning of this line ambiguous, so that it could also mean: “the dedicator, devising the inscription so as to make it a greeting, dedicated it”. Hence it follows that *γνώθι ἑαυτὸν* are not words of the God, but words of the dedicator himself, who presents his words as those of Apollo himself. The God would be, in this case, the dedicator himself. This would match what is known about Critias, who argued that gods were devised by rulers in order to take advantage from the fear inspired by Gods so as to force the subjects to obey laws⁶³. Secondly, Critias above distorted Hesiods’ words; therefore, it would not be strange that even here Critias uses Delphic inscription to assert his opinion. Plato has his great-uncle use poets and Gods to impose his own will on others. Critias’ distortion of *γνώθι ἑαυτὸν* is evident when he says that it is a greeting, not some advice. A greeting is exchanged among equals; among people who belong to the same community, group, league and so on. God and man are not equal. However, in the perspective outlined above, if a human ruler hides himself behind Apollo, *γνώθι ἑαυτὸν* interpreted as a greeting would sound to Critias’ ears: “I, a ruler using Gods to master people, greet you, Critias, as my equal and (one could add) deserving of mastery over your citizens”⁶⁴. This is at odds with Socrates’ Apollo, since the philosopher believes in Apollo’s existence and considers himself a soldier of the God (28d4-29a1). Plato represents Socrates as Apollo’s servant, whereas Critias regards Apollo as his own and his likes’ servant. These lines are essential because they indicate how Socrates and Critias are far from each other, although in this dialogue Critias uses the same words

⁶³ Cf. DK 88 B25.

⁶⁴ I am drawing upon Schmidt’s remarks on these lines (W. Schmidt, 1998, pp. 35-38). Some scholars (Th. Tuozzo, 2011, pp. 184-184) hold that in these lines Plato is presenting his own view: accordingly Delphic inscription would be the greeting the God Apollo addresses to those who commit to philosophy. Even if this interpretation is convincing, two reasons make more probable that in these lines Plato hints at Critias’ atheism. Firstly, this kind of haughty atheism is perfectly consistent with Critias’ character in the dialogue. Secondly atheistic or also agnostic positions were not unusual in the sophistic culture, to which Plato connects his great-uncle. Anyway, it is to bear in mind that the Critias of *Charmides* is a character of Plato, not the historic one. This means that Critias is not only a man; *Charmides*’ Critias embodies a part of the Athenian soul at the end of V century; the part in which the combination of political elitism and religious nihilism comes to light.

as Socrates does elsewhere. It is not a contradiction, as in Plato it is possible that characters say opposite things using the same words, since often the meanings of the words are dependent on characters' personality. Since in Critias' perspective Apollo is but a tool of human power, the divine sphere disappears; and along with it, *every reference to the objective pole of σωφροσύνη*.

Let us come back to the relation *Doctor/patient*. The doctor should help the patient to regain his health; health now is at the same time individual and objective: individual because everyone has a particular complexion; objective because this complexion does not depend on individuals' decision; I, as an individual, have a higher tolerance for alcohol than someone else; however, it is not me who decides to have a high tolerance. *Therefore, my health depends on my individual care on some objective features of my body; so that my good (health in this case) is both individual and objective*. The disappearance of the divine sphere in Critias' perspective marks the disappearance of the objective side of the σωφροσύνη, the *production of a relational good*. Others' health is for the doctor the objective side of his individual σωφροσύνη; his individual good is bound to that of the others.

It is useful to keep in mind that, from the moment Critias has taken the floor, Socrates is not interested in refuting; he rather tries to interpret Critias' utterances. Doing one own's thing has turned out to be "doing good things" and Socrates was favourable to this definition. The further step should be: "σωφροσύνη as the awareness and intention of doing good things", but these good things are, as suggested by Socrates, always relational. Accordingly, the σωφροσύνη Socrates is searching for should be both subjective and objective: subjective because it is based on the awareness of one's own weakness and strength; objective because this awareness should help humans acknowledge that good is not a private possession, but a common achievement, even when doers (as doctor and patient) are not equal. Established that the dialogue so far is closer to a solution than one can expect, both the importance of production of relational goods and the relevance of self-awareness have come to light. The next step should be trying to understand how self-awareness is linked to production of relational good⁶⁵. To do this one should

⁶⁵ Each human being is not only a whole (body, soul and soul's inner world), but, as a member of a community, each human is also a part and σωφροσύνη is what enables to be a good member/part of

conceive *a relational self, a self who needs other selves*. However, with the disappearance of the divine dimension, the objective side of the σωφροσύνη, that is to say, the good as a relational achievement, disappears and, along with it, the importance of others human beings. The self-knowledge proposed by Critias ends up becoming *the mere self-assertion of an individual indifferent to other human beings; a self whose only interest is mastering without being mastered by anyone else*⁶⁶.

*σωφροσύνη as knowledge of itself*⁶⁷

Socrates tries to recover the objective feature of the σωφροσύνη by pointing out that knowledge is always knowledge of something (165c5-7). Charmides obviously says that σωφροσύνη is knowledge of oneself. Medicine, points out Socrates, being knowledge of healthy, produces the health, a great good. These remarks of Socrates once again point out the relational and supra-individual good which medicine produces and also σωφροσύνη, as knowledge of himself, should produce. The same applies to other crafts; their knowledge is aimed at the production of something else. Accordingly, σωφροσύνη being knowledge of oneself should produce something (165d5-11). According to what has been said so far, it could be suggested that the answer to this question may be that the knowledge of one-self as a relational self should lead to the production of relational goods. However, Critias points out that neither σωφροσύνη, by its own nature, is similar to the other sciences, nor the others to each other (οὐ γὰρ ὁμοία αὕτη πέφυκεν ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐπιστήμαις, οὐδέ γε αἰ ἄλλαι ἀλλήλαις, 165e2-3). Arithmetic and geometry in fact do not produce anything like house or clothes as carpenters and dressmakers do. Even Socrates is

the social whole; as a consequence, where σωφροσύνης is lacking, communities are doomed to be tore apart, because it is lacking that which holds them together: cf. Th. Tuozzo, 2001, pp. 321-350; L. Napolitano, 2010, pp. 159-160.

⁶⁶ The ethical and political consequences of Critias' ideal of self-knowledge are thoroughly examined by G. Danzig, 2013, pp. 486-519. Cf. A. Pichanick, 2005, pp. 249-264, who rightly points out that in the *Charmides* two kind of self-knowledge are outlined: a tyrannical and aristocratic self-knowledge (Critian) and a philosophical one (Socrates); it is the kind of self-knowledge supported by Critias, not the Socratic one, which will turn out to be impossible.

⁶⁷ Cf. G. G. Carrera, 2003, pp. 59-60; E. Heitsch, 2004, pp. 245-356; K. Morisaki, 2005, pp. 38-50

ready to consent to this remark (166a2); besides, this hints at the fact that goods are not only bodily objects. Health is a good, but not a bodily object. Σωφροσύνη can produce social and politic goods (a just community), but not a bodily object. These “incorporeal” goods are more unstable than the bodily ones: a potter does not need buyers’ help to produce a vase, whereas a doctor needs patients’ collaboration and a politician needs his citizens collaboration. However, justice and health are more important than houses and clothes and are also more fragile, being based on the community commitment to preserve them. Incorporeal goods originate from a community effort; and this is the reason why σωφροσύνη in this dialogue is at the same time comparable to a craft and irreducible to the craft’s model. It is similar to a craft because it aims at the production of goods (incorporeal and relational); it is different because its outcomes are dependent also on others’ collaboration; therefore, the goods produced by σωφροσύνη sometimes are less durable than vases and clothes.

Socrates points out that arithmetics has an object different from itself, that is to say, the even and the odd; sciences have an object different from themselves (166a2-7); in the same way weighing is science of the heavy and the light which are different from the science itself (b1-4). This would apply also to σωφροσύνη provided that the self of this knowledge was a relational one; in this case the object different to the self would be others’ good, or, more exactly, the others’ good insofar as one’s own good and that of the others cannot be separated from each other. Socrates asks Critias which is the object of σωφροσύνη different from σωφροσύνη itself. Socrates through his questions has tried to preserve the objective and relational aspect of σωφροσύνη in the definition of it as self-knowledge; however, the very possibility of a relational self has disappeared from the dialogue and with Critias’ next answer, it becomes clear that Critias’ self-knowledge has nothing to do with others’ wellness.

Critias states that other sciences are always sciences of something else (different from themselves) and not of themselves, whereas σωφροσύνη is science both of other science and of itself (166c1-4). Socrates, Critias says, has already noticed this feature of the σωφροσύνη, but he does not want to acknowledge it, because Socrates’ aim is refuting him. However, Socrates assures Critias that he refutes him for the same reason for which he interrogates his own words in order to avoid

believing that one knows something, while one does not know (166d1-3)⁶⁸. This strict examination of his own and others' words serves the purpose of avoiding one's own and others' self-deception: "or do you not believe (says Socrates to Critias) that is a common good (κοινὸν οἶει ἀγαθὸν εἶναι) almost for all men that it became clear in which way everything is? (ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων ὅπη ἔχει;)" (166d5-7).

Socrates' refutations are instrument of his σωφροσύνη; in fact, they are aimed at a κοινὸν ἀγαθόν, a common and relational good, the removal of self-deception, produced through the common effort of relational selves. In this lines Socrates shows to possess that σωφροσύνη in which the self-knowledge obtained through self-examination involves other's wellness. This means also that the Socratic σωφροσύνη needs self-examination with other people, so that one can be sure that one is not deceiving oneself; or, if self-deception is present, through self-examination with others it is possible to remove it. On the contrary in Critias self-knowledge there is no possibility of self-deception; this kind of self, indifferent to others' good and regarding itself as beyond self-deception (that in which consists its self-deception), is so self-confident that nothing can makes it waver; and this is quite consistent with Critias' personality, since he regards himself not as the servant of a God, but as a creator of gods.

Since σωφροσύνη is the science of itself and other sciences as well, it follows that σωφροσύνη it is also science *of the lack of science* (καὶ ἀνεπιστημοσύνης ἐπιστήμη ἂν εἴη, εἶπερ καὶ ἐπιστήμης, 166e11-12)⁶⁹. Critias agrees. Socrates tries to make Critias understand that self-knowledge involves knowledge of one's own ignorance.

Therefore, the σώφρων, Socrates says, will know himself and be able to examine what he knows and what he does not; consequently, he can do the same

⁶⁸ It is the possibility to be wrong, even unwillingly, that makes Socratic self-knowledge necessary: cf. T. Hatano, 2007, pp. 237-252: this capability of detecting one's own ignorance is the core of that human wisdom which Socrates ascribes to himself (*Ap.* 20d6-21b6): cf. L. Napolitano, 2010, pp. 25-27; 2018, pp. 221-225.

⁶⁹ Once again, the story of the Delphic oracle in the *Apology* is telling. In fact by means of his dialectic refutations, Socrates discovers the ignorance of those who claim to be wise; by pursuing self-knowledge Socrates experiences not only his own *lack of science*, but also that of those who think they do not lack science at all (21e-22c). Cf. McPharran, 1996, pp. 223-225.

with the other people, discovering those who know and those who do not, but think they do. Thus, σωφροσύνη and acting with σωφροσύνη (σωφρονεῖν) consists in knowing what one knows and what one does not (167a1-9). This reformulation of σωφροσύνη as knowledge of what one knows and what one does not is quite different from the *science of itself and other science* and is more similar to the procedure of examination of oneself and the others outlined in 166c8-d7. However, in that passage Socrates mentions the removal of self and others' deception as κοινὸν ἀγαθόν to reach through examination; in this new reformulation the link to the relational good is absent. Critias consents to this reformulation. First of all it is to understand if this knowledge is possible⁷⁰; then if it is useful for those who practice it (166b1-5). Anyway, Socrates holds that this inquiry has been provoked by Critias' definition of σωφροσύνη as science of itself and other science (166b11-c3); therefore, it is necessary to examine it.

*The question of the apperception*⁷¹

⁷⁰ Socrates, as far as it is inferable from *Alcibiades I*, holds that self-knowledge is possible and even necessary. However, the self-knowledge Socrates has in mind is never acquired once and for all. but an ongoing practice one cannot give up; it is a *practice of life*: P. Hadot, 2005, pp. 31-43; 169-176; M. Foucault, 2011, pp. 3-13.

⁷¹ Leibniz was the first who used this word in his treatise on the Monads (14). The word is a compound of ad- "in addition to, further" and perception "perception". It is a further perception which accompanies the other ones; is the perception of those monads, *human beings*, aware of their own inner psychic states. In the monadology, the apperception represents the cognitive/ontologic side of the monads, whereas the *appetition* is the pursuit of the monad to reach a desired state according to its perceptions; cf. S. Bender, 2013, pp. 214-241. In Leibniz *apperception* and *appetition* refer respectively to the cognitive features of the monad and to those which have to do with desire and in human beings instantiate in more complex forms, such as the moral action. In Socrates' σωφροσύνη cognitive and moral aspects are inseparable; in fact, σωφροσύνη involves both the moral commitment to the achievement of good things and the cognitive ability to evaluate properly his inner states (desires, fears, aspirations and so on). The apperception is a necessary, *not sufficient* condition of σωφροσύνη. To know oneself, one must be able to *see* one's inner states; nevertheless, if this ability is detached from the pursuit of truly good things, it cannot be regarded as σωφροσύνη, at least in the Socratic meaning.

To face the question of the possibility of a science of itself and other sciences, Socrates poses to Critias some questions about some acts of the human experiencing of the world. The philosopher asks Critias if, in his opinion, there is a vision (ὄψις) which is vision of itself and of other visions and of the lack of vision, but not of the colors, which are the proper object of vision; or if there is a hearing (ἀκοή) which is hearing of itself of other hearings and its lack as well, but not of sounds, which are the proper object of the hearing (167c9-d7)⁷². Since Critias denies the existence of such acts, Socrates can ask him if in general there is a perception perceiving itself and others perceptions and its lack, but not what other perceptions perceive (*scil.* the sensible world); once again Critias' answer is negative (167d9-13). Socrates goes on to deal with more complex psychic acts, such as desire and fear, following the same ascensional move from the perceptible to the soul in the same way as in the transition from Charmides' first definition of σωφροσύνη to the second one. Now Socrates asks Critias if he thinks that there is a desire which is desire of itself and other desires as well, but not of pleasures (167e1-3); a deliberation which wills itself and other deliberations, but no good (167e5-7); a love of itself and other loves, but not of the admirable (167e9-11); or a fear of itself and other fears, but not of the dreadful (167d3-168a2). Critias' answers are always negative. Notwithstanding, it is not to infer that Socrates really rejects the possibility of such apperceptive acts. Some scholars have rightly argued that Socrates so far has displayed several times such apperceptions: in 154b10-c8, *when he proves to be aware of the way in which he himself and other see Charmides*; in 155d3-e3, *where Socrates desires not to succumb to the desires of the pleasure provoked by Charmides' beauty*; in 166c7-d6, *where Socrates is afraid of not fearing enough self-deception*⁷³. Socrates, it goes without saying, is able to exert this apperception and also later in the dialogue he will seem to bring into question what he himself embodies in his own conduct. What

⁷² Cf. V. Caston, 2002, pp. 772-773, argues that ὄψις and ἀκοή are to interpret as acts, not as capacities. However, this does not change the meaning of this section: ὄψις and ἀκοή, intended both as faculties and as acts, always need an external content (a seen color or a heard sound). Socrates is not denying the possibility of a self-reflexive knowledge (this thesis has been supported by O. Balaban, 2008, pp. 663-693), *but only the possibility of a self-reflexive knowledge without a previous experience of an external content.*

⁷³ Cf. W. Schmid, 1998, pp. 89-92. See also Th. Tuozzo, 2011, pp. 211-219.

in my opinion Socrates seems to doubt is not the possibility of apperceptive acts, but a way of interpreting this apperception. In the aforementioned examples *it is always a first-order act which triggers a second order one*. Socrates can see his seeing of Charmides beauty because he has experienced Charmides beauty; he can desire not to succumb to desire because he has experienced desire, and he can be afraid of not fearing self-deception because it fears self-deception. From these examples it can be inferred that apperception is based on the first order experience; wherefore what Socrates cannot accept, in my opinion, *is the idea of a self-reflection which does not need first order experience to exert itself*. The idea of a self-reflection which needs sensible and emotional material in order to exert himself is consistent with the idea of a relational self, which needs the external world so as to become aware of itself⁷⁴; whereas the idea of a self-reflection not needing neither external (perceptions of sensible objects) nor internal (one's own emotions) to exert itself matches Critias' illusion of complete self-sufficiency and mastery over everything (even over the Gods).

Socrates comes back to the issue of a science which is science of itself and other sciences and of no knowledge (οὐδενὸς μαθήματος), since he and Critias have not

⁷⁴ The dependence of apperception on something external to itself is consistent also with Socrates words in *Alc. I* 132d4-1338, where it is argued that the human eye comes to see itself only as long as he sees its reflected image in someone else eye so that it can become aware of its nature and its functioning (cf. L. Palumbo, 2008, pp. 185-199; 2020, pp. 81-95; Chr. Moore, 2015, pp. 114-122). This dependence is also consistent with what happened during the discussion with Charmides. The young man manages to see his own thoughts thanks to Socrates' refutations, which acts like a mirror sending back to Charmides his own words so that he can see his opinions (cf. *supra*, pp. 120ff.). Consciousness, to become consciousness of itself, must somehow bounce off a surface (the sensible world, refutations, his own emotions...), which resend the consciousness to itself so that it comes to see itself. In Charmides' life, as in that of everyone else, immediate and unthinking adhesion to one's life chronologically preexists to the ability to reflect on one's experience. For this reason, the acquisition of this ability always has initiatic features. Acquiring the ability to reflect on oneself marks the entrance into a new phase of one's life, a world completely different from that of the immediate adhesion to one's own experience. This initiatic nature of self-reflection explains also why not all men manage to practice it; In fact even if this self-reflection is a natural disposition, not all humans manage to develop it in the proper way (cf. *supra*, pp. 35-39): humans could and *should* practice it, but this does not mean that it will happen. Cf. *supra*, pp. 39-40.

stated yet that such a science does not exist, but are still investigating (168a7-14). Socrates adds that this science is science of something; that is to say, it has such a faculty (τοιαύτην τινὰ ἔχειν δύναμιν) as to be of something. Critias agrees and Socrates goes on to introduce the example of the greater (τὸ μείζον) which also has the faculty as to be greater of something, namely than something smaller (ἐλάττωσ τινος) (168b1-9). If there were something greater than itself and the other greater things, but not greater than things compared to which greater things are greater, it follows that this greater would be in such a situation as to be greater and smaller than itself at the same time. Consequently something will be at the same time more and less (168c10), heavier and lighter, older and younger than itself (168c11-12), and so on⁷⁵. Moreover, *whatever has its faculty directed to itself* (ὅτιπερ ἂν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ δύναμιν πρὸς ἑαυτὸ ἔχη), *will have that essence to which it is direct* (ἐκεῖνην ἔξει τὴν οὐσίαν, πρὸς ἣν ἡ δύναμις αὐτοῦ ἦν, 168d1-2)⁷⁶. Socrates clarifies these words by using the example of hearing and vision:

Socrates: “For instance, hearing is, as we say, just a hearing of sound, is it not?”. Critias: “Yes”. Socrates: “So if it is to hear itself, it will hear a sound of its own (φωνὴν ἐχούσης ἑαυτῆς ἀκούσεται); for it would not hear otherwise”. Critias: “Most inevitably”. Socrates: “And sight, I suppose, my excellent friend, if it is to see itself, must need have a colour (χρῶμά τι αὐτὴν ἀνάγκη ἔχειν); for sight can never see what is colourless”. Critias: “No more it can” (168d4-e1).

⁷⁵ Socrates seems to suggest that if the same reasoning were applied to science of itself, it would turn out that science of itself is at the same time science and lack of science of itself. Although this outcome in Critias’ perspective were unacceptable, it would be possible for Plato’s Socrates. According to *Men.* 81c5-e2, soul can inquire into that which it does not yet because of the memory of what has experienced in previous lives; as a consequence, soul is never completely ignorant nor completely wise; accordingly it can be aware of its ignorance. One can rightly point out that there is a fallacy in Socrates’ reasoning in these lines, since the relationship between greater and smaller is not comparable to that between science and its object; nevertheless this is not a weakness of the reasoning, for Socrates’ focus is the issue of the relation to itself (for the relation of the greater to itself as a hint at the theory of the ideas see, M. Erler, 1987, pp. 190-194).

⁷⁶ On the fact that the knowing subject has an οὐσία similar to that of the known object cf. *infra*, note 77.

Socrates argues that in this case faculty and its external object should share the same οὐσία, so that hearing will be sound and vision colors⁷⁷. However, if one pays attention to the Greek text, one will notice that the correct rendering of the parts left in Greek is: it (hearing) will hear itself *having sound*; and it is necessary that it (vision) *has a colour*. This does not mean that hearing and sound are the same, *but that hearing, to hear itself, needs sounds*, and the same applies to the relation between vision and colours. This is perfectly consistent with what it has been said above about apperceptive acts displayed by Socrates throughout the dialogue; it is a first order act (seeing colours), which makes second order act (reflecting on seeing colours) possible. Socrates does nothing but restate, even unsuccessfully, that even a reflexive knowledge needs external contents. Critias does not manage to accept the idea that self-knowledge is bound to the natural and social world, whereas Socrates does acknowledge this dependence. Besides, it is always to keep in mind that Socrates does not argue against a faculty directed to itself, but against the way in which Critias intends this faculty.

The idea of a relation to itself raises some doubts; some things, as magnitudes and numbers, are regarded as unable to exert this relation, while for other things this ability is debated (168e3-7). What concerns hearing, vision, or a movement moving itself, or a heat burning itself, someone holds these cases to be impossible, someone else not⁷⁸. Socrates ends his reasoning by invoking a great man who will determine if there are beings able to direct their faculty to themselves and which beings are not⁷⁹. In those beings who are in relation to themselves there may be the science named σοφροσύνη (169a3-9). Eventually Socrates claims to be unable to carry out such a task; he cannot state if such a science of science exist; nevertheless he goes

⁷⁷ That the cognitive act and the known object share a common nature applies in particular to the sight and also to the intelligible world, as *Resp.* VI, 508a11-509b10 suggests: Cf. P. Grisei, 2000, pp. 262-296. In *Tim.* 45b2- c2 it is said that the fire in us (responsible for sight) is akin (ἀδελφόν) to the fire bringing about the light of the day-

⁷⁸ This self-movement will appear in *Phaedr.* 245c5-e2 and *Laws*, 895a1-d1 as the essential feature of the soul.

⁷⁹ This great man is the dialectic philosopher, a man able to carry out founded divisions among the kinds of the beings. Cf. *Phaedr.* 266b3-c5, 278c-e; *Pol.* 262a-263a; *Soph.* 253d1-9. Cfr. F. Fronterotta, 2007, pp. 145-161.

on to state that σωφροσύνη must be something useful and good (τὴν γὰρ οὖν δὴ σωφροσύνην ὠφέλιμόν τι καὶ ἀγαθὸν μαντεύομαι εἶναι, 169b1-4)⁸⁰. Therefore Critias, says Socrates, still has to demonstrate that a science of itself and its lack as well exists and then that this science is useful. Once again what is aporetic is not this relation to oneself, but a reflection devoid of any contents, as Critias intends it. In fact Socrates has displayed at least twice so far the ability to direct his faculty to himself. In the prologue he has removed from himself his bodily conditionings (the seduction exerted by Charmides' beauty) in order to be able to remove these conditioning from Charmides. *Furthermore, he has claimed to examine himself and others so as to remove self-deception on for the sake of the common good.* Hence Socrates, or more exactly Socrates' soul, is able to direct is faculty at himself, so that Socrates' soul is a perfect abode for σωφροσύνη, that σωφροσύνη which he is looking for; once again Plato has his Socrates inquire about something he already seems to possess. Besides in the following lines it is said that Critias gets affected by Socrates' stance so that he himself is overcome by *aporia* (169c2-7). Socrates proves to be able to put himself in an aporetic situation and push others into this feeling⁸¹. Obviously, Socrates and Critias aporetic situations are not the same; the former in fact is able to actively submit to *aporia* and benefit from it, Critias on the contrary passively suffers from this overpowering feeling induced by Socrates' reasoning. To become able on his turn to exert this active and wanted *aporia* Critias should accept to be rejected and, what is more, set himself free from his bodily conditioning, such as his haughtiness, the love for reputation, the will to come across as better than anyone else. He should undergo the same removal of his bonds to the sensible world as Charmides tried unsuccessfully to bring to an end.

Σωφροσύνη and its object

⁸⁰ The verb μαντεύομαι means "prophesise" (in the *Sophist* the verb *apomanteuesthai* is used in the meaning of "hypothese": cf. G. Movia, 1991, pp.); and God of prophesy is Apollo. It is not fortuitous that Plato has Socrates use this word, even more after that Critias has displayed such a self-confidence in interpreting the Delphic inscription. Socrates here is somehow saying: "I, as a true Spokeman of the God Apollo, tell you that σωφροσύνη is useful and good". *Charmides* bears a hidden meaning; it is not only a discussion about a virtue; it is also a struggle for the correct interpretation of Apollo's words, which makes *Charmides* a sort of holy war.

⁸¹ The same ability to push oneself and others into *aporia* is depicted in *Men.* 80a1-b6.

Critias is completely unable to face the questions raised by Socrates; this provokes in him an unbearable shame before the audience, which paralyses him. To continue the discussion, Socrates concedes that it is possible that a science of science exists, and suggests that the inquiry as to whether it is effectively the case or not is to postpone (169d3-6). What Socrates asks now Critias is: if such a science of science is possible, how does this science make possible to know what one knows and what one does not? This knowing of what one knows and does not is, as Socrates and Critias agreed, is knowing oneself and acting with σωφροσύνη (τοῦτο γὰρ δήπου ἔφραμεν εἶναι τὸ γινώσκειν αὐτὸν καὶ σωφρονεῖν: ἧ γάρ; 169d8-9). Socrates wants to know if the (Critias') science of itself can help the (Socratic) correct examination of one's own and others' knowledge. As we see in the next lines, the answer is negative.

Critias answers that a man possessing the science knowing itself will be similar to what he possesses, therefore, by possessing the science knowing itself, he knows himself, in the same way as someone possessing swiftness is swift (169e1-6). Socrates does not dispute that who has what knows itself will know himself⁸²; nevertheless he claims to fail to understand how possessing it should make able to know what one knows and what does not (169e7-10). Possessing what knows itself and knowing what one knows and what does not, Critias claims, are the same thing. Socrates is going to argue that science of science and knowing of what one knows and what does not are not the same and do not overlap.

This is a relevant step in the dialogue from the theoretical point of view; Plato is arguing, more straightforwardly than in other passages, that Critias' ideal of σωφροσύνη has nothing to do with the Socratic one. In Critias' ideal the knowledge of oneself is devoid of contents, and it is the owner of this knowledge who claims to rule over them (at the end of the dialogue Critias will devise a science ruling over the science of what is good); Socrates' σωφροσύνη is bound to the world (human and natural) out of itself. In Critias' case σωφροσύνη is regarded as the master of the truth, while Socratic σωφροσύνη *searches for the truth*.

⁸² "What knows itself" is the soul itself. The replacement of "knowledge" with the neuter participle of the verb γινώσκειν is not random; Socrates indeed hints at a being able to direct at itself its own faculty.

Let us come back to Socrates' reasoning. Socrates asks if a science of science can do more than determine what is science and what is not; Charmides consents that a science of science will not do more than this (170a6-9). The science of the healthy (medicine) and that of just (politic) are different from each other and, what is more important, from the science of science, which has no object out of itself (170b1-5). Accordingly, someone ignoring the healthy and just, but knowing the science, since he has science of this, namely that he knows and has a science, would be able to know it about himself and the others as well (170b8-12). The owner of this science cannot know the contents of his knowledge; he indeed may know the healthy through medicine, not through σωφροσύνη, and the same applies to harmony (known through music), to what pertains to building (known through carpentry) and to the other sciences and crafts (170c1-5). Σωφροσύνη as science of science, and of no external object, does not allow to know the healthy and what pertains to carpentry; it follows that such a σόφρων knows that knows but not what knows (170c8-14). This means that σωφρονεῖν and σωφροσύνη turn out to be not knowing what one knows and what does not, but only *that one knows and does not*.

The owner of this σωφροσύνη, lacking specific knowledges, is necessarily unable to discriminate a professional from an imposter; accordingly, he cannot discriminate a true doctor from one who pretends to be, but is not (170e1-4)⁸³. This kind of σόφρων, if anything, will be able to know that a doctor knows; however, he will not afford to face any deeper investigation into the science under examination because he ignores what it focuses on (in the case of medicine, the healthy and the noxious) (171a3-b2).

This kind of σωφροσύνη, lacking contents, cannot exert the ruling role over the other sciences, which Critias ascribes to it; or, if it must exert this rule, it should master the contents of any other particular science, which is humanly impossible. So far Socrates has tried to argue that even a knowledge of itself must have an object different from itself. Now Socrates makes a step forward; σωφροσύνη, regarded as a science, must have its specific object, different from those of the other sciences. As far as one can infer, this object of σωφροσύνη cannot be but *the common good*,

⁸³ Maybe an allusion to Critias himself, who fails to distinguish the true doctor (Socrates) from imposters (Critias himself and Charmides' flatterers).

a common good based on a relational self. However it is to bear in mind that this common good is not object of σωφροσύνη in the same way as a house is of carpentry; carpenter in fact does not need residents' help to build their house, whereas the σώφρων cannot benefit anyone without their own will to be benefitted from him. The common good is a community's accomplishment⁸⁴. For instance, Socrates is better than the others at examining himself and others so as to remove self-deception; this does not involve that the others are always ready to give up their false opinions. Nevertheless, although Critias and Socrates have not come yet to a final conclusion, throughout the dialogue two features of σωφροσύνη have emerged, which have not been rejected: 1) even self-knowledge must have contents to be possible; 2) σωφροσύνη must be good and useful, it must aim *at what is good, which is always common; that is to say, such as to benefit both the doer and the beneficiary at the same time.* To reach a satisfactory outcome, it is essential to establish the correct connection between these two features emerged so far. However, Critias will fail to do it.

The reappearance of what is good: the last chance of the dialogue

Socrates has demonstrated that the science of science and the knowing of what one knows and what does not are not the same thing. Now the philosopher resumes the idea of knowing what one knows and what does not and wonders which is the benefit rising from this kind of σωφροσύνη⁸⁵. This kind of σωφροσύνη would be vastly useful for those possessing it; in fact, Socrates argues:

since we should pass all our lives, both we who had temperance (οἱ τὴν σωφροσύνην ἔχοντες) and all the rest who were governed by us, without error (ἀναμάρτητοι). For neither should we ourselves attempt to do what we did not know, instead of finding out those who knew and placing the matter in their hands, nor should we permit others under our governance to do anything but what they were likely to do aright; and they would do that when they had knowledge of it; *and so it would be that a house which*

⁸⁴ W. Schmidt, 2002, pp. 242-244.

⁸⁵ The mention of the benefit, *ὠφελία* in Greek, is the first hint that Socrates in the next lines will try to recover the connection of σωφροσύνη to the good from the oblivion.

was ordered, or a state which was administered, as temperance bade, and everything else that was ruled by temperance, could not but be well ordered (καὶ οὕτω δὴ ὑπὸ σωφροσύνης οἰκία τε οἰκουμένη ἔμελλεν καλῶς οἰκεῖσθαι, πόλις τε πολιτευομένη, καὶ ἄλλο πᾶν οὗ σωφροσύνη ἄρχοι) (171d7-172a1).

In these lines Socrates is restating the ideal of *οἰκειπραγία*. This time he is saying something more: a *σώφρων* ruler, who can comply with this ideal, could be able to implement it in the city, so that everyone would be obliged to do that at which he is better, letting others to do what he cannot. These lines seemingly echo what is said in *Republic*. Nevertheless, the *οἰκειπραγία* outlined in this passage and that of *Republic* are not the same thing, since in the quoted lines any reference to *the common good* is lacking, whereas the common good is the principle which underlies *οἰκειπραγία* in *Republic*. The *σωφροσύνη* outlined in these lines, which Critias so enthusiastically accepts, is but the mere evaluation of the means for the accomplishment of an aim, which could be also an evil one. By means of this kind of *σωφροσύνη*, errors in human actions would be abolished, and, under the mastery of correctness, everyone in the city would act always correctly⁸⁶, and consequently, everyone would be happy⁸⁷. However, such a science has not yet been found yet. The good provided by such a science, Socrates suggests, may be that he who possesses it can learn more easily and all what he learns will be clearer for him, since besides what he learns he will gaze also on the science (ἅτε πρὸς ἐκάστῳ ᾧ ἂν μανθάνῃ προσκαθορῶντι τὴν ἐπιστήμην)⁸⁸. This science of science would allow

⁸⁶ Εὖ πράττειν, translated as “acting correctly”, means also doing well. The ambiguity of the expression embodies what Critias is getting at. He implicitly holds that acting correctly is happiness itself. Believing that acting correctly and being happy are the same thing conceals the substantive ethical danger Socrates already seems to have noticed: if the mere correct action is the happiness itself, even an evil action, if it has been carried out correctly, can bring happiness: cf. *supra*, pp. 72-75.

⁸⁷ The use of the adjective *εὐδαίμων*, as well as *ὠφελία*, is a hint that Socrates is going to recover the good in the discussion; indeed, only the *ἀγαθόν* can provide the *εὐδαιμονία*, as it is argued in other dialogues (*Symp.* 204e-205b2; *Phil.* 11b4-d6;)

⁸⁸ In this case *σωφροσύνη* turns out to be the knowledge of the formal features shared by all particular sciences, so that he who masters this knowledge learns everything more easily because he possesses the formal structure which makes science a science; cf. T. G. Tuckey 1951, pp. 68-73; Witte 1970, pp. 131-133; Schmid 1998, pp. 121-123. The acquisition of this *transcendental* structure

their possessors to evaluate themselves as well as the others correctly, and this is all the benefit coming from the σωφροσύνη intended as *science of science and its lack*.

Once again, the knowing of what one knows and what does not is an undeniable feature of the σωφροσύνη Plato is implicitly ascribing to his Socrates from the beginning of the dialogue. The self-examination itself would make no sense, if this feature were to remove. Therefore, this knowing of what one knows and what does not is necessary for σωφροσύνη, but not enough. To be σωφροσύνη, this knowing must aim at the good. Now Socrates is ready to retract what he himself said before, that is to say that a σωφροσύνη intended as *the knowing of what one knows and what not is a good itself*; Socrates in fact argues that he and Critias too rashly have agreed that the guide of this σωφροσύνη in running the house and the city is a great good (ἀ γὰρ νυνδὴ ἐλέγομεν, ὡς μέγα ἂν εἴη ἀγαθὸν ἢ σωφροσύνη εἰ τοιοῦτον εἴη, ἡγουμένη διοικήσεως καὶ οἰκίας καὶ πόλεως, οὗ μοι δοκοῦμεν, ὃ Κριτία, καλῶς ὁμολογηκέναι, 172d3-6). Critias cannot help being surprised at this unexpected withdrawal from Socrates; however, Socrates restates that, if σωφροσύνη is such knowing (of what knows and what not), he does not figure out *what good this σωφροσύνη provides* (ὡς ἀληθῶς γάρ, εἰ ὅτι μάλιστα τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν ἢ σωφροσύνη, οὐδέν μοι δῆλον εἶναι δοκεῖ ὅτι ἀγαθὸν ἡμᾶς ἀπεργάζεται, 172e7-173a1).

Socrates presents his following remarks as a dream whose truthfulness must be proven⁸⁹. Under the rule of σωφροσύνη, he argues, everything would be done according to sciences (κατὰ τὰς ἐπιστήμας πάντ' ἂν πράττειτο) and the true

underlying the particular sciences seems to parallel what is said about the aspiring king philosophers who have to prove to be able to appreciate the affinity existing in the disciplines leading to the dialectical knowledge (τὰ τε χύδην μαθήματα παισὶν ἐν τῇ παιδείᾳ γεγόμενα τούτοις συνακτέον εἰς σύνοψιν οἰκειότητός τε ἀλλήλων τῶν μαθημάτων καὶ τῆς τοῦ ὄντος φύσεως, *Resp.* 537c1-2). However, in these lines there is no allusion to the overarching vision the dialectic philosopher should be able of. This comprehensive gaze is the necessary requisite to grasp the Good, whereas the formal knowledge outlined in these lines of *Charmides* has nothing to do with the Good. If a comparison with *Republic* is to be found, the formal knowledge described in the lines under examination is more similar to the mathematical disciplines (510b4-511a1); disciplines able to grasp the formal and general structures of phenomena, but indifferent to the good.

⁸⁹ In 173a7-8 Plato alludes to Hom, *Odyss*, 562 ff. In *Theaet.* 201d8-e5 Socrates presents as a dream the theory some scholars ascribe to Antisthenes; cf. F. Ferrari, 2011, pp. 118-123.

professionals would be easily distinguished from those who pretend to know what they do not (173b1-5); thanks to such a σωφροσύνη rulers would select only able doctors, able generals and able helmsmen so that people would have healthier bodies, more safety in war and in the dangers of the sea (ὕγιέσιν τε τὰ σώματα εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ νῦν, καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάττῃ κινδυνεύοντας καὶ ἐν πολέμῳ σῶζεσθαι, 173b6-8). Craftmen would produce everything in an unobjectionable way (173c1-3). Socrates goes so far as to say that those who possess such a σωφροσύνη could evaluate the prophets themselves, so as to remove the swindlers and install the veritable prophets as predictors of the future (τοὺς μὲν ἀλαζόνας ἀποτρέπειν, τοὺς δὲ ὡς ἀληθῶς μάντις καθιστάναι ἡμῖν προφήτας τῶν μελλόντων, 173c6-8)⁹⁰. This kind of σωφροσύνη, by doing away with lack of science, would make possible the *infallible life* outlined in 171d7-172a1. However, Socrates concludes: “I still fail to figure out this, that is to say, that by acting according to science we would do well and be happy” (ὅτι δ’ἐπιστημόνως ἂν πράττοντες εὖ ἂν πράττοιμεν καὶ εὐδαιμονοῖμεν, τοῦτο δὲ οὐπω δυνάμεθα μαθεῖν, 173d3-4). Critias objects that there is no fulfilment of doing well, if the role of science is disregarded (173d7-9).

Socrates obviously is quite far from neglecting the role of knowledge, all the more so because he has never rejected so far the definition of σωφροσύνη as knowing of what one knows and what not. Nevertheless, as it has been said several times throughout these pages, σωφροσύνη needs something more, namely the connection to the good, since only this connection to the good makes σωφροσύνη, intended as knowing what one knows and what not, something useful. Let us draw on to the analogy with medicine, which has proven to be quite fruitful: a doctor, examining one of his patients, observes an illness he cannot treat, because treating

⁹⁰ He who examines prophets should know the future before the prophets reveal it; only thus he was able to distinguish the swindlers from the veritable prophets. The only one who can evaluate prophets is Apollo himself, who, obviously, knows the future before his prophets. The σωφροσύνη Socrates is describing would be the divine wisdom itself. That Critias is so enthusiastic about the σωφροσύνη Socrates is outlining in these lines matches his personality. In the previous lines Apollo in Critias words has become the mere fabrication of a ruler. Critias with this infallible σωφροσύνη would like to make a further step; he himself would take Apollo’s place, by acquiring the knowledge through which the God knows what is going to happen before it happens. Critias wants to undergo a transformation: from creator of gods to a god himself. Cf. M. A. Johnstone, 2015, pp. 423-437

it is not par of his skills. Therefore the doctor, *knowing that he cannot treat that illness, since it is not one of the illnesses he can treat, for the sake of the patient, will adress the patient to another doctor.* The doctor perfectly knows what he knows and what not and thanks to this self-knowledge helps the patient recover the health, the relational good which benefit both patient and doctor. It is this care for the relational good which makes σωφροσύνη useful and, in general, which makes self-knowledge σωφροσύνη. In fact if this knowledge of what one knows and what not were to be regarded as valuable irrespective of the good it can accomplish, even a terrorist who, after an accurate reflection on what he and his accessories know and what do not, detonated a bomb in a school, were to be regarded as a σώφρων.

Socrates asks Critias the rule of science of what; Socrates starts facing the issue of *what*. He puts forth some examples, such as working bronze or carpentry; Critias obviously rejects these options (173e1-5). Therefore, Socrates says, the statement that he who lives according to science is happy (τῷ λόγῳ τῷ εὐδαίμονα εἶναι τὸν ἐπιστημόνως ζῶντα, 173e6-7) is not to hold, since even a carpenter, a blacksmith and a taylor should be happy, for they live according to their science. Therefore Socrates argues that Critias regards as happy the one who lives according to the science of *certain things*. Socrates asks Critias if this happy person is who knows the future, the prophet (174a1-2)⁹¹. Critias hints at another potential happy man. Socrates suggest that this person could be the one who, beside the future, may know the past and the present, and may ignore nothing (εἴ τις πρὸς τοῖς μέλλουσιν καὶ τὰ γεγονότα πάντα εἰδείη καὶ τὰ νῦν ὄντα, καὶ μηδὲν ἀγνοοῖ, 174a4-6)⁹². Nobody could be happier than him, since nobody would live according to science more than him (174a7-8). Socrates asks Critias which of the science can make this man happy or if all of them alike can. Socrates again asks Critias which science can make happy

⁹¹ Cf. *supra*, note 80.

⁹² In *Theogony* Muses are said to weave the past, the present and the future (εἰρεῦσαι τὰ τ' ἐόντα τὰ τ' ἐσόμενα πρὸ τ' ἐόντα, v. 38). The line of *Charmides* under examination may allude to Hesiod, which it is not unreasonable, even more that Critias himself in 163b3-7 has mentioned Hesiod (to distort his words). The science Socrates hints at would be the wisdom of the epic poet who narrated the origins of the gods. Once again Socrates, alluding to Hesiod as knower of the origins of the gods, ironically allude to Critias, another knower of the origins of the gods (in this case Critias knows the origins of the gods because he states that they are to trace back to human rulers' will).

those who practice it; after rejecting draughts-playing, arithmetic and medicine, Critias come to the answer to which Socrates so far has been trying to steer Critias: the science making happy is that through which one knows the good and the bad (ἤ τι τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἔφη, καὶ τὸ κακόν). Socrates' reaction to this answer is noteworthy:

Vile creature! I said, *you have all this time been dragging me round and round* (πάλαι με περιέλκεις κύκλω), while concealing the fact that the life according to knowledge *does not make us do well and be happy* (τὸ εἶ πράττειν τε καὶ εὐδαιμονεῖν ποιοῦν), not even if it be knowledge of all the other knowledges together, but only if it is of this single one concerning good and evil. For, Critias, if you choose to take away this science from the whole number of them (εἰ θέλεις ἐξελεῖν ταύτην τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐκ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν), will medicine any the less give us health, or shoemaking give us shoes, or weaving provide clothes, or will the pilot's art any the less prevent the loss of life at sea, or the general's in war? (174b12-c8).

At this point nearly at the end of the dialogue, the discussion seems to have come back to 163e10-11, where Socrates interpreted Critias' words in 163b4-c8 as suggesting that σωφροσύνη should be doing good things; then Socrates, using the analogy to medicine, argued that the good is common, so that the good action benefit both the doer and the beneficiary. Throughout the entire dialogue Socrates has never rejected this understanding of σωφροσύνη as doing good things; the discussion on self-knowledge had grown out of Socrates' suggestion that σωφροσύνη involves that the doer of good things should do them consciously. Socrates has never doubted the connection of σωφροσύνη to the good, whereas Critias from 164d1 has no more taken it into consideration.

Socrates has managed to recover the good from the oblivion; for the last time in the dialogue, the possibility to find the relationship between self-knowledge and good is outlined. Socrates provides also another important suggestion: he says that if this science is removed from the others, the particular sciences will reach their own aims all the same; however:

to have any of these things well and beneficially done will be out of our reach if that science is lacking (τὸ εἶ γε τούτων ἕκαστα γίνεσθαι καὶ ὀφελίμως ἀπολειποῦς ἡμᾶς ἔσται ταύτης ἀπούσης) (174c10-d2).

This science of good makes good the other sciences. The verb ἐξαιρεῖν used in the aorist infinitive in 174c4 means “extracting something from something else”; in these lines Socrates argues that, to be effectively good, the science of good must make good; however to do it, it must not be removed from the particular sciences; a doctor who does not care for his patient’s health, for instance, prescribes to him too strong medications in order to cure an illness. The patient recovers from the illness; however, the cure has been so aggressive as to bring about a new disease. Or a general, who does not care his soldiers’ good, is ready to send a half of his army to death in order to take a city. The city is taken, but the losses are so many that the victory itself turns out to be a damage. To avoid that, also particular science should have as aim the good and care for it. Accordingly, this science of the good and the evil, to be truly good, cannot be a science detached from any other and devoid of contents; this science of good and evil cannot be Critias’ σωφροσύνη. This does not mean that Socrates does not ascribe hierarchical superiority to this science. This science is what makes good actions; therefore, is superior to the others; however everyone in the city should have this science. This science of the good must guide every action and be shared by all the sciences and craft as well⁹³.

Critias and the science ruling over the science of good and evil: the failure of the dialogue

This science able to make good the other sciences, Socrates goes on, cannot be σωφροσύνη, at least σωφροσύνη intended as science of sciences and lack of sciences. Consequently, not σωφροσύνη, but this new science would be that which

⁹³ This is not at odd with what is said in *Republic* about the knowledge of the Good as pinnacle of dialectic philosophical knowledge (*Resp.* VII 517a1-c4: cf. F. Ferrari, 2022, pp. 106-112.). The king philosophers are different from other citizens not because they only care for the good, but because they only can glimpse at the metaphysical good. Nevertheless, the other citizens also care for the political good, namely ὁμόνοια, the social harmony. The γενναῖον ψεῦδος (414b1-415d8) indeed serves the purpose of persuading citizens to keep social harmony, by complying with its hierarchical structure and consequently adjusting to the criterium of the οἰκαιοπραγία. Everyone in the Kallipolis, from the humble craftsman to the king philosopher, is guided by the will to achieve the good and keep it. Obviously, the way in which a king philosopher contributes to the social good is different from that of a carpenter; nevertheless, everyone in the Kallipolis aims at the good, even if from different perspectives.

can benefit men; accordingly, σωφροσύνη is not beneficial. Socrates is alluding to what Critias said in 166c1-5, that is to say that σωφροσύνη has itself as its object, whereas the other sciences have an object different from themselves; Socrates is provoking Critias, as he has done throughout the dialogue, to include the good in the definition of σωφροσύνη intended as knowledge of what one knows and what does not; if Critias were able to correct his previous definition, it would be possible to argue *that σωφροσύνη is the knowledge of what one knows and what not aimed at the accomplishment of good things*. Accordingly, the good would turn out to be the object of self-knowledge, different from self-knowledge⁹⁴. However, Critias fails to understand Socrates invitation to correct his definition and with his next answer, brings the discussion to its end:

But why, he asked, should not it be beneficial? For if temperance is above all a science of the sciences, and presides too over the other sciences, surely, she will govern this science of the good, and so benefit us (ταύτης δήπου ἂν ἄρχουσα τῆς περὶ τὰγαθὸν ἐπιστήμης ὠφελοῖ ἂν ἡμᾶς) (174d10-e3).

Critias does not take advantage from Socrates' suggestion in 174b12-c8 according to which the science of good and evil must not be separated from the others. On the contrary, Critias makes out of it a particular science detached from the other particular sciences and crafts. That means also that the good, which should be the aim, which the other sciences and crafts care for, is downgraded to an object among the others. Moreover, Critias has failed to establish the correct connection between σωφροσύνη and the good; this failure involves relevant consequences not only from the theoretical, but also from the ethical point of view.

The theoretical consequence consists in the fact that σωφροσύνη, being the good object of another science which it rules over, is still devoid of an object different from itself. Thus, Critias' σωφροσύνη remains a mere knowledge of itself without any link to something different from itself and, what is more important, without any

⁹⁴ In *Resp.* VI 505b8-c4 Socrates argues against those who regard φρόνησις as the good. If one asked them which φρόνησις is good, they would oblige to answer the φρόνησις of the good. Φρόνησις, as well as σωφροσύνη in *Charmides*, is what allows human beings to know the *good*, but is not the good itself. Cf. J. Adamietz, 1969, pp. 53-54.

usefulness, since it cannot provide the benefits provided by the other science (health, for instance, is provided by medicine, not by σωφροσύνη). The consequence is that σωφροσύνη cannot provide any benefit (175a6-7). The ethical consequences of the subordination of a science of the good to another one (σωφροσύνη), are not discussed in the dialogue, but can be inferred from what has been argued so far. The good, which is always common, should be the criterium to which everyone adjusts. Stating that σωφροσύνη rules over the science of the good means that the σώφρων is superior to the good itself; he would even establish what is good and what is not, and the science of the good, as a subsidiary one, should restrict itself to carry out its orders⁹⁵. One can add that ruling over the good and not having the good as one's own object are the same thing. The doctor helps the patient to recover the health; however, patient's health is not dependent on doctor's will: it is a balance the doctor can help to restore, not something he can impose at will. Obviously, the health is a state of the body and cannot exist without a body, but this does not mean that health has no objective features independent from doctors' opinions. In the same way rulers can convince themselves that making money irrespective of other citizens' wellness is good itself. After some years they will have brought about so dangerous inequity as to make life in the city unbearable, and they will undergo their self-destruction owing to their reckless conduct⁹⁶. Even in this case, there are some objective features of the social good (for instance: avoiding impoverishing people) they have neglected.

Socrates examines himself and the others in order to remove one's own and others' self-deception; this examining involves that it is possible to believe what is not true and regard as good what is not. If the good were creation of individual, self-deception were impossible since everyone would be right to believe that what they regard as good is good. Certainly, the good not always (or almost never) is evident and must be found. Individuals must strive for *the good, a good which is not individual only*. The primary objective feature of the individual good is the existence of other people, whose wellness, as Socrates has pointed out in the dialogue, is an essential part of the individual wellness. Socrates may have held that

⁹⁵ Cf. Th. Tuozzo 2011, pp. 292-298.

⁹⁶ This is what happens in the oligarchic regime: cf. *Introduction*, note 25.

the good is questionable and people have to question it; however he never says that the good is arbitrary⁹⁷. Regarding the good as something subject to a particular will means removing from the good all its objective features, first of all, the importance of taking others' wellness into consideration. Critias' carelessness for others' wellness underlies his idea of σωφροσύνη; in fact, the well runned city he has in mind is more similar to a dystopia where a group of rulers establishes at will the good to pursue, while their subjects have become technically unobjectionable (almost mechanical) executors of their orders. The good (its objective and relational features) has undergone the same fate as Apollo. As the God has downgraded to a mere tool of the σόφρων ruler, in the same way the good has been downgraded to the object of a subsidiary science; the disappearance of the God and the subordination of the good go together.

Conclusions

The Care and the Whole

Despite the numerous concessions, the interlocutors have failed to find what is σωφροσύνη, and, what is worse, they have gone so far as to conclude that it cannot provide any benefit (175d1-4). Socrates complains that Charmides, according to the outcomes of the discussion, will not benefit from σωφροσύνη, even if it were already present in him (7-11); what is more, he complains that the incantation learnt from the Thracian healer (156d5-e6) has turned out to be useless. However, Socrates does not think that the incantation itself is useless, but rather that it is him who is bad at investigating. He concludes that σωφροσύνη must be a great good and Charmides, if he has this virtue, is a blessed one, since the more σόφρων he is, the happier he will be (176a1-5). Socrates' ἐπωδή, the Socratic elenctic procedure, has not been completely useless, since it has affected Charmides positively. As it has been said above, the Thracian healer has stated that Greek doctors, not caring for the soul, do not care for the whole. Socrates has proven to aim at nothing but

⁹⁷ For questioning the good as a feature of Socratic stance in *Charmides*, cf. P. Stern, 1999, pp. 399-412

caring for Charmides as a whole. It has been argued that Charmides' admirers (and Critias himself) regard him as an ἀπρόσωπος, a faceless, someone who can see neither others nor himself, but is mere object of his admirers' lustful gazes. However, thanks to Socrates' first refutation, Charmides starts practicing self-reflection, looking at himself. Socrates, by means of his refutation, was aiming at giving a face to Charmides, the ability to look at himself and others as well; the same ability which Charmides' admirers and his tutor deny to him. Socrates *was trying to transform Charmides from an incomplete "faceless" boy into a complete individual endowed with a face and the ability to direct his gaze at himself.* This directing one's gaze at oneself is essential for the assumption of the "remedy" that is to say, σωφροσύνη. This looking at oneself is also essential for immortalising, as the Thracian physician taught to do. When one looks at oneself, one should be able to remove from oneself (one's soul) all the bodily conditionings, namely, everything that in bodily life shatters one's experience; thus one should be able to find in oneself the inner foundation which underlies different observable actions⁹⁸. Finding this inner foundation is what makes possible to regard one's experience in the world as a whole and not as a discrete amount of unrelated actions.

At this point it could be useful to spend some words about the significance of the body in *Charmides*. From what has been argued so far it can be inferred that body in this dialogue is not the mere organized whole of tissues and organs; by body it is to mean all what makes humans observable from others and everything they do in as much this can be perceived. Therefore even actions carried out before other people are to regard as body. Becoming immortal therefore will mean removing what keeps oneself distant from looking at oneself so as to grasp what underlies one's actions and opinions (accordingly, also public life is body). Consequently immortalising oneself, as setting oneself free from the shattering conditionings of the bodily life and becoming whole, as finding in oneself the foundation underlying one's own behaviors and opinions go together; thus immortality and wholeness appear to be conditions which cannot be detached from each other.

⁹⁸ This finding the inner foundation of the external behavior is exactly what Socrates exhorts Charmides to undertake in 160d5-10.

Socrates caring for Charmides as a whole underlies also Socrates' attempt to lead Charmides to contradicting Homer. The possibility to contradict Homer triggers in Charmides an emotional upheaval he cannot face up to. This means that not all the opinions are mere opinions. Sure, there are some opinions one has not so many trouble giving up; however there are some others which are deeply rooted in one's emotional life, which are the mirror of what one regards as painful and enjoyable; therefore contradicting some opinions of one's own is contradicting one's own way of feeling. Socrates cares for the whole also because he points at those opinions deeply rooted in the emotional life of his interlocutor; and it cannot be otherwise. Σωφροσύνη is also the ability to look at oneself as a whole; that means that one should be able not only to know what he thinks, but also the emotions which accompany one's opinions and even why those emotions accompany those opinions. To become able to regard himself as a whole, a whole in which cognitions and emotions are entangled, one must beforehand face an upheaval shocking both cognitions and emotions.

Let us come back to Charmides; at a certain point he has retreated from the discussion so that it seems that the dialogue has failed. However in 176a6-b5 Charmides claims to be ready to undergo further incantations at least until that Socrates says it is enough. Charmides' admission means that the boy has started looking at himself and has acknowledged that his knowledge is lacking; he does not know what to believe; however he has questioned what he believed so far. Charmides has started having "a face" and directing his look at himself; this is the essential condition to become able to care for oneself and for others as well, in the same way as Socrates, talking about the removal of deception from oneself and others as well, proves be able to do. Even if Charmides seems to have been influenced by Socrates' incantation to some extent, he has not committed yet to the pursuit of Socratic σωφροσύνη, and his last words cast shadows on this positive conclusion. Critias orders Charmides to cultivate Socrates friendship and never lose touch with him. Charmides promises to obey his tutor starting from then on (176b6-c3). At this point Socrates shyly asks:

There, there, I said, what are you two plotting to do (τί βουλεύεσθον ποιεῖν)? Nothing replied Charmides; we have made our plot. *So you will use force, I said, before even*

allowing me to make my affidavit (βίαση ἄρα, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, καὶ οὐδ' ἀνάκρισίν μοι δώσεις). *You must expect me to use force, he replied, since he gives me the command* (ὡς βιασομένου, ἔφη, ἐπειδήπερ ὅδε γε ἐπιτάττει: πρὸς ταῦτα σὺ αὖ βουλευέου ὅτι ποιήσεις): take counsel, therefore, on your side, as to what you will do (176c6-7).

Socrates points out that he has no choice, since Charmides and Critias have already decided. Charmides displays in these lines an authoritarian attitude, which he has never showed throughout the dialogue; this may mean that he is influenced by his despotic cousin and has assimilated some features of his personality. Socrates has helped Charmides to direct his look at himself, but this does not involve that Charmides will use this skill for the common good; in fact now the danger stands out that Charmides, instead of espousing Socrates' σωφροσύνη will commit to that of Critias, the mere self-assertion claiming to be able to rule over everything and superior to everything, even to the good (and the Gods). This kind of σωφροσύνη is in the best cases useless, in the worst ones dangerous. The dialogue seems to end with a beginning, the beginning of the battle for Charmides' soul, since it is not clear which kind of σωφροσύνη he will decide to pursue. The boy must choose between two lifestyles, and both ascribes a great role to σωφροσύνη, even if both intend it in a different, opposite way. What distinguishes them from each other is the role of the good. The Socratic σῶφρων attempts to understand *in every situation where is the good and how he can accomplish it*; on the contrary Critias' σῶφρων has no effort to do, since he himself establishes at will what is good and what is not. Only caring for a good which is common and independent of individual whims makes self-knowledge σωφροσύνη in the Socratic meaning. And only the existence of a common good, which is the aim of a community commitment, makes the *caring for oneself and for other as well not only morally valuable, but also theoretically possible*.

The Care and the good: the self of the Care

In 166c8-d7, after Critias has established the difference between σωφροσύνη and other sciences, Socrates claims that he cannot immediately consent to Critias' words; Socrates must examine the speech, and if it is the case, consent or reject it, since it is a κοινὸν ἀγαθόν, a common good, that the truth about everything there is

clear. Undertaking the examination of a speech and not consenting to it immediately nor letting others do it is not unusual for Socrates⁹⁹. These lines are a relevant example of Socrates' σωφροσύνη, since the care for his and others' good is pointed out. However, this does not mean that Socrates and his interlocutors and the bystanders are equal; even Socrates indeed does not know immediately if a speech is true or false, but he is much better than the others at finding it out. In the same way nor the doctor neither the patient immediately knows which illness the patient is suffering from; yet only the doctor can find it out. This makes the Socratic dialogue an asymmetrical relationship. Nevertheless, doctors need patients' good not only for financial benefits. Helping patients recover enhances doctor's self-confidence; healed patients are evidence that he is a good doctor and through his science he benefits others more than they could benefit themselves. Thanks to his success the doctor can *rightly esteem himself*, so that the relationships doctor/patient eminently shows that the right care for oneself is *dependent on others' wellness the patients in this case*)¹⁰⁰. Doctor and patient share a common good, because the recovered health of the patient benefits both doctor and patient, but not in the same way. Doctor's good is the increased self-esteem and the enhancement of his skills as a doctor; Patient's good is health. This involves that the good, even if common, is not the same for both parts, since doctor and patient are benefitted in different ways. In the same way, Socrates as σόφρων must avert from himself and others as well the danger of self-deception. Thus, his interlocutors can exert a clearer look at himself and Socrates, as σόφρων, has been useful both to himself and other. He can *rightly esteem himself on account of the common good he helps achieve*¹⁰¹. Supposing that the care for the good is an indispensable feature of σωφροσύνη, the highest example of this virtue is provided by Socrates himself, who wants to help Charmides to acquire this virtue. In this case, Charmides would become able to care

⁹⁹Cf. *Prot.* 313a1-314b5.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Introduction*, pp. 34-39.

¹⁰¹ Given that the examination of oneself and the others as well is aimed at the common good, the famous words of *Apol.* 38a5: "the unexamined life is not worth living for a man (ὁ δὲ ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπου)" could be interpreted: "I life without the care for the common good is not worth living".

actively for his own and others' good, for the greatest benefit one can provide to someone else is making them able to benefit themselves and others.

It has been said above that the "self" in the Charmides, that being able to direct one's own faculty at itself is the soul; indeed, if σωφροσύνη is engendered in soul and from soul come the goods and the evils to the body, it is reasonable to infer that a soul endowed with σωφροσύνη can remove from itself the evils it suffers from or prevent itself from them. This involves that soul is both its own patient and its own doctor at the same time, so that this soul, as able to direct its faculty at itself, can be *healthier and sicker than itself*¹⁰². This entails also that this soul can fall prey to opposite impulses¹⁰³. Socrates himself acknowledges that before Charmides' beauty he feels as a fawn before a lion. The seduction exerted by Charmides' beauty could prevent him from caring for the true good; nevertheless Socrates does not fall prey of this seduction: he is aware that this seduction exerts its power also on him and could distract him from his purpose (providing the remedy to Charmides); however he manages to overcome this seduction so that he can care for his own good (proving to himself to be able to go beyond bodily conditionings so as to help someone else to pursue σωφροσύνη) as well as for that of Charmides (being helped to pursue σωφροσύνη and acquire the face his admirers and his tutor deny to him). Socrates' attitude in these lines shows also that even someone as σώφρων as him experiences impulses contrary to the pursuit of the good; what makes Socrates σώφρων is being able to overcome them. Being σώφρων does not mean being infallible, but being able to face one's fallible nature, not letting it distract from the pursuit of the good. The awareness of a fallible nature that cannot be eradicated once and for all is what distinguishes Socrates' σωφροσύνη from Critias': this fallible nature is what makes self-examination necessary; indeed, if one were infallible, one would not need to examine himself or others, because one would immediately discern what is true and what is false without posing questions neither to others nor to oneself.

This infallibility is what Critias longs for; The σωφροσύνη he has in mind should make its possessor ἀναμάρτητος, infallible. Being ἀναμάρτητος does not mean making mistakes; someone ἀναμάρτητος is someone beyond the possibility itself

¹⁰² Cf. 167c9-12.

¹⁰³ Cf. *supra*, 11ff.

of making mistakes; and this is a feature of the immortals; in particular of the Gods. Plato in this dialogue has disseminated some hints that his great-uncle wants to take Apollo's place, become immortal as Apollo is. Both Socrates and Critias establish a link between σωφροσύνη and immortality; however, the immortality Socrates longs for is different from that which Critias strives for. Becoming immortal for Socrates is reaching that state in which the soul, detaching itself from bodily and social conditionings, can judge himself as rightly as the judges of the other world would judge him after death, without being indulgent with himself¹⁰⁴. The immortality Critias longs for is that of those who cannot be judged, because it is *a priori* excluded that they make mistakes they must account for.

Charmides as a "holy war".

The god Apollo has been explicitly mentioned just once in the dialogue, in 164d5, where Critias is giving his interpretation of the Delphic inscription. Yet, some hints suggest that the presence of this God is a steady feature in the dialogue. Socrates indeed mentions Abaris in 158b5, who, according to the sources, was healer and minister of Apollo¹⁰⁵. Besides, in 161c7-8 Socrates says that the words τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν resembles an enigma. This enigma cannot be dismissed as something reckless because the speaker of such words must be quite wise; Socrates regards these words as words of the God (as they will turn out to be, since the attempt to interpret them will lead both interlocutors to Delphic oracle). Furthermore, the use of verb μαντεύεσθαι (cita linea greco) suggests that Plato is ascribing to his Socrates the role of a veritable spokesperson of Apollo¹⁰⁶. Accordingly, Socrates is fulfilling two tasks on Apollo's behalf: firstly, as a healer, he attempts to care for the young Charmides, providing a remedy to him; secondly as a spokesperson, he is implicitly defending the true meaning of Apollo's words against Critias' distortions. Apollo, as it has been seen above, has been downgraded to the instrument of human rulers. Given that, behind Critias' atheism in *Charmides* something deeper hides, namely

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *supra*, note 35.

¹⁰⁵ Hdt. IV 36; Pind. Fr. 270; Lyc. *Contra Mnesimachum*, fr. 86.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *supra*. p. 137, note 80.

the history of Athens in the second half of the Vth century b. C. In 454 b.C Pericles moved the treasury of the Delian league from Delos to Athens; from then on, as Thucydides says, Athen starts becoming an empire and transforming its allies into subjects¹⁰⁷. The league, despite being still consecrated to Apollo as tutelary deity, contrary to the archaic amphictyonic leagues had no religious feature more; it was a league of cities based on the mutual defense against enemies and, at least formally, aimed at thwarting the Persian threat. The transfer of the treasury marked a deep transformation within the league; Athens was no more a prominent city, but a city like the others; the Delian Apollo, as well as Critias' Apollo in the *Charmides*, was no more the tutelary deity of all the members of the league, but the facade behind which Athens' will to master the other members of the league was concealed. In 415 b.C. the herms were vandalized and in the consequent trial even Critias was accused. Besides, little before the mutilation of the herms, Alcibiades was accused of desecrating the Eleusinian Mysteries. After the restoration of the democracy Socrates will have appeared to the new regime also as the teacher of two defilers of sacred things¹⁰⁸. Anyway it is not unreasonable that, apart from the purpose of emphasizing the gap between Socrates and Critias, Plato in *Charmides* also attempts to bring to light the gap between Socrates and two feature of the Athenian culture in the second half of the Vth century b. C., namely the atheism and the longing for military and political power irrespective of justice, both embodied by the same individual in this dialogue. Socrates, the true servant of Apollo, must defend his God's words against a man who does not acknowledge a higher power than his own. The disappearance of the God and the disappearance of the good in Critias' reasoning go together; in fact the good and the God (Apollo in this case) represent both the limit beyond which one cannot go; the good, which, to be good, must be common, is a limit because *the good is what one reaches only through others' wellness and not something one establishes and imposes to others irrespective of their wellness*. The God is also a limit because its existence reminds men that there

¹⁰⁷ Thuc. I 96.

¹⁰⁸ Xenophon (*Mem.* I 2, 12-16) argues that Alcibiades and Critias have never regarded Socrates as a model of conduct; they indeed were too ambitious to practice Socrates' simple lifestyle. Therefore, they took advantage from him, and as soon as they considered him to be useless, they abandoned him.

will be always something they cannot do. Getting the rid of the divine sphere somehow means getting the rid of the limits to what one can do; however if one has no more limits, one could end up believing, as Critias does, *that one has also the power to rule over what is good*. Socrates doubts that the science Critias is so enthusiastic of can make happy; the reason is that such a science establishes an erroneous relationship with the good (and the Gods). To be happy, one has to find what is good: even if this good is not always clear, even if it is not always the same in every situation, this does not mean that this good is created by individuals; this good is to find. The good is something one complies with, not something one establishes at will. *In the disappearance of the divine sphere lurks the danger that also the care for the good (intended as something one must adjust to) may disappear*. This is the reason why Socrates is engaged in a holy war not only against Critias, but against Athens itself; he is the spokesperson of both the God and the good against Critias who has downgraded both the God and the good to mere instruments of the ruler. The existence of the Gods involves the *existence of goods things men must find, not create*, and only *a servant of the God* can suggest that happiness needs one's adhesion to a good one cannot establish at will; a suggestion which *a creator of gods* cannot understand.

Chapter III: the *Alcibiades*

*Alcibiades and the initiatory nature of the care for oneself and the others*¹

In the *Alcibiades I* the initiatory and transformative nature of the care for oneself as well as others emerges in the first lines of the dialogue, which, as it will be argued, appears to be a ritual of initiation, namely an initiation into the adult and political world of the city. The initiatory features of the acquisition of the ability to take care for oneself and others as well could help the reader shed light on the nature of the *self*; this self is not something one has access to whenever one wants, irrespective of others' existence; on the contrary this *self* appears as something whose existence depends on a dialectical exchange, that is to say, something which implies more than one person. The *self* is something which comes into the world out of a dialectical exchange and once come into the world, can carry on this exchange on its turn. Given that, it can be argued that the reflexivity of the *self* is a condition acquired in an initiatory way by means of the Socratic dialogue.

*Alcibiades and the separation from his milieu*²

¹ I do not mean to dwell on the long-lasting debate on the authenticity of the *Alcibiades*, neither would it be possible here to provide a substantial contribution to this philological debate: cf. A. Pennesi, 2009, pp. 7-24 and M. J. de Carvalho, S. Oliveira, 2019, pp. 10ff. Anyway, it will be seen, the *Alcibiades* can be fruitfully read as an initiation; accordingly, the *Alcibiades*, inspite of the doubts on its authenticity, is consistent with the reading of the Platonic Socrates outlined in this work. The main assumption underlying the reading outlined in this dialogue is the intrinsically relational nature of self-knowledge; therefore, this reading grows out of L. Napolitano, 2007, pp. 177ff. and M. Boeri, L. de Brasi, 2017, pp. 29-34. What is argued in this chapter is that this self-knowledge becomes possible by means of an initiatory transformation, triggered by the Socratic dialogue.

² The *separation* is a feature of the rituals of passage. Ephebes, for instance, had to spend the military service far from Athens in the forests close to the city. This period during which the ephebe was living in non-urban environment prepared the return of the ephebe to the city no more as a boy, but as a man. During the two years spent far from the city and its inhabitants, from the world of his childhood, he dies as a boy to return to the city as an adult. This separation from one's milieu followed by the reinstatement in it is a common feature of the ritual of passage also in civilizations different from the greek one; cfr. A. Van Gennep, 1909, pp. 89-92.

At the beginning of the dialogue Socrates reveals that for long time he has been looking at Alcibiades without daring to talk to him because of a daimonic prohibition; however, Socrates finds the courage to address Alcibiades since this prohibition has ceased (103a-b2). As in the *Euthydemus*³ the mention of the daimonic intervention, referring to a divine dimension, serves the purpose of ascribing priestly features to the Platonic Socrates. The other lovers of Alcibiades, overcome by his haughtiness due to his beauty, the nobility of his family and the political and military power of his guardian, Pericles (104a3-b5), have abandoned him; and it is now, when the other lovers have run away, that Socrates comes forward. Socrates is aware that Alcibiades has noticed it; therefore he wants to reveal to the young man why he has persisted in following him while the others run away; Socrates says that, if Alcibiades were happy with what he already possesses, namely beauty, nobility, wealth and powerful friends, he would have given up his love for the young man; on the contrary, Socrates is sure that Alcibiades' ambitions are quite higher; according to Socrates' words, Alcibiades longs for undisputed power and influence not only in Greece, but also in Asia, so that he would not live, unless he fills the whole world with his name and his power (105c1-5)⁴; these ambitions of power and glory are the reason why Socrates has carried on following Alcibiades wherever he went until that moment. Socrates tells Alcibiades that only thanks to him his ambitions will be crowned with achievement (τούτων γάρ σοι πάντων τῶν διανοημάτων τέλος ἐπιτεθῆναι ἄνευ ἐμοῦ ἀδύνατον, 105d2-3); "nobody" Socrates carries on, "neither guardian, nor relative except me could provide to you the power you long for, with the god's help (105e4-5). This is the reason why thus far the God⁵ has been preventing Socrates from approaching

³ In the prologue of the *Eythudemus*: cf. *supra*, pp. 41-43. *the* conversation starts because Socrates experiences the daimonic prohibition to leave the gymnasium; conversely in the *Alcibiades I* the conversation starts because of a silent daimonic consent.

⁴ Cf. C. Modenutti, 2019, pp. 111-137.

⁵ At the beginning of the dialogue Socrates says that he avoided addressing to Alcibiades due to a δαιμόνιον ἐναντίωμα; now it is ὁ θεός (Apollo) who prevented him from doing it. If one reads the adjective δαιμόνιον as "coming from the Gods", the divine prohibition can come from Apollo, as well as from any of the Gods. Problems rise when one interprets δαιμόνιον as referring to an entity different from the God; in this case δαιμόνιον ἐναντίωμα would be "the prohibition of the daimon",

Alcibiades, because, if Socrates had talked to Alcibiades when he was too young, he would have talked uselessly; instead, Alcibiades is now in the age to benefit from the Socratic *διαλέγεσθαι*.

Apart from the end of the divine prohibition, further initiatory features deeply interrelated in this prologue are: 1) the stressing of Alcibiades' age; 2) the separation from his previous lovers. Regarding the first point, it is on account of his age that now Alcibiades must benefit from Socratic elenchus; in the dialogue Alcibiades should be nineteen years old⁶; an age in which he should have finished the military service as Ephebe or is on the verge of finishing it. Therefore, Alcibiades finds himself in a transitional period of his life⁷, a period between the abandonment of his childhood⁸ and the entrance in the adults' world; a period in which he is neither of both. In this transitional period Alcibiades and his peers live far from the city, far from the world they had known until that moment as well as far from the world they should enter at the end of this period. Alcibiades is "dead" to the world; he will come back to life when this transitional period ends and he appear, as a man, before the assembly of the demos (105a5-b1). Alcibiades is also far from his lovers, that

so that, at least in *Alcibiades I* the God and the Daimonion would end up be the same thing. However, if one takes into account that, according to Diotima's speech, the communication between Gods and human exists thanks to the *δαίμόνιον* (intended as the class of the *δαίμονες*), it goes without saying that *δαίμονες* experience Gods' command directly. The fact that Socrates experiences directly a prohibition of divine origine and exhorts Alcibiades to observe Apollo's command "know theeself" (the command of a God) could lead to think that Socrates himself is depicted as a *δαίμων*; accordingly, Socrates would be a creature inferior to the Gods, but superior to humans. Cfr. *infra*, pp. 354ff..

⁶ The end of Alcibiades' Ephebia coincide with the beginning of the peloponnesian war. Cf. D. Nails, 2002.

⁷ Wilamowitz, 1893, pp. 193-194 thinks that the ephebia was created in 336/335; However, other scholars, such as A. Breilich, 1969 p. 220 and H. Jeanmaire, 1939, consider the Ephebia a later evolution of more ancient rituals of initiation of young males to adult age. This thesis is more probable that that supported by Wilamowitz, at least for one reason: the importance of the holy dimension (the young males at the first year of the Ephebia were obliged to pay visit to several holy places; furthermore, they had to swear an oath in the temple of Agraulos). Cf. O. W. Reinmuth, 1952, pp. 34-50.

⁸ On the relationship between the biological end of the childhood and the social one, see A. Van Gennep, 1909, pp. 76-82.

his to say, far from those people who love him for his bodily beauty, his nobility, his wealth, his influent friends and so on. This means that Alcibiades in this moment is far from those people who love what in the *Gorgias* the judges of the afterworld remove from souls in order to judge them as correctly as possible and in *Charmides* Socrates attempt to remove in order to look at Charmides's soul. In the *Alcibiades I* the socratic διαλέγεσθαι rises in a death-like frame⁹, since Alcibiades, physically far from his previous lovers and his guardian as well, dead to the world which admires him, cannot rely neither on wealth, nor on beauty, nor on nobility to escape from Socrates' interrogations. Regarding the self-knowledge, one does not have to arrive to 129b1 to find Socrates facing this issue. Before revealing to Alcibiades his own ambitions, Socrates addresses these words to him: "I will show you other thoughts of yours, whereby you will know that I have persisted in taking care of you" (νοῦν δ' ἕτερ' αὖ κατηγορήσω διανοήματα σὰ πρὸς αὐτὸν σέ, ᾧ καὶ γνώση ὅτι προσέχων γέ σοι τὸν νοῦν διατετέλεκα. 105a1-2). Socrates seems to say that he knows Alcibiades better than Alcibiades knows himself; Socrates can show to Alcibiades Alcibiades' own thoughts, in the same way as a mirror shows the image of the person before it¹⁰. Thus far Socrates has been avoiding approaching Alcibiades and now he starts talking to him in order to show to him who he really is; it is not by chance that Socrates commits to helping Alcibiades in a moment in which Alcibiades is far from his previous lovers and his guardian; besides, a moment in which Alcibiades no more belongs to the world of childhood, nor has entered the world of the adult citizens; he is dead to childhood and not yet born to manhood. It

⁹ On the physical distance from the initiate and his death to the social world he comes from, A. Moreau, 1992, p. 215: "Le jeune homme entre dans l'au-delà, dans le surnaturel, dans le royaume d'Hadès. Ainsi les éphèbes athéniens n'accomplissent ils jamais leur service militaire dans la cité d'Athènes mais aux frontières de l'Attique, loin de leur famille, de leur maison, de la société dans laquelle ils ont vécu. Dans les mois qui précèdent leur majorité, les jeunes Spartiates passent par l'épreuve redoutable de la kryptie. Abandonnés dans la campagne, ils doivent survivre seuls, se cacher le jour et agir la nuit". Cf. P. Vidal-Naquet, 1981, pp. 39ff.

¹⁰ Cf. D. Ferguson, 2019, pp. 369-391. The greek verb κατηγορεῖν, besides "moving accusations" as a legal act, can mean also "showing, make clear, reveal". In these latter meanings the verb κατηγορεῖν seems to allude to the features of a mirror. In this case the image of the reflection in a mirror as a way to know oneself comes out in the first lines of the dialogue. Obviously the mirror is Socrates, or, more exactly, Socratic refutations.

is in this deathlike and transitional phase that Socrates will attempt to initiate Alcibiades into the care of self and others as well; this indicates that the ability to know oneself and the related commitment to the self-improvement are a condition one acquires through an initiatory itinerary by undergoing a deathlike experience¹¹.

Διαλέγεσθαι and self-reflection

Alcibiades neither denies nor assents to Socrates's statements on his own ambitions. He restricts himself to asking Socrates why the achievement or the failure of these ambitions depends on Socrates (106a2-5). Socrates answers that he is able to demonstrate how he can help Alcibiades reach his aims, provided that Alcibiades himself wants to assist (ὑπερηγήσαι) Socrates (106b3-4), since Socrates is not going to deliver a long speech as those to which Alcibiades is accustomed (106b1-2). What Socrates is going to propound to Alcibiades is to answer to questions (b6-9). This is a relevant step of the dialogue, first of all because it is part of the initiatic atmosphere of the prologue: Alcibiades will not hear long speeches as a hearer; Alcibiades must distance himself not only from the city and his lovers, but also from the kind of speeches to which he is accustomed (the kind of speeches in which his guardian Pericles is expert). In this transitional phase of his life, Alcibiades must experience a different communication, one in which he must actively provide his assistance to the interlocutor so that the conversation can continue; therefore Socrates initiates Alcibiades into a new way of communication. Moreover, Socrates, in order to reveal to Alcibiades Alcibiades's own thoughts, uses dialectic exchange; the *self* emerges not just through the intercourse with an other person, but *through the dialectic intercourse with an other person*. Socrates would never dream of revealing to Alcibiades the person he is through an oratorical performance; Alcibiades must gain the self he is by means of the dialectic exchange, in which he gives his active assistance. This *Self* is acquired in a deathlike time during which one is neither boy nor man¹²; and it is acquired through the dialectic examination.

¹¹Cfr. *Introduction*, pp. 9-23.

¹² It is the notion of liminality which is the backbone of every ritual of passage: cf. V. Turner, 1969, pp. 359-366.

The dialectic examination starts. Socrates asks Alcibiades on which issues he would advise the Athenians; maybe, Socrates suggests, Alcibiades would advise the Athenians on issues he knows better than the people he wants to advise (c3-7). Alcibiades assents to Socrates's suggestion, since one is a good advisor only when one knows that on which is going to advise. Socrates makes Alcibiades assent also that one knows only what learns from others and what one has found on one's own (d4-6); moreover Alcibiades acknowledges that he could not find nor learn anything unless he wants to learn or searches for it; besides, Alcibiades admits that he would not search nor learn that which he believes that he already knows (10-11) and, what is more, that there was a time in which he did not know that which he does now (e1-3). Since the Athenians, when they gather, do not ponder over the issues in which Alcibiades is expert, nor over divination or building houses (issues about which Alcibiades does not know anything), Socrates asks Alcibiades on which issue he could advise the Athenians, provided that the advisor should be expert in that on which is going to advise (107c3-4). Alcibiades answers and the subsequent lines deserve to be quoted in their entirety:

Socrates : « Then what will they have under consideration if you are to be right in standing up, when you do so, as their counsellor? ». Alcibiades: « Their own affairs (ὅταν περὶ τῶν ἑαυτῶν πραγμάτων), Socrates ». Socrates: « Do you mean with regard to shipbuilding, and the question as to what sort of ships they ought to get built? » Alcibiades: « No, I do not, Socrates. [...] ». Socrates: « Well, on what sort of affairs of their own do you mean that they will be deliberating? ». Alcibiades: « On war, Socrates, or on peace, or on any other of the state's affairs ». Socrates: « Do you mean that they will be deliberating with whom they ought to make peace, and on whom they ought to make war, and in what manner? » Alcibiades: « Yes ». Socrates: « And on whom it is better to do so (χρῆ δ' οὐχ οἷς βέλτιον), ought they not? ». Alcibiades: « Yes ». Socrates: « And at such time as it is better (καὶ τόθ' ὁπότε βέλτιον)? ». Alcibiades: « Certainly ». Socrates: « And for so long as they had better (καὶ τοσοῦτον χρόνον ὅσον ἄμεινον)? ». Alcibiades: « Yes » (107c3-e4, tr. W.R.M Lamb).

By means of his questions, Socrates connects τὰ ἑαυτῶν πράγματα to the issue of the βέλτιον and ἄμεινον; considering that ἄμεινον is the comparative form of

ἀγαθόν, it seems that here Socrates is establishing the link between one's own affair and one's own good, as it has come out in *Charmides*¹³; this link, which in *Charmides* disappears in the discussion with Critias, reappears here as a foundation of the following reasonings: if advising people on their own affairs means advising them on what is good for them, it follows that, to advise others on their own good, the advisor should know what is good for himself¹⁴. To advise on war, the advisor should possess the knowledge of what is good, or more exactly, of what is better; he must not only know how to wage war from a technical point of view; he must know also against whom, when and for how long. This advisor should possess a knowledge of the big picture, so that he can make others benefit from war because his view goes beyond the mere military conflict¹⁵. To lead Alcibiades to understand the nature of the better one must have in view in order to advise on peace and war, Socrates proposes the example of the wrestle-master; he is the ablest to advise on what is better in wrestling, since he possesses a knowledge (9-11); what is the better in this case is what is performed in compliance with the art of the wrestle master; since the art of the wrestle master is the gymnastic, what is better in wrestling is the gymnastic (γυμναστικὸν 108b1-3). Given that the better is what is absolutely correct and the absolutely correct is what is carried out in compliance with an art (6-8), Socrates invites Alcibiades to say what is the better in harping and singing

¹³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 121-123.

¹⁴ In a certain way the relational nature of the good is taken into consideration both in *Charmides* and in *Alcibiades*, but from opposite perspectives: in *Charmides* Socrates starts from the individual good to suggest that individual good needs others' good, whereas in *Alcibiades*, to benefit others, one must know how to benefit oneself. Anyway, it can be stated that in both cases τὰ ἑαυτῶν πράγματα are intimately related to the idea of the fulfillment of relational goods, so that the true οικειοπραγία is always a ἀγαθοπραγία.

¹⁵ The only man who knows how to wage war because he goes beyond war is the king, or a royal man. The kind of knowledge Alcibiades should have in order to provide good advice on war can be fruitfully compared to what is said about the royal art in *Euth.* 29a1-291d3. It could be argued that what Socrates wants to do in *Alcibiades* is not only to help Alcibiades become a man, but also become a man able to rule the city in a royal way. This would be perfectly consistent with the attention paid to the education of the Persian and Spartans king, the most powerful enemies of Athen. If this is the case, *Alcibiades* would be Socrates' attempt to resend to the democratic Athen a royal ruler who has nothing more to do with the values of the demos. Socrates initiates Alcibiades not only into manhood, but also into kingship.

and keeping time. Alcibiades has troubles finding the answer and hardly figures out that the better in harping and singing is what is performed musically, that is to say, in compliance with the rules of music (108d1-6)¹⁶. Now Alcibiades is invited to say the better in waging war and peace, that is to say in compliance with which art war and peace are to wage¹⁷. Once again Alcibiades is unable to answer and Socrates points out how shameful (αἰσχρόν)¹⁸ is that Alcibiades, who claim to be able to advise his citizens on war and peace, does not know the better in waging them (e5-11). In the following lines Socrates shifts the focus from the art in compliance with which one has to act to the aim the advisor must have in view. Socrates asks Alcibiades: “Then consider and do your best to tell me the connection of “better” in being at peace or at war with those to whom we ought to be so disposed” (σκόπει δὴ καὶ προθυμοῦ εἰπεῖν πρὸς τί τείνει τὸ ἐν τῷ εἰρήνην τε ἄγειν ἄμεινον καὶ τὸ ἐν τῷ πολεμεῖν οἷς δεῖ, 109a6-7). In the following lines the shift becomes clearer:

Socrates : « But you must know what treatment it is that we allege against each other when we enter upon a war, and what name we give it when we do so? ». Alcibiades: « I do: we say we are victims of deceit or violence or spoliation (ἐξαπατώμενοί τι ἢ βιαζόμενοι ἢ ἀποστερούμενοι) ». Socrates: «Enough: how do we suffer each of these things? Try and tell me what difference there is between one way and another”.

¹⁶ Using music as example is not fortuitous: music is the art which more than any other is capable of shaping soul and make them ordered and well-balanced, as it is clear from several passages of *Republic* (401d-402a; 412a; 591d). Music is essential because it engender σοφροσύνη, that virtue which provide order in the individual as well as in the community. Accordingly, the royal man can be regarded as a great musician able to fashion the city after the criteria of order and harmony. Cf. N. V. Moreau, 2021, pp. 128-133.

¹⁷ One can say: in compliance with the royal art. Cf. *supra*, note 14.

¹⁸ Shame for one’s ignorance is a purifying emotional condition and plays a relevant role in this initiatic context; by inducing shame in him, Socrates attempts to help Alcibiades abandon the person he has been thus far in order to become a new one. For the relevance of shame in education and politics in Plato, see: L. Palumbo, 2007, pp. 309-323; S. Föllinger, 2018, pp. 139-158; M. L. Bartles, 2020, pp. 147-168; J. Pfefferkorn, 2020, pp. 252-269; F. de Luise, 2021, pp. 131-163; L. Lijuan, 2022, pp. 129-173.

Alcibiades: “Do you mean by that, Socrates, whether it is in a just way or an unjust way (τὸ δίκαιως ἢ τὸ ἀδίκως¹⁹)?”. Socrates: “Precisely” (109a9-b6).

Focusing on the aim (a just decision) rather than on the art the advisor must possess to advise his citizens allows avoiding the difficulties of a science devoid of an object (and an aim) different from itself²⁰. The advisor must advise his citizens on their own affairs; to do that, he must have in view the juster (τὸ δικάϊστερον); this attention to the aim of the advice involves also that, to advise correctly, it is not enough to act in compliance with a *techne*, but to act in compliance with an art in order to reach an aim different from the art itself. This does not mean that the art and the aim have nothing to do with each other; the point is that acting in accordance to a *techne* is indispensable to reach an aim (the juster in this case); nevertheless the mere skilled acting is not the aim itself.

Socrates asks, quite ironically, if it eludes Alcibiades that he does not know the juster or Alcibiades has learnt it unbeknown to him. In this case, Socrates would like to know the teacher of Alcibiades in order to know the juster on his turn (d1-4). Alcibiades admits that he has not had teachers; nevertheless, he knows the juster. The only way to know without learning from a teacher is finding it on one’s own, as Alcibiades assents in 106d4-6. This involves that there was a time in the past when one noticed one’s own ignorance and from then on started searching for the knowledge one needed. However, in the case of Alcibiades, there is no sign of this time in his life; year over year, Socrates goes further back to Alcibiades’ childhood, when, Socrates argues, Alcibiades was quite sure of what was just and what not (110b1-5). Alcibiades was sure that he knew justice when he was a child; however,

¹⁹ Alcibiades has troubles assent to it; indeed, even if nobody wants to admit it publicly, it is not the pursuit of justice which brings about wars (109c1-2). Alcibiades’ awkwardness in admitting that waging war aims at the juster mirrors the reflections of a part of the Athenian culture on the Athenian empire and the power in general. According to these reflections, power does not need justification, as it emerges in the well known dialogue between Athenians and Melians (Tuch. V, 89-116). Similar ideas are to find in *Gorgias*, in Calicles’ speech on natural law as right of the stronger to subjugate the weaker (481b-486d) and in *Republic*, where Trasimachus explains that justice is but a tool which power uses to perpetuate itself (I, 338c-341a).

²⁰ The problem in the *Charmides* rises because the interlocutors fail to find the connection between σοφροσύνη as selfknowledge and the concern for the good. Cfr. *supra*, pp. 141-150.

since he has assented to Socrates' statement that who learns something without the help of a teacher should have noticed his ignorance in a time proceeding the beginning of his search for knowledge, it follows that there has not been, at least thus far, a moment in Alcibiades' life in which he found it necessary to learn what is just²¹ (110c1-9). Alcibiades has never committed to searching for justice, because he, from his childhood, has been believing that he already knows it. What Socrates' questions and Alcibiades' answers have revealed is that Alcibiades, even if a man in his body, is still a child in his soul; the separation from his childhood must be complete if he wants to be a good advisor for his citizens. Socrates, through the *διαλέγεσθαι*, attempts to help the soul to realize the transition from childhood to manhood which in the body has already happened²². Alcibiades withdraws his previous statement and this time acknowledges that he has had a teacher of justice, the same teacher as the others, that is to say the Many (the Athenian people). Socrates points out that the Many are unable to teach what is just, considering that they are unable to teach subjects less important than justice (110e3-10). Nevertheless, the many, as Alcibiades highlights and Socrates assents, can teach to speak Greek (*ἐλληνίζειν*), which is not a worthless skill²³ (111a1-3). Socrates agrees with Alcibiades that the many are good teacher of Greek, as they possess a feature proper of every good teacher: they know what they teach (the Greek) (111a7-b3). What is more, those who know agree with each other on what they know and do not differ, whereas ignoring people differ and disagree on what they do not know. The Many are knowledgeable teacher of Greek; therefore, they agree with each other about the meanings of the words, so that, if Alcibiades asked them what a stone or a tree is, each of them would agree on the object to which these words refer

²¹ The only way to know without learning from a teacher nor finding on one's own is having known the Justice itself before coming to light. However the inbuilt precense of the paradigms do not cancel the necessity of a right education, since te presence in us of the idea of justice is useless if it is not reactivate through education.

²² It can be said that Socrates is founding a ritual of male initiation into manhood based on the dialectic exchange. He is founding a philosophical ephebia, able to do what the athenian ephebia, as Alcibiades shows, cannot: introducing young male to adult age.

²³ Speaking greek is quite far from worthless, if one considers that it is thanks to the knowledge of greek language that the slave of Meno, albeit ignoring the basics of geometry can be led by Socrates to grasp the solution of the problem of redoubling a square (*Men.* 82b3-4).

(111b11-c4). On the contrary, they would not be able to say, for instance, which horses are good for races (δρομικοί), or which men are healthy and which sick (111d5-15). On account of their ignorance, they differ on these subjects. Likewise, the Many, as Alcibiades assents, disagree with each other on what is just and what is not, as this disagreement grows out of their ignorance of the issue on what they disagree. Actually the ignorance of the just brings about wars and death more than ignorance of the healthy, as perfectly exemplified by Homer's poems, which, as Socrates claims, enact disagreements on what is just and what unjust (112a5-b7). However, there are also contemporary examples of ignorance of what is just, as the athenian defeat at Tanagra (457b.C) and that at Coronea (446b.C), where also Alcibiades' father fell in the battle (c2-5)²⁴. Given that the disagreement on what is just reveals the ignorance of the Many and Alcibiades has not found it on his own, it follows that it is quite improbable that Alcibiades knows what is just.

To become a good advisor of his people, Alcibiades must distance himself not only from his childhood, but also from the Many, the people of Athens; actually, if we take into consideration the ephebes, distancing oneself from the childhood and from the many are two sides of the same coin: in fact, the psychic and bodily distance of the ephebe from his childhood is mirrored by the physical distance he has to keep from the community he comes from²⁵. Besides, the initiation enacted in *Alcibiades I*, albeit mirroring a ritual actually practiced in Athens, has also a philosophical meaning, so that the anthropological frame of the ritual of passage becomes the foundation of the initiatic διαλέγεσθαι of philosophy. The philosophic

²⁴ That these two defeats are mentioned as an example of the disagreement on what is just, rising from ignorance of it could be an allusion to the fact that Athenian people and its democratic leaders ignore what is just. Accordingly, Pericles himself, Alcibiades' guardian, the most influential personality of the democratic regime, as leader of it, does not know what is just and what is not. As a consequence, Alcibiades, according to Socrates, is expected to advise his people on something both his guardian and his own people completely ignore. This allusion to the inadequacy of the democratic leaders of Athens would be perfectly consistent with what Socrates says in *Gorg.* 503c1-d3; the democratic leaders, Pericles among them, prove unable to improve their people, and all what they do is humoring people's whims in order not to lose their support. Cf. J. Mintoff, 2012, pp. 90-106.

²⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 159-162.

aim of this διαλέγεσθαι is to separate Alcibiades from the naive confidence in the truth of what he has acritically absorbed from his cultural environment, that is to say οἱ πολλοί, the Many. But what does this separation from the many mean? It does not mean distancing oneself from what the many think: the many do not have only one opinion, given that they disagree with each other. Therefore, distancing oneself from the many should be interpreted as “*distancing oneself from the features the many share with each other, no matter what each of them thinks*”. These common features can be inferred from the *Gorgias*. First of all, the many are those who are sensitive to long and beautiful speech, those to which also Alcibiades is accustomed, because they ignore the subjects on what rhetoricians attempt to persuade them (458e1-459c2); as a consequence, the many are sensible to what fuels their desire and their fear. Subsequently, the many are unable to resist their ἐπιθυμίας, so that they will give political support to those who promise to fulfill their desires, no matter if they are beneficial or harmful²⁶. Even if the many have different opinions, they share the same inability to rule over their desires and give in to them, even the harmful ones. Distancing oneself from the many means distancing oneself from the immediate adhesion to one’s desires and fears, being able to know which desires, if fulfilled, can benefit oneself and which can be harmful. Alcibiades, from the beginning of the dialogue, is depicted as one of the Many; he is so engrossed with his political ambitions that he has never wondered if he is really able to advise his citizens, or if he lacks the right education which would allow him to be a good advisor. His uncritical adhesion to his ambition is so strong as to cause him to believe that he has all the necessary skills. This is the reason why he needs Socratic διαλέγεσθαι and refutations, *because it is through them, and not through beautiful and long speeches, Alcibiades can see the person he really is*. In

²⁶ Cf. *supra*, note 23. In *Republic* Socrates argues that in the democratic regime a particular indifference to the value of pleasures rises. The *isonomicos aner* embodies this indifference; what matters to this kind of man is only fulfilling his desire irrespective of the usefulness or the harmfulness of their fulfillment (VIII, 561c1-d1). This *isonomia* in pleasures is obviously dangerous, since when people regard them as indifferent, even the worst desires could end up being considered as worthy; consequently this *isonomia* in pleasures can become the psychic foundation of tyranny. Cf. I. Jordovic, 2019, pp. 142-148. Regarding the relationship between Alcibiades’ love for power and the tyrannical man cf. A. Larivière, 2012, pp. 1-26.

112c10 Alcibiades says that he does not know the just out of Socrates' statements (ἐκ μὲν ὧν σὺ λέγεις οὐκ εἰκόζ). However Socrates through several examples points out to him that it is the person who answers who provides statements, not the questioner (113a7-b3). Therefore it has been Alcibiades who has stated that Alcibiades ignores justice, not Socrates, who has restricted himself to drawing conclusions from what Alcibiades has answered. Making clear Alcibiades' thoughts to Alcibiades himself in 105a1-2 is the aim of this socratic refutation. Through this elenctic exchange, the ambitious and overconfident Alcibiades starts looking at himself as someone who probably could lack the proper education which permits him to face the political life of his city; as someone who may not live up to one's own expectations. Socrates by means of his refutation has started assembling the mirror he wants to put before Alcibiades; a mirror made up of the statements of Alcibiades himself²⁷. Therefore Alcibiades turns out to ignore the just not out of Socrates' statements, but out of what he himself has assented to; consequently, it seems that Alcibiades is about to commit to a mad undertaking (μανικὸν γὰρ ἐν νῶ ἔχεις ἐπιχείρημα ἐπιχειρεῖν 113d5-6), that is to say, teach others what he himself does not know²⁸.

The courage and the just

Alcibiades starts seeing his inadequacy; nevertheless he is not yet ready to accept to be unable to advise the Athenians; therefore he points out to Socrates that

²⁷ For elenchos and dialectic as mirror, see B. Rider, 2010, pp. 402-408; E. Belfiore, 2012, p.61; D. Werner, 2013, pp. 307-331; E. Wasmuth, 2016, pp. 123-130. Even if Socrates claims to be an objective mirror of the real condition of his interlocutor, it can hardly escape that his questions do affect the result of the dialectic exchange; the questions can steer the focus of the interlocutor in a direction rather than in an other one, so that the imagine of the interlocutor turns out to be, if not false, at least partial. However this does not diminish the relevance of the initiatic *dialegesthai* of Socrates in *Alcibiades I*, since Socrates' aim, as I will argue below, is not to deliver to Alcibiades his complete and flawless image once and for all; what Socrates aims at is helping Alcibiades acquire the hability to practice the *dialegesthai* on his own. As seen in *Charmides* and *Euthydemus*, Socratic initiatic questioning does not aim at transmitting contents of knowledge, but at help the interlocutor become able to practice an activity.

²⁸ Cf. J. Ambury, 2011, pp. 241-260.

Athenians and the other Greek, when they gather, do not care about the just, whereas they look at the advantageous (τὰ συμφέροντα), for the just and the advantageous are not the same, and some people have benefitted from their wrongdoing, while others have not taken advantage from their just acts (113d1-6). This words sum up Alcibiades attitude towards himself and Athen as well; caring for the just is useless because nobody does. Accordingly, the ruler and the advisor do not need to be neither epistemically nor morally superior the the others, for, one could add, the mere power, not the way one exert it, is what matters²⁹. Socrates avoids asking Alcibiades how he knows what is advantageous, if he found it on his own or learnt it from a teacher, as Socrates already know that his questions will lead up to the same outcome, that is to say that Alcibiades does not know the advantageous, because he has neither found it on his own nor learnt from a teacher (114a1-6). Instead Socrates asks Alcibiades to demonstrate that the advantageous and the just are not the same “by questioning me as I did or carry on the reasoning in the way you prefer” (εἰ μὲν βούλει, ἐρωτῶν με ὥσπερ ἐγὼ σέ, εἰ δέ, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ σεαυτοῦ λόγῳ διέξελε 114b2-3). However Alcibiades claims not to be able to do it; Socrates invites the young man to consider him as the assembly before which Alcibiades intends to speak, since also in that case he has to persuade each man singly (ἀλλ’, ὠγαθέ, ἐμὲ ἐκκλησίαν νόμισον καὶ δῆμον: καὶ ἐκεῖ τοί σε δεήσει ἓνα ἕκαστον πείθειν, 114b5-6). The same person, Socrates goes on, can persuade about what he knows both numerous people together and a single man (114b9-c3), in the same way as the schoolmaster can persuade both many together and a single man about letters and the arithmetician about numbers (114c3-7); consequelntly if Alcibiades knows that the advantajeous and the just are not the same, he should be able to persuade both a single man (Socrates in this case) and a crowd. Socrates goes as far as saying that the only difference between the rhetorician declaiming in the assembly and one who speaks in a dialectic conversation consists in the amount of people to persuade (114c13-2d)³⁰. Once again Socrates exhort Alcibiades to

²⁹ There is nothing furthest form the political view of Plato’s Socrates . According to the philosopher, the ruler is obliged to be superior to the ruler ones; it is the ruler who makes his power worthy, not viceversa.

³⁰ This is not true. In a dialectic conversation the questioner (Socrates) needs the assent of his interlocutor at every question, because the conversation is rising in that moment. An oratorical

practice with him and try to persuade him that the just sometimes (ένίοτε)³¹ is not convenient. However Alcibiades accuses Socrates of being insolent (ύβριστής εἶ, ὃ Σώκρατες 114d7)³² and the discussion continues as before: Socrates poses questions and Alcibiades attempts to answer.

Socrates accepts to persuade Alcibiades that the just is advantageous and exhorts his interlocutor not to believe it unless he hears himself saying that is so (καὶ ἐὰν μὴ αὐτὸς σὺ σαυτοῦ ἀκούσης ὅτι τὰ δίκαια καὶ συμφέροντά ἐστιν, ἄλλω γε λέγοντι μὴ πιστεύσης, 114e7-8). First of all Socrates asks Alcibiades if he claims that he considers some just things to be advantageous and some others not³³;

speech has been prepared before the performance. In the dialectic conversation the assent of the interlocutor is required at the moment, but not taken for granted in advance; declamatory speeches have been conceived in order to obtain the assent of people before people hears it. Not even the existence of a thure rhetoric (which is, according to *Phaedr.* 271d1-5, a knowledge of human soul), which is the persuasive side of socratic philosophy (Cf. F. Trabattoni, 1994, pp. 53-82) limits the oddity of Socrates' statement: even if a certain kind of rethoric persuasion is necessary to philosophy, nevertheless pilosophical communication never involves convincing an entire audience, but only once interlocutors. Given that, it seems to be probable that Socrates intentionally conceals the difference between declamations and dialectic so that Alcibiades, accustomed to the first kind of communication, lets down his guard and answers to Socrates' questions without knowing that they will show Alcibiades' inner contradictions.

³¹ Cfr. *infra*, note 31.

³² Alcibiades understands that he would never persuade Socrates neither to deliver a long speech nor pose questions to him; Socrates masters the dialectic method, while Alcibiades experiences the socratic dialectic method for the first time. Regarding the long speech, it could be that Alcibiades already knows that Socrates can refute it by pinpointing its weakness and demolishing it from the inside. Socrates, in Alcibiades' opinion, would be insolent because he challenges the interlocutor to do something Socrates himself already knows that the interlocutor is unable to do. Therefore, Socrates *hybris* would consist in showing to his interlocutor that they are inferior to him. On Socrates' *hybris* Cfr. M. Gagarin, 1977, pp. 22-37; W. Desmond, 2005, pp. 43-63.

³³ "Some" in the greek text ἐνια echoes "sometimes" (ένίοτε) in 114d5, where Socrates invites Alcibiades to persuade him that the just "sometimes" is not advantageous. Also here Socrates seems to attempt to limit the breadth of Alcibiades' statement in 113d4

Alcibiades assents. Then Socrates asks Alcibiades if some of the just things are honorable (καλά)³⁴ and some not:

Socr: « And sometimes honourable and sometimes not? ». Alcibiades: « What do you mean? » Socrates: « I am asking if you ever knew anyone who did what was dishonourable and yet just? ». Alcibiades: « Never ». Socrates: « All just things are honourable? ». Alcibiades: « Yes ». Socrates: « And are honourable things sometimes good (ἀγαθὰ) and sometimes not good, or are they always good? ». Alcibiades: « I rather think, Socrates, that that some honourable things are evil (κακὰ) ». Socrates: « And some dishonourable (αἰσχρὰ) things good? ». ALC: « Yes » (115a3-13 tr. Jowett).

It must be kept in mind that in these lines and in the following ones the strategy of mirroring Alcibiades through Alcibiades' own words is at work; Socrates asks Alcibiades if he ever knew anyone who did something dishonorable, but just; the philosopher resorts to Alcibiades' own experience in order to persuade him, and this is consistent with what has been observed in the *Euthydemus* and in *Charmides*: Socrates tailors his διαλέγεσθαι to the interlocutor, so that it could be as suitable for him as possible. Even if Socrates attempts to persuade about *a universal truth* (the just is advantageous in this case), *he always persuades individuals*; to use a fruitful comparison, it could be said that the διαλέγεσθαι is like a GPS; the same GPS system provides a path to different people who wants to reach *the same destination*. Nevertheless, even if the destination is the same and the system is the same, *the paths are different, because the place of departure of each one is different*. What has emerged so far is that Alcibiades holds that some honorable things are not good; in the following lines Socrates provides a concrete example:

Socrates: « You mean in such a case as the following? In time of war, men have been wounded or have died (τραύματα ἔλαβον καὶ ἀπέθανον) in rescuing a companion or kinsman, when others who have neglected the duty of rescuing them have escaped in safety? ». Alcibiades: « True ». Socrates: « And to rescue another under such circumstances is honourable (καλήν), *in respect of the attempt to save those whom we*

³⁴ Honorable is Jowett's (2013) rendering of the greek adjective, while W.R.M. Lamb uses "noble". In this case I prefer Jowett's translation because "honorable" makes clearer the connection of the καλόν to the social perception; the καλόν is what actually makes honorable and praiseworthy those who commit to and accomplish deeds which are considered καλά.

ought to save (κατὰ τὴν ἐπιχείρησιν τοῦ σῶσαι οὐκ ἔδει); and this is courage (ἀνδρεία)? ». Alcibiades: « True ». Socrates: « But evil (κακὴν) in respect of death and wounds (κατὰ τοὺς θανάτους τε καὶ ἔλκη)? ». Alcibiades: « Yes » (115b1-9).

The example of courage in battle obeys to the strategy of tailoring the speech to the interlocutor, since Alcibiades is quite sensitive to the issue of courage in battle³⁵: as a young aristocrat, he obviously ascribes great importance to this virtue; moreover, as said above, he lost his father during the battle of Coronea. Through Socrates interrogations Alcibiades has brought to light the “trascendental”³⁶ which underlies his statement that the just and the advantageous are not the same. This “trascendental” is that the honourable (which is a feature of the just) and the good are not the same. Something to be honourable must be admired by others, whereas to be good must benefit only the individual who does it; this opinion brings to light the idea that, benefitting oneself has nothing to do with benefitting the others, and sometimes the one is at odds with the other. This contradiction between honourable and good is founded on the view of the individual as completely detached from the others and independent from their good; that is to say the same view underlying the *oikeiopraxia* proposed by Charmides in the *Charmides*³⁷. On the contrary, there is no contradiction between good and honourable when one considers that individual

³⁵ Cf. *Introduction*, p. 40.

³⁶ The use of the word “trascendental” recalls the kantian reading of the Socratic method provided by Nelson, who considers Kant and Socrates two thinkers concerned with the definition of a philosophical method-cfr. L. Nelson, 1931. That Socrates, by means of his questions, is able to bring to light inner convictions of the interlocutors, which lie behind their statement as formal *apriori* is something is a feature of the Socratic dialogue appreciable in the *Alcibiades*. By means of the regressive method, which works through dissection (*zur Zergliederung*) of the statements provided by the interlocutor, Socrates grasps their implicit foundation. However this foundation is not an *apriori*, merely cognitive devise, like the categories of the *Critic of the pure reason*. The implicit transcendentals lying at the core of the answers provided by the interlocutors are *emotional*; In the case of Alcibiades, believing that one’s own good and others’ can be at odds with each other is not a mere category of judgement, *but an emotionally loaded belief, which has got stronger through custom, so as to become an “apriori” of the way in which Alcibiades experiences the social world around him*; accordingly one could speak of *emotional apriori*. For a thorough analysis of Nelson’s reading of Socrates cf. L. Napolitano, 2018, pp. 75-87.

³⁷ Cf. *supra*, note 11.

good always involves others' good, as suggested by Socrates in the *Charmides*³⁸. Rescuing companions in battle is a perfect example, which makes arguable that the good has a relational nature and that the honourable is also good, or, more exactly, that something is honourable because of the common good it makes possible.

Rescuing friends in battle is honourable and evil, but not in the same respect (115c3-4). Socrates invites Alcibiades to consider if rescuing friends in battle, inasmuch as it is honourable, is also good (ὄρα τοίνυν εἰ, ἧ γέ καλόν, καὶ ἀγαθόν, 115b6). The following lines perfectly mirrors the strategy of constructing a speech which is as suitable as possible for the interlocutor; the following dialectic exchange is based on the idea that the good is that whose presence one desires in one's own life:

Socrates: « Look at the matter thus: which would you rather choose, good or evil (ἀγαθὰ ἢ κακά)? ». Alcibiades: « Good ». Socrates: « And the greatest goods you would be most ready to choose, and would least like to be deprived of them? » Alcibiades: « Certainly ». Socr.: « What would you say of courage? At what price would you be willing to be deprived of courage (ἐπὶ πόσῳ ἂν αὐτοῦ δέξαιο στέρεσθαι)? ». Alcibiades: « I would rather die than be a coward (οὐδὲ ζῆν ἂν ἐγὼ δεξαίμην δειλὸς ὄν) ». Socrates: « Then you think that cowardice is the worst of evils? » Alcibiades: « I do ». Socrates: « As bad as death (ἐξ ἴσου τῷ τεθνάναι, ὡς ἔοικε), I suppose? ». Alcibiades: « Yes ». Socrates: « And life and courage are the extreme opposites of death and cowardice? ». Alcibiades: « Yes ». Socrates: « And they are what you would most desire to have, and their opposites you'd least desire? ». Alcibiades: « Yes ». Socrates: « It is because you think life and courage the best, and death and cowardice the worst (ἄρ' ὅτι τὰ μὲν ἄριστα ἡγήῃ, τὰ δὲ κάκιστα)? » Alcibiades: « Yes » (115c8-e7).

This lines parallel *Symp.* 204e1-4, where Diotima suggests that she and Socrates should replace τὸ καλόν with τὸ ἀγαθόν; then the priestess asks Socrates what the lover loves of the goods and Socrates answers that the lover loves that they may be his. Also in *Symposium* the good features as that whose presence one desires in one's life. Also in this dialogue there is an intimate relationship between ἀγαθόν and καλόν. The courage is good and consequently Alcibiades desires its presence

³⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 125-126; see also *Introduction*, pp. 34-39.

in his own life, so that he would rather die than live as a coward. This is relevant because it involves that life for Alcibiades is worth living only under certain conditions, for instance that of being courageous³⁹. Therefore life and courage are not good in the same way; thus death and cowardice are not evil in the same way, since there is a hierarchical relationship in both couples; in the first couple it is the courage which makes life good, in the latter it is cowardice who makes life evil (and consequently death preferable). Accordingly what Alcibiades really desires is *a life made good by courage and avert from himself a life made evil by cowardice*. That Alcibiades wants to live as a courageous echoesthe care for the person one wants to be in one's life, as it inferable from Socrates' concern for Cleinias' ἐπιτήδευμα⁴⁰. This commitment to become the person one wants to be involves the active desire to be that person, a desire which involves daily practice and persistence. What Socrates is revealing to Alcibiades through the answers of Alcibiades himself is that the young man wants to be courageous because courage makes life praiseworthy; being a courageous person is what Alcibiades wants to commit to. Socrates *has thus revealed to Alcibiades what his care aims at*. The desire to keep good things reveals itself through μελέτη, the active practice to keep good things⁴¹. In the next lines Socrates establishes a hierarchical relationship between good and honourable; *indeed an act his honourable because of the good it can realise*:

Socrates: « And would you term the rescue of a friend in battle honourable, in as much as courage does a good work (κατ' ἀγαθοῦ πράξιν τὴν τῆς ἀνδρείας)? ». Alcibiades: « I should ». Socrates: « But evil because of the death which ensues (κακοῦ πράξιν τὴν τοῦ θανάτου)? ». Alcibiades: « Yes ». Socrates: « Might we not describe them different effects as follows: you may call either of them evil in respect of the evil which is the result, and good in the respect of the good which is the result of either of them (εἴπερ

³⁹ N. Smith, 2004, pp. 93-108 pinpoints in the statement that death is evil a contradiction with what is said in *Ap.* 29b1-2; *Gorg.* 523a1-7. Actually hardly can be found in *Alcibiades* lines more consistent with what Plato says in these dialogues. Alcibiades clearly states that it is courage that makes life worth living. What is said in these lines of *Alcibiades* is that *life, as mere biological survival, is not a value in itself*, a thesis perfectly consistent with what Socrates says in the *Gorgias* and in the *Apology*.

⁴⁰Cfr. *Supra*, pp. 56-58.

⁴¹ In *Symp.* 208a3-b2 the μελέτη is that through which one renews the memory of one's knowledges. The μελέτη perverts the purpose of perpetuating one's care for the object of one's love.

ἢ κακὸν ἀπεργάζεται κακὴν καλεῖς, καὶ ἢ ἀγαθὸν ἀγαθὴν κλητέον)? ». Alcibiades: « Yes ». Socrates: « And they are honourable in so far as they are good, and dishonourable in so far as they are evil (ἄρ' οὖν καὶ ἢ ἀγαθόν, καλόν: ἢ δὲ κακόν, αἰσχρόν)? ». Alcibiades: « True » (115e7-116a5).

The good made possible by courageous actions is a common one, as Alcibiades own words lead to infer; it is good to the rescued because conserves his health⁴² and good to the rescuer because his brave act makes his life worth living; thus the rescuer gains the privilege to esteem himself⁴³. To sum up, what has emerged so far is that: 1) Alcibiades takes the courage in battle to be honourable, 2) it is also good, as the good is that whose presence one desires in one's life, and Alcibiades desires to be always courageous rather than live as a coward. 3) Courageous acts, as good, produce a *common good, which benefits both who acts and who receives it; as a consequence, what makes life worth living (the good) cannot be detached from others' good; actually it necessarily involves it*. Socrates in the *Alcibiades I* explicitly states what in *Charmides* he only hinted at. Since the honourable is what aims at good things, the courage as a honourable thing, produces good things; consequently, it cannot be evil at the same time:

Socrates: « Then when you say that the rescue of a friend in a battle is honourable and yet evil, that is equivalent to saying that the rescue is good and yet evil? ». Alcibiades: « I believe that you are right, Socrates ». Socrates: « Nothing honourable, regarded as honourable, is evil; nor anything base, regarded, as base, is good ». Alcibiades: « Clearly not » (116a6-b1).

However it could be said that, although Socrates has convinced Alcibiades that “honourable” and “good” involve each other, this does not mean that something can be good in a certain respect and evil in an other one. Socrates argues that the good

⁴² Given that the mere biological survival is not a value in itself, it can be inferred that rescuing is good in as much as the rescued after the battle is still in good health or his wounds are not so severe as to prevent him from living a worthwhile life, for, contrary to the mere biological survival, health is a good.

⁴³ The good act produces a common good, but who receives and who does are benefitted in different ways. It happens the same as in the case of doctors and their patients (Cf. *supra*, note 36). A doctor who helps patients recover from illness benefits both himself and patients; he gains self-esteem and a worthwhile life, the patients a restored health.

does not accept its contrary, not in the *Alcibiades*, but in *Gorg.*495e1-497e3, where Socrates argues against Kallichles that the pleasure and the good cannot be the same things, as the pleasure can coexist in the same person with its contrary (the pain): a thirsty man who drinks distances himself from pain and gets closer to pleasure; instead this does not apply to good and bad, as these two states, contrary to pleasure and pain, cannot coexist with each other. It seems that in these lines of the *Alcibiades* Socrates takes for granted a thesis which has been demonstrated in another dialogue⁴⁴. Also in the *Alcibiades* good cannot accept his opposite; the evil, as opposite to the good, which makes life worthy, is what makes life worthless, and what makes life worthy cannot make it worthless at the same time. This outcome is more understandable if it is kept in mind that life is not a value in itself; in fact if one assumes that life does not justify itself and needs noble acts which make it noble, it is easier to understand that individual good cannot be detached from others' wellness, whereas a dualistic perspective tends to rise when life, intended as biological survival becomes a value in itself, or even the most important thing; the coward experiences this dualism because he considers life, intended as continuing breathing, a valuable good, or the the best thing in life; it goes without saying that if continuing breathing becomes an aim in itself, it becomes more difficult to figure out that individuals need each other's wellness to be happy; when the most important thing becomes continuing breathing, dualisms rises: me and the others, my interests and others'; helping others can become harmful and one's good can harm others⁴⁵. Being established by both that the "honorable" is "honorable" inasmuch as it realizes the good, and that the good cannot coexist with its opposite, Socrates is going to accomplish the refutation that the just and the advantageous are not the same; eventually he shifts his focus from the honorable to those who act

⁴⁴ More often one sees that the same notion which in a dialogue in aporetic occurs in an other dialogue as foundation of Plato's reasoning. For instance in the *Republic* the notion of *oikeiopraxia* is the core of the justice (in the city as well as in oneself), whereas in the *Charmides* the idea of doing's one's own business raises several difficulties. However, this does not mean that Plato contradicts himself. Cfr. *supra*, pp. 121-123.

⁴⁵ The conclusion it can be drawn from what has been said above is that ethic and political dualistic perspectives are not something existing in nature; more exactly they grow out of individual and social weakness. It is weakness which brings about dualisms.

honorably⁴⁶. Those who act honorably, Socrates goes on, does also well (εὖ πράττει)⁴⁷; those who act well are also happy (εὐδαίμονες) because of the goods things they acquire by means of their good and honourable acts; therefore their doing good things is honourable, and where one finds the honourable, there also the good is bound to be found (ὅτι ἂν ἄρα εὖρωμεν καλόν, καὶ ἀγαθὸν εὐρήσομεν ἕκ γε τούτου τοῦ λόγου 116c4-5)⁴⁸. Since the good things are advantageous, as Alcibiades assents, and those who do just things, as Alcibiades himself has expressly stated in 115a8-9, necessarily do honourable things; given that the honourable and the good cannot be detached from each other and the good is advantageous, it follows that just things are advantageous. As it is Alcibiades who has stated, whereas Socrates has posed questions, it turns out that the contradiction was in Alcibiades; Socrates only has brought it to the light⁴⁹. Socrates refutations are slightly removing all the hindrances which prevent Alcibiades from seeing the person he really is in that moment (and his own ignorance); Alcibiades himself admits: “I do not even know what I am saying, I feel altogether in such a strange state! For from moment to moment I change my view under your questioning” (οὐκ οἶδ’ ἔγωγε οὐδ’ ὅτι λέγω, ἀλλ’ ἀτεχνῶς ἔοικα ἀτόπως ἔχοντι: τοτὲ μὲν γὰρ μοι ἕτερα δοκεῖ σοῦ ἐρωτῶντος, τοτὲ δ’ ἄλλα, 115e2-3). What Alcibiades is describing here is the *aporia*, which, as it has been observed in the *Euthydemus* and in the *Charmides*, is the moment in which the interlocutor/initiate starts distancing from the person he has been thus far; it is the most important moment of the dialogue and the most ambiguous as well; the one who find in such an aporetic state, a state of

⁴⁶ This shift of the focus from the quality of the action to those who act in that way is a move which features also in *Gorg.* 497e4ff.

⁴⁷The locution εὖ πράττειν means “being lucky, or happy”, but in this case it means “acting well”; it is probable that Socrates is attempting to make correct action the only cause of happiness so as to rule out the role of chance. This use of εὖ πράττειν can be compared to that which has been said above about the εὖ πράττειν in the *Euthydemus*. Cf. *supra*, pp. 73-76.

⁴⁸ In 116c1-2 Socrates says that “the good and the honourable have turned out to be the same”. However, at it is to infer from what has been argued so far the “honourable” and the “good” are the same insofar as they involve each other; nevertheless, they are not the same thing, for it is the pursuit and the realisation of the good that makes an act honourable. It is not unreasonable to say that the honourable is a transcendental of the good, a *conditio bonum comitans*.

⁴⁹Cf. *Supra*, pp. 72-74.

“lack of landmarks” (ἀτοπία)⁵⁰ can decide to undertake a new path out of this *aporia*, a new path which leads him into a new phase of life, so that he goes beyond the person he has been until that moment; however one may find the anguish provoked by this condition so unbearable as to give up and try to hold on to the person one has been until that moment more stubbornly than before. Be that as it may, it can be argued that a subtle criticism to the institution of Ephebia lurks. This institution should make possible the transition from childhood to manhood; on the contrary Alcibiades, few days before appearing before the Assembly, is still a child who, as the Many do, immediately and acritically adheres to his desires without ponder over them. Even if Alcibiades is far from the city with his body, with his soul he is still within its walls. To become an adult, the distance from the city and from the Many cannot be only a geographical condition; the lack of landmarks which Alcibiades must undergo must be first and foremost experienced in the soul.

Socrates explains to Alcibiades that the contradiction he experiences about what is just grows out of his ignorance of it (117a8-11). When one ignores something, one’s soul is bound to be bewildered about that which one does not know (b2-3)⁵¹. What makes dangerous Alcibiades’ ignorance is that he is not aware of it. As Socrates rightly points out, Alcibiades would never err about something he knows he does not know; Alcibiades knows that he does not know how to prepare a dish; therefore he would entrust the preparation to a cook, in the same way as he knows that he does not know how to steer a ship, and consequently it would antrust it to a helmsman (117c2-d3). This epistemic condition has bearing on the action, since the person ignoring his ignorance about something is bound to make mistakes, contrary to those who know and those who, knowing their ignorance about

⁵⁰ In the contest of the *Alcibiades aporia* and *atopia* involve each other; to say better the one is the origin of the other: in a state of *atopia*, one finds himself in a unknown place; as a consequence, one is in *aporia*, since, in an unknown place, one does not know how to find the way. Socrates, who is *atopos* more than anyone else, has led Alcibiades to a *place where Alcibiades’ convictions fade away*. Since these convictions, which are like *landmarks* for Alcibiades (he needs them in order to orient himself), fade away, Alcibiades is unable to find the right path; he is in *aporia*, i. e. lack of ways.

⁵¹ ἄρ’ οὖν οὕτω καὶ ἔχει: ἐπειδὴν τίς τι μὴ εἰδῆ, ἀναγκαῖον περὶ τούτου πλανᾶσθαι τὴν ψυχὴν; when one is bewildered, it is because one’s soul is bewildered. Socrates is laying the foundation for the identification of the *Self* with the soul.

something, step aside (117d7-118a3). This ignoring one's own ignorance is the most regrettable kind of ignorance; it is the origin of the evils (αὕτη ἄρα ἡ ἄγνοια τῶν κακῶν αἰτία καὶ ἡ ἐπονείδιστος ἀμαθία 118a3)⁵², and if this ignorance concerns the most important things, such as the just, the good, and the advantageous, the evils it can bring about are the most harmful (a10-11) even more when the person suffering from this ignorance wants to become advisor of his citizens and helmsman of the state. Alcibiades suffer from the worst kind of ignorance, because he does not know to be ignorant about the most important issues

Socrates: « you are impeached of this by your own words, out of your own mouth; and this, it seems, is why you dash into politics before you have been educated. And you are not alone in this plight, but you share it with most of those who manage our city's affairs, except just a few, and perhaps your guardian, Pericles » (118b6-c2, tr, W.R.M. Lamb).

Nevertheless Pericles, even if wise, has proven unable to make wise other people; he has not made wise his own sons, nor Clinias, Alcibiades' brother, who, as Alcibiades himself acknowledges, is a mad man. Alcibiades admits that he does not pay attention to Pericles. However, it seems that nobody, neither slave nor freeman, has become wise thanks to the intercourse with Pericles (119a1-7). The judgment over Pericles' skills as educator echoes that over his skills as politician in *Gorg.*515d7-516d3. He turns out to be completely unable, as well as other well-known democratic leader, to make his citizens better; actually, thanks to Pericles, Athenians have become worse than before. The only way to escape from the lack of education the democracy and its leaders are accountable for is to undertake *the care for oneself*:

Socrates: « Very good: then what is your intention regarding yourself? Will you remain as you are, or take some trouble (ἐπιμέλειάν τινα ποιῆσθαι)? » Alcibiades: We must put our heads together, Socrates. And indeed, as soon as you speak, I take the

⁵² In the case of Alcibiades, this ἀμαθία, which is not a mere ignorance, but an inability to learn due to his selfconfidence, appear to be the consequences of too selfsatisfied conduct, *an emotional condition which brings about an epistemological deficiency*. This emotional condition can be fruitfully compared to *the excessive love for oneself* of *Leg. V*, 731d4-e4, a condition which makes those suffering from it unable to recognise their flaws and improve themselves. Cf. G. Cusinato, 2021, pp. 198-233

point and agree. For the men who manage the city's affairs, apart from a few, do strike me as uneducated (δοκοῦσι γάρ μοι οἱ τὰ τῆς πόλεως πράττοντες ἐκτὸς ὀλίγων ἀπαιδευτοὶ εἶναι) ». Socrates: « Then what does that mean? ». Alcibiades: « That if they were educated, I suppose anyone who undertook to contend against them would have to get some knowledge and practice first, as he would for a match with athletes (ἔδει ἂν τὸν ἐπιχειροῦντα αὐτοῖς ἀνταγωνίζεσθαι μαθόντα καὶ ἀσκήσαντα ἰέναι ὡς ἐπ' ἄθλητάς): but now, seeing that these men have gone in for politics as amateurs, what need is there for me to practise and have the trouble of learning? » (119a8-c2).

Once again the “democratic prejudice” comes out; since Athenian politicians are uneducated people, it is useless to improve oneself in order to exert power; the only requirement to exert power is desire it. Socrates wants to remove from Alcibiades this view; the initiation of Alcibiades is not only the abandon of childhood, but the abandon of a *democratic childhood*. It is hardly fortuitous that the words ἐπιμέλειάν τινα ποιῆσθαι appears here in the dialogue for the first time, after the umpteenth implicit criticism to democracy. As it has been said sofar, taking care for oneself, and in the case of a politician, for other as well, is an initiatic skill; a young man, Alcibiades in this case, who has never committed to the personal improvement, must start taking care for it. One has to commit to something one has never done before, so that ἐπιμέλειάν τινα ποιῆσθαι marks an initiatic transition from child to man, from someone who needs others' care to someone who can practice this care on one's own. Anyway everything thus far suggests that Socrates is implicitly saying that, to accomplish this transition, Alcibiades must abandon once and for the democratic view; the initiatic ἀτοπία, the absence of landmarks in which Alcibiades finds himself is an absence of *democratic landmarks*; Alcibiades must escape from this ἀτοπία and find a way to be a complete man and a good advisor; at this point a difference rises between Socratic and philosophical transitional ritual and that of the city. The ritual of the city involves that the ephebe, after serving out of the city, has died as a democratic child and revives as a democratic man; only the child dies in this transition, not the democrat. In Socrates' view, democrats and children share the same essential feature: they adhere immediately and recklessly to their own desires, irrespective of their harmfulness or usefulness, thinking that desiring something is a sufficient requirement for acquiring it. In this vision, dying as a child and dying as a democrat are the same

thing. If in the Socratic philosophical rite of transition from childhood to manhood democratic view must be removed, which kind of manhood is that into which Socrates desires to introduce the young Alcibiades? Where does Socratic love lead Alcibiades far from the democratic childhood?

*Alcibiades initiated into kingship*⁵³?

Socrates points out to Alcibiades that his rivals are not the Athenian politicians, but the external enemies, whom he has to defeat; likewise, who is going to steer a warship must be superior to his fellow-fighters, as a condition to exert the authority on the ship. However, his true concern is to be superior to the external enemies he must face in battle (119d4e4). This helmsman cannot boast of being more skilled than his sailors in what concerns his art (τὰ κυβερνητικά), since this superiority should be taken for granted; nor could he be proud of being superior to enemy sailors. The only ones he could be rightly proud of being superior to are the other helmsmen, people who are skilled in the same expertise as he is. One can be rightly proud of oneself only when one is superior to people who practice the same art; a skilled musician is proud to be superior to the other musicians, a skilled painter to the other painters and so on. It is at these external enemies that Alcibiades must look, so that he could really rule the city, not flatter it; it is by having in view these enemies that he must care for himself in order to face them.

But who are these external enemies Alcibiades should be able to fight? They are, Socrates says, the king of the Persians and the kings of the Spartans (120a5-6). This provides a suggestion as what Alcibiades should become; if, as it has been said above, the helmsmen must try to get the better of enemies sharing the same expertise, what must Alcibiades become so as to get the better of kings? The easiest answer, according to what has been said, is: to get the better of kings, Alcibiades must become king.

⁵³ The praise of kingship is appreciable in the Athens of IV century b.C, as a work such as Xenophon's *Cyropedy* suggests: cf. J. J. Farber, 1979, pp. 497-514; L. Mitchell, 2019, pp. 442-465. Whoever may be the author of the *Alcibiades*, Plato or someone else, he seems to share the interest in kingship widespread in the Athenian culture of this century.

The Persian and Spartan kings are not like others enemies, as Alcibiades wrongly believes (120c2-3). This opinion is harmful for two reasons: firstly underestimating these enemies would prevent Alcibiades from taking the right care for himself (120c6-d1); secondly, this opinion is false. The aforementioned kings have both the necessary features which make them perfected in virtue: a good nature, because of the nobility of their bloodline; moreover, they have benefitted from a good education (120e3). Both the Persian and Spartan kings descend from Zeus (120e5-8), a feature which they share with Alcibiades and Socrates himself⁵⁴. However, the Spartan and the Persian kings come from an uninterrupted ancestry of kings, whereas Socrates and Alcibiades, as well as their fathers, are private citizens⁵⁵. Furthermore, the queens in Sparta are guarded by the Ephors, so that no suspicion can rise that they could have a child from someone not belonging to the bloodline of the Heracleides (121b3-c1)⁵⁶; the Persian queen needs no guards, since it is the fear itself of the punishment which prevents her from committing adultery (121c1-4). Moreover, after his birth the Persian crown prince is entrusted to eunuchs

⁵⁴ In *Phaedr.* 252e1-2 it is said that the lovers who were devotees of Zeus in the afterlife will search for a beloved similar to Zeus, that is to say “someone with a philosophical nature and suitable for command (φιλόσοφος τε καὶ ἡγεμονικὸς τὴν φύσιν)”. Anyway it is clear that Socrates is not interested in recommending Alcibiades following as a model the historical kings living in their times; the kind of kingship Socrates wants to introduce Alcibiades into is a philosophical and holy one. What is more important, the kingship he must commit to is a kingship of the soul, not (or not only) of the city. Socrates is attempting to remove a democratic soul to let a royal soul take the floor. In 252e2-3, it is said that the lover, once he finds the beloved, will try to make the beloved similar to the worshipped god. It seems that in the lines of *Alcibiades* under examination something similar happens: Socrates and Alcibiades are bound to the same god Zeus; Socrates, as he observes in Alcibiades the features of the God he himself descends from, wants to trigger in the young man the transformation which will lead him to the assimilation to Zeus, inasmuch as it is possible to a human being.

⁵⁵ On the other hand, one could say that in a democratic city like Athens there was no sharp difference between political engagement and private life, whereas in a monarchic regime like the Persian kingdom this difference was effective.

⁵⁶ Stressing the importance of the purity of the Spartan royal bloodline could be a quite malicious allusion to the rumors about a liaison between Timaea, wife of Agides II, and Alcibiades (Plut. *Alc.* XXIII 7, 1-7). However, it is probable that this story was created after Alcibiades' death, basing on his reputation as womanizer. Cf. J.Hatzfeld 1940, pp. 43-44.

appointed to the care of the newborn: they are charged shaping the newborn's limbs into the correct form so that he can become as handsome as possible (καὶ ὅπως ὅτι κάλλιστος ἔσται μηχανᾶσθαι, ἀναπλάττοντας τὰ μέλη τοῦ παιδὸς καὶ κατορθοῦντας, 121c4-5)⁵⁷. After spending seven years in learning riding and hunting, the young crown prince is introduced into the learning of the art of ruling at fourteen⁵⁸. He is entrusted to the four royal pedagogues, who instruct him in the virtues which the king-philosophers of the *Republic* must have in order to be able to rule; Socrates says:

these are four men chosen as the most highly esteemed among the Persians of mature age, namely, the wisest one, the justest one, the most temperate one, and the bravest one (σοφώτατος καὶ ὁ δίκαιότατος καὶ ὁ σωφρονέστατος καὶ ὁ ἀνδρειότατος). The first of these teaches him the magian lore (μαγείαν τε διδάσκει) of Zoroaster, son of Horomazes; and that is the worship of the gods (ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο θεῶν θεραπεία): he teaches him also what pertains to a king (διδάσκει δὲ καὶ τὰ βασιλικά). The justest teaches him to be truthful all his life long⁵⁹; the most temperate, not to be mastered by even a single pleasure (μηδ' ὑπὸ μιᾶς ἄρχεσθαι τῶν ἡδονῶν, ἵνα ἐλεύθερος εἶναι ἐθίζηται καὶ ὄντως βασιλεύς), in order that he may be accustomed to be a free man and a veritable king, who is the master first of all that is in him, not the slave⁶⁰; while the bravest trains him to be fearless and undaunted, telling him that to be daunted is to be enslaved (ἄφοβον καὶ ἀδεᾶ παρασκευάζων, ὡς ὅταν δείσῃ δοῦλον ὄντα) (121e4-122a6).

