

THE INTERNATIONAL PLATO SOCIETY



UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA
DIPARTIMENTO DI FILOLOGIA, LETTERATURA E LINGUISTICA

X SYMPOSIUM PLATONICUM

The Symposium



Pisa, 15th - 20th July, 2013

Proceedings I

The International Plato Society



Università di Pisa
Dipartimento di Filologia, Letteratura e Linguistica

X Symposium Platonicum

The *Symposium*

Pisa, 15th - 20th July, 2013

*Sotto l'Alto Patronato del Presidente della Repubblica
Con il Patrocinio dell'Università di Pisa*

MONDAY, 15TH JULY, 2013 3

Eros and Life-Values in Plato's *Symposium*

STEPHEN HALLIWELL

7

The Ethics of *Eros*: Eudaimonism and Agency

13

Telos and Philosophical Knowledge in Plato's *Symposium* (Yuji Kurihara)

15

Il ruolo e l'importanza della dimensione esperienziale ed empirica nel *Simposio* (Maurizio Migliori)

20

Who loves? The question of agency in Plato's *Symposium* (Carolina Araújo)

21

Eudaimonist Closure in the Speeches of Plato's *Symposium* (David T. Runia)

27

Method, Knowledge and Identity

33

Ὅμολογία and ὁμολογεῖν in *Symposium* (Lesley Brown)

35

The Kind of Knowledge Virtue Is: Rational Ecstasy in Plato's *Symposium* (Kendall Sharp)

40

The Protreptic Power of Love: *Eros*, Care for the Self and Personal Identity

in the *Symposium* (Annie Larivée)

41

Diotime contre Aristote: qu'est-ce qui fait l'identité à soi du vivant? (Alexis Pinchard)

53

Reading the *Symposium*: Text and Reception

67

Stylistic Difference in the Speeches of the *Symposium* (Harold Tarrant)

69

Lettori antichi di Platone: il caso del *Simposio* (POxy 843) (Margherita Erbi)

75

Revisiting the *Symposium*: the paradoxical eroticism of Plato

and Lucian (Ruby Blondell - Sandra Boehringer)

80

Symposium 212a6-7: the Most Immortal of Men (Gerard Boter)

88

Immortalità personale senza anima immortale: Diotima e Aristotele

MARIO VEGETTI

95

TUESDAY, 16TH JULY, 2013 105

Wichtige Manuskripte als Meilensteine in der Textgeschichte von Platons *Symposion*

CHRISTIAN BROCKMANN

109

The Frame Dialogue: Voices and Themes

111

A Rejected Version of the *Symposium* (Menahem Luz)

113

Narrazioni e narratori nel *Simposio* di Platone (Lidia Palumbo)

114

The Functions of Apollodorus (Matthew D. Walker)

119

Agatone *agathos*: l'eco dell'*epos* nell'*incipit* del *Simposio* (Dino De Sanctis)

125

No Invitation Required? A Theme in Plato's *Symposium* (Giovanni R.F. Ferrari)

130

Diotima and *kuësis* in the Light of the Myths of the God's Annexation

of Pregnancy (Anne Gabriële Wersinger)

134

Phaedrus and Pausanias

141

Phaedrus and the sophistic competition of beautiful speech (Noburu Notomi)

143

Eros sans expédient: *Banquet*, 179b4-180b5 (Annie Hourcade Sciou)

149

Eros protrepôn: philosophy and seduction in the *Symposium* (Olga Alieva)

153

La natura intermedia di *Eros*: Pausania e Aristofane a confronto con Socrate (Lucia Palpacelli)

161

Philotimia and *Philosophia* in Plato's *Symposium* (Jens Kristian Larsen)

169

La pédérastie selon Pausanias: un défi pour l'éducation platonicienne (Olivier Renaut)

174

Eryximachus

181

Eryximachus' Medicine in the *Symposium* and Plato's Love (Hua-kuei Ho)

183

La medicina di Erissimaco: appunti per una cosmologia dialogica (Silvio Marino)

188

Eryximachus' Physical Theory in Plato's *Symposium* (Richard D. Parry)

193

The concept of harmony (187 a-e) and its cosmological role

in Eryximachus' discourse (Laura Candiotta)

194

Sophrosyne in the *Symposium* (Richard Stalley)

201

El dilema "Eriximaco" (Ivana Costa)

205

The Realm of the <i>Metaxy</i>	207
Le <i>Banquet</i> de Platon: une philosophie de la relation? (Michel Fattal)	209
Perché tanta morte in un dialogo sull'amore e sulla vita? Riflessioni sul rapporto amore-morte-immortalità nel <i>Simposio</i> di Platone (Arianna Fermari)	220
La nozione di intermedio nel <i>Symposium</i> di Platone (Cristina Rossitto)	226
Reproduction, Immortality, and the Greater Mysteries in Plato's <i>Symposium</i> (Thomas M. Tuozzo)	234
Gli eroi e la natura demonica di Amore: Proclo interprete di <i>Symp.</i> 201e-204b (Piera De Piano)	239
Socrates as a divine intermediary in the <i>Apology</i> and <i>Symposium</i> (Gerard Naddaf)	246
Agathon	247
Why Agathon's Beauty Matters (Francisco J. Gonzalez)	249
La <i>mimesis</i> di sé nel discorso di Agatone: l'agone fra poesia e filosofia nel <i>Simposio</i> (Mario Regali)	258
Die Poetik des Philosophen: Sokrates und die Rede des Agathon (Irmgard Männlein-Robert)	263
<i>EROS SOTER</i> : How Can Love Save Us? (Aikaterini Lefka)	268
Agathon's Gorgianic Logic (Richard Patterson)	276
Tragedy and Comedy at Agathon's Party: Two Tetralogies in Plato's <i>Symposium</i> (Nicholas Riegel)	277
Literary Form and Thought in Aristophanes' Speech	283
Platonic Fables as Philosophical <i>Poiesis</i> (Rick Benitez)	285
Tra <i>Henologia</i> ed <i>Agathologia</i> : Aristofane e Diotima a confronto sulla concezione del Bene e sulla Dialettica (<i>Symp.</i> 189a1-193a2 e 201d1-212c3) (Claudia Luchetti)	286
The Comic and the Tragic: A Reading of Aristophanes' Speech in Plato's <i>Symposium</i> (Suzanne Obdrzalek)	303
Aristofane e l'ombra di Protogora: origini dell'umanità e <i>orthoepia</i> nel mito degli uomini-palla (Michele Corradi)	304
What Socrates learned from Aristophanes (and what he left behind) (Samuel Scolnicov)	309
Split Personalities in the <i>Symposium</i> and the <i>Bible</i> : Aristophanes' Speech and the Myth of Adam and Eve (Roslyn Weiss)	313
WEDNESDAY, 17TH JULY, 2013	317
Sokrates' Rollen im <i>Symposion</i>: sein Wissen und sein Nichtwissen THOMAS ALEXANDER SZLEZÁK	321
Chi è il Socrate del <i>Simposio</i>? GIUSEPPE CAMBIANO	326
Diotima and the Ocean of Beauty	329
<i>Symposion</i> 210d4: τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος τοῦ καλοῦ (Francisco L. Lisi)	331
L'océan du beau: les Formes platoniciennes et leur extension (210a-212a) (Arnaud Macé)	336
Socrates' <i>Thea</i> : The Description of Beauty in <i>Symposium</i> 211a and the Parmenidean Predicates of Being (Manfred Kraus)	344
L'interpretazione plotiniana (<i>Enneade</i> III 5) della nascita di <i>Eros</i> (<i>Symp.</i> 203b-c) (Angela Longo)	345
<i>Eros, Poiesis</i> and Philosophical Writing	347
On the Early Speeches' Developement of a Methodology (Philip Krinks)	349
Boasting and self-promotion in Plato's <i>Symposium</i> (Gabriel Danzig)	355
La difficile analogia tra poesia e amore (Giovanni Casertano)	365
<i>Onoma</i> e <i>holon</i> in <i>Symp.</i> 204e-206a: che cosa nomina il nome "eros" (Francesco Aronadio)	371
The Picture of Socrates	373
Alcibiades' Refutation of Socrates (Edward C. Halper)	375
Platon als Lehrer des Sokrates (Rafael Ferber)	382
Sócrates aprendiz y maestro de Eros: conocimiento erótico y profesión de ignorancia en Platón, <i>Symposium</i> (Graciela E. Marcos de Pinotti)	383
Platone, la virtù e un gioco di specchi: guardare il filosofo con gli occhi del φιλότιμος (Federico M. Petrucci)	389

Monday

15th July, 2013

Cornelia J. de Vogel Lecture

Chair: Noburu Notomi

Eros and Life-Values in Plato's Symposium

Stephen Halliwell

Olympiodorus's commentary on the first *Alcibiades*, and likewise the anonymous *Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*, recounts that shortly before his death Plato dreamt that he had turned into a swan which frustrated a group of pursuing bird-catchers by moving rapidly from tree to tree. (Real swans, you will appreciate, are *not* to be found in trees – but we are in a forest of symbols here.) Simmias the Socratic, the story continues, decoded the dream as showing that the significance of Plato's thought would always elude its interpreters: no matter how hard they try, they will never capture its meaning. Plato's works, like those of Homer, we are told, are open to an irreducible plurality of interpretations.

Whatever the exact origins of this anecdote (which draws, of course, on motifs and tropes from Plato's own writings), it undoubtedly reflects a long history of ancient debates – both inside and outside the Academy – about how to read Plato's dialogues. Such debates have their modern counterparts, and that is as it should be: we are still hermeneutic bird-catchers and the beautiful swan continues to escape our grasp. This is as true of individual dialogues as of the whole *oeuvre* whose parts they constitute. In the case of the *Symposium*, everyone agrees on the work's multi-layered texture of registers, voices and dramatic psychology: it was surely in the forefront of Nietzsche's mind when he characterised Plato's writing in general as 'polygeneric' and quasi-(or proto-)novelistic. Yet even the *Symposium* is regularly exposed to readings which enlist it in the cause of a doctrinally systematic Platonism – the system usually being posited 'behind' the work but visible through it, provided one has the right kind of discernment. Such readings treat the speech of Diotima (whom I take as a fictionalised projection of Socrates' 'mantic' persona) not just as a climactic moment in the dialogue, but also as a definitive key to everything else around it. But to treat the *Symposium* as though we can effectively transcribe its message in that way is arguably to collapse its complexity into a reductive simplicity.

On the alternative hermeneutic adopted in this paper, Plato's (written) philosophy in each of his dialogues resides not in a single message which requires interpreters to extract and codify it, but in the whole web of relations between its parts. What this means, among other things, for the *Symposium* is that the speech of Diotima-Socrates, despite (or even because of) its unique features, does not nullify everything that has preceded it nor even tell us exactly what we should think about all the earlier speeches. The work itself, in its totality, sets up a configuration of perspectives – all of them coloured by the elusive element of role-playing undertaken by the symposiasts (not least Socrates himself) – which makes it impossible for Diotima's account of mystical transcendence to resolve all the questions so intricately posed by the dialogue's succession of ideas.

I intend to concentrate here (with some drastically selective and abbreviated remarks) on the *Symposium*'s treatment of *erōs* as a focus for its participants' idealised reflections on life-values – values putatively capable of shaping and informing an entire life. That this is one profitable way of following some of the work's various thematic threads may seem paradoxical in the light of the fact that in archaic and classical Greek culture *erōs*/Eros – whether conceived of as divine, personified, or purely naturalistic/ psychological, and whether or not conjoined with Aphrodite – is predominantly associated with psychosomatic upheaval and loss of control: with types of experience, in other words, that violently destabilise the course of a life, threatening it with madness and even, in extreme cases, with destruction. Such traditional ideas are much more in evidence (both echoed and philosophically recast) in *Phaedrus* than in the *Symposium*. In the latter, *erōs*'s psychosomatic dangers are largely suppressed. Instead, the concept is treated by almost everyone (with the obtrusive if complex exception of Alcibiades) as a source of life-unifying meaning and motivation.

It is important, however, to remember that Plato could expect his first readers to be familiar with a much wider range of earlier Greek patterns of thought about *erōs* than we can now fully reconstruct (though we can detect some of their traces). It is not, I suggest, a sheer coincidence that in one fragment of Euripides (897 *TrGF*) Eros is described as 'an education in wisdom' (παίδευμα σοφίας), called a *daimōn* with whom humans 'consort' (προσομιλεῖν, cf. *Symp.* 203a3), and regarded as something into which it is possible to be '(un)initiated' (ἀτέλεστος) and which the young are urged not to flee from but 'to use correctly' (χρησθαι...ὀρθῶς)? Other fragments of Euripides too (esp. 388, 661), as well as some passages in the surviving plays, contain clear indications of a conception of *erōs* that splits into a polarity of negative and positive, the latter capable of being harmonised with such

values as σοφία and σωφροσύνη. It is not a matter of positing direct links between the *Symposium* and such texts but of recognising that the richness of the dialogue's play of ideas, and the depth of its cultural and literary resonances, must have been even greater for its earliest readers than it is for us now.

In ways that intersect at many points with older Greek ideas about Eros/*erōs*, the *Symposium*'s ensemble of characters use the stylised, intense, but also playfully fantasised conditions of the drinking-party to adopt positions, in their various styles of discourse, on how *erōs* can function as a life-guiding and life-unifying value. One consequence of this, on my reading (though not on everyone's), is a cumulative – and not just a Socratic – 'desexualisation' of *erōs*: a distancing of it from the specifically sexual domain of physical pleasure, and its conversion, even 'sublimation', into other kinds of motivating goals. More specifically, all the main participants (with the conspicuous exception of Alcibiades, whose whole persona is stamped with the *intermittency* of its impulses) seek to escape from a conception of *erōs* tied to the purely episodic workings of sexual desire.

This is seen with special piquancy (as well as pathos) in the contribution of Aristophanes. The ostensibly corporeal incompleteness of the divided figures in his fable might be thought to lend their yearning desire (πόθος, cf. 191a6) a superficially sexual tenor, and the same goes for their repeatedly stressed need for embraces and physical entwinement (with four occurrences of the verb συμπλέκεσθαι, 191a-e, whose senses certainly include sexual congress). Yet, in a delicious touch of dramatic irony, none other than Zeus himself *misunderstands* the predicament of the creatures whose separation he had himself caused. Overcome by pity, he thinks it sufficient to rearrange their genitals for the sake of specifically sexual συμπλοκή between them (191c4), thereby allowing them 'to experience physical satisfaction/satiety (πλησμονή), cease from agitation, turn instead to work, and take care of the rest of their lives' (191c6-8).

Zeus's mistaken assumption is that humans' erotic desires are fundamentally bodily and can be dealt with – at any rate where males are concerned (191c5-6) – by a mechanism of merely somatic release. He also supposes that the bulk of a human life is (or can be) detached from *erōs*. But the story tells us otherwise. It discloses that the most urgent desire of human 'souls' (not bodies) is for something other than sexual intercourse, as well as something they cannot consciously recognise but only instinctively 'divine' (μαντεύεται, 192d1: Diotima-Socrates is not the only 'mantic' figure in the work). Such desire craves non-episodic satisfaction distributed across a whole lifetime (cf. διατελοῦντες... διὰ βίου, 192c2-3). But a lifetime of what? That phrase refers directly to partners who never live apart. Yet the allegorical wish-fulfilment of 'fusion' into a single entity (192d-e) dissolves, rather than clarifying, the sense of what lovers want. Aristophanes' formula for escaping the episodic dissolves the coherence of individual identity itself.

*

Aristophanes (about whose speech I'll say a little more in sequence below) is not alone in inhabiting the realms of fantasy. There are puzzles about every attempt in the *Symposium* to forge a connection between *erōs* and the underpinning values of a life. I am deeply unpersuaded that solutions to any of these puzzles are encoded within the text itself.

Phaedrus, who sets a rhetorical tone of idealisation for the whole discussion, has difficulty stabilising his entire perspective on *erōs*. He moves between an asymmetrical *erastēs-erōmenos* paradigm and a more general conception which allows a wife like Alcestis to count as a 'lover'; and even his use of the former vacillates over how far the workings of *erōs* need involve an active-passive dynamic. But those uncertainties do not prevent the speech from broaching one version of the idea of *erōs* as a transformative power: a power, as Phaedrus specifically sees it, to build a whole life around a relationship between 'self' and a special 'other'.

Phaedrus's speech includes a salient statement of the conviction that *erōs* is the most important source of life-shaping value. 'As regards that which should guide human beings in their entire life if they are to live well (ὃ γὰρ χρὴ ἀνθρώποις ἡγεῖσθαι παντὸς τοῦ βίου τοῖς μέλλουσι καλῶς βιώσεσθαι), this is something neither kinship nor honour nor wealth nor anything else can bring about in the way that *erōs* can' (178c5-d1). The idea of 'guiding' a life conveyed here by the verb ἡγεῖσθαι recurs several times later in the dialogue: Aristophanes calls Eros our 'leader (ἡγεμών) and commander (στρατηγός)' (193b2); Agathon likewise twice calls Eros ἡγεμών (197d3, e2, adding musico-festive imagery to Aristophanes' military metaphor); and Diotima sees the ascent to perfect beauty as starting with a relationship in which an older person correctly 'guides' and leads another (ὀρθῶς ἡγῆται ὁ ἡγούμενος, 210a6-7).

Phaedrus's statement of *erōs*'s capacity to guide a whole life follows immediately on the

proposition that *erastēs* and *erōmenos* are the greatest good for each other, but it thereby simultaneously shifts the terms of reference of his speech beyond the specifically sexual. The sexual component in *erōs* is in fact nowhere explicitly addressed in the speech; at most, Phaedrus takes the operations of physical desire for granted. But his overall case requires the supposition that (perhaps initially) sexual impulses can be channelled into the development of an ethical self. (I will just mention in passing that if we look for a latent theory of what sexual impulses *per se* amount to, Phaedrus's only – and belated – answer seems to be that they are responses to bodily beauty: 180a5. Note that this is the only reference to sensory beauty in his speech; all his other uses of *καλός* vocabulary are ethically slanted.) Phaedrus's account of *erōs* leaves no room for bodily gratification as an end in itself. On both his homoerotic and his gender-neutral models, physical desire is overlaid by the beloved's status as a kind of ethical mirror for the lover's self-image.

That process appears to grow through a series of stages: first, a shame-centred desire not to be thought bad; second, the 'philotic' desire to be seen as good in the beloved's eyes; third, the willingness to sacrifice self-interest (even to the point of death) for the benefit of the other. But Phaedrus blurs the picture by converting *erastēs/erōmenos* asymmetry into something more like reciprocity (the beloved will feel the same shame, the same *philotimia*, and even the same self-sacrificing impulses as the lover, 178e-9a); and he even hints at an element of emotional reciprocity too (n.b. *ἀγαπᾶν* at 180b2, the same verb used of lovers by Pausanias at 181c6 and by Diotima at 210d2). The bridge from asymmetry to reciprocity remains, however, very uncertain. Phaedrus's idealism exceeds its supporting theory. But he sets an agenda for what follows by advancing the far from negligible thesis that *erōs* can define a life by passionately motivating an individual to seek ethical self-confirmation and self-realisation in the perceptions of another.

*

Pausanias's speech differs from Phaedrus's, though it does not respond to it directly (and Plato makes sure he thwarts any readerly desire for narrative *completeness*, 180c1-2), by openly acknowledging what the latter had relegated to the background: the (putative) root of *erōs* in physical desire. Given Pausanias's claim that 'there is no Aphrodite without Eros' (οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνευ Ἐρωτος Ἀφροδίτη, 180d4) – i.e., apparently (despite the suspicion of invalid logic), that *erōs* is inseparable from sexual attraction (always part of Aphrodite's 'entourage') – it might seem strange at first sight to discern any movement towards the 'desexualisation' of *erōs* in Pausanias's case. But it is also true that Pausanias hedges round his notion of Uranian Aphrodite/Eros precisely by excluding many, even most, actual practices and patterns of sexual desire. In addition, he specifically denies that *erōs* need be a response to physical beauty (182d7), thereby locating its centre of gravity elsewhere.

His concern, reinforced by a prescriptivism lacking in Phaedrus's case, is to claim that what starts (and may continue) as a sexual impulse can be made the basis of a lifelong relationship between whole persons, not just their bodies. 'Pure' lovers, those 'impelled' by Uranian Aphrodite with attraction towards young males on the cusp of adulthood, 'are prepared...to form lifelong partnerships and a fully shared way of life' (παρεσκευασμένοι...ὡς τὸν βίον ἅπαντα συνεσόμενοι καὶ κοινῇ συμβιωσόμενοι,...: 181d3-5). 'The lover of good character remains (sc. a lover) throughout life, since he is fused with something of lasting value' (ὁ δὲ τοῦ ἡθους χρηστοῦ ὄντος ἐραστῆς διὰ βίου μένει, ἅτε μονίμῳ συντακεῖς, 183e5-6.). As with Phaedrus, there is a gesture here in the direction of reciprocity. Yet Pausanias feels a need to retain a distinction between *erōs* and *philia* between the partners (182c6): to that extent he leaves unanswered questions about what it means for such asymmetry to underlie 'a fully shared way of life'.

Because Pausanias's speech has been predominantly discussed in relation to historical reconstructions of the social mores and protocols of male homosexuality in classical Greece (something I leave on one side here), and because he himself visibly takes pains to try to reconcile his version of 'pure' *erōs* with acceptance of sexual pleasure, it is easy to read his contribution to the symposium as a self-serving translation of his own erotic orientation into a statement of normativity. But in the thematic structure of the work his speech unmistakably adheres to a version of *erōs* as a source of unifying value that reaches beyond sexual desire as such. What's more, unlike Phaedrus, who saw *erōs* as drawing out the lover's (and the beloved's) better self through practical virtue, Pausanias sees this 'better self' as realising itself partly through intellectual virtue. In this respect he stands in a particularly significant relationship to the later speech of Diotima-Socrates: after all, Pausanias alone of the first five speakers links his ideal *erōs* with the idea of 'philosophy' (184d1, cf. 182c1), and he alone likewise brings the concept of *phronēsis* into the equation (184d7). Despite these verbal correspondences between Pausanias and Diotima, however, a gulf remains between them.

Pausanias ties his whole case to the fulfilment of *erōs* in a relationship between two persons; Diotima will abandon any such premise once ‘philosophical’ *erōs* has progressed beyond its earliest stages. That, indeed, will be part of what makes her vision hard to come to terms with.

*

If Phaedrus and Pausanias, despite differences of nuance, agree in presupposing a relationship between two individuals as the matrix of ideal *erōs*, Eryximachus is the first, though not the last, contributor to suspend such an assumption. His alternative vantage-point has something in common with older Greek sensibilities. The idea of Eros not as a specifically human phenomenon but a force manifesting itself in the cosmos as a whole is already present in Hesiod’s theogonic account of the primeval emergence of Eros, and the quasi-Empedoclean traits of Eryximachus’ theory have also been widely noted. But Eryximachus goes so far in expanding the scope of *erōs*, and in equating it with a series of other values (especially ἁρμονία and ὁμόνοια, but also φιλία, σωφροσύνη, and δικαιοσύνη), that he produces a more diffusely generalised conception of it than anyone else in the dialogue. When he concludes that ‘all Eros, taken in its entirety, possesses all power’ (πάσαν δύναμιν ἔχει συλλήβδην...ὁ πᾶς Ἔρως, 188d4-5) it is impossible (and unnecessary) to distinguish between rhetorical hyperbole and theoretical universalism.

Eryximachus’s interweaving of medicine, physics, and musical theory radically depersonalises (and therefore desexualises) *erōs* to the point where relationships between individuals assume no more than a minor role within the larger scheme of things. Although he twice reiterates Pausanias’s tenet that it is right for only good men to be allowed sexual gratification in homoerotic relationships, he does so both times by way of analogy to his own preoccupation with medicine and other arts (186b-c, 187d-e). It is open to readers to draw further general inferences about the conditions which such relationships would have to satisfy on Eryximachus’s terms: most significantly, they would presumably have to instantiate reciprocal rather than asymmetrical or hierarchical desires (in keeping with the principle of ἐρᾶν ἀλλήλων, 186d6, whose immediate context is medical) and they would have to incorporate ethical virtue (μετὰ σωφροσύνης καὶ δικαιοσύνης, 188d5-6). Even so, it looks as though one might practise Eryximachean values without ever being, in any sense, ‘in love’ with another person at all – or, at any rate, with one individual more than any other. There is at least a degree of affinity here with Diotima. The paradox in Eryximachus’s case is that *erōs* is given such a pervasive presence in the world that it is impossible to disentangle it from all the other values that might be identified in a life.

*

One of the *Symposium*’s many moments of dramatic irony occurs when Eryximachus suggests at the end of his speech that he has maybe ‘omitted many things’ and invites Aristophanes to fill the gaps. For all its mythic apparatus, Aristophanes’ narrative turns out to have a psychological kernel far removed from Eryximachus’s all-embracing thesis. According to the comic poet, *erōs* makes only one thing really matter in life: the self-‘completion’ in a unique relationship to another soul, and (despite some residual use of the asymmetrical lexicon of ‘lovers’ and ‘beloveds’) the perfect mutuality of such a relationship.

I have already drawn attention to one strand in Aristophanes’ speech which it shares with those of the other symposiasts: its stress on the impulsion of *erōs* towards a unified, non-episodic state of being. But if we probe further into the allegorised core of his story, several points make it distinctive. One is a vein of pathos (remember Zeus’s pity) beneath the comic veneer. While all the speakers propose *erōs* as the means for a human life to achieve supreme fulfilment, Aristophanes alone modifies such idealism by striking a note of uncertainty: he mentions that few humans actually find their true beloved (193b5-6) and he leaves the outcome of their quest rhetorically hypothetical (if we are pious to the gods, we will all find our unique ‘other half’? cf. Diotima’s criticism of Aristophanes’ moral ambiguity at 205d-e) and perhaps even contradictory (fulfilled *erōs* depends on piety yet involves the recovery of the ‘original’ condition in which humans offended against the gods).

Another telling feature of Aristophanes’ contribution is that it implies a conception of human identities as essentially given and unchangeable, not something to be shaped or developed along extended life-paths. This is related to his emphatic appeal to ‘human nature’: apart from Diotima-Socrates (see 206c4, 212b3), Aristophanes is the only speaker to use this concept and indeed to identify it with erotic completion, thereby turning *erōs* into a kind of biological imperative. But the

principle of a universal ‘human nature’ does not itself generate or require the idea that each individual can find erotic fulfilment only with a single, uniquely suitable partner: the two notions might even be thought to be in tension with one another. Admittedly, there is a reading of the allegory available to us which can assimilate that last point. But it is a reading that tips over from pathos into pessimism.

There is one final feature of Aristophanes’ speech I want to highlight. This is the fact that he is the only symposiast who makes no use at all of the *καλός* word-group (or its opposite, *αἰσχρός*). Aristophanic *erōs*, it seems, has no need for a concept of ‘beauty’ (still the best general equivalent, for all the well-known pitfalls of translation). Can we say why that should be? Relations between the various speakers’ usage of *kalos* vocabulary are more complex than sometimes claimed. Phaedrus had made one passing (and belated) reference to physical beauty as a defining property of an *erōmenos* (180a5) but had predominantly applied *kalos* terms to the virtuous actions prompted by *erōs* (178c-d, 179c). Pausanias had followed Phaedrus’ ethical emphasis (esp. 180e-1a, 183d) but diverged from him in the former respect: an *erōmenos* need not be physically beautiful (182d7). Either missing or ignoring that last detail (see 186a4), Eryximachus generalised *καλὸς ἔρωσ* (186d1) to make it coextensive with all relations of harmonious *homonoia*. Agathon will in turn complicate things by calling the (symbolic) god Eros himself *κάλλιστος* (195a7) but also, at the same time, taking all *erōs* to be a response to beauty (197b).

Where in this kaleidoscope of views does Aristophanes fit? I suggest, in brief, two reasons why he makes no space for beauty in the foreground of his picture: the first, because beauty, unless subjectively perspectivised (which it had been, for instance, by Sappho 16 *PLF*, *ἔγω δὲ κῆν* [sc. *κάλλιστον*] *ὅττω τις ἔραται*, and cf., more obliquely, Plato *Rep.* 5.474d-e), will not sit easily with Aristophanes’ emphasis on the *unique* fit between every pair of ideal partners; secondly, because to make beauty the specific object of erotic desire would be hard to square with Aristophanes’ disconcerting suggestion that the yearning soul does not *understand* its own desires and cannot identify their true object (192c-d). Aristophanes might have followed Phaedrus and Pausanias in applying *kalos* vocabulary to virtuous actions. But if he had done so this would have been marginal to his argument: it would have left untouched everything which makes his speech *sui generis* within the *Symposium*.

*

Agathon deserves a little better than the superciliousness many modern scholars show towards him and like to suppose that Plato builds into his depiction. He is a poet (high on his recent success) and self-consciously thinks of himself as performing in the small, intimate ‘theatre’ (194a-b) of his own celebratory party. He is also, as Socrates correctly notes, someone who can adopt a Gorgianically mannered rhetoric. His speech (and this is itself a Gorgianic mode) is a kind of prose-poem – both stylistically and rhythmically. It has nothing to say about lovers and beloveds, and very little that is directly sexual, though he does refer to sexual desire with the twin terms *ἕμερος* and *πόθος* (197d7), the former used by no one else and the latter only by Aristophanes. (Contrast the absence of both terms from the discourse of Diotima-Socrates with their importance for the ‘Stesichorean’ Socrates of *Phaedrus*.) Agathon’s speech purports to be a description of a *god*. Taken strictly on that level, it is not actually refuted by the combined views of Socrates and Diotima: Diotima thinks gods are of necessity happy and in possession of goodness and beauty (202c), precisely what Agathon had predicated of Eros in the first place (195a5-7). The problem, of course, is that no one can plausibly take Agathon to be talking strictly about Eros in separation from *erōs*. And once one tries to decode Agathon’s description of Eros as an account of human experience of desire, it becomes vulnerable to a logical elenchus of the kind Socrates undertakes.

And yet. Is a logical elenchus the most appropriate mode of response to a prose-poem (and a serio-comic one at that: 197e7), especially an elenchus that picks on the idea of Eros/*erōs* as beautiful while neglecting (till Diotima makes the point at 204c) the ambiguity that runs through Agathon’s speech between Eros/*erōs* as subject and object of desire? We can redeem some of the interest of Agathon’s speech by taking it, in part at least, as a celebration of the aesthetics of *erōs*: a free-floating evocation of some of the sensory qualities (of form, texture, etc.) of objects of desire, the states of mind associated with their enjoyment and contemplation, and even the creative drive within poetry itself (196d-e), something Diotima herself will touch on (209a-d).

If Socrates’ interrogation of Agathon forms a kind of hinge in the *Symposium* – the point at which readers are faced with a clash between fundamentally different kinds of discourse – it is a hinge which can turn in both directions. Socrates subjects Agathon’s poetic flights of fancy to logical analysis, and Diotima does the same to Socrates’ own thoughts. But as Socrates’ mantic alter ego,

Diotima cannot get all that far, it seems, without turning back herself to a more visionary mode of discourse.

*

It may seem preposterous to leave myself so little space for Diotima herself. But I have little to say (for now) – confident that others will make up for this deficit.

Among the *Symposium*'s multiple perspectives on *erōs* as a source of life-values, special weight is lent to the idea of philosophy itself as a unifying form of life. This point of view is marked programmatically at the outset, where Apollodorus recounts how the three years since he became a devotee of philosophy have been orientated around a *daily* obsession with the words and actions of Socrates (172e) and bluntly tells his money-making friends that he pities their own lives as wretchedly squandered on meaningless ends (173c-d). Socrates-Diotima links philosophy directly with *erōs*: at 203d Diotima characterises Eros as 'philosophising throughout his life' (φιλοσοφῶν διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου); at 211d she describes contemplation of absolute beauty, in a somewhat odd trope, as the 'place' in life where a human being should ideally live, ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου...βιωτὸν ἀνθρώπῳ. (ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου ought to mean 'at this point/stage in life' but cannot do so here.) Concomitantly, she condemns the body-centred way of life of many people (ironically including Socrates, 211d5). The impact of Socrates himself on others' lives is underlined, but also complicated, by the psychologically tangled comments of Alcibiades both on the magnetic (Sirenesque) attraction exercised by Socrates and on the reproach he expresses to the life that Alcibiades actually leads when apart from him.

Modern scholars have no difficulty accepting that the Platonic Socrates represents an entire way of life. But when Socrates speaks *about* the philosophical life he is not always speaking transparently about himself: that is so, very obviously, in his idealised account of philosophers in the *Republic*. In the *Symposium*, the gap between Socrates the person and Socrates as mouthpiece for a vision of the ultimate inspiration/aspiration of a philosophical life is difficult to gauge, since it is embedded in Socrates' mantic 'ventriloquism' of the views of Diotima. Even if we try to close that gap by merging the two voices into one, that leaves us with a very strange Socrates and a set (literally) of philosophical 'mysteries'.

For anyone seeking to understand a philosophical way of life, the central enigma of Socrates-Diotima's vision is how the ascent to apprehension of absolute beauty (with the finality of a sudden revelation, 210e4) is supposed to *inform* the rest of life. Diotima is emphatic that it can do so: ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου...βιωτὸν ἀνθρώπῳ, to repeat that telling if peculiar formulation. But the formulation continues θεωμένῳ αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, so that the implication (of the present participle) is that the erotics of philosophy involve living in the constant, vivifying presence of the transcendent vision (just as the fleshly lover tries to live in the constant presence of a beloved, 211d6 – with an allusion to Aristophanes' speech). The emphasis is repeated at 211e-12a, where again a form precisely of life (βίος) entails a continuous state or condition described by present participles (βλέποντος, θεωμένου, συνόντος). Yet because pure, unmixed, 'divine' beauty is somehow independent of the material world (211e), it remains uncertain how the former can give shape to a life conducted in the latter.

The mysterious ambiguity of Diotima's vision is parallel to the ambiguity of Socrates himself, represented as a figure who both does and does not seem to have need of others – capable of engaging fully in social activity (even to the point of saving people's lives in battle, 220d-e) but equally of withdrawing, as we hear near both the start and the end of the dialogue (174d, 220c), into his own impenetrable world of 'noetic' absorption. Is the Socrates we see and hear about in the *Symposium* supposed to be living in the perpetual contemplation of absolute beauty? The dialogue cannot, and does not purport to, tell us. It requires us to recognise the challenge of trying to make sense of both Socrates and Diotima (and of the other characters as well), but its own enticing rewards – the rewards of engaging dialogically as readers of Platonic philosophy – do not promise the availability of final answers in the text itself.

The Ethics of *Eros*: Eudaimonism and Agency

Chair: Luc Brisson

Telos and Philosophical Knowledge in Plato's *Symposium*

Yuji Kurihara

1. Introduction

At the top of the “Ladder of Love” we suddenly encounter two mysterious subjunctives: τελευτήση (211c7) and γνῶ (c8), which the transmitted text retains.

ἄν τι ἄπτοιτο τοῦ τέλους. τούτο γὰρ δὴ ἐστὶ τὸ ὀρθῶς ἐπὶ	211b7
τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἰέναι ἢ ὑπ’ ἄλλου ἄγεσθαι, ἀρχόμενον ἀπὸ	c1
τῶνδε τῶν καλῶν ἐκείνου ἕνεκα τοῦ καλοῦ αἰεὶ ἐπανιέναι ,	
ὡσπερ ἐπαναβασμοῖς χρώμενον, ἀπὸ ἐνὸς ἐπὶ δύο καὶ ἀπὸ	
δυοῖν ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ καλὰ σώματα, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν καλῶν	
μάτων ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ μαθήματα, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν μαθημάτων ἐπ’	c6
ἐκείνο τὸ μάθημα τελευτήση , ὃ ἐστὶν οὐκ ἄλλου ἢ αὐτοῦ	c7
ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ μάθημα, καὶ γνῶ αὐτὸ τελευτῶν ὃ ἐστὶ	c8
καλόν. ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου, ὃ φίλε Σώκρατες, ἔφη ἡ Μαν-	d1 ¹

These subjunctives are mysterious not only because, without a conjunction such as ἵνα or ὥς, they cannot be explained grammatically in the infinitive construction (c1-d1) but also because these key words entangle us in philosophically enigmatic questions: What is the *telos* of the Ladder of Love? Why is the verb γνῶ used here, which is the only instance of a purely cognitive verb in this passage, despite numerous appearances of sensory verbs, such as seeing and touching? While commentators and translators have ingeniously emended the text to avoid grammatical problems, very few have dealt seriously with the philosophical questions it raises.

In this paper, assuming that the text’s grammatical deviation is connected to philosophical implications in this context, I would like to claim that Plato thinks of the *telos* of the Ladder of Love as living the philosophical life, not merely grasping the Form of Beauty.² Considering the way the philosophical life has to do with Beauty itself, I shall demonstrate Plato’s view of the importance of philosophical knowledge to human beings.

2. Two Possible Emendations and Slings’s Solution

As noted above, the two subjunctives, τελευτήση (211c7) and γνῶ (c8), as they stand, are so ungrammatical that any interpreter must either explain them in context or emend the text accordingly. With regard to the latter, roughly speaking, there are two possible emendations: (i) ἔστ’ ἄν for καὶ (211c6) and (ii) ἵνα for καὶ (c8), using τελευτήσαι instead of τελευτήση (211c7).³ (i) is more traditional and traceable to the Aldina edition of the 16th century, the reading of which might derive from ἔστ’ ἄν in a minor medieval manuscript, Vind. phil. 21(Y).⁴ According to this emendation, the final stage of the Ladder of Love consists of (a) reaching the science of Beauty itself from the beautiful sciences and (καὶ 211c8) (b) knowing Beauty itself. Although this reading, in a sense, is based on a manuscript, “ἔστ’ ἄν is a non-Platonic form”⁵ and, as Brockmann has shown,⁶ Y belongs to the family of a much more reliable manuscript, Clark. 39 (B), whose reading is καὶ at 211c6; today few editors adopt this emendation.⁷

More recent editors and translators,⁸ on the other hand, have basically followed (ii), although it is not authorized by any existent manuscript. This requires us to assume that τελευτήσαι with ἐπανιέναι (c2) explains τούτο (b7). Interestingly, however, since ἵνα plus the subjunctive introduces a

¹ I use the text of OCT of Burnet (1901), except τελευτήση (211c7). Burnet emended it by τελευτήσαι, following Usener (1875).

² To this extent, my claim is not new; cf. White (2004). See also Sheffield (2006) esp. 149; Howatson (2008) xxii.

³ (ii) is Usener’s emendation in Jahn and Usener (1875) 107.

⁴ Brockmann (1992) investigates existent manuscripts and editions in detail. For 211c5-8 and Y, see 81-2.

⁵ Bury (1932) ad loc.

⁶ See Brockmann (1992), Stemma Codicum.

⁷ Schanz (1881) changes καὶ (211c6) to ὥς, to which Bury (1932) ad loc., objects by saying that ὥς, in the final use, is “very rare in all good prose writers except Xenophon.”

⁸ Dover (1980) 158; Rowe (1998) 200; cf. Bury (1932) ad loc.

final clause that shows purpose, according to this emendation the final stage of the ladder consists in (b) knowing Beauty itself as a result or purpose of (a) reaching the science of Beauty. This differs from the reading of (i), which supposes that both (a) and (b) constitute the final stage,⁹ whereas (ii) posits a causal or teleological relation between (a) and (b), specifying (b) as the final stage. Although Christopher Rowe, who, like most scholars, supports (ii), notes that “none of the editorial solutions to the problems looks particularly attractive, but none makes much difference to the sense,”¹⁰ we must stress that whether we adopt (i) or (ii) does affect our understanding of the final stage of the ascent, so we must be more cautious in considering the relation between (a) and (b).

What, then, is the *telos* of the ascent? We must answer this philosophical question by referring back to Diotima’s original account of the ascent at 210a4-211b5, which our passage merely recapitulates. As a matter of course, we will find a similar, but more complicated description of the final stage of the ascent at 210c6-e5. After beautiful activities, says Diotima, the guide must lead (ἀγαγεῖν sc. δεῖν) the lover to the different kinds of knowledge, so that (ἵνα) the lover may next see (ἴδῃ) the beauty of the kinds of knowledge and may no longer be (ἦ) worthless and petty by clinging to particular beautiful objects, but may give birth to (τίκτῃ) many beautiful, magnificent words and thoughts in unlimited philosophy, contemplating the great sea of beauty, until (or in order that; ἕως ἄν) he will behold (κατίδῃ) a certain single kind of knowledge, which is of Beauty itself. Diotima then calls Socrates’ attention to the issue of finality and continues as follows: the lover, who comes now towards the final goal of matters of love, will suddenly behold (κατόψεται) Beauty itself.

Obviously, just like its recapitulation, this description reveals a causal or teleological relation between seeing the beauty of kinds of knowledge and seeing the single knowledge of Beauty itself. It is also clear that in addition to seeing the knowledge of Beauty itself, Diotima further mentions seeing Beauty itself, without specifying their mutual relationship. It seems natural that these two distinct—at least verbally—activities of seeing correspond to the above (a) and (b) in the recapitulation, respectively.¹¹ If so, our understanding of the relation between (a) and (b) will directly serve to explain the *telos* of the ascent in the original description.

Let us now turn to the other attempt to understand our two problematic subjunctives. S. R. Slings tries to elucidate them in context and concludes that the text is correct.¹² After asserting that no solutions introducing a conjunction explain the corruption, Slings compares our two relevant passages—210c6-d6 and 211b7-d1—and argues that the subjunctives without ἵνα describe the final stage of the ascent. He points out three factors that combine to produce a reasonable account: first, in Diotima’s original description “the steps themselves had been in the infinitive and the result in the subjunctive,” whereas in the recapitulation “the whole process focuses on the result.” Second, describing the stage of knowledge, Diotima uses the lengthy ἵνα clause including three subjunctives: ἴδῃ, ἦ, and τίκτῃ. Third, in the recapitulation “the whole process of ascent is in turn one long string of prepositional phrases,” depending on and following the single infinitive ἐπανιέναι: “psychologically speaking, it is easy to understand that after all the prepositional phrases the influence of this infinitive is weakened.” “Therefore,” Slings concludes, “when a new verb is necessary,” the parallelism between the original account and the recapitulation “causes a shift from infinitive to subjunctive.”

Judging by the textual fact that the sentence including the subjunctives in question, which itself is extraordinarily long, condenses and recapitulates even more complicated original sentences, Slings’s solution seems to me attractive by appealing to the speaker’s psychology in this passage. Moreover, in examining several passages in the Platonic corpus, Slings shows that “the rules and habits of the spoken language, in other words, oral grammar, do indeed play a decisive part.”¹³ I prefer to accept this account, which is based on “oral grammar,” to emending the text, for it is plausible that Plato is here most vividly imitating and representing an oral communication between Diotima and Socrates, in full awareness that the subjunctives are “ungrammatical” in the written language. What, then, does Slings think of the final stage of the ascent? By reading the subjunctives as they stand, he must take it for granted that καὶ (211c8) is a copulative conjunction; he then must hold that the final stage consists of (a) seeing the knowledge of Beauty and (b) seeing or knowing Beauty itself,¹⁴ which is in agreement with the reading of (i). Slings, however, does not explain what

⁹ It is, of course, possible that καὶ is a consecutive καί, “and so,” in which case the final stage itself can be divided into two steps.

¹⁰ Rowe (1998) 200.

¹¹ Scholars agree that ἐπιστήμη and μάθημα are interchangeable here.

¹² Slings, (1997) 208-10, to my knowledge, is the only scholar who reads the text as it is, except Nehamas and Woodruff (1989) 59 n.93, who note on τελευτήση: “Here we follow the manuscripts, rejecting Usener’s emendation. The finite verb form of the manuscripts is more vivid”; but they take καὶ like ἵνα and translate: “so that in the end he comes to know...”

¹³ Slings (1997) 204.

¹⁴ Slings, (1997) 210 n.92, actually denies splitting up the final stage into two parts, criticizing Burnet’s solution that changes

they are and how they are related, except saying that (b) is merely the final result. From a philosophical viewpoint, his standpoint is far from clear. Thus, we must now shift from philology to philosophy.

3. What is the Telos of the Ladder of Love?

Although I have focused on the distinction between (a) seeing the knowledge of Beauty and (b) seeing or knowing Beauty itself, few scholars care about it, but group them together, despite the fact that most of them actually follow the emendation of (ii). Terence Irwin, for example, divides the whole process of ascent into six stages: S1=a single beautiful body; S2=the beauty in all bodies; S3=the beauty of souls; S4=the beauty of practices and laws; S5=the beauty of sciences; S6=Beauty Itself.¹⁵ If one reads ἴνα for καὶ (211c8) either causally or teleologically, then one must distinguish between (a) and (b); otherwise, one would be inconsistent. Hence, because I now follow the transmitted text and read καὶ (c8), I need not explain a causal or a teleological relation between (a) and (b). However, I must explain how (a) and (b) are both distinct and related to each other.¹⁶

Let us begin by considering (a) seeing the knowledge of Beauty at 210d6-e1. As the text indicates, this follows the previous stage in which the lover engages in philosophy and sees the beauty of various kinds of knowledge, while contemplating the great sea of beauty and giving birth to beautiful and magnificent words and thoughts. To compare these two stages, we must note that it is in philosophy (ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ δῶ; ἐνταῦθα δῶ) that the guide leads the lover from studying different kinds of knowledge to the single knowledge of Beauty itself. The lover then must start to study each subject of knowledge according to its proper method and the overall curriculum of philosophy. Beauty in each kind of knowledge is different from beauty in bodies and activities or laws, in that knowledge concerns universals instead of particulars, such as a little boy, a person, or an activity (d2-3). Being led by the guide correctly, step-by-step, the lover observes beautiful subjects of all kinds of knowledge as in the great sea of beauty spread in front of him. Without being possessed by any particular kind of knowledge, by following the guide the lover tries to swim across the great sea through understanding a series of philosophical subjects and producing reasonable accounts and theories of them in due order.

Next, the lover is led to see the knowledge of Beauty, which must be distinct from seeing the beauty of each kind of knowledge in the previous stage. In astronomy (cf. *R.* 528e-530c), for example, the lover may look up at the night sky, observe the celestial objects, and suddenly comprehend the real motions of the heavenly bodies based on the universal law behind apparent movements of the sensible stars, so that he can give an account of the law by discussing it with the guide. In this case, the lover sees the objects of knowledge—the celestial objects, the heavenly bodies, and the universal law—in front of him and with the guide, as well as seeing its beauty, acquires knowledge of it.

Similarly, the lover may well see (κατίδῃ 210d7) the knowledge of Beauty somehow in front of him before acquiring it. Now that the object of knowledge is Beauty itself, not the beauty of something else, he cannot rely on sensible objects in order to discover something hidden behind them. Instead, he witnesses how the knowledge of Beauty manifests. This time, however, there is no other medium through which he learns to see beauty. Because the knowledge in question concerns Beauty *itself*, the knowledge of Beauty directly emerges through the philosophical dialectic between the guide and the lover. Not only does the guide try to teach the lover what Beauty itself is, but she also actualizes and exemplifies her knowledge of Beauty here and now. Differently from the previous stage in which the lover studies each kind of knowledge with the guide and succeeds in seeing its beauty, the lover at this stage cannot yet produce beautiful words and thoughts by himself, but receives them from the guide through dialectic, thus learning what the knowledge of Beauty must be like, even before possessing it.¹⁷ The guide is a model of the acquisition of that knowledge and the lover begins to imitate the model in order to know Beauty itself next.

Diotima goes on to explain (b) how the lover learns to see Beauty itself: “Anyone who has been guided and educated in love matters to this point, contemplating beautiful things in order and correctly and coming now to the final stage of love matters, will suddenly behold something

τελευτήσῃ to τελευτήσαι and leaves γνῶ unchanged.

¹⁵ Irwin (1977) 167; cf. Moravcsik (1971) 286; Blondell (2006) 154-5. An exception, again, is Nehamas and Woodruff (1989) xxi, who say: “But even the love of knowledge ... is not the final stage of the ascent,” but it is surprising that they do not distinguish between seeing beauty of kinds of knowledge and seeing the knowledge of Beauty; so their reading of the subjunctives does not serve to explain the final stage of the ascent.

¹⁶ This copulative καί may be either successive or epexegetical. As I shall show below, it must be successive.

¹⁷ At 202a Plato posits correct belief between knowledge and ignorance, in that it hits the truth without giving a reason for it.

wonderfully beautiful in its nature” (210e2-5). In my reading of the subjunctives, (b) seeing Beauty itself constitutes the final stage, in addition to (a) seeing the knowledge of Beauty. How, then, are these two cognitions related to each other?

As F. C. White points out, most scholars presuppose that the *telos* of the Ladder of Love consists in the lover’s contemplation of Beauty itself. White, on the other hand, argues, “the higher mysteries reach their summit ... in the philosopher’s bringing forth of true virtue and in the immortality that this bestows.”¹⁸ White is right in following Diotima’s generic definition of love (205a-206a) and taking into account the “Lesser Mysteries” (208e-209c) for the sake of (ὄν ἕνεκα 210a1) the “Greater (Higher) Mysteries.” In the Lesser Mysteries, the lover encounters a beautiful person and educates (παιδεύειν 209c2) him to become a good man (τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν ἀγαθὸν c1) by begetting virtue (a3-4, b8, c3) and rearing it together (c4-7). Similarly, according to White, the true lover in the Greater Mysteries begets true virtue, which amounts to the philosophical works and external discourse shared with his beloved. Thus, the true lover as a philosopher can attain immortality by leaving true virtue as such behind for the future generations.¹⁹

I agree with White that the *telos* of the Ladder of Love is not characterized merely as seeing Beauty itself but as the philosophical activities of the lover and the beloved. As White stresses, Diotima explicates the philosophical life as worth living for the lover who is contemplating Beauty (cf. 211d1-3). However, White’s analysis is not sufficient to ensure that the lover’s philosophical life must involve the beloved’s engagement in it, for the text only indicates the interaction of the lover with Beauty, not with the beloved (211d-212a).²⁰ To resolve this problem, as I propose, we should look into Diotima’s two-step account of the final stage of the ascent. First, (a) Diotima describes the lover’s learning process of Beauty itself, which is led by the guide who manifests and actualizes her knowledge of it. Although the lover has not acquired knowledge of Beauty, as long as he is a student, he actually participates in that knowledge and engages in philosophical activities with the guide, who lives a philosophical life. While as teacher the guide attempts to explain what Beauty is, the lover makes every effort to receive the guide’s explanation as correct. This is how the lover sees the knowledge of Beauty appearing in the dialogical interaction between him and the guide. Second, (b) Diotima goes on to state that the lover suddenly (ἐξαίφνης 210e4) beholds Beauty itself, which must mean that the lover succeeds in acquiring the knowledge of Beauty. This knowledge, as we saw, appears in the philosophical dialogue between the teacher and the student. By beholding Beauty itself, therefore, the lover then becomes a philosophical guide and begins to educate a beautiful person to be good, just like the lover in the Lesser Mysteries does. Thus, the lover’s acquisition of the knowledge of Beauty is no doubt a momentary experience, but it never ends at this point. While contemplating Beauty itself,²¹ the lover continues to actualize his knowledge through philosophical engagement with the beloved. In this dialogical nature of that knowledge, we can conclude that the *telos* of the Ladder of Love resides in the lover’s philosophical life and involves the beloved’s engagement in it.

Consequently, Diotima represents the final stage of *eros* as both (a) the ascent and (b) the descent of philosophy, at the summit of which the lover suddenly changes his role from student to teacher. By following the transmitted text and reading τελευτήσῃ (211c7) and καὶ γυνῶ (c8), we will discover that these two sides of philosophy are closely related to each other at the final stage of the Ladder.

4. Socratic Eros and Platonic Education

I have thus far elucidated the dialogical nature of knowledge of Beauty in this passage. As knower, the guide aims to explain what Beauty is, while as pupil, the lover accepts the guide’s explanation as correct and tries to understand it, even though he himself cannot yet give an account of Beauty. Only in succeeding in leading the lover to behold Beauty, can the guide legitimately call herself a knower for the first time, thus proving her teaching ability. In other words, it is then that the guide becomes “wise about love matters” (ταῦτά [sc. τὰ ἐρωτικά] τε σοφὴ 201d3) and can educate the lover. In the same way, the lover encounters a new lover and initiates him into the mystical rites of philosophy by teaching the matters of love. It is not until he succeeds in leading another lover to contemplate Beauty that the lover-guide partakes of immortality, thus being loved by the gods. Therefore, the true virtue

¹⁸ White (2004) 366.

¹⁹ White (2004) 374-8.

²⁰ Cf. Sheffield (2006) 145-6, 149; Blondell (2006) 155-6. Interestingly, White, (2004) 372, does read ἴνα for καὶ (211c8) and virtually admits the finality of having knowledge of Beauty itself.

²¹ Note Plato’s frequent uses of present participles here (θεωμένῳ αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν 211d2-3, θεωμένου καὶ συνόντος αὐτῷ 212a2; cf. ἐφαπτομένῳ 212a5). See also ὄρων (211d5) and ὄροντες (d6); cf. θεᾶσθαι (d7).

that the lover delivers must be philosophy itself.

Finally, I suggest that the dialogue form adopted here supports this reading. Plato describes how Socrates becomes a philosophical guide (ἐπίστασθαι or δεινὸς τὰ ἐρωτικά, cf. 177d7-8, 198d1, 207c3; 193e5) with the help of Diotima's initiation or teaching (διδάσκειν, cf. 201d5, 204d2, 207a5), being aware that he needs a teacher (207c5-6). Having been persuaded by her, Socrates establishes his own principle of life (πίστις; cf. πεπεισμένος 212b2) and turns to persuade (b3) other people whom he thinks are pregnant. In this way, he actualizes his dialogical knowledge of Beauty in the form of philosophy. Similarly, through writing his dialogues, Plato too guides his readers in the philosophical life. In reading this passage, we experience variously overlapping philosophical dialogues based on freedom (cf. φιλοσοφία ἀφθόνω 210d6), which goes beyond our slavish everyday conversation (cf. φλυαρία θνητῆς 211e3; cf. *R.* 515d3).²² Plato's creation of this mystic mood surely affects our psychology and leads us to accept the irregularity of the subjunctives in question.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blondell, R. (2006), "Where is Socrates on the 'Ladder of Love'?" in J.H. Lesher, D. Nails, and F.C.C. Sheffield, *Plato's Symposium: Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, Washington D.C.
- Brockmann, C. (1992), *Die Handschriftliche Überlieferung von Platons Symposium*, Wiesbaden.
- Bury, R.G. (1932), *The Symposium of Plato* (2nd ed.), Cambridge.
- Dover, K.J. (1980), *Plato: Symposium*, Cambridge.
- Howatson, M.C. (tr.) (2008), *Plato: The Symposium*, edited with F.C.C. Sheffield, Cambridge.
- Irwin, T. (1977), *Plato's Moral Theory*, Oxford.
- Jahn, O., and Usener, H. (eds.) (1875), *Platonis Symposium*, Bonn.
- Moravcsik, J.M.E. (1971), "Reason and Eros in the 'Ascent'—Passage of the *Symposium*," in J.P. Anton and G.L. Kustas (eds.), *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, Albany: 285-302.
- Nehamas, A. and Woodruff, P. (tr.) (1989), *Plato: Symposium*, Indianapolis.
- Rowe, C.J. (1998), *Plato: Symposium*, Warminster.
- Sheffield, F.C.C. (2006), *Plato's Symposium: The Ethics of Desire*, Oxford.
- Slings, S.R. (1997), "Figures of Speech and their Lookalikes," in E.J. Bakker (ed.), *Grammar as Interpretation*, Leiden: 169-214.
- White, F.C. (2004), "Virtue in Plato's *Symposium*," *Classical Quarterly* 54: 366-78.

²² Rowe, (1998) 197, notes "the somewhat telegraphic style of the whole passage."

Il ruolo e l'importanza della dimensione esperienziale ed empirica nel *Simposio*

Maurizio Migliori

ABSTRACT

Una visione che metafisicizza *alla seconda potenza* i concetti cardine dell'impianto metafisico di Platone è portata a ignorare *l'attenzione che il filosofo ha sempre per il concreto e l'empirico* e quindi a rischiare di perdere l'unità della filosofia dell'Ateniese.

Tale attenzione nel *Simposio* si manifesta a vari livelli:

1. Troviamo una valorizzazione della dimensione sociale, a partire dal convito stesso e dalla cura con cui viene presentato e concluso, dalla natura dei presenti e da tanti altri elementi, ad esempio nell'intervento di Alcibiade.

2. A livello filosofico, nei vari discorsi abbiamo molte affermazioni che dividono o unificano troppo i due piani, fisico e metafisico, e che vengono poi smentite o corrette. Per fare degli esempi, si pensi a come Diotima (208C-D) trascende la posizione di Fedro che descrive in termini solo umani e sociali la potenza di amore (178 C-180A); si pensi a come viene superata la posizione di Pausania che separa e contrappone le due Afroditi, mentre già Erissimaco sente il bisogno di ricollegare i due ambiti, cosa che trova il suo completamento nella trattazione di Diotima; si pensi alla visione mitica di Aristofane, che unifica in modo eccessivo i soggetti, cosa che viene poi smentita esplicitamente da Diotima (205D-E) in nome del bene.

Gli esempi potrebbero moltiplicarsi: si tratta di ricostruire il sottile gioco di riferimenti e correzioni interne che Platone opera fin dalla prima parte del testo. Infatti, la contrapposizione tra il discorso vero di Socrate e quello non vero degli altri (198D-199B) non implica la loro falsità, dato il modello triadico esplicitato *senza alcuna apparente ragione* da Diotima, la quale sostiene che c'è qualcosa di intermedio fra sapienza ed ignoranza (201E-202A), affermando così che non è corretto lavorare in un quadro binario per concetti come sapere-non sapere, bello-brutto, buono-cattivo.

3. Infine l'empiria ha un importante ruolo nella trattazione di Diotima, che parte sia dall'affermazione che tutti sono gravidi sia dalla naturale tendenza di un mortale a diventare immortale (207B-E); questa riguarda sia l'essere umano, sia il corpo, sia l'anima e le attività spirituali (208A-C). Nel processo ascensivo, che *non è necessario* ricondurre all'*anamnesi* ma che *allude ai suoi concetti fondamentali*, Diotima mette in gioco vari elementi empirici, in una connessione stretta anche perché i veri misteri sono «quelli perfetti e oggetto di iniziazione, *in funzione dei quali sono anche i precedenti*, se si procede correttamente» (210A1-2). Così si arriva a scorgere *all'istante* (210E4) quell'unica scienza, che ha per oggetto la bellezza, Idea divina (211E3) che porta l'essere umano stesso in una sfera divina e lo fa essere in qualche senso immortale.

Dunque questo processo, svolto da sé o sotto la conduzione di una guida (211C) parte da dati elementari e via via per successive purificazioni, viste come necessari gradini, giunge ad una conoscenza improvvisa che ha natura diversa dal processo che l'ha resa possibile, un dato importante per il tema della conoscenza del Bene.

Who loves? The question of agency in Plato's *Symposium*

Carolina Araújo

According to the ancient models of praise¹, the excellence proper to the praised is to be lauded in preference of its other features, like genealogy or wealth. When it comes to the praise of Eros in Plato's *Symposium*, Phaedrus' speech announces that he is the cause without which no human being accomplishes great deeds (178c2-3; 178d2-4). To explain what is this causal function, Phaedrus describes the divine manifestation not according to the traditional epiphany, but to enthusiasm, a model in which the internal presence of the god produces the human excellence in what then becomes a simultaneously human and divine deed (αὐτὸς ὁ Ἔρως ἔνθεον ποιήσσειε πρὸς ἀρετὴν - 179a7; τοῦτο ὁ Ἔρως τοῖς ἐρώσι παρέχει γιγνόμενον παρ' αὐτοῦ - 179b2-3). In general, it is hard to distinguish Eros from individual desire or motivation of actions, but it is also hard to distinguish it from an external stronger force that commands this same individual.² This tension between the divine and the human share in a cooperative work of motivation seems to me a *leitmotiv* in the dialogue, and in this paper I will try to explore some consequences of taking it as a key to the text's interpretation, an unusual approach in view of the long-lasting mainstream of readings of the *Symposium* according to the object of love.

Resuming Phaedrus' speech, we can easily see its inconsistency in dealing with enthusiasm: On the one hand, he claims that Eros is the cause of shame and desire of honor in human beings (178d2), motivations that are connected with the visibility of the action (178d5; e2; 179a3), in which lovers and beloveds act as a spectacle to each other (178d4-5; e1-2; e4-5; 179d2; e1-2). On the other hand, he claims that the beloved is more honored by the gods because he does not act by enthusiasm (180a7-b5), but only as a response to the lover.³ More interesting than the inconsistency, though, is the equivocal use of enthusiasm as both an internal and an external motivation, better said, between inspiration (by the god) and aspiration (for honor). As we can see in the case of shame, aspiration can, while inspiration cannot, take the form of a restraint on previous motivations.

Pausanias is more strongly committed to the enthusiastic model, using it to describe agency for both good and bad actions (180e4; 181b8, d1). In this setting, restraint has a central role, either produced externally by rules (181d7-e1; 182a1; 182a3-6), or internally by good agents, who are voluntary servants (181e3-182a1; 184c2-3; 181c4). The fact that rules differ in quality (182d1-5) would be an objection to this system, but Pausanias proves himself to be more refined than a simple conventionalist.⁴ He claims that better rules are those successful in turning external into internal restraint, i.e., in promoting excellence (184c3; 185b1-5), through a device of long-lasting tests of internal motivations (βασανίζειν - 184a1; 183e6-184a5). In doing so, he evaluates actions according to the perseverance of the agent and the stability of the object of love, i.e., the soul in contradistinction to the decaying body (183e1-2; e6). Time and persistency reveal the good lover, for whom love is an aspiration (for excellence) through restraint.

Eryximachus operates a wide extension of the enthusiastic model in considering it present in everything that moves towards something, including the gods (186a3-6; κατ' ἀνθρώπινα καὶ κατὰ θεῖα πράγματα - 186b2). The cosmic approach makes Eros an overall power that must be directed towards the good if happiness is to be produced (188d4-5). In his approach to arts, Eryximachus presents human knowledge as the mastering of Eros and its effects (ἐπιστάμενος ἐμποιῆσαι καὶ ἐνόντα ἐξελεῖν, ἀγαθὸς ἂν εἴη δημιουργός - 186d3-4). Eros is the object on which the arts work with the aim of producing harmony (ὡς ἂν κοσμιώτεροι γίγνοιτο οἱ μήπω ὄντες - 187d5-6; 188b3-6; c1-2; c6-7)⁵ and

¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I, 9 (1327b28-1328a9). Anaximenes of Lampsarcus, *Ars Rhetorica*, 35, 3.1-4.5 (1440b14-28).

² "Usando la terminologia contemporanea, si potrebbe dire che la persona amata è al tempo stesso l'origine e la meta della forza che si qualifica come desiderio in colui che ama e lo fa tendere verso di essa". (Calame: XXVIII-XXIX).

³ The problem is not "that the love of which Phaedrus speaks is not the ultimate source of excellence" (Corrigan & Glazov-Corrigan: 53-4), because love (in the lover) is still necessary for the action of the beloved; the problem is that Phaedrus has two concepts of enthusiasm: desire for honor is still the motivation in the beloved.

⁴ Dover seems to discard Pausanias' commitment to excellence, persistence and love of the soul as a disguise for his personal interest: "the difference between good and bad eros lies in whole context of the ultimate physical act, not in the presence or absence of the act itself" (1964: 34) or "The eros of which he approves is a protracted relationship, in which the resistance of the eromenos makes great demands on the erastes, but there are circumstances in which resistance should cease" (1978: 91). However even if the sparse biographical information available on Pausanias should count more than the text itself, he would still defend a relationship in which the sexual act is not the first aim.

⁵ In saying that there is an erotic knowledge (187a5) and that Eros guides the arts (πᾶσα διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τούτου κυβερνᾶται - 186e4-187a1) he means that Eros is an art object, a formula that should be understood in a sense similar to ἀρχουσί γε αἱ τέχναι καὶ κρατοῦσιν ἐκείνου οὐπὲρ εἰσιν τέχναι. (Rep., 342c8-9) or πᾶσα ἡ πράξις καὶ ἡ κύρωσις διὰ λόγων ἐστίν. διὰ ταῦτ' ἐγὼ τὴν ῥητορικὴν τέχνην ἀξιώ εἶναι περὶ λόγους (Gorg., 450b9-c2).

if everything is enthusiastically moved, Eryximachus' artist is not. He does not love; he is moved by the greatest power of knowledge, the only one that, bringing things to their ends, generates happiness (188d5-10).⁶

The first attitude of Aristophanes in his speech is to defend Eros as a cause of human happiness, turning him into the divine physician that promotes the healing of human beings (189c9-d3). According to his myth, Eros is the longing for the previous half (191a5-b1; c8-d3; 192b5; 192e10-193a1), which could have been deadly had not Zeus provided human beings with temporary relief (191b6-8) and ways of reproduction (191c4-5). Sex is not Eros, but as well as the rules (192b2), it is a device to ensure all other non-erotic human actions (ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα τρέποντο καὶ τοῦ ἄλλου βίου ἐπιμελοῖντο - 191c7-8), in particular the sacrifices and honors to the gods (190c4-5). However, this purpose of the gods is not clear to humans; to us Eros is an obscure motivation (192c4-d5), an indefinable stroke (ἐκπλήττονται - 192b7), a suffering (τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν καὶ τὰ παθήματα αὐτῆς - 189d5-6) in opposition to the actions expected from humans. Notwithstanding Eros is our own nature (191c8-d2), each erotic suffering is a reminder that we are not the god that Eros is. We suffer, Eros heals; his philanthropy consists in a unique inverted enthusiasm: he leads to constant failure in achieving the goal, i.e., to become whole, and through this suffering he inspires non-erotic actions. Eros is a cause of happiness inasmuch as it reminds us that happiness is not the fulfillment of our desires, but a gift from the gods and that therefore we ought to act piously (193a7-b1).⁷

This brings us to Agathon's complaint that all the previous speeches have taken the enthusiastic model for granted in not distinguishing the god himself from his effects in human beings. According to him, Eros is the highest paradigm of happiness, beauty, goodness and youth (195a6-8), whose presence is to be found in the characters and the souls both of humans and gods (ἐν γὰρ ἦθεσι καὶ ψυχαῖς θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων - 195e4-5) that present these properties. Hence Eros manifests itself not through enthusiasm, but according to a principle of affinity, i.e., attraction of the similar (ὁμοίον ὁμοίῳ ἀεὶ πελάζει - 195b4-5) and repulsion of the opposite (196a7-8).⁸ Moreover, this is not a compulsive movement; Eros is a choice to the detriment of the kingdom of Necessity (195c6; 197b7). Both gods and human beings are voluntary servants of Eros, to use Pausanias' expression (196b6-7; c1-2); a choice justified because Eros is the strongest of all desires (196d2-3). Agathon's model merges inspiration, restraint and choice into aspiration⁹: given the principle of affinity, the most powerful internal motivation is the one toward the external paradigmatic object (δῆλον ὅτι κάλλους - αἴσχει γὰρ οὐκ ἔπι ἔρωσ - 197b5; ἐκ τοῦ ἐρᾶν τῶν καλῶν πάντ' ἀγαθὰ γέγονεν - 197b8-9), an external final cause presented to both gods and humans. Happy are those who choose happiness and the ones who choose Eros love.

Notoriously this is Socrates' point in the elenchus based on the formula τινος ὁ Ἔρωσ ἔρωσ (199d1-2; e6-7). We can see here that Socrates distinguishes lover and beloved, claiming three points: i) the presence of Eros is necessary to the act of love; ii) it is the lack in the agent that marks his difference from the object (200a8-b1; αὐτῶν τούτων ὧν ἐνδεής ἐστίν - 202d1-3) and iii) love is a desire to possess the object and this possession is happiness (200b6-8; 205a1-3). Altogether, these claims result in Socrates' striking treatment of Eros, and not of the human being in which Eros manifests himself, as the lacking subject (201c4; 204a1-7). Diotima's speech, claiming that Eros is not a god, but a daimon (202d5-e1; 203a4-8), is introduced precisely to reject the enthusiastic model through a defense of the unity of the love agent. It is not only the case that both daimones and human

⁶ In presenting Eryximachus as "the exemplar of authority that persuades" (170), Edelstein lists all the advice given by him to other characters, but unfortunately he does not make any connection between this position and the authoritative content of his speech.

⁷ The contradiction pointed by Corrigan and Glazov-Korrigan, "if we are pious, we shall be restored to our original nature. But our original nature was violent and impious" (74), is not a contradiction, but the moral of Aristophanes' myth. "Therefore the final problem is how to establish a working relation between this rebellion, the attempt to return to the original nature, and the Olympian gods, to whom men owe their lives" (Strauss: 127). "... the 'whole' which Aristophanes' lovers seek is not only physically inaccessible to them; its attainment lies under the eternal interdict of the gods. Eros is, therefore, an endless, unterminating, perpetual desire." (Halperin: 169). The difficulty in Halperin's reading lies not in his interpretation of Aristophanes' speech, but in his thesis that the speeches prior to Aristophanes would treat Eros as a simple appetite in Halperin's terms.

⁸ Sedley spots this principle but he is too ready to relate it to the argument of causality in Phaedo, 102a9-107a1; the result is a retreat to the enthusiastic model: "if you desire something, your doing so is secondary to, and caused by, the presence in you of the relevant desire, itself the primary subject of the desiring" (56). Defending a "principle of affinity" we can claim that choice is Agathon's relevant contribution to the causal role of Eros.

⁹ Stokes calls attention to the problem: "The 'absolute' use may, or may not, imply, or require supplement by a general expression in the genitive case. It is simply not clear from Agathon's speech which view he wishes to take, or how he would answer to these questions." (118). However, the use of both forms is precisely Agathon's point according to his principle of affinity, a principle Stokes seems to neglect in his analysis of self-predication in Agathon's speech (140).

beings lack something¹⁰; it is the case that, as lovers, they are one and the same, the daimonic man (δαίμωνιος ἀνὴρ - 203a5).¹¹ Some light is shed on this matter by Burkert's analyses of the Greek religion; according to him:

*Daimon does not designate a specific class of divine beings, but a peculiar mode of activity. For daimon and theos are never simply interchangeable either. (...) Daimon is occult power, a force that drives man forward where no agent can be named. The individual feels as it were that the tide is with him, he acts with the daimon, syn daimona, or else when everything turns against him, he stands against the daimon, pros daimona, especially when a god is favouring his adversary. (...) Every god can act as a daimon, not every act of his reveals the god. Daimon is the veiled countenance of divine activity. There is no image of a daimon, and there is no cult. Daimon is thus the necessary complement to the Homeric view of the gods as individuals with personal characteristics; it covers that embarrassing remainder which eludes characterization and naming.*¹²

If we can understand a daimonic action as one in which reasons are unclear, we can see that his communication function (202e3-7) is not a simple transmission, but an interference and we also see how Socrates merges Agathon's voluntary submission to paradigmatic objects (200e7-201a1) and Aristophanes' enigmatic suffering (200e; 205d-e). This mixed model is compatible with Diotima's description of right opinion as something that has reality as its object, but is not capable of giving a rational account of it (202a5-9). This is the tension that forces Eros to be a philosopher (ἀναγκαῖον Ἔρωτα φιλόσοφον εἶναι 204b4). If love is desire for happiness though the possession of love's paradigmatic though enigmatic objects, then i) it is a universal human action (κοινὸν οἶε εἶναι πάντων ἀνθρώπων - 205a5-8; d1-3)¹³; ii) it is an internal feeling that marks actions of constant pursuit (206b1-4); iii) its daimonic character marks its failure in its task of constantly giving reasons, turning it into a constant rescue of knowledge (208a3-7). If so, Diotima's universal human Eros mirrors Socrates' daimonion in the *Apology*¹⁴, said to always turn him away from a previous motivation (ἀεὶ ἀποτρέπει με τοῦτο ὃ ἂν μέλλω πράττειν - 31d2-3; ἐναντιουμένη, εἴ τι μέλλοιμι μὴ ὀρθῶς πράξειν - 40a4-5). Socrates' singularity is that, as a gift since childhood, his daimonion is committed to rectitude.¹⁵

What the *Symposium* shows is that this rectitude is not necessarily a gift. Diotima presents us an educational process towards a stage that would unify happiness, understood as the possession of goodness throughout time and described as pregnancy, and immortality, described as giving birth in beauty at the right age mediated by *logos*; a dynamic of acquiring and creating. If we shall not forget the lesser mysteries when heading to the higher, what establishes rectitude in loving (210a4-6; 210e2-3; 211b5-6) and designs the *scala amoris* is the exercise of mortal desire for immortality¹⁶, constantly

¹⁰ Dover (1980: 139-140) presents the problems of the inference, but not the consequence of this common agency.

¹¹ "Insofar as we all have a certain striving for the good and the beautiful in us, we are all 'daemonic' beings, the children of Poros and Penia" (Frede: 403). An objection could be made to the thesis of the daimonic human beings based on Diotima's personification of Eros in the myth of Poros and Penia, but the myth should be understood as a response to Aristophanes' account – obviously recalling his comic personification of Penia in *Ploutos*. An approach to the myth that would claim divine status for Eros, would also have to attribute it to Penia, which is of course against both Socratic models of gods and daimones (see 203b8; c6). Moreover is notable that in its conclusion, the myth claims that Eros can be neither a god nor ignorant (204a1-7), leaving untouched the Aristophanic hypothesis of its being human in nature.

¹² Burkert: 180. Besides Homer, this interpretation is compatible for example with Hesiod, *Op.* 121-3; *Theogonia*, 380-381; Heraclitus, fr. 112; Plato, *Cratylus*, 397d10-398c4.

¹³ A note should be made about animals. Having defined their love as desire for immortality, Diotima claims procreation as more general goal for love, since it is common to all living beings (207d1), however she is very clear about the constant limits imposed on human beings because of their inability to give a *logos* of their object of love (208a5-b1), a task obviously proper only to us.

¹⁴ For the opposite argument, see Belfiore: 24.

¹⁵ "Socrates is the archetype of the erotikos because he is permanently besotted (with knowledge, with handsome young men) and never manages to achieve a finality" (Davidson: 36). See 211d3-5: τοὺς καλοὺς παῖδας τε καὶ νεανίσκους δόξει σοὶ εἶναι, οὗς νῦν ὀρώων ἐκπέληξαι καὶ ἔτοιμος εἶ καὶ σὺ καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοί; 216d2-3: Σωκράτης ἐρωτικῶς διάκειται τῶν καλῶν καὶ ἀεὶ περὶ τούτων ἐστὶ καὶ ἐκπέληκται. Socrates' rectitude in being permanently in love responds to Phaedrus' shame, Pausanias' restraint, Eryximachus' harmony and Aristophanes' piety. As such, it agrees with Agathon's transformation of constraint into aspiration.

¹⁶ Although I do not agree with Brisson's translation "recherche", he is right in finding in *meletan* a notion that "prend à la fois en compte les notions d'oubli et de mémoire" (212). Sheffield rejects this continuity in the ladder by defending an object-driven analysis: "In Socrates' own speech the central contrast between the desiring agents of the lower and the higher mysteries is that between the love of honour and the love of wisdom" (202; see 137-153); the onus it has to deal with is the function of laws and activities in the higher mysteries (210c4) in clear relation to the mention of Lycurgus' and Solon's immortal children in the lower mysteries (209d4-e3). Ferrari, who takes the same position, is aware of the problem, and

changing objects due to the acknowledgement of their limits in comparison to the reality that strikes us (κατανοῆσαι - 210a8; b2; b4; b7; c3), meanwhile obstinately devoted to producing *logos* about this obscure paradigmatic object (210a7-8; c1-2; d5). Time and again the lover fails to give an account of reality, however, through the memory of the *logos* he produces and the effect of this memory, he becomes humanly immortal. All the stages consist in love's action inasmuch as they all intend the sudden sight of beauty (210e4-6)¹⁷ and they are all right if constantly trying to rescue from oblivion this fleeting moment through *logos*, (σχεδὸν ἄν τι ἄπτοιο τοῦ τέλους - 211b6-7 in opposition to ἵνα γνῶ αὐτὸ τελευτῶν ὃ ἐστὶ καλόν - 211c8-d1): the unity of the ladder is given both by the unity of beauty and by action of the lover.¹⁸ This permanent exercise of love is real excellence (212a5-7) and its immortality takes place in others by means of all the erotic speeches produced along the journey.¹⁹

Alcibiades presents the effect of these speeches in his eulogy for Socrates as the daimonic agent (214d3; 221c4-6).²⁰ According to his imagery, gods are inside Socrates (215b3)²¹, causing him to be hubristic for being simultaneously excellent and disdainful (215b7, see also 175e7; 216d6-7; e2-5; 219d4-7; 222a3). This internal divine nature, said to be also νοῦς (222a2-3) makes Socrates a unique human being (221d2), capable of producing speeches that produce possession (κατεχόμεθα - 215d6). In a reappraisal of the enthusiastic model, the daimonic possession or philosophical madness (218b3) is presented as an effect of speech on human beings, felt as an Aristophanic suffering (ἐκπεπληγμένοι - 215d5-6; ἔπασχον - 216e5), which arouses the divine in others through the distress (ἐτεθορύβητό - 215e6) about the way one ought to live (216a1-2). The speech is hence not only a product of love that can immortalize actions, as poets and legislators do; it is a producer of love, immortalizing the production of speeches by producing daimonic lovers.²² The daimonic way of living *qua* possession is irresistible – and here Pausanias' voluntary servitude comes back to the fore (ποιητέον εἶναι ἔμβραχον ὅτι κελεύει Σωκράτης 217a1-2; 218a3-5) in again a merging of Aristophanes' and Agathon's meanings of love (216d2-3; 221d1-6; see also 177d7-8; 198d1-3) –, but Alcibiades is simply incapable of living it (216b3-5). Both Alcibiades' mistake about Socrates²³ and

states that “the philosophic initiate begins, then, at a level lower than that attained by the honor lover in the Lesser Mysteries (whom he will overtake in the due course)” (256). What the higher mysteries seem to reveal is how the constant exercise of lack and reasoning, described in the lesser mysteries, can result in excellence.

¹⁷ Being an educational process between at least two people, the ladder is the action of a lover to turn someone else also into a lover, and it is as the common way of living of lovers that love takes place among individuals. If this daimonic way of life is marked by the constant experience of falling short of giving an account of the reality that strikes us, beauty is the constant object of love in persons, bodies, souls, laws, activities, etc. This constancy implies that even the vocabulary of “exclusive” or “inclusive” interpretations, proposed by Moravcsik (293), is misleading, not to mention the whole debate about love for a person as a person. For this topic, see my *To orthos paiderastein: righteousness and eroticism in Plato's Symposium*, forthcoming.

¹⁸ Halperin (186) seems to neglect this daimonic model of action in claiming that the link between the stages is made only in objective and not in subjective terms, although he recognizes that Plato considers the lover's sexual desire identical to the philosopher's desire (188).

¹⁹ “What is generated at the summit is, for the first time, not described as a kind of discourse, but rather as ‘true virtue’” (Ferrari: 259). The form of beauty will cause the experience of failure in the attempt to give an account of it, because i) it is sudden; ii) because it is loved, it is never possessed. Hence it determines the rectitude of all the process without a *logos* of itself, the same kind of rectitude that must be implied in a right opinion, an internal state ratified by practical effectiveness. All the speeches in the ladder are about beauty (in diverse instances) and they fall short because of their object. “If Socrates has indeed been gazing on the Form of Beauty, the offspring he produces will be not *logoi*, but interior virtues. Such virtues may, however, be manifested in action”. (Blondell: 158). The evidence of excellence in actions is what explains Alcibiades' mistaken claim about Socrates' inner states.

²⁰ Robin: 109, 161-164; however, we cannot accept Robin's theses that Eros is the nous or the soul, (125, 137) nor is the feeling of love cut off from philosophy (159), a theory that would destroy the principle of lack and desire for immortality. Robin's intellectualism even considers Platonic love as an inferior principle of action (164-165), a conclusion based in its synthetic function that would, again, hold against his identification of Eros and nous. Interestingly enough some of Robin's claims can also be found in Nussbaum: “It is, we see, the old familiar eros, that longing for an end to longing, that motivates us here to ascend to a world in which erotic activity, as we know it, will not exist”. (183). Closer to our approach here is Belfiore's definition of Socratic eros as: “a passionate desire for the wisdom, beauty and other good things that one recognizes that one lacks”(3).

²¹ Reeve's understanding of agalmata as “an image for what is itself necessarily beyond image”(138) seems to imply a too radical philosophical experience in what Alcibiades sees in Socrates. What Alcibiades sees is the success in speeches and the excellence in actions, i.e., Socrates' efficiency in performing tasks that Alcibiades would like to perform equally well.

²² Lear insightfully suggests the connection between beauty and immortality through memory, which “makes one wonder whether his quasi-immortality is not something altogether different from enduring for a very long time in the minds of others” (111); a point of view shared by Price: “so long as the boy lives, and does not deteriorate, the man's virtues will be alive in him” (28). However these approaches do not consider Socratic love as a producer of lovers in which it is one's own excellence instead of the memory of someone else's deeds that immortalizes the love.

²³ So Alcibiades' unreliableness lies in his ignorance and misunderstanding of reasons, not in his description of past facts or phenomena, his *parresia*, which is assured by the silence of Socrates himself. “Plato's text encourages his readers to adopt a hermeneutic of suspicion towards Alcibiades' interpretation of Socrates, but not towards the veracity of incidents that he recounts” (Lane: 47). “In Alcibiades' speech, Socrates is sophos, and therefore godlike and lacking in desire, rather than the

his alleged incapacity rest on his supposition of a conquest, of achieving a definitive internal divine state which would infallibly cause success in actions and speeches, and not as an exercise. If he is not to conquer this kind of excellence, Alcibiades feels slighted and charges Socrates of hubris (214d3; 219c5-6). Confronted with Socrates' concept of Eros, Alcibiades is the first to realize that he is unable to love, that loving is too difficult a task for a human being; it involves dealing with what is beyond control.

What is offered here is the sketch of an argument that would require more than a whole book. The aim is obviously to seize the occasion for a dialogue about agency in the *Symposium*, egoistically aiming to benefit myself from the audience's objections. What I claim is that the narrative in the *Symposium* transfigures Eros as a cause of action. What was at first a force greater than human, a divine cause of human accomplishments, has proved to demand control, internal or external, through laws, knowledge or piety. Socrates claims that this control can be replaced by aspiration and instead of inspiration he suggests constant exercise, the heaviest of tasks, condemned by those unable to properly love, but not by Plato.

Works cited:

- Allen, R. *The Symposium*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.
- Belfiore, E. S. *Socrates'daimonic art: love for wisdom in four Platonic dialogues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Blondell, R. Where is Socrates on the 'ladder of love'? In: Leshner, J.; Nails, D.; Sheffield, F. 147-178.
- Brisson, L. *Le Banquet*. Paris: Flammarion, 2007 (5th ed).
- Burkert, W. *Greek religion*. Cambridge: Harvard, 1985.
- Calame, C. (ed.) *L'amore in Grecia*. Roma: Laterza, 2006.
- Davidson, J. *The Greeks and Greek love: a radical reappraisal of homosexuality in Ancient Greece*. London: 2007.
- Dover, K. *Symposium*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- _____. *Greek homosexuality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- _____. Eros and nomos: Plato, Symposium, 182a-185c. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 11, 1964. 31-42.
- _____. Aristophanes' speech in Plato's Symposium. *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 66, 1966. 41-50.
- Edelstein, L. The role of Eryximachus in Plato's Symposium. In: Temkin, O, & Temkin, C. L. *Ancient medicine: selected papers of Ludwig Edelstein*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1967. 153-171.
- Ferrari, G. R. F. Platonic love. In: Kraut, R. *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 248-276.
- Frede, D. Out of the cave: what Socrates learned from Diotima. In: Rosen, R. & Farrell, J. (ed.) *Nomodeiktēs: Greek studies in honor of Martin Ostwald*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993. 397-422.
- Halperin, D. Platonic Eros and what the men call love. *Ancient Philosophy*, 5, 1985. 161-204.
- Lane, M. Virtue as love of knowledge in Plato's Symposium and Republic. In: Scott, D. (ed.) *Maieusis: Essays on Ancient Philosophy in honour of Miles Burnyeat*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 97-135.
- Lear, G. R. Permanent beauty and becoming happy in Plato's Symposium. In: Leshner, J.; Nails, D.; Sheffield, F. 96-123.
- Leshner, J.; Nails, D.; Sheffield, F. *Plato's Symposium: issues in interpretation and reception*. Washington: Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies, 2006.
- Moravcsik, J. Reason and Eros in the "ascent"- passage of the Symposium. In: Anton, J. P. & Kustas, G.L. (eds.) *Essays in Ancient Greek philosophy*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1971. 285-302.
- Nussbaum, M. *The fragility of the goodness: luck and ethics in Greek tragedy and philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Nightingale, A. W. The folly of praise: Plato's critique of encomiastic discourse in the Lysis and the Symposium. *Classical Quarterly*, 43, 1993. 112-130.
- Price, A. W. *Love and friendship in Plato and Aristotle*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1989.

philosophos who restlessly schemes after perfection" (Nightingale: 127).

- Reeve, C. D. C. A study in violets: Alcibiades in the Symposium. In: Lesher, J.; Nails, D.; Sheffield, F. 124-146.
- Robin, L. *La théorie platonicienne de l'amour*. Paris: PUF, 1964.
- Sedley, D. The speech of Agathon in Plato's Symposium. In: Reis, B; Haffman, S. (eds.) *The virtuous life in Greek ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 47-69.
- Sheffield, F. C. C. *Plato's Symposium: the ethics of desire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Stokes, M. C. *Plato's Socratic conversations: drama and dialectic in three dialogues*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.
- Strauss, L. *On Plato's Symposium*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

Eudaimonist Closure in the Speeches of Plato's *Symposium*

David T. Runia

The theme for my paper today is one that has intrigued me for a long time. It goes back to my inaugural lecture in Leiden pronounced almost exactly twenty years ago. The title of the lecture, written in Dutch and only published in that language, was *Bios eudaimon*, not easy to translate, but let us say 'a life well lived'.¹ The lecture took its starting-point in the observation that numerous literary works in the ancient world with a philosophical content (however loosely defined) ended with the theme of the good life, most usually associated with the key philosophical term *eudaimonia*. This applied not only to Greek and Latin philosophical works, but also to writings in the Hellenistic-Jewish and Christian traditions.

A key text for my argument was taken from Plato's enormously influential work, the *Timaeus*. As you all know, the work is for the most part not really a dialogue, but a lengthy monologue by the Pythagorean natural philosopher Timaeus. After giving an extensive account of the origin and structure of the cosmos and of its most important and complex inhabitant—linked to each other in the crucial macrocosm–microcosm relation—Timaeus ends with a brief account of what the best life is for the human being at the centre of his discourse. It is only when the human being constantly cares for his divine part and brings its motions in conformity (*homoiôsis*) with the rational motions of the universe that he can be supremely *eudaimôn* and that will mean that the goal (*telos*) will have been achieved, the best life offered to human beings by the gods (*Tim.* 90c–d).

It will be noted that this passage does not actually constitute the final words of Timaeus' monologue. He in fact ends with a hymn to the cosmos (92c). But it does in my view represent the climactic moment of his speech and Plato underlines this by immediately afterwards saying that he has virtually reached the end (*telos*) of his account of the universe up to the genesis of the human being. There is an obvious play on words between the goal of human life just mentioned and the completion of the discourse. As Carlos Steel and others have pointed out,² the ultimate purpose of the *Timaeus* is not science but ethics, to set out the basis in natural philosophy for the key questions of human existence. So effectively the climax and end-point of the work is this passage on the good life.

But let us quickly turn to the dialogue that is our focus in *this* conference, the *Symposium*. In my oration at the time I noted that at least four of the speeches in this work end with the subject of *eudaimonia* and the good life.³ In my paper today I wish to expand this observation and very briefly examine all seven speeches in the *Symposium* in relation to the theme of closure outlined above. How do the individual speeches end? Why do a majority of the speeches end with the theme of *eudaimonia* (and/or related themes), but a minority do not? What might the reason be for this state of affairs and how does it fit in with Plato's purpose for the dialogue?

I would argue that this is a topic of intrinsic interest, based on an observation that I have not come across anywhere in the literature (which of course does not mean that it has not been made somewhere in the vast output of Platonic scholarship). I also hope that, in studying the speeches of the *Symposium* from this point of view, we may also be able to shed some light on an interesting recent controversy which focuses on the question of the purpose of the five speeches prior to that of Socrates (and Diotima) in the dialogue. Are these 'essentially individual contributions with each attempting to go one better than the one before in an apparently haphazard way', with each of the speakers representing a type as well as an individual, as Christopher Rowe has argued?⁴ Or do the speeches follow each other in a deliberate sequence which might even have a dialectical purpose, with Socrates' speech purposefully correcting and superseding what has preceded, as argued by Frisbee Sheffield?⁵ I will return to this question during the course of my paper. But let us now turn to the first speech and how it ends.

The first speaker, Phaedrus, has hardly begun his encomium of Eros before he mentions the theme of living well. The key characteristic of Erôs is that he has the power to inspire excellence (*aretê*). Through love a sense of shame at acting shamefully and a sense of honour in acting honourably is instilled in the lover and this leads to fine and noble deeds (178c5–d4). Such deeds the gods reward, in the case of Alcestis when she returns from the dead, in the case of Achilles when he is

¹ Runia (1993).

² Steel (2001).

³ Runia (1993) 5–6.

⁴ Rowe (1998) 8.

⁵ Sheffield (2006) 30 and *passim*.

transported to the isles of the blessed. The gods honour excellence all the more when it belongs to and is inspired by love. The final words of the speech could not be more emphatic (180b6–8):⁶ ‘Therefore I say that Erôs is the most ancient of gods, the most honoured and the most powerful in helping men gain *aretê* and *eudaimonia*, whether they are alive or have passed away.’

The next speaker, Pausanias, develops the theme of the excellence inspired by love further. Love in itself neither honourable nor shameful. Its nature depends entirely on the deeds to which it leads (183d4–6). Common love is attached to the body rather than the soul and its outcome is predictably vulgar (181b, 183e). How different is the higher form of love which looks to the soul. Not only does it lead to *aretê*, but also, Pausanias suggests, to a love of wisdom (*philosophia*) (184c3–d1). Only in this case is it permitted for a young man to take a lover, when the lover is able to make the young man better and wiser, and when the young man is eager to be taught and improved by the lover (184d7–e5). The speech ends with praise of heavenly love, which compels the lover and the beloved to focus all their efforts on the pursuit of *aretê*, in marked contrast to what happens in the case of vulgar love (185b5–c2). The theme of *eudaimonia* and the good life is not utilized here. It is perhaps implicit in the earlier mention of the ‘love of wisdom’, but not made explicit. As Frisbee Sheffield has noted, what needs clarification here is the nature of the above-mentioned wisdom and how it is to be achieved.⁷

The next speaker is the physician Eryximachus and his opening words, directed at the previous speaker Pausanias, are of immediate interest for our theme. Literally he says that ‘as Pausanias started off well in his *logos* but did not complete (*apetelese*) it well, I must attempt to place a *telos* on his *logos*’ (185e7–186a2). The term *logos* gives rise to the usual difficulties. Should we translate ‘argument’ with Reeve and most scholars, or ‘theme’ with Rowe? Or are other translations such as ‘account’ or even ‘speech’ also possible? We recall the text in the *Timaeus* discussed at the outset where *telos* is the ‘end of an account’. It would certainly be going too far to argue that Eryximachus is alluding to the fact that his predecessor’s speech did not end with the theme of *eudaimonia* and the good life, but that might be taken as at least part of what was missing. The comment also indicates to us the importance of ending an argument or a speech in the appropriate way.

So what does Eryximachus say himself? As befits a physician, he focuses on the role of love in various sciences, although oddly less in medicine than in music, mantic and astronomy. The two kinds of love identified by Pausanias can be seen in all the phenomena studied by these sciences. When permeated by the higher kind of love, harmony, health and goodness result, while the other kind brings on injustice and destruction (188a3–9). Like Phaedrus, Eryximachus emphasizes the power of Erôs. In fact this theme introduces the climax of his speech, just a few words before its end.⁸ ‘So much and so great is the power that Erôs has; or rather Erôs taken together as a whole has all power, but it is the one that is brought about (*apoteloumenos*) with moderation and justice in relation to those things that are good, both among us and among the gods, who has the greatest power, providing us with all *eudaimonia*, enabling us to associate and be friends both with each other and with the gods, who are superior to us.’ Here too, as we saw in Phaedrus’ case, the speech ends with the themes of power, excellence and *eudaimonia*, to which is added the rich motif of ‘friendship with god’, another key aspect of what is regarded as constituting the good life that is the goal of human existence.

Aristophanes now takes over from Eryximachus and, although the comic poet’s speech has a quite different approach from that of the physician, he does start off with the same theme of Erôs’s power and the god’s ability to heal human ills and provide the human race with *eudaimonia* (189c4–d2). But in order to understand this, Aristophanes says, we need to know the ‘nature of human beings and what happens to them’ (189d5–6), and so he goes on to tell his famous story of the originally unified creatures that are now in a divided state. There is only one way for the human race to flourish (i.e. be *eudaimôn*), Aristophanes claims as he comes to the end of his speech: we must bring *erôs* to its conclusion (*ektelesaimen*) and return to our original nature (193c3–5). Hence we must praise Erôs, for ‘he promises the greatest hope of all: if we treat the gods with due reverence, he will restore to us our original nature, and by healing us, he will make us blessed and *eudaimones*.’

These are the climactic words of Aristophanes’ speech. Even more emphatically than previous speakers, he ends with the theme of the blessed state of *eudaimonia*, the good life for human beings. The ‘original nature’ (*archaia phusis*) is of course our state before we were divided. But it is fascinating to note that in the *Timaeus* passage discussed at the outset of our paper the phrase returns

⁶ For the most part I use the translation Nehemas and Woodruff (1997), though I modify it when required.

⁷ Sheffield (2006) 25.

⁸ Using Rowe’s more literal version here.

and its meaning deepened: it is the original state in which humans were made before they plunged into the stream of genesis, that state that allows them to reach the *telos* of human existence which is the best life given to human beings by the gods (*Tim.* 90d5–7). Plato is telling us across the years that behind the humour and fun of Aristophanes’ story lies a deeper message.

Next comes Agathon with his florid and mannered speech in praise of the god. At the outset he describes Erôs as the most blessed (*eudaimonestatos*) of the gods (195a6), but he does not dwell on the themes of human *aretê* and *eudaimonia* that have been so prominent so far. His speech thus makes no contribution to our theme, except perhaps that its absence is telling. Agathon’s speech is all style and no substance, in contrast to what is about to come.

We now arrive at the climactic speech of the dialogue, Socrates reporting the words of Diotima. Time forbids us to mention more than just what is essential for our theme. Firstly there are two key passages which both speak of the end (*telos*). Early in their conversation (204e–205a) Diotima famously makes the point about goodness and *eudaimonia*. You can ask why one desires good things and the good, but when the answer is ‘for the sake of *eudaimonia*’ you cannot go further, since there is no point in asking why you might want to be *eudaimôn*. You have reached the endpoint (*telos*). This argument surely sheds light on why three of the five previous speeches have ended on the theme of the good life. The other passage records the climax of the quest for the beautiful, when the lover ascends to the goal of his erotic activities (*telos tôn erotikôn*) and all of a sudden sees the marvellous sight of the beautiful itself (210e3–5). This, the priestess declares, is the life worth living for a human being (211d2–3).

All the themes that we have discussed so far then come together wonderfully well in the final words of Diotima’s speech (211e4–212a7, slightly abbreviated): ‘Do you think it would be a poor life for a human being to look there (i.e. at divine Beauty) and to behold it and be with it? Or haven’t you remembered that in that life alone, when he looks at Beauty in the only way that Beauty can be seen—only then will it be possible to give birth to true *aretê*. The friendship of the gods belongs to anyone who has given birth to true *aretê* and nourished it, and if any human being could become immortal, it would be he.’ Through the particular emphasis of this dialogue and its theme of *erôs*, the good life and wisdom are identified with the quest for and attainment of true Beauty and true *aretê*. In other words, what is described here is the state of *eudaimonia*. To be sure, the concept does not appear here, but this is exactly what being a friend (or beloved) of the gods and (qualified) immortality refer to.⁹ We recall that the theme of friendship with the gods also occurred in the final lines of Eryximachus’ speech earlier.

We are now in a position to draw some conclusions. Four of the six speeches—those of Phaedrus, Eryximachus, Aristophanes and Diotima—end with the theme of *eudaimonia* and the good life. The theme is introduced and linked to the crucial role of *aretê* in Phaedrus’ opening speech. It is broadened and elaborated by Eryximachus. In Aristophanes’ speech the key aspect (even if comically presented) of the human ‘original nature’ is added: by restoring us to our original nature Erôs can heal us and make us *eudaimones*. This theme is years later greatly deepened in the *Timaeus*. Finally Socrates through Diotima teaches how it is love of wisdom and love of beauty resulting in true *aretê* that brings about the friendship of the gods and such immortality as is available to human beings. Two of the speeches—those of Pausanias and Agathon—do not end with the theme. It is no coincidence that they are the speeches that contribute least to the advancement of thought in the dialogue. The sequential build-up of thought that we have noted makes me want to side with Sheffield against Rowe on the question of whether the speeches preceding that of Socrates can be seen to represent a dialectical progression that leads the reader on the path to the climax of the work in Diotima’s speech.

Let us now turn to the question of why Plato might have adopted this procedure of ending the four speeches as we have described them. When we add the fact that he ends other very significant works in his corpus in a similar way—I am thinking the *Gorgias*, both books I and X of the *Republic*, the *Politicus*, as well as the *Timaeus* already mentioned (and also, I might add, a number of pseudo-Platonic works¹⁰)¹¹—we must conclude that the method is very deliberate. I have often wondered whether Plato was making use of some kind of standard method that had developed in the rhetorical and philosophical practices in the fifth and late fourth centuries. It would require further research to investigate this possibility (any help would be most appreciated).

But it is by no means necessary to lean on such an hypothesis, since very good reasons can be

⁹ For being *theophilês* cf. Aristotle NE 10.9 1178b30–32, and for immortality cf. *Tim.* 90c1–2 (where it is also qualified).

¹⁰ Including the *Clitophon*, which Simon Slings in the English edition of his fine commentary now thinks may well be authentic; see (1999) 227–234.

¹¹ See the listing in Runia (1993) 5–6.

given for why Plato might want to end his speeches with the themes of *aretê*, *eudaimonia* and the good life. It has everything to do with the role of protreptic in his philosophy. It can be argued that the question ‘how should one live’ as so strikingly formulated in the *Gorgias* (492d5), is the central theme of Plato’s philosophy. The main subject of the *Symposium* is *erôs*, but of course with a specific philosophical focus: how can love, that phenomenon that plays such a central role in both the cosmos and in human life, contribute to the achievement of the central quest of human beings, to live the good or even the best life. Implicit is the so-called protreptic argument, namely that all human beings desire to achieve the state of *eudaimonia* and the good life, that only philosophy can bring about this state, that one should therefore change one’s way of life and practise philosophy, and thereby achieve one’s goal (*telos*) and become *eudaimoon*.¹² It is significant that, as we saw, Diotima expounds in her speech (205a) a key proposition of that argument, namely that in achieving *eudaimonia*, the attainment of the highest good, one reaches the end-point of the argument. So, by placing the protreptic theme so emphatically at the end of four main speeches, and particularly as the climax of the most important speech, that of Diotima–Socrates, Plato has created a philosophical framework that gives the theme of love its ultimate place. The themes of *aretê* and *eudaimonia* are of course not exclusively philosophical. It is clever how Plato introduces them right from the start in seemingly non-philosophical contexts and then gradually deepens them until in the climax of the dialogue they play a key role.

I also cannot resist returning to my earlier hypothesis about a possible link between the theme of the *telos* and the closure of a literary piece, in the case of the *Symposium*, the speech. As we have seen, in Diotima’s speech Plato emphasizes both the end of an argument (205a3) and the end of a quest (210e4) in connection with *eudaimonia* and the good life. I believe that this connection with the end may still have played a role in bringing about the striking feature of the speeches that we have focused on, namely that they end so deliberately with the theme of the goal of human life. Admittedly, unlike in the *Timaeus*, there is no direct literary reference to the *telos* in any of these conclusions,¹³ but it seems to me that the conjunction of the two kinds of end may have contributed in the background.

But there remains a seventh speech which we have not yet discussed. After Socrates has finished recounting what he learnt from the priestess Alcibiades bursts in. His quite lengthy speech falls outside the formal arrangements of the *Symposium*, but nevertheless it must be seen as the seventh speech in the dialogue’s sequence. And it too builds up to a climax. Alcibiades returns to the hollow statues of Silenus as the image of Socrates. These are now ‘truly worthy of a god, bursting with figures of virtue inside, of great, no indeed of the greatest importance for anyone who wants to be a truly good man (*kalos kagathos*) (222a3–6)’. We have here the climax of Alcibiades’ speech, before he closes with a brief peroration. Plato returns to the theme of *aretê* now personified in the life and *logoi* of Socrates (219d, 221d). This recalls above all the ending of the speech of Pausanias, where as we saw the role of *aretê* is central, but also of the other speeches (except that of Agathon¹⁴) in which it is explicitly mentioned or implicitly assumed.¹⁵ But here Plato does not go the further step and have Alcibiades speak of *eudaimonia* and the good life. I am convinced that this is very deliberate. Alcibiades comes under Socrates’ sway and feels the attraction of the life of excellence and virtue, but he does not go the further step of embracing that life, as of course his very behaviour on that night demonstrates. He stops short of doing what he ought and so the good life promised by the philosophical life embodied by Socrates will elude him. In a parallel way, too, that is why the final speech of the dialogue does not exhibit the full-blown conclusion involving *eudaimonia* and the good life that we have seen to be a key feature of the majority of speeches preceding it.

Bibliography

- A. Nehemas and P. Woodruff, ‘Symposium’ in J. M. Cooper (ed.), *Plato Complete Works* (Indianapolis 1997) 458–505.
 C. J. Rowe, *Plato: Symposium* (Warminster 1998).
 D. T. Runia, *Bios eudaimoon* (inaugural lecture, Leiden 1993).
 F. C. C. Sheffield, ‘The Role of the Earlier Speeches in the *Symposium*: Plato’s Endoxic Method,’ in J. H. Lesher and D. Nails (edd.), *Plato’s Symposium: Issues in Interpretation and Reception*

¹² For this argument see esp. the locus classicus *Euthd.* 278e–282d. On philosophical protreptic in the fourth century and in Plato see Slings (1999) 59–164.

¹³ But note the use of verbs involving the role of τέλος: ἀποτελούμενος 188d6; ἐκτελέσαμεν 193c4.

¹⁴ Agathon only praises the *aretai* of Erôs, not those of human beings affected by him.

¹⁵ See the speech of Phaedrus 180b6; of Pausanias 185b7; of Eryximachus 188d5–6 (moderation and justice); of Aristophanes 193d4 (piety towards the gods); of Diotima 212a5.

(Washington DC 2006) 23–46.

S. R. Slings, *Plato : Clitophon, Edited with Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries 37 (Cambridge 1999).

C. Steel, 'The Moral Purpose of the Human Body: a Reading of *Timaeus* 69–72', *Phronesis* 46 (2001) 105–128.

Method, Knowledge and Identity

Chair: Graziano Arrighetti

Ὁμολογία and ὁμολογεῖν in *Symposium*

Lesley Brown

As readers of Plato you will know how widely he uses ὁμολογεῖν, ὁμολογία and related terms. In this short paper, part of a larger study, I make some general remarks and then examine some key uses in *Symposium*.

The standard translation of the verb is ‘to agree’, and it is very convenient that English ‘agree’ has all the key uses and constructions of ὁμολογεῖν - notably ‘agree that’ (such and such), corresponding to ὁμολογεῖν with accusative and infinitive; and ‘agree to ...’, that is, promise to, completed with infinitive. Des Places, *Lexique*, sv ὁμολογεῖν has a very helpful entry¹

I quote:

1) “reconnaître”, “concéder” (que). 2) “s’engager” (à) ; 3) “s’accorder” (avec).

We could refer to ὁμολογεῖν (1) as ‘to agree that ...’ and ὁμολογεῖν (2) as ‘to agree to do’, but, for reasons I’ll explain later, ‘agree that ...’ is misleading as a translation in some contexts of ὁμολογεῖν (1). Instead I’ll label use (1) declarative ὁμολογεῖν, and I’ll label use (2) ὁμολογεῖν as promising (though here ‘agree to do ...’ is fine as a translation). I shall also argue that “reconnaître” and “concéder” are misleading as translations for ὁμολογεῖν (1), for much the same reason as “agree” is misleading. As I explain below, “agree that” and “reconnaître”/ “concéder” (que) all trigger presuppositions which are absent from ὁμολογεῖν. See Sec III below for my arguments on this. In this paper I shall not be able to discuss use 3), which is far rarer in Plato.

Another reason for the label ‘declarative’ is this: in Greek ὁμολογεῖν (1) is always a public speech act (or the equivalent of a speech act, such as nodding assent). This contrasts with the English ‘agree that ...’, which can signify a private, unexpressed concurring, as in *I could tell that Mary agreed that Tom was to blame, though she said nothing*. One who ὁμολογεῖ that such and such is the case gives it as their opinion that such and such is the case; of course one can do so insincerely. In other words, ὁμολογεῖν represents a speaking (or other public indication of assent, such as nodding), not an unexpressed believing. You may find this surprising, not least since its complement construction is almost invariably the accusative and infinitive – which typically indicates a verb of thinking rather than a verb of saying.²

Likewise the noun ὁμολογία has uses analogous to each of the uses of the verb. Corresponding to (1) ὁμολογία can be an assertion or declaration or admission (or its content: the thesis asserted or declared). Corresponding to (2) ὁμολογία can be a promise (or what is promised); or, more formally, a treaty or pact, or term of a treaty. The participle ὁμολογημένα can be used both for theses declared or asserted and for things promised.³

Section II: ὁμολογεῖν and its cognates in Symposium; Eryximachus’ use.

As Robert Wardy has noted,⁴ ὁμολογεῖν and its cognates are prominent at certain points in our dialogue. In what follows I offer a close examination of passages using the term, and will draw some conclusions different from those of Wardy. In the final part I shall argue for a thesis that has some important bearing on passages throughout Plato’s works in which Socrates is conducting his usual kind of cross examination of his interlocutors, viz. that we should not invariably translate ὁμολογεῖν (1) by ‘agree’.

As in all dialogues, ὁμολογεῖν (1) is prominent. Given that our dialogue is narrated, it is no surprise that we find it as one of the verbs of reported speech. Apollodorus tells his friend that he had a narration from Aristodemus, but checked a few points with Socrates himself: καί μοι ὁμολόγει καθάπερ ἐκεῖνος διηγείτο (173b6). And it is used to report the interlocutor’s assent, as at : Οὐκοῦν

¹ Platon, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Tome XIV, Paris 1970.

² K-G II.2 357; Fournier, H., (1946) *Les verbes “dire” en grec ancien*, p15ff.

³ ὁμολογήματα – more rarely found in Plato – are things asserted/admitted when these are rather weighty (cf. *Gorg* 480b3, *Tht* 155b4).

⁴ R.Wardy, (2002) ‘The Unity of Opposites in Plato’s Symposium’ *O.S.A.P.* 2002.

ἀδελφοῦ ἢ ἀδελφῆς; Ὁμολογεῖν (199e7).⁵

As well as being used in the *narration* of conversational exchanges, it is also used *within* those conversations themselves, especially those of a dialectical nature. As Wardy noted, the stretch known as the elenchus of Agathon contains ‘a sustained stream of ὁμολογία vocabulary’, though I don’t agree with him that it is ‘without parallel in the Platonic corpus’.⁶ In Section III I examine what I have called the declarative use, ὁμολογεῖν (1).

ὁμολογεῖν (2), to promise, is also a very common use of the verb, even if somewhat rarer, in Plato, than (1). When Agathon praises Eros for never using force, he remarks that all serve Eros willingly, and ἅ δ’ ἂν ἐκὼν ἐκόντι ὁμολογήσῃ (whatever is undertaken willingly on both sides) the laws call just (196c1). At 198c5 and 199a 5 Socrates uses the verb when he claims to have been unaware of the rules of eulogising when he *promised* to take his turn in praising Eros.⁷

But before these everyday and unremarkable occurrences we have a stretch making important use of ὁμολογ- vocabulary where it is harder to classify the uses: the speech of Eryximachus. To back up his claims about the ubiquitous importance of Eros, Eryximachus appeals to Heraclitus’ saying (187a4-6) on the unity of opposites, τὸ ἐν γὰρ φησι “διαφερόμενον αὐτὸ αὐτῷ συμφέρεσθαι,” “ὥσπερ ἄρμονίαν τόξου τε καὶ λύρας”. He goes on to criticise it in a short stretch containing six occurrences of ὁμολογ- vocabulary. How intriguing, then, that in Plato’s version of the Heraclitus saying itself we find not the word ὁμολογεῖ transmitted by Hippolytus, but συμφέρεσθαι. Most scholars accept Plato’s version as the correct one, though Kahn is a fervent proponent of reading ὁμολογεῖ : an ‘unexceptional text transmitted by our most reliable ancient source.’⁸ Marcovich, who is among the majority preferring συμφέρεται, offers the reason that ‘Plato uses this word although ὁμολογεῖ would better suit his purpose’ –sc. given the argument Eryximachus proceeds to mount invoking ὁμολογ-terminology.⁹

Leaving aside the question of the text of the Heraclitus fragment, I turn to Eryximachus’ comments on the saying, which many have found crass. In response to Heraclitus invoking the *harmonia* of a bow or a lyre, Eryximachus retorts:

ἔστι δὲ πολλὴ ἀλογία ἄρμονίαν φάναι διαφερέσθαι ἢ ἐκ διαφορομένων ἔτι εἶναι. ἀλλὰ ἴσως τόδε ἐβούλετο λέγειν, ὅτι ἐκ διαφορομένων πρότερον τοῦ ὀξέος καὶ βαρέος, ἔπειτα ὕστερον ὁμολογησάντων γέγονεν ὑπὸ τῆς μουσικῆς τέχνης. οὐ γὰρ δήπου ἐκ διαφορομένων γε ἔτι τοῦ ὀξέος καὶ βαρέος ἄρμονία ἂν εἴη· ἢ γὰρ ἄρμονία συμφωνία ἐστίν, συμφωνία δὲ ὁμολογία τις—ὁμολογίαν δὲ ἐκ διαφορομένων, ἕως ἂν διαφέρωνται, ἀδύνατον εἶναι· διαφορόμενον δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ μὴ ὁμολογοῦν ἀδύνατον ἀρμόσαι—ὥσπερ γε καὶ ὁ ρυθμὸς ἐκ τοῦ ταχέος καὶ βραδέος, ἐκ διεννηγεμένων πρότερον, ὕστερον δὲ ὁμολογησάντων γέγονε. τὴν δὲ ὁμολογίαν πᾶσι τούτοις, ὥσπερ ἐκεῖ ἡ ἰατρικὴ, ἐνταῦθα ἡ μουσικὴ ἐντίθησιν, ἔρωτα καὶ ὁμόνοιαν ἀλλήλων ἐμποιήσασα· (187a6-c3)

But it is quite illogical to say that a harmony is at variance, or composed out of things that are still at variance. Perhaps what he meant to say was that it has come to be from the high and the low, which were previously at variance, but which then later struck an agreement under the agency of musical expertise. For surely if the high and the low were still at variance, a harmony would not come from them, for harmony is concord, and concord is a kind of agreement, and it is impossible for agreement to come from things at variance with each other, for as long as they are at variance with each other, and impossible in turn to harmonise what is at variance and not in agreement; just as rhythm, too, comes about from the quick and the slow, from things which had been at variance previously, but which later struck an agreement. What establishes the agreement among all these things, like medicine in its sphere, is music, by implanting in them love and unanimity with each other. (tr. Rowe 1998).

Rowe (1998 p 149) protests against this criticism: ‘of course something can be simultaneously in disagreement and in agreement, if what’s meant is something like a bow or a lyre’, and again ‘we do not need to ask whether ‘the high and the low’ are the sort of things that could strike an agreement; who would seriously disagree that a ‘harmony’ in the sense defined [sc. a set of sounds which a lyre

⁵ However, nowhere in the corpus do we find “οὐχ ὁμολογεῖ”, despite Euclides mentioning it as one of the tiresome narrative devices he will avoid (*Tht.* 143c).

⁶ Wardy (2002) p 51. *Protagoras* 350c6-e7 is one passage where ὁμολογία terms are found in a greater density.

⁷ 198c6 ἦνίκα ὑμῖν ὁμολογοῦν ἐν τῷ μέρει μεθ’ ὑμῶν ἐγκωμιάσασθαι τὸν Ἔρωτα, / 199a5 οὐ δ’ εἰδὼς ὑμῖν ὁμολογήσα καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ μέρει ἐπαινέσασθαι.

⁸ Kahn (1979) 195-9. He renders ‘how a thing at variance with itself speaks in agreement’, and argues that it must echo or anticipate D50: οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφὸν ἐστὶν ἐν πάντα εἶναι.

⁹ Marcovich (1967) p125.

would produce if tuned to produce those notes] represents some sort of concord between high and low?'.¹⁰

I suggest that careful attention to the ὁμολογ- vocabulary shows how skilfully Eryximachus has engineered this *reductio* of Heraclitus. Rowe (quoted above) insists that something *can* be simultaneously in agreement and disagreement, if what's meant is something like a bow or a lyre. But (as Rowe is aware) by the repeated phrase ὑστερον ὁμολογησάντων Eryximachus indicates that he is thinking of the required agreement, not simply as concord, but as an explicit 'coming to terms' or, in Rowe's apt translation: 'striking an agreement'. Closely connected to ὁμολογεῖν (2), (to promise), the use of ὁμολογεῖν for 'to make terms' is commonly found in (for instance) Herodotus.¹⁰ So Eryximachus' language uses the metaphor of making terms or a truce, and as such he invokes a kind of agreement where it is *not* possible to be simultaneously in agreement and disagreement. (Compare *Republic* IV, 437b, where *epineuein* and *ananeuein* are among the *enantia* Socrates uses to illustrate his principle that the same thing can't be or do or suffer *enantia* simultaneously.)

The series of 'equivalences' Eryximachus offers – from ἀρμονία to συμφωνία to ὁμολογία τις involves a carefully designed slide from a mere state of being in harmony (possible between divergent things) to a sort of *homologia* (note the *tis*). And, since this set of equivalences follows the use of ὁμολογησάντων to indicate the act of striking agreement, it is this sense of ὁμολογία which is uppermost in the reader's mind: ὁμολογία as a contract or promise or a treaty or term of a treaty.¹¹ In the last sentence of the passage quoted above, we should again understand ὁμολογία not as a mere state of being in concord, but as an agreement struck (to use Rowe's term): the lively metaphor makes music responsible for a deal done between high and low (187b2), or (in the case of rhythm) between short and long. Implanting love and concord –so Eryximachus claims– is the necessary means to get the warring elements to strike an agreement.

To sum up: the criticism Eryximachus offers of Heraclitus' saying may be perverse, but the terms in which it is couched show how cleverly he introduces a kind of agreement about which it cannot be claimed, with Rowe, that 'of course something can be simultaneously in agreement and disagreement'. Personifying the elements (first high and low, then long and short) the learned doctor makes it clear that the sort of ὁμολογία and ὁμολογεῖν he attributes to them is an act of coming to terms, and that *does* require that the parties no longer be at odds with each other.

Section III: ὁμολογεῖν in dialectical contexts; declarative ὁμολογεῖν.

The stretch known as the elenchus of Agathon, and the following elenchus by Diotima of Socrates, feature plentiful uses of ὁμολογεῖν(1), as Wardy notes. He finds a pervasive polarity between ὁμολογία and ἀνάγκη, one that 'comes into its own during dialectical exchanges'.¹² And he glosses all the ὁμολογ- vocabulary in terms of agreement – something that might seem uncontroversial. But I aim to cast doubt on that. I have come to the conclusion that the active ὁμολογεῖν, in its declarative use, should not invariably be translated 'agree', and indeed that it can be misleading about the nature of Socratic questioning to do so. I'll now try to convince you of this.

When you read English translations of Plato you will find all over the place Socrates saying 'but a little while ago you agreed that *p*' or saying 'from what you agreed it follows that such and such' or asking 'do you agree that *p*?', translating forms of ὁμολογεῖν. But this, I now believe, can be misleading. In English 'agree that *p*' triggers a presupposition that another person (usually the speaker) holds the belief that *p*. Let me tell you about a controversy over the forthcoming referendum concerning independence for Scotland. When it was first announced, the Scottish administration proposed the following question: Do you agree that Scotland should be an independent country? This sparked strong objections, on the ground that the question implied 'Do you agree (with us who are asking the question) that Scotland should be an independent country?'. (A more neutral question has now been proposed in its place.) English 'agree that *p*' is used in such a way that it typically conveys 'agree with the speaker that ...', in its second and third person uses (*you agree (d) / he agrees/agreed that...*). Sometimes the agreeing described is with a third party. I can say 'Mary agreed with Jane that Tom was to blame, but I thought they were both wrong'. But normally if I say 'you/she agreed that *p*' or ask 'do you/does she agree that *p*?' I imply that I too hold the belief that *p*.

Something similar applies to the French verbs used by des Places for ὁμολογεῖν (1):

¹⁰ Powell, *Lexicon to Herodotus*: of 37 occurrences of ὁμολογεῖν, 20 signify 'to reach an agreement'.

¹¹ All 12 occurrences in Herodotus of ὁμολογία are for a treaty or truce. The related use for a contract is common in Plato, with *Crito* 52a, 54c and *Cratylus* 435c being noted occurrences.

Wardy, p49. The polarity is perhaps rather between ἀνάγκη and what is ἕκων.

“reconnaître”, “concéder” (que). “Reconnaître” (I believe) is a factive verb; I cannot say of someone ‘il reconnaît que’ *p* but then go on to deny *p* myself. Nor (I think) can one say we were wrong to reconnaître that so and so. But both of these are possible, as I shall show, for Greek ὁμολογεῖν (1). Here is my evidence that when speaker A describes B as ὁμολογεῖν a certain thesis, speaker A need not endorse the thesis, or imply that anyone else holds it. Sometimes when Socrates uses ὁμολογεῖν to refer to what the interlocutor assents to, he plainly does *not* endorse the thesis.

(i) At *Meno* 79, Meno has accepted both (1) to do whatever one does with justice is virtue and (2) justice is a part of virtue. Socrates continues:

So it follows, from what you assert (συμβαίνει ἐξ ὧν σὺ ὁμολογεῖς) that doing whatever one does with a part of virtue, that is virtue. (*Meno* 79b4-5)

The conclusion – virtue is doing what one does with a part of virtue – is one that is rejected, so at least one of the premises must be rejected too. When Socrates addressing Meno uses ὁμολογεῖς, Socrates is certainly not endorsing both (1) and (2).

(ii) Next recall the famous self-refutation argument in *Theaetetus*:¹³

Socrates: Secondly, it has this most exquisite feature: as regards the opinion of those who hold a belief contrary to his opinion (namely the belief that his is false) Protagoras – I presume – concedes (συγχωρεῖ) that theirs is true, seeing that he professes that all men judge what is (ὁμολογῶν τὰ ὄντα δοξάζειν ἅπαντας). *Theod*: Undoubtedly. *Soc*: And if he agrees (ὁμολογεῖ) that the opinion of those who think him wrong is true, then wouldn’t he be conceding (συγχωροῖ) that his own opinion is false? *Theod*: Necessarily. *Soc*: But the others don’t concede (συγχωροῦσιν) that theirs is false? *Theod*: Indeed not. *Soc*: But Protagoras, for his part, admits (ὁμολογεῖ) *this* judgement to be true, given what he’s written. (*Theaetetus* 171a6-b8)

You will note that this passage has three uses of συγχωρεῖν and three of ὁμολογεῖν. I’ll come back to the difference between these. For now, it is the first occurrence of ὁμολογεῖν that provides me with the evidence I want: ὁμολογῶν τὰ ὄντα δοξάζειν ἅπαντας (171a8-9). Socrates is noting that Protagoras professes that all men judge what is, i.e. that all beliefs are true. Now this – that all beliefs are true - is something Protagoras *alone* believes or maintains, so it is wrong to render it (as translators regularly do) ‘seeing that he agrees that ...’. The verb ὁμολογεῖν here indicates merely that the person in question gives it as their opinion that *p*. This text shows it can’t be taken to imply that in giving a certain opinion they are concurring with the speaker, or with any other parties.

(iii) We find just such an occurrence in our dialectical stretch in *Symposium* 201b9. Socrates is challenging Agathon’s description of Love as beautiful. He has got Agathon to admit that Love desires what is beautiful and that one loves what one lacks and does not possess; so Agathon will have to admit that Love is not beautiful. In the course of this stretch we get (201a10) ὁμολόγει and a line later Socrates asking/reminding Agathon thus: Οὐκοῦν ὁμολόγηται, οὗ ἐνδεής ἐστὶ καὶ μὴ ἔχει, τούτου ἐρᾶν; ‘Wasn’t it agreed/ maintained that etc.’ For those two occurrences ‘agree’ is harmless enough, but now see what follows. (201b9): Ἐπι οὖν ὁμολογεῖς Ἔρωτα καλὸν εἶναι, εἰ ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχει; To translate ‘agree’ here is surely incorrect.¹⁴ Dover (1990) *ad loc* has noticed a problem, but his comment shows that he clings to the meaning ‘agree’ for ὁμολογεῖς. He writes: “‘agree (sc with popular belief)’; Socrates himself does not believe that Eros is καλός”. I find this implausible. To cast around for another party with whom the question implies Agathon shares the view – as Dover does - is unnecessary. Instead we must recognise that, unlike ‘agree’ (and unlike ‘reconnaître’ and ‘concéder’), ὁμολογεῖν does not trigger the presupposition that some other person shares the view which someone ὁμολογεῖ. Waterfield¹⁵ has it right with ‘Do you still maintain that Love is attractive?’¹⁶

Why does this matter? I think it can affect how we understand the tone and implications of dialectical exchanges; they may be far less consensual than the translation ‘agree’ suggests. When Socrates is the speaker, his uses of ὁμολογεῖν (to record or recall what has been said) are typically taken to imply his endorsement of the theses in question. This matters for how Socratic inquiry is

¹³ I pass over issues of text and interpretation of this argument. Cf L.Castagnoli, *Ancient Self-Refutation* (2010).

¹⁴ Rowe (1998) *ad loc* ‘Do you still agree that Love is beautiful?’. Wardy (p51) wrongly cites it as ‘a final invitation to agree’.

¹⁵ R.Waterfield tr Plato’s *Symposium*, Oxford World’s Classics 1994; cf C. Gill (Penguin tr) : Do you still suppose that ...’

¹⁶ Cf. Menander’s *Samia* (524, cf. 651) The Samian woman, Chrysis, to help a pair of lovers, is pretending that the girl’s baby is her own. When the young man eventually explains the situation to his father, he says ‘Chrysis is not the child’s mother, she’s doing this as a favour to me ὁμολογοῦσ’ αὐτῆς,’ (proclaiming that the baby is hers). Once again, ‘agree’ would be wrong as a translation here.

understood, and it's relevant to the debate between the constructive and destructive readings of Socratic inquiry or elenchus.¹⁷ But if my arguments are correct, then we cannot assume, when Socrates uses ὁμολογεῖν or describes theses as ὁμολογημένα, that Plato is representing Socrates as endorsing them.¹⁸ Surprising though it may seem, the ὁμο- in ὁμολογεῖν no longer has its original force: the one who ὁμολογεῖ that *p* may not be *saying the same as* anyone else – as the text from *Theaetetus* quoted above shows. Perhaps the only remaining force of the ὁμο- prefix is that one who ὁμολογεῖ says/expresses belief in/ the same as the *logos* says – as in Heraclitus Fr.50 (cf note 8 above) - but not necessarily the same as someone else believes or maintains. My conclusion is that the active ὁμολογεῖν in its declarative use should not be uniformly translated 'agree', though of course it is safe to do so when it is clear from the context that the speaker or someone else also holds the thesis in question.¹⁹ The verb's connotations are less consensual than the translation 'agree' warrants, something which its frequent use in forensic contexts demonstrates, with the antonym ἐξαρνεῖσθαι, and its connexion with bringing witnesses (cf. *Symp* 215b7).²⁰

Finally a few words about the relation between συγχωρεῖν and ὁμολογεῖν. Adorno in a noted article²¹ explored the relations between these terms. I agree with his claim that there is an important distinction, but not with his explanation, viz. that while ὁμολογεῖν indicates rational assent, συγχωρεῖν has emotional or affective overtones. No, the distinction is simpler than that, I believe. Like 'agree' or 'concede' in English, συγχωρεῖν does carry the implication that what X is said to συγχωρεῖν is also maintained by another relevant person; the συν- prefix has retained its force. But the same does not apply to ὁμολογεῖν. There is less agreeing in Socratic discussion than you may have thought.

References

- Adorno, F., (1968) 'Appunti su omologein e omologia nel vocabolario di Platone' 49-65, in Adorno, F., *Pensare Storicamente*, Firenze 1996
 Benson, H. (2000) *Socratic Wisdom* New York, Oxford 2000
 Des Places, E., (1970) *Platon, Oeuvres Complètes, Tome XIV, Lexique* Paris 1970
 Dover, K.J. (1980) *Plato, Symposium* (Cambridge 1980)
 Fournier, H., (1946) *Les verbes "dire" en grec ancien*, Paris 1946
 Irwin, T.H. (1995) *Plato's Ethics*, Oxford, ch 2
 Kahn, C.H., (1979) *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* Cambridge 1979
 Kennedy, J.B. (2011) *The Musical Structure of Plato's Dialogues*, Acumen 2011
 Marcovich, M., (1967) *Heraclitus*, Merida 1967
 Powell, J.E., (1938) *A Lexicon to Herodotus*, Cambridge 1938
 Rowe, C.J. (1998) *Plato: Symposium* (translation and commentary), Aris and Phillips 1998
 Vlastos, G., 'The Socratic Elenchos' *O.S.A.P.* 1983
 Wardy, R., (2002) 'The Unity of Opposites in Plato's *Symposium*' *O.S.A.P.* 2002

¹⁷ Champions of the constructive reading include Vlastos (1983) and Irwin (1995). Champions of the minimalist or destructive reading include Benson (2000) and M.Frede ('The skeptic's two kinds of assent' p203-4 in *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford 1987)

¹⁸ Benson (a destructivist), writes of it as an *objection* to his reading that Socrates frequently introduces his remarks with 'we agree' or 'it was agreed that' (i.e. with ὁμολογοῦμεν or ὁμολόγηται); cf. Benson (2000) p47n52. *Rep* 339d5 is a case where Socrates uses ὁμολόγηται for theses which only Thrasymachus had maintained.

¹⁹ Middle uses do convey mutual agreement, and are more frequent with διομολογεῖσθαι and ἀνομολογεῖσθαι (cf. *Symp* 199c1 ἀνομολογησάμενος παρ' αὐτοῦ).

²⁰ Space does not permit discussion of the analysis by J.B.Kennedy (2011). Agreement as a species of harmony is of great weight for his hypothesis that key points in *Symp* corresponding to musical notes are marked in various ways. As K. acknowledges (p51), in his interpretation the genus 'harmony' is given a wide interpretation; its first alleged occurrence is when Apollodorus stops as requested (172a5).

²¹ F.Adorno (1968) 'Appunti su omologein e omologia nel vocabolario di Platone' in *Pensare Storicamente* (1996).

The Kind of Knowledge Virtue Is: Rational Ecstasy in Plato's *Symposium*

Kendall Sharp

ABSTRACT

At the close of Plato's *Symposium*, Socrates is seen "compelling [Agathon and Aristophanes] to agree that it belongs to the same man to know how to make [*epistasthai poein*] comedy and tragedy, and the man who is a tragedy-maker by *technê* is also a comedy-maker" (223d). This scene evokes Socrates' argument, from *Ion*, that the poets' knowledge is not a *technê* but a divine gift. Two other dialogues, *Protagoras* and *Meno*, also end on the related theme that virtue, although knowledge, cannot be taught by instruction like *technê*-knowledge (*Protagoras*), and comes to people by divine gift (*Meno*). Yet Socrates in *Ion* and *Phaedrus* describes divinely inspired knowledge as a type of *mania*. Two urgent questions thus arise: If not by instruction, then how do humans acquire by divine gift the knowledge that is virtue? Second, if this knowledge comes by divine gift, then why is virtue not a type of madness? In this paper, I argue that by concluding with this scene, Plato associates *Symposium* with these questions, and indicates that he has answered them in the speeches of Socrates and Alcibiades. In these speeches, Plato sets forth a picture about the kind of divinely inspired knowledge virtue is, and about Socrates' role in helping others obtain it by divine gift and become virtuous.

The picture emerges when the two speeches are read in light of our two questions. While virtue is not *technê*-knowledge, Socrates claims another type of knowledge, which he calls "*ta erôtika*" (*Smp.* 177d, 198d). Socrates' speech can be read as answering our two questions by describing this erotic knowledge. This knowledge fits the bill because it comes by divine gift (*Lysis* 204bc), but leaves its recipients in their right minds nevertheless, for it results in part from extensive training in rational discourse (*logoi*) (*Smp.* 210a-d). Alcibiades in his speech makes clear that this training in rational discourse consists in precisely Socrates' characteristic conversational practice. He also displays the non-*technê*, divine aspect of this knowledge in his own experience of it. Not only does he inadvertently echo Socrates' use of metaphors from the mystery religions. Alcibiades' speech also connects Socrates' eulogy of Eros to his model in *Ion* for sharing divine inspiration. In that dialogue, Socrates describes how the poet's divine inspiration is obtained, not through instruction like a *technê*, but during moments of personal contact with one who already possesses the gift (535e-536d). This matches very closely how Alcibiades describes the beneficial influence of Socrates on himself, as turning him to philosophy only when he is in Socrates' presence. When he is not with Socrates, this beneficial influence fades, and Alcibiades' focus shifts back to his more usual political ambitions (216a-b). If Socrates' speech is understood as answering our two questions, then the knowledge that is virtue is erotic knowledge of *to kalon*. At different degrees of initiation, this knowledge comes by divine gift to those who philosophize, but only after the soul is prepared by training in the rational *logoi* of Socrates' conversational practice (210a-e).

The Protreptic Power of Love. *Eros, Care for the Self and Personal Identity in the Symposium*

Annie Larivée

Note: Only the parts of the text in 11 points font will be read at the conference (i.e. part of the intro as well as parts of the section on Aristophanes and ‘Socra-tima’s’ speeches). The paper will be read in English

Plato’s Socrates cares intensely about what others care about. This is not to say that he would care for the same things as his fellow citizens, but rather he is aware of “the importance of what we care about” to borrow a phrase from Frankfurt. <Unlike contemporary specialists of moral psychology, his care for care is not strictly theoretical, it is practical: he sees it as his mission to make his fellow citizens realize that what they intensely care about (sensual pleasures, political power, public honours, wealth) has little importance while they pay no attention whatsoever to what really matters (the self as soul, virtue, intelligence).> In other words, he wishes to provoke, in others, something like a reorientation of care. But can that be done? And if so, how? How can the philosopher, as an expert in the care of the soul, hope to awaken a concern for something that most people do not care about in the least? I believe that in the *Symposium* Plato offers a protreptic strategy based on a universally shared human experience, namely, the experience of love. Why love? Part of the answer is that there is something inherently protreptic about love: when in love, what one previously cared so much about seems not to matter much anymore as the person’s attention becomes intensely focused and turned in a new direction. Such a radical reorientation of one’s attention, priorities and care also has the power to affect the self deeply and to transform it in unexpected ways. In what follows, I will try to describe the role played by *eros* in the strategy for reorienting care found in the *Symposium* and the complex ways in which this dialogue promotes care for the self. We will also see how a particular conception of the self is linked to the use of that specific strategy.

The Prologue: loving Socrates and caring about what really matters

As is often the case in the dialogues, the prologue provides subtle hints of what will later reveal itself as a crucial question of the text. Here, the power of love to reorient care is evoked early in the prologue when Apollodorus refers, twice, to the impact his relation to Socrates has had on his way of life and priorities. Within a couple of days Apollodorus, a relatively recent but extremely devoted follower of Socrates¹, is asked, by two different friends, to share the story of the symposium where Socrates made his famous speech on *eros*. When his friend Glaucon first asks him to recall his memories about the event, Apollodorus replies that he did not attend the symposium (that actually took place a long time ago) and goes on to explain his situation in this antagonistic fashion: “it’s been less than three years that I’ve been Socrates’ companion and made it my job to know exactly what he says and does each day. Before that, I simply drifted aimlessly. Of course, I used to think that what I was doing was important, but in fact I was the most worthless man on earth—as bad as you are this very moment: I used to think philosophy was the last thing a man should do” (172e-173a). In reporting his recent conversation with Glaucon to the second, anonymous friend, he asserts that *philosophia* is the only thing he personally cares about, the only thing that is worthy of any attention in his view. Speaking or hearing about philosophy, he explains, provides him with overwhelming joy, whereas listening to the type of topics that rich business people (such as the friend with whom he is currently speaking!) usually discuss seems absolutely pointless to him and devoid of importance (173c-d).² That declaration clearly echoes Socrates’ famous invitation, in the *Apology* (as well as in

¹ In fact, given Apollodorus’ extreme enthusiasm, ‘devoted’ seems a bit of a weak word. The intensity of his devotion to Socrates suggests that there is some kind of *eros* involved. Also, Apollodorus, who has not attended the banquet himself, has heard the story from Aristodemus who also was, in the past, a fervent follower of Socrates. There is, therefore, something like a chain of *eros* between Socrates and his disciples, his passionate followers learning more about him through the stories told by other passionate disciples. An interesting question, in the context of Diotima’s teaching on immortality, is to wonder how Socrates was able to generate replicas of himself, his followers imitating his behaviour, adopting his values, learning his past speeches and conversations...

² “... my greatest pleasure comes from philosophical conversation, even if I’m only a listener, whether or not I think it will be to my advantage. All other talk, especially the talk of rich businessmen like you, bores me to tears, and I’m sorry for you and your friends because you think your affairs are important when really they’re totally trivial. Perhaps, in your turn, you think I’m a failure, and believe me, I think that what you think is true. But as for all of you, I don’t just *think* you are failures –I know it for a fact.”

the *Alcibiades*, among other dialogues), to care primarily for the soul, *philosophia*, and intelligence, rather than one's wealth or reputation. (In what follows, I will refer to this order of priorities as 'Socrates's hierarchy of care'). These apparently innocent comments from the prologue are significant, for they reveal the correlation between being intensely devoted to and enamoured with Socrates, and starting to care about the right things in life, things that truly matter and deserve attention.³ The speeches on love carefully memorized and later retold by Apollodorus shed light on other aspects of the possible connection between love and care. The first two, in particular, seem to offer a vision of love that is compatible with the Socratic exhortation to care about the self (as soul). However, as we will now see, such a rapprochement is problematic in many ways.

Phaedrus: taking care of oneself in order to be loved

The core idea of Phaedrus' eulogy⁴, as summarized in its conclusion, is simple: Eros is the most powerful force that enables human beings to acquire virtue and *eudaimonia*.⁵ At first glance, Phaedrus' praise, with its emphasis on the role of eros in "living well" (178c5-6) seems in harmony with the Socratic hierarchy of care –an impression made even stronger by the fact that he depreciates the role of kinship, public honor and wealth in this good life (178c6-d1). It is love, he claims, that is the source of the greatest goods in so far as it imparts this "guidance each person needs for his whole life, if he is to live well" (178c5-6, note that the 'guiding love' he has in mind is pederastic). However, the resemblance between the role Phaedrus attributes to love and Socrates' hierarchy of care remains superficial; Phaedrus' account is centered on love's power to trigger an intense concern for oneself, but the form that this concern takes is clearly unsocratic. He in no way suggests that love leads to virtue by inciting the lover or the beloved to care for the state of his soul (there is no mention of the *psuche* in Phaedrus' speech). In the wake of the traditional heroic ideal, he thinks of virtue and *eudaimonia* essentially in terms of actions, and more importantly, actions that are (or could be) *witnessed, seen* by the loved-one.⁶ His understanding of virtue and *eudaimonia* is somehow 'external' as it is focused on the public (or at least, 'visible') performance of fine actions and the achievement of great and beautiful deeds (*megala kai kala erga*, 178d4). Phaedrus holds that love is the source of fine deeds (mostly courageous ones in the context of war) and an obstacle to shameful acts, for a lover would rather die than be seen performing dishonourable acts by his beloved. Thus what love seems to trigger, beyond a care for virtue as such, is a fear of shame and a desire to be admirable (*kalon*) in the beloved's eyes.

Now, needless to say, from a Socratic point of view this emphasis on visibility raises questions. First, one can wonder if *eros* is the principle of a genuine form of individual and political betterment or if it only triggers a concern for the way one *appears* to be.⁷ This problem appears later in the interlude between Aristophanes' and Agathon's speeches when Socrates asks Agathon if it is really the case that he would only be ashamed of doing something disgraceful if it was witnessed by a group of intelligent individuals and would not mind at all if it happened before a crowd of ordinary people (194c).⁸ With this remark Socrates seems to question the idea that the quality of an action somehow depends on the 'audience' that witnesses it. This echoes his well known attack on the care for *doxa*, reputation, and appearances.

Let us note in passing that the value Phaedrus attributes to love-motivated self-sacrifice at the end of his eulogy also raises important questions for my inquiry. Can self-sacrifice be, in certain

³ The prologue also subtly evokes a theme that will be crucial in Diotima's speech, namely the necessity to constantly reactivate one's memories and to repeat and thus recreate what one knew in order to maintain one's identity, 208a. Indeed, Apollodorus twice mentions the fact that he was well exercised (*ouk ameletetos einai* 172a1, *ouk ameletetos echo*, 173c1), having apparently memorized, told and retold Socrates' speech (as well as the other guests').

⁴ Despite the fact that Eryximachus was the one to suggest a eulogy to eros, the idea originates from Phaedrus and since Phaedrus is also presented as learning a speech about love by heart in the *Phaedrus*, we can infer that eros was a topic to which he had given quite a bit of thought. That, coupled with the fact that he is the first to speak, makes his speech important: it is his speech that sets the scene and to which the other guests will react.

⁵ "Love is the most ancient of the gods, the most honored, and the most powerful in helping men gain virtue and blessedness, whether they are alive or have passed away" 180b. Eros' capacity to lead to *eudaimonia* at the level of the polis is mentioned at 178d, e. Although Phaedrus does not explain what this contribution consists in, we can infer that he is thinking of its collective usefulness in the context of war and as a motive for self-sacrifice.

⁶ On the importance of being or not being *seen*, see 178d-e, 178a. Vernant [1991] 105-7, provides insightful explanations on this aspect of Greek culture.

⁷ And if the latter is the case, could this concern for the actions witnessed by the beloved lead, eventually, to a real improvement of the lovers' character?

⁸ "–S:...if you did run into wise men, other than yourself, you'd certainly be ashamed at the thought of doing anything ugly in front of them. Is that what you mean? –A.: That's true, he said. –S.: On the other hand, you wouldn't be ashamed to do something ugly in front of ordinary people. Is that it?"

situations, an appropriate form of care for the self? If so, what does this reveal about the self that is thus cared for? Does this self have to be an immortal *psyche* in order for self-sacrifice to make sense as a form of self-care? Phaedrus evokes the fate of two mythological heroes, Alcestis and Achilles, to show that their love-induced self-sacrifices pleased the gods and earned them special rewards, but he does not show how self-sacrifice is intrinsically valuable or explain how it depends on or relates to immortality. It is, however, a step taken by ‘Socratima’ in their own speech as we will see.⁹

Pausanias: giving in to virtuous lover in order to better one’s soul

With his focus on a type of love that is ‘heavenly’ –i.e. directed at the soul, as opposed to ‘common’ eros, focused on the body (180a-b) –, Pausanias seems to hold a position on eros that is closer to the spirit of Socrates’ hierarchy of care. Pausanias praises Eros as a source of care for the self, i.e. care for the *soul*. This is what the concluding sentence of his speech makes clear: “Heavenly love” is highly valuable for individuals and states as it compels both the lover and the beloved to care for virtue (185b-c).¹⁰ But, again, is this convergence more than superficial?

True, there are significant similarities. According to Pausanias’ account the contribution that eros makes to the care for the self is not dependant on fear of shame or a concern for the way one looks in the eye of the loved-one. As a matter of fact, far from leading the lover to consistently present himself in a favorable light in order to impress the beloved, eros can lead him to behave in a way that would be considered slavish in any other circumstances (183a-b). Pausanias does not attempt to explain how this phenomenon (the power of eros to diminish the lover’s concern for his image, his own integrity or sense of dignity) can be reconciled with his view that love’s value lies in its power to promote care for the self. We will have, again, to wait for Socratima’s speech to learn more about this.

Pausanias’ views seem more compatible with the Socratic conception of care for the soul in that the value he attributes to love is centred on a type of relationship that provides the conditions for a continuous, life-long process of self-improvement, rather than one that consists in episodic displays of heroism. Here, the beneficial effects of love are linked to a process that takes time and this temporal dimension of eros as a form of care is threefold. First, the type of love that is valuable (i.e., soul-focused) requires time as it involves a process of betterment based on a life-long union (181d).

Second, it also requires time since the beloved has to put the lover to the test before he can agree to a relationship (so as to make sure that the lover’s motivation is the beloved’s betterment, 184a). Finally, the priority it assigns to the soul is also a condition that makes the relationship stable over time (183e). Indeed, in terms that are reminiscent of the *Alcibiades*, Pausanias argues that the permanence of the relationship depends on the stability of its object: the love of the *erastes* devoted to the vulgar Aphrodite won’t endure because the object of his love (the body) won’t endure either, whereas the love directed to the beloved’s soul will persist (183e).¹¹ In brief, whereas Phaedrus praised eros for its capacity to inspire heroic gestures that benefit the polis as well as the individual (a claim that still needs to be clarified in cases where self-sacrifice is involved), Pausanias puts the emphasis on the capacity of a certain type of enduring relationship, namely a soul-focused homoeroticism¹² to contribute to the care for the self.¹³

Now, despite these similarities, the compatibility of this account with the Socratic hierarchy of care is only partial. Indeed, while Pausanias’ description clearly states that the heavenly *eromenos* cares about the state of the beloved’s *soul* (his only concern is the contribution the relationship can make to his own improvement), the nature of the *erastes*’ interest is not unambiguous. Pausanias’ explanations concerning the fact that it is perfectly fine for the beloved to give in to the lover’s advances once he has put his motivation to the test (184a) indicates that the *erastes*’ efforts are to be rewarded with sensual pleasure. But if it is really the soul that the heavenly lover is after, why must the outcome of the relationship be sexual? Pausanias explains that the *erastes* cares for the soul in the

⁹ I take the freedom to use that combination name inspired by contemporary ‘power-couples’ such as ‘Brangelina’ to refer to Diotima’s speech as retold by Socrates. Since there are some parts where Socrates obviously makes personal additions to Diotima’s teachings (for ex.: 205e), and since we can also infer that he acts as a filter and recalls only what seems pertinent to him, and finally, since it is his decision to use parts of her teachings as a ‘praise’ for Eros, I think it is more prudent to attribute the authorship of the speech and the ideas contained in it to both of them conjointly.

¹⁰ “Love’s value [i.e. “Heavenly love”] to the city as a whole and to the citizens is immeasurable, for he compels the lover and his loved one alike to make virtue their central concern (*pollen epimeleian anagkazon poieistai pros areten ton te eronta auton autou kai eromenon*).”

¹¹ We find a parallel passage in the *Alcibiades*, at 131c-d.

¹² Contrarily to Phaedrus, he associates that fine type of eros exclusively with homoerotic love, 181d

¹³ This account is more clearly focused on the benefits of love for the individual and even if Pausanias mentions benefits to the *polis*, he does not explain their nature.

sense that he will choose an intelligent *eromenos* (as opposed to an unintelligent one, 181b, d) and will contribute to the improvement of his beloved's soul. However, what the *erastes*, himself, seems to get out of this relationship is *bodily* pleasures. The *eromenos*, then, seem to be the one who genuinely cares for the soul (his own soul) in so far as it is his soul that really benefits from the relationship. All this raises the question: aside from sexual pleasures, what else could the *erastes* get out of the relationship? In what way can it make a contribution to the lover's self-care?¹⁴ Or is he entirely altruistic? Pausanias does not say and we will have, again, to wait for Socratima's speech to get an answer.

In all honesty, Pausanias gives the impression that he is using the Socratic *topos* of the 'care for the soul' as a rhetorical tool enabling older men to persuade beautiful youth to choose someone, who, like himself, cares for the soul in the sense that he is devoted to 'philosophy' instead of choosing an *erastes* who can provide him with financial resources and political influence (183a)... His declaration to the effect that only one type of servitude is acceptable, namely to become the servant of the person we know will make us better in terms of knowledge or virtue also seems to point in that direction (184c, 184d-e). Seen in that light, when addressed to the potential beloved, the Socratic invitation to care for one's intelligence and soul (instead of wealth and honor) could be 'translated' as follows: "I urge you to choose an *erastes* like me, a soul-oriented philosopher, instead of letting yourself be seduced by wealthy and politically powerful lovers!" And in truth, we cannot exclude that Socrates' exhortation to care for the soul can be interpreted in that way, for it is an invitation addressed to youth to look for a mentor, a virtuous educator who 'specializes' in the soul instead of putting themselves in the care of men of power or wealth. The difference is that Socrates does not use this exhortation in order to seduce youths sexually.

There are other aspects of Pausanias' explanations that indicate that his exhortation is more self-interested (ambiguously motivated) than Socrates'. For instance, he declares, apparently unconcerned, that an *eromenos* should not be ashamed if it turns out that the *erastes* to whom he gave his favours ends up not being capable or willing to fulfil his promises. Such a mistake in evaluation, he explains, is nothing that the *eromenos* should feel ashamed of, for it reveals his willingness to entrust himself to someone he thought could make him better (185b). Socrates, for his part, does not take such a risk lightly. In many dialogues, Plato portrays him assisting young people in assessing the 'credentials' of individuals who present themselves as potential mentors or educators.¹⁵ We find an allusion to that vulnerable situation of youths in the *Symposium* when Socrates ironically mocks Alcibiades' conviction that he is able to correctly assess Socrates' value despite his own lack of experience.¹⁶ Instead of encouraging potential *eromenoi* to just take a chance with an *erastes* who seems capable of teaching them virtue, he encourages them to be vigilant and critical, and to realize that in such relationships they are exposing the most precious part of themselves to harm and corruption, namely their soul (*Prot.*, 312c, 313a-b). Pausanias is not nearly as scrupulous. In truth, he seems not to care much about their fate.

Eryximachus: Eros as the principle at the core of therapeutic arts

Although the relevance of Eryximachus' speech for the question that interests me is not immediately evident, it does offer a good occasion to contrast the attempt to reorient care found in the *Symposium* with conversion modes found in other dialogues. At first glance, with his eulogy, Eryximachus seems to invite us to get away from the anthropocentric (not to say 'pederastocentric') perspective of the previous speeches by drawing our attention, instead, to diverse physical phenomena in which measure and harmony are manifestations of the 'Heavenly Eros' described by Pausanias. This invitation to modify our view point involves a radical conversion of our attention as it encourages us to abandon the familiar perspective of personal love (which is something that most people have experienced and care a lot about) to pay attention to an 'erotic' feature shared by diverse physical phenomena (a highly general, not to say universal, viewpoint, the existence of which most people are not aware of). Are we here given an *avant-goût* of the type of 'ascent' referred to in Socratima's speech? I believe it is not the case for several reasons.

First, whereas the type of conversion promoted by Socratima is progressive (the change of perspective is achieved *gradually*, by passing through different stages), Eryximachus seems to invite

¹⁴ This question must be asked about Socrates. What does he get (or hope to get) out of his relationship with Alcibiades for example? Since he refrained from having any sexual contact with him, are we to believe that his attempt to help the youth improve was completely selfless and altruistic?

¹⁵ The prologue of the *Protagoras* is probably the best example.

¹⁶ 219a.

us to abruptly abandon our common understanding of eros. There is no transition between the ordinary and the ‘scientific’ viewpoints. It would therefore perhaps be more appropriate to compare this shift of perspective to the ‘imaginary flight’ (as Pierre Hadot calls this type of spiritual exercise) that Socrates depicts in the *Theaetetus* (173c-177c). The abrupt alteration of one’s ordinary perspective –characteristic of the philosopher engaged in the ‘*homoiosis theoi*’— requires that one stops looking at things from the viewpoint of ordinary practical human interests in order to adopt something like an objective view of phenomena. Given that Eryximachus mentions music and astronomy in his speech, it would also be tempting to see a convergence with the passage of the *Republic* where Socrates identifies the disciplines that can help achieve the conversion of the whole soul required of philosophers (*Rep.* 518c). But in reality, these comparisons are mistaken.

Despite a shift to a certain level of generality, the perspective adopted by Eryximachus remains, in fact, deeply anthropocentric. It is, however indirectly, focused on what human beings typically care about and need. Indeed, the object of his praise and his attention is not really eros as a unique principle of harmony at play in different physical phenomena. What really interests him is the capacity to produce that type of order and harmony in spheres that are crucial to human survival and well-being with the help of arts such as medicine, agriculture, gymnastics, music, and divination. Not only does Eryximachus focus more on the ‘heavenly’ (i.e. measured) character of eros than on what makes it ‘erotic’ in the first place, but he does not even praise Heavenly Eros as a factor of harmony and order as such; rather he praises the arts and experts who know how to generate such an order and who are aware of its importance. The competent physician, for example, has the capacity and responsibility to create the type of eros that leads to health and concord in individual bodies, and to avoid the type of eros that leads to excess, illness, and destruction (Asclepius’ art relied on that capacity as he knew how to create love and concord, 187d-e). Moreover, not only is his eulogy directed at those who can promote heavenly eros in spheres useful to human beings, but the majority of the arts that Eryximachus praises are directed toward the care of the body and not of the soul.>

Aristophanes: an a-therapeutic and a-protreptic conception of love

Aristophanes’ speech is, no doubt, the one that resonates the most with contemporary readers. In fact, the social discourse that helps to shape our contemporary experience of love shares so many traits with the aristophanic narrative that one suspects that Plato’s *Symposium* has, somehow, made a contribution to its production at some point in Western history.¹⁷ The emphasis on love as a search for our ‘soul mate’, the belief that there is someone out there who is ‘the one’, our ‘second half’ that will make us feel ‘whole again’, the supreme importance attributed to the couple as the primordial relationship outside of which the individual remains, somehow, lacking and incomplete are all elements of the contemporary experience of love that bear a striking similarity to Aristophanes’ fanciful story. And, perhaps we should add to this list of common features the fact that, in contrast with the previous speeches, Aristophanes makes no reference (explicit or implicit) to the capacity that love has (or can have) to contribute to one’s improvement.¹⁸

There is, indeed, no mention at all of a connection between eros and care for the self in Aristophanes’ account. Love is portrayed as an experience of intense need and search for a lost half, and perfection as something that belongs (exclusively) to the past. No process of self-improvement or self-care could ever bring peace to the individual anxious to be (however imperfectly) reunited with their lost half. Finding one’s lost half –an event that depends on chance as M. Nussbaum noted¹⁹– does not lead to a betterment of the (previously separated) self, but only brings a (partial) relief by soothing the distress linked to the feeling of deep need and restlessness caused by the traumatic separation. If there is care involved, then, it’s only in the minimal sense that one tries to repair, as well as one can, something that has been deeply broken, to partially heal something like an original wound²⁰. No matter how captivating and powerful Aristophanes’ story is, it does not really constitute a *praise* of eros. His colorful, comical, and moving narrative gives a vivid picture of some of the emotions felt in one’s search for love, but if this description were the only story one could tell about eros, love would appear as something rather miserable and absurd. Not only because of its orientation

¹⁷ In the Renaissance probably (to be researched).

¹⁸ Ch. Taylor [1991], among others, is certainly right to underline the crucial role of personal love for self-discovery and self-expression in contemporary culture, but this is different from self-improvement and self-care.

¹⁹ “The creatures ‘search’ and ‘come together’, but it is plainly not in their power to ensure the happy reunion. It is difficult to accept that something as essential to our good as love is at the same time so much a matter of chance.” Nussbaum [1986] 174.

²⁰ Love attempts to “heal (*iasasthai*) human nature”, 191d.

toward a (irrecoverably) lost perfection, or its conception of the self as a deficient entity whose integrity depends on a (precarious) relationship with another (equally deficient) human being, but also because Aristophanes' story evokes those aspects of love that are potentially asocial (the lovers are so absorbed in one another that they care for nothing else), self-destructive (they let themselves die) and self-impoverishing (it motivates an intense search for a lost half that absorbs time and energy that could be better spent).²¹ Let us not forget that the whole situation is the result of a divine *punishment* according to the story.

That said, what makes the Aristophanic narrative relevant here is precisely the radical incompatibility between the conception of the self implicitly contained in that story and the Socratic ideal of care for the self. Socrates himself ironically –though unambiguously– underlines that incompatibility when he later attacks the Aristophanic conception of love by making the following statement:

Now there is a certain story [...] according to which lovers are those people who seek their other halves. But according to my story, a lover does not seek the half or the whole, unless, my friend, it turns out to be good as well. I say this because people are willing to cut off their own arms and legs if they think they are diseased. I don't think an individual takes joy in what belongs to him personally unless by 'belonging to me' he means 'good' and by 'belonging to another' he means 'bad'. That's because what everyone loves is really nothing other than the good. (205e-206a)²²

Of course, despite Socrates' edifying words, many people seem to 'love' and search the company of someone who is not 'good' to/for them.²³ Aristophanes' fanciful narrative transposes, in striking images, the intense, painful and often self-destructive experience that love too often is – and from an empirical point of view it is probably better equipped than Socratima's to make sense of most people's experience of erotic attachment.²⁴ Whereas Socratima describes eros as it can or could be at its best, Aristophanes shows it as it usually is. Not only does he show it as it is, but the lost-half story has no power to transform that pitiful experience. It does not enrich it, it does not make use of its intensity to bring us somewhere else, and it does not aim to. This story does not make us better and is not trying to. In brief, Aristophane's speech is unapologetically a-therapeutic and a-protreptic. (Unless we suppose that a plain description of this pathetic experience could trigger, in some people, an intense desire to avoid it!)

Another way to shed light on the difference between the two, without jumping ahead, would be to say that Aristophanes' and Socratima's different conceptions of love find their source in a different understanding of the temporal and normative nature of the self. Whereas Aristophanes' self is essentially a-normative and defined by its past (the self is and wishes to be what it once was –no matter what that was), Socratima's self, as we will soon see, is a self in progress, turned toward its future, which is the temporal condition of its own improvement. That self is future-oriented and fundamentally normative, hence the central importance of self-care. It is a 'becoming self' whose process of becoming is based on the capacity to let go of the parts of itself that are not worth keeping and to perpetuate those that are worthy of "intra- or interpersonal propagation". In other words, it does not confuse what it was (what it inherited from its past) with what it 'is' (that is: what it can *become* by reproducing and 'propagating' what is good in itself and by purging what is worthless from itself).

²¹ 191a-b.

²² The only aspect of this story that is remotely linked to a protreptic motion (in the literal sense of the word: 'to turn toward') is its attempt to make sense of one's sexual *orientation*. That said, the story helps to understand why people are sexually 'turned' in a specific direction and makes no attempt to change that direction determined by the past and apparently unchangeable.

²³ To the extent that this story depicts the situation of one half searching for another half, we must suppose that the original unity was in some way differentiated, i.e., composed of two halves at least partially identifiable in their individuality, something like the unity of conjoint twins. The story does not mention the possibility that one of these twins (or both) feels liberated after the separation and that they could have experienced their union as, say, being joined to a gangrenous limb, as Socrates' objection supposes. All that we know is that the original spheres or 'wheels' felt complete while the half-wheels feel incomplete without their lost half and that the wheels originally had powers that even two reunited halves would lack.

²⁴ It is also compatible with the psychoanalytic axiom now largely accepted according to which the erotic tendencies and needs of adults are essentially determined by their past (more precisely by the infant's primary relationship with the mother and other care-givers).

Agathon: elenchos as an erotic 'turn-on' and as a purge

For my purpose, Agathon's eulogy is interesting mainly as an excellent illustration of someone who "commits himself or the care of his soul to words" (*Cratylus*, 440c) and whose soul, therefore, is in need of a purge. This probably motivates Socrates' (however brief) attempt to submit him to an elenctic process. Agathon's speech does however, make a significant –if only negative– contribution to the dialogue in that it helps to shape Socrates' eulogy by providing him with ideas to criticize and beliefs to put straight (beliefs about Eros' beauty, for example, or his divine nature). As such, it is also a good example of the Socratic art of seduction, in which the elenchus plays an important role in humbling the eromenos. In what follows, I will limit myself to Socrates' criticism of these ideas and will not discuss Agathon's eulogy as such, nor the beginning of elenctic purification to which Socrates submits him before evoking Diotima's teachings. >

Socratima: love as a mean of self-propagation. Memes and personal identity

[Note : due to lack of time, the rest of the text is in French, but it will be presented in English at the conference]

Le mouvement protreptique initié par le discours de Socratima est si habile, les idées qui le soutiennent si séduisantes que pour bien percevoir la transition radicale qu'il tente de susciter, il faut d'abord faire l'effort spécial de résister à sa séduction et mettre l'accent sur ce qu'il y a, en lui, d'inouï. Autant l'histoire comico-bizarroïde d'Aristophane mettait en mots et en images des sentiments familiers ressentis dans l'amour, autant les idées et les images apparemment beaucoup plus communes employées par Socratima tentent d'initier un processus « amoureux » menant vers une sphère d'expérience pour le moins inhabituelle. L'idée de conversion est, me semble-t-il, adéquate pour rendre compte de ce passage d'un univers familier à une expérience hors du commun. D'ailleurs, cette puissance et cette intention de conversion sont en quelque sorte symbolisées, dès le départ, par le personnage démonique d'Eros présenté comme jouant le rôle d'intermédiaire, de passeur. Eros est cette force démonique permettant de transiter de la pauvreté à la richesse (203e), du laid et du mauvais au beau et au bon (202b), de l'ignorance au savoir (202a, 204a-b), de la mort à la vie (203e), de la sphère humaine à la sphère divine (202d-e). Autant de transitions qui peuvent être pensées comme des mouvements de conversion, eros étant la force protreptique par excellence.

Pour plus de clarté, il convient de différencier deux passages protreptiques dans les enseignements que Socrate attribue à Diotima. Le premier passage, qui met en jeu une stratégie protreptique « classique », correspond à la partie où il est question des bénéfiques dont eros est la source. Il s'étend de 204d à 209e et je l'appelle le « protreptique long ». Quant au second passage, « le protreptique court », il est constitué par la description condensée que Diotima offre de l'initiation qu'elle décrit comme « le plus haut mystère » à la fin du discours de Socrate entre 210a-et 212b, passage que les interprètes désignent souvent comme « l'ascension vers le Beau ». Le contraste entre les tactiques protreptiques employées dans ces deux passages est frappant.

1- Premier passage protreptique : Eros as a mode of propagation of the self

Je qualifie l'approche protreptique utilisée ici de « classique » car elle repose sur une méthode couramment appliquée ailleurs.²⁵ Cette méthode, simple, consiste à : 1) mettre en lumière, chez le lecteur ou l'auditeur, un désir, un but souhaité, et 2) présenter ensuite ce vers quoi on veut le tourner comme étant moyen de parvenir à ce but préexistant. Dans le passage qui nous intéresse, le but en question est le bonheur, présenté comme « la possession perpétuelle des choses bonnes » (205a). Le fait que Socratima précise que ce but est partagé par « tous les hommes » (205a6, 9) nous informe sur ceux qui sont (en principe) visés par cette première conversion protreptique. En un mot : tous. Tout le monde. Jusqu'ici, rien d'original. Mais ce qui distingue son approche du protreptique classique, c'est qu'elle décide de faire en quelque sorte un pas en amont de ce but universel et de nous présenter, tous, dans la position d'*amoureux* par rapport au désir des choses bonnes. Elle fait valoir, en effet, que l'application du terme 'amour' est arbitrairement limitée à une de ses formes (comme c'est également le cas du terme *poiesis*) et doit être élargi à la sphère entière du désir des choses bonnes (205c-d). « D'une façon générale, tout ce qui est désir des choses bonnes et du bonheur, c'est cela qu'est *Amour*, aussi tout puissant que rusé en toutes choses » (205d). Dans notre poursuite du bonheur, Socratima nous invite donc à nous percevoir comme des amoureux, et à voir cette quête universelle du

²⁵ In the *Euthydemus* for example. See Larivée [2010], 168-9.

bonheur comme étant érotique.²⁶ Un autre trait distinctif par rapport au protreptique classique est qu'elle décide de mettre l'accent sur un aspect précis de cette quête (érotique) du bonheur, à savoir son aspect temporel. Nous souhaitons une possession des bonnes choses qui soit *permanente, perpétuelle* (206a). De manière inhabituelle, c'est sur cet aspect temporel que son levier protreptique viendra s'appuyer.

Le gros de son effort sera ensuite consacré à la deuxième étape protreptique. Celle où il s'agit d'identifier un certain moyen, un certain mode de vie, comme étant *la* façon de parvenir au but visé. Dans le cas du premier passage protreptique, ce moyen n'est pas présenté comme étant le mode de vie philosophique (ce sera le rôle du second passage), mais plus largement comme ce que j'appellerai la « procréation spirituelle ». Cette transition vers la question du *moyen* d'atteindre le but visé est, dans le texte, très claire puisque Socratima pose elle-même, de manière rhétorique, la question de savoir par le biais de quelle activité (*praxis*) particulière impliquant zèle et effort, le but sera atteint (206b1-2). La réponse, apparemment ésotérique (« un enfantement dans la beauté selon le corps et selon l'âme », 206b) met en jeu une analogie entre l'âme et le corps, analogie qui sert souvent de tremplin à la conversion vers le souci de l'âme dans les dialogues de Platon.²⁷ Dépouillée de ses embellissements rhétoriques, l'analogie est simple : tout comme la manière, pour le corps, de se perpétuer est la reproduction, l'âme aussi peut persister par le biais de quelque chose comme une « reproduction spirituelle ». Rappelons ici que l'aspect de notre désir 'amoureux' des bonnes choses (autrement dit, du bonheur) sur lequel Socratima concentre son attention est la permanence, la persistance temporelle. Ce qui se fait jour, à son avis, dans l'amour comme quête de bonheur, c'est le désir de durer, ce désir qu'a tout individu de « persister dans son être » pour parler comme Spinoza. On pourrait dire, en termes socratiques, qu'il s'agit d'un certain souci de soi, un souci qu'a le soi, heureux, de persister. Or suivant les explications de Socratima, pour des mortels, le seul moyen, la seule *praxis*, permettant d'y parvenir est l'activité de procréation. L'âme, comme le corps doit, afin de persister au-delà de la mort individuelle, se reproduire.

On pourra s'étonner, ici, que l'âme ne soit pas présentée comme intrinsèquement immortelle. Bien qu'on puisse être tenté d'y percevoir un signe de l'évolution des positions philosophiques de Platon, j'aurais pour ma part tendance à penser qu'il s'agit là d'une indication du caractère protreptique du passage (et du dialogue en général). L'immortalité (aussi bien spirituelle que physique) n'est pas présentée comme un état de fait, quelque chose de donné, mais est plutôt utilisé par Socratima comme une « carotte » permettant de tourner vers le souci de l'âme. Vous voulez l'immortalité de l'âme comme condition d'un bonheur permanent, semble-t-elle dire? Eh bien dans ce cas vous devrez la gagner en choisissant une *praxis* amoureuse liée à l'âme et menant à une certaine forme de procréation spirituelle.

Seule cette conception égocentrée de l'amour peut expliquer le sacrifice des animaux pour leurs petits, des héros pour leurs aimé(e)s, phénomène qui autrement serait « absurde » (208c). Admète, Achille, ont fait le sacrifice de leur vie non par renoncement à soi, mais par désir de s'assurer l'immortalité (208d). Il n'y rien là d'altruiste, semble-t-elle dire en réponse aux questions soulevées par le discours de Phèdre. Mais la reproduction, physique ou spirituelle, nous permet-elle vraiment d'atteindre l'immortalité, serait-on tenté de lui demander? Elle a prévu nos résistances et y répond dans le passage dense et déconcertant (207d-208b) où elle présente sa vision de ce que les philosophes contemporains appellent le problème de l'« identité personnelle » (c'est-à-dire le problème qui consiste à rendre compte du maintien de l'unité de la personne malgré l'essentielle fluidité du moi, constamment en devenir, physiquement et mentalement). On pourrait formuler l'objection prévenue par Socratima comme suit : l'immortalité de l'individu ne peut vraiment être assurée par la procréation (physique ou spirituelle) dans la mesure où ce qui est créé par la re-production n'est pas le « même » que ce qui l'a créé. Ainsi, dans la re-production issue de l'amour, physique ou spirituel, il y a certainement quelque chose qui vient *de* soi, mais pas la persistance *du* soi comme tel. Et si tel est le cas, ni la reproduction, ni la création spirituelle sous le signe d'eros ne permettent au soi comme tel d'atteindre l'immortalité. Ni la procréation, ni la création de belles œuvres ne permettrait donc de satisfaire le souci de soi en ce sens-là. Le souci, qu'a le soi, heureux, de durer.

Pour surmonter cette difficulté, Socratima adopte la stratégie insolite consistant à dissocier la question de l'identité personnelle de celle de la *mêmeté*. Faisant appel à nos croyances ordinaires concernant l'individu, elle nous force à admettre que nous admettons spontanément l'existence *d'une*

²⁶ Elle "traduit" aussi la hiérarchie socratique du souci en terme d'amour lorsqu'elle critique l'aspect limité de l'application du concept d'amour en disant: "... those who pursue this along any of its many other ways –through making money, or through the love or sports, or through philosophy—we don't say that these people are in love, and we don't call them lovers" (sous-entendu : alors qu'en fait, on le devrait), 205d.

²⁷ See for ex. Larivée [2007].

personne particulière et identifiable (la réponse au ‘qui est-ce?’) malgré les constants changements que cette personne subit à divers égards. Malgré le fait, donc, qu’elle n’est jamais tout à fait la *même*, nous n’avons néanmoins aucune hésitation à désigner une personne donnée comme étant cette personne particulière, X.

La partie de ses explications qui ont les conséquences les plus importantes pour mon sujet concernent l’âme. Car Socratima fait valoir qu’au niveau de l’âme, la persistance de la personne dépend en fait du choix qu’elle fait de conserver, de renouveler par la mémoire et l’exercice, tel ou tel trait de son caractère, telle ou telle opinion, tel ou tel désir, telle ou telle connaissance (207e). Continuer d’exister en tant que personne, semble dire Socratima, repose sur un constant processus de sélection, *de reproduction de soi par soi*. De sorte que le processus de reproduction spirituelle ou certains éléments du soi pérennisés dans des supports extérieurs au soi qui seront ensuite assimilés par d’autres (par le biais d’œuvres poétiques, éducatives, ou législatives par exemple) ne serait pas fondamentalement différent de ce qui se produit constamment à l’intérieur de la personne.

Si l’on emprunte le vocabulaire employé par Irwin, on pourrait dire que Socratima tente de nous convaincre que la persistance de la personne par le biais d’une ‘interpersonal propagation’ (sous forme spirituelle et psychique) ne diffère pas fondamentalement de l’‘intrapersonal propagation’ sur laquelle repose notre identité personnelle, identité que nous ne questionnons pas.²⁸ Au niveau interne à l’âme, la persistance du soi prend la forme d’une self-propagation qui repose sur la décision de conserver certains traits et éléments présents de la personne, en vue de les maintenir dans le futur. Or, la procréation spirituelle repose sur la même dynamique de sélection et de préservation, elle est une propagation du soi sur un support extérieur. En fait, on pourrait même aller jusqu’à dire que ce que R. Dawkins a baptisé « meme »²⁹ (à savoir « an idea, behavior, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture »)³⁰ est aussi le support de l’identité personne telle que Socratima suggère que nous la comprenions. Si l’on cherchait à prouver, avec Ch. Gill, que le soi ou la personne, dans l’antiquité grecque classique, ne repose pas, contrairement à l’époque moderne, sur la capacité d’adopter la perspective de la première personne (ce qu’on pourrait appeler avec Ricoeur l’ipséité), on aurait trouvé de bons arguments dans ce passage du *Banquet*!³¹ Mais quelles sont les conséquences de ce passage pour la question du soin de l’âme ?

D’abord, avec ces explications sur la procréation de l’âme, Socratima ouvre la possibilité pour l’éraсте d’être, lui aussi, motivé par son souci de l’âme (alors que chez Pausanias, il ne retirait apparemment rien d’autre qu’une satisfaction sensuelle).³² Le soin qu’il prodigue à l’éromène est bénéfique non seulement à l’âme de l’éromène, qui s’en trouve améliorée, mais également à sa propre âme. Une certaine forme de souci de l’âme comme souci de soi trouve ici sa satisfaction par le biais de la procréation spirituelle. Et si l’on applique ces idées à la relation entre Socrate et Alcibiade telle que décrite par Alcibiade à la fin du *Banquet* par exemple, on obtient une réponse à la question de savoir ce que cherchait Socrate dans sa relation chaste avec le jeune homme politiquement ambitieux. On peut penser qu’il cherchait en quelque sorte à s’auto-propager en semant, dans l’âme d’Alcibiade, ce qui, en lui-même, lui semblait essentiel et digne d’immortalité: ses vertus, son amour de la philosophie. À plus forte raison, c’est bien entendu aussi ce qu’a fait Platon en écrivant le *Banquet* que l’on pourrait peut-être, tout entier, percevoir comme un « meme ».

Évidemment, on pourrait reprocher à la vision de l’amour présentée par Socratima d’être, plus encore que celle d’Aristophane, ego-centrée (et instrumentale). Car dans l’amour, ce qui serait en jeu serait la capacité du soi d’assurer sa permanence par la ‘propagation’ d’éléments (du soi) qui semblent dignes d’être transmis. Ce n’est sans doute pas faux. Mais à mon avis, la meilleure manière de comprendre le caractère auto-centré de la conception de l’amour présentée par Socratima est d’en percevoir la puissance protreptique. Très habilement, Platon exploite ici le souci qu’a tout soi de persister dans son être pour amorcer une conversion de l’attention vers une sphère d’intérêt beaucoup plus générale et impersonnelle : belles créations poétiques, éducation, belles institutions politique ou législatives, par exemple.

²⁸ Irwin [1995], 306-11.

²⁹ Dawkins [1989], 192. "We need a name for the new replicator, a noun that conveys the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of *imitation*. 'Mimeme' comes from a suitable Greek root, but I want a monosyllable that sounds a bit like 'gene'. I hope my classicist friends will forgive me if I abbreviate mimeme to *meme*. If it is any consolation, it could alternatively be thought of as being related to 'memory', or to the French word *même*."

³⁰ Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

³¹ Gill [2006] 330-34.

³² Rappelons que le discours de Pausanias ne permettait pas de comprendre ce qui motive l’éraсте dans une perspective socratique du souci de l’âme. Car si le discours de Pausanias permet de voir comment le processus éducatif de la relation pédérastique bénéficie clairement à l’âme de l’éromène, on ne comprend pas l’avantage que l’éraсте pourrait en retirer (autre que sensuel).

Avant de clore mon analyse du protreptique long, on pourrait me reprocher d'avoir présenté le discours de Socratima comme un discours de conversion vers le souci de l'âme alors qu'en fait, « engendrer dans le beau » peut-être accompli aussi bien selon le corps que l'âme. Il est en effet déclaré que certains sont plus féconds selon le corps, d'autres selon l'âme. Il semble donc que Socratima reconnaisse l'existence de deux types de personnes différents sans tenter de convertir les premiers au mode d'accomplissement des seconds. Cela serait mal comprendre le public visé par Platon dans ses œuvres protreptiques. Ceux qu'il vise à gagner sont en fait ceux dont le désir pourrait aller aussi bien d'un côté que de l'autre, ceux qui ont un certain souci pour l'âme, mais qui sont également fortement attirés par d'autres « amours », tel Alcibiade.³³

Dans le passage qui nous intéresse, plutôt que de produire un argument sophistiqué pour prouver cette valeur supérieure, Socratima s'appuie tout bonnement sur une situation empirique connue de tous : le fait que des honneurs publics sont constamment accordés aux créations issues de l'âme alors que personne n'est publiquement honoré pour avoir donné naissance à un enfant (209e). Elle joue donc ici habilement sur un jugement de valeur implicite et préexistant chez ses auditeurs pour encourager une conversion du souci. De manière crue, sa conversion repose sur la logique protreptique suivante :

- l'amour a pour objet le corps ou l'âme,
- l'amour du corps aspire à la reproduction physique, l'amour de l'âme à des productions spirituelles,
- les créations spirituelles se voient accorder des honneurs publics, ce qui n'est pas le cas des rejets physiques,
- tous admettent donc que l'amour de l'âme a plus de valeur que l'amour du (ou des) corps.

Si vous êtes minimalement cohérent, semble-t-elle ainsi suggérer, vous vous souciez dans vos amours plus de l'âme que du corps puisque vous accordez *en fait* plus de valeur aux productions de l'âme qu'à celles du corps.

2- Second passage protreptique (court), l' « ascension vers le Beau »

Quant au levier protreptique qui permettrait de passer à la sphère philosophique du Beau en soi, il est, de manière surprenante, beaucoup moins sophistiqué que le précédent.

Avant d'aller plus loin, il faut distinguer l'*effet* protreptique que peut avoir ce court passage de son *sujet* (ou *contenu*) protreptique. Le passage a un contenu protreptique dans la mesure où il décrit, verbalement et de manière extérieure, un processus de conversion, le passage progressif d'une expérience commune (personnelle) de l'amour à une sorte d'érotique philosophique (impersonnelle) à première vue étrange. Ce processus décrit comme une initiation, Diotime l'a visiblement expérimenté elle-même et elle déclare que Socrate pourrait peut-être également le vivre (210a). Or, cette description d'un processus protreptique que Diotime, seule, a vécu, peut également avoir un certain *effet* protreptique sur le lecteur ou l'auditeur.³⁴ Le récit est donc protreptique non seulement par son contenu (par le fait qu'il offre le portrait d'une conversion), mais aussi par son effet possible au sens où il peut susciter le désir du lecteur ou de l'auditeur face à une telle expérience, décrite comme incroyablement satisfaisante. Les deux aspects protreptiques sont donc liés, mais ils ne doivent pas être confondus.³⁵ Dans un premier temps, on se tourne vers cette expérience (décrite comme pouvant « tourner » notre âme), en un second temps, notre âme est tournée par cette expérience –en admettant que nous l'accomplissons. Car rien ne garantit que celui qui est séduit par ce récit platonicien sera ensuite en mesure de passer à travers les stades de cette expérience (pas même Socrate suivant Diotime). Il faut donc soigneusement différencier ces deux mouvements de conversion, conversion vers, conversion par.

Cette distinction permet d'ailleurs d'évoquer un aspect crucial de la description de l' « ascension vers le Beau » trop souvent passé sous silence : son double caractère à la fois sublime et décevant, édifiant et creux. En effet une fois la première séduction passée, on en vient à se demander quelle forme concrète peut bien prendre une telle 'vision' du Beau en soi et comment elle peut créer l'intense satisfaction que Diotime lui associe. La description de cette conversion du regard ou du souci par rapport au beau est séduisante, attrayante et en cela, protreptique, mais en l'absence

³³ Larivée [2012], 20-24

³⁴ Qu'il s'agisse de Socrate, qui avoue avoir été « persuadé », des participants du banquet où Socrate rapporte le récit, et de l'ami d'Apollodore qui écoute la narration du discours.

³⁵ On peut être convaincu de la valeur et du caractère désirable de cette érotique philosophique à la lecture du passage (ou l'audition du récit), mais cette expérience de conversion vers la philosophie comme activité ou mode de vie est différente de la conversion du regard qui se produit lors de l' « ascension vers le Beau » décrite par Diotime.

d'expérience réelle, elle reste purement verbale. On apprend, par le témoignage d'autrui, qu'une telle expérience a le pouvoir de faire que « la vie vaut d'être vécue » (211d), mais en quoi consiste cette expérience exactement? Comment la reproduire ?

En fait, cet espace creux entre la conversion *vers* et la conversion *par* –pour le lecteur ou l'auditeur— est en quelque sorte comblé par une condition souvent négligée. À savoir qu'un *guide* semble nécessaire (ou du moins hautement souhaitable) pour parvenir à cette expérience. En effet, non seulement la transition érotique prend du temps, elle est graduelle et nécessite le passage à travers plusieurs étapes, mais Diotime mentionne à plusieurs reprises que cette expérience se fait à l'aide d'un accompagnateur initié. De sorte qu'entre l'enthousiasme créé par la description de l'expérience de conversion et la déception issue du caractère purement verbal du récit, il y a un espace d'action ouvert pour l'auditeur ou le lecteur. Avec l'allusion à la nécessité d'un guide, une condition est posée, une tâche concrète est proposée : se mettre à la recherche du guide compétent. Après seulement, sous la tutelle de ce guide, la vraie conversion érotique, la vraie expérience pourra avoir lieu. <Signalons ici au passage qu'il y a ici une modification de la relation pédérastique traditionnelle car l'éraсте n'est pas le guide (ou en tout cas pas le guide premier). L'éraсте, dans son rapport à l'éromène, puis aux éromènes, est *guidé* par quelqu'un d'autre, un initiateur.³⁶ Ce guide facilite et encourage une conversion de l'attention de l'éraсте qui passe graduellement de la contemplation de diverses manifestations du beau vers le Beau lui-même, et ce, par le biais du souci amoureux. Au terme de la conversion du regard, l'éraсте est toutefois seul, l'amour n'implique plus sur un rapport de personne à personne.>

À être complété et révisé... This is a work in Progress.

Selective bibliography

- BENARDETE, S. [2001] *Plato's Symposium*, U of Chicago Press.
- BRUNSCHWIG, J. [1963] *Correspondance: sur Amélès et Méléte+, *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, no2, avril-juin, 267-268.
- DAWKINS, R. [1989] *The Selfish Gene* (2 ed.), Oxford University Press,
- DOVER, K.J. [1978] *Greek Homosexuality*, Cambridge Mass., Harvard U Press, 1989.
- FRANKFURT, H. [1988] *The Importance of What We Care About*, Cambridge U Press.
- GERSON, L. [2003] *Knowing Persons. A Study in Plato*, Oxford U. Press.
- GILL, Ch. [2006] *The Structured Self in Hellenistic and Roman Thought*, Oxford U Press.
- HADOT, P. [1993] *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*, Albin Michel, Paris, 2002.
- HUNTER, R. [2004] *Plato's Symposium* (Oxford Approaches to Classical Literature). Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 2004
- IRWIN, T. [1995] *Plato's Ethics*, Oxford U Press.
- LARIVÉE, A. [2010] "The Philebus, a Protreptic?" *Plato's Philebus. Selected Papers from the 8th Symposium Platonicum*, Akademia Verlag, 163-71.
- _____. [2012] "Eros Tyrannos: Alcibiades as the Model of the Tyrant in Book IX of the *Republic*," *IJPT* 6, 1-26.
- LUDWIG, P.W. [2002] *Eros and Polis. Desire and Community in Greek Political Theory*, Cambridge, Cambridge U. Press.
- NUSSBAUM, M. [1986] *The Fragility of Goodness*, Cambridge U. Press, Updated Edition, 2001.
- PARFIT, D. [1984] *Reasons and Persons*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- PERRY, J., [1978] *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*, Indianapolis.
- _____, [2002] *Identity, Personal Identity, and the Self*, Indianapolis/Cambridge, Hackett Publ. Company.
- _____, [2008] (ed.) *Personal Identity*, Berkley-Los Angeles, U of California Press.

³⁶ Il est tentant, ici, de faire un rapprochement avec l'Alcibiade où Socrate se présente à Alcibiade comme étant sous la tutelle d'un dieu qui le guide, XXX.

- PLATO [1997] *The Symposium*. Trans. by A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff in *Plato Complete Works*, J. H. Cooper, D. Hutchinson (ed.) Hackett. Pub.
- PRICE, A.W. [2004] *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, Oxford U Press.
- RICOEUR, P. [1990] *Soi-même comme un autre*, Paris, Seuil.
- TAYLOR, Ch. [1991] *The Malaise of Modernity*, Toronto, House of Anansi Press.
- VERNANT, J.-P. [1959] *Aspects mythiques de la mémoire en Grèce+, *Journal de Psychologie*, 1-30.
- _____, [1991] "Façons grecques d'être soi," *Les Grecs, les Romains et nous*, R.-P. Droit (ed), Le Monde Éditions, Paris, 103-13.
- _____, [1998] *Le fleuve Amélès@ et la *mélète thanatou+, *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs*, Paris, 137-152.
- VLASTOS, G. [1973] "The Individual as an Object of Love in Plato," *Platonic Studies*, Princeton U. Press.
- WARNER, M. [1979] "Love, Self, and Plato's *Symposium*," *Philosophical Quarterly* 29, 329-39.
- WHITING, J. [1986], "Friends and Future Selves," *Philosophical Review* 95, 547-80.
- WILLIAMS, B. [1973], *Problems of the Self*, Cambridge U. Press, 1999.

Diotime contre Aristote : qu'est-ce qui fait l'identité à soi du vivant?

Alexis Pinchard

Intro

Ainsi que le montre la fin du *Cratyle*, les Formes intelligibles, si toutefois il y en a, disposent évidemment d'une parfaite identité à soi sous tout rapport¹. Il n'y a pas d'obstacle psychologique qui gêne la reconnaissance de cette évidence. C'est le sens même de la position des Formes intelligibles, le sens de leur être : elles sont censées rendre la science possible en tant que celle-ci constitue un savoir lui-même caractérisé par la stabilité et portant sur une réalité, sur un être au sens plein du terme, car du néant il n'y a qu'ignorance. S'il faut admettre l'existence réelle des Formes intelligibles, c'est parce qu'elles seules disposent, par définition, d'une identité à soi sous tout rapport et pour toujours, nécessaire à tout objet d'une science digne de ce nom. L'Identité elle-même est une Forme, un grand genre de l'être auquel participe tous les autres genres (*Sophiste*, 254d-e : « Chacun [des genres de l'être que sont l'Être, le Mouvement et le Repos] est autre que les deux qui restent et même que soi »). D'ailleurs les Formes intelligibles sont tellement identiques à elles-mêmes qu'elle ne peuvent être la forme de rien sinon d'elles-mêmes. Elles n'accueillent pas l'altérité de la matière en elle. Elles ne façonnent rien directement. Elles ne sont pas réellement impliquées dans ce dont, par imitation, elles sont le principe. Elles sont seulement en elles-mêmes, et donc séparées de tout le reste. La « Beau divin », en particulier, est selon Diotime « éternellement joint à l'unicité de sa forme » (*monoeides*, *Banquet*, 210e ; repris en 211e). Dans l'éternité, où tout est simultanément, la question de l'identité numérique de l'essence (*ousia*) — c'est le même Beau que contemplent tous ceux qui ont été initiés à Eros jusqu'au bout — et la question de son identité à soi comme permanence se confondent² : faute de parties internes dans l'essence, la moindre modification supposerait un éclatement radical et une suppression de l'identité numérique. Réciproquement l'unité numérique se traduit nécessairement par une parfaite conservation de toutes les déterminations.