The pedagogue teaching Zoroastrian religion is the σοφώτατος, the one endowed with the virtue *par excellence* of the king philosopher. This connection between

⁵⁷ A reference to midwives shaping newborn's body is to find in *Resp.* III 377c1-3.

⁵⁸ Regarding the meaning of the number seven cf. A. Masaracchia, 1958, pp. 323ff.

⁵⁹ This is the point in which the portrait of the Persian monarch differs from the king philosopher the most. In *Resp.* III 389b8-c6, where it is explicitly said that the rulers can and must lie, as long as they do it on behalf of the city. Probably this evaluation of saying the truth mirrors the widespread hearsay about Persian attitude towards lying: cf. Herod. I 1, 38.

⁶⁰ Cf. G. Casertano, 1983, pp. 92-103. In the *Republic* the σωφροσύνη involves both ruling over one's desires and the awareness of one's place in the city; so that it is not always easy to discriminate between σωφροσύνη and justice. Anyway it could be said that the justice is a quality of the city, made possible through the σωφροσύνη of the citizens (S. Bourgault, 2013). In any case, also in *Republic*, most royal man is who reigns over himself (580b9-c3).

wisdom and religion must be taken quite seriously, since the “wisest” pedagogue is the teacher of the royal art⁶¹. What Socrates is depicting here is the model of the *divine kingship*, a model of leadership widespread also in Greece in the most ancient time of his history, and existing in the near East at Plato’s times⁶². The Persian king is first and foremost a worshipper of the gods; he presents undeniable priestly features; actually, as a king, he is the high priest⁶³. The philosopher, as a royal man endowed with a royal soul, presents several priestly features, at least in Plato’s view. The philosopher is the man closest to the divine; however the divine he worships has nothing to do with the antropomorphic gods of the popular religion; on the contrary he looks at the Beauty itself, as in *Phaedrus*, or at the *Good itself*, that is to say, those beings which, as eternal and immutable, are the most divine beings⁶⁴. The Persian crown prince is surrounded by the cares courtiers from his birth; moreover, these courtiers are outstanding subjects; on the contrary, Alcibiades were entrusted by Pericles to an old slave, Zopyros the Thracian (122b1-2). The high standard education of the Persian crown prince dwarves the natural gifts Alcibiades was so proud of, which are not enough to face such an opponent. Once again, it is to keep in mind that the Socrates of the *Alcibiades* proposes as model not historic kings, but a *metastorical ideal of priestly and divine kingship*, for which the power of the ruler resides in his closeness to the gods. The second important aspect to keep in mind is that Socrates in not advising Alcibiades to attempt a *coup d’etat* in

⁶¹... τὰ βασιλικά is what pertains to a king in the same way as τὰ κυβερνητικά are what pertains to the helmsman, that is to say the skill and expertise which make him different from the other men.

⁶² It is quite probable that the *archon basileus* is what remains in Athenian history of the divine monarch; a heritage who may be fruitfully compared with the Roman “rex sacrorum”. Both magistrates testify to the ancient link between kingship and the holy, which was still living in the neareast for instance: cf. E. Ehrenberg 2008, pp. 103-132; B. Lincoln 2008, pp. 221-242. For evidence of the divine kingship in Greece, cf. Mondy 1980, pp. 203-216.

⁶³ The Byzantine emperor was regarded as “peer to the Apostels”; indeed, Emperors deposed Patriarchs, since it is the Emperor, not the Patriarch, the man closest to God. The separation of the ruler from the priest is but an exception,

⁶⁴ The *eide* are somehow the source of the divinity of the Gods themselves, who are gods owing to their stabler knowledge of these divine beings; cf. F. Karfik, 2010, p. 86

Athens⁶⁵. Given that the *Alcibiades* enacts an initiatic ritual, it is Alcibiades' soul that must be transformed into a kingdom; the absence of democratic landmarks Socrates has induced Alcibiades into must be replaced by the presence of royal landmarks. And this royal landmarks are, regarding the Persian king, the closeness to the divine and the ability to ruling over one's fears and desires, so as not to become their slave.

The third royal landmark is not explicitly mentioned in these lines, but it can be inferred from them: a holy and priestly king, due to his connection to the divine realm, does not dwell entirely in the human world; his body is in the human society, but his soul is somehow *somewhere else*. To some extent this situation is contrary to that of Alcibiades; in fact it has been said that the young man in this moment is far from οἱ πολλοί with his body, but among them with his soul; to make a royal man out of him, this relationship must be reversed: the young man will dwell among οἱ πολλοί with his body, but far from them with his soul⁶⁶.

This is maybe the most important feature of Plato's holy king; *his liminal nature*: neither completely out of the city nor completely inside. Kings dwell at the frontier, in that region between the divine realm and the human society⁶⁷. Nobody in Athen is interested in providing such an education, and probably Socrates is implicitly saying that nobody can, unless obviously a lover cares for Alcibiades (122b1-7). To sum up, the necessity to Alcibiades to care about his condition appears for the first time in the dialogue between the criticisms to Athenian democracy and the praise of the Persian kingship; this is essential. Nevertheless, it is to observe that, in Plato's view, kingship and democracy are constitutions of souls; a royal soul fulfills only good desires, being able to discriminate between useful and harmful longings, whereas a democratic soul, being *ισονομική*, longs for the fulfillment of every kind

⁶⁵ Regarding the political stance of the Platonic Socrates cf. C. Griswold, 2010, pp. 333-354; Chr. Jedan, 2010, pp. 31-43.

⁶⁶ Alcibiades should somehow become *ἄτοπος*, that is to say, not completely belonging to the city and its people.

⁶⁷ During the age of Cronos, the first kings of humankind were not humans, but daemons, so that these rulers, wiser and of a better nature than mortals, could rule them. Cf. *Leg.* 713c3-e3. The royal politician, insofar as he is better than those ruled by him, must be a sort of *δαίμων* (custodian and guide) for them.

of desire, no matters how harmful they may be to oneself and to others as well⁶⁸. Consequently, the initiation into kingship, in this view, is the initiation into the ability to establish a certain relationship with one's desires. Therefore, someone who learns to let grow the noble and useful desires and weaken the wicked ones is bound to get closer to the most divine region of his soul⁶⁹. Regarding the Spartans, Socrates tells Alcibiades:

Should you choose, again, to look at the temperance (σωφροσύνην) and orderliness (κοσμιότητα), the facility and placidity, the magnanimity and discipline, the courage and endurance, and the toil-loving, success-loving, honor-loving spirit of the Spartans (εὐχέρειαν καὶ εὐκολίαν καὶ μεγαλοφροσύνην καὶ εὐταξίαν καὶ ἀνδρείαν καὶ καρτερίαν καὶ φιλοπονίαν καὶ φιλονικίαν καὶ φιλοτιμίαν τὰς Λακεδαιμονίων), you would count yourself but a child in all these things (122c3-d1).

In these lines Socrates says what he has been hinting at from the beginning of the dialogue: Alcibiades is still a child. Once again, the Athenian ritual of initiation into manhood is a failure; only kingly models can rescue Alcibiades from his lacking education. However the judgement about Sparta is quite ambiguous: the virtues mentioned by Socrates are those typical of the good soldier; the reader would expect that the philosopher puts them down to the Spartan *agoghe*, since the order in battle is the mirror of the order in the soul due to the right education; one would expect that Socrates praise Lychourgos and the *Rethra*⁷⁰; and, to keep the comparison to

⁶⁸ Cf. *Resp.* VIII 561a5-e1; IX587b3-488a2.

⁶⁹ Cf. *infra*, pp. 215ff.

⁷⁰ The feature Plato appreciated the most of Spartan *agoghe* is that it is a business of the community, non of the singular families. Moreover, as Plutarchus refers (*Lych.* VIII), Lychourgos started a fairer distribution of the land, in order to fight the unbearable inequality reigning over the citizens during the second Messenian war. Preventing the citizens from avidity steering their desires towards modesty and orderliness is, it goes without saying, the task of every true politician; which makes even more significant the absence of the praise of Spartan constitution. Besides, the Spartan constitution established a ritual of initiation into the group of the "equal" (*hoi homoioi*), the κρηπτεῖαι, which sometimes involved the assassination of the hilots, the rural servants of Sparta, descendant of the enslaved populations (XXVIII 3-5). Although it is not explicitly said in the text,

the Persian model, one would expect that Socrates highlights the closeness of the Spartan kings to the gods⁷¹.

However, in the following lines such praises are lacking; in particular what is lacking is that feature of a true king and politician, the ability to wage war because one is beyond the war; *the ability that makes the king a master of the war, not only a mere expert of it*. Contrary to these expectations, what is highlighted is the wealth of the Spartans; the land they inhabit is fruitful and vast; moreover, they have available a plenty of slave who care for it (122d5-e1)⁷². Even more relevant is the emphasis on the amount of silver and gold circulating in Sparta; this gold and silver coming from all the Greece and the Barbarians gather in Sparta but does not pass out of the city. Thanks to this impressive circulation of money, Spartans are the wealthiest among the Greeks, and their kings the wealthiest among the Spartans thanks to their right to a bigger amount of wealth as well as the royal tax the Spartans have to pay to them. Compared to the Persian crown prince the Spartan kings cannot help but pale; the former is educated to be temperate, brave and close to the gods, whereas the latter are depicted as hoarder of money. Nevertheless, the Spartan education seems to be still able to instill such values, as courage in war, modesty and law abidingness; however, an inexorable process has set in; the conspicuous circulation of wealth will bring to the onset of the avidity, which will harm once and for all the souls of the Spartans⁷³. Yet, the prosperity of the Spartan

it is not unreasonable to infer from the general attitude towards democracy that the κρυπτεῖαι, as rituals of passage, are taken to be much more effective than the Athenian Ephebia.

⁷¹ Probable the Spartan kings do not present this feature (or do not present anymore) because of the love for money which is spreading out in Sparta. Love for money and possessions in general prevent from closeness to the divine. Cf. *supra*, note 70.

⁷² This is a geographical requirement of a well ruled city, at least to Plato's eyes: a fruitful land, accompanied by the lack of harbors; these two features are relevant because they prevent the inhabitants of the city from undertaking maritime trades, regarded as the origin of the political upheavals which lead to the birth of democracies. Cf. *Leg.* IV 704b4-5; XII 952e1-2.

⁷³ To put it in the terms of the *Republic*, the Sparta depicted in these lines is a timocratic city, a city where the military education of the *élite* still holds the high standards of the royal city; yet, this *élite* has started undergoing a process of moral deterioration, brought about and fueled by the love for wealth and hoarding of financial power: cf. F. Calabi, 2005, pp. 263-293. This love for hoarding wealth will have the better of the noblest tendencies in the soul of the rulers, heritage of the royal

kings, even if great compared to that of the other Greeks, is nothing compared to that of the Persian king; extended territories are named after ornaments of the Persian queen, as Socrates has heard from a friend coming back from there (123b1-c3)⁷⁴.

Now Socrates has the queen Amestris herself intervene; Socrates says: “if one told Amestris that the son of Deinomache is going to fight her son, she would rightly wonder what Alcibiades resorts to so as to face her son; Amestris would say that it is only thanks to *care and wisdom*” (ἐπιμελεία τε καὶ σοφία, 123d2-3). However if the queen were informed that Alcibiades is completely uneducated and, although his lover told him that he *must learn, care for himself* in order to be able to face the Great King (ἐπιμελεία τε καὶ σοφία μαθόντα καὶ ἐπιμεληθέντα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀσκήσαντα, 123d5-e1), he stated that his beauty, his wealth, his nobility and his gifted soul were enough, she would think that Socrates and Alcibiades are mad (123e2-5)⁷⁵. The same applies to Lampido, the mother of Agis, if she knows that someone as uneducated as Alcibiades were going to fight her son.

The section on the kings ends: Alcibiades has been put before an elenctic mirror which has sent back to him the image of an uneducated young man longing for power and political responsibilities, unable to face his true opponents *because of the lack of selfcare*. In the same way as he has never searched for the just⁷⁶, because he thus far has been sure that he knows it, so he never cared for his self-improvement, for, to rule in a democratic regime, one does not need to be better than the others. However, the elenctic mirror has not only reflected the person Alcibiades is now, but also the person he could be, if he killed the democratic child

city. Sparta is represented as a city which has deteriorated from the Platonic ideal of kingship, but which has not yet become an oligarchy (in the worst meaning of the word). For the issue of the deterioration of Sparta due to the avidity and love for money favored by the victory against Athen, cf. Plutarchus, *Lys.* II 6.

⁷⁴ Maybe Xenophon.

⁷⁵ Here Socrates and Amestris would say the same: “Alcibiades needs *care for himself*, if he wants to face powerful and well educated enemies”. Actually Socrates and Amestris share a feature: they know if the future leaders are legitimate or not; Amestris indeed knows it because it is her, as a mother, the source of legitimacy of the crown prince’s claims to throne. Socrates is able to reveal if one can rightly become a leader, by examining the state of his soul.

⁷⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 163ff.

in himself. He could become a king, that is to say, someone modest, brave, and close to the divine, since these features characterize a royal soul; Alcibiades has the natural gifts to become a royal man, but he lacks the proper education. Thanks to the Socratic love, he could become this royal man if he accepts to die as the person he has been thus far and to commit to an ongoing self-improvement.

To become a royal man, one must be not only naturally gifted: he must also actively desire to be such a person; once again Socrates' initiatory *dialeghesthai* is first and foremost aimed at steering initiate's desires towards aims different from those the initiate had before; as it has been seen in the *Euthydemus*, the Socratic initiatory death is the transformation of desires. The desire to become better must last the entire life; it must be the ἐπιτήδευμα underlying every act and speech. This is the initiatory transformation Alcibiades must undergo: *from a young man, who wants to rule because he thinks that he is already better than his citizens, to a true man, who wants to rule only as long as he is truly better than his citizens; from the longing for to ruling to the longing for being better.*

The god Apollo and self-knowledge

As Critias in the *Charmides*, Socrates advises Alcibiades to follow the Delphic precept:

Ah, my remarkable friend, listen to me and the Delphic motto, "Know thyself" (γνῶθι σαυτόν); for these people are our competitors, not those whom you think; and there is nothing that will give us ascendancy over them save only pains and skill. If you are found wanting in these, you will be found wanting also in achievement of renown among Greeks and barbarians both; and of this I observe you to be more enamored than anyone else ever was of anything (124a5-b4).

Although Socrates has not yet faced the question of the nature of this self, it is inferable from what has been said so far why in the *Alcibiades* self-knowledge is not only possible, but also *necessary*. First of all, the knowledge of his ignorance Alcibiades has gained thus far has been possible thanks to the presence of an external object: the just. He indeed has discovered *about himself his own ignorance in relation to the just*. Instead, the self-knowledge put forth by Critias is problematic, since it is devoid of external contents.

Secondly the self-knowledge Alcibiades has aimed at thus far has a moral aim (assimilation to the royal rulers); he now knows about himself *that he must acquire the same qualities of his enemies in order to face them*. In Critias' self-knowledge there is no place for the appreciation of the enemies; in Critias' soul there is only Critias; his self-knowledge is not a dialogue, but a monologue.

Thirdly this self-knowledge of Alcibiades has been gained through the elenctic mirror provided by the initiatory *dialeghesthai*; a *dialeghesthai* aimed at purifying people from what prevents them to make themselves better. In Critias' self-knowledge there is no elenctic self-reflection; Critias speaks with himself only in order to agree with himself. In Socratic self-knowledge there is always the possibility that the subject does not know his weakness. In Critias' model of self-knowledge weaknesses are already known as well as strengths; there is no initiation in this model, because there is nothing the subject may discover about himself it does not know.

The kind of self-knowledge emerged thus far in the *Alcibiades* needs two terms: *an object in relation to which one must test one's wisdom or ignorance (the just)*; *the will to become better at that thing (juster)*. In the *Alcibiades* as in the *Charmides* and in *Euthydemus* it is Socrates who helps the young man direct his own look towards himself. However, this is not the aim of initiation; the aim is to make the young men themselves able to exert this refutative and improving look at themselves *autonomously*, even if there were no Socrates outside to help them; Socrates' aim is to make Alcibiades able to cultivate *σωφροσύνη* *by himself*⁷⁷. Finally Socratic appeal to self-knowledge involves the necessity of self-improvement: actually, it is self-improvement the aim of self-knowledge. In Critias' self-knowledge there is no self-improvement because Critias regards himself and his likes as gods. Accordingly, he cannot become better than he already is.

Alcibiades is going to abandon the child he still is; he himself now acknowledges that he must take care for his inadequate condition (124b6-7). However also Socrates admits that he himself needs education, as Alcibiades does; nevertheless, Socrates differs from Alcibiades in only one, but essential thing: Alcibiades has

⁷⁷ Cf. *infra*, pp. 208-211.

Pericles as his guardian, while Socrates has the God (Apollo) (124c1-7)⁷⁸. That also Socrates needs care for himself does not mean that he and Alcibiades are equal; self-knowledge must be gained in relation to an aim. Now Alcibiades knows about himself that he has an inadequate education in relation to the just as foundation of the political action; Socrates does not need self-care in relation to the art of ruling, since ruling is not his purpose. If the benefit Alcibiades gains from this conversation with Socrates is easy to understand (the initiation into a life devoted to the self-improvement in order to be a ruler as good as possible), which benefit does Socrates gain from the dialogue? It will be clear at the end of the analysis. Anyway, also to this case applies what has been said about the relationship between doctor and patient: doctor's beneficial care benefits both the doctor and the patient, but in different ways.

Socrates exhorts Alcibiades not to lose the courage shown thus and carry on the discussion (124d7-9). After claiming to be motivated to become as good as possible (φαμὲν γὰρ δὴ ὡς ἄριστοι βούλεσθαι γενέσθαι. ἧ γάρ; 124e1), Alcibiades and Socrates go on to search for the virtue they must excel in. According to Alcibiades this virtue is that of the man good at managing affairs (124e2-5)⁷⁹; however these affairs are neither those pertaining to horsemanship, nor those pertaining to the art of the helmsmen (124e7-14)⁸⁰. Alcibiades says that these affairs pertains to the

⁷⁸ The *epitropos* manages the assets of the young entrusted to him and *cares for his education*. The guardian should help the young to become a man. In the case of Alcibiades, Socrates is doing but saying that Pericles has failed. That Apollo is indicated as Socrates' guardian, that is to say, as that one who should care for Socrates' good, is perfectly consistent with the preferential relationship between the philosopher and the God depicted in other dialogues (*Ap.* 1a; *Euthyd.* 302b-d; *Crat.* 405b; *Phaed.* 57a; 85b; *Phaedr.* 244d); cf. H. Tränkle, 1985, pp. 19-31.

⁷⁹ The Greek words are δῆλον ὅτι οἱ πράττειν τὰ πράγματα; they obviously recall what Alcibiades takes to be the true skill of a good advisor; that is to say advise the citizens on their own affairs (περὶ τῶν ἑαυτῶν πραγμάτων). However now any reference to reflexive pronoun is lacking. This absence is not fortuitous; it marks the change in Alcibiades' attitude: at the beginning of the conversation he was sure of the person he was and as a consequence of the persons the others are. Now this self-confidence has disappeared and therefore the reference to the self has disappeared; now this self is no more something taken for granted, but something that has to be found.

⁸⁰ To be able to manage the affairs Alcibiades wants to manage, it is necessary to practice an art, a skill distinguishing its practitioners from the other human beings. The same applies to the advisor at

καλοὶ κάγαθοί⁸¹; through the subsequent dialectic move, he agrees that these καλοὶ κάγαθοί are the experts (τοῦς φρόνιμους)⁸²: everyone is good at that in which one is expert (125a1-6). Since every craftsman practises an expertise at which is good, it is to understand which skill the καλοὶ κάγαθοί possess.

They, according to Alcibiades, should be those able to rule in the city (τοὺς δυναμένους ἔγωγε ἄρχειν ἐν τῇ πόλει, 125b8). However this answer does not help yet discriminate between those καλοὶ κάγαθοί and other experts: indeed in a city there are those able to rule over suffering men (the doctors), those over the sailing men (the helmsmen), those over harvesting. Specifically, the καλοὶ κάγαθοί are those able to rule over men who make business with each other making use one of

the beginning of the dialogue. The reference to the importance of possessing an art does not allow for intellectualistic readings of this dialogue, nor - maybe - of other dialogues. Alcibiades must learn something he does not possess. When one learns something from the beginning, the desire and the emotional commitment to this learning must be so strong as to allow the neophyte to undergo and overcome all the difficulties the learning involves. Acting according to an art involves the relevant presence of non-intellectualistic parts, namely the desire to learn at the beginning and the desire not to lose knowledges after learning. Moreover, *technē* is not only the possession of universal laws and methods, but the ability to adjust universal laws to particular situations and individuals as well. The importance of the desire and the respect for the individual features are essential traits of every art and in particular of Socratic *dialeghesthai*; traits which the intellectualistic approaches worryingly disregard.

⁸¹ According to F. Bourriot 1995, p. 620, the concept of *kalokagathia* was introduced by the Sophists in the second half of the Vth century b.C. The *kalokagathos* represents the model of a perfect man, successful in his undertakings and able to shape the life of his own city. Cf. C. Mann, 2009, pp. 147-170.

⁸² The adjective φρόνιμος means “clever”, “smart”, “intelligent”, but also “wise”, “prudent”, “judicious”; it pertains not only to the cognitive sphere, but also to the domain of moral action, and the bond between these two spheres is so intimate that one cannot translate the word φρόνιμος in a sense or in another unless inevitably loses one of the two shades of this adjective. Anyway, that Alcibiades agrees that the *kalokagathos* is φρόνιμος is not of little moment; in doing so, he has implicitly (and maybe unconsciously) admitted that the excellent and successful man must be a *man who knows*. It is not clear yet which knowledge characterizes the *kalokagathos* (i.e. self-knowledge); however the mention of the craft is enlightening: if craftsmen possess knowledges on things the many ignore, one can expect that the *kalokagathos*, as φρόνιμος, has a knowledge which is not easy and makes him different from the others.

another (τῶν καὶ συμβαλλόντων ἑαυτοῖς καὶ χρωμένων ἀλλήλοις, ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς ζῶμεν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν, 125c4-5).

This answer of Alcibiades shows that in this dialectic section a move already observed in the *Charmides* is at work: the ascensional transition from the particular to the general⁸³. Alcibiades understands that those who are able to rule have to look at that which all the citizens share, regardless of the art each of them practices⁸⁴. Socrates asks Alcibiades if by καλοὶ καγαθοὶ he means those able to rule over men ruling other men; and Alcibiades assents (125c6-7). However, the art the καλοὶ καγαθοὶ should possess is not that of the helmsman, who is able to rule over boatwains ruling over rowers (125c8-10); it cannot be even the chorus' teachers' art, who rule over flute players ruling over dancers. Alcibiades provides a new answer: "I mean ruling over men in the city who share in it as fellow-citizens, and do business with each other (κοινωνούντων ἕγωγε λέγω πολιτείας καὶ συμβαλλόντων πρὸς ἀλλήλους, τούτων ἄρχειν τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει, 125d6-7)".

Now the true aim of the purification of the Socratic *dialeghesthai* comes out: as we have already seen, it is the removal from Alcibiades' soul of democratic features. The "many" have been depicted as engrossed in διαφορά, in a perpetual disagreement with each other and with themselves, since they ignore the most important things. If the democratic regime is the realm of διαφορά, the καλοὶ καγαθοὶ must rule over a κοινωνία in which citizens are bound to each other. Once again, given that it is the art of the helmsman that rules over men sharing sea journey, and it is the science of the chorus' teacher that rules over those sharing in the same song, it is to understand *which science* rules over those sharing in the citizenship (125e1-4).

⁸³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 117-119. In the *Charmides* this ascensional move leads from the observable behaviour to the invisible state of the soul underlying it; likewise, also in the *Alcibiades* this move from the ruling pertaining to a specific field to the ruling over the relationship in which everyone, irrespective of their skills, is involved will make possible a transition from the observable behavior of human being to the principle underlying them (their soul).

⁸⁴ This is consistent with Socrates words' at the beginning of *Republic IV*: the custodians have to look *at the whole*; this involve that they must be concerned in what the citizens share, not in what make each of them different from each other. Caring for that which the parts share is caring for the health of the whole. Actually caring for the wellness of the whole is what makes arts true arts: cf. *Gorg.* 503d4-504a4.

This science should be, as Alcibiades says, the εὐβουλία, the ability to take good decisions⁸⁵; however this ability is proper also of the helmsmen, who have to take good decisions in order to preserve their passengers (125e7-126a1). The εὐβουλία Alcibiades talks about is the ability to take good decisions in order to better manage and preserve the city (εἰς τὸ ἄμεινον τὴν πόλιν διοικεῖν καὶ σώζεσθαι, 126a3).

At this point Socrates asks him what, being present, makes it possible that the city be better managed and preserved and makes it impossible when absent, in the same way as health, being present, makes it possible to manage better and preserve the body (126a4-7). This is an essential point of the dialogue: rulers have to provide conditions which make possible the preservation of the city. Likewise the doctor must make possible that state (health) which make possible strengthen the body: indeed only a health body can work out; this involves that to become stronger one has to be in the condition which allows to become stronger, since someone who tried to work out with a sick body would only harm himself (and the others related to him)⁸⁶. In the same way rulers cannot directly rule over selfish and contentious people: indeed, even if they were the best rulers in the world, the wicked nature of the community they rule over would make their commitment ineffective. Ruling well is not enough; the rulers must bring about the conditions thanks to which ruling well is possible⁸⁷.

The same reasoning has obviously a relevant bearing on the issue of the ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ; it is useless tell a young man who has never cared for the health of his soul that he would care for it. One has to bring about the condition for which the young man can decide to undertake it: this condition is that the young looks at his own weakness and acknowledges his lacking condition and actively commits to

⁸⁵ *Euboulia* cannot be separated from σωφροσύνη. It can be said that σωφροσύνη is the origin of *euboulia*, since self-knowledge is indispensable for taking good decisions.

⁸⁶ Likewise, if one with a sick body ate recklessly, one would end up harming himself: cf. *Gorg.* 504a5-7. In the same way, Socrates is implicitly suggesting, if one with a sick soul attempts to rule the others, one necessarily harms oneself and these other as well; such a person ends up like the tyrant of the *Republic* (579c4-d4), tore apart by that power he so strongly yearned for.

⁸⁷ The condition thanks to which the ruled people observe the regulation of social life and the rulers can rule as well as possible is but σωφροσύνη itself, the remedy which Socrates wants to provide to Alcibiades.

improving himself. Regarding politics, this *transcendental* condition of a well ruled city is the friendship (φιλία) of the citizens to each other which prevents them from contentions (126c1-2).

This friendship, goes on Socrates, is agreement (ὁμόνοιαν) and cannot be disagreement⁸⁸. The science who makes possible that citizens agree with each other and individuals with themselves on the number is arithmetics, as well as the art of mensuration does the same regarding the evaluation of the lengths (126c5-d6)⁸⁹. The science Socrates and Alcibiades are looking for must have the same features; it must provide agreement to the individuals with each other as well as to each of them with themselves; but about what?

It is possible to figure it out from the depiction of the democratic regime as the realm of διαφορά about the most important things; if the science under examination must produce the opposite of the διαφορά, it is probable that it must produce agreement about the most important things for living well, in the city which

⁸⁸ That ὁμόνοια is the most relevant commitment of a true politician is said in *Resp.* IV, 432a1-7. Interestingly this ὁμόνοια is said to be the σωφροσύνη (*ibid.*), which is compared to a musical chord (ἁρμονία τινὴ ἢ σωφροσύνη ὁμοίωται, 431e7-8). Politician, as model and custodian of this σωφροσύνη, is a sort of king musician. Cf. *supra*, note 16.

⁸⁹ The ability of the arts of mensuration to solve disagreements is praised in *Euth.* 7b5-c8, in a way which recalls the lines of the *Alcibiades* on the same issues. On the other hand, even the most famous of the arts of mensuration in Plato's dialogues, that of *Prot.* 357a5-b6, has something to do with politics; in fact, even if the art of mensuration in the *Protagoras* is about the evaluation of pleasures and in the *Alcibiades* and in the *Euthyphro* the focus is on disagreements on values, such as the just the honourable and so on, the τέχνη μετρητική is nevertheless essential for right political action: in fact that a ruler is able to act not in accordance to the momentary pleasures, but according to the evaluation of the consequences of their fulfillment, has a great bearing on the life in a community. Furthermore, although Socrates in the *Protagoras* refrains from the identification of this art, it is not unreasonable that it is σωφροσύνη, or to say it better, a feature of σωφροσύνη: in fact if σωφροσύνη, according to what has been said above (cf. *supra*, pp. 153-156) is the proper self-evaluation in relation to the good one can accomplish, it makes sense that one must act according to the evaluation of the pleasures one has to refrain from as well as the pains one may bear in order to accomplish that good. As a consequence the τέχνη μετρητική of the *Protagoras* cannot be detached from σωφροσύνη, the virtue which Socrates wishes Alcibiades to commit to as a remedy to his love for power.

each other and in one's soul with oneself: this thing are the just, the unjust, the convenient and so on.

This agreement with oneself about the most important things is contrary to Alcibiades' inner condition revealed by the Socratic refutation. The reference to the agreement with oneself is essential because it sticks to the logic of the ascensional movement from the particulars to the general observed above. This time this transition acquires a new feature: it is a transition from the external and observable agreements among the individual to the inner agreement among oneself. This is consistent with what has been said about the *Charmides*⁹⁰: indeed moving from the observable and different behaviours to the unifying principle underlying them means moving from the body to the soul. The rulers *καλοὶ κἀγαθοὶ* mentioned by Alcibiades must be able to agree with themselves about the most important things in order to make also others agree; this ability of the ruler is, as it will be clear, the *σωφροσύνη*, the ability to look at oneself mercilessly, finding out the true condition of one's soul in order to take the proper care of it⁹¹.

Alcibiades now should say which is this art and about what it produces agreement; however he only states that the agreement he is speaking about is that existing between parents and children, and men and wives⁹². Socrates points out that there cannot be agreement between husband and wife on woolwork (*περὶ ταλασιουργίας*), for the husband, ignoring it, cannot agree with his wife, who on the contrary is expert in it⁹³. Likewise the wife cannot agree with her husband about soldiering

⁹⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 117-120.

⁹¹ In *Resp.* 432a it is said that the agreement on the tasks and the duties everyone has to accomplish in the city is *σωφροσύνη*. Taking into account that the *oikeioprachia* is the essence of justice and the *σωφροσύνη* is the agreement of individual with oneself and with other individuals on what everyone has to do in the city, it seems that both in the *Republic* and *Alcibiades* the definition of *σωφροσύνη* is inner agreement on what is just.

⁹² Although the answer seems to be insufficient, it hints at a feature of the *ὁμόνοια* actually present in the *Republic*. In that dialogue the friendship and agreement among citizens is based also on the demolition of the traditional monogamous partner and the spreading of the family bonds to the entire social body. Cf. *Resp.* V 457c8-461e7.

⁹³ It is quite probable that Socrates does not believe what is saying. On the contrary, it is the *oikeioprachia*, the mutual respect for others' skills and tasks and the not interfering in them that warrants an ordered and peaceful life in a community. If an opposition rises between carrying out

(περὶ ὀπλιτικῆς), since she does not know anything about it. Given that there could not be ὁμόνοια between husband and wife about their expertises and that ὁμόνοια is φιλία, when they attend to their tasks, there is no love between them (127a11-b5).

If one considers the closeness of the *Alcibiades* to the *Charmides* and the *Republic*, it is quite improbable that Socrates may see a contradiction between οἰκειοπραγία and friendship. Indeed the doctor must benefit others to benefit himself; the craftsmen must give the *products of their own arts* to receive *from the others what they cannot produce on their own*. Also in the *Alcibiades* rescuing companions is for a soldier *fulfilling his own duty; but fulfilling one's duty in this case involves benefitting others*. As it has been said, since the good is *always common good*, the οἰκειοπραγία *is also agathoprachia*. *The longing for the good, which is always common, makes every contrast between selfishness and altruism meaningless*. Given that, it is probable that Socrates pretends to see a contradiction between οἰκειοπραγία and friendship only in order to figure out if Alcibiades can solve this illusory contradiction⁹⁴.

Alcibiades gives up: he confesses that he does not know any longer what he is saying and acknowledges he has lived in a shameful condition (οὐδ' αὐτὸς οἶδ' ὅτι λέγω, κινδυνεύω δὲ καὶ πάλαι λεληθέναι ἑμαυτὸν αἴσχιστα ἔχων, 127d4-5). The process of removal of certitudes has come at its pinnacle: now Alcibiades has lost the adhesion to his own words. The initiatic absence of landmarks into which the Socratic *dialeghesthai* has led Alcibiades reveals itself as the loss of the adhesion to oneself. Doing away with the cultural references in which Alcibiades has grown up, Socrates has triggered in him the dissatisfaction for the person he has been thus far. Now Alcibiades does not adhere to this person: he looks at it as at a stranger, he no more identifies with his own words. However, this doubling of the subject, this loss of the immediate adhesion to oneself is necessary for ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ: only

one's own tasks and loving and respecting others, it is obvious that the concept of *oikeioprachia* at the core of this opposition is erroneous. It is likely that Socrates makes this false opposition rise only in order to see if Alcibiades is able to solve it.

⁹⁴ Socrates in 127d1-3 claims to fail to grasp which kind of ὁμόνοια he and Alcibiades should be expert of. Yet, Socrates has implicitly suggested that it should concern the most important things for social life. As in the *Charmides*, Plato has his Socrates pretend to ignore what he already knows.

by gaining this distance from oneself it become possible to see weaknesses and strenghts which an immediate and reckless adhesions to one's desires would make impossible to see. *Only now care become possible.*

Socrates encourages Alcibiades not to give up, since he is still young and can remedy his condition (127e1-2). However Alcibiades must go on answering Socrates' questions; only in this way, with the favour of the God and trusting in Socrates divination (τῆ ἐμῆ μαντεία πιστεύειν), both Socrates and Alcibiades will be in better condition (127e3-4)⁹⁵.

Ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ: *the discovery of the self as a regressive movement from the many to the one.*

In order to be able to take proper care for oneself, it is necessary to find out what this "oneself" is so as to avoid caring for other things one mistake for it. Thus far Alcibiades has discovered which kind of person he is: ambitious, naturally gifted and ignorant; however he does not know yet *what he is*; to know it, Alcibiades must undergo the same process at work in the finding out the art of ruling; in the same way as the true politician does not care for a specific domain of human life, but for what all the citizens share irrespective of their individuals traits, thus Alcibiades must distance himself from the various aspects of his life in order to grasp that *one* which underlies them. As well as Charmides, he must move from his observable behaviours to their invisible origin: this section of the dialogue represents the last step of the initiatic removal of Alcibiades from the "many". In the beginning, the challenge has been removing the individual Alcibiades from the "many"; now the initiatic removal has reached a higher level; the removal *in Alcibiades himself of what makes him observable; that to say his body.*

Alcibiades, as already Charmides, is going to *take off his body through Socrates' interrogation.* The regressive removal of the "many" aspects of Alcibiades' life starts from the *accessories of the body.* Rings and shoes are accessories of the hands and the feet (128a7-12): it is not through the care for shoes that we take care for our feet; and since taking care for something means making it better, it is not thanks to

⁹⁵ This words hint at Socrates' closeness to Apollo, god of soothsaying.

the care for shoes that feet are made better. The movement from the many to the one is already at work: indeed a person can possess an array of shoes different from each other, *but has always two feet which are the same*. Since accessories of the feet and feet themselves are not the same, the arts appointed to their improvement are different: regarding shoes, it is the shoe-making which makes them better; regarding rings, it is ring engraving that makes them better. Different accessories require different crafts: but the body, *which is the one underlying these accessories*, is made better *by one art, that is to say the gymnastic* (128a4-12)⁹⁶. Established that the art through which one cares for the thing belonging to oneself and that through which one cares (makes better) for oneself are not the same art (128d1-6), it would be to figure out through which art one could care for oneself (φέρει δὴ, ποίᾳ ποτ' ἂν ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιμεληθεῖμεν; 128d13). Since we know which kind of craft shoe-making and ring-engraving because we know what they care for (rings and shoes), it is necessary to know *what* we are (τί ποτ' ἐσμὲν αὐτοί) *in order to know which art makes oneself better* (τίς τέχνη βελτίω ποιεῖ αὐτόν, 128e8)⁹⁷.

The argument of the user

In 129b1 Socrates starts the well known argument of the user, through which he is going to argue that the “self” is the soul⁹⁸. The argument of the user seems to comply

⁹⁶ This first regressive move from the many (the accessories of the body) to the one underlying them (the body itself) does not take into consideration not unimportant difference between the arts concerning the accessories of the body and that (the gymnastic) concerning the body: the former deals with an external object (the accessory) which is passive, whereas the latter does not deal with the body directly: the trainer teaches which movements his disciples have to do in order to strengthen their body. In the case of gymnastic, the object of this art (the body of others' people) one deals not with passive object such as rings and shoes. This involves two features which makes gymnastics different from the other arts concerning the body: 1) it is somehow “reflexive”, since disciples use their body to strengthen their body. 2) Since the trainer does not manipulate directly the body of his disciples, but teaches them how to work out, the outcome is more unpredictable (the disciples may also carry out the movements erroneously) than that of those arts which deal with mere accessories.

⁹⁷ Cf. P. Remes, 2013, pp. 271-301.

⁹⁸ Cf. That humans are their souls does not mean that body is a mere accessory or something negligible: cf. J. Annas, 1985, pp. 111-138. If one considers the connection between self-knowledge and politics in the *Alcibiades* (cf. L. Soares, 2017, pp. 93-118), it can be said that it is

with the already highlighted strategy of grasping the one underlying the many by means of the removal of the many themselves. In the beginning Socrates has removed the *numerous* accessories of the body in order to draw *the attention on the one underlying them* (the body) now, through the argument of the user the various actions in which the body is involved must be removed so that *the one underlying them* (the soul)⁹⁹ could come to light. The argument starts by pointing out the relation between the speakers and the *logos* through which they communicate:

Socrates: “Steady, then, in Heaven's name! To whom are you talking now? To me, are you not (τῷ διαλέγῃ σὺ νῦν; ἄλλο τι ἢ ἐμοί)?“. ALC: „Yes “. SOCR: “And I in turn to you?“. ALC: “Yes”. SOCR: “Then the talker is Socrates?“. ALC: “To be sure”. SOCR: “And the hearer, Alcibiades?“. ALC: “Yes”. SOCR: “And Socrates uses speech in talking (οὐκοῦν λόγῳ διαλέγεται ὁ Σωκράτης)?“. SOCR: “And you call talking and using speech the same thing (τὸ δὲ διαλέγεσθαι καὶ τὸ λόγῳ χρῆσθαι ταῦτόν που καλεῖς), I suppose”. ALC: “To be sure (129b2-c3)”.

One would expect that Socrates would attempt to establish between *logos* and its user the same relationship as between body and its accessories. However, this would be impossible, and in the following reasoning Socrates attempts to let the true user of *logos* emerge by removing the body from this user rather than the *logos*¹⁰⁰. Socrates and Alcibiades agree that the user and the used tool are not the

one's own body the first thing that the one's must rule and that thing which allows soul to act within a *world inhabited by other embodied selves* : cf. *infra*, note 100.

⁹⁹ As it has been seen the conversations in the *Euthydemus* take place in a dressing room; in the *Charmides* Socrates say that, to evaluate the good nature of Charmides, he must undress him by removing his body, and in the *Gorgias* souls have to be judged devoid of the body. Therefore, the ruling out of the body from the understanding of what one truly is would not be a problem, since it is a common feature of the socratic *dialoghesthai*, even in works whose Plato's authorship is undisputed.

¹⁰⁰ It is to infer from others passages in Plato's dialogue that a mere instrumental relationship between soul and *logos* is impossible, even so more from the educational point of view, as it is the case in the *Alcibiades* (cf. P. Remes, 2013, pp. 282-285). In *Symp.* 210c1-2 it is said that the *logoi* on the beauty of the soul must make the young better; and in *Phaedr.* 276a4-5 Socrates says that *the logos written in the soul of the pupil is able to defend himself*. The *logos* the pupil receives from his teacher becomes part of his soul. In *Sophist.* 263e2-4 it is said that the *logos is but the audible expression of the dialogue of the soul with itself*; but in this dialogue lies the essence of the soul

same thing; accordingly, the shoemaker is different from the tools he uses to cut the leather, as well as the harper is different from the tools he uses to play (his instrument) (129c4-11)¹⁰¹. Socrates goes on to argue that the harper and the shoemaker *use* also parts of their own body, not only the tools of their trade, bodily different and detachable from them (129d3-e1). Since the human being *use* the totality of its body (παντὶ τῷ σώματι), and the user, as it has already established, is different from *the used tools* (ἕτερον δ' ἦν τό τε χρώμενον καὶ ᾧ χρῆται; e5), it follows that *the human being, as user of the body, is different from it* (129e7). The user of the body cannot be but soul, so that the human being must be only one of

itself as able to have *doxai*. Therefore it cannot be applied the Doubt of Gassendi on *res cogitans* to the identification of the soul as being capable of *dialegethai*. This dialogue (with others and with oneself as well) is not a feature of the soul among the others, but the most important one. Applying the Gassendi doubt to this identification would be saying that for a human being the belonging to human species is a feature among the others. What is more, it is to be kept in mind that body, albeit instrument, is not an instrument in the same way as artificial things are: it is possible to walk without shoes, but not without feet; even if the capability of walking originates from soul which ensouls body, it would be impossible if the instrument (the body) were damaged; to use Socrates' words in the *Phaedo*, body is that without which a cause could not be cause (99b1-2). In the *Alcibiades* Socrates does not affirm the role of body as necessary instrument of soul as explicitly as in the *Phaedo*; however, it is reasonable to think that also in the *Alcibiades* Socrates notices this difference between a necessary instrument (body) of soul and accessories. In *Alc. I* 132a4-9, Socrates makes a distinction between body (the things of the self) and food and riches (the things of the body); this leads to believe that, even if humans are in first place their soul, body is nevertheless in an intimate relationship with soul: in fact it is a thing of the *self*, *something which belongs to soul*. This makes the normative dualism (Cf. C. Zoller, 2018, *passim*) the best hermeneutical approach to read the *Alcibiades*: Soul is superior to body and nevertheless it must use it and care for it as its instrument. Thus humans are souls; but souls to which bodies belong. Accordingly, it could be said that, according to the *Alcibiades*, humans are *souls to which bodies belong*. Cf. D. del Forno, 2006, pp. 81-89.

¹⁰¹ A harper is different from his instrument, but not from the art by means of which he can play this instrument; this art, thanks to which he can play, is the totality of the *logoi* received by his master and the apprenticeship. This art is a state of his soul and cannot be detached from him. Likewise the carpenter of the *Cratylus* is bodily different from the tools he uses to produce the spool, but *he cannot be detached from the idea of the spool in his soul; that idea through which he can produce further spools*.

these three things: its soul, its body, or together as a whole (130a1-10). The use of the *χρόμαι* made by Socrates, it is obvious, hints at hierarchical relationship, and this relationship between a ruling soul and a ruled body parallels the relationship which should be established between a ruler and the ruled ones; Alcibiades must be different from the many over whom he must rule; this means that, to be able to rule, Alcibiades is bound to be superior to the ruled ones; likewise it is the soul, superior and different from the body, that must rule it; this is, as it has been said above, the last part of the ritual of separation; as in the beginning Alcibiades has been separated from the “Many”, so now he is going to be separated from what of him “the Many” can see (that is to say, his body); Socrates is evoking Alcibiades’ soul out of the observable realm in order to see it directly, so that also here, just like in the *Charmides*, *Euthudemus*, and *Gorgias*, the *διαλέγεσθαι* reveals itself as a deathlike experience. Furthermore, it is to keep in mind that the necessity of a ruling soul different and superior to the body cannot be detached from the issue of the *care*; only something superior as ruling *can take care for something unable to take care of itself*. Accordingly, saying that the body does not rule over itself is the same as saying *that the body cannot take care of itself*¹⁰². The removal of the body from the soul is aimed at finding out what one truly is in order to care for oneself; however it is this oneself which cares for oneself; he is at once the subject and the object of the care; therefore in the *Alcibiades* Socrates implicitly admits that which in the *Charmides* has been only hinted at in the prologue: that is to say that human soul has a reflective power, the ability to direct its own faculty at itself¹⁰³. To care for itself, the human being must exert this reflective power, and the body, as devoid of this power, cannot be the human being¹⁰⁴. The human being cannot be even the body and the soul together as a whole, since the body does not partake in ruling,

¹⁰²Cf. *Phaedr.* 246b6-c4.

¹⁰³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 134-138.

¹⁰⁴ Contrary to body, soul is capable of *self-reflexivity*- cf. K. Oehler, 1997, pp.153-177 D. Werner, 2013, pp. 307-331. For instance, when one is working out, it can seem that one’s body exert some kind of reflexivity, because the body carries out movements in order to strengthen itself; however only a live body, i. e. *endowed with soul*, can work out. This means that the ultimate source of the apparent reflexivity of body is soul itself.

and *the human being is first and foremost the part able to rule*¹⁰⁵. Socrates, even if aware that the reasoning lacks exactitude, states that it can be concluded that human beings are neither body, nor body and soul as a whole; *they are souls to which bodies belong*¹⁰⁶. Socrates adds that he and Alcibiades will know exactly (that the human being is soul), when they find that which they have thus far neglected (ἀκριβῶς μὲν γὰρ τότε εἰσόμεθα, ὅταν εὔρωμεν ὃ νυνδὴ παρήλθομεν διὰ τὸ πολλῆς εἶναι σκέψεως 130c6-d1). This is the αὐτὸ τὸ αὐτό¹⁰⁷, instead of which they have so far focused on what everyone is (that is to say their soul). It is not yet clear what this αὐτὸ τὸ αὐτό is; we will focus on its nature in the analysis devoted to the analogy of the mirror; anyway the aforementioned ascensional removal of the many in order to grasp the one underlying them can be a heuristic criterium which can be applied also to this case: in the same way as the body is the one underlying its accessories and the state of the soul is the principle of the different movements in which the body is involved, this αὐτὸ τὸ αὐτό could be what underlies the different desires and instances of the soul and makes the soul a whole. Indeed, although there are no elements to speak of a threefold soul in the *Alcibiades*¹⁰⁸, this does not involve that

¹⁰⁵ Socrates dismissed the possibility that the man may be the body and the soul as a whole in a very hurried way; therefore, the statement that the soul is the user of the body and the body cannot rule itself is the foundation, not the outcome of Socrates' reasoning in these lines; Cf. S.Forde, 1987, p. 235; E. Wasmuth, 2016, pp.72-74. However, Socrates interest is not to provide to Alcibiades a theoretical knowledge of the human nature based on sound and flawless reasoning but *transform and steer Alcibiades' desires towards new aims*. Therefore, it is to keep in mind the initiatory and exhortative side of this lines Socrates is not only saying: "human beings are their soul", but also: "Alcibiades, if you want to rule and be a good politician to your citizens, you must be your soul, and of your soul, as it will be seen below, the part closest to the divine nature.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *supra*, note 100. Cfr. L. Napolitano, 2010, pp. 166-171.

¹⁰⁷ Cfr. *infra*, pp. 147-154.

¹⁰⁸ It is a mistake to think that there is an alternative between a monolithic and a threefold soul; even if not threefold as in the *Republic* and in the *Phaedrus*, soul always presents different instances. For instance, Alcibiades longs for power and reputation; but he also wishes to be courageous. He has false opinion; however he proves (at least in this dialogue) to be able to change his mind. All this different instances concern his soul and show that soul, even when not threefold, is not something monolithic or simple. On the other hand, if soul were something simple, the need for *epimeleia eautou* would fade. In fact, as it has rightly pointed out by Napolitano, 2020, p. 18, the idea of the care of soul is fashioned after the idea of the care of body, conceived of as balance and order of

the soul in this dialogue is a monolithic and rigid being; first of all, the soul can care for itself; this feature entails that the soul is a *dual* (at least dual) *unity*; secondly people (now we can say their soul) can agree and disagree not only with others, but also with themselves; but, to agree and to disagree as well, there must be more than one term involved in the relationships. When there is agreement, the several instances of the soul find themselves in a well-balanced whole; conversely, when there is disagreement, there is a fight in order to get the better of the others, in the soul as well as in the city. As a consequence, if the soul is the *one in relation to the body*, the soul is on its turn multiple in itself; the *αὐτὸ τὸ αὐτό* will be the *one in relation to the soul*; so that this *αὐτὸ τὸ αὐτό* will be the *unifying principle of all the aspects of our life*¹⁰⁹.

The σωφροσύνη as the skill of making oneself emerge

The conversation between Alcibiades and Socrates is an intercourse between souls using their *logos beyond their bodily conditionings* (130d7-8; 130e2-4). *Socrates has undressed*¹¹⁰ *Alcibiades (his soul)*, so as to lead him into the deathlike world of his *dialectic*. The ascensional move from the different and multiple aspects of life to the unifying principle underlying them has outlined a hierarchical structure of human knowledges; indeed since the politician must focus on what the human beings in the city share, irrespective of the abilities which make each of them different, in the same way the politician must care for his soul as that which underlies every aspect of his life; therefore, to care for the whole outside (the city), he must care for the whole inside (his soul)¹¹¹. As a consequence, the experts in other domains do not know themselves; or more exactly, if they do, there is not

different and opposit instances. Now, if soul were simple and monolithic, there were no harmony to build, since there is harmony only where there is more than one element. Accordingly if the notion of harmony (a well-balanced multiplicity) did not apply to soul, also the care of soul would be impossible, since the care is aimed at making well-balanced and ordered that which is cared.

¹⁰⁹ As we will see below, this “*ich denke*” of our cognitive and moral life as well is that which longs for happiness.

¹¹⁰ Cf, *supra*, pp. 105-108.

¹¹¹Cf. *supra*, note 108.

thanks to the sectorial expertise they have; accordingly, the doctor, as a doctor, will not know himself, but what belongs to himself (the body and his functioning, 131a4-5). Even further are the farmers and the other craftsmen who deal with the things pertaining to the things of oneself (the food and the other accessories of the body. This knowing oneself is the σωφροσύνη; Socrates provides here the same definition of this σωφροσύνη which in *Charmides* has appeared to be aporetic; however it has been explained for which reason the σωφροσύνη as knowing oneself in this dialogue is possible, whereas it is not in the *Charmides*¹¹². Alcibiades has started looking at himself through a painful process; through Socrates' mirroring refutations, which have sent back to Alcibiades himself the *image of the person he has been thus far*. The knowing oneself is the outcome of a dialectic process, and in this dialectic process one must be able to undergo refutations and destruction of one's own certitudes. Alcibiades this time has needed Socrates' refutations because he has never looked at himself. Conversely the true σῶφρων must be able to look at himself and to refute himself, if the case, even if nobody exhorts him to do it. The ability to practice this dialogue with oneself about one's strengths and weakness is the *initiativ threshold an aspiring politician is obliged to cross*. What *oneself is* is something emerging from the dialogue; it is somehow an *image* constructed by means of the mirroring nature of the dialectic exchange; a dialectical exchange with Socrates, in this case. However, if the *self* is not *something taken for granted, but something gained from the dialogue*, in relation to what is our *self* sent back and made visible to us by means of the dialectic exchange? The answer is: in relation to our aims in life. For instance a case of σωφροσύνη would be: "I, Alcibiades, want to be a good advisor for the Athenians; to be a good advisor, I have to be just and expert in what I want to advise on. Do I possess these features? Obviously not, since from my birth until now I have never committed to becoming such a man. Therefore it would be unreasonable that someone as ignorant as I am, immediately undertake politics; before undertaking it, I must actively commit to the

¹¹² Cf. *supra*, pp. 148-151.

acquisition and the improvement of the features I lack¹¹³”. It goes without saying, only who has undergone and accepted someone else’s refutations can refute themselves. Thus the σωφροσύνη would be the ability to let the person one is in that moment emerge from the dialogue with oneself about one’s desires and aims¹¹⁴. Knowing oneself by means of this sincere and merciless dialogue with one’s aims in life in an initiatic condition which marks the separation not only between childhood and manhood, but also between rulers and common citizens. In the democratic Athen even leaders are unable to have this dialogue, since their only interest is flattering people so as not to lose their favour. To become a good ruler, Alcibiades must acquire the *initiatic condition of σωφροσύνη; become a man able to look at himself at a distance and no more a rush boy who immediatly adheres to his ambitions. Only in this way he can once and for all die as a democratic child and rise again as an aspiring royal ruler.*

Socrates’ love as love for what one can become

As the human being is its soul, those loving Alcibiades’ body love a thing of Alcibiades, not Alcibiades himself (131c5-6); this kind of lover will go away, as soon as the body finishes blooming (131c10). Socrates is the lover who turns up when the others longing for bodies go away. Socrates’ love unfolds when the “Many” are away, because that which attracts them is going to fade: the beauty of a young body. Socrates’ love is initiatic because through it Socrates tries to lead the soul of the loved out of the *aporetic loss of landmarks brought about by Socrates himself*. The aporetic period of the transition into manhood is physically mirrored by the stay of the initiate outside the city, that is to say outside the place of his

¹¹³This knowing oneself involves two features: the aim one want reach to must be a beneficial one: one cannot be σώφρων if one’s aim in life is to become a serial killer; secondly one has to be merciless towards oneself; one must face one’s ignorance, without trying to conceal it.

¹¹⁴ This involves that the self one is changes in relation to the aims; for instance one is ignorant as a doctor, but wise as a pilots. Furthermore, this self changes over time; for instance the self of someone whose aim is playing guitar well after 20 years of apprenticeship is different from theis self when they started learning. In this sense, the same person, has more than a self at the same time and during its lifetime.

childhood. This ritual (the epheby in the case of Athen) sometimes proves to be ineffective, so that it is possible to find adult man who are still children in their soul. The socratic refutations are aimed at creating *in the soul* the loss of the landmarks the initiate must undergo and overcome; However the ritual of the epheby is aimed at reintroduce the young man into the city as *a complete democratic citizen*; therefore the exit from the aporetic absence of landmarks brings back to the origin. Through the socratic love Alcibiades is led into kingship (at least a kingship of the soul, if not of the state). Now it is clear what Socrates loves of Alcibiades; it is clear that he loves Alcibiades' soul, but this is not enough. Alcibiades' soul has proven to be ignorant and obviously it is not ignorance that Socrates loves. At beginning of the dialogue Alcibiades has admitted that he is ambitious; this is the reason why Socrates approaches Alcibiades, not the reason why he loves him; actually Socrates seems to suggest that Alcibiades should not immediately and recklessly adhere to his ambitions without understanding if he can really fulfil them. Therefore Socrates does not love *the person Alcibiades is, but the person he could become*. Indeed Socrates exhorts Alcibiades to be as handsome as possible (προθυμοῦ τοίνυν ὅτι κάλλιστος εἶναι.). Socrates' love has an transformative power, because Socrates through it attempts to transform Alcibiades into someone deserving love¹¹⁵. Because of his love for Alcibiades (his soul) Socrates is his only true lover, and as a lover, the only one who can make him better¹¹⁶.

Σωφροσύνη as antidote

Nevertheless, Alcibiades, in spite of his good nature, risks being corrupted by the Athenian people, in the same way as lot of good Athenians were corrupted (132a1-3): “the people of the great-hearted Erecteus has a beautiful face”¹¹⁷. Therefore it is necessary to look at it after undressing it (ἀλλ’ ἀποδύντα χρὴ αὐτὸν θεάσασθαι,

¹¹⁵Cf. *supra*, p. 210.

¹¹⁶ Cf. J. Stannard, pp. 120-134; Z. Zelinova, A. Kalas 2019, pp. 13-27; F. Pentasuglio, 2020, pp.77-105.

¹¹⁷ Hom. *Il.* II, 547.

132a4-5)¹¹⁸. Alcibiades must learn the things he should know before entering politics, so that he can use them as antidotes (ἀλεξιφάρμακα, 132b2), so as to avoid suffering from something harmful. It is inferable that the most harmful thing Alcibiades may do is adhering recklessly to his longing for power and prestige without wondering if he lives up to his own expectations. Therefore the most important of the ἀλεξιφάρμακα Alcibiades must acquire is σωφροσύνη, because only the sincere and merciless dialogue with one's desires and aims aimed at finding out one's strengths and weakness can prevent from the *isonomic* temptation of fulfilling every desire, irrespective of the benefits and the damages their fulfilment may bring about. As an antidote, the σωφροσύνη is a medicine Socrates is trying to administer to Alcibiades; an antidote which is up to Alcibiades to ingest or not. Likewise, in the *Charmides* the σωφροσύνη is the remedy Socrates is administering to Charmides; a remedy able to provide health not only to the body, but also, what is more important, to the soul. In both cases, Socrates is depicted as a priest-healer who, on Apollo's behalf, attempts to administer a medicine to two young aristocrats who, albeit well gifted, risk being corrupted by the people around them.

Before going on, it could be useful to understand how the σωφροσύνη, as knowing oneself is connected to the ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ as making oneself better. In the case of medicine and gymnastic, this is clearer: gymnastic improves a health body; medicine makes bodies health, so that medicine is superior to gymnastic, because it provides the conditions indispensable for the gymnastic itself. So far σωφροσύνη has appeared as more similar to medicine than gymnastic; indeed, as knowing oneself, σωφροσύνη is *what provides the condition which make the ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ possible*. If between knowing oneself and caring for oneself there were the same relationship as between medicine and gymnastic, it would be to conclude that σωφροσύνη and ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ are different from each other; however, although they are not the same thing, they cannot be separated from

¹¹⁸ Socrates has undressed Charmides of his body so as to look at his soul. What Socrates is suggesting here is something similar. To know what the Athenian people really is, one must look *at its soul*, by removing from it the seeming beauty which misleads those bewitched by its flatteries. That the democratic regime is able to corrupt even the most gifted people is an issue faced in the VI book of the *Republic*.

each other. As it has been said several times, *knowing oneself means knowing oneself in relation to one aims*; Alcibiades discovers thanks to the Socratic refutations his ignorance and inadequacy *in relation to his will to advise the Athenian*. As a consequence, the σωφροσύνη is not a theoretical knowledge of oneself, but a knowledge aimed at reaching an aim. If the subject is inadequate (as in the case of Alcibiades), σωφροσύνη will draw a path so as to overcome this inadequacy; For instance: “I want to become a physicist; to become a physicist, one must master mathematics, physics, chemistry and so on. Considering that which a good physicist should know, do I have this knowledge? What have I to improve? Which are my weaknesses? After discovering that I can for instance take private lessons of analysis or attend classes and so on”. In relation to my will to become a good physicist, I have tried to outline my actual state, so as to understand how far or how close to my expectations I am. Accordingly, σωφροσύνη is not to be considered as a mere knowledge of oneself, *but knowledge of oneself aimed at self-improvement*. Furthermore, this feature of σωφροσύνη is consistent with its being an antidote. Indeed, if Alcibiades only were able to know himself theoretically, but this knowledge had no bearing on his moral life and his behaviour, such a knowing oneself hardly could be regarded as an antidote.

Towards the eye analogy

Alcibiades agrees on what Socrates has said, asking him how “we could take care for ourselves” (132b3-4). Socrates summarises the outcomes of the discussion about soul and care for oneself. However it would be possible, Socrates argues, that neither he nor Alcibiades have truly understood what the Delphic inscription says, although there is no doubt that its words are correct¹¹⁹. Now Socrates proposes looking at the inscription as if the God were commanding to the eye “see thyself” (ἰδὲ σαυτόν, 132d4). To do that, the eye would look at that by looking at which

¹¹⁹ Socrates reveals the same attitude towards the oracle in *Ap.* 21A-b. It is not Socrates who submits Apollo’s words to his refutations, but Apollo’s words which exhort Socrates to use his reasoning so that he can understand them. Once again, as in the *Charmides* and in the *Apology*, Socrates is depicted as truthful interpreter of the meaning of Apollo’s words, a feature which makes him similar to a priest.

would see itself (132d5-6)¹²⁰. those beings by looking at which the eye see itself are the mirrors and things of this sort (132e1). Also the eye itself can mirror as the actual mirrors; indeed the face (τὸ πρόσωπον) of the person who looks into other's eye appears in the opposite view, as in a mirror (133a1-3). Socrates in the beginning used the progressive removal of body and body accessories to grasp the soul, that is to say what the human being is; now he uses an other strategy: no more the removal of the body, but the reflecting into the other's eye (soul). As we have already seen this strategy complies with the idea of selfreflection as retrospection; selfreflection is possible because Socrates, through his refutations makes possible to the interlocutors to see themselves through their own words. Through Socrates' refutations Alcibiades loses the immediate adhesion to his ambitions and certitudes; but, by losing it, he becomes able to see what his adhesion to his certitudes prevented him from noticing; that is to say his ignorance. Socrates, by constructing an elenctic mirror made up of Alcibiades' own words, *makes possible to Alcibiades to see Alcibiades*. Socrates somehow gives to Alcibiades a vision he had not¹²¹. This is the reason why a mere mirror cannot be enough; the most relevant danger of a material mirror is that it could send back to us not the truthful image of what we are like, but an image consistent with what one thinks one is and is not, whereas the ability to look at oneself at distance arise only when in the mirror appears also what one would like not to see¹²²; knowing oneself involves knowing one's limits and accepting that there may be limits one does not know; a mirror which sends back only that which one is pleased with cannot help cultivate σωφροσύνη. The second,

¹²⁰ Cf. V. J. Wohl, 2012, pp. 45-60. Socrates imagines that the inscription advises his eye as it were a man (εἰ ἡμῶν τῷ ὄμματι ὅσπερ ἀνθρώπῳ συμβουλεῦον εἶπεν) in relation to vision the human being is its eyes.

¹²¹ Cf L. Palumbo, 2010, pp. 185-209. The same applies to Socrates in the *Charmides*, where the Philosopher, by means of the refutations, leads the young Charmides to look at himself in order to say what σωφροσύνη is. Cf. *supra*, pp. 121-123.

¹²² Alcibiades' lovers are somehow *defective mirrors*. They, interested only in Alcibiades' physical beauty, not in his soul, send back to Alcibiades the image of a young, handsome aristocrat who already has what he needs and can do whatever he wants. However this is not the true image of Alcibiades; his lovers send back to Alcibiades the image of the person he thinks he is, not of the person he really is. As a consequence these mirrors reinforce the self-satisfaction and weaken the self-awareness.

and maybe the most important limit of a mere mirror is that the mirror *does not see*. To know itself an eye should mirror itself into an eye, because thus the eye mirrors itself into a being which exerts the same power as it does (vision); in particular, the eye should look at that region (the pupil) in which the virtue of the eye (the sight) resides (καὶ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ εἰς ἐκεῖνον τὸν τόπον ἐν ᾧ τυγχάνει ἡ ὀφθαλμοῦ ἀρετὴ ἐγγιγνομένη, 133a2-3). Alcibiades comes to see himself through an elenctic mirror constructed through a dialectic exchange; considering also that in 130d7-8 Socrates says that souls have intercourse exchanging *logoi* with each other, it can be deduced that the functioning of soul expresses itself in the dialectical reasoning. However, it must be kept in mind the exhortative nature of the conversation between Socrates and Alcibiades. Before Socrates approached him Alcibiades had never reasoned in a dialectic way, neither with oneself nor with the others; for Alcibiades every desire involves its fulfilment and none, except for Socrates, has never prevented him from undertaking what he does not live up to. Therefore, Alcibiades, looking at the dialectic way of reasoning proper of Socrates, does not see the way in which his soul functions, *but the way in which his soul should and could function*. Having a dialogue with oneself and other as well and being able, by means of this dialogue, to go beyond bodily conditionings and selfconfidence (and also beyond others' opinions on oneself), so as to see the truth of one and others' soul is not that which Alcibiades is able to do, *but that which Alcibiades should be able to do*. If the eye, to be completely self-reflective, must look not only at the functioning of sight, but at the *region where sight rises, to know truly what one is one cannot only look at dialectic, but understand why and where dialectic rises. What makes dialectic in human life necessary?*

The longing for happiness as the most divine instance of the human soul

Soul must look at that region of itself where wisdom is present, the virtue of the soul, and at something similar to that part¹²³ (καὶ μάλιστα εἰς τοῦτον αὐτῆς τὸν τόπον ἐν ᾧ ἐγγίγνεται ἡ ψυχῆς ἀρετὴ, σοφία, καὶ εἰς ἄλλο ᾧ τοῦτο τυγχάνει ὅμοιον ὄν, 133c7-8). In my opinion those who have attempted to understand what this region

¹²³Scil. The divine itself.

of the soul is have focused only on the cognitive and metaphysical features of it¹²⁴; in my opinion, even if my reading does not rule out the identification of this region with the noetic instance of the soul, it would be useful to highlight *that the closeness to the divine of this region of the soul does not resides only in the way it knows, but also, and maybe above all in that which it longs for*¹²⁵.

In 133c1-2 Socrates asks:

And can we find any part of the soul that we can call more divine than this, which is the seat of knowledge and thought (τῆς ψυχῆς θειότερον ἢ τοῦτο, περὶ ὃ τὸ εἰδέναι τε καὶ φρονεῖν ἐστίν)? (Tr. W. R. M. Lamb).

The translator reads the words περὶ ὃ as indication of a place; however it could be said that περὶ plus accusative indicates vicinity to a place not the staying in it; what is more important, the greek locution περὶ τι εἶναι means also “commit to something”, be concerned with something” and also “be devoted to”. What I would like to suggest is that, to better understand this lines, it would be useful to read περὶ ὃἐστίν as words indicating care and commitment; Accordingly, the most divine in us would be “that, which knowledge and thought are devoted to. In *Symp.*209a-b1 Diotima says:

for there are persons,’ she declared, ‘who in their souls still more than in their bodies conceive those things which are proper for soul to conceive and bring forth; and what are those things? Prudence, and virtue in general; and of these the begetters are all the

¹²⁴ Cf. J. Annas, 1985; D. Johnson, 1999; J. F. Pradeau, 2000; A. Joosse, 2014. For the view that the totality of the divine is the rational structure of the universe Cf. R. S. Bluck, 1953, pp. 46-52; P. M. Clark, 1955, pp. 231-240; C. A. Bos, 1970. For the reading of the self itself as a form/idea of human soul cf. N. Denyer, 2001, pp. 211ff. Cf. Chr. Gill, 2006, p. 349.

¹²⁵ As the myth of the winged chariot shows, not only the white and the black steeds feel emotions, but also the charioteer (the noetic instance) is able to feel fear and desire (*Phaedr.*254b7-d1). This “emotional” side of the highest of the human faculty was appreciated by Olympiodorus (*in Phaed.* XXIX, 13-20), whereas the contemporary scholars mentioned above (cfr. *supra*, n. 124) seem to ignore it and regard the rational faculties of human soul as mere cognitive instances aimed at knowing the truth. Even this is not false, they do not take into consideration that this knowing for truth is an *eros*; the love for truth has an emotional side. To conclude, it can be argued that the difference between the highest instance of human soul and the other ones is not that it is devoid of longings, but that *it does have different longings*. Cf. F. Renaud, 2011, pp. 207-224.

poets and those craftsmen who are styled “inventors.” *Now by far the highest and fairest part of prudence is that which concerns the regulation of cities and habitations; it is called sobriety and justice* (πολὺ δὲ μεγίστη, ἔφη, καὶ καλλίστη τῆς φρονήσεως ἢ περὶ τὰ τῶν πόλεων τε καὶ οἰκήσεων διακόσμησις, ἣ δὴ ὄνομά ἐστι σωφροσύνη τε καὶ δικαιοσύνη (Tr. H. N. Fowler).

The contest from which these lines of the *Symposium* have been issued lets us understand that those who are pregnant in soul beget their “children” in order to be happy, so as to reach the εὐδαιμονία, the perpetual presence of the good in one’s life (207a1-3). As it is clear from these lines, the happiness these poets and craftsmen long for *by means of their wisdom* involves not a good intended as a private possession, *but a good which is a common good*. The happiness of those pregnant in their soul is possible only by benefitting oneself and the others as well. True Happiness involves the love for the true good; namely the common one. In *Gorg.* 467c4-468b8, Socrates argues that all that which one undertakes and does in life is undertaken and done in order to acquire the good, that is to say, in order to be happy. Assuming that the αὐτὸ τὸ αὐτό can be identified with the most divine instance of the human soul and that this αὐτὸ τὸ αὐτό is the unifying core of human life, it could be concluded that this αὐτὸ τὸ αὐτό, this foundation underlying desires, fears and longing for wisdom and knowledges itself is but the divine in us which longs for the εὐδαιμονία¹²⁶. This εὐδαιμονία, as the people pregnant in their soul show, comes from the accomplishment of the common good; the only truthful one. This has been showed also in the section of the *Alcibiades* devoted to the courage

¹²⁶ I read the lines 133c4-6 as alluding to the human intellect as the highest and most divine part of human soul, and in this I follow Olympiodorus’ reading (*in Alc.* 217.17). On the contrary, D. Johnson 1999, basing on the interpretation of the phrase καὶ τις εἰς τοῦτο βλέπων provided by Bos, 1970, p. 114 and Favrelle, 1982, pp. 363-367, states that God, not a god-like instance of soul is human true “self”. However, it may be, this reading is aimed at the mere comprehension of the metaphysical nature of the self and does not take into account the connection between metaphysics and ethics so strong in Plato. Plato’s gods are already happy because of their wisdom. Socrates tells Alcibiades that it is impossible to be happy without σωφροσύνη (134a12); however, if the “highest self” in us is God this means that the true core of ourself is something which does not long for wisdom, since it, as god, is already wise, and does not long for happiness, since, it, as a good, is already happy. In my opinion, Johnson fails to explain in which relationship having God as true self and longing for happiness are.

in battle; in the end it has been established that there is no good thing which harms the person who does it. In the *Gorgias* Socrates' refutations of Polus and Callicles led to an outcome consistent with the idea of the εὐδαιμονία as longing for the common good; that is to say: the person who harms others cannot be happy. This longing for the common good as a source of the true εὐδαιμονία can explain also why this instance of human soul is similar to the Gods.

In the II book of the *Republic* in the famous lines devoted to the τύποι περὶ θεολογίας the gods are said creator of good things, and the evil cannot belong to their nature (II, 379c2-7)¹²⁷. Divine nature knows only the good and being beneficial is inbuilt in it¹²⁸. Gods, as intrinsically beneficial, cannot harm each other, as on the contrary the popular tales say about them¹²⁹. Therefore the divine is a realm of powerful beings intrinsically beneficial, from which the disagreement is excluded; it seems that the Athenian democracy, as kingdom of the διαφορά both with oneself and with others, is the opposite of the divine world. From what it has been said it can be concluded that the most divine region of human soul, its νοῦς¹³⁰, is the αὐτὸ τὸ αὐτό of human life, its self itself, that instance of us which desires the true good so as to be truly happy; a desire foreign to any opposition between individual and common good; a desire which cannot conceive a happiness founded on others' suffering; a desire which gives birth to the longing for wisdom and

¹²⁷ Cf. V. Ilievski, 2014, pp. 20-34.

¹²⁸ A well-known example of the beneficial nature of the divine is what is said about the Craftsman in *Tim.* e1-3, where it said that the craftsman, being good, does not know envy; therefore he wants to make similar to him (make good) what is close to him. Even if one reads the Craftsman as a personification of the active power of the world of the Ideas, nothing changes. Even in this case, and maybe still more, being beneficial is the essential feature of the divine power

¹²⁹The ruling out from the divine realm any trace of disagreement is present also in *Eutyphr.* 7e-8a.

¹³⁰That this instance of the soul is the νοῦς can be inferred from what is said below in the dialogue in 134e6-135a5. Besides, identifying this instance in human soul as νοῦς warrants its being *divine*, since Gods in Plato are *noetic beings*, cf. M. Bordt, 2006; F. Karfik, 2010, pp. 82-97; D. Koch, 2010, pp. 198-212. The presence of the νοῦς as that which in human beings aims at reaching the good is steady in the dialogue of the middle periode and in the later ones; see the chapter on the *Euthydemus*, n. 67.

knowledge, as they rise in order to accomplish this desire¹³¹. Nevertheless this longing for true happiness in human beings is weak and fallible, threatened by innumerable difficulties; sometimes a bad education can bring individuals to lose completely touch with this desire, so that they go as far as to think that, to be happy, one must harm others; sometimes injustices one is victim of are so unbearable as to push them to give up the will to benefit others. Human beings are fragile and fears and yearnings can bring them far from this desire. However for a politician, a royal one, as Socrates wishes Alcibiades to become, the ongoing devotion to this desire is necessary, even if it may involve suffering and the temptation to give it up may not be lacking. However, for a true politician, for one who wants to make better what all human beings in the city share, irrespective of their individual abilities, living according to this desire is necessary. This is the reason why the presence of God in the life of the politician is necessary. It has been said above that the knowing oneself of the *Alcibiades* is not aporetic because in this knowing oneself there are two features that in the Critias' ideal are lacking: 1) an aim, and 2) a model. Socrates pushes Alcibiades to evaluate himself in relation to an aim (becoming the advisor of the Athenians) and a model (the king of Persia, model of politician); σωφροσύνη is the ability, by means of dialectic exchange (with oneself or with others) to know the person one is in a certain moment in relation to one's aim and models, so as to find out the path which brings closer to the person one could become. God in this case plays the same role as the king of Persia. There is an instance in human soul which longs for happiness founded on the common good (this is an aim) and there are the gods which are beneficial by nature and almost "irradiate" a beneficial action, in the same way as the sun its rays. Σωφροσύνη in this case will be the ability to understand what one is like in relation to one's longing for happiness and one's model (the gods). However there is a difference, the king of Persia is a model, but still a human being; Alcibiades could one day become also better than him. On the contrary, God will never be overcome or equalled. God in

¹³¹ The νοῦς is the instance which longs for true happiness and that part of soul which searches for wisdom in order to fulfill this longing. Thus, the νοῦς is the region where wisdom and intelligence rise and that instance whose divine longing for happiness must be fulfilled by wisdom and intelligence, which rise in the νοῦς itself. For the interpretation of the locution περὶ τι εἶναι in 133c1-2, cf. *supra*, p. 216.

the life of a true politician is like a compass which indicates the north the politician always must take into consideration; a north that however he will never reach, irrespective of how close to it he gets. The action of the God, an action beneficial foreign to selfishness, is not a feature a human ruler can acquire, but the north of his lifetime; a north he must avoid deviating from. Accordingly being a (true) politician involves the awareness that there will be always something superior to oneself.

God as a compass

In 133c4-5 Socrates says that this part of human soul is the most similar to God (τῷ θεῷ ἄρα τοῦτ' ἔοικεν αὐτῆς)¹³², and whoever looks at this part and knowing all that is divine, God and thought (θεόν τε καὶ φρόνησιν)¹³³, could know themselves as good as possible (οὕτω καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἂν γνοίη μάλιστα). Some interpreters have been induced by these lines to think that human soul, by looking at its most divine part, can see God in itself so that the deepest root of the human soul is God himself, a root which is the same for all the human souls¹³⁴. The error of this reading consists in my opinion in inferring the knowledge of the God from the looking at the most divine instance of human soul. On the contrary, it would be more reasonable that looking at one's divine desire of happiness and knowing the God be two different operations, albeit deeply interconnected. Indeed in the case of the desire to become a good politician, the king of Persia embodies the final aim of this desire; however the king of Persia is not in one's soul. What truly belongs to soul is the desire to be a good politician, not the model of this desire. Likewise, the deepest root of human

¹³² Cf. *supra*, n. 124.

¹³³ Burnet (1902) replaces θεόν with νοῦν. However this reading, philologically unfounded, does not change the meaning of the lines, considering the intimate connection between divine and noetic in Plato.

¹³⁴ However it are some of the lines considered an interpolation which prevent from this reading. In 133c8-9 Socrates asks Alcibiades if God is brighter and purer than that which is the best in our selves (οὕτω καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοῦ ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ ψυχῇ βελτίστου καθαρώτερόν τε καὶ λαμπρότερον τυγχάνει ὄν;). This suggests that the best in ourselves, albeit god-like, is not god. What is more, Socrates says "looking at god we could use him as a mirror of that which pertains to human soul; thus, we could know ourselves" (133c11-13, translation is mine). If the core of our "self" were god, we could not use god as a mirror of our soul..

soul is longing for being *like the gods, not being actually God*. And Gods are obviously the model of the human divine longing for happiness, a north that, as it has been said above, will be never reached. Accordingly, knowing all the divine, (not only the divine in us, but also the divine itself) in the reading I have suggested means knowing that gods are intrinsically beneficial and beyond any kind of disagreement. Besides, since the deepest root of human nature is the desire to be truly happy, the divine realm is a compass for this desire; a compass through which one understands if one truly lives according to this divine desire. This vision of the divine not only as a mirror into which one must mirror oneself, but also as *a compass of human life (and first of all, of the life of the ruler)* is somehow suggested by some of the lines as a late addition to the dialogue. In c8-9, it is said that the God is purer and brighter than what is the best in our selves (καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοῦ ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ ψυχῇ βελτίστου καθαρώτερόν τε καὶ λαμπρότερον τυγχάνει ὄν). This is perfectly consistent with that which has been argued thus far. The God possesses those features (happiness and beneficial nature) that the divine desire of human soul longs for without being able to possess them as the God does; this is the reason why it is brighter than what is the best in human soul; our best part longs for light, whereas the God is the source of the light; God is not only a compass, but also lighthouse. In 133c12-14 Socrates says:

By looking at the God we could draw upon it as a mirror of human things in relation to virtue (καλλίστῳ ἐνόπτῳ χρῶμεθ' ἂν καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων εἰς τὴν ψυχῆς ἀρετὴν), and in this way we could see and know ourselves as good as possible¹³⁵.

Although the God is compared to a mirror, what emerges in these lines is the observed function of compass. Thanks to the immutable, beneficial and happy nature of the God, one can draw upon it in order to understand how to live according to one's desire for true happiness, so as to improve one's soul. Being able to resort to divine realm as the compass of one's life is a necessary feature for the politician who, as in the case of the king of Persia, can rule because of his closeness to the gods; however, once again, closeness, does not mean sameness; the royal, priestly politician will never be able to equal the God, and what makes him different from the other men is that he *actively commits to the loyalty to his divine longing for true*

¹³⁵ Cfr. *supra*, note 134.

happiness, not that he can go beyond the human difficulties involved in the living according to it. This politician servant of the gods, albeit godlike, is not god.

The presence of the Divine and the dialectic

Given that God is the compass of the human soul, not the human soul, it is easier to understand which relationship exists between the dialectic and the God. First of all, it is necessary to establish as foundation of the reasoning that, from a Socratic point of view the contrast between believing in Gods and resorting to dialectic examination is completely meaningless; and this is well showed by Socrates life itself. On Apollo's behalf Socrates attempts, by means of the dialectic refutations, to make Charmides and Alcibiades desire to cultivate σωφροσύνη; on Apollo's behalf he remains loyal until death to the dialectic examination, so that it can be said that in Socrates' life, the believing in Gods is not the denial of the dialectic reasoning, but its very foundation. As a compass indicating the north, divine nature helps the sailing through life. Sometimes our ship can deviate from the course because of the fog or the violence of the wave; if the dialectic is the ability of the helmsman to correct the path each time, it is thanks to the presence of God (compass and lighthouse) that this correcting is possible. Without something one could draw on as able to make life truly worth living, dialectic could go astray in the sea of life, and in the worst case, degenerate into a useless destruction of others' speeches, practiced only in order to win at all costs¹³⁶. The most important benefit of having divine nature as a model for self-improvement is that this can help us improve ourselves when people around us are not able to do it. This is the case showed in the dialogue: except for Socrates, Alcibiades has never had in his life someone interested in helping him becoming better; actually he has known only people who have fueled his narcissism. Σωφροσύνη is, as I have tried to show also in the *Charmides*, a social virtue, based on the practice of self-knowledge through dialectic exchange with the others. But what happens when people around us are unable to help us become better? Sometimes it does happen, and this is the reason why in this dialogue Alcibiades can come to see himself *only through Socratic*

¹³⁶Cfr. *supra*, pp. 45-51.

refutations. This hints at the elitist aspect of the ideal of care emerging in this dialogue as in other dialogues whose authorship is undisputed; an elitist trait which no attempt to democratize the ideal of care can cancel: the truth about ourselves does not come from the dialogue with the others, but from the dialogue with *some others*. This is the reason why the presence of God is necessary, when the dialogue with the others is impossible; having as model of behavior and action the beneficial and intrinsically happy nature of Gods helps us keep alive the dialogue with ourselves in order to understand what we are and what we could be in relation to that model. Having the divine nature as lighthouse and compass of the navigation through the sea of life, helps keep alive the longing for true happiness, even when people around us are interested neither in helping us become better, nor in becoming better themselves. This is the pinnacle of the initiatory transformation Alcibiades must undergo to become a true politician: the transformation from a boy who resorts to the inadequacy of the Athenian politicians to justify his claim to be able to rule *to a man who draws on the north indicated by Gods in order to become better, even if people around him cannot help him*.

*After the merge, the aggregation*¹³⁷; from the heights of the divine realm into the city anew

The divine nature, as the model of our divine desire for true happiness, is the compass of σωφροσύνη as *agathopraxia*; indeed if the divine nature is the model of what we really are (our desire of true happiness), by knowing ourselves in relation to this model, we would know also what is truly good for us. Given that, Socrates recalls that it had been established that some people know themselves, some the things of themselves and some the things pertaining to the things of themselves (133d8-10). However, as the human longing for true good (the common good) and true happiness is what unifies the entire life, it follows that knowing oneself as longing or happiness involves knowing every other aspect of one's life, so that it

¹³⁷ From now on it is described how a true politician will act in the city. After the separation from the community, Alcibiades should to the city so that he, once become close and loyal to his divine desire of happiness, can attempt to let the divine light enter the city.

will be task of the same τέχνη, namely σωφροσύνη and of the same man (the royal politician) to know oneself, the things of oneself and the thing pertaining to the things of oneself (133e1-2). If a person ignored the things of himself, he or she would ignore also the things of the others, and as a consequence, the things of the cities; consequently such a person could not be a true politician (133e4-10). This ignorance leads to make mistakes which will harm both oneself and others (134a1-5). This mistake due to the ignorance of oneself, and the subsequent ignorance of what one should do, will cause the ignorant rulers and those ruled by them to be unhappy (134a6-10). Without virtue, cities cannot be happy, because it is not in walls, in warship or in size that happiness resides¹³⁸. The true ruler of the other human beings must be virtuous (σώφρων one could say, considering the political relevance of this virtue in this dialogue); only in this way he can impart virtue also to his citizens (134a1-6)¹³⁹;

Thanks to the closeness to gods and to the divine desire to be happy letting his citizens share in the good, both Alcibiades and the city will act so as to please gods (θεοφιλῶς, 134d1); and by looking at the gods they will know themselves and what is good for them (4-5). The presence of divine nature as compass of political action makes possible to understand how the knowing oneself leads not only to *oikeiopraxis* but also to *agathopraxis*, since both are but two sides of a coin; indeed if knowing oneself is knowing that the deepest root of our soul is the divine longing for true happiness by making others share in the good, and this longing has the gods themselves as its compass, this means that human beings (and the politician in particular) do what they have to do (*to oikeion*) when they act in order to benefit themselves and others¹⁴⁰. Conversely, if they (the human beings) look at the godless

¹³⁸The same evaluation is to be found in *Gorg.* 519a1-6.

¹³⁹ This does not mean that Alcibiades' task as a ruler is make citizens able to rule on their own. It only means that he must rule in such a way as to create a community as similar as possible to the divine realm, that is to say, a community where people benefit each other and disagreement and struggle for power are ruled out.

¹⁴⁰ This divine longing, albeit present in everyone, does not express itself in only one way. A doctor for instance sees his good in helping people heal; a good helmsman sees his good in others' safety during the travel. However human beings are sick only sometimes and travel only sometimes, whereas they always belong to a community. The politician (always the royal one) benefits human

and the dark (εἰς τὸ ἄθεον καὶ σκοτεινὸν βλέποντες 134e4), they will act ignoring themselves and, as a consequence, what is truly good for them. Harmful is the action of the those who has the liberty to do what he wants, but is mindless (νοῦν δὲ μὴ ἔχῃ, 134e6)¹⁴¹; they would be similar to a sick man, who, albeit without a medical mind¹⁴², has the tyrannical power to prevent others from reproaching him (τυραννοῦντι¹⁴³ δὲ ὡς μηδὲν ἐπιπλήττοι τις αὐτῶ, 135a1-2). Likewise, the longing for political power at all costs, without having a political mind, one could add, bring to tyrannical regimes, which is the worst¹⁴⁴. Therefore, before being virtuous, being

beings as belonging to a community, that is to say, *by caring for that feature which they, irrespective of the age, the skills and other differences, keep for their entire lifetime*. The desire of the true politician is the closest to the divine nature, since gods do not benefit human as doctors, helmsmen or musicians, but as belonging to humankind.

¹⁴¹ According to the reading suggested in these pages, these words would be to intend: “without acting in accordance with that instance of human soul which longs for true happiness by means of the common good.

¹⁴² The νοῦν ἰατρικόν of 135a1 is a notion not only technical and theoretical, but also ethical; it is the will to accomplish common goods thanks to the mastery of medicine. Thus, if there were νοῦς πολιτικός in the dialogue (actually it is implicitly present), it would be the will to accomplish common goods by means of σωφροσύνη so as to make one’s community as ordered and well-balanced as possible.

¹⁴³ Cf. E. Bieda, 2016, pp. 149-170. The link between tyrannical attitude and sick body occurs elsewhere. In *Resp.* XI, 579c the tyrant is compared to a sick man facing challenges his body cannot endure. In *Phaedr.*... the lover or Socrates’ first speech presents the typical traits of the tyrant and is said to hate, in the same way as a sick man does, everything which resists him

¹⁴⁴ The tyranny is, as a condition of supreme injustice, the most unhappy state of a human being, since, according to *Resp.* 589e3-4, the most divine part of oneself (τὸ ἑαυτοῦ θεϊότατον) becomes slave of the most *godless* and wrecked one (ὑπὸ τῷ ἀθεωτάτῳ τε καὶ μίαιρωτάτῳ). That in these last lines of the dialogue Socrates stresses the importance of avoiding acquiring tyranny could mean that Socrates already knew that Alcibiades was tempted by this kind of power. If this were the case, the outcome would be quite interesting: a potential king and a potential tyrant live in the same individual. Socrates should be the one who helps him to take the right decision on the person Alcibiades chooses to be. If nothing of Alcibiades were known except for what is said in this dialogue, one would have believed that Alcibiades had chosen to become a royal man.

governed by someone superior is better than to rule, not only for a man, but also for a child¹⁴⁵.

On the daimonic nature of Socratic love: connect human and divine

Alcibiades' ambitions have provided the occasion for his first conversation with Socrates; but only now, at the end of the dialogue, it is possible to understand that Socrates is not interested in supporting Alcibiades' ambitions; what Socrates is trying to do and would have tried to do in the following intercourse with Alcibiades, is to connect Alcibiades *human ambitions* (reputation and political power) to Alcibiades' *divine desire to benefit others and himself so as to reach true happiness*. This divine desire, as said above, is present in everyone, but it is only possible, *not necessary*, that human beings decide to live according to it. This desire to be truly happy is not necessarily the unifying core of human life, and usually human experience is unified not through the longing for what is truly good, but *through the longing for what seems to be good (and often it is not)*. Throughout the dialogue Socrates tries Alcibiades to lay a bridge between *Alcibiades' divine desire* and *his human ambitions*, and in this resides the daemonic nature of this love for Alcibiades. In *Symp.*202e4-5 it is said that the daemonic¹⁴⁶ fills the gap between humans being and gods, so that the whole is connected thanks to the daimonic (ἐν μέσῳ δὲ ὄν ἀμφοτέρων συμπληροῖ, ὥστε τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ αὐτῷ συνδεδέσθαι). Socrates tries to establish this connection between human and divine, not in the universe, as the *daimones* are expected to do, but in an individual, Alcibiades and through

¹⁴⁵ A subtle suggestion to Alcibiades not enter yet Politics and let himself be guided by Socrates. Obviously the entire transformation Alcibiades must undergo in order to become a true politician cannot be achieved in only one encounter. Alcibiades, it goes without saying, has started discovering things about himself he did not know; however this it is not enough yet. To become able to live according to the divine longing for true happiness, so as to let the light coming from the divine world enter the human city, Alcibiades should carry on the intercourses with Socrates, undergo other merciless refutations and, what is the most important thing, he should practice what learns during the intercourses with Socrates, even when Socrates is not with him, what, as it is known from the *Symposium*, Alcibiades always fails to do.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. *infra*, note 147.

individuals, in a city¹⁴⁷. The *daimones* connect humankind and gods; likewise Socrates tries to connect in Alcibiades' soul the *human longing for power* with the *divine desire for the common good and happiness*¹⁴⁸.

Conclusive remarks

Kings and Creators of kings

The dialogue ends with Alcibiades promising to take care for justice from then onward (135a3). However, Socrates' last words let the reader foreshadow that both he and Alcibiades will be subjugated from the power of the city (135a4-5). Only from the athenian history of the Vth century we know that this dialogue, if it ever has taken place, has been a complete failure: Socrates did not manage to initiate Alcibiades into royal politics, and Alcibiades committed several treasons both towards Athen and its own enemies¹⁴⁹. The failure of Alcibiades is easy to understand: since he should have taken care for himself in order to become a true politician, his failure resides in his inability to persist in such commitment, failing to become that kind of politician. What concerns Socrates, his failure could reside in the inability to help Alcibiades become that kind of politician the young man could have become thanks to his natural talent. Now it is possible to answer to the question: What does Socrates gain, or, more exactly, what Socrates would have gained from this dialogue with Alcibiades, if also in the history Alcibiades had committed to become a true (royal) politician? The answer should be: Socrates would have gained self-esteem as able to educate a true politician¹⁵⁰. The care for oneself Socrates and Alcibiades must commit to, although this *care for themselves* take place in the same conversation, is different, because different are the aims of the characters: Alcibiades must care for himself so as to be a true ruler; Socrates

¹⁴⁷ Socrates would be somehow the *daimon* of Athen, he who establishes, or at least tries to do, a bridge between the God (Apollo) and the Athenians. Cfr. *infra*, pp. 227-228.

¹⁴⁸ Socrates' final aim should transform Alcibiades from someone who longs for power as an aim into someone who wants to be happy by accomplishing common goods by means of his political influence. In this way, love for politics is not denied; instead it become a part of a life whose first aim is to fulfill the divine longing for happiness.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. P. J. Rhodes, 2011, pp. 55-71; G. Cornelli, 2015, pp. 1-24.

¹⁵⁰ Cfr. *supra*, pp. 101-103.

instead must take care for himself so as to become a *true initiator of true politicians*. Once again, even if Socrates has claimed to be as needy of care as Alcibiades, all the dialogue implicitly suggests that Socrates is superior to Alcibiades and to all the Athenians. Indeed between Alcibiades and Socrates there is the same relationship as between a professor who tests students and a professor who is so forward in his career as to test those who wants to become professors on their turn. Both Socrates and Alcibiades *care for Politics, but in a different way*; the latter wants to be a ruler, the former wants to be the one who helps talented people become rulers. Coming back to the section on kingship, if Alcibiades must be a royal men, so as to face royal enemies, Socrates plays here a role similar to Zoroaster and Lykurgos, not kings themselves, but the founder of that educational path that the crown princes of their country must necessarily undertake to become kings. Socrates must care himself not to be a ruler, but *the one thanks to whom rulers can rule*.

Σωφροσύνη as apollonian virtue

In the *Cratylus* the name of the God Apollo is connected to simplicity and agreement; he, as a truthful soothsayer, is called ἄπλουν (the simple) by the Thessalians and, as a musician god, he moves the poles together in the sky and presides over the balance among men and gods as well (ἐπιστατεῖ δὲ οὗτος ὁ θεὸς τῇ ἁρμονίᾳ ὁμοπολῶν αὐτὰ πάντα καὶ κατὰ θεοὺς καὶ κατ' ἀνθρώπους 405d2-3)¹⁵¹. Apollo is, according to the etymologies in the *Cratylus*, the god of the agreement, of the harmony and the one who removes the διαφορά. As a consequence, he is also the god of the σωφροσύνη, as it is clear from the *Alcibiades*. The διαφορά, the disagreement with oneself and with others as well, is a condition brought about by the ignorance and, one could add, from the reckless adhesion to any kind of desires; on the contrary, the σωφροσύνη is a virtue which makes agreement and balance possible, not only in human communities, but also in oneself. As a consequence, it is Apollo, the god of the harmony and the removal of the disagreement, the god who exhorts humankind to cultivate σωφροσύνη, that is to say, self-knowledge. The removal of the disagreement hints at an other power of the god, namely the

¹⁵¹ The etymologies of the name of Apollo are relevant not because they are truthful from a scientific point of view, but because through them it is possible to see what philosophy is for Plato and which tasks he assigns to philosophy. Cf. F. Montrasio, 1988, pp. 227-259.

purification. Being able to remove from oneself the disagreement could be painful and bring about great suffering, even so more when this disagreement with oneself is unconscious and maybe it is upon this unconscious disagreement that one's personality is founded, as it is the case for the young Alcibiades. As it is possible to observe in the section devoted to the courage in battle, Alcibiades appears to believe that his own good is the opposite of that of the other people. He wants to rule his citizens because he thinks that he can effortlessly take the better of them. Alcibiades has internalized the *διαφορά* typical of the democratic Athens, that split within the individual and between the individual and other citizens for which political power is not aimed at benefitting others, but at getting the better of the citizens without being harmed by them. If this split, this *διαφορά*, has become the core of Alcibiades' education and the foundation itself of his worldview, removing this split from Alcibiades somehow means killing Alcibiades himself. Undergoing and overcoming the suffering raised by the "death" of the person one thought that one was is a necessary condition to practice *σωφροσύνη*; only those able to face the pain of the destruction of their own certitudes can face and go beyond the disagreement with themselves, so as to reach anew the inner balance. On the contrary those who do not accept to undergo this "death", but try nevertheless to look at themselves, will not see themselves, but only *what they want to see*

Chapter IV: the *Lysis*

Lysis as a dialogue on care

The *Lysis* is usually regarded as an *aporetic* dialogue, in which the interlocutors fail to reach a satisfying conclusion on the subject under examination, that is to say, what is a friend and how one befriends someone else. However, stressing too much the lack of a definition in the dialogue risks preventing from understanding that the *aporia* is not a failure of the dialogue, but an essential step of it; the moment in which the transition from the person one was before talking to Socrates to a new person becomes possible. The *aporia*, the absence of ways out as well as known landmarks¹ is the final outcome of the ritual “assassination” of Socrates’ youngest interlocutors; interlocutors who are in a transitional period of their life, no more children, but not yet men. Becoming adults means overcoming this ritual death provoked by Socrates’ refutations; however going beyond *aporia* does not mean finding an answer at all costs. Believing it means believing that the importance of a dialogue resides in the unmistakable definitions it provides. On the contrary, going beyond the *aporia* is possible not through the acquisition of an intellectual definition, but through the acquisition of an emotional attitude. The young Cleinias promises to commit to wisdom not because Socrates has provided a definition of what is wisdom, but because Socrates has made him desire to be wise. Alcibiades wants to become just so as to be a good politician not because Socrates has provided a definition of justice, but because he has made Alcibiades feel ashamed of his own ignorance, and this shame triggers in him the desire to become better. The young Charmides claims to be willing to undergo other ἐπιφοδαί, Socrates’ spells/refutations which are aimed at provoking in the interlocutors contrasts with the convictions they are *emotionally* bound to. The *aporia* is the outcome of Socrates’ destruction of those opinions rooted in the *emotional core of the interlocutors*; therefore the only way to go beyond the *aporia* is not through the acquisition of a definition which not engages the emotional part of the interlocutor, but through the commitment to go beyond the *aporia itself*. Accordingly, *aporetic* does not mean *unsuccessful*; if one considers that Socrates’ aim is not, or not only, find definitions,

¹ Cf. *supra*, 181-184.

but transform his young interlocutors' attitude towards themselves and others as well, and this by steering their desires towards new aims; if one considers that, a dialogue really fails not when a definition is lacking, but when the interlocutors persists in believing what they want to believe, even if it is false or not as indisputable as it was thought it was. This is the reason why, according to this reading, the *Theaetetus* for instance, an aporetic dialogue, is successful; in fact, Thaetetus has accepted to be refuted and from then on he will be able to beget sounder and better theories than before². Conversely, the conversations with Polus and Callicles are unsuccessful; although Socrates makes his interlocutors assent to his conclusions on gorgian rethoric and the unhappy life rising from fulfilling every desire irrespective of its harmfulness, both Callicles and Polus are not innerly persuaded by Socrates; they are obliged to assent to his reasoning, nevertheless they do not agree in the slightest with Socrates; far from being willing to change their attitude, after the conversation with Socrates they seem even more stubbornly to cling to the opinions they hold to be true. Therefore, if the transformation of interlocutors, not the mere finding of definitions is regarded as an aim, the *Theaetetus*, the aporetic dialogue, is much more successful than the *Gorgias*.

Accordingly, also the *Lysis*, an other aporetic dialogue, is much more successful than it may seem. The relevance of this dialogue rests on Socrates' effort to found a language suitable for speaking about *care*. Although the words ἐπιμέλεια, ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, μελέτη and so on, are lacking, the issue of care for oneself and for others is implicitly present throughout the dialogue. This is particularly appreciable in Socrates' attempt to outline an "intermediate kind", a being which is neither good nor bad, but may become good or bad; in fact it is within such a kind (that of the human beings) that care for oneself and for others is possible, one could dear to say, from an ontological point of view; indeed only a being which can become good, but *is not good in its essence*, can improve itself and be loved by those who want to

² If after this you ever undertake to conceive other thoughts, Theaetetus (ἐὰν τοίνυν ἄλλων μετὰ ταῦτα ἐγκύμων ἐπιχειρῆς γίγνεσθαι), and do conceive, *you will be pregnant with better thoughts than these by reason of the present search* (βελτιόνων ἔση πλήρης διὰ τὴν νῦν ἐξέτασιν), and if you remain barren (κενὸς), you will be less harsh and gentler to your associates, for you will have the wisdom not to think you know that which you do not know (σωφρόνως οὐκ οἰόμενος εἰδέναι ἃ μὴ οἶσθα). (*Theaet.* 210b14-c3, tr. H. N. Fowler).

make it better (as parents do with their children). The foundation of this intermediate realm allows Socrates to make out of the word οἰκεῖος a philosophical term, a liminal concept which alludes to something belonging to the individual without being under its control, something beneficial, close and distant at once. In order to found the intermediate realm of beings neither good nor bad and the idea of an οἰκεῖος intended as something belonging to the individual without being under one's control, Socrates will have to face and go beyond the eristic way of reasoning; that way of reasoning for which all beings are monolythic units separated from each others in an immutable isolation. Only through the destruction of the eristic way (a destruction which, as it will be shown, is eristic on its turn) it will be possible to outline a world of beings which are not good or bad, but can become, the only world in which *caring*, intended as making better (both oneself and others) can make sense. Only in this world the existence is of the οἰκεῖος possible, something which belongs to us, without being completely possessed.

The ritual context

Noteworthy is that the dramatic frame itself hints at the idea of transition and intermediate phases. In fact the dialogue happens during the Anthesteria³, a community festival held during the 11th, 12th and 13th of the month of Anthesterion, a period that marks the end of the winter and the beginning of the spring, a transitional phase in which the beginning of a new year and the renewal of life after the winter was celebrated; it is in this liminal period, which is not the fullness of the spring, but foreshadows it and is no more the sleep of the winter, that the dialogue takes place. On account of the liminal nature of the Anthesteria, between the sunset of the fading winter and the beginning of the rising spring, these days were regarded as a period in which life and death are mixed; souls of the dead and evil spirits roam throughout the city and only in the last day of the festival, named χύτροι, through an offering to Hermes⁴, spirits and souls, that is to say the last remains of the fading year, were thrown out⁵. It is during this festival that Hippothales, lover of the young

³ Cf. J. Goeken, 2013, p. 39; S. Dova, 2020, pp. 113.

⁴ Cf. W. Burkert, 1977, pp. 358-363; H. W. Parke, 1986, pp. 107-124

⁵ Cf. R. Parker, 1996, pp. 39ff.

Lysis, bumps into Socrates outside the walls of the city. Socrates encounters Hippothales and Ctesippus⁶ under the wall (ὕπ' αὐτὸ τὸ τεῖχος) at the little door which leads to the Spring of Panops (κατὰ τὴν πυλίδαν ἢ ἢ Πάνοπος κρήνη)⁷. Walls and doors are liminal entities (doors in particular); they mark both a separation and a connection: there can be doors only between separated rooms, nevertheless it is only through doors that separated rooms are connected. Therefore both the period of the year and the physical place in which Socrates encounters Hippothales and Ctesippus hint at the transition, at a moment in which neither what was before nor what is later exists yet: the Antesteria are the door of the Spring, but not yet the Spring; likewise the door of the spring of Panops leads to it, but is something different from it. Noteworthy is also the destination of Socrates before encountering Hippothales; Socrates says: “I was making my way from the Academy straight to the Lyceum (ἐπορευόμενον μὲν ἐξ Ἀκαδημείας εὐθὺς Λυκείου 203a1). Both Academy and Lyceum were seats of two well-known Gymnasias (the latter established by Pericles himself). During the Anthesteria even slaves and young could participate in the festival, and in this occasion the gymnasias were crowded with handsome boys without their guardians or pedagogues⁸. What is more important, the Lycaeum rose near a shrine devoted to Apollo Lykaios. The connection of the final destination of Socrates' path to Apollo cannot be neglected, even so more if Apollo is the Apollo Lykaios. The epithet Λυκεῖος hints at wolves. Wolf was an animal sacred to Apollo and the god himself was able to transform into a wolf⁹; nevertheless, he was also the god who threw the wolves out and kept them away from herds¹⁰. The epithet Λυκεῖος reminds that the apollonian power is double: he protects wolves (he himself is a wolf) and casts them out; he brings about plagues and purifies¹¹; he

⁶ The character featuring in the *Euthydemus* as the lover of the young Cleinias

⁷ Panops is Hermes as All-seeing.

⁸ The pedagogues of Lysis and Menexenus show up only at the end of the dialogue in order to take home the boys.

⁹ Cf. K. Kerényi, 1939; D. E. Gershenson, 1991, *passim*.

¹⁰ A. Moreau, 1992 p. 198. For witnesses of this “wolfish” nature of Apollo in the tragedy of Vth century b. C. cf. C. F. de Rougin, 1999, pp. 104-112.

¹¹ This destructive feature can be found in *Il.* I, 44-50. In these lines Apollo punishes the Greek army by means of the plague.

heals and destroys¹². Apollonian double power is mirrored by Socrates in his attitude towards eristics: the philosopher masters eristics and is also able to destroy eristics who use eristic method against him. Socrates, as his god, must have a double power: as a good physician is able to heal as well as kill, likewise the philosopher uses the weapons of the enemy much better than the enemies themselves and sometimes against them.

Hippothales invites Socrates to follow him and Ctesippus in a nearby Gymnasium; Hippothales indicates *an enclosure and an open door* (περίβολόν τέ τινα καὶ θύραν ἀνεωγμένην 203b6)¹³. The gymnasium is managed by Mikkos, a friend of Socrates; those indoors, Hippothales explains, are spending their time in speeches (ἢ δὲ διατριβὴ τὰ πολλὰ ἐν λόγοις, 204a4)¹⁴. Socrates then asks Hippothales who among the boys in the Gymnasium seems to him to be the most handsome; Hippothales does not answer and blushes (καὶ ὃς ἐρωτηθεὶς ἠρυθρίασεν, 204b2). Socrates has understood that Hippothales is in love with one of those who are in the Gymnasium; actually, Socrates says, Hippothales is in an advanced state of his love (ἀλλὰ καὶ πόρρω ἤδη εἶ πορευόμενος τοῦ ἔρωτος, 204b6-7). Socrates says that he is bad and useless in everything, except for the question regarding love; he has as a divine gift (τοῦτο δὲ μοί πως ἐκ θεοῦ δέδοται) the ability to recognize quickly a lover and a beloved (ταχὺ οἶω τ' εἶναι γινῶναι ἐρῶντά τε καὶ ἐρώμενον.)¹⁵.

¹² Socrates in the *Cratylus* (405e1-3) mentions an etymology of Apollo according to which the name of the god means “a sort of destruction” (φθοράν τινα). Given that, it can be inferred that according to this etymology the name Apollo originally was ἀπολλύων (present participle of the verb ἀπόλλυμαι); whence Apollo is “the destroyer”. Socrates dismisses this etymology quite quickly, just as the centuries to come, so that Apollo has ended up becoming the god of music, light, reason and so on. However this etymology conveys a not unimportant side of the homeric Apollo. As Kerényi (*cit*) points out, the destructive and “wolfish” features of the gods were worshipped in several regions of the Greek world. Furthermore, the destructive and “wolfish” features of Apollo’s nature characterise also Socrates’ dialectic.

¹³ Περίβολόν and θύραν, as τεῖχος and πυλῖδα mark both separation and connection between two different rooms. Cf. *supra*, p. 232-233.

¹⁴ This is a well-known setting of Socratic dialogue, as already seen in the *Charmides* and the *Euthydemus*: a gymnasium full of handsome boys, where people have agreeable conversations.

¹⁵ This statement must not be underrated; the dialogue ends with Socrates admitting that he does not know how one befriends someone else and which is the very origin of friendship; nevertheless here at the beginning of the dialogue claims to be able to understand quickly who loves and who is

Ctesippus harshly mocks Hippothales' discretion on the identity of his beloved; if Socrates spent little time with Hippothales, he would be tortured by Hippothales, who repeats ongoingly his beloved's name (ἐὰν δ' οὗτος καὶ μικρὸν χρόνον συνδιατρίψῃ σοι, παραταθήσεται ὑπὸ σοῦ ἀκούων θαμὰ λέγοντος, 204c4-5)¹⁶. Hippothales is so obsessed with Lysis, this is the name of the beloved young, that he not only forces his friends to listen to the things about Lysis he says in prose (καταλογάδην, 204d2); he, says Ctesippus, also drowns his friends with writings and poems devoted to Lysis (204d3-4). Finally Hippothales sings about his beloved in an outstanding voice, which Ctesippus and other friends have to bear (ὅτι καὶ ᾄδει εἰς τὰ παιδικὰ φωνῇ θαυμασίᾳ, ἣν ἡμᾶς δεῖ ἀκούοντας ἀνέχεσθαι, 204d4-5)¹⁷. Socrates asks Hippothales to show him a performance like those he submits to his friends, so as to understand if Hippothales knows what he should say of his beloved to the beloved himself and to others (204e8-205a2). Socrates, after an exchange with Ctesippus, explains the sense of his request; he does not want to hear the verses or the songs Hippothales has composed to Lysis; What Socrates wants to hear is their purport (τῆς διανοίας), *so that he can understand how*

loved. *Eros* and *philia*, even is not the same thing, are connected to each other, since both rise from the desire to acquire the οἰκεῖον. In some ways Socrates at the beginning of the dialogue claims to know what he himself admits he ignores at the end. The alternative is: or Socrates does not know which is the origin of friendship and therefore has made a mistake at the beginning of the dialogue; or he knows it and lies at the end, saying that he ignores it. If one considers that in the *Charmides* it has been pointed out that Socrates knows what he pretends to ignore (cf. *supra*, pp. 113-116), it is probable that also in the *Lysis* he already knows what he himself claims to be unable to figure out.

¹⁶ The same mocking attitude Ctesippus shows towards Euthydemus and Dionysodorus; cfr. Chance, 1992, pp. 160-163. In the *Euthydemus* Ctesippus is depicted as a gifted young man (he manages to acquire very quickly the eristic tricks); however he is also disdainful and aggressive. This character seems to be suitable for the eristic.

¹⁷ To describe Hippothales' performances Ctesippus uses the adjectives δεινός and θαυμάσιος, which indicates what is uncommon and seldom; As *vox mediae*, they can mean uncommon in the meaning of "over the average" "outstanding" "skilled" and so on, or in the meaning of what is even inferior to the average, blameworthy and even ridiculous. The text is intentionally ambiguous, and it is quite probable that here Ctesippus is implicitly mocking Hippothales, whereas this mocking attitude becomes explicit below in the dialogue.

*Hippothales behave with his beloved*¹⁸. Hippothales, evidently annoyed by Ctesippus' mocking attitude, lets him answer the question posed by Socrates. Hippothales, explains Ctesippus, is ridiculous; in fact, despite his being an obsessed lover, ongoingly intent on praising his beloved, he has nothing particular to say. Hippothales only says what Athen sings of Democrates, Lysides' father, Lysis, his grandfather, and his ancestors, and even more ancient things (πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ἔτι τούτων κρονικώτερα 205c5-6)¹⁹, like the refuge given to Heracles, because a ancestor of Lysis, owing to his kinship to Heracles, hosted him (205c6-d3). Socrates cannot help but agree with Ctesippus: Hippothales is ridiculous; and the reason is that Hippothales prides himself before winning his victory (205c5-6). Hippothales objects that what he composes and sings is devoted to Lysis, not to himself; nevertheless Socrates points out that all his praises only glorify him as if he had won such a beloved (205e1-4), whereas, if the beloved escapes from him, the greater the praises of his beloved are, the greater are the admirable and good things he seems to have been deprived of. This criticism is essential because it permits to understand the conception of friendship Socrates attempts to outline in the dialogue; in Hippothales' praises Lysis disappears; first of all because he is too young to have accomplished something noteworthy; as a consequence, Hippothales can praise him only by praising the undertakings of Lysis' father and ancestors²⁰. Secondly, Lysis disappears in Hippothales' praises, because Hippothales appears to be interested only in benefitting from Lysis' company, but no concern about what he could do in order to benefit Lysis touches him²¹. Through this first criticism it is possible to see what is lacking in Hippothales' love and what conversely is

¹⁸ ἵνα εἰδῶ τίνα τρόπον προσφέρῃ πρὸς τὰ παιδικά 205b2. Socrates wants to know the δῖα νοῖα to understand the behaviour. Also in the *Charmides* Socrates asks Charmides what makes him behave in a certain way (with modesty): cf. *supra*. 118ff. Once again, observable behavior (the poetic frenzy of Hippothales) has its origin somewhere else, and it is the invisible origin of the observable behavior (the δῖα νοῖα) that matters in the socratic inquiry.

¹⁹ On the rôle of poetry in the *Lysis* cf. G. Osborn 1995. Cf. *infra*, pp. 255ff.

²⁰ As a παῖς (204e6), Lysis' age ranges from 7 to 14 years- cf. M. Bordt, 1998, p. 111, n. 224. Socrates interlocutors, even the youngest, are never as young as Lysis. Socrates youngest interlocutors are always μεῖράκια, boys whose age ranges from 14 to 21 years. It is the μεῖράκιον, not the παῖς, who is in the initiatic phase of the life who leads to the adult age.

²¹ Cf. M. Bordt, *ivi*, pp.116-117.

necessary to a true friendship. Furthermore Hippothales acts as if his own desire were a sufficient reason to obtain Lysis' love. His overstated praises mirror this state of his soul, his *διάνοια*: he thinks-and probably he is not aware thereof, that, to obtain someone's love, the only thing to do is to long for it²²; Besides, the excessive longing for the beloved is dangerous for the lover; indeed it prevents him from seeing who his beloved really is. The praises which Hippothales indirectly (and unconsciously) addresses to himself can lead him to self-deception over himself and his beloved as well²³. Besides, these praises will made the beloved haughty and full of himself (206a2-3). This is relevant because love has a transitive power; the lover who deceives himself sooner or later will make also the beloved deceive himself about himself²⁴; which is the opposite of the effect which the words and song addressed to the beloved must produce; they must *charm* the beloved, not make him unmannerly (καὶ μὲν δὴ λόγοις τε καὶ ᾠδαῖς μὴ κηλεῖν ἀλλ' ἐξαγριαίνειν πολλὴ ἀμουσία)²⁵. Hippothales asks Socrates to advise him on how he could endear himself to Lysis (206c1-2). Socrates offers to show to Hippothales how he should talk to Lysis (ἄ χρὴ αὐτῷ διαλέγεσθαι), instead of what he usually tells and sings (206c3-5). The use of the verb *διαλέγεσθαι* is noteworthy not only because Socrates

²² To some extent he commit the same mistake as Alcibiades, who thinks that the mere longing for power makes deserving of it. Conversely it is not the longing for love, but the ability to benefit others that makes deserving of being loved.

²³ Cf. D. Bolotin, 1979, pp.78-80; F. Trabattoni, 2004, pp. 73-75.

²⁴ If the nature of love is such that the negative features of the lover migrate also into the beloved, it is inferable that a noble and beneficial love/friendship needs *σωφροσύνη*, which prevents from selfdeception on what is good, in this case for the lover and the beloved. The concern for the moral condition of the beloved mirrors the disparity existing in a relationship such as the pederastic love. The lover has an educational task towards the beloved and obviously the lover, as older, will influence the beloved much more than the beloved influence the lover. Cf. Th. Hubbard, 2003, pp. 10-14.

²⁵ Charming, in greek *κηλεῖν* is the effect of the *ἐπιφθαι*, which are the enchantments facilitating the transition from a phase into another. In the chapter on the *Charmides* it has been seen that these enchantments are Socrates' refutations which, leading into the *aporetic death* the interlocutors make possible (even if not necessary) their transformation: cf. *supra*, pp. 27. If in the *Charmides* the enchantments were the refutations, in the *Lysis* the magical part should be the *eristic refutation of the eristic*, as it will be seen below.

intends to have a dialectic exchange based on short questions and answers with Lysis, but also because of the implicit relationship here established between dialectic and friendship. Hippothales wants to become dear (προσφιλής) to Lysis; Socrates is implicitly saying that it is through the διαλέγεσθαι that it is possible to befriend somebody. This is a further feature which a beneficial relationship must have: it must not be based on self-deception, and it must be on the διαλέγεσθαι, not on the poetic and wordy praises, that a sound friendship must be based; while in Hippothales' poetic praises Lysis fades, in the διαλέγεσθαι Lysis appears as an autonomous individual who must answer questions.

Hippothales accepts Socrates' suggestion; they enter Mikkos' gymnasium, where in that moment the Hermea are being celebrated²⁶. Inside some boys are carrying out a sacrifice and the religious ceremonial is almost over (αὐτόθι τεθυκότας τε τοὺς παῖδας καὶ τὰ περὶ τὰ ἱερεῖα σχεδόν τι ἤδη πεποιημένα 204e2-3), while others boys are playing with dices in a corner of the changing room (τοῦ ἀποδυτηρίου ἐν γωνίᾳ) and others stand by looking at them. A Gymnasium, in particular its changing room, as it has been seen, has a great symbolic relevance²⁷; in these places, where boys are naked, Socrates, by means of refutations undresses also their souls²⁸. Furthermore in this Gymnasium a sacrifice has been carried out; to sum up what one thus far has known about this gymnasium, it stands outside the wall of the city, surrounded by a περιβολος and seat of offerings; all these features highlight the holy nature of the setting of the dialogue; a place which is more similar to a shrine than a wrestling school. Lysis, who stands crowned with a garland among other boys, notices Socrates, Hippothales and Ctesippus; he would like to approach them, but he does not know how to do and is afraid to come forward alone (τέως μὲν οὖν ἠπόρει τε καὶ ὄκνει μόνος προσιέναι 207a5). However when also Menexenus turns up and sits down by Ctesippus, even Lysis joins the company²⁹.

²⁶ During the Anthesteria Hermes was worshipped as tutelary deity of the wrestling schools. The celebration of the Hermea within the gymnasium stresses the religious and ritual features of the prologue. Cf. J. Von Heyking, 2013, pp. 132-154.

²⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 63-65

²⁸ Cf. *supra*, p. 119.

²⁹ As correctly assumed by Hippothales, Lysis will approach Socrates as soon as he sees his cousin Menexenus doing the same. The intimacy between Lysis, the beloved of the "poet", and Menexenus,

*Φιλία, σωφροσύνη, ἐπιμέλεια*³⁰

In the religious frame outlined above, the *διαλέγεσθαι* can finally take place. Before addressing Lysis Socrates poses some questions to Menexenus; these lines, albeit being an intermission between the prologue and the dialogue with Lysis, are important for the ideal of friendship Socrates tries to suggest. Besides, Socrates is also attempting to advise Hippothales on how he must behave with his beloved; but alongside it he is also outlining what true friendship needs. Socrates asks Menexenus if he and Lysis disagree on who is the elder and the nobler between them and Menexenus says that they actually disagree (207c1-4). After asking if they disagree on who of them is the more handsome, Socrates poses questions which are rather suggestions to his interlocutors and to Hippothales:

But of course I shall not ask, I said, which of you is the wealthier; for you are friends, are you not? Certainly we are, they replied. And, you know, friends are said to have everything in common (*οὐκοῦν κοινὰ τὰ γε φίλων λέγεται*)³¹, so that here at least there will be no difference between you, if what you say of your friendship is true. They agreed. After that I was proceeding to ask them which was the juster and wiser of the two (*ἐπεχείρουν δὴ μετὰ τοῦτο ἐρωτᾶν ὁπότερος δικαιότερος καὶ σοφότερος αὐτῶν εἶη*), when I was interrupted by somebody who came and fetched away Menexenus, saying that the wrestling-master was calling him (207c7-d2, tr. J. Burnet).

the pupil of the erist Ctesippus, somehow recalls that between Hippothales and Ctesippus themselves. Through the intimacy among these characters Plato hints at the link between the education based on poetry and eristics; as a consequence the refutation of the eristic way involves that of the poetical one.

³⁰ Φιλία, usually translated as friendship, refers to any relationship in which love is involved; as a consequence, not only among friends in the modern meaning, but also between lovers and between parents and son there is Φιλία; cf. F. Dirlmeier, 1931; W. M. Blundell, 1989; D. Konstan, 1993, p. 11; F. J. Gonzalez, 2000, pp. 379-398; R. Jenks, 2005, pp. 65-80.

³¹ According to Diogenes Laertius (VIII, 10) the historian Timaeus of Tauromenius (350-260 b. C.) ascribed this saying to Pythagoras. The saying allude to the lifestyle of pythagorean communities: each of the members shared their wealth with the others. As we will argue below, it can be inferred from this saying that true friendship involves a third element, something third which arises in the relationship between friends: this third, like the *κοινά* of the saying, belongs neither to a friend, nor to the other; it is *something shared by all friends* (like a community) which rises in their relationship and preserves and strengthens the bonds among them.

The first suggestion is that friends must share all, or at least their wealth. The *κοινωνία* of something is the first relevant feature of friendship; a feature which is lacking in Hippothales' poetical obsession for Lysis. As said above, in Hippothales' praises Lysis is absent; what is more, praises are a kind of speech in which *κοινωνία* is lacking; Lysis does not actively participate in these praises, he is the merely passive target of Hippothales' passion. On the contrary, in the dialectic exchange Lysis share in the communication. The socratic *διαλέγεσθαι* has a feature in common with friendship, that is to say the *κοινωνία*; Socrates is stressing the importance of the *κοινωνία* in friendship by means of a kind of communication (the *διαλέγεσθαι*) which is based on the *κοινωνία*. What is said is mirrored by the way in which it is said, so that friendship has its own way of communication³²; and this way is not poetical praises, but the *διαλέγεσθαι*. The second suggestion regards what friendship must concern. The second question Socrates wants to pose to Menexenus, is not a suggestion to Hippothales (Socrates does not pose this question); however it could be a suggestion to the reader who can read it. Contrary to Hippothales' praises, who rises from an obsessed love, in which the danger of selfdeception about oneself and the beloved is real, the socratic *διαλέγεσθαι* is not aimed at flattering the participants, but at understanding if they are just and wise and at persuading to commit to justice and wisdom³³. In the poetical obsession the lover always risks shaping the beloved better than he really is; in the socratic *διαλέγεσθαι*, based on the *κοινωνία*, removing selfdeception is what matters the most, because only in this way one can *actually become better than one is*. Menexenus stands up and goes to Mikkos, who is participating in a ritual (*ἔδόμεν γάρ μοι ἱεροποιῶν τυγχάνειν* 207d3).

The dialogue with Lysis: Parents' φιλία

Socrates addresses Lysis, asking him if their parents love him, that is to say if Lysis is object of his parents' *philia* (ἤ που, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὃ Λύσι, σφόδρα φιλεῖ σε ὁ πατήρ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ;). Since they love their son, they want him to be as happy as

³² Cf. M. Narcy, 1997, pp. 205-218; E. Garver, 2006, pp. 127-146.

³³ Cf. *Ap.* 29c4-30a5.

possible (ὡς εὐδαιμονέστατον)³⁴. Socrates goes on to say that nobody can be happy if they are enslaved and prevented from doing everything they desire (207e2-3); as a consequence, Lysis' parents, loving him and wishing him to be happy, should let him do everything he desires (207e8-9)³⁵. However, Lysis' parents prevent their son from this unrestrained liberty; his father does not let him climb on his chariots and hold the reins when he races; actually he would prevent his son from doing it. Instead he pays an hireling (ἡνίοχος παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μισθὸν φέρων, 208a6), who can do with the horses whatever he wants³⁶. Neither would Lysis be allowed to control the mule-cart and whip the mule; even in this case, there is someone, the muleteer, a slave, who Lysis' father trusts in more than his own son. Lysis cannot even rule himself, as this is the task of his tutor (παιδαγωγός), who takes him to school and controls him; at the school he has his teachers as rulers, so that it seems that Lysis' father has set over his own son numerous masters and rulers. Neither would Lysis' mother allow him to do what he wants with the tools she uses for spinning; if Lysis dared to do it, he would risk being beaten (208d3-e1). Socrates asks Lysis:

Well, what reason can they have for so strangely preventing you from being happy (διακωλύουσιν εὐδαιμόνα εἶναι) and doing what you like? Why do they maintain you

³⁴ This is an other relevant feature of *philia* which obviously does not apply only to the relationship between parent and children: *a true friend must care for his/her friend's happiness*.

³⁵ Doing everything one wants is the conception of happiness defended by Callicles in the *Gorgias* (cf. I. Jordovic, 2019, pp. 105-108). It goes without saying that Socrates does not think that happiness resides in the unrestrained liberty. Happiness, as seen in the chapter on *Charmides* and *Alcibiades* is possible provided that one can accomplish good things, and good things are always *common good*. It is probable that Socrates pretends to adhere to such an idea of happiness because it is the idea of happiness every child in the age of Lysis may have: happiness as unrestrained liberty. Contrary to Th. Becker, 1882, pp. 284-308 ; H. von Arnim, 1914; 1916, pp. 364-387 and Ph. S. Bashor, 1968, pp. 269-280, who regard the lines on parental *philia* as philosophically unimportant, I agree with Bordt and Trabattoni on their relevance. These lines, as it will be clear below, outline the ideal of friendship as a *caring for friends' improvement, so as to help them become happy*.

³⁶ The hireling can do whatever he wants, because he possesses a knowledge suitable for this task. Socrates is outlining the link between happiness and wisdom, as it has already been observed in the *Euthydemus*, *Charmides* and *Alcibiades*. To be happy, one must have a knowledge; having unrestrained liberty on horses without knowing how to ride or steer them does not provide happiness; at most it provides the possibility to harm oneself and the others, and this leads to unhappiness.

all day long in constant servitude to somebody, so that, in a word, you do hardly a single thing that you desire (ἐνὶ λόγῳ ὀλίγου ὧν ἐπιθυμεῖς οὐδὲν ποιοῦντα)? (208e4-6).

Socrates is going on pretending to believe that happiness resides in the fulfilment of every kind of desire. Now Socrates wants to know from Lysis why his parents prevent him from an indiscriminate fulfilment of his desires. As it has been pointed out in the chapter on the *Alcibides*³⁷, the immediate adhesion to one's desires is the condition typical of the childhood, whereas the σωφροσύνη is the ability to evaluate one's desire in relation to what is good (both for oneself and for the others). Preventing one's son, as Lysis parents does, from doing everything he likes helps the child, Lysis in this case, to acquire a σώφρων attitude towards his desires; he internalizes that not all the desires deserve being fulfilled; what is more important, he internalizes that it is not the mere longing for something that makes deserving of acquiring it, contrary to what Hippothales and Lysis may think. This means that longing for something is not enough; one must live up to the desire one has; and the first inescapable condition to live up to one's desires is mastering a skill, the possession of the *know how* in a field. Indeed, Lysis parents, suggests Socrates, prevent him from climbing on chariots, controlling family wealth and even ruling his own body (209a1-3) not because he is still too young, but because he still lacks the skills for doing these things. In certain domains Lysis is free to do what he wants; for instance in writing and reading nobody prevents Lysis from reading or writing what he wants. Likewise, in playing lyra he can tighten and slicken the chords he wants (209b5-6); The freedom which Lysis benefits from in these domains does not depend on his age, but on his mastering them. As a consequence, Lysis' father will entrust his assets to his son not when Lysis will be more aged, but when he will think (φρονεῖν) better than his own father; likewise, also the Athenians entrust their business to Lysis when they notice that he is sufficiently intelligent³⁸.

³⁷ Cf. *supra*, 171; 181-184.

³⁸ T. C. Lockwood, 2017, pp. 319-332. Socrates' reasoning has here a political bearing. And it could not be otherwise. As offspring of one of the most wealthy and influent families of Athen, Lysis is supposed to enter politics when he will be older. Anyway the same reasoning applies to this field. To be happy, that is to say successful as a politician, one has to possess the technical skills allowing

Accordingly, even the Great King of the Persian would ever dream of doing what he does not know, nor would he allow his heir to do. As a consequence, if the King needed a doctor for his son's eyes, he would call a doctor, that is to say an expert, and he would refrain from doing anything³⁹. Thus Socrates can conclude:

The case then, my dear Lysis, I said, stands thus: with regard to matters in which we become intelligent (ἂν φρόνιμοι γενώμεθα), every one will entrust us with them, whether Greeks or foreigners, men or women and in such matters *we shall do as we please, and nobody will care to obstruct us. Nay, not only shall we ourselves be free and have control of others in these affairs* (ποιήσομέν τε ἐν τούτοις ὅτι ἂν βουλώμεθα, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἡμᾶς ἐκὼν εἶναι ἐμποδιεῖ, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ τε ἐλεύθεροι ἐσόμεθα ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἄλλων ἄρχοντες), but they will also belong to us, since we shall derive advantage from them; whereas in all those for which we have failed to acquire intelligence (εἰς ἃ δ' ἂν νοῦν μὴ κτησώμεθα), so far will anyone be from permitting us to deal with them as we think fit, that everybody will do his utmost to obstruct us; not merely strangers, but father and mother and any more intimate person than they; and we on our part shall be subject to others in such matters, which will be no concern of ours, since we shall draw no advantage from them (αὐτοὶ τε ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐσόμεθα ἄλλων ὑπήκοοι, καὶ ἡμῖν ἔσται ἀλλότριά). (210a9-c3, tr. W.R.m. Lamb).

To be free to do what one wants, one must be expert in that field in which one wants to act; however the mere technical expertise is not enough, as it is clear from the aforementioned lines. Socrates uses the adjective φρόνιμος to indicate the person who acts according to a technical skill and the verb φρονεῖν to indicate the skilled

them to be a good ruler for his citizens (about war, economics and so on). Only who has these skills can take good decisions, whereas who acts without knowing what to do is doomed to fail.

³⁹ In the *Alcibiades* the Persian king, owing to his education, is the closest man to the divine realm. In the *Charmides* Zalmoxis, the physician who teaches his followers to make people immortal, is named by the Thracian teller "our king" (ἡμέτερος βασιλεύς, cf. *supra*, pp. 109-110). In these lines of the *Lysis* the great king is depicted as a σώφρων man; a man who, despite his limitless power, knows that there are things that he does not know and therefore refrains from doing them so as not to damage neither himself nor others (his own son in this case). Besides, as a σώφρων father, the Persian king prevents also his son from doing what is not able to do. As Socrates in the *Alcibiades* has pointed at the great King as a model to follow (cf. *supra*, 188ff.), likewise he is representing the relation between the King and the crown prince as a sound relationship between father and son. The presence of the great King in this dialogue proves how relevant the issue of the kingship was for Plato and one does need to read *Republic* to find Plato's praises of kingship.

acting.; it is nonetheless implicit that the skilled acting of the expert is aimed at benefitting other people. The skilled acting is always aimed at a benefit; otherwise it would be harmful. Then Socrates adds that everyone will prevent Lysis from doing that in which he has not acquired *voũς* (210b4-5). The *voũς*, the ingelligence proper of the *φρόνιμος*, indicates the complete mastery of an art, but not only that; As it has been seen⁴⁰, the *voũς* is the skilled intelligence aimed at the accomplishment of good things; as a consequence, the theoretical side of this faculty cannot be detached from the ethical one; this intelligence is both ethical and theoretical; actually it can accomplish the noblest moral aims thanks to the mastery of a skill⁴¹. Therefore, the *voũς* is not a vague will to benefit devoid of the technical tools, nor a mere instrumental intelligence indifferent to what is good or bad, but an intelligence endowed with theoretical knowledges aimed at the accomplishment of the moral good; in fact the technical skill indifferent to the good is harmful, while good intentions without knowing are powerless⁴². It is only through the acquisition of this kind of understanding, both theoretical and practical that one becomes really free to do what one wants. This is another relevant feature that Socrates ascribes to Lysis' parents' *philia* towards his son; Lysis parents want that their son acquires *voũς*. Hippothales' love for Lysis is instead based on Hippothales' *ἐπιθυμία*; *Hippothales only desires that Lysis reciprocate his love, whereas he is not concerned with his moral education.* The *philia* of Lysis' father points at the future; a future in which his son Lysis is a *φρόνιμος* adult, able to act according to his *voũς*; whereas Hippothales' love is aimed at being immediately reciprocated by his beloved, irrespective of whether he becomes a good or a bad man. To sum up, it can be said that Lysis *philia* for his own son is based on the *ἐπιμέλεια* as intended in the *Alcibiades*; Democrates wants to make his son better; actually he wants to make his

⁴⁰ Cf. Chapter I, note 63; Chapter III, note 130.

⁴¹ The same meaning has *voũς* in *Charm.* 154c.6, 160d6, 166e2; *Euthyd.* 272d8, 273b6, 281b7, 283a2; *Gorg.* 465a5, 466e9-10, 498a3; *Men.* 88B5-6; cf. R. Radice, 2003, p. 632).

⁴² In Plato's middle dialogue the *voũς* becomes that eye of the soul able to grasp the true and eternal being (*scil.* The Ideas); Cf. M. Bordt, 2006, pp. 238-251; A. Mason, 2013, pp. 201-228. However, the connection of the *voũς* to the moral good is present also in dialogue where there is not yet track of the theory of the Ideas. Therefore it is in my opinion relevant to take into account that platonic *voũς* is a kind of intelligence both theoretical and practical even in the early dialogue.

own son better even than himself, whereas in Hippothales praises there is no track of concern with the improvement of Lysis; actually, as said before, in Hippothales' praises Lysis disappears⁴³, whereas in his father's *philia* Lysis is always present as the only thing to care for. These features of Hippothales' love and Democrates' *philia* for Lysis do not allow to regard the former as "selfish" and the latter as "selfless" in the meaning usually ascribed to these words. Indeed Socrates adds:

Socrates: « Then will anyone count us his friends or have any affection for us in those matters for which we are useless (ἄρ' οὖν τῶ φίλοι ἐσόμεθα καί τις ἡμᾶς φιλήσει ἐν τούτοις, ἐν οἷς ἂν ὄμεν ἀνωφελεῖς)? ». « Surely not », he [Lysis] said. Socrates: « So now, you see, your father does not love you, nor does anyone love anyone else, so far as one is useless (νῦν ἄρα οὐδὲ σὲ ὁ πατήρ οὐδὲ ἄλλος ἄλλον οὐδένα φιλεῖ, καθ' ὅσον ἂν ἢ ἄχρηστος) ». « Apparently not », he said. Socrates: « Then if you can become wise, my boy, everybody will be your friend, every one will be intimate with you, since you will be useful and good; otherwise, no one at all, not your father, nor your mother, nor your intimate connections, will be your friends (εἰ δὲ μή, σοὶ οὔτε ἄλλος οὐδεὶς οὔτε ὁ πατήρ φίλος ἔσται οὔτε ἡ μήτηρ οὔτε οἱ οἰκεῖοι) » (210c5-d3).

It could seem that in these lines Socrates is outlining a merely utilitarian ideal of friendship, based only on the benefit one can draw from others' skills⁴⁴. Although the issue of the usefulness of the friend is unmistakably present in the dialogue with Lysis, Socrates cannot be liable to such a criticism for several reasons. First of all, the Socratic *ὠφέλιμον* is something wider than what is intended nowadays by this word. Nowadays usefulness is first at foremost what pertains to biological survival and financial wellness; therefore according to this conception of the useful, invading a country to plunder resources is useful, even if not good. For Socrates useful is what makes our life beautiful and worthy; according to this meaning of useful, dying for rescuing comrades in battle is more useful than living as a coward, since that courageous act, even if bringing the biological life to the end, has made one's life

⁴³ Cf. *supra*, p. 236-237.

⁴⁴ This is the reading provided by G. Vlastos, 1981, pp. 3-34;

beautiful and worthy⁴⁵. For contemporaries, as well as for Alcibiades and Meno, something can be beautiful and not good (useful)⁴⁶. For Socrates this is impossible. Therefore when he says that Lysis will be loved as long as he is useful, one has to intend these words in this way: “Lysis will be loved as long as he is able to make people’s life beautiful and worthliving. But to be able to do it, one has to commit to the acquisition of the *voũς*, the skilled intelligence aimed at the accomplishment of good things. Secondly, one has to keep in mind that in every kind of *philia* it is always present the interest for the personal advantage, but in a different way from the mere selfish interest. Lysis’ father for instance knows that when his son will have the suitable skills for managing his assets, he will benefit from his son’s skills; however it is not only for this reason that he educates his son. If Lysis becomes a *φρόνιμος* adult, not only his father, but also his citizens will benefit from it; and what is more important, Lysis himself. as a *φρόνιμος*, will be able to benefit himself. Lysis would become a man appreciated by his citizens and, one day, a good father for his own children. Therefore Lysis’ father does not educate his son *only for himself, but also for himself*. Instead In Hippothales’ passion the immediate fulfilment of desires is the only thing that matters. As a consequence the difference between Hippothales’ passion and Democrates’ *philia* is not that Hippothales’ passion is self-*interested* and Democrates’ *philia* is self-*less*; the true difference is that when one loves in a wrong way, as Hippothales does, the contradiction between selfishness and selflessness rises, because lovers desires are at odds with the wellness of the beloved; on the contrary, when one’s *philia* is sound, that is to say aimed at the improvement of the *philos*, as that of Democrates is, there is no contradiction between self-interest and other’s good⁴⁷. The third point,

⁴⁵ This conception of the “useful” necessarily involves the concern with one’s death, that is to say “how it is more useful to die so as to make my life beautiful and worthy”. We come back to this issue in the chapter on the *Crito*.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Alc. I*, 115a7-12. Cf. *supra*, pp. 172ff.

⁴⁷ This involves that in order to appreciate Socrates character in Plato’s dialogue and also in other works, one must accept that Socrates is presented as someone who believes that there is a sound, even *objective* way to love and that the legitimacy of our love is based on what we do to improve the life of the beloved people, not on our good intentions. Contrary to the modern morals, which ascribes great role to the intention, Socrates seems to say: “intentions does not metter if they are not supported by the intelligence to realise them and there is only a correct way to love another human

maybe, not so evident in these lines, but nevertheless present, is that Democrates, making Lysis better through the education he provides to him, he makes better also himself; that is to say makes better himself as a parent. The *philia* between Lysis and Democrates is a relationship based on *caring*. Democrates cares for Lysis because he cares for Lysis' improvement. But, as it has been said, in this relationship the care for others cannot be detached from the care for oneself: the doctor, improving patients' health, improves also himself as a professional and gains self-esteem and right love for himself from the benefits he brings to his patients; in the same way Democrates, by caring for the improvement of his own son, improves also himself as a parent and gains from his son successes self-esteem and right love for himself from the benefits he has brought to his son⁴⁸. In the relationship between parents and children, as in every *philia*, the *philo*i benefit from the same relationship in a different way, in this case Democrates as a parent and Lysis as a son. Each of them is benefitted in a different way; accordingly, one can give a new meaning to the words κοινὰ τὰ γε φίλων uttered by Socrates in 207c9. The first and most important thing which friends have in common is the ἀγαθον, *the good they want to achieve*. This ἀγαθον is a κοινόν for them not because it is the same for both, but because they need each other to achieve it: thanks to Democrates Lysis can become a good citizen, a man able to care for others, his own family and the affairs of the city; on the other hand only by benefitting Lysis Democrates can reach his own ἀγαθον, that is to say being a good father, proud of himself insofar as he is proud of his son. However if their good is a κοινόν, so that Lysis' good cannot be detached from Democrates' good and viceversa, it means that also their εὐδαιμωνία, which is always based on the ἀγαθον⁴⁹, is a κοινόν. As a consequence the happiness of Democrates and that of Lysis cannot be detached from each other; *philia* involves

being". Anyway, instead of trying at all costs to find in Socrates resemblances to the modern way of reasoning, it could be useful to ascribe more importance to what differentiates him from us.

⁴⁸ This is the egocentric side, one could say, of the socratic idea of happiness. One is really happy and loves rightly oneself, not when others are happy, *but when others are happy thanks to oneself*, and this is quite easy to understand: parents are happy when they can rightly regard themselves as creators of the happiness of their children. No parent would be happy knowing that the happiness of their children is to ascribe to other people but not to themselves.

⁴⁹ Once again happiness is based on a good which is common.

that one's happiness needs other's happiness: thus if a *philos* is unhappy, the other *philos*, to be really happy, must help the other become happy. If one (in this case Hippothales) is so engrossed with one's own longing as to neglect the others' (in this case Lysis) happiness, one is not a *philos*, and such a relationship is not *philia*.

*The eristic distraction of the Eristics*⁵⁰

In the meanwhile also Menexenus has come back and sits down by Lysis (211a1-3). Lysis asks Socrates to repeat to Menexenus what he has been saying to him; instead Socrates exhorts Lysis to say to Menexenus on his own. Lysis must try, says Socrates, to recollect (*ἀπομνημονεῦσαι*)⁵¹ their dialogue and tell Menexenus the whole of it clearly (*ἵνα τούτῳ σαφῶς πάντα εἴπῃς*). Anyway Lysis asks Socrates to talk also to Menexenus until it is time to go back home (211b2-3). Socrates claims to be ready to talk also to Menexenus and ironically begs Lysis to help him, since Menexenus is *ἐριστικός*; obviously Socrates' attitude is ironical for two reasons: first of all, Socrates does not need help to face eristic speeches⁵²; secondly it is Socrates himself who will use an eristic way of reasoning. Thus Socrates is going to start his *διαλέγεσθαι*, this time with Menexenus. After a short exchange with Ctesippus, of whom Menexenus is said to be a pupil (211c4-5), the dialogue between Socrates and Menexenus can start. Socrates tells Menexenus that there is a possession he longs for from his childhood (*τυγχάνω γὰρ ἐκ παιδὸς ἐπιθυμῶν κτήματός του*, 211d6). Some long for horses, some for dogs, some for gold and others for honours,

⁵⁰ I follow those who think that the Socrates of the following lines deliberately draws on eristic strategies: J. Annas, 1977, p. 53; H. G. Gadamer, 1985, pp. 171-186 (For the reading according to which Plato himself is confused in these lines cf. D. B. Robinson, 1986, p. 71; D. Konstan, 1997, p. 30; M. Nichols, 2006, pp. 1-19; 2009, pp. 169-170). However, Socrates uses the eristic way of reasoning in order to show that the eristic approach to *φιλία* is doomed to fail: cf. *infra*, pp. 253-255.

⁵¹ The exhortation to repeat the dialectic exchange could be a further hint at the pythagorean, who were used to practice mnemonic exercises, such as repeat mentally the events of the preceding days before getting out of the bad (Iambl. *V. Pyth.*, 164-166). Reinforce memory had not only a cognitive value, but also a moral and metaphysical significance (thanks to his prodigious memory Pythagoras could remember even his own previous lives): cf. Chr. Riedweg, 2002, pp. 62-67. Anyway, Socrates seems to be interested in familiarising Lysis with a way to use memory quite different from the antiquarian display which Hippothales makes in his praises of Lysis (Cf. *supra*, note 43).

⁵² Cf. *supra*, pp. 87-96.

but what Socrates longs for the most in the world is a good friend (211e1-3), and he would rather a good friend than dogs, horses, and even all Darius' gold, so fond he is of his comrades (οὕτως ἐγὼ φιλέταιρός τίς εἰμι 211e6). Menexenus and Lysis are so young and already appear to have obtained this possession; Menexenus is a good friend to Lysis and viceversa, whereas Socrates is so far from this possession that he does not even know how a person becomes friend of another (ἐγὼ δὲ οὕτω πόρρω εἰμι τοῦ κτήματος, ὅστε οὐδ' ὄντινα τρόπον γίγνεται φίλος ἕτερος ἐτέρου οἶδα 212a3-4)⁵³. Therefore he must ask Menexenus about that, for Menexenus is an expert (already having a good friend). Actually Socrates is far from being as ignorant on friendship as he claims to be: Socrates has implicitly suggested that 1) friends must share something; 2) that *philos* cares for the improvement of the other and 3) as inferable from 1), a friend, to be happy, needs that his/her friend be happy. This shows, at least, that Socrates knows how a friend must act toward friends. However here Socrates' focus seems to have been shifted to another issue; the point is no more how one must act towards one's own friend so as to prove to be a good friend; from now on the question is: what in human nature explains the origin of friendship? It is in order to answer this question that Socrates throughout the dialogue will go as far to outline the humankind as an intermediate kind between the good and the bad as well as a *πρῶτον φιλόν*, which is what makes *philon* every other thing in one life. To achieve these goals, Socrates will have in advance to get rid of every false approach to the issue of friendship; and the first false approach to eliminate is the eristic way. Interestingly, Socrates himself uses the eristic way of reasoning, but only to destroy it from the inside. Socrates intentionally uses the eristic way of reasoning, so as to demonstrate how inadequate it is⁵⁴. The eristic way is inadequate because it is based on a binary logic according to which something cannot be two things at once. According to this logic, *philos* is only who loves or who is loved and the very possibility that *philos* is *what loves and is loved*

⁵³ It is hard to understand how from the actual lack of a good friend in Socrates' life should logically follow that he does not know in what way people becomes friend. My suggestion is that through this not so sound consecutive clause Socrates wants to appear completely ignorant to Menexenus, so as to increase his selfconfidence. In this way Menexenus, made overconfident by Socrates himself, will be defenseless to Socrates' eristic reasoning

⁵⁴This is also the reading provided by M. Bordt, 1998, pp. 149-151.

disappears, so that the idea itself of reciprocity ends up becoming impossible. Given that, Socrates asks Menexenus, when someone loves someone else (ἐπειδάν τις τινα φιλή, 212a6): “who becomes φίλος of whom, the loving of the loved, the loved of the loving, or is there no difference” (212b1-2). I have not translated the word φίλος, since Socrates, using in these lines the eristic way of reasoning, intentionally draws upon the ambiguity of the greek word, which means both “friend” as subject of friendship, and “dear to”, as target of the friendship; Socrates will use the word in a meaning or in the other to refute Menexenus⁵⁵. Menexenus answers that there is no difference⁵⁶. Then Socrates asks:

„How is that?“ I [Socrate] said; „do you mean that both become friends mutually, when there is only one loving the other (ἀμφοτέροι ἄρα ἀλλήλων φίλοι γίνονται, ἐὰν μόνος ὁ ἕτερος τὸν ἕτερον φιλή)?“. „Yes, I think so“, he [Lysis] replied. (212b4-5).

Then Socrates points out that sometimes the loving may not be reciprocated by the loved (212b7). Actually, sometimes it is possible that the lover be hated by the beloved, as it happens to some lovers who think that they are not loved in return from they beloved, whereas some others think they are hated (212c1-2)⁵⁷. In this kind of relationship only one loves, while the other is loved (ὁ μὲν φιλεῖ, ὁ δὲ φιλεῖται c4). Then Socrates rephrases his question: “who is then φίλος of whom, the loving of the beloved, even if he is not loved in return or is even hated (ἐάντε καὶ ἀντιφιλήται ἐάντε καὶ μισῆται c6-7), or the loved of the loving, or in this case neither of them is φίλος of the other, if both do not love eachother?”. Menexenus agrees with Socrates. Friendship, to be friendship, must be mutual. However from the eristic section it will be clear that in the eristic way of reasoning, based on a binary logic in which there is no middle ground between contrary alternatives,

⁵⁵ The same use of the ambiguity of a word is made by Euthydemus and Dionysodorus when they alternatively use the verbe μαθάνειν in the meaning of “learning” and in the meaning of “understanding”. Cf. *supra*, pp. 59-63.

⁵⁶ Bordt thinks that, by saying “there is no difference”, Menexenus means saying that there is no difference because in any case friendship is reciprocal. However Menexenus says below that it is enough that only one love so that there can be friendship.

⁵⁷In the greek text of these lines the lover is ἐραστής and the beloved is τὰ παιδικά. Here Socrates is depicting the relationship existing between Hippothales and Lysis, in which the lover (Hippothales) loves The beloved (Lysis), while the beloved does not love him in return or even hates him.

mutuality is impossible. Anyway, it is clear that this time Socrates has used φίλος in the meaning of “who loves”; indeed, only thus can be true that: “when not both are φίλοι, neither are φίλος. However if it is clear that who does not love in return is not φίλος in this meaning, how could who loves not be φίλος? The answer could be that some lovers, as Hippothales, do not know and are not interested in knowing if the beloved is good and how can become good; they only care about fulfilling their desires, not for the beloved as autonomous person. In Hippothales’ love as in his praises Lysis is absent. To some extent, this kind of φίλος is not φίλος; he does not love a person, but his desire fulfilled by that person⁵⁸. Therefore Socrates can conclude that “for the loving nothing is φίλον unless it (the φίλον) loves it (the loving) in return⁵⁹” (212d5). Given that thus far Socrates has used the adjective in the meaning of “who loves”, this conclusion necessarily sounds tautological; it would be: “the loving has nothing which loves it, unless something loves it in return”. Then Socrates switches the meaning without letting Menexenus noticing it, and this time he uses φίλος in the meaning of “loved, dear to”. If the φίλος, to be φίλος, must be loved in return, there are no horse-lovers (φιλίπποι), no quail-lovers (φιλόρτυγες), no wine-lovers (φιλοίνοι), no sport-lovers (φιλογυμνασταί) and no lovers of wisdom (φιλόσοφοι), because all of them love something which does not love them in return⁶⁰. Accordingly, Socrates goes on, The poet who says: *Happy is*

⁵⁸ Furthermore friendship, both between parents and children and among peers, must be based on the κοινά, on something shared; in a relationship in which even the love is not equally shared, the foundation itself of friendship is lacking

⁵⁹ In this line Socrates uses the neutral: “οὐδὲν μὴ οὐκ ἀντιφιλοῦν”; this switch allows to shift from interpersonal relationships to the *philia* towards animals or inanimate things.

⁶⁰ Obviously Plato knew that there is a difference between friendship among people and enthusiasm for inanimate things. Trabattini, 2004, pp. 99-101 suggests that in this lines Plato juxtaposes friendship between people and love for inanimate things to bring to light the common feature of this two kind of *philia*: Indeed both in the love for people and in love for inanimate things or animals what is common is that the lover needs the loved (person, animal, or inanimate thing) as something good for his/her life. Actually in the love for inanimate thing this need is more perceptible than in the love for people. Inanimate things are unable to reciprocate love: therefore the lover of this thing notices the desire and the need more strongly than the lover who is loved in return by friends. This makes arguable the statement that in *Lysis* Plato is dealing not only with human friendship, but with

that to whom children are φίλοι and trampling horses, scent-snuffing dogs, and the foreign guest⁶¹. The ambiguity intentionally used by Socrates goes on: according to what Socrates himself has stated, children, guests, horses and dogs cannot be all of them φίλοι in the meaning of “loving”, for only guests and children can reciprocate love, while dogs and horses cannot. However all of them can be φίλοι in the other meaning; that is to say in the meaning of “loved, dear to”. Menexenus agrees with the poet⁶², and the only way to accept that children, guests, dogs and horses can be φίλοι is by switching the meaning of the word φίλον; no more “lover” or “fond of”, but “loved” and “dear to”. Accordingly Socrates states: it is the loved (τὸ φιλούμενον) φίλον to the loving (τῷ φιλοῦντι), whether it loves or hates (ἐάντε φιλήῃ ἐάντε καὶ μισῇ) (212e7-8). Even in this case mutuality can be lacking or even hate can rise; for instance, the new-born children are not yet able to love in return, whereas some children can hate their parents when they are punished by them and nevertheless they are φίλτατα to their parents (213a1-2). According to this reasoning the φίλος is not who loves (ὁ φιλοῦν), but who is loved (φιλούμενος); as a consequence, Socrates infers, the ἐχθρός is not who hates (μισῶν), but who is hated (μισούμενος)⁶³. Consequently it will follow that lots of people are loved by their ἐχθροί and others are hated by the φίλοι if the φίλον is what is loved and not

the *philia* intended as universal attraction, of which the human *philia* is a kind. Cf. N. Reshtoko, 1997, pp.15-16; D. Wolfsdorf, 2007, pp. 235-238,.

⁶¹ That is to say Solon (XXI. 2). Mentioning poetical verses is an important part of Socrates’ strategy. As it will be clearer below, not only eristic, but even the education based on poetry is regarded as inadequate to understand friendship. Eristic and poetry are to some extent connected. Therefore, to comprehend friendship, Socrates must undertake also the dismissal of the poetical way of approaching the issue.

⁶² The trustworthiness of the verses is for Menexenus out of question; that a character, named ἐριστικός, trusts verses of a poet so much stresses that connection between eristics and poetry implicitly mirrored by the intimacy between Hippothales and Ctesippus

⁶³ Ἐχθρός, as φίλος, has two meanings; it can mean both “hating” and “hated”. This is the second time Socrates resorts to cases of hostility to refute Menexenus. Even in this eristic section correspondence between *the way in which something is said and what is said*. Cf. *supra*, pp. 239-240. In the eristic way of reasoning, which Socrates is intentionally using, the interlocutor is an opponent who must be defeated; furthermore to refute Menexenus, Socrates resorts to the case in which the loved hates the lover. Socrates uses a hostile way of reasoning in his words and *hostility itself* as content of these words.

what loves; Then Socrates concludes: it would be quite unreasonable to be φίλον to the ἐχθρόν and ἐχθρόν to the φίλον (213b1-3). Since Menexenus does not want to accept these consequences rising from admitting that the loved is φίλον⁶⁴, Socrates and Menexenus just have to regard the loving (τὸ φιλοῦν) as φίλον of the loved (τοῦ φιλουμένου, 212b5). Accordingly, the ἐχθρόν is the “hating” not the “hated”. However, even admitting that the loving is φίλον, the reasoning would fall into the same difficulties as before, since even in this case a φίλον could be φίλον of what is not φίλον, or even of what hates it (ἐχθρόν); likewise an ἐχθρόν could be enemy of what is not an enemy, or even of what loves it (212c1-3). The consequence of this eristic reasoning is, as Socrates admits, that neither the loving ones (οἱ φιλοῦντες) will be φίλοι, nor the loved ones (οἱ φιλούμενοι), nor those who are both loving and loved (οἱ φιλοῦντές τε καὶ φιλούμενοι)⁶⁵.

The (intentionally provoked) failure of the eristic way: the lack of κοινά

In the eristic way it is taken for granted that φίλον has to do with some kind of attraction, or because the φίλον feels this attraction or because it is its target. However that the φίλον has to do with attraction is necessarily true; nevertheless it is not enough. In this eristic reasoning the understanding of what the φίλον is lacking; the reasoning aims at discovering who becomes φίλος of whom; but, to do that, one should have to know what φίλος is in advance; that is to say what friendship

⁶⁴ As the case of Hippothales and Lysis shows, it is quite possible that a φίλον be loved by someone detested (ἐχθρόν). Probably, as Bordt, 1998, p. 152 has suggested, admitting such a case is at odds with the traditional moral code according to which one must benefit the friend and harm the enemy. Menexenus has showed blind trust in poetical verses; therefore it is not unreasonable that the respect for the traditional moral code prevent him from accepting the consequences of Socrates’ reasoning. Indeed the case that one loves someone who detests them is something that the aforementioned code cannot contemplate.

⁶⁵ As pointed out by W.R.M. Lamb, Socrates actually does not face this third possibility. We could add that this is hardly fortuitous. Indeed in an eristic reasoning ruled by a binary logic according to which the φίλον can be only what loves or what is loved and each alternative ends up in hostility it is obvious that the possibility that φίλον can be loved and love in return does is ruled out. On the other hand, the lack of a “third way”, the way of mutuality and reciprocal love, is not a mere weakness of the eristic way of thinking, but its very core.

is. Therefore the eristic reasoning is first of all a reasoning without foundation⁶⁶. However, it has been Socrates himself who in the beginning has asked how one becomes friend of another, as if it were already evident what a φίλος is. By omitting to ask Menexenus “what is a friend” or also “what do you think a friend is”, Socrates is preparing the failure of the eristic reasoning from its very beginning. Besides its failure is to ascribe also to another reason. In the dialogue with Lysis something relevant was said by Socrates, namely that: “the things of friends are common”. On the other hand it has been argued that the most important κοινόν is the “good”, or more exactly, the common effort to reach good things so as to be happy⁶⁷. Democrates educates his son Lysis so as to make a φρόνιμος man out of him also in order to benefit from his son’s skills, but not only and not primarily for that. If Lysis becomes φρόνιμος, he will be φρόνιμος also after Democrates’ death, that is to say, when he will no more be able to benefit from Lysis’ skills. Moreover, Democrates educates his son so that the others (his citizens) can love Lysis; Democrates does not care only for his financial interest, because his happiness as a father resides in that his son may be loved not only by him, but also by anyone else. In this kind of relationship there are some κοινά, because the happiness of Democrates is bound to the that of Lysis. On the contrary, in the eristic reasoning performed by Socrates the κοινά are lacking⁶⁸: the φίλος loves without being loved or is loved without loving; mutuality is absent. On the other hand, it is the lack of κοινά that makes mutuality impossible; Lysis can care for his father happiness (by being a good son) because he may perceive that Democrates cares for his happiness (by educating him so as to make him a useful and loved man). Democrates and

⁶⁶ The eristic reasoning does not comply with the *Priority of the Definition principle*. However adjusting to this principle does not involve that the one must know what x is even before starting the dialogue, cf. P. Geach, 1966; 1972, p. 33 ; H. H. Benson, 1990, pp. 128-158. The principle means that every reasoning must be based on a foundation, that is to say on the explanation of what x is or what t is thought or said that it is. This foundation is a necessary, not sufficient condition of a reasoning. This means that it can be corrected or eliminated; nevertheless it is necessary so that a reasoning can reach a conclusion, even a false one. A reasoning devoid of foundation, even a provisional one, does not reach false conclusions, it only ends up being impossible. Cf. V. Karasmanis, 2006, pp. 129-141.

⁶⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 247-248.

⁶⁸ Cf. H. J. Curzer, 2014, pp. 352-368.

Lysis share a bond which the happiness of the one indispensable to that of the other; this is impossible in the eristic way of reasoning. However, this is not a failure, but one of the greatest triumphs of Socrates; from the beginning of the dialogue with Menexenus, the philosopher, by acting like the most expert of the erist, has pursued the failure of his eristic reasoning. By resorting to eristic tricks and eristic way of thinking, he has brought Menexenus into a dual and binary world of conflicts in which a third way (the reciprocal *philia*) is banned once and for all. Socrates, intentionally leading his eristic reasoning to a failure, has implicitly shown that eristics is inadequate to understand *friendship*, because *eristic*, one could conclude, is based on the elimination of mutual relationship. Therefore eristics is bound to fail to reach a theoretical comprehension of friendship; likewise, one could infer, an eristic conduct prevents from *the moral experience of friendship*⁶⁹.

The destruction goes on: the poetical tradition

After the conclusion of the eristic section Menexenus admits: “By Zeus, Socrates, I cannot find my way at all (οὐ πᾶν εὐπορῶ ἔγωγε). At the beginning of the dialogue with Socrates Menexenus thought he was in a state of εὐπορία about how one befriends an other; after the exchange with Socrates, what Menexenus experiences in the lack of way, that is to say, the ἀπορία. This should be the moment in which Menexenus’ certitudes and belief are wiped away, leaving the ground to an *emotional upheaval* and a void of known landmarks⁷⁰. This is the particular emotional and cognitive state to which Socrates leads his interlocutors in order to steer their desires towards new aims, so as to trigger the transition from an old personality into a new one. However, Socrates does not persist in talking to Menexenus and anew addresses Lysis; furthermore Socrates proposes abandoning the way traversed so far (the eristic way of reasoning), because it is too arduous (καὶ γὰρ χαλεπή τίς μοι φαίνεται ὥσπερ ὁδὸς ἢ σκέψις). Instead they, goes on Socrates, should resume the other way, by examining the issue according to the poets⁷¹, since

⁶⁹ It is reasonable to think that Socrates, by making his own eristic reasoning fail, wants to weaken Menexenus’ penchant for eristics. This is probable, even more if considering that Menexenus in 211b6-7 is said to be ἐριστικός

⁷⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 181-184.

⁷¹ Homer and Hesiod

they are “for us like fathers and guides of the wisdom”⁷². The first poetical witnesses that Socrates uses as example of what the great poets said about friendship is a verse of Homer: “the Godness always leads the like to the like” (αἰεὶ τοὶ τὸν ὁμοῖον ἄγει θεὸς ὡς τὸν ὁμοῖον, 214a1)⁷³. According to Homers’ words *philia* is based on likeness, and also in the writings of the wisest man, who are those who talk and write about nature (οἱ περὶ φύσεώς τε καὶ τοῦ ὅλου διαλεγόμενοι καὶ γράφοντες, 214b4-5), Socrates argues, it is possible to find the statement that the like is necessarily φίλος of the like (τὸ ὅμοιον τῷ ὁμοίῳ ἀνάγκη ἀεὶ φίλον εἶναι)⁷⁴. Lysis agrees with this idea; Socrates is skeptical, since at least a half of this statement could be unsound: a wicked man could not be friend of an other wicked man, because he would end up doing injustice; and who does injustice and who suffers it cannot befriend each other (ἀδικοῦντας δὲ καὶ ἀδικουμένους ἀδύνατόν ποῦ φίλους εἶναι, 214c2-3); therefore the half of the thesis of likeness is not true, since the wicked, insofar as wicked, are like (ὅμοιοι) (214c5-6), and nevertheless they cannot be φίλοι to each other⁷⁵. Consequently, the thesis of likeness applies only to good men (τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς): only the good are like and friend to each other. On the contrary the wicked are not like even to themselves, since they are unbalanced and unsteady. Since what is unlike and in disagreement to itself could not become like and friend to anything, it is to conclude, Socrates argues, that the supporter of the

⁷² From the philosophical point of view this is also true in a chronological sense. In fact, as Socrates makes clear in the subsequent lines, the first inquirer of the nature wrote poems in order to develop and justify their doctrines

⁷³ Hom. *Od.* XVII, 218.

⁷⁴ In this lines Socrates is alluding to Empedocles who, according to Aristoteles, belongs to those who order the nature assuming as a principle that the like strive for the like (οἱ δὲ φυσιολόγοι καὶ τὴν ὅλην φύσιν διακοσμοῦσιν ἀρχὴν λαβόντες τὸ τὸ ὅμοιον ἰέναι πρὸς τὸ ὅμοιον, διὸ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς καὶ τὴν κύν’ ἔφη καθῆσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς κεραμῖδος διὰ τὸ ἔχειν πλεῖστον ὅμοιον, *Eu. Eth.* 1235A10-13). The most relevant witnesses of this theory in Empedocles are fragments DK31 B22 ; B62; B107 ;B110; (For the analysis of this fragments, which cannot be faced here, cf. H. Flashar, D. Bremer, G. Rechenauer, 2013, pp. 698-707. That Socrates, in order to highlight the authority of the thesis of *philia* based on likeness alludes to “the wisest man who talk and write about the nature and the whole” seems to corroborate the statement that the *Lysis* is not, or not only, about human friendship, but about *philia* as universal law.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Resp.* I 349b1-d1.

thesis of likeness meant that only the good is friend to the good (ὁ ἀγαθὸς τῷ ἀγαθῷ μόνος μόνῳ φίλος), whereas the wicked never becomes true friend neither of the good nor of the wicked (ὁ δὲ κακὸς οὔτε ἀγαθῷ οὔτε κακῷ οὐδέποτε εἰς ἀληθῆ φιλίαν ἔρχεται. συνδοκεῖ σοι)⁷⁶.

How this conclusion may seem satisfying, something prevents Socrates from completely assenting to it. Indeed Socrates wonders if a like, who is friend of a like inasmuch as he is similar to him, is also useful to him: nothing like could bring any benefit to the like that it could not bring to itself; neither something like could do any harm to its own like which it could not do to himself. Like in this way could not cherish each other because the mutual assistance between them would disappear (μηδεμίαν ἐπικουρίαν ἀλλήλοις ἔχοντα). Since what does not cherish cannot be φίλος, it follows that the like is not φίλος of the like (ἀλλὰ δὴ ὁ μὲν ὅμοιος τῷ ὁμοίῳ οὐ φίλος, 215a6)⁷⁷. Therefore the good should be friend of the good not insofar as

⁷⁶ The same applies to the tyrannical man of the IXth of *Republic*, where it is said that “tyrannical nature never tastes freedom and true friendship (ἐλευθερίας δὲ καὶ φιλίας ἀληθοῦς τυραννικὴ φύσις ἀεὶ ἄγευστος, *Resp.* IX 576a6). The tyrant does not know and will never know true friendship; but this does not involve that he does not have a social life, at least before becoming an actual tyrant. Indeed, he has lot of supporters and is loved by his lovers. However sooner or later he will end up betraying some and killing some others (even his own parents), when he will believe that they are hindrances to the fulfilment of *what he thinks that it is good for him*. Likewise, the wicked of these lines of the *Lysis* may even have numerous superficial acquaintances, and nevertheless no true and lasting friend, because in any case they would end up harming those around him.

⁷⁷ Socrates’ criticism of likeness in these lines does not cast any shadow on the great relevance the idea of likeness as foundation of friendship has in other dialogues (*Leg.* 837a6; *Phaedr.* 240c1-4; *Resp.* I, 329a2-4; *Symp.* 195b5; *Gorg.* 510b4); Cfr. M. Bordt, 1998, pp. 168-170. On the other hand also humans, belonging to the kind of beings intermediate between good and bad, are like insofar as they belong to the same kind; Furthermore two friends are always like to some extent, because they share the concern for the reciprocal happiness. Therefore Socrates in these lines is not criticising likeness itself, but a certain kind of likeness, which is identity rather than likeness. It is clear that people having the same virtues would be useless to each other: a soldier brave in battle does not need a friend who persuade him to act bravely; even so more two friends having the same weaknesses could not help each other; actually they would end up harming each other. If someone got drunk every night and their friend were as addicted to wine as they are, this friend would be unable to help them desist from getting drunk; maybe this friend would encourage them to carry on. But by acting like this, he would not be a true friend, because he harms his friend.

like, but insofar as good. However, by admitting that the good is friend of the goos insofar he is good, other difficulties rise. The good insofar he is good, is self-sufficient (καθ' ὅσον ἀγαθός, κατὰ τοσοῦτον ἱκανὸς ἂν εἴη αὐτῷ; 215a9); as the self sufficient does not need anything, he could not even cherish anything (ὁ δὲ μὴ του δεόμενος οὐδέ τι ἀγαπήνῃ ἄν, 215a13-b1). What does not cherish, argues Socrates, does not love (ὁ δὲ μὴ ἀγαπήνῃ, οὐδ' ἂν φιλοῖ, 215b3); who does not love (ὁ δὲ μὴ φιλοῖ) cannot be φίλος. As in the case of the like, also the good cannot become friend of anyone, since they do not need anyone; but lack of need means lack of friendship, as it is inferable from this lines: as the like does not need his like because it is able to reach the same successes and make the same mistakes on his own, likewise the good, als self-sufficient do not need anyone. Friendship is based on need, that is to say, on a condition of lack; however this does not make friendship something vulgar or merely utilitarian in the modern meaning: one could need a person because that person provides wise advise, or, maybe, speaking with it helps discover things about oneself one did not know, or because its company permits to improve⁷⁸. Need in this case involves everything one is not able to do by oneself; as a consequence needs are not only those pertaining to biological survival or financial wellness. Furthermore there are also noble needs; needs which make praiseworthy those who feel them. Obviously, if one is so good that his life cannot become better and one's ability to do good things is so towering that it cannot be further improved, it is obvious that such an individual would not need any friend, or, if he had friends, their relationship would be such that his friends would be beneficiary of goods they could not reciprocate, even if they wanted⁷⁹. The thesis of likeness seems to be inadequate to explain friendship; conversely it could be that

⁷⁸ This is what Aristides in *Theag.* 130d4-e3 says about Socrates' company.

⁷⁹ Such an asymmetrical relationship there could be only between humans and gods, since gods, who are wise and beneficial, cannot be made better by humans, who worship them (Cf. *Euthypr.* 13c7-8). This asymmetrical relationship is the reason why Aristodemus tells that the δαίμόνιον (what is divine as outcome of divine action) is so magnificent that it does not need to be worshipped by him (Xen. *Mem.* I, IV, X, 1-3). In fact the ἀγαθός outlined by Socrates in the lines of the *Lysis* is so firmly good and self-sufficient as to be more similar to a god than a man. Obviously a man cannot be good in the same way as a good. Even if human being can be good, they are nevertheless good in a human way, that is to say in the way proper of those being which, contrary to the gods are not absolutely and effortlessly good.

it is the opposite of likeness which is the origin of friendship. Socrates says that he heard somebody endorsing this idea (which we call thesis of the opposite), who used Hesiod's words as witness "the potter get mad with the potter, the aoidos with the aoidos and the beggar with the beggar" (καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεῖ κοτέει καὶ ἀοιδὸς ἀοιδῶ καὶ πτωχὸς πτωχῶ, 215c7-d1)⁸⁰; Likest things, says Socrates, must be filled with envy, contention and hostility to each other, whereas the unlikest with friendship; Accordingly the poor is bound to be friendly to the rich and the weak to the stronger for the sake of assistance, as well as the sick to the doctor and everyone who does not know to those who know (καὶ τὸν κάμνοντα τῷ ἱατρῶ, καὶ πάντα δὴ τὸν μὴ εἰδότα ἀγαπᾶν τὸν εἰδότα καὶ φιλεῖν. 215d5-6). The speech of the un-known man mentioned by Socrates goes on in a more dignified way; indeed he goes so far as to state that the thesis of the opposite is a law of nature, since everything longs for its opposite, not for its like (ἐπιθυμεῖν γὰρ τοῦ τοιούτου ἕκαστον, ἀλλ' οὐ τοῦ ὁμοίου, 215e3-4): the dry longs for the wet, the cold for the hot, the bitter for the sweet, the sharp for the blunt, the empty for the fullness and the full for the emptiness. The opposite is nourishment to the opposite (τροφὴν γὰρ εἶναι τὸ ἐναντίον τῷ ἐναντίῳ, 215e6)⁸¹. Socrates seemingly finds this reasoning convincing and well argued, as Menexenus himself acknowledges. Nevertheless also admitting that the longing of the opposite for each other is the root of friendship triggers difficulties; indeed the omniscient men, the ἀντιλογικοί, would point out that the hostility is opposite of the friendship; therefore according to the thesis of the opposite it would follow that the friend is friend to the enemy and the enemy to the friendly (216b4-5)⁸²; the same outcome which Menexenus refused to accept above⁸³. Furthermore, according to the thesis of the opposite, would say the ἀντιλογικοί, the just should be friend to the unjust, the modest to the undisciplined, and the good to the wicked; these would be outcomes of the thesis of the opposite which are at odds

⁸⁰ Hes. *Op.* 25.

⁸¹ These lines recall the well known passage in the *Phaedo* where Socrates explains that everything compares out of its contrary (70d5-71c7). Besides the argument in the *Phaedo* presents a structure similar to that in the lines of the *Lysis* under examination. Also in the *Phaedo* Socrates starts from the situation of human beings to extend the same principle to the everything existing.

⁸² Cf. *supra*, pp. 252-253.

⁸³ Cf. *supra*, note 64.

with what has been established before (for instance that the wicked cannot be friend of anyone and anything. Neither the like is friend to the like nor the opposite to the opposite; as a consequence both thesis fail to grasp friendship (b6-12).

The poetical approach to the issue of friendship: its strengths and its weaknesses.

That Socrates imagines how the ἀντιλογικοί may refute the thesis of the opposite does not involve that Socrates would agree with them or he finds sound such a refutation; it rather means that the poetical approach lay itself open to this kind of criticism, in spite of its undeniable strength. Indeed even if both the thesis of likeness and that of the opposite have been refuted, they nevertheless present numerous interesting starting points for the development of the dialogue. The thesis of the likeness shows that friendship must be founded on something shared by both friends; what Socrates himself has been implicitly upheld throughout the dialogue; however it must be understood what friends must share to be friend and, if κοινά τὰ τῶν φίλων⁸⁴, on which kind of κοινά friendship must be based. Drawing upon the relationship between Democrates and Lysis and on what has been said in the lines on the thesis of likeness, the κοινά must be not qualities shared by both friends, but common aims; if the aim of friendship is happiness and happiness is essentially based on the good, two like sharing the same virtues and the same shortcomings could get along with each other; however, they could not be true friend, because they could not benefit each other: in their virtues they would be useless to each other, while in their shortcomings they would be indulgent to each other. What paradoxically lacks in the *philia* based on likeness is the κοινά, intended as the pursuing of happiness through reciprocal benefit; accordingly, it is not on the mere shared features, but on the shared aims that friendship is based. Also the statement that only the good can be friend is quite important. However the kind of good person Socrates has depicted above seems more similar to a god than a human being⁸⁵. If the concern for the mutual good belongs to the κοινά of friends, it must be true that there is friendship only among good people; but which kind of good people? A good

⁸⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 239-240.

⁸⁵ Cf. *supra*, note 79.

person should benefit its friends and be benefitted by them; accordingly a good person should a person *which strives for the good, not which is good by its own nature*. Indeed if someone were good in the latter way, he would not have even aims, because benefitting others and being happy would not be the outcome of an effort, but the mere externalization of his own nature. Besides, such a being could not share the pursuit of the good with anyone, since it would not need anyone to acquire and do good things.

Also the thesis of the opposite presents several interesting suggestions. First of all, the importance of being useful thanks to one skilled intelligence, as it is inferable from the example of the doctor (215d1) and from the dialectic exchange with Lysis⁸⁶. In the second kind of opposite, the dry and the wet, the sweet and the bitter and so on, an interesting aspect emerges: the terms of this couples are not merely opposite; they are complementary of each other, so that each of them can help the other face its shortcomings; the dry can compensate for the wet and viceversa as well as the bitter for the sweet and so on. This kind of couples of complementary terms do not present the weakness of the thesis of the like because the complementary terms are different, and, when the terms of these couple reach balance, all existing being are benefitted by this harmony between contrary/complementary terms⁸⁷. However, even in the case of the thesis of the opposite the aspect of the κοινά is lacking. It is not clear why the rich should help the poor, or the strong the weak, or why the dry should balance the wet, the bitter the sweet, the cold the hot and so on. The answer could be that, by helping each other, the opposite/complementary friends pursue the κοινά of friendship, that is to say the common pursuit of happiness⁸⁸. However this feature is lacking and,

⁸⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 243-248.

⁸⁷ Making these opposites (cold and warm, bitter and sweet, dry and moist) friend to each other is the task which Eriximachus ascribes to medicine in *Symp.* 186d6-e1. When the balance within these couples fades and an arrogant *Eros* (ὁ μετὰ τῆς ὕβρεως Ἔρως) prevails (*scil.* when an element of the couple becomes so preponderant shake the balance within the couple), every being is harmed by it (188a1-6)

⁸⁸ What concerns cold and warm, dry and moist, bitter and sweet, it is not clear how each of them should befriend its opposite complementary. According to Eriximachus (cf. *supra*, note 87) these elements are unable to befriend their opposite; what makes it possible is *art*. Thus the aforementioned

once again, even the poetical approach, which otherwise has turned out to be so rich in suggestions, fails to highlight the foundation of friendship; namely the pursuit of κοινά. This may be the reason why Socrates, in 213c8, instead of continuing the dialogue with Menexenus, has preferred undertake the examination of the poetical approach to friendship, because both poetry and eristics, how different may be, share the same feature: they fail to find the κοινά of friendship; this is the reason why both in the eristic and poetry friendship is a biunivocal relationship of which one always fails to understand what makes it possible. At the end of the poetical section two things are clear. To explain friendship, the mere presence of two terms (the two friends) is insufficient; the terms must be three: the two friend and the common aim they pursue. This common pursuit, as it has been suggested thus far, is aimed at happiness, and, as evident from the relationship between Democrates and Lysis, the happiness of the one necessarily involves that of the other; happiness is founded on the good, both on the good one receives and that which one does. Therefore φίλος should be a person which can benefit and be benefitted, since, to pursue happiness, one must not only be benefitted, but also be able to benefit in turn. As a consequence, friendship involves that both friends can be benefitted and benefit each other. This means that friends must be good, as said above, *not because they are unchangeably good, but because they long for the happiness which is founded on the common good*. This means also that friendship, as Socrates depicts it, is a relationship founded on *care for oneself and other as well*. If the φίλος is a person whose life can be improved by the benefits coming from its friend, this means that the φίλος can be cared for, that is to say, can be improved, made more able to do good things and benefit from them; on the other and, if the φίλος can also benefit, it means that the φίλος can care for others, that is to say help them improve themselves⁸⁹. This involves that a being capable of care cannot be neither unfallibly

couples of opposite/complementary are led to balance by medicine, in the same way as high and low are led to balance by music (*Symp.* 187b5-c5)

⁸⁹This is the very reason why like in everything cannot give birth to a true friendship. Friends must be different, but in such a way that they can benefit from this differences, An extroverted friend for instance may help his introverted friend be more sociable and the introverted friend may help the extroverted understand that his extroversion is not always a good thing. They help each other to reach a more balanced attitude. In this way they improve each other and care for their shortcomings.

good (otherwise he could not be cared and the good it provides would be effortless) nor irredeemably wicked (otherwise it could neither benefit nor be benefitted). Since friendship involves that one's own happiness needs the happiness of the friend, the friend who cares for the happiness of the other friend is caring also for its own. Therefore caring for others inevitably involves caring for oneself, at least when the relationship is a true *philia*. Neither the eristic way nor the poetical approach contemplate κοινά foundin as a third element which makes friendship possible; as a consequence, they do not even contemplate the necessity of *mutual care underlying friendship*. Therefore the only way out of the *aporetic elimination of both approaches resides in outlining a being which is not infallibly good, but striving for the good; which needs a being as intermediate as it is, so as to reach that good which it could not reach by itself*. Friendship is not a line included between two extremities (the two friends), but a pyramid at the pinnacle of which lies that third element (happiness), the pursuit of which founds friendship as end of all the efforts.

Out of the aporia: the Oracle.

Socrates admits that he himself is dizzy because of the aporia in which the reasoning has fallen (ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι αὐτὸς εἰλιγγιῶ ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ λόγου ἀπορίας (216c5). It can be hardly sufficiently repeated that even in this state of confusion Socrates is not equal to his interlocutors; indeed they undergo the *aporia*, whereas Socrates is the one who has triggered it⁹⁰. This entails that Socrates is never a mere, defenceless victim of the *aporia* he provokes; actually he has also the ability to escape from it. An example of this ability is what he says in 216d4-6:

Then I will be a diviner for once (λέγω τοίνυν ἀπομαντευόμενος), and state that what is neither good nor bad is friendly to what is beautiful and good; and what it is that prompts me to this divination (πρὸς ἃ δὲ λέγων μαντεύομαι), you must now hear. My view is that there are three separate kinds, as it were-the good, the bad, and what is neither good nor bad (τὸ μὲν ἀγαθόν, τὸ δὲ κακόν, τὸ δ' οὔτ' ἀγαθὸν οὔτε κακόν) (216d4-6).

⁹⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 138-139.

The fact that Socrates is presenting his suggestion as the answer of a diviner may indicate that Socrates has revealing something out of his own understanding which other interlocutors would have never been able to infer from the previous reasoning. This is in some way true and in some other false. Probably it is true that Menexenus and Lysis would never have been able to reach such a conclusion on their own; however, this does not mean that Socrates' words do not follow logically from what he has been implicitly suggested thus far. Both in the first dialogue with Lysis and in the section devoted to the examination of the poets Socrates has suggested that the Good and the Wicked are two necessary measures to evaluate friendship; Democrates is friend of Lysis because he by educating his son, benefits him, for he aims at making a good and useful man out of his son. On the contrary, the like cannot be friends because they cannot *benefit each other*. Accordingly, that Socrates resorts to the the ideas of Good and Bad in order to understand friendship is not an abrupt revelation of a diviner, but (at least for the reader) the logical outcome of the previous arguments. This does not mean that the reference to the oracle is unimportant or to take ironically; once again, here Socrates is acting as a servant of Apollo, the God who inspires diviners; as a purifying, Socrates has eliminated the erstic way and the poetical approach (or at least what in this approach is inadequate), because both prevent from a true understanding of friendship; as a diviner, he is suggesting the way out of the void of certitudes left by the elimination of the aforementioned approaches⁹¹.

Socrates goes on: “since neither the good is friend to the good, nor to the wicked, nor is the wicked friend to the good or to the wicked, the only possibility that a thing be friend to something is that this thing is neither good nor bad (216d9-e4). It is excluded that something can be friend to the wicked. According to the previous speech it cannot be even friend to something like, namely something neither good nor bad (οὐκ ἄρα ἔσται τῷ μήτε ἀγαθῷ μήτε κακῷ τὸ τοιοῦτον φίλον οἷον αὐτό, 216e8)⁹². Then Socrates wonders if what has been said can be a sure guide for the

⁹¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 253-263.

⁹² Such a sentence, if isolated by its contest, would even allow to regard the idea of friendship Socrates is outlining, as a mere utilitarian exploitation of things and human beings in order to acquire one's one happiness. This would be a real risk, if one did not take into account that in a true friendship

comprehension of friendship (ἄρ' οὖν καὶ καλῶς, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὃ παῖδες, ὑφηγεῖται ἡμῖν τὸ νῦν λεγόμενον, 217a3)⁹³; Socrates proposes considering the case of a body in a healthy state: such a body need neither medicine or any other benefit (οὐδὲν ἰατρικῆς δεῖται οὐδὲ ὠφελίας 217a4); therefore nobody in a healthy state is friend to a doctor because of health (ὥστε ὑγιαίνων οὐδεὶς ἰατρῷ φίλος διὰ τὴν ὑγίειαν, 5), whereas a suffering man could be friend of the doctor because of his illness (διὰ τὴν νόσον, 217a7)⁹⁴. Since the illness is bad and the medicine beneficial (ὠφέλιμον καὶ ἀγαθόν), and the body, insofar as it is body, is neither good nor bad; accordingly the body it is compelled to accept and love medicine because of the illness it is suffering from; given that, it seems that the neither good nor bad becomes friend of the good because of the presence of the bad (τὸ μήτε κακὸν ἄρα μήτ' ἀγαθὸν φίλον γίγνεται τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ διὰ κακοῦ παρουσίαν, 217b7). It is essential to keep in mind that the neither good nor bad Socrates attempts to outline is not something stationary included between two poles (the good and the bad), but something which can

the happiness of a friend always involves that of the other. If the sentence under examination were read without considering its links to what has preceded it and what follows, one could think that Socrates is saying: “other human are only a middle to reach my happiness”. Actually things are more complex; a friend is not a tool, but a helper. As the dialogue will make clear below, there is no alternative between individual happiness and love for friends. What Socrates attempts to say is not: “I do not love my like (a human as I am) because I love the good”, but: “*I do love my like because it helps me to get closer to the good*).

⁹³ It is not immediately clear if Plato intends here test the oracle itself: “only something neither good nor bad can be friend of something”, or only his last statement: “only the neither good nor bad can be friend to the good. The following lines suggest that Socrates is testing the oracle itself. Testing an oracle is, as we know, perfectly consistent with Socrates character of Plato; however it is useful to remind it, Socrates does not examine the oracle to check if they are true (they, as words of the God Apollo, are necessarily true), but *in which way they are true*. Socrates is not only interpreter of oracles, but of the words of the God in general (the inscription at Delphi for instance). And also in this case, as in the *Charmides* and the *Alcibiades*, The words of the God are not hindrance to the dialectic reasoning, but its very origin. Cfr. McPherran, 1996, pp. 222-240.

⁹⁴ Bortolotti observes that the διὰ in τὴν διὰ ὑγίειαν indicates an aim; therefore the healthy man is not friend to the doctor because he has not health as his aim (since he is already healthy). Instead the διὰ in διὰ τὴν νόσον indicates a cause: the sick man is friend of the doctor because of his illness. Obviously also in the case of the sick man is the longing for health what leads him to the doctor. The illness can become a cause only because it is the desire to be healthy that makes the sick man want to free himself from illness.

fluctuate and get closer or to one of the pole (the good) or to the other (the bad). The example of the body is enlightening: body is not stationary between god and bad; sometimes it gets sick, then it recovers from illness. Moreover it can also become stronger and faster, and thus get even closer to his good (without reaching obviously a state of immutable perfection; even the olympian champions must carry on working out); on the other hand it can also become weaker and weaker (without reaching a state of stationary and immutable deterioration; in this case the body dies). Besides, only a neither good nor bad able to get closer to one or the other of the two poles can be target of someone else's *care*; indeed something stationary between good and bad would be like the absolutely good or the absolutely bad: it would be unchangeable. If it were unchangeable, it would be neither harmed nor benefitted from anything or anyone; as a consequence, even the neither good nor bad could not be friend of anybody. Only by understanding what means that something is neither good nor bad it is possible to comprehend what Socrates is going to say in the following lines. First of all, Socrates states that the neither good nor bad is friend of the good insofar as it is not yet bad; indeed, once become bad, it could no more long for the good and be its friend (οὐ γὰρ δὴ γε κακὸν γεγονὸς ἔτι ἄν τι τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ οὐ ἐπιθυμοῖ καὶ φίλον εἶη) since nothing bad can become friend of the good. This involves that something neither good nor bad can be affected from the bad (as well as from the good, we may assume) in different way, as clarified through the example of the hair dye. If one, Socrates says, tinged Lysis' hair with white lead, hair would appear white, but it would not be truly white (217d1-4). Certainly, the whiteness would be present in it (καὶ μὴν παρείη γ' ἂν αὐταῖς λευκότης, 217d5)⁹⁵; nevertheless the hair would not be white; actually, in spite of the presence of whiteness, the hair is neither white, nor black: indeed, one could

⁹⁵ Some scholars (A. Taylor, 1926; K. Glaser 1935, pp. 47-67; V. Schoplick 1968) argued that behind the use of the substantive *παρουσία* and the verb *παρεῖναι* hides a still incipient theory of Forms (this may be suggested also by the use of an abstract substantive, *λευκότης*, to mean a quality. The distinction between two ways in which something can be present in something else is undoubtedly a relevant moment of Socrates' reasoning; however this does not authorize to assume that in these lines Plato is outlining a theory of Forms, and even admitting that Plato, when wrote *Lysis*, had already thought of it, this does not mean that Plato intend to focus on the Forms in the *Lysis* (G. Vlastos 1981; M. Bordt 1998).

add, if Lysis removed the white lead with water, his hair would turn out to be blond. On the contrary, if the hair were white because of the old age, hair would be made white because of present of white (λευκοῦ παρουσία λευκαί); but this time the white could not be removed from the hair by means of water. Likewise, also what is neither good nor bad is affected by the bad (and by the good) in different way, and this is consistent with the dynamic and unsteady position of such a being between the good and the bad⁹⁶. Let us come back to the example of the body; if one gets drunk just a night in a year, the amount of alcohol has affected his liver only in a superficial way and will be soon removed from the body. Instead if one gets drunk every day, he could irredeemably harm his liver, so as to risk dying. On the other hand the same applies to the good: not working out only a day in a year, but the ongoing commitment to the improvement of the body can make it stronger. The importance of the commitment recalls something present in the example of the white hair: time. The white hair of the old age cannot be undone because aging, as a process unfolding over the years, has made that white immutable. Likewise it is only the ongoing getting drunk that irredeemably harms the liver. Aging and ongoingly getting drunk obviously are different processes: aging is unavoidable, getting drunk is not; nevertheless they share a feature: they unfold over the time until they irreversibly affect the body. This means that what really changes the neither good nor bad is not the isolated good or bad action, but the persistence in a certain behaviour over the time. Accordingly if the neither good nor bad has been only superficially affected by the bad, it can still desire to heal from it, whereas something whose persistence in the bad has lasted too much can also lose its ability to desire the good⁹⁷. The philosopher is an enlightening example of what is neither

⁹⁶ Indeed if the neither good nor bad could be affected by the bad or the good only in a superficial way or only in a definitive way, it would be immutable to some extent: in the former case if the good or the bad it can reach would be a superficial one and would be removed (as the white lead from Lysis' hair). In the second case it would become irredeemably bad or immutably good immediately. Both in one case and in the other the neither good nor bad would lose its dynamic nature and be frozen in the same immutable position between good and bad.

⁹⁷ If the neither good nor bad loses the ability to desire the good, it will not desire the bad (what is impossible), but *what it thinks that is good*. Indeed what makes the Tyrant of the *Republic* and the unrestrained man of Callicles in the *Gorgias* so dangerous to the others and themselves as well is not that they pursue the bad, but that they pursue *what it seems to them to be the good*. Their good

good nor bad: wisdom indeed as something indoubtedly good, cannot be searched by those who are already good; on the other hand even those who are so ignorant as to be wicked cannot pursue wisdom⁹⁸. The only one who can do it is someone who is somehow affected by this evil, namely ignorance, but not in such a way as to have become reckless and stupid (μήπω δὲ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ὄντες ἀγνώμονες μηδὲ ἀμαθεῖς); someone who still thinks that *they do not know what they do not know*)⁹⁹. Accordingly only those who are neither good nor bad pursue wisdom, while the good and the evil do not. Lysis and Menexenus are both satisfied with Socrates' reasoning, so that he can proudly conclude: "we have found what is the friend and what is not. We state that: in the soul, in the body and everywhere (καὶ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα καὶ πανταχοῦ)¹⁰⁰, the neither good nor bad is friend of the good because of the presence of the evil (218c1-2). However the satisfaction with this conclusion will not last, and already few lines below Socrates confesses that

only accidentally matches that of the others' around them, but as soon as they think that what is good to themselves is at odds with what is good to that of someone else, they will not hesitate to steal, torture and kill them, for in their whay of thinking their own happiness does not need that of the other; actually they rather think that their happiness needs others' suffering. These man lose the ability to desire the good, because the good is always common. If someone is convinced that their good needs others' pain, from Socrates point of view, they do not desire what is truly good, but only an illusion to which they stubbornly cling.

⁹⁸ Cf. *Symp.* 203d8-a7.

⁹⁹ The ability to know its own ignornce is a fueture of the σοφροσύνη, the ability to know oneself in relation to the evil one must avoid and the good one can pursue. Therefore the philosopher is first of all a σόφρων, someone who is able to know their shortcomings and orrect them, whitout ever reach perfection. T is the steady practice of σοφροσύνη that discriminates the philosopher from the other human being. Both philosophers and the others are, as man, neither god nor bad (in the dynamic meaning explained above; however others human may also ignore they intermediate condition, whereas philosophers not only share this condition with their like, but they also *know that they are in this intermediate condition*. This is the reason why Critias for instance goes so far as to think that the ruler can decide what is good, whereas Socrates suggests that although one gest always closer to the good, one will never be able to remove from oneself imperfection once and for all.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *supra*, note 74. The adverb πανταχοῦ in Socrates' conclusion seems to support the idea that the *philia* of the *Lysis* is not a mere human phenomenon, but a more wider and universal law of attraction. Cf. O. Keiser, 1980, pp. 193-218.

has wormed its way in him the suspicion that what they have agreed on is not true (218c5-6).

The πρῶτον φίλον

Socrates does not explain the reason of his dissatisfaction with what has been said thus far. What can be argued is that he does not doubt that only the neither good nor bad can be friend to the good, but that the neither good nor bad is friend to the good only because of the presence of the evil. It has been said above that both the eristic way and the poetical approach have failed because in both of them the κοινά are lacking; according to these two approaches friendship is only something existing between two people, while any third element is lacking; on the other hand it is the existence of a third element (the common pursuit of happiness) which makes mutuality possible. Without a third element the connection between two people would be impossible¹⁰¹. Obviously this third element, the κοινά of friendship, has to be something *truly good and beneficial*; hardly Socrates would claim that two people who share the common goal to kill thousands of innocents are true friends. In the previous lines Socrates has been stressing the state of lack typical of friendship (in the example of the sick man and the doctor for instance). This feature of friendship is undoubtedly necessary, and even Socrates has pointed out that people who does not need each other in anything hardly can become friends. However only stressing the lacking state of the neither good nor bad is not sufficient to understand why it is the only being capable of friendship. Friendship has κοινά, that is to say its own aims; what it is still lacking in the previous lines is the focus *on the final aim of friendship; that third element which is neither one friend or the other, but which explains their mutual need and love*. It is the shift of the focus to the final cause of friendship that makes Socrates ask if friend is friend *because of nothing and for the sake of nothing or because of something and for the sake of something* (πότερον οὐκ οὐδενὸς ἔνεκα καὶ δι' οὐδέν, ἢ ἔνεκά του καὶ διὰ τι, 218d8)¹⁰²; the

¹⁰¹ This is the reason for which the reading according to which the πρῶτον φίλον is a person (Cf. H. J. Curzer, 2014). The πρῶτον φίλον must be something which brings the two friends together, not one of them

¹⁰² The presence of the evil can be a reason for friendship only inasmuch one is still able to desire the good; that is to say, when one is able to see what is evil in oneself so as to eliminate it. On the

aim for the sake of which a friend is friend must be “friend” on its turn¹⁰³. Accordingly the sick man is friend of the doctor not only because of his illness, which is an evil, but more exactly: *because of illness for the sake of health, which is a good*. The medicine itself, which the body needs to, is not a good in itself, but because of the health; it is because of health that medicine is friend (ἔνεκα δὲ τῆς ὑγείας τὴν φιλίαν ἢ ἰατρικὴ ἀνήρηται, ἢ δὲ ὑγίεια ἀγαθόν, 219a2-3). As a consequence the neither good nor bad is friend of the good *because of the evil and hostile for the sake of the good and “friend”* (219b1-2). These lines mark an important step in the dialogue; indeed, by saying that “*the friend is friend of friend because of the evil for the sake of friend*”, Socrates explicitly states that there must be a *third element*, an aim, which can found friendship. Previously Socrates said that the sick man is friend of the doctor because of the medicine. However, this was not yet enough to escape once and for all from the mere biunivocal relationship; the medicine is the skill of the doctor and therefore it cannot be regarded as a third element external to the couple and able to find their connection. In the case of the relationship between patient and doctor this third element can be only health, which brings them together, because it is different from both: from the patient because he lacks it; from the doctor because his art, the medicine, is aimed at providing health, but it is not itself the health. Furthermore, health is the aim of the friendship between patient and doctor, but once health is regained, according to the previous reasoning, also friendship should end; obviously one could say, the doctor and the healed patient may carry on being friend; however, their friendship in this case should be founded on something different than the pursuit of health. Socrates seems to be not

contrary for someone who is no more able to desire the true good (cf. *supra*, p. 267), the presence of the evil could not be a reason for desiring the good, because in this case someone affected in such a way by the evil, would be unable also to see the evil in itself. Therefore the presence of the evil can be a cause only insofar one desires the *true good*. Using the words of the *Phaedo*, it could be said that the deep reason of friendship is the longing for the happiness, which is founded on the true good, while the presence of the evil is that *whithout which the cause could not be cause* (99b2-4).

¹⁰³ Here Plato is not using the adjective φίλος ambiguously; it would be the case, if he used the adjective both in the active and in the passive meaning in order to speak of the same thing; but now Plato is focusing on the aim of friendship, and this aim can be φίλον in a passive meaning. Therefore if the friend is φίλος in an active way because longs for the good, it is necessary that the aim of friendship, as good, is φίλον in a passive way, because it is loved by the friend

yet satisfied and suggests that health itself is φίλον for the sake of something else (one may say: for the sake of the things one can do when one is health and illness prevents from doing). However, since also the advantages of health are pursued for the sake of something else, to avoid the *regressum ad infinitum*, it is necessary to come to a principle (ἀφικέσθαι ἐπί τινα ἀρχήν, 219c11), which is “friend” not because of something else, but is the “first friend” (πρῶτον φίλον) “for the sake of which we say that all the other things are friend”¹⁰⁴. The πρῶτον φίλον has been interpreted in different way and a detailed comparison of all the readings would deserve an entire chapter. Anyway, in my opinion the most reasonable reading is that according to which the πρῶτον φίλον is happiness¹⁰⁵, and several reasons make

¹⁰⁴ Some scholars (G. E. M. Ascombe, 1958, p. 1-19; T. Irwin 1977, pp. 15; J. Annas, 1977, pp. 532-554) have stated that the the idea that the action and longings must culminate in only one point is sophistic and present a fallacious move. On the other hand, if this were the case, also *Gorg.* 467c-468e3 and *Symp.* 204e5-207a4 should be regarded as fallacious move and in general every passage in the dialogues in which Socrates commit to a prioritisation of human actions and desires for the sake of a final aim (happiness in the case of *Lysis*). That even from the early dialogues Plato has his Socrates commit to the construction of a pyramid, not only of the human aims, but also, and deeply connected to that of the aims, of human knowledges, is something that cannot be denied, and, what is more, that cannot be regarded as a fallacious move without admitting that the attempt of christian philosophy to outline a pyramid at the pinnacle of which there is only one being are sophistic and fallacious (Cf. M. Narcy, 2000, pp. 192-193). Even admitting that Socrates in the *Lysis* (and in the *Euthydemus* as well) support “a multicomponent” conception of the happiness (G. Vlastos, 1991, p. 232), according to which happiness needs also health and wealth (not only wisdom), the happiness as final aim would be in any case one. Wether one needs several goods to be happy or the only wisdom, the happiness is in any case one. In both cases we always have a pyramid; if Vlastos is right, a pyramid a little bit broader in the proximity of the pinnacle.

¹⁰⁵ I follow T. Irwin, 1986, pp. 85-112 and A. W. Price, 1989. K. Glaser, 1935; P. N. Levin, 1971, pp. 247-248; H. Peters, 2001 state that the πρῶτον φίλον is to identify with the Form of Good (*contra* G. Vlastos, 1973, pp. 6-11, who states that the *proton philon* is the loved individual). The features which suggest that it is a form is that it must be an ἀρχή (219c10); every other thing is φίλον because of this πρῶτον φίλον (220e1-4); however, also the longing for happiness has a hierarchising nature-cfr. *infra*, note 107. What is more, the πρῶτον φίλον is not that because of which (*di'ho* would be in greek), but that *for the sake of which* (*henekh'hou*) *phila* are *phila*. This means that the several *phila* are *phila* not because they origin from the *philia* itself (a Form), *but because they help get closer to the πρῶτον φίλον*. This is essential since platonic Ideas are not final causes, at least not like the πρῶτον φίλον; for instance, the Horse itself is that because of which, *not that for the sake of*

this reading arguable. First of all, what is said in the first dialectic exchange with Lysis, where the only, tangible example of successful *philia* features: that between Lysis and his parents. In 207e5-6 Socrates says that if Lysis' parents love him (love is φιλεῖν) and desire him to be happy, then they will desire that he is as happy as possible. Then Socrates attempts to convince Lysis that happiness does not rest on doing what one likes, but what is beneficial according to σοφία¹⁰⁶. In any case, the protasis of the aforementioned lines are essential; indeed the καί between “εἴ σε φιλεῖ ὁ πατήρ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ” and “εὐδαίμονά σε ἐπιθυμοῦσι γενέσθαι” appears to mark a hendiadys, as if the core itself of the φιλεῖν resided in the longing for the happiness of the beloved friend. This is the reason why Lysis' parents prevent their son from doing what he likes and attempt to educate him so as to make out of him a φρόνιμος man, a man whose wisdom makes him friend (dear) to his citizens¹⁰⁷. Furthermore, this πρῶτον φίλον should be something the longing for which can arrange into a hierarchy any other human commitment and undertaking, in the same way as a father whose son has drunk the hemlock will regard as friend the wine which can save his son, as well as the vase containing the wine (219e1-3). Obviously this father regards as “friend” the wine, the vase and the goblet itself from which

which horses are horses. Further more are to reject those readings according to which the πρῶτον φίλον is the quality of goodness present in anything people desire (cf. L. Versenyi 1975, pp. 185-198; D. B. Robinson, 1986, pp. 63-83; F. J. Gonzalez, 1995, pp. 69-90; N. Reshtoko, 1997, 1-18). In this case the πρῶτον φίλον would be a feature of the loved thing, something which the loved thing does not strive for; once again, the πρῶτον φίλον would be not something which brings together the two friends, but something which moves only one of them.

¹⁰⁶ For wisdom as πρῶτον φίλον cf. V. Schoplick, 1968; C. H. Kahn, 1997.

¹⁰⁷ From the lines of the dialogue with Lysis is inferable that wisdom itself is what makes happiness possible. Therefore it does not seem arguable the reading of those who regard wisdom as the πρῶτον φίλον. This follows from the analogy with the relationship between patient and doctor, when Socrates says that medicine is friend because of the health it is able to provide. If the wisdom were the πρῶτον φίλον, also medicine should be “friend” because of itself, not because of something else; what Socrates explicitly denies. Accordingly wisdom will be friend only insofar it makes possible to be happy. This obviously does not mean that wisdom is a means among the other to reach and preserve happiness; actually wisdom is the most important one and the only one which can make other things beneficial and useful. Nevertheless, how irreplaceable it may be, wisdom *serve the purpose of making happy*. Therefore, in the pyramid Socrates is outlining, wisdom certainly will occupy the last step before the pinnacle, but in any case *not the pinnacle*.

his son must drink not because of themselves, but because of the only “friend” thing for the sake of which the aforementioned thing become “friend”, namely the life of his son. This father has arranged into a hierarchy of means every other things in relation to the life of his son. Likewise the *πρῶτον φίλον* must be something the longing for which can create a pyramid of the other desires of human life; and the only longing with such a hierarchising power is the longing for happiness¹⁰⁸. Moreover, it is the analogy itself with health that suggests that the *πρῶτον φίλον* is happiness. Health is the aim of the relationship between patient and doctor, but it is also a relative good which is not happiness but a *condition* which allows to produce and acquire those good things that can lead to happiness; to make clearer the nature of the *πρῶτον φίλον*, Socrates uses the example of health and this is not fortuitous, since health and happiness albeit hierarchically different, share a relevant feature: both are neither objects nor activities; they are *conditions*; Obviously, reaching them involve carrying out certain activities. Health is an improbable condition: one can not only recover from an illness, but also become healthier and stronger by means of steady working out; however, this condition is not immutable; it must be preserved through ongoing care, because bad behaviours can jeopardize it. Likewise, happiness is a condition one can keep only by ongoing commitment, since also human happiness, just like health, can be reached, but also lost, so that the happy human is not *the one who is beyond the adversities affecting human condition* (otherwise Socrates would never be arrested), *but the one who, despite them, does not give up the commitment to happiness*. Happiness, therefore, as *πρῶτον φίλον*, is that in which all the so-called “friendships” culminate (εἰς ὃ πᾶσαι αὐται αἱ λεγόμεναι φιλίαι τελευτῶσιν, 220b2-3). In this pyramid shaped by the longing for happiness the friend with whom one shares the pursuit of the happiness has a particular place. The human friend indeed is not only a means of happiness, but also (and above all) a helper of one’s happiness, and this is the reason why our “friend” is not only inside our hierarchy of desires, but also our friend has his own hierarchy in which we are included. Democritus who educates his son and the father who attempt to save life to his son perfectly show that the pursuit of individual happiness not only involves the presence of a friend, but *the happiness of this friend*.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *supra*, note 107.

True friendship (Socrates obviously commits to true friendship; otherwise, every kind of attraction could be called friendship; even that of the tyrant for his lovers) is based on common good, a good rising from the common effort of the members of a relationship and of such sort that all of them are benefitted by this good even if in different way¹⁰⁹. If the most important way of benefitting friends (and being benefitted by them) is making them better (and being made better by them), the core of every true and steady friendship is the ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ, since helping one's friend to become better necessarily benefits also the one who benefits. That the core of friendship is the ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ is consistent with the statement that only neither good nor bad can be friend; likewise only the neither good nor bad can commit to the ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ; a being whose longing for the good involves its active commitment to it and whose closeness to the evil depends on its giving up the longing for the good.

A good without the evil

The reasoning which has led to the πρῶτον φίλον for the sake of which all the other things are φίλα is based on the statement that “the friend of the friend is friend because of the hostile for the sake of the friend” (219b4); this would potentially mean that even the πρῶτον φίλον, which can put into a hierarchy all the other longings, is loved only because of the presence of the evil; as a consequence, the πρῶτον φίλον itself would not be able to exert a direct attraction on the neither good nor bad; on the contrary only the presence of the evil could push the neither good nor bad to long for this πρῶτον φίλον. Socrates understands that this is the final outcome of this reasoning; hence it would follow that if evils were lacking, neither good nor bad would not have need for the πρῶτον φίλον, that is to say, for happiness. In this case the good would be but a remedy of the evil (ὡς φάρμακον ὄν τοῦ κακοῦ τὸ ἀγαθόν, 220d2), while the evil is the illness; and when there is no illness, there is no need for remedy (220d2-3). Accordingly says Socrates “the good is of this sort by its nature and is loved by us, who are in the middle between the good and the evil; however the good itself for its own sake is of no use?” (ἄρ’ οὕτω πέφυκέ τε καὶ φιλεῖται τὰγαθὸν διὰ τὸ κακὸν ὑφ’ ἡμῶν, τῶν μεταξύ ὄντων τοῦ κακοῦ τε καὶ τὰγαθοῦ, αὐτὸ δ’ ἑαυτοῦ ἔνεκα οὐδεμίαν χρείαν ἔχει, 220d5-7). This

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 154-155.

obviously has great bearing on friendship, since if its evil, namely the hostile, disappeared, also friendship would be useless. The issue which Socrates must deal with is arguing that the longing for the good not necessarily implies the presence of the evil, but without denying that every pursuit of the good is rooted in the need for it. Therefore, to preserve the importance of the need in the pursuit of the good and exclude that the only reason of this pursuit is the presence of the evil, one should argue that not all needs are evil; *that not every state of lack indicates the presence of something bad in the neither good nor bad*. Hunger and thirst for instance would exist in any case as state of lack of a body which must be periodically nourished; however, removed the evil, one could say that there would be neither starving nor dehydration, that is to say, hunger and thirst would always be present as natural impulses, but they would never reach their most harmful and even deadly forms. In any case hunger and thirst are not evil in themselves; actually, as natural desires, hunger and thirst are useful, since their presence indicates that a need must be fulfilled so that the body can preserve its health¹¹⁰. Those longings which are neither good nor evil (as hunger and thirst) would exist in any case, even if their most dangerous forms disappear; and since it is impossible that one does not love what desires and longs for (οἷόν τε οὖν ἐστὶν ἐπιθυμοῦντα καὶ ἐρῶντα τούτου οὗ ἐπιθυμεῖ καὶ ἐρᾷ μὴ φιλεῖν, 221b9-10), it follows that, even if the evil thing disappeared, in any case there would be some things loved. This would be impossible, if the only reason for loving something were the presence of an evil; indeed if the evil disappeared, also *philia*, which rises as remedy of the evil, would disappear (221c3-5). That the neither good nor evil is in a state of lack even if no evil affect it perfectly matches the fluctuating and dynamic position of the neither good nor evil between the two poles; indeed, as said above the neither good nor bad can be affected in a different ways and its position between good and evil is never stationary. Accordingly, to long for the good, this being not necessarily needs the evil. Besides this is consistent with the statement that the core of friendship the *care for oneself*.

¹¹⁰ Health is not an unchanging condition and can be lost. Hunger and thirst are physiological signs which reminds us that we must eat and drink in order to preserve health. These physiological signs are aimed at the survival of the living being and fulfilling the impulses signalled by them cyclically renews the balance within the body, as it is said in *Phil.* 31c8-32b3. Cf. J. A. H. Giménez, 2016, pp.127-128.

Caring for oneself, as the case of the doctor exemplifies, needs *caring for others*; now, a doctor can feel the necessity to become always better even if he already knows his art. In this case the will to improve oneself as a doctor is not based on a state of lack of science, but *on the desire to become better as a doctor, that is to say to care for oneself as a doctor*. This obviously has great bearing on the relevance of the *πρῶτον φίλον* in human life. Indeed, if the *πρῶτον φίλον*, as it has been suggested, is happiness, Socrates' reasoning in these lines implicitly says that humans do not need to be unhappy to love their happiness and the longing for happiness can push them to become always better at benefitting themselves and other as well. As a consequence, the evil is not the only reason for the pursuit of the good, and maybe it is not even the most important one. Accordingly friendship, as based on *care*, does not need necessarily the presence of the hostile to rise, because its cause, its *αἴτιον*, says Socrates, is *desire*: “the desire is the cause of friendship, and what desires is friend of what it desires and when it desires” (ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς φιλίας αἰτία, καὶ τὸ ἐπιθυμοῦν φίλον ἐστὶν τούτῳ οὗ ἐπιθυμεῖ καὶ τότε ὅταν ἐπιθυμῇ, 221d3-4) whereas their previous statement on friendship (as based on the presence of the hostile) was a triviality.

Φίλον as οἰκεῖον

That Socrates proposes regarding the desire as *αἰτία* of friendship could let think that the reasoning is returning to an idea of friendship as a mere desire of the one for the other; a dual relationship in which the third, unifying element (the common pursuit of the *πρῶτον φίλον*) is lacking. Actually, the desire which Socrates is speaking of has *two targets, not only one*. As it will be clear, the desire is desire both friend with whom one shares friendship and of the good (the *πρῶτον φίλον* as that at which friends together aim. Actually, more exactly and in compliance to what has been said about the *πρῶτον φίλον*, it is the desire of one's good (happiness) which makes desire friends and preserve the friendship with them. Besides stressing the importance of desire is consistent with the relevance of need and lack as origin of friendship; relevance which Socrates has highlighted few lines above and in particular in the section devoted to the examination of the poetical approach.

Longing for something rises from lack of it (221d7-e1). The following lines are noteworthy:

Socrates: “And the deficient is a friend to that in which it is deficient (τὸ δ’ ἐνδεὲς ἄρα φίλον ἐκείνου οὗ ἂν ἐνδεὲς ᾗ)?” Lysis: „I suppose so“. Socrates: „And it becomes deficient in that of which it suffers a deprivation (ἐνδεὲς δὲ γίγνεται οὗ ἂν τι ἀφαιρῆται)“. Lysis: „To be sure“. Socrates: „So it is one's own belongings, it seems, that are the objects of love and friendship and desire (τοῦ οικείου δῆ, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὃ τε ἔρωσ καὶ ἡ φιλία καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τυγχάνει οὗσα)” (221e3-7).

It has been said that the desire has two targets, the friend and *πρῶτον φίλον*. If the longing for happiness unfolds throughout the time, and even if it were acquired, one in any case should commit to preserving it, since human happiness is not a divine condition, beyond adversities; it follows that also the longing for the human friend in flesh and bones must unfold throughout the time; more exactly, if the happiness of the friend is an irreplaceable part of one's own happiness, it follows that the care for the happiness of the friend must last as much as the friendship itself. This is the reason why, one could say, the need for the friend lasts even if one already has befriended him. In the same way as for happiness, befriending someone is not enough; indeed, after acquiring a friend, one has to preserve the friendship by caring for the other's happiness¹¹¹. Interesting is also the statement that one lacks/needs what has been taken away from them. The verb ἀφαιρεῖν means “take away” “steal” “deprive” and so on, and in general a violent act through which something is detached from something else. Applied to the human friend, this reasoning would lead to think that both friends were together before being separated and that to some extent their friendship is the reinstatement of that condition¹¹².

¹¹¹ Cf. *supra*, 261-263.

¹¹² Accordingly *philia* would have the same power as Eros in Aristophanes' myth; in fact Eros is said to be “restorer of the ancient nature” (καὶ τῆς ἀρχαίας φύσεως συναγωγεὺς, 191d1-2), because it (Eros) brings together the two halves which were separated by Zeus. Noteworthy is also that the two lovers, as halves of an original whole, are σύμβολα of each other (191d3-5). σύμβολα can match each other not because they have similar feature, but because their shape involve the presence of something else (the other half) which must be added; also σύμβολα are like the pieces of a puzzle; pieces whose shape involve the necessary presence of other pieces.

However, it may be, what Socrates wants to stress is that friendship between people is not established at will by people themselves; to some extent it is not fortuitous that some are friends and some others are not; only “who has taken away from us” can become our friend. This is clearer when Socrates concludes that the object of love and friendship is the οἰκεῖον. The adjective οἰκεῖος means “belonging to the house” “relative” and “familiar”; but also suitable and convenient. In Socrates’ using of this word both meanings are present. Indeed, friend is familiar and “belonging to house”, because of the affection between friend; on the other hand, friend is as οἰκεῖον also suitable and proper; since something is suitable *for something*, friend as οἰκεῖον is suitable for the aim of friendship; namely the common pursuit of the happiness. Actually, it is friend’s being suitable for the common pursuit of happiness that makes friend “familiar” and “belonging to oneself”. This means also that every human being has its οἰκεῖον and not everyone can befriend everyone. Accordingly, humankind appears to be similar to a puzzle in which every piece contributes to the final picture, and every piece matches only some others, *but not all the others, because every piece has its οἰκεῖον* (more exactly its οἰκεῖα). Likewise, if friendship fails, that does not involve that one of the friends or both are bad friends, but only that they are not οἰκεῖοι to each other; they are *mutually unsuitable for the common pursuit of happiness*. Furthermore that of the οἰκεῖον is a kind of resemblance that does not undergo the difficulties rising from likeness, as observed in the poetical section¹¹³; and this is clear from the relationship between Lysis and Democrates; both are οἰκεῖοι in the true meaning of the word, because they are father and son (they are *familiar* to each other). Moreover, they are also suitable for each other for the common pursuit of happiness. Democrates to Lysis (by making him φρόνιμος) and Lysis to Democrates (by becoming φρόνιμος and making him proud). Besides, albeit οἰκεῖοι, Democrates and Lysis are not ὁμοῖοι: they are bound to each other by a common bloodline and a common pursuit of happiness, but they are also different individuals and their differences are potentially beneficial for their common pursuit (what was excluded in the case of the ὁμοῖοι). Socrates says to Menexenus and Lysis: “if you are friends, you are in

¹¹³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 259-261.

some way naturally *suitable/familiar* to each other, 221e10)¹¹⁴. As a consequence, “if one desires the other or longs for him (εἰ ἄρα τις ἕτερος ἑτέρου ἐπιθυμεῖ [...] ἢ ἐρᾷ), he could neither desire nor long for nor love him, unless he somehow is οἰκεῖος to the loved or in his soul (κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν) or in some disposition or demeanor or cast of the soul (ἢ κατὰ τι τῆς ψυχῆς ἤθος ἢ τρόπους ἢ εἶδος, 222a2). Accordingly, here Socrates is saying that the souls of both friends have to be such that from their intercourse the common pursuit of happiness can rise; their souls have not to be similar; rather *they have to match each other*. In the last lines Socrates has gradually shifted the focus from friendship to love, probably to get closer to the starting point of the dialogue, namely the attempt to advise Hippothales (the lover) on how to talk to Lysis (the beloved)¹¹⁵.

ὁμοῖον and οἰκεῖον: the decisive step of the dialogue

Socrates has noticed that this could be the most important step of the dialogue; indeed if the οἰκεῖον is different from the ὁμοῖον, he and his interlocutors would have reached a definition of what is friend. This is consistent with the move Socrates has given to the dialogue after his oracle: if the neither good nor bad strives for the good, and the final good which underlies the other good things and makes them good is the πρῶτον φίλον, that is to say happiness, a friend is the person which, being οἰκεῖος, familiar and suitable for the pursuit of happiness, helps to pursue happiness and is helped in return in the same pursuit, for, let us remind it, the happiness of friend is a necessary part of individual happiness. Given that, one would have all the coordinates to grasp the core of friendship, which needs not only

¹¹⁴ The dialogue started because Socrates wanted to know from Lysis and Menexenus how one befriends one other. In the end, it seems that it is Socrates himself that reveal it to them: two becomes friend because they are οἰκεῖοι.

¹¹⁵ In 222a6 Socrates says: “it is necessary that the genuine and not pretended lover be loved by his loved (ἀναγκαῖον ἄρα τῷ γνησίῳ ἐραστῇ καὶ μὴ προσποιήτῳ φιλεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν παιδικῶν). According to the context, the genuine lover is that suitable for helping his loved become happy. In 222b1-2 it is said that Hippothales turned all manner of colors because of pleasure. Obviously Hippothales think that Socrates, by speaking of genuine lover, is alluding to him. However it is clear from the beginning of the dialogue that Hippothales is the last person who Socrates may regard as genuine lover

one pole, but two: the *πρῶτον φίλον* and the human friend, who helps and is helped in this pursuit; furthermore this is consistent with the statement that desire, as cause of friendship, has not only one target but two: one's happiness and one's friend, whose happiness is necessary to one's one happiness. The dialogue itself would reach a comprehension of friendship, but only as long as Socrates' interlocutors too had understood the difference between *ὁμοῖον* and *οἰκεῖον*; indeed if the difference were not grasped and the *οἰκεῖον* were regarded as a mere "like", none of the aforementioned achievement would be accomplished and the dialogue would fall anew into the difficulties rising from the idea of likeness emerged in the poetical section; that is to say that a friend is useless to a friend because of their likeness (b6); however, *since agreeing that a friend is useless would be a mistake* (τὸ δὲ ἄχρηστον φίλον ὁμολογεῖν πλημμελές, 222b6-c1), Socrates proposes conceding that the *οἰκεῖον* differs from the *ὁμοῖον* (222c2). However Socrates is not merely taking for granted that Menexenus and Lysis have understood that difference; in fact Socrates, by the next question, wants to understand if Menexenus and Lysis actually have grasped the difference. In fact, Socrates asks:

will we state that the good is to everything *suitable/familiar*, while the evil is *alien/unsuitable*? Or is the evil *familiar/suitable* to the evil, the good to the good and the neither good nor evil to the neither good nor evil?

The first thing to note is that here Socrates is no more focusing on the friend as the partner of friendship, but on the friend as "ἀγαθόν", that is to say, on the common aim of friendship; once again this is consistent with the depiction of the desire as having two targets: the friend as partner and the friend as aim of friendship¹¹⁶. Accordingly a person has not only one *οἰκεῖον*, but two *οἰκεῖα*: its partner in friendship and the common aim of friendship. Therefore, an *οἰκεῖον* is the *proper/suitable* aim (happiness) as aim which the neither good nor evil attempts to reach; the other *οἰκεῖον* is the partner suitable for the *οἰκεῖον* of friendship. Thus we

¹¹⁶ The notion of a two-headed *φιλία* (referring both at the loved aim and the partner who shares the pursuit of this aim) allows to understand the presence of the two meanings of the adjective *οἰκεῖος*: cf. G. Rudebusch, 2004, pp. 67-80; M. N. G. Crema, 2018, pp. 212 ff. The *φιλία* is the pursuit of an aim suitable to us (happiness, cf. *supra*, pp. 269-274) and the love for those with whom we share the common pursuit of happiness.

could infer from what Socrates has said in these lines and in general from the whole depiction of friendship as a relationship aimed at accomplishment of good things (and as a consequence of happiness) that the difference between ὁμοῖον and οἰκεῖον consists in that ὁμοῖον indicates the mere presence of shared features, while οἰκεῖον, as suitable, refers to *the presence of a shared aim*, either because, as in this case the οἰκεῖον, it is the the aim proper/suitable to the neither good nor evil or because the οἰκεῖον is the partner suitable for reaching the aim. Given that in the question posed by Socrates the οἰκεῖον is the aim, not the partner of friendship, it follows that answering that the good is familiar/suitable to everithing, while the evil is alien/unsuitable would allow the participant in the dialogue to go ahead and maybe even to find out a satisfying definition; besides, that the good is οἰκεῖον, *proper aim of everithing*, while the evil is *alien* to everithing is consistent with the thesis repeated several times that nothing can be friend of the evil. As a consequence the second part of the question is false. In fact if the οἰκεῖον of this lines is the proper aim, the good would have as its aim the good, what is impossible because it is already good; likewise the evil could not have as its proper aim the evil. Regarding the neither good nor evil, if its proper aim was the neither good nor evil, it would rine a relationship in which the *third, unifying element (the common pursuit of happiness)* would disappear, in this case the reasoning would come back to an idea of friendship as a dual relationship in which there is nothing shared between the partner which could explain their mutual love; on the other hand if οἰκεῖον here had been the suitable partner, saying that the neither good nor bad is οἰκεῖον to the neither good nor bad would have been correct. Menexenus and Lysis must prove to have grasped the relevant different between ὁμοῖον and οἰκεῖον. However they answer show that they lack this understanding: in fact they answer that “ each of them is οἰκεῖον to each of them” (οὕτως ἐφάτην δοκεῖν σφίσιν ἕκαστον ἐκάστω οἰκεῖον εἶναι, 222c7-d1). Menexenus and Lysis has interpreted οἰκεῖον as ὁμοῖον, as if Socrates had asked whether “the good is like to the good, the evil to the evil and so on”. Therefore their lack of comprehension would make the discussion fallen in the same difficulties they thought they overcome: anew the unjust will be friend to the unjust and the wicked to the wicked as well as the good to the good (222d1-3). The discussion seems to have ended up in a blind ally; neither the loved nor the loving near the like nor the unlike nor the good ner the οἰκεῖοι are φίλον (both loved

and loving). Socrates claims not to have what to say (ἀλλ' εἰ μηδὲν τούτων φίλον ἐστίν, ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκέτι ἔχω τί λέγω, 222e4-5).

The final aporia and the end of the Anthesteria.

The state of *aporia* into which Socrates claims to have fallen does not seem to be a real one; actually, for the reader of the dialogue it is hardly to find an *aporetic state less aporetic than this one*. The depiction of friendship as desire of οἰκεῖον (as aim and as partner as well) is of such sort as to overcome all the difficulties emerged throughout the dialogue, and the only reason for which this suggestion has failed to triumph is that in the end Menexenus and Lysis mistake οἰκεῖον for ὁμοῖον and make the discussion face anew the only seemingly overcome difficulties. However, there could be a deeper reason for the final *aporia* of the dialogue; a reason underlying Menexenus and Lysis failure to grasp the difference between ὁμοῖον and οἰκεῖον, and the reason is that they *are still too young*. In fact, after admitting his state of *aporia* Socrates adds: “however, while saying that, I intended to engage someone else among the older” (ταῦτα δ' εἰπὼν ἐν νῶ εἶχον ἄλλον ἤδη τινὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων κινεῖν, 223a1). Those who are older than Menexenus and Lysis are the μεράκια, and μεράκια are Alcibiades, Charmides and Clinias, who are in that age in which one can face the ritual death marking the passage from a phase of life into another. Menexenus and Lysis are not in this transitional age, but on the verge of entering it; likewise, the *Anthesteria*, which are the frame of this dialogue, are the necessary prelude to spring, but are not spring themselves. In the *Anthesteria* the abundance of spring is somehow prepared but are not the *Anthesteria* the moment in which one benefits from this abundance; likewise in the *Lysis* numerous important suggestion and statement on friendship have been put forth; however, this is not the *Lysis* the place in which one will benefit from these suggestions¹¹⁷. The *Anthesteria* themselves are to some extent an *aporetic time*, not because they are merely fruitless; but because, albeit fruitless themselves, prepare the abundance for

¹¹⁷It is reasonable to think that the *euporia* which in the *Lysis* is only prepared will come to light in the *Symposium*, Cf. Chr. Rowe, 2000, pp. 204-217. It would be too lengthy to deal with the links between the two dialogues, which are quite close from the thematic point of view,

the future. In any case, to bring to the end the *Anthesteria* so as to make possible the future *euporia* of Spring, the spirits and the evil souls (the shadows of the fading year) are expelled. This happens when Menexenus and Lysis' guardians come up on the scene; they are described as “δαίμονές τινες” who have come to order Menexenus and Lysis to leave and come back home (223a2-3). It has been suggested that the words δαίμονές τινες recall Socrates δαιμόνιον¹¹⁸; indeed, the guardians in this case prevent Menexenus and Lysis from carrying on the discussion (what Socrates intended to do) in the same way as sometimes Socrates is prevented from doing certain things. Besides the arrival of the guardians happens in a crucial moment, since also Socrates had decided to interrupt the discussion with the boys. Nevertheless, despite the final *aporia* and Lysis and Menexenus' bewilderment, the *Lysis*, under the surface of this *aporia*, provides interesting suggestions. First of all, φιλία must be reciprocal; it involves loving and being loved in turn. Secondly, friends share the pursuit of an aim, their happiness; to reach it, friends help each other. Reciprocity and pursuit of happiness are the essential feature of the φιλία, which make φιλία an essential trait of the Socratic care. Socrates' aim is to help his interlocutors to be happy; however, by helping in the pursuit of happiness, he pursues his own happiness¹¹⁹. Care, as a kind of relationship in which both partners actively contribute to their own happiness by helping the other in this pursuit, displays the quintessence of φιλία, which, at the end of this analysis of the *Lysis*, turns out to be friends' common pursuit of happiness.

¹¹⁸Cf. M. Narcy, 2000, p. 185.

¹¹⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 34-39.

Chapter V: the *Euthyphro*

Euthyphro: holiness as supreme form of care

The *Euthyphro* is one of those dialogues which usually, just like *Charmides*, *Euthydemus* and *Lysis*, is not regarded as a source of knowledge on Socratic care. However, in the same way as the aforementioned dialogues, also the *Euthyphro* turns out to be as useful to comprehend Socratic *care* as dialogues such as *Alcibiades I* and *Apology*.

Euthyphro and Socrates: similarities and differences

At the beginning of the dialogue we find Euthyphron leaving the portico of the Archon Basileus, the magistrate assigned to organise the civic rituals of Athen and custodian of the traditional piety, which, at least to the inhabitants of the city, appeared to be threatened by dangerous innovators, such as Socrates and Euthyphro. It has been observed that, contrary to what has been believed for a long time, Euthyphro is not a champion of the traditional religious piety, or at least his pious zeal and his attitude in matter of religion is mocked by the other Athenians, when not roughly disapproved. Firstly the very reason for which Euthyphro has gone to the portico of Archon Basileus does not allow to regard him as a mere upholder of the traditional, civic piety. In fact Euthyphro has indicted his own father for the murder of a seasonal worker (πελάτης τις, 4c3) who, in a drunken impetus of rage, killed a slave of Euthyphro's father; then he imprisoned the seasonal worker and threw him into a ditch. Thereafter he sent a man to Athen to ask the religious advisors how he should behave (πέμπει δεῦρο ἄνδρα πεισόμενον τοῦ ἐξηγητοῦ¹ ὅτι χρεῖη ποιεῖν); meanwhile the seasonal worker passed away owing to the awful conditions of the imprisonment; Euthyphro's father, awaiting the

¹ The ἐξηγηταί were a college of three men assigned to advise on cases of bloodshed. It is quite probable that they were chosen by the oracle of Delphi from a list of nine candidates; cf. W. A. Heidel, 1902, p. 44; M. Forschner, 2013, note 109. The murder, and the consequent bloodshed always brings about pollution, μῦσμα, which has to be wiped away through rituals and prayers. It is not fortuitous that the ἐξηγηταί are somehow connected to the shrine of Delphi and, as a consequence, to Apollo, god of purification.

response from Athen, let the prisoner starve (4c4-d3). Euthyphro states that it is irrelevant if the killed was a stranger or a relative, for the only thing which matters is if the action of killing was just or not (εἴτε ἐν δίκῃ ἔκτεινεν ὁ κτείνας εἴτε μή, 4b6) and if the action was just, let the slayer go; otherwise, proceed against him, even if he share one's own hearth and one's own table (ἐάνπερ ὁ κτείνας συνέστιός σοι καὶ ὁμοτράπεζός ῆ, 4b7-c1)². This attitude of Euthyphro towards the crime committed by his father was at least unusual and certainly not compliant with the piety typical of the common athenian, considering that Euthyphro's relatives argue that "it is unholy (ἀνόσιον) that a son proceeds against his father" (4d7-e1). It is relevant that Euthyphro's relatives accuse him of an unholy action, since "unholy" according to Euthyphro is what his father has done letting his prisoner starve; according to Euthyphro's relatives, it would be Euthyphro's action against his father which brings about that pollution, that μίασμα which Euthyphro ascribes to the crime committed by his father. Therefore in these lines what emerges is a conflict not between Euthyphro's between the *commonly accepted piety of his relatives and that of Euthyphro, which, at least thus far, is quite far from being "commonly accepted"*. Euthyphro carries on saying that his relatives do not know how is the divine towards the holy and unholy; in fact, below in the dialogue, in order to justify the decision to proceed against his father Euthyphro draws upon the legends on the gods, showing that even Zeus, the best and justest among the gods, killed his father Chronos because of his crime against Zeus' brothers, in the same way as Chronos killed his father Uranus. The consequence which Euthyphro draws from the stories about the gods is that it is holy to punish wrongdoers, even if they are one's relatives, or even one's parents (5e4-6a3). Although Euthyphro's resorting to traditional tales about the gods seems to corroborate the view that he upholds popular piety, it is to keep in mind that he resorts to those tales in order to explain to Socrates what he holds to be ὄσιον, as it will be seen below in this chapter, as well as to justify his proceeding against his father, an action that Euthyphro's relatives take to be unholy, as most athenians would do; Euthyphro resorts to the traditional tales about the gods to show the holy nature of an action which everyone

² The platonic Socrates several times stresses the importance of piety towards one's parents (*Phaed.* 113e4-114a5; *Gorg.* 456d1-e3; *Resp.* 454a5-c4; *Leg.* 717c3-718a4. Cf. N. Smith, 2014, pp. 1-13.

else would regard as unholy. This using the tales about the gods, foundation of popular piety, to justify a behaviour which popular piety would never endorse, is to some extent subversive, if not revolutionary; and, actually, revolutionary is not only to state unprecedented things, but rather seize the heritage of the past to make it the vehicle of new messages³. As a consequence the character of Euthyphro cannot be trivially explained away as that of a dogged defender of the piety wide-spread in Athen, which he does not seem to share. On the contrary, he shows esteem for Socrates and seems to know him quite well. Socrates tells Euthyphro that Meletus has indicted him for corrupting the young athenians and ironically points out that Meletus commits to politics in the right way since the most important thing is to care for the young so that they will be as good as possible (ὀρθῶς γὰρ ἐστὶ τῶν νέων πρῶτον ἐπιμεληθῆναι ὅπως ἔσσονται ὅτι ἄριστοι)⁴, as a good farmer first of all cares for the young plants, then for the others; therefore Meletus, says Socrates: “in first place wipes away us, who corrupt the young plants (ἡμᾶς ἐκκαθαίρει⁵ τοὺς τῶν νέων τὰς βλάστας διαφθείροντας, 3a1). However Euthyphro does not agree with Socrates; in his opinion, trying to harm Socrates means attempting to harm the city at its hearth (3a4-5); such a statement would be unexplicable if Euthyphro did not esteem Socrates; accordingly, not only does Euthyphro not uphold the piety of common people in Athen, but does he show also respect for Socrates, a man indicted for ἀσεβεία by Meletus who is the champion of that piety commonly accepted and

³ To some extent the same as the platonic Socrates does, when he reinterprets the traditional notion of σωφροσύνη, intended as modesty in public behavior, as “knowledge of oneself in relation to the good achievement one can or cannot reach (cf. *supra*, pp. 99-105). Nevertheless this reinterpretation of the notion of σωφροσύνη does not undermine the relevance of “modesty” for the social life, but put this modesty into a new hierarchy, in which the foundation of modesty is no more others’ look, but the inner knowledge of the importance of a modest attitude towards the others for the attainment of common goods.

⁴ This is the issue of *care*.

⁵ The verb ἐκκαθαίρειν means “remove” but also “purge” and “clear away”; considered the great relevance of the issue of purification and pollution in these lines of the dialogue, it is reasonable ascribe also to this verb a religious nuance. Accordingly, Socrates himself with his own is regarded by Meletus as cause of pollution as much as the crime committed by Euthyphro’s father is regarded by his son. According to Meletus, Socrates is a μίασμα for young athenians. Cf. M. McPherran, 2002, pp. 105-129.

practiced in Athen. Socrates carries on explaining that he has been accused of creating new gods and not believing in the old ones (καὶ ὡς καινοὺς ποιοῦντα θεοὺς τοὺς δ' ἀρχαίους οὐ νομίζοντα, 3b1-2)⁶. The reply of Euthyphro is quite interesting, since he immediately puts these accusations down to the δαιμόνιον, which had to be perceived as one of the strangest feature of Socrates personality. This shows that Euthyphro knows Socrates well, or at least so well as to know about the δαιμόνιον and the reaction of the athenian people to it; in fact, as Euthyphro says, accusations, such as those Socrates was charged with, easily trigger the malevolence and the reproach of the “many” (εὐδιάβολα τὰ τοιαῦτα πρὸς τοὺς πολλούς, 3b6). Euthyphro’s attitude in these lines is noteworthy; first of all he knows that the δαιμόνιον is bound to draw the malevolence of the athenians on Socrates; however Euthyphro himself does not appear to think that the δαιμόνιον is something “heretical” or “unprecedented”. This is consistent with the interpretation of the tales on gods which he gives below in the dialogue, and sums up his general attitude: the subversive nature of its interpretation does not reside in the denial of those tales, but in ascribing to them a meaning and, above all, practical implications which the Athenians would never dream of doing; given that, it is not excluded that Euthyphro regards the δαιμόνιον as consistent with the traditional piety, while only the ignorance of Meletus and the many as well can lead to consider it a creation of Socrates⁷. Interesting is also Euthyphro’s attitude towards the many, who mock him

⁶ It is interesting to note that “making gods” recalls Critias’ theories on religion, according to whom God has been shaped by human ruler so that the subjects obey laws even when no one controls them. If one considers the role played by Critias’ closeness to Socrates in Socrates’ sentence, it is not strange that Plato is suggesting that people believed that Socrates was a sort of “creator of gods”, like those rulers who, Critias says, shaped the gods. Cf. *supra*, pp. 128-133.

⁷ Noteworthy is that in the *Cratylus* (396d4-7) Socrates (ironically) credits Euthyphro with a *daemonic* wisdom (τῆς δαιμονίας σοφίας). This could explain why Euthyphro does not consider Socrates’ δαιμόνιον at odds with a pious conduct: he himself is endowed with a *daemonic wisdom* which makes him a talented soothsayer. The loyalty of Socrates’ conduct to the traditional piety is highlighted also by Xenophon (*Mem.* I, I-IX), who regards the δαιμόνιον as consistent with the traditional piety. On the other hand, some scholars (Th.c Brickouse, N. D Smith, 1994, pp. 189-195; M. L. McPherran, *cit.*, pp.175-208; Th.c Brickouse, N. D Smith, 2007, pp. 45-62; J. Bussanich, 2013, pp. 276-300) who have dealt with this aspect of Socrates’ religion have been interested in understanding what the δαιμόνιον is rather than if it is consistent or not with traditional piety, that

as a mad man, when during the gatherings of the Assembly he reveals what is still to happen to them (ὅταν τι λέγω ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ περὶ τῶν θεῶν, προλέγων αὐτοῖς τὰ μέλλοντα, καταγελωσιν ὡς μαινομένου, 3c1-2), although, he adds, what he has predicted always has come true. Thus far Euthyphro has been using the singular to talk about himself; however in the following line he uses a plural pronoun: “they envy us for such reason (φθονοῦσιν ἡμῖν πᾶσι τοῖς τοιούτοις); however it is necessary not to care them, but face them (ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν αὐτῶν χρή φροντίζειν, ἀλλ’ ὁμόσε ἰέναι, 3c3-4). The pronoun ἡμῖν means that here Euthyphro refers both to himself and Socrates; accordingly both would be the target of the ignorant envy of the Many. In Euthyphro’s opinion, the Many envy him for his skill in prediction of future events; in fact Euthyphro is a μάντις. He says that both he and Socrates are envied by the many for such reasons, πᾶσι τοῖς τοιούτοις, but the reasons Euthyphro explains have to do with his prophetic ability; as a consequence, these lines would suggest that in Euthyphro’s opinion both he and Socrates are envied because of their ability to predict the future. As it has been seen, in *Alcibiades* and in *Charmides* Plato depicts his Socrates as the only worthy exegete of the delphic inscription and of Apollo’s words; in *Lysis* Socrates reveals, by means of an oracle, that the only being capable of friendship is the neither good nor bad. The platonic Socrates has several times the features of a μάντις, but predicting the future is something which rarely the platonic Socrates is committed to⁸; nevertheless, it may be reasonable to suggest that here Plato, through Euthyphro’s words, is referring to Socrates’ ability as a μάντις in general, and not to a particular skill, namely the prediction, a μάντις is supposed to possess. Therefore not only does Euthyphro esteem Socrates, but also regards him as a colleague of his. However there are also differences between Euthyphro and Socrates, and it is hardly fortuitous that Plato lets them emerge in those passages in which Socrates and Euthyphro seem to be similar. As it has been pointed out⁹, Euthyphro’s statement that the only thing which matters is if one kills

which none of them has questioned. Socratic δαίμονιον and its connection to the traditional religion will be examined in the chapter on the *Apology* (cfr. *infra*, pp. 339ff.).

⁸ For instance, at the end of the *Apology* (39c1-6). Furthermore, Socrates, by means of a dream, predicts the day in which he would pass away (*Crit.* 44b1-2). Cf. W. Bernard, 2016, pp. 59-61.

⁹ M. Erler, 1987, pp. 147-148.

out of a just reason or not and if not, one must be punished, even if one is a relative or even a parent, recalls Socrates words on punishment in the *Gorgias* (480a1-e2), where Socrates says that one must not defend one's own injustice and indict oneself for it, so that, through the punishment, one can pay the penalty for the wrongdoing and become health (ἵνα δὲ δίκην καὶ ὑγιᾶς γένηται, 3c4-5)¹⁰. Obviously this applies not only to oneself, but also to one's friends, relatives and parents, so that if any of them committed a crime, one would persuade them to undergo the right punishment. Behind Socrates words lies the principle that committing injustice is worse than undergoing it; as a consequence, if one wants to be health, or at least, less sick, one has to accept to be punished. Moreover, behind these words on the importance of punishments lies Socrates' concern for the *care of oneself and of the others*; the person who wants to promote its own wellness and that of its beloved ones must not defend neither itself nor them in case of wrongdoing, since preventing a wrongdoer (either oneself or one's beloved) from the right punishment means worsening the condition of their soul. The situation in the case of Euthyphro is quite different¹¹. Euthyphro says that the μῦσμα, the pollution deriving from a crime, affects also the person who, even knowing the wrongdoing, nevertheless associate with the one who has committed it; therefore one has to purify oneself and the culprit by proceeding against him. That the covering up a crime somehow pollutes also the one who helps the culprit and worsens the condition of his soul is something, one could guess, which also Socrates would agree on; however, contrary to Socrates, Euthyphro does not show the slightest interest in the happiness or unhappiness of the culprit (in this case is father). For Socrates, by paying the penalty

¹⁰ In *Gorg.* 477a5ff. Socrates argues that punishment is aimed at removing wickedness from the soul of the punished, just like Euthyphro in the homonymous dialogue, considers punishment a purification. Cf. G. U. Luttenberger, 2017.

¹¹ In the *Gorgias* Socrates states that punishment is aimed at health, while Euthyphro in the *Euthyphro* argues that the punishing his father serves the purpose of wiping away the pollution which the crime of his father has brought about, so that Socrates is using a language issued from medicine, while Euthyphro resorts to religious notions: However this difference is irrelevant, even so more for someone, like Socrates, who is so strictly connected to Apollo, god of both purifications and healing; actually the medicine itself is but art of purification, since it aims to remove (purge) from the body what hinders its health.

for his crime, the culprit heals his soul from the sickness brought about by injustice and, as a consequence, he is less unhappy than he would have been, if he had escaped from the punishment; on the contrary, Euthyphro does not seem to be interested in the happiness or unhappiness of his father. If happiness, as it has been argued thus far, is the aim of ἐπιμέλεια intended as active commitment to improving oneself and other as well, it can be argued that Euthyphro does not care for his father, that is to say he does not care for his improvement and happiness; he does not care to benefit his father by means of the punishment; the only thing he cares about is not to be “tornish” by actions of his father. Furthermore, if the care for other, in this case a relative, is irreplaceable part of the care for oneself, Euthyphro, lacking any interest in caring his father, somehow lacks also care for oneself. Euthyphro does not say: “by helping my father to purify himself from his crime, I benefit him because I care for the health of his soul¹², and, as a consequence, I benefit myself as a son caring for his father and in this way foster my happiness”; the only thing which Euthyphro cares about is not to be “dirty” by his father. To sum up, although both Euthyphro in the *Euthyphro* and Socrates in the *Gorgias* says that wrongdoers must be punished, even they are someone close to oneself, Euthyphro is not interested in benefitting the culprit (his father), whereas for Socrates benefitting the culprit is the aim of the punishment; what emerges is that in Euthyphro’s pious attitude the care for the others (and for oneself) is lacking. This contrast between Euthyphro and Socrates on the value of punishment shows that Socrates and his interlocutor use the same words on the same subject; however, this does not mean that they have the same view; on the contrary,

¹² Even if he commits to purifying his father from the crime, Crito never mentions soul. What is to purify according to Crito? It is probable that he believes in the existence of a soul separated from the body. However, this is not enough: in fact also homeric soul survives after the separation from the body and nonetheless this kind of soul is far from the socratic/platonic soul, which is the true target of care. Only a soul which is the true foundation of humans can be the target of platonic care, whereas a soul intended as a *body become shadow* (*scil.* powerless) cannot-cfr. W. F. Otto, 1962, pp. 21-37.

sometimes the interlocutors who *seem* to be the closest to Socrates are those who are *the furthest from him*¹³.

The other point in which Euthyphro and Socrates remarkably differ is in their attitude towards οἱ πολλοί, “the many”, who Euthyphro looks at with an elitist scorn; their ignorance and, above all, their envy lead them to underestimate and scoff off a μάντις whose predictions are infallible. On the other hand it is undeniable that the same elitist disdain towards the πολλοί is typical also of the platonic Socrates, since they, lacking true knowledge and being controlled by their reckless desires, are far from the model of right education, so that caring for oneself means in first place distancing oneself from the many¹⁴. However, despite this similarity, the practical conduct to which this “elitist”disdain leads Euthyphro and Socrates is quite different, if not opposite. Socrates says that the Athenians are angry with him because he, in their opinion, attempts to make others such as he is; Socrates would be διδασκαλικὸς τῆς σοφίας (3c6). In fact, says Socrates, due to his love for humankind (ὑπὸ φιλανθρωπίας, 3d4)¹⁵, he seems to Athenians to share generously with everyone (ἐκκεχυμένως παντὶ ἀνδρὶ), not only without payment, but also paying himself, if anyone were willing to listen to him (3d4-5). Euthyphro, on the contrary is not target of the rage of the Athenians (but only of their derision) because he does not teach anyone about his wisdom. Socrates puts down to his φιλανθρωπία Athenians’attitude towards him; it is reasonable to state that the love to which the word φιλανθρωπία refers is not a mere penchant for other human beings. In the chapter on the *Lysis* it has been argued that the true φιλεῖν is *caring for himself as well as the others*; on the other hand, if the true caring is an active commitment to the improvement of the beloved people, it can be inferred that Socrates’ φιλανθρωπία is the tireless commitment to the improvement of the other human beings (in this case the Athenians). Once again this commitment to caring others is an irreplaceable part of the care for *oneself*. Furthermore Socrates’ φιλανθρωπία is

¹³ The example of Critias in the *Charmides* is enlightening (cf. *supra*, pp. 124-125). Both Critias in the *Charmides* and Socrates in the *Alcibiades* connect the σωφροσύνη to selfknowledge; however it is clear that Critias’ selfknowledge is not the same as that which Socrates is committed to.

¹⁴ Cf. Chapter VII

¹⁵ On the relevance of φιλανθρωπία in Socrates’ piety, cfr. E. Song, 2008, pp. 115-129.

not at odds with his “elitist” scorn toward the “Many”; in fact, as said in the chapter on the *Alcibiades*, the “Many” are not merely a social class, but “a worldview”; accordingly, even the Aristocrats, such as Critias, Charmides, Alcibiades, Cleinias, Lysis and so on, belong to the “Many” insofar as their lives are guided by irrational longings and lack of selfknowledge as well. Through his refutations Socrates attempts to remove from people’s soul what binds them to such a worldview, so that, one could infer, the only way to get rid of the πολλοί is neither by killing them physically, nor by keeping them away from oneself, but *by making powerless, through refutations, within people themselves that which binds them to the “worldview of the Many.* Therefore it is love for humankind which lies behind Socrates elitist attitude. On the contrary Euthyphro shares only the outcomes of his skills (his predictions during the gatherings of the Assembly); however, he does not teach anyone about how to reach the same outcomes, and on the other hand he could not teach anyone, even if he wanted¹⁶. Euthyphro’s attitude towards the Many seems to rest on a principle different from that of Socrates; it is as if Socrates said: the Many are ignorant and reckless, but through refutations and the proper care it is possible remove from some of them these shortcomings, whereas Euthyphro says: the many are ignorant and reckless, *and it cannot be otherwise.* On account of the (alleged) irredeemable foolishness of the Many it is useless to attempt to teach anyone of them, since they are bound to fail to understand. Thus Euthyphro turns out to be the opposite of Socrates; instead of φιλόανθρωπος, he is φθονερός, because he denies everyone something which may benefit them¹⁷. Euthyphro’s elitism leads him to deny benefits, whereal Socrates’ leads him to lavish on his interlocutors whatever may be useful to their improvement. Socrates and Euthyphro are superficially similar, but essentially different; in Socrates it is the *care for oneself*

¹⁶ As a μάντις, Euthyphro, just like, is connected to Apollo. Soothsaying cannot be taught as well as mathematics or musics, since divine inspiration plays in this art a preminent role, and not all benefit from this relationship with the divine. However, Euthyphro, even if unable to teach the soothsaying, could persuade the Athenians of the truthfulness of his oracles; what emerges from Euthyphro’s attitude is his inability to persuade people to trust him; he would like to be obeyed by his fellow-citizens as soon as he recommends doing or not doing whatever he predicts. Probably it is this inability to persuade and his will to be obeyed which prevent him from teaching anything.

¹⁷ Cf, *supra*, pp. 287-288.

and the other as well which leads him to assume an attitude to which Euthyphro is led by opposite reasons. Therefore the instances present in the *Euthyphro* are not two, but three: not Socrates against Euthyphro and the city, but *Socrates against Euthyphro and the city against both*¹⁸. This analysis of the similarities and differences between Socrates and Euthyphro prevents from falling into the same mistake in which Athen probably fell: that of regarding Euthyphro and Socrates as identical. A trivial mistake leads people to consider what is different from themselves as *one thing*. As in the *Politicus* is pointed out the error of those who name *barbaroi* every people different from the greek, whereas among the *barbaroi* there are numerous people different from each other¹⁹, in the same way Euthyphro and Socrates' piety is not the same as that of the average Athenian of the fourth century; but this does not mean that Socrates and Euthyphro are identical. If Athen fell into the mistake of considering Socrates and Euthyphro and his like as identical, it is arguable that one of the reasons for which Plato wrote the *Euthyphro* is to show how far Socrates and Euthyphro were from each other. From this point of view *Euthyphro* is similar to the *Charmides* because both dialogues serve the purpose of discriminating between Socrates and a character who was associated with him or regarded as similar to him. The need for distinguishing Socrates from such characters matches an apologetic aim, since, as it is to see through Plato's dialogues and more explicitly appreciable in Xenophon, a relevant concurrent cause of the death sentence were, paradoxically, *those who esteemed Socrates*.

The Holy is what the Gods love

Euthyphro is sure that his proceeding against his father is compliant with piety and in no way can offend the gods; in fact, Euthyphro says, if he did not know if what is doing is pious or not and did not know what is pious and what is not, he would not be superior to the other men, as he, evidently, claims to be (4e6-5a2). Since

¹⁸ Cf. R. J. Klonowsky, 1986, pp. 130-137; M. Butnyeat, 1997, pp. 1-12. For the reasons explained above it seems to me more reasonable not to consider Euthyphro a representative of the traditional piety: cf. D. S. Werner, 2012, pp. 41-62.

¹⁹Plato, *Pol.* 262a8-d6.

Euthyphro claims to be expert in what concerns piety and holiness, Socrates, in a way that recalls his attitude to Euthydemus and Dionysodorus²⁰, pretends to long for becoming pupil Euthyphro's pupil (ἄρ' οὖν μοι, ὃ θαυμάσιε Εὐθύφρων, κράτιστόν ἐστι μαθητῆ σὸ γενέσθαι, 5a1), so that he can challenge Meletus before the trial and tell his accuser that if he holds Euthyphro to be expert in what concerns the gods, he should hold that also Socrates, as Euthyphro's pupil, is expert in the same field; otherwise, suggests Socrates ironically, Anytus should blame Euthyphro for Socrates' ignorance of divine thing; accordingly Anytus should teach Socrates and chastise Euthyphro, who ruins²¹ the elderly, not only his father, but also Socrates himself (5b1-5). After claiming to want to be enlightened by Euthyphro, Socrates asks him what he says that the pious and the impious are (ποῖόν τι τὸ εὐσεβὲς φησ εἶναι καὶ τὸ ἀσεβὲς καὶ περὶ φόνοῦ καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων 5c6-d1); then Socrates adds: "Is not holiness always the same with itself (τὸ ὅσιον αὐτὸ αὐτῷ) in every action and, on the other hand, is not unholiness the opposite of all holiness, always the same with itself (τὸ ἀνόσιον αὐτὸ τοῦ μὲν ὀσίου παντὸς ἐναντίον, αὐτὸ δὲ αὐτῷ ὅμοιον) and whatever is to be unholy possessing some one characteristic quality (ἔχον μίαν τιὰ ἰδέαν)?" (5d1-4, tr. J. Burnet). The word ἰδέα refers to something which must be present in all the actions regarded as holy; a feature which only makes a holy action holy. As it will be clear from the reply which Socrates provides to the first definition proposed by Euthyphro, this ἰδέα cannot be a particular holy action among the others, in cannot even be the mere sum of all of them; on the contrary, this ἰδέα must be *that which underlies and pervades all the holy actions without identifying with them*²². The question posed by Socrates

²⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 69-73; 95.

²¹ By "ruin" is rendered the greek verb διαφθείρειν, which means both "corrupt" and "kill, destroy". Ruin appears to be the best rendering in these lines.

²² Cf. M. O. Wiitala, 2014, pp. 393-410. The use of the term ἰδέα does not authorize to think that behind it lies Plato's commitment to the theory of the Ideas intended as transcendent and eternal Paradigms- thesis upheld by G. M. A. Grube, 1935, pp. 8-10; p; W. D. Ross, 1953, p. 13 and R. E. Allen, 1970, *passim*; ἰδέα here, as also elsewhere in Plato, is not necessarily a metaphysical being, but *the one underlying a multiplicity of cases*, a one thanks to which the various cases are not a merely discrete amount of cases, but a *structured multiplicity held together by a unifying instance*; accordingly the ἰδέα of these lines of Euthyphro is more similar to the ἰδέα of *Phaedr.* 237d6-7 than

provides also a suggestion about how Socrates wants Euthyphro to answer; Socrates is not interested in an array of holy actions, not even in a particular holy action among the others, *but in that which makes holy all of them without being any of them*. This sums up Socrates' attitude towards Euthyphro, which recalls that held towards Euthydemus and Dionysodorus: Socrates has shown his desire to become Euthyphro's pupil, and at the same time implicitly advises the man who should be his teacher on how he has to answer to his question²³.

As it was to foresee, Euthyphro fails to follow this suggestion, providing as example of *holy* a particular action, namely, the proceeding against those who commit injustice or in killing, or in stealing from temples, or committing crime of such kind, whether this person be one's father, mother, or anyone else, whereas not proceeding against wrongdoers in unholy (5d6-e1). Furthermore this definition does not provide what is the holy, *but rather a consequence of it*; it is as if Euthyphro were saying holy is punishing who commits unholy actions, whereas it is unholy not punishing him; in fact it is undoubtedly holy to punish unholy actions; however one can punish unholy actions only if one knows in advance what the holy is. Euthyphro in his answer skips this step; instead of saying what is that which makes holy human conduct, he provides *a consequence of such a conduct*. Thereafter Euthyphro draws upon the traditional legends on the gods in the way which has been explained above²⁴; noteworthy is that Euthyphro uses these legends as "evidence that the law is so (μέγα σοι ἐρῶ τεκμήριον τοῦ νόμου ὅτι οὕτως ἔχει) [...]: not let who acts impiously (τῷ ἀσεβοῦντι) go unpunished, whoever he may be" (5e2-4). Euthyphro says that one has to proceed against those who commit injustice, then that those who commit impious actions must be punished; this shows that in Euthyphro's speech a distinction between ἀδικία and ἀσέβεια is absent; as a

to the paradigms of the *Timaeus*. Therefore I would suggest that here *ιδέα* is not what makes different individuals belong to the same kind, but *what makes a coherent whole out of different cases*; accordingly also human conduct, as a *one making consistent actions with each other*, is an *ιδέα*, as the mentioned lines of the *Phaedrus* suggest. (for the connection between *idea* and *whole*, as a compound not reducible to its parts cf; E. S. Haring, 1982, pp. 509-128; V. Harte, 2002; B. Centrone, 2005, pp. 103-114; F. Ferrari, 2011, pp. 107-123.

²³ Cf. Socrates shows the same attitude towards Euthydemus and Dionysodorus: *supra*, pp. 69-70.

²⁴ Cf. *supra*, p. 286-287.

consequence it is to infer that for Euthyphro there is no difference even between *justice* and *piety*, a stance which below in the dialogue Socrates will attempt to go beyond by introducing the possibility of the difference between these two virtues²⁵. As a sign of the overlapping of *justice* and *piety* in Euthyphro is to regard the use of the word νόμος to introduce the explanation of a myth. The word νόμος in greek means “law” intended as measure implemented by means of a written decree, but also also “common law” whose validity rests on customary behavior²⁶. If, at it is arguable, the most probable meaning of νόμος in these lines is the second one, it is as if Euthyphro were saying that the common law of punishing impious rests on that, starting from the gods, this custom has never faded. At first sight it seems that Euthyphro by his proceeding is pursuing the ὁμοίωσις θεῶν: he want to act as Zeus did with Chronos and Chronos with Uranus; in this overlapping of *piety* and justice *there is a dark and even sacrilegious side*; Euthyphro has included the Gods in the human common law; he has made them actors whose actions found a chapter of human common law. As a consequence, such overlapping of piety and justice does not lead to elevate human justice to the gods, but to absorb them into *human legal procedures*; by including the gods in the common law as if they were human actors thus the divine is downgraded to justification of one’s purposes²⁷.

²⁵ The fact that they are not identical does not mean that they are separated: actually, they are intimately bound to each other. Cf. *infra*, pp. 307.

²⁶ The greek word νόμος is issued from the indoeuropean root *nem*, which refer to the act of “allotting” “distributing” “dividing and so on; cfr J. Pokorny, 1948, pp. 763-764. This root, from which also the latin words *numerus* and *nemus* are derived, probably indicated the act of subdividing a territory and allotting its parts; therefore νόμος would be *what is valid in a certain territory*. The validity of the νόμος can reside on a decision of an authority (king, Assembly, and so on) or on its antiquity, insofar as the νόμος, due to its persistence over the time, has become customary and is regarded as a parameter according to which people should behave. In both cases, it is not necessary that the νόμος be written (cfr. 1373b2-4)- the *kerygmata* of Creon in *Antigone*, albeit issued from an authority, are implemented by means of heralds, not of written support; cf. D. Morrison, 1995, pp. 329-347; L. Pepe, 2017, pp. 109-137.

²⁷ If such a reading is at least arguable, Critias, the atheist, and Euthyphro the “pious” man, share more than one may expect. Cf. *supra*, pp. 149-151.

Socrates admits that he finds hard to accept such tales about the gods and probably it is for this reason someone will say that he is wrong (φήσει τίς με ἐξαμαρτάνειν, 6a6-7). However Socrates does not undertake a refutation of Euthyphro's view on Gods; rather he commits to refuting what follows from this view. Euthyphro believes not only in the legends about divine parricides, but also in stories more marvelous than these ones (καὶ ἔτι γε τούτων θαυμασιώτερα), which the many do not know²⁸. Furthermore, Euthyphro also claims to believe, this time along with the "Many" one could say, that among the gods there are war, awful hostilities and fights, and other things of such kind which are narrated by the poets²⁹. In Euthyphro's quite literal reading of the myths, in which features that anthropomorphism which philosophy always has condemned, the divine realm is a world of chaos, war and disunion; a world in which gods commit mutual injustice. This world lacks any unifying parameter, so that Euthyphro's mindset seems unsuitable for the commitment to the *holy as unifying character of all the holy actions*; Socrates asks Euthyphro to say what, in his opinion, is that feature which founds the holiness of all the holy action; However Euthyphro does not see any agreement among the gods. In fact Socrates points out that Euthyphro has only claimed that indicting his father for murder is pious; however he has not explained *what the holy is* (6d1-3). Therefore Socrates reminds his interlocutor that, although the holy things may be numerous (6d5), what he is searching for is not one or two of the numerous holy things; on the contrary, he search for that εἶδος itself *by virtue of which all the holy things are holy* (ὃ πάντα τὰ ὅσια ὅσιά ἐστιν, 6d8), since, as Euthyphro has consented, *it is by virtue of one idea that the holy things are holy*

²⁸ This could be a further evidence that Euthyphro are far from the kind of piety commonly shared by the average Athenians; in fact in these lines he claims to believe in stories that does not belong to those widespread among the common citizens. Some scholars (R. G. Hoerber, 1958, pp. 95-100; R. Klonosky, 1986) suggests that Euthyphro was close to orphism- within which myths different from those of the city were transmitted.

²⁹ This view on gods are criticised by Plato in the book II of the *Republic*, wherein Socrates provides the rules according to which the poets of the *Kallipolis* have to speak of the divine- cfr. M. Bordt, 2006, pp. 96-144. According to Vlastos, 1991, pp. 162-166, it is this attempt to moralise the gods that represents the revolutionary trait of Socrates' religiousness. Cf. R. J. O Connel, 1985, pp. 31-50; D. L. Berry, 1998, pp. 257-265; T. A. Szlezak, 2010, p. 221; Chr. Rowe, 2013, pp. 313-328.

and the unholy ones unholy (μᾶ ἰδέα τὰ τε ἀνόσια ἀνόσια εἶναι καὶ τὰ ὅσια ὅσια, 6d8-e1). Thus, by using this ἰδέα as a model (χρώμενος αὐτῇ παραδείγματι)³⁰, Euthyphro will be able to say what is holy and what is not of the actions he himself or anyone else commits (6e4-5). Eventually, Euthyphro grasps the features of the definition required by Socrates and suggests that the *holy is what is dear to the gods, whereas what is not is unholy* (ἔστι τοίνυν τὸ μὲν τοῖς θεοῖς προσφιλὲς ὅσιον, τὸ δὲ μὴ προσφιλὲς ἀνόσιον, 6e8-7a1). As Socrates himself acknowledges, the definition, providing a general feature shared by all the holy actions, is formally correct; however, it must be ascertained whether it is also true; that is to say if it is being dear to the gods the ἰδέα of all the things which are holy. The loved by the gods and the man loved by the god are holy (τὸ μὲν θεοφιλὲς³¹ τε καὶ θεοφιλῆς ἄνθρωπος ὅσιος), and, as holy, they are opposite to the hated (τὸ δὲ θεομισῆς) and the man hated by the gods (ὁ θεομισῆς). Euthyphro has claimed to believe that gods are affected by civil wars (στασιάζουσιν οἱ θεοί, 7b2) and that fight and disagreement reigns among them; from now on Socrates will attempt to show to Euthyphro that if the gods disagree with each other, it is impossible to say that holy is what they love. As it will be argued below, that the holy is what is loved by the gods is not completely false; what makes it sound or not is the kind of gods in which one believes³². To show to Euthyphro the inconsistency of his definition, Socrates will assume Euthyphro's anthropomorphic view; given that, what Socrates is going to do is not different from what he has done with Alcibiades (and Charmides too): by

³⁰ The use of the word παράδειγμα and of the verb ἀποβλέπειν would suggest that here Plato is committed to a form of the theory of ideas present in the dialogues of the middle period. Although undertaking to support the thesis of the pre-existence of the Ideas or denying it would bring too far from the purpose of this chapter, it can be said that in the *Euthyphro* Plato uses the language typical of the doctrine of Ideas. If the theory of the Ideas has already reached the form appreciable in dialogues such as *Phaedrus* or *Phaedo*, or if the *Euthyphro* is but a phase of its development is an issue which cannot be faced here. Anyway I restate that ἰδέα is a unifying and ordering instance; however this unifying instance in Plato's dialogues not necessarily is a metaphysical paradigm. Cfr. *Supra*, n. 461.

³¹ Socrates replaces τοῖς θεοῖς προσφιλὲς with θεοφιλὲς; this cannot be uphazard. Probably the reason is that, using θεοφιλὲς, Socrates shifts the focus from the object loved to the love itself. Regarding the use of this adjective in Plato cf. J. Y. Châteaueau, 2005, pp. 295-303.

³² Cfr. *infra*, p. 302.

using the words and the views of the interlocutor, Socrates prepares to build a mirror able to send back to the interlocutor his own words and thoughts, so that he can see them and become aware of his inner contradictions.

In Euthyphro's opinion, divine realm and human world do not differ from each other, and the shortcomings of the one are the shortcomings also of the other; as a consequence the reason of the disagreement among the gods should be the same as among the human. Some disagreements are quite easy to resolve, for instance those about numerical quantities; in fact two people disagreeing about them can resort to calculation so as to establish the right relationship among these quantities and stop disputing (7b5-c1)³³. Likewise it is possible resort to the measuring and the weighing in case of disagreement about lengths and weights (7c3-8). However, there are some conflicts which, owing to the lack of a measuring procedure similar to those mentioned above, bring about terrible enmities and fights among human beings; these conflicts rise from the disagreement about the just and the unjust, the admirable and the shameful, the good and the evil (τό τε δίκαιον καὶ τὸ ἄδικον καὶ καλὸν καὶ αἰσχρὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν καὶ κακόν, 7c1-2). If the divine world is afflicted by the same troubles as the human one, it follows that, even the gods should lack true knowledge of the just and unjust, the good and the evil and so on, so that continuous disagreement reigns among the gods, disagreement which lead into wars and mutual damages. In such disagreement each god regards as just, good and admirable things different from what the others gods hold to be just, admirable and good, so that each god, as Euthyphro agrees, *will love only what he holds to be just, admirable and good and regard as unjust, shameful and evil what is loved by the others* (7e1-7). As a consequence, the same thing loved by some gods could be hated by some others, so that the same thing, as loved and hated by different gods, will be both holy and unholy at the same time (8a5-8). This means also that the proceeding of Euthyphro against his father, according to the the view on divine world as a realm of fight and disagreement, would be both holy and unholy, since it would be loved by some gods (namely Zeus, who has killed his father) and hated by others (Uranus, killed by his

³³Cf. *Euthyphr.* 7b5-d7 parallels *Alc.* 112b6-c5; 126c1-d7.

son)³⁴. Being loved by the gods is not the definition Socrates is searching for; however this does not mean that it is completely false. Being loved by the gods, as it will be clearer in Socrates' refutation of the second definition suggested by Euthyphro, is *a feature* of the holy, not *its essence*; nevertheless this feature is not unimportant; in fact being loved by the gods is not a feature of the holy in the same way as the color red is feature of a table. Being loved by the gods does not grasp the essence of the holy, but it can be considered as a *transcendental feature of it*, since the holy is *what gods cannot help but love*; likewise metals cannot help but be attracted by magnets, although their essence do not resides in this attraction (or at least not only). Furthermore, as it has been said, Socrates' commitment in these lines is not showing that being loved by the gods is not the essence of the holy, but rather that being loved by the gods cannot be the essence of the holy if one assume that gods ongoingly fight and disagree with each other. On the contrary, if one assumed that gods constitute a community of rational and beneficial beings always in agreement on what is beautiful, good and just and what is not, in that case being loved by the gods would turn out to be, even if not the essence itself of the holy, *a fundamental trait of it*.

Despite this disagreement, no god, Euthyphro points out, would disagree that who has killed unjustly must pay the penalty for his crime (8b5-6). Actually, says Socrates, no man would dare to say that who commits injustice must be left unpunished; at most people may disagree about who commits injustice and which is the wrongdoing committed; however nobody would question that injustice must be punished (8d3-4). Likewise, also Euthyphro's anthropomorphic gods would

³⁴ Interesting is the case of Chronos, who killed his father and was killed by his son. Chronos should regard Euthyphro action as endowed with *opposite features under the same respect at the same time*. In the IV book of *Republic* Plato resolves the problem by resorting to the conception of a tripartite soul, so that it is possible that the same person loves in the same thing opposite features at the same time, for different are the parts of the soul which love them. Disagreement within one self is possible since soul is made up of different instances. One of the consequences of Euthyphro's religious anthropomorphism is that the disagreement *among* the gods ends up being disagreement *within* the gods; therefore divine souls themselves turn out to be prey of opposite desires, hesitant on what to do, and, what is worse, manipulable. Obviously such a consequence of anthropomorphic views is unacceptable to Plato.

agree that the wrongdoer must be punished; however they would disagree over which acts are to regard as wrongdoings and which not (8e3-6)³⁵. If holy is something loved by the gods, it must be loved by *all the gods, not only by some of them*; the love for the holy, one could say, must be such as to found a *κοινωνία* among the gods; that is to say, the state opposite to the *στάσις*, the internal conflict which Euthyphro ascribes to the divine world. Infact Socrates asks his interlocutor if he can provide some evidence that the seasonal worker unjustly died and his father unjustly let him die and that, what is essential, not only some gods, *but all the gods take to be just that Euthyphro proceeds against his father and indicts him for murder*. “If you show me that all the gods hold that your action is right”, Socrates says “I won’t stop commending you for your wisdom” (9b1-2, my translation). Euthyphro appears reticent; he should undertake a more thorough demonstration (9b2-3)³⁶. Be that as it may be, Socrates considers that, even if Euthyphro managed to demonstrate that all the gods hold that the seasonal worker died unjustly (and therefore his action against his father is right), nevertheless he would not have learned *what the holy and the unholy are* (9c1-4), since, as it has been pointed out above, divine love for the holy is a feature, albeit an important one, not the *ἰδέα* itself which Socrates is searching for. What has been reached thus far is that the holy is what is loved by all the gods, unholy what is hated, whereas what is loved

³⁵ The *Hippolytus* of Euripides enacts a similar situation: Hippolytus worships Artemis and disregards Aphrodite; as a consequence, he is punished by the goddess who makes him fall in love with his father’s wife; cf. M. Forscher, 2013, pp. 119-121. Hippolytus is both loved and hated by the gods. It is not unreasonable that behind the refutation of the first definition lies also Plato’s criticism against the religious moral present in the tragedy and epic poetry. According to this moral human life is afflicted by the opposite whims of the gods, who end up being represented as short-sighted and harmful being.