Mais y a-t-il des Formes intelligibles ? Existent-elles comme on les décrit ? Peut-on légitimement poser le type de réalité ainsi défini ? Bref sont-elles ? Voilà qui n'est pas évident pour la *doxa*. C'est un songe de philosophe. Si on pense ces Formes pour en manifester les déterminations et l'entrelac mutuel, leur réalité devient une évidence, mais par définition la *doxa* ne pense pas. Sur ce point, il faudra donc aller contre les apparences communes. Il faudra faire un pari sur l'invisible. Le philosophe devra surmonter en lui la répugnance naturelle de la *doxa* pour admettre l'existence de ces Formes.

Inversement, des vivants sensibles sont évidemment donnés à notre perception. Tout le monde s'accorde là-dessus. Le fait de leur existence n'est pas contesté, même par le philosophe, bien qu'il se demande en retour ce qu'exister veut dire dans ce cas. Mais qu'en est-il de leur identité individuelle ? C'est là que le doute est permis, et même requis. Contrairement à l'intelligible qui réclame une affirmation sur le plan de l'existence, le sensible, lui, réclame au vrai philosophe une retenue concernant le plan de l'identité à soi, même si l'usage de la langue commune, avec ses noms, incite à

¹ Cf. Platon, *Cratyle*, 439b-440d, trad. Catherine Dalimier modifiée : « — Socr. : Examine en effet, admirable Cratyle, ce songe que je fais souvent. Affirmons-nous, oui ou non, que le bon en soi existe, et de même pour chacun des êtres pris individuellement ? — Cratyle : À mon avis, Socrate, ils existent. — Eh bien examinons cet en soi. Il ne s'agit pas de savoir si, lorsqu'un visage ou quelque chose de ce genre est beau, tout cela semble aussi s'écouler, mais il s'agit du beau en soi : n'est-il pas toujours tel qu'il est ? — Nécessairement. — [...] S'il est toujours dans le même état et toujours identique à lui-même, comment pourrait-il changer ou se mouvoir, sans s'écarter en rien de sa forme (*idea*) ? [...] En va-t-il ainsi (ce qui connaît et ce qui est connu existe toujours, autrement dit s'il existe un beau en soi et tout le reste) ou de la première façon, comme le prétendent les héraclitéens et tant d'autres ? Sujet d'étude difficile, je le crains ! [...] En conclusion, Cratyle, peut-être qu'il en est ainsi, mais peut-être pas. Il faut donc examiner la question avec vaillance et bien à fond, sans t'en laisser accroire — tu es encore jeune et c'est le bel âge pour le faire — et si tu as trouvé après cet examen, tu devras me le communiquer. » Socrate, face à Cratyle, n'affiche ici aucune certitude concernant la position d'essences séparées ; la question réclame encore un examen dialectique auquel il encourage son jeune interlocuteur. En revanche, la nécessité de l'immutabilité de ces êtres est clairement établie. Cette immutabilité, impliquant une complète identité à soi, est la condition pour qu'ils soient intelligibles, puisque de toute façon ils ne sauraient être visibles, et donc connaissables. Sans cela la position d'essence séparées pour chaque prédicat possible ne permettrait pas de sauver la possibilité de la connaissance en générale, compromise par le caractère fluant du sensible. On retrouve l'insistance sur l'identité à soi de la Forme intelligible en *République* V, 479a : le beau en soi, dès lors qu'on en reconnaît l'existence, garde « une forme (*idéa*) qui se tient toujours dans le même état sous les mêmes rapports (*ἀεὶ μὲν κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ὁσαύτως ἔχουσαν*). » Le pluriel « sous les mêmes rapports », implicitement opposé à « sous certains rapports », indique que tous les aspects de la forme sont conservés. Il n'y a pas, au sein de l'essence, de partage entre un fond qui demeure et une surface qualitative variable.

² Cf. Plaul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, Paris, 1990, p. 140-141.

dépasser la mesure. Il y a une chiasme. Dans le cas du sensible, le philosophe devra surmonter la tendance affirmative de la *doxa*, sans toutefois la renverser complètement. Accorder l'identité plénière aux vivants sensibles, ce serait encore donner trop d'exactitude au sensible. Identité et altérité n'ont pas exactement le même sens dans le sensible et dans l'intelligible. De la même manière, quand le philosophe a admis l'existence des Formes intelligibles, il savait que cette existence ne pouvait signifier exactement la même chose que pour le sensible qui l'imite imparfaitement. La différence entre le mode d'être du sensible et celui de l'intelligible se joue à la fois sur la relation de l'étant à ses propres déterminations et sur sa position nue.

Enfin, qu'en est-il de l'âme ? En quel sens, et à quel degré reste-t-elle identique à elle-même, elle qui est intermédiaire entre le sensible et l'intelligible ? Pour produire des jugements d'identité à propos du sensible comme à propos de l'intelligible, ne faut-il pas que sa manière d'être identique soit ni tout à fait étrangère au sensible ni tout à fait étrangère à l'intelligible ? Mais le fait que toutes les manières d'être identiques ne soient pas identiques entre elles, n'est-ce pas contradictoire ? L'identité n'exclut-elle pas par nature les degrés et les approximations ?

En tout cas, c'est vers un tel renversement de la *doxa* que nous oriente le texte suivant, extrait du discours de Diotime dans le *Banquet* :

Εἰ τοίνυν, ἔφη, πιστεύεις ἐκείνου εἶναι φύσει τὸν ἔρωτα, οὐ πολλάκις ὠμολογήκαμεν, μὴ θαύμαζε. ἐνταῦθα γὰρ τὸν αὐτὸν ἐκείνῳ λόγον ἢ θνητῇ φύσει ζητεῖ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν ἀεὶ τε εἶναι καὶ ἀθάνατος. δύναται δὲ ταύτη μόνον, τῇ γενέσει, ὅτι ἀεὶ καταλείπει ἕτερον νέον ἀντὶ τοῦ παλαιοῦ, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐν ᾧ ἔν ἑκάστον τῶν ζώων ζῆν καλεῖται καὶ εἶναι τὸ αὐτό – οἷον ἐκ παιδαρίου ὁ αὐτὸς λέγεται ἕως ἂν πρεσβύτης γένηται· οὗτος μέντοι οὐδέποτε τὰ αὐτὰ ἔχων ἐν αὐτῷ ὅμως ὁ αὐτὸς καλεῖται, ἀλλὰ νέος ἀεὶ γιγνόμενος, τὰ δὲ ἀπολλύς, καὶ κατὰ τὰς τρίχας καὶ σάρκα καὶ ὀστά καὶ αἷμα καὶ σύμπαν τὸ σῶμα. καὶ μὴ ὅτι κατὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀλλὰ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν οἱ τρόποι, τὰ ἦθη, δόξαι, ἐπιθυμίαι, ἡδοναί, λύπαι, φόβοι, τούτων ἕκαστα οὐδέποτε τὰ αὐτὰ πάρεστιν ἐκάστῳ, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν γίνονται, τὰ δὲ ἀπόλλυται. πολὺ δὲ τούτων ἀτοπώτερον ἔτι, ὅτι καὶ αἱ ἐπιστήμαι μὴ ὅτι αἱ μὲν γίνονται, αἱ δὲ ἀπόλλυνται ἡμῖν, καὶ οὐδέποτε οἱ αὐτοὶ ἐσμεν οὐδὲ κατὰ τὰς ἐπιστήμας, ἀλλὰ καὶ μία ἐκάστη τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ταυτὸν πάσχει. ὃ γὰρ καλεῖται μελετᾶν, ὡς ἐξιούσης ἐστὶ τῆς ἐπιστήμης· λήθη γὰρ ἐπιστήμης ἕξοδος, μελέτη δὲ πάλιν καινὴν ἐμποιοῦσα ἀντὶ τῆς ἀπιούσης μνήμην σφάζει τὴν ἐπιστήμην, ὥστε τὴν αὐτὴν δοκεῖν εἶναι. τούτῳ γὰρ τῷ τρόπῳ πᾶν τὸ θνητὸν σφάζεται, οὐ τῷ παντάπασιν τὸ αὐτὸ ἀεὶ εἶναι ὥσπερ τὸ θεῖον, ἀλλὰ τῷ τὸ ἀπὸν καὶ παλαιούμενον ἕτερον νέον ἐγκαταλείπει οἷον αὐτὸ ἦν. ταύτη τῇ μηχανῇ, ᾧ Σώκρατες, ἔφη, θνητὸν ἀθανασίας μετέχει, καὶ σῶμα καὶ τᾶλλα πάντα· ἀθάνατον δὲ ἄλλη. μὴ οὖν θαύμαζε εἰ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἀποβλάστημα φύσει πᾶν τιμᾷ· ἀθανασίας γὰρ χάριν παντὶ αὕτη ἢ σπουδὴ καὶ ὁ ἔρωσ ἔπεται.

Or donc, dit-elle, si tu es bien convaincu que l'objet de l'amour est par nature celui que nous disons et sur lequel, à plusieurs reprises, nous nous sommes mis d'accord, il n'y a pas là (le zèle déployé par tous les vivants pour se reproduire et conserver leur progéniture) de quoi s'émerveiller ! Car dans le cas présent le raisonnement sera le même que dans l'autre : la nature mortelle cherche, dans la mesure de ses possibilités, à être toujours et à être immortelle ; or le seul moyen dont elle dispose pour cela, c'est le processus de naissance, en tant que perpétuellement à la place de l'ancien elle laisse quelque chose d'autre, qui est tout nouveau. À preuve cela même qu'on appelle la vie individuelle de chaque vivant et son identité à soi, c'est-à-dire le fait que depuis sa jeunesse jusqu'au temps où il sera devenu vieux, on dit qu'il est le même ; oui, en vérité, ce [vivant] qui n'a jamais en lui les mêmes choses, on l'appelle pourtant le même ! alors qu'au contraire perpétuellement, mais non sans certaines pertes, il se renouvelle dans ses cheveux, dans sa chair, dans ses os, dans son sang, bref dans son corps tout entier.

En outre, ce n'est pas vrai seulement du corps, mais aussi, en ce qui concerne l'âme, de nos dispositions, de notre caractère, des opinions, penchants, des plaisirs, des peines, des craintes ; car en chaque individu rien de tout cela ne se présente identiquement : il y en a au contraire qui naissent et d'autres qui se perdent. Ce qu'il y a encore de beaucoup plus déroutant que tout cela, c'est ce qui se passe pour les connaissances. Non seulement il y en a qui naissent en nous et d'autres qui se perdent, si bien que pour ce qui est de nos connaissances nous ne sommes non plus jamais les mêmes ; mais en outre chaque connaissance individuelle a le même sort. Car ce que l'on appelle «étudier» suppose que la connaissance puisse nous quitter ; l'oubli est en effet le départ d'une connaissance, tandis qu'en revanche l'étude, créant en nous un souvenir tout neuf à la place de celui qui se retire, sauve la connaissance et fait qu'elle semble être la même.

C'est, vois-tu, de cette façon que se sauvegarde tout ce qui est mortel : non pas en étant à jamais totalement identique comme l'est le divin, mais en faisant que ce qui se retire, et que son

ancienneté a ruiné, laisse après soi autre chose de nouveau, pareil à ce qui était. Voilà, dit-elle, par quel artifice, dans son corps comme dans tout le reste, ce qui est mortel, Socrate, participe à l'immortalité ; pour ce qui est immortel, c'est d'une autre manière. Par conséquent tu n'as pas à t'émerveiller de ce que tout [vivant] fasse naturellement cas de ce qui est une repousse de lui-même ; c'est en vue de l'immortalité que sont inséparables de chacun ce zèle et cet amour (Platon, *Banquet*, trad. Robin modifiée).

Ce texte ne se contente pas d'énoncer dogmatiquement ce qu'il en est de l'identité, ou plutôt du manque d'identité, des vivants sensibles. Il pose lui-même un certain nombre de difficultés au lecteur attentif.

I/ L'identité du corps vivant comme problème

Diotime se démarque ici du discours entièrement mythique d'Aristophane notamment en ce que, ayant précédemment prouvé que l'amour est, par nature, désir d'immortalité, elle peut rétablir une connexion nécessaire entre amour et procréation. La sexualité génitale n'est plus un accident de l'amour. La perpétuation de toutes les espèces vivantes est l'expression et l'effet d'un même désir d'immortalité. L'amour ne vise pas à posséder autrui mais un avenir où quelque chose de soi, fût-ce le déni de soi, demeure pour que demeure aussi la possession du beau. Dans l'autre comme partenaire sexuel, c'est encore soi que l'on cherche, mais un soi qu'on n'est pas encore et qu'on ne sera peut-être jamais. Davantage, l'articulation entre Eros et procréation, loin de se limiter à une philosophie de la nature cherchant à expliquer les comportements des êtres vivants à l'égard de leur partenaire sexuel ou de leur progéniture, va prendre une véritable dimension ontologique car le désir d'immortalité va être intériorisé par Diotime au sein de chaque vivant individuel en tant qu'il est en relation avec lui-même. C'est tout individu mortel, en lui-même, indépendamment du comportement qu'il peut adopter envers d'autres individus, qui se révèle durer par une perpétuelle procréation interne. Son être même doit être interprété à partir de l'hypothèse qui fait d'Eros une puissance oeuvrant à la cosmicité du cosmos. Eros constitue le fil d'Ariane qui peut nous guider dans le labyrinthe du demi-être et des imperfections énigmatiques propres au sensible³. Mais, du même coup, qu'en est-il de l'identité à soi du vivant ? S'il y a procréation interne, il doit aussi y avoir alterité numérique *interne* ne se limitant pas à une simple altération qualitative, au point que l'application même de la notion d'intériorité devient ici problématique. N'est-ce pas par un abus de langage que l'on parle d'individu à propos du vivant en général, et aussi à propos des corps et des âmes ? Et pourtant comment peut-on vivre, et donc être mortel, si l'on ne fait pas positivement un avec soi-même ? En quoi le vivant se distingue-t-il de la matière inerte s'il n'est pas habité par *une* vie ? Davantage, en quoi pourrait-on encore affirmer que l'amour pousse à s'immortaliser si ce qui naît de cet amour n'a rien à voir avec ce qui, précisément, cherchait à s'immortaliser en donnant naissance ? La seule ressemblance extérieure est-elle suffisante ? Que faut-il à cette ressemblance pour que, à l'avenir, elle fasse signe vers celui qui a disparu ? Comment le nouveau vivant pourra-t-il être le *séma* de l'ancien — marquant définitivement sa mort comme le fait un tombeau — à défaut de le prolonger positivement ?

L'analogie qu'établit Diotime entre l'individu et l'espèce a en fait des effets contraires par rapport à notre opinion ordinaire. Au niveau de l'espèce, remarquer que les enfants sont le résultat du désir d'immortalité des parents a plutôt tendance à rétablir une continuité entre les parents et les enfants ; en revanche, au niveau de l'individu, affirmer qu'il y a une procréation interne incessante aboutit plutôt à fragmenter ce qui nous semble d'ordinaire un seul et même individu au cours du temps.

En quel sens le mortel reste-t-il donc identique à soi au cours du temps ?

a/ Le corps n'a plus besoin de l'âme pour vivre et mourir ?

Tout d'abord, la « nature mortelle » dont les stratégies, partiellement vaines, pour se rendre immortelle sont décrites par Diotime, est analysée ici en deux composantes, le corps et l'âme. Chacune de ces composantes se révèle éprise d'immortalité mais ne pouvant accéder qu'à un simulacre de celle-ci, à l'opposé de la nature immortelle, c'est-à-dire principalement l'intelligible, qui, elle, dispose d'emblée d'une éternelle et parfaite identité à soi. Donc il semble que chacune de ces composantes soit astreinte aux limites caractéristiques de la nature mortelle — l'immortalité, pour elle, ne peut consister qu'en un « artifice » — et donc (selon la *ratio cognoscendi*) constitue un

³ Cf. *République* V, 479c-d : les multiples participants sensible d'une Idée, comparés à l'objet des « énigmes » et des « jeux de mots échangés dans les banquets », sont finalement placés à un rang intermédiaire entre l'être et le non-être, et ainsi ne peuvent être objets de d'opinion.

exemple de nature mortelle : ce n'est que pour le mortel que la question des stratégies d'immortalisation se pose. Le tout a ici le même caractère que les parties. Bien que le composé puisse se défaire lors de la mort du vivant individuel, ce n'est pas seulement le composé âme-corps qui est sujet à l'alternative opposant mortel et immortel, comme l'envisage Socrate dans le *Phèdre*⁴, mais ce sont aussi le corps et l'âme, chacun pris en lui-même, car chacun connaît à tout instant de sa durée, fût-elle limitée ou illimitée, pour ainsi dire une petite mort. On ne peut pas se rassurer en disant que le composé, en tant que tel, est mortel, c'est-à-dire susceptible de se dissoudre en ses deux composantes de base, et doit donc recourir à un artifice pour s'immortaliser, tandis que les composantes seraient parfaitement immortelles. L'imperfection du composé relativement à l'immortalité de l'intelligible a sa *ratio essendi* aussi dans l'imperfection des composantes. Mais qu'est-ce que signifie être mortel pour un corps pris en lui-même, hors de son rapport à une unique âme ? Peut-on définir la mortalité, et donc la vie, sans référence à l'âme ? Cela semble contradictoire au sein du platonisme, et c'est pourtant ce que le texte présuppose. Car, alors que l'immortalité n'est encore étudiée qu'au niveau du corps, Diotime parle déjà de « vivant » et de « vie individuelle », tandis que, quand elle aborde l'âme, elle se cantonne au « nous » humain (ἡμῶν, 208a 1) et ne se lance plus dans des considérations biologiques générales. Le cas du vivant individuel, censé illustrer une thèse universelle, à portée ontologique, sur la participation de la nature mortelle à l'immortalité et ses modalités, semble donc commencer et s'arrêter avec la description du métabolisme corporel. Corrélativement, l'âme de ce passage du *Banquet* est présentée comme sujet d'émotions et de connaissances, si du moins la notion de sujet peut être maintenue, comme un principe essentiellement cognitif et non comme principe de vie. C'est un principe proprement spirituel, faisant de nous des personnes et non des choses.

D'ailleurs, puisque Diotime, peu avant notre passage, oppose la fécondité selon le corps et celle selon l'âme (206b), il est évident qu'une telle âme ne saurait condescendre à aucune fonction nutritive. La multiplication des individus au sein de chaque espèce ne la concerne pas directement. L'âme ainsi conçue est plus proche de celle de Descartes que de celle d'Aristote.

b/ Le soi du corps : proclamé mais introuvable

L'autre au cœur du même

Ensuite, en ce qui concerne le corps pris en lui-même, hors de son rapport avec l'âme, Diotime n'est pas très claire sur le degré d'altérité qui en réalité, pour ce que l'on appelle un « même » être vivant, sépare un corps vivant instantané des corps à peu près semblables qui le précèdent et le suivent immédiatement au cours du temps. Y a-t-il une discontinuité ontologique absolue, chaque corps étant numériquement distinct de tous les autres, ainsi que le terme *hétéron* (ἕτερον, 207d 3) le laisse penser, ou bien une discontinuité ontologique relative, concernant seulement le contenu du corps mais non le contenant : au cours du temps, les éléments qui sont « dans » le corps — sang, cheveux, os — se renouvèlent mais il semble qu'il y ait toujours une sorte d'enveloppe qui demeure tant que le corps est en vie. Après tout, les Formes intelligibles demeurent non seulement identiques à elles-mêmes, mais aussi identiques « sous tout rapport ». Le corps pourrait donc s'immortaliser en demeurant identique à lui-même sous certains rapports seulement, conservant un noyau d'être immuable au moins pour toute la durée de notre vie tandis que les propriétés qualitatives et quantitatives glisseraient en surface, et la différence entre l'immortalité imparfaite de la nature mortelle et l'immortalité parfaite de l'intelligible serait encore sauvée. L'hypothèse de la discontinuité relative pourrait alors aller jusqu'à la reconnaissance de la permanence d'une *chôra* toujours identique à soi au fond d'elle-même malgré ses altérations qualitatives, comme dans le *Timée* ; mais alors l'identité déborderait le vivant individuelle pour englober tout corps possible. Il ne s'agirait plus de l'identité de tel corps plutôt que de tel autre corps. L'hypothèse de la discontinuité ontologique relative doit donc elle-même être posée de manière relative. Diotime, apparemment, n'abandonne pas tout à fait l'idée qu'il y a un « soi » (ἐν αὐτῷ, 207d 7) de ce corps, et donc une identité — à moins que cette thèse ne soit qu'une illusion nécessairement produite par tout discours au sujet du corps, illusion à laquelle Diotime elle-même n'adhère pas et contre laquelle tout lecteur philosophe devrait se défendre. Si l'on suit les paroles de Diotime étape par étape, mot à mot, à défaut d'une « mêmété » individuelle impliquant la permanence d'un contenu chosal, il y aurait finalement au moins une « ipséité » du vivant, dont l'âme pourtant ne serait pas le

⁴ Cf. *Phèdre*, 246c, trad. Robin modifiée : « Ce qu'on a appelé vivant, c'est cet ensemble d'une âme (immortelle) et d'un corps solidement ajusté, et il a reçu la dénomination de mortel. Quant à celle d'immortel, il n'est rien qui permette d'en rendre raison d'une façon raisonnée ; mais nous foregons, sans en avoir ni expérience ni suffisante intelligence, une idée du dieu : un vivant immortel qui possède une âme, qui possède aussi un corps, mais tous deux naturellement unis pour toujours. »

principe — et nous reprenons ici la terminologie de Paul Ricoeur⁵. Il y a quand même quelque chose comme une « nature » mortelle, distincte d'autres natures, ayant sa cohérence propre et ses exigences conceptuelles permanentes. D'un côté, ce maintien discret d'un soi corporel vital va dans le sens de l'analogie entre l'âme et le corps face aux effets de l'amour puisque Diotime, dans sa description de l'effort de l'âme pour immortaliser ses connaissances, ne va pas jusqu'à remettre en question le fait qu'il s'agisse d'une seule et même âme au cours du temps, bien qu'elle ne fasse pas non plus de l'âme un substrat figé. D'un autre côté, on voit bien pourquoi ce n'est pas la relation à une seule et même âme qui, dans ce texte, pourrait venir assurer l'identité à soi du corps vivant : l'âme elle-même sera présentée d'abord sous l'angle des discontinuités qui affectent ses vécus successifs, lesquels se réduisent asymptotiquement à une simple série de phénomènes, sans qu'on ne puisse tout d'abord clairement discerner pour qui sont ses phénomènes. Comment une âme aussi profondément affectée par le changement pourrait-elle valoir comme principe d'identité pour autre chose qu'elle-même ?

Que l'on considère la relation du corps à l'âme comme celle d'un tout à sa cause à la fois synthétique et organisatrice — dans une perspective plutôt aristotélicienne (« forme substantielle ») —, ou bien comme une relation de communication entre mouvements de l'un et affects de l'autre — dans une perspective plutôt cartésienne —, dans tous les cas dire qu'il s'agit du même corps parce que c'est le corps de la même âme supposerait que l'identité à soi de l'âme soit évidente pour elle-même ou, à défaut, pour le métaphysicien, ce qui n'est pas le cas ici, tant du moins que l'identité est interprétée comme mêmeté, selon la terminologie de Paul Ricoeur. Davantage, si c'était l'âme qui, grâce à une puissance constitutive rayonnant au-delà d'elle-même, assurerait immédiatement, à chaque instant, l'individualité du corps par rapport aux autres corps dans l'espace et, médiatement, son identité à soi à travers la durée malgré la perpétuelle nouveauté de ses éléments constitutifs, en quoi le cas du corps serait-il encore un exemple d'immortalisation du mortel par la procréation ? Car, dans cette hypothèse, c'est l'âme qui produirait le corps, non le corps instantané qui se reproduirait lui-même pour s'immortaliser, et ainsi la thèse de Diotime serait ruinée.

L'individu à l'image de l'espèce

Mais il est difficile de trouver à quoi correspond ce soi du corps maintenu malgré tout par les mots de Diotime, car qu'est-ce qu'un corps sinon la somme de certains éléments matériels ? Peut-on, sans prendre la permanence de l'âme en considération, affirmer qu'il y a une forme dans le corps qui demeure réellement identique à elle-même au cours du temps et qui ne soit pas le simple résultat d'un effort d'abstraction toujours maintenu par l'intelligence ? Certes, il y a la Forme intelligible à laquelle le corps participe, mais cette Forme n'est pas en lui et ses éléments ne sont pas elle : elle est « séparée ». À cette difficulté théorique générale empêchant d'accorder au corps vivant une quelconque permanence substantielle s'ajoute le poids des comparaisons effectuées par Diotime elle-même. À la limite, au terme de ces comparaisons, le renouvellement de l'espèce devient en général indiscernable du renouvellement de l'individu (comme c'est manifestement le cas pour les animaux unicellulaires et certaines plantes à rhizome), si bien qu'individu et espèce constituent des points de vue plutôt que des réalités absolument distinctes. En effet, si le genre tend à l'immortalité de la même manière que le vivant individuel, c'est-à-dire avec les mêmes moyens et les mêmes limites dans la réussite du projet, il faut que le vivant individuel soit un individu seulement pour un point de vue externe, car entre le père et son rejeton, par exemple, il n'y a pas de lien réel (pas de *vinculum substantiale* dirait Leibniz), pas d'âme ou de forme commune immanente qui donne une raison *intrinsèque* de considérer l'ensemble comme un seule et même chose. Une fois passé le bref moment de l'engendrement, c'est seulement la ressemblance entre l'un et l'autre, découverte par un observateur externe, qui incite à les regrouper dans la même espèce. Le père et son rejeton n'ont pas immédiatement en eux-mêmes, positivement, le fondement de leur relation ; le père peut mourir sans que la vie du rejeton en soit affectée, et heureusement sinon l'artifice d'immortalisation ne fonctionnerait pas du tout ; la discontinuité ontologique entre l'ancien et le nouveau est ici la condition nécessaire pour que la procréation ait un sens, c'est-à-dire puisse être expliquée à partir d'Eros. La relation identifiante entre le père et son rejeton doit passer par la médiation d'une

⁵ Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, Paris, 1990, « Indentité personnelle et identité narrative », p. 148 : « Il importe de tirer argument, en faveur de la distinction entre identité du soi et identité du même, de l'usage que nous faisons de la notion dans les contextes où les deux sortes d'identité cessent de se recouvrir au point de se dissocier entièrement, mettant en quelque sorte à nu l'ipseité du soi sans le support de la mêmeté. Il est en effet un autre modèle de caractère dans le temps que celui du caractère. C'est celui de la parole tenue dans la fidélité à la parole donnée [...] La parole tenue dit un *maintien de soi* qui ne se laisse pas inscrire, comme le caractère, dans la dimension du quelque chose en général, mais uniquement dans celle du *qui* ? »

intelligence capable de remarquer leur commune participation à la Forme transcendante de l'homme ou d'un autre animal, bref leur similitude. Certes, au niveau de l'intelligible, l'espèce animale constitue bien une seule et même réalité, mais cette Forme ne peut se penser que comme l'unité d'une multiplicité.

On n'aurait donc pas d'occasion de la penser si la multiplicité des individus vivants au cours des générations disparaissait, même si son être ne dépend pas d'une telle multiplicité. Or, de fait, on est capable de la penser. Le fait que multiple vaille comme condition épistémologique de la saisie de l'unité intelligible apparaît évidemment dans le cas de la Beauté exposé par Diotime au terme de la fameuse dialectique ascendante : celle-ci doit passer par l'amour de tous les beaux corps avant d'en arriver à l'unique espèce de Beauté qu'est Beauté des corps, ne peut se penser que comme l'unité d'une multiplicité.

De même, l'immortalité du vivant individuel est comparée à l'immortalité du nom, objet d'amour pour les héros de jadis et les poètes qui les chantèrent (*Banquet*, 208c-d). La gloire épique se transmet certes de génération en génération, mimant la procréation sur le plan symbolique, mais elle est bien différente d'une immortalité personnelle supposant la conservation de l'identité numérique de l'âme au cours du temps. Il s'agit d'une succession du semblable au semblable, sans rien de réel qui unisse le successif à lui-même, ainsi que l'a déjà compris Héraclite :

αἰρεῦνται γὰρ ἐν ἀντὶ ἀπάντων οἱ ἄριστοι, κλέος ἀέναον θνητῶν· οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ κεκόρηται ὄκωσπερ κτήνεα

Les meilleurs, en vérité, préfèrent une seule chose à toutes les autres, la renom intarissable parmi les mortels, tandis que le plus grand nombre se remplit à satiété, exactement comme du bétail (Héraclite, fr. 29 DK).

Le contraste entre « intarissable » et « mortels » est ici typiquement héraclitéen : chaque homme qui porte la rumeur est pris dans le devenir, bientôt anéanti, mais cette rumeur demeure par ce renouvellement incessant lui-même. La gloire est ainsi à la fois toujours la même et toujours autre que ce qu'elle était, tel un fleuve dans lequel on ne se baigne jamais deux fois. Nous retrouvons ici l'héraclitéisme bien connu de Platon en ce qui concerne le sensible.

Si nous appliquons ces analogies au corps vivant individuel, l'amant débutant qui aime un seul beau corps en aime déjà une pluralité potentiellement infinie sans le savoir. « L'océan du beau » (*Banquet*, 210d), en réalité, est déjà là. L'élévation dialectique à l'amour de tous les beaux corps ne fait que montrer la vérité implicite de l'étape précédente. La véritable unité ne se trouvera que dans l'Idée, unité pour la pensée et dans la pensée, et non dans l'ordre du corps, qu'on le prenne en sa pluralité manifeste ou en quelque singularité apparente.

La mort en héritage ?

Et pourtant, alors même que l'on cherche à nier que le corps demeure identique à *lui-même*, on lui attribue justement un « lui-même », un soi : il faut bien admettre qu'il n'est jamais le même justement parce qu'il se reproduit toujours. L'altérité émergente est le résultat d'une capacité à se dépasser *soi-même* inhérente au terme antérieur, ce qui suppose donc une sorte de soi. Ce dépassement, payé au bout du compte au prix de la mort, est à la fois de soi et par soi. Au niveau de l'espèce, Diotime évoque le sacrifice des parents pour les enfants comme un cas limite et seulement possible révélant, par son caractère exceptionnel même, la vraie nature d'Eros en tant qu'il est étranger à tout principe de conservation de ce qui est déjà donné en son imperfection et son inertie :

[Les bêtes] sont prêtes à batailler pour leur progéniture, les plus faibles contre les plus fortes, et à sacrifier leur vie, souffrant elles-mêmes les tortures de la faim en vue d'assurer sa subsistance et se dévouant de toutes les manières possibles (Platon, *Banquet*, 207b).

Mais, au niveau de l'individu, il faut toujours que l'ancien disparaisse pour que le nouveau apparaisse : nos corps successifs et semblables ne peuvent pas se chevaucher dans le temps, ou alors un cancer se développe et nous mourons encore plus vite. Dans le vivant en devenir, la négation même par lequel le jeune corps chasse le vieux est un fruit de l'identité à soi du terme plus ancien. Certes, ce terme ancien était mortel et donc il aurait fini par être détruit par son environnement même s'il ne s'était pas reproduit, mais la destruction qui le frappe dans l'acte de reproduction a l'avantage de venir de lui-même, et c'est précisément cette réflexivité qui le sauve. Il est encore là dans son entrée en absence. Le fils, pour ainsi dire, hérite bien de quelque chose venant de son père glorieux,

mais il n'y a pas de transfert d'un contenu réel positif car ce quelque chose c'est la mort du père, condition pour que le *souvenir* en soit transmis de génération en génération. L'immortalisation par la gloire qu'évoque Diotime pour ceux dont la fécondité est d'ordre spirituel, poètes ou législateurs, nous rappelle que, au niveau des Petits Mystères, la continuité de la vie est paradoxalement affaire deuil car elle est affaire de mémoire à défaut de réminiscence. L'immortalité se réalise alors, dans la faible mesure où elle est accessible au mortel, au détriment de la conservation : tel est le lot de ceux qui sont, dès l'origine, un mélange d'être et de non-être. Leur prolongement est aussi contradictoire que leur existence, à la limite du pensable, recelant une vérité par ce qu'il laisse deviner plutôt par ce qu'il est en lui-même. Diotime doit trouver dans l'abolition des propriétés et de l'existence du soi l'affirmation ultime de ce dernier comme facteur d'unité relative au cours du temps, car si il y avait une étrangeté et une extériorité absolue entre deux corps successifs au sein de ce qui semble un même individu vivant, en quoi cette succession de corps constituerait-elle une stratégie, fût-elle imparfaite, pour qu'il s'immortalise *lui-même* ? Il faut bien, pour la cohérence du discours de Diotime, que d'une certaine manière l'ancien se prolonge dans le nouveau, au moins par le fait que l'un jaillit de l'autre, même si par la suite, dans la mémoire d'un observateur lucide, ils sont numériquement distincts. Eros n'ouvre pas seulement l'âme humaine sur la transcendance de l'intelligible en tant que telle, sans la rabaisser, ainsi que le montreront les Grands Mystères finalement dévoilés par Diotime ; il pousse aussi tout étant sensible à se transcender, à se perdre pour enfin conserver de soi ce qui peut l'être, ne serait-ce justement que cet élan périlleux. La perte de soi garantit ici que, tout en suivant une impulsion interne, c'est bien au-delà de ce que l'on était et de notre finitude que l'on passe. Vouloir se conserver de manière immobile, à la manière de l'intelligible, en se renfermant sur une identité morte, un simple stock d'éléments ou de propriétés, n'aboutirait pour le vivant qu'à l'annihilation.

En somme, nous retrouvons ici les problèmes « puérils » évoqués dans le *Philèbe* (14d). Comment une même réalité sensible peut-elle être dite à la fois une et multiple ? Faut-il faire de l'unité une simple apparence ? Mais à lui refuser toute unité véritable, c'est la multiplicité même des individus regroupés dans l'espèce que l'on ruine, car il n'y a de multiple que là où l'on peut compter des unités, et finalement on ruine aussi la réalité de la Forme intelligible qui devait faire la synthèse de cette multiplicité. Faut-il dire qu'elle participe à l'un sous un certain rapport et au multiple sous un autre ? Mais alors on ne comprendra plus qu'elle se reproduise, c'est-à-dire se multiplie elle-même à partir d'elle-même en tant qu'elle-même. Il n'est pas certain que la solution de ces apories soit aussi facile que ce que revendiquera le *Philèbe*.

c/ Eros comme principe d'identité ?

Le vrai principe qui fait l'unité du vivant dans le temps n'est pas un substrat inerte dont on pourrait espérer donner un concept stable et clos, ce n'est pas une matière supportant ultimement des qualités sensibles ou intelligibles. Car Platon sait bien qu'un tel substrat, tel un « objet transcendantal = X » (Kant, *Critique de la raison pure, passim*), n'est postulé que pour faire l'unité des phénomènes et ne peut être connue en lui-même hors de sa seule fonction synthétique par rapport à notre propre perception en tant que perception objective ; autrement dit, l'étendue qui sert de matrice au devenir, contrairement aux Formes intelligibles qui sont connues en elle-mêmes et par elle-mêmes, n'est connue que par un « raisonnement bâtarde » (*Timée*, 52b) partant du sensible et servant l'impérieux besoin d'unité de la raison. Il s'agit d'ailleurs d'une simple représentation, comme un « songe », et non d'une connaissance capable de déterminer l'être même de son objet. En fait, la notion de substrat permanent ne permet pas d'affirmer que le vivant reste identique à lui-même malgré le devenir apparent, mais au contraire suppose une telle identité. C'est en postulant une unité qu'on en vient à imaginer le substrat identitaire, car ce substrat demeure en lui-même à la fois invisible et inintelligible. Or, au nom de quoi postuler l'unité du vivant sensible ? Cette unité, en vérité, n'est pas en lui mais dans notre perception de lui. L'unité qui se traduit par la supposition d'une étendue permanente sous la diversité du devenir des qualités sensibles n'a donc pas de valeur ontologique ; c'est seulement une condition de possibilité notre expérience en tant qu'expérience d'objets stables et différenciables les uns des autres.

Seul l'Amour, qui n'est pas le reflet de notre désir d'unité au sein de la perception mais sa cause, est capable de garantir, au niveau ontologique — même s'il s'agit d'une ontologie en mode mineur —, une sorte d'identité au vivant, car Eros ne se tient pas en deça de ce qu'il lie, comme s'il était un terme encore autre que les moments et les éléments à lier, mais Eros est parfaitement immanent à ce qu'il lie. Car si chaque moment du corps enfante un autre moment du corps, si chaque connaissance enfante une autre connaissance dans la même âme, c'est qu'elle se trouve suffisamment bonne et belle pour s'aimer elle-même. Ainsi, en se procréant lui-même avec lui-même, le corps

vivant enfante encore dans le beau. La disparition de l'ancien qui laisse place au nouveau s'origine intégralement dans l'unique terme ancien. L'Eros narcissique cher à Freud n'est donc pas le garant de la conservation individuelle, mais cette conservation elle-même, avec tout ce qu'elle implique de mort sur son passage. En effet, Diotime n'a pas exclu que l'amour porte sur soi, mais y a mis comme condition un jugement de valeur :

Mais ce que prétend ma théorie à moi (contre Aristophane), c'est que l'objet de l'amour n'est ni la moitié ni l'entier, à moins justement, mon camarade, que d'aventure ils ne soient en quelque manière une chose bonne (Platon, *Banquet*, 205e).

On aura certes peut-être du mal à admettre qu'un corps, à lui seul, puisse prononcer un tel jugement de valeur. Mais rien, dans le sensible n'est tout à fait dépourvu de participations aux Formes intelligibles, à leur pureté et finalement à leur beauté. Le vivant s'aime lui-même en tant qu'il se tient sous le jour de l'intelligible. Le *Phédon*, alors que l'argument en faveur de l'immortalité de l'âme basé sur la réalité des expériences de réminiscence, n'admet-il pas que le sensible en tant que tel, étant pour ainsi dire conscient de son imperfection, aspire en personne à la plénitude de l'idéal⁶ ?

En tout cas, dans le vivant individuel, seul l'amour demeure, non pas en tant que sujet mais en tant qu'activité incessante, passant de l'ancien corps au nouveau corps sans relâche. C'est toujours de la même manière et par la même puissance qu'Eros subvertit les identités et les ouvre sur l'altérité, ne gardant d'elle que leur souvenir glorieux. Celle qui naît, dès qu'elle naît et parce qu'elle naît, est déjà tendue vers son propre dépassement. L'amour est une puissance de liaison aussi au sein de l'individu vivant : il le rattache à lui-même, assure la médiation et la continuité dialectique entre ses divers éléments au cours du temps dans la mesure où il déborde chaque moment du corps à la fois du côté du passé — c'est grâce à Eros que ce moment est apparu — et du côté de l'avenir — c'est grâce à Eros qu'il cèdera la place au nouveau corps qu'il va produire. Ainsi il y a finalement bien un soi du corps vivant, sur le mode de l'ipséité et non de la mêmeté, permettant d'affirmer qu'il se reproduit et que ses éléments sont sans cesse renouvelés. Telle est l'œuvre démonique d'Eros, à l'échelle du micro-cosme comme du macro-cosme :

Puisque le démonique est à mi-distance des hommes et des dieux, son rôle est de combler le vide : il est ainsi le lien qui unit le Tout à lui-même (202e).

Mais on se heurte à nouveau à une difficulté : dans le *Philèbe*, Socrate démontre qu'il n'y a de désir que de l'âme, car tout désir suppose la mémoire. Comment donc le corps, au même titre que l'âme elle-même et en analogie avec elle, pourrait-il être possédé d'Eros ? Or c'est pourtant ce que laisse penser la première partie de notre texte du *Banquet*. Face à cette difficulté, il faut entrer plus avant dans la démonologie. Eros n'est pas un affect de l'âme. Il traverse l'âme sans la supposer. C'est une personne au sujet de laquelle on peut composer un discours mythique, sa réalité est autonome. Et pourtant Eros n'est rien d'autre que la somme de ses manifestations. Il s'épuise dans ses effets. Il faut qu'il se fasse sentir pour être. En fait Eros n'est pas une chose du monde parmi d'autres. C'est le sens même de l'être pour les étants sensibles, l'*a priori* qui donne forme à tout ce qui se manifeste à nos sens sans se manifester lui-même en personne. C'est pourquoi on peut contrer l'objection qui consisterait à dire qu'Eros ne peut pas assurer l'identité des corps vivants parce que, demeurant justement le même en chacun d'eux, il finirait par les confondre tous en une sorte de sphère homogène digne du règne de l'Amitié empédocléenne pris à son paroxysme. Comme la *chôra*, il sauverait l'identité au détriment de l'individualité, effacerait l'Autre à force de faire régner le Même ? Non. En effet, Eros n'est pas un étant ayant un effet sur d'autres étants. Comme Eros garantit, par sa faveur, que les étants soient précisément des étants, ou plutôt ne soient pas des non-étants absolus, et puisque le fait qu'ils ne soient pas des non-étants absolus implique qu'ils soient au moins objet d'opinion, Eros assure que les réalités sensibles restent à peu près distinctes les unes des autres. Eros donne aux demi-étants sensibles juste assez de stabilité pour pouvoir se disposer sous la lumière séparatrice de l'Idée et la recevoir.

d/ Le refus de l'âme comme principe de la substantialité

Aristote et l'âme comme «forme substantielle»

Ayant examiné la solution positive au problème de l'identité des corps vivants qui émane des propos de Diotime, il faut à présent comprendre ce que Diotime refuse, car cela engage à la fois le sens de l'œuvre de Platon dans son ensemble et les rapports entre Aristote et Platon.

Diotime, si notre interprétation est correcte refuse en quelque sorte par avance ce qui

⁶ Platon, *Phédon*, 75a-b : « Quoi qu'il en soit, ce sont bien nos sensations qui doivent nous donner l'idée, à la fois que toutes les égalités sensibles *aspirent (orégetai)* à l'essence même de l'Egal, et qu'elles sont déficientes par rapport à elles. »

deviendra la solution aristotélicienne pour penser l'identité à soi du vivant individuel, solution partant pourtant de prémisses semblables aux siennes :

La plus naturel des fonctions pour un être vivant qui est achevé et qui n'est pas incomplet, ou dont la génération n'est pas spontanée, c'est de créer un autre être semblable à lui, l'animal un animal, et la plante une plante, de façon à participer à l'éternel et au divin dans la mesure du possible [...]. Puisque donc il n'est pas possible pour l'individu de participer à l'éternel et au divin d'une façon continue, par le fait qu'aucun être corruptible ne peut demeurer le même et numériquement un, c'est dans la mesure où il peut y avoir part que chaque être y participe, l'un plus et l'autre moins ; et il demeure ainsi non pas lui-même, mais semblable à lui-même, non pas numériquement un, mais spécifiquement un.

L'âme est cause et principe du corps vivant. Ces termes, « cause » et « principe », se prennent en plusieurs acceptions, mais l'âme est pareillement cause selon les trois modes que nous avons déterminés ; elle est, en effet, l'origine du mouvement, elle est la fin, et c'est aussi comme l'essence (*ousia*) des corps animés que l'âme est cause. Qu'elle soit cause comme essence, c'est évident, car la cause de l'être est, pour toutes choses, l'essence : or c'est la vie qui, chez tous les êtres, constitue leur être, et la cause et le principe de leur vie, c'est l'âme (Aristote, *De anima*, 415b1-15).

Le refus aristotélicien de poser les universaux que constituent les espèces vivantes comme des substances (*ousia*) séparées a pour corrélat nécessaire la reconnaissance de l'âme comme forme réellement active et donc réellement présente dans le corps vivant tout au long de sa vie, si toutefois on veut accorder une certaine réalité à ces universaux et éviter ainsi le nominalisme. Certes l'âme, en tant que *forme* d'un corps pourvu d'organes, n'existe pas séparément, mais elle existe quand même, n'étant pas un simple résultat de l'abstraction, dans la mesure où elle exerce une causalité organisatrice. Elle n'est d'ailleurs que cette force organisatrice. L'espèce n'est une réalité, pour Aristote, que si elle s'actualise dans les individus sensibles, passant d'entéléchie première à entéléchie seconde, et fait d'eux, à titre de cause, précisément ce qu'ils sont pour tout le temps où ils sont. Sans les individus sensibles l'intellect, qui pense nécessairement l'universel, ne saisirait aucune vérité sinon dans ses jugements, et l'intuition ne pourrait donc venir fournir les principes de la démonstration. Certes l'âme, cause formelle du corps vivant en tant que vivant, pourra abandonner le corps, et ce sera alors la mort, y compris peut-être la sienne, mais en attendant, pour quelques temps, elle confère le rang de substance, parmi les divers sens de l'être, à certains individus sensibles. C'est véritablement, comme le dira la scolastique, une « forme substantielle », à la fois active dans la matière et soutenue par elle quoique non soumise à son flux. Un individu vivant ne demeure le même au cours du temps que parce que son âme est toujours présente dans son corps, ce qui permet justement de dire que c'est *son* corps. Et chaque vivant participe à l'éternel à proportion de la complexité de son âme. Au sommet, avec l'âme intellectuelle, l'homme y participe davantage que la plante douée seulement d'âme nutritive. Mais toujours l'individu prend consistance par son âme, aussi brève que soit sa vie. Aristote ne peut donc aligner exactement la nutrition sur le statut de la reproduction, contrairement à Diotime, car la nutrition suppose une seule et même âme, alors que la reproduction en convoque au moins deux. Il n'y a pas d'âme de l'espèce, nous ne sommes pas chez Schopenhauer.

L'âme platonicienne constituante?

Mais cette opposition entre Aristote et Diotime exprime-t-elle, plus profondément, une opposition entre Platon et Aristote ? Rien n'est moins sûr, au moins à première vue. Car, dans le *Phédon*, contrairement au *Banquet*, Socrate semble admettre l'hypothèse d'une âme durable qui se façonne toujours à nouveau un corps quasi instantané mais parfaitement organisé, constituant ainsi la véritable unité du vivant au cours de sa durée, voire lui donnant ainsi, tout simplement, une durée. Cette âme formatrice nous ramène du côté d'Aristote et de son âme « cause et principe du corps vivant » (Aristote, *De anima*, 415b 5), bien qu'elle ne soit jamais assimilée à une *ousia* :

SOCRATE : L'âme, dirait-on [si on voulait appliquer au couple âme-corps l'analogie avec le tisserand et le vêtement qu'il tisse], est chose durable, le corps de son côté chose plus fragile et de moindre durée. En réalité, cependant, ajouterait-on, mettons que chaque âme use de nombreux corps, particulièrement quand la vie dure de nombreuses années (car on peut supposer que, le corps étant un courant qui se perd tandis que l'homme continue à vivre, l'âme au contraire ne cesse de retisser ce qui est usé) ; ce n'en serait pas moins une nécessité que l'âme, le jour où elle sera détruite, ait justement sur elle le dernier vêtement qu'elle a tissé, et que ce soit le seul antérieurement auquel ait lieu cette destruction. Mais une fois l'âme anéantie, c'est alors que désormais le corps révélerait sa fragilité

fonceuse ; et, tombant en pourriture, il ne tarderait pas à passer définitivement (*Phédon*, 87d-e, trad. Robin).

Il faut resituer cette théorie dans son contexte dialectique. Socrate veut montrer à Simias que l'un de ses arguments pour prouver l'immortalité de l'âme, basé sur une analogie entre l'âme et un tisserand, est invalide. La raison n'en est pas nécessairement la fausseté de l'analogie qui sert de prémisses, mais son incapacité à fonder la conclusion qu'on veut en tirer. Socrate, d'ailleurs, admet que l'âme soit quelque chose de « plus durable » que le corps ainsi que l'implique l'analogie. Néanmoins la valeur de vérité de l'analogie avec le tisserand n'est pas maintenue explicitement par Socrate, qui reste neutre. Ce dernier veut surtout montrer que, quand bien même on admettrait cette analogie, on n'aurait pas encore l'argument recherché. Il réfute ici l'âme de Simias, qui raisonne maladroitement, et non l'une de ses thèses en particulier. Il s'agit d'une manœuvre élenchtique typiquement socratique.

Pourtant, de manière plus générale, il est indéniable que le *Phédon* admet que l'âme apporte partout et nécessairement avec elle la vie, puisque c'est même là une des prémisses pour le dernier argument en faveur de l'immortalité de l'âme⁷. Comment donc réconcilier cette conception de l'âme exposée et non démentie par Socrate, et celle exposée par Diotime dans le *Banquet* ? Une telle réconciliation est-elle même possible ?

Cette contradiction au moins apparente ne serait pas la seule dans l'œuvre de Platon concernant l'âme. Dans le *Timée*, seule une partie de l'âme, l'élément rationnel, est dite « immortelle », tandis qu'est dite « mortelle » celle qui apporte la vie au corps en lui insufflant les désirs nécessaires à sa conservation⁸. Les deux contradictions sont analogues et peuvent se résoudre de manière analogue, ce qui nous amène de manière assez naturelle à des interprétations proches du néoplatonisme, en particulier Plotin. En effet, l'âme étant principe de son propre mouvement, elle ne peut non seulement se rapprocher ou s'éloigner d'autres réalités, et donc changer son rapport à elles, mais elle peut aussi — et c'est en fait la condition du premier point — changer son rapport à elle-même de par sa propre initiative. C'est ainsi qu'elle peut s'aliéner et être plus ou moins elle-même. Son soi peut se poser comme distance à soi, voire perte de soi.

Or, pour Platon, la vraie vie est celle de l'esprit :

S'étant alors rapproché de cet objet, s'étant confondu vraiment avec l'être, ayant engendré intelligence et vérité, *il vivra* (souligné par nous) se nourrira véritablement, et ainsi cesseront pour lui les douleurs de l'enfantement (*République* VI, 490b).

L'âme n'est principe de vie pour le corps que parce qu'elle est elle-même la vie par excellence. Et sa vie atteint son maximum d'intensité lorsqu'elle pense et en tant qu'elle pense les Formes. La vie de l'âme s'amoindrit au fur et à mesure qu'elle s'éloigne de son centre intellectif. La vie que reçoit le corps et qu'il détient n'est plus la vie primordiale. C'est une âme aliénée, par sa propre initiative, qui devient capable s'assurer les fonctions vitales du corps. Mais cette âme compromise, qui se meut sur le mode du désir et de l'ardeur combattive peut disparaître comme elle est apparue, en fonction des options cognitives de l'âme, sans que l'âme elle-même soit réduite à néant. Il s'agit donc en quelque sorte d'une partie mortelle de l'âme. Elle ne dure qu'autant que l'âme veut se projeter en autre chose qu'elle-même et refuse de se connaître pleinement elle-même. De même, ce qui, de l'âme, constitue et reconstitue le corps au cours du temps, n'est plus vraiment l'âme. L'âme ne peut fournir au corps qu'un simulacre d'identité car, quand elle se tourne vers le corps, elle est elle-même exilée d'elle-même. L'âme, sortie d'elle-même, ne peut se manifester dans le corps qu'en le dispersant, qu'en introduisant en lui un mouvement linéaire, dont la fin ne saurait coïncider avec le commencement. Par exemple, la vieillesse demeure inexorablement distincte de l'enfance. Le temps de notre existence, en tant que nous sommes mortels, est irréversible, comme Platon le montre dans le mythe du *Politique*. Ce décalage entre le commencement et la fin n'advient pas malgré l'âme mais à cause de l'âme. Donc quand bien même l'âme contribuerait à la reconstitution quotidienne du corps, elle ne saurait valoir

⁷ Cf. Platon, *Phédon*, 105c : « Qu'est-ce qui, en se présentant dans un corps, fera qu'il soit vivant ? — Ce sera l'âme, dit-il. — Est-ce qu'il en est toujours ainsi ? — Le moyen, en effet, de le nier ! fir Cébès — Sur quelque objet, par conséquent, que l'âme mette sa prise, elle est venue à l'objet en question, portant avec elle la vie. »

⁸ Cf. Platon, *Timée*, 69c-d : « [Les jeunes dieux nés du Demiurge], à son imitation, entreprirent, après qu'ils eurent reçu le principe immortel de l'âme, de façonner au tour pour lui un corps mortel et, à ce corps, ils donnèrent pour véhicule le corps tout entier cependant qu'ils établissaient dans ce dernier une autre espèce d'âme, celle qui est mortelle et qui comporte en elle-même des passions terribles et inévitables : d'abord le plaisir, le plus important appât qui provoque au mal, ensuite les douleurs qui éloignent du bien, et encore la témérité et la peur, un couple de conseillers peu sages, l'emportement rebelle aux exhortations, et l'espérance facile à décevoir. Ayant fait un mélange avec ses passions, la sensation irrationnelle et le désir de qui vient toute entreprise, ils ont constitué l'espèce mortelle en se soumettant à la nécessité. »

pour lui comme un principe d'identité univoque. L'âme dans pureté primordiale n'a pas d'énergie formatrice à appliquer du côté du corps ; elle est tout entière tournée vers elle tout entière.

II/ L'identité de l'âme comme problème

A/ Penser et être soi

En examinant le rôle identificatoire que l'âme aurait pu joué à l'égard du corps, que d'autres textes de Platon suggèrent et que Diotime, pourtant, refuse, on est naturellement conduit à s'intéresser à la question de l'identité de l'âme elle-même. Conformément au plan du texte, venons-en donc maintenant au niveau de l'âme, c'est-à-dire à la personne elle-même et non plus seulement ce qui lui appartient, le corps. Si le niveau de l'âme n'a pas pu apporter directement de solution aux problèmes d'identité rencontrés au niveau du corps, c'est que l'âme elle-même constitue problème. Comment concilier la variété ininterrompue des contenus de conscience décrite par Diotime et le maintien d'un soi de l'âme ? L'identité personnelle, introuvable au niveau du corps puisque le peu qui le lie à lui-même est l'universel Eros, a-t-elle une meilleure chance de se réaliser, avec sa singularité essentielle, au niveau de l'âme ?

En ce qui concerne l'identité aussi, l'âme est un intermédiaire entre le sensible et l'intelligible, mais un intermédiaire mobile, un intermédiaire intermédiaire et non intermédiaire placé après-coup. Dans le discours de Diotime, rien n'oblige à poser l'âme comme mortelle dans sa totalité — en cela ce discours s'accorde avec le reste de l'œuvre de Platon — mais ce qui vit en elle peut être mortel et se renouveler à la manière des éléments du corps, ou bien, quand le degré suprême de l'initiation érotique est atteint, coïncider avec l'immortalité de l'intelligible qu'elle contemple, autrement dit s'identifier à l'identité de l'intelligible. L'âme peut progresser vers l'identité absolue ou se laisser aller à une aliénation radicale, mais quoi qu'il arrive, quelque oubli de soi qui survienne, c'est toujours à elle-même que cela arrive, en sorte que l'âme conserve toujours un minimum d'ipséité. La philosophie est un art de la reconquête de soi, mais à partir de soi. « Se soucier de soi » comme l'exige Socrate (par exemple en *Cratyle* 440c), c'est d'abord de soucier d'avoir vraiment un soi. Le souci est le geste même qui maintient le soi comme tel pour lui-même. L'âme dispose toujours de la faculté de s'inquiéter d'elle-même, et dès lors qu'elle en use elle se donne une nouvelle figure, ou plutôt revient à sa forme originelle. Mais cela n'implique aucun narcissisme. Si le philosophe aspire à être pleinement soi-même, c'est pour jouir pleinement du Beau qu'il aime, de même que le vivant cherche à s'immortaliser pour toujours posséder la belle chose qu'il aime. L'immortalité visée par l'amour lucide du philosophe ne soulève donc pas le problème des moyens disponibles pour réaliser une identité conçue comme permanence dans le temps ; au contraire, elle est d'emblée la solution de ce problème :

N'est-ce pas, d'autre part, à celui qui enfante une réelle capacité d'exceller (*aretè*) et qui la nourrit, qu'il appartient de devenir cher à la divinité, et, s'il y a un homme capable de s'immortaliser, n'est-ce pas celui dont je parle qui en détiendra le privilège (Platon, *Banquet*, 212a) ?

Ici, on peut certes se demander en qui la réelle capacité à exceller est enfantée. Est-ce dans la même âme celle qui contemple le beau, ce qui irait dans le sens de la *République*⁹ où les rois, grâce à leur fréquentation des Formes en particulier du Bien, obtiennent une âme bien ordonnée et juste, ou bien s'agit-il de l'âme du disciple, sur le modèle de ce qui est dit dans le *Phèdre*, quand le maître produit dans son élève une capacité à argumenter de diverses manières, qui sera féconde à son tour.

Mais, au fond, cette disjonction n'est peut-être pas pertinente. En effet, d'une part, il faut exceller soi-même pour transmettre l'excellence ; d'autre part l'excellence intellectuelle qui est transmise ne contribue pas à l'immortalité du maître par sa démultiplication dans divers sujets, mais pas le fait même qu'elle est transmise. C'est l'événement même du transmettre qui compte, événement où précisément la différence des deux excellences s'abolit. On peut donc supposer que la capacité à exceller en question est aussi celle du disciple, en sorte que l'immortalité du philosophe, dans un premier temps, ressemble à celle des vivants en général : il s'agit de mettre quelque chose de soi en l'autre qui nous survivra. Comme tous les amoureux, il enfante dans le beau ce qui prolongera sa possession du beau. Mais l'Idée étant parfaitement identique à elle-même sous tout rapport, les actes de contemplation, quel qu'en soit le sujet, sont en fait tous numériquement le même. Car l'Idée n'apparaît pas différemment selon le point de vue qu'on adopte pour la contempler, si bien que la notion même de point de vue, dans l'espace ou dans le temps, n'est plus pertinente. Quand le donc le disciple se met à penser effectivement, actualisant l'*aretè* que le maître a produit en lui par la semence

⁹ Cf. Platon, *République* VII, 540b : « En contemplant le bien lui-même et en ayant recours à lui comme à un modèle, ils ordonneront la cité et les particuliers comme ils se sont ordonnés eux-mêmes. »

de sa parole vive, c'est en fait la pensée du maître qui se répète. Davantage, elle ne se répète que pour ceux qui sont les témoins extérieurs d'une telle contemplation sans contempler eux-même ; en vérité, du maître au disciple, la contemplation n'a pas cessé, étant coéternel à son objet. Le fait que le disciple contemple à son tour n'augmente pas la quantité d'immortalité qui échoit au maître car cette immortalité, par nature, est toujours déjà achevée dès qu'elle atteinte. En revanche, comme le dit l'*Alcibiade*, c'est en contemplant l'acte contemplatif du disciple que le maître peut prendre conscience de l'éternité qui traverse son propre intellect. C'est donc dans l'enseignement que le philosophe fait l'épreuve de l'éternité de sa propre pensée en tant qu'elle entre en contact avec l'éternité des Formes.

Cette argument permet de trancher une question concernant le type de ressouvenir évoqué par Diotime en 208a : il ne s'agit pas de la réminiscence dialectique, car il est alors précisé que la nouvelle connaissance est certes semblable à l'ancienne, mais en fait numériquement autre. Il s'agit de la révision de connaissance acquise *ex datis* durant la vie incarnée. Il ne s'agit pas de vérités éternelles connues *a priori* à partir de principes innées. La connaissance de l'Idée, quant à elle, est toujours vraie et pleinement vraie dès qu'elle advient puisqu'elle est simple, et donc, comme il n'y a qu'une seule vérité de chaque chose, cette connaissance doit être toujours exactement la même quel que soit le moment où, pour le discours mondain qui la relate, adressé à d'autres hommes pris dans le monde, elle surgit. C'est autour d'une telle identité que se reconstitue l'identité supérieure du philosophe. Le soi de celui qui pense les Formes est tout entier pensant, et ce qu'il pense se tient tout entier à l'intérieur de lui, car saisissable par la seule réminiscence. Davantage, ce soi n'est-il pas le même pour toute conscience ? Ce soi n'a-t-il pas aboli la diversité de tous les moi, et donc l'identité personnelle en tant qu'elle est complémentaire d'une certaine altérité ? Comment peut-on encore être dit rester le même quand il n'y a plus rien d'autre vers quoi on pourrait aller pour trahir son identité ? Demeurer identique, n'est-ce pas d'abord continuer à être autre que les autres ? En vérité, en ce qui concerne l'âme en train d'intelliger, de l'altérité demeure, mais idéale : l'intellect pense diverses Formes, d'un seul coup. S'il faut dialectiser pour parvenir à l'intellection, il faut que l'intellection récapitule la multiplicité des Formes parmi lesquelles le dialecticien circule, à l'image de ce qui se pratique dans le *Philèbe*. Donc l'altérité n'est pas perdue mais elle est intériorisée par le Moi qui pense. La singularité du moi devient enfin ce qu'elle est : unique.

L'immortalité du philosophe qui contemple le Beau en soi est donc différente de l'immortalité des autres âmes, sans que cela remette en cause l'immortalité de l'âme propre à tous les vivants et la différence entre l'éternité de l'intelligible et le sempiternité propre au mode d'être intermédiaire qui est échu à l'âme. Il s'agit d'une immortalité qui garantit l'identité au lieu de soulever le problème de l'identité comme permanence au cours du temps.

Lorsque l'âme se met à intelliger, c'est-à-dire lorsqu'elle prend l'initiative de donner à son auto-mouvement constitutif une orientation pour ainsi dire circulaire et parfaitement régulière, elle décide par elle-même de ne plus mettre son énergie au service d'une loi venant de l'extériorité corporelle. Le mouvement circulaire est par excellence le type de mouvement qu'elle doit choisir si enfin elle décide de choisir son mouvement au lieu d'abandonner sa direction au hasard, car il est le mouvement qui, faisant coïncider la fin et le commencement, exprime au mieux le fait que l'âme est un principe qui se meut soi-même jusque dans les différentes orientations qu'elle peut se donner. C'est ce mouvement qui signifie le mieux la nature de toute âme. Lorsqu'elle décide de penser, l'âme accède donc librement à l'autonomie quant à la nature de son mouvement et non plus seulement quant au fait de son mouvement. Ainsi l'âme respecte enfin concrètement pour tous les aspects de son activité la loi à laquelle elle a dû faire allégeance pour venir à l'être : tenir de soi-même ses propres déterminations. Plus rien d'elle n'échappe à l'auto-causalité qui la distingue dès l'origine de tous les autres êtres. Tout ce qui *en* elle sera désormais issu d'elle et par elle. C'est seulement ainsi que le soi qu'elle cause est son soi tout entier et donc mérite son nom de soi. Ces déterminations seront certes amenées à changer puisque l'âme est mouvement, mais toujours elles surgiront des déterminations antérieures selon un ordre qu'elle-même peut comprendre. L'âme en train de penser est donc en quelque sorte *doublement* elle-même. Elle ne se contente pas d'être, de fait, elle-même ; elle se *pose en tant qu'elle-même*, à ses propres yeux, dans l'espace de sa trajectoire et des figures générales qu'elle dessine. Elle se *veut* elle-même, s'elle s'aime elle-même en tant que principe agissant sur soi. Elle échappe à sa contradiction ordinaire, être cause de soi par hasard.

B/ Connaissance du vrai, fidélité au serment et ipséité (thèse)

Ce qui persiste, en matière de soi, au sein de ce mouvement ininterrompu de l'intellection, c'est, comme le suggère Paul Ricœur, l'intensité éthique d'un engagement, et non un substrat inerte ou un

ensemble de propriétés. L'identité personnelle du philosophe n'est donc pas un acquis mais une tâche de chaque instant, une fidélité toujours renouvelée au *logos* une première fois assumée. En revanche, pour le commun des mortels, l'identité de l'âme consiste seulement dans le désir — Eros — qui mène d'image en image¹⁰. Eros, au niveau du corps, produit d'autres corps ; au niveau de l'âme, il produit des affects successifs qui sont à eux-mêmes leurs propres sujets mais s'appellent les uns les autres à l'autres à l'infini. Cette série est liée dynamiquement par le désir, non pas un substrat statique commun se tenant en retrait. C'est l'élan érotique lui-même qui se soutient — l'âme est auto-motrice — et qui soutient continûment les diverses tonalités affectives qui peuvent le colorer. Certes, toute âme d'homme pense un tant soit peu, car toute âme d'homme a vu les Formes mais Eros produit le plus souvent une perte de soi dans l'extériorité. Seul l'amour de l'Idée reconnu comme tel peut maintenir une tension continue de soi vers soi. C'est l'attraction de l'Idée qui incurve le mouvement de l'âme pour en faire un cercle parfait, de même que, dans le système Newtonien, c'est l'attraction du soleil qui courbe le mouvement de certains corps célestes pour en faire ses satellites, les planètes.

L'intellect n'est pas un sujet donné *a priori* qui endure une série d'expérience comme autant de modifications périphérique successives, mais il est l'attitude d'une âme qui s'efforce, au nom de son amour du Bien et du Beau, de demeurer à la hauteur de l'exigence qui lui a donné naissance. L'intellect est un geste, une danse, et il n'est un « organe », comme le dit parfois Platon dans la *République*, que par métaphore et commodité de langage. C'est, pour l'âme, une manière de se comporter à l'égard d'elle-même et, du même coup, c'est aussi une manière de se comporter à l'égard des Idées ; ce comportement investit finalement l'être de l'âme tout entier.

Chez Platon, la reconnaissance du vrai a la valeur éthique du respect d'un serment où, à travers l'autre, c'est finalement surtout à soi-même que l'on est fidèle. Corrélativement, nier le vrai, c'est se trahir. La recherche dialectique est ce qui va montrer cette trahison ou cette fidélité comme telles, et donc nous amener à nous amender.

En effet, Platon choisit de faire de la recherche de ce que sont les choses en soi et par soi la forme première de toute piété¹¹. S'abstenir de mensonge ne suffit pas à contenter les dieux ; il faut aussi investir toutes les forces humaines dans l'approfondissement de la vérité spéculative. Néanmoins, cela se traduit aussi nécessairement par une sincérité envers soi-même et une capacité à maintenir nos engagements initiaux : c'est le principe de l'*ἔλεγχος* socratique. Puisque mon âme possède une semence de vérité en raison de son séjour prénatal dans l'Hadès, et que toutes choses sont apparentées, je ne puis tenir une opinion erronée sans me contredire secrètement. Pour éviter l'erreur, je dois être fidèle au serment que m'impose la raison. Seul celui qui est parfaitement en accord avec soi-même peut dire en vérité ce qui est. Il y a une raison intérieure à l'adéquation de mon discours avec les objets extérieurs. Or cette semence de vérité en moi ne peut être que d'origine divine, voire une divinité en personne. Dire la vérité sur ce qui est, c'est donc ne pas négliger son âme en la laissant dans la contradiction et cela, à son tour, c'est ne pas léser le dieu qui est en nous, l'intellect. Prendre soin de la partie de notre âme capable de penser porte tous les cultes extérieurs à leur perfection, voire les remplace avantageusement pour ce qui est de la familiarité avec le divin :

En ce qui concerne l'espèce d'âme [l'intellect] qui en nous domine, il faut se faire l'idée que voici. En fait, un dieu a donné à chacun de nous, comme démon, cette espèce d'âme-là dont nous disons — ce qui est parfaitement exact — qu'elle habite la partie supérieure de notre corps, et qu'elle nous élève au-dessus de la terre vers ce qui, dans le ciel, nous est apparenté. [...] L'homme qui a mis tout son zèle à acquérir la connaissance et à obtenir des pensées vraies, celui qui a exercé surtout cette partie de lui-même, il est absolument nécessaire, je suppose, qu'il ait des pensées immortelles et divines, si précisément il a atteint à la vérité ; que, dans la mesure, encore une fois, où la nature humaine est capable d'avoir part à l'immortalité, il ne lui en échappe pas la moindre parcelle ; enfin que, puisqu'il ne cesse de prendre soin de son élément divin et qu'il maintient en bonne forme le démon qui en lui partage sa demeure, il soit supérieurement heureux¹².

Inversement, l'absence de vérité spéculative, cause de toute immoralité — nul n'est méchant volontairement —, détruit positivement l'âme, la privant des béatitudes parmi les dieux promises aux initiés de la philosophie :

¹⁰ Cf. Leibniz, Lettre à la reine Anne-Sophie Charlotte : « Car, comme le mouvement mène la matière de figure en figure, l'appétit mène l'âme d'image en image. »

¹¹ Cf. Alexis Pinchard, *Les langues de sagesse dans la Grèce et l'Inde anciennes*, Genève, 2009, p. 160 et suivantes.

¹² Platon, *Timée*, 90a-c. Plus généralement, sur les devoirs sacrés de l'homme envers son âme comme envers ce qu'il y a de plus divin en lui, cf. *Lois* V, 726a-728c.

Donc, quand les morts se présentent devant leur juge, quant ceux d'Asie, par exemple, vont auprès de Rhadamante, Rhadamante les arrête et il sonde l'âme de chacun, sans savoir à qui cette âme appartient ; mais il arrive souvent qu'il tombe sur l'âme du Grand Roi ou encore sur n'importe quel autre roi ou chef, et qu'il considère qu'il n'y a rien de sain en cette âme, qu'elle est lacérée, ulcérée, pleine de tous les parjures ou injustices que chaque action de sa vie a imprimés en elle, que tous ces fragments ont été nourris de mensonges, de vanité, que rien n'est droit en cette âme, parce qu'elle ne s'est jamais nourrie de la moindre vérité. [...] Dès qu'il voit cette âme privée de toute dignité, il l'envoie aussitôt dans la prison du Tartare, où elle est destinée à endurer tous les maux qu'elle mérite¹³.

Prendre soin de l'élément divin de l'âme et l'honorer, ce n'est pas flatter la vanité de l'individu. Au contraire, c'est se purifier incessamment pour dégager ce qu'il y a de vraiment immortel en nous, l'intellect. C'est une ascèse toujours à renouveler. Dans cet effort le soi authentique se constitue, et il ne se constitue qu'en reconnaissant une norme qui le précède, à savoir l'Idée. Chez Platon, la sincérité authentique mène finalement à des vérités objectives car notre âme est constituée par les linéaments de ces vérités. Le souci de soi est un chemin de connaissance vers ce qui est antérieur à soi.

¹³ Platon, *Gorgias*, 525a.

Reading the *Symposium*: Text and Reception

Chair: Antonio Carlini

Stylistic Difference in the Speeches of the *Symposium*

Harold Tarrant (collaborating with Marguerite Johnson)

It is now widely acknowledged that literary form is a crucial ingredient of the Platonic dialogue, and one that affects how the reader should be interpreting the work. Hand in hand with form goes the correspondingly important ingredient of diction. While Plato does not usually introduce obvious and significant changes in diction, he is certainly capable of changing it in accordance with specific requirements, as Tarrant, Benitez, and Roberts demonstrate in relation to the *Timaeus-Critias* and the language of myth (*Ancient Philosophy*, 31, 2011, 95-120). Their methods, borrowed in part from the University of Newcastle's Centre for Literary and Linguistic Computing, focus on the mix of recurrent vocabulary and in particular on the words that tend to be used in any similar text regardless of the subject matter, generally 80 to 100 words in the commonest 200 in any set of texts.

When Plato offers a variety of speeches within a work, especially speeches delivered by different characters or deriving (as in the *Phaedrus*) from different sources of inspiration, he demonstrates himself well able to switch between types of diction, probably involving what should be thought of linguistically as changes of 'register'. Of course, the Greeks had no word equivalent to this term, though the metrical changes that occur in tragedy and comedy guarantee their sensitivity to different types of speech, types that will be employed by an individual only where the situation warrants. Furthermore, the development of rhetorical theory resulted in a technical vocabulary for types of rhetorical speech that applied to one situation rather than another. Accordingly Plato too is prepared on occasion to use the terminology of, for instance, *epideixis* and *protreptic*, and must have had a grasp of their usual stylistic requirements.

The *Symposium*, with its rich cast and with speeches that are usually considered to contrast with one another, is a natural place to expect to see Plato distinguishing between different types of speech—not simply between short question-and-answer exchanges and long set speeches, and not simply between the types of characters being sketched, but between different types of diction that the Greek reader of c. 380 BCE would be instinctively have been aware. There are two poets, but are they actually speaking with a recognisably poetic diction? There is a medical man, but is his language noticeably scientific? And what of the language of the literary enthusiastic 'Phaedrus', or of 'Pausanias' who is often thought to have sophistic connections? As for the language of Alcibiades, it does not seem to reflect his drunkenness, but is it or is it not distinctive? Finally there is the language associated with Diotima. Does she speak like a woman, and if so does she speak particularly like a prophetess? And is ALL this language especially suited to sympotic contexts, informal occasions designed to serve the reunion of friends and to smooth out any recent wounds?

This paper began with an observation that resulted in a joint Johnson-and-Tarrant article, which is (hopefully) soon to appear.¹ The commentary of Olympiodorus had branded the central section of the *Alcibiades I* 'protreptic', and a test of various chosen materials was run to ascertain whether there was indeed a recognisable 'protreptic register' in Plato. They included the two works in which the notion of protreptic discourse appeared, the *Euthydemus* (with its protreptic interludes considered in isolation) and the *Clitophon*, where 'Clitophon' complains that Socrates' discourse serves only a protreptic purpose. Chart 1 offers diagrammatically the resultant cluster analysis:

¹ 'Fairytales and Make-believe, or Spinning Stories about Poros and Penia in Plato's Symposium: A Literary and Computational Analysis', *Phoenix* forthcoming.

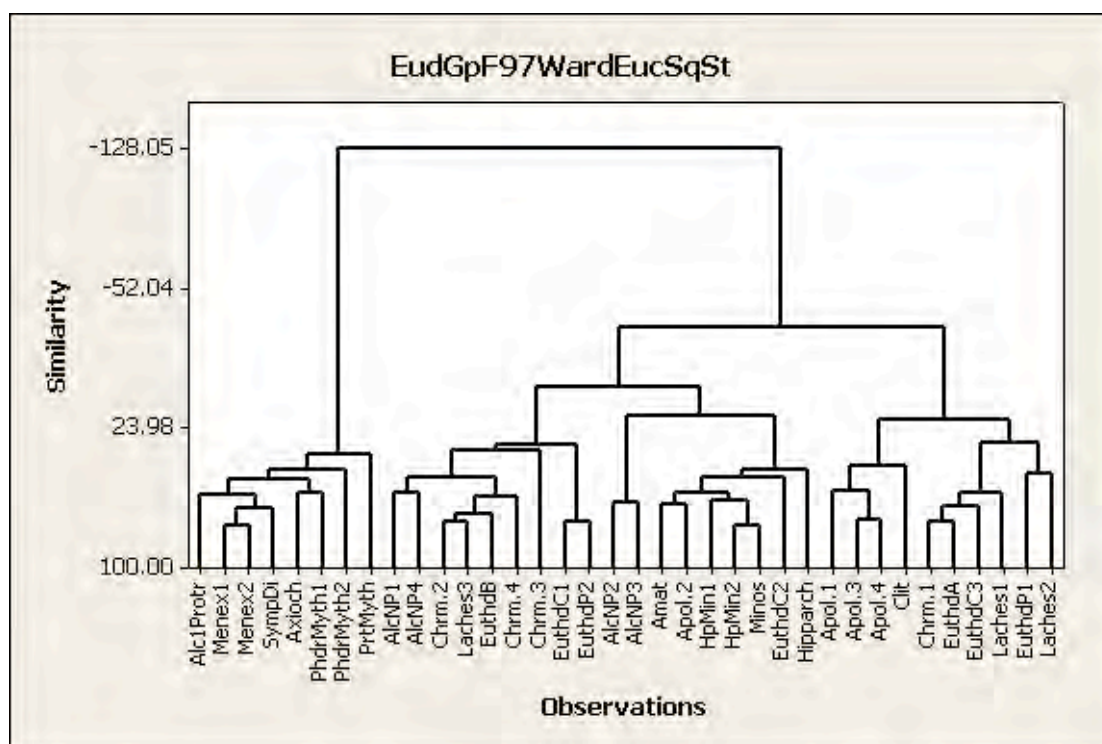


Chart 1: Cluster analysis of selected Socratic texts

Olympiodorus' 'protreptic' section of the *Alcibiades* I (119a-124b: = Alc1Protr, far left), in which Socrates, offering concerned guidance of an almost parental character, makes excellent use of the things that queens of Persia and Sparta might say about Alcibiades, is placed closest to both blocks into which the program had split the *Menexenus* and to *Symposium* 201d-212b. The role of women in all four blocks suggests that there may be some common linguistic feature that affects how Socrates speaks when trying to think like Aspasia, Diotima, and Amestris or Lampido. The only other four blocks that are closely linked with these linguistically are the spurious *Axiochus* in which Socrates urges Axiochus to face death bravely, the palinode of the *Phaedrus* (in two parts) and the myth of *Protagoras*. Do they too offer some kind of quasi-parental voice, perhaps, or is there some overlap between the language of myth and female language? Diotima is of course herself a myth-teller, and as we show the tale of Poros and Penia is linguistically more extreme than most myths.

This suggestion of a link between the voices of women and of story-tellers may be of wide relevance to the *Symposium*. To many of Socrates' contemporaries, notably Thrasymachus (*Rep.* 350e2-4) and Callicles (*Grg.* 527a5-8), little was thought as unreliable as a story coming from a mature woman. Even taken alone, neither story nor female voice is ordinarily a source of authority for an Athenian, and either could readily be dismissed. But much the same could be set of 'symptotic literature' altogether. No speaker at this symposium or at the one presented by Xenophon commands great authority, for that is not what is expected of a contribution towards symptotic entertainment. And further, the poem's account of the tale's oral history (172a1-173b8) and Aristodemus' documented lapses of attention (180c1-2, 223b8-c1), are enough to undermine any confidence the hearer has in the accuracy of the narrative on offer. Plato is not forcing beliefs on us here; his speakers compete in offering worthy praise of the god Eros (177c2-7, 197e5-7), not in offering anything reliable (198c5-e4). He invites us to relax and enjoy an entertainment, which may well conceal truth upon reflection, but seldom masquerades as literal truth.

Even the comments made upon the diction are such as to reinforce our sense of incredulity, beginning with Apollodorus' assertion that the wise teach him to use cheap jingles (185c4-5), continuing with Aristophanes' determination to deliver a laughable speech (189b4-7), proceeding on to Socrates' affirmation about the refined Agathon speaking like the haughty Gorgias (198c1-2), and finally to the enigmatic suggestion that Diotima, approaching the climax of her speech (208c1), spoke 'like the ultimate sophists'. One never knows what, if anything, to take seriously for it seems that Plato spends the whole dialogue being coy, and hiding his jewels well beneath the surface.²

Even so, it could be argued that the very language used in some speeches invites us to

² Cf. *Alcibiades* on Socrates, 216e.

contemplate the possibility of a serious message, while that used by others does not. Certainly we are unlikely to listen seriously to anything resembling the speech of Lysias in the *Phaedrus*, and we do in fact have a speech in the *Symposium* that the computer recognises as closely resembling it. That speech is of course the speech given by Lysias' great admirer Phaedrus. We divided the *Symposium* according to speeches, plus a file for the introduction preceding the speeches, and another for additional frame-material, while dividing the *Phaedrus* into:

- Phdr.A: what precedes the speech of Lysias
- Phdr.S1: the speech of Lysias
- Phdr.B: what follows Lysias and precedes Socrates' first speech
- Phdr.S2: Socrates' first speech
- Phdr.C: what follows his first speech and precedes the Palinode
- PalinodeA: to 247c2
- PalinodeB: 247c3-253c6
- PalinodeC: 253c7 on
- Phdr.D (1-3): what follows the palinode, words 1-2000, 2001-4000, 4001 on.

To these materials were added the *Phaedo* divided into 2000-word blocks; *Republic* IV, VII, and X similarly divided (except that the Myth of Er was kept separate); a composite file consisting of all Gorgias' contributions to the *Gorgias* of around three lines or more; the final myth in the *Gorgias*. The computer easily isolates and links together the files consisting of Gorgias' speeches, Lysias' speech, and Phaedrus' speech in the *Symposium* (chart 2):

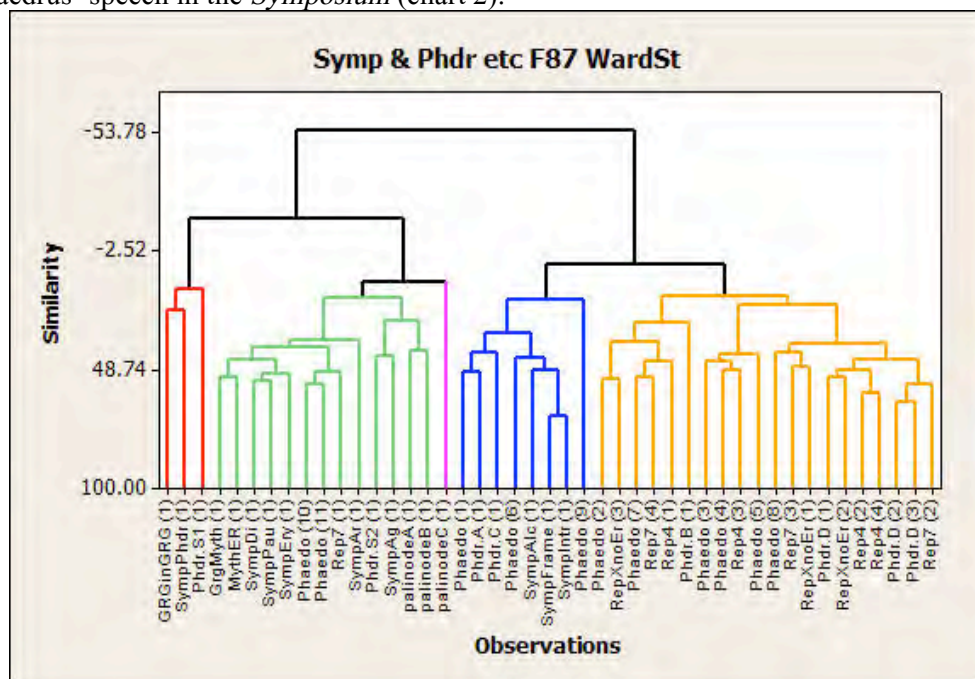


Chart 2: Cluster analysis of parts of middle-period dialogues

Most files that we should expect to display the features of everyday conversational language are placed in cluster 3 (centre, blue) or 4 (right, yellow), both in the right-hand arm of the chart. Here are placed all blocks of *Phaedo* except for the two last blocks (106b7-111e5, 111e5-end), all blocks of *Republic* iv, vii and x except the Myth of Er and the Cave-block (514a1-520d3), all non-speech *Phaedrus*; and the introduction and frame of *Symposium* plus Alcibiades' speech. The three rhetorical files (cluster 1, left, red) are kept together,³ separate from, but distantly related to files in which Plato appears to use other kinds of non-conversational language, usually myth-like or poetic: the myth of judgment in *Gorgias*, the Myth of Er, the account of the True Earth in *Phaedo*, the Cave-block of *Rep.* 514-520, both of Socrates' speeches in *Phaedrus*—the first poetic, the second poetic and sometimes myth-like, and all speeches in *Symposium* other than the shallow rhetorical exercise of *Phaedrus* and the speech of Alcibiades. This latter, though a monologue, closely resembles the narrative introduction and frame of *Symposium*.

What do all the main speeches other than those of Phaedrus and Alcibiades share in common?

³ Subsequent analysis used files reflecting the real language of Gorgias (*Helen*, *Epitaphios*), Lysias (*c.Erat.*), and Isocrates (*c.Soph.*); the speech of Lysias and Phaedrus' speech proved closer to Lysias and Isocrates than to Gorgias.

Neoplatonists would have regarded them all as examples of a style that is to some degree ‘rich’ or ‘weighty’ (ἄδρὸς), as opposed to ‘lean’ (ἰσχνὸς). The speech of Lysias is a paradigm case of a speech in the lean style (Hermias *in Phdr.* 10.16, 206.22; cf. *in Prm.* 633.10), but Socrates’ familiar conversational style is likewise lean (*in Tim.* I.64.5-11, cf. anon. *Proleg.* 17.12-13). However, Socrates uses a weightier style in both his speeches in *Phdr.* (Hermias, *in Phdr.* 206.17-26; cf. 10.14-18; anon. at Proc. *in Prm.* 633.10). This style was considered suited to those experiencing divine possession (*in Prm.* 645.30-31), to divine addresses (*in Tim.* III.199.29-200.19), to myths like that of the *Gorgias* (anon. *Proleg.* 17.13-15) and other theological material (ibid. 3-4), to divinely inspired poetry (Proc. *in Prm.* 646.23-25), and other inspired speech such as the Nuptial Number passage and the Myth of Er in the *Republic* (Proc. *in Tim.* III.200.3-10), and to oracles (*in Tim.* I.64.16-17). These passages repeatedly speak of the weightier language being tailored to reflect the weightier nature of the subject matter. Hence there is a presumption that wherever Plato breaks into this richer language his characters will be trying to suggest the great weight of their subject matter. Given that all formal speeches in the *Symposium* are ‘encomia’, it is no surprise that Proclus tells us that a worthy encomium requires a delivery that is rich, solemn and grand (*in Tim.* I.62.8-9). These encomia tailor their language to subject matter concerned with a divine, or at least daemonic, being. If the speech is to praise their subject in a worthy fashion, then it must be rich, solemn and grand.

But does Phaedrus’ speech not count as an encomium? Perhaps, but Lysian simplicity has got the better of him. And is Agathon’s speech really to be taken seriously? In this case Proclus (*in Tim.* I.6413-23) seems to have an answer. Dividing composition into ‘inspired’ and ‘technical’, he argues that the attempt to substitute artificial technique for higher inspiration produces a contrived and bombastic result. Agathon’s speech begins by offering guidelines for correct encomia (194e4-195a5), and Socrates’ response subtly mocks Agathon’s techniques (198c5-199a3). The solemnity of his speech is artificial, hence Socrates will ultimately compare its ending with the bombastic prose of *Gorgias*.

As for Phaedrus’ speech, one needs to separate out the elements that contribute to its being attributed to the rhetorical cluster. Principal component analysis has the advantage of detecting groups of words that combine to influence the linguistic mix of several blocks. The first principal component detects the most obvious of these combinations, the second the second most obvious, and so on. Phaedrus’ speech (+6.32), the *Gorgias*-file (+7.07), and the speech of Lysias (+10.86) are placed together at the top of the *second* principal component, indicating that they share a combination of characteristics. However, the difference between speech that is weighty and that which is lean seems to be precisely what is captured by the first principal component. Here are all the scores at the lowest (negative) end of the scale:

Block name	Score, PC1	Category	Remark
palinodeC (1)	-9.35037	Myth	Also poetic
MythER (1)	-7.13451	Myth	
palinodeB (1)	-7.09177	Myth	Also poetic
palinodeA (1)	-4.07255	Inspired	Also poetic
Phdr.S2 (1)	-4.06727	Inspired	Also poetic
GrgMyth (1)	-3.63663	Myth	
SympAr (1)	-3.45248	Myth	Also poetic
SympAg (1)	-3.44254	Encomium	Also poetic
SympEry (1)	-2.94973	Encomium	
Phaedo (11)	-2.2353	Part-myth	Swansong 111e-118a
Phaedo (10)	-1.84489	Part-myth	Swansong 106b-111e
SympPhdr (1)	-1.69257	Encomium	Rhetorical
SympPau (1)	-1.24534	Encomium	
SympDi (1)	-1.21953	‘Encomium’	Part-conversational
Rep7 (4)	-0.83935	Cave explained	533a-541b
Rep7 (1)	-0.62754	Cave described	514a-520d
Phaedo (5)	-0.61465	Myth-like	79b-84d

Table 1: Results of less than -0.5 on first principal component

Obviously the pervasive presence of either myth or a poetic style is important in accounting for these negative scores, and accordingly the speech of Aristophanes is the highest-scoring part of the *Symposium*, followed by Agathon and Eryximachus, with Phaedrus coming next. Recall that all these speeches are encomia of a kind, though the Diotima contribution is a highly unusual and somewhat conversational kind (199a6-b7).

What do these results mean for an ancient reader? As encomia of a quasi-divine being that is manifested in human action, they a partly proreptic function, designed to encourage supposedly ethical behaviour. The anonymous *Prolegomena* takes a blended style, neither wholly weighty nor wholly lean, as a characteristic of moral discussions (17.15-18), and the speeches of Phaedrus and Pausanias would perhaps have struck the listener as ‘blended’, and hence as having something serious to offer *if the elevated style did not seem contrived*, as that of Phaedrus would perhaps have done. Pausanias’ speech was certainly agreed by the Platonist Taurus and Aulus Gellius (*NA* 17.20.6) to require one to penetrate beyond the dressing of rhetoric to the weighty and majestic depths of Plato’s subject matter. Rather weightier (to judge from PC1) was the tone of Eryximachus, marginally less weighty than Aristophanes’ foundation-myth of human erotic behaviour and Agathon’s technically contrived poetic encomium. Through the admixture of features of the ἄδρῶς-style Plato ensures that his audience sits up in expectation of hearing something with substantial content, and the tendency is for this admixture to increase, from Phaedrus (who by his resemblance to ‘Lysias’ must have been seen to display features of the opposite style as well) and Pausanias, to Eryximachus, Aristophanes, and Agathon—who is quickly exposed as a fraud by Socrates. The specious beauty of Agathon’s effort is in effect replaced by the deeper beauty associated with Diotima, who will make use of the ἄδρῶς-style in certain passages, most notably the myth of Poros and Penia and the Ladder of Love passage, but remains in conversational-mode elsewhere.

In the following chart, which was not atypical, we found that the Poros and Penia passage most resembled the latter part of the *Palinode*,⁴ and the Ladder of Love the earlier part. The special diction of the Diotima passage is thus like nothing more than that of the inspired poet, whether mythical or not so mythical. The remainder of it most resembled the introductory narratives of the *Euthydemus* and the *Symposium* itself (Chart 3):

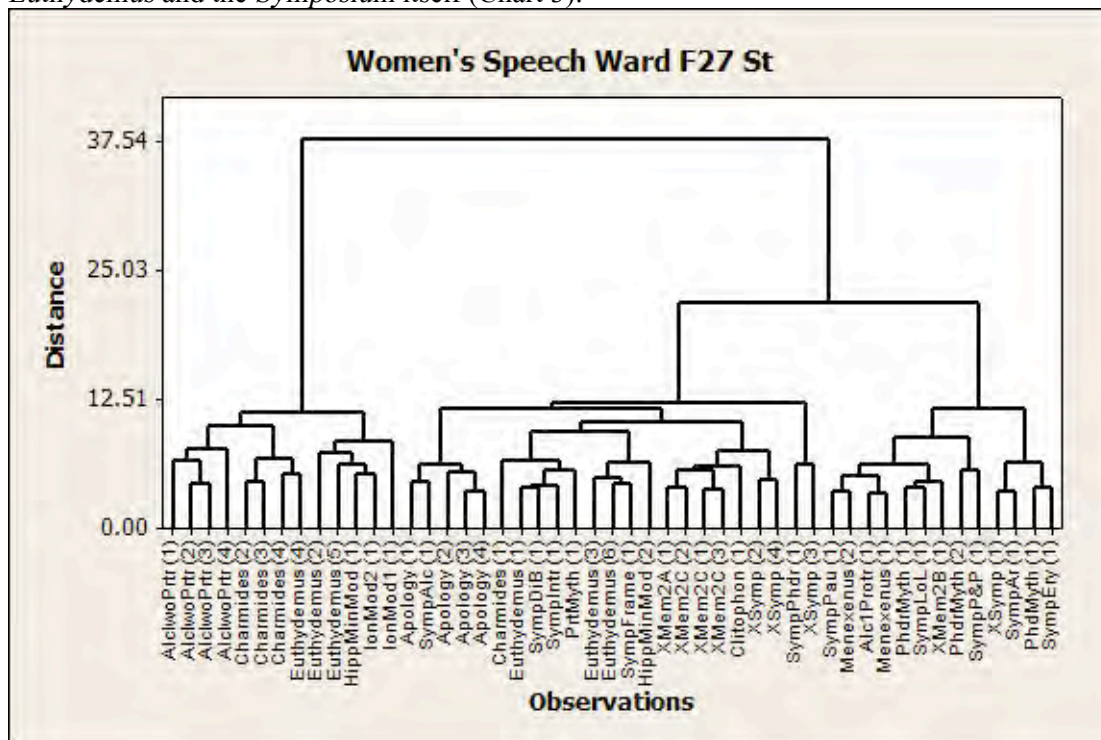


Table 3: Diotima’s speech split

The versatility of Diotima’s diction was thus both striking and confusing, and stands in contrast to the more homogeneous contributions of other speakers. The listeners are left perplexed (212c4-6), no doubt unwilling to share Socrates’ readiness to believe this strange lady, and happy to be diverted by

⁴ Rather than the threefold division used earlier in this paper, earlier work had simply split the *Palinode* into two files, with a break after the first 2000 words (250a6).

the arrival of Aristophanes.

Some Possible Conclusions:

- Varieties of diction in the *Symposium* are intended to be noticed by Plato's audience; they are used partly as a means of controlling our expectations, and, where these prove false, of increasing our perplexity;
- Diotima's diction, perhaps recognizably female, varied, and ultimately weighty, creates an atmosphere designed to challenge our expectations of a female voice;
- Phaedrus' diction is modelled on that of the orators on whom he doted, and undermines any seriousness behind the speech;
- Intermediate speeches are seemingly all examples of a type of speech associated by later Platonists with a serious message and elevated subject matter;
- Agathon's speech seems intended to sound technical rather than inspired, and so the audience's confidence is ready to be undermined by Socrates' challenge;
- Aristophanes' speech is the one that most resembles myth, and hence is the most likely of the early speeches to conceal a weightier message below the surface;
- There is little in either the text or the stylistic results to discourage the idea of a general increase in depth from Phaedrus to Diotima that nevertheless bypasses Agathon.
- There is little difference in level of 'richness' or 'weightiness' between the speeches of Eryximachus and Aristophanes, and combined with the hiccough device that has the two speak out of order, there is once again an ambiguity that encourages one to ponder which is the proper order of speeches.

Lettori antichi di Platone: il caso del *Simposio* (POxy 843)

Margherita Erbi

“Contaminazione, diffusione trasversale, o orizzontale di lezioni vi fu di certo, ma essa appartiene già al periodo antico della storia del testo, non soltanto alla tradizione medievale”.

In sintesi questo è, per usare le parole di Giorgio Pasquali, il contributo dato alla ricostruzione della storia del testo di Platone dai papiri. La tradizione papiracea, infatti, prova che i codici bizantini continuano, almeno in parte, vari esemplari antichi risalenti ad edizioni antiche, forse già pre-alessandrine¹. Dunque per Pasquali tutt'altro che marginale è stato nella ricostruzione delle fasi più antiche della storia del testo di Platone il ruolo avuto dalla tradizione papiracea, che negli anni in cui veniva alla luce la *Storia della tradizione e critica del testo*, consisteva in soli 23 esemplari, quelli cioè registrati nei noti elenchi di Oldfather². Da allora nuove acquisizioni hanno incrementato il numero dei papiri che conservano i dialoghi: 82 sono i papiri editi nel 1999 nel *Corpus dei Papiri Filosofici*. 96 sono i papiri che oggi compaiono nel MartensPack3 *on line*, il Database del Centre de Documentation de Papyrologie Littéraire aggiornato a maggio 2013. Questi i papiri secondo le tetralogie: 1 con l'*Eutifrone*, 1 con l'*Apologia*, 1 con il *Critone*, 10 con il *Fedone*, 2 con il *Cratilo*, 4 con il *Teeteto*, 1 con il *Sofista*, 7 con il *Politico*, 2 con il *Parmenide*, 2 con il *Filebo*, 1 con il *Simposio*, 7 con il *Fedro*, 3 con l'*Alcibiade I*, 2 con l'*Alcibiade II*, 1 con i *Rivali*, 1 con il *Teage*, 2 con il *Carmide*, 5 con il *Lachete*, 1 con il *Liside*, 2 con l'*Eutidemo*, 1 con il *Protagora*, 5 con il *Gorgia*, 2 con il *Menone*, 1 con l'*Ippia Maggiore*, 13 con la *Repubblica*, 1 con il *Timeo*, 1 con il *Minosse*, 9 con le *Leggi*, 1 con l'*Epistola II*, 1 con l'*Epistola VII*. A questi si aggiungono 5 papiri che conservano *Commentari* ai dialoghi: 1 al *Fedone*, 1 al *Teeteto*, 1 al *Politico*, 1 al *Fedro* e 1 all'*Alcibiade I*. I più antichi di questi papiri risalgono al III secolo a.C.: PPetr I 5-8 che conserva il *Fedone*, PPetr I 50 con il *Lachete* e PHib 2.228 che conserva il frammento del *Sofista*, ma anche PLG Carlini 29+P.Monac 2.21 che restituiscono il commento filosofico al testo del *Fedone*. Il papiro più recente, PAnt 2.68, un papiro con il *Teeteto*, è datato al V-VI d.C. Il gruppo più consistente è costituito dagli 81 papiri di età imperiale, datati tra il II e III secolo d.C.: si tratta dunque della gran parte dei papiri di Platone a noi noti, il confronto dei quali con la tradizione medievale si è rivelato, come ha dimostrato Antonio Carlini³, assai fruttuoso. Incolmabile è almeno fino a oggi, purtroppo, il vuoto dal III secolo a.C. al II secolo d.C.

È ben comprensibile come un così significativo numero di papiri che appartengono a epoche tanto diverse tra loro non potesse che indurre la critica a interrogarsi sulla storia più antica del testo e sui diversi stati attraverso i quali le opere di Platone dall'antichità sono giunte a noi. I papiri più antichi, quelli di epoca tolemaica, presentano un testo spesso divergente da quello dei codici, talvolta rivelandosi superiore ai codici, talvolta presentando corrotte e varianti inferiori. Le convergenze con la tradizione medievale confermano per lo più l'antichità di lezioni prima attestate da singoli codici o da famiglie di codici e suggeriscono che il numero delle varianti esistenti già un secolo dopo la morte di Platone doveva essere piuttosto ampio. I papiri platonici di età imperiale presentano un testo molto più uniforme con un numero di varianti ridotto rispetto alla tradizione medievale: poche sono le varianti notevoli, per lo più i papiri confermano le lezioni dei codici. Una situazione che si spiega, ricorrendo, pur con la necessaria cautela, all'ipotesi di un'edizione autorevole che abbia imposto una sua autorità sulle altre. Un'edizione alla quale risalirebbero, in ultima analisi, sia i codici, sia i papiri di età imperiale nonché i testimoni medievali. Dunque i papiri, al di là della bontà della tradizione che testimoniano, consentono, in molti casi, il recupero di correnti testuali, magari secondarie, ma pur sempre presenti nell'antichità. Per tutto ciò si rivelano assai importanti per la storia del testo di Platone, in particolare per ripercorrere i diversi stadi del testo. Ma non c'è dubbio che i papiri offrano anche indizi utili per ricostruire la fruizione del testo di Platone nell'antichità. In proposito è ben noto che per Platone i papiri provano soprattutto una fruizione alta: si tratta infatti nella stragrande maggioranza dei casi di rotoli realizzati per studiosi. Dunque, il numero dei papiri prova una buona diffusione, la tipologia dei rotoli prova la fruizione alta.

Dei 96 papiri di Platone giunti a noi solo il POxy 843 conserva il testo del *Simposio*. Dunque un unico papiro, ma un papiro che, come vedremo, molti dati offre sul suo allestimento e sulla sua

¹ Pasquali G., *Storia della tradizione e critica del testo*, Firenze 1952².

² Oldfather C.H., *Greek Literary texts from Graeco-Roman Egypt*, Madison 1923.

³ Carlini A., *Studi sulla tradizione antica e medievale del Fedone*, Roma 1972.

destinazione. Si tratta del più esteso papiro che conserva un testo di Platone, uno dei rotoli letterari meglio conservati. Rinvenuto ad Ossirinco durante V la campagna di scavo nel 1905-1906 e datato su base paleografica tra il II e III secolo d.C., è edito per la prima volta nel 1908 da Grenfell e Hunt nel V volume degli *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*: è di Fabio Vindruscolo l'edizione del testo pubblicata nel 1999 nel *Corpus dei Papii Filosofici*.

Le caratteristiche fisiche del *volumen* ne provano l'ottima qualità, la *mise en page* è indice della cura redazionale, gli interventi del *diorthotes* documentano un sistematico impegno sul testo.

Il *volumen* alto 31,1 cm è conservato in lunghezza per 2,50 m. Le 31 colonne ricostruibili corrispondono a poco meno della seconda metà del dialogo: pertanto il rotolo con l'intera opera doveva originariamente avere una lunghezza di circa 7 m. e contenere in totale 65/70 colonne. Sostanzialmente ben leggibili sono 25 colonne di scrittura: della I colonna si leggono solo poche lettere, consistente è la lacuna che si estende per ben 5 colonne dalla XVIII alla XXIII. Dalla colonna II all'inizio della colonna XVIII è conservata la parte di testo che corrisponde a 201a1 – 213e3 Stephanus. Dalla colonna XXIII fino alla fine del rotolo è conservato il testo che corrisponde a 213e4-217b1 Stephanus. Dunque il papiro restituisce, pur solo in parte, le ultime 16 pagine Stephanus del dialogo: le ultime battute dello scambio tra Socrate e Agatone e parte del discorso di Diotima riferito da Socrate, l'ingresso di Alcibiade, l'elogio di Socrate e le battute finali.

Ben leggibile è il colofone con il nome dell'autore e il titolo dell'opera, Πλάτωνος Συμπόσιον vergato nella colonna finale sotto le ultime righe di scrittura.

Il nostro testo soddisfa tutte le sei caratteristiche che, secondo Turner⁴, contraddistinguono i libri di Ossirinco destinati ad una fruizione dotta: una bella grafia, l'uso del solo *recto*, la correttezza ortografica dello scriba, la presenza di punteggiatura e segni critici, le tracce dell'intervento di un revisore, l'aggiunta di note marginali. Il testo è vergato sul *recto* con una grafia verticale, angolosa e regolare: il modulo è piccolo e tendenzialmente quadrato. Il tratto è caratterizzato da irregolari contrasti di spessore. Il *verso* è bianco. L'allineamento a destra dei righe è rispettato: realizzato sia con il restringimento delle lettere sia con l'impiego del segno di riempimento angolato (>). Il v in fine rigo è spesso sostituito da un trattino soprascritto: si tratta dell'unica forma di abbreviazione presente nel testo. Abbastanza regolare è l'uso dei segni di interpunzione: *stigmai* e *paragraphoi* segnalano pause più o meno forti, i doppi punti sono utilizzati, anche se non esclusivamente, per indicare, come d'uso, il cambio di battuta. I passaggi più significativi della struttura del dialogo, spesso evidenziati anche dai codici medievali, sono marcati dalla *diple obelismene* o dalla *paragraphos* più grande combinata con la coronide. La *diple obelismene* si trova due volte: a 201d1 in corrispondenza del punto in cui Socrate introduce il discorso di Diotima, dopo εἶσω, e a 210a5 nel punto in cui Diotima inizia Socrate agli ἐρωτικά. Le coronidi segnano invece la fine del discorso di Socrate a 212c4 la fine del discorso di Alcibiade, 222c1 e la fine dell'intero componimento. Il testo, come abbiamo ricordato, è abbastanza corretto dal punto di vista ortografico.

L'apporto del papiro alla costituzione del testo è positivo: il papiro conferma per lo più il testo tradito di fronte a molti interventi non necessari. Benché alcune novità rispetto ai codici primari che sanano guasti già emendati dai bizantini o dai moderni, o comunque già rilevati, non siano da trascurare, nella grande maggioranza dei casi le varianti appaiono tendenzialmente inferiori o equivalenti al testo medievale. Pochi sono, ma comunque assi utili per la costituzione del testo sono i casi nei quali le varianti risultano autentiche e pertanto preferibili al testo della tradizione medievale. Il nostro papiro è l'unico testimone che conserva a r. 1180 la preziosa lezione εἶσω ἄντικρυς con il significato "direttamente dentro" al posto di εἰς τὸ ἄντικρυς di 223b4, presente nella maggior parte dei codici, interpretato come equivalente al semplice ἄντικρυς "direttamente" e accolto da gran parte degli editori. L'uso di ἄντικρυς con articolo e preposizione non ha paralleli né spiegazione. È invece attestato con καταντικρύ "di fronte": forse proprio all'influsso di καταντικρύ è da ricondurre l'origine dell'errore e quindi la sequenza εἰς τὸ ἄντικρυς. εἶσω ἄντικρυς descrive certo meglio dell'inusuale sequenza εἰς τὸ ἄντικρυς l'irrompere improvviso della folla di gaudenti nel simposio, alla fine del dialogo, nel momento in cui Agatone si accinge a sdraiarsi accanto a Socrate.

Molti sono gli errori presenti nel papiro ma estranei alla tradizione medievale: si tratta per lo più di banalizzazioni emendate dall'intervento del *diorthotes*. Poche sono invece le varianti di cui non è facile ipotizzare l'origine. Non privo di significato per la storia del testo è inoltre l'accordo, se pure occasionale, in lezioni erronee o peculiari fra il nostro papiro e altri testimoni di età imperiale contro i codici. L'assenza poi di significativi casi di convergenza in errore con i codici primari suggerisce di collocare il testo del nostro papiro prima di una fase di selezione attraverso la quale è passata la tradizione di Platone giunta a noi. Le numerose coincidenze in errore tra il papiro e le singole famiglie

⁴ Turner E.G., *Greek Papyri. An Introduction*, Oxford 1980².

o parti della tradizione non sono particolarmente significative: per lo più sono spiegabili come esito di una comune tendenza alla banalizzazione. Non sfugge tuttavia che dietro i pochi sicuri errori sia possibile scorgere un'unità testuale di fondo tra il nostro testimone e i codici medievali. Un'unità che, si può forse ricondurre, se pure con cautela, alle fasi più remote della trasmissione del testo di Platone, forse addirittura all'edizione che sarebbe stata allestita all'interno dell'Accademia. Nei casi in cui i codici divergono il nostro papiro conferma di norma la lezione buona di due delle tre famiglie. Per questo il papiro si rivela decisivo per dirimere i molti casi in cui nella tradizione medievale si contrappongono due lezioni adiafore.

Ma non c'è dubbio che l'importanza del papiro è accresciuta dall'accurato intervento del *diorthotes*. La grafia del *diorthotes*, con asse lievemente inclinato a destra, può essere ritenuta coeva a quella dello scriba: pertanto in relazione a interventi minimi sul testo non sempre è facile distinguere la mano del correttore dalla mano dello scriba che *inter scribendum* corregge il testo. Una distinzione resa non agevole anche dalla grande somiglianza dell'inchiostro usato dallo scriba con quello del correttore. Tuttavia la gran parte dei 150 interventi sul testo sono per lo più da ricondurre al lavoro del *diorthotes* che sana le sviste dello scriba, emenda i guasti, esiti di banalizzazioni, corregge gli errori più importanti, colma omissioni e lacune, aggiunge punti, accenti, spiriti e segni diacritici. È plausibile che proprio la mano del *diorthotes* abbia segnato gli spiriti e gli accenti che compaiono nel testo, una ventina in tutto con funzione distintiva. Le aggiunte testuali sono inserite *supra lineam*, le cancellazioni di parole iterate o di parti da espungere sono, di norma, eliminate con soprilineatura. È della mano del correttore l'unico scolio presente nel testo.

L'impegno del *diorthotes* sul testo ne migliora in molti casi la qualità. Né pochi né irrilevanti, poi, sono gli interventi che suggeriscono una revisione condotta a partire da un esemplare diverso rispetto all'antigrafo dal quale la prima mano ha copiato il testo. Infatti, almeno in sette casi è possibile individuare lezioni o varianti riconducibili ad una tradizione diversa da quella alla quale appartiene il testo copiato dallo scriba. Si tratta per lo più di varianti inferiori, ma pur sempre di varianti che circolavano ad Ossirinco nel II secolo d.C., e che danno accesso forse ad un altro manoscritto. Osserviamo dunque alcuni esempi.

In risposta a Socrate Diotima a 207d4 spiega che la natura mortale, per quanto le sia possibile, cerca di esistere perennemente attraverso la generazione. Diotima poi precisa che ciò può avvenire in quanto la natura lascia ogni volta un essere nuovo in luogo di uno vecchio: anche nel lasso di tempo in cui ciascun animale vive ed esiste di per sé, si dice che rimane lo stesso l'individuo da quando è fanciullo alla vecchiaia, anche se le sue parti costitutive si rinnovano perpetuamente. ἐν ὧν ἔν di 207d4 conservato da BD T PW è sospeso sintatticamente nella frase e crea un anacoluto. ἐν ᾧ manca invece in Vind Phil Gr. 21, dove probabilmente è stato eliminato per congettura. Il papiro a r. 438 conserva la sequenza ἐν ὧν ἔν con spirito e accento sopra ω e con un punto sia sopra ε sia sopra ν del secondo εν. Nel papiro il punto sopra la lettera è registrato di solito in modo incerto. Di norma, come si è visto, l'espunzione di parole e passi più lunghi è indicata mediante soprilineatura. Dunque è plausibile che il correttore qui abbia voluto segnalare con i due punti sopra εν un'omissione che registrava nel suo esemplare di collazione.

A 223a4 Agatone si rivolge ad Alcibiade: dichiara di voler cambiare posizione soprattutto per ricevere l'elogio di Socrate. A r. 1167, in luogo di παντὸς μᾶλλον dei codici, il papiro ha πάντοσ'ε' μᾶλλον dove la ε' è aggiunta *supra lineam*. Resta incerto il testo dello scriba sul quale è intervenuto il correttore. I primi editori stampano πάντοσα, con α incerta e ε *supra lineam* come correzione di α, ma forse non si deve escludere παντω, con ω corretto, in un primo momento in παντ [[ω]] ός. Certo è che πάντοσε μᾶλλον è con ogni probabilità una lezione inferiore come suggerisce l'assai raro πάντοσε, ma lezione dotata di senso e di efficacia: Alcibiade con πάντοσε sembrerebbe ribadire la sua ferrea intenzione di spostarsi ovunque pur ricevere la lode da Socrate.

Della stessa mano del correttore è l'unico scolio presente nel papiro. In margine a r. 391 si leggono due brevi righe: nel primo rigo la sequenza αρεχ, con ν sopra α, come abbreviazione di ἀν(τὶ τοῦ), e ν sopra ο, come abbreviazione di οὔ(τωσ), nel secondo la sequenza ρος στ .[. Gli editori stampano ἀν(τὶ τοῦ) οὔ(τωσ) ἔχει e riconoscono in questa nota una spiegazione a εἶεν di 206e 3-4, la parola più vicina. Non possiamo ricostruire l'indicazione del *diorthotes* che nello scolio sembra proporre una forma alternativa a εἶεν che ne chiarisca il senso. In effetti εἶεν, raramente usato come forma breve di risposta, si trova in un passaggio cruciale del dialogo tra Socrate e Diotima. Diotima afferma che eros è desiderio di generazione del bello. La risposta di Socrate, εἶεν, introduce di fatto il discorso con il quale Diotima spiega la propria tesi mostrando che la generazione è per mortali cosa immortale ed eterna. È probabile che per il correttore εἶεν il cui significato, come emerge dalla critica, sembra oscillare tra un valore asseverativo e un valore interrogativo, richiedesse una spiegazione. Pochi sono

gli errori evidenti che restano non corretti e per lo più si tratta di sviste o dimenticanze. È plausibile che siano esito di banalizzazioni che, non compromettendo il senso, erano trascurate dal correttore.

Come emerge dalle considerazioni fin qui sviluppate, non c'è dubbio che il P.Oxy. 843 vergato sul *recto* di un rotolo di buona qualità con una grafia ordinata e corretta, caratterizzato dalla presenza di punteggiatura, accenti, spiriti e segni critici, sottoposto alla revisione attenta e scrupolosa di un correttore, segno palese di uno spiccato interesse esegetico doveva essere destinato ad uno studioso.

È plausibile che il nostro testo sia stato allestito presso uno degli *scriptoria* o delle biblioteche presenti ad Ossirinco, la città definita a partire dal III secolo d.C. λαμπρά καὶ λαμπροτάτη, illustre e celeberrima, ma senza dubbio importante anche nei secoli precedenti. Numerosi sono i documenti che per il II secolo d.C. descrivono Ossirinco come una città dotta che aveva contatti con la vita culturale di Alessandria e con le correnti culturali più vive. È proprio ad Ossirinco nel II secolo d.C. che collochiamo con certezza l'attività di Arpocrazione, l'autore del noto lessico sui dieci oratori, e l'attività di altri eruditi, dei quali è possibile in alcuni casi definire addirittura l'identità e gli interessi. All'impegno di studiosi ed eruditi sui testi della letteratura greca bisogna forse ricondurre la presenza ad Ossirinco di moltissimi rotoli con testi letterari. Certo frutto della loro esegesi sui testi sono le tante opere erudite conservateci dai papiri. Intenso ad Ossirinco era dunque anche il lavoro degli scribi, le mani di alcuni dei quali, grazie alle importanti quantità di rotoli rinvenuti, è stato possibile riconoscere in più di un manoscritto.

Questo il *milieu* culturale nel quale il nostro papiro è stato allestito. Dunque l'attività di studio del dotto destinatario del nostro rotolo è da immaginare in relazione ai circoli di intellettuali che animavano la vita culturale della Ossirinco del II secolo d.C. E questo certo non desta stupore. Infatti la gran parte dei papiri con i testi di Platone provengono da Ossirinco e sono databili al II o al III secolo d.C. Si tratta di 53 in tutto. Tra i quali spiccano i 6 del *Fedone*, i 6 del *Politico* e i 4 delle *Leggi* i 4 con l'*Alcibiade* I, i 3 del *Teeteto* e i 3 del *Lachete*. Nella gran parte dei casi sono, proprio come il nostro testo del *Simposio*, ben scritti, mai gravemente scorretti, con segni di punteggiatura, segni diacritici e varianti marginali o interlineari, brevi note. Dunque manoscritti destinati a lettori dotti e allestiti con scrupolosa cura in vista di uno studio più approfondito del testo e non della sola lettura. La circolazione dei dialoghi di Platone ad Ossirinco in quei secoli è provata inoltre da un frammento proveniente da Ossirinco con un elenco di titoli e di nomi: il PSILur inv. 19662. L'elenco è scritto sul *verso* di una lista di terreni: si tratta di una sola colonna di scrittura priva della parte iniziale e di quella finale. Il primo titolo dell'elenco è il *Simposio*, nel rigo successivo si legge διάλογοι seguito dal numerale κ, 20. Di seguito nelle altre 22 righe uno dopo l'altro sono elencati titoli di dialoghi di Platone. E forse il nome di Platone compariva all'inizio di questo elenco. Alcuni di questi titoli ricorrono più volte, il *Filebo*, l'*Alcibiade*, il *Protagora*, alcuni sono multipli, l'*Ippia* deve riferirsi sia all'*Ippia maggiore* e all'*Ippia minore*, alcuni sono posti in alternativa, *Alcibiade* o *Liside* e altri non corrispondono nessuna delle opere di Platone. Separate da una *paragraphos* seguono prima un elenco di quattro titoli di opere di Senofonte, poi la successione dei nomi di Omero, Menandro, Euripide ed Aristofane, tutti seguiti dalla sequenza ὅσα εὑρίσκειται, letteralmente, "quanti si trovano", forse si intendono i libri disponibili sul mercato. Il papiro è stato interpretato variamente dalla critica: ora come un inventario di titoli di opere presenti in una collezione di libri forse presenti in una biblioteca o una lista di *desiderata*, cioè un elenco di libri che si intendeva acquistare, o da un librario o per uno *scriptorium*. In ogni caso l'elenco documenta per il III secolo d.C. la presenza ad Ossirinco di questi libri o la possibilità di recuperarli. E tra questi non sfugge la presenza del *Simposio*, un dialogo per il quale, dunque, dobbiamo forse immaginare una diffusione più ampia di quella che l'unico papiro rinvenuto, POxy 843, sembra suggerire. Ma c'è di più.

Come ho detto il POxy 843 venne rinvenuto durante la V campagna di scavo iniziata nel dicembre del 1905, insieme ad altri undici rotoli con testi letterari, in quello che Grenfell e Hunt⁵ nella cronaca dello scavo hanno definito un *basketful of broken literary papyrus rolls*. Un ritrovamento senza alcun dubbio di portata eccezionale. Oltre al rotolo con il *Simposio*: POxy 841 con Pindaro, *Peani* II, POxy 842 con le *Elleniche di Ossirinco*, POxy 844 con Isocrate, *Panegirico*, POxy 852 con Euripide, *Ipsipile*, POxy 853 con un *Commentario* a Tucidide II, POxy 1012 con un testo di erudizione, POxy 1364 con Antifonte Sofistail Περὶ ἀληθείας, POxy 1376 con Tucidide VII, POxy 1606 con Lisia, con brani in particolare da *Contro Ippoterse*, e *Contro Teomnesto*, ma soprattutto POxy 1016 e POxy 1017, i noti papiri che conservano parti del *Fedro*. Forse, come suggerisce parte della critica, si tratta di una vera e propria collezione di libri, presumibilmente appartenuta alla biblioteca di un erudito di Ossirinco del III secolo d.C. Una collezione certo che prova un prevalente,

⁵ B.P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt, *Egypt Exploration Fund: Archeological Report* 15 (1905-1906), 8-16.

se non assoluto interesse di natura letteraria. E non è un caso che in questa raccolta compaiano di Platone sia il *Fedro* sia il *Simposio*, i due dialoghi al centro dei quali è *eros*, il cuore dell'argomentazione. Due testi nei quali, dunque, non a caso, Platone esplicita una parte consistente della sua riflessione sul rapporto tra il dialogo e gli altri generi della tradizione, raggiungendo, forse, il risultato più pieno della sua arte di scrittore.

Per tutto ciò è plausibile che nella dotta Ossirinco tra il II e il III secolo d.C., chi leggeva il *Simposio*, leggesse anche Pindaro, Euripide, Isocrate, Tucidide, Lisia, segno palese della posizione eminente che nel *corpus* di Platone ricopre il *Simposio* quale esempio, ormai canonico, del genio letterario di Platone.

Revisiting the *Symposium*: the paradoxical eroticism of Plato and Lucian

Ruby Blondell - Sandra Boehringer

The purpose of this paper is to provide a new perspective on Plato's *Symposium* by viewing it through the lens of a humorous and paradoxical reading supplied by a short dialogue by Lucian. Lucian was a prolific second century CE rhetorician and satirist whose native tongue was Syriac but who wrote in Greek. His numerous works include a set of fifteen short farces known as the *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, which seem to offer us a kind of survey of character-types from the world of commercial sex in the Athens of Plato's day. Lucian openly acknowledges the philosophical roots of dialogue form, thus priming his audience to detect Platonic resonances. Because of their subject-matter, however, which seems closer to comedy, scholars have not viewed these particular dialogues through the lens of Platonic influence.

In this paper we shall argue that this exclusion is unwarranted. Not only was Plato himself a master of serious play, but the subject matter of the *Dialogues of the Courtesans* gives them an immediate point of contact with the philosopher's interest in erotic themes, his dramatization of erotic relationships, and his eroticizing of philosophical conversation. We shall focus specifically on *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 5, in an effort to show that Plato--and especially the *Symposium*--is fundamental to a proper understanding of this particular work. Conversely, we believe that Lucian's parody allows us to see aspects of Plato's erotic theory more clearly.

Dialogue 5 is a short quasi-Socratic work, which opens with an inquiry about a sexual relationship. A courtesan named Clonarium addresses her friend, the courtesan Leaena. Using diction that evokes the ambiguities of philosophical *eros* in Plato, she says she has heard that Megilla, a wealthy woman from Lesbos, is "in love with" Leaena (*eran*) and they are "having intercourse" (*suneinai*), doing together "I don't know what". Baffled, she subjects Leaena to a series of questions, and the latter ends up describing for her a remarkably erotic evening that she spent with Megilla and another rich foreign woman, the Corinthian Demonassa.

It all started with a party of a very unorthodox kind--an all-female drinking party, complete with the musical and sexual entertainment typical of a male *symposion*. Leaena was invited as a musician, but after she finished playing, when it had grown late and the two foreigners were drunk, Megilla proposed that she spend the night with them. We are then treated to a description of sexual activity that stands apart from all other ancient erotic texts for its detail and specificity, its enthusiastic and multifaceted eroticism, the involvement of three participants instead of two, and (most strikingly) the fact that they are all women.

When the erotic and narrative tension is at its height, something unexpected intervenes. In the heat of passion, Megilla removes her (previously imperceptible) wig, revealing a shaved head like that of a male athlete. She thereupon declares herself a handsome youth (*kalos neaniskos*), demands to be called Megillus, and announces that she "has married" Demonassa, who is her "wife". This startling announcement leads to a discussion of the paradox of Megilla's identity.

Leaena, who reports the conversation to Clonarium, adopts the "Socratic" role of questioner, offering a sequence of hypothetical explanations for the mystery that confronts her. First she hypothesizes that Megilla is really a man. But to confirm this theory she wants to know two more things. One of her questions is about the body--does Megilla *have* the "manly thing" that men *have* (*to andreion*)?--and the other is about behavior--does she *do* to Demonassa what men *do*? Megilla responds negatively to the first question, and affirmatively to the second, leaving the confusion unresolved (how can a woman "do what men do" without "having what men have" to do it *with*?). For her next hypothesis Leaena suggests that Megilla has bodily attributes of both sexes, like a hermaphrodite. When the object of her inquiry replies in the negative, Leaena speculates that Megilla was transformed by a divinity, like Teiresias, who "became a man after being a woman". When Megilla denies this too, the women start debating what it is that makes a man a man. For Leaena, it is the male sexual organ, but for Megilla it is "mind" (*gnomē*) and "desire" (*epithumia*). When Leaena wonders whether this is "enough", Megilla assures her that she does not need the male organ because she has "something instead".

With this exchange we leave the embedded dialogue and return to the narrative frame. Leaena describes--briefly but unambiguously--sexual intercourse between herself and Megilla. She embraced Megilla "as if she [Megilla] were a man" and Megilla went at it vigorously with evident pleasure. Her audience--Clonarium (and of course ourselves)--wants to know exactly *what* Megilla did, and *how*,

but Leaina declares "by the Heavenly Goddess"--that is, by Aphrodite Ourania--that she will say no more because it is shameful.

Even though *Dialogue 5* makes no explicit reference to philosophy or philosophers, it is highly Platonic in tone. It is pervaded with expressions of confusion and ignorance that evoke Plato's Socrates ("doing I don't know what," "I don't understand," etc.); the central question is an epistemological problem; and in the inset conversation the audience is treated to a parody of philosophical dialogue, as Leaina attempts to solve that mystery through a logical sequence of questions and answers. The ending is, moreover, aporetic. Neither Clonarium nor the reader ever finds out the exact nature of the "something" that Megilla has instead of a male sex organ.

Dialogue 5's most striking Platonic antecedent and intertext is, for several reasons, the *Symposium*. Like Plato's dialogue, Lucian's consists of an outer conversational frame containing an inner narrative that describes a drinking party, elicited by questions from a curious friend. At both gatherings the topic of conversation is *eros* and the participants outdo each other in demonstrating their expertise on the subject. The inset story, like the most famous episode in Alcibiades' speech, is a tale of seduction--but this time a successful one. Both those tales are told by unreliable narrators, who present their own behavior as a shameful secret. Both are willing to undergo considerable embarrassment, by participating in transgressive sexual behavior, in order to discover the truth about an erotic mystery. But if Leaina is an Alcibiades, she is also a Socrates, who brings her audience to the very brink of revelation by ventriloquating Megilla, an expert in erotics, just as Socrates does by ventriloquating Diotima. At the end of the dialogue she teases her audience--and Lucian his--by withholding the answer, just as Plato's Socrates--in the view of his enemies and even his frustrated admirers--withholds his wisdom, as part of a larger Platonic strategy to elicit our philosophical desire.

Both these drinking parties are, moreover, quite unconventional. Plato's *symposion* is notoriously devoid of drunkenness--at least until Alcibiades appears. It is further marked as both unusually cerebral and exclusively male by the banishment of the female musician (176e). Lucian's is extraordinary for a very different reason: the fact that it consists *only* of women, who are enthusiastically devoted to the very pleasures of music, drunkenness and sex that Plato's *symposion* eschews. Leaina is invited in the first place as a musician to entertain the other women--as if she were the Platonic flute-girl dismissed from the male *symposion* and sent away to play for the women of the household (*Symp.* 176e). Lucian thus offers the perspective of those who are excluded from male philosophical "intercourse." But the excluded women are not thwarted or downcast by the male identification of the feminine with the body and its pleasures. On the contrary, they enthusiastically embrace that identification--without, however, abandoning their right to engage in rational conversation about those very pleasures. Plato excludes women from the elite male world of philosophy; but Lucian *appropriates* that world for them, portraying a self-sufficient and harmonious single-sex world that mirrors the male world of philosophy.

Dialogue 5 also includes a number of more specific allusions to Plato's *Symposium*. In the interests of time, we will focus here on two interrelated themes that connect these two dialogues: the confusion surrounding conventional sex-roles, hierarchies and practices, and the motif of sex among women.

In Plato's *Symposium*, conventional erotic categories are disturbed in several ways, notably the role reversal between Alcibiades, the *eromenos* who pursues Socrates like an *erastes*, and Socrates, the ugly philosophical *erastes* who is also an *eromenos*. Such confusion is also a marked feature of the myth of Aristophanes, which explains sexual desire as the consequence of chopping in half three primordial beings--the complete male, the complete female and the androgyne. The comic playwright purports to organize human sexuality into three tidy categories. In reality, however, it is impossible to map them neatly onto the roles and expectations that were in place in Plato's Athens. Aristophanes' geography of human sexualities disrupts the active-passive binary by generating three types of couple in all of which desire is equal and reciprocal, leaving no room for conventional hierarchies.

Aristophanes' myth also introduces the second theme that will be important for Lucian--sex among women. Because this theme is so rare in our surviving ancient texts from all periods, scholars have seized on *Dialogue 5*, with its extended and detailed account of sex among women, to fill the vacuum created by the silence of our other sources. Though interpretations vary, the dialogue is typically understood in one of two ways (which may overlap). The first approach sees Lucian as providing an active-passive model of female sexual relationships based on the male *erastes/eromenos* model, with Megilla filling the "active", "male" role, in order to make it comprehensible to his male audience (thus, Megilla is interpreted as physically masculine, she behaves like a man, and uses a dildo). The second sees him associating sex among women with gender inversion and construction of

psychological identities, the butch and the fem (models that seem easily legible to a modern audience). But in our view none of these interpretations is adequate to the complexities of the dialogue, which can be properly understood only in light of its Platonic subtext.

This subtext emerges most strikingly with the use of one particular word. When Clonarium reports the rumor she has heard about women in Lesbos she calls them *hetairistriaí*. This is only the second appearance of this word in our ancient sources. The first, of course, is in Plato's *Symposium*. In his myth, Aristophanes tells us that the slices of the all-female primordial creature include in their number the *hetairistriaí* (191e). What exactly does he mean? The word *hetairistriaí* cannot be translated "lesbians" or "homosexual women," since these categories did not exist in the ancient world (where sexual behavior was not used to construct such psychological identities). Nor does it refer to *all* the women resulting from the splitting of the primordial female. It refers, rather to those who are attracted *strongly* to other women. Aristophanes gives us no further information about these women, who take their place among the fantasies and distortions licensed by his role as a comic playwright (cf. 189b). But Lucian's Clonarium defines the word *hetairistria* her own way: "they say there are such women in Lesbos, masculine looking (*arrenopos*), not willing to have it done to them (*paschein*) by men, but preferring to associate (*plêsiazein*) with women as men do". In other words, she associates sex among women with masculine attributes and sexually active behavior, suggesting gendered role reversal among the women she calls *hetairistriaí*. But Clonarium is reporting mere hearsay. Nor did she participate in Megilla's soirée. Leaena's eye-witness account will provide a much less clear-cut picture than Clonarium's characterization of the *hetairistria* might lead us to expect.

Let us start with the women's appearance. According to Leaena, Megilla is "terribly manly" (*andrikê*). What exactly does this mean? Megilla is not masculine in her general appearance or physique. The wig, when worn, is undetectable. The only physical trait that marks her as "manly" looking is her baldness--an effect that any woman could produce by shaving. Besides, she presents herself as a *neaniskos*, a "youth", not a mature man. The cultural mark of a *neaniskos* is precisely the *absence* of confirmed physical signs of virility, and retention of the softness and sexual indeterminacy of childhood. Megilla is, then, sometimes androgynous and sometimes feminine, depending on the presence or absence of her wig. She does not have a "masculine" physique. Note, too, that Leaena mentions no physical signs of masculinity in Demonassa, even though she is said to have "the same skills as" Megilla and both of them behave at times "like men". It is character and behavior, rather than appearance, that are emphasized throughout the dialogue.

Perhaps, then, when Leaena calls Megilla "manly" she means that Megilla will play the "active" sexual role in relation to her partners and assign them the "passive" role (like the women Clonarium has heard about in Lesbos). But the larger picture does not support this model. Demonassa, despite being designated Megilla's "wife", has "the same skills" as Megilla and, like her, behaves "just like men do" in actively kissing and embracing Leaena. Leaena too takes the initiative at times. There is thus no simple active-passive or masculine-feminine reversal. Nor does the dialogue portray just one sexual act between two people. There is sex between Leaena and Megilla, sex between Megilla and Demonassa, and sex among the three women. The confusion is further fostered by Megilla's self-proclaimed identity as a *neaniskos*. By claiming this identity, Megilla subverts the passive/active binary associated with conventional representations of male homoeroticism. She is both "manly" and "active", like an *erastes*, but the phrase *kalos neaniskos* clearly codes her as one who would, in a male homoerotic relationship, play the role of an *eromenos*. Like Plato's Alcibiades, "Megillus" is an *eromenos* who asserts "himself" as an *erastes*. At the same time, "his" pleasure is described in a way that suggests the excess associated with *female* sexual response. Leaena presents herself, by contrast, not as experiencing reciprocal pleasure, as a woman would be expected to do, but as merely in it for the gifts she receives in return--or perhaps, like an *eromenos*, for the education (!).

Lucian sows even more doubt by leaving us uncertain what exactly Megilla has "instead of what men have". Most scholars assume that she is referring here to an *olisbos* (a dildo) to "replace" the male sex organ. If so, however, her use of it does not conform to the expectations raised by the presence of such an object. The *olisbos* is typically represented as bringing pleasure to the person penetrated (whether it is a matter of solo or group use). But Megilla, who uses the object in question, also experiences obvious pleasure herself. Moreover neither the word *olisbos* nor any equivalent appears anywhere in the text. Megilla's specific practices therefore remain veiled in mystery. Role-reversal (a woman taking the role of a man) is thus *not* the way to explain sex between women, as shown in this dialogue. Rather, what is culturally and socially "masculine" (gender) circulates among three women without completely or permanently characterizing any one of them. The claim that Lucian is relocating sex between women into the framework of a binary active/passive relationship modelled on conventional representations of male homoeroticism is equally untenable.

In short, Lucian does not, in *Dialogue 5*, present a coherent picture of female-female sexuality. This work does not function with reference to reality (that is, to “real” “lesbians”) but through engagement with its Platonic subtext, which likewise does not provide a coherent picture of the classical categories governing sexual behavior. In the *Symposium*, Plato is not interested in providing an alternative sexuality. Rather, he employs the licence supplied by comedy and fantasy to manipulate conventional sexual roles in the service of a philosophical agenda. Lucian responds by rendering Plato's subversion of the active-passive homoerotic binary gleefully physical, and by reintroducing the drunken, female physical body eschewed by Platonic dialogue. He places at the center of his sympotic drama female characters that were confined to the margins of Plato's: the excluded female musician and the *hetairistria*. He completes the Platonic picture by taking the tantalizingly underspecified women of Aristophanes' myth and filling them out with a wealth of carnal detail worthy of the comic playwright himself. Like Plato, however, he is not offering us an alternative sexuality, or revealing one that has been suppressed by other authors. He is, rather, responding to Plato by appropriating philosophy in its turn for *his* own purposes--namely, to win applause for the ingenious manipulation of intellectual and erotic traditions. The result is at once a satire of the pretensions of philosophical *eros* and an homage to its absurdities.

Un *Banquet* revisité : l'érotisme paradoxal de Platon et de Lucien

Ruby Blondell - Sandra Boehringer

Le but de cette communication est de tenter de porter un regard renouvelé sur le *Banquet* de Platon à partir de la lecture d'un dialogue humoristique et paradoxal composé par Lucien. Lucien est un sophiste du II^e siècle, un rhéteur et un satiriste particulièrement prolifique, de langue maternelle syriaque et écrivant en grec. Ses nombreuses productions comprennent un ensemble de 15 courtes saynètes, connues sous le nom de *Dialogues des courtisanes*, qui semblent déployer un catalogue des personnages-types du monde du commerce sexuel dans l'Athènes de l'époque de Platon. Dans son œuvre, Lucien reconnaît les origines philosophiques de la forme dialogique qu'il a choisie, rendant ainsi son public sensible aux influences platoniciennes. Pourtant, la critique contemporaine a généralement exclu de cette influence les *Dialogues des courtisanes*, en raison de leur caractère comique et de leur thème (les femmes et la sexualité).

Nous montrerons aujourd'hui que cette exclusion ne se justifie pas : non seulement Platon était lui-même un maître du « jeu sérieux » mais, de plus, le thème du *Dialogue des courtisanes* est en lien direct avec l'intérêt du philosophe pour les questions érotiques, les mises en scènes des relations érotiques et l'érotisation des conversations philosophiques. Une étude serrée du dialogue 5 mettra en évidence le fait qu'il n'est pas possible de comprendre l'œuvre de Lucien sans prendre en compte l'œuvre de Platon (et surtout *Le Banquet*) ; inversement, nous pensons que la parodie de Lucien nous permet de mieux saisir certains aspects de l'érotisme platonicienne.

Le dialogue 5 est un court dialogue, quasi socratique : il s'ouvre sur une question (portant sur une relation sexuelle). La courtisane Klonarion s'adresse à son amie et courtisane Léaina : elle a entendu dire que Mégilla, une riche femme de Lesbos, s'est prise d'amour pour Léaina (le verbe *eran* a un sens érotique sans équivoque) et qu'elle « couchent ensemble » (le verbe *suneinai* est ambigu et a également un sens philosophique), faisant toutes deux « on ne sait quoi ». Perplexe, elle soumet Léaina à une série de questions – et la dernière suscite, en réponse, la description hautement érotique de la soirée que Léaina a passée avec Mégilla et une autre riche femme étrangère, la corinthienne Démonassa.

Tout a commencé sous la forme d'une soirée particulièrement peu conventionnelle : une fête exclusivement féminine, où l'on boit et où l'on passe du bon temps grâce aux divertissements musicaux et érotiques typiques du *symposion* masculin. C'est en tant que musicienne que Léaina a été invitée, mais après qu'elle a joué, une fois nuit tombée, les deux étrangères sont ivres, et Mégilla propose à Léaina de passer la nuit avec elles deux. Commence alors la description de pratiques érotiques particulièrement inédites dans le corpus antique (les autres *Dialogues des courtisanes* inclus), en raison des détails et de leur précision, de l'érotisme débordant et multiforme, de la participation des trois partenaires (et non de deux) et, enfin, en raison du sexe des partenaires (toutes des femmes).

La tension est à son comble quand intervient un élément imprévu : au beau milieu de l'étreinte, Mégilla enlève sa perruque – une perruque que personne n'avait préalablement remarquée – mettant à nu un crâne rasé comme celui des athlètes. Elle se présente alors en disant d'elle-même qu'elle est un beau jeune homme (*kalos neaniskos*), elle demande qu'on la nomme Mégillos et annonce que, jadis, elle a épousé Démonassa et que celle-ci est sa femme. Cette révélation pour le moins surprenante est le point de départ d'une discussion sur le paradoxe de l'identité de Mégilla.

Léaina qui rapporte la conversation à Klonarion – il s'agit donc d'un dialogue enchâssé dans un dialogue – prend le « rôle socratique » de celui qui pose les questions. Ses questions prennent la forme d'une succession d'hypothèses destinées à expliquer le problème épistémologique auquel elle est confrontée. Léaina avance une première hypothèse en se référant à un épisode du mythe d'Achille où le jeune héros est travesti en fille, postulant que Mégilla est en réalité un homme. Mais pour confirmer sa théorie, il lui faut savoir deux autres choses. L'une de ses questions porte sur le corps (« Et est-ce que tu as ce qu'ont les hommes ? »), l'autre sur ses pratiques (« Est-ce que tu fais à Démonassa ce que font les hommes ? »). Puis Léaina, en se référant au personnage d'Hermaphrodite et donc à une possible bisexualité, émet l'hypothèse d'une malformation physique. La réponse de l'intéressée étant négative, Léaina poursuit et passe dans le domaine surnaturel : comme Tirésias qui fut transformé « de femme en homme », Mégilla aurait été métamorphosée par une divinité. La réponse étant négative, les deux femmes commencent à débattre sur ce qu'un homme est un homme. Pour

Léaina, c'est le membre viril, pour Mégilla ce sont l'esprit (*gnomé*) et le désir (*epithumia*). Léaina lui demande alors si cela lui suffit et Mégilla lui assure qu'elle n'a pas besoin du membre viril car elle a « quelque chose » à la place.

Le dialogue enchâssé s'achève et l'on revient au premier niveau de la discussion. Léaina décrit, brièvement mais sans équivoque, la relation sexuelle entre elle et Mégilla. Elle embrasse Mégilla « comme si elle était un homme » et Mégilla l'étreint avec une énergie qui débouche sur une jouissance visible. Le public (Klonarion, ainsi que les spectateurs du dialogue évidemment) veut savoir ce que Mégilla a fait, et comment, mais Léaina déclare que, « par la déesse ouranienne » (à savoir par Aphrodite), elle ne dira rien de plus, car c'est honteux.

Le dialogue 5 ne fait aucune référence explicite à la philosophie ou à des philosophes, mais la tonalité platonicienne n'en est pas moins forte. Le dialogue est traversé par un grand nombre d'expressions de doute ou d'ignorance qui évoquent le Socrate de Platon (« faisant je ne sais quoi », « je ne comprends pas » etc.). La question centrale est un problème épistémologique – et le dialogue enchâssé offre au public une parodie de dialogue philosophique, avec une succession de questions et de réponses qui progressent par étapes et de façon logique. La fin, de plus, est aporétique. Jamais Klonarion ni le public ne connaîtra la nature exacte de ce « quelque chose » que Mégilla a à la place de ce qu'ont les hommes.

L'intertexte le plus visible, la source la plus prégnante de ce dialogue, est sans conteste le *Banquet*. Comme lui, le dialogue 5 se compose d'une discussion générale incluant un dialogue qui lui-même déploie la description d'une soirée – une description suscitée par les questions d'un ami trop curieux. Lors des deux soirées, le thème de la conversation est éros et les participants rivalisent les uns avec les autres pour mettre en évidence leur maîtrise du sujet. Le récit enchâssé, comme le fameux épisode du discours d'Alcibiade, est une histoire de séduction – dans le dialogue 5, d'une séduction réussie. Ces deux récits sont assumés par des personnages peu crédibles, qui présentent leur comportement comme un secret honteux. Les deux sont consentants pour vivre une expérience compromettante, en s'engageant dans des relations sexuelles transgressives, dans l'objectif de découvrir la vérité du mystère d'éros. Mais si Léaina est un Alcibiade, elle est aussi un Socrate qui entraîne son public au seuil même de la révélation : tel un ventriloque elle fait entendre la voix de Mégilla, une experte en matière érotique, tout comme Socrate fait entendre la voix de Diotime. À la fin du dialogue, elle joue avec son public – et Lucien avec le sien – en gardant pour elle la réponse finale, tout comme Socrate – du point de vue de ses détracteurs et de ses admirateurs frustrés – garde pour lui sa sagesse : c'est là un des aspects de la stratégie platonicienne pour susciter le désir de la philosophie.

Les deux soirées (celle décrite par Platon et celle de Lucien) sont, de plus, particulièrement non conventionnelles. C'est bien connu, point d'ivresse lors du banquet décrit par Platon – du moins jusqu'à l'arrivée d'Alcibiade. Il est consacré aux seules considérations intellectuelles des hommes exclusivement, la musicienne ayant été renvoyée (176e). Le banquet décrit par Lucien est exceptionnel pour une raison fort différente : il n'y a *que* des femmes, qui s'adonnent avec un grand enthousiasme au plaisir de la musique, de la boisson et du sexe – des plaisirs que le banquet platonicien rejette. Léaina est invitée principalement en tant que musicienne pour divertir les autres femmes : on pourrait reconnaître la flûtiste de Platon, renvoyée du *symposion* masculin et qui viendrait jouer pour les femmes de la maisonnée (*Symp.* 176e). Lucien fait accéder au point de vue de celles et ceux qui sont exclus du « commerce » philosophique des hommes, mais cette fois, les femmes exclues ne sont pas repoussées ou rabaissées par l'assimilation entre le féminin et les plaisirs du corps. Au contraire, elles assument avec enthousiasme cette identification sans toutefois abandonner leur droit à s'engager dans des conversations rationnelles sur ces plaisirs, précisément. Alors que Platon exclut les femmes du petit monde élitiste et exclusivement masculin de la philosophie, Lucien, quant à lui, leur consacre ce monde et en fait, en miroir, un lieu exclusivement féminin, autonome et harmonieux.

On relève dans ce dialogue plusieurs références très précises à des éléments de discours prononcés par les participants au *Banquet* de Platon. Pour des raisons de temps, nous nous concentrerons sur les deux éléments les plus importants qui rapprochent ces deux dialogues : le brouillage des rôles sexuels traditionnel et le thème de la sexualité entre femmes.

Dans le *Banquet*, en effet, les catégories traditionnelles sont brouillées d'une manière remarquable. L'inversion des rôles traditionnels en est un exemple : Alcibiade, l'*eromenos*, se conduit comme un *erastes* et cherche à séduire Socrate ; Socrate, l'*erastes* âgé, laid et philosophe, est poursuivi et, tel un *eromenos*, sait résister aux avances. Un brouillage complexe apparaît également dans le fameux discours d'Aristophane : celui-ci explique l'origine de l'attraction sexuelle comme étant la conséquence de la coupure des trois boules primitives – la boule mâle, la boule femelle et la

boule androgyne. Il tente ainsi d'organiser la sexualité humaine en trois catégories bien distinctes, mais sans pouvoir y intégrer l'ensemble des aspirations et des rôles tels qu'ils se formulaient dans l'Athènes de Platon. La cartographie érotique d'Aristophane brise l'opposition binaire activité/passivité en créant trois types de couples où dans chacun d'eux le désir est égal et réciproque, ne laissant pas de place aux hiérarchies traditionnelles.

Le mythe d'Aristophane nous mène au deuxième thème platonicien qui se trouve être primordial dans notre analyse du cinquième *Dialogue des courtisanes* : les relations sexuelles entre femmes. En raison de la rareté du thème, les chercheurs l'ont surexploité pour remplir le vide créé par le silence des sources. Les interprétations de ce passage varient, mais globalement deux lectures dominent (elles se chevauchent parfois) : selon l'une, Lucien offre à son public l'image d'une relation entre femmes sur le modèle actif-passif, où Mégilla endosserait le rôle actif et masculin, et l'objectif de Lucien serait de rendre intelligible ce type de relations pour le public masculin (c'est pour cette raison, par exemple, que l'on a considéré que Mégilla a réellement un physique viril, qu'elle se comporte comme un homme et qu'elle utilise un godemiché). La seconde lecture du dialogue consiste à voir, dans le traitement de ce thème par Lucien, la mise en scène d'une inversion de genre et la construction de nouvelles identités psychologiques : ce seraient des lesbiennes et, plus particulièrement, Mégilla serait une butch, Léaina une fem (c'est une interprétation qui permet apparemment une compréhension plus facile du passage pour un public contemporain). Nous pensons qu'aucune de ces deux lectures n'est valable et que le texte de Lucien ne peut être compris qu'à la lumière de son lien avec son sous-texte, le *Banquet* de Platon.

Ce sous-texte est particulièrement perceptible pour le public, en particulier dans l'usage que fait Lucien d'un terme précis. Lorsque Klonarion rapporte la rumeur sur les femmes de Lesbos, elle utilise le terme d'*hetairistria*. Il s'agit de la deuxième occurrence de ce terme dans le corpus grec, la première apparaissant dans le *Banquet* de Platon. Dans son célèbre discours, Aristophane raconte que les moitiés femelles, issues de la coupure de l'être femelle, sont plutôt attirées par les femmes que par les hommes, et que dans cette catégorie figurent les *hetairistria* (191e). Mais que signifie ce mot ? Dans ce contexte, le terme d'*hetairistria* ne peut d'aucune manière être traduit par « lesbiennes » ou « homosexuelles » puisque ces catégories n'existent pas dans le monde antique (les comportements sexuels ne servent à construire une « identité psychologique » ou « intime » des individus). Il ne désigne pas non plus toutes les femmes issues de la scission de l'être femelle : il désigne celles qui sont attirées *intensément* par les femmes. Aristophane ne donne pas davantage d'information sur ces femmes, qui prennent place dans une histoire fabuleuse et imaginaire dont les distorsions par rapport à la réalité sont autorisées par le statut d'auteur comique du personnage (cf. 189b). Le personnage de Lucien, Klonarion, en fournit une définition : « des femmes à l'air viril (*arrenopos*) qui ne veulent pas se donner (*paschein*) aux hommes, mais qui ont des relations (*plesiazein*) avec des femmes comme des hommes ». Il y a là sans conteste une association entre l'homoérotisme féminin et le fait d'avoir des comportements ou des attributs masculins. Mais Klonarion rapporte des on-dits, elle n'a pas participé personnellement à la soirée de Mégilla, et le récit de Léaina fournit des informations bien plus précises que ce que cette définition d'*hetairistria* élaborée par une courtisane apporte.

Qu'en est-il, en effet, de leur apparence physique ? Lorsque Léaina dit de celle-ci qu'elle est « terriblement masculine », il est certain qu'il ne s'agit pas d'un trait visible pour tous ni que Mégilla a l'air d'être un homme. La perruque, dont Léaina découvre avec étonnement l'existence un peu plus tard, est « invisible (littéralement : très ressemblante) et bien attachée ». Le seul trait physique qui renvoie à un trait masculin est la nudité de son crâne au moment où elle retire la perruque, une caractéristique que toute femme peut avoir... en se rasant la tête. Par ailleurs, Mégilla se présente comme un *neaniskos*, un jeune homme, et non comme un homme mûr : or la caractéristique culturelle du *neaniskos* est, précisément, de ne pas avoir de signes affirmés de la virilité et de conserver la douceur des traits sexuellement indéterminés de l'enfance. Par conséquent, Mégilla a une apparence parfois féminine, parfois androgyne, selon qu'elle porte ou non sa perruque. Elle n'a donc pas de « physique mâle ». Ajoutons qu'à aucun moment il n'est dit que Démonassa aurait des traits masculins, alors même qu'il est précisé qu'elle a les mêmes pratiques (*homotechnos*) et que les deux se conduisent « comme des hommes ». Il s'agit donc dans ce dialogue de caractère et de comportement, et non d'apparence physique.

Alors, peut-être est-ce un rôle sexuel actif que Léaina caractériserait lorsqu'elle utilise le terme de « viril », impliquant ainsi que Démonassa aurait le rôle « passif » ? Pourtant, alors même que Démonassa a été désignée comme l'épouse de Mégilla, elle a les mêmes pratiques qu'elle : comme Mégilla, elle se conduit « comme le font les hommes » lorsqu'elle embrasse et enlace Léaina, avec une énergie que le texte ne manque de souligner. À d'autres moments c'est Léaina qui prend l'initiative - bref, il apparaît nettement qu'il n'y a pas là un simple renversement ou une simple

inversion des rôles actifs/passifs ou féminins/masculins. Le dialogue fait état d'une relation érotique entre Léaina et Mégilla, entre Démonassa et Mégilla et entre les trois femmes. De surcroît, en revendiquant son identité de *neaniskos*, Mégilla subvertit la binarité actif/passif traditionnellement associée à la relation homoérotique masculine. Comme un *erastes*, elle est à la fois masculine et active, mais l'expression *kalos neaniskos* la désigne clairement comme étant celui qui, dans une relation entre hommes, joue le rôle de l'*eromenos*. Comme l'Alcibiade de Platon, « Mégillos » est un éromène qui s'affirme et se revendique éraste. Mais en même temps, le plaisir sexuel ressenti est décrit de façon à suggérer une démesure toute féminine. Quant à Léaina, à l'inverse, elle ne se présente pas comme engagée dans une relation où le plaisir est partagé, conformément à ce qui est traditionnellement présenté comme propre aux femmes, mais elle dit d'elle-même qu'elle a accepté des cadeaux – en échange de ses services, ou peut-être, tel un éromène, pour l'éducation qu'il a reçue (!).

Lucien sème un doute encore plus grand en ne permettant pas à son public de savoir avec précision ce que Mégilla a « à la place de ce que les hommes ont ». Certains commentateurs ont supputé qu'elle faisait référence à un *olisbos* (un godemiché) pour faire office de sexe masculin. Pourtant, si tel était le cas, l'usage qu'en fait Mégilla ne correspond pas à ce que l'on attendrait d'un tel objet. L'*olisbos* est généralement représenté comme un objet censé apporter, en premier lieu, du plaisir à la personne pénétrée par cet objet (que l'on soit seul, à deux ou en groupe). Mais dans l'étreinte entre Mégilla, qui prend les initiatives, et Léaina, c'est Mégilla qui se trouve ressentir visiblement une forte jouissance. Ajoutons que nulle part le terme d'*olisbos* n'apparaît dans le texte. Les pratiques particulières de Mégilla conservent leur voile de mystère. L'inversion des rôles (un femme prenant le rôle d'un homme) n'est donc pas une lecture possible des relations entre femmes – c'est ce que le montre ce dialogue. Ce qui est culturellement et socialement considéré comme masculin (le genre) circule entre les trois femmes sans jamais en caractériser une de façon totale et permanente. De même, l'affirmation selon laquelle Lucien replace la sexualité entre femmes dans une grille de lecture actif/passif sur le modèle binaire de la relation conventionnel entre hommes n'est pas davantage recevable.

Pour conclure, Lucien ne nous offre pas, dans ce dialogue, un tableau cohérent et réaliste des relations sexuelles entre femmes : cette œuvre ne fonctionne pas par le biais de références à la réalité et aux « vraies » pratiques des femmes, mais par le lien que Lucien établit avec le sous-texte platonicien. Dans le *Banquet*, Platon utilise la liberté offerte par la comédie et l'imagination pour transformer les rôles sexuels conventionnels dans le cadre d'un programme philosophique. Dans le dialogue 5, Lucien répond, en quelque sorte, à Platon en faisant de la subversion des rôles homoérotiques actifs/passifs une subversion joyeusement physique. Il réintroduit le vin et les corps de femmes que le dialogue platonicien avait évacués. Lucien met au centre de sa mise en scène du banquet les personnages de femmes qui restaient, chez Platon, à la marge : les *hétairistriaï*, la flûtiste renvoyée. Il retouche le tableau platonicien en reprenant le motif platonico-aristophanesque de la catégorie des femmes issues de l'être primitif femelle, une catégorie laissée dans un flou particulièrement frustrant, et en le complétant par une abondance de détails physiques et érotiques concrets dignes de la comédie elle-même. Comme Platon, cependant, il ne fait pas l'éloge d'une sexualité alternative et son but n'est pas davantage de révéler, ou de dénoncer, un quelconque tabou chez les auteurs qui l'ont précédé. Au contraire, il répond à Platon en s'appropriant la philosophie et en la mettant au service de ses objectifs : obtenir l'ovation d'un public enthousiasmé par son habile détournement des conventions intellectuelles et érotiques. Le résultat en est une satire des ambitions de l'érôs philosophique – dont Lucien souligne les multiples aspects – et, tout à la fois, un hommage à sa splendide absurdité.

Symposium 212a6-7: the Most Immortal of Men

Gerard Boter

1. Introduction

As Kurt Sier writes in his monograph on Diotima's speech, the concluding sentence of this speech is the most discussed sentence of the *Symposium*.¹ There is no unanimity on the character of the immortality which is in store for the philosopher-lover and probably there never will be. In this paper I do not intend to bring forth a new interpretation. I wish to draw attention to two hitherto neglected formal arguments in favour of the thesis that the philosopher's immortality described by Diotima refers exclusively to immortality by means of posterity and not to some sort of personal immortality after death. Both arguments are contained in the words 212a6-7 καὶ εἶπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ.

The problem concerning the philosopher's immortality as sketched by Diotima at the end of her speech is well-known. Some scholars argue that the philosopher becomes immortal by procreation, like other living beings.² Others maintain that this is not enough: they claim that in addition to the immortality by procreation the philosopher also gains a higher type of immortality—one bestowed upon him as a reward for his perfect virtue.³ Yet others argue that Diotima is talking exclusively about immortality after death.⁴

Let us first read the passage which interests us: the end of Diotima's speech (*Smp.* 211e4-212a7).

ἄρ' οἶει, ἔφη, φαῦλον βίον
(212a1) γίγνεσθαι ἐκεῖσε βλέποντος ἀνθρώπου καὶ ἐκείνο ᾧ δεῖ
θεωμένου καὶ συνόντος αὐτῷ; ἢ οὐκ ἐνθυμῆ, ἔφη, ὅτι ἐνταῦθα
αὐτῷ μοναχοῦ γενήσεται, ὁρῶντι ᾧ ὁρατὸν τὸ καλόν, τίττειν
οὐκ εἶδωλα ἀρετῆς, ἅτε οὐκ εἰδώλου ἐφαπτομένῳ, ἀλλὰ
(a5) ἀληθῆ, ἅτε τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἐφαπτομένῳ· τεκόντι δὲ ἀρετὴν
ἀληθῆ καὶ θρεψαμένῳ ὑπάρχει θεοφιλεῖ γενέσθαι, καὶ εἶπερ
τῷ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ;

“Do you think it's a worthless life,” she said, “if a person (ἄνθρωπος) turns his gaze in that direction and contemplates that beauty with the faculty he should use, and is able to be with it? Or do you not recognize”, she said, “that it is under these conditions alone, as he sees beauty with what has the power to see it, that he will succeed in bringing to birth, not phantoms of virtue, because he is not grasping a phantom, but true virtue, because he is grasping the truth; and that when he has given birth to and nurtured true virtue, it belongs to him to be loved by the gods, and to him, if to any human being (ἄνθρωπος), to be immortal?” (Rowe)

2. ἄνθρωπος

Throughout Diotima's speech it is pointed out that man is a living being, composed of body and soul. Because one of these elements—the body—is mortal, the composite of body and soul is mortal too. With regard to the body, man is equal to any living being. See for instance *Smp.* 206c1-8: “All human beings (ἄνθρωποι), Socrates, are pregnant both in body (σῶμα) and in soul (ψυχή), and when we come to be of the right age, we naturally desire to give birth. (...) This matter of giving birth is something divine: living creatures (ζῴων), despite their mortality (θνητῶ), contain this immortal aspect (ἀθάνατον), of pregnancy and procreation.” (Rowe) In this passage, man is called a ζῴων, “a living

¹ Sier 1997, 184: “Dies ist der in der Forschung meistdiskutierte Satz des *Symposion*.”

² See for instance Wipern 1965, 142 (with note 123 on p. 158); Dyson 1986, 59-72; Stokes 1986, 180-182; Price 1989, 49-54; Rowe 1998, ad 212a6-7 (p. 201).

³ See for instance Sier 1997, 184-197; Fierro 2001, 34-36; Sedley 2009, 160-161. According to Sier the philosopher's soul continues to exist after death as an individual with an unchanged and unchangeable identity. Fierro suggests that the philosopher's fate as sketched in the *Phaedo*, where the philosopher “attain[s] the best kind of existence (i.e. an existence in which the soul is by itself, lives with the gods, is in contact with the Forms and achieves an immortality which is superior to a just survival through reincarnation)”, is also what Diotima attributes to the perfect lover of beauty. Sedley states that the philosopher is “as it were, an intellectual Heracles”.

⁴ See for instance O'Brien 1984.

being”, which unites him to the animal world.

It is obvious to everyone without the need for proof that the body is subject to decay and death. And for any composite which contains at least one mortal element it is impossible to be immortal: the death of one element involves the death of the composite to which this element belongs. This is stated clearly in *Phaedo* 70b2-4: “but to show that the soul (ψυχή) exists when the man (ἄνθρωπος) has died, and possesses some power and intelligence—well, that, I feel, needs a great deal of persuasive argument.” (Hackforth)

You may wonder why I insist on something which is so obvious. This is because the word ἄνθρωπος occurs twice at the end of Diotima’s speech. The first time is at 211e4, where she speaks about the man who is contemplating Beauty itself.⁵ In the *Phaedo*, viewing the Forms in their perfect state is reserved for the disembodied soul of the philosopher; in the *Symposium* it is expressly stated that this is possible for the philosopher when he is living as a man. I will return to the *Phaedo* later.

The second occurrence of the word ἄνθρωπος at the end of Diotima’s speech is found in the very last line, καὶ εἴπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ. Once more, Diotima stresses the fact that the philosopher she is talking about is a man, that is, a composite of body and soul, living in our material world. The philosopher, that is, is explicitly put on a par with the living beings—animals and men—who were discussed in the preceding part of Diotima’s speech. In order to fully appreciate the meaning of the final phrase, however, we must first have a closer look at the phrase εἴπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ itself.

3. εἴπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ

Phrases of the type εἴπερ τις ἄλλος are treated in Kühner-Gerth,⁶ who state that the phrase indicates “dass das im Hauptsatze ausgesprochene Prädikat einer Person oder Sache mehr als irgend einer anderen zukomme”; in practice, that is, the phrase means “more than anyone or anything else”.

Here are some instances. Just before our passage Diotima says (*Smp.* 211d1-3): ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου, ὃ φίλε Σώκρατες, ἔφη ἡ Μαντινικὴ ξένη, εἴπερ που ἄλλοθι, βιωτὸν ἀνθρώπῳ, θεωμένῳ αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, “In that state of life above all others, my dear Socrates,” said the Mantinean woman, “a man finds it truly worth while to live, as he contemplates essential beauty.” (Lamb)⁷ In the exordium of Demosthenes’ speech *Against Timocrates* we read (D. 24.4): ἐγὼ δ’, εἴπερ τινὶ τοῦτο καὶ ἄλλῳ προσηκόντως εἴρηται, νομίζω κάμοι νῦν ἀρμόττειν εἰπεῖν, “But if that claim has ever been made with propriety, I think that I am entitled to make it now.” (Vince) Further on in the same speech we find (D. 24.96): ἔστιν ὑμῖν κύριος νόμος, καλῶς εἴπερ τις καὶ ἄλλος κείμενος, τοὺς ἔχοντας τὰ θ’ ἱερὰ καὶ τὰ ὄσια χρήματα κτέ, “You have a law in operation, as good a law as ever was enacted, that holders of sacred or civil moneys etcetera.” (Vince) I might style this use of the phrase εἴπερ τις ἄλλος as the “inclusive superlative”. It corresponds exactly to the English idiom by which Vince translates the Demosthenes passage just mentioned: “**as good** a law **as ever** was enacted”, which in practice amounts to “the best law ever enacted”.⁸

Usually one or both elements of the phrase contain καί, as in the two passages from Demosthenes. It is remarkable that in translations of such passages καί usually goes untranslated, as in Vince’s translation of the first passage from Demosthenes. But it is necessary for fully appreciating the sense: “if **others too** have ever made that claim with propriety [as in fact they have], then I am entitled to make it now **too**.” Even if the phrase in practice usually means that someone deserves a

⁵ At 211d1 too, just before the passage under discussion, the word ἄνθρωπος also figures prominently: ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου, ὃ φίλε Σώκρατες, ἔφη ἡ Μαντινικὴ ξένη, εἴπερ που ἄλλοθι, βιωτὸν ἀνθρώπῳ, θεωμένῳ αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, “In that state of life above all others, my dear Socrates,” said the Mantinean woman, “a man finds it truly worth while to live, as he contemplates essential beauty.” (Lamb) For further discussion of this passage see below.

⁶ Kühner-Gerth 1898³, 2.573.

⁷ Rowe translates: “It is here, my dear Socrates,” said the visitor from Mantinea, “if anywhere, that life is worth living for a human being, in contemplation of beauty itself.” That is, Rowe takes the phrase in the “exclusive sense”, for which see below.

⁸ In fact, in passages as this one I believe that the superlative meaning is not necessarily present. Demosthenes wants to point out that the law under discussion is a very good law; we need not assume that he really thinks that all other laws are inferior to this law. Similarly, in *X. Cyr.* 5.1.6, the phrase ἀλλ’ ὡς ἡμεῖς γε νομίζομεν, εἴ τις καὶ ἄλλος ἀνὴρ, καὶ Κῦρος ἄξιός ἐστι θαυμάζεσθαι may just indicate that Cyrus is to be reckoned among admirable men; but we need not assume that according to Xenophon he outdid all other famous men who ever lived. To put it in grammatical terms: the superlative may often be absolute (“very good”) rather than relative (“best of all”). — In terms of the speech act theory one might explain matters as follows. In the passages from Demosthenes and Xenophon the illocution is equal to the perlocution, that is, “A is as good as anyone” means that there are others equal to A, but nobody superior to A. In the passage from the *Symposium* the perlocution goes further than the illocution, that is, “if anywhere, then here” means that “here” is superior to all other circumstances, but (and this is essential) this does not mean that there are no other circumstances in which life is worth living; it is only to state that nowhere is life worth living in the same degree as “here”.

predicate more than anyone else, we should realize that καί in the apodosis indicates that besides the man or thing under discussion there are others for whom the same qualification is valid, although it be to a lesser degree (however, not stated explicitly).

In Xenophon's *Hiero* we read (X. *Hier.* 7.13): ἀλλ' εἴπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ, ὃ Σιμωνίδη, λυσιτελεῖ ἀπάγξασθαι, ἴσθι, ἔφη, ὅτι τυράννῳ ἐγώ γε εὐρίσκω μάλιστα τοῦτο λυσιτελοῦν ποιῆσαι, "Ah, Simonides," he cried, "if it profits any man to hang himself, know what my finding is: a despot has most to gain by it, since he alone can neither keep nor lay down his troubles with profit." (Marchant/Bowersock) Here, the superlative meaning of the phrase is stressed by μάλιστα.

O'Brien⁹ goes one important step further than Kühner-Gerth: he states that in some passages in Plato the phrase must mean "to the exclusion of anyone (anything, anywhere) else", which in fact is the meaning he needs for his interpretation of the philosopher as the only one to attain immortality. I might style this as the "exclusive use". As instances, O'Brien mentions three passages in the *Phaedo*.¹⁰ At *Phaedo* 78c we find: εἰ δέ τι τυγχάνει ὄν ἀσύνθετον, τούτῳ μόνῳ προσήκει μὴ πάσχειν ταῦτα, εἴπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ; which is translated by Hachforth as: "Isn't it incomposite things alone that can possibly be exempt from that?" Strictly speaking, the phrase is a contamination of τούτῳ μόνῳ προσήκει μὴ πάσχειν ταῦτα and τούτῳ προσήκει μὴ πάσχειν ταῦτα, εἴπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ. But the exclusiveness here results from the addition of μόνῳ, not from εἴπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ, and therefore this passage cannot serve to prove O'Brien's thesis.¹¹ In the other two instances adduced by O'Brien the exclusive interpretation appears to hold; thus at *Phaedo* 65c Socrates says: Ἄρ' οὐκ ἐν τῷ λογίζεσθαι εἴπερ πῶς ἄλλοθι κατάδηλον αὐτῇ γίγνεται τι τῶν ὄντων; "If then any part of reality is ever revealed to it, must it not be when it reasons?" (Hackforth) Here reasoning is dichotomically opposed to physical perception; in the preceding sentence Socrates had said that the soul is deceived by the body and thus it is clear that reasoning is the *only* valid way of reaching the truth.¹² This use of the formula εἴπερ τις ἄλλος corresponds to the English idiom "to him, if to any human being". In fact, O'Brien goes still further: he makes a switch from the plain exclusive use of the phrase ("he alone is immortal") to a qualified exclusivity ("he alone is immortal in the real sense of the word").¹³ But this switch is nowhere hinted at in the text. Moreover, in O'Brien's interpretation we would have to assume that the word ἀθανάτῳ is being used in two senses at the same time: personal immortality for the philosopher and immortality through procreation for other men.

For O'Brien's interpretation of the philosopher as the only one to attain real immortality it is essential that εἴπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ has an "exclusive" meaning. The exclusive interpretation of the phrase is also found in the majority of translations. See for instance: Rowe, "to him, if to any human being"; Susanetti, "e, se mai fu altro uomo, immortale?"; Boll-Buchwald, "und, wenn es überhaupt ein Mensch erreicht, gar unsterblich?"; Brisson, "Et si, entre tous les hommes, il en est un qui mérite de devenir immortel, n'est-ce pas lui?"¹⁴ But is this "exclusive" interpretation acceptable in our passage? It is not.

I have already noted that the presence of καί in the apodosis is an unmistakable indication of the "inclusive superlative"; in our passage we find καὶ ἐκείνῳ in the apodosis. What is more, there is abundant explicit mention of others to whom immortality applies: in fact, the whole of Diotima's speech from 206c on aims to demonstrate that living beings, both animals and men, successfully strive for immortality by means of procreation. And therefore, when Diotima says that if it happens to anyone else it will also befall the philosopher to become immortal, we have to take this as an inclusive superlative.¹⁵

⁹ O'Brien 1984, 197, n. 34.

¹⁰ *Phaedo* 78c, 65c and 66a.

¹¹ For the illogicality of the phrase, Rowe 1993 ad loc. refers to *Phaedo* 62a, εἰ τοῦτο μόνον τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων ἀπλοῦν ἐστίν, "that this alone of all the other things is without exception", which, as Verdenius 1958, 197-198 states, is "a contamination of "this alone of all things" and "this as distinct from other things"."

¹² The other passage adduced by O'Brien, *Phd.* 66a7-8, runs as follows: ἄρ' οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν, ὃ Σιμμία, εἴπερ τις [καὶ] ἄλλος ὁ τευξόμενος τοῦ ὄντος; "Is not this the man, Simmias, if anyone, to attain to the knowledge of reality?" (Fowler) I agree with O'Brien that the phrase is exclusive here. There is an interesting textual problem in this passage: καὶ is found in the majority of the medieval mss. but it is omitted in TV and Jamblichus and probably it was absent from the papyrus as well. The word is bracketed by Burnet but accepted by Rowe and Strachan (the editor of the new OCT), as by the majority of editors. Because of the exclusive meaning of the phrase I side with Burnet: καὶ is inappropriate here.

¹³ O'Brien 1984, 197, n. 34: "A clause of this kind is therefore an appropriate idiom with which to contrast the philosopher's true immortality with the mere semblance of it achieved by other men."

¹⁴ See also, e.g., Sedley (2009, 160), "and to him it belongs, if to any human being, to become immortal"; Robin, "n'est-ce pas à celui dont je parle qu'en reviendra le privilège?"; Joyce, "if ever it is given to man to put on immortality, it shall be given to him"; Howatson-Sheffield, "it is possible for him (...) and to become, if any human can, immortal himself."

¹⁵ Here are some instances of correct renderings of the phrase: Ferrari, "e, se altri mai, immortale anch'egli?"; Reale, "e sarà, se mai un altro uomo lo fu, egli pure immortale?"; Schleiermacher, "dem gebührt (...) und, wenn irgendeinem anderen Menschen, dann gewiß ihm auch, unsterblich zu sein"; Rufener, "und dann kann, wenn überhaupt ein Mensch, auch er

4. εἶπερ τῶ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ

Now that we have established that the phrase εἶπερ τῶ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ should not be taken in an exclusive sense in our passage, we should return to the word ἀνθρώπων in this phrase. We have already seen that man (ἄνθρωπος) belongs to the class of ζῶα, “living beings”, to which θηρία, “animals” also belong. The large majority of men become immortal in the same way as animals, namely by physical procreation. Some people, however, become immortal by intellectual procreation; at 209c she calls this type of offspring ἀθανατώτεροι παῖδες, “more immortal children”. Because men become immortal through their offspring, we may conclude that the parents will become all the more immortal when their offspring is more immortal. So here the scalarity of immortality is mentioned explicitly. With the philosopher’s offspring we reach the top of the scale. Like some other men, he produces spiritual offspring. But, just as the spiritual offspring of some is more immortal than the physical offspring of others, the philosopher’s offspring thus surpasses the spiritual offspring of others because the philosopher begets this offspring in real beauty, the Form of Beauty itself, and not in an image of beauty. Therefore the philosopher might rightly be called ἀθανατώτατος, “most immortal”. Thus the phrase εἶπερ τῶ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ fulfils the function it usually does: it indicates an inclusive superlative—the top of the scale. Like others, the philosopher, being a man, becomes immortal through the offspring he begets and raises.¹⁶

Many scholars have drawn attention to the similarity of the philosopher’s view of the Form of Beauty in the *Symposium* and the perfect and eternal view of the Forms by the philosopher’s soul after death in the *Phaedo*, when he finally escapes from the cycle of reincarnation.¹⁷ But the differences between the two dialogues are so great that they prevent us from attributing personal immortality to the philosopher-lover in the *Symposium*. For one thing, I have already mentioned that Diotima speaks about him as a man (ἄνθρωπος) viewing the Form of Beauty, whereas in the *Phaedo* the Forms are viewed by the disembodied soul of the philosopher. For another, the relation between viewing the Forms and virtue in the *Symposium* is exactly the opposite of the situation in the *Phaedo*. In the *Symposium* the philosopher’s viewing the Form of Beauty enables him to produce real virtue and thus it precedes virtue; in the *Phaedo* the possession and practising of real virtue earns him the reward of viewing the Forms and thus it follows upon viewing the Forms.

5. The immortal Socrates

It is generally assumed that the picture of the philosopher as the perfect lover sketched by Diotima is put into practice in Alcibiades’ eulogy on Socrates in the next part of the *Symposium*.¹⁸ I would suggest that an allusion to the person of the historical Socrates may also be present at the end of Diotima’s speech itself. What I have in mind is similar to the situation in the Simile of the Cave in the *Republic*. There (*R.* 517a4-6) it is stated about the man who returns into the Cave after having seen the real world and who tries to free the prisoners and lead them outside the cave, “And if it were possible to lay hands on and to kill the man who tried to release them and lead them up, would they not kill him?” (Shorey) It has long been recognized that this is an allusion to the fate of Socrates himself, who was killed by his fellow Athenians. Thus Socrates is made to predict his own death in the *Republic*. I suggest that a positive counterpart of this procedure is found in the *Symposium*. Just as the philosopher-king, that is Socrates, in the *Republic* has acquired true knowledge of the Forms, so the ideal philosopher-lover, that is Socrates, has acquired true knowledge of the Form of Beauty. And his contact with the Form of Beauty has enabled him to give birth to true virtue. The true virtue, therefore, alludes to Socrates’ perfect philosophy of virtue. This true virtue, being the most immortal offspring imaginable, will make him immortal.

Both the *Phaedo* and the *Symposium* can be regarded as monuments for Socrates. They might be said to constitute a diptych. In the *Phaedo* the man Socrates is about to die. The dialogue

unsterblich sein”; Chambry, “Or c’est à celui (...) qu’il appartient (...) et, si jamais homme devient immortel, de le devenir lui aussi.” Lamb’s translation, “he, above all men, is immortal”, makes the superlative meaning of the phrase explicit.

¹⁶ What happens to the philosopher’s soul (or, for that matter, to anybody’s soul) after death is not mentioned at all in the *Symposium*. As to Plato’s opinion on the immortality of the soul at the time he wrote the *Symposium*, I concur with those scholars who claim that this doctrine is nowhere contradicted in the *Symposium*; it just plays no role in this dialogue. See for instance Kahn 2003, 300-301; Sedley 2009, 159. Kahn convincingly speaks about the “autonomy” of the Platonic dialogue.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Sier 1997, 187: “Diotima läßt ihre Rede, mehr andeutend als ausführend und in einem gewissen mythischen Halbdunkel mit einem Motiv ausklingen, das gleichsam die Abbeviatur eines eschatologischen Mythos darstellt, wie er gegen Ende von Gorgias, Phaidon und Politeia begegnet.” See also Fierro 2001, 36-41; Sedley 2009, 160.

¹⁸ See, e.g., Hunter 2004, 99 with references.

concentrates on the fate of Socrates' soul after the death of the man Socrates: he is the perfect philosopher whose immortal soul will eventually escape from the cycle of reincarnation and live forever with the gods, in perfect contact with the Forms. The *Symposium* deals with the man Socrates in this world of ours: his actual life as the perfect philosopher-lover, as related in Alcibiades' speech, and his posthumous life in which he will become immortal by his offspring, true virtue. The fact that we are talking about Socrates today proves that Plato was fully justified in putting this prediction into the mouth of his admired master.

References

- Boll, F., Buchwald, W. 1969⁶. *Platon, Symposion* (München)
- Bury, R.G. 1932². *The Symposium of Plato* (Cambridge)
- Brisson, L. 2000². *Platon, Le Banquet* (Paris)
- Chambry, E. 1922. *Platon, Le Banquet* (Paris)
- Diano, C. 1992. *Platone. Il Simposio* (Venezia)
- Dover, K.J. 1980. *Plato, Symposium* (Cambridge)
- Dyson, M. 1986. *Immortality and Procreation in Plato's Symposium*, *Antichthon* 20, 59-72
- Ferrari, F. 1985. *Platone, Simposio* (Milano)
- Fierro, M.A. 2001. *Symp. 212A2-7: Desire for the Truth and Desire for Death and a God-like Immortality*, *Méthexis* 14, 23-43
- Fowler, H.N. 1914. *Plato, Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus* (Cambridge MA/London)
- Gigon, O., Rufener, R. 1974. *Platon, Meisterdialoge. Phaidon, Symposion, Phaidros* (Zürich/München)
- Hackforth, R. 1955. *Plato's Phaedo* (Cambridge)
- Howatson, M.C., Sheffield, F.C.C. 2008. *Plato, The Symposium* (Cambridge)
- Hunter, R. 2004. *Plato's Symposium* (Oxford)
- Joyce, M. 1963². *Plato, Symposium*, in: Hamilton, E., Cairns, H. (eds.) *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Princeton)
- Kahn, Ch. 2003. *On the Philosophical Autonomy of a Platonic Dialogue: the Case of Recollection*, in: Michelini, A.N. (ed.), *Plato as Author. The Rhetoric of Philosophy* (Leiden/Boston)
- Kühner, R., Gerth, B. 1898³. *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache, Zweiter Teil: Satzlehre* (Hannover)
- Lamb, W.R.M. 1925. *Plato, Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias* (Cambridge MA/London)
- Marchant, E.C., Bowersock, G.W. *Xenophon, Scripta minora* (Cambridge MA/London)
- O'Brien, M.J. 1984. "Becoming Immortal" in *Plato's Symposium*, in: Gerber, D.E. (ed.) *Greek Poetry and Philosophy (Festschrift L. Woodbury)* (Chico), 185-205
- Price, A.W. 1989. *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford)
- Reale, G. 2001. *Platone, Simposio* (Milano)
- Robin, L. 1929. *Platon, Le Banquet* (Paris)
- Rowe, C.J. 1998. *Plato, Symposium* (Warminster)
- Schleiermacher, F., Kurz, D. 1974. *Platon, Phaidon, Das Gastmahl, Kratylos* (Darmstadt)
- Sedley, D. 2009. *Three Kinds of Platonic Immortality*, in: Frede, D., Reis, B. (eds.) *Body and Soul in Ancient Philosophy* (Berlin), 145-161
- Shorey, P. 1935. *Plato, The Republic, vol. 2* (Cambridge MA/London)
- Sier, K. 1997. *Die Rede der Diotima* (Stuttgart/Leipzig)
- Stokes, M.C. 1986. *Plato's Socratic Conversations* (London)
- Verdenius, W.J. 1958. *Notes on Plato's Phaedo*, *Mnemosyne* 10, 193-243
- Vince, J.H. 1935. *Demosthenes, vol. 3* (Cambridge MA/London)
- Wipperfurth, J. 1965. *Eros und Unsterblichkeit in der Diotima-Rede des Symposions*, in: Flashar, H., Gaiser, K. (eds.) *Synusia, Festgabe für Wolfgang Schadewaldt zum 15. März 1965* (Pfullingen), 12

Plenary session

Chair: Mary Margaret McCabe

Immortalità personale senza anima immortale: Diotima e Aristotele

Mario Vegetti

1. Diotima¹ sostiene con molta chiarezza la tesi che il desiderio di possedere “ciò che è buono” (*tagathà*) è motivato dall'altro e dominante desiderio di “essere felici” (εὐδαίμων ἔσται, 204e6 ss.). Eros è dunque rivolto a «possedere il bene per sempre» (206a8-9), e con esso, s'intende, la felicità che ne consegue. Questa aspirazione a un possesso perpetuo di bene e di felicità dà necessariamente luogo a un desiderio erotico di immortalità (ἀθανασίας δὲ ἀναγκαῖον ἐπιθυμεῖν, 206e9 s.).² Diotima indica tre percorsi che possono venire seguiti in vista della soddisfazione di questo desiderio di immortalità.³

1.1 La prima via verso l'immortalità riguarda ogni vivente mortale, uomo o animale che sia (207b), e consiste nella procreazione biologica di un individuo simile al genitore, poiché «in ogni vivente che è mortale vi è qualcosa di immortale», la gravidanza e la generazione (206c6-8): «la procreazione è ciò che di eterno e immortale spetta a un mortale» (206e8).⁴

Infatti, conclude su questo punto Diotima, «la natura mortale cerca per quanto le è possibile (*katà to dynatòn*) di essere sempre e di essere immortale. Ma può farlo solo in questo modo, attraverso la procreazione» (207d1-3).

Si tratta in particolare della via seguita da quegli uomini che sono «gravidi secondo il corpo»: essi si rivolgono alla riproduzione sessuale «procurandosi attraverso la procreazione di figli immortalità e ricordo e felicità (ἀθανασίαν καὶ μνήμην καὶ εὐδαιμονίαν)...per tutto il tempo a venire» (208e).

1.2 Accanto alla via biologica verso l'immortalità, Diotima ne riconosce altre due, queste specificamente umane, che potremmo definire di tipo “culturale”.⁵

La prima di esse riguarda un tipo d'uomo il cui profilo antropologico è diverso da quello dedito alla riproduzione biologica. E' l'uomo ambizioso, motivato dalla *philotimia*, il cui desiderio di immortalità prende la forma dell'aspirazione – di chiara memoria omerica⁶ – a un *kleos athanaton* (208c5 s.), che assicura «l'immortale memoria» delle loro gesta e della loro *areté*: «è per una virtù immortale e una fama gloriosa che tutti fanno tutto, e tanto più quanto migliori essi siano: infatti amano l'immortale» (208d5-e2).

E' nell'ambito di questo tipo antropologico che la tensione verso un'immortalità culturale si sviluppa, dopo la primitiva ricerca del *kleos* eroico dell'epica, in direzione di un lascito eterno di opere memorabili, tanto nell'ambito della creazione poetica quanto in quello della storia politica. La vecchia *areté* eroica lascia ora il passo a un nuovo quadro di virtù che si inscrivono nello spazio dell'intelligenza, la *phronesis* (φρόνησίν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν, 209a4): quelle virtù, *sophrosyne* e *dikaiosyne*, che per Platone sono essenzialmente “politiche” (cfr. *Resp.* IV 430d1), e che Aristotele avrebbe preferito chiamare “etiche”. Gli eroi eponimi di queste nuove virtù sono ora i poeti e gli artisti “creativi”, come Omero ed Esiodo, ma ancor di più coloro che si distinguono nel garantire il buon ordine (*diakosmesis*) delle case e delle città, come i protolegislatori Licurgo e Solone.⁷ E' grazie alle loro opere nel dominio della cultura e della politica che essi acquistano, come i vecchi eroi, fama (*kleos*) e memoria immortali (209d).⁸

¹ La maggior parte dei commentatori riconosce senza incertezze in Diotima un portavoce affidabile del pensiero platonico. Dubbi in proposito, da punti di vista diversi, sono stati espressi per esempio da SEDLEY (1999) p. 130 n. 2, e da NAILS (2006) pp. 192-3. Si tratta di dubbi legittimi, se si tiene conto delle complesse strategie di distanziamento dal testo presentate nel prologo del dialogo (catena di narratori poco attendibili), e del carattere anomalo del personaggio (donna, straniera, sacerdotessa). E' vero tuttavia che Diotima usa a più riprese, come vedremo, il linguaggio tecnico della teoria delle idee che appartiene senza dubbio a uno dei nuclei teorici costanti del pensiero di Platone. Se è vero che nessun personaggio (comprese le diverse raffigurazioni di Socrate) può essere considerato senza riserve come “portavoce” autentico di Platone, non credo dunque che Diotima sia da considerare meno affidabile per esempio del Socrate del *Fedone* o della *Repubblica*, né che le sue tesi vadano corrette sulla base di quelle espresse altrove da altri personaggi autorevoli. Ma della specificità del personaggio nel contesto dialogico, in particolare per quanto riguarda la retorica erotica, bisognerà tener conto nel seguito di questa analisi.

² Per un importante passo parallelo sulla connessione tra immortalità e felicità cfr. *Timeo* 90c, sul quale dovremo tornare. L'accostamento è segnalato da FERRARI (2012) p. 38.

³ Si veda in questo senso LEAR (2006) p. 109.

⁴ Le traduzioni del *Simposio* citate sono di M. Nucci (2009), con qualche modifica.

⁵ FUSSI (2008) segnala tuttavia che nel caso degli uomini anche la riproduzione biologica comporta un aspetto culturale, perché essa comprende le nozioni di famiglia e di memoria conservata nella discendenza (pp. 6-7).

⁶ Sul tono epico di tutto il passo cfr. SUSANETTI (1992) p. 25.

⁷ G. R. F. FERRARI (1992), p. 255, parla in proposito di un «pious roll of cultural heroes».

⁸ Un interessante passo delle *Leggi* compatta la prima e la seconda via all'immortalità. «In qualche misura il genere umano

Fin qui, secondo Diotima, il giovane Socrate è in grado di seguire il percorso dell'iniziazione erotica. La sacerdotessa dubita però che egli sia in grado di seguirla oltre la soglia dei cosiddetti misteri maggiori, che apre la via all'iniziazione epoptica, nonostante che si dichiari disposta a dedicare al discepolo tutto il suo impegno (οὐκ οἶδ'εἰ οἷός τ'ἂν εἶης...ἐγὼ καὶ προθυμίας οὐδὲν ἀπολείψω, 210a2-4). Torneremo più avanti sul senso di questa presunta incapacità di Socrate di seguire Diotima nel percorso iniziatico. Si tratta ora invece di vedere che cosa sta oltre la soglia dei "grandi misteri". E' certo comunque che a superarla non potrà essere il tipo antropologico dell'uomo "filotimico", ma una figura umana diversa: evidentemente, è il caso di anticipare, quella del filosofo.