³⁶ Socrates insinuates that Euthyphro refrains from this thorough explanation because he takes Socrates to be more stupid than the judges he must persuade to condemn his father. Euthyphro has proven to respect Socrates, so it seems unreasonable that he holds that Socrates is stupid. Nevertheless Socrates implicitly hints at an important feature of Euthyphro’s character. He regard himself has superior to the other Athenians, but, at the same time, he does not wont to shere his wisdom with anyone, provided that he really possesses such wisdom. Euthyphro complains about the stupidity of his citizens; however he does not do anything to make them less stupid than he is certain that they are.

and hated by some of them is neither holy nor unholy, or is both (9d2-4). Socrates suggest that Euthyphro should consider if by this hypothesis (that the holy is what is loved by the gods) he will be able to teach Socrates about what he promised (the *ιδέα* of the holy) (9d6-7).

Holy as what is loved by all the gods: love and its object

Despite Socrates' warning, Euthyphro insists on saying that the holy is what all the gods love (9e1-2). As it has been said above, being loved by gods is a relevant trait of the holy; nevertheless it is not this love which causes the holy actions to be holy, but the holy itself. It has been pointed out by some scholars that in this section of the dialogue Socrates is committed to a refutation of that which later has been called *theological voluntarism*, the idea that morality and piety depend on divine command³⁷; as far as I am concerned, this view grasps the gist of Socrates' reasoning; on the other hand it must be kept in mind that being loved by the gods is not an accessory trait of the holy, but a necessary feature of it³⁸; gods, although their love is not the cause of the holy, necessarily love it. Accordingly, rewording the words of Philip the Chancellor, it could be said that divine love is *condicio sacrum comitans*. Let us briefly recall Socrates' reasoning. Socrates wonders if the holy is loved by the gods because it is holy or it is holy because it is loved by the gods (10a1-2). Then he provides to Euthyphro some examples to clarify his point: what is carried and what carries (φερόμενον καὶ φέρον), what is led and what leads (ἀγόμενον καὶ ἄγον), what is seen and what sees and what is seen (ὁρώμενον καὶ ὁρῶν)³⁹ and all the similar things differ from each other, one could add, since

³⁷ Cf. M. Forschner, 2013, pp. 134-134.

³⁸ *Ivi.* 136.

³⁹ If in the first two cases it is easy to see that the two terms are different, in the case of view it is not so obvious, at least is one takes into account the passages on view in other works. In *Rep.* VI, it is said that the eye is similar to the sun; the eye, having in itself something of the solar light, can look at the things in the world around, which are illuminated by the same light (VI, 507e1-b8): cf. S. Brodie, 2021, pp. 16-22. Accordingly, it is as if the eye and the seen thing, even if different, were bound together by a common element (they share the same light). Furthermore in it is in the eye that resides the image of the seen face, as in a mirror (*Alc.* 132d8-133a2), whereas hands do not hold

the one is the passive pole of the action, while the other is the agent. Likewise, also what is loved and what loves differ from each other. Accordingly something is seen because there is something which sees it, but it cannot be that something sees because something else is seen, and the same applies to the cases of carrying and leading (10b5-8). Therefore, concludes Socrates with a general statement “if something comes to light (γίγνεται)⁴⁰ or is affected in a certain way (ἢ τι πάσχει), it becomes not because is becoming, but it becoming because it becomes, and it is affected not because it is something affected, but is something affected because it is affected (10c1-3). The loved thing is something becoming or affected by something else (10c5); therefore the loved thing is loved by those by whom is loved not because is something loved, but rather it is something loved because it is loved by those who love it (10c6-7). On the contrary, the holy is loved by all the gods, but is loved because it is holy, and is not holy because it is loved by the gods (10d1-6); divine love is not the origin of the holy, but, as said above, a necessary feature of it; in fact the divine love makes the holy θεοφιλέσ⁴¹; regarding human actions, which

in themselves any image of the object they are carrying. View somehow contains its objects and is bound to them by the light. One could reasonably say that, even if the seen object and the seeing eye are different, their relationship is much more intimate than that existing between what carries and what is carried.

⁴⁰ Usually γίγνεται is translated with an intransitive verb, such as becoming, coming to be, growing and so on; cf. K. Reich, 1968, p 31; R. Merkelbach, 2003, p.40. However, as Forschner, 2013 p. 131 has correctly remarked, such a translation would lead to think that here Plato is including in his statement also cases such as, the sun rises, the ship sinks and so on; cases in which one has to do with *ergative verbs* (cf. B. Bauer, 2000, pp. 31-92). On the other hands, as Patzig, 1972, p. 293-305 states, examples provided by Plato suggest that he in these lines focuses only on those pairs where there are a subject of the action and its target. The only way to hold the traditional rendering and keep in mind that here Plato is dealing with transitive verbs, is considering this “becoming” is provoked by something different from the becoming individual.

⁴¹ If the holy is what is necessarily loved by Gods, Gods are those who necessarily love the Holy. As a consequence, this kind of love cannot be compared to the carrying something: one can decide to stop carrying something, whereas gods cannot stop loving the Holy. Thus, being loved by Gods is a transcendental feature of the Holy and loving the Holy is a transcendental feature of the Gods: it is a love, but a love the gods cannot decide to feel; loving is an action, just like carrying something; but, contrary to carrying something, it is an action which the subject (the Gods) cannot decide to stop. Cf. R. Zhu, 2014, pp. 1-15. Those scholars who have found this section flawed from the logical

is the focus of the discussion (the discussion has started because Socrates asked Euthyphro to demonstrate the holiness and piety of his action against his father) this means that holy actions must be necessarily loved by gods because of their holiness; however divine love is not the origin of their holiness⁴². Being loved by gods is coextensive of the holy⁴³; nevertheless they differ from each other, since the holy is what attracts someone else's love, but is not originated by this love (10e2-3); something is θεοφιλέξ because it is loved by the gods, so that being θεοφιλέξ is a consequence of gods' love, whereas the holy is what triggers this love. Furthermore, if "loved from the god" and "holy" were the same, they could replace each other *salva veritate*, so that the loved by gods would be loved because it is loved by gods, and the holy would be holy because it is loved by the gods, which is not possible since "loved by gods" is a property which depends on divine love, whereas the holy is that which draws this love (11a1-4). Euthyphro, says Socrates reproachfully, is unwilling to clarify the essence of the holy (τὴν μὲν οὐσίαν μοι αὐτοῦ οὐ βούλεσθαι δηλῶσαι, 11a5-6), and keeps on mentioning a property of it, "for the holy possesses this property; that is to say, being loved by gods (ὅτι πέπονθε τοῦτο τὸ ὄσιον, φιλεῖσθαι ὑπὸ πάντων θεῶν, 11a6-b1). However Socrates has not trouble to accept that "being loved by all the gods is a property of the holy and exhorts again Euthyphro, quite ironically, to tell him what the holy and the unholy are (11b1-3). Although the οὐσία of the holy has not been found, some significant points are emerged which will be the backbone of the following discussion. First of all, *Gods*

point of view (cf. A. Kim, 2004, note 3; 4; D. Wolfsdorf, 2005, pp. 1-72) have failed to understand the transcendent nature of this love, wherefore the divine love is a not chosen action ; an action which has a passive feature. If one fails to understand this active/passive feature of the divine love for the Holy, this section is doomed to appear paradoxical (cf. S. M. Cohen, 1971, pp. 1-13).

⁴² This view is as far as possible from the theological voluntarism, since the gods themselves seem to have to adjust to a criterium external to their own will: cf. G. K. Harrison, 2015, pp. 107-123. However, this cannot mean that gods feel forced to adhere to the holy, which it would be impossible in Socrates' view; as observed above, gods cannot help but loving the holy, not because they are forced, but because their divine nature prevents them from acting otherwise. These gods of Socrates are as far as possible from the gods of the homeric world, who were conceived of as autocratic rulers independent in their acting from any external criterium.

⁴³ Cf. *supra*, note 41.

do not establish what is holy; however they cannot help loving it. Socrates in this lines has launched a powerful attack against the civic polytheism: God are not whimsical rulers who decide what is holy and what is not, *but infallible lovers of an holiness independent of their will.* Furthermore they are quite far from any dispute, since they necessarily agree with each other on what is holy and, as a consequence, worthy of their love; thus this ὁσιον of Socrates is of such nature as to produce a κοινωμία⁴⁴ among the gods, the state opposite to the wars and the disagreements which Euthyphro, along with the common piety, ascribes to the gods⁴⁵; what is more, the holiness which Socrates is committed to is the same both for the gods and human beings; there is only one holiness, which gods necessarily love and man have to adjust to in their actions, so as to be loved by the gods. Accordingly the difference between gods and humans is not that the ones have to adjust to the holy and the others establish it, but that *the gods never stop knowing and loving the holy, whereas human being in their life could also never become holy in their behaviour.* Therefore, a pious man does not love what the gods want, but what the gods themselves love. As a consequence the holy must be such as to found a κοινωμία not only among gods, but also between gods and pious men sharing with gods the love for the holy. Explicitly it has been said that “being loved by the god” is a property, not the essence of the holiness; but what is concealed in these lines is that the holy is the same both for humans and gods, and it is something that, if loved also by human beings, can provide agreement and harmony with the god themselves. The human love for the holy could potentially found a κοινωμία between human and gods, since, as it has emerged in the chapter on the *Lysis*, the κοινωμία, as “community based on the sharing something”⁴⁶ is irreplaceable condition of the *care for oneself and others, a care which, being based on the search of a common good, aims to accomplish it.* If piety, as “holy behaviour” is a form of

⁴⁴ The word κοινωμία does not occur in the *Euthyphro*; however it properly shows the peaceful and ordered existence of the gods. Κοινωμία “agreement”, but also “condivision” and “community”: the gods agree on what is holy; therefore they share the love for it. Gods’ love for the holy founds a community of divine beings sharing this love.

⁴⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 296-299.

⁴⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 239-240 ; 260-263.

care, actually the highest one, as we will attempt to show, it must be also *koinopragia*, that is to say the commitment to the common good. To understand which kind of care piety is, it is necessary to grasp the common good it is committed to.

Euthyphro's aporia: the beginning of the initiation?

Euthyphro admits being unable to say what he thinks, since all the statements which he and Socrates put forth seem to move about and never stay where they put them (11b4-5). Euthyphro's statements, in the same way as the works of Daedalus, can move, and probably, also the statements of Socrates, Daedalus' descendant (11b6-c1)⁴⁷, would be moving and unable to stay where he puts them; nevertheless in this case it is Euthyphro the responsible for their unsteadiness; in fact it is Euthyphro, not Socrates, who puts the statements. Euthyphro is experiencing the socratic *aporia*, as it is clear from his inability to articulate his thoughts (11b4-5). As it has been said several times throughout this work, the aporetic condition is a death-like, intermediate moment between two phases, a previous one in which one is convinced to know, and a following one in which one *wants to know*; however, as a lack of known ways, *aporia* is the state in which it is possible, *not necessary*, to find a new way different from the previous ones; yet, something else may happen; the interlocutor, scared by this lack of known ways, could cling to his opinions even more stubbornly or may abandon the known paths to enter worse ones. For instance both the philosopher and the tyrant leave democracy behind⁴⁸; both somehow abandon the known ways, but those chosen by the latter are even worse than those which he abandons. Through the *aporia* people's inner state is revealed, not only because they come to experience the ignorance and the inconsistency concealed to

⁴⁷ The comparison of Socrates' speeches with Daedalus' moving statues may allude also to the vitality of the dialectic reasoning. Daedalus' statues can move because they are living beings. Likewise, the dialectic reasoning can move because it is endowed with an inner life.

⁴⁸ Also the young who will become the tyrannical man has had a democratic education and a democratic father. However he is misled by noxious friends whose flatteries fuel his need for the fulfillment of any kind of desire-cf. D. Levystone, 2014, pp. 35-52; I. Jordovic, 2019, pp. 183-208. Thus the future tyrannical man, originally, a democratic boy, becomes unable to rule himself. He abandons the democratic way; however, he ends up entering an even worse one.

them by their self-confidence, but also because it becomes possible to know who does not want to change his mind despite the inconsistency of his thoughts as well as, who can go out of the *aporia* and start committing to self-care and self-improvement and who, abandoned the traditional ways, may become worse than before. Euthyphro seems to belong to those who refuse to acknowledge their lacking state and prefer to overcome the *aporia* by remaining loyal to his opinions, even if they are refuted. In fact Euthyphro blames Socrates for the instability of his statements, which, says Euthyphro, if were up to him, would stay. The death-like experience of the loss of certainties can be fruitful only as long as the person undergoing it acknowledges its own responsibility for its inner inconsistency; only in this way one comes to see oneself reflected in the mirror made up of one's own words⁴⁹. Obviously Euthyphro is unwilling to do it and ascribes to Socrates the responsibility for the inconsistency and unsteadiness of his own reasoning; on the contrary, Socrates makes visible these inconsistency and unsteadiness to the interlocutor; however he is not their cause. Accordingly, it is foreseeable that Euthyphro will not be able to face the annihilating experience of the *aporia*. Quite ironically Socrates admits being even more skilled than his ancestor, as Daedalus was able to make only his own work move, while Socrates can make also those of the others move⁵⁰(11d1-3). Whatever he may be, it is Socrates himself who tries to suggest a way to escape from the *aporia* into which the discussion has fallen, in the same way as in the *Lysis* it is Socrates who, by means of an oracle, provides a way to save the discussion and carry it on⁵¹. Euthyphro, says Socrates ironically, is lazy due to his overabundant wisdom; therefore Socrates proposes to help him so that Euthyphro finally can teach him about the holy. In this case a walkable way out of the *aporia* can be found by facing the issue of the relationship between justice and holiness.

⁴⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 213ff.

⁵⁰ This is an example of Socrates' ability to direct his refutative speeches at others as well as himself. This faculty both reflective and transitive is what distinguishes souls from anything else: cf. *supra*, pp. 134-139. Furthermore it is only through such faculty, which is both reflexive and transitive, that something like *care*, which is both reflexive and transitive, becomes possible

⁵¹ That is to say that *φίλον* is neither good nor evil, but something in the middle. Cf. *supra*, pp. 263ff.

*Holiness and justice*⁵²

Socrates asks Euthyphro if he thinks that all what is holy is also just (ἰδὲ γὰρ εἰ οὐκ ἀναγκαῖόν σοι δοκεῖ δίκαιον εἶναι πᾶν τὸ ὅσιον, 11e4), to which Euthyphro answers in the affirmative; on the other hand this is consistent with Euthyphro character, as already at the beginning of the discussion he stated that the proceeding against his father is holy because he killed the seasonal worker unjustly (4b5-c1), and that it is holy to punish who has committed any kind injustice, whoever the wrongdoer may be (5d7-e1). It is clear that in Euthyphro's view justice and holiness are intimately linked to each other; however Thus far it is not clear yet if Euthyphro regards piety and justice as the same thing or he thinks that "being just" is a feature of holy actions, in the same way as "being loved by gods is of the holy. Anyway it is arguable that Euthyphro, at least until this point of the discussion, has held that justice and holiness are the same thing; if nothing else, this emerges from his resorting to the stories on the gods to explain the νόμος on punishment of unjust murders (5e3-5): according to this view, the actions of the gods found at the same time what is holy and what is just, so that, in Euthyphro's view "just" and "holy" are not merely coextensive, *but two different words to say the same thing*. This view involves that justice, as founded on gods' will, has nothing to do with what other men hold to be just (the contempt for the opinions of his citizens on just and holy is a significant feature of Euthyphro's attitude); this implies also that a man adjusting to divine will is much juster as an entire city whose citizens fail to respect this will. Noteworthy is that this is the case of Socrates⁵³; nevertheless, as said in the chapter on Charmides and also in this one, the same words used by different characters can have different meanings. In fact, if one believes in vengeful and impulsive gods regarded as undisputed rulers and masters of justice and holiness,

⁵² Cf. F. Rosen, 1968, pp. 105-116.

⁵³ Thus Socrates would never obey Athen if obeying the city meant disobeying Apollo (*Ap.* 30a1-5). As for Socrates there is only one moral order which binds Gods and Humans together (G. Vlastos, 1991, p. 164), there would be no conflicts between these two spheres. However the participation to this moral order is not the same for Gods and Humans: Gods by their own nature adjust to this order; on the contrary humans often fail to comply with it. This means that, even if the moral order is one both for Humans and for Gods, only Gods can be measure of human conduct, since human loyalty to the moral order is not as steady as that of the Gods.

the kind of justice and holiness founded on their will leads the believer to bring about in the human world the same disagreement and fight which he sees in the divine sphere; conversely, if one believes in rational and beneficial gods who are not contentious masters of the holy, *but unanimous lovers of it*, the holiness and justice based on their will leads such a believer to bring about in the human world the same harmony and agreement he ascribes to the gods. Once again, using the same words is not evidence that two people agree with each other, and if one had to take into account only the words used by the character of the dialogue ignoring the aims underlying them, one would end up saying that Socrates, Euthyphro and Critias are the same person. What concerns Euthyphro's view on holiness and justice, Socrates suggests that, even if all which is holy is just, not all which is just is also holy, so that they are not coextensive. Euthyphro admits not understanding what Socrates is saying, and this failure to understand Socrates' point may be a further clue that Euthyphro regards holiness and justice as the same, so that such an attempt to distinguish them must sound strange to him. To clarify his point, Socrates, as in other dialogues, resorts to the verses of a poet⁵⁴; however, Socrates is going to argue for a thesis opposite to that which the verses convey (12a6-7). In fact, the poet says:

Zeus the creator, him who made all things, thou wilt not name; for where fear (δέος) is, there also is reverence (αἰδώς). (12a7-b1, tr. H. N. Fowler)⁵⁵

Socrates points out that δέος is not always accompanied by αἰδώς, since lot of people seem to dread diseases and poverty and similar things; however they do not feel reverence for such things which they dread (12b4-6). On the contrary, where is reverence, there is also fear; in fact when one feels reverence and shame for something (αἰδούμενός τι πρᾶγμα καὶ αἰσχυνόμενος), one also fears (πεφύβηται) and dreads (δέδοικεν) the reputation of wickedness (δόξαν πονηρίας). Now besides "reverence" also shame has appeared. Reverence is the feeling inspired by something perceived as superior, and in this case should be the feeling inspired by

⁵⁴ Cf. *Prot.* 339b1-3. *Crit.* 44a8-b2.

⁵⁵ For the context of these verses and their author, see M. Forscher, 2013, note 325.

gods, considering that in the relationship between reverence and dread reverence plays the role of the holiness in the pair holiness/justice. Shame is the fear of being judged negatively by the others and losing their esteem as well, which makes shame a social emotion *par excellence*. The connection between reverence and shame, which in these lines is so intimate, is far from evident; whatever it may be, it is reasonable that who does not revere what is worthy of reverence or fails to revere it properly is bound to face social blame as well as the loss of one's good reputation. It is not right to say that where is fear there is reverence, but rather where is reverence there is also fear, since fear is something broader than reverence (ἐπὶ πλεον γὰρ οἶμαι δέος αἰδοῦς, 12c4); accordingly, reverence is a part of the just (μόριον γὰρ αἰδῶς δέους) in the same way as the odd is a part of number, so that *not* where is number there is odd, *but where is odd there is also number* (12c5-6). Socrates has suggested that just and holy are not coextensive and Euthyphro, despite his view on the sameness of just and holy, is quite ready to assent to Socrates' reasoning (12d3). However it is not the first time in the dialogue that Euthyphro easily gives up opinions which should be rooted in him. He believes in gods eternally in disagreement, but when Socrates shows that believing in such gods does not allow to regard that which is loved by the gods as the essence of the holy, he is ready to give up his gods and to acknowledge that gods must agree on what is pious and what is not. Such readiness to give up one's opinion would let think that Euthyphro is not so stubborn and is willing to learn from the discussion with Socrates. However, the end of the dialogue will show that he will not give up his opinions. Regarding the relationship between holy and just, it is quite clear that they not always involve each other; nonetheless, the example of number is potentially misleading, since it may allow to neglect the most significant point of the comparison between the pair holy/just *and* that reverence/fear. First of all, in numbers there is no hierarchy; in fact odd numbers are as number as the even ones and it is not possible to say that the ones are superior to the others; they simply are juxtaposed in the broader gender of number⁵⁶. The same does not apply to reverence and fear; in fact reverence is not a kind of fear among the others included

⁵⁶ Probably a pythagorean would have disagreed with this statement and argued for the superiority of the odd numbers.

in the broader gender of fear. Reverence involves elementary fears, whereas they do not involve it. Furthermore, reverence is a kind of fear superior to the other ones, since reverence and shame as well are bound to self-knowledge; reverence in fact rises from the perception of oneself as inferior to someone else who, because of their excellence, is worthy of being worshipped by others; on the other hand shame is perceiving oneself as unworthy of esteem because of one's actions; what is more shame, as in the *Alcibiades I*, can be a useful fear, since through shame one is led to distance himself from the person one has been until that point, so that shame can promote self-improvement⁵⁷. Every man fears poverty and diseases, and death (also animals fear it), whereas not all men are so committed to worship gods properly or are so afraid of not living up to what others expect from them or what they expect from themselves. Accordingly, reverence is part of fear, but not in the same way as the odd is part of number, *but rather in the same way as the pinnacle is a part of a pyramid*; given that fear has to be considered not as a $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$ whose parts are equal to each other as well as to the $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$ to which they belong⁵⁸; on the contrary, fear is a gender arranged into a hierarchy, in which some parts are superior to the other ones. Likewise, holiness, as part of just, is not a part like the other ones, since holiness involves other forms of just. In this view there is no place for a holiness intended as the compartmentalized justice proper of priests, so that who is holy may also lack other forms of justice; holiness, the virtue through which one attempts to conform, as much as possible, to the perfect harmony and divine love for the holy, cannot be a way which one chose instead of others, just as one chooses to become lawyer instead of engineer. Holiness, once again, as the pinnacle of a pyramid, requires all the previous layers; otherwise it would not be possible. As a consequence, if someone is pious and holy towards the gods, they cannot be unjust towards human beings. This casts also light on the issue of the unity of virtues, since the considering virtue as a hierarchically structured unity of different parts (like a pyramid) allows to regard virtues as deeply linked to each other and to hold that

⁵⁷ Cf. *Supra*, Chapter III, pp. 166-167, note 18.

⁵⁸ The same applies to virtues, which are to be considered a whole, but not in the same way as a bulk of gold, whose parts are identical to each other and to the bulk (*Prot.* 329d5-6).

some of them can exist also without the others, at least in the empirical individual⁵⁹. In fact, if one is only just, that is to say acting in compliance with laws of the city, one can be just without necessarily being pious, that is to say without trying to adhere to models higher than the human ones; on the contrary, who wants to comply with a love and a will higher than the human ones must be a just man, so that it appears that the unity of virtues is possible only at its highest level, whereas the lowest virtues can be exerted also without the aid of the superior ones. Likewise, a pyramid is really completed only when the pinnacle is placed on its top⁶⁰. Now, Socrates says, it would be to find what differentiates holiness from the other just, that *differentia specifica* which, within the genus, makes it different from other species, just as “being divisible by two” discriminates even numbers from the odd ones (12d4-7). If this were found, says Socrates, he would be able to tell Meletus not to wrong him any longer or indict him for impiety (12d1-2). Socrates’ trust that, if he found the kind of justice which piety, he would be able to avoid indictment for impiety suggests that Socrates think that he and Euthyphro could have found a way out of the *aporia* into which they had fallen. Euthyphro’s answer to the question about the *differentia specifica* of the holy is relevant and deserves full quotation:

This then is my opinion, Socrates, that the part of the right which has to do with attention to the gods constitutes piety and holiness, and that the remaining part of the right is that which has to do with the service of men. (12e4-6).

Holiness, piety and θεράπεια

⁵⁹ This is the solution of the *Republic*. The king philosopher is endowed also with the virtues typical of the two other groups of the *Callipolis*: the courage (virtue of the warriors) and the σωφροσύνη (the virtue of those who are neither warriors nor philosophers). Although the existence of the *Callipolis* needs three virtues, only the members of a group (the philosophers) possess all of them; whereas some other lack one (the warriors) or two (those who are neither warriors nor philosophers). Nevertheless all the citizens of the *Callipolis* are just since everyone observes their task and respects that of the others (*oikeiopraxia*). However only a minority of citizens has come to grasp the metaphysical foundation of the justice within the city. Therefore, the unity of all virtues is accomplished only in one of the members of *Callipolis*, the philosopher.

⁶⁰ The same role is played by *eusebeia* in the *Epinomis*: cf. P Lautner, 2013, pp. 85-103.

Socrates seems to be satisfied with Euthyphro's answer⁶¹. Two issues rise: firstly, the proper meaning of the word *θεράπεια* in relation to gods must be determined; *θεράπεια* is the kind of *care* the doctors addresses to their patient ; in this meaning it is a restorative cure and not a care aimed at improving⁶²; on the other hand, come occurrences in Plato's works show that several times used in the meaning of "*care aimed at improving of that which one is caring for*, so that this *θεράπεια* is synonymous with the *ἐπιμέλεια* of the *Alcibiades I*⁶³. Furthermore, *θεράπεια* may be also the *service* due to a master, to parents and in general to those whose authority is superior to that of those who serve them⁶⁴. Understanding how one can speak of *θεράπεια* in relation to gods is the issue explicitly faced in the following lines. However there is also an other issue which from now on, even if implicitly, underlies the discussion. Socrates has suggested, and Euthyphro has assented, that there is an asymmetrical relationship among the forms of justice, so that justice towards humans not always involves holiness, whereas holiness always involves the other kind of justice, so that a holy and pious man is always also just, while a just man is not necessarily pious⁶⁵. If piety, as a part of justice, involves justice towards humans, it is not unreasonable that the *θεράπεια* for the gods, whatever it may be, must involve *θεράπεια* for human beings; otherwise one would

⁶¹ Socrates' assent is only formal and does not exclude the the dialectic examination. Both Forschner and McPharran holds that holiness as *θεράπεια θεῶν*, provided that this *θεράπεια* is intended as a service, is sofar the closest to the Socratic idea of piety, which is inferable also from other dialogue, such as the *Apology*

⁶² Regarding the differences between improving *care* and restoring *cure* cf. L. Napolitano, 2013, pp. 121-148.

⁶³ Important occurrences of the word *θεράπεια* used in this meaning are: *Gorg.* 501a3-4; 517e3-5; *Resp.* 443e3; 533b4-5; 585d1-2 *Tim.* 87c1-2.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Alc. I*, 122a1-2; *Resp.* 425b1-2; 427b5; *Leg.* 716d6; 723a4; *Phaedr.* 255a1-2.

⁶⁵ This does not mean that a just man can be unholy or impious. It depends on the meaning we ascribe to the words "pious" and "holy" in relation to humans; if by pious and holy it is understood the deference to the customary religious practices, in that case everyone is pious and just at once, since carrying out these practices is a part (like the others) of the justice in a city. However, if by pious and holy we understand a person who, on account of his closeness to the divine, have abilities and *tasks* which nobody does, in that case "pious" in these meaning are only few; thus it is possible that a just man, albeit just, may be not "pious".

risk regarding holiness and piety as a compartmentalized domain of a group of people (the priests) who do not have to have other virtues, so that, in this view, a pious man could be a coward, a murderer and so on; provided that such a man adjusts to his sector-based kind of *θεράπεια*, he would be holy in any case. Obviously Socrates cannot accept such a view since the adjusting to the holy must provide agreement not only among the gods, but also between gods and humans, so that love for the holy should provide unity and harmony, *not break down reality into disciplinary fields*⁶⁶. Has Euthyphro grasped this asymmetrical relationship among the forms of justice, is he able to understand that holiness must involve the *θεράπεια* for human beings? In the pages devoted to contrasting Socrates with Euthyphro it has been said that in Euthyphro's piety there is no interest in caring other human beings⁶⁷; therefore it is not strange that he will fail to understand that worshipping gods and caring humans cannot be detached from each other. Regarding the meaning of the word *θεράπεια*, Socrates asks Euthyphro to say what he means by it; in fact Socrates thinks that Euthyphro does not mean to say that *θεράπεια* of gods is the same as the others *θεράπειαι*, as for instance, that by which the horseman cares horses, since horsemanship consists in caring horses (13a1-6)⁶⁸; just as the huntsman's art consists in caring dogs (13a10) and oxenherd's art in caring oxen (13b2-3). All these *θεράπειαι* aims at some good and benefit of that which is cared (*ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ τινί ἐστι καὶ ὠφελία τοῦ θεραπευομένου*) and the thing cared is benefitted and made better, just as horses are made better and benefitted through

⁶⁶ This is the danger rising from applying the technical model to piety. Cfr M. Forschner, 2013, pp. 153-155.

⁶⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 288-293.

⁶⁸ Horsemanship consists not only in healing sick horses (or not in first place), *but in training and strengthening, that is to say, in making them better*; this could be a hint that Socrates is alluding to a *θεράπεια* which improves and not only restores what is cared. The same view is present in *Gorg.* 464c1-d2. Crafts and technical skills serves the purpose of caring/improving something or somebody. To some extent it is not wrong to apply the technical model to piety, insofar as it must be beneficial and practiced only by few man, as any other arts; however the technical model is useless if one, according to it, risks holding that piety is a technical field like the others, with its own aims and its own methods, different and *indifferent* to the aims pursued and the methods practiced by the other craftsmen.

horsemanship (13b7-8); what is more, those who care are experts and have an expertise which make the cared being dependent on their knowledge (horses and dogs would not train by themselves). Anyway this kind of *θεράπεια* is close to the *ἐπιμέλεια/ἐπιμελεῖσθαι* of the *Alcibiades*, since they share *the purpose of benefitting something/somebody by making them better*. However the gods could not be the target of such *θεράπεια*; this would involve that gods are made better and benefitted by human beings, who, according to the technical model of *θεράπεια* outlined above, would have a technical skill on which Gods themselves are dependent; accordingly not only would gods need to be improved, but would they not even be able to improve themselves autonomously (13c7-8). Neither Socrates nor Euthyphro, it goes without saying, would never dream of saying that gods are perfectible and, to become better, they need *human care*; as a consequence, if holiness, as a kind of justice, is *θεράπεια τῶν θεῶν*, such a *θεράπεια* cannot be that through which human experts benefit and improve beings dependent on their skills. This *θεράπεια* paid to gods, Euthyphro says, will be the same as that paid by the slaves to their masters (*ἦνπερ, ὃ Σώκρατες, οἱ δοῦλοι τοὺς δεσπότας θεραπεύουσιν*, 13c4).

Holiness as service and the task of gods

Socrates concludes that the *θεράπεια* which Euthyphro is speaking of is a “kind of service to the gods” (*ὑπηρετική τις ἄν, ὡς ἔοικεν, εἴη θεοῖς*, 13c5), and Euthyphro assents to this remark. This is probably the point of the dialogue in which Socrates and Euthyphro are close to a satisfying solution of the discussion. Socrates himself in other dialogues conceives of the relationship gods/humans as a relationship masters/slaves⁶⁹; however it is in the *Apology* that Plato has Socrates say that no greater benefit than his service to the god (Apollo) (*τὴν ἐμὴν τῷ θεῷ ὑπερησίαν*) can happen to the Athenians; this service consists in exhorting his own citizens to care for their own soul before than anything else (30a7-b4)⁷⁰. In these few lines of the *Apology* both *θεράπεια* as service paid by an inferior to a superior and *θεράπεια* as caring for someone’s improvement are present; more exactly, Socrates’ service to

⁶⁹ Cf. *Phaed.* 62d-63d; *Parm.* 134d-e. Also Xenophon ascribes to Socrates the same conception in the *Mem.* I, IV, 10-11.

⁷⁰ Regarding the connections between the *Euthyphro* and the *Apology* cf. D. Solcan, 2009.

the gods involves his caring for humans; this caring, as it has been already remarked, is *caring for improvement, that is to say, helping others, as much as possible, to become able to care for themselves, make others desire to become better than they are*. Accordingly, the service paid to a god who cannot be improved (because he is perfect) involves caring those who can become better (*scil.* Humans, because they are perfectible). What is more, these lines of the *Apology*, from which is to infer that Socrates' service to the god necessarily involves care for others, match the lines of *Euthyphro* in which Socrates suggests that holiness, as a part of just hierarchically superior to the other ones, must involve also justice towards human beings. Worshipping the divine and being beneficial to other human beings go together, so that, one could say, to pay to the gods a *θεράπεια* which is as good as possible, it is necessary to pay to human beings a *θεράπεια* which is as good as possible. Socrates' care consists in annihilating humans' (Athenians) illusory self-confidence and their confidence in what they think they know or what they hold to be right, beautiful or good, so that they, "*purified*" from their unthinking attitude, become able to *look at themselves* and actively commit to their improvement. Socrates' service to the god involves that the humans which he *care for* may refuse to undergo such a purification; actually, they could end up even hating Socrates. True care involves also pain, but it is only through pain that the physician can help patients recover from illnesses⁷¹; health is not dependent on patients' will: it is an objective condition of the body which sometimes can be regained only through suffering. On the contrary, culinary is but a flattery; it does not provide what people need to preserve health in the future, *but what they long for to satisfy their ephemeral desires*⁷². Medicine uses also pain to provide a lasting healthy condition of the body; culinary art always satisfies any whims so that eventually a healthy condition of the body becomes impossible. To serve the god properly, suggests Socrates in the *Apology*, one must care for men, and to care for men, it is necessary to make them suffer, by cutting or burning them (as physicians do) or (as Socrates does) by plunging them into a *death-like* experience in which their certainties and their immediate adhesion to what they think they know is wiped away. If holiness

⁷¹ Cf. *Gorg.* 456b-c; 459a-b; *Prot.* 354a1-b7.

⁷² Cf. *Gorg.* 465a1-b1.

involves caring for men, this care must be *the proper care, that through which people becomes better*. This proper care is what the holy man must be able to provide if he want to serve the gods. It has been said that in Euthyphro's conception of holiness there is no track of the commitment to others' improvement⁷³; as it will be seen, Euthyphro does not conceive of care for humans as commitment to helping them to improve themselves; he lacks the ability to care for humans properly; ability which is the basis of the holiness.

The task of the Gods

Socrates suggests that this service paid to the gods must help the master to produce something and obviously it can be but something good; the examples provided by Socrates are enlightening: Socrates asks:

Socrates: « Now can you tell me what result the art that serves the physician serves to produce? Is it not health? (ἔχους ἂν οὖν εἰπεῖν ἢ ἰατροῖς ὑπηρετικὴ εἰς τίνοσ ἔργου ἀπεργασίαν τυγχάνει οὕσα ὑπηρετικὴ; οὐκ εἰς ὑγείας οἶει)» Euthyphro: “Yes”. Socrates: “Well then; what is it which the art that serves shipbuilders to produce? (τί δὲ ἢ ναυπηγοῖς ὑπηρετικὴ; εἰς τίνοσ ἔργου ἀπεργασίαν ὑπηρετικὴ ἔστιν)“. Euthyphro: „Evidently, Socrates, a ship“. Socrates: « And that which serves housebuilders serves to build a house? ». Euthyphro:“Yes“. (13d7-e4).

First of all it is to point out that masters in Socrates' examples are specialist of an art. This is a significant point, since this means that the service which the holy man pays to the gods is not that which a slave pays to a master who, being stronger than him, can punish him if he refuses to obey. This could have been the kind of service which the seasonal worker paid to Euthyphro's father; in this case it is status, not skills that made the one master and the other subordinate. On the contrary, the pious man obeys gods because of their wisdom. Thanks to their wisdom the specialists in Socrates' examples can produce benefits drawing on procedures independent on opinions. Physicians can produce health in a body, but health is an objective state

⁷³ Cf. *supra*, note 67.

for every body and physician can only help patients to regain it; however, they cannot establish at will what is healthy or not; the rules of the art according to which they act are not whimsical, but procedures suitable for healing a sick body. The same applies to shipbuilders and housebuilders; both act according to procedures independent on their whim in order to produce something whose good state is not arbitrarily established. As it has been said, *the good is the aim of the wise will, not its creation*⁷⁴. Likewise, gods' actions is not whimsical and adjusts to criteria in order to produce something which is good not because of their whims, but because it could not be otherwise; as a consequence, Socrates' gods seem to have not a *potentia absoluta*, but a *potentia ordinata* since they too adjust to laws which are not created by them. This is consistent with Socrates' commitment against the *theological voluntarism*, according to which holiness depends on divine love. What is more, Socrates' examples cast a light on the relationship between *θεράπεια* and justice, relationship which needs explanation. When Euthyphro said that holiness is that that part of justice regarding the *θεράπεια* of the gods, Socrates did not ask what this particular *θεράπεια* had to do with justice, as if their bound were evident. What makes this *θεράπεια* a form of justice? The answer is: *oikeiopragia*. In *Republic* Socrates says that it is doing one's own things that constitutes the core of justice (IV, 434c6-8). On the other hand doing one's own things is also the core of the care which citizens take of each other within the *Callipolis*: in fact, by producing and providing to others the outcomes of their skills, citizens benefit each other so that each of them, by attending one's own work, benefits oneself, the others and the whole (the city) to which they belongs; therefore, also this *oikeiopragia* turns out to be a *koinopragia*⁷⁵, because each one, *by carrying out their own task and providing the outcomes to the others, contributes to the common good*. In this case Justice turns out to be justice insofar as it aims at the common good, which is the same accomplishment as *caring* aims at. *Θεράπεια* in relation to gods is not benefitting them, but serving them; nevertheless the idea of the *oikeiopragia* underlies also this kind of care; in fact the only way to care for someone whose power and wisdom go beyond the human ones is serving them; accordingly, by

⁷⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 157-159.

⁷⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 126-134; 175-176; 246ff.

serving the gods the holy man act properly towards the gods. Furthermore *oikeiopragia* applies also to gods. In fact a physician helping patients recover from diseases carries out *his own task, that task which is his οἰκεῖον*, just as the shipbuilders and housebuilders attending to their own tasks; likewise, also gods have their own tasks to carry out, so that the holy man must serve them in their task. The greek word used to refer to the service paid to gods by the holy man is ὑπηρετικῆ, which means not mere “service”, but “art of serving”⁷⁶; this would mean that the pious man is not an ignorant slave who obeys whatever his masters tell him to do; on the contrary, he is a skilled subordinate who obeys a skilled master whose task is the production of something good. The skilled subordinate knows how to assist his masters and what his own work is aimed at; however he would never be able to replace his master and carry out his task. For instance, carpenter is a skilled subordinate who provides the outcomes of his work to a shipbuilder or to a housebuilder, who, thanks to carpenter’s work, can build something bigger (a ship or a house). The skilled subordinate practices an art and is able to understand the role which the outcomes of his art play in the building of a house or of a ship; nevertheless he would never be able to replace the housebuilder or the shipbuilder. Likewise, the holy man should be a skilled subordinate, who knows who to provide the outcomes of his works and which role they play in the work of the gods; however he would never be able to do what the gods do. To understand what holiness is it would be necessary to comprehend the task of the gods, and in fact several times Socrates asks Euthyphro to say what this task consists in⁷⁷, but Euthyphro answers that this task consists in many and beautiful things (πολλὰ καὶ καλά, ὃ Σόκρατες, 13e10), an answer which cannot satisfy Socrates, who, as his examples show, does not search for some accomplishments or the sum of them, *but for that unique aim underlying the different accomplishments; that aim of the divine action.* Thus generals accomplish many and beautiful things, but the aim which sums up them (τὸ κεφάλαιον αὐτῶν) is victory in war (14a1-2), just as farmers accomplish many and beautiful things, but the pursued aim is the nourishment from

⁷⁶ The feminine singular of the adjective ending with the suffix τικός stands for the respective skill, just as ἰατρικῆ (τέχνη)

⁷⁷ Cf. *Euthyphr.* 13e5-6; 8-9; 14a7-8.

land (14a4-5). Euthyphro appears to be unwilling or rather unable to say what is that aim which sums up the numerous divine accomplishments; he fails to comprehend that there is something unique underlying divine actions, and this failure recalls his inability to understand that holy actions, despite being numerous, share the same ἁγιότης which make them holy⁷⁸. Whatever it may be, thus far the ἔργον of the gods has not been clarified yet and even Socrates will not suggest what consist in; however, considering that gods are beneficial, it is probable that their task consist not in caring for an aspect of the world, *but for the world in its wholeness*⁷⁹.

Holiness as serving gods caring for the world in its totality

The *Euthyphro*, as other dialogues, provides some hints that divine work cannot be restricted to promoting human happiness: In this case the holy man and the gods would do the same thing: caring for human beings, so that it would turn out that pious man assist the gods in a task the gods themselves are not able to carry out on their own. However the examples provided by Socrates let infer that “the human art of service” serve the divine art; but these arts are not the same. As said above, among gods and holy men there is the same relationship as among shipbuilder and carpenter; only shipbuilders know how to build a ship which is as safe as possible for the travelers. The charpenter knows that the outcomes of his art serve this purpose; nevertheless he does not possess the knowledge to build a ship, but only that through which he can help those who know it⁸⁰. The same applies to war. In an

⁷⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 294-295. Cf. J. Y. Château, 2005, pp. 5-13.

⁷⁹ Cf. E. Song, 2008, *passim*.

⁸⁰I am not agree with McPherran, 1996, pp. 65-66 who states that, according to Socrates, it is impossible to a human being to grasp the nature of such a divine task. As I try to argue, the master/subordinate analogy provides more suggestions than one could think, as long as one is willing to take this analogy seriously. What is more, it is possible, as I attempt to show, that the skilled subordinate can grasp the work of his master, although he is not able to carry out his master task. Likewise nothing prevents a pious man from understanding what and on which purpose gods do what they do, although he is not able to do the same. In the same way a musician playing in an orchestra knows what a conductor does and why; however this does not know that he could replace

army officials have the skills to obey general's orders as well as possible; however only the general is able to lead the army to the victory. Charpentry is a subsidiary art because it cares *for a part of the ship*; whereas the shipbuilder cares for the ship itself, the final work which involves the art of charpenter; shipbuilders (as the hausbuilders), as says the Socrates of the *Gorgia* (503d4-504a39, make out of different parts a *holon*, something new endowed with νόμος and τάξις, which is more than the mere sum of its parts⁸¹. Likewise, only the general can provide to the army νόμος and τάξις so as to make a whole out of it, in which each part cooperates with the other for the sake of victory. Officials with their skills can help the general, but they and the general do not have the same skill since the general *cares for the whole itself, whereas his officials care for parts of these whole*. Obviously officials care parts so that the whole can be in a good state; nonetheless they would not be able to replace the general. Likewise, if the art of serving gods necessarily involves caring for human beings, it means that the work of the gods goes beyond caring humankind; Basing on the analogy, it is to conclude that Gods care for a *whole* which includes *also humankind*, just as ships includes wood and armies include horses. Gods provide νόμος and τάξις to a *whole*, a part of which is humankind. In *Gorg.* 507e4-508a3, Socrates says that:

And wise men tell us, Callicles, *that heaven and earth and gods and men are held together by communion and friendship, by orderliness, temperance, and justice* (καὶ οὐρανὸν καὶ γῆν καὶ θεοὺς καὶ ἀνθρώπους τὴν κοινωνίαν συνέχειν καὶ φιλίαν καὶ κοσμιότητα καὶ σωφροσύνην καὶ δικαιοσύνην); and that is the reason, my friend, why they call the whole of this world (τὸ ὅλον τοῦτο) by the name of order, not of disorder or dissoluteness (*Gorg.* 507e4-508a3, tr. W.R.M. Lamb).

The whole is held together by justice, a virtue of the holy man, although it is inferable from the context that here Socrates is speaking of cosmic justice;

him. The only, not unimportant difference between the pious man and any skilled subordinate is that a skilled subordinate over time may develop his skills and one day also replace his master, whereas the pious man will never develop the same skills as his (divine) masters; he will never be at their level.

⁸¹Cf. J. Dalfen, 2004, pp. 412-416. What concerns the idea of a compound not reducible to the sum of its parts, cf. *supra*, note 22.

nonetheless, if human beings are part of a whole, it is reasonable that also human justice is part of a broader justice, a cosmic one⁸². Accordingly, the holy man, being just towards the other human beings, complies not only with the human justice, but also with the cosmic order. Σωφροσύνη is also Socrates' virtue⁸³, a virtue which has a significant role in human society, since thanks to σωφροσύνη the κοινωμία among citizens is possible. Also the use of the word κοινωμία in the aforementioned lines of the *Gorgias* is relevant. Socrates' aim is to refute the idea that a life based on the *pleonexia*, the longing for having always more, can provide happiness⁸⁴; in these lines Socrates elevates his reasoning to a cosmic level; not only does *pleonexia* not make happy those leaving according to it, but *pleonexia* is contrary also to the functioning itself of the universe, which, being based on order and κοινωμία, rules out the excess⁸⁵. Although it is not so evident, also the criticism to *pleonexia* involves the praise of the *oikeiopragia*; in fact human beings are a part of a whole and the virtue proper of the part is to refrain from *pleonexia*. Everything plays a specific role in the whole which they belong to, so that complying with the limits of one's nature as a part and adjusting to the measures of the whole benefits both the whole and the part, which takes advantage of a well functioning whole. Accordingly, to preserve κοινωμία in the whole they live in (human society), human beings must adjust to the *oikeion* of the part, that is to say, refrain from destroying the balance within the whole. Only thanks to this form of *oikeiopragia* proper of

⁸² The first philosophical witness of a cosmic justice whose functioning affects everything is the fragment of Anaximander transmitted by Symplicius (DK12a9), although the idea may have been much older than the origins of western thought- cfr. E. A. Havelock, 1978, pp.263-272; J. Engmann, 1991, pp. 1-25. G. Vlastos, 1995, pp. 57-88. The view according to which the functioning of our world mirrors rules which are effective at a cosmic level is appreciable also in Plato, as Eryximachos speeches in the *Symposium* attests (185e4-188a6).

⁸³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 111-114; pp. 227-229.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Gorg.* 483c1-484c2.

⁸⁵ Alcmaion of Croton named *μοναρχία* the condition of lack of balance within the element of human body. It is probable that Alcmaeon's view of health as inner balance of opposite element was grounded in a broader view on the functioning of the cosmic order; which would not be unreasonable, considering the intimate bond, in the ancient greek medicine, between rules of the body and rules of the universe.

the parts, parts can live in agreement with each other and with the overarching whole. As said above⁸⁶, also holiness, as a kind of justice, is *oikeiopraxis*; in fact the *oikeion* of the holy man is to serve the gods and, to serve them properly, he must care for human beings. The holy man, by carrying out his *oikeion*, preserves that *κοινωνία* which Socrates speaks of in the *Gorgias*⁸⁷. By caring for others' improvement, Socrates assists gods (Apollo) in their work: fashioning the world so that everything in it is in its best state⁸⁸; just as an official, by leading the cavalry well, helps the general to obtain the victory and a carpenter, by working wood properly, helps the shipbuilder build a safe ship. An other significant passage for the idea of a whole in which gods and humans live together is the description of the *daemonic* provided by Diotima in the *Symposium*. Diotima says:

Interpreting and transporting human things to the gods and divine things to men (ἐρμηνεύον καὶ διαπορθμεύον θεοῖς τὰ παρ' ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀνθρώποις τὰ παρὰ θεῶν); entreaties and sacrifices from below, and ordinances and requitals from above: *being midway between, it makes each to supplement the other, so that the whole is combined in one* (ἐν μέσῳ δὲ ὄν ἀμφοτέρων συμπληροῖ, ὥστε τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ αὐτῷ συνδεδέσθαι). *Through it are conveyed all divination and priestcraft concerning sacrifice and ritual and incantations, and all soothsaying and sorcery* (ἡ μαντικὴ πᾶσα χωρεῖ καὶ ἡ τῶν ἱερέων τέχνη τῶν τε περὶ τὰς θυσίας καὶ τελετὰς καὶ τὰς ἐπωδὰς καὶ τὴν μαντείαν πᾶσαν καὶ γοητείαν (202e3-203a1. Tr. H.N. Fowler)

The *daemonic* holds together the whole in Diotima's speech, providing that *κοινωνία* which Socrates speaks of in the *Gorgias* and at which the holy man aim at. Actually, if one considers that the skills linked to the *daemonic*, such as divination, rituals and incantations are priestly features, it is to infer that priests, like Diotima, are *daemonic* people. Furthermore Plato ascribes to his Socrates all of this

⁸⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 308-310.

⁸⁷ Cf. *supra*, p. 319-320.

⁸⁸ It is quite reasonable that Gods' tasks is to make and preserve universe in its best condition. This is consistent with the beneficial nature of divine beings often stressed by Plato, in the *Timaeus* (29e1-30a6), for instance, wherein it is said that the craftman wanted *everything to be good* (thus he ordered that which moved in a disordered way) and in the second book of *Republic*, wherein it is said that gods are cause only of good things.

features⁸⁹, so that Socrates himself has priestly skills; in fact it is through these skills that these daemonic people ongoingly preserve and renew the bond between humans and gods. In fact gods do not mingle with man (203a1-2); this means also that gods do not care for humans *directly*; on the contrary, they care for them by means of the daemonic sphere. Since it is reasonable to say that priests are holy man, since they also practice the art of serving the gods, it can be said that holy people have a daemonic function in the human world, as they preserve the *κοινωνία* between humans and the whole which humans belong to. Socrates, as priest and daemonic man, by committing to self and others' care contributes to the great work of the gods which consists in making the world as beautiful as possible⁹⁰. Now it is possible to suggest what is the difference between holiness and justice in the *Euthyphro*, at least according to their hierarchical relationship outlined above⁹¹. Obviously gods cannot help loving just acts, even if these are not committed by holy/daemonic humans; a man who benefits a citizen of him is loved by gods even if that man has benefitted his citizen only because he is a friend of him and not because his aim is preserve the bond between man and the divine realm; according to this suggestion, the difference between just man and pious man resides not only in the different things they do or in possessing an "art of serving the gods", but also in the different aims they want to reach *when they do the same things*. A just man would rescue a comrade in battle because it is honourable and acting otherwise would not allow him to esteem himself; a holy man would rescue his companion because acting otherwise would be not only coward, but also would loosen the *κοινωνία* among him and the gods; through his cowardice this loosening of the bonds underlying the *κοινωνία* between human and divine, part and whole, would end up destroying also the city, since the part which separates itself from the whole to is bound for selfdestruction. Basing on this reading , it can be concluded that the

⁸⁹In the *Charmides* Socrates spells an incantation (the elenchos, cf. *supra*, pp. 107-109); in *Men.* 80b6 he is called " γόης" by Meno because of his ability to to make people talking to him doubt their knowledge. In the *Euthydemus* Socrates uses the coribantic dance of the brothers to officiate a τελετή (cf. *supra*, pp. 52-54). Furthermore, Socrates appears as mantis in numerous dialogues.

⁹⁰ Cf. E. Song, 2008, pp.125-129.

⁹¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 308-312.

whole for the just man is the city, while for the holy man is the entire universe. It is as if the just man and the holy man both knew well the streets of their city. However the just man knows them since he know the city, while the holy man knows them because he knows the whole Greece; the scope of his view is much wider than that of the just man. Accordingly just man cares for his citizens because he holds this caring to be a social duty; the holy man do the same for the sake of the preservation of the bonds connecting humankind to the whole. Contrasting *Euthyphro* with the *Symposium* and the *Gorgias* makes the hypothesis that the task of the gods is *caring for the whole* if not certain, at least arguable. Whatever it may be, Euthyphro will not make any attempt to answer Socrates' question; Euthyphro says that learning such things involves too much effort (πλείονος ἔργου ἐστὶν ἀκριβῶς πάντα ταῦτα ὡς ἔχει μαθεῖν, 14b1); then, he, quite annoyed, suggests a further definition of the holy, the last one of the dialogue.

Doing what pleases the gods: Holiness as ἐμπορικὴ τέχνη

However, I say simply that when one knows how to say and do what is gratifying (κεχαρισμένα) to the gods, in praying and sacrificing (εὐχόμενός τε καὶ θύων), that is holiness, and such things bring salvation to individual families and to states (καὶ σώζει ταῖς τοιαῦτα τούς τε ἰδίους οἴκους καὶ τὰ κοινὰ τῶν πόλεων); and the opposite of what is gratifying to the gods is impious, and that overturns and destroys everything. (14b1-5).

This new definition of Euthyphro recalls his first one, that is to say that holy is what is dear to the gods, and indeed it will lead the discussion to the same outcomes; in fact also what pleases the gods cannot be the essence of the holy, but a property of it, albeit a relevant one (14b5-c2)⁹². However this definition is interesting because maybe for the first time in the dialogue Euthyphro's view comes out. This definition is ambiguous, just as the first one suggested by Euthyphro: in fact, if gods are rational and beneficial beings which benefit the world and love the actions aimed at serving them in their beneficial work and those who commit them, in this case "what pleases gods" is not the εἶδος of the holy, but a necessary feature of it; on the

⁹² Cf. *supra*, pp. 300-305.

contrary, if gods are vengeful and whimsical masters whom slaves attempt to satisfy, holy end up becoming what in a particular moment matches the divine whims. Socrates' gods are powerful experts and experts not only always agree, but also *always agree on the same things*. Likewise, shipbuilders *not only in a particular moment, but always* agree on how the hull must be shaped to face the sea; in fact *the good condition of the ship depends on objective rules, not on human arbitrariness*. Accordingly gods, as expert whose action is aimed at a good accomplishment, agree on what is holy not in a particular moment, but always. Nothing says that Euthyphro has grasped what is concealed behind the comparison of the gods with human experts: the existence of objective criteria which gods themselves complies with, which they cannot change. Euthyphro has committed to a voluntaristic perspective, although he has comprehended that the unanimous agreement of the gods is necessary to define holiness also on voluntaristic basis; accordingly, Euthyphro's gods may also always agree, *but not always on the same thing*, so that gods would turn out to be whimsical and ignorant master who always agree with each other, but every time on different things. Furthermore, also the use of the verb *χαρίζεσθαι* is relevant; it means "pleasing", but also "pleasing somebody in order to obtain something from them them"⁹³. In this second case *χαρίζεσθαι* turns out to be a flattery through which it would be possible to persuade gods to do or not to do certain things. That the gods can be even persuaded or even manipulated if the sacrifices and the prayers devoted to them are convincing is for Plato unacceptable⁹⁴, since gods' decisions are unappealable and, above all, beneficial; gods are relentless experts, whose nature consists in complying with rules of their art in order to reach good outcomes. Gods cannot be averted from the good, since, contrary to humans, they necessarily know what is good and necessarily accomplish

⁹³ Cf. *Rep.* IV, 426c; *Phaedr.* 227C; 231C; *Theaet.* 173a.

⁹⁴ It is probable that Euthyphro was one of those who claimed to be able, obviously under payment, to purify the wrongdoers from their injustice by means of sacrifices and incantations, so as to placate the gods-cfr. *Rep.* 364b2-e7. Plato criticizes the opinion that gods are manipulable by means of sacrifices also in *Leg.* 906b2-d6. This opinion is dangerous since thinking that gods are easily manipulated fuels the *pleonexia*, the insuppressible longing for having more than the others- Cfr. K. Schöpsdau, 2011, pp. 444-448.

it. In the view of Plato's Socrates, averting good from a purpose would be trying to avert him from the good", because divine purposes are always good. Likewise it is absurd to try to persuade gods to do something. However this not means that for Socrates prayers are useless. There is a useful way of praying, as one can read in the *Alcibiades II*, a dialogue which, albeit being spurious, conveys thesis not at odds with what the Socrates of Plato may have said. The only correct way to pray the gods must be based on the knowledge of what is best for oneself⁹⁵. However one wants the best for oneself only if one knows oneself, so that it is self-knowledge the foundation of the correct way of praying; only self-knowledge makes possible to pray *not for what is regarded as good* (as tyrannies or wealth), *but for what is truly good*)⁹⁶. Since practicing self-knowledge is aimed at self-care and subsequently at self-improvement, only the one who cares for oneself can properly pray to the gods. Euthyphro, as it has been seen, lacks *self-knowledge*, *self-care* and is not interested in helping others improve themselves. He lacks self-knowledge because he thinks that he knows what the holy is and does not see his ignorance; he lacks self-care because, not knowing his ignorance, he thinks he does not need to improve himself; he lacks care for others: in fact he only wants to be obeyed by his citizens when he tells them what to do; however he holds them to be an ignorant crowd whose stupidity cannot be redeemed⁹⁷. Accordingly he lacks all the features which enable to pray to the gods properly. Therefore by prayers and sacrifices Euthyphro may think that it is possible to manipulate the gods in order to make them do *what people want*. Therefore, when Euthyphro speaks of "saving families and states", it seems that he is saying: "praying and sacrificing so as to please the gods allows to obtain honours one does not deserve and avoid punishments one deserve". Whatever it may be, the "art of serving the gods" involves care for human beings, that which is still lacking in Euthyphro's perspective. In fact if holiness were the art of persuading the gods do or not to do what one wants or does not want, care for one self and for the others would be impossible. In fact there would be always the risk that one could manipulate the gods to obtain or avoid something, and persuade them to do

⁹⁵ Cf. *Alc. II*, 145d4-146b2.

⁹⁶ *Ivi.* 141c9-143a5.

⁹⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 287-288.

the same for other people. This is obviously at odds with the ideal of care as improvement: if it is always possible to avert or obtain everything by manipulating the gods, one would make no effort to know oneself, what one deserves and which suffering one has to face to become worthy of what one longs for. Believing in almighty, whimsical and manipulable gods leads to the lack of interest in caring oneself as well as the others; on the contrary, the only gods in whom a man devoted to improving himself and other as well can believe are rational and beneficial beings, whose actions are eternally aimed at the good and whose will is immutable. To sum up, Euthyphro's conception of holiness leads to the lack of *care for oneself as well as for the others*, whereas Socrates' conception of holiness is founded on *this care*.

Euthyphro as bargainer: Gods als instruments of one's self-interest

Let us return to the definition proposed by Euthyphro. Socrates is dissatisfied with it; in fact, it is as if Euthyphro turned away from the right way on which they were (14c1-2). On the contrary, says Socrates, if Euthyphro had been willing to answer to his question (which is the task of the gods), he would sufficiently have learnt about holiness (ὁ εἰ ἀπεκρίνω, ικανῶς ἂν ἤδη παρὰ σοῦ τὴν ὁσιότητα ἐμεμαθήκη, 14c2-3). This remark is not to underrate. Socrates here is saying that they were close to a solution; however he is ready to deal with the new definition provided by Euthyphro and to follow him wherever he may lead (ὅπη ἂν ἐκεῖνος ὑπάγη⁹⁸). This could mean that in this moment the success or the failure of the discussion depends exclusively on Euthyphro. This has to do with the transformative nature of the Socratic dialogue; at a certain point the interlocutor will have to prove that he is actually undergoing such transformation; however, Socrates is not interested in transforming his interlocutor at all costs; Socrates has no problem leaving unchanged those who he notices that are not able to undergo the deathlike experience of abandoning their opinions. At a certain point it is up to the interlocutor to face the *aporia* and attempt to find a way out of it; if he fails,

⁹⁸ Ὑπάγω means also "leading away from" Socrates could be ironically saying: "I am ready to follow you wherever you lead me away from the right way".

Socrates will not attempt to help the interlocutor at all costs, just like a benevolent professor who, despite having attempted to help a candidate, in the end decides that he will not do anything to avoid that the candidate fails the exam. Socrates asks Euthyphro if he think that holiness is “a science of sacrificing and preying” (οὐχὶ ἐπιστήμην τινὰ τοῦ θύειν τε καὶ εὔχεσθαι, 14c5) and if sacrificing is offering gifts to the gods and preying is asking from them (οὐκοῦν τὸ θύειν δωρεῖσθαι ἐστὶ τοῖς θεοῖς, τὸ δ’ εὔχεσθαι αἰτεῖν τοὺς θεούς, 14c-8). To both questions Euthyphro answers in the affirmative. Accordingly, says Socrates, holiness is science of asking from gods and giving to them, and Euthyphro enthusiastically assents (πάνυ καλῶς, ὃ Σώκρατες, συνήκας ὁ εἶπον, 14d2). According to Euthyphro, this science is also the kind of “service to the gods” which he and Socrates were attempting to grasp. It is interesting to note that in this service to the gods the idea of a divine ἔργον has disappeared; Socrates’ “art of service” was based on the idea that the pious man carries out his *oikeion* by serving his wise masters (the gods). This service, based on the *oikeion* of the holy man, involves *caring for humans* (Socrates cares for humans by exhorting them to become better); by carrying out his *oikeion*, the holy man preserves the bonds between human and divine, so that his *oikeiopraxia*, as it has been remarked in the chapter on the *Lysis*, must lead to a *koinonia*⁹⁹. In the kind of “service” outlined now by Euthyphro the foundation of the bond between human and divine has changed; the foundation is no more the human cooperation to the beneficial aim pursued by the gods. Now the foundation of the relationship between human and divine is *need, that is to say a state of lack*. Humans needs divine power to fulfill their own desires and also gods need humans. However, how is it possible that humans can provide to the gods anything? They already have everything, or holiness would be a science by means of which the holy man makes the gods accept what they themselves do not need. Such an ability to give to somebody what they do not need is not a skill proper of an expert (οὐ γάρ που τεχνικόν γ’ ἂν εἴη δωροφορεῖν δίδόντα τῷ ταῦτα ὧν οὐδὲν δεῖται, 14e2-3)¹⁰⁰. Socrates concludes that

⁹⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 239-240; 260-263.

¹⁰⁰ If τέχναι have to be beneficial, giving to someone what they do not need could be something against the beneficial nature of the arts. For someone to accept what they do not need, it is probable

holiness ends up being “an art of bargaining (ἐμπορικὴ ἄρα τις ἂν εἴη, ὃ Εὐθύφρων, τέχνη, 14e5) between humans and gods”. Euthyphro, albeit annoyed, accepts Socrates’ conclusion. It is noteworthy that Socrates compares Euthyphro’s piety with a commercial relationship, even more when one considers what Socrates says about sophists in the *Protagoras*. In fact sophists, as merchants of disciplines (nourishment of the soul) always praise what they sell; however they do not know, and are not interested, if their teachings are beneficial or harmful to those who want to buy them. Sophists, as merchants, are interested only in fostering their profits, even if this implies damaging the buyers¹⁰¹. Commercial relationships are of such nature that buyers and sellers may deceive each other; furthermore, in this bargaining the seller is willing to damage the buyers if by damaging them he will promote his own business; accordingly in this kind of relationship it is taken for granted that the interests of the sellers often do not match and sometimes are contrary to those of the buyers. This “bargaining” is the opposite of the relationship of care; selfcare involves care for the others, so that one’s own good cannot be detached from others’ happiness. One’s own good involves that of other humans; thus true selfcare, involving care for the others, makes possible a *community*, that κοινωμία which true holiness should preserve not only among humans, but also among humans and gods. On the contrary, in the bargaining there is no interest in *community* and the only thing which matters is to foster profits at all costs¹⁰². A holiness conceived of as “art of bargaining” with the gods involves that these gods, albeit almighty, can be manipulated and even deceived; thus such an art of bargaining does not care for the bonds between human and gods, since gods are regarded as powerful, arbitrary beings to steer towards human aims. Conceiving of holiness as an art of bargaining casts a shadow on Euthyphro’s *voluntarism*¹⁰³; in

that they have been deceived. Accordingly Socrates may be suggesting that the piety professed by Euthyphro is a scam and its practitioners (Euthyphro himself) are swindlers.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *Prot.* 313a1-d1.

¹⁰² Merchants are considered a danger for the life of communities because of their interest in fostering profits, regardless of their stability also in *Leg.* XII, 950a-2. As a consequence, trading relationships between the city and foreign merchants are subject to strict rules- cf. K. Schöpsdau, 2011, pp. 247-251.

¹⁰³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 302-305.

fact if the holy man can use his art to persuade the gods to do or not to do what he wants, there is the risk that the *holy itself* is no more what the gods love, *but what the holy man persuades the gods to love*; in this way the gods are downgraded to mere tools by which he pursues his aims; that which could never happen if gods were regarded as wise and good masters whose will cannot be changed. Believing that gods have been created by human lawmakers or that they can be easily persuaded by means of a commercial skill lead to the same result: in both cases gods cease to exist as autonomous beings. Furthermore this art of bargaining with gods would entail also an art of bargaining with humans: in fact, if the holy man is able to persuade gods to do or not to do anything, he could persuade his citizens that, under the right payment, he could ask the gods to provide prosperity to them or to leave their wrongdoing unpunished¹⁰⁴. Such bargaining with humans over divine favour would make them worsen than they are; in fact they would make no effort to improve themselves and make themselves “worthy of gods’ love” since gods’ love is easily purchasable (at least for those who have substantial assets). To sum up, when a mercantile mindset spreads in human relationships and in those between human and gods, every feature of the *care*, such as preserving community, *oikeiopraxia*, selfimprovement and caring for the others, fade away, and what remains is a state in which the only thing who matters, even to the gods themselves, is to obtain immediate advantages even at others’ expences.

In any case, such an art of bargaining would be disadvantageous for the gods, since they would end up getting back from humans the goods which they themselves have given to humans; in fact humans have no good which is not given by the gods (οὐδὲν γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ἀγαθὸν ὅτι ἂν μὴ ἐκεῖνοι δῶσιν). Or, this art of bargaining is so one-sided that only humans get gift from the gods, whereas gods do not get anything from humans; therefore conceiving of holiness as art of bargaining with the gods may involve also “a mercantile art of deceiving them as buyers”. On the other hand Euthyphro points out that the gifts which humans get from the gods are not the same as those which the gods get from humans: in fact the gifts which the gods get from humans are “honor, praise and gratitude” (τί δ’

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *supra*, note 94.

οἷε ἄλλο ἢ τιμή τε καὶ γέρα καί, ὅπερ ἐγὼ ἄρτι ἔλεγον, χάρις, 15a6). Also Socrates would agree with Euthyphro that humans must be grateful to the gods, praise and honour them as well¹⁰⁵; however this may be an other point in which only the used words are similar, whereas the aims lying behind them are different. According to the Socrates of the *Memorabilia*, humans should be grateful to gods, praise and honour them, because gods have shaped humans body so as to enable them to see the sky and the order underlying the movements of the stars, and, what is the most important, because they have given to humans all what they need to be happy¹⁰⁶. Thus Socrates would suggest that humans should be grateful to the gods for the goods they have received *without begging the gods for them*. Euthyphro has not rejected the conception of the holiness as a “mercantil skill”, and in a “mercantile” view the seller is grateful to the buyer only insofar as the buyer has spented a substantial sum; according to Socrates view, humans must be grateful to the gods because they have given a lot of goods *which humans have not asked for*. According to a “mercantile mindset”, humans are grateful to gods inasmuch as gods give humans *those goods which humans expect from the gods or have explicitly requested*. Furthermore, also in praising and honoring the gods “mercantile purposes” may lurk; in fact one can honor and praise someone because one wants to obtain something from them, or one may honor and praise them after obtaining it. This is the umpteenth case in which the same words used by different characters (in this case Euthyphro and Socrates) have different meanings und serve different purposes. Whatever it may be, if humans must offer their gratitude to the gods, the holy consist in what pleases/ is grateful to the gods. Socrates asks if what pleases/ is grateful to the gods is also beneficial (ὠφέλιμον) and dear to them (φίλον τοῖς θεοῖς). Euthyphro does not notice that, by answering in the affirmative, he plunges the discussion into the same troubles which Socrates already has pointed out; Euthyphro, even more skilled than Daedalus himself, has made the discussion go round in a circle (15b5-7). In fact the holy would end up being what is dear to the

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *Phaed.* 61b; *Euthyd.* 302c-303a; *Ap.* 35d; *Menex.* 243e-244b; *Phaedr.* 229e; Cf. McPharran, 1996, pp.75-78.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Xen. *Mem.* IV, III, 15-17; Socrates' words on the gratitude due to gods is perfectly consistent with the beneficial nature ascribed to them by Socrates in Plato's works- cfr. *supra*, note 88.

gods; however in 10e1-11a3 it was already argued that “holy” and “dear to the gods” are not the same thing (in fact the holy is dear to the gods because it is holy; “dear to the gods” is a property of the holy, not the holy itself). The discussion has returned to the beginning; nonetheless Socrates claims that he will not give up until he learns what the holy is (ὡς ἐγὼ πρὶν ἂν μάθω ἐκὼν εἶναι οὐκ ἀποδειλιάσω, 15b9-10).

The failure of the dialogue

The discussion seems to fail because Socrates and Euthyphro ends up stating that the holy is what is dear to the gods, which is a property of the holy, not its essence; however how can it be that Euthyphro has not noticed that, saying that the holy is what pleases/is grateful to the gods, he would have fallen into the same difficulties which Socrates had stressed in relation to the definition of holy as “what is dear to the gods”? The answer to this question could be that, during the whole discussion Euthyphro has not learnt anything; he is always the same as at the beginning of the dialogue, although the person Euthyphro really is emerges only at the end of the discussion with Socrates, in those lines on the holiness as an “art of bargaining”. In fact this is this conception of holiness as an art of bargaining which lays behind the view of the holy as dear to the gods, and, what is more, it is this conception which leads Euthyphro to prevent Socrates from dwelling on that “divine task” in which holy men serve the gods¹⁰⁷. In a mercantile mindset what is dear to the gods is what the holy man/ merchant persuades his divine buyers to buy; it is for this reason that Euthyphro never comprehends throughout the dialogue what Socrates has told him, that is to say that *divine love is a consequence of the holiness, not its origin*. In the “art of bargaining” wares have not an unchangeable value; the merchant/holy man can play up some of the features of what is selling, while playing down some other features, so that buyers do not buy the thing itself, but what the merchant has made them to believe. Likewise the merchant/holy man, by means of sacrifices and prayers, persuades the gods to approve of something. Accordingly, in this mercantile perspective, the goods/customers do not approve of

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 320ff.

something because it is valuable in itself, *on the contrary, something becomes valuable because the gods have been led to think that it is*. Such a perspective involves that gods are ignorant; they do not know what is holy and what is not; otherwise it would be useless to try to persuade them. Accordingly, if the holy man is the merchant, the gods are wealthy customers, who do not know anything about the wares they are going to buy. This is also the reason for which Euthyphro distracts Socrates' attention from that "task of the gods" which appeared to lead the discussion to a satisfying solution. If gods were skilled masters whose will cannot be changed because its only aim is the correct execution of a beneficial task, the art of bargaining proper of the merchant would become useless and even sacrilegious. Therefore, admitting that gods have a beneficial task to carry out would involve that they cannot help but performing it in the best way; however this on its turn involves that the divine will is unchangeable, and if it is unchangeable, holy men/merchants are of no use. Euthyphro may have sensed that accepting Socrates' statements in the end would involve that his own art of bargaining with the gods is useless or sacrilegious. Thus Euthyphro would have had to admit: "I Euthyphro, who claim to be a holy man, practice an useless and even unholy art, since divine will cannot be changed; therefore, when I say that holiness is an art of bargaining with the gods, I am lying or speaking of something I do not know anything about". The conception of holiness as a mercantile skill impedes Euthyphro from grasping the relationship between justice and holiness which Socrates outlines in 12b4-d2; in fact, if holiness is a technical skill like the others, this means that, to be a holy man, one only has to comply with the methods and the aims of one's own art, just as, to be a good carpenter, one does not need to be able to build warships, but only to do what one's art requests. Euthyphro thinks that he is holy because he practice a technical skill based on ritual procedures (sacrifices and prayers), a technical skill which is selfsufficient and does not need other skills to be practiced; therefore the holy man/merchant does not need justice to be holy, because justice is a different skill, *which is different from holiness*. Euthyphro appears to have a compartmentalized view of holiness; yet, he thinks that punishing his own father is not only holy, but also just, so that holiness and justice are to some extent connected. How can Euthyphro have a compartmentalized conception of holiness and at the same time

think that a holy action is also just? The answer could be that in Euthyphro's opinion, who possesses holiness and the technical skills connected to it is necessarily also just, as if justice were something the holy man/merchant acquires because of his ability to bargain with the gods. In this way it is possible to have a compartmentalized conception of holiness, since in this perspective holiness is a technical skill like the others and at the same time think that holiness and justice are connected. This may happen when one believes that mastering a specific skill enables to talk about what one does not know. To some extent Euthyphro, who possess a technical knowledge about how to sacrifice and prey the gods and therefore thinks that he know also what is just, recalls those experts of the *Apology* who think that, thanks to their particular skills, can talk about everything, even if they do not know (but they think they know)¹⁰⁸. According to the reading of 12b4-c3 suggested in this chapter, justice towards humans is not something one knows out of the practice of holiness intended as a mere knowledge of the procedures to please the gods (or it would be better to say "a certain kind of gods"); actually justice is the necessary foundation of *socratic piety*, so that a holy man must be a just man. However, as it as explained above, justice and holiness are not the same thing, because justice is the gender and holiness a species, or, more exactly, the highest species of justice as well as the highest species of care, since the holy man, by caring for humans, serve the gods and contributes to the beauty of the world and its inner connection as well. The holy man does not serves the gods like an ignorant slave who does not know what to do; on the contrary he practices an "art of serving". If holy people serve the gods by caring for humans, their art should be connected to this care. This art could be prophecy in some cases, or spelling incantations¹⁰⁹. This would mean that there are numerous arts of serving the gods; if this is true, which is the art by means of which Socrates serves the gods? The answer may be: the dialectic.

Dialectic as art of serving the gods

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *Ap.* 22c9-d5.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 109ff.

In the *Lysis* Plato has his Socrates give an oracle to Lysis and Menexenus¹¹⁰, in the *Charmides* he spells an incantation and in the *Euthydemus* he enacts a ritual death in order to exhort Cleinias to wisdom¹¹¹. These skills, as it has been said, are connected to the daimonic sphere¹¹²; they are typical of priests and in particular oracles are prerogative of the god Apollo. Plato's Socrates can practice all these priestly arts so that he himself appears to be a priest. On the other hand, when Socrates proves to master these skills, he is always engaged in a dialectic exchange; wherefore it is dialectic which unifies all these experiences, so that dialectic is that art which *uniderlies and unifies Socrates' priestly skills*. Socrates' dialectic is an art, and as any other art, has methods and aims. Through dialectic Socrates attempts to lead his interlocutors to see the truth about themselves beyond the selfdeceptions behind which they hide their inner condition. Thus dialectic is aimed at benefitting, just like the other skills and crafts; furthermore it is based on short questions and answers, a method which discriminates dialectic from other kinds of communication, such as poetry and the lengthy speeches of the Sophists. The dialectic method involves that interlocutors are not passive listener; on the contrary, they are actively engaged in the discussion. To remove selfdeception from his interlocutors and transform their attitude towards the others and themselves as well, Socrates attempts to trigger an emotional upheaval in the soul of his interlocutors, so that they are compelled to ask themselves if they can carry on living as they have done until that moment; making interlocutors regard their life as something suspicious is what makes possible that they accept to abandon the person they have been thus far; but, it has been said often, this is possible, *not necessary*; humans are different, and this is the reason for which Socrates, in order to bring about the aforementioned emotional upheaval, cannot only rely on the universal rules of logic irrespective of the individual features of the interlocutors; individuals love and hate different things, and dialectic cannot regard them as unimportant. This is the reason for which Socrates cannot develop a mere well structured reasoning from

¹¹⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 263ff.

¹¹¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 93ff.

¹¹² Cf. *supra*, pp. 323-325.

the logical point of view; what Socrates tries to do is much more ambitious: he is not interested in convincing; he wants to change people's attitude towards their life. However, humans are different, and most of them are not willing to face this bewildering experience. Euthyphro for instance is one of those who is not willing to consider his life as something suspicious; in the end he decides to run away, avoiding facing further questions which may threaten his self-confidence. The case of Euthyphro shows also that dialectic is a peculiar art different from other skills and crafts, and this difference resides in the kind of matter which the dialectic tries to fashion; that is to say the human soul; a matter which can be much more refractory than clay and wood. Humans can resist to those who try to improve them much more than the clay resist to the potter and the wood to the carpenter. Accordingly dialectic cannot shape humans in the same way as pottery shapes vases; this would involve that interlocutors are merely manipulable matter which cannot even resist to Socrates' words; however, as Euthyphro, Critias, and also Thrasymachus, Callicles, Meno and the historical Alcibiades show, humans are quite far from being such a passive and limitlessly manipulable matter¹¹³. On the contrary, human soul is the most difficult matter to shape, but it is also that matter which, if well shaped, can bring about the great goods. The task of Socrates' dialectic, leading people to commit to improving themselves, is difficult to carry out *because it is the most important of the human accomplishments*. Socrates' dialectic is not a pottery or a carpentry of the soul, *but a medicine of the soul*, and it is with medicine that dialectic shares the most significant features¹¹⁴. In fact medicine is an art and also a theoretical science, *whose accomplishments nevertheless depend also on the cooperation of the patients*, so that neither medicine nor dialectic completely master their outcomes. Human body and human soul

¹¹³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 226-227.

¹¹⁴ Cf. M. Vegetti, 1966, pp. 3-39. The issue of the relationship between medicine and philosophy in Plato has drawn Scholars' attention from the beginning of the past century as the work of A. E. Taylor, 1911, who considered medicine one of the origin of the theory of the Ideas, M. Pohlenz, 1913, and W. Jaeger, 1934, attest. The link between medicine and dialectic in relation to the initiatic reading of the socratic dialogue will be examined in the section devoted to the *Sophist*. For the contemporary developments of the debate we refer to J. Torres, 2021, pp. 287-316.

provide to humans the most difficult challenges, and overcoming them is the most important accomplishment; as a consequence dialectic (for the soul) and medicine (for the body) are the most important among the human arts; however the importance of their issues and the complexity of their tasks make these two arts more exposed to failure than the other arts are.

Chapter VI: the *Apology*

Daemonic and Care: the philosophical appropriation of the old religion.

In the dialogues so far examined it has been observed how Plato has his Socrates act as a seer, initiator to the corybantic mysteries (*Euthydemus*), priest creator of royal men (*Alcibiades*) able to go beyond his bodily conditionings so as to judge himself and those around him. As it has remarked by numerous scholars, Plato, founding his philosophy appropriates the past and in particular, religious traditions¹. According to the reading suggested so far, it is to keep in mind that Socrates, and in particular Plato's Socrates, is not a mere human, who humbly searches for truth with his fellow-citizens; this humble and friendly Socrates, as I have tried to argue, does not exist, or, at least, it is not Plato's aim to depict such a Socrates²; Socrates is undoubtedly superior to his fellow-men, so that his very failures are worthier than the others' achievements. Plato has his Socrates tower above humankind, and especially above Athenians, through his justice and his closeness to the divine. Plato's intention to make out of Socrates a man superior to everyone is appreciable also in the *Apology*, where, as it will be seen, Socrates has been depicted as the *daemon* of Athen. In fact, in the lines in which Socrates rejects the accusation of atheism (*ap.* 27b3-28a1), the philosopher argues that it is impossible to believe in things which pertain to *daemons* (δαίμονια) without believing in daemons, which are gods or children of gods; in the same way it is impossible to believe in things which pertain to horses (ἵππικά) without believing in horses' existence. The daemonic and divine thing sign, which sometimes prevents Socrates from doing what is about to do, is one of those δαίμονια, those things which pertain to daimons; accordingly, it is as if Plato had his Socrates implicitly say: "I, Socrates, am affected by something which pertain to daemon, because I am a daemon". This reading enriches Diotima's

¹Cf. A. Dieterich 1893; P. E. More, 1921, pp. 1-22, M. L. Morgan, 1990; P. Kingsley, 1995; Chr. Schefer, 2004, pp. 222-236; A. Lefka, 2013; A. Nothingale, 2021, pp. 1-45.

² This is the Socrates that Hannah Arendt, 2015, sees depicted in Plato's dialogues (L. Napolitano, 2018, pp. 121-137).

speech on the nature of the daemonic (*symp.* 202d13-203a2) and shows that the boundaries between daemon and daemonic man are softer than one thinks they are; as it will be argued, Socrates can be regarded as a daemonic man, if compared to cosmic forces, such as Eros; whereas he himself is a daemon if compared to his fellow-citizens. Elevating Socrates to the rank of daemon is consistent with the attempt on Plato's part to appropriate the heritage of greek religious traditions; however it is right to wonder which part of greek religion Plato appropriates in the *Apology* so as to make a daemon out of Socrates, that is to say to which tradition the particular kind of daemon that Socrates is is connected³. It will be argued that this kind of daemon is to trace back to Hesiod, the first who outlined a distinction between gods and daemons. The daemons of Hesiods are custodians of humankind, a feature which Plato ascribes to his Socrates in the *Apology*⁴. Nevertheless, Socrates is a peculiar kind of custodian; he does not care humans from behind the scenes and irrespective of their will to be cared; Socrates is a daemon *who can care only those who want to be cared*. Socrates is not only a custodian; infact, as a daemon, he is a model of moral conduct and courage⁵. Socrates, like the soul of a man of the golden age, takes care for Athenians of his time, not only by exhorting

³ As it has been seen thus far, Plato appropriates different traditions (B. M. Dinkelaar, 2020, pp. 36-62), not only one. In the *Euthydemus* is the practice of Corybantic ritual is to appreciate, whereas in the *Charmides* Socrates comes across as a priest-physician like those worshipping Zalmoxis. In some important works of the middle period, such as the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* (but also in the *Gorgias*) the presence of orphism is much more relevant, as A. Bernabé (2013a, pp. 117-151) rightly has pointed out, whereas in other dialogues the eleusinian mysteries are present (Chr. Riedweg, 1987; V. Adluri, 2006, pp. 407-423). Plato appropriates all these traditions; however this appropriation is not disordered, because all these different religious features are subsumed by Plato under an overarching frame, that is to say Socrates' worship of Apollo. Apollo becomes the god who towers above any other divinity, just like philosophy now towers above and incorporates the preceding traditions

⁴ Already D. El Murr, 2010, pp. 277-297, points out how the passages regarding *daemons* in the *Work and days* were important to Plato and how he appropriated them. D. El Murr also highlights the paradigmatic nature of Hesiod's *daemons*. The following exploration of the link between Hesiod's *daemons* and Plato's Socrates grows out of the remarks of the mentioned essay, which nonetheless did not enlighten this link in the case of the *Apology*.

⁵ Cf. *infra*, pp. 373-376.

them to pursue virtue and justice, but also by acting as a model of what he says; he leads by examples, by his own life. Accordingly Daemons in the *Apology* turn out to be those whose life have been so admirable that they have become model of conduct for humankind (like Achilles). Before facing Plato's appropriation of the features of a daemon, it is necessary to face the analysis of the word δαίμων in Hesiod. Then it will be argued how Socrates is a daemon, not of all humankind, but of a part of it (the Athenians). Then, it will be argued the connection between Socrates' daemonic nature and the oracle given to Cherephon.

Hesiod and the Daimons

In the *Cratylus* Plato suggests that the word δαίμων comes from δαήμων, issued from the verb δαήναι (to know, to be expert in); accordingly a δαίμων is someone wise, expert, who masters an art (*Crat.* 398b5-c4). However it is more probable that δαίμων is issued from the proto-indoeuropien root *da-*, which refers to distribution, divisions and allotment⁶. Δαίμων is someone who divides something in order to distribute its parts. Consequently Zeus in the *Iliad* is the supreme δαίμων because he distributes to each mortal joy and pain, accomplishments and failures. Consequently, δαίμων comes to acquire a passive meaning; it is not only the divine distributor, but also *what has been distributed*; in this way the word δαίμων acquire the meaning of “destiny”, as the totality of what gods have allotted to the mortals⁷. According to this meaning, a δαίμων is not a being, but a quality, the quality of a divine being inasmuch it, by means of its “allotment” shapes the human life⁸. However, not only gods, but also humans can be daimons, inasmuch it is possible to them. In *Il.* III, 182 Agamemnon is called ὀλβιοδαίμων “endowed with a happy daimon” or “happy as a daimon”⁹. Agamemnon, as a king and leader of the greek

⁶J. Pokorny, 1959, pp. 538-539. From the same root are issued other greek words referring to the sphere of division and distribution, such as the verbs δαίζω and δατέομαι and substantives δαίτρον and δαῖσις. In the modern languages the presense of the same root can be observed in the english *deal* and in the german *teil* and also in *day* and *tag*, as parts *into wich time is divided*.

⁷ Δαίμων as the destiny allotted to the mortals occurs in *Il.* II, 132-137; *Od.* III, 26-28.

⁸ Accordingly gods are *daemons* insofar as they distribute to each human his/her destiny.

⁹This is the rendering of the adjective suggested by M. Untersteiner, 1939, p. 105.

armies, has the power to “distribute” to his soldiers their own task, and thus he shapes their conduct by telling them what they can do and what they cannot. Besides, δαίμων refers to the limits of those who are subject to its power; it is the manifestation of something invisible (the gods) which brings about the failure of the human aims, or a royal power which can be criticised only at risk of consequences¹⁰. Accordingly, the δαίμων in Homer refers to a force which hinders and makes human purposes fall¹¹. In Homer it is possible to find Gods which, as daimons, allot to humans their destiny, and human leader who, endowed with a power which recalls that of the Gods, are daimons, that is to say distributor of honours and punishments, to the other humans. The δαίμων is also the individual destiny, and consequently that force which pushes back mortals into the limits of their own destiny when they attempt to escape from them; what is lacking in Homer, is a clear distinction between δαίμων and gods; such a distinction is present in Plato’s *Symposium* (202d1-e1). However its origins, as it will be seen, are to be trace back to Hesiod. Also in this case the idea of distribution of the old proto-indoeuropean root is present; however this time the δαίμων is not only the distributor, but that being to which *gods have allotted a task, that of serving as a custodian*. The δαίμων as that being occupying an intermediate region between humans and gods is going to rise: it distributes *its care to mortals, because gods have distributed to him the task of watching over them*.

Works and Days: *daimons as custodians of humankind*.

In Hesiods’ works the function of the gods as great distributors of the destiny to mortals has not disappeared¹²; nevertheless Hesiods prefers to use the words θεός and ἀθάνατος rather than δαίμων to refer to gods. In the *Work and Days*, the men

¹⁰This is the case of Thersites, beaten by Odysseus for having criticising Agamemnon before the greek army (*Il.* II 224-242)

¹¹Cf. *Od.* XXIV, 305-306. Cf. M. Untersteiner, 1939, pp. 100-101.

¹² Cf. E. Pellizer, 2011, pp. 255-272.

of the golden age (111-120), after their death, become custodian and *distributors of health* to mortals¹³:

But after the earth had covered this generation—they are called pure spirits dwelling on the earth (δαίμονες ἄγνοι ἐπιχθόνιοι ἐσθλοί), and are kindly, delivering from harm, and guardians of mortal men (ἀλεξίκακοι, φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐσθλοί); for they roam everywhere over the earth, clothed in mist and keep watch on judgements and cruel deeds, givers of wealth; for this royal right also they received (καὶ τοῦτο γέρας βασιλῆιον ἔσχον). (*Erga*, 121-126, Tr. H. G. Evelyn-White).

These δαίμονες are the dead men of the golden age who keep dwelling on earth as custodians; as provider of wealth they recall homeric kings who, as δαίμονες, allot land to their soldier, and indeed providing wealth, that is to say land and possessions, is one of the royal prerogatives, as it is explicitly said in the quoted verses¹⁴. Δαίμονες deliver also from harm and this is telling; in fact in the *Charmides* Socrates claims to have the remedy Charmides needs to heal from the headache; but it has been already seen that this remedy is but σωφροσύνη a virtue of the soul¹⁵. These δαίμονες are ἀλεξίκακοι; they protect from evils. In the *Alcibiades* Socrates attempts to initiate Alcibiades into a life imbued with σωφροσύνη, the knowledge of oneself and the others which is ἀλεξιφάρμακον, the antidote against the temptations coming from the *demos*. Besides, in both cases Socrates acts on Apollo's behalf, god of medicine and also of σωφροσύνη, a virtue which in Plato's works is deeply connected to the god Apollo¹⁶; in both dialogues Socrates, on behalf of his god, tries to provide two young men with a remedy so as to prevent them from being harmed from their entourages (Critias and

¹³The first generation of humans created by Gods; they lived in peace and prosperity, they did not need to work to survive, because the earth bare to them all they needed. They were also just and wise, so that they did need neither laws nor trials; accordingly they completely ignored private injustice and wars.

¹⁴ It is to keep in mind that the rightful distribution of wealth is a relevant theme to Hesiod, whose brother Perses, after squandering his inheritance, prosecuted Hesiod and, by corrupting the judges, managed to seize his brothers' goods.

¹⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 109ff.

¹⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 228-229.

Charmides' lovers for Charmides, and Pericles and the democratic politicians for Alcibiades). However, despite these important similarities, there are also relevant differences between Socrates and the men of the golden age who act as *daimons* on earth. The latter are said to deliver from harm, but nothing is said on what the harmed ones must do to be healed; probably they may have prayed or made offerings to the daemon whose benevolence they wanted to draw, or perhaps the daemons acted on their own regardless of human choice to resort to them. In any case, it seems not so difficult to gain their favours. On the contrary, both Charmides and Alcibiades must undergo a dialectic torture to be healed by means of σοφροσύνη; dialectic examination is an initiation during which the interlocutor has to face the most insidious of the enemies, onemself, or, to say better, that self he has been until Socrates refutation, and he will be able to benefit from the intercourse with socrates only provided that he is ready to kill (go beyond) that self. Accordingly it is not easy to benefit from socratic caring, and Socrates himself is not an easy daimon to deal with. Besides, it is quite probable that Hesiods' daimons only prevent from bodily evils, such as illness or poverty, as their quality of distributor of wealth seems to suggest; Socrates on the contrary attempts to free from the evils of the human souls, so that hesiod's daimons care for the body, intended as everything visible and public in the human life¹⁷, whereas Socrates tries to care the invisible and innermost part of humans. But this is consistent with the relationship Socrates establishes between the state of the soul and visible and public goods; if the soul is in a good state, the soul is able to preserve also the bodily and visible goods, such as wealth and reputation. On the contrary, if a soul is in an evil state, the soul is unable to preserve those goods and is bound to lose them; actually, for someone whose soul is in a bad condition, wealth, reputation, health, bloodline and courage itself are bad things. The good state of the soul is not a good like the others, but the one which makes good the other things; therefore caring for soul does not mean neglecting the other aspects of human life, but caring for them starting from a higher principle. Thus, it can be said that Hesiod's daimons cares

¹⁷ Cf. *supra*, p. 152-153.

earthly good starting from earthly good, whereas Socrates *cares earthly goods starting from the soul*.

In Hesiod's aforementioned lines it is said that daimons keep watch on human justice and cruel deeds (οἳ ῥα φυλάσσουσίν τε δίκας καὶ σχέτλια ἔργα). It is probable that what daemons are supposed to do is that human justice is fairly administered. This is another quality of the Hesiod's daemons which the Socrates of the *Apology* share with them. In *Ap.* 32a9-b5 Socrates reminds the judge of the Assembly that he, as prytaneis, at risk of his life, took position against those who wanted to try and execute together the generals of the Arginusae, since such a measure was illegal; in fact, according to the laws, each general should have been judged individually and sentenced according to his own responsibilities¹⁸. However, in the end the faction favorable to the summary trial got the better of their adversaries and the generals were sentenced to die. Under the regime of the thirty tyrants he refused to bring to Athen Leo of Salamis, who was sentenced to die in absentia only because he was an eminent exponent of the democratic regime (32c5-9). Although the oligarchic regime was powerful at that time, Socrates preferred face death than commit injustice and impiety¹⁹ (32d1-e1). Both the daemons of the *Works and Days* and Socrates keep watch on the correct course of human justice; however, as the two examples from the *Apology* show, Socrates is ready to put at risk his own life in order to prevent his fellow-citizens from committing injustice, whereas Hesiod's daemons, who already have died, are not involved in the suits they are supposed to watch over. The daemonic caring for correct application of human justice may shed light on the law-abidingness shown by Socrates in the *Crito*. In the *Crito* the Laws of Athen tell Socrates that, if he escaped from the prison, the city would be overturned, since a city in which the sentences of the trials

¹⁸ Cfr. Xen. *Hell.*I, 7, 4; *Mem.* I, 1, 18; IV, 4, 2; Arist. *Cost. Ath.* XXXIV; Diod. Sic. XIII, 100-103. Cf. D. Kagan, 2013, pp. 354-376.

¹⁹*Ap.* 32d1-2: οὐ λόγῳ ἀλλ' ἔργῳ αὐτῷ ἐνεδειξάμην ὅτι ἐμοὶ θανάτου μὲν μέλει, εἰ μὴ ἀγροικότερον ἦν εἰπεῖν, οὐδ' ὀτιοῦν, τοῦ δὲ μηδὲν ἄδικον μηδ' ἀνόσιον ἐργάζεσθαι. Socrates is the most pious of all the men (Xen. *Mem.* IV, 8, 11). According to what it has been said in the chapter on the *Euthyphro*, the most pious of the men is also the justest, since justice and piety are not two different virtues. Piety is the pinnacle of the justice, so that it is impossible to arrive to the pinnacle of justice without passing the previous steps. Cf. *supra*, pp. 308-312.

are ignored by the private citizens is bound to be overturned (50a9-b5). Socrates' concern in this lines is not that of a mere law-abiding citizen. He does not restrict himself to comply with laws; he fears that, if he ignores the sentence of the trial, he would weaken the stability of the city. Socrates in these lines is regarding the city and its laws not as an allmighty system before which citizens have to bow down, but as a fragile being which is even too easy to destroy. By giving up escaping from the prison, Socrates means not only to observe the laws, but also to protect them. This is not at odd with the depiction of the Laws as Socrates' parents, whom it would be unholy to force, in the same way as it would be unholy to force one's own father and mother (51a1-c3). Sure, the Laws of Athens made the marriage of Socrates' parents possible (50d1-5); then they provided to Socrates the rightful education (50d6-e1). Therefore Socrates is son and servant of the Laws which have made his life and education possible. However Socrates is not only son and servant of the Laws; actually he also commits to protecting them; accordingly it can be said that, if the Laws of Athen are Socrates' true parents, Socrates is a son who has been grown up so well that he is able to protect his parents (the Laws) in case they are too weak to protect themselves. It is for this reason that Socrates is not only a son and servant of the Laws, but also their *care-taker*; a task which a mere law-abiding citizen cannot commit to. Given that, it can be concluded that Socrates' law-abidingness is not that of the common citizen. Socrates is law-abiding in the same way as a magistrate could be, that is to say someone who not only has been shaped by the laws of their community, but also protects them from the attacks of those who want to destroy them. It is in his being not only son, but also *care-taker* of the Laws of Athens that Socrates' daemonic nature resides. The e of the *Works and Days* are custodians of the lawfulness in the criminal justice; thus it is Socrates, who, as daemon of Athen, guards the laws of his city.

In the hesiodic lines it is said that daimons roam on earth, clothed in mist. Regarding the roaming, also this trait seems to be shared by the Socrates of the *Apology*. Infact, Socrates, attempting to find out how he is the wisest of the men, starts *walking around in order to examine those who are traditionally regarded as*

wise by common people, namely the poets, the politicians and the craftsmen²⁰. In the same way the hesiodic daemons roam on earth in order to guard the legitimacy of human lawsuits, likewise roams Socrates in order to understand the meaning of the oracle and verify people's claim of wisdom. Socrates, in spite of his roaming, never abandons the territory Athens; his roaming unfolds within the city.

An other interesting resemblance between the Socrates of the *Apology* and the daemons of the *Works and Days* is to infer from the use of the verb ἀεροβατεῖν in 19c3. Socrates is saying that Aristophanes enacted in his comedy (the *Clouds*) a Socrates walking through the air and dealing with other nonsense about which Socrates says he does not know anything. Socrates walking through the air recalls *Clouds* 225-234, where Socrates explains to Strepsiades that, to know the celestial things (τὰ μετέωρα πράγματα), it is necessary to mix one's thought and intelligence with the ἄηρ which is of the same nature²¹. The word ἄηρ is rendered as air, and in the *Clouds* this "walking through the air" recalls also the fact that, when Strepsiades sees Socrates for the first time, the philosopher is hanging in the air. This walking through the air may hint at Socrates' ability to be in more than a place at the same time, an ability which is ascribed to Pythagoras and his earlier disciples²². In the *Apology* Socrates claims his non involvement in such practices as walking through the air, even if he himself says that he does not regard such an ability as something

²⁰ The Socrates of the *Sophist* asks if the Stranger of Elea is not a god come to refute them (216a-5-b6). Theodorus answers that the stranger is not a *god* himself, but is a divine man. The Stranger is someone who has roamed, has changed place; furthermore he is divine, θεῖος. If one interprets θεῖος as similar to gods, the adjective indicates someone superior to a mere human, close to divine nature, but not god; someone who recalls a daimon. A daemon who, in the case of the *Sophist*, has come to test his interlocutor on what they think that the being is. S. Montiglio, 2005, pp.153-154.

²¹ Here Aristophanes has his Socrates follow the theories on the ἄηρ typical of Diogenes of Apollonia, according to which the intelligence (νόησις) comes to men and other beings (the gods?) from the surrounding ἄηρ (DK 64 A 19; B 5). Cf. K.J. Dover, 1968, pp. 127-128; P. W. Waerdt, 1994, p. 61. It is clear that Aristophanes is ascribing to Socrates an epistemological theory according to which the similar (the celestial things which originate from the ἄηρ) is known by means of the similar (the νόησις which comes from the ἄηρ). Cf. D. Konstan, 2011, pp. 75-91.

²² A. Stavru, 2018, p. 144. This could be also an allusion to Abaris' ability to fly. It is important to keep in mind the presence of Diogenes of Apollonia in these verses; in fact moving through the air can be intended as the sign of Socrates connection with the element in which the Intelligence resides.

irrelevant; however if one keeps in mind the resemblance between Socrates and Hesiod's daemons, this *aerobatein* is something which Socrates is necessarily expert in. Infact if one intended the ἄηρ of the compound ἀεροβατεῖν not as mere air, but as “moisture” “fog” “dump”, which is the most ancient meaning of the word ἄηρ²³, the verb ἀεροβατεῖν would end up meaning “walking in a misty fog”; which is exactly what the daemons do. In the aforementioned verses of the *Theogony*²⁴. It is said that the daimons carry out their tasks as custodian of justice and givers of wealth “clothed in mist”(ἡέρα ἐσσάμενοι); this mist they are clothed in serve the purpose of making them invisible so that they can watch on justice so that nobody becomes aware of their action. If Socrates, like the Hesiods daimons, walks “clothed in the mist”and this invisibility allows the daimons to watch on human justice without being involved in it, how is this invisibility to understand in relation to Socrates and the importance he ascribes to justice? In what sense is Socrates “invisible”? In order to understand in what sense Socrates is “invisible”and how this invisibility has allowed him to watch on justice in his city, it is useful to contrast *Ap.* 32e2-33a5 and *Gorg.* 521d6-e4, two passages which only seemingly are at odds with eachother. In the mentioned lines of the *Apology* Socrates says that he has survived so many years in Athen because he always has backed out of public affairs (τὰ δημόσια); infact if he, as a public personality, had tried to act in a way worthy of a good man and to help just people, he already would have died. In the lines of the *Gorgias* Socrates claims to be one of the few Athenians who truly commit to political art and run political affairs (οἶμαι μετ' ὀλίγων Ἀθηναίων, ἵνα μὴ εἶπω μόνος, ἐπιχειρεῖν τῇ ὡς ἀληθῶς πολιτικῇ τέχνῃ καὶ πράττειν τὰ πολιτικὰ μόνος τῶν νῦν). Socrates, when he utters his speeches, he aims not at flattering those who listen to him, but at improving them. As it is said in the *Alcibiades*, improving someone means improving their soul, and in the *Gorgias* Socrates, resorting to the model of the crafts, says that every craftman aims at bringing order and beauty into the matter he deals with so as to bring it into the better state according to the pursued aim (503d4-504a3); thus the constructor of ships bring order and beauty into the

²³According to the reading of P. Kingsley, 1995, pp. 24-26, who finds this meaning of ἄηρ in Empedocles doctrine of the four roots.

²⁴ Cf. *supra*, p. 343.

wood so as to build a ship which can face the sea, and the doctor, by means of his art, brings into a sick body that order and that beauty from which health originates. In the same way the good and expert rhetorician will utter speeches from which justice (δικαιοσύνη) and temperance (σωφροσύνη) originate in his citizens' souls²⁵. If Politics, according to Socrates, is the art of caring those who live in a *polis*, that is to say, improving them by making them juster, Socrates ends up being one of the few who, by their speeches, try to instill justice in their citizens; Socrates, according to the *Gorgias*, is the only who truly runs public affairs, since he speaks for the sake of the best, not of the pleasant, that which will make him hateful to the Athenians. So Socrates is the only one who cares for true politics in the *Gorgias* and also the one who never has committed to public affairs in the *Apology*; and both statements are true: Socrates' "invisibility" resides in the fact that, except for the lawsuit of the Arginusae, he never partakes in the "institutional" policy of Athens; this refraining from the policy embodied in the courts of law and in the assembly has made Socrates somehow invisible, providing him with that ἄηρ, that misty fog behind which he cares justice without "being seen" doing it. His care for justice, as the *Gorgias* suggests, resides not only in watching over the procedural correctness of human lawsuits, but also, and in first place, in caring for the good state of souls; a soul in good state is a just one, and a just soul is bound to take right choices. Accordingly, Socrates is once again similar and different from Hesiods' daimons. He is similar because like them he roams "not seen", and not seen cares for justice; however he is also different because daemons care justice in its institutional features, while the justice Socrates care for, is that of the soul; a form of justice which makes possible that also the institutional one works. Therefore I would suggest that the ἀεροβατεῖν of *Ap.* 19c3 can be read at least in two ways. It is an allusion to a scene in the *Clouds*; but it may be also, as I have argued, a daemonic feature, a "walking in a misty fog" so as to be invisible and carry out his tasks without being noticed.

²⁵ Both in the *Alcibiades* and in the *Gorgias* Socrates attempt to lead to the pursuit of σωφροσύνη his young interlocutors; hence he displays in these two dialogues a feature of the true rhetorician of *Gorg.* 500d6-504e4.

Daimonion as the feature of a daimon

Before coming back to the *daimonion*, it is useful to spend some words about the common understanding of what a *daimon* is in Plato; an understanding which is based on Diotima's speech on Eros' nature in the *Symposium*²⁶. The passage which deserves full quotation:

Interpreting and transporting human things to the gods and divine things to men; entreaties and sacrifices from below, and ordinances and requitals from above (ἐρμηνεῦον καὶ διαπορθμεῦον θεοῖς τὰ παρ' ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀνθρώποις τὰ παρὰ θεῶν, τῶν μὲν τὰς δεήσεις καὶ θυσίας, τῶν δὲ τὰς ἐπιτάξεις τε καὶ ἀμοιβὰς τῶν θυσιῶν): being midway between, it makes each to supplement the other, so that the whole is combined in one (ὥστε τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ αὐτῷ συνδεδέσθαι). Through it are conveyed all divination and priestcraft concerning sacrifice and ritual and incantations, and all soothsaying and sorcery (διὰ τούτου καὶ ἡ μαντικὴ πᾶσα χωρεῖ καὶ ἡ τῶν ἱερέων τέχνη τῶν τε περὶ τὰς θυσίας καὶ τελετὰς καὶ τὰς ἐπιδὰς καὶ τὴν μαντείαν πᾶσαν καὶ γοητείαν). God with man does not mingle: but the spiritual is the means of all society and converse of men with gods and of gods with men, whether waking or asleep. Whosoever has skill in these affairs is a spiritual man (καὶ ὁ μὲν περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα σοφὸς δαίμωνιος ἀνὴρ) to have it in other matters, as in common arts and crafts, is for the mechanical. Many and multifarious are these spirits, and one of them is Love (*Symp.* 202e3-203a2 Tr. H. N. Fowler).

This lines seems quite clear: daimons and, in general, the daimonic on the whole (πᾶν τὸ δαίμωνιον) are charged with making possible and keeping the intercourse between two different and distant spheres, the divine realm and the human world; the skills by means of which this bond between earth and heaven is preserved are the arts of priests, those men and women who are able to preserve the communication between human and divine; skills which, as seen in the previous chapter, Socrates appears to practice, and it could not be otherwise, since Socrates,

²⁶ For the developments of the demonology within the academy after Plato cfr. J. M. Dillon, 2004, pp. 123-141.

as the *Symposium* suggests, is the *daimonic man par excellence*²⁷; besides, it seems to be clear that there is a difference between *daimons* and *daimonic human*, so that what should be out of question is that human are different from daimons, that is to say that daemons and humans (even the daemonic ones are different beings). Nevertheless a difficulty lurks in this lines, a difficulty which prevents from considering this difference as taken for granted. It has been seen that in Hesiod *daimons* are human souls roaming on the earth and watching over human justice and health; in this case there is no difference between humans and daemons, since daemons themselves are the souls of quite worthy human beings (those of the golden age) who, after death, keep the role of *care-taker*; at most, and this is not negligible, it can be added that not all human souls become daemons, but only few of them (those of the golden age). What is more, it seems that particularly “superhuman” humans, as those of the golden generation are, are not daemon during their life on the earth, that is to say, when their soul are still bound to bodily conditionings; they become daemons only when they are free from these conditionings²⁸. After all, it is not unusual, in greek as well as in roman religion, to believe that some praiseworthy individuals after death go beyond the human nature, since during their life their deeds has proven that they were superior to the other humans; already as bodily beings they had showed that no human could equal

²⁷ Cfr. *Symp.* 204d1-5. Eros, the great daimon, is philosophos; he strive for a wisdom which he does not have. Therefore philosophy, as such a striving for wisdom, is of daimonic nature. The quoted lines and Diotima’s entire speech can be regarded as a further example of the appropriation of greek religion Plato is pursuing. Diotima, the priestess, conveys to Socrates, the philosopher, her knowledge on Eros and its daimonic nature. To some extent, by sharing this wisdom with Socrates, Diotima is not only enlightening him about Eros’ nature and skills, but is also designating him as her successor. Accordingly, philosophy is, we can say, the ultimate daemonic skill. Infact Socrates is philosopher; that is to say *daimonic lover of wisdom*. As daimonic himself, he can understand Diotima’s speech on daimonic nature better than anyone else- cf. E. S. Belfiore, 2012, pp. 7-8; 190-196.

²⁸ The same says Apuleius (*de genio Socratis*, XV). A similar view on guardians is appreciable in Plutharch’s *The genio Socratis* (591). Interesting is that, according to these lines, to become daemons, souls do not have to separate from the body, as they can overcome the bodily conditionings even during the earthly life; that which means that some humans, already in their bodily life, have gone beyond the human nature- fr. J. Dillon, 2010, pp. 258-261.

them²⁹. Let us go back to Diotima's words on daimons in the *Symposium*. As said above, it seems that Plato here is discriminating between daimons and daimonic human beings, whereas such difference is not to be found in Hesiod. But nowhere in the *Symposium* it is explained in what this difference consists, nor it would be sensible to rely too much on the medioplatonic daemonology in order to infer what Plato may have meant in the lines under examination. Anyway Plato shares with Hesiod that there are a lot of daimons; moreover Plato speaks about "all that is daemonic", which I intend as a "daemonic sphere", which must include both daimons and daimonic humans. Eros is a daimon and it is obvious that Eros is not a human being³⁰; or, more exactly, we cannot imagine Eros as a bodily being, even if behind the description of Eros provided by Diotima hides Socrates himself³¹; actually, going deeper in Diotima's speech, it is impossible even to imagine Eros as a being: Eros, according to Diotima, is the desire to give birth to creatures who perpetuate one's existence, a longing for immortality, the feature typical of the gods; however it is not the unchangeable and indefectible condition of the divine nature, but an earthly immortality which is based on the *melete*, the care for perpetuation of what is loved, which may be not only one's own children (reproduction, one can say, is the biological side of the longing for immortality Diotima is speaking about), but also the children of one's own soul, all those knowledges and skills which one

²⁹The rationalist attitude (embodied by Prodicus in the 5th century b. C., and later by Evemerus in the ellenistic period) of those who regarded traditional gods as deified human beings is consistent with the greek religion and poetry, since the believing that human beings can go beyond human nature is quite old; consequently, the evemerism ends up being the philosophical readaptation of something much more ancient, destined to exert long lasting consequences, even when christian authors will draw upon evemeristic views to undermine paganism (pagan gods are not true gods, since they are but deified humans)-cfr. A. Kledt, 1999, pp. 626-634. Besides, the philosophical readaptation of the traditional religious "euhemerism" is appreciable also in the available medioplatonic sources on daemons like Apuleius' *de deo Socratis*. Here the daemons are subdivided into three classes, the second of which consist of those souls which, for their merits, become daemons after death (XIV).

³⁰ Nevertheless it is not clear if Penia, Eros' mother, is mortal or not; If it were the case, Eros would share a feature with the most important greek heroes, such as Heracles and Achilles, both children of a divine parent and a mortal one.

³¹Cf. *Symp.* 203d1-204a5.

wants to keep alive³². Accordingly Eros is not a being, but a desire, a desire which, when is philosophical, can help humans to fill the gap between human nature and divine realm. The theme of the perpetuation of what is loved is essential in relation to philosophy, as it will be clear in the *Phaedo*, where Socrates' longing for immortality is aimed not only at the after life, but also at this world, since he, on the verge of passing away, exhorts those who remain to keep alive the *logos*, the self examination carried out together, which is what they love and Socrates himself loves³³. If Eros, as a daimon, is not a being, but a desire, it is, at least in this case, the desire which fills the gap between human and god; that which is consistent with our analysis of the *Euthydemus*, where it has been argued that it is the longing for wisdom that lays a bridge between ignorance and wisdom (which is divine), so that human longing for self-improvement prevents the world from becoming a mere amount of inconciliable opposites³⁴. Accordingly, the great daimon of the *Symposium*'s lines would be the human desire, fulfilled by human means, to be more than human, and the *daemoniac* humans turn out to be those humans so engrossed in such a desire that they end up becoming part of the daemoniac sphere. Nevertheless daemoniac people not only attempt to go beyond the human nature towards the divine realm, but also try to preserve the bond between human and divine also for the other human beings; nothing but this do priests and priestesses, soothsayers and sorcerers. Nothing but this, as we will see below, does Socrates. Eros is a daimon because it lays a bridge between human and divine, and as a desire, he fills the gap between opposite natures, which otherwise would be separated. Furthermore, while the daemoniac humans only keep the intercourse between gods and humankind, Eros

³² *Ivi.* 207e1-208b2.

³³ Cf. *infra*, pp. 367ff. It is interesting to notice that the earthly immortality Socrates cares about, has nothing to do with a personal, or, even worse, physical immortality. On the contrary, he does not care the annihilation of his body; what cares is that, even when he has passed away, his spiritual heritage will not pass away with him (part of this spiritual heritage, as we can infer from the *Alcibiades* and the *Gorgias* is not caring about the life as a mere staying alive more than a virtuous life).

³⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 88-90.

does this between divine and *all that which is mortal*³⁵; therefore Eros is longing for immortality experienced by everything existing, since also animals, by means of reproduction, even in an unaware and merely biological way, aspire to the divine³⁶. This shows also that there is a mimetic relationship between daimons and daemonic humans; if daemons lay a bridge between gods and mortal in general, daemonic humans, as soothseers, sorcerers and priests (and also philosophers) lay a bridge between gods and a particular kind of mortals, that is to say humankind. Accordingly, as it emerges from the lines of the Diotima's speech under examination, the daimonic man (or woman, like Diotima herself) has not a merely theoretical knowledge of what daemons do and which skills are related to them; daemonic people *practice these skills, and they act as daemons in the human world. Therefore the daemonic man is a daimon in relation to human society in which he lives, whereas actual daimons are daimons in relation to all living beings; consequently the difference between the daimonic humans and the daimons lays not only in their nature, but also in the width of their powers, that is to say, in the concrete number of the beings under their tutele.* Thus, what concerns their tasks, there is no difference between daemon and daemonic man, and, if compared to daemons like Eros, daemonic humans are human; in relation to humankind they are *daimons*. This could cast light on what lurks in the *Apology*, namely Plato's attempt to make Socrates something more than a mere human; someone who, even human in his body, has gone beyond humankind: *a daemonic man, who is a daimon in relation to the Athenians.*

³⁵ δαίμων μέγας, ὃ Σώκρατες; καὶ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ δαιμόνιον μεταξύ ἐστὶ θεοῦ τε καὶ θνητοῦ. "(Eros is) a great daemon, Socrates, and in fact all the daemonic lays between god and mortal" (202d12-13, tr. mine). Accordingly Eros is not only a fundamental feature of human condition, but a desire shared by every natural being. This view of Eros as a universal phenomenon is similar to Eriximachus's speech, where, despite the similarity Eros power is even wider; since it is the inner balance which makes possible the existence itself not only of bodily beings (animals and humans), but also of the natural events: in fact season also, to benefit living beings, must abide to a correct Eros, which constitutes the inner balance of its part (188a-b).

³⁶ Cf. *Symp.* 207a2-c1.

The accusation of atheism

At the end of Diotimas's speech Eros seems to be not a being, but a force³⁷; on the contrary, in some other passages Eros seems to be a being, which, just like any other being, has two parents, Poros and Penia³⁸. However, even these two depictions of Eros are different, they not necessarily are at odds with each other: infact either being or force, Eros has to do with the desire, not any desire, but those able to lead human life in a direction rather than in another one, so that eros is the being inspiring such desires, or these desires themselves. From this point of view Eros is a daemon also in the homeric meaning of fate, since Eros is not any desire, *but the desire which shapes human life and makes humans different from eachother*³⁹. It follows that Eros embodies the fate of loving people; infact one's love, one's leading desire, marks the boundaries of *what has been distributed to them by the gods*. In the same way, Socrates, as a daemonic man, faces the fate outlined by his daimon (his leading love) and, *as daemon, shapes the fate of those who follow him, so that Socrates' fate is to be the fate of others (in first place of Plato himself)*. The lines which makes this reading arguable are the ones devoted to the accusation of atheism in the *Apology*.

These lines are fundamental for two reasons: 1) first of all, they make the *Apology* the only dialogue in which an intimate relationship between *daimon* and

³⁷ According to W. Burkert, 1977, p. 180ff., *daimon* is the expression of the divine power; *daimon* is not a being, but the display of the divine activity.

³⁸ The occurrence of the world *daimon* as a being different both from gods and human are numerous in the dialogues; besides, *daimons* are also custodians which after death (the separation of the soul from the body) lead souls (every soul has its daemon) in the afterlife journey (*Phaed.* 107d5-6; 108b1-2; 113d1-2. *Resp.* X, 620d6). In *Tim.* 90a2-4 it is said that the god gave to humans the highest power of human soul as a δαίμων, which is the rational part of human soul-Cfr. A. Taylor, 1928, p. 633. Plutarch, basing on this lines of the *Timaeus* and on *Phaedr.* 248a1-6, puts forth the identification of the δαίμων with its νοῦς, that part which is not in touch with the body. Cf. A. Setaioli, 2014, pp. 112-113.

³⁹ Thus it is love which make people different, as is arguable from the IXth book of the *Republic*. In the *Callipolis* philosopher are philosopher because of their love for truth and warriors are warriors because of their love for victory, so that it is love and desire which, as *daimones*, shape the life of humans in a well ruled community.

daimonic is outlined⁴⁰. 2) The δαιμόνιον is not entity, but something which pertains to an entity⁴¹. Let us examine these lines. In 24b5-c2 Socrates goes on to face “the new accusation”, namely the corruption of young boys and the accusation of not believing (νομίζεῖν) in the gods the gods the city believes in⁴², but in new *spiritual beings* (δαιμόνια)⁴³. The Rtext of the accusation is repeated in 26b2-4, but this time, after accusing Meletus of ignoring what benefits youth, Socrates asks his accuser to explain what he means when he says that Socrates teaches not to believe in the Gods the city believes in; does this means that socrates teaches to believe that there are some gods, who are different from the civic gods, or that Socrates does not believe in any god and teaches other to do so? (26b8-c7). This question is fundamental, and Meletus answers that Socrates is atheist; he does not believe in the existence of any god. If Meletus had answered that Socrates does not believe in the civic gods, the accusation would have been not so easy to refute. Infact it is quite clear that Socrates does not believe in the traditional gods⁴⁴, whereas it is hard to

⁴⁰ In the *de genio Socratis* Plutarch regards the *daimon* and the *daimonion* as the same thing (J. Bussanich, 2013, p. 289). More closely to *Apology*, C. D. C. Reeve, 2000, pp. 24-39 argues that *daimon* and *daimonion* are not the same thing. However *daimonion* in the *Apology* is something much wider than the mere voice of a *daimon*. It is *everything pertaining to daemons*.

⁴¹ This is the reading proposed by P. Cartledge, 2009, p. 87, according to which the *daimonion* is a divinity of a lower grade than the *daimones*. However, it is hard to find in Plato such a differentiation in the realm between divine and gods, while, on the basis of *Symp.* 202e4ff., it is possible to speak of a difference between *daimons* and *daemonic humans*, even if, as seen above, this difference is softer than one believes. Accordingly, regarding the *daimonion* as a divinity of a lower grade than *daimons* does not seem to be trustworthy and may betray the influence of the later developments of Plato’s demonology, in which the daimonic sphere becomes more differentiated. A witness of such developments can be found in Apuleius’ work- cf. C. Moreschini, 2013, pp. 37-44; E. Vimercati, 2015, p. 42.

⁴² The verb νομίζεῖν refers here, as it will be clear below, to the believing or not in the existence of a divinity. However the verb has also a meaning related to the sphere of laws and customs in general; that is to say acting according to customs. In this case Socrates’ *asebeia* would consist not in not believing in the civic gods, but in not worshipping them, or in not worshipping them in compliance with the customs. Cf. L. Noussan-Letry, 1966, pp. 25-36; A. Momigliano, 1980, pp. 437-458;

⁴³ Spiritual beings is H. N. Fowler’s rendering of the word.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Supra*, pp. 215-219. Those of Socrates are moralised, rational eternally beneficial gods having nothing to do with human weaknesses. That this kind of divine may have been regarded as something

state that he was an atheist. However one may justify Meletus' naive answer: atheism is a more serious accusation, much more than that of believing in the gods, but not in the civic ones; besides, accusing Socrates of atheism is aimed at stressing that Socrates was compared with astronomers and inquirers of nature (in particular Anaxagoras); this comparison is one of the *leitmotiv* of the *Apology*⁴⁵. What concerns the reading proposed in this chapter, Meletus appears to regard the *daimonia* as a class of beings; in the subsequent lines Socrates implicitly assumes that the *daimonia* are not beings, but things that pertain to certain beings, and these being are the *daimons*. Then the existence of daemons allow Socrates to refute the accusation of atheism. Actually Socrates displays such a selfconfidence as to say that Meletus knows that the accusation of atheism is contradictory; however Meletus would see if Socrates is able to notice its inconsistency (27a1-5). Nevertheless it is interesting to see how Socrates refutes Meletus' accusation, since, by refuting it, Socrates changes the meaning of *daimonia*; no more a class of being, as Meletus intended, but a class of things relating to beings. These are the lines under examination:

Is there any human being who believes that there are things pertaining to human beings (ἀνθρώπεια μὲν νομίζει πράγματ' εἶναι), but no human beings? Let him answer, gentlemen, and not make a disturbance in one way or another. Is there anyone who does not believe in horses, but does believe in things pertaining to horses (ἵππους μὲν οὐ νομίζει, ἵππικὰ δὲ πράγματα)? or who does not believe that flute-players exist, but that things pertaining to flute-players do? There is not, best of men; if you do not wish to answer, I say it to you and these others here. But answer at least the next question. Is there anyone who believes spiritual things exist, but does not believe in spirits (ἔσθ'

suspicious, if not dangerous to the every day piety by some of the jurors at the trial of Socrates, has been thoroughly argued by M. L. McPherran (2005a, pp. 13-30; 2011, pp. 116-122).

⁴⁵ Cf. E. Heitsch, 2002, pp.108-110; N. Denyer, 2019, pp. 83-86. Meletus states that Socrates believed that sun and moon were no gods, but stones. As Socrates point out, these thoughts are to ascribe to Anaxagoras, whose work is full of such utterances (26d4-7). Actually Anaxagoras was accused of atheism for this theory and would have faced capital punishment, if Pericles had not saved him. Then he was banned from Athen. Cf. J. Geffcken, 1907, pp. 127-133; J. Davison, 1953, pp. 34-45; A. Banfi, 1999, pp. 3-85.

ὅστις δαιμόνια μὲν νομίζει πράγματ' εἶναι, δαίμονας δὲ οὐ νομίζει)? “There is not (*Ap.* 27b3-c2).

To say it in Aristotle’s terms, the relationship outlined by Socrates between *daimones* and *daimonia* is that existing between substances and their συμβεβήκοτα. Men can build houses, write poems, get sick and so on; all this belongs to human things, and the same applies to horses and flute players. What pertains to daimons? If this is clear in the case of humankind, horses and flute-players, less clear is in the case of daimons, at least in the *Apology*, whereas Diotima’s speech in the *Symposium* does dwell on what pertains to daemons. In any case, Socrates believes in things which pertain to daimons; this involves that he necessarily believes in the daimons. At this point the refutation is complete; in fact, says Socrates, and Meletus himself agrees, Daimons are either gods or gods’ children (27d1). If they are gods, believing in them immediately means believing in gods; if they are illegitimate children of gods and nymphs (or humans), also in this case Socrates turns out to believe in gods, since if there are children, there must be also their parents (27d2-e2). By means of this refutation Plato has Socrates show the inconsistency of the accusation of atheism; however the Philosopher has implicitly something even more important. In 31c7-d4 Socrates explains why he never engaged with athenian politics:

But the reason for this, as you have heard me say at many times and places, is that something divine and spiritual comes to me, a voice (θεῖόν τι καὶ δαιμόνιον γίγνεται φωνή), the very thing which Meletus ridiculed in his indictment. I have had this from my childhood; it is a sort of voice that comes to me, and when it comes it always holds me back from what I am thinking of doing, but never urges me forward (36c7-d4).

This θεῖόν τι καὶ δαιμόνιον follows Socrates since his childhood; as we have seen, it occurs in *Euthyd.* 272e2-3 (ἀνισταμένου δέ μου ἐγένετο τὸ εἰωθὸς σημεῖον τὸ δαιμόνιον); in *Alc. I*, 103a3-4 (τούτου δὲ τὸ αἴτιον γέγονεν οὐκ ἀνθρώπειον, ἀλλὰ τι δαιμόνιον ἐναντίωμα); *Theag.* 128e3-4 (καὶ ἐγὼ διεκώλυόν τε αὐτὸν καὶ εἶπον ὅτι ‘λέγοντός σου μεταξύ γέγονέ μοι ἢ φωνή ἢ τοῦ δαιμονίου); *Phaedr.* 2 42b7-8 (τὸ δαιμόνιον τε καὶ τὸ εἰωθὸς σημεῖόν μοι γίνεσθαι ἐγένετο [...]- καὶ τινα φωνήν

ἔδοξα αὐτόθεν ἀκοῦσαι)⁴⁶: It is interesting to notice that in the *Theages*, commonly considered spurious, the δαίμονιον is conceived of as a voice, just like in the mentioned lines of the *Apology* and in the *Phaedrus* is linked with soothsaying, a skill of the daimonic humans, as seen in the *Symposium*⁴⁷. Also in *Ap.* 40a3 the same link occurs; there Socrates speaks of the “usual soothsaying of the *daimonion*” (ἡ γὰρ εἰωθυῖά μοι μαντικὴ ἢ τοῦ δαίμονιου); interestingly, this soothsaying of the *daimonion* is also a sign of the god (τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ σημεῖον, 40b2). Also in the lines quoted above it is said that the voice heard by Socrates is something *divine and daemonic*; if the *daimonion* is something pertaining to daimons and, consequently, divine is something pertaining to gods, *daimonion* turns out to pertain to daimons and to gods at the same time. This ambiguity reoccurs also in *Ap.* 40a3-b2 where Socrates speaks of the same thing as “sign of the god” and “soothsaying of the *daimonion*”; understanding the correct meaning of these two genitives, *of the daimonion* and *of the god* is the backbone of the reading proposed in these chapter, and to make this understanding possible, it is necessary to show that the *daimonion can be something pertaining both to daimons and to gods at the same time*; this is possible only provided that, according to the law of noncontradiction, *daimonion* pertains both to daimons and to gods, at the same time, *but not under the same respect*, and this is evident in the relationship between Apollo and his *manteis*⁴⁸. An oracle is divine, since the god (Apollo) is its source; however the same oracle is also *daimonic*, since it is a *daimonic human* (the pythian priestess in this case) who receives the words of the gods and reveals them to the human beings; therefore, the same oracle is both divine, as it comes from a god⁴⁹; it and *daimonic*, as it is

⁴⁶ For the occurrences of the *daimonion* in Plato’s works and the analysis of the contexts in which it occurs, cf. S. Jedrkiewicz, 2011, pp. 221-237.

⁴⁷ Cf. *supra*, p. 350.

⁴⁸ Daimones, as intermediary between humans and gods, convey orders and prayers. Therefore daimones appear to have to do with language and verbal expression, which make daimones seem to have apollonian features. Oracles comes from Apollo and are conveyed to Humans through his priests and priestesses

⁴⁹ This means that, as A. A. Long, 2006, pp. 63-74 rightly point out, the *daimonion* is not something merely “extra-rational”. If by extra-rational one understands that which does not originate from the procedures of human discursive mind, the *daimonion* is extra-rational. However, if one considers

incumbent upon a *daimonic human* to communicate it; infact communication of divine words is *daimonic*, it pertains to *the daimonic sphere*. This oracle is like a packet which at the same time pertains to the sender and the addressee, *but, as said above, not under the same respect*. Given that, the genitive τοῦ δαιμονίου in *Ap.* 40b1 does not refer to a being, but to a sphere “*which pertains to daimons, which is daemonic*”; accordingly, the words ἡ γὰρ εἰωθυῖά μοι μαντική ἢ τοῦ δαιμονίου should be translated: *the soothsaying usual to me, which is part of what is daemonic*⁵⁰. At this point it should be clearer what is implicitly said throughout the *Apology*: Socrates leads Meletus to consent that believing in daemonic things, that is to say things pertaining to daimons, means believing to daimons, and, consequently believing in gods. Now, in Socrates’ life there is something daimonic. If daimonic is that which pertains to daimons, and Socrates experiences this daimonic thing since childhood, it follows that Plato is suggesting that Socrates is a *daimon*⁵¹. This, as said above, is not at odds with the depiction of Socrates as daimonic man, since a daimonic man is human compared to daimons like Eros, which is a cosmic force; but the same daimonic man is a *daimon if compared to the other human beings, since he acts as a daimon towards them*. According to this reading, Socrates is not a mere refuter of the Athenian, but their *daimon/custodian*, whom Apollo has assigned to care Athenians. This daimonic care provided by Socrates consists in leading people to commit to their self-improvement.

Daemons and Care: the meaning of the Oracle

that the *daimonion* is a sign coming from the divine sphere (Apollo) and that the divine sphere is necessarily rational, it follows that the *daimonion* is rational, since the superior divine rationality is its source.

⁵⁰ For Socrates’ soothsaying cfr. M. L. McPherran, 2003, pp. 71-92. The proposed translation makes the *Apology* consistent with that which Diotima says about soothsaying as daemonic skills. However also translating “the soothsaying concerning the daimonic sign” can be a correct rendering; what matters is that the *daimonion* is not to intended as a *being*, or *lower divinity*, which is endowed itself with *soothsaying*. The *soothsayer* is Socrates and *daimonion* refers to the source and nature from his *soothsaying*. It is daimonic and belong to the daimonic.

⁵¹ Cf. A. Sima, 2016, pp. 85-101.

Stating that Socrates, according to Plato, is a *superhuman man*, who acts as a *daimon* in Athen seems to be at odds with what Socrates says in 20b4-6, that his to say that his wisdom is a *human one* (ἀνθρωπίνη σοφία). To show that there is no contradiction, it is useful to remember that a daimonic man, even if acting as a daimon, is always human, but a human whose skills goes beyond human nature; accordingly, it is possible that a daimonic man can practice a human wisdom. Anyway let's start from the beginning. The accusations against which Socrates attempts to defend himself are old and lasting, since Athenians have heard them from their childhood (18b1-c1). Such old accusations are the most powerful and insidious; furthermore they have provided the ground on which the more recent accusations moved by Anytos, Lycon and Meletus are based; they are so deep-rooted in Athenians that Socrates knows that it will be difficult to remove them from their souls (18e4-19b2). The old accusation show once again how widespread was the confusion of Socrates with Anaxagoras, a confusion which Aristophanes contributed to reinforce (19c2-3). According to these old accusations, Socrates was an “investigator of the thing beneath the earth and in the sky (ζητῶν τὰ τε ὑπὸ γῆς καὶ οὐράνια, 19b3); besides, Socrates makes stronger the weaker speech and teaches others the same things” (19b3-c1). Obviously Socrates is interested in demonstrating that he does not know anything about such issues and he does not teach anyone; however, if one looks at other dialogues, it is not so evident that Socrates is telling the truth. Regarding the investigation into natural phenomena, Plato has his Socrates say that when he was younger he dedicated himself to it⁵²; consequently, although Socrates is telling the truth when he says that he does not teach others about the investigation of nature, he is not telling the truth when he says that he does not know anything about it. What concerns the skill of making stronger the weaker speech, it was a common accusation moved against the

⁵²Cf. *Phaed.* 96a6-97b8. Noteworthy is that Socrate says that it was Anaxagoras' work that helped him overcome the dissatisfaction for the investigation of nature; in fact Socrates deemed Anaxagoras' νοῦς to provide an explanation of natural phenomena different from a merely mechanistic model. As the reader of the *Phaedo* knows, also the philosophy of Anaxagoras turned out to be disappointing (98b3ff.)

sophists⁵³, and also in this case Socrates says he ignores it; however even in this case Socrates' words are not to accept without examination. In the *Gorgias* he argues that committing injustice is worse than receiving it⁵⁴; or, in the *Republic*, he shows that the tyrant is the unhappiest of men (578a1-580a7)⁵⁵. The view according to which the happiest of men is that whose power allows him to fulfil any desire and this man is the tyrant, was “the strongest speech” at least in certain intellectual *milieus*⁵⁶. Socrates attempts to show the inner weakness of the “might is right” ideology and attracts the hate of its supporters when he refutes it. From this point of view it is not wrong to say that Socrates “makes weaker the stronger speech”: infact he takes a strong speech, that according to which “might is right” and demolishes it, so as to make it unsustainable and “weak”. Lastly Socrates says he does not know and, consequently, he cannot teach that *human and political virtue* which Evenus of Parus teaches (20b2-20d3)⁵⁷; however also in this case one cannot accept immediatly Socrates' words, if one considers that in *Gorgias* Socrates claims to be one of the few who cares true politics, namely the politics of souls, that politics by means of which souls becomes ordered and beauty (506d6-507a4). Order and beauty are what in the soul makes a soul σόφρων⁵⁸. As seen in the *Charmides* and in the *Alcibiades I*, Socrates attempts (albeit uselessly) to exhort Charmides and Critias to σωφροσύνη, the selfknowledge aimed at good achievements⁵⁹. As a

⁵³ Socrates was confused with Anaxagoras and the more recent sophists, like Protagoras and Gorgias. Even if the philosophers of nature and sophists pursue different aims and are interested in different issues, regarding Socrates both as a philosopher of nature and as a sophists complied with the purpose of making Socrates the symbol of everything is new and somehow “subversive”, that new education that some blamed for the loss of war. Cfr. A. Stavru, 2009, pp. 55-60.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Gorg.* 468b2-469c7

⁵⁵ About the tyrant's unhappiness cf. S. Gastaldi, 2005, pp. 499-538; R.D. Parry, 2007, pp. 386-414. Also in the *Gorgias* the rejection of the lifestyle embodied by the tyrant plays a significant role, in particular in the dialectic exchange with Polus, who states that the rethorician has the same power as a tyrant (467c5-468e10). About this lines of the *Gorgias* cf. E. Dodds, 1959, pp. 235-236.

⁵⁶ For instance, the kind of intellectual embodied by Callicles and Polus in the *Gorgias*.

⁵⁷ Philosopher and poet contemporary with Socrates. His name will reoccur again in the *Phaedo*.

⁵⁸ Cf. S. Gastaldi, 2021, pp. 91-100.

⁵⁹ In the chapters devoted respectively to the *Charmides* and the *Alcibiades*, σωφροσύνη presents a stressed cognitive side (cf. *supra*, pp. 134-139; 173ff.) since it is selfknowledge of one's inner life,

consequence, even when Socrates says that he does not know anything of the *human and political virtue*, we must not trust immediately, as Socrates is at once lying and saying the truth depending on the meaning which one ascribes to his words; if one intends the *human and political virtue* as σωφροσύνη, Socrates is lying, since he not only is σῶφρων, but also attempts to make others be σῶφρονες (even if not through a traditional method of teaching and not always successfully, as the case of Alcibiades suggests). On the contrary if we intend *the human and political virtue* as the art of fighting against the opposite party, getting the better of the opponents irrespective of the justice of one's purposes and seizing the power at any costs; if we intend that virtue like this, Socrates is telling the truth, since he not only does not have this art (and he is not even interested in it), but would never teach others to do the same. Socrates tells the truth and lies depending on the meanings one ascribes to the words. Words are ambiguous and convey more than one meanings, so that the same speech can present the same words, whereas its overall meaning has changed (and the dialogues shows that no thinker is more aware than Plato of the intricacies of semantics)⁶⁰. This plunge into the ambiguity of Socrates words is

while in the *Gorgias*, in a more traditional way, σωφροσύνη is that order of soul which prevents from uncontrolled passion. However there is no contradiction between these two presentations of the same virtue; actually it can be said that the σωφροσύνη intended as knowledge of one's inner life aimed at (common, not solipsistic) good things involved that intended as self-mastery: in fact if one is aware of one's desires and passions in relation to the goods achievements which one pursues, one is also able to prevent oneself from those pleasures which may be a hindrance to the achievement of those good things. The difference in the presentation of σωφροσύνη in these three dialogues may depend on the different interlocutors; Alcibiades are interested in ruling and, as a consequence, Socrates shows how beneficial σωφροσύνη is for a ruler. Charmides is a "faceless" to his lovers; therefore Socrates' remedy (σωφροσύνη) must help him to develop that skill of "looking at himself and others", so as to understand whom it is better to associate with and whom it is better to avoid. Calicles is a supporter of the lifestyle based on *pleonexia*; consequently, Socrates must show him how σωφροσύνη prevents from the consequences of that lifestyle.

⁶⁰ Plato's awareness of the ambiguity of meanings is appreciable also in the case of the *Phaedrus*, wherein Phaedrus acknowledges that that of Love belongs to the most controversial (ἀμφισβητησίμων). It is because of the controversial meaning of this notion that is possible to deliver speeches on it so different from each other, like those of Socrates and Lysias. Cf. E. Heitsch, 1993, pp. 137-138. The ambiguity of semantics leads into an outcome similar to that of the Kantian

necessary, as the same ambiguity is in Apollo, his tutelary god. Socrates speaks like Apollo, telling things ambiguously. Thus the Oracle given to Chaerephon is true insofar as one is able to find the true meaning of the words; instead it *seems false, if one ascribes, as Socrates does at the beginning, wrong meanings to the words.*

*The Oracle*⁶¹

Socrates introduces the story of the oracle in order to explain to the jury how his reputation of wise (σοφός) has risen⁶²; it depends on the oracle which Chaerephon, passed away at the time of the trial, received from the Pythia: he asked if there was someone wiser than Socrates, and the priestess (or more exactly Apollo through her mouth) answered that nobody was wiser than him (21a3-5). Now, to understand *how* the oracle is true, it is necessary to understand *the correct meaning* of the word σοφός. Σοφός, in Aristotle's terms, is the one who knows the principles and their consequences (*Nich. Eth.* VI, 7, 16-18); accordingly he should know the frame of that which exists. This is a philosophical meaning of wisdom; but σοφός means also “expert” or “proficient” in a skill or in a craft, that is to say expert in a specific domain. It is in this meaning that Socrates intends the σοφός of the oracle and for this reason he finds so hard to understand how it is possible that nobody is more σοφός than him; in fact Socrates says: “I am aware that I am not σοφός, neither much nor little” (οὔτε μέγα οὔτε μικρὸν σύννοια ἐμαυτῷ σοφὸς ὄν, 21b3)⁶³.

antinomies. If the meaning of a notion is controversial, all the speeches basing on it can be accepted and refuted, just like a notion of which one does not have experience (like the soul or the totality of the physical world) gives birth to opposite reasoning none of which can be accepted (or refuted).

⁶¹ Cf. C. Antoni, 1964, pp. 229-236; A. Brancacci, 1997, pp. 279-301; D. Futter, 2013, pp. 61-79.

⁶² The Greek word σοφός is *vox media*; it means “wise”, “expert”, “smart” and so on. But it has also a pejorative nuance; thus it can mean “crafty” or “sly”. To those who considered Socrates a sophist, he had to appear σοφός in this pejorative meaning, since as a sophist, he was able to deceive those who were so naïf as to trust him.

⁶³ Regarding the use of the verb συνειδέναι in these lines cf. L. Napolitano, 2010, pp. 27-27; 2018, pp. 222-223. Usually the words μέγα and μικρὸν are considered adverbs, so that the translation of the lines sounds: “I am aware that I am not wise neither little nor much”. In my reading of this line I follow the suggestion of S. Ahbel-Rappe (forthcoming), that the words μέγα and μικρὸν as to

However the god cannot lie; how can be possible that Socrates is wise and not wise at the same time? It is possible, as long as Socrates and the oracle intend σοφός in a different meaning. That Socrates deems σοφία to be the mastery of a particular skill is quite clear when he says that, to test the oracle, he addressed the hand-workers, whose σοφία is but a particular expertise in a particular field. Obviously in this field the hand-workers are more σοφοί than Socrates; however they commit the same mistake as the poets and the good craftsmen (22d3-4): they (the hand-workers) think that their particular σοφία makes them experts also in those fields about which they do not know anything (22d4-5). To find someone wiser than him, Socrates has refuted those who were regarded as σοφοί in Athen: the politicians seems to be σοφοί to themselves and others, but they are not (21c4-6), while the poets are able to compose wonderful poems, but do not know anything about that which they talk: “infact they compose not by σοφία, but by natural talent and inspiration, just like the prophets and the givers of oracle (22b6-c2). On account of this attitude Socrates attracts the calumies of all those he has refuted and the suspicion of other citizens, who regard him as a crafty refuter, who pretends to ignore that which he knows (23a1-3); From this experience Socrates has learned that the true difference between the politicians and the intellectuals of his times is that they believe to know even what they do not, whereas Socrates does not ascribe to himself knowledges he does not has (21b7-d7)⁶⁴; As they think that they know what they do not, they suffer from *amathia*, the worst kind of ignorance⁶⁵; in fact it is not an aware ignorance ; actually it comes across as a self-satisfied confidence

intend as accusatives referring to σοφός, so that the translation of the quoted line should be: “I am aware that I am not wise neither in great nor in little things”. According to this translation, Socrates is saying not that he is absolutely ignorant, but that he is not expert in something specific (great or little). Indeed knowing oneself or caring oneself are not disciplines, specific and transmissible like carpentry, pottery or shipbuilding. Therefore when Socrates says that he is not wise in this line, this does not mean that he is ignorant, but that he has no sector-based expertise. Cf. A. Cancrini, 1969, pp. 46-52.

⁶⁴ Cf. L. Napolitano, 2018, pp. 226-228.

⁶⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 15-17.

in one's own wisdom⁶⁶ However, apart from the hostility he has attracted, by his refutations Socrates has understood the sense of the oracle:

but the fact is, gentlemen, it is likely that the god is really wise and by his oracle means this: "Human wisdom is of little or no value (ὅτι ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη σοφία ὀλίγου τινὸς ἀξία ἐστὶν καὶ οὐδενός)". And it appears that he does not really say this of Socrates, but merely uses my name, and makes me an example (ἐμὲ παράδειγμα ποιούμενος), as if he were to say: "This one of you, O human beings, is wisest, who, like Socrates, recognizes that he is in truth of no account in respect to wisdom (23a4-b3)

Socrates has understood that the σοφία ascribed by the oracle to him is not a particular expertise, as he believed at the beginning of his investigation; his σοφία is the awareness of the limits of human condition if compared to the omniscient nature of the god; one could say that Socrates' wisdom is the awareness of *the place of humankind in the hierarchy of beings*. Besides, Socrates' wisdom does not consist in knowing that he does not know; actually this knowledge rests on the knowledge of the limited power of human understanding if compared to the divine wisdom, as if Socrates were saying: since true wisdom belongs only to the god, and I am not a god, it follows that I do not know, that is to say, my knowledge will never be as comprehensive and flawless as that of the gods⁶⁷. Socrates' "epistemic humbleness" is not the outcome of a merely rationalistic stance, but the logical consequence of the awareness of the qualitative difference between human and divine. His citizens seem to forget this difference, and some of them become so exalted by the mastery in their particular domain as to believe that they know everything (and some others, like Critias, deem the gods to be created by human rulers). Noteworthy is that the ἀνθρωπίνη σοφία occurring at 20d6 is the expertise in particular domains; it is this ἀνθρωπίνη σοφία which is of no value compared to divine wisdom. On the contrary the ἀνθρωπίνη σοφία ascribed by the oracle to Socrates is the awareness of the qualitative difference between human and divine. This human wisdom is not a particular expertise like the others; it has to do with selfknowledge, since the awareness of what a human being cannot do goes beyond

⁶⁶ Cf. J. Patocka, 1999, pp. 366-369.

⁶⁷ Cf. R. Bett, 2010, pp. 215-236. The awareness of one's ignorance is the unavoidable starting point of self-knowledge: cf. L. Napolitano, 2007, pp. 111-113.

the boundaries among particular crafts and disciplines; it is the knowledge of oneself in relation to the cosmos in its totality. However that Socrates has this human wisdom does not mean that he is a man like the others; he is a *daimonic man*, who acts as a *daimon* towards his fellow-citizens. This is suggested by the word παράδειγμα in the lines quoted above, usually translated as example; however παράδειγμα means also “model”. This means that Socrates is not a mere example (a case like others), but the model (that at which one must look in order to understand) of human wisdom. Now, a model is that which cannot lose certain features; accordingly, Socrates, as the model of human wisdom, cannot lose the awareness of the difference between human and divine, and the consequent awareness of the limits of human understanding; on the contrary human beings (like Critias and the tyrant of the *Republic*) as the western history teach, may end up forgetting this difference. Socrates is not threatened by this danger, since he possesses the human wisdom in a paradigmatic way: he may learn new things and forget some of them; however he will never cease to ongoingly renew his self-awareness⁶⁸. The other clue that Socrates possesses the human wisdom not as a normal man, but as a *daimonic man*, is that he commits to spreading this wisdom among his fellow-citizens; not only is he self-aware in a paradigmatic way, but does he commit to reawaken others’ self-awareness, and this on Apollo’s behalf.

Care as daimonic task

One of the most remarkable things is that Socrates continues refuting his fellow-citizens even after understanding that the superiority of his wisdom resides in his self-awareness. Refuting the others has been a means to get closer to the truth about himself; as a consequence, one would expect that, after understanding the

⁶⁸ It goes without saying that Socrates’ self-knowledge is not an infallible and indefectible knowledge of everything concerning himself; such a knowing would not be neither human nor daimonic, but *divine*. The self-knowledge Socrates commits to is the outcome needs ongoing self-examination. If Socrates believed that humans can reach a perfect, comprehensive and definitive self-knowledge, he would not be different from Critias- cf. *supra*, pp. 128-131.

words of the oracle, Socrates should no more need to refute his fellow-citizens; nevertheless he says:

I am still even now going about and searching and investigating at the god's behest (κατὰ τὸν θεὸν) anyone, whether citizen or foreigner, who I think is wise; and when he does not seem so to me, I give aid to the god (τῷ θεῷ βοηθῶν) and show that he is not wise (*Ap.* 23b3-5).

Socrates claims to do that in order to assist the god (Apollo), so that he has never had time to engage in politics or care his own affairs on account of the service to the god (διὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ λατρείαν, 23b5-c1). To understand in what this service to the gods consists, it is necessary to come back to Socrates' interpretation of the oracle. According to this interpretation, the oracle addresses not Socrates (at least not in first place), but humankind- the oracle says that human wisdom is of no value compared to the gods- and Socrates would embody (in a paradigmatic way) the awareness of the limits of human conditions. whereas some of his fellow-citizens seem to be unaware of the structural weakness of human understanding (if compared to the divine one); actually, some of them (the poets and the craftsmen) believe that they know everything⁶⁹. If the words of the god concern humankind, and some humans (or the majority of them) are so reliant on the powers of their understanding as to become haughty, Socrates assistance to the god would consist in spreading and awakening in Athen the awareness of those limits. If Socrates were a common man, it goes without saying, this service to the god would be unjustified; but Socrates is *a daimonic man*, tasked with filling the gap between human and gods (in his case between gods and Athenians). In this case, his way of filling the gap consists in awakening people self-awareness about their knowledge and its limits. Accordingly, Socrates assists Apollo by making Athenians self-aware.

The protreptic side of Socrates' wisdom

The self-awareness Socrates attempts to awaken in his interlocutors, as seen in the examined dialogues, is awakened by means of refutations: As said in the chapter

⁶⁹ Cf. *Ap.* 22a6-e2.

on *Charmides*, to cease to be a “faceless” and become able to direct one’s gaze at himself and others as well, one must give up the immediate adhesion to one’s opinions and to the person one thinks that one is⁷⁰; but, to bring about this scissure in the interlocutors, Socrates must arouse some emotions; such as bewilderment and shame. These emotions are aimed at the generation of self-awareness, since it is through negative emotions that it become possible to *distance oneself from oneself* so that the ability to see oneself *in a mirror* may rise⁷¹. This distance from oneself is the basis of self-awareness, which Socrates tries to awake; however it would be a mistake to think that the service to the god he is so proud of consists in a merely destructive refutation; as the lines of the *Apology* suggest, the service to the god has also a *constructive side*. If the jurors offered Socrates freedom on the condition that he ceased to practice philosophy, he could never accept, since accepting such a freedom means disobeying the god (29c5-d3). But serving the god involves not only the *destructive side of the refutation, but also the constructive side of the exhortation to the pursuit of self-improvement*:

If you should let me go on this condition which I have mentioned, I should say to you, “Men of Athens, I respect and love you, but I shall obey the god rather than you (πείσομαι δὲ μᾶλλον τῷ θεῷ ἢ ὑμῖν), and while I live and am able to continue, I shall never give up philosophy or stop exhorting you and pointing out the truth to any one of you whom I may meet, saying in my accustomed way: “Most excellent man, are you who are a citizen of Athens, the greatest of cities and the most famous for wisdom and power, not ashamed to care for the acquisition of wealth and for reputation and honor, when you neither care nor take thought for wisdom and truth and the perfection of your soul (φρονήσεως δὲ καὶ ἀληθείας καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς ὅπως ὡς βελτίστη ἔσται οὐκ

⁷⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 103-107; 119.

⁷¹ The αἰσχύνη Socrates wants to rise is not (or not primarily) the shame before the others, *but the shame before oneself*. This difference is embodied by Callicles and Alcibiades respectively in the *Gorgias* and in the *Alcibiades I*: Callicles feels ashamed because he has been refuted before others, not because he thinks that what he thinks is unsustainable ; on the contrary Alcibiades feels ashamed (at least in the dialogue bearing his name) because he has been refuted before himself ; that is to say he has lost his trust in his presumed knowledge and, on the whole, in the person he believed he was.- cf. F. Fermaglia, 2021, pp. 107-129. Obviously only in the latter case αἰσχύνη is *an initiatic emotion which can provoke a transformation in those who experience it*, whereas in the former case it is only something unpleasant that people like Callicles try to silence. Cf. L. Lijuan, 2022, *passim*.

ἐπιμελῆ οὐδὲ φροντίζεις)?” And if any of you argues the point, and says he does care, I shall not let him go at once, nor shall I go away, but I shall question and examine and cross-examine him, and if I find that he does not possess virtue, but says he does, I shall rebuke him for scorning the things that are of most importance and caring more for what is of less worth. This I shall do to whomever I meet, young and old, foreigner and citizen, but most to the citizens, inasmuch as you are more nearly related to me. For know that the god commands me to do this, and I believe that no greater good ever came to pass in the city than my service to the god ταῦτα γὰρ κελεύει ὁ θεός, εἴ ἴστε, καὶ ἐγὼ οἶμαι οὐδέν πω ὑμῖν μείζον ἀγαθὸν γενέσθαι ἐν τῇ πόλει ἢ τὴν ἐμὴν τῷ θεῷ ὑπηρεσίαν). (29c4-30a5).

These lines are significant because Socrates lets realize that the aim of his refutations is constructive. The loss of the immediate adhesion to one's world and opinions (a trait which, in the examined dialogue is proper of Socrates' young interlocutors) is not the aim itself; Socrates is saying that his purpose is not to refute his fellow-citizens and make them believe that every attempt to knowledge is useless and out of reach. What Socrates (and Apollo, by means of Socrates) pursues is not the creation of a disconsolate humankind, which is devoid of self-confidence. Losing the adhesion to one's world and gaining distance from oneself is the only way to see the person one is in a certain moment; in this way it becomes possible to notice the limits of the person one is and try to face the transition into a new one. It is to keep in mind that this transition, as seen in the *Euthydemus*, is not a transition from a lack of knowledge into its possess, *but from an unaware lifestyle into a self-aware attitude of a person caring for oneself*⁷². This involves that Socrates' mission unfolds through two movements, destruction and construction; the destruction is carried out through the elenctic procedure, which, given the comparison of the Socratic dialogue with an initiation, can be fruitfully compared to the purification preceding the initiation, as it has been done⁷³. By means of refutation the gaze at

⁷² Cf. *supra*, pp. 94-96.

⁷³ Cf. *Soph.* 226a-231c. The comparison between the purification of the body and that of the soul rightly leads to believe that the language Plato uses in these lines is medical. However, as argued in the chapter on the *Charmides*, the boundaries between the religious sphere and the medicine are quite soft- cf. J. Longrigg, 1998, pp. 1-13. For the use of a religious terminology in this section of the *Sophist*, cf. A. Bernabé, 2013, pp. 41-57.

oneself becomes possible; one *dies* as a monolithic individual in order to become a *dual* individual, an individual able to establish a relationship with oneself. The constructive phase is not only a phase of the dialogue, but it should be a *new phase in the interlocutor's life*; the constructive side is not only Socrates' exhortation to selfcare, but also the interlocutor's choice to commit to this selfcare, so that the constructive side of the socratic dialogue is more incumbent upon the interlocutors than upon Socrates. Socrates shows the way to his young interlocutor, but it is up to the interlocutor to choice to take it; if the Socratic dialogue is successfull, its constructive part should *be the lifestyle itself the interlocutor commits to after being refuted by Socrates*.

An other significant clue of the constructive side of Socrates' mission is to infer from the lexical choices made to refer to the sevice to the god. In 23c1, to refer to his service to the god, Socrates uses the word λατρεία, but, by means of this word, he refers to his refuting his fellow-citizens on Apollo's behalf. Instead, in 30a5, to refer to his service, he uses the word ὑπηρεσία; he uses this word after stressing in the lines under examination the constructive side of his mission. It is to keep in mind that the ὑπηρεσία was the service of the rower, that is to say the service that the members of the lower classes carried out in the fleet. The rowers are those who use their strenght to make the trireme go where the trierarch commands. The strenght of the rowers provides the necessary push⁷⁴. Given that, it is not fortuitous that, speaking of the constructive side of his service, Socrates uses the term ὑπηρεσία: infact by exhorting Socrates gives a push to the interlocutor's life in a different direction, just like the rowers give their strenght to push the trireme. Besides, this ὑπηρεσία provided by Socrates is consistent with the definition of the piousness as ὑπηρετική τις (*Euthyphr.* 13d5) provided to the gods, which, as argued in the chapter on the *Euthyphro*, could be the definition searched by Socrates. As showed in that chapter, this ὑπηρετική τις, which is literally "a skill of the rower",

⁷⁴ The citizens of the lower classes served in the Athenian fleet as rowers; this means that they were not slaves obliged by a master to fight even against their own will; on the contrary they were people who accepted to fulfill a civic duty Cf. L. Napolitano, 2013a, pp. 133-134. Accordingly, Socrates, as a rower of Apollo, is not an obliged slave, but daimonic man that freely and proudly fullfils a duty he wants to fullfil.

is not an exclusive relationship with the divine sphere, indifferent to humankind; on the contrary such “art of serving” involves caring humans⁷⁵; which in Socrates’ case means helping humans (the Athenians) to improve themselves. Accordingly, if Socrates is the rower, Apollo must be regarded as the trierarch, and the universe is the trireme Apollo leads by means of his *daimonic* rowers. However, as it is clear, Socrates serves Apollo not caring for the entire universe, but only for those who live or pass through Athens⁷⁶; in the same way more rowers push the trireme, and all together, *each of them by staying at their place*, give their strength to lead the trireme where the trierarch commands. Accordingly Apollo (and the other gods) leads the universe towards its good, and the daimonic rowers of the universe provide their strength to their divine trierarch⁷⁷. Likewise does Socrates, who provides his strength not to the universe in its entirety, but only to a part of it. He, *staying at his place*, serves his divine commander, and as a rower has his place in the trireme, which cannot be abandoned, so Socrates has his place, which has been assigned to him, and this place his Athens⁷⁸. Given that, it is now possible to rethink the

⁷⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 315-317.

⁷⁶ Although Socrates is deeply bound to Athens, this not mean that he cares only for the Athenians; in fact, Meno (a Thessalian) and Simmias and Cebes (from Thebe) show that Socrates’ daimonic care is open also to foreigner people.

⁷⁷ On a trireme the trierarch is only one; according to the traditional polytheism gods are many. It is clear that Socrates cannot be considered polytheist in a traditional way; actually some suggest that Socrates cannot even considered polytheist at all. However it may be, two are the alternative: 1) The analogy with a trireme is in any case sound, since Socrates’ gods never disagree on what is the best to do; therefore, the gods are many, *but their will is one*. In this way the polytheism is not completely denied and the idea of a concord and *united* divine rule of the universe is warranted. 2) Gods are the instantiations on just one divine entity which has no anthropomorphic features; this entity should be Apollo, not the one of the traditional mythology, but a philosophical divinity. Accordingly Apollo is not a god like others, but the very essence of the divine, the absence of multiplicity (*a*-without *pollon* many). In my opinion, both alternatives present valid elements. Without peepening too much a theme which would bring us too far, I suggest that the Platonic Socrates should be regarded as an *enotheist*; accordingly gods are many, but not equal; there are a hierarchy at the pinnacle of which Apollo, the Apollo of Plato, not that of the Athenians, resides.

⁷⁸ This does not mean that Socrates cannot serve his God also somewhere else; Athens, it will be seen in the *Crito*, cf. Chapter VII, pp. 383ff., is the homeland which he never would leave, not even for saving one’s own life. If Socrates stays in Athen is his own decision, not a command of Apollo.

meaning of Socrates' death in light of the daimonic and paradigmatic role which in the *Apology* is implicitly ascribed to him.

The exemplary nature of the courage before death.

Socrates' attitude before death shows complete self-confidence, not because he believes that he can avoid the sentence, but because he does not fear death; in fact someone, says Socrates, may regard such self-confidence as haughtiness (34c5-d1). Socrates does not implore and does not try to move to piety the jurors by leading his children before them (34c2-4): this is the kind of behavior the jurors expect from a defendant, even from one accused of insignificant crimes; however Socrates is not a common man, *but a daimonic man who has been assigned to care souls*. This is the reason why he chooses not to behave like everybody else. The reasons provided by Socrates in order to justify his attitude are consistent with the role of model ascribed to him⁷⁹. In fact Socrates seems to scorn the common behavior of the defendants because of the shame they cause to the city, and this shame is even bigger, in case that the defendants are considered worthy people:

If then those of you who are supposed to be superior either in wisdom or in courage or in any other virtue whatsoever (δοκοῦντες διαφέρειν εἴτε σοφία εἴτε ἀνδρεία εἴτε ἄλλη ἥτινιοῦν ἀρετῇ) are to behave in such a way, it would be disgraceful. Why, I have often seen men who have some reputation behaving in the strangest manner, when they were on trial, as if they thought they were going to suffer something terrible if they were put to death, just as if they would be immortal if you did not kill them. It seems to me that they are a disgrace to the state (ἐμοὶ δοκοῦσιν αἰσχύνην τῇ πόλει περιάπτειν) and that any stranger might say that those of the Athenians who excel in virtue, men whom they themselves honor with offices and other marks of esteem, are no better than women. Such acts, men of Athens, we who have any reputation at all ought not to commit, and if we commit them you ought not to allow it, but you should make it clear that you will be much more ready to condemn a man who puts before you such pitiable scenes and makes the city ridiculous than one who keeps quiet (ὅτι πολὺ μᾶλλον καταψηφιεῖσθε

⁷⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 367-368.

τοῦ τὰ ἐλεῖνὰ ταῦτα δράματα εἰσάγοντος καὶ καταγέλαστον τὴν πόλιν ποιῶντος ἢ τοῦ ἠσυχίαν ἄγοντος). (35a2-b6, tr. H. N. Fowler).

Socrates' concern for the shame caused by a coward behavior before death recalls the traditional value of the military bravery, which Plato usually ascribes to his Socrates⁸⁰. From this point of view, the *Apology* is not only the work in which Plato appropriates the old religion, but also the work wherein Plato appropriates the traditional moral code of the Greek soldier; but even in this case Socrates is not a man who tries to adjust to a model of courage, *but the model itself to which people should adjust*. The exemplary nature of Socrates' courage is suggested also by means of the comparison of the philosopher with Achilles, *the archetype of the bravery*. As an Archetype, also Achilles plays a paradigmatic role in the image of Greek people; the same paradigmatic role has Socrates' courage, which must inspire those who remain. Shame is much worse than death, Socrates seems to say, in a way which recalls Homer's heroes. What is more interesting, not only the soldier must display such a courage, but also the wise and everyone who excels in a virtue, as it can be inferred from the lines under examination. Courage before death should be a common feature of all the virtues, according to these lines. However Socrates' courage is more than the mere fear of being considered coward by people; his courage rests on the awareness that his accusers cannot harm him, *since a better man cannot be harmed by a worse one*; the better man can be robbed, defamed, injured and even killed, but there is no risk that he can truly be harmed, because the *θέμις*, the divine justice, different and superior to the human laws, does not allow men like Meletus to harm those like Socrates, who, as a daimonic man, adjusts to the *θέμις*⁸¹. It is the loyalty to the *θέμις* which prevents him from abandoning his

⁸⁰ Cf. *Lach.* 181a6-b3; *Charm.* 152b6-c4; *Symp.* 219e3-220c2; 220d3-e2. Cf. M. Anderson, 2005, pp. 273-289; S. Monoson, 2014, pp. 135-147; 2015, pp. 96-117; L. Napolitano, 2012, pp. 97-134; M. Migliori, 2021, pp. 215-229.

⁸¹ Regarding Socrates' trust in a cosmic order ruled by beneficial Gods a fundamental source are the unpublished writings of W. F. Otto on Socrates (Cf. A. Stavru, 1998, pp. 195-222; 2008, pp. 65-85); regarding Socrates' in cosmic order see also G. Bastide, 1939, pp. 218-228. According to L. Napolitano, 2017, pp. 65-78, the reason of Socrates' confident attitude towards death is that death, either intended as a definitive annihilation of the individual or as soul's survival in a different place, is not an evil. The two explanations are consistent with each other: in fact, it is arguable that Socrates

τάξις, the place he has in the city, a place which has been assigned by someone who is superior to any human commander, the god Apollo. Socrates does not disobey human laws of Athens; he respects them, and at the same time he respects the superior order of the θέμις. Infact, as a daimon tasked with watching over the criminal justice, Socrates must respect that justice he watches over; as a servant of Apollo tasked with the care and the improvement of the Athenians, he must comply with the commands of his divine general, even if this loyalty brings to death. The only way Socrates has to respect both human laws and his τάξις is dying: if he dies, it means that he accepts the capital sentence, and in this way he respects the laws; furthermore, if he dies, he obeys Apollo's command until death. The trial would not have ended otherwise. Infact Socrates has never truly hoped that he could be released: he is aware that there are deep-rooted biases against him in Athens, and he cannot undo them. On the other hand Socrates does not want to be released if this means ceasing to practice philosophy; this would mean abandoning the mission assigned to him by the god. Breaking out of prison and choosing the exile would be the worst choice; in this case he would disobey the laws of Athens (one can decide to be legally banished by the city rather than illegally escape after breaking out); besides, he would disobey also Apollo, because abandoning Athens means abandoning the τάξις in which the god has deployed Socrates. Accordingly, given that the acquittal has never been a possibility, the only way to respect the human laws and the θέμις is facing death. The second reason which Socrates provides to justify his confident attitude before death concerns the correct way of judging a defendant. Infact if a judge lets himself move to piety by forensic tricks, this judge commits impiety, just like the defendant who uses these tricks in order to mislead the judges (οὐδέτεροι γὰρ ἂν ἡμῶν εὐσεβοῖεν, 35c5). Behaving like this means doing things which are neither admirable, nor just, nor pious; acting like this is impious, and Meletus would rightly accuse Socrates of impiety, if Socrates used those tricks. It is significant that Socrates states that judges should not be influenced

states that death is not an evil because he believes in an ordered world in which God do not allow that anything evil may happen to the good humans. It is interesting to note that the two alternatives taken into consideration by Socrates-soul's survival and annihilation, the two alternatives which face each other in the *Phaedo* 77c6-e7) are the only two conceived by western tradition.

by these tricks, as if Socrates wanted advise the judges on how they should do their work; which is consistent with Socrates' role as custodian of the criminal justice: infact teaching the judges about the correct way of doing their work is something one would expect from a *daimon* watching over human judgments⁸².

The end of the trial

For I tried to persuade each of you to care for himself and his own perfection in goodness and wisdom rather than for any of his belongings ((μὴ πρότερον μῆτε τῶν ἑαυτοῦ μηδενὸς ἐπιμελεῖσθαι πρὶν ἑαυτοῦ ἐπιμεληθεῖν), and for the state itself rather than for its interests, and to follow the same method in his care for other things (πρὶν αὐτῆς τῆς πόλεως, τῶν τε ἄλλων οὕτω κατὰ τὸναὐτὸν τρόπον ἐπιμελεῖσθαι). What, then, does such a man as I deserve? (36c3-d2)

Since those who want to sentence Socrates to die are not so many more than those who want to impose a different punishment, in compliance with the institution of the ἀντιτίμησις Socrates can propose facing a punishment different from death; as the reader knows, Socrates, on account of his service to his fellow-citizens, will suggest that he should be maintained in the prytaneum at the expense of the city (36d5-37a1). This is, in Socrates' opinion, the proper reward for a life spent in caring his fellow-citizen. However, Socrates cannot improve anyone regardless of their will to improve themselves⁸³; therefore the only way to improve someone else is making them to desire to improve themselves⁸⁴. This is the greatest εὐεργεσία (benefit) Socrates tries to provide: instill the longing for self-improvement. This εὐεργεσία, as already seen in the other chapters, is not a soft exhortation. To be able to improve oneself, one must beforehand be aware that one must improve oneself; but this self-awareness is something quite difficult to obtain. One must accept to be refuted, sometimes in a rough way, by means of the Socratic elenchos; one must give up

⁸² Cf. *supra*, p. 346. Besides, it is to keep in mind that Socrates in the *Charmides* plays the role of judge in a paradigmatic way: he does not allow Charmides bodily beauty to influence him, since, to judge someone, one must not look at their beauty, their bloodline, the power of their friends, *but only at the state of their soul*, in the same way as Zeus commands the infernal judges to do in the myth at the end of the *Gorgias*.

⁸³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 343-344.

⁸⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 73-77.

what until that point had been holding to be true or false, and, in short, one must somehow give up oneself. However the new life one gains by means of the deathlike experience of the elenchos is a life in which one is able to improve oneself, since accepting the experience of refutation means acknowledging that there is nothing in human nature which cannot be improved, because there is nothing which is perfect. Only two beings do not become better, the gods and those who think that their knowledge is flawless and irrefutable: the former cannot become better because they are perfect: the latter ones because they *cannot see themselves*, and as a consequence, they do not even see how much they need to improve themselves. As a consequence, it is impossible to become better without being refuted. On the contrary, those who decide to face their lacking condition and see themselves in their entirety (not only what they want to see), commit themselves to an active ἐπιμέλεια of themselves, the endless self-improvement. This ἐπιμέλεια is: *oikeiopragia*, because improving oneself is the purest form of self-interest; *koinopragia* because to be refuted one needs at least another person, and also because, to make one's self-interest, one needs others' existence, since the self has a relational structure⁸⁵; *agathopragia*, because improving oneself means benefitting oneself; however one cannot truly benefit oneself regardless of the others' good. As a consequence, the individual good cannot be indifferent to the common one, and improving oneself involves also benefitting others. The ἐπιμελεῖσθαι sums up Socrates' life. However, if the self of care is relational, and the good is always common, which good comes to Socrates from a relationship in which the interlocutor is a man, while Socrates, according to this reading of the *Apology*, is a *daimonic man with daimonic powers*? It is the issue of the common good in a not symmetrical relationship, the issue faced in the analysis of the *Charmides*, speaking of the relationship between doctor and patient. The good is common, but not the same: the patient heals, the doctor, by caring for his patient, has a financial benefit, improves his skills as doctor, and, as a good doctor, gains self-esteem⁸⁶. Doctor and patient achieve different goods, but they can achieve them only together. Socrates is a daimonic man; if a man, as a doctor, can be happy only provided that he

⁸⁵Cf. *supra*, pp. 131-133; 142.

⁸⁶Cf. *supra*, p. 155; 179; 227; 247.

manages to cure his patients, Socrates, as a daimonic being, can be happy only provided that he does what such a being must do. Given that the daimonic realm fills the gap between mortal and immortal, and Socrates fulfills this task by awakening self-awareness in the Athenians and exhorting them to self-improvement, it follows that Socrates' happiness consists in the fulfillment of this task, because this means the fulfillment of his daimonic nature⁸⁷. For this reason being released on the condition that he ceases to practice self- and others' examination has never been an option: if he had accepted freedom on that condition, he would have disavowed his daemonic nature; but this would bring Socrates to unhappiness⁸⁸. He says, it is true, that death, as a condition devoid of perception, just like a dreamless night (καὶ εἴτε δὴ μηδεμία αἴσθησις ἐστὶν ἀλλ' οἷον ὕπνος ἐπειδὴν τις καθεύδων μηδ' ὄναρ μηδὲν ὄρα) is a great gain and even the great king could enumerate just few days and nights in which he has lived better than in that dreamless night. However, it is to keep in mind that he is trying to hearten the judges who wanted to spare him; maybe, by saying that, if death is like a dreamless night, it is a gain, he wants to hearten those who do not believe in an existence different from the bodily one⁸⁹; on the other hand, he is aiming at showing that

⁸⁷If caring by means of dialectic is Socrates' task, it can be argued that the Idea of happiness outlined in these lines of the *Apology* is close to what Aristotle says in *Nich. Eth.* I, V, 1097b18-1098a4 on happiness as end itself, which resides in carrying out of those activities proper of humans by their nature.

⁸⁸This is also consistent with the philosophical appropriation of the traditional military values: if a true soldier prefers a honorable death to the survival as a deserter, likewise Socrates, as Apollo's soldier, prefers to die fulfilling his tasks than live deserting.

⁸⁹ This is the reason why it is not prudent to see in 40d1-e3 a suicidal view on the part of the philosopher. The suicidal view comes from "the bleak view on human condition" which someone finds in the *Apology*, and in general in the dialogue devoted to Socrates' death: cf. R. E. Jones, 2016, pp. 97-105. This is the necessary reading when one forgets that *it is not life, but life as a mere biological survival that Socrates refuses*. What, in my opinion, the "bleak view" reading does not figure out is that, in Socrates' view, dying in order to fulfill one's duty is good, while reneging it in order to survive is a great bad. This view comes from the philosophical appropriation of the military bravery carried out by Plato in the *Apology*. If one tries to evaluate Socrates' attitude before death without taking into account this appropriation of the military moral code, one is destined to read Socrates' words as the mere will to end it.

death is not to fear, even if it means fading away once and for all⁹⁰. More enlightening about Socrates' hopes and his idea of happiness is the second hypothesis on death, that death is the soul's wandering from this place (this world) into an other one (the afterlife) where one's soul finds the souls of the other departed (40e3-4). If death is this wandering, there is no greater good than this⁹¹. After coming to Hades, soul would know the infernal judges (who are much better than the judges of this world, Socrates seems to say). Besides, the soul in Hades may know the demigods and the heroes of the past as well as Homer, the poet who made them immortal, and also Hesiod⁹², Orpheus and Museus. What is the most important, if death is the soul's stay in a different place with the souls of the other departed, Socrates could carry on practicing the self-and others examination:

And the greatest pleasure would be to pass my time in examining and investigating the people there, as I do those here, to find out who among them is wise and who thinks he is when he is not (τοὺς ἐκεῖ ἐξετάζοντα καὶ ἐρευνῶντα ὥσπερ τοὺς ἐνταῦθα διάγειν, τίς αὐτῶν σοφός ἐστιν καὶ τίς οἶεται μὲν, ἔστιν δ' οὐ). What price would any of you pay, judges, to examine him who led the great army against Troy, or Odysseus, or Sisyphus, or countless others, both men and women, whom I might mention? To converse and associate with them and examine them would be immeasurable happiness (οἷς ἐκεῖ διαλέγεσθαι καὶ συνεῖναι καὶ ἐξετάζειν ἀμήχανον ἂν εἴη εὐδαιμονίας). At any rate, the folk there do not kill people for it; since, if what we are told is true, they are immortal for all future time, besides being happier in other respects than men are here (41b4-c5).

The διαλέγεσθαι, the συνεῖναι and the ἐξετάζειν are essential features of the Socratic care. This means that the immeasurable happiness Socrates hopes that he will find in the afterlife is carrying on doing in the afterlife that which he always

⁹⁰ Cf. *supra*, note 80

⁹¹This shows to which alternative Socrates is inclined: in fact death as a dreamless night is only a gain, not something of which there is no greater good. According to this view on death soul outlives the body not as a impersonal principle of life which ensouls the body (that which is true of a consistent part of presocratics' psychology cf. A. Stavru, 2009, pp. 15-39), *but a principle of life which preserves the moral features of the living human*.

⁹² Cf. *supra*, pp. 342ff.

has done until death, caring for himself as well as others⁹³. But the ἐπιμελεῖσθαι by means of the dialectic exchange is but his daimonic task, the task assigned to him by Apollo; consequently, Socrates' immeasurable happiness consists in carrying on fulfilling the task he already had, so as to be, even in the afterlife, *a daimonic man loyal to his duty*. At this point an etymological observation is fitting. The word εὐδαιμονία, translated as “happiness” is the compound of εὖ “good, worthy”, and δαίμων, which in Homer means “god”, but also “what the gods have allotted to the mortals” and, as a consequence, “the destiny the gods have allotted to each of us”⁹⁴. Accordingly, εὐδαιμονία should mean “the condition of those to whom gods have allotted a worthy destiny”, or “the condition of those accompanied by a good δαίμων⁹⁵”. However this does not mean that εὐδαιμονία is a sort of predestination which humans cannot avoid, as if happiness were a condition which is fulfilled regardless of the human will to be happy. This cannot be the socratic ideal of happiness. Sure, some people may be more talented than others and more capable of caring for themselves, but this does not mean that they will be happy regardless of their active commitment. If happiness were unavoidable, the existence of Alcibiades in Plato's works would not make any sense: Alcibiades is talented, handsome, wealthy and has powerful friends; however his self-satisfaction prevents him from actively committing to his self-improvement; he could be happy, but this does not involve that he will be happy, and, at least from the socratic point of view, he will not. Socrates' ideal of εὐδαιμονία involves the active commitment, so that the word εὐδαιμονία could be intended as “the capability of fulfilling the things which gods have allotted to us to be happy”. According to such ideal, the ἐπιμελεῖσθαι is essential for happiness: being handsome is not enough, one must *care for one's beauty*, avoiding excesses and training. Being intelligent is not enough; one must care for one's intelligence learning always something new and

⁹³ However how Socrates conceives this dialogue in the afterlife it cannot be inferred from this lines of the *Apology*, even more if one considers that in the *Phaedo* the soul of the true philosopher is divinised; given that, the dialogue of philosophers souls among each other would turn out to be a peaceful and eternal conversation among deified souls.

⁹⁴Cf. *supra*, p. 341-342.

⁹⁵A spirit guide who represents this destiny.

not indulging to self-satisfaction. It could be said that gods have provided only the fifty percent of human happiness; regarding the other fifty percent, it is incumbent upon humans to reach it. If the gods want that it is incumbent upon humans to be happy, it follows that Socrates, exhorting his fellow-citizens to care for themselves, exhorts them to commit to their own happiness. In Socrates' case the εὐδαιμονία is the capability of fulfilling his daimonic task forever; therefore Socrates' εὐδαιμονία consists in being a good and faithful daimon. However this does not mean that Socrates does not improve himself; even if he is superior to the common humans, he is not a god. Socrates improves himself as a daimonic man, that is to say that he must commit to become always better at awakening self-awareness and exhorting at self-improvement. Also Socrates must actively commit to the fulfillment of what Gods (Apollo) have allotted to him to be happy. Socrates *chooses* to be loyal to his master, he *chooses* to die instead of betraying himself; The loyalty to his duty is so strong that he asks the judges to reproach his own children, in the same way as Socrates has done with his fellow-citizens, if they will care money or anything else more than virtue (41e1-3). To sum up, Socrates' happiness, according to the lines under examination, consists in doing his own duties, because this fulfills his daimonic nature. Furthermore, the self- and others' examination in the afterlife would be an intercourse between souls; but, as it is clear from the *Alcibiades* and the *Charmides*, the socratic dialogue is always an intercourse between souls. Once again, the great happiness Socrates says that he hopes in the afterlife, is but carrying on being "a good daimon". The only thing which changes is that in the afterlife souls would not try to kill Socrates and would not hate him; accordingly he would not fear for his life. Given that, Socrates seems to be so far from despising life that he hopes that the afterlife will be not different from the life he already has lived. However in the afterlife, at least in his hopes, he will not find the hate and the envy he has found in his city; therefore, in Socrates' hopes, the afterlife may be the place where there are no hindrances to the fulfillment of his nature.

Conclusive remarks: on Socrates' self-awareness.

It has been said above that Socrates is self-aware in a paradigmatic way; this does not mean that he, in every moment of his life, has a perfect and flawless awareness of what he knows and does not know; if this were the case, Socrates would not benefit from the “intercourse between souls” in which he engages his interlocutors. What makes Socrates superior to his fellow-citizens and enables him to be their daimon is *the awareness that self-awareness is an ability one must practice forever*; it is this the self-awareness which Socrates possesses in a paradigmatic way. If his self-awareness were the flawless awareness of what he knows and does not know, not only would he not feel any need for self-examination, but probably would he not be interested in examining others: in fact he would be so far from ignoring anything about himself that he would not need others to know what he does not know yet. Besides, he would not even practice the paradigmatic role the oracle ascribes to him: Socrates can exhort his fellow-citizens to care for themselves because he himself practices self-care, which is possible only insofar as one continually renews one’s awareness. Therefore Socrates is paradigmatic not because he is so far from failure that he does not need to care for himself, but because he shows how to practice this care to his fellow-citizens. This is the reason why a god, a perfect and indefectible being, cannot be a proper model of self-care, since divine nature cannot be improved; as a consequence, the only being which can exhort the Athenians to care for themselves is a being which is superior to them insofar as it has the clear awareness of the limits of its nature and, as a consequence, does not cease to care for itself (in this way this being can be a paradigm of self-care). This being is a daimon, or, more, exactly, a daimonic man who is the daimon of his community.

Chapter VII: the *Crito*.

Socrates and his own death: the Crito

Thus far it has been showed how Socrates, by means of the dialectic method, leads his young interlocutors to face the deathlike experience of the loss of their certitudes; it has been said that this loss means the loss of oneself, that is to say of the person which the young has been until the dialectic intercourse with Socrates. The loss of oneself is the initiatic death faced by the young man in order to become something else and *something more*; *only those who are willing to be torn apart by the ritual violence of the Socratic dialectic can stop being young and start becoming adults*¹. Those who fear this ritual death, those who fear the loss of the immediate adhesion to their certitudes (which is, as said in the chapter on the *Alcibiades*, the loss of their childhood); those ones, even growing older in their bodies, remain children in their soul; they are the *many*. The significance of the Many in the *Crito* (and in Plato's works in general) cannot be underrated: it is the Many who have sentenced Socrates to die, it is the Many who think that death is the worst evil; and it is the Many who are the evidence of the fact that not all can benefit from socratic care. What is more, in the *Crito* it is Socrates himself who is going to face death; however, while the deathlike experience experienced by his young interlocutors does not end up in a physical death, in the case of the *Crito* it is physical death which looms over Socrates. Besides, another relevant difference between Socrates and the interlocutors of the analysed dialogues is that those like Charmides, Alcibiades, Euthydemus and Euthyphro can become better only by giving up the people which they have been until the intercourse with Socrates, whereas Socrates *must remain the person he has been thus far in order not to become worse, that is to say not to become one of the Many*. The initiatic challenge with which Socrates has to do in the *Crito* is *not to give up himself in order to survive*. Socrates always has exhorted to care for oneself (and for others as well); in order to do that, one must be able to look at oneself and lose the immediate and unthinking adhesion to what one thinks that is good or bad. If Socrates, who mocks the Many because they think they know that death is the greatest of the evil, escaped from the prison in

¹ Cf. *supra*, 20-24.

order to avoid his own death, he would act just like someone who fears death and would be ready to repudiate themselves in order to carry on breathing. If Socrates accepted Crito's proposition, Socrates would become one of the Many. This is the challenge Socrates must take on: while the young interlocutors belong to the Many (Alcibiades, Charmides and Euthydemus are like the Many because of their way of thinking, not because of their status) and must distance themselves from them, Socrates does not belong to the Many and must not become one of them. If Socrates escaped from the prison, he would become one of the Many, one of those who think that dying is the worst evil. As said above, by caring for oneself, one commits oneself to a lifestyle which distances oneself from the Many; therefore Socrates does not accept Crito's proposition; if he did, the *epimeleia eautou* itself would be in danger: if the *epimeleia eautou* is possible only by facing the deathlike experience of the loss of that which is considered obvious and taken for granted, Socrates would seem to never have believed in the *epimeleia eautou*; he would turn out to fear the loss of his own bodily existence, which is maybe the most obvious thing in the human experience. Actually Socrates always has practiced the loss of his bodily existence, if it is true that the dialogue is an intercourse between souls, as it is said in the *Alcibiades* and in the *Charmides*². To understand who his interlocutors are, Socrates must go beyond that which his perceptions conveys to him: their beauty, the political power of their families, their bloodline and so on. To do that, he must go beyond his own physical and social conditionings, or, to say it better, he must go beyond that part of himself which may lead him astray from the grasping the condition of his interlocutors'souls; Socrates can help his interlocutors to go beyond bodily conditionings only because he himself is able to do that. However, even if the dialogue is considered an intercourse between souls and an experience in the afterlife as well, at the end of the dialogue Socrates and his interlocutor still have their body; on the contrary, in the *Crito*, and in the *Phaedo* in particular, Socrates engages himself in discussions at the end of which he will lose his body. This is what makes the *Crito*, and the *Phaedo* as we will see below different from the dialogues analysed thus far. Now Socrates is on the verge of

² Cf. *supra*, pp. 105-107; 208; 381-384.

facing not a challenge like the others, but the most important one: he must show to the others and (or above all) to himself that he is so accustomed to separating himself from his bodily conditionings that he does not even fear the loss of the body itself. If caring oneself involves going beyond the bodily and social conditionings in order to improve our soul so as to be more able to benefit oneself and the others, the most important (and the most scariest) challenge of the *epimeleia heautou* is going beyond the origin of the bodily and social conditionings, the bodily existence itself. Furthermore, overcoming this challenge sheds a retrospective light on what Socrates has been doing and saying thus far: if Socrates is so calm and faces death, it means that the *epimeleia heautou* practiced by him is *true and has true effects on one's life*: their effects are so true that it can free its practitioner from the fear of death.

The ritual frame of the Crito

Before dealing with the contents of the dialogue it is useful to spend some words on his ritual frame, as it has been done for other dialogues, in particular for the *Lysis*³: just like in that dialogue also in the *Crito* the action takes place during one of the most important religious celebration of Athen, the Delia; during the Delia a ship, that on which according to the legend Theseus sailed to Creta, was sent to Delos in order to thank Apollo for the success of Theseus' expedition⁴. Noteworthy is the presence of the god Apollo in honor of whom the celebration takes places. In the *Apology* Apollo is the god in the name of whom Socrates commits to free his fellow-citizens from their false belief and exhorts them to care themselves; in the *Crito* it is a celebration in honor of Apollo which beats the final moments of Socrates. As in the *Charmides* and in the *Lysis* proves to be an apollonian μάντις, also in the *Crito*, and in the *Phaedo*, Socrates carries out a prophecy and a purification, other two skills connected to Apollo. Regarding the prophecy, Socrates is able to know in advance that he will not die the day after as Crito pays him a visit

³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 232-238.

⁴ Cf. V. von Schoeffer, 1889, A. Mommsen, 1898, pp. 450-451; E. Pfuhl, 1900, pp. 106-107; P. Stengel, 1920, p. 256.

in the jail, but after two days (44a4-b2)⁵. In the case of the *Crito* Socrates delivers a prophecy about himself, while in other dialogues the prophecy concerns someone else. In the case of the *Apology* it concerns those who have sentenced him to death; according to Socrates' χρησμός, they will not benefit from Socrates' death, because after his death they will have to face other people who will refute their belief and lifestyle as well. Furthermore, these new refuters will be much tougher than Socrates, since they will be younger (29c1-39d2)⁶. What concerns the purification, Socrates, as it will be clearer in the analysis of the *Phaedo*, is going to carry out that which for a mortal being is the most difficult thing to do, that is to say preparing to die; that which is the final challenge of the *epimeleia heautou*, purifying oneself from the bond to physical existence in order to face death in the best way. The purification which Socrates carries out on himself takes place during an other purification, that of Athen. As we know from *Phaed.* 58b4-5, when the ship raises anchor, Athen is purified and nobody must be killed until the ships returns from Delos. The νόμος which requires that during the period of purification nobody must be killed is so old and venerable that also the sentences of courts are suspended⁷.

⁵ Socrates uses the word ἐνόπνιον, which indicates a dreamlike experience the truth of which is incontestable (I. Capitani, 2015, p. 3). it is not unusual in the greek world (and not only) that truth, and truth about the future, is vehiculated through dreams or experienced in extralogical states of consciousness. A well known example is the pythian priestess who devined under the possession of the god (ἐνθουσιασμός)-scholars are uncertain about the origin of this ἐνθουσιασμός that such an ἐνθουσιασμός, which some think it was provoked by means of inhalation of gas exhaling from the earth, while others suggest a self-induced hypnosis-cf J. Fontenrose, 1978, pp. 197-203. An other example of truth revealed in dreams is the ritual of incubation at the Asclepius' temple in Epidauros-cfr. K. Kerényi, 1956, pp. 17-48; C. A. Meyer, 2012; J. B. Pettis, 2015, *passim*; F. Steger, 2016, pp. 84-91.

⁶ In the lines of the *Apology* Socrates uses the verb χρησμοδεῖν, which means "singing oracles". A witness of the "singing" as skill of the Pythia can be found in Euripides *Ion*, where it is said that a woman from Delphi seats on a holy tripod, singing the cries Apollo makes resound (θάσσει δὲ γυνὴ τρίποδα ζάθειον/ Δελφίς, αἰείδουσ' Ἑλλησι βόας./ ὅς ἂν Ἀπόλλων κελαδήσῃ, 91-93)

⁷ I do not translate the word νόμος with the english "law" because the greek word means something much wider than law in the modern jurisprudence. Νόμος is everything which is observed by people, whether it is a written rule or not. However, even the difference between written and unwritten law may turn out to be useless: it could be that a custom observed in a community is transcribed, but it

While the ship is away, the city must be purified, and it cannot be otherwise since the Delie are celebrated in honor of Apollo, god of purification⁸. Likewise, Socrates benefits from this time of purification to purify himself before facing death. Socrates purifies himself while the city purifies itself; this shows that Socrates' actions not only take place within the city, but they *mirror the life of Athen itself*⁹; so intimate is the bond between Athens and Socrates, its daemonic custodian¹⁰, that they purifies themselves at the same time, both in the name of Apollo, tutelary deity of the Ionian people; intimate is the bond between Socrates and the νόμοι of Athen, which he, as custodian of its community, must defend from those who want to disregard them, even if they, just like Crito, are friends. A further element of the ritual frame of the *Crito* is Socrates' *aporia*. Thus far it were the young interlocutors who find themselves in *aporia*, that condition in which the young face the ritual deadlike experience of the loss of his certitudes. In this condition the young experiences something similar to the impossibility to move. He is enchained¹¹ because he cannot go back (*scil.* to his certitudes, since they have

was observed already before its transcription; in this case the difference between written and unwritten is no longer so clear. An other noteworthy case is that of the *Antigone*: here Creon issues an edict by means of which he prevents from burying Polynices. Even if the decree issues from the authority, Creon spreads its content among the people by means of heralds, whereas today such a decree, issued from the political authority, requires the written form- Cf L. Pepe, *cit*, pp. 119-124. The νόμος which prescribed the purification of Athen during the Delie may have been transcribed at Socrates' time; nevertheless it is hard to believe that the observance of this ritual of purification depended on a written law. Cf. Chapter V, note 26.

⁸The role of Apollo as a great purifying god is a *leitmotiv* of the contemporary attic tragedy J. Peake, 2011, pp. 121-133; 169-178; R. R. Dyer, 2013, pp. 38-56; L. Pucci, 2016, pp. 71-95. It would not be unreasonable to think that the image of Socrates as Apollonian purifying daemonic man can be considered a philosophical appropriation and readaptation on Plato's part of the tragic theme of purification.

⁹ The action of the dialogue mirrors the ritual celebration also in the *Lysis*. Cf. *supra*, note 3.

¹⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 342-349.

¹¹ Telling is what Aristotle says about the usefulness of the *aporia*. He compares this condition with that of those who are enchained: "Now for those who wish to get rid of perplexities it is a good plan to go into them thoroughly; for the subsequent certainty is a release from the previous perplexities, and release is impossible when we do not know the knot (λύειν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγνοοῦντας τὸν δεσμόν). The perplexity of the mind shows that there is a "knot" in the subject; for *in its perplexity* (ἢ γὰρ

been wiped away by the socratic elenchos); he cannot even go ahead (he does not know, or not yet, which is *the right way* to overcome this deadlike state). He is in *aporia*, in a condition of *lack of ways*¹². In the case of the *Crito*, Socrates' *aporia* is much more tangible: he is not like enchained, *he is enchained; he cannot move because he cannot (and does not want to) escape from the prison. He is apparently in a real lack of ways*. However, the *aporia* is but lack of ways only for those who are too scared of the loss of their certitudes, whereas the same place where the *old* ways fade can become, for those who overcome fear, the place where *new* ways can be found and traced. In the same way a jail is but the place of the never ending wait of death for those who are too bound to bodily existence; on the contrary, the same jail becomes for Socrates the place in which the final challenge of the *epimeleia heautou*, the purification from the bond to bodily existence in order to face death, takes place. It is this final purification, officiated by Socrates in the *Crito* and in the *Phaedo* over himself, which definitively distances Socrates from the πολλοί, who fear death more than anything else. Given that, it is possible to go on to deal with the significance of the contrast between Socrates and the Many in the *Crito*.

The Many: the negative pole of the epimeleia heautou

Crito has already expressed his astonishment for Socrates' composure (43b6-8). Socrates says that it would be inappropriate for a man aged like him to regret to die. On the other hand *Crito* says that others, albeit aged, would nonetheless regret (43c1-3). These "others" who, in spite of their age, would carry on living, one can infer, are the Many, those Many before whom Socrates was discredited by his past

ἀπορεῖ) it is in much the same condition as *men who are fettered* (τοῖς δεδεμένοις): *in both cases it is impossible to make any progress* (ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἀμφοτέρως προελθεῖν εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν). (*Met.* II, 995a27-32, tr. H. Tredennick).

¹² L. Napolitano, 2014, pp. 152-155, links the *aporia* to the navigation; the sea is by its nature *aporon*; since it is fluid and variable, routes cannot be established once and for all and must be traced each time anew. This explanation of the *aporia* and mine are not at odds with each other; in fact the lack of known ways depends on the presence of *too many ways*, many of which are wrong. Those who face this lack of known ways, which is tantamount to the presence of *countless unknown ways*, feel like paralysed, like *enchained and consequently unable to go ahead*.

accusers, those Many who have sentenced him to death: in fact the philosopher says that those who have sentenced him to die think that, by killing him, they will harm him (*Ap.* 41d6). The people who sentenced Socrates to death are but the Many, the male citizens of each tribe who served as jurors during the trials at the Helieia¹³. They were not jurists, neither was such a skill required; every adult male citizen could attend to trials and express his vote. To sum up, the Helieia was the stronghold of the Many, who in that place could decide on things which they ignore, or at least this was Socrates (and Plato's) opinion¹⁴. However, even Crito appears to share the view of the Many on death, since he believes that: "the opinion of the Many must be taken into account, since they can bring about not the smallest, but the greatest of the evils, if one is defamed before them" (44d1-5). The word δόξα here translated as "opinion" and the verb δοκεῖν "to seem" represent the way of knowing typical of the Many. Their δόξα sometimes can be true; however they cannot explain why it is true or false, or they trace back this truth to false causes. As a consequence, they cannot benefit or harm anyone, since they do not know anything about what is good or bad, although they think they do. The only way to help (or harm) someone is make them φρόνιμος (or ἄφρων), but the Many are unable to do it; as a consequence they do whatever it chances (ποιοῦσι δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἂν τύχῃσι, 44d7-8)¹⁵. The Many, it goes without saying, think they are powerful, because they can decide on life and death; on the contrary, Socrates does not believe that deciding on life and death makes someone powerful *tout court*; only someone who *wisely* decides on life and death is powerful, not who decides ignoring what is good or bad to do, or who decides intoxicated by one's power¹⁶. Contrary to Socrates, Crito

¹³ Cf. G. Weber, 2008, pp. 21-32.

¹⁴ Cf. J. M. Hoffpauir, 2019.

¹⁵ I used the translation proposed by T. Penner, 1997, p.153, who rightly observed that the the Many are far from being careless of the good and the evil. Other renderings of the verb τυγχάνειν may lead to think that the Many are careless of what is good (or evil); but this is not true. The Many, all together in the Assemblies and each of them in his private life, are concerned with what is good (or bad) to do. However, since they do not know what it is, they act according to what they think that it is, or, what someone else (a rhetorician or a politician) leads them to believe.

¹⁶ Paradigmatic is the case of the Tyrant (*Gorg.* 466a-468e), who can be considered the ultimate offspring of the disorders of democracy. He is characterised by moral and cognitive blindness, which

considers the power of the Many something real; this power, albeit reckless, undeniably influences the political life of Athens. This shows how Crito is close to those Many from whom he wants to rescue his friend¹⁷. Interestingly, Crito is not a member of the lower classes, considering that his prosperity allows him to bribe prison guards. This is a further evidence that belonging to the Many, at least from philosophical point of view, has nothing to do with status and riches; there are two main features which characterise the Many: first of all, they ignore what is truly good (and evil); secondly, one who belongs to the Many always acts according to what the others think that is proper, rightful, just, and so on, not because the others know what they do, but because old customs and clever politicians suggest what they have to think. Just as the young Alcibiades has been thinking that he knows what is just, at least until the encounter with Socrates, because he has learnt it from his milieu, in the same way the Many never question what they think that is good, right, beautiful and so on; whether they may be wealthy and noble, or poor and from worker classes, they share the same immediate and unthinking adhesion to the world in which they have grown up and to the mentality of the people who inhabit them. This is Crito's attitude when he exhorts Socrates to rescue himself and accept his proposition. Interestingly he says that he fears that, if he does not help Socrates, it will seem to the Many, who does not know sufficiently him and Socrates, that he, Crito, prizes money more than friends; in fact the Many would never believe that Socrates has refused to escape from prison (44b7-c4)¹⁸. That Crito is so worried about what the Many may think of him and Socrates indicates that Crito shares the same mentality of the Many, even if his assets will have been substantial. Crito's words indirectly show a further feature of the Many: their inconsistency. According to Crito, the Many would regard as vile that Crito does not spend his money to help Socrates escape. However, among these Many there are some who have sentenced Socrates to death. As a consequence, some of these Many think

involves his false confidence in his illusory power. He thinks that he is the mightiest of men, while he is the most powerless- cfr. T. Penner, 1991, pp. 147-202.

¹⁷ Cf. M. Montuori, 1998, pp. 30ff.; V. Harte, 1999; pp. 117-147; Y. Liebersohn, 2015, pp. 103-118.

¹⁸ According to G. Danzig, 2006, pp. 21-45, in Athens the slander circulated that Socrates' friends did nothing to rescue him; the *Crito* would be also a defence against this slander.

that it is just to kill Socrates, but it is vile if Crito does not help him escape. This is in Socrates' mindset unacceptable: if something is just, an action which hinders justice cannot be honorable. Therefore, if it is just to kill Socrates, it cannot be just to rescue him; Attempting to rescue one's friends, even if they have committed injustice, is an understandable behaviour; nevertheless it is not just. the Many could think that it is vile not to rescue Socrates only provided that they think that the sentence was unjust; so they would be consistent with themselves. But in the world of the Many it is possible to regard contradictory opinions as both true, and this is possible because they do not know that their opinions are contradictory¹⁹. Crito's words lead us to believe that some of the Many think at the same time that it is just to kill Socrates and vile that Crito does not rescue him. However, if Crito managed to save Socrates, what should the Many do? Would they punish or commend Crito? If they punished Crito, they would punish him for a honorable action. If they commended him, they would commend a man who has helped a convicted escape. This contradiction indicates that not only the Many contradict each other, but also each of the Many contradicts himself; each of the Many is himself Many²⁰. The excessive worry for what the Many may think of one's behaviour and the inconsistency with oneself are at odd with a lifestyle shaped according to the *epimeleia heautou*, as it has been seen in the dialogues analysed above: to speak to the young Alcibiades, Socrates has waited for Alcibiades' *many* admirers be away²¹, as if the soul, which one must care so that it will be as good as possible, can become aware of its condition only provided that the crowd is away; on the other hand, undressing the soul, as Socrates does with Alcibiades, but also with Charmides and Euthydemus, means removing from the soul all those features, such as beauty,

¹⁸ The reason is that ignore what they think they know: For instance if one does not know what is just, it will be possible to have contradictory opinions about it.

²⁰ The tyrannical man of *Republic* comes to light when the disordered multiplicity of his longings gets the better of the other parts of the soul thanks to the ἔργος μόνναρχος at their head. The inner multiplicity, when it is not clearly known and, as a consequence, not refined, can become the cradle of Tyranny (in the soul as well as in the city), that is to say that condition, both psychological and political, in which reason, defeated by the worst wishes, is unable to exert its ordering and unifying role: cf. Z. Hitz, 2010, pp. 112-122.

²¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 160-164.

bloodline, political power and so on, which the Many usually prize. To care oneself, one must understand what this “self” is, and to understand it, one cannot rely on what the Many love or hate; only provided that one does not rely on the Many, one can know the condition of one’s soul and become able to care oneself. Moreover, the Many, as said above, are inconsistent with themselves. On the contrary, selfcare is an ἐπιτήδευμα, *a course of life*, which requires the active and *consistent* commitment to selfimprovement²²; a lifestyle which cannot be practiced, if one thinks that one knows what he really does not and is unaware of one’s inner contradictions. Charmides and Alcibiades become aware of their inner condition thanks to the *aporia*, that deathlike condition in which the young/initiate loses what he thinks that he is (a consistent person who knows) and see what he truly is (an inconsistent person who does not know and think that he does). To care oneself, one must face the bewildering experience of the *aporia* and learn from it; the Many are unable to care themselves because their unshakable adhesion to the world they know and its mindset prevents them from facing the *aporia*, or from considering it an instructive experience. To sum up, if the ability to evaluate oneself and the others regardless of the social pressure as well as the courage to accept one’s own *aporia* are features of the practitioner of the *epimeleia heautou*, the submission to social pressure and the unwillingness to face the *aporia* characterise the Many; as a consequence, the *epimeleia heautou* and the condition of the *Many* are diametrically opposed.

Crito, as said above, shares the mindset of the many. However, since the worry for what the Many may think makes no impression on Socrates, he puts forward other reasons to persuade Socrates to escape from prison; firstly he tells Socrates that he must not worry for the expenses Crito wants to do to rescue him (44e1-45e3); even if they bumped into informants who may trouble them, it would not be so expensive to bribe them (45a6-9). Furthermore, not only Crito, but also Simmias and Cebes, the characters of the *Phaedo*, are willing to spend their money to help Socrates escape from Athens, so that from the financial point of view there is no hinder to Socrates’break out. What is more, Socrates, says Crito, will be wellcome

²² Cf. *supra*, pp. 57-58.

in Thessaly, where many of his friends would host them (45c2-4)²³. Further reasons put forward by Crito once again show how close to the Many he is: Socrates should escape because, if he did not, he would do a favour to his enemies²⁴. If Socrates died, says Crito, he would harm his own children who would end up facing what usually happens to the fatherless (45d2-3). Then Crito goes on to put forward a reason which, he thinks, should make a great impression on Socrates, the care for virtue; Socrates, says Crito, seems to take it too much easily (σὺ δέ μοι δοκεῖς τὰ ῥαθυμώτατα αἰρεῖσθαι, 45d5-6); on the contrary, says Crito:

and you (Socrates) ought to choose as a good and brave man would choose, you who have been saying *all your life that you cared for virtue* (ἅπερ ἂν ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἀνδρεῖος ἔλοιτο, ταῦτα αἰρεῖσθαι, φάσκοντά γε δὴ ἀρετῆς διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου ἐπιμελεῖσθαι). So I am shamed both for you and for us, your friends, and I am afraid people will think that this whole affair of yours has been conducted with a sort of cowardice on our part (αἰσχύνομαι μὴ δόξη ἅπαν τὸ πρᾶγμα τὸ περὶ σέ ἀνανδρία τινὶ τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ πεπραχθῆναι)-both the fact that the case came before the court, when it might have been avoided, and the way in which the trial itself was carried on, and finally they will think, as the crowning absurdity of the whole affair, that this opportunity has escaped us through some base cowardice on our part (κακία τινὶ καὶ ἀνανδρία τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ διαπεφευγέναι ἡμᾶς δοκεῖν, since we did not save you, and you did not save yourself, though it was quite possible if we had been of any use whatever. Take care, Socrates, that these things be not disgraceful, as well as evil, both to you and to us. Just consider, or rather it is time not to consider any longer, but to have finished considering. And there is just one possible plan; for all this must be done in the coming night. And if we delay it can no longer be done. But I beg you, Socrates, do as I say and don't refuse (45d6-46a8, tr. H. N. Fowler).

²³ Cf. *infra*, pp. 420-421.

²⁴ Behind Crito's remark lies the traditional moral code according to which one must benefit one's friends and harm one's enemies, the same idea of justice endorsed by Polemarchus in the first book of the *Republic* (332a7-d6). The idea of justice underlying this moral code, which is deep-rooted in the Greek society of Socrates' times (L. Pearson, 1962, pp. 90-136; A. W. H. Adkins, 1972, pp. 11-13; G. Vlastos, 1991, pp. 179-190), is implicitly rejected by Socrates in *Gorgias*, in those lines wherein he argues for the usefulness of punishments-cf. K. Steffou, 2013, pp. 52-62.

Crito is not in the wrong when he thinks that courage and virtue have influence on Socrates, especially military bravery, recalled by the word ἀνδρείος, a value which Socrates himself displayed in rescuing Alcibiades. The ἀνδρεία is the courage before death, and also in this case Socrates seems to have it. What concerns the ἀρετῆς διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, it is obvious that these words make an impression on Socrates; it is Socrates himself who said in the *Euthydemus* that he wants Euthydemus to commit to philosophy and care of virtue²⁵; in the *Apology* he says that it is shameful to care about money, power and honor and not to care for the intelligence, the truth, and the soul, so that it will be as good as possible²⁶. Socrates always cared for others' virtue (and for his own). Eventually Crito seems to have found the right words to lead Socrates to accept his proposition. However the mindset lying behind these words comes to light. Crito, once again, is worried about what the Many may think if he does not risk everything to permit Socrates to leave Athens: in fact, even if οἱ πολλοὶ are not explicitly mentioned in the quoted lines, their presence is noticeable, as the verb δοκεῖν, which here occurs two times, suggests. Accordingly it is reasonable to guess that τοῖς πολλοῖς is the implied dative of the verb δοκεῖν, so that Crito turns out to say something like that: “I am ashamed (αἰσχύνομαι) that it may seem (δόξη *scil.* τοῖς πολλοῖς) that...”. The courage and the cowardice Crito is afraid of being accused of, according to this moral code, are courage and cowardice only as long as the community can commend or condemn, his courage and his cowardice are public deeds, the existence of which consists in being noticed by others; to conclude, Crito appears to belong to that “culture shame” appreciable in the epic poems, as the use of the verb αἰσχύνεσθαι in the quoted lines suggests²⁷. There is also a further feature which Crito shares with the Many: since he himself fears death, he does not understand how Socrates does not want to leave Athens; as Crito takes for granted that everyone (and he himself, one can guess), if they could, would avoid death, whether they deserve death or not, he cannot understand how Socrates does not want to avoid it. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the Many and the practitioner of selfcare

²⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 58; 64; 73; 85.

²⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 368-371.

²⁷ Cf. E. Dodds, 1951, pp. 28-64.

always commit opposed actions; often both make the same things; what changes are their reasons: the Many for instance, may believe that modesty is a behavior to observe before people, while, when nobody looks, one can abandon oneself to wildness. Instead the practitioner of care would practice modesty because restraining from excessive pleasures benefits the body, so that the soul, not concerned with a body in a bad condition, can commit to selfimprovement²⁸; furthermore a soul and a body in good condition allow to care for others. That moral code whose core is the social pressure cannot influence Socrates' decisions; Crito on the other hand has proven to belong to the mindset of the Many. Socrates is now going to face the final challenge of the *epimeleia heautou*, but the *epimeleia heautou* always involves the good of someone else, Crito in this case; therefore, Socrates, facing the challenge, must care for Crito; since, as said thus far, the mindset of the Many is at odds with the *epimeleia heautou*, Socrates' task will distance Crito from this mindset. However this time Socrates will not attempt to steer his interlocutor towards the deathlike experience of the *aporia*; instead he will try to use persuasion and rethoric, as the speech of laws indicates.

Socrates and the consistency before death

As said above, one of the feature of the Many is their inconsistency, while consistency characterizes the *epimeleia eautou*, as Socrates lets understand: "I am not only now, but always such a man as to follow nothing but the reasoning which on considerations seems to me the best" (46b3-4). This consistency in following the best reasoning does not allow him disown his past λόγοι, which still appears to him the most reasonable; therefore he cannot neglect them, even if he is going to face death (actually, it is because he is going to face death that he cannot neglect them). Furthermore following the best reasoning is at odds not only with the inconsistency of the Many, but also with their immediate and unthinking adhesion to what they know (or they think they know): the best λόγος is the outcome of attentive consideration, and it is possible only as long as one acknowledges one's own lack of

²⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 109-116.

knowledge. Socrates will not disown his past λόγοι, unless he and Crito find some better; otherwise, Socrates says:

I shall not give way to you (says Socrates to Crito), not even if the power of the multitude (ἡ τῶν πολλῶν δύναμις) frightens us with even more terrors than at present, as children (ὡσπερ παῖδας) are frightened with goblins, threatening us with imprisonments and deaths and confiscations of property (δεσμούς καὶ θανάτους ἐπιπέπουσα καὶ χρημάτων ἀφαιρέσεις). (46c2-4).

These lines are noteworthy because of the relationship they establish between the power of the Many and the children. As said above, Socrates does not fear this power; actually he believes that the Many have no power. So, who fear their power? The answer is: the Many themselves; it is the Many who fear the Many. The Many disagree with each other, and each of them with themselves. Therefore, it is not unusual that some of the Many, whether they be politicians or commoners, fall into disgrace and from slanderers become slandered. The Many fear the power of the Many, as they were children, maybe because each of them knows that this power is changeable and the favour of the people can be easily lost. To conclude, each of the Many is both tormenter and victim of his fellow-citizens. However, the fear for the Many, a fear of which they themselves are victim, cannot prevent Socrates from following the best λόγος, the only possible criterion of conduct.

To persuade Crito and heal him from the fear for the Many, Socrates goes on to examine one of his λόγοι, that is to say that some opinions are to follow, some not (46d1). Socrates uses the word δόξα to establish continuity between Crito's speech and his own. In Crito's speech δόξα and δοκεῖν occur several times, and to let Crito more easily follow his reasoning, Socrates does not contrast δόξα and λόγος, but two different kinds of δόξα. On the other hand, even Crito, even if fearing the power of the many, nonetheless agrees that not all the opinions are to esteem, but only some, and not those of all men, but only of some (47a1-4). Useful (χρησταί)

opinions are to esteem, while useless (πονηράς) opinions are not²⁹; useful opinions are those of the wise (τῶν φρονίμων), while useless opinions are those of the foolish (τῶν ἀφρόνων).

Thus far Socrates is still speaking of opinions, intended as “what seems to someone”; in the next move of Socrates’ reasoning the words δόξα and δοκεῖν cease to mean “what seems” to acquire the meaning of “what experts hold to be true on account of the mastery of their domains”³⁰. Socrates, as he already did in the *Euthydemus*³¹, changes the meaning of the word δόξα in a subreptitious way, so that this δόξα of the experts turns out to be the opposite of the δόξα of the Many.

The One and the Many. The Many and the ruin of the body.

Socrates introduces two experts into his reasoning, the ἰατρός and the παιδοτρίβης:

Socrates: „If a man is an athlete and makes that his business, does he pay attention to every man's praise and blame and opinion (παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἐπαίνῳ καὶ ψόγῳ καὶ δόξῃ) or to those of one man only who is a physician or a trainer? (ἐνὸς μόνου ἐκείνου ὃς ἂν τυγχάνῃ ἰατρὸς ἢ παιδοτρίβης ὧν);“. Crito: „To those of one man only“. Socrates: “Then he ought to fear the blame and welcome the praise of that one man and not of the multitude (μὴ τοὺς τῶν πολλῶν)“. Crito: “Obviously“. Socrates: “And he must act and exercise and eat and drink as the one man who is his director and who knows the business thinks best rather than as all the others think. (ἢ ἂν τῷ ἐνὶ δοκῇ, τῷ ἐπιστάτῃ

²⁹ The adjectives χρηστός and πονηρός mean good or bad in relation to their suitability for a certain aim. Socrates means that useful opinions are those which make possible to attain good outcomes, whereas the useless opinions make it impossible.

³⁰ In the *Minos* law is traced back to the true opinion, which is discovery of being (οὐκοῦν ἡ ἀληθῆς δόξα τοῦ ὄντος ἐστὶν ἐξέυρεσις;) (314e10-315a4). Accordingly law, being such an opinion grasping reality, cannot be the mere opinion of the majority, but *the wise and expert opinion of those mastering skills*. Each of them is law-giver in the respective field (316c3-317a1)- Cf. J. Dalfen, 2009, pp. 90-98. Accordingly only political and royal men (οἱ πολιτικοὶ τε καὶ οἱ βασιλικοὶ) can be law-giver of cities, since their δόξαι are true and able to grasp the being. Although the *Mino* is considered spurious from the majority of the scholars, it vouches for the use of δόξα as outcome of the reflection carried out from a skilled mind, a use quite close to that which Plato makes in the *Crito*.

³¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 78-85

καὶ ἐπαῖοντι, μᾶλλον ἢ ἢ σύμπασι τοῖς ἄλλοις)“. Crito: “That is true“. Socrates: „Well then; if he disobeys the one man and disregards his opinion and his praise, but regards words of the many (τιμήσας δὲ τοὺς τῶν πολλῶν λόγους) who have no special knowledge, will he not come to harm? Crito: “Of course he will“. Socrates: “And what is this harm? In what direction and upon what part of the one who disobeys does it act?“. Crito: “Evidently upon his body; for that is what it ruins“ (47a13-c3).

Interestingly, these lines echo some lines of the *Gorgias* wherein Socrates explains that craftsmen, and in particular ἰατροί and παιδοτρίβαι, do not act randomly, but in such a way as to bring order and balance into that with which they deal (in this case into the human body), until the final outcome turns out to be something ordered and well balanced (ἕως ἂν τὸ ἅπαν συστήσῃται τεταγμένον τε καὶ κεκοσμημένον πρᾶγμα, 503e8-504a3). Accordingly the health of the body is but that condition deriving from following the τάξεις (orders, dispositions, but also precepts) pertaining to the body:

Socrates: “For it seems to me that any regularity of the body is called healthiness (ταῖς μὲν τοῦ σώματος τάξεσιν ὄνομα εἶναι ὑγιεινόν), and this leads to health being produced in it, and general bodily excellence. Is that so or not ? ». Callicles: « It is ». (504c7-9, tr. W. R. M. Lamb)

It is the doctor (or the instructor) who gives orders pertaining to the body. In the aforementioned lines of the *Crito* listening to the Many means ruining one’s body, because they ignore what one has to do, or because some of them exhort to commit to an unregulated lifestyle; anyway the ignorance of the Many, as contrary to the τάξεις of the experts of human body, brings about body’s ἀταξία (lack of order). What is more, medicine (the art of the ἰατρός) and training (the art of the παιδοτρίβης) are two θεραπεῖαι because their task is to lead the being with which they deal (the human body) to its best condition (*Gorg.* 464c3-4). On the contrary, culinary (which disguises as medicine) and cosmetics (which disguises as gymnastic) are κολακεῖαι, kinds of adulation, they are unable to benefit those who turn to them; actually, while medicine and training benefit the body, culinary and

cosmetics ruin it. It is noteworthy that Socrates says that if a cook and a doctor contended, before boys or men as foolish as boys (ἢ ἐν ἀνδράσιν οὕτως ἀνοήτοις ὥσπερ οἱ παῖδες), as to who of them is knowledgeable about healthy and harmful, the doctor would end up starving (464d4-e1). These men, *as foolish as boys*, are the Many, who, because of their ignorance of what is good, support those who ruin them (the cooks) even at the expense of those who could benefit them (the doctors). This case shows the darkest feature of the Many, the inclination to selfdestruction; the Many, on account of their ignorance and their inclination for flattery, voluntarily, and not compelled, increase the power of those who harm them. Thus far Socrates has spoken of the body; however the same reasoning applies to something else.

The One and the Many. The Many and the ruin of the soul

Given that, Socrates stops speaking of the body and goes on to speak of the just, the unjust, the honorable, the vile, the good and the bad (καὶ δὴ καὶ περὶ τῶν δικαίων καὶ ἀδίκων καὶ αἰσχρῶν καὶ καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν); Socrates asks Crito if they should follow and fear the opinion of the Many on the mentioned issues (the just, the unjust and so on), or:

that of the one (τῆ τοῦ ἐνός), if there is anyone who knows about them (εἴ τις ἐστὶν ἐπαῖτων), whom we ought to revere and fear more than all the others? And if we do not follow him, *we shall injure and cripple that which we used to say is benefited by the right and is ruined by the wrong* (διαφθεροῦμεν ἐκεῖνο καὶ λωβησόμεθα, ὃ τῷ μὲν δίκαιῳ βέλτιον ἐγγίγνεται τῷ δὲ ἀδίκῳ ἀπώλλυτο). Or is there nothing in this? (47d1-4).

Also in this case Socrates keeps the opposition between the one who knows and the Many who ignore. However, in the case of the body it was clear which being can be benefitted or harmed (the body itself) and who are those who can benefit it (the doctors and the trainers). On the contrary, in the case of the just and the unjust (as well as the good, the bad and so on) Socrates does not provide the name of an expert who knows them; what is more, he does not provide the name of that being which

is benefitted by the just and harmed by the unjust. Anyway, as Crito agrees, if it is not possible to live with an injured body, which is that which is benefitted by the healthy and harmed by the noxious (47d6-47e4), likewise it is not possible to live when that which is harmed by the unjust and benefitted by the just is injured, even more considering that that which is concerned with the justice and the injustice (περὶ ὃ ἢ τε ἀδικία καὶ ἢ δικαιοσύνη ἐστίν, 48a1) is more important (τιμώτερον) than the body. This “something” which is benefitted by the just and harmed by the unjust, as it has been rightly noted, is but soul, the ψυχή which throughout the *Crito* is never explicitly mentioned³². Anyway this absence is even more notheworthy if one considers that, as said above, Socrates is trying to care for Crito’s soul. Why does Socrates not ask Crito to identify “that which is benefitted by the just and harmed by the unjust”, as he did for the body? It seems to me that the most reasonable answer to this question is that Socrates understands that Crito would not be able to identify this thing³³. That Crito is not able to provide such an identification is not unreasonable and could be one of the reasons for which Socrates earmarks for Crito a different kind of *epimeleia*, which will be analysed at the end of the chapter³⁴. The identification of that which is benefitted by the just and harmed by the unjust with the soul is strengthened by some lines in the *Gorgias* about the name to give to the orders and beauty pertaining to soul:

Socrates: « And the regular and orderly states of the soul are called lawfulness and law (ταῖς δὲ γε τῆς ψυχῆς τάξεσι καὶ κοσμήσεσιν νόμιμόν τε καὶ νόμος), whereby men are similarly made law-abiding (νόμιμοι) and orderly (κόσμιοι); and these states are justice (δικαιοσύνη) and temperance (σωφροσύνη). Do you agree or not?“ Callicles: “Be it so“ (*Gorg.* 504d1-2)

³² D. Blyth, 1996, pp. 1-20; Y. Z. Liebersohn, 2015, pp. 1-20; W. Bernard, 2016, pp. 83-85.

³³ As suggested by Liebersohn, *ivi*, p. 15: “It is my contention that Socrates knows that had Crito been asked directly to identify that “something” which is improved by *to dikaion* and ruined by *to adikon*, he would not have been able to answer. Indeed, Crito’s answer sufficiently conveyshis confusion: οἶμαι ἔγωγε, ὃ Σώκρατες (I think it is true, Socrates, 47d7).

³⁴ Cf. *infra*, pp. 417-421.

The νόμος Socrates is speaking of in these lines are not the mere regulation issued from the political authority; nowadays what makes law a law is that it is issued by the political authority, regardless of their contents and, what is more, regardless of their aims: a law, even if were issued in order to impoverish the majority of people or in order to harm an ethnic minority; if such a regulation were issued by the authority and were observed in the country where it is in force, as much as immoral it may be, it would be nonetheless a law and, as a consequence, disregarding it would mean committing a crime, at least in the country in which such a law has been implemented. The νόμος of the quoted lines of the *Gorgias* is not what is convenient to the mighty, as Trasymachus would say; the νόμος Socrates is thinking about is a kind of regulation which first of all should benefit those who observe it; and it could not be otherwise, since the comparison between healthy of body and justice of soul is founded on the ideas of order and balance³⁵: if health is a state of balance and order of all the parts of the body, a sick body is a body troubled by lack of order and balance; likewise a just soul is a soul in which the order and the balance of desires is in force, whereas an unjust soul is a soul troubled by the disorder of its undisciplined longings. Such a conception must be compared to what Socrates says about the craftsmen, whose task is to put order and balance into the components they deal with so as to create something ordered and well-balanced (*Gorg.* 503e1-504a1)³⁶. If the order and the inner balance are the bedrock of effective devices (such houses, ships, and so on) and, in the case of body, of health, the νόμος, as means by means of which order and balance in soul are established, must serve the purpose of forging good human beings. As a consequence, the νόμος is a tool of the *epimeleia heautou*, since it puts order into soul and helps it by leading it to the things which make the soul better (*Gorg.*505b1-3)³⁷. According to what is said in

³⁵ According to *Ap.* 32a3-e1 Socrates took position against the decision to try the generals of the Arginusae together and refuse to obey the thirty Tyrants when they ordered him to bring Leon of Salamis to Athens; obeying in these cases would have meant committing injustice, that is to say: bringing about disorder in one's own soul. Given that, it can be said that, when obedience brings about in soul disorder and lack of balance, refusing to obey is, from the moral point of view, the best choice. Cf. R. Guardini, 1956, p. 89; J. Patocka, 1998, pp. 66-87.

³⁶ Cf. *supra*, p. 398.

³⁷ Cf. F. L. Lisi, 1985; H. Seubert, 2005.

the *Gorgias*, νόμοι are aimed at establishing order and harmony in the soul, that which is summed up by the word τάξις. The word τάξις applies also to military domain, in which it indicates the formation of the army. An army is a group of people ordered according to the hierarchy of its members in order to accomplish their aim (the victory). Likewise the τάξις in the soul, according to the lines of the *Gorgias*, is the order and the balance of one's longings provided by νόμοι (this is the aim of the νόμοι). It is interesting to contrast what is said about the νόμοι in the *Gorgias* and what has been said about the Many. If by means of νόμοι order and balance are established in the soul, one can add that νόμοι make soul uniform and "one"; not because they remove the several instances and longings of soul, but because they, the νόμοι, put them in order so as to make the different instances be in balance with each other, so that soul can pursue *one* aim, that is to say becoming better. Instead the soul of the Many are not in balance and in order, and the evidence of their condition is their inconsistency; they usually fall prey of contradictory longings and opinions, because their soul lack that τάξις aimed at selfimprovement. As said above, the Many engender ἀταξία; but, since νόμοι are aimed at the τάξις of soul and the Many lack τάξις, it follows that the Many engender also ἀνομία. If one puts together Socrates words on "that which is damaged by the unjust and benefitted by the just in the *Crito* and his words on the τάξις in the *Gorgias* it emerges that Socrates is implicitly suggesting that νόμοι and Many are at odds with each other; but this means also that the Many cannot be the defenders of νόμοι, at least not of the νόμοι intended as regulations by means of which those who observe them become better. This means that the true opponent of the Many is not who disregards νόμοι, but who follows them, just like Socrates in the speech of Laws. It must be recalled that Socrates is trying to take care of Crito, that is to say, purify him from his fear of the (powerless) power of the Many. However, even in a democratic regime, Socrates seems to suggest, it is not important what the Many think about justice; but what thinks the one who knows it. This one, according to the *Gorgias*, must be someone whose soul is ruled and made consistent by νόμοι. Even if this person is not explicitly named in the *Crito*, it is reasonable to say that this elusive man is but that to whom Crito is listening.

*The one and the Many. Is Socrates the “one” who knows ?*³⁸

There are some good reasons to think that it is Socrates himself the expert of justice, who is not explicitly named. A hint that Plato may have Socrates allude to himself can be inferred from the comparison between health and justice, which is present both in *Crito* and in the *Gorgias*. If the expert of the healthy is the doctor who takes care of the body, the expert of the just could be a kind of doctor who takes care of soul³⁹. In two of the dialogues analysed thus far Socrates plays the role of curer of souls. In the *Charmides* Socrates attempts to give to the young Charmides a remedy for his headache; but, as it has been said, this remedy is but σωφροσύνη, a virtue of soul⁴⁰. Accordingly Socrates proposes to take care of Charmides' soul by helping it become σώφρων. In the *Alcibiades* Socrates tries to give to Alcibiades the same remedy⁴¹. At the end of the dialogue Alcibiades promises to start caring about justice (ἀλλὰ οὕτως ἔχει, καὶ ἄρξομαί γε ἐντεῦθεν τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἐπιμέλεσθαι. 135e3), which is, according to the Socrates of the *Gorgias*, that healthy state of soul originating from the internalization of νόμοι. Therefore, also in the *Alcibiades* Socrates is curer of soul. Further support to the identification of the “expert” of justice with Socrates comes from those lines of the *Gorgias* where Socrates says to Callicles:

I think I am one of few, not to say the only one, in Athens who attempts the true art of statesmanship (τῆ ὡς ἀληθῶς πολιτικῆ τέχνῃ καὶ πράττειν τὰ πολιτικὰ μόνος τῶν νῦν), and the only man of the present time who manages affairs of state: hence, as the speeches that I make from time to time are not aimed at gratification, but at what is best (πρὸς τὸ βέλτιστον) instead of what is most pleasant (πρὸς τὸ ἥδιστον), [...]. (521d5-e1)⁴².

The πολιτικὴ τέχνη Socrates is speaking of is the art of making his fellow-citizens souls better by making them just, as it can be inferred from Socrates' words about the skilled and good rethorician (ὁ ῥήτωρ ἐκεῖνος, ὁ τεχνικός τε καὶ ἀγαθός, 504d4),

³⁸ Cf. K. Ackah, 2008, pp. 75-88.

³⁹ The soul is that which is benefitted by the just and harmed by the unjust.

⁴⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 107-109.

⁴¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 211-213.

⁴² Cf. Montuori, 1998, pp. 53-57.

who does everything so that justice may arise in their soul, and injustice be removed (δικαιοσύνη μὲν ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς γίγνηται, ἀδικία δὲ ἀπαλλάττηται, 504e1). Furthermore just like the skilled and good rethorician, Socrates cares for what is the best, not for what is the most pleasant, and this concern for what is the best is a feature of the τέχνη, as it is suggested by the adjective τεχνικός. Moreover, some lines at the end of the *Gorgias* stress the conflict between the “doctor”, who cares for the best and the children, who are manipulated by flatterers; this conflict is enacted in a way which recalls the opposition between the “one” and the Many in the *Crito*:

I shall be like a doctor tried by a bench of children on a charge brought by a cook (ὡς ἐν παιδίοις ἰατρὸς ἂν κρίνοιτο κατηγοροῦντος ὀψοποιοῦ). Just consider what defence a person like that would make at such a pass, if the prosecutor should speak against him thus: “Children, this fellow has done you all a great deal of personal mischief, and he destroys even the youngest of you by cutting and burning, and starves and chokes you to distraction (τέμνων τε καὶ κάων, ἰσχυαίνων καὶ πνίγων ἀπορεῖν ποιεῖ), giving you nasty bitter draughts and forcing you to fast and thirst; not like me, who used to gorge you with abundance of nice things of every sort.” What do you suppose a doctor brought to this sad pass could say for himself? Or if he spoke the truth “All this I did, my boys, for your health” how great, think you, would be the outcry from such a bench as that? A loud one, would it not? (521e3-522a5).

The comparison between health in bodies and justice in souls opens up to the comparison between the doctor, curer of bodies, and Socrates, curer of souls; but, contrary to what happens in the *Crito*, where the comparison is not further developed, in the quoted lines of the *Gorgias* it is much more noticeable. Just like the doctor, who imposes painful treatments in order to benefit his patients, in the same way Socrates tortures his interlocutors in order to purify them from their lack of selfknowledge and exhort them to improve themselves. What is more, doctor and Socrates share a particular ability; they lead people to *aporia*. As it has explained above, the *aporia* is the lack of (known) ways, and, as a consequence, the inability to move⁴³. In the case of the doctor, the treatments he imposes to his patients, such

⁴³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 387-388.

as burning and cutting, can hinder the mobility of the body; however it is only by means of this temporary lack of mobility that it is possible to heal. In the same way Socrates has led his young interlocutors to the deathlike and painful experience of the *aporia*: the young interlocutors see fading away the person they have been thinking that they are until that moment; they somehow are witness of their own death. However, it is by means of this deathlike experience that the young men can detach themselves from an unthinking youth so as to become men able to care for themselves.

The children blaming the doctor recall the Athenians defaming Socrates; the former are manipulated by the cock, the latter by the accusers of Socrates. Once again, it is possible to notice how similar to each other are the Many and the children; both confuse what they like with what is best for themselves, and both, because of this confusion, can be easily manipulated by those who flatter them. Given that, it can be inferred that the “one” not named in the *Crito* who knows justice is Socrates himself. As daemonic custodian of Athens’ he defends its justice, and, as a consequence, the νόμοι on which this justice is based⁴⁴. Νόμοι make citizens better and disregarding them corrupt the city as well as the individuals, as Socrates will try to convince Crito. Once again, such an attitude from Socrates cannot be understood if one regards νόμοι as laws in the modern meaning. On the contrary, as regulations aimed at the well being of human soul, νόμοι create harmony and beauty, in individual and in community as well. Only this conception of νόμοι can explain Socrates’ attitude; otherwise one should admit that Socrates defends νόμοι as mere expression of the will of men in charge, that which Socrates is far from doing⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 342-349.

⁴⁵ Cf. *supra*, p. 401, note 35. If the essence of νόμοι were the mere issuing from those in charge, even tyrants should have the right to be obeyed when they give orders; that which the Platonic Socrates is farthest from stating. However even the consent of citizens is not enough to make νόμοι valid; otherwise the Many would be a valid source of νόμοι, that which in the *Crito* is implicitly denied-also in the *Minos* the definition of νόμος as πόλεως δόγμα is rejected. The only true νόμος is that which, issued by someone (or some) endowed with political skills, is aimed at the wellbeing of those who have to observe it- cf. E. Benati, 2021.

The dialogue goes on: a good life is better than mere life

Socrates, by reminding Crito of the reasoning on the truth of which they have always agreed, is persuading him that one must not care about the opinion of the Many, but about that of the “one” and the truth itself (48a5-8). However Socrates realises that the power of the Many to kill can outdo the will of numerous people (48a8-9), and Crito agrees on this point. Socrates understands that he must remind Crito of an other of his own usual reasonings, a reasoning which readers can find also in the *Alcibiades* and in the *Gorgias*; that is to say that *not life is to prize at the highest degree, but good life* (οὐ τὸ ζῆν περι πλείστου ποιητέον ἀλλὰ τὸ εὖ ζῆν, 48b3-4). For this reason it is better to die rescuing one’s fellow soldiers than live abandonning them⁴⁶. *A truly good man must not care to live as long as he can, because only the god decides on the time of his life; instead he should concentrate on how he may live as best as he can the time destined to him* (*Gorg.* 512d8-e4). This reasoning is the core of what Socrates says in the *Apology*, namely: “ a life which is not examined is not worth living for a human being” (ὁ δὲ ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ, 38a4). This reasoning is also at the core of Socrates’ choice not to escape from the jail, since, as it has been seen in the *Apology* and will be seen below, the life awaiting Socrates out of the jail, if he escapes, is not *good* life, but the mere biological survival. The Many fear death as the greatest of evils; Socrates on the contrary fears a not good life. But which role does death play in a good life? It has been said above that death is the final challenge of the *epimeleia heautou* for Socrates since by facing death he must prove to truly believe that a just, honourable and good life is to prefer to life itself when it is not just, honourable and good; such a way of thinking, which recalls the heroic moral code which Socrates appropriates in the *Apology*, opens up to the possibility that, sometimes, death is to prefer to life. However this death, as it will be seen below, must be such as to be consistent with the life itself which ends; accordingly also death must be good. Therefore a good life *needs a good death, namely a death which mirrors the goodness of the life one has lived*. It is this kind of death which Socrates is willing to face.

⁴⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 177-179.

Anyway, also the reasoning according to which not life, but good life is to prize is still in force, as Crito assures; moreover Crito still agrees that the “good” (εὖ in the text) is the same as the honourable (καλῶς) and the just (δικαίως)⁴⁷. If a good life is a just one, and a good life must be just until its end, it means that it must be also just until its end; this involves that Socrates and Crito must examine if it is just or not just that he escapes without the consent of the Athenians (48b8-c1), because the *goodness* of Socrates’ life depends on the justice (or injustice) of what Crito is suggesting. If carrying out Crito’s proposition turned out to be unjust, it is necessary to face death in order not to commit injustice (48d2-4).

Towards the speech of νόμοι

Given that Crito agrees that one must face also death in order to avoid committing injustice, Socrates makes sure that Crito still agrees that in no case committing injustice is good or honourable for the one who commits it (49a3-b7)⁴⁸. Their past agreement on this point is still in force and, at least for Socrates, even death is not able to shake it. Agreeing that committing injustice is never good nor honourable involves that even requiting the injustice with a further injustice cannot be good or honourable, since also this ἀνταδικεῖν, this committing injustice in turn, is nonetheless committing injustice:

Socrates: « And we ought not even to requite wrong with wrong, as the world thinks, since we must not do wrong at all. (οὐδὲ ἀδικούμενον ἄρα ἀνταδικεῖν, ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ οἴονται, ἐπειδὴ γε οὐδαμῶς δεῖ ἀδικεῖν) » Crito: « Apparently not ». Socrates: “Well, Crito, ought one to do evil or not?”. Crito: “Certainly not, Socrates”. Socrates: “Well, then, is it right to requite evil with evil, as the world says it is, or not right? (ἀντικακουργεῖν κακῶς πάσχοντα, ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ φασιν, δίκαιον ἢ οὐ δίκαιον;)”. Crito: “Not right, certainly”. Socrates: “For doing evil to people is the

⁴⁷ Socrates commits to the identification of just, honourable and good in *Alc.I*, 115a3-116c5-cf. *supra*, pp. 173ff. If this identification is to intend as immediate sameness or not is not clear in the *Crito*. Otherwise one could think of a transcendent relationships among these three terms, whereby, although they are not the same thing, they necessarily involve each other.

⁴⁸ That injustice is never to commit is one of those past λόγοι on which Socrates and Crito always have agreed; this means that Socrates expressed this reasoning before the imprisonment. Here Socrates may hint at his dialogue with Polus in the *Gorgias* where Socrates states that committing injustice is worse than being subject to it (468c-468b).

same thing as wronging them”. Crito: “That is true”. Socrates: “we ought neither to requite wrong with wrong nor to do evil to anyone, no matter what he may have done to us”. (49b8-c9).

It is useful to remind that Socrates throughout the dialogue carries on purifying Crito from the fear inspired by the power of the Many, that which is not easy, even so more when one considers that Crito, as said above, is he himself one of the Many. However, Crito is not only one of the Many; he is also a friend of Socrates, who thus far has never ceased to remind him of the λόγοι on which they have agreed; λόγοι which the Many do not share. It is on their longstanding friendship, and on the λόγοι shared throughout this friendship that Socrates relies in order to persuade Crito that the Many are not to follow and their power, albeit fearsome, is illusory; as consequence, it never should guide one’s conduct. Therefore if the reaction of the Many to suffered injustice is retaliation, Socrates states that, even harmed (κακῶς πάσχοντα), one must not harm in turn (ἀντικακουργεῖν). According to Socrates words (48b2-6), living well means living honourably and with justice; since Crito agrees that doing evil is not different from committing injustice, it follows that doing evil in turn is not different from committing injustice in turn. However this means that doing evil in turn, as kind of injustice, prevents the doer from living well and honourably: by requiting the evil with further evil, Socrates is implicitly saying, one has harmed the offender; but one has somehow harmed oneself too. Under Socrates’ words in these lines of the *Crito* lies behind the relational structure of the *self*, already observed in the *Charmides* and in the *Alcibiades*⁴⁹; that structure on which the *epimeleia heautou* is based, wherefore one’s own good involves others’ good and, as a consequence, harming others means harming oneself.

Once again Socrates asks Crito if he agrees that committing injustice and committing just in turn is never right, so that they can base their decision on this assumption (49d4-7). Socrates is aware that, contrary to the Many, whose reaction to injustice would be committing injustice in turn, only few would agree that

⁴⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 131-136; 176-179

committing injustice is never right not even in order to requite a suffered wrong (49d1-2). However, Crito, despite sharing several features with those Many from whom he wants to rescue his friend, claims that he still clings to the assumption that committing injustice is never right (49e1-3). Now Socrates can pose the question which leads to the speech of νόμοι:

Socrates: « Now the next thing I say, or rather ask, is this: “ought a man to do what he has agreed to do, provided it is just⁵⁰, or may he violate his agreements (πότερον ἂ ἄν τις ὁμολογήσῃ τῷ δίκαια ὄντα ποιητέον ἢ ἔξαπατητέον;)?” Crito: « He ought to do it ». Socrates: « Then consider whether, if we go away from here without the consent of the state, we are doing harm to the very ones (κακῶς τινὰς ποιοῦμεν) to whom we least ought to do harm (καὶ ταῦτα οὐκ ἤκιστα δεῖ), or not, and whether we are abiding by what we agreed was right, or not (καὶ ταῦτα οὐκ ἤκιστα δεῖ) ». Crito: « I cannot answer your question, Socrates, for I do not understand ». (49e4-50a3).

In the quoted lines the two leading themes of the dialogue, namely justice and consistency are intimately connected. Now Socrates speaks of justice in the meaning of “obeserving agreements established beforehand”: if a previous ὁμολογία is still held to be right, it is not just to break it arbitrarily; in the case of a ὁμολογία, being just means clinging to what one has promised to someone else. However Crito fails to understand who are those whom Socrates would harm if he escaped from prison and left Athens. Crito thinks that Socrates means the people of Athens; actually Socrates fears to harm something else, that is to say the νόμοι of Athens; those νόμοι which Socrates has promised to observe.

The consistency of the custodian

It has been pointed out that Crito does not understand that Socrates hints at νόμοι because Crito thinks that one can harm (that is to say, commit injustice) only others individuals⁵¹; instead Socrates is suggesting that his escaping and leaving the jail against the will of the Athenians could harm the νόμοι, who are not individuals, but the totality of regulations and customs shaping the life of a city. However Socrates shows how harming νόμοι involves harming individuals, because, by disregarding

⁵⁰ Just is my translation of the word δίκαια, while Fowler uses “right”.

⁵¹Cf. Y. Liebersohn, 2015, *passim*.

them, one harms that which permits and regulates the life of individuals in a community. It would be the same as if someone polluted a spring from which everyone draws water: they have neither killed nor wounded anyone personally; nonetheless, they have endangered the life of a lot of people. Actually what they have done is even worse because the injustice committed directly towards individuals can be punished and contained, whereas, when the bedrocks of survival are seriously damaged, people are always in danger for years to come, even after the responsables have been punished; some kinds of injustice carries on living decades after the culprits. Also this concern lays behind the words which Socrates have the νόμοι say to him in 50b1-6. The νόμοι ask how could a city not be subverted if in that city sentences were not observed and private persons made them invalid⁵²; by escaping, Socrates would disregard one of the νόμοι, that which orders that the sentences issued by courts be valid (50b5-6). Furthermore, by disregarding this νόμος Socrates would contribute to increase the disorder and the political instability in Athens, that which would end up harming his fellow-citizens⁵³. Interestingly Socrates by escaping would disregard not only a single νόμος, but all the νόμοι: it is not only the νόμος concerning the sentences of courts which talks to Socrates, but all the νόμοι together; they show up like a unique body, each part of which cannot be separated from the others. It is not by chance that the νόμοι appear with the κοινόν of the city: the νόμοι, as regulations and customs which every citizen should observe, create and preserve a social world which is *shared* by its inhabitants; wherefore harming νόμοι means harming citizens, in the same way as polluting water means harming those who drink it. It is not possible to disregard only one νόμος, since disregarding just one of them involves dsregarding all of them, at least as far as the lines under examination lead to believe. Disobeying a law means somehow underestimating (or ignoring) its role in keeping the κοινόν of

⁵² Cf. E. E. Magoja, 2017, pp. 411-436.

⁵³ In these lines Socrates seems to be afraid that his escaping may encourage others to do the same; that which is not unreasonable, since he is concerned about the social consequences of his actions. Moreover Socrates' concern for social consequences of his decisions matches his paradigmatic nature highlighted in the chapter on the *Apology* (cf. *supra*, pp. 367-368; 373-374-381-382); as a paradigm, he cannot behave in a way which would harm the city if he were imitated.

the city alive; when this happens, also the other νόμοι, or the need itself for νόμοι is questioned.

This does not mean that Socrates holds the sentence to be just; otherwise he would not have insisted in telling Crito that, one never must commit injustice in turn, even if one has suffered injustice. This seems to be the case of Socrates, as he himself explicitly says at the end of his dialogue with the νόμοι; however, even in the case the city itself commits injustice, the harmed one should not retaliate, at least for two reasons: the first one is that νόμοι make life in the city possible. So Socrates has been generated by the laws (those regulating marriage), which permitted that his father married his mother and begot him (οὐ πρῶτον μὲν σε ἐγεννήσαμεν ἡμεῖς, καὶ δι' ἡμῶν ἔλαβε τὴν μητέρα σου ὁ πατήρ καὶ ἐφύτευσέν σε, 50d1-2); Socrates cannot have anything against these νόμοι, which have regulated his birth. Moreover νόμοι provided to Socrates the proper education for free citizens, ordering to his father to educate him in music and gymnastics (50d4-e1). Socrates could not reproach νόμοι for allowing him to have a good education. On the other hand it is not unimportant that Socrates recalls the role of νόμοι in the education; this lets understand that the view of νόμος of the *Gorgias* is implicit also in the *Crito*: not a mere regulation which one has to observe blindly; but a norm whose main purpose is benefit citizens. In case of the νόμος regulating education, they benefit citizens by shaping their body (by means of gymnastics) as well as their soul (by means of music). Νόμος, as in the *Gorgias*, is aimed at benefitting, that is to say *making better*, the same as the *epimeleia* pursues⁵⁴.

The second reason for which Socrates, even harmed, cannot escape and in this way disobey to the νόμοι, is that νόμοι and citizens are not equal; actually there is an asymmetrical relationship between them, as the following words of the νόμοι let understand:

“Well then, when you [Socrates] were born and nurtured and educated, could you say to begin with that you were not our offspring and our slave (καὶ ἔκγονος καὶ δοῦλος), you yourself and your ancestors? And if this is so, do you think right as between you and us rests on a basis of equality (ἄρ' ἐξ ἴσου οἶε εἶναι σοὶ τὸ δίκαιον καὶ ἡμῶν), so

⁵⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 401-402.

that whatever we undertake to do to you it is right for you to retaliate? There was no such equality of right between you and your father or your master, if you had one, so that whatever treatment you received you might return it (καὶ ἅτ' ἂν ἡμεῖς σε ἐπιχειρῶμεν ποιεῖν, καὶ σοὶ ταῦτα ἀντιποιεῖν οἶει δίκαιον εἶναι), answering them if you were reviled, or striking back if you were struck, and the like; and do you think that it will be proper for you to act so toward your country and the laws, so that if we undertake to destroy you, thinking it is right, you will undertake in return to destroy us laws and your country (καὶ σὺ δὲ ἡμᾶς τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὴν πατρίδα καθ' ὅσον δύνασαι ἐπιχειρήσεις ἀνταπολλύναι), so far as you are able, and will say that in doing this you are doing right, you who really care for virtue (ὁ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἐπιμελόμενος;)? (50e1-51a5).

Interestingly νόμοι have fatherly nature in Socrates' words, and they are not only fathers of Socrates, but father of his ancestors; therefore νόμοι turn out to be fathers *par excellence*, more than the fathers in the flesh. This partially explains why Socrates can leave his own children, that for which Crito harshly reproached him; the reason is that Socrates' children would not become fatherless, since their fathers, the νόμοι, care for them. This also could explain why it is so important for Socrates not to harm them: by harming νόμοι, Socrates would harm the true "fathers" of his children, the νόμοι, which after his death will go on caring for his children.

A reason of the asymmetrical relationship between νόμοι and citizens, which in the quoted lines is explicitly pointed out, has already emerged: as they represent a κοινόν, a social world shared by its inhabitants, it is impossible to harm νόμοι without harming citizens; on the contrary, if νόμοι kill a citizen, like Socrates, this does not affect the other citizens, or at least this should be one of the meaning of such an asymmetrical relationship⁵⁵. A further reason of this asymmetrical relationship is that νόμοι watch over holyness of country, which are to esteem more than one's entire ancestry:

⁵⁵ One could say that νόμοι, punishing a person, does not harm others provided that the punished person has committed injustice; in this case not only would the νόμοι not harm the other citizens, but would they benefit them. However, what when νόμοι punish innocent? Is it true that an injustice suffered by an innocent does not spread all over the city? This would be possible only if the other citizens were unjust in turn.

Or is your wisdom such that you do not see that your country is more precious and more to be revered and is holier and in higher esteem among the gods and among men of understanding than your mother and your father and all your ancestors, and that you ought to show to her more reverence and obedience and humility when she is angry than to your father, and ought either to convince her by persuasion or to do whatever she commands, and to suffer, if she commands you to suffer, in silence, and if she orders you to be scourged or imprisoned or if she leads you to war to be wounded or slain, her will is to be done, and this is right, and you must not give way or draw back or leave your post, but in war and in court and everywhere, you must do whatever the state, your country, commands (51a5-c1).

Socrates' words on the holiness of homeland (πάτρις) and city were not shared by some relevant personalities who did not ascribe any sacredness to things like homeland or νόμοι. These men, to whom the adjective σοφοί ironically refers, regarded the life of the city ruled by means of νόμοι or as a subjection of the citizens to those exerting power (Thrasymachos), or, on the contrary, as a subjection of the stronger men to the weaker ones (Challicles)⁵⁶. However it may be, it is noteworthy that in 51a5-c1 νόμοι does not speak of themselves, but of πάτρις καὶ πόλις. Thus far νόμοι have reminded Socrates that he owes them every thing, because they have shaped and benefitted him since his birth. Therefore now νόμοι can exhort Socrates not to violate the holiness of his fatherland. It could seem that νόμοι and fatherland are the same. However they, albeit intimately connected, are not the same, because νόμοι preserve the health and the balance of a κοινόν (the city), but they are not that κοινόν; thus working out and medical prescriptions are regulations of the body, *but not the body itself*; likewise νόμοι are regulations of fatherland, *but not fatherland itself*. As a consequence they (body and homeland) may also deviate from their regulations, because they are not the same; accordingly someone can deviate from regulations preserving the health of body and get sick, and a city can deviate from

⁵⁶ Both Callicles and Thrasymachos mirror the contemporary debate on the relationship between νόμος and φύσις, to which also Antiphon (DK87 B44) contributed. What concerns this relevant debate and his development in the Vth and IVth century, we refer to Guthrie, 1969, pp. 55-135.

his νόμοι and become ἄνομος (deprived of νόμοι)⁵⁷. That νόμοι and the city are different and, in the worst cases, opposite is hinted at in the lines following 51c1:

or must show her by persuasion what is really just⁵⁸ (ἢ πείθειν αὐτήν ἢ τὸ δίκαιον πέφυκε), but that it is impious (οὐχ ὄσιον) to use violence against either your father or your mother, and much more impious to use it against your country? What shall we reply to this, Crito, that the laws speak the truth, or not? (51c1-3).

Violating the holyness of one's parents is never ὄσιον (holy), even more the fatherland. Observing holiness in conduct is typical of the εὐσεβής, the pious man, and piousness is the most relevant feature of a daemonic man like Socrates⁵⁹. Nevertheless this does not mean that fatherland is always right. Sure one must obey it; however that one can attempt to show to one's fatherland where *the just is by its nature*⁶⁰ opens up to the possibility that fatherland may ignore the just, and, consequently, be unjust. This is consistent with 54b1-c1, where νόμοι acknowledge that Socrates has been harmed not by them, but by men (ἀλλὰ νῦν μὲν ἡδικοῦμενος ἄπει, ἐὰν ἀπίης, οὐχ ὑφ' ἡμῶν τῶν νόμων ἀλλὰ ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων, 54b8-c1). A city is inhabited by people who can be wrong and be manipulated so that an embraceable νόμος (that against impiety and corruption of youth) can be wrongly implemented; νόμοι, albeit just, are powerless if citizens are unable to live according to them and

⁵⁷ In the case of Athens, it cannot be considered ἄνομος as disavowing laws. Socrates himself would agree that it is right to punish unholy people. However the many appear unable to understand who is unholy and who is not (as the case of Euthyphro makes clear-cf. *supra*, pp. 284ff.). Therefore in the case of the people of Athens they are ἄνομοι not because they disregard laws, but because they are too unaware to implement them in the proper way (they are unable to understand who must be praised and who condemned).

⁵⁸ Cf. Regarding the persuasion in the *Crito* cf. E. Garver, 2012, pp.1-20.

⁵⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 323-325; 349-354.

⁶⁰ The use of the verb πέφυκε, issued from φύω, may suggest that Socrates is alluding to an idea of justice as natural order, not dependent on human will; a view quite different from that of intellectuals such as Antiphon (cf. M. Ostwald, 1990, pp. 294-307). According to this view there is no opposition between φύσις and νόμος; in fact, according to this view νόμος is not the product of the human will but the order itself of everything existing.

implement them in the right way⁶¹. To conclude, it seems that νόμοι know that Athens has committed injustice, whereas the Many think they have sentenced Socrates according to νόμοι. However the νόμοι Socrates is enacting are may be wrong; as a consequence, even they are not unerring and, when it is the case, must be “persuaded”, as the νόμοι themselves admit in 51e5. It can seem paradoxical that νόμοι and homeland, exalted and honored in these lines, are at the same time regarded as fallible and sometimes powerless; the reason is that the νόμοι of the *Crito* are of human origin and they must be honored and observed not because they have been imposed by gods, but because they are aimed at benefitting those who observe them; they are holy not in their origin, but in their aim: propagating and preserving the wellbeing in a community.

Νόμοι go on to remind Socrates that he has never left Athen for another city, although Athen itself permit to his citizens to leave it and settle in where one prefers (51d1-e1); since Socrates has never left Athen, he has implicitly agreed that he would do whatever its νόμοι may order him to do (ἤδη φαμέν τοῦτον ὠμολογηκέναι ἔργῳ ἡμῖν ἃ ἂν ἡμεῖς κελεύομεν ποιήσῃν ταῦτα, 51e2-3). If one thinks that νόμοι are wrong, one can try to convince them of their error; the attempt to convince νόμοι and πόλις that they are wrong is not at odds with the implicit agreement between citizens and νόμοι; actually preventing one’s own city from wrong decisions indicates loyalty to one’s own city, not betrayal. Accordingly citizens betray their

⁶¹ That νόμοι are powerless when people disavow them (or do not implement them properly) recalls the distinction between human and divine νόμοι established by Socrates in the IV book of the *Memorabilia*. Contrary to human νόμοι, the divine ones are unescapable (IV, 4, 21). However they are unescapable *not* because they cannot be violated, but because, if violated, they are able to punish by themselves transgressor; they do not need human legislators to punish who disregard them (Ivi. 24)-cf. S. Dustin, 2021, pp. 122-139. On the contrary human laws can be escaped because some crimes may remain unnoticed or because judges can be bribed. In such cases laws are powerless and witness to injustice without doing anything; in fact the νόμοι of a city, if there is nobody who makes them effective, have no force, whereas divine νόμοι are effective regardless of human will. This means that even if human νόμοι are escapable, in the end no crime will remain unpunished; even if a murderer, for instance, will never be arrested, divine νόμοι will punish him in other ways (the divine νόμοι of the *Memorabilia* are not laws of the other world; they punish the transgressor already in this life).

agreement only as long as they neither obey nor convince their city of the error it is doing. Moreover, if Socrates escaped from jail and left Athens, he would break his νόμοι more than anyone else (52a3-4), since Socrates, more than anyone else, has been pleased with Athens and its νόμοι; νόμοι remind Socrates that he has never gone out from Athen not even for a festival like his fellow-citizens, except once for the Isthmia. The only times Socrates went out from Athen were when he performed military service (οὔτε ἄλλοσε οὐδαμόσε, εἰ μή ποι στρατευσόμενος, 52b4-5). Socrates is so rooted in Athens and its νόμοι that he went out from Athen only as its soldier, in order to defend it in war; on the other hand, by stressing his loyalty as a soldier, Socrates implicitly recalls that τάξις μὴ λιπεῖν, that “do not commit desertion” which somehow sums up his conduct towards Athens as well as towards the god Apollo⁶². Socrates, as daemonic custodian of his city, must preserve justice in Athens and make sure that sentences be observed, even if this means facing death. Furthermore he must purify his fellow-citizens from their false opinions on what is just, honorable, pious and so on. What concerns his young interlocutors, Socrates has attempted to purify them by arousing inner contradictions and emotions such as bewilderment and shame for their illusory wisdom; however, in the case of the *Crito*, such an attempt on Socrates’ part to arouse disturbing feelings in Crito is not appreciable, or, at least, such attempt is much softer than in the dialogue analysed thus far. To purify Crito from the fear of the many’s power, Socrates relies on a different emotion, which is a different kind of shame; not the shame for one’s own ignorance, but for one’s own inconsistency. This kind of shame, obviously, is tailored to the strategy adopted by Socrates to free his interlocutor from the concern for what the many think that is just or not; only this shame for inconsistency can affect someone who, like Crito, esteems values such as loyalty to friends and keeping a promise.

Feeling ashamed for betraying oneself: the dialogue with the νόμοι as a mirror of the dialogue with Crito

⁶² Cf. *supra*, pp. 100-101; 367-372.

And moreover even at your trial you might have offered exile as your penalty, if you wished, and might have done with the state's consent what you are now undertaking to do without it. But you then put on airs and said you were not disturbed if you must die, and you preferred, as you said, death to exile (σὺ δὲ τότε μὲν ἐκαλλωπίζου ὡς οὐκ ἀγανακτῶν εἰ δέοι τεθνάναι σε, ἀλλὰ ἥροῦ, ὡς ἔφησθα, πρὸ τῆς φυγῆς θάνατον). And now you are not ashamed to think of those words (ἐκείνους τοὺς λόγους αἰσχύνη) and you do not respect us, the laws, since you are trying to bring us to naught; and you are doing what the meanest slave would do, since you are trying to run away contrary to the compacts and agreements you made with us that you would live in accordance with us (ἐπιχειρῶν παρὰ τὰς συνθήκας τε καὶ τὰς ὁμολογίας καθ' ἃς ἡμῖν συνέθου πολιτεύεσθαι). First then, answer this question, whether we speak the truth or not when we say that you agreed (ὡμολογηκέναι), not in word, but by your acts, to live in accordance with us. (52c3-d4).

In these further words by the Laws, the verb αἰσχύνεσθαι occurs for the first time only in the lines quoted above, although shame is present throughout the dialogue. This shame, as said above, is of a particular kind, because it is shame for inconsistency; but this inconsistency Crito should feel ashamed at, is not cognitive, *but moral*, because escaping and leaving Athen would make Socrates not only inconsistent with his own λόγοι during the trial, but also with the λόγοι stated throughout his own entire life, with the lifestyle of which he is so proud. This lifestyle involves the role of custodian of the νόμοι of Athens, so that Socrates, more than anyone else, has to respect them⁶³. In the lines under examination all the vocabulary relating to loyalty to agreements is used: we find words such as συνθήκη and ὁμολογία, and the verbs ὁμολογεῖν and συντίθεσθαι. However Socrates does not regard the respect and defence of νόμοι as an unpleasant duty to fulfill; on the contrary, the νόμοι and the city always have pleased him, as the verb ἀρέσκειν indicates; it is because of this pleasure joined in Athens and its νόμοι that he decided to beget his children in that city and did not move to Sparta or Crete, which in other dialogues occur as well ruled cities⁶⁴. It is because of this love for his own city and its νόμοι that Socrates, by accepting Crito's proposal, would betray

⁶³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 406-407.

⁶⁴ Cf. A. Mayr, 2016, pp. 97-123.

not a mere duty, but his own love for his own city: he would betray himself; the same kind of betrayal which Crito unconsciously would have committed. If Socrates, at his age, escaped from jail and left Athens, he would betray not only the νόμοι, but also himself, even more because he, who always has stated that not living, but living well is to esteem, would disobey Athens in order to survive. Likewise, Crito, by offering to help Socrates escape and take refuge in another city, is not only at odds with Socrates' λόγοι, but also with himself, since he always has esteemed those λόγοι. One can say that the Socrates' dialogue with the νόμοι is the mirror of his dialogue with Crito. Interestingly, in the dialogue with νόμοι Socrates plays the same role as Crito in his dialogue with Socrates: Socrates tries to persuade Crito to be loyal to the λόγοι on which they have agreed throughout their friendship; in the same way, the νόμοι persuade Socrates to be loyal to the implicit agreement to which Socrates has been loyal throughout his life. However there is an implicit difference between Socrates and Crito: Crito is persuaded by Socrates to give up his proposition, whereas Socrates has not seriously considered escaping; Socrates needs no persuasion to accept the sentence, whereas Crito does to accept the death of his friend. It is to keep in mind that the dialogue with the νόμοι is a fiction forged by Socrates in order to persuade Crito; νόμοι are but Socrates himself, and the dialogue with them is a dialogue of Socrates with himself. Socrates is conversing with his own life; a life in which the respect and defence of Athens and its νόμοι plays an essential role, so that νόμοι turn out to be the personification of Socrates life-long commitment to an ordered and well-balanced lifestyle. Therefore Socrates has enacted before Crito a theatrical piece in which he, Socrates, is the only actor. But, why does Socrates enact such a drama before Crito, and why does Socrates depict himself like someone who needs to be persuaded? To provide an answer to both questions, it must be kept in mind that Crito is not like the young interlocutors of Socrates: he is an old, well-heeled gentleman, who can no longer face the same deathlike experience as interlocutors such as Charmides and Alcibiades did in the respective dialogues; although the shame for betraying oneself is not a pleasant emotion, Socrates attempts to arouse it in Crito in a soft way, if compared to the bewilderment faced by Cleinias and Alcibiades in the respective dialogues. This should be a convincing reason for which Socrates enacts the dialogue between

himself and the νόμοι before his longstanding friend; by attending this dialogue like a theatrical piece, Crito can be convinced more easily of the necessity to keep one's agreement and be loyal to his own values, whereas a logically flawless reasoning would not be as persuasive as the fiction of the dialogue with the νόμοι. Accordingly, Socrates enacts himself needing to be persuaded by the νόμοι because it is Crito who needs it; thus the real Socrates enacts a Socrates with whom Crito can identify. Thus Crito, by identifying himself with the Socrates of the dialogue with the νόμοι, identifies himself with the one who accepts to be loyal to one's own word; as a consequence, Crito, identifying himself with the character of the Socrates speaking with νόμοι, ends up accepting his decisions and respecting his destiny⁶⁵.

Although being loyal to the agreement with the νόμοι seem to be the main reason of Socrates' decision to accept the sentence, also the concern for his friends explains his attitude: if he escaped and left Athen, he would endanger his friends in Athen (53b1-2). What is more, if he escaped and took refuge in Megara or Thebes, which are said to be well ruled⁶⁶, he would be considered a destroyer of laws (διαφθορέα ἡγούμενοι τῶν νόμων, 53b5) by those who care for their city, so that it would turn out that the accusations against him were well-founded, since a destroyer of laws would come across a corruptor of young and reckless people (νέων γε καὶ ἀνοήτων ἀνθρώπων διαφθορεὺς, 53c2). Accordingly, two alternatives present themselves to Socrates: 1) survive in an other city, become betrayer of the νόμοι and endanger his own friends, or 2) die, show his loyalty to νόμοι and keep his friends safe. Given the importance Socrates ascribes to the loyalty to his agreement with νόμοι and to loyalty to his friends as well, the choice between these

⁶⁵ To convince Crito Socrates leads his friend to identify with the Socrates of the dialogue with νόμοι. It is noteworthy that such an identification is made possible by means of fiction, in the same way as it may happen in case of tragedies; thus spectators identify with the characters enacted on stage and are led to prize their decisions and their destiny. Likewise, Crito is led to ascribe worth to the choices of the character (Socrates) with whom he has identified. Regarding the value of the νόμοι's speech as a rhetorical and literary device cf. G. Moretti, 2012, pp. 70-113.

⁶⁶ Cf. *supra*, note 64.

two alternatives will have been less hard than one may believe⁶⁷. Besides, and this is what Socrates fears the most, by escaping from jail and leaving Athen, he could no longer practice the *dialeghesthai*; he would become unworthy of those λόγοι about justice, virtue, νόμοι and their importance. He would no more exhort nobody to care for justice, or for self-improvement; by escaping from jail, he would become unworthy of the task which Apollo entrusted him with (53c3-d1). This becoming unworthy of the person one has been throughout his life would be the outcome of *the treason against himself* which Socrates would commit if he let Crito help him escape from the jail and take refuge in another city. In this case betraying oneself means killing oneself: Socrates, becoming unworthy of the *dialeghesthai* he has always practiced, would make his life worse; therefore he, after escaping and leaving Athens, should give up his *dialeghesthai*; otherwise it should become a new Socrates, a Socrates whose *dialeghesthai* is indifferent to the city in which it is practiced and, what is worse, to the contents of the λόγοι. If Socrates betrayed himself in order to survive and were inconsistent with his λόγοι, he would transform himself into a person like Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, someone who has no obligation to be loyal neither to a city, nor to what they themselves say. This could be one of the outcome of Socrates' treason against himself, which means killing oneself. However this is not the kind of assassination of oneself to which Socrates has exhorted his interlocutors: Alcibiades, Charmides and Cleinias must kill themselves in order to become men able to care for themselves and others as well, whereas if Socrates "killed himself" by leaving Athens, he would become not better, but worse

⁶⁷This is the reason why it is not correct to regard Socrates' refusal to give up philosophy and his loyalty to laws as at odds with each other (B. G. Young, 1974, pp. 1-29; A. D. Woozley, 1979; R. W. Momeyer, 1982, pp. 21-53; P. Unruh, 2000, pp.177-179), neither does it make sense to consider Socrates a model of civil disobedience (G. G. James, 1973, pp. 119-127; A. Marcou, 2020, pp. 339-359). Socrates himself thinks that impiety is a crime and must be punished, although he thinks that the many are wrong to accuse him. As said, dying is the only way to remain loyal both to philosophy and to the laws : in fact, one can say that the only way to disobey laws in this case is to follow Crito's proposition and leave Athens; that which Socrates firmly refuses throughout the dialogues. Cf. J. Jinek, 2016, pp. 1-17.

than he has been thus far; he would transform himself into a sophist and his *dialeghesthai* would become as inconsistent as that of the erists.

What has been said makes clear that, at the end of the day, Socrates is not deciding between dying or surviving, but between two kinds of death: if he accepts the sentence of the court, he dies as a biological being; if he escapes and leaves Athens, he dies as custodian of Athen and practitioner of philosophical *dialeghesthai* as well. Also in the case of this alternative, the decision seems to Socrates to be not so hard. Furthermore, Socrates must decide between two different Thessalies: the Thessaly where Crito's friends wait for Socrates, where ἀταξία (disorder) and ἀκολασία (dissoluteness) are all the rage (53d1-2), and the Thessaly of Socrates' dream, the Thessaly awaiting him after his (biological) death.

The other Thessaly. Νόμοι as totenpasse

At the beginning of the dialogue Socrates tells Crito the dream he dreamt the night before:

I dreamed that a beautiful, fair woman, clothed in white raiment, came to me and called me and said, "Socrates, "on the third day thou wouldst come to fertile Phthia (ἤματί κεν τριτάτῳ Φθίην ἐρίβωλον ἴκοιο) (44a8-b2).

The words of the beautiful woman are a verse of Homer (*Il.* IX, 363). Phthia is a city and also a region of Thessaly, from which Achilles was said to come from; in fact the verse quoted by Socrates are words of Achilles himself, who intend to abandon the greek army and return to Phthia, his fatherland⁶⁸. Also here in the *Crito* the comparison between Socrates and Achilles developed in the *Apology* is present: Socrates' resoluteness before death is so courageous that it can rival its heroic paradigm, i.e. Achilles; on the other hand the philosophical appropriation of the heroic model as well as the moral code of the military honor has been carried out in the *Apology*. However, the appropriation of the heroic model, albeit implicitly

⁶⁸ In the *Iliad* one finds ἴκοιμην instead of ἴκοιο. In those lines of the ninth book Achilles is speaking of himself; consequently he uses the verb at the first person. Instead in the quotation of the *Crito* a woman addresses these words to Socrates; thus the second person of the verb (ἴκοιο) is used.

present in the *Crito*, is not the only noteworthy reading to which the comparison between Achilles and Socrates opens up. Socrates, as a philosophical Achilles, has dreamt of reaching his fatherland, Phthia, after the execution; interestingly considering death a way to reach one's own fatherland is a feature of orphism: human soul is of divine nature; therefore, after death, which is a break out from the bodily prison⁶⁹, soul can reach the (divine) world from which it has come from⁷⁰. An other hint at the orphism in the *Crito* is provided by the last words adressed to Socrates by νόμοι as well as by the chthonic context which they mention. Νόμοι exort Socrates not to go to Thessaly by Crito's friends with his own children; they should stay in Athen and Socrates' friends should care for them when he will have descended into the Hades (54a6-b1). This is the first time in the dialogue that νόμοι mention the afterlife, that Hades which, in Socrates' dream, is that Phthia which he is going to reach after his death. Noteworthy is that here Hades is not the bleak kingdom of disconsolate shadows⁷¹; instead it is regarded as the wished fatherland which one longs for reaching after years of distance. In the following lines of the *Crito* νόμοι further stress the reference to the afterlife; they adress to Socrates these final words:

Ah, Socrates, be guided by us who tended your infancy. Care neither for your children nor for life nor for anything else more than for the right, that when you come to the home of the dead, you may have all these things to say in your own defence. For clearly if you do this thing it will not be better for you here, or more just or holier, no, nor for any of your friends, and neither will it be better when you reach that other abode. Now, however, you will go away wronged, if you do go away, not by us, the laws, but by men; but if you escape after so disgracefully requiting wrong with wrong and evil with evil, breaking your compacts and agreements with us, and injuring those whom you least ought to injure-yourself, your friends, your country and us-we shall be angry with you while you live, and there our brothers, the laws in Hades' realm, will not receive you graciously; for they will know that you tried, so far as in you lay, to destroy us.

⁶⁹ Cf. Plat. *Crat.* 400c1-9.

⁷⁰ Cf. A. Bernabé, A. I. J. San Cristòbal, 2008, pp. 169-178.

⁷¹ For the relationship between the soul of the dead and the shadow in Homer cf. J. Bremmer, 1983, pp. 74-82;

Do not let Crito persuade you to do what he says, but take our advice. (54b2-d1, tr. H. N. Fowler).

Once again νόμοι exhort Socrates to accept the sentence and avoid to commit injustice on his turn by following Crito's proposition. Interestingly, νόμοι themselves acknowledge that Socrates has been wronged by his citizens; however νόμοι's purpose has never been to convince Socrates that he is wrong, but to argue that, even if wronged, one must not retaliate, that principle of conduct on which Socrates and Crito always have agreed, although Crito was ready to disregard it in order to make his friend survive. Behind νόμοι's words lies Socrates' conviction, stated also above, that not life, *but a good life is to esteem; and a good life necessarily involves a good death*⁷². Νόμοι appear to care about what may happen to Socrates after the execution; also for these reason they exhort them not to follow Crito's advise: following it would mean disobeying the νόμοι of Athens; but disobeying the νόμοι of Athens would mean offending the νόμοι of the other world, that world which is awaiting Socrates after the execution, just Phthia awaited the return of Achilles. If Socrates followed Crito's advise, not only would he betray himself and his whole lifestyle, but would he also offend those νόμοι which rule the place which the dream implicitly has indicated as Socrates' fatherland; if he broke out, he would disregard not only the νόμοι of Athens, his fatherland in this world, but also the νόμοι of the otherworld, the fatherland he is going to reach. At the same time Socrates would offend the νόμοι of two world, that which for a *daimonic* man, tasked with watching over justice, would be unacceptable⁷³. Besides, since the νόμοι of Athens are its true fathers and, accordingly, fathers of all the Athenians, harming them, according to Socrates reasoning, would be tantamount to a parricide, a crime for which the νόμοι of the afterlife would take revenge of Socrates. The νόμοι of Athens advise on Socrates to observe the verdict; otherwise the νόμοι of the otherworld will not receive him favourably; they are advising Socrates on how he must behave in his last hour (as he always as done), so that he can find a favourable there where he is about to go. It seems that the νόμοι of Athens are

⁷² Cf. *supra*, pp. 406-407.