1.3 La terza via verso l'immortalità è anch'essa, come la seconda, di ambito culturale e non biologico, ma sia il suo approccio sia il suo esito sono di qualità intellettuale del tutto superiore a quelli della via "filotimica". Chi dunque procede correttamente (*orthòs*) per questa via passerà dall'eros rivolto alla bellezza di un corpo a quello per tutti i corpi che partecipano del tratto della bellezza, poi a quello rivolto alla superiore bellezza delle anime e dei loro prodotti: comportamenti (*epitedeumata*), leggi, conoscenze (*epistemai*) (210a-c). Questo eros riorientato lo metterà di fronte allo spettacolo del «vasto mare del bello», la cui contemplazione gli ispirerà la generazione di «discorsi (*logoi*) belli e magnifici», nonché di nobili pensieri (*dianoemata*) filosofici, il cui orizzonte è la conoscenza unitaria e per così dire intensiva (*mia episteme*) del bello (210d).

A questo punto, giunto ormai al *telos* della contemplazione delle cose belle, l'iniziato perverrà alla visione istantanea (*ἐξαιφνης κατόψεται*) del «bello per natura» (210e4-6). Tutto ciò suscita naturalmente parecchie domande, ma importa qui in primo luogo vedere le conseguenze di questa visione del bello in sé. Chi la consegue genera non più simulacri di *areté* – tali vanno ormai evidentemente considerate tanto le virtù "eroiche" quanto quelle etico-politiche – ma la «virtù vera» (212a4-6), la cui natura deve essere dunque considerata soltanto contemplativa. A chi l'ha conseguita spetta di diventare *theophilés*, evidentemente nel doppio senso di colui che è "caro agli dèi" e che è a loro devoto. A questo tipo di uomo toccherebbe anche di diventare immortale, *athanatos*, se mai ciò potesse accadere a un uomo, e nella misura in cui questo per un uomo è possibile (212a7-8). Questa è la terza e più elevata forma di immortalità perseguibile dagli uomini, dopo quella biologica e quella poetica e politica.

1.4 Tutto questo, si diceva, suscita molte domande. Che cosa esattamente conosce l'iniziato quando "vede" il bello? Che forma epistemica assume questa conoscenza? Perché essa dovrebbe risultare quasi inaccessibile al Socrate allievo di Diotima? C'è continuità o discontinuità fra i diversi passi verso l'immortalità, e i tipi d'uomo che ad essi corrispondono? Che cosa accade all'iniziato dopo la visione del bello? Infine quella che è per noi la domanda più importante: di che tipo è l'immortalità acquisita grazie alla conoscenza del bello?

1.4.1 Il linguaggio con cui Platone descrive il "bello" oggetto della visione epoptica non lascia dubbi: si tratta dell'idea o forma del bello, cui vengono riferiti i tratti ricorrenti in quella che si può definire la teoria standard delle idee.⁹ E' sufficiente leggerne due passi confrontandoli rispettivamente con quelli paralleli in *Repubblica* e *Fedone*. Il bello del *Simposio* «sempre è e non nasce né muore, non cresce né diminuisce, ...non è in parte bello e in parte brutto, né a volte bello e a volte no, né bello rispetto a una cosa e brutto rispetto a un'altra [...]» (211a1-4). E si veda *Repubblica*, dove si polemizza contro il filodosso che «non ritiene esservi il bello in sé né alcuna idea della bellezza in sé che permanga sempre invariante nella sua identità», e gli si obietta che delle molteplici cose belle «non ve n'è una che non possa apparire anche brutta [...], e che le stesse cose appaiono, da diversi punti di vista, ora belle ora brutte», a differenza dell'identità invariante dell'idea (V 479a1-8). Ancora, il bello del *Simposio* si trova «esso stesso (*αὐτὸ καθ'αὐτό*) in se stesso, con se stesso, in un'unica forma (*monoèidès*), eterno, mentre tutte le altre cose belle partecipano (*metechonta*) di esso [...]» (211b1-3). Il confronto qui è con il *Fedone*, dove dell' «uguale in sé, del bello in sé, e di ciascuna cosa che è in sé» si dice che «ciascuna di queste cose che sono, essendo uniformi (*monoèidès*) in sé e per sé (*αὐτὸ καθ'αὐτό*) e nella medesima condizione, in nessun momento, in nessun luogo ammette alcun mutamento» (78d3-8).

Non c'è dubbio, quindi, che l'oggetto della visione iniziatica possa definirsi tecnicamente come l'idea del bello. Il fatto che il contatto con essa (designato con il verbo *aptesthai*) rappresenti il

partecipa per sua natura dell'immortalità e di questa ognuno ha un desiderio innato: si tratta del desiderio di diventare celebri (*kleinòn*) senza giacere senza nome una volta morti. In effetti il genere umano è in qualche modo connesso con la totalità del tempo che lo accompagna e lo accompagnerà sino al termine ed essendo appunto in questo senso immortale, col lasciare i figli dei figli restando perennemente identico a se stesso e unico, partecipa mediante la generazione all'immortalità» (IV 721b7-c7). E' da notare che mentre l'immortalità attraverso la fama è strettamente individuale, quella riproduttiva si sposta chiaramente, come sarebbe accaduto in Aristotele (cfr. 2.1) dagli individui al genere.

⁹ Si vedano in questo senso p. es. DI BENEDETTO (1985) p. 41; FRONTEROTTA (2012) p. 99.

culmine e il compimento del percorso erotico (*telos*, 210e4) può suggerire un'analogia, almeno di posizione, con l'idea del buono nella *Repubblica*, collocata anch'esso al culmine (*telos*) del mondo ideale, e oggetto di un'apprensione noetica (VII 532b1 s.), che può a sua volta venire indicata con il verbo *aptesthai* (VI 511b6). Ma si tratta di un'analogia che è appunto solo di posizione, perché mentre nella *Repubblica* il primato del buono rispetto alle altre idee è argomentato con forza, nel *Simposio* il bello appare come *telos* nel quadro dominante della sublimazione erotica, né è mai in questione il suo rapporto con le altre forme del dominio eidetico.

1.4.2 Pochi dubbi possono esservi anche circa il modo di apprensione dell'idea del bello nel *Simposio*. Il linguaggio platonico rinvia inequivocabilmente all'immediatezza dell'atto intuitivo, che si configura come visione o contatto (*exaiphnes*, *kathoràn*, *aptesthai*: 210e5, 211b8). Si aggiunge esplicitamente che in questo atto l'apparizione del bello non prende la forma né di un *logos* né di una *episteme* (211a8), è dunque estranea rispetto all'ambito della conoscenza linguistico-proposizionale.¹⁰ E' persuasivo il confronto con l'approccio della dialettica all'idea del buono nella *Repubblica*. Benché anche qui non siano assenti accenni a una conoscenza di tipo intuitivo, l'accento cade sulla definizione discorsiva (*διορίσασθαι τῷ λόγῳ*), sull'*elenchos* (VII 534b8-c1), sul *logos tes ousias*, sul *logon didonai* (VII 534b3-5). Confesso di non trovare appassionante la discussione intorno al carattere irrazionale, mistico, oppure razionale e addirittura iper-razionale¹¹ di atti conoscitivi extralinguistici. Linguistico/proposizionale e razionale non sono evidentemente termini sovrapponibili e convertibili, e la storia dell'idea di *Wesenschau* nella filosofia del Novecento è lì a dimostrarlo. Più interessante è la questione, sollevata da Fronterotta,¹² se l'atto di conoscenza intuitiva individualmente sperimentato sia linguisticamente trasponibile, comunicabile e universalizzabile: a me pare che, a differenza della *Repubblica*, la questione non sia tematizzata nel *Simposio* e debba quindi essere lasciata aperta, anche se una risposta positiva potrebbe, con molta incertezza, venire suggerita dal rapporto maestro-discepolo che regge l'intero percorso iniziatico.

Va piuttosto notato che la piena visione dell'idea del bello è perfettamente accessibile in questa vita, e non richiede – a differenza che nel *Fedone* – alcuna separazione dell'anima dal corpo, anzi è possibile solo al termine di un processo di sublimazione nel quale l'attrazione verso la bellezza corporea è il punto di partenza imprescindibile. Ma su questo dovremo tornare da un diverso punto di vista.

1.4.3 Che cosa significa dunque l'incapacità di seguirla nel viaggio iniziatico che Diotima attribuisce a Socrate? In essa si è potuto leggere il segno della insuperabile minorità del filosofo, costretto, almeno in questa vita, ad amare la sapienza senza poterla conseguire, e dunque confinato nella zona epistemica dell' "opinione vera". Questa interpretazione sembra tuttavia smentita da un passo molto simile della *Repubblica*, dove è però Socrate, una volta giunto sulla soglia della piena comprensione della dialettica e del suo oggetto terminale, l'idea del buono, ad attribuire a Glaucone un'analogia incapacità di procedere oltre.¹³ Socrate usa qui quasi le stesse parole che Diotima gli aveva indirizzato nel *Simposio*: «mio caro Glaucone, non sarai più in grado (*οὐκέτι...οἶός τ' ἔσῃ*) di seguirmi, per quanto io non trascurerò certo ogni sforzo (*prothymia*)» (VII 533a1 s.). Il cambio di posizione fra Socrate e Diotima può allora far pensare che l'incapacità di Socrate nel *Simposio* sia dovuta alla sua giovinezza,¹⁴ superata nella *Repubblica* quando un Socrate maturo avrebbe ormai assunto l'atteggiamento del maestro. Anche questa ipotesi sembra tuttavia messa in dubbio da un confronto con il *Parmenide*. Qui il vecchio maestro eleata riconosce come propria del giovanissimo Socrate una procedura filosofica consistente nel riconoscere tratti comuni a diversi enti (è il primo passo nella costruzione della teoria delle idee, cioè il riconoscimento dell'unità oltre la molteplicità, dello *hen epi pollois*, da cui inizia anche l'ascesa del *Simposio*, 210b3 s.), e nel separare (*choris*) questi tratti dagli enti che ne partecipano, facendone così *eide* esistenti in se stessi: «questo ragionamento vale anche per realtà quali la forma in sé e per sé (*εἶδος αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό*) del giusto, del bello, del buono» (130b2-9, cfr. 130e5-131a2).

Quello insomma che il giovanissimo Socrate fa secondo Parmenide è la costruzione di una forma *standard* della teoria delle idee mediante una semplice procedura logico-ontologica che non richiede né i *paraphernalia* dell'iniziazione ai misteri erotici propri del *Simposio*,¹⁵ né alcuna visione

¹⁰ Cfr. CENTRONE (2009) p. XXXIII; NUCCI (2009) n. 269; FRONTEROTTA (2012) pp. 106-10.

¹¹ Parla di «suprema rigorosità razionale» BEARZI (2004) p. 215. Che non si tratti di una «mystische Erlebnis», perché non c'è alcuna *unio mystica* fra soggetto e oggetto, è sostenuto da SIER (1997) pp. 171 sg.

¹² Cit., p. 109.

¹³ Qui tuttavia può trattarsi non tanto di un'incapacità soggettiva quanto dell'intrinseca difficoltà che la dialettica possa costituirsi come un sapere epistemologicamente completo e saturo, difficoltà che dipende dalla natura ontologicamente ambigua del suo oggetto ultimo, l'idea del buono: cfr. in questo senso VEGETTI (2005) pp. 25-37.

¹⁴ Interessanti considerazioni sul "Socrate giovane" nei dialoghi in DE LUISE (2012) pp. 115-38.

¹⁵ Giustamente ROWE (1998) sottolinea che quella erotica è solo una delle vie possibili per la conoscenza filosofica.

oltreterrena delle idee.

Non sembra dunque che la ragione della difficoltà attribuita da Diotima a Socrate consista nell'aspetto cognitivo dell'accesso all'idea del bello. Ciò che viene in questo modo enfatizzato e solennizzato è la difficoltà di una scelta di vita più che di un orientamento epistemico: la scelta di vita che condurrà a una forma di immortalizzazione individuale diversa sia da quella biologica sia da quella politica e poetica, e che dunque richiede una piena maturità morale oltre che intellettuale da parte di chi si avvia in quella direzione.

1.4.4 Sembra di poter escludere che vi sia una continuità fra i diversi percorsi verso l'immortalità, e che essi possano venir disposti in una sequenza progressiva:¹⁶ quello erotico-filosofico va intrapreso «fin da giovane» (210a6), e ad esso corrisponde un tipo d'uomo – appunto il filosofo – antropologicamente diverso sia da quello dedito alla procreazione biologica sia dal *philotimos*. La scelta del filosofo comporta una forma di vita che gli è peculiare: «questa è la dimensione della vita che, se mai altra, un uomo deve vivere (*biôtòn*): contemplando il bello in sé» (211d1-3).

Il *Simposio* – a differenza dalla *Repubblica* – non sembra prevedere alcuna discesa del filosofo una volta raggiunto lo stadio contemplativo.¹⁷ E' vero che giunto alla visione del bello, e al tipo di vita che le consegue, il filosofo ha ancora un'attività generativa, consistente nel «partorire non simulacri (*eidola*) di virtù, ma virtù vera, visto che afferra il vero» (212a4-6). Questa *areté*, proprio in quanto è “vera”, sarà perciò diversa dalle virtù poetiche e politiche: se possiamo anticipare un linguaggio aristotelico, essa sarà una virtù dianoetica e non etica, che configura una forma di vita dedicata alla verità e non alla politica o alla creazione poetica.

Blondell¹⁸ ritiene inevitabile una discesa: «poiché il filosofo non può esistere permanentemente nella contemplazione delle forme», «il Socrate temporaneamente solipsistico tornerà presto fra i suoi compagni mortali». Questo può essere certamente vero per il filosofo della *Repubblica*, e forse anche per il nostro senso comune. Ma è meno vero per la figura del filosofo che Platone delinea nel celebre *excursus* del *Teeteto*, con la sua esclusiva dedizione alla pura teoresi (173d-175b), per non parlare dell'asceti del *Fedone*.¹⁹ Del resto, non c'è nulla di impensabile in una vita interamente dedicata alla comprensione delle strutture del mondo noetico, se si pensa a esercizi teorici come quelli programmati nel *Sofista* e nel *Parmenide*. Che il *bios theoretikòs* possa costituire una forma di vita pervasiva, lo avrebbe indicato con chiarezza Aristotele – anche se certamente in lui l'oggetto della contemplazione risulta assai dilatato rispetto a quello platonico.

1.4.5 Queste considerazioni rendono più agevole la risposta alla domanda per noi più importante, circa il tipo di immortalità personale che consegue alla visione dell'idea del bello (e per estensione, è lecito supporre, del mondo delle forme nel suo insieme). «Non trovi – chiede Diotima – che a chi partorisce e alleva virtù vera spetta di diventare caro agli dèi (*theophilès*), e se mai a un uomo toccasse di diventare immortale, dovrebbe toccare a lui?» (212a7 s.). Il senso di questo passo, in cui Platone indica la terza e più elevata via verso l'immortalità personale, viene chiarito dal confronto con un più esplicito testo parallelo del *Timeo*, il cui linguaggio presenta forti affinità con quello del *Simposio*: «colui il quale si è impegnato nella ricerca del sapere e in pensieri veri e soprattutto questa parte di sé ha esercitato, è assolutamente necessario che, quando attinge alla verità (*ἀληθείας ἐφάπτηται*), abbia dei pensieri immortali e divini e che, nella misura in cui alla natura umana è stato dato di partecipare all'immortalità, non ne trascuri alcuna parte e sia perciò straordinariamente felice» (90b6-c6, trad. Fronterotta leggermente modificata).

Il passo del *Timeo* conferma ciò che risulta già con molta chiarezza nel *Simposio*. Per individui mortali, l'immortalità personale ottenuta mediante l'acquisizione, il consolidamento, la trasmissione educativa della conoscenza – al pari di quella perseguita mediante la prole o la memoria – non richiede e non presume l'immortalità dell'anima individuale. Come ha scritto Casertano, «ogni singolo uomo è mortale, in suo corpo e sua anima, ma ha la possibilità, nella sua vita mortale, di

¹⁶ Cfr. in questo senso CENTRONE (2009) p. XXXIII e NUCCI (2009) n. 260.

¹⁷ Così NAILS (2006): «the ascent in the *Symposium ends* at the summit with exclusive contemplation of *the kalon*» (pp. 193 s.). Nello stesso senso BEARZI (2004), p. 234 (che tuttavia cerca di mostrare una indiretta compatibilità con la *Repubblica*). Scrive efficacemente FERRARI (1992) pp. 259-60: «far from there being any hint that he [l'iniziato] could transfer his concern from the Beautiful itself to the beauty of virtue, he is explicitly envisaged as spending his life in contemplation of the former. In marked contrast to the Lesser Mysteries, what virtue amounts to here is not clearly something other than the vision of the Beautiful that gives it birth».

¹⁸ BLONDELL (2006) pp. 155, 176. Mi sembra abbastanza simile la posizione di GONZALEZ (2008) §17. Anche PRICE (1989) ritiene che contemplazione non possa significare inazione e indifferenza alle altre persone, ma come conferma a questa tesi cita prevalentemente passi della *Repubblica!* (p. 51). Se tutte le tesi sostenute da Platone in ogni dialogo fossero immediatamente trasferibili a tutti gli altri, Platone avrebbe scritto un solo libro: un compendio, o *syngramma*, della filosofia platonica, opera che egli stesso dichiara impossibile e il cui primo esemplare storico sembra sia stato composto dal giovane tiranno siracusano Dionisio II (*Ep. VII* 341b-c).

¹⁹ Per questa tensione tra diversi profili della vita filosofica cfr. VEGETTI (2000) pp. 362-64.

attingere una forma di immortalità, che consiste precisamente nell'innalzarsi al mondo immortale della conoscenza».²⁰

Il senso dell'assenza nel *Simposio* di una teoria dell'immortalità dell'anima individuale, in rapporto all'insieme del pensiero platonico, andrà discusso più avanti.

E' ora il caso di considerare una posterità importante, e in qualche misura sorprendente, delle tesi sull'immortalità insegnate da Diotima; reciprocamente, questa posterità servirà a comprendere meglio il senso e la portata delle osservazioni che abbiamo svolto fin qui.

2.1 C'è una straordinaria somiglianza fra la via riproduttiva all'immortalità indicata da Diotima e il modo in cui Aristotele spiega la finalità della riproduzione biologica tanto nel *De anima* quanto nel *De generatione animalium*. «La funzione più naturale (*physikôtaton*) degli esseri viventi [...] è di produrre un altro individuo simile a sé: l'animale un animale e la pianta una pianta, e ciò per partecipare (*metechôsin*), nella misura del possibile, dell'eterno e del divino. In effetti è a questo che tutti gli esseri tendono (*oregetai*) [...] Poiché dunque questi esseri non possono partecipare con continuità dell'eterno e del divino, in quanto nessun essere corruttibile è in grado di sopravvivere identico e uno di numero, ciascuno ne partecipa per quanto gli è possibile, chi più e chi meno, e sopravvive non in se stesso, ma in un individuo simile a sé, non uno di numero, ma uno nella specie (*eidei*)» (*De an.* II 4 415a25-b7, trad. Movia). Più brevemente ribadiva Aristotele nel *De generatione*: «poiché non è possibile che la natura del genere degli animali sia eterna, ciò che nasce è eterno nel modo che gli è dato. Individualmente gli è dunque impossibile [...] secondo la specie gli è invece possibile. Perciò vi è sempre un genere di uomini, di animali e di piante» (*De gen. anim.* II 1 731b31-732a1, trad. Lanza).

Aristotele non fa così che generalizzare, estendendola all'intero mondo vivente, dagli uomini alle piante, la tesi di Diotima sull'immortalità riproduttiva. L'estensione comporta però due conseguenze. La prima è una certa de-psicologizzazione del discorso di Diotima, che sostituisce l'eros con una pulsione "naturalissima"; resta vero anche per Aristotele che l'aspirazione (*orexis*) verso l'eternità divina costituisce una sorta di programma genetico del vivente, che può però agire in modo del tutto inconsapevole. La seconda conseguenza è che la scena dell'immortalizzazione riproduttiva si sposta decisamente dagli individui alla specie, che ne è l'unico ambito possibile.

2.2 Aristotele non riprende in modo esplicito la seconda via verso l'immortalità personale, quella perseguita dal tipo d'uomo "filotimico". Non c'è dubbio però che egli delinea questa forma di vita e la sua connessione con la virtù e la felicità, anche se non direttamente con l'immortalità mediante la memoria. Si tratta dell'ambito delle virtù che Aristotele chiama etiche, distinguendolo da quelle "teoriche" definite, com'è noto, "dianoetiche". Le virtù etiche non sono le prime anche se godono di una loro eccellenza. «L'agire politico e le azioni di guerra eccellono tra le azioni secondo virtù»; ne derivano «potere e onori (*timàs*), e comunque la felicità (*eudaimonia*) per se stesso e per i propri concittadini» (*Eth. nicom.* X 7, 1177b13-17, trad. Natali modificata). Tuttavia la felicità conseguente a questa forma di virtù è imperfetta e di secondo rango, perché condizionata da circostanze esterne e indipendenti dall'individuo agente, al quale viene richiesto un impegno oneroso e dall'esito incerto.

2.3. Inequivocabile invece la ripresa aristotelica della terza via verso l'immortalità personale, quella filosofica:²¹ essa è manifestata in un passo dell'*Etica nicomachea* dal forte rilievo retorico, centrato sul verbo *athanatizein*, un *hapax* nel corpo aristotelico.²² Nel celebre capitolo 7 del libro X,²³ Aristotele decreta il primato della vita teoretica, in quanto attività secondo la migliore virtù umana, quella esercitata dal *nous* nella conoscenza delle cose «belle e divine», da cui consegue la sua capacità di pervenire alla «felicità perfetta (*teleia eudamonia*)» (1177a12-17). Questa vita consiste nell'attività dell'elemento divino inerente alla vita umana, appunto il pensiero. Per questo, aggiunge Aristotele, «non si deve, essendo uomini, limitarsi a pensare a cose umane, né essendo mortali pensare solo a cose mortali, come dicono i consigli tradizionali, ma rendersi immortali fin quanto è possibile (*ἐφ' ὅσον ἐνδέχεται ἀθανατίζειν*) e fare di tutto per vivere secondo la parte migliore che è in noi. Anche se

²⁰ Cfr. CASERTANO (2012) pp. 64-5 (anche nota 49 a p. 67). Nello stesso senso LEAR (2006) p. 115 nota 25 («nel mondo del *Simposio* le pratiche culturali durano più a lungo delle anime perché le anime sono mortali. E le scienze sono ancora più "immortali" perché sono associate a oggetti atemporalis»); FERRARI (2012) p. 39 (l'eternazione del sapere come unica forma di immortalità umana); ROWE (1998) pp. 112-13. Per il *Timeo* cfr. CENTRONE (2007) p. 42. Per posizioni opposte cfr. nota 25.

²¹ La vicinanza di Aristotele a Platone su questo tema è stata segnalata e discussa da ARENDT (1991) pp. 70-129.

²² Cfr. in proposito VEGETTI (2007A) pp. 165-66, 174-76. Un accenno all'influsso di *Simposio* e *Timeo* 90c su questo passo aristotelico è formulato da SIER (1997) pp. 187 sg.

²³ La critica ha spesso rilevato il carattere anomalo di questo e del seguente capitolo rispetto al tono generale del trattato etico: la discussione relativa in VEGETTI (2010) pp. 202-10.

è di peso (*onchos*) minuscolo, per potere e per onore essa supera di gran lunga tutto il resto» (1177b31-1178a1). La più alta forma di immortalità personale possibile per l'essere umano mortale, la virtù più vera, la perfetta felicità: riecheggiano con molta forza, in questo passo aristotelico, i tratti decisivi riconosciuti da Diotima alla contemplazione filosofica dell'idea del bello – certo estesa da Aristotele a tutto il campo dei possibili oggetti del pensiero speculativo.

Sembra dunque certo che Aristotele abbia trovato nel *Simposio* elementi decisivi per pensare la questione del desiderio di immortalità individuale da parte di viventi mortali, e dei diversi livelli ai quali questo desiderio può venire soddisfatto: dall'eternazione riproduttiva fino all'assimilazione parziale con l'immortalità divina consentito dalla forma di vita teoretica.

2.4 L'elaborazione e l'espansione aristotelica delle prospettive indicate da Diotima forniscono dal canto loro preziosi chiarimenti che possono venire impiegati retroattivamente per l'interpretazione dei problemi cruciali sollevati da quelle prospettive.

In primo luogo. Considerata dal punto di vista aristotelico, la questione se il percorso “politico” e quello speculativo verso l'immortalizzazione personale vadano considerati come posti in sequenza o piuttosto in alternativa può venire chiaramente risolta nel secondo senso. La forma di vita politica e quella teoretica sono nettamente distinte e contrapposte da Aristotele;²⁴ ad esse corrispondono tipi d'uomo diversi, e diverse virtù gerarchicamente distinte (quella dianoetica e quelle etiche, anche se naturalmente l'esercizio della virtù maggiore non esclude il possesso di quelle etiche, richieste dall'interazione quotidiana fra gli uomini)²⁵. Aristotele considera l'attività politica come un impedimento e un impaccio per quella speculativa, cui va dedicata per quanto è possibile la vita intera – anche se essa concerne un'esigua minoranza di uomini, come del resto presumibilmente accadeva per la perfetta iniziazione erotica del *Simposio*.

Questa opposizione tra virtù, forme di vita e tipi umani contiene in sé anche la risposta che il punto di vista aristotelico offre al secondo quesito suscitato dal *Simposio*, circa l'eventuale “discesa” nelle occupazioni umane dopo l'evento della contemplazione dell'idea del bello. Come si era anticipato, questa risposta non può che essere negativa. A differenza del ritorno nella caverna dei filosofi della *Repubblica*, il filosofo aristotelico rifiuterà il coinvolgimento politico, decidendo di «vivere da straniero» nella città (*Pol.* VII 2 1324a16). La stessa permanenza perpetua nella sfera dell'attività teoretica sarà dunque da attribuire al filosofo contemplatore del *Simposio*.

Ma veniamo alla terza e più importante questione. L'idea di un accesso biologico all'eternità della specie, e di una conquista culturale dell'immortalità personale che non comporta e non richiede alcuna concezione dell'immortalità dell'anima individuale, si accorda perfettamente con la psicologia e l'etica perfettamente “mondane” di Aristotele. Reciprocamente, il fatto che egli possa accogliere senza riserve queste prospettive sull'immortalizzazione formulate nel *Simposio* significa che nella lettura aristotelica esse non comportavano alcun impegno nei riguardi delle convinzioni altrove formulate da Platone circa l'immortalità dell'anima individuale, convinzioni che Aristotele non avrebbe potuto affatto condividere. Aristotele conferma dunque l'assenza nel *Simposio* di ogni riferimento a questo complesso di dottrine e delle loro ricadute sia morali sia gnoseologiche.

3. Un'assenza, questa, che non può venire spiegata con ipotesi di tipo evolutivo, vista la prossimità del *Simposio* a dialoghi, come il *Fedone* e il *Fedro*, dove il pensiero dell'immortalità dell'anima gioca un ruolo centrale. Sembra anche piuttosto arbitrario pensare a uno «scetticismo temporaneo» di Platone intorno a questa convinzione, come ha fatto Hackforth.²⁶ Ma neppure sembrano accettabili “spiegazioni” (nel senso inglese di *explain away*) che implicano una *petitio principii*, di questo tipo: Platone ha *sempre* sostenuto la teoria dell'immortalità dell'anima; dunque essa *non può* risultare assente nel *Simposio*, anche se il testo sembra confermarlo.²⁷

²⁴ Si vedano in proposito le puntuali analisi di GASTALDI (2003) pp. 109-31.

²⁵ Cfr. in questo senso *Eth. nicom.* X 8 1178b2-7.

²⁶ R. HACKFORTH, *Immortality in Plato's 'Symposium'*, «Classical Review» 64 (1950) pp. 43-45.

²⁷ Mi sembra che di questo tipo sia l'argomentazione in CENTRONE (2009) pp. LIX s.: «La negazione dell'immortalità personale implicita nelle parole di Diotima a 207c-208b non può essere in contrasto con la teoria dell'immortalità dell'anima, cosmica o individuale, di cui Platone è costantemente strenuo e convinto sostenitore; il mortale di cui si parla è il corpo e probabilmente il composto di anima e corpo». Un ragionamento simile anche in FIERRO (2001), la cui interpretazione del *Simposio* è interamente derivata dal *Fedone*. Ponendosi da un punto di vista “compatibilista” (per es. tra *Fedone* e *Simposio*), PRICE (1989) si chiede: «The question becomes how best characterize an immortality within mortality whose achievement is desirable even for souls that are themselves fully immortal»; e conclude: «Plato, regrettably, leaves us to speculate about an answer» (pp. 33-4). Per un'ampia discussione problematica cfr. SIER (1997) pp. 185-197. Tra l'interpretazione secondo la quale «l'individualità della persona può perpetuarsi solo per sostituzione, attraverso la 'creazione' spirituale», e quella di una immortalità piena, non vicariante, per l'anima del filosofo, Sier propone con molta cautela per la seconda, soprattutto sulla base dell'opinabile riferimento indicato da O'Brien a *Resp.* X 612e-614a. Il saggio di M. O'BRIEN (1984) costituisce probabilmente il migliore sforzo in senso “compatibilista”, perché non si nasconde le difficoltà di

In realtà, anche l'eclissi dell'immortalità dell'anima individuale deve a mio avviso venire interpretata secondo il criterio prudente e plausibile formulato da Tim Robinson: «Il rifiuto manifesto, da parte di Platone, di ridurre a una sembianza d'ordine artificiale una serie di concezioni dell'anima che, intrinsecamente, sono probabilmente inconciliabili [...] va compreso come un segno della sua potenza filosofica [...] Esso può venire attribuito a una sua ferma decisione di lasciare una pluralità di opzioni aperte in caso di dubbio, decisione di un uomo che lungo tutta la sua vita, e fino alla fine, ha scelto di esprimersi sempre, su ogni argomento, nella forma di un dialogo aperto e non in quella di un trattato dogmatico».²⁸

E' del resto ben noto quanto sia problematica e tormentata in Platone la questione dell'immortalità dell'anima individuale, in ragione delle stesse esigenze cui essa è chiamata a rispondere. C'è da un lato la necessità di ordine morale di incentivare la condotta giusta in questa vita mediante un dispositivo di premi e punizioni previsti per l'anima nell'al di là, che possono risarcire il giusto per le sue sofferenze mondane e sanzionare l'ingiusto per le sue prevaricazioni, dispositivo ampiamente descritto nei miti escatologici del *Gorgia* e del libro X della *Repubblica*.²⁹ C'è dall'altro lato l'esigenza gnoseologica di spiegare la possibilità di conoscenza di enti incorporei come le idee da parte di un'anima vincolata agli organi di senso: essa può essere più facilmente pensata come un contatto pre-natale fra le idee e un'anima non ancora incorporata, secondo la tesi del *Fedone*.³⁰

Le due esigenze tuttavia confliggono su un punto decisivo, che resta irrisolto in Platone.³¹ Una qualche forma di ricordo dell'esperienza conoscitiva pre-natale deve essere conservato nella vita corporea, perché su di esso si fonda la via anamnestic per il riconoscimento delle idee anche in questa vita. Al contrario, l'istanza etica esige la cancellazione di ogni ricordo delle esperienze pre-natali, come indica il mito di Er, perché altrimenti non si avrebbero più in questa vita decisioni morali responsabili, bensì un semplice calcolo di costi e benefici, in base al quale la condotta giusta verrebbe presumibilmente scelta in vista dei premi decuplicati con cui essa è remunerata nell'al di là, e viceversa sarebbe evitata la condotta ingiusta per timore delle analoghe punizioni. La memoria, necessaria per la conoscenza delle idee, renderebbe dunque impossibile la scelta morale. Una contraddizione questa che Platone non risolve e neppure tematizza, lasciando che i due tipi di discorso si svolgano su piani diversi e non comunicanti.

Considerazioni simili si possono svolgere intorno alla questione dell'immortalità dell'anima nella sua singolare individualità.³² L'esigenza di ordine morale richiede che la vicenda oltreterrena dell'anima la riguardi nella sua interezza personale (si parlerà dunque dell'anima di Achille o di Socrate): premi e punizioni non possono che riguardare *tutta* l'anima che porta meriti e colpe della vita dell'individuo cui è appartenuta. Ma d'altro canto è difficile pensare che le parti dell'anima più strettamente legate alla corporeità, come lo *thymoeidès* e l'*epithymetikòn* – del resto esplicitamente designate come “mortali” nel *Timeo* – possano godere della stessa immortalità che spetta all'elemento divino che è in noi, cioè il principio razionale che è tuttavia per sua natura impersonale.

Anche questi problemi non trovano in Platone soluzioni univoche, né vengono esplicitamente tematizzati.

Se si tiene conto di questo quadro complesso e frastagliato, si può dunque accettare senza eccessiva sorpresa che il *Simposio* non prenda affatto in considerazione l'immortalità dell'anima, e proponga di pensare una via all'immortalizzazione personale che ne prescinde completamente: questi va considerato come uno dei molti esperimenti intellettuali di Platone, la cui importanza è eccezionalmente confermata dalla sua attenta rivisitazione da parte di Aristotele.

E' però il caso di mettere in rilievo una conseguenza importante di questo esperimento, alla quale non sempre si è dedicata una sufficiente attenzione: si tratta della rinuncia alla funzione

interpolare nel *Simposio* una dottrina dell'immortalità dell'anima senza sovrapporvi altri dialoghi come il *Fedone* (p. 186), benché egli stesso ricorra poi ripetutamente al libro X della *Repubblica*. O'Brien scrive che la topica dell'immortalità è evitata, piuttosto che asserita o negata, nel discorso di Diotima (p. 192), ma vede nella sua frase finale un riferimento alla «immortalità letterale del filosofo in comunione con la Bellezza assoluta» (p. 196-7, 197 n. 34). Tuttavia O'Brien si rende conto di due anomalie di questa interpretazione: che l'immortalità è una prospettiva, un “achievement”, concessi solo al filosofo, la cui anima non è immortale per natura ma può diventarlo; ed è presentata come un dono divino al filosofo, non come un attributo necessario dell'anima (pp. 199-201). O'Brien spiega queste anomalie come l'effetto della strategia retorica (psicagogica) di Diotima, ma di fatto esse sembrano caratterizzare l'intero assetto teorico del discorso sull'immortalità, che per questo probabilmente avrebbe attratto l'interesse di Aristotele. Credo comunque di aver dimostrato (VEGETTI 2007B) che il libro X della *Repubblica*, o le parti di cui è composto, non possa essere considerato come “l'ultima parola” della filosofia platonica su questo e altri temi.

²⁸ TH. M. ROBINSON (1997) p. 26.

²⁹ Cfr. in proposito CENTRONE (2007) pp. 36 s.

³⁰ Cfr. in questo senso FERRARI (2007) pp. 80-83.

³¹ Per una discussione più ampia in proposito rinvio a VEGETTI (2003) pp. 119-31.

³² Il problema è discusso in CENTRONE (2007) pp. 35-50, e in MIGLIORI (2007) pp. 273-75.

gnoseologica (oltre che a quella morale) attribuita all'immortalità dell'anima.

4. Fare a meno dell'immortalità dell'anima significa nel *Simposio* rinunciare alla reminiscenza (*anamnesis*) come modalità di recupero di una conoscenza del mondo eidetico ottenuta dall'anima nella sua vita extracorporea.³³ L'accesso all'idea del bello in questo dialogo avviene grazie a un percorso di sublimazione della pulsione erotica che non richiede affatto la separazione dell'anima dal corpo, anzi ha nel corpo – come soggetto e oggetto del desiderio di bellezza – il suo imprescindibile punto di partenza, e l'indispensabile riserva di energie psichiche da investire nella conversione verso l'idea. Non c'è dubbio, dunque, che secondo il *Simposio* una conoscenza delle idee (che qui sembra di tipo prevalentemente intuitivo) è possibile anche senza il ricorso all'immortalità dell'anima e alla relativa reminiscenza.

E' indubbiamente vero che in molti dialoghi – dal *Fedone*³⁴ al *Menone*,³⁵ per certi aspetti al *Fedro* – la compiuta visione del mondo eidetico è fatta dipendere da un'esperienza cognitiva possibile solo per l'anima disincarnata, che ne conserva una qualche memoria anche dopo la reincarnazione. E' altrettanto vero, però, che in altri dialoghi non meno importanti, oltre che nello stesso *Simposio*, la conoscenza delle idee risulta possibile anche senza reminiscenza.

Nel *Parmenide*, il giovane Socrate sembra impiegare con una certa disinvoltura il metodo – che Aristotele avrebbe chiamato *ekthesis* – consistente nell'isolare un tratto predicativo comune a più realtà empiriche facendone un'entità noetica “separata” e invariante, insomma un'idea. Un metodo di trattazione delle idee, naturalmente, che non ha nulla a che fare con l'immortalità e con la reminiscenza.

Ma ciò che più conta è l'assenza della reminiscenza nella *Repubblica*, che pure offre nel libro VII il più elaborato programma di accesso al mondo eidetico che Platone abbia mai formulato. E' ben poco plausibile il tentativo di ridurre la portata di questa assenza riconducendola a ragioni «essenzialmente letterarie e drammatiche», perché stonerebbe con la prospettiva unificante della visione del bene.³⁶ Al contrario, la conoscenza delle idee, e al di là di esse dell'idea del buono, è preparata – a partire dai paradossi dell'esperienza sensibile – dai processi astrattivo-idealizzanti delle matematiche, poi dal lavoro critico-costruttivo della dialettica.³⁷ Anche qui, e forse qui più che altrove, Platone non sembra avvertire alcuna necessità di ricorrere all'ipotesi di una conoscenza prenatale delle idee e della sua reminiscenza in questa vita.

Il *Simposio* non è dunque l'unico testimone del fatto che Platone abbia esplorato soluzioni gnoseologiche diverse per l'accesso al mondo eidetico.³⁸ Ci sono alternative alla rammemorazione anamnestic, e, nel loro ambito, ci sono modalità differenziate di approccio alla conoscenza delle idee (nel *Simposio* l'accento è posto sull'immediatezza della visione, nella *Repubblica* sul lavoro dialettico, nel *Parmenide* sulla *ekthesis* dell'unità dal molteplice). Le differenze fra queste prospettive non consentono di essere spiegate mediante ipotesi evolutive, e possono probabilmente venire considerate non incompatibili nel quadro del pensiero platonico. Non è però accettabile scegliere una di queste prospettive come dominante o “strutturale”, facendone un letto di Procuste in cui annullare la ricchezza di esperimenti teorici presenti nei dialoghi. In essi Platone ha mostrato come fosse possibile mantenere un nitido profilo di pensiero, invariante nel suo assetto di fondo, sviluppando al tempo stesso in direzioni diverse le sue potenzialità di ricerca. Almeno in un caso – l'immortalizzazione personale senza immortalità dell'anima – questi sviluppi avrebbero incontrato il consenso da parte di Aristotele, che era interessato a mantenere il privilegio straordinario della forma di vita filosofica, la sua capacità di *athanatizein*, senza per questo modificare la sua dottrina dell'anima come forma del corpo e da esso inseparabile (*De anima* II 1 412b5, 413a2 ss.).

³³ Il punto è stato sottolineato da DI BENEDETTO (1985) p. 40. L'assenza nel *Simposio* dell'*Anamnesis-Modell* è sottolineata anche da SIER (1997) pp. 147sg., 190.

³⁴ Secondo la nota tesi di EBERT (1994) in questo dialogo la reminiscenza apparterebbe più alla dottrina pitagorica che a quella platonica. In senso opposto va la discussione di TRABATTONI (2011) pp. XXXIV-XLVIII, con ampi riferimenti alla bibliografia recente.

³⁵ Ma sulle differenze fra questi due dialoghi cfr. le interessanti osservazioni di LAFFRANCE (2007).

³⁶ E' la tesi di KAHN (2005) p. 100. Anche questo autore sembra incorrere in una sorta di *petitio principii*, quando riconosce una “struttura profonda” del pensiero di Platone in «ciò che è comune a *Simposio*, *Fedone* e alla *Repubblica*» (p. 98), attribuendo poi le varianti di questa struttura a ragioni letterarie. Ma perché allora la reminiscenza, assente in *Simposio* e *Repubblica*, non dovrebbe essere attribuita a “ragioni letterarie” nel *Fedone*, anziché ipotizzare che essa sia “strutturale” sulla base del solo *Fedone*?

³⁷ Sul ruolo delle matematiche nella *Repubblica* cfr. CATTANEI (2003).

³⁸ Nella stessa *Repubblica* del resto è presente – seppure in secondo piano – il tema della sublimazione della pulsione erotica come impulso verso la conversione teorica (cfr. VI 485d6-e1, 490a8-b8).

Riferimenti bibliografici

- ARENDRT (1991): H. ARENDRT, *Tra passato e futuro*, trad. ital. Garzanti, Milano 1991
- BEARZI (2004): F. BEARZI, *Il contesto noetico del 'Simposio'*, «Études platoniciennes» I, 2004 (pp. 199-251)
- BLONDELL (2006): R. BLONDELL, *Where is Socrates on the "Ladder of Love"?*, in Leshner - Nails - Sheffield (pp. 147-178)
- BORGES DE ARAUJO - G. CORNELLI (2012): A. BORGES DE ARAUJO - G. CORNELLI (a cura di), *Il 'Simposio' di Platone: un banchetto di interpretazioni*, Loffredo, Napoli 2012
- CASERTANO (2012): G. CASERTANO, *In cerca dell'anima nel 'Simposio'*, in Borges de Araújo - G. Cornelli (pp. 53-75)
- CATTANEI (2003): E. CATTANEI, *Le matematiche al tempo di Platone e la loro riforma*, in *Platone. Repubblica*, trad. e commento a cura di M. Vegetti, vol.V, Bibliopolis, Napoli 2003 (pp. 473-539)
- CENTRONE (2007): B. CENTRONE, *L'immortalità personale: un'altra nobile menzogna?*, in Migliori - Napolitano - Fermani (pp. 35-50)
- CENTRONE (2009): B. CENTRONE, *Introduzione a Platone. Simposio* (trad. e comm. M. Nucci), Einaudi, Torino 2009 (pp. V-LX)
- DE LUISE (2012): F. DE LUISE, *Il sapere di Diotima e la coscienza di Socrate. Note sul ritratto del filosofo da giovane*, in Borges de Araújo - G. Cornelli (pp. 115-138)
- DI BENEDETTO (1985): V. DI BENEDETTO, *Eros/conoscenza in Platone*, in *Platone. Simposio*, BUR, Milano 1985 (pp. 5-65)
- DIXSAUT (2005): M. DIXSAUT (a cura di), *Études sur la 'République' de Platon*, 2 voll., Vrin, Paris 2005
- EBERT (1994): TH. EBERT, *Sokrates als Pythagoreer und die Anamnesis in Platons 'Phaidon'*, Steiner, Stuttgart 1994
- FERRARI (1992): G. R. F. FERRARI, *Platonic Love*, in R. Kraut (a cura di), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, Cambridge Univ. Press 1992 (pp. 248-276)
- FERRARI (2007): F. FERRARI, *L'anamnesis del passato tra storia e ontologia. Il mito platonico come pharmakon contro utopismo e scetticismo*, in Migliori - Napolitano - Fermani (pp. 73-88)
- FERRARI (2012): F. FERRARI, *Eros, paideia e filosofia: Socrate fra Diotima e Alcibiade*, in V. Sorge - L. Palumbo (a cura di), *Eros e pulchritudo. Tra antico e moderno*, La Scuola di Pitagora, Napoli 2012 (pp. 29-46)
- FIERRO (2001): M.A. FIERRO, *Symp. 212a2-7: Desire for the Truth and Desire for Death and a God-like Immortality*, «Methexis» 14 (2001) pp. 23-43
- FRONTEROTTA (2012): F. FRONTEROTTA, *La visione dell'idea del bello. Conoscenza intuitiva e conoscenza proposizionale*, in A. Borges de Araújo - G. Cornelli (pp. 97-114)
- FUSSI (2008): A. FUSSI, *Tempo, desiderio, generazione. Diotima e Aristofane nel 'Simposio' di Platone*, «Rivista di storia della filosofia» 1 (2008) pp. 1-27
- GASTALDI (2003): S. GASTALDI, *Bios hairetotatos. Generi di vita e felicità in Aristotele*, Bibliopolis, Napoli 2003
- GONZALEZ (2008): F.J. GONZALEZ, *Interrupted Dialogue: Recent Readings of the 'Symposium'*, «Plato» 8 (2008)
- HACKFORTH (1950): R. HACKFORTH, *Immortality in Plato's 'Symposium'*, «The Classical Review» 64 (1950) pp. 43-45
- KAHN (2005): CH. H. KAHN, *Pourquoi la doctrine de la réminiscence est-elle absente dans la 'République'?*, in Dixsaut, vol. II (pp. 95-103)
- LAFFRANCE (2007): Y. LAFFRANCE, *Les puissances cognitives de l'âme: la réminiscence et les Formes intelligibles dans le 'Ménon' (80a-86d) et le 'Phédon' (72e-77a)*, «Études platoniciennes» 4 (2007) pp. 239-52
- LEAR (2006): G.R. LEAR, *Permanent Beauty and Becoming Happy in Plato's 'Symposium'*, in Leshner - Nails - Sheffield (pp. 96-123)
- LESHER - NAILS - SHEFFIELD (2006): J.H. LESHER - D. NAILS - F.C.C. SHEFFIELD (a cura di), *Plato's 'Symposium': Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge (Mass.)-London 2006
- MIGLIORI (2007): M. MIGLIORI, *La prova dell'immortalità dell'anima (608c-612c)*, in *Platone. Repubblica*, trad. e commento a cura di M. Vegetti, vol. VII, Bibliopolis, Napoli 2007 (pp. 199-275)
- MIGLIORI - NAPOLITANO VALDITARA - FERMANI (2007): M. MIGLIORI - L. NAPOLITANO VALDITARA - A. FERMANI (a cura di), *Interiorità e anima. La psyché in Platone*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2007
- NAILS (2006): D. NAILS, *Tragedy off Stage*, in Leshner - Nails - Sheffield (pp. 179-207)

- NUCCI (2009): M. NUCCI, in *Platone. Simposio*, trad. e commento di M. Nucci, Einaudi, Torino 2009
- O'BRIEN (1984): M. O'BRIEN, "Becoming immortal" in *Plato's 'Symposium'*, in D.E. Gerber (ed.), *Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, Scholars Press, Chico CA, 1984 (pp. 185-205)
- PRICE (1989): A.W.PRICE, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, Clarendon Press, Oxford
- ROBINSON (1997): TH. M. ROBINSON, *Caractères constitutifs du dualisme âme-corps dans le 'Corpus platonium'*, «Cahiers du Centre d'études sur la pensée antique "kairos kai logos"», 11 (1997) pp. 1-28
- ROWE (1998): CH. ROWE, *Il 'Simposio' di Platone*, Academia, Sankt Augustin 1998
- SEDLEY (1999): D. SEDLEY, *The Ideal of Godlikeness*, in G. Fine (a cura di), *Plato 2. Ethics, Politics, Religion and the Soul*, Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford 1999 (pp. 309-28)
- SIER (1997): K. SIER, *Die Rede der Diotima. Untersuchungen zum platonischen Symposion*, Teubner, Stuttgart-Leipzig 1997
- SUSANETTI (1992): D. SUSANETTI, *L'anima, l'amore e il grande mare del bello*, introd. a *Platone. Il Simposio*, Marsilio, Venezia 1992 (pp. 9-46)
- TRABATTONI (2011): F. TRABATTONI, Introduzione a *Platone. Fedone*, a cura di F. T., Einaudi, Torino 2011 (pp. VII-LXXXVI)
- VEGETTI (2000): M. VEGETTI, *Il regno filosofico*, in *Platone. Repubblica*, a cura di M.V., vol. IV, Bibliopolis, Napoli 2000 (pp. 335-364)
- VEGETTI (2003): M. VEGETTI, *Quindici lezioni su Platone*, Einaudi, Torino 2003
- VEGETTI (2005): M. VEGETTI, *Glaucon et les mystères de la dialectique*, in M. Dixsaut (a cura di), *Études sur la 'République' de Platon*, vol. II, Vrin, Paris 2005 (pp. 25-37)
- VEGETTI (2007A): M. VEGETTI, *Athanatizein. Strategie di immortalità nel pensiero greco*, in *Dialoghi con gli antichi*, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin 2006 (pp. 165-178)
- VEGETTI (2007B): M. VEGETTI, *Introduzione al libro X*, in *Platone, Repubblica*, traduzione e commento a cura di M.V., Bibliopolis, Napoli 2007, vol. VII (pp. 13-34)
- VEGETTI (2010): M. VEGETTI, *L'etica degli antichi*, Laterza, Roma (1989) 2010

Tuesday

16th July, 2013

Plenary session

Chair: Giuseppe Cambiano

Wichtige Manuskripte als Meilensteine in der Textgeschichte von Platons *Symposion*

Christian Brockmann

ABSTRACT

In diesem Vortrag wird die Textgeschichte von Platons *Symposion* von der Spätantike und dem Ersten Byzantinischen Humanismus bis zur Renaissance und der Frühen Neuzeit zunächst überblicksartig dargestellt. Dabei werden einige grundlegende wissenschaftlich-kulturelle Bedingungen, die für die Überlieferung der griechischen Literatur insgesamt von Bedeutung sind, kurz erläutert, nämlich das Verdrängen der Papyrus-Rolle durch das Manuskript in Kodex-Form sowie der umfassende Prozess der Bearbeitung und Revision der antiken Texte im Zuge des *Metacharakterismos*, also der Herstellung neuer, aktualisierter Manuskripte mit Hilfe des neuartigen graphischen Systems der Minuskelschrift (9.-10. Jahrhundert).

Anschließend werden einige der wichtigsten Manuskripte exemplarisch vorgestellt und genauer betrachtet. Es wird nach ihrer Entstehung und ihrer Rolle für die Überlieferung gefragt. Dabei liegt ein besonderes Augenmerk auf der gelehrten Arbeit, die die Manuskripte geformt hat und die sich in ihnen manifestiert. Selbstverständlich finden die beiden ältesten Kodizes besondere Würdigung, nämlich Ms. E. D. Clarke 39 aus der Bodleian Library und Marc. 4,1 aus Venedig (Kodizes B und T). Neue Überlegungen und Hypothesen zu ihrer Entstehung und ihren Vorlagen werden erörtert, wobei auch auf die Beziehung von T zu dem ältesten erhaltenen Platon-Manuskript, Kodex A (Parisinus graecus 1807) eingegangen wird.

Der Vorgang des Abschreibens und Herstellens neuer Manuskripte ging meistens mit einer Bearbeitung der Textform, die man in der Vorlage oder auch in mehreren Vorlagen fand, einher. Denn es haben bedeutende byzantinische Gelehrte an der Überlieferung der Platonischen Werke als Schreiber, Bearbeiter und Auftraggeber mitgewirkt. Ihre philologische Leistung lässt sich in den erhaltenen Manuskripten genau studieren. Manche ihrer Textänderungen oder Konjekturen haben sich bis heute durchgesetzt oder werden als bedenkenswerte Varianten zitiert. Allerdings bleiben die Urheber dieser Lesarten meistens ungenannt, da die Varianten in den kritischen Apparaten nur der Handschrift zugewiesen werden, in der man ihren Ursprung vermutet. Um diesem Mangel abzuwehren, sollen die Arbeiten byzantinischer Gelehrter wie Georgios Pachymeres (Parisinus graecus 1810) und Maximos Planudes (Vindobonensis phil. 21) am Text des *Symposions* genauer diskutiert werden. Die Manuskripte wurden durch die Arbeit der Gelehrten zum Teil erheblich verbessert. Es ist erkennbar, dass sie stets bemüht waren, andere Manuskripte mit besserem Text zu finden und dass es teilweise auch Austausch und Zirkulation von Varianten gegeben hat.

In der wissenschaftlichen Kreativität, dem Engagement und den Fähigkeiten der Schreiber und Bearbeiter und der gemeinschaftlichen Arbeit intellektueller Kreise an den Kodizes werden wesentliche Kennzeichen der griechisch-byzantinischen Manuskriptkultur sichtbar. Ob es den Gelehrten zuweilen sogar gelungen ist, Fehler der Überlieferung zu heilen, werden wir diskutieren müssen. Dabei ist auch das umfangreiche Papyrusfragment (um 200 n. Chr.) zum Vergleich heranzuziehen. Ein Höhepunkt in der Arbeit am Platontext wird in der Renaissance mit Kardinal Bessarion und Marsilio Ficino erreicht. Die griechischen Manuskripte, die sie benutzt und bearbeitet haben, werden zum Abschluss behandelt. Es ist spannend zu sehen, dass es auch hier Verbindungen gegeben hat.

**The Frame Dialogue:
Voices and Themes**

Chair: Alonso Tordesillas

A Rejected Version of the *Symposium*

Menahem Luz

ABSTRACT

Phoenix son of Philip is said to have passed on a version of the Agathon's symposium described by Apollodorus as unclear and in the end passed over in favour of that described in the main body of Plato's *Symposium* (172b, 173b). Although many assume that Plato was the inventor of the symposium genre, but Apollodorus' remarks are a *prima facie* admission that an earlier version of the account existed only to be here dismissed. More recently a number of scholars (e.g., Holgar Thesleff (1978)), for considering Plato's account of Agathon's *Symposium* to have been written after Xenophon's account of Callias' *Symposium* that Plato rejected in his account of Apollodorus' opening. Since Xenophon's composition has been long shown to reflect salient linguistic, stylistic and philosophical passages in that of Plato, it was then suggested that Xenophon partially rewrote his material (esp. cap. viii) as a reply (Gabriel Danzig (2005)). Although it is possible that Xenophon rewrote his composition, my own contention is that we need not presuppose his chronological priority. When we recall the structure of Plato's work we see that it opens a basically two level structure suggesting, as I hope to show, the seams of rewriting. The main section of the *Symposium* is in *oratio obliqua* as many previous dialogues while the opening introduction of Apollodorus is in *oratio directa*. Although a handful of dialogues show this technique, the one easiest recalled is the *Theaetetus* itself known to have been rewritten by Plato after its initial composition. We need only assume that Plato initially composed the *Symposium* without Apollodorus' introduction or with another one. Shortly afterward, Xenophon produced his account of Callias' *Symposium* riffled from Antisthenes, Aeschines and Plato himself. Finally Plato reworked the opening of the *Symposium* as he was said to have done with other dialogues all of his life, but in this case included a rejection of Xenophon's account. Other scholars have given reasons for seeing Phoenix son Philip – the author of the version rejected by Apollodorus – as representing Xenophon's account, but none are convincing. My own suggestion is that Phoenix' father, Philip - both elsewhere unknown in Plato – is to be identified with Philip the comedian in Xenophon's *Symposium* who appears uninvited at Callias' house along with his child. This unnamed child should be identified with Phoenix. Although it has been suggested that Xenophon's rewrote cap. viii of his composition as a reply to Phaedrus' speech in Plato's work, we find in Xenophon a much deeper misconstruction of Socratic eros emerging from his piecemeal choice of sources on this issue (Aeschines, Antisthenes and of course Plato).

Narrazioni e narratori nel *Simposio* di Platone

Lidia Palumbo

Nella prima riga del dialogo Apollodoro afferma di non essere colto alla sprovvista (ἀμελέτητος) dalla richiesta di racconto che gli è stata posta. Al contrario, egli ha avuto cura di prepararsi, perché nei giorni precedenti gli è stata rivolta una richiesta di narrazione simile a quella che gli viene rivolta nell'occasione presente. Egli dice di essersi dedicato all'allestimento del racconto e racconta di tale allestimento tornando con la narrazione indietro nel tempo.

È così, allora, e cioè con la creazione di tessere di temporalità diverse disposte su piani di distanza crescente dal presente che, a partire dal dialogo tra Apollodoro e i suoi anonimi interlocutori¹, e cioè dalla prima scena del testo, si costruisce quella profondità prospettica che sarà destinata ad ospitare la desiderata narrazione. Vi è un primo piano, dunque, che è quello del tempo rappresentato sulla scena: il presente spaziale e temporale dell'incontro di Apollodoro con i suoi anonimi interlocutori.

Vi è poi un secondo piano, corrispondente ad un secondo tempo, precedente rispetto al primo di circa due giorni, – ieri l'altro (πρόην, 172a2) dice Apollodoro – che è il tempo dell'incontro del narratore con uno *gnorimos*, un conoscente², che ha formulato, dal suo tempo di secondo piano, una richiesta dello stesso racconto. Viene così disegnata, secondo un percorso a ritroso, la traccia ripetuta di un'aspettativa, di un desiderio di ascolto, che conduce il lettore in un movimento all'indietro, verso un tempo passato, che dà senso e direzione alla narrazione.

Tutto nel testo concorre a creare questa direzione prospettica rivolta al passato: le relazioni spaziali tra ciò che è in primo piano e ciò che è in secondo piano, tra ciò che è davanti e ciò che è dietro, tra ciò che è in basso e ciò che è in alto, ciò che è vicino e ciò che è lontano alludono, secondo l'analogia tra forma e contenuto che caratterizza la scrittura platonica, alla relazione temporale tra ciò che viene prima, ed è meno importante, e ciò che viene dopo, ed è più importante, ed è meta del percorso, fine del racconto, riposo del viaggio.

Apollodoro comincia a narrare nella prima riga del dialogo di un percorso in salita, εἰς ἄστν (172a2), verso la città. Di un conoscente che lo ravvisa dall'indietro, ὀπίσθεν, che lo chiama da lontano, πόρρωθεν (172a3), che gli chiede di aspettarlo. E allora Apollodoro si ferma e il racconto è alla sua prima precoce pausa, indicativa del ritmo lento della narrazione. La pausa è finalizzata ad introdurre la prima richiesta di racconto del simposio che venga menzionata nel testo. Il conoscente sta infatti cercando Apollodoro perché vuole interrogarlo sull'incontro tra Agatone, Socrate, Alcibiade e gli altri presenti al banchetto. Ciò che il conoscente vuole sapere è quali furono, τίνας ἦσαν, (172b3) gli *erotikoi logoi* che in quella circostanza si tennero³. Un altro ha già a lui raccontato e costui aveva a sua volta ascoltato il racconto da Fenice⁴.

È stato Fenice a riferire che anche Apollodoro conosce il racconto (“ha detto che anche tu sai”: ἔφη δὲ καὶ σὲ εἰδέναι, 172b4). Ma è Glaucone a consacrare Apollodoro come narratore giustissimo (δικαιότατος, 172b5): è giusto che sia tu a riferire – egli dice – i discorsi del tuo amico. Fenice infatti non aveva οὐδὲν εἶχε σαφὲς λέγειν, 172b4-5, niente di chiaro da dire.

Nel *Simposio* è possibile individuare una riflessione sulla natura del racconto e del linguaggio diegetico. Tale riflessione è a tratti implicita e a tratti esplicita, e la dialettica di questa alternanza non è estranea alla tematizzazione in questione. Di un racconto – emerge dal testo – la cosa più importante è il narratore. Nel *Simposio* si configurano diverse tipologie di narratori. Nella prima pagina ne distinguiamo già due: Apollodoro e Fenice. Di Apollodoro si dice che è giustissimo che sia lui a raccontare di Socrate e degli *erotikoi logoi* che Socrate tenne (e suscitò e raccontò e ascoltò e confutò) in un'occasione lontana dai tempi in cui tale narrazione avviene. Apollodoro è buon

¹ La cui identità apparirà chiara solo alla pagina seguente: si tratta di affaristi, gente dedita alla cura della ricchezza (173c), cui Apollodoro riserva il trattamento critico che i socratici amavano marcare in tali circostanze. La differenza tra filosofi e non filosofi è posta così fin dal principio, attraverso la nozione di cura, *melete* (la cui negazione è negata, nella prima riga del testo, con il termine ἀμελέτητος): Apollodoro trascorre – lo dirà tra poco – il tempo con Socrate, e ciò di cui ha cura ha a che vedere con i *logoi*: egli si prepara a raccontare di lui e dei suoi discorsi. Costoro, invece, trascorrono il tempo dissipandolo, dediti alle monete e non alle parole, letteralmente sono *philochrematoi* e non *philosophoi* (cfr. *Phaed.* 68c, *Symp.* 173c). Cito dall'edizione oxoniense di Burnet 1976 (I ed. 1901).

² Che poi si rivela essere Glaucone, forse il fratello di Platone.

³ Il racconto si configura come oggetto di desiderio. Il narratore è inseguito, è oggetto di ricerca, e il suo racconto è l'oggetto cercato.

⁴ Il nome di Fenice, che è ὁ διηγούμενος, il narratore (172c1), significa “abitante della Fenicia”, luogo della palma e della porpora, luogo di provenienza della scrittura.

narratore di tali discorsi perché è amico di Socrate (172b7). Quando qualcuno è *hetairos* di qualcun altro, è giusto che si dedichi lui stesso e non altri al *dialegesthai* dell'*hetairos*. Si tratta di una riflessione importante. L'amante può narrare dell'amato meglio di chiunque altro, ed è sempre ad un amante, nel *Fedone* come nel *Simposio*, che Platone ha affidato il compito delicato della narrazione di Socrate. In 172c6-7 si dice che Apollodoro passa il suo tempo con Socrate, che si prende cura ogni giorno di sapere quel che dice e quel che fa. Questa notazione assumerà tutta la sua importanza al comparire della terza e più importante figura di narratore, e cioè Aristodemo, innamorato di Socrate e presente ai fatti narrati. Di Aristodemo e Apollodoro, narratori giusti, in un certo senso, come vedremo, immagini l'uno dell'altro e dell'oggetto del loro racconto, il *Simposio* presenta nella figura di Fenice l'immagine negativa di narratore privo di chiarezza⁵. La mancanza di *sapheneia* del racconto di Fenice riguarda essenzialmente il tempo in cui avvennero i fatti. Glaucone che ha ascoltato Fenice crede infatti che il simposio di cui desidera sapere si sia tenuto così recentemente che Apollodoro avrebbe potuto parteciparvi.

La determinazione corretta del tempo in cui va collocato un evento è molto importante. Ogni tempo è qualitativamente determinato. Dalle parole di Apollodoro (173a) apprendiamo che vi può essere un tempo per errare ed uno per filosofare, che il tempo giusto è quello in cui si dà alla propria esistenza una direzione, ed allora il prima e il poi sono scanditi da una cesura a partire dalla quale la vita assume senso. Nel testo il ritmo del tempo è scandito dal racconto ed è il ritmo della determinazione del senso. Il percorso a ritroso in direzione dell'evento passato di cui si desidera il racconto è segnato, nel testo, prima da un'annotazione di Apollodoro che, dopo le prime due citate sopra, traccia i contorni di una terza temporalità: quella che stabilisce una distanza tra il tempo presente, cominciato tre anni prima, da quando egli vive insieme a Socrate (Σωκράτει συνδιατρίβω, 172c5), e il tempo passato, in cui, più sventurato di chiunque altro, vagante per ogni dove, egli era teso a far qualunque cosa tranne che filosofare. Ma è solo con Glaucone, cui è affidato il compito di enunciare, con ciò stesso disegnandola⁶, dimmi invece quando avvenne l'incontro (πότε ἐγένετο ἡ συνουσία αὐτη, 173a4-5) che poi appare la scena del tempo di cui si desidera il racconto, la temporalità veramente degna di essere narrata, quella collocata alla più grande distanza dal presente scenico, tessera di quarto piano: il tempo del simposio che dà il nome al testo. Essa ha avuto bisogno di una introduzione, di una preparazione, che fosse in grado di allestire quella scena del dialogo in cui abitano gli eventi passati destinati a restare nella memoria, che è strutturata come una scena dell'anima⁷, il cui allestimento, la cui preparazione, letteralmente teatrale, è tanto più accurata quanto più degni di essere ricordati sono gli eventi narrati. Ed allora Apollodoro racconta, e la formula di introduzione del racconto è quella che subito si colora di nostalgia:

Eravamo ancora ragazzi (παίδων ὄντων ἡμῶν ἔτι) quando Agatone vinse con la sua prima tragedia, fu all'indomani del giorno in cui egli e i coreuti offrirono il sacrificio per la vittoria (173a5).

La distanza temporale disegnata da Apollodoro è scandita anche dal suo interlocutore come sempre nei dialoghi quando una cosa deve essere sottolineata:

Allora, - disse - a quanto pare è passato molto tempo davvero. Ma chi ti ha raccontato la cosa? Forse Socrate stesso? (173a7-8).

Apollodoro non ha ricevuto il racconto da Socrate stesso (*autos Sokrates* 173a8) e non narra fatti che abbia visto egli stesso, ma può narrarli bene, perché gli sono stati narrati da Aristodemo, che è a sua volta buon narratore: Aristodemo è infatti innamorato di Socrate (173b4). Perché un racconto sia giustamente raccontato, stando al testo del *Simposio*, devono essere giusti sia il narratore sia

⁵ Fenice incarna nel testo del *Simposio* una tipologia di narratore diversa sia da quella cui appartiene Apollodoro, sia da quella cui appartiene Aristodemo: assente ai fatti di cui si narra, li ha appresi da Aristodemo e li ha a sua volta riferiti, ma il suo racconto non racconta niente (οὐδὲν διηγεῖσθαι, 172b8).

⁶ "Non prenderti gioco di me", dice Glaucone ad Apollodoro in 173 a4-5, "e dimmi invece quando avvenne l'incontro" (πότε ἐγένετο ἡ συνουσία αὐτη, 173a4-5).

⁷ Ho presentato un'interpretazione del dialogo platonico come testo teatrale in cui prende corpo un'idea di anima intesa come scena, scena psichica, luogo di figure e di parole, testo mimetico e diegetico, dialogico per essenza, nei due seguenti saggi: «Scenografie verbali di quinto secolo. Appunti sulla natura visiva del linguaggio tragico», apparso in *V secolo. Studi di filosofia antica in onore di L. Rossetti*, a cura di S. Giombini e F. Marcacci, Perugia 2010, pp. 689-699 e *Pensare l'anima nello spazio iconico dei dialoghi di Platone*, apparso in "Chora. Revue d'études anciennes et médiévales" 9-10 (2011-2012), pp. 13-31.

l'ascoltatore. Giusti parrebbe significare, in questo caso, affetti dall'affezione di cui il racconto dice: l'eros socratico⁸, in tutti i sensi di questa espressione.

Aristodemo è narratore diverso da Apollodoro perché era presente ai fatti che narra. Egli ha narrato non solo ad Apollodoro, ma anche a Fenice (173b1-2). A differenziare Apollodoro da Fenice, entrambi ascoltatori di Aristodemo, ed entrambi a loro volta narratori del racconto di Aristodemo, stanno le seguenti determinazioni: non si conoscono i sentimenti di Fenice per Socrate e Fenice non ha avuto cura di determinare il tempo in cui sono avvenuti i fatti narrati (172b8-c2). Apollodoro non soltanto ha cura di determinare il tempo in cui sono avvenuti i fatti che narra (172c-173a), ma, nel prepararsi al racconto, non si è limitato ad ascoltare Aristodemo e ricordare quanto lui gli ha narrato, ma ha anche interrogato Socrate su alcune delle cose ascoltate, ed ha ottenuto da questi conferma (173b5-6)⁹. Ed è come se la conferma di Socrate si fosse incastonata nel racconto di Apollodoro impreziosendolo e donandogli chiarezza e verità.

Nel cominciare il suo racconto a Glaucone, il suo racconto dei fatti appresi da Aristodemo, Apollodoro presenta innanzitutto la figura di Aristodemo narratore, sul quale parrebbe aver assunto delle informazioni:

Un certo Aristodemo, del demo Cidateneo, un piccolo uomo sempre scalzo. Aveva assistito all'incontro, poiché, a quanto mi risulta, era tra i più innamorati di Socrate, a quel tempo (Σωκράτους ἐραστής ὢν ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα τῶν τότε, 173b1-4).

Da questa presentazione di Aristodemo apprendiamo che egli, innamorato di Socrate, in un qualche modo gli somigliava, lo imitava¹⁰, almeno nell'abitudine di andare scalzo, e questa notazione serve a creare nel lettore l'impressione che l'*erastes*, l'amante, sia buon narratore dei fatti dell'amato, e a mostrare come egli stesso, rappresentando il suo racconto, diventi in un certo modo il ritratto di ciò che viene raccontato¹¹. Apollodoro, a sua volta, è, per così dire, pur in un'altra temporalità, l'immagine di Aristodemo: *tra i più innamorati di Socrate, nel suo tempo*; è un'immagine solo un po' sbiadita, come l'*hetairos* lo è dell'*erastes*; ed infatti Aristodemo, presente al banchetto di cui narra, è di esso testimone oculare, mentre Apollodoro, assente al banchetto di cui narra, guarda ad esso come ad un'immagine in assenza, in un'altra temporalità, un'immagine un po' sbiadita, ma della quale è anche egli, in qualche modo, un buon narratore, un buon ritratto, essendo di Socrate *hetairos* e "da tre anni preoccupato di sapere ogni giorno ciò che dice e ciò che fa" (172c).

Glaucone non ha dubbi sulla accuratezza del racconto di Apollodoro, ed insiste per ascoltarlo. Nel porsi nella condizione di ascoltatore, egli associa il racconto ad un percorso:

La strada che conduce alla città¹² è proprio adatta, per chi cammina, a parlare e ad ascoltare.

Qui scompare dalla scena Glaucone, buon ascoltatore, abitatore della temporalità di secondo piano, appena più arretrata rispetto al presente scenico, e il posto di ascoltatore viene occupato, per tutta la durata del dialogo, dal gruppo anonimo di affaristi che stanno interrogando Apollodoro sul banchetto che si tenne nel passato a casa di Agatone. Come Glaucone, del quale sono indegni sostituti nel ruolo

⁸ Amanti sono i narratori, amato e desiderato è il racconto da chi lo richiede, erotico è l'argomento di cui il racconto è racconto: "dimmi degli *erotikoi logoi* che si tennero", è questo il modo in cui la richiesta di racconto, come abbiamo visto, è formulata.

⁹ Analoga interrogazione di Socrate da parte di un narratore che cerca chiarimenti e conferme su fatti da narrare in *Theaet.* 142d-143a.

¹⁰ In *Phaed.* 74d10 compare un elemento importante della semantica della *mimesis*: il «desiderio di essere simile a», di essere «quale è un altro». In *Resp.* VI 500c6-7 si dice che questo desiderio, che è quello che prova l'inferiore verso il superiore, è un desiderio che non è possibile non provare nei confronti di ciò che si ammira. È nel *Fedro* poi l'idea che l'amato vede nell'amante come in uno specchio (255d6).

¹¹ Nei dialoghi di Platone la relazione delle caratteristiche dei personaggi con la tesi che essi assumono o difendono, ossia una sorta di concretizzazione delle teorie o dei racconti enunciati e rappresentati dai personaggi, sono procedimenti che ricordano la scrittura di Aristofane. Va nella stessa direzione la relazione dei nomi dei personaggi con le loro qualità e le loro teorie, la esposizione delle dottrine nelle loro versioni più estreme, quasi caricaturali, ed ancora lo stretto legame che è possibile individuare tra le tematiche abordate e la maniera di abordarle. Sull'argomento cfr. Luisa Buarque, *As armas cômicas. Os interlocutores de Platão no Crátilo*, Rio de Janeiro, Hexis, 2011; Rossella Saetta-Cottone, *Aristofane e la Poetica dell'ingiuria*, Roma, Carocci, 2005.

¹² Il percorso è in salita (*eis asty*, 173b7), ma non nel senso che sia faticoso, piuttosto esso è un cammino verso l'alto, verso ciò che conta, verso ciò che è degno di essere ascoltato. L'*asty* è alto in contrapposizione al Pireo anche in *Resp.* 327. Sull'argomento cfr. E. Nuzzo, *Tra acropoli e agorá. Luoghi e figure della città in Platone e Aristotele*, Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2011.

di ascoltatori¹³ in un'altra temporalità, costoro pregano Apollodoro di raccontare gli *erotikoi logoi*¹⁴, e, situati come sono alla massima distanza dal tempo narrato, essi, con la loro stessa diversità dal narratore e dalle sue occupazioni, sottolineano, *per differentiam*, l'importanza di una vita *kata philosophian*.

Nel cominciare a raccontare, Apollodoro ha prima, per così dire, una falsa partenza:

Ebbene furono pressappoco i seguenti, quei discorsi...(173e7).

Poi, correggendo il tiro, si appresta a cominciare a raccontare secondo il modo corretto di raccontare, che è quello che comincia ἐξ ἀρχῆς:

Ma è meglio che, cominciando da principio, come aveva raccontato Aristodemo, così cerchi anch'io di raccontarli a voi (173e7-174a2).

Apollodoro narratore assume dunque esplicitamente Aristodemo a modello di narrazione: egli racconterà *hos ekeinos diegeito*, "come lui raccontò"; ma soprattutto il suo discorso, il suo racconto di discorsi, seguirà il modello che ogni discorso deve seguire, e cioè comincerà dall'inizio e giungerà fino alla fine, come si dice nel *Fedro*¹⁵, e come si constata in altri dialoghi e nel *Simposio* stesso, ove accade che la narrazione giunge fino alla fine della serata di cui si narrano i discorsi: specchio del suo oggetto, il racconto non deve disordinarne le parti né deformarlo. Non solo. Specchio filosofico e non sofistico¹⁶ del suo oggetto, il racconto platonico di discorsi non soltanto deve narrare i suoi oggetti senza deformarli, ma deve anche rendere ragione di ciò che dice, deve esplicitare le sue fonti, deve raccontare, cominciando ancor prima dell'inizio, da una sorta di introduzione al racconto, qual è quella che troviamo nel *Protagora*, ove all'anonimo amico che incontra Socrate di ritorno dalla casa di Callia e gli chiede di raccontare la *συνουσία* che questi ha appena avuto con il sofista, il filosofo racconta ciò che è avvenuto *prima* della conversazione con Protagora, cioè fa precedere l'esposizione della conversazione da una sorta di *introduzione* che conduce gli ascoltatori ad una specie di ascolto consapevole, critico, mimetico¹⁷. Troviamo una simile introduzione all'ascolto anche nel *Simposio* stesso, come abbiamo visto, ove vengono da Apollodoro narrati tanti dettagli prima ancora che si cominci a parlare del banchetto avvenuto a casa di Agatone; e tra questi dettagli, che sono esterni all'oggetto della narrazione, occupano un posto importante la presentazione degli ascoltatori del racconto, che sono per così dire i destinatari della narrazione, l'esplicitazione del loro desiderio di ascolto, delle motivazioni e delle condizioni che sono alla base di questo desiderio¹⁸; e tutto ciò per condurre chi ascolta, ed anche in ultima analisi noi stessi lettori del dialogo, per così dire all'interno del testo, a condividere il desiderio di discorsi *kata philosophian*.

Seguendo la narrazione di Aristodemo, Apollodoro non racconta dunque direttamente i discorsi che si tennero a casa di Agatone, ma comincia da quello che considera l'inizio dell'evento da raccontare, dall'incontro che avvenne tra Aristodemo e Socrate diretto al banchetto. I personaggi nel racconto di Apollodoro parlano dell'invito, dei festeggiamenti per la vittoria di Agatone occasione del banchetto, e di molte altre cose ancora, e poi, a marcare, come nel *Protagora*¹⁹, ma ancora più

¹³ Indegni perché dediti agli affari invece che alla filosofia come ha modo di sottolineare Apollodoro in 173c: "Così dunque, camminando, assieme parliamo di queste cose, e di conseguenza, come appunto dissi da principio, non mi trovo impreparato. Se poi occorre fare anche a voi questo racconto, ebbene facciamolo. D'altronde per parte mia, quando tengo io stesso, o ascolto da altri, discorsi di filosofia, provo una mirabile gioia, [cfr. *Phaed.* 58d, ove Fedone dice ad Echecrate: "Proverò a raccontare. E poi, ricordarmi di Socrate, o che ne parli io o che ne oda parlare da altri, è sempre per me la più dolce cosa fra tutte"], senza considerare che credo di trarne giovamento. Di fronte ad altri discorsi invece, soprattutto i vostri, dei ricchi e degli uomini d'affari, io mi irrita, e vi compiango, miei compagni, perché credete di far qualcosa, mentre non fate nulla. Dal canto vostro, forse ritenete che io sia un povero diavolo, e credo che la vostra credenza sia vera; ma io, per quanto vi riguarda, non è che lo creda, bensì lo so con certezza" (173b9-d3, trad. di G. Colli).

¹⁴ La preghiera degli anonimi affinché Apollodoro racconti è ripetuta in 173e5-6, ed è ancora una volta desiderio di ascolto di *logoi*: "ciò su cui ti abbiamo pregato non rifiutarlo e racconta quali furono i discorsi" (διήγησαι τίνες ἦσαν οἱ λόγοι).

¹⁵ Cfr. *Phaedr.* 264c: "Ogni discorso deve essere costruito come una creatura vivente (*hosper zoon*); deve avere un suo corpo che non manchi né di testa, né di piedi, ma abbia le sue parti di mezzo e i suoi estremi, composti così da essere in armonia fra loro e con l'intero".

¹⁶ Il riferimento è al libro decimo della *Repubblica* (596d sgg.) ove si mostra come i discorsi sofistici sono specchi deformanti dei loro oggetti. Sull'argomento cfr. L. Palumbo, *Mimesis. Rappresentazione, teatro e mondo nei dialoghi di Platone e nella Poetica di Aristotele*, Napoli, Loffredo 2008, pp. 50-63.

¹⁷ Sull'argomento cfr. L. Palumbo, *Socrate, Ippocrate e il vestibolo dell'anima*, in *Il Protagora di Platone: struttura e problematiche*, a cura di G. Casertano, Napoli 2004, pp. 87-103.

¹⁸ Ed avranno un loro ruolo i luoghi della narrazione, i colori delle cose, l'ordine degli interventi, specialmente quando questo è invertito, è sbagliato, è prima pronunciato e poi corretto e così via.

¹⁹ Cfr. *Prot.* 314c3-7: "Quando fummo davanti alla porta d'ingresso, ci fermammo a discutere di un qualche argomento che

marcatamente che allora, un indugio in funzione introduttiva sulla soglia del luogo dei discorsi, si colloca nel testo del *Simposio* l'episodio della sosta di Socrate nel vestibolo della casa di Agatone.

L'intero racconto di Apollodoro, che è, come sappiamo, il racconto di un racconto, ha per questo la forma della *oratio obliqua* e la sua costruzione è quella di una lunghissima infinitiva²⁰. Ogni racconto è un'immagine, e quella di Apollodoro è l'immagine di un'immagine, in cui sono riflessi anche i due narratori: l'uno (Apollodoro) immagine dell'altro (Aristodemo), ognuno a rappresentare nel proprio tempo l'immagine dell'amato, che è anche l'oggetto del racconto, perché il racconto è una forma di cura, e raccontare di qualcuno è prendersi cura di lui²¹.

Quando, allora, appena cominciato il racconto, Apollodoro narratore cita Omero, e dice che il poeta plasma (cfr. 174b7 ποιήσας, c3 ἐποίησεν) le figure del suo racconto, dando ad esse caratteri e colori, appare chiaro che il narratore, proprio come un falegname, fa dei personaggi le sue creature, e che la narrazione, in *Symp.* 205a-d presentata come la forma creativa per eccellenza²², consacra Apollodoro, Aristodemo e, in ultima analisi, quindi, Platone, come creatori dei *sokratikoi logoi* di cui essi sono amanti e narratori.

Aristodemo – viene di ciò avvertito il lettore in 178a – non aveva un ricordo completo dei *sokratikoi logoi*, né del racconto di Aristodemo aveva un ricordo completo Apollodoro, per cui dei discorsi che quel giorno si tennero non soltanto vengono raccontati solo quelli che, secondo il giudizio dei narratori, erano davvero degni di essere conservati, ma, accade anche che, trattandosi della narrazione di discorsi, sia difficile, talvolta, nel corpo della narrazione, per l'ascoltatore, discernere ciò che appartiene ai discorsi narrati e ciò che, sorta di elemento metanarrativo, è una riflessione del narratore che si introduce nel corpo della narrazione. Quando, per esempio in 190a, nel corpo della narrazione di Aristofane si narra dei primordi della natura umana e si dice che gli uomini allora erano a forma di sfera, che avevano dorso e fianchi in cerchio, quattro mani, quattro gambe e due volti sul collo cilindrico, che “la testa per entrambi i volti messi uno all'opposto dell'altro era poi una sola”, ma quattro gli orecchi e due gli organi sessuali; quando, dopo tutto ciò, il testo riporta la frase conclusiva sull'aspetto degli uomini a forma di sfera e dice che “tutte le altre cose erano come uno le immaginerebbe a partire da questi cenni”, è difficile stabilire se questa frase è di Aristofane o di Aristodemo narrato da Apollodoro, se cioè il commediografo descrisse altri particolari degli uomini a forma di sfera o li lasciò all'immaginazione del lettore, e fu invece Aristodemo a scegliere di raccontare così questo pezzo del discorso di Aristofane. La decisione su questo e su molte altre cose narrate è lasciata da Platone al lettore.

ci si era presentato strada facendo: perché non rimanesse inconcluso, e per entrare solo dopo averlo condotto a termine, continuammo a discutere, fermi lì in piedi nel vestibolo, fino a quando ci trovammo d'accordo”.

²⁰ Si veda la nota che Nucci fa precedere alla sua traduzione del testo in Platone, *Simposio*, traduzione e commento di M. Nucci, introduzione di B. Centrone, Torino, Einaudi 2009, pp. LXIV-V.

²¹ Apollodoro dice di prendersi cura di Socrate da tre anni, e questa cura – espressa in 172c5 con il termine ἐπιμελές – che egli gli dedica, comprende anche la preparazione a raccontare, della quale due volte, in 172a1 e in 173c1, con l'espressione οὐκ ἀμελέτητος, egli afferma di non mancare. Si è preparati a fare qualcosa quando la si è già fatta. Prepararsi è dedicarsi, avere attenzione ripetuta, osservazione, memoria. Questo è ciò che consente di raccontare. Sono tre anni che Apollodoro si dedica, allora, per così dire, al racconto di Socrate, ed è a questo racconto che ha dedicato la sua vita. Racconto dunque come cura attenta che consente di salvare, conservando; racconto come memoria, memoria come salvezza (*soteria*, cfr. *Phil.* 34a).

²² Ποίησις ἐστὶ τι πολὺ “creazione è termine vasto” 205b8.

The Functions of Apollodorus

Matthew D. Walker

In the opening frame prologue of Plato's *Symposium*, the enigmatic Apollodorus recounts to an unnamed companion, and to us, Aristodemus's story of just what happened at Agathon's drinking party. Since Apollodorus did not attend the party, however, it is unclear what relevance he could have to our understanding of the drama and speeches about *erôs* that follow. Apollodorus's strangeness is accentuated by his recession into the background after only two Stephanus pages. It might seem, then, that Plato could have presented the *Symposium* without Apollodorus. Instead of writing what David M. Halperin calls a "mixed narrative" (Apollodorus's third-person recounting of the events at Agathon's party), Plato could always have written a straightforward mimetic account of Agathon's party (set in the present tense, in direct discourse), or a first-person report (e.g., from either Aristodemus's or Socrates' point of view).¹ The question thus arises, what difference—if any—does Apollodorus make to the *Symposium*? Does his inclusion call the dramatic and philosophical unity of the work into question?

I argue that, despite initial appearances, Plato has important literary and philosophical reasons for including Apollodorus as a character. Far from being an odd appendage to an otherwise complete narrative, Apollodorus plays an integral role in the *Symposium*. Of course, one might identify, piecemeal, any number of functions that Apollodorus could serve in the work. I find it entirely plausible, for instance, that Plato includes the frame prologue with Apollodorus to render the events that take place at Agathon's party mysterious and distant, and to arouse our desire to learn more about them.² In this paper, however, I aim to provide a more systematic account of Apollodorus's role in the *Symposium*. Apollodorus, I contend, plays at least four important, *interconnected* functions in the work, functions that touch on the *Symposium*'s main themes.

I. Through his portrayal of Apollodorus, who reveals a passion for philosophical *logoi*, Plato intimates that *erôs*, in some way yet to be specified, will (a) somehow be philosophical, or best understood by reference to philosophizing (φιλοσοφεῖν: 173a3); and that (b) the satisfaction of *erôs* in philosophy will somehow be important for securing happiness (or *eudaimonia*). These claims are central in Socrates' own speech concerning *erôs*. Through his portrayal of Apollodorus, then, Plato primes us to consider these claims as we go on to read the various speeches concerning *erôs* that follow. This is the *first function* that Apollodorus plays in the *Symposium*.

The thought that *erôs* is somehow philosophical is developed throughout the speech of Socrates, which presents the views of Diotima, a Mantinean priestess, and which I take, generally, to present both Socrates' and Plato's own views. According to Socrates' recounting of Diotima's teaching about love (a teaching that personifies *erôs* in quasi-mythic terms), *Erôs*—the child of *Poros* (Resource) and *Penia* (Lack)—aims at securing what it lacks and needs (200a-b). Since *Erôs* aims at beauty, *Erôs* lacks beauty. But *Erôs* is not thereby ugly and bad (201e). Rather, *Erôs* is an intermediate spirit, a *daimôn* who occupies a place in between gods and mortals, beauty and ugliness (202d-e). Wisdom, however, is among the most beautiful things (204b). Hence, *Erôs*, lacking beauty, lacks wisdom. But since *Erôs* is not altogether ugly, *Erôs* is not altogether ignorant: *Erôs* is in between wisdom and ignorance (203e-204a). Lacking wisdom, but neither ignorant nor foolish, *Erôs* is a lover of wisdom—a philosopher (203d6; 204a).

Second, Socrates portrays philosophy as the highest form of *erôs*, and one whose satisfaction best secures happiness. Philosophy, that is, is the form of *erôs* that most completely attains the end at which *erôs* aims as such, viz., securing immortal possession of the good through generation. In his speech, Socrates famously outlines a philosophical ascent, in which the erotic philosopher "moves up" (ἐπιανών: 211b6; cf. of ἐπιανίεναι at 211c2) from beautiful particular bodies and souls toward Beauty itself (αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν: 211e1). In completing this ascent, and in "contemplating and being with" (θεωμένου καὶ συνόντος αὐτῷ: 212a2) Beauty itself, the philosopher gives birth to true virtue and thereby secures a stable, godlike happiness (212a).

The thought that *erôs* might be philosophical, and might even constitute a kind of *erôs*, is striking. Yet such a view might seem far-fetched. The same goes for the thought that one might secure

¹ Halperin (1992: 93-129). Cf. Bury (1909: xv-xvi). Translations from the *Symposium* are generally adapted (with emendations) from Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff's translation, in Cooper 1997.

² See Scott and Welton (2008: 28). For her part, Nussbaum (1986: 168) insists that the mixed narrative "makes us always aware of the fragility of our knowledge of love."

happiness in, or through, philosophical activity. Accordingly, I suggest, Plato has good reason to introduce his readers to these thoughts through his depiction of Apollodorus in the *Symposium's* prologue.

First, Plato portrays Apollodorus as erotically inspired, and as passionately concerned with philosophical *logoi*. Apollodorus shows a kind of mania (173e1-2) that reveals him as erotically inspired.³ Further, this mania is manifest in his passion for making and listening to “speeches about philosophy” (τινας περὶ φιλοσοφίας λόγους; 173c3).⁴ At the same time, Apollodorus also possesses an acute awareness of the unsatisfactoriness of the life that he used to lead (173c).⁵ To this extent, Apollodorus reminds one of a Socratic philosopher who has come to attain a certain degree of self-knowledge, i.e., a certain awareness of his ignorance. Finally, just as the erotically inspired lover in Socrates’ speech “moves up” a ladder toward the contemplation of Beauty, Apollodorus describes himself as on his “way up (ἀνιὼν) to town” from his home Phalerum (172a2-3)—i.e., to the city, where Socrates elsewhere plausibly suggests that philosophical conversation might best flourish.⁶

Second, Plato portrays Apollodorus as believing himself to be making progress toward happiness by devoting himself to philosophical *logoi*. Now that he has found philosophy, Apollodorus says, joy has entered his life: “how extraordinarily I enjoy (ὑπερφῶς ὡς χαίρω) speeches about philosophy, even if I’m only a listener” (173c). Speaking to Glaucon, Apollodorus disdains his life before encountering Socrates. “Before then,” Apollodorus says, “I ran around aimlessly. Of course, I used to think that what I was doing was important, but in fact I was the most worthless man on earth (ἀθλιώτερος ἢ ὄτουσιν)—as bad as you are this very moment: I used to think philosophy was the last thing a man should do” (173a). Apollodorus, however, suggests that things now are different. Apollodorus now views philosophy as a paramount end worthy of regulating the shape of one’s life. Thus, Apollodorus claims to be unconcerned with merely instrumental goods, the sort with which his anonymous companion seems to be concerned (insofar as his companion leads a life organized around wealth and profit): “All other talk, especially the talk of rich businessmen (τοὺς τῶν πλουσίων καὶ χρηματιστικῶν) like you, bores me to tears, and I’m sorry for you and your friends because you think your affairs are important when really they’re totally trivial” (173c-d). When Apollodorus dismisses such ends, and the lives that pursue them, as incapable of securing happiness, it is plausible to think that Plato agrees.

II. So far, I have argued, Apollodorus introduces Plato’s audience to the thoughts, central to the *Symposium*, that (a) philosophy and *erôs* are tightly linked, such that philosophy is the highest form of *erôs*, and that (b) the satisfaction of such *erôs* best secures happiness. Yet, ultimately, I suggest, Apollodorus turns out to be neither a philosopher strictly speaking, nor really on the path to happiness. Apollodorus, then, serves a corresponding *second function* in the *Symposium*. Plato’s characterization of Apollodorus compels Plato’s readers to question what it is to be a philosopher, and to consider how (and why) Apollodorus ultimately falls short.⁷

To support this reading, I consider Apollodorus’s innocuous opening line: Δοκῶ μοι περὶ ὧν πυνθάνεσθε οὐκ ἀμελέτητος εἶναι (172a1). A literal, if clunky, translation of this line might go something like, “I seem to myself, concerning the things about which you inquire, to be not unrehearsed.” Indeed, only two days ago, Apollodorus says, he recounted to Glaucon the story about Agathon’s party that he had heard from Aristodemus. Thus, Apollodorus reiterates to his anonymous companion in the present, he is “not unrehearsed” (οὐκ ἀμελετήτως ἔχω; 173c1).

Three points about Apollodorus’s opening remarks invite comment. First, with Δοκῶ, Plato introduces Apollodorus as one who *seems*, and perhaps one against whom we need to be on guard. Second, the reflexive μοι suggests that Apollodorus seems a certain way *to himself*—and it allows that he may well be deluded. Third, Apollodorus seems to himself to be οὐκ ἀμελέτητος—not unrehearsed. One of the primary senses of *meletê*, evident here, is “rehearsal” or “practice,” i.e., focused repetition and drill. But another primary sense of *meletê* in Plato is “care.” Thus, as Socrates suggests elsewhere, to be a philosopher is to have *meletê* for the right sorts of objects. For instance, in the *Apology* (24d-26b), Socrates puns on the name of one of his later accusers, Meletus. Despite his accuser’s claims to be concerned about the virtue and education of young Athenians, Socrates claims

³ On Apollodorus’s mania as erotic, cf. Neumann (1965: 285).

⁴ At *Symposium* 218b3-4, Alcibiades identifies philosophy as a kind of mania and Bacchic frenzy.

⁵ On Apollodorus’s grasp of the unhappiness of his pre-conversion way of life, see Moore (1969: 229); Sheffield (2006: 10).

⁶ On Apollodorus’s ascent and its relation to the ascent Socrates describes, see Osborne (1996: 88-90); Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan (2006: 10). As Rowe (1998: 127) observes, Phalerum is on the outskirts of Athens, away from its center. As Socrates maintains at *Phaedrus* 230d, philosophical conversation best flourishes in the city.

⁷ Cf. Rosen (1987: 14), who argues that Apollodorus “is both close to and far from philosophy.” Halperin (1992: 113-114) also notes Apollodorus’s ambiguity.

that “to Meletus, these things neither much nor little ever were cares (ἐμέλησεν)” (26b; my translation). The philosopher, by contrast, shows a proper care for the soul and its best condition (29d-30b). Similarly, in the *Alcibiades*, Socrates chastises the young Alcibiades for failing to care for himself and his virtue. Throughout that dialogue, Socrates impresses on young Alcibiades the need to show such care (*epimeleia*: e.g., *Alcibiades* 119a9, 120c8-d4; 123d4-e1; 124b2-3; 127d-e; 132b6-c2).⁸

With Apollodorus’s multiple references to the ambiguous term *meletê* in the opening lines of the *Symposium*, Plato compels his readers to reflect on the meaning(s) of *meletê* and on the sort of *meletê* that Apollodorus displays. On the one hand, in Apollodorus’s opening exchange, Plato highlights the sense of *meletê* as rehearsal and drilled practice. On the other hand, since Apollodorus presents himself as passionate for philosophy, Plato invites us to recall the other sense of *meletê* that Socrates thinks is proper to the philosopher, i.e., care for the soul and its good condition.⁹

With these ambiguities in mind, one must consider what sort of *meletê* Apollodorus displays when Apollodorus expresses his passionate concern to make and listen to “speeches about philosophy” (περὶ φιλοσοφίας λόγους: 173c3). For, as Plato’s portrayal of Apollodorus indicates, philosophizing for Apollodorus consists, above all, in making and listening to speeches *about Socrates*. Thus, Apollodorus reveals to Glaucon that he has been consorting with Socrates for three years, and has made it his “care (ἐπιμελὲς) to know exactly what he says and does each day” (172c). Although Apollodorus presents himself on the “way up” to the city, he, and his erotic drives are ultimately focused on the Socrates who inhabits the city’s streets.¹⁰ Apollodorus seems less—if at all—concerned for the objects at which the philosopher’s *erôs*, according to Socrates, properly aims. Apollodorus, that is, seems not to be especially concerned with contemplating Beauty itself, or even, more modestly, in pursuing lower kinds of beautiful knowledge. Apollodorus appears similarly fixated on Socrates as such elsewhere in Plato, viz., in the *Apology* and *Phaedo*.¹¹

Apollodorus shows up as distinctly non-philosophical in other ways. For instance, Apollodorus appears content simply to *rehearse and drill* stories about the speeches and deeds of Socrates. On this basis, commentators have compared Apollodorus to a Homeric rhapsode¹² or to someone repeating a mantra.¹³ Apollodorus does not engage argumentatively or dialectically with Socrates’ speeches.¹⁴ To be sure, that Apollodorus memorizes philosophical *logoi* does not by itself show that Apollodorus fails to be a philosopher. For Socrates himself is content in other dialogues to rehearse philosophical *logoi* (e.g., at *Timaeus* 17b-19b, which rehearses points from the *Republic*).¹⁵ Unlike Socrates, however, Apollodorus shows no signs of doing anything other than rehearsing philosophical *logoi*. In light of Plato’s other ways of characterizing Apollodorus, this point counts against Apollodorus’s philosopher status. Accordingly, when Apollodorus’s anonymous companion says, “I don’t know exactly how you came to be called ‘the soft (τὸ μαλακός),’” it is plausible to construe Apollodorus’s softness as consisting, in part, of a lack of nerve to question, to challenge, and to press on for the sake of a fuller understanding.¹⁶

Second, although Apollodorus, as we have seen, believes himself to be making progress toward happiness insofar as he devotes himself to philosophical *logoi*, Plato gives us reasons to doubt that Apollodorus adequately grasps his own situation. Despite Apollodorus’s claims that philosophy

⁸ On the authenticity of the *Alcibiades*, see, e.g., Annas (1985: 111-115); Denyer (2001: 14-26).

⁹ As Halperin (1992: 103) rightly notes, Apollodorus’s references to *meletê* also prefigure Socrates’ discussion of *meletê qua* rehearsal as preservative, and how *meletê* preserves knowledge (e.g., at 207e-208b).

¹⁰ Like Halperin (1992), Sheffield (2006: 11-12) identifies Apollodorus as manifesting an erotic “attraction to Socrates,” and as “drawn to” Socrates. Rowe (1998: 129), by contrast, argues that Apollodorus is only a “friend” or “companion” (*hetairos*: 172b7) of Socrates. In reply, it bears noting that *Glaucon* calls Socrates the friend of Apollodorus. That is still consistent with Apollodorus’s being a lover of Socrates.

¹¹ Apollodorus’s zeal for Socrates shows itself in his offering to pay Socrates’ bail (*Apology* 38b), and in Apollodorus’s wailing at Socrates’ death (*Phaedo* 117d-e). As Neumann (1965: 285) reasonably claims, grief is a natural response to the loss of a great value in one’s life. But Apollodorus’s response is excessive by the standard set by Socrates’ other companions.

¹² Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan (2006: 12; 15). As the *Ion* suggests, while rhapsodes are divinely inspired, they do not possess real knowledge.

¹³ Benardete (2001: 180).

¹⁴ Here, I agree with Scott and Welton (2008: 29) that Apollodorus “shows no signs of excelling as a philosopher.” See also Halperin (1992: 114) and Hunter (2004: 27-28). Even Neumann (1965: 282), who insists that Apollodorus *is* a philosopher, admits that Apollodorus engages in no actual philosophical dialogue. Rowe (1998: 130) acknowledges that many modern commentators deny that Apollodorus engages in philosophy; but Rowe says, “maybe they should listen to Apollodorus.” Even by Socratic lights, I contend, Apollodorus is not a philosopher.

¹⁵ See Sheffield (2006: 14n8).

¹⁶ Neumann (1965: 289) contends that Apollodorus’s softness consists in his erotic receptivity to a passion for philosophy lacking in the many. My reading, however, finds support from Plato’s other uses of *malakos* elsewhere. As Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan (2006: 16n23) observe, *Phaedo* 85b-c suggests that the soft man (*malthakos*) does not investigate and question.

has brought him joy (173c4-5), his snarling attitude toward the unenlightened (e.g., at 173a) makes us wonder. If Apollodorus were *truly* progressing toward happiness, we are apt to think, he would be a witty, gentle sort. Yet, as Apollodorus's anonymous companion remarks to Apollodorus, Apollodorus seems unhappy (κακοδαίμονα: 173d1): “for you are always like this in your speeches, always furious (ἀγριαίνεις) with everyone, including yourself—but not with Socrates!” (173d).¹⁷ Apollodorus's response to his anonymous companion—“Of course, my dear friend, it's perfectly obvious why I have these views about us all: it's simply because I'm a maniac, and I'm raving!” (173e)—itself seems tinged with unhappy condescension and obsessiveness. Even if extraordinary enjoyment comes to Apollodorus from recounting the speeches and deeds of Socrates, he seems not to have made much progress. Indeed, he seems to be back where he started. Despite his philosophical conversion, that is, Apollodorus *still* seems to be “running around”—except that he now goes about chastising non-philosophers and recording the speeches and deeds of Socrates.

In making these claims, I am not saying that Apollodorus's encounter with Socrates has been *harmful* for him. On the contrary, Socrates now provides a principle of order in Apollodorus's life, such that Apollodorus's life has a certain shape and unity that it presumably lacked before. Further, as Socrates does with the young Alcibiades in the dialogue of the same name, Socrates has evidently brought at least some of Apollodorus's self-ignorance to light, and he has compelled Apollodorus to detach himself from his previous way of life, which Apollodorus has come to accept as an unhappy one. Yet, *contra* Catherine Osborne, for instance, I am doubtful that Apollodorus's “journey from his home to the city matches his departure from his old, non-philosophical lifestyle to the new Socratic life.”¹⁸ I am similarly skeptical that we should see Apollodorus as having made an “ascent from ordinary life to Socratic philosophy.”¹⁹ For, given Plato's depiction of Apollodorus, it seems doubtful that Apollodorus's separation from his older way of life counts as a real step *forward* toward either Socratic philosophy or a happy life, any more than, say, Alcibiades' recognition of his self-ignorance (e.g., at *Alcibiades* 127d and *Symposium* 215d-216c) marks similar progress for Alcibiades. Such separation and self-awareness serves, at best, as a precondition for such progress.²⁰ So, while I concur with Frisbee Sheffield that Apollodorus receives a certain educational benefit from his interactions with Socrates (viz., a certain grasp of the happiness of the philosophical life),²¹ Apollodorus himself seems not to be on the path toward happiness.

III. So, how, and why, then, does Apollodorus go wrong? An answer to this question, I contend, brings to light Apollodorus's *third function* in the *Symposium*. Through his portrayal of Apollodorus, Plato dramatizes how, in general, the nature of *erôs* is prone to be misunderstood and, correspondingly, how *erôs* is apt to be misdirected. In virtue of his misdirected *erôs*, Apollodorus displays the basic—and commonly shared—misunderstanding of *erôs*'s nature that Socrates seeks to overcome in his speech, and that the *Symposium* as a whole aims to correct.

To understand this point, consider how the attendees of Agathon's party identify *erôs*. As quoted by Eryximachus, Phaedrus asks how people could “never, not even once, write a proper hymn to Love? How could anyone ignore so great a god?” (177c). Sharing this conception of *Erôs* as divine, Eryximachus proposes that each of the attendees spend the night offering encomia to *Erôs* (177d). In his own speech, Phaedrus identifies *Erôs* as “a great god, wonderful in many ways to gods and men,” and the “most ancient god” (178a-b). Pausanias distinguishes two kinds of *Erôs*—one heavenly, one common—but insists that it is necessary to praise all gods (180d-e). Eryximachus identifies a harmonizing kind of *Erôs* as the god through which medicine is guided (186e). Aristophanes, for his part, describes *Erôs* as the “most philanthropic of gods” (θεῶν φιλανθρωπότατος: 189c7-d1). The speakers' praise of *Erôs* reaches its culmination in the rhetorical fireworks of Agathon's speech (especially at 197c-e), which identifies *Erôs* as “the most beautiful and the best” of gods. It is no surprise, then, that the young Socrates, in conversation with Diotima, grants that *Erôs* “is agreed by all to be a great god” (ὁμολογεῖται γε παρὰ πάντων μέγας θεὸς εἶναι: 202b6-7).

In praising *Erôs* as a god, however, the various speeches, and common opinion, make the following mistake: they treat a *daimôn* as though he were fully divine, i.e., complete and beautiful. That is, they misconstrue *Erôs* not as a needy and desirous lover (τὸ ἐρῶν: 204c3), but, rather, as a fitting object of love (τὸ ἐρώμενον: 204c2). *Erôs*, however, is not complete in this way. On the

¹⁷ Bury (1909: 6) argues for the alternate reading of the nickname, “*to manikos*.” Rowe (1998: 130), however, plausibly defends *malakos* as making the most sense of the incongruity of Apollodorus's being savage toward others.

¹⁸ Osborne (1996: 88).

¹⁹ Osborne (1996: 90).

²⁰ For this point about the knowledge of ignorance, see Sheffield (2006: 61).

²¹ Sheffield (2006: 11).

contrary, as already discussed, *Erôs* is an intermediate figure, neither wholly without resource, nor wholly without lack. And just as one (theoretically) misconstrues *Erôs*'s nature when one identifies *Erôs* as a divine, complete, and beautiful object of desire, so too one (practically) misdirects one's *erôs* when one pursues *erôs* as such an object. That is, one's *erôs* is misdirected to the extent that one is "in love with love," as opposed to loving the complete and beautiful objects and ends that would fulfill *erôs*.

As we have also seen, *Erôs*—neither fully wise nor wholly ignorant—is desirous of wisdom, and so, a philosopher. By the same token, the philosopher *qua* philosopher embodies and personifies *Erôs*. Thus, as scores of commentators have noted, Socrates' description of a tough, barefoot, scheming, brave *Erôs* (e.g., at 203c-d) seems like something of a self-portrait. Insofar as the philosopher personifies *erôs*, then, the philosopher himself would fail to be a fitting object of *erôs*, at least not without qualification. For *erôs* misdirected toward a philosopher would misconstrue a needy lover as a complete and beautiful object of love. It would accordingly fail to be aimed toward its proper objects, viz. wisdom, contemplation of the Beautiful, and the immortal possession of the good. To that extent, an *erôs* misdirected toward *erôs*, or toward the philosopher as personification of *erôs*, would fail to secure immortal happiness.²²

Given *Erôs*'s resourcefulness in guiding one toward the good, one can understand how one might misconstrue *Erôs*'s nature as wholly divine and loveable: for *Erôs*, after all, is not wholly lacking, but has certain good-making features. Similarly, in virtue of the philosopher's own forms of resourcefulness, one can understand how one might come to misconstrue—and to pursue—the philosopher himself as a complete object of erotic striving. Indeed, given Plato's depiction of Socrates in the *Symposium*, one can understand Apollodorus's unhealthy attraction to Socrates in particular. For in the *Symposium*, Plato portrays Socrates as relatively beautiful and resourceful, showing more of his paternal inheritance than his maternal. Thus, Socrates shows up to Agathon's party in an unusual guise, bathed, prettified, wearing slippers (174a; cf. 220b). He claims, astonishingly, to understand nothing other than erotic matters (οὐδέν... ἄλλο ἐπίστασθαι ἢ τὰ ἐρωτικά: 177d8). Indeed, rather than ending on a note of *aporia*, Socrates reveals himself to be a skilled figure capable of trapping the beautiful and good, at least to some extent. His inventive account of *erôs* builds, and improves, upon the prior speeches, and presents an overview, however dim and incomplete, of the truth about *erôs*. But to construe a figure like Socrates as godlike and complete, and to pursue him accordingly as an ultimate aim of erotic striving, is to overlook his needy and incomplete side, apparent in Plato's portrayal of Socrates in other dialogues. In such works, Socrates spends his days barefoot in the streets, seeking, but characteristically failing to attain, the wisdom that he is all too aware of lacking.

In short, the *Symposium* suggests, it is problematic to construe philosophers as complete objects of *erôs*, as attractive without qualification. It is problematic, in other words, to idolize them. This is the error that Apollodorus reveals in his stance toward Socrates. And this error reflects a more general error—misconceiving the daimonic as divine—that Plato aims to explore and correct in the *Symposium*. In his portrayal of Apollodorus, Plato introduces and dramatizes this error.

IV. Thus far, I have argued that Apollodorus plays three main, unified functions in the *Symposium*. (i) Apollodorus's presence offers a means for Plato to introduce certain of the work's central—if initially puzzling and possibly counterintuitive—views about *erôs*, philosophy, and happiness. (ii) Nevertheless, Apollodorus's status as philosopher *manqué*, and his apparent unhappiness, compel us to puzzle about how Apollodorus goes wrong. (iii) Insofar as Apollodorus goes wrong by idolizing Socrates, who in turn personifies *erôs*, Apollodorus introduces us to central views that the *Symposium* as a whole develops, viz., concerning *erôs*'s nature, how we are apt to misconstrue it, and some of the potential practical implications of so doing.

On these grounds, I propose, Apollodorus plays a *fourth function* in the *Symposium*, an overarching rhetorical, or "psychagogic," function intended to regulate how Plato's readers orient themselves toward the *Symposium* and the Socrates who appears in its pages. Through his depiction of Apollodorus, I conjecture, Plato attempts to inoculate the aspiring philosophical reader of the *Symposium* against some of the tendencies that Apollodorus displays. More specifically, Plato's portrayal of Apollodorus serves as a *distancing device*, by means of which Plato prevents his readers

²² Sayre (1996: 126-127) identifies this problem as it arises for Alcibiades, who pursues Socrates as perfect and godlike, and who accordingly fails to make progress of his own. On Alcibiades' "idolrous attachment to Socrates," cf. Sheffield (2006: 204), who observes in passing that Apollodorus makes a similar mistake. Bury (1909: xvi) identifies Apollodorus as "a worshipper of Socrates." Cf. Rosen (1987: 10) and Halperin (1992: 114). According to Nussbaum (1986: 168), Apollodorus (and Aristodemus) invite comparison with Alcibiades insofar as they "remain lovers of the particulars of personal history."

from fully identifying with Apollodorus.

Such distancing is important on account of the *Symposium*'s dramatic portrayal of Socrates in a more beautiful, more resourceful, less aporetic mode than elsewhere. Presented with Socrates' own beautiful speech and inspiring character, Plato's readers are always at risk of lowering their aims as aspiring philosophers. Instead of working through the *Symposium* and questioning Socrates' views on *erôs*—i.e., instead of approaching the *Symposium* in a mood of engaged *meletê*—Plato's audiences are at risk of being lulled into merely “rehearsing” the work by reading it passively. They are at risk of accepting Socrates as a kind of “guru” figure, rather than as a spur to further thinking and progress of their own. Through his unattractive characterization of Apollodorus, a figure who does accept Socrates in just this way, Plato reminds his readers of this danger.²³ Plato thereby aims to promote, or at least not to forestall, his audience's philosophical progress.²⁴

Bibliography

- Annas, Julia. 1985. “Self-Knowledge in Early Plato.” In *Platonic Investigations*, ed. Dominic O'Meara, 111-138. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press.
- Benardete, Seth, trans. and comm. 2001. *Plato's Symposium*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bury, R.G., ed. and intro., 1909. *The Symposium of Plato*. Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons.
- Cooper, John M. ed. 1997. *Plato: Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Corrigan, Kevin and Elena Glazov-Corrigan. 2006. *Plato's Dialectic at Play: Argument, Structure, and Myth in the Symposium*. University Park: Penn State Press.
- Denyer, Nicholas, ed. and comm. 2001. *Plato: Alcibiades*. Cambridge: Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics.
- Halperin, David M. 1992. “Plato and the Erotics of Narrativity,” in *Methods of Interpreting Plato and His Dialogues*, ed. James C. Klagge and Nicholas D. Smith (*Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* supplement): 93-129.
- Hunter, Richard. 2004. *Plato's Symposium*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Moore, J.D. 1969. “The Philosopher's Frenzy.” *Mnemosyne* 22: 225-230.
- Neumann, Harry. 1965. “On the Madness of Plato's Apollodorus.” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 96: 283-289.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. 1986. *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Osborne, Catherine. 1996. *Eros Unveiled: Plato and the God of Love*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Rowe, Christopher, ed. and trans. 1998. *Plato: Symposium*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips.
- Sayre, Kenneth. 1996. *Plato's Literary Garden: How to Read a Platonic Dialogue*. South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Scott, Gary Alan and William A. Welton. 2008. *Erotic Wisdom: Philosophy and Intermediacy in Plato's Symposium*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Sheffield, Frisbee C. C. 2006. *Plato's Symposium: The Ethics of Desire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

²³ Some commentators—e.g., Bury (1909: xvi) and Neumann (1965: 284)—plausibly see Apollodorus as a kind of mask for Plato himself. If so, I contend, that is not because (as Neumann suggests) Apollodorus is a philosopher. Rather, Apollodorus represents certain tendencies toward which aspiring philosophers are prone—tendencies toward which Plato believes that perhaps he too risks falling victim. Accordingly, the presence of Apollodorus serves not only to inoculate Plato's audience from these tendencies, but also to provide a kind of self-inoculation for Plato. But such remarks, I allow, are speculative.

²⁴ Acknowledgments tk.

Agatone *agathos*: l'eco dell'*epos* nell'*incipit* del *Simposio*

Dino De Sanctis

Per il *Simposio* Platone costruisce una cornice complessa. Nell'esordio improvviso, Apollodoro rivolgendosi ad un gruppo di anonimi destinatari, si dice non impreparato, οὐκ ἀμελέητος, riguardo alle notizie che costoro chiedono sul banchetto di Agatone. Subito un'indicazione temporale, πρόην, evoca un incontro recente: l'incontro con Glaucone. Proprio l'altro ieri, infatti, come afferma Apollodoro, anche Glaucone ha chiesto notizie relative a quella συνουσία, credendola un evento recente. Senza esitazione Apollodoro rivela l'errore di Glaucone, un errore che dipende dalla fonte: mentre Apollodoro ha ascoltato Aristodemo, presente al banchetto, e per questo sa con sicurezza che il banchetto è avvenuto molto tempo fa, un ἄλλος τις, un uomo dall'identità imprecisata, ha offerto a Glaucone un racconto non chiaro, privo di σαφήνεια, sullo stesso δείπνον, dopo aver ascoltato Fenice che, a sua volta, ha ricevuto a riguardo un racconto di Aristodemo. Il banchetto di Agatone, come rivela Apollodoro, è invece ben più lontano nel tempo rispetto all'incontro con Glaucone. Risale agli anni in cui Apollodoro e Glaucone erano παῖδες e per la prima volta Agatone ottenne la vittoria con una tragedia. Il πάνυ ἄρα πάλαι, ὡς ἔοικεν (173a7), che ora esclama Glaucone, è dunque l'eloquente e quasi meravigliata precisazione che, in questo sapiente gioco di incastri cronologici, restituisce di nuovo al passato il banchetto di Agatone rispetto al νῦν, il presente di Apollodoro.

Tra gli elementi peculiari che rendono il *Simposio* un dialogo di profondo equilibrio e di armoniosa complessità, la critica ha più volte sottolineato il valore che assume questa elaborata cornice. Nella cornice ai salti cronologici che proiettano il lettore in una vertiginosa fuga nel tempo si armonizzano, a vari livelli, le voci dei narratori: la voce entusiastica di un Apollodoro μαλακός, la voce di Aristodemo συμκρός e ἀνυπόδητος αἰεί, su tutte la voce vigile e accorta di Platone, voce onnisciente che spesso evoca la poesia quale indispensabile risorsa narrativa, quale principale paradigma della realtà, quale necessario strumento ermeneutico. Nella cornice, levando le tende di un palcoscenico costruito con arte e con cura scrupolosa, Platone inizia a introdurre il lettore nella dimora di Agatone, che si popola di personaggi scelti e ben distinti dalla folla degli Ateniesi, nuovi eroi di una speciale ποιήσις. Una comunità di uomini eccellenti, ἀγαθοί, riunita intorno a Socrate, per un banchetto nel quale la rinuncia sostanziale al vino è finalizzata all'encomio di eros. La casa di Agatone diventa, dunque, il maestoso teatro di un δείπνον che mostra caratteri di spiccata eccezionalità. Non desta meraviglia, per tutto ciò, che nel *Simposio* gli echi dell'*epos* siano intrecciati a programmatiche strategie sceniche che richiamano il dramma, la tragedia e la commedia, i generi sui quali Platone, tramite la discussione tra Socrate, Agatone e Aristofane, all'alba del nuovo giorno annunciato dal canto dei galli, chiude il sipario del dialogo (223d). Questo intreccio tra *epos* e dramma, a ben vedere, nel *Simposio* si esplicita da subito, già nel momento in cui nella cornice inizia il prologo dialogato tra Socrate e Aristodemo (174a-d3), cioè quando Aristodemo incontra Socrate per le strade di Atene prima di entrare nella casa di Agatone, alla quale Socrate, in un momento di concentrazione assoluta e distintiva, preferirà il πρόθυρος dei vicini (175a6-9), creando un'entrata in ritardo che sottolinea la superiorità dell'ospite.

Mio intento, dunque, sarà oggi esaminare la funzione che riveste in questo prologo dialogato la poesia con i suoi echi suggestivi che si diffondono via via nelle pagine del *Simposio*.

L'incontro tra Aristodemo e Socrate è veloce. Socrate spiega che si sta dirigendo presso Agatone. Il giorno precedente, allontanandosi dalla folla per paura, χθὲς γὰρ αὐτὸν διέφυγον τοῖς ἐπινικίοις, φοβηθεὶς τὸν ὄχλον (174a7-8), Socrate non ha presenziato al sacrificio di ringraziamento che Agatone offre per la vittoria: con Agatone, dunque, ha deciso di differire l'incontro per il giorno successivo. Platone presenta ora un Socrate bello, καλός. Questo κάλλος, tuttavia, desta stupore in Aristodemo perché strano, atipico per l'uomo che Aristodemo ama più di ogni altro. Subito, però, la stranezza ha una sua spiegazione: il lettore scopre che i calzari, la pulizia del corpo, il καλλωπίζεσθαι si giustificano alla luce del fatto che Socrate si sta dirigendo bello a casa di un bello, ἵνα καλὸς παρὰ καλὸν ἦω (174a9). All'inizio del dialogo, dunque, è inevitabile una corresponsione armoniosa tra la bellezza dell'ospite e quella del padrone di casa.

Il motivo della bellezza di Agatone, unita nella cornice del *Simposio* ad un viaggio per le strade di Atene, richiama, forse intenzionalmente, le *Tesmoforiazuse*. Aristofane apre la commedia, come noto, mettendo in scena un grave problema che agita Euripide e destabilizza l'equilibrio della città. In occasione delle Tesmoforie, le donne stanno per condannare a morte il tragico, perché nelle sue opere le ha diffamate con i più biechi e violenti insulti. Euripide pertanto decide di chiedere aiuto ad un suo κηδεστής. Il piano di Euripide è scaltro: andare, assieme al κηδεστής, a casa di Agatone e,

vista la sua straordinaria bellezza, che si fonda su seducenti tratti femminili, su un'eleganza senza pari, convincere Agatone a unirsi alle Ateniesi, travestito per l'appunto da donna, per evitare che lo condannino a morte. Sul piano scenico, dunque, nelle *Tesmofoiazuse* due uomini, Euripide e il parente, si dirigono presso la casa di Agatone, come nel *Simposio* presso la stessa casa si dirigono Socrate e Aristodemo. A differenza delle *Tesmofoiazuse*, però, nelle quali Euripide e il parente resteranno fuori dalla dimora del tragico, dinanzi alla porticina, il θύριον, nei pressi della chiostra, il θριγκός (24-38), e osserveranno l'uscita di un θεράπων che annuncia l'uscita spettacolare di Agatone (38-128), nel *Simposio*, seppure in momenti ben diversi, Aristodemo e Socrate entreranno nella casa di Agatone per prendere qui parte al banchetto. Non solo: nella fase iniziale della commedia, il fascino di Agatone è destinato a diventare una connotazione fisica negativa. Tutto su Agatone è comicamente affascinante e sublime tanto da suscitare il violento accanimento e il dissacrante sarcasmo del κηδεστής. Inevitabile pertanto appare il richiamo serrato del κηδεστής al κάλλος di Agatone che dalle parole armoniose di poeta delicato e καλλιεπής si riverbera sul corpo imbellettato ad arte di novella Cirene, ἀλλ' ἢ τυφλὸς μὲν εἰμ'; Ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐχ ὄρω / ἄνδρ' οὐδέν' ἐνθάδ' ὄντα, Κυρήνην δ' ὄρω (97-98). La bellezza che Socrate, invece, nel *Simposio* scorge come un tratto fisico connotante Agatone, tanto da indurlo ad un personale e raro καλλωπίζεσθαι, traspare da subito quale componente positiva e distintiva.

Ad Agatone ἀγαθός Platone dedica in fondo le prime pagine del *Simposio*. Si tratta di una sezione nella quale è presentato il tema dell'andare a cena ἄκκλητος, un tema centrale anche nell'*incipit* del *Simposio* di Senofonte (II 2-7). Qui, infatti, a banchetto iniziato arriva Filippo, il buffone parassita, *Kultperson* ricorrente nella commedia a partire dall'*Eracle presso Folo* di Epicarmo (fr. 66 K.-A.) e poi spesso centrale nella μέση e nella νέα. Filippo calcia con forza alla porta della casa di Callia, desideroso di entrare quanto prima; per giustificare la sua presenza nel segno del γελοῖον, afferma che per un buffone andare alle cene altrui ἄκκλητος desta maggiore riso che presentarsi su invito, ἦκω δὲ προθύμως νομίσας γελοιότερον εἶναι τὸ ἄκκλητον ἢ τὸ κεκλημένον ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον. Callia subito ordina che Filippo entri, ritenendo un gesto volgare privare qualcuno di un tetto (I 12-13). L'arrivo del buffone parassita, descritto durante il banchetto da Senofonte, del resto, promette un salace divertimento che poi nei fatti non avrà luogo. Ben diversa, invece, è la situazione nel *Simposio* di Platone per non pochi motivi. Certo, qui manca la figura del buffone parassita e il γελοῖον che all'inizio del banchetto è prodotto dalla sosta di Socrate presso il portico - Aristodemo dirà infatti che proprio a questo punto gli successe una cosa davvero buffa, καὶ τι ἔφην γελοῖον παθεῖν (174e1-4) - come si capirà in breve tempo, non è altro se non un ἔθος peculiare e serissimo di Socrate quando Socrate è alla ricerca della σοφία. Ma non solo: nella cornice del *Simposio* Socrate invita presso Agatone Aristodemo incontrato per strada che, a questo punto, da ἄκκλητος diventa a suo modo κεκλημένος, anche se non per diretto invito del padrone di casa. In tal modo Aristodemo che dice di essere un φαῦλος rispetto ad un uomo σοφός, viene integrato in una gerarchia etica superiore. L'invito di Socrate è dunque decisivo. Certo, non è finalizzato a minare l'armonia del banchetto al quale si sta recando o a suscitare ilarità. Socrate intende alterare tutt'al più una παροιμία, un proverbio, per dimostrare che sono i buoni ad andare spontaneamente al banchetto dei buoni, ἀγαθῶν ἐπὶ δαίτας ἴασιν αὐτόματοι ἀγαθοί. Non sfugge in questa sequenza il gioco di parole prezioso e colto che si sviluppa tra il nome di Agatone e l'epiteto ἀγαθός. Non a caso, Lachmann ipotizzò che sotto il genitivo ἀγαθῶν sul quale unanime concorda la tradizione si celasse un dativo con aferesi Ἀγαθῶν(ι). Senza dubbio, una congettura ingegnosa e ricca di fascino, non a caso accolta in testo da Burnet, tale da restituire il sottile gioco al quale inevitabilmente Platone - come ogni Greco - pensava al suono del nome parlante del tragico Agatone. Ma forse, a mio avviso, non è necessario spingersi alla correzione della tradizione e preferire nel testo il dativo Ἀγαθῶνι. Anche il genitivo ἀγαθῶν, infatti, rende conto del verbo διαφθείρω che, assieme a μεταβάλλω, contrassegna l'azione sovversiva che ora Socrate compie nei confronti della παροιμία citata. Un'azione sovversiva che, peraltro, è di poco peso, se messa a confronto con quanto invece, secondo Socrate, avviene in Omero. Omero, infatti, non solo altera il proverbio ma addirittura commette un atto di ὕβρις nei suoi confronti. Nell'*Iliade*, prima che l'esercito greco marci contro Troia, Menelao spontaneamente si dirige presso la tenda di Agamennone durante un sacrificio per propiziare Zeus, αὐτόματος δέ οἱ ἦλθε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Μενέλαος (II 408). La scena è di per sé strana, visto che secondo Omero, come aggiunge Socrate, Menelao è un μαλθακὸς αἰχμητής rispetto a Agamennone considerato nel *Simposio* un ἀγαθὸς ἀνὴρ τὰ πολεμικά. Non sfugge in questa sezione una voluta fusione delle tessere dell'*epos* compiuta da Socrate. Socrate attribuisce a Menelao, nel II libro del poema definito βοὴν ἀγαθός, il profilo riservato all'eroe durante un momento decisivo del XVII libro, non a caso dedicato alla *aristia* di Agamennone, quando cioè Apollo per spronare alla guerra Ettore chiama molle guerriero il re di Sparta, οἶον δὲ Μενέλαον ὑπέτρεσας, ὃς τὸ πάρος γε / μαλθακὸς αἰχμητής (587-588). Ne consegue dunque che in Omero Menelao, un uomo

inferiore, χείρων, senza invito, va di sua iniziativa al banchetto di Agamennone, un uomo superiore, ἀμείνων.

Per comprendere le implicazioni sottese dalla lettura dell'*Iliade* avanzata ora da Socrate è opportuno considerare l'uso del verso proverbiale ἀγαθῶν ἐπὶ δαίτας ἴασιν αὐτόματοι ἀγαθοὶ presentato a questo punto del dialogo. Di sicuro Socrate ne altera la struttura, come suggerisce il verbo διαφθείρειν, compie un mutamento di termini, come testimonia il verbo μεταβάλλειν, se consideriamo la forma iniziale alla quale Platone forse intende riferirsi. Sia uno scolio al *Symposio* sia Ateneo sia il paremiografo Zenobio, infatti, individuano un rapporto di diretta dipendenza tra la παροιμία citata da Socrate e un frammento che deriva dal Χρυσσοῦν γένος di Eupoli (fr. 289 K.-A.):

αὐτόματοι δ' ἀγαθοὶ δειλῶν ἐπὶ δαίτας ἴασιν.

Sequenza esametrica che nella commedia di norma evoca e tradisce la parodia epica. Il titolo di questo dramma, del resto, richiama chiaramente il mito delle cinque razze delineato negli *Erga* di Esiodo tanto che forse non sarà azzardato credere che qui Eupoli sviluppasse il τόπος delle origini per muovere una polemica contro la società coeva. Del resto, è plausibile che in questa commedia fosse presentata una realtà anomala, un mondo alla rovescia, nel quale è ammessa un'interazione tra buoni e cattivi, tra δειλοί e ἀγαθοὶ per l'appunto, durante una mitica età primitiva in cui i buoni si recano di propria iniziativa alla mensa dei cattivi. Socrate, dunque, smentisce il verso di Eupoli, nel momento in cui, tramite l'invito ad Aristodemo, fa in modo che siano solo i buoni a recarsi αὐτόματοι, spontaneamente, presso i buoni.

Ma, a ben vedere, l'inserimento di ἀγαθῶν che compie Socrate nella παροιμία con δειλῶν non è solo un abile espediente con il quale Platone anticipa il profilo di chi partecipa alla mensa di Agatone: diventa una dotta ἐπανόρθωσις, una correzione, per così dire, filologica, capace di restituire al proverbio il suo *côtè* epico.

Il verso del Χρυσσοῦν γένος di Eupoli, infatti, si fonda su un verso attribuito alle *Nozze di Ceice*, un poema in antichità assegnato ad Esiodo (fr. 263-268 M.-W.). Qui era narrato l'arrivo di Eracle nella dimora di Ceice nel momento in cui il re offre un banchetto per le sue nozze con Alcione. Ma non solo: nel poema iniziava a delinearci anche il doppio profilo di Eracle, cioè quello dell'Eracle mangione, molto caro alla commedia, e quello dell'Eracle virtuoso. In effetti, una volta entrato nel banchetto di Ceice, Eracle contende con Lepreo, altro commensale di Ceice, per vedere chi dei due sia il più abile e forte nel divorare il cibo. Solo dopo il banchetto invece subentrerà una gara ben più difficoltosa, relativa alla virtù, nella quale Eracle sarà il vincitore. Certo è che nel poema, arrivando senza invito e inatteso alla casa dell'amico Ceice, Eracle esclamava, come ricorda Zenobio, αὐτόματοι δ' ἀγαθοὶ ἀγαθῶν ἐπὶ δαίτας ἴενται (fr. 264 M.-W.). L'idea per cui i buoni si possano recare spontaneamente presso i buoni risale dunque già ad un poema della tradizione arcaico-esiodica dove è collegata in maniera vistosa alle gesta di Eracle, ad un contesto simposiale, ad una disputa agonale. Non a caso, dopo le *Nozze di Ceice*, nel narrare la stessa vicenda, anche Bacchilide, nel IV Peana, ricorda l'entrata di Eracle nel palazzo di Ceice con parole che hanno il valore di una citazione programmatica (fr. 1, 21-25 Irigoin):

στᾶ δ' ἐπὶ λάϊνον οὐδόν,
τοὶ δὲ θοίνας ἔντυον, ὧδέ τ' ἔφα·
"Αὐτόματοι δ' ἀγαθῶν ἐς
δαίτας εὐόχθους ἐπέρχονται δίκαιοι
φῶτες."

I versi sono un chiaro esempio di memoria poetica tra *epos* e lirica. Fermo sulla soglia di bronzo del palazzo del re, mentre è allestito il banchetto nuziale, Eracle giustifica il suo arrivo improvviso e inatteso, ricordando di nuovo che alla mensa dei buoni gli uomini giusti vanno da soli, senza essere invitati, spontaneamente. Δίκαιοι φῶτες sono ora per l'Eracle di Bacchilide gli ἀγαθοὶ di Esiodo. Solo dopo Esiodo e Bacchilide, dunque, il verso arriva alla commedia: lo troviamo, come abbiamo visto, in forma alterata in Eupoli. E lo troviamo anche nella Πυλαία di Cratino, forse durante la parabasi, quando il poeta tramite il coro si rivolge al suo pubblico (fr. 182 K.-A.):

οἱ δ' αὖθ' ἡμεῖς, ὡς ὁ παλαιὸς
λόγος, αὐτομάτους ἀγαθοὺς ἰέναι
κομπῶν ἐπὶ δαίτα θεατῶν.

A differenza di Eupoli, Cratino volutamente ricorda la tradizione che il verso ha alle spalle: l'antico detto, il *παλαιὸς λόγος* al quale accenna è il verso delle *Nozze di Ceice*, il verso che ora serve al comico per rivelare che, come un poeta ἀγαθός, assieme al suo coro, dunque assieme alla sua opera, si sta recando presso spettatori eleganti, κομψοὶ θεαταί, in quanto capaci di giudicare un'arte perfetta, in un banchetto che coincide con il teatro secondo una metafora simposiale non peregrina sulla scena ateniese.

Il verso errante che Socrate, incontrando Aristodemo, modifica a partire dalla forma scelta da Eupoli con il riferimento agli ἀγαθοί, ha dunque una funzione decisiva all'inizio del dialogo, un funzione prolettica che non a caso ruota intorno al concetto di ἀγαθόν. Non stupisce del resto che nel *Simposio* la convergenza tra καλόν e ἀγαθόν diventi a poco a poco un sostanziale *Leitmotiv* che in fondo omaggia il padrone di casa, almeno sino a quando Socrate tramite Diotima non rivela che amore, realtà demonica intermedia tra uomini e dei, né bello né brutto, è tutt'al più tensione suprema al καλόν e all'ἀγαθόν. Ma certo, almeno sino ad Agatone, Eros è causa per l'appunto di ἀγαθά, è ποιητής ἀγαθός, ἕλεως ἀγαθός e ἐπιμελής ἀγαθῶν. Socrate, ora, nel prologo dialogato della cornice, come un nuovo Eracle che avanza per le strade di Atene, si sta dirigendo presso la dimora di un poeta ἀγαθός dove incontrerà uomini ἀγαθοί. Certo, a differenza di Eracle, Socrate è stato invitato da Agatone: il suo arrivo non è dunque inatteso né impreveduto. Inatteso e impreveduto è tutt'al più l'arrivo di Aristodemo, l'amico che Socrate incontra per strada. Ma l'invito, proposto da un ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός e ad un tempo σοφός ad un amico, non altera il corretto andamento del δείπνον, la sua struttura armoniosa e consequenziale. Lo dimostra, ad esempio, sul finale del *Simposio* la serie di arrivi di altri personaggi, uomini che, in modo diverso, rappresentano per il δείπνον un momento critico, certo potenzialmente di difficile gestione. A casa di Agatone, infatti, la stessa sera giungono altri conoscenti di Agatone non invitati, nel momento in cui la συνουσία volge al termine: Alcibiade con il suo corteggio ebbro e festante, nonché un secondo gruppo di rumorosi comasti. Giungono entrambi inattesi, senza invito, all'improvviso, ἐξαίφνης (212c7 e 223b2). Alcibiade addirittura troverà la porta chiusa e dovrà bussare per entrare a differenza di Socrate e di Aristodemo dinanzi ai quali le porte della casa di Agatone sono aperte e dunque accessibili, ἐπειδὴ δὲ γενέσθαι ἐπὶ τῇ οἰκίᾳ τῆ Ἀγαθῶνος, ἀνεωγμένην καταλαμβάνειν τὴν θύραν (174d8-e2). Si ha come l'impressione che per chi partecipa a questo δείπνον speciale, la guida di Socrate sia una garanzia irrinunciabile, necessaria, indispensabile.

Una testimonianza in questa direzione è offerta, per l'appunto, dall'ultima fondamentale citazione che Socrate, nel convincere Aristodemo a seguirlo, propone nel prologo dialogato della cornice. Prima di intraprendere la strada che condurrà alla casa di Agatone, nel momento in cui i due amici decidono cosa dire al loro imminente ospite, Socrate esclama alcune parole che, nella *Dolonia*, Diomede rivolge a Nestore per ottenere la compagnia del saggio Odisseo, σύν τε δού', ἔφη, ἐρχομένῳ πρὸ ὁδοῦ (174d2). Si tratta anche in questo caso di un verso riadattato rispetto all'originale, σύν τε δού' ἐρχομένῳ καί τε πρὸ δ τοῦ ἐνόησεν (*Il. X* 224), nel quale palese è il cambio funzionale πρὸ ὁδοῦ rispetto al tradito πρὸ δ τοῦ. La tradizione di questo verso della *Dolonia* peraltro ha una lunga storia: del resto Platone lo utilizza, nella sua completezza, una seconda volta, nel *Protagora* (348d1), quando Socrate per l'appunto, nella sezione dedicata al commento del *Carme a Scopas*, dimostra a Protagora che entrambi dispongono di buone risorse nella discussione per quanto riguarda azione, parola e pensiero, εὐπορώτεροι γάρ πως ἅπαντές ἐσμεν οἱ ἄνθρωποι πρὸς ἅπαν ἔργον καὶ λόγον καὶ διάνοιμα. Aristotele lo cita poi sia nell'*Etica Nicomachea* (1155a12-16) sia nella *Politica* (1287b13-15). Certo, nel *Simposio* questo verso, una volta rivisitato da Socrate, ha una spiccata valenza evocativa. Nell'*Iliade* Diomede sceglie Odisseo come compagno di viaggio per la sua superiore capacità intellettuale prima di un'impresa difficoltosa e piena di pericolo; nel *Simposio* Socrate, dopo aver integrato il suo amico nel novero degli ἀγαθοί, procede assieme a lui - o almeno così lascia credere il lettore - verso un evento decisivo e a suo modo impegnativo lungo una strada che conduce alla dimora di Agatone.

Certo, colpisce a prima vista, che il proposito che Socrate rivela a Aristodemo, procedere entrambi assieme sulla stessa strada, nel *Simposio* sia subito disatteso. Mentre Aristodemo avanza per le strade di Atene, Socrate resta indietro, avvinto dai suoi pensieri, nella sua estatica concentrazione. Quando l'amico di viaggio si girerà per attenderlo, Socrate lo manderà avanti, presso Agatone, verso la meta dove Aristodemo entrerà da solo. Il procedere assieme, dunque, presto diventa un cammino parallelo ma solitario e si ricomporrà nell'intreccio dei λόγοι a casa di Agatone. L'atteggiamento di Socrate, tuttavia, non deve stupire. Non a caso, quando Agatone vede arrivare a casa sua Aristodemo, afferma che avrebbe voluto invitarlo ma che non è riuscito nell'intento per la folla numerosa che lo circondava e che gli ha impedito di scoprire dove fosse andato il suo amico. Al di là dell'urbanità di Agatone che deve far sentire a suo agio il conoscente giunto senza suo invito, ma come precisa di nuovo Aristodemo invitato da Socrate, è qui possibile cogliere una sottile allusione al fatto che chi

viaggia con Socrate e lo frequenta assiduamente è una figura opportuna e ammessa tra gli ἀγαθοί. E qui, tra gli ἀγαθοί, Socrate quale nuovo eroe della sontuosa ποίησις de *Simposio* ha il ruolo decisivo e di guida, paradigma, maestro, in vista della lode suprema che riceverà al termine del dialogo. Socrate ha ormai indicato ad Aristodemo - e dunque al lettore del *Simposio* - dove occorre andare, quale sia il vero banchetto che l'uomo deve frequentare, quale sia la strada corretta da intraprendere. Non resta che percorrere questa strada e entrare nella casa di Agatone dove Aristodemo scoprirà, come il lettore del dialogo, che nell'impulso ad eros si nasconde l'inesausta tensione dell'uomo verso il bene, verso l'eterno possesso dell'immortalità.

No Invitation Required? A Theme in Plato's *Symposium*

Giovanni R.F. Ferrari

Uninvited arrivals are a salient theme of Plato's *Symposium*. Why is this?

The theme is broached when Socrates, coaxing Aristodemus to accompany him, uninvited, to Agathon's, twists a proverb to make it say that the good go uninvited to the feasts of the good (174b). Three distinct acts of uninvited arrival are involved here: most obviously, good going uninvited to good; implicitly, superior going uninvited to inferior, since this seems to be the version of the proverb that Socrates is treating as his original; lastly, inferior going uninvited to superior, which is how Socrates claims Homer portrayed Menelaus's visit to Agamemnon in the *Iliad*. Each of the three has its significance for the dialogue.

Aristodemus worries that his situation would fit, not the first case, good going uninvited to good, but the third: inferior going uninvited to superior. For protection, he seeks an invitation from Socrates. This, however, is a revealing error. For to go uninvited as inferior to superior, in Plato, is emblematic of one's philosophic independence. It is to follow where nothing and no one actively beckons or responds; where what draws you on is your own desire for the wisdom that would yield complete, godlike satisfaction, if you could attain it. It is this connection with desire that makes the theme a natural one to appear when the talk in Plato's dialogues turns to love, since love may well pursue its object without regard for invitation, and may continue the pursuit — indeed, may pursue more ardently — if unrequited.

Not coincidentally, therefore, the theme reappears in Plato's other dialogue on love, the *Phaedrus*, where it receives a full-dress mythical presentation as the relationship in which philosophers should properly stand to the divine. The Olympian gods in Socrates' great speech on love in the *Phaedrus* are said to wander the pathways of the heavens, enjoying blessed visions and "doing each his own" (*prattôn hekastos autôn to hautou*, 247a), while any human soul who is able and willing may follow them (*hepetai de ho aei ethelôn te kai dynamenos*), ascending after much struggle to glimpse the place where the gods are to feast and dine on the vision of true being (*pros daita kai epi thoinên*); for the gods begrudge nothing (*phthonos gar exô theiou khorou histatai*). The gods, then, issue no invitations. Nor, however, do they pose obstacles. It is up to humans to follow, in sympathetic imitation, if they wish to enjoy a similar blessedness. They must go uninvited to the feast of their superiors.

The *Symposium* too does not lack for a mythical presentation of this theme. Whereas the divine feast of the *Phaedrus*, however, is high-flown in every sense of the word, that in the *Symposium* is narrated in the lower, comedic register of Aesopic fable, as is appropriate to the less serious, "symptic" tone of the dialogue as whole. In the symbolic story of Eros' origins, told by Diotima to Socrates (203b-204a), it is Eros' mother, Poverty, who goes uninvited to beg at the doors where the gods are holding a celebratory feast for Aphrodite's birth. As Poverty incarnate, she is herself poor and, one assumes, hungry, while the gods' feast is sumptuous (*hoion dê euôkhias ousês*, 203b). It is her own nature, then, that draws her on. And there she seizes on a second opportunity, again without invitation: finding the god Resource (*Poros*) prostrate in a drunken stupor in the garden nearby, and conscious of her own lack of resources (*dia tèn hautês aporian*, 203b), she takes advantage of his temporary defenselessness and conceives a child from this most well-off of fathers.

The child Eros, however, turns out to resemble its mother more than its father. Eros' resemblance to Poverty, expressed allegorically in terms of the external features of his life, is well-nigh perfect. Like his mother, he is poor and homeless and lives a hardscrabble life out of doors. Hence his life is excluded from resembling that of his divine father, who, unlike his mother, is a fully-paid up member of the happy company of feasting gods. And here it is important to see that *Poros'* name, in the context of this fable, means Resource in the sense of "Resources" rather than "Resourcefulness." When Plato writes that "in conformity with his father [or perhaps, "in the direction of his father"], he is a schemer after the beautiful and the good" (*kata de au ton patera epiboulos esti tois kalois kai tois agathois*, 203d), and when he follows this with a long list of attributes making Eros out to be a cunning and resource-ful provider of those resource-s, it is the resources that he inherits from his father, *not* the resourcefulness. The resources or goods that Eros seeks (but only occasionally and temporarily achieves) are those times in his life when he prospers and enjoys success (*tote men ... thallei ... tote de apothnêiskeit*, 203e).¹ Resource himself, however,

¹ So too, when terms etymologically related to *Poros* are used in this passage, they refer to achieved goods rather than to the process of achieving them. This is certainly the case at 203e, just cited in the text, where Eros is described as capable in one

has no need to be resourceful: he is a god, who already has all that he needs.

In fact, the parent who demonstrates resourcefulness in this fable is not Resource but Poverty. She is the one who is driven to scheme after resources that she lacks — driven by an awareness of her own lack of resources that seems the seed of the philosopher's awareness of his own ignorance (cf. 204a). The word for her scheming is *epibouleousa* (203b). When we read at 203d, then, that Eros is *epiboulos*, a "schemer" after the beautiful and the good, we should attribute the scheming to his mother, while to his father, who lives large, we should attribute only the broad range of "beautifuls" and "goods" (*tois kalois kai tois agathois*) to which Eros aspires — a larger goal than his mother could have attempted to attain for herself. Eros's philosophic nature, then, makes him a striver after the beautiful and good, and in this he resembles his mother, who goes uninvited to the feasts of her superiors. Although transposed to the genre of fable, it is essentially the same message as the one we found in the *Phaedrus*.

Let us return now to the early scene between Socrates and Aristodemus and see how the theme plays out there. It might seem that the theme applies only to Aristodemus, not to Socrates, since with his opening words Socrates informs Aristodemus that he has accepted an invitation to attend a dinner party at Agathon's that day (174a). More precisely, the occasion would seem to be a case of the good going invited to the good: for Socrates jokingly gives as his reason for having groomed himself unusually well for the occasion his desire to go to Agathon *kalos para kalon*, "as one beautiful person to another."

This appearance, however, turns out to be deceptive, and that in two ways. First, Socrates' beauty is only cosmetic; it is not the kind of beauty that bears a close relation to the good. Accordingly, although Socrates' physical beauty is much inferior to Agathon's, we are not surprised to find, as the dialogue progresses, that when it comes to the good, and to the beautiful that attends the good, it is Socrates, not Agathon, who is the superior. Second: despite having a bona fide invitation, Socrates manages, in a sense, to arrive uninvited after all. En route to Agathon's he becomes pensive and falls behind, putting Aristodemus in the embarrassing situation of entering Agathon's house without him. Socrates then ignores the slave sent by Agathon to summon him from the neighbor's porch, to which he has repaired. Agathon makes many further moves toward calling Socrates inside, but Aristodemus refuses to permit them even to reach Socrates' ears. Finally, when the guests are already halfway through their meal, Socrates arrives unheralded, having spent the intervening time in his accustomed way (174d-175c).

When Socrates arrives, then, he arrives on his own initiative. He interrupts the meal like an uninvited parasite — somewhat in the way that the clown Philip in Xenophon's *Symposium* interrupts the dinner at Callias' house (1.11-13). Philip, however, as an ironist of a far cruder stamp than Socrates, makes an issue of his uninvited status, claiming that it is funnier to come to dinner without an invitation than with one. Socrates, by contrast, is simply being himself, arriving without comment and only when he is good and ready. His arrival fits the version of the proverb that Socrates seized upon in order to twist: he is a superior going uninvited to the feast of his inferior. If that version of the proverb is itself a satire on the version that has the good going uninvited to the feasts of the good — since we find it in the comic poet Eupolis (fr. 289), while the version that has good going to good is found in Hesiod (fr. 264) — its comic quality would also fit Socrates' general situation well. That is to say, among his fellow human beings, a philosopher such as Socrates is permanently in a condition analogous to that of a superior going uninvited to the feasts of the inferior. He lives among the pleasures of his fellow human beings without defining himself by their pleasures. Socrates in the *Symposium* drinks, but he never gets drunk (176c, 214a, 220a). He joins in, but stays sober, while

and the same day as "living and flourishing" and then "dying": for it is when he is flourishing — when the desire is not just live and active, but successful — that Eros is said to *eporein*, find resources. And it is when he "comes back to life on account of his father's nature" that he is said once again to have a *porizomenon* that he can lose — a "provision," not a "means of providing." What his father represents, then, is the wealthy pole at the opposite extreme from *aporia*, as described in the conclusion that Eros "neither lacks resources nor is wealthy" (*oute aporei Erôs oute ploutei*). Poros represents achieved wealth, not the pursuit of wealth. Accordingly, the earlier reference to Eros' being *phronêseôs epithymêtês kai porimos* (203d) should be understood to say that he both desires to understand and is resourceful about coming to understand — not just about seeking to understand. In its general usage, the word *porimos* seems in any case to be used in contexts where resourcefulness is proven by success. Rowe in his commentary to 203d5-7 agrees that "we might expect *porimos* to mean 'resourceful in finding [wisdom]';" in his translation, however, he writes "resourceful in looking for it," on the grounds that a philosopher, unlike a god, never does actually find wisdom, at least according to 204a. But what is said at 204a is that a wise person (*sophos*) does not philosophize. This does not exclude — in fact, had better not exclude — that a philosopher could on occasion achieve some better understanding than he previously had. As Rowe himself puts it in a subsequent note (to 203e2), the idea that Eros at any particular moment is neither resourceless nor rich makes sense "as a metaphorical description of the ups and downs of philosophic discussion." [C. J. Rowe, trans., comm., *Plato: Symposium* (Warminster 1998)]

those around him make fools of themselves. It is a situation rich in comic possibilities.

But although the philosopher among his fellow human beings is as a superior going uninvited to the feasts of the inferior, this is not the condition to which he aspires. In his pursuit of wisdom he resembles, as we have seen, an inferior going uninvited to the feasts of his superiors. And ultimately, he would wish to be as the gods themselves could be said to be (and in the *Phaedrus*, are said to be): the good going uninvited to the feasts of the good.²

Both of these latter situations, in fact, are alluded to also in this opening scene between Socrates and Aristodemus. The allusion is contained in Socrates' garbling of Homer's treatment of Menelaus. Homer, so Socrates claims, made Menelaus out to be a "soft spearman," while portraying his brother Agamemnon as a superior fighter; despite which, Homer has Menelaus arrive uninvited, as inferior to superior, when Agamemnon arranges a feast for the Greek generals at Troy (174b-c). Aristodemus, ever subservient to his idol Socrates, accepts Socrates' account of Homer without objection. But Plato's readers should not. Socrates has had to stretch to find that slighting evaluation of Menelaus' soldierly prowess: it occurs in the seventeenth book of the *Iliad* (17.587), separated by much incident from the feast that Agamemnon held in the second book. What is more, it is an insult put in the mouth of Apollo rather than uttered as a judgment of the narrator. Menelaus in Homer is generally quite as brave a fighter as most — indeed, Apollo's taunt here is an attempt to discount a conspicuous act of valour that Menelaus has just performed.

Thus alerted, the reader who considers more closely the incident in Book 2 will recall that the reason Homer gives for Menelaus having come unbidden to Agamemnon's feast is that, as Agamemnon's younger brother, he knows the elder's mind without needing to be told: "And Menelaus of the strong war cry came to him of his own accord, for he knew in his heart the cares that troubled his brother" (2. 408-9). That is, as one brother to another, he took his invitation for granted at such a time, even if Agamemnon's worries caused him to forget to include Menelaus among the formally invited guests. (This is how Plutarch interprets the passage at *Moralia* 706f.) Although the brothers differ in status — Agamemnon being the elder and exercising the greater kingly authority — they belong together by nature.

To the extent that the description "inferior going uninvited to superior" still fits Menelaus' situation, then, it does so in a positive sense. Although not his brother's equal, he too, like his brother, is a valiant warrior. And it is with this positive spin that his situation corresponds to the philosopher's pursuit of godlike wisdom. The philosopher is not equal to the divine; but he has within him the godlike spark of reason that allows him to aspire, by nature, to associate himself as closely with the divine as a human being can (as, for example, at the summit of Diotima's ascent, where the philosopher keeps company with the beautiful itself, 211e-212a). It is with the divine that the philosopher naturally belongs — ultimately, as the good having gone uninvited to the good.

To seek out invitations, by contrast, is to look for acknowledgment from one's fellows and to find in this a source of validation. Yet the love that seeks a return of this or indeed of any sort is a less adequate love than the uninvited love felt by the philosopher for the divine. This is the philosophic point embodied in the theme of going uninvited in the *Symposium*. The philosopher seeks creative self-realization through belonging, to the fullest extent, with that to which the best in his nature is congenial; he seeks Diotima's "birth in the beautiful," not the quid pro quo that is the basis of the standard love-affair between Athenian males or of the everyday sacrificial transactions between the Greeks and their gods.³ Those who seek invitations in the *Symposium* duly come unstuck.

We have already seen one such case, when Aristodemus gets left in the lurch on the way to Agathon's house. Aristodemus, described by his kindred spirit Apollodorus as a "huge fan" or "lover" of Socrates at the time (*erastês*, 173b), makes the mistake of loving and seeking sponsorship from Socrates, rather than simply loving what Socrates loves. That is why he goes barefoot like his idol, and reports on his every word (173b). He imitates Socrates, rather than the divine. When Socrates

² These three possibilities for uninvited arrival (good to good; superior to inferior; inferior to superior) naturally suggest a fourth, which would complete the four-place grid: bad going uninvited to bad. It is a possibility realized at the very end of the dialogue, when the crowd of drunken revellers break in uninvited on the company at Agathon's house. ("Bad" here is a relative term, and describes the typical behavior of ordinary Athenians by contrast to the aspirational conduct of philosophers.) The incident represents and is an instance of complete disorder on a humdrum level. It implicitly acknowledges the necessity of "invitations" — of mutual acknowledgment and negotiation — to the smooth running of social life. That the philosopher has the ability to transcend such behavior makes him exceptional.

³ Admittedly, in Diotima's initial description of Eros' role as daemonic intermediary between humans and the gods, the relationship mediated by "the daemonic" (*to daimonion*) runs both ways, in the manner of traditional religion: requests and sacrifices are conveyed from men to gods; commands and returns for sacrifice are conveyed from gods to men (202e). But her account here is preliminary. Once Diotima has left the "Lesser Mysteries" behind for the Greater (209e), the religious traffic becomes one-way, as the philosopher ascends, through Eros, to join with the divine. Such communion is its own reward.

abandons him along the road, then, Aristodemus is getting his symbolic come-uppance.

In this behavior, Aristodemus at the dialogue's opening turns out to be a precursor of Alcibiades at its close. Like Aristodemus, Alcibiades makes Socrates, rather than the divine, the focus of his love. His aspiration is not simply, as he claims (218d), to become the best he can be, but, as his behaviour reveals, to have Socrates acknowledge him as the best. And once again, Plato deploys the theme of invitation-seeking and uninvited arrival to help make his point.

We have seen how Socrates, at the beginning of the dialogue, seems to have been invited to the feast but ends up coming uninvited. Alcibiades, at the dialogue's end, seems to show up uninvited, with much drunken banging on the doors, but turns out to be responding to an invitation after all. "I couldn't come yesterday, so here I am now," are among his first words (212e).⁴ Then, in the story Alcibiades tells of his pursuit of (not wisdom, but) the wise Socrates, we learn that, in his impatience to receive an invitation from Socrates, he went so far to issue his own invitation to the feast (217c), inviting Socrates to dinner at his house as if he were the older lover and Socrates the young man whose love he sought. In this role, Alcibiades could be described as the inferior inviting the superior to the feast in order that the superior may approve of him. But the description should ring a bell: it is based on Agathon's instruction to his servants at the start of the evening's dinner: "Imagining that I and these others have been invited to dinner by you, serve us, so that we may praise you" (175b). Agathon, the master, here comments wryly about being at the mercy of his slaves. Alcibiades attempts the same trick, but cannot disturb Socrates' mastery.

⁴ It is once again Socrates who appears uninvited, startling Alcibiades when he turns around to find him sitting as third guest on the couch. "Always popping up where I least expect you," says Alcibiades (213c).

Diotima and *kuèsis* in the Light of the Myths of the God's Annexation of Pregnancy

Anne Gabrièle Wersinger

In Plato's *Symposium* (201d-212b), Diotima of Mantinea introduces herself in an hyper-masculine environment, through a complex apparatus of speech embedded relays and nested narratives of which the main effect is to blur the source of enunciation¹. Reported by a male, Socrates, one of Diotima's main thesis seems rather surprising at first sight: men's desire (*eròs*) even the most manly of them, is to become pregnant (*kuèsis*)².

Male pregnancy and the Olympian and Orphic myths

Scholars³ have tried to edulcorate Diotima's thesis, pretending that it does not imply any valuation of a feminine attribute. After all, does not Plato write in the *Timaeus* that a male's seed, a divine part derived from the marrow which forms the brain, is sown in the "ploughland of the womb with living creatures too small to be seen (*aorata ... zôia*) and that those are nourished until they grow large within" (91c8-d5)? Aeschylus seems to echo the same tradition in a passage of the *Eumenides*, when Athena says: "It is not the mother who is the begetter (*tokeus*) of what is called her child, being only the nurse of the newly-sown embryo (*kumatos*); the one who begets (*tiktei*) is the one who mounts (*d'ho thrôiskôn*)" (v. 658-660). The phallus is considered the key element for the birth, and if the maternal role has not completely disappeared, it is reduced to a nurturing function. Anaxagoras held that man's ejaculation of seed produced an homunculus which reached its full size thanks to the nourishment supplied by the mother⁴. Accordingly, when Diotima says that the males aspire to pregnancy, one should understand (except by uttering something absurd) that she can't of course be speaking of the mother's pregnancy, but only of the condition whereby a man is ready to ejaculate his seed⁵.

But, to postulate that *kuèsis* applied to males can't have the usual meaning and must be interpreted in a metaphorical sense, since a male can not reasonably be pregnant, is a petition of principle that prohibits understanding why Diotima chooses this metaphor rather than another⁶. It should be noticed also that in the *Timaeus*, (where one would mostly expect the word to occur), *kuèsis* (and its derivatives) is not used by Plato. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that, as Diotima stresses the metaphor of *kuèsis* built on the verb *kuèô*⁷, she means something else than the male's condition before ejaculation.

It seems then that a better method would imply working on a material where male pregnancy is fully acknowledged, such as in the mythological tradition called "Olympian" going back to Hesiod, which points toward the annexation of the feminine function of giving birth, by the father. Thus, in Hesiod, while allocating privileges (*timai*) to the gods, Zeus marries Metis. When she is about to give birth to Athena, Hesiod says, Zeus swallows her into his *nèdun*⁸ (v. 899) to avoid that some one else would take his privilege from him (*time*, v. 892) and then he begets Athena (*Theogony*, v. 886-890 with the verb *etikte*, v. 922, implied v. 924). N. Loraux reminds us that Athena is *Dios pais*, *Dios tekôn*, and above all, that she is motherless⁹. In *Euripides' Bacchae*, Zeus is accused of having deprived Semele from her child Dionysus, while still in her womb. He then hid the child in his thigh

¹ Wersinger, 2011, p. 96-100 and 2012, p. 2-6.

² *Symposium*, 206c1 (*kuèô*), c7 (*kuèsis*), d4 (*to kuôiôn*), d7 (*to kuèma*) d8 (*tôi kuôiñti*); 208e2 (*egkumones*), 209a1 (*kuôiñsin*), b1 (*egkumôn*), b5 (*kuôn*), c3 (*ekuei*).

³ Morrisson, 1964, p. 54.

⁴ Leitao, 2012, p. 15, speaks of « male pregnancy as scientific fact » but it seems rather a deduction as the word *kuèsis* does not occur in what is left of Anaxagoras' work.

⁵ Morrisson, *ibid.*, Pender, 1992, p. 72; Leitao thinks that there is a strategic turn in Diotima's discourse, and agrees with Pender up to 210d5, where one has to acknowledge a feminine form of pregnancy (2012, p. 188).

⁶ Wersinger, 2012, p. 11. Unfortunately, Leitao who deals a lot with the word *tiktein* (p. 281-284) does not examine the word *kuèsis*.

⁷ Morrisson, (1964, p. 53), and Evans, (2006, p. 15, and n°2) have pretended that *kuèô* may have the causal meaning of "impregnate" that applies to the male role in procreation, as attested in the aorist tense in Aeschylus, fr. 44, Nauck (ὄμβρος δ' ἄν' εὐνάεντος οὐρανοῦ πεσὼν / ἔκυσσε γαῖαν ἢ δὲ τίκτεται βροτοῖς). But Aeschylus here does not employ the verb *kuèô* (to be pregnant), but the verb *kuô* with an accusative that, in this case, means "impregnate".

⁸ The word reinforces the analogy with the womb often designated by the belly or other parts of the digestive tract (e.g. Euripides, *Bacchae*, v. 527).

⁹ Loraux, 1981, p. 142.

(v. 96-97 and v. 523-530)¹⁰. Athenian vases often place one or more Ilithyies alongside Zeus, to emphasize its annexation of the mother's privilege.

And so, it looks as if in the "Olympian" tradition, Zeus appropriates himself pregnancy, an attribute that he explicitly steals from woman.

But another important tradition is noteworthy. More recent than the Olympian tradition, it is mentioned in the Papyrus Derveni whose anonymous interpreter assigns to Orpheus (Coll. VII, 4-8). In this tradition, the role of the phallus is strongly emphasized:

“αἰδοῖον κατέπινεν, ὃς αἰθέρα ἔκθορε πρῶτος”.
(He swallowed the phallus (or the venerable) Fr. 8 (Coll. XIII, 4))¹¹.

The examination of the theogonic vocabulary in the Derveni Papyrus shows that in the Orphic scenario Zeus having swallowed the phallus of Heaven would beget the "cosmos". In other words, Zeus would become pregnant, directly after having swallowed Ouranos' phallus. This pregnancy seems to be confirmed by the Hellenistic version of an hymn to Zeus, the original dating from the 5th century BC.

“A domination, a daimon, great sire, principle of all things / a royal body in which all things are moved in a circle” (*“en hoî tade panta kukleîtai”*, *Orphica* F 168, Kern, v. 6-8).

One will undoubtedly agree that the image of things and beings that move circularly in the divine body strongly suggests pregnancy.

According to Bernabé whose interpretation we shall follow, Zeus, having swallowed the phallus of Heaven, after having listened to the prophecies of the Night and of his father Kronos, would go back to the origin of all things and would restart the history of the universe, by becoming the "new mother" of who was the first born. If Heaven has been the first-born, Zeus, somehow, for having introduced the phallus of Heaven in his breast, becomes himself the ascendant of the first being, while having been also the new born. Indeed, we may read in fr. 14, 1 "Zeus was born first, Zeus, the last".

Such material offers us a first lesson concerning the comparison between the Olympian model and the Orphic model. In Hesiod's Olympian model, Zeus annexes pregnancy considered as a feminine attribute, while in the Orphic model of the Derveni papyrus, pregnancy is considered a result of the ingestion of the phallus, as if the mere ingestion of the phallus made Zeus a mother, capable of pregnancy, and so explicitly gaining bisexuality¹².

Such a duality of sex roles is acknowledged by all the posterity of the Derveni Papyrus. The later Orphic Hymns seem to interpret the role of Zeus as a sexual duality. Let us start with the *Hymn to Zeus* (v. 4) quoted in the Ps.-Aristotle's *De Mundo*, 401a25:

“Zeus was born a male, immortal Zeus was a nymph”

Similarly, in the Orphic Hymn 6, even if it involves Phanes which is not discussed in the fragments of papyrus Derveni, we have:

*Πρωτόγονον καλέω διφυή, μέγαν, αἰθερόπλαγκτον,
 ὠιογενή, χρυσαίσιιν ἀγαλλόμενον πτερύγεσσι,
 ταυροβόαν, γένεσιν μακάρων θνητῶν τ' ἀνθρώπων,
 σπέρμα πολύμνηστον, πολυόργιον (...)*

“I invoke the First Born, of both natures, the great who haunts the Ether
 Born of the egg, glorious with his golden wings,
 Roaring like a bull, he, the origin
 Of the Blessed and mortal men
 Seed of many memories of many orgies”

¹⁰ In the *Melampodia*, Metis is said *hupo splagchnois*, fr. 343, 13, R. Merkelbach and M.L. West, 1983.

¹¹ It is unnecessary here to recall the controversy around the term *aidoion*. According to Bernabé (2002), there is no doubt that the word here means not simply the “venerable” but Ouranos' phallus which is also associated with the Sun. This is confirmed by the anonymous comment of the Papyrus, explaining that the word (*aidoion*) refers to men's genitals.

¹² Bernabé, 2010, 78.

This tradition continues lately, as evidenced by the following Latin authors:

Tiberianus, Versus Platonis de deo (ed. S. Mattiacci, 1990), vers 21-24 :

*Tu genus omne deum, tu rerum causa uigorque
Tu natura omnis, deus innumerabilis unus
Tu sexu plenus toto, tibi nascitur olim
Hic deus, hic mundus, domus hic hominumque deumque*

“Thou, the first origin of the gods, thou cause and vigor of things,
Thou, universal nature, countless single god,
Thou, the whole sex, it is from thee that in one day are born
this god, this world, this home of gods and men”

R. F. Avienus, Les Phénomènes d’Aratos (ed. J. Soubiran, CUF, 1981, v. 25-28) :

*(...) sexuque inmixtus utroque
atque aevi pariter gemini simul omnia lustrans
sufficit alterno res semine. (...)*

“(...) mixed with both sexes
with an equally twofold life, running at once through all things
he provides things with seed of either sex”.

In these texts, we see that the focus is on the duality of the sexes, as if Zeus was hermaphrodite, both male and female. Moreover, in column 7, we read:

*Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία
καὶ Ζεὺς καὶ ἀφροδισιάζειν καὶ θόρνυσθαι καὶ Πειθῶ
καὶ Ἄρμονία τῶι αὐτῶι θεῶι ὄνομα κεῖται.*

“Aphrodite Ourania,
Zeus, sexual intercourse, ejaculation, Persuasion
and Harmony are names given to the same god”.

In this excerpt where Zeus is identified with female deities, we can see evidence that Zeus acquires both sexes. And if Zeus is the *noûs*, one must notice also that in column 26, the *noûs* is explicitly called the “mother” of other things.

Bernabé recalls a Hurrian myth known from a Hittite version, *The Kingdom of Heaven* (or *Theogony*). In one episode, Anu, the god of heaven, is emasculated by the bite of Kumarbi. Then he swallows the phallus of Heaven. However, precises Bernabé, he finds himself “pregnant” of many gods.

The Derveni Papyrus seems to reflect a source of inspiration, perhaps Hittite, where the god creator is pregnant.

The scope of Diotima’s thesis (whose name etymologically meaning, Zeus’ *timè*, might hint at an Orphic character) makes sense, compared to these traditions.

The ellipsis of ejaculation in Diotima’s speech

Now, on one point at least, Diotima explicitly reverses the tradition of Olympian patriarchal myths of annexation. Indeed, she describes Erôs’ birth through rather surprising words:

*ἡ οὖν Πενία ἐπιβουλεύουσα διὰ τὴν αὐτῆς ἀπορίαν παιδίον ποιήσασθαι ἐκ τοῦ Πόρου,
κατακλίνεται τε παρ’ αὐτῶ καὶ ἐκύησε τὸν Ἔρωτα (203a3-203c).*

“Then Penia, being of herself resourceless, planned to make for her a child from Poros, and lying down by his side she became pregnant of Erôs”.

It should be noticed here that the middle voice aorist infinitive of the verb *poio*¹³, suddenly stresses the active role of some unexpected person, for gender and context reasons: Penia, whose name means Poverty, being resourceless with regard to resourceful Poros, and of course being a woman, shows her capacity of devising and initiating an intercourse with a sleeping, unconscious, and for this reason, passive male. There is an obvious hint here to the myth in which Zeus steals Métis or Semele of their power to give birth¹⁴. But in Diotima's version of the myth, it is as if there was annexation by a woman of the male share of generation. At the same time, since Penia necessarily had to be inseminated by Poros, we must assume that *kuèsis* implies the existence of a man's sperm.

But one is left then with a question : why is Diotima so elliptical about ejaculation when redefining the purpose of love as *kuèsis*? According to her, it is men's business, even for those who love and have intercourse with women (208e2-4), to "beget children" (*paidogonia*), but things seem to happen without any reference to ejaculation, although Plato uses, in erotic contexts such as the *Phaedrus* (250e5) the verbs *paidosporeîn* "to protrude" or *bainein* "to mount. Should we assume that it is so obvious that pregnancy involves ejaculation, that it is not necessary to mention it?

A *fortiori*, some scholars¹⁵ have pretended that, since men are at stake, it can't be female pregnancy but ejaculation that is evidently supposed in *Symposium* 206d4-206e1 ("to *kuôn* is released (...) from its great birth pangs (*dia to megalès ôdinos apolueîn*"), this passage having a parallel in the *Phaedrus* : as he looks at his *païs'* beauty (251c6), the lover feels the discomfort of sexual tension described by the metaphor of the production and growth of feathers¹⁶, and, when his soul receives the *himeros*, he is released from his birth pangs (*odunès*, 251 d1). The word *ôdis* being generally used for women¹⁷, one too easily believes that since Plato applies to men a word usually used for women in the *Phaedrus*, there is no reason to admit that it would not be the case in the *Symposium*, including the word *kuèsis*. But one may reverse the argument : why does the word *kuèsis* appear in the *Symposium* and not in the *Phaedrus* ?

Anyway, it seems difficult to accept that the ellipsis of ejaculation is unimportant in Diotima's speech face to a tradition that emphasizes so strongly its importance, as it is the case in the Orphic tradition (in Fr. 15, the word *thorer*¹⁸, a substantive presumably denoting ejaculation). The ellipsis makes sense with regard to this emphasis.

Taking for granted these points, we may conclude that Diotima reverses the Olympian myths of annexation of the female share of generation, by rendering to the mother the initiative of gestation.

Regarding the Orphic myth, she seems to conceal both ejaculation and phallus for the benefit of pregnancy.

The orphic and musical background of the female ingenious

What is then the real scope of Diotima's metaphor of *kuèsis*? Answering this question requires setting the background of the notion of creation in Plato's *Timaeus*.

In the Derveni Papyrus, and unlike what happens in Homer and Hesiod, to produce (*poeîn*) and to give birth to (*tikteîn*) are no longer opposed¹⁹.

In an Orphic poem, which dates from the second century AD, (an older version being quoted in the Derveni Papyrus), the first two lines show that the assimilation of the two concepts is indeed realized:

“Zeus was born first, Zeus with the bright lightning, is the last
Zeus is the head, Zeus is the middle, from Zeus all things were made (*Dios tetuktai panta ek*),
v. 1-2

Zeus alone is the prime genitor (*archigenethlos*)”, v. 5 (fragment 168, Kern, quoted by Apuleius, *De Mundo*, 37, and Porphyry, *Peri Agalmatôn*, 3, 7).

The Orphic Zeus is the demiurge that begets *and* makes the cosmos. This assimilation of ideas for making and childbirth is completely Orphic. Thus the musician Timotheus of Miletus mentions Orpheus, demi-god, son of the Muse Calliope in indicative terms for our purpose:

¹³ Wersinger, 2012, p. 9-10.

¹⁴ Wersinger, *ibid.*, Leitao, 2012, p. 221.

¹⁵ Pender (1992), p. 72-75, as Morrisson (1964), p. 51-52.

¹⁶ Csapo, 1993, p. 12

¹⁷ Loraux (1990), p. 40, 63.

¹⁸ West, 1997, p. 91-92.

¹⁹ Wersinger, 2009, 2013. Leitao notices it (2012, p. 122) but without being able to tell the origin of the birth metaphor (p. 127).

“Orpheus, Calliope’s son, he of the intricate muse,
was the first to beget (*eteknôsen*) the tortoise-shell lyre in Pieria” (fr. 711, Page, 221-224,
trad. D.A. Campbell)

The birth of a lyre, an instrument of music being a technical and unnatural object, reflects the assimilation of the two registers, the demiurgic and the procreative, and this reference is Orphic (compare with Hermes in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, who is said to “make a singer (*tektênat'aoidon*)” (v. 25).

But it looks too as if the assimilation of the idea of begetting and the idea of demiurgy implied the female gender.

In Aristophanes' comedy *The Thesmophoria*, the poet-musician Agathon who, like Timothy, is a follower of the New Music which feeds with Orphism a proven relationship, is in action. He is currently composing a tragedy of the kind of the *Phaedra*, and needs the musical mode akin to tragedy (a Mixolydian for example, which is said to be “feminine”). For this purpose, the creator must engage in a *mimêsis* of a special type which is to get into the spirit (*gnome*) of female fashion, that is to say, he has to “think like a woman” and to “feel like a woman” in his very body. This is the theory called the *Gunaikêia Dramata*, according to which a composer of dramas must impulse *mimêsis* so far that his own ways and attitudes must conform with the feminine character he creates. That is why Agathon has the feminine attributes of childbirth that Aristophanes caricatures. This does not mean that Agathon is an effeminate man, and Aristophanes outlines the poet’s virility (v. 95-153).

The teaching of this passage is that a man, a male, who is explicitly a poet-musician, can be said to give birth *like a woman*. Timotheus of Miletus’ dithyramb called the *Birthpangs of Semele* was probably composed through this feminine mimetical device²⁰. But it should immediately be added that this birth metaphor is characterized by novelty. Agathon and Timotheus of Miletus both emphasize the novelty of their music: Eros is a musician-poet that Agathon praises, and by calling him *neôtaton* and *aei neos* (*Symposium*, 195c), he is obviously echoing Timotheus of Miletus’ *Persians*:

“I do not sing the old songs, because mine are new (*kaina*) and better.
A young Zeus reigns (*neos*) ...” (fr. 20, in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistes*, 122c-d).

It is also known that music is likened to the birth of a newborn. Thus, according to Athenaeus, the comic poet of the 4th century, Anaxilas has said in his *Hyacinthus*:

“Music, like Libya, thanks to the gods gives birth (*tikteî*) to a new creature each year (*kainon*)”
(*Deipnosophistes* 623F).

The same testimony is offered about the comic poet of the fifth century, Eupolis:

“The comic poet Eupolis, my friends said that” Music is a thing (*pragma*) deep and complex 'and is constantly offering new discoveries (*aiêi te kainon hexeuriskeî*) for those who can reach them” (Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistes* 623F).

Such material constitutes the evidence of the background of what Diotima says about production (*poiesis*):

“(…) a single section, disparate from the whole of creation (*pasês tês poiêseôs*), —merely the business of music and meters (*to peri tèn mousikèn kai ta metra*)—is entitled with the name of the whole. This and no more is called creation (*poiêsis*); those only who possess this branch of creation (*tês poiêseôs*) are creators (*poiêtas*)” (*Symposium*, 205c4-c8).

According to Diotima, one came by synecdoche to denote by the word creator what we call, still today, the poet, in fact the musician. The creator *par excellence*, is the musician, i.e. the melic poet.

But the musician illustrated by Agathon, is also, as we have seen, not only the one who gives birth, but the one who always gives birth to something new, as a neo-musician. As Timothy or

²⁰ Hordern, 2002, p. 249 ; Leitao, 2012, p. 65, 155.

Philoxenus, Agathon is a “passionate of novelty, a *philokainos*”.

It is not insignificant either that Timothy expressly claims novelty by claiming the name of the “new Zeus” and by repudiating the Muses of the past:

“Go away Muses of the Beginning (*Apito Mousa Archon*)” (fr. 20, in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists*, 122c-d)²¹.

Through the synecdoche operated by Diotima, one may reckon an undeniably Orphic theme according to which creation and musical poetry considered as begetting a *newborn* child are identified²².

Subversion of paiderastic intercourse: the beloved as a midwife

But to grasp the very significance of Diotima’s subversive operation, another key element is worth noting. Indeed observe that Diotima subverts paiderastic relationship (one adult, the *erastès* is supposed to appeal to a younger, the *erômenos*, and to assault him sexually)²³ by giving the *erômenos* the posture of a midwife (206d2) and the *erastès* that of a mother, giving birth to beautiful discourses²⁴.

However, as Diotima herself gives birth to *logoi* face to Socrates, we must recognize that a woman, pregnant with discourses, substitutes herself to an *erastès*, facing Socrates himself being invested with the character of an *erômenos*-midwife²⁵.

This is understandable only by comparing the *Symposium* (where the figure of the midwife remains passive, all the active part belonging fully to the one that is pregnant, 206d7), with the *Theaetetus* where, on the contrary, Socrates as midwife expert in deliveries, masters the art of delivering as well as aborting (151c4). Obviously, birth control involves the selection of products. It means that, conversely, in the speech of Diotima, gestation takes over the product itself. Everything happens as if, according to Diotima, the work as a result was worth less than its gestation, that is to say, if one wants to translate this into *logoi*, the gestation of speech outweighs the speeches themselves.

Philosophical gestation

Even if Diotima’s speech is a pastiche composed by Plato for fun²⁶, it offers a testimony on the relationship between New music and Orphism, and on the semantic and conceptual transformations of the concept of creation under the influence of Orphism. It looks as if the style of orphic religion, of which it is agreed that it was not fixed in a dogmatic code, proceeded as a kind of wreath by profusion of ingenious theories. Such could be the theory of the *genious* musician giving birth to a newborn work, under the auspices of Orpheus. In this perspective, the metaphor of feminine pregnancy in Diotima’s speech would have the purpose of claiming that especially in thought matter such as philosophy, where intelligence and truth are concerned, and where the Ilithyie is the Form of Beauty itself (212a2), creation can’t reduce itself to the begetting of novelty and invention, but takes time²⁷ as does a maternal gestation.

²¹ It is not possible to show in detail here that Agathon’s speech reflects the close relationship of the new music with religious language promoting innovation of which Orpheus seems to be the effigy, Wersinger, 2009, 2013.

²² Diotima emphasizes the opposition between new and ancient, through several progressive arguments (*heteron neon anti tou palaiou*, 207d3-4, for the desire to perpetuate one’s mortal life ; (*presbutès d6 / neos aei*, d8) for one’s own life ; (*kainèn empoioûsa anti tês apiouês* 208a6) for spiritual matters such as memory, knowledge.

²³ Leitao (2012, p. 131sq.) rightly says that Plato invented the Socrates-as-midwife metaphor as a counter to a teacher-as-impregnator metaphor originated by Prodicus or another Sophist. But he does not see that the metaphor of the midwife starts already in the *Symposium*.

²⁴ We have to remember that *to kalon* currently denotes the *pais* (Wersinger, 2012, p. 44-45). Now, Diotima explains that *érôs* consists in *tokos en kalôi* (206b6). Then she progressively explains this definition, by proceeding through substitutions:

- *kuôûsi gar* substitutes for *tokos* (206 c1)

- *en de kalôi* opposed to *men aischrôi* substitutes to *en kalôi* (206c4-5)

- *hè kuêsis kai hê gennêsis* substitutes to *tokos* (206c7-8)

- Diotima goes back to the opposition between *aischron* and *kalon* taken as *anarmoston* opposed to *harmotton* (notice the chiasma) (206 d1-2)

- *Moirâ et Eileithiâ* are related to *Kallonè* (substituting to *kalon*) (d2-3) and *Kallonè* (206d2) which substitutes to *Eileithia*. The formula “*en philosophiai aphthonôi*” (210d5-6) shows the same construction with *en*.

²⁵ Wersinger, 2012, p. 11.

²⁶ It is out of the limits of this contribution to locate Diotima’s subversion in the broader context of phallic Dionysian rituals, where cross-dressing and playing with gender reversal was common, Csapo, 1997, p. 263.

²⁷ Eight months are needed for the real philosopher’s seeds to mature in the soul (*Phaedrus*, 276b1-8).

Bibl.

- BERNABÉ A., Casadesús F. (ed.), *Orfeo y la tradición órfica: un reencuentro*. (2 vols.) Akal Universitaria. Madrid, Akal, 2008.
- BERNABÉ, A., « El himno a Zeus órfico. Vicisitudes literarias, ideológicas y religiosas » In Bernabé A., Casadesús F., and Santamaría F. *Orfeo y el Orfismo: nuevas perspectivas* Alicante, Biblioteca Virtual Cervantes, 2010, 67–97
- BERNABÉ, A., « La Théogonie orphique du papyrus de Derveni », *Kernos* 15, 2002, 91-129
- BROMMER F., « Die Geburt der Athena », *Jahrbuch des römisch-germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 8, 1961, 66-83
- BURKERT W. « El dios solitario. Orfeo, fr. 12 Bernabé, en contexto. » in Bernabé and Casadesús 2008, 579–589
- CSAPO, E., « Riding the Phallus for Dionysus: Iconology, Ritual, and Gender-Role De/Construction », *Phoenix*, Vol. 51, No. 3/4 (Autumn - Winter, 1997), 253-295
- CSAPO, E., « Deep Ambivalence : Notes on a Greek Cockfight (Part I) », *Phoenix* Vol. 47, n°1, Spring 1993, 1-28
- EVANS N., « Diotima and Demeter as Mystagogues in Plato's Symposium », *Hypatia*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Spring, 2006), pp. 1-27
- HORDERN J., *The Fragments of Timotheus of Miletus*, Oxford, Oxford Clarendon Press, 2002.
- LEITAO D. D., *The Pregnant Male as Myth and Metaphor in Classical Greek Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012
- LORAU N., *Les enfants d'Athéna, idées athéniennes sur la citoyenneté et la division des sexes*, Paris, Maspero, 1981
- LORAU N., *Les Mères en deuil*, Paris, Seuil, 1990.
- MORRISON, J., S., « Four notes on Plato's *Symposium* », *The Classical Quarterly*, New series, Vol. 14, n°1 (May), 1964, 42-55
- PENDER E., E., « Spiritual Pregnancy in Plato's *Symposium* », *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 42, No. 1 (1992), pp. 72-86
- WERSINGER A.G., « Aux origines de la création artistique : Le concept de Nouveauté dans la poétique musicale en Grèce ancienne et ses conséquences sur l'interprétation de la création », (paper initially read in 2009 in "la Création en questions" organized by the Centre de Philosophie de l'Art de Paris I-Sorbonne), in P. Caye, L. Boulègue, F. Malhomme eds. *Les Théories de l'Art*, Paris, Garnier, forthcoming, 2013
- WERSINGER A.G., « La voix d'une "savante": Diotime de Mantinée dans le Banquet de Platon (201d-212b) », *Cahiers Mondes anciens* 2, 2012.
- WERSINGER A.G., « Plato and Philosophy as a *figure* of speech » in *Oralité et Écriture chez Platon*, J.-L. Périllié (ed.), Bruxelles, *Ousia*, Cahiers de Philosophie, 2011
- WERSINGER A.G., « Platon et la philosophie comme 'figure' d'énonciation » *Philosophia* 40, 2010.
- WEST M.L., « Hocus-Pocus in East and West. Theogony, Ritual and the Tradition of Esoteric Commentary » in A. Laks and G. Most (eds.), *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997, 81–90.

Phaedrus and Pausanias

Chair: Thomas M. Robinson

Phaedrus and the sophistic competition of beautiful speech

Noburu Notomi

In Plato's *Symposium*, a series of speeches in praise of Eros are introduced as customary entertainment at a symposium with reference to the sophistic activity of encomium. The five speakers before Socrates predominantly depend on experts' or sophists' knowledge, and respond to each other. It is against these sophistic modes of speech that Socrates forwards his own speech. I will clarify this sophistic feature of the earlier speeches in contrast with that of Socrates in contrast with that of Socrates by putting special focus on Phaedrus, the first speaker and original proposer of this theme. The dialogue is concerned with "wisdom" (σοφία),¹ and its relation to "philosophy" (φιλοσοφία) and "sophistry".

1. Speech competition over wisdom

In the symposium celebrating the first victory of Agathon, the participants agree to enjoy conversation, rather than heavy drink or music. They choose "encomium to Eros" for the topic of conversation. While this topic is proposed by Eryximachus at the party, the original idea comes from Phaedrus. Eryximachus explains that Phaedrus insisted each time that Eros should be praised, for he complained that this god alone has not been bestowed proper honour differently from other gods (177a-d). He tried to prove this claim with reference to poets and sophists: whereas the past poets dedicated hymns and eulogies to the other gods, no poet has made an encomium to Eros. Then, he refers to the sophists, as follows.

[Plato, *Symposium* 177b-c]

Or again, if you like, consider the case of the sophists, I mean the respectable ones (τοὺς χρηστοὺς σοφιστὰς). Isn't it terrible that they write prose panegyrics of Heracles and others, as the excellent Prodicus did – in fact, that isn't so amazing, but I have actually come across a book by a clever man in which salt was the subject of amazing praise for its usefulness (πρὸς ὠφελίαν), and you'll see many other things of that sort given encomia. (trans. C. J. Rowe)

His first reference is to Prodicus' famous work, *The Choice of Heracles*,² in which he encourages young people to choose, as Heracles did, a life of virtue and labor, instead of that of vice and pleasure. Phaedrus takes this moralist story as a kind of encomium to the hero (half-god). Next, the "clever man" mentioned here and one who praises "bumble-bees and salt and the like" (Isocrates, *Helen* 12) are supposed to be Polycrates.³ He is said to have produced encomia to such trifles as pebbles and mice, and to such notorious heroes as Clytemnestra and Paris.⁴ Thus, it is true that the sophists produce speeches in praise of gods and heroes, but they are nothing but playfulness (παίγνιον), as Gorgias says at the end of his *Encomium of Helen* (21), and as Agathon emphasizes in his own speech by calling it "play" (παιδιά, 197e).

On the other hand, we should remember that Prodicus advances the rationalistic view that useful things (τὰ ὠφελοῦντα) and the men who designed them were regarded as gods.⁵ He is said to have related Demeter to bread, Dionysus to wine, Poseidon to water and Hephaestus to fire. For this idea of the gods, he is later regarded as an atheist.⁶ In this respect, Phaedrus' reference to the sophists implies departure from traditional religion, notwithstanding his apparently pious proposal of encomium to the god.

It is also interesting to note that Gorgias is not mentioned here as the author of the famous *Encomium of Helen*. This work may not have been written before 416 BC (the date of Agathon's party);⁷ however, it seems possible that Phaedrus deliberately ignores it because it is too paradoxical

¹ For example, Bury (1932²), xix, says that "one main motive of the dialogue as a whole is to exhibit the σοφία of Socrates, his intellectual as well as moral supremacy".

² DK 84 B2 (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* II 1, 21-34).

³ This is assumed by Sauppe, Blass, Jebb, Hug, Bury, Dover, and Rowe. For the relation between the two texts, see Bury (1932²), xx-xxi; cf. Radermacher (1951), B XXI 9. Bury introduces Antisthenes as another candidate.

⁴ He wrote *The Apology of Busiris*, a monstrous king of Egypt, and also published a pamphlet entitled *The Accusation of Socrates*, around 393BC.

⁵ Cf. DK 84 B5 (Sextus Empiricus, *Math.* 9.18, cf. 9.51–52).

⁶ Cf. Notomi (2010).

⁷ Gorgias may have responded to Euripides' *Trojan Women*, produced in 415 BC, since there are many similarities between the two works. If Euripides responded to Gorgias, his work may have been written around 416 BC.

or scandalous (but in any case, Plato's contemporary readers must have been aware of it).

Now it is obvious that "encomium to Eros" constitutes a sophistic competition. Phaedrus becomes "father of the discourse" (πατήρ τοῦ λόγου, 177d), and is appointed as the first speaker.⁸

Agathon's welcome address to Socrates points out that "wisdom" (σοφία) is a hidden theme (175c-e). He asks Socrates to lie next to him, so that he can enjoy the wisdom that Socrates must have discovered before entering the door. He assumes that wisdom flows from the fuller to the emptier by touch. This reminds us of sophistic teaching. Agathon says that "On this, we'll take our rival claims to wisdom to court a bit later on, with Dionysus as judge" (175e).⁹

2. *Phaedrus' citations of authorities*¹⁰

The first speaker Phaedrus appears in the other two dialogues of Plato, namely *Phaedrus* and *Protagoras*. In the *Phaedrus*, he converses with Socrates over rhetoric and love. When Phaedrus comes across Socrates, he is learning by heart a short rhetorical text written by Lysias with the view of reciting it in front of the others. This initial scene vividly shows that he loves any kind of discourse (*philologos*).¹¹ In the *Protagoras*, he appears among those who eagerly follow Hippias of Elis at the spectacular gathering of the great sophists in Callias' house (315c).

In the *Symposium*, Phaedrus begins his speech with the citations of authorities. While this passage (178b2-c2) has been drastically emended since the beginning of the 18th century, I propose to retain the reading of the major manuscripts (BTW), and to reject the modern editions that print different texts.¹² Since I have already examined elsewhere how these differences emerged, so as to demonstrate that the traditional reading of the manuscript is correct, I simply assume my reading here.

[Plato, *Symposium* 178b2-c2]

b2 γονῆς γὰρ Ἔρωτος οὔτ' εἰσὶν οὔτε λέγονται ὑπ' οὐδενὸς
οὔτε ἰδιώτου οὔτε ποιητοῦ, ἀλλ' Ἡσίοδος πρῶτον μὲν Χάος φησὶ
γενέσθαι—

b5 αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
Γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος, πάντων ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ,
ἠδ' Ἔρος

b8 φησὶ μετὰ τὸ Χάος δύο τούτῳ γενέσθαι, Γῆν τε καὶ Ἔρωτα.
Παρμενίδης δὲ τὴν γένεσιν λέγει—
πρῶτιστον μὲν Ἔρωτα θεῶν μητίσατο πάντων.

c1 Ἡσίοδῳ δὲ καὶ Ἀκουσίλειος ὁμολογεῖ. οὔτῳ πολλαχόθεν
ὁμολογεῖται ὃ Ἔρος ἐν τοῖς πρεσβύτατος εἶναι.

For Eros neither has any parents, nor is he said by anyone, whether layman or poet, to have them. Hesiod says that first to come into being was Chaos;

"and then broad-bosomed Earth, a seat for all, safe for ever, and Eros".

He says that these two, Earth and Eros, came into being after Chaos. Parmenides says of the origin of Eros

"First was devised Eros, of all gods".

Acusileos agrees with Hesiod. Thus it is agreed on many sides that Eros was among the oldest. (trans. C.J. Rowe, modified)

The recent studies of doxography show that Phaedrus here depends on Hippias' *Anthology* for the citations. The first evidence comes from a parallel passage in Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A4, 984b23-31: in discussing the earlier thinkers who investigated the first principles, Aristotle cites the same Parmenides (B13) and Hesiod, *Theogony* (116-117 and 120). Although modern editors found this exact correspondence with the *Symposium* strange and often emended the transmitted text, the parallelism of the two texts is best explained by the assumption that the citations derive from the same source, i.e. *Anthology*, a collection of famous sayings of the authorities, edited by the sophist

⁸ His role as chairman continues in 194d-e, 199b-c, and 212b-c.

⁹ The issue of wisdom gets focused again in 194b-c.

¹⁰ This section provides a summary of my arguments in Notomi (forthcoming).

¹¹ The character of Phaedrus as "philologue" is analyzed by Ferrari (1987).

¹² 178b8 to c2: Burnet (1901¹, 1910²) emended the text of 178b8 to c2 on the suggestion of Schanz (1882), 7, and was followed by Dover (1980), Vicaire (1989), and Rowe (1998). It reads "Acusileos too says the same as Hesiod, that these two, Earth and Eros, came into being after Chaos" (b8-9). Among the 20th century major editions, Robin (1929¹, 1958⁶) is the only one that maintains the manuscripts' reading, with one minor addition.

Hippias.¹³

Since Hippias is the only author, as far as we know, who compiled an anthology up to the latter half of the 5th century BC, he most probably was the common source for Plato and Aristotle. His policy of compilation, namely to excerpt from both verse (poetry) and prose writings,¹⁴ fits what Phaedrus says before the citations (178b1-3).

If we assume that Phaedrus uses Hippias' *Anthology* in citing famous sayings on Eros, we can observe the following points:

(i) The citations of Hesiod, *Theogony*, Parmenides, and Acusileos are a part of the chapter on Eros in Hippias' *Anthology*.

(ii) Hippias probably introduces the sayings in chronological order, namely, "Hesiod, Parmenides, Acusileos",¹⁵ according to his assumed editorial policy.¹⁶ If this is the case, the manuscript reading better fits the original source, as long as Phaedrus cites it more or less faithfully.

(iii) Hippias probably omits the two lines 118-119 in quoting from Hesiod for his own purpose. Plato and Aristotle then quote from this shorter version (in slightly different ways from each other).

(iv) Phaedrus adds a paraphrase of the older word "*Gaia*" in Hesiod for "*Gē*" after the citation (178b8). To modern commentators, this appears insignificant or redundant, but it may well be a customary way of commenting on citations.

(v) Hippias may also have collected some words from Acusileos in the *Anthology*. If so, Phaedrus makes it simple by saying, "Acusileos agrees with Hesiod" (178c1), but this never means that both insist on exactly the same things, as is evident from the testimonies of Acusileos.¹⁷

When "encomium to Eros" was chosen as the theme for the symposiastic speeches, Phaedrus must have already prepared to give a speech by learning the relevant materials by heart. No doubt, the useful collection of famous sayings of poets and others, edited by Hippias, was a main source for his preparation.¹⁸ Therefore, he starts a speech with citations from the three men of wisdom, namely Hesiod, Parmenides, and Acusileos, to appeal to authority.

The style of sophistic polymathy (for which Hippias was particularly famous) is suitable for the beginning of the competition of speeches at the symposium. From the *Phaedrus*, we know that Phaedrus is fond of memorising many texts of poets, rhetoricians, sophists, and other intellectuals to show off his knowledge in front of others by freely citing the authorities. We know that Hippias was also an expert of such mnemonic skills (cf. DK 86A2, 5a, 16, etc.). This kind of exhibition of wisdom might look shallow to those who possess or seek true knowledge, but it must have attracted many men of culture. Phaedrus' audience may well be aware that he depends on Hippias' *Anthology*, and responded to him reflecting this awareness. It is a sort of intellectual game, more or less expected on such an occasion as a symposium. The polymathy and mnemonic skills of Hippias characterise this beginning of the competition.¹⁹

3. Sophistic responses to Phaedrus

Next, we shall look at how the other speakers respond to Phaedrus, above all, to his sophistic presentation of Hippias' style. Pausanias starts with a sort of criticism of Phaedrus' speech.

[*Symposium* 180c-d]

Phaedrus, our subject seems to me not to have been put forward in the right way – I mean in that we have been instructed, as we have, simply to give an encomium to Eros. If Eros were such that there were just one of him, that would be in order; but in fact there isn't just one of him; and if there isn't, it is more correct (ὀρθότερον) to preface what one says by first saying what sort of Eros one should praise. So I shall try to put this right (ἐπανορθώσασθαι).

¹³ This view was originally given by Bruno Snell on the doxography of Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A3 (983b21 ff.) and Plato, *Cratylus* 402b; cf. Snell (1944), 170 ff., von Kienle (1961), 41 ff. It was then applied to the *Symposium* passage by Classen (1965), 175-178; cf. Mansfeld ([1986]/1990), 35, 46, 48, 71, n.9, Patzer (1986), 43-48. While they take it for certain that *Symposium* 178b-c depends on Hippias, no commentary on the passage, notably Dover and Rowe, takes this aspect into consideration yet.

¹⁴ DK 86B6 (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* VI.15).

¹⁵ Acusileos of Argos probably came after Parmenides (active in the beginning of the fifth century BCE) since his date of activity is assumed to be around the Persian War.

¹⁶ Cf. Patzer (1986), 46.

¹⁷ Cf. DK 9 B1 (Damascius, *On the First Principles* 124 (I.320, 10R.), Eudemos fr.117 Wehrli, Philodemus, *De pietate* 137, 13 p.61 Gomperz) and B3 (*Scholía to Theocritus* 13 1/2c Wendel).

¹⁸ It is also suggested that Phaedrus is influenced by Isocrates (or Lysias): cf. Rowe (1998), 137, Wardy (2004), 180-181.

¹⁹ Also, Phaedrus presents, in the third part of his speech, literary criticism concerning Homer, Aeschylus and others (Euripides?). His speech is essential to understand the whole dialogue: see Wardy (2012).

Pausanias then distinguishes two senses of Aphrodite, one heavenly (Οὐρανίον) and the other common (Πάνδημον), and two senses of Eros accordingly (180d-181a). Making a distinction between each word is a typical method of another sophist, Prodicus of Ceos, who is much concerned about the correctness of words (ὀρθοέπεια) and criticizes others by pointing out the ambiguity of words, so as to exhibit his acute knowledge of language and various issues. Pausanias' remarkable emphasis on "correctness" clearly represents the main concern of Prodicus.²⁰ Since he insists that "correctly" (ὀρθῶς) means "beautifully" (καλῶς, 181a4), his *correct* speech becomes a *beautiful* speech (cf. 180c4). It seems obvious that Pausanias uses this sophist' arsenal for criticism against Phaedrus, who assumes, as Hippias does, the traditional view that Eros is a single object.

Pausanias' long argument seems to show another feature of Prodicus. In the distinction between the two kinds – high and low – of Aphrodite and Eros, each plays some function but neither looks very "divine". In particular, "Common" Aphrodite and Eros are not highly respected. This shows a characteristic position of Prodicus, who challenges traditional views on gods and eventually rejects them as human deification.²¹ This may explain why Pausanias provides a strange excuse:

[*Symposium* 180e]

Now one should praise all gods, but for now what matters is to try to say what domain falls to the lot of each Eros.

Moreover, Pausanias frequently refers to the "custom" (νόμος) of each society (181d-184c). Different societies, such as Sparta, Ionia, and Athens, have different attitudes and laws towards love. This kind of relativistic observation is typical of the sophists in the latter half of the 5th century BC. In contrast with Pausanias, Aristophanes repeatedly emphasizes the ancient "nature" (φύσις) of human beings in his original myth (189d, 191d, 192e, 193c-d). He explicitly contrasts *physis* with *nomos* as a compelling force in a society (192b). This contrast is manipulated by the sophists.

Here we should also remember that Pausanias appears in the *Protagoras* as one of the followers of Prodicus (315d). A young beautiful boy, Agathon, was sitting next to Pausanias (315d-e). So when the sophists compete with each other at Callias' house (the dramatic setting is around 432 BC), Agathon sides with Prodicus, but 16 years later in 416 BC, he is fully influenced by Gorgias. It was in 427 BC when Gorgias made an impressive debut at Athens.

Finally, the rhetorical speech of Agathon manifestly imitates Gorgias' style: in particular, the repetition of similar words, the use of antithetic phrases, the order of encomiac argument starting from the praise of the origin, and the mocking ending claiming "playfulness" (197e).²² Socrates mockingly points out this imitation (198c).

Agathon reacts against Phaedrus in commenting on his interpretation of the oldness of Eros. This opposition corresponds to Gorgias' antagonism against Hippias. He says:

[*Symposium* 195b-c]

I agree with Phaedrus on many other things, but on this I do not agree, that Eros is more ancient than Cronus and Iapetus: I declare that he is youngest of the gods, and always young, and that those old happenings that Hesiod and Parmenides report in relation to gods, if they were actually reporting the truth, happened through Necessity and not through Eros.²³

Gorgias was famous for his paradoxical arguments (παραδοχολογία), notably *On What Is Not* and *Encomium of Helen*. He is good at forwarding most unexpected views against our common sense, so as to subvert it. Here, Agathon presents a similar uncommon view that Eros is the youngest god. For, as Hippias provides abundant support (Hesiod, Acusileos, et al.), Eros was regarded as one of the oldest gods in traditional mythology. Therefore, Agathon's criticism of Phaedrus recapitulates the sophistic opposition between Hippias' austere presentation of traditional wisdom and Gorgias' playful demonstration of paradoxical wisdom: one authoritative and the other shocking but enchanting. They are two contrasting skills of sophistic exhibition.

In criticizing Phaedrus with reference to Hesiod and Parmenides (195c), Agathon must be aware that his opponent depends on Hippias' *Anthology*. Thus, the critical exchange between the two

²⁰ Cf. ὀρθότερόν, 180c7; ἐπανορθώσασθαι, d2, ὀρθῶς καλεῖσθαι, e2; ὀρθῶς λέγοντας, 183d1.

²¹ For this aspect of Prodicus, see Notomi (2010).

²² For the detailed analysis, see Dover (1980) *ad hoc*.

²³ Some commentators suggest that Agathon raises here an issue of literary criticism: while Phaedrus takes "τὴν Γένεσιν" (Generation, 178b9) for the subject of Parmenides B13, Agathon proposes "ἀνάγκη" for it.

speakers represents sophistic antagonism.

4. Socrates' criticism and a double image of Eros

We find many hints of sophists' influence in the earlier speeches, but Socrates starts his speech with a total rejection of this kind of sophistic discourse: the latter is concerned solely with "beauty" in appearance, but not with the real "beauty" (i.e., the truth). Socrates expresses this rejection exactly when the sophistic tendency culminates in the Gorgianic extempore speech by Agathon (197c-e). His encomium is typically empty and fallacious. Thus, philosophy as seeking for the truth is sharply contrasted with rhetoric as presenting beautiful *logos*.

Socrates cross-examines Agathon in a philosophical way (i.e., through questions and answers). However, his elenchus reveals a more radical view than that of Prodicus, since they conclude that Eros is not a god at all. He criticises the previous speakers, notably, Aristophanes in 205d-e (cf. 212c); this reminds us of sophistic competition. Therefore, Socrates must seem to the others to be a far more formidable sophist who defeats all the others. This might be related to the perplexing passage where Eros is characterized as "sophist" along with "philosopher" (cf. 204a-b):

[*Symposium* 203d]

His father's side, for its part, makes him a schemer after the beautiful and good, courageous, impetuous, and intense, a clever hunter (θηρευτής δεινός), always weaving new devices, both passionate for wisdom and resourceful in looking for it, philosophizing through all his life (φιλοσοφῶν διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου), a clever magician, sorcerer, and sophist (δεινὸς γόης καὶ φαρμακεὺς καὶ σοφιστής).

Also, Socrates reports that Diotima speaks like "accomplished sophists" (οἱ τέλει σοφισταί, 208c).

This fusion of "sophist" and "philosopher" is striking as well as perplexing, since Plato always tries to make a clear distinction between the two. The sophists, such as Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus and Hippias, are sharply contrasted with the philosopher, Socrates, and therefore we see few "respectable" sophists in Plato's dialogues.²⁴

It seems obvious that Plato deliberately fuses the philosopher and the sophist in these passages. Then, should we, or can we distinguish between the two in a clear way? These coincide in the figure of Eros as if they are an inseparable twin. How about Diotima? What is her wisdom? Again, what is the "erotic" wisdom of Socrates, which he was taught by Diotima?²⁵ Plato may be suggesting that the distinction is neither simple nor easy. Do we need sophists in order to do philosophy? Sophists may be within us, when we seek for truth in philosophy. I think this is a genuine challenge of the *Symposium*.

[Bibliography]

- Burnet, J. (1901¹, 1910²), *Platonis Opera, Tomus II*, recognovit brevique adnotatione critica instruxit Ioannes Burnet, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Bury, R. G. (1909¹, 1932²), *The Symposium of Plato*, edited with introduction, critical notes, and commentary, W. Heffer, Cambridge.
- Classen, C. J. (1965), "Bemerkungen zu zwei griechischen 'Philosophier-historikern'", *Philologus* 109, 175-178.
- Dover, K. (1980), *Plato, Symposium*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Ferrari, G. R. F. (1987), *Listening to the cicadas: a study of Plato's Phaedrus*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Kienle, W. von (1961), *Die Berichte über die Sukzessionen der Philosophen in der hellenistischen und spätantiken Literatur*, Freie Universität, Berlin.
- Mansfeld, J. ([1986]/1990), "Aristotle, Plato, and the Preplatonic Doxography and Chronography", G. Cambiano ed., *Storiografia e dossografia nella filosofia antica*, Torino, 1986, 1-59; repr. in his *Studies in the Historiography of Greek Philosophy*, Assen / Maastricht, 22-83.
- Notomi, N. (2010), "Prodicus in Aristophanes", Stefania Giombini e Flavia Marcacci. Aguaplano ed., *Il Quinto Secolo: Studi di filosofia antica in onore di Livio Rossetti*, Aguaplano, Perugia, 655-

²⁴ In only a few passages, the word "sophist" seems to be used in a neutral or a positive way: *Men.* 85b ("experts"), *Prot.* 312c ("man of wisdom"), and *Rep.* X 596d ("man of wisdom", but ironical). It is also used for gods in *Crat.* 403e and *Minos* 319c bis.

²⁵ Socrates unusually claims his knowledge, in 177d, cf. 201d.

663.

Notomi, N. (forthcoming), “Citations in Plato, *Symposium* 178b-c”, *SCO*.

Patzer, A. (1986), *Der Sophist Hippias als Philosophiehistoriker*. Alber, Freiburg / München.

Radermacher, L. (1951), *Artium Scriptores (Reste der voraristotelischen Rhetorik)*, Rudolf M. Rohrer, Wien.

Robin, L. (1929¹, 1958⁶), *Platon, Œuvres complètes*, t. 4, pt. 2, *Le Banquet*, texte établi et traduit par Léon Robin, Société d'édition “Les Belles Lettres”, Paris.

Rowe, C. J. (1998), *Plato: Symposium*, edited with an introduction, translation and commentary, Aris & Phillips, Warminster.

Schanz, M. (1882), *Platonis Opera quae feruntur omnia, No.5, Symposium, Phaedrus*, ad codices denuo collatos, Leipzig.

Snell, B. (1944), “Die Nachrichten über die Lehren des Thales und die Anfänge der griechischen Philosophie- und Literaturgeschichte”, *Philologus* 96, 170-182.

Vicaire, P. (1989), *Platon, Œuvres complètes*, t. 4, pt. 2, *Le Banquet*, texte établi et traduit par Paul Vicaire, “Les Belles Lettres”, Paris.

Wardy, R. (2012), “Father of the Discourse: Phaedrus’ Speech in the *Symposium*”, *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne* 30-2, 133-184.

Eros sans expédient : *Banquet*, 179b4-180b5

Annie Hourcade Sciou

A la ligne 178b7 du *Banquet*, Phèdre cite de manière tronquée le vers 120 de la *Théogonie* d'Hésiode, se contentant de nommer Eros mais omettant la définition, pourtant décisive, qu'Hésiode lui-même donne du dieu (vers 120-122) :

ὄς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι,
λυσιμελής, πάντων τε θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων
δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν.

« Celui qui est le plus beau parmi les dieux immortels, celui qui affaiblit les membres et dompte dans la poitrine des dieux et des hommes la raison et la prudente délibération ».

La lecture du discours de Phèdre révèle que les vers manquants confèrent au texte sa structure sous-jacente et que l'omission constitue avant tout un procédé de nature rhétorique. De fait, si Phèdre en appelle expressément à l'autorité d'Hésiode et de Parménide afin de montrer (1) qu'Eros puise sa supériorité dans son ancienneté (178a9-178c5), il consacre la plus grande partie de son discours à démontrer (2) qu'Eros est étranger à toute forme de laideur (178c5-179b3) et (3) qu'Eros confère à tous une puissance d'action qui, méprisant tout recours aux stratagèmes issus de l'intelligence, permet d'outrepasser les limites imposées par la raison (179b4-180b5). C'est en ce sens qu'Alceste est supérieure à Orphée qui est puni des dieux pour avoir usé d'un expédient pour entrer vivant dans l'Hadès (179d6) et qu'Achille est honoré pour avoir choisi de combattre Hector en dépit du savoir prévoyant conféré par sa mère (179e2).

Le but de cette communication est d'explorer plus particulièrement cette troisième caractéristique d'Eros et le traitement que Phèdre en fait, notamment par l'intermédiaire des figures exemplaires d'Alceste, d'Orphée et d'Achille. De manière plus précise, il s'agit d'interroger les conséquences, pour la conception de l'âme et des rapports à l'œuvre entre ses parties, de cette caractéristique problématique d'Eros – caractéristique d'Eros qui est d'ailleurs, au même titre que sa beauté, remise en cause, dans la suite du dialogue, par Diotime.

Les développements de Phèdre conduisent en effet à envisager l'existence d'un *thumos* foncièrement moral en dépit – ou même en raison – de son insoumission à toute forme d'influence du *nous* ou plus largement de la raison ; un *thumos* que la puissance d'Eros autorise à ne viser que le beau, à réaliser également sa vocation première, et à proprement parler essentielle, en présidant de manière exclusive à l'action indépendamment de tout assujettissement au calcul, à l'expédient et à la délibération issus de la raison.

I

Les vers 120-122 de la *Théogonie* d'Hésiode ne sont pas présents dans le discours de Phèdre. Seul apparaît, de fait, le nom d'Eros et non sa définition, en cela, il est assimilé d'emblée à un principe cosmologique, alors que les vers d'Hésiode conduisent à voir en lui, également, et peut-être même surtout, un principe psychologique. Cette définition d'Eros, pourtant, Phèdre va y faire référence, non pas en l'énonçant au moyen d'une formule, d'un *logos*, comme le fait Hésiode, mais en ayant recours, dans le cadre d'un discours de nature épictétique, à des figures exemplaires et traditionnelles qui sont représentatives de l'effet produit par Eros sur le cœur des hommes et des dieux.

Incontestablement, ce qui témoigne d'un tel effet, c'est la présence d'une vertu morale, de la vertu morale par excellence du cœur, à savoir, le courage. Vertu qui trouve essentiellement à s'exercer sur le champ de bataille. Excellence du cœur qui n'est pas le signe d'un bon naturel, mais d'une inspiration divine. Personne n'est mauvais au point qu'Eros, lui-même, l'inspirant, ne produise en lui la vertu, de sorte qu'il devienne semblable au meilleur par nature (179a7-8). C'est exactement le cas pour Alceste, femme pourtant – dont la principale excellence par nature par conséquent n'est pas le courage –, attestant qu'elle est inspirée par Eros lorsqu'elle consent à mourir à la place de son mari alors que les propres parents de celui-ci n'ont pas accepté de le faire. Eros peut donc inspirer un sentiment qui dépasse les liens familiaux traditionnels et la nature même de chacun. A proprement parler, ce que récompensent les dieux en Alceste, c'est le courage qu'elle a eu de sacrifier sa vie.

En revanche, même si l'action accomplie par Orphée est du même ordre : il descend dans

l'Hadès pour en ramener sa femme, il ne mérite pas la renommée, à la différence d'Alceste, car il a eu recours à un stratagème : « au lieu d'avoir sous l'impulsion d'Eros, le courage de mourir comme Alceste, il avait eu recours à un artifice pour pénétrer vivant chez Hadès (καὶ οὐ τολμᾶν ἔνεκα τοῦ ἔρωτος ἀποθνήσκειν ὥσπερ Ἄλκηστις, ἀλλὰ διαμηχανᾶσθαι ζῶν εἰσιέναι εἰς Ἅιδου) » (179d5-7). C'est précisément en soulignant cette différence entre Alceste et Orphée que Phèdre fait implicitement référence à la définition d'Eros pourtant non énoncée, à l'effet qu'il produit, non sur le corps – celui selon lequel il affaiblit les membres – mais sur le cœur, tel qu'il se manifeste dans la poitrine : « il dompte dans la poitrine des dieux et des hommes la raison et la prudente délibération ». De fait, si Alceste n'a en aucun cas réfléchi avant de consentir au sacrifice de sa vie pour son mari, si elle n'a pas délibéré afin de trouver un moyen efficace permettant d'atteindre ce qui pourtant était la fin de son action, à savoir la vie sauve pour son mari, sans pour autant sacrifier la sienne, Orphée, en revanche, a utilisé sa raison et sa sagesse pour rechercher un moyen afin de préserver sa propre vie. En cela, Orphée s'est davantage placé sous l'égide de la raison – visant l'utile – qu'il n'a écouté son cœur. C'est sans doute pour cette raison que son action n'était pas belle et c'est pour cette raison qu'il n'a pas reçu les honneurs des dieux, pour cela également que les moyens mis en œuvre, en dépit de leur caractère réfléchi et calculé, ne lui ont finalement pas permis de parvenir à sa fin ; alors que l'âme d'Alceste, sans que cela ne soit le résultat d'un stratagème de sa part, a eu accès à l'immortalité.

De même Achille « a appris » (179e2) de sa mère qu'il trouverait la mort s'il tuait Hector, pourtant la préscience de son avenir ne l'a pas détourné de venger Patrocle. Là encore, comme chez Alceste, la peur de la mort, l'intérêt pour l'individu de faire prévaloir sa propre vie sur toute autre, la possibilité d'utiliser son intelligence, sa capacité de délibération et de prévision, ne le détournent pas d'accomplir un acte de sacrifice qui suscite l'admiration des dieux.

C'est précisément le double critère de la beauté du geste et de son caractère désintéressé – action belle parce qu'elle est désintéressée – qui permet de hiérarchiser les actions d'Alceste, d'Orphée et d'Achille. Orphée voit son entreprise échouer et il reçoit la punition des dieux car il use d'un subterfuge pour ramener Eurydice à la vie. Le qualificatif de « lâche » (179d4) utilisé à propos d'Orphée est partiellement lié au fait qu'Orphée use de stratagème et par conséquent agit non en vue de la beauté, mais de l'utilité – pour lui comme pour celle qu'il aime. Cette intervention de l'intérêt suffit à rendre son action laide et par conséquent lâche, c'est parce que l'action n'est pas accomplie exclusivement sous l'emprise du cœur qu'elle témoigne d'une absence de virilité ou de courage, bien qu'Orphée soit un homme. Alceste agit en revanche en vue de la beauté exclusivement et de manière personnellement désintéressée, en cela, son action est courageuse, bien qu'elle soit une femme. Cette action cependant est moins belle que celle d'Achille car Achille est l'aimé et agit pour l'amant et l'amant est « chose plus divine que l'aimé » (180b3). Sans doute pourrait-on en outre souligner que l'action d'Achille est encore plus libre d'intérêt que celle d'Alceste dans la mesure où ce n'est même pas pour sauver la vie de son amant qu'il consent à mourir, puisque ce dernier a déjà été tué par Hector.

II

Si l'on tente à présent de réinscrire la perspective de Phèdre dans le cadre d'une conception de l'âme et des rapports entre ses parties, on note la valorisation par Phèdre de l'excellence qui ressortit au *thumos*, en l'occurrence le courage, mais un courage qui n'a semble-t-il rien à voir avec l'intelligence, un courage qui n'est précisément courage que parce qu'il ne fait pas intervenir la délibération. Si l'on essaie d'éclairer les exemples choisis par Phèdre à la lumière de la partie tronquée de la citation d'Hésiode, il semblerait que l'action accomplie par Alceste, ou encore par Achille, le soit exclusivement sous l'emprise du cœur et que ce soit cette exclusivité qui, à la différence précisément des développements de Platon sur la question au livre IV de la *République*, lui confère son caractère moral¹. Pour Platon, en effet, l'action ne sera courageuse que parce qu'elle sera inspirée par la raison, que parce que le cœur sera à l'écoute de la voix de la raison et agira selon son conseil (442b5-c3). C'est en ce sens qu'Ulysse ne fait pas preuve de lâcheté (*Odyssée*, XX, 17) quand, selon la citation homérique de Platon en *République*, IV, 441b5-c2, « s'étant frappé la poitrine, il réprimanda son cœur en lui tenant ce discours ». Dans le discours de Phèdre, comme dans la définition cachée d'Hésiode, l'amour nous fait agir au contraire en faisant taire, en domptant, le *nous* et la prévoyante, la sage délibération, ce qui conduit Phèdre à une définition du courage bien particulière, celle selon laquelle le courageux agira sous l'emprise du cœur, mais sans intervention aucune de la raison, faute de quoi il sera considéré comme lâche, comme c'est le cas pour Orphée².

¹ Sur la place implicite de la tripartition de l'âme dans le *Phèdre*, voir Alessandra Fussi, « The Desire for Recognition in Plato's *Symposium* », *Arethusa*, 41 (2), 2008, pp. 237-262, p. 238.

² La beauté de l'action est ce qui prévaut selon Phèdre. Kenneth Dorter, « The Significance of the Speeches in Plato's

L'un des intérêts du discours de Phèdre est d'exemplifier un fonctionnement exclusif du *thumos*³, indépendamment par conséquent de toute intervention de la raison, mais aussi de l'*epithumia*. L'amour n'est pas considéré par Phèdre selon la dimension qui fait de lui un principe de génération, un principe de vie ; bien au contraire, il est, tout au long de son discours, associé à la mort⁴. De fait, c'est exclusivement en tant qu'il confère à chacun cette capacité d'aller jusqu'au sacrifice de sa vie pour l'autre (179b), qu'Eros est envisagé.

L'autre aspect, lié, c'est l'association d'Eros et de la beauté. Eros en effet, pour Phèdre, ne peut qu'être beau et se pose ici la question de la finalité de l'action accomplie. Plus que dans les figures traditionnelles convoquées par Phèdre, c'est dans la mention, non moins traditionnelle, du bataillon sacré de Thèbes que l'association d'Eros et de la beauté est la plus présente. Phèdre en effet introduit la référence à la beauté et le sentiment qui lui correspond dans l'âme de celui qui agit de manière belle : l'honneur et, en regard, la référence à son contraire, la laideur et le sentiment qui lui est associé : la honte (178d). Alceste et Achille ont recherché l'honneur par la beauté de leur action et, de fait, ils ont l'un et l'autre provoqué l'admiration des dieux et ont obtenu une récompense proportionnelle à la beauté de leurs actions respectives. Orphée, en revanche, a agi en usant de ruse et de stratagème, il a donc agi de manière laide, provoquant le mépris des dieux et un châtement honteux proportionnellement à la laideur de son action : le fait d'être mis à mort par des femmes.

Je voudrais insister sur le fait qu'un tel schéma trouve un corrélat rhétorique et un corrélat politique⁵. Phèdre en effet s'inscrit de manière très classique dans une visée épideictique. Son discours en effet est beau, il use de l'éloge et du blâme, il vise en outre à en appeler aux sentiments que provoquent dans l'auditoire la beauté et la laideur afin d'exhorter à l'action belle et détourner de l'action laide en ayant recours essentiellement à des références traditionnelles, qu'elles soient collectives, comme l'armée de Thèbes, ou encore individuelles mais exemplaires, comme c'est le cas pour Alceste ou Achille. Comme cela apparaît aussi bien dans la référence à l'armée de Thèbes que dans l'exemple d'Alceste ou d'Achille, ce n'est pas, en dernier recours, la beauté de l'aimé que l'amant inspiré par l'amour recherche (et inversement), c'est en définitive la belle action, celle qui provoquera l'admiration des hommes et des dieux, celle qui confèrera l'honneur, et c'est en ce sens qu'il semble légitime de considérer, comme cela a souvent été fait, que cette pratique rhétorique est, de manière très classique, au service d'une visée politique et éducative. Le discours de Phèdre en effet s'inscrit dans la perspective d'une éducation à la vie civique des jeunes par les anciens⁶ ; et le comportement valorisé par Phèdre est conventionnellement considéré comme beau par les membres de la cité⁷.

III

La critique du discours de Phèdre, mise en œuvre par Diotime, a souvent été signalée⁸ et tout particulièrement le fait que Diotime souligne que ce n'est pas par amour pour Admète qu'Alceste a sacrifié sa vie et qu'Achille a suivi Patrocle dans la mort, mais par amour de la renommée et de l'immortalité (208d-e). De fait, Alceste comme Achille prêts pourtant à sacrifier leur vie, ont, selon la volonté des dieux et en vertu de la beauté de leur action désintéressée, accédé l'un et l'autre à l'immortalité. Diotime, en revanche, n'évoque guère la figure d'Orphée et, de fait, ce dernier, comme on le sait, en raison même de sa conduite honteuse, parce qu'il a usé d'un subterfuge, n'a accédé ni à la renommée, ni à l'immortalité. Pourtant, ce silence de Diotime à son propos est susceptible de signifier qu'à la différence d'Alceste et d'Achille, c'est bien par amour d'Eurydice qu'il a agi comme

Symposium », *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 2 (4), 1969, pp. 215-234, pp. 216-217, souligne que même si, selon Phèdre, il est beau de mourir plusieurs fois plutôt que de jeter les armes (*Banquet*, 179a5), il peut être meilleur, sous certaines conditions, de battre en retraite, comme cela fut le cas pour Socrate (220e8), plutôt que de tenir bon contre toute raison. Il en va bien entendu de la définition du courage et de la place accordée à la raison dans la conduite courageuse.

³ Sur Achille emblématique de la prévalence du *thumos* dans la *République* de Platon, voir Angela Hobbs, *Plato and the Hero. Courage, Manliness and the Impersonal Good*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 199-219.

⁴ Comme le fait remarquer Arlene W. Saxonhouse, « Classical Greek Political Thought II : I. Eros and the Female in Greek Political Thought. An Interpretation of Plato's *Symposium*, *Political Theory*, 12 (1), 1984, pp. 5-27, p. 14.

⁵ Voir notamment les développements de Steven Berg, *Eros and the Intoxications of Enlightenment. On Plato's Symposium*, Albany, State University of New York, 2010, p. 15 : « [...] Phaedrus understands the ground for his teaching regarding the divinity of Eros to be neither a cosmology nor a psychology, but a novel art of speaking that combines poetry and political rhetoric in equal measure ». Voir également Andrea Wilson Nightingale, « The Folly of Praise: Plato's Critique of Encomiastic Discourse in the *Lysis* and *Symposium* », *The Classical Quarterly*, NS, 43 (1), 1993, pp. 112-130, p. 117.

⁶ Sur ce point, Gary Alan Scott, William A. Welton, *Erotic Wisdom. Philosophy and Intermediacy in Plato's Symposium*, Albany, State University of New York, 2008, p. 48.

⁷ Gabriel Richardson Lear, « Permanent Beauty and Becoming Happy in Plato's *Symposium* », in J. H. Leshner, Debra Nails, Frisbee C. C. Sheffield (ed.), *Plato's Symposium. Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, Cambridge (Mass.)-London, Harvard University Press, 2006, pp. 96-123, p. 100.

⁸ Voir notamment, Kenneth Dorter, « The Significance of the Speeches in Plato's *Symposium* », *op. cit.*, p. 231.

il l'a fait.

Je voudrais suggérer que la critique que Diotime met en œuvre de la conception de l'amour par Phèdre est également présente dans la définition même qu'elle donne d'Eros, prenant l'exact contrepied de la définition d'Eros donnée dans les vers manquants d'Hésiode. Un tel état de fait est plus particulièrement prégnant dans le passage suivant dans lequel Diotime dresse le portrait d'Eros. Comme sa mère il est pauvre, rude et malpropre ; « [...] à l'exemple de son père en revanche, il agit par préméditation (ἐπίβουλός) en vue de ce qui est beau et de ce qui est bon, il est viril (ἀνδρείος), résolu (ἴτης) et ardent (σύντονος), c'est un chasseur redoutable (θηρευτὴς δεινός) ; il ne cesse de tramer des ruses (μηχανάς), il est passionné de savoir (φρονήσεως ἐπιθυμητὴς) et fertile en expédients (πόριμος), il passe tout son temps à philosopher, c'est un sorcier redoutable (δεινὸς γόης), un magicien (φαρμακεὺς) et un sophiste (σοφιστής) » (203d4-8).

De manière assez inattendue, Diotime dresse ici le portrait d'un Eros qui serait mi-Achille, mi-Orphée. D'Achille, sans aucun doute, il aurait le courage et l'ardeur, le caractère résolu également ; comment en serait-il autrement puisque l'amour produit son effet avant tout sur le cœur des hommes et des dieux ? Mais d'Orphée, l'Eros de Diotime posséderait aussi plusieurs traits. Dans le registre irrationnel, Eros aurait, comme Orphée, un don pour la magie, la capacité de captiver et de charmer ; l'usage par Diotime de la référence au σοφιστής ressortit d'une orientation similaire : Eros est capable de charmer au même titre que le sophiste charme par son discours et Orphée par sa musique ; l'Eros de Diotime est un chasseur comme le sophiste mais aussi comme Orphée qui est capable de captiver, par son art, aussi bien les hommes que les animaux les plus sauvages. Mais comme Orphée également, l'Eros de Diotime présenterait la caractéristique d'user avec talent de sa raison pour arriver à ses fins. De fait, à son propos, elle use du terme de ruse (μηχανή), terme que précisément Phèdre utilise lui aussi par l'usage du verbe : διαμηχανᾶσθαι (179d6), mais contrairement à Diotime à des fins critiques, précisément pour suggérer que l'amour est absent du comportement d'Orphée. Une remarque similaire peut être faite concernant l'usage, par Diotime, de l'adjectif πόριμος. Plus encore, semble-t-il, c'est l'usage, par Diotime, de l'adjectif ἐπίβουλός appliqué à Eros qui est particulièrement intéressant. On en trouve peut-être un écho dans les vers tronqués d'Hésiode, tout particulièrement dans l'expression ἐπίφρονα βουλήν. Dans les deux cas, en effet, c'est moins l'idée de stratagème ou d'expédient qui est présente qu'un recours à l'anticipation et à la prudente délibération. L'Eros d'Hésiode et de Phèdre n'a rien à voir avec la ruse et avec la raison ; l'Eros de Diotime est sophiste, parce qu'il charme mais aussi parce qu'il use d'un savoir de type pratique ; il est aussi philosophe car il est passionné de sagesse φρονήσεως ἐπιθυμητὴς.

Sans aucun doute, même si elle n'est pas abordée directement, la question de la constitution de l'âme et des rapports entre ses parties est présente dans le *Banquet*, avec un intérêt tout particulier accordé au *thumos*. L'approche de Phèdre est intéressante car elle permet d'envisager la possibilité, pour l'âme, d'être exclusivement dominée par son *thumos*, sans que pour autant cette domination ne conduise à sortir des cadres de la cité. Bien au contraire, Phèdre prend appui sur la définition de l'amour qui, en définitive, le met au service des valeurs collectives et fait de lui un auxiliaire indispensable des pratiques éducatives de la cité⁹ car « sans cela, ni cité ni particulier ne peuvent réaliser de grandes et belles choses (178d2-4). L'amour dans ce cas, il est vrai – en ce sens Diotime a sans aucun doute raison –, se confond avec la passion de l'honneur et de la renommée.

⁹ On pourra, toutes proportions gardées, se référer à Thucydide, II, 43.1. Voir sur la question Sara Monoson, « Citizen as Erastes: Erotic Imagery and the Idea of Reciprocity in the Periclean Funeral Oration », *Political Theory*, 22 (2), 1994, pp. 253-276.

Eros protrepōn: philosophy and seduction in the Symposium

Olga Alieva

The scope of this paper is to provide some literary background for Pausanias' speech in the *Symposium* and, against this background, to reconsider the notion of Ἔρως προτρέπων in the dialogue. I assume that one of Plato's purposes in this dialogue was to question the protreptic function of Eros as understood in Antisthenes.¹

I'll try to show, firstly, that Pausanias' speech echoes Antisthenes' views that only the wise man is worthy of love. A natural inference from this conviction would be that the sage has a sort of "monopoly"² on seduction: the idea most explicitly set forth by Pausanias.

Secondly, I'll turn to the *Phaedrus* where we also find the notion of Ἔρως προτρέπων. Certain parallels with "Lysias' speech" enable to consider Pausanias' praise of Eros as a sort of "sophistic" palinode.

But first of all, a brief background should be given concerning λόγοι ἐρωτικοί and their relation to protreptic.

Ἔρως σοφιστής

In 1944 F. Lasserre suggested that prosaic λόγοι ἐρωτικοί, as we find them in the *Symposium* and in the *Phaedrus*, originated among the sophists,³ and he even assumes that "Lysias' speech" in the *Phaedrus* is indeed an unknown piece written by the famous orator.⁴

In his seminal *Protreptik und Paränese bei Platon* Gaiser adopts Lasserre's thesis on sophistic λόγοι ἐρωτικοί and claims that "Lysias' speech" has as a "precondition" (*Voraussetzung*) the existence the genre.⁵ But as a matter of fact, we don't have to go that far: the only "precondition" here is the common opinion μὴ ἐραστῶν χαρίζεσθαι αἰσχρόν which can be used as a departure point for λόγος παράδοξος.

We do actually find this opinion in the anonymous *Dissoi Logoi*.⁶ One the chapter of this writing is entitled "Concerning seemly and disgraceful"⁷ (*Περὶ καλοῦ καὶ αἰσχροῦ*) and contains the following statement: αὐτίκα γὰρ παιδὶ ὠραῖοι ἐραστῶν μὲν [χρηστῶν] χαρίζεσθαι καλόν, μὴ ἐραστῶν δὲ [καλῶν] αἰσχρόν. Thereafter, a set of "comparative" examples follows, many of them concerning sexual compartment.⁸ The conclusion of the section, designed as a merely rhetorical exercise, is: "disgraceful and seemly are really the same thing" (2. 21), or πάντα καιρῶν μὲν καλά ἐντι, ἐν ἀκαιρίαι δ' αἰσχροά.⁹ In other words, under certain circumstances, μὴ ἐραστῶν χαρίζεσθαι may also be καλόν. *It is this "inversed" thesis that is defended by Lysisas, but we find here a feature which is not*

¹ In this paper, I can't linger on parallels with Aeschines in the *Symposium*, which are also very important. On his notion of eros see: Dittmar, H., *Aischines von Sphettos: Studien zur Literaturgeschichte der Sokratiker*, Berlin, 1912; Gaiser, K., *Protreptik und Paränese bei Platon: Untersuchungen zur Form des Platonischen Dialogs*, Stuttgart 1959; Ehlers, B., *Eine vorplatonische Deutung des sokratischen Eros: der Dialog Aspasia des Sokratikers Aischines*, München, 1966; Kahn, Ch., "Aeschines on Socratic Eros", in P. A. Vander Waerdt (ed.), *The Socratic Movement*, Ithaca NY, 1994, 87-106; Idem, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form*, Cambridge / New York, 1996.

² I owe this expression to M. Narcy whose book *Le Philosophe et son double : un commentaire de l'Euthydème de Platon* (Paris, 1984) helped to formulate many of the ideas expressed in this paper.

³ Lasserre, F., "Ἐρωτικοὶ λόγοι", *Museum Helveticum*, 1 (1944), 169-178. Lasserre singles out two forms of λόγοι ἐρωτικοί: a more 'primitive', that is "un propos adressé à un être aimé", and a more advanced one, that is an encomium of Eros. "Primitive" λόγοι ἐρωτικοί, according to Lasserre, date back to the elder sophists.

⁴ This guess is not supported by any evidence. For reasons set out below, I am inclined to agree with prof. Shichalin's assumption that Lysias' speech reproduces in a playful manner some features of Antisthenes' teaching on eros. Unfortunately, the work I'm referring to is not translated into English. See: Shichalin, Y. (ed.), Egunov, A. (trans.), *Plato, Fedr*, Moskva, 1989 (in Russian).

⁵ Gaiser, op. cit., 66.

⁶ The unknown author of this writing adopted Protagoras' methods; see: Guthrie, W.K.C., *The Sophists*, London; New York, 1971, 316.

⁷ Hereinafter the translation is that of Sprague. See: Sprague, R. K., *The older Sophists : a complete translation by several hands of the fragments in Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, edited by Diels-Kranz. With a new edition of Antiphon and Euthydemus, Columbia, SC, 1972, 279 ff.

⁸ Diss. log. 2. 16: "It strikes the Lydians as seemly that young girls should first earn money by prostituting themselves and then get married, but no one among the Greeks would be willing to marry a girl who did that"; Ibid. 2. 12: "To the Macedonians it appears to be seemly for young girls, before they are married, to fall in love and to have intercourse with a man, but when a girl is married it is a disgrace", etc.

⁹ The author cites a fragment of an unknown tragedy: "And if you investigate in this way, you will see another law for mortals: nothing is always seemly or always disgraceful, but the right occasion takes the same things and makes them disgraceful and then alters them and makes them seemly" (2. 19).

characteristic of the sophistic writings. *Lysias* mentions moral perfection among the reasons to yield to the non-lover.¹⁰

If we give a closer look to the extant specimens of sophistic oratory, we'll note that though Eros and beauty (both physical and literary) do occupy an exceptional place here,¹¹ nothing is said concerning their "moral" influence whereas both in the *Symposium* and in the *Phaedrus* it is this aspect that comes to the fore. In Isocrates we even find the motif of voluntary slavery for the sake of beauty,¹² but for him, this slavery requires no justification like moral perfection. Even for Gorgias it would be far-fetched to claim that Helen has become "better" due to her passion for Paris: as playful as an argument might be, it should nonetheless remain within the domain of *εἰκός*.

But the problem is deeper than that: technical *παιδεία* of the sophists is absolutely unconcerned with erotic disposition of the person being converted. His *χάρις* is of no interest to the teacher.¹³ On the contrary, in the earliest testimonies on Socrates his *paideia* is so to say sexually connoted. Thus, in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, Socrates is presented on the one hand as the cheerleader of the sophistic movement,¹⁴ and on the other hand as a sexually licentious person.¹⁵ Far from being historically reliable, this image testifies to the effect that Socratic education was understood "in terms of eros" as late as in 423 BC.¹⁶

Polycrates might have developed some of the motifs present in Aristophanes. After Polycrates' accusation,¹⁷ there were attempts to reconsider the Socratic eros ("corruption") in a more positive way. It is at this point when eros and moral protreptic become associated: it would be pointless to look for something similar in non-Socratic literature. That is why I am inclined to think that Pausanias' speech is not a specimen of some generalized "sophistic" reasoning,¹⁸ but a response to one particular sophist,¹⁹ Antisthenes.

¹⁰ Phaedr. 233a4–5: "And then, too, it will be better for your character (*βελτίονί σοι προσήκει γενέσθαι*) to yield to me than to a lover" (hereinafter Fowler's transl.). Cfr. note 545.

¹¹ See, e.g., Gorg. Helen. 11. 110–111: "If, (being) a god, (love has) the divine power of the gods, how could a lesser being reject and refuse it?" (transl. by G. Kennedy in Sprague, op. cit., 30 ff). According to Gorgias, the power of eros is that of "impression": "the sight engraves upon the mind images of things which have been seen" (*εἰκόνας τῶν ὁραμένων πραγμάτων ἢ ὄψις ἐνέγραψεν ἐν τῷ φρονήματι*). Eros is therefore compulsory (cfr. 11. 125: *ἔρωτος ἀνάγκαις*), just like *λόγος* is, — one can hardly resist it; still, nothing is said concerning their "moral" influence. Isocrates also dealt extensively with the exceptional power (54.5: *δύναμιν*; 55. 6: *ρόμην*) of beauty in his *Helen*, where he claims that "beauty is of all things the most venerated, the most precious, and the most divine."

¹² Isocr. Helen. 57: "we submit more willingly to be the slaves of such than to rule all others, and we are more grateful to them when they impose many tasks upon us than to those who demand nothing at all" (*ἥδιον δουλεύομεν τοῖς τοιούτοις ἢ τῶν ἄλλων ἄρχομεν...*) Transl. by G. Norlin.

¹³ Gaiser tries to overcome this difficulty by pointing to Ps.-Demosthenes' *Erotikos*: "Der *ἔραστής* empfiehlt seinem Liebling eine sophistiche Ausbildung, der er selbst nicht zu leisten vermag" (op. cit., 69). "Eine solche äußerliche Verquickung der sophistiche-paideutischen und der erotisch erotisch-paideutischen Werbung in der Form des protreptischen Logos *Erotikos* ist nun aber auch für die Zeit der Sophisten vor dem Aufkommen der sokratischen Literatur zu vermuten", he argues. However, this is not convincing for the writing in question is a later one (presumably, 350th BC) and is most likely influenced by the Socratic literature. On Ps.-Demosthenes, see: Blass, F., *Die Attische Beredsamkeit III. 1: Demosthenes*, Leipzig, 1893, 406 ff.; Wendland, P., *Anaximenes von Lampsakos: Studien zur ältesten Geschichte der Rhetorik*, Berlin, 1905, 71 ff.

¹⁴ See: Shichalin, Y., "Was the image of Socrates–Pythagorean Plato's invention?", in the *Socrates and the Socratic Dialogue*, ed. Ch. Moore et al. (in print). Shichalin observes that Aristophanes' Socrates worships the Clouds as the gods of the sophists' (Nub. 331: *Σω. οὐ γὰρ μὰ Δί' οἶσθ' ὅτι πλείστους αὐταὶ βόσκουσι σοφιστάς*), whereas the Clouds consider Socrates to be inferior only to Prodicus (Nub. 360-361: *οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἄλλω γ' ὑπακούσαιμεν τῶν νῦν μετεωροσοφιστῶν // πλὴν ἢ Προδίκω*), the graduate of Socrates' school is supposed to become a sophist (Nub. 1111: *ἀμέλει, κομει τοῦτον σοφιστὴν δεξιόν*). Note that Aristophanes' Socrates is engaged in typically sophistic activity: linguistic contrivances, making the just logos unjust etc.

¹⁵ The Just Logos claims that Socrates' *παιδεία* will fill the young boy "with the lewdness of Antimachus" (1022: *καταπυγούσης*; cfr. 909: *καταπύγων εἰ κἀναίσχυντος*) and eventually will make him *εὐρύπρωκτος* (1085). Dover maintains that these terms were associated with passive homosexuality. See: Dover, K.J., *Greek Homosexuality*, Cambridge, Mass., 1989, 141.

¹⁶ I don't think that what we find in Aristophanes is more than an obscenity, a rude joke which is not supposed to be taken literally (neither is contemporary abusive language!). Nevertheless, it doesn't enable to maintain that "no one before Aeschines proposed to understand the protreptic and educational influence of Socrates in terms of eros" (Kahn, Ch., "Aeschines on Socratic Eros", 93). A useful survey of Aristophanes' attitude to eros (as connected with sophistry) may be found in: Rosen, S., *Plato's Symposium*, New Haven, 1968, 120 ff.

¹⁷ In Polycrates, Socrates' corrupting influence was illustrated with the example of Alcibiades. Isocrates witnesses in his *Busiris* that this was a novelty, for before Polycrates no one heard of Alcibiades as a student of Socrates. Isocr. Bus. 5.9–13. Livingstone, N., *A Commentary on Isocrates' Busiris*, Leiden; Boston, 2001, 38.

¹⁸ Rosen notes that Pausanias' "sexual inversion" is "assisted by the teaching of the Sophists" (op.cit., 86). It is agreed that Pausanias was a pupil of Prodicus; see: Nails, D., *The People of Plato: a Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics*, Indianapolis, 2002, 222; cfr. Hunter, R., *Plato's Symposium*, Oxford, 2004, 43.

¹⁹ We know that Antisthenes endorsed some key sophistic attitudes, for instance, *τὴν ἀρετὴν διδακτὴν εἶναι* (SSR V A 99 = DL VI 105, see note 34 below), and studied with Gorgias. He is one of the "sophists" Isocrates addresses in his *In sophistas*.

Monopoly on seduction

An accurate reading of Pausanias' speech reveals an enormous significance attributed to the *χαρίζεσθαι* by the speaker.²⁰ He is particularly and even annoyingly insistent that a youth should yield to a lover in order to gain moral excellence. The verb *χαρίζεσθαι* in different forms is used 11 times by Pausanias.²¹

Text 1	182a2-3	...τινάς τολμᾶν λέγειν ὡς αἰσχρὸν χαρίζεσθαι ἐρασταίς .
Text 2	182b1-3	ἐν Ἡλίδι μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἐν Βοιωτοῖς, καὶ οὐ μὴ σοφοὶ λέγειν, ἀπλῶς νενομοθέτηται καλὸν τὸ χαρίζεσθαι ἐρασταίς ... τῆς δὲ Ἰωνίας καὶ ἄλλοθι πολλαχθὺ αἰσχρὸν νενομίσται...
Text 3	182c5-d1	ὁ γὰρ Ἀριστογείτονος ἔρωσ καὶ ἡ Ἀρμοδίου φιλία βέβαιος γενομένη κατέλυσε αὐτῶν τὴν ἀρχήν. οὕτως οὐ μὲν αἰσχρὸν ἐτέθη χαρίζεσθαι ἐρασταίς ...
Text 4	183d6-8	αἰσχροῦ μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ πονηρῶ τε καὶ πονηρῶς χαρίζεσθαι , καλῶς δὲ χρηστῶ τε καὶ καλῶς.
Text 5	184b5-66	μία δὲ λείπεται τῷ ἡμετέρῳ νόμῳ ὁδός, εἰ μέλλει καλῶς χαριεῖσθαι ἐραστῇ παιδικά .
Text 6	184c7-d3	δεῖ δὴ τῷ νόμῳ τούτῳ συμβαλεῖν εἰς ταῦτόν, τόν τε περὶ τὴν παιδευασίαν καὶ τὸν περὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν, εἰ μέλλει συμβῆναι καλὸν γενέσθαι τὸ ἐραστῇ παιδικὰ χαρίσασθαι . ὅταν γὰρ εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ ἔλθωσιν ἐραστής τε καὶ παιδικά, νόμον ἔχων ἐκάτερος, ὁ μὲν χαρισαμένοις παιδικαῖς ὑπηρετῶν ὅτι οὖν δικαίως ἂν ὑπηρετεῖν, ὁ δὲ δικαίως αὐ ὅτι οὖν ἂν ὑπουργῶν <ὑπουργεῖν>, ...τότε δὴ ...συμπίπτει τὸ καλὸν εἶναι παιδικὰ ἐραστῇ χαρίσασθαι , ἄλλοθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ.
Text 7	184e6-a5	εἰ γὰρ τις ἐραστῇ ὡς πλουσίῳ πλούτου ἕνεκα χαρισάμενος ἐξαπατηθεῖ καὶ μὴ λάβοι χρήματα, ἀναφανέντος τοῦ ἐραστοῦ πένητος, οὐδὲν ἦττον αἰσχρὸν ·δοκεῖ γὰρ ὁ τοιοῦτος τό γε αὐτοῦ ἐπιδειξάσθαι, ὅτι ἕνεκα χρημάτων ὅτι οὖν ἂν ὁτωοῦν ὑπηρετοῖ , τοῦτο δὲ οὐ καλόν .
Text 8	185a5-b5	κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ λόγον κἂν εἴ τις ὡς ἀγαθῷ χαρισάμενος καὶ αὐτὸς ὡς ἀμείνων ἐσόμενος διὰ τὴν φιλίαν ἐραστοῦ ἐξαπατηθεῖ, ἀναφανέντος ἐκείνου κακοῦ καὶ οὐ κεκτημένου ἀρετήν, ὅμως καλῆ ἢ ἀπάτη· δοκεῖ γὰρ αὐ καὶ οὗτος τὸ καθ' αὐτὸν δεδηλωκέναι, ὅτι ἀρετῆς γ' ἕνεκα καὶ τοῦ βελτίων γενέσθαι πᾶν ἂν παντὶ προθυμηθεῖ, τοῦτο δὲ αὐ πάντων κάλιστον · οὕτω πᾶν πάντως γε καλὸν ἀρετῆς γ' ἕνεκα χαρίζεσθαι .

The first thing that attracts a reader's attention is that in all cited passages *χαρίζεσθαι* is qualified by adverbs *καλῶς* or *αἰσχροῦς*; alternatively, a neutral adjective *καλὸν* (*αἰσχρὸν*) is used. One might get the impression that Pausanias' aim is to distinguish between two "modes" of Eros, and that this distinction proceeds from a clear idea of what the noble (*καλὸν*) and the base (*αἰσχρὸν*) is. However, Pausanias remarks that "every action... as acted by itself (*αὐτῇ ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς πραττομένη*) it is neither noble nor base (*οὔτε καλῆ οὔτε αἰσχροῦ*)²²: "when the doing of it is noble and right, the thing itself becomes noble; when wrong, it becomes base. So also it is with loving, and Eros is not in every case noble or worthy of celebration, but only when he impels us to love in a noble manner (*ὁ Ἔρως οὐ πᾶς ἐστὶ καλὸς οὐδὲ ἄξιος ἐγκωμιάζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ ὁ καλῶς προτρέπων ἐράν*)" (180e5-a6; hereinafter Fowler's transl.).

At first glance, this text is highly reminiscent of the *Dissoi logoi*. In both cases, the focus is on noble and base actions; in both cases a "comparative cultural study"²³ is carried out in order to blur the

See: Usacheva, A., "Socratics" as the addressees of Isocrates' epideictic speeches (Against the sophists, Encomium to Helen, Busiris)", in the *Socratica III* volume (in print).

²⁰ Pausanias' speech has been often regarded as a specimen of "moral relativism" and poorly disguised "predilections" of the speaker. See: Cooksey, Th. L., *Plato's Symposium: A Reader's Guide*. London; New York: 2010, 50; cfr.: Scott, G.A.; Welton W.A., *Erotic wisdom: philosophy and intermediacy in Plato's Symposium*, 2008, 56.

²¹ And once more by Eryximachus while commenting on the previous speech; we also find here several occurrences of *δουλεύειν* (183a7; 184b7-8; 184c2), *ἀλῶναι* (184a6; 184a8), *ὑπηρετεῖν* and *ὑπουργεῖν* (184d7).

²² It has been observed by scholars that Pausanias' views here are close to those of Stoics, see: Inwood, B., "Why do fools fall in love?", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 41, S68 (1997), 55-69. Cfr.: Laurand, V., "L'Éros pédagogique chez Platon et les stoiciens", in Bonazzi, M., Helmig C., *Platonic Stoicism, Stoic Platonism the dialogue between Platonism and Stoicism in antiquity*, Leuven, 2007, 63-86.

²³ Cfr. text 2 above: "in Elis and Boeotia and where there is no skill in speech they have simply an ordinance that it is seemly

difference between the two; finally, both texts deal with *χαρίζεσθαι ἐρασταῖς* motif and are fallaciously reasoned.²⁴ But Pausanias' speech has one important novelty as compared to the *Dissoi logoi*, namely the protreptic element.

Pausanias is not interested in defending the paradoxical thesis that *μὴ ἐραστῶν χαρίζεσθαι καλόν*; he aims at more: it is only noble to gratify a lover for the sake of wisdom and moral perfection (see above texts 6, 8)²⁵. The pursuit of virtue justifies, in his opinion, *δουλεία ἐκούσιος* (184c2; cfr. *ἐθελοδοουλεία* 184c2-7). In full compliance with this practice, Alcibiades wants to gratify (218d4: *χαριζόμενος*) Socrates in order to become better (218d2: *βέλτιστον ... γενέσθαι*).

In the *Euthydemus*,²⁶ where Socrates invents his own protreptic, the interlocutors are driven to the conclusion that there's no disgrace in being a slave for the sake of wisdom (282b²⁷). Nancy justly observes that in both cases the use of the verb *προτρέπω* recurs in a context where the case in point is the exceptional value of wisdom. Philosophical protreptic therefore involves what Nancy labels as "monopoly on seduction". I'll try to demonstrate that such understanding stems from Antisthenes, to whom Plato playfully alludes in the *Symposium*.

Antisthenes: ἀξίεραστος ὁ σοφός

The extant fragments of Antisthenes abound in scornful remarks concerning "worldly" love and pleasure. "I would rather go mad than enjoy pleasure";²⁸ "If I could catch Aphrodite I would shoot her with my bow, because she has corrupted so many excellent and beautiful women among us" (SSR V A 122–123)²⁹ and so on.

On the other hand, as Kahn puts it, Antisthenes "has a much more positive conception of philosophical eros in the sense of intimate friendship among intellectuals in pursuit of virtue."³⁰ Thus, he says: "the wise man will be in love for he is the only one who knows whom one should love" (SSR V A 58 = DL VI 11³¹) and "it is the sage who is worthy of love and friend to one like himself" (SSR V A 99 = DL VI 105³²).

It is difficult to account for these inconsistencies unless we assume that Antisthenes distinguished between the two Eroses: a vulgar one and a philosophical one, just like Pausanias does. This assumption is indirectly corroborated by a passage from Xenophon's *Symposium* (VIII. 10) where Socrates draws a distinction between the vulgar and the heavenly Aphrodite.³³

Furthermore, it is likely that in Antisthenes eros was endowed with educational function. The above cited fragment from Diogenes Laertius (see note 32: *ἀξίεραστος ὁ σοφός*) is taken from the writing *Heracles* where Antisthenes showed *τὴν ἀρετὴν διδακτὴν εἶναι*. There, Heracles was depicted as one

to gratify lovers"; "in Ionia and many other regions where they live under foreign sway, it is counted a disgrace". The latter practice is then associated with the despotic rule peculiar to the barbarians (text 3).

²⁴ Pausanias' argument is circular: if there is nothing noble or base "by itself", any "manner" under certain circumstances can be regarded as either noble or ignoble. Besides, there is a fallacious slip: what is "by itself" neither noble nor base turns out to be indispensable for attaining moral virtue.

²⁵ See note 54. However, with "wisdom" he means no more than persuasiveness in speech. See: Rosen, op. cit., 89.

²⁶ Michelini notes certain parallelism between the protreptic in the *Euthydemus* and Pausanias' speech; see: Michelini, A., "Socrates Plays the Buffoon: Cautionary Protreptic in *Euthydemus*", *American Journal of Philology* 121 (2000), 509-35. Rappe argues that the *Euthydemus* "exhibits a number of familiar Cynic trademarks, or rather motifs that strikingly anticipate Cynicism, (apparently) associated with Socrates' follower Antisthenes"; see: Rappe, S., "Father of the dogs? Tracking the Cynics in Plato's *Euthydemus*", *Classical Philology*, 95, 3 (2000), 282-303. On Antisthenes' *Protreptic* see our paper in the *Socratica III* volume "Protreptic in the Socratics: In Search of a Genre" (in print).

²⁷ Nancy, op.cit., 114. On slavery for the sake of virtue as a protreptic motif see: Slings, S.R., *Plato, Clitophon*, Cambridge (UK), 1999, 117-118.

²⁸ Translation is cited from: Kahn, Ch., "Plato as a Socratic", in *Hommage à Henri Joly, Recherches sur la Philosophie et le Langage* 12, Grenoble, 1990, 287-301, here 289.

²⁹ See especially Theodoret. Graec. Aff. Cur. III. 53 (SSR V A 123): *αὐτίκα τοῖνον Ἀντισθένης ὁ Σωκράτους ἐταῖρος καὶ Διογένης διδάσκαλος, τὴν σωφροσύνην περὶ πλείστου ποιούμενος καὶ τὴν ἡδονὴν μισαττόμενος, τοιάδε περὶ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης λέγεται φάναι «ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην κἄν κατατοξεύσαιμι, εἰ λάβοιμι, ὅτι πολλὰς ἡμῶν καλὰς κάγαθὰς γυναῖκας διέφθειρεν». τὸν δὲ γε ἔρωτα κακίαν ἐκάλει τῆς φύσεως, ἧς ἥττους ὄντες οἱ κακοδαίμονες θεὸν τὴν νόσον καλοῦσιν. ταύτη τοι μανῆναι μᾶλλον ἢ ἡσθῆναι ἡρεῖτο.*

³⁰ Kahn, "Plato as a Socratic", 289.

³¹ DL VI 11: *(τὸν σοφὸν) γαμήσειν τε τεκνοποιίας χάριν, ταῖς εὐφροεστάταις συνιόντα γυναιξί. καὶ ἐραστήσεσθαι δὲ· μόνον γὰρ εἰδέναι τὸν σοφὸν τίνων χρὴ ἔραν.*

³² DL VI 105: *Ἀρέσκει δ' αὐτοῖς καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν διδακτὴν εἶναι, καθὰ φησιν Ἀντισθένης ἐν τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ, καὶ ἀναπόβλητον ὑπάρχειν· ἀξίεραστόν τε τὸν σοφὸν καὶ ἀναμάρτητον καὶ φίλον τῷ ὁμοίῳ, τύχη τε μηδὲν ἐπιτρέπειν.*

³³ Kahn remarks that though this passage "has certainly been influenced by Pausanias' speech in Plato's *Symposium*", "Xenophon's distinction between carnal and noble eros is much more simplistic than anything in Plato" and "it probably reflects Antisthenes' distinction between the bad eros based on pleasure" and "the morally sound eros based upon virtue and wisdom in the beloved." See: Kahn, "Plato as a Socratic", 290.

of Chiron's students (SSR V A 92: ἤκουεν αὐτοῦ), along with Achilles. A passage from Ps.-Eratosthenes says that Antisthenes' Heracles came to the centaur Chiron δι' ἔρωτα³⁴ (SSR V A 92 = Ps.-Erat. Catast. 40).

Different interpretations of this eros have been suggested. Thus, Rankin compares this passage with a fragment from Themistius' oration *On virtue*³⁵ (SSR V A 96) and assumes that Heracles was urged "to progress towards full human development". "A crude and brutalized Heracles", Rankin believes, was forced to direct his "animal energy" towards philosophy.³⁶ "The animal is converted to virtue by the influence of Chiron — another animal itself conspicuously virtuous. Fully aware that we are speculating, may we ask whether the *sophos* in C fg 22 (= SSR V A 99 — O.A.) who is *axioerastos*, is Chiron?"

The same suggestion was earlier made by Dümmler in connection with another fragment: λέγει γοῶν καὶ ὁ Ἀντισθένης Ἡρακλῆς περὶ τινος νεανίσκου παρὰ τῷ Χείρωνι τρεφομένου· «μέγας γάρ, φησι, καὶ καλὸς καὶ ὠραῖος, οὐκ ἂν αὐτοῦ ἠράσθη δειλὸς ἐραστής» (SSR V A 93 = Proclus in Alcib. 98. 14). "Damit wird der ἀνδρείος ἐραστής, als welchen man sich Cheiron oder Herakles selbst denken kann, doch nicht gemißbilligt," he remarks³⁷. A passage cited by Dümmler from Dio³⁸ suggests that Achilles might have also been depicted as a Chiron's ἐρόμενος. Though the verb χαρίζεσθαι does not occur in our fragments, we know that Antisthenes praised Achilles for undergoing service to Chiron for the sake of education (SSR V A 95³⁹).

Diogenes notes certain parallelism between the *Kyros* and the *Heracles* of Antisthenes: both dialogues were dedicated to the same problem and dealt with the topic ὁ πόνος ἀγαθόν (SSR V A 97 = DL VI 2). We know that Alcibiades' *παρανομία* was discussed in the *Kyros* and that the whole piece was probably a reported Socratic dialogue written, Dittmar believes,⁴⁰ as a response to Polycrates. Dümmler claims that "Cheiron war bei Antisthenes vielmehr echter Tugendlehrer und sein Verhältniß zu Achill analog dem des Sokrates zu Alkibiades."⁴¹ Rankin agrees saying that Antisthenes probably saw in Alcibiades "a Heracles figure" who "met his Chiron too late for good effect"⁴². Given that, it is not that strange to find allusions to the *Heracles* in the *Symposium*, where Plato also hints at other authors who somehow touched upon the Socratic eros.⁴³

Pausanias is critically disposed towards flatterers, but he stresses that it is "counted no flattery (*κολακεία*) or scandal" for the lovers "to be willingly and utterly enslaved to their favorites" (184c1-3); whatever is done by the lover to achieve his aim, he is not reproached "with adulation" (183b1: *κολακείας*). This might also be a playful allusion to Antisthenes. The latter compared flatterers to hetairas⁴⁴; this topic was touched upon also in the *Heracles*⁴⁵. In a fragment preserved by Plutarchus we read that the youth should not yield (*μηδενὶ χάριν ἔχειν*) to the adulators. For Antisthenes, the adulators harm ἐρομένοις insofar as they keep them from νοῦς and φρόνησις; similarly, the "vulgar"

³⁴ Rankin, H.D., *Antisthenes Sokraticos*, Amsterdam, 1986, 104-105, notes: "Mullach, in his edition, fg6 (C fg 24) adds the conjecture *paideias* after *eros* so that the phrase explicitly says 'desire of education', instead of simply 'desire'." Rankin is inclined to think "that *eros* is used with an ironical layer of intention to refer to its sexual meaning in addition to its "Socratic" and metaphorical sense of spiritual and intellectual frenzy for knowledge".

³⁵ Preserved only in Syriac; Giannantoni cites the Latin translation of R. Mach: "...Perfectum enim vir non eris, priusque ea, quae hominibus sublimiora sunt, didiceris. Si ista discas, tunc humana quoque discas; sin autem humana tantum didiceris, tu tamquam animal ferum errabis", etc. For English translation and interpretation of the passage see: Luz, M., "Antisthenes' Prometheus Myth", in *Jacob Bernays: un philologue juif*, ed. by John Glucker, André Laks et al., Villeneuve d'Ascq, 1996, 89-104; Moles, J., "The Thirteenth Oration of Dio Chrysostom: Complexity and Simplicity, Rhetoric and Moralism, Literature and Life", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 125 (2005), 112-38. The latter article contains also important considerations concerning the notion of "double *paideia*" probably coming from Antisthenes' *Heracles*. One may cautiously assume that two types of *paideia* correlated with the two types of love.

³⁶ Rankin, op.cit., 105.

³⁷ Dümmler, F., "Zum Herakles des Antisthenes", *Philologus* 50 (1891), 288-296, here 293.

³⁸ Ibid., 294. Dio. Or. 58. 4-5: ὁ Χείρων ὀργισθεὶς ... μάλιστα δὲ ἀπεχόμενος τοῦ μὴ παῖσαι αὐτόν, ὅτι διανοεῖτο ἐρᾶν αὐτοῦ etc.

³⁹ Dümmler (op. cit., 293) also cites several passages from Xenophon's *Cynaegeticus* (12. 18-20) where the love for ἀρετή is mentioned along with Chiron's name. Cfr., esp.: Xen. *Cyneg.* 12. 20 ὅταν μὲν γάρ τις ὀράται ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐρομένου, ἅπας ἑαυτοῦ ἐστι βελτίων. *It seems to me, that the passage in question may as well be influenced by the Phaedrus, but I leave alone this question so far.*

⁴⁰ Dittmar, op.cit., 90.

⁴¹ Dümmler, op.cit., 291.

⁴² Rankin, op.cit., 127.

⁴³ See notes 1 and 16.

⁴⁴ Stob. Anthol. III. 14. 19 = SSR V A 132: Ἀντισθένης ἔλεγε, ὥσπερ τὰς εταίρας τάχαθὰ πάντα εὔχεσθαι τοῖς ἐρασταῖς παρεῖναι, πλὴν νοῦ καὶ φρονήσεως, οὕτω καὶ τοὺς κόλακας οἷς σύνεισιν.

⁴⁵ Plutarch. De Vit. Pud. 536B = SSR V A 94: οὕτως ἄτρεπτος ἦν καὶ ἀνάλωτος ὑπὸ τῶν τοιούτων, καὶ κρατῶν ἐκείνης τῆς παραινέσεως, ἣν ὁ Ἀντισθένης Ἡρακλῆς παρήνει, τοῖς παισὶ διακελευόμενος μηδενὶ χάριν ἔχειν ἐπαινοῦντι αὐτούς· τοῦτο δ' ἦν οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ μὴ δυσωπεῖσθαι μηδ' ἀντικολακεῦν τὸν ἐπαινοῦντα. Cfr. Hecaton ap. DL VI. 489 = SSR V A 131: κρεῖττον ἔλεγε, καθά φησιν Ἐκάτων ἐν ταῖς Χρειαῖς, εἰς κόρακας ἢ εἰς κόλακας ἐμπσεῖν· οἱ μὲν γὰρ νεκροῦς, οἱ δὲ ζῶντων ἐσθίουσιν.

lover in Pausanias is said to love “the most witless people” (*ὡς ἂν δύνωνται ἀνοητοτάτων*), whereas the “noble” lovers fall for those *νοῦν ἔχοντες*⁴⁶.

Pausanias emphasizes that lovers “in the vulgar opinion” have “indulgence from the gods” when they forsake vows they have sworn — a motif also reminiscent of Antisthenes, who says in his *Homerica* that lovers often break their promises.⁴⁷

In any case, it is clear that in the *Heraclēs* and, probably, in other Antisthenes’ dialogues the teaching of virtue was discussed and the erotic disposition of the characters played a significant role. That the wise man in those writings had the same “monopoly on seduction” that Pausanias defends in his speech doesn’t seem to be a bold assertion.

Interestingly enough, it has already been noted on several occasions that Pausanias’ distinction between the two Eroses corresponds to the basic Stoic notion of love. As Inwood puts it, Pausanias’ theory with its division between love for exceptional people and that for ordinary, or base, “is the most appropriate backdrop for an exploration of eros in Stoic thought.”⁴⁸ If we bare in mind that Antisthenes is in the background of Pausanias’ speech this parallelism becomes more understandable, though of course it requires a closer consideration.

Sophistic palinode?

Ἔρωσ προτρέπων in Pausanias’ speech is reminiscent of Socrates’ closing words in his “palinode” in the *Phaedrus*. Addressing himself to Eros, Socrates says: “Pardon, I pray, my former words and accept these words with favor; be kind and gracious to me; do not in anger take from me the art of love (*τὴν ἐρωτικὴν ... τέχνην*) which thou didst give me... Make [Lysias] to cease from such speeches, and turn (*τρέψον*) him, as his brother Polemarchus is turned (*τέτραπται*), toward philosophy, that his lover Phaedrus may no longer hesitate, as he does now, between two ways, but may direct his life with all singleness of purpose toward love and philosophical discourses (*πρὸς Ἔρωτα μετὰ φιλοσόφων λόγων*) (257ab).

To what kind of discourse is “Lysias” supposed to be directed? Socrates gives but a hint by saying: “I advise Lysias also to write as soon as he can, that ...the lover should be favored rather than the non-lover (*ὡς χρὴ ἐραστῆ μᾶλλον ἢ μὴ ἐρώντι ... χαρίζεσθαι*)” And Phaedrus replies: “Be assured that he will do so: for when you have spoken the praise of the lover, Lysias must of course be compelled by me to write another discourse on the same subject” (243de). To an extent, I’d say that Pausanias’ speech is a sort of sophistic “palinode” Phaedrus promises to Socrates, with a reservation that “sophistry” here should also include Antisthenian sophistry.

A comparison of Lysias’ speech and that of Pausanias reveals certain parallelism between the two: both Lysias’ non-lover and Pausanias’ lover aim at the *ἀφελία* of the *ἐρόμενος*⁴⁹ and are going to remain faithful to him⁵⁰ even when he is older,⁵¹ because they are attracted not to his body, but to his soul;⁵² on the other hand, the *ἐρόμενοι* in the two speeches also have much in common: they should yield⁵³ — one to the non-lover, the other to the lover — in order to gain moral excellence;⁵⁴ finally, both speakers are concerned with public opinion and custom⁵⁵ and hold those possessed with

⁴⁶ Symp. 181b1-6: [*οἱ φαῦλοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων*] ... ἐρώσει ... ὡς ἂν δύνωνται ἀνοητοτάτων etc.; Cfr. 181c4-6 on “noble” lovers: ὅθεν δὴ ἐπὶ τὸ ἄρρεν τρέπονται οἱ ἐκ τούτου τοῦ ἔρωτος ἐπιπνοί, τὸ φύσει ἐρρωμενέστερον καὶ νοῦν μᾶλλον ἔχον ἀγαπῶντες.

⁴⁷ Symp. 183b5-8: καὶ ὀμνύντι μόνῳ συγγνώμη παρὰ θεῶν ἐκβάντι τῶν ὄρκων – ἀφροδίσιον γὰρ ὄρκον οὐ φασιν εἶναι, 183e1-5: πολλοὺς λόγους καὶ ὑποσχέσεις καταισχύνας. The same idea in the first Socrates’ speech in the *Phaedrus* (240e). Cfr. Porphyry. Schol. ad Od. VII, 257 = SSR V A 188: Ἀντισθένης δὲ φησι ὅτι τοὺς ἐρώντας ἦδει ψευδομένους τὰς ὑποσχέσεις· τοῦτο γὰρ ποιεῖν οὐκ ἐδύνατο δίχα Διός.

⁴⁸ See note 22 above.

⁴⁹ Phaedr. 230e7: συμφέρειν; 233b6-c2: οὐ τὴν παρούσαν ἡδονὴν θεραπεύων συνέσομαί σοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν μέλλουσαν ὠφελίαν ἔσεσθαι; 234c3-4: ὠφελίαν δὲ ἀμφοῖν γίνεσθαι. On the moral use of love in Pausanias, see above. On pragmatic attitude to love in Antisthenes, see: Shichalin, *Fedr.* xvii.

⁵⁰ Phaedr. 233c5-6: ταῦτα γὰρ ἐστὶ φιλίας πολλὸν χρόνον ἐσομένης τεκμήρια; 234a6-7: διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου φίλοις ἐσομένοις. Symp. 181d4-5: ὡς τὸν βίον ἅπαντα συνεσόμενοι καὶ κοινῇ συμβιωσόμενοι; 183e5-6: ὁ δὲ τοῦ ἤθους χρηστοῦ ὄντος ἐραστῆς διὰ βίου μένει.

⁵¹ Phaedr. 234a1-3: οὐδὲ ὅσοι τῆς σῆς ὥρας ἀπολαύσονται, ἀλλ’ οἵτινες πρεσβυτέρῳ γενομένῳ τῶν σφετέρων ἀγαθῶν μεταδώσουσιν; Symp. 183e1-5: πονηρὸς δ’ ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνος ὁ ἐραστῆς ὁ πάνδημος, ὁ τοῦ σώματος μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐρών... ἅμα γὰρ τῷ τοῦ σώματος ἄνθει λήγοντι, οὐπερ ἦρα, “οἴχεται ἀποπτάμενος” etc.

⁵² Symp. 181b1-6: [*οἱ φαῦλοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων*] ... ἐρώσει τῶν σωμάτων μᾶλλον ἢ τῶν ψυχῶν. Cfr. Phaedr. 232e3-233a4: Καὶ μὲν δὴ τῶν μὲν ἐρώντων πολλοὶ πρότερον τοῦ σώματος ἐπεθύμησαν ἢ τὸν τρόπον ἐγνώσαν etc.

⁵³ Χαρίζεσθαι in Lysias’ speech at 233d5, 233e6; on Pausanias, see table above.

⁵⁴ Phaedr. 233a4-5: βελτιονί σοι προσήκει γενέσθαι ἐμοὶ πειθόμενος; Symp. 185b2-3: ἀρετῆς γ’ ἕνεκα καὶ τοῦ βελτίον γενέσθαι πάν ἂν παντὶ προθυμηθείη; 184c4-7: ἠγούμενος δι’ ἐκεῖνον ἀμείνων ἔσεσθαι.

⁵⁵ Phaedr. 232a6-b3: τοὺς δὲ μὴ ἐρώντας οὐδ’ αἰτιάσθαι διὰ τὴν συνουσίαν ἐπιχειροῦσιν; 231e3-4: Εἰ τοίνυν τὸν νόμον τὸν καθεστηκότα δέδοικας, μὴ πυθόμενων τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὄνειδος σοι γένηται etc. Symp. 182a1-2: οὗτοι γὰρ εἰσιν οἱ καὶ τὸ

“worldly” passion in contempt.⁵⁶

Interestingly, Lysias’ speech bears many traits of Antisthenes’ teaching on eros⁵⁷. Thus, Lysias thinks that those in love suffer from an illness that makes them mad;⁵⁸ he stresses that one should yield to those who would be grateful for that;⁵⁹ he doesn’t approve of pleasure (at least, he says so)⁶⁰ and aims at mutual benefits of those engaged in a relationship. The parallelism between the speeches of Pausanias and Lysias may therefore be explained by the fact that in both pieces Plato alludes to Antisthenes.

Literary context seem to provide an important background for understanding the meaning of philosophical protreptic in Plato. It turns out that for Socrates it makes little difference if a sophist is praising or rebuking Eros. To take an image from the *Phaedrus* itself, “Lysias” and Pausanias think they are urging “to buy a horse and fight against the invaders”, but none of them has a slightest idea of what a horse is (260b).⁶¹ Not that I wished to compare Eros to a donkey but the thing is that neither Lysias nor Pausanias have an idea of what they are praising and urging to.

Socrates defends a radically different sort of rhetoric: one aimed at pleasing not the listeners, however “wise” they are, but gods themselves. At this point, the problem of *χαρίζεσθαι* gains a more broad meaning. As Socrates himself claims in the *Phaedrus*, a wise man will study rhetoric not “for the sake of speaking and acting before men, but that he may be able to speak and to do everything, so far as possible, in a manner pleasing to the gods (*θεοῖς κεχαρισμένα*). For those who are wiser than we, Tisias, say that a man of sense should surely practice to please not his fellow slaves (*οὐ ... ὁμοδούλοις δεῖ χαρίζεσθαι μελετᾶν τὸν νοῦν ἔχοντα*), except as a secondary consideration, but his good and noble masters” (273e5–9).

This entails that both rhetorical and erotical *χάρις* must be turned (“converted”) not to the “fellow slaves”, however wise they might be, but to gods alone⁶². Thus, dealing with *Ἔρωσ προτρέπων*, Plato offers his solution to the problem of *δουλεία ἐκούσιος* and to the combination of eros and exhortation in speeches. The protreptic power of Socrates’ speeches, described by Alcibiades at the end of the dialogue (216 ab), originates in gods themselves, is addressed to the gods and — eventually — converts his listeners to the divine⁶³.

P.S.: A question of chronology

Though *Phaedrus* is now believed to be a later dialogue,⁶⁴ it has also been observed that certain motifs would be more appropriate in an earlier writing. Thus, Hackforth notes that some reminiscences of Isocrates’ speeches could hardly be detected by Plato’s readers some 15-20 years after these speeches

ὄνειδος πεποιηκότες; cfr. 183a2: *όνείδη*; 183b1: *τῶν μὲν ὄνειδιζόντων*, 183b4: *ἄνευ ὄνειδους*, 183c7: *ὄνειδίζωσιν*, 183c8: *ὄνειδίζωσιν*, 184c1: *μηδὲ ἐπονείδιστον* etc. In both cases the common aim is to convince the youth that there is no *όνειδος* in gratifying a (non-)lover.

⁵⁶ *Phaedr.* 232e3-6; 233b1–6: *πολὸν μᾶλλον ἐλεεῖν τοῖς ἐρωμένοις ἢ ζηλοῦν αὐτοὺς προσήκει*; 231e2-4: *αὐτοὶ ὁμολογοῦσι νοσεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ σωφρονεῖν, καὶ εἰδέναι ὅτι κακῶς φρονοῦσιν, ἀλλ’ οὐ δύνασθαι αὐτῶν κρατεῖν*. This idea is clearly of Antisthenian provenance, see note 29: *θεὸν τὴν νόσον καλοῦσιν*.

⁵⁷ This idea was expressed and elaborated by Y. Shichalin in his edition of the *Phaedrus* (above note 4).

⁵⁸ See note 56.

⁵⁹ *Phaedr.* 233d5-8: *Ἔτι δὲ εἰ χρὴ τοῖς δεομένοις μάλιστα χαρίζεσθαι, προσήκει καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις μὴ τοὺς βελτίστους ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἀπορωτάτους εὖ ποιεῖν· μεγίστων γὰρ ἀπαλλαγέντες κακῶν πλείστην χάριν αὐτοῖς εἴσονται*; cfr. DL VI, 3 = SSR V A 56: *καὶ χρὴ τοιαύταις πλησιάζειν γυναῖξιν αἰ χάριν εἴσονται*.

⁶⁰ Cfr. above note 49.

⁶¹ Cfr. DL VI 8 = SSR V A 72: *συνεβούλευεν [sc. Antisthenes] Ἀθηναίους τοὺς ὄνους ἵππους ψηφίσασθαι· ἄλογον δὲ ἡγουμένον, “ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ στρατηγοί,” φησί, “γίνονται παρ’ ὑμῖν μηδὲν μαθόντες, μόνον δὲ χειροτονηθέντες.”* May we suggest that Antisthenes himself is subject to the reproach which he addresses to the Athenians?

⁶² This theoretical consideration is manifested at the practical level: Socrates’ speech in the *Phaedrus* is marked by the ostensible change of addressee, whereas in the *Symposium* the role of Socrates as “mediator” between the gods and the people is emphasized (202e-203a).

⁶³ Alcibiades says that Socrates’ speeches are “divine” (222a3: *θειοτάτους*), they contain “images of virtue” inside (222a4: *ἀγάλματ’ ἀρετῆς*), just as their author that conceals “divine images” (216e6-7: *ἀγάλματα θεῶν*). The “wondrous power” (216c 6–7: *τὴν δύναμιν ὡς θαυμασίαν*) of Socrates becomes more clear when we bare in mind the divine origin of his protreptics.

⁶⁴ Erler, Hackforth and Robin take the *Phaedrus* to be later than the *Republic*, see: Erler, M., *Platon / Die Philosophie der Antike*, Band 2/2, Basel 2007, 216; Hackforth, R., *Plato’s Phaedrus*, Cambridge, 1952, 7; *Platon, Oeuvres complètes IV 3: Phèdre / texte établi et trad. par Léon Robin*, Paris, 1985, ix. Not many scholars now place the *Phaedrus* among earlier dialogues. See: Moore, J.D. “The Relation between Plato’s *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*”, in *Patterns in Plato’s thought: papers arising out of the 1971 West Coast Greek Philosophy Conference*, ed. by J.M.E. Moravcsik, Dordrecht; Boston, 1973, 52-71; cfr. also J. Dillon’s “Comments on John Moore’s Paper” in the same volume. Bury also defends the priority of the *Phaedrus*, see: Bury, R.G., *The Symposium of Plato*, Cambridge, 1909, lxxvii.

were published.⁶⁵ The so called “theory of revision”, suggested by H. Thesleff, enables to assume that some parts of the dialogue (“Lysias’ speech” among them) were written before the *Symposium*,⁶⁶ which fits in with the upshot of the present paper. Of course, this question requires further investigation, which we neither can nor intend to undertake within the limited scope of this paper.

⁶⁵ Hackforth, op.cit., 34.

⁶⁶ The theory of revision was proposed by Thesleff (Thesleff, H., *Studies in Platonic Chronology*, Helsinki, 1981, 172) and endorsed by Y. Shichalin in his edition of the *Phaedrus* (see note 15) and by A. Usacheva (“Concerning The Date Of Plato’s *Phaedrus*”, to be published in *Hermathena*, 2013). In the same volume, H. Tarrant in his “Final Reflections” singles out several “stylistic clusters” in the *Phaedrus* and remarks: “This may owe something to Plato’s conscious changes in linguistic register, but is better explained in terms of chronology”.

La natura intermedia di Eros: Pausania e Aristofane a confronto con Socrate

Lucia Palpacelli

Il *fil rouge* dell'analisi che propongo è costituito dalla parola *μεταξύ* e, quindi, dal concetto di intermedio che a me sembra essere una chiave di volta, attraverso la quale è possibile rileggere in controluce il discorso di Pausania, che pare anticipare quello di Socrate, e il discorso di Aristofane, che lo nega, anche se in modo del tutto funzionale all'esito del dialogo stesso.

1. Le occorrenze di *μεταξύ* all'interno del *Simposio*

Il primo dato su cui è interessante riflettere è proprio quello delle occorrenze della parola *μεταξύ*: attraverso uno *screening* dell'intero dialogo, condotto con l'ausilio del lessico informatizzato di Radice-Bombacigno¹, risulta che *μεταξύ* compare nel *Simposio* 8 volte e le occorrenze sono tutte concentrate nel discorso di Socrate-Diotima (202 A 2; 202 A 8; 202 D 11; 202 D 13; 204 B 1; 204 B 2), ad eccezione di una (214 E 10), in cui però *μεταξύ* non ha valore di intermedio e non è legato ad Eros, ma all'espressione verbale *μεταξύ ἐπιλαβοῦ* che significa «interrompere».

Alla luce di questo risultato si può quindi affermare che il concetto di intermedio è, nella finzione scenica, un guadagno esclusivo di Socrate-Diotima, perché in nessun altro discorso questo termine compare.

Del resto, questo dato è in linea con il fatto che l'intervento di Socrate si apre con una precisazione metodologica che preannuncia una diversa impostazione del suo discorso rispetto a quelli che lo hanno preceduto: cogliendo uno spunto di Agatone, infatti, il filosofo, osserva:

Caro Agatone, a me sembra che tu abbia aperto bene il tuo discorso, dicendo che per prima cosa bisogna mostrare quale sia (τίς ἐστίν) Eros, poi le sue opere (τὰ ἔργα) (199 C 3-5)².

In questo modo, Platone avverte il lettore che tutti i discorsi precedenti – tranne quello di Agatone – sono viziati da un errore a monte³ che, quindi, pregiudica anche il loro svolgimento e consente di affermare che «ogni personaggio che è intervenuto a parlare di Eros, prima di Diotima, ha messo in luce ciò che rientrava nelle sue competenze, ha permesso al ragionamento di procedere, inverando con le sue parole un aspetto dell'amore, ma non ne ha colto l'essenza»⁴.

Se poi analizziamo i passi in questione, ci accorgiamo che Platone presenta il concetto di *μεταξύ* come risolutivo per individuare la natura di Eros.

Socrate riconosce, infatti, che, di fronte alla sacerdotessa di Mantinea, anche lui sostenne ciò che ha sostenuto Agatone e cioè che Eros è un grande dio ed è amore delle cose belle, ma Diotima lo ha confutato affermando che

Proprio sulla base del mio discorso, Eros non è né bello né buono (201 E 7).

Di fronte a tale affermazione, Socrate replica:

Che cosa dici, Diotima? Allora Eros è forse brutto e cattivo? (201 E 8-9).

E Diotima gli impone di tacere:

Sta' zitto! Pensi forse che ciò che non è bello, sia necessariamente brutto?... E che ciò che non è sapiente sia ignorante? O non ti accorgi che c'è *qualcosa di intermedio* (τι μεταξύ) tra sapienza e ignoranza? (201 E 10 -202 A 3).

¹ R. Radice - R. Bombacigno, *Plato. Lexicon*. Con CD-ROM, Biblia, Milano 2003.

² La traduzione di tutti i passi citati è mia.

³ «I cinque discorsi che precedono quello di Socrate costituiscono esempi di stile retorico e questo fornisce il primo punto di contrasto: come lo stesso filosofo, dopo l'esibizione di Agatone, dice subito, egli è interessato solo alla verità» (*Il Simposio di Platone*, *Lectura Platonis* 1, a cura di M. Migliori, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin 1998, p. 25). Sottolinea questo anche L. M. Segolini, *Socrate a banchetto, Il Simposio di Platone e i Banchettanti di Aristofane*, GEI. Gruppo Editoriale Internazionale, Roma 1994, pp. 63-64.

⁴ G. Cappelletti, *Simposio e Fedro. Variazioni strutturali del discorso d'amore*, in *La struttura del dialogo platonico*, a cura di G. Casertano, Loffredo Editore, Napoli 2000, pp. 253-261, p. 256.

Questa è la prima occorrenza del termine *μεταξύ* che si rivela come la chiave per uscire dalla strettoia dell'*aut... aut...*: Eros, infatti, non può dirsi né bello né buono, ma questo non significa che sia brutto e cattivo.

Diotima conclude, affermando:

Allora, non costringere ciò che non è bello ad essere brutto e ciò che non è buono ad essere cattivo. Lo stesso vale per eros: dal momento che tu concordi sul fatto che non sia né buono né bello, non pensare che debba essere brutto e cattivo, ma *qualcosa di intermedio* (*τι μεταξύ*) tra questi (202 B 1-5).

La terza occorrenza del termine *μεταξύ* (la seconda ricorre infatti a 202 A 8, e definisce la retta opinione come intermedia tra sapienza e ignoranza) permette di vedere lo schema ternario entro cui Platone pone Eros:

bello – intermedio (= Eros) – brutto; buono – intermedio (= Eros) – cattivo.

Il fatto di riconoscere la natura mediana di Eros, consente anche di affermare che egli non è un dio, ma è un demone, intermedio tra mortale e immortale (quinta e sesta occorrenza):

È qualcosa di *intermedio* tra mortale e immortale (*μεταξὺ θνητοῦ καὶ ἀθανάτου*)... un grande demone (*δαίμων μέγας*), infatti tutto ciò che è demonico è *intermedio* tra mortale e immortale (202 D 11- E 1); è figlio di Penia e di Poros, è filosofo, in quanto *intermedio* (settima occorrenza) tra sapienza e ignoranza (204 b 1-2).

2. Il discorso di Pausania e di Aristofane a confronto con il discorso di Socrate

Intrecciando tra loro i discorsi di Socrate, Pausania e Aristofane è possibile verificare che l'approdo costituito dal *μεταξύ* è preparato da Platone nei discorsi che precedono quello del filosofo, sia in positivo - tramite cioè, alcuni elementi che vengono ripresi dai discorsi del retore e del commediografo per essere corretti, posti in una più giusta prospettiva o meglio messi a fuoco - sia in negativo, attraverso vere e proprie prese di distanza.

2.1. Pausania prepara il discorso di Socrate

Ponendo in relazione il discorso di Socrate e quello di Pausania, si ha l'impressione che, nel discorso del retore, Platone cominci ad indicare al lettore la via di soluzione poi percorsa da Socrate, mettendo in bocca a Pausania le parole giuste in un contesto sbagliato, come il successivo discorso del filosofo chiarisce.

Alla luce del discorso di Socrate, infatti, risulta che Pausania abbia sbagliato, innanzitutto, nel considerare gli *erga* di Eros prima della sua natura.

La prima movenza del retore nel suo intervento è quella di distinguere due Eros, legati rispettivamente ad Afrodite Pandemia e ad Afrodite Urania (180 D-E), sulla base della considerazione per cui Eros non è cosa semplice e, come si è detto all'inizio, *in sé e per sé* (*αὐτὸ αὐτό*), né bella né brutta, ma è bella se viene fatta in modo bello e brutta se viene compiuta in modo brutto (183 D 4-6).

Infatti, proprio all'inizio del suo discorso (181 A) Pausania aveva subito stabilito che il primo Eros, terreno, non è certo da lodare, bisogna, invece, elogiare il secondo, perché così come le azioni in se stesse non possono dirsi né belle né brutte, ma risultano tali in relazione al modo in cui vengono compiute (181 A 2-3), questo vale anche per l'Eros: non ogni Eros è bello e degno di lode, ma quello che ci spinge ad amare in modo bello (181 A 5-6).

Come osserva Reale, «secondo Pausania, i valori non sono nelle cose, ma vengono dati alle cose: ogni azione in quanto tale non è né bella né brutta; ma risulta essere bella, se svolta in modo retto e armonico, mentre risulta essere brutta, se svolta in maniera opposta. In altri termini, non è l'azione in sé... ad avere un valore o un disvalore, bensì il modo in cui essa viene fatta. Dunque, è il modo in cui si fa un'azione che conferisce valore o disvalore all'azione stessa»⁵.

Sicuramente quindi, l'errore metodologico porta Pausania già su una strada sbagliata, ma l'insistenza del retore sulla natura neutra dell'amore non può non richiamare la strada tracciata da Socrate per arrivare al concetto di intermedio, come definizione appropriata di Eros: come si è visto, infatti, a 201 E anche Diotima, correggendo Socrate, dichiara Eros né bello né necessariamente brutto, ma questo non implica uno sdoppiamento dell'Eros stesso in un Eros celeste e bello e in un Eros terreno e brutto, perché, così facendo, non si definisce comunque la sua natura. Infatti, Pausania è

⁵ G. Reale, *Eros demone mediatore. Il gioco delle maschere nel Simposio di Platone*, Rizzoli, Milano 1997, pp. 68-69.

costretto a duplicare Eros per poter giustificare il fatto che esso appaia, sulla base degli *erga*, bello e brutto e, dunque, *in sé né bello né brutto*⁶.

Alla neutralità riconosciuta a Eros, quindi, Socrate-Diotima risponde con uno schema ternario, mentre Pausania, legando l'oggetto al modo in cui viene usato, risponde con uno schema binario: se Diotima definisce Eros come intermedio tra bello e brutto e buono e cattivo, Pausania riconosce *due* Eros: uno bello e buono e l'altro brutto e cattivo.

Al di là degli errori, però, l'elemento corretto che Platone fa preannunciare a Pausania, perché Socrate lo ponga poi nella giusta luce, è proprio il fatto che Eros non sia in sé né bello né brutto (ad indicare l'importanza di tale affermazione sta anche l'insistenza con cui Platone la sottolinea sia per bocca di Pausania sia per bocca di Socrate: 180 E; 183 D 5; 201 C). Proprio a partire da questa considerazione, infatti, Diotima può affermare che egli abbia una natura intermedia. D'altro canto, però, solo quando si arriva al *μεταξύ* la giusta intuizione di Pausania sembra essere collocata al livello appropriato e sfruttata appieno per definire la natura stessa di Eros.

Un'ulteriore conseguenza dell'indicazione metodologica che Platone mette in bocca a Socrate all'inizio del suo discorso è quella secondo cui Pausania non avrebbe dovuto giocare il suo discorso sul piano pratico-comportamentale, ma su quello ontologico-metafisico.

Del resto, che questo aspetto del discorso di Pausania sia particolarmente debole è messo in evidenza da Platone anche tramite il passaggio che prende in considerazione le diverse costituzioni politiche rispetto all'amore: egli nota, infatti, che nell'Elide e nella Beozia si stabilisce semplicemente che concedere favori agli amanti è cosa bella, mentre nella Ionia e in luoghi in cui dominano i barbari, si è stabilito per legge che è cosa brutta (182 B - C). Una tale valutazione, però, a suo parere non è corretta, ma dove è stato stabilito che è cosa brutta compiacere gli amanti, si è deciso a causa della bassezza di chi lo ha stabilito, per la prepotenza di coloro che governano e per la viltà di coloro che sono governati, invece dove fu stabilito semplicemente che è bello, questo fu a causa dell'ignavia di chi lo ha stabilito (182 C 7- D 4).

Cosa diversa accade ad Atene dove vige una «legge molto più bella» (182 D 4), anche se non facile da comprendere (a 182 B Platone aveva già anticipato che ad Atene e a Sparta la legge era molto più complessa).

Infatti, da un lato, qui si afferma che amare apertamente è cosa più bella che amare di nascosto ed è soprattutto considerato bello amare i più nobili e i migliori, anche se sono più brutti di altri. Inoltre a chi ama, la legge e perfino gli dei concedono ampia libertà: egli, per amore, può fare cose per le quali, sarebbe biasimato, se fosse spinto da diverse ragioni; può perfino giurare e trasgredire i giuramenti (183 A). D'altro canto, però, l'atteggiamento dei padri che istruiscono i pedagoghi perché i giovani amati non parlino con i loro amanti, può far pensare che l'amore sia considerato cosa bruttissima⁷.

Pausania scioglie questa ambiguità, ribadendo la natura neutra di Eros e affermando che il fatto che sia bello o brutto *dipende dal modo in cui viene compiuto* (183 D 4-6)⁸.

In questo passaggio si sottolinea di nuovo, quindi, che il giudizio di Pausania sul bello e sul brutto rispetto ad Eros non tocca la sua natura, ma dipende da qualcosa di esterno a lui.

Infine, rivelando la vera natura di Eros come intermedio e la natura del vero amante, Socrate chiarirà che l'eros sessuale è il primo gradino della scala d'amore e che l'eros filosofico si pone al di sopra dei sensi e del sensibile (210 B-211 B). Questo gli consente di fondare ad un altro livello e, quindi, di superare la visione che Pausania tocca con l'ultimo punto del suo discorso: la connessione tra eros e virtù.

Per quanto riguarda l'amore compiuto in modo bello, il retore sottolinea, infatti, come la legge

⁶ A conferma che, comunque, anche nell'errore Platone può "nascondere" indizi utili, Allen (*The dialogue of Plato, The Symposium*, volume II, translated with comment by R. E. Allen, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1991, p. 20) fa notare che «se la distinzione di Pausania tra due Afrodite e due Eros è confusa, essa è anche dopotutto fertile: suggerisce che l'amore può essere più che fisico e che, nella misura in cui è diretto verso l'educazione e la virtù, può diventare un mezzo per ottenere un fine spirituale».

⁷ «Se c'è un problema morale rispetto all'amore, non può che porsi nel caso in cui l'indecisione della regola lascia alle risorse interiori dell'agente morale la libertà di determinarsi, in un senso o nell'altro. È proprio quello che accade in un caso complesso e ambiguo, qual è quello del costume ateniese» (*Platon, Le Banquet*, notice de L. Robin, texte établi et traduit par P. Vicaire, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1992, p. XLVIII).

⁸ Rowe (*Symposio...*, p. 25) osserva che Pausania, nel trattare d'amore, «tratta... un argomento che lo coinvolge direttamente: è l'unica persona del dialogo identificata chiaramente come un amante, cioè amante del bell'Agatone». Dover (*Plato, Symposium*, University Cambridge Press, Cambridge 1980, p. 96), a questo proposito, afferma che «il rapporto di Pausania con Agatone è riflesso nel suo disdegno per le donne (181 B 3- C 6), nella sua critica di quelli che desiderano ragazzi immaturi (181 C 7 - 182 A 6) e nell'importanza che dà alla stabilità (181 D 3-7; 183 D 8 - E 6)». Allen (*Dialogue...*, p. 17) afferma, infatti, che «Pausania stesso sembra sia stato l'*erastes*, l'amante, di Agatone che era l'*eromenos*, l'amato e la loro relazione era durata fino all'età adulta».

stessa incoraggi soprattutto l'amore che conduce alla virtù:

Ecco la nostra legge: come per chi ama l'assoggettarsi, accettando volontariamente qualsiasi servitù per i propri amanti, non si deve considerare né adulazione né qualcosa di vergognoso, così c'è soltanto un'altra servitù volontaria che non è vergognosa, ed è quella riguardante la virtù. Da noi, infatti, è così stabilito per legge: se qualcuno vuol servire un altro pensando che, tramite quello, diventerà migliore o per una sapienza o per qualche altra parte della virtù, questa servitù volontaria non è da considerarsi vergognosa e nemmeno un atto di adulazione (184 B 6 - C 7)⁹.

Su questa connessione tra amore e virtù, egli continua ad insistere con tre sottolineature che confermano l'importanza del tema per Platone (184 C-D; 185 B; 185 B-C).

Come riconosce Reale, infatti, «per Platone è vera la tesi che Eros va strettamente congiunto con la sapienza e con la virtù, *ma ciò deve avvenire in maniera del tutto differente*. Pausania cerca di salvare il piacere sessuale dell'eros per i giovani nobilitandolo, ossia connettendolo con la sapienza e con la virtù. Ma la sua tesi risulta essere del tutto fallace, in quanto cerca di mediare cose *non mediabili in questo modo*»¹⁰.

Infatti, a 206 C, dopo aver definito Eros come desiderio del possesso del bene sempre, Diotima chiede in quale azione l'impegno e lo sforzo di chi mira al bene può chiamarsi amore. Per dirla con Aristotele, la sacerdotessa di Mantinea sta chiedendo qual è la specie in cui il genere appena definito – l'amore come desiderio del bene – si declina. La risposta è chiara: nell'amore umano, o meglio, nella tendenza, propria di tutti gli uomini, a procreare nel bello.

Se, infatti, l'amore è desiderio del bene sempre, Eros è anche un desiderio di immortalità che si esplica tramite la procreazione nel corpo, ma anche tramite la procreazione nell'anima (208 E - 209 A).

All'anima si addicono le virtù e, in particolar modo, la temperanza e la giustizia che riguardano l'ordinamento della città e della casa.

E quando qualcuno fin dalla giovinezza abbia l'anima gravida ed essendo celibe, giunta l'età, desideri partorire e generare, credo che egli, girando intorno, cerchi ciò che è bello nel quale possa generare... E qualora incontri un'anima bella e nobile e di buona natura, allora si avvicina a questa bellezza e di fronte a quest'uomo subito gli vengono discorsi intorno alla virtù e sul modo in cui l'uomo deve essere buono e delle cose di cui deve prendersi cura e comincia ad educarlo... Di conseguenza, questi uomini hanno tra loro una comunanza molto più grande di quella che hanno con i figli e un'amicizia più salda, perché condividono figli più belli e assolutamente immortali (209 A 8 - C 7).

Ecco quindi il giusto modo e le corrette ragioni per le quali è cosa lodevole che Eros si accompagni a virtù.

2.2 Aristofane nega il discorso di Socrate

Aristofane apre il suo discorso mettendosi subito e apertamente in contrapposizione con il discorso di Pausania e con quello di Erissimaco, che del discorso di Pausania ha conservato l'elemento della duplicazione di Eros (186 A)¹¹.

Il commediografo afferma:

Certamente, Erissimaco, ho in mente di parlare in modo diverso rispetto a come avete parlato tu e Pausania (189 3-4)¹².

Egli mostra da subito, infatti, di muoversi in modo opposto rispetto a Pausania, perché non enfatizza

⁹ In questo senso, è confrontabile un passo dell'*Eutidemo*: «E se si crede che si debba certamente ereditare questo piuttosto che le ricchezze del padre, chiedendo e pregando di essere resi partecipi della sapienza, dai tutori, dagli amici, da quelli che si dicono amanti, sia stranieri sia concittadini, non è, Clinia, assolutamente vergognoso né degno di biasimo, per questo, obbedire e servire sia l'amante sia ogni uomo, volendo servire in qualsiasi modo, purché sia onesto, perché si desidera diventare saggi» (282 A 7 - B 6). A questo proposito, Allen (*Dialogue...*, p. 17) nota che «la franchezza con cui Platone elogia la pederastia può sembrare sorprendente al lettore moderno, anche se forse meno che in passato... si deve osservare, però, che Platone non sta elogiando l'omosessualità e neanche la pederastia in generale, ma una specifica variante di essa: l'amore del ragazzo adolescente che sta appena mettendo la barba. L'approccio è essenzialmente romantico e idealizzato».

¹⁰ Reale, *Eros...*, pp. 76-77.

¹¹ «Dal momento che Pausania ha cominciato bene il suo discorso, ma non lo ha concluso in modo adeguato, a me sembra che sia necessario che io lo porti a compimento. A me sembra corretto, infatti, distinguere i due Eros» (185 E 6- 186 A 3). Sul discorso di Erissimaco come ampliamento, dal punto di vista fisico-biologico, del discorso di Pausania, svolto invece sul piano sociale, cfr. L. M. Napolitano Valditara, *Il sé, l'altro l'intero. Rileggendo i dialoghi di Platone*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2010, pp. 149-161.

¹² A riprova dell'importanza di questo dato, esso viene ricordato da Aristofane anche alla fine del suo discorso (193 D 6-7).

la natura duplice di Eros, ma anzi, tramite il racconto della natura umana alle origini, punta l'attenzione sull'elemento unitario e sull'interezza che caratterizzava il genere umano: inoltre, la figura di ciascun uomo era tutta intera e rotonda, aveva il dorso e i fianchi a forma di cerchio, aveva quattro mani e tante gambe quante mani e due volti assolutamente uguali su un collo arrotondato. Aveva un'unica testa per entrambi i visi rivolti in senso contrario (189 E 5 – 190 A 3).

L'interezza e l'unità originaria vengono spezzate da Zeus e questo innesca negli uomini il meccanismo del desiderio della loro metà per ricostituire l'intero; infatti, come osserva la Napolitano, «gli uomini nuovi, generati dalla bisezione divina sono, a causa di questa, dimidiati e, dunque, per ciò stesso *desideranti*: è ora, dopo il taglio che essi hanno subito, che nasce in essi l'*ἐπιθυμία*, la brama di “rifondersi insieme”, prima, evidentemente, del tutto assente e ignota»¹³:

ciascuna metà desiderando (ποθοῦν) l'altra metà di sé tendeva a raggiungerla (191 A 6).

In questo quadro Eros viene ad essere quindi quella forza connaturata negli uomini che riporta all'antica natura:

Pertanto, da tanto tempo, è connaturato negli uomini l'amore reciproco degli uni per gli altri che ci riconduce all'antica natura e cerca di fare uno da due (ἔν ἐκ δυοῖν) e di risanare la natura umana (191 C 8 – D 3).

Aristofane, poi, si sofferma a descrivere i possibili incontri tra le metà di diverso genere che sono funzionali a classificare le diverse forme di amore, per ribadire, infine, che il desiderio di chi si ama per tutta la vita è proprio quello di fondersi e, da due, farsi uno (192 C-D).

Di contro al modello binario proposto da Pausania e a quello ternario che descriverà Socrate, Aristofane ci pone, quindi, di fronte ad un modello unitario: Eros è ritorno all'uno, desiderio di completa fusione nell'altro. Il concetto di intermedio viene evidentemente negato.

A conferma del rapporto antitetico tra la posizione del commediografo e quella esposta dal filosofo, proprio in virtù del fatto che Eros ha una natura intermedia e, quindi, desidera ciò che è bello e buono, Diotima arriva a fare un'importante precisazione:

Si fa però un certo discorso, secondo cui coloro che cercano la loro metà, questi amano. Il mio discorso afferma invece che l'amore non è amore né della metà né dell'intero (οὔτε ἡμίσεός... τὸν ἔρωτα οὔτε ὅλου), a meno che, caro amico, non capiti che questo sia il bene. Infatti, gli uomini desiderano farsi tagliare piedi e mani, qualora a loro sembri che queste parti di sé siano malandate. Infatti, penso che ciascuno non sia attaccato a ciò che gli è proprio, a meno che quel qualcosa che gli è proprio non si chiami bene e male ciò che è estraneo; non c'è altro che gli uomini amano che non sia il bene (205 D 10- 206 A 1).

Nel dichiarare che l'amore non è amore né della metà né dell'intero, la sacerdotessa si pone in netta contrapposizione con le parole di Aristofane a 191 A 6: non avendo riflettuto sulla natura dell'eros (errore metodologico comune a Pausania e agli altri discorsi; cfr. 199 C 3-5)¹⁴, il commediografo fa l'errore di credere che Eros sia desiderio dell'intero e dell'unità di se stessi, mentre ora Platone precisa che il criterio non è quello della tensione alla totalità delle parti (al contrario, gli uomini desiderano farsi tagliare piedi e mani, se sono malate), ma quello del bene. Alla luce di questo passo e dell'orizzonte che sto cercando di delineare, non credo quindi che sia corretto vedere, con Reale, nell'affermazione di Aristofane del ritorno all'uno un'allusione ai principi dell'Uno e della Diade, perché Platone prende chiaramente le distanze da questa affermazione e non indica al lettore di dividerla in alcun modo, anzi, come si è appena visto, Socrate si pone su una linea del tutto antitetica¹⁵.

Nonostante il fatto che Socrate arrivi a un esito opposto rispetto a quello di Aristofane, però, il discorso del commediografo non è del tutto invalidato.

Nei passaggi iniziali del suo discorso, infatti, Socrate sembra seguire la linea tracciata da Aristofane e “salvare” almeno un elemento posto in luce dal commediografo nel suo discorso: il fatto

¹³ L. M. Napolitano Valditara, *Platone e le ‘ragioni’ dell'immagine. Percorsi filosofici e deviazioni tra metafore e miti*, Vita e pensiero, Milano 2007, p. 113. A. W. Saxonhouse, *The net of Hephaestus: Aristophanes' Speech in Plato's Symposium*, «Interpretation», 13 (1985), pp. 15-32, p. 21-22, osserva a questo proposito che la forma umana originaria «è una forma senza eros, perché è in sé completa. La forma sferica indica l'assenza di un inizio e di una fine. Essa non richiede nulla di più per essere completa. Non c'è interdipendenza tra i corpi sferici. Essi non hanno bisogno gli uni degli altri, neanche per il fine della procreazione».

¹⁴ Allen (*Dialogue...*, p. 36) sottolinea il fatto che Aristofane ha sbagliato nella comprensione dell'oggetto di Eros.

¹⁵ Reale, *Eros...*, p. 105-108; cfr. anche G. Reale, *Per una nuova interpretazione di Platone*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1991, pp. 471-477.

di pensare all'eros come a una tensione, a un desiderio per qualcosa che manca.

Infatti, il discorso di Socrate si apre proprio stabilendo che Eros è amore di qualcosa e dunque *desidera* ciò di cui è amore:

SOCRATE: Ma dimmi questo: Eros è amore di qualcosa, *desidera* (ἐπιθυμεί) o no questa cosa?

AGATONE: Certamente! (200 A 2-4)

Perché si inneschi il meccanismo del desiderio, però, è necessario che si desideri ciò che non si ha: Eros quindi deve desiderare ciò che egli non è, ciò di cui ha bisogno:

SOCRATE: Dunque, questi e ogni altra persona che desideri, desidera ciò che non ha a disposizione e che non è presente, ciò che non possiede e ciò che egli non è, ciò di cui ha bisogno. Sono queste le cose di cui sente desiderio (ἐπιθυμία) e amore?

AGATONE: Certo! (200 E 2-6).

In particolare, Socrate conclude il suo ragionamento con Agatone affermando che Eros ama le cose belle, proprio perché manca di esse e stabilendo poi un'eguaglianza tra le cose belle e le cose buone, che gli permette di definire Eros come mancante sia di cose belle sia di cose buone (201 C).

In questo senso, potremmo dire con Halperin, che Platone ha preparato il lettore alla sua teoria dell'eros fissandone le premesse nel mito di Aristofane, fornendo così «al lettore non filosofico una base di normale esperienza umana per l'iniziazione ai misteri dell'erotica platonica»¹⁶.

Infatti, mettendo in gioco il concetto di intermedio, la posizione di Aristofane viene progressivamente corretta fino ad arrivare ad un'esplicita presa di distanza:

- Eros è amore di qualcosa e dunque desidera (intuizione di Aristofane);
- È necessario che si desideri ciò che non si ha;
- Eros è desiderio di cose buone e belle, per cui non è né buono né bello, ma ha una natura intermedia (correzione al discorso di Aristofane: Eros non è desiderio dell'intero);
- Eros è amore del bene, non dell'intero (a meno che non sia sotto il segno del bene) né della metà (presa di distanza da Aristofane)¹⁷.

Ripercorrendo e riassumendo quanto fin qui sostenuto, quindi, potremmo affermare che Pausania comincia a focalizzare l'elemento della neutralità dell'eros che Socrate, nel discorso di Diotima, non rinnega, ma corregge e sviluppa: egli, infatti, porta il discorso dal piano più strettamente "pratico" ed "etico-comportamentale", al piano teorico/metafisico e approda al concetto di intermedio, che in Pausania resta *in nuce* nella movenza della duplicazione stessa di Eros e in Aristofane viene negato, a favore di una visione unitarista dell'Eros, inteso come desiderio di totale fusione.

In questo quadro, come già anticipato, il concetto di intermedio, si rivela del tutto funzionale non solo per definire correttamente l'eros, ma anche per ricollocare le giuste intuizioni che hanno preceduto il discorso di Socrate: Platone ci presenta, infatti, tre modelli diversi tra di loro (unitario quello di Aristofane, binario quello di Pausania, ternario quello di Socrate) e quella indicata dal μεταξύ sembra essere una terza via (rispetto alle due che si autoescludono), cui gli altri due modelli preludono e preparano in senso positivo (quello di Pausania) e in senso negativo (quello di Aristofane).

3. Considerazioni conclusive

La breve analisi condotta conferma che Platone ha costruito questo dialogo con una regia perfetta, entro la quale tutti i personaggi concorrono a costruire il discorso platonico intorno a Eros¹⁸ che

¹⁶ D. M. Halperin, *Platonic Eros and what men call love*, «Ancient Philosophy», 5 (1985), pp. 161-204, pp. 169-170.

¹⁷ Rispetto al desiderio, Kahn (*Plato and the Socratic Dialogue*, Cambridge University Press, 1996; traduzione italiana, *Platone e il dialogo socratico. L'uso filosofico di una forma letteraria*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2008, pp. 259-260) osserva, dopo aver condotto un'analisi sull'uso platonico dei verbi che indicano il desiderare, che «Platone esprime il generico concetto di desiderio non con un singolo termine, ma attraverso un libero movimento attraverso una serie di espressioni diverse che includono *epithumein*, *boulesthai*, ed *eram*» e ascrive la decisione platonica di «fondere le parole del desiderio in un'unità concettuale» ad un'importante ragione filosofica: «l'intenzione di creare una teoria del desiderio che si focalizzerà esclusivamente sul desiderio razionale per il bene, cioè proprio quel desiderio che sta alla base del paradosso socratico. Questo è il desiderio razionale che Aristotele chiamerà *boulesis*. Ma nello schema platonico la *boulesis* ha un ruolo più importante da giocare: quell'universale desiderio umano per il bene... che diventa eros nella scala dell'amore del *Simposio*».

¹⁸ In particolare rispetto al mito narrato da Aristofane nel *Simposio*, assume questa chiave di lettura anche la Napolitano, rifacendosi ad un'affermazione di Vegetti: «Assumo qui una significatività possibile del mito al livello minimo, cioè non tanto rispetto al fatto... della sua attribuzione al personaggio di Aristofane, quanto rispetto alla sua presenza nel dialogo:

sembra procedere, come si è visto, per successive correzioni e puntualizzazioni.

Rispetto a questo particolare *modus scribendi*, di cui qui si è dato appena un esempio, credo che esso sia spiegabile rintracciando un fine ultimo presente nel *Simposio*, come in tutti i dialoghi platonici, cioè quello di invitare il lettore a fare filosofia.

Nell'intreccio di voci di Pausania, Aristofane e Socrate, è stato possibile verificare, infatti, come Platone dissemini nel testo, "affidandoli" ai diversi personaggi, elementi e motivi che egli condivide e trova utili per la ricerca che si sta compiendo, anche se li pone in uno sfondo impreciso e non sempre corretto, per poi indicare al lettore come correggere alcune affermazioni o in quale luce esse assumano una prospettiva utile.

Un tale modo di procedere si giustifica, in ultima analisi, alla luce di una prospettiva educativo-prorettica: «Il dato distintivo dei dialoghi è che l'Autore, per ragioni eminentemente educative, ha "inventato" e sviluppato una particolare tecnica di scrittura... Platone è convinto che la filosofia non si apprende, ma si fa, per cui il maestro deve essere colui che aiuta il soggetto a compiere il suo percorso euristico che è insieme vitale e intellettuale. Pertanto lo scrittore, se vuole essere filosofo, deve "spingere" il lettore a "fare filosofia", non dando "soluzioni" ma indicando i problemi e le vie che portano alla soluzione degli stessi»¹⁹.

Ecco perché Platone dissemina "indizi" lungo il percorso che sta tracciando per arrivare a definire Eros, servendosi di tutte le voci, ma, allo stesso tempo, stando sempre attento ad indicare al lettore le posizioni deboli e gli errori.

Letteratura critica citata e utilizzata

Allen R. E., *The dialogue of Plato, The Symposium*, volume II, translated with comment by R. E. Allen, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1991.

Cappelletti G., *Simposio e Fedro. Variazioni strutturali del discorso d'amore*, in *La struttura del dialogo platonico*, a cura di G. Casertano, Loffredo Editore, Napoli 2000, pp. 253-261.

Dover K. J., *Plato, Symposium*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1980.

Halperin D. M., *Platonic Eros and what men call love*, «Ancient Philosophy», 5 (1985), pp. 161-204.

Kahn C. H., *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue*, Cambridge University Press, 1996; traduzione italiana, *Platone e il dialogo socratico. L'uso filosofico di una forma letteraria*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2008.

Migliori M., *Tra Polifonia e puzzle. Esempi di rilettura del "gioco" filosofico di Platone*, in *La struttura del dialogo platonico*, a cura di G. Casertano, Loffredo Editore, Napoli 2000, pp. 171-212.

Migliori M., *Come scrive Platone. Esempi di una scrittura a carattere "protrettico"*, «Annali della facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Macerata», 37 (2004), pp. 249-277.

Napolitano Valditara L. M., *Platone e le 'ragioni' dell'immagine. Percorsi filosofici e deviazioni tra metafore e miti*, Vita e pensiero, Milano 2007.

Napolitano Valditara L. M., *Il sé, l'altro l'intero. Rileggendo i dialoghi di Platone*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2010.

Radice R.-Bombacigno R., *Plato. Lexicon*. Con CD-ROM, Biblia, Milano 2003.

questa può avere come tale un senso non irrilevante, ammesso... che in qualche modo *tutti* i personaggi dei dialoghi contribuiscano, in modo critico, cioè quantomeno perché propongono ipotesi da discutersi e superarsi alla costruzione della stessa filosofia dialettica di Platone; egli andrebbe dunque in qualche modo "riconosciuto in tutti i suoi personaggi" <M. Vegetti, *Quindici lezioni su Platone*, Einaudi, Torino 2003, p. 79>» (L. M. Napolitano Valditara, *Platone...*, p. 105). Migliori (Tra Polifonia e puzzle. Esempi di rilettura del "gioco" filosofico di Platone, in *La struttura del dialogo platonico*, a cura di G. Casertano, Loffredo Editore, Napoli 2000, pp. 171-212, p. 189), su questa linea, richiama l'attenzione sull'"architettura" dei dialoghi di Platone: «Il primo frutto dell'intreccio tra grande letteratura e grande filosofia, che avviene nel solo Platone, è che i suoi dialoghi hanno una struttura "architettónica" che è molto rilevante sia sul piano estetico sia per i fini argomentativi che l'Autore si propone». Rowe (*Simposio...*, p. 10) sottolinea che «Tutti i dialoghi sono "fictions", anche l'*Apologia* lo è in larga misura, e credo che questo aspetto del *corpus* sia stato per troppo tempo trascurato... Ciò che dobbiamo chiederci, a mio avviso, in ciascun punto del dialogo è: perché Platone fa parlare così questo personaggio, adesso, in questa parte del dialogo? Perché questo accadimento avviene proprio qui? E come contribuisce al senso generale del dialogo? E qual è questo senso?».

¹⁹ M. Migliori, *Come scrive Platone. Esempi di una scrittura a carattere "protrettico"*, «Annali della facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Macerata», 37 (2004), pp. 249-277, p. 250.

Reale G., *Per una nuova interpretazione di Platone*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1991.

Reale G., *Eros demone mediatore. Il gioco delle maschere nel Simposio di Platone*, Rizzoli, Milano 1997.

Robin L., *Platon, Le Banquet*, notice de L. Robin, texte établi et traduit par P. Vicaire, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1992,

Rowe C. J., *Il Simposio di Platone*, Lectura Platonis 1, a cura di M. Migliori, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin 1998.

Saxonhouse A. W., *The net of Hephaestus: Aristophanes' Speech in Plato's Symposium*, «Interpretation», 13 (1985), pp. 15-32.

Segolini L. M., *Socrate a banchetto. Il Simposio di Platone e i Banchettanti di Aristofane*, GEI. Gruppo Editoriale Internazionale, Roma 1994.

Vegetti M., *Quindici lezioni su Platone*, Einaudi, Torino 2003.

Philotimia and Philosophia in Plato's Symposium

Jens Kristian Larsen

”So it was by main force that I stopped my ears and took off in flight, as if from the Sirens, in order that I might not sit here in idleness and grow old beside him. In regard to this human being alone have I been affected in a way that no one would suspect was in me, to feel shame before anyone at all. Only before him do I feel shame. For I know within myself that I am incapable of contradicting him or of saying that what he commands must not be done; and whenever I go away, I know within myself that I am doing so because I have succumbed to the honor I get from the many.” (*Symp.* 216a6-b5)¹

With these words the drunken Alcibiades, who arrives at the end of Agathon's symposium, describes his own troubled relationship both to Socrates and to the Athenian public. The speech delivered by Alcibiades, which is presumably meant to tell the truth about Socrates (214e1-6), seems to tell the truth about Alcibiades as well. Under the influence of Socrates, whose speeches Alcibiades claims affect him like charms (215c6-d6), Alcibiades has come to the opinion that it is not really worth living if he remains as he is (216a1), and therefore he feels shame before Socrates. For instead of taking care of himself, which Socrates both urges him to do and forces him to admit that he does not do, he is preoccupied with the affairs of the Athenians (216a4-6). Alcibiades, it seems, does not live the examined life that Socrates in the *Apology* claims is the only one worth living (38a1-7). As such we may suspect that he lacks the self-knowledge that the Delphic oracle exhorts us to seek.

All the same, Alcibiades *does* seem to know himself, at least to the extent that he knows that it is his own love of honour which prevents him from turning from the applause of the multitude to the philosophic life envisioned by Socrates. He thus seems to have realized what Socrates points out, both when defending his life of philosophy before the men of Athens in the *Apology* and before his friends in the *Phaedo*, namely that *philotimia*, love of honour or ambition, may stand in the way of *philosophia*, the love of wisdom (*Apo.* 29d7-e3, *Phd.* 68c1-3, 82c8).² Although Alcibiades thus seems unable to break the spell public esteem holds over him, he has at least realized how questionable this is, since he knows that it prevents him from caring about that which really matters, his soul. He has been bitten by Socrates' philosophic discourses, as he says (*Symp.* 217e6-218b2), and this has made him painfully aware of his own shortcomings, even if they have been unable to turn him to philosophy. The life of Alcibiades seems to be a troubled one.

Alcibiades' ambivalent relation to honour due to his encounter with Socratic philosophy seems to make him the exact opposite of Phaedrus, the initiator of the encomia to *eros* that makes up the greater part of the *Symposium*. For Phaedrus makes *philotimia* pivotal in his account of the goods bestowed on human beings by *eros*. He thus seems blind to the doubtful worth of *philotimia* and its connection with public approval that Alcibiades has come to realize. Moreover, Phaedrus, more than any of the other encomiasts, praises *eros* from a traditional point of view. As uncritical reliance on tradition seems to be the opposite of philosophical inquiry, it might appear that Phaedrus of all the figures in the *Symposium* is the one farthest removed from the life of philosophy advocated by Socrates. That the speech of Phaedrus has often been accorded little interest from scholars is thus perhaps understandable.³

All the same, a careful reading of Phaedrus' speech reveals that it contains insights about *eros* that will ultimately be absorbed into Diotima's speech and this alone should make us hesitate to condemn it as devoid of philosophical content. Furthermore, as I shall go on to argue, these insights are connected with Phaedrus' understanding of *philotimia*. This should make us wonder if there might, at least according to Diotima, be a positive aspect of our ambition for honour, an aspect that has escaped Alcibiades. Let us therefore turn to Phaedrus in order to see what we can learn about *eros*

¹ Translation is taken from from the Symposium are by S. Benardete

² This potential conflict is of course also pointed out in the *Republic*, ???

³ Thought-provoking and careful readings of the speech can be found in S. Rosen, *Plato's Symposium*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968 [2nd ed. 1987], 39-59 and L. Strauss, *On Plato's Symposium*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001, 46-56. Both Rosen and Strauss regard Phaedrus as preoccupied with utility or gain, more precisely, with the utility of *eros* from the point of view of the beloved, and hence see Phaedrus as the lowest of the speakers of the *Symposium*. All the same Strauss points out, to my mind correctly, that all “the motives of Phaedrus's speech return in Socrates' speech in a modified way”, p. 56 (see also Rosen, p. 35). In contrast to Strauss' and Rosen's overall negative evaluation of Phaedrus, F. Sheffield *Plato's Symposium – The Ethics of Desire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 17 points out that his speech is “a thought-provoking account of how *erōs* can lead to virtue”. See also K. Corrigan and E. Glazov-Corrigan, *Plato's Dialectic at Play*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004, 51-56, who emphasize the positive aspects of Phaedrus' speech while maintaining that Phaedrus himself is incapable of examining the philosophical importance of his claims.

from his speech.

Once Phaedrus has finished the first part of his speech, which praises *eros* by claiming that it is oldest among the gods, he delivers, from 178c2-179b3, an account of how *eros* serves us as a guide for acquiring virtue and happiness. The first thing to note is that Phaedrus claims that *eros* is the cause of the greatest goods for *both* lover *and* beloved, since the greatest good for a beloved is to have a good or useful lover and the greatest good for a lover is to have a beloved (178c3-5). More precisely, *eros*, according to Phaedrus, implants “that which should guide human beings who are going to live nobly throughout their lives” more beautifully than anything else (178c5-d1), and it implants this in lover and beloved alike. This means that Phaedrus, in contrast to most of the other encomiasts, regards an erotic relation as reciprocal. According to a traditional understanding of the paiderastic relation, in accordance with which most speakers at Agathon’s symposium analyse the erotic relation, the beloved, the *eromenos*, was – at least ideally – to acquire virtue through the educative effort of the lover, whereas the lover, the *erastes*, was to receive sexual gratification. As regards the acquisition of education and virtue, it was thus a one-way relation; the lover was supposedly already good, wise and virtuous.⁴ According to Phaedrus, however, *eros* installs a guide for living nobly or beautifully – and that means in accordance with virtue (cf. 179a8) – in lover and beloved alike.

This power residing in *eros* is due to the fact that it, at least according to Phaedrus, makes us feel shame at doing shameful things and gives us ambition – or love of honour, that is *philotimia* – as regards the noble things (178d2). That we should fear performing base acts and make it a point of honour to do noble deeds is of course a traditional view of what it means to live virtuously that we find in many Greek poets.⁵ All the same, it is interesting that Phaedrus claims that love makes us follow this ideal because it makes us fear how we will look in the eyes of our lover or beloved, respectively, if we fail to live up to it. It is this aspect of the erotic relation that installs a drive for virtue in human beings much better than family or publically bestowed honours could do (cf. 178c6-7).⁶ This implies that, even if Phaedrus’ ideals are borrowed from tradition, a fact that could seem to inscribe Phaedrus in the conventionality of the public sphere, he envisages the virtuous life as a life that – at least potentially – transcends this sphere and its values, since it is centred on how we appear to our loved ones, not to others in general.

This nonconventional dimension also comes to the fore when Phaedrus, at 179a7-9, sums up the good effects of *eros* with the following words: “there is no one so bad that, once the god Eros had entered him, he would not be directed toward virtue – to the point where he is like one who is best by nature”, that is *fysis*. As is pointed out by Kevin Corrigan and Elena Glazov-Corrigan, the claim that *eros* installs a striving in us to become like – *homoios* – the one who is by nature best, is “reminiscent of the Platonic *homoiōsis theō*”,⁷ that is, the ideal to become as like god as is humanly possible. This platonic notion, which is introduced in both the *Theaetetus* and the *Laws* as a contrast to the Protagorean doctrine that man is the measure (cf. *Th.* 176a-177c in contrast to 166e-167c and *Lg.* 716c-d, 906a-b), is – among other things – meant to point out that there is a natural standard for excellence and happiness independent of human convention or tradition, that is *nomos*. When Phaedrus states that *eros* makes us like what is by nature – *physei* – best, the same ideal of a non-conventional standard seems to be in play.

Of course, Phaedrus does not attempt to give any conceptual clarification of virtue or nature, nor does he deliver any argumentative justification for the claim that *eros* makes us strive for the best. In this respect one may thus say that he is far removed from philosophy. All the same, I think that a good part of his tradition-bound understanding of *eros* gains a philosophical justification in the speech of Diotima. So let us now turn briefly to this speech, before we finally return to Phaedrus’ and Alcibiades’ conflicting interpretations of *philotimia*.

Diotima’s speech can roughly be divided into three parts.⁸ The first (201d1-204c) contains Diotima’s clarification of the nature of *eros*. A second part, running from 204c9-209e4, then focuses on the effects of *eros* in general and goes on to elaborate these effects from the perspective of

⁴ For a discussion, see L. Brisson, “Agathon, Pausanias, and Diotima in Plato’s *Symposium*” in *Plato’s Symposium – Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, ed. J. Lesher, D. Nails and F. Sheffield, Washington DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2006, 233-235.

⁵ For a discussion of this, see C. Pietsch, “Die Rede des Phaidros (178a6-180b8)” in *Platon. Symposium – Klassiker Auslegen* 39, hg. Christoph Horn, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012, 42.

⁶ T. L. Cooksey, *Plato’s Symposium – A reader’s guide*, Continuum, 2010, 37.

⁷ Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan, *op. cit.*, 53.

⁸ An interesting discussion of the relation between these parts and the genre of encomium can be found in K. Ågotnes, “” (2013) who in contrast to my interpretation claims that the *Symposium* as such “leaves us with one strong message: we shall not love honour”, p. 59.

philotimia, whereas the third part,⁹ running from 209e5-212c3, finally, elaborates the effects of *eros* from the perspective of *philosophia*. Here I will limit myself to say a few words about the second and third parts, in particular about the relation between *philotimia* and *philosophia* we find therein.¹⁰

In both the second and the third part of Diotima's speech we find a hierarchy of types of *eros*. These hierarchies are dependent on Diotima's claim that *eros*, as desire for something, must be understood as broader than the erotic relation between human beings (205b4-c10): *eros* is, generally speaking, our desire to possess the good in order to become happy, a desire characterizing all human beings (204e1-205a8). But although all people naturally desire to possess the good, in order to become happy, different people regard different things as what is truly good. To illustrate this point, Diotima initially lists three types of desires, three kinds of *eros*, in addition to what is normally called love, namely a love of money-making, a love of gymnastics and a love of wisdom (205d4-5) that roughly seem to correspond to the three kinds of desires Socrates ascribed to the three parts of the soul in the *Republic*, that is the epithymic, the thymoedic and the rational parts (553c, 549a, 581b).¹¹ Diotima then delivers two hierarchies of types of desire, one at the end of the second part of her speech, that is at 208e1-209a9, the other at the beginning of the third part, running from 210a4 to 210e2. Both hierarchies begin by contrasting the types of desires to be placed within them with physical erotic desire, which in the *Republic* is determined as one of the characteristic desires of the epithymic part. As I see it, the first hierarchy is centred entirely on *philotimia*, which may be said to be the kind of *eros* which corresponds to the desire of what is in the *Republic* called the thymoedic part, whereas the second culminates in the *eros* which corresponds to the leading desire of that part of the soul which in the *Republic* is called *logistikon*.

Prior to the first hierarchy, Diotima explains that the real motivation behind deeds performed as an expression of *philotimia* is a love of immortality, since immortality can supposedly be gained – so far as this is humanly possible – through an eternal renown for one's virtue (208c1-e1). This motivation results in different psychic products, such as speeches about virtue (209b8), poetry (209a4-5, 209c7-d4) and lawgiving (209a6-8, 209d4-e4), which are supposedly the offspring of the virtues possessed by their creators. The third hierarchy, in contrast, regards this kind of striving for immortality as just a preliminary to philosophy (210a1-2, 210e5-6), which is the true striving for immortality, and here science (*epistêmê*, 210c6-d6) and the vision of true beauty is added to the list as higher kinds of *eros*.

A full discussion of how these two hierarchies relate to each other lies beyond the scope of the present paper. Here I only wish to emphasize the following. The first hierarchy explicates different ways in which people seek eternal renown through psychic products that bear witness to their virtue, and this explains how *philotimia* drives people towards virtue, in a manner that closely resembles Phaedrus' initial claim that *philotimia* leads us to imitate what is by nature best.¹² In contrast to Phaedrus, however, Diotima indicates that such activities have a further goal than virtue, namely eternal renown.¹³ To people driven by *philotimia*, Diotima suggests, virtue is regarded as a means to an end, honour and renown, rather than as an end in itself.¹⁴ In contrast, the second hierarchy makes clear that, in order to gain true virtue, and not just images (*eidôla*) of virtues (212a3-5), one must proceed from the love of bodies, of beautiful ways of living, and of the sciences, to a single science, namely the science about the beautiful (210d6-e1). It is only when one reaches this level of knowledge that one becomes virtuous and life becomes worth living (211d1-2). The second hierarchy thus makes clear that the virtues attested to by the deeds performed through *philotimia* are not true virtues.

It is tempting to see a parallel between this and what Socrates claims in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, namely that political or popular virtue, the kind of virtue pursued by most gentlemen, is in fact not true virtue, because it is not grounded in knowledge or wisdom (*phrônesis*) which in turn

⁹ There is a clear shift in Diotima's speech at 209e5 which on the dramatic level is emphasized by the fact that Diotima, through the voice of Socrates, states that Socrates may no longer be able to follow her. As many commentators have pointed out, this shift is structured around the division between the lesser and the greater mysteries known from ??

¹⁰ For a more elaborate discussion of how these relate, see Sheffield, *op. cit.*, 137-153

¹¹ See Francisco Lisi, "Philosophische und tyrannische Liebe" in Plato's Symposium – *Proceedings of the fifth Symposium Platonicum Pragense*, ed. A. Havlíček and M. Cajthaml. Prague, 2005, 182-183. See also Strauss, *op. cit.*, 57. In contrast to Lisi I believe that the discussion of *philotimia* is not limited to the passage 208c1-e1 but continues till 209e4. For a similar reading, see Dorothe Frede, "Eros als Verlangen nach Unsterblichkeit" in *Platon. Symposium – Klassiker Auslegen 39*, hg. Christoph Horn, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012, 151-154.

¹² The connection with Phaedrus is emphasized by the fact that Diotima, in order to exemplify the deeds performed through *philotimia*, uses the same examples as Phaedrus had done earlier, compare 208d2–6 with 179b4-180b5.

¹³ I have discussed the relation between Phaedrus' and Diotima's speeches at greater length in "The love of the beloved" in *Norsk Filosofisk Tidsskrift*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2013, 81-83.

¹⁴ Cf. Frede, *op. cit.*, 151-152.

depends on a philosophical grasp of the forms (cf. *Phd.* 68b8-69b8, 82a11-b3, *Resp.* 500d4-8). If this parallel is plausible, one may wonder if Diotima, despite the fact that she seems to reiterate Phaedrus' claims about the good effects of *philotimia*, in the end discredits Phaedrus' understanding of *eros* altogether. I think at least three things speak against this.

The first point is that Diotima herself emphasizes that the psychic products resulting from *philotimia* should be regarded as steppingstones for the philosopher. Although Diotima ultimately points out that the production of these products – speeches about virtue and how one should live, poems, and laws – will not lead to true happiness and do not necessarily result from true virtue, she still regards the recognition of the beauty inherent in them as necessary steps for the one who is moving up her 'ladder of love'. What distinguishes the philosopher in the making from the person driven by *philotimia* seems to be an awareness of how one should relate to such things (cf. 210a4-7, 210e2-6, 211b7-d1). The products in themselves are thus good if one knows how one should comport oneself towards them, but presumably bad if one believes that they themselves are what should be striven for.

The second, and more important, point is that Phaedrus himself does not stress the productive dimension of *philotimia* in quite the same way as Diotima does. To Diotima, *philotimia* is a striving for immortality that reaches its end in the alleged immortality consisting in eternal renown for the products one has left behind. Phaedrus' focus is simpler. *Eros* is able to guide us in living the best life because it makes us shameful of the base things and ambitious as regards the noble or beautiful things (178c3-d2). Phaedrus is not too specific about what these 'things' are, but it seems relatively clear that what he has in mind is deeds or acts – in particular courageous acts in combat (cf. 178d2-179a6) – rather than spiritual products. The point for Phaedrus is therefore not that a lover wants to become immortal through the renown his speeches, poems, or laws will secure him, but that a lover or a beloved wishes to appear as a good man before his loved one, i.e. that he wishes, through his deeds, to display his virtue. In other words, Phaedrus is not interested in the honour we receive from others due to our creative greatness, but only in the fact that *eros* drives us to become more virtuous because we fear to appear bad in the eyes of *the* other that truly matters.¹⁵ Phaedrus' straightforward and rather simple emphasis on the relation between deeds and virtue is, to my mind, closer to a Socratic understanding of virtue than the rather grandiose picture we get in Diotima's first hierarchy. For whereas we may well imagine a man able to make good laws or good poems although he is corrupted, it is less likely – although of course not impossible – that such a person will be able to stably perform virtuous actions. Phaedrus' more restricted focus is, in my view, a result of the fact that his praise of *eros* is disconnected from the political sphere.¹⁶ In contrast to Diotima, who regards *philotimia* as the main motivational force for the production of laws and tradition, Phaedrus connects it only with the achievement of personal virtue. In this way, Phaedrus' sub-political notion of *philotimia* seems to me to foreshadow Diotima's teaching about the highest – and in a way supra-political – form of *eros*, philosophy.

Finally, as I pointed out initially, Phaedrus sees the erotic relation as reciprocal since *eros* makes both lover and beloved better. The same reciprocal dimension can be found in Diotima's speech, albeit on a higher, and more reflected, level. In her account of the progress of the *philotimic* as well as the philosophic lover (209a8-c7, 210a4-e1), she emphasizes, in accordance with the traditional understanding of the *paiderastic* relation, that the lover will seek to educate his beloved (cf. 209c1-2, 210b6-c3). However, she equally emphasizes that the lover, through his encounter with the beauty of the beloved, himself gives birth to virtue, i.e. that he becomes virtuous, and this is really the basis for the lover's ability to educate the beloved (cf. 209c2-3, 210c1-2, 210d3-6).¹⁷ The birth of virtue is connected with the lover's ascent up the 'ladder of love' which culminates in his vision of beauty itself. On this ladder he comes to understand different levels of beauty until he learns that the vision of beauty is what makes life worth living, and it is presumably this understanding of the levels of beauty he seeks to pass on to his beloved (cf. 210c3-5).

Let us finally return to Alcibiades. As I stated initially, he is presented as a man torn between his love of public honour, on the one hand, and his knowledge that there is another form of life than the political that is the one truly worth living, the philosophic life. No doubt, he is a man characterized

¹⁵ It must be admitted that the bestowing of honour does play a role in Phaedrus' account of *eros*. However, he does not focus on honour bestowed upon us by other men or by the public, but only by the Gods, cf. 179d2, 180a2-3, 180b5. This, I think, connects with the fact that Phaedrus' praise of *eros* is a-political. We should remember that the notion of being honoured by the gods is, at a higher level, repeated by Diotima when she claims that the philosopher, when he has given birth to true virtue, becomes dear to god (212a6).

¹⁶ Something about the army of lovers as a political dimension...

¹⁷ That Diotima thus criticizes the traditional *paiderastic* ideal of *paideia* is rightly emphasized by L. Brisson, see Brisson, *op. cit.*, 246-251.

by *philotimia*, love of honour. But is it Phaedrus' love of honour? This is not a simple question. On the one hand, what Alcibiades is primarily interested in is publically bestowed honour and, as I have argued, this is not what Phaedrus is interested in. For Phaedrus, *philotimia* means ambition for doing noble acts, which, as its counterpoint, has shamefulness at performing shameful acts. These two explains why *eros*, according to Phaedrus, is able to make us like those that are by nature best. But this points to a connection between Phaedrus' understanding of *eros* and the character of Alcibiades. Alcibiades states that Socrates is the only one before whom he has felt shame. So we see that Phaedrus' notion of *eros* is somehow vindicated in the character of Alcibiades. It is his love of Socrates that makes him shameful, shameful at caring more about the matters of the Athenians than about his soul. Perhaps, if he had chosen to sit by Socrates, instead of running off to the many, he could have overcome his infatuation with the honour bestowed by the public and instead made it a point of honour to strive for virtue, thereby changing his *philotimia* from being a hindrance to the philosophic life into a noble ally.

La pédérastie selon Pausanias : un défi pour l'éducation platonicienne

Olivier Renaut

Le discours de Pausanias est majoritairement étudié comme un témoignage sur l'institution de la « pédérastie »¹. Il est aussi d'usage de considérer qu'il est un discours auquel Platon ne souscrit pas, qu'il ridiculise, qu'il critique, par un ensemble de procédés internes au *Banquet* d'une part, et souvent à la pensée de ce que Platon peut affirmer ailleurs, notamment dans les *Lois*².

Il me semble qu'un autre traitement de ce discours de Pausanias peut être envisagé. La question de savoir si la « pédérastie » peut jouir d'une qualification positive chez Platon demeure une question ouverte³. Non seulement il faut se déprendre de l'idée qu'on puisse trouver chez Platon une quelconque affirmation non problématique sur la pédérastie, mais il faut aussi, dans la mesure du possible éviter de projeter sur ces textes une intention qui relève davantage d'engagements personnels et contemporains sur la « sexualité »⁴.

Il ne s'agit pas pour autant de « réhabiliter » Pausanias pour lui-même : ce discours doit être réinséré dans l'économie générale du *Banquet* d'une part, et comparé à d'autres mentions de la pratique de la pédérastie dans les dialogues de Platon, notamment la *République* et les *Lois*. Le discours de Pausanias constitue bien un « défi pour l'éducation platonicienne » de deux manières : d'abord, l'institution pédérastique telle que la définit Pausanias est critiquée dans le discours de Diotime, permettant ainsi d'en proposer une pratique « correcte » s'appuyant sur une redéfinition de l'objet aimé et une reconfiguration du désir ; mais pour autant, cette critique de la pédérastie chez Diotime ne doit pas occulter la place du désir charnel dans la relation (homo-)érotique, ni non plus la dimension intrinsèquement politique du discours de Pausanias qui interroge les conditions d'une éducation à la vertu dans la cité, notamment par l'intermédiaire d'une législation sur les pratiques sexuelles.

Le discours de Pausanias n'est pas seulement une singerie : il est, dans le sillage du discours de Phèdre, une réflexion sur les conséquences d'*eros* dans sa dimension politique et éducative. À ce titre, ce discours doit être mieux pris en compte dans sa prétention à promouvoir la philosophie.

I. À la recherche d'une règle

Partons tout d'abord de l'expression que Diotime utilise en 211b6, *orthos paiderastein* :

« Toutes les fois donc, que, en partant des choses d'ici-bas, on arrive à s'élever par une pratique correcte de l'amour des jeunes garçons (*διὰ τὸ ὀρθῶς παιδεραστεῖν*), on commence à contempler cette beauté-là, on n'est pas loin de toucher au but. Voilà donc quelle est la droite voie qu'il faut

¹ Le discours de Pausanias est une pièce maîtresse chez les historiens et tous les spécialistes de lettres classiques qui se sont intéressés aux questions de genre et de sexualité dans l'Athènes classique. Pausanias est un personnage ambigu : il est l'amant d'Agathon et représente donc une figure non pas tant marginale, mais compliquée relativement à l'institution de la pédérastie dont il fait l'éloge. Un ensemble de thèses ont été tirées de ce discours : a) la pédérastie est une institution qui ne saurait être comprise si on ne la resitue pas dans un contexte précis, et qui, de l'aveu de Pausanias, est divers. Le problème de la sexualité est dérivé par rapport à la perception de la norme en vigueur dans la cité (Dover 1964). b) d'autres interprètes ont insisté en revanche sur l'importance du problème sexuel entre éraste et éromène défini comme un jeu à somme nulle à travers une relation nécessairement asymétrique (Dover 1978; Cohen 1987). Voir également la présentation de Brisson (2006).

² Ce même discours a été largement négligé par les philosophes. M. Nussbaum (1994) traite ce discours d'une manière charitable, mais se rallie en général à la position de Dover, et, symptomatiquement, souligne que des discours de Phèdre, Pausanias et d'Aristophane, c'est ce dernier qui est le plus « sérieux » (Nussbaum 1994:1541). À l'inverse certains commentateurs n'hésitent pas à traiter Pausanias de a) vicieux sophiste séducteur dont le but est de déroger à la règle naturelle qui impose la reproduction (Neumann 1964); b) de sociologue sophiste (Corrigan 2004:56-61); c) de quelqu'un qui est obsédé par les conventions, au point d'en bégayer « Il devrait y avoir une loi » (Ludwig 2002:44) ; d) de représentant une forme d'*eros* athénien incompatible avec l'*eros* philosophique platonicien, bien qu'il le singe (Corrigan 2004:51).

³ Simplement à titre de rappel, sur les 7 occurrences de *paiderastein* chez Platon, 6 se trouvent dans le *Banquet*, dont 2 chez Pausanias, 2 chez Aristophane, 1 dans le discours de Diotime où il est question de *orthos paiderastein*, et 1 autre se trouve dans le *Phèdre* (250a), fait notable, où il est question des cycles de réincarnation de l'âme humaine, qui doit attendre dix mille ans avant de retrouver son point d'origine, « exception faite pour l'homme qui a aspiré loyalement au savoir ou qui a aimé les jeunes gens pour les faire aspirer au savoir » (*πλὴν ἢ τοῦ φιλοσοφήσαντος ἀδόλως ἢ παιδεραστήσαντος μετὰ φιλοσοφίας*).

⁴ Voir à ce propos Davidson (2001) qui trace une généalogie très convaincante de la construction du rapport "pénétré/pénétrant" dans l'image de l'amour grec, et son influence en particulier sur les analyses de Dover entre 1964 et 1978.

*suivre dans le domaine des choses de l'amour ou sur laquelle il faut se laisser conduire par un autre (τὸ ὀρθῶς ἐπὶ τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἰέναι ἢ ὑπ' ἄλλου ἄγεσθαι) (...) ».*⁵

Il est tentant de comprendre que le *orthos* qui qualifie cette *paiderastia* très particulière décrite par Diotime renvoie à l'obsession que Pausanias a de la règle qu'il cherche désespérément à formuler. La voie « correcte » que propose Diotime s'opposerait donc à une *mauvaise* pédérastie, celle-là même dont Pausanias ferait l'éloge au début du *Banquet*. L'argument serait donc le suivant : a) Pausanias déclare, à l'envie, être le garant d'une convention sociale bien établie, et le champion de la « droite » règle⁶, d'abord en rectifiant le sujet de l'éloge, ensuite en se proposant de produire une juste interprétation des règles en vigueur dans de multiples cités, et enfin en proposant de comprendre que les relations sexuelles dans la pédérastie, si elles sont exécutées *droitement*, sont belles ; b) Diotime, à l'inverse de Pausanias, établit la rectitude de la pédérastie en proposant des étapes bien connues dans la voie qui mène à la science du bien.

Il est cependant intéressant de résister un peu à cette interprétation qui met en concurrence deux voies qui se déclarent toutes deux « droites ».

Pour Pausanias, l'institution pédérastique est multiple (182b). Il existe une multitude de règles et de conventions en effet, au sein desquelles il faut comprendre la complexité d'une institution pour en saisir l'intérêt et la fécondité, sa droiture, qu'on cherchera donc à travers les effets pédagogiques et politiques qu'elle est capable de produire.

Pausanias, comme on le sait, commence par critiquer l'institution pédérastique elle-même : elle est une institution qui favorise un Eros vulgaire, insolent, abusant de la naïveté des jeunes garçons, etc.⁷ Sa pratique ternit selon lui un usage correct de l'érotique masculine patiente, qui va au-delà de l'âge de l'institution pédérastique⁸.

Par ailleurs la complexité de la règle athénienne, selon Pausanias, réside, non pas tant comme chez Diotime dans les différentes étapes à gravir avant la contemplation du Bien, mais dans la subtilité de normes apparemment contradictoires qui règlent la société athénienne et les pratiques de la cour qui lie l'érastrate à l'éromène : liberté totale de l'amant conquérant et résistance attendue de l'aimé ; constance des relations s'attachant au caractère et à la vertu, et non la poursuite de la relation uniquement corporelle ; condamnation des aspirations aux honneurs, à l'argent, au pouvoir politique⁹.

Un seul et même but est donné par Pausanias à cette institution : la vertu, se déclinant elle-même pour l'amant à « contribuer à faire avancer sur le chemin de l'intelligence et de la vertu » (184d6-e1) (à supposer qu'il les possède), et pour l'aimé à « gagner en éducation et en savoir » (184e1-2). Plus encore, il s'agit, par deux fois dans le discours de Pausanias, de mettre en relation directe la *philosophia* et la *paiderastia*.

S'agit-il alors vraiment de considérer que Pausanias voudrait *justifier* la *paiderastia* par la *philosophia* ?

II. *Paiderastia* et *philosophia*

À la fin de son discours, Pausanias déclare que la pédérastie est une institution qui doit favoriser l'éclosion de la vertu et la pratique de la « philosophie ».

*En effet, chez nous, la règle est la suivante : si l'on accepte d'être au service de quelqu'un en pensant que par son intermédiaire on deviendra meilleur dans une forme de savoir quelconque ou dans un autre domaine de l'excellence (ἢ κατὰ σοφίαν τινὰ ἢ κατὰ ἄλλο ὅτιοῦν μέρος ἀρετῆς), quel que soit ce domaine, cet esclavage accepté n'a rien de honteux et ne relève même pas de la flatterie. Il faut dès lors réunir en une seule (εἰς ταῦτόν) ces deux règles, celle qui concerne l'amour des jeunes garçons (τόν τε περὶ τὴν παιδεραστίαν) et celle qui concerne l'aspiration au savoir et au reste de la vertu (καὶ τὸν περὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν), s'il doit résulter un bien du fait que l'aimé cède à l'amant.*¹⁰

⁵ *Phèdre*, 211b5-c1. Toutes les traductions, sauf mention contraire, sont de L. Brisson (1998).

⁶ Les termes de la famille de *-ὀρθ sont répétés six fois dans le discours de Pausanias 180c7, 180d2, 180e2, 181a4 (deux fois), 183d1 (on peut ajouter l'usage de l'adverbe δικαίως à la fin du discours en 184d6); cette fréquence appuie l'abondance du vocabulaire de la loi (νόμος) : 181d7, 181e3, 182a5, 182a7, 182b2; 182d3, 182d4, 182e2, 183b4, 183c2, 184a1, 184b5, 184b7, 184c7, 184d1, 184d4.

⁷ 181d7-e1 : « Il faudrait même établir une règle qui interdise d'aimer les jeunes garçons ».

⁸ 181c7-d3. Voir à ce propos Brisson (2006:235-8).

⁹ Comme l'ont très bien analysé Dover (1964), puis Cohen (1987) et Hindley (1991).

¹⁰ 184c7-d3. (trad. L. Brisson légèrement modifiée).

Le programme est donc le suivant : il faut combiner deux lois : celle qui régule (ou devrait réguler) l'institution pédérastique qui associe un amant et un aimé d'une part, et une autre « règle » qui renvoie au système pédagogique où celui qui sait transmet à celui qui ne sait pas¹¹. C'est la combinaison de cette institution bien réglée et de l'éducation en un sens large qui permet l'éclosion de la vertu et la *philosophia*.

De quelle *philosophia* s'agit-il ? Certainement pas de la pratique de la *philosophia* telle que la proposent Socrate et Diotime dans leur échange. Il s'agit d'une certaine culture générale, dont le rapport à la vertu est néanmoins très accentué, dans une veine intellectualiste que Platon s'amuse à souligner ironiquement¹². La *philosophia* dans ce passage de 184d1 se comprendrait donc comme un terme générique qui concerne l'ensemble des savoirs non techniques, en un mot de la vertu. Pausanias le rappelle à la fin de son discours :

*De toute évidence en effet, cet aimé-là lui aussi a manifesté le fond de sa nature ; à savoir que la vertu et progrès moral (ἀρετῆς γ' ἔνεκα καὶ τοῦ βελτίων γενέσθαι) sont l'objet en tout et pour tout de son effort passionné ; et rien n'est plus beau. Ainsi donc il est beau en toutes circonstances de céder pour atteindre à la vertu.*¹³

En 182c1, *philosophia* apparaît, à travers la figure des tyrannicides bien connus Harmodios et Aristogiton, pour montrer que la philosophie est l'une des choses que l'amour fait éclore, aux côtés de la *philogymnastia*.

*C'est que chez les Barbares l'exercice du pouvoir tyrannique conduit à faire de cela en tout cas quelque chose de honteux, tout comme l'est la passion pour le savoir et pour l'exercice physique (ἢ γε φιλοσοφία καὶ ἡ φιλογυμναστία). En effet, ceux qui détiennent le pouvoir ne tirent aucun avantage, j'imagine, du fait que naissent chez leurs sujets de hautes pensées (φρονήματα μεγάλα), ou même de solides amitiés et de fortes solidarités (οὐδὲ φιλίας ἰσχυρὰς καὶ κοινωνίας), ce que justement l'amour, plus que toute autre chose, se plaît à réaliser. Les tyrans de chez nous en ont aussi fait l'expérience. En effet, l'amour d'Aristogiton et l'affection d'Harmodios, sentiments solides, brisèrent le pouvoir de ces tyrans.*¹⁴

Philosophia et *philogymnastia* sont ici, comme dans la *République* au livre III à propos de l'éducation préliminaire, deux pôles que la relation érotique ou plus largement communautaire doit favoriser dans le caractère des amants. Les « hautes pensées » philosophiques, remparts contre la tyrannie, sont un gage de l'efficacité du système éducatif que Pausanias détaille, en montrant que l'amour des discours est un des effets du système pédérastique¹⁵.

Même si nous ne reconnaissons rien de comparable à la « philosophie » platonicienne dans cet usage du terme *philosophia* dans le discours de Pausanias, la proximité avec le vocabulaire socratique du « souci de soi » peut nous interpeller quant à la manière dont le progrès moral s'ensuit de la relation érotique pédérastique. En effet, à la fin du discours, Pausanias déclare :

*Cet Eros relève de l'Aphrodite céleste et lui-même il est céleste, et sa valeur est grande aussi bien pour la cité que pour les particuliers (καὶ πόλει καὶ ἰδιώταις), car il oblige l'amant en question et son aimé à prendre eux-mêmes soin d'eux-mêmes pour devenir vertueux (πολλὴν ἐπιμέλειαν ἀναγκάζων ποιεῖσθαι πρὸς ἀρετὴν τὸν τε ἐρῶντα αὐτὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν ἐρώμενον).*¹⁶

L'expression *autos epimeleian autou* doit se comprendre, dans le sillage du discours de Phèdre, comme l'impératif pour l'amant et l'aimé de produire de soi-même une image désirable et vertueuse, avec l'idée que cette émulation réciproque (τὸν τε ἐρῶντα καὶ τὸν ἐρώμενον) constitue bien le moteur de la vertu¹⁷.

¹¹ Sur ce point précis d'un modèle de transmission du savoir conçu comme transmission du liquide séminal, voir Brisson (2006 :229-230), avec lequel je m'accorde.

¹² Pausanias aime les garçons intelligents : 181c6, 181d2· Voir également 182c2 où Pausanias mentionne les φρονήματα μεγάλα des citoyens.

¹³ 185b1-5.

¹⁴ 182b7-c7.

¹⁵ L'inutilité du discours persuasif à des fins séductrices (182b4-6) chez les Béotiens et les Spartiates est comparée à de la paresse d'esprit par Pausanias (182d3-4 : τῆς ψυχῆς ἀργίαν).

¹⁶ 185b5-c1.

¹⁷ Sur ce discours, voir Wersinger (2001:248-257) et Renaut (2012).

La *philosophia* et plus généralement la vertu, constitue donc bien, pour Pausanias, la fin de la relation pédérastique correcte. Si Dover a raison de souligner à propos de ce discours que Pausanias n'a pas montré que la pédérastie était en elle-même une entreprise pédagogique, ce n'est pourtant pas une raison suffisante pour faire du plaisir sexuel de l'éraсте¹⁸. Il n'y a, selon Pausanias, nulle contradiction qui puisse exclure, d'emblée, un croisement possible entre pratique sexuelle et pédagogie. Il est donc nécessaire de clarifier le rôle des relations sexuelles dans la forme droite de la pédérastie selon Pausanias¹⁹.

III. Le rôle des relations sexuelles

L'Aphrodite Pandémios ne concerne littéralement « pas moins les femmes que les garçons, et davantage le corps que l'âme (οὐχ ἦττον γυναικῶν ἢ παίδων, ἔπειτα ὧν καὶ ἐρῶσι τῶν σωμαίων μᾶλλον ἢ τῶν ψυχῶν) » (181b3-4). Cette indistinction d'objet entre homme et femme, et la prévalence du corps sur l'âme permet de poser que la « fin » que poursuit l'amant « pandémien » est le plaisir sexuel, plutôt que la reproduction, qui se satisfait de l'une ou de l'autre indifféremment.

L'Aphrodite Céleste introduit une dimension sexuée et genrée nette, brisant une symétrie attendue qui aurait fait de l'amour céleste un amour exclusivement tourné vers l'âme. Cet amour ne concerne que le « mâle » (οὐ μετεχούσης θήλειος ἀλλ' ἄρρενος μόνον) (181c2-3), et n'est attentif qu'à l'intelligence et à la vigueur du garçon (τὸ φύσει ἐρρωμενέστερον καὶ νοῦν μᾶλλον ἔχον) (181c6). L'amour ouranien, s'il favorise l'intelligence, ne discrédite pas le corps (181e2-3 : l'amant serait attentif au développement du garçon, aussi bien quant à son âme qu'à son corps : ψυχῆς τε πέρι καὶ σώματος). Pausanias, en dépit du dualisme âme-corps qui semble structurer son discours, ne pose en réalité qu'une différence de degré entre ces deux pôles, raison pour laquelle la *philosophia*, dans le passage précité d'Harmodios et Aristogiton, est flanquée de la *philogymnastia*.

Comme l'a parfaitement remarqué L. Brisson, l'amour ouranien n'a pas pour objet l'âme exclusivement, mais le caractère (ἦθος)²⁰. Dans la comparaison entre l'amant pandémien et l'amant ouranien, on remarquera encore l'absence de symétrie entre l'amour ouranien et l'amour pandémien :

Et celui qui n'en vaut pas la peine, c'est l'amant « vulgaire », celui qui aime le corps plutôt que l'âme (ὁ τοῦ σώματος μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐρῶν). (...) En revanche, celui qui aime un caractère qui en vaut la peine (ὁ δὲ τοῦ ἥθους χρηστοῦ ὄντος ἐραστής) reste un amant toute sa vie, car il s'est fondu avec quelque chose de constant.²¹

La relation sexuelle pédérastique et entre deux hommes plus murs (dans la perspective d'une amitié sexuelle continuée) n'est donc en aucun cas discréditée. Elle est même très fortement suggérée, à peine euphémisée, à partir de 184d (notamment à travers les connotations sexuelles des verbes χαρίζεσθαι et ὑπηρετεῖν).

La relation sexuelle accompagne donc la relation érotique comme son ombre, *nécessairement* certes mais *secondairement*, comme s'il fallait s'acquitter du fait que nous sommes, aussi, un corps²².

Que l'amour platonicien soit exclusif ou non de relations sexuelles effectives est évidemment un problème contesté, puisqu'il engage une certaine interprétation du rôle de l'amour « personnel »²³. Il est indubitable que dans le *Banquet*, la relation sexuelle n'est pas valorisée pour définir la puissance d'Eros. Il est également hors de doute que Platon entend transformer radicalement le sens et la valeur de la *paiderastia* en lui conférant un *telos* différent de celui que Pausanias lui prête, en la rendant exclusive de la relation sexuelle. Cependant, le discours de Pausanias constitue bien un défi pour le

¹⁸ (Dover, 1978:91).

¹⁹ Sheffield (2006:25) parvient à une position nuancée sur ce discours qui me semble plus propice à faire du discours de Diotime un exercice de clarification de l'entreprise pédérastique.

²⁰ (Brisson, 2006 :244).

²¹ 183d8-e6.

²² Marsile Ficin est particulièrement sagace à propos de Pausanias, et c'est cette interprétation qu'il choisit de donner, en en faisant, comme tous les autres discours, une expression de la pensée platonicienne : « Qu'est-ce donc que Pausanias critique dans l'Amour ? Je vais vous le dire. Supposons que trop porté à l'acte d'engendrer l'on néglige la contemplation, ou que l'on cherche cette génération par les femmes avec excès ou par les garçons contre nature, ou que l'on préfère la beauté du corps à la beauté de l'âme : c'est là abuser de la dignité de l'Amour. Et tel est l'abus que blâme Pausanias. Mais celui qui en use correctement, loue, certes, la beauté corporelle, mais à travers elle il conçoit la beauté supérieure de l'âme, de l'intelligence et de Dieu et l'admire et l'aime encore plus ardemment. Quant au devoir de génération et d'union charnelle, il s'en acquitte dans les limites prescrites par l'ordre naturel et par les lois civiles édictées par les sages. Pausanias s'est étendu longuement là-dessus. » *De Amore*, II, 7.

²³ Sur ce sujet, voir Renaut (2012).

discours de Diotime, dans la mesure où le premier entrelace l'institution pédérastique et les relations sexuelles afférentes à un problème social et politique, que le discours de Diotime prend soin de mettre à l'écart.

Je ne ferai ici que deux remarques pour accréditer l'idée que Platon choisit de laisser dans l'ombre la question des relations sexuelles en particulier homoérotiques.

a) Dans son discours, Diotime emploie des exemples déssexualisés concernant les effets « politiques » de l'amour. Discréditant le couple Achille-Patrocle présent dans le discours de Phèdre (208d), et remplaçant les tyrannicides Harmodios et Aristogiton du discours de Pausanias par les exemples de Codros (208d), Lycurgue et Solon (209d), passant sous silence l'exemple populaire du bataillon de Thèbes (178e), Diotime récuse une justification possible de la relation sexuelles entre hommes par ses effets politiques. En d'autres termes, Diotime entend faire des mœurs sexuelles dans la cité un problème différent de celui de l'érotisation de l'action politique.

b) Ce qui est laissé dans l'ombre dans le *Banquet* fait au contraire l'objet d'un intérêt particulier dans la *République* à propos de la sexualité des gardiens et des gardiennes, que je ne détaille pas ici²⁴. La régulation des pratiques sexuelles des jeunes gardiens, la licence des gardiens plus vieux qui ne sont plus en âge de procréer, ainsi que les règles de convenance qui obligent les uns et les autres à la plus grande discrétion font de la sexualité un enjeu politique important, que le discours de Diotime tend à occulter. Je terminerai donc par ce que je considère comme l'enjeu le plus important dans le discours de Pausanias : les implications politiques et sociales de la *paiderastia* chez Pausanias.

IV. Les implications politiques de la *paiderastia*

Reprenons la question de savoir quelle est la nature du lien entre *philosophia* et *paiderastia* dans le discours de Pausanias. S'agit-il seulement d'une heureuse coïncidence ? Si la réponse était positive, alors on aurait raison de considérer que Pausanias masque sous la promesse d'un savoir l'ambition d'un amant peu scrupuleux pour assouvir son désir charnel. Rien ne permettrait en somme de lier ces deux termes sinon la combinaison fortuite et toute sociale du désir pédérastique et du désir de philosophie. Ce n'est pourtant pas le cas, et Pausanias, à la suite de Phèdre, affirme qu'il y a bien un lien plus intime entre la pédérastie et l'éclosion de la vertu plus que toute autre forme de savoir.

En effet, en 182c, à propos des tyrannicides, Pausanias souligne que *philosophia* et *philogymnastia* favorisent des « liens forts de communauté » à travers les relations érotiques. De même, à la fin du discours, Pausanias souligne bien que l'effet de la pédérastie bien comprise est bénéfique aussi bien pour les particuliers que pour la cité :

*Cet Eros relève de l'Aphrodite céleste et lui-même il est céleste, et sa valeur est grande aussi bien pour la cité que pour les particuliers (καὶ πόλει καὶ ἰδιώταις), car il oblige l'amant en question et son aimé à prendre eux-mêmes soin d'eux-mêmes pour devenir vertueux (πολλὴν ἐπιμέλειαν ἀναγκάζων ποιεῖσθαι πρὸς ἀρετὴν τὸν τε ἐρῶντα αὐτὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν ἐρώμενον).*²⁵

Plus qu'un trope rhétorique, il s'agit bien pour Pausanias d'intégrer l'institution pédérastique dans un système normatif global et d'en expliciter la fonction politique, reprenant ainsi l'expression que Phèdre utilisait dans son précédent discours²⁶. En un mot, l'institution pédérastique permet de valider une idéologie compétitive et coopérative, dans un contexte public d'émulation réciproque à la vertu.

L'Eros pédérastique est en effet éminemment « public » : la cour de l'amant auprès de l'aimé se déclare en public, devant l'assistance des amis, des parents, et s'offre au jugement du qu'en-dira-t-on. La publicité de l'institution pédérastique est en outre assurée par un contrôle familial et une véritable « mise à l'épreuve » du caractère des amants :

*La règle chez nous entend soumettre les amants à une épreuve sérieuse et honnête (εὖ καὶ καλῶς βασανίζειν) pour que l'aimé sache à qui céder et qui fuir. Pour cette raison, la règle qui est la nôtre encourage les uns à poursuivre et les autres à fuir en instaurant une compétition qui permette de reconnaître à quelle espèce appartiennent et l'amant et l'aimé (ἀγωνοθετῶν καὶ βασανίζων ποτέρων ποτέ ἐστὶν ὁ ἐρῶν καὶ ποτέρων ὁ ἐρώμενος)*²⁷.

²⁴ Voir sur ce sujet l'analyse de Ludwig (2007).

²⁵ 185b5-c1.

²⁶ « Sans cela, en effet, ni cité ni individu ne peuvent réaliser de grandes et belles choses » (178d2-4).

²⁷ 183e6-184a5.

Il s'agit ni plus ni moins d'une compétition, un *agôn*, qui se charge ainsi de tester la qualité de l'amant. En ce sens, le discours de Pausanias est parfaitement congruent avec le discours de Phèdre qui fait du champ de bataille homérique le lieu où s'éprouvent la qualité des amants grâce à la *philotimia* (178e-179a).

Je voudrais pour conclure revenir aux intuitions fondamentales de Dover (Dover 1964) qui insistait sur le contexte public de l'analyse de la pédérastie chez Pausanias, sur l'appareil complexe du dispositif social qui entendait donner de la valeur à certains types d'actions. Ce qui est honteux, ce n'est pas l'acte lui-même, c'est *la manière dont il est accompli*. En un mot, il ne s'agit pas de l'acte sexuel, mais bien d'une manière d'accomplir la norme. Ce qui est honteux, ce n'est pas corrélativement le fait d'être vaincu (pour l'éromène), ou de vaincre de quelque manière que ce soit (pour l'éraсте), mais, en vertu du croisement des deux règles énoncées par Pausanias à la fin de son discours, conjointre pédérastie et relation pédagogique fondée sur la bonté du caractère (τοῦ ἥθους χρηστοῦ). Ainsi, ce qui est honteux représente *une certaine application de la règle*, et renvoie à une certaine « finesse » dans l'interprétation des normes.

La pédérastie chez Pausanias a) n'est pas une légitimation superficielle de la conquête sexuelle ; b) n'est pas un jeu à somme nulle mais implique un mutuel bénéfique pour les partenaires bien qu'ils jouent avec des normes qui sont celles de la conquête virile ; c) repose sur une intrication des mœurs sexuelles et de la sphère publique et politique, permettant ainsi de faire de la relation érotique le vecteur de l'éducation à la vertu. Le discours de Pausanias représente donc un défi pour l'éducation platonicienne, dans la mesure où il pose le problème spécifiquement politique de la régulation des mœurs sexuelles, de leur comptabilité avec la loi, mais surtout de l'usage par le législateur des relations (homo-)érotiques pour l'éclosion de la vertu, non pas chez les philosophes, mais pour la cité tout entière.

Bibliographie

- Brisson, L. 1998. *Platon, Le Banquet*. Paris, Flammarion.
- . « Agathon, Pausanias, and Diotima in Plato's Symposium. Päderastia and Philosophia », in J. Leshner, D. Nails, F. Sheffield (eds.), *Plato's Symposium. Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, Washington, Center for Hellenic Studies : 229-251.
- Cohen, D. 1987. « Law, Society and Homosexuality in Classical Athens ». *Past & Present* (117): 3-21.
- . 1991. « Law, Society and Homosexuality in Classical Athens: Reply ». *Past & Present* (133): 184-194.
- Corrigan, K. 2004. *Plato's Dialectic at Play: Argument, Structure, and Myth in the Symposium*. University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Davidson, J. 2001. « Dover, Foucault and Greek Homosexuality: Penetration and the Truth of Sex ». *Past & Present* (170): 3-51.
- Dover, K. J. 1964. « Eros and Nomos (Plato, Symposium 182a–185c) ». *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 11: 31-42.
- . 1978. *Greek homosexuality*. Harvard Univ Press.
- Hindley, C. 1991. « Law, Society and Homosexuality in Classical Athens ». *Past & Present* (133): 167-183.
- Ludwig, P.W. 2002. *Eros and polis: desire and community in Greek political theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- . 2007. « Eros in the Republic », in G.R.F. Ferrari (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 202-231.
- Neumann, H. 1964. « On the Sophistry of Plato's Pausanias ». *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 95: 261-267.

- Nussbaum, M. C. 1994. « Platonic Love and Colorado Law: The Relevance of Ancient Greek Norms to Modern Sexual Controversies ». *Virginia Law Review* 80 (7): 1515-1651.
- Renaut, O. 2013. « Challenging Platonic Erôs: The Role of Thumos and Philotimia in Love », in E. Sanders, C. Thumiger, N.J. Lowe (eds.), *Erôs in Ancient Greece*, Oxford, Oxford University Press: 95-110.
- Sheffield, F. "The Role of the Earlier Speeches in the Symposium: Plato's Endoxic Method?", in J. Leshner, D. Nails, F. Sheffield (eds.), *Plato's Symposium. Issues in Interpretation and Reception* :23-46.
- Wersinger, A.-G. 2001. *Platon et la dysharmonie : recherches sur la forme musicale*. Paris: J. Vrin.

Eryximachus

Chair: David T. Runia

Eryximachus' Medicine in the *Symposium* and Plato's Love

Hua-kuei Ho

The main body of Plato's *Symposium* consists of seven speeches on ἔρως (love/desire) which are made by seven distinguished figures. Eryximachus is one of them. In the context, Eryximachus is a representative of his τέχνη (expertise), that is, medicine. Medicine is an exemplar of the genuine τέχνη. It meets Plato's requirement of knowledge in the earlier dialogues, that is, to require the possessor of knowledge (as a practitioner of the τέχνη) to give a rational account. The emphasis on rational explanation seems to be a common feature of medicine of that time and Plato's philosophy. Another common feature can be found in their aim. Medicine aims at health by harmonizing different elements in the body, the soul, and everything. So does Plato's philosophy.

In spite of these similarities, Plato's accent on ἔρως shows one important characteristic of his philosophy. Ἐρως is in a sense a kind of νόσος (disease). This may be the most striking difference between the roles of love in the medical discourse and in Plato. The connection of Plato's love to disease marks the divergence of Plato's treatment of desire from the medical view. It leads to a different idea of harmony too, especially when the issue comes to the harmony of the elements in the soul. This calls more attention to Plato's complex attitude toward irrationality. Philosophy cannot be deprived of irrationality and thus is distinguished from the balanced calculation or rational science like medicine, since philosophy in Plato is the ἔρως for wisdom.

In the first part of my paper, I shall justify the role of Eryximachus in the dialogue as the representative of medicine of that time, and show the similarities between medicine and Plato's philosophy; in the second part I shall compare Plato's connection of ἔρως to disease on the one hand, and the insufficiency of Eryximachus' speech and the treatment of mental disease in the Hippocratic writings on the other hand, to highlight the dissimilarity of the doctor's medicine and Plato's love.

I.

Eryximachus' speech runs from 186a to 188e in the *Symposium*. In the context of the dialogue, the speech is sandwiched between Pausanias' and Aristophanes'. He continues Pausanias' distinction between good and bad desires and tries to expand the thesis to the whole universe. The distinction between good and bad desires in Pausanias' speech is delivered in the language of myth. There the division of double Ἐρως (the god), along with double Aphrodite, represents the double face of ἔρως (love/desire). (180c-e) Eryximachus translates the distinction into a more scientific language which contains more of rational explanation from the view of a practitioner of medicine. Here the distinction between good and bad desires is understood in the same way as the distinction between health and disease (τὸ ὑγιές... καὶ τὸ νοσοῦν). (186b5 ff.) The main principle is to gratify the good and healthy desires in each body. (186b-c) He defines medicine as knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) of the love-matters in respect of "filling and emptying (πλησμονὴν καὶ κένωσιν)." In practice, the medical method is to distinguish the good love from the bad ugly one, and to produce love where it ought to be, to remove love from where it ought not to be. (186d) In this way it achieves a balance of the opposites like cold and hot, bitter and sweet, dry and wet. (186d-e) This is "our expertise (τὴν ἡμετέραν τέχνην)," the doctor says. (186e3)

Traditionally, the role of Eryximachus in the *Symposium* has been dismissed as a pompous caricature of doctor. The unfriendly reading has once been widely, almost unquestionably, accepted in the first half of the twentieth century, before Edelstein challenges the reading.¹ As Edelstein complains, this piece of text had been reduced to a mere caricature of doctor. He defends that the "ironical portrait of the pedantic expert and scientist" is "hardly justified." (1945: 85) Throughout the dialogue, Eryximachus' medical knowledge does work. He proves to be a genuine expert. "By making Eryximachus act as physician whenever the occasion calls for medical opinion, Plato can hardly have intended to satirize him." (86) Moreover, at the end of his speech in the *Symposium*, the doctor says he might omit many things and expects Aristophanes to fill up. (188e) These modest words "betray belief in his own wisdom and superiority." (91)

To a certain extent, I follow Edelstein's suggestion: Eryximachus does have his importance. However, to the eye of readers after a half century, still, Eryximachus looks "pompous, over-emphatic about his *expertise*" and "imposing 'orderliness' on the conduct of the symposium."² But two points

¹ A brief history of the hostile reading and relevant debate, see Craik 2001: 110, n.7.

² In words of Gill (1999: xxiii). Italics mine.

are noteworthy here. Firstly, Eryximachus is a representative of his expertise, medicine, and medicine is regarded as an exemplar of the genuine τέχνη in Plato. Secondly, even if Plato's representation appears satirical, features in the speech here properly match the principal ideas of medical discourse of Plato's days.

In the *Symposium*, Eryximachus contrasts medicine with cookery which aims at pleasing our appetites and is not a genuine τέχνη. (187e4-6) The contrast is simply the same one drawn by Socrates at *Gorgias* 464d, where Plato is making a sharp distinction between τέχνη and ἐμπειρία (sheer experience, 464b-466a). Plato sometimes uses a more offensive term τριβή (knack). The most crucial point is that ἐμπειρία or τριβή does not give any rational account (λόγον, 465a3) and thus is with-no-account/irrational (ἄλογον, 465a6).

Readers of Plato might be very familiar with the epistemic significance of τέχνη in the early dialogues. Τέχνη requires rational explanations. So does knowledge. In the earlier dialogues, starting from the *Apology*, *Ion*, to *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, Plato submits the same requirement for people who appear to possess knowledge (ἐπιστήμη). It is no surprising that Plato chooses medicine to be a model of τέχνη (and thus to be a typical model of knowledge). The Hippocratic physicians of that time differentiate themselves from other healers by giving rational explanations. It is the way in which they display their superiority in knowledge and τέχνη, probably with a certain degree of self-consciousness. One author of the *Hippocratic* corpus defends his own standpoint on the ground that he can give a better account than others. (*Nature of Man* 1) To display their knowledge, they are debating (ἀντιλέγουσιν, 1.22). The true possessor of knowledge must be able to "provide his own explanation always victorious (παρέχειν αἰεὶ ἐπικρτέοντα τὸν λόγον τὸν ἑωυτοῦ)." (1.29-30) As for the need of accuracy, the author of *On Ancient Medicine* says, although it is impossible for human being to attain the perfect accuracy,³ they can reach the greatest accuracy by reasoning (λογισμῶ). (*On Ancient Medicine* 12.9-16) The requirement of giving an account and the emphasis on rationality make medicine the best candidate to show what knowledge is like in Plato.

As a true professional practitioner of medicine, Eryximachus' advice is decisive when the participants in the drinking party are making the regulation not to indulge their desires, but to entertain themselves with speeches on desire/ἔρωσ. (176b-e) In deeds, he exhibits his expertise by stopping Aristophanes' hiccups. (185c-e) In words, his eulogy of ἔρωσ expresses the typical view of Greek medicine which emphasizes the harmony among different elements and aims to achieve the health of body and soul. (185e-188e)

The harmony in Eryximachus' speech is defined by a balance of the opposites like cold and hot, bitter and sweet, dry and wet. (186d-e) Eryximachus' thesis of balancing elements can be found in the Hippocratic writings. (*On Nature of Man* 4.1-9; *On Ancient Medicine* 12, etc.) The balance and continuous interaction of these opposites play an important role in Greek medicine and early nature philosophy.⁴ Now the doctor in the *Symposium* applies the medical thesis of balance into μουσική (music/arts). He values harmony and emphasizes that it is impossible to achieve harmony as long as the elements stay at variance as Heraclitus insists. (187a-b) Then the medical idea of balance expands into divination further. It becomes the guarding (φυλακήν) and healing (ἴασίν) about Love. (188c)

The pursuit of health and harmony is by no means unfamiliar to the readers of Plato's *Republic*.⁵ In the *Republic*, the inner state of the just person resembles the musical harmony (σύμφωνα at 441e-422a; συναρμόσαντα, ἁρμονίας and ἡρμωσμένον at 443d-e). Plato describes it as the "health" of the soul. (444c-e) Eryximachus' "guarding and healing" about Love also reminds us of the guardian in the *Republic*. Plato's guardian in the strict sense is the philosopher who really possesses the true knowledge. As pointed out above, medicine is the model of τέχνη and thus is also a typical model of knowledge. So is medicine in the *Republic I*. Medicine plays the role of the typical

³ A brief discussion on the exactness in medicine, see Lloyd 1991: 257. The practitioners of the Hippocratic medicine are clearly aware of their limitation. This is consistent with Eryximachus' modest attitude in the *Symposium* and can support Edelstein's reading.

⁴ For Eryximachus' connection to the theory of filling and emptying in the Hippocratic treatises, see Hunter 2004: 55-6. For the forming of this medical idea, see Lloyd 1964. The first extant text in medicine on the balance of the hot and the cold, the dry and the wet, is the Hippocratic treatise *On the Nature of Man*. (Lloyd 1964: 92) The underlying thoughts can be traced to Anaximander' cosmological theory. (100) Eryximachus' speech exhibits some important features of Greek medicine and natural philosophy. The early Greek thinkers tend "to divide opposites into a positive and a negative pole." (104) This helps to explain Eryximachus' acceptance of the division of double love.

⁵ The problem of connection between different dialogues is complex. The *Symposium* is composed, broadly speaking, in the same period as *Republic*. (Cf. Dover 1965; Brandwood 1992: 91 and 110.) One year earlier than Dover's paper, Morrison analyses the development of Plato's thoughts on immortality, and argues that *Symposium* should be composed earlier (even earlier than *Meno*). (Morrison 1964: 42-46) But, take more recent examples of Howatson and Sheffield 2008: vii, Hunter 2004:3, Gill 1999: xvi etc., *Symposium* and *Republic* are usually supposed to be in the same group. Plato's thoughts in the two dialogues should maintain a certain degree of consistency.

example of τέχνη by which Plato expounds the features of knowledge. (*Republic* 350a-b) Plato's guardian is the one who truly has knowledge concerning the soul just as the physician is the one who truly has knowledge concerning the body.⁶ In the *Republic*, Plato submits the doctrine of the tripartite soul. (436a-441c) "Since there are three elements," there are also "three kinds of desire (ἐπιθυμίας)." (580d) The doctor knows how to achieve the health of the body by harmonizing the opposites. Similarly, Plato's philosopher knows how to achieve the health of the soul by harmonizing the opposite desires of different elements in the soul.