⁷³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 342-349.

similar to the *Totenpasse*, which provide useful advice to Socrates on his stay in the *Hades*⁷⁴. However there seems to be a difference between νόμοι and the *totenpasse*: *totenpasse* contain instruction on what the soul of the deceased has to do when it is already in the otherworld, whereas νόμοι address to a Socrates whose soul has not abandoned yet the bodily existence; However there are some golden leaves which appear to address to people who are not died yet, but are on the verge of passing away. In this case the *totenpasse* advise a soul on what to do when it will be in the otherworld; instead νόμοι advise Socrates on what he must not do (follow Crito's proposition) in this world so as to find a favourable reception in the realm he is going to reach. If a difference has to be found between *totenpasse* and νόμοι is that the former provide to the dying person advice on what to do *after his death* so that he/she may be favourably received; the latter provide advice to the dying person (Socrates in this case) on what he must not do *in his final hour in this world*, so that he can be favourably received in the other world. Accordingly νόμοι are a kind of *totenpass* which one has to observe already in this life in order to benefit from a good stay in the other world. Observing νόμοι, intended as beneficial regulations of soul⁷⁵, serves the purpose of establishing order and beauty in soul, so that a law-abiding soul (that is to say: a soul which observes and practices the precepts by means of which it becomes better) can be happy also in this world. Given that, νόμοι can help in death provided that they have helped in life; by shaping souls properly νόμοι can lead them to a good stay in the Hades, or, one may say, according to the Orphic view, in their fatherland. Accordingly νόμοι can be efficient *totenpasse* only provided that they have been observed throughout one's life; they, shaping soul and giving it order and beauty, make it not only worthy in this life, but also deserving being received by the masters of the other world.

Conclusive Remarks.

Still on the shame for betraying oneself. Remembering and healing

⁷⁴ Cf. *supra*, note 70.

⁷⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 400-401.

It has been said above that Socrates' aim is to purify Crito from the fear for the power of the Many. It has also pointed out that Crito himself share some relevant traits with these Many whose power he fears; also in this case caring is somehow destroying, since Socrates is going to purify Crito not from a mere opinion, but from a deep-rooted feature of him, his belonging to the Many. It has been remarked that the negative pole of care are the Many, because their behaviour and their way of thinking is at odds with a lifestyle inspired by care; wherefore the first step to do in order to care (both oneself and others) is to distance (oneself and others) from the influence of the Many. Socrates tries to do this with Crito; he wants to make him independent from the influence of the Many. However Crito is one of the Many, so that purifying him from the opinion that the Many are powerful means purifying him from a part of himself which is *emotionally rooted in Crito*; whence purifying Crito means destroying him. If this opinion were not so intimate and emotionally loaded, one could not explain Crito's speech at the beginning of the dialogue. It has also pointed out that, to purify Crito, Socrates triggers in Crito a particular kind of shame, not the shame for not knowing what one thinks one knows, but that for disregarding what one has always held for just and worthy. In the case of Crito (and of the Many as well) it is the fear of death which makes him inconsistent with himself, so that he is willing to betray all the λόγοι he and Socrates have agreed on, as long as he can rescue his friend. It is fear of death, typical of the Many, and the love for Socrates, proper of Crito, which lead him to advise Socrates to escape. To get the better of Crito's dependence on Many's influence, which is emotionally loaded and rooted in Crito, Socrates cannot use, or at least not only, a logical and flawless reasoning; to purify Crito from certain emotionally loaded opinions (the fear of the Many), Socrates must triggers an opposite and *more powerful emotion* (the shame for betraying himself). Now Crito cannot betray himself without betraying Socrates; in fact if Crito disregards Socrates' λόγοι, not only does he betray himself, since he always has agreed on them, but does he also betray Socrates, since it is Socrates who has professed these λόγοι. The only way to be faithful to those λόγοι and to Socrates' friendship is to let him to die, since attempting to rescue him is a betrayal of this friendship based on those λόγοι on which Crito always has agreed. Committing such a betrayal would engender shame in Crito, but this shame

for betraying oneself and one's friend is possible only because of Crito's fondness for Socrates; Crito would not feel ashamed at committing this betrayal, if he did not love his friend Socrates. To sum up, it is for Socrates' sake that Crito wants to rescue Socrates and it is for Socrates' sake that Crito must let Socrates die. Socrates in this dialogue relies on Crito's fondness for him in order to convince him to accept the sentence; it is as if Socrates were saying: "Crito if you love me and want to help me, do not try to make me survive at all costs, but rather preserve and observe our λόγοι". Attempting to rescue Socrates depends on Crito's fondness for Socrates; however this fondness is corrupted by the fear of the Many and death as well (which the Many fear). On the contrary, accepting Socrates' death and committing to preserving and observing Socrates' λόγοι, even when Socrates will have gone, is the fondness for Socrates purified from Many's influence. Indeed Socrates is not a mere biological being; Socrates is first of all his own λόγοι; wherefore it is by preserving and practicing what he has said and done that Socrates carries on living, not by preserving his mere biological survival. To purify Crito's fondness from Many's influence, Socrates relies on Crito's memory, that is to say, the memory of their long-standing friendship based on sharing λόγοι. The fear inspired by the Many is such as to obscure this memory and Socrates attempts to purify Crito by means of awakening it. These two friends have always agreed that *a good life, not the mere life* is to esteem and now it is time to show that they really are convinced of what they say. By awakening the memory of the λόγοι on which their friendship is based, Socrates attempts to heal Crito from Many's influence; the memory of the past helps Crito face present adversities. The shame for betraying oneself is the emotional state that Socrates tries to trigger in Crito; but this emotional state can rise provided that the memory of friendship and of the shared λόγοι is still alive. By keeping this memory alive it is possible to trigger the purifying shame which can heal Crito from the fear of the Many. To sum up, it can be said that it is the memory of their friendship that leads Crito to accept Socrates' decision. Such a memory of the λόγοι shared with his friend Socrates involves the commitment to observe them also after Socrates' death. The memory of the past has helped Crito heal from his fear, so that the true purifying emotions in Crito's case are those

connected to the esteem for Socrates as well as the memory of those λόγοι which are the core of his friendship with Socrates.

Socrates ἄτοπος and faithful to a place

In the *Apology* Socrates recalls his loyalty to Athens as a soldier; in the *Crito* he states that he only left Athens in order to defend it in war, and now even death cannot lead him to leave his city. This shows that Socrates is quite bound to the place where he has lived and grown his children. However Socrates often is said to be ἄτοπος, word usually translated as “strange” “unusual”, which literally means “without a place”. His lifestyle, his practice of self-and others’ examination, his ongoing refuting, the practice of the *aporia*, into which he leads himself and others as well, all this makes Socrates appear as a “stranger”, a person without a place in that city to which he claims to be faithful. How can be that Socrates is both “without a place” and “stranger” in Athens and at the same time its most loyal citizen? A probable answer, based on the reading of the *Crito* provided in this chapter, is that Socrates is ἄτοπος, stranger and without place insofar as he does not share the ambitions of his fellow-citizens, he is not interested in that which the others strive for; bloodlines, military and political power, assets, satisfying longings at all costs; all this does mean anything to Socrates. These longings, which are the longings of the Many, do not deserve anything. For these reason Socrates may come across as ἄτοπος to his fellow-citizens, who are led in their conduct by these longings. However, as a soldier and daemonic custodian of justice, Socrates has his place, which he would not leave not even to survive; this place is Athens. Socrates has tasked by Apollo with purifying his fellow-citizens from their false wisdom, so that they can be exhorted to care for that which is truly important⁷⁶. The target of the mission assigned to Socrates by Apollo is not the whole humankind, but only a little part of it, those who live in Athens. Socrates’ care (of himself and others as well) is connected to a place, to which he is faithful and which cannot abandon, just as a soldier cannot abandon the place in the formation⁷⁷. Accordingly Socrates is ἄτοπος

⁷⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 368ff.

⁷⁷ Cf. *supra*, p. 416.

because he does not ascribe importance to that which others consider deserving their pursuit; nonetheless Socrates, as custodian of the city and daemonic *care-taker* of its inhabitants, is the most bound to Athens among his fellow-citizens. To sum up, it can be concluded that Socrates is at the same time the least assimilable of the strangers and the most rooted of the citizens. Noteworthy is that he can be both without any contradiction.

Chapter VIII: the *Phaedo*.

The Phaedo. Caring for those who remain: Socrates' bequest and the life of self-care after Socrates' death.

As the reader of this work can notice, one of the aims pursued throughout these pages has been to show that dialogues traditionally not considered witnesses of the Socratic care are valuable sources for our understanding of it; that which applies also to the reading of the *Phaedo* developed in the next pages. However, the attempt to show the significance of the *Phaedo* as a source for the comprehension of the Socratic care finds two hindrances: the first hindrance to the understanding of the dialogue proposed in these pages is the long-lasting and sometimes misleading contrast between the so called Socratic dialogues and the *Phaedo*. Accordingly, whereas in the former the *aporia* triumphs, in the latter the spirit becomes assertive. Socrates has faded away to leave the ground to a Plato who commits to metaphysical truths such as the immortality of soul and the existence of a world of pure forms, object of an incontrovertible knowledge. The second hermeneutical hindrance to the reading of the *Phaedo* as a source of the Socratic care is the approach of those who see the dialogue as an evidence of Plato's "austere dualism", that is to say that view according to which the perceptible world is a mere copy of the true one and the body is the hindrance preventing the soul from true knowledge; therefore the true philosopher must despise and neglect the perceivable world and the body in order to attain the unchanging truth of the transcendent world¹. It goes without saying that these hermeneutical biases are intertwined with each other, so that, where there is the metaphysical Plato, there also the Plato despiser of the body and the natural world is to find. Such an understanding of the *Phaedo* plunges its roots in the antiquity². Then it has been so far-reaching as to influence the interpretation of Plato's philosophy in its entirety until the 19th century, as one can

¹I borrow the phrase "austere dualism" from C. P. Zoller, 2018, *passim*.

²According to C. P. Zoller, *ibid.*, it has been Plotinus the initiator of this exegetical approach to the dialogue, which was embraced by the thinkers of the following centuries. For the reading of the *Phaedo* in the antiquity cf. S. Delcomminette, 2015.

infer from some of Nietzsche's works³. Nowadays, although this reading of the *Phaedo* is not as pervasive as in the past, it is quite far from dismissed and finds numerous supporters in modern and contemporary scholarship⁴. Obviously accepting this interpretation of the *Phaedo* means erase it from the dialogues which can tell something important about Socratic care; infact how could a metaphysical and "austere dualist" work, wherein a Socrates despiser of natural world as well as the emotional side of human nature, tell us something about Socratic care of soul, a care which, as seen thus far, does take into consideration the emotional instances of human soul? To get the rid of the austere dualist view, or at least, of its extreme consequences, so as to let appear the usefulness of the *Phaedo* as source of the Socratic care, it is necessary to focus on two objectives: 1) to show that the relationship between soul and body is not that of mere opposition; 2) that soul in the *Phaedo* is not the mere rational and cognitive instance, but something more; 3) that the attempt to persuade the emotional parts of the interlocutor's souls pervades the dialogue. Once argued these three points, it will be clearer that the *Phaedo* can be fruitfully read as a source of Socratic care. This does not mean that the *Phaedo* can be considered a dialogue like the *Euthyphro* or the *Laches*; in this work Plato is seriously committed to one of the metaphysical pillars of his philosophy, the theory of the Ideas as transcendent beings. As a consequence, there is no doubt that in the *Phaedo* there is something exclusively Platonic; nevertheless, this does not mean that this Platonic element must be regarded as incompatible whith those dialogues considered Socratic. This is an other ermeneutical bias, according to which Plato's innovation have nothing to do with Socrates' original thought. However, what cannot be ascribed to Socrates is not necessarily *contrary* to Socrates. If it is to take seriously what Aristotle says about Socrates in the *Metaphysics*, that is to say that he was the first to inquire into definitions⁵, Plato's *eide* could be considered as the

³ The name of Socrates is bound to the ascetic ideal of life in the *Genealogy of Morals*. Cf. S. Steel, 1998, pp. 203-213.

⁴Cf. Grube 1935; Cornford, 1941; P. Friedländer, 1964; 1969; Guthrie, 1975, p. 331; Gosling, Taylor, 1982; D. Frede, 1993; Plumwood, 1993; Nehamas, 1998; P. Hadot, 2002; Griswold, 2003; D. Seedley, 2007; Barney, 2008.

⁵Ar. *Met.* XIII, IV, 1078b.

attempt to provide an ontological foundation to the capability of human mind to conceive of definitions, that is to say statements conveying the unchanging and fundamental features of a group of changing individuals. Socrates inquired into definitions (not in Aristotelian meaning); Plato provided an ontological ground to this inquiry. What I want to suggest is that what is not Socratic is not *tout court* anti-Socratic and even if the theory of eternal paradigms is Platonic, this does not mean that is at odds with Socrates. From Aristotle one only knows that Socrates inquired into definitions. We could say that Socrates inquired into that *one* which lies behind different situations and actions, just like the “holy” which is that *one* which is always present in the numerous and always changing holy actions. However we do not know if Socrates, to use terms borrowed from Medieval philosophy, was realist or nominalist. He, as all the philosophers worthy of this name, noticed that behind the multiplicity of the experiences and events lies something unvaried; but if he considered this “something” ontologically founded in a transcendent reality or the mere product of the human power to organise the data coming from perception (almost in a Kantian way) we cannot ascertain and on the other hand it is of no use for our inquiry. What must be established is that Platonic and anti-Socratic are not synonymous. Given that, it is possible to face the reading of the dialogue and the pursuit of the aforementioned aims. In first place, some words must be spent on the ritual frame of the dialogue.

The ritual frame: μελέτη as keeping things alive

The overarching frame of the *Phaedo* is a dialogue between Phaedo and Echecrates. The action takes place in Phlius in Argolis. This location is significant; Phlius was an important center of the Pythagoreanism, the presence of which pervades the dialogue. It has been pointed out that in the *Phaedo* Plato sets out to stress his closeness to the Pythagoreans, that which explains his attempt to deliver a portrait of Socrates as close as possible to that of a Pythagorean philosopher⁶. The presence of Pythagoreanism, alongside with that of the Orphism, is a relevant feature of this dialogue and gives to the entire dialogue that ritual and

⁶Th. Ebert, 2004, *passim*.

initiativ aspect which, as argued the previous chapter, is linked with the Socratic care, at least in the Socratic care enacted in Plato's dialogues. On the other hand, there would be not much to say about the ritual frame of the *Phaedo*, since the symbolic value of the jail (as the place of the *aporia*) has already been stressed in the chapter on the *Crito*. However there is something in the prologue of the *Phaedo* which is lacking in the *Crito*, that is to say the history of the ship sent to Delos in order to thank Apollo for the return of Theseus and the fourteen Athenian boys from Crete. The ship is sent to Delos every year starting from Theseus' return. Obviously this ship could not keep unvaried over the decades (or also the centuries); the ship faced deterioration and the deteriorated parts had to be replaced⁷. This means that, to remain loyal to their vow to the God, the Athenians were used to fix the boat for the expedition. This is a telling example of the importance of keeping one's promise (in this case to the God), a loyalty the significance of which has been highlighted in the chapter on the *Crito*. What is interesting is that, to remain loyal to their promise, the Athenians wear themselves to preserve over years something (the ship) which naturally could not get the better of the deterioration. It is Athenians' consistency which prevents the ship from ruination. In the *Symposium* Diotima, in a passage which deserves full quotation, says something similar about μελέτη:

with regard to the possessions of knowledge, not merely do some of them grow and others perish in us, so that neither in what we know are we ever the same persons; but a like fate attends each single sort of knowledge. What we call μελετᾶν implies that our knowledge is departing; since forgetfulness is an egress of knowledge, while μελέτη substitutes a fresh one in place of that which departs, and so preserves our knowledge enough to make it seem the same. Every mortal thing is preserved in this way; not by keeping it exactly the same for ever, like the divine, but by replacing what goes off or is antiquated with something fresh, in the semblance of the original (*Symp.* 207e4-208b2tr. H. N. Fowler).

Not only the body, but also knowledges are perisheable, wherefore it is necessary to protect them from the oblivion, the psychic equivalent of the physical deterioration in the case of the ship. The μελέτη (concern, meditation, attention, but

⁷ Plut. *Vita Thesei* XXIII.

also exercise, training) is the care urging to preserve what is held to be worthy of preservation, memories, knowledges, or also a ship. The passage of the *Symposium* in telling because it provides a case of μελέτη applied to memory. As we know from Jamblichus (*Vit. Pyth.* XCVII 21-22), Pythagoreans trained daily their power of retention by reminding themselves of what they have learnt. Accordingly pythagoreans were engaged in a daily fight against oblivion which daily they had to overcome. This daily fight against oblivion stresses the reiterative nature of the μελέτη, the commitment to the preservation of what is valuable; indeed, what is valuable is perishable and μελέτη must be ongoing: if one fixed a ship only once, soon or later the ship would face disintegration; likewise, if one repeated only once what one has learnt, soon or later, knowledges would fade away. Considering that the *Phaedo* is the narration of the last conversations between Socrates and his friends and Echecrates asks Phaedo to share with him the memories of those conversations (58d1-9), it can be said that the *Phaedo* appears to be a great act of μελέτη carried out by Phaedo, who recalls the conversations held in the day of Socrates' death. The *Phaedo*, one of the dialogue in which the role of memory is glorified, comes across, as an act of μελέτη of one's own memory; as an example of fight against the oblivion.

Pleasure and pain: Socrates as mytograph.

Phaedo begins his narration. He tells Echecrates how astonished he was at Socrates' attitude, which seemed neither afraid nor afflicted so that he gave the impression that also in Hades he would be happy (58e5-6)⁸. In that occasion Phaedo confesses to feeling a strange mixture of pain and pleasure, which is quite unusual to him (59a4-7). Socrates dwells on the co-presence of pleasure and pain in the *Gorgias* (). This circumstance, which is a description of Phaedo's emotions, is mirrored by the co-presence of pleasure and pain felt by Socrates after being unchained, co-presence which he so explains:

if Aesop had thought of them, he would have made a fable telling how they were at war and god wished to reconcile them, and when he could not do that, he fastened their

⁸It is the καλή ἔλπις which often occurs in the dialogue. Cf. A. Lefka, 2021, pp. 289-296.

heads together (συνῆψεν εἰς ταῦτόν αὐτοῖς τὰς κορυφάς), and for that reason, when one of them comes to anyone, the other follows after (ὅ ἄν τὸ ἕτερον παραγένηται ἐπακολουθεῖ ὕστερον καὶ τὸ ἕτερον). Just so it seems that in my case, after pain was in my leg on account of the fetter, pleasure appears to have come following after (60d1-5, tr. H. N. Fowler).

In the case of Socrates pleasure and pain appear to be in a sequence; this sequence of pleasure and pain is caused by the presence/absence of one single thing, the chain⁹. As said in the chapter on the *Crito*, the jail is the place of the *aporia*, the inability to move because of the lack of way out¹⁰; Socrates has been unchained, but this means that his *aporia*, his dead-like inability to move, is going to an end¹¹. The end of the dead-like inability to move occurs few hours before Socrates' physical dying. The chain has been removed from Socrates' body and this has caused him to feel pleasure; likewise he is going to lose his embodied existence, which in this dialogue seems to represent the greatest of the chains which ties human beings and in particular the philosopher; accordingly the philosopher should be happy to leave the body, just as every prisoner would be happy to leave jail. This has persuaded numerous readers of this work to consider the Socrates of the *Phaedo* as a despiser of the body and everything which pertains to it and a worshipper of pure and disembodied reason. It is not to deny that a merely literal reading of the *Phaedo* may lead into this conclusion. Nevertheless a more attentive and unbiased reading of this dialogue, and its comparison with passages in other works, can provide a portrait of the relationship soul/body less bleak than that conceived of by the "austere dualist" interpretation. Let us come back to the portrait of Socrates as mythographer. Socrates' commitment to this activity in his last hours surprises Cebes, who asks him why he has decided now, before his death, to devote himself to such an activity. Socrates answers that he had to observe an order coming from a dream saying. "Socrates, make music and work at it" (μουσικὴν ποιεῖ καὶ ἐργάζου, 60e6-7, tr. H. N. Fowler). The circumstance that Socrates composed also a poem to

⁹ Cf. G. Casertano, 2015, p. 271

¹⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 247-248.

¹¹ Because he is going to die, that is to say he is going to carry out the final step of his life-long initiation, which is philosophy itself.

Apollo makes arguable that the dream itself comes from this God, the tutelary deity of Socrates, in honour of whom the ship was sent to Delos. Furthermore Socrates confesses to composing this “popular music” (ταύτην τὴν δημώδη μουσικὴν 61a6-7) in order to purify himself by means of a sacrifice¹². This is a further evidence that there is a sort of symbiosis between Athen and Socrates: Socrates offers his poetical brainchildren to the God in order to purify himself before death and Athen purifies itself in Apollo’s honour by refraining from bloodshed until the return of the ship from Delos¹³. The proem to Apollo and the versification of Aesop’s fable is *a gift made of words* which Socrates offers to Apollo; a ritual act carried out by Socrates before his last hour. This ritual purification carried out by means of words mirrors the following purification which is about to take place: Socrates’ final purification from the fear of death¹⁴. This sort of purification, as said above, is the most difficult one for a human being and also the most important challenge of *self-care*, challenge which can demonstrate if the practitioner of the *self-care* has practiced it in a proper way or not¹⁵. Now it is Socrates, not one of his young interlocutor who have to carry out a transition, not a transition from a young into an adult, but *from an embodied human being into a disembodied soul*. A young man facing the ritual dead-like experience of the *aporia* carries on existing as embodied being regardless of the outcome of the challenge; others can perceive him. But what guarantees that someone carries on existing even the their body has been mortally damaged? This question is able to shed a terrifying shadow on the ideal of self and others’ care. If death will destroy everything, does it make sense to commit to a tiring self-improvement lasting the entire life? If the eternal nothingness swallows both the virtuous and the wicked, why not to choose what is easy instead of what is just?¹⁶ Such questions make facing bodily death the greatest challenge

¹²The verb ἀφοσιῶσθαι means “make a sacrifice” and “purify oneself”. In the greek word the meanings are not to be separated; as a consequence I have propose a translation able to render both of them

¹³Cf. *supra*, p. 385-388.

¹⁴

¹⁵ Cf. *Supra*, p. 383-385.

¹⁶ These questions cast terrifying shadows only if one shares the perspective of Simmias and Cebes, who fear death. On the contrary, Socrates states that one must care for justice for the sake of

*Humans in a φρουρά. An other case of Apollonian ambiguity*¹⁷

Cebes has asked about his poetical *divertissements* on Evenus' behalf whose poems Socrates ironically admits he is unable to rival (60d9-10). The mention of Evenus triggers the following development of the actions; if Evenus is wise, says Socrates, he should follow him (*scil. die*) as soon as possible (61b8-c1). It is this bewildering advise which makes possible to establish the relationship between philosophy and death; indeed if Evenus is philosopher, he should want to die, just like everyone else who deserves the name of philosopher (61c6-9). Nonetheless, this longing for death does not mean that the philosopher is allowed to kill himself. According to some, suicide is contrary to the gods will (61c6-9)¹⁸. The relationship between philosophy and death, to which Socrates has alluded, is the backbone of this work and in the previous chapters it has been argued for the ritual and initiatic nature of the bond between dead-like experience (*aporia*) and the philosophical *self-care*. As we will see below, Socrates' words on the intimate connection between philosophy and death are consistent with the reading of the dialogues proposed thus far, that which warrants the inclusion of the *Phaedo* in the group of dialogues analysed in these pages. For the time being Socrates does not examine this bond, as he will do below, in his *Apology*; instead he prefers to dwell on the theme of the suicide.

Among the people arguing against the suicide there are the Pythagoreans, as it is suggested in 61e6-7, wherein Philolaus is mentioned¹⁹. Cebes, who listened

happiness, because a just soul is able to carry out those tasks the fulfillment of which leads to a happy life: cf. *supra*, pp. 35-39. As a consequence, one must practice justice not (or not only) in order to be happy in the after-life, but in order to be happy already during the embodied existence.

¹⁷ Socrates uses words in such a way as to make speeches true or false according to the meaning given to them. This makes his words similar to Apollo's oracles which are deliberately ambiguous- cf. *supra*, pp. 363-364.

¹⁸ H.N. Fowler renders οὐ θέμιτον into "not permitted". In my opinion in this rendering the meaning of the word θέμιτον is not preserved. Θέμιτον is not merely permitted or rightful; it is what is compliant with the θέμις, the divine order of the world. Cf. *supra*, pp. 374-376.

¹⁹ From the Pythagorean point of view suicide is not allowed because it interferes with the cycles of reincarnations. However there is not compelling evidence that also Philolaus shared the doctrine of the metempsychosis. Cfr. C. Huffman, 2009, pp. 21-45.

Philolaus on this issue, confesses never hearing anything definite on this subject. Furthermore Socrates himself understands how strange may seem to Cebes that some humans, for whom it is better to die, cannot kill themselves without committing impiety (62a5-7). Socrates reports a *secret speech* (ὁ μὲν οὖν ἐν ἀπορρήτοις λεγόμενος περὶ αὐτῶν λόγος 62b2), whose Orphic origin is highlighted by Damascius (*in Phaed.* II 19-IV 26)²⁰. According to this speech:

we men are in a kind of prison (ὡς ἐν τινι φρουρᾷ ἐσμεν) and must not set ourselves free or run away, seems to me to be weighty and not easy to understand (62b3-5).

Such a speech is great, says Socrates, and hard to see through it his meaning (62b5-6). Then he adds:

But this at least, Cebes, I do believe is sound, that the gods are our guardians and that we men are one of the chattels of the gods (τὸ θεοῦ εἶναι ἡμῶν τοῦ ἐπιμελουμένου καὶ ἡμᾶς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῶν κτημάτων τοῖς θεοῖς εἶναι). Do you not believe this?" (62b6-9).

The speech itself is quite clear: we belong to the gods and, as their possession, we cannot kill ourselves, unless, adds Socrates, one has to kill oneself by some necessity sent by the gods, like in the case of Socrates himself²¹. However there is a word in these lines whose ambiguity makes the speech not so easy to grasp, as Socrates himself acknowledges. Φρουρά means “prison” and this translation makes these lines consistent with *Crat.* 400c1-9, wherein it is ascribed to the Orphics the belief that the body is the grave of soul²²; whether grave or prison, soul is confined to a narrow place (the body) and this imprisonment prevents soul from being what it truly is. However φρουρά means also (if not in first place) “guardpost” intended

²⁰ Cf. Olympiodorus (X, 20ff.); The ambiguity of the word φρουρά is remarked also by M. Dixsaut, 2013, pp. 18-19. Regarding the debate on the meaning of this word in the lines under examination cf. G. Casertano, 2015, pp. 282-282. Cf. K. A. Morgan, 2010, p.73, who ascribes this speech to the Pythagorean milieu.

²¹ For the reasons which have urged Socrates to accept the capital punishment cf. *supra*, pp. 416ff.

²² In the lines of the *Cratylus* quoted above the word δεσμοτέριον, which, more than φρουρά, refers to an actual imprisonment

as the place where watchers dwell. In this case the phrase ὡς ἔν τινι φρουρᾷ ἐσμεν would mean: “we are, *as guardians*, in a sort of guardpost”. If humans are their souls and the φρουρά is the body, but the body is a guardpost and humans are the watchers, this means that humans, as watchers, have to watch over their own body, the guardpost in which they dwell. Rendering φρουρά into guardpost and its consequences would make the lines under examination consistent with *Phaedr.* 246b7, wherein is said that every soul tends to/cares for what is devoid of soul (τοῦ ἀψύχου, *scil.* body and bodily things as not endowed with self-motion²³). In any case, the ambiguity of the word φρουρά does not mean that there is contradiction in the evaluation of the body²⁴; it means that body may be a prison where our souls have been imprisoned or a guardpost over which our souls must watch; but, as we will see, it is up to soul to choose in which kind of dwelling to spend his worldly stay, if in a guardpost (where the soul is watcher) or in a prison (where the soul is prisoner). However it may be, even if the embodied existence were to consider a punishment²⁵, this would not argue against the fact that such a punishment may involve care for body and bodily beings²⁶. The ambiguity of the word φρουρά has been ignored by the supporters of the auster dualist view. On the contrary, it casts a shadow on this view. Even if embodied existence were a punishment, but such a punishment which involves watching over the body, could it be still possible to explain away the *Phaedo* like a work in which Socrates merely advises true philosophers to despise bodily existence? As I will argue, it is not possible, since the philosopher is not who despises and annihilates his body, *but who transforms the body in the most suitable dwelling for his longing for knowledge.*

Toward the apology

²³*Phaedr.* 245e5-7.

²⁴For such a contradiction between a positive and negative evaluation of the embodiment cfr. R. Wagoner, 2019.

²⁵At least from an orphic perspective. Souls originate from Titans who, after dismembering Dionysos, were destroyed by Zeus- cf. A. Crysanthou, 2020, pp. 85-112. The same myth is recalled by Pindarus’ verses quoted by Plato in *Men.* 81b8-c4.

²⁶In any case, soul is bound to take care for what is devoid of soul, as it is said in *Phaed.*

At this point Cebes and Simmias move to Socrates the first of the numerous objections which unfold throughout the dialogue. In fact, Cebes fails to understand how it is possible that, if gods are the best of the overseers and care for us, philosophers, who should be the most sensible among the human beings, could wish to die and thus escape from the tutelage of the gods, the best and greatest of all the masters. Accordingly Cebes suggests that it are the foolish who should long for death, whereas the sensible (the philosophers) should regret death, since dying means ceasing to be cared by the gods (62c9-e7). Simmias cannot help but agree with Cebes. Furthermore Simmias adds that Cebes' words are directed to Socrates; in fact both Simmias and Cebes do not comprehend why Socrates, a sensible man, is so calm before death, which, according to Socrates himself, at least in their understanding of Socrates' words, means not being cared by gods any longer.

Socrates must justify his attitude; he needs a new self-defence, one which, says Simmias, must be more persuasive than that held before the judges during the trial. However Socrates is calm because he hopes that he will be received by other gods, who are good masters and good departed men, better than the living ones²⁷. This is Socrates' hope and he says he does not want to be too assertive on the kind of men he will find (63c1-2); however he claims to be sure that he will go by gods who are great masters (63c3-4). This means that his hope about gods in the afterlife is not a mere wish, but a firm belief which cannot be questioned; one can have doubts about humans in the afterlife, but not about gods. The only thing which can be said about them is that they exist and are good²⁸. This reason makes Socrates have good hope (εὐέλπις) that there is something awaiting the departed and it is better for the good people than for the wicked ones (63b4-7). From now on, until 69e5 Socrates, on Simmias' request, will try to explain why he believes that who really spent his life in philosophy must not be afraid of death and actually should have a good hope that, after death, he will obtain the greatest of the goods (63e8-64a3). Before going on to examine Socrates' apology it must be kept in mind that: 1) Socrates specifies

²⁷ Socrates is alluding to Hades, the "good and intelligent god" (80d7), so that in the world awaiting Socrates after the hemlock he will be cared by the god as in this one. On the hope to find virtuous and noble departed people in the afterlife cfr. *Ap.* 41a3c-7.

²⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 299-302; 325-326.

the kind of relationship between philosophy and death; it is not the philosopher, but *the true philosopher*, who has spent his lifetime philosophising, who can be calm and hopeful before death. This specification seems to suggest that Socrates' words cannot be traced back to the mere opposition between philosophers and the many, since among the philosophers themselves there are discriminations 2) The hope to which Socrates refers is not the mere condition of those who cannot provide compelling evidence to their reasoning; this hope about what awaits humans in the afterlife is the condition of the initiates to the mysteries²⁹. Being an initiate means also to practice such a lifestyle, inspired by ritual precepts, that the initiates become calm and hopeful before death and free themselves from the fear of it³⁰.

In the *Phaedo* philosophy is deliberately described as a mystery, able to provide to those who practice it properly the calmness and hope which Socrates speaks of. Also mysteries (if not in first place) are lifestyle, since taking part in rituals and ceremonies is not enough; if such a participation in these sporadic events is not supported by the commitment to a proper lifestyle is useless. To sum up, mysteries command the μελέτη, that effort to keep alive what matters³¹. Only by the daily commitment to keeping alive and implementing precepts initiates may attain the calm and be hopeful about death. Likewise it is a philosophical lifestyle, not the sporadic conversations, which can provide this hope. Given that, it is to show how philosophy, also in the *Phaedo*, like every mystic cult, is founded a μελέτη, a life-long practice, which involves the care for the body.

The apology: the death, the body and the soul

The lines from 64b4 until the first argument on the immortality of soul constitute the section which, more than any other in the dialogue, seems to substantiate the austere dualist view; those who deal with philosophy properly (ὀρθῶς ἀπτόμενοι φιλοσοφίας, 64a4-5), says Socrates, commit themselves to nothing but dying and being dead (ἀποθνήσκειν τε καὶ τεθνάναι 64a6) and the death which true philosophers practice is the separation (ἀπαλλαγὴν) of the soul from the body

²⁹Y. Ustinova, 2013, pp. 105-108.

³⁰Cic. *De Leg.* II 36.

³¹ Cfr. *supra*, pp. 431-433.

(64c4-5)³². This definition easily may have been interpreted in the meaning that true philosopher engages in repressing every kind of longing and emotion and in giving up any kind of pleasure. The following lines (only seemingly) support this reading. Philosophers do not care pleasure like drinking and eating; neither are they interested in sexual pleasures (64d3-6) nor in the adornments of the body, such as clothes and shoes, unless necessity urges them (the philosophers) to have them (64d8-e2). To sum up, what concerns pleasures, the philosopher, more than other man, *frees the soul from the body*³³. What is more important, body hinders soul's pursuit of the true understanding of things (65a9-b1); in fact view, hearing and the other senses do not convey anything trustworthy, and soul, when trying to search for truth with the help of the body, is deceived by it (65b9-11). On the contrary, it is through reasoning (ἐν τῷ λογίζεσθαι) that something of the beings (τι τῶν ὄντων) becomes clear to soul (65c21-3); but to be effective this λογίζεσθαι must not be hampered by extraneous influences:

But it thinks best when none of these things troubles it, neither hearing nor sight, nor pain nor any pleasure (μήτε ἀκοή μήτε ὄψις μήτε ἀλγηδῶν μηδέ τις ἡδονή), but it is, so far as possible, alone by itself (αὐτὴ καθ' αὐτήν), and takes leave of the body, and avoiding, so far as it can, all association or contact with the body, reaches out toward the reality (ὁρέγεται τοῦ ὄντος) (65c5-d9).

This reality, the understanding of which soul can attain as long as it prevents body from interfering with λογίζεσθαι are the just, the good, and those beings which cannot be grasped through senses. Socrates asks Simmias:

Or did you ever reach them with any of the bodily senses (ἄλλη τινὶ αἰσθήσει τῶν διὰ τοῦ σώματος)? I am speaking of all such things, as size, health, strength, and in short the essence [65e] or underlying quality of everything (οἷον μεγέθους πέρι, ὑγείας, ἰσχύος, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐνὶ λόγῳ ἀπάντων τῆς οὐσίας ὃ τυγχάνει ἕκαστον ὄν). Is their true nature contemplated by means of the body (διὰ τοῦ σώματος)? Is it not rather the

³²A similar definition occurs also in *Gorg.* 524b3-4, wherein the word used for separation is διάλυσις.

³³I have rendered into “free” the verb ἀπολύειν used in the present participle in the text. This translation recalls the jail, the location in which the dialogue takes place.

case that he who prepares himself most carefully to understand the true essence of each thing that he examines would come nearest to the knowledge of it? (65d11-e5).

Then Socrates adds:

Would not that man do this in the purest way (καθαρώτατα) who approaches each thing, so far as possible, with the reason alone, not introducing sight into his reasoning nor dragging in any of the other senses along with his thinking (μήτε τιν' ὄψιν παρατιθέμενος ἐν τῷ διανοεῖσθαι μήτε τινὰ ἄλλην αἴσθησιν ἐφέλκων μηδεμίαν μετὰ τοῦ λογισμοῦ), but who employs pure, absolute reason (εἰλικρινεῖ τῇ διανοίᾳ) in his attempt to search out the pure, absolute essence (αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ εἰλικρινές ἕκαστον) of things, and who removes himself, so far as possible, from eyes and ears, and, in a word, from his whole body (ἀπαλλαγείς ὅτι μάλιστα ὀφθαλμῶν τε καὶ ὠτῶν καὶ ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν σύμπαντος τοῦ σώματος), because he feels that its companionship disturbs the soul and hinders it from attaining truth and wisdom? Is not this the man, Simmias, if anyone, to attain to the knowledge of reality? (65e6-66a8).

In these lines Socrates refers for the first time to the Ideas, the Being the philosopher longs for³⁴. This Being is accessible only to those who have purified themselves as much as possible from bodily conditionings, according to the view, typical of initiatic paths, which imposes that only who has been properly prepared can attain a superior kind of knowledge. The importance of purity, which occurs several times in the following lines, suggests that the attainment of the Being is to intend as an *epopteia*, the highest degree of the initiatic path accessible only after a long preparation³⁵; which, in the case of philosophy, would consist in getting rid of the

³⁴ Cf. T. Menkhaus, 2003, pp. 28-33.

³⁵ The epoptic experience is, in the terms of Plato's philosophy, a noetic act which grasps immediately its object and goes beyond the discursive reason, represented by the λογίζεσθαι: cf. L. Brisson, 1997, pp. 95-111; F. Aronadio, 2002, pp. 19-61; Chr. Horn, Chr. Rapp, 2005, p. 17; F. Fronterotta, 2012, *passim*; A. Filius, 2013, pp. 19ff. Noetic knowledge and discursive reason do not exclude each other; actually, it can be said that for a human, embodied being, it is impossible to experience a noetic knowledge without a previous discursive training, as it is inferable from *Epist. VII*, 344b1-8: cf. L. Napolitano, 2012, pp 32-33. However the noetic knowledge is harder to reach and nothing says that already in the embodied life it will be reached; as a consequence, as long as the embodied existence lasts, the discursive knowledge is more accessible and can be always be practiced; it is the best

body. However such an elimination of the bodily conditionings is impossible during the embodied existence, so that true (metaphysical) understanding (of the Being) seems to be out of reach or, at least, not fully attainable (66b5-7). Furthermore, body is the source of loves desires, fears, fancies and great futility (ἐρώτων δὲ καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ φόβων καὶ εἰδώλων παντοδαπῶν καὶ φλυαρίας) which prevent from thinking (66c1-5). Body is also of wars, uprising and fights, which are waged because of the longing for riches and the needs and longings of body, with which everyone is compelled to deal (66c6-d3). What is worse, the presence of the body is so pervasive as to hinder and trouble philosopher's inquiries; wherefore it follows that only after death, the separation of soul from body, it is possible to the philosopher to grasp that which he strives for (the truth of the Being) (66e1-6). Given that, it is quite easy to understand why Socrates is so hopeful; death, the definitive end of the bounds between soul and body, will allow him to fulfil that pursuit (the attainment of true understanding) which the embodied existence falls short of (67b7-c3). The purification to which the true philosopher is committed is a practice of death (οἱ ὀρθῶς φιλοσοφοῦντες ἀποθνήσκειν μελετῶσι, 67de4-5). They accustom themselves to make bodily conditionings unimportant so as to be prepared when they will face death, the veritable separation of soul from body:

And does not the purification (κάθαρσις) consist in this which has been mentioned long ago in our discourse, in separating, so far as possible, the soul from the body (τὸ χωρίζειν ὅτι μάλιστα ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος τὴν ψυχὴν) and teaching the soul the habit of collecting and bringing itself together from all parts of the body (αὐτὴν καθ' αὐτὴν πανταχόθεν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος συναγείρεσθαί τε καὶ ἀθροίζεσθαι), and living, so far as it can, both now and hereafter, alone by itself, freed from the body as from fetters (ἐκλυομένην ὥσπερ ἐκ δεσμῶν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος)? (67c5-d2).

As a consequence, it would be unreasonable if the philosopher, who spends his life making the bodily conditioning irrelevant in order to develop the cognitive powers of his soul, were afraid or regretted when death, the separation of the soul from the

access to Being for an embodied human, that is to say for someone who does not possess a steady and always available noetic vision. Cf. Chr, Riedweg, 1987, pp. 30-79; F. Casadesus, 2016, pp. 9-18.

body opening up to true knowledge, is going to reach him (67e4-68e2). Many willingly undertook the way leading to Hades in order to see again their departed beloved and stay with them³⁶. Therefore if someone longs for understanding and has the hope that they will not attain it in any other place but in Hades, they should not fear or regret death; actually, they should be happy to go there³⁷. Therefore, the philosopher, who loves wisdom, must not fear to go there where he will find that which he longs for (68a3-b6). Socrates concludes:

Then is it not”, said Socrates, “a sufficient indication, when you see a man troubled because he is going to die, that he was not a lover of wisdom (φιλόσοφος) but a lover of the body (φιλοσώματος)? And this same man is also a lover of money (φιλοχρήματος) and of honor (φιλότιμος), one or both (68b7-c3).

Here I have summarised that section of the dialogue which seems to provide the steadiest foundation to the austere dualist view. In the next pages I attempt to argue that there are several hints, in the summarised lines and in other passages of the *Phaedo*, which suggest that the austere dualist reading is not the only and not even the most reasonable one. Moreover, the following pages are aimed at showing that there are several elements which justify the inclusion of the *Phaedo* in the dialogues useful for the understanding of Socratic care in Plato’s works.

The true philosopher and pleasures

What concerns philosopher’s evaluation of pleasures, there is nothing in the text which suggests that they are to despise. In 64d2-6 it is said that that the true philosopher does not ascribe importance to the pleasures of drinking and eating and to sexual ones; furthermore he makes of small account (ἀτιμάζει) the adornments of body, unless there is not great necessity to have them. However this not means that the true philosopher disdains these pleasures, but only that he does not ascribe

³⁶ Cfr. *Symp.* 179b4-180b5.

³⁷ Also in *Crat.* 403c1-404a6 it is stressed that it is desire which holds back the departed in the Hades, since in the Hades they find what they loved when they were alive.

too much importance to them³⁸. In fact it is telling that Socrates himself is said in *Symp.* to be able to drink all night long without getting drunk; furthermore his love for beautiful boys as well as the fact that he, no more young, has had a child from his wife, the youngest of his sons (60a1-3), show that he was far from despising sexuality. What discriminates the true philosopher from others is not to refrain from pleasures, but to benefit from them in such a disciplined way as to be master of them and prevent them from ruling one's choices and pursuits. This is confirmed by 68c8-12, wherein Socrates prizes σωφροσύνη, which consists in not being troubled by pleasures, taking them not seriously and keeping an ordered conduct regarding them (ἀλλ' ὀλιγώρως ἔχειν καὶ κοσμίως). The problem of the lines under examination is that numerous translators, supporters of the austere dualist view, interpret words such as ὀλιγώρως, ὀλιγορεῖν and ατιμάζειν in the meaning of despise and disdain. However such an understanding of these words is at odds with the use of the adverb κοσμίως which means "in an ordered, balanced way", "properly, honourably"; how is it possible to despise pleasures and approach them in an ordered way at the same time? If ὀλιγώρως, ὀλιγορεῖν and ατιμάζειν are interpreted as conveying the meaning of "making of small account" "not taking too seriously", it is possible to make pleasures of small account (avoid ascribing them too much importance and as a consequence approach them in the proper, ordered way), ascribing to them the role they deserve. This ordered and disciplined enjoyment of pleasures is consistent with the moral code of the μηδὲν ἄγαν, nothing too much, which prescribed measure in human behavior and the connection of which to Apollo, Socrates tutelary deity, was quite intimate³⁹.

Furthermore, it can be hardly understood how someone who despises embodied existence can prize the bravery as virtue of the true philosopher, as Socrates does in 68c5-6; the ἀνδρεία is the virtue of the soldiers, of those who have to defend their homeland and their beloved⁴⁰. If the true philosopher were a person who disdains embodied existence and looks forward to death, how could it be that such a man

38 Cf. K. Dorter, 1982, p. 27.

39 Cf. *Prot.* 343a1-b3.

40 For the importance of military bravery in Socrates' moral code and its philosophical appropriation cf. *supra*, pp. 372-375.

would commit himself to protecting something else or someone else embodied? How could someone who despises their own body consider a virtue to fight in order to protect others' bodies from wounds and death? Socrates' praise of σωφροσύνη and ἀνδρεία is at odds with the ideal of true philosophy as practice of mortification of the body. Ἀνδρεία cannot find place in this lifestyle for the reason explained above: σωφροσύνη, as an ordered and disciplined use of pleasures, would be of no use in a life devoid of them. The presence of σωφροσύνη involves the presence of pleasures and, paradoxically, those who give up pleasures do not need it. Accordingly, what Socrates is saying is that the true philosopher should master pleasures and not be mastered by them and ascribe to them the proper role in his life. From this point of view the evaluation of pleasures in these lines of the *Phaedo* is not too different from the evaluation of pleasures in the *Philebus*⁴¹.

However the ἀνδρεία and σωφροσύνη of the true philosopher and those of the others are not identical. It can be that one undertakes brave deeds because one is afraid of something else, and in this case one would turn out to be brave because of one's fear; this happens to everyone except for the philosopher (68d5-13). Socrates does not provide example of this bravery due to fear from which only the philosopher is free; however it is not hard to imagine what he is speaking about: one, for instance, wants to commit a brave action, such as risking one's own life in order to rescue a friend, because one fears that, if one did not do it, one would come across as a coward⁴². Often it is the fear to be considered coward which makes brave. This bravery due to fear is proper of the φιλότιμος, the lover of honors mentioned in 68c2, who esteems reputation more than anything else and is afraid of losing it. This kind of bravery is typical of the many, influenced in their conduct by social approval and social condemnation⁴³. The philosopher, the true one, does

⁴¹ Cf. J. A. Giménez, 2016, pp. 180-202.

⁴² This is the case of Crito, when he tries to persuade Socrates to escape from prison and leave Athens. Cfr. *supra*, pp. In *Leg.* I 647a-b the Athenian recommends using people's fear for social condemnation in order to instill in them modesty and courage-cfr. L. Palumbo, 2007, pp. 309-323. The true philosopher is the only one able to find more honorable reason to his modesty and courage. For the others, the many, it is not useless to put pressure on their fear for social reproach in order to make good citizens out of them.

⁴³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 390ff. Cf. G. Casertano, 2015, p. 296.

not depends on others' opinion in his choices, or, at least, it is not social approval or condemnation the main reason for which he undertakes or refrains from an action. Accordingly, it could be said that the true philosopher would rescue a friend of his only because it is just and honorable to do it. A true philosopher commits a virtuous action even if nobody will know it. Thus he would refrain from committing injustice even if it went unnoticed, and this because it is not reputation (others' approval) the main reason of his actions. A similar consideration applies to σωφροσύνη. Some refrain from some pleasures because fulfilling them would prevent from fulfilling others. They refrain from some pleasures for sake of some others, so that they turn out to be σώφρονες because of debauchery. An example of this σωφροσύνη due to debauchery is that of a man who does not drink even a drop of alcohol the day before because he is planning to get drunk the night after. The σωφροσύνη of the true philosopher is not aimed at fulfilling excessive pleasures, but at being happy, not prey of an emotional disorder which would make his soul unjust and unable to fulfill those task which a soul must tend to in order to be happy⁴⁴. It is φρόνησις which makes philosophical σωφροσύνη and ἀνδρεία different from the common ones:

“My dear Simmias, I suspect that this is not the right way to purchase virtue, by exchanging pleasures for pleasures, and pains for pains, and fear for fear (ἡδονὰς πρὸς ἡδονὰς καὶ λύπας πρὸς λύπας καὶ φόβον πρὸς φόβον καταλλάττεσθαι), and greater for less, as if they were coins, but the only right coinage, for which all those things must be exchanged and by means of and with which all these things are to be bought and sold, is in fact wisdom (φρόνησις); and courage and self-restraint and justice and, in short, true virtue exist only with wisdom, whether pleasures and fears and other things of that sort are added or taken away. And virtue which consists in the exchange of such things for each other without wisdom, is but a painted imitation of virtue and is really slavish and has nothing healthy or true in it; but truth is in fact a purification from all these things, and self-restraint and justice and courage and wisdom itself are a kind of purification (ὁ δ' ἀληθὲς τῷ ὄντι ἢ κάθαρσις τις τῶν τοιούτων πάντων καὶ ἡ

⁴⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 35-39.

σωφροσύνη καὶ ἡ δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἀνδρεία, καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ φρόνησις μὴ καθαρός τις)⁴⁵.
(69a6-c3).

In these lines it is not said that one must give up pleasure in order to attain φρόνησις, but rather that there must be something, φρόνησις, which rules over pleasures, since pleasures cannot rule themselves. Let us come back to the σωφροσύνη due to debauchery; these lines suggest that one has to be disciplined in pleasures not in order to fulfill one's excesses, but in order to develop φρόνησις. This φρόνησις is in turn that which makes virtues true virtues⁴⁶; it is that faculty by means of which one finds new and better reasons to those virtuous actions behind which, quite often, others reasons lie (such as fear for social condemnation, selfish interests, ambition, debauchery and so on).

What has been said so far casts a different light on the μελέτη θανάτου practiced by the true philosopher. The practice of death is said to be a purification (65c5-d3). In 69c2-3 it is said that the φρόνησις itself is a kind of καθαρός; however the lines under examination suggest that φρόνησις does not urge to give up pleasures; what φρόνησις makes is to find *different reasons to pleasures*. Accordingly, the μελέτη θανάτου seems to be aimed not at doing without the body as much as possible, *but at doing away with a certain attitude towards the bodily existence*. Both the φιλοσώματος and the philosopher have a body; the difference is not that the philosopher gives up pleasures and the φιλοσώματος benefits from them; both feel pleasures, *but in a quite different way*. For the φιλοσώματος body is all which exists and pleasure and pain are the only criteria of his life; he would do everything to fulfill pleasures and avoid pains regardless of the suffering and damages his behavior may bring about. On the contrary, for the philosopher pleasures and pains are not the leading criteria; as a consequence a true philosopher can decide, in the name of truth or justice, to postpone pleasures or undergo pains. It can be said that the μελέτη θανάτου has not to do with the getting rid of the body, but of that mindset which makes believe that body is the only thing real (because it can be perceived) and its pleasures and pains the only thing which matters. The true philosopher

⁴⁵ The virtues of *Republic*: cf G. Casertano, 2015, pp. 297-298.

⁴⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 81ff.

benefits from pleasures in an ordered and wise way so that he can devote himself to the development of a true understanding; pleasures for him become a means, not an aim. Accordingly, benefitting from pleasures in an ordered way is necessary to preserve psychophysical health, so that the true philosopher, not affected by physical diseases, can tend to inquiry into truth⁴⁷. In a certain way the philosopher cares for his body more than the φιλοσώματος; the latter always risks damaging his body because of his tendency to exaggerate when it comes to pleasures, whereas the latter preserves his body's health thanks to his disciplined enjoyment of pleasures. Above it has been said that humans are in the body like in a φρουρά and that this word is ambiguous because it can mean “prison” and “guardpost”⁴⁸; that which happens to the philosopher and the lover of body. For the lover of body body is a prison to which he is bound by his pleasures, which master him more than he masters them; for the philosopher body is a guardpost which he has to watch over because his disciplined use of pleasure allow him to dwell in his φρουρά in the best way. As a consequence the μελέτη θανάτου is the practice to get rid of the body as a prison and watch over it as a guardpost; accordingly, the μελέτη θανάτου does not mean mortification of body; actually it involves *caring for body*; the true philosopher is not who represses pleasures and mortifies body, *but who has educated his pleasures and pains so as to make out of his body a healthy dwelling, suitable for his stay in the world*. Thus μελέτη θανάτου has to do with education, not annihilation of embodied existence.

Body is ambiguous, it can be a prison or a guardpost and it appears the ruling of pleasures plays a decisive role in this business; the lover of body does not rule his pleasures and pains and his body is a prison; the philosopher does and his body is a guard post. But what rules or fails to rule pleasures and pains? The answer is: soul. Soul is the source of body's ambiguity; a dissolute soul causes body to suffer, whereas a disciplined soul causes body to be well. Thus far it has been argued how

⁴⁷ Repressing pleasures would make the longing for their fulfillment more troubling. This contradictory fate is, according to Hegel, what awaits the ascetics, who end up enslaving themselves to that which they claim to despise (their body) (

⁴⁸ Cf. *supra*, p. 436-438.

the μελέτη θανάτου involves caring for body. Now it is to show the intimate bond existing between μελέτη θανάτου and caring for soul.

The philosopher and the knowledge: the soul, the pleasures and the senses.

A rough reading of Socrates' apology in the *Phaedo* may lead into the conclusion that the true philosopher disdains pleasures, that which, as argued above, is far from true. What is more, a rough reading leads into the conclusion that pleasures and pains, longings and fears originate from the body, troubling and hindering a soul whose main pursuit is the attainment of true knowledge. This is quite at odds with other relevant passages of Plato's dialogue where it is said that it is soul, not body, the origin of pleasures and pains and so on. In *Resp.* IV 439b1-e1 Socrates, describing a situation in which one longs for drinking but cannot because drinking is noxious, infers that in our soul there are two instances, a rational one, which prevents from drinking, and an irrational and appetitive, which longs for drinking irrespective of consequences⁴⁹. In *Resp.* IX 588c6-e2, Socrates, shaping a metaphorical image of human soul, tells his interlocutor that he must connect the three instances of soul so that they are somehow grown together (σύναπτε τοίνυν αὐτὰ εἰς ἓν τρία ὄντα, ὥστε πη συμπεφυκέναι ἀλλήλοις, 588e6-7). Socrates words are telling; he suggests that the instances of soul are not isolated compartments, but faculties deeply interconnected to each other. In the *Phaedrus* the longing for sexual pleasures originates from soul, or more exactly from one of soul's instances (*Phaedr.* 253e1-254a6). Also in the story of the lover's longing for the loved all the instances of soul are involved; they are deeply interconnected, like in the *Phaedrus*, since they are bound to the same winged chariot (246a5-6)⁵⁰. The *Republic* and the *Phaedrus* share the idea of a threefold soul; although the recalled passages belong to different contexts and grow out of different necessity (explain the nature of justice in the former and love in the latter), nonetheless they share two important features: 1) they convey the idea that soul's instances are deeply interconnected;

⁴⁹ Cfr. M. M. Sassi, 2007, XIII-XVI.

⁵⁰ The bond between the charioteer and the chariot is σύμφυτος (inborn). The adjective comes from the verb συμφύειν, used in *Resp.* IX 588c6-e2.

2) they convey the idea that pleasures, even the most repugnant ones⁵¹, pains, fears and longings, also those pertaining to nourishment and sexual satisfaction, origin not from body but from soul⁵². On the other hand, also in the *Gorgias*, a dialogue in which there is no track of the threefold soul, it is said that longings for the pleasures pertaining to body is business of soul:

in fact I once heard sages say that we are now dead, and the body is our tomb, and the part of the soul in which we have desires (τῆς δὲ ψυχῆς τοῦτο ἐν ᾧ ἐπιθυμῖαι) is liable to be over-persuaded and to vacillate to and for, and so some smart fellow, a Sicilian, I daresay, or Italian, made a fable in which - by a play of words - he named this part, as being so impressionable and persuadable, a jar, and the thoughtless he called uninitiate: in these uninitiate that part of the soul where the desires are (τοῦτο τῆς ψυχῆς οὗ αἱ ἐπιθυμῖαι εἰσὶ), the licentious and fissured part, he named a leaky jar in his allegory, because it is so insatiate. (493a1-b3 tr. W. R. M Lamb).

Interestingly Socrates alludes to an Orphic image which occurs in the *Cratylus*. In the three mentioned passages, pleasures, pains and the intemperance of longings always belongs to soul, never to body, so that a soul, even when it is not depicted as threefold, turns out to be characterised by numerous and different instances. On the other hand, it is this kind of soul, a soul which reasons, but also desires, fears, has expectations and so on, the soul which can be cared by someone else and can care itself; it is this soul which can pursuit the ἐπιμέλεια intended as self-improvement. Self-improvement in Socrates' conversations with his young interlocutors, involves facing soul's inconsistency and pursuit soul's harmony. However there can be harmony only there where instances are more than one. Socrates himself desires Charmides' body and at the same time is concerned with his soul's condition. Alcibiades knows that he should follow Socrates' advice; however longings for reputation and power prevent him from listening to it⁵³. Crito loves his friend Socrates but is obsessed about that which his fellow-citizens may think of him, so that the esteem of reputation and the love for his friend are

⁵¹ Like in the episode of Leontius

⁵² Cfr. M. Erler, 2012, pp. 19-25.

⁵³ Cfr. *supra*, pp. 227-228.

intertwined⁵⁴. Only a multiple soul, a soul whose longings are different and, in the worst cases, opposite, can feel the need for discipline and balance so as to become harmonious and capable of good accomplishments; only a multiple soul could desire to care itself and other souls which are likewise multiple. These remarks on the relationship between soul's multiplicity and soul's care brings to the problems raised by an austere dualist understanding of Socrates' apology in the *Phaedo*. If the true philosopher's soul in the *Phaedo* is only a cognitive instance which is annoyed and hindered by the impulses and feelings coming from the body, how can such a soul practice self-care and commit itself to self-improvement? As endowed with the only cognitive instance, the only thing which such a soul must do is to await that the thing which troubles it, the body, disappears as soon as possible. The outcomes of this view is that the *Phaedo* turns out to be of no use for the comprehension of Socratic care in Plato's dialogues and that the kind of soul outlined in the *Phaedo* is at odds with the idea of self-care intended as self-improvement. Given that, the first thing to do in order to show that the true philosopher's soul of the *Phaedo* is consistent with the ideal of self-care as self-improvement, is to show that the true philosopher's soul is multiple, that is to say, that also in the *Phaedo*, just like in the *Gorgias*, in the *Phaedrus* and in the *Republic*, it is soul, not body, the origins of pulsions, feelings and senses by means of which the true philosopher knows.

Pleasures and pains; chains of soul created by the soul itself.

That soul, not body, is the origin of pleasures and pain seems to be undermined by two passages of the *Phaedo*. In the former Socrates says:

Because each pleasure or pain nails it as with a nail (ὡσπερ ἦλον ἔχουσα) to the body and rivets it on and makes it corporeal (σωματοειδῆ), so that it fancies the things are true which the body says are true (83d4-6).

⁵⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 407-409.

It seems that Socrates is ascribing to the body the ability to impose to soul what it has to believe or not, as if the body itself were endowed with some sort of will. In the latter passages Socrates says:

For, by Dog, I fancy these bones and sinews of mine would have been in Megara or Beotia long ago, carried thither by an opinion of what was best, if I did not think it was better and nobler to endure any penalty the city may inflict rather than to escape and run away (98e5-99a4).

Socrates speaks of his body as if it were somehow aware of the imminent danger, it fears death and would escape as far as possible if Socrates had not decided to face the death sentence. In an austere dualist view these passages and the others of Socrates' apology all agree on this: body is the source of all troubling pulsions which hinder the philosopher's soul; as a consequence, body is but an enemy to weaken. However there are several hints in the dialogue which suggest that, contrary to the austere dualist view, soul, not body, is the origin of pleasures, pains and so on.

In 65a7 Socrates, speaking of pleasures such as drinking, eating and sex, defines them as pleasures, which occur through body (τῶν ἡδονῶν αἱ διὰ τοῦ σώματος εἶσιν). The preposition διὰ plus genitive points to the instrumental role; accordingly, it seems that body plays the role of means in the origin and enjoyment of pleasures, it is not the origin of pleasures, but the means by means of which pleasures are fulfilled and, furthermore, the means of his physiological manifestation. Crito's words in 63d5-e2 are enlightening and deserve full quotation:

“Only, Socrates”, said Crito, “that the man who is to administer the poison to you has been telling me for some time to warn you to talk as little as possible (ὡς ἐλάχιστα διαλέγεσθαι). He says people get warm (θερμαίνεσθαι) when they talk and heat has a bad effect on the action of the poison; so sometimes he has to make those who talk too much drink twice or even three times (63d5-e2).

Socrates claims to be ready to drink the poison twice and even three times, if it is necessary. The desire to διαλέγεσθαι is so strong that he does not mind drinking the poison more than once. The θερμαίνεσθαι, which occurs as a consequence of the

διαλέγεσθαι, is undoubtedly a bodily manifestation; however this is the bodily manifestation of something whose origin is not body. Body is not able to διαλέγεσθαι and the desire to διαλέγεσθαι does not come to light in body, but in soul. The desire to διαλέγεσθαι, whose origin is soul, has a bodily manifestation, the θερμαίνεσθαι, the physiological expression the origin of which lies not in body, but in soul. The same applies to crying. Several times in the *Phaedo* the reader sees bystanders crying about Socrates' imminent death⁵⁵; so when Socrates swallows the hedlock, many, who until that moment hardly had held back tears, cannot refrain from crying any more. Also in this case tears and the lump in the throat before crying are bodily manifestations of sadness; however it is hard to state that sadness has its origin in body. Once again body conveys something (sadness) whose origin is not the body (but soul). A further hint that soul, not body, is the origin of pleasures and pains is obtained by comparing the beginning of the dialogue to its end. In 60b1-c1 Socrates, touching his leg, focuses on the pleasure of being untied following the pain provoked by bearing chains. In 117e3-118a1 the man who administers the poison to Socrates touches Socrates' legs, who has drunk the hedlock, and asks him if he feels anything. Socrates answers that in that part of the body he does not feel anything any longer. Socrates had argued that soul bears in itself the εἶδος of life, the Life itself, so that soul cannot be affected by death (105d3-106a1); consequently, if death approaches a human being, his mortal part, will perish, whereas his immortal part (soul) *will run away, giving ground to death* (106e6-8)⁵⁶. The poison, which bears death in itself, that is to say the separation of soul from the body, makes soul run away from body; but where soul is away, there also pleasures and pains are lacking; Socrates can feel pleasure and pain in his leg because his soul still permeates body in its entirety⁵⁷. At the end of the dialogue Socrates does not feel anything in his legs because the bonds between soul and body, since the hedlock has entered bloodstream, start loosening and the first parts ceasing to be ensouled

⁵⁵ Cf. *Phaed.* 59a8-9; 116d1-2; 117c5-8; d3-4.

⁵⁶ Regarding the difficulties rising from these lines cf. G. Casertano, 2015, pp.380-381.

⁵⁷ Soul is somehow kneaded (σμπεφυρμένη) with the body (66b5-7). Soul is diffused throughout the body only as long as it ensouls a body.

are the lower ones (Socrates' legs)⁵⁸. This would confirm that soul, not body, is the origin of pleasures and pains.

It is quite enlightening that the parts of body abandoned by soul becomes insensitive to stimuli; this casts a light on what the body alone by itself (*ἀντὸ καθ'αὐτό*) is. If our soul is kneaded with body throughout the embodied existence and only death can separate them from each other and make them exist in their pureness, what is really the body in its pureness, that is to say devoid of soul? The answer is: a corpse. Without soul, body is but lifeless matter unable to react to what happens around; we can feel pleasures and pain in our bodies in so far as our *bodies are ensouled*. But when ensoulement comes to an end, body by itself can neither suffer nor protect itself. Given that it can be reasonably stated that also in the *Phaedo*, just like in the *Gorgias*, *Republic* and *Phaedrus*, it is soul, not body, the origin of pleasures and pains, whereas body, only provided that is *ensouled*, can be considered the gate through which experiences come to soul and cause it to feel pain and pleasure; moreover body is what makes possible the physiological manifestation of these feelings. A further hint that soul and not body is the core of the instincts and emotional life comes from lines 80e2-81a2, which deserve full quotation:

if it (the soul) departs pure, dragging with it nothing of the body, because it never willingly associated with the body in life, but avoided it and gathered itself into itself alone, since this has always been its constant study-but this means nothing else than that it pursued philosophy rightly and really practiced being in a state of death: or is not this the practice of death (80e2-81a2).

Socrates uses the mystic language of the ritual purity which pervades the entire work⁵⁹. He is speaking of the soul of the philosopher which, thanks to the conduct held throughout the embodied life, after the separation from its wandering,

⁵⁸ It would be more correct to say that the *ensouled body* is the origin of pleasure and pain. This is one of the reasons for which Socrates is so careless of his burial in 115c4-116a1. Once that the ensoulement comes to an end, body becomes unable to feel pleasures and pains. As a consequence it does not matter if body is buried, burnt, cut or what else; only the ensouled body can feel pain. On the contrary, devoid of soul, body cannot feel anything painful (or pleasant).

⁵⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 441-444.

foolishness, fears, wild longings and the other human illslike, is destined, like the initiate, for the life of the gods (81a4-9)⁶⁰. The following lines, characterised by the language of the ritual impurity, focus on the soul which has failed to purify itself before leaving the body:

if when it departs from the body it is defiled and impure (μεμιασμένη και ἀκάθαρτος), because it was always with the body and cared for it and loved it and was fascinated by it and its desires and pleasures (ἄτε τῷ σώματι ἀεὶ συνοῦσα και τοῦτο θεραπεύουσα και ἐρῶσα και γοητευομένη⁶¹ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ὑπό τε τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν και ἡδονῶν), so that it thought nothing was true except the corporeal, which one can touch and see and drink and eat and employ in the pleasures of love, and if it is accustomed to hate and fear and avoid (τοῦτο δὲ εἰθισμένη μισεῖν τε και τρέμειν και φεύγειν) that which is shadowy and invisible to the eyes but is intelligible and tangible to philosophy (νοητὸν δὲ και φιλοσοφία αἰρετόν) - do you think a soul in this condition will depart pure and uncontaminated? (H. N. Fowler, 81b1-c2).

Interestingly the two quoted passages, which seem to support the rigid austere dualist view, make this view dubious, if not unsustainable. If the only origin of soul's troubles were instincts and feelings and they originated from the body, this would mean that every soul, after the separation from body, would be equally pure; there would be no difference between the soul of the φιλοσώματος and that of the φιλόσοφος. The supporters of the austere dualist view could say that every soul is pure and that of the φιλοσώματος has been polluted by the touch with the body. Even if this were true, this would mean only that the multiplicity of the bodily conditionings affects soul to such an extent that also the embodied soul becomes multiple. But this does not contradict what we are saying; actually it would strengthen our thesis; in fact even if one admitted that the origin of the emotional life of the humans is the body, one would be compelled to acknowledge that the embodied soul, because of his closeness to the body, becomes multiple. Therefore

⁶⁰ Cf. *infra*, pp. 507ff.

⁶¹ As rightly pointed out (G. Casertano, 2015, pp. 328-329) Plato is quite far from condemning seduction and enchantment since even the philosophical speeches must exert a kind of wizardry on the interlocutors in order to be persuasive (on the other hand, the refutations themselves of the *Charmides* are considered incantations: cf. *supra*, pp. 116-118). The philosophical reasoning exerts a kind of enchantment which helps soul to pursue its happiness: cf. B. Centrone, 2007, pp. 35-50

even if one wanted to support the austere dualistic theory, one would be nonetheless compelled to ascribe to soul a multiplicity of instances which the traditional reading ascribes only to the body.

However soul, as said above, is not merely affected by multiplicity; it is its origin. Accordingly the chains of the soul have their origin in the soul itself. Therefore, when Socrates says that purification (practice of death) consists in accustoming soul to living alone by itself, untied from body like from chains (67c9-d2), this means that body can tie soul only because soul itself has forged the chains. Accordingly the φιλοσώματος surrenders to excessive bodily pleasures not because of his body, *but because of his soul*. If pleasures and pains nail soul to body, it is nonetheless true that soul itself has provided these nails and also the hammer to stick them. Therefore if the φιλοσώματος is imprisoned in his body, it is his soul which is accountable for its own imprisonment; therefore the φιλοσώματος' soul is both prisoner and gaoler.

What is more, that soul, not body, is the true origin of pleasures and pains and the body an instrument of their fulfillment and of their physiological manifestation is consistent with Socrates' words about the essential distinction between causes and means (98c2-e5): it is because of his choice to face the sentence that Socrates sits in the jail, not because of the movements of his joints, which move in such a way as to allow him to sit down and keep this position. Likewise the bystanders at Socrates' last hour cry because their souls are sad for Socrates' death (true cause), not because they have lachrymal glands (means to express sadness); Phaedo tells Echecrates Socrates' conversations with Simmias and Cebes because remembering Socrates consoles his soul (true cause), not because the movements of his mouth and his breath produce intelligible sounds (means to narrate the event). Ascribing pleasures and pains to soul and not to body means attributing multiplicity to human soul and also to the soul of the true philosopher; but it is because of this multiplicity of instances that soul needs self-care⁶². If the true philosopher's soul is the origin

⁶² Because only a multiple soul will commit to harmonising its several instances within a life-style whose aim is happiness. Cf. *infra*, pp. 466ff. Caring for soul in its wholeness does not mean neglecting the single instances; in fact, caring one's own desires and fears, pleasures and pains involves caring for their peaceful coexistence with the other instances of soul; therefore caring for

not only of reasoning, but also of pleasures and pains and other feelings, it follows that his soul is capable of self-care and the kind of soul outlined in the *Phaedo* is such as to practice self-care.

Thus far pleasures and pains has been under examination. What concerns senses, similar remarks can be made. In 66d8-e1; e5, 67a5-7, it is said that body prevents soul from knowing things in their pureness; accordingly senses only divert from grasping truth⁶³. Also in this case the well known austere dualist view seems to occur: soul's task is reasoning in order to attain true understanding, whereas bodily senses are false and deceitful. However also in the case of senses there are some hints which suggest that body, not soul, is the origin of senses. The first hint is the construction *διά* plus genitive indicating the means; in 65d11-12 one can read: ἄλλη τινὶ αἰσθήσει τῶν διὰ τοῦ σώματος ἐφήψω αὐτῶν; “with which other sense of those *occurring through the body* did you touch them (*sci.* the Beings, the Ideas)?”⁶⁴. In 83a4-5 we find ἡ διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων σκέψις: “the inquiry carried out by means of eyes” and ἡ διὰ τῶν ὠτῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων αἰσθήσεων: “that (*scil.* the inquiry) carried out by means of ears and other sensory organ”⁶⁵. These two passages highlight the instrumental nature of body and sensory organs, in a way which recalls the gnoseology outlined in *Theaet.* 184d1-e6, where the role of sensory organs as means is decisively stated⁶⁶. If this division between instrument

the individual instances involves caring for its existence within the whole. Accordingly our rational part is like a good farmer who, by giving measures and order to the other instances of soul, cares for each of them and leads them to a peaceful coexistence within the whole. Cf. *Resp.* IX, 589a5-b6.

⁶³ Cf. *Phaed.* 65d11-e1; 83a4-5.

⁶⁴ H. N. Fowler renders *διὰ τοῦ σώματος* into “bodily”, which is a mere quality, whereas the complement of means disappears. Considering that H. N. Fowler appears to support the austere dualist view, it could be argued that such a translation is deliberate. On the other end, it is not unreasonable that the austere dualist readers do not want to stress those elements which allude to the instrumental role of the body during perception: cf. F. J. Church, 1951, p. 10; F. Dirlmeier, 1959, p. 31; P. A. Fabrini, 2020, p. 138. In fact these hints suggest that body is not the origin, but only the means of senses.

⁶⁵ Another possible translation of *αἰσθησις*. The presence of *ὠτῶν* in the phrase makes the rendering of *αἰσθησις* into “sensory organ” more reasonable than rendering it into “sense”.

⁶⁶ Cf. M. Narcy, 1994, p. 353; M. Dixsaut, 2002, pp. 46-49 p. 353, F. Ferrari, 2011, pp. 404-405 tend to weaken the difference between the instrumental cause, expressed by *διά* plus genitive, and the

and true cause applies also to perception, it means that, if senses are deceitful and they origin from soul, it is soul which deceives itself. However, that body is the means, not the origin, of senses does not involve that sensory organs are irrelevant; to use a famous example, a man wearing blue glasses would see everything blue; the origin of vision is not glasses; nonetheless their color affects it. Body, even if not the origin of senses, is not irrelevant, since a body in good or bad condition has influence on the quality of our perception. However also body's condition, at the end of the day, seems to be a business of soul; in fact, unless one comes to world with genetic disfunctions, it is upon soul to prevent body from worsening. Let us come back to the φιλοσώματος. Throughout his life he has eaten and drunk so much that he is now unable to feel fullness; thus he keeps on eating and drinking even if his body is suffering because the natural alarm does not work anymore. The body of the φιλοσώματος is deceitful because does not warn against the danger. However if the body of the φιλοσώματος has become deceitful and unreliable is because his reckless conduct (due to the bad condition of his soul) has harmed it in such a way that it cannot work like a healthy body. Also in the case of senses and bodily perception is valid what has been said about pleasures: if the body is a prison, it is the soul which imprisons itself, as these lines tellingly suggest:

“The lovers of knowledge (οἱ φιλομαθεῖς)”, said he, “perceive that when philosophy first takes possession of their soul it is entirely fastened and welded to the body (διαδεδεμένην ἐν τῷ σώματι καὶ προσκεκολλημένην) and is compelled to regard realities through the body as through prison bars (ὥσπερ διὰ εἰργμοῦ), not with its own unhindered vision (ἀλλὰ μὴ αὐτὴν δι’ αὐτῆς)⁶⁷, and is wallowing in utter ignorance. And philosophy sees that the most dreadful thing about the imprisonment is the fact that it is caused by the lusts of the flesh (δι’ ἐπιθυμίας ἐστίν), so that the prisoner is the

efficient cause, expressed by the simple dative. In particular M. Dixsaut pointed out that also soul is said to work as an instrument (*Theaet.* 185e1); however this makes the difference between soul and body greater. That also soul is depicted as an instrument only means that the true difference between soul and body is not that the soul is agent and body an instrument, but that *body is only a means, whereas soul can be both agent and means of itself.*

⁶⁷ For soul as instrument of itself cf. M. Dixsaut, *ivi.*, 51ff.

chief assistant in his own imprisonment (ὡς ἂν μάλιστα αὐτὸς ὁ δεδεμένος συλλήπτωρεῖ τῷ δεδέσθῃ) (82d9-83a1).

The ἐπιθυμία, the most powerful of the chains⁶⁸, has been provided by soul itself, which is its own gaoler. Ascribing the responsibility for subjection to pleasures and deception to soul and not to body means considering soul the maker of its own destiny, which soul can shape by practicing self-care. However the austere dualist view is not yet defeated. By attributing to soul the responsibility for what happens *to soul*, one can get rid of the opposition soul/body, but not of the opposition reasoning/senses or reasoning/pleasures. What changes is that soul must do away not with body, *but with some instances of itself*. In the *Phaedo* Socrates never prescribes annihilation or repression neither of senses nor of pleasures; as it has been argued above, the philosophical μελέτη θανάτου consists in benefitting from them in a disciplined way and in considering them not the aim itself of one's conduct, but the means of body healths, so that the disciplined enjoyment of pleasures becomes a means used by soul in order to keep body's health⁶⁹. Likewise μελέτη θανάτου does not mean getting rid of senses in order to practice pure reasoning; it means *getting rid of the common way of considering senses in order to use them in the proper way*.

An evidence thereof is provided by some passages in the recollection argument. Socrates argues that, by experiencing equivalence in trees, stones and other things, we come to conceive of an equal (the Equal itself) which is different from equal things (74a9-12; b4-9); indeed this Equal is not a mere equal object like others, but *the criterion itself which permits to evaluate the equality in the things experienced by means of senses* (74e9-75a3). The knowledge of this Equal is not immediately accessible to human understanding; therefore it is necessary to experience things imperfectly equal which may trigger the recollection of the Equal itself (75a11-b2); only by using senses, it is possible to retrieve the knowledges we had before coming to world (75e2-7; 76a1-4). Basing on these passages of the recollection argument, it turns out that senses, far from being deceitful hindrances to understanding, *are the*

⁶⁸ Cf. *Crat.* 403d1-2.

⁶⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 444ff.

gates through which experiences can reach soul so as to trigger in it the process of recollection. Senses are at the same time the hindrance to the full grasping of true Being (from Socrates' words it can be inferred that, however close to it one may arrive, an embodied human will never know it as well as when soul is no more embodied) and the primary and unavoidable access to that world from which soul sources experiences useful to recollection. Senses and body are ambiguous, but this does not mean that they are to condemn; indeed also the true philosopher uses senses; however he knows that senses do not convey us the truth, *but provide as that material which makes soul retrieve its own unaware memories.* Senses cannot be bypassed, and even when one wants to exert pure reasoning devoid of material contents, one has had to experience them in advance. Accordingly, the difference between the philosopher and the φιλοσόματος is not that the former has given up senses and the latter is mastered by them. Instead the difference is this: *the philosopher knows that senses are ambiguous means which may be both the first step and the main hindrance to knowledge; wherefore he cares that his senses are as clear as possible. The φιλοσόματος does not believe that they convey material useful to the pursuit of the truth; actually he believes that senses directly convey the truth; wherefore he blindly trust them, even when they may be unreliable.*

Once again, the μελέτη θανάτου turns out to consist not in giving up instances of human nature, *but in giving them the proper role within a life devoted to philosophy.* On the other hands some of the dialogue analysed are example of μελέτη θανάτου. In the *Charmides*, Socrates goes beyond his bodily conditionings (the attraction for Charmides) in order to know the condition of Charmides' soul and care for it⁷⁰. Socrates does not despise physical beauty; what despises is the attitude of those who esteem body's beauty more than soul's beauty. Likewise he approaches Alcibiades because of his soul, not because of his beauty and the other reasons which attracts the crowd of his admirers. Socratic dialogues, as an intercourse between souls, always involve going beyond bodily and earthly conditionings, such as physical beauty, riches, power and so on, which may divert

⁷⁰ On the contrary, Charmides' lovers are interested only in his body; they are φιλοσόματοι. Cf. *supra*, pp. 101ff.

from the knowledge of others' souls and one's own as well⁷¹. The dialectic μελέτη θανάτου engages both Socrates and his interlocutor; actually Socrates help his interlocutor die, that is to say "kill" interlocutor's abitudinal attitude, inherited by his cultural milieu, towards world and oneself, so as to allow him to revive as a person capable of self-improvement⁷². If understood in this way, the μελέτη θανάτου turns out to be not the giving up pleasures and emotions which Socrates proclaims for the first time in the *Phaedo*, but *the practice of going beyond oneself which Socrates has practiced throughout his life*.

Thus far it has been argued how the multiplicity of perceptions and feelings belongs to soul, not to body. As the true philosopher's soul is endowed not only with the reasoning, but also with pleasures, pains, desires and so on, his soul is characterised by multiplicity; that which makes necessary to rule this multiplicity. The presence of multiplicity in soul casts an interesting light on Socrates' refutation of the argument according to which soul is *harmonia*. Indeed, soul, as having multiplicity in itself, needs *harmonia*, which makes out of this multiplicity an ordered and balanced soul. Accordingly *harmonia* is necessary to soul and it is incumbent upon soul to create such an order in itself.

Μελέτη θανάτου and music. Μελέτη θανάτου as the practice of standing before oneself.

After the third argument for the immortality of soul, Simmias and Cebes, urged by Socrates, move their objection to Socrates. Simmias' objection, that on which I focus in these pages, is based on the idea of *harmonia* and must have represented the position of numerous Pythagoreans on the subject. According to Simmias (and those Pythagoreans who supported such a view) soul could be the *harmonia* rising from the good condition of the body in its entirety, just as the good sound of musical instruments rise from the correct assembly of their parts and the tuning of the chords. This harmony/tuning, which grows out of the workmanship of the

⁷¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 105-107.

⁷² From this perspective it is the *Eutydemus* the first dialogue where an unmistakable case of μελέτη θανάτου is to find. Cf. *supra*, pp. 94ff.

instrument, cannot exist without the instrument, so that if the instrument goes through severe damages or is broken, the harmony/tuning, the capability of producing good sounds, is irreparably endangered. The harmony/tuning is something divine, invisible, incorporeal and wonderful⁷³; however it cannot exist before the instrument of which it is harmony/tuning and cannot exist after its destruction (86a1-b5). In the same way, says Simmias, human body (just like an instrument) is strung and held together (ὡςπερ ἐντεταμένου τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν καὶ συνεχομένου) by the warm, the dry, the moist and other humors; as a consequence human soul is a mixture and a harmony (κρᾶσιν εἶναι καὶ ἁρμονίαν) of these elements (86b6-c2). Therefore also soul, just like any kind of harmony, cannot exist irrespective the deterioration of the thing of which it is harmony. As a consequence, when body is irredeemably damaged and the balance of elements stringing it and holding it together cannot be restored, soul's existence comes to an end⁷⁴.

Socrates' first counterattack to Simmias' objection targets not the soundness of the argument, but Simmias' inconsistency. Indeed both Simmias and Cebes have claimed to believe in the theory of recollection more than anything else (92a2-5); but one of the consequences of the recollection argument is that soul exists before the body and before embodiment has learnt the things which it recollects during its embodied life. Therefore, if one believes that soul is a well balanced *temperamentum* rising from the good working of the body, one cannot believe in the recollection argument; otherwise one should admit that soul, the harmony rising

⁷³ In the third argument Socrates establishes an implicit connection between invisibility and immortality: cf. *Phaed.*80a10-b5. Simmias' objection is aimed at undermining this implicit connection; there is also the case that something (the harmony/tuning) is invisible and nonetheless mortal.

⁷⁴ Cf. DK44 B4; B6; B8; B10. Given the analogy between harmony/tuning in instruments and soul in bodies, it follows that, if the harmony/tuning is the capability of the instrument to produce sounds, soul can be considered the capability of the body to carry out different acts. Wherefore the soul outlined by Simmias turns out to be "something of the body", to say it with Aristotle, or "eine Funktion des Leibes", as J. Wipperfurth 1970, p. 283 says; cf. K. Dörner, 2011, pp. 98-101. As T. Menkhaus 2003, p. 113-114 rightly points out, it is noteworthy that the idea of a soul which, even if not identical with bodily processes, depends on their working, opens up to the modern experimental psychology inaugurated by W. Wundt. Cf. D. Ulich, 1989, p.67. Cf. J. Bernhardt, 1971.

from the good condition of body, already exists before the body itself; that which is self-contradictory (92b4-c3). After this first counterattack from Socrates, Simmias seems to be convinced that the recollection theory is much more thrustworthy than the harmony argument, since the recollection argument, says Simmias, is much more founded and is based on the existence of that οὐσία (the Ideas) which Simmias would never dream of questioning (92d7-e3). It seems that it is no more necessary to argue against the idea of the soul as harmony/tuning of the body. However Socrates moves two further counterattacks to this idea; it is in the third one that it becomes clear that soul is not harmony, but *that which produces harmony*. The second counterattack is based on the relative independence of soul from the conditions of the body. The harmony/tuning rising from the good craftsmanship of the instrument cannot contrast the condition of the element from which it itself has risen; for instance if strings are not tuned or the bar is broken, the harmony/tuning cannot tune the strings or fix the bar; it is the consequence, not the cause of the good condition of the instrument. On the contrary when we have an arm broken or blood flows from a wound, we can cure them and prevent the damages from becoming too severe. If soul were like an harmony/tuning, it could never choose to cure body. Therefore soul is rather *the cause* of the well being of the body than its consequence (contrary to the harmony/tuning of the instrument); from this point of view soul is more similar to a luthier, able to fix an instrument, than to the harmony/tuning⁷⁵.

Socrates' third counter attack, the most relevant one, starts by pointing out that the harmony/tuning of an instrument admits graduations. The harmony/tuning, he says, can be more harmony/tuning and in a greater extent than another harmony tuning (93a14-b3). Guitars make Socrates' remarks quite easy to understand; when a guitar is tuned, its fifth string is an A and the fourth is an E. If the A remains A and the fourth string is a semitone out of tune, the guitar is not as harmonious as before. However, if one loosens the fourth string more and more, the harmony fades away inasmuch as the untuning goes on. This is clearer if one compares several instruments to each other; an instrument can be well tuned, whereas another one is not so tuned, and the tuning of a third one can be still further from the right tuning

⁷⁵ Regarding the debate on Socrates' refutation of the soul/harmony theory cf. G. Casertano, 2015, pp. 343-345, in particular cf. W. F. Hicken, 1954, pp. 16-20.

and so on. Contrary to the/harmony tuning, soul, as Simmias agrees on that, is not something gradable; as a consequence, a soul cannot be more soul and to a greater measure or less soul and to a lesser measure than another soul (93b4-7). Actually, one can say, it is possible to say that one is more intelligent or more modest than others; however intelligence and modesty are qualities of soul, not soul itself. In the same way a guitar can be more tuned than another guitar, *not more guitar than another guitar*. Qualities are gradable, whereas the thing of which they are qualities are not. The harmony/tuning is a quality of an instruments; on the contrary, soul is not a quality; *it has qualities*, as it is clear in the following lines. Indeed a soul can be said to have intelligence (νοῦν), virtue (ἀρετήν) and to be good (εἶναι ἀγαθή) while an other soul is said to have foolishness (ἄνοιαν), wickedness (μοχθηρίαν) and to be bad (εἶναι κακή) (93b8-c1). It are the good qualities which constitute the harmony of soul, which is not harmony, but *can be harmonious*, as the following lines suggest:

Socrates: “Now what will those who assume that the soul is a harmony say that these things - the virtue and the wickedness - in the soul are? Will they say that this is another kind of harmony and a discord (πότερον ἀρμονίαν αὐτὴν ἢ τινα ἄλλην καὶ ἀναρμοστίαν), and that the soul, which is itself a harmony, has within it another harmony (καὶ τὴν μὲν ἡρμόσθαι, τὴν ἀγαθὴν, καὶ ἔχειν ἐν αὐτῇ ἀρμονία οὖσα ἄλλην ἀρμονίαν) and that the other soul is discordant and has no other harmony within it (τὴν δὲ ἀναρμοστον αὐτὴν τε εἶναι καὶ οὐκ ἔχειν ἐν αὐτῇ ἄλλην)?” Simmias: “I cannot tell”, replied Simmias, “but evidently those who make that assumption would say some thing of that sort” (93c3-10).

Probably the quoted lines are some of the most underestimated in the dialogue, They are considered the mere attempt to put on the spot the supporters of the harmony theory. It is true that Socrates’ aim is to refute them: however, Socrates says also something more: what he here implicitly is saying and more assertively in the following lines is *that virtue is the harmony of soul, whereas the lack of it is wickedness*. As a consequence, if the true philosopher commits to virtue more than

anyone else, it follows that he commits to the harmony of his soul more than anyone else⁷⁶.

The relevance of *the harmony in soul* is said in several passages in the dialogue. As said above, the notion of harmony unavoidably recalls that of multiplicity, since harmony involves the well balanced order of more than one element⁷⁷. Saying that virtue is the harmony of the soul means that there is a multiplicity in soul, which has to be ordered, shaped, and educated in the proper way. Given that, it seems that these lines implicitly confirms that has been argued also above, that is to say: 1) that soul, also that of the true philosophers, has numerous instances (desires, fears, pleasures, pains and so on) and faculties, not only the cognitive ones; 2) that a philosophical life does not involve getting rid on the aspects of human nature which are not properly aimed at knowledge, but *harmonising one's own soul, caring for its multiplicity and making it ordered and balanced*. Of course the longing for true knowledge is the dominant one in the philosopher's soul; however this does not mean that he has to despise the other aspects of his soul⁷⁸. In light of this, it follows that Socrates is carrying out not a mere refutation, but the correction of a mistake; the supporters of the harmony theory erroneously state that soul is the harmony/tuning of the body. It is true that a relationship between soul and harmony exists; what matters is to understand the nature of this relationship. Therefore Socrates's counterattacks to this theory are not only aimed at rejecting it; along with refuting the theory, he suggests how soul and harmony have to do with each other. *Soul is not harmony, but harmony is a quality of soul* (its optimum condition); and in the case of the philosopher an essential one.

⁷⁶ This harmonious condition characterises a soul ruled by justice; it is the condition which permits soul to fulfill its natural tasks: cf. *supra*, pp. 28ff.

⁷⁷ That which makes *harmony* a universal principle working in every domain of reality, in medicine as principle of bodily health, in music and in politics as a principle of an healthy community: cf. A. Chaturvedi, 2018, pp. 61-77; 113-142.

⁷⁸ Caring for oneself (one's own soul) means exert a sort of demiourgic role on one's soul (cf. J. Giménez, 2016, pp. 211-216). Anyway it is soul which exerts this demiourgic role on itself, so that it is at the same time both craftman and creation.

At this point Socrates resumes the refutation from another point of view. In his first move he argued that soul, which is not gradable, cannot be harmony/tuning, which admits graduations. Now Socrates draws the consequences rising from assuming that the harmony/tuning does not admit graduations (93d1-4); in fact since Simmias has acknowledged that soul has not graduations, assuming that soul and harmony/tuning are the same, it follows that even the harmony/tuning must not have graduations. It follows from this assumption that harmony/tuning, as the optimum order and balance of the constitutive elements, cannot be neither more nor less harmony than it already is, neither to a greater nor to a lesser extent, neither than itself nor than another harmony/tuning. As a consequence soul turns out to be an unchangeable harmony (93d6-e1). However, if soul is such an unchangeable harmony, which does not admit its contrary, the lack of harmony and the harmony/tuning of soul is its virtue and the lack of harmony is the lack of virtue, it follows that soul, as an unchangeable harmony/tuning, is always virtuous and there cannot be any wicked soul (94a1-10). After showing the consequences of considering soul a harmony/tuning, Socrates resumes the second counter-attack, according to which soul cannot be harmony/tuning of the body; otherwise it would be unable to rule the body. Soul's mastering and ruling body involves also that soul can disagree with some pulsions pertaining to the body and can decide to fight them (94b6-c1). This capability of disagreeing with some pulsions is not aimed at repressing or annihilating; *but at helping and caring for the body itself*. Accordingly, Socrates says that soul can rule body using training and medicine (τά τε κατὰ τὴν γυμναστικὴν καὶ τὴν ἰατρικὴν, 94d4). Even if medicine may impose painful treatments, they are aimed at benefitting body⁷⁹. Therefore that soul can disagree with some pulsions of desire means that soul can benefit body. In fact disagreeing with the longing for drinking means preventing body from being harmed by drinking excessively; on the contrary, the φιλοσώματος is unable to disagree with his own longings; therefore he lets them to destroy his own body. As a consequence, disagreeing with longings does not mean annihilating them, *but giving them a measure*; a measure which makes them beneficial and not dangerous.

⁷⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 397-399.

It has been said that pleasures, even if they pertain to body, since it is body that by means of which they express themselves, do not originate from body; they originate from soul⁸⁰. So the fact that soul is able to give a measure to pleasures means that soul is able to give a measure in first place to itself, then to the body⁸¹. This means that soul must be able to get in touch with itself as if it were talking to someone else⁸². In 94d5-6 Socrates says that soul should be able to speak (διαλεγόμενη) to longings (ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις), rage (ταῖς ὀργαῖς) and fears (τοῖς φόβοις) as if it were something different (speaking) *to something different from it* (ὡς ἄλλη οὕσα ἄλλῳ πράγματι). The use of the adverb ὡς “as if” is telling; it seems to allude to the fact that longings, rage and fears are not something extraneous to soul, but something intrinsic to it. This would be consistent with the *Republic*, the *Phaedrus*, the *Philebus* and the *Sophist*⁸³. As a consequence, when Socrates says that soul exerts its ruling by speaking to longings, rage and fears, he is saying that soul exerts its ruling by speaking to itself, or, more exactly, to some instances of itself. The greek verb rendered into “speak to” is διαλέγεσθαι; this means that soul, and the philosopher’s soul more than any other, should be able to have a dialectic exchange with itself, just like that which Socrates is having with Simmias and Cebes. Soul gives measures to itself and to the body by means of this dialogue; this is consistent with the nature essentially dialogic of thought, highlighted in *Theaet.* 189e4-190a7

⁸⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 458ff.

⁸¹ A disciplined soul, that is to say endowed with σωφροσύνη, is able also to care for the body. Soul’s measures lie behind body’s well-being. Cf. *supra*, pp. 113ff.

⁸² Human soul is to consider a sort of *dual unity*: it is one because, albeit made up of different instances, which may also disagree with each other, it is nonetheless the unifying principle which ensouls the body and is the ultimate source of the moral and cognitive life of the individual (cf. 186a10-c5). However, it is also dual: it is able to talk to itself, just as to different people talk to each other. One of the most telling examples of this dual unity of soul is Socrates himself in the *Hippias Major*: in fact, the rude refuter (288d4; 290e4), who refutes Socrates whatever he may say, is but Socrates himself: cf. H. Olson, 2000, pp. 265-287. It is to keep in mind that the pinnacle of this human ability to talk to oneself is the ability to remute oneself; that which not all are able to do. On the contrary a soul which talks to itself only in order to say yes to that which it already holds to be true is more common: telling are the example of Alcibiades and Critias, and of Ippias himself

⁸³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 450-452.

and in *Soph.* 263e2-264a2⁸⁴. The ability of soul to have dialogic exchanges with itself is based on its ability to look at itself; as we know, this ability to look at itself is not something which every soul possesses⁸⁵; as seen in the preceding chapters, this ability to look at one's own soul rises in Socrates' interlocutors by means of Socratic refutations. The ability of soul to look at itself is hinted at in the lines under examination by means of the verb ἐναντιοῦσθαι, which thus far has been rendered into "disagree". However, if one considers the etymology of the verb, one finds that ἐναντιοῦσθαι is a compound of ἐν "in, within" and ἀντίος "facing, in front of, before"; whence the literal meaning of the verb is "occupy the facing place, stand in front or before someone else". On the other end, if one thinks about two armies, their mutual enmity is physically represented by their standing before each other. Accordingly that soul is able to ἐναντιοῦσθαι longings and fears, pleasures and pains and so on, means that soul is able to stand before them. But standing before them is the only way to see them, so that speaking to them can be possible. On the other hand, this standing before longings and fears and so on is not something of which human beings are capable from the beginning of their life; it is something which must be learnt and practiced. This is showed by the case of the φιλοσόματος. He is unable to stand before his longings; as a consequence he cannot see them; since he cannot see them, he cannot even speak to them; wherefore it follows that the φιλοσόματος is unable to have a dialectic exchange with himself. Contrary to the φιλοσόματος, the true philosopher is more than anyone else to *stand before* his pleasures, pains, longings and fears; thus he can see them and carry out the διαλέγεσθαι with the instances of his soul. In light of this, it can be said that Socrates takes seriously the link between soul and harmony; soul is not itself harmony, but can be harmonious, that is to say virtuous. However, it are musical instruments which can be harmonious; given that, soul, as capable of harmony, is more similar to the instrument than to the harmony. On the other hand, it has been said that it is soul itself which, standing before itself and speaking to its own instances, provides that

⁸⁴ Cf. L. Napolitano, 2018, pp. 292-301.

⁸⁵ It is a natural task of soul; however soul needs to reinforce and practice this natural disposition to the dialogue with itself; otherwise this disposition could become so weak as to disappear. Cf. *supra*, pp. 39-40.

order and harmony which it itself needs; thus soul is not harmony tuning; it is, at the same time, the instrument which is shaped as to be harmonious/tuned and the luthier who, thanks to his skills, provides this harmony/tuning to the instrument. Now a further element can be added to the reading of the μελέτη θανάτου: it has been said that the μελέτη θανάτου is not aimed at getting rid of pleasures, pains and in general the emotional instances of ourselves, *but at getting rid of the attitude according to which senses and feelings conveys us the truth itself*⁸⁶; that attitude which makes us to believe that there is no but that which pleasures and pains, longings and fears urge us to believe. The attitude typical of the φιλοσώματος, which makes body an actual prison. To avoid being overwhelmed by the vehemence of undisciplined emotions, one must learn to stand before them, that in which the ἐναντιοῦσθαι recalled above consists. To educate its own instances and avert the dangers rising from the attitude of the φιλοσώματος, soul must learn to stand before itself⁸⁷. Considering that it is thanks to this standing before itself that soul is able to speak with itself, μελέτη θανάτου, as practice of standing before itself, involves practicing self-knowledge. Given that, it is now possible to go on to examine Socrates' arguments on the immortality of soul and show how each of them delves into a certain aspect of the μελέτη θανάτου which have been stressed. The first argument convey interesting elements regarding the link between death and Socratic dialectic. The second argument show the connection between death and transformation of one's way of reasoning. The third one is based on the idea of μελέτη, intended, as it has been explained at the beginning of this chapter, as the untiring effort to keep alive what matters. Then it has to be argued how these arguments provide elements consistent with the idea of care pervading all the chapters of this work.

Dialectic and death. The art of dying and revive

Socrates' hope for the future awaiting him after his biological death is founded on his belief in the immortality of soul. However, as Cebes points out, humans seems

⁸⁶ Cf. *supra*, p. 460-461.

⁸⁷ The attitude according to which the perceptible things are the only thing existing and, as a consequence, the only things which matter.

to fear that soul does not outlive body and it perishes the very day in which their separation occurs. Accordingly, soul is doomed to scattering and dispersing like smoke, as soon as the bond between soul and body comes to an end (70a1-6). It is to reply to this objection from Cebes that Socrates recalls a *παλαιὸς λόγος* according to which after dying soul comes to the Hades and anew comes to the world and rises from the dead (70c6-8)⁸⁸. If it were true that living comes from nowhere but from dead, it would follow that souls dwell there (in the Hades) before coming again to the world; but this would mean that they outlive body. Socrates' first argument has attracted numerous criticisms, the most relevant of which is that it is founded on a *petitio principii*; he assumes as the very foundation of his reasoning that which he should demonstrate. Socrates implicitly assumes that soul is immortal; only thus it is possible to say that life and death are only alternating conditions of something which keeps existing under the succession of different states. In the same way wake and sleep are the alternating condition of something (a human being) which keeps existing under the succession of these two states (71c9-d2; 72b7-c3)⁸⁹. However it may be, there are at least three elements in this first argument, which seems to some quite meager from the logical point of view, which deserve an attentive analysis. The first element is Socrates' display of his knowledge of the inquiry into nature, which he himself practiced when he was young⁹⁰. Socrates attempts to include the belief that souls go and come from Hades in a wider view grounded on the Presocratic speculation. Everything existing in the becoming rises and has its existence thanks to its opposite (70d7-e4)⁹¹. Between the two opposite terms two mirror-like transformations unfold, which constitute the backbone of the becoming; accordingly between bigger and smaller unfold growth (*αὔξησις*) and decrease (*φθίσις*). In the same way aggregating (*συγκρίνεσθαι*) and decomposing

⁸⁸ It is not easy (neither is it useful) to state firmly the Orphic (Cf. A. Bernabè, 1998; 2003) or Pythagorean (Th. Ebert) origin of this *παλαιὸς λόγος*, moreover because the belief in the metempsychosis seems to characterise both Pythagoras and the Orphism.

⁸⁹ This is the reading of the argument provided by W. Bröckner, 1990, p. 178.

⁹⁰ Cf. *infra*, pp. 489ff.

⁹¹ T. Menkhaus (2009, p. 58 n 152) arguably suggests that it is Heraclitus who lies behind this explanation of the becoming based on contraries (cf. DK 22 B 88: cf. M. M. Sassi, 1996, pp. 437-445). For the influences of Heraclitus on Plato cf. Th. A. Szlezak, 2021, pp. 250-252.

(διακρίνεσθαι)⁹², cooling (ψύχεσθαι) and getting warm (θερμαίνεσθαι) are transformations (γένεσεις) unfolding between the two poles of a couple of opposites. The becoming is a weave of relationships ruled by the law of the ἀνταπόδοσις (restitution, giving in turn) according to which every transformation is balanced out by its opposite (every growth involves a decrease and *vice versa*, and so on), so that there is no linear transformation in it, but all the movements existing in it somehow go back shaping the cyclical structure of the becoming (72a11-b5)⁹³. In such a becoming conceived of as a cyclical structure, the living beings and dead ones obey to the same law as anything else; thus reviving and dying are the mirror-like transformations unfolding between the opposite of this couple. Wherefore, as the living being (the embodied soul) by dying (a transformation) becomes dead, in the same way the dead being (the soul separated from body) by reviving (the mirror-like transformation) becomes a new living being (a soul embodied in an other body). Socrates argues for the soundness of the παλαιὸς λόγος drawing upon a general view on the law underlying the transformation occurring in the perceptible world. Furthermore, as evidence of his familiarity with Anaxagoras' work, Socrates quotes a line from Anaxagoras' writing on nature to show the consequences occurring in the world if the opposite transformations did not balance out each other⁹⁴. The

⁹² συγκρίνεσθαι and διακρίνεσθαι are essential ideas in the speculation of the Presocratics, in particular in Empedocles, Anaxagoras and Democritus. Cf. DK 31 A86; B8; B22; B62; B90; DK 59 B5; B12; B13; B17; DK 68 B164. Cf. G. Casertano, 2015, pp. 402-404.

⁹³ However this does not mean that the becoming is eternal; at least not for all. The soul of the true philosopher, as it is said also in *Phaedr.* can escape once and for all from the cycle of the becoming, as well as the soul too wicked to be purified. As a consequence the argument does not say that the becoming lasts for ever, but only that when and until there is becoming, it is characterised by the cyclical alternating of opposite transformations, ruled by the law of the ἀνταπόδοσις.

⁹⁴ The line is: “ὅμοῦ πάντα χρήματα” (all the things together/in the same place, DK59 B1). Anaxagoras' words describe the conditions of the seeds, not separated and shaped into beings by the νοῦς. Socrates points to the consequences of balancing opposites in the weave of the becoming. If, for instance, some people, like Endimion, did not wake after falling asleep and some other did not fall asleep and so on, reality would turned out to be a place where opposites exist side by side (all the things together), but in such a congested and overcrowded way that the becoming itself, since the

second noteworthy element to draw from this first argument concerns the link between the becoming and the not explicitly stated doctrine of the metempsychosis. If soul, which is itself invisible⁹⁵, thanks to the embodiment enters the weave of the becoming and gets involved in the visible world, it follows that within this weave of the becoming there is something invisible which does not deteriorate like bodies. That there is something in the becoming lying behind birth and deterioration of bodies opens up to the idea, developed in the second argument, that the visible world hides an invisible one, which is the foundation of it. The third, and the most important, element of this argument is the *dialectic structure of the becoming*. The Greek word rendered into “opposite” is ἐναντία. In 70e1-2 ; e4-8 it is said that the ἐναντία rise from their ἐναντία; between the ἐναντία those transformations occur (which are said to be ἐναντία), which are the core of the becoming. However the two ἐναντία are not mere opposite, or even enemies, as one of the possible translations of the adjective leads to think; they are also, if not in first place, complementaries, because the one makes the existence of the other possible; it is only because of the hot that something cold can exist and *viceversa*, and it is because of death that there can be life⁹⁶. That there is not mere hostility, but mutuality between the ἐναντία, is clear in 71b9-10; there it said that the ἐναντία rise from each other (ἐξ ἀλλήλων) and the becoming of each of them is aimed at the other (γένεσίν τε εἶναι ἑκατέρου εἰς ἄλληλα). The pronoun ἄλληλα indicates the mutuality holding together the ἐναντία. As said above about the soul and its ἐναντιοῦσθαι, the ἐναντία are not merely opposite; they are those things which stand before each other⁹⁷; on

balance of the mirror-like transformations comes to an end, would fade away. Thus the becoming itself would somehow end up freezing.

⁹⁵ Cf. *infra*, pp. 501ff.

⁹⁶ The mutual involvement of the ἐναντία concerns only the world of the becoming, while this does not apply to the world of the *eide*. For instance, the *eidos* of life (the Life itself) does not need death to exist. It exist by itself and needs no ἐναντίον to be what it is.

⁹⁷ Regarding the ἐναντία as not merely opposite, but complementary cfr. *supra*, p. 156. That the ἐναντία involve and need each other can help to go beyond the numerous fallacies which some readers have seen through the argument of the contraries: cf. D. Bostock 1986; F. Karfik 2011, pp. 47-62. One of the most frequent criticismi is that Plato here does not discriminate between the kind of relation existing between terms such as beautiful-hugly and that existing between terms like juster

the other hand, if soul stands before itself in order to have a dialectic exchange with itself, in the same way the ἐναντία, standing before each other, have a dialectic exchange with each other. The dialogue unfolding between the ἐναντία is the cyclical alternating of the mirror-like transformations which connect the poles to each other; likewise by dying life communicates to death and by reviving death communicates to life. Dying and reviving constitute the interaction between life and death, which is made possible by the “standing before each other” of the two ἐναντία. As a consequence, if one of them ceased to stand before the other (giving up the role of dialogic partner), the whole weave of the becoming would loosen. The ἐναντία cooperate in order to keep alive their “dialogue” (the mutual transformation into each other) and the world originating from this “dialogue”; they are like those players whose aim is not to defeat the other, but prevent the ball from falling on the ground. In the same way the Socratic dialogue is that weave of questions and answers which originate from its ἐναντίοι (the interlocutors), who stand before each other and keep the dialogue alive. In the same way as in the case of life and death, dialogue is not only advance, but also impasse (the *aporia*). Nevertheless *aporia* is necessary and cannot be avoided; it is that dead-like condition which the interlocutor must go beyond in order to die as the person he has been and revive as a new one. Therefore death must cooperate with life in the wider picture of the becoming, just as *aporia* and *euporia* in the wider picture of the dialogue. However, the *aporia* may be so disheartening that some could decide to give up the role of ἐναντίοι in the dialogue; in this way the dialogue comes to an end just as the becoming itself would do if one of the ἐναντία faded. This has relevant consequences on the ideal of self-knowledge and self-care outlined in the previous chapters. The dialogue is the place where self-knowledge and self-care become possible. *Aporia* is not a limit of the socratic dialogue; it is the ritual

and bigger and smaller, which are comparatives. In my opinion here Plato is drawing on a feature common to all these relationships: the need for a complementary. This common feature is shared by all the relationships which Socrates uses as examples. As a consequence, it is to keep in mind that, although the kind of relationships suggested by Socrates are different to each other, they share the same essential characteristics. Cf. Th. Ebert, 2001, pp. 214ff.

challenge which must be faced and overcome in order to improve oneself⁹⁸; accordingly, if one throughout one's lifetime always avoids *aporia*, it means that one always avoids the possibility to know oneself and consequently care for one's own condition (the true condition of one's own soul). Thus what must be avoided is not the *aporia* (it cannot and must not be avoided); actually the danger to avoid is that the discouragement provoked by the *aporia* an excuse to give up self-care. It is at avoiding this danger that the section said "against misology" is devoted.

The death of the speech. Μελέτη θανάτου as the art of killing and reviving the λόγος.

In 88c1 the action comes back to the overarching frame of the *Phaedo*, the conversation between Phaedo and Echecrates. The former tells that the objections moved by Simmias (the harmony/tuning theory) and Cebes to Socrates' arguments were so powerful as to plunge the bystander (and Phaedo himself) into distrust (εις ἀπιστίαν καταβαλεῖν) not only in the previous λόγοι, but also in the things which were still to be said (ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τὰ ὕστερον μέλλοντα ῥηθήσεσθαι)⁹⁹. Distrust is overwhelming; the danger rises that the participants starts to distrust not some λόγοι, but λόγοι themselves, so as to believe that nothing can be known and the effort itself to practice them is useless, since λόγοι lead us nowhere, This is a not yet explored scenario rising from the *aporia*, which is the moment when one experiences his own death (as the person one has been until that moment) and consequently *the death of the λόγοι one has of oneself*. Alcibiades is a young boy full of himself who thinks that he is much better than his fellow-citizens; Charmides is modest out of habit and at his uncle's mercy. Euthyphro thinks that he is holy and practices holiness; Crito is a decent man obsessed with reputation. Each of them has his own personality and also an idea of himself, of what a person should be like, of what deserves pursuit and what not. This idea of oneself has also a verbal side, the λόγος

⁹⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 20ff.

⁹⁹ The word λόγος is not easy to translate. It means reasoning, argument and speech and English has no word into which λόγος, as it is used in these lines, can be rendered; wherefore I have preferred to leave the Greek word.

one has of oneself, which comes to light when the interlocutors speak with Socrates. This λόγος is the verbal manifestation of what one thinks that one is, so that rejecting it means rejecting the personality itself of the bearer of this λόγος. Thus far two reactions to this death of one's own λόγοι are known: there are those, like Alcibiades, at least in the *Alcibiades*, who face and overcome the death of himself and his λόγος and commits to self-care and those, like Euthyphro, who run away annoyed. In the lines of the *Phaedo* a third reaction to the *aporia* and the death of the λόγος is outlined: there can be also those who, embittered by the unreliability of the λόγοι in which they have believed, decide to give up believing in any λόγος once and for all. This resentful scepticism cannot be the outcome wished by Socrates. Phaedo says:

That he had an answer ready was perhaps to be expected; but what astonished me more about him was, first, the pleasant, gentle, and respectful manner in which he listened to the young men's criticisms, secondly, his quick sense of the effect their words had upon us, and lastly, the skill with which he cured us (εἶ ἡμᾶς ἰάσατο) and, as it were, recalled us from our flight and defeat and made us face about and follow him and join in his examination of the argument (ὥσπερ πεφευγότας καὶ ἡττημένους ἀνεκαλέσατο καὶ προύτρεψεν πρὸς τὸ παρέπεσθαί τε καὶ συσκοπεῖν τὸν λόγον) (89a1-7).

Here Socrates appears as a healer as the verb ἰᾶσθαι suggests, a role, connected to Apollo, which he performs also in the *Charmides* and the *Alcibiades*¹⁰⁰. Furthermore, he exhorts the participants to keep their formation, just like a commander would exhort discouraged soldiers; but also in the *Euthydemus* Socrates appears to be an expert in exhorting, since he exhorts the young Cleinias to pursue virtue and philosophy. Socrates' attitude in the quoted lines shows that he does not fear that his arguments may be rejected; what he fears is that the will to reason together comes to an end. He says:

Tomorrow, perhaps, Phaedo, you will cut off this beautiful hair. I suppose so, Socrates, said I. Not if you take my advice. What shall I do then? I asked. You will cut it off today, and I will cut mine, if our λόγος dies (τελευτήσῃ) and we cannot bring it to life again (ἀναβιώσασθαι). (89b4-c1).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 105ff; 211-213; 403-405.

These lines show that it is not the death of the λόγος, but the fact that this death may have the last word that must be avoided. In the weave of the becoming life and death are intertwined by means of the transformations (dying and reviving) occurring between them and if one of them disappears, the whole dialogue of the becoming falls apart. Socrates is not concerned for one of his argument; in fact when an argument is unsound, it must be rejected. As said above, dying and reviving originate from two ἐναντία and it is only because these two ἐναντία stand before each other that these transformations are possible. Now if the analogy between the weave of the becoming and the dialogue is valid, the λόγος Socrates is concerned for is not a mere argument, *but the practice of dialogic communication itself, the communication proper of philosophy*. The λόγος Socrates speaks of is capable of τελεύτη and ἀναβιώσασθαι; if dying and reviving are transformations occurring between two ἐναντία, a λόγος capable of dying and reviving is a λόγος occurring between a couple, or more, of ἐναντία; it is not a merely solitary reasoning, an argument or a speech before an audience; *it is dialogic communication and it is for this kind of communication that for which the philosopher is concerned*. Therefore Socrates' warning against the misology can be considered the warning against the refusal of dialogic communication. From this point of view the comparison between misanthropy and misology is telling. Misanthropy, which is the consequence of the mistrust of human being, grows out of credulity; if it often happens one believes too easily and too much that someone is above suspicion and then one finds out that they do not deserve in the slightest such a trust, eventually that embittered mistrust which leads into misanthropy may rise (89d1-e3). To avoid credulity and mistrust, one should approach humans with *an art regarding human things* (89d5; e5); thanks to this art one understands, for instance, that the truly noble humans and the truly wicked ones are few, whereas the majority of them lies between these two extremes (90a1-2). Truly noble people exist; however they are not so easy to find, wherefore one must not too easily believe that one has such a luck. Accordingly, to avoid mistrust Socrates recommends not credulity, *but caution*; a prudent attitude to which an art concerning human things can lead. Socrates does not dwell upon this art; on the other hand one can imagine that he is not recommending a merely theoretical and bookish inquiry into human characters, which prepares to the

experience *before the experience*. On the contrary, the art concerning human being should be learned from the contact with real human beings and the experience of the complexity of human things. Therefore it is from approaching humans that one learns how to approach humans. Obviously if one wants to gain such an experience, disappointment cannot be avoided; it can always happen that one may be disappointed by humans, even by those whom one trusts the most. However the art concerning human things is aimed at avoiding disappointment only to some extent; in fact to avoid disappointment at all times, one should possess a flawless knowledge of every human being or know someone's nature before they start talking and acting. The art concerning human things provides not infallibility, but prudence and, one could add, courage; so even if one is disappointed, one does not sink into despair, since one knows that disappointment, even if not necessary, is nevertheless possible and one must be ready to face it when it occurs.

What concerns misology, it, just like misanthropy, grows out of credulity, when one believes too easily and too much that a certain λόγος is true and irrefutable, and then the same λόγος turns out to be false, even if sometimes it is not, and the same occurs for another λόγος and another again. One should approach λόγοι with an art concerning them, which, like the art concerning human things, cannot be a merely bookish inquiry into strategies of reasoning. Also the art concerning λόγοι is the result of the experience and through experience can be perfected. It involves examining true speeches of true people and replying to these speeches; as a consequence, it involves two people *standing before each other*¹⁰¹; it is dialogic communication, which, basing on the shared examination of what is said, accustoms to the caution about λόγοι. In fact a certain kind of λόγοι can lead into misology, just as a certain kind of humans can lead into misanthropy. They are the antilogic λόγοι, those practised by Euthydemus and Dionysodorus¹⁰²:

then you know, those men especially who have spent their time in disputation (περὶ τοὺς ἀντιλογικοὺς λόγους διατρίψαντες) come to believe that they are the wisest of

¹⁰¹ Or a single person standing before herself: cf. *Theaet.* 189e4-190a6; *Sophist.* 263e2-264a2.

Regarding thought as soul's dialogue with itself cf. L. Napolitano, 2018, pp. 292-301.

¹⁰² Cf. *supra*, pp. 43-45. Cf. G. Casertano, 2015, pp. 341-342.

men and that they alone have discovered that there is nothing sound or sure in anything, whether argument or anything else (οὔτε τῶν πραγμάτων οὐδενὸς οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς οὐδὲ βέβαιον οὔτε τῶν λόγων), but all things go up and down, like the tide in the Euripus, and nothing is stable for any length of time (90b9-c6).

The mention of the antilogic reasoning provides a further evidence that the misology does not endanger every kind of λόγος, but only the dialogic one. To make this point clearer, it is useful to make some remarks on misanthropy¹⁰³. The misanthrope not necessarily refrains from living among humans, like Alcestes in the *Misanthrope* of Molière. The misanthrope thinks that his/her like are worthless and nothing good can come from them; however this does not prevent him/her from living with them. He/she will use them to fulfil his/her pleasures and avert troubles which may affect him/her; but if others need him/her, he/will not care and it makes no difference to him/her if the other around him live or die. In the same way the misologist thinks that λόγοι are always unreliable and have nothing to teach. However this does not mean that the misologe gives up them; one can use λόγοι before an audience to persuade one's city to wage a reckless war for the sake of power or to seize the fortune of some of one's fellow-citizens. Others may use λόγοι as the antilogic do, for sake of prestige, unconcerned about the truth or the moral value of what they state or refute. As a consequence, one can be even very skilled in using λόγοι and nonetheless considering them worthless. The only kind of λόγος which no misologist can practice is the dialectic one, practiced by Socrates, since it is aimed at truth. In the dialogues Socrates' interlocutors discover the truth about themselves; they may discover that their skills do not live up to their ambitions (Alcibiades), that their obsession with reputation is at odds with what themselves agree on (Crito), that they have a role in society which they do not deserve (Euthyphro) and so on. Socratic dialogic communication makes possible to know oneself because it is aimed at truth. No misologist could practice this kind of communication; in fact if one thinks that λόγοι cannot convey truth about anything, it follows that also knowing oneself by means of λόγοι is impossible. As a

¹⁰³ Also Socrates, by means of the elenchus, leads interlocutors to contradiction; however, the aims pursued by Socrates are different from those pursued by the eristic way of reasoning. Cf. *supra*, 18ff.

consequence, the misologist cannot practice true dialogic communication, even if he can practice any other kind of λόγος¹⁰⁴. Thus, when Socrates warns the bystanders against misology, he is warning against giving up true dialogic communication, the only one which benefits its practitioners and the only one which the misologist cannot practice. The dialogic communication must be always kept alive and the impasses into which it falls must be overcome; on the contrary the single λόγοι occurring within it rise and fall, just as the dialogue between life and death persists, whereas the single living being comes to light and abandon it. Furthermore, just as dying is necessary in the “dialogue” between life and death, in the same way the *aporia* (the dying of the single λόγοι) is necessary in the wider picture of the dialogic communication. It is for this reason that Socrates, noticing that Simmias and Cebes are talking in a whisper, exhorts them to share what they are saying. Socrates must have understood that his arguments have not satisfied the two Thebans and exhorts them to move their objections (84c1-d3). True dialogic communication needs the death of the single λόγοι, whereas if one defends one’s own λόγοι so that one comes to silence other’s and one’s own doubts about their truth, one endangers the dialogic communication. This is what Socrates fears the most when he says that he risks acting not like a philosopher, but like the most ignorant who are interested only in victory (91a1-3). The only difference would be that Socrates is not interested in convincing others of his λόγος, but himself. This would be fatal for the dialogic communication; if Socrates’ aim were to convince himself of the immortality of soul, the entire dialogue would end up being Socrates’ attempt to persuade his interlocutors to say what he wants to hear. What is more important, he would prove that he does not accept death neither the biological one nor that of his λόγος. On the contrary, the true philosopher must be dauntless before both kinds of death.

What has been said further enlightens the relationship between μελέτη θανάτου and dialogue. It has been said above that the μελέτη θανάτου is not the mere denial

¹⁰⁴ Euthydemus and Dionysodorus may seem to practice dialectic because their reasoning is based on questioning and answering; however their is not true dialectic because it is not aimed at truth. This is the clear separation between eristic and dialectic, which it is important to distinguish because they seem to be so similar, if not the same thing.

of the embodied existence; it is practice *of transforming oneself*. One *dies* as a being mastered by momentary emotions and others' expectations in order to revive as a person able to stand before its emotions and have a dialectic exchange with the multiple instances of its soul. Therefore μελέτη θανάτου, intended as such a practice, is what makes possible the dialogue with oneself. However the need for such a transformation does not rise in the dialogue with oneself (this dialogue presupposes it), but in the dialogue with others, in particular with Socrates. By means of refutations, Socrates urges his interlocutors to face the *death* of their λόγοι, which is always the *death* of their self-image. If the interlocutors do not escape and face the *aporia* and the death of their λόγοι, and, what is the most important, decide to find a way out of the *aporia*, a way different from those which they know, then the interlocutors start undertaking the μελέτη θανάτου, the practice of one's own transformation. Furthermore, only who practice this transformation keeps throughout life the ability to improve and learn. Those, like Euthyphro, who are too bound to their λόγος and self-image, cannot remedy their own shortcomings, because they think that they do not have any. In this way they prevent themselves from improving themselves and doom themselves see what they think they are, *but not what they are*.

Socrates exhorts his interlocutors to undertake the μελέτη θανάτου; however in the dialogues analysed in the previous chapters Socrates never faces the dead-like experience of the *aporia*, or at least, not as violently as his interlocutor; this has been explained as the consequence of the difference between Socrates and his interlocutors¹⁰⁵; furthermore, as it has been said, Socrates does not fear *aporia*; actually it is Socrates himself who exhorts Simmias and Cebes to move their objections towards his arguments. A reason of Socrates' attitude to *aporia*, so different from that of his interlocutors, is that *aporia* for Socrates is something well known, and it could not be otherwise; in fact a person who claims to practice the μελέτη θανάτου, which, as it has been pointed out, is also the practice of abandoning one's own λόγος, if it is not true, necessarily must be familiar to the *aporia*, the feeling experienced when one sees what one has held for true and unobjectionable

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 155-157; 366-368.

fading and somehow dying. The *Phaedo* tells Socrates' *aporia*, when he was young and dealt with the inquiry into nature; it narrates Socrates' initiatic death¹⁰⁶, when he *kills* his previous λόγος and embraces a new one.

The recollection argument. Μελέτη θανάτου as learning to see the invisible.

The second argument, based on the theory of Ideas typical of the dialogues of the middle periode, may lead to believe that it is Plato who speaks in the *Phaedo* and Socrates is only an instrument which Plato uses to convey his own thought. However also in this section of the dialogue there are several elements which make it consistent with the idea of self-and other's care outlined in this work. In particular the theory of recollection is consistent with the general idea of μελέτη θανάτου, which, as the practice of transforming oneself and helping others to transform themselves, is the core of self-and others care. Interestingly it is not Socrates who on his own initiative puts forth the argument, but it is Cebes who mentions it, and Simmias, who does not remember how the argument is demonstrated, asks Socrates to explain it¹⁰⁷. It is hardly fortuitous that Cebes mentions the recollection argument and Simmias asks Socrates to recall it; both Simmias and Cebes, as close to Pythagoreanism, must have been particularly interested in an argument wherein memory plays an essential role¹⁰⁸; Simmias himself, who otherwise proves to be quite sceptical, displays an unshakable trust in the soundness of the theory of recollection¹⁰⁹. Socrates starts his argument by showing that recollection occurs

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *infra*, pp. 489.

¹⁰⁷ In 73a7-b2 Cebes summarises the argument. Interestingly Plato has Cebes allude to the recollection applied to geometry (*ibid.* b1), which recalls what happens in the *Meno* (80d5-86c2). Cf. L. Napolitano, 2007a, pp. 204-211.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 326-327. A. Cameron, 1939, argued that the Pythagoreanism of Vth century provided the main inspiration to Plato's theory of recollection. However it is not to forget that also in Orphism memory plays an essential role, so that it would be more reasonable to speak of Orphic/Pythagorean influences underlying the theory of recollection.

¹⁰⁹ Simmias' trust in it is so deep-rooted that he has no trouble rejecting the hypothesis of soul/harmony, when he understands that this hypothesis is inconsistent with the theory of recollection (92a4-c10).

when one, seeing or hearing or using any other perception, not only acquires the knowledge of the perceived object, but also comes to consider something different from what has been perceived (73c4-d1). Accordingly, a lover who perceives something related to his beloved, a lyre, a garment and so on, comes to think about his beloved (73d5-10). Recollection allows to link our experiences to each other, even if some contents of our experience are not physically present. This first case of recollection put forth by Socrates is not yet the *vertical* process which leads from the realities of the perceptible world to the intelligible one, but the *horizontal* process which links realities of the same world¹¹⁰. These two aspects of the recollection are two sides of a coin; however not all humans are able to practice recollection in its entirety; actually it can be said that the *horizontal* aspect of the recollection is shared by everyone, since everyone is able to link the contents of their experience, even if some of them are not present. On the contrary not all, but only a few are able to use the power of recollection in order to link not contents of the experience made in this world, but *the contents of the experience of this world and the experience of realities belonging to a different world*. The vertical recollection is proper only of some people, those, as we will see, who decide to practice the μελέτη θανάτου. It is arguable that Socrates has started from the *horizontal* aspect of the recollection because it is closer to everyday life and is known to everyone. Furthermore, by starting from the *horizontal* recollection, Socrates highlights a feature of it which is proper also (or in first place) of the *vertical* recollection: the ability to link something perceptible with something which is not. Thus the lover, seeing the lyre of the beloved thinks about the beloved, who is not present. What is more, the *Phaedo* itself is a great example of recollection; in fact Echecrates, encountering Phaedo, comes to think of Socrates; thus he asks

¹¹⁰ It has been pointed out that the first case of recollection recalls Hume's principle of association of ideas (T. Menkhaus, 2003, p. 67 n. 173). On the other hand that recollecting is both an *horizontal* and *vertical* process is to infer also from *Men.* 81c5-9, where it is said that soul has seen everything both in this world and in the other one. This argues for the existence of an *horizontal* aspect of the recollection, since soul, having seen everything in each world, is able not only to link the things of this world to the realities of the others, but also the things of this world to each other. Cf. F. Ferrari, 2016, pp. 200-202, n. 115;116.

Phaedo to tell him Socrates' words in his last hour. Socrates is not only not visible in that moment, but no more visible at all, since he is dead. Therefore the horizontal and vertical recollection share this feature: they allow to link the visible with the invisible, the perceptible with that which cannot be perceived. However, whereas the horizontal recollection works almost as an automatic power of soul, the vertical recollection is not automatic; it must be willingly chosen and practiced.

To show how the vertical recollection works Socrates dwells on the recollection triggered by like things (ἀφ' ὁμοίων)¹¹¹: for instance, one sees a portrait and remembers the portrayed person because one knows her. In the recollection triggered by like things one not only comes to think about that which is recalled by the experienced things, but experiences something further (ἄρ' οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον τόδε προσπάσχειν), that is to say one evaluates how like or not the experienced things are to that which has been recalled; accordingly if one looks at some paintings portraying the same person and one knows that person, one can also evaluate which painting portrays her the best and which the worst. Given that two things can be said about the person recalled by the paintings: 1) it is not only an independent reality, but also *criterion* by means of which the likeness of the paintings can be evaluated; 2) to evaluate the likeness of the paintings one must know the portrayed person before experiencing them; the criterion is not drawn by the perceived things, *but precedes the perception of them*¹¹². The same reasoning applies to the case of the

¹¹¹ Cf. J. L. Ackrill, 1973, pp. 177-195; Th. Ebert, 1994, pp. 35-39.

¹¹² I read these lines as a declaration of innatism: cf. D. Scott, 1995, pp. 16-17; *contra*, G. Casertano, 2015, pp. 317-318. For Plato Ideas are in first place entities not dependent on human mind, as the criticisms in *Parm.* 132b3-c11 against the interpretations of the Ideas as νοήματα. Cf. A. Graeser, 2003, p. 20. F. Ferrari, 2004, pp. 79-82. Nevertheless if our knowledge of the Ideas, albeit unaware, is inborn in our souls, it is not incorrect to say that Ideas somehow are *also, but not in the first place* thoughts of human minds. On the other hand, the conceptualistic view has had great influence on the history of Platonism considering that in the Platonism of second century the Ideas, in their paradigmatic and causal role, become thoughts, not of the human mind, but of a divine intellect. Obviously it is impossible to outline the *wirkungsgeschichte* of the theory of the Ideas in the Western philosophy within a footnote. However other two remarks can be made: 1) the fact that the memory of the Ideas is inborn, even if unaware, involves that Ideas are to some extent also thoughts of our mind and work as criteria of our experience; however if we compare the account of the recollection in the *Phaedo* to those of the *Meno* and the *Phaedrus*, we can notice that only the account of the

Equal, the example chosen by Socrates to explain the vertical aspect of the recollection; there are in the world several things equal to each other, a stone to a stone, wood to wood and so on (74a9-10). However, there is also something else besides these equal things (παρὰ ταῦτα πάντα ἕτερόν τι), a kind of equal the memory of which can be triggered by the equal things, but which is none of them; just as the memory of the portrayed person is triggered by the paintings, but the portrayed person is not a painting¹¹³. Furthermore, just like the person portrayed in the paintings, to be a criterion of perceived things the Equal must be possessed *before* that one sees or hears or perceives in any other way the empirical equal things (75b4-8); since as soon as one comes to the world one starts perceiving things and criteria must be in everyone *before* experiencing perceptible things, it follows that soul possesses these criteria *before* the birth (the embodiment) (75b10-c5). This reasoning does not apply only to the Equal, the Bigger (τὸ μείζον) and the Smaller (τὸ ἔλαττον), but also to the Just, to the Honorable, to the Holy and in general, says Socrates, “to all that into which we impress as a seal (ἐπισφραγιζόμεθα) the words *that itself which is* (τὸ αὐτὸ ὃ ἔστι) in our questions when we pose them and in our

Phaedo highlights the role of the Ideas as criteria of our experiences, whereas in the *Meno* this role of the Ideas is not highlighted and in the *Phaedrus*, albeit present, is less stressed than in the *Phaedo*. 2) In the modern Western philosophy the role of the Ideas as laws of the experience will be stressed by the Neo-criticism and in particular by Paul Natorp in his *Plato's Ideenslehre*.

¹¹³ The recollection leading from perceptible things to the Idea, as said above, is based on likeness. However it seems that Ideas must be also different from perceptible things. Accordingly Ideas and perceptible things must be both like and different. It is interesting to note how the later Platonists, such as Plotinus and Proclus, tried to go beyond the difficulties rising from the theory of participation by highlighting how different Ideas and material things are: cf. P. d’Hoine, A. Michalewski, 2015, pp. 173-191. Accordingly Ideas and material things must be similar insofar as the former are the paradigmatic origin of the latter. However they must be also different insofar as the former are eternal paradigmatic causes, whereas the latter are perishable things. Stressing also the difference between Ideas and material things is the only way to avoid the argument of the third man, the unavoidable consequence of an interpretation of the participation which stresses the only role of likeness: cf. C. d’Ancona Costa, 1992, pp. 69-113. Although Plato did not find the same solutions to the problem as the later Platonists, it is reasonable to think that he, even before the lines of the *Parmenides* concerning the third man, may have had understood the difficulties rising from taking into account only likeness in the relationship between Ideas and material things

answers when we give them (ἐν ταῖς ἐρωτήσεσιν ἐρωτῶντες καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἀποκρίσεσιν ἀποκρινόμενοι) (75c10-d3)”¹¹⁴. Humans come to the world endowed with knowledges acquired before the embodiment; as a consequence soul must exist before comes to the world in a human form (76c11-13). However humans are unaware of these knowledges; they do not know that they possess them; otherwise everyone should be able to give account of them (76b8-9). Instead experience show that humans cannot give account on their own of the inborn knowledges; they come to the world endowed with inborn knowledges, *but not with the awareness that they have them*; this awareness must be obtained throughout lifetime. At this point it is possible to show how the account of recollection and the issue of care are linked with each other. First of all both the recollection and self and other care share an essential feature: the foundational role played by self-knowledge. The case of the Equal suggests that humans unconsciously use it as a criterion, which works like a Kantian apriori¹¹⁵. Thus, when one finds out that behind one’s own experience of the equal things lies an Equal already possessed before experiencing equal things, one has also found out something important about oneself; that is to say, one finds out that one comes to the world endowed with inborn knowledges. As a consequence recollecting involves knowing oneself and the more one practices recollection, the more one practices self-knowledge as becoming aware of unknown aspects of oneself. On the other hand, this becoming aware of what lies concealed in soul can be compared to that movement from the several actions carried out in

¹¹⁴ The participle ἐρωτῶντες and ἀποκρινόμενοι refer to the dialectic procedure as art of answering and questioning (*Crat.* 390c9; *Men.* 75d5-7). Socrates is saying that dialectic deals with that itself which is (the Ideas) as it is said in *Resp.* VII 534b2-3. It is noteworthy that, even if the Ideas plays an essential role in the theory of recollection, nowhere in the dialogue Socrates takes the time to demonstrate or at least to argue for their existence; they are assumed as the unshakable foundation of the entire argument and their existence is simply taken for granted: cf. E Heitsch, 1979, p. 5. Interestingly it is Simmias himself, who otherwise seems to be sceptical, who agrees on the existence of the Ideas, as if it had been irrefutably proven (76e8-77a5). On the other hand, that an interlocutor close to the Pythagoreanism so readily agrees on the existence of the Ideas may be not fortuitous; for the relationship between Pythagoreanism and the theory of Ideas cf. Th. Ebert, 1994; 2004, *passim*

¹¹⁵ Cf. *supra*, note 112.

everyday life to their one foundation in soul; just as a person practicing recollection shifts the focus from the many equal things to the Equal lying behind the experience of them, in the same way to practice self-care one must move from one's own actions and visible behaviour to the origin of them lying in one's own soul¹¹⁶. As a consequence, the recollection, as a movement from the multiple perceived things to the foundation of experience in soul is also a movement from the visible (the multiple perceived things) to the invisible (the world of soul); as such a movement, recollection is an essential aspect of the μελέτη θανάτου, which, as a transformation of one's own attitude, is the transition from a way of thinking according to which body and bodies are the only reality which exists and matters (the attitude of the φιλοσώματος) to an attitude according to which the visible (bodies) is not the only existing reality and there is something else, invisible (Ideas and soul) which explains and, in the case of the Ideas, causes the perceived things to be what they are. What is more, just like the practice of self and others' care, also recollection needs dialogic communication, as Cebes' words suggest and the case of the slave of the Meno shows¹¹⁷. Also recollection, occurring by means of dialectic, is a part of that practice of standing before oneself in which the μελέτη θανάτου consists; by means of the recollection, which is an exercise of self-knowledge, one comes to find oneself before oneself; one faces the deepest root of one's own soul that which connects humans to the realm of the invisible realities. However, as said above, this kind of self-knowledge is not something which everyone is able to practice; in first place, recollection needs the dialectic procedure; this means that to recollect one needs an interlocutor who masters the dialectic procedure (Socrates or someone like him). Secondly, even if one finds such an interlocutor, this does not mean that one will be willing to follow him wherever he may go. Recollecting is a movement from the visible to the invisible; it is a kind of death, or, more exactly, recollection is the cognitive side of death intended as soul's separation from bodily conditionings¹¹⁸. A man like the *philosomatos* may deny that there is something lying behind the visible world which explains human knowledge, just as he may deny that there is

¹¹⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 118-119; Chapter IV, pp. 235-236, note 18.