II

But surely philosophy is not medicine.

Plato's ἔρωσ is in a sense a kind of disease. This is a significant difference between the roles of love in the medical discourse and in Plato. In the doctor's speech, the distinction between good and bad loves/desires is understood in terms of the distinction between health and disease. Medicine is to gratify the good and healthy elements and not to gratify the bad and diseased elements. (186b-c) But later in the *Symposium*, in Diotima's teaching, people in the intensive ἔρωσ are described as diseased (νοσοῦντά, 207a9-b1). In the *Phaedrus*, the companion dialogue of the *Symposium*, ἔρωσ is labelled as the fourth kind of madness. (*Phaedrus* 249d) Madness is counted as disease in Greek medicine. (Cf. *On the Sacred Disease*) So is in Plato. (*Timaeus* 86b) Furthermore, when Plato explains the work of love that "the stream of beauty flowing through the eyes," he uses the metaphor of infecting "the disease of the eyes." (*Phaedrus* 255d)

Plato's philosophy is the ἔρωσ for wisdom. The connection of Plato's love to disease marks the divergence of Plato's philosophy from medicine. Medicine as a genuine τέχνη contains some true knowledge. But now the model of knowledge is not sufficient any longer.

The model of medicine becomes insufficient not simply because that it deals with the body rather than the soul. The limited scope of the doctor's speech may be counted as a weakness. Dover suggests that the doctor fails to give a fair account of the concepts like health and harmony, because of "its narrow materialism." (Dover 1969: 220) But Plato is not totally anti-materialist. The dialogue tells us, some gaps in Eryximachus' speech will be filled up by the next speaker Aristophanes. (188e) Aristophanes delivers a story about how human beings were split into two halves and how ἔρωσ leads us to embrace our "another-halves." (189c-191d) It is heavily concerning the body and physical needs. According to the literary arrangement, dealing with the body is not the main insufficiency of Eryximachus' speech.

However, there is a side effect when the scope is limited in the physical material world. "Harmony" explained by physical causes, is a result of adding or removing some material elements from certain physical places. It is to even out variance. Another weakness pointed out by Dover lies in Eryximachus' concept of harmony: Harmony in the doctor's speech is in the sense of mediation. According to Dover's analysis, "[m]ediation is possible in two ways, depending on whether or not one preserves the natures of the things mediated." (226) Eryximachus only focuses on one kind of mediation, but fails to notice the other kind. (226-7) The other kind of mediation can be presented by Heraclitus' description of harmony: it is agreement of things at variance, like of the bow and of the lyre.⁷ Eryximachus criticizes Heraclitus. He thinks it is impossible to achieve harmony when the elements still preserve their differences. (*Symposium* 187b) In the context, the next speaker Aristophanes mocks Eryximachus' prescription of healing hiccups by sneezing and mocks the doctor's concept of harmony in this way. (189a) This makes Plato's representation appear satirical. But the doctor's suggestion does work. And it is true that if the superfluous air in different parts of body remains there, the hiccups will not stop. The concept of harmony in medicine mainly means to even out differences. Based on the concept, Eryximachus' treatment of desire is a kind of calculation. It measures desires and their effects, namely pleasures. With the correct measurement, the doctor helps people to maintain the good desires but remove the bad desires. Then the elements in the body are balanced.

Mental disease may be also healed in this way. As said above, Plato's ἔρωσ is a kind of madness. Madness is counted as disease in the Hippocratic medicine, and can be explained by physical causes. It can be given an account by the condition of the brain. The brain is where our

⁶ Hunter appeals to *Republic* 403d ff. to read that Plato "the exaggerated claims of medicine, which had little in common with what he saw as the true pursuit of understanding (philosophy)." (Hunter 2004: 54) But the reading seems inconsistent with Plato's positive evaluation of medicine as a genuine τέχνη in *Republic I*. Though book 1 might be dated much earlier than the rest of the *Republic*, it is unreasonable to suppose that Plato compiles inconsistent pieces into one work.

⁷ Fr. 51, Kirk and Raven 1957: 193.

emotions, perceptions and knowledge come from. (*On the Sacred Disease* 14) It is the interpreter of understanding. (15, 16, 17) When the brain is too hot, too cold, too wet or too dry, it becomes unhealthy. Madness is caused by too much moisture inside the head. Then the brain needs to be put into motion (to remove the superfluous humidity) and thus the sight and hearing cannot be at rest, and the person cannot reason properly. (14) When the brain is damaged by phlegm and bile, people become mad. Being heated or being cooled may change the condition of the brain. (15)

Actually Plato shares the medical view that the “sacred disease” (epilepsy) is caused by phlegm and bile in the brain.⁸ For the brain is the sacred part of our body, the disease is called sacred. (*Timaeus* 85a-b) The author of *On the Sacred Disease* emphasizes that the “sacred disease” is “no more divine nor sacred than other diseases” but can be explained by natural causes. People call it divine because they are unable to comprehend it. This is the way in which the author distinguishes himself from ignorant people. (*On the Sacred Disease* 1) Plato adopts the medical explanation to regard the diseases of the soul as resulted from the condition of the body. Madness is one of the two kinds of disease (the other kind is ignorance). (*Timaeus* 86b) Considering these, once again we find that Plato’s position could not be too anti-materialist. However, he seems not as eager to discharge the divine matters by physical causes as the Hippocratic physicians.⁹

In the *Symposium*, philosophy is colored with a divine hue. The divine hue brings a new reflection on irrationality. In Plato’s early dialogue *Ion*, the requirement of giving a rational account distinguishes the genuine τέχνη from the divine inspiration. In the *Ion*, the rhapsody inspired by divinity—as the author of *On the Sacred Disease* says, one thing is called divine when people cannot comprehend it—is not a genuine τέχνη and thus not knowledge. Ion chooses to be thought divine, when he fails to provide rational explanations for his irrational performance. (*Ion* 542a-b) But in the *Symposium*, the need to go beyond τέχνη is pointed out by Diotima. The communication between god and human being takes place through ἔρωσ. This kind of wisdom is something different from wisdom περὶ τέχνας (about expertise). (203a) The role of Diotima as a priestess from Mantinea (punning on μαντική (divination)) strengthens the divine tone of her teaching. But now it is not irrationality which fails to give an account as in the *Ion*. The ἔρωσ for wisdom is the rational desire which combines both rationality (toward the rational aim, wisdom) and irrationality (urged by irrational ἔρωσ). In Diotima’s teaching for the initiates, when one ascends from the physical level to the end of the education in love, and catches the sight of the beauty of its wonderful nature, the beauty will appear “nor as any rational explanation nor as any knowledge (οὐδέ τις λόγος οὐδέ τις ἐπιστήμη).” (211a7) It does not come short of rationality, but go beyond.

Philosophy as the ἔρωσ for wisdom refers to a special state in the soul. Plato does not emphasize the harmony and health less than any true practitioner of medicine, especially when it is involved with the soul. But to characterize philosophy, Plato needs to go beyond the model of τέχνη. Though the corresponding condition of the body can be explained by physical causes, the harmony of elements in the soul cannot be reduced to a rational balance of the opposite desires. Medicine produces the balance of different elements by evening out variance. But the harmonious soul of Plato’s philosopher contains not only rational, but also irrational elements.

[Reference]

Brandwood, L., “Stylometry and chronology,” in R. Kraut ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, Cambridge, 1992: 90-120.

Burnet, J., ed., *Platonis Opera Tom. II*, Oxford: 1901.

Craik, E. M., “Plato and Medical Texts: Symposium 185c-193d,” *Classical Quarterly* 51.1 (2001): 109-114.

Dover, K., “The date of Plato’s *Symposium*,” *Phronesis* 10, 1965: 2-20.

---, “The Significance of the Speeches in Plato’s *Symposium*,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 2, 1969: 215-34.

Edelstein, L., “The Role of Eryximachus in Plato’s *Symposium*,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 76, 1945: 85-103.

Gill, C., *Plato: the Symposium*, Penguin, 1999.

Howatson, M. C. and Sheffield, F. C. C., eds., Howatson tr., *Plato, the Symposium*, Cambridge, 2008.

Hunter, R., *Plato’s Symposium*, Oxford, 2004.

⁸ On this, “Plato agrees with the Hippocratic author of *On the Sacred Disease* that epilepsy is to be explained by a physical, not a religious, account.” (McPherran 2006: 77) “Plato even goes so far as to implicitly deny the popular view that epilepsy is caused by a divinity.” (77 n.18)

⁹ Even for the Hippocratics, the influence of divinity might still remain. (McPherran 2006: 81)

- Jones, W. H. S., ed., *Hippocrates Collected Works I*, Harvard, 1868. (www.perseus.tufts.edu)
- Kirk, G. S., and Raven, J. E., *The Presocratic Philosophers*, Cambridge, 1957.
- Lamb, W. R. M., *Plato: Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias*, Harvard, 1925.
- Littre, A., ed., *Oeuvres Completes D'Hippocrate, Hippocrates*, Adolf M. Hakkert. (Hippocrates, *De Morbo Sacro* on www.perseus.tufts.edu)
- Lloyd, G. E. R., "The Hot and the Cold, the Dry and the Wet in Greek Philosophy," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 84, 1964: 92-106.
- , "The Medical Τέχνη in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries," *Science and Philosophy in Classical Greece*, ed. A. C. Bowen, Garland, 1991: 249-260; reprinted in *Principles and Practices in Ancient Greek and Chinese Science*, ed. G. E. R. Lloyd, Ashgate, 2006 (same pagination).
- McPherran, M. L., "Medicine, Magic, and Religion in Plato's *Symposium*," in *Plato's Symposium: Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, eds. J. H. Lesher, D. Nails, F. Sheffield, Harvard, 2006: 71-95.
- Morrison, J. S., "Four Notes on Plato's *Symposium*," *Classical Quarterly*, 14: 1, 1964: 42-55.
- Page, T. E., Capps, E., Rouse, W. H. D., Post, A., Warmington, E. H., eds., with an tr. by W. H. S. Jones, *Hippocrates IV, Heracleitus, On the Universe*, Loeb library, Harvard, 1931.
- Slings, S. R., ed., *Platonis Rempublicam*, Oxford, 2003
- .

La medicina di Erissimaco: appunti per una cosmologia dialogica

Silvio Marino

Il discorso di Erissimaco nel *Simposio* è stato definito un *pastiche*, ed effettivamente risulta un insieme di spunti medici e filosofici che hanno come obiettivo l'elogio sia di Eros sia della medicina. Questo *pastiche* colpisce per il tentativo di tenere uniti il tema della discussione, l'amore, e il sapere medico di cui Erissimaco è esperto. Non si può del resto non considerare anche la particolare corrente medica che questo discorso sembra abbracciare, ovvero la scelta di una medicina di stampo *physiologico*, apertamente criticata in *Antica medicina*.

Pur non potendo toccare molti degli innumerevoli spunti che questo brano offre al lettore, quanto vorrei qui sottolineare è la sua vicinanza con il trattato pseudo-ippocratico del *Regime*, soprattutto per quanto riguarda il primo libro. Cercherò di mostrare, seppur brevemente, quali sono i portati dell'incrocio tra questi due scritti e cosa possiamo supporre Platone stia proponendo qui attraverso il personaggio di Erissimaco.

Il discorso in onore di Eros fatto dal medico presenta vari aspetti ed è una sorta di cosmologia erotica, in cui i due amori sono a fondamento di ogni realtà, da quelle complesse come l'uomo a quelle meno complesse come le piante e tutti gli enti, tutte le realtà esistenti¹. Non solo; lo schema generale qui tracciato da Erissimaco contempla anche gli dèi e i rapporti tra gli dèi e gli uomini, ovvero tratta dell'armonia e della concordia che devono esistere tra uomini e dèi. Non si potrebbe avere una teoria più generale di questa.

Ma il duplice amore, che funziona a livello macrocosmico, si ritrova anche all'interno stesso degli enti e ne determina la costituzione e i mutamenti. Ed è in questo ambito che viene enunciato il principio di funzionamento che regola le varie realtà, ovvero il principio di inclusione del simile e di esclusione del dissimile:

La natura dei corpi, infatti, possiede questo duplice amore, in quanto la sanità del corpo e la malattia sono, per riconoscimento comune, diverse e dissimili, ma il dissimile desidera ed ama cose dissimili. Altro è, dunque, l'amore in ciò che è sano e altro in ciò che è malato. (tr. Cambiano)²

Il passo indica che ciò che è diverso è dissimile e pertanto due enti dissimili non possono amare le medesime cose o essere attratti da enti simili. Ciò che è sano desidera ciò che a lui è simile e ciò che è malato ciò che è malato, per una legge universale che è quella per la quale al simile si accompagna sempre il simile.

La strutturazione del corpo umano, così come quella di tutte le realtà, non è neutra, ma opera uno slittamento di senso, a mio avviso, dal concetto di simile al concetto di opposto. Tale slittamento è determinato dalla divisione della realtà in due campi differenti e opposti, ovvero nei due campi del sano e del malato. Nel *Gorgia* si afferma esplicitamente questo principio:

chi sta bene si trova nella condizione opposta di chi sta male, non ti pare?

[...]

Perciò, se sono due condizioni opposte, deve valere per esse ciò che vale per la salute e la malattia: ossia un uomo non può essere sano e malato contemporaneamente, e neppure può liberarsi contemporaneamente della salute e della malattia. (*Gorg.* 495e2-9; tr. Zanetto, lievemente modificata).³

Non si può essere sani e malati allo stesso tempo e non si può non essere contemporaneamente né in una condizione di salute né in una condizione di malattia: *tertium non datur*.

¹ Cfr. *Symp.* 186a3-b2: «ὅτι δὲ οὐ μόνον ἐστὶν ἐπὶ ταῖς ψυχαῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τοὺς καλοὺς ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς ἄλλα πολλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις, τοῖς τε σώμασι τῶν πάντων ζῶων καὶ τοῖς ἐν τῇ γῆ φουμένοις καὶ ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς οὐσι, καθεωρακέναι μοι δοκῶ ἐκ τῆς ἱατρικῆς, τῆς ἡμετέρας τέχνης, ὡς μέγας καὶ θαυμαστὸς καὶ ἐπὶ πάντων ὁ θεὸς τείνει καὶ κατ' ἀνθρώπινα καὶ κατὰ θεῖα πράγματα».

² *Symp.* 186b4-8: «ἡ γὰρ φύσις τῶν σωμάτων τὸν διπλοῦν Ἔρωτα τοῦτον ἔχει· τὸ γὰρ ὑγιὲς τοῦ σώματος καὶ τὸ νοσοῦν ὁμολογουμένως ἕτερόν τε καὶ ἀνόμοιον ἐστὶ, τὸ δὲ ἀνόμοιον ἀνομοίων ἐπιθυμεῖ καὶ ἐρᾷ. ἄλλος μὲν οὖν ὁ ἐπὶ τῷ ὑγιεινῷ ἔρωτος, ἄλλος δὲ ὁ ἐπὶ τῷ νοσώδει».

³ *Gorg.* 495e2-9: «τοὺς εὖ πράττοντας τοῖς κακῶς πράττουσιν οὐ τοῦναντίον ἡγῆ πάθος πεπονθέναι; [...] Ἄρ' οὖν, εἴπερ ἐναντία ἐστὶν ταῦτα ἀλλήλοις, ἀνάγκη περὶ αὐτῶν ἔχειν ὡσπερ περὶ ὑγείας ἔχει καὶ νόσου; οὐ γὰρ ἅμα δῆπου ὑγιαίνει τε καὶ νοσεῖ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, οὐδὲ ἅμα ἀπαλλάττεται ὑγείας τε καὶ νόσου».

Se all'interno del corpo umano si introduce la distinzione tra ciò che è sano e ciò che è malato, allora non può non instaurarsi una dialettica oppositiva all'interno stesso del corpo. Tale dialettica, però, inserita all'interno della costituzione degli enti, opera non solo a livello propriamente medico, ovvero non concerne soltanto le terapie atte a ripristinare uno stato di salute nel corpo, ma opera a livello più generale sul piano della strutturazione stessa degli enti, sia dal punto di vista cosmico (le relazioni tra i vari enti) sia dal punto di vista delle parti costitutive di ogni singolo ente. Infatti Erissimaco esplicita in che modo il medico debba operare:

bisogna appunto essere in grado di rendere amiche e far innamorare reciprocamente nel corpo le proprietà più ostili. E le più ostili sono le più contrarie, il freddo al caldo, l'amaro al dolce, il secco all'umido e così via: per aver saputo produrre tra queste amore e concordia (ὁμόνοιαν) il nostro progenitore Asclepio, come dicono questi poeti ed io ne sono convinto, istituì la nostra tecnica (tr. Cambiano)⁴

Il principio per il quale il simile si unisce al simile si può rintracciare nel *Regime* pseudo-ippocratico, che mostra avere una particolare affinità anche con il discorso che si affronta nel *Timeo* (cfr. 57c2-7)⁵. Nel testo del *Regime* le relazioni di somiglianza si declinano secondo il concetto di "appropriato", espresso con i termini σύμφερον e ὁμότροπον, e queste relazioni determinano l'aggregazione e la disaggregazione dei composti e la posizione delle particelle all'interno degli enti:

non è possibile infatti che ciò che non ha una struttura simile (ὁμότροπον) rimanga in luoghi inappropriati; (tali elementi) pertanto errano senza ragione. Ma una volta mescolati (questi elementi) fanno ciò a cui si uniscono: l'appropriato si unisce all'appropriato, mentre l'inappropriato entra in guerra, combatte e si separa. (*De vict.* I, 6, July 2003 p. 130, 11-15).

La relazione di somiglianza viene espressa, in questo passo, attraverso il concetto di ὁμοτροπία e determina le condizioni di mutamento di luogo. Ma troviamo in questo passo qualcosa in più, perché gli elementi dissimili non sono neutri quanto alle reazioni che generano: essi iniziano a guerreggiare (πολεμεῖ), a farsi battaglia (μάχεται) e quindi si separano (διαλλάσσει). Possiamo ritrovare questa concezione dei mutamenti degli elementi anche nel *Timeo*: in questo dialogo platonico, infatti, gli elementi dissimili e non uniformi ingaggiano una lotta che porta o all'assimilazione dell'elemento debole all'elemento forte oppure comporta uno spostamento dell'elemento debole in un luogo a lui "adatto", "appropriato"⁶.

È importante sottolineare questo aspetto comune alla concezione platonica e a quella del *Regime*, in quanto questa strutturazione della materia si rivela non soltanto all'interno del corpo umano, oggetto proprio della medicina, ma anche all'interno del corpo politico, nelle relazioni tra gli uomini. Il processo di differenziazione cui gli enti sensibili sono soggetti, in quanto mutevoli, produce di fatto una situazione di conflitto tra i vari elementi (siano essi particelle, parti del corpo o uomini), una situazione che all'interno del corpo genera la patologia.

Del resto, il principio per cui enti dissimili producono guerra e conflitto si ritrova in un passo molto interessante del *De flatibus* (altro trattato in cui molti studiosi hanno messo in evidenza le affinità con il discorso di Erissimaco per il tema del *megas dynastes*):

[un regime di questo tipo è cattivo]: quando si ingeriscono cibi variati e tra di loro dissimili: le cose dissimili infatti entrano in conflitto (στασιάζει) e alcune sono digerite più rapidamente, altre più lentamente (*Des vents* VII, 1, Jouanna p. 111, 5-7)⁷.

Il compito del medico, sia per Erissimaco sia per l'autore di *Venti*, è quello di equilibrare i cibi e gli elementi presenti nel corpo. È questo il senso dell'operazione che rende amiche le proprietà più

⁴ *Symp.* 186d5-e1: «δεῖ γὰρ δὴ τὰ ἔχθιστα ὄντα ἐν τῷ σώματι φίλα οἶόν τ' εἶναι ποιεῖν καὶ ἐρᾶν ἀλλήλων. ἔστι δὲ ἔχθιστα τὰ ἐναντιώτατα, ψυχρὸν θερμῷ, πικρὸν γλυκεῖ, ξηρὸν ὑγρῷ, πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα· τοῦτοις ἐπιστηθεὶς ἔρωτα ἐμποῖησαι καὶ ὁμόνοιαν ὁ ἡμέτερος πρόγονος Ἀσκληπιός, ὅς φασιν οἶδε οἱ ποιηταὶ καὶ ἐγὼ πείθομαι, συνέστησεν τὴν ἡμετέραν τέχνην.»

⁵ *Tim.* 57c2-7: «le masse di ciascun elemento si distribuiscono in base al luogo che è loro proprio in virtù del movimento del ricettacolo che li accoglie, ma quelle parti di esse che di volta in volta divengono da sé dissimili e simili ad altre sono trascinate via, per il grande sommovimento, verso il luogo che è proprio di quelle cui sono divenute simili (διέστηκεν μὲν γὰρ τοῦ γένους ἐκάστου τὰ πλήθη κατὰ τόπον ἴδιον διὰ τὴν τῆς δεχομένης κίνησιν, τὰ δὲ ἀνομοιοῦμενα ἐκάστοτε ἑαυτοῖς, ἄλλοις δὲ ὁμοιοῦμενα, φέ-ρεται διὰ τὸν σεισμὸν πρὸς τὸν ἐκείνων οἷς ἂν ὁμοιωθῆ τόπον)» (tr. Fronterotta).

⁶ *Tim.* 57a7b7; tr. Fronterotta leggermente modificata.

⁷ *Des vents* VII, 1, Jouanna p. 111, 5-7: «ὅταν ποικίλας καὶ ἀνομοίους ἀλλήλησιν ἐσπέμῃ τροφὰς· τὰ γὰρ ἀνόμοια στασιάζει καὶ τὰ μὲν θάσσον, τὰ δὲ σχολαίτερον πέσσειται.»

nemiche tra di loro.

Per quanto riguarda questa operazione di accordo, il discorso di Erissimaco e il testo del *Regime* presentano una particolare affinità sia terminologica sia concettuale. Nel discorso del *Simposio*, infatti, Erissimaco introduce i termini *symphonia* e *harmonia* ed entrambi i testi utilizzano la tecnica musicale per spiegare i processi che avvengono nel corpo. Il termine *symphonia* occorre soltanto in questo trattato pseudo-ippocratico e il termine *harmonia* ha sette occorrenze nel *Corpus hippocraticum*, di cui ben quattro nel *Regime*. A partire da queste convergenze possiamo proporre un parallelo tra questi due testi e ipotizzare il senso del discorso di Erissimaco.

Nel *Simposio*, dopo aver citato liberamente Eraclito (B 51), commentandone l'assurdità dell'affermazione, Erissimaco interpreta in questo modo il senso del pensiero del filosofo di Efeso:

Ma forse voleva dire questo, cioè che da elementi prima discordi (διαφερομένων), l'acuto e il grave, dopo che questi si sono accordati (ὁμολογησάντων) per opera della tecnica musicale, nasce in seguito l'armonia, perché certamente dal grave e dall'acuto ancora discordi non potrebbe nascere armonia, dato che l'armonia è consonanza (συμφωνία) e la consonanza è un certo tipo di accordo (ὁμολογία τις) – e che un accordo (ὁμολογία) risulti da elementi discordi, finché discordano, è impossibile, come è impossibile, d'altra parte, armonizzare ciò che è discorde e non si accorda (διαφερόμενον δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ μὴ ὁμολογοῦν ἀδύνατον ἀρμόσαι) (*Symp.* 187a8-b7; tr. Cambiano)⁸.

L'interpretazione del pensiero eracliteo, chiaramente piegata da Platone ai fini del discorso di Erissimaco, serve a far passare una serie di assimilazioni le quali tendono a mostrare che in realtà ogni operazione che la medicina e il medico possono realizzare si risolve nell'accordo, nella *homologia*, termine, quest'ultimo, non neutro per la dialettica platonica. È indicativo, inoltre, il fatto che si accosti il concetto di *homologia* a quello di *harmonia* (con l'uso del verbo corradicale *harmosai*). Se il *dialegesthai* individua nella *homologia* un concetto molto preciso, ovvero l'accordo che arriva alla fine di un dialogo condotto correttamente, in cui si giunge a una posizione condivisa dagli interlocutori, il concetto di *harmonia* indica qualcosa di più ampio e che può essere utilizzato in diversi contesti. Questo concetto può infatti indicare un patto stipulato tra uomini, i legamenti della zattera di Odisseo, un accordo musicale, o anche un legame costitutivo di un *holon*. Con l'accostamento dei due concetti di *homologia* e di *harmonia* Platone allarga il campo semantico del concetto di *homologia* e lo rende estendibile a quelle realtà che non si pongono primariamente in un orizzonte dialogico.

Nel *Regime* il ricorso alla musica viene usato nel medesimo spirito: la musica serve a mostrare e a spiegare i processi di mutamento, di agglomerazione e di disgregazione delle particelle che non possono essere colti dall'esperienza sensibile:

Una volta che [queste particelle] hanno cambiato luogo e che hanno trovato una corretta armonia che ha rapporti musicali secondo le tre consonanze, la quarta, la quinta e l'ottava, esse vivono e aumentano grazie agli stessi alimenti di cui fruivano precedentemente; ma se esse non trovano l'armonia, se cioè i suoni gravi non sono consonanti con quelli acuti nel primo intervallo o nel secondo o nell'ottava, mancando uno solo di essi, tutto l'accordo è senza effetto.⁹

Il passo appena citato si riferisce ai processi che investono il corpo umano, oggetto di trattazione specifica a partire dal capitolo VII del primo libro del *Regime*. Non penso possa essere casuale il richiamo alla musica e ai concetti di *harmonia* e di *symphonia* nel discorso di Erissimaco, sia se pensiamo a un'influenza diretta dell'uno sull'altro sia se pensiamo a una matrice comune, a un immaginario comune della riflessione medica e fisica del cosmo e dell'uomo.

Del resto, quanto occorre sottolineare dell'ampiezza della spiegazione fornita da Erissimaco è il fatto che essa riesce a mettere in connessione il microcosmo col macrocosmo, anche in relazione alle realtà fisiche esterne all'uomo: è il caso dell'alternarsi delle stagioni dell'anno e della costituzione di ognuna di esse (ἢ τῶν ὥρων τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ σύστασις). Infatti anche qui compare il lessico della tecnica musicale:

⁸ *Symp.* 187a8-b7 «ἀλλὰ ἴσως τόδε ἐβούλετο λέγειν, ὅτι ἐκ διαφερομένων πρότερον τοῦ ὀξέος καὶ βαρέος, ἔπειτα ὕστερον ὁμολογησάντων γέγονεν ὑπὸ τῆς μουσικῆς τέχνης, οὐ γὰρ δήπου ἐκ διαφερομένων γε ἔτι τοῦ ὀξέος καὶ βαρέος ἀρμονία ἂν εἴη· ἢ γὰρ ἀρμονία συμφωνία ἐστίν, συμφωνία δὲ ὁμολογία τις – ὁμολογίαν δὲ ἐκ διαφερομένων, ἕως ἂν διαφέρωνται, ἀδύνατον εἶναι· διαφερόμενον δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ μὴ ὁμολογοῦν ἀδύνατον ἀρμόσαι».

⁹ *De vict.* I, VIII, Joly, *CMG*, p. 132, 6-10: «χώρην δὲ ἀμείναντα καὶ τυχόντα ἀρμονίης ὀρθῆς ἐχούσης συμφωνίας τρεῖς, συλλαβὴν, δι' ὀξέων, διὰ πασέων, ζῶει καὶ αὐξεται τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν, οἷσί περ καὶ πρόσθεν· ἦν δὲ μὴ τύχη τῆς ἀρμονίης, μηδὲ σύμφωνα τὰ βαρῆα τοῖσιν ὀξέσι γένηται ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ συμφωνίῃ ἢ τῇ δευτέρῃ ἢ τῇ διὰ παντὸς, ἐνὸς ἀπογενομένου πᾶς ὁ τόπος μάταιος».

Il fatto è che anche la costituzione delle stagioni dell'anno è piena di entrambi questi amori e quando quei contrari che dicevo poco fa, il caldo e il freddo, il secco e l'umido, abbiano raggiunto reciprocamente l'amore ordinato e abbiano assunto una saggia armonia e mescolanza (καὶ ἁρμονίαν καὶ κρᾶσιν λάβη σῶφρονα), allora il loro arrivo apporta buona annata e salute agli uomini, agli altri animali e alle piante e nulla compie ingiustizia (καὶ οὐδὲν ἠδίκησεν). (*Symp.* 188a1-6; tr. Cambiano leggermente modificata)¹⁰.

Il principio della *harmonia* si declina, come per le proprietà costituenti l'uomo, così anche per quelle che costituiscono le stagioni. Innanzitutto possiamo notare che le proprietà che vengono citate, che possono dirsi "classiche" nei trattati medici o nella speculazione *peri physeos*, sono le coppie caldo/freddo e secco/umido. Queste due coppie sono anche le istanze prime della costituzione dell'universo per l'autore del *Regime*, in quanto tutto si genera attraverso i due elementi del fuoco e dell'acqua, che hanno come proprietà rispettivamente il caldo e il secco e il freddo e l'umido (cfr. il capitolo IV del primo libro). Ma Erissimaco procede nell'esposizione dell'azione di eros facendo slittare il senso da un piano fisiologico a un piano prettamente morale: spia di ciò è il verbo ἠδίκησεν che compare alla fine del passo citato. Il riferimento alla tecnica musicale, presa come paradigma esplicativo di tutte le realtà (corporali e ambientali), viene arricchito da un cortocircuito semantico per il quale la *harmonia* e la *symphonia* fanno sì che nulla "compia ingiustizia", il che equivale a dire che *harmonia* e *symphonia* producono e ingenerano in qualsiasi essere giustizia.

Il quadro tratteggiato da Erissimaco riesce a raggruppare assieme piani di discorso differenti presi da vari settori del sapere e a ricostruire un senso profondo. Ed è a questo livello, che sbaglieremmo a definire "astratto" *tout court*, che possiamo leggere il lessico proprio del *dialegesthai* platonico in un'altra prospettiva da quella che concerne prettamente lo scambio dialogico tra gli interlocutori di un dialogo.

Se vogliamo tirare le somme di quanto esposto precedentemente, possiamo intravedere in che modo Platone si appropri di tutto un armamentario concettuale proprio della medicina di stampo *physiologico* e riesca a fonderla con dinamiche e concetti propri della discussione dialogica e politica. Se poniamo attenzione ai passi e traiamo le conclusioni per quanto riguarda le assimilazioni operate da Platone ci troviamo di fronte a questa catena di termini: *eros-homonoia-armonia-symphonia-homologia-sophron-dikaion*.

Gli slittamenti di piano dei termini impiegati da Erissimaco mostrano il passaggio da un piano biologico a un piano "erotico" (eros), un piano politico (*homonoia*), un piano biologico e musicale fino ad arrivare a un piano etico. Se prendiamo questa prospettiva per inquadrare il senso del discorso del medico, possiamo immaginare che qui Platone stia suggerendo, attraverso la bocca di Erissimaco, una sorta di cosmologia dialogica, in cui tutto il cosmo, nei suoi diversi piani strutturali, è legato da una logica biologica, il cui dispositivo funziona per esclusione del dissimile (che genera *adikia*) e inclusione del simile (che genera *harmonia*, *symphonia*, *homologia* e *homonoia*) e che viene non a caso a investire il piano dialogico e il piano prettamente politico: il termine *homonoia* infatti in Platone si trova in contesti esclusivamente politici e indica il corretto sistema di relazioni tra gli uomini, che non è altro poi che la giustizia.

Il discorso di Erissimaco è, da questa prospettiva, una sorta di appunti non sistematizzati di una cosmologia dialogica, che trova la propria sponda ancora una volta nel primo libro del *Regime*, nel capitolo undicesimo:

Tutte le cose, infatti, sono simili, pur essendo dissimili; tutte sono compatibili, pur essendo incompatibili; tutte dialogano, pur non dialogando; tutte hanno intelligenza pur essendone prive; il modo di ciascuna cosa è contrario pur accordandosi (ὁμολογούμενος). Il *nomos* e la *physis*, attraverso i quali facciamo tutto, non si accordano pur accordandosi.¹¹

Anche nel *Regime* occorrono termini molto prossimi all'elaborazione concettuale del *dialegesthai* così com'è pensato da Platone, e anche qui questi concetti non servono semplicemente a spiegare soltanto

¹⁰ *Symp.* 188a1-6: «ἐπεὶ καὶ ἡ τῶν ὀρῶν τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ σύστασις μεστή ἐστὶν ἀμφοτέρων τούτων, καὶ ἐπειδὴν μὲν πρὸς ἄλληλα τοῦ κοσμοῦ τύχη ἔρωτος ἂν νυνδὴ ἐγὼ ἔλεγον, τὰ τε θερμὰ καὶ τὰ ψυχρὰ καὶ ξηρὰ καὶ ὑγρὰ, καὶ ἁρμονίαν καὶ κρᾶσιν λάβη σῶφρονα, ἥκει φέροντα εὐετηρίαν τε καὶ ὑγίειαν ἀνθρώποις καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ζῴοις τε καὶ φυτοῖς, καὶ οὐδὲν ἠδίκησεν».

¹¹ *Regime* I, XI, πάντα γὰρ ὅμοια, ἀνόμοια ἔοντα· καὶ σύμφωνα πάντα, διάφορα ἔοντα· διαλεγόμενα, οὐ διαλεγόμενα· γνώμην ἔχοντα, ἀγνώμονα. ὑπεναντίος ὁ τρόπος ἐκάστων ὁμολογούμενος. Νόμος γὰρ καὶ φύσις, οἷσι πάντα διαπρησόμεθα, οὐχ ὁμολογεῖται ὁμολογούμενα. (Joly 2003 *CMG* pp. 134, 24-136, 1).

dei fenomeni fisici; essi servono a ricostruire i diversi piani di realtà attraverso una struttura relazionale improntata a rapporti oppositivo-polari.

Il discorso di Erissimaco, da questo particolare angolo visuale, introduce quindi concetti biologici all'interno stesso della pratica dialogica (e politica) e viceversa. L'uso da parte di Erissimaco di termini come *homologia* e *homonoia* apre a una prospettiva dialogica e politica per quanto concerne tutte le realtà esistenti. In questo modo il medico del *Simposio* produce un doppio movimento concettuale (presente anche nel I libro del *Regime*) per cui dal dialogico si passa al biologico e dal biologico al dialogico, ovvero instaura una comunicazione tra due piani: quello della *physis* e quello della *techné*.

Il risultato degli slittamenti di senso risulta essere doppio. Da un lato, infatti, si introduce nel campo del dialogico una dinamica necessaria (di derivazione biologica) in cui i rapporti tra gli elementi seguono il principio del "simile"; dall'altro, all'interno del campo cosmologico-antropologico, servendosi di principi dialogici applicati al piano fisico, si propone una sorta di cosmologia dialogica che riesce a legare i diversi piani di realtà in cui l'uomo si trova a essere.

BIBLIOGRAFIA MINIMA

E.M. Craik, *Plato and medical texts: Symposium: 185c–193d*, in «*Classical Quarterly*» LI, 2001, pp.109-114.

L. Edelstein, *The Role of Eryximachus in Plato's Symposium*, in «*Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* Vol. 76, (1945), pp. 85-103».

S.B. Levin, *Eryximachus's tale: The Symposium's role in Plato's Critique of medicine*, in «*Apeiron*» 2009, XLII, pp. 275-308.

R. Joly, *Recherches sur le traité pseudo-hippocratique du Régime*, Paris 1960.

P. Laspia, *L'articolazione linguistica. Origini biologiche di una metafora*, NIS, Roma 1997.

A. Thivel, *Eryximaque et le principe des contraires*, in «*Cuadernos de filología clásica*» (G) XIV, 2004, pp. 35-44.

R. Wardy, *The unity of opposites in Plato's Symposium*, in «*Oxford studies in ancient philosophy*», XXIII, 2002, pp. 1-61.

Eryximachus' Physical Theory in Plato's *Symposium*

Richard D. Parry

ABSTRACT

In line with recent attempts to defend the coherence of Eryximachus' speech, this paper will explore the similarity between his account of double eros and Empedocles' account of Love and Strife. I assume that, in basing Eryximachus' account on Empedocles', Plato is offering a variation of the latter that deserves serious consideration. Empedocles posits four roots: fire, air, water, and earth (B6). These are not the mutually aggressive opposites, found in Anaximander and Heraclitus, that devour one another. Rather, they either cohere with or flee one another, depending on whether Love or Strife rules (B17, 23). Eryximachus' theory is similar—but only to a point. His speech begins with a medical theory in which appetites are subject either to noble eros (which is orderly and healthful) or to base eros (which is hubristic, causing disease). Medicine, which institutes noble eros in place of the base, is knowledge about bodily desires' (*tôn erôtikôn*) filling and emptying. This medical theory finds some important parallels in the account of medicine in the *Gorgias*, especially in the relation of health to orderly appetites and of disease to undisciplined ones (493e-494a; 500e-501c; 503e-505b; 517d-518d). For Eryximachus, whether the appetites are healthy or not depends on whether noble eros rules the opposites that compose the body, instituting not only desire (*eros*) but also accord (*homoia*) among cold and hot, bitter and sweet, dry and moist (186a-e). In Eryximachus' account of the system of the seasons, we can see how noble eros institutes accord among opposites. When noble eros unites hot, cold, dry, and moist in harmony and temperate mixture (*harmonian kai krasin...sôphrona*), fertility and health result for humans, animals, and plants. When base eros rules, the opposites destroy one another and commit injustice, resulting in pestilence and disease (188a-b). First, then, unlike Empedocles, Eryximachus keeps the opposites, as found in, e.g., Anaximander (B1). Second, noble eros affects both bodily appetites and the opposites. Thus, we need not suppose that eros in bodily desires is different from eros among the opposites—as some hold. If we suppose that, in Anaximander and Heraclitus, the opposites consume one another because of desire, the desire would be like hunger or thirst. A variation on this kind of opposition would have them sexually desire one another, like lovers. Then the hot would have a desire for its opposite, the cold, to fill some lack it has. If noble eros rules, the hot is filled without completely destroying the cold and committing injustice. Since the same can be said for the desire of the cold for the hot, they achieve harmony with respect to their desires; thus, noble eros causes friendship and accord. This type of integration of elements into a larger whole makes their coherence into a regulated mutual dependence. It is what we would call chemical—and, as we shall see, has advantages over Empedocles' combination of elements. Still, Eryximachus' account has other deficiencies, given its position in the series of speeches.

The concept of harmony (187 a-e) and its cosmological role in Eryximachus' discourse

Laura Candiotta

Introduction

This article aims to analyze the role of harmony specifically in the Symposium 187a-e and, more generally, in Eryximachus' discourse. In opposition to those who consider Eryximachus a pedant¹, whose discourse is refuted by Diotima's discourse², the paper proposes an interpretation emphasizing literary and philosophical aspects which enable us to grasp the positive significance carried by Eryximachus' discourse within the *Symposium*³.

After having analyzed Eryximachus' character and its role in the dialogue, the concept of "harmony" will be explored in relation to pre-Socratic physics and Hippocratic medicine. The aim of this article is to evaluate the philosophical import of a "cosmological medicine", emphasizing how this concept recurs also in other dialogues, and to present reasons for considering it as an expression of platonic philosophy.

Eryximachus and the medicine of IV Century

Eryximachus⁴ is a *physikos* belonging to a family of doctors⁵ (his father is Acumenus) whose members trace their origin back to Asclepius. As a platonic character, we find him – in addition to the *Symposium* – in *Protagoras* 315c, where he questions Hippias about nature, astronomy and meteorology. Moreover, he is cited in Phaedrus 268a as Phaedrus's friend⁶. In these three occasions he is presented as a friend of Phaedrus, so his relationship with him developed at least from 433/432 BC, dramatic dating of *Protagoras*, to 416 BC, dramatic dating of the *Symposium*. One Eryximachus is cited among those who desecrate the Herms in 415, but it is not clear whether or not he is the Eryximachus we are referring to.

Eryximachus represents temperance or – we could say on the basis of what will be demonstrated below – the concept of harmony: as a symposiarch he decides a correct balance to the proportions of water and wine⁷, as a doctor he proposes a therapy for Aristophanes' hiccups⁸, as a good musician he establishes the order of discourses and restores it after the disorder generated by Alcibiades' arrival⁹. The characterization of Eryximachus reflects thus the content conveyed by his encomium of Eros and by his prominent position in the dialogue¹⁰. Arguably, grasping these aspects enables us to question, at least partially, the assumption that Eryximachus' discourse is pedantic and sophistic.

Plato intervened with a discourse of this type in the debate¹¹ concerning the relation between philosophy and medicine, which develops in the fifth Century due to the establishment of Hippocratic medicine¹². In the discourse of Eryximachus, Plato places himself between Empedocles and the Ionics on the one hand and Hippocrates on the other¹³. The discourse is thought also as a response to Eleatism and Heraclitism in relation to the nature of the compounds.

The Cosmological role of harmony

We are going to highlight now the aspects of closeness and distance between Eryximachus' discourse and each of these positions, in particular in relation to the cosmological role of harmony, to the

¹ Bury 1909, Robin 1929, Dover 1980, Rosen 1987, Nehamas 1989.

² For example Corrigan 2004.

³ In line with Edlestein 1945, Konstan, Young-Bruehl 1982, Rowe 1999, Hunter 2004, McPerrhan 2006, Cooksey 2010.

⁴ Nails 2002.

⁵ Plat., *Symp.* 214b.

⁶ Cf. also Plat., *Symp.* 177a.

⁷ Plat., *Symp.* 176b, 214b.

⁸ Plat., *Symp.* 185c7-8.

⁹ Plat. *Symp.* 223b.

¹⁰ In agreement with what has been demonstrated by Edlestein 1945, in particular cf. p. 99.

¹¹ Cambiano 1991, Longrigg 1993, Vegetti 1995.

¹² Edlestein 1945.

¹³ Jouanna 1961.

observation of nature and in general to the relationship between philosophy and physics¹⁴. By focusing on these themes it is possible to individuate more clearly the platonic position present in Eryximachus's discourse.

Eryximachus's discourse can be subdivided into six sections¹⁵

Prologue: Eryximachus refers to the discourse of Pausanias saying that it is right to retain a double nature for Eros but such double nature needs to be extended to the whole cosmos.

Section 1: Eros and medicine. The body manifests Eros' double nature in the coexistence of healthy desires and unhealthy desires. Medicine is the science of the erotic tendencies of the body to fill and empty itself. It enables the distinction between healthy and unhealthy desires. The task of the doctor is to transform the fight between the two Eros in friendship by operating on opposites: cold/hot, bitter/sweet, dry/humid.

Section 2: Eros and music. Eryximachus comments Eraclitus' fragment DK 22 b51, interpreting it from a temporal perspective: the doctor musician is able to create harmony from an initial discord. He operates thus through a technique which is able to transform the discordant into concordant. Music is then the science of love of harmony and rhythm. It is important to take care of both forms of Eros, using cautiously that of the muse Polyhymnia, enjoying its pleasure without falling sick.

Section 3: Eros and meteorology and astronomy. Prosperity and Health happen when the opposites find themselves reciprocally united in an ordered love and support each other in harmony and temperate mixture. When excessive Eros prevails (*hybreos Eros*), which leads to imbalance, we witness epidemics, disease and destruction.

Section 4: Eros and religion. Friendship between men and Gods happens by seconding ordered Eros.

Epilogue: Eryximachus concludes by saying that Eros possesses a universal power and that happiness comes from that Eros which aims to the good with justness and moderation. He passes then the baton to Aristophanes inviting him to fill the gaps in his speech.

This article focuses on Section two, but it is immediately evident that this section is intertwined with the other sections, thus it is fundamental to interpret it through an analysis of the comprehensive significance of Eryximachus' discourse and of the role that he plays in the dialogue.

Already in section one the text clearly reveals the relevance Eryximachus attributes to the praxis which establishes friendship between previously contrasting forces. Nature is composed of opposite forces whose dynamics create movement and transformation. The doctor qua good physicist and knower of the cosmos must know the Erotic tendencies of elements in order to help them to come together in relations of mutual friendship. In Eryximachus' discourse, Empedocle's two cosmic forces – *philia* and *neikos* – assume an immanent character as forces that compose nature in ordered and disordered forms. Equilibrium is dynamic¹⁶: in Empedoclean terms, it is possible to maintain that the predominance of *philia* on *neikos* does not cancel *neikos* but shapes it in the right proportion. Eryximachus transforms thus the Empedoclean perspective which defines the starting point of his discourse by emphasizing the necessary coexistence of the two forces¹⁷. Such coexistence will not be conflictual as in Eraclitus, but it will unfold in harmonic proportion. In the second section Eryximachus transforms in fact Eraclitus' own maxim to his own advantage. Harmony is not realized by discordant things but by transforming discordant things into concordant ones. For Eryximachus, Eraclitus intended to say that harmony is realized by things that before were discordant and that, thanks to medical praxis, become concordant. Harmony is in fact both consonance (*symphonia*), and agreement (*omologia*). The physics described by Eryximachus is not an ordered and harmonic whole but a world in movement and transformation that must be ordered by a doctor-demiurge following the principle of harmony¹⁸. In this way, E. emphasizes the role of technique¹⁹ and of human action in the universe. Such a role consists of creating a dynamic equilibrium by transforming discordant forces into concordant ones, without falling into the error of eliminating one of the two poles but finding the right rhythm to enjoy the pleasure that the negative force offers whence a relation is established with the positive one. Moderation or temperance is not thus the dictatorship of the positive, but the right proportion between the different constituents of the universe, like the right proportion between water

¹⁴ The study of Jouanna (1998) is crucial on this issue.

¹⁵ In this division, I am following Bury 1976.

¹⁶ Interestingly, this concept will be taken up in Roman times by the Pneumatics, whilst in the nineties of the last century research on physiology of stress led to the revision of the traditional concept of homeostasis (restoration of the same equilibrium) and its substitution with the concept of allostasis (different equilibrium). Cf. Bottaccioli 2010, p. 25.

¹⁷ It is important to notice that in section two Eryximachus says that he is taking care also of the Eros of the muse Polyhymnia.

¹⁸ According to McPherran the interpretation of Heraclitus' maxim demonstrates the fact that Eryximachus is not a "slave to pre-Socratic science". Mc Pherran 2006, p. 80, n27.

¹⁹ For a detailed analysis of the concept in comparison to that present in *Gorgias*, cf. Levin 2009.

and wine to prevent intoxication, as explained by Eryximachus in 176c1-e3.

Rhythm, which transforms the fast and the slow from discordant to concordant, is realized thanks to numeric harmony. In this perspective Eryximachus refers explicitly to the Pythagorean doctrine²⁰ and establishes a relation between the harmony which manifests itself in the cosmos and an “invisible” harmony. In fact it is the number²¹, a being that is invisible yet present in the visible, which creates harmony within the proportional relation. Musical harmony, which can be perceived through ears but which is realized through the numerical proportion between high-pitched and low pitched sounds is thus the bond holding together body and soul²², the sensible and ideas. Conversely, celestial harmony does not possess the double nature of Eros: Eryximachus argues in fact that in harmony itself (thus in the idea of harmony) there is no duality²³. Duality is rather the model according to which the musician-demiurges must order the opposite forces which are present in the *physis*. The medical-demiurgical-musical art thus implies the restoration of a hidden proportion.²⁴

Eryximachus’ discourse distinguishes thus two harmonizing actions: one creates harmony in the sensible universe on the model of the intelligible; the other creates harmony between the sensible and the intelligible.

The topic of the cosmological function of celestial harmony obviously recalls the *Timaeus*. This dialogue clearly explains that the harmony of the microcosm should be related to that of the macrocosm. Accordingly, the health of the body will be properly defined as the right equilibrium among elements²⁵, the health of the soul as the absence of excesses in the constitution of its nature, good education and mode of life. Music²⁶ absolves the task of healing the soul by restoring the balance lost²⁷ through incarnation. The right proportion amongst elements is intended by *Timaeus* as conformity to nature, imbalance as a disorder that creates illness in the body and the soul. In fact, nature has been created by the demiurge in the best possible way, yet it presents imbalances due to the disorder of elements in the *chora*. This explains the necessity of the ordering role of a magistrate-demiurge who legislates, as well as the healing practice of a doctor who heals the soul and the body²⁸ taking as a model the constitution of the Universe²⁹. In the *Philebus*³⁰, the Good performs the function of a good mixture so that the elements are well blended, insofar as, once again, an incorrect relation between elements causes the ruin of the whole within which they are contained.

The composition of elements

How are elements composed?³¹

Eryximachus’ discourse presents the theory of the composition of contraries, based on the law that “the similar loves the similar”³². Eryximachus therefore endorses the concept of harmony as unity of opposites, yet in a way different from Heraclitus: the unity in question is possible only if the opposites become friends, transforming their nature from that of discordant opposites to a composition of similar elements (i.e. to that of concordant ones). A qualitative change takes place. Friendship does not imply a shift from opposition to identity, but from opposition to the proportion

²⁰ For Pitagoras cosmic harmony depends on the unity produced by the tension between opposites and its essence is in numbers in the opposition between the even and the odd. Cf. for example Philolaus, 44 a1 DK.

²¹ It is the number that enables a Harmonic combination intended as limit between high and low pitched sounds Cf. *Phl.* 26a3-5

²² Pelosi 2010.

²³ *Symp.* 187 c5-7.

²⁴ Jaeger 1936, Reale 1999.

²⁵ The illnesses of the body caused by a disequilibrium of elements are described in *Tim.* 81e6-86a8.

²⁶ Also the word, if it is that of true rhetoric, absolves the task of *pharmakon*. On this topic I refer to the second chapter of my monography, Candiotta 2012, with the intention to explore further the theme of the analogy between music and true rhetoric – especially in Phaedrus and Gorgias – in the near future. To emphasize the centrality of this theme it suffices to mention – focusing on the symposium – the definition of Socrates as a flautist in *Symp.* 215b8.

²⁷ *Tim.* 47 c-e. Cf. Barker 2000, Barker 2005, pp. 125-126.

²⁸ *Tim.* 88b5-c1

²⁹ *Tim.* c7-d1

³⁰ *Phil.* 64d9-65a5.

³¹ The *Timaeus*, again, is of fundamental importance in addressing this question. In particular, the theory of the composition of elements through the mélange of Same and Different is presented in the passage 35a-b. For our study it is important to emphasize the role played by harmony in inducing the Different, refractory to composition, to mix with the Identical. Compositions in fact will be born from the union and subsequent subdivision in parts (through particular numerical proportions) of Identical, Different and intermediate substance. Compositions are thus born from three elements, thanks to the primary harmonizing work of the demiurge, who operates on the two opposite principles of the Same and the Different. For further reading, Cf. Brisson 1998.

³² Thivel (2004) questions whether Eryximachus’ theory is to be considered mainly as a theory of the opposites, arguing for the preeminence of the theory of the similar in his discourse.

between similar elements. Proportion pertains in fact to the correct measure, the reciprocal relation between different elements. Through a quantitative transformation (in other words, by creating the right proportion) the contrasting relation between elements becomes harmonic. Elements change their oppositional qualities thanks to a quantitative change. For this reason Eryximachus maintains that Polyhymnian Eros must be retained but that its presence must be well proportioned in relation to that of Uranian Eros. The duality of Eros is functional therefore to the medical concept of harmonic proportion between elements.

Eryximachus is able to elaborate this perspective not only thanks to Pythagorean, Empedoclean and Eraclitean contributes, but also thanks to his medical formation.

Medicine and philosophy emerge in fact from the same cultural and professional substratum, with ample and persistent reciprocal influences³³. For example, the combination between Crotoniate medicine and Pythagoreanism can be traced back to the first historically known philosopher-doctor, Alcmaeon. We owe him the first definition of health and illness based on the concepts of harmony and equilibrium. Even if Empedocles' medical praxis is quite different from that of Hippocrates, the former's work was to inspire the latter's theory of four elements.

Hippocrates, albeit younger, is Plato's contemporary. It is therefore easy to think that Plato, through Eryximachus, presents a medical theory which entertained a dialogical relation with the Hippocratic one³⁴.

Eryximachus between Plato and Hippocrates

An important point to be established is whether Eryximachus' discourse is characterized more by a Hippocratic conception, a platonic one or by a combination of the two.

The cosmological significance of medicine is ascribed to Hippocrates by Plato himself in *Phaedrus* 270 c-d, when Phaedrus tells Socrates that not only the nature of the soul, but also that of the body cannot be known without knowing the nature of the Whole.

Greek medicine focuses from the beginning on the natural context in which life manifests itself. Knowing the physical environment in a broad sense, from stars to waters to air, is crucial in order to know the human being and the conditions of health and disease³⁵. In *Airs, Waters and Places* the healthy city is characterized by equilibrate seasons: such equilibrium is the equivalent of moderation (*metriotes*), a state where there are not sudden changes (*metabolè*). Such changes are the ecological equivalent of *hybris*; excess in its moral dimension.

These elements are present in Eryximachus' discourse (it is possible to mention here *hybreos eros*, cited specifically in relation to seasons,³⁶ and its continuous emphasis on caution and temperance) and recur also in other platonic passages: in the already mentioned *Timaeus* but also in *Charmides*³⁷, in relation to the cure for the headache of Charmides, and in the final of *Phaedrus*³⁸.

In the second section, Eryximachus talks about meteorology³⁹. This is a clear reference to those texts of Hippocratic medicine⁴⁰ which refer to cosmological medicine. This medicine is also recalled in the usage of the Hippocratic word for equilibrium, *eukrasia*, literally "good mixture" which is used in *Timaeus*⁴¹ in relation to the right combination of seasons, but not in Eryximachus' discourse, where the term used is *harmonia*. Plato uses in Eryximachus' discourse the word *harmonia* in the second and third section as, in my opinion, he aims to emphasize how this relation of proportion between different elements, typical of musical harmony, is present from a cosmological perspective in the combination of seasons. Moreover, in the passage 188 a4, which concerns the seasons, Plato uses next to the word *harmonia* the term *krasis*, mixture, to recall not only Empedocles but also Hippocrates and to emphasize how Hippocratic *eukrasia* assumes a philosophical meaning whether conceived together with *harmonia*. In the *Philebus* musical harmony is realized through the combination of the Limited and the Limitless and – an aspect particularly relevant for our study – in

³³ Regarding the complex primal intertwining between philosophy and medicine, classical literature establishes the supremacy of philosophy over medicine (Edelstein 1987, Cambiano 1991), whilst a reading which emphasizes the foundational contribution of medicine towards philosophy has been advanced in more recent years.

³⁴ Hippocrates has been cited in *Prt.* 311b-c, *Phdr.* 270 c-d, *Chrm.* 156 e.

³⁵ Edelstein individuates the general atmosphere of Eryximachus' encomium in the Hippocratic text *On the Art*, cf. Edelstein 1945, p.90. Konstan, Young-Bruehl in the Hippocratic text *On Regimen*, cf. Konstan, Young-Bruehl 1982, p.42.

³⁶ *Symp.* 188a7.

³⁷ *Charm.* 155e.5-157c6.

³⁸ *Phaedr.* 279 b9-c5.

³⁹ Cf. Gaudin 1970 for the meaning of meteorology in Plato's philosophy.

⁴⁰ Cf. Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*.

⁴¹ *Tim.* 24 c6.

26b1-3 Socrates applies this concept to seasons.

The harmony of opposites is connected by Eryximachus, however briefly, to divination and religious practice. Again in the *Timaeus*⁴² we find a reference consistent with this topic, concerning the mixture of opposites within the liver that enables the operation of divination during sleep⁴³. This passage enables us to grasp how the law of harmony acts not only between congener elements but, like in this case, also between images and physical elements – sweet and bitter – that constitute the liver.

These passages – it would be possible to mention and analyze many others – are in my opinion the sign of a general⁴⁴ thematic concordance between Plato and Hippocrates in relation to a “cosmological medicine” and, more specifically, the sign of a conformity between Eryximachus discourse and platonic philosophy⁴⁵. In the meanwhile, however, Plato’s effort in detecting and incrementing the philosophical meaning of Hippocratic medicine testifies his will to guarantee the epistemic primacy of philosophy and therefore to create a certain dependency of medicine on philosophy⁴⁶. The predilection for the theory of the similar over the theory of contraries is a clue to Plato’s predilection for Empedocles rather than Heraclitus and for the theory of contraries presented by the *Corpus Hippocraticum*⁴⁷.

Harmonic education and cosmological medicine

Corporeal illness, unhappiness, folly and the ignorance of the soul⁴⁸, disorder at a meteorological level, religious impiety, *hybris* from an ethical and political perspective are expression of an infraction of the harmonic law which regulates the universe.

These aspects emphasize the necessity of a technique which is able to re-create harmony taking celestial harmony as a model. The musical image of harmony is considered in this article mainly from the perspective of cosmological medicine, in other words, as a medical-demiurgical technique inserted in a cosmological contest⁴⁹. The ethical and educative role of harmony (the references to the *Laws*⁵⁰ and the *Republic*⁵¹ are central in relation to this theme) becomes thus meaningful in a holistic vision, where the praxis oriented towards the construction of the right harmony of the physical universe – but also of institutions and laws – takes celestial harmony as a model.

In Plato, cosmological medicine – typical of an important part of the *Hippocratic Corpus* – takes up a philosophical meaning which pervades all fields of human activity, including ethics and politics. Arguably, Eryximachus’ discourse is thus expression of the platonic tendency to translate on the philosophical plane the implications of a model *peri physeos*.

However, the harmonic technique cannot order everything once and for all. In the same way in which the demiurge’s act is a continuous series of exhortations to the *chora*⁵², so in the narrative framework the doctor Eryximachus advises against excessive drinking (in other words, he gives the prescription and provides the motivations), but he needs to obtain the consent of the patient, who will subsequently decide freely. The text in fact emphasizes that everyone will drink as he pleases⁵³ without getting drunk. Eryximachus presents himself thus as a free doctor, using the terminology of the well-known passage of the *Laws*⁵⁴ in relation to the difference between doctors who are free and doctors who are slaves.

Harmonic praxis is thus always linked to the theme of moral responsibility: the philosopher is also doctor, musician and demiurges in his harmonizing activity. Accordingly, there is no primacy of the physical plane over the ethical one, or of the ethical over the physical, but – we could say inspired by our theme – a reciprocal and harmonic relation.

⁴² *Tim.* 71 c3-d4.

⁴³ Barker 2000.

⁴⁴ This perspective is in contrast with that of Levin (2009), who maintains that in the *Symposium* Plato firmly criticizes the medical technique and seeks to limit the philosophical pretenses of medicine.

⁴⁵ Accordingly, he does not represent the model of doctor which Plato seeks to oppose. Leven (2009) and others does not agree with this perspective.

⁴⁶ According to Cambiano this was precisely what Hippocrates sought to avoid. Cf. Cambiano 1991, p. 41.

⁴⁷ Cf. Thivel 2004, p. 42.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Tim.* 86b1-4.

⁴⁹ Brès 1973, pp. 287-319.

⁵⁰ *Leg.* VII 790.

⁵¹ Third book.

⁵² For an ethical and political significance cf. Casertano 2003.

⁵³ *Symp.* 176 e1-3.

⁵⁴ *Leg.* IV 720 c-e.

Conclusion: the philosophical import of a medicine connected to cosmology

The perspective presented in Eryximachus' discourse plays an important role among the passages of the *Corpus Platonicum* in relation to harmony, enabling to grasp its cosmological and holistic character. In his encomium cosmological medicine assumes the character of philosophy. Therefore it comes to partake in the general framework of a platonic philosophy of relations⁵⁵, which aims to institute and recreate harmonies among parts whether operating at cosmological, ontological, ethical or political levels. Re-evaluating Eryximachus' discourse in this light enables us also to verify the positive role of his character and his discourse in the interpretation of the Symposium. Although for reasons of space it is not possible to develop further this subject of enquiry in this paper, I would like to conclude with three questions which trace a possible trajectory of research: to what extent does the *metaxy* of Socrate-Diotima's discourse depend on the concept of harmony developed by Eryximachus? Is it possible to intend the *metaxy* not as something which stands in the middle of a division but as a proportional equilibrium which does not transform the ugly in beautiful but in something qualitatively and quantitatively different? To what extent the ascent from the corporeal plane to divination present in Eryximachus' encomium is connected to the erotic ascent expressed by Diotima?⁵⁶

Bibliography

- Barker, A., "Timaeus on musica and the liver", in M. R. Wright (ed.), *Reason and necessity. Essays on Plato's Timaeus*, Duckworth, London 2000, pp. 85-99.
- *Psicomusicologia nella Grecia antica*, Guida, Napoli 2005. (tr. A. Meriani)
- Brès, Y., *La psychologie de Platon*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1973.
- Brisson, L., *Le Même et l'Autre dans la Structure Ontologie du Timée de Platon. Un commentaire systématique du Timée de Platon*, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin 1998.
- Brisson, L., Meyerstein, W., *Inventer l'univers. Le problème de la connaissance et les modèles cosmologiques*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1991.
- Bottaccioli, F., *Filosofia per la medicina, medicina per la filosofia. Grecia e Cina a confronto*, Tecniche Nuove, Milano 2010.
- Botter, B., "Numero e armonia", in C. Natali (ed.), *Introduzione alla storia della filosofia antica*, Cafoscarina, Venezia 2004, pp. 171-180.
- Boussolas, N., "Étude sur l'esthétique de la composition platonicienne des mixtes", *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 65e Année, No. 4 (Octobre-Décembre 1960), pp.422-448.
- Bury, R. G., *The Symposium of Plato*, W. Heffer and Sons Ltd, Cambridge 1909.
- Cambiano, G., *Platone e le tecniche*, Laterza, Roma 1991.
- Candiotta, L., *Le vie della confutazione. I dialoghi socratici di Platone*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2012.
- "The Children's Prayer: saving the Phenomena in Plato's *Sophist*", *Anais de filosofia clássica*, vol. V n° 9, 2011, pp. 77-85.
- Casertano, G. (2003), "Cause e concause", Natali C., Maso S. (eds.), *Plato physicus. Cosmologia e antropologia nel Timeo*, Adolf Kakert Editore, Amsterdam, 33 - 63.
- Cooksey, T. L., *Plato's Symposium: A Reader's Guide*, Continuum, London-New York. 2010.
- Craik, E. M., "Plato and Medical Texts: Symposium 185c-193d", *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 51, No. 1 (2001), pp. 109-114.
- Corrigan, K., Glazov-Corrigan, E., *Plato's dialectic at play. Argument, structure, and myth in the Symposium*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park 2004.
- Dover, K., *Plato: Symposium*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1980.
- Edelstein, L., "The Rôle of Eryximachus in Plato's Symposium", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 76 (1945), pp. 85-103.
- Gaudin, C., "Remarque sur la météorologie de Platon", *Revue des Études anciennes* 72, 1970, 332-343.
- Hunter, R., *Plato's Symposium*, Oxford University Press, New York 2004.
- Konstan, D., Young-Bruehl, E., "Eryximachus' Speech in the *Symposium*", *Apeiron*, 16:1 (1982:June) pp. 40-46.
- Levin, S. B., "Eryximachus' Tale: The *Symposium's* Role in Plato's Critique of Medicine", *Apeiron*,

⁵⁵ Candiotta 2011

⁵⁶ In relation to this last question, contextualized with references drawn from the *Republic* and *Timeous*, cf. Edelstein 1945, p. 93.

2009, pp. 275-308.

McPherran, M. L., "Medicine, Magic, and Religion in Plato's *Symposium*", in J. H. Lesher, D. Nails, F. C. C. Sheffield (eds), *Plato's Symposium: Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, Center for Hellenic Studies, Washington 2006, pp. 71-95.

Irwin, T. H., "Plato's Heracleiteanism", *Philosophical Quarterly* 27 (1977), pp. 1-13.

Jouanna, J., *Hippocrate. Pour une archéologie de l'école de Cnide*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1974.

- *Œuvres complètes: Airs-Eaux-Lieux*, tome II, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1996.

- "Présence d'Empédocle dans la Collection Hippocratique", *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, ser. 4 (1961), pp. 452-463.

Lami, A. (ed.), *Ippocrate: Testi di medicina greca*, Rizzoli, Milano 1983.

Lloyd, G. E. R. (ed.), *Hippocratic Writings*, Penguin Classics, New York 1978.

Lombard, J., *Platon et la médecine, le corps affaibli et l'âme attristé*, L'Harmattan, Paris 1999.

Longrigg, J., *Greek rational medicine. Philosophy and medicine from Alcmeon to the Alexandrians*, Routledge, London and New York 1993.

Nails, D., *The people of Plato. A prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics*, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis 2002.

Natali, C., Maso, S. (eds.) (2003), *Plato physicus. Cosmologia e antropologia nel Timeo*, Adolf Kakkert Editore, Amsterdam.

Nehamas, A., Woodruff, P., *Plato: Symposium*, Hackett, Indianapolis 1989.

O'Brien, D., "Aristophanes' speech in Plato's *Symposium*: the empedoclean background and its philosophical significance", in A. Havlíček, M. Cajthaml, *Plato's Symposium. Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium Platonicum Pragense*, OYKOYMENH, Prague 2007.

Pelosi, F., *Plato: on Music, Soul and Body*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2010.

Reale, G., *Corpo, anima e salute. Il concetto di uomo da Omero a Platone*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano 1999.

Robin, L., *Le Banquet*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1929

Rosen, S., *Plato's Symposium*, Yale University Press, New Heaven 1987.

Rowe, C. J., *Plato: Symposium*, Aris & Phillips, Oxford 1998.

- "The Speech of Eryximachus in Plato's *Symposium*", in J. J. Cleary (ed.), *Traditions of Platonism: Essays in Honour of John Dillon*, Ashgate, Ashshot 1999, pp. 53-64.

Temkin, C. L., Temkin, O., (eds.), *Ancient Medicine: Selected Papers of Ludwig Edelstein*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London 1987.

Thivel, A., "Eryximaque et le principe des contraires", *Estudios griegos e indoeuropeos* 35 2004, 14, pp. 35-44.

Van der Eijk, P., (ed.), *Greek Medicine by Jacques Jouanna*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2012.

- *Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity. Doctors and Philosophers on Nature, Soul, Health and Disease*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005.

Vegetti, M., *La medicina in Platone*, Il Cardo, Venezia 1995.

Voltaggio, F., *La medicina come scienza filosofica*, Laterza, Roma 1998.

Wardy, R., "The unity of opposites in Plato's *Symposium*", *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 23 (2002), pp. 1-61.

Wunenburger, J. J., "La dynamique Éraclitienne des contraires et la naissance du mobilisme universel selon Platon", *Les Études philosophiques*, No. 1, Philosophie grecque — II: Platon — Aristote — Epicure (Janvier-Mars 1976), pp. 29-47.

Sophrosyne in the Symposium

Richard Stalley

Most accounts of the *Symposium* rightly focus on its treatment of love. But, since the dialogue describes a drinking party, it also draws our attention to the pleasures and dangers of alcohol. Most of the participants are already suffering the effects of some serious drinking and the initial expectation is that this will continue (175e). But it is soon agreed that each should drink merely as much as suits his pleasure. The flute girl, a symbol of dissipation, is sent away and party-goers set about entertaining one another with speeches. They are eventually interrupted by the arrival of Alcibiades and a disorderly crowd of revellers. Alcibiades is so drunk that he needs the support of, among others, another flute girl (212d). He insists that much more wine should be consumed (213e-214a) and gives a speech about Socrates in which it is clear that alcohol has seriously loosened his tongue. When he has finished, the party is interrupted by a further irruption of drunken revellers. Some of the guests leave but most of the others drink themselves to oblivion. Only Socrates remains awake and sober to the end.

By introducing us to a drinking party Plato inevitably directs our attention to the virtue which the Greeks called *sōphrosunē*. This, of course, refers to the capacity to handle temptations, particularly those arising from bodily appetites. It is, thus, commonly translated, as 'temperance', 'self-control' or 'sobriety'. It is opposed to *akolasia* and to *akrasia*. As we know from the *Charmides* (159b), it is also used to describe moderate, orderly, and unobtrusive behaviour. It is associated with the Delphic maxims 'Know thyself' and 'Nothing to much'. In these contexts 'moderation' or 'modesty' may be preferred translations. Our *sōphrosunē*, or the lack of it, is particularly apparent in our use of alcohol. In moderate quantities this promotes conviviality and encourages free expression. But it can be a source of desires that are notoriously difficult to resist, and excessive consumption may cause us to do things which would horrify us if we were sober. For this reason Plato, in the *Laws* (645d-650a) recommends carefully managed drinking parties as a means of testing and developing young men's powers of self-control. Sex is another source of desires which seem almost irresistible. It, too, can lead to behaviour which we would regard as shameful in other contexts. It can be destructive for the individual, for the family and for the wider community. So here, too, the virtue we need is *sōphrosunē*.

Throughout the *Symposium* Socrates is represented as a model of sobriety. As Alcibiades puts it, externally he looks like Silenus but internally he is incredibly full of *sōphrosunē* (216d) So far as sex is concerned, he is presented as the lover of Alcibiades and as strongly attracted to any beautiful young man. But we also learn that Alcibiades could not seduce him into physically consummating his love. Socrates actually spent the whole night in the arms of his loved one without being physically aroused (217a-218c). So far as alcohol is concerned he does not care whether he drinks or not (176c), but he can consume as much as anyone and remain none the worse for it. By the end of the dialogue he is the only one to have survived the night awake, sober and ready for the new day. According to Alcibiades, he also showed extraordinary endurance during his military service. He withstood hardship and hunger better than anyone but he could enjoy a feast to the full. On such occasions he outlasted his companions in drinking but was never seen drunk (220a). He is contrasted, in these respects, with the notoriously dissolute Alcibiades. The latter not only arrives drunk but insists on further heavy drinking. He describes at length his elaborate, though unsuccessful attempts to seduce Socrates. He also admits to a kind of *akrasia*, for, although he is convinced by Socrates' advice, he is unable to follow it. As soon as he leaves Socrates' presence he is overcome by his desire for political glory (216b). He is, therefore, is utterly ashamed when he meets Socrates, but still does not change his behaviour.

Given these points there can be little doubt that the *Symposium* draws attention to the virtue of *sōphrosunē*. But the question to consider now is whether the content of the speeches contributes to the philosophical understanding of this virtue

Phaedrus' uncritical praise of love shows no recognition that erotic desires may need restraint, but there is a change of direction when Pausanias introduces his distinction between the Heavenly Love, which should be encouraged, and the Common Love, which should not. This, no doubt, reflects the attitudes of Plato's circle. They, too, would presumably disapprove of a love which is directed to women and young boys, which values the body rather than the soul and which aims to achieve gratification without caring whether it does so honourably or not. Likewise they might be expected to approve of the more enduring love that is directed to young men, whose power of understanding has already developed. Pausanias supports his claim that only the Heavenly Love merits gratification with

an appeal to what he claims are Athenian customs. These forbid the pursuit of young boys, but encourage lovers to go to great lengths in the pursuit of those who are somewhat older. At the same time the objects of these attentions are expected to resist. The point of this, Pausanias claims, is to distinguish the common lovers, whose desire is purely physical, from those whose love is directed to the soul and who seek to benefit the loved ones by making them wise and virtuous. Only this latter group should be gratified (181b-182a).

Although Socrates has already pointed out that mere physical contact cannot transfer wisdom from one person to another (175d-e), Pausanias assumes, without argument, that gratifying a lover's desires can advance a young man in wisdom and virtue. His frequent references to *nomos* suggest that he is relying on the prejudices of his social milieu rather than on a clear conception of what makes life worth living. Even more striking is his account of Athenian customs. These, he claims, encourage lovers to engage in extraordinary kinds of behaviour — beseeching and begging their loved ones, swearing oaths and camping out on their doorsteps. They are even forgiven for breaking vows made under love's influence. By Pausanias' own admission, such behaviour would not be tolerated in any other circumstances (83c-d). He even claims that a lover should place himself in a kind of voluntary slavery to his beloved. So he clearly does not expect lovers to exercise moderation and self-control. All this is in marked contrast to the views Plato expresses elsewhere. In the *Republic* he argues that the correct kind of love is a sober (*sōphrōn*) love of order and beauty and has nothing mad or licentious about it. A lover may, therefore kiss and touch his beloved, as a father would, but no more (403a-b). In the *Laws* he again outlaws homosexual intercourse and, tellingly, points out that it could not be expected to promote virtue. It would not foster courage in the one who is seduced, nor *sōphrosunē* in the seducer (836d).

Eryximachus presents himself as a man of sobriety. Early in the dialogue he portentously claims medical authority for the utterly obvious point that drinking can be harmful. His own speech starts with the claim that love is a force at work throughout nature. Medical science supports Pausanias' view that it is twofold. In particular the love a body displays in so far as it is healthy is quite unlike the love it displays in so far as it is sick. Pausanias claimed that it is a fine thing to gratify the love of good men, but not that of the bad. Similarly one should gratify the healthy elements in the body and refuse gratification to the sick ones. Medicine is thus the science concerned with bodily loves. The skilled practitioner replaces sick forms with healthy ones.

Some features of this passage recall the *Gorgias*. There Socrates relies heavily on an analogy between bodily health and sickness, on the one hand, and virtue and vice on the other. The skilled doctor allows healthy patients to satisfy their bodily desires, but restrains sick patients from doing so. Similarly the wise statesman restrains the desires of licentious people and so creates order and harmony in their souls. But important elements in the *Gorgias* are missing from Eryximachus' speech.

In the *Gorgias* medicine stands to the body as statesmanship does to the soul. These are genuine crafts because they seek the good of their respective subjects and rely on reason. They must therefore be distinguished from their bogus counterparts, oratory and cookery, which seek pleasure and rely merely on experience. Thus the *Gorgias* insists that the happy and virtuous life requires a knowledge of the good which only philosophy can provide. Eryximachus, on the other hand, blurs the distinction between soul and body. The same power of love operates in both. So it looks as though any account Eryximachus could give of *sōphrosunē* would be based, like his original warning against over-drinking, on physiological grounds. We must not indulge desires when that would cause pain or discomfort or would hinder our enjoyment of other pleasures.

Eryximachus goes on to argue that pretty well everything can be explained in terms of the interaction of opposites, such as cold and dry, sweet and sour, dry and moist. The art of medicine creates love and agreement between elements which would otherwise be hostile to one another. Similarly music creates love and agreement between high and low in pitch and between fast and slow in rhythm. This confirms that we should gratify and preserve the 'heavenly love' which takes orderly people as its object and tends to improve those who are not yet orderly. We should however exercise caution in tasting the pleasures afforded by the common kind of love so that we do not thereby become involved in debauchery (186d-188d).

Here Eryximachus introduces the key idea that the goodness of the soul consists in order and harmony. But there are important differences between the way in which he deploys this idea and its use by Plato in dialogues such as the *Republic*. There the fact that we can experience opposite desires is used as an argument for the tripartite division of the soul (435a-441c). But there is no suggestion that the parts of the soul, as such, are opposed or that virtue consists simply in a balance between them. In an unjust soul the desires of the three parts will conflict, but in a just soul there will be no conflict because each part does its own work. Reason will govern, with the aid of spirit, and appetite

will obey (441e-442b). *Sōphrosunē* will consist in an agreement and harmony among the parts, whereby appetite and spirit willingly accept the rule of reason (442c-d). There is an important link between the order and harmony of the soul and that of music, but it is not to be understood, in Eryximachus's way, as a balance between opposites. The key point is that reason must be in control. Only then can the soul as a whole and its individual parts achieve their good.

Eryximachus concludes his speech by commenting that, while love in general is all powerful, the love that is concerned with the things that are good and is 'completed with justice and temperance (*sōphrosunē*)' has the greatest power and creates happiness community and friendship among men and gods (188d). But he has done very little to explain what makes things good, nor why the love of them creates friendship rather than competition, envy and greed. Nor has he explained how justice and *sōphrosunē* enter into the picture.

On the surface, at least, neither Aristophanes nor Agathon recognise the need for restraint in love matters. But both their speeches remind the reader that love can be a source of moral danger. According to Aristophanes, lovers are seeking their missing 'halves'. But Zeus split human beings in two because of their hubristic behaviour. So it looks as though the reunion of the halves might make them disruptive once again. Agathon sees love as spreading peace and happiness wherever it goes. But Plato has given him a speech which reminds readers why sexual desires can pose a particular threat to *sōphrosunē*. Love insinuates itself unnoticed into our souls, preferring those which are soft and malleable to those that are hard and tough. But Agathon claims that, since it does not use force, it is just and temperate. As evidence of Love's bravery he refers to Ares' scandalous love affair with Aphrodite. This is supposed to show that even the god of war can be overcome by love but it might equally serve as proof that love undermines *sōphrosunē*. So Agathon turns features that reveal the moral danger of Love into arguments for its virtue. His speech is Gorgianic, not only in its language, as Socrates suggests (198b-199b), but also in its paradoxical arguments. We may recall that in the *Gorgias* Plato depicts oratory, which aims at pleasure rather than the good, as the enemy of *sōphrosunē*.

It is tempting to assume that Socrates is Plato's philosophical mouthpiece and that his speech must therefore contain the solution to the problems raised in the dialogue. In some respects that approach looks promising. The lack of an adequate conception of the good prevented Pausanias and Eryximachus from giving satisfactory accounts of *sōphrosunē*. In Socrates' speech, on the other hand, Diotima makes it clear that the ascent of love involves a gradual development in one's understanding of the good. Those who make significant progress on that ascent will, doubtless, display the attributes associated with *sōphrosunē*. They will, for example, be above the temptation to over-indulge in drink or sex. This is possible, not because they have suppressed their desires but, rather, because they have reshaped them and redirected them towards the beautiful and the good. They have achieved self-knowledge because they understand the nature of their desires and their proper place in the economy of the soul. Socrates himself has evidently achieved at least part of this ascent. So we can see the Diotima section as describing an ideal *sōphrosunē* which is, in part at least, exemplified in the dialogue by the figure of Socrates.

There is some truth in this picture but it cannot be the whole truth. The ascent to the beautiful apparently requires powers that are almost divine. Socrates learns about it from an imaginary priestess who has demonstrated divine power by postponing the Athenian plague (201d). She argues that Love is himself a semi-divine daemon who mediates between gods and men. In order to embark on the ascent one needs guidance which, presumably can be provided only by someone like Diotima herself.

No doubt this explains Socrates' lack of success in improving Alcibiades' character. More prosaically we may notice that Diotima says nothing about inner conflict or about the need to restrain unruly desires. Nor does she say anything about the way in which ordinary men and women might achieve some kind of virtue. So while the *Symposium*, as a whole, emphasises that we are embodied beings with desires that may need restraint, Diotima seems to envisage a 'heavenly' virtue which has little to do with the lives of ordinary mortals. By allowing Alcibiades to have the last word, Plato warns us that Socrates has not provided a definitive answer to the problems raised in the dialogue.

To find a more rounded answer we must look back at the speeches of Pausanias and, particularly, Eryximachus. The latter is well aware that we have desires which should not be satisfied. Virtue consists in replacing the discord in our souls with order and harmony. In this respect virtue is to the soul what health is to the body. Eryximachus is unable to weld these ideas into a coherent account, but they are all to be found elsewhere in Plato, most notably in the *Republic*. There the good and healthy condition of the soul is one in which the appetites and the desire for honour follow the direction of reason. This can come about only if children need are brought up in the right kind of environment and receive the right kind of education in music and gymnastics. But that alone is not

enough: the city must be ruled by philosopher kings. So the *Republic* attempts to integrate the ideal of order in the embodied soul with that of a philosopher who has turned away from the world of the senses in order to commune with the good and the beautiful. We may therefore see the that dialogue as an attempt to solve problems which are displayed but not resolved in the *Symposium*.

El dilema “Erixímaco”

Ivana Costa

ABSTRACT

El discurso de Erixímaco, sobre el cual la tradición interpretativa pronunció una condena casi generalizada, con la notable excepción de Edelstein (1945), ha sido reivindicado en las últimas décadas al menos en dos sentidos. Konstan y Young-Bruehl (1982: 44-46) defendieron el “rigor intelectual” de su “exposición sistemática” y sobre todo la sutileza de su análisis, que al distinguir la doble valencia de Eros (como epithymía y, a partir de Smp. 186d6, como philía) revela la necesidad “de una nueva definición”. Por su parte, McPherran (2006: 74- 80) encontró en la reivindicación que hace Erixímaco de la mántica (análoga en un plano cósmico a la tarea del médico practicante sobre el paciente) un aporte puntual al más vasto proyecto platónico de incluir determinados aspectos de la religiosidad entre las tareas propias de la filosofía. Así, según McPherran, el discurso de Erixímaco anticipa en parte la concepción de la piedad que esbozarán Sócrates-Diotima, entendida como asimilación a lo divino. No obstante estos avances hacia una comprensión más cabal de la inserción de Erixímaco entre los oradores del Simposio, el valor de su discurso sigue siendo en gran medida oscuro. Erixímaco, de hecho, no hace el encomio de Eros sino el de la medicina: capaz de identificar la doble naturaleza de Eros y su doble tendencia: hacia lo enfermo o, si se trata del Eros benéfico, hacia lo sano. La medicina también es capaz de lograr que los elementos más hostiles entre sí “se hagan amigos y se deseen unos a otros” (186d5-6) generando homónoia (186e2). La astronomía y la mántica son análogas a la medicina, pues permiten establecer —teórica y prácticamente— una comunicación con la esfera divina capaz de dar paso a las transformaciones necesarias para alcanzar armonía y prosperidad. El énfasis de Erixímaco en la estructura radicalmente dualista de las tendencias humanas y cósmicas resulta difícil de compatibilizar con la contemplación de la unitaria “belleza maravillosa” en la que culmina el discurso de Sócrates-Diotima. Como señaló Dover (1980: 105), la “positiva atribución de un Eros malo al orden de la naturaleza es completamente ajena a la metafísica de Diotima”. Pero por otra parte, resulta igualmente difícil soslayar la relevancia de Erixímaco, dada la insistencia con la que regresan, a lo largo del corpus, los esquemas dualistas que explican aspectos de la vida humana o del devenir cósmico a través de las leyes de atracción de lo semejante por lo semejante. La crítica contemporánea ha visto huellas de Erixímaco en la teoría cósmica de la philía de Ly. 215c3–216a4 (Penner y Rowe, 2005: 95), en el análisis de la enfermedad psicosomática de Ti. 88e4-89a1 (Zamora y Brisson, 2010: 423), en la pintura del universo que brinda el Ateniese hacia el final de Lg. X, 906a2-b3 (Scott y Wellton, 2008: 241). La falta de una explicación coherente para cada una de estas apariciones fantasmagóricas de Erixímaco no ha mitigado la pertinencia de su aporte. Entonces, he aquí el dilema: la posición dualista de Erixímaco no puede ser asimilada lisa y llanamente a la cima conceptual de Smp., pero a la luz de sus trazos, esparcidos por el corpus, tampoco podemos reducirla a mera pedantería (Bury, 1909: xxviii; Hamilton, 1951: 15) o al tecnicismo obcecado de un “aficionado anodino” (Wardy, 2002: 5). Intentaré una interpretación del sentido del discurso de Erixímaco para la economía del Smp. procurando hallar en ella también un marco para la comprensión de sus “huellas” en el corpus. Argumentaré que el discurso de Erixímaco efectivamente provee un elemento crucial para la edificación de la vida filosófica que van a proponer Sócrates-Diotima. El dualismo —buscaré mostrar—no es irrelevante ni prescindente en esa arquitectura, tal como revela la formulación e interpretación que se ofrece en Smp. 187a4-6 del fragmento 51 de Heráclito. (Tomaré como prueba para mi razonamiento la formulación ligeramente diversa del mismo 22B51 DK que se ofrece en Sph 242e2-3.) El punto decisivo está dado en Smp., a mi juicio, por la situación de intermediación que, según Erixímaco (según Platón), Heráclito no ha visto claramente, pero es la que se debe adoptar frente a un escenario dualista. El médico, como el músico (como el filósofo) disponen de una doble competencia: la teórica, que diagnostica, y la práctica o demiúrgica, capaz de torcer la espontaneidad de una tendencia perjudicial hacia lo mejor. La medicina brinda aquí —al igual que en otros contextos platónicos—un modelo para la conducta pero también un mapa que identifica la posición del ser humano en el mundo y lo orienta en la misma dirección del filosofar.

The Realm of the *Metaxy*

Chair: Beatriz Bossi

Le *Banquet* de Platon : une philosophie de la relation ?

Michel Fattal

À la différence de l'approche matérialiste des philosophes présocratiques qui faisaient intervenir des principes physiques comme l'air, l'eau le feu et la terre dans leur explication de l'univers et de sa genèse, Platon inaugure une ère radicalement nouvelle dans sa façon d'expliquer la naissance de tout ce qui existe dans le monde visible. Désormais, les réalités de la nature, du monde physique et visible, ne s'expliquent plus par un élément matériel, mais trouvent leur origine ou leur cause dans ce qu'il appelle les Idées (*eidê*) ou les Formes intelligibles¹. Ces Idées caractérisées par leur stabilité, leur éternité et leur être, constituent les modèles ou les paradigmes des choses sensibles et visibles sujettes au devenir, au temps et à l'instabilité. Ce monde sensible et visible qui est celui du devenir instable est donc conçu comme copie (*eikôn*) ou comme imitation (*mimêsis*) de cette cause intelligible et invisible qu'est l'Idée. Dans le *Phédon*, 79 a, Socrate affirme « qu'il existe deux espèces d'être, d'une part l'espèce visible, de l'autre l'espèce invisible » représentée par l'intelligible situé au niveau le plus élevé. En exhaussant l'Idée au-dessus du monde physique, Platon faisait de la forme (aspect) un principe séparé du sensible. L'Athénien ira jusqu'à parler, dans la *République* (VI, 509 d ; VII, 517 b ; 508 c) de « lieu intelligible » et dans le *Phèdre* de « lieu qui se trouve au-dessus du ciel » (247c). On voit ainsi apparaître l'existence de deux ordres hiérarchiquement séparés ou de deux sphères distinctes de réalité : celle du « lieu intelligible » et celle du « lieu sensible ». C'est la réalité qui est censée être une et continue qui se trouve en quelque sorte coupée en deux par la « séparation » (*chôrismos*) de ces deux sphères qui sont bien distinctes. C'est la raison pour laquelle certains commentateurs parlent de « dualisme » ou même de « l'infranchissable fossé entre le sensible et l'intelligible »² à propos de la philosophie de Platon. Ce dualisme ontologique ou cosmologique qui vise à « dissocier d'elle-même une réalité qu'il convient précisément d'expliquer dans son unité »³ va également s'appliquer à la représentation que Platon se fait de l'homme. Ainsi, l'homme se trouve lui aussi constitué d'une âme immatérielle, éternelle et invisible qui est « séparée » ou même opposée au corps matériel, visible et sujet à la corruption et à la mort. On connaît les développements du *Phédon* sur le corps comme tombeau⁴ ou prison de l'âme. Le corps apparenté au devenir et sujet à la mort constitue un obstacle à l'élévation de l'âme ou à son accès au « lieu intelligible ». L'âme qui s'apparente à ce qui est divin et intelligible se trouve en quelque sorte entravée par l'action des désirs infinis et insatiables du corps qui retiennent celle-ci dans le monde matériel et temporel, et l'empêchent de rejoindre la sphère intelligible.

Pour résumer les choses, on peut dire que Platon inaugure, après la vision unitaire et holistique ou même moniste des Présocratiques, une vision dualiste de la réalité et de l'homme. C'est le fameux *chôrismos* (séparation) ontologique et cosmologique du sensible et de l'intelligible, et la célèbre « séparation » anthropologique de l'âme et du corps⁵. Ce dualisme ontologique et anthropologique soulève une véritable difficulté ou une véritable aporie qui a été relevée par les commentateurs et par l'élève de Platon lui-même, Aristote. Le Stagirite ne manquera pas en effet de critiquer la théorie platonicienne des Idées qui, selon lui, redouble inutilement la réalité. Platon lui-même, conscient de cette difficulté pose, dans le *Parménide*, le problème de la « participation » ou du « rapport » du sensible à l'intelligible, et envisage la causalité que l'intelligible exerce sur le sensible. C'est dans la cosmologie du *Timée* que Platon trouvera une solution au problème épineux de la participation en mettant en œuvre d'autres types de causalités comme par exemple la causalité efficiente du démiurge et la causalité matérielle de la *chôra* à partir de laquelle le monde sera formé ou engendré⁶.

¹ Voir à ce sujet, J.-F. Pradeau (éd.), *Platon, les formes intelligibles*, Paris, PUF, « Débats », 2001.

² Voir récemment l'ouvrage de Ch. Rogue, *Comprendre Platon*, Paris, Armand Colin, « Coursus », 2004, chapitre V : « L'infranchissable fossé entre sensible et intelligible », pp. 87-108.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 94.

⁴ Voir le jeu de mots *sôma sêma* (corps tombeau).

⁵ Sur les occurrences de *chôrismos*, *chôrizein*, *chôris* dans l'œuvre de Platon, voir *Platon, Lexique* (M-Omega), par A. Diès, Les Belles Lettres, Collection des Universités de France, année, Tome 2, 1964, p. 570-571 ; R. Radice (ed.), *Plato Lexicon*, Electronic edition by R. Bombacigno, Milano, Biblia, 2003, p. 993-994. Voir par exemple, le *Phédon* 64 c 5-6 ; 67 a ; 67 d 3 ; L. Brisson, « Comment rendre compte de la participation du sensible à l'intelligible chez Platon ? », in J.-F. Pradeau (éd.), *Platon, les formes intelligibles*, *op. cit.*, p. 55 sq.

⁶ Là-dessus, voir L. Brisson, art. cit., p. 57. Il ne faut certes pas oublier la causalité des Formes. Les Formes, caractérisées par la stabilité et contemplées par le démiurge, jouent également un rôle déterminant, car elles lui permettent de mettre en ordre la *chôra* traversée par des mouvements désordonnés.

Dans la seconde partie du *Parménide*, Platon n'hésitera pas à poser le problème de la participation des formes intelligibles entre elles⁷, et à remanier de fond en comble, dans le *Sophiste*, sa doctrine des Idées en envisageant leurs mutuelles et effectives participations en vue de rendre compte de la complexité du réel et du langage. C'est en introduisant du non-être dans l'être, de l'altérité dans l'identité, et c'est en faisant éclater en quelque sorte le caractère monoeidétique de la forme intelligible et de l'être que le *Sophiste* réalisera une profonde révolution du platonisme classique⁸. C'est en envisageant « l'entrelacement » (*sumplokê*) ou la « communication » (*koinônia*) des Idées ou des genres entre eux que sont le « même » et « l'autre », « l'un » et le « multiple », « l'être » et le « non-être », le « repos » et le « mouvement » que cette révolution de la doctrine classique des Idées se réalise pleinement. C'est en d'autres termes, dans la « relation » ou le « lien » (*desmos*) qui est établi entre les genres différents que certaines difficultés suscitées par la doctrine des Idées se trouvent en quelque sorte résolues ou dépassées. Platon est ainsi confronté, dans le *Parménide* et dans le *Sophiste*, au problème de la « séparation » et de « la participation » du sensible à l'intelligible, et à celui de la « participation » des idées entre elles.

La thèse que je me propose de défendre, dans cet exposé consacré au *Banquet*, est que Platon n'a pas attendu le *Parménide*, le *Sophiste* ou même le *Timée* pour résoudre le problème épineux de la séparation et de la participation du sensible à l'intelligible, ou de la séparation et de la participation des idées entre elles, mais qu'il a pris conscience assez tôt, dans sa carrière d'écrivain, et notamment dans le *Banquet*, de la nécessité de mettre en œuvre une philosophie de la relation. C'est, dès le *Banquet*, et après le *Ménon* et les dialogues socratiques, qu'on verrait apparaître cette philosophie de la relation que Platon énonce aussitôt qu'il envisage ce qu'on pourrait appeler sa philosophie de la séparation du sensible et de l'intelligible. Platon, ayant ainsi pris conscience très rapidement des difficultés soulevées par sa théorie des Idées séparées tenterait de les résoudre aussitôt à travers cette philosophie de la relation en vue de sauvegarder l'unité et la cohésion du réel qui lui sont chers. Le *Banquet* représenterait la cohabitation de deux philosophies différentes et complémentaires, ou mettrait en œuvre une philosophie qui en appelle une autre. La philosophie de la séparation en appellerait ainsi à mettre nécessairement en place une philosophie de la relation.

Parti avec Socrate et les dialogues socratiques d'une recherche sur l'essence ou la nature de concepts éthiques que sont le bien, le beau, la vertu, le courage, Platon va considérer d'une manière explicite, à partir du *Phédon*, du *Banquet*, de la *République* et du *Phèdre* que ces Essences constituent désormais la vraie réalité des choses. Les Idées universelles, éternelles et stables qui sont des Êtres véritables se trouvent séparées et exhaussées au-dessus du sensible. Afin de sauvegarder l'unité du réel, Platon se servira d'un certain nombre de notions pour dire le « lien » ou la « relation » qui unit malgré tout le sensible à l'intelligible. Ce sont les notions de participation (*methexis*), de communication (*koinônia*), d'image (*eikôn*), d'imitation (*mimêsis*) qui établissent désormais ces relations entre ces deux ordres séparés. La participation établit, on l'a vu, un « rapport » entre le sensible et l'intelligible : le sensible « prend part » (*metechei*) à l'intelligible et dépend de lui. Le lien avec l'intelligible dont il est séparé n'est donc pas rompu. Ainsi, l'homme physique, visible et sensible « participe » à l'homme intelligible, c'est-à-dire trouve son origine dans cette cause supérieure qu'est l'Idée d'Homme. Pour dire les choses autrement, l'homme corporel et sensible serait une « image », une « copie », une « imitation » ou un « reflet » du modèle d'Homme qui est la vraie réalité de l'homme. La notion d'image est une notion paradoxale qui permet de dire à la fois l'identité et l'altérité. Plus exactement, elle permet de dire le lien, la relation dans la différence⁹. Ainsi, la beauté physique et sensible d'un corps, bien que différente de l'Idée de beauté ou du Beau en soi, conserve malgré tout un lien ou une relation avec la Forme du Beau dont elle est l'image et à laquelle elle « prend part », c'est-à-dire « participe » et dépend causalement.

Le point de vue défendu dans la présente conférence vise à montrer que Platon énonce sa philosophie de la relation dès qu'il met en œuvre sa philosophie de la séparation. Philosophie de la séparation et philosophie de la relation sont donc indissociables. On pourrait dire que Platon est dans l'obligation de sauvegarder l'unité et la cohésion du réel à partir de moment où il élabore une forme de dualisme ontologique, cosmologique et anthropologique. L'étude du *Banquet* est tout à fait

⁷ Cf. V. Brochard, « La théorie platonicienne de la participation d'après le *Parménide* et le *Sophiste* », in *Etudes de philosophie ancienne et de philosophie moderne*, Paris, Vrin, 1926, pp. 113-150.

⁸ Voir à ce sujet l'Introduction de N.-L. Cordero, *Platon, Le Sophiste*, Paris, GF Flammarion, 1993, pp. 11-65 ; M. Fattal, *Le Langage chez Platon. Autour du Sophiste*, Paris, L'Harmattan, « Ouverture Philosophique », 2009, pp. 39-83.

⁹ Sur le caractère paradoxal de cette notion intéressante d'image, voir M. Fattal, *Image, Mythe, Logos et Raison*, Paris, L'Harmattan, « Ouverture Philosophique », 2009 ; trad. allemande in J. Grave und A. Schubbach (dir.), *Denken mit dem Bild*, München, Fink Verlag, « Eikones », 2009. Voir également du même auteur, *Logos et image chez Plotin*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1998 ; trad. italienne *Ricerche sul logos. Da Omero a Plotino*, a cura di R. Radice, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, « Temi metafisici e problemi del pensiero antico. Studi e testi 99 », 2005.

intéressante à cet égard, car elle permet de révéler l'existence de cette philosophie de la relation qui s'exerce et s'affirme à tous les niveaux du dialogue : dans le thème et la forme littéraire choisis, dans la relation pédagogique unissant le maître au disciple, dans la représentation que Platon se fait de la philosophie et du philosophe, dans sa conception du savoir et de l'ignorance, dans sa représentation de l'être et du cosmos, et surtout dans le discours (*logos*) de Diotime sur l'amour.

Si le dialogue socratique du *Ménon* n'évoque pas d'une manière explicite la doctrine des Idées, le *Phédon* et le *Banquet*, quant à eux, ne manquent pas d'affirmer, avant la *République* et le *Phèdre*, une conception des Essences séparées. L'exemple du beau corps et de la Beauté en soi, évoqué précédemment et qui marque cette différence entre le sensible et l'intelligible, est justement donné par Platon, dans le *Banquet*, dans le célèbre passage consacré à ce que les commentateurs appellent habituellement la « dialectique ascendante » conduisant à la vision du Beau (210 a sq.). La doctrine des Idées est explicitement mise en place dans le *Phédon* et cette mise en place d'un intelligible distingué et séparé d'un sensible, qui apparaît également dans le *Banquet*, appelle automatiquement et nécessairement la mise en place d'une philosophie de la relation qui se déploie et se développe merveilleusement bien à travers les notions de « banquet » ou de « beuverie commune » (*sumposion*), de discours (*logos*), d'amour (*erôs*), de passage (*poros*), d'intermédiaire (*metaxu*), de milieu (*meson*), de philosophie (*philosophia*), de philosophe (*philosophos*), etc. Cette philosophie de la relation qui est mise en œuvre à tous les niveaux du dialogue permettrait de résoudre les difficultés soulevées par une philosophie qui instaure une forme de verticalité et de transcendance induisant une séparation entre des niveaux différents de réalités. Essayons de voir comment Platon est amené à déployer, dans le *Banquet*, une telle philosophie de la relation et du lien.

I. Le titre, le thème et la forme littéraire du dialogue

En Grèce ancienne, le *sumposion*, qui désigne la « beuverie commune », suit habituellement le *deipnon*, c'est-à-dire qu'il suit le « repas ». Le *sumposion* constitue donc le second moment d'un banquet au cours duquel les convives boivent du vin, parlent sur un thème, chantent et font des libations aux dieux (176 a). Tous les convives sont ainsi réunis, reliés les uns aux autres, au cours de la « beuverie commune » qu'ils partagent. Tous les convives se rassemblent également autour d'un *logos* commun (discours) qu'ils vont tenir et autour d'un thème commun qu'ils vont aborder et dont ils vont faire l'éloge. Le *sumposion* est manifestement « ce qui met en relation » les convives à travers « la mise en commun » (*sun* : avec, ensemble) de plusieurs choses : le vin, le *logos* (discours) et l'amour (thème). C'est à Phèdre qu'incombe de présider le *sumposion* et de fixer l'ordre du jour (177 c-e). C'est à Phèdre, qui occupe la première place (*prôton*) et qui est qualifié de « père du discours » (*patêr tou logou*)¹⁰, que revient la prérogative de prononcer le premier discours qui sera « un éloge de l'amour » (177 d). Le thème du *sumposion* est donc l'amour (*eros*), et la forme du discours (*logos*) qui porte sur l'amour, et dont Phèdre est le « père », est celle de l'éloge.

Mais pourquoi pratiquer la forme de l'éloge (*epainos, enkômion*) ? L'éloge vise à honorer un dieu (177 c). Or, comme pour la majorité des convives, l'amour est un dieu, il était nécessaire de se rassembler pour que chacun prononce à tour de rôle un « discours » (*logos*) qui serait une louange de ce dieu qu'est l'Amour. La louange ou l'hommage rendu, qui constitue la forme littéraire adoptée par la majorité des orateurs, est par conséquent un *logos* qui porte sur le thème *Eros*. Le lecteur peut constater que le discours de Diotime sur l'amour (sixième discours) tranche par rapport aux cinq premiers discours de Phèdre, de Pausanias, d'Eryximaque, d'Aristophane et d'Agathon qui célèbrent tous l'amour en tant que divinité. L'amour est non seulement un dieu pour les auteurs des cinq premiers discours, mais il est également beau. Le discours de Diotime, la prêtresse de Mantinée, vise à montrer que l'amour n'est ni un dieu, ni beau. Son objectif est de montrer les liens étroits qui unissent l'amour à la philosophie. Mais avant d'approfondir la conception que Diotime se fait de l'amour-philosophe, essayons de voir en quoi le titre du dialogue, le thème choisi et la forme littéraire adoptée relèvent de ce qu'on pourrait appeler une pensée de la relation.

On a vu que le *sumposion*, le *logos* envisagé sous le registre littéraire de l'éloge (*epainos, enkômion*) et le thème de l'amour (*eros*) « rassemblent » tous les convives autour de la table du banquet. Tous les convives partagent une même boisson, le vin, et un même discours qui est une louange de l'amour. Le vin, le discours et l'amour permettent aux convives d'entrer en relation les uns avec les autres et d'avoir un objectif commun qui les unit et les réunit. Or, il faut voir que le thème fédérateur choisi comme objet central du *logos* est lui-même marqué du sceau de la relation. L'amour

¹⁰ Il est le « père du discours » (*patêr tou logou*), car il sera à l'origine d'autres discours sur l'amour (cf. Platon, *Le Banquet*, Traduction inédite, introduction et notes par L. Brisson, p. 188, n. 91).

est relation. L'amour établit manifestement une relation entre les hommes. Cette relation est d'ordre sexuelle et pédagogique. La relation sexuelle (*sunousia*) unissant deux êtres l'un à l'autre, et l'amour masculin ou plus exactement la *paidēra*, dont il est souvent question dans les premiers discours du *Banquet*, rendent compte de la relation pédagogique unissant le maître à son disciple, et unissant l'amant (*erastēs*) qui est âgé à l'aimé (*erōmenos*) qui est plus jeune¹¹. « Agathon, (qui est) assez représentatif des convictions de son époque, considère l'éducation comme la transmission du savoir ou de la vertu qui passe d'un récipient plein, le maître, vers un récipient vide ou moins rempli, le disciple, par l'intermédiaire d'un contact physique... dans l'union sexuelle. A cette représentation masculine de l'éducation, Diotime, une étrangère dont Socrate prétend rapporter les paroles, oppose, vers la fin du dialogue, une autre représentation, féminine celle-là, qui fait intervenir la procréation »¹². Ce qu'on peut noter ici, c'est que Diotime propose, en contrepoint du lien classique unissant pédagogie et pédérastie, une représentation nouvelle de la relation pédagogique qui s'appuie sur la relation sexuelle de type féminin et qui a partie liée à la procréation, c'est-à-dire à la recherche de l'immortalité. Une telle recherche de l'immortalité n'avait nullement été envisagée par les cinq discours qui précèdent. N'est-ce pas dans la recherche du Beau en soi, du beau dans les âmes et dans les corps qu'il est possible d'accéder à une forme d'immortalité ? Mais qu'est-ce qui permet de rechercher le Beau en vue de s'immortaliser sinon la philosophie ? Platon ne dira-t-il pas dans le *Phèdre*, 248 d, que le philosophe est un *philokalos*, un « amoureux du beau » ?

Rappelons pour l'instant que le titre, le thème et la forme littéraire du *Banquet* sont tous placés sous le signe de la relation : relation des convives autour du vin, relation des orateurs autour d'un *logos* qui est un éloge de l'amour, relation pédagogique entre un maître et un disciple induisant une relation sexuelle entre un homme âgé et un homme jeune. La forme littéraire de l'éloge est elle-même fédératrice, car elle suppose l'accord de tous les convives et orateurs sur le fait que l'amour est un dieu, qu'il est beau, et qu'il faut nécessairement l'honorer et le louer par un discours. Ce discours (*logos*) est donc le « lien » qui unit et réunit par excellence les convives. N'oublions pas que le substantif *logos* provient du verbe *legein*, dérivé de la racine *leg-* qui renvoie au fait de lier et de relier. Ainsi, avant de signifier « parler », le verbe *legein* signifie avant tout le fait de « rassembler, ramasser, recueillir »¹³. Platon lui-même ne définira-t-il pas, dans le *Théétète* et dans le *Sophiste*, le *logos* comme « combinaison » (*sunthesis*) ou comme « entrelacement » (*sumplokê*) de noms et de verbes, ou d'idées entre elles. On notera ici l'importance qui est à nouveau accordée au *sun-* de *sunthesis* (de noms et de verbes) et de *sumplokê* (d'idée). Un *sun-* dont l'importance a été précédemment relevée au sujet des termes de *sumposion* (beuverie commune) et de *sunousia* (relation sexuelle). Le *logos* discursif en tant que lien (*desmos*) ou synthèse de noms et de verbes et, en tant que relation d'idées (ou de genres), porte sur un objet, l'amour qui est lui-même relation. Le *logos* dit donc « quelque chose » au sujet de « quelque chose » (l'amour) qui est lui-même en relation avec « quelque chose », le beau.

En effet, dans la discussion de Socrate avec Agathon (*Banquet*, 199 b - 201 c), il s'agit de voir si l'amour est amour de « quelque chose » (*tinōs*) ou amour de « rien » (*oudenōs*).

La question est posée par Socrate à Agathon à deux reprises en 199d-e. La réponse donnée est la suivante : l'amour est amour de la beauté dont on est dépourvu. En faisant ainsi de l'amour un relatif ou un corrélatif du beau qui nous manque, Socrate bat en brèche l'idée classique défendue par Agathon selon laquelle l'amour est beau. L'amour n'est pas identifié au beau, mais il est amour du beau. Dans la relation masculine et pédagogique unissant le maître à son disciple, l'amour est principalement amour du beau (physique et moral) qu'on ne possède pas. L'éloge de Socrate qui sera prononcé par Alcibiade à la fin du *Banquet* en est la preuve la plus éloquente. Alcibiade, en aimant Socrate, va finir par aimer en Socrate ce dont il est dépourvu, à savoir sa beauté morale, intellectuelle et spirituelle¹⁴. Au même titre que le *logos* qui est relation puisqu'il « dit quelque chose au sujet de quelque chose » (*legei ti kata tinōs*)¹⁵, l'amour est relation, car il est l'amour « de quelque chose »

¹¹ Sur la relation qui unit la sexualité à l'éducation en Grèce archaïque et classique, et dans le *Banquet* de Platon, voir notamment, C. Calame, *L'Eros dans la Grèce antique*, Paris, Belin, « L'Antiquité au présent », 1996 ; L. Brisson, *op. cit.*, Introduction, pp. 55-65.

¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 11, et notamment p. 61 sq.

¹³ Voir à ce sujet, Fournier, *Les verbes « dire » en Grec ancien*, Paris, 1946 ; M. Heidegger, *Introduction à la métaphysique*, Paris, Gallimard, « Tel », 1967, p. 132 ; et surtout M. Fattal, *Logos, pensée et vérité dans la philosophie grecque*, Paris-Montréal-Turin-Budapest, L'Harmattan, « Ouverture Philosophique », 2001, pp. 28-48 ; pp. 52-57 ; trad. it. *Ricerche sul logos*, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-40 ; pp. 42-46.

¹⁴ Voir à ce sujet, P. Hadot, « La figure de Socrate », in *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2002 (1993, 1^{ère} éd.), pp. 100-141 ; repris dans *Eloge de Socrate*, Paris, Editions Allia, 1998.

¹⁵ Platon, *Le Sophiste*, 237 e : « Qui ne dit quelque chose (...) ne dit rien ». Le *logos* est donc discours de quelque chose ou sur quelque chose (*tinōs*). Il « dit quelque chose au sujet de quelque chose » (*legei ti kata tinōs*). Cette réflexion sur l'attribution et la prédication qui apparaît chez Platon se trouvera thématisée et systématisée par Aristote. Voir à ce sujet, M.

(*tinos*) qu'on ne possède pas (la beauté morale et intellectuelle) et qu'on recherche à travers l'amour « de quelqu'un » (Socrate). *Logos* et *eros* sont donc en consonance parfaite dans la mesure où l'un et l'autre sont « en rapport » avec quelque chose et avec quelqu'un. La relation discursive ou dialogique unissant les interlocuteurs se fait sur la base d'un thème fédérateur ou d'un objet qui se définit lui-même par la relation et la synthèse¹⁶.

Essayons de voir maintenant comment le discours de Diotime sur l'amour, qui tranche par rapport aux discours précédents qui faisaient de *eros* un dieu beau et délicat et qui faisaient de l'amour masculin un modèle pédagogique, illustre merveilleusement bien cette philosophie de la relation. Cette philosophie de la relation où l'amour est amour du beau et du bien dont on est dépourvu, et qui fait intervenir une représentation féminine de l'amour induisant la procréation et le désir d'immortalité, apparaît à différents niveaux du discours de Diotime qui s'étend de 201 d à 212 c. Cette philosophie de la relation trouve concrètement son illustration dans les développements que Diotime consacre à la figure de l'*eros*-démon, au mythe de la naissance d'*Eros*, et à travers ce qu'on pourrait appeler l'initiation aux mystères de l'amour.

II. *Eros-démon, un intermédiaire entre les dieux et les hommes, le savoir et l'ignorance*

Sur la fin de son discours sur l'amour, Diotime s'adressant à Socrate, affirme que c'est dans la contemplation de la beauté en elle-même (211 d) que la vie humaine vaut la peine d'être vécue. C'est donc dans la contemplation des Formes que réside la valeur d'une vie de philosophe. La puissance de l'amour, symbolisant le philosophe, constitue le moyen d'accès idéal au monde des Formes. Plus exactement, l'*eros* (amour)-philosophe, qui est lui-même identifié à la figure mythique du démon, représente l'intermédiaire incontournable reliant le monde d'en haut au monde d'en bas. Mais qu'est-ce que le démon ? Dans la représentation populaire, le démon désigne une « puissance divine », une « puissance distributive » ou « une divinité du destin »¹⁷. Ici, dans le *Banquet*, le démon n'est pas une divinité, mais un intermédiaire (*metaxu*) entre les dieux et les hommes. Il est le médiateur, le moyen terme de la relation qui permet de combler le vide résultant de sa théorie de la séparation (*chôrismos*). Cette conception de l'*eros*-démon qui n'est pas un dieu, mais à un intermédiaire ou une médiation, et plus exactement une puissance de relation, symbolise le philosophe et la philosophie qui se charge de colmater les brèches du *chôrismos* séparant le sensible de l'intelligible, le corps de l'âme. L'amour-démon, qui relie et unit les êtres, est une puissance dynamique qui, en tant qu'intermédiaire et moyen terme, établit une relation entre le monde d'ici-bas et le monde d'en-haut, entre la terre et le ciel. Notons au passage que dans le *Phèdre*, c'est l'âme humaine qui possède cette fonction médiatrice dynamique, cette puissance de relation. Le *Timée* envisage l'âme humaine à l'image de l'Ame du monde comme un mélange de divisible et d'indivisible, de l'autre et du même, du multiple et de l'un. Cette représentation dynamique et synthétique de l'âme comme intermédiaire et médiatrice sera reprise et développée par Plotin jusqu'à Damascius. L'amour dans le *Banquet* et l'âme dans le *Phèdre* possèdent donc l'un et l'autre cette fonction médiatrice et relationnelle, ou représentent ce moyen d'accès dynamique vers les Formes, l'indivisible, le beau et le bien. L'amour est donc l'auxiliaire (*sun-ergon*) dynamique de l'âme du philosophe désireuse d'accéder au Beau et au Bien qu'elle ne possède pas. L'âme, située à mi-chemin entre le haut et le bas, est susceptible de s'élever vers les Formes comme elle peut être capable de chuter dans le sensible. La figure mythique de l'*eros*-démon permet donc à Platon de « lier » des domaines, des ordres ou des sphères séparés : les hommes et les dieux, le corps et l'âme, le bas et le haut, la terre et le ciel, l'ignorance et le savoir, l'anthropologique et le théologique. Elle offre plus exactement à Platon une solution au problème du dualisme induit par sa philosophie de la séparation puisqu'elle se propose d'assurer le « passage » (*poros*) d'un domaine à l'autre.

Fattal, *Logos, pensée et vérité dans la philosophie grecque*, op. cit. ; trad. it. *Ricerche sul logos*, op. cit.

¹⁶ Sur l'amour en tant que synthèse, voir L. Robin, *La Théorie platonicienne de l'amour*, Paris, PUF, 1964 (1909 1^{ère} éd.).

¹⁷ *Daimôn* est un dérivé de la racine *da(i)-* qui a donné en grec *daiomai* (partager, diviser, distribuer), d'où le sens de « puissance distributive » ou de « divinité du destin », sachant que l'*heimarmenê* (destin) elle-même provient du verbe *meiromai* (obtenir en partage, diviser, séparer). Voir à ce sujet, A. Timotin, *La Démonologie platonicienne. Histoire de la notion de daimôn de Platon aux derniers néoplatoniciens*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, « Philosophia Antiqua 128 », 2012, p. 13 sq. Sur les démons et la notion d'intermédiaire en Grèce et chez Platon, voir J. Ries et H. Limet (éds), *Anges et démons*, Actes du colloque de Liège et de Louvain-la-Neuve, 25-26 novembre 1987, *Homo religiosus* 14, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1989 ; C. Calame (éd.), *Figures grecques de l'intermédiaire, Etudes de Lettres*, Lausanne, 1992 ; M. Détienné, *La Notion de Daimôn dans le pythagorisme ancien*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1963 ; Ph. Hoffmann, « Le sage et son démon. La figure de Socrate dans la tradition philosophique et littéraire », *Annuaire de l'EPHE*, 94 (1985-1986), pp. 417-436 ; 95 (1986-1987), pp. 295-305 ; 96 (1987-1988), pp. 272-281 ; J. Souilhé, *La Notion platonicienne d'intermédiaire dans la philosophie des dialogues*, Paris, Librairie Félix Alcan, 1919.

Moyen terme dynamique de la relation, médiation et intermédiaire atypique et atopique, puissance relationnelle par excellence, figure paradoxale susceptible d'orienter l'œil de l'âme vers les Formes intelligibles, telles sont les qualités du philosophe Socrate. La figure du démon, symbolisant le philosophe médiateur, est là pour combler l'intervalle et le vide entre les dieux et les hommes, et en vue d'assurer la cohésion de l'univers ou l'unité du Tout avec lui-même. Sa fonction est déterminante : elle est tout autant cosmologique et physique que théologique et anthropologique. La figure de l'*eros*-démon médiateur ou intermédiaire se charge de mettre en relation, d'établir un contact entre les hommes et les dieux puisque « le dieu, dit Diotime, n'entre pas en contact direct avec l'homme ». « C'est par l'intermédiaire de ce démon, que de toutes manières possibles les dieux entrent en rapport avec les hommes et communiquent avec eux, à l'état de veille ou dans le sommeil. Celui qui est expert (*sophos*) en ce genre de choses est un homme démonique (*daimonios anêr*) » (203 a, trad. Brisson).

Ce passage, identifiant clairement le philosophe à l'homme démonique susceptible de mettre en contact et en relation les dieux avec les hommes, s'inscrit dans la continuité de ce que Diotime dit quelques lignes plus haut en 202 d – 203 a en vue de justifier l'intervention de sa conception de l'*eros*-démon. Etant donné qu'*eros* n'est pas beau et qu'il n'est pas un dieu, l'amour ne peut qu'être « désir » des choses qui lui manquent. Il est « désir » du Beau et du Bien qu'il ne possède pas, et en tant qu'*epithumia* (désir) et *epithumein* (désirer) il incarne cet élan dynamique et passionné. N'étant pas un dieu, il est, dit-elle, un grand-démon :

« *Eros* est un intermédiaire (*metaxu*) entre le mortel et l'immortel. – Socrate : Que veux-tu dire, Diotime ? – Diotime : C'est un grand-démon (*daimôn megas*), Socrate. En effet tout ce qui présente la nature d'un démon est intermédiaire (*metaxu*) entre le divin et le mortel. – Socrate : Quel pouvoir est le sien ?, demandai-je – Diotime : il interprète et il communique (*hermêneuon kai diaporthmeuon*) aux dieux ce qui vient des hommes, et aux hommes ce qui vient des dieux : d'un côté les prières et les sacrifices, et de l'autre les prescriptions et les faveurs que les sacrifices permettent d'obtenir en échange. Et, comme il se trouve à mi-chemin (*en mesô*) entre les dieux et les hommes, il contribue à remplir l'intervalle, pour faire en sorte que chaque partie soit liée aux autres dans l'univers (*to pan auto hautô xundedesthai*)...Le dieu n'entre pas en contact direct avec l'homme ; mais c'est par l'intermédiaire de ce démon, que de toutes les manières possibles les dieux entrent en rapport avec les hommes et communiquent avec eux, à l'état de veille ou dans le sommeil. Celui qui est expert (*sophos*) en ce genre de choses est un homme démonique... » (202 d – 203 a, trad. Brisson).

Ce passage rend compte de la mise en relation verticale, de haut en bas, des dieux avec les hommes, grâce à l'homme démonique et expert qu'est le philosophe, et de la mise en relation verticale, unissant de bas en haut, les hommes aux dieux, grâce à la fonction herméneutique et communicationnelle du philosophe. Diotime dira en effet de l'*eros*-démon qu'« il interprète et (qu') il communique (*hermêneuon kai diaporthmeuon*) aux dieux ce qui vient des hommes, et aux hommes ce qui vient des dieux ». L'herméneute est un traducteur, un passeur, un transmetteur. L'âme démonique et inspirée du philosophe qui est médiatrice occupe une position privilégiée pour traduire, interpréter et mettre en relation ou tout simplement communiquer ce qui provient des hommes à destination des dieux (prières, sacrifices) et ce qui provient des dieux à destination des hommes (prescriptions et faveurs des sacrifices). Je dirais que la position centrale du philosophe qui se trouve à mi-chemin ou au milieu (*en mesô*) entre les dieux et les hommes, et que le statut médian de son âme démonique qui est à la fois rationnelle et inspirée, dotée d'un intellect et mue par le désir irrationnel, lui confèrent le don (inspiration) d'assurer non seulement la relation des hommes entre eux, des hommes et des dieux, du mais de sauvegarder également la cohésion du cosmos en suturant le Tout avec lui-même¹⁸, c'est-à-dire en reliant le sensible à l'intelligible.

A partir de sa théorie de l'*eros*-démon, Platon offre une merveilleuse solution au problème du *chôrismos* et évite à son système de sombrer dans le dualisme. Voilà que se trouve vérifiée notre thèse selon laquelle la mise en place de la théorie des Formes intelligibles, induisant une « séparation » entre le sensible et l'intelligible, appelle *nécessairement et simultanément* la mise en place d'une philosophie de la « relation » illustrée par la figure mythique de l'*eros*-démon qui suggère à Platon un développement tout aussi poétique et mythique au sujet de la naissance d'*Eros*.

III. La naissance d'*Eros*

Si le philosophe, identifié à la figure mythique de l'amour-démon, est en mesure d'établir le « lien »

¹⁸ Les différentes parties de l'univers se trouvent désormais liées les unes aux autres au sein du Tout qu'on ne peut fragmenter.

entre des domaines séparés, c'est parce qu'il est un « mixte » ou le résultat d'une « synthèse » de ses parents qui l'ont engendrés. En d'autres termes, il est une « synthèse » de Poros (chemin, expédient) et de Pénia (pauvreté, indigence). C'est à partir des pages 203 a – 204 c que Diotime, la prêtresse de Mantinée, relate à Socrate le mythe de la naissance d'*Eros* que les commentateurs ont longuement commenté¹⁹.

« Le jour de la naissance d'Aphrodite, raconte Diotime, il y eut banquet chez les dieux. A la fin du repas, Pénia, c'est-à-dire 'Pauvreté', 'Privation', vint pour mendier. Elle vit Poros, c'est-à-dire 'Moyen', 'Expédient', 'Richesse', enivré par le nectar et endormi dans le jardin de Zeus. Pour remédier à son dénuement, Pénia décida d'avoir un enfant de Poros. Elle s'étendit près de Poros endormi et conçut ainsi l'Amour »²⁰. Après avoir rappelé la généalogie d'*Eros*, P. Hadot souligne à juste titre que « l'Amour n'est pas beau, comme l'avait voulu le poète tragique Agathon. Sans cela il ne serait plus l'Amour. Car *Eros* est essentiellement désir et on ne peut désirer que ce dont on est privé. *Eros* ne peut être beau : fils de Pénia, il est privé de la beauté ; mais fils de Poros, il sait remédier à cette privation »²¹. Fruit d'une synthèse de Pénia et de Poros, de Pauvreté et de Richesse, d'Indigence et d'Expédient, l'*eros*-philosophe est paradoxal et atypique. Il est à la fois riche et pauvre, beau et laid, homme et dieu, ou plus exactement, il n'est ni homme ni dieu, ni beau ni laid, ni sage ni insensé. Il est pur « désir », désir du beau qu'il n'a pas, désir du « savoir » dont il est dépourvu. L'*eros*-philosophe qui met en relation des domaines séparés est celui qui est capable de « passer » et de « faire passer » (*poros* désigne le « passage », l'« issue », le « chemin » qui permet de sortir de l'*aporie*, d'une situation sans issue, d'une difficulté) du dénuement à la richesse, du manque à la satisfaction du manque. Il est le « moyen » dynamique qui « fait passer » de l'indigence esthétique et éthique (le beau et le bien dont il est privé) à la perfection morale et intellectuelle (contemplation du beau et du bien), de l'ignorance au savoir, de l'absence de connaissance à la connaissance. C'est là qu'apparaît le rôle incontournable du philosophe sur le plan gnoséologique et épistémologique.

Etant donné que les dieux possèdent le savoir et que les hommes sont ignorants, et compte tenu du fait que le philosophe est un intermédiaire entre les dieux et les hommes, la philosophie est nécessairement un intermédiaire entre le savoir des dieux et l'ignorance des hommes. En effet, *Eros*, en tant que fils de Pénia, est pur « désir » (*epithumia*) du savoir qu'il n'a pas. Dans son « élan » vers le beau et le bien, il tend à « connaître » le beau et le bien. « L'*epithumia*, dira M. Dixsaut, fait partie du genre de la relation », pourtant, ajoute-t-elle « ce n'est pas l'objet qui est la fin du désir, mais bien le mouvement de se procurer, de ramener à soi ; on désire la génération d'un rapport, le devenir d'une mise en relation (*Rép.* IV, 437 c et *Phil.* 53 c-55 a) »²². C'est le verbe *epiêmi* qui est utilisé dans ces deux passages de la *République* et du *Philèbe* pour dire le désir, c'est-à-dire le mouvement, la tension vers, la recherche de ce qu'on ne possède pas. C'est par ce désir et par cette « tension vers » quelque chose d'autre que l'*epithumia* met en relation. Elle est relation dynamique en direction de quelqu'un d'autre ou de quelque chose d'autre. De même qu'*eros*-démon est un intermédiaire entre le laid et le beau, le mauvais et le bon, il est également intermédiaire entre l'ignorance et le savoir. Diotime s'adressant à Socrate l'interroge de la manière suivante :

« T'imagines-tu de même que celui qui n'est pas expert (*sophos* : savant) est stupide ? N'as-tu pas le sentiment que, entre science et ignorance, il y a un intermédiaire (*metaxu*) ? – Socrate : Lequel ? – Diotime : Avoir une opinion droite (*ortha doxazein*), sans être à même d'en rendre raison (*logon dounai*). Ne sais-tu pas, poursuit-elle, que ce n'est là ni savoir – car comment une activité, dont on arrive pas à rendre raison, saurait-elle être une connaissance sûre ? – ni ignorance – car ce qui atteint la réalité ne saurait être ignorance. L'opinion droite (*orthê doxa*) est bien quelque chose de ce genre, quelque chose d'intermédiaire (*metaxu*) entre le savoir et l'ignorance » (202 a, trad. Brisson).

Un peu plus loin, Diotime ajoute :

« Par ailleurs, il se trouve à mi-chemin (*en mesô*) entre le savoir et l'ignorance. Voici, en effet ce qui en est. Aucun dieu ne tend vers le savoir ni ne désire devenir savant, car il l'est ; or, si l'on est savant, on n'a pas besoin de tendre vers le savoir. Les ignorants ne tendent pas davantage vers le savoir ni ne

¹⁹ Je me permets de renvoyer au développement que P. Hadot, « La figure de Socrate », in *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*, op. cit., *Eloge de Socrate*, op. cit., pp. 45-53, consacre à ce mythe. J'insisterai plus loin sur le caractère épistémologique ou gnoséologique du philosophe situé à mi-chemin entre le savoir des dieux et l'ignorance des hommes.

²⁰ P. Hadot, « La figure de Socrate », in *Exercices...*, op. cit. ; *Eloge de Socrate*, op. cit., p. 45-46.

²¹ Op. cit., p. 46.

²² M. Dixsaut, *Le Naturel philosophe. Essais sur les Dialogues de Platon*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres-Vrin, 1985, p. 131.

désirent devenir savants. Mais c'est justement ce qu'il y a de fâcheux dans l'ignorance : alors que l'on est ni beau, ni bon, ni savant, on croit l'être suffisamment. Non, celui qui ne s'imagine pas en être dépourvu ne désire pas ce dont il ne croit pas devoir être pourvu » (203 e – 204 a, trad. Brisson).

Dans ce texte, la distinction est nettement établie entre le philosophe et le dieu, entre celui qui est *philo-sophos* et celui qui est *sophos*. Seul dieu semble être un *sophos*, car il possède le savoir. Ici, Platon, utilise le verbe *epithumein* pour signifier l'acte de désirer le savoir. Or, ce désir (*epithumia*) semble dénié au dieu. Le dieu n'en n'a nullement besoin puisqu'il possède déjà le savoir. Possédant le savoir et la sagesse, le dieu ne philosophe pas, c'est-à-dire ne désire pas et ne recherche pas le savoir. Le *philo-sophe*, à la différence du *sophos*, est en quête, à la recherche de quelque chose. Il est mu par la dynamique du désir. Il incarne donc la figure de l'*epithumein* (désirer) et du *philein* (aimer). Désirer et aimer sont non seulement absents du dieu, mais également absent de l'homme ignorant. A l'opposé de la figure du savant qui ne désire pas le savoir puisqu'il le possède, il y a la figure de l'ignorant qui ne désire pas non plus le savoir. Croyant savoir, l'ignorant ne cherche même pas à savoir. L'ignorant ignore qu'il est ignorant, il ne sait pas qu'il ne sait rien ; alors que Socrate, situé à mi-chemin entre le savant et l'ignorant, sait qu'il ne sait pas, sait qu'il ne sait rien. Il a cet avantage sur l'ignorant, c'est d'avoir un savoir de son non-savoir. L'ignorant ignore son non-savoir. Comme l'ignorant ne pense pas être dépourvu de savoir, il n'a pas d'*epithumia*, et ne croit pas avoir besoin de savoir. En revanche, le *philo-sophe* Socrate, mu par son *epithumia*, désire savoir parce qu'il sait qu'il ne sait rien, et c'est par ce savoir du non-savoir (inscience) qu'il vérifie l'Oracle de Delphes qui faisait de lui le « plus sage » des hommes. Ce savoir du non-savoir ne fait pourtant pas de lui un savant au sens absolu du terme, c'est-à-dire que cette conscience du non savoir ne peut faire de lui un dieu. Ainsi, l'*eros*-philosophe n'a pas le savoir absolu de dieu et l'ignorance des hommes, car il est situé dans l'entre-deux, à mi-chemin ou au milieu des deux (*en mesô*) du fait qu'il est un intermédiaire (*metaxu*) reliant la *sophia* à l'*amathia*. Relativement au dieu, il n'est pas savant ou sage, mais relativement aux autres hommes son savoir et sa sagesse résideraient justement dans son inscience. Or, il est dit en 202 a que l'opinion droite (*orthê doxa*) est un intermédiaire. Compte tenu du fait que l'opinion droite est un *metaxu* et qu'*eros* est également un intermédiaire, on peut se demander s'il est légitime d'identifier le caractère intermédiaire de l'opinion droite au caractère intermédiaire d'*eros* ? Jusqu'à quel point une telle identification est-elle tenable ?

En commentant cette page 202 a dans laquelle Diotime évoque le statut intermédiaire de l'opinion droite, on ne peut que renvoyer au passage célèbre du *Ménon*, 97 a – 99 a, souvent commenté par les exégètes dans lequel l'expression d'opinion vraie (*alêthês doxa*)²³ apparaît. « L'opinion vraie (*alêthês doxa*), dira Brisson à propos de ce passage du *Ménon*, se distingue de la science par son manque de stabilité, stabilité que seul peut conférer un 'raisonnement qui donne l'explication (*aitias logismos*)' de la chose considérée. Seul celui qui est en mesure de rendre raison (*logon didonai*) d'une chose peut prétendre en avoir une connaissance sûre, la connaître vraiment »²⁴. « Rendre raison » (*logon didonai*)²⁵, c'est donner une explication ou une justification (*aitia*), à travers un raisonnement (*logismos*) ou une proposition (*logos*)²⁶. Rendre raison revient en fait à établir des « liens ». Parlant des opinions, Socrate dira en effet dans le *Ménon*, 98 a qu'« elles ne valent donc pas grand-chose, tant qu'on ne les a reliées par un raisonnement qui en donne l'explication (*aitias logismô*)... Dès que les opinions ont été ainsi reliées... elles deviennent connaissances ». Ainsi, pour Platon, les opinions vraies²⁷ ne deviennent sciences que si elles sont attachées par un « lien »²⁸ qui en donne l'explication. Or, c'est au philosophe qu'incombe la tâche de relier les opinions entre elles et d'en donner l'explication par son *logos* et par son *logismos*. On peut ainsi apercevoir le rôle incontournable du philosophe-intermédiaire sur le plan gnoséologique et épistémologique. « Le processus de transformation des opinions vraies en connaissance s'achève, sous l'effet de l'interrogation dialectique, en une connaissance globale où l'opinion, une fois liée, perd sa valeur

²³ L'opinion droite (*orthê doxa*) correspond à l'opinion vraie (*alêthês doxa*). Ce qui est droit est vrai chez Platon. La vérité est donc caractérisée par la rectitude. Sur l'*orthotês* platonicienne, voir le sous-titre du *Cratyle*. *Sur la rectitude des noms* (*peri onomatôn orthotêtôs*) ; et M. Fattal, « Vérité et fausseté de l'*onoma* et du *logos* dans le *Cratyle* de Platon », in M. Fattal (éd.), *La Philosophie de Platon*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2001, Tome 1, pp. 207-231.

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 209, n. 377.

²⁵ C'est le titre évocateur donné à l'ouvrage publié en hommage à G. Casertano, *Logon didonai. La filosofia come esercizio del render ragione. Studi in onore di Giovanni Casertano*, a cura di L. Palumbo, Napoli, Loffredo Editore, 2001.

²⁶ Voir à ce sujet, Y. Lafrance, *La Théorie platonicienne de la Doxa*, Paris-Montréal, Les Belles Lettres-Bellarmin, 1981, p. 295.

²⁷ Voir à ce sujet, *Platon, Ménon*, Traduction, introduction et notes par M. Canto, Paris, GF Flammarion, 1991, pp. 84-94.

²⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 89, n. 151.

d'opinion »²⁹.

Après avoir montré le rôle joué par l'opinion vraie au sein de l'interrogation dialectique du philosophe en vue de sa transformation en connaissance et en science, on peut se demander maintenant si le statut intermédiaire de l'opinion droite est identifiable au statut intermédiaire de l'*eros*. L. Robin soutient que « si l'Amour est quelque chose d'intermédiaire, ce n'est pas du moins au même sens que l'opinion, et, par conséquent, si l'exemple de l'opinion est allégué dans le *Banquet* pour faire comprendre ce qu'est l'Amour, il faut ne voir là qu'une comparaison très générale »³⁰. « Jamais, ajoute Robin, l'opinion droite n'atteint le réel véritable ; si elle arrivait jusque-là, elle cesserait d'être elle-même, elle deviendrait autre chose, elle serait science ; elle reste donc essentiellement incapable de s'élever jusqu'à ce qui pourrait rendre raison d'elle-même. L'Amour, au contraire, n'est pas un tel intermédiaire, et, si la *theia moira* qui lui donne naissance n'est pas une grâce imparfaite et précaire, il doit nous conduire jusqu'à son terme naturel, qui est la contemplation même du Beau absolu...s'il nous conduit jusque-là, c'est qu'il est un intermédiaire bien différent de l'opinion vraie...l'Amour...est de telle nature qu'il tend à unir véritablement les extrêmes, à les concilier l'un avec l'autre. De plus, il est ce que n'est pas l'opinion, car il constitue par lui-même une méthode, c'est-à-dire une transition au sens propre du mot, un passage, un mouvement vers un but, auquel il atteint sans cesser d'être ce qu'il est »³¹, alors que l'opinion droite cesse d'être ce qu'elle est en devenant science.

L'Amour-philosophe qui ne cesse d'être lui-même établit d'une manière dynamique et rationnelle, grâce à l'élan qui le caractérise en propre et qui est absent de l'opinion droite, un « lien » ou une « liaison » entre l'ignorance et la science, le sensible et l'intelligible, le corps et l'âme. Il est ce « chemin » ou ce « moyen » qui fait passer d'un domaine à l'autre, de la beauté corporelle à la beauté psychique, de la beauté psychique à la beauté épistémologique, et de la beauté épistémologique à la beauté intelligible. Ce moyen terme qui est « tension vers » et *relation dynamique* du fait qu'il est animé par un désir passionné fait passer l'initié de la beauté esthétique (*aisthêsis* : sensible), à la beauté morale, et de la beauté morale et intellectuelle à la beauté spirituelle³². Ce passage ou cette méthode qui conduit à la contemplation du Beau en soi est très bien décrit par Platon lorsque Diotime se propose d'initier Socrate aux mystères de l'amour (209 e – 212 c).

IV. L'initiation aux mystères de l'amour : un passage du sensible à l'intelligible, une transition du beau corps au Beau en soi (209 e – 212 c)

Je ne rentrerai pas dans le détail de ce passage du *Banquet* qui a été maintes fois commenté par les exégètes. Je rappellerai ici que si la philosophie est conçue comme aspiration/élan vers le savoir et la sagesse visant la contemplation des Formes intelligibles, il est nécessaire que l'individu, qui se propose de contempler ces Formes, soit aidé par un guide (Diotime). Il doit être éduqué en vue de tourner le regard/l'œil de son âme du sensible vers l'intelligible, de l'image vers le modèle. Il devra donc être guidé et initié par un maître ou un éducateur. Or la « voie droite » (*orthos*) ou les « échelons » (*epanabasmôis*) (211 c) qu'il faut suivre pour atteindre le but est comparable à l'initiation aux mystères³³.

L'initiation parfaite aux mystères représente une méthode ou un chemin constitué d'échelons et d'étapes permettant de progresser vers la contemplation du Beau en soi. Platon résume cet itinéraire conduisant au terme du cheminement en 211 b – d :

« Voilà donc quelle est la droite voie qu'il faut suivre dans le domaine des choses de l'amour ou sur laquelle il faut se laisser conduire par un autre ; c'est en prenant son point de départ dans les beautés d'ici-bas pour aller vers cette beauté-là, de s'élever toujours, comme au moyen d'échelons, en passant d'un seul beau corps à deux, de deux beaux corps à tous les beaux corps, et des beaux corps aux belles occupations, et des occupations vers les belles connaissances qui sont certaines, puis des belles connaissances qui sont certaines vers cette connaissance qui constitue le terme, celle qui n'est autre que la science du beau lui-même, dans le but de connaître finalement la beauté en soi. C'est ce point

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 93.

³⁰ L. Robin, *La Théorie platonicienne de l'amour*, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

³¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 169-170.

³² « Aussi, dira P. Hadot, *op. cit.*, p. 52, lorsque les autres hommes aiment Socrate-Eros, lorsqu'ils aiment l'Amour, révélé par Socrate, ce qu'ils aiment en Socrate, c'est cette aspiration, c'est cet amour de Socrate pour la Beauté et la perfection de l'être. Ils trouvent donc en Socrate le chemin vers leur propre perfection ».

³³ Voir à ce sujet, L. Brisson, *op. cit.*, Introduction, pp. 65-71 ; J.-F. Mattéi, « Le symbole de l'amour dans le *Banquet* de Platon », in R. Bague et J.-F. Courtine (éds), *Herméneutique et ontologie. Mélanges en hommage à Pierre Aubenque*, Paris, PUF, « Epiméthée », 1990, pp. 55-77.

de la vie, mon cher Socrate, reprit l'étrangère de *Mantinée*, plus qu'à n'importe quel autre, que se situe le moment où, pour l'être humain, la vie vaut d'être vécue, parce qu'il contemple la beauté en elle-même » (trad. Brisson).

Ce qu'il y a d'intéressant pour mon propos, dans ce passage, c'est que ce dernier met à nouveau en œuvre ce que j'ai appelé une philosophie de la relation qui vient contrebalancer la philosophie de la séparation ou le dualisme du corps et de l'âme, du sensible et de l'intelligible clairement posé et affirmé dans le *Phédon*. Si en effet, dans le *Phédon*, le corps est une prison/tombe pour l'âme, s'il faut pratiquer la purification, c'est-à-dire « séparer le plus possible l'âme du corps » pour être notamment en mesure de penser l'être et la vérité ; ici, dans le *Banquet*, bien que l'âme soit distinguée du corps, la rupture ou la scission du corps et de l'âme n'apparaît pas puisqu'il s'agit justement de ménager des étapes, des échelons, des transitions et des progressions de l'amour des beaux corps à l'amour des belles âmes en vue d'accéder au Beau en soi. L'amour des beaux corps constitue donc un « tremplin » vers l'amour des belles âmes et par delà l'amour des belles âmes vers la Beauté intelligible. On peut même dire que la philosophie du *Banquet* est une philosophie du passage, une philosophie méthodique, permettant l'ascension progressive conduisant à la saisie immédiate du Beau en soi. Il s'agit manifestement de ne pas exclure, de cette représentation progressive de l'ascension vers le Beau en soi, la première étape de l'initiation qui est celle de la prise en considération de l'amour du beau corps. L'amour du beau corps *n'est en aucune manière opposé* à l'amour d'une belle âme et à l'amour du Beau en soi (le dualisme suppose justement l'opposition et l'exclusion). Bien au contraire, l'amour du beau corps ou des beaux corps est la condition *sine qua non* de toute conversion, de toute élévation, de toute vision, c'est-à-dire de toute saisie du Beau en soi. L'amour du beau corps et des beaux corps est en d'autres termes la condition nécessaire de toute contemplation. Cette condition nécessaire, mais non suffisante, de l'amour du beau corps caractérise en propre cette philosophie du passage. C'est donc à partir du premier stade incontournable de l'ascension que la philosophie de la relation est mise en œuvre. Le premier échelon représente en fait le point de départ sans lequel l'ascension ne peut être possible ou ne peut se réaliser. Ainsi, le corps, loin de constituer un obstacle, représente un passage nécessaire et obligé vers l'âme, la science, et le Beau en soi. Il est le « lieu initial » à partir duquel il est possible de « relier » le sensible à l'intelligible, l'extérieur à l'intérieur, le bas au haut. Et c'est l'amour, en tant qu'élan, aspiration et désir passionné, qui est le moteur ou le ciment fédérateur et dynamique de ces différents niveaux.

Si le corps représente un passage nécessaire et obligé, et si l'amour du beau corps permet cette dynamique ascensionnelle vers le Beau en soi à travers les médiations de l'amour des belles âmes et des belles sciences ; si, en d'autres termes, le corps, au lieu d'être rejeté et séparé de l'âme, constitue en revanche un élément incontournable de ce que j'ai appelé une philosophie de la relation, c'est parce que la vision sensible d'un beau corps permet le souvenir (réminiscence) de la Beauté en soi contemplée par l'âme antérieurement avant qu'elle ne rentre dans un corps. Si la philosophie de la réminiscence qui est clairement formulée dans le *Ménon* et dans le *Phédon*³⁴ n'apparaît pas explicitement dans le *Banquet*, on peut tout de même dire qu'elle sous-tend cette philosophie de la relation qui au lieu de séparer comme par une coupure le sensible de l'intelligible, le corps de l'âme permet plutôt d'assurer leur unité et leur cohésion.

Conclusion

Ainsi, partis d'une philosophie de la séparation dans le *Phédon* dont on trouve les traces dans le *Banquet*, on se trouve aussitôt installé, avec le *Sum-posion*, dans le cadre d'une philosophie de la relation qui assure désormais la cohésion du Tout avec lui-même, et l'unité de l'homme avec lui-même. Ce monisme cosmologique et anthropologique permet à Platon de sauvegarder l'unité de son système et l'empêche de sombrer dans le dualisme opposant le sensible à l'intelligible, le corps à l'âme. Platon répondrait à la critique que lui adressera par la suite Aristote. Contrairement à ce que soutiendrait Aristote, Platon ne redoublerait pas la réalité puisque celle-ci se trouverait malgré tout caractérisée par l'unité. J'ajouterai que cette philosophie de la relation, développée par Platon dans le *Banquet*, est conforme à l'optimisme grec en général et à l'optimisme platonicien en particulier qui considèrent que le monde est beau (cf. le *Timée*) et que l'homme est en mesure d'harmoniser, en lui,

³⁴ Sur la réminiscence dans le *Ménon* et le *Phédon*, cf. l'Introduction de M. Canto, Platon, *Ménon*, op. cit., p. 74 sq., ainsi que l'Introduction de M. Dixsaut, Platon, *Phédon*, Traduction nouvelle, introduction et notes, Paris, GF Flammarion, 1991, p. 97 sq. Sur le rôle joué par l'anamnèse dans d'autres dialogues, voir l'étude de S. Scolnicov, « Anamnèse et structure des idées dans le *Théétète* et dans le *Parménide* », in M. Fattal (éd.), *La Philosophie de Platon*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2005, Tome 2, pp. 139-158.

le corps et l'âme, le physique et le psychique. C'est à travers la figure mythique et dynamique de l'*eros*-démon-intermédiaire et médiateur, figure par excellence du « lien » (*desmos*) incarnée par le *philo*-sophe qui occupe une position médiane (*en mesô*) et centrale entre le haut et le bas, que cette unité du Tout avec lui-même et que cette harmonie de l'homme avec lui-même sont rendues possibles.

Perché tanta morte in un dialogo sull'amore e sulla vita? Riflessioni sulla dialettica amore-morte-immortalità nel *Simposio* di Platone

Arianna Fermani

«Fratelli, a un tempo stesso, Amore e Morte,
ingenerò la sorte»
(G. Leopardi, *Amore e Morte*, 1832)

I. Riflessioni introduttive

Il primo dato su cui vorrei cercare di riflettere e su cui, stranamente, non si è adeguatamente soffermata la critica, è la cospicua presenza di riferimenti alla morte e al morire all'interno del *Simposio*¹.

L'individuazione delle occorrenze del lemma θάνατος, del verbo θνήσκω e dei suoi composti, costituisce il punto di avvio di questo contributo. Sulla scorta del lessico informatizzato di Radice-Bombacigno² è possibile individuare una serie di occorrenze piuttosto significative legate ai termini di quest'area semantica. Infatti, a fronte di un'unica occorrenza del lemma θάνατος³, si riscontrano nel testo numerose occorrenze relative ai lemmi θνήσκω⁴, θνητός⁵, ai composti ἀποθνήσκω⁶ e ὑπεραποθνήσκω⁷, e ai verbi τελευτάω⁸ e ἀπόλλυμι⁹.

All'assunzione di questa presenza, tanto significativa quanto anomala, se si tiene conto che ci troviamo all'interno di un dialogo consacrato all'amore e dunque tradizionalmente considerato un inno alla procreazione e alla vita¹⁰, va però affiancata la riflessione sulla particolare curvatura che la nozione di θάνατος riceve all'interno del *Simposio*. Quello che, infatti, vorrei cercare di mostrare attraverso questo percorso è come, contrariamente alla nota contrapposizione tra ἔρως e θάνατος - intesi rispettivamente come istinto vitale e come pulsione distruttiva, ovvero come la *Todestriebe* (pulsione di morte) di freudiana memoria¹¹ - la morte rappresenti in questo contesto non solo il fondamento della vita, ma la *condizione di possibilità dell'insorgenza dell'eros stesso*.

II. Le articolazioni del rapporto tra amore e morte

Il riferimento alla morte e al morire attraversa tutta l'opera, a partire dal primo discorso. Fedro ricorda infatti come

«solo gli amanti accettano di *morire* (ὑπεραποθνήσκειν) per gli altri; non solo gli uomini, ma anche le donne. E di questa mia affermazione offre agli Elleni una bella testimonianza la figlia di Pelia, Alceste, che volle, ella sola, *morire* (ἀποθανεῖν) per il suo sposo, pur avendo egli padre e madre... Invece Orfeo, figlio di Eagro, gli dèi lo mandarono via dall'Ade senza alcun risultato... perché

¹ Gli studi tema della morte nell'opera platonica, infatti, si concentrano principalmente su dialoghi quali *Apologia*, *Fedone* e *Repubblica*. Si vedano, tra gli altri, Van Harten, *Socrates on Life and Death*; Austin, *Fear and Death in Plato*; Armleder, *Death in Plato's Apologia*. Per ovvie ragioni di spazio i riferimenti alla letteratura secondaria e la discussione con essa saranno limitati al minimo. Per una rassegna bibliografica, di carattere generale e specifico, si rinvia all'aggiornamento bibliografico di M. Tulli, in Platone, *Simposio*, 2011²⁴, pp. 80 ss.

² Radice-Bombacigno, *Plato, Lexicon*, 2003.

³ θάνατον: 179 D 8.

⁴ τεθνάναι: 179 A 5; τεθνεώτε: 192 E 4.

⁵ θνητή: 207 D 1; θνητής: 211 E 3; θνητόν: 208 A 7, 208 B 3; θνητός: 202 D 8; 203 E 1; θνητοῦ: 202 D 11; 202 E 1; θνητῶ: 206 C 7; 206 E 8.

⁶ ἀπέθνησκον: 191 A 8; ἀποθανεῖν: 178 B 8; 208 D 3; ἀποθάνητε: 192 E 3; ἀποθάνοι: 191 B 2; ἀποθανοῖτο: 179 E 3; ἀποθνήσκειν: 179 D 6.

⁷ ὑπεραποθανεῖν: 180 A 1; ὑπεραποθνήσκειν: 179 B 4; 207 B 4; 208 D 2.

⁸ τελευτᾶ: 181 E 2; τελευτήσαι: 211 C 7; τελευτήσασσι: 180 b 8; τελευτήσοι: 179 E 4; τελευτῶν: 198 C 3; 211 C 8; τελευτῶντες: 220 C 8; τετελευτηκότι: 180 A 2.

⁹ ἀπολλύμενον: 211 a 1; ἀπολλυμένων: 211 b 3; ἀπόλλυνται: 208 a 1; ἀπόλλυται: 207 E 4; ἀπόλλυντο: 191 B 5.

¹⁰ «Ciò che emerge chiaramente nel *Simposio* è che i concetti che caratterizzano l'eros... sono il desiderio, la bellezza, la creatività, l'immortalità» (Santas, *Platone e Freud*, p. 70).

¹¹ Si tratta della teoria, elaborata da Sigmund Freud a partire dal 1920 (cfr. Freud, *Jenseits des Lustprinzips*), fondata sulla contrapposizione delle due pulsioni, quella di vita (*Eros*) e quella di morte (*Thanatos*), che scandirebbero la dimensione psichica di ogni essere vivente. «Contrapponendo amore e morte, *Eros* e *Thanatos*... Freud vede in Amore il tentativo di contrastare le forse disgregatrici, le pulsioni di morte, che altro non sono se non le cadenze con cui la natura gioca il suo rinnovamento a spese degli individui, ingannati dalla cieca pulsione (*blinder Trieb*) che Shopenhauer, il filosofo di Freud, aveva così lucidamente indicato» (Galimberti, *Idee*, p. 19).

sembrò loro essere un debole... e non avere il coraggio di *morire per amore*» (ἔνεκα τοῦ ἔρωτος ἀποθνήσκειν) come ebbe Alcesti... Per questo motivo gli diedero un castigo e lo fecero *morire* (ἐποίησαν τὸν θάνατον) per mano di donne... E non lo trattennero certo come Achille, figlio di Teti, a cui attribuirono onori e lo mandarono alle Isole dei Beati. Infatti Achille, pur avendo saputo dalla madre che, se avesse ucciso Ettore, *sarebbe morto* (ἀποθανοῖτο) e che, se non avesse fatto questo, sarebbe tornato a casa e sarebbe *morto* (τελευτήσοι) vecchio, ebbe il coraggio di scegliere, porgendo soccorso al suo amante Patroclo e vendicandolo, non solo di *morire per lui* (ὑπεραποθανεῖν) ma di *morire per lui già morto* (ἐπαποθανεῖν τετελευτηκότι)¹².

Il discorso di Fedro contiene, dunque, una cospicua serie di riferimenti alla morte e al morire. Il vero amante, dice Fedro, è colui che è disposto a morire per il proprio amato, come fece Alcesti, sebbene fosse una donna, o come fece Achille, che addirittura fu disposto a morire per un amato già morto. Egli, infatti, «non solo morì *per* Patroclo ma anche *dopo* Patroclo»¹³. Sul fronte opposto c'è chi, come Orfeo, non ha la forza di dare la propria vita per la propria amata. Egli non ha abbastanza coraggio¹⁴ e quindi non riesce a dominare la paura e, nello specifico, la paura della morte. In questo senso, come viene detto esplicitamente, egli, pur essendo un uomo, è più debole di Alcesti. Ma a chi non è disposto a morire per amore non resta che o essere ucciso per mano altrui (o addirittura, come si legge, per «mano di donne», 179 D 8, come capitò, appunto, ad Orfeo), o terminare i propri giorni arrivando al termine della propria esistenza¹⁵ morendo da vecchio ma in modo ignobile (prospettiva che Achille non fu disposto ad accettare).

Tale discorso, dunque, che apre la serie di riferimenti al tema del θάνατος all'interno del dialogo, oltre ad avere una serie di limiti evidenziati dalla critica¹⁶, è dichiarato sbagliato dallo stesso Platone. In 208 D 7-8, infatti, Diotima, riprendendo le figure ricordate nel discorso di Fedro, puntualizza che la vera ragione per cui Alcesti e Achille sono morti per il proprio amato è quella di ottenere «la virtù immortale» e «la fama gloriosa». D'altra parte l'erroneità del discorso di Fedro non toglie, come ha giustamente osservato Reale¹⁷, l'importanza di questo, come di tutti gli altri personaggi, all'interno dell'economia complessiva del dialogo. «Il giudizio negativo che molti hanno dato del contenuto del discorso è dovuto al fatto che non hanno compreso il personaggio che lo pronuncia... e hanno frainteso il preciso ruolo della maschera con cui inizia il complesso gioco drammaturgico»¹⁸.

Resta comunque il fatto che ci troviamo di fronte a vari scenari di “amore” e di “morte”, che nel discorso di Fedro vengono presentati in modo certamente inadeguato, ma che testimoniano la forza e il valore dell'eros, visto che gli dèi arrivano a punire chi non è disposto a morire per amore¹⁹. Un morire per amore che, in realtà, non ha nulla a che fare con l'ideale cristiano del sacrificio e dell'amore supremo che consiste nel morire gratuitamente per l'altro²⁰, ma che è finalizzato all'acquisizione di una forma di *immortalità*: quella che deriva dalla fama e dalla gloria²¹. Come ha giustamente sottolineato Reale²², infatti, «costoro... non avrebbero fatto ciò che hanno fatto “se essi non fossero stati convinti che della loro virtù sarebbe rimasta immortale la memoria” [Simposio 208 D]. Essi hanno accettato di sacrificare la vita “per la virtù immortale e per la fama gloriosa”, e dunque *per amore dell'immortalità*».

¹² Platone, *Simposio* 179 B 4-180 A 2. La traduzione di riferimento è quella di G. Reale, in Platone, *Simposio*, 1993.

¹³ Rowe, *Il Simposio di Platone*, p. 25, n. 24.

¹⁴ Sul fatto che l'amore implichi coraggio cfr. *Simposio* 196 C 8-D4: «E per coraggio, poi, *neppure Ares gli si può opporre*. Infatti non è Ares che possiede Eros, ma Eros che possiede Ares... E chi possiede è più forte di chi è posseduto; e chi domina colui che ha il maggior coraggio rispetto agli altri, risulta essere il più coraggioso di tutti».

¹⁵ Il verbo usato in questo caso è, significativamente, τελευτάω che significa sì “morire” ma nel senso di “portare a termine la vita”, “compiere”, “finire”.

¹⁶ «Fedro sta applicando la sua regola generale che “solo coloro che amano sono pronti a morire per altri”, ma con risultati particolarmente strani» (Rowe, *Il Simposio di Platone*, p. 25). La stranezza starebbe, in questo caso, nel fatto che, come sottolinea sempre Rowe, «solo gli amanti muoiono per altri; Alcesti muore per suo marito; pertanto deve necessariamente essere un'amante» (*Ivi*, n. 23).

¹⁷ *Eros. Demone mediatore*, pp. 54 ss.

¹⁸ Reale, *Demone mediatore*, p. 55.

¹⁹ In questo senso l'eros risulta essere più forte della *philia*: «l'esempio di Alcesti, che per amore dello sposo fu pronta a morire al suo posto, a differenza del padre e della madre, dimostra che l'eros è più forte dell'amore familiare (*filia*). Gli dei la rispettarono, mentre punirono invece Orfeo che non fu ugualmente disposto a morire per Euridice» (Santas, *Platone e Freud*, p. 31).

²⁰ «L'Agape cristiana costituisce un vertice di *amore donativo* in senso assoluto, mentre l'Eros della morte per l'altro di cui parla Platone è un *amore acquisitivo e non donativo*» (Reale, *Eros demone mediatore*, p. 195).

²¹ Non a caso, come sottolinea Jaeger, *Paideia*, p. 997 a proposito del discorso di Fedro: «motivo fondamentale del suo discorso è l'aspetto che si può dire politico di Eros. È lui che desta negli uomini il desiderio di onore, lui che genera l'*areté*, senza di che, non può esistere né amicizia, né società né stato».

²² Reale, *Eros. Demone mediatore*, p. 195.

I due poli “morte”-“immortalità”, legati dal comune *trait d'union* rappresentato dall’ “amore”- in una triade dialettica che, come cercherò di mostrare nella parte che segue, rappresenta una delle strutture concettuali fondanti dell’opera- emergono, dunque, già all’inizio del dialogo, anche se in forma per così dire embrionale.

Il tema della morte e del morire affiora, poi, anche se ad un altro livello, anche nel discorso di Aristofane. Qui la questione della morte viene associata all’aspirazione a diventare “una cosa sola”, ovvero a quell’insaziabile desiderio di fusione (ἐπιθυμοῦντες συμφῶναι: 191 A 8) che caratterizza gli amanti. Infatti è proprio a causa di questa ἐπιθυμία insopprimibile che, si racconta, gli amanti «*morivano* di fame e di inattività (ἀπέθνησκον ὑπὸ λιμοῦ καὶ τῆς... ἀργίας)»²³.

Il discorso di Aristofane²⁴, presenta dunque una articolazione del rapporto fra amore e morte diversa rispetto al discorso di Fedro: nel racconto aristofanese, infatti, gli amanti non scelgono di morire per il proprio amato, e la morte non si configura come l’esito di un atto eroico, non è l’espressione di forza o di coraggio (finalizzato in realtà, come spiegherà Diotima alla fine dell’opera, all’acquisizione di una gloria immortale²⁵), ma, esattamente al contrario, sopraggiunge per una forma di debolezza, cioè per l’incapacità di controllare l’impulso amoroso e di amministrare il desiderio.

Ora, per un verso, come è ovvio e come emerge chiarissimamente anche dal mito, la *morte* rappresenta il contraltare della *vita*, ovvero ciò che le si oppone e che la nega. Quando, infatti, delle due metà dell’intero, una muore e una vive, quella che rimane in vita proietta il proprio desiderio verso un’altra metà, sia essa di sesso maschile sia di sesso femminile:

«quando una metà *moriva* (ἀποθάσκει) e l’altra rimaneva in vita, questa rimasta cercava un’altra metà e si intrecciava con questa, sia che si imbattesse nella metà di una donna... sia che si imbattesse nella metà di un uomo. E in questo modo *morivano* (ἀπόλλυντο)»²⁶.

Ancora una volta, dunque, l’esito della fusione di due metà è rappresentato dalla morte e dalla distruzione: c’è infatti una “prima” morte al momento della separazione della metà originaria e una “seconda morte” al momento della formazione di un altro intero.

Ma, se da un lato è vero che vita e morte si contrappongono, delineando due esiti irrimediabilmente opposti (come l’esperienza comune e le parole pronunciate da Socrate alla fine dell’*Apologia* attestano con una straordinaria icasticità: «è ormai venuta l’ora di andare: *io a morire, e voi, invece, a vivere*»²⁷), è però *anche* vero che nella potente immagine aristofanese *vita e morte si trovano a convivere*. Dire, infatti, che l’intero è contemporaneamente costituito di due metà, di cui una è viva e l’altra è morta («una metà *moriva* e l’altra *rimaneva in vita*» 191 B 2), significa, fuori dal linguaggio mitico, che gli opposti sono chiamati a convivere e ad armonizzarsi proprio in virtù della loro contrapposizione. E significa anche che i due termini *vita* e *morte* danno reciprocamente senso l’uno all’altro: la morte esiste in quanto esiste la vita e viceversa, e i due termini si danno e si completano proprio in forza della loro opposizione. Ci troviamo insomma di fronte alla analoga movenza dialettica introdotta già nel discorso di Erisimaco²⁸ in cui, non a caso, viene esplicitamente citato il celebre frammento eracliteo: «*L’Uno in sé discorde, con se medesimo s’accorda, come l’armonia dell’arco e della lira*». In questa “opposizione armoniosa”, dunque, che costituisce il vero cuore del pensiero dialettico, risiede (così come -seppur a diverso titolo- mostrano i discorsi di Fedro e di Aristofane) uno degli snodi fondamentali del rapporto tra amore e morte.

Inoltre, sempre nel mito narrato da Aristofane, emerge, a mio avviso, un’altra questione estremamente rilevante: la metà viva è *spinta dall’amore e in virtù della morte* della parte che precedentemente la completava, a dirigersi altrove, ovvero a cercare un’altra metà, segno che l’*amore*, da un certo punto di vista, *trae origine dalla morte*. Se dunque «con la morte di una metà, l’altra cercava e abbracciava qualunque metà potesse ricomporre la coppia originaria»²⁹, questo significa che vita e morte si trovano, seppure in un modo del tutto particolare, a convivere.

Ma in realtà vita e morte vengono ad intrecciarsi, nel medesimo discorso, anche ad un altro livello. L’amore, infatti, letto secondo il paradigma della “fusione degli amanti”, viene anche visto come ciò

²³ 191 A 8-191 B 1.

²⁴ Sebbene anche questo discorso, al pari di quello di Fedro, sia considerato falso da Platone (cfr. 208 C-E; 205 D-E; su tutta la questione cfr. Migliori, *Il Disordine ordinato*, pp. 115 ss.), risultano a mio avviso interessanti le movenze teoriche che in essi vengono proposte e che troveranno conferma nel discorso di Diotima.

²⁵ «Credo proprio -soggiunse- che tutti facciano quello che fanno per la virtù immortale e per questa fama gloriosa, tanto più, quanto più valgono: infatti, essi *amano l’immortalità* (ἀθανάτου ἐρώσιν)» (208 D 7-E 1).

²⁶ 191 B 2-5.

²⁷ *Apologia di Socrate*, 42 A 2-3.

²⁸ «Egli fonda il suo concetto della concordia armoniosa sulla teoria eraclitea dei contrari... che, del resto, ha una notevole parte anche in altri elementi del pensiero medico del tempo» (Jaeger, *Paideia*, p. 1003).

²⁹ Santas, *Platone e Freud*, p. 35.

che *supera i confini della vita prolungandosi nella morte*. Efesto, infatti, offre agli amanti la possibilità che essi si fondino l'uno con l'altro, perché, dice il dio parlando direttamente ad essi «viviate insieme la vita, e quando *morirete* (ἀποθάνητε), anche laggiù, nell'Ade, invece di due siate ancora uno, uniti insieme anche nella *morte* (τεθνεώτε)³⁰.

Dunque se l'amore costituisce il fondamento di una fusione, di una *reductio ad unum* che supera il limite della vita trapassando anche nella morte³¹, allora si può dire che, *anche* da questo di vista, *vita e morte si trovano a convivere*, nel comune anello di congiunzione rappresentato da Eros.

Queste diverse riflessioni sulla morte, sul suo nesso con la vita e con l'amore da un lato e con l'immortalità dall'altro, trovano delle interessanti conferme nel discorso di Socrate. Il discorso di Diotima riportato dal Filosofo, infatti, che ruota tutto intorno all'eros definito come «un parto nella bellezza, sia secondo il corpo, sia secondo l'anima» (206 B 7-8), e come amore di «generare e partorire nel bello» (206 E 5), si impernia proprio sulla tensione dialettica tra mortale e immortale:

«la generazione è ciò che ci può essere di sempre nascente e *di immortale in un mortale* (ἀθάνατον ὡς θνητῶ)» (206 E 8).

L'amore, dunque, definito esplicitamente «desiderio di immortalità (τῆς ἀθανασίας τὸν ἔρωτα)» (207 A 3-4), viene definitivamente connesso al duplice polo della morte da un lato e dell'immortalità dall'altro.

Questo significa che, come accade per il demone Eros, che «per mancanza delle cose buone e belle, ha desiderio di queste cose di cui è mancante (ἐνδεής)» (202 D 1-3), così l'uomo, costitutivamente ancorato alla sua originaria mancanza, inchiodato alla sua condizione mortale e chiuso nel perimetro delimitato sin dall'inizio alla sua esistenza, non può trovare se non nell'amore il fondamento della propria immortalità, *per quanto è possibile all'essere umano*:

«infatti lo stesso discorso di prima vale anche ora, ossia che *la natura mortale* (ἡ θνητὴ φύσις) cerca, *nella misura del possibile* (κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν), di essere sempre e di essere immortale (ἀεὶ τε εἶναι καὶ ἀθάνατος)» (207 D 1-2).

E l'unica condizione di accesso all'immortalità per l'essere umano, ricorda il Filosofo, risiede nella possibilità di “generare figli”, siano essi figli del corpo o figli dell'anima³². In realtà, nell'ottica platonica, sono “i figli dell'anima” a detenere il primato, ovvero quei figli spirituali che sono frutto di un processo comunicativo-educativo e di una fecondità interiore ben più importante della prima. Da questa seconda forma di generazione derivano, non a caso, figli definiti esplicitamente «più immortali (ἀθανατωτέρων) e più belli» (209 C 7).

«E appunto in questa maniera ogni cosa mortale si mette in salvo, ossia non già con l'essere sempre in tutto il medesimo, come ciò che è divino, ma con il lasciare in luogo di quello che se ne va o che invecchia, qualcos'altro che è giovane e simile a lui», si legge in 208 A 7-B 2.

In questo senso si può dire che ad una forma di immortalità per così dire “leggera”, in quanto posseduta sin da sempre e per altra via dalle realtà eterne³³, si contrappone l'“immortalità faticosa” dell'essere umano, raggiungibile solo passando attraverso un vero e proprio “stratagemma” (μηχανή: 208 B 2), cioè solo attraversando le impervie vie e le dolorose strettoie della *cura* (σπουδῆ: 208 B 6) e dell'*amore* (ἔρωτος: 208 B 6):

«con questo stratagemma³⁴, o Socrate-soggiunse-, *ciò che è mortale partecipa dell'immortalità* (θνητὸν ἀθανασίας μετέχει), sia il corpo, sia ogni altra cosa... Non ti stupire, dunque, se ogni essere tenga in onore il proprio rampollo, perché è in funzione di immortalità che questa cura e l'amore s'accompagnano ad ognuno» (208 B 2-6).

III. Riflessioni conclusive

Da questo attraversamento -seppur rapido e incompleto- della nozione di *thanatos* all'interno del *Simposio*, emerge come il tema della *morte* e del *morire*, che intesse intimamente molte trame dell'opera, non si configuri nel dialogo come contraltare dell'amore e come negazione della vita, ma come ciò che:

1) *è inseparabile dalla vita stessa*, nel senso che non può esserci la vita senza la morte e senza il limite da essa delineato;

³⁰ 192 E 3-4.

³¹ In realtà va osservato come, in tale fusione, i soggetti si perdono, dato che sopravvive l'unione e non le due metà che si cercavano.

³² Per un approfondimento di questa nozione di «mental procreation» cfr. Price, *Love and Friendship*, pp. 35 ss.

³³ «Ciò che è immortale, invece, vi partecipa in altro modo» (208 B 4).

³⁴ Ho apportato qui una variazione rispetto alla traduzione del termine μηχανή (“sistema”) proposta da Reale.

2) rappresenta la *conditio sine qua non* dell'insorgenza stessa dell'amore come desiderio inestinguibile, come desiderio di immortalarsi, «per quanto è possibile ai mortali» (206 E 8).

In questo senso, forse, si può comprendere come il Filosofo, *proprio* nel dialogo dedicato alla «pulsante vitalità della vita»³⁵, ritenga necessario parlare, più volte e in molti modi, di morte.

La presenza ineludibile della morte, infatti, costituisce la sorgente inesauribile dell'amore e, con esso, la ricerca dell'immortalità, visto che «Platone è chiaro nel sostenere che l'immortalità costituisce la meta ultima dell'eros vero e proprio»³⁶. Le due forme di immortalità del *Simposio*, infatti, ovvero «l'immortalità riproduttiva, che riguarda la stirpe e la specie, e l'immortalità del pensiero, quella che spetta ai poeti, agli uomini di scienza, ai legislatori, grazie alla fama imperitura delle loro opere, che sopravvivono nella posteriorità»³⁷, si fondano proprio sulla consapevolezza di quel *πέρας* (limite) intrinseco alla vita rappresentato dalla morte stessa. «Perciò la generazione di un essere identico nella specie... è l'unica via, per il mortale e finito, di conservarsi immortale»³⁸.

In questo senso, amore e morte, lungi dal contrapporsi irriducibilmente, finiscono per costituire due facce della stessa medaglia, e non solo in base al fatto che, come si ricorda nel primo discorso, «solo gli amanti sono disposti a morire per gli amati» (179 B 4-5), ma per una ragione più profonda, rappresentata dalla tensione dialettica (che a mio avviso rappresenta uno dei cuori teorici della riflessione etico-antropologica platonica) tra la *consapevole accettazione della morte* e l'*insopprimibile aspirazione al suo superamento*.

«Ogni... persona che abbia desiderio, desidera ciò che non ha a sua disposizione e che non è presente, ciò che non possiede, *ciò che egli non è* (ὁ μὴ ἔστιν αὐτὸς), ciò di cui ha bisogno», si legge in 200 E 2-5.

Sull'assunzione di quel *limite* invalicabile che è la morte, dunque, risiede la radice di un desiderio *senza limite*, dato che, se l'essere umano non fosse consapevole della sua mancanza, non potrebbe neppure desiderare:

«quando non si crede di essere privi di una cosa, non la si desidera (ὁ μὴ οἰόμενος ἐνδεὴς εἶναι οὐδ' ἂν μὴ οἴηται ἐπιδεῖσθαι)» (204 A 6-7).

La *mancanza* e la *consapevolezza di questa mancanza* si danno dunque come elementi indisgiungibili, esattamente come la natura di Eros è costituita dalla “tensione armonica” e dalla combinazione delle nature opposte dei suoi genitori *Poros* e *Penia*. Perché Eros è sì costitutivamente manchevole, in quanto «ha la natura della madre, *sempre accompagnato con povertà* (ἀεὶ ἐνδέειν σύνουκος)» (203 D 3), ma ha anche la ricchezza enorme, conferitagli dalla natura paterna, di essere sempre alla ricerca, sempre “affamato”: «è coraggioso, audace, impetuoso, straordinario, cacciatore... pieno di risorse, ricercatore di sapienza per tutta la vita» (203 D 4-7).

Ma se Eros può desiderare in quanto, appunto, «privo di bellezza e bontà, ma consapevole di questa mancanza e pieno di risorse nel cercare di ottenerle»³⁹, in virtù del suo collocarsi in una *posizione intermedia fra mortale e immortale* (μεταξὺ θνητοῦ καὶ ἀθανάτου) (202 D 11), questo significa anche che ciò che è immortale, in virtù della sua perfezione e compiutezza, non ha accesso al desiderio. Non a caso gli dèi, come ricorda esplicitamente Platone, non desiderano (204 A 1).

Senza l'assunzione della finitezza originaria del θάνατος, pertanto, non si darebbero né la vita né eros, vero anello di congiunzione tra divino e mortale (θνητοῦ) (202 E 1), e fondamentale condizione di possibilità che, come si è visto, «ciò che è mortale partecipi dell'immortalità» (208 B 3)⁴⁰.

«Con un sapiente discorso Diotima rivela la verità sulla natura e l'opera di Eros, demone potente, che muove alla fecondità del corpo e dello spirito e che mediante i bei corpi e le anime belle consente all'uomo di godere dell'immortalità della specie e del pensiero immortale. È dunque l'amore che innalza l'uomo oltre la propria condizione mortale e suscita il desiderio di oltrepassare la propria natura finita portandone a compimento le proprie potenzialità»⁴¹.

L'amore è indisgiungibile dalla morte, dunque, e da essa trae origine, esattamente come la filosofia che, proprio per questa ragione, è sorretta da un'inquietudine costante⁴². Ecco perché il filosofo, come Eros, è sempre alla ricerca, non ha mai pace. Egli, infatti, non solo non rimuove e non dimentica la

³⁵ Bury, *The Symposium of Plato*, p. III.

³⁶ Santas, *Platone e Freud*, p. 63.

³⁷ Vegetti, *Quindici lezioni su Platone*, p. 129 (corsivi miei).

³⁸ Jaeger, *Paideia*, p. 1015.

³⁹ Santas, *Platone e Freud*, p. 50.

⁴⁰ «Diotima has been describing an immortality open to what is mortal» (Price, *Love and Friendship*, p. 30).

⁴¹ Zanatta, in Platone, *Simposio o Sull'amore*, p. 178.

⁴² «La filosofia, come indica lo stesso termine, possiede una dimensione affettiva che la costituisce e insieme la caratterizza. Il filosofo non solo agisce guidato dall'intelligenza, ma ama questa attività, conosce il valore delle sue risorse, apprezza il suo linguaggio, cioè desidera il sapere di cui va alla ricerca. La filosofia è *desiderio di conoscere*. Intelligenza e desiderio sembrano convergere, stringendosi in un nodo inestricabile» (corsivo mio)» (Borges, *Eros: direzione e effetti*, p. 15).

morte, ma ne fa la chiave di volta della sua vita, il punto di partenza della sua inestinguibile sete di conoscenza, di amore e, dunque, di immortalità. Perché se è vero che «la filosofia nasce come tentativo di controllare il dolore che il divenire porta con sé»⁴³, è proprio in questo fondamentale crocevia che può sprigionarsi la meraviglia, ovvero quell'apertura incessante alla domanda e alla vita che può generarsi solo in presenza di un atteggiamento di persistente e profonda anticipazione della morte:

«la domanda che nasce nella prospettiva della fine resta comunque inevitabile e finisce col costituire l'inizio stesso della filosofia. Platone e Aristotele hanno insegnato che la filosofia nasce con la meraviglia sull'essere. Si può però ben dire che la meraviglia non è che il risvolto positivo dell'angoscia di fronte al nulla, in qualche modo già la prefigurazione della sua salvezza»⁴⁴.

IV. Bibliografia citata e utilizzata

1. Strumenti e lessici

Radice R.-Bombacigno R., *Plato. Lexicon*. Con CD-ROM, Biblia, Milano 2003.

2. Fonti

Bury R.G., *The Symposium of Plato*, Heffer, Cambridge 1932.

Ferrari F.: Platone, *Simposio*, introduzione di F. Di Benedetto, traduzione e note di F. Ferrari, aggiornamento bibliografico di M. Tulli, Bur, Milano 1986, 2011²⁴.

Freud S., *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* 1920, trad. it. *Al di là del principio del piacere*, in *Opere di Sigmund Freud (OSF) vol. 9. L'Io e l'Es e altri scritti 1917-1923*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 1986.

Reale G.: Platone, *Simposio*, introduzione, traduzione, note e apparati di G. Reale, appendice bibliografica di E. Peroli, Rusconi, Milano 1993.

Zanatta F.: Platone, *Simposio o Sull'Amore*, introduzione di U. Galimberti, traduzione a cura di F. Zanatta, Feltrinelli, Milano 1995, 2010⁹.

3. Studi critici

Armleder P.J., *Death in Plato's Apologia*, «Classical Bulletin», 42 (1966), p. 46.

Austin E., *Fear and Death in Plato*, Washington University 2009.

Borges De Araújo Jr. A., *Eros: direzione e effetti*, in Anastácio Borges De Araújo Jr.-Gabriele Cornelli (eds.), *Il Simposio di Platone: un banchetto di interpretazioni*, Loffredo Editore, Napoli 2012.

Galimberti U., *Idee: il catalogo è questo*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2001.

Jaeger W., *Paideia. Die Formung des griechischen Menschen*, 3 voll., Berlin 1936-1947; trad. it. L. Emery-A. Setti: *Paideia. La formazione dell'uomo greco*, introduzione di G. Reale, indici di A. Bellanti, Bompiani "Il pensiero Occidentale", Milano 2003.

Melchiorre V., *Al di là dell'ultimo. Filosofie della morte e della vita*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1998.

Migliori M., *Il Disordine ordinato. La filosofia dialettica di Platone*. Volume I. *Dialettica, metafisica e cosmologia*. Volume II. *Dall'anima alla prassi etica e politica*, Morcelliana, Brescia 2013.

Price A.W., *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1989, 1997³.

Reale G., *Eros demone mediatore e il gioco delle maschere nel Simposio di Platone*, Rizzoli, Milano 1997.

Rowe C. J., *Il Simposio di Platone. Cinque lezioni sul dialogo con un ulteriore contributo sul Fedone e una breve discussione di Maurizio Migliori e Arianna Fermani*, a cura di M. Migliori, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin 1998.

Santas G., *Plato and Freud. Two Theories of Love*, Basis Blackwell, Oxford 1988; trad. it. L. Casalboni: *Platone e Freud: due teorie dell'eros*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1990.

Van Harten A., *Socrates on Life and Death (Plato, Apology 40 C 5-41 C7)*, «The Cambridge Classical Journal», 57 (2011), pp. 165-183.

Vegetti M., *Quindici lezioni su Platone*, Einaudi, Torino 2003.

⁴³ Galimberti, *Idee*, p. 61.

⁴⁴ Melchiorre, *Al di là dell'ultimo*, p. 10.

La nozione di intermedio nel *Symposium* di Platone

Cristina Rossitto

Nel *Symposium* Platone utilizza ripetutamente la nozione di "intermedio" (μεταξύ), in quanto essa è fondamentale per stabilire quale sia la vera natura di Eros. Questi infatti viene riconosciuto come né bello né brutto, ma come intermedio fra i due; come né buono né cattivo, ma come intermedio fra i due; ma soprattutto come né immortale né mortale, né un dio né un uomo, ma come qualcosa di intermedio fra ciò che è immortale e ciò che è mortale, fra ciò che è divino e ciò che è umano. In quanto tale, Eros è un "dèmone", e anzi, proprio per il fatto di avere una natura intermedia fra gli dèi e gli uomini, egli assume la funzione di vero e proprio collegamento tra gli uni e gli altri: Eros è appunto un "dèmone mediatore".¹ E ancora, figlio di Poros e Penia, genitori aventi per molti aspetti natura opposta l'uno rispetto all'altra, Eros si trova in una situazione di intermediarietà anche fra sapienza e ignoranza, ed è perciò filosofo.

Tale uso della nozione di intermedio come ciò che possiede una natura che sta "in mezzo" fra una superiore ed una inferiore ad esso, queste ultime "opposte" o senz'altro "contrarie" (ἐναντίον) fra loro², è sicuramente il più noto ed è riscontrabile anche in altri luoghi platonici, e non solo nei dialoghi,³ ma anche nelle testimonianze sulle "cosiddette dottrine non scritte"⁴. In questa sede, tuttavia, si preferisce svolgere alcune considerazioni di carattere più specifico sulla nozione di intermedio utilizzata da Platone, proprio grazie al fatto che nel *Symposium* egli offre una varietà di coppie di opposti "con intermedio" assai ricca ed articolata. Ciò lascia intendere, già ad una prima lettura, che la nozione di intermedio possieda più di un significato e che essa si colleghi ad altre prospettive e ad ambiti ulteriori rispetto a quanto espresso nel *Symposium* stesso.

Proprio per tale motivo si cercherà di concentrare l'attenzione solo sulle argomentazioni contenute in questa parte del dialogo, limitando il confronto, a titolo esemplificativo, con un altro breve testo platonico, forse meno tematizzato in questa prospettiva, ma meritevole di considerazione, quale quello che si può individuare nel *Gorgia*.⁵ In tal senso, la nozione tecnica di intermedio e la figura di Eros potrebbero trovare un qualche reciproco giovamento dal punto di vista filosofico, in riferimento non solo alle dottrine platoniche ma anche alle dottrine di altri pensatori del medesimo periodo o ambito culturale, le quali, pur nella loro diversità rispetto alle prime, rivelano per altri aspetti una linea comune di sviluppo.

1. L'uso "tecnico" del concetto di μεταξύ si trova nella parte finale del dialogo, quella che viene di consuetudine considerata come la più strettamente filosofica, dal momento che la sua conduzione è affidata, diversamente da quanto avvenuto in precedenza, alla figura di Socrate.

Più precisamente, il primo riferimento importante alla nozione di μεταξύ compare, nel *Symposium*, nel momento in cui Socrate espone il discorso su Eros udito da Diotima, nella stessa forma in cui questa lo spiegò a lui, ossia interrogando:

Σχεδὸν γάρ τι καὶ ἐγὼ πρὸς αὐτὴν ἕτερα τοιαῦτα ἔλεγον οἷάπερ νῦν πρὸς ἐμὲ Ἀγάθων, ὡς εἶπεν ὁ Ἔρως μέγας θεός, εἶπεν δὲ τῶν καλῶν ἤλεγχε δὴ με τούτοις τοῖς λόγοις οἷσπερ ἐγὼ τοῦτον, ὡς οὔτε καλὸς εἶπεν κατὰ τὸν ἐμὸν λόγον οὔτε ἀγαθός. Καὶ ἐγὼ, Πῶς λέγεις, ἔφη, ὦ Διοτίμα; αἰσχρὸς ἄρα ὁ Ἔρως ἐστὶ καὶ κακός; Καὶ ἦ, Οὐκ εὐφημήσεις; ἔφη ἦ

¹ Cf. G. Reale, *Eros dèmone mediatore. Il gioco delle maschere nel Symposium di Platone*, Milano 1997.

² E' noto che la distinzione dei tipi di termini opposti (ἀντικείμενα) in contraddittori, privazione e possesso, contrari (ἐναντία) e relativi risale ad Aristotele, il quale però a volte, esattamente come è in Platone, utilizza ancora il termine ἐναντίον per indicare tanto gli opposti in generale quanto quel particolare tipo di opposti che sono i "contrari" (cf. per esempio Aristot. *Cat.* 10). D'altra parte, è proprio Aristotele ad ammettere la possibilità che vi siano intermedi fra termini opposti solo per i contrari, e anzi, nemmeno per tutti (cf. anche Aristot. *Metaph.* X 7).

³ Per una considerazione complessiva ma articolata dei luoghi dei dialoghi in cui Platone utilizza il termine μεταξύ si rinvia all'intramontabile J. Souilhé, *La notion platonicienne d'intermédiaire dans la philosophie des dialogues*, Paris 1919, anche se qui spesso prevale una visione della tematica che forse tiene troppo conto della tradizione filosofica successiva a Platone, quale quelle aristotelica e stoica.

⁴ Cf. H.J. Kraemer, *Platone e i fondamenti della metafisica*, Milano 1982.

⁵ Non potranno perciò essere qui tematizzati i collegamenti con dialoghi quali la *Repubblica*, il *Teeteto* e il *Timeo*, essendo di carattere troppo ampio, mentre l'utilizzazione della nozione di intermedio nell'ambito delle "dottrine non scritte" è ricerca condotta in altra sede. Per un esempio di apprezzamento del concetto di intermedio nel *Symposium* in generale, si veda, recentemente, Ch. Rowe, *Il Simposio di Platone*, Sankt Augustin 1998; R. Fabbrichesi, *La freccia di Apollo. Semiotica ed erotica nel pensiero antico*, Pisa 2006.

οἶει, ὅτι ἂν μὴ καλὸν ἦ, ἀναγκαῖον αὐτὸ εἶναι αἰσχρὸν; Μάλιστα γέ. Ἡ καὶ ἂν μὴ σοφόν, ἀμαθές; ἢ οὐκ ἤσθησαι ὅτι ἔστιν τι μεταξὺ σοφίας καὶ ἀμαθίας; Τί τοῦτο; Τὸ ὀρθὰ δοξάζειν καὶ ἄνευ τοῦ ἔχειν λόγον δοῦναι οὐκ οἶσθ', ἔφη, ὅτι οὔτε ἐπίστασθαί ἐστιν - ἄλογον γὰρ πρᾶγμα πῶς ἂν εἶη ἐπιστήμη; - οὔτε ἀμαθία - τὸ γὰρ τοῦ ὄντος τυγχάνον πῶς ἂν εἶη ἀμαθία; - ἔστι δὲ δήπου τοιοῦτον ἢ ὀρθὴ δόξα, μεταξὺ φρονήσεως καὶ ἀμαθίας. Ἀληθῆ, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, λέγεις. Μὴ τοίνυν ἀνάγκαζε ὃ μὴ καλὸν ἐστὶν αἰσχρὸν εἶναι, μηδὲ ὃ μὴ ἀγαθόν, κακόν. οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἔρωτα ἐπειδὴ αὐτὸς ὁμολογεῖς μὴ εἶναι ἀγαθὸν μηδὲ καλόν, μηδὲν τι μᾶλλον οἶον δεῖν αὐτὸν αἰσχρὸν καὶ κακόν εἶναι, ἀλλὰ τι μεταξὺ, ἔφη, τούτοις.

Infatti, anch'io dissi a lei all'incirca quelle stesse cose che Agatone ha detto a me, ossia che Eros è un gran dio, e che è amore delle cose belle. E lei mi confutò con quegli stessi argomenti con cui io ho confutato lui, ossia dicendo che, in base al suo stesso discorso, Eros non risulta essere né bello né buono. Ed io allora risposi: "Che cosa dici, o Diotima? Allora Eros è brutto e cattivo?". E lei: "Sta' zitto! Credi forse che ciò che non sia bello, di necessità debba essere brutto?". (S.) "Sicuramente!". (D.) "E che ciò che non sia sapiente, debba essere ignorante? O non ti accorgi che c'è un intermedio fra sapienza e ignoranza?". (S.) "Qual è questo?". "L'opinione rettamente, però, senza essere in grado di fornire spiegazioni - precisò Diotima -, non sai che non è un sapere? Infatti, come potrebbe essere scienza una cosa senza spiegazioni? E non è neppure ignoranza. Infatti, come potrebbe essere ignoranza, se coglie l'essere? Pertanto, l'opinione retta è indubbiamente di questo tipo: un intermedio fra saggezza e ignoranza". "Dici il vero", risposi. "Allora non forzare ciò che non è bello ad essere brutto e ciò che non è buono ad essere cattivo! E così anche Eros, dal momento che anche tu sei d'accordo che non è né buono né bello, non credere che debba essere brutto e cattivo: è qualcosa di intermedio fra questi due", disse.⁶

Eros dunque, pur non essendo bello non è nemmeno brutto, e in tal senso, non essendo né bello né brutto, è un intermedio fra i due; così anche, pur non essendo buono non è nemmeno cattivo, e in tal senso, non essendo né buono né cattivo, è un intermedio fra i due. Questa è del resto una situazione che si riscontra anche a proposito di sapienza e ignoranza, per cui qualcuno, pur non essendo sapiente, non è nemmeno ignorante, e in tal senso, non essendo né sapiente né ignorante, è un intermedio fra i due, e precisamente possiede opinione retta.

Per quanto riguarda la nozione di intermedio, essa dunque sta ad indicare ciò che non è né l'uno né l'altro di due termini opposti, cioè contrari, fra loro, come appunto è la retta opinione rispetto a sapienza e a ignoranza, ciò che non è né bello né brutto rispetto a ciò che è bello e a ciò che è brutto, ciò che non è né buono né cattivo rispetto a ciò che è buono e a ciò che è cattivo. Si tratta in questo caso di tre coppie di contrari - sapienza-ignoranza, bello-brutto, buono-cattivo - che presentano, ciascuna al proprio interno, un terzo termine - retta opinione, né bello né brutto, né buono né cattivo -, che è appunto il rispettivo intermedio.

Benché Platone introduca la coppia sapienza-ignoranza con intermedio retta opinione per mostrare come essa sia il modello da assumere per comprendere le coppie bello-brutto e buono-cattivo, di cui Eros costituisce l'intermedio, essendo né bello né brutto e né buono né cattivo, solo per quel caso indica esplicitamente l'intermedio, ossia appunto la retta opinione - che è comunque ciò che non è né sapienza né ignoranza -, mentre negli altri due casi si limita a mantenere la doppia negazione - né l'uno né l'altro dei due -. Si tratta dunque dell'indicazione dell'intermedio mediante la negazione dei due contrari di cui è intermedio.

Anche altrove Platone mostra di adottare una simile terminologia, ed anzi, nel *Gorgia*, proprio in riferimento alle nozioni di bene e di male:

- ΣΩ. Ἄρ' οὖν ἔστιν τι τῶν ὄντων ὃ οὐχὶ ἦτο ἀγαθὸν γ' ἐστὶν ἢ κακὸν ἢ μεταξὺ τούτων, οὔτε ἀγαθὸν οὔτε κακόν; -ΠΩΛ. Πολλὴ ἀνάγκη, ὦ Σώκρατες. -ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν λέγεις εἶναι ἀγαθὸν μὲν σοφίαν τε καὶ ὑγίειαν καὶ πλοῦτον καὶ τᾶλλα τὰ τοιαῦτα, κακὰ δὲ τὰναντία τούτων; -ΠΩΛ. Ἔγωγε. -ΣΩ. Τὰ δὲ μήτε ἀγαθὰ μήτε κακὰ ἄρα τοιάδε λέγεις, ἃ ἐνίοτε μὲν μετέχει τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ἐνίοτε δὲ τοῦ κακοῦ, ἐνίοτε δὲ οὐδετέρου, οἷον καθῆσθαι καὶ βαδίζειν καὶ τρέχειν καὶ πλεῖν, καὶ οἷον αὐτὸ λίθους καὶ ξύλα καὶ τᾶλλα τὰ τοιαῦτα; οὐ ταῦτα λέγεις; ἢ ἄλλ' ἄττα καλεῖς τὰ μήτε ἀγαθὰ μήτε κακὰ;

⁶ Plat. *Symp.* 201E3-202B5 (trad. it. di G. Reale, in Platone, *Simposio*, Milano 2011, pp. 175-177).

Esiste una sola cosa che non sia o buona, o cattiva, o intermedia tra l'una e l'altra, cioè né buona né cattiva? ... Tu dirai, senza dubbio, che sapienza, salute, ricchezza e altre simili doti sono un bene, male le qualità contrarie? ... Né buone né cattive dirai, invece, quelle cose che partecipano ora del bene ora del male, talvolta ancora né del bene né del male, come, per esempio, lo stare a sedere, camminare, correre, navigare, oppure le pietre, il legno, e gli altri oggetti di questo genere?⁷

Anche nel *Gorgia*, dunque, Platone, a proposito della coppia di contrari costituita da bene e male, indica l'intermedio come ciò che non è nessuno dei due, ossia come ciò che non è né bene né male. Egli anzi distingue un duplice significato di ciò che viene indicato con la negazione dei due contrari (ciò che non è né bene né male), per cui ciò che non è né l'uno né l'altro dei due può essere inteso o come ciò che partecipa ora del bene ora del male, o come ciò che non partecipa né del bene né del male. Sembra dunque di poter intendere che, in base al primo significato, la negazione dei due contrari è da intendersi come un vero e proprio intermedio, nel senso che ciò che non è né bene né male a volte è collegato al bene e a volte al male, mentre, in base al secondo significato, essa rimane una semplice negazione, nel senso che ciò che non è né bene né male non ha nulla a che fare né con il bene né con il male.

Gli esempi riportati, in questo testo veramente abbondanti, sembrano del resto confermare tale prospettiva. Che non siano né bene né male si dice tanto della passeggiata quanto del legno; ma mentre nel primo caso ciò significa che la passeggiata a volte può far bene, se compiuta con equilibrio, a volte può far male, se comporta uno sforzo eccessivo, nel secondo caso ciò significa che il legno non fa né bene né male.

In realtà, come si evince dall'esordio del passo, qui Platone non pare riferirsi direttamente al bene e al male, ma agli "enti" che possono essere buoni e cattivi. In base a questa considerazione, per cui potrebbe trattarsi di una classificazione degli enti, nel senso che questi o sono beni o sono mali o sono nessuno dei due, nel duplice significato visto, il passo del *Gorgia* ritorna esattamente nello stesso modo nelle *Divisiones Aristoteleae*, uno scritto attribuito ad Aristotele che è costituito da una raccolta di classificazioni dei sensi di vari termini e i cui contenuti sono riconducibili all'ambiente dell'Accademia platonica antica. In tale opera, infatti, una delle divisioni degli enti suona così:

Διαιρείται ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων εἰς τρία. ἔστι γὰρ ἢ ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακὸν ἢ οὐδέτερον. τὸ μὲν οὖν ἀγαθὸν ἔστιν, ὅταν ὠφελήσῃ τινὰ καὶ οὐ βλάψῃ, τὸ δὲ κακὸν, ὅταν βλάπτῃ αἰεὶ, τὸ δὲ οὐδέτερον, ὅπερ ποτὲ μὲν βλάπτει ποτὲ δὲ ὠφελήσῃ, οἷον οἱ περίπατοι καὶ οἱ ὕπνοι καὶ οἱ ἐλλέβοροι καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, ἢ οὔτε βλάπτει ὅλως οὔτε ὠφελήσῃ.

Ciascuno degli enti si divide in tre: infatti o è un bene, o un male, o nessuno dei due. L'uno, dunque, è un bene, qualora procuri vantaggio a qualcuno e non faccia danno; l'altro è un male, qualora faccia sempre danno; quello invece che non è nessuno dei due, è ciò che a volte fa danno e a volte procura vantaggio, per esempio le passeggiate, il sonno, l'elleano e simili, oppure ciò che non fa danno né procura vantaggio affatto.⁸

Se le cose stanno così, allora il passo del *Gorgia* starebbe proprio alle origini di questa divisione, che anzi sarebbe diventata patrimonio comune dell'Accademia antica.⁹ In effetti, secondo una testimonianza di Sesto Empirico, sarebbe stato proprio l'Accademico Senocrate ad occuparsi specificamente di questa tematica, tanto da mettere in atto una vera e propria dimostrazione:

Πάντες μὲν οἱ κατὰ τρόπον στοιχειοῦν δοκοῦντες τῶν φιλοσόφων, καὶ ἐπιφανέστατα παρὰ πάντας οἱ τε ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχαίας Ἀκαδημίας καὶ οἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ Περιπάτου, ἔτι δὲ τῆς Στοᾶς, εἰώθασιν διαιρούμενοι λέγειν τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν εἶναι ἀγαθὰ, τὰ δὲ κακά, τὰ δὲ μετὰ τούτων, ἅπερ καὶ ἀδιάφορα λέγουσιν· ἰδιαιτέρον δὲ παρὰ τοὺς ἄλλους ὁ Ξενοκράτης καὶ ταῖς ἐνικαῖς πτώσεσι χρώμενος ἔφασκε· "πάν τὸ ὄν ἢ ἀγαθὸν ἔστιν ἢ

⁷ Plat. *Gorg.* 467E1-468A4 (trad. it. di F. Adorno, in Platone, *Gorgia*, Bari 1971, p. 193)

⁸ *Divisiones Aristoteleae* 55 (cod. Marciano) Mutschmann (trad. it. di C. Rossitto, in Aristotele e altri Autori, *Divisioni*, nuova ed. riveduta Milano 2005, p. 197). Xenocr. fr. 231 Isnardil = Sext. Emp. *Adv. Eth.* 3-6 (trad. it. di M. Isnardi Parente, in Senocrate-Ermodoro, *Frammenti*, Napoli 1982, pp. 243-244).

⁹ Sulla ricchezza delle posizioni accademiche al proposito e sulla loro fortuna, sono costretta a rinviare ai miei *Studi sulla dialettica in Aristotele*, Napoli 2000, nonché a *Contrarietà e relazione nello scritto sugli opposti di pseudo-Archita*, in C. Rossitto (a cura), *Studies on Aristotle and the Aristotelian Tradition*, Lecce 2011, pp. 207-224.

κακόν ἐστιν ἢ οὔτε ἀγαθόν ἐστιν οὔτε κακόν ἐστιν." καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν φιλοσόφων χωρὶς ἀποδείξεως τὴν τοιαύτην διαίρεσιν προσιεμένων αὐτὸς ἐδόκει καὶ ἀπόδειξιν συμπαραλαμβάνειν. "εἰ γὰρ ἔστι τι κειχωρισμένον πρᾶγμα τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν καὶ τῶν μῆτε ἀγαθῶν μῆτε κακῶν, ἐκεῖνο ἦτοι ἀγαθόν ἐστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγαθόν. καὶ εἰ μὲν ἦτοι ἀγαθόν ἐστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγαθόν. καὶ εἰ μὲν ἀγαθόν ἐστιν, ἐν τῶν τριῶν γενήσεται· εἰ δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγαθόν, ἦτοι κακόν ἐστιν ἢ οὔτε κακόν ἐστιν οὔτε ἀγαθόν ἐστιν· εἰ δὲ κακόν ἐστιν, ἐν τῶν τριῶν ὑπάρξει, εἰ δὲ οὔτε ἀγαθόν ἐστιν οὔτε κακόν ἐστι, πάλιν ἐν τῶν τριῶν καταστήσεται. πᾶν ἄρα τὸ ὄν ἦτοι ἀγαθόν ἐστιν ἢ κακόν ἐστιν ἢ οὔτε ἀγαθόν ἐστιν οὔτε κακόν ἐστιν".

Tutti quei filosofi che sembra abbiano compiuto trattazioni metodiche e più chiaramente fra tutti gli Accademici antichi, i Peripatetici e inoltre gli Stoici, sogliono dividere la materia dicendo che delle cose che sono alcune sono buone, altre cattive, altre intermedie fra queste, e queste ultime le chiamano indifferenti. Ma Senocrate, in forma più tipica di tutti gli altri e valendosi della forma singolare, diceva: "Tutto ciò che è, è buono, oppure è cattivo oppure non è né buono né cattivo". E mentre tutti gli altri filosofi adottavano questa suddivisione senza addurre alcuna dimostrazione, sembra che egli si sia adoperato a darne anche una dimostrazione: "se vi è qualcosa che sia diverso da ciò ch'è buono, sia da ciò ch'è cattivo, sia da ciò che non è né l'uno né l'altro, questo è però sempre o buono o non buono; e se è buono ricade in uno dei tre casi considerati; se non è buono, o è cattivo o è fra quelle cose che non sono né l'uno né l'altro; ma se è cattivo ricade in uno dei tre casi, e lo stesso se non è né buono né cattivo. Dunque ogni cosa non può non essere o buona, o cattiva, o né buona né cattiva".¹⁰

Comunque stiano le cose, si può procedere ora al confronto tra le informazioni ottenute a proposito dell'intermedio, anzi, di ciò che non è nessuno dei due contrari, dal passo del *Gorgia* e la caratterizzazione di Eros come intermedio nel *Symposium*. Sembra chiaro che nessuna delle tre coppie di contrari addotte nel *Symposium* ha un intermedio (né sapienza né ignoranza, cioè retta opinione, né bello né brutto, né buono né cattivo) nel secondo significato distinto nel *Gorgia*, ossia come ciò che non avrebbe nulla a che fare con entrambi i contrari di cui è intermedio. Ché anzi lo scopo di Platone è proprio quello di mostrare come Eros "sia" un vero e proprio intermedio tra i contrari.

Né il fatto che Platone mantenga, proprio per Eros, la negazione dei contrari per indicare la sua intermedietà, deve indurre in sospetto. Evidentemente era questa una consuetudine nell'Accademia antica, che ancora Aristotele, nelle *Categorie*, sembra quasi ritenere bisognosa di giustificazione:

ἐπ' ἐνίων μὲν οὖν ὀνόματα κεῖται τοῖς ἀνὰ μέσον, οἷον λευκοῦ καὶ μέλανος τὸ φαιὸν καὶ ὤχρον· ἐπ' ἐνίων δὲ ὀνόματι μὲν οὐκ εὐπορον τὸ ἀνὰ μέσον ἀποδοῦναι, τῇ δὲ ἑκατέρου τῶν ἄκρων ἀποφάσει τὸ ἀνὰ μέσον ὀρίζεται, οἷον τὸ οὔτε ἀγαθόν οὔτε κακόν καὶ οὔτε δίκαιον οὔτε ἄδικον.

In alcuni casi questi termini intermedi hanno un nome, come tra il bianco e il nero il grigio e il giallo, ma in altri casi non è facile contrassegnare i termini intermedi con un nome, ma questi vengono definiti mediante la negazione di ciascuno degli estremi, come il né buono né cattivo e il né giusto né ingiusto.¹¹

A tale proposito valga altresì notare che uno degli esempi di intermedio "senza nome" qui addotti da Aristotele è proprio quello interno alla coppia buono-cattivo.

Non rimane che mettere a confronto l'altro significato di ciò che non è né l'uno né l'altro dei due contrari, ossia quello indicante l'intermedio in senso positivo. In effetti, tra quanto affermato nel *Gorgia* - e nella *divisione* - e quanto risulta dal *Symposium* sembra esserci una differenza. Nel primo caso, infatti, l'intermedio è ciò che è nessuno dei due contrari nel senso che ha a che fare a volte con l'uno e a volte con l'altro; nel secondo, invece, l'intermedio è ciò che è nessuno dei due contrari nel senso che è in qualche modo entrambi i contrari. Se infatti consideriamo gli esempi, la passeggiata è intermedio fra bene e male perché a volte fa bene e a volte fa male, mentre non è così per la retta opinione, in quanto di questa non si può dire che è intermedia fra sapienza e ignoranza perché a volte è sapienza e a volte è ignoranza. Anzi, la retta opinione è intermedia fra sapienza e ignoranza proprio

¹⁰ Xenocr. fr. 231 Isnardi1 = Sext. Emp. *Adv. Eth.* 3-6 (trad. it. di M. Isnardi Parente, in Senocrate-Ermodoro, *Frammenti*, Napoli 1982, pp. 243-244).

¹¹ Aristot. *Cat.* 10, 12 a 20-25 (trad. it. di D. Pesce, in Aristotele, *Le categorie*, Padova 1967, p. 95).

perché non è né totale sapienza né pura ignoranza, bensì è, per così dire, un po' sapienza e un po' ignoranza.

L'intermedietà di Eros in questo primo passo del *Symposium*, per cui egli è insieme bello e brutto, buono e cattivo, cioè è insieme, ma in parte, entrambi i contrari, sembra avvicinarsi maggiormente a quanto Aristotele spiegherà in modo molto tecnico, nella *Metafisica*, circa la natura dell'intermedio. Quivi infatti egli offre un'articolata dimostrazione di quale sia effettivamente tale natura, concludendo che "è chiaro dunque che gli intermedi appartengono al medesimo genere, che sono intermedi fra contrari e che tutti quanti sono composti di contrari" (ὅτι μὲν οὖν τὰ μεταξὺ ἔν τε ταύτῳ γένει πάντα καὶ μεταξὺ ἐναντίων καὶ σύγκειται ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων πάντα, δῆλον).¹²

Di particolare interesse è anzi, per quanto riguarda la natura degli intermedi come necessari composti di contrari, la fase finale della dimostrazione aristotelica, che immediatamente precede la conclusione appena citata. Pur argomentando da un punto di vista che implica la sua stessa dottrina del mutamento, cioè la dottrina dei tre principi elementi del divenire (sostrato e due contrari), egli ha modo di osservare:

Τὰ μὲν οὖν ἐναντία ἀσύνθετα ἐξ ἀλλήλων, ὥστε ἀρχαί· τὰ δὲ μεταξὺ ἢ πάντα ἢ οὐθέν. ἐκ δὲ τῶν ἐναντίων γίγνεται τι, ὥστ' ἔσται μεταβολὴ εἰς τοῦτο πρὶν ἢ εἰς αὐτά· ἐκατέρου γὰρ καὶ ἦττον ἔσται καὶ μᾶλλον. μεταξὺ ἄρα ἔσται καὶ τοῦτο τῶν ἐναντίων. καὶ τᾶλλα ἄρα πάντα σύνθετα τὰ μεταξὺ· τὸ γὰρ τοῦ μὲν μᾶλλον τοῦ δ' ἦττον σύνθετόν πως ἐξ ἐκείνων ὧν λέγεται εἶναι τοῦ μὲν μᾶλλον τοῦ δ' ἦττον. ἐπεὶ δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἕτερα πρότερα ὁμογενῆ τῶν ἐναντίων, ἅπαντ' ἂν ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων εἴη τὰ μεταξὺ, ὥστε καὶ τὰ κάτω πάντα, καὶ τάναντία καὶ τὰ μεταξὺ, ἐκ τῶν πρώτων ἐναντίων ἔσσονται. ὅτι μὲν οὖν τὰ μεταξὺ ἔν τε ταύτῳ γένει πάντα καὶ μεταξὺ ἐναντίων καὶ σύγκειται ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων πάντα, δῆλον.

I contrari non sono composti gli uni degli altri e pertanto sono principi; invece gli intermedi o sono tutti composti dei loro contrari o non lo è nessuno. Ora certamente esiste qualcosa composto di contrari e tale che il mutamento da un contrario all'altro dovrà prima passare attraverso esso; infatti esso dovrà essere più di uno dei contrari e meno dell'altro: e, questo, sarà intermedio fra i contrari. Allora anche tutti gli altri intermedi saranno composti di contrari, perché ciò che è meno dell'uno e più dell'altro è in qualche modo composto di ambedue quei termini, nel confronto di ciascuno dei quali è detto più oppure meno. E poiché non esistono altre cose dello stesso genere che siano anteriori ai contrari, tutti gli intermedi dovranno essere composti di contrari.¹³

2. Subito dopo aver mostrato la natura intermedia di Eros rispetto a buono e cattivo e a bello e brutto, nel senso appunto che egli non è né l'uno né l'altro dei due, essendo un po' l'uno e un po' l'altro, Platone affronta l'esame di un'altra sua peculiarità, che riguarda più precisamente il rapporto con il divino. Socrate infatti riprende una tesi già avanzata nel dialogo, per cui ad un certo punto si era ammesso che Eros era un grande dio, ma Diotima lo confuta ancora una volta, mostrando che Eros è un demone. In realtà, l'argomentazione di Diotima, che fa leva tutta e proprio sulla nozione di intermedio, si articola in tre momenti successivi, tesi a dimostrare (a) che Eros è un demone, in quanto intermedio fra mortale e immortale, fra uomo e dio; (b) che ha natura duplice, in quanto intermedio fra Poros e Penia, i suoi genitori di natura opposta; (c) che è filosofo, in quanto intermedio fra il sapiente e l'ignorante.

Di tale argomentazione riportiamo i passaggi fondamentali, mantenendone l'articolazione.

(a) Λέγε γάρ μοι, οὐ πάντα θεοὺς φησὶ εὐδαίμονας εἶναι καὶ καλοὺς; ... Ἀλλὰ μὴν Ἐρωτά γε ὁμολόγηκας δι' ἔνδειαν τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ καλῶν ἐπιθυμεῖν αὐτῶν τούτων ὧν ἐνδεής ἐστιν ... Πῶς ἂν οὖν θεὸς εἴη ὃ γε τῶν καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν ἄμοιρος; ... Τί οὖν ἄν, ἔφη, εἴη ὃ Ἐρωσ; θνητός; Ἥκιστα γε. Ἀλλὰ τί μὴν; Ὡσπερ τὰ πρότερα, ἔφη, μεταξὺ θνητοῦ καὶ ἀθανάτου. Τί οὖν, ὦ Διοτίμα; Δαίμων μέγας, ὃ Σώκρατες; καὶ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ δαιμόνιον μεταξὺ ἐστὶ θεοῦ τε καὶ θνητοῦ. Τίνα, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, δύναμιν ἔχον; Ἐρμηνεύον καὶ διαπορθμεύον θεοῖς τὰ παρ' ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀνθρώποις τὰ παρὰ θεῶν, τῶν μὲν τὰς δεήσεις καὶ θυσίας, τῶν δὲ τὰς ἐπιτάξεις τε καὶ ἀμοιβὰς τῶν θυσιῶν, ἐν μέσῳ δὲ ὄν ἀμφοτέρων συμπληροῖ, ὥστε τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ αὐτῷ συνδεδέσθαι.

¹² Aristot. *Metaph.* X 7, 1057 b 32-34.

¹³ Aristot. *Metaph.* X 7, 1057 b 22-30 (trad. it. di G. Reale, in Aristotele, *La metafisica*, Napoli 1968, vol. II, pp. 116-117).

"Dimmi: non affermi tu che tutti gli dèi sono beati e belli?" ... "Ma tu hai ammesso che Eros, per mancanza delle cose buone e belle, ha desiderio di queste cose di cui è mancante" ... "E allora come potrebbe essere un dio chi non è partecipe delle cose belle e delle cose buone?" ... (S.) "Allora - dissi - che cos'è Eros? E' un mortale?". "Come si è detto prima - disse -. E' qualcosa di intermedio fra mortale e immortale". "Allora che cos'è, o Diotima?". "Un grande demone, Socrate: infatti, tutto ciò che è demonico è intermedio fra dio e mortale". "E quale potere ha?" domandai. "Ha il potere di interpretare e di portare agli dèi le cose che vengono dagli uomini e agli uomini le cose che vengono dagli dèi: degli uomini le preghiere e i sacrifici, degli dèi, invece, i comandi e le ricompense dei sacrifici. E, stando in mezzo fra gli uni e gli altri, opera un completamento, in modo che il tutto sia ben collegato con sé medesimo".¹⁴

(b) ἄτε οὖν Πόρου καὶ Πενίας ὑὸς ὢν ὁ Ἔρως ἐν τοιαύτῃ τύχῃ καθέστηκεν. πρῶτον μὲν πένης ἀεὶ ἐστὶ, καὶ πολλοῦ δεῖ ἀπαλός τε καὶ καλός, οἷον οἱ πολλοὶ οἴονται, ἀλλὰ σκληρὸς καὶ ἀχμηρὸς καὶ ἀνυπόδητος καὶ ἄοικος, χαμαιπετὴς ἀεὶ ὢν καὶ ἄστρωτος, ἐπὶ θύραις καὶ ἐν ὁδοῖς ὑπαίθριος κοιμώμενος, τὴν τῆς μητρὸς φύσιν ἔχων, ἀεὶ ἐνδεία σύνοικος. κατὰ δὲ αὐτὸν τὸν πατέρα ἐπιβουλός ἐστι τοῖς καλοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς, ἀνδρείος ὢν καὶ ἴτης καὶ σύντονος, θηρευτὴς δεινός, ἀεὶ τινὰς πλέκων μηχανάς, καὶ φρονήσεως ἐπιθυμητὴς καὶ πόριμος, φιλοσοφῶν διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου θυμητὴς καὶ πόριμος, φιλοσοφῶν διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου, δεινὸς γόης καὶ φαρμακεὺς καὶ σοφιστὴς· καὶ οὔτε ὡς ἀθάνατος πέφυκεν οὔτε ὡς θνητός, ἀλλὰ τοτὲ μὲν τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας θάλλει τε καὶ ζῆ, ὅταν εὐπορήσῃ, τοτὲ δὲ ἀποθνήσκει, πάλιν δὲ ἀναβιώσκειται διὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς φύσιν, τὸ δὲ ποριζόμενον ἀεὶ ὑπεκρεῖ, ὥστε οὔτε ἀπορεῖ Ἔρως ποτὲ οὔτε πλουτεῖ, σοφίας τε αὐτὸ καὶ ἀμαθίας ἐν μέσῳ ἐστίν.

"Dunque, in quanto Eros è figlio di Penia e di Poros, gli è toccato un destino di questo tipo. Prima di tutto è povero sempre, ed è tutt'altro che bello e delicato, come ritengono i più. Invece, è duro e ispido, scalzo e senza casa, si sdraia sempre per terra senza coperte, e dorme all'aperto davanti alle porte o in mezzo alla strada, e, perché ha la natura della madre, è sempre accompagnato con povertà. Per ciò che riceve dal padre, invece, egli è insidiatore dei belli e dei buoni, è coraggioso, audace, impetuoso, straordinario cacciatore, intento sempre a tramare intrighi, appassionato di saggezza, pieno di risorse, filosofo per tutta la vita, straordinario incantatore, preparatore di filtri, sofista. E per sua natura non è né mortale né immortale, ma, in uno stesso giorno, talora fiorisce e vive, quando riesce nei suoi espedienti, talora, invece, muore, ma poi torna in vita, a causa della natura del padre. E ciò che si procura gli sfugge sempre di mano, sicché Eros non è mai povero di risorse, né ricco".¹⁵

(c) Σοφίας τε αὐτὸ καὶ ἀμαθίας ἐν μέσῳ ἐστίν. ἔχει γὰρ ὧδε. θεῶν οὐδεὶς φιλοσοφεῖ οὐδ' ἐπιθυμεῖ σοφὸς γενέσθαι - ἔστι γὰρ - οὐδ' εἴ τις ἄλλος σοφός, οὐ φιλοσοφεῖ. οὐδ' αὐτὸ οἱ ἀμαθείς φιλοσοφοῦσιν οὐδ' ἐπιθυμοῦσι σοφοὶ γενέσθαι· ... Τίνες οὖν, ἔφη, ἐγώ, ὦ Διοτίμα, οἱ φιλοσοφοῦντες, εἴ μήτε οἱ σοφοὶ μήτε οἱ ἀμαθεῖς; Δήλον δή, ἔφη, τοῦτό γε ἤδη καὶ παιδί, ὅτι οἱ μεταξὺ τούτων ἀμφοτέρων, ὢν ἂν εἴη καὶ ὁ Ἔρως, ἔστιν γὰρ δὴ τῶν καλλίστων ἢ σοφία, Ἔρως δ' ἐστὶν ἔρως περὶ τὸ καλόν, ὥστε ἀναγκαῖον Ἔρωτα φιλόσοφον εἶναι, φιλόσοφον δὲδόντα μεταξὺ εἶναι σοφοῦ καὶ ἀμαθοῦς. αἰτία δὲ αὐτῶ καὶ τούτων ἡ γένεσις· πατρὸς μὲν γὰρ σοφοῦ ἐστὶ καὶ εὐπόρου, μητρὸς δὲ οὐ σοφῆς καὶ ἀπόρου. ἡ μὲν οὖν φύσις τοῦ δαίμονος, ὃ φίλε Σώκρατες, αὕτη.

"Inoltre, sta in mezzo fra sapienza e ignoranza. Ed ecco come avviene questo. Nessuno degli dèi fa filosofia, né desidera diventare sapiente, dal momento che lo è già. E chiunque altro sia sapiente, non filosofo. Ma neppure gli ignoranti fanno filosofia, né desiderano diventare sapienti"... "Chi sono allora, o Diotima - io dissi -, coloro che filosofano, se non lo sono i sapienti e neppure gli ignoranti?". "E' ormai chiaro - rispose - anche ad un bambino che sono quelli che stanno a mezzo fra gli uni e gli altri, e uno di questi è appunto anche Eros. Infatti, la sapienza è una delle cose più belle, ed Eros è amore per il bello. Perciò è necessario che Eros sia filosofo, e, in quanto è filosofo, che sia intermedio fra il sapiente e l'ignorante. E causa di questo è la sua nascita: infatti, ha il padre sapiente pieno di risorse, e la madre non sapiente priva di risorse. La natura del

¹⁴ Plat. *Symp.* 202 C6-E7 (trad. it. cit. pp. 177-179).

¹⁵ Plat. *Symp.* 203C5-E5 (trad. it. cit. p. 181).

dèmone, caro Socrate, è dunque questa".¹⁶

Ecco dunque la vera natura del dèmone mediatore. Eros è intermedio fra uomo e dio, quindi è intermedio fra l'essere mortale e l'essere immortale, non essendo completamente né l'uno né l'altro. E' intermedio fra la natura del padre e quella della madre, perché, non potendo accogliere completamente ciascuna delle due, le ha entrambe in sé, e quindi è ad un tempo ricco di risorse (per esempio ha molta inventiva) e povero di risorse (dorme ovunque gli capiti). Infine è intermedio fra l'essere sapiente e l'essere ignorante, perché, non essendo totalmente né l'uno né l'altro, possiede comunque un po' dell'uno e un po' dell'altro, ossia è filosofo.

Di queste tre coppie di contrari, di cui Eros è l'intermedio, le ultime due, ossia ricco di risorse - povero di risorse e sapiente-ignorante, sembrano potersi ricondurre più (la seconda) o meno (la prima) a quelle che consentono un vero e proprio intermedio al loro interno, come abbiamo riscontrato essere, nel passo precedente del *Symposium*, le coppie costituite da bello-brutto e buono-cattivo. In tale prospettiva Eros è intermedio fra l'essere ricco di risorse e l'essere privo di risorse nel senso che, non essendo né l'uno né l'altro, si trova in una terza situazione, per cui è un po' ricco e un po' povero insieme; analogamente egli è intermedio fra l'essere sapiente e l'essere ignorante nel senso che, non essendo né l'uno né l'altro, si trova in una terza situazione, per cui è un po' sapiente e un po' ignorante insieme, il che corrisponde alla situazione del filosofo, che è ulteriore rispetto a quella del sapiente e a quella dell'ignorante. Insomma, quasi rivelando una dottrina che a suo modo Aristotele, come abbiamo visto, potrebbe aver ripreso, in entrambi i casi Eros si manifesta essere un "composto" di entrambi i contrari. Ma se l'intermedio è l'essere insieme l'uno e l'altro dei due contrari (come lo è il filosofo rispetto al sapiente e all'ignorante), allora ne deriva che esso costituisce un vero e proprio *status* ontologico: ma per essere tale deve esserci appunto la compresenza simultanea delle caratteristiche, pur in misura differente, di entrambi i contrari.

Ma è proprio per questo motivo che una situazione diversa sembra invece essere quella che vede Eros come intermedio fra uomo e dio, cioè fra l'essere mortale e l'essere immortale. A tale proposito, nel passo considerato, di Eros si dice che "stando in mezzo fra gli uni (uomini) e gli altri (dèi), opera un completamento, in modo che il tutto sia ben collegato con sé medesimo" (a); e che "per sua natura non è né mortale né immortale, ma, in uno stesso giorno, talora fiorisce e vive, quando riesce nei suoi espedienti, talora, invece, muore, ma poi torna in vita, a causa della natura del padre" (b).

In base a tali spiegazioni di Platone, sembra difficile che si possa intendere la situazione di Eros come intermedio rispetto alla mortalità e all'immortalità esattamente nello stesso senso in cui si era intesa quella precedente come intermedio, in quanto filosofo, rispetto alla sapienza e all'ignoranza, ossia come un vero e proprio *status* ontologico che per essere tale deve essere costituito dalla compresenza simultanea delle caratteristiche, pur in misura diversa, di entrambi i contrari. Infatti si dovrebbe poter riscontrare in Eros la compresenza simultanea di mortalità e di immortalità: ma ciò pare andare in direzione esattamente opposta alle parole di Platone.

Si potrebbe piuttosto pensare a una qualche affinità con il significato di intermedio presente nel *Gorgia*, dove si era riscontrata, per l'intermedio, l'alternanza fra i due contrari. Da questo punto di vista, allora, come la passeggiata a volte fa bene e a volte fa male, ma mai contemporaneamente, così Eros a volte è mortale (quando muore) e a volte è immortale (quando rinasce), ma mai contemporaneamente. Ma se le cose stessero così, allora nemmeno Eros sarebbe "ad un tempo" mortale ed immortale, il che potrebbe anche costituire un pericolo per la sua stessa caratteristica di dèmone mediatore.

La particolarità che indubbiamente caratterizza l'intermedio rispetto alla coppia di contrari mortale-immortale non sembra possa dipendere da una concezione simile a quella aristotelica del divenire (dottrina dei tre principi elementi), come se di Eros si potesse dire che da mortale diviene immortale e viceversa, alternativamente, giacché "sempre", nel caso del divenire di tipo aristotelico, i due contrari appartengono ora l'uno ora l'altro al soggetto. Né può dipendere dalla nozione di intermedio in quanto tale, perché "sempre" un intermedio fra i due contrari, essendo costituito dai due contrari, è i due contrari insieme. Insomma, nel caso di mortale e immortale, se Eros è in alcuni momenti mortale ed in altri immortale, è in divenire, ma non è propriamente un intermedio; se è un intermedio, dovrebbe essere mortale e immortale contemporaneamente, ma così non è.

Per tali motivi sembra dunque di poter ritenere che la differenza fra il caso della coppia mortale-immortale e quelli delle altre coppie, non potendo dipendere né da una nozione di divenire di tipo aristotelico (peraltro non appartenente comunque a Platone), né dalla nozione di intermedio in senso

¹⁶ Plat. *Symp.* 203E5-204B8 (trad. it. cit. pp.181-183).

stretto come composto di contrari (che invece Platone possedeva, e molto chiaramente), non possa che dipendere dalla natura particolare che caratterizza quella coppia di contrari, cioè dalle nozioni stesse di mortale e immortale, particolarità di cui Platone pare essere consapevole e che si manifesta come impossibilità di compresenza simultanea in un medesimo soggetto.

In conclusione, per quanto riguarda la nozione di intermedio che Platone utilizza nel *Symposium*, si può riconoscere che essa è molto più complessa di quanto potrebbe sembrare a prima vista. E ciò non per il modo in cui Platone la esamina, ma per la difficoltà intrinseca della nozione stessa. Tanto più se, come pare, essa è stata discussa e sviluppata ulteriormente nell'ambito dell'Accademia platonica e anche successivamente, come mostrano alcune riflessioni al proposito svolte da pensatori quali Senocrate e Aristotele.

Reproduction, Immortality, and the Greater Mysteries in Plato's *Symposium*

Thomas M. Tuozzo

What is the philosophical import of Socrates' contribution to the encomia to Love offered at Agathon's dinner party in Plato's *Symposium*? In this paper I shall offer an answer to this question which is intended to respond to a trend in recent interpretations of Socrates' speech in this dialogue. Scholars have noticed that while what are commonly called "the lesser mysteries" in Diotima's teaching put a strong emphasis on immortality through reproduction, the "greater mysteries" make only one brief mention of immortality. They have accordingly proposed a new interpretation of the speech: the true culmination of the ascent to the vision of the Beautiful Itself is not, as traditional readings of the *Symposium* would have it,¹ a self-reproduction that in some sense comes closest to true immortality, but is rather simply the beatific experience of that vision itself. The concern with reproduction and immortality, on this view, is an egoistic distortion of the erotic characteristic of the lesser mysteries; in the greater mysteries the goal is rightly understood as the selfless contemplation of the Form itself.²

The question of whether experience of the Beautiful leads one to engage in some activity of self-reproduction, or is rather a self-contained experience of contemplation, is a manifestation of a tension in Plato's philosophy that also shows up in the question of why the philosopher returns to the cave in the *Republic*. The tension lives on in Aristotle's ethics, as the question of the respective roles of practical and theoretical activity in the highest form of eudaimonia. In my view, speaking very broadly, for Plato there is always a connection between the soul's contemplating the eternal principles of order, the Forms, and its acting in accordance with those principles in shaping the sensible world. The soul is not a Form, and never can be; its essential temporality is, in fact, one of the central lessons of the *Symposium*. Plato maintains the connection between the contemplative and the active dimensions of the grasp of the Forms, even as he emphasizes one or the other in different dialogues. Indeed, traditionally the *Phaedo* and the *Symposium* have been seen precisely as complementary dialogues, stressing, respectively, the other-worldly and this-worldly aspects of knowledge of the Forms. Recent scholarship has tended to assimilate the *Symposium* to the one-sided view of the *Phaedo*; I hope to contest that tendency here.

It is sound move on the part of recent scholars to avoid conflating what Diotima says about the lesser and the greater mysteries. Socrates' account of love is in fact clearly articulated into four sections; ignoring these articulations and indiscriminately mixing together propositions from throughout his speech is, I think, a recipe for confusion. The first division in Socrates' account is that between Socrates' dialectical exchange with Agathon (199c3-201c9) and his account of the teachings of Diotima (201d1-212a7). The latter is itself divided into the teachings she gave him on a number of occasions (201d1-207a4) and the additional teachings she gave on him on one particular occasion (whether it was ever repeated or not we are not told) (207a5-212a7). This last, finally, is itself divided into the account of the lesser (207a5-209a4) and the greater mysteries (209a5-212a7). I shall develop my interpretation by addressing these sections in turn.

Discussion with Agathon

Socrates' preliminary discussion with Agathon accomplishes more than it appears to at first glance: it lays the foundation for the extended discussion of the temporality of the soul in the lesser mysteries. Love, Socrates argues, has an object; Love in fact desires that object; and since desire is for what one lacks, Love must lack its object. Before specifying what Love's object is, Socrates considers a possible objection to the claim that the desirer lacks what he desires: cannot someone who is strong, or swift, or healthy, or rich, desire to be so, even while possessing the things that make them strong, swift, etc.? Indeed they can; so Socrates re-interprets what it means to desire what one lacks: it is to desire to possess something in the future, which, simply in virtue of being in the future, is not yet available to one. Socrates explicitly extends this analysis to all cases of desire: even in cases where one desires what one does not presently have, what one desires is not that one presently have it – as Socrates might say, whether you desire to have it or not, you simply do not have it, and no desire can change that – but rather that one have it in the future (200e2-5).

¹ For a relatively recent, sophisticated version of the traditional interpretation, see Price.

² Those offering variants of this interpretation include: Ferrarri (1992, 1994), Rowe (1998), Sheffield (2006), and, most recently, Obdrzalek (2010).

Socrates' reanalysis of desire here as essentially future-related anticipates Diotima's analysis of the temporality of the soul in the lesser mysteries. The desire of the rich to be rich is a desire for the future possession of wealth; it presumably prompts continued business activity, to replace the necessary outflow caused by the expenditures of a lavish lifestyle. So too the desire of the strong to be strong is a desire to maintain physical strength; it prompts continued physical exercise, to counteract the deconditioning effects of time. Oddly, however, when Socrates returns to the question of Love's relation to its object, he neglects the possibility he has just sketched for these two cases. He argues that since Love is desire of beauty, it must lack beauty, and similarly with the good. But his examples suggest a different possibility: that love is beautiful, but its hold on beauty, like the rich man's hold on wealth, is precarious, and requires work. And this is the view that Diotima develops in the lesser mysteries.

Diotima's Teachings, First Round

In the first round of Diotimian lectures Socrates reports, Diotima elaborates the notion that Love is a *daimon*, midway between gods and mortals, and so occupies a middle position between beauty and ugliness, goodness and badness, wisdom and ignorance.³ Diotima then turns to the question of what the lover gets out of the possession of beautiful things. Construed along the model of the rich person's desiring wealth in order to be rich, the answer would be: the lover becomes beautiful. The unsatisfactoriness of that answer perhaps explains why Socrates does not give it. In fact, he is unable to come up with any answer at all. At this point Diotima broadens the discussion by making the love that is concerned with beauty into one species of the general desire for good things, whose goal is happiness, and which all humans share. She gives other species of this generic love for happiness: people pursue it "through money-making (*chrêmatismôn*), or athletics (*philogumnasian*), or philosophy (*philosophian*)" (205d3-5). The examples of money-making and athletics recall Socrates' earlier examples of the rich person and the strong person, whose happiness would consist in being wealthy and being strong. Diotima does not here explain how philosophy counts as way of pursuing happiness, but instead turns back to the specific version of love concerned with beautiful things.

Given the philosophical version of this specific love that Diotima develops in the greater mysteries, we are probably meant to identify the two.

After explaining the general desire for happiness of which specific love concerned with beauty is one version, Diotima turns back to an analysis of this latter.⁴ She first relates a possible account of specific love that she thinks is wrong: namely, what we know to be the Aristophanic account of love as a search for one's other half. This view of specific love is rejected because it violates the condition that generic love sets for all its different species: they must be ways of pursuing the good. Diotima then offers her own account: the characteristic activity of specific love is "giving birth in the beautiful, in both body and soul" (206b7-8). When Diotima introduces this account, she does not explain how giving birth in the beautiful constitutes possession of the good (which, as a form of generic love, it must do). Rather she concentrates on the role of the beautiful, vividly describing how it fosters reproduction (and how ugliness impedes it). She then draws a lesson for generic love from her account of specific love: it is for immortality as well as for the good.⁵ Now since generation is the only way mortal things have of pursuing immortality, and generation is always in the beautiful, it might seem that "giving birth in the beautiful" is the definition of the generic love of happiness. I do not think this can be right. Diotima nowhere indicates that acquiring wealth or physical strength is a form of self-reproduction or of giving birth, or that it is a response to beauty. While all desire for happiness is desire for immortal happiness, only specific love actually involves reproduction. This explains why reason specific love is singled out with the name "love," which (according to Diotima)

³ She first offers a static conception of this midway condition (e.g., offering "right opinion" as midway between wisdom and ignorance), and she replaces it with a dynamic one (philosophy as the midway position, consisting in the continual working at acquiring wisdom).

⁴ Surprisingly, some commentators deny that this is so; see, for example, Rowe (1998) and Sheffield (2006). The parallels between 205d and 206b seem to me to tell heavily in favor of the view that the latter passage is concerned with specific love. See *allêi trepomenai ~ tina tropon; eran kalountai ~ erôs kaloito; espoudakotes ~ spoudê*. Rowe's objection, that the activity of specific love is obviously sex, neglects the rejection of that answer already in Aristophanes' speech (192d), implicitly endorsed by Diotima's rejection of Aristophanes' own answer at 205d.

⁵ Diotima's reasoning here has generally raised eyebrows, but it is a rather natural way of developing the point, earlier made, that all desire is for possessing something *in the future*. In order to possess something in the future, one must exist then. One natural way of dealing with this fact is to include one's future existence in the content of the wish: one does not only wish to eat a good meal tonight, one also wishes to be there to eat it. The alternate possibility is to make every desire a conditional one: "I wish, in case I am alive tonight, to have a good meal." While both alternatives are possible, it strikes me that the one Diotima chooses is a reasonably intuitive one (although it is true she does not explicitly argue for it against the alternative).

applies more widely to the desire for happiness. The reproduction characteristic of specific love enables it to more fully express the desire for happiness than other ways of pursuing it.

Diotima's Teachings, Second Round: Lesser Mysteries

At 202a5 Socrates turns from a summary of the teachings Diotima gave him on repeated occasions to the report of one particular lesson. Here Diotima focuses entirely on specific love; there is no reason to suppose that she discusses the general desire for happiness at all. On this occasion Diotima pursues the investigation of specific love at a more fundamental level than her usual lectures: she asks for the *cause* (*aition*, *aitia*) of the “awful lovesick state” (*hôs deinôs diatithetai ... nosounta te ... kai erôtikôs diatithemena*) animals are in when they want to reproduce (grouping together both sexual intercourse and care for offspring as manifestations of specific love). The *aitia* of this behavior, she reveals, is rooted in the very nature of mortal beings:

mortal nature seeks so far as it can to exist forever and to be immortal. And it can achieve it only in this way, through becoming (*genesei*), because it always leaves behind something else that is new in place of the old... (207d1-3).⁶

Diotima goes on to explain that the very continued existence of mortal things is due to ceaseless becoming, with parts of the body passing away and replaced by new ones, and psychic states behaving likewise. It should be noted that Diotima never calls the becoming that is the fundamental aspect of mortal being reproduction, nor does she intimate that the beautiful has anything to do with it.⁷ Rather, the reproduction characteristic of specific love is a specific manifestation of mortal becoming, one that enables the individual to survive, in a fashion, beyond the limits of his own life.

After rooting specific love, with its concern for reproduction, in the general nature of mortal things, Diotima turns to a specifically human form of that love: the “awful state” human beings get in “through love of becoming famous and of storing up immortal renown for all time” (*hôs deinôs diakeintai erôti tou onomastoi genesthai kai kleos es ton aei chronon athanaton katathesthai*.) Human beings who pursue specific love in this way are pregnant in soul, and what they give birth to is virtue. Diotima makes it clear that giving birth to virtue must be understood in a broad sense, to include becoming virtuous, performing virtuous activities, and producing educational discourses, poems, and laws that enable one’s virtues to live on after the death of those who produced them. And this ‘living on’ itself has several dimensions – not only does a person live on in others’ memory of what he has done and been, but he also lives on in the virtues and virtuous actions of those who are inspired by his example or more directly educated by his poems or laws. While the focus in Diotima’s account of the lesser mysteries is on the variety of virtuous offspring produced by those pregnant in soul, she does not neglect the role of beauty as catalyst: those pregnant in soul are stirred to give birth to virtue by their dealings with a beautiful beloved, one whose bodily beauty in the best case is, but need not be, accompanied by beauty in soul (cf. 209b).

Diotima's Teaching, Second Round: Greater Mysteries

At 210a Diotima turns to her “final revelation” about love, even as she expresses doubt as to Socrates’ ability to understand what she is about to say. In these greater mysteries Diotima is not introducing yet a new class of lovers, distinct from and superior to those pregnant in soul discussed in the lesser mysteries.⁸ Rather, she reveals the proper method to be followed in matters of love by those pregnant in soul in order to reach the highest results of which they are capable.⁹ In the lesser mysteries Diotima explained what sort of offspring is produced by those pregnant in soul: virtue and *logoi* about virtue.

In the greater mysteries, Diotima does not reject this aspect of the highest use of love;¹⁰ rather, she takes it for granted, and focuses on the different grades of beauty in response to which the properly-led lover gives birth. Whereas in the lesser mysteries the only beauty mentioned was that of the beloved, the proper method of the greater mysteries requires that the human beloved be left behind

⁶ Extended translations are based on Rowe (1998b).

⁷ Indeed, throughout this whole passage (207c8-208b6) Diotima never uses any of the words she has used earlier for generation and reproduction (*tiktein*, *gennan*, etc.); when she has cause to talk about reproduction as it relates to the constant becoming of mortal things, she uses a different word: “offshoot” (*apoblastêma*, 208b5).

⁸ Those whose views tend in this direction include Obdrzalek (2010) and Sheffield (2006).

⁹ Note the repetitions of *orthôs*: 210a2,4,6, e3; 211b5,7.

¹⁰ *logoi*: 210a8, c1, d5; virtue: 212a3-5.

as the lover pregnant in soul learns to appreciate first the beauty of bodily form as a whole, and then the beauty of soul and its sources in beautiful customs and laws, and then the source of *their* beauty in the sciences and, ultimately, the Beautiful Itself.¹¹ The focus is on the change in the beauty contemplated, not (until the very end) in the change in offspring that results from it. Indeed, there is no reason to doubt that Diotima's account, in the lesser mysteries, of the persistence of knowledge through study is applicable also to the lover's dealings with the sciences in the greater mysteries.¹²

Even when the soul has seen the Form of the Beautiful, such knowledge as it acquires will still be subject to the conditions of temporality that characterize the being of the soul. It will still need to practice (*meletan*) to retain its knowledge. But in Diotima's account of the greater mysteries we learn something important about that practice: it involves contemplating the Form of the Beautiful. Diotima gives two descriptions of the experience of the Beautiful Itself. The first emphasizes the value of the experience, and does not mention any resulting product: "Here in life, said the visitor from Mantinea, if anywhere, is it worth living for a human being, contemplating the beautiful itself" (211d1-3). The second description, however, which serves as the finale of Diotima's teaching as a whole, emphasizes the birth and rearing of true virtue:

Do you think it's a base life, she said, if a person turns his gaze in that direction and contemplates that [beauty] with the appropriate faculty, and is able to be with it? Or do you not realize, she said, that it is there alone that it will belong to him to bring to birth not phantoms of virtue, since he is not grasping a phantom, but true virtue, since he is grasping what is true? And that when he has given birth to true virtue and has raised it, it belongs to him to be a friend of the gods, and, to him, if to any human being, to be immortal? (211e4-212a7)

It has been suggested that we should read this second description in terms of the first: the only "virtue" produced is knowledge of the Beautiful Itself, which is nothing other than the activity of contemplation.¹³ I think it much more likely that we are to assume that Diotima has in mind a production of virtue much like that in the lesser mysteries: virtuous state of character, virtuous actions, and educative talk and/or writings directed towards producing virtue in others. However, the change in the character of the beautiful which conduces to this reproduction, we may reasonably speculate, makes some difference in the nature of the virtue produced. Certainly, as Diotima explicitly indicates, the virtue produced in virtue of communion with the Form of the Beautiful is "true virtue," as that produced merely in response to the beauty of the beloved is not. But further, we may suppose that the very process of generalization – starting from the move from one beautiful body to bodily beauty in general, and moving to ever greater levels of generality – also conditions how the lover conceives of his product. In the lesser mysteries, just as the beauty which fostered the production of virtue was that of a particular individual, so too the virtue produced was valued, in part, because of its connection with the lover himself. It was a living memorial to the lover's excellence *in its particularity*, making not only his goodness, but also his name live on. The lover initiated into the greater mysteries knows that the particularity of any instance of beauty (including virtue) is not part of what makes it valuable. What he identifies with as valuable in himself, and what he wishes to propagate, is nothing particular, but only virtue as such. His encounters with others are geared towards moving them to virtue, and not at all towards making sure that that virtue bears his own stamp. And the model of such a lover is surely the character Socrates himself.

Works Cited

- Ferrari, Giovanni. 1992. "Platonic Love." In *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, edited by Richard Kraut, 248-276. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ferrari, G. R. F. 1994. "Moral Fecundity. A Discussion of A. W. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* no. 9:169-184.
- Ionescu, Cristina. 2007. "The Transition from the Lower to the Higher Mysteries of Love in Plato's

¹¹ On this cf. Patterson (1991).

¹² It is not uncommon for interpreters to suppose that the account of the persistence of knowledge at 208a3-7 applies only to right opinion or something else short of true knowledge. Cf. Obdrzalek (2010), Ionescu (2007).

¹³ See Sheffield (2006).

Syposium." *Dialogue* no. 46:27-42.

Obdrzalek, Suzanne. 2010. "Moral Transformation and the Love of Beauty in Plato's *Symposium.*" *Journal for the History of Philosophy* no. 48:415-44.

Patterson, Richard. 1991. "The Ascent in Plato's *Symposium.*" *Proceedings of BACAP* no. 7:193-214.

Rowe, C. J. 1998. "Socrates and Diotima: Eros, Immortality, and Creativity." *Proceedings of BACAP* no. 14:239-259.

———. 1998b. *Plato. Symposium.* Warminster: Aris & Phillips.

Sheffield, Frisbee C. C. 2006. *Plato's Symposium: The Ethics of Desire.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gli eroi e la natura demonica di Amore: Proclo interprete di *Symp.* 201e-204b

Piera De Piano

Riempire la distanza in maniera tale che il tutto risulti collegato con se stesso: questo uno dei poteri riconosciuto da Diotima a ciò che sta ἐν μέσῳ, ad Eros demone di *Symp.* 202e6-7. È a partire da questa annotazione che vorrei guardare, in questo breve contributo, a chi, all'interno della scuola platonica, fa dell'elemento intermedio un criterio ontologico ed ermeneutico di capitale importanza nella descrizione e comprensione del reale, tanto da fissare nei demoni «τὰ κέντρα τῆς τοῦ παντός διακοσμήσεως», i cardini dell'ordinamento cosmico¹.

È la *Teologia Platonica* il luogo in cui Proclo fornisce, dichiarando di apprenderla direttamente dai dialoghi platonici², questa esposizione della struttura del reale, una struttura che si organizza in numerosi e diversificati livelli ontologici³. Ciascuno di questi livelli nei quali si viene progressivamente ad individuare l'assoluta semplicità principiale è presidiato da un dio e così la struttura metafisica diventa una struttura teologica: questo il senso dell'opera somma del filosofo tardo neoplatonico. Siamo nel sesto libro del capolavoro procliano. Dopo aver presentato le primissime enadi, poi le divinità di livello intelligibile e, quindi nell'ordine, quelle intelligibili-intellettive, quelle intellettive e demiurgiche, infine quelle introduttive alla dimensione psichica, ovvero le divinità ipercosmiche e quelle, ancora una volta intermedie, ipercosmiche-encosmiche, Proclo avrebbe dovuto parlare del genere ἐγκόσμιον degli dèi, celebrato solo in maniera cursoria (σποράδην) da Platone⁴, genere caratterizzato a sua volta da un'ulteriore suddivisione che vede animare di angeli, demoni ed eroi la processione dell'universo sensibile da quello intelligibile⁵. In realtà non lo farà, se non, anche lui, in maniera sporadica, forse perché non riesce a completare la sua trattazione o forse perché nel suo progetto di delineare gli ordinamenti divini che governano a livello originario e universale il tutto non rientra in maniera specifica la descrizione di quelle entità semi-divine ormai già fuori dall'intelligibile. Del *Simposio*, dialogo dove figura un demone celebre, non è sopravvissuto, come si sa, alcun commento neoplatonico⁶. Il mio interesse si concentra pertanto, in questa occasione, sulla presenza demonica, e in particolare di Eros δαίμων μέγας, nell'*In Cratylum*, su quelle pagine degli scoli procliani in cui il discorso sul linguaggio s'intreccia con il discorso sulla poesia e sull'amore.

Il punto d'inizio dell'esegesi procliana è l'indagine etimologica dei termini δαίμων ed ἥρωας (demone ed eroe) proposta da Socrate nel suo dialogo con Ermogene (*Crat.* 397e-398d).

Ricorrendo alla fonte esiodea che faceva dei demoni una stirpe aurea, ctonia e custode dell'umanità⁷, Socrate suggerisce di trovare la giustificazione razionale di tale immagine poetica nella

¹ Procl. *In Alc.* 69, 12-13 ed. Segonds.

² Il dialogo da cui è possibile dedurre la dottrina teologica, dal principio fino agli ultimi enti, è il *Parmenide*, in cui vengono presentati, secondo la lettura procliana, i generi divini a partire dalla primissima causa e nella loro reciproca connessione: *Theol. Plat.* I, 7, p. 31, 14-16 ed. Saffrey - Westerink. È da questa prospettiva che la filosofia platonica diventa una mistagogia, così come ci viene presentata anche da Marino nella *Vita Procli* (cap. 13 ed. Saffrey - Segonds), una iniziazione ai grandi misteri cui si accede attraverso lo studio di alcune opere propedeutiche (i pitagorici *Versi d'oro*, il *Manuale* di Epitteto, gli scritti di Aristotele introdotti dall'*Isagoge* porfiriana) come se fossero dei sacrifici preparatori ad una vita filosofica che è esercizio spirituale. In *Theol. Plat.* I, 1, pp. 5, 16 – 6, 15 e I, 5 pp. 24, 12 – 25, 2, Proclo presenta Platone come un sacerdote attraverso il quale si è rivelata la somma verità divina ad anime iniziate e la sua è detta essere una mistica dottrina di contenuto divino (περὶ θεῶν μυσταγωγία).

³ Sulla divinizzazione e la gerarchizzazione dell'intelligibile nella *Teologia Platonica*, cfr. Abbate 2008, pp. 11-16, 107-11. Sulla struttura gerarchica dell'intero sistema metafisico procliano ancora fondamentale è lo studio di Beierwaltes 1965.

⁴ Sulla nozione di 'intermediario' nei dialoghi platonici è imprescindibile la monografia di Souilhé 1919. Più recentemente si vedano Friedländer 1954, I, pp. 34-62; Robin 1964, per un approfondimento più specifico sulla natura demonica di amore; Motte 1989 e Alt 2000, pp. 223-230. Sulla demonologia in ambito neoplatonico ricchissimo è il recente volume di Timotin 2012, che indaga sugli sviluppi che tutte le figure demoniche dei dialoghi platonici subiscono dall'Accademia antica fino al tardo neoplatonismo.

⁵ «Tutti quanti gli dèi, in effetti, sono sovrani e governanti nell'universo, e a danzare intorno a loro ci sono molti ordini di angeli, molte serie di demoni, molte schiere di eroi, gran masse di anime particolari, multiformi generi di viventi mortali, ed infine variegata tipologie di piante»: Procl. *Theol. Plat.* VI, 4, p. 24, 2-7. La traduzione è di Abbate 2005.

⁶ Il *Simposio* è certamente un dialogo inserito nel *curriculum* neoplatonico e, nell'ordine di lettura stabilitosi con Giamblico, è posto insieme col *Fedro* quasi alla fine del *cursus*, preparando l'allievo, con la descrizione della risalita dell'anima al bello intelligibile e da questo al Principio Primo, su questioni teologiche poi affrontate nel *Timeo* e nel *Parmenide*: cfr. An. *Procl.* 26, 31-32 ed. Westerink. Secondo Ermia nel *Simposio* Platone avrebbe definito l'essenza e la potenza di Eros, nel *Fedro*, invece, la sua attività: *In Phaedr.* 12, 15-25 ed. Couvreur. Sul canone dei dialoghi e l'ordine con cui essi vengono proposti nella scuola platonica fondamentale è lo studio di Festugière 1969, in particolare, sul *Simposio* e il *Fedro*, pp. 284 e 290-292.

⁷ Hes. *Op.* 121-123.

loro intelligenza: i demoni sono aurei non perché realmente fatti d'oro, ma perché luminosi nella loro bellezza e bontà; ora chi è buono è anche saggio, dunque i δαίμονες ricevono la loro denominazione dal loro essere δαήμονες, sapienti. Diversa è l'origine del termine greco ricostruita da Proclo ed anche dalla moderna scienza etimologica: piuttosto che da una radice in comune col verbo διδάσκω, che collegherebbe la figura del demone alla conoscenza, gli studiosi moderni rimandano la natura semidivina all'elemento della divisione, riconducendo il termine greco al verbo δαίωμα e alla radice indoeuropea *da(i)⁸. Il demone sarebbe dunque colui che assegna le parti, le distribuisce. Così spiega Proclo:

[Dei generi posteriori agli dèi alcuni] sono chiamati demonici (τὰ δαιμόνια) in quanto legano insieme la parte centrale dell'universo (ὡς τὴν μεσότητά συνδέοντα) e distribuiscono la potenza divina (τὴν θεϊὰν δύναμιν μερίζοντα) e la portano avanti fino alle ultime cose: suddividere (τὸ μερίσαι) è infatti dividere (δαίσαι)⁹.

È proprio la distribuzione, la condivisione che sembra connotare il posto centrale di Eros nel dialogo platonico, quel posto che è μεταξύ tra sapienza e ignoranza, tra il divino e il mortale, e che racconta in maniera pervasiva la gerarchica successione degli ordinamenti divini nel platonismo procliano¹⁰. Prima di soffermarci più specificamente sul ruolo destinato ai demoni e agli eroi dal filosofo licio, è opportuno fissare alcuni punti essenziali del contesto esegetico in cui le riflessioni sull'ordinamento demonico degli dèi si inseriscono.

Dalla prospettiva procliana, il rapporto che lega il nome al suo referente è un rapporto iconico e l'onomaturgia, in quanto tecnica di assimilazione di una copia ad un modello, è un'attività umana condivisa per analogia con la dimensione divina¹¹. Se, però, l'uomo nomina in maniera inevitabilmente fallibile, poiché opera con oggetti inseriti in una temporalità e in una spazialità di cui può avere solo una conoscenza altrettanto mutevole e corruttibile, l'onomaturgia divina si pone al principio stesso delle cose nominate, per cui il nome divino delle cose coincide con la cosa stessa. Il contenuto veridico del nome divino può però essere trasferito ai filosofi da una figura che, pur non essendo un dio, è a questo più vicino di quanto non lo sia il filosofo stesso, e cioè dal poeta. Coloro che sono ispirati (οἱ ἐνθουσιάζοντες) hanno il compito di mostrare ai filosofi il reale oggetto di ricerca di cui sono a conoscenza per insegnamento divino¹². Il principio dell'ἐνθουσιασμός, che Platone nello *Ione* evoca a dimostrazione dell'ignoranza del poeta, della sua mancata scienza di ciò che racconta, e di conseguenza della sua profonda distanza dal filosofo¹³, diventa, invece, nell'esegeta neoplatonico, proprio per il filosofo, uno strumento epistemico e perciò l'elemento di salvezza del linguaggio poetico. Il poeta arcaico, proprio perché ἔνθεος, è più prossimo al linguaggio corretto di produzione divina e al tempo stesso si pone al centro tra gli dèi e gli uomini che da lui apprendono il vero linguaggio. Coerentemente con il principio fondamentale del neoplatonismo, per cui tanto maggiore è il grado di originarietà, quindi di indeterminatezza, del reale, tanto minore è la possibilità che esso sia dicibile, nel suo *Commento al Cratilo* Proclo individua diversi gradi di nominabilità del divino, che vanno dalla assoluta indicibilità dei συνθήματα, a noi visibili solo attraverso figure luminose¹⁴ (τοῦ φωτὸς χαρακτήρες), alla forma intermedia dei σύμβολα, i suoni inarticolati delle pratiche teurgiche, fino ad arrivare ai veri e propri ὀνόματα, nomi con cui gli dèi vengono nominati e celebrati nelle

⁸ Dalla stessa radice derivano le forme verbali attive δαίζω «dividere» e δαίνωμι «distribuire» e, detto di cibo, «banchettare», da cui il termine δαίς, «pasto» o «banchetto» in cui ciascuno ha la sua parte. Cfr. Chantraine 1968, *sub voces δαίμων* e δαίωμα, pp. 246-247 e Lévêque 1993.

⁹ Procl. *In Crat.* CXXVIII, 75, 19-21 ed. Pasquali. La traduzione è di Romano 1989, lievemente modificata. Cfr. anche Herm. *In Phaedr.* 39, 20-22 in cui si spiega che Eros è un grande demone perché partecipa del bello in maniera divisa e non unitaria: «δαίσασθαι γὰρ τὸ μερίσασθαι».

¹⁰ Sul ruolo ontologico dei demoni, sulla funzione di mediazione tra le realtà divine e quelle umane, traducendo la provvidenza trascendente, universale e unitaria in una provvidenza prossima, particolare e plurale cfr. anche Procl. *In Tim.* I, 39, 30 – 40, 10 ed. Diehl. Tralascero in questa sede questioni relative alla dimensione demonica delle anime particolari. Sull'argomento cfr. Steel 1978, Di Pasquale Barbanti 2001 e, in particolare sul demone di Socrate, De Vita 2011.

¹¹ Cfr. Procl. *In Crat.* LI, 18, 9 – LIII, 23, 25. Sull'argomento cfr. Abbate 2001, pp. 39-45, 55-61 e De Piano 2013. Sulla natura iconica, dunque mimetica, del linguaggio già in Platone cfr. Palumbo 2008, pp. 334-364.

¹² Procl. *In Crat.* LXVIII, 29, 11-12.

¹³ Il poeta divinamente ispirato è assolutamente inconsapevole (ἔκφρων) e l'intelletto (νοῦς) non è più in lui; egli, «κοῦφρον γὰρ χρῆμα ... καὶ πτηνὸν καὶ ἑρόν, *Ion.* 534b3-4», non è capace di comporre alcunché se prima non è colmo di divino (ἐνθεός, 534b5). Sull'ispirazione poetica nella tradizione arcaica e in Platone mi limito a rimandare in questa sede a Tigerstedt 1969 e Murray 1981 (da Omero a Pindaro) e, più specificamente per Platone, a Velardi 1989 e Giuliano 2005, pp. 137-218.

¹⁴ Cfr. *Or. Ch.* fr. 145 Des Places e si veda, per un interessante commento su tale immagine di ascendenza caldaica, Pépin 1981, pp. 50-53.

diverse lingue degli uomini¹⁵. Ebbene, gli dèi superiori al livello intellettuale dell'essere sono immersi nel silenzio; in realtà essi comunicano tra di loro, ma l'atto del comunicare, essendo in loro unito a quello del pensare, si risolve in un elemento luminoso, pura luce che procede da un ordine all'altro. Ma questi nomi, che pure esistono in maniera nascosta (κρυφίως) presso gli dèi, «sono rivelati a chi tra gli uomini ha una certa affinità con gli dèi (τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῖς συγγενέσι πρὸς τοὺς θεούς)»¹⁶. Tra questo particolare genere di uomini sono da considerare i teurghi, i sacerdoti, così come intermediari tra il divino e l'umano, ancor prima degli uomini, sono i demoni¹⁷. Gli dèi a volte comunicano direttamente con gli uomini, ad esempio nei riti e nei misteri, altre volte si servono di intermediari, come accadde – ricorda Proclo – ad Eleno nell'episodio iliadico¹⁸, che «senti il volere di Apollo e di Atena non già per mezzo degli enti più elevati, bensì di quelli a lui immediatamente vicini e che sono di natura demonica¹⁹». Ma che i poeti condividano con queste misteriose figure la natura di *congeneri*, veri *parenti* degli dèi è altrettanto esplicito.

Nel capitolo CXVIII dell'*In Cratylum* l'esegeta neoplatonico spiega il nome poetico come un velamento della realtà divina: «i miti ricoprono le cose per mezzo dell'omonimia, οἱ μῦθοι οὖν διὰ τῆς ὁμωνυμίας²⁰ τὰ πράγματα συγκαλύπτουσι, 69, 11-12». In questo passo Proclo utilizza il concetto aristotelico dell'omonimia per tradurre in termini linguistico-semantiche la distanza ontologica tra una divinità principale ed una derivata. È la stessa processione dell'essere, la derivazione dei molti dall'Uno, della realtà intelligibile nella sua struttura triadica di essere intelligibile, intelligibile-intellettuale e intellettuale ad essere coperta, velata in un sistema perfetto di omonimie poetiche. Ciascun dio, preso in se stesso, trascende gli dèi che vengono dopo di lui, ma al tempo stesso, ha con questi un elemento in comune, qualcosa che permette la processione degli dèi di rango inferiore da quelli di rango superiore. Ciascun dio presiede una catena (σειρά), una serie dalla quale l'essere divino procede dal trascendente al sensibile senza creare alcun vuoto nella gerarchia ontologica del reale²¹. Ebbene il linguaggio poetico rappresenta tale struttura gerarchica servendosi di omonimi, ovvero denominazioni che sono le stesse per gli dèi, cause principali della loro propria catena (τῆς ἑαυτῶν σειρᾶς ἀρχικοῖς αἰτίοις) e per gli enti intermedi che da questi dèi derivano fino alle ultime entità (πνεύματα²²), inferiori persino ai demoni e agli eroi. È così spiegato il motivo per cui i poeti parlano di dèi che si uniscono a donne mortali o di uomini che si uniscono a dee; in realtà essi non fanno altro che velare un principio metafisico più complesso:

Se avessero voluto parlare in termini chiari e precisi (διαρρήδην καὶ σαφῶς), avrebbero detto che Afrodite e Ares e Teti e gli altri dèi producono, ciascuno cominciando da quello che sta più in alto fino agli ultimi enti (ἕκαστος ἄνωθεν ἀρχόμενος μέχρι τῶν τελευταίων), la sua propria catena comprendente tutte le molteplici cause (προάγει τὴν οἰκείαν σειρὰν περιέχουσαν πολλὰς αἰτίας), che sono diverse l'una dall'altra, pur nella medesima essenza (διαφερούσας ἀλλήλων τῆ οὐσία αὐτῆ), quali, ad esempio, le cause che sono angeli, demoni, eroi, ninfe e simili²³.

Dopo questa spiegazione di ordine generale, Proclo si sofferma sull'origine e sulla natura di queste cause seconde che derivano dagli dèi e che pure manifestano delle caratteristiche comuni con gli uomini. Esse infatti si trovano al limite tra il superiore (gli enti primari, ovvero gli dèi) e la generazione degli enti secondari, ovvero eroi, uomini, ma anche ninfe, piante, sorgenti e specie

¹⁵ Su tale classificazione triadica della processione e produzione linguistica degli dèi si vedano Trouillard 1975, pp. 243-248 e Van den Berg 2008, pp. 162-172.

¹⁶ Procl. *In Crat.* LXXI, 33, 19-20.

¹⁷ Che la comunicazione tra i demoni avvenga per irradiazioni, senza uso di voce e suoni, è un fatto già noto ai medioplatonici: cfr. per esempio Plut. *De gen. Socr.* 20, 589b dove si trova utilizzato lo stesso verbo procliano (ἐλλάμψειν).

¹⁸ Hom. *Il.* VII, 44.

¹⁹ Procl. *In Crat.* LXXIX, 37, 19-21; cfr. anche il capitolo CXXII, 72, 10-15 dove si fa un esplicito riferimento ai «Teurghi nati sotto Marco Aurelio» ai quali gli dèi hanno tramandato i nomi «che ci informano sulle proprietà degli ordinamenti divini».

²⁰ Sull'omonimia in Arist. *Cat.* 1a1 ss. ed il fecondo dibattito sorto in ambito neoplatonico cfr. Narcy 1981, Chiaradonna 2002, pp. 227-305 e Chiaradonna 2004.

²¹ Cfr. Procl. *In Remp.* I, 78,1-6 ed. Kroll.

²² Con questo termine Proclo si riferisce proprio a quegli enti intermedi che sono a contatto con le anime; si possono perciò associare a figure come spiriti ed eroi: essi sono inferiori ai demoni che si collocano ancora al di là della relazione con le cose e vivono intorno alla terra e sono particolari e «aiutano a generare alcune cose, ma non certo mescolandosi fisicamente con le cose mortali, ma stimolando la natura e portando a compimento la potenza generatrice»: *In Crat.* CXVIII, 69, 6-9.

²³ Procl. *ibi*, CXVIII, 69, 14-20. Lo stesso principio è chiarito in *El. Theol.* 125 ed. Dodds. Cfr. anche *In Tim.* I, 361, 1 ss.; III, 166, 12 ss.; *In Remp.* I, 91, 15 ss.; 147, 6 ss. dove le ingiurie di Achille nei confronti di Apollo si spiegano col fatto che non è ad Apollo che l'eroe omerico si rivolge, ma al suo demone che da lui deriva e che porta il suo stesso nome. Che esistano dei demoni che portano lo stesso nome degli dèi è già detto chiaramente da Plutarco in *De def. orac.* 21, 421e. Cfr. anche Iambl. *De myst.* IX, 9, p. 284, 3-7 ed. Des Places.

animali. Esistono tre generi intermedi: gli angeli, i demoni e gli eroi; i primi sono i più vicini agli dèi e ne condividono l'essenza unitaria e indivisa, rendendo proporzionato alle cose posteriori il carattere non ancora molteplice della natura divina; i secondi, come abbiamo già visto sopra, distribuiscono la potenza divina in tutti gli enti secondari; i terzi, invece, riconducono la molteplicità degli enti derivati all'intelletto divino, hanno cioè il compito di elevare e convertire le anime umane attraverso l'amore²⁴. Da qui la spiegazione etimologica del termine ἥρωες, «eroe». Tutti gli eroi, infatti, spiega Platone nel *Cratilo* (398d1-e3), sono nati da un innamorato (ἐρασθεύς): o da un dio innamorato di una mortale, o da un mortale innamorato di una dea. Ecco perché la radice del termine ἥρωες è strettamente collegata al termine ἔρωος, al nome dell'amore, da cui appunto sono nati gli eroi. Nello scolio CXIX, di commento proprio a questo passo platonico, Proclo inquadra tale spiegazione nella gerarchia metafisico-teologica del reale: gli eroi ricevono la loro denominazione (ἐπωνυμίαν) da Eros, dio dell'amore. Questi è a metà tra il mortale e il dio, spiega Diotima²⁵, ed è per questo che gli eroi non solo nascono dai demoni, ma ne ricevono anche, per analogia (ἀναλόγως), le proprietà: poiché Eros è generato da *Poros*, che è migliore, e da *Penia*, che è peggiore, anche gli eroi contengono in sé questi generi differenti, l'uno divino, l'altro mortale²⁶.

La genitorialità di Eros serve a Proclo per spiegare la genitura divina in generale nel primo libro della *Teologia Platonica*. Gli dèi sono posti al di sopra della γένεσις e della realtà condizionata dalla temporalità, e allora il racconto di Diotima che presenta Eros figlio di una causa paterna e una materna diventa il luogo adatto alla spiegazione di qualunque nascita di ordine divino. La processione degli dèi è conforme all'unità, essa non prevede divisioni e distinzioni dell'essenza, che invece procede senza che ciò che è superiore subisca diminuzione né alterazione²⁷.

Quando allora Platone dice in forma di racconto mitico (ἐν μυθικοῖς πλάσμασιν) della nascita di Eros, generato durante la festa per la nascita di Afrodite, dobbiamo ricordare – spiega Proclo – che egli si sta servendo di una dimostrazione simbolica: i miti chiamano γένεσις l'indicibile manifestazione che ha origine dai principi causali. Quando invece Platone si esprime in maniera dialettica e intellettuale, e non in modo mistico come fanno i teologi, ovvero i poeti ispirati, egli non fa che celebrare il carattere di ingenerato proprio degli dèi²⁸. L'ordine divino più prossimo all'Uno contiene in se stesso le processioni degli enti inferiori, intermedi e di ultimo livello: in esso, come in ciascuno degli ordinamenti divini di livello inferiore, sono contenuti principi causali uniformi ma anche multiformi enti causati. Ciascuno di questi contenuti sussiste però in maniera differente: «i primi, in quanto completanti preesistono ai secondi; i secondi, in quanto completati, bramano quelli più compiuti, e a loro volta, partecipando della potenza dei primi, si rendono principi di generazione di quelli successivi»²⁹.

È tenendo presente queste nozioni che va interpretata la genitorialità divina dei racconti mitici: s'intenderà perciò la causa paterna come il principio causale uniforme della natura superiore, e quella materna come il principio causale di natura inferiore e più particolare che viene a preesistere nel ruolo di madre (ἐν μητρὸς τάξει). Se però la causa paterna è sempre superiore all'ente da essa derivato, la causa materna a volte può anche essere ad esso inferiore: è questo il caso di Πενία, causa materna di Eros nel *Simposio*. Ciò è vero non solo nei racconti mitici, ma anche quando Platone parla 'in maniera filosofica' degli enti, come nel *Timeo*, quando chiama «padre» l'essere, ovvero i modelli intelligibili delle cose sensibili, chiama «madre» e «nutrice del divenire» la materia, ricettacolo delle immagini dell'essere, e «figlio» la natura di ciò che è ad essi intermedio (τὴν δὲ μεταξὺ τούτων φύσιν)³⁰. Ebbene le potenze causatrici che perfezionano le realtà seconde, che sono promotrici di vita

²⁴ Cfr. Procl. *ibi*, CXXVIII, 75, 80 – 76, 4. La stessa distinzione dell'ordinamento intermedio di natura demonica in angeli, demoni ed eroi si trova anche in *In Tim.* III, 165, 15-22. La distribuzione gerarchica degli esseri intermedi tra gli dèi e gli uomini si trova già nell'*Epinomide* in cui ad ognuna delle specie viventi e dei quattro elementi di *Tim.* 39e10-40a2 si fanno corrispondere, rispettivamente, gli dèi, i demoni, di cui si individua anche un particolare ἀέριον γένος, i semidei e infine gli uomini (*Ep.* 984d-985b). Stessa disposizione gerarchica si ritrova in Alc. *Didask.* p. 171, 15-29 ed. Whittaker - Louis e in Calc. *In Tim.* §§ 127-136 ed. Waszink. Ad introdurre l'elemento angelico accanto a quello demonico è la tradizione neopitagorica (cfr. Iambl. *Theol. aritm.* p. 24, 20 ed. De Falco). L'ordine angeli – demoni – eroi è già di Celso (in Orig. *Contr. Cels.* VII, 68) e di Ierocle di Alessandria (*In carm. aur.* 19, 17-22 ed. Köhler). Sull'argomento cfr. Rodríguez Moreno 1998, pp. 177-192 e Timotin 2012, pp. 85-161.

²⁵ Plat. *Symp.* 202d11-e1; 203b1-e5. Cito i testi platonici dall'edizione oxoniense di Burnet, tt. I-V, 1900-1907.

²⁶ Cfr. Procl. *In Crat.* CXIX, 71, 8-13.

²⁷ Cfr. Procl. *El. Theol.* 25.

²⁸ Cfr. Procl. *Theol. Plat.* I, 28, pp. 120, 22 – 121, 14.

²⁹ Procl. *ibi*, I, 28, pp. 121, 21 – 122, 2. La traduzione è di Abbate 2005, lievemente modificata.

³⁰ Cfr. Plat. *Tim.* 50d2-4 e 52d5. L'identificazione dell'essere con la causa paterna dell'universo è dedotta da Proclo direttamente da *Tim.* 50d2 in cui l'appellativo di 'padre' riferito da Platone al modello intelligibile, uno dei tre principi della generazione del cosmo, risulta significativo per l'interpretazione del ruolo del demiurgo a cui tradizionalmente si attribuiscono, senza un reale riscontro del testo, gli appellativi di ποιητής e πατήρ di *Tim.* 28c3. Sull'argomento rimando al fondamentale studio di Ferrari 2003, teso a dimostrare come il mondo delle idee rappresenti contemporaneamente la causa

e generano divisione, sono cause materne al di sopra degli enti derivati; le potenze che invece accolgono le realtà seconde e moltiplicano le loro attività e ne estendono la condizione inferiore sono anch'esse dette madri, ma sono al di sotto degli enti da essi generati. Allo stesso modo, tra i prodotti generati da tali principi causali, alcuni procedono da entrambi i principi in maniera unitaria e si completano presso entrambi i tipi di causa, altri sono posti in mezzo, al centro (ἐν μέσῳ) e conservano il legame con entrambi, trasferendo «i doni dei padri nei grembi materni e facendo rivolgere i ricettacoli di questi verso le cause primigenie perché le ricolmino»³¹. È così spiegata la nascita di Eros, generato da *Poros* e *Penia*, principio superiore il primo, principio inferiore il secondo: rispetto ad entrambi Eros demone si pone al centro perché nel suo essere legato ad entrambi i genitori esso è sintesi dell'uno nell'altro, è l'assenza di risorse che trova la risorsa, è la mancanza di espedienti che trova l'espediente, è il non essere che si fa essere nel riempire di sé di ciò che è mancante.

La dialettica triadica della processione dell'essere racconta anche il genere di sapienza divina di cui parla Diotima in *Simp.* 204a1-3; Proclo lo spiega nel capitolo 23 del primo libro della *Teologia Platonica* a proposito dei tre attributi divini, la bellezza, la sapienza e la bontà desunti da *Phaedr.* 246d8-e1:

Io dico che secondo la Diotima del *Simposio* la natura del sapiente è colma del conoscibile, e non ricerca né insegue, bensì possiede l'intelligibile. [...] La natura del sapiente è ricolma e non è bisognosa di nulla, e tutto ciò che vuole ha lì presente, e non è bramosa di nulla, ma è preposta al filosofo come desiderabile e appetibile³².

È proprio dalla palinodia socratica che Proclo ricava la triade di ἀγαθόν, σοφόν, καλόν, da lui posta al livello intelligibile dell'essere³³. Nell'assetto teologico-metafisico del νοητόν, derivano da queste tre cause tre monadi: πίστις, ἀλήθεια ed ἔρως, Fede, Verità e Amore³⁴ che rappresentano di ciascuna causa l'elemento intermedio attraverso il quale le realtà inferiori da esse derivate possono ricongiungersi al loro principio: è necessario, infatti, che ci sia una determinata medietà (μεσότης) congenere a ciascun ente perché attraverso di essa quell'ente possa raggiungere la propria causa. L'elemento intermedio della Bellezza è l'amore. Infatti non sarebbe possibile porre l'amore né tra i primi esseri perché l'oggetto d'amore è al di sopra dell'amore, né tra gli ultimi enti perché l'amante partecipa dell'amore³⁵.

Dall'eros come principio causale, dunque dalla monade che ha sede nell'intelligibile, ha inizio la serie erotica degli dèi, che procede dal livello ineffabile dell'intelligibile a quello unificante, perfettivo e paterno dell'ordinamento intelligibile-intellettivo³⁶, a quello poetico e assimilatore degli dèi ipercosmici³⁷, fino a mostrarsi in maniera molteplice e divisa negli dèi encosmici³⁸. Se al livello del νοητόν eros esiste solo κατ' αἰτίαν, come principio causale, è lì dove intervengono l'unità e la divisione tra gli esseri che l'amore manifesta pienamente la sua natura di essere intermedio³⁹. Nel *Commento all'Alcibiade Primo*, in cui si descrive il ritorno dell'anima a sé per mezzo della forza anagogica di eros⁴⁰, Proclo stabilisce il modello della classe demonica proprio nella εἰροτική σειρά, nella catena erotica degli dèi, quella che da una parte ha il compito di elevare le realtà inferiori fino alla divina Bellezza e dall'altra irradia su queste stesse realtà la luce divina che dalla Bellezza procede. «È necessario allora che questo dio sia posto al centro (ἐν μέσῳ) tra l'oggetto d'amore e gli amanti, e che sia inferiore al bello, ma superiore a tutto il resto», scrive Proclo⁴¹. La direzione epistrotica delle realtà seconde verso quelle di ordine primario si realizza pertanto intorno alla centralità dell'ordinamento erotico degli esseri divini, che trovano così in Eros, demone potentissimo,

paradigmatica e quella efficiente della generazione del mondo.

³¹ Procl. *Theol. Plat.* I, 28, p. 123, 4-6. La traduzione è di Abbate, lievemente modificata.

³² Procl. *ibi*, I, 23, p. 105, 5-12.

³³ Una sua dettagliata presentazione si trova in Procl. *Theol. Plat.* I, 22-24, pp. 100, 17 – 109, 12 e III, 22, pp. 78, 15 – 81, 20. Cfr. anche Dam. *In Phaed.* I, 41 ed. Westerink.

³⁴ Cfr. Procl. *Theol. Plat.* I, 2, p. 11, 13-21 e I, 25, pp. 109, 4 – 113, 10. Proclo attinge tale triade dagli *Oracoli caldaici*, fr. 46 Des Places.

³⁵ Cfr. Procl. *In Alc.* 51, 3-6.

³⁶ Sugli attributi degli dèi intelligibili-intellettivi cfr. Procl. *El. Theol.* 151, 57; 154; *In Crat.* XCVIII, 48, 1-4; CX, 63, 7-16; 65, 3-7.

³⁷ Cfr. Procl. *In Tim.* II, 236, 27; 273, 16-19.

³⁸ Cfr. Procl. *In Crat.* CXXVIII, 75, 9-14; 19-21.

³⁹ «Poiché esso [*scil.* l'amore] è il legame (συνδεδετικός) degli esseri separati e l'unione (συναγωγός) di quelli che vengono dopo di lui con quegli enti che lo precedono, è colui che converte (ἐπιστρεπτικός) gli esseri di secondo rango verso quelli primari, che eleva (ἀναγωγός) e perfeziona (τελειουργός) gli esseri più imperfetti»: Procl. *In Alc.* 53, 5-8.

⁴⁰ Sull'interpretazione tardo neoplatonica del potere anagogico di eros cfr. Motta 2012.

⁴¹ Procl. *ibi*, 51, 6-8.

l'immagine più perspicua della loro medietà⁴².

Per aver sottoposto ad una capillare teologizzazione gli scritti del divino maestro, la tarda scuola platonica si trovava di fronte alla necessità di colmare quel vuoto di cui persino ciò che è perfetto ha bisogno per conservare la sua natura assolutamente separata e trascendente. Allo scopo di colmare questo vuoto era stata elaborata una inusitata e labirintica proliferazione dei livelli ontologici, che avrebbero potuto gradualmente salvaguardare la trascendenza della causa originaria e l'appartenenza degli enti secondari alla causa primissima. Per dare dinamismo ad un sistema che altrimenti sarebbe imploso nella sua eccessiva articolazione, Proclo ricorre con una prudenza, potremmo dire, genialmente maniacale all'elemento intermedio, sia esso un dio, un demone, un eroe o persino un poeta, ogni volta che è chiamato a descrivere la continuità di ciò che è separato, il legame del tutto con se stesso.

Abbreviazioni bibliografiche

- Abbate 2001 = M. Abbate, *Dall'etimologia alla teologia: Proclo interprete del Cratilo*, Casale Monferrato 2001.
- Abbate 2005 = Proclo, *Teologia platonica*, presentazione di W. Beierwaltes, introd. di G. Reale, trad., note e apparati di M. Abbate, Milano 2005.
- Abbate 2008 = M. Abbate, *Il divino tra unità e molteplicità. Saggio sulla Teologia Platonica di Proclo*, Alessandria 2008.
- Alt 2000 = K. Alt, *Der Daimon als Seelenführer: zur Vorstellung des persönlichen Schutzgeistes bei den Griechen*, «Hyperboreus», 6 (2000), pp. 219-252.
- Beierwaltes 1965 = W. Beierwaltes, *Proklos: Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik*, Frankfurt am Main 1965.
- Chantraine 1968 = P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, Paris 1968.
- Chiaradonna 2002 = R. Chiaradonna, *Sostanza movimento analogia. Plotino critico di Aristotele*, Napoli 2002.
- Chiaradonna 2004 = R. Chiaradonna, *Plotino e la teoria degli universali*. Enn. VI, 3 [44], 9, in *Aristotele e i suoi esegeti neoplatonici. Logica e ontologia nelle interpretazioni greche e arabe*, Atti del Convegno internazionale, Roma 19-20 ottobre 2001, a cura di V. Celluprica - C. D'Ancona, Napoli 2004, pp. 1-35.
- De Piano 2013 = P. De Piano, *Il Demiurgo, l'onomaturgo e l'artista nei capitoli LI-LIII dell'In Cratylum di Proclo*, «Logos. Rivista annuale del Dipartimento di filosofia A. Aliotta», 8 (2013), pp. 9-22 (in fase di elaborazione presso l'editore).
- De Vita 2011 = M. C. De Vita, *Sul demone di Socrate: l'esegesi neoplatonica*, in *Λόγος διδόναι. La filosofia come esercizio del render ragione. Studi in onore di G. Casertano*, a cura di L. Palumbo, Loffredo 2011, pp. 841-863.
- Di Pasquale Barbanti = M. Di Pasquale Barbanti, *Il concetto di mediazione nella psicologia e nella gnoseologia di Proclo*, «Invigilata Lucernis», 23 (2001), pp. 55-81.
- Ferrari 2003 = F. Ferrari, *Causa paradigmatica e causa efficiente: il ruolo delle Idee nel Timeo*, in *Plato Physicus*, a cura di S. Maso e C. Natali, Amsterdam 2003, pp. 81-94.
- Festugière 1969 = A. J. Festugière, *L'ordre de lecture des dialogues de Platon aux Ve/VIe siècle*, «Museum Helveticum», 26 (1969), pp. 281-296.
- Friedländer 1954 = P. Friedländer, *Platon. Seinswahrheit und Lebenswirklichkeit*, I-III, Berlin 1954 (I ed. 1928-1930)
- Giuliano 2005 = F. M. Giuliano, *Platone e la poesia. Teoria della composizione e prassi della ricezione*, Sankt Augustin 2005.
- Lévêque 1993 = *Répartition et démocratie. A propos de la racine *da-*, «Esprit», décembre 1993, pp. 34-39.
- Motta 2012 = A. Motta, *Eros ἀναγωγός e filosofia nell'esegesi tardo neoplatonica*, in *Eros e Pulchritudo. Tra Antico e Moderno*, a cura di L. Palumbo – V. Sorge, Napoli 2012, pp. 71-82.
- Motte 1989 = A. Motte, *La catégorie platonicienne du démonique*, in *Anges et démons. Actes du colloque de Liège et de Louvain-la-Neuve, 25-26 novembre 1987*, éd. par J. Ries, Louvain 1989, pp. 205-221.
- Murray 1981 = P. Murray, *Poetic inspiration in early Greece*, «The Journal of Hellenic Studies», 101 (1981), pp. 87-100.

⁴² Cfr. Procl. *ibi*, 30, 15 – 31, 9. La serie erotica trova il suo παράδειγμα nei demoni poiché essa detiene tra gli dèi la medesima medietà che ai demoni viene riconosciuta tra le realtà divine e quelle umane: «καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τῆς ὅλης τῶν δαιμόνων τάξεως ἐν αὐτῇ τὸ παράδειγμα προεστήσατο, ταύτην ἐν τοῖς θεοῖς ἔχουσα τὴν μεσότητα ἣν οἱ δαίμονες τῶν τε θεῶν μεταξὺ καὶ τῶν θνητῶν ἐκλήρωσαντο πραγμάτων»: *ibi*, 31, 5-8.

- Narcy 1981 = M. Narcy, *L'homonymie entre Aristote et ses commentateurs néo-platoniciens*, «Les études philosophiques», janvier-mars 1981, pp. 35-52.
- Palumbo 2008 = L. Palumbo, Μίμησις. *Rappresentazione, teatro e mondo nei dialoghi di Platone e nella Poetica di Aristotele*, Napoli 2008.
- Pépin 1981 = J. Pépin, *Linguistique et théologie dans la tradition platonicienne*, in AA. VV., *Linguaggio. Scienza-Filosofia-Teologia, Atti del XXV convegno di assistenti universitari di filosofia*, Padova 1981, pp. 23-53.
- Robin 1964 = L. Robin, *La théorie platonicienne de l'amour*, nouvelle édition, préface de P.-M. Schuhl, Paris, 1964 (I ed. 1908).
- Rodríguez Moreno 1998 = I. Rodríguez Moreno, *Ángeles, démones y héroes en el neoplatonismo griego*, Amsterdam 1998.
- Romano 1989 = Proclo, *Lezioni sul "Cratilo" di Platone*, introd. trad. e comm. di F. Romano, Catania 1989.
- Souilhé 1919 = J. Souilhé, *La notion platonicienne d'intermédiaire dans la philosophie des dialogues*, Paris 1919 (rist. New York – London 1987)
- Steel 1976 = C. G. Steel, *The Changing Self. A study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius, Priscianus*, Bruxelles 1976.
- Tigerstedt 1969 = E. N. Tigerstedt, *Plato's Idea of Poetical Inspiration*, Helsinki 1969.
- Timotin 2012 = A. Timotin, *La démonologie platonicienne: histoire de la notion de daimôn de Platon aux derniers néoplatoniciens*, Leiden – Boston 2012.
- Trouillard 1975 = J. Trouillard, *L'activité onomastique selon Proclus*, in *De Jamblique à Proclus*, Neuf exposés suivis de discussions par B. D. Larsen *et al.*, avec la participation de F. Brunner, entretiens préparés et présidés par H. Dörrie, Vandoeuvres-Geneve, 26-31 août 1974, Genève 1975, pp. 239-251.
- Van den Berg 2008 = R. M. Van den Berg, *Proclus' Commentary on the Cratylus in Context. Ancient theories of Language and Naming*, Leiden – Boston 2008.
- Velardi 1989 = R. Velardi, *Enthousiasmos. Possessione rituale e teoria della comunicazione poetica in Platone*, Roma 1989.

Socrates as a divine intermediary in the *Apology* and *Symposium*

Gerard Naddaf

ABSTRACT

The best and most complete portraits that Plato provides of the figure of Socrates as a philosopher appear in the *Apology* and the *Symposium*. In both dialogues, Socrates comes across as a deeply religious or spiritual figure. Yet there are both similarities and differences between the two dialogues which make it difficult to determine which portrait is the more faithful.

In this paper I focus on the figure of Socrates as a “daimonic man” (*daimonios anêr*, *Sym.* 203a5) and leader (*hêgoumenos*, *Sym.* 210a7). I argue that Socrates is acutely self-conscious (*sunoida emautôi*, *Ap.* 21b4-5, 22c8) of the belief that he is not only divinely inspired but also god’s representative on earth and that god has given him the means to perform his task, which he knows, as well as his disciples, is exceedingly difficult (*sunoida emautôi*, *Sym.* 216a3, b3). The ultimate aim for us, as Socrates understands it, is to become as godlike as possible, for this will lead to happiness in this life and the next, a glimpse of which is conveyed in the form of a final revelation during an *exaiphnês* or sudden moment in the *Symposium* (210e4). I also explain where Socrates’ *exaiphnês* moments of insight and revelation appear in the *Apology*.

In conjunction, I show that there is no difference between the god of the *Apology* (*to daimonion*, 40a5 or *ho theos*, 40b1) communicating *directly* with Socrates via a voice (*phônê*, 31d2) or sign (*sêmeion*, 40b1) and the Socrates of the *Symposium*, portrayed as a spiritual entity (*to daimonion*, *Sym.* 202e1, or *daimonios anêr*, 203a5) standing between god and mortals, or, more precisely, the incarnation of the greatest of all daimons: Eros himself (202d). Socrates is indeed the ultimate messenger and leader, the one through whom, like the Delphic oracle, divination now passes (202e).

Finally, since in the *Apology* Socrates states that the divine voice communicated with him from childhood (*ex païdos*, 31d3), he appears to be god’s chosen messenger from an early age. I understand this as an instance of the awakening of self-consciousness, a relatively new phenomenon in ancient Greece and elsewhere.

Agathon

Chair: Debra Nails

Why Agathon's Beauty Matters

Francisco J. Gonzalez

*When I kiss Agathon my soul is on my lips,
whither it comes, poor thing, hoping to cross over¹*

There is a tendency to treat Agathon's as the most superficial and philosophically vacuous speech in the dialogue.² This impression is of course encouraged by Socrates who characterizes the speech as a piece of Gorgianic rhetoric concerned only with impressing through its choice of words and phrases and not at all with telling the truth about its subject. In other words, Socrates suggests that the speech is an attractive or beautiful one (καλὸν οὕτω καὶ παντοδαπὸν λόγον ῥηθέντα 198b3), but not a good one. Indeed the speech makes love itself something merely attractive but not good, like the author in whose image it is conceived: despite his name, Agathon is more pretty boy than good.

But careful consideration of Agathon's speech and its place in the dialogue shows that this assessment cannot stand. Considering first its place in the dialogue, Agathon's speech immediately precedes Socrates' and is thus given a prominent, central place in the dialogue. If we see the series of speeches as an ascent of some sort, Agathon's is near the top. One could of course in response reject the view that the speeches represent an ascent, as many scholars have precisely in order to avoid giving Agathon's speech too much honor³ But we do not need to assume such an ascent in order to see in the position of Agathon's speech a sign of its importance. The reason is that the *Symposium* explicitly justifies this position by making it clear that Socrates' contest is with Agathon more than with any other participant. Right near the start we have Socrates' ironic comparison of his wisdom with that of Agathon's and then Agathon's suggestion that Dionysus will soon decide their claims to wisdom (175e7-9). We are reminded of this towards the dialogue's end when Alcibiades in the guise of Dionysus first crowns Agathon and then, upon seeing Socrates, crowns him as well (note that *both* are crowned).⁴ Furthermore, if Socrates claims expertise in love (177d7-8), Eryximachus suggests that Socrates *and* Agathon are the two experts in love among the party (193e4-5). Now why would Plato set up this contest and this rivalry if he thought that Agathon was a mere airhead with nothing but

¹ “τὴν ψυχὴν Ἀγάθωνα φιλῶν ἐπὶ χεῖρασιν ἔσχον. ἦλθε γὰρ ἡ τλήμων ὡς διαβησομένη” This verse is attributed to Plato by Diogenes Laertius (3, 23, 32), among others. See final note of paper.

² Though acknowledging that “some valuable points are made”, Waterfield characterizes Agathon's speech as “little more than a tour de force” (Plato: *Symposium* [Oxford University Press, 2009], xxiv) and concludes: “Underneath the pretty exterior lies a conventional encomium and a conventional view of Love, which reflects the god's portraits we can find in paintings and in literature. It is therefore a perfect speech for Agathon the artist” (xxv). Note this damning last sentence on the ‘artist’. Such a judgment can be found already in Bury who judges the content of the speech purely conventional and suggests that nothing better describes it than the Pauline phrase: “Though he speaks with the tongues of men and of angels, he is become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.” (R. G. Bury, *The Symposium of Plato* [Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1909]). Though one could multiply the examples of such a judgment ad nauseam, let us just add Luc Brisson's description of the speech as “empty but magnificently constructed” (“Agathon, Pausanias, and Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*; *Paidierastia and Philosophia*,” in *Plato's Symposium: Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, eds. Leshner, Nails, Sheffield [Harvard University Press, 2006], 245).

³ Kenneth Dorter has argued that the speeches cannot form an ascent, but must instead be interpreted dialectically, on the basis of his unquestioned assumption that the speech of Agathon “even allowing for its humorous intent, can hardly be placed above (or even alongside of) the inspired myth of his predecessor Aristophanes” (“A Dual Dialectic in the *Symposium*,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 25, no. 3 [1992]: 253-254). Bury already made the same point in arguing that the thesis of an ascending order is made untenable by “the obvious fact that Agathon's speech is in no real sense the best or most important of the series; rather, from the point of view of Socrates, it is the worst.” One exception to this tendency is David Sedley, “The Speech of Agathon in Plato's *Symposium*,” in *The Virtuous Life in Greek Ethics*, eds. Stella Haffmans & Burkhard Reis (Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 47-69. Defending what he calls the ‘crescendo’ interpretation of the speeches, Sedley interprets Agathon's speech as being the one closest to Socrates' own, even calling it ‘sub-Socratic’. As will be noted below, some of the observations Sedley makes in support of this reading coincide with the points made here, though some exception will be taken to his overall account of Agathon's role in the dialogue and of his relation to Socrates.

⁴ A point rightly emphasized by Steven Robinson, “The Contest of Wisdom between Socrates and Agathon in Plato's *Symposium*,” *Ancient Philosophy* 24 (2004): 93. Robinson interprets this double-crowning as an indication of two sides of the worship of Dionysos: the public polis-cult, represented by Agathon with his dramatic victory at a Dionysian festival, and the private mystery-cult, represented by Socrates through his account of eros in the voice of Diotima and in the language of the mystery religions: see especially p. 87. Agathon and Socrates on this interpretation are both legitimated, the first as representing discourse that “is exoteric and public, and extends to *all* citizens, who *all* partake of it” and the second as representing discourse that “is esoteric and private, and extends only to those few citizens who are capable of meeting its very high demands, and who also participate in the public discourse” (98). But this interpretation, apart from its Straussian tendency of reducing all issues (in this case eros!) to the political one of exoteric versus esoteric discourse, appears to eliminate any real *contest* between Agathon and Socrates: if each has his own domain, what is the contest *for*?

pretty words to offer on the subject of love? Agathon and Socrates are the last to speak on the topic of eros because *both* are recognized to have the most to say on the topic and therefore to be the real contenders in the contest of praising eros.

It might seem that Agathon, far from being any kind of expert, as a poet only panders to public opinion and therefore is not worthy of having anything he says taken seriously by Socrates. This is why the short conversation in which Socrates engages Agathon prior to Agathon's speech is of much importance. Here, in response to Socrates' suggestion that he cannot possibly be worried about the opinions of the few present at the party after having addressed a vast multitude in the theater, Agathon protests that he is not so 'full of the theater' (θεάτρον μεστόν, 194b7) as to ignore that we should esteem only the opinions of the wise and not those of the many (194b6-8). His plays may be 'crowd-pleasers', but Agathon no less than Socrates values wisdom and expertise above popular opinion. Indeed, two surviving fragments of the work of the historical Agathon appear to express well Agathon's view here and thus his kinship with Socrates: "No envy would there be in the life of men / If we were all constituted equal by nature" (fr. 24); "To envy wisdom more than wealth is noble" (fr. 25).

If we turn to Agathon's speech itself, we see that far from being empty rhetoric and saying nothing true, it is a conceptually coherent and sophisticated speech that makes a number of important points for the first time with which Socrates will himself agree. Within the present time constraints I can only outline these contributions as follows.

- 1) Agathon claims that we must distinguish between the nature of Love and what it effects or produces, criticizing previous speakers for neglecting the former (194e5-195a5).⁵ Socrates will explicitly praise the soundness of this methodology and embrace it as his own.
- 2) This methodological shift brings with it a shift in how the causality of love is understood. While previous speakers treated love as a verb only rather than as a subject, so that it is a property of people or things that 'do' the loving, Agathon makes love itself the subject and cause of loving. This shift in perspective is not only adopted by Socrates, but is essential to his entire argument. As David Sedley has shown (56-57), the argument by which Socrates tries to prove that love lacks beauty and goodness works at all only if the subject is understood to be not people who love but the love itself that causes them to love. Lovers can of course possess good and beautiful things and still be lovers, but the love itself that causes them to love must as desire for what is good and beautiful be utterly lacking in these properties. In other words, in loving I can myself possess good and beautiful things, but the love that causes me to desire good and beautiful things cannot itself in any way be good or beautiful. In this way, the very starting point of Socrates' account of love would be impossible without the shift towards treating love as itself the cause and subject of loving brought about by Agathon.
- 3) In addressing the nature of love, Agathon argues it to be happy because both beautiful and good. This identification of happiness with the possession of goodness and beauty will of course play a central role in Socrates' speech (204e1-7). But Agathon is as conceptually careful here as he is in his opening distinction between the nature and the works of love: rather than simply conflating the properties of 'beautiful' and 'good', he argues for love's possession of each in turn by further analyzing each property into a set of characteristics Love can be shown to possess.
- 4) Love is shown to be beautiful by being shown to be young, delicate, supple and always in bloom. Though these may at first appear to be trivial characteristics that tell us nothing important about the nature of Love, Agathon's argument in fact has him defending some important claims that imply a critical distance from the poetic tradition. Love must be young because the violent deeds the poets attribute to the gods at the beginning could not have been caused by love, but only by necessity. In Agathon's view, poets like Homer and Parmenides have at the very least failed to make the important distinction between love and necessity, a distinction that Agathon will make again later in the speech to connect beauty and the good in their opposition to necessity. But here he suggests that the poets may not even be telling the truth in their attribution of violent deeds to the gods, since after citing their views, he adds: "If they spoke the truth" (195c2-3).⁶

⁵ This is presumably why Socrates engages only Agathon in discussion: the latter, unlike the others, has something to say about the nature of love. As Frisbee C. C. Sheffield observes, "If one must begin an investigation, as Socrates suggests, with an identification of the subject matter, then examining Agathon's speech will be the best place to start" (*Plato's Symposium: The Ethics of Desire* [Oxford University Press, 2006], 35).

⁶ Sedley has another reading of this passage that would make Agathon's questioning of poetic authority even more direct.

- 5) In defending the claim that Love is delicate, Agathon cites Homer, but in a strikingly clever and subversive way. Citing a passage in which Homer describes Delusion (Atê) as having delicate feet because she walks on the heads of men (195d4-5), Agathon first substitutes Love for Delusion, as if he were correcting the poet for confusing the two just as he confused love with necessity. In another important correction, he then claims that Love has delicate feet not because it walks on men's heads: after all, heads are not really soft! Instead, love makes its home in what is truly soft: the souls and characters of men and gods (195e4-7). Agathon thus uses a rather trivial anthropomorphism in a rather subversive way in order to locate love in the soul, as Socrates himself will do.
- 6) Turning to the argument that Love is not only beautiful but good, he analyzes the latter into the virtues of justice, moderation, bravery and wisdom (196b5-197b3), an analysis that can be claimed to be distinctly Platonic.⁷ Agathon then discusses each virtue one by one, defending in each case its attribution to Love.⁸ There has been much indignation at the weakness of Agathon's arguments. Is love really temperate because it is a desire stronger than, and thus able to control, other desires? Is it courageous because the god of love is stronger than the god of war? But not sufficient importance has been given to the fact that, weak as they are, Agathon still gives *arguments*. Can that be said of any of the preceding speeches? Even Socrates' speech, put into the mouth of a priestess, has been judged, in its more positive part, as rather lacking in the argument department. Furthermore, Agathon acknowledges, as we will see, that there is some playfulness mixed in with seriousness in his speech. Can a Platonist condemn *that*? Most importantly, Agathon's arguments, however playfully presented, are not as absurd as they are often taken to be. When scholars, for example, find ridiculous the argument that eros is temperate because it is a desire stronger than, and therefore capable of controlling, other desires, one must ask why they don't find the same view ridiculous when defended by Socrates. Have they forgotten that the opposition between temperance and erotic desire in Lysias' speech and Socrates' first speech in the *Phaedrus* is explicitly rejected in Socrates' second speech where true temperance (256b1-2, as distinct from the contemptible purely 'mortal' temperance, 256e5) is achieved through erotic desire? Have they forgotten that in the *Symposium* itself Socrates describes true virtue as being the product of the erotic desire for beauty? In arguing that temperance, rather than involving an opposition to all desire, is rather the ruling of lower desires by a higher desire for a higher object, Agathon is defending a sophisticated and distinctly Platonic conception of temperance.
- 7) Among the virtues, Agathon significantly devotes the greatest amount of space to the *wisdom* of love (196d5-197b9).⁹ Though Agathon here characterizes love as being a poet like himself,

Sedley suggests that we understand 195c1-3 as follows: "and the ancient goings-on concerning the gods, of which Homer and Parmenides speak, were due to Necessity, not to Love, <as they themselves would say> if they were speaking the truth" (67-68). On this reading, Agathon is agreeing with Phaedrus that Homer and Parmenides made Love rather than Necessity rule during the time of castrations, etc., and is claiming that the poets were wrong. Agathon is in this case, as Sedley notes, simply "rejecting their authority" (69). Yet Sedley thereby makes Agathon in another respect more conservative as he has him not question that the immortal happenings concerning the gods did occur (only their attribution to Love), whereas on the other reading ("if they spoke the truth," i.e., about the ancient goings-on) Agathon at least doubts this. The traditional reading is in my view better in that it has Agathon implicitly rejecting one view of the poets (that Love existed at the time of the ancient immoral happenings) and explicitly bringing into question another (that such immoral happenings concerning the gods ever even took place).

⁷ See the interpretation of this part of Agathon's speech in Ficino, *In Convivium* V.8. Citing Adam's observation that the identification of good character with just these four virtues appears to be new with Plato, Bury rather absurdly counters that "a peculiarly Platonic tenet would hardly be put into the mouth of Agathon"! See also C. J. Rowe, *Plato: Symposium* (Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 1998), p. 164, who insists that there is nothing Platonic about the virtues Agathon describes. On the other end of the interpretative spectrum we have Sedley who judges that here "Agathon . . . is speaking with a sufficiently Socratic (or Platonic) voice for it to be worth tracking his ideas and seeing what will become of them in the hands of Socrates himself" (59). Specifically, Sedley sees the serious content running through Agathon's account of the virtues as lying in the notion that virtue is a matter of non-coercive control, a notion that "has obvious enough resonances with the theory of virtue, in both city and soul, developed . . . in *Republic* 4" (59).

⁸ Agathon's claim that love is just because it commits no violence is described by Dover as "a somewhat reckless statement, considering the importance of eros as a motive of violence and fraud in myth, history and everyday life" (127). But then would not Socrates' account of love also need to be judged 'reckless' for the same reason? One surviving fragment (though of uncertain attribution) might show that Agathon was well aware of the darker side of love: "Should I judge you hubris or Cypris? Desire or distress of the heart?" (fr. 31). The important point is that all the speakers are engaged in the explicit project of defending love against its more negative depiction in earlier literature.

⁹ Surviving fragments show Agathon to have been, as he is here, especially concerned with the notion of *technê* (see frs. 6, 8, & 20). Socrates' own tendency to compare with *technê* the kind of wisdom that constitutes virtue is notorious. Sedley, noting the importance of Agathon's emphasis on wisdom, comments that nevertheless "Agathon's view of wisdom (*sophia*, the goal of philosophy) is a deeply unphilosophical one, and the same may be said of his treatment of virtue in general" (62). Agathon of course does not include philosophy in his treatment of wisdom, but to consider this a defect is to assume that

he does so in the context of describing love as a ‘poet’ in the broadest sense possible that includes not only all artistic production, but also all natural and technical production. Love’s wisdom is an ability to produce or create in general. This is another idea that will be taken up by Socrates with his characterization of love as giving birth and with the suggestion that poetry like love has both a broader and a narrower meaning (205b8-c10).¹⁰

- 8) In the context of claiming that the gods associated with different arts discovered these arts through the power of love, Agathon returns to the idea that what reigned at the beginning, if the stories of the poets are to be believed, was not love, but necessity (197b7).¹¹ But this idea now enables him to connect the notions of beauty and goodness that have until now been distinct. Agathon first claims that the love that ended the disputes between the gods and inspired the different arts was the love of *beauty* (197b5). In thus treating beauty as the object of love, Agathon is of course introducing the idea that will prove absolutely central to Socrates’ own account; in later critiquing the ambiguity in Agathon’s formulation, Socrates is also acknowledging a debt. But Agathon goes even further: he proceeds to conclude that it is the love of *beauty* that brings what is *good* to both men and gods (ἐκ τοῦ ἐρᾶν τῶν καλῶν παντ’ἀγαθὰ γέγονεν καὶ θεοῖς καὶ ἀνθρώποις, 197b8-9). Beauty, if distinct from the good, is still a cause for good. Again, the anticipation of Socrates is impossible to ignore, especially since for Agathon too it is apparently through providing wisdom that the love of beauty is a cause of good.
- 9) Finally, the speech concludes with a poetic peroration that is clearly distinguished from the rest of the speech in form, as it exhibits the rhythms and alliteration of verse,¹² and adds nothing to its content, as it only recaps the main conclusions. Poet he may be, but Agathon still knows the difference between argument, however playfully expressed, and poetic flourish.

Agathon’s speech is thus rigorously organized according to important conceptual distinctions: between the nature of Love and its effects, between beauty and goodness as the two components of Love’s happiness, between the different characteristics that comprise beauty and the good respectively, between the analysis itself and a poetic peroration that only recaps the conclusions of the analysis in verse. Furthermore, if we consider all of the anticipations of key points in Socrates’ own speech outlined here, it seems impossible to deny that the contributions of Agathon’s speech far outdo in importance the contributions of all the other speeches.¹³

But why, then, does Socrates dismiss the speech as mere pretty rhetoric with no truth content? One puzzle in Socrates’ reaction to the speech is indeed just how unfair it is. While Agathon’s speech does contain some pretty Gorgianic rhetoric, especially in its last part, it also contains, as we have seen, much more than that. Most importantly, Agathon is quite aware of the distinction between this kind of rhetoric and the attempt to say the truth about love since he concludes with these words: “Let this, Phaedrus, be my account dedicated to the gods, partly partaking of play, partly of measured seriousness, to the extent of my ability” (τὰ μὲν παιδιᾶς, τὰ δὲ σπουδῆς μετρίας . . . μετέχων, 197e). Here Agathon acknowledges the playfulness of his speech, playfulness that would presumably include

Socrates has already won the contest as well as to assume that the nature of philosophy and its relation to other forms of knowledge is something perfectly clear.

¹⁰ See Michael C. Stokes, *Plato’s Socratic Conversations: Drama and Dialectic in Three Dialogues* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 156-157. Sedley also stresses the way in which Agathon’s connection of love with poesis and his broadening of the sense of both terms anticipates Diotima (60-61), even suggesting that “Diotima is formally theorizing what Agathon has already done *de facto*” (61).

¹¹ Much is made of this distinction by Ficino, *In Convivium* V.11. In a surviving fragment of Agathon we find *technê*, here associated with love; explicitly opposed to both necessity and chance (fr. 8).

¹² Kenneth Dover notes that “In the peroration (197d1-e5) nearly all the thirty-one members (or ‘cola’) into which the passage can be articulated by attention to the phrasing indicated by the sense are recognisable, once normal rules of Attic prosody, elision, crasis, etc., have been applied, as metrical units familiar in Greek lyric poetry” (*Plato: Symposium* [Cambridge University Press, 1980], 124).

¹³ After outlining Socrates’ refutation of Agathon, Sheffield rightly notes: “But this is not the say that Agathon’s speech is nonsense. Socrates goes on to show that Agathon is right that Eros has some relationship both to beauty and to divinity; he is muddled about the precise nature of those relationships. This is a muddle to which Socrates himself, apparently, was subject, before he met the mysterious Diotima (201e3-7)” (36). Dover, despite expressing ‘our’ annoyance at Agathon’s “verbal sophistries or his apparent inability to draw distinctions which, if drawn, would profoundly affect his generalizations’ and claiming that the speech “is appropriate to a man whose business in life is the manipulation of language”, must nevertheless concede: “In so far as it subsumes under eros all kinds of desire for τὰ καλά (197b8) and seems to attribute to this desire all good in the life of gods and men, it may be regarded as expressing, although in ways which make it immediately vulnerable to systematic criticism, some degree of ‘right opinion’ . . . on the role of Eros as Diotima sees it” (123). Given that Diotima assigns ‘right opinion’ to that same intermediate position occupied by Eros and by the philosopher, this is actually high praise.

the play with words and sounds, the mischievously subversive use of the poets, the more blatantly sophisticated argumentation (e.g., Love is courageous because Aphrodite is stronger than Ares!), and the flights of poetic fancy, especially in the entire concluding section: precisely the kind of playfulness, in other words, that readers of Plato find in his own dialogues! Yet Agathon also claims a measure of seriousness and with ample justification, as we have seen.¹⁴ What, then, is Socrates' reaction? Unbelievably he says: "I didn't find the rest quite so wonderful, but who would not be enchanted in hearing the ending with its beauty of language?" (τὰ μὲν ἄλλα οὐχ ὁμοίως μὲν θαυμάσια, τὸ δὲ ἐπὶ τελευτῆς τοῦ κάλλους τῶν ὀνομάτων καὶ ῥημάτων τις οὐκ ἂν ἐξεπλάγη ἀκούων, 198b). Socrates thus chooses to ignore the serious content of the speech and focus only on the beautiful language concentrated in its conclusion! This unfair focus should give us some pause before simply accepting the critique that follows.¹⁵ Indeed, we should remember that Socrates is in a contest with Agathon, which means that he naturally seeks to belittle the contribution of his rival.

The upshot of Socrates' critique is that Agathon's is a beautiful speech, but lacks truth (see 198e2, 199a7, b3). This is indeed a puzzling critique in a number of ways. First, as we have seen, there is much in Agathon's speech that Socrates himself will acknowledge as 'true' in his own speech. Therefore, as we have seen, Socrates can make this critique only by initially ignoring the serious content of Agathon's speech and focusing on the poetic peroration. Secondly, Socrates targets with his critique not Agathon in particular, *but all of the preceding speeches*.¹⁶ He claims that none of them understood an encomium as required to tell the truth, but thought it sufficient to say anything to magnify the subject, whether true or false (198d7-e2). Thirdly, when after this general condemnation he turns to Agathon's speech in particular, the first thing he does is praise as correct the organizing principle of Agathon's speech: i.e., that we need to exhibit the nature of Eros before exhibiting its effects (199c3-5), a principle reiterated at the start of Socrates' own speech (201d8-e2).¹⁷ Fourthly, the question to Agathon with which Socrates begins his elenchus is formulated thus: "Come, since you have so beautifully and magnificently (καλῶς καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶς) expounded in other respects what Love is, tell me this about it: is Love such as to be the love of something or of nothing?" (199c6-d2). Finally, while Socrates indeed goes on to refute a central contention of Agathon's speech, i.e., that Love is itself beautiful and good, he claims at the start of his own speech that he once believed exactly what Agathon believes (201e3-5).¹⁸ There is no reason to dismiss this as mere politeness; Socrates has not shown himself elsewhere in the dialogue to be very concerned with politeness! Rather, if he engages Agathon in discussion, this is because he recognizes in Agathon a serious position that he himself once held. It is hard to avoid the conclusion: if all of the speeches failed to speak the truth about Love, Agathon's speech in Socrates' view came the closest and is most deserving of serious discussion.¹⁹ Of course, this means that Socrates's judgment disagrees with the

¹⁴ Elizabeth S. Belfiore finds in this statement "a self-awareness shared by none of the other five speakers" (*Socrates' Daimonic Art: Love for Wisdom in Four Platonic Dialogues* [Cambridge University Press, 2012], 137) and therefore an indication that Agathon's *amathia* "is less serious than that of the other speakers" (136). Bruno Centrone notes that this mixture of seriousness and play is what characterizes the true art of writing in the *Phaedrus* 276bff. (*Platone: Simposio*, trans. Matteo Nucci [Turin: Einaudi, 2009], xxv), a connection also made by Heidegger in a seminar on the *Phaedrus* he gave in the summer of 1932 (*Seminare: Platon – Aristoteles – Augustinus, Gesamtausgabe* 83 [Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2012], p. 143). Rowe rightly observes that with this comment Agathon distinguishes himself from Gorgias (in a way, I would add, that Socrates deliberately ignores!): while Gorgias characterized his *Encomium of Helen* as mere play (*paignion*, fr. 11. 21), Agathon insists on the at least partial or moderate seriousness of his own speech (p. 166). Rowe nevertheless is himself unable to find any seriousness in Agathon's speech: "It is not clear where exactly the seriousness of Agathon's speech is supposed to lie; but then P. clearly wishes to leave us with a picture of someone who has a distinctly uncertain relationship with anything resembling the truth" (166).

¹⁵ Matteo Nucci appears to consider Socrates' response justified here, seeing him as highlighting the peroration "come se fosse l'unica cosa di cui è veramente capace il poeta, visto anche che invece le argomentazioni sono deboli, capziose, inconsistenti" (*Platone: Simposio* [Turin: Einaudi, 2009], p. 115, n. 189). But this is why it is important to show, as I attempt to do here, that the 'serious' part of Agathon's speech is not so weak, empty and therefore ignorable as Nucci and others take it to be.

¹⁶ Though Rowe insists that Agathon is the main target: p. 167.

¹⁷ This is not to deny that the principle undergoes some modification in Socrates' adoption of it. As Sedley has argued (52-54), Agathon's starting point is an account of what love is *like* (οἷός ἐστιν, 195a4) that takes the form of a description of the qualities that make love good and beautiful, rather than an account of what love *is*, i.e., its essential nature, which is Socrates' own starting point. Sedley accordingly concludes that "Agathon's method is not yet fully Socratic" (54).

¹⁸ And Agathon's view, after all, is not so obviously ridiculous or false. As Allen notes, "Agathon, if he is mistaken in describing Eros as beautiful, is surely not making a linguistic mistake: not only the object of desire, but the person desiring could be characterized as καλός, as Phaedrus and Pausanias make clear. Indeed, desire itself, and specifically erotic desire, could be so characterized" (p. 44, n. 69).

¹⁹ As Bruno Centrone suggests, "il suo discorso sembra contenere molti spunti accettabili nell'ottica di Platone; ma forse proprio per questo sarà anche quello attaccato più direttamente nei suoi fondamenti" (p. xxii). Stokes has sought to show how Socrates' critique of Agathon genuinely engages with the content of Agathon's speech, so that "Agathon sheds the foolish weakness he is often saddled with, just as Socrates sheds his overbearing rhetoric. This passage, at least, can now be

prevailing view in scholarship on the dialogue that tends to consider Agathon's speech the most vacuous and least worthy of serious discussion among all the speeches.

Yet presumably one reason why Agathon's speech has not been taken more seriously is Socrates' repeated description of the speech as 'beautiful', reflecting Agathon's own extraordinary beauty,²⁰ and the assumption that beauty is something superficial having little to do with truth. One of the central points of similarity, however, between Socrates and Agathon is to be found in their understandings of the relation between beauty and goodness. Both neither completely identify the two terms nor see them as separable. Central to Socrates' own speech is Diotima's substitution of 'good' for 'beautiful' in order to arrive at the conclusion that what we seek from the possession of beautiful things is happiness (204d-e). At the same time, this substitution does not appear to presuppose a simple identity given the different roles assigned to the beautiful and the good in the higher mysteries: what the lover pursues, both in its different manifestations and in itself, is beauty and not the good, while the good, in the form of true virtue, is what the lover gives birth to through intercourse with beauty.²¹ The relation is thus neither a simple identity nor a sharp distinction. Socrates therefore would hardly be justified in dismissing the beauty of Agathon's speech, and indeed Agathon's own beauty and the beauty of love on his account, as *mere* beauty, as something superficial having no necessary connection to goodness. At the very least, this beauty of Agathon's is something that could lead us to the good.

It is significant that immediately after calling Agathon's speech beautiful (καλῶς γε εἶπες), Socrates' asks him if anything good is not also beautiful (τὰγαθὰ οὐκ καὶ καλὰ δοκεῖ σοι εἶναι, 201c). Some, such as Waterfield (p.84), have taken this to imply that the contrary is not true, i.e., that not everything beautiful is good, and have seen here an implicit critique of Agathon. But since what Socrates seeks to establish here is that to be deprived of beautiful things *is* to be deprived of good things, an opposition of the beautiful to the good (i.e., the suggestion that some beautiful things are bad) is not even implied. Even in his critique of Agathon's rhetoric, Socrates does not oppose beauty and truth, but rather suggests that they go together: a good encomium is one that *chooses the most beautiful truths* (198d3-6).²² Thus there is nothing to suggest that Socrates sees the relation between beauty and goodness or truth as a discordant one, not even in the sense of the 'felicitous discordance' described by Heidegger in his Nietzsche lectures. It is hard to see, then, how Socrates could join so many modern commentators in dismissing Agathon and his speech as 'merely' beautiful.

As for Agathon himself, he surely is not guilty of simply reducing goodness to beauty. As we have seen, his speech clearly distinguishes between the two: he first sets out to show how Eros is κάλλιστος (195a8-196b5) and then how it is ἄριστος (196b5-197b10).²³ As we have also seen, however, Agathon relates the two characteristics, seeing the love of beauty as a means to acquiring what is good, as it is in the highest mysteries of Diotima's account.²⁴ Thus Agathon's understanding of the relation between the good and the beautiful appears no different from Socrates' own. Furthermore, far from sacrificing truth to beauty, Agathon questions the veracity of the poets²⁵ and carefully distinguishes between the more serious and the more playful aspects of his own speech.

One must therefore suspect that the reason for the contest between Agathon and Socrates and for Socrates' unfair critique of Agathon's speech is that the beauty cultivated and promoted by the poet is not so easy to separate from the goodness pursued by the philosopher. The beautiful Agathon is not so indifferent to goodness and truth as Socrates pretends and Socrates is not so indifferent to beauty as he sometimes pretends. In the words of the *Philebus*, after all, in the nature of beauty lies

read as a *dialogue*" (145).

²⁰ Considering all the surviving testimony, Pierre Lèvéque concludes: "Éclatante beauté, telle est donc l'impression qu'Agathon produisit sur tous ses contemporains" (*Agathon* [Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1955], 36).

²¹ See Stokes, pp. 154-155 and 181. As he notes with regard to Diotima's 'higher mysteries', the desire for immortality "is not a desire directly to possess the beautiful so much as to procreate offspring in the beautiful. It is, however, the desire for what is good. The functions of the good and of the beautiful in the argument and its exposition are quite different" (181). See also Sedley who denies that the good and the beautiful are ever identical in Plato's dialogues (p. 49, n. 4).

²² As Nucci notes, commenting on this passage: "La bellezza segue la verità ma le dà anche luce" (117, n. 194).

²³ This is a point noted by Steven Berg: "Agathon is thus the first speaker since Phaedrus to distinguish the beautiful and the good and he makes explicit what Phaedrus left implicit" (*Eros and the Intoxications of Enlightenment: on Plato's Symposium* [SUNY 2010], 77). Yet Berg claims that Agathon goes on to conflate the two in attributing the power to effect good to eros as a poet, i.e., as a maker of images: "What Agathon shows, then, is that the beautiful is an image in speech of the good that speciously appropriates to itself the being of the good. Agathon's entire speech is just such an image. His claim, then, that wisdom is the good is the beautiful masquerading as the good. His god Eros in the wisdom of his making is the unreal unity of the beautiful and the good" (88). This critique I address below.

²⁴ See Stokes, pp. 125-126, who claims that Agathon is trying to have things both ways. But isn't Socrates as well?

²⁵ Rowe, instead of seeing here evidence of a concern for truth on Agathon's part, cannot restrain himself from the slander: "whether Agathon has any interest at all in 'truth' must be at best an open question (cf. S. at 198d—e)" (163).

the power of the good (vñv δὴ καταπέφουγεν ἡμῖν ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ δύναμις εἰς τὴν τοῦ καλλοῦ φύσιν, 64e5-6).²⁶

One might of course be tempted to identify Agathon with the mere appearance of the good while identifying Socrates with its reality,²⁷ just as one might be tempted to identify poetry with mere imitation and philosophy with an unmediated grasp of the truth.²⁸ There can be no doubt that Agathon's speech shows him to be an imitator par excellence, as it literally depicts love *in his own image*. Furthermore, this is the characteristic of Agathon that is emphasized in his portrayal by Aristophanes in the *Thesmophorizusae*. There, in the context of explaining why he is dressed as a woman, Agathon argues that the poet must himself be beautiful in order to compose beautiful plays, since "one necessarily composes things like one's nature [ὅμοια γὰρ ποιεῖν ἀνάγκη τῆ φύσει]" (167). This is a principle both explicitly articulated in Agathon's speech in the *Symposium* when he cites with approval the old saying that like is drawn to like (ὅμοιον ὁμοίῳ ἀεὶ πελάζει, 195b5) and put to work there, since both the beauty of the speech itself and the beauty it attributes to love are only reflections of Agathon's own beauty. But if we return to Aristophanes' play, Agathon there is made to express the view that imitation is not simply the result of being good or beautiful, but can itself be that by which we become good and beautiful. In claiming that the poet must become like his characters, Agathon explains that "mimēsis can provide us with the things we do not possess [ἃ δ'οὐ κεκτήμεθα, μίμησις ἤδη ταῦτα συνθηρεῖται], 155-156).²⁹ It is thus possible that in imitating the beauty and goodness of love Agathon seeks not only to reflect what he takes to be his own nature, but also further to become himself good and beautiful. Here it is worth noting that Socrates describes the young Agathon in the *Protagoras* as being not only beautiful in appearance, but as having a beautiful and good nature (καλὸν τε κάγαθον τὴν φύσιν, τὴν δ'οὖν ἰδέαν πάνυ καλός, 315d). Furthermore, it would be wrong to identify Agathon with the poetic tradition Plato otherwise criticizes. For one thing, as we have already noted, Agathon, unlike the other speakers, treats his poetic sources critically.³⁰ This should not surprise us since Agathon's distinction as a tragedian was to invent his own plots rather than imitate the traditional stories told by the poets.³¹ And Agathon's theatre, from what we know of it, could be judged to be especially philosophical in character.³²

²⁶ Commenting on the distinction between beauty and the good in Agathon's speech, Ficino concludes: "bonitatis florem quemdam esse pulchritudinem volumus" (V.1.40). But for Ficino there are two senses to this analogy: beauty is the flower of the good not only in the sense that it is the outward manifestation of inner goodness, but also in the sense that, as the flower carries the seed from which other flowers will grow, beauty leads us to the good: "ut flores arborum seminibus orti semina ipsi quoque producant, its spetiem hanc bonitatis florem, ut ex bono pululat, eic et ad bonum amantes producere" (V.1.40).

²⁷ Thus Allen, though showing the many ways in which Agathon's speech anticipates Socrates', concludes: "Both speeches are rhetorical. But Agathon's rhetoric deals with appearance, as Socrates' examination of it will show, and Diotima's with reality" (R. E. Allen, translation and commentary, *The Dialogues of Plato, Volume II: The Symposium* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991], p. 40). Likewise, Sedley, while emphasizing the Socratic content of Agathon's speech, in the end sees in Agathon nothing but "a pale ghost of the Platonic truth" and "mere 'images' of the philosophical understanding in which real virtue resides" (65). If Sedley acknowledges that of the speeches Agathon's comes closest to the Platonic position, this 'closest' is still in his view immeasurably far. There can be no doubt that what Agathon provides is in some sense an image, but to assume that such an image is to be disparaged and rejected by the philosopher is to assume that the philosopher is capable of an unmediated access to the truth. Diotima of course describes such an ideal, but to believe that Socrates or any other philosopher could fully attain it, as Sedley apparently does (see p. 65), is to ignore the context of Diotima's teaching and thus to misread the dialogue as a whole. For my own reading of the dialogue on this point, see "*Il bello nel Simposio: sogno o visione?*", *Méthesis XXV* (2012): 51-70.

²⁸ "Agathon as sophist is an image of Socrates the philosopher and his imitation of mind as wisdom finds its original in Socrates' knowledge of ignorance. Agathon, however, is a sophist who makes the unique claim that Eros is the core of his wisdom and its power. He is a peculiarly Socratic false image of Socrates whose sole expertise is erotics" (Berg, 89).

²⁹ Lèvēque sees here "une évolution dans la conception de l'artiste: il n'est plus le créateur d'une oeuvre qui exprime avec une nécessité intime sa nature profonde; il devient un acteur qui veut produire une impression et se prête, pour atteindre son but, à toutes les transformations de son être. A la place de la φύσις naît la τέχνη, à la place de l'inspiration qui contraint, la rhétorique préméditée" (125).

³⁰ See Belfiore, 136.

³¹ "Nevertheless even in tragedy there are some plays with but one or two known names in them, the rest being inventions; and there are some without a single known name, e. g. Agathon's *Antheus*, in which both incidents and names are of the poet's invention, and it is no less delightful on that account" (Aristotle, *Poetics* 6, 1451b19-24). Lèvēque argues that this was the play with which Agathon achieved the victory being celebrated in the *Symposium* (55). One piece of evidence he offers is the use of forms of the word for 'flower' (ἄνθος) at 196a8-b2, which can be plausibly taken as an allusion to the title of the tragedy (56; see also 111). Apart from its having an original plot, nothing is known about what this plot was; even the title *Flower* has been disputed (see Lèvēque, pp. 105-114). From the other titles that have been preserved, it is clear that Agathon most often was faithful to the old classical subjects. But he was also an innovator with regard to the musical dimension of tragedy and this in two respects: he reduced the choruses to mere intermezzi with no necessary connection to the plot and he introduced chromaticism, where "le chromatique permettait au poète d'exprimer toutes les nuances des sentiments et des passions" (151). As Lèvēque concludes, "C'est donc avant tout comme un novateur que se présente Agathon . . ." (153).

³² As Lèvēque notes, "nous retrouvons dans la tragédie d'Agathon cette même attitude réflexive, ce même besoin de connaître l'homme et le monde, cette même curiosité inlassable de l'esprit, ce même effort d'analyse s'appliquant à la

If we are tempted to think that Socrates has nothing to do with the imitation practiced by Agathon, we should first recall that Socrates goes to Agathon's party all dressed up because, he explains, Agathon is beautiful and he must go to him looking beautiful (οὕτω καλὸς γεγεννημένος, 174a5). But then just a few lines later he alters a proverb to describe himself and Aristodemus as good men going unbidden to the feast of the good (174b4-5). So it is Socrates himself who is here not distinguishing between beauty and goodness, is ascribing both to Agathon, and is understanding our relation to both as one of imitation. Furthermore, if we are inclined to criticize Agathon for describing love in his own image, asserting that he thereby misses the truth about love, we should recall that Socrates does the same thing in describing love as ugly, barefoot and poor! (Not to mention that fact that, like Agathon in the *Thesmophorizusae*, Socrates gives his speech in the guise of a woman!) Finally, Agathon's claim in Aristophanes' play could be made Socrates' own: we become what we imitate and therefore the solution to not possessing goodness and beauty is to imitate them.

It is here, however, that we can begin to perceive where the real difference between Socrates and Agathon lies. If Agathon tends to think that he is what he imitates, that he possesses what he loves, Socrates interprets all imitation as desire and all desire as lack. Agathon the poet is satisfied with images because he fails to see the great gulf that separates the image from the original. This is why Agathon's wisdom is manifest and bright (λαμπρά), while Socrates' is "ambiguous like a dream" (ἀμφισβητήσιμος ὡς ὄναρ, 175e3-4). Because he in contrast recognizes this gulf, Socrates can at least envisage, through the eyes of the priestess Diotima, a beauty that is no longer an image and the contact with which will give birth to goodness that is no longer an image (212a4-6). But if Socratic eros recognizes the deficiency of images and is directed beyond them, that need not make it any less enamored of images. On Socrates' account, it is only through beautiful images—and this includes *beautiful bodies*—that we can access, if at all, the good. That Socrates critiques Agathon and the beautiful images he represents, that he wishes to go beyond him, in no way shows that he does not remain attracted to him.

Agathon, we must note, is indeed attractive for more than his physical beauty. Not only does the serious content of his speech show him to possess at least an approximation of the wisdom Socrates himself seeks, but he also recognizes that he can at best offer a 'measure' of the truth according to the limits of his abilities. This is reflected in the perfect graciousness with which he meets what can only be described as extremely rude behavior on the part of Socrates and in his acceptance of his refutation with an open acknowledgement of his ignorance rather than with anger or evasion.³³ Agathon is indeed one of the very few good interlocutors in Plato's dialogues and we should not forget that he is in the current dialogue the only person Socrates chooses to engage in conversation. If in comparison to Alcibiades he lacks a sufficiently passionate nature and does not experience fully the pain of shame regarding his deficiencies, this makes him less of a lover but not less of a beloved.³⁴

This is made clear at the dialogue's end when Socrates expresses his desire that Agathon sit next to him so that he can praise him as Alcibiades praised Socrates: Socrates even claims that "I'm really desirous of praising him" (πάνυ ἐπιθυμῶ αὐτὸν ἐγκωμιάσαι, 223a2). While on the usual assessment of Agathon and his speech, Socrates' desire here must come as a surprise (though not for long, as commentators always have ready to hand the convenient device of dismissing surprising claims as being only 'ironic'), there is nothing surprising about it on the current reading. After having critiqued Agathon and his earlier self for not conceiving of love as a lover (204c1-3), Socrates is eager to praise Agathon as the embodiment of the good and beautiful qualities that belong to the *beloved*. Socrates indeed twice in the dialogue addresses Agathon as 'beloved' (201c9, 222d5). After Alcibiades' speech praising Socrates the lover as if he were the beloved and as if he possessed a wisdom he disavows, Socrates is eager to counter by assuming the role of lover again in praising someone who, having misunderstood what it means to be a lover, can still be an object of love.

The dramatic action is significant here. At first Alcibiades tries to come between Socrates and Agathon, but only to witness what he describes as Socrates' resourcefulness in getting Agathon to sit

totalité du réel. Son théâtre est un théâtre raisonneur, et même philosophique et, comme tel, rappelle de près celui d'Euripide" (116-117).

³³ Lèvēque does not neglect to emphasize the goodness of Agathon: his graciousness, hospitality, solicitude towards his many friends, but also his courage in publically defending the politician Antiphon at a very sensitive and dangerous time (for details, see 46-47).

³⁴ "On the other hand, the fact that Agathon responds so mildly, without expressing passion or conflict, suggests that he shares less than does Alcibiades in the 'philosophical madness and Bacchic frenzy' that, according to Alcibiades, characterizes a philosopher (218b3-4) who is a passionate lover of wisdom. Agathon is portrayed throughout not as a lover, but as a beloved" (184). Lèvēque in stressing the similarities between Agathon and Alcibiades (78-79), ignores the important differences in character.

next to him (223a8-9): a description that clearly echoes Diotima's description of love's resourcefulness as explained by its mother Poverty lying down with its father Resource (203b7-c1). But in the end it is the sudden arrival of drunken revelers that comes between Socrates and Agathon (223b2-6). Is it too much to hear the suggestion here that Alcibiades and the drunken revelers come between Socrates and *the good* he desires, or at least its beautiful image?³⁵ We can assume, of course, that Socrates' praise of Agathon, like Alcibiades' praise of Socrates, would have been mixed with critique, and this for the simple reason that it would have been a praise of *the good* and therefore implicitly a critique of the eponymous person who is only a deficient if beautiful appearance of the good. Yet Socrates knows perfectly well that the pursuit of the good cannot dispense with beautiful images, however deficient.

Even the disorder that puts an end to the speeches and prevents Socrates from praising Agathon cannot stand in the way of Socrates's passion for dialogue. And who is the last one to stay awake in discussion with Socrates but Agathon? Even if Socrates is trying to persuade both Agathon and Aristophanes that their respective arts should form one expertise, Aristophanes nods off well before Agathon, the latter not falling asleep until it was already daylight (223d8), leaving us to wonder if in the end it is not only Agathon who can follow Socrates' point and perhaps even be persuaded by it. There is indeed evidence of the historical Agathon bringing the forms of tragedy and comedy closer together in key respects and even, if one scholion is to be believed, writing comedies himself.³⁶ In this case Agathon would have much in common with that tragedian-turned-writer-of-tragicomic-dialogues named Plato. But at the very least the concluding conversation between Socrates and Agathon as all others have fallen asleep or passed out confirms the kinship between the two suggested by the nature and central importance of their rivalry in the dialogue.³⁷ While most commentators do not consider Agathon worthy even of speaking before Socrates, Dionysus crowns both. And Socrates, far from begrudging the poet his laurels, does not allow the destructive infatuation of Alcibiades or the indiscriminate noise of the multitude to keep him from giving Agathon what is surely the highest possible praise: engaging him in serious conversation. It is for this purpose, after all, that Socrates made himself beautiful.³⁸

³⁵ Belfiore finds this play already in Socrates' refutation of Agathon: ". . . when Socrates says that Eros is deficient in (or needs) good things (*tôn agathôn endeês*; 201c5), he is simultaneously refuting Agathon and paying him a compliment, by stating that Eros is in need of Agathon. This pun also helps explain why Socrates addresses Agathon as 'beloved'. In identifying him with the things Eros needs, Socrates casts Agathon in the role of beloved, a role that Agathon's speech already gave to his soft and delicate Eros (see 204c1-5)" (176).

³⁶ Even Rowe must grudgingly admit that "Agathon has shown at least some ability to follow an argument, and certainly more than Aristophanes (see 212c4-6n.) (But perhaps this is to press the text too hard?)" (215). Rowe sees a critique of Agathon in the final argument, but only by assuming that Agathon "was exclusively a tragic poet" (214). Strikingly, one scholiast of Aristophanes' *Frogs* describes Agathon as κομωδοποιός (84). Lévêque dismisses this as an error perhaps having its origin in Socrates' argument at the end of the *Symposium* that the tragic poet should also be able to write comedies (87). But why not instead take this as some evidence that Agathon was persuaded by Socrates to the extent of going on to write comedies? Lévêque himself sees an anticipation of the New Comedy in Agathon's innovation of an original plot (113) as well as his innovative reduction of the choruses to simple intermezzi (141).

³⁷ At the very least, there is between Socrates and Agathon, as Lévêque has concluded, "une solide amitié" (44). I hope the present paper has shown to be completely groundless Rowe's claim that "Certainly, by the end of the dialogue it will have become perfectly clear that S. has no high opinion of Agathon's qualities, either as intellectual or as poet" (p. 161).

³⁸ Indeed, in the context of the dialogue's final pages one can well imagine that Plato wrote the verses cited at the beginning of this paper in the persona of Socrates, as suggested by Edmonds: "As A. was born 20 years before Plato, this poem, like the next but one, seems to have been written, like the Dialogues, by Plato personating Socrates: cf. Gell. 19. 11. 1, Macr. Sat. 2. 2. 15, A.P. 5. 77, Cram. A.P. 4. 384. 1" (2.1.2., note 10, *Elegy and Iambus*. with an English Translation by. J. M. Edmonds. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press. London. William Heinemann Ltd. 1931.) Lévêque, not considering the possibility suggested by Edmonds, just dismisses the verse as a fabrication by someone who forgot the respective ages of Agathon and Plato (53).

La *mimesis* di sé nel discorso di Agatone: l'agone fra poesia e filosofia nel *Simposio*

Mario Regali

Da sempre il discorso di Agatone gode di diversa fortuna. Di norma, ad Agatone è stata riconosciuta solo la cura formale per una sequenza elegante di frasi levigate, che celano però un pensiero vacuo, se non del tutto fallace. Scopo di Platone sarebbe quindi la parodia, rivolta in polemica contro la poesia e contro l'*epideixis* sofisticata.

Con una rinnovata attenzione al testo dei dialoghi, nella critica recente non poche voci si sono levate a contrasto, in difesa del ritratto di Agatone offerto da Platone¹. Tali voci hanno mostrato come il discorso di Agatone su Eros sia degno della posizione che occupa nella struttura del *Simposio*: subito prima di Socrate, prima della *climax* che con Diotima conduce alla visione del bello in sé. Non pochi elementi del discorso di Agatone infatti anticipano i concetti espressi, pur su un piano più alto, da Diotima. E non a caso, nell'azione del dialogo, ad Agatone, fra i personaggi del *Simposio*, Socrate dedica l'attenzione maggiore. Socrate sceglie infatti Agatone quale suo interlocutore nell'*elenchos* che precede il racconto su Diotima, confessando poi che anch'egli, da giovane, prima dell'incontro con Diotima, pensava di Eros ciò che ora il giovane Agatone ha espresso nel suo discorso (199c-201e). Nella sezione finale del dialogo, Agatone diviene poi persino il possibile *eromenos* di Socrate (222c-223a).

Mio scopo oggi è osservare il ruolo del concetto di *mimesis* nel discorso di Agatone e più in generale nella seconda parte del dialogo. In particolare, nel discorso di Agatone sembra avere un ruolo centrale la *mimesis* di sé, intesa quale proiezione sul personaggio Eros di caratteristiche personali dell'autore Agatone. Un processo che Platone sembra sviluppare anche nel discorso di Socrate: con la *mimesis* di sé Socrate, pur dietro la maschera di Diotima, rappresenta Eros quale φιλόσοφος, come con la *mimesis* di sé Agatone rappresenta Eros quale ποιητής. Intorno alla *mimesis* di sé si articola uno snodo cruciale del *Simposio*: il progressivo mutare del tema al centro del dialogo, dalla lode di Eros alla lode di Socrate. Dopo l'unione tra Eros e φιλοσοφία proposta da Diotima, Alcibiade infatti varia in modo radicale il tema del *Simposio* sostituendo la lode di Eros φιλόσοφος con la lode di Socrate.

Nel discorso di Agatone, Eros è bello, giovane, delicato e poeta; nel discorso di Socrate, Eros non possiede bellezza, è scalzo ed è φιλόσοφος. In entrambi i casi, il profilo di Eros riflette il profilo di chi pronuncia il discorso. Nei rispettivi *logoi*, tramite la lode di Eros Agatone e Socrate promuovono quindi il proprio sapere: il sapere del poeta e il sapere del filosofo. Ciò non sorprende: la critica ha spesso messo in luce come nei *logoi* del *Simposio*, a margine dell'encomio di Eros, ognuno dei simposiasti tenda all'elogio della propria *techne*². Come ha mostrato Tilman Krischer, tra i personaggi del *Simposio* è infatti in palio la qualifica di *sophos*, secondo la tradizione letteraria del banchetto dei Sette Saggi e la *Gesetz der Reihe*³.

Ma quale sapere promuove Agatone nel suo discorso? Anche sulla base del commento di Socrate (198c1-5), la critica ha individuato il sapere di Agatone nella *techne* epidittica di Gorgia. Tuttavia nell'impegno teorico che Platone svilupperà tra la *Repubblica* e le *Leggi* è la *mimesis* il tratto distintivo dei poeti. Nel ritratto che Platone offre di un poeta nel momento della sua prima vittoria, l'occasione del *Simposio*, il lettore della *Repubblica* e delle *Leggi* si attenderebbe quindi che ad emergere con forza dal personaggio di Agatone fosse la *mimesis*. Certo, nella plausibile cronologia dei dialoghi, il *Simposio* con ogni probabilità precede la *Repubblica*, ma la distanza che la critica immagina non è ampia. Se la *mimesis* ha un ruolo decisivo nell'indagine sulla poesia della *Repubblica*, nel *Simposio* è dunque legittimo attendersi la presenza di essa nel profilo di un poeta. Alla luce di ciò, è plausibile osservare sotto una diversa luce l'influenza di Gorgia che la critica, sulla scia di Socrate, tende a scorgere nel discorso di Agatone. Proprio a Gorgia, infatti, è da attribuire uno dei contributi decisivi nella riflessione teorica dei Greci sul concetto di *mimesis* letteraria, in particolare nella descrizione degli effetti mimetici del λόγος sulla ψυχή nell'*Encomio di Elena* (82 B 11, 9 D.-K.). In questa direzione è utile tenere presente che, nelle *Tesmoforiazuse* di Aristofane,

¹ Cfr., fra gli altri, D. SEDLEY, *The Speech of Agathon in Plato's Symposium*, in S. HAFFMANN, B. REIS (edd.), *The Virtuous Life in Greek Ethics*, Cambridge 2006, 47-69, e S. STERN-GILLET, *Poets and Other Makers: Agathon's Speech in Context*, in A. HAVLÍČEK, M. CAJTHAML (edd.), *Plato's Symposium*, Prague 2007, 86-107, J. MÜLLER, *Der Wettstreit über die Weisheit zwischen Poesie und Philosophie: Agathons Rede und ihre Prüfung durch Sokrates (193-201c)*, in C. HORN (ed.), *Platon. Symposium*, Berlin 2012, 105-123..

² Cfr. F. SHEFFIELD, *Plato's Symposium. The Ethics of Eros*, Oxford 2006, 15-16.

³ T. KRISCHER, *Diotima und Alkibiades. Zur Struktur des platonischen Symposium*, «Grazer Beiträge» (1984), 51-65.

rappresentate nel 411, dove prima del *Simposio* Agatone diviene personaggio sulla scena della commedia, il poeta è già un μιμητής, il suo sapere ruota già attorno alla *mimesis*. Di fronte ad Euripide, che chiede aiuto in vista della condanna a morte che l'assemblea delle Tesmoforie pronuncerà contro di lui, Agatone appare sulla scena in abiti femminili perché intento a comporre una tragedia di argomento femminile (95-265). Spiega poi il suo abbigliamento esponendo un principio di poetica: il poeta deve uniformare i propri τρόποι ai δράματα che compone (146-152). Agatone, perché uomo, per produrre un dramma "femminile" deve quindi indossare abiti femminili. Agatone lega in modo saldo la produzione letteraria alla φύσις dell'autore: ciò che è estraneo alla φύσις può invece essere rappresentato tramite la *mimesis* (154-156). Il termine μίμησις compare quindi quando Aristofane descrive il bisogno dell'autore di rappresentare l'altro da sé, come nel caso di Agatone intento alla composizione di drammi femminili, di per sé estranei alla sua φύσις maschile. Ma nella scena delle *Tesmoforiazuse* è senza dubbio mimetico anche il rapporto fra il poeta e la produzione che non è estranea alla sua φύσις. La produzione letteraria riflette sempre la natura del suo autore: ὅμοια γὰρ ποιεῖν ἀνάγκη τῇ φύσει (159-167).

Come noto, il nucleo di pensiero attorno al quale Aristofane costruisce la scena comica su Agatone nelle *Tesmoforiazuse* è poi sviluppato da Platone nella *Repubblica*. Tra il III e il X libro traspare il giudizio di Platone: da un lato il rifiuto per la *mimesis* dell'altro da sé, che distrae il φύλαξ dall'unico compito specifico che gli spetta, dall'altro l'assenso per la *mimesis* di sé da parte dell'uomo virtuoso, dell'ἐπιεικῆς ἀνὴρ. Nel VI libro della *Repubblica*, quando soggetto della *mimesis* è il filosofo, il consenso di Platone diviene non a caso esplicito: svela infatti il profilo dell'autore della *Repubblica* la metafora del "buon pittore" che da un lato, quale φιλόσοφος, rende simile se stesso alle "realità ordinate e sempre invariate nella loro identità", dall'altro costruisce un modello di πόλις che riproduce "ciò che per natura è giusto, bello, moderato" (500c-501b). Dietro la maschera del "buon pittore", parte della critica scorge la poetica di Platone autore della *Repubblica*: il dialogo imita la ricerca del filosofo sulla δικαιοσύνη. La selezione che Platone attua nei confronti della tradizione rappresentata da Aristofane favorisce dunque la *mimesis* del sé, quando il sé cela il profilo del filosofo.

E il passaggio dalla tradizione poetica, rappresentata in commedia da Aristofane, alla nuova *mimesis* del filosofo che imita se stesso è messo in scena già nella sezione finale del *Simposio*. Come vedremo, Agatone rappresenta il punto più alto possibile raggiunto dalla tradizione poetica: una tradizione corretta e riveduta, che pone al centro l'imitazione del sé e non la indiscriminata *mimesis* di ogni oggetto possibile. Ma la *mimesis* di Agatone non è ancora diretta verso la ricerca del filosofo e il carattere stabile delle idee al quale il φιλόσοφος aspira. Questo passo ulteriore è compiuto da Socrate che, con la maschera di Diotima, rappresenta Eros quale φιλόσοφος.

Osserviamo ora, dunque, come Agatone tenda nel λόγος a rappresentare se stesso quale poeta ed Eros quale riflesso del sé. Pur senza menzionare il concetto di *mimesis*, Agatone disegna un ritratto di Eros che appare modellato sull'immagine di se stesso, l'immagine di Agatone offerta dalla tradizione che Platone recepisce nel *Simposio*. Eros è καλός, νέος, ἀπαλός, (195a-b; 195d-e; 196a-b), come Agatone è καλός, νεανίσκος, ἀπαλός (174a, 198a; Aristoph. *Thesm.* 192). Il rispecchiamento di Agatone nell'immagine di Eros giunge al culmine con la qualifica di poeta che ad Eros è attribuita nella sezione finale del discorso: Eros e gli uomini che ad Eros inneggiano condividono il medesimo canto (196e-197a). Vediamo nel dettaglio. La prima definizione che Agatone offre di Eros è nel segno della massima lode: Eros è il più felice tra gli dei, è κάλλιστος e ἄριστος (195a5-8). Tra le qualità che compongono la bellezza di Eros, Agatone illustra per prima la giovinezza. Eros è il più giovane tra gli dei: Eros sempre rifugge infatti la vecchiaia e sempre accompagna i giovani, a lui simili (195a8-b7). Nella fase più antica della storia del mondo, infatti, le lotte e le violenze tra gli dei delle quali raccontano Esiodo e Parmenide scaturirono da *Ananke*, quando Eros, il più giovane tra gli dei, ancora non era in vita; da Eros deriva invece la φιλία e la pace che ora dominano il mondo degli dei. La correzione etica che Agatone opera sui racconti di Esiodo e Parmenide recepiti da Fedro richiama da vicino i τύποι per la rappresentazione degli dei che Socrate stabilisce nella *Kallipolis* della *Repubblica* tra il II e il III libro: tra gli dei non esistono contese e violenza.

Sin da questo primo tratto di Eros emerge il rapporto mimetico con Agatone: come Eros è bello perché giovane, così la caratterizzazione di Agatone, sia nel *Simposio* sia nelle *Tesmoforiazuse*, è focalizzata sulla bellezza e sulla gioventù del poeta. Nella cornice, quando Aristodemo incontra Socrate che contro le sue abitudini si è fatto bello, Socrate spiega che si è reso bello "per andare da un bello", il suo imminente ospite Agatone: ταῦτα δὴ ἐκαλωπισάμην, ἵνα καλὸς παρὰ καλὸν ἦω (174a2-8). Nel primo scambio fra Agatone e Socrate, in merito alla trasmissione della σοφία, Socrate descrive la σοφία di Agatone, che a differenza della sua, debole e vaga come un sogno, splende chiara a tutti i Greci dopo la vittoria del giorno precedente, una σοφία che per la giovane età di Agatone, definito

véος da Socrate, promette molto per il futuro (175e3-7). Al termine del discorso di Agatone, Aristodemo ricorda il clamore destato tra i simposiasti, il θόρυβος che si solleva per l'appropriatezza del λόγος del giovane, del νεανίσκος come qui Aristodemo definisce Agatone (198a1-3). Anche nelle *Tesmofoiazuse*, la caratterizzazione di Agatone ruota attorno alla giovane età: subito dopo il canto di Agatone, come nel *Simposio* subito dopo il λόγος, il Parente apostrofa Agatone con ὦ νεανίσκε (134). Non solo: la gioventù di Agatone è un tratto che Platone sottolinea con intenzioni diverse dalla fedeltà storica. È importante notare che Agatone infatti è già trentenne nel 416, nel momento della sua prima vittoria nell'agone tragico, la data fittizia del *Simposio*. L'insistenza sulla gioventù del poeta da parte di Platone deriva quindi dalla focalizzazione sui tratti tipici del personaggio Agatone che Aristofane aveva posto sulla scena delle *Tesmofoiazuse*.

Tutto ciò che sappiamo dal *Simposio* e dalle *Tesmofoiazuse* sul ritratto di Agatone ruota dunque attorno alla gioventù e alla bellezza del poeta. I soli tratti dell'aspetto di Agatone ai quali sia Platone sia Aristofane accennano sono la sua giovane età e la bellezza del corpo o dei vestiti che indossa. E non a caso, nel pieno rispetto della teoria esposta da Agatone nelle *Tesmofoiazuse*, nel *Simposio* Agatone compone un encomio per Eros attribuendo al dio tratti fisici identici ai propri.

Nella stessa direzione conduce il tratto della delicatezza, la ἀπαλότης. Quale prova della ἀπαλότης di Eros Agatone propone la delicatezza di ciò con cui Eros entra in contatto privilegiato: la ψυχή e l'ἦθος (195e1-9). Come per la gioventù, anche per la delicatezza sussiste una corrispondenza fra Eros e il ritratto di Agatone. Ancora nella scena di Agatone nelle *Tesmofoiazuse*, infatti, Euripide descrive l'aspetto femminile di Agatone, l'aspetto che lo rende adatto a confondersi fra le donne delle Tesmoforie: una sequenza di attributi nella quale, in chiusura, compare la ἀπαλότης (192).

Sin qui le caratteristiche fisiche di Eros, che riflettono le caratteristiche fisiche di Agatone. Ma il vertice della *mimesis* di sé nel ritrarre Eros è raggiunto da Agatone nella seconda parte del λόγος, quando dal κάλλος il poeta passa a descrivere l'ἀρετή del dio. Nella sequenza canonica δικαιοσύνη, σωφροσύνη, ἀνδρεία e σοφία, la σοφία di Eros identifica in modo palese l'oggetto della lode, Eros, con l'autore della lode, Agatone: la σοφία di Eros è infatti la σοφία di un poeta (196d4-e6). Anche per onorare la propria τέχνη, come in precedenza Erissimaco, Agatone afferma che Eros è un ποιητής così sapiente da riuscire a rendere chiunque poeta: chi è toccato da Eros diviene infatti poeta anche se estraneo alle Muse. La descrizione di Eros quale poeta raggiunge poi il suo culmine nella sezione conclusiva, nella quale, non a caso, anche lo stile di Agatone vira dalla prosa di stampo gorgiano verso la dizione poetica (197c3-35). L'immagine conclusiva di Eros poeta "accompagnato da ogni uomo" nel canto che affascina è preparata in vario modo nella serrata sequenza asidentica che chiude l'encomio. Eros appare quale guida, ἡγεμών, degli incontri, σύνοδοι, dove di norma ha luogo la rappresentazione poetica: le feste, i cori, i sacrifici (197d2-3). Ancora quale guida, κυβερνήτης, Eros è descritto in relazione alla fatica, alla paura, al desiderio, alla parola, il λόγος (197d8-e1). Una sequenza nella quale la critica scorge la situazione di Agatone nel momento presente, l'encomio che è chiamato a esporre, e i momenti legati alla sua attività di poeta: la fatica della composizione, la paura dell'insuccesso, il desiderio di gloria, il λόγος⁴. Il quadro conclusivo del ritratto di Eros offerto da Agatone coincide poi con il vertice dell'identificazione fra Eros e il poeta. Eros è ora l'ἡγεμών κάλλιστος e ἄριστος, che ogni uomo deve seguire mentre inneggia secondo bellezza e partecipa all'ode che il dio canta affascinando la mente di tutti gli dei e degli uomini. Ogni uomo deve quindi seguire Eros con un inno: non a caso, Platone sceglie qui un composto di ὕμνεϊν che indica in senso tecnico il canto poetico per il dio, ossia il canto di lode che Agatone sta tessendo per il dio Eros. Agatone esorta quindi gli uomini a divenire poeti, a lodare Eros seguendo il suo esempio: Agatone diviene così maestro di poesia, proprio come Eros. La partecipazione di Agatone all'attività poetica di Eros è ora esplicita, come esplicito è l'effetto del canto di Eros che chiude il λόγος: il piacere per gli dei e per gli uomini. Anche in questo caso la scelta lessicale di Platone è significativa: il θέλγειν, come il τέρπειν, è la funzione principale che nella poetica arcaica è attribuita alla poesia. Nonostante il carattere di novità che contraddistingue Agatone nel *Simposio*, poeta giovane, di successo recente, che corregge i racconti antichi di Esiodo e Parmenide, il cardine della sua poetica resta immutato rispetto alla tradizione: scopo principale della poesia è il piacere che affascina.

La *mimesis* quale rappresentazione di sé percorre dunque, come abbiamo visto, l'encomio per Eros di Agatone nella sua interezza. Non è estraneo al concetto di *mimesis* anche il discorso che Socrate apprende da Diotima. Come la critica non ha mancato di notare, i contatti tra il discorso di Diotima e il discorso di Agatone sono numerosi: in particolare è approvato da Socrate il principio di metodo espresso da Agatone in apertura del suo discorso. Prima bisogna descrivere "quale sia Eros, poi le sue opere" (199c3-6; 201d8-e2). Nel rispetto di tale principio, tramite l'*elenchos* di Agatone,

⁴ C.J. ROWE, *Plato. Symposium*, Oxford 1998, 166.

Socrate giunge a mostrare “quale sia Eros” invertendo di segno il ritratto offerto in precedenza da Agatone: Eros non è né καλός né ἀγαθός, bensì è privo sia di καλά sia di ἀγαθά (201b1-c9). L'insegnamento seguente di Diotima conduce poi a identificare nella sfera del μεταξύ l'ambito che appartiene ad Eros (201e8-b5). Ma il profilo reale di Eros è offerto da Diotima con il racconto sulla nascita da Poros e Penia: un ritratto che sconvolge l'immagine di Eros offerta da Agatone (203b1-204a7). Eros è sempre povero e soprattutto è molto lontano dall'essere delicato e bello, ἀπαλός τε καὶ καλός. Alla delicatezza di Agatone, si oppone l'Eros duro e squallido di Diotima, l'Eros σκληρὸς καὶ αὐχμηρός (203c6-d3). Ora, negando la delicatezza e la bellezza di Eros, Diotima inverte di segno il ritratto di Eros che Agatone aveva delineato tramite la *mimesis* di sé. Quindi un profilo nuovo per Eros, un profilo che presenta i tratti che appartengono a Socrate. Oltre all'essere scalzo, il tratto peculiare di Socrate segnalato già nella cornice con gli inusuali sandali che stupiscono Aristodemo, a Socrate, come all'Eros nuovo di Diotima, non appartiene certo la bellezza. L'immagine del Sileno al quale Alcibiade paragonerà Socrate ne offre conferma (215a-e). Come nel discorso di Agatone, poi, la *mimesis* del sé coinvolge l'attività di Eros: come Socrate, Eros è “filosofo attraverso l'intera vita”, φιλοσοφῶν διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου (203d7). La posizione intermedia tra mortalità e immortalità conduce Eros al passaggio continuo, nello stesso giorno, dalla morte alla rinascita, alla continua alternanza tra sapere e ignoranza (203d8-e5). Non a caso, tale tratto del carattere di Eros torna più oltre nel discorso di Diotima, quando Eros conduce i mortali a partecipare dell'immortalità tramite il continuo rinnovarsi della ἐπιστήμη per mezzo di una μελέτη che richiama senza dubbio la ricerca continua di Socrate, con il suo διαλέγεσθαι (207c-208b). Solo Eros, poi, tra gli dei pratica la filosofia e desidera divenire σοφός, perché gli altri dei già possiedono il sapere. Il danno maggiore provocato dalla ἀμαθία è per Diotima l'illusione di essere valenti e saggi quando in realtà non si è tali: emerge qui un ritratto di Eros molto vicino al profilo di Socrate nell'*Apologia*, il più sapiente tra gli uomini, secondo l'oracolo, perché unico a sapere di non sapere (21a-23c). Diotima conclude ora il ritratto di Eros affermando in modo definitivo la sua natura filosofica: è necessario che Eros sia φιλόσοφος poiché il φιλόσοφος è in una condizione intermedia tra il sapiente e l'ignorante, una condizione che Eros deve alla nascita da Poros e da Penia, la condizione alla quale di frequente nei dialoghi, dalla *Apologia* al *Fedro*, Socrate aspira (204a1-c1). E ancora, nei Grandi Misteri, l'*ergon* di Eros corrisponde di nuovo alla φιλοσοφία: dopo gli ἐπιτηδεύματα, il νέος deve essere guidato verso la bellezza delle ἐπιστήμαι, dove il καλόν non risplende solo nei particolari ma è libero, senza vincoli, nel “grande mare del bello”. Di fronte al mare del bello, nella sua contemplazione, il giovane produrrà λόγοι “belli e magnifici” e genererà pensieri nella φιλοσοφία priva di φθόνος (210c6-e1). Il praticare senza φθόνος la ricerca del sapere, qui attribuito al νέος che segue Eros, è un tratto che nei dialoghi è sempre associato al personaggio di Socrate o all'ideale di φιλόσοφος che Socrate propugna, dal *Protagora* (320c1-2) alla *Repubblica* (VI. 499d10-501b8)⁵. Eros diviene quindi nel ritratto di Diotima un maestro di φιλοσοφία; Eros tende alla conoscenza del καλόν e trascina chi partecipa di esso, così come Eros, per Agatone, tende alla poesia e trascina al canto chi di lui partecipa. Come per Agatone, dunque anche per il discorso di Socrate la *mimesis* di sé ha un ruolo fondamentale.

Indicare la presenza della *mimesis* di sé nel discorso di Agatone e poi nel discorso di Socrate, con il passaggio cruciale dalla *mimesis* del poeta alla *mimesis* del filosofo, permette di comprendere l'intenzione preminente di Platone nella elaborazione drammaturgica del *Simposio*: costruire una *climax* che tenda alla lode per Socrate. Agatone, prossimo al vertice della scala, è emblema della produzione poetica nella sua espressione più alta: corregge i racconti sugli dei di Esiodo e di Parmenide, offre una *mimesis* non indiscriminata, rivolta al καλόν e all'ἀγαθόν, priva solo del sapere fondato sulla dialettica. Al culmine della *climax* Socrate mostra la propria superiorità nel segno della *aletheia*; il vero volto di Eros cela il volto del φιλόσοφος, in armonia, come abbiamo osservato, con la *mimesis* del sé da parte dell' ἐπιεικῆς ἀνὴρ della *Repubblica*. Il discorso di Alcibiade, che irrompe nella casa di Agatone sancisce poi il definitivo mutamento del tema dalla lode di Eros, il tema convenzionale scelto da Fedro, alla lode di Socrate, all'encomio del filosofo che nell'agone simposiale conquista la corona che spetta a chi possiede in misura maggiore la σοφία.

E alla vittoria di Socrate corrisponde la vittoria dei suoi *logoi*, dell'intreccio fra domande e risposte che sviluppa l'*elenchos*: la corona che Alcibiade dona a Socrate sancisce la vittoria del dialogo, del *logos sokraticos* sulla tragedia, anche sulla tragedia nuova e fortunata di Agatone, autore di un discorso che pur fondato sul modello corretto della *mimesis* del sé, non è rivolto alla *mimesis* del filosofo. La celebre scena finale del *Simposio*, pur nel fiavole ricordo di Aristodemo assonnato, racconta poi di Socrate che confuta sia Agatone sia Aristofane, segnando così il *telos* del cammino di

⁵ Cfr. F.G. HERRMANN, *φθόνος in the world of Plato's Timaeus*, in D. KONSTAN, K. REUTER (edd.), *Envy, Spite and Jealousy. The Rivalrous Emotions in Ancient Greece*, Edinburgh 2003, 53-83.

Mario Regali

Platone: il dialogo, unione di *spoudaion* e *geloion*, supera la tradizione letteraria nel segno della *mimesis* di Socrate, φιλόσοφος e maestro di φιλοσοφία.

Die Poetik des Philosophen: Sokrates und die Rede des Agathon

Irmgard Männlein-Robert

I. Einleitung

Die Rede des Tragödiendichters Agathon ist die fünfte der Eros-Reden, die im Rahmen des Symposions gehalten wird, und hat in methodischer, inhaltlicher und struktureller Hinsicht eine Sonderstellung inne.¹ Zum einen ist Agathons erster Sieg im tragischen Agon der Lenäen (Februar 416 v. Chr.) Anlass der Feier, zu der er einlädt. Die Rede des Gastgebers und gefeierten Tragödiensiegers erhält in der Runde also besondere Aufmerksamkeit, zudem wird sie spät, als letzte vor dem Beitrag des Sokrates, gehalten. Zum anderen werden Agathon und Sokrates, deren Beiträge die Sequenz der Eros-Reden abschließen, von Eryximachos als Eros-Experten, als Meister in Liebesangelegenheiten beschrieben (Smp. 193e). Damit wird beiden, die auch zusammen auf der letzten Kline in der Symposionsrunde liegen, eine besondere erotische Affinität attestiert, beide werden somit als besonders kompetentes Team herausgestellt, die Erwartung der anderen Symposiasten (und der Rezipienten), zunächst auf die Rede des gefeierten Agathon, steigt. Dessen Eros-Rede ist durch zwei kleine dialogische Gespräche gerahmt, in die Sokrates ihn verwickelt. Es handelt sich dabei nicht, wie bei den vorherigen kurzen Gesprächen in der Runde (jeweils nach den Reden des Pausanias, des Eryximachos und des Aristophanes), um Zwischengespräche, die sich aus dem situativen Wechsel des vorherigen zum folgenden Redner ergeben (vgl. den berühmten Schluckauf des Aristophanes 185c-e). Vielmehr handelt es sich bei den beiden, die Agathon-Rede rahmenden Partien um dialogische Intermezzi, an denen sich nun erstmals Sokrates – relativ plötzlich und dominant – beteiligt, der im Anschluss an Agathon sein Eros-Lob vortragen soll. Überdies markiert vor allem das zweite, an die Agathon-Rede anschließende von Sokrates dominierte Intermezzo einen Moduswechsel, und zwar inhaltlich wie methodisch. Denn die Agathon-Rede ist die einzige in der Runde, die in Aspekten ihrer Form und ihres Inhalts resp. Argumentationsganges von Sokrates ins Visier genommen und näher diskutiert wird. Der Modus eben dieser kritischen Diskussion ist ein sokratischer Elenchos, in dem Sokrates den gerade noch bejubelten Dichter Agathon zur Rücknahme seiner Argumente zwingt. Bereits vor der Eros-Rede Agathons hatte sich ein kleiner Dialog zwischen diesem und Sokrates entsponnen, der von Phaidros unterbrochen wurde. Im Anschluss an Agathons Rede erwirkt Sokrates von Eryximachos nun jedoch die Erlaubnis, Agathon nur ein einige kleine Fragen stellen zu dürfen, da es eine Irritation auszuräumen gelte, die sich nach dessen Eros-Rede ergeben habe. Daraus folgt dann der kleine elenktische Dialog, in dem Sokrates den Dichter Agathon zum Selbstwiderspruch nötigt. Meine These ist nun, dass es sich bei den beiden Intermezzi, welche die Agathon-Rede rahmen, um wichtige Textpassagen des Platonischen *Symposions* handelt, in denen methodische und inhaltliche Richtlinien einer philosophischen Poetik angedeutet werden, wie sie später Sokrates für Diotima referieren wird. Diese Richtlinien werden bereits im Vorfeld der Agathon-Rede in dem kleinen Gespräch zwischen Sokrates und Agathon motiviert (Intermezzo I), unmittelbar nach Agathons Rede im Elenchos (anhand der Wiederlegung der nur formal überzeugenden Darstellung des Dichters) gleichsam ex negativo skizziert (Intermezzo II) und finden im anschließenden Diotima-Referat des Sokrates konkrete Anwendung und positive Bestätigung.

II. Präludium

Um die Rahmung der Agathon-Rede und insbesondere den dialogischen Elenchos des Sokrates besser verstehen und einordnen zu können, müssen wir einen Blick auch auf eine frühere Szene werfen, die ihn vorab motiviert. Die von Eryximachos formulierte Affinität des Sokrates und des Agathon zu Eros zeigt sich gleich am Anfang des Symposions in der kleinen Szene, in der Sokrates verspätet in der Symposionsrunde eintrifft (Smp. 175c-d): Als er nach einiger Zeit des Nachdenkens im Vorhof (ebd. 175a8: ἐν τῷ τῶν γειτόνων προθύρῳ) in der Mitte des Mahles hereinkommt, fordert Agathon, der allein auf der letzten Kline Platz genommen hat, ihn auf, sich zum ihm zu legen – was Sokrates auch tut. Bereits hier in der Rahmenerzählung des *Symposion* vor dem Referat der gehaltenen Eros-Reden findet sich ein Vorverweis auf das später tatsächlich folgende (Streit-) Gespräch zwischen Sokrates

¹ Einen Überblick über die Forschungspositionen dazu bietet Müller, J., Der Wettstreit über die Weisheit zwischen Poesie und Philosophie: Agathons Rede und ihre Prüfung durch Sokrates (193e-201c), in: Platon, *Symposion* (Hg. v. C. Horn), Berlin 2012, 105-123, hier: 105-107.

und Agathon (ebd. 175e7-9). Der Umstand, dass Sokrates direkt neben Agathon auf dessen Kline Platz nimmt, ist zum einen der Situation seines Zuspätkommens geschuldet, hat aber zum anderen auch eine symbolhafte Signalwirkung darüber hinaus und bringt über die räumliche Affinität eine gewisse Nähe dieser beiden so unterschiedlichen Symposiasten zum Ausdruck. Beide bieten im Austausch ihrer Höflichkeiten eine jeweils indirekte Schilderung von Charakteristika der Sophia des anderen: Sokrates beschreibt die Sophia des Agathon als jugendliche, wirkmächtige, eindruckliche, vom großem Publikum gefeierte (πολλὴ καὶ καλὴ σοφία, vgl. ebd. 175e1f.) – Agathon die des Sokrates als eine, die in der Einsamkeit, im einsamen Nachdenken und Durchdenken gründet.² In der ironischen Umkehr (ebd. 175d3-7) von Agathons Witz, er wolle neben Sokrates liegen, da er dann durch Körperkontakt von dessen Weisheit profitieren könne (ebd. 175c8-d1: ἵνα καὶ τοῦ σοφοῦ ἀπτόμενός σου ἀπολαύσω, ὃ σοι προσέστη ἐν τοῖς προθύροις), deutet Sokrates an, dass seine Sophia keine stabile sei (ebd. 175e3f.: ἀμφιβητήσιμος ὥσπερ ὄναρ οὔσα), dass Weisheit und Wissen nicht einfach übertragbar sei. Auch wenn der ganze Ton dieser kleinen Szene heiter und humorig und situativ bedingt zu sein scheint, so lassen sich doch Signale für das spätere dialogische Intermezzo zwischen Sokrates und Agathon identifizieren. Agathon verweist mit urbanem Humor auf die später anstehende Entscheidung darüber, wer nun von wessen Sophia profitiere (ebd. 175e8f.).³

III. Agathon und Sokrates

1. Vor der Rede des Agathon: Intermezzo I

Im Anschluss an die Rede des Aristophanes macht Eryximachos deutlich, dass jetzt nur noch Agathon und Sokrates in der Reihe der Eros-Redner fehlen (Smp. 193e1f.). Erneut werden beide als ‚Team‘ deutlich. Eryximachos lenkt somit den Blick der Runde (und der Rezipienten) auf die beiden auf der letzten Kline Platzierten und verstärkt den visuellen Eindruck eines ‚Teams‘ noch dadurch, dass er diese beiden als besonders kompetent in Eros-Angelegenheiten bezeichnet (ebd. 193e5: δεινοῖς οὔσι περὶ τὰ ἐρωτικά), obgleich nun doch schon so vieles darüber gesagt worden sei. Daraufhin entspinnt sich ein kleines dialogisches Intermezzo (ebd. 193e3-194c10) zwischen Sokrates und Agathon, das von Phaidros unterbrochen wird. Worum geht es aber in diesem Intermezzo? Sokrates lenkt die Aufmerksamkeit und Spannung auf die als nächste anstehende Rede des Agathon, die ihn selbst als letzten Redner in Bedrängnis bringen wird. Agathon meint, Sokrates wolle ihn aus der Fassung bringen. Der betont, Agathon habe vor riesigem Publikum im Theater Mut und Selbstvertrauen bewiesen (epideíxasthai), daher könne ihm das kleine Publikum hier nichts anhaben. Doch Agathon verweist auf den Unterschied zwischen einem großen unverständigen Publikum und einem kleinen verständigen (émphrones – áphrones). Daraufhin mutmaßt Sokrates, dass Agathon verständigen Männern, nicht den Vielen, Aufmerksamkeit entgegenbringen würde und sich vor diesen für etwas Hässliches schämen würde. Sokrates rechnet sich hier (in vorsichtiger Formulierung!) nicht zu den Verständigen, sondern zur Menge. Als er Agathon fragt, ob dieser sich für etwas Unschönes auch vor der Menge schämen würde, er also die Fragestellung auf einen Fall anwendet, unterbricht ihn Phaidros, der die ausschließliche Fixierung des Sokrates auf diese Art von dialogischem Gespräch (194d3f.), noch dazu mit einem schönen jungen Mann, explizit macht, ein solches hier aber verhindert und auf andere künftige Gelegenheiten verweist. Von da an steht aber der Gegensatz zwischen den (wenigen) Verständigen resp. Weisen und den Vielen im Raum. Erneut kommt hier also, situativ motiviert, das Duo Sokrates-Agathon in den Blick des referierenden Erzählers. Im Komplimenten-Geplänkel darüber, wer nun den schwierigeren Part habe, entspinnt sich unmittelbar vor Agathons Rede ein kleiner Dialog zwischen beiden, der maßgeblich von Sokrates‘ stimuliert und dominiert wird. Agathon gesteht Sokrates hier zu, dass für ihn die Weisen, nicht die Vielen, das ausschlaggebende Publikum darstellen. Indem Sokrates sich hier listig in einer nur scheinbar logischen Schlussfolgerung zur Gruppe der Vielen rechnet, da er ja gestern in der Menschenmenge Agathons Sieg im Theater miterlebt habe, signalisiert er dem jungen Dichter, dass er vor ihm, Sokrates, keine Angst haben müsse, was die Beurteilung seiner Eros-Rede angehe. Damit aber wiegt er den schönen Agathon, wie sich nach dessen Rede im Elenchos zeigen wird, in falscher Sicherheit.

² Dazu Szlezák, T.A., Platon und die Schriftlichkeit der Philosophie, Berlin/New York 1985, hier: 254f., dagegen siehe Rehn, R., Der entzauberte Platon. Symposium, in: Kobusch, T./Mojsisich, B. (Hg.), Platon. Seine Dialoge in der Sicht neuer Forschungen, Darmstadt 1996, 81-95, hier: 90f.

³ Dazu und zum Symbolwert des hier als Richter genannten Dionysos siehe Robinson, S.R., The Contest of Wisdom between Socrates and Agathon in Plato's Symposium, in: Ancient Philosophy 24, 2004, 81-100.

2. Agathons Rede

Es folgt die Rede des Agathon (ebd. 194e4-197e8), die nach allen formalen Regeln der sophistischen Rhetorik komponiert ist. Agathon betont dabei nachdrücklich einen Ansatz, den die bisherigen Redner nicht verfolgt hatten: Er will sich zunächst auf die Qualität resp. die Charakteristik des Eros konzentrieren, daraus seine Urheberschaft für entsprechende Dinge ableiten und dann erst seine Gaben und Wirkungen auf die Menschen loben (ebd. 194e7: ὅποῖος; 195a2: οἷος οἶων ἄτιος ὄν, 195a4: οἷός ἐστιν). Es ist diese Systematik, die von allen vorherigen Rednern methodisch abweicht, die aber in Fragestellung und Untersuchungsmethodik mit der des Sokrates in den aporetischen Dialogen Platons übereinstimmt.⁴ Es sind aber auch weitere inhaltliche Argumente seiner Rede, etwa die von ihm fokussierten Aspekte der Schönheit und der Gerechtigkeit, Besonnenheit, Tapferkeit und Weisheit, kurz: die Tugenden des Eros (ebd. 196b-d), die zuvor nicht in dieser Weise dargestellt worden waren, vielmehr dem platonischen Sokrates in den aporetischen Dialogen als Gegenstand dialektischer Untersuchung dienen. Vor allem aber Agathons Bemerkungen, dass Eros mit Blick auf die gesamte Musenkunst ein guter Dichter resp. ein wirksames Stimulans für Dichtung (poiesis), er selbst ein von Eros angetriebener Dichter (poietes) sei (ebd. 196ef.),⁵ und dass alles Gute für Menschen und Götter aus dem Eros nach Schönem resultiere (ebd. 197b7-9), heben seine Rede von allen früheren Eros-Reden in der Runde ab und machen sie – ganz offensichtlich – für den platonischen Sokrates interessant und einer prüfenden Diskussion würdig.

3. Nach Agathons Rede: Intermezzo II

Die eigentliche Eros-Rede des Agathon wird mit großem Beifall und Tumult der Anwesenden quittiert, da er ‚geziemend für sich selbst sowie für den Gott [sc. Eros]‘ geredet habe. Agathon hat sich also zumindest vor dem anwesenden Symposions-Publikum nicht blamiert. Und wie reagiert Sokrates nun auf diesen erneuten Erfolg des Gastgebers Agathon? Er differenziert zwischen dem Anspruch einer ‚schönen‘ und dem Anspruch einer ‚wahren‘ Rede. Scherzhaft verweist er auf seine ‚seherischen‘ Fähigkeiten (Smp. 198a5: μαντικῶς), denn er habe ja vorhergesagt, dass Agathon eine glänzende Rede halten werde. Eryximachos bestätigt ihm explizit diese mantische Gabe (ebd. 198a8f.), macht ihm aber Mut für seine ja immer noch ausstehende Rede (ebd. 198a9). Doch Sokrates ist noch nicht bereit, diese zu halten, vielmehr beschreibt er ein Missverständnis: Eine so ‚schöne‘ Rede wie Agathon könne er niemals halten, habe er doch immer gedacht, es käme darauf an, die Wahrheit über Eros zu sagen (ebd. 198d3f.: ὄμην δεῖν τάληθῆ λέγειν περὶ ἐκάστου τοῦ ἐγκωμιαζομένου; 198d7f.: ὡς εἰδὼς τὴν ἀλήθειαν; 199a7: τὰ γε ἀληθῆ). Er kann nur auf seine Weise loben, was man ihm auch zugesteht. Kurz: Wir sehen, wie Sokrates hier einen Moduswechsel, einen anderen ‚trópos‘ des Eros-Lobes motiviert, bei dem es nicht auf die (letztlich ungesicherte) Zuschreibung von Superlativen an Eros oder auf suggestive rhetorische Form oder Schönheit in der Form ankommt, sondern auf das Kriterium der *Wahrheit* (ebd. 198b1-199b7): Das ist nun ein Parameter, der mit Blick auf die Eros-Thematik erstmals in die Runde kommt. Damit entlarvt Sokrates nicht nur alle anderen vorherigen Reden, inkl. der des Agathon, der Rhetorizität, sondern motiviert für seine Rede einen andere, ganz eigenen Modus des Eros-Lobes, den ihm die anderen Symposiasten als nunmehr letztem Redner auch zugestehen. Im Anschluss wendet sich Sokrates an Phaidros mit der Bitte, Agathon noch eine Kleinigkeit fragen zu dürfen, was man ihm zugesteht. Von diesem Punkt des Symposions an hat sich Sokrates die Lizenz erwirkt, so zu sprechen, wie er will. Das impliziert den ihm eigenen Tropos resp. Modus des Sprechens: also in Frage- und Antwortmodus und impliziert auch die dialektische Suche nach der Wahrheit. Seinen dialogischen Tropos wendet er vor seinem Eros-Beitrag nun zuerst auf Agathon an, da er ja sein Missverständnis noch ausräumen müsse. Raffiniert hat er sich so nun den Dialog ermöglicht, den ihm unmittelbar vor der Agathon-Rede (im Intermezzo II) Phaidros noch verwehrt hatte.

IV. Agathon im Elenchos des Sokrates

Sokrates lobt die Disposition der Rede Agathons, zuerst nach der Qualität des Eros, dann nach seinen Taten zu fragen. Er lenkt das kleinteilige dialogische Gespräch auf das wichtige Ergebnis, dass Eros ein Mangelzustand von etwas resp. ein Begehren nach etwas, das man noch nicht hat, beschreibt. Am Beispiel der Schönheit, die Agathon in seiner Rede für Eros in allerhöchstem Maße proklamiert hatte,

⁴⁴ Ausführlich siehe Erler, M., Vom Sinn der Aporien in den Dialogen Platons, Berlin/New York 1987.