¹¹⁷ Cf. F. Ferrari, 2016, pp. 53-67.

¹¹⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 152ff.

something more important than fulfilling one's longings for bodily things (money, sexual partners, power over one's fellow-citizens and so on). Accepting the cognitive side of the μελέτη θανάτου cannot be detached from accepting its ethical consequences; accordingly, it is not possible to be *philosomatos* in everyday life and *philosophos* in reasoning, so that the cognitive and ethical sides of the μελέτη θανάτου are two faces of a coin.

Before exhorting others people to undertake the transition from the visible to the invisible also Socrates carried out the same transformation and experienced the same dead-like experience into which he leads his interlocutors¹¹⁹. This aporetic experience occurs following his inquiry into natural philosophy, which turns out to be unable to answer to Socrates' questions. However, this transition is not a renounce to the world of perceptible things, but a renounce to a way of thinking; that which is consistent with what has been said about the μελέτη θανάτου. Just as the μελέτη θανάτου is not the mere renounce to pleasures, but a transformation of the way of considering and experiencing them (not as aims themselves), in the same way the μελέτη θανάτου is not the mere renounce to the physical world or the condemnation of it as a source of deception, *but the transformation of the way of considering and experiencing it* (not as something autonomous and reducible to the working of mechanistic laws, but as something the causes of which lay in a different level of reality). As it will be seen, this transformation of the way of considering the physical world is linked with the issue of self and others care, intended as the shifting focus from the multiple, different actions and words of the everyday life (the *visible*) to the true cause of them, the condition of one's soul (the *invisible*).

¹¹⁹ Recollection is the form that this transition takes in the *Phaedo*; but such a transition from the world of perceptible things to the world of the invisible (soul) is present also in other dialogues, such as the *Alcibiades* and the *Charmides*. Therefore what changes in the *Phaedo* is not the presence of this transition, but that this transition is linked with the theory of the Ideas, which in the dialogues thus far analysed is not present, or at least not stated as explicitly as in the *Phaedo*. For the presence of the Ideas in the *Euthyphro* cf. Chapter V, note 22.

Beyond the inquiry into nature: the aporia of Socrates

Before replying to Cebes' objection (87a1-88b8) Socrates recounts his past experience with the inquiry into nature and the disappointing outcome to which this inquiry has led him. According to Cebes' objection to Socrates' arguments on soul, what always is left unsubstantiated is the immortality of soul. Cebes disagrees not that soul exists before the human body which it ensouls (87a1-5); he does not even disagree that soul can outlive body; What Cebes rightly points out is that, even if soul outlives body, this does not mean that soul is immortal. Soul could be like an old weaver, who has worn numerous dresses and now has come to the end of his life (87b2-5). This weaver exists before the garments he wears and carries on existing after a lot of them; however even the weaver will die and when it happen, it will have passed away before the garments he was wearing in his last hour. The weaver is more long-lived (πολυχρονιότερον) than his dresses; nevertheless he will die (87c5-d3). In the same way as the weaver, also soul can exist before the bodies it ensouls and after their deterioration; however, this does not mean that it will be able to do it forever: just like the weaver, the soul, after having worn (ensouled) numerous bodies throughout its life, at a certain point will perish (87d7-e5). Therefore soul, like the weaver, is something more long-lived and enduring than what it wears (bodies) and despite this doomed to pass away. After summarising Cebes' objection (95c4-e3), Socrates recognises that Cebes' remarks on his arguments make necessary to face the inquiry into the cause of birth and deterioration (ὅλως γὰρ δεῖ περὶ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς τὴν αἰτίαν διαπραγματεύσασθαι, 95e9-96a1): that is to say the inquiry into nature, with which Socrates himself dealt when he was young (96a6-8), maybe when he was as young as Simmias and Cebes. Socrates may have realised that Cebes and Simmias' objections grow out of the longing for the knowledge of natural processes which had inflamed him¹²⁰. However, this inquiry, as Socrates will show, turns out to be

¹²⁰ Simmias' objection concern the theory of the soul/harmony. The intellectual biography of Socrates has a great importance within this chapter and this thesis in its entirety because it shows the aporetic phase into which Socrates himself fell when he was young; determining whether this *Bildungsroman* of Socrates (cf. S. Scolnicov, 1992, p. 38) is historically reliable (G. Cerri, 2003, pp. 51-62) or is only a fictional device (Th. Ebert, 2004, p. 349) is not the aim of this section.

disappointing; the natural inquiry, in particular that started with Anaxagoras, tends to reduce reality to the working of mechanistic laws and in this way it does not even answer to the questions to which it claims to be able to find solution. Socrates seems to want to warn Simmias and Cebes against the dangers of the reductionism of the naturalistic knowledge; wherefore one can find in the *Phaedo* not only a warning against misology, but also *a warning against physiology*. However, there is a difference between misology and physiology: misology is always something to avoid; physiology is not itself despicable; but if one comes to think that there is nothing which cannot be explained by the naturalistic approach to the phenomena, one may become haughty supposing that one has acquired an unobjectionable and total knowledge of everything. Accordingly, physiology is not itself dangerous, *but can be dangerous*, and haughtiness is the main danger to which it leads if not practiced in the proper way. Socrates himself acknowledges that the wisdom which discloses the causes of everything, of birth, perishing and existence (διὰ τί γίγνεται ἕκαστον καὶ διὰ τί ἀπόλλυται καὶ διὰ τί ἔστι, 96a9-10) is a magnificent one¹²¹. Socrates himself claims to have spent his time dealing with some of the issues raised by the inquiry into nature, such as the role of the warm and the cold in the development of living beings¹²²; furthermore he was interested also in the naturalistic explanation of the working of human knowledge (96b3-8)¹²³. However in the end Socrates had to acknowledge that he was not gifted in the slightest at this kind of inquiry (96c1-2). Nevertheless the time spent in trying to acquiring it (and it must have been not few) has not been useless, since the inquiry into nature has led him into *aporia*. In fact he admits that he was so blinded by this inquiry that he

¹²¹ The word “magnificent” renders the Greek ὑπερήφανος. The Greek adjective means “magnificent”, but it means also “haughty, full of himself”. This ambiguity can be hardly considered fortuitous; on the contrary, the adjective ὑπερήφανος implicitly alludes to the dark side of the naturalistic knowledge. It is magnificent and majestic because of the importance of the issues with which it deals; however, it can be also “haughty” and “full of itself” because it may lead to haughtiness its least sensible practitioners.

¹²²Cf. DK12 A10; DK31 B62; B73.

¹²³ Famous was Alcmeon’s research on this subject: cf. DK24 A5. Regarding the connection between the studies on brain underlying Alcmaeon’s fragment and Anaxagoras cf. D. Lanza, 1966, pp. 71-78.

unlearnt even the things which he believed that he knew¹²⁴. The *aporia* into which Socrates falls is so powerful that he does not believe any more in any of the things he has held for true, for instance that a man is taller than another man because of his head (ἀὐτῇ τῇ κεφαλῇ, 96e1) or the ten is bigger than the eight because of the addition of the two (τὸ δύο αὐτοῖς προσεῖναι, 96e2). Socrates has come so far in the *aporia* triggered by the naturalistic inquiry into phenomena that he does not believe anymore that physical and perceptible processes are the true causes of beings. The case of the two is telling; in fact the two (a group made up of two units) can rise when a unit is added to another unit; on the other hand, the two rises also when an original unit is divided into two parts. Socrates tells that he could not believe that division and addition were the true causes of the two (97a5-7); addition and division are contrary to each other, so that the same outcome (the two) would occur out of contrary processes. Socrates does not know anything anymore, not even how the one rises and why it perishes (97b3-6); in the end he tells that he cannot persuade that he knows anything, neither the cause of its coming to the world nor of its passing away. However the reason of this loss of certitude, says Socrates, is the kind of method (κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον τῆς μεθόδου) he had followed thus far (the naturalistic approach). Therefore one must use another method, one which can lead beyond this loss of certitudes, one which Socrates himself is creating (ἀλλὰ τιν' ἄλλον τρόπον αὐτὸς εἰκῆ φύρω). Several elements tell the reader that the experience lived by Socrates is an *aporia*. First of all the *aporia* is not a merely momentary doubt about a particular issue, but a *condition of loss of certitudes which extends to the past*; in fact Socrates has *unlearnt* what he has held to be true before. Secondly in the rising of the *aporia* the contradictions occurring in the experience play an essential role; Socrates wonders how it is possible that a same result (the two) originates from opposite processes. Noticing that there are contradictions in the experience leads to question its value; however contradiction is somehow the engine of the progress, since it urges to reawaken powers of soul not used in

¹²⁴ Socrates mentions the example of growth, which, as he believed, occurs when the substances contained in the food and in the drinks are added to (προσγένωνται) the corresponding parts of the body, flesh to flesh, bones to bones and so on (96c8-d6). Socrates is alluding to Anaxagoras' explanation of growth (DK59 B10).

everyday life¹²⁵. Thirdly, Socrates is unable to convince himself that he knows anything. On the other hand this means that he has decided to face the *aporia*; only those who decide to face it acknowledge their ignorance, whereas those who fear it attempt to remove this feeling. That the naturalistic method has led Socrates into *aporia* does not mean that it is harmful; actually it has played a useful role in Socrates' life. *Aporia*, as said above, must be neither avoided nor concealed; it must be faced, because only the one who faces it and tries to find a way out of the absence of known paths becomes able to care for oneself. Furthermore the *aporia* experienced by Socrates has been his baptism of fire in the μελέτη θανάτου. The μελέτη θανάτου is the practice of transforming oneself and, as a consequence, the practice of *letting die* those λογόι which hinder the transformation¹²⁶. By accepting the *aporia* Socrates has undertaken the μελέτη θανάτου, he has decided to die as a young physicist in order to revive as a new person; on the contrary, if he had never fallen into *aporia* and had always been satisfied with the naturalistic method, he would have never had to face the loss of certitudes and would never have become the Socrates practitioner of the μελέτη θανάτου. He faces his *aporia* and tries to find a way out of it; this way out is suggested by a thinker of Clazomene.

Beyond the inquiry into nature: Anaxagoras and the turn to λόγοι.

A lot has been said and written about the words which Plato has his Socrates say about the role of the νοῦς in Anaxagoras' thought as well as Socrates' disappointment when he noticed that Anaxagoras' νοῦς has nothing to do with a beneficial mind which arranges everything teleologically¹²⁷. It is not the aim of this chapter to wonder how close to the historicity of Anaxagoras' philosophy Socrates' judgement is; such an inquiry belongs more to the study on preplatonic philosophy

¹²⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 19ff; 66-68.

¹²⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 475ff.

¹²⁷ Aristotle says that Anaxagoras' νοῦς arranges the world καλῶς, in a beautiful way: cf. *De An.* 404b1-3. This could mean that it should be not true that Anaxagoras' νοῦς does not arrange the world teleologically. Regarding Anaxagoras' νοῦς and its role in the universe cf. K. Von Fritz, 1964, pp. 87-102; J. W. Carter, 2019, pp. 1-28; D. Lanza, 2022, pp. 148-188.

than to a work on Socratic care in Plato's dialogues. Furthermore, to understand how also these lines of the *Phaedo* are linked with the ideal of Socratic care, it is more useful to focus on that which Socrates expected from Anaxagoras than wonder if his disappointment is historically founded or not. Interestingly Socrates was so enthusiastic about Anaxagoras' νοῦς because he thought that a mind which causes everything to be and orders everything arranges the universe in such a way as everything exists in the best condition:

I was pleased with this theory of cause, and it seemed to me to be somehow right that the mind should be the cause of all things, and I thought, 'If this is so, the mind in arranging things arranges everything and establishes each thing as it is best for it to be (ἕκαστον τιθέναι ταύτη ὅπη ἂν βέλτιστα ἔχη). So if anyone wishes to find the cause of the generation or destruction or existence of a particular thing, he must find out what sort of existence, or passive state of any kind, or activity is best for it (ὅπη βέλτιστον αὐτῷ ἐστὶν ἢ εἶναι ἢ ἄλλο ὅτιοῦν πάσχειν ἢ ποιεῖν). And therefore in respect to that particular thing, and other things too, a man need examine nothing but what is best and most excellent (ἀλλ' ἢ τὸ ἄριστον καὶ τὸ βέλτιστον); for then he will necessarily know also what is inferior, since the science of both is the same. As I considered these things I was delighted to think that I had found in Anaxagoras a teacher of the cause of things quite to my mind, and I thought he would tell me whether the earth is flat or round, and when he had told me that, would go on to explain the cause and the necessity of it, and would tell me the nature of the best and why it is best for the earth to be as it is (λέγοντα τὸ ἄμεινον καὶ ὅτι αὐτὴν ἄμεινον ἦν τοιαύτην εἶναι); and if he said the earth was in the center, he would proceed to show that it is best for it to be in the center; and I had made up my mind that if he made those things clear to me, I would no longer yearn for any other kind of cause (97c2-98a2).

As every reader of the *Phaedo* knows, Socrates' expectations were disappointed, since in Anaxagoras' works he did find nothing but a mechanistic explanation of the phenomena as the following lines (98c3-99a9) lead to infer. However, as said above, it is not the aim of this chapter to wonder if Socrates' evaluation of Anaxagoras is founded or not; what is interesting to our analysis is Socrates' expectation on Anaxagoras' νοῦς. In Socrates' expectations Anaxagoras' νοῦς is not a mere moving cause, to say it in Aristotle's terms, but a cause which makes everything exist in the best condition. This makes Anaxagoras' νοῦς in Socrates'

expectations similar to those beneficial and wise gods on which Socrates' theology is based; as said in the chapter on the *Euthyphro*, gods are assisted by pious humans in accomplishing and preserving the best condition of the universe¹²⁸; in the same way beneficial beings are the gods of the *Republic* and in particular the craftman of the *Timaeus*, who provides the good to all which is devoid thereof¹²⁹. What is more, aiming at leading a thing to its best condition means caring for it, so that the relationship between gods and universe is based on care. In fact to βέλτιστον is the aim of the arts in the *Gorgias*, which are said to be θεραπεῖαι (forms of care)¹³⁰; the βέλτιστον is also the aim of the Socratic care since Socrates helps his interlocutors and his fellow-citizens become as good as possible¹³¹. Accordingly, Socrates thinks that Anaxagoras' νοῦς cares for the universe. Socrates' expectation, even if disappointed, is telling; Socrates starts reading Anaxagoras' writings because he thinks that he has found a way out of the *aporia* into which the inquiry into nature had plunged him. However what in Anaxagoras could help Socrates to find a way out of the *aporia* was the presence of a cause which works according to the criterion of the βέλτιστον; therefore it has been the idea of *care*, of a principle which is also cause of the βέλτιστον, which helped Socrates move his first step out of the *aporia*. Such an explanation is lacking in Anaxagoras and, as the reader can infer, in the thought of any other physicist, none of whom has ascribed the proper importance to the good (τὸ ἀγαθόν) as true causes of the processes occurring in the universe (99c1-6). Socrates starts his transformation: he dies as a young man who searching for the causes of things following the mechanistic approach of the physicist and revives as a man who considers the world the outcome of the care for it. It is interesting to note that, although Anaxagoras' philosophy disappointed him, Socrates does not fall into a new *aporia*, as when he gave up the naturalistic approach of the inquiry into nature; this time he does not give up the way he has found, although Anaxagoras does not provide the answers he seeks; actually he is so persuaded that the approach to the phenomena based on the inquiry into the

¹²⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 320ff.

¹²⁹ Cf. Chapter V, note 88.

¹³⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 398-399.

¹³¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 57ff; 96-98; 195; 221; 286-287; 391ff.

βέλτιστον is right that he claims to be willing to follow anyone who can teach him about such a cause (99c7-8). The transition from an approach to phenomena based on mechanistic processes to an approach based on *care* (the inquiry into the βέλτιστον) is irreversible; the mechanistic laws of the phenomena are not erased, but change their role¹³². They are no more true causes, but means without which true causes cannot work in the physical world; accordingly Socrates does not sit in his jail because of the structure of his body, but if his body were not structured in a certain way, he could not sit in the jail. Likewise one does not talk because of the movements of one's mouth; however if one could not carry out these movements, one could not talk even if one wanted¹³³. However it may be Socrates' transformation cannot be undone; the second navigation starts (99c9-d1), which is not a mere change in the approach to phenomena. The transformation to a worldview based on mechanistic processes as true causes to a another one according to which the true cause of everything is the βέλτιστον is a radical transformation of the way of thinking; this transformation of the way of thinking involves also a transformation of the means of the inquiry and, consequently, a transformation of the way of communicating. The new worldview involves a way of reasoning and communicating different from those typical of the physicist; a way of reasoning and communicating appropriate for a worldview based on the idea of care¹³⁴.

Beyond the inquiry into nature: the dialectic turn.

Socrates new method of inquiry into the causes, based on the inquiry into the βέλτιστον and the good, involves an escape in the λόγοι by means of which he will investigate the truth of Beings (ἔδοξε δὴ μοι χρῆναι εἰς τοὺς λόγους καταφυγόντα

¹³² This is consistent with the ideal of μελέτη θανάτου, which is not the mere removal from life of the everyday experience, but the transformation of its meaning. In the same way the μελέτη θανάτου faced by Socrates leads him not to get the rid of the mechanistic process of nature, but to ascribe to them a role quite different from that ascribed to them by the physicists (not causes, but necessary means of the true causes).

¹³³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 457-458.

¹³⁴ This new way of communicating and reasoning is the dialectic method.

ἐν ἐκείνοις σκοπεῖν τῶν ὄντων τὴν ἀλήθειαν, 99e4-6). According to Socrates comparison of the λόγοι to the water reflecting the sun (99d7-e1) λόγοι are a sort of screen which prevents our senses from being blinded by truth. Truth can blind because, like the sun, it is too bright to our bodily vision. That truth is something bright is an allusion to the Ideas, to the brightness of which Socrates alludes in the *Parmenides*, where he uses as example the light of the day in order to explain how he intends the participation (131b3-6). However Socrates himself admits that the comparison is not sound (99e6-a1). The sun reflected by the water is a meager image of the true sun, whereas the truth reflected by the λόγοι should not be a meager image of the true itself; λόγοι are not such screens; on the contrary they are verbal image which enable to get closer to object which are out of our senses' reach and we cannot grasp directly¹³⁵. Given that, λόγοι are not a deficient screen, but a powerful one. According to Socrates' new method, the foundation of any other reasoning must be that λόγος which turns out to be the steadiest (ἐρρωμενέστατον), so that it must be also the criterion according to which truth and falsehood of any other reasoning is evaluated (100a5-7). Socrates decides to show how this method works; furthermore, showing the working of the method, he replies to Cebes'

¹³⁵ The diversion to images is appreciable in *Leg. X*, 898d8-e2, where it is said that, to understand the nature of νοῦς, it is not possible to grasp it directly; instead, it is necessary to turn to the proper image of it, the movement. A telling example of diversion is *Men.* 87b2-6, where Socrates suggest that he and Meno should use the hypothetic method of the γεόμετραι who, to resolve a problem, do not face it directly, but deal with it from an other start point (86e4-87b2): accordingly, to know what virtue is, Socrates and Meno do not face directly the nature of virtue, but try to grasp it starting from a different startpoint: the inquiry whether virtue is teachable or not (for the comparison between this passage of the *Meno* and the lines of the *Phaedo* on the escape into λόγοι cf. R. S. Bluck, 1957, pp. 21-31; C. Chiesa, 2011, pp. 75-93). On the other hand, it is reasonable that the ability to turn to λόγοι in order to create proper images of things and the hypothetic method of γεόμετραι are comparable: in fact the hypothetic method belongs to λογίζεσθαι (calculating) and both the λόγοι of the dialectic and the λογίζεσθαι of mathematics are forms of discursive knowledge, that knowledge which unfolds through consecutive passages. It is reasonable to say that, to grasp directly truth without any mediation, one should possess a steady and always available noetic knowledge: however, since no human (not even the philosopher) possesses such a knowledge in an indefectible way, it is necessary to turn to the λόγοι. In any case, noetic knowledge and discursive knowledge do not exclude each other: cf. *supra*, note 35.

objection to the immortality of soul¹³⁶. As said above, λόγοι are a screen which allows to get closer to a certain kind of realities, the Ideas, the kind of cause with which Socrates has started dealing after his experience with the mechanistic approach of the physicists. Since Socrates has abandoned the previous worldview in the name of one according to which universe is something cared, it follows that there is a link between the theory of the Ideas and care; a link which in the *Phaedo* is only hinted at, whereas it is more appreciable in the *Timaeus* for instance, wherein the Craftman benefits the universe by making it as similar as possible to the eidetic paradigm (30c2-31a1). The Ideas are not only criteria of knowledge and causes of beings; they are also their βέλτιστον and this is particularly appreciable in the case of Ideas such as Beauty, Holiness, Justice and so on; they are not only criteria or causes, they are that βέλτιστον to which humans should tend in order to improve themselves and be as good as possible, which is the aim of the self-care. Given that, let us come back to Socrates' new method shown to Cebes; as said above, it is necessary to find a steady foundation of the reasoning; this steady foundation is the existence of the Ideas (100b3-7), which is never demonstrated throughout the dialogue, but always readily assumed by Simmias and in this case by Cebes (100c1-2)¹³⁷. According to Socrates, participation is the kind of relationship which connects perceived things to the Ideas, so that a beautiful thing for instance is beautiful for no other reason but its participation to the Beautiful itself (100c2-7); however Socrates himself says few lines below that he does not want to insist on this issue, if this relationship is a form of participation, a presence (παρουσία *scil.* of the Ideas in the perceptible things) or a kind of connection (κοινωνία) (100d2-7). However it may be, what matters and seems to Socrates to be the surest thing to answer to himself and others as well is that beautiful things are beautiful because of the Beautiful (100d7-e3). Also on the causal role of the Ideas Cebes cannot help but agree, just as he has agreed on their existence. Following Socrates' new method, one is led to state that it is not true that a man is taller or shorter than another man because of the head, as Socrates himself believed when he dedicated himself to the

¹³⁶ *Scil.* the weaver argument. Cf. *supra*, p. 489

¹³⁷ Cf. *supra*, note 114.

inquiry into nature before falling into the *aporia*¹³⁸; instead one must state that the bigger (μείζον, a group of which also the taller man is part) is bigger for no reason but bigness (μεγέθει)¹³⁹. In the same way the smaller (τὸ δὲ ἔλαττον, the group of which the short man is part) is smaller for no reason but smallness (συμκρότητι) (101a1-b2). According to his new method and contrary to what he held for true before his falling into *aporia*, Socrates says that if Cebes wanted to explain the cause of the two, he should not draw on the addition of two units or the division of one unit into two parts (101b4-c3): according to 99b2-6, addition and division are not true causes, but only mechanistic processes without which true causes could not work in the realm of perceptible things. As a consequence, if one has to say the true causes of being two, one must say that it is because of the participation in duality (τὴν τῆς δυάδος μετάσχεσιν, 101c5) just as the participation in unity is the cause of what will be one (καὶ μονάδος ὃ ἂν μέλλῃ ἐν ἔσεσθαι, 101c6-7)¹⁴⁰.

At the end of the previous paragraph it has been said that Socrates, along with his new worldview, starts practicing a way of communicating and reasoning suitable for it. This new way consists in the escape in the λόγοι. It has been said that these λόγοι are a sort of powerful screen, a means to inquire into realities (the ideas) which are out of our senses' reach; however nothing has been said about the nature of these λόγοι. Also Anaxagoras' books are λόγοι, more exactly written λόγοι; yet, they are not the kind of λόγοι on which Socrates' new method is based; Anaxagoras' λόγοι are treatises which can be only read (at least for Socrates, who does not know their author), whereas it are the dialectic λόγοι which found Socrates' new method. This can be inferred from what Socrates says about the hypothesis of the Ideas. Their existence and the participation in them is the steadiest of the foundations; however, if one had to give account (διδόναι λόγον) of this foundation, one should draw on a new one which could found it (101e5-8). The διδόναι λόγον is an essential

¹³⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 489ff.

¹³⁹ The substantive greatness, used by Fowler, is too ethically loaded to be suitable to render what Plato means in these lines. As it is clear from the case of the taller man, the substantive μέγεθος has to do with measurement and size.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. G. Casertano, 2015, pp. 363-369.

part of the dialectic method, founded on dialogic communication¹⁴¹. Anaxagoras' λόγοι cannot give account to their reader, if the reading of them raises questions which Anaxagoras had not come yet to pose to himself; whereas requiring and giving account is always possible during a dialectic exchange. Furthermore, the quarrelsome reference to the ἀντιλογικοί suggests that Socrates' escape into λόγοι is but an escape in the dialectic method. The ἀντιλογικοί do not provide foundation to their λόγοι and as a consequence cannot give account of them; on the contrary, each participant in a dialectic exchange can require account of others' statements and must give account of their own. The way of reasoning and communicating of the ἀντιλογικοί is wrong and one of the main causes (but also one of the main consequences) of misology¹⁴². On the contrary the λόγοι in which Socrates has escaped display the same features as that art of λόγοι which removes misology and is not but dialectic¹⁴³. Socrates delved into Anaxagoras' works because he thought that he would find in them the explanation of everything; thus he himself displayed that readiness to trust which, if disappointed, may lead into misology¹⁴⁴. Instead the new method practiced by Socrates removes credulity and, as a consequence, the causes of misology. First of all the foundation of reasoning must not be enthusiastically and recklessly assumed; on the contrary, to be assumed, this foundation must have been considered the steadiest, and one must be able to give account of its steadiness to those who think that it is not sound¹⁴⁵. Furthermore, assuming such a foundation is not enough; in fact it is necessary to examine also the consequences originating from the assumption of it. To sum up, the escape in λόγοι leads to that cautious attitude towards speeches and reasoning typical of the art of λόγοι, that is to say, the dialectic method. Socrates shows to Cebes his new method (100a7-8); what follows is a dialectic exchange, based on posing questions

¹⁴¹ This λόγον διδόναι is addressed not only to others but also to oneself; in fact also the individual soul has to justify before itself what it holds to be true: cf. *supra*, note 82.

¹⁴² Cf. *supra*, pp. 477ff.

¹⁴³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 478.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 476-477.

¹⁴⁵ The steadiest of foundation, the existence of the Ideas and the participation of perceptible things to them is readily assumed by Cebes and Simmias; however, one should suppose that, if they had not so readily assumed it, Socrates would have given account of it to his interlocutors.

and answering, so that Socrates does not provide a mere description of his method; he shows its working to Cebes by practicing it before him and *with him*. As said above, the new worldview involves a new way of reasoning and of communicating; when Socrates believed that physicists would unveil the truth of everything, he learnt from books and delved into solitary reading of them. After his worldview changes, he starts practicing dialectic method, based on dialogic communication and it is not fortuitous that the dialectic method matches a worldview according to which knowing the cause of each thing means knowing what is best for them, that is to say a worldview based on the ideal of *care*. As remarked in the dialogues analysed thus far, the dialectic, based on dialogic communication, is the way of reasoning and communicating typical of self- and others' care; that way of reasoning and communicating which allows to know the condition of one's own soul and the best for it and help accomplish it; dialectic appears to be the way of reasoning and communicating suitable for the inquiry into the βέλτιστον, not only the βέλτιστον for the souls of the participants in the dialogue, but also the βέλτιστον underlying the events of the physical world. The lines of the *Phaedo* concerning Socrates' new method of inquiry into causes, just like those concerning the recollection, may appear the least Socratic passages of the dialogue, since they are based on the assumption of the existence of the Ideas and the participation, an assumption considered Platonic and not Socratic. However, as said above, the fact that a theory or a statement is not to trace back to the historical Socrates does not mean that that theory or that statement are anti-Socratic¹⁴⁶; Therefore Plato, devising a philosophy of nature grounded in metaphysical principles, conceives a method of inquiry into the causes of the physical world based on dialectic and the role of the βέλτιστον, the same features on which also self- and others' *care* is founded¹⁴⁷; Socrates may not have conceived such a method of inquiry into causes; yet, it is nonetheless consistent with the ideal of *care* outlined in the examined dialogues.

146 Cf. *supra*, p. 277. Cf. G. Giannantoni, 2005, pp. 313-347.

147 Regarding the role of nature in Plato's philosophy and the neoplatonic reception of Plato's philosophy of nature Cf. R. Chiaradonna, 2009; 2015; pp. 155-171; J. Wilberding, Chr. Horn, 2012; D. Koch *et al.*, 2019;

In the lines devoted to his new method Socrates lays the groundwork to the fourth argument on the immortality of soul. Before facing this argument it is necessary to deal with the third one, first of all because implicit assumption underlying the third argument, assumptions which lay behind also the fourth one; secondly because in the third argument Socrates highlights the role of μελέτη in the philosophical lifestyle, that is to say the effort to keep alive what matters¹⁴⁸. It has been said that Socrates' new worldview is not a merely theoretical change of approach to the physical world; it has a relevant bearing on Socrates' life since this new worldview involves a new way of reasoning and communicating, the dialectic method. Socrates' transformation is both theoretical and practical; inasmuch as it is also practical, it must be implemented every day of life. Accordingly as a practical choice, and not a merely theoretical issue, the dialectic method must be practiced throughout life; it needs to be accompanied by μελέτη, the effort to keep alive the important things. It is μελέτη which is the core of the third argument, an argument that for this reason makes the reader realise the usefulness of the *Phaedo* for the understanding of Socratic care in Plato's dialogues.

The third argument and the role of Μελέτη

The likeness to the divine

The third argument on the immortality of soul grows out of the necessity to convince Simmias and Cebes that soul carries on existing even after the end of the embodied life; in fact, as Simmias remarks (77b5-9) and Cebes agrees with him, the first two arguments (the contrary argument and the recollection argument) only can persuade that soul exists before the embodiment; however they not persuaded about the destiny of soul after the separation from the body: soul can exist before the body and nonetheless die along with the end of the embodied life (77c1-2). Socrates realises that the mere combination of the two previous arguments is not enough to persuade Simmias and Cebes (77c6-d5); they need to dwell upon this issue (the existence of soul after the separation from the body) since, Socrates says, they fear like children that the wind blows away (διαφυσᾶ) the soul leaving the

¹⁴⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 431-433.

body and scatters (διασκεδάννυσιν) it (77d8-e1). To persuade Simmias and Cebes of the existence of soul after death, Socrates must find it on a different basis; in the third argument it is not the necessity of the cosmic becoming (like the first argument) or the remembering of the Ideas (the second argument) which guarantees the immortality of soul, but *the likeness of soul to the Ideas themselves*. Socrates tells Simmias and Cebes that at first one must wonder which kind of things faces this event, that is to say being scattered (τῷ ποίῳ τινὶ ἄρα προσήκει τοῦτο τὸ πάθος πάσχειν, τὸ διασκεδάννυσθαι, 77b5-6) and which kind does not, and then inquire to which kind soul belongs. Only at the end of this inquiry (after understanding if soul can be scattered or not) one can fear or be confident about the destiny of soul. Since it is that which is compounded (συντεθέντι) and composite (συνθέτω) which faces this event, being divided in the same way in which it was compounded (διαιρεθῆναι ταύτη ἢπερ συντέθη 78c2), if there is anything uncompounded (ἀσύνθετον), it is that which does not face division and scattering¹⁴⁹. The clear distinction between compounded and uncompounded seems to establish a rigid dualism¹⁵⁰. On the other hand it has been Socrates himself who has started the third argument as an inquiry to which of the two kinds (the compounded and the uncompounded) soul belongs, as if there were nothing but these two kinds; yet, there is a third kind of being between these two extremes, that being which is capable of μελέτη. This third being between the compounded and uncompounded is but soul itself¹⁵¹.

¹⁴⁹ Tracing back death to division of the composite into its parts displays Socrates' familiarity with the physical theories typical of the Presocratics, in particular Empedocles. The same familiarity with physics emerged in the first argument: cf. *supra*, pp. 472ff; note 92. That which suggests that Socrates may be more suitable for inquiry into nature than he claims to be.

¹⁵⁰ The dualistic reading of this argument and in general of the entire dialogue lays behind Findlay's interpretation (1994, p. 64).

¹⁵¹ A. Pieper, 1970, p. 397, rightly speaks of soul as "Zwischenwesen *kat'exochèn*". In the following pages I am going to dwell upon the intermediate nature of human soul because it is this intermediate nature the origin and ontological foundation of μελέτη. Saying that soul is compounded means saying that there are different instances in it; on the other hand several readers of the *Phaedo* have acknowledged the existence of a multiplicity of instances in the kind of soul outlined in this dialogue: cf. P. Shorey, 1903, pp. 42-46; O. Apelt, 1913, p. 16; L. Stefanini, 1949, pp. 288-289; Th. A. Szlezak,

To understand how soul is a third reality between compounded and un-compounded, it is necessary to see which things belong to these groups. What concerns the un-compounded, this kind of beings is constituted by the Ideas (781-3). Since birth and death and in general every change in the physical world are conceived of as combinations and separations of parts, Ideas, as un-compounded (not made up of parts) are also changeless (μή ποτε μεταβολήν καὶ ἡντινοῦν ἐνδέχεται, 78d4-5). This means that each of these beings is identical to itself (μονοειδὲς ὄν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό, ὡσαύτως κατὰ ταῦτὰ ἔχει, 78d5-6) and no alteration never affects them (οὐδέποτε οὐδαμῆ οὐδαμῶς ἀλλοίωσιν οὐδεμίαν ἐνδέχεται, 78d6-7). As un-compounded, Ideas are also invisible and unreachable by means of senses (79a1-2); wherefore the only way to grasp that which is unchangeable (τῶν δὲ κατὰ ταῦτὰ ἐχόντων, 79a2) is by the reasoning of mind (τῷ τῆς διανοίας λογισμῷ). What concerns the compounded things, they are those clothes, horses, humans to which Socrates refers in 78c10-e1; they are the realities of everyday experience inasmuch as they are bodies which can be perceived by senses¹⁵². Contrary to Ideas, they change and are never identical to themselves (78e2-4). In the following lines Socrates traces back the distinction between compounded and un-compounded to that between visible and invisible (79a6-11). From now on the focus of Socrates' inquiry changes; what matters is not to realise which of the two kinds of reality the soul is (as in 78b7-8), but to which of them is more similar (ὁμοιότερον) and akin (συγγενέστερον). These two adjectives refer to a kind of relationship which is not sameness; even if a thing is quite similar to another one,

1985, p. 312; F. Trabattoni, 2007, pp. 307-320. However these scholars trace back this multiplicity to the theory of the threefold soul; *contra* R. Hackforth, 1955, p. 56. May this connection legitimate or not, in my opinion soul can be multiple even when it is not threefold; cf. K. Dorter, 1982, pp. 104-105, who acknowledges the existence of non-rational instances of soul without drawing on the threefold soul. If in Plato soul were multiple only when it is threefolded (that is in the *Republic* and in the *Phaedo*), passages such as *Sophist*. 298b2-10 and *Leg.* II 653a5-c3, where multiplicity of soul is assumed and tripartition does not occur, would be impossible to explain.

¹⁵² As it will be seen, humans are both body and soul, but soul is not a reality which can be grasped by means of senses. As a consequence, when Socrates opposes the ἀσύνθετα to humans, horses and so on, it means that humans are taken into consideration only as bodily (that is to say compounded and divisible) beings

it is not identical to it; accordingly the words ὁμοιότερον and συγγενέστερον let foreshadow that soul belongs neither to the invisible changeless beings nor to visible, always changing realities. Given the distinction in human beings between soul and body (79b1-2), it is to wonder to which kind of beings soul and body are more similar. Since body is visible, it is more similar to the visible kind (that of the compounded things) (79b6). Soul, as invisible, is more similar to the invisible kind (that of the Ideas) (79b16-17)¹⁵³. Soul, because of its invisibility, does not belong to the visible kind; it is more similar to the invisible one, but only similar. Soul cannot be of the same invisibility as the Ideas are and the reason is inferable by Socrates' words. According to the philosopher, when soul, in its inquiry into anything, draws on sense organs, it is dragged to things which are never in the same conditions (τότε μὲν ἔλκεται ὑπὸ τοῦ σώματος εἰς τὰ οὐδέποτε κατὰ ταῦτα ἔχοντα, 79c6) and it itself is upsettled (ταράττεται) and is dizzy (εἰλιγγιᾷ) as if it were drunk (ὥσπερ μεθύουσα) because touches things of this kind (ἅτε τοιούτων ἐραπτομένη). On the contrary, if it inquires alone by itself (αὐτὴ καθ' αὐτήν), it reaches what is pure, always existing, immortal and changeless (οἴχεται εἰς τὸ καθαρὸν τε καὶ ἀεὶ ὄν καὶ ἀθάνατον καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχον, 79d1-2). Therefore soul ends its wanderings and thanks to the changeless becomes changeless, since it touches things of this kind (τοιούτων ἐραπτομένη). Socrates' words, showing the bond between soul and the object of its interest, implicitly explain the reason for which soul is not of the kind of Ideas. It is said that the closeness and the devotion to changeless things makes soul changeless; this perfectly matches Diotima's words in *Symp.* 212a, wherein she says that the one who manages to see the Beautiful itself, which is divine and immortal, becomes immortal in turn. This blessed partakes in the life of gods during this vision. However Socrates himself admits that embodied life involves challenges and needs which prevent from such experiences (66b1-e4). Accordingly human embodied life, in particular the philosophical one, knows only flashes of the

¹⁵³ To refer to the invisibility of soul and Ideas Socrates uses also the adjective αἰδής. Albeit synonymous of the adjective ἀνόρατος, αἰδής, more than ἀνόρατος, recalls the word Αἰδής, the other world. If words are not fortuitous, it is reasonable to think that soul and Ideas are not only ἀνόρατα, but also αἰδῆ because of their bond to Αἰδής, the invisible realm, that realm which is reached after the end of the embodied life.

divine condition, not a changeless and endless immortality¹⁵⁴. These flashes can be experienced by soul only insofar as it devotes to the proper lifestyle and the inquiry into the proper realities. This means that soul is affected by the objects of its interest and longings; accordingly the condition of human soul changes according to the nature of that to which it devotes. This involves that soul can change, it knows alteration; wherefore soul does not belong to the kind of Ideas, but is only similar to them: Ideas are changeless by their own nature, whereas it is capable of changing. On the other hand, if soul were changeless, philosophy as purification and μελέτη θανάτου were meaningless; only a soul capable of changing can purify itself; the first thing from which one must purify oneself is the attitude according to which the only things which matter and exist are the perceptible ones and the pleasure and pains relating to them (the attitude of the φιλοσώματος). This attitude is a kind of *amathia*, the condition in which one finds oneself when one is certain to know without knowing; as a consequence purifying oneself from this attitude means purifying oneself from *amathia*, that condition which prevents human from fulfilling their ἔργα in the best way and, as a consequence, from being happy¹⁵⁵. Given that, it is possible to outline the nature of soul besides the two kinds already outlined above: bodies are visible and changeable, Ideas are invisible and changeless; soul is *invisible and changeable*. However soul and bodies are not changeable in the same way; bodies are only affected by changes, whereas soul can decide the changes to face. Soul does not become better in the same way as iron rusts; iron unavoidably rusts, soul *must decide to become better and be faithful to this decision*; it must keep alive this decision by means of its μελέτη. Soul is the only being capable of μελέτη.

¹⁵⁴ This is possible only to true philosopher after the end of the embodied life.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 19ff. This purification is carried out by means of the elenctic procedure. It is important to highlight that, according to what has been said thus far, this purification is aimed at permitting self-improvement; as a consequence this kind of purification serves not the purpose of a mere escape from earthly world or a lack of interest toward it, as it is the case for the Orphism, whose presence is nonetheless undeniable in the *Phaedo*. A philosophical life must lead to happiness not only in the afterlife, but also in this world; accordingly the philosopher must not neglect the natural world (to which his own body belongs, and, on the other hand, it has been said several times, soul cares for that which is devoid of soul *Phaedr.* 246b3-4), neither must he kill himself; on the contrary, he must live as well as he can and be ready to die when his hour has come.

Bodies change and cannot decide how to change, Ideas are changeless; soul is changeable and can decide how to change and its μελέτη allows it to carry on and be faithful to the transformation it decides to face. Furthermore soul is neither as uncompounded as Ideas nor as compounded as bodies. Ideas are to consider uncompounded because of their lack of inner multiplicity; on the contrary bodies are compounded because they can be divided into smaller parts¹⁵⁶. What concerns soul, it cannot face the same material division as bodies; however, contrary to Ideas, it has inner multiplicity. Above it has been attempted to argue that, in spite of the long-lasting understanding of the nature of soul in the *Phaedo*, even in this dialogue soul displays several instances and consequently inner multiplicity¹⁵⁷. Therefore also in this case soul is a third reality beside compounded and uncompounded: the uncompounded is indivisible and lacks multiplicity, the compounded is divisible and has multiplicity (because of its parts); soul is *indivisible and has multiplicity* (because of its instances). However soul and compounded has not multiplicity in the same way: the compounded does not go beyond its multiplicity, so that it is nothing more than its capability to be divided; on the contrary, soul is not the mere sum of its several instances, since soul is also able *to rule* its inner multiplicity, whereas the compounded cannot rule its multiplicity because it is not but its multiplicity. Instead soul is capable of practicing the ἐναντιοῦσθαι, the “standing before” its instances, so as to rule them¹⁵⁸. Soul’s suitability for ruling is stressed also in 80a2, while body has to obey (80a1-2)¹⁵⁹. Soul’s ruling of the body originates

¹⁵⁶ According to Anaxagoras there is no limit to the divisibility (DK59 B3; B6). On the contrary, in *Tim.* 54a1-b5 Plato speaks of elemental triangles which are the ultimate constituents of the four natural elements. Among the physiologist also Democritus (and Leucippus) rejects the idea of an endless divisibility of bodies (if the endless divisibility were true, there would not be *atoma*, indivisible things).

¹⁵⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 468-470.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 473-475.

¹⁵⁹ Soul’s natural suitability of ruling is stressed also in other dialogues of the middle and late periode: cf. *Alc. I*, 129e3-130c9; *Resp.* I, 353d3-7; *Leg.* X, 896c1-3; *Epin.* 983d2-7. Soul’s supremacy is not (or should not be) tyrannical. Soul must rule the body, but above all *must rule itself*; therefore a good soul rules not because it mistreats the body, but because it provides to the body those rules which benefits the body itself.

from soul's likeness to the divine, which is by its own nature entitled to rule (80a4). It has been said that soul is a third reality besides compounded and un-compounded, mortal and divine; however it is not equidistant from these two extremes; it is neither mortal like bodies nor divine as gods (at least not during embodied life). Nevertheless it is a little bit closer to the divine than the mortal. It is because of the closeness to the immortal, intelligible (νοητῶ), indissoluble (ἀδιαλύτῳ) and always identical to itself that soul and body face different destinies after their separation. The not ensouled body remains in the visible world as a mere corpse, which, just like the compounded things of the visible world, is doomed to decompose and dissipate (80c2-5). It is true that body does not fade as long as it ceases to be ensouled and keeps organised structure for a while before decomposing and a procedure like the Egyptian mummification is able to make bodies much longer than they by their own nature can (80d7-9). However this does not change that bodies are dissoluble and doomed to fade away. On the contrary soul, as the invisible in human beings, after the end of the embodied life reaches a place which is likewise invisible, the Hades, by that God by which also Socrates' soul is going to go (80c5-10). The following lines show that Socrates is speaking of the soul of philosophers, those who have practiced the μελέτη θανάτου throughout their embodied lives (80e3-81a2); only this kind of soul will dwell in that invisible realm to which the invisible divine beings, the Ideas, belong. This means that other souls, even if immortal, do not dwell in the same place as the souls of true philosophers. Above it has been said that soul is changeable because its condition is shaped by that to which soul has devoted itself; actually, this is true not only of the embodied soul, but also of the soul who has left the body.

The deification of the philosopher. Self-care as μελέτη θανάτου

It has been said that soul belongs neither to Ideas nor to bodies and nonetheless is closer to the Ideas. Furthermore it has been said that soul is changeable and what changes it is that to which it decides to devote itself, the object of its μελέτη. This is the reason for which soul's likeness to the divine can be lost, since this likeness, as a condition of human soul, which is changeable, may fade away, if one does not

preserve it¹⁶⁰; as a consequence, soul can lost or strenghten its likeness to the divine according to that which it decides to keep alive throughout its embodied life. That soul which is so bewitched by its pleasures and longings (its instances more bound to the physical world) that it ends up holding for true only what is corporeal, which can be touched, seen, drunk, eaten and used for sexual pleasures (οὗ τις ἂν ἄψαιτο καὶ ἴδοι καὶ πίοι καὶ φάγοι καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἀφροδίσια χρήσαιτο, 81b4-5) and is accustomed (εἰθισμένη) to hating, fearing and run away from wht is intellegible and attainable by means of philosophy (νοητὸν δὲ καὶ φιλοσοφία αἰρετόν), is not pure when it leaves the physical worls (81c1-2). Such a soul has so much indulged to the instances binding it to the perceptible world that it has been imprisoned by it. This is the soul of the φιλοσώματος; it has been enslaved by its longings and fears and has let the body it ensouls become a prison and not a guardpost where to dwell¹⁶¹. However this soul comes so far as to think that its prison is the only thing really existing and necessarily fears to leave it; since only what is visible and touchable exists, leaving it means to this soul fading¹⁶². The μελέτη of this soul has been to strenghten the chains which bind them to the visible world¹⁶³; and its μελέτη has been so effective that the soul acquires some of the features of bodies: it are the souls of this kind which after the separation from their body come across as visible spectre and carry on roaming graves (81c9-d4). Socrates incisively shows how soul is changed by that to which it devotes itself. A wrong μελέτη can irredeemably distort soul. Soul is not visible by its own nature and yet it could become, if its μελέτη, the effort to keep alive what matters to it, is focused only on the perceptible world. Even this soul is still immortal; however it is immortal in a degraded way.

¹⁶⁰ In *Tim* 41b7-42b1 it is upon the young gods which is incumbent to shape the not rational instances of souls, whereas the rational one comes directly from the Craftsman (90a1-b1); in fact if the Craftman shaped individual beings in their entirety, they would be as divine as the gods themselves (41c2-3). This passage of the *Timaios* shows in a powerful way that even if humans are bound to the divine, this bond is sameness and this is the reason for which a bad lived life can lead to the dissolution of this bond.

¹⁶¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 436-438.

¹⁶² Such a soul is by its own nature coward, whereas the soul which has lived philosophically does not fear death, as it knows that the visible is not the only thing existing.

¹⁶³ It is to keep in mind that these chains are forged by soul itself. Cf. *supra*, pp. 452ff.

Its customs, outcomes of its μελέτη, have led it to the loss of the likeness to the divine and changeless. These lines stress the importance of the customs, recalled by the participle εἰθισμένη in 81b8. Soul, albeit similar to the divine, is not immutably similar to it; bad customs and a bad μελέτη can lead soul to the loss of this likeness. Therefore a soul of this kind not only will not leave the cycle of the becoming, but will reincarnate into animals such as donkeys, if it during its embodied life has practiced gluttony, violence and drunkenness (τοὺς μὲν γαστριμαργίας τε καὶ ὕβρεις καὶ φιλοποσίας μεμελετηκότας καὶ μὴ διηυλαβημένους 81e5-6); instead those who have preferred injustice, tyrannies and robberies reincarnate into wolves, hawks and kites (τοὺς δὲ γε ἀδικίας τε καὶ τυραννίδας καὶ ἀρπαγὰς προτετιμηκότας εἰς τὰ τῶν λύκων τε καὶ ἱεράκων καὶ ἰκτίνων γένη, 82a3-4)¹⁶⁴. Soul's μελέτη is crucial, it decides its destiny not only in one's life, but also the body into which each of them reincarnate in the next one. A better fate awaits the souls of those who have practised common and political virtues, such as justice and self-mastery (σωφροσύνην τε καὶ δικαιοσύνην, 82b1-2), when this kind of virtue originates from custom and practice without philosophy and true understanding (ἐξ ἔθους τε καὶ μελέτης γεγονυῖαν ἄνευ φιλοσοφίας τε καὶ νοῦ, 80b3-4)¹⁶⁵. However these moderate and sociable souls will not face the same destiny as those of philosophers; they will reincarnate into bees or anew into humans who are moderate (82b5-8)¹⁶⁶. Justice and self-mastery are essential also in a philosophical life and the *Charmides*, the *Alcibiades* and the *Republic* show how important is σωφροσύνη to Socrates. The philosopher and the common man practice σωφροσύνη; but out of different reasons. It is out of question

¹⁶⁴ This degradation in the following reincarnation, probably of Orphic origin (G. Casertano, 2015, p. 330) is to find also in *Tim.* 42b1-42d. In *Resp.* X, 618a1ff. it is said that souls themselves must choose the next live and they do that according to the experience gathered in the previous one. This two representations are not at odds with each other: probably the loss of choice concerns only those whose life has been irredeemably wicked, whereas the others, who have been neither too good nor too wicked, can continue to choose. On the other hand, also the soul of the true philosopher will cease to choose; in fact, at a certain point, it will leave the cycle of becoming. Cf. L. Napolitano, 2013, pp. 149-161; 2015, pp. 435-468.

¹⁶⁵ This passage is the backbone of the Neoplatonic theory of the degrees of virtues: cf. G. Catapano, 2006, pp. 9-28.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. M. Erler, 2007, pp. 59-71.

that customs are essential also for the philosopher; however it is not only because a long-lasting custom to practice σωφροσύνη that the philosopher is σόφρων. Socrates is σόφρων because, beside a merely customary conduct, he has also understood that σωφροσύνη benefits the one who practices it and helps accomplish relational goods which improve the life of a community¹⁶⁷. Socrates is pious not only because of his act of traditional piety, but because he has understood which place the pious man occupies within the world and his relationship with the gods¹⁶⁸; the philosopher is moderate and pious not (or not only) because he has seen others acting moderately and piously and has accostumed to doing the same out of imitation; in addition he has acquired νοῦς, the true understanding of the role of virtue in human life. Accordingly the philosopher must practice political virtues, but it is not because of customs (or not only) that he practices them. In the *Phaedo* the philosopher has spent his life binding as tightly as possible to the divine and changeless foundation of the visible world and this is the ultimate reason for which the philosopher practices political virtue; not out of customs, but because he wants to be worthy of the likeness to the divine of his soul. Therefore he will attempt not only not to loose it, but also to strengthen it as he can; as a consequence, the μελέτη of the philosopher leads his soul to a different fate from that of those have practiced political virtues only out of customs: the latter will carry on reincarnating into new beings; the former will elevate itself to the divine condition (81a9-10; 82b10-c1). The soul of the philosopher has devoted itself to the invisible and changeless; as a consequence after the end of the embodied life, it acquires the same condition of that to which it has committed during the life in the body; as the final myth tells, those who have been purified by philosophy will live forever without bodies and in dwellings different from those awaiting the other souls (114c2-6). This means that the soul of the philosopher frees itself from the cycle of the becoming and the same liberation awaits the soul also in *Phaedr.* 249a1-5, when it has chosen three times consecutively to live philosophically. Socrates' words on the divinisation of the soul of the philosopher are aimed at stressing the closeness of the philosophical life to an initiatic way. Orphism promised to its initiates the divinisation and the liberation

¹⁶⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 126-128; 150-151; 377.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 315; 464-467.

from the cycle of the becoming¹⁶⁹. The initiatic way of philosophy, the way of the μελέτη θανάτου is the practice of transforming our soul and not, as numerous readers of the *Phaedo* have believed, of despising the body¹⁷⁰. The μελέτη θανάτου properly practiced during the embodied life allows the soul to free itself from reincarnation and reach that changeless and divine immortality which during life is unreachable, so that, only seemingly paradoxically, the μελέτη θανάτου turns out to be a μελέτη ἀθανασίας. ; however, this pursuit of divine immortality needs the engagement in the human world; as said several times throughout this work, caring for oneself involves caring for others; what is more, it means fulfilling those ἔργα, natural to soul, which involve others' good¹⁷¹. Contrary to a merely ascetic withdrawal from world, that which may have been the ideal of Orphism, the philosophical immortality, to be pursued, needs the care for the earthly world and those who inhabit it; the kind of care which is Socrates' pious and daimonic assistance to gods¹⁷². Accordingly, immortality is not a condition which one can reach neglecting the world around oneself ; on the contrary, it is a condition which can be reached only by caring for oneself and, as a consequence, for the others, in the proper way¹⁷³.

Let us come back to purification: any kind of purification or ritual is useless if not accompanied by the μελέτη, that effort to keep alive what matters which unfolds

169 Cf. A. Barnabè, 2007, pp. 25-44; 2010, pp. 422-441; I. G. Kalogerakos, 2012, pp. 343-362; A. Petit, 2019, pp. 249-265.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 429-430, note 4.

¹⁷¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 35-39.

¹⁷² Cf. *supra*, pp. 320ff.

¹⁷³ Becoming immortal means becoming similar to gods and several times it has been said that Socrates' gods are beneficial beings; accordingly, pursuing immortality, the assimilation to gods, involves benefitting people around us and in general for the world one inhabit, just as the gods benefit it: cf. Procl. *In Rem.* 367, 12-368, 14. This is for this reason that things like selfishness and love for power and wealth as good themselves are harmful to oneself; they are inner condition which make others appear like hindrances or enemies; in this way one may end up becoming indifferent to others' good or even harm them. However, in this way one distances oneself from the bond to the divine and from that immortality which soul *naturally* could pursue and which only few manage to attain.

throughout the entire life; it is for this reason that Socrates says about those who practise initiations: “the thyrsus-bearers are many, but the mystics few” (ναρθηκοφόροι μὲν πολλοί, βάκχοι δὲ τε παῦροι, 69c8-d1, tr. H. N. Fowler). Participating in a ritual and acting as the ritual prescribes is a thing which everyone can do, but only few are truly transformed by those rituals and decide to keep alive their transformation and perfect it; the βάκχοι are the true initiate because they have transformed their initiation into a lifestyle¹⁷⁴. The same do the true philosophers. As it has been seen above, Socrates’ acceptance of the *aporia* originating from the physicists’ inquiry (his philosophical initiation) has urged him to transform his way of reasoning and communicating; his own lifestyle has changed because he has transformed himself and kept alive the results of this transformation (the practice of the dialectic method is one of them)¹⁷⁵. Initiation, intended as a ritual procedure, lasts few; but it can be truly initiation only if the initiate shapes his life after it. If there are true philosophers, there must be also false philosophers: these could be the antilogic and erists, who use the dialectic method without giving any foundation to their reasoning; so they use the method of the philosophers, but the way in which they use it is not philosophical¹⁷⁶. Likewise false philosopher or, more exactly, not yet philosopher, are Simmias and Cebes: they are interested in the inquiry into causes; however because of their mechanistic way of conceiving soul and their fear for physical death they are still far from being true philosophers, although they would become after. The true philosophers are like the βάκχοι; also they have been transformed by that to which they have devoted themselves. The μελέτη is not only the backbone of initiations; it is also the backbone of self-care, which in this work has been depicted as an initiatic way of life. It is μελέτη, the ongoingly keeping alive the commitment to self-improvement that makes a life based on self-care possible. The case of Alcibiades is once again telling; he, like others interlocutors, faces the dead-like *aporia*, and sees himself as he is, not as he thinks he is. However this *aporia* has no gearing on Alcibiades’ life; he himself realises that Socrates is right; yet, he does not manage to follow him because he lacks μελέτη, he does not

¹⁷⁴ Cf. A. J. San Cristobàl, 2014, pp. 46-60

¹⁷⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 499-501.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 478-480; 499.

attempt (or not manage) to keep alive what he learns of himself from the *aporia*. On the contrary, Socrates has cared for his transformation (from a young physicist into a dialectic philosopher), that transformation which his *aporia* has made possible, but only his μελέτη has made effective. Self-care is but μελέτη θανάτου. In fact θάνατος in the *Phaedo* is not the end of the body, but the transformation of the soul and this transformation leads the soul to become as good as possible, since thanks to such a transformative path soul keeps and strenghtens his likeness to the divine¹⁷⁷. Accordingly θάνατος, intended as transformation of soul, is but caring for it, since caring for soul means improving it; on the other hand it can be improved only if it is transformed. However this transformation is gradual and hard; therefore it needs μελέτη. Given that μελέτη θανάτου turns out to be the keeping alive the effort to become as good as possible. In the *Phaedo* this effort leads the philosopher to bridge over, at least after death, the gap between human and divine. Probably also the divinisation of the philosopher's soul is, just like the theory of Ideas, more Platonic than Socratic; however, also in this case, not Socratic does not mean anti-Socratic. In the *Apology* it is said that human knowledge is nothing compared to divine wisdom (23a5-b4). Plato seems to restrict the human inferiority to the gods to the embodied life; in fact Plato himself knows that during the embodied life the philosopher can reach but ephemeral flashes of the divine condition¹⁷⁸; furthermore even the ὁμοίωσις θεῶ of *Thaetet.* 176a8-b2 does not lead its practitioner to a completely divine condition (this ὁμοίωσις is achieved κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, inasmuch it is possible to a human being); therefore, as long as the embodied life lasts, it is impossible to reach that condition. However Plato says that it is possible, only after the separation from the body and only for few souls, to go beyond one's own nature. That Plato may have intended to speak of a divinisation of the philosopher is not so hard to believe, considering that in the *Phaedo* he appropriates Orphic spirituality¹⁷⁹; as a consequence he ends up outlining a sort of philosophical euhemerism which recalls that of the Orphics, to whom the worship of divinised

¹⁷⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 507ff.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp 504-505.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. *infra*, pp. 548ff.

heroes was not unknown¹⁸⁰. Like Socrates, Plato realises that divine condition is out of reach during this life, but, beyond Socrates, he states that the same condition can be reached by the true philosopher *only* after the end of the embodied life¹⁸¹. This compromise is based on the idea of μελέτη: an intermediate being, the human soul, which cannot be like a god as long as the embodiment lasts, can become after the embodiment thanks to its μελέτη, the ongoing effort to keep alive and strengthen its likeness to the divine. In light of what has been said, it can be concluded that the third argument on the immortality of soul is essential to understand the nature of self-care, since self-care is impossible without μελέτη, the perseverance in the effort to improve oneself and the third argument is one of the passages of Plato's works which stresses the most the role of μελέτη. What is more, an implicit ontological founding of μελέτη takes place in the third argument and its foundation is the nature itself of human soul; in fact only a being neither changeless like Ideas nor changeable like bodies is capable of μελέτη; only such a being can bind its destiny to that which it longs for and be shaped by practicing that which matters to it. The importance of the third argument resides also in the fact that its basis, that soul is neither an Idea nor a body, but nonetheless more similar to Ideas than to bodies, is the basis also of the fourth and final argument of the *Phaedo*; however in the new argument the issue of the nature of soul is developed from another point of view: in the third argument it is stressed that soul, albeit invisible, is changeable, but not in the same way as bodies. In the fourth argument it is highlighted how soul is also *changeless*, but not in the same way as Ideas are.

Soul as both changeless and changeable. Self-care as dynamic balance of destruction and preservation

¹⁸⁰ Cf. B. McLachlan, 2009, pp. 204-216. If one considers the comparison between Achilles and Socrates occurring in the *Apology* and in the *Crito*, Socrates after his death will be like a divinised hero.

¹⁸¹ As it has been said above, the true philosopher can experience already in this life flashes of divine condition; however, they are only flashes. To reach this condition in a steady and indefectible way, his soul must leave his body

The fourth argument on the immortality of soul is the reply to Cebes' objection according to which soul, albeit existing before and after the bodies it ensouls, may be nonetheless doomed to die, just like a weaver, who exists before and after his capes and nonetheless could pass away before the last cape he has woven¹⁸². Socrates had started replying by explaining his new method of enquiry into the causes, based on the existence of Ideas and the participation of the perceptible things in them. From such an assumption it follows that Simmias, for instance, is taller than Socrates not because he is Simmias, but because of the Tallness which he happens to have (τῷ μεγέθει ὃ τυγχάνει ἔχων, 102c2). This phrase τῷ μεγέθει ὃ τυγχάνει ἔχων refers to the following development of Socrates' reasoning; in fact the words τῷ μεγέθει ὃ τυγχάνει ἔχων allude not to the Ideas, the Tallness itself, but to a thing which, even if not Idea, is intimately kin to it; this thing is called below the Tallness in us (102d7) which Socrates mentions as a thing different from the Tallness itself (102d6). These lines and the following ones deserve attention because of this distinction, since in these lines the later Platonists glimpsed the metaphysical ancestor of that which they called ἔνυλον εἶδος, the level of the intelligible directly involved in shaping the sensible world¹⁸³. Usually it is acknowledged that here Socrates is outlining a distinction between two different levels of reality (the Ideas and that which of Ideas there is in us)¹⁸⁴; however there are some scholars who reject such a distinction¹⁸⁵. This debate has more to do with the history of Plato's metaphysics than the issue of *care* and delving into it would bring too far. So far as I am concerned, Socrates' commitment to establish a distinction between two levels of being is not to reject, since in the third argument Socrates has established a similar distinction; there soul was that which, not being

¹⁸² Cf. *supra*, note 136.

¹⁸³ Cf. A Linguiti, 2020, pp. 81-91. This connection is rejected by D. O Brian, 1967-1968.

¹⁸⁴ The scholars who accept this distinction are: D. Scarrow, 1961, pp. 250-1; G. Vlastos, 1973, pp. 83-6; E. Burge, 1971, pp. 5-6; N. Fujisawa, 1974, pp. 31-34; D. Frede, 1978, p. 35; C.J. Rowe, 1993, pp. 249-50; D. T. Devereaux, 1994, pp. 66-73; S. Stone, 2018, pp. 55-69; W. Altmann, 2020, pp. 151-165.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. J. Rist, 1964, p. 30; W.K.C. Guthrie, 1975, pp. 353-6; D. Gallop, 1975, pp. 195-196, 198, 206; D. Bostock, 1986, pp. 179-184, 186, 199, 203; R.M. Dancy, 1991, p.14; E. Perl, 1999, p. 353; C. G. Rowe, 2001, p. 255; G. Fine, 2003, pp. 305-9.

itself an Idea, is nonetheless akin to Ideas. In the same way, the soul of the third argument is not the Life itself (the Idea of life); *but it is indissolubly bound to the Life itself*. Let us come back to Socrates' reasoning. He states that neither the Tallness itself nor that is us accept their contrary (shortness); rather they would run away or be destroyed if their contrary approached them (102d5-e3). Accordingly none of the contraries would accept to become its contrary¹⁸⁶; rather they would run away or be destroyed if their contrary approached them (102d6-103a-2). Socrates' language is quite inaccurate: the Tallness itself, as an Idea, cannot run away from the body which become small; Ideas do not exist in space and time and as a consequence do not carry out movements such as running away. Obviously they cannot be destroyed, because they are changeless and being destroyed involves facing a change; therefore it would more correct to say that a body becoming short participates less than before to the Tallness itself, while the Tallness itself remains unmoved and changeless. Concerning the tallness is us and in general "what is in us", Socrates is not clear as whether it is destroyed by its contrary or simply runs away from it¹⁸⁷. However it may be, that which is in us is changeless; the Tallness in us, no matter if it runs away or is destroyed by its contrary, does not accept it. This feature has not understood by the anonymous bystander who, bravely, but not

¹⁸⁶ The difference between the ἐναντία of the first argument and these of the last one is that the former are ἐναντία/complementaries (they involve and need each other), whereas the latter are ἐναντία/contradictory (they are of such a nature that the one excludes the other: cf. Arist. *Met.* V 1018a20-b8). Plato proves to be aware of the distinction of these two kinds of ἐναντία in *Gorg.* 495e5-497e3: in fact, there are ἐναντία, such as pleasure and pain, which involve and need each other and even can coexist at the same time, whereas other ἐναντία, such as health and illness, or good and evil, cannot exist and the one exclude the other.

¹⁸⁷ This doubt does not concern soul, which, as *always* bound to the Life itself, cannot accept death, its contrary. This means that soul not only participates in Life itself, but does it participate eternally. However there is a difference between the eternity of Life itself and that of soul; soul is not the source of its own immortality (which is the Life itself); accordingly, soul is similar to the young gods of *Tim.* 41a6-b5, whose immortality has its origin in the Craftsman. The case of soul and that of the young gods open the possibility of a class of realities which possess a sort of immortality of second degree; that which means that immortality characterises not only the highest degree of reality, but also, albeit in a derivative form, other entities: cf. L. Robin, 1935, p. 122.

appropriately, recalls the first of Socrates' argument, which stated that the smaller originates from the bigger and *viceversa* (103a4-b10). However, the first argument does not apply to Ideas; bodies from bigger may become smaller, but Bigness cannot become small; there is a difference between those beings which have the contraries and the contraries themselves (103b5-c1); accordingly a body may become beautiful and ugly, big or small, but Beauty cannot become ugly and Bigness cannot become small, since the becoming affects the things which participate in the Ideas, not the Ideas themselves. However, not only the Ideas but also that of them which is in us cannot be affected by becoming contrary to them, so that the Beauty in us and the Bigness in us may be destroyed by their contraries; nevertheless, they cannot become contrary to that which they are. In the following lines Socrates will focus on specifying the nature of that τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν, which eventually turns out to be the soul itself. This entity is compared to the snow and the fire; snow is not the coldness itself, but it is so intimately bound to coldness that it cannot become warm without being destroyed; in fact if one places snow near the fire, snow melts, but does not become warm (103d5-8). Likewise fire is not the warmth; however it is so bound to warmth that cannot become cold, which is contrary to warmth; in fact if one puts snow on fire, fire dies out, but not becomes cold. In this comparison τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν is the snow and the fire; the coldness and the warmth are Ideas. The comparison is not sound because snow and fire are bodies, whereas soul, the τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν, is not; however the comparison gets the message across; it aims is to provide the example of an entity which cannot be deprived of its main feature without fading away. This helps understand how snow and fire are changeless; they are changeless not because they are indestructible, but because they never lose their main feature as long as they exist (103e2-5); fire can be extinguished; however there will never be a fire deprived of warmth. In the same way snow can melt; however there will never be a snow deprived of coldness; as a consequence fire and snow do not accept that which is contrary to their main feature. Thus snow does not accept the warmth, which is contrary to coldness and fire does not accept the cold, which is contrary to warmth. Once again it can be pointed out that Socrates is basing the fourth argument on the same assumption of

the third one, that of a reality which, albeit not belonging to the realm of the Ideas, is intimately bound to them.

Socrates establishes another comparison, this time using numbers. In the new comparison the role of the Ideas is played by the Even (ἄρτιον) and the Odd (περιττόν) and the numbers are τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν. Obviously the numbers of this second comparison are abstract entities, not amount of real things and this is suggested by the words used to name them, such as τριάς, πεμπτάς, δυάς. Socrates never speaks of a concrete amount, such as two men, five cows and so on; when he speaks of the two or the tree he speaks of numerical values which do not refer to anything, just as the formula: $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ applies to every right-angled triangle irrespective of the sizes of their cathetus. Just like in the case of fire and snow, Socrates points out that the τριάς is not the same as the Odd (since there are also other odd numbers); however it is so intimately bound to the Odd that it is *never* deprived of it (104a1-b2); In the same way no even number is the same as the Even (since there are countless even numbers) and nonetheless none of them can be deprived of the Even (104b2-4). In the following lines Socrates draws the consequences of what he has said this far. The contraries exclude each other; however if a thing is so bound to one of the two contraries that it never is deprived of it, it follows that this thing never accepts the contrary of that to which it is bound:

Now see what I want to make plain. This is my point, that not only abstract opposites exclude each other, but all things which, although not opposites one to another, always contain opposites (ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅσα οὐκ ὄντ' ἀλλήλοις ἐναντία ἔχει ἀεὶ τὰναντία); these also, we find, exclude the idea which is opposed to the idea contained in them (ἐκείνην τὴν ιδέα ν ἢ ἂν τῆ ἐν αὐτοῖς οὔση ἐναντία ἤ), and when it approaches they either perish or withdraw (ἤτοι ἀπολλύμενα ἢ ὑπεκχωροῦντα)¹⁸⁸. We must certainly agree that the

¹⁸⁸ In this lines Socrates in speaking of those things like the three, the five ans, as a consequence, of soul. This means that the *idea* Socrates is alluding to is the intellegible and paradigmatic Being (the life itself in the case of soul). Some scholars (R. S. Bluck 1955, p. 17; R. Hackforth, 1955, p. 150; D. T. Devereux, 1994, p. 198) think that here *idea* refers to the immanent features of the Idea. If it were the case, then the entities which escape or are destroyed by the opposite *ideai* would be the sensible beings ; that which is not suggested by the lines under examination.

number three will endure destruction or anything else rather than submit to becoming even, while still remaining three, must we not? (104b6-c3).

Socrates provides several examples issued from arithmetics in order to clarify the kind of entity he is conceiving. The three, intended as an abstract number, is not the opposite of the Even (this is the Odd); however it is so bound to the Odd that it cannot accept what is contrary to it, that is to say the Even (104e7-10); these entity, which I will call for argument's sake bearers of the contraries¹⁸⁹, are, like snow and fire, changeless, not because they are indestructible, but because, as long as they exist, they cannot become contrary to that to which their are by their own nature bound; as a consequence they do not even accept the features of that which is contrary to that to which they are bound. For instance, a feature of the Even is the divisibility by two: the three cannot accept such a divisibility, since it is essential of the opposite of that to which the three is indissolubly bound (*scil.* The Odd). Furthermore, the bearers of contraries are *intermediate* between that to which they are essentially bound and that to which they themselves pertain (104d5-15)¹⁹⁰. These lines are quite important because now three terms come into play and the third one will be the body itself few lines below (105b5-c5). Socrates does not provide numerical examples of what he says; however it is not hard to deceive one. Let us imagine that the five (the bearer of contrary) is the number of books (that to which the bearer of contrary pertains) on a shelf; since the five is by its own nature indissolubly bound to the Odd, it follow that the books are not only five, but also odd and have inherited from the five the features of the Odd; this means for instance that those five books cannot be divided by two. This does not means that those books cannot become six or then by addition of further books and thus lose the features of the Odd; it only means that those books, as long as they are five, thanks

¹⁸⁹ The use of the word “bearers” refer to the verb ἐπιφέρειν used for the first time in 104e10.

¹⁹⁰ Usually “intermediate” are named the mathematical entities of *Resp.* V, 510c1-511b2, which, according to Aristoteles (*Met.* I, 6, 987b14-18), are intermediate beings (μεταξύ) between the sensible things and the intellegible ones: Cf. E. Cattanei, 1996, *passim*; G. Reale, 2003, pp. 237ff. Since I have not found another term more appropriate than “intermediate” to speak of soul, I beg the reader to allow me to use the term also in order to speak of soul.

to the five, have also the features of the Odd, to which the five is indissolubly bound. The assumption of such intermediate entities leads Socrates to amend his theory of participation in the Ideas, on which is new method of inquiry is based; participation in which also these intermediate beings are involved. It is true that, for instance, one is tall because of the Tallness itself; however this participation is not direct: it would be more correct to say that one is tall because of the Tallness in oneself which, being indissolubly bound to the Tallness itself, transfers its features to the body to which it pertains. In the same way bodies are warm not because of warmth but because of fire (105c1-2), as well as a sick body is warm not because of sickness but because of fever (105c3-4). By outlining this class of intermediate entities, Socrates has outlined the nature of soul; it is an intermediate thanks to which an entity (the body) participates in that to which it (the soul) is eternally bound (the Life itself). Soul, being by its own nature indissolubly bound to the Life itself, gives life to the body which it ensouls (105d3-4). Soul is a particular kind of intermediate, since, contrary to the other members of this class, it is imperishable. The other intermediates, such as fire, snow and numbers, as said above, are changeless not because are indestructible, but because, as long as they exist, they preserve their nature; Socrates himself has never denied that such intermediates may be destroyed by the opposite of that to which they are indissolubly bound, neither would it be easy to maintain the contrary against someone who states that destruction is the fate which awaits these intermediate entities (106c2-7); however, this cannot apply to soul. The contraries which the intermediates bear do not accept their contraries; soul is by its own nature bound to the Life itself, which does not accept death, its contrary, so that the Life itself is ἀ-θάνατον, that is to say *death-less* and as a consequence ἀν-ώλεθρον (106d5-9)¹⁹¹. Soul inherits from Life itself the deathlessness and the in-destructibility, just as the four and the six inherit from the Even

¹⁹¹ This passage from *death-less* to *indestructible* has been criticised by Strato of Lampsachus: cf G. Casertano, 2015, pp. 381-383. However there is no error in this argument from the logical point of view, if one considers that Socrates here understands by death the disintegration of compounded; if soul, as said above, is not compounded, it cannot be broken into pieces: accordingly it cannot be destroyed. According to this view, the passage from deathless to indestructible is not only logically not erroneous, but even necessary.

the divisibility by two; it follows that soul, like the other intermediates, but not in the same way, is changeless: in fact soul *eternally* preserves its natural bond to the Life itself, which is the source of its immortality, whereas nothing assures that the other intermediates preserves their bonds only until their destruction by the contraries; that which does not affect soul.

According to the fourth argument, soul turns out to be the intermediate between body and Life itself, to which it is indissolubly and *eternally* bound; that which is the metaphysical consequence of the assumption of the third argument, that is to say that soul is an intermediate between Ideas and bodies, but much closer to the former than to the latter. However in the analysis of the third argument it has been stressed that soul, albeit more similar to Ideas than to bodies, is different from them because soul is changeable, whereas Ideas are not¹⁹². Instead the fourth argument leads to appreciate the unchangeability of soul, which eternally preserves the immortality originating from the Life itself. The contradiction is illusory and showing how soul is both changeless and changeable has bearing on the comprehension of the ontological foundation of *care* appreciable in the third argument¹⁹³. Above it has been said that soul is τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν of the Ideas, that is to say that which of the Ideas is in us¹⁹⁴. This is true at least from two points of view: from the biological and the gnoseological one. From the biological point of view soul is τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν of Humankind itself, because human soul, according to *Phaedr.* is different from the souls of other species on account of its contemplation of the Ideas, so that soul could be rightly considered “the Humankind in us”. Furthermore it follows from Socrates’ argument that soul is also “the Life in us” because of its inbuilt bond to the Life itself. From the gnoseological point of view soul is τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν of all the Ideas because it harbors in itself the unconscious memory of the Ideas which it already knows; which memory must be reawakened by means of recollection¹⁹⁵. However there is at least a difference, and not an unimportant one, between soul as a biological principle and soul as gnoseological (and also ethical)

¹⁹² Cf. *supra*, pp. 404-405.

¹⁹³ Cf. *supra*, p. 514.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 516-517.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 482ff.

instance. To be just soul must be educated in a certain way and even the philosopher, despite his knowledge of Justice, cannot refrain from acting according to justice and living justly; virtues must not also be known in their eidetic essence, but also be practiced. What concerns recollection, only few souls are able to reawaken the awareness of the inbuilt *criteria* of their experience of the world; on the contrary, the majority of souls keep being unaware thereof. It happens that a soul may never become just, because it has not been properly educated or because it may come so far as to think that justice is useless or harmful. Likewise a soul may never become aware of the memory of the Ideas hidden in itself, because, for instance, it does not even know that there are Ideas or because it denies their existence. Given that, it can be said that soul's ethical and cognitive role as bearer of the Ideas is exposed to failure and to what may happen or not happen during embodied life. On the contrary, soul as origin of the life of the body is infallible and changeless; in fact the worst of the criminals and the most virtuous of the philosophers are both alive. Therefore soul as principle of life is exposed neither to failure nor to changes. As said above, μελέτη is the endless effort to keep alive that which matters; now it is obvious that soul makes this effort not as a metaphysical principle of life, *but as a cognitive and ethical being*. Accordingly the soul of the philosopher does not try to be more immortal, since immortality is a changeless condition; instead this soul tries to become wiser and juster, because justice and wisdom can be aim of human μελέτη. It can be easily inferred that μελέτη applies to that which is not unavoidable; as a consequence soul is capable of μελέτη only insofar as it pursues things which, albeit honorable, are not essentially bound to it, or, more exactly are bound to it, but not as tightly as Life itself. For instance, soul is unavoidably living and bearer of Life; however, it is not unavoidably wise or just and for this reason it needs μελέτη. Therefore it can be concluded that soul is both changeless and changeable; changeless as metaphysical origin of the biological life, changeable as cognitive and moral entity. The immortality and unchangeability of soul, as changeless condition, is not needy of care; however this does not mean that this condition plays no role in caring and improving that which of the soul itself is changeable and improvable. Actually it could be said that *it is thanks to that which in soul is changeless that what is changeable can change*. To make this point clearer, it is

useful to recall the words which Dionysodorus addresses to Socrates in the *Euthydemus*. Dionysodorus says that Socrates wishes Clinias to die, since for Clinias, who is ignorant, becoming wise would mean dying. It has been remarked also that Socrates never denies that becoming wise is a sort of death; what he denies is that death is a definitive passing away, since death, just like in the case of becoming wise and better, is a regenerative one. Death can be regenerative because there is something which does not change, and this is, according to the *Phaedo*, soul's indissoluble bond to the Life itself. Clinias can become better and start caring for himself; this transformation is a sort of death, which starts with a dead-like experience, the *aporia*. However what dies in this transformation is what is changeless; ignorance, naivety, excessive self-confidence and so on, can be deeply rooted in souls and nonetheless can be removed; a soul indeed is not naive in the same way as it is alive, since naivety, albeit deeply rooted, is a condition which can be removed if one commits to caring for oneself and never ceases to practice this care, whereas souls' bond to Life cannot be removed. This means that, even if Clinias dies as a naive young and careless of himself and revives as an adult committing to self-care, his soul, as metaphysically bonded to the Life itself, has never ceased to be alive. What of the soul dies in its transformation is only that which prevents the soul from becoming better. It is because soul is bound to the Life itself that self-care is possible; in fact if soul were only changeable, if there were be nothing steady and reliable in it, transforming itself would doom soul to a definitive death. On the contrary, thanks to the metaphysical kinship with the Life itself soul is always alive in spite of the several deaths (transformations) which it may face. Self-care is a dynamic balance of destruction and preservation, since it is based on the ongoing destruction of those hindrances in soul (*ἀμαθία*, haughtiness, slavery to others' opinions and so on) which prevent soul itself from becoming better and the preservation of the commitment to self-improvement, that is to say the *μελέτη*¹⁹⁶. Self-care involves both destruction and preservation and it is not fanciful to say that such a structure of self-care parallels the structure of soul; in fact destruction is possible because there are soul's features which can be removed

¹⁹⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 431-433.

(ἀμαθία and the other shortcomings of souls recalled above are part of what in soul can be changed)¹⁹⁷: the preservation of the commitment to self-improvement is possible because, under and beyond these destructions, soul carries on being alive thanks to its bound to the Life itself, that which makes it able to keep alive the effort to carry on the transformations which it undertakes. From what has been said it follows that soul, as both changeless and changeable is also to some extent both mortal and immortal, and it is this which makes possible the μελέτη θανάτου, which, as said above, is the very essence of self-care¹⁹⁸. In the section devoted to the analysis of the contrary argument it has been said that the particular λόγοι are not eternal and the soul which wants to practice its own death (its own transformation) must be ready to give up its own λόγος; however there is a λόγος which soul must never give up; that great λόγος which is the dialectic inquiry¹⁹⁹. Under and beyond the several λόγοι which pass away, there is a λόγος which remains steady and soul can preserve and give up because of its inner structure. Therefore it can be said that it is true that soul cannot die; however it must be explained how it is true. In fact if one intends θάνατος as decomposition, it is obvious that soul does not die in this way, since it is bound to the Life itself and is not an aggregate of parts²⁰⁰. On the contrary, if one intends θάνατος as a *transformation aimed at becoming better and strengthening the likeness to the divine*, then soul can die and actually soul is the only entity which can die in this way²⁰¹. Given that, it can be concluded that soul, as both changeless and

¹⁹⁷ More exactly, they are faults of soul which can be removed as long as one commit to self-improvement since youth. If one does not take care of oneself, these faults would become permanent features of soul. On the other hand the presence in the final myth of departed doomed to the eternal stay in Tartarus (113e1-6) suggests that, when the self-negligence has come too far, soul becomes hopeless and self-care is no more possible.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. *supra*, p. 482.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 475ff.

²⁰⁰ Cf. *supra*, note 192.

²⁰¹ Regarding soul's likeness to the divine cfr. *supra*, pp. 501ff. Bodies' transformations are mere additions or dispersion of elements: it is soul which gives an aim to the transformation of the bodies, for instance a soul which decides to train the body it ensouls. On the other hand Ideas, as beyond any kind of change, are also beyond any kind of death.

changeable, mortal and immortal, is the true “bearer of contraries” and it cannot be otherwise; in fact self-care is possible only because soul by its own nature is and must be a dynamic balance of different instances.

The fourth argument on the immortality of soul brings to an end that implicit ontology of care whose foundations have been laid in the third argument²⁰². The fourth is also the last of the dialectic arguments of the dialogue and the argument satisfies even Cebes, who claims to have been convinced by Socrates’ reasoning that soul is immortal and does not need any further argument (107a2-b5). Instead Simmias seems to be split: he himself fails to see how he could mistrust the λόγοι on the immortality of soul; however the importance of the subject (ὕπὸ μέντοι τοῦ μεγέθους περὶ ὧν οἱ λόγοι εἰσὶν, 107a9-b1) and the human weakness (τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἀσθένειαν 107b1) prevent him from trusting what has been said. Simmias is split because he finds Socrates’ arguments sound from a logic point of view. However this is not enough to him; the human weakness leads him to fear and be discouraged. The human weakness could be the human inability to directly grasp the Invisible. This weakness, which is the condition typical of every human and in particular of those who have not been purified through philosophy, if not educated, leads to fear that there is nothing beyond what can be perceived and as a consequence to fear death; that which philosophy must avert²⁰³. However, the dialectic arguments do not seem to have had the wished effect on Simmias, who is not yet persuaded and on the other hand Socrates himself admits that the main assumption (τάς γε ὑποθέσεις τὰς πρώτας) should be further examined, even if they are trustworthy²⁰⁴. To persuade Simmias, even if not to convince him definitively,

²⁰² Cf. *supra*, note 193. By “ontology of care” I understand the foundation of the necessity of care in soul’s nature, which is that of an intermediate reality which, albeit longing for knowledge and happiness, does not possess them in an indefectible way, but must commit to their pursuit and their preservation throughout its life, at least as long as it ensouls a body. Only after death it is possible to few men (the true philosopher) to bring to an end this pursuit and reach once and for all such a condition in an indefectible and *divine* way.

²⁰³ Cf. *infra*, pp. 541.

²⁰⁴ The main assumption is the participation of things to Ideas and the existence of the Ideas themselves, which throughout the dialogue has never been demonstrated, but always taken for granted.

Socrates draws upon a different way of communication, one by means of which he may reach more easily that part of Simmias' soul which the dialectic method has not entirely reached.

The myth of the Phaedo

The myth and the exhortation to the courage before life

The final myth marks the change of Socrates' way of communicating; no more by questions and answers according to the dialectic method, but by means of a long myth; this does not mean that Socrates' aim has not changed. He wants to persuade Simmias and Cebes to be hopeful about death and to care their souls so as to be ready and not fearful before death; however, this time he does not start another argument; instead he tells a myth, a myth which, albeit not endowed with a dialectic structure, shares the aim of the previous arguments. The fact that the arguments and the myth, in spite of their difference, share the same aim, makes necessary an examination of the role of a myth in a dialectic context. Before starting this examination, it is useful to remember that our aim in this chapter is to show how the *Phaedo* can be read as a dialogue on *care*; accordingly, our aim in this section of the chapter is not to analyse every single detail of the myth, such as the intricate geography of the other world or the place which every kind of soul deserves. What matters is to show that the myth is a tool of *care* and, as a consequence, *a precious ally of the dialectic method*, which as said above, in the way of reasoning and communicating on which the care is based. Now it is useful to make some remarks about the lines preceding the myth starting at 110b5. These lines are relevant for three reasons. The first one is that in these lines, at 107c1-2, the ἐπιμέλεια τῆς ψυχῆς explicitly appears. Obviously the care of soul pervades the entire dialogue, but the Greek words which mean it occur only here, in the lines between the end of the dialectic arguments and the beginning of the myth. This cannot be fortuitous; the ἐπιμέλεια τῆς ψυχῆς works like a bridge laid between the dialectic arguments and the myth, because the care of soul is their common aim²⁰⁵. Another

²⁰⁵ The ἐπιμέλεια τῆς ψυχῆς is the core of the unity of this dialogue, of its dialectic and mythical sections, a unity which has been questioned by some scholars (Cf. G. Ryle, 1966,

notheworthy point is the presence of the δαίμονες, guides of souls in the other world (107d6; 108b3-4). In the chapter on the *Apology* it has been stressed that Socrates is a δαίμων because, assisting the gods in their task, he is an intermediate between them and humans²⁰⁶. However, according to what has been said in the other chapters, Socrates is a δαίμων also as a guide in the other world. If by “other world” one understands a sphere lying behind and beyond the perceptible one, it is Socrates who leads soul to it. When he tries to “undress” Charmides, he tries to leads Charmides’ soul to see itself; but soul is by nature invisible, not belonging, on not entirely belonging, to the perceptible world. Therefore Socrates leads Charmides’ soul to the invisible world which is the world of the soul itself, away from things such as the concerns for the opinions of his guardian, for reputation and so on, so that the soul may be experience its true condition away from concers which prevent it from the self-examination. The same applies to Alcibiades, whom Socrates distances from the world of the city and its prevalent longing for political and military supremacy: he leads him to the invisible world of his soul where the true origin of every action lies, that is to say the divine longing for true happiness²⁰⁷. Eventually the same reasoning applies also to Phaedrus, whom Socrates purifies from the idea of love as a mere longing for beautiful bodies in order to lead him to the comprehension of the philosophical love, an otherwordly form of love, the longing of a soul for the beauty of another soul²⁰⁸. Socrates is the one who leads the soul to the Invisible, that is to say: he leads the soul to itself. Therefore he is δαίμων not only as intermediate being between human and gods, but also as guide of souls into the invisible realm²⁰⁹. Human souls needs guides because of the rough route

p. 182; F. Ferrari, 2006, p. 255). On the connection between the dialectic argument and the myth cf. G. Arrighetti, 1991, pp. 1-22; L. Brisson, 1994, pp. 144-145; L. Napolitano, 2021, pp. 13-43.

²⁰⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 342ff.

²⁰⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 215ff.

²⁰⁸ Cf. *Phaedr.* 255b7-e2.

²⁰⁹ It goes without saying that it is thanks to dialectic method that he manages to make his interlocutors’ soul emerge so as to lead them to see the invisible they are. If Socrates is he himself a δαίμων, this could mean that he does not need any guide in the other world. This is consistent with the comparison of the philosopher to an Orphic/Pythagorean initiate which pervades the dialogue.

they have to travel in the other world; a path that Socrates, one can guess, as a philosopher and familiar to the invisible, can travel more easily and hopefully than those who are too bound to the perceptible world. Few things are to say about the true earth, since this shows one of the most significant powers of the myths, that to move the imagination of those who hear it and allow them to approach what otherwise would be hard to grasp²¹⁰. It can be stated that the true earth of the myth is the realm of the Ideas²¹¹; In fact, according to the lexicon of the ritual purity used by Socrates, such an earth is pure and lays in a pure sky (αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν γῆν καθαρὰν ἐν καθαρῷ κεῖσθαι τῷ οὐρανῷ 109b7-8)²¹². Thus true earth is pure, like everything living on it, just like the Ideas, which are the pure objects of a pure knowledge²¹³. Furthermore, there is a noteworthy passage which recalls *Phaedr.* 247b7-248b4. In these lines of the *Phaedrus* it is said that the plain of truth (the eidetic realm) is *beyond* the sky (that is to say beyond the visible) (247c3) and only the soul able to raise its head over the vault of the sky can see it (248a1-3). In the *Phaedo* humans, living in the holes on the surface of the true earth, think that they live on earth (109c3-5; d6-8). However if one stuck one's head over the surface of the hole in which humans live (that which humans call sky) or became winged²¹⁴, one could see

The otherworld is to an initiate not as unknown as it may be to the uninitiated. As the golden leaves show, the initiates at their death were provided with some sort of instructions which allowed them to orient themselves in the otherworld: cf. R. Janko, 1984, pp. 89-100. If Socrates does not need to be guided in the other world because he himself is a guide, this makes Socrates very close to those, like Empedocles or Pythagoras, to the souls of whom was credited the ability to reach the other world as they want: cf. M. L. Gemelli Marciano, 2018, pp. 303-323. An other hint in the text that Socrates, as a δαίμων and philosopher, does not need he himself a δαίμων, comes from lines 108c3-5.

210 Cf. *Plot.* III, V, 9, 24-28. So the *eikon mythos* of the *Timaeus*, which, using images and similitudes, helps understand a subject, the birth of the universe, whose difficulty is a challenge for everyone who deals with it: cf. W. Mesch, 2002, pp. 194-213.

211 Cf. F. Ferrari, 2006, pp. 255-256.

212 The purity of the true earth and what pertains to it is stressed in 109d3-4; 110c2; 110e3; 111b5-6.

213 It is to keep in mind ritual prohibition for those who are not pure to touch pure things: cf. *Phaed.* 67b2.

214 The soul of the *Phaedrus* is winged.

the true earth, just like the fishes of the sea, raising their head over the surface of the water, could see the earth, on which they themselves live. The Ideas of the *Phaedrus* dwell in a region beyond the sky, which human soul can reach only by sticking its head over the sky; the true earth of the *Phaedo* lays beyond that which human call sky and can be reached by those who stick their head over this sky. The true earth of the *Phaedo* and the Ideas of the *Phaedrus* share these features: however, the eidetic realm of the *Phaedrus* is colorless, without contours and intangible (ἡ γὰρ ἀχρώματός τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος καὶ ἀναφῆς οὐσία ὄντως οὐσα, 247c6-7); on the contrary the true earth, and Socrates seems to stress it, is endowed with colors, even if much purer and more beautiful than those to which humans are accustomed (110b7; c2-6). Furthermore on the surface of the true earth trees, flowers and fruits grow and numerous precious stones are to find (110d5-e2); even if all these things are much more beautiful and purer than those which are to find in the human world (110e3-6), they are described as things endowed with contours and, as such, touchable. It seems that in the myth of the *Phaedrus* and that of the *Phaedo* describe the same thing (the eidetic sphere) with opposite features. However this opposition is not so hard to resolve; even if there are differences in describing the eidetic realm in the two myths, these differences are to trace back to the interlocutors and the contexts of the two dialogues. Phaedrus is a young charmed by beautiful speeches; Socrates fears that Phaedrus may espouse a wrong idea of love intended as a mere benefitting from bodily beauty of bodies. It could be reasonable that, to avoid that, Socrates insists in the myth on the alterity of the eidetic world and of soul's nature. Simmias is a young interested in philosophy still bound to a mechanistic worldview. He is enthusiastic about the recollection theory; however he blames the human weakness for his failing to completely trust Socrates' arguments. Socrates in the third and in the fourth arguments has always stressed the otherness of the Ideas and soul; however this has not persuaded Simmias; actually this ongoing stressing the gap between the perceptible world and the eidetic realm may have made Simmias even more distrustful and fearful of death. His discouragement has led Socrates to change strategy; he stops stressing the alterity of the Invisible realm, as he has done in the dialectic arguments, and starts, in the final myth, describing the Invisible world as it were similar to this one, even if much

purer and more beautiful. Socrates uses the imaginative language of the myth in order to make the Invisible more “visible” and helps Simmias to face its human weakness; thus he makes Simmias feel more comfortable. Above it has been said that Socrates tailors his dialectic strategies to the characteristics of the interlocutor²¹⁵; now we have seen that this applies also to myth. The myth of the *Phaedrus* highlights the alterity of the eidetic sphere, whereas the myth of the *Phaedo* describes it as similar to the perceptible world because the interlocutors to whom they are addressed are different. To make Simmias more trustful and hopeful about death, Socrates stresses the happiness of those who dwell on the surface of the true earth, which are the souls of those who are deserved such a staying²¹⁶. It is noteworthy that in 63c1-2 Socrates does not dwell too much on the presence of virtuous humans in the otherworld; now instead he is stressing this point. This is quite reasonable if one considers that he is trying to persuade Simmias to be hopeful not only about Socrates’ death, but also about his own: if in the world beyond this one those who have deserved staying there (the true philosopher) benefit from an endless happiness, this means that it is worth living philosophically and practicing the μελέτη θανάτου; it is for this reason that the final myth of the *Phaedo* has an exhortative aim and it exhorts not only to be hopeful about death, but also to be courageous during life. Socrates mentions several times ἀνδρεία in the *Phaedo* intended as the courage of the soldiers before death; however, ἀνδρεία is also the courage before refutations and before the possibility that certitudes be wiped away. Socrates never tries to avoid objections; actually, he himself exhorts Simmias and Cebes to move their objections; Socrates has chosen to devote its life to self-and others’ care. This involves the practice of dialectic method, based on dialectic communication and in a true dialectic exchange one cannot ask one’s interlocutors to refrain from moving their objections²¹⁷. If self-care, as μελέτη θανάτου, involves the life-long commitment to self-improvement, it involves also the courage before

²¹⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 26; 40-41.

²¹⁶ Among them there are also those who have practiced the common temperance and justice, without philosophy. However contrary to philosophers, they do not stay in this blessed realm eternally and, after a certain time, resume the cycle of reincarnation: cfr. A. Lami, 2020, note 235.

²¹⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 479-481.

the challenges coming from this life-style. Accordingly the philosophical ἀνδρεία is deeply linked with the idea of μελέτη: if μελέτη is the effort to keep alive one's own transformation, ἀνδρεία is the firmness before the difficulties which may lead to give up such a life-style. The myth of the *Phaedo* exhorts to be hopeful about death, but hopeful can be only those who have had the courage to live in a certain way; therefore it can be said that the myth exhorts to be courageous and practice the μελέτη θανάτου, even if this path is hard to travel; only in this way one can be hopeful about one's own death. Given that, it can be said that the myth is a tool of *self-care*; the myth is aimed at inspiring courage, without which a life style based on *self-care* is impossible. That myths and in particular the myths on the other world are aimed at inspiring courage it is stated in the *Republic*. According to Socrates, hearing since childhood that Hades is a terrible and fearful place may lead to fear of death and as a consequence to cowardice; therefore those who will be combative must hear myths which commend the other world. So they will not fear death (*Resp.* 386a1-c2). Socrates is speaking in these lines of the courage in war; however not only soldier, but also philosopher needs the courage before death; the myths are aimed at inspiring courage also in the philosophers, not only in soldiers. However, the courage before death cannot be detached from the courage before life; actually it is courage before life the origin of the courage before death. As said above, the life style of *self-care* is not easy to practice, not only because of its inner difficulties, but also because of the relationship with the other fellow-men. It has been said several times that *self-care* has a relational structure and improving oneself involves benefitting others by helping them improving themselves²¹⁸. However, not all are thankful to Socrates; he himself acknowledges that he has raised great discontent among those who have been refuted by him (*Ap.* 21b1ff.). Many love Socrates, but many also hate him and it has been his own life-style which has raised this hate; practicing *self-care* may involve this and for this reason the practitioner of *self-care* must be ready not only to die, but also to endure the challenges which his own life-style entail. Not only must he not fear death, but must he not fear life. The myth of the *Phaedo* and in general the myths exhorting to virtue must be able to inspire such

²¹⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 35-39; 126ff; 377; 408.

a courage, a kind of firmness not only before death, but also before challenges and difficulties in general. In *Republic* the courage is a virtue of the θυμοειδής, that vast domain of human soul involving self-affirmation, shame, pride, but also heroism and self-denial²¹⁹. If exhortative myths like that of the *Phaedo* must inspire courage, it follows that their target is the θυμοειδής. On the other hand, it makes sense that in the *Republic* is the θυμοειδής the target of the myths. The ἐπιθυμητικόν must not be repressed, but disciplined; however it cannot help reason directly. It can be said the a disciplined ἐπιθυμητικόν helps reason by not troubling the soul. Reason devotes itself to knowledge and to the search for truth and the dialectic method is the way it travels in order to attain its aims; but what helps reason implement what it thinks of? What gives to reason the strenght to pursue what is good or to accomplish it in social life? The answer is: what gives strenght to reason is an educated θυμοειδής. An educated θυμοειδής is like the rowers on a ship; it is the commander (the reason) who decides where to go, but only the rowers provide the necessary strenght to make the ship go where the commander decides. This comparison is suitable for a well educated soul (and a well balanced society); however in a soul lacking of education there is the risk that the θυμοειδής joins forces with the ἐπιθυμητικόν and this could bring to the birth of the tyrannical man. It seems in the *Republic* that the alliances of the θυμοειδής decides over fate of soul (and of community); therefore the real issue at stake in the education is lead the θυμοειδής to take the right sides. To do that, it is necessary to educate the θυμοειδής by means of myth, a kind of language it can understand and by which it can be lead to fulfill its proper fuction in soul. Accordingly using myth exhorting to courage means shaping the most powerful ally of reason (the θυμοειδής)²²⁰.

219 Courage in battle may lead a soldier to sacrifice himself in order to rescue a comrade. Therefore also self-sacrifice has to do with the θυμοειδής.

220 This does not mean that the myth speaks *only* to the θυμοειδής; in fact, myth, as rethorical and artistic device, ha salso the power to please senses, in particular the hearing and the sight, since a vivid myth make those hearing it *see* the things which are narrated: cf. L. Palumbo, 2013, pp. 35-46. The persuasiveness of myth is grounded also in these capability of pleasing senses, that which makes easier to convey the moral message that it vehiculates.

In the *Phaedo* something similar occurs. In the *Phaedo* there is no explicit mention of a threefolded soul; yet, as it has been seen above, the soul of the *Phaedo* has more instances than the cognitive one²²¹. By means of a myth Socrates wants to help Simmias face his “human weakness”, the inability to see the Invisible²²². This weakness is a cognitive one, which may lead to ethical consequences, such as believing that the only thing which matters is power on visible things (because they are the only existing) cowardice, and so on. This weakness is deeply rooted in the embodied life and it is not reasonable that the mere abstract reasoning can get the better of it. To deal with this inbuilt weakness, one must rely not only on pure reason, but also on courage and self-respect (the will not to give up); other instances which, even if not reason, can become its allies if properly educated and can be educated and persuaded to take the right sides by means of myths. The μελέτη θανάτου compels its practitioners every day of their life to face and get the better of their human weakness; therefore the practitioner of μελέτη θανάτου (the true philosopher) needs not only rationality, but also self-affirmation (the will to get the better of the challenges which his life-style involve) and perseverance; instances which the myths, due to their exhortative nature, can educate. The presence itself of a myth in the *Phaedo* would suffice to undermine the traditional understanding of the soul in the *Phaedo* and the intellectualistic reading of it²²³. If the myth speaks a language which is not that of logic and discursive reason and the myth is addressed to soul, this means that there is in soul much more than logic and discursive reason; and this “more” the philosopher must take into account if he really wants to practice the μελέτη θανάτου.

At this point, it could be said that dialectic is not a merely intellectualistic procedure and throughout this work it has been attempted to show how the dialectic procedure always involves arousing the deep, emotional instances of the interlocutors. Accordingly, it would not be reasonable to see a separation or, what is worse, an opposition between dialectic, rational, and myth, emotional: they are

²²¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 465-467.

²²² Cf. *supra*, p. 525.

²²³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 429-431; note 4.

not identical and nevertheless cooperate²²⁴. Now it is time to examine the relationship between myth and dialectic in the *Phaedo* and see what they share and what instead makes them different from each other.

The relationship between dialectic and myth in the Phaedo.

The role of myths in Plato's philosophy is a subject on which it exists a vast literature and nothing new could be said about that, at least not within one paragraph²²⁵. However it is interesting to examine the kind of relationship between dialectic and myth occurring in the *Phaedo* because of its complexity. It has been said that myth and dialectic share the same aim, the ἐπιμέλεια τῆς ψυχῆς²²⁶. It is noteworthy that dialectic and myth share the same aim, considering that Socrates himself at the beginning of the dialogue discriminates between μύθοι and λόγοι and claims not to be μυθολογικός (61b3-5). These lines hint at a clear distinction between two ways of communicating. Yet, there are verbs in the *Phaedo*, such as μυθολογεῖν and διαμυθολογεῖν "telling myth" which occur much before the beginning of the final myth²²⁷. As a consequence, the reader of the *Phaedo* is led to think that when Socrates says that it is worthwhile to examine and tell myth (μυθολογεῖν) about the travel in the otherworld (61e1-3), the word μυθολογεῖν does not refer to the final myth (or not only), but to the dialectic arguments, so that these arguments have something mythical. The terminological oscillation regarding myth and logos is not infrequent in Plato's works²²⁸. As said above, the language of the myth talks to instances of soul which are not the rational one and persuades them to cooperate with reason. However also dialectic can serve the same purpose. In the *Euthydemus* Socrates exhorts the young Cleinias to the pursuit of virtue by means of the dialectic procedure of questioning and answering; also by means of dialectic Socrates

²²⁴ K. Geiser, 1984, pp. 125-152; D. Cürsgen, 2002; J. F. Mattéi, 2003, pp. 61-75; C. Collobert, 2012, pp. 87-108.

²²⁵ Regarding the literature on this subject cf. C. Collobert *et al.*, 2012, pp. 435-453.

²²⁶ Cf. *supra*, p. 526-527.

²²⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 433-435.

²²⁸ Cf. *Gorg.* 523a1-2; *Resp.* VI 501e3-4; *Leg.* VII 811c1-d6. Regarding the oscillation of μύθος and λόγος in the *Timaeus* cf. F. Ferrari, 2006, pp. 52-57; L. Brisson, 2012, pp. 369-391.

reaches those instances of soul, such as longings and emotion in general²²⁹. In the same way it is by means of dialectic that Socrates persuades Crito to be faithful to the principles of their friendship and be courageous before his friend's death²³⁰. In the *Phaedo* itself Socrates exhorts Simmias and Cebes and the other bystanders not to fall into discouragement, which may lead to misogyny (89a1-7)²³¹. Furthermore, both myth and dialectic can work as spells. In *Phaed.* 77e5-9 Socrates says that there is a child in us who fears death, who must be charmed every day of life until he fears death no more (ἀλλὰ χρή, ἔφη ὁ Σωκράτης, ἐπάδειν αὐτῷ ἐκάστης ἡμέρας ἕως ἂν ἐξεπάσητε). Throughout the dialogue Socrates attempts to charm Simmias and Cebes, so as to make them hopeful about his imminent death and death in general, as long as death is the end of just life. To persuade Simmias and Cebes that death is not to fear, Socrates has used both dialectic arguments and a myth; as a consequence both dialectic and myth are ἐπωδαί. On the other hand that the dialectic method, based on answering and questioning, works like the ἐπωδαί aimed at facilitating the childbirth is said in *Theaet.* 149c9-d3. In *Charm.* 157a the ἐπωδαί are the beautiful λόγοι engendering the σωφροσύνη in soul²³². Ἐπωδαί are instead the μύθοι on the gods in *Leg.* X 903a-b aimed at persuading the deniers of the divine providence that gods rule the universe²³³. The ἐπωδαί are spells endowed with persuasive power, a power which effects emotions and talks to longings and fears. The Socratic dialectic works well like a spell because it does not engage only the rational and discursive capacities of the interlocutors, but *the soul as a whole*; which involves all the instances of soul²³⁴.

Myth and dialectic share significant features: they have both an exhortative function and work like ἐπωδαί. However, there is something which discriminates these two ways of communicating; something which makes the dialectic the primary language, even if not the only one, of the care of soul. The reason is that,

²²⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 19ff.

²³⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 416ff.

²³¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 475ff.

²³² Cf. *supra*, pp. 114-115.

²³³ Regarding the myth as a spell cf. M. Vorwerk, 2003, pp. 81-86.

²³⁴ Cf. *supra*, note 229.

by means of dialectic Socrates' interlocutors come to see even that which they would prefer not to see²³⁵. Thanks to dialectic these interlocutors start losing the immediate adhesion to what they hold to be taken for granted and come to look at themselves from a certain distance. The myth is a continuous narration and, from this point of view, is much closer to an ἐπίδειξις than to dialectic; what is more important, the myth, contrary to dialectic, cannot produce that distance of the soul from itself. Myths can be useful tool of the care of soul, because they serve the purpose of educating and shaping the not rational instances of soul²³⁶; however they cannot be the main language of the care of soul because they do not lead the interlocutors to see their contradictions. Myths are unable to do that because they, even if similar to dialectic, do not have the structure of dialectic, based on answering and questioning; it is by answering to Socrates' questions that interlocutors come to find out their inner contradictions and their ignorance on subjects they think they know. The dialectic procedure, not the myths, leads to see what he would prefer to hide to others and, what is more important, to himself²³⁷. It is thanks to its refutative part that the dialectic procedure can help soul to see itself from a certain distance; thanks to refutations the interlocutor come to be distrustful about what he has held to be obvious; thus once refuted the interlocutor comes to see the difference

²³⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 228-229.

²³⁶ G. Arrighetti, 1991, p. 3; P. Destrée, 2012, pp. 109-124.

²³⁷ However, it cannot be said that myths and in general *eikones* in Plat's works have nothing to do with self-knowledge: the myth of the original humankind narrated by Aristophanes (*Symp.* 189e5ff.), the phoenician myth of metals (*Resp.* III, 414c4ff), or the puppet of *Leg.* I, 644d6-645c5 and the inner man, the lion and the monster with numerous heads in *Resp.* IX, 588c6. These myths and images say something important about ourselves; however, they do that in a way different from that of dialectic: the quoted myths and images focus on *human condition*, whereas the dialectic deal with refutation and exhortation of individual and lead the individual, not the entire humankind to self-knowledge. Nevertheless these two kind of self-knowledge are not separated from each other, as the *human wisdom* of the *apology* suggest. By refuting the craftsmen, the poets and the politicians, Socrates has come to know himself better (that the difference between them and those men is that he does not think that he knows what he does not); but this self-knowledge has led to the comprehension of the lacking nature of humankind if compared to gods. The human wisdom shows that knowing oneself as individual and knowing oneself as a part of a cosmos are two sides of the same coin.

between the person he thinks that he is and the person he really is. Becoming aware of this difference is a fundamental condition to undertake self-care. Above it has been said that the soul practicing μελέτη θανάτου is a soul able to “stand before itself”; but it is only when it is refuted that soul experiences this “standing before” itself, which is indispensable for self-care²³⁸. Dialectic is not only exhortative; it has also a destructive side, ἔλεγχος, which is the purificatory side of dialectic²³⁹. Actually it can be said that dialectic can exhort only after refuting; that is to say building only after destroying; Socrates exhorts Cleinias only after having him refuted by Euthydemus and Dionysodorus²⁴⁰ and Charmides can take the remedy for the headache (σωφοσύνη) only after the ἐπφδαί, that is to say only after being refuted²⁴¹. Myths lack the destructive part, which on the contrary dialectic possesses; however, this means also that myths are unable to lead the soul to “stand before itself”. There are no destructive myths; they have always to do only with exhortation and persuasion, never with destruction. This is the reason for which myths can serve the purpose of founding a community²⁴². There is no mythical refutation. It is true that a myth basing on the immutability of the gods implicitly denies that gods change their appearance; however, no myth involves the *explicit* refutation of the opposite belief; this is a task which is incumbent on dialectic to carry out. The presence of a destructive side in dialectic involves a different way to approach the not rational instances of soul²⁴³.

²³⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 469-470.

²³⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 19ff.

²⁴⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 73ff.

²⁴¹ Cf. *supra*, note 232.

²⁴² That which occurs in the case of noble lie (*Resp.* III, 414b7-415d4).

²⁴³ To this conclusion it could be objected that the myth of the *Gorgias* souls, naked of any shelter, are judged according to their true condition; that which the elenchus is aimed at: accordingly there would be at least one example of elenctic myth in Plato: cf. R. G. Esmond III, 2012, pp. 165-185. However also in this case it can be said what has been said above (cf. *supra*, note 237): the myth of the *Gorgias* enacts a final elenchus/judgement which every soul will face; accordingly this elenctic myth concerns humankind, whereas only the elenctic procedure performed by means of dialectic can affect the individuals.

It has been said that both dialectic and myth engages the not rational instances: however, the way to affect them is not the same. The myth appears to have some sort of direct access to these parts of soul. On the contrary dialectic, proceeding by answers and questions, has to build that gate to the interlocutors' emotions which are easier to reach to the myth. Furthermore, because of its refutative part, dialectic is bound to trigger unpleasant emotions: bewilderment, fear or shame are that which the refuted interlocutor may experience and this could lead them to run away from Socrates or hate him. However, also these unpleasant emotions have an important role²⁴⁴; they can be which triggers the definitive decision to leave one's own lifestyle so as to commit to the care of soul. Myth, as devoid of a refutative and destructive part, do not arouse these negative and unpleasant emotions; this is maybe the most important reason for which they could not be the primary language of the care of soul: by ruling out the unpleasant emotions, they rule out also something which may lead to commit to the care of soul. Given that, it can be understood how myth and dialectic, albeit sharing several significant features, are nonetheless different from each other and the main reason is that dialectic is endowed with that destructive power (refutative procedure) whereof myths are devoid. This is also the reason for which dialectic and myth are not two alternative ways of communicating. The myth is not alternative to dialectic or its opposite; the myth is an ally of dialectic; an ally on which it relies in order to reach more easily those instances of soul which it has not managed to arouse, as in the case of Simmias, who, albeit convinced by the arguments, has trouble trusting them²⁴⁵. It is the dialectic itself which acknowledges that there are hindrances which arguments by answers and questions may not be able to bypass; therefore, to persuade Simmias to be hopeful about the death of the true philosophers, Socrates uses a myth in order to reach the aim of the dialectic, the exhortation to the care of soul. This is the reason for which there is no contradiction between Socrates' words in 61b4-7 and the fact that the so many lines of the dialogue are devoted to the narration of a myth. When Socrates says that he is not a *μυθολογικός* he is speaking of the *δημώδης μουσική*, the vulgar music: this kind of music is not further outlined;

²⁴⁴ Cf. L. Lijuan, 2022, pp. 21-55.

²⁴⁵ Cf. *supra*, note 222.

however if one contrasts it with the philosophy, which is the *μεγίστη μουσική*, it can be understood in which consists its vulgarity. Philosophy aims at making the soul better and strengthening its likeness to the divine²⁴⁶. The *δημώδης μουσική*, which includes the traditional myths, is vulgar because its aim is pleasure itself, not the education of soul²⁴⁷; as a consequence it is something which can please the many, as their aim is not becoming better, but pleasing themselves²⁴⁸. Socrates' myth at the end of the dialogue is also, not only a source of pleasure. The true earth is painted with bright colors and traversated by subterranean rivers; these elements cannot help but please someone who, like Simmias, is interested in the natural philosophy and has troubles conceiving the Invisible because of the human weakness²⁴⁹. However Socrates tells this myth not (or not only) to please Simmias, but to exhort him to undertake a philosophical lyfe-style. The imaginative language of the myth is that by means of which Socrates attempts to inspire courage and persuade him that it is worth to practice true philosophy. Accordingly the myth of the *Phaedo* has not pleasure as its own aim; instead it *uses* pleasure as a *means* in order to fulfill its exhortative task; therefore it is not a vulgar myth, but a philosophical one. Given that, Socrates can say that he is not *μυθολογικός* at the same time narrating myths: if one intends *μυθολογικός* as someone who creates myths only to arouse the pleasure of those who hear them, in that case Socrates is not *μυθολογικός*; on the contrary if one considers *μυθολογικός* someone whose myths, by arousing pleasure, inspire the will to commit to the care of soul, in that case nobody is more *μυθολογικός* than Plato's Socrates²⁵⁰. On the other hand this use of myths is consistent not only with the *Republic*²⁵¹; it is consistent also with

²⁴⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 501ff.

²⁴⁷ Cf. P. Destrée, 2011, pp. 125-139.

²⁴⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 255ff. On the other hand it is the adjective *δημώδης* which hints at the connection of this music with the many.

²⁴⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 526-529.

²⁵⁰ This is one of the cases of Socrates' oracular language; Socrates' statements become true or false according to the meaning one ascribes to the words: cf. *supra*, pp. 436ff; note 17.

²⁵¹ Ruling out traditional poetry does not mean ruling out poetry *tout court*. On the other hand Plato's concern in *Republic* is to make myths vehiculate a new kind of education rather than exclude them from the community life.

the idea of μελέτη θανάτου propounded in this chapter. It has been said that the practitioner of the μελέτη θανάτου does not rule out pleasures; he includes them within a lifestyle whose aim is happiness, not pleasures themselves²⁵². Furthermore the practitioner of μελέτη θανάτου does not despise the natural world; he considers the natural phenomena the visible manifestation of invisible causes²⁵³. The initiatic way of the μελέτη θανάτου involves giving new meaning to visible things rather than excluding them. Accordingly the practitioner of μελέτη θανάτου does not underrate myths; he uses them as valid allies of dialectic in order to exhort to virtue by means of the pleasure they arouse. This is what Socrates does in the *Phaedo*. Given that, it can be concluded that dialectic and myth, albeit different from each other, share numerous features, the most important of which is their common aim, the ἐπιμέλεια τῆς ψυχῆς. Their shared aim is also the reason for which there is no break between the myth and the dialectic arguments; they share the same aim and it is this aim, the ἐπιμέλεια τῆς ψυχῆς, which pervades the entire dialogue.

Along with the myth Socrates' attempts to persuade his interlocutors and, as a consequence, the entire conversation comes to an end. The time for Socrates to drink the hemlock has come and he has no intention to postpone what is unavoidable, so that even the one appointed to give him the hemlock commends him for his courage (116c1-d2). The last pages of the *Phaedo* are devoted to Socrates' farewells to his friends and his family. These pages are important because of two reasons; 1) reading them, one can notice that Socrates displays those priestly features which have been ascribed to him in other dialogues²⁵⁴. 2) Socrates expresses his last will; this will concern the ἐπιμέλεια τῆς ψυχῆς.

The cock for Asclepius. Socrates as initiate and initiator

²⁵² Cf. *supra*, pp. 444-450.

²⁵³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 492ff. Socrates is faithful to Anaxagoras' words: ὄψις ἀδήλων τὰ φαινόμενα (DK59 B21a). From this point of view Socrates is still a staunch disciple of Anaxagoras.

²⁵⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 106-107; 160-161; 335ff.

Above it has been said that the *epopteia*, the final attainment of the true knowledge in the Hades (the invisible) is the end of a life lived according to true philosophy, which is μελέτη θανάτου. As a consequence also Socrates last actions are transformed into ritual acts preceding the phinal step of his initiatic path. Accordingly the φάρμακον itself is no more a mere poison, but becomes a ritual drink. In some gold tablets the immersion in milk is present²⁵⁵. Milk in Orphism is a symbol of immortality and in connected to the divinisation of soul in the other world. Now, it has been argued that the initiate drunk milk²⁵⁶; as a consequence, milk would play the role of a ritual drink and it is reasonable that Socrates drinks the hedlock just as an Orphic drinks milk before passing away. Another important example of ritual drink was the Cyceon in the Eleusinian mysteries; the initiates drunk them in a day of the great mysteries, which culminated in the *epopteia* in the telesterion at Eleusis²⁵⁷. On the other hand, also Socrates' washing has an initiatic meaning. In the great mysteries at Eleusis the initiates, once come to the telesterion, washed themselves in ritual tubs in the courtyard of the building. Interestingly the initiates had their ritual ablution before drinking the Cyceon, just as Socrates washes himself before drinking the φάρμακον. Socrates final acts are to compare with what he says to Charmides in the *Charmides* about the ἐπωδαί and the φάρμακον: he says that the remedy (σωφοροσύνη) cannot be taken without the ἐπωδαί (refutations)²⁵⁸. On closer inspection throughout the *Phaedo* Socrates follows his own advise. Crito himself tells Socrates that it would be better if he did not engage in διαλέγεσθαι before taking the φάρμακον. However Socrates knows that dialectic is an ἐπωδή²⁵⁹; as a consequence, one cannot do without it: dialectic, as ἐπωδή, must precede the ingestion of the φάρμακον. However, there is an essential difference between Charmides and Socrates: in the *Charmides* Charmides has to be initiated to σωφοροσύνη and Socrates is the initiator who starts singing the ἐπωδή. In the *Phaedo* Socrates, with his own dialectic arguments and the final myth,

²⁵⁵ Cf. S. Torjussen, 2014, pp. 35-45; N. Newman, 2015, pp. 102-119.

²⁵⁶ Cf. A. Bernabé, J. San Cristobàl, 2008, pp. 76-79.

²⁵⁷ Cf. A. Delatte, 1954, pp. 727-743.

²⁵⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 112 ff.

²⁵⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 535ff..

is singing an ἐπὸδὴ not only to the interlocutors, but also to himself: so he is at the same time who charms and who is charmed, he is officiating a ceremony in which he is *both initiator and initiate*. On the other hand, Socrates' self-charming is not solipsistic, since it involves the two young men, Simmias and Cebes: they are two gifted young who have approached philosophy, but who are not true philosophers yet because of their way of thinking too influenced by physicists' approach to nature. Socrates would want to lead Simmias and Cebes to the same transformation he himself faced when he was younger; also Socrates was a young man devoted to the natural philosophy and his way of thinking was similar to that of Simmias and Cebes. However the disappointment provoked by this kind of inquiry caused him to find a new method and, along with this method, a new worldview and a new way of living²⁶⁰. This meant also the entering of the Invisible in Socrates way of thinking: he is officiating on himself the final acts of his long-life path and at the same time is initiating Simmias and Cebes to that long-life path whose end Socrates has reached; to say it in mystic terms, Socrates is at end of his μύησις and leads Simmias and Cebes to start their own μύησις. Therefore it can be said that in the same place, Socrates' jail, lesser mysteries and greater mysteries are having place at the same time. Socrates' self-initiation has a relational structure, since it involves also initiating Simmias and Cebes and this at this point is no more astonishing, since self-initiation and self-transformation are two sides of one coin, the μελέτη θανάτου, and, as self-transformation, μελέτη θανάτου is self-care. Being prepared to die is the final outcome of the life-long self-care practiced by Socrates; on the other hand, as said above, self-care involves others' care since one's own good involves others' good²⁶¹. As a consequence, Socrates' self-initiation, as final act of his self-care, by its own nature involves others' initiation, that is to say the exhortation to undertake self-care. In 118c5-8 Socrates asks Crito to sacrifice a cock to Asclepius; it is well known Nietzsche's reading of these lines: according to him, Socrates is thankful to Asclepius because he frees him from a bad illness, the life itself²⁶². This reading has influenced the reading of the *Phaedo* as a dialogue in

²⁶⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 494-495

²⁶¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 531 note 218.

²⁶² Cf. F. Nietzsche, 1965, p. 191.

which Socrates despises embodied life²⁶³. However, if one considers what is the true aim of the dialectic/ἐπωδή in the *Phaedo*, one has to acknowledge that Nietzsches' judgement is erroneous. Socrates suggests that one should everyday charm oneself in order to face one's own fear of death (77e5-9); furthermore, he tells Simmias the myth in order to inspire courage and to make him hopeful about death; accordingly the core of Socrates' commitment in the *Phaedo* is not to die as soon as possible, but *get better of the fear of death*. In 98d5-99a4 he himself seems to fear death to some extent. This may be the reason for which he administers to himself the ἐπωδή, that is to say the dialectic arguments and the final myth: he wants to free himself from the fear of death before drinking the hemlock. Accordingly Socrates is thankful to Asclepius not because he is going to die, but *because he has got the better of the fear of death*. A fearless death is the outcome of a life devoted to self-care and Socrates manages to overcome this challenge. Thus Socrates' self-initiation can be carried out since he is now ready to drink the initiatic φάρμακον which marks the final step of his self-transformation. The fear of death is a consequence of the human weakness, the inability to grasp the Invisible directly: as embodied being, Socrates cannot grasp the Invisible as he could if he were only soul. However, throughout his life he has accostumed himself to the existence of an invisible world and to care his own and others' soul, which are invisible²⁶⁴; this has helped him to face his natural fear and overcome it. This makes Socrates a *daemonic man*. Gods by their own nature do not fear death (because they do not die) and humans naturally fear it; Socrates is a daemonic man not because he has come to a world devoid of the fear of death, but because he throughout his life and *thanks to his life* has overcome it. Socrates' death, at least the death which Plato enacts in the *Phaedo*, is the last hour of an initiate come at the end of his preparatory path. Therefore in *Phaedo*'s final words the word τελευτή (death) in 118a15 could be replaced with the word τέλετη:

²⁶³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 429-430; note 4.

²⁶⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 486-488.

Such was the τελέτη (initiation), Echecrates, of our friend, who was, as we may say, of all those of his time whom we have known, the best and wisest and most righteous man (118a15-17).

The kinds of immortality. Self-care and Socrates' legacy

It is known that the ancient thought conceived at least two kinds of immortality; the immortality of that which changes throughout the time, such as nature itself, and the immortality of that which is changeless because it exists beyond time. In the *Symposium* both kinds of immortality are taken into account: the timeless kind of immortality is that which live those who elevate themselves to the contemplation of the Beauty itself; this is a divine condition which can be experienced only by flashes as long as one is still alive²⁶⁵. The temporal immortality is that of the species which by means of reproduction carry on their existence throughout time. In the *Phaedo* things seem to become more complex since three kinds of immortality are to find: the timeless immortality of the Ideas, the temporal immortality of the universe, seat of the becoming in the first argument; then there is also the immortality of soul which is both temporal and timeless. In its stays in the Hades it is beyond space and time and when it embodies a body, it is involved in the weave of time. Furthermore soul is temporal and timeless not only in successive phases of its life, but also at the same time; soul cares for the body and as embodied, it is concerned with what pertains to the embodied existence; however soul has known the true being in the other world and this knowledge makes soul timeless. The difference between the philosopher and the not philosopher is that the former becomes aware of this timeless part of himself during the embodied life, whereas the latter do not²⁶⁶. It seems that the *Phaedo* says that the soul of the philosopher simply must give up this kind of intermediate immortality split between visible and invisible and decide once and for all to become immortal in a timeless way. This is not false; however if one stresses only the fact that the philosopher becomes timeless, one can easily fall into the traditional reading of the *Phaedo* according to

²⁶⁵ Cf. *supra*, p. 504-505.

²⁶⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 482ff.

which the philosopher despises temporal existence and as a consequence his own body, which is the symbol of the temporal existence of soul. Falling into this reading of the *Phaedo* is unavoidable if one forgets that the philosopher can *divinely* immortal only thank to his conduct during temporal existence. Socrates may become divinely immortal after his death only because he has practiced the ἐπιμέλεια τῆς ψυχῆς and has exhorted others to do the same. This point has been shown in the analysis of the *Euthyphro*: a holy man is not who selfishly cares for his otherworldly salvation and acts selfishly or cruelly in this world; on the contrary the holy man is the one who makes himself worthy of the divine favor by benefitting his fellow-humans in this world and helps gods to make it as good as possible²⁶⁷. The philosopher is the holy man *par excellence* (114b6-c5): as a consequence, his divine immortality cannot be the outcome of a solipsistic life indifferent to others. In his last hour Socrates warns Simmias and Cebes against the dangers of mysology and exhorts them and the other bystanders to be courageous before the death and, what is more important, before life²⁶⁸; even when he is about to drink the hedlock, he is still caring for others' souls, as it befits a holy man. The final act of Socrates' holy care for his friends is also his last will. To Crito who asks him what his friends should do in order to please him he replies:

What I always say, Crito, he replied, nothing new. If you take care of yourselves you will serve me and mine and yourselves, whatever you do, even if you make no promises now (ὅτι ὑμῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιμελούμενοι ὑμεῖς καὶ ἐμοὶ καὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς καὶ ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς ἐν χάριτι ποιήσετε ἅττ' ἂν ποιῆτε); but if you neglect yourselves and are not willing to live following step by step, as it were, in the path marked out (ὥσπερ κατ' ἴχνη) by our present and past discussions, you will accomplish nothing, no matter how much or how eagerly you promise at present (115b5-c1)

The only way Socrates' friends have to please him is by caring for themselves. This does not mean that all of them must become philosophers and practice the μελέτη θανάτου; this can be true of Simmias and Cebes, but not, for instance, of Crito, who is no young and has not the mindset of the philosopher²⁶⁹. Crito and those like him

²⁶⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 320ff.

²⁶⁸ Cf. *supra*, 526ff.

²⁶⁹ Regarding the character of Crito cf. *supra*, pp. 416ff.

must care for themselves by living and acting with justice and temperance towards themselves and others; this life-style, albeit not supported by a philosophical stance, nonetheless warrants beautiful stays in the afterlife, even if it does not free its practitioners from the cycle of the becoming. Socrates is leaving not only an exhortation, but also the way to adjust to it. Socrates' friends do not have to improvise; they have a model of just and temperate life which they can follow in their practice of self-care and this model is Socrates himself. He is leaving not only mere words, but also ἔχνη which his friends can follow. Accordingly it can be said that what Socrates is bequeathing to his friends is *his life itself as a model of self-care*. This means that the Socrates of the *Phaedo* pursues not only the timeless immortality of the gods, but also the temporal immortality. In *Symp.* 208b1-2 Diotima says that mortal longing for immortality involves that what is going away or has grown old leaves something new, which is similar to it. Accordingly a man and a woman pursue a kind of temporal immortality by giving birth to children, which will remain after their physical death. The same does Socrates in the *Phaedo*: he is exhorting his friends to self-care and, by exhorting to self-care, he exhorts them to undertake that which he himself has undertaken. As a consequence, by exhorting them to self-care, he is leaving in this world *a sort of spiritual sons*, who, by taking care of themselves and *following Socrates' example*, will carry on Socrates' life in this world after his physical death. This is a great difference between the φιλοσώματος and the philosopher: the φιλοσώματος would never leave this world, he would be immortal as an embodied being, which is impossible. On the contrary the philosopher longs not only for the timeless immortality beyond this world; he longs also for staying in this world, not as an embodied being, *but by means of his heritage*. The exhortation to self-care is what Socrates leaves of himself in this world and what his friends will leave to their children and disciples and so on; so Socrates' life carries on also after his physical death. In the case of Socrates timeless and temporal immortalities are deeply interconnected. It has been said that the timeless immortality of Socrates is the result of a life devoted to self-care, which by its own nature involves benefitting others. If this benefitting others means helping and exhorting them to undertake self-care, it follows that Socrates, by benefitting his interlocutors, makes them his spiritual sons, that is to say, people

who will leave according to Socrates' heritage after his death. However temporal immortality, as temporal, is exposed to what may happen in the temporal world; whereas the timeless immortality is a changeless condition, the temporal immortality of Socrates' λόγοι depends on those who remain; it are them who must transmit what they have heard to the next generation; otherwise the temporal immortality of teachings and ways is endangered. Therefore the timeless immortality of the divine is a condition which pertains only to those who reach it, whereas the immortality of their memory in this world is something which only those who remain can preserve; the temporal immortality of those who are gone is the result of the efforts of those who remain, of that μελέτη which is the effort to keep alive what matters²⁷⁰. An example of this μελέτη is the *Phaedo* itself: Phaedo, narrating Socrates' last hours to Echecrates, makes Socrates' temporal life carry on and starts keeping alive Socrates' heritage in this world.

Conclusions

Throughout this chapter it has been attempted to argue that, inspite of the metaphysical commitment, such as the immortality of soul and the existence of the Ideas, the *Phaedo* is nonetheless essential as a dialogue of *care*. To argue it, it has been shown that the soul of the *Phaedo*, despite the traditional reading, is endowed with a multiplicity of instances; that which makes it a soul capable of caring for itself and being cared as well²⁷¹. As a consequence, even the soul of the true philosopher has an emotional part which must not be annihilated, but *harmonised*²⁷². The harmonisation of this multiple soul is to accomplish by means of dialectic, which is not a merely intellectualistic procedure, since it engages the interlocutors in the entirety of their soul. Furthermore dialectic itself may draw on myths in order to arouse and educate those emotional instances which it itself does not neglect²⁷³. All these issues of the reading of the *Phaedo* are interconnected to

²⁷⁰ Cf. *supra*, pp. 431-433.

²⁷¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 501ff.

²⁷² Cf. *supra*, pp. 464ff.

²⁷³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 538-540.

each other by means of the overarching idea of this chapter: that the μελέτη θανάτου is not the intellectualistic annihilation of the body, *but the initiatic self-transformation of the soul in its entirety*. If the reading of the *Phaedo* were based on this μελέτη θανάτου as self-transformation of the soul, this dialogue would turn out to be as important for the understanding of *self-care* as other dialogues, such as the *Apology* and the *Alcibiades I*.

Conclusive Remarks.

What hides behind Hades. Philosophy as apollonian mystery

It has been said that Plato not only uses religious and poetical tradition, but appropriates them²⁷⁴. He does not establish a merely superficial comparison between philosophy and initiation: he means to make philosophy *a proper initiatic path*, as the idea itself of μελέτη θανάτου shows. That of Plato is not a mere use of existing languages or imageries: it is an appropriation. This means that he not only uses a material which comes to him from already existing traditions, but makes it vehiculate new aims, *the aims of philosophy*. In the case of the *Phaedo* Plato appropriates the Orphic imagery and language to philosophy, which is a initiatic path. This means in first place that the God to which this philosophic mystery are devoted and in honour of whom the initiates undertake the μελέτη θανάτου is not Dionysos, as it is true of the Orphism. It is not Dionysos the God to whom the philosophical mysteries are devoted; this God is one who by his own nature is invisible. In 80d6-7 Socrates says that soul, as invisible, goes to a different, pure and *invisible* (ἀιδῆ) place, by the good and wise God (παρὰ τὸν ἀγαθὸν καὶ φρόνιμον θεόν): considering the references to the Invisible and the Hades in these lines, it seems reasonable to conclude that the wise and good God by whom Socrates hopes he will go is Hades himself. In these lines and throughout the dialogue in general a further important appropriation has taken place, that of the Hades, which, according to tradition, sometimes is represented as a God, sometimes as a place. However it may be, the Hades of the *Phaedo* is no more an invisible and fearful place, *but an invisible and desirable one*. Since the death itself is for the philosopher

²⁷⁴ Cf. Chapter VI, 339ff; note 1.

the necessary gate through which he can accede to the true knowledge and the true Being, which is invisible (the Ideas), it follows that the Hades, as a place, is the seat of the true Being, where the philosopher can attain true understanding of everything, while, as a God, Hades turns out to be the God of the true Being (the Invisible) and of true knowledge as well²⁷⁵. Accordingly Hades is the God of the philosophers, the final aim of the μελέτη θανάτου, the God with whom the soul of the true philosopher, once divinised, will enjoy the true knowledge of the Invisible²⁷⁶. However the connection between Dionysos and Hades was strong in the ancient world and in the mystic traditions, so that Plato's philosophical appropriation of the Hades and of the Orphic material would seem to have gone not so far from the Orphic tradition²⁷⁷. However in 85b1-10 things seem to be different: in these famous lines Socrates compares his arguments on the immortality of soul to the song which swans sing when they realise that their last hour has come. Swans are servants of Apollo and their last song is not due to pain, but to joy, since they, as skilled mantic, know in advance the goods awaiting them in the Hades. Socrates claims to have the same master as the swans and be devoted to Apollo (ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἡγοῦμαι ὁμόδουλός τε εἶναι τῶν κύκνων καὶ ἱερός τοῦ αὐτοῦ θεοῦ) and he is no less skilled in soothsaying as the swans. Socrates' words in these lines are consistent with other dialogues wherein Socrates comes across as servant of Apollo and skilled in soothsaying²⁷⁸. In these lines Apollo is said to be Socrates' master and tutelary deity, whereas above it has been remarked that it is Hades is the wise and good God by whom the soul of the philosophers will dwell. It seems that Socrates is speaking of two different Gods; however it can be argued that the Hades of the *Phaedo* is but Apollo himself. There are several hints which suggest this identification. First of all, the realm of the Invisible, the Hades where Hades dwells,

²⁷⁵ The philosophical Hades of the *Phaedo* is not far from becoming a God-intelligence, whose contemplation of the Being (the Ideas) is eternal, since he himself is not different from the objects of its contemplation.