⁵ Zur Ambiguität von Poiesis siehe Stern-Gillet, S., Poets and Other Makers, in: Plato's Symposium. Proc. of the Fifth Symposium Platonicum Pragense (hg. v. A. Havlíček/M. Cajthaml), Prague 2007, 86-107, hier: 86-91.

demonstriert nun Sokrates den logischen Schluss, dass Eros nach Schönheit strebe, diese also nicht habe (ebd. 201b4).⁶ Eros ist somit Agathon zufolge ein Mängelwesen. Am Ende erweitert er noch gleichsam *en passant* die Fragestellung, indem er die Behauptung, das Schöne sei auch gut, von Agathon bestätigen lässt. Die Identität des Schönen mit dem Guten verfolgt Sokrates hier jedoch nicht weiter, lenkt nur am Ende des dialogischen Intermezzos erneut zurück auf das Kriterium der ‚Wahrheit‘, der Agathon nicht widersprechen könne (ebd. 201c1-9). Agathons Eros-Rede ist somit entwertet und als nur der Form und dem Klang nach schön kenntlich geworden, der gefeierte Tragödiensieger und Gastgeber der Runde vor allen seinen Gästen von Sokrates widerlegt.⁷ Während am Vortag die Masse ihn durch den Sieg im tragischen Agon in seinem poetischen Tun, seiner ‚poiesis‘, ausgezeichnet und bestätigt hatte, bringt ihn Sokrates in einem dialogischen Elenchos zu Fall. Die poetische Sophia des Dichters Agathon erweist sich spätestens hier, gleichsam *ex negativo*, als eine ganz andere als die des Sokrates, sie entspricht zwar publikumswirksam dem modischen Geschmack der Menge und erweist sich im Gestus der Disposition (Frage nach der Qualität von Eros) und der Präsentation seiner Tugenden als quasi-philosophisch. Seine Sophia brilliert nur im Modus der ihr genuinen Kommunikationsform, der enkomiastischen Rede (oder aber der tragischen Dichtung). Schlussendlich kann Agathon aber einer Prüfung des Philosophen Sokrates im Medium des Prosa-Dialogs weder methodisch noch argumentativ standhalten, seine poetische Sophia vermag eine Transponierung in eine andere Kommunikationsform nicht mit zu vollziehen und erweist sich damit als zu eng, zu spezifisch, zu wenig objektiv und als nicht transferierbar. Und doch ist es so, dass Sokrates allein den schönen und jungen Dichter mit einem Elenchos würdigt, da er nicht zuletzt aufgrund seiner Zuschreibung von Tugenden und kreativer Potenz an Eros, aber auch mit seiner Bemerkung, Eros sei ein Poietes (ebd. 196e1), für Sokrates richtige, aber noch zu überprüfende Behauptungen formuliert. Damit weist dieser dem in Erotika versierten, philosophisch prinzipiell nicht untauglichen Agathon zumindest methodisch einen ersten Schritt auf dem Weg in Richtung ‚Wahrheit‘ oder echter Weisheit (Sophia).

V. Sokrates im Elenchos der Diotima

Sokrates referiert dann seine Widerlegung durch die weise Diotima aus Mantikleia, die seine Meinung, Eros sei gut und schön, widerlegt habe. Dafür übernimmt er – explizit – die bereits für gut befundene Disposition des Agathon (Qualität, Taten des Eros). Die anfängliche Belehrung des jungen Sokrates durch die weise Diotima erfolgte dabei zunächst im Modus des elenktischen Dialogs, bevor sie den Weg zur Schau des Schönen beschreibt.⁸ Diese Szene hat, wie das gesamte Diotima-Gespräch, eine komplexe Bedeutungsstruktur, aus Zeitgründen sei nur auf einige wenige Aspekte verwiesen: Die Widerlegung des Sokrates durch Diotima erweist sich als ‚klärende‘ oder ‚reinigende‘ Belehrung,⁹ die dialogisch erfolgt. Der junge Sokrates lernt also auf diese Weise von der weisen Diotima über Eros. Erinnern wir uns an das humorvolle Gespräch zwischen Sokrates und dem jungen Agathon bei der verspäteten Ankunft des Sokrates, als dieser eine gleichsam physische Vermittlung von Sophia durch körperliche Nähe zu Agathon ausgeschlossen hatte, wird nun anhand des Diotima-Referates des Sokrates deutlich, wie Sophia allein vermittelt werden kann: im aktiven geistigen Eigenerwerb, im aktiven Nachvollzug,¹⁰ einer von einer ‚weisen‘ Person geleiteten Argumentation durch ein dialogisches Gespräch, den Elenchos, in den Sokrates zuvor Agathon verwickelt hatte. Dieser erweist sich somit als Anfangsgrund einer auf Wahrheit basierenden (philosophischen) Poetik, die rückwirkend durch Diotima autorisiert wird. Der Modus des dialogischen Elenchos erweist sich einmal mehr als geeignete Form der Überprüfung von Wissen eines philosophischen ‚Anfängers‘, dessen Tauglichkeit sich relativ schnell zeigt – im Falle des jungen Agathon ebenso wie im Fall des damals noch jungen Sokrates. In unserem Kontext ist nicht zuletzt Diotimas Hinweis auf die produktive Potenz des Eros von besonderer Bedeutung, als sie allgemein den Übergang vom Nichtsein zum Sein auf die in ihm gründende Poiesis zurückführt (ebd. 205b-c).¹¹ ‚Erotik‘ wird somit zur (universell zu verstehenden) Poetik und umgekehrt, die Sokratische Erotik erweist sich als eine

⁶ Zur logischen Inkonzinnität dieses Elenchos siehe Payne, A., The Refutation of Agathon: Symposium 199c-201c, in: Ancient Philosophy 19, 1999, 235-253 und Castagnoli, L., L' eälegxow di Agatone. Una rilettura di Platone, Simposio, 199c3-201c9, in: Dianoia 6 (2001), 39-84.

⁷ Zur Passivität Agathons im Elenchos siehe z.B. Müller 2012, 117.

⁸ Dazu mehr bei Sier, K., Die Rede der Diotima, Stuttgart/Leipzig 1997.

⁹ Siehe Riedweg, C., Mysterienterminologie bei Platon, Philon und Klemens von Alexandrien, Berlin 1987, hier: 17-29.

¹⁰ Vgl. das von Alkibiades gebrauchte Bild der nötigen Mühe um den Zugang zum Wissen (Smp. 215a-222b); dazu Gaiser, K., Platone come scrittore filosofico, Neapel 1984, 55-76.

¹¹ Vgl. Plat. Soph. 265b.

‚Poetik der Wahrheit‘ (ebd. 199a-b), die bereits auf objektive Wahrheit verweist.¹² Mit Blick auf die zu Sokrates‘ Zeiten längst etablierte poetische Tradition, in der das Kriterium der Wahrheit seit Hesiods (llegenden) Musen (Hes. Th. 26-28) variabel geworden und poetologisch ausdifferenziert worden war, ist der Rekurs des Sokrates auf ‚Wahrheit‘ als grundsätzlichen Maßstab des Philosophen für eine universal verstandene Poetik resp. Erotik bemerkenswert und hebt ihn, wie demonstrativ am Beispiels des umjubelten Dichters Agathon, von einer populären, zu kurz greifenden Poetikauffassung ab.¹³

VI. Fazit

Der durch Sokrates in der Rahmung der Agathon-Rede markierte, szenisch elegant vollzogene Methodenwechsel innerhalb der Eros-Enkomastik hat philosophisch-poietische Relevanz und Signalwirkung. Die Eros-Rede des Agathon, ein rhetorisches Glanzstück des tragischen Dichters, hält dem sokratischen Elenchos nicht stand. Und dennoch fungiert sie, wie vor allem an der Rahmung durch die Sokrates-Intermezzi deutlich wird, als ‚Aufhänger‘ für eine korrigierte, eine philosophische Darstellung des Phänomens Eros – so wie Sokrates das in seinem Diotima-Referat beschreibt. Zugleich erweist sich der in diesem Vortrag fokussierte Passus als bedeutsames Gelenkstück im Übergang von populärer, modisch-technischer Poiesis, verkörpert durch Agathon, zu einer durch Eros inspirierten philosophischen Poiesis, wie sie der Autor Platon seinen Protagonisten, den Erotiker Sokrates (re-)präsentieren lässt.

¹² Zum Anklang an Platonisches Ideenwissen siehe Erler, M., Platon, Basel 2007, 197; 488f.

¹³ Siehe auch Smp. 223d, als Sokrates Agathon und Aristophanes im Ausgang des Gelages zum Eingeständnis nötigt, dass derselbe Dichter Komödien wie Tragödien verfassen könne, dazu Stern-Gillet (2007), 104-107.

EROS SOTER: How Can Love Save Us?

Aikaterini Lefka

Introduction

In the *Symposium*, Agathon calls Eros, among other attributes, *soter* (197 e 1). Some commentators of the dialogue accorded to this term a short note. However, the qualification *soter* was largely neglected and, in my opinion, unjustly underestimated. To my knowledge, up to now there has been no study dedicated to its entirely original link with Love. In my paper, I shall try to defend the idea that *soter* is an attribute that can offer us considerable help for a better understanding of Eros as presented in the *Symposium*.

In fact, *soter* / *soteira* is an epithet given by Plato's contemporaries to some particular divinities, to heroes and to men who, under certain circumstances, offered crucial help to someone or to a group of persons. I shall first expose which were the divinities who usually received such an epithet and for which particular reasons, in order to make evident the most interesting elements attached to the divine "saviours" action.

Then, I shall give a short account of Plato's use of this attribute. In the dialogues we may see that Plato follows slightly the religious tradition and innovates most of the times.

In the third part of my paper, I shall try to point out that every speech of the *Symposium*, where figures the *hapax* "Eros *soter*", offers a different aspect of the multiple functions of Love saving humanity in a complex structure that progressively leads to the most radical Platonic positions.

I. Divinities currently qualified by the epithet *soter*

Soter (masculine form) or *soteira* (feminine form) is "from the Homeric hymns (Hom. H. 22,5; 33, 6) onwards the epithet of very diverse Greek deities in the role of helper in time of need". The general terms "god" or "the gods" could receive this qualification. Finally, it is "also an epithet for humans based on crucial actions (of help)"¹.

We may make more or less evident suppositions concerning the reasons for which some particular divinities were currently considered as "saviours".

Zeus² receives the epithet *soter* first as a just king of the universe, contributing to its harmonious function by the application of the divine law. The divinities Themis and Eunomia, who also supervise the respect of the divine justice are called *soteirai*³.

In Athens, where Zeus is one of the official protectors of the city (*polieus*; *poliouchos*), like Athena⁴, they both may be considered as "saviours" of the *polis* and its inhabitants from any danger, during times of peace or at war⁵.

Zeus *tritos soter* is also invoked during the three ritual libations, where the first is dedicated to Zeus *Olympios*, the second to a hero and the third to Zeus *soter*, in order to obtain his protection. Apollo⁶ and his son Asclepius⁷ were divinities attached to the exercise of medicine; they "saved" people from illness and death. Apollo was supposed to send also diseases that were in fact divine punishments for some *hybris* committed by humans and to stop them when the tribute was considered satisfactory.

Artemis⁸ was one of the divinities supervising births, a perilous experience for mothers and children, whom she was asked to preserve. Rhea⁹ *soteira* should also be included, I think, to the same domain of mothers' and children's protection, as she is the mother of Zeus and saved him when he

¹ K. Zimmermann, 2008, p. 666.

² For the various aspects of Zeus, see for example A. B. Cook, 1925 ; H. Schwabl *et al.*, 1972, pp. 253-376 and 1978, pp. 993-1481.

³ For Themis, the first wife of Zeus, see, for example, J. Jank, 2000, pp. 5-31 ; L. Käppel, 2002, pp. 301-302 ; E. Stafford, 2007, pp. 71-85. For Eunomia, one of the three Horai, daughters of Zeus and Themis (the other two being Dike and Eirene), see P. Stengel, 1913, pp. 2300-2313 ; Th. Heinze, 1998, pp. 716-717 ; O. Waser, 1907, pp. 1130-1131 ; R. Bloch, 1998, p. 255.

⁴ See, for example, S. Deacy and A. Villing (eds.), 2001 ; F. Dümmler, 1896, pp. 1942- 2020 ; R. Ganszyniec, 1959, pp. 199-204 ; F. Graf, 1997, pp. 160-166 ; C. J. Herington, 1955 ; I. Kasper-Butz, 1990 ; K. Kérenyi, 1952 ; R. Parker, 2000, p. 198.

⁵ For the gods *poliouchoi* of Athens, see, for example, S. Deacy, 2007, pp. 219-235 and R. Parker, 2005.

⁶ See, for example, K. Wernicke, 1896, pp. 1-111 ; F. Graf, 1996, pp. 863-868.

⁷ See, for example, E. J. and L. Edelstein, 1945 ; F. Graf, 1997, pp. 94-99 ; E. Thraemer, 1896, pp. 1642-1697 .

⁸ See, for example, K. Wernicke, 1896, pp. 1336-1440 ; F. Graf, 1997, pp. 53-58.

⁹ See, for example, J. Heckenbach, « Pέα » (1914), pp. 339-341 ; L. Käppel, « Rheia » (2001), p. 950.

was just a new-born from the cruelty of his father, Cronos.

The Dioscuri¹⁰, experienced warriors and horsemen, were the protectors of men in battle but also of navigators and were often invoked in case of bad sailing conditions that could put into danger the ships, the persons and the goods they carried. For a people of seamen as the Greeks, these “saviours” were highly appreciated. On the other hand, Hermes¹¹, as the god protecting the travellers, the messengers and the merchants, is a *soter* asked to assure the safe journeys by land.

He is also the guide of the souls in their way to Hades, and this eschatological dimension may add a second aspect to his role as a “saviour”. The soul is also expected to be “saved”, thanks to the eternal beatitude offered by the initiation to Mysteries, like the Eleusinian ones, which explains sufficiently, I think, the attribution of the epithet *soteira* to Demeter¹² and to Kore¹³.

Hecate¹⁴ is a particular divinity, attached to the crossroads (and therefore protecting also travellers), including the ones between the three levels of existence: the heavens, the earth and the underworld, a fact that makes her also responsible of the safe souls’ transition. She is the obscure goddess of the moon, occult practices and fortune, too. Her help was asked to assure protection from evil and acquisition of good luck.

Tyche¹⁵, the goddess of Fortune herself is considered as a *soteira* for the same reason. We may therefore conclude that, besides the invocation to the gods in general, in various cases of great need, the particular divinities who most currently receive the epithet *soter* or *soteira* are the ones who supervise domains where the human life, liberty, safety, health, procreation, justice, wealth, success, and even the soul’s eternal well-being may be seriously threatened.

It is noteworthy for our study that Eros never figures among the traditional divine “saviours”.

II. Who is a *soter* for Plato?

Among these divinities who currently received the epithet *soter*, Plato chooses only Zeus, to whom he refers four times in his whole work.

When we give a close look to these passages, we may observe that the philosopher offers new, original interpretations of the epithet, the ritual attached to it and the salutary action of the supreme god of the Greek pantheon, adapted and integrated to his own theories. For example, in the *Laws*, III, 692 a 3, Zeus is referred to as *tritros soter*. Instead of the usual third libation, the context here is a metaphore concerning the “salvation” of the city, thanks to the third of the institutions that the god accorded for the government of Sparta, that is the ephors (after the two kings and the senate), elected among the people in order to control the just exercise of the government.

In the *Charmides*, 167 a 7, Socrates uses this epithet when he is trying for the third time to give a definition of wisdom (*sophrosyne*), which he identifies with “knowing one’s self”. In the same way, in the *Philebus*, 66 d 4, he mentions *tritros soter* while he gives his third version of defining the relation between wisdom and pleasure.

Finally, in the *Republic*, IX, 583 b 3, Socrates combines this epithet of Zeus with the sport of wrestling, where the athlete who would throw his opponent three times on the ground was the winner. The third victory of the just man against the unjust within the frame of the arguments of the philosophical dialogue (compared to an Olympic victory) is dedicated to Zeus *soter* and *Olympios*. In the *Timaeus*, 48 d 5, there is a more general reference to “the god” who is asked to operate as the “saviour” of the interlocutors while they undertake an extraordinary, but true narration of the cosmogony, the theogony and the anthropogony.

Other entities, non-divine but characteristic of Platonic philosophy receive also the qualification “*soter*”, like the intellect (*nous*: *Laws*, XII, 961 d 1), the reason (*logos*: *Republic*, VIII, 549 b 7) and the laws (*Symposium*, 209 d 5).

Concerning more concrete operations of rescue, an Egyptian priest calls the river Nile the saviour of Egypt (*Timaeus*, 22 d 5) from all extreme and dangerous climate conditions, among others. The hero Hector (*Cratylus*, 392 e 2) is also called “saviour”, as it was the case in the Homeric *Iliad*, because he defended efficiently his city against the Greek army till his death. But the human beings

¹⁰ For the twin sons of Zeus and Leda, who saved also their sister Helen from Theseus’ kidnapping, see, for example E. Bethe, 1903, pp. 1087-1123 and T. Scheer, 1997, pp. 673-677.

¹¹ See, for example, G. Baudy, 1998, pp. 426-431 ; S. Eitrem, 1912, pp. 738-792 ; D. Jaillard, 2007 ; L. Kahn, 1978.

¹² See, for example, F. Graf, 1997, pp. 420-425 ; S. Guettel Cole, 2000, pp. 133-154 ; O. Kern, 1901, pp. 2713-2764 ; N. J. Richardson, 1974.

¹³ See, for example, F. Bräuninger, 1937, pp. 944-972 ; L. Bruit, 2007, pp. 37-52 ; K. Clinton, 2007, pp. 342-356 ; S. Rosen, 1943, pp. 247-259 ; Chr. Sourvinou Inwood, 2000, pp. 600-603 ; G. Zuntz, 1971.

¹⁴ See, for example, J. Heckenbach, 1912, pp. 2769-2782 ; S. I. Johnston, 1990 and 1998, pp. 267-270.

¹⁵ See also G. Herzog-Hauser, 1948, pp. 1643-1689 and N. Johannsen, 2002, pp. 936-937.

who replace the heroes in this role in the platonic dialogues are the wise legislators and governors of a city (*Theaetetus*, 170 a 12; *Republic*, V, 463 b 1; VI, 502 d 1; *Lois*, IV, 704 d 6) as well as the excellent and the wise men in general (*Laws*, III, 689 d 9; XI, 922 a 1).

We may therefore consider that Plato keeps here the traditional domain of the life and the good government of a city, but insists on the salutary role of intelligence, justice, wisdom and moral excellence in the public sphere¹⁶. He also refers to “saviours” quite originally, on the occasion of a philosophical debate and argumentation or of a narration that reveals the truth, against all false opinions¹⁷. The philosopher attributes rarely any epithets to the particular gods he refers to, and *soter* isn’t an exception. It is accorded only to Zeus, the wise governor of the world, in the passages cited above, and to Eros, just once, on an occasion that merits a closer look.

III. The Platonic Eros as a soter

Eros is a divinity usually presented as terrible by the poets, who put more eagerly into evidence the torments of his victims¹⁸. In the *Symposium*, the orators decide to adopt a new, positive way to depict him: for the first time, they undertake to praise “the great god” Eros as a benefactor.

Agathon, the host of the banquet, exclaims in the end of his speech, among other qualifications, that Eros is “in trouble, in fear, in longing, in speaking, a steersman, defender, fellow-soldier and saviour without peer (*παραστάτης τε καὶ σωτὴρ ἄριστος*), ornament at once of all gods and men, most beautiful and best guide, whom everyone must follow” (197 d 8-e 3)¹⁹.

Only a few commentators paid some attention to the use of the term *soter* here. For example, L. Brisson just notes that “the preceding *parastates* (the *hoplites* who stood beside his fellow soldier and was supposed to protect him, as well as be protected by him) accords a military sense to *soter*”²⁰. R. G. Bury makes a parallel with the protector *daimon* of each person, as well as with Socrates as a *soter*, putting forward that this term is usually attributed to heroes. Taking under consideration the military and the naval context, he concludes that “the general sense of the passage is this: ‘in the contests both of war and peace the best guide and warden, comrade and rescuer is Eros’”²¹.

I believe that the salutary action of Eros is nevertheless present in all speeches of the *Symposium*. In fact, every speaker offers a different aspect of the multiple functions of Love as a “saviour” for humans, in a complex structure that progressively leads to the most innovating Platonic positions on the subject.

Phaedrus²² and Pausanias²³ support that love will push a person to defend his lover’s life (as it was the case when couples of warriors were fighting together, for example), to pursue and to accomplish virtue (especially courage) and to enjoy the eternal honour (*time*) that could come out of these heroic deeds – this was the only access to eternity that the heroes of the Homeric poems could pretend to.

Pausanias, by his distinction between Eros *Ouranios* and Eros *Pandemos*, introduced the element of a rational and selective approach to Love, if one wants to receive his salutary effects. The more traditional, disastrous characteristics of the divinity are found in the second Eros.

Euriximachus²⁴ goes even further, by developing a true “erotic science” that permits us to know how to approach and to conduct this universal force, innate to all beings, so that we might benefit of the health, the harmony and the well-being that the “good” Eros can install to our body and mind and to avoid as much as possible the nuisance of the “bad” one, the desire for inappropriate things. Eros guarantees the unity and the concord among the different parts of the world, including the friendly relations between the members of a community and even between gods and men.

Aristophanes²⁵, with his peculiar myth of the “three original genders” of humankind, takes up the healing power of Eros, who alone offers us the possibility to recover from the division imposed to us by Zeus because of our ancestral *hybris*, by finding our “other half”, restoring our initial nature and living happily ever after in a perfect union.

¹⁶ For the notion of “salvation” in Plato’s political theories, see A. Kelessidou, 2009.

¹⁷ Plato can use also other expressions related etymologically to *soter*, like *soteria*, *sozein* etc., but we chose here to examine only the cases where he mentions the divine epithet.

¹⁸ See for example, Sappho, fr. 2 ; fr. 44 and fr. 46.

¹⁹ Translation of C. J. Rowe, 1998.

²⁰ L. Brisson, 1998, p. 206, n. 331.

²¹ R. G Bury, 1973, p. 83.

²² Plato, *Symposium*, 178 a 6- 180 b 8.

²³ Idem, *op. cit.*, 180 c 3-185 c 3.

²⁴ Idem, *op. cit.*, 185 e 6-188 e 4.

²⁵ Idem, *op. cit.*, 189 a 1-193 e 2.

Agathon²⁶ follows all the rhetoric rules to elaborate a praise of Eros where he is depicted as absolutely excellent, concerning his form, his ethics and his intelligence. The benefits that god and men enjoy from his creative action are also of supreme importance: everybody has learnt the science, the art or the activity he likes best because of his love for this particular knowledge and therefore because of Eros, who becomes thus the wisest of teachers. Let us remind here that the extraordinary artistic or scientific creations open another way for humans to obtain an “immortal fame”. Eros always seeks harmony and beauty; he installs peace and concord in the whole world, against the hard struggles imposed by Necessity. In times of war or peace, on land or at sea, this god is the best guide, supporter and “saviour” for us.

Socrates²⁷ insists also on the knowledge of the truth concerning Love and transmits to his interlocutors the “initiation to the mysteries of Eros” that he received when he was still a young man from the wise priestess Diotima, who was invited to Athens in order to “save” the city from the menace of a plague²⁸. Eros is presented here as a philosopher, a constant lover and seeker of beauty and wisdom, like Socrates himself. This *daimon* guarantees the survival of the human race by the desire of beautiful bodies and of procreation of physical children. He also helps us to realise the most excellent and happy life thanks to intellectual creations due to the progressive attraction to the knowledge of higher kinds of beauty, up to the contemplation of the Idea of the Fine itself; creations that bring immortal glory, by making their author a better person and inciting others to start the practice of philosophy. The eternal and absolute felicity of the soul, promised by all doctrines of mysteries, is offered here by the salutary action of Eros.

Alcibiades²⁹ enters uninvited and in great fuss to the banquet, after the end of Socrates’ speech. He shall crown the philosopher, however, as the winner of the competition for the best praise to Eros, and shall give a touching personal testimony of the philosopher’s way to behave in amorous relations, where indeed he seems to apply the model of the “initiated” lover depicted previously: he is virtuous (courageous at wartime, capable of saving his fellow-soldiers, moderate and just at peaceful moments), wise and perfectly detached from any material charms. He creates enchanting speeches that have the power to turn the listeners towards the practice of philosophy and the pursuit of virtue and therefore eternal felicity.

Conclusions

After the close examination of the *Symposium*’s speeches, under the light of the salutary characteristics of Eros, I think we may conclude that Plato accorded much more importance to this aspect of the divinity than currently believed. The interlocutors pronounce more than praises to the benefits of Love; they present in fact Eros *soter* in an original combination of traditional and new, philosophical dimensions. If we possess the right knowledge concerning Eros, this *daimon* helps us to survive (at wartime and at peace) and to lead a terrestrial existence as good and as harmonious as possible internally and externally, in unity with our companions and with our fellow citizens, as well as with the gods and all the other parts of the universe. Thanks to his benevolence, we may even overcome the limits of our human condition and achieve immortality (understood in various ways: physical childbirth or intellectual creations of eternal glory) and eternal felicity – the components of the *homoiosis theoi* –. Socrates, through Diotima’s “initiation in the mysteries of Eros” offers the summit of the philosophical interpretation of Love as our “saviour”, while Alcibiades gives evidence of its concrete realisation.

But I think that the most important innovation of the Platonic vision of Eros is that he doesn’t operate in the usual way of the other divine rescuers. Possessing the human soul with a “divine madness”, as Socrates says in the *Phaedrus*³⁰, he incites us in fact to become wise, virtuous, happy and finally the “saviours” of ourselves and of our beloved ones. Eros offers us the possibility of becoming responsible for our own “salvation”, but also of the help provided to other humans and thus to “resemble the divine” in an original way: as *soter*es.

²⁶ Idem, *op. cit.*, 194 e 4-197 e 8.

²⁷ Idem, *op. cit.*, 198 b 1-212 c 3.

²⁸ In the text (idem, *op. cit.*, 201 d 3-5) Socrates supports that Diotima with her sacrifices succeeded only in delaying this “divine punishment” (of Apollo), imposed to the city ten years later (431-430 B.C.).

²⁹ Idem, *op. cit.*, 215 a 4-222 b 7.

³⁰ See idem, *Phaedrus*, 244 a 3-245 c 4 and 265 a 9-b 5.

Selective Bibliography

- G. Baudy, « Hermes », *Der Neue Pauly, Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, V, 1998, pp. 426-431.
- E. Bethe, « Dioskuren », *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben von G. Wissowa, J.B. Metzlerscher Verlag, Stuttgart, V, 1, 1903, pp. 1087-1123.
- S. Bernadete, *Socrates and Plato. The Dialectics of Eros*, C. F. von Siemens Stiftung Themen, Bd.76, C. F. von Siemens Stiftung, München, 2002.
- R. Bloch, « Eunomia », *Der Neue Pauly, Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, 5, 1998, p. 255.
- F. Bräuninger, « Persephone », *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben von G. Wissowa, J.B. Metzlerscher Verlag, Stuttgart, XIX, 1, 1937, pp. 944-972.
- L. Brisson, *Platon. Le Banquet*, GF Flammarion, Paris, 1998.
- , « Agathon, Pausanias and Diotima in Plato's *Symposium* : *Paidierastia and Philosophia* », J. Lesher, D. Nails and F.C.C. Sheffield (eds.), *Plato's Symposium. Issues in Interpretation and Reception* (Conference held at the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington D.D., in August 2005), Center for Hellenic Studies, Washington D.C., 2006, pp. 229-251.
- L. Bruit, « Le Religieux et le politique en Grèce ancienne (II). Déméter et Koré dans le panthéon athénien », *Les Études classiques*, 75 (2007), pp. 37-52.
- R. G. Bury, *The Symposium of Plato*, W. Heffer and sons ltd., Cambridge, 1973.
- A. Cacoulos, « The Doctrine of Eros in Plato », *Diotima*, 1 (1973), pp. 81-99.
- Cl. Calame, *L'Éros dans la Grèce antique*, Belin, Paris, 1996.
- A. B. Cook, *Zeus. A Study in Ancient Religion*, Vol. I-III, Cambridge, 1925.
- G. R. Carone, « The Virtues of Platonic Love », J. Lesher, D. Nails and F.C.C. Sheffield (eds.), *Plato's Symposium. Issues in Interpretation and Reception* (Conference held at the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington D.D., in August 2005), Center for Hellenic Studies, Washington D.C., 2006, pp. 208-226.
- J. J. Cleary, « Erotic *paideia* in Plato's *Symposium* », M. Erler and L. Brisson (eds.), *Gorgias-Menon. Selected papers from the seventh Symposium Platonicum*, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin, 2007, pp. 33-45.
- K. Clinton, « The Mysteries of Demeter and Kore », *A Companion to Greek Religion*, D. Ogden (ed.), Oxford, Blackwell, 2007, pp. 342-356.
- F. M. Cornford, « The Doctrine of Eros in Plato's *Symposium* » (1937), reprinted in F. M. Cornford (ed.), *The Unwritten Doctrines and Other Essays*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1950, pp. 68-80 and in G. Vlastos (ed.), *Plato, A Collection of Critical Essays*, II. *Ethics, Politics, and Philosophy of Art and Religion*, Doubleday & Anchor, Garden City (N. Y.), 1971/ Mc Millan, London, 1972, pp. 119-131.
- P.W. Cummings, « Eros as Procreation in Beauty », *Apeiron*, 10, no 2, 1976, pp. 23-28.
- S. Deacy, « Famous Athens, Divine *Polis* : The Religious System at Athens », *A Companion to Greek Religion*, D. Ogden (ed.), Oxford, Blackwell, 2007, pp. 219-235.
- S. Deacy and A. Villing (eds.), *Athena in the Classical World*, Brill, Leiden, 2001.
- M. Despland, *The Education of Desire. Plato and the Philosophy of Religion*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto/Buffalo/London, 1985.
- K. N. M. Dover, « The Significance of the Speeches in Plato's *Symposium* », *Ph & Ph*, 2, 1969, pp. 215-234.
- F. Dümmler, « Athena », *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben von G. Wissowa, J.B. Metzlerscher Verlag, Stuttgart, II, 1896, pp. 1942- 2020.
- E. J. and L. Edelstein, *Asclepius. A Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies*, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1945.
- S. Eitrem, « Hermes », *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben von G. Wissowa, J.B. Metzlerscher Verlag, Stuttgart, VIII, 1, 1912, pp. 738-792.
- Chr. Evangeliou, « Eros and Immortality in the *Symposium* of Plato », *Diotima*, 13, 1985, pp. 200-211.
- R. Ganszyniec, « Pallas Athene », *Filomata*, 124 (1959), pp. 199-204.
- S. Guettel Cole, « Demeter in the Ancient Greek City and its Countryside », *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion*, ed. by R. Buxton, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 133-154.
- Chr. Gill, « Platonic Love and Individuality », A. Loizou and H. Lesser (eds.), *Polis and Politics. Essays in Greek Moral and Political Philosophy*, Avebury, Aldershot, 1990, pp. 69-88.
- , *Plato. The Symposium*, Penguin's Classics, London/N. York, 1999.
- Th. Gould, *Platonic Love*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1963.

- F. Graf, « Apollon », *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, I, 1996, pp. 863-868.
- , « Artemis », Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, II, 1997, pp. 53-58.
- , « Asklepios », *Der Neue Pauly, Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, II, 1997, pp. 94-99.
- , « Athena », Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, II, 1997, pp. 160-166.
- , « Demeter », *Der Neue Pauly, Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, III, 1997, pp. 420-425.
- , « Eros », *Der Neue Pauly*, B. IV, 1998, pp. 89-91.
- J. G. Griffith, « Static Electricity in Agathon's Speech in Plato's *Symposium* », *Classical Review*, 40, 1990, pp. 547-548.
- D. M. Halperin, « Platonic Eros and What Man Called Love », *Ancient Philosophy*, 5, 1985, pp. 161-204, reprinted in N. D. Smith (ed.), *Plato. Critical Assessments. Vol. III. Plato's Middle Period: Psychology and Value Theory*, Routledge, London/USA/Canada, 1998, pp. 66-120.
- , « Plato and the Metaphysics of Desire », *BACAP* 5, 1991, pp. 27-52.
- , « Plato and the Erotics of Narrativity », J. E. Kluge and N. D. Smith (eds.), *Methods of Interpreting Plato and his dialogues, OSAPh Supplement*, Oxford, 1992, pp. 93-123, reprinted in N. D. Smith (ed.), *Plato. Critical Assessments. Vol. III. Plato's Middle Period: Psychology and Value Theory*, Routledge, London/USA/Canada, 1998, pp. 141-272.
- J. Heckenbach, « Hekate », *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben von G. Wissowa, J.B. Metzlerscher Verlag, Stuttgart, VII 2, 1912, pp. 2769-2782.
- , « Πέα », *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben von G. Wissowa, J.B. Metzlerscher Verlag, Stuttgart, I, A1, 1914, pp. 339-341.
- Th. Heinze, « Horai », *Der Neue Pauly, Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, 4, 1998, pp. 716-717 ;
- D. t. D. Held, « Eros, Beauty, and the Divine in Plato », *NECJ*, 36, 2009, pp. 155-167.
- C. J. Herington, *Athena Parthenos and Athena Polias*, Manchester, 1955.
- G. Herzog-Hauser, « Tyche », *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben, Neue Bearbeitung begonnen von G. Wissowa, Alfred Druckenmüller Verlag, Stuttgart, VIII 2, 1948, pp. 1643-1689.
- L. Irigaray, « Socratic Love. A Reading of Plato's *Symposium*, Diotima's Speech », *Hypatia*, 3, 1989, pp. 32-44.
- D. Jaillard, *Configurations d'Hermès. Une « théogonie » hermaïque*, Kernos, Supplément 17, Athènes/Liège, 2007.
- J. Jank, « Dike and Themis in the Works of Homer », *Eos*, 87 (2000), pp. 5-31.
- N. Johannsen, *Der Neue Pauly, Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, 12/1, 2002, pp. 936-937.
- S. I. Johnston, *Hekate Soteira. A Study of Hekate's Roles in the Chaldean Oracles and Related Literature*, American Philological Association American Classical Studies Series, no 21, Oxford University Press, Oxford-N.York, 1990.
- , « Hekate », *Der Neue Pauly, Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, V, 1998, pp. 267-270.
- L. Käppel, « Rheia », *Der Neue Pauly, Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, X, 2001, p. 950.
- , « Themis », *Der Neue Pauly, Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, XII/1, 2002, pp. 301-302.
- L. Kahn, *Hermès passe ou les ambiguïtés de la communication*, Maspero, Paris, 1978.
- F. Karfik, « Éros et l'âme », A. Havlíček and M. Cajthaml (eds.), *Plato's Symposium. Proceedings of the fifth Symposium Platonicum Pragense*, Oikoumene, Prague, 2007, pp. 147-163.
- I. Kasper-Butz, *Die Göttin Athena im klassischen Athen. Athena als Repräsentantin des demokratischen Staates*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 1990.
- A. Kelessidou, « The Religious Dimension of the Concept of Salvation in Plato » (in Greek), *Annual Report of the Research Center of Greek Philosophy*, 3-14, Akademy of Athens, Athens, 1983-84, pp. 189-207, reprinted in A. Kelessidou, *The Platonic "psychagogy" and other philosophical studies*, Athens, 1994, pp. 52-70.
- , Η έννοια της σωτηρίας στην πλατωνική πολιτική φιλοσοφία, Κέντρο Ερεύνης της Ελληνικής Φιλοσοφίας, Ακαδημία Αθηνών, Αθήνα, 2009 (πρώτη έκδοση 1982).

- K. Kérenyi, *Die Jungfrau und Mutter der griechischen Religion. Eine Studie über Pallas Athene*, Rhein – Verl., Zürich, 1952.
- O. Kern, «Demeter», *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben von G. Wissowa, J.B. Metzlerscher Verlag, Stuttgart, IV, 2, 1901, pp. 2713-2764.
- H. G. Liddell & R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1996 (10th ed.), lemm. *soteira, soter*, p. 1751.
- R. A. Markus, «The Dialectics of Eros in Plato's *Symposium*», *Downside Review*, 73, 1955, pp. 219-230, reprinted in G. Vlastos (ed.), *Plato, A Collection of Critical Essays*, II. *Ethics, Politics, and Philosophy of Art and Religion*, Doubleday & Anchor, Garden City (N. Y.), 1971/ Mc Millan, London, 1972, pp. 132-142.
- A. Motte, «Éros», in *Dictionnaire des religions*, P. Poupard, Paris, 1984², pp. 525-526.
- , «La Catégorie platonicienne du démonique», in *Anges et Démons. Actes du Colloque de Liège et de Louvain-la-neuve (25-26 novembre 1987)*, Louvain-la-neuve, 1989, pp. 205-221.
- , «Platon et la dimension religieuse de la procréation», *Kernos*, 2, 1989, pp. 157-173.
- M. Nussbaum, «Plato on Commensurability of Desire» (1984), reprinted in M. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge. Essays in Philosophy and Literature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, pp. 55-80.
- A. Nye, «The Subject of Love. Diotima and her Critics», *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 24, 1990, pp. 135-153.
- M. J. O'Brien, «"Becoming Immortal" in Plato's *Symposium*», D. E. Gerber (ed.), *Greek Poetry and Philosophy. Studies in honour of L. Woodbury*, Scholars Press, Chico (California), 1984, pp. 185-205.
- C. Osborne, *Eros Unveiled. Plato and the God of Love*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994.
- R. Parker, «Pallas», *Der Neue Pauly, Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, IX, 2000, p. 198.
- , *Polytheism and Society in Athens*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005.
- J. M. Rhodes, *Eros, Wisdom and Science : Plato's Erotic Dialogues*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia, 2003.
- G. Reale, *Eros, démons, médiateur. Il gioco della maschere nel Simposio di Platone*, Rizzoli, Milano, 1997.
- N. J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1974.
- L. Robin, *La Théorie platonicienne de l'amour*, Alcan, Paris, 1908.
- , *Le Banquet*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1989.
- S. Rosen, «The Grief of Persephone», *Harvard Theological Review*, 36 (1943), pp. 247-259.
- C. J. Rowe, *Plato: Symposium*, Aris & Phillips Ltd., Warminster, England, 1998.
- , «All Desire is for the Good. A Theme in Some Platonic Dialogues», *Philosophia*, 33, 2003, pp. 129-142.
- , «Socrates and Diotima : Eros, Immortality and Creativity», *BACAP* 14, 1998, pp. 239-259.
- G. Santas, «Plato's Theory of Eros in the *Symposium*», *Nous*, 13, 1979, pp. 67-75.
- , «Plato on Love, Beauty and The Good», D. J. Depew (ed.), *The Greeks and the Good Life. Proceedings of the IXth Annual Philosophy Symposium*, California State University, Fullerton, 1981, pp. 33-68.
- T. Scheer, *Der Neue Pauly, Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, 3, 1997, pp. 673-677.
- D. C. Schindler, «Plato and the Problem of Love. On the Nature of Eros in the *Symposium*», *Apeiron*, 40, 2007, pp. 199-220.
- H. Schwabl *et al.*, «Zeus», *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben, Neue Bearbeitung begonnen von G. Wissowa, Alfred Druckenmüller Verlag, Stuttgart, X, A, 1972, pp. 253-376 ; suppl. XV, 1978, pp. 993-1481.
- G. A. Scott – W. A. Welton, «Eros as a Messenger in Diotima's Teaching», G. A. Press (ed.), *Who Speaks for Plato? Studies on Platonic Anonymity*, Rowman & Littlefield Pub., Lanham/Boulder/N. York/Oxford, 2000, pp. 147-159.
- D. Sedley, «The Ideal of Godlikeness», G. Fine (ed.), *Plato, 2. Ethics, Politics, Religion and the Soul*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999, pp. 309-328.
- F. C. C. Sheffield, *Plato's Symposium. The Ethic of Desire*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006.
- Chr. Sourvinou Inwood, «Kore», *Der Neue Pauly, Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Herausgegeben von H. Cancik – H. Schneider, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart – Weimar, IX, 2000, pp. 600-603.
- E. Stafford, «Personifications in Greek Religious Thought and Practice», *A Companion to Greek Religion*, D. Ogden (ed.), Oxford, Blackwell, 2007, pp. 71-85.
- P. Stengel, «Horai», *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben von G. Wissowa, J.B. Metzlerscher Verlag, Stuttgart, VIII, 2, 1913, pp. 2300-2313.

- O. Thomson, «Socrates and Love», *C & M*, 52, 2001, pp. 117-178.
- E. Thraemer, « Asklepios », *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben von G. Wissowa, J.B. Metzlerscher Verlag, Stuttgart, II, 1896, pp.1642-1697.
- J. P. Vernant, «Un, deux, trois, Éros», M. M. Mactoux et E. Geny (éds.), *Mélanges Pierre LeVêque*, vol. I, Presses Universitaires Franche-Compté, Besançon, 1988, pp. 293-302.
- G. Vlastos, «The Individual as an Object of Love in Plato», G. Vlastos (ed.), *Platonic Studies*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N. J., 1973, pp. 3-42, reprinted in G. Fine (ed.), *Plato, 2. Ethics, Politics, Religion and the Soul*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999, pp. 137-163.
- O. Waser, «Eunomia », *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben von G. Wissowa, J.B. Metzlerscher Verlag, Stuttgart, VI 1, 1907, pp. 1130-1131.
- K. Wernicke, « Apollon », *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben von G. Wissowa, J.B. Metzlerscher Verlag, Stuttgart, II 2, 1896, pp. 1-111.
- , « Artemis », *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben von G. Wissowa, J.B. Metzlerscher Verlag, Stuttgart, II 2, 1896, pp. 1336-1440.
- J. Wipern, «Eros und Unsterblichkeit in der Diotima-Rede des *Symposions*», H. Flashar und K. Gaiser (hrsg.), *Synusia*, Festgabe für W. Schadewaldt zum 15. März 1965, Neske, Pfullingen, 1965, pp. 123-129.
- K. Zimmermann, lemm. «Soter», *Brill's New Pauly*, vol. 13, Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2008, 666-668 and «Soteria», *ibid.*, 668.
- G. Zuntz, *Persephone*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971.

Agathon's Gorgianic Logic

Richard Patterson

ABSTRACT

In responding to Agathon's speech, Socrates notes the influence of Gorgias. Commentators have pointed to Agathon's free use of the verbal "antitheses" for which Gorgias was famous, especially in the concluding section of his speech, which Socrates professes to find particularly impressive. Indeed Agathon surpasses Gorgias in this respect, although at the cost of any semblance of seriousness of purpose.

Equally characteristic of Gorgias' style, however, is the self-conscious highlighting of a speech's logical structure. This consists partly in displaying an ability to produce arguments for any thesis, however outrageous. That much seems to be part of what any clever sophist is supposed to be able to do. But Gorgias likes to make explicit every significant point relevant to a thesis, then argue for each point systematically and exhaustively—as opposed to persuading the hearer, at least on some points, by other means (e.g., projecting an air of authority, manipulating emotion). This careful and conspicuous logical structuring typifies Gorgias' best known and most clearly authentic works—the Defense of Helen and On What Is Not. Gorgias stands out among the sophists in this respect (which is not to say that the rest do not use deductive argument). His performance in On What Is Not is surpassed only by Plato in the *Parmenides*--and perhaps Zeno, in a work attested by Proclus and alluded to in the *Parmenides*.

Agathon takes things to the extreme, arguing for every statement that pops out of his mouth, whether trivial or seemingly important, and whether the argument provided is any good or not. In fact Agathon's argumentation (encompassing about two dozen short, densely ordered deductions "proving" the attributes of Eros) amounts itself to a kind of verbal pyrotechnics, one in deductive mode.

All three marks of Gorgianic rhetoric (virtuosic use of verbal antitheses, formulation of an argument for every relevant point, and making evident, for all to admire, the systematic and exhaustive nature of the overall logic of a speech) characterize Agathon's contribution to the *Symposium*.

What is Plato's point in composing such a speech for Agathon? Aside from showing that Plato can (as usual) beat his rivals at their own game, even while exposing the shallowness of their efforts, it serves important dramatic purposes (as described in "The Platonic conception of Tragedy and Comedy", *Philosophy and Literature*, 1982). It also contains thoughts about the creative--and inspirational-- force of eros that are developed more deeply in Diotima's speech. But comparison of the two speeches—and the intermediate section showing that Agathon did not know what he was talking about—reveals that eros must be educated through philosophical logos if it is to bring us into contact with, and then give birth to, what is genuinely beautiful (by a process described in "The Ascent in Plato's *Symposium*", *Proceedings, Boston Area Colloquium*, 1991). Pace the Beatles, it is false that "Love Is All You Need".

Tragedy and Comedy at Agathon's Party: Two Tetralogies in Plato's *Symposium*

Nicholas Riegel

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to answer two questions. The first is: Why does the *Symposium* end as it does? What is the connection between the ending and the rest of the dialogue? At the end of the dialogue, when all of Agathon's guests have either left or drifted off to sleep, we are told that the last thing Aristodemus remembers seeing is Socrates explaining to Agathon and Aristophanes – a tragic and a comic poet, respectively – that it belongs to the same person to know how to write both comedies and tragedies. One might be excused for thinking that the *Symposium* wasn't really about tragedy and comedy, but about love. But it is precisely this apparent lack of connection that raises the question of what the subject of tragedy and comedy has to do with the rest of the dialogue. The second major question is: What is the meaning of the argument that it belongs to the same person to know how to write good tragedies and comedies?

Regarding the first major question, two things strongly suggest that in fact the dialogue does have quite a bit to do with tragedy and comedy. First there is the number of characters. And second, there is the dialogue's many allusions to tragedy and comedy. Anyone who reads the *Symposium* must be struck by the sheer number of significant characters. Nowhere else in Plato's works do so many characters have significant speaking roles. Usually, it is just Socrates speaking to one or two other people. In *Symposium*, no less than seven (I will argue there are eight) characters have significant speaking roles. And Socrates does not dominate discussion, as he usually does.

The number of significant characters in the dialogue raises the question of the dialogue's structure. Scholars have divided the speeches up differently. R. G. Bury divides the speeches into three acts: The first act consists of the first five speeches, the second consists of Socrates' speech, and the third of Alcibiades'.¹ Both G. R. F. Ferrari and Alexander Nehamas would divide "the praises of *eros*" into two groups, the first comprising the speeches of Phaedrus, Pausanias, and Eryximachus, and the second, the speeches of Aristophanes, Agathon, and Socrates.² But if we take Diotima's as separate speech, and appreciate dialogue's intimate connection to Greek drama, its structure becomes immediately clear: there are eight speeches, divided into two tetralogies. And this mirrors the structure of the festivals of the Great Dionysia in 5th and 4th century Athens. At these festivals, tragic poets competed by presenting three tragedies followed by a satyr play. And here in the *Symposium* we have two sets of three serious speeches followed by a humorous speech. In the first tetralogy, Phaedrus, Pausanias, and Eryximachus present serious or tragic speeches, and Aristophanes presents a humorous speech or satyr play. In the second tetralogy, Agathon, Socrates and Diotima present serious or tragic speeches and Alcibiades presents the humorous speech or satyr play. There can be no doubt that Plato intends us to take Alcibiades' speech as a satyr play, because Socrates calls it a satyr play. At *Symposium* 222d, Socrates says to Alcibiades: "You think that I should be in love with you and no one else, while you and no one else, should be in love with Agathon – well, we were not deceived; we've seen through your little satyr play."³ But if Alcibiades' speech constitutes a satyr play, then it would make sense to take Aristophanes' speech as a satyr play as well. Thus the

¹ Robert Gregg Bury, *The Symposium of Plato*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Heffer, 1932). lii.

² Alcibiades' speech is apparently a separate issue. Alexander Nehamas, "The Symposium," in *Virtues of Authenticity: Essays on Plato and Socrates* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1999), 306; G. R. F. Ferrari, "Platonic Love," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, ed. Richard Kraut (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 250. For a review of the literature on this topic dating from 1932 see Bury, *The Symposium*. For a more recent review, see Kevin Corrigan and Elena Glazov-Corrigan, *Plato's Dialectic at Play: Argument, Structure, and Myth in the Symposium* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004). Chpt 3. Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan attempt to show how the first five speeches (Phaedrus, Pausanias, Eryximachus, Aristophanes, and Agathon) are reflected in the ascent to the Form of the Beautiful in Diotima's speech. Cf. also Meyer William Isenberg, "The Order of the Discourses in Plato's *Symposium*" (The University of Chicago, 1940); John A. Brentlinger, "The Cycle of Becoming in the Symposium," in *The Symposium of Plato*, ed. Leonard Baskin (Amherst: 1970).

³ Except where otherwise noted, translations of Plato's works will be taken from John M. Cooper, ed. *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

dialogue's structure is as follows:⁴

Tetralogy 1	Tetralogy 2	
Phaedrus	Agathon	Tragedy
Pausanias	Socrates	Tragedy
Eryximachus	Diotima	Tragedy
Aristophanes	Alcibiades	Satyr Play

This analysis becomes even more persuasive when we attend to what I think is the dialogue's second most salient feature: namely its many allusions to tragedy and comedy. First, there is the fact that the symposium takes place at Agathon's house. Agathon is a tragic poet. And the symposium is held in honor of his victory at the Lenaia in 416 BCE. Second, the famous comic poet Aristophanes is there. Third, a symposium is literally a drinking party. And so it must take place under the auspices of Dionysus: god of wine and drama. And Alcibiades is depicted as Dionysus, and Socrates is compared to Silenus (215b ff.), companion of Dionysus, and leader of satyr chorus. And finally there is the ending of the dialogue itself, as we have already mentioned. Thus it seems that contrary to what we might have thought at first, the *Symposium* has quite a lot to do with tragedy and comedy.

Regarding the second major question - namely, what is the meaning of arguing that it belongs to the same person to write good tragedies and comedies - I want to argue that all three: Philosophy, Tragedy, and Comedy claim to address life's problems. Two of life's central problems are love and death. The questions concerning love are: What is the good? What is happiness? And what should we desire? And the question concerning death is: Why is there badness especially in the forms of suffering and death? I think Plato's point is that comedy and tragedy have no answer to these questions. We can never be sure whether what they say about love is true. And we are left with the feeling that they both say that suffering and death are meaningless. Tragedy emphasizes the horror of this, and comedy emphasizes the ridiculousness of it. So, insofar as all the speeches in the *Symposium* are like tragedies or comedies, they all fail in some way - even the speeches of Socrates and Diotima - although they fail perhaps least of all. The first tetralogy fails because it does not follow a correct methodology. And this leads to the content being wrong. But even if the methodology and hence the content were correct - as they are in the second tetralogy - tragedy and comedy still fail because the medium is wrong. Tragedy and comedy are essentially *mimetic*, and so they cannot lead us to the true object of love - the good itself - nor can they solve the question of death and suffering. Plato's point is that only philosophy can do this.

II. PRELIMINARY OBJECTIONS

Before we begin, however, I would like to address a number of questions or objections which may have already occurred to the reader. The first major objection may be that there is a difference between satyr plays and comedies. Satyr play was one of the four types of performances at the City Dionysia, the other three being dithyramb, tragedy and comedy.⁵ Satyr plays consist of a chorus of satyrs led by their father, Silenus. According to Bernd Seidensticker there are four major differences between satyr play and comedy.⁶ The first is that Satyr Plays are more light-hearted than comedies. Comedies tend to engage more in satire and parody, and often have a biting, caustic side to them, whereas satyr plays are aimed at pure relaxation and enjoyment. Second, satyr plays do not take contemporary issues as their theme. They resemble tragedies in being about the stories from well-known myths. Comedy, on the other hand, often takes contemporary issues, like the Peloponnesian War, as its theme, and it often addresses contemporary figures and ridicules them by name. Third, in

⁴ In his article *The Cycle of Becoming in the Symposium* John Brentlinger also divides the *Symposium* into two sets of four speeches. However, he does not consider Diotima's to constitute a separate speech; rather, he divides the second set of speeches as follows: 1. Agathon, 2. Agathon and Socrates, 3. Socrates, 4. Alcibiades. In addition, he does not make the connection between the series of four speeches and the dramatic tetralogies of Antiquity. And, though he goes on to make many excellent points, I believe his analysis of the order of the speeches ignores an important critique of Socrates, which my analysis reveals. Brentlinger, "The Cycle of Becoming in the Symposium," 7.

⁵ The dithyramb is a cult song in honor of Dionysus. It was sung to the accompaniment of the *aulos* by a chorus at the beginning of the festivals.

⁶ For this and much of what follows my source is Bernd Seidensticker, "Dithyramb, Comedy, and Satyr-Play," in *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. Justina Gregory (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).

contrast to both tragedy and comedy, the chorus of satyrs in a satyr play takes an active part in the action of the drama; whereas, the chorus of tragedies and comedies is usually relegated to observation and commentary. And finally, the scene of satyr plays is generally “trees, caves, and mountains,” whereas the scene of tragedies is usually a palace, while the scene of comedies is usually the common spaces of a city.

Though satyr plays are a distinct genre from comedy proper, it does not seem to me to follow necessarily that some of the things said about comedy cannot also be said about satyr play and vice versa. Even Seidensticker, who is adamant about the difference between satyr play and comedy,⁷ admits that they both have essentially the same function, namely “to get the audience to laugh.”⁸ Thus just as Tragedy may be categorized as “that which is performed for the sake of fear and pity,” so perhaps we may group satyr play and comedy together under the heading “that which is performed for the sake of laughter.” And it is in this sense that what Socrates speaks about at the end of the *Symposium* as comedy, may also refer back to the speeches I have categorized as satyr plays in the two tetralogies.

The second major objection may be that it is not at all clear that Plato believed there was a science of tragedy and comedy. At *Republic* 395A Socrates evinces clear awareness that as a matter of fact the same person does not write tragedies and comedies. This might be explained, as James Adam does, by saying that in *Republic* he is talking about what in fact is the case, whereas in *Symposium* he is talking about what should be the case.⁹ The case of the *Ion* is more complex. For at *Ion* 534c Socrates seems to say that good poetry *cannot* be produced by a scientific method. But even if Plato believes that as a matter of fact, good poetry is not produced by scientific means, it seems to me, we may still ask why Plato seems to think in the *Symposium* that if it were produced scientifically, the same person would be able to write tragedies and comedies? It is true that, as Adam points out,¹⁰ it is a Socratic principle that there should be one science for every pair of opposites, but we can still ask, what is it about tragedy and comedy in particular that makes Socrates think, at least in the *Symposium* that there could be a single science or craft of both?

Having hopefully addressed these objections, let us turn now to the comparison of the two tetralogies: the first, we might call the ‘demotic tetralogy,’ and the second is the ‘philosophic tetralogy.’ In the first tetralogy we will see that each speech fails to adequately address the problems of love and life in their content. In the second, the methodology and content are correct – or so it would appear Plato thinks – but still, the speeches fail to bring the reader to the knowledge of the good and the solution to our mortality. After showing this, we will consider why Plato thinks neither tragedy nor comedy offers a solution to life, and why he thinks only philosophy can.

III. THE FIRST, OR DEMOTIC TETRALOGY

If we accept the bi-tetralogical structure of the *Symposium*, we can further analyze each tetralogy as follows: thesis, antithesis, development, and critique. Thus Phaedrus presents the thesis that love is good because his effects are good. Pausanias disagrees with Phaedrus that love’s effects are always good and thus feels the need to posit two kinds of love. Eryximachus agrees with Pausanias, but he goes further than any of the other speakers in explaining the essence of the good effects of love. At the basis, however, of all the first three speeches lies the assumption that love consists in two beings coming together and that the correct object of love is always another human being. Aristophanes makes this assumption explicit and perhaps also gently ridicules it.

Phaedrus presents the thesis of the first tetralogy: the effects of love are good. Love, he argues, leads to virtuous activity. One would least of all like to be seen doing something shameful in the eyes of one’s lover. As proof he adduces the myths of Alcestis, Orpheus and Achilles. It was said that all the speeches of the first tetralogy fail because they do not address the central problems of love, among which are the problems of suffering and death. But here, in the first speech of the first tetralogy Phaedrus explicitly refers and relies on myths surrounding the deaths of three persons. Even though Phaedrus does bring up the subject of death, it is clear that he does not do so in order to emphasize death as a central problem for the question of love and life; rather, he does so only in order to further his program of demonstrating the good effects of love. For a serious discussion of the

⁷ “Even if (as is probable) the three dramatic genres arose from the same or closely related cultural contexts, in their fully developed literary forms each as its separate identity.” *Ibid.*, 49.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁹ James Adam, *The Republic of Plato: Edited with Critical Notes, Commentary and Appendices*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1902). ad loc.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

problem death poses for love, we shall have to wait for Diotima's speech in the second tetralogy.

Pausanias presents the antithesis that the effects of love are not always good. Since the effects of love are not always good, he concludes that there must be two gods of love, or two kinds of love. But the problem is that we begin to have doubts even about what Pausanias calls the good kind of love. He argues that in the good kind of love the beloved will be motivated by the desire for virtue which the older lover can presumably confer. But we are not told what the lover gets from this relationship. Presumably sexual gratification, but no investigation is made into whether this indeed is good. Despite this apparent difficulty with his account, Pausanias has provided a definite advance in the dialectic. The effects of love are not always good. But, again, by concentrating on the effects of love, Pausanias neglects love's nature, and thus he misses the central questions of love.

Eryximachus presents the development of Pausanias' contribution. He deepens our understanding of the effects of love. Like Diotima in the second tetralogy, Eryximachus focuses on natures and essences. But unlike Diotima, he focuses on the nature of the effects of love, rather than on the nature of love itself. The good effect of love consists in agreement (*homonoia*: 186e; *homologia*: 187b) and harmony (*harmonia*: 187a; *sumphonia*: 187b).¹¹ The main thrust of his argument is to try to connect the good sort of love with the principle of harmony and concord. He speaks as though love conquers all the discord in the universe, but we are led to wonder whether this is true. As a doctor Eryximachus must know that at best the good kind of love has a temporary victory in the universe. Even the healthiest body, where all the opposing elements are maximally harmonized for the longest time, will eventually succumb to the forces of decay and discord. And we are still left with no answer to the question: what was it all for? Nevertheless, Eryximachus has provided an advance over Pausanias. While Pausanias argued that there must be different kinds of love, since love has bad effects as well as good, he did not investigate the nature of those effects. Eryximachus gives an answer to the question about the nature of love's good effects. But as with all the previous speakers, the ultimate questions concerning love are not answered. And this is because the nature of love itself has neither been explored nor settled.

Like Alcibiades will in the second tetralogy, Aristophanes does not so much continue the progression of the dialectic of the first three speeches, as criticize the basic picture of love which lies beneath the previous speeches in their respective tetralogies. The basic picture of love in the first tetralogy is that it consists in two people coming together. This is obviously the case with Phaedrus and Pausanias, but even with Eryximachus, there is no indication that human love has any other proper object than another person. But, one might well argue, Aristophanes does not paint the picture of the double-people in order to criticize it; rather, he seems to celebrate it. Here I would say that Aristophanes' own humor works against him, and that we need to remember Plato/Socrates' own injunction against taking poets as the ultimate authorities on the correct interpretation of their own works at *Apology* 22a-c. The way in which Aristophanes' own comedy works against the conclusion he draws from it, is precisely the ridiculousness of the imagery of the double-people. Aristophanes counts heavily on this imagery to raise a laugh, but he does not see that the reason it raises a laugh is precisely because it takes to the extreme the idea that one person should couple with another. But Plato may here be highlighting how absurd it looks from a philosophical point of view.

In the end each speech in the First Tetralogy fails because it does not follow a proper methodology. The speeches describe the effects of before defining love itself. They raise problems without adequately answering them. We can either worry about these problems, as in the first three speeches. Or we can laugh about them, as in the last one. But none of the speeches solves the problems.

IV. THE SECOND, OR PHILOSOPHIC TETRALOGY

The structure of the second tetralogy is like the first. Agathon presents the thesis that love is good; Socrates presents the antithesis that love is not good; Diotima then develops Socrates' theme; and Alcibiades provides a criticism of the picture of love which emerges from the dialectic. The second tetralogy is "philosophic" because it follows the correct methodology. It begins by investigating love's nature rather than its effects. But as we shall see in Alcibiades' speech there is a veiled criticism

¹¹ It should be noted that it is not clear whether the words *harmonia* or *sumphonia* mean exactly the same thing as our word 'harmony'. Some translators have favored 'attunement' for the former and 'concord' for the latter, e.g. Nehamas and Woodruff. But I think Eryximachus' point is clear, both *harmonia* and *sumphonia* are kinds of agreement (*homologia*) and as such 'harmony' is not out of place as a translation in this context. Cf. 187b: ἡ γὰρ ἁρμονία συμφωνία ἐστίν, συμφωνία δὲ ὁμολογία τις. Cf. also Kenneth James Dover, *Plato: Symposium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1980). 108; Bury, *The Symposium*: ad loc.

even of the second tetralogy. It necessarily fails to bring us to the vision of the beautiful itself because it is a mimetic representation.

Turning to the speeches, we might well ask why Agathon belongs in the philosophic tetralogy? The answer is because he begins almost in the right way. He begins by considering love itself rather than its effects, and he criticizes all the previous speakers for failing to do so at 194e-5a. Socrates acknowledges that Agathon gets this right at 199c where he states, “Indeed, Agathon, my friend, I thought you led the way beautifully in your speech when you said that one should first show the qualities of Love himself, and only then those of his deeds. I much admire that beginning.” The problem is that it is still not precisely right to begin as Agathon does by attributing all good and virtuous qualities to love. Even though this is not made explicit until Diotima’s speech, the proper procedure is to begin by considering an object’s nature or essence. Only then should one move to consider its qualities and then its effects.

Socrates presents the antithesis that love is not good. He argues 1. That love is “of” something (199d-e); 2. That it is the desire for its object (200a); and 3. That a desire implies a lack or deficiency of the object desired (200a-b). From this he argues that it follows that love can be neither good nor beautiful, as Agathon had claimed. Whether Socrates’ arguments are valid or not would be the subject of another paper. But his conclusion seems insightful and plausible. His overall conclusion is that insofar as love implies some sort of desire, it also seems to imply some sort of lack, deficiency, and imperfection. And thus one who is in a state of love/desire is experiencing an awareness of a lack of goodness. Socrates is the first to begin by considering love’s nature, and thus he advances the dialectic.

But even Socrates fails to give a definition of love. Only with Diotima do we finally get a proper definition of love. Progress toward the definition begins at 204d when she changes the proper object of love from beauty to goodness. The next step was already prepared for us by Socrates when he realized that persons who possessed a quality could still be said to desire that quality in a way. What those persons desire is the continued possession of that property. Diotima reminds Socrates of this when she points out that lovers don’t just want the good, they want the good to be theirs eternally. The full definition of love is at 206a: “In a word, then, love is wanting to possess the good forever.” And this shows the problem with the other speeches. Even if one is lucky enough to attain the good in this life, we still remain mortal beings. So if anything is going to solve the problem of life and love it must tell us two things: first, what is the good, and second how can we possess it forever. Anything which fails to answer these two questions, fails to solve the problem of love, which has become the problem of life. And Diotima does both, even if a bit cryptically. The good turns out to be the eternal possession of the ultimate object of knowledge in the increasingly abstract ascent of the higher mysteries (210a-212a). This is the apex of the ascent of philosophy, where one achieves a vision of the beautiful and eternal life at the same time. But, though we seem to have an answer finally to the question of love and life, the dialogue does not end here, and it is worth considering why.

I would like to focus only on two main points with respect to Alcibiades. The first is that he is or represents Dionysus in the *Symposium*. He crowns the victors of the contest between two tetralogies: Agathon, Socrates and himself, just as Dionysus decides the contest between Aeschylus and Eurpides in Aristophanes’ *Frogs*. This eventuality was prepared for us at the beginning of the *Symposium*, at 175e, where Agathon tells Socrates that Dionysus will soon be the judge of their wisdom. The second point is that Alcibiades shows the problem with the second tetralogy. Alcibiades can and does describe Socrates intimately, but it is clear that he doesn’t understand him, for if he truly did understand Socrates he wouldn’t have run away and lived the life that he did. What I think this is meant to show is that even if a poet had the right method, still the problem with poetry is that at best it can only represent, and therefore it cannot get you to the transcendent solution to love and life.

V. CONCLUSION

Thus, in conclusion, the essay began with two questions: What is the connection between the argument about tragedy and comedy, and the rest of the dialogue? What is the meaning of Socrates’ argument that it belongs to the same person to write tragedy and comedy? Regarding the first question, it turns out there were many connections: First, the *Symposium* takes place at Agathon’s house. Second, Aristophanes is there. Third, Alcibiades is depicted as Dionysus and Socrates as Silenus. And finally there is the Structure of the Dialogue itself, which seems very similar to the dramatic contests performed at the festivals of Dionysus. Regarding the second question, it belongs to the same person to know how to write tragedies and comedies because they are about the subject matter. All three: tragedy, comedy, and philosophy attempt to deal with the problems of life. Two of

the main problems are: What is the good and how do we get it? What is the meaning of it all considering our mortality?

Tragedy and comedy can and do address these problems, but they cannot solve them. They cannot solve the problems because they do not have the right methodology. This was the problem with the first tetralogy. But even if they did have the right methodology, qua mimetic representations they can only give an external description of the good and how to get there. They cannot bring us to the good itself. This was the problem with the second tetralogy. Art and poetry, according to Socrates in the *Republic*, can only hold up a mirror to nature. But the problem for Plato is that he thinks the solution to the problems of life ultimately require transcending the concrete world of the senses. The *Symposium* teaches that only through philosophy can we transcend the concrete world of the senses and find a solution to life's problems. Whether Plato was right about that is another question.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adam, James. *The Republic of Plato: Edited with Critical Notes, Commentary and Appendices*. 2 vols Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1902.
- Brentlinger, John A. "The Cycle of Becoming in the Symposium." In *The Symposium of Plato*, edited by Leonard Baskin. Amherst, 1970.
- Bury, Robert Gregg. *The Symposium of Plato*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Heffer, 1932.
- Cooper, John M., ed. *Plato: Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997.
- Corrigan, Kevin, and Elena Glazov-Corrigan. *Plato's Dialectic at Play: Argument, Structure, and Myth in the Symposium*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004.
- Dover, Kenneth James. *Plato: Symposium*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1980.
- Ferrari, G. R. F. "Platonic Love." In *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, edited by Richard Kraut. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Isenberg, Meyer William. "The Order of the Discourses in Plato's *Symposium*." The University of Chicago, 1940.
- Nehamas, Alexander. "The Symposium." In *Virtues of Authenticity: Essays on Plato and Socrates*. Princeton: Princeton University, 1999.
- Seidensticker, Bernd. "Dithyramb, Comedy, and Satyr-Play." Chap. 3 In *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*, edited by Justina Gregory. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005.

Literary Form and Thought in Aristophanes' Speech

Chair: Arnaud Macé

Platonic Fables as Philosophical *Poiesis*

Rick Benitez

ABSTRACT

Scholars have sometimes noted the importance of fables to Plato by pointing to the passage of *Phaedo* in which Cebes speaks of Socrates embellishing Aesop's fables (ἐντείνας τοὺς τοῦ Αἰσώπου λόγους, 60d1). Some have suggested that Plato's fables play an important structural role in the philosophical lessons of particular dialogues (e.g. Betegh, 2009).¹ None, however, have gone so far as to describe the Platonic fables as making an important contribution to Plato's critique of poetry generally. In this paper I propose that Platonic fables—short myths, typically incorporating comic elements and embedding a philosophical lesson rather than a caution—have a cognitive function that conventional fables do not: they reflect a rationally ordered picture of how things are. Mimesis of a rational order of things is an aesthetic criterion; we see it at work in Plato's fables, where it provides a model for what Plato believes good poems and myths should do.

A unique context for examining my hypothesis is the *Symposium*, because it presents both a Platonic fable—the fable of Poros and Penia—and a fable in conventional form—Aristophanes' fable of the circle-men. In the *Symposium* it is possible to observe both Plato's objections to conventional fables and his recommendations for what fables (and by extension poems and myths) should do. Scholars have generally treated the fable of Poros and Penia as part of Socrates' response to Agathon, but there are many similarities to Aristophanes' fable (such as the union of complementary beings, the neediness of incomplete beings, the relationship of desire to lack, etc.). Despite the structural similarities linking the two fables, however, they function in entirely different ways. While Aristophanes' fable emphasises the irrationality of the human condition, the hubris of human beings, and the need to fear the gods because of their power to destroy, the fable of Poros and Penia emphasises cognitive capacities, approves of unrestrained desire to understand, and establishes intercourse between humans and gods through an intermediate.

Hunter (2004:85)² recognised that the fable of Poros and Penia provides part of the philosophical education of the acolyte of beauty (though according to him only the lowest part). My aim in this paper is to show that the Poros and Penia fable does more than that. Since it incorporates an understanding of the nature, object and function of desire, it is the sort of story that only a teacher who had received the highest vision could tell. It is thus a creation that is born in the presence of the beautiful—the sort of creation that reflects how things really are. The fable of Poros and Penia, then, is not only an inducement to the attainment of rational vision, it is the accomplishment of such a vision.

Sheffield (2006:45)³ has noted that through the fable of Poros and Penia "Socrates envisages stories with the right (philosophical) content." This is correct, but does not go far enough. The fable also allows us to envisage stories with the right form and aim of composition.

1 Gabor Betegh, 2009, "Tale, theology and teleology in the *Phaedo*" in Catalin Partenie, ed., *Plato's Myths*. Cambridge.

2 Richard Hunter, 2004, *Plato's Symposium*, Oxford.

3 Frisbee Sheffield, 2006, *Plato's Symposium: The Ethics of Desire*, Oxford.

Tra *Henologia* ed *Agathologia*.
Aristofane e Diotima a confronto sulla concezione del Bene
e sulla Dialettica (*Symp.* 189a1-193e2 e 201d1-212c3)

Claudia Luchetti

θεραπεία δὲ δὴ παντὶ παντὸς μία, τὰς οἰκείας ἐκάστῳ τροφὰς καὶ κινήσεις ἀποδίδοναι. τῷ δ' ἐν ἡμῖν θεῖῳ συγγενεῖς εἰσιν κινήσεις αἱ τοῦ παντὸς διανοήσεις καὶ περιφοραί· ταύταις δὴ συνενόμενον ἕκαστον δεῖ, τὰς περὶ τὴν γένεσιν ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ διεφθαρμένας ἡμῶν περιόδους ἐξορθοῦντα διὰ τὸ καταμανθάνειν τὰς τοῦ παντὸς ἁρμονίας τε καὶ περιφοράς, τῷ κατανοουμένῳ τὸ κατανοοῦν ἐξομοιωῶσαι κατὰ τὴν ἀρχαίαν φύσιν, ὁμοιωῶσαντα δὲ τέλος ἔχειν τοῦ προτεθέντος ἀνθρώποις ὑπὸ θεῶν ἀρίστου βίου πρὸς τε τὸν παρόντα καὶ τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον.

Timaios, 90c6-d7

τεθεάμεθα μέντοι διακειμένον αὐτό, ὥσπερ οἱ τὸν θαλάττιον Γλαῦκον ὀρώντες οὐκ ἂν ἔτι ῥαδίως αὐτοῦ ἴδοιεν τὴν ἀρχαίαν φύσιν, ὑπὸ τοῦ τά τε παλαιὰ τοῦ σώματος μέρη τὰ μὲν ἐκκεκλάσθαι, τὰ δὲ συντετριῖσθαι καὶ πάντως λελωβῆσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων, ἄλλα δὲ προσπεφυκέναι, ὄστρεά τε καὶ φκία καὶ πέτρας, ὥστε παντὶ μᾶλλον θηρίῳ εἰκέναι ἢ οἷος ἦν φύσει, οὕτω καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμεῖς θεώμεθα διακειμένην ὑπὸ μυρίων κακῶν. ἀλλὰ δεῖ, ὦ Γλαῦκον, ἐκεῖσε βλέπειν. - Ποῖ; ἢ δ' ὅς. - Εἰς τὴν φιλοσοφίαν αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐννοεῖν ὧν ἄπτεται καὶ οἷον ἐφίεται ὀμιλιῶν, ὡς συγγενῆς οὐσα τῷ τε θεῖῳ καὶ ἀθανάτῳ καὶ τῷ ἀεὶ ὄντι, καὶ οἷα ἂν γένοιτο τῷ τοιοῦτῳ πᾶσα ἐπισπομένη καὶ ὑπὸ ταύτης τῆς ὀρμῆς ἐκκομισθεῖσα ἐκ τοῦ πόντου ἐν ᾧ νῦν ἐστίν

Politeia X, 611d1-e5

Premessa

Il presente contributo si propone come tentativo di fornire un'interpretazione prevalentemente filosofica di alcuni aspetti del legame presente fra i discorsi di Aristofane e Socrate-Diotima sulla natura di Eros.

Che nel *Simposio* vi sia un filo d'Arianna, teso sapientemente da Platone con il probabile intento, sottolineerei, *didattico* e *protreptico* insieme, di mantenere viva l'attenzione del lettore sull'esistenza di connessioni più profonde fra i due 'encomi' di Amore, è stato già osservato¹: si va dall'inversione dell'ordine dei discorsi di Aristofane ed Erissimaco (185c4-e5), al richiamo esplicito di Diotima, decisivo per la comprensione dell'analogia e della distanza fra le due posizioni (205d10-e3), alla segnalazione da parte di entrambi di voler parlare in modo alquanto *diverso* da quanto ha fatto chi li ha preceduti (si veda rispettivamente 189c2-3 ed in particolare 199a6-b5), fino al tentativo di Aristofane di riprendere la parola dopo Socrate (212c4-d5), interrotto "improvvisamente" (ἐξαίφνης, 212c6) dall'irrompere di Alcibiade sulla scena, ed infine alla conversazione a tre che culmina, fattosi oramai giorno, nell'autentico *enigma* della teoria socratica dell'Unità di tragedia e commedia (223d3-6). È chiaro che, con quest'ultima allusione, Platone ha voluto porre la parola fine ad uno dei suoi capolavori *omettendo* i dettagli indispensabili a comprendere il senso ultimo di un *διαλέγεσθαι* (c6) che si è sviluppato nel corso di buona parte della notte (cfr. 223b1 sgg.).

*Desidero esprimere subito la mia riconoscenza a Platone per averci lasciato, oltre al compito di coglierne le connessioni certo non elementari, un dialogo, l'unico, in cui si parla, *separatamente ed insieme*, sia dell'Uno che del Bene.

¹ Per non appesantire questa presentazione, mi limito ad indicare alla fine una breve lista solo di alcuni fra i testi che ritengo essenziali, per approfondire il tipo tematiche affrontate qui. La mia tendenza innata a privilegiare sempre innanzitutto il lavoro sui testi, sistematico e senza troppe mediazioni, mi ha comunque portata ad imboccare un percorso per certi versi *atipico*, come del resto non può non accadere, quando ci si affidi interamente a Platone.

Aristofane e Platone. Sulla "Natura Originaria", e sul Bene come Uno.

Se questo gioco di rimandi interni al *Simposio* è già un segnale piuttosto esplicito dell'esortazione, da parte di Platone, a prendere seriamente il contenuto del discorso di Aristofane, sulla sua profonda consistenza teoretica non ci sono più dubbi se ci si concentra sulla predominanza del concetto di ἀρχαία φύσις (191d1-2, 192e9, 193c5, 193d4), intorno a cui ruota l'intero argomento. L'insistenza su questa nozione svela l'intento platonico di porre al centro dell'attenzione, servendosi della maschera di Aristofane, sia il tema della natura primigenia dell'Anima, sia della relazione della ψυχή con il Bene, l'oggetto supremo che guida il desiderio psichico di ritorno al proprio stato originario, senza distinzioni, ad un livello iniziale, sulle inclinazioni più o meno filosofiche del soggetto in questione (cfr. *Resp.* VI 505d5-e3 con *Symp.* 191c2-d2, passaggi su cui tornerò a breve).

Per stabilire le innegabili affinità fra questa natura pristina e la concezione platonica dell'Anima considerata nella sua forma pura, è necessaria una breve ricostruzione. Oltre ai due brani che ho citato all'inizio, *Timeo* 90c6-d7, e *Repubblica* X 611d1-e5, possiamo rifarci a quanto descritto nella celebre analogia con il Sole di *Repubblica* VI (508d4-509a5): quando la Psiche è ormai interamente orientata alla visione delle realtà illuminate dalla Verità e dall'Essere (ἀλήθειά τε καὶ τὸ ὄν, 508d5), essa si rivela nel suo aspetto *agatoide* (ἀγαθοειδής, 509a3), ovvero come Intelligenza e Scienza (νοῦς, 508d6 ed ἐπιστήμη, 508e6).

Che questo Essere dell'Anima non si riduca semplicemente ad una condizione statica, ma corrisponda ad una costante *aspirazione* e *tensione*, ce lo dimostra proprio il brano di *Repubblica* X (611d1-e5): per poterne contemplare l'antica natura è *alla sua filosofia* che bisogna guardare. In questa formulazione confluiscono, da un lato, la concezione dell'attività filosofica come μελέτη θανάτου (61b7-84b8) e la teoria della συγγένεια dell'Anima al divino mondo degli εἶδη provenienti dal *Fedone*, e dall'altro, la natura prevalentemente *erotica* dello slancio psichico verso l'Intelligibile proveniente dal discorso di Socrate e Diotima nel *Simposio*, segnalata dal ricorso alla metafora del *contatto fisico-spirituale* (*Resp.* X 611e1, *Symp.* 192b5, ed in Diotima 208e5, 209c7, 211b5-7, 212a2-5). La filosofia dunque, l'Eros rivolto all'εἶδέναι ed alla φρόνησις (cfr. *Phaed.*, 62c9 sgg.), non rappresenta solo il desiderio, certamente realizzabile, anche se con delle limitazioni di ordine 'temporale' (*Phaed.* 66b1-67a2), di un soggetto ancora incarnato, ma costituisce l'autentica *Essenza* dell'Anima, quando la si osservi in ciò che essa è "al di là" (cfr. la perfetta coincidenza nell'uso dell'ἐκεῖσε di *Resp.* X 611b10-d8 e *Symp.* 211e4-212a2) dei vincoli corporei, e per mezzo dell'unico strumento che rende possibile questa contemplazione: la sua stessa Intelligenza. Nel concetto platonico di ἀρχαία φύσις si concretizza infatti quella *simmetria* quasi onnipresente nei dialoghi fra conoscenza dell'Anima e conoscenza delle Idee (cfr. la ἕψη ἀνάγκη di *Phaed.* 76e5), che culmina nell'Autoconoscenza.

L'espressione massima di questa *bellissima sintesi* di ontologia, gnoseologia e psicologia platoniche, la ritroviamo proprio nel passo del *Timeo* (90c6-d7), che descrive la dinamica della ὁμοίωσις θεῶ: l'ἀρχαία φύσις qui si svela, in maniera evidentissima, non nella considerazione del soggetto conoscente, nella sua forma incontaminata, e dell'oggetto del conoscere, presi a sé, *scollegati*, bensì nella *fusione* di questa *polarità* nell'Unità dell'atto noetico. E l'identità che Platone ci esorta a meditare in *Repubblica* X fra ἀρχαία φύσις e φιλοσοφία, intesa con Diotima come conseguimento del Bene mediato dall'unione intellettuale col Bello (cfr. 201d1 sgg.), ci intima a non perdere di vista l'elemento fondamentale di questo 'eterno processo' e di questa 'eterna aspirazione': nell'analogia con il Sole il Bene non è 'solo' causa dell'Essere e dell'Esistenza degli Intelligibili (τὸ εἶναι τε καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν, 509b7-8), è anche causa del 'passaggio' dalla loro conoscibilità al loro *essere conosciuti* (τὸ γινώσκεισθαι, 509b6). Il Bene investe di sé, simultaneamente, e 'servendosi' di quel legame potente che è la Luce, definita come un "terzo" (τρίτον, 507d1, e1), la ψυχή e gli εἶδη, determinandone, nell'atto stesso dell'irradiazione, sia la consistenza ontologica che la connessione reciproca.

In sintesi: *l'ἀρχαία φύσις è per Platone l'Unità del conoscente e del conosciuto, in termini erotico-filosofici, dell'Amante e dell'Amato, causata dall'ἀγαθόν.*

Senza approfondire ulteriormente, bisogna domandarsi se, nel discorso di Aristofane, si celi o meno tutta questa *densità* gnoseologica, ontologica e metafisico-protologica. Fatte tutte le dovute precisazioni, che proverranno anche dal successivo confronto con il discorso di Diotima, risponderò con un sì a questa domanda.

Se analizziamo la condizione dell'androgino, o della natura umana in generale, anteriore all'intervento dicotomico operato da Zeus (189c5-190c1), ci troviamo infatti di fronte ad un essere completamente *inconsapevole* del proprio legame con l'ἀγαθόν in quanto il suo possesso -ammesso e

non concesso che inizialmente lo fosse davvero- connaturato alla sua struttura originaria, non viene riconosciuto come tale.

Questo ci porta ad ipotizzare sin dall'inizio la necessità distinguere almeno due livelli di questa φύσις; platonicamente infatti la non divisione non conduce alla vera unificazione –διαίρεσις e συναγωγή si implicano reciprocamente, e lo vedremo- in quanto quest'ultima è inizialmente presente in forma *indifferenziata* ed *irriflessa*. Parafrasando le parole che userà Socrate nel suo discorso, 'non si desidera ciò di cui non si crede di aver bisogno' (200a1 sgg.), mentre Eros, erede della natura indigente della madre Penia, è sempre 'bisognoso e desideroso' (203c5 sgg.). Con tutta evidenza quindi, la natura che non *vive*, ma 'vegeta', nell'*era* anteriore a quella di Zeus, è completamente priva di qualsiasi tipo di *tensione erotica* orientata verso il Bello ed il Bene, il che esclude a priori che questa tipologia rispecchi con le sue caratteristiche la *confluenza* platonica fra ἀρχαία φύσις e φιλοσοφία, con tutte le δυνάμεις conoscitive che ne conseguono.

Indicazioni chiare di una considerazione negativa da parte platonica delle attitudini degli umani indivisi, provengono dalla loro descrizione come esseri "terribili" (190b5), e dal paragonarli ai Titani (190c4). Anche i loro "grandi/smisurati pensieri" (τὰ φρονήματα μεγάλα, 189b6), non sono rivolti ad altro che a tentare la ἀνάβασις al cielo per aggredire gli Dei (190b8-c1). La punizione divina che ne consegue, è il segno più evidente dell'assoluta mancanza di quell'*ordine interiore* (κόσμοι, 193a4, da cfr. con 190e4-5), della Giustizia (cfr. τὴν ἀδικίαν, 193a2) e di quella *devozione* (εὐσεβεῖν, 193a8) ed *amicizia verso gli Dei* (φίλοι τῷ θεῷ, 193b3-4), che in Platone costituiscono, insieme, il presupposto ed il fine della ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, *trasformare* la Psiche individuale quanto più possibile nello 'specchio' dell'ordinamento giusto ed invariante degli εἶδη (cfr. *Resp.* VI, 500b8-d2, *Theaet.* 176a5-b3).

Inoltre, non è una coincidenza che il concetto di ἀρχαία φύσις compaia solamente nella 'seconda' parte del racconto di Aristofane (appunto in 191d1-2, 192e9, 193c5, 193d4), mentre 'prima' che Zeus intervenga, la formula utilizzata è la assai meno allusiva ἡ γὰρ πάλαι ἡμῶν φύσις οὐχ αὐτὴ ἦν ἤπερ νῦν (189d6-7). Viene anche evitato il ricorso alla possibile alternativa ἡ παλαιὰ φύσις, che avrebbe potuto farci pensare immediatamente a *Repubblica* X (cfr. 611d2).

Il discorso invece, di un'intensità straordinaria, che il Dio Efesto rivolge alle due metà dell'umano *diviso*, si innesta su uno sfondo che corrisponde *fedelmente* alla visione platonica del legame fra ψυχή ed ἀγαθόν: le Anime di ciascuna delle due metà non sono "capaci di dire" (192c3, d1) il perché del rapimento -avendo già escluso che sia di tipo puramente sessuale (192c5)- che le domina quando riescono a ritrovarsi e ad "Essere insieme" (συνών, 192c6); le due metà possono solo *indovinare* questo desiderio irresistibile e *manifestarlo in forma enigmatica* (μαντεύεται ὃ βούλεται, καὶ αἰνίττεται, 192d1-2), e, se interrogate ancora al riguardo, continuano a rimanere nell'*incertezza* e nell'*imbarazzo* (ἀποροῦντας, 192d5). Ci troviamo qui esattamente nella stessa costellazione teorica del libro VI di *Repubblica*, 505d5-e3: l'Anima, che nel caso del Bene non si accontenta mai dell'apparenza, ma lo cerca nella sua realtà, agisce sempre *in vista di esso* (cfr. il τούτου ἕνεκα di 505d11 con *Symp.* 192c6), anche quando *indovini* soltanto che cosa esso sia (ἀπομαντεθομένη τι εἶναι, 505e1), essendo *incerta* ed incapace di coglierne *a sufficienza* l'Essenza (ἀποροῦσα δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσα λαβεῖν ἱκανῶς τί ποτ' ἐστίν, 505e1-2).

Questo parallelismo marcatissimo ci permette anche di individuare una differenza prospettica, ovviamente consapevolmente ricercata da Platone in qualità di *scrittore* del *Simposio*, ma *sostanziale*, su cui mi concentrerò in tutto quanto segue. L'ἀγαθόν non è affatto assente dal λόγος di Aristofane: vi si fa esplicito riferimento, alla fine, nei termini della *felicità* e della *beatitudine* (εὐδαιμον, 193c3, μακαρίους καὶ εὐδαιμόνας, 193d5), e del conseguimento di quell'*ottimo* (ἄριστον, 193c6, c7) che derivano appunto dalla ricostituzione dell'ἀρχαία φύσις (193c2-5).

Il Bene però, non è il fine primario delle Anime che anelano alla ricostituzione della loro natura originaria: inconsapevoli di ciò che auspicano dalla loro metà perduta (191c2-4), non desiderano altro che "ridiventare, da due, uno" (ἐκ δυοῖν εἰς γενέσθαι, 192e8-9); perciò perseguono la "totalità" (τοῦ ὅλου), perché la loro condizione era quella di 'interi' (ὅλοι, 192e10), *intendendo con ciò che erano assolutamente Uno* (ἓν ἦμεν, 193a1-2).

Emblematico in Aristofane è quindi il primato dello ἓν sull'ἀγαθόν: diversamente da quanto lascia intendere una considerazione *sinottica* del concetto di ἀρχαία φύσις nei dialoghi, *il Bene è una conseguenza dell'essere Uno, e non la sua causa*.

Diotima, o dell'Uno come Bene.

καὶ λέγεται μὲν γέ τις, ἔφη, λόγος, ὡς οἱ ἂν τὸ ἥμισυ ἑαυτῶν ζητῶσιν, οὔτοι ἐρῶσιν· ὁ δ' ἐμὸς λόγος οὔτε ἡμίσεός φησιν εἶναι τὸν ἔρωτα οὔτε ὅλου, ἂν μὴ τυγχάνῃ γέ που, ᾧ ἑταίρε, ἀγαθὸν ὄν...

Symposion, 205d10-e3

Nel discorso di Socrate, Diotima, alla proposta di definizione di Eros data da Aristofane, τοῦ ὅλου οὖν τῆ ἐπιθυμία καὶ διώξει ἔρωτος ὄνομα (192e10-193a1), risponde con un'alternativa chiarissima: Amore non è in primo luogo Amore dell'Uno, concetto che nella sua polisemia può esprimere sia l'unità della parte che del tutto, ma del Bene *in quanto tale*. La tensione verso l'Uno, dominante nel discorso di Aristofane, va dunque *corretta* e *riletta* come conseguenza del suo essere Bene, e non viceversa.

Una prova straordinaria della priorità dell'ἀγαθόν sullo ἓν si evince dal percorso erotico che conduce al Bene, partendo da una più adeguata definizione di Eros come *Amore del Bene e del suo eterno possesso*, ovvero *dell'Immortalità* (204d1 sgg.), e culminante nell'epifania della Bellezza.

La metodologia *dialettica* adottata nella descrizione dell'ascesi psichica che procede per i diversi gradi dei misteri erotici, presenta delle particolarità a cui è indispensabile almeno accennare: Platone ci ha abituati, dall'*Eutifrone* (6c-e), attraverso la *Repubblica* (libro V 476b-d, 479c-e) ed il *Fedro* (249b-c, 266b-c), sino al *Filebo* (12b-15c), solo per fare pochi esempi, a considerare come prima operazione della Dialettica (cfr. *Soph.* 253c-e) il passaggio, parafrasando il *Fedro*, 'da una molteplicità sensibile ad un'Unità articolata con, ed apprensibile dal ragionamento'. Nel *Simposio* siamo di fronte ad un impiego della συναγωγή e delle sue varianti estremamente più complesso, e questo sotto un duplice aspetto:

1) Innanzitutto abbiamo un'interazione palese e *strutturale* fra Unità e Molteplicità: senza mettere in discussione la chiara organizzazione *piramidale* e *gerarchica* dei vari gradi di manifestazione del Bello, osserviamo che il punto di partenza di questa elevazione non sono τὰ πολλὰ καλὰ, come ci si potrebbe aspettare, bensì un singolo sensibile ritenuto bello (210a4-8). Per evitare il possibile errore di identificazione di questo tipo di unità puramente apparente, con il vero 'Uno' che è il τέλος di tutto il percorso, la συναγωγή *sembra* venire applicata, per così dire, *al contrario*, introducendo solo in un secondo momento una molteplicità sensibile che permetta, per contrasto, di individuarvi un'Unità *ontologicamente superiore* in quanto di tipo non più fenomenico. L'effetto più immediato dell'utilizzo ripetuto di questo metodo, è la produzione di quelle combinazioni possibili di Unità e Molteplicità, che anticipano in modo puntuale la descrizione, esplicitata nel *Sofista*, di tutte le operazioni della διαλεκτική ἐπιστήμη (cfr. 253d1-253e2). Ne consegue anche che, giunti al livello della Bellezza della singola ψυχή e delle molte ψυχαί, la dinamica erotico-dialettica continuerà a svolgersi in ambito esclusivamente intelligibile (210b6 sgg.).

2) In secondo luogo, possiamo apprezzare la presenza, quasi *nascosta*, del ben noto contraltare dialettico di questo procedere per *livelli di Unificazione* sempre più articolati e profondi: la via della διαίρεσις. Quella riconduzione ad unità svolta in apparenza all'inverso, che fa da *mediatore* fra un'unità di ordine inferiore e l'infinita molteplicità che potrebbe seguirle immediatamente, rendendo, come nel caso della fissazione erotica sull'unità apparente di partenza, anche qui, impossibile il riconoscimento di quel tratto *Identico ed Uno* (ἔν τε καὶ ταὐτόν, 210b3), necessario al raggiungimento del livello ontologico successivo, è in realtà il metodo *dicotomico*: ἀπὸ ἐνὸς ἐπὶ δύο καὶ ἀπὸ δυοῖν ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ καλὰ σώματα, 211c3-4. Se ne può concludere che συναγωγή e διαίρεσις, pur non ricorrendo come *termini tecnici*, agiscono sullo sfondo dell'elevazione erotica in modo *sinergico* ed *indissolubile*.

Perché, anche solo partendo da queste poche premesse, è possibile sia sostenere che la prospettiva di Diotima è *agatologica*, che stabilirne la supremazia su quella *henologica* avanzata da Aristofane nel suo discorso? Perché il sentiero iniziatico che conduce alla contemplazione del Bello passa attraverso un processo *espansivo* dall'Uno ai Molti, che colloca esplicitamente alcune Molteplicità (quella di tutti i corpi o quella delle Anime), ad un livello superiore a quello di alcune Unità (rispettivamente del singolo corpo o della singola Anima). Procedendo nella *generalizzazione* evidentemente queste Molteplicità vengono ulteriormente *sintetizzate* in Unità ancora superiori fino ad arrivare al τέλος. Le Unità *sintetiche* che di volta in volta vengono contemplate, si presentano perciò come Esseri *Uni-molteplici* , ovvero come delle *Totalità* o *Interi* , ὅλοι.

Da un punto di vista ontologico dunque, l'Idea del Bello-Bene, pur essendo μονοειδής (211b1, e4), si presenta come l'antitesi più radicale di quel presunto atomismo monolitico ed a-dialettico sul quale Platone, secondo molte interpretazioni moderne, avrebbe impostato la sua teoria delle Idee, e che poi avrebbe abbandonato, del tutto o in parte, nei dialoghi tardi.

In un'ottica metafisico-protologica, tornando al richiamo ad Aristofane di Diotima in 205d10-

e3, le parole della Sacerdotessa si potrebbero riformulare come segue: se è vero che Amore del Bene è Amore dell'Uno -ricordiamo che si parte dal grado infimo dello slancio erotico verso l'Uno, quello rivolto al singolo corpo- non necessariamente vale l'inverso, ovvero che Amore di un'unità qualsivoglia sia Amore del Bene. Amore dell'Uno, per essere Amore del Bene, deve essere *Amore di un'Unità sintetica che sappia fondere insieme, ed in maniera ultimativa, Uno e Non Uno*, ovvero capace di assorbire in sé anche il lungo cammino di *negazioni* (cfr. 210e2-211b5) e *distinzioni* in cui il carattere onnipervasivo del καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν trova la sua espressione più consona.

Come si può facilmente constatare, una ricostruzione di questo tipo non entra in contrasto con quelle testimonianze indirette sugli ἄγραφα δόγματα, che fanno esplicito riferimento *all'identità sostanziale fra il Bene e l'Uno*²: la Metà, o più genericamente, la Parte, ed il Tutto, di cui parla Diotima, sono pur sempre forme specifiche di Unità, dipendenti però da un'Unità originaria intimamente *dialettica*, e non indifferenziata e disarticolata. Detto in maniera ancora più prosaica, permettendomi di richiamarmi al dialogo *Parmenide*, l'Uno-Bene platonico trova corrispondenze decisamente più numerose nello ἔν-ὄλον della seconda ipotesi (cfr. 142b1 sgg.), certo non nello ἔν indifferenziato ed inconfondibile della prima (cfr. 137c4 sgg.)³.

Gli stimoli che provengono dal *Simposio* però, spingono anche a problematizzare molto seriamente la questione del rapporto non solo dell'Uno, ma di entrambi i Principi all'ἀγαθόν, e questo perlomeno in due sensi:

a) In primo luogo perché la *divisione* e la *negazione*, rivelandosi per elementi che non si limitano a permetterci di discriminare 'verticalmente' i livelli dell'epifania del Bello sulla base della loro maggiore o minore consistenza ontologica, determinando bensì, diciamo 'orizzontalmente', la costituzione stessa dell'αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, sono proprio quelle componenti che rendono possibile parlarne come di un *vasto mare* (τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος, 210d4). Coerenza con questa interpretazione agatologica, cioè dialettica, vuole che, se stando alla tradizione indiretta, la διαίρεσις e la ἐτερότης, rispettivamente, dipendono metodologicamente e derivano ontologicamente entrambe dalla ἀόριστος δυάς, ci si svincoli da quella visione della Diade presente in alcune interpretazioni della teoria dei Principi non solo come radicalmente *opposta* all'Uno, ma soprattutto impregnata di connotazioni etiche negative.

L'*utilità* dell'applicazione del metodo dicotomico è evidentissima: per suo tramite viene *divisa, spezzata concettualmente, l'unità* apparente di partenza, svelandone l'illusorietà, nel produrne *due da una*, di modo che la Psiche dell'iniziando possa volgersi alla considerazione della *Totalità delle Unità* appartenenti alla medesima specie (cfr. ancora 211c3-4). Nelle loro manifestazioni metodologico-dialettiche lo ἔν e la δυάς *concorrono* non solamente a *liberare la via* alla visione ultimativa del Bello-Bene, ma *convergono* nella determinazione della sua stessa *natura*: questo θεῖον θαῦμα (211e3, 210e4-5) è *sia trascendente che immanente, assoluto nella sua inconcussa Unità e simultaneamente diffusivo ed onnipervasivo*.

b) Secondariamente, ma non in ordine di importanza, va tenuto conto del carattere *iconico* di Eros, che induce, nel riflettere sulla relazione fra l' ἀγαθόν e lo ἔν, a spostare il baricentro di questo rapporto in maniera ancora più decisa nella direzione *agatologica*: nel brano *centrale* (202d8-203a8), in cui Diotima descrive la potenza (δύναμις) di questo grande δαίμων, Eros è quella forza *ermetica* (ἐρμηνεύων) di *scambio* e di *comunicazione* (ἡ ὁμιλία καὶ ἡ διάλεκτος) fra il Divino e l'umano, capace di *colmare* le 'lacune' (συμπληροῦ) affinché *tutto* risulti, *in se stesso -intrinsecamente-interconnesso* (ὥστε τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ αὐτῷ συνδεδέσθαι).

A mio parere non c'è motivo per non vedere in questa straordinaria illustrazione, anche la descrizione, sottoforma di *immagine*, di una dinamica il cui svolgimento coinvolge, oltre al rapporto 'verticale' fra un'Anima ancora incarnata che anela all'Idea, con questa, innanzitutto la dimensione intelligibile in quanto tale, e questo per due ragioni: la prima è che nel mito immediatamente successivo sulla genealogia di Amore, è possibile intravedere, come è notoriamente già stato suggerito, nelle vesti di Poros e Penia, lo ἔν e la ἀόριστος δυάς dell'insegnamento orale. La seconda, per me ancora più importante, è che forse nell'unica vera *definizione del Bene* che abbiamo nei

² Qui è sufficiente richiamarsi, per la ἀναγωγή del metodo generalizzante che riduce i μέγιστα γένη allo ἔν, alla relazione sullo scritto περὶ τῶν ἐναντίων (Alessandro di Afrodisia, *Commento alla Metafisica di Aristotele*, 250, 20, sgg. Hayduck), e per la riduzione della serie positiva ad Aristotele, *Metafisica* Δ 15, 1021a9 sgg. Per la specifica dipendenza della ταυτότης dalla ἐνότης, cfr. *Metaph.* Δ 1018a7, e per la fondamentale identificazione fra ἀγαθόν e ἔν cfr., a titolo esemplificativo, *Metaph.* N 4, 1091b14.

³ Per esigenze di sintesi ho dovuto rinunciare ad una disamina, entro la concezione plotiniana della henosis, della recezione, più o meno esplicita, del mito dell'androgino. Alcuni aspetti del discorso di Aristofane (cfr. *Enn.* IV,3,12) diventano centrali, accanto ad una lettura radicalmente *monista* della teoria platonica dei Principi (cfr. *Enn.* V, 3, 15 and V, 4, 2), sia per distinguere il νοῦς ἑμφορικός dal νοῦς ἐρῶν (cfr. *Enn.* III,5, 4-7 and VI 7 31-35.), che per pervenire alla propria visione dell'Uno *superessenziale*.

dialoghi platonici, precisamente nel *Fedone* (99c1-6), l'ἀγαθόν è quell'autentico *potere immortale* che tutto *tiene insieme* e tutto *collega*:...ὡς ἀληθῶς τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ δέον συνδεῖν καὶ συνέχειν.

Seguendo questa suggestione, Eros sarebbe *icona del Bene*, proprio in quanto *frutto* della *mescolanza* fra i due Principi, dominati da un'Unica ἀρχή che è loro *immanente*, in quanto è identica al *misto*, al *prodotto* della *fusione*, ed insieme li *trascende*, in quanto, essendo la *causa dell'unione*, ne costituisce il fondamento ontologico.

Non solo Eros è immagine fededegna del Bene, lo è anche il φιλόσοφος per eccellenza: Socrate. Unico uomo realmente *demonico* (cfr. 203a4-5, 219b7-c2), unico vero *esperto* di cose d'Amore (cfr. 177d6-8, 198c5 sgg.), Socrate è, come l'*Istante* in cui il Bello-Bene irrompe nell'Anima (ἐξαίφνης, 210e4, 213c1), stando *nel mezzo* fra sapienza ed ignoranza (cfr. 201e10-202a10), una ἄτοπος φύσις μεταξύ (cfr. *Symp.* 175a10-b3, 221d2, e *Parm.* 156d1-e3). Ma questa sua ἀτοπία è la stessa θαυμασιότης del Bello (cfr. 210e4-5 e 213e2, 215b8, 216c7, 219c1, 220a4, a7, 221c3, c6). Proprio in questa *meraviglia* si svela il tratto più profondo della personalità di Socrate, il suo essere ἄφθονος (cfr. *Symp.* 210d6 e ad esempio *Euthyphr.* 3b5-d9, *Phaed.* 61d9-e4), e cioè ἀγαθός (cfr. *Tim.* 29e1-3).

Naturalmente, la ragione ultimativa della supremazia dell'agatologia di Diotima sulla henologia di Aristofane, si radica nella *sorgente di quella antinomia originaria* che, per via *analogica*, dice l'ἀγαθόν in quanto massimo datore di Forma, come ἰδέα ed οὐσία, ed *insieme* come "al di là" della Forma (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας, 509b9-10), quindi, letteralmente, come οὐκ ἰδέα ed οὐκ οὐσία (509b8-9).

Il λόγος di Diotima ci mostra che non c'è bisogno di imboccare *una sola* fra le due vie a discapito dell'altra, perché è proprio *nell'Unione* con ciò che è *massimamente* Idea, il Bello (210e6-211b5), che si schiudono tutta la πρεσβεία e la δύναμις generatrici del Bene.

Solo da una συνουσία (*Symp.* 211d8, 212a2) con questo tipo di 'Unità', per meglio dire, di *causa unificante*, o di *non Dualità*, e né con un'unità primaria ma indifferenziata, né semplicemente con un uno di secondo grado (cfr. Aristofane, rispettivamente 191c7, 192c5, c6), è possibile la *procreazione nel Bello* (τόκος ἐν καλῷ, 206b7-8): come nella *Repubblica* dalla μείζις erotica del filosofo con l'οὐσία sgorgano νοῦς, ἀλήθεια ed ἐπιστήμη (libro VI 490a 8-b8), così, nel *Simposio*, dalla *coesistenza* con il Bello, l'Anima genera la 'restante' *prole* (*Resp.* VI 507a1-5) dell'ἀγαθόν, la vera ἀρετή (212a2-7).

La "Natura Originaria" e l'Uno di Aristofane rivisti in prospettiva agatologica.

La concezione di un Bene che include in sé *dialetticamente* l'Uno, permette, per concludere, di gettare un breve sguardo retrospettivo alla 'seconda' parte del discorso di Aristofane e di mettervi meglio a fuoco alcuni ulteriori elementi genuinamente platonici nella relazione fra l'ἀγαθόν, la ψυχή e lo ἔν.

Ovviamente si potrebbe dubitare dell'opportunità di riconoscere nella descrizione dell'umano diviso degli espliciti richiami ai due metodi fondamentali della dialettica platonica.

Sta di fatto però, che il *dividere per due* compiuto da Zeus, sottolineato con una certa insistenza (διατεμῶ δίχα, *Symp.* 190d1, τεμῶ δίχα, d5, ἔταμε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους δίχα, d7, ἡ φύσις δίχα ἐτμήθη, 191a5-6), compare come *terminus technicus* perfettamente interscambiabile con il noto δίχα διαίρειν dei dialoghi ritenuti espressamente dialettici (cfr. *Soph.* 221e2, 265a11, 265e8, *Polit.* da 261b4 a 302c8, *Phil.* 49a9, ed in *Leg.* V 745c5, d2), ma ricorre anche all'inizio della celebre analogia della Linea in *Resp.* VI 509d6.

Per quanto concerne il *riconduurre ad unità*, anche se a quest'altezza del racconto, Aristofane intende il desiderio di *commistione* e *coniungimento* delle due metà in un'accezione prevalentemente sessuale, la scelta cade sulle espressioni συμπλεκόμενοι di 191a7, συνεπλέκετο, 191b3, e ἐν τῇ συμπλοκῇ, 191c4, συμπεπλεγμένοι, 191e8-192a1, tipiche della συμπλοκὴ τῶν εἰδῶν (*Soph.* 259e6, cfr. 240c1, 262c6, *Theaet.* 202b5, *Polit.* 278b2 fino a 309e10, ed in particolare la significativa connessione fra συμπλέκειν e l'*agatologico* συνδεῖν in 309a8 sgg.). Di συναγωγή invece, come *strumento amoroso* messo a disposizione dall'azione congiunta di Zeus e di Apollo per *risanare* la natura umana, si parla esplicitamente anche in 191d3 (συναγωγεύς).

È interessante inoltre osservare, che col procedimento di *individualizzazione* o di *individuazione* eseguito da Apollo su ciascuna metà, per *sanare* le ferite prodotte dalla *scissione* (190e2-191a5), vengono ricreate quelle condizioni di *ordine interno* (cfr. κοσμιώτερος, 190e4), necessarie a generare un giusto rapporto con il Divino: nel rivolgersi (μετέστρεφε, 190e6 e cfr. *Resp.* VII 518c4-519a1) col volto al proprio ὀμφαλός (190e9), vedendo così *simultaneamente* sia il taglio che la sua *guarigione*, l'Anima di ciascuna metà prende coscienza, in un modo che ricorda fortemente l'*anamnesi* (μνημείον εἶναι τοῦ παλαιοῦ πάθους, 191a4-5, e cfr. *Phaed.* 73c1 sgg.), sia della propria

somiglianza che della *dissomiglianza* dall'origine, ovvero della *convivenza* in essa di *Uno e Non Uno*. Zeus ed Apollo concorrono dunque per primi, nel loro *dividere e ri-unificare*, a favorire la ricostituzione dell'Unità originaria, prerequisito per riconquistare la *μεγίστη εὐδαιμονία* perduta, in quanto questo Principio e Sorgente, è appunto *sia Uno che Dualità* (ποιῆσαι ἓν ἐκ δυοῖν, 191d2, τετμημένος...ἐξ ἑνὸς δύο, 191d5, ὥστε δύο ὄντας ἓνα γεγονέναι, 192e1, ὡς ἓνα ὄντα, e2, ἀντὶ δυοῖν ἓνα εἶναι, e3-4, ἐκ δυοῖν εἰς γενέσθαι, 192e8-9).

Dalla proposta, spiccatamente *demiurgica*, fatta da Efesto alle ψυχαί dell'umano diviso, di *ri-fondere e concreate insieme* in un *Identico ed Uno* (συντῆξαι καὶ συμφυσεῖσθαι εἰς τὸ αὐτό, 192d8-e1) le due metà, è chiaro che l'*ἀρχαία φύσις* così ricomposta non può più coincidere con l'unità *disarticolata* di partenza. Per pervenirvi infatti, è nuovamente indispensabile *l'intervento di un Dio*, ed inoltre questo ricongiungimento potrebbe non essere una grazia riservata a tutti, ma solo a coloro che abbiano raggiunto definitivamente almeno il livello dell'Amore fra le Anime (da 192b5 in poi).

Risiede dunque nella *sapienza demiurgica del Divino, il solo sufficientemente capace di sciogliere l'Uno nei Molti e di riportare il Molteplice ad Unità* (cfr. *Tim.* 68d2-d7), la *vera causa* dei fondamenti di una *dialettica erotica* fra soggetto e oggetto -al livello più alto auspicato da Platone, fra Anima e Idee (cfr. anche *Phaedr.* 250c7 sgg.)- che sfoci nella loro *autentica Unificazione nell'atto intellettuale*.

Se l'uomo non è *nient'altro che Anima* (cfr. *Alc.* I 130c1-3, *Leg.* XII 959a4-b7), servendosi di Aristofane Platone precisa, ulteriormente, la sua mancanza di *Autosufficienza* nella sua singolarità: l'unità psichica individuale è infatti solo un σύμβολον ἀνθρώπου (191d4). La *vera Psiche* risulta invece dall'*assimilazione* con il massimo oggetto d'Amore, in cui la φιλοσοφία può essere vista come la connessione reciproca, 'verticale' ed 'orizzontale' *insieme*, che *lega indissolubilmente* (per il δεσμός più bello e più potente, cfr. *Tim.* 31b8-c4, e *Crat.* 403a3 sgg.) il conoscente ed il conosciuto nella *comune tensione* verso l'ἀγαθόν.

È dunque più che plausibile che nell'*ἀρχαία φύσις* di Aristofane, rivista con lo sguardo di Socrate e di Diotima, si nascondano davvero quella *sintesi primigenia* del *Timeo* fra ψυχή ed εἶδη, *congiunte nell'Unità della Noesi*, e quella realtà *agatoide* della *Repubblica*, Principiato immediato del Bene, che con il soccorso degli Dei possiamo 'ricreare', realizzando il nostro fine: con le parole del *Timeo*, dialogo con cui alcune parti del λόγος di Aristofane andrebbero confrontate sistematicamente, "la migliore delle realtà generate, dal migliore degli esseri intelligibili ed eterni" (τῶν νοητῶν ἀεὶ τε ὄντων ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀρίστου ἀρίστη γενομένη τῶν γεννεθέντων, 37a1-2).

Indicazioni bibliografiche

Edizioni del Simposio

Platone, *Simposio*, introduz. di V. Di Benedetto, traduz. e note di F. Ferrari, 2008²², Milano, Rizzoli.
Platone, *Simposio*, traduz. e commento di M. Nucci, introduz. di B. Centrone, Torino, Einaudi, 2009.
Platone, *Simposio*, traduz. di G. Calogero, introduz. di A. Taglia, Bari, Laterza, 1996.
The Symposium of Plato. Edited with Introduction, Critical Notes and Commentary by R.G. Bury, Cambridge, W. Heffer & Sons Ltd, 1932².

*

K. Albert, *Mystik und Philosophie, Sankt Augustin*, Verlag Hans Richarz, 1986.
W. Beierwaltes, *Denken des Einen. Studien zur neuplatonischen Philosophie und ihrer Wirkungsgeschichte*, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1985.
W. Beierwaltes, *Lux Intelligibilis. Untersuchungen zur Lichtmetaphysik der Griechen*, München, 1957.
S. Delcomminette, *Le Philèbe de Platon: introduction à l'agathologie platonicienne*, Leiden, Brill, 2006.
N. Dimon, *L'infelicità di essere Greci*, Castelvechi-Lit Edizioni, Roma 2012.
M. Ficino, *Über die Liebe oder Platons Gastmahl*, Lateinisch-Deutsch, Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 2004.
J.N. Findlay, *Plato. The Written and Unwritten Doctrines*, New York, 1974.

- H.G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, 1965².
- K. Gaiser, *Platons Zusammenschau der mathematischen Wissenschaften*, in *Antike und Abendland*. Beiträge zum Verständnis der Griechen und Römer und ihres Nachlebens, Band XXXII, 1986, pp. 89-124.
- K. Gaiser, *La dottrina non scritta di Platone [Platons ungeschriebene Lehre, 1968²]*, traduz. di V. Cicero, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1994.
- K. Gaiser, *Testimonia Platonica. Le antiche testimonianze sulle dottrine non scritte di Platone*, [in *Platons ungeschriebene Lehre, 1963*], ediz. it. a c. di G. Reale e V. Cicero, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1998.
- K. Gaiser, *Platonische Dialektik – damals und heute*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, hrsg. von T.A. Szlezák und K.-H. Stanzel, Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, pp. 177-203.
- G. Giannantoni, *Dialogo socratico e nascita della dialettica nella filosofia di Platone*, Edizione postuma a c. di B. Centrone, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2005.
- J. Halfwassen, *Monismus und Dualismus in Platons Prinzipienlehre*, in *Platonisches Philosophieren. Zehn Beiträge zum Ehre von H.J. Krämer*, Spudasmata, 82, 2001, pp. 67-85.
- N. Hartmann, *Platos Logik des Seins*, Berlin, Walter De Gruyter & Co., 1965².
- G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, in *Sämtliche Werke. Jubiläumausgabe in zwanzig Bänden*, mit einem Vorwort von K.L. Michelet, hrsg. von H. Glockner, Stuttgart, Frommanns-Holzboog, 1959 Band XVIII.
- G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über Platon (1825-1826)*, herausgegeben, eingeleitet und mit Anmerkungen versehen von J.L. Vieillard-Baron, Frankfurt am Main-Berlin-Wien, Ullstein Verlag, 1979.
- V. Hösle, *Wahrheit und Geschichte. Studien zur Struktur der Philosophiegeschichte unter paradigmatischer Analyse der Entwicklung von Parmenides bis Platon*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, frommann-holzboog, 1984.
- M. Isnardi Parente, *Studi sull'Accademia Platonica Antica*, Firenze, Olschki, 1979.
- H.J. Krämer, *Aretē bei Platon und Aristoteles. Zum Wesen und zur Geschichte der platonischen Ontologie*, Heidelberg, Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1959.
- G. Krüger, *Einsicht und Leidenschaft. Das Wesen des platonischen Denkens*, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1948.
- S. Lavecchia, *Oltre l'Uno ed i Molti. Bene ed Essere nella filosofia di Platone*, Milano-Udine, Mimesis Edizioni, 2010.
- P. Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1960.
- Plotino, *Enneadi*, a c. di G. Faggin, Milano, Rusconi, 1992
- Raphael, *Iniziazione alla Filosofia di Platone*, Fano, Edizioni Āśram Vidyā, 1996²
- Giovanni Reale, *Eros dēmone mediatore. Il gioco delle maschere nel Simposio di Platone*, Milano, Bompiani, 2005.
- Giovanni Reale, «*Tutto ciò che è profondo ama la maschera*». *Aristofane nel Simposio come maschera emblematica delle dottrine non scritte di Platone*, in *Studia Classica Iohanni Traditi oblata*, vol. II, pp. 899-1015.
- L. Robin, *La teoria platonica dell'amore [La théorie platonicienne de l'amour, 1964]*, traduz. di D. Gavazzi Porta, prefaz. di G. Reale, Milano, Celuc, 1964.
- L. Robin, *La Théorie Platonicienne des Idées et des Nombres d'après Aristote*, Paris, Felix Alcan Éditeur, 1908.
- W. Schwabe, *Der Geistcharakter des »Überhimmlischen Raumes«*. *Zur Korrektur der herrschenden Auffassung von Phaidros 247C-E*, in *Platonisches Philosophieren. Zehn Vorträge zu Ehren von Hans Joachim Krämer*, Spudasmata Band 82, hrsg. von T.A. Szlezák und K.-H. Stanzel, 2001, pp. 181-331.
- J. Stenzel, *Zahl und Gestalt bei Platon und Aristoteles*, Leipzig-Berlin, B.G. Teubner Verlag, 1924.
- T.A. Szlezák, *Platone e la scrittura della filosofia. Analisi di struttura dei dialoghi della giovinezza e della maturità alla luce di un nuovo paradigma ermeneutico, [Platon und die Schriftlichkeit der Philosophie. Interpretationen zu den frühen und mittleren Dialogen, Berlin, 1985]*, introduz. e traduz. di G. Reale, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1988.
- T.A. Szlezák, *Unsterblichkeit und Trichotomie der Seele im zehnten Buch der Politeia, Phronesis*, 21, 1976, pp. 31-58.
- E. Zeller-R. Mondolfo, *La filosofia dei Greci nel suo sviluppo storico [Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung, 1892]*:
Parte II. *Platone e l'Accademia antica*. Voll. III\1 e III\2, a c. di M. Isnardi Parente, Firenze, la Nuova Italia, 1974.

**Between Henology and Agathology.
Aristophanes and Diotima Compared
on the Conception of the Good and on Dialectics
(*Symp.* 189a1-193e2 e 201d1-212c3)***

Claudia Luchetti

θεραπεία δὲ δὴ παντὶ παντὸς μία, τὰς οἰκείας
ἐκάστῳ τροφὰς καὶ κινήσεις ἀποδιδόναι. τῷ δ' ἐν
ἡμῖν θεῖῳ συγγενεῖς εἰσιν κινήσεις αἱ τοῦ παντὸς
διανοήσεις καὶ περιφοραί· ταύταις δὴ
συνεπόμενον ἕκαστον δεῖ, τὰς περὶ τὴν γένεσιν ἐν
τῇ κεφαλῇ διεφθαρμένας ἡμῶν περιόδους
ἐξορθοῦντα διὰ τὸ καταμανθάνειν τὰς τοῦ παντὸς
ἁρμονίας τε καὶ περιφοράς, τῷ κατανοουμένῳ τὸ
κατανοοῦν ἐξομοιωῶσαι κατὰ τὴν ἀρχαίαν φύσιν,
ὁμοιωῶσαντα δὲ τέλος ἔχειν τοῦ προτεθέντος
ἀνθρώποις ὑπὸ θεῶν ἀρίστου βίου πρὸς τε τὸν
παρόντα καὶ τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον.

Timaios, 90c6-d7

τεθεάμεθα μέντοι διακειμένον αὐτό, ὥσπερ οἱ τὸν
θαλάττιον Γλαῦκον ὀρώντες οὐκ ἂν ἔτι ῥαδίως
αὐτοῦ ἴδοιεν τὴν ἀρχαίαν φύσιν, ὑπὸ τοῦ τά τε
παλαιὰ τοῦ σώματος μέρη τὰ μὲν ἐκκεκλάσθαι, τὰ
δὲ συντετριφῆθαι καὶ πάντως λελωβῆσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν
κυμάτων, ἄλλα δὲ προσπεφυκέναι, ὄστρεά τε καὶ
φυκία καὶ πέτρας, ὥστε παντὶ μᾶλλον θηρίῳ
εὐοικέναι ἢ οἷος ἦν φύσει, οὕτω καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν
ἡμεῖς θεώμεθα διακειμένην ὑπὸ μυρίων κακῶν.
ἀλλὰ δεῖ, ὦ Γλαῦκον, ἐκεῖσε βλέπειν. - Ποῖ; ἢ δ'
ὄς. - Εἰς τὴν φιλοσοφίαν αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐννοεῖν ὧν
ἄπτεται καὶ οἷον ἐφίεται ὁμιλιῶν, ὡς συγγενῆς
οὐσα τῷ τε θεῖῳ καὶ ἀθανάτῳ καὶ τῷ ἀεὶ ὄντι, καὶ
οἷα ἂν γένοιτο τῷ τοιούτῳ πᾶσα ἐπισπομένη καὶ
ὑπὸ ταύτης τῆς ὀρμῆς ἐκκομισθεῖσα ἐκ τοῦ
πόντου ἐν ᾧ νῦν ἐστίν

Politeia X, 611d1-e5

Premise

In this Paper I aim at giving above all a philosophical interpretation of some of the facets and the clear connections between the speeches of Aristophanes and Socrates-Diotima about the nature of Eros. The subtle Ariadne thread, pulled by Plato all through the *Symposium*, with the probable intention, *didactic* and *protreptic* at once, to keep the attention of the reader concentrated on the existence of deeper conceptual connections between the two ‘encomia’ of Love, has already been highlighted¹: we start from the inversion of the order of the speeches of Aristophanes and Eryximachus (185c4-e5), through the explicit recall of Diotima, which is essential to comprehend both analogies and distances between the two positions (205d10-e3), to the declaration, of Aristophanes and Socrates as well, of their will to talk in a radically *different* way from that of those who preceded them (see respectively 189c2-3 and in particular 199a6-b5), until Aristophanes failed attempt to take the floor after Socrates (212c4-d5), being “suddenly” interrupted (ἐξάφνης, 212c6) from the arrival of Alcibiades on the scene, and finally to the conversation among three which culminates, as the day has already begun, in the authentic *enigma* of Socrates’ theory of the Unity of tragedy and comedy (223d3-6). It is quite clear

*I wish to express explicitly my gratitude to Plato, for having left us, apart from the challenge of grasping the bond between them, which is certainly no easy challenge, a dialogue, the only one, in which he speaks, *separately and together*, about the One and the Good.

¹ To avoid an excessive heaviness of this presentation, I limited myself to indicate in the Bibliography a list of few texts which I consider to be essential to deepen the topics discussed here. However, my tendency to privilege a direct and systematic confrontation with the dialogues, led me to follow, in some respects, an *atypical* path.

that, with this last allusion, Plato decided to write the word end to one of his masterpieces, *omitting* those details that would have been indispensable to comprehend the ultimate meaning of a διαλέγεσθαι (c6) carried out through the greater part of the night (223b1 ff.).

Aristophanes and Plato. On the “Primordial Nature”, and on the Good as One.

If this pattern of internal cross-references in the *Symposion*, is already an evident sign that Plato exhorts us to take the content of Aristophanes’ speech seriously, there should be no doubts as regards its theoretical consistency, if one focuses on the predominance of the notion of ἀρχαία φύσις (191d1-2, 192e9, 193c5, 193d4), around which the whole argument is constructed. The insistence on this notion reveals the platonic intention, wearing the mask of Aristophanes, to draw the attention on the topic of the pristine nature of the Soul, as well as on the relationship of the ψυχή with the Good, the highest object that guides the psychical desire to return to her ancient condition. Within certain limits, it is not necessary to establish distinctions among the more or less accentuated philosophical inclinations of the Souls involved in this myth, from the point of view of their aspiration (see *Resp.* VI 505d5-e3 and *Symp.* 191c2-d2).

To establish the undeniable affinities between this primigenial nature and Plato’s conception of the Soul regarded in her pure form, a brief reconstruction might be useful.

Apart from the two passages, quoted in the previous page, from the *Timaeus* 90c6-d7, and the *Republic* X 611d1-e5, we can refer to a couple of lines of the Sun’s Simile in *Republic* VI (508d4-509a5): when the Soul is definitively oriented to the vision of the realities enlightened by Truth and Being (ἀλήθειά τε καὶ τὸ ὄν, 508d5), she discloses her *agathoid* features (ἀγαθοειδής, 509a3), that is to say, she shows herself as Intelligence and Science (νοῦς, 508d6 ed ἐπιστήμη, 508e6).

The passus of *Republic* X (611d1-e5), proves that the Soul’s Being does not exhaust itself in a static condition, consisting instead in a constant *aspiration* and *propensity*: in order to contemplate her primeval nature, one has to *gaze at her philosophy*. In this formulation are flowing into each other on the one hand, the conception of the philosophical activity as μελέτη θανάτου (61b7-84b8) and the theory of the συγγένεια of the Soul with the divine reality of εἶδη deriving from the *Phaedo*, and on the other hand, the predominantly *erotic* character of the psychical *élan* towards the Intelligible deriving from the speech of Socrates and Diotima in *Symposion*, signalled from the use of the metaphor of *physical and spiritual contact* (*Resp.* X 611e1, *Symp.* 192b5, and in Diotima 208e5, 209c7, 211b5-7, 212a2-5). Philosophy therefore, the Eros aiming at εἰδέναι and φρόνησις (see *Phaed.*, 62c9 ff.), doesn’t only represent the wish, certainly possible to fulfill, though with some ‘temporal’ limitations (*Phaed.* 66b1-67a2) of a still embodied subject, but constitutes the authentic *Essence* of the Soul, when one observes her in what she is “*beyond*” the bodily constraints (see the perfect coincidence in the use of ἐκεῖσε in *Resp.* X 611b10-d8 and *Symp.* 211e4-212a2), and by virtue of the only instrument which makes this contemplation possible: her own Intelligence.

In the platonic concept of ἀρχαία φύσις converges the almost omnipresent *symmetry* in the dialogues between knowledge of the Soul and knowledge of the Ideas (see the ἴση ἀνάγκη of *Phaed.* 76e5), which culminates in *Self-knowledge* (see *Phaed.* 79d1-7).

We encounter the highest expression of this *beautiful synthesis* of platonic ontology, gnoseology, and psychology, precisely in the passus of the *Timaeus* (90c6-d7), describing the dynamic of the ὁμοίωσις θεῶν: the ἀρχαία φύσις reveals herself here, most evidently, neither in the consideration of the subject of knowledge, also in its uncontaminated form, nor in the object of knowledge, taken as such, *disconnected*, but rather in the *fusion* of this *polarity* within the Unity of the noetic act. The Identity, that Plato exhorts us to meditate in *Republic* X between ἀρχαία φύσις and φιλοσοφία, understood with Diotima as the attainment of the Good mediated by the intellectual Union with Beauty (see 201d1 ff.), urges us not to lose sight of the core of this ‘eternal process’ and this ‘eternal aspiration’: in the Sun’s Simile the Good is not ‘only’ the cause both of Being and Existence of the Intelligible (τὸ εἶναι τε καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν, 509b7-8); it is the cause of the ‘passage’ from their knowability to their *being known* as well (τὸ γινώσκεισθαι, 509b6). The Good infuses, simultaneously, ψυχή and εἶδη with itself, ‘by mean of’ that mighty bond called Light, defined as a “third” (τρίτον, 507d1, e1), determining, ‘during’ the act of irradiation itself, both their ontological consistence and their reciprocal connection.

To synthesize: ἀρχαία φύσις is for Plato the *Unity of knowing subject and object of knowledge, in erotic-philosophic words, of Lover and Beloved, caused by the ἀγαθόν*.

Without further deepening, one should ask oneself whether Aristophanes’ speech hides all this gnoseological, ontological and metaphysical or protological *density*, or not. Once all the necessary clarifications will be made, with the support of a comparison with Diotima’s speech, I will answer yes to this question.

If we analyze the condition of the androgyn, or of the human nature in general, prior to the dichotomic intervention of Zeus, (189c5-190c1), we can observe a kind of being which is completely *unaware* of its bond with the ἀγαθόν, for its possession, -just assuming that at the very beginning it was really a possession- connaturated to the original structure of the prime humans, is not recognized as such.

This leads us to hypothesize from the beginning the existence of at least two levels of this φύσις: from a platonic perspective in fact, a *non division* does not lead to a *true* unification -διαίρεσις and συναγωγή imply each other, as we will see- for this unification is initially displayed in an *undifferentiated* and *unreflected* way. Paraphrasing the words that Socrates will use in his speech, ‘one does not desire, what he does not believe to need’ (200a1 ff.), while Eros, which inherited the indigent nature from the mother Penia, is always ‘needing and desiring’ (203c5 ff.). In a most evident way therefore, the nature that does not *live*, but ‘vegetates’ instead, ‘before’ the *age* of Zeus, lacks entirely of any kind of *erotic tension* oriented towards Beauty and the Good, which excludes *a priori* the hypothesis of a correspondence between this first typology of androgyn and human, and the conceptual *confluence* of ἀρχαία φύσις and φιλοσοφία, with all their consequent epistemic δυνάμεις.

Some clear signals of the negative evaluation of the attitudes of the undivided humans, come from their description as “tremendous” beings (190b5), and from their comparison with the Titans (190c4). Even their “huge/unmeasured thoughts” (τὰ φρονήματα μεγάλα, 189b6), are aimed at nothing else but the ἀνάβασις to the sky to attack the Gods (190b8-c1). The outcome, a divine punishment, is the most evident sign of their absolute lack of that *inner order* (κόσμοι, 193a4, to compare with 190e4-5), of Justice (see τὴν ἀδικίαν, 193a2) and of the *devotion* (εὐσεβεῖν, 193a8) and *friendship towards the Gods* (φίλοι τῷ θεῷ, 193b3-4), that in Plato’s view represent, at once, the premise and aim of the ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, *to transform* the individual Psyche, as much as possible, in the ‘mirror’ of the invariant and just order of εἶδη (see *Resp.* VI, 500b8-d2, *Theater.* 176a5-b3).

Furthermore, it is no coincidence that the notion of ἀρχαία φύσις only occurs in the ‘second’ part of Aristophanes mythical reconstruction (precisely in 191d1-2, 192e9, 193c5, 193d4), while ‘before’ the intervention of Zeus the formulation utilized is the less allusive ἡ γὰρ πάλαι ἡμῶν φύσις οὐχ αὐτὴ ἦν ἥπερ νῦν, ἀλλ’ ἄλλοία (189d6-7). Plato also avoids the use of the possible alternative ἡ παλαιά φύσις, which could have let us thought immediately about *Republic* X (see 611d2).

The speech instead, of extraordinary intensity, directed from the God Hephaestus to both halves of the *divided* humans, takes root in a background that corresponds *faithfully* to the platonic vision of the connection between the Soul and the Good: the Souls of each of the two halves are not “able to say” (192c3, d1) the reason for the thrill that dominates them -having already excluded the merely sexual meaning of such an excitement (192c5)- when they manage to find each other again and to “Be together” (συνῶν, 192c6). The two halves can only *guess* the nature of such an irresistible desire and *express it in an enigmatic way* (μαντεύεται ὃ βούλεται, καὶ αἰνίττεται, 192d1-2), and if they would be asked once more, about their condition, they would still remain in a state of *uncertainty* and *embarrassment* (ἀποροῦντας, 192d5). We are here exactly in the same theoretical constellation of the book VI of the *Republic*, 505d5-e3: the Soul, which in the case of the achievement of the Good is never content with an appearance of it, and searches for it constantly in its reality, always acts *in view of it* (see the τούτου ἕνεκα of 505d11 and *Symp.* 192c6), even when she can only *guess* what it is (ἀπομαντευομένη τι εἶναι, 505e1), being *uncertain* and unable to grasp its Essence *sufficiently* -or *satisfactorily*- (ἀποροῦσα δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσα λαβεῖν ἰκανῶς τί ποτ’ ἐστίν, 505e1-2).

This accentuated parallelism, also helps us to detect a *substantial* difference of perspective, which Plato, as *writer* of the *Symposium*, is consciously willing to highlight, on which I will focus in what follows. The ἀγαθόν is not absent at all in the λόγος of Aristophanes: there are explicit references to it, right at the end of the speech, in terms of *happiness* and *bliss* (εὐδαιμον, 193c3, μακαρίους καὶ εὐδαιμονας, 193d5), and of the attainment of that *best* (ἄριστον, 193c6, c7) descending indeed from the reconstruction of the ἀρχαία φύσις (193c2-5).

Despite this, the Good is not the primary goal of the Souls yearning to piece together their ancient nature: unconscious of what they really wish to obtain from their lost half (191c2-4), they do not desire anything else but “becoming again, from two, one” (ἐκ δυοῖν εἰς γενέσθαι, 192e8-9); therefore they pursue the “totality” (τοῦ ὅλου), because their previous condition was to be as “wholes” (ὅλοι, 192e10), *meaning by this that they were absolutely One* (ἐν ἡμεν, 193a1-2). Emblematic by Aristophanes is the priority of ἐν on ἀγαθόν: contrary to what emerges from a synoptic consideration of the concept of ἀρχαία φύσις in the dialogues, *the Good is said here to be a consequence of being One, and not its αἰτία.*

Diotima, or on the One as Good.

καὶ λέγεται μὲν γέ τις, ἔφη, λόγος, ὡς οἱ ἂν τὸ ἥμισυ ἑαυτῶν ζητῶσιν, οὗτοι ἐρῶσιν· ὁ δ' ἐμὸς λόγος οὔτε ἡμίσεός φησιν εἶναι τὸν ἔρωτα οὔτε ὅλου, ἔαν μὴ τυγχάνῃ γέ που, ᾧ ἑταίρε, ἀγαθὸν ὄν...

Symposion, 205d10-e3

In Socrates' speech, Diotima answers to the proposal of a definition of Eros given by Aristophanes, τοῦ ὅλου οὖν τῆ ἐπιθυμίας καὶ διώξει ἔρωτος ὄνομα (192e10-193a1), with an extremely clear alternative: Love is not primarily Love of the One, a notion that in its polisemy can express both the unity of the part and the unity of the whole, but Love of the Good *as such*. Therefore, the longing for the One, dominant in Aristophanes' speech, has to be *corrected* and *reread* as a consequence of its being Good, and not vice versa.

An extraordinary evidence of the supremacy of ἀγαθὸν on ἓν can be deduced from the characteristics of the erotic path, whose departing point is the more adequate definition of Eros as *Love of the Good and of its eternal possession*, that is to say, *of Immortality* (204d1 ff.), culminating in the epiphany of Beauty itself.

The *dialectical* methodology employed within the description of the psychic ascent that proceeds through the diverse degrees of the erotic mysteries, shows some particularities that require to be at least mentioned: Plato accustomed us, from the *Euthyphron* (6c-e), through the *Republic* (book V 476b-d, 479c-e) and the *Phaedrus* (249b-c, 266b-c), until the *Philebus* (12b-15c), just to mention few examples, to behold as the first operation of Dialectics (see *Soph.* 253c-e) the passage, paraphrasing the *Phaedrus*, 'from a multiplicity approached through the senses to a Unity articulated with/and apprehensible through reasonment'.

In the *Symposium* Plato challenges us to grasp a much more complex use of συναγωγή and its variations, from a double point of view:

1) First of all, we have an evident and *structural* interaction between Unity and Multiplicity: without needing to arise any doubt about the clear *pyramidal* and *hierarchic* organization of the various degrees of manifestation of Beauty, one can observe that the starting point of this elevation are not τὰ πολλὰ καλὰ, how one may expect, but a single perceivable object regarded as beautiful (210a4-8). To avoid the possible mistake of identifying a merely apparent unity of this kind with the *true 'One'*, which is the τέλος of the whole path, the συναγωγή *seems* to be applied, so to say, *upside down*, introducing only in a second phase a phenomenal multiplicity, and this in order to allow the initiate to recognize, by contrast, *an ontologically higher level Unity* which no longer belongs to the bodily sphere. The most immediate consequence of the reiterated use of this method, is the production of those possible combinations of Unity and Multiplicity, which punctually anticipate the description, made explicit in the *Sophist*, of all the operations of the διαλεκτικὴ ἐπιστήμη (see 253d1-253e2). It follows further, that once the level of Beauty of a single ψυχή and of the many ψυχαί has been reached, the erotic-dialectical dynamic will keep taking place only within the intelligible realm (210b6 ff.).

2) Secondly, one can notice the presence, *nearly completely hidden*, of the well known dialectical counterpart of this way of forthcoming through more and more articulated and deep *levels of Unification*: the way of διαίρεσις. That reduction to Unity, which seemed to be developed upside down, working as a *mediator* between a lower range unity and the infinite multiplicity that could follow it immediately, preventing, exactly as in the former case of the erotic fixation on the apparent unity of departure, from recognizing traces of Identity and Unity (ἓν τε καὶ ταυτόν, 210b3), which are indispensable to reach the following ontological layer, is in reality the *dichotomic* method: ἀπὸ ἐνὸς ἐπὶ δύο καὶ ἐπὶ δυοῖν ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ καλὰ σώματα, 211c3-4. It is therefore legitimate to conclude that συναγωγή and διαίρεσις, even if they do not occur as *technical terms*, are constantly acting on the background of the erotic ascent in a *synergic* and *indissoluble* way.

Why is it possible, even moving from these few premises, to claim both that Diotima's perspective is *agathological*, and to establish its supremacy on Aristophanes' *henological* position, carried out in his speech?

Because the path of mystic initiation that leads to the contemplation of Beauty, goes through a process of *expansion* from the One to the Many, that evidently places some Multiplicities (like the one of all bodies or the one of the Souls) on a higher level than that of some Unities (respectively, of the single body or of the single Soul). By proceeding with this *generalization*, these Multiplicities are further *synthesized* in higher Unities, until the arrival at the τέλος. Therefore, the *synthetic* Unities contemplated 'from time to time', reveal themselves as *complex* Beings, that is, as *Totalities* or *Wholes*, ὅλοι.

From an ontological point of view then, the Idea of Beauty-Good, even though it is μονοειδές

(211b1, e4), presents itself as the most radical antithesis of the presumed monolithic and a-dialectical atomism on which Plato, in the opinion of many interpreters, would have based his theory of Ideas, to abandon it partially or completely only in the later dialogues.

In metaphysical-protological perspective, going back to Diotima recalling the content of Aristophanes speech, the words of the Priestess could be rephrased as follows: if it is true that Love of the Good is Love for the One -remembering that the starting point is the lowest degree of the erotic *élan* towards the One, the attraction directed to a single body- the opposite statement is not necessarily true, i.e. that Love of just any unity coincides with the Love for the Good. The Love of the One, to be Love of the Good, must be *Love of a synthetic Unity able to fuse together, and permanently, One and Not One*. It signifies: an ultimate Unity capable of including in itself also the long path of *negations* (see 210e2-211b5) and *distinctions*, in which the *pervasive* and *permeating* features of the *καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν* find their highest expression.

It is easy to see, that such a reconstruction does not collide with those indirect testimonies on the *ἄγραφα δόγματα*, which explicitly claim the *substantial Identity of the Good with the One*²: the Half, more generically, the Part, or the Whole, about which Diotima is talking, are always specific forms of Unity, though they depend on a archetypal *dialectical* Unity, not on an *undifferentiated* and *disarticulated* One. To say it in an even more prosaic way, allowing myself to recall the *Parmenides*, the platonic One-Good finds much more correspondences in the *ἔν-ᾧλον* of the second hypothesis (see 142b1 ff.), certainly not in the non dialectical and unknowable *ἔν* of the first (see 137c4 ff.)³.

The suggestions coming from the *Symposium*, though, encourage us to reflect very seriously not only on the relationship of the One, but of both Principles with the *ἀγαθόν*, at least in two directions:

a) First, because *division* and *negation*, having revealed themselves as elements, that are not only allowing us to distinguish ‘vertically’ the levels of the epiphany of Beauty, on the base of their more or less ontological consistence, determining indeed, so to say, ‘horizontally’, the constitution itself of *αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν*, are precisely those components by virtue of which it is possible to describe Beauty as a *wide sea* (*τὸ πολλὸν πέλαγος*, 210d4). Being coherent with this agathological and dialectical perspective implies, that if in the indirect tradition *διαίρεσις* and *ἑτερότης*, are said to be both, respectively, methodologically dependent on and ontologically deriving from, the *ἀόριστος δυάς*, one should free oneself from a view of the Dyad, occurring in some interpretations of Plato’s theory of Principles, not only as radically *opposed* to the One, but above all filled with negative ethical connotations.

The *utility* of applying the dichotomic method could not be more evident: by means of it the apparent unity of departure is *conceptually ‘broken’, divided*, generating *two from one*, so that the Soul of the initiate can comprehend its illusory character and start beholding the *Totality of Unities* belonging to the same kind (see again 211c3-4). Therefore, in their methodological and dialectical manifestations *ἔν* and *δυάς* are *contributing both* not only to *free the path* to the ultimate vision of the Beauty-Good, but they *converge* in the determination of its own *nature* as well: this *θεῖον θαῦμα* (211e3, 210e4-5) is both *transcendent and immanent, absolute in its unshaken Unity, and simultaneously diffusivum and omnipervasivum*.

b) Second, but no less important, one should take into consideration the *iconic* character of Eros, which leads, reflecting on the relationship between *ἀγαθόν* and *ἔν*, to move the center of gravity of this bond even more decidedly in the *agathological* direction: in the *crucial* passus (202d8-203a8), where Diotima describes the *mighty* (*δύναμις*) of this great *δαίμων*, Eros is that *hermetic* power (*ἔρμηνεύον*) of *intercourse* and *communication* (*ἡ ὁμιλία καὶ ἡ διάλεκτος*) between the human and the Divine, able to *fill* the ‘gap and lapse’ (*συμπληροῦ*), so that *everything* can result *in itself - intrinsically- interconnected* (*ὥστε τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ αὐτῷ συνδεδέσθαι*).

In my opinion, there is no evidence not to see in this marvelous illustration, under the form of an *image*, also the description of a dynamic involving, apart from the ‘vertical’ relation of a Soul still embodied yearning for the Idea, above all the intelligible dimension as such, and this for two reasons:

² It should be enough here to refer, for the *ἀναγωγή* of the *generalizing* method, reducing the *μέγιστα γένη* to the *ἔν*, to the report on the writing *περὶ τῶν ἐναντίων* of Alexander of Aphrodisias, in his *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, 250, 20, ff. (Hayduck), and for the reduction of the *positive* series to Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Δ 15, 1021a9 ff. For the specific dependence of *ταυτότης* and *ἐνότης* on the One, see *Metaph.* Δ 1018a7. For the fundamental *identification* of *ἀγαθόν* and *ἔν* see, for example, *Metaph.* N 4, 1091b14.

³ In such a brief account I had to give up the plan to discuss Plotinus' more or less explicit reception of the myth of the divided humans, within his conception of *ἔνωσις*. Some facets of Aristophanes' speech (see *Enn.* IV,3,12), together with a radically *monistic* understanding of Plato's theory of Principles (see *Enn.* V, 3, 15 and V, 4, 2), become crucial for Plotinus, both to distinguish *νοῦς ἔμφρονος* and *νοῦς ἐρών* (see *Enn.* III,5, 4-7 and VI 7 31-35), and to acquire his own vision of the *superessential* One.

the first, is that in the following myth about the genealogy of Love it is possible to recognize, as it has already been noticed, under the guise of Poros and Penia, the ἔν and ἀόριστος δυάς of the oral teaching. The second, much more important from my point of view, is that maybe in the only *true definition of the Good* contained in the platonic dialogues, precisely in the *Phaedo* (99c1-6), the ἀγαθόν is the authentic *immortal power that truly keeps and connects (everything) together...* ὡς ἀληθῶς τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ δέον συνδεῖν καὶ συνέχειν.

Following this suggestion, Eros would be an *icon of the Good*, by virtue of its being *fruit* of the *mixture* between the two Principles, both dominated from a *Unique ἀρχή* which, being identical with the *mixture*, the *product* of this *fusion*, is *immanent* to them, while being the *cause of the Union*, constituting therefore their ontological foundation, *transcends* them both.

Not only Eros, also the φιλόσοφος *par excellence* is a *faithful image* of the Good: Socrates. The *only* man that can be regarded as *demonic* (see 203a4-5, 219b7-c2), the *only true expert* in matters of Love (see 177d6-8, 198c5 ff.), Socrates is, like the *Instant* in which the Beauty-Good irrupts in the Soul (ἐξαίφνης, 210e4, 213c1), being *in the middle* between wisdom and ignorance (see 201e10-202a10), an ἄτοπος φύσις μεταξύ (see *Symp.* 175a10-b3, 221d2, and *Parm.* 156d1-e3). But his ἀτόπια is the same θαυμασιότης of Beauty itself (see 210e4-5 e 213e2, 215b8, 216c7, 219c1, 220a4, a7, 221c3, c6). Precisely this *wonder* discloses the deepest feature of Socrates' personality, his being ἄφθονος (see *Symp.* 210d6 and, for example, *Euthyphr.* 3b5-d9, *Phaed.* 61d9-e4), that is, ἀγαθός (see *Tim.* 29e1-3).

Obviously, the ultimate reason for the supremacy of Diotima's agathological perspective on Aristophanes' henology, takes root in the *source of that primordial antinomy* which, by means of an *analogy*, tells the ἀγαθόν as ἰδέα and οὐσία, being the highest giver of Form, and as "beyond" Form, *at once* (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας, 509b9-10), so, literally, as οὐκ ἰδέα and οὐκ οὐσία (509b8-9).

The λόγος of Diotima shows us that it is not necessary to follow *only one* among these two ways, excluding the other, for it is exactly *in the Union* with that what is *pre-eminently* Idea, Beauty itself (210e6-211b5), that the whole generative πρεσβεία and δύναμις of the Good become manifest.

Only from a συνουσία (*Symp.* 211d8, 212a2) with this kind of 'Unity', better to say, of *unifying cause*, or *Non Duality*, and neither with a primary but undifferentiated unity, nor with a derived or second degree unity (see Aristophanes, respectively 191c7, 192c5, c6), the *procreation in the Beauty* (τόκος ἐν καλῷ, 206b7-8) becomes possible: as in the *Republic* from the erotic μείλις of the philosopher with the οὐσία gush out νοῦς, ἀλήθεια and ἐπιστήμη (book VI 490a 8-b8), so in the *Symposium*, from the *coexistence* with Beauty the Soul generates the 'remaining' *offspring* (*Resp.* VI 507a1-5) of ἀγαθόν, true ἀρετή (212a2-7).

The "Primordial Nature" and Aristophanes' One reviewed in an agathological perspective.

To conclude, the conception of a Good including in itself *dialectically* the One, allows us to take a retrospective look at Aristophanes' speech, in order to focus in it on some further platonic facets of the relationship between ἀγαθόν, ψυχή and ἔν.

Naturally, one could doubt about the correctness of an attempt aimed at finding in the description of the divided humans strict correspondences with the two fundamental methods of platonic Dialectics.

It is a state of fact though, that the *dividing by two* completed by Zeus, and underlined with a certain insistence (διατεμῶ δίχα, *Symp.* 190d1, τεμῶ δίχα, d5, ἔτεμε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους δίχα, d7, ἡ φύσις δίχα ἐτήθη, 191a5-6), occurs as *terminus technicus* and is perfectly interchangeable with the well known δίχα διαίρειν of the dialogues commonly regarded as dialectical (see *Soph.* 221e2, 265a11, 265e8, *Polit.* from 261b4 to 302c8, *Phil.* 49a9, and *Leg.* V 745c5, d2), but it is used also at the beginning of the famous Simile with the Line in *Republic* VI 509d6.

As far as the *reduction to unity* is concerned, even if at this point of the account, Aristophanes seems to understand the desire of *interrelation* and *conjunction* of the two halves in a mainly sexual sense, the choice falls on formulations like συμπλεκόμενοι in 191a7, συνεπλέκετο, 191b3, ἐν τῇ συμπλοκῇ, 191c4, and συμπεπλεγμένοι, 191e8-192a1, typical for the συμπλοκή τῶν εἰδῶν (see *Soph.* 259e6, 240c1, 262c6, *Theaet.* 202b5, and *Polit.* 278b2 till 309e10, and particularly the meaningful connection between συμπλέκειν and the *agathological* συνδεῖν in 309a8 ff.). The συναγωγή instead, considered as *erotic instrument* put at our disposal from the conjunct action of Zeus and Apollo to *cure* the human nature, is explicitly mentioned also in 191d3 (συναγωγεύς).

Furthermore, it is very interesting to observe that through the process of *individualization* or *individuation* carried out by Apollo on each half, to *heal* the wounds produced by the *scission* (190e2-191a5), it is possible to restore the conditions of that *inner order* (see κοσμιώτερος, 190e4), necessary

to establish a just relation to the Divine: by turning (μετέστρεψε, 190e6 and see *Resp.* VII 518c4-519a1) herself towards her ὀμφαλός (190e9), *seeing simultaneously* the cut and its healing, the Soul of each half becomes aware, in a way that strongly recalls *the anamnesis* (μνημεῖον εἶναι τοῦ παλαιοῦ πάθους, 191a4-5, and see *Phaed.* 73c1 ff.), both of her *resemblance* and of the *dissimilarity* from the origin, in other words, of the *coexistence* within herself of *One and Not One*.

Zeus and Apollo are therefore the first to cooperate, with their *dividing* and *re-unifying*, to reform the pristine Unity, prerequisite to attain the lost *μεγίστη εὐδαιμονία*, for this Principle and Source is *both One and Duality* (ποιήσαι ἓν ἐκ δυοῖν, 191d2, τετμημένος...ἐξ ἑνὸς δύο, 191d5, ὥστε δύο ὄντας ἓνα γεγονέναι, 192e1, ὡς ἓνα ὄντα, e2, ἀντὶ δυοῖν ἓνα εἶναι, e3-4, ἐκ δυοῖν εἰς γενέσθαι, 192e8-9).

Seeing the typically *demiurgic* proposal, directed by Hephaestus to the ψυχαί of the divided humans, to *merge again* and to *concreate together* into a *One and Identical* (συντῆξαι καὶ συμφυσῆσαι εἰς τὸ αὐτό, 192d8-e1) the two halves, it is clear that the ἀρχαία φύσις, so recomposed, cannot coincide anymore with the *undefined* Unity of the beginning. To achieve it indeed, the intervention of a God is, once again, unavoidable, and further, this reconjunction could be a sort of grace that not everyone deserves, but only those who have reached, permanently, at least the degree of Love between two Souls (from 192b5 on).

It takes root, then, in the *demiurgic wisdom of the Divine, the only one sufficiently able to solve the One in the Many and to take the Multiplicity back to Unity* (see *Tim.* 68d2-d7), the *true cause* of the foundations of an *erotic Dialectics* between subject and object -on the highest level hoped by Plato, between Soul and Ideas (see also *Phaedr.* 250c7 ff.)- that flows into their authentic *Unification in the intellectual act*.

If the man is *nothing but Soul* (see *Alc.* I 130c1-3, *Leg.* XII 959a4-b7), Plato takes the chance, through Aristophanes' mythical tale, to further precise its lack of *Self-sufficiency*, regarded in its singularity: the individual psychic unity is just a σύμβολον ἀνθρώπου (191d4). The *true Psyche* results, instead, from the *assimilation* with the highest object of Love, in which the φιλοσοφία can be seen as the reciprocal connection, 'vertical' and 'horizontal' *at once*, that *binds indissolubly* (for the most beautiful and mighty δεσμός, see *Tim.* 31b8-c4, and *Crat.* 403a3 ff.) the knowing subject and the object of knowledge in the *common aspiration* to the ἀγαθόν.

Everything considered, it is more than just plausible that in Aristophanes' concept of ἀρχαία φύσις, *reread* with the eyes of Socrates and Diotima, are really hiding that *primordial synthesis* of the *Timaeus* between ψυχή and εἶδη, *joined together in the Unity of Noesis*, and that *agathoid reality* of the *Republic*, immediate creation of the Good, that we can 'restore' with the help of the Gods, achieving our aim: with the words of the *Timaeus*, a dialogue with which some sections of Aristophanes' λόγος should be compared systematically, "the best among the generated beings, from the best among the intelligible and eternal beings" (τῶν νοητῶν ἀεὶ τε ὄντων ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀρίστου ἀρίστη γενομένη τῶν γεννηθέντων, 37a1-2).

Bibliography

Editions of the *Symposium*

- Platone, *Simposio*, introduz. di V. Di Benedetto, traduz. e note di F. Ferrari, 2008²², Milano, Rizzoli.
Platone, *Simposio*, traduz. e commento di M. Nucci, introduz. di B. Centrone, Torino, Einaudi, 2009.
Platone, *Simposio*, traduz. di G. Calogero, introduz. di A. Taglia, Bari, Laterza, 1996.
The Symposium of Plato. Edited with Introduction, Critical Notes and Commentary by R.G. Bury, Cambridge, W. Heffer & Sons Ltd, 1932².

*

- K. Albert, *Mystik und Philosophie, Sankt Augustin*, Verlag Hans Richarz, 1986.
W. Beierwaltes, *Denken des Einen. Studien zur neuplatonischen Philosophie und ihrer Wirkungsgeschichte*, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1985.

- W. Beierwaltes, *Lux Intelligibilis. Untersuchungen zur Lichtmetaphysik der Griechen*, München, 1957.
- S. Delcomminette, *Le Philèbe de Platon: introduction à l'agathologie platonicienne*, Leiden, Brill, 2006.
- N. Dimon, *L'infelicità di essere Greci*, Castelveccchi-Lit Edizioni, Roma 2012.
- M. Ficino, *Über die Liebe oder Platons Gastmahl*, Lateinisch-Deutsch, Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 2004.
- J.N. Findlay, *Plato. The Written and Unwritten Doctrines*, New York, 1974.
- H.G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, 1965².
- K. Gaiser, *Platons Zusammenschau der mathematischen Wissenschaften*, in *Antike und Abendland*. Beiträge zum Verständnis der Griechen und Römer und ihres Nachlebens, Band XXXII, 1986, pp. 89-124.
- K. Gaiser, *La dottrina non scritta di Platone [Platons ungeschriebene Lehre, 1968²]*, traduz. di V. Cicero, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1994.
- K. Gaiser, *Testimonia Platonica. Le antiche testimonianze sulle dottrine non scritte di Platone*, [in *Platons ungeschriebene Lehre, 1963*], ediz. it. a c. di G. Reale e V. Cicero, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1998.
- K. Gaiser, *Platonische Dialektik – damals und heute*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, hrsg. von T.A. Szlezák und K.-H. Stanzel, Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, pp. 177-203.
- G. Giannantoni, *Dialogo socratico e nascita della dialettica nella filosofia di Platone*, Edizione postuma a c. di B. Centrone, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2005.
- J. Halfwassen, *Monismus und Dualismus in Platons Prinzipienlehre*, in *Platonisches Philosophieren. Zehn Beiträge zum Ehre von H.J. Krämer*, Spudasmata, 82, 2001, pp. 67-85.
- N. Hartmann, *Platos Logik des Seins*, Berlin, Walter De Gruyter & Co., 1965². G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, in *Sämtliche Werke. Jubiläumausgabe in zwanzig Bänden*, mit einem Vorwort von K.L. Michelet, hrsg. von H. Glockner, Stuttgart, Frommanns-Holzboog, 1959 Band XVIII.
- G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über Platon (1825-1826)*, herausgegeben, eingeleitet und mit Anmerkungen versehen von J.L. Vieillard-Baron, Frankfurt am Main-Berlin-Wien, Ullstein Verlag, 1979.
- V. Hölsle, *Wahrheit und Geschichte. Studien zur Struktur der Philosophiegeschichte unter paradigmatischer Analyse der Entwicklung von Parmenides bis Platon*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, frommann-holzboog, 1984.
- M. Isnardi Parente, *Studi sull'Accademia Platonica Antica*, Firenze, Olschki, 1979.
- H.J. Krämer, *Aretē bei Platon und Aristoteles. Zum Wesen und zur Geschichte der platonischen Ontologie*, Heidelberg, Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1959.
- G. Krüger, *Einsicht und Leidenschaft. Das Wesen des platonischen Denkens*, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1948.
- S. Lavecchia, *Oltre l'Uno ed i Molti. Bene ed Essere nella filosofia di Platone*, Milano-Udine, Mimesis Edizioni, 2010.
- P. Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1960.
- Plotino, *Enneadi*, a c. di G. Faggini, Milano, Rusconi, 1992
- Raphael, *Iniziazione alla Filosofia di Platone*, Fano, Edizioni Āśram Vidyā, 1996²
- Giovanni Reale, *Eros dēmone mediatore. Il gioco delle maschere nel Simposio di Platone*, Milano, Bompiani, 2005.
- Giovanni Reale, «*Tutto ciò che è profondo ama la maschera*». *Aristofane nel Simposio come maschera emblematica delle dottrine non scritte di Platone*, in *Studia Classica Iohanni Traditi oblata*, vol. II, pp. 899-1015.
- L. Robin, *La teoria platonica dell'amore [La théorie platonicienne de l'amour, 1964]*, traduz. di D. Gavazzi Porta, prefaz. di G. Reale, Milano, Celuc, 1964.
- L. Robin, *La Théorie Platonicienne des Idées et des Nombres d'après Aristote*, Paris, Felix Alcan Éditeur, 1908.
- W. Schwabe, *Der Geistcharakter des »Überhimmlischen Raumes«*. *Zur Korrektur der herrschenden Auffassung von Phaidros 247C-E*, in *Platonisches Philosophieren. Zehn Vorträge zu Ehren von Hans Joachim Krämer*, Spudasmata Band 82, hrsg. von T.A. Szlezák und K.-H. Stanzel, 2001, pp. 181-331.
- J. Stenzel, *Zahl und Gestalt bei Platon und Aristoteles*, Leipzig-Berlin, B.G. Teubner Verlag, 1924.
- T.A. Szlezák, *Platone e la scrittura della filosofia. Analisi di struttura dei dialoghi della giovinezza e della maturità alla luce di un nuovo paradigma ermeneutico, [Platon und die Schriftlichkeit der*

Philosophie. Interpretationen zu den frühen und mittleren Dialogen, Berlin, 1985], introduz. e traduz. di G. Reale, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1988.

T.A. Szlezák, *Unsterblichkeit und Trichotomie der Seele im zehnten Buch der Politeia, Phronesis*, 21, 1976, pp. 31-58.

E. Zeller-R. Mondolfo, *La filosofia dei Greci nel suo sviluppo storico* [*Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 1892]:

Parte II. *Platone e l'Accademia antica*. Voll. III\1 e III\2, a c. di M. Isnardi Parente, Firenze, la Nuova Italia, 1974.

The Comic and the Tragic: a Reading of Aristophanes' Speech in Plato's *Symposium*

Suzanne Obdrzalek

ABSTRACT

At the close of the *Symposium*, we are left with a striking image: Aristophanes, Agathon and Socrates drink wine from a common cup, as Socrates argues that the skillful tragedian should also be a comic and vice versa. Readers of the *Symposium* might wonder whether this stricture can be applied to Aristophanes' speech. With its grotesque depiction of the cutting of human bodies and the contortions of sex, Aristophanes' speech appears pure comedy. In this paper, I argue that it is in fact fundamentally tragic: it presents humans as both incomplete and incapable of completion.

Though Plato deliberately draws attention to the significance of Aristophanes' speech in relation to Diotima's—she twice makes seemingly anachronistic objections to it (205d-e, 211d)—it has received relatively little philosophical attention. Critics who discuss it typically treat it as a comic fable, of little philosophical significance (e.g. Dover 1966, Rowe 1998), or uncover in it an account of love which recognizes the value of human individuals as love-objects (e.g. Dover 1966, Nussbaum 1986). Against the first set of interpreters, I maintain that Aristophanes' speech is of the utmost philosophical significance; in it, Plato sets forth a view of *eros* as the desire for completion, which is the starting-point for Diotima's analysis. I argue against the second set that Aristophanes' speech contains a profoundly pessimistic account of *eros*. Far from being a response to the individuality of the beloved, *eros*, for Aristophanes, is an irrational urge.

In the first part of my paper, I offer an analysis of human nature as presented in Aristophanes' speech. According to Aristophanes, humans are created both incomplete and aware of this incompleteness. In the second part of my paper, I offer a close reading of the physical transformations undergone by Aristophanes' humans. I argue that Plato subtly indicates that while we may attempt to overcome our incompleteness through finding our other halves, this project is doomed to failure. It is not obvious how we might recognize our other halves; indeed, there is reason to doubt that they even exist. Furthermore, Aristophanes' humans do not appear to seek their other halves, but rather to forget their state of primordial incompleteness by embracing any available partner. In the final part of my paper, I ask what goes wrong with Aristophanes' lovers. Diotima, too, sees man as incomplete, but is hopeful that we can achieve completion through our relationship to the forms. I argue against Dover that what Plato rejects is not Aristophanes' focus on love of particular individuals. Instead, the difficulty with Aristophanes' lovers is their irrationality. Aristophanes' lovers are not depicted as attracted to any qualities in their other halves beyond their ability to complete them. It is only when Aristophanes' analysis of *eros* as originating in lack is wedded to Agathon's emphasis on beauty that *eros* becomes rational and capable of resolution: in the ascent it is the initiate's responsiveness to the beauty of a particular beloved that enables him to eventually love beauty itself (see, e.g., my 2010).

Aristofane e l'ombra di Protagora: origini dell'umanità e *orthoepia* nel mito degli uomini-palla

Michele Corradi

Gli interpreti moderni, da Robin a Strauss, da Rosen a Corrigan e Glazov-Corrigan, hanno spesso colto un rapporto dei discorsi pronunciati dagli interlocutori di Socrate nel *Simposio* con dottrine, particolarità stilistiche ed argomentative riconducibili a varie figure di sofisti.¹ Del resto, alla fine del discorso di Agatone (198c), lo stesso Socrate sottolinea l'ispirazione gorgiana delle parole del poeta, καὶ γὰρ με Γοργίου ὁ λόγος ἀνεμίμησεν. Rivela di aver avuto paura, in modo analogo ad Odisseo alla fine della νέκυια, che Agatone gli gettasse contro la testa di Gorgia, oratore δεινός, per pietrificarlo e privarlo della parola. A Prodicò fa poi allusione esplicita Erissimaco, proponendo il tema del simposio, quale autorità nella produzione di ἔπαινοι in prosa (177b). E una possibile per quanto non sicura influenza di Prodicò coglieva Brochard nella distinzione fra i due tipi di amore proposta nel discorso di Pausania.² Nel discorso di Fedro, più in particolare nella maniera in cui sono citati i testi dei poeti e filosofi, è invece plausibile individuare una forte traccia del metodo dossografico di Ippia (178a-b): lo ha recentemente evidenziato Notomi.³

Certo, com'è stato segnalato da molti critici, è significativo il fatto che tutti gli interlocutori di Socrate nel *Simposio* siano presenti sulla scena del *Protagora*, quale pubblico attento delle *performances* dei sofisti nella casa di Callia (315a-316b): Platone descrive Fedro ed Erissimaco intenti a porre domande a Ippia di argomento naturalistico, περὶ φύσεώς τε καὶ τῶν μετεώρων ἀστρονομικὰ ἄττα διερωτᾶν, Pausania e Agatone seduti accanto al letto di Prodicò coinvolti in una discussione di cui Socrate non riesce a ricostruire il contenuto a causa del tono baritonale della voce di Prodicò. Come nel *Simposio* (212d), Alcibiade giunge solo in un secondo momento, in tempo però per intervenire nella discussione fra Socrate e Protagora in difesa di Socrate.

Troviamo dunque una sola pesante eccezione: Aristofane non compare sulla scena del *Protagora*. A mio avviso, però, proprio nel discorso di Aristofane del *Simposio* (189c-193d), grazie al sottile gioco di maschere sapientemente costruito da Platone, nella trama fitta di riferimenti al dialogo giovanile, può essere scorta l'ombra di Protagora. All'analisi della presenza di Protagora quale "convitato di pietra" seduto a fianco di Aristofane al banchetto di Agatone saranno dedicate le considerazioni che proporrò qui oggi.

Innanzitutto è possibile evidenziare, come è stato almeno in parte proposto da Manuwald, una serie di affinità specifiche, pur nel quadro di una più generale appartenenza all'ambito dei cosiddetti miti platonici, tra il discorso di Aristofane e il mito di Prometeo che lo stesso Protagora narra nell'omonimo dialogo (320c-322d = 80 C 1 DK).⁴

Entrambi i discorsi hanno un carattere eziologico, si soffermano sull'umanità delle origini per spiegare alcuni caratteri essenziali della natura dell'essere umano e in particolare le cause del loro vivere associati: nel caso del discorso di Aristofane, il vincolo d'amore, συναγωγεύς dell'antica natura dell'uomo, tale da rendere una sola cosa due individui separati, ποιῆσαι ἓν ἐκ δυοῖν (191c-d), nel caso del mito di Prometeo, i legami di amicizia reciproca, che sono causa della formazione e della sopravvivenza della città, πόλεων κόσμοι τε καὶ δεσμοὶ φιλίας συναγωγοί (322c).

Se certo per l'interesse per l'umanità primitiva si può richiamare l'*archaia* (si pensi ad esempio all'antologia di frammenti di comici dell'*archaia* sull'età dell'oro salvata da Ateneo nel VI libro dei *Deipnosofisti*, 267e-270a) e se, più in generale, possono essere individuati precisi paralleli tra il racconto sugli uomini-palla e la produzione di Aristofane (ad esempio la *Pace* o gli *Uccelli*)⁵, per il discorso del *Simposio* sono stati messi in evidenza stretti rapporti proprio con tipologie di

¹ L. Robin, *Platon. Oeuvres complètes - Tome IV, 2e partie. Le Banquet*, Paris 1958⁶, xxxvi; L. Strauss, *On Plato's Symposium*, edited and with a foreword by S. Benardete, Chicago 2001; 25-27 e 39-40; S. Rosen, *Plato's Symposium*, New Haven-London 1968, 24-25; K. Corrigan, E. Glazov-Corrigan, *Plato's Dialectic at Play. Argument, Structure, and Myth in the Symposium*, University Park 2004, 33-34.

² V. Brochard, *Études de philosophie ancienne et de philosophie moderne*, Paris 1912, 68-71. Alla presenza nel discorso di Pausania di modalità argomentative protagoree, simili a quelle che si ritrovano nei *Dissoi logoi* pensa G.F. Nieddu, *Pausania: un sofista 'sociologo' nel Simposio di Platone*, in G. Bastianini, W. Lapini, M. Tulli (ed.), *Harmonia. Scritti di filologia classica in onore di Angelo Casanova*, Firenze 2012, II, 651-668.

³ N. Notomi, *Citations in Plato, Symposium 178B-C*, «Studi Classici e Orientali», LIX, 2012 (in stampa).

⁴ Cfr. in ultimo B. Manuwald: *Die Rede des Aristophanes (189a1-193e2)*, in Ch. Horn (ed.), *Platon. Symposium*, Berlin 2012, 89-104. Sull'uso del mito in Platone recenti contributi offrono C. Collobert, P. Destrée, F.J. Gonzalez (ed.), *Plato and Myth. Studies on the Use and Status of Platonic Myths*, Leiden-Boston 2012.

⁵ Cfr. ad es. R. Hunter, *Plato's Symposium*, Oxford-New York 2004, 64-65.

esposizione tipiche dei sofisti⁶. Ben documentata per i sofisti è la composizione di ἐπιδείξεις che rielaborano temi mitologici per sviluppare riflessioni di carattere antropologico, etico e politico: basti pensare a Prodicò, e più in particolare all'apologo di Eracle al bivio delle Ὠραι (84 B 2 DK), e proprio a Protagora, se dal Περί τῆς ἐν ἀρχῇ καταστάσεως (80 B 8b DK) o da un'altra opera del sofista dipende il mito di Prometeo del *Protagora* (320c8-322d5 = 80 C 1 DK).

Certo con buona plausibilità sono stati indicati, soprattutto grazie alle approfondite ricerche di O'Brien,⁷ rapporti tra il racconto di Aristofane e altri filoni della riflessione presocratica, nello specifico l'antropogonia di Empedocle (31 B 61-63 DK), in cui erano presenti creature simili agli uomini-palla di cui ci parla Aristofane. Non si deve però dimenticare che anche la speculazione dei cosiddetti sofisti non era impermeabile ai risultati delle ricerche della fisica presocratica. Probabili riferimenti alle dottrine empedoclee sono presenti nello stesso mito del *Protagora*: si pensi in particolare al riferimento all'origine degli esseri viventi dalla terra, τυποῦσιν αὐτὰ θεοὶ γῆς ἔνδον (320d; cfr. 31 B 62, 4 DK: οὐλοφουεῖς μὲν πρῶτα τύποι χθονὸς ἐξάνετ'ελλον).

Tornando ad una prospettiva più letteraria, si deve rilevare che, dal punto di vista dello sviluppo narrativo, i parallelismi fra il mito del *Protagora* e il racconto di Aristofane sono evidenti. Entrambi i discorsi prendono le mosse da un originario stato di eccezionalità dell'uomo primitivo: nel discorso di Aristofane gli esseri umani sono dotati di forza straordinaria e di pensieri superbi, caratteristiche che li spingono a muovere guerra agli dei (190b); nel mito del *Protagora* un deficit di doti naturali rispetto agli animali rende gli uomini privi di ogni difesa contro i pericoli naturali (321b-c). Segue in entrambi i testi un intervento divino che mira al superamento della situazione aporetica (*Prt.* 321c: ἀπορία, *Smp.* 190c: ἠπόρουσιν) per stabilire una condizione di equilibrio: nel *Simposio* Zeus in collaborazione con Apollo divide gli uomini-palla in due metà affinché pongano fine alla loro intemperanza divenendo più deboli (190c-e), nel *Protagora* Prometeo ruba il fuoco ad Atena ed Efesto perché gli uomini possano trovare nelle τέχναι un sapere utile per la sopravvivenza (321c-e). Tale intervento non risolve efficacemente la situazione e anzi minaccia l'esistenza stessa del genere umano (*Smp.* 191b ἀπώλλυντο, *Prt.* 322c ἀπόλοιο): gli uomini-palla ormai divisi in due, desiderosi di riunirsi, restano avvinti in un abbraccio perpetuo che non permette loro di fare nulla, causando così la loro morte per fame e inattività (*Smp.* 191a-b); nel caso degli uomini primitivi del mito di Prometeo, le τέχναι artigianali, che pure si erano rivelate sufficienti per la ricerca del cibo, non sono in grado di contribuire alla lotta contro gli animali feroci. Gli uomini primitivi sono infatti privi della πολιτικὴ τέχνη, di cui fa parte l'arte bellica. Per questo stesso motivo, quando tentano per salvarsi di riunirsi in città, sono costretti a separarsi nuovamente a causa delle reciproche ingiustizie (*Prt.* 322b-c).

Segue per questo un intervento di Zeus che ha carattere risolutivo ed è causa della condizione attuale degli esseri umani: nel *Simposio* (191b-c), Zeus, impietosito, trasferisce sul davanti i genitali degli esseri umani e crea così la sessualità, che permette di conciliare l'eros con le altre esigenze della vita: per mezzo della generazione nel caso di coppie eterosessuali, per mezzo della sazietà nel caso di coppie omosessuali – si chiarirà in seguito (192a) che proprio chi fa parte di coppie omosessuali maschili sarà per natura portato all'attività politica; nel *Protagora* (322c-d), Zeus, temendo la scomparsa del genere umano, ordina a Ermes di distribuire a tutti gli uomini αἰδώς e δίκη: in questo modo potranno sviluppare la πολιτικὴ τέχνη e dunque la vita associata nella πόλις. Zeus stabilisce però una norma: chi non è in grado di partecipare di αἰδώς e δίκη dovrà essere eliminato come una malattia per la città. Alla norma stabilita da Zeus risponde in una qualche misura il timore espresso da Aristofane alla fine del proprio discorso: se gli uomini non saranno ben disposti nei confronti degli dei, potrebbero essere ancora una volta scissi in due metà come le figure scolpite nelle steli.

Al di là delle evidenti somiglianze dal punto di vista dello sviluppo narrativo, è da sottolineare la presenza nei due discorsi di un'analoga articolazione bipartita: al racconto sugli eventi dell'umanità primitiva fa seguito un'analisi delle conseguenze che tali eventi hanno sull'uomo contemporaneo. Nel *Protagora*, tale articolazione, tematizzata dallo stesso Protagora nell'opposizione tra μῦθος e λόγος (320c e 324d), si ritrova anche nella prima parte del discorso, esplicitamente definita dal sofista μῦθος, in cui è possibile distinguere una sezione narrativa (320c-322a) da una chiaramente argomentativa (322a-324c). Nel discorso di Aristofane, dopo il racconto sull'umanità primitiva (189c-191d), si offre un'ampia analisi dei possibili tipi di relazioni amorose fra esseri umani che proprio in base alle vicende dell'umanità primitiva sono spiegate (191d-193d).

A margine, può valer la pena infine ricordare che la sezione finale del discorso di Aristofane e

⁶ Cfr. ad es. P.W. Ludwig, *Eros and Polis. Desire and Community in Greek Political Theory*, Cambridge-New York 2002, 34 n. 17.

⁷ Cfr. in ultimo D. O'Brien, *Aristophanes' Speech in Plato's Symposium: the Empedoclean Background and Its Philosophical Significance*, in A. Havlíček, M. Cajthaml (ed.), *Plato's Symposium. Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium Platonicum Pragense*, Prague 2007, 59-85.

quella del grande discorso di Protagora presentano un chiaro ritorno al contesto drammatico del dialogo attraverso l'evocazione di vicende relative a personaggi presenti sulla scena: Pausania e Agatone nel *Simposio* (193b-c), i figli di Pericle Paralo e Santippo nel *Protagora* (328c-d).

Come emerge da questa serie di analogie, Platone fa pronunciare ad Aristofane un discorso sotto molti aspetti simile a quello che presta a Protagora nell'omonimo dialogo. Un discorso dunque che, almeno nella particolare prospettiva dei dialoghi di Platone, ha una forte connotazione protagorea.

Tale connotazione può apparire in qualche modo una risposta di Platone al poeta comico che nelle *Nuvole* aveva caratterizzato in senso protagoreo la παιδεία di Socrate: basti pensare all'insegnamento del discorso più forte e del discorso più debole impartito nel φροντιστήριον (94-99, 112-113, 898-1104 = 80 C 2 DK), che riecheggia il celebre ἐπάγγελμα di Protagora τὸν ἥττω δὲ λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν (80 B 6 DK), o alla lezione di grammatica offerta a Strepsiade da Socrate (658-693 = 80 C 3 DK), che attinge chiaramente alle ricerche del sofista sull'ὀρθοέπεια (80 A 26-30 DK).⁸

Del resto riferimenti alle *Nuvole* non mancano nel *Simposio*: alla commedia di Aristofane (362: ὅτι βρενθύει τ' ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδοῖς καὶ τῶφθαλμῶ παραβάλλεις) allude ad esempio in modo esplicito Alcibiade per caratterizzare il coraggio di Socrate che nella ritirata di Delio incedeva βρενθυόμενος καὶ τῶφθαλμῶ παραβάλλων (221b3).

In ogni caso nella connotazione protagorea del discorso di Aristofane non deve essere colta a mio avviso la volontà di una sarcastica vendetta – il desiderio da parte di Platone di vendicarsi delle *Nuvole* è stata ad esempio letto da più di uno studioso nell'episodio del singhiozzo di Aristofane (185c-e)⁹ – ma quella di creare un sottile gioco di maschere. Tale è il peso dell'insegnamento di Protagora sulla cultura ateniese della seconda metà del V secolo che, se Aristofane aveva potuto in modo plausibile costruire la maschera di un Socrate dai tratti protagorei, con altrettanta plausibilità Platone riesce a costruire una maschera protagorea per Aristofane. Del resto, dalle pagine di Platone, che pure non risparmiano critiche nei confronti del sofista, emerge un ritratto di Protagora quale figura di primo piano nella storia del pensiero. La stessa opposizione dialettica fra Socrate e Protagora sull'ἀρετή si risolve nel finale del *Protagora* in uno scambio di posizioni che Protagora approva vaticinando per Socrate un futuro fra gli uomini ἐλλόγιμοι per σοφία (359e-362a).

La connotazione protagorea del racconto di Aristofane e il suo rapporto con le *Nuvole* ci permettono forse di meglio apprezzare un passo sul quale gli interpreti non si sono soffermati con la necessaria attenzione: si tratta della spiegazione del nome ἀνδρόγυνος che Aristofane propone all'inizio del suo discorso (189e). Osserviamo più da vicino il passo. Secondo Aristofane la natura degli esseri umani in origine era diversa. Non esistevano soltanto il genere maschile e quello femminile, ἄρρεν καὶ θήλυ. Ma ne esisteva un terzo. Tale genere aveva caratteristiche comuni agli altri due, κοινὸν δὲ ἀμφοτέρων τούτων. Ora è sparito ma ne rimane il nome, οὐδὲν ὄνομα λοιπὸν, αὐτὸ δὲ ἠφάνισται. Si trattava del genere androgino, dotato di caratteri comuni al genere maschile e a quello femminile sia dal punto di vista dell'aspetto sia dal punto di vista del nome, ἀνδρόγυνον γὰρ ἐν τότε μὲν ἦν καὶ εἶδος καὶ ὄνομα ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων κοινὸν τοῦ τε ἄρρενος καὶ θήλεος. Questo genere non è più presente ma il nome continua a essere utilizzato con un significato dispregiativo, νῦν δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλλ' ἢ ἐν ὀνειδείῃ ὄνομα κείμενον. Aristofane con una struttura particolarmente elaborata fonda la sua riflessione relativa alla natura originaria dell'uomo su un argomento di tipo linguistico-etimologico: il nome ἀνδρόγυνος avrebbe assunto nel greco della sua epoca il significato volgare di "uomo effeminato", "cinedo", che non aveva all'inizio. Nella sua accezione originaria indicava invece, come rivela l'etimologia, un essere che presentava un aspetto, un εἶδος ad un tempo maschile e femminile: Aristofane offre una spiegazione del nome identificandone le due componenti, ἀνήρ e γυνή, e parafrasandole con i sinonimi ἄρρεν καὶ θήλυ. Il nome ἀνδρόγυνος rivela dunque una perfetta corrispondenza fra nome e cosa, tra ὄνομα ed εἶδος. Una perfetta corrispondenza che si è persa a causa della scomparsa del genere androgino, del suo εἶδος – dei motivi di tale scomparsa ci informerà il racconto di Aristofane – e della sopravvivenza dell'ὄνομα con un altro significato, per giunta dispregiativo, ἐν ὀνειδείῃ (si noti il raffinato gioco retorico fondato su *omeoarcto* e *paronomasia* che fa risuonare in ὀνειδείῃ ad un tempo ὄνομα ed εἶδος). Se certo la riflessione sul rapporto tra ὄνομα ed εἶδος suggerisce in modo sorprendente un legame con le pagine del *Cratilo*, credo che non debba essere dimenticato il rapporto con il contributo di Protagora, più in particolare proprio con quanto da Protagora riprende Aristofane nelle *Nuvole*. Com'è noto, Protagora ha dato un impulso fondamentale

⁸ Cfr. O. Imperio, *La figura dell'intellettuale nella commedia greca*, in A.M. Belardinelli, O. Imperio, G. Mastromarco, M. Pellegrino, P. Totaro, *Tessere. Frammenti della commedia greca: studi e commenti*, Bari 1998, 43-130, e M. Corradi, *Protagora tra filologia e filosofia. Le testimonianze di Aristotele*, Pisa-Roma 2012, 133-175.

⁹ Cfr. ad es. M.G. Bonanno, *Aristofane in Platone (Pax 412 et Symp. 190c)*, «Museum Criticum», x-xii, 1975-1977, 103-112: 108-113.

allo sviluppo della riflessione grammaticale antica con le sue ricerche sull'ὄρθοέπεια. In particolare dalle testimonianze antiche ricaviamo la presenza di un importante contributo sul verbo, che anticipava probabilmente la riflessione della successiva τέχνη γραμματική su modi e tempi, e soprattutto sul nome (80 A 25-30 DK). Lo stesso Aristotele nella *Retorica* si riferisce a Protagora come ad un'autorità nell'ambito della distinzione fra i generi del nome (1407b6-8 = 80 A 27 DK): Πρωταγόρας τὰ γένη τῶν ὀνομάτων διήρει, ἄρρενα καὶ θήλεα καὶ σκεύη. Come emerge dalle *Confutazioni sofistiche*, sembra che Protagora giungesse a criticare lo stesso Omero per l'uso di μῆνις al genere femminile a suo avviso scorretto (80 A 28 DK). Nella lezione di grammatica che Socrate impartisce a Strepsiade nelle *Nuvole* (658-691 = 80 C 3 DK) la critica ha da tempo colto una ripresa per quanto parodica abbastanza precisa delle ricerche di Protagora sui generi grammaticali.¹⁰ Nella commedia Socrate cerca di persuadere Strepsiade ad utilizzare nomi diversi per distinguere entità di genere maschile e femminile (è il caso della coppia ἀλέκτωρ/ἀλεκτρυίνα), a correggere i nomi femminili appartenenti alla seconda declinazione per ricondurli alla prima (è il caso di ἡ κάρδοπος che viene modificato in ἡ καρδόπη), a considerare femminili anche i nomi maschili appartenenti alla prima (è il caso di Ἀμεινίας). In buona sostanza dalla scena delle *Nuvole* possiamo ricavare che il contributo di Protagora sui γένη dei nomi andasse nella direzione della ricerca di una corrispondenza tra generi grammaticali e generi naturali. Anche l'ὄρθοέπεια di Protagora si inserisce pertanto in quel filone del pensiero arcaico e tardo-arcaico che s'interrogava profondamente sul rapporto fra ὀνόματα e cose alla ricerca di corrispondenze che fornissero la chiave di un metodo sicuro per la comprensione della realtà. Una tradizione che trovava le sue radici nell'*epos*, in Omero ed Esiodo, autori non a caso studiati e approfonditi da Protagora: si pensi al nome di Odisseo la cui spiegazione nell'*Odissea* svela il destino del personaggio (XIX 403-409) o ai nomi delle Muse nel proemio della *Teogonia* che nell'etimologia rivelano le funzioni stesse del canto (77-79). Lo hanno insegnato a generazioni di studiosi le pagine di Friedländer o di Stanford.¹¹

Nella spiegazione che Aristofane offre del nome ἀνδρόγυνος, interpretato nella sua duplice componente maschile e femminile proprio con i termini che a partire da Protagora assumeranno carattere tecnico per l'indicazione dei generi grammaticali, ἄρρεν e θήλυ, può forse essere vista una trasposizione fantastica se non parodica degli studi che il sofista aveva svolto sul genere dei nomi: la ricerca di una corrispondenza fra generi grammaticali e generi naturali prende vita nella figura di un essere androgino che proprio nella sua commistione di maschile e femminile realizza una perfetta ma difficilmente recuperabile corrispondenza di ὄνομα e εἶδος.

L'Aristofane di Platone intreccia dunque con sapienza racconto sulle origini dell'uomo e riflessione sul linguaggio. In una qualche misura l'interpretazione stessa che del nome ἀνδρόγυνος e della sua evoluzione semantica Aristofane offre nel *Simposio* è motore dello sviluppo narrativo sull'umanità delle origini. In questo Platone sembra chiaramente inserire il suo personaggio nel solco di lunga tradizione letteraria. Come hanno mostrato Risch e, più recentemente, Arrighetti, già nell'epica arcaica l'interpretazione del nome, la spiegazione etimologica è spesso alla base del μῦθος: nella *Teogonia* Afrodite nasce dalla spuma del mare perché alla spuma del mare rinvia l'etimologia del suo nome (188-200).¹² A tale tradizione non sono del resto sorde la commedia arcaica e la produzione di Aristofane in particolare: si pensi al ruolo dei nomi parlanti dei protagonisti delle sue commedie, ad esempio Strepsiade e Dicepoli, o alla capacità insuperata di dare esistenza concreta sulla scena alle metafore di cui il poeta dà ripetuta prova. Nello studio e nella rielaborazione della tradizione letteraria del passato anche Protagora fondava quel ben connesso intreccio di riflessione linguistica, politica e pedagogica che emerge da quanto su Protagora ci offrono il poderoso ritratto sbizzato da Platone e i pochi frammenti conservati da altri autori: sul testo di Omero Protagora esercitava la propria riflessione linguistica, con le tessere dei poemi di Esiodo, stando alla testimonianza del *Protagora*, costruiva il suo racconto sull'origine della πόλις.

Nei discorsi del *Simposio* Platone ci offre uno *specimen* straordinario dei risultati a cui la cultura greca della fine del V secolo era giunta nella rielaborazione della grande tradizione del passato. A tali risultati avevano contribuito in maniera rilevante anche i cosiddetti sofisti, in una certa misura maestri di tutti i protagonisti della scena e "convitati di pietra" del banchetto a casa di Agatone. Fra questi un ruolo di primo attore era certo rivestito da Protagora che, come abbiamo visto,

¹⁰ Cfr. M. Corradi, *op. cit.*, 154-158.

¹¹ P. Friedländer, *Rec. Hesiodi Carmina recensuit Felix Jacoby*. Pars I: Theogonia, «Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen», XCIII, 1931, 241-266, trad. it. in G. Arrighetti, *Esiodo. Opere*, Torino 1998, 495-510, e W.B. Stanford, *The Homeric Etymology of the Name Odysseus*, «Classical Philology», XLVII, 1952, 209-213.

¹² E. Risch, *Namensdeutungen und Worterklärungen bei den ältesten griechischen Dichtern*, in *Eumusia*. Festgabe für Ernst Howald zum sechzigsten Geburtstag am 20. April 1947, Erlenbach-Zürich 1947, 72-91, ora in *Kleine Schriften*, Berlin-New York 1981, 294-313, e G. Arrighetti, *Poeti, eruditi e biografie. Momenti della riflessione dei Greci sulla letteratura*, Pisa 1987, 16-36.

Platone vuol celare fra le pieghe del discorso di Aristofane. Di quel poeta cioè che nelle *Nuvole* aveva invece intagliato una maschera con i tratti di Protagora per Socrate, il maestro di Platone. Solo dopo averla riconsegnata – almeno per un po’ – ad Aristofane, Platone potrà accompagnare, anche grazie alla riflessione di Aristofane e di Protagora sulla tradizione letteraria greca, il suo Socrate a trascenderne i risultati lungo la scala che li condurrà alla scoperta dell’ideale.

What Socrates learned from Aristophanes (and what he left behind)

Samuel Scolnicov

All the speakers who preceded Aristophanes – Phaedrus, Pausanias, Eryximachus – characterized Eros by what he is or does. So will Agathon do. Aristophanes, on the other hand, characterizes Eros not positively but negatively, by what he *lacks*,¹ by what he seeks.