²⁷⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 507ff. Regarding the differences between the Socrates of Plato and the Orphism cf. *supra*, pp. 505; 511; note 155; 173.

²⁷⁷ Regarding the connection between Hades and Dionysos cf. S. Torjussen, 2006, pp. 86-101.

²⁷⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 137; 158; 83-84; 263ff; 358ff.

is also a realm of purity, since the true Being is something pure which only the purified soul can reach²⁷⁹. Purification is a domain of Apollo, not only the purification of the body, but also of the soul (*Crat.* 405a5-b4). These few lines of the *Cratylus* have an important bearing on the reading of the *Phaedo*; if philosophy is a purification of soul, this means that the Apollo is the tutelary deity of the μελέτη θανάτου. Given that, an intimate connection, even if not an identification, between Apollo and Hades has come to light; the former is the pure God by whom pure souls dwell, the latter is the purifying God who makes souls deserving of dwelling by Hades. The next point is to show that the pure god and the purifying one are not only deeply interconnected, but are the same thing. In the third argument it is said that the Ideas have no parts and therefore they cannot be divided²⁸⁰; they are simple entities. The Invisible, the seat of the true Being is the simple and indivisible domain of truth and Hades, as invisible god of true knowledge, must be likewise simple. The simple nature of the Invisible can be fruitfully compared with *Crat.* 405c2-5: here it is said that Apollo, on account of the soothsaying, the truth and the simple, is called Ἀπλοῦν (the Simple). This perfectly matches the nature of the Invisible in the *Phaedo*; Ideas are invisible and simple, since they lack inner multiplicity, but they are also true; actually they are the truth. The true cause of numerous equal objects is an Equal which is *invisible, one, and simple* (lacking inner multiplicity). Accordingly the truth, which Apollo reveals by means of the soothsayers, is simple, because is one²⁸¹; furthermore it is invisible, since the truth revealed by Apollo concerns what must happen or what has happened unnoticed. Therefore Apollo, as God of truth, is God of something *invisible and simple*, just as Hades, as God of true Being, is God of something *invisible and simple*. A further hint to the identification of Hades to Apollo comes from the *Phaedo* itself: in 85a1-3 Socrates says that swans, realising that they are going to die, are happy because they are going by the God of whom they are servants, that is to say Apollo. If Socrates is servant of the same God, this means that also Socrates, as ὁμόδουλος of the swans,

²⁷⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 442ff.

²⁸⁰ Cf. *supra*, p. 501ff.

²⁸¹ Accordingly “one” is the expert, opposed to the many, who ignore what must be done: cf. *supra*, pp. 397ff.

hopes that he will go by Apollo. Above it has been said that it is Hades the God by whom the soul of philosopher will dwell; now it is Apollo the God by whom Socrates hopes he will go. If there is no contradiction, it means that Hades and Apollo are the same God; that which is consistent with the idea of knowledge pervading the dialogue. If Apollo is the God of knowledge, and knowledge, as comprehension of truth, involves grasping the Invisible, it follows that Apollo is the God of the Invisible; that is to say, he is Hades. Therefore Ἄιδης could be considered as one of the name of Apollo; he is the invisible God because he knows what is true and simple, which is by its own nature invisible. As a place, the Ἄιδης is the realm of the invisible, that is to say, the realm of Apollo.

Now it is possible to understand the bearing of Plato's appropriation of the Orphic imagery and language: he uses them in order to found philosophy as an initiatic path. However he seizes them and makes them the tools of the description of an Apollonian initiation: the imagery of the orphism at the service of the Apollonian mysteries, that is to say philosophy²⁸². Accordingly, it is not Dionysos, but Apollo the God of self-transformation, and God of the death itself, intended as transformation. This means also that not Dionysos, but Apollo is the God of rebirth. Those who decide to commit to the philosophical life-style somehow die as the people they have been and come to the world a second time: just like Socrates, who, after leaving the inquiry into nature of the physicists, revive as a practitioner of the μελέτη θανάτου who practices the dialectic method²⁸³. The Apollonian mysteries are based on a kind of ritual whose nature makes it different from any other ceremony in any other mysteric cult; it is a dialectic ritual, which means that it is a *dialogic ritual*. During this ritual the dead-like *aporia* has place and only who manages to overcome the fear and the bewilderment (or also the shame) coming from the *aporia* can undertake the initiatic path of the μελέτη θανάτου, which is self-care itself. Socrates is the initiator of his young interlocutors, such as Cleinias, Alcibiades, Charmides, Simmias and Cebes, and at the same time is an initiate at

²⁸² Even if Dionysos is the main divinity of the orphism, Apollo is nonetheless present in the orphic traditions and plays a not unimportant role in the events concerning Orpheus and Dionysos himself. Cf. E. S. de la Torre, 2013, pp. 58-82.

²⁸³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 499ff.

the highest degree of his path. His purificatory power comes to him by Apollo and exerts it by means of dialectic. Dialectic is the art by means of which Socrates reveals to his interlocutors, *and with the help of his interlocutors*, the Invisible lying in them, that is to say their soul. In the same way, by means of soothsaying Apollo reveals the *Invisible* to those who ask for his responses. Dialectic, as a priestly art, is the skills by means of which the Initiator reveals to people their soul, what of us is invisible. Therefore the true philosopher is an initiate and an initiator of the Invisible (*scil.* of souls) to the knowledge of the Invisible itself (the soul itself and the Ideas by means of recollection); that Invisible whose undisputed master is Apollo/Hades.

Conclusion: The Socrates of Plato as gateway to the dialogue with other civilisations.

This work has started with some remarks on the twentieth-century readings of the Socratic dialogue; as said above, the Socrates of these readings is that of Plato, so that the attempt highlight the importance of the Socratic dialogue involves the attempt to read Plato in a different way from that which Nietzsche has initiated and Heidegger in the twentieth century has continued. The conclusive remarks on a work on Plato's Socrates is not the proper place to carry out a thorough analysis on the criticisms addressed to Plato in the twentieth century, a subject on which there are several noteworthy works¹; however, it can be said that, apart from the readings focusing on the importance of the Socratic dialogue (the Socratic dialogue enacted in Plato's works), Plato has been the target of several criticism during the past century: Plato initiator of the metaphysics and the *Seinsvergessenheit*, Plato forerunner of the Holocaust, Plato enemy of the open society are some of the images of Plato which have had so a powerful bearing that they, in particular those concerning the political aspect, have ended up influencing also the precomprehension of those who do not study ancient philosophy². The Socrates of Plato follows the destiny of Plato's dialogues: accordingly, as said above, highlighting the importance of Plato's Socrates and reading Plato's work in a different way go hand in hand. However there is at least one feature which the demonisation of Plato and the enthusiastic, modern interpretations of his works share: the implicit reference to Western civilisation. The Metaphysics, intended as that way which leads to the oblivion of the essence of Truth, is something which concerns the western culture and Plato, as initiator of Metaphysics is also the initiator of western civilisation; accordingly, the Plato forerunner of the Holocaust and enemy of the open society are images which have grown out of the terrible events which have troubled western civilisation; event which have compelled numerous thinker to rethink the development of western culture and its

¹ Cf. M. Dixsaut, 1993.

² Cf. K. R. Popper, 1945; H. Arendt, 1962, pp. 460-479; M. Heidegger, 1997.

responsability in those events³. In the same way the implicit, but pervasive reference to western civilisation is implicit in the political readings of the Socratic dialogues and, we could add, also in the pedagogical readings⁴. Plato's works are the core of the sunset of western world or the source of its rebirth; however it may be, it is to western world that Plato speaks and it are only the answer the western culture seek that which in Plato is useful to find. Obviously, the bearing of Plato's works on western civilisation is impossible to deny and the attempt to seek in these works suggestions and solutions to the problems of western world has historical reason into which it is not possible here to go deeper. However, there is a question which, at the end of the present work, I would like to pose to the reader: is this implicit, but totalising reference to the western world the only interpretation or are there others? Does this interpretation not prevent from finding other elements of Plato's works which could be useful to understand them? To answer to such a question, it is necessary to understand what is that « western world » to which the twentieth century readings implicitly refer; in my opinion, by western world we can understand a kind of civilisation devoid of bonds which connect it to other cultures; as a consequence, the totalising reference to modern civilisation in interpreting Plato means the totalising reference to a world and a culture which considers itself as different and not comparable to any other. However, is Plato only able to lead us within the boundaries of that which is called « Occident »? Is the dialogue with our present and our civilisation the only dialogue which Plato's works make possible or can they lead the reader beyond the boundaries of that which is usually understood by « western civilisation »? The previous chapter devoted to Plato's dialogues are but a tentative answer to the raised question. I have attempted to highlight the importance of the ritualistic dimension in the Socratic dialogue and Socratici deal of care not only because this aspect deserves a more attentive consideration; highlighting the presence of the ritualistic element within a work devoted to care in Plato's work is aimed also at showing how Plato may work as a highway which connect our civilisation to others. As said above, this aim has been

³ A telling example of this rethinking the development of western culture is *Die Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1947) by M. Horkheimer and Th. W. Adorno.

⁴ Cf. M. Nussbaum, 2010.

pursued here only in a tentative way and it would need a further work which focuses more on the anthropologic aspects; nevertheless, even if this work has not (and could not) laid a bridge between Platonic studies and anthropology, it has laid a stone to which, it would be desirable, further studies will add others. In the introduction it has been argued that Plato appropriates to philosophy several initiatic experiences, not only the orphic mysteries, but also the corybantism and the ritual of passage from childhood to manhood. These experiences are grounded in the idea of transition and initiatic death, according to which the initiation is the death in a life which one has left behind and the re-birth in a new life which one is going to live⁵. The initiatic death, which in this work I have considered has an essential feature of the Socratic care in Plato's dialogues, is an experience which humankind has always practiced in every place and every time; it can be easily considered an anthropological constant⁶. In the same way, it is an anthropological constant that young people (male and female) at a certain point of their life have to face a challenge which is a divide between their life before and their life after. Throughout this work it has been argued that this challenge is the *aporetic* moment; only those who are able to face it in the proper way become able to care for themselves and commit to their self-improvement⁷. This self-improvement involves learning to die, that is to say learn to kill in ourselves those parts of us which, albeit deep-rooted in our life, prevent from this self-improvement. Also childhood can become such an emotional illness which prevent us from this self-improvement. In Plato's dialogues Socrates speaks several times of the πολλοί, those who have not managed to become truly adults; as children, they immediatly and recklessly adhere to that which they hold to be true, right, honorable and so on; they have never learned to kill in themselves those fears and desires, those pleasures and pains which prevent from self-improvement and reinforce those which lead happiness; they have never learned to rise from their own ashes; that which those who have properly faced the *aporia* are able to do. Although it is too lengthy to argue this point in the final pages

⁵ Cf. *Introduction, passim*. Cf. M. Eliade, 1975; H. Kraft, 1995; H. Möller, U. Clement, P. Eberl, 2012, pp. 199-227.

⁶ Cf. J. Mittelstrass, 2003, pp. 483-494.

⁷ Cf. *Introduction*, pp. 20-22.

of this work, I would suggest that probably the μελέτη θανάτου is the true core of every initiatic path everywhere; it is the human aspiration to go beyond one's own boundaries and explore new territories; but this is possible only as long as one is ready to give up one's previous life; accordingly, the initiated into manhood give up the childhood, the initiated into philosophy *must* cease to be one of the πολλοί. The fact that the initiatic and ritualistic dimension is so present in Plato's works could lead the readers to deepen the knowledge of others traditions risen in other civilisations; however this attempt to see the importance of the ritual death in Plato in relation to other traditions must not be carried out in light of an excessive philological mindset; in fact, what can be fruitfully applied to subject such as the transmission of codes conveying ancient works from the middle age to the renaissance does not necessarily apply to subject such as comparative studies in anthropology. For instance, a medieval code of the thirteenth century conveying Plato's *Republic* presents in the same passage the same textual variations as an other code of the eighteenth century; according to the philologic mindset, it cannot be fortuitous that the same variations in the same passage occur in two different codes by chance; this means either that the older code is the source of the variations in the more recent code or that both codes depend on an ancient ancestor from which the common variation has come. This way of thinking is right if one wants to establish the *stemma codicum* of the witnesses conveying a certain work and on the other hand it could not be found another better; however this does not mean that this is the only way of reasoning or the best one when one wants to carry out a comparison among tradition of different civilisations; if one applied also to such a field the way of reasoning typical of philology, the outcomes could be disappointing. In fact, one should think that, if in different traditions it is possible to find common features, this means that those traditions are somehow connected to each other or both depend on a more ancient tradition which has come lost, just like the codes of the late antiquity which, being the basis of the transmission in the following centuries, never outlive the age of their composition. This could be true, for instance, in the case of the relationship between Thracian world and Greek Orphism, a relationship proven also by the ancient sources. However, how can be something like the triad be explained in this way? Triadic schemes of explanation of the world are to find in

numerous culture which are quite far from each other; that which makes triad not a cultural feature assimilated by an other culture, but an anthropologic constant something which, humans, as humans, come to think of. Accordingly, I suggest that those who want to try to read the ritual death in Plato's works in relation to its instantiations in different cultures must take seriously the existence of such anthropological constants, according to which it is possible that different civilisations share common features even if they never come into contact with each other. This does not mean that Plato's works must be read as a mere source of the anthropology, that which would be impossible; or, more exactly, it is impossible to those whose main interest is to deal with the philosophical message of these dialogues. As a consequence, the interest in the anthropological aspects of Plato's works and the exploration of their philosophical contents should go hand in hand; actually, it would be desirable that the thorough exploration of the anthropological aspects (myths, religious traditions and so on) contributed to the attainment of a wider comprehension of Plato also from the philosophical point of view; in particular the exploration of such mythical and religious traditions in Plato should lead to pose anew the question on the relationship between philosophy and religion, a relationship which several times, even if not ignored, is neglected or not taken seriously. This may be the consequence of an idea of reason as separated and even opposite to the other instances of human life; a reason which must rule, even by repression when it is the case, all which is considered not rational⁸. Interestingly, it is Plato himself the one who is considered accountable for bequeathing to western world this idea of rationality as disembodied power to connect propositions to each other; a kind of rationality which reaches its pinnacle calculators, intelligences devoid of emotions whose ability to find solution to problems is almost infallible⁹.

However this kind of instrumental rationality is not that which is to find in Plato; on the contrary, the reason of Plato's work is a reason aimed at establishing harmony and peaceful coexistence among the instance of soul, not at repressing or

⁸ Above it has been argued that not even in the *Phaedo* such an idea of rationality is to find; cf. *supra*, pp. 462ff.

⁹ This development of western culture has been outlined by H. L. Dreyfus 1972; T. Winograd, F. Flores, 1986.

ignoring as unimportant that which comes from the other instances¹⁰. Accordingly, the reason of Plato is not a reason which excludes or represses the non rational; actually it rules and cares for it so that it may exist in a healthy way. If one leaves behind once and for all this idea of rationality as calculating, instrumental ability separated from the other instances of human life, indifferent or opposite to them and instead embraces an idea of *logos* as that power whose aim is to lead humans to happiness by establishing unity and harmony within the several aspects of their life, then several problems such as the relationship between philosophy and myth or philosophy and religion turn out to be less hard to resolve; in one embrace such an idea of *logos* it becomes easier to understand how philosophy can be considered an initiatic path and that the dialectic procedure finds in myths its best allies¹¹. On the contrary the same relationships become much harder to understand if the reading of Plato's dialogues is influenced by the idea of instrumental reason mentioned above. Certainly, precomprehensions lie behind every hermeneutic undertaking; no reader approaches a text devoid of expectations or commonplaces about it; and even when one's ignorance on a text is so deep that one even does not have heard anything about it, nevertheless society and cultural heritage provide to reader some commonplaces and biases which the reader, in an unconscious way, cannot but assimilate. These unconsciously assimilated heritage is that which allow him/her to approach the works which his/her cultural tradition has bequeathed¹². However, thanks to the reading of the text one can realise if one's own opinion and precomprehension are suitable for fruitfully reading or in general interpreting the heritage of the past century; by means of the reading one may come so far as to leave behind some deep-rooted biases in order to adjust to what the text (or any other kind of work) is trying to say. The idea of a only calculating, instrumental rationality is undoubtedly so pervasive that it is not only a philosophical commonplace, but it has become an unconscious bias even of those who never have entered the faculty of philosophy. This bias is so deep-rooted and powerful that it affects not only the understanding of the works of ancient philosophy, but also

¹⁰ Cf. *supra*, note 8.

¹¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 538-540.

¹² Cf. H. G. Gadamer, 2000, pp. 551-634.

everyday life; this bias, which can be named rationalistic, leads the people affected by it to find opposition everywhere: opposition between reason and love, reason and faith, reason and desires, reason and nature, and that which plays an important role in political field, reason and gut. Now the problem is not to see the terms of these couple as different, because they are; the problem is to see them as *opposite*, as *irreconcilable*. As a consequence this rationalistic bias leads those affected by it to become unable to lead the different aspects of human life to coexist with each other; as their idea of reason and rationality is grounded on unbridgeable oppositions, the only way to exert rationality is by repressing or by neglecting all that reason considers different from itself. Let us come back to the reading of Plato's works; it has been said above that no reader approaches a text without precomprehension; on the other hand, precomprehension is not necessarily a hindrance to the understanding of the text; however it can become, as the case of the rationalistic bias tellingly shows. It has been said that the reason in Plato is not aimed at establishing irreconcilable oppositions, but at making unity and harmony possible; when Plato outlines a soul fallen prey of irreconcilable oppositions, it is a sick soul: this is the case of the tyrant, who, like everyone else, pursues happiness; however his way to pursue it will lead him to unhappiness¹³. He, like every *amathes*, because of his emotional disorder is wracked by the contradiction between his aim and his inability to reach it¹⁴. Inner oppositions is a pathological condition and not a desirable one; actually, it could be said that the idea of reason underlying the rationalistic bias is opposite to the kind of reason which can be found in Plato's dialogues. Stressing the importance of the emotions in Socratic care matches also the attempt to show how far from the comprehension of Plato's works this rationalistic bias may bring: in each of the chapters it has been attempted to show that the emotions of the interlocutors are deeply involved in the exchange with Socrates and that reasoning has always an emotional side that dialectic must affect. The rationalistic bias does not help the understanding of Plato's philosophy and it would be desirable that the aspiring reader of Plato's dialogues left behind it before starting to read them; however, it is true that Plato's dialogue themselves may help

¹³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 32ff.

the reader to abandon this bias, as long as the reader is ready and willingly to be refuted and see his deep-rooted opinion rejected. If the reader is open enough to be shaped by Plato's texts, he/she can decide to leave behind those biases bequeathed by the social milieu; but this means practicing a sort of death: in this way the reader affected by the rationalistic bias by reading Plato may learn to kill in him/herself something (the rationalistic bias) which, albeit deep-rooted, must be removed, because it prevents not only from the comprehension of Plato, but also, what is more important, from using reason to engender harmony and not oppositions. Thus the reader of Plato's works must follow the example of Socrates and his interlocutors and undertake a form of μελέτη θανάτου: by means of the reading of Plato's works he/she must *die* as a *rationalistic* person and *rise again* as a person aiming at being not rationalistic, *but rational*.

These remarks on the rationalistic bias and the importance to leave it behind and the attempt to consider Plato a gateway to the dialogue with other cultures go hand in hand; leaving behind the rationalistic bias means also acknowledging the ritualistic and initiatic dimension in Plato's work and acknowledging it may lead to widen the scope of research and to search for parallelisms between Plato and other traditions even out of Greece. The idea I have tried to suggest in this conclusion that seizing this comparative look to Plato's works may encourage, also in setting different from the Universities, the dialogue among different cultures; in fact stressing that the ritualistic and initiatic dimension of the Socratic dialogue in Plato belongs to a wider and not individual, but *human* ability to found rituals and transform oneself and learn to leave behind the person one is in order to become a new one; stressing all this means remembering that Plato's works, the pillars of western tradition, are not something out of the world, but grows out of the humankind, which, even if different way and according to different customs, has always endowed itself with means to practice the μελέτη θανάτου¹⁵. As a consequence, insisting on the ritualistic and initiatic dimension in Plato has a moral importance; it means insisting on that western civilisation, albeit different from the others, belongs with the other cultures to the same humankind. In my opinion,

¹⁵ Cf. *supra*, note 5.

acknowledging the importance of western civilisation to the same humanity as the other cultures involves also leaving behind once and for all the rationalistic bias; in fact the rationalistic bias is not only responsible for the oppositions such as reason and feelings, culture and nature and so on; it is also responsible for the opposition between different people and in the worst cases it may lead to supremacist bias, a sort of dark shadow of the rationalistic view, according to which western humankind is the only one endowed with rationality; wherefore the western humankind is entitled to master the others or, when it does not exert a military or economic hegemony, to consider itself as the paradigm which the other cultures must follow¹⁶. Stressing the importance of the presence of the ritual and the initiatic sphere in Plato serves the purpose of showing how Plato is not only the thinker to whom only the western world can pose questions and whose task is to answer *only* to the western world, as if this part of humankind were completely separated and had nothing to learn from the other cultures. On the contrary, some expressions of humankind go beyond the boundaries between countries and, what is more, the boundaries historiography draws among the ages of human history. This conclusion are aimed at showing that the ritualistic and initiatic features of the Socrates of Plato belong to the wider domain of this transcultural expression; for this reason Plato's works can be considered a gateway to a fruitful dialogue with other cultures. Highlighting the importance of Plato as a possible access to what is out of the western world and as a supporter of a idea of self-and others' care based on a kind of rationality quite different from the rationalistic one is the aim which I have tried to pursue in these conclusive remarks and in this work in its entirety; it is in this pursuit which not only the philosophical, but also the moral sense of these pages lies. Aware of the tentative nature of these conclusions, I hope that the questions raised in this conclusion will lead others to write further works, not only on Plato, but also on other thinkers, focusing on the ancient philosophy not only as expressions of the western humankind, *but also as expression of humankind*. It is

¹⁶ This was one of the justifications of the colonialism of the twentieth century. Works such as Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, 1853-1855 and Chamberlain's *Die Grunlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* 1899 are enlightening example of the bonds between the rationalistic bias and the supremacist ideology.

my opinion that the studies on ancient philosophy may be the useful remedy to heal from the rationalistic bias by which numerous people are unconsciously ruled; in fact, studies on ancient philosophy, focusing on thinkers not yet affected by this modern bias, show that a not *rationalistic* rationality is possible; a rationality which cares for the dialogue with emotions and with the dialogue with other cultures.

Literature

Critical Edition of Plato's works

Burnet 1900 = *Platonis opera*, edidit J. Burnet, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1903.

Translation of Plato dialogues quoted in this Thesis

Bury 1967 = Plato, *Laws*, translated by R. G. Bury, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1967.

Fowler 1914 = Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo*, translated by H. N. Fowler, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1914.

Fowler 1921 = Plato, *Sophist*, translated by H. N. Fowler, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1921.

Fowler 1927 = Plato, *Charmides. Alcibiades I and II, Hipparchus. The Lovers. Theages. Minos. Epinomis*. translated by W. R. M. Lamb, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1927.

Lamb 1924 = Plato, *Laches, Protagoras, Meno, Euthydemus*, translated by W. R. M. Lamb, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1927.

Lamb 1925 = Plato, *Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias*, translated by W. R. M. Lamb, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1955.

Fowler 1927 = Plato, *Charmides. Alcibiades I and II, Hipparchus. The Lovers. Theages. Minos. Epinomis*. translated by W. R. M. Lamb, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1927.

Shorey 1969 = Plato, *Republic*, translated by P. Shorey, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1969.

Other ancient works quoted in this Thesis

Abbate 2004 = Proclo, *commento alla Repubblica di Platone*, saggio introduttivo, tr. e comm. di M. Abbate, Milano, Bompiani, 2004.

Evelyn-White 1914 = Hesiod, *Works and Days*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1914.

- Finck 1847 = *Olympidori philosophy scholia in Phaedonem*, edidit Chr. E. Finck, Heilbronn, Landherr.
- Murray 1924 = Homer, *Iliad*, translated by A. T. Murray, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1924.
- Tredennick 1933 = Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Aristotle in XXIII volumes, Voll. XVII-XVIII, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1933.
- Westerink 1976 = L. G. Westerink (ed.), *The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo*, Olympiodorus Vol I, Damascius Vol II, Amsterdam, Nort-Holland Publications, 1976.

Commentaries

- Bernard 2016 = Platon, *Kriton*, Übersetzung und Kommentar von W. Bernard, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2016
- Bolotin 1979 = D. Bolotin, *Plato's Dialogue on Friendship: An Interpretation of the Lysis with a New Translation*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1979.
- Bordt 1998 = Platon, *Lysis*, Übersetzung und Kommentar von M. Bordt, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1998
- Canto 1987 = M. Canto, *L'intrigue philosophique: essai sur l'Euthydeme de Platon*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1987.
- Casertano 2015 = G. Casertano, *Fedone, o dell'anima: dramma etico in tre atti*, Napoli Loffredo Editore, 2015.
- Chance 1992 = Th. Chance, *Plato's Euthydemus: Analysis of What Is and Is Not Philosophy*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2009.
- Chateau 2005 = J. Y. Chateau, *Philosophie et Religion. Platon, Euthyphron*, Paris, Vrin, 2005.
- Dalfen 2004 = Platon, *Gorgias*, Übersetzung und Kommentar von J. Dalfen, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2004.
- Dalfen 2009 = Platon, *Minos*, Übersetzung und Kommentar von J. Dalfen, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009.
- Denyer 2001 = N. Denyer, *Plato: Alcibiades*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Denyer 2019 = N. Denyer, *Platon and Xenophon. Apologies of Socrates*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Dodds 1959 = E. Dodds (ed.), *Plato, Gorgias*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1959.

- Dorter 1982 = K. Dorter, *Plato's Phaedo: An Interpretation*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1982.
- Ebert 2004 = Platon, *Phaidon*, Übersetzung und Kommentar von Th. Ebert, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004.
- Forschner 2013 = Platon, *Euthyphron*, Übersetzung und Kommentar von M. Forschner, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2013.
- Heitsch 1993 = Platon, *Phaidros*, Übersetzung und Kommentar von E. Heitsch, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993.
- Heitsch 2002 = Platon, *Apologie des Sokrates*, Übersetzung und Kommentar von E. Heitsch, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002.
- Montuori 1998 = M. Montuori, *Per una nuova interpretazione del Critone di Platone*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1998
- Movia 1991 = G. Movia, *Apparenza, essere e verità. Commentario storico-filosofico al Sofista di Platone*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1991.
- Palpacelli 2009 = L. Palpacelli, *L' Eutidemo di Platone: una commedia straordinariamente seria*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2009.
- Pennesi 2009 = A. Pennesi, *L' Alcibiade I attribuito a Platone: introduzione, traduzione e commento*, Università degli Studi di Parma, 2009.
- Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi 2014 = G. Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi, *Playful Philosophy and Serious Sophistry. A reading of Plato's Euthydemus*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2014.
- Schöpsdau 2011 = Platon, *Nomoi (Gesetze), Buch IV-VII*, Übersetzung und Kommentar von K. Schöpsdau, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2011.
- Taylor 1928 = A. E. Taylor (ed.), *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1928.
- Tuozzo 2011 = Th. M. Tuozzo, *Plato's Charmides. Positive elenchus in a "Socratic" dialogue*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Trabattoni 2003/2004 = F. Trabattoni (ed.) Plato, *Liside*, Voll. 2, Milano, LED Edizioni Universitariw, 2003/2004
- Van der Ben 1985 = N. van der Ben, *The Charmides of Plato. Problems and Interpretations*, Amsterdam, B. R. Gruner Pub. Co., 1985.

Studies and other translated editions

- Ackah 2008 = K. Ackah, *Socrates, the Moral Expert in the Crito*, «Philotheos», 8 (2008), pp. 75-88.
- Ackrill 1973 = J. L. Ackrill, *Anamnesis in the Phaedo: remarks on 73c-75c*, «Phronesis», 18, 177 (1973), pp. 177-195.
- Adamietz 1969 = J. Adamietz, *Zur Erklärung des Hauptteils von Platons Charmides (164a–175d)*, «Hermes», 97 (1969), pp. 37-57.
- Adkins 1972 = A. W. H. Adkins, *Moral Values and Political behaviour in ancient Greece from Homer to the fifth century*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1972.
- Adluri 2006 = V. Adluri, *Initiation Into the Mysteries: The Experience of the Irrational in Plato*, «Mouseion» 6 (2006), pp. 407-423.
- Ahbel-Rappe = S. Ahbel-Rappe, *Socrates' Esoteric Disclosure in Plato's Apology: a comparative religions approach* (forthcoming).
- Allen 1970 = R. E. Allen, *Plato's Euthyphro and the Earlier Theory of Forms*, London, Routledge, 1970.
- Altman 2020 = W. Altman, *In Defense of Plato's Intermediates*, «Plato Journal», 20, 2020, pp. 151-166.
- Ambury 2011 = J. Ambury, *The place of displacement: the elenchus in Plato's Alcibiades I*, «Ancient Philosophy», 31, 2 (2011), pp. 241-260.
- Anderson 2005 = M. Anderson, *Socrates as Hoplite*, «Ancient Philosophy», 25, 2 (2005), pp. 273-289.
- Annas 1977 = J. Annas, *Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism*, «Mind», 86, 344 (1977), pp. 532–54
- Annas 1985 = J. Annas, *Self-Knowledge in Early Plato*, in D. O. Meara (ed.), *Platonic Investigations*, Washington D. C., The Catholic University of America Press, 1985.
- Annas 1993 = J. Annas, *Virtue as the Use of Other Goods*, in T. Irwin, M. Nussbaum (eds.) *Virtue, Love and Form: Essays in Memory of Gregory Vlastos*, Edmonton, Academic Printing and Publishing, 1993 pp. 53-66.
- Apelt 1913 = O. Apelt, *Platons Dialoge*, Leipzig, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1913.
- Arbe 2017 = R. Arbe, *La dimensión erótica del cuidado de sí en el Cármides de Platón*, Universidad Nacional de la Plata, XI Jornadas de Investigación del Departamento de Filosofía FaHCE-UNLP [online], 2017, pp. 1-7.
- Arendt 1962 = H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Cleveland-New York, Meridian Books, 1962 (or. 1951).
- Arendt 2015 = H. Arendt, *Socrate*, a cura di I. Possenti, tr. it. Milano, Cortina, 2015 (or. 2005).

- Aronadio 2002 = F. Aronadio, *Il problema dell'intuizione in Platone*, in A. Aportone, F. Aronadio, P. Spinicci (eds.), *Il problema dell'intuizione. Tre studi su Platone, Kant, Husserl*, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2002, pp. 19-61.
- Arrighetti 1991 = G. Arrighetti, *Platone fra mito, poesia e storia*, «Studi classici e orientali», 41 (1991), pp. 1-22.
- Ascombe 1958 = G. E. M. Ascombe, *Modern Moral Philosophy*, «Philosophy», 33, 124 (1958), pp. 1-19.
- Assman 2010 = Assmann, *Verwandelnde Erfahrung: Die großen Mysterien in der Imagination des 18. Jahrhunderts*, in A. Bierl, W. Braungart (eds.), *Gewalt und Opfer: Im Dialog mit Walter Burkert*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2010, pp. 343-362.
- Ausland 2002 = H. W. Ausland, *Forensic Characteristics of Socratic Argumentation*, in G. A. Scott (ed.), *Does Socrates Have a Method*, University Park, Penn. State University Press, 2002, pp. 36-60.
- Balaban 2008 = O. Balaban, *Le rejet de la connaissance de la connaissance, la these centrale du Charmide de Platon*, «Revue Philosophique de Louvain», 106, 4 (2008), pp. 663-693.
- Banfi 1999 = A. Banfi, *I processi contro Anassagora, Pericle, Fidia ed Aspasia e la questione del «circolo di Pericle». Note di cronologia e di storia*, «Annali dell'Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici», 16 (1999), pp. 3-85.
- Bartles 2020 = M. L. Bartles, *Plato's Seesick Steersman: On (Not) Being Overwhelmed by Fear in Plato's Laws*, in L. Candiotta, O. Renaut (eds.), *Emotions in Plato*, Leiden, Brill, 2020, pp. 147-168.
- Bashor 1968 = P. S. Bashor, *Plato and Aristotle on Friendship*, «Journal of Value Inquiry», 2 (1968), pp. 269-280.
- Bastide 1939 = G. Bastide, *Le moment historique de Socrate*, Paris, Librairie Felix Alcan, 1939.
- Bauer 2000 = B. Bauer, *Archaic Syntax in Indo-European. The Spread of Transitivity in Latin and French*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter.
- Becker 1882 = Th. Becker, *Zur Erklärung Von Platons Lysis*, «Philologus», 41, 1-4 (1882), pp. 284-308.
- Belfiore 2012 = E. Belfiore, *Socrates' Daimonic Art*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Benati 2021 = E. Benati, *Law as a discovery of being: the Minos in the light of the Cratylus*, «Etudes Platoniciens [en ligne]», 16, 2021.

- Bender 2013 = S. Bender, *Von Menschen und Tieren—Leibniz über Apperzeption, Reflexion und conscientia*, «Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung», 2 (2013), pp. 214-241.
- Benson 1990 = H. H. Benson, *Meno, the Slave Boy and the Elenchos*, «Phronesis», 35 (1990), pp. 128-150.
- Bernabé 1998 = A. Bernabé, *Platone e l'orfismo*, in Sfameni Gasparro G. (ed.), *Destino e salvezza: tra culti pagani e gnosi cristiana. Itinerari storico-religiosi sulle orme di Ugo Bianchi*, Cosenza, Lionello Giordano, 1998, pp. 37-97.
- Bernabé 2003 = Id. *Hieros logos. Poesía órfica sobre los dioses, el alma y el más allá*, Madrid, Akal, 2003
- Bernabé 2007 = Id. *L'âme après la mort: modèles orphiques et transposition platonicienne*, in Pradeau, J.F. (ed.), *Études platoniciennes IV, Les puissances de l'âme selon Platon*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2007, pp. 25-44
- Bernabé 2008 = Id., A. I. J. San Cristobàl, *Instructions for the Netherworld. The Orphic Gold Tablets*, Leiden, Brill, 2008, pp. 61-94.
- Bernabé 2010 = Id. "The Gods in Later Orphism", in Bremmer, J. N., Erskine, A. (eds.), *The Gods of Ancient Greece. Identities and Transformations*, Edinburgh, Leventis Studies 5, 2010, pp. 422-441
- Bernabé 2013 = A. Bernabé, *The Sixth Definition (Sophist 226a – 231c): Transposition of Religious Language*, in B. Bossi, Th. M. Robinson (eds.), *Plato's Sophist Revisited*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2013, pp. 41-56.
- Bernabé 2013a = Id. *Ὁ Πλάτων παρωιδεῖ τὰ Ὀρφέως Plato's Transposition of Orphic Netherworld Imagery*, in V. Adluri (ed.), *Philosophy and Salvation in Greek Religion*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2013, pp. 117-149
- Bernhardt 1971 = J. Bernhardt, *Platon et le materialism ancien. La theorie de l'ame-harmonie dans la philosophie de Platon*, Paris, Payot, 1971.
- Berti 1987 = E. Berti, *Contraddizione e dialettica negli antichi e nei moderni*, Palermo, L'Epos, 1987.
- Barney 2008 = R. Barney, *Eros and Necessity in the Ascent from the Cave*, «Ancient Philosophy», 2 (2008), pp. 357-372.
- Benjamin 2012 = A. R. Benjamin, *Socrates' Philosophical Protreptic in Euthydemus 278c–282d*, «Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie», 2 (2012), pp. 208-228.
- Berry 1998 = D. L. Berry, *Socrates and the Gods*, «An Interdisciplinary Journal», ½ (1998), pp. 257-267.

- Bertelli 2005 = L. Bertelli, *Platone contro la democrazia (e l'oligarchia)*, in Platone, *La Repubblica*, tr. it e comm. a cura di M. Vegetti, Vol. VI-Libri VIII-IX, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2005, pp. 295-396.
- Bett 2011 = R. Bett, *Socrates' Ignorance*, in D. Morrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 215-236.
- Bieda 2016 = E. Bieda, *El alma tiránica de Alcibiades en el Banquete de Platón*, «Ágora. Papeles de filosofía», 1 (2016), pp. 149-170
- Blössner 2011 = N. Blössner, *The Unity of Plato's Meno. Reconstructing the Author's Thoughts*, «Philologus», 155 (2011), pp. 39-68.
- Bluck 1953 = R. S. Bluck, *The origin of the Greater Alcibiades*, «Classical Quarterly», 1-2 (1953), pp. 46-52.
- Bluck 1955 = Plato, *Phaedo*, translated by R. S. Bluck, London, Routledge, 1955.
- Bluck 1957 = Id. *Hypothesis in the Phaedo and platonic dialectic*, «Phronesis», 2 (1957), pp. 21-31.
- Blundell 1989 = M. W. Blundell, *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies: A Study in Sophocles and Greek Ethics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Blyth 1996 = D. Blyth, *What in Plato's "Crito" Is Benefited by Justice and Harmed by Injustice*, «Apeiron», 29(4), 1996, pp. 1-19.
- Boeri 2017 = M. Boeri, L. De Brasi, *Self-knowledge in the Alcibiades I, the Apology of Socrates, and the Theaetetus: the limits of the first-person and third-person perspectives* », *Universum* 32, (2017), pp. 17-38.
- Bordt 2006 = Id. *Platons Theologie*, Freiburg-München, Karl Alber Verlag, 2006.
- Bos 1970 = C. A. Bos, *Interpretatie, Vaderschap en Datering van de Alcibiades Major*, Culemborg, Willink-Noorduijn, 1970.
- Bostock 1986 = Plato, *Phaedo*, translated by D. Bostock, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1986.
- Bourgault 2012 = S. Bourgault, *Prolegomena to a rehabilitation of Platonic moderation*, «Dissensus [online]», 5 (2013).
- Bowe 2008 = G. Bowe, *Euthydemus and Dionysodorus*, in P. O Grady (ed.), *The Sophists. An Introduction*, London, Bloomsbury, 2008, pp. 121-128.
- Brancacci 1997 = A. Brancacci, *Socrate e il tema semantico della coscienza*, in G. Giannantoni, M. Narcy (eds.), *Lezioni socratiche*, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 1997, pp. 279-301
- Brancacci 1999 = A. Brancacci, *Eutidemo e Dionisodoro, gli ΟΨΙΜΑΘΕΙΣ del Sofista e un passo dell'Eutidemo*, «Elenchos» 2 (1999), pp. 381-396.

- Brancacci 2017 = Id. *Eristic and philosophy in Euthydemus*, «Φιλοσοφία», 47 (2017), pp. 37-45.
- Brancacci 2018 = Id. *Il frammento gnoseologico di Eutidemo*, «Elenchos», 1 (2018), pp. 7-27.
- Brancacci 2019 = Id., *I fondamenti teorici dell'eristica di Eutidemo*, «La Cultura», 1 (2019), pp. 29-48.
- Breilich 1969 = A. Breilich, *Paides e Parthenoi*, Vol.1, Roma, Edizioni dell'Ateneo 1969.
- Bremmer 1983 = J. N. Bremmer, *The early Greek concept of the soul*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1983.
- Bremmer 2021 = Id. *Becoming a Man in Ancient Greece and Rome: Essays on Myths and Rituals of Initiation*, Tübingen Mohr Siebeck, 2021.
- Brickhouse and Smith 1994 = T. C. Brickhouse, N. D. Smith, *Plato's Socrates*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Brickhouse and Smith 2007 = Id. *Socrates on how wrongdoing damages the soul*, «The Journal of Ethics», 4 (2007), pp. 337-356.
- Brisson 1994 = L. Brisson, *Platon. Les mots et les mythes*, Paris, La Decouverte, 1994 (or. 1983).
- Brisson 1997 = Id. *L'intelligibile comme source d'évidence ultime chez Platon*, in C. Lévy, L. Pernot (eds.), *Dire l'évidence (Philosophie et rhétorique antiques)*, Actes du colloque de Creteil et de Paris (24-25 mars 1995), Paris, l' Harmattan, 1997, pp. 95-111.
- Brisson 2012 = Id. *Why is the Timaeus Called an Eikôs Muthos and an Eikôs Logos*, in in C. Collobert, P. Destrée, G. J. Gonzalez (eds.), *Plato and Myth*. Leiden, Brill, 2012, pp. 369-391.
- Bröckner 1990 = *Platons Gespräche. Phaidon*, übers. Von W. Bröckner, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1990 (or. 1987).
- Brodie 2021 = S. Brodie, *Plato's Sun-Like Good. Dialectic in the Republic*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021
- Burge 1971 = E. Burge, *The Ideas as Aitiai in the "Phaedo"*, «Phronesis», 16(1), 1971, pp. 1-13.
- Bourriot 1995 = F. Bourriot, *Kalos kagathos-Kalokagathia : D'un terme de propaganda des sophistes à une notion sociale et philosophique. Etude d'histoire athenienne*, Hildesheim, Georg Olms Verlag, 1995.
- Burkert 1977 = W. Burkert, *Die Griechische Religion der archaischen und Klassischen Epoche*, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1977.

- Burkert 1990 = Id. *Antike Mysterien*, München, Beck, 2003 (or. 1990).
- Burnyeat 1997 = M. F. Burnyeat, *The Impiety of Socrates*, «Ancient Philosophy», 1 (1997), pp. 1-12.
- Bussanich 2013 = J. Bussanich, *Socrates' Religious Experiences*, in J. Bussanich, N. D. Smith (eds.), *The Bloomsbury Companion to Socrates*, London, Bloomsbury, 2013, pp. 276-406.
- Butti de Lima 2002 = P. Butti de Lima, *Platone. Esercizi di filosofia per il giovane Teeteto*, Venezia, Marsilio, 2002.
- Calabi 2005 = F. Calabi, *Timocrazia*, in Platone, *La Repubblica*, tr. it e comm. a cura di M. Vegetti, Vol. VI-Libri VIII-IX, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2005, pp. 263-293.
- Cameron 1939 = A. Cameron, *The Pythagorean Background of the Theory of Recollection*, «Journal of Philosophy», 2 (1939), pp. 49-50.
- Campbell 2020 = I. J. Campbell, *Ambiguity and Fallacy in Plato's Euthydemus*, «Ancient Philosophy», 1 (2020), pp. 67-92.
- Campese 2005 = S. Campese, *Misthotike*, in Platone, *La Repubblica*, tr. it e comm. a cura di M. Vegetti, Vol. I-Libri I, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2005, pp. 257-268.
- Campese and Gastaldi = S. Campese, S. Gastaldi, *Bendide e Panatenee*, in Platone, *La Repubblica*, tr. it e comm. a cura di M. Vegetti, Vol. I-Libri I, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2005, pp. 105-132.
- Cancrini 1969 = A. Cancrini, *Il tema semantico Syneidesis-conscientia*, «La Cultura», 7 (1969), pp. 46-52.
- Candiotta and Renaut 2020 = L. Candiotta, O. Renaut (eds.), *Emotions in Plato*, Brill, Leiden, 2020.
- Capitani 2015 = I. Capitani, *Il sogno in Platone*, «Studi Classici e Orientali», 1 (2015), pp. 399-416.
- Cardoso de Castro 2017 = J. Cardoso de Castro, R. Siqueira-Batista, *A virtude pode ser ensinada? Uma aproximação a partir dos diálogos platônicos de Mênon, Protágoras e Eutidemo*, «Hypnos», 2 (2017), pp. 288-310.
- Carrera 2003 = G. G. Carrera, *Conocimiento y auto conocimiento. Une aproximación desde el Cármenes de Platón*, «Apuntes Filosóficos», 22 (2003), pp. 49-60
- Carter 2019 = J. W. Carter, *How Aristotle Changes Anaxagoras's Mind*, «Apeiron», 1 (2019), pp. 1-28.
- Cartledge 2009 = P. Cartledge, *Ancient Greek Political Thought in Practice*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

- Casadesùs 2016 = F. Casadesùs, *The Transformation of the Initiation Language of Mystery Religions into Philosophical Terminology*, in Blanco, M. J. G., Velasco, M. J. M. (eds), *Greek Philosophy and Mystery Cults*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016, pp. 9-18.
- Casertano 1983 = G. Casertano, *Il piacere, l'amore e la morte nelle dottrine dei presocratici*, Napoli, Loffredo Editore, 1983.
- Casertano 1985 = G. Casertano, *La legge e il piacere: Antifonte B44 DK*, in L. Montoneri, F. Romano, *Gorgia e la sofistica*, Atti del convegno internazionale Lentini-Catania (12-15 dic. 1983), Catania, Siculorum Gymnasium, 1985, pp. 447-457.
- Caston 2002 = V. Caston, *Aristotle on Consciousness*, «Mind», 111 (2002), pp. 751-815.
- Catapano, G., *Alle origini della dottrina dei gradi di virtù: il trattato 19 di Plotino (Enn. I 2)*, «Medioevo: rivista di storia della filosofia medievale», 31 (2006), pp. 9-28.
- Cattanei 1996 = E. Cattanei, *Enti matematici e metafisica: Platone, Aristotele e L'Accademia a confronto*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1996.
- Centanni 1997 = M. Centanni, *Atene Assoluta. Crizia dalla Tragedia alla Storia*, Padova, Esedra, 1997.
- Centrone 2005 = Id. *L'eidos come holon in Platone e i suoi riflessi in Aristotele*, in F. Fronterotta, W. Leszl (eds.), *Eidos-Idea. Platone, Aristotele e l'Accademia Platonica*, Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, 2005, pp. 103-114.
- Centrone 2007 = Id. *L'immortalità personale: un'altra nobile menzogna?*, in M. Migliori, L. Napolitano, A. Fermani (eds.), *Interiorità e anima. La psychè in Platone*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2007, pp. 35-50.
- Cerri 2003 = G. Cerri, *La pagina autobiografica del Fedone. Da Socrate a Platone*, «Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica», 75 (2003), pp. 51-62.
- Chaturvedi 2018 = A. Chaturvedi, *On the Role of Harmonia on Plato's Philosophy*, University of Pennsylvania, 2018.
- Chiaradonna 2009 = R. Chiaradonna, *Physics and philosophy of nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Leiden, Brill, 2009.
- Chiesa 2011 = C. Chiesa, *Le refutation socratique et la methode hypothetique*, in A. Longo, D. Del Forno (eds), *Argument from hypothesis in ancient philosophy*, Napoli, Bibliopolis 2011, pp. 75-93.
- Church = Plato, *Phaedo*, translated by F. J. Church, London, McMillan Publishing Company, 1951.
- Clark 1955 = P. M. Clark, *The Greater Alcibiades*, «Classical Quarterly», 3-4 (1955), pp. 231-240

- Clinton 2003 = K. Clinton, *Stages of Initiation in the Eleusinian and Soamothracian Mysteries*, in M. B. Cosmopoulos (ed.), *Greek Mysteries*, London, Routledge, 2003
- Cohen 1971 = S. M. Cohen, *Socrates on the definition of Piety*, «Journal of the History of Philosophy», 1 (1971), pp. 1-13.
- Collobert 2012 = C. Collobert, *The Platonic Art of Myth-Making: Myth as Informative Phantasma*, in C. Collobert, P. Destrée, G. J. Gonzalez (eds.), *Plato and Myth*. Leiden, Brill, 2012, pp. 87-108.
- Collobert, Destrée, Gonzalez 2012 = *References*, in C. Collobert, P. Destrée, G. J. Gonzalez, *Plato and Myth. Studies on the Use and Status of Platonic Myths*, Leiden, Brill, 2012.
- Coolidge 1993 = F. P. Coolidge, *The Relation of Philosophy to Σωφροσύνη: Zalmoxian Medicine in Plato's Charmides*, «Ancient Philosophy», 13 (1993), pp. 23-36.
- Cornelli 2015 = Cornelli, Gabriele, *La figura de Alcibiades en la historia de Atenas del siglo V y en la narrativa del Banquete de Platón*, «Prometeus», 8 (2015), pp. 1-24.
- Cornford 1941 = *The Republic of Plato*, translated by F. M. Cornford, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1941.
- Crema 2018 = M. N. G. Crema, *Between the herms: convention, transition, and intervention in Plato's Lysis*, University of Chicago, 2018.
- Crysanthou, A., *Defining Orphism. The Beliefs, The Teletae and the Writings*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2020.
- Cusinato 2021 = G. Cusinato, *At the origin of evil. Amathia and excessive Philautia in a passage of Plato's "Laws"*, «Thaumazein. Rivista di filosofia online», 1 (2021), pp. 198-232
- Cürsgen 2002 = D. Cürsgen, *Die Rationalität des Mythischen: der philosophische Mythos bei Platon und seine Exegese im Neuplatonismus*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2002.
- Cürsgen 2004 = Id. *Platons Euthydem. Zum Verhältnis von Dialog. Logik und königlicher Kunst*, in M. v. Ackeren (eds), *Platon verstehen. Themen und Perspektiven*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004, pp. 22-38.
- Curzer 2014 = H. J. Curzer, *Plato's Rejection of the Instrumental Account of Friendship in the Lysis*, «Polis», 31 (2014), pp. 352-68
- D' Ancona Costa 1992 = C.d' Ancona Costa, *AMORFON KAI ANEIDON. Causalité des formes et causalité de l'Un chez Plotin*, «Revue de Philosophie Ancienne», 10 (1992), pp. 69-113
- Cusinato 2013 = G. Cusinato, *Il problema dell'orientamento nella società liquida: autotrascendimento e avere cura come esercizio di trasformazione*, «Thaumàzein. Rivista di filosofia online», 1 (2013), pp. 35-84.

- Cusinato 2021 = Id. *At the origin of evil: amathia and excessive philautia in a passage of Plato's Laws*, «Thaumàzein. Rivista di filosofia online», 1 (2021), pp. 198-232.
- Dancy 1991 = R. M. Dancy, *Two Studies in the Early Academy*, Albany, SUNY Press, 1991.
- Danzig 2006 = G. Danzig, *Crito and the Socratic Controversy*, «Polis», 23 (2006), pp. 21-45.
- Danzig 2013 = Id. *Plato's Charmides as a political act : apologetics and the promotion of ideology*, «Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies», 3 (2013), pp. 486-519.
- Davison 1953 = J. A. Davison, *Protagoras, Democritus, and Anaxagoras*, «The Classical Quarterly», ½ (1953), pp. 33-45.
- De Carvalho and Oliveira = M. J. de Carvalho, S. Oliveira, *Foreword*, in M. J. de Carvalho, S. Oliveira (eds.), *Rediscovering the Alcibiades Major*, Coimbra, Coimbra University Press, 2019, pp. 5-15.
- De la Torre 2013 = E. S. de la Torre, *Apollo and Dionysos: Intersections*, in A. Bernabé, et al. (eds.), *Redefining Dionysos*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2013, pp. 58-81.
- Delatte 1954 = A. Delatte, *Le Cycéon, breuvage rituel des mystères d'Eleusis*, «Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique», 40 (1954), pp. 690-752.
- Delcominette 2015 = S. Delcominette et al., *Ancient Readings of the Phaedo*, Leiden, Brill, 2015.
- Delorme 2019 = C. de Bravo Delorme, *Socrates' dialectic therapy according to Plato'saporetic Dialogues*, «Filozofia», 3 (2019), pp. 169-180.
- Del Forno 2006 = D. del Forno, *Il corpo come strumento dell'anima tra De Anima A3 e Alcibiade*, in U. La Palombara, G. Lucchetta (eds.), *Mente, anima e corpo nel mondo antico. Immagini e funzioni*, Pescara, Opera, 2006, pp. 81-89.
- De Luise 2021 = F. De Luise, *La pedagogia della vergogna nel Simposio di Platone. Due modelli a confronto per l'uso di un'emozione sociale*, in F. Benoni, A. Stavru (eds.), *Platone e il governo delle passioni. Studi in onore di Linda Napolitano*, Perugia, Aguaplano, 2021, pp. 131-162.
- De Rijk 1986 = L. M. De Rijk, *Plato's Sophist: a philosophical commentary*, Amsterdam, North-Holland Publications, 1986.
- De Romilly 1997 = J. de Romilly, *Alcibiade. Un avventuriero in una democrazia in crisi*, tr. it. Di E. Lana, Milano, Garzanti, 1997.
- De Rougin 1999 = C. F. de Rougin, *Apollon Lykeios dans la tragédie: dieu protecteur, dieu tueur*, «dieu de l'initiation», «Kernos», 12 (1999), pp. 99-123.
- Desmond 2005 = W. Desmond, *The hybris of Socrates: A Platonic 'revaluation of values' in the Symposium*, «Yearbook of the Irish Philosophical Society», (2005), pp. 43-63.

- Destrée 2012 = Id. *Spectacles from Hades. On Plato's Myths and Allegories in the Republic*, in C. Collobert, P. Destrée, G. J. Gonzalez (eds.), *Plato and Myth*. Leiden, Brill, 2012, pp. 109-124.
- Destrée, P., *Plato on Tragic and Comic Pleasures*, in A. E. Dehnam (ed.), *Plato on Art and Beauty*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 125-141.
- Devereaux 1994 = D. T. Devereux, *Separation and Immanence of Forms*, «Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy», 12 (1994), pp. 66-73.
- D'Hoine and Michalewski 2015 = P. D'Hoine, A. Michalewski,, *Ontologia ed epistemologia: le Idee e la partecipazione*, in Chiaradonna R. (ed.), *Filosofia tardoantica*, Roma, Carocci Editore, 2015 (or. 2012), pp. 173-193.
- Dieterich 1893 = A. Dieterich, *Nekyia: Beiträge zur Erklärung der Neuentdeckten Petrusapokalypse*, Leipzig, Teubner, 1893.
- Dillon 2004 = J. M. Dillon, *Dämonologie im frühen Platonismus*, in H. G. Nesselrath et al. (eds.), *Apuleius. Über den Gott des Sokrates*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004, pp. 123-141.
- Dillon 2010 = J. Dillon, *I Medioplatonici. Uno studio sul platonismo (80 a. C.-220 d. C.)*, tr. it. di E. Vimercati, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2010 (or. 1977).
- Dimas 2002 = P. Dimas, *Happiness in the Euthydemus*, «Phronesis», 1 (2002), pp. 1-27.
- Dinkelaar 2020 = B. M. Dinkelaar, *Plato and the Language of Mysteries: Orphic/Pythagoreans and Eleusinian Motifs and Register in Ten Dialogues*, «Mnemosyne», 1 (2020), pp. 36-62.
- Diop 2004 = S. Diop, *Socrate narrateur et dialecticien. Le cadre narratif de l'Euthydème de Platon*, "Circe", 9 (2004), pp. 123-135.
- Dirlmeier 1931 = F. Dirlmeier, *Philos und Philia im vorhellenistischen Griechentum*, München, Diss., 1931.
- Dirlmeier 1959 = Platon, *Phaidon*, übers. Von F. Dirlmeier, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1959.
- Dixsaut 1993 = M. Dixsaut, *Contre Platon*, Voll. II, Paris, Vrin, 1993.
- Dixsaut 2002 = Ead. *Natura e ruolo dell'anima nella sensazione (Teeteto 184b-186e)*, in Casertano, G., (ed.), *Il Teeteto di Platone: struttura e problematiche*, Napoli, Loffredo Editore, 2002, pp. 39-62.
- Dixsaut 2013 = Ead. *Platon et la question de l'ame*, Paris, Vrin, 2013.
- Dodds 1951 = E. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, University of California Press 1951.
- Dorter 2011 = K. Dorter, *The Objections of Simmias and Cebes (84c-89c)*, in J. Müller (ed.), *Platon*: Phaidon, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 2011, pp. 97-110-

- Dova 2020 = S. Dova, *On the Philogymnastia and Its Cognates in Plato*, in Heather L. Reid, Mark Ralkowski, Coleen P. Zoller, *Athletics, Gymnastics, and Agon in Plato*, Berkeley, Parnassus Press-Fonte Aretusa, 2020, pp. 107-126.
- Dover 1968 = J. K. Dover, *Aristophanes Clouds*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968.
- Dover 1983 = K. J. Dover, *La morale popolare greca all'epoca di Platone e di Aristotele*, tr. it di L. Rossetti, Brescia, Paideia, 1983 (or. 1975).
- Dreyfus 1972 = H. Dreyfus, *What Computers can't do: the Limits of Artificial Intelligence*, New York, Harper & Row, 1972.
- Dustin 2021 = S. Dustin, *Xenophon's Socratic education : reason, religion, and the limits of politics*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021.
- Dyer 2013 = R. R. Dyer, *The Evidence for Apolline Purification Rituals at Delphi and Athens*, «The Journal of Hellenic Studies», 89 (2013, or. 1969), pp. 38-56.
- Ebert 1994 = Th. Ebert, *Sokrates als Pythagoreer und die Anamnesis in Platons Phaidon*, Mainz-Stuttgart, Frany Steiner Verlag, 1994.
- Ebert 2001 = Id. *Das Argument aus dem Wiedergeboernwerden (Wiedergeburt-Argument) 69e-72e*, in A. Havlicek, F. Karfik (eds.), *Plato's Phaedo*. Proceedings of the Second Symposium Platonicum Pragense. Prague, OIKOYMENH, 2001 pp. 208–240
- Eckl 2002 = A. Eckl, *Die Unmöglichkeit des Widerspruchs gegen den „Satz vom Widerspruch: Platons Begrenzung der sophistischen Zauberkunststücke im Euthydemus*, in W. Hohgrebe, (ed.), *Grenzen und Grenzenüberschreitungen: XIX deutscher Kongress für Philosophie*, Bonn, Sinclair Press, 2002, pp. 25-33.
- Edmonds III 2012 = R. G. Edmonds III, *Whip Scars on the Naked Soul: Myth and Elenchos in Plato's Gorgias*, in C. Collobert, P. Destrée, G. J. Gonzalez (eds.), *Plato and Myth*. Leiden, Brill, 2012, pp. 165-185.
- Edwards 2015 = A. Edwards, *Logos and Ergon in Book I of Plato's Republic*, «Pseudo-Dionysos», 17 (2015), pp. 87-95.
- Ehrenberg 2008 = E. Ehrenberg, *Dieu et Mon Droit: Kingship in Late Babylonian and Early Persian Times*, in N. Brisch (ed.), *Religion and Power. Divine Kingship in Ancient World and Beyond*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2008, pp. 103-132.
- Eisenstadt 2011 = M. Eisenstadt, *The affects and senses in Plato's Charmides*, «Hermes» 139 (2011), pp. 84-87
- Eliade 1975 = M. Eliade, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation. The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth*, tr. by W. E. Trask, London, Harper & Row, 1975 (or. 1958).

- El Murr, D., *Hesiod, Plato, and the Golden Age: Hesiodic Motifs in the Myth of the Politicus*, in Boys-Stones, G. R., Haubold, J. H. (eds.), *Plato and Hesiod*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 276-297.
- Engmann 1991 = J. Engmann, *Cosmic Justice in Anaximander*, "Phronesis", 36, 1 (1991), pp. 1-25.
- Erler 1987 = M. Erler, *Der Sinn der Aporien in den Dialogen Platons. Übungsstücke zur Anleitung im philosophischen Denken*, Berlin Boston, De Gruyter, 1987.
- Erler 2007 = M. Erler, *La felicità delle api. Passione e Virtù nel Fedone e nella Repubblica*, in M. Migliori, L. Napolitano, A. Fermani (eds.), *Interiorità e anima. La psychè in Platone*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2007, pp. 59-71.
- Evans 2002 = N. A. Evans, *Sanctuaries, Sacrifices, and the Eleusinian Mysteries*, «Numen», 3, (2002), pp. 227-254.
- Ewegen 2014 = S. M. Ewegen, *An Inconsequent Ado About Matters of No Consequence': Comic Turns in Plato's Euthydemus*. "Epoché" 19 (1) (2014), pp.15-32
- Fabrini 2020 = Platone, *Fedone*, tr. it. e note di A. Fabrini, Milano, Bur Rizzoli, 2020 (or. 1996).
- Falcon, A., *Filosofia della Natura*, in R. Chiaradonna (ed.), *Filosofia tardoantica*, Roma, Carocci, 2015 (or. 2012), pp. 155-173.
- Faraone 2008 = Chr. A Faraone, *MYSTERY CULTS AND INCANTATIONS Evidence for Orphic Charms in Euripides' Cyclops 646-48?*, «Reinisches Museum», 151 (2008), pp. 127-142.
- Farber 1979 = J. J. Farber, *The Cyropaedia and Hellenistic Kingship*, «AmericanJournalof Philology», 100 (1979), pp. 497-514.
- Favrelle 1982 = Eusebe de Cesaree, *La preparation evangelique*, trad. Et ed. pasr G. Favrelle, Paris, Editions du Cerf, 1982.
- Ferejohn 1984 = T. M. Ferejohn, *Socratic Thought-Experiments and the Unity of Virtue Paradox*, «Phronesis», 2 (1984), pp. 105-122.
- Ferguson 2019 = D. Ferguson, *Self-Knowledge in the Eye-Soul Analogy of the Alcibiades*, «Phronesis», 4 (2019), pp. 369-391.
- Fermaglia 2021 = F. Fermaglia, *Vergogna e ignoranza nei dialoghi platonici: i tipi di αἰσχύνη*, in in F. Benoni, A. Stavru (eds.), *Platone e il govono delle passioni. Studi in onore di Linda Napolitano*, Perugia, Aguaplano, 2021, pp. 107-129.
- Ferrari 2006 = F. Ferrari, *I miti di Platone*, Milano, Bur Rizzoli, 2006.
- Ferrari 2011 = Platone, *Teeteto*, a cura di F. Ferrari, Milano, Bur Rizzoli, 2011.
- Ferrari 2016 = Platone, *Menone*, a cura di F. Ferrari, Milano, Bur Rizzoli, 2016.

- Ferrari 2019 = Platone, *Parmenide*, a cura di F. Ferrari, Milano, Bur Rizzoli, 2019 (2004).
- Ferrari 2020 = F. Ferrari, *Anamnesis e sungeneia: a proposito di Menone 81c-d*, "Plato Journal", 20 (2020), pp. 127-135.
- Ferrari 2022 = F. Ferrari, *La Repubblica di Platone*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2022.
- Filius 2013 = A. Filius, *Noësis als intuitives Erkennen in Platons Epistemologie. Problemaufriss und Deutungsvorschlag*, «Zeitschrift für Erstpublikationen aus der Philosophie und ihrer Geschichte», 1 (2013), pp. 5-35.
- Fine 2003 = G. Fine, *Immanence in Fine*, G. (ed.), *Plato on Knowledge and Forms*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003 (or. 1986), pp. 71-97.
- Fissel 2009 = B. Fissel, *Thrasymachus and the Order of Pleonexia*, «Aporia», 1 (2009), pp. 35-43.
- Flashar, Bremer, Rechenauer, 2013 = H. Flashar, D. Bremer, G. Rechenauer, *Die Philosophie der Antike. Frühgriechische Philosophie*, Bd. 1, Basel, Schwabe Verlag.
- Flores and Winograd 1986 = F. Flores, T. Winograd, *Understanding Computers and Cognition: A New Foundation for Design*, New Jersey, Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1986.
- Föllinger 2018 = S. Föllinger, *Die Bedeutung der Scham für die Moral in Platons Philosophie*, in A. Grund-Wittenberg, R. Poser (eds.), *Die verborgene Macht der Scham*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2018, pp. 139-158.
- Fontenrose, J., *The Delphic Oracle*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978
- Forde 1987 = S. Forde, *On the Alcibiades I*, in T. Pangle (ed.), *The Roots of Political Philosophy: Ten Forgotten Dialogues*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1987, pp. 222–239.
- Frede 1978 = D. Frede, *The Final Proof of the Immortality of the Soul in Plato's Phaedo*, «Phronesis», 1 (1978), pp. 1-41.
- Frede 1993 = Ead, *Out of the Cave: What Socrates Learned from Diotima*, in Rosen, R. M., Farrel J. (eds.), *Nomodeiktēs: Greek Studies in Honor of Martin Ostwald*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1993, pp. 397-422.
- Friedländer 1930 = *Die platonischen Schriften*, Vol. II, übers. Von P. Friedländer, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1930
- Friedländer 1960 = *Die platonischen Schriften, zweite und dritte Periode*, Vol. III, übers. von P. Friedländer, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1960
- Fronterotta 2007 = Platone, *Sofista*, a cura di F. Fronterotta, Milano, Bur Rizzoli, 2007.
- Fronterotta 2012 = F. Fronterotta, *La visione dell'idea del bello. Conoscenza intuitiva e conoscenza proposizionale nel Simposio (e nella Repubblica)*, in A. B. de Araujo Jr.,

- G. Cornelli (eds.), *Il Simposio di Platone: un banchetto di interpretazioni*, Napoli, Loffredo Editore, 2012, pp. 97-114.
- Fujisawa 1974 = N. Fujisawa, *Echein, Metechein and the idioms of paradigmaticism in Plato's Theory of Forms*, «Phronesis», 19 (1974), pp. 30-58.
- Futter 2013 = D. Futter, *Socrates' Human Wisdom*, «Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Revue/Revue Canadienne de Philosophie», 1 (2013), pp. 61-79.
- Gadamer 1985 = H. G. Gadamer, *Logos und Ergon im Platonischen Lysis*, in H. G. GADAMER (ed.), *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 6, Griechische Philosophie II, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, pp. 171-86.
- Gadamer 2000 = H. G. Gadamer, *Verità e metodo*, tr. it. di G. Vattimo, Milano, Bompiani, 2000 (or. 1960).
- Gagarin 1977 = M. Gagarin, *Socrates' 'Hybris' and Alcibiades' Failure*, «Phoenix», 1 (1977), pp. 22-37.
- Gallop 1975 = Plato, *Phaedo*, translated by D. Gallop, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975.
- Gaiser 1984 = K. Gaiser, *Platone come scrittore filosofico*, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 1984.
- Gardella 2014 = M. Gardella, *Conflictos socraticos en el Eutidemo: la critica platonica a la dialectica megarica*, «Argos. Revista de la Asociacion Argentina de Estudios Clasicos», 1 (2014), pp. 47-67.
- Garver 2006 = E. Garver, *The Rhetoric of Friendship in Plato's Lysis*, «Rhetorica», 2 (2006), pp. 127-146.
- Garver 2012 = Id. *Plato's Crito on the nature of persuasion and obedience*, «Polis», 29 (2012), pp. 1-20.
- Gastaldi 2005 = S. Gastaldi, *L'infelicità dell'ingiusto: il caso del tiranno*, in M. Vegetti (ed.), *Platone, La Repubblica*, tr. it. e comm. a cura di M. Vegetti, Vol. VI, Libri VIII-IX, 2005, Napoli, Bibliopolis, pp. 499-538.
- Gastaldi 2005a = Ead. *L'immagine dell'anima e la felicità del giusto*, in M. Vegetti (ed.), *Platone, La Repubblica*, tr. it. e comm. a cura di M. Vegetti, Vol. VI, Libri VIII-IX, 2005, Napoli, Bibliopolis, pp. 593-634.
- Gastaldi 2021 = Ead. *La sophrosyne dal Gorgia alla Repubblica*, in F. Benoni, A. Stavru (eds.), *Platone e il governo delle passioni. Studi in onore di Linda Napolitano*, Perugia, Aguaplano, 2021, pp. 91-105.
- Geach 1966 = P. Th. Geach, *Plato's Euthyphro: An Analysis and Commentary*, «The Monist», 50 (1966), pp. 369-382.
- Geach 1972 = Id. *Logic matters*, Berkeley, Blackwell, 1972.

- Geffcken 1907 = J. Geffcken, *Die ἀσέβεια des Anaxagoras*, «Hermes» 42 (1907), pp. 127-33.
- Gemelli Marciano 2020 = M. L. Gemelli Marciano, *Viaggi nell'aldilà e vita dopo la morte. Testi e contesti per la tomba del tuffatore*, in Meriani, A., Zuchtriegel, G. (eds), *La tomba del Tuffatore. Rito, arte e Poesia a Paestum e nel Mediterraneo d'epoca tardoantica*, Pisa, Edizioni ETS, 2020, pp. 303-323.
- German 2017 = A. German, *Chronos, Psyche, and Logos in Plato's Euthydemus*, «Epoche», 2 (2017), pp. 289-305.
- Gershenson 1991 = D. E. Gershenson, *Apollo the Wolf-God*, McLean, Institute for the Study of Man, 1991.
- Gertz 2010 = S. Gertz, *do Plato and Aristotle agree on self-motion in souls*, in J. F. Finamore, R. M. Berchman (eds.), *Conversations Platonic and Neoplatonic: Intellect, Soul, and Nature*, Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, 2010, pp. 73-87.
- Giannantoni 2005 = G. Giannantoni, *Dialogo socratico e nascita della dialettica nella filosofia di Platone*, a cura di B. Centrone, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2005.
- Gill 2000 = C. Gill, *Protreptic and Dialectic in Plato's Euthydemus*. In T. M. Robinson, L. Brisson (eds.), *Plato: Euthydemus, Lysis, and Charmides. Proceedings of the V Symposium Platonicum*. Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, 2000, pp. 133-143.
- Giménez 2016 = J. A. Giménez, *Theorie und Praxis bei Platon. Die Ethik des gemischten Lebens in Platons Philebos*, Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, 2016.
- Gill 2006 = Chr. Gill, *The Structured Self in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006
- Giorgini 2005 = G. Giorgini, *Il tiranno*, in Platone, *La Repubblica*, tr. it e comm. a cura di M. Vegetti, Vol. VI-Libri VIII-IX, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2005, pp. 423-470.
- Goeken 2013 = J. Goeken, *SOCRATE E MICCO UN'AMICIZIA PARTICOLARE NELLA SIDERE DI PLATONE*, «Studi Classici e Orientali», 59 (2013), pp. 35-54.
- Gonzalez 1995 = F. J. Gonzalez, *Plato's Lysis: An Enactment of Philosophical Kinship*, «Ancient Philosophy», 1 (1995), pp. 69-90.
- Gonzalez 2000 = F. J. Gonzalez, *Socrates on Loving One's Own*, «Classical Philology», 95 (2000), pp. 379-398.
- Gosling and Taylor =, J. C. B. Gosling, C. C. W. Taylor, *The Greeks on Pleasure*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1982.
- Glaser 1935 = K. Glaser, *Gang und Ergebnis des platonischen Lysis*, «Wiener Studien» 53 (1935), pp. 47-67.

- Graeser 2003 = Platon, *Parmenides*, übers. von A. Graeser, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2003.
- Griswold 2003 = Ch. Griswold, *Longing for the Best: Plato on Reconciliation with Imperfection*, «Arion», 2 (2003), pp. 101-136.
- Griswold 2010 = Id. *Socrates' Political Philosophy*, in D. Morrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 233-254.
- Grube 1935 = G. M. A. Grube, *Plato's Thought*, London, Methuen, 1935.
- Guardini 1956 = R. Guardini, *Der Tod des Sokrates: eine Interpretation der platonischen Schriften Euthyphron, Apologie, Kriton, und Phaidon*, Hamburg, Rohwolt, 1956 (or. 1943).
- Guthrie 1969 = W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy: The fifth-century enlightenment*, Vol. III, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969.
- Guthrie 1975 = Id. *A History of Greek Philosophy: Plato: the Man and His Dialogues Earlier Period*, Vol. V, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Hackforth 1955 = Plato, *Phaedo*, translated by, R. Hackforth, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1955.
- Hadot 1995 = P. Hadot, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?*, Gallimard, Paris, 1995.
- Haring 1982 = E. S. Haring, *The Theaetetus ends well*, «The Review of Metaphysics», 3 (1982), pp. 509-528.
- Harrison 2015 = G. K. Harrison, *The Euthyphro, Divine Command Theory and Moral Realism*, «Philosophy», 351 (2015), pp. 107-123.
- Harte 1999 = V. Harte, *Conflicting Values in Plato's Crito*, «Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie», 2 (1999), pp. 117-147.
- Harte 2002 = Ead. *Plato on Parts and Wholes. The Metaphysics of Structure*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2002
- Hatano 2007 = T. Hatano, *Socrates and the Opinion of One's Own Ignorance*, «Philosophy», 58 (2007), pp. 237-252.
- Hatzfeld 1949 = J. Hatzfeld, *Alcibiade: Étude sur l'histoire d'Athènes à la fin du Ve siècle*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1940
- Havelock 1978 = E. A. Havelock, *The Greek Concept of Justice. From Its Shadow in Homer to Its Substance in Plato*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1978.
- Havlicek 2007 = A. Havlicek, *Philosophy and politics in Euthydemus*, in
- Heidegger 1997 = M. Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1997 (or. 1931).

- Heidel 1902 = Plato, *Euthyphro*, introduction and notes by W. A. Heidel, New York, American Book Company, 1902.
- Heitsch 1979 = E. Heitsch, *Finden, Wiederfinden, Erfinden. Überlegungen zu Platons Phaidon 76e4-5*, «Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften und Literatur», 14 (1979), pp. 3-20.
- Heitsch 2004 = Id. *Zur Epistemologie in Platons Charmides*, in M. Janka (ed.), *Egkuklion kepon (Rundgärtchen). Zu Poesie, Historie und Fachliterature der Antike. Festschrift für Hans Gärtner*, München/Leipzig, Saur, 2004, pp. 245-356.
- Hermann 2013 = F. G. Hermann, *Dynamics of Vision in Plato's Thought*, «Helios», 1-2 (2013), pp. 281-307.
- Hicken 1954 = W. F. Hicken, *Phaedo 93a11-94b3*, «The Classical Quarterly», 1 (1954), pp. 16-22.
- Hillman 1984 = J. Hillman, *Suicide and the Soul*, New York, Harper & Row, 1973 (or. 1964).
- Hitz 2010 = Z. Hitz, *Degenerate regimes in Plato's Republic*, in M. McPherran (ed.), *Plato's Republic: A Critical Guide*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 112-122
- Hoerber 1958 = R. G. Hoerber, *Plato's Euthyphro*, «Phronesis», 2 (1958), pp. 95-107.
- Hoffpauir 2019 = J. M. Hoffpauir, *Between Socrates and the Many: A Study of Plato's Crito*, Lanham, Lexington Books, 2019.
- Horkeimer and Adorno 1947 = M. Horkeimer, Th. W. Adorno, *Die Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente*, Amsterdam, Querido Verlag, 1947.
- Horn 2005 = Chr. Horn, Chr. Rapp, *Intuition und Methode. Abschied von einem Dogma der Platon- und Aristoteles-Exegese*, «Logical Analysis and History of Philosophy», 8 (2005), pp. 11-45.
- Hösle 2004 = V. Hösle, *Platons Protrepitkos. Gesprächsgeschehen und Gesprächsgegenstand in Platons Euthydemus*, «Reinisches Museum für Philologie», 147 (2004), pp. 247-275.
- Hösle 2006 = V. Hösle, *The philosophical Dialogue. A Poetics and a Hermeneutics*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.
- Hubbard 2003 = Th. K. Hubbard, *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome. A Sourcebook of Basic Documents*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003.
- Huffman 2009 = C. Huffman, *The Pythagorean Conception of the Soul from Pythagoras to Philolaus*, in D. Frede, B. Reis (eds.), *Body and Soul in Ancient Philosophy*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2009, pp. 21-44.

- Iber 2007 = Chr. Iber, *Platon, Sophistes, aus dem Griechischen von Friedrich Schleiermacher, auf der Grundlage der Bearbeitung von Walter F. Otto, Ernesto Grassi und Gert Plamböck*; Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 2007.
- Ilievski 2014 = V. Ilievsky, *Plato's Theodicy and the Platonic Cause of Evil*, Budapest, Central European University, 2014.
- Irwin 1977 = T. H. Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory*, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1977.
- Irwin 1986 = id. *Socrates the Epicurean?*, «Illinois Classical Studies», 11 (1986), pp. 85-112.
- Irwin 1995 = Id. *Plato's Ethics*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Jackson 1990 = R. Jackson, *Socrates' Iolaos: Myth and Eristic in Plato's Euthydemus*, «The Classical Quarterly», 2 (1990), pp. 378–395.
- Jaeger 1934 = W. Jaeger, *Paideia. Die Formung der griechischen Menschen*, Bd. 1, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1934
- Janko, R., *Forgetfulness in the Golden Tablets of Memory*, «The Classical Quarterly», 1 (1984), pp. 89-100.
- James 1973 = G. G. James, *Socrates on civil disobedience and rebellion*, «Southern Journal of Philosophy», 1-2 (1973), pp. 119-127.
- Jeanmaire 1939 = H. Jeanmaire, *Couroi et courètes. Essai sur l'éducation spartiate et sur les rites d'adolescence dans l'Antiquité hellénique*, Paris, Lille, 1939.
- Jedan 2010 = Chr. Jedan, *Sokrates und die deliberative Demokratie. Zum sokratischen Politikverständnis in Platons Apologie, Kriton und Gorgias*, «PEITHO/Examina Antiqua», 1 (2010), pp. 31-43.
- Jedrkievicz = S. Jedrkievicz, *Sign, Logos and Meaning: the Platonic Socrates and his Daemonic Experience*, «Metis. Anthropologie des mondes grecs anciens», 9 (2011), pp. 209-243.
- Jenks 2005 = R. Jenks, *Varieties of philia in Plato's Lysis*, «Ancient Philosophy», 25 (2005), pp. 65-80.
- Jinek 2007 = J. Jinek, *Conditions for the discussion and sophrosune as "Doing one's own" in Plato's Charmides*, in A. Havlicek, S. Spinka (eds.), *Platonuv dialog Charmides. An anthology of the fourth Czech Symposium on Plato*, Prague, Oikoumene, 2007, pp. 86-111.
- Jinek 2016 = Id. *Zum Problem des Gehorsams gegenüber dem Gesetz bei Platon*, in A. Havlicek, Chr. Horn, J. Jinek (eds.), *Nous, Polis, Nomos. Festschrift für Francesco L. Lisi. Studies on Ancient Moral and Political Philosophy*, Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, 2016, pp. 1-17.

- Johnson 1999 = D. M. Johnson, *God as the true self: Plato's Alcibiades I*, «Ancient Philosophy», 19 (1999), pp. 1-19.
- Johnstone 2015 = M. A. Johnstone, *Tyrannized Souls: Plato's Depiction of the Tyrannical Man*, «British Journal for the History of Philosophy», 3 (2015), pp. 423-437.
- Jones 2013 = R. E. Jones, *Wisdom and Happiness in Euthydemus 278–282*, «Philosophers Imprint», 13, 14 (2012), pp. 1-21.
- Jones 2016 = Id. *Socrates' Bleak View on the Human Condition*, «Ancient Philosophy», 1 (2016), pp. 97-105.
- Josse 2014 = A. Josse, *Dialectic and who we are in the Alcibiades*, «Phronesis», 1 (2014), pp. 1-21.
- Jordovic 2019 = I. Jordovic, *Taming Politics. Plato and the Democratic Roots of Tyrannical Man*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2019.
- Kagan 2013 = D. Kagan, *The Fall of the Athenian Empire*, New York, Cornell University Press, 2013, pp. 354-376.
- Kahn 1988 = C. H. Kahn, *Plato's Charmides and the Proleptic Reading of Socratic Dialogues*, «Journal of Philosophy», 10 (1988), pp. 541-549.
- Kahn 1997 = Id. *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Karasmanis 2006 = V. Karasmanis, *Definition in Plato's Meno*, in L. Judson, V. Karasmanis (eds.), *Remembering Socrates*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 129-141.
- Karfik 2001 = F. Karfik, *Die entkleidete Seele: die erotische Psychagogie in Platons Charmides*, «Listy filologické/Folia philologica», 34 (2001), pp. 209-222.
- Karfik 2010 = F. Karfik, *Gott als Nous. Der Gottesbegriff Platons*, D. Koch, I. Männlein-Robert, N. Weidtmann (hrsg.), *Platon und das Göttliche*, Tübingen, Attempto Verlag, pp. 82-97.
- Karfik 2011 = Id. *Das Argument aus den Gegensätzen (69e-72d)*, in J. Müller (hrsg.), *Platon: Phaidon*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 2011, pp. 47-62.
- Keiser 1980 = O. Keiser, *Lysis oder von der Freundschaft*, «Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte», 3 (1980), pp. 193-218.
- Kerényi 1939 = K. Kerényi, *Apollon. Studien über antike Religion und Humanität*, Wien, Frany Leo & Comp. Verlag, 1939 (or. 1937).
- Kerényi 1956 = Id. *Der göttliche Arzt*, Darmstadt, Gentner, 1956.
- Kerferd 1953 = G. Kerferd, *Protagoras' Doctrine of Justice and Virtue in the Protagoras of Plato*, «The Journal of Hellenic Studies», 73 (1953), pp. 42-45.

- Keulen 1971 = H. Keulen, *Untersuchungen zu Platons Euthydem*, Wiesbaden, O. Harrassowitz, 1971.
- Kim 2004 = A. Kim, *A Chiastic Contradiction at Euthyphro 9e1-11b5*, «Phronesis», 3 (2004), pp. 219-224
- Kingsley 1995 = P. Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic-Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995.
- Kledt 1999 = A. Kledt, *Der Mythos von Demeter in der Deutung des Firmicus Maternus in «Latomus»*, 58 (1999), pp. 626-634
- Klonowsky 1986 = R. Klonowsky, *The portico of the Archon Basileus: on the significance of the setting of Plato's Euthyphro*, «The Classic Journal», 2 (1986), pp. 130-137.
- Koch 2010 = D. Koch, *Zur Bewegung der göttlichen und menschlichen Seele in Platons Phaidros*, in D. Koch, I. Männlein-Robert, N. Weidtmann (hrsg.), *Platon und das Göttliche*, Tübingen, Attempto Verlag, pp. 198-212.
- Koch 2019 = D. Koch *et al.* (Hrsg), *Platon und die Physis*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2019.
- Konstan 1993 = D. Konstan, *Friends and Lovers in ancient Greece*, «Syllecta Classica», 4 (1993), pp.1-12.
- Konstan 1997 = D. Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Konstan 2011 = Id. *Socrates in Aristophanes' Clouds*, in D. Morrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 75-90.
- Konstantinos 2013 = M. Konstantinos, *Healing gods : the cult of Apollo Iatros, Asclepius and Hygieia in the Black Sea Region*, International Hellenic University, 2013.
- Korobili and Stefou 2020 = G. Korobili, K. Stefou, *Plato's Charmides on Philosophy as Holistic Medical Practice*, in C. Thumiger (ed.), *Holism in Ancient Medicine and Its Reception*, Leiden, Brill, 2020, pp. 201-219.
- Kraft 1995 = H. Kraft, *Über innere Grenzen. Initiation in Schamanismus, Kunst, Religion und Psychoanalyse*, Berlin, Diederichs, 1995.
- Kucera 2007 = L. Kucera, *Sophrosune as «Doing one's own» in Plato's Charmides*, in A. Havlicek, S. Spinka (eds.), *Platonuv dialog Charmides. An anthology of the fourth Czech Symposium on Plato*, Prague, Oikoumene, 2007, pp. 112-122.
- Lanza 2022 = *Nous e thanatos. Scritti su Anassagora e sulla filosofia antica*, a cura di H. Ugolini, Pistoia, Editrice Petite Plaisance, 2022,
- Larivée 2012 = A. Larivée, *Eros Tyrannos: Alcibiades as the Model of the Tyrant in Rep. IX*, «International Journal of Platonic Studies», 1 (2012), pp. 1-26.

- Lavecchia 2013 = S. Lavecchia, *La cura di sé come "agatofania". Esperienza del bene e autotrascendimento nella filosofia di Platone*, «Thaumàzein. Rivista di filosofia online», 1 (2013), pp. 149-164.
- Lavecchia 2021 = S. Lavecchia, *Monarchia della paura. L'antiagatologia del tiranno*, in F. Benoni, A. Stavru (eds.), *Platone e il governo delle passioni. Studi per Linda Napolitano*, Perugia, Aguaplano, 2021.
- Lefka 2013 = A. Lefka, *"Tout est plein de dieux": les divinités traditionnelles dans l'oeuvre de Platon: du rapport entre religion et philosophie*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2013.
- Lefka 2021 = Ead. *Socrates eudaimon at the threshold of Hades (Plato, Phaedo 58e-59)*, «Thaumàzein. Rivista di filosofia online», 1(2021), pp. 282-304.
- Leshner 1995 = J. H. Leshner, *Mind's Knowledge and Powers of Control in Anaxagoras DK B12*, «Phronesis», 2 (1995), pp. 125-142.
- Levenson 1999 = C. Levenson, *Socrates among the Corybantes: Being, Reality and the Gods*, Woodstock, Spring Publications, 1999.
- Levin 1971 = D. N. Levin, *Some Observations concerning Plato's Lysis*, in J. P. Anton, *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, Albany, SUNY Press, 1971, pp. 236-258.
- Levystone 2014 = D. Levystone, *Plato, Socratics and the Tyrannical Personality*, «Journal of Greco-Roman Studies», 3 (2014), pp. 33-52.
- Liebersohn, Y. Z., *Crito's character in Plato's Crito*, «Harvard Studies in Classical Philology», 108, 2015, pp. 103-118.
- id.* *The Place of psyche in Plato's Crito*, «Illinois Classical Studies», 40(1), 2015b, pp. 1-20.
- Lijuan 2022 = L. Lijuan, *Die Helfer der Vernunft: Scham und verwandte Emotionen bei Platon*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2022.
- Lincoln 2008 = B. Lincoln, *The Role of Religion in Achaemenian Imperialism*, in N. Brisch (ed.), *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in Ancient World and Beyond*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2008, pp. 221-242.
- Lisi 1985 = F. L. Lisi, *Einheit und Vielheit des platonischen Nomosbegriffes*, Königstein, Hain, 1985
- Lisi 2005= Id. *Repubblica VIII e Leggi III*, in Platone, *La Repubblica, ...cit.*, pp. 635-663.
- Long 2006 = A. A. Long, *How Does Socrates' Divine Sign Communicate with Him?*, in S. Ahbel-Rappe. R. Kamtekar (eds), *A Companion to Socrates*, Oxford, Blackwell, pp. 63-74.
- Longrigg 1998 = J. Longrigg, *Greek Medicine. From the Heroic to the Hellenistic Age. A source Book*, London, Routledge, 1998.

- Lookwood 2017 = C. Lookwood, *Do Lysis 'parents really love him*, «Ancient Philosophy», 30, 2 (2017), pp. 319-332.
- Luttenberger 2017 = G. U. Luttenberger, *Reigt Strafe tatsächlich die Seele? Überlegungen zu Platons Gorgias*, München, Grin Verlag, 2017.
- Maclachlan, B., *Women and Nymphs at the Grotta Caruso*, in Johnston, P. A., Casadio, G. (eds.), *Mystic Cults in Magna Graecia*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 2009, pp. 204-216.
- Magoja 2017 = *Obedecer las leyes? Utilitarismo, retórica forense y autoridad en el Critón de Platón (50a6-50b5)*, «Topicos», 53 (2017), pp. 411-436.
- Mann 2009 = C. Mann, *Kalokagathia in der Demokratie: Überlegungen zur Medialität der politischen Kommunikation im klassischen Athen*, in: C. Mann, M. Haake, R. von den Hoff (eds.), *Rollenbilder in der athenischen Demokratie*, Wiesbaden, Reichert, 2009, 147–170.
- Marion 2015 = F. Marion, *Quelques remarques sur la critique platonicienne des Megariques (lecture du Sophiste, 245e-249d)*, Université Paris-Sorbonne, séminaire d'élèves, 2015, pp. 1-16.
- Marcou, A., *Obedience and Disobedience in Plato's Crito and the Apology: Anticipating the Democratic Turn of Civil Disobedience*, «The Journal of Ethics», 25(3), 2020, pp. 339-359
- Masaracchia 1958 = A. Masaracchia, *Solone*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1958.
- Maso 2018 = S. Maso, *Dissoi Logoi. Edizione criticamente rivista, introduzione, traduzione, commento*, Roma, Storia e Letteratura, 2018.
- Mason 2013 = A. Mason, *The Nous Doctrine in Plato's Thought*, «Apeiron», 46, 3 (2013), pp. 201-228.
- Mattéi 2003 = J. F. Mattéi, *Mythos, logos et dialogos chez Platon*, in M. Fattal (ed.), *Logos et langage chez Plotin et avant Plotin*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2003, pp. 61-75.
- Mayr 2016 = A. Mayr, *Die Idealstaatsmodelle in Platons Nomoi und Xenophons Kyrupädie, Hieron. Die Verfassung der Spartaner und die Verfassung der Athener, sowie die politischen Systeme Spartas und Athens im Vergleich*, München, Ludwig-Maximilian Universität, 2016.
- McPherran 1996 = M. L. McPherran, *The Religion of Socrates*, Pennsylvania, State University Press, 1996.
- McPherran 2002 = Id. *Justice and Pollution in the Euthyphro*, «Apeiron», 35, 2 (2002), pp. 105-129.

- McPherran 2003 = Id. *Socrates, Crito and their Debt to Asclepius*, «Ancient Philosophy», 23, 1 (2003), pp. 71-92.
- McPherran 2005 = Id. *What Even a Child Would Know: Socrates, Luck, and Providence at Euthydemus 277d-282e*, «Ancient Philosophy», 25, 1 (2005), pp. 49–63.
- McPherran 2005a = Id. *Introducing a New God: Socrates and His Daimonion*, «Apeiron», 38, 2 (2005), pp. 13-30.
- McPherran 2011 = Id. *Socratic Religion*, in D. Morrison, *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 111-137.
- Menkhaus, T., *Eidos, Psyche und Unsterblichkeit: Ein Kommentar zu Platon's Phaidon*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2003.
- Merkelbach 2003 = Platon, *Euthyphron*, übers. von R. Merkelbach, K. G. Saur Verlag, München-Leipzig, 2003.
- Mesch, W., *Die Bildlichkeit der platonischen Kosmologie Zum Verhältnis von Logos und Mythos im Timaios*, in Janka, M., Schäfer, C. (eds.), *Platon als Mythologe. Neuen Interpretationen zu den Mythen im Platons Dialogen*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, pp. 194-213.
- Meyer, C. A., *Healing Dream and Ritual: Ancient Incubation and Modern Psychotherapy*, Einsiedeln, Daimon, 2012 (1989).
- Michelini 2000 = A. N. Michelini, *Socrates Plays the Buffon: Cautionary Protreptic in Euthydemus*, «The American Journal of Philology», 121, 4 (2000), pp. 509-535.
- Migliori 2021 = M. Migliori, *Virtù polivoche in Platone: il coraggio*, in F. Benoni, A. Stavru (eds.), *Platone e il governo delle passioni. Studi in onore di Linda Napolitano*, Perugia, Aguaplano, 2021, pp. 215-229.
- Mintoff 2012 = J. Mintoff, *Did Alcibiades learn justice from the Many?*, in M. Johnson, H. Tarrant (eds.), *Alcibiades and the Socratic Lover-Educator*, London, Bloomsbury, pp. 90-106.
- Mitchell 2019 = L. Mitchell, *Political thinking on kingship in democratic Athens*, «The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought», 36, 2 (2019), pp. 442-465.
- Mittelstrass 2003 = J. Mittelstrass, *Philosophy or the Search for Anthropological Constants*, in U. M. Staudinger, U. Lindenberger, *Understanding Human Development. Dialogues with Lifespan Psychology*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Boston, 2003, pp. 483-494.
- Modenutti 2019 = C. Modenutti, *El erōs de Alcibiades. Entre Sócrates y la philotimia*, «Nuevo Itinerario», 14 (2019), pp. 111-137.
- Möller 2012 = H. Möller, U. Clement, P. Eberl, *Initiationsriten*, in H. Möller (ed.), *Vertrauen in Organisationen*, Wiesbaden, Springer VS, 2012, pp. 199-227.

- Momeyer, R. W., *Socrates on Obedience and Disobedience of the Law*, «Philosophy Research Archives», 1982, pp. 21-33.
- Momigliano 1980 = A. Momigliano, *Empietà ed eresia nel mondo antico*, in A. Momigliano, *Contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, Vol. VI, Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1980, pp. 437-458.
- Momsen 1898 = A. Momsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen*, Leipzig, Teubner, 1898.
- Mondi 1980 = R. Mondi, *ΣΚΗΠΤΟΥΧΟΙ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΣ: AN ARGUMENT FOR DIVINE KINGSHIP IN EARLY GREECE*, «Arethusa», 2 (1980), pp. 203-216.
- Monoson 2014 = S. Monoson, *Socrates in Combat: Trauma and Resilience in Plato's Political Theory*, in P. Meineck, D. Konstan (eds), *Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks*, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2014, pp. 131-162.
- Montiglio 2005 = S. Montiglio, *Wandering in ancient greek culture*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Montrasio 1988 = F. Montrasio, *Le etimologie del nome di Apollo nel Cratilo*, «Rivista di Storia della Filosofia», 2 (1988), pp. 227-259.
- Moore 2015 = Chr. Moore, *Socrates and Self-Knowledge*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Moravcsik 1960 = J. M. E. Moravcsik, *Συμπλοκή Ειδῶν and the Genesis of Λόγος*, «Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie», 2 (1960), pp. 117-129.
- More 1921 = P. E. More, *The religion of Plato*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1921.
- Moreau 1992 = A. Moreau, *L'initiation en Grèce antique*, «Dialogues d'histoire ancienne», 1 (1992), pp. 191-244.
- Moreau 2021 = N. V. Moreau, *Introduction to Music in Plato's Republic: A Symposium*, «The Political Science Reviewer», 1 (2021), pp. 127-134.
- Moreschini 2013 = C. Moreschini, *Storia del pensiero tardo-antico*, Milano, Bompiani, 2013
- Moretti 2012 = G. Moretti, *Allegoria della Legge. Prosopopea delle leggi e appello alle leggi personificate: un topos retorico (e le sue trasformazioni) dal Critone platonico alla tradizione declamatoria*, in G. Moretti, A. Bonandini (eds.), *Persona ficta: la personificazione allegorica nella cultura antica fra letteratura, retorica e iconografia*, Trento, Università degli Studi di Trento, Dipartimento di Studi Letterari, Linguistici e Filologici, 2012, pp. 53-122.
- Morgan 2010 = K. A. Morgan, *The Voice of Authority: Divination and Plato's Phaedo*, «The Classical Quarterly», 1 (2010), pp. 63-81.

- Morgan 1990 = M. L. Morgan, *Platonic piety: philosophy and ritual in fourth-century Athens*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1990.
- Morisaki 2005 = K. Morisaki, *Knowledge of Knowledge in the Charmides*, «Methodos. A Journal for Ancient Philosophy», 37 (2005), pp. 38-50.
- Morrison 1995 = D. Morrison, *Xenophon's Socrates on the Just and the Lawful*, «Ancient Philosophy», 2 (1995), pp. 329-347.
- Mouzala 2019 = M. G. Mouzala, *Logos as "weaving together or communion of indications about ousia" in Plato's Sophist*, «Платоновские исследования», 1 (2019), pp. 35-75.
- Nails 2002 = D. Nails, *The People of Plato: A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics*, Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, 2002.
- Napolitano 1994 = L. Napolitano, *Lo sguardo nel buio. Metafore visive e forme grecoantiche della razionalità*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1994.
- Napolitano 2007 = Ead. *Alle origini del «gnôthi sautòn». Da Delfi al sapere socratico di non sapere*, «Esercizi Filosofici», 2 (2007), pp. 110-125.
- Napolitano 2007a = Ead. *Anamnesi e dialettica nel 'Menone'*, in M. Erler-L. Brisson (eds.), *Gorgias-Ménon, Selected Papers from the Seventh Symposium Platonicum*, Sankt Augustin Academia Verlag 2007, pp. 204-11
- Napolitano 2010 = L. Napolitano, *Il sé, l'altro, l'intero. Rileggendo i dialoghi di Platone*, Milano-Udine, Mimesis Edizioni, 2010.
- Napolitano 2012 = Ead. *Il coraggio in Platone. Cammini nuovi di un'antica virtù nel I libro delle Leggi?*, in M. Pontempi, G. Panno (eds.), *L'anima della legge. Studi intorno ai Nomoi di Platone*, Padova, Polimetrica Publisher, 2012, pp. 93-134.
- Napolitano 2012a = Ead. *Istante, presente ed attuale. Ipotesi per una temporalità psichica in Platone e Aristotele*, in S. Lavecchia (ed.), *Istante. L'esperienza dell'illocalizzabile nella filosofia di Platone*, Milano-Udine, Mimesis Edizioni, 2012, pp. 11-54
- Napolitano 2013 = Ead. *Prospettive del gioire e del soffrire nell'etica di Platone*, Milano-Udine, Mimesis Edizioni, 2013.
- Napolitano 2013a = Ead. *Cura, eros, felicità. Sull'antropologia di Platone*, «Thaumàzein. Rivista di filosofia», 1 (2013), pp. 121-148.
- Napolitano 2014 = Ead. *Meraviglia, perplessità, aporia: cognizioni ed emozioni alle radici della ricerca filosofica*, «THAUMÀZEIN», 2, 2014, pp. 127-178
- Napolitano 2015 = Ead. *La sofferenza, l'eros e l'Odisseo di Platone*, in R. Radice- G. Tiengo, *Seconda navigazione. Omaggio a Giovanni Reale*, Milano Vita & Pensiero 2015, pp. 435-68.

- Napolitano 2017 = Ead. *La grande e buona speranza di Socrate*, in G. Cusinato, F. L. Marcolungo, A. Romele, *Interpretazione e trasformazione*, Milano-Udine, Mimesis Edizioni, pp. 65-78.
- Napolitano 2018 = Ead. *Il dialogo socratico. Fra tradizione storica e pratica filosofica per la cura di sé*, Milano-Udine, Mimesis Edizioni, 2018.
- Napolitano 2020 = Ead. *Curare le emozioni, curare con le emozioni*, Milano-Udine, Mimesis Edizioni, 2020.
- Napolitano 2021 = Ead. *Filosofi sempre. Immagini dalla filosofia antica*, Verona, QuiEdit, 2021.
- Narcy 1984 = M. Narcy, *Le philosophe et son double. Un commentaire de l'Euthydème de Platon*, Paris, Vrin, 1984.
- Narcy 1994 = Id., *Platon Théétète, traduction inédite, introduction et notes*, Flammarion, Paris, 1994.
- Narcy 1997 = Id. *Le Socratism du Lysis: I. Philia et dialegesthai*, in G. Giannantoni, M. Narcy, *Lezioni Socratiche*, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 1997, pp. 205-18.
- Narcy 2000 = Id. *Le Socrate du Lysis est-il un sophiste*, in Th. M. Robinson, L. Brisson (eds.), *Plato : Euthydemus, Lysis, Charmides. Proceedings of the V Symposium Platonicum*, Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, 2000, pp. 180-193.
- Narcy 2013 = Id., *Remarks on the first five definitions of the Sophist*, in B. Bossi, Th. M. Robinson (eds.), *Plato's Sophist revisited*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2013.
- Natorp 1903 = P. Natorp, *Platos Ideenlehre*, Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1903.
- Nehamas 1998 = A. Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault*, Berkeley, University of California press, 1998.
- Nelson 1931 = L. Nelson, *Die sokratische Methode*, Göttingen, Öffentliches Leben Verlag, 1931.
- Newman 2015 = N. Newman, *Sailing to the underworld on a sea of milk: orphic allusion and the transition to the underworld in Lucian's Verae Historiae*, «New England Classical Journal», 2 (2015), pp. 102-120.
- Nichols 2006 = M. Nichols, *Friendship and Community in Plato's Lysis*, «The Review of Politics», 68 (2006), pp. 1-19.
- Nichols 2009 = Id. *Socrates on Friendship and Community: Reflections on Plato's Symposium, Phaedrus, and Lysis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University press, 1997.
- Nielsen 2020 = K. M. Nielsen, *The Tyrant's Vice: Pleonexia and Lawlessness in Plato's Republic*, «Philosophical Perspectives», 1 (2020), pp. 1-24.

- Nithingale, A., *Philosophy and Religion in Plato's Dialogues*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- North 1966 = H. North, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1966.
- Noussan-Letry 1966 = L. Noussan-Letry, *NOMIZEIN ΘΕΟΥΣ*, *Platon*, Apologia 35d4-c7, «Revista de Estudios Clasicos», 10 (1966), pp. 25-36.
- O'Brien 1968 = D. O'Brien, *The Last Argument of Plato's Phaedo*, «Classical Quarterly» 1 (1968), pp. 95-106.
- Nussbaum 2010 = M. Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: why Democracy needs the Humanities*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010.
- O Connel 1985 = R. J. O Connel, *God, Gods and Moral Cosmos in Socrates' Apology*, «International Philosophical Quarterly», 1 (1985), pp. 31-50.
- Oehler 1997 = K. Oehler, *Subjektivität und Selbstbewußtsein in der Antike*, Würzburg Königshausen & Neumann, 1997.
- Olsen 2000 = H. Olsen, *Socrates talks to himself in Plato's Hippias Major*, «Ancient Philosophy», 2 (2000), pp. 265-287.
- Osborn 1995 = G. Osborn, *Plato: Poet: Lysis: Poem*, Vanderbilt University, 1995.
- Ostwald 1990 = M. Ostwald, *Nomos and Physis in Antiphon's Περὶ Ἀληθείας*, in Th. G. Rosenmeyer, M. Griffith, D. J. Mastrorade (eds.), *Cabinet of the muses: Essays on classical and comparative literature in honor of Thomas J. Rosenmeyer*, Atlanta, Scholar Press, 1990, pp. 293-306.
- Otto 1962 = W. F. Otto, *Die Manen oder von den Urformen des Totenglaubens. Eine Untersuchung zur Religion der Griechen, Römer und Semiten und zum Volksglauben überhaupt*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1962 (or. ed. 1923),
- Palpacelli 2004 = L. Palpacelli, *L' "Eutidemo" prelude al "Sofista"*, «Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia», Università di Macerata, 37 (2004), pp. 317-352.
- Palpacelli 2017 = Ead. *L' Eutidemo di Platone: un invito alla filosofia e alla virtù. Un dialogo protrettico sulla protrettica*, «Educação E Filosofia», 62 (2017), pp. 865-908.
- Palumbo 2007 = L. Palumbo, *La paura e la città (Platone, Leggi I, II)*, «Atti dell'Accademia di Scienze morali e politiche», 117, 2007, pp. 309-323
- Palumbo 2008 = Ead. *Mimesis. Rappresentazione, teatro e mondo nei dialoghi di Platone e nella 'Poetica' di Aristotele*, Napoli, Loffredo Editore, 2008.
- Palumbo 2010 = Ead. *Socrate e la conoscenza di sé: per una nuova lettura di Alc. I 133a-c*, in A. Stavru, L. Rossetti (eds.), *Socratica 2008. Studies in Ancient Socratic Literature*, Bari, Levante Editori, 2010, pp. 185-209.

- Palumbo 2013 = Ead. *Portare il lettore nel cuore del testo. L'ekphrasis nei dialoghi di Platone*, in S. Marino, A. Stavru (eds.), *Ekphrasis, Estetica. Studi e Ricerche* Vol. 1, Roma, Aracne Editrice, 2013, pp. 35-46.
- Palumbo 2020 = Ead. *Socrate o dello specchio. Strategie di scrittura nell'Apologia e nell'Alcibiade*, «Plato Journal», 20 (2020), pp. 81-95.
- Parke 1986 = H. W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1986.
- Parker 1996 = R. Parker, *MIASMA. Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996 (or. 1983).
- Parry 2003 = R. D. Parry, *The Craft of Ruling in Plato's Euthydemus and Republic*, «Phronesis», 1 (2003), pp. 1-28.
- Parry 2007 = Id. *The Unhappy Tyrant and the Craft of Inner Rule*, in G. Ferrari (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 386-414.
- Patocka 1998 = J. Patocka, *Criton*, «Les temps modernes», 53 (1998), pp. 66-87.
- Patocka 1999 = J. Patocka, *Socrate. Lezioni di filosofia*, a cura di G. Girgenti, Milano, Rusconi, 1999 (or. 1947).
- Patzig 1972 = G. Patzig, *Logic in the Euthyphro*, in S.M. Stern, A. Hourani, V. Brown (eds.), *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition*, Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1972, pp. 293-305.
- Peake 2011 = J. Peake, *Tragic Apollo in Fifth-Century Athens: Text and Contexts*, The Open University, 2011.
- Pearson 1962 = L. Pearson, *Popular Ethics in Ancient Greece*, Stanford, University Press, 1962.
- Pellizer 2011 = E. Pellizer, *La nozione di dàimon nella Grecia arcaica*, in E. A. C. Dorda, A. M. Ortiz, *Eusébeia: estudios de religión griega*, Madrid, Signifer Libros, 2011, pp. 255-272.
- Pendrick 2002 = G. J. Pendrick, *Antiphon the Sophist. The Fragments*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Penner 1991 = T. Penner, *Desire and Power in Socrates: The Argument of Gorgias 466a-468e that Orators and Tyrants have no Power in the City*, «Apeiron», 3 (1991), pp. 147-202.
- Penner 1997 = Id. *Two notes on the Crito: the impotence of the many, and 'persuade or obey*, «Classical Quarterly», 1 (1997), pp. 153-166.

- Pentassuglio 2020 = F. Pentassuglio, *Philosophical synousia and pedagogical eros*, «Philosophie Antique», 20 (2020), pp. 75-105.
- Pepe, L., *Nomos agraphos, nomos gegrammenos. Osservazioni su legge non scritta e legge scritta nell'ordinamento ateniese*, «Rivista di diritto ellenico», 7, 2017, pp. 109-137.
- Périllé 2014 = J. L. Périllé, *Mysteres socraatique et traditions orales de l'eudemonisme dans les dialogues de Platon*, Paris, Vrin, 2014.
- Périllé 2019 = J. L. Périllé, *Rituel corybantique des mystères socratiques et doctrine des principes*, «Revue de métaphysique et de morale», 103 (2019), pp. 267-285.
- Perl 1999 = E. Perl, *The Presence of the Paradigm: Immanence and Transcendence in Plato's Theory of Forms*, «The Review of Metaphysics» 2 (1999), pp. 339-362.
- Peters 2001 = H. Peters, *Platos Dialog Lysis: ein unlösbares Rätsel*, Frankfurt am Main, P. Lang, 2001.
- Petit 2019 = A. Petit, *Dionysos et la liberation de l'ame dans la tradition philosophique orphique*, in *Dossier. Corps antiques: morceaux choisis*, Paris-Athènes, Editions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2019, pp. 249-265.
- Petre 2007 = Z. Petre, *Zalmoxis, roi et dieu: autour du Charmide*, «DACIA. Revue d'histoire ancienne et d'archéologie», 1 (2007), pp. 47-72.
- Pettis 2015 = J. B. Pettis, *The Sleeper's Dream: Asclepius Ritual and Early Christian Discourse*. Piscataway, Gorgias Press, 2015
- Pfefferkorn 2020 = J. Pfefferkorn, *Shame and Virtue in Plato's Laws. Two Kinds of Fear and the Drunken Puppet*, in L. Candiotta, O. Renaut (eds.), *Emotions in Plato*, Leiden, Brill, 2020, pp. 147-168.
- Pichanick 2005 = A. Pichanick, *Two Rival Conceptions of Sôphrosunê*, «Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought», 2 (2005), pp. 249-264.
- Pichanick 2016 = Id. *Sophrosyne, Socratic Therapy, and Platonic Drama in Plato's Charmides*, «Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy», 1 (2016), pp. 47-66.
- Pieper 1970 = A. Pieper, *Vier Wege des Wissens. Interpretation der sokratischen Ursachenforschung nach Platons Dialog "Phaidon"*, «Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görresgesellschaft», 77, pp. 378-397.
- Pfuhl 1900 = E. Pfuhl, *De Atheniensium pompis sacris*, Berlin, Weidmann, 1900.
- Plumwood, V., *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, London, Routledge, 1993.
- Pokorny 1959 = J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Francke Verlag, Bern, 1959.
- Politis 2008 = V. Politis, *The place of aporia in Plato's Charmides*, «Phronesis», 1 (2008), pp. 1-34

- Pohlenz 1913 = M. Pohlenz, *Aus Platos Werdezeit*, Berlin, Weidmann, 1913.
- Popper 1945 = K. R. Popper, *The open society and its enemies: the age of Plato*, Vol. I, London, Routledge, 1945.
- Pradeau 2000 = J. F. Pradeau, *Introduction*, in C. Marboeuf, J. F. Pradeau (eds.), *Platon: Alcibiade*, Paris, Flammarion, 2000, pp. 9-81.
- Praechter 1932 = K. Praechter, *Platon und Euthydemus*, «Philologus», 87 (1932), pp. 121-135.
- Press 2001 = G. A. Press, *The Elenchos in Plato's Charmides*, in G. A. Scott (ed.), *Re-examining the Socratic Elenchos*, University Park, Penn. State University Press, 2001, pp. 252-265.
- Price 1989 = A. W. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989.
- Pucci 2016 = L. Pucci, *The Purification of Orestes at Troezen*, in A. Ercolani, M. Giordano (eds.), *Submerged Literature in Ancient Greek Culture*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2016, pp. 71-94.
- Radice 2003 = R. Radice, *Plato*, Milano, Biblia, 2003.
- Reich 1968 = Platon, *Euthyphron*, übers. von K. Reich, Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968.
- Reale 2003 = G. Reale, *Per una nuova interpretazione di Platone*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2003 (or. 1984).
- Reeve 2000 = C. D. C. Reeve, 2000. *Socrates the Apollonian*, in N. D. Smith, P. Woodruff (eds.), *Reason and Religion in Socratic Philosophy*, London, Routledge, pp. 24-39.
- Reinmuth 1952 = O. W. Reinmuth, *The Genesis of the Athenian Ephebia*, «Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association», 83 (1952), pp. 34-50.
- Remes 2013 = P. Remes, *Reason to Care: The Object and Structure of Self-Knowledge in the Alcibiades I*, «Apeiron», 3 (2013), pp. 270-301.
- Renaud 2007 = F. Renaud, *Self-knowledge in the first Alcibiades and in the commentary of Olympiodorus*, in M. Migliori, L. M. Napolitano Valditara, A. Fermani (eds.), *Inner Life and Soul: Psyche in Plato. Lecturae Platonis, 7*. Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, 2011, pp. 207-224.
- Reshtoko 1997 = N. Reshtoko, *Plato's Lysis: A Socratic Treatise on Desire and Attraction*, «Apeiron», 1 (1997), pp. 1-18.
- Rider 2010 = B. Rider, *Self-Care, Self-Knowledge and Politics in the Alcibiades I*, «Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy», 2 (2010), pp. 395-413.

- Riedweg 1987 = Chr. Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie bei Platon, Philon und Klemens von Alexandrien*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 1987.
- Riedweg 2005 = Id. *Pythagoras. Leben, Lehre, Nachwirkung*, München, Beck, 2002.
- Rhodes 2011 = P. J. Rhodes, *Alcibiades*, Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2011.
- Rist 1964 = J. Rist, *Equals and Intermediates in Plato*, «Phronesis», 9 (1964), pp. 27-37.
- Robin 1935 = L. Robin, *Platon*, Paris, Librairie Felix Alcan, 1935,
- Robinson 1942 = R. Robinson, *Plato's Consciousness of Fallacy*, «Mind», 51 (1942), pp. 97-114.
- Robinson 1986 = D. B. Robinson, *Plato's Lysis: The Structural Problem*, «Illinois Classical Studies», 11 (1986), pp. 63-83
- Rosen 1968 = F. Rosen, *Piety and Justice: Plato's Euthyphro*, «Philosophy», 164 (1968), pp. 105-116.
- Ross 1953 = D. Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953.
- Rossetti 2007 = L. Rossetti, *Il dialogo socratico come unità comunicazionale aperta*, in G. Mazzara. M. Nancy, L. Rossetti, *Il Socrate dei dialoghi. Seminario palermitano del gennaio 2006*, Bari, Levante Editore, 2007, pp. 33-51.
- Rowe 1993 = Plato, *Phaedo*, translated by C. Rowe, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Rowe 2000 = Id. *The Lysis and the Symposium: Aporia and Euporia*, in Th. M. Robinson, L. Brisson (eds.), *Plato: Euthydemus, Lysis, Charmides. Proceedings of the V Symposium Platonicum*, Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, 2000, pp.
- Rowe 2013 = Id. *Socrates and his Gods: from the Euthyphro to the Eudemian Ethics*, in V. Harte, M. Lane (eds.), *Politeia in Greek and Roman Philosophy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 313-328.
- Rowe 2015 = Id. *Theaetetus and Sophist*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- San Cristobal, A. J., *The Meaning of βᾶκχος and βακχεύειν in Orphism*, in Johnston, P. A., Casadio, G. (eds.), *Mystic Cults....cit.*, pp. 46-60.
- Rudebusch 2004 = G. Rudebusch, *True Love is Required: The Argument of Lysis 221d-222a*, «Ancient Philosophy», 24, 1 (2004), pp. 67-80.
- Ryle 1966 = G. Ryle, *Plato's Progress*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1966.
- Samter 1901 = E. Samter, *Familienfeste der Griechen und Römer*, Berlin, Georg Reimer, 1901.
- Santas 1993 = G. Santas, *Socratic Goods and Socratic Happiness*, in T. Irwin, M. Nussbaum (eds.) *Virtue, Love and Form: Essays in Memory of Gregory Vlastos*, Edmonton, Academis Printing and Publishing, 1993, pp. 37-52.

- Sassi 1996 = M. M. Sassi, *Eraclito nel Fedone? Note sull'argomento ciclico*, in M. S. Funghi (ed.), *HODOI DIZESIOS. Le vie della ricerca (Studi in onore di F. Adorno)*, Firenze, Olshki, 1996.
- Scarpi 2002 = P. Scarpi (ed.), *Le religioni dei misteri. Samotraccia, Andania, Isside, Civele e Attis, Mitraismo*, Vol. II, Milano, Mondadori, 2002.
- Scarrow, D., *Phaedo 106a-106e*, «Philosophical Review», 70(2), 1961, pp. 245-253.
- Schamp 2000 = J. Schamp, *L'homme sans visage: pour une lecture politique du Charmide*, «L'Antiquité Classique», 69 (2000), pp. 103-116.
- Schmidt 1998 = W. Th. Schmidt, *Plato's Charmides and the Socratic ideal of rationality*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1998.
- Schmidt 2002 = W. Th. Schmidt, *Socratic Dialectic in the Charmides*, in in G. A. Scott (ed.), *Does Socrates Have a Method*, University Park, Penn. State University Press, 2002, pp. 235-251.
- Schoplick 1968 = V. Schoplick, *Der platonische Dialog Lysis*, Freiburg, Diss, 1968.
- Scolnicov 1992 = S. Scolnicov, *An image of perfection. The good and the rational in Plato's material universe*, «Revue de philosophie ancienne», 9 (1992), pp. 35-67.
- Scott 1995 = D. Scott, *Recollection and experience. Plato's theory of learning and its successors*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Sedley, D., *Philosophy, the Forms and the Art of Ruling*, in Ferrari, G. R. F. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 256-283.
- Setaioli 2014 = A. Setaioli, *The Daimon in Timarchus' cosmic vision (Plu. De Gen. Socr. 22, 590B-592E)*, in J. R. Ferreira, D. F. Leão, C. A. M. de Jesus, *Nomos Kosmos and Dike in Plutarch*, Coimbra, Centre de Estudos Clássicos e Humanísticos da Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra, 2012, pp. 109-120.
- Seubert 2005 = H. Seubert, *Polis und Nomos: Untersuchungen zu Platons Rechtslehre*, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 2005.
- Shields 2013 = Chr. Shields, *The grounds of Logos: The Interweaving of Forms*, in G. Anagnostopoulos, J. Miller (eds.), *Reason and Analysis in Ancient Greek Philosophy. Essays in Honor of David Keyt*, New York, Springer, 2013, pp. 211-230.
- Shorey 1903 = P. Shorey, *The unity of Plato's thought*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1903
- Sima 2016 = A. Sima, *Sókratés jako daimón [Socrates like a daimon]*, J. Jacub (ed.), *Platónova Obrana Sókrata [Plato's Apology of Socrates]*, Prague, Oikoumene, 2016, pp. 85-101.

- Smith 2004 = N. D. Smith, *Did Plato write the Alcibiades*, «Apeiron», 37, 2 (2004), pp. 93-108
- Smith 2014 = N. D. Smith, *Sons and Fathers in Plato's Euthyphro and Crito*, "Ancient Philosophy", 2014, pp. 1-13.
- Soares 2017 = L. Soares, *El conocimiento de sí en el Alcibiades I como problema psico-político*, Universidad Nacional de la Plata, XI Jornadas de Investigación del Departamento de Filosofía FaHCE-UNLP [online], 2017, pp. 93-118.
- Solana 2013 = J. Solana, *Socrates and 'Noble' Sophistry* (Sophist 226b – 231c), in B. Bossi, Th. M. Robinson (eds.), *Plato's Sophist Revisited*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2013, pp. 71-86.
- Solcan 2009 = D. Solcan, *La piété chez Platon: une lecture conjuguée de l'Euthyphron et de l'Apologie de Socrate*, Paris, Harmattan, 2009.
- Solinas 2005 = M. Solinas, *Desideri: fenomenologia degenerativa e strategie di controllo*, in Platone, *La Repubblica*, tr. it e comm. a cura di M. Vegetti, Vol. VI-Libri VIII-IX, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2005, pp. 471-498.
- Song 2008 = E. Song, *Philanthropie und Frömmigkeit in Platons Euthyphro*, "Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie", 90, 1 (2008), pp. 115-129.
- Spinelli 2002 = E. Spinelli, *Socratismo, platonismo e arte della vita. Ancora sulla digressione del Teeteto*, in G. Casertano (ed.), *Il Teeteto di Platone. Struttura e problematiche*, Napoli, Loffredo, 2002, pp. 201-215.
- Sprague 1962 = R. K. Sprague, *Plato's Use of Fallacy: A Study of the Euthydemus and Some Other Dialogues*. London, Routledge, 1962.
- Stannard 1959 = J. Stannard, *Socratic Eros and Platonic Dialectic*, «Phronesis», 4, 2 (1959), pp. 120-34.
- Stark 1952 = Platon, *Euthyphro*,
- Stavru 1998 = A. Stavru, *Il lascito di Walter Friederich Otto nel Deutsches Literaturarchiv di Marbach*, «Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni», 64 (1998), pp. 195-222.
- Stavru 2008 = Id. *Socrate et la confiance dans les agraphoi nomoi (Xénophon, Memorables, IV, 4, 19-25). Réflexions sur les socratiques de Walter Friederich Otto*, in M. Narcy, A. Tordesillas (eds.), *Xénophon et Socrate. Actes du colloque d'Aix en Provence (6-9 novembre 2003)*, Paris, Vrin, 2008, pp. 65-85.
- Stavru 2009 = Id. *Socrate e la cura dell'anima. Dialogo e apertura al mondo*, Milano, Marinotti, 2009.
- Stavru 2018 = A. Stavru, *Pythagoreische Seelenreisen bei Aristophanes: Katabasis als transformativer Wissenserwerb*, in I. Männlein-Robert (ed.), *Seelenreise und*

- Katabasis: Einblicke ins Jenseits in antiken philosophischer Literatur*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2018, pp.139-176.
- Steel, S., *Nietzsche's Understanding of Socrates*, Hamilton, McMaster University, 1998.
- Stefanini 1949 = L. Stefanini, *Platone*, voll. 2, Padova, Cedam, 1949.
- Stefou, K., *Helping friends and harming enemies: the case of Gorgias 480b-481b5*, «Letras Clasicas», 17(2), 2013, pp. 52-62
- Steger, F., *Asclepios: Medizin und Kult*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016.
- Stengel, P., *Griechische Kultursaltertümer*, München, Beck, 1920.
- Stern 1999 = P. Stern, *Tyranny and Self-Knowledge: Critias and Socrates in Plato's Charmides*, «The American Political Science Review», 93, 2 (1999), pp. 399-412.
- Stone, S., *Μοῦσας and ψυχή in the Phaedo*, «Plato Journal», 18, 2018, pp. 55-69.
- Suvák 2016 = V. Suvák, *Socratic Therapeia: Plato's Charmides 153a-158d*, «Filozofia», 1 (2016), pp. 357-368
- Swanson 2011 = C. E. Swanson, *Socratic Dialectic and Resolution of Fallacies in Plato's Euthydemus*, State University of New Jersey, 2011.
- Szaif 2017 = J. Szaif, *Socrates and the Benefits of Puzzlement*, in G. Karamanolis, V. Politis (eds.), *The Aporetic Tradition in Ancient Philosophy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 29-47.
- Szlezak 2010 = T. A. Szlezak, *Freundschaft zwischen Gott und Mensch. Zur Bedeutung von theophilés bei Platon*, in D. Koch, I. Männlein-Robert, N. Weidtmann (hrsg.), *Platon und das Göttliche*, Tübingen, Attempto Verlag, pp. 216–232
- Tarrant 2003 = H. Tarrant, *Plato's Euthydemus and a Platonist Education Program*, «Dionysius» 21 (2003), pp. 7–22
- Taylor 1911 = A. E. Taylor, *Varia Socratica. First Series*, Oxford, J. Parker & co., 1911.
- Taylor 1926 = Id. *Plato: The Man and His Work*, London Routledge, 1926.
- Tell 2009 = H. Tell, *Wisdom for sale? The sophists and money*, «Classical Philology», 1 (2009), pp. 13-33.
- Thein 2007= K. Thein, *Hunting, making, using: The Euthydemus and the problem of dialectics*, Czech Symposium on Plato (recueil), 5 (2007), pp. 82-96.
- Thein 2007a = K. Thein, *Socrates' dream and "Doing one's own job" in the Charmides*, in A. Havlicek, S. Spinka (eds.), *Platonuv dialog Charmides. An anthology of the fourth Czech Symposium on Plato*, Prague, Oikoumene, 2007, pp. 112-122.
- Tränkle 1985 = H. Tränkle, *GNOTHI SAUTON. Zr Ursprung und Deutungsgeschichte des delphischen Spruchs*, «Würzburger Jahrbuch für Altertumwissenschaft», 11 (1985), pp. 19-31.

- Torjussen, S., *Dionysos in the Underworld. An Interpretation of the Toledo Krater*, «Nordlit», 10(2), 2006, pp. 85-101.
- id.* *Milk as Symbol of Immortality in the Orphis Gold Tablets from Thurii and Pelinna*, «Nordlit», 33, 2014, pp. 35-46.
- Torres 2021 = J. Torres, *Plato's Medicalisation of Ethics*, «Apeiron», 54 (3) (2021), pp. 287-316.
- Trabattoni 1994 = F. Trabattoni, *Scrivere nell'anima. Verità, dialettica e persuasione in Platone*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1994.
- Trabattoni 2007 = F. Trabattoni, *Si può parlare di "unità" della psicologia platonica? Esame di un caso significativo (Fedone 68b-69e) in L'immortalità personale: un'altra nobile menzogna*, in M. Migliori, L. Napolitano, A. Fermi (eds.), *Interiorità e anima. La psychè in Platone*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2007, pp. 307-320.
- Tuckey 1951 = T. G. Tuckey, *Plato's Charmides*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1951.
- Turner 1969 = V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, London, Routledge, 1969.
- Ulich, D., *Einführung in die Psychologie*, Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, Kohlhammer, 1989.
- Unruh 200 = P. Unruh, *Sokrates und die Pflicht zum Rechtsgehorsam. Eine Analyse von Platons Kriton*, Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2000.
- Untersteiner, M., *Il concetto di δαίμων in Omero*, «Atene e Roma», 17 (1939), pp. 93-134.
- Ustinova, Y., *To Live in Joy and Die with Hope: Experiential Aspects of Ancient Greek Mystery Rites*, «Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies», 56(2), 2013, pp. 105-123.
- Van Gennep 1909 = A. van Gennep, *Les rites des passage*, Paris, E. Nourry, 1909.
- Vasiliu 2021 = A. Vasiliu, *Montrer l'ame. Lecture du Phèdre de Platon*, Paris, Sorbonne Université Presses, 2021.
- Vegetti 1966 = M. Vegetti, *La medicina in Platone*, «Rivista Critica di Storia della Filosofia», 21, 1 (1966), pp. 3-39.
- Vegetti 1998 = Id. *L'etica degli antichi*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1998 (or. 1986).
- Vegetti 2005 = Id. *Techne*, in Platone, *La Repubblica*, tr. it e comm. a cura di M. Vegetti, Vol. I-Libri I, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2005, pp. 233-257.
- Vegetti 2018 = Platone, *Repubblica*, intr. tr. e note di M. Vegetti, 2019 (or. 2007).
- Versenyi 1975 = L. Versenyi, *Plato's Lysis*, «Phronesis», 20, 3 (1975), 185-198.
- Vidal-Naquet 1981 = P. Vidal-Naquet, *Le chasseur noir: formes de pensée et formes de société dans le monde grec*, Paris, La Découverte, 1981

- Villar 2020 = F. Villar, *No-ser, Falsedad y contradiccion: la segunda demostracion eristica del Eutidemo y el problema de lo falso en el Sofista*, "Topics, Revista de Filosofia", 58 (2020), pp. 11-37.
- Vimercati 2015 = E. Vimercati (ed.), *Medioplatonici. Opere, frammenti, testimonianze*, Milano, Bompiani, 2015.
- Vlastos, G., *Reasons and Causes in the Phaedo*, «The Philosophical Review», 78(3), 1969, pp. 291-325.
- Vlastos 1973 = G. Vlastos, *The Individual as Object of Love in Plato*, in G. Vlastos, *Platonic Studies*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1973, pp. 3-34.
- Vlastos 1980 = Id. *The Paradox of Socrates*, in G. Vlastos (ed.), *The Philosophy of Socrates. A Collection of Critical Essays* (1971), Notre Dame, Notre Dame University Press, 1980, pp. 1-21.
- Vlastos 1981 = G. Vlastos, *Platonic Studies: Second Edition*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981 (or. 1973).
- Vlastos 1991 = Id. *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1991.
- Vlastos 1995 = Id. *Theology Philosophy in Early Greek Thought*, in D. W. Graham (ed.), *The Presocratics*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995. pp. 57-88.
- Von Arnim 1914 = H. von Arnim, *Platons Jugenddialoge und die Entstehung des Phaidros*, Leipzig, Teubner, 1914.
- Von Arnim 1916 = Id. *Plato's Lysis*, «Rheinisches Meseum für Philologie», 71 (1916), pp. 364-87.
- Von Fritz 1964 = K. von Fritz, *Der ΝΟΥΣ des Anaxagoras*, «Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte», 9 (1964), pp. 87-102.
- Von Heyking 2013 = J. von Heyking, *Hermes as Eros in Plato's Lysis*, «History of the Human Sciences», 26, 5 (2013), 132–154.
- Von Schoeffer, V., *De Deli insulae rebus*, «Berliner Studien für classische Philologie und Archaeologie», 9(1), 1889.
- Vorwerk 2003 = M. Vorwerk, *Zauber oder Argument? Die ἐπωδοὶ μῦθοι in Nomoi X (903a10-905d1)*, in Scolnicov, S., Brisson, L. (eds.), *Plato's Laws: From Theory into Practice. Proceedings of the VI Symposium Platonicum. Selected Papers*, Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, 2003, pp. 81-86.
- Waerdt, P. V., *Socrates in the Clouds*, in Waerdt, P. V. (ed.), *The Socratic Movement*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1994, pp. 48-86.

- Weiss 2001 = *When Winning is Everything: Socratic Elenchus and Euthydemian Eristic*, in T. M. Robinson, L. Brisson (eds.) *Plato: Euthydemus, Lysis, Charmides. Proceedings of the V Symposium Platonicum*, Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, pp. 68-75.
- Wasmouth 2015 = E. Wasmouth, *ΩΣΙΠΕΡ ΟΙ ΚΟΡΥΒΑΝΤΙΩΝΤΕΣ: THE CORYBANTIC RITES IN PLATO'S DIALOGUES*, "The Classical Quarterly". 65, 1 (2015), pp. 69-84
- Wasmouth 2016 = Ead. *Self-Knowledge in the Alcibiades I*, University of Cambridge, 2016
- Weber 2008 = G. Weber, *Die athenische Demokratie. Entstehung, Institutionen, Probleme*, in G. Lucks (ed.), *Demokratie: Entstehung, Krisen und Gefahren. Vier Vorträge*, Hamburg, Dr. Kovac Verlag, 2008, pp. 21-32.
- Werner 2012 = D. Werner, *Myth and the Structure of Plato's Euthyphro*, "International Philosophical Quarterly", 52, 1 (2012), pp. 41-62.
- Werner 2013 = Id. *The self-seeing Soul in the Alcibiades I*, «Ancient Philosophy», 33, 2) (2013) pp. 307–331.
- Wiehl 1969 = Platon, *Der Sophist*, übers. O. Apelt, hrsg. R. Wiehl, Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1967.
- Wiitala 2014 = M. O. Wiitala, *The Forms in the Euthyphro and the Statesman: a case against the developmental reading of Plato's dialogues*, "International Philosophical Quarterly", 54, 4 (2014), pp. 393-410.
- Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1893 = U. von Wilamowitz Moellendorf, *Aristoteles und Athen*, Berlin, Weidmann 1893.
- Wilberding 2012 = J. Wilberding, Horn Chr., *Neoplatonism and the philosophy of nature*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Wilburn 2021 = J. Wilburn, *Musical and Gymnastic Education in the Republic*, in J. Wilburn (ed.), *The Political Soul: Plato on Thumos, Spirited Motivation, and the City*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021, pp. 141-165.
- Wippern 1970 = J. Wippern, *Seele und Zahl in Platons Phaidon*, in Zinn, E., et al. (Hrsg.) *SILVAE. Festschrift für Ernst Zinn zum 60. Geburtstag*, Tübingen, M. Niemeyer, pp. 272-288.
- Witte 1970 = B. Witte, *Die Wissenschaft vom Guten und Bösen*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1970.
- Wohl 2012 = V. Wohl, *The eye of the beloved Ophis and Eros in Socratic pedagogy*, in M. Johnson, H. Tarrant (eds.), *Alcibiades and the Socratic Lover-Educator*, London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012, pp. 45–60.
- Wolfsdorf 2005 = D. Wolfsdorf, *Euthyphro 10a2-11b1: A Study in Platonic Metaphysics and its Reception Since 1960*, "Apeiron", 38, 1 (2005), pp. 1-72.

- Wolfsdorf 2007 = Id. *Φιλία in Plato's Lysis*, «Harvard Studies in Classical Philology», 103 (2007), pp. 235-259.
- Woozley 1979 = A. D. Woozley, *Law and Obedience: The Arguments of Plato's Crito*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1979.
- Young 1974 = B. G. Young, *Socrates and Obedience*, «Phronesis», 19, 1 (1974), pp. 1-29.
- Zelinova, Kalas 2019 = Z. Zelinova, Andrej Kalas, *Alcibiades' pedagogical Erôs?*, «Filozofia», 74, 1 (2019), pp. 13-27.
- Zeppi 1969 = Platone, *Eutidemo*, a curia di S. Zeppi, 1969.
- Zhu 2014 = R. Zhu, *Love in the Euthyphro*, «Apeiron», 47, 1 (2014), pp. 1-15.
- Zoller 2018 = C. Zoller, *Plato and the Body: Reconsidering Socratic Asceticism*, Albany, SUNY Press, 2018.