This lack is not simple privation. Immanent in it is a drive for the completion of what lacks. Yet, this immanent drive should not be understood as something of an aristotelean potentiality. It is not a drive towards an essence already immanent. It is a drive towards a completion of what man does *not* have, not for what he already has, albeit in a somewhat different form. What he lacks is *outside* of him, yet it is *his* in an important sense to be characterized by Aristophanes mythically.

The change of order Aristophanes/Eryximachus is, in most cases, passed over or swiftly explained away by the commentators.² However, this exchange of places bears an important structural significance. Aristophanes too, like the first speakers, speaks of the individual; Eryximachus broadens the scope to cosmic proportions. From this point of view, considering the content of his speech, Eryximachus should come last in that series, after Aristophanes. Yet, Aristophanes introduces (or, rather, prefigures) a change of direction as well as a change of tone, stressed by his new place in the order of the speeches, anticipating, as he does, some salient features of Socrates/Diotima's³ speech.⁴

Of course, Aristophanes' myth is not to be taken literally. For example, it has nothing to say about other animals and cannot explain why man is no longer born globular (although, of course, *in illo tempore*, in those mythical times, things happened, as it were, not as they happen today). On this count, Eryximachus' all-inclusive cosmological and anthropological speech is to be considered superior. On the other hand, Aristophanes' myth – like many a platonic myth, if not indeed all of them – expresses in temporal, anthropogenic terms a non-temporal truth, *viz.*, in this case, what Aristophanes sees as man's fundamental nature. In this too, in transferring the discourse to this other plane, his speech is of another order than all the previous speeches.

However, Aristophanes conceives of eros only as a yearning for completion within the same order of being. According to him, man lacks a *part* of his own body, which was mythically taken away from him. Unlike the previous speakers' views of man, Aristophanes' man is *not* self-sufficient. In his speech, man as empirically given lacks half of himself. For the platonic Socrates too, man is not sufficient to himself. Not as Thrasymachus and Glaucon assume in the *Republic*. The shift from the previous speakers in the *Symposium* to Aristophanes is the same as the shift from the political theories of Thrasymachus and Glaucon to Socrates' founding of human society. For Thrasymachus and Glaucon, the individual single man is sufficient to himself and is not in need of others. The others just stand in his way. The function of their states is to manage the conflicts between basically self-contained units of power, by subjugation and submission or by mutual contract. Socrates' state, on the contrary, arises from the basic insufficiency of man, hence his need to collaborate in order to survive. Socrates' man in the *Republic* is *not* a unit unto himself but only a part of the larger unit of the state.

However, man's privation in itself can suscite neither the aristophanic longing for his other half nor the socratic need of collaboration or the powerful attraction towards the Beautiful and the Good. For that, it is necessary that man be *conscient* of his lack. This is why, in the terms of Aristophanes' anthropogenic myth, man has his face turned round: so that he can *see* his deficiency and be vaguely reminded of his mythical pristine state. The conscience of the cut makes man *kosmioteros* (190e). The drive to *kosmos* is a consequence of man's conscience of his deficiency and the desire to overcome it. Eryximachus put much store on harmony and balance, the aim of medicine on a cosmic scale. Aristophanes' hiccups undermine Eryximachus' theory. The latter is quick to restore that harmony by his art, although, against his own theoretical principles of the good and bad *erotes*, he can only cure that disorder by means of yet more disorder. The inordinate state of the body is to be appeased only

¹ I am indebted for this insight to my student Noa Lahav.

² Hoffmann 1947 attempts to explain the change on the basis of the ternary and quaternary structures of the relevant speeches. But I cannot see why the final order could not have been established *ab initio*, without highlighting the still unnecessary change.

³ That Diotima is a stand-in for Plato's Socrates, who cannot yet in character propound positive doctrines, is by now well accepted. Her love lesson follows smoothly from Socrates' elenchus of Agathon.

⁴ But I cannot see in this change of order a pointer to the *dottrine non scritte* (Reale 2001, ad 185c5-d and li-liii, 196-204, esp. 200). Aristophanes' half-men are not *aoristoi duades*. For a thorough 'arithmological' interpretation of the *Symposium* without appeal to any supposed esoteric doctrines, see, *e.g.*, Hoffmann 1947.

by more noise and irritation in the form of sneezes.⁵ Eryximachus can restore the body to its ordered state, even if he cannot explain why he does what he does. But he cannot go beyond natural science as such.

But Aristophanes' own analysis of man's deficiency as the lack of a *part* is pointedly shown not to be quite adequate either. Hiccups and sneezes are not the sort of defect that Aristophanes will address in his speech. They are not a form of bodily incompleteness. Although he exhibits this shortcoming of his own body, Aristophanes cannot account for it in his speech. Even by resorting to the mythical mode, Aristophanes too cannot transcend empirical *phusis*.⁶ The poet's man is conscious only of his longing for some sort of physical completeness. Like his own half-men, who experience *ho adunatoi eipein* (192d), what they cannot say, also Aristophanes exhibits what he cannot formulate. Aristophanes' original men *ta phronema megala eikhon* (190a), were high minded and had proud looks.⁷ They not only conspired against the gods.⁸ Perhaps there is in this phrase some ambiguity, certainly not intended by Aristophanes but possibly played on by Plato, as he is wont to do: they had high thoughts, proud designs, were presumptuous and arrogant, in good and bad sense.⁹ Aristophanes' original men attempted to be like the gods by escalating their place. Diotima will transform those proud thoughts into a drive for *homoiosis theoi*. High thoughts indeed. Aristophanes' man becomes *kosmioteros* by being reminded of the unwelcome consequence of his *hubris* towards the gods. Diotima's man becomes *kosmioteros* as a most fortunate consequence of his attempt at trying to transcend his given state.

Socrates learned from Aristophanes, first of all and most importantly, that man, as empirically given, is defined by what he *lacks* rather than by what he is or does. Moreover, Aristophanes makes quite clear that what man lacks both belongs to him and is outside him, natural to, but not immanent in him, not what he already has.¹⁰ What we have is not simply *inside* us. We do not *have* it, not in our present state, although it is natural to us.

Socrates also takes from Aristophanes the need for conscience of this lack. Only man is conscious, in fact only semi-conscious, of his deficiency. Socrates, through Diotima's speech, again corrects Aristophanes, even while following his clue. True, man longs for wholeness. *Eros* is the name given to *epithumia holou* (192e), desire for the whole. But eros is not just an *epithumia*, not as such. Aristophanes cannot go beyond *epithumiai* as bodily desires. But eros is not only of the corporeal and not of the same order of being as the *epithumiai*. In Aristophanes' myth, man longs for *himself*, for completion of what he lacks. But for Socrates/Diotima this 'himself' is his *ideal* nature. It is his *oikeion*, but it is not *homoion* to him.¹¹ It is akin to him, natural to him, even in this empirical life of his, but it is not like him. Aristophanes has an inkling of this at 193d2-3, in saying that, if we behave ourselves, we can hope that the gods will lead us to our *oikeion*. But he still misunderstands this *oikeion* as what we lack materially.

In all the previous speeches, *eros* was a desire for some form of immortality. Any immortality referred to, however, was only by descendants or else by fame of deeds and works. Animals can reach only physical transcendence in the form of descendants. This transcendence will be interpreted by Diotima as ultimately dependent on another order of being, of which other animals cannot ever be conscious. For Aristophanes, only man is conscious of his incompleteness. Sex organs are turned to the front to allow a certain transcendence, not different from that of the other animals. In any case, these do not interest Aristophanes.

Thus, procreation is not totally incidental to the true motive of eros.¹² It is a way of attaining some sort of immortality in the form of progeny or of something else man cannot put a name to. Aristophanes' men long for something they do not know what it is and cannot achieve it. Man wants to be whole *ekei au en Haidou* (192e), also there in Hades'. 'What is erotic is unconsciously animated by a vision of the "immortal".'¹³ Man wants to transcend this life but he can hardly think beyond some sort of extension of his empirical life.¹⁴ That much Socrates learned from Aristophanes.

Man and even, more obscurely, all animals are driven by their *real* nature, which is *not* immanent in them. Aristophanes' man longs for something else he takes for everlasting wholeness:

⁵ On Aristophanes' implicit critique of Eryximachus, see Hofmann 1947, 14.

⁶ Pace Salman 1990.

⁷ Bury, *ad loc.*

⁸ *Megala phronemata* dicuntur habere qui contra dominis conspirant (Hommel, quoted by Bury, *ad loc.*).

⁹ Cf. LSJ, *ad voc.* II.

¹⁰ *Contra* Hunter 71.

¹¹ Pohlenz 1916.

¹² *Contra* Salman 1990.

¹³ Salman 1990.

¹⁴ As pointed out by Rowe 1998.

the temporal expression of a metaphysical perfection he cannot fathom. In this, he goes wrong twice: he thinks in terms of physical completeness and of temporal everlastingness.

But Plato's soul cannot be immortal in this sense. For Plato, the incarnate soul is the principle of *ordered* movement, and, as such, it has a supra-sensible dimension. This dimension is expressed as immortality only mythically understood as everlastingness. The incarnate soul, as ordered movement, introduces in the world a duplicity of sensible (insofar as it is movement) and of non-sensible reality (insofar as it is order).¹⁵ But if Plato's soul is the principle of ordered movement, it is necessarily prior to time as the number of that movement (*Timaeus*). Thus, the soul cannot be immortal in the sense of indefinite continuation in time. Indefinite continuation in time is the sensible, mythical expression of a non-temporal, non-empirical dimension of the incarnate soul. The soul in its pure form as *nous* (*Republic* x) is not temporal.

Plato is not concerned in the *Symposium* with immortality after death. Diotima does not speak of an after-life,¹⁶ as Aristophanes does not do either. (His Hefaiostos' proposal is merely hypothetical.) She is not concerned with reward after death.¹⁷ Soul comes to its own perfection by attaining its true, non-empirical nature, not by securing its own everlastingness.

Man is not in need of completion; he needs *perfectioning*. He lacks *Vervollkommnung*, not *Ergänzung*, as Pohlenz put it in a slightly different context.¹⁸ What he lacks is not more of the same ontological order. Praxiteles' *Doruphoros* lacks his spear and is, therefore, in need of completion. A Roman copy of it may have all its parts and still fall short of the original. Any first-year conservatory student can play Bach's first *Two-Part Invention* without missing a single note, but not as Glen Gould or Wanda Landowska played it.

Compare, in the *Republic*, the passage from the 'city of pigs' to the 'swollen city'. In the first, man has all he needs for his survival and even enjoys a modicum of happiness. But what Glaucon misses of is not of the order of physical survival. What he needs is something of a different order: luxury, poetry, art, eventually philosophy. Glaucon can begin to name what Aristophanes' half-men could not.

Diotima is indeed concerned with the highest amount of perfection achievable in this life,¹⁹ but not just with some kind of self-perfection by creative work. As Dover justly notes, 'Aristophanes' notion that in sexual eros we are groping in ignorance after something beyond temporary union (192c4-d3) might itself be regarded as an uninformed but not totally misdirected groping after the metaphysical world perceived and expounded by Diotima (210a-212a)'.²⁰ Although he is prepared to say that, in his view, there is here a faint apprehension of recollection, yet he further claims explicitly that 'recollection and the existence of the soul before union with the body are nowhere mentioned by Diotima, and we cannot be sure what view Plato took of the recollection theory when he wrote *Smp.*'.²¹ Aristophanes' myth stresses man's half-conscience of what he lacks and his drive towards completion and procreation, and presents man as fundamentally pregnant. This is as far as Aristophanes can go: not only conscience of the lack but also a vague *memory* of it (cf. *mnemeion* 191a4). But this memory is too vague, it has no inkling of a positive content.

The myth does not quite amount to an 'intimation of the "hyperouranian" place'.²² It only posits a drive for physical completion, knowingly marking man's painful shortcoming, without being able to see, not even through a glass darkly, what this shortcoming implies or where to look for its remedy. Socrates/Diotima will clarify this as a most powerful drive towards man's non-immanent perfection, to which he can approximate by careful recollection of his mythical pre-natal state.

Works cited

- Bury, R.G. 1969. *The Symposium of Plato*. Cambridge: W. Heffer. Second edition.
 Dover, Kenneth J. 1980. *Symposium*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 Frede, Dorothea 1993. 'Out of the cave: What Socrates learned from Diotima'. *Nomodeiktes: Greek studies in honor of Martin Ostwald*. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 397-422.

¹⁵ I cannot go here into a discussion of this vexed question. In a forthcoming article, I argue that Plato's teleology, the principle of order, is not temporal and is, in this sense, external to the pure, absolutely non-directional motility of the *khora*. Cf. Scolnicov (forthcoming).

¹⁶ Frede 1993, O'Brien 1984.

¹⁷ *Contra* O'Brien 1984.

¹⁸ Pohlenz 1916.

¹⁹ Frede 1993.

²⁰ Dover 1990.

²¹ Dover 1990.

²² Salman 1990.

- Hoffman, Ernst 1947. *Über Platons Symposium*. Heidelberg: Kerle.
- Hunter, Richard 2004. *Plato's Symposium*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- O'Brien, Michael 1984. ' "Becoming immortal" in Plato's *Symposium*'. *Greek poetry and philosophy*. Chico, CA: Scholar Press, 185-205
- Pohlenz, Max 1916. Review of Hans v. Arnim, *Platos Jugenddialoge und die Entstehungszeit des Phaidros*. *Gottingsche gelehrte Anzeigen* 178:5 (1916).
- Reale, Giovanni 2001. 'Introduzione', 'Commento'. Platone: Simposio. [Milano]: Mondadori.
- Rowe, Christopher 1998. *Il Simposio di Platone*. Sankt Augustin: Academia.
- Salman, Charles 1990. 'The wisdom of Plato's Aristophanes'. *Interpretation* 18:2 (1990), 233-249.
- Scolnicov, Samuel (forthcoming). 'Plato's atemporal teleology', *Teleology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Split Personalities in the *Symposium* and the *Bible*: Aristophanes' Speech and the Myth of Adam and Eve

Roslyn Weiss

Of the many points of comparison between the Aristophanes myth in Plato's *Symposium* and the myth of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2-3—both are tales of how human beings came to yearn for one another; both are ultimately tales of disobedience on the part of human beings and retribution by the god(s)—I will be focusing my attention on their accounts of (1) why there is attraction between people and (2) how the gods figure in the matter of human attraction. The two myths offer radically different perspectives on the first of these questions, and hence suggest divergent visions of the relationship between the human and divine realms.

I. Why There Is Love between People

Both these myths presuppose that there is something special about the connection between human beings that requires an account, some element in the human longing for one another that cannot be reduced to a reproductive instinct or even to the biologically based love of parent for child. In neither of these myths do the peculiar beginnings to which the relations between human beings are traced apply to other animals.¹

In fulfilling his charge as a speaker in the *Symposium* to compose an encomium to Eros, Aristophanes provides an account of human beings' yearning for one another. In the myth he presents, human beings begin as composites, but are subsequently split apart from one another, so that forever after they seek to recover their lost completion. Once they find their missing half, they do not wish to separate from their complement; promiscuity results only from the unsatisfied search for wholeness.

In the biblical myth of man and woman, man begins alone. The initial condition of the man, of Adam, is not one of self-sufficiency but one of lack or need. Something is missing, but not something he has already had. The only way he can be made whole is via union with a being who is separate from him from the start.

Separate from him, but not entirely so. Woman is made *from* Adam, from part of him. (There is a debate among biblical scholars as to whether *tzel'a* means side or rib, but I am inclined to believe it means rib, insofar as the textual expression is: *ahat mitzal'otav*, one of his *tzel'aot*, suggesting that there are several, and it seems odd to suppose that Adam had several sides.) A part of Adam is removed from him, flesh is added to it to complete the new being, and breath is breathed into that new being, woman.

Let us draw out some of the implications for the nature of human attraction from just these bare outlines of the two myths. In both, a person is missing a part of himself. But the nature of what is missing is significantly different in the two cases. In the *Symposium* myth as recounted by Aristophanes, the original human being was composed of two wholes. Although the human being's power is diminished by being divided in two, nevertheless, each half is on its own complete. The situation is comparable, perhaps, to that of conjoined twins, who, when separated, can each, at least in some instances, have all the organs and limbs necessary for independent existence. Nevertheless each twin profoundly misses the connection with his or her twin. These siblings are indeed often, though paradoxically, described as "inseparable."

In the Genesis myth, unlike in the Aristophanes myth, Adam and the woman do not start out as two complete human beings conjoined with one another. At first there is only Adam, only a man. The sole being who can complete Adam is not even envisioned. Adam's situation is bleak, perhaps even dire. He has power and intelligence—he is smart enough to be entrusted with naming all the animals—and he is placed in charge of the Garden, "to work it and to protect it" (Gen. 2:15). But he has no human connection, no one who is his mate. None of the animals that God fashions will do. In Genesis 1 we are told that God created man—male and female. But, at least according to Genesis 2, the creation of male and female proceeds in stages.

In the Genesis myth, Adam cannot have a mate without sacrifice on his part—the sacrifice, in fact, of a part of his body. His body must be rendered less than whole in order for him to become whole; he welcomes as his mate someone for whom he has yielded his bodily integrity.

One important consequence of the creation of woman out of the rib of man is that male and female are not equals; the relationship is not symmetrical. Unlike in the Aristophanes myth in which

¹ Animals as well as plants experience love according to Eryximachus (186a).

two conjoined wholes are separated into two independent wholes, in the Genesis myth, one whole becomes less than whole in order for there to be a second whole which contains a part of the original whole which is no longer whole. We ought not, then, to think of Adam, who is the first human creation, as the perfect specimen of a human being; it is in fact the woman who is most perfect. It is she who not only lacks nothing, but even contains a part of Adam. Moreover, the woman never experiences aloneness or lack. She never has to sacrifice a part of her body for her mate. She is born into the world to satisfy the neediness of another; she herself is not needy.

Adam is delighted at the sight of the woman when they are first introduced to one another. Finally, after having surveyed a host of unsuitable animals, he meets the mate who is just right. When the woman is brought to him, he exclaims: “This one this time is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she will be called ‘woman’ because she was taken from ‘man’” (2:23).² There is no comparable reaction on the part of the woman. It is not she who lacks something and is now acquiring what is missing. She comes to man as whole, as independent, as complete—not as alone, dependent, and missing a rib. It is perhaps not farfetched to infer from the Genesis myth that prelapsarian woman has the upper hand. Whereas in Aristophanes’ myth there is no reason that both partners would not equally desire their missing half, in the biblical narrative, the desire is initially decidedly one-way.

In order to appreciate the relationship between the biblical first man and first woman it may perhaps be useful to think of the relation between a first-born child and a second, though the comparison is not entirely apt. The first-born child is perfect, the apple of his or her parents’ eye. But the child is alone. The parents produce a playmate for their child—a brother or sister. But all is not rosy. Yes, the older child now has a sibling, born of the same parents, and so, automatically, someone with whom the older child has much in common. But the older child also experiences significant loss: no longer enjoying undivided parental affection, the child must adjust to not being the only child. Since the younger child has never enjoyed undivided parental affection and has never been without a sibling, he or she has significantly less adjusting to do.

One way in which a dependent and needy person might seek to ensure the survival of the being on whom his own completion depends is by becoming over-protective. We have good reason to think that this is precisely what Adam does. The prohibition of eating from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was issued to Adam alone³—before the creation of the woman. The prohibition forbade eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for “on the day you eat from it you will surely die” (Gen. 2:17). Although there were two trees planted in the center of the Garden (2:9), both the tree of knowledge and the tree of life (2:9), the prohibition extended no farther than the tree of knowledge. Moreover, the prohibition concerned only eating. When the woman reports the prohibition to the Serpent in 3:3, she is able to correct the Serpent’s version of the prohibition: “You may not eat from all the trees of the Garden” (3:1), but she herself has it wrong as well. Whereas she believes correctly that the prohibition does not apply to all the trees of the Garden, she thinks incorrectly that it applies to the fruit of the tree in the center of the Garden (rather than to the fruit of just one of those trees) and that it includes a prohibition on touching it (3:3). Where could the woman have gotten these ideas but from Adam? The woman is surely reporting what she has heard from the man, who has apparently sought, by inflating the prohibition, to make doubly or triply sure that she will not sin, thereby safeguarding her life on which he is dependent.

It is perhaps significant, in addition, that the woman is attracted to the fruit—not to the man. The fruit fulfills all her yearnings: for physical pleasure, for aesthetic enjoyment, and for intellectual fulfillment. “And the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was desirable for the purpose of becoming wise, and she took of its fruit and ate” (3:6). One might say that the serpent cunningly directs the woman’s lust toward the fruit.⁴

The difference between the equality of the two halves seeking completion in the Aristophanes myth, stemming as it does from the wholeness in itself of each of the halves, with neither suffering a loss of its wholeness in the separation from it of its other half,⁵ and the asymmetry in the Genesis myth between man and woman, creates a disparity in the complexity of the relationship between the parties in the two cases. The Aristophanes myth seeks to account for why any two people are attracted to one another, but not for why one might be more attracted than the other. The Genesis myth, by contrast, sets for itself the task of explaining why the attraction is not even—and not simple. Chapter

² We don’t know how Adam determined which names to assign to the animals.

³ Gen. 2:16-17. Note that after the sin, God says to Adam: “Hast thou eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee (masculine sing.) that thou shouldst not eat?” (2:11).

⁴ Certainly not to himself.

⁵ The equality in the Aristophanes myth appears to represent a deliberate departure from Pausanius’s speech where lover and beloved are essentially unequal.

2 in Genesis thus ends with an asymmetrical statement by the narrator: “Therefore does a man leave his father and his mother and cleave to his woman, and they become one flesh” (2:24).

A second remarkable difference between the Aristophanes and Genesis myths is that, although in both cases attraction follows—and requires—separation, in the former attraction arises only after an “unnatural” separation of one half from the other occurs, as a result of the undoing of the original human state, while attraction in the latter *is* the natural state for man once woman is created. Adam is incomplete and requires a mate before he has one, and his attachment to his mate follows immediately upon her creation. In both cases, attraction requires separation, but for Aristophanes love mends an unnatural and imposed separation, whereas biblically, attraction is in the nature of things.

A third feature of interest is, of course, that the Aristophanes myth explains homosexual as well as heterosexual attraction; it explains why some men pursue women, some men pursue men, and some women pursue women: each is seeking his or her lost half. What this myth fails to account for, however—and it is a glaring omission—is why love is not always reciprocated. If a person finds his/her genuine other half, why does not this other half always return the affection? Also, the truest and best matches, according to Aristophanes, are those of an older lover and a younger beloved: is it likely that these very different human specimens could be the two halves of a former whole?

The biblical myth does not account for homosexual attraction, but it does offer an astonishing account of how (heterosexual) attraction can misfire. The man who is dependent on his perfect companion acknowledges his dependence on her as he blames her for his disobedient act: “The woman whom Thou didst give to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat” (3:12).⁶ This man so cleaves to this woman that he prefers to disobey God rather than risk creating a rift between himself and her. Adam, we note, obeys the divine command until the woman gives him the forbidden fruit. Unlike the woman, he is not said to be attracted to the fruit. He eats it, as he says, because *the woman* gave it to him. Adam’s only alternative would have been to rebuke her; this is something he was not—or not yet—prepared to do.⁷

Once the man’s and the woman’s eyes are opened and they see their nakedness, Adam is at last the one to take the initiative: “Adam and the woman hid (the verb is masculine singular) from the Lord God amid the trees of the Garden” (3:8). This is the first real act on Adam’s part: he did not think to request a companion; the animals were brought before him to be named; he ate what he was given. But he is no longer protective of the woman. He blames her for his disobedience to God.

The punishment that God metes out to the woman is that she now desires the man and he rules her. This is, then, in the biblical narrative, a post-lapsarian reversal of the natural order of things, comparable to that in the Aristophanes myth. The change in the *Symposium* is from two wholes joined as one to two separate beings yearning for one another; the change in Genesis is from man completed by the woman upon whom he is dependent to man who, as the object of the woman’s desire, rules her. The flaw Adam now sees in the woman with his newly opened eyes results in disillusionment and disappointment—he now sees not only his own nakedness but hers: “they knew that they were naked” (3:7)—causing the power in the relationship to revert to him. And she, by seeing her own nakedness, becomes aware of her own imperfection and can finally be dependent on another. Whereas God’s initial intent must surely have been for two equal companions to complete one another, the dependency of the one on the other without a reciprocal dependency of the other on the one set the stage for a power shift, ultimately with sexual overtones, in the relations between male and female. If the serpent turned Eve’s lust on the fruit, God turned it (by way of punishment) toward Adam. One might say that the biblical story is one that explains how man came to desire woman and how woman came to desire man, with the respective desires having very different origins. Had God created the woman *ab initio* as a separate being without using a part of Adam, Adam could not have said “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh”; he might never have eaten the fruit the woman gave him; and the woman’s desire might well then never have come to be centered on him.

II. Gods and Human Beings

A central feature of both myths is human disobedience or rebellion. In the *Symposium*, powerful human beings clamber up to heaven and try to topple the gods. In Genesis, Adam is given an explicit

⁶ Adam was with her when she took the fruit and ate and gave some to him: “...she took of its fruit and did eat, and gave also to her husband (who was) with her, and he ate” (3:6). The same term is used for “with me” and “with her”: the man who was “with her” complains to God about the woman who God gave him to be “with him.” The woman who was presumably meant to help him came to dominate him—he followed her as she took the lead—and now he has sinned.

⁷ It is possible that Adam preferred that he and the woman die together than that she die and he once again be alone. Perhaps once he sees that neither of them died, he is less hesitant about placing the blame on the woman.

prohibition, and he and the woman defy it. Neither the biblical author nor Aristophanes approves of human defiance. Aristophanes calls it *adikia*, injustice (193a); in Genesis, the author expresses no reservation concerning God's right to punish; nor do any of those punished lodge a protest. As a consequence of their improper acts, human beings in the *Symposium* and in Genesis probably deserve what they get. In both cases God/s keep human beings in their place: although the human beings in Genesis attain knowledge of good and evil and in this way become *like* God, they also become subject to death and in this way become *unlike* God; in the Aristophanes myth, mortals are further weakened, though their numbers initially increase.

The first striking difference between the two myths with respect to relations between gods and men is the number of gods involved. In Aristophanes' myth, three gods are prominent: Zeus, Apollo, and, finally, Eros. There are also the gods who are the parents of the original double-people: Sun of the double-males; Earth of the double-females; Moon of the mixed double. In Genesis there is but a single God. In the Aristophanes myth, Zeus hatches the plan to weaken human beings by cutting them in two, halving their strength and doubling their number, so that the gods would at once have less to fear and more sacrificial smoke to savor. If this is not enough to reduce them to lives of peace and quiet, Zeus reckons, the cut can be made again. Once the first cut is made, the heads of the new beings are turned around by Apollo—as per Zeus's instructions—so that they face the gash where they were cut and learn greater restraint as they contemplate their wounds. Apollo then sews them up and smoothes them out, leaving a few creases around the center (190d). The role Eros plays is to draw together the severed halves, to make one out of two, to heal the human condition. Eros loves the human race more than any of the other gods do, supporting us and healing the wounds that prevent our greatest happiness (189d). He is the god who will help us find the boys who are our true matching halves. The Aristophanes myth retains the hope that we might return to our original state—if we treat Love right. Love might heal our wounds and render us blessed, whole, and happy. One wonders, however, whether Eros doesn't break at least as many hearts as he mends.

Remarkably in the Genesis myth, by contrast, the God who creates Adam and creates the woman for his sake, and also endows them with wisdom and power and provides for them by permitting them the fruit of all the Garden's trees but one, is the very God who punishes them. The same God who lovingly gives man life is the one who, perhaps also lovingly, punishes. (Note that the text does not say that God is angry.) This God is one who is not prepared to pronounce all of Creation "very good" (1:31) until He fixes the one thing that He acknowledges is "not good." As he says: "It is *not good* for man to be alone; I will make him a helper alongside him" (2:18). It is only once the woman is created that the creation of the human as summarized in Genesis 1, "male and female He created them" (1:27), can contribute to God's assessment of His creation as "very good" (1:31). Of course, this is not a God who thrives on the gifts of human beings in the form of sacrifices and worship. He might well have destroyed the human race now as He will soon consider doing in the days of Noah when human corruption exceeds all bounds. He can go on without them. According to Aristophanes' myth, however, the gods do not have the luxury of being able to destroy human beings whose hand feeds them, so their only viable option is to weaken them. Nevertheless, both the God of the Bible and Zeus take pity on people. God sews for the man and the woman coats of skin and clothes them (3:21). Zeus helps to preserve the human race by changing the placement of the sexual organs; this change not only has the potential to result in conception and birth (in the case of males and females locked in embrace), but in the temporary satisfaction that enables men to turn their attention to their basic needs (191c). Since, however, Zeus needs to have human beings exist, one suspects that something more than pure compassion may be motivating him.

III. Conclusion

In Aristophanes' myth, Zeus had no hand in creating the bond between the two halves of the original human beings; yet it is he who breaks it: the broken bond constitutes the human beings' punishment. In Genesis, God creates the bond, but the relations between man and woman are complicated; they even reverse direction as a result of her sin. In the Aristophanes myth, equals search for equals; in Genesis, unequals yearn unequally for one another: first man for woman, later woman for man. Thus in Aristophanes, there is no shift in the dependence **relation**, but in Genesis there is. In Aristophanes, man was never destined for immortality; in Genesis man could not both be immortal and know good and evil: one or the other, however, could be tolerated. And this is because man is no threat to God in the Bible; God does not need men to survive.

Wednesday

17th July, 2013

Plenary session

Chair: Verity Harte

Sokrates' Rollen im *Symposion*: sein Wissen und sein Nichtwissen

Thomas Alexander Szlezák

Von sich selbst sagt Sokrates, er behaupte sich auf nichts anderes zu verstehen als auf die Dinge der Liebe (*ouden phēmi allo epistasthai ē ta erōtika*, Symp. 177 d7-8). In der Situation, in der das gesagt wird zu Beginn des Symposions, klingt das ziemlich harmlos, stellt sich doch Sokrates in eine Reihe mit den anderen Teilnehmern des Gastmahls, denen er offenbar einen je eigenen Zugang zum Thema ‚Liebe‘ zubilligt. Er ist weit davon entfernt, in seiner Erotik ein *mathēma* zu sehen, in dem er alle Früheren und Heutigen übertreffe – so läßt ihn nur der Autor des unechten Theages reden (128 b2-6) – er nennt auch seine Kennerschaft (sein *epistasthai*) in Liebesdingen nicht eine *technē*, wie im Phaidros (257 a7-8) und weist nicht darauf hin, daß er sie von Gott hat (wie im Phaidros und im Lysis 204 c1-2). Man könnte eher geneigt sein, Sokrates' oben wiedergegebene Selbsteinschätzung in Symp. 177 d7-8 mit einem außerplatonischen Zeugnis für die sokratische Erotik zusammenzustellen: mit dem Ende von Aischines' Dialog *Alkibiades*. Dort läßt der Autor seinen Sokrates vehement verneinen, daß er Alkibiades genützt habe kraft einer *technē*, er habe auch kein *mathēma*, das er lehren könnte um einem anderen Menschen von Nutzen zu sein, vielmehr glaubt er, im Umgang mit Alkibiades diesen durch seine Liebe (*dia to erān*) besser zu machen (Aischines, SSR VI A 53. 4-6, 26-27). Doch auch dieses Zeugnis geht über den wie es scheint absichtlich bescheiden gehaltenen Anspruch von Symp. 177d hinaus, hat doch Sokrates seine Gabe des Bessermachens kraft ‚göttlicher Fügung‘ (*theiāi moirāi*), was wiederum ganz in die Richtung des *ek theou (moi) dedotai* im Lysis weist. Die Art, wie Sokrates sich beim Gastmahl des Agathon als Erotiker einstuft, entspricht ganz der Rolle, in der er an diesem Abend zunächst auftritt: es ist die Rolle eines geselligen Menschen, der gar nichts Besonderes sein will, sondern sich gutwillig in einen Freundeskreis von Gebildeten eingliedert, wie die anderen frisch gebadet und mit Schuhen versehen zum Gelage kommt, in ganz konventioneller Weise die Libation und das Absingen eines Hymnos mitmacht und freundschaftlich-scherzhaft Bemerkungen mit den anderen austauscht, sei es über deren ‚Weisheit‘, sei es über deren erotische Eifersucht (174 a3-4, 176 a2-3, 175 c-e, 213 c2 – d6, 221 c1 – 223a9).

Und doch ist festzuhalten: Sokrates charakterisiert sich hier nicht negativ über sein Nichtwissen, sondern positiv: er ist einer, der sich auf etwas versteht, einer, der etwas *epistatai*. Kann das wirklich ganz harmlos gemeint sein?

Nun hat Sokrates in diesem Dialog noch andere Rollen. Bevor er ins Haus des Agathon eintritt und sich zu den Symposiasten gesellt, wird seine Rolle als der einsam Nachdenkende geschildert (174d – 175c). Kann sie etwas mit seinem erotischen Wissen und Können zu tun haben? Es scheint doch nichts Unerotischeres zu geben als die Einsamkeit des Denkens. Und von einem Wissen oder einer Einsicht, die er soeben gewonnen habe, sagt Sokrates nichts.

Nun kam Sokrates nicht allein, sondern in Begleitung des Aristodemos, den er unterwegs getroffen und zum Gelage mitgenommen hatte (174 a-d). Wie dieser Freund zu Sokrates steht, wird in der Schilderung des Gelages nicht zum Thema gemacht. Doch im Vorgespräch hatte Apollodoros ihn als einen der eifrigsten Verehrer (oder Liebhaber, *erastēs*, 173 b3) des Sokrates bezeichnet. Von diesem *erastēs* also stammt der Bericht über die Gespräche über den Eros, den Apollodoros wiedergibt – Apollodoros, der seinerseits dem Sokrates folgt als dem, der seinem Leben erst Sinn gegeben hat. Apollodoros und Aristodemos stehen stellvertretend für eine ganze Gruppe von Anhängern des Sokrates, deren Existenz (als Gruppe) erst in der Rede des Alkibiades am Ende des Dialogs sichtbar wird. Ihre Mitglieder sind ihm zwar in unterschiedlichem Grad verbunden – man könnte sagen: ihre Bindung an Sokrates reicht von ‚ihm zugetan‘ bis ‚ihm verfallen‘ – sie haben jedoch eines gemeinsam: sie alle haben den ‚Biß der Schlange‘ erfahren, wie Alkibiades es ausdrückt (217e – 218a), d.h. sie wurden in ihrem Innersten getroffen und verwundet vom Anspruch des sokratischen Fragens, das sie nicht mehr losließ, so daß sie nunmehr ‚teilhaben am Wahnsinn der Philosophie‘ (*kekoinōnēkate tēs philosophou manias*, 218 b3). Nach der Darstellung des Alkibiades ist die Bindung der Mitglieder des Freundeskreises an die zentrale Gestalt Sokrates für jeden einzelnen eine ‚erotische‘: Sokrates gibt sich zunächst als Verehrer und Liebhaber, *erastēs*, zieht den jeweils ‚erwählten‘ jungen Mann in seinen Bann und wird in einem überraschenden Rollentausch schließlich zum Verehrten und Umworbenen (*paidika mallon autos kathistatai ant' erastou*, 222 b3-4). Sokrates selbst sieht seine jungen Freunde als durch starken Liebeszauber an ihn Gefesselte – allerdings nicht bei Platon (der indes denselben Sachverhalt dezenter ausdrückt: Sokrates bittet Eros, daß er bei den Schönen künftig noch mehr als jetzt schon geschätzt werde (Phdr. 257 a9)), sondern in dem Gespräch mit Theodote, in dem der xenophontische Sokrates der Hetäre erklärt, sein Gefolge sei bei ihm nur

weil er es mit Liebeszauber, Besprechungen und Zauberrädern ? (mit *philtera, epōdai, und iynges*) an sich binde (Xen.mem. 3.11.17). Ziehen wir die allzu krasse Selbstironie ab – die Iynx in der Hand des Sokrates müssen wir ja nicht wörtlich nehmen –, so bleibt die Information, daß Sokrates' erotisierende Wirkung wie bei Aischines und Platon so auch bei Xenophon fest zum Bild dieses Mannes gehörte.

Daß Sokrates seine *erastai* nicht nur durch sein persönliches Charisma, sondern ebenso sehr durch philosophische Inhalte und Einsichten fesselte, ist bei allen Sokratikern als selbstverständlich vorausgesetzt. Doch welche inhaltlichen Positionen waren das, wenn es um den Eros ging? Es gab dazu keine *technē*, versichert uns Aischines, und kein *mathēma* (s.o.) Bei Xenophon gibt Sokrates vor seinem Bekenntnis zu seinem Liebeszauber der Theodote Ratschläge, wie sie bewirken könne, daß ihre Kunden sie noch mehr begehren und dann bei ihr bleiben – Ratschläge, die einer sehr simplen Psychologie entspringen und eigentlich von jedem, der auch nur einen bescheidenen Grad von ‚*common sense*‘ besitzt, hätten gegeben werden können. An solchen Gedanken kann sich der platonische Sokrates mit seinem Anspruch auf *epistasthai ta erōtika* nicht gut orientiert haben. Platon läßt seinen Alkibiades danach verlangen, „alles zu hören, was Sokrates wußte“ (*panta akousai hosaper houtos ēidei*, 217 a4-5). In Dingen der Liebe wurde ihm bedeutet – und dies nicht nur in Worten (218d6 – 219a1), sondern auch durch die Tat (219b3 – d2) – daß sich sittliche Schönheit nicht gegen körperliche Schönheit eintauschen läßt. Die bloße Tatsache, daß er einen Versuch dazu machte, zeigt zur Genüge, daß er das Wesentliche an Sokrates' Denken nicht hinreichend verstanden hat. Dennoch ist er sich sicher, an den *Logoi* des Sokrates – er kennt nur Unterhaltungen vom Typ der aporetischen Frühdialoge (221 e1-6) – alles zu finden, was man brauche, um ein Mann von Charakter und Anstand zu werden (222a 5-6). Alkibiades' Streben, dem gängigen Ideal des *kalos kagathos* zu genügen zeigt, daß er – in platonische Terminologie übersetzt – an jener bürgerlichen oder populären Tugend, jener *politikē* oder *dēmotikē aretē* orientiert ist, die Platon anderswo so deutlich von der *aretē*, die die Philosophie verleiht, absetzt (Phdn. 82ab, Politeia 500d). Mag dieser leidenschaftliche *erastēs* die Einzigartigkeit des Sokrates als Charakter auch richtig erkannt haben (221d), über das philosophische ‚Wissen‘, das seinen Anspruch auf ein seiner würdiges *epistasthai ta erōtika* rechtfertigen könnte, erfahren wir aus seinen Worten nichts Spezifisches. Die Rolle des Sokrates als *paidika* (222 b3) seiner zahlreichen *erastai* ist überdeutlich; welche Art von Wissen oder Nichtwissen zu dieser Rolle gehört, bleibt vorerst noch rätselhaft.

In einer ganz anderen Rolle erscheint Sokrates nach der Rede des Agathon. Es ist seine Standardrolle, an die wohl auch Alkibiades gedacht haben mag, als er vom ‚Öffnen‘ der sokratischen *Logoi* sprach (221d7 – 222a6): die Rolle des schonungslosen Prüfers fremder Weisheit. In aller Freundschaft weist er dem jungen Tragödiendichter nach, daß alles, was er über den Eros gesagt hat, verkehrt war und daß er folglich ohne Wissen von seinem Gegenstand gesprochen hatte (201b 11-12). Der Eros ist weder schön noch gut, wie Agathon geglaubt hatte, denn er begehrt das Schöne, zu dem auch das Gute gehört, hat also beides nicht (199c – 201c). Agathon hatte offenbar den Eros als Streben verwechselt mit dem Objekt des Strebens. Die Weisheit des Agathon ist also aus überlegener Warte widerlegt, und die Widerlegung besteht lediglich in einem Aufweis der Unverträglichkeit von Agathons eigenen Annahmen. Der sokratische *Elenchos* braucht ja nichts als eine These des Gegners und die Zugeständnisse, die er auf einfache Fragen macht. Sein Ergebnis ist rein negativ und verweist als solches nicht auf eine eigene Weisheit, ein eigenes ‚Wissen‘ des Sokrates. In keiner der bisher untersuchten Rollen des Sokrates ist ein Können oder Wissen greifbar geworden, das den Anspruch des *epistasthai ta erotika* mit spezifischem Inhalt füllen könnte, denn selbst Sokrates' Überordnung der Arete über körperliche Schönheit ist etwas, das auch der konventionellen *sophrosyne* erreichbar wäre.

Im Anschluß an das Gespräch mit Agathon enthüllt Sokrates nun aber, daß seine Widerlegung fremden Wissens ihrerseits auf fremdem Wissen beruhte. Er hatte nur den *Elenchos* wiederholt, dem Diotima seine eigenen früheren Ansichten unterzogen hatte. Mit der unerwarteten Berufung auf diese Figur kommt nunmehr konkretes Wissen über den Eros in den Dialog.

Die Einführung Diotimas ist die radikalste Wendung im ganzen Dialog. Was die dramaturgische Gestaltung betrifft, so scheint zwar der Auftritt des Alkibiades nach der Diotima-Rede den stärkeren Einschnitt darzustellen, kommt doch der neue Mann in der Runde mit Musik und viel Lärm, mit reichem Bänderschmuck auf dem Kopf und in Begleitung anderer Zecher, darunter einer Flötenspielerin. Auch was er dann zu sagen hat ist extravagant genug – und doch betrifft es nichts unerhört Neues, sondern den allen bekannten Sokrates und bestätigt nur dessen bewährte *sophrosyne*. Diotima hingegen ist eine *radikal* andere Figur. Sie ist nicht Athenerin, sie kommt aus der Fremde (1). Sie ist Frau (2) und klärt Sokrates, einen Mann, über den Eros auf. Während die anderen als *idiōtai* sprechen, die von sich aus keinen ausgewiesenen Bezug zum Göttlichen haben, spricht sie als

Priesterin (3) zur Frage, ob Eros ein Gott sei. Sie äußert sich nicht in ungeplanten, zufälligen Gelegenheitsunterhaltungen, sie unterrichtet vielmehr ihren athenischen Schüler in immer wieder stattfindenden Lehrgesprächen (4) (206 b6, 207 a5-6). Und sie bleibt nicht beim bloßen Elenchos stehen, sondern schreitet fort zu positiven Aussagen (5) von großer Kühnheit. Dies aber tut sie nicht in protreptischer Dialogform (wie noch beim anfänglichen Elenchos), sondern in autoritativer Belehrung (6) (ab 207a).

Die kühne, radikal andersartige Konzeption Diotimas als Dialogfigur ist der geeignete Rahmen für die Inhalte ihrer Rede, deren philosophische Neuartigkeit weit schockierender ist als die verstörende persönliche Erfahrung des Alkibiades. In dichter Folge erteilt die Priesterin aus Mantinea Belehrungen, von denen jede einzelne Thema und Ergebnis eines kürzeren oder auch mittleren Dialogs sein könnte. Diotima erklärt, daß der Eros (1) des Schönen nicht teilhaftig ist, und, da alles Gute auch schön ist, (2) auch des Guten nicht teilhaftig ist. Diesen doppelt negativen Einstieg in die Erörterung hatte Sokrates bereits an Agathon bei dessen Befragung weitergegeben. Und dennoch ist die zwingende Schlußfolgerung, die in dieser Aussage schon beschlossen liegt, wie ein weiterer harter Schlag gegen das gängige Eros-Bild: in Ermangelung des Schönen und des Guten kann Eros (3) auch kein Gott sein. Hier endet der elenktische Durchgang durch die Durchschnittsphilosophie des Eros, die auch Sokrates – wie er glauben machen will – anfangs vertrat. Es folgen positive Festlegungen von großer Tragweite. Der Eros ist (4) ein großer Daimon, dessen Seinsstatus nicht im Dunklen gelassen wird: er steht zwischen dem Sterblichen und Unsterblichen. Überhaupt steht (5) *alles Daimonische* zwischen diesen beiden Bereichen, wobei es den Verkehr zwischen ihnen vermittelt, auch den Verkehr zwischen Göttern und Menschen durch Mantik, Opfer, Mysterien und Besprechungen, denn (6) ein Gott verkehrt nicht mit einem Menschen. Durch seine Mittelstellung füllt das Daimonion die Kluft zwischen beiden auf, so daß das All (7) mit sich selbst verbunden ist. Ein Mensch, der bezüglich dieser Dinge weise (*sophos*) ist, ist (8) ein ‚daimonischer Mann‘ (*daimonios anēr*), im Gegensatz zum Banausen, der über andere Dinge, etwa Künste und Handwerk, Bescheid weiß. (10) Die Eltern des Eros sind Poros und Penia, und er hat von beiden ihre charakteristischen Eigenschaften geerbt, die Mittellosigkeit von der Mutter, die Fähigkeit, sich das Erstrebte zu verschaffen, vom Vater. Daraus folgt, (11) daß Eros weder dauerhaft mittellos noch jemals dauerhaft reich ist an Einsicht, vielmehr steht er zwischen Weisheit und Unwissenheit in der Mitte, weil ihm das, was er gewonnen hat, wieder zerrinnt. (12) Kein Gott philosophiert und will weise werden, denn er ist es schon, und auch sonst philosophiert niemand, der weise ist. (13) Die Menschen verlangen nach nichts anderem als nach dem Guten, genauer nach dessen dauerhaftem Besitz, mithin (14) nach der Unsterblichkeit. Der Sinn des Zeugens im Schönen ist das (15) Anteilgewinnen an der Unsterblichkeit, sei es durch Fortpflanzung, sei es durch ewigen Ruhm, sei es durch geistige und moralische Hinterlassenschaft: auch die Dichter und Gesetzgeber ‚zeugen‘ in ihren Werken *aretē* für die Ewigkeit.

Alles bisher Gesagte (201e – 209e) war nur Vorbereitung für das Eigentliche. Über die ‚epoptische‘ Schau des Schönen selbst faßt sich Diotima vergleichsweise kurz (210a – 212a). Voraussetzung ist (16) ein Aufstieg über die verschiedenen Erscheinungsformen des Schönen bis hin zum (17) Ziel und Ende (*télos*) des erotischen Strebens (*telos tōn erōtikōn*), zum (18) plötzlich (*exaiphnēs*) erscheinenden Schönen selbst (*auto to kalon*). Der Weg dorthin ist klar festgelegt, und wer (19) ihn ‚richtig‘ (*orthōs*) beschreitet oder auf ihm ‚richtig‘ geführt wird (*eān orthōs hēgētai ho hēgoumenos*), kann das *telos* berühren. (20) Dieses schauende Zusammensein mit dem reinen und unvermischten Schönen selbst ist ein Zeugen wahrer *aretē* und bedeutet für den Schauenden vollkommenes Glück, Unsterblichkeit und Geliebtsein von Gott.

Nach dieser Darbietung geballten Wissens über den Eros weiß der Leser: wenn irgend jemand in diesem Dialog dem Anspruch des *epistasthai ta erōtika* genügen kann, dann ist es die Fremde aus Mantinea. Sie ist Priesterin und spricht nicht dialogisch-protreptisch, sondern autoritativ als Lehrerin (vgl. 207 c6 *didaskalōn deomai*). Ihre Mitteilungen bietet sie als eine Analogie zur Einweihung in Mysterien (209e5 – 201a2), mithin zu einer religiösen Handlung. Die Riten der Mysterien aber müssen exakt den Vorschriften entsprechen. Daher ihr mehrfaches Betonen des ‚richtigen‘ (*orthōs*) Beschreitens des Weges und des ‚richtigen‘ Führens auf dem Weg (210 a2, 6, 211 b5, 7). Es kann keinem Zweifel unterliegen, daß sie ihrerseits ihren Initianden Sokrates richtig führt: Diotima ist die kompetente Mystagogin, unter ihrer Führung könnte Sokrates das *télos* erreichen. Das setzt voraus, daß sie selbst die Mysterien durchlaufen hat – eine Mystagogin, die nicht selbst eingeweiht wäre, wäre ein kompletter Widersinn. Diotima hat das Schöne selbst gesehen, sie weiß, wovon sie redet.

Ungeachtet der Neuartigkeit der Enthüllungen Diotimas haben viele ihrer Aussagen Parallelen, zum Teil sogar sehr enge Parallelen, in anderen Dialogen. Das All ist in sich verbunden, sagt Diotima (202 e6-7) – das ist auch die Auffassung der ‚Weisen‘ (*sophoi*), auf die sich Sokrates im Gorgias

(507e6 – 508a4) beruft, und der Priester und Priesterinnen, deren Meinung er Menon 81c9 – d1 wiedergibt. Ebenso denkt der Sokrates der Politeia, daß der Dialektiker zu einer Zusammenschau der ‚Verwandtschaft‘ (*oikeiotēs*) der mathematischen Wissenschaften untereinander und mit der Natur des Seienden gelangen muß (Pol. 537 c2-3), was auch der ‚Athener‘ der Nomoi (unter Verwendung des Wortes Gemeinschaft, *koinōnia*) vertritt (967 e2-3). Wer ‚weise‘ ist in Dingen der Liebe, den hält Diotima für einen *daimonios anēr* und unterscheidet ihn vom Banausen (203 a4-6), ganz wie Sokrates im Exkurs des Theaitetos die für den Menschen entscheidende ‚Weisheit‘ vom banausischen Wissen absetzt (176 c4-d1). Kein Gott philosophiert nach Ansicht der mantineischen Priesterin, und auch sonst keiner, der weise ist (204 a1-2) – ganz ähnlich hatte Sokrates im Lysis das Philosophieren denen abgesprochen, die schon weise sind, „ob diese nun Götter sind oder Menschen“ (218 a2-4). Was die Menschen letztlich erstreben, ist das Gute, erklärt Diotima (205e7 – 206a12), durchaus in Übereinstimmung mit dem Sokrates der Politeia, der vom Guten sagt, es sei das „was jede Seele verfolgt und worumwillen sie alles macht“ (505 d11-e1). Und wenn Diotima einen gestuften Aufstieg zum Ziel der Erkenntnis skizziert (201a-e), so ist sie offenbar in unmittelbarer philosophischer Nähe zum methodisch geregelten Weg über die Stufen der Hypothesen hinauf zum voraussetzungslosen Prinzip von allem (Politeia 511 b3-7) bzw. zum ‚Hinreichenden‘ (*hikanon*) schlechthin (Phdn. 101 d3-e1). Bei richtigem Beschreiten des Weges oder bei richtigem Geführtwerden ist das Erreichen des *télos* möglich – mit dieser Überzeugung (210 e2-6, 211 b5-7, c8, 212 a1-7) trifft sie sich abermals mit dem Sokrates der Politeia, der die Dialektik – das ist das *per definitionem* richtige geistige Voranschreiten – als den einzigen Weg zur *archē* und zum *télos* sieht (533 c7-d1, 504 d3, vgl. 532 e3). Und was Diotimas Schilderung der abschließenden Glückserfahrung (211e4 – 212b7) betrifft, so hat sie eine im Werk Platons einmalige Punkt- für Punkt- Entsprechung in Sokrates‘ analoger Schilderung des Aufhörens des Eros und der Geburtswehen (*apolēgoi erōtos, lēgoi ōdinos*) beim Erreichen des Erkenntnisziels durch den wahren *philomathēs* (Politeia 490 a8-b7): an beiden Stellen ist vom ‚Berühren‘ des Erkenntnisobjekts die Rede, von dem Teil der Seele, dem das zukommt und von seiner Verwandtschaft mit ihm, von ‚Zusammensein‘ und ‚Vermischung‘ mit ihm und vom Zeugen wahrer *aretē* bzw. Einsicht und Wahrheit, und schließlich vom wahrhaften Leben, das auf diese Weise erreicht wird.

Man sieht: so fremdartig Diotima auch erscheinen mag nach ihrer Herkunft, ihrem Beruf und ihrem Lehrhabitus, intellektuell erweist sie sich doch als Zwillingsschwester des unpriesterlichen, urbanen, dialogisch vorgehenden Atheners Sokrates. So daß die Frage nunmehr unvermeidlich wird: wer ist diese Diotima wirklich? Daß es in Mantinea einmal eine Priesterin dieses Namens gegeben hat, ist gut möglich (wenn auch durch keine außerplatonische Quelle belegt). Daß aber diese Priesterin Sokrates regelmäßigen Philosophieunterricht erteilt hat, ist durchsichtige poetische Fiktion. Platon hätte leicht einen quasi-historischen Rahmen für Diotimas Unterweisungen angeben können. Wir finden nichts davon im Text, und es fragt auch keiner der Teilnehmer des Gastmahls: „wann und wo pflegtest du, Sokrates, die Priesterin zu treffen, und warum hast du uns nicht früher schon von ihr berichtet?“ Die in sich gänzlich unglaubwürdigen Begegnungen werden erzählerisch völlig von der athenischen Alltagsrealität isoliert. Der Leser soll sie dadurch als reine Fiktion erkennen. Wir haben Diotima als Maske des Sokrates zu verstehen. Somit liegt vom Ende der Widerlegung des Agathon (201 d1) bis zum Auftreten des Alkibiades ein geschlossener Monolog des Sokrates vor (201d – 212c), der in seiner ersten Hälfte (bis 207a) dialogisiert wird, aber nur formal.

Das Wissen der Diotima ist also Wissen des Sokrates. Wo und wann kann er dieses Wissen gewonnen haben? Etwa im Gespräch mit Partnern wie Agathon, Pausanias und den anderen? Oder beim vertrauten Umgang mit Alkibiades (der sich ihm effektiv entzog)? Man muß diese Frage nur stellen, um zu sehen, daß kein Weg führt von den stadtbekannten Alltagsbeschäftigungen des Sokrates, die ihm auch die Ankläger vorwarfen, nämlich strenge Befragung von Spezialisten (hier des Spezialisten für die Tragödie Agathon) und Verkehr mit bildungswilligen Jünglingen (hier vertreten durch den schönsten von ihnen, Alkibiades) zur geistigen Welt der Diotima. Die Kluft zwischen der ‚Mysterien‘-Auffassung des Eros und der gängigen – die trotz der interessanten Variationen bei Phaidros, Pausanias, Eryximachos, Aristophanes, Agathon und Alkibiades durch ein gemeinsames intellektuelles und ethisches Niveau zusammengehalten wird – ist so groß, daß es der erwähnten dramaturgischen Isolierung und der Einführung einer neuen, gänzlich unwahrscheinlichen *dramatis persona* bedurfte, um das Nebeneinander der zwei inkommensurablen geistigen Welten erträglich zu machen.

Die Frage nach dem Zugang zu dieser anderen Sicht des Eros kann in zweifacher Weise gestellt werden: (a) sachlich-philosophisch und (b) biographisch. (a) Die philosophische Antwort kann nur lauten: beim Anblick des diesseitigen Schönen kommt jenen Seelen, die über hinreichende Erinnerung (*mnēmē*, Phdr. 250 a5) an das jenseits Geschaute verfügen, die Wiedererinnerung,

anamnesis, an das vollendet Schöne (Phdr. 249d4 – 250c6). Sokrates – d.h. *Platons* Sokrates – war solch eine Seele. (b) Zeitlich-innerweltlich betrachtet muß es dann aber einen bestimmten Zeitpunkt gegeben haben, an dem ihm die entscheidende Einsicht über das Wesen des Schönen selbst, dieser Ausblick auf das Außer- und Überzeitliche plötzlich (*exaiφhnēs*, Symp. 210 c4) aufging. Darüber vor anderen zu reden, wäre ihm unangemessen erschienen. Lieber versteckte er sich ironisch hinter der Maske ‚Diotima‘.

Doch Platon der Dialogdichter schuf einen ‚biographischen‘ Kontext, in dem man sich das Erlangen einer exzeptionellen Einsicht durch den exzeptionellen Mann gut vorstellen kann. Das waren die Momente, in denen Sokrates unvermittelt stehen blieb, das Gespräch mit anderen beendete und alleine konzentriert nachdachte. Auf diese Weise den Kontakt zu den Gesprächspartnern zu suspendieren und ganz allein für sich seinem Denken zu folgen, war eine Gewohnheit (*ethos*, *hōs eiōthei* 175 b1, c5) des Sokrates, den *wir Heutige* uns nur in Gemeinschaft mit anderen philosophierend vorzustellen pflegen. So wichtig ist Platon dieser einsam nachdenkende Sokrates, daß er ihn gleich zweimal inszeniert, vor Beginn des Gastmahls (174 d4 – 175 d2) und gegen Ende der letzten Rede (220 c3-d5). Das partnerlose Selbstdenken rahmt so in auffälliger Weise die in der Gemeinschaft (*koinōnia*) vorgetragenen Porträts des Eros. Deren Höhepunkt aber ist der lange Monolog des Denkers, der sonst für sein ‚gemeinsames Suchen‘ (*koinēi zētein*) bekannt ist. Sollen wir das als reinen Zufall betrachten? Oder will Platon auf unaufdringliche Weise nahelegen, daß tatsächlich – wie von Agathon vermutet (175 c7-d2) – ein Zusammenhang besteht zwischen Sokrates‘ Gewohnheit des einsamen Nachsinnens und seinem ‚Finden‘ und ‚Haben‘ von Einsichten, die die anderen an ihm bewundern?

Wenn aber wirklich das einsame gesprächslose und nicht einmal verbalisierte Denken – von Verbalisation sagt weder Aristodemos etwas noch Alkibiades – die eigentliche Quelle der Einsichten des Sokrates ist, müssen wir da nicht die seit der Romantik liebgewonnene Vorstellung aufgeben, der dialogisch-dialektische Austausch zweier gleichgestellter Partner sei die Seele des sokratisch-platonischen Philosophierens und existentiell wichtig für jeden, der sich als *philosophos* verstehen möchte? Nun, über die ‚Gemeinsamkeit‘ der Suche kursieren seit Schleiermachers berühmter ‚Einleitung‘ (1804) allerhand Märchen und Mythen, die der Überprüfung am Text nicht standhalten. In Wirklichkeit ist die jeweilige Dialektikerfigur (heiße sie nun Sokrates, Diotima, Parmenides, Eleat, Athener) dem intellektuell weit schwächeren Partner stets meilenweit voraus und lenkt das Gespräch souverän nach eigenem Gutdünken.¹ Grundsätzlich sind ‚Sokrates‘, ‚der Eleat‘, ‚der Athener‘ usw. ihren Partnern so weit überlegen wie Diotima ihrem angeblichen Schüler Sokrates, und sie müssen es sein, wenn Einsicht bei den Partnern aufkommen soll.

Die wesenhafte Dialogizität des platonischen Philosophierens müssen wir anderswo suchen: in der *dianoia* als dem innerhalb der Seele mit sich selbst geführten Zwiegespräch ohne ‚Stimme‘, d.h. ohne Verbalisation (*ho entos tēs psychēs pros hautēn dialogos aneu phōnēs*, Sop. 263 e3-5, vgl. Tht. 184 e6-7). Diese innere Dialogizität braucht keinen Partner. Kein Wunder also, daß Sokrates sagen kann, es wäre besser für ihn, wenn die Menschen nicht mit ihm übereinstimmten als wenn er als der Einzelne, der er ist, mit sich selbst nicht im Einklang wäre (Gorg. 482 c1-3): die Homologie muß im eigenen Inneren gefunden werden, dann erst im Umgang mit anderen. Das ist auch der Sinn der Stellen, an denen gesagt wird, man verfolge das Argument primär um der eigenen Person willen, sekundär auch im Blick auf andere (Politeia 528 a1-5, Cha. 166 d3, Phdn. 91 a7-b1). Das Dialogische ist dem Erzielen der Übereinstimmung mit sich selbst unterzuordnen. Über diese Übereinstimmung, *homologia*, kann nur das eigene Denken, das innere Gespräch der Seele mit sich selbst, befinden.

Die Notwendigkeit der *didachē meta synousias pollēs*, der Lehre mit vielen Zusammenkünften (Nom. 968 c6), oder des *phoitān para tēn didaskalon* (vgl. Symp. 206 b6, 207 c6) wird damit nicht bestritten. Die Frage ist vielmehr, wo der philosophisch entscheidende Schritt erfolgt. Wenn er im ‚plötzlichen‘ (*exaiφhnes*) Erblicken des Schönen selbst besteht, so kann sein Ort nur die Seele des einsam Denkenden sein. Die Schau und die ‚Berührung‘ des *auto to kalon* ist kein Gemeinschafts- und kein Paarerlebnis.

¹ Dies an allen Dialogen (mit Ausnahme von Ion und Menexenos) auch im Detail zu zeigen war die Aufgabe, die ich mir in „Platon und die Schriftlichkeit der Philosophie“ (1985) und „Das Bild des Dialektikers in Platons späten Dialogen“ (2004) gestellt hatte.

Chi è il Socrate del *Simposio*?

Giuseppe Cambiano

ABSTRACT

The *Symposium* consists to a large extent of long continuous speeches. That fits the habitual practice of the symposia, where people attending them used to speak in turn. However in some dialogues, such as *Protagoras* and *Gorgias*, long speeches are opposed to *katà brachy dialegesthai*, i.e. the method of speaking by questions and answers, preferred by Socrates, while, as has been rightly remarked, in the *Symposium* Socrates too, although refractory to participate to the symposium, delivers a long speech. The dialogue, however, contains a section in which Socrates dialectically refutes Agathon, but immediately afterwards he confesses that he is not the true author of the refutation. He has been able to refute Agathon, because he himself was refuted by Diotima nearly in the same way. But Diotima's refutation of Socrates extends beyond the conclusion reached in the discussion with Agathon and is followed by a long discourse, inclusive also of a myth, delivered by Diotima, who is repeatedly presented as a *sophé* woman and a teacher of Socrates. In this context Socrates' questions aim at learning, not at refuting. The conversation with Diotima shows that Socrates' refutation comes from a woman who knows what is Eros, whereas in Plato habitually Socrates refutes without any knowledge of the themes about which he puts the questions. As it is delivered by a person who has knowledge and can therefore claim to be capable to teach, Diotima's long speech is presented as a discourse completely different from the speeches pronounced by the other characters of the dialogue. As it has been rightly remarked by Thomas Szlezak, at the beginning of the dialogue Socrates is able to present himself as knowing *tà erotikà* (177 d 6-8), because he received in past times Diotima's teaching.

But if Socrates does not display his usual dialectical *techné*, what is his leading rôle in the *Symposium*? Socrates' long speech is neither an *epideixis* in the sophists' way, nor a rhetorical encomium. In the dialogue Socrates is represented as reporting his repeated meetings with Diotima and the speeches which were delivered in those occasions. There are other dialogues in which Socrates displays this same function, but his reports concern recent events and conversations (sometimes yesterday or the day before, as in *Charmides*, *Protagoras* and *Euthydemus*, and perhaps also in *Lysis*). On the contrary, in the *Symposium* Socrates' report concerns events occurred many years before. In *Parmenides* too we have a report of a meeting occurred many years before, but in that case it is not Socrates who reports, but Antiphon, as well as in the *Theaetetus* it is Euclides the writer who reports the meeting. An interesting parallel to the *Symposium*, which would be worthwhile to analyse, could be the *Menexenos*, where Socrates reports the epitaphs pronounced by another woman, Aspasia, teacher of rhetoric to Socrates himself (235e), but the epitaph was delivered 'yesterday' (236 b). Then, the *Symposium* seems to be a *unicum*, in that it presents Socrates reporting an old story. If the plague alluded to 201 d is the plague in Athens in 430, Diotima's stay in Athens should be dated about 440, whereas – according to Bury, p. lxvi – the date of the banquet should be the year 416 and the date of the dramatic setting circ. 400. Socrates declares that he will report Diotima's speech, as he will be able (201 d), alluding perhaps to the difficult contents of the speech, but also to his ability in remembering them. In order to report old events and speeches, to memorize is an essential condition. The *Symposium* as a whole appears to be an oral report of a past event, that contains within it Socrates' report of a much older event. The author of the entire report, Apollodorus, says that Socrates himself confirmed the reliability of Aristodemus' first oral account. We may think that Apollodorus asked Socrates' confirmation above all about the things said by Socrates himself, particularly about Diotima's speech. So the *Symposium*, as a written product, appears to be a written *hypomnema* of an oral report, within which Socrates' oral report fits as its deepest core. In the *Phaedrus*, as is known, there is at least a case in which the *paidià* of writing seems to be justified, that is in order to store up a treasure of records (*hypomnemata thesaurizomenos*) both for himself, when the forgetful old age will arrive, and for those who will follow the same track (276 d). As a matter of fact the *Symposium* presents Socrates orally performing what Plato frequently performs by writing, that is reporting past events and speeches. I think that perhaps we could interpret this circumstance as a sort of justification of Plato's practice of writing. Socrates' *hypomnema* contains refutation, arguments with positive conclusions and also a myth, that is to say precisely the ingredients, in variable ratio, of a Platonic written dialogue. Furthermore it shows that also a long speech can have philosophical relevance; indeed, as is pointed out in the *Theaetetus*' remark on the philosopher's portrait, both length or

shortness are unimportant, provided the speech seizes *tò on* (172 d 8-9). But significantly in the *Symposium* the author of the content of the long speech, reported by Socrates, is Diotima, not Socrates himself, as it occurs also in the *Timaeus*.

However in the *Symposium* there is another person who delivers a long speech, whose content is for the most part a report of past events: it is Alcibiades' speech, that constitutes the *pendant* of Socrates' report. It is the well-known story of his relations with Socrates, having its climax in the closed space of Socrates and Alcibiades in the same bed and in the open spaces of the military expeditions, at Potidaea and Delion, between 432 and 424 b.C (217 a-221 c). Alcibiades is conscious of Socrates' *atopia*, but he does not understand the peculiar character of the Socratic dialectic. He interprets the effects of Socrates' speeches on his audience in terms of fascination, as a sort of passive condition and paralysis, which reminds us Gorgias' views, that is a rhetorical horizon. It is not by any chance that Alcibiades refers to a competitive context, where the most important thing is to win and to overpower the opponents. Therefore he appeals to the physical contact as a mean to dominate Socrates. But the emphasis on the physical contact shows that Alcibiades is very far from the ascending process described by Diotima recurring to a terminology taken from the mysteries (Riedweg). The apex is constituted by the contemplation of the beautiful itself, described also metaphorically as *ephaptesthai* the truth (212 a 3-5), that obviously is not a physical contact. On the contrary, Socrates proves that he has learned from Diotima, when he arrives at the banquet and Agathon makes him sitting beside himself in order to benefit from Socrates' wise discovery by the help of this physical contact (*haptomenos*) (175 c 7-d 2). But Socrates replies that it would be very useful if *sophia* could flow from the fuller to the emptier individual simply by a physical reciprocal contact (*haptometha*) (175 d 3-e 6). This is the aspect that is not understood by Alcibiades, who however is reporting the story of his relations with Socrates. This confirms, in my opinion, that an oral *hypomnema* can express also a philosophical misunderstanding and represent persons who remain temporarily or always far away or on the threshold of philosophy. And the Platonic dialogues too, as written products, display the same circumstances, in the interrelations of common beliefs, reports, myths, refutation and philosophical arguments.

Diotima and the Ocean of Beauty

Chair: Maurizio Migliori

Symposion 210d4: τὸ πολὺ πέλαιος τοῦ καλοῦ

Francisco L. Lisi

1. *Introducción*

La revelación que Diotima hace a Sócrates (201d1-212a7) tiene su culminación en la contemplación del “gran océano de lo bello” (τὸ πολὺ πέλαιος ... τοῦ καλοῦ; 210d4), una frase que ha dado lugar a numerosas interpretaciones a lo largo de la historia del platonismo, muchas de ellas contradictorias. Basten dos ejemplos, uno tomado de la Antigüedad y otro proveniente de interpretaciones contemporáneas. Plotino interpreta la frase como una referencia a la multiplicidad de las Ideas (*Enneades* I 6 9, 34-36). Una interpretación que ha tenido una amplia recepción últimamente (Chen 1983, 68 nn. 17 y 18 = 1993, 41 nn. 19 y 20) sostiene que este término sólo puede referirse a la gran cantidad de instancias en las que la belleza se realiza en los distintos niveles de la realidad. Platón utiliza aquí metafóricamente un término, πέλαιος, que no es habitual en su obra. A pesar de la posición central que tiene este giro en el discurso de Diotima, no se le ha prestado la atención que merece. En general, los intérpretes se limitan a repetir el texto sin proceder a una auténtica interpretación (cf., p. ej., Leisegang 1950, col. 2449).

En la presente exposición, me propongo responder a tres preguntas que hacen a la sustancia de la versión que ofrece Diotima. (a) ¿A qué se refiere τὸ πολὺ πέλαιος τοῦ καλοῦ?, (b) ¿Qué tipo de proceso se describe? (c) ¿cuál es la relación de la Idea de lo Bello con la Idea del Bien.

2. *El significado de πέλαιος*

La palabra πέλαιος designa en general el alta mar, el piélago, que en general suele traducirse en lengua castellana por océano con la intención de otorgarle el significado que aparentemente tiene en griego de inmensidad marítima, dado que en muchas ocasiones va acompañada de términos que designan específicamente el mar como θάλασσα o πόντος. En el amplio *corpus Platonicum* aparece sólo dieciocho veces, de las cuales dos se encuentran en un diálogo considerado espurio desde la Antigüedad, el *Axíoco* (368c1 y 370b4). En esas dos apariciones, el término tiene su sentido habitual. De las dieciséis apariciones restantes, ocho se dan en el *Timeo* y el *Critias* relacionadas con las descripciones geográficas de la Atlántida. En algunas ocasiones, la voz es utilizada como sinónimo de πόντος o θάλασσα (*Tim.* 24e5, 25a4, d4,) o, simplemente, con un significado similar a nuestro océano (*Tim* 24e4; *Cts.* 109a1, 114a6, c6). En el *Político* la palabra es utilizada como sinónimo de θάλασσα (298b5). Estos pasajes no permiten establecer ningún significado específico, dado que la palabra parece utilizarse con gran libertad para indicar o bien la acepción de ‘mar’ u ‘océano’, pero no, precisamente, la idea de piélago o alta mar. Parecería más bien referirse a una superficie espacialmente grande, aunque no profunda. El significado de ‘piélago’, ‘alta mar’ puede encontrarse en el *Segundo Alcibíades* (147b1) y, probablemente, en el *Fedón* (109c5). Algo semejante sucede con un pasaje de la *República* (V 473d6) y en el dístico que pronuncia Agatón en el *Banquete* (197c5). Hay una utilización metafórica de πέλαιος en los dos pasajes restantes que son coincidentes en cuanto al significado. Tanto en el *Parménides* (137a6) como en el *Protágoras* (338a6) se menciona un πέλαιος τῶν λόγων para designar la inmensidad y la diversidad de la argumentación.

El pasaje antes mencionado del mito final de *Fedón* (109c5), puede ayudar a esclarecer el significado del término en el *Simposio*. En él se sostiene que los seres humanos vivimos en cuevas, creyendo habitar en la superficie de la tierra, como si alguien acostumbrado a habitar en el medio de las profundidades del océano creyera vivir en la superficie del mar y al ver el sol y el resto de los astros pensara que el mar es el cielo y por su lentitud y debilidad nunca pudiera llegar a la superficie ni verla, pero si saliera y levantara su cabeza fuera del mar, alcanzaría una realidad mucho más pura y bella que la que existe donde vive él.

Este primer acercamiento a los significados del término en el resto de la obra platónica parece indicar que la palabra significa todo lo contrario a lo que se pretende: no sólo multiplicidad sino incluso desorden, y indefinición e infinitud.

3. *Breve esbozo de la estructura del discurso*

Volvamos ahora la mirada hacia el contexto en el que el término aparece. Los diferentes estudios realizados sobre el discurso de Diotima han indicado ya sus relación con el resto del diálogo y, en

especial, con la irrupción de Alcibiades y el discurso de Agatón, de manera que es innecesario insistir aquí sobre ese punto. El relato de Sócrates puede dividirse en dos partes, siguiendo las pautas dadas a los encomios al Amor. En la primera (201d1-206a13) se revela la naturaleza de Eros, su carácter demoníaco como intermediador entre el mundo de los dioses y el de los hombres, pero fundamentalmente el hecho de que sea el que garantiza la unidad del universo (ὥστε τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ αὐτῷ συνδεδέσθαι; 202e6-7). El amor se muestra como un deseo que impulsa a los seres vivientes a buscar la unidad con la realidad trascendente que da el ser al mundo, como una búsqueda del ser por parte del devenir.¹ De esta forma realiza el Eros la unidad del universo consigo mismo y el filósofo se convierte en un factor de unidad cósmica. Diotima logra esto a través de una serie de pasos. En primer lugar, redefine lo bello (cf. 205d10-206a1), uniéndolo al bien (204e1-2) y a la felicidad como finalidad humana (e5-6): el amor más importante y engañoso es el deseo de bienes y de ser feliz (πᾶσα ἢ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμία καὶ τοῦ εὐδαιμονεῖν ὁ μέγιστός τε καὶ δολερὸς ἔρως παντί; 205d2-3). El amor se convierte así en un deseo, un impulso hacia el Bien (cf. τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ en 206a1), a la obtención y posesión del Bien para sí eternamente (ὁ ἔρως τοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτῷ εἶναι ἀεί; a11-12). De esta manera se da la identificación del Bien y de lo Bello.

La segunda parte (206b1- 212a7) describe la obra del amor, que antes había sido definida al pasar como lograr que, por su intermediación, el universo se mantenga unido consigo mismo (202e6-7). Esta parte muestra también la importancia que tenía la comparación anterior con la producción/creación (ποίησις; 205b8-c9), ya que el amor es el impulso a la creación, el esfuerzo y tensión en la gestación en lo bello, tanto en el cuerpo cuanto en el alma. Los seres humanos quedan preñados en el cuerpo y en el alma y cuando llegan a una cierta edad quieren engendrar, pero esto puede hacerse sólo en lo bello. Engendrar y parir son formas de la inmortalidad en lo mortal, algo divino. La belleza es el medio en el que se produce la creación. Es imposible generar en lo inarmónico, pero lo bello es armónico. En realidad, no se busca lo bello por lo bello, sino porque sólo en él puede darse la creación (b1-e6). La identificación de lo bello con lo armónico, proporcionado (ἀρμόδιον; 206d2) apunta a la identificación de lo Bello con el Bien, anteriormente apuntada. La descripción que se realiza a continuación se corresponde con los tres géneros de alma. El amor corporal, que es la expresión de esta necesidad de inmortalidad que tienen los seres vivos, corresponde al ἐπιθυμητικόν. La naturaleza mortal busca en lo posible existir siempre y ser inmortal. El mortal sufre el cambio, la destrucción y el nacimiento en los asuntos del cuerpo y del alma (206e7-208b9). Lo mismo sucede con el amor por ser renombrados y alcanzar una fama inmortal. Más fuerte que el amor a los hijos (c1-e1). El amor en el alma engendra inteligencia (φρόνησιν) y el resto de la virtud. El joven busca a alguien bello que le haga engendrar esa virtud a través de la amistad (c1-209e4). Este estadio, que se corresponde con la personalidad de los héroes, los poetas y los legisladores, es el propio del θυμικόν, ya que se subraya una de sus características esenciales, la búsqueda de la inmortalidad a través de la fama.

Estos dos momentos están unidos y formalmente separados del penúltimo estadio correspondiente al νοῦς (cf. 209e5-210a4). Esta sección está dividida en dos momentos cualitativamente diferentes: (a) El que quiere llegar a él correctamente, debe comenzar desde joven, llevado por un guía. En el primer escalón debe dirigirse a los cuerpos jóvenes, concentrándose en primer lugar amar un solo cuerpo y engendrar en él discursos bellos. Luego debe buscar la belleza corporal como género (τὸ ἐπ'εἶδει καλόν; 210b2), dado que es una y la misma en todo. A continuación debe indagar lo bello en las prácticas y las costumbres/leyes, contemplarlo y verlo. Más tarde ha de pasar a lo bello en las ciencias y mirar la multiplicidad de la belleza (πολὸν ἤδη τὸ καλόν; 210d1). Éste es un estadio que indica la inmensidad de lo bello común a todos, pero identificable con la multiplicidad: es una abstracción de lo bello particular que lleva a crear razonamientos bellos y magníficos en abundante filosofía. El πολὸν πέλαγος τοῦ καλοῦ hace referencia a esa abstracción de la multiplicidad en la unidad del género. Este estadio prevé una intensa práctica filosófica que fortalece el intelecto del iniciando y lo hace crecer hasta hacerlo ver una única ciencia de esa belleza (τινὰ ἐπιστήμην μίαν τοιαύτην, ἣ ἔστι καλοῦ τοιοῦδε; d7-e1).

Una nueva indicación formal (e1-2) anuncia que pasamos a un estadio cualitativamente superior (210e1-211b4). El término ἐξαιφνης marca un fenómeno diferente al de la abstracción que hasta ahora había sido el preponderante. El que llega a este punto del proceso “ve súbitamente algo maravillosamente bello en su naturaleza” (ἐξαιφνης κατόψεται τι θαυμαστὸν τὴν φύσιν καλόν; 210 e4-5). Este ser posee todas las cualidades que corresponden a las Ideas. Es absolutamente bello en todo

¹¹ “Der Entwurf der Transzendenz ist bei Platon in sich immer schon durch den Eros geführt und geleitet. Das heißt zugleich: Die Seiendheit des Seienden ist selbst Eros; das im Genitiv genannte Gründungsverhältnis selbst geschieht immer schon als Eros” (Büchner 1965,150). Eros no es, como reclama Büchner la entidad del ente, sino, más bien, el impulso que lleva a buscar el fin último de esta realidad, e. d. no es el ser, sino la aspiración al ser.

los sentidos. No es corporal, ni intelectual, ni científico. No está en otro. Es en sí, consigo, único, eterno. Todo lo bello participa de él.

La última parte del discurso de Diotima (211b7-212a7) es un resumen de lo expresado anteriormente, pero añade varias determinaciones de importancia: el proceso no finaliza con la visión súbita, sino que requiere además una permanencia que es deseada por el filósofo iniciado. La permanencia en contacto con lo Bello en sí, despreciando la belleza corporal, hace devenir al filósofo querido de los dioses e inmortal.

Chen (1983, 68 s.) sostiene que la transición de conocimiento que se da a la contemplación de las Ideas es de una cualidad diferente a los estadios anteriores y sólo aquí se produce el ascenso. Según su interpretación el ascenso tiene un solo paso y no más. Sólo hay dos niveles metafísicos: realidad e ideas y no una gradación. El proceso no sería un proceso de abstracción ni de generalización, e. d. no es la producción de un concepto. La Idea de lo Bello no es un concepto, es un ser, una entidad. Si bien es cierto que la captación de lo Bello es claramente un estadio cualitativamente superior al resto del proceso, no es menos verdadero que el texto contradice la interpretación de Chen de manera palmaria. Diotima habla expresamente de un ascenso (cf. ἐπανιών, 211b6; ἐπανίεναι, c2) y de estadios o escalones ascendentes (ἐπαναβασμοίς; c3). El mito del *Fedón* citado anteriormente permite comprender la metáfora utilizada en el *Banquete*. Se trata del momento en el que el alma se levanta por encima de la realidad sensible y percibe la multiplicidad anterior a la formación del concepto. En ese momento, a través de la intensa actividad dialéctica (ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ; 210d6), alcanza el conocimiento de la unidad de esa multiplicidad de lo bello (κατίδη τινὰ ἐπιστήμην μίαν τοιαύτην, ἥ ἐστι καλοῦ τοιοῦδε; d7-e1). Ése es el momento previo que da lugar al salto cualitativo que se produce de súbito con la captación de la Idea de lo Bello.

Por otra parte, contrariamente a lo que sostiene Chen, se menciona la creación de conceptos y pensamientos en el proceso de ascenso. Hay una ciencia que está referida a esa visión de lo bello que se logra por la contemplación y frecuentación del concepto que se obtiene a través de la contemplación del amplio océano de lo bello. Kahn (1987, 101) ha caracterizado este ascenso como un proceso dialéctico similar al de la *República*. Sin embargo, no aparece aquí delineada ninguna búsqueda de una definición de lo Bello, sino que se trata más bien de visiones y de contemplación. Sobre todo en el estadio final se menciona una captación que trasciende la ciencia y, aunque se habla del αὐτοῦ ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ μάθημα (211c7-8), no se trata de un conocimiento discursivo, sino de una captación intuitiva de la naturaleza de lo bello.

4. Lo Bello y el Bien

Uno de los problemas centrales que presenta este pasaje es el de la relación existente entre lo Bello y el Bien. Ya Plotino en la *Enéada* anteriormente mencionada identificaba lo Bello con el Bien. Esta identificación se ha impuesto en la mayoría de los intérpretes contemporáneos que suelen darla por supuesta.² Kahn (1987, 91), p. ej., atribuye a ambas Ideas el mismo papel en el proceso de iluminación filosófica.³ Aunque no se define explícitamente acerca de su identificación, su interpretación se basa en ella, ya que ambas son el fin del proceso. Otros como White (2004) se definen por la distinción del Bien y lo Bello (cf. *quoque* Strauss 2001, 234). Según Chang (2002, 433s.), la Idea del Bien no se encuentra en el *Simposio*, donde el Eros es la causa de todo lo bello y bueno (436), aunque la única referencia es a los pasajes de 197c3 y 198e6-199a1 que corresponden al discurso de Agatón. De todas maneras, Chang considera a lo Bello el principio último que produce todo, lo que implica o bien la identificación de lo Bello con el Bien o bien, más probable, la suplantación de la Idea del Bien por la Idea de lo Bello. Como último ejemplo, Krämer (1959, 494) sostiene la diferencia entre ambas Ideas y entiende el Bien como fin y lo Bello como medio, aunque afirma que Platón deja aquí sin respuesta el problema de la relación entre ambas ideas.

El discurso de Diotima se mueve ocultando la relación existente entre lo Bello y el Bien. El Bien aparece en la redefinición de la finalidad del amor, como el deseo de obtener y poseer de manera permanente el Bien (τὸ ἀγαθόν; 206a11-12). La definición que da Diotima del Amor se dirige directamente contra el mito puesto en boca de Aristófanes, pero la insistencia en diferenciar en lo Bello y lo Bueno se opone también al discurso de Agatón que considera a Eros el principio de lo Bello

² Markus (1955, 137), p. ej., considera esta identificación “axiomatic for Plato”, pero no ofrece ninguna prueba de su afirmación, salvo la identificación que Agatón que hace de ambos términos y del pasaje del diálogo entre Diotima y Sócrates (204d1-e7) que ya he analizado antes y que no indica esa identificación. Cf. *quoque*, Taylor (1926, 231 s.); Bury (1932 xlv); Patterson (1991, 197-200). Para más ejemplos, cf. White (1989, 479, n. 3; 2008, 372 n. 28).

³ Algo similar sucede con Brisson (1998, 71-74), que tampoco se pronuncia de manera clara, pero parecería dar por supuesta la identificación.

y Bueno. El diálogo entre Agatón y Sócrates que sirve de vínculo a la exposición de este último (199c3-201c9) pone de manifiesto una diferencia entre lo bello y lo bueno que es también una indicación de importancia, entre otras razones porque muestra que Eros es un deseo de aquello que se carece y porque anuncia la posición de Diotima: el carácter final de la aspiración amorosa, la posesión del Bien.⁴ Que el bien del que se habla es el principio último de la realidad queda claro por la expresa relación con la felicidad. Quien lo posee es feliz y ése es el final de la búsqueda (205a3). Si bien Diotima utiliza el plural en esta primera aproximación, su definición final del amor deja en claro que apunta al Bien, principio último de la realidad, dado que sólo en unión con él puede darse el estado de felicidad.

El hecho de que Eros sea insistentemente unido a la creación (ποίησις), como ha puesto de manifiesto el análisis de la estructura del discurso, parecería también apuntar a la presencia creadora del Bien, tal como se manifiesta en la *República*. Es, además, indicativo que lo bello sea el medio en el que se produce la búsqueda de eternidad o inmortalidad que caracteriza al amor. Asimismo, La caracterización de Eros como filósofo (204b4) indica el valor cósmico del filósofo, que a la manera de Eros media entre los dioses y los hombres y une de esa forma el universo.

De todas formas, estos aspectos no indican la identificación de lo Bello y el Bien. En repetidas ocasiones en la obra de Platón, la característica de la belleza implica el predicado de bondad, para explicarlo en términos lógicos, la especie de τὸ καλόν está incluida en el género de τὸ ἀγαθόν (Prot. 360b3, Symp. 201c1-5). La relación entre el Bien y la Belleza también es considerada en el *Filebo* (64e5-65a5), donde tres Ideas (belleza [κάλλει], proporción [συμμετρία] y verdad [ἀληθεία]) aparecen para describir el poder/capacidad del Bien (ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ δύναμις; 64e5). Estas predicaciones son comprensibles a partir de la alegoría del sol en el sexto libro de la *República* (cf. Lisi 2007). La Idea del Bien es el fundamento que otorga estas tres características. Por último, la misma Diotima indica al pasar que ésa no es la meta final del impulso o deseo que es el amor:

ὅταν δὴ τις ἀπὸ τῶνδε διὰ τὸ ὀρθῶς παιδευαστεῖν ἐπαιῶν ἐκεῖνο τὸ καλὸν ἄρχηται καθορᾶν, σχεδὸν ἄν τι ἄπτοίτο τοῦ τέλους (“Cuando, uno, elevándose desde las cosas bellas de este mundo por el correcto amor a los jóvenes, comienza a ver aquello bello, casi tocaría el final”, 211b5-7).

El sintagma σχεδόν τι indica con claridad que la Idea de lo Bello no es idéntica a la Idea del Bien y que el impulso amoroso necesita aún recorrer un camino más largo para llegar a la contemplación de la Idea del Bien. El camino que lleva de la contemplación de la Idea individual a la Idea del Bien no es explicado en este pasaje. Una aproximación puede encontrarse en la descripción de la dialéctica en la *República*.

Bibliografía mencionada

- Brisson, L. (1998), Platon. *Le Banquet*. Traduction inédite, introduction et notes par L. B. Paris.
- Büchner, H. (1965), *Eros und Sein*. Erörterungen zu Platons Symposium. Bonn.
- Bury, R. G. (1932), *The Symposium of Plato*. Edited with introduction, critical notes and commentary by R. G. B.. Cambridge 1932 (2nd. ed.).
- Chang, K-Ch. (2002), “Plato's Form of the Beautiful in the Symposium versus Aristotle's Unmoved Mover in the Metaphysics (Λ)”, *The Classical Quarterly*, NS 52, 2, 431-446.
- Chen, L. C. H. (1983), “Knowledge and Beauty in Plato's Symposium”, *The Classical Quarterly* NS 33, 1, 6-74.
- (1992), *Acquiring knowledge of the Ideas*. A study of Plato's Methods in the *Phaedo*, the *Symposium* and the central books of the *Republic*. Stuttgart. Palingenesia 35.
- Kahn, Ch. (1987), “Plato's theory of desire”, *Review of Metaphysics* 41, 1, 77-103.
- Krämer, H.-J. (1959), *Arete bei Platon und Aristoteles*. Zum Wesen und zur Geschichte der platonischen Ontologie. Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-historische Klasse 1959,6.
- Leisegang, H. (1950) “Platon” REPW XX, col. 2342-2537.
- Markus, R. E. (1955), “The dialectic of Eros in Plato's *Symposium*”, *Downside Review* 73, 219-230. Ahora en: G. Vlastos (ed.), *Plato*. II: Ethics, Politics, and Philosophy of Art and Religion. A collection of critical essays, s. I. 1971, 132-143 (citado por esta edición).
- Patterson, R. (1991), “The Ascent in Plato's *Symposium*”. J. Cleary, *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 7, Boston-London, 193-214.

⁴ Es doctrina permanente en Platón que el que desea desea el bien para sí (cf. *Men.* 77b6-e4)

- Strauss, L. (2001), *On Plato's Symposium*. Ed. with a foreword by S. Benardete. Chicago.
- Taylor, A. E. (1926), *Plato*. The man and his work. London 1955.
- White, F. C. (1989), "Love and Beauty in Plato's *Symposium*". *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 109, 149-157.
- (2004), "Virtue in Plato's *Symposium*" *The Classical Quarterly* NS, 54, 2, 366-378.

L'océan du beau : les Formes platoniciennes et leur extension (210a-212a)

Arnaud Macé

Je souhaite explorer les implications du fait que l'ensemble des objets participant à la Forme de la beauté, dont Diotime accomplit le parcours, soit décrit (τὸ πολὺ πέλαιος τοῦ καλοῦ *Banquet* 210d4) comme une pleine mer, une haute mer, un πέλαιος, cette étendue sur laquelle on peut voir, à perte de vue, se lever la houle :

ὥς δ' ὅτε πορφύρη πέλαιος μέγα κύματι κωφῶ¹

Comme lorsque la vaste mer se gonfle d'une vague muette

Le terme décrit la mer moins comme une entité, différenciée par exemple de la Terre ou du ciel, comme πόντος – l'infranchissable² –, qu'une mer en particulier, la mer Égée ou Ionienne, et surtout, cette mer que l'on est en train de traverser, plutôt que de tranquillement suivre une côte³. Cette expérience, dans la poésie homérique, est aussi bien celle d'une épreuve (ce que les héros doivent en effet traverser, cf. *Od.* III 179) qu'une source d'analogie, comme dans le présent passage où il s'agit d'évoquer l'état d'esprit de Nestor. Les poètes l'utilisent comme métaphore pour dire une quantité qui paraît si grande qu'on en voit pas le bout – en imaginant par exemple un océan sans fond de ruine⁴. Platon prolonge cet usage métaphorique, en nous invitant à considérer que le « beau » est une telle étendue. La première chose qu'il faut observer c'est tout simplement qu'en lui donnant un nom, même métaphorique, Platon circonscrit une chose qui n'en a pas toujours dans les dialogues, car l'océan du beau n'est pas la Forme du beau, mais plutôt ce que l'on pourrait appeler son « champ de participation », à savoir l'ensemble des items qui, à un moment donné, en viennent à participer à cette Forme. Il me semble que c'est une donnée importante de la façon dont les Formes sont présentées dans les dialogues, à savoir que l'on puisse aussi le saisir à partir de leur champ et penser leurs rapports à partir de ceux qui s'établissent entre leurs champs respectifs⁵. Le passage du *Banquet* que nous allons considérer fait apparaître, au gré d'une métaphore bien choisie, le caractère à la fois mouvant, sans contours fixes et fondamentalement hétérogène du champ de participation propre à la Forme du Beau. Nous verrons même que cette hétérogénéité menace la possibilité de trouver dans l'ensemble des manifestations du Beau un trait descriptif commun : la Forme du Beau unifie son champ de participation sans donner aux choses qui le composent un style identique, et en lui laissant plutôt arborer un fascinant miroitement.

1/ Ouvrir l'extension : la totalisation des belles choses

Étendre la classe des choses dont on parle : c'est déjà le souci d'Eryximaque après l'intervention de Pausanias : si ce dernier a péché, c'est en restreignant sa distinction des deux amours aux âmes des hommes, alors qu'elle s'applique à quantité d'autres choses, dans le corps des animaux, dans ce qui pousse sur la terre, et, pour ainsi dire, dans tout ce qui existe (186a). Diotime prolonge cette appel vers le large, en invitant chacun à étendre le champ des belles choses qu'il fréquente.

a) Il y a les beaux corps (τὰ καλὰ σώματα 210a6 et 211c4).

L'initiation proposée par Diotime commence au niveau qui est aussi celui de l'*Hippias Majeur*. Hippias a proposé, en réponse à la question “τί ἐστὶ τοῦτο τὸ καλόν;” (287d3), la réponse suivante : une belle jeune femme. Le spécialiste d'Homère qu'est Hippias aurait pu donner un exemple : pourquoi pas Hermione, fille d'Hélène et de Ménélas, dont l'εἶδος, la beauté, est celle d'Aphrodite même⁶. C'est à ce niveau que commence aussi l'initiation proposée par Diotime. Il faut même qu'elle

¹ Homère, *Il.* XIV 16 Allen.

² ἐπ' ἀπείρονα πόντον *Il.* VII 350. Pour Hésiode, voir par exemple πόντος ἀπείριτος 109.

³ Voir Thucydide VI 13 1, 10-11 : on oppose διὰ πέλαιους, en traversant directement la mer, au fait de suivre la côte, παρὰ γῆν.

⁴ Voir Eschyle *Perses* 433 κακῶν πέλαιος μέγα et *Suppliants* 470 ἄτης δ' ἄβυσσον πέλαιος.

⁵ Nous avons proposé de lire la construction de la dialectique platonicienne en termes de rapports entre ensembles de choses participant aux Formes, voir A. Macé, *L'Atelier de l'invisible, apprendre à philosopher avec Platon*, Paris, Ere, 2010, particulier les chapitres II et III. Il s'agit en particulier de repérer les relations qui existent entre de tels ensembles, telles que celles que nous nommons aujourd'hui en mathématiques l'inclusion ou l'intersection.

⁶ Hermione, qui a la beauté de l'Aphrodite d'or, Ἑρμιόνην, ἥ εἶδος ἔχε χρυσοῦς Ἀφροδίτης, *Od.* IV 14. Ce sens de beauté, en particulier de beauté du visage, est manifeste dans la plupart des occurrences archaïques, mais a laissé place, au IV^e siècle, à

commence par l'amour d'un seul corps.

δεῖ γάρ, ἔφη, τὸν ὀρθῶς ἰόντα ἐπὶ τοῦτο τὸ πρᾶγμα ἄρχεσθαι μὲν νέον ὄντα ἰέναι ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ σώματα, καὶ πρῶτον μὲν, ἔάν ὀρθῶς ἠγήται ὁ ἠγούμενος, ἐνδὸς αὐτὸν σώματος ἐρᾶν καὶ ἐνταῦθα γεννᾶν λόγους καλοῦς,⁷

Il faut en effet, dit-elle, que celui qui prend la bonne voie pour aller à ce but commence dès sa jeunesse à rechercher les beaux corps. Dans un premier temps, s'il est bien dirigé par celui qui le dirige, il n'aimera qu'un seul corps et alors il enfantera de beaux discours...⁸

Il est possible que la « bonne voie » dont il s'agit renvoie à la « pratique correcte de l'amour des jeunes garçons (τὸ ὀρθῶς παιδεραστεῖν) »⁹, l'amour pour les femmes (de la part des hommes) ayant été réduit au désir de l'immortalité à travers la progéniture (208e), tandis que l'amour des jeunes hommes semble propice au fait de laisser l'âme s'inspirer du spectacle de la beauté (209b-c). Cette bonne voie commence en outre par la singularité : s'enticher d'un corps unique. C'est que l'on est précisément au niveau de l'εἶδος, de ce trait de beauté sensible qui n'est jamais aussi bien saisi que dans son incarnation individuelle. Il y a donc déjà une incroyable abstraction dans le fait de passer, pour l'amoureux d'Hermione, ou disons plutôt pour l'amoureux de Pâris, à passer de son amour exclusif pour Pâris à la considération que Pâris et un autre jeune homme aurait finalement, à travers leur beauté, des propriétés qui sont au fond du même type.

ἔπειτα δὲ αὐτὸν κατανοῆσαι ὅτι τὸ κάλλος τὸ ἐπὶ ὀφροῦν σώματι τῷ ἐπὶ ἐτέρῳ σώματι ἀδελφόν ἐστι, καὶ εἰ δεῖ διώκειν τὸ ἐπ' εἶδει καλόν, πολλὴ ἄνοια μὴ οὐχ ἔν τε καὶ ταῦτὸν ἠγεῖσθαι τὸ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς σώμασι κάλλος.¹⁰

puis il constatera que la beauté qui réside en un corps quelconque est sœur de la beauté qui se trouve dans un autre corps, et que, si on s'en tient à la beauté qui réside dans l'apparence, il serait insensé de ne pas tenir pour une et identique la beauté qui réside dans tous les corps.¹¹

Notez l'emploi sensible du terme εἶδος ici : il s'agit bien, comme les poèmes homériques, de la beauté du corps – cet εἶδος encore de la femme de Candaule que ce dernier rêve de faire admirer à son fidèle Gygès¹². On s'élève à une caractérisation de la beauté des corps en général. Les comparaisons homériques, mesurant ainsi qui est premier « quant à l'εἶδος », c'est-à-dire en termes de beauté, offraient déjà cette possibilité d'abstraction de la qualité générale¹³. Il y a une beauté des corps, une dimension unique dans tous les beaux corps, que l'on pourra décrire avec des propriétés similaires, taille, formes, etc. On peut peut-être encore entendre cette abstraction du beau qu'il y a dans tous les corps, dans la formule qui sera utilisée à propos de la Forme du beau dans la page qui suit, pour nier quelle paraisse à ce niveau. Nous reviendrons à cette négation, commençons par simplement relever la

celui d'apparence physique, de silhouette, devenu plus courant, comme en témoigne un commentaire d'Aristote dans la *Poétique* 1461a12-14 : καὶ τὸν Δόλωνα, “ὅς ῥ' ἦ τοι εἶδος μὲν ἔην κακός”, οὐ τὸ σῶμα ἀσύμμετρον ἀλλὰ τὸ πρόσωπον αἰσχροῦν, τὸ γὰρ εὐειδὲς οἱ Κρητες τὸ εὐπρόσωπον καλοῦσι. Taylor déduit de cette remarque d'Aristote le fait qu'en revanche, dans la langue attique quotidienne, le terme en est venu à vouloir dire le « corps » ou le « physique », ce dont la forme ou les proportions peuvent être commentées, voir A. E. Taylor, « The Words eidos, idea in pre-Platonic Literature », in *Varia Socratica: first series*, Oxford, J. Parker, 1911, p. 178-267, p. 182. On peut néanmoins douter de la réduction stricte de la beauté signifiée par l'adjectif εὐειδής à celle du visage, en considérant par exemple la fable d'Esopé intitulée « Aphrodite et la Belette » (50 Hausrath = 76 Chambry), qui semble ne pas s'interdire de désigner par là l'ensemble des charmes physiques de la jeune mariée. Il s'agit de la beauté du corps en général, dont les visages peuvent être un moment plus intense. Voir aussi l'usage d'Hérodote mentionné ci-après.

⁷ *Banquet* 210a4-8 Burnet.

⁸ Traduction Luc Brisson.

⁹ *Banquet* 211b5-6, traduction Brisson.

¹⁰ *Banquet* 210a8-b3 Burnet.

¹¹ Traduction de Luc Brisson modifiée en un seul point, mais un point essentiel : Luc Brisson traduit τὸ ἐπ' εἶδει καλόν par « la beauté qui réside dans une Forme ». Nous comprenons le terme εἶδος dans son sens courant et non platonicien. L'ensemble de notre propos montrera pourquoi nous ne pouvons considérer qu'il s'agisse là déjà de la Forme, qui n'est pas encore apparue à l'initié, lequel n'en poursuit pour l'instant que des imitations.

¹² Hérodote I, 8. Certains y lisent le sens de « silhouette », voir A. E. Taylor, « The Words eidos, idea in pre-Platonic Literature », *op. cit.*, p. 184-186. Nous préférons celui de beauté (beauté physique), qui est le sens homérique.

¹³ C'est en effet un argument pour ceux qui pensent que le corps homérique n'est saisi qu'à travers des traits hétérogènes qui en classent les différents aspects sans les réunir en un corps organique. Ainsi B. Snell fait la remarque que δέμας, qu'Homère emploie de la même façon qu'εἶδος, à l'accusatif de spécification, qui était pourtant le mieux placé pour désigner chez Homère le corps lui-même, puisque σῶμα ne jouait pas encore ce rôle, n'y parvenait pas et restait une simple façon de préciser l'attribution d'une qualité relative (il est grand ou petit « du point de vue du δέμας », plus grand qu'un tel « du point de vue du δέμας », de la même façon qu'on est premier « quant à l'εἶδος »), B. Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes: Studien zur Entstehung des europäischen Denkens bei den Griechen*, Hamburg, Allemagne, Claassen & Goverts, 1948, p. 19.

caractérisation de ce niveau corporel :

οὐδ' αὖ φαντασθήσεται αὐτῷ τὸ καλὸν οἷον πρόσωπόν τι οὐδὲ χεῖρες οὐδὲ ἄλλο οὐδὲν ὧν σῶμα μετέχει,¹⁴

Le Beau ne se manifestera pas non plus à lui comme un visage, ni non plus comme des mains ou quoi que ce soit d'autre parmi les choses qui ont part au corps,¹⁵

Imaginons le « τὸ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς σώμασι κάλλος », celui dont on vient de parler, il faut bien assurément qu'il soit cette beauté que l'on peut saisir dans les visages, sur les mains et sur tout ce qui a part à la corporéité – on note l'importance de l'expérience du visage et des mains dans l'expérience de la beauté. L'éclat de cette beauté qui rayonne sur les corps, et notamment sur les visages, est aussi évoqué dans le *Phèdre*.

ἀρτιτελής, ὁ τῶν τότε πολυθεάμων, ὅταν θεοειδὲς πρόσωπον ἴδῃ κάλλος εὖ μεμιμημένον ἢ τινα σώματος ἰδέαν, πρῶτον μὲν ἔφριξε...¹⁶

Celui au contraire qui vient d'être initié, celui qui des réalités de jadis a eu une vision pleine, quand il lui arrive de voir un visage, ou la forme d'un corps,¹⁷ qui soit d'un aspect divin, qui imite à merveille la beauté, celui-là, alors, commence par frissonner...

Nous tenterons plus tard de réconcilier ce qui semble incompatible entre ce passage du *Phèdre* et celui du *Banquet* que nous venions de citer : comment les mêmes corps peuvent-ils être l'imitation de la beauté même et ce en quoi le beau se refuse à se manifester ? Pour l'instant, nous en restons à la mise au jour de cette couche spécifique du corporel en général dans l'expérience des belles choses. On peut noter à ce propos que l'extension proposée par Diotime, qui peut sembler violente à tous ceux qui sont attachés à la singularité des attachements exclusifs, est pourtant limitée. Que l'on pense à l'initiation que Socrate fait connaître à Hippias, en lui faisant apparaître la beauté qu'il y a dans les juments, les lyres et dans les marmites. Une belle jument est aussi quelque chose de beau ; car comment admettre que « ce qui est beau ne soit pas beau » (*Hippias Majeur* 288c2-3) ? Hippias, qui se souvient des magnifiques juments dont on fait l'élevage dans son pays, à Elis, approuve. Et Socrate lui fait accepter qu'une belle lyre est aussi quelque chose de beau, et aussi une belle marmite : « si la marmite a été fabriquée par un bon potier, qu'elle est bien lisse, bien arrondie et bien cuite, comme sont, parmi les belles marmites, celles qui ont deux anses, et qui peuvent contenir six congés – de si belles marmites » (288d6-9). Or Diotime ne semble pas requérir que l'on approfondisse l'initiation amoureuse en reconnaissant aussi la beauté qu'il y a dans les marmites, les juments, en s'adonnant à l'amour de ces corps là aussi, au même titre qu'on désire la beauté de Pâris ou de Patrocle. Nous verrons qu'il y a une étape de l'initiation où nous rangerons pourtant Pâris à côté des marmites et des juments. Mais pour l'instant, une logique de l'éminence semble présider à l'initiation, un point de vue qu'Hippias déjà avait très bien exprimé, en affirmant qu'une marmite, même très belle, « ne mérite pas qu'on la place parmi les belles choses, au même titre que le cheval ou la jeune femme et que toutes les autres belles choses » (*Hippias Majeur* 288e7-9). Grâce à Hippias, nous savons déjà quoi répondre à celui qui nous a fait reconnaître la beauté des marmites, en lui apprenant qu'il ignore la vérité qu'il y a dans ces mots d'Héraclite : « le plus beau des singes est laid en comparaison de l'espèce humaine » (289a3-4), et la vérité qu'il y a dans cet aphorisme du savant Hippias : « la plus belle des marmites est laide, en comparaison de l'espèce des jeunes femmes » (289a4-6) ! Voilà une bonne raison de préférer commencer l'initiation par les corps humains, sans s'embarrasser des marmites : ils manifestent la beauté à un degré supérieur à celui de la même propriété présente dans les marmites et les jugements : ils la possèdent « éminemment (*kuriôs*) »¹⁸, comme dirait Aristote. Mais, comme Hippias l'a aussi appris à ces dépens, une telle logique est prompte à évincer ses élus d'un jour. On trouve toujours un porteur plus éminent de la qualité recherchée. Les âmes s'appêtent à éclipser les corps selon la même logique.

b) ce qu'il y a dans les âmes : actes

Après avoir élu la beauté des corps, on se trouverait étonnamment, comme par la grâce d'une première

¹⁴ *Banquet* 211a5-7 Burnet.

¹⁵ Nous traduisons.

¹⁶ *Phèdre* 251a1-4 Burnet.

¹⁷ Nous traduisons.

¹⁸ *Sur les formes*, cité par Alexandre d'Aphrodise, *Commentaire à la Métaphysique d'Aristote*, 82.13.

synthèse du corporel en général, à voir apparaître un nouveau type de choses qui sont susceptibles de beauté : les âmes. La beauté qui se trouve dans les âmes lui semblera plus digne d'éloge que celle qui est dans les corps, de telle sorte qu'il sera enclin à chérir et prendre soin d'une personne possédant une âme admirable, quand bien même son physique serait ingrat (210b6-c3). Or si l'on s'arrête sur la nature des discours qu'une âme admirable inspire, on s'aperçoit, poursuit la prêtresse, qu'il s'agit de discours qui ont pour but de « rendre la jeunesse meilleure ». Cela implique que la beauté qui est dans les âmes (τὸ ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς κάλλος 210b6-7), est aussi la beauté qui est dans les conduites et dans les lois qui les inspirent (τὸ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις καλὸν 210c2-3/τὰ καλὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα 211c5). Les actes, comme les discours, sont ce en quoi se manifeste la beauté des âmes.

Cette façon qu'à la beauté des discours et celle des esprits qu'ils révèlent justement, comme les actes le font aussi, d'évincer la beauté des corps est là aussi comme une réminiscence homérique : on pense à l'apparition d'Ulysse devant les Troyens, tel que Priam se la remémore tandis que du haut des remparts en compagnie d'Hélène il reconnaît le roi d'Ithaque affairé à ranger ses hommes, au livre III. Ulysse apparaît au vers 194-198, moins grand qu'Agamemnon mais paraît plus large, de la poitrine et des épaules (194), et Priam se souvient de la façon du jour où Ulysse et Ménélas se présentèrent devant l'assemblée troyenne. Le roi de Sparte parle le premier, homme de peu de mots, mais qui sonnent bien. Ulysse lui, lorsqu'il se lève pour parler a d'abord l'air d'un idiot : il se tient là, les yeux au sol, le sceptre immobile – il a l'air de quelqu'un qui a perdu l'esprit (ἄφρονά 220). Pourtant, dès que sa voix sort de sa poitrine, « avec des mots tombant pareils aux flocons de neige en hiver »¹⁹, alors, aucune mortel ne peut rivaliser, et, dès lors, avoue Priam, « nous songions moins désormais à admirer sa beauté »²⁰. La description homérique a le grand mérite de nous donner une idée, même métaphorique, des traits que l'on peut expliciter pour décrire la beauté d'une âme, ou la beauté de ses mots, de sa manière de se révéler à travers son discours. On pense à la façon dont Socrate décrit Théétète, aussi laid que lui-même, mais révélant une âme d'une grande beauté, lorsqu'il manifeste ce mélange de courage et de douceur qui lui permet de progresser à travers les problèmes sans effort, comme une nappe d'huile s'épand silencieusement (144a1-b7)²¹.

Avec les corps et les actes qui révèlent les âmes, les deux premiers niveaux de l'initiation, nous tenons du reste les deux types de choses dans lesquelles les Formes de vertu peuvent se manifester – c'est encore le verbe φαντάζω qui est utilisé à ce propos dans un autre texte de Platon :

Καὶ περὶ δὴ δικαίου καὶ ἀδίκου καὶ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ καὶ πάντων τῶν εἰδῶν πέρι ὁ αὐτὸς λόγος, αὐτὸ μὲν ἐν ἕκαστον εἶναι, τῇ δὲ τῶν πράξεων καὶ σωμάτων καὶ ἀλλήλων κοινωνία πανταχοῦ φανταζόμενα πολλὰ φαίνεσθαι ἕκαστον.²²

Et le raisonnement est le même en ce qui concerne le juste et l'injuste, le bien et le mal et toutes les autres Formes : chacune elle-même est une, mais paraît multiple en se manifestant partout en communauté les unes avec les autres et avec les actes et les corps.²³

Ce qui est troublant, peut-être, c'est qu'il faille penser que la même chose se « manifeste » dans des corps et dans des actes, comme si c'est deux niveaux étaient susceptible de nous procurer des descriptions homogènes de propriétés. Or, si l'on se transporte du côté de la beauté, comment imaginerions-nous unir l'arrondi et le lisse qui font la belle marmite, la grâce du visage et des mains qui font le beau jeune homme, et la douceur audacieuse qui fait la belle âme ? Nous allons revenir sur sur ce point. Il y a encore une étape dans l'ascension.

c) La beauté qui est dans les sciences.

Après les occupations, on parvient au beau qui est dans les sciences (ἐπιστημῶν κάλλος 210c7, τὰ καλὰ μαθήματα 211c6). On pourrait dire que les sciences sont dans les âmes – et donc que ces beautés feraient partie de celles que l'on a déjà pu envisager. Mais s'il s'agit toujours d'une logique d'éminence, il est plus probable qu'il s'agisse d'un nouveau genre de beauté, non pas celle des sciences en tant que dispositions psychiques, mais celle des objets de science, par exemple la beauté de l'ordre mathématique que révèle l'étude de l'univers. Il s'agirait par exemple éventuellement de cette beauté qui se trouve dans le cosmos, en tant que la science y trouve des régularités, comme lorsque dans le

¹⁹ καὶ ἔπεα νιφάδεσσιν ἑοικότα χειμερίησιν, 222. C'est l'élégante la traduction de Paul Mazon.

²⁰ οὐ τότε γ' ὄδ' Ὀδυσσεὺς ἀγασσάμεθ' εἶδος ἰδόντες, 224. C'est là encore la traduction de Paul Mazon.

²¹ Voir A. Macé, « L'institution platonicienne de la question des vertus intellectuelles », *Les Cahiers philosophiques de Strasbourg*, n° 20, éd. par T. Bénatouil et M. Le Du, 2006, p. 11-48, p. 26-27.

²² *République* 476a4-7 Burnet.

²³ Nous traduisons.

Timée (47b5-c4) on explore la façon dont les mathématiques nous permettent, ayant observé le ciel, ayant étudié à fond (ἐκμαθόντες) les mouvements qui s'y trouvent et ayant pris part à la justesse du calcul (λογισμῶν... ὀρθότητος), de découvrir l'harmonie qui est dans le ciel, découverte qui aura pour effet de mettre de l'ordre dans les mouvements de notre âme. Or une telle indication de localisation de cette beauté semble confirmée lorsqu'à la page suivante on en vient à éliminer toutes les choses précédemment évoquées dans lesquelles la Forme elle-même n'est pas :

οὐδέ τις λόγος οὐδέ τις ἐπιστήμη, οὐδέ που ὄν ἐν ἐτέρῳ τι, οἷον ἐν ζώῳ ἢ ἐν γῆ ἢ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἢ ἐν τῷ ἄλλῳ,²⁴

(Ce Beau ne se manifestera) pas non plus comme un discours ni comme une science donnée, il ne sera pas non plus en quelque façon dans une autre chose, comme dans un animal, dans la Terre, dans le ciel ou dans quoi que ce soit d'autre.

La beauté du ciel ou de la terre semblent bien être de celles que les sciences peuvent révéler. En quoi ces beautés sont-elles plus grandes que celles des hommes et des femmes ? Ce sont les beautés de divinités. Or, comme Hippias l'a appris à ses dépens, la plus belle des femmes, comparée à une déesse, ne sera plus très belle, comme le dit Héraclite : « le plus savant des hommes paraît un singe auprès d'un dieu ; il en est de même pour le savoir, comme pour la beauté, comme pour toute chose » (*Hippias* 289b4-5). Surtout, il semble s'agir désormais d'une beauté qui ne se révèle qu'à l'intellect, par l'intermédiaire de l'étude des sciences, celle de l'ordre mathématique que l'étude révèle aux futurs gouvernants de la *République* comme des *Lois* (XII 966d-968c).

2/ les propriétés des choses composant l'ensemble total des belles choses

Une chose étonnante se produit alors. Pourquoi, si l'on se tenait dans une logique d'éminence, de recherche d'une beauté de plus en plus éclatante, se retourner pour regarder en arrière ? Diotime invite l'initié à contempler l'ensemble parcouru : « en considérant la vaste étendue qui est déjà celle du beau (βλέπων πρὸς πολὺ ἤδη τὸ καλόν) »²⁵. Alors, l'initié aux mystères d'Eros, se trouve « tourné vers l'océan du beau et le contemplant (ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος τετραμμένος τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ θεωρῶν) » (210d3-4). L'océan du beau n'est pas la Forme du beau : c'est l'ensemble des choses belles qui ont été parcourues. Ce que nous appelons son champ de participation. Or c'est le moment où Diotime, en décrivant une nouvelle chose qui ne fait pas nombre avec l'ensemble des choses belles, en décrivant la Forme du Beau, propose, en creux, une description de certains attributs communs à toutes les choses belles qui ne sont pas le Beau lui-même. Lorsque Diotime entreprend de nous présenter « ce beau dont la nature est merveilleuse » (τι θαυμαστὸν τὴν φύσιν καλόν 210.e4-5), elle se contente d'exclure un certain nombre d'attributs (210e6-211b5). Or l'ensemble de ces propriétés aurait permis pourtant de circonscrire des ensembles d'objets que l'on vient de traverser. Il y a deux types de propriétés.

a) Les formes du mouvement :

ὃς γὰρ ἂν μέχρι ἐνταῦθα πρὸς τὰ ἐρωτικά παιδαγωγηθῆ, θεώμενος ἐφεξῆς τε καὶ ὀρθῶς τὰ καλά, πρὸς τέλος ἤδη ἰὼν τῶν ἐρωτικῶν ἐξαίφνης κατόψεταί τι θαυμαστὸν τὴν φύσιν καλόν, τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο, ὃ Σώκρατες, οὗ δὴ ἔνεκεν καὶ οἱ ἔμπροσθεν πάντες πόνοι ἦσαν, πρῶτον μὲν αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον...²⁶

Celui qui en effet aura suivi jusque là l'initiation menant vers les objets de l'amour, contemplant les belles choses, de manière successive et correcte, parvient alors au terme des choses de l'amour : il verra soudain quelque chose d'incroyablement beau quant à sa nature, cette chose même, Socrate, qui était le but de toutes les peines antérieures, une chose, qui, tout d'abord, est toujours, ne vient jamais à l'existence ni ne périt, ne s'accroît ni ne diminue...²⁷

Rien qui ne vienne à l'existence ni n'en sorte, n'augmente ni de diminue. Cette exclusion de la génération et de la destruction est complétée par celle de l'augmentation et de la diminution, peut-être de manière générale celle de toute forme de devenir. Voyons en effet la reprise de ce thème :

ἀλλ' αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ μεθ' αὐτοῦ μονοειδὲς αἰεὶ ὄν, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα πάντα κατὰ ἐκείνου μετέχοντα τρόπον

²⁴ *Banquet* 211a7-b1 Burnet.

²⁵ *Banquet* 210c3-d1.

²⁶ *Banquet* 210e2-211a2.

²⁷ Nous traduisons.

τινὰ τοιοῦτον, οἶον γιγνομένων τε τῶν ἄλλων καὶ ἀπολλυμένων μηδὲν ἐκεῖνο μήτε τι πλέον μήτε ἔλαττον γίνεσθαι μηδὲ πάσχειν μηδέν.²⁸

mais il est lui-même par lui-même, d'une forme unique, existant toujours, et toutes les autres choses belles participent à celui-ci sur un certain mode tel que tandis que les autres choses viennent à l'existence et périssent, jamais celui-ci ne devient ni plus grand ni plus petit et ne subit rien.

On pourrait imaginer ici que toute forme de devenir, grand ou petit, mais aussi de bien toute autre sorte est aussi bien exclut – l'altération en général. C'est ce que confirme une expression précédemment utilisée : οὐδὲ τοτὲ μὲν, τοτὲ δὲ οὐ²⁹, il n'est pas beau à un moment, et laid à un autre.

Il ne s'altère pas. On trouve peut-être là les différents types de mouvements qui affectent toute les choses qu'il y a dans l'univers, qu'il s'agisse de corps (corps individuels, corps du monde), d'âmes (âmes individuelles ou âme du monde) ou de dispositions de ces corps et de ces âmes, comme le décrit la physique du livre X des *Lois* (893c-896e³⁰). Il y a bien là un ensemble de propriétés qui qualifient bien l'ensemble des choses parcourues par Diotime jusqu'ici : même le corps et l'âme du monde sont des choses soumises au mouvement, et leur ordre, objet des mathématiques, l'est aussi. L'ordre du ciel peut-être décrit comme le résultat d'une mise en ordre, comme c'est aussi le cas dans le *Timée*.

b) La relativité des perceptions.

ἔπειτα οὐ τῇ μὲν καλόν, τῇ δ' αἰσχρόν, οὐδὲ τοτὲ μὲν, τοτὲ δὲ οὐ, οὐδὲ πρὸς μὲν τὸ καλόν, πρὸς δὲ τὸ αἰσχρόν, οὐδ' ἔνθα μὲν καλόν, ἔνθα δὲ αἰσχρόν, ὡς τισὶ μὲν ὄν καλόν, τισὶ δὲ αἰσχρόν· 31

en outre il n'est pas beau d'un côté, laid de l'autre, ni beau à un moment, laid à un autre, ni beau par rapport à tel autre, laid par rapport à tel autre, beau ici, laid ailleurs, beau pour certains, pour d'autres laid.

On a là cinq formes de relativité qu'il faut distinguer et que l'on peut réduire à quatre modes, comme l'a fait Vlastos³² : selon les parties, le temps, la relation, le lieu et le point de vue. Le tableau résume ces quatre possibilités.

Parties et aspects : comparaison interne	Beau du visage, laid des pieds ; beau habillé, laid nu
Temps	Beau jeune, laid vieux
Relation	Beau par rapport à une marmite, laid par rapport à une jument ³³ .
Lieu	Beau à Athènes, Laid à Sparte
Point de vue	Beau pour les vieux, laid pour les jeunes

Ces variations affectent assurément les objets sensibles, comme en témoignent de nombreux autres passages platoniciens. Qu'en est-il des âmes ? Sont-elles elles aussi soumises à l'ensemble de ces variations ? Il semble en effet qu'une âme puisse être seulement partiellement belle, cesser de l'être, l'être relativement seulement, et être soumise à des évaluations diverses selon les lieux et selon les interlocuteurs – même auprès de la même âme, si on en croit le type de distorsions qui peuvent exister au sein du même sujet sur le moindre spectacle³⁴. La beauté qui est dans les sciences est-elle soumise à la même variation ? Il n'y a pas moyen d'y échapper. Un triangle pourrait-il être beau et laid ? Il peut bien être à la fois grand et petit. Bref, il n'y aurait aucune attribution absolument stable de propriétés contraires. Peut-être pourrait-on néanmoins accepter des degrés : que les corps soit davantage soumis

²⁸ *Banquet* 211b1-5.

²⁹ *Banquet* 211a3 Burnet.

³⁰ Voir A. Macé, *Platon, philosophie de l'agir et du pâtre*, Sankt Augustin, Academia, 2006, 147-150.

³¹ *Banquet* 211a2-5.

³² Voir G. Vlastos, « Degress of Reality », in R. Bambrough (éd.), *New essays on Plato and Aristotle*, London, pays multiples, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965, p. 219-234, et voyez notre comparaison avec de multiples passages platoniciens, A. Macé, *Platon, philosophie de l'agir et du pâtre*, op. cit., p. 185-189.

³³ On pense aussi au cas des bouts de bois égaux (deux à deux) qui peuvent en même temps être inégaux (par rapport à d'autres) (*Phédon* 74d-e), le cas des hommes ou des doigts que nous voyons grands par rapport à certains se trouver petits par rapport à d'autres (*Ibid.* 102b-e pour les hommes, *République* VII 523c-d pour les doigts).

³⁴ Voir notre étude A. Macé, « Que l'art ne peut pas tout pour la cité : la dissonance de l'art, du spectateur et de l'acteur selon Platon », *Cahiers du Centre G. Glotz*, n° 18, 2007, p. 303-322.

à cette évaluation contraire que les âmes et les actes, et les objets des sciences moins que les âmes et les actes : ce serait la raison de la logique d'éminence que nous avons suivi : plus de stabilité peut-être dans les propriétés présentées par les âmes, et plus encore dans celles des objets mathématiques. Ce n'est qu'une hypothèse.

3/ La forme du Beau n'a aucune des caractéristiques portées par l'ensemble des choses belles

Il faut donc conclure que le beau lui-même n'a aucun de traits des choses belles. La négation du premier groupe de propriétés le rend simplement inaccessible au changement. La négation du second groupe le libère de toute forme de conflit des apparences. Mais Diotime ne procède pas seulement à une négation des deux types de propriétés qui caractérisent l'ensemble des choses belles, elle procède aussi à la négation des groupes de propriétés qui caractérisent aussi chacun des domaines de choses belles, comme nous l'avons vu : le domaine corporel, le domaine psychique et celui des sciences. La beauté ne se manifeste pas sous les traits d'un visage ou d'un raisonnement, elle n'est pas la beauté que l'on peut lire dans le ciel. Elle *n'a aucun des traits* que l'un de ces types de chose pourraient manifester. Or c'est bien sa seule possibilité d'échapper à la relativité des perceptions que manifestent tout traits descriptifs. On comprend ces passages des dialogues qui affirment que nous *n'avons jamais vu* la beauté. Pensons au *Phédon* :

Τί δὲ δὴ τὰ τοιάδε, ὦ Σιμμία; φαμέν τι εἶναι δίκαιον αὐτὸ ἢ οὐδέν;
 Φαμέν μέντοι νῆ Δία.
 Καὶ αὐτὸ καλὸν γέ τι καὶ ἀγαθόν;
 Πῶς δ' οὐ;
 Ἦδη οὖν πόποτε τι τῶν τοιούτων τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς εἶδες;
 Οὐδαμῶς, ἦ δ' ὅς.³⁵

Affirmons-nous qu'il existe quelque chose qui est la justice même, ou qu'il n'y a rien de tel ? - Par Zeus oui, nous l'affirmons ! - Et ne disons-nous pas encore qu'il y a quelque chose de beau et quelque chose de bon ? - Comment ne le dirions-nous pas ? - Et alors, as-tu déjà vu, de tes yeux vu, l'une de ces choses ? - Jamais, dit-il.

Or il n'y a pas que le bon et le juste que nous n'ayons jamais vus, de nos yeux vus :

Ἄλλ' ἄλλη τιὴν αἰσθήσει τῶν διὰ τοῦ σώματος ἐφήψω αὐτῶν; λέγω δὲ περὶ πάντων, οἷον μεγέθους πέρι, ὑγείας, ἰσχύος, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐνὶ λόγῳ ἀπάντων τῆς οὐσίας ὃ τυγχάνει ἕκαστον ὄν.³⁶
 Mais n'est-ce pas par une autre sensation que celle qui se fait par le corps que tu as touché ces choses ? Je veux parler de toutes ces choses comme la grandeur, la santé, la force, en un mot de ce qui relève de la réalité que chacune de ces formes se trouve être.

Différencions donc deux choses : personne n'a jamais vu la grandeur, la beauté, la santé ou la force, mais l'on pourrait avoir vu la beauté d'une fleur, senti la force d'un taureau, etc. La Forme en tant que telle ne se manifeste pas. En réalité, ce que l'on a vu, ce sont *d'autres propriétés* – celles qui *imitent* la Forme. Est-ce que la fleur est belle « parce qu'elle a une charmante couleur ou à cause de ses formes (ἢ χρώμα εὐανθὲς ἔχον ἢ σχῆμα) »³⁷ ? Non, ces choses ne sont que des produits de la participation à la Forme du Beau qui, elle, est au-delà de toutes ces déterminations. La Forme de la beauté recule derrière la diversité des caractéristiques que présentent les choses belles : elle est seulement *traduite* dans d'autres propriétés qui en assurent l'imitation, propriétés éminemment variables selon les supports – rondeur des marmites, grâce des visages humains, douceur des mots et des âmes, élégance des âmes, ordre du ciel. Dès lors, un champ de participation doit être considéré comme une classe d'une nature tout à fait particulière. Si on peut la définir comme une classe, c'est-à-dire un ensemble de valeurs de x vérifiant la description « x est Beau », il faut admettre que c'est une classe étonnante, dans la mesure où il n'y a rien dans le contenu descriptif en question que l'on puisse trouver d'homogène. L'ensemble qui fait le champ de participation d'une telle Forme est un ensemble mouvant et hétérogène. Un véritable océan.

On pourrait prolonger la réflexion en considérant que c'est là une manière très vigoureuse de répondre à l'objection qu'énoncera un jour Aristote à propos du Bien platonicien (*Ethique à Nicomaque* I 4) : à chercher une unité qui enveloppe des choses qui se trouvent dans de multiples

³⁵ *Phédon*, 65d4-10 Burnet.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 65d11-e1.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 100d1.

genres, on ne peut produire de définition, car il faudrait qu'il existe un trait essentiel commun à des choses de genre si différents, or cela n'existe pas, sinon par analogie. La nature du Beau, dans laquelle la puissance du Bien s'est réfugiée³⁸, traverse elle aussi de nombreux « genres » de choses, au sens où Aristote emploierait ce terme. Elle est donc moins facile semble-t-il à définir qu'une vertu qui pourrait se situer dans un genre de chose donné. La justice par exemple, nous savons qu'elle est dans l'âme ou dans la cité. Or ce qui est le plus étonnant, c'est que ces Formes qui sont le plus étendues, et donc les plus difficiles à définir, semble être celles qui ont le plus d'éclat parmi les choses sensibles. C'est une autre leçon du *Phèdre*. La beauté rayonne sur ces choses avec une intensité particulière – plus que toute autre forme, plus que la justice, la tempérance et les autres choses que l'âme estime, et dont les imitations sont perçues de manière très affaiblies³⁹. Au contraire, la beauté jouit du privilège d'être, parmi toutes les formes, la plus éclatante dans ses propres images, et la plus désirée⁴⁰. Il est donc plus facile d'être ému par la beauté d'un visage que par le courage qui peut aussi pourtant s'y lire, comme nous le rappelle Plotin⁴¹, mais plus difficilement. Il faut croire que le fait, pour une Forme, de n'être liée, dans ses imitations, à aucun contenu descriptif particulier, laissant celles-ci se disperser dans la plus grande hétérogénéité, lui offre aussi la capacité de se manifester avec le plus grand éclat.

³⁸ *Philèbe* 64.e.5-6 Νῦν δὴ καταπέφυγεν ἡμῖν ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ δύναμις εἰς τὴν τοῦ καλοῦ φύσιν.

³⁹ *Phèdre* 250b.

⁴⁰ *Phèdre* 250c8.

⁴¹ *Enneades* 1, 6, 5,14 *andrian blosuron ekhousan prosôpon*.

Socrates' *Thea*:
The Description of Beauty in *Symposium* 211a
and the Parmenidean Predicates of Being

Manfred Kraus

ABSTRACT

Some 40 years ago, Friedrich Solmsen and Rosamond Kent Sprague have simultaneously and independently pointed to the striking similarity of the terms in which Diotima describes the Form of Beauty in *Symposium* 211a and the predicates of Parmenidean Being revealed by the goddess in fragment B 8. Yet in subsequent scholarly literature this groundbreaking discovery has left astonishingly few traces other than short remarks or footnotes. Scholars have mostly confined themselves to pointing out the negative or privative character of the employed predicates or to emphasize parallels with other Platonic descriptions of the Ideal such as *Phaedo* 78b-79b, *Cratylus* 439d-440b, *Timaeus* 52a-c, *Philebus* 15b, and several others.

Yet in effect, while Platonic descriptions of ideas are often reminiscent of Eleatic concepts and vocabulary, in the *Symposium* passage this correlation appears to be even more close-knit than in any other. It provides not only a description of the Beautiful itself, but also of the nature of knowledge and wisdom, and the imagery of ascent, descent, revelation, sudden vision and light is particularly prominent and concentrated.

For this reason this true centrepiece of the whole dialogue would seem to deserve a more detailed comparative appraisal than it has hitherto been granted. Such an endeavour is both strongly suggested and facilitated also by the fact that scholarship on the Parmenidean predicates of Being has made substantial progress in recent years, and the role of space, time, eternity, homogeneity, indivisibility, changelessness, perfection etc. in Parmenides has been reassessed in many ways, not to speak of erotic undertones that have recently been perceived.

The paper will attempt to analyse the *Symposium* passage by comparing it in a first step with other similar Platonic passages relevant to the description of ideas, in order to highlight its particular differences and peculiarities. It will then meticulously examine the relationship of the individual predicates and combinations of predicates to their respective parallels in Parmenides' fragment B 8. Ideally, the result will be not only a more profound understanding of the Platonic passage and its Eleatic background, but also some new insights about the sometimes contested wordings and meanings of the difficult Parmenidean sequence. As a result it will emerge that the Platonic passage is in various respects more closely modelled on its Parmenidean archetype than mostly assumed, and how Socrates takes on the role of a new *kouros* to listen to the revelations of his personal guiding goddess, the mysterious Mantinean woman Diotima, eventually to become an *eidōs phōs* in all things *erōs*, beauty, and wisdom.

L'interpretazione plotiniana (*Enneade* III 5) della nascita di *Eros* (*Symp.* 203b-c)

Angela Longo

ABSTRACT

Il confronto con il “Simposio” di Platone rappresenta un elemento costante nella ricerca filosofica e nella produzione letteraria di Plotino (205-270 d. C.). Esso “feconda” il pensiero e lo stile di scrittura plotiniani sia nei trattati del primo periodo, tra cui spicca il primo scritto stesso composto da Plotino “Sul bello” (Enn. I 6 [1]), sia nei trattati del periodo di mezzo, tra cui spicca l’opuscolo “Sul bello intelligibile” (Enn. V 8 [31]), sia infine nei trattati dell’ultimo periodo, tra cui merita una particolare menzione l’opera “Sull’amore” (Enn. III 5 [50]). Plotino si rivela un lettore selettivo del “Simposio” platonico poiché sono soprattutto due temi e un’immagine che lo accompagnano nella sua lunga riflessione sull’anima che risale al bello tramite amore e che trascende persino il Bello nell’unione con il Bene. I due temi sono:

a) quello della risalita graduale dell’anima dai vari gradi di bellezza (dei corpi, dell’anima, delle azioni, delle scienze) fino alla visione del Bello in sé (Platone, *Symp.* 210-12);

b) quello della nascita di Amore (Plat., *Symp.* 203-204);
mentre l’immagine letteraria è quella delle statuette preziose che si trovano nell’anima di Socrate (*Symp.* 216e5-217a).

All’interno del “Simposio” platonico, i due temi sono contenuti nel discorso che Socrate riferisce come proprio di Diotima, mentre l’immagine delle statuette è espressa nel discorso di Alcibiade su Socrate. Plotino, quale interprete fedele e, al tempo stesso, personale di Platone, rielabora il tema dei vari gradini che portano l’anima amante dal bello sensibile o artistico al Bello intelligibile sia nell’opuscolo “Sul bello” sia in quello successivo e più complesso “Sul bello intelligibile”, inserendo tale ascesa nella sua propria speculazione sulla conversione e purificazione dell’anima umana che ritrova la sua origine e natura intelligibile grazie alla forza propulsiva del bello cui essa costantemente tende. Nondimeno nel sistema gerarchico della realtà secondo Plotino (in ordine ascendente Anima, Intelletto, Bene), il percorso non si esaurisce mai nella contemplazione del Bello in sé, ma a partire da essa si verificano le condizioni perché l’anima umana possa fare un salto finale e attingere il Bene stesso, causa prima e finale di tutto quello che esiste.

Ma è soprattutto nel tardo trattato “Sull’amore” che Plotino sembra dare un’interpretazione specialmente personale del discorso di Diotima in reazione al secondo tema da noi individuato, ossia la nascita di Amore. In tale trattato infatti (capitoli 5-9) Plotino fornisce un’interpretazione allegorica dei vari personaggi del mito della nascita di Eros, per cui l’Afrodite “celeste” è l’Anima che, figlia dell’Intelletto, è sempre volta alla contemplazione di questi e, nel far ciò, genera il dio Amore; l’Afrodite di secondo livello è l’anima cosmica che volta al mondo sensibile genera il demone Amore; Penia indica la materia, Poros sta per le forme razionali, Zeus personifica l’Intelletto e il giardino di Zeus (in cui nasce Amore) è lo splendore che emana dall’Intelletto. Nel compiere questa operazione di allegoresi Plotino si rifà alla tradizione ormai consolidata, soprattutto in ambito stoico, di reinterpretazione della lettera di testi poetici al fine di ricavarne dati “accettabili” alla speculazione filosofica, e teologica in particolare. Egli menziona anche delle allegoresi concorrenti che rifiuta, come per esempio quella per cui Amore indicherebbe il mondo sensibile (cfr. in proposito la testimonianza di Plutarco di Cheronea (“Su Iside e Osiride”). Inoltre nel capitolo finale (9) del trattato, Plotino, in rapporto all’interpretazione allegorica da lui fornita, offre una riflessione sul mito in generale e come esso vada correttamente interpretato, visto che il mito, per ragioni didattiche, separa nel tempo e in vari personaggi delle realtà che sono invece fuori dal tempo e unitarie.

Infine l’immagine platonica delle statuette preziose nell’anima di Socrate viene in Plotino elaborata e sviluppata in modo importante sia a livello letterario sia nel suo significato filosofico, poiché essa traccia il panorama dell’interiorità del saggio in generale (Socrate non è più direttamente menzionato). Infatti il messaggio sarebbe che la vera contemplazione del Bello e del Bene si risolve in una contemplazione del “sancta sanctorum” della propria anima, sviluppando quel discorso sull’interiorità che avrà largo seguito non solo nella filosofia pagana post-plotiniana ma anche in quella cristiana, *in primis* in Agostino.

Eros, Poiesis and Philosophical Writing

Chair: Marcelo D. Boeri

On the Early Speeches' Development of a Methodology

Philip Krinks

I: INTRODUCTION

The objective of this short paper is to re-examine the early speakers' reflections on method. I argue that each early speaker adopts an explicit methodological focus for his speech, which responds to his predecessors' focuses. The early speakers thereby collectively and progressively generate a methodology for praising *erōs*. This connection and progression between the early speeches gives them a tighter relation to one another, and the dialogue a greater degree of unity, than might otherwise appear.

For Phaedrus, the method for praising *erōs* is to focus on what it causes (Section II); for Pausanias, on *erōs* as a *praxis* (Section III); for Eryximachus, the praise should be complete, reach the *telos* (Section IV); for Aristophanes, a praise should do justice to the power of *erōs* (Section V); for Agathon, to the intrinsic character of *erōs*.

I also make the observation, as a corollary (Section VII), that it is these five methodological focuses which then structure Socrates' speech.

II: PHAEDRUS AND CAUSALITY

II.1 Phaedrus and his predecessors

Although Phaedrus is the first speaker in the dialogue, he has a long tradition of praise discourse to draw on. Phaedrus sees that the conventions of prose encomium, which would be used if one were praising a legendary hero, or heroically depicted aristocrat, can be adapted for the praise of *erōs*. The conventional pattern for praising a hero would be in outline:

- This hero is of distinguished *genesis*
- His *genesis* is responsible for him being virtuous
- So he is responsible for great *erga*

II.2 Phaedrus' focus: what *erōs* causes

Phaedrus evolves this pattern. *erōs* lacks noble lineage, but does have great antiquity.¹ Therefore:

'Since *erōs* is very old, he is cause (*aitios*) of very great goods for us human beings' (178c2-3)²

Phaedrus relies on a methodological principle, drawn from conventional encomiastic practice, that someone should be praised if he is cause of benefits for other human beings. Phaedrus has to evolve the standard pattern, however: it is implausible to state, given what had been said about *erōs* in poetry and prose in the preceding decades, that *erōs* is virtuous. Phaedrus removes the direct reference to virtue in the middle step of the conventional structure.³ He maintains the ideas that shame and love of honour play an important and positive ethical role⁴, and the idea that outstanding human lives are marked by great works⁵. This gives him the structure of his praise:

- *erōs* has no known parentage
- so it must be old
- it instils (better than other things) shame and pride (at the right things)
- which is what is needed to do great and fine works (and lead a fine life)

¹ Rowe (op. cit. p.137, ad 178a5ff) rightly notes the superlatives. Socrates comments on the superlatives below, 199a2

² Translations from the Symposium are partly from the excellent edition and translation of Rowe 1998, and partly my own doing

³ This creates an interesting parallel with Gorgias' Encomium of Helen, which begins its praise and defence of Helen by discussing Helen's pre-eminence in nature (*phusei*) and descent (*genei*)

⁴ Cf. Williams 1993 pp.78ff on shame. The idea that the role played by shame and love of honour is positive was, by the late 5th and early 4th century, controversial. Some worried that '... philotimia could slide into aggression, pride and boastfulness'. Dover 1974, p.232 cites examples of concern about *philotimia* from Aristophanes and Demosthenes

⁵ That is true from Homer onwards: famously Penelope requests Phemius to sing of 'the works (*erga*) of gods and heroes' at Odyssey 1.338

III: PAUSANIAS AND PRAXIS

III.1 Pausanias and his predecessors

Pausanias criticises the method so far:

'Far from fine is the manner, Phaedrus, it seems to me, that the topic (logos) has been imposed (probeblēsthai) on us - I mean, that we have been instructed to praise erōs too simply (haplōs).' (180c4-5)

Pausanias finds a single, but important fault: the *logos* has been 'imposed'⁶, *qua* topic and *qua* method, 'too simply' (*haplōs*).⁷ In terms of the famous exchange in Euripides' *Phoenician Women*⁸, Pausanias casts Phaedrus as Polyneices, who thought nostalgically that simplicity was the mark of truth, and that complexity was inappropriately sophisticated (as opposed to appropriately subtle and nuanced⁹). Pausanias casts himself, on the other hand, as Eteocles, to whom what is simple (*haplous*) may be unhelpful, because it can constrain appropriately two-sided debate.

Pausanias' account of *erōs* is as multiple:

'If erōs were one, then that [sc. imposing a haplōs method] would be fine, but in fact he is not one' (180c5-6)

A simple method is literally too one-fold, in assuming that *erōs* is one. Perhaps Pausanias assumes that it will not work to praise in a simple way a thing which is not simple: after all, poetry referred to *erōtes* plural. Perhaps Pausanias is more subtle: a method which is not simple reveals an *erōs* which is not one.

III.2 Pausanias' focus: the praxis of erōs

For Pausanias, as 180c7-d3 shows, not only is *erōs* multiple, but one of the *erōtes* is not in fact praiseworthy. Phaedrus assumed he had to praise all *erōs*. If in fact one or more kinds of *erōs* can be left unpraised, how is one to identify the kind of *erōs* which is praiseworthy? Methodologically, Pausanias' frame is that each *erōs* is a practical activity (*praxis*). His principle is that any *praxis* can be praiseworthy or not:

'The following holds true of every practical activity (praxis): being done, itself by itself, it is neither fine nor shameful. But within the doing of it (en tēi praxēi), depending on the manner in which it is done (hōs an prachtei), so it turns out.' (181a1-4)

Whereas on Phaedrus' heroic view, every activity was either fine or shameful, Pausanias implies no

⁶ I would bring out the notion of imposition a little more than the translators. (E.g.: Jowett 1970: 'The argument has not been set before us quite in the right form.' Rowe 1998: 'Our subject seems not to have been put forward in the right way.' Gill 2003: 'Our project has [not] been specified properly'.) The expression *prosballein ti tini* literally means 'to throw something against someone'. Cf. Aeschylus *Prometheus Bound* 950f., where Hermes asks 'do not impose (*prosbalēis*) upon me a double (*díplas*) journey' –Pausanias' concern at the imposition of a single method may recall Hermes' concern at the possible imposition of a double journey

⁷ The adjective '*haplous*' from which the adverb '*haplōs*' word comes, means, literally, 'in a single way' 'one-fold', 'single'. It is contrasted with double or two-fold (*diplous*). Since it is a complaint, it must in the context have the connotation of 'too simple', 'simplistic', or 'simple-minded'. But it can also have a positive connotation: simple, clear, decisive, plain, open, straightforward, frank

⁸ Produced 409 B.C.

Polyneices: 'Simple (*haplous*) is the word of truth

And of complex (*poikilōn*) interpretations justice has no need

Since it of itself has the advantage. But the unjust word

Diseased in itself needs drugs which are clever (*sophōn*)...' (Lines 469-72)

Eteocles: '...But if the same thing seemed to all fine (*kalon*) and wise (*sophon*)

There wouldn't be the two-sided strife of debate among humans

But nothing is like nor equal (*ison*) among mortals

Except names (*onomosai*); and names are not deeds (*ergon*)...' (lines 499-502)

(I owe my understanding of the importance of these lines to Meltzer 2006, pp.1ff, whose translation (p.2 *ibid.*) I adapt here)

⁹ The word for this might be *poikilon* cf. *Medea* line 300, 'those with a reputation for subtlety' and cp. *Apology* 20d-23c, esp. 21b-22; cp. Williamson 1990 p.30 n.12

activity is in itself either defensible or indefensible. Pausanias can then distinguish bad *erōs*, which is not controllable, from good *erōs* which can be channelled through a social transmission mechanism. Thus Pausanias steps away from Phaedrus' simple absolutes, to a subtle account of virtue.¹⁰ Human values are viewed in a more relativistic way. Ethical principles, matters of right and wrong, are *polis*-specific conventions, determined by political and social factors.

IV: ERYIMACHUS AND COMPLETENESS

IV.1 *Eryximachus and his predecessors*

Pausanias came to a pause (*pausamenou*, 185c5). Eryximachus thinks he can do better than a pause and bring completion (*telos*).¹¹

'It seems to me to be necessary, since Pausanias set out well in his speech, but failed sufficiently to complete it (*apetelese*), that I must bring completeness (*telos*) to his argument' (185e6-186a3)

Eryximachus compliments Pausanias on making a distinction¹²:

'To say that *erōs* is double (*diploun*) seems to me to make a good distinction (*kalōs dielesthai*)' (186a3-4)

The compliment is a self-serving one, however: Pausanias did not say that. Pausanias' notion was not one *erōs* with a double nature. It was multiple *erōtes* with evident differences. Eryximachus sees things differently. Pausanias wanted specificity of praise (or not), according to each *erōs* and its *praxis*; Eryximachus sees *erōs* as one thing with multiple aspects.

IV.2 *Eryximachus' focus: a complete praise*

Eryximachus significantly broadens the discussion at 186a4-7. He recalls Empedocles: both in the breadth of his cosmic view, for example fragments B21 and B26; and in the statement that a single force of love plays a role throughout the whole cosmos (for Eryximachus, *erōs*; for Empedocles *philotēs*, for example at B17). A praise of love must be *teleion* in the sense of applying to the whole role of *erōs*: it must be complete, in the sense of exhaustive. *erōs* can best be praised as a broad phenomenon, through the frames of medical practice and Empedoclean philosophy: it is a cosmic force which has utility (*katakrēsthai*, 187d1).

V: ARISTOPHANES AND POWER

V.1 *Aristophanes and his predecessors*

Aristophanes' opening remark is addressed to Eryximachus:

'Indeed I do have in mind to speak in a different (*allēi*) way from you and Pausanias.' (189c3-4)¹³

They have made the same mistake as all or most other people:

'...For it seems to me that human beings have completely failed to perceive the power (*dunamis*) of *erōs*...' (189c5-6)

To say that one should do justice to the power of *erōs* seems reasonable. But it is a sharp criticism of Eryximachus. Contemporary scientists and philosophers believed that to understand the nature (*physis*) of x, one must understand the power (*dunamis*) of x, both what x does (*poiein*) to other things and what x undergoes (*pathein*) at the hands of y. By seeing what y does (*poiein*) to x, one sees the power of y.¹⁴ If Empedocles should have yielded anything to Eryximachus, it was an understanding of

¹⁰ Cf. Sheffield 2006a p.36: perhaps, as Phaedrus said, *erōs* does manifest itself in a love of honour but one needs to ask whether that 'is ... the only (or the best) [manifestation]'

¹¹ What it is to be complete (*teleion*) is a topic in many Platonic dialogues, e.g. Philebus 20d, Sophist 253d

¹² Examples of discussions elsewhere in Plato include Phaedrus 265e, Sophist from 218c

¹³ So Pausanias' earlier suggestion was right: Aristophanes does 'have in mind to praise the god in a different way' (188e4)

¹⁴ For this view elsewhere in Plato, v. e.g. Phaedrus 270c8-d5

the nature, including the power, of the thing under discussion.

V.2 *Aristophanes and the power of erōs*

Aristophanes gradually reveals what he means by doing justice to the power of *erōs*. It is not the doctor or other technician who must find the utility in *erōs*: it is *erōs* which:

‘is the most human-loving of gods, being the helper of human beings, and doctor (*iatros*) of those things, which if they were cured (*iathentōn*) it would be the greatest happiness for the human race (*genei*)...’ (189c9-d3)

This is double-edged: ultimately, *erōs* does not cure the illness. It treats our ills, without necessarily curing them: a note of dismal realism

Eryximachus was right, Aristophanes implies, to focus on nature (*physis*). But it is human nature (*anthropinēn phusin*) which matters.

‘... It is necessary for you to learn (*mathein*) what human nature (*anthropinēn phusin*) is and what its sufferings (*pathēmata*) have been...’ (189d3-6)

Only if one understands human nature, Aristophanes implies, can one understand the power of *erōs* and so defend it. That is another criticism of Eryximachus: the account of nature which focuses on a cosmic account of *erōs* (relating to the elements and their combination through Love and Strife) is not, says Aristophanes, the type of nature on which the defender of *erōs* needs to focus. Aristophanes’ own praise of *erōs* consists in an exposition of human nature: the power of *erōs* is that it contributes to defining, in a rather literal way, with the various slicings, the human condition. *erōs* defines the human condition in its incompleteness, offering also a remedy for incompleteness, albeit a tragically partial one.

VI: AGATHON AND INTRINSIC CHARACTERISATION

V.1 *Agathon and his predecessors*

Agathon’s criticism of his predecessors¹⁵ is apparently devastating:

‘Those who have spoken before me seem not to be offering an encomium to (*egkōmiazein*) the god, but congratulating (*eudaimonizein*) human beings on the benefits of which the god is cause (*aitios*) for them.’ (194e5-7)

He has a point. The previous speakers did seem to proceed as if the right way to defend *erōs* was to point out the benefits *erōs* brought to human beings, based on certain characteristics which they said that *erōs* had: oldest of gods, twofold, widely present in the cosmos, definitive of the human condition, respectively.

Agathon’s own focus will be elsewhere:

‘But what the characteristic of (*hopoios tis*) *erōs* is (*ōn*), such that he makes gift of (*edōrēsato*) these things, no one has said’ (194e7-195a1)

An initial impression may be that this makes an incorrect criticism about the previous praises. It might seem to say that the previous speakers failed to say what they thought the characteristics of *erōs* were. And that would be incorrect: for they each described one or more characteristics: oldest of gods, twofold, widely present in all creatures, and so on.

It is a valid criticism if the test for an appropriate characterisation is that it should in itself provide an adequate explanation of how *erōs* can give such gifts. That is what Agathon means. A literal translation of the text would be:

‘of what kind (*hopoios tis*) himself (*autos*) being (*ōn*) he gives these things (*tauta edōrēsato*), no one has said (*oudeis eirēken*)’

¹⁵ Bury 1932/1973, ad 194e, rightly points out this is ‘the favourite rhetorical device of criticising the manner or thought of previous speakers’, but on my reading it is also something more than that

By using the participle of the verb to be (*ōn*), translated ‘is’ above, and literally meaning ‘being’, he means that one must describe what *erōs* is like, and that that same description must also show how *erōs* can make those gifts to human beings.

The next sentence confirms this:

‘There is one correct way for any praise of anything: to go through in one’s speech what kind of thing (*hoios*) it happens to be (*ōn*), such that it is cause (*aitios*) for the things (*hoiōn*), concerning which the speech (*logos*) is made’ (195a1-3)

The verb ‘to be’ and its participle *ōn* appears again, but this time with the notion of ‘cause’ (*aitios*) being explicit. Agathon’s principle is that there must be an explanatory or causal link between the characteristics of *erōs* and what the gifts are. One must say what kind of thing *erōs* is, such that it is thereby shown how *erōs* is responsible for the gifts.

The reader might think that seems a fair enough principle for the praise of *erōs*. But it is not clear that Agathon is correct to say the others failed to honour it. It seemed that each symposiast had his reasons to say that his description of *erōs* explained it being beneficial. For example, Phaedrus had his reasons to say that the great age of *erōs* explained it being beneficial.

Agathon’s complaint is aimed, however, specifically at the structure of their praises:

‘It is just for us also to praise *erōs* first himself for the kind of thing he is, and then his gifts’ (195a3-4)

The problem, then, is, in the first place, with the descriptions. If *erōs* is to be praised ‘for the kind of thing he is’, then he must be described as something which is in itself praiseworthy. But the others’ descriptions of *erōs* (as old, co-working with Aphrodite, pervasive in the cosmos, and so on) are not in themselves praiseworthy. When Phaedrus made his modifications to encomium convention, having in mind, I suggested, previous attacks on *erōs*, the result was a strategy to defend *erōs* which was indirect. This indirect strategy characterised *erōs* in a neutral way (as opposed to the negative characterisations offered by the attackers), and then showed how on some neutral characterisation *erōs* provided benefits to humans and was therefore defensible. Until now, no one has questioned this indirect strategy. Agathon does, and requires instead that the description of *erōs* should itself show how *erōs* can cause benefits.¹⁶

One reason Agathon might doubt the indirect strategy, is that he might hold, as some pre-Socratic philosophers seem to have done, that what causes something to be F must itself be F: that F-ness must be somehow transmitted between the two.¹⁷ This then suggests a more direct strategy, where the description of *erōs* would be as in itself praiseworthy. *erōs* can be defended as literally putting its own beauty and goodness into human beings, being in that sense directly the cause of human beings becoming beautiful and good. The accounts of beautiful and good given by Agathon then reflect that: a subjectivist account of beauty, where *erōs* pours beauty into y, in the sense that it makes y see z as beautiful; and a reductive account of goodness, where *erōs* is a strong psychological compulsion which determines right conduct, defined as acting according to the strongest compulsion.

VII: CONCLUSION AND COROLLARY OBSERVATION

The early speakers’ explicitly reflect on method. Phaedrus’ methodological focus is to demonstrate causality, with *erōs* is praised as cause (*aitios*, 178c2) of benefits for humans. Pausanias’ focus is human *praxis* (181a1) in all its specificity and context. Eryximachus’ focus is a complete (*telos*, 186a2) praise. Aristophanes’ focus is acknowledging power (*dunamis*, 189c6). Agathon’s focus is intrinsic characterisation: to show ‘what the characteristic of *erōs* is’ (*hopoios tis*, 194e7), such that he gives us these things: else, it is not explained how he does.

Their reflections structure and unify the early part of the dialogue. Their speeches respond to those preceding. The stated methodological focus of each speaker shapes his speech. Methodological questions raised by the desire to praise *erōs* are explored.

A corollary observation, which can only be stated here, concerns the structure of Socrates’ speech. It is the others’ principles which structure Socrates’ speech. After Socrates introduces his own

¹⁶ Sedley (2006 p.55f.) is right to highlight this: my interpretation has several points of contact with his

¹⁷ On the pre-Socratics, v. Barnes 1979 e.g. vol.1 p.88f. On Plato’s consideration of this question in the Phaedo and elsewhere, v. Sedley 1998 e.g. p.119

methodological focus, on truth (*alēthē legein*, 198d4), it is then the principles of the early speakers which structure his speech. The principles appear in reverse order. Firstly, there is a discussion of intrinsic characterisation (*poios tis*, 201e1). Secondly, there is an enquiry as to the power of *erōs* (*dunamin*, 202e2). Thirdly, there is a search for a complete account (*telos echein*, 205a3). Fourthly *erōs* is examined as praxis (*praxei*, 206b2). The final focus is on *erōs* as cause (*aition*, 207a6).

Corollary conclusions are that Socrates' speech has a greater degree of methodological dependency on the earlier speeches than might otherwise appear; and that the early speakers' methodological focuses serve to unify the dialogue, not only in its early part, but up to at least the latter part of Socrates' speech.

WORKS CITED

- Barnes, J., 1979, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (2 vols.) (London: Routledge)
Bury, R.G., 1932/1973 (2nd ed.), *The Symposium of Plato* (Cambridge: Heffer)
Dover, K.J., 1974, *Greek Popular Morality In The Time Of Plato And Aristotle* (Oxford: Blackwell)
Gill, C.J., 2003, *The Symposium* (London: Penguin)
Jowett, Benjamin, 1970, *The Dialogues of Plato*, (London: Sphere)
Meltzer, G. S., 2006, *Euripides And The Poetics Of Nostalgia* (Cambridge: CUP)
Rowe, C.J., 1998, *Plato's Symposium* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips)
Sedley, D., 1998, *Platonic Causes*, *Phronesis* 43.2, pp.114-132
Sedley, D., 2006, *The Speech Of Agathon In Plato's Symposium*, pp.49-67, in *The Virtuous Life in Greek Ethics*, ed. Reis (Cambridge: CUP)
Sheffield, F.C.C., 2006, *Plato's Symposium: the Ethics of Desire* (Oxford: OUP)
Williams, B.A.O., 1993, *Shame and Necessity*, *Sather Classical Lectures*, Vol. 57 (University of California Press)
Williamson, M., 1990, *A Woman's Place in Euripides' Medea*, pp.16-31 in *Euripides, Women, And Sexuality*, ed. Powell (London: Routledge)

Boasting and self-promotion in Plato's *Symposium*

Gabriel Danzig

Speakers at a Greek symposium regularly engage in competition, seeking to outdo each other in making clever and impressive speeches, criticizing, capping and outmaneuvering their rivals.¹ In addition to this, the speeches generally exhibit a reflexive, self-promoting or boastful character. Not merely competing in producing good speeches or in trying to show themselves good *as speakers or thinkers*, the speakers also compete in praising themselves for their personal qualities and possessions and in showing that the lives they lead are worthwhile and enviable. Plato puts this feature of the symposium to a specifically Platonic purpose, transforming the sympotic contest into a kind of Platonic dialogue. The contest is not merely to describe eros in the most compelling terms, but by praising eros in terms that are implicitly self-flattering to show who is the better man or woman. This is also an important characteristic of the early dialogues. Although they are often seen as devoted primarily to investigations of philosophical questions, they are no less devoted to the same kind of personal rivalry.

Xenophon's Symposium

The reflexive character of the sympotic speech is most clearly evident in Xenophon's *Symposium*, where, instead of speaking in praise of a god or devoting themselves to any other single topic, the speakers take turns openly praising their own good qualities.² Considerable leeway is allowed in defining the aim of the speeches: one may display the best knowledge one has (3.3) or more generally describe the thing of which one is most proud (3.4). In practice, the guests boast about diverse subjects: the ability to make others better, knowledge of the Homeric poems, beauty, wealth, poverty, knowledge of procuring, the ability to make other laugh, a son who has won athletic contests, one's father, the goodness and power of one's friends. After these claims are made, explanations, which are never straightforward, are offered in a second round. Callias, who boasts about his ability to make others better, really wishes to remind the guests of his great wealth, claiming that his wealth enables him to make others just.³ Niceratos demonstrates the value of his knowledge of Homer by outlining the racing strategies and condiment recipes he has acquired from his knowledge of Homer. Critobulus boasts about the practical advantages that beauty confers on him, especially that fact that everyone else in the room will serve his needs gladly. Charmides describes the advantages of poverty by contrasting the burdens placed on the wealthy in democratic Athens.⁴ Antisthenes boasts of his ability to enjoy very little as proof of his great wealth. Hermogenes, who was lined up to speak last, takes Socrates' place in the order, and takes his inspiration from Socrates' well-known communication with the *daimon*. Apparently having no friends to boast of, he explains that the gods are his friends. Phillip, who was supposed to speak after Socrates, speaks next, boasting that his ability to make others laugh means that he is invited only to happy, opulent events, and not to the reverse. The Syracusan entertainment provider, who was not scheduled to speak at all, is asked if he is most proud of the beautiful young male entertainer he has brought. But he complains that he is worried about pederasts taking advantage of him, and says that in fact he is most proud of the stupid people who pay to see his performances. Tactfully enough, no one asks Lykon to explain his pride in his son, nor Autolykos to explain his pride in his father: given the humorous and paradoxical character of the explanations, they would have had to explain themselves by insulting one another.

Socrates, who is left for last, explains his boast about his ability as a procurer by arguing that a procurer teaches the art of self-presentation. His presentation is remarkable in several ways. The previous speakers made impressive boasts, and then explained them in ludicrous and unimpressive ways. The explanations are let-downs from the high boasts that were originally made. Callias' ability to make others better is nothing other than his ability to pay their debts and thereby make them "just." Niceratos' great mastery of Homer culminates in the suggestion that the company eat onions. And so

¹ This aspect of the symposium has been studied in detail recently by Fiona Hobden (*The Symposium in Ancient Greek Thought*, Cambridge, 2013, see esp. 201-213).

² See also *Wasps* (1186-1207).

³ Compare Cephalus' words in *Republic* (330d-331b).

⁴ The speech of Charmides was supposed to have been given after that of Antisthenes, but the order is reversed. This may indicate that the two speeches, in praise of poverty and in praise of wealth, are interchangeable. Indeed, no one will really praise wealth directly although all prefer it.

forth. The only partial exception to this pattern is Charmides, who boasts about his poverty. But here, too, the explanation is a let-down: his claim that poverty enables him to evade costly levies shows the high value he places on money and hence makes his original boast that poverty is a good thing look absurd. He admits freely that he would rather be wealthy. The good-humored speakers in Xenophon act as if they are engaged in simple boasting, but then reveal themselves to be engaged in self-ridicule.

This self-ridicule is a strategy of self-defense: if I have not really boasted, I am not really open to attack. Socrates reverses this strategy: he opens with a ludicrous claim – expertise in the art of procuring – and then explains that it is really a valuable skill.⁵ By doing this, Socrates actually makes and defends a serious boast, thereby exposing himself in principle to attack. But he proves his possession of the claimed ability by showing himself a master of self-presentation throughout the composition, even taking the upper hand when losing a beauty contest (5.10). No one attacks Socrates' claim, in fear, one may suppose, of his reputation for verbal self-defense, thereby implicitly recognizing the validity of his claim.⁶ In any case, taking no chances, Socrates concludes his presentation with another unique accomplishment: foisting his disreputable skill onto Antisthenes (4.61-64). He is the only one who uses his own boast as an opportunity to attack or insult someone else. Socrates is also unique in the doubly-reflexive manner he speaks. Not only is he, like all speakers, praising himself, but the skill for which he praises himself is the skill of self-presentation, which is the very skill which all the speakers, himself included, are attempting to use.⁷ By openly claiming to be doing what everyone is doing surreptitiously he shows himself more honest than they and at the same time lends his speech a meta-theatrical air. This self-conscious focus on self-presentation shows just how central it is to Xenophon's conception of the speeches at a symposium. To summarize, it is taken for granted that a speaker at a symposium will boast, and the art of speaking involves fulfilling this expectation without exposing oneself to the possibility of attack and insult. The clever self-deprecating humor that is displayed by the speakers serves a self-defensive purpose in preventing serious attacks. Xenophon highlights the centrality of self-presentation by making Socrates' self-presentation focus on his ability at self-presentation. All this goes to show that the competition at this symposium is not merely over cleverness in rhetorical display or philosophic insight. Rather the competition concerns the value of the personal qualities one claims to possess. Participants speak of the value of wealth, Homeric poetry, beauty, or the power of laughter as a means of praising themselves. This is self-evident to any participant in a symposium and any reader of sympotic literature, and is only slightly less obvious in Plato's *Symposium*.

Plato's Symposium

As the comparison with Xenophon suggests, the speakers here do not merely compete in producing clever, insightful speeches, they also compete in praising themselves for qualities they possess and in showing implicitly that the lives they lead are enviable. Plato is much heavier in tone than Xenophon, even in a relatively humorous work like *Symposium*. There is little of the self-deprecatory humor, the self-defensive effort to keep things light, that we find in Xenophon, and nothing that substantially offsets the serious effort of self-promotion in which the speakers are engaged. As in Xenophon, the speakers praise themselves by praising the qualities they possess, but there is an additional layer of indirection: since the nominal topic is eros, everyone must attribute his own good qualities to the god in order to praise herself. If attributing my qualities to the god is a form of praise of the god, my qualities must be very good ones indeed.

Commentators have long noted some obvious ways in which some of the speakers craft their speeches on eros to give praise to themselves. Most obvious are the cases of Eryximachos, Agathon and Socrates, each of whom creates eros in his own image and in the image of his own art or practice. But this reflexive, boastful or self-promoting characteristic is common to all the speakers.

Phaedrus

Phaedrus is not usually one of the characters taken to task for self-promotion. Rutherford, who shows more interest than most in the self-promoting aspect of the speeches, says about Phaedrus that he has "rather little to say about himself or his native Athens or the company's emotional lives."

⁵ In fact he combined the serious and the ridiculous in his initial comment, where he made a serious face while announcing his ridiculous profession (3.10). Thus his initial comment already contains the serious-ludicrous combination. Whereas the other speakers use a simple serious-ridiculous formula, Socrates uses a more complex serious-ridiculous-serious formula.

⁶ Incidentally, this ability supports Xenophon's claim that Socrates could have won his trial had he wanted to (*Ap.* 1-9).

⁷ This reflexivity seems to be a special Socratic characteristic in Plato as well as Xenophon.

(185) Following Bury, he sees the speech as illustrating an interest in mythical allusions and quotations.⁸ But in fact Phaedrus' speech appears to be highly self-referential.

We know about Phaedrus from several dialogues. Born about 444, he is a very young man in *Protagoras*, which is set in 433-2.⁹ Evidently interested in intellectual pursuits, he is already associating with Eryximachos. In *Phaedrus* he seems to be a slightly older young man (the dramatic date is uncertain), fascinated by *erotikoi logoi*. He enjoys hearing speeches in which lovers attempt to persuade beautiful young men to accept their advances for paradoxical reasons. He appears to be a popular young man, for we find Socrates following him around and competing jealously with other offstage intellectuals for his admiration. Although he is not explicitly said to be beautiful, he must have at least some of the bloom of youth that is necessary for service as an attraction for Socrates (*Symp.* 210c1). In one way, the arguments in *Phaedrus* seem to imply that he is indeed good looking: Socrates' explanation of the attractive power of beauty (249e-252c) provides a reflexive explanation of his pursuit of Phaedrus only on this assumption (see also Diogenes Laertius 3.29).

In *Symposium*, set in 416 when he would be almost thirty years old, Phaedrus shows a similar interest in the things that lovers do for their beloveds, especially suicides. In more than one way he is comparable to Critobulus in Xenophon's *Symposium* who describes at length the services he receives by virtue of his beauty and the desire this inspires in others (4.10-18). Like Critobulus, Phaedrus believes that love can contribute to military victory, but in arguing for this case, he goes beyond Critobulus' relatively mild comments to suggest sexual relations between the soldiers.¹⁰

How acceptable was Phaedrus' fascination with eroticism in ancient Athens? Despite the relative openness of the Greeks concerning erotic subjects, it was not at all common to speak in praise of eros. Phaedrus has complained to Eryximachos that no one, neither poets nor sophists, has ever done it before, or rather that no one has *dared* to do it before (177c: *tetolmekenai*).¹¹ This language, which he also uses in describing the heroism of Achilles (179e) and in contrasting it with the less impressive behavior of Orpheus (179d), suggests that praising eros requires daring or courage, and hence that eros was not generally thought to be worthy of praise. Aristophanes also testifies to the general neglect of this deity (189c). The speakers seem embarrassed to even raise the topic: Phaedrus does not suggest it openly himself, but turns the task over to Eryximachos, and Eryximachos in turn makes it clear that the idea is not his own. Hostile attitudes towards pederastic couples are reflected throughout Pausanias' speech, and the fact that Socrates merits praise for abstaining from sexual relations with Alcibiades also shows the low esteem in which they were held.¹²

This attitude is not difficult to understand: the Greeks before Plato viewed love as a kind of mental disease that causes personal and communal disaster.¹³ It was responsible in Homer and Herodotus for catastrophic wars, and in Sophocles and Euripides for suicides and murders. Although a symposium was a natural place for words of love, there is a difference between giving expression to the effects of a disease by expressing one's desire, as in much Greek erotic poetry, and actually praising the disease while sober. In requesting speeches in praise of eros, Phaedrus is demanding legitimacy for a subject of great personal interest to him. He wishes his obsession with love to brand him not as a victim of a mental disease, but as an admirable servant of an important god.

There is a further motive here. Phaedrus is not only a partisan of a disreputable god, he is also himself an attractive *eromenos*.¹⁴ As is well known, the passive member of a homosexual relationship

⁸ R. G. Bury, *The Symposium of Plato* (Cambridge, 1932) xxiv-xxvi); R. Rutherford, *The Art of Plato* (London, 1995) 190; R. Hunter, *Plato's Symposium* (Oxford, 2004) 38-42.

⁹ See D. Nails, *People of Plato* (Indianapolis, 1992) 233-4.

¹⁰ This is one of the chief arguments for the priority of at least this section of Xenophon's *Symposium*: it is hard to imagine Xenophon copying from Plato and attributing to Critobulus a mild version of a suggestion that he evidently finds so objectionable (see 8.33-4).

¹¹ Phaedrus himself seems embarrassed to raise his suggestion in public and has apparently asked Eryximachos to do so on his behalf; and Eryximachos, while willing to raise the suggestion, does not take responsibility for it, but mentions its real author. The fact that this subject was somewhat off-limits by the fourth century may also explain the many-layered literary frame and the intense curiosity that is evoked in the opening conversation.

¹² The off-bounds character of erotic matters is also reflected in the secretive way that Phaedrus treats the speech of Lysias in *Phaedrus* (228d-e). This may also explain the great curiosity that the subject evidently arouses at the time of the telling of *Symposium* (172a-173d). T. K. Hubbard has suggested that attitudes towards homosexuality underwent a change in the middle and late fifth century ("Pederasty and Democracy: The Marginalization of a Social Practice," in T. K. Hubbard, ed., *Greek Love Reconsidered*, New York, 2000, 1-11. If so, the elaborate chain of transmission of the contents of *Symposium* may be designed to reflect a memory of a time when pederasty was more widely favored.

¹³ Although it needs to be used with caution, the most comprehensive treatment of this point is Bruce S. Thornton, *Eros: The Myth of Ancient Greek Sexuality* (Boulder, Colorado, 1997). This attitude did not change quickly: despite Plato's efforts to make eros into a respectable subject, Aristotle barely mentions it in his own vast ethical writings.

¹⁴ Although typically the *eromenos* was a young man without a beard, in Plato's *Symposium* this role is played by men who would have been about the age of thirty, such as Agathon and Alcibiades. It is not clear to me how much we are meant to

was a special target of ridicule throughout antiquity.¹⁵ Alcibiades mentions this clearly in his own speech (218d). Phaedrus therefore has a special reason to redeem eros and the *eromenos*: by redeeming them he also redeems himself from social disgrace.

Phaedrus' personal interests and status in Athens explain why he not only speaks in praise of eros, but also instigates the entire series of speeches in praise of eros. It explains why he emphasizes the respectable qualities of eros: the greatness (*meγas*), the impressiveness (*thaumastos*), the dignity (*timion*) and honored age (*presbutatos*: 178a-c; 180b). His central claim is that far from being a corrupting influence on human beings, as was usually thought, eros actually benefits them. It is the best guide to a good life for the most paradoxical reason: it inspires moral improvement, not corruption, and it does this by inspiring feelings of shame, not shamelessness.¹⁶ Eros does not merely offer practical benefits by encouraging an emotion that Aristotle would characterize merely as a semi-virtue (*NE* 4.9: 1128b9-36), it also provides an incentive to acts of greater nobility and self-sacrifice than those performed by parents for children, as the example of Alcestis shows. Erotic relations create greater bonds than the most sacred bonds of family, inspiring even women, such as Alcestis, to overcome the fear of death. Here Phaedrus transforms the harmful effect of delirious passion into a mark of great nobility. Given its connection with suicide and military disaster, when Phaedrus argues that eros is responsible for virtuous behavior and military prowess, and suggests that it should be encouraged among soldiers, he is defending a thesis no less paradoxical than that of Gorgias when defending Helen or those he enjoys in *Phaedrus*.

The speech is self-referential not only in its general praise of eros, but also in giving the best role to the *eromenos*. This explains the peculiar conclusion in which he praises the beloved above the lover on the ground that they are not possessed by divinity (180a-b). Commentators have wondered why Phaedrus closes his speech by criticizing Aeschylus for making Achilles the lover and Patroclus the beloved. As Rutherford (189) points out, criticism of great poets and thinkers is part and parcel of the openly rivalrous self-promoting atmosphere of *Symposium*. The speakers regularly criticize famous poets and previous speaker, Aristophanes even responding afterwards to Socratic criticism of his own speech. So there is nothing strange about criticizing Aeschylus. But why this particular criticism?

The criticism of Aeschylus is part of a general claim that the gods reserve more wonder, admiration and even benefits for the beloved who is devoted to his lover than for the lover himself (180a).¹⁷ This argument stands in tension with the praise that Phaedrus heaped on the lover earlier (178d-179d). Phaedrus had argued that eros inspires lovers to deeds of supreme courage (179a6-b2) but here he argues that the presence of the divine in the lover is a reason to discount his noble actions. He could just as easily have argued for the opposite conclusion, that the lover is more worthy precisely because he is possessed by the divinity. Why does he choose to make the argument in favor of the beloved? Why does he even feel compelled to enter into this comparison between the two?

This can be explained by the self-referential character of the speech. While Phaedrus has some interest in redeeming the honor of inflamed lovers and encouraging their attentions, he primarily wishes to defend his own honor as a sexual object and this means praising the *eromenos*.¹⁸ Why then has he praised lovers in the earlier part of his speech? This may of course be attributed to a genuine admiration for the men who love him, a desire to please them and perhaps even to the hope of attracting more. But it also serves a rhetorical purpose: by praising lovers for being possessed by the divine, he flatters them into accepting this description of their state. This in turn leaves them open to the later claim that for this very reason their acts of courage rank lower than those of *eromenoi*.

In sum, Phaedrus' speech aims to remove the stain that is associated with his erotic interests and passive sexual role. He builds a paradoxical speech which praises eros and especially *eromenoi* for reasons diametrically opposed to their common reputation.

reflect on these ages and whether or not Plato is being careful about them. Despite the evident value of D. Nail's prosopographical volume, we do not know to what extent Plato aimed at historical verisimilitude in portraying the persons and settings of his dialogues or that he was accurate in portraying events that occurred when he was a young boy.

¹⁵ See K. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge MA, 1978) 100-109.

¹⁶ Xenophon roundly ridicules this idea in his *Symposium* (8.32-34) and Aristophanes provides evidence for the prevalence of Xenophon's attitude (192a: possibly a reference to Xenophon).

¹⁷ While supportable on the basis of some passages in the *Iliad*, the idea that Achilles acted primarily out of love for Patroclus is questionable. As Socrates will argue, such acts stem more from a love of glory than from the love of a particular person (208c-d). This point is made by Xenophon's Socrates in an apparent allusion to Plato's *Symposium*: he denies that Patroclus was Achilles beloved, and also denies that Achilles was motivated by erotic love in avenging him (8.31).

¹⁸ This may also explain also why, unlike Pausanias, Eryximachos and Aristophanes, he praises a woman, Alcestis: like the *eromenos*, women always play the passive sexual role, so their honor and the honor of the *eromenos* are naturally tied together.

Pausanias

As a devoted lover of Agathon (*Protagoras* 315d-e; see also X. *Mem.* 8.32), Pausanias shares with Phaedrus the general aim of dispelling the stigma that attaches to eros.¹⁹ He is the first speaker to claim that homosexual love is superior to heterosexual love, an opinion that must not have been universally accepted if he has to argue for it (see 181c). Like Phaedrus, Pausanias is concerned with popular attitudes and he uses some form of the word *nomos* not less than 21 times between 181d and 184e. As an *erastes*, Pausanias suffered from a different kind of hostility than that to which an *eromenos* was exposed. While the *eromenos* suffered from the humiliation of being used like a woman, the *erastes* was considered an enemy by the friends and family of his supposed victims (see 183c-d).

Pausanias defends himself by accepting the views of his opponents to a large degree. There are men who should be kept away from boys, especially very young ones, but he is not among them. He hopes to redeem the reputations of virtuous pederasts such as himself and to encourage potential young *eromenoi* to choose the right sort of lovers. The better sort love boys for their souls or intellects, and hence have no interest in girls or very young boys, neither of whom have much intellect to love (181c).²⁰ They love slightly older boys whose intellects are starting to bloom and they tend to stick with them for a long time. He thinks it is wrong to castigate those who engage in pederastic relations in the right way, arguing that it is only the inferior lovers who give pederasty a bad name (182a). He takes the high moral ground by proclaiming that there should be a law against those who take advantage of young boys (*paidōn*: 181d-e), but it is surprising to see who this law is meant to protect. Pausanias argues that the pederasts are the ones who are harmed by the young boys they pursue, since young boys are apt to turn out disappointing (181e). His parallel, the sanctions against sexual relations with unmarried free women (181e-182a), would not support this explanation. But it fits well his effort to gain sympathy for the older lover.

As Pausanias notes, parents are deeply concerned about the effects pederasty may have on their young children and take serious efforts to prevent its occurrence (183c-d). Understandably, Pausanias spends much less time on this than he does describing the encouragement that is given to those who pursue beautiful young men (182d-183c). These conflicting attitudes need reflect nothing other than the fact that plenty of men in Athens, including the very fathers who objected to the pederastic use of their sons, would have been quite happy to form a sexual relationship with a nice young boy from another family: what is good for me may not be good for you. But Pausanias, finding a deeper logic in them, argues that Athenians take a moderate stance towards pederasty, neither outlawing it, as is done in barbaric (ie., non-Greek but also uncivilized) and tyrannous regimes, nor enforcing it, as is done in societies whose members, according to him, lack the wit to properly seduce a boy. Its complex and seemingly contradictory attitudes – encouraging the lover while discouraging the boy – are actually designed to insure that the young people will form sexual relations with excellent men like himself.

The speech seems like an advertisement for these better lovers, and hence for Pausanias himself. He argues that the better lovers contribute to the acquisition of virtue and wisdom by the boys (184c-185c), and he also puts great emphasis on the fact that the better lovers are willing to devote themselves to their beloveds for the long-term (183e-184b)²¹ as he apparently did with Agathon.²² But although Pausanias devotes much of his effort to praising those who love boys for their souls rather than their bodies, he does not encourage what we call “platonic” relationships. It is important to him that the boys he seduces reciprocate his affection by offering their bodies for his gratification, and he insists that young men give their bodies only to those who, like himself, love them for their souls (*tois men charizesthai, tous de phugein*: 184a). Nor does Pausanias place any limit on the kind of sexual activities that may legitimately take place. As he says, there is no act that is inherently prohibited; it all depends on how it is done (181a). The analogies he offers, of drinking, singing and talking, suggest that he is referring to specific acts that lovers engage in with their beloveds. The better lover does not refrain from any of these acts, but rather performs them in a fine

¹⁹ Many theories have been proposed to explain the order of the speeches in *Symposium* (see Bury, lii-lvii). I believe that each speech is paired both with the one before it, if there is one, and with the one after it, if there is one.

²⁰ While boys are more attractive intellectually than girls, there is no claim that they are more beautiful physically. In Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* (5.1.7) and *Memorabilia* (3.1.1) women are presented as the most beautiful temptations.

²¹ Pausanias’ and Agathon’s long-term love affair played an important role in the introduction of this principle which was to play a fundamental role in Aristotle’s thinking on friendship and in the thinking of the entire philosophic tradition in the west and its associated cultures during the thousands of years that followed.

²² There may be something defensive in this latter claim, since his long-term relationship with Agathon was made into a subject of ridicule in Athens. See L. Brisson, “Agathon, Pausanias, and Diotima in Plato’s *Symposium*: *Paidierastia* and *Philosophia*,” in *Plato’s Symposium*, ed. J. Leshner et al., Washington, 2006, 229-251.

way. While there may be certain acts that are prohibited to those who are incapable of performing them in a fine way, to the better kind of lover, like himself, everything is permitted.

Because of his virtue the good lover receives numerous leniencies. Since the only good motive for forming a relationship with an older lover is educational improvement, he is freed from the obligation to provide material benefits – and is even forbidden to do so (184a5-b7). Such virtuous couples are, by Athenian custom as interpreted by Pausanias, freed from any ordinary moral conventions and are free to act as slavishly as they wish one to the other.²³ There is even a convenient escape hatch involved: if anyone gives sexual favors to a Pausanias, and then finds that he lacks any educational value, he has nothing to be ashamed of, as long as he was careful to accept no gifts (185a5-b5).

Given his desire to trade virtue for sex, the best possible theory for him to espouse would be one that holds that wisdom and virtue may be transmitted sexually via the semen.²⁴ Although Pausanias does not mention this theory explicitly, there is some evidence to suggest that he and other men said things like that to their eromenoi. His beloved Agathon seems to believe this theory, since he asks Socrates sit next to him, so that “touching you I may benefit from the wisdom that came to you in the porch” (175c-d).²⁵ In light of Socrates’ response, this appears to be a playful offer to play a passive sexual role for Socrates. Socrates understands this as a reference to the transmission of wisdom through the seminal fluid, but he rejects the offer commenting that wisdom is not a liquid (and hence a fortiori not a bodily fluid) that can be transferred from one person to another (175d) thus demonstrating his disinterest in sexual relations by publicly foreclosing the possibility of using this claim in the future.

To whom does Pausanias address his advertisement? Because he is the long-term lover of Agathon, who is now thirty years old, many commentators have assumed that he cannot be making a play for a new *paidika*, however suitable for that his speech may seem. Rutherford assumes that his aim is to impress Agathon.²⁶ But Agathon has had enough time to get to know Pausanias already, and hearing about it again would not make much difference. But is it right to assume that Pausanias is faithful to Agathon? Although Pausanias has spoken at length about long-term devotion, it is interesting to note that, in contrast to Aristophanes, he said nothing to imply exclusivity in his description of the better lover. Just as Agathon seems free to make advances to Socrates on this occasion (222d-223b), Pausanias must also be free to make a play for other young men, either those in the room, or those who may hear about his views at second hand. Given Agathon’s success in the recent tragic competition, Pausanias may even be using the occasion to toot his own horn by showing how successfully his *paidika* turned out.

Even if he has no practical aims, it seems obvious that, like Phaedrus before him, Pausanias has concocted a speech designed to make himself look good in the eyes of others. Such speeches are useful both for assuring one’s position in society and for providing a kind of psychological reassurance. The very fact that they aim at self-promotion, however, means that their refutations will have serious personal consequences.

The Value of Boasting

A similar phenomenon can be found in virtually all of Plato’s dramatic dialogues. Plato is a dramatic artist precisely because he always bears in mind the connection between the persons who are speaking and the philosophical arguments they support. One of the clearest examples is the conversation between Socrates and Cephalus in book one of *Republic*. While often seen as a preliminary effort to define justice, this conversation can also be described as an effort by Cephalus to defend himself and his status as a wealthy householder. His own personal interest compels him to consider justice satisfied when one has conducted one’s business honestly, and he is not concerned

²³ 184b7-c7; see 182e-183c; compare Xenophon’s Socrates who, like Pausanias, praises friendship for enabling otherwise shameful behavior (*Mem.* 2.7-9).

²⁴ Erich Bethe, “Die dorische Knabenliebe, ihre Ethik und ihre Idee,” *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 62 (1907) 438-75. See also Harald Patzer, *Die griechische Knabenliebe* (Wiesbaden, 1982).

²⁵ L. Brisson (1998, 11-12). C. J. Rowe misreads the Greek, in which *haptomenos* must be construed with *sou* (as Bury recognized), and translates: So that I can also have benefit from contact with that bit of wisdom of yours.” (21) Alcibiades also seems to think he has something to gain by sexual relations with a virtuous man such as Socrates, although he does not suggest that the semen will convey wisdom or virtue (217a).

²⁶ “The map he draws of Athenian practice is well-observed, but the deductions he draws seem self-interested, for he is himself the pursuer of Agathon.” (186) “He is trying to advance his relationship with Agathon” (190) “Pausanias argues that it is acceptable to yield to a lover ‘in order to improve one’s moral state’ (184ab, 185b); this suits his own interest, as he himself is a lover of Agathon.” (201) Hunter shares this view (45).

about the possibility that wealth acquired by legitimate means may nevertheless wind up in the hands of those who have no real need or good use for it and no intelligent ability to reapportion it, since this would raise doubts about his own right to the wealth he possesses. By demonstrating that this understanding of justice is wrong, Socrates not only advances the understanding of justice, he also undermines Cephalus' personal claim by right to the resources on which his status depends and advances the claims of those who, like himself, may possess the virtues that merit the wealth they do not possess.²⁷

While this kind of self-interested speech may seem out of place in a serious philosophical investigation, it is actually a necessity of Socratic philosophy, because Socrates' aim in his conversations is not so much to discover the truth about a question as to investigate his interlocutor and raise question that impel him or her to change his or her character, mentality and behavior. This goal is announced in many of the dialogues, but nowhere more clearly than in *Symposium*, where Apollodoros berates his anonymous listeners, who represent the audience assembled at a reading of the composition, for leading worthless lives, spending their time in pursuit of money rather than devoting their time to Socrates (172c-173e). Sincere boasting, praising oneself for the things one is and does, is an essential pre-requisite for this process.

The boastful speeches we find in *Symposium* and elsewhere take the form of implicitly self-flattering claims about the nature of things. Because they are claims about the world, they have an objective quality and can be brought into conflict with other contrary claims. When this occurs the result is not merely the refutation of a theory, and the embarrassment generated is not merely the embarrassment of being shown not to know. If the principles refuted are genuine reflections of the character, mentality and behavior of the speaker, the result is the refutation also of the person who espouses it. This is why Socrates is so happy when his interlocutors speak the truth as they see it (*Gorgias* 486d-487d; see *Republic* 367e-368b): this not only gives him an opportunity to investigate the proposition being proposed – which would be possible even if the person were not sincere about it – but also to examine the principles that motivate the speaker personally. When these principles are refuted, the speaker must either turn hostile or suffer a breakdown. For this reason, the level of personal competition is much higher in the Socratic dialogues than it would be in a disinterested conversation about philosophical issues, however eager the parties are to prove themselves right. The aggressive, personal flavor of the Socratic conversation is better captured when we recognize that the subject is not merely what is the best way of life, but rather whose life is better, mine or yours.

Refutation

Symposium resembles a Socratic dialogue because it contains a refutation of the self-interested arguments of the previous speakers. Criticism is not a uniquely Socratic privilege in a symposium, of course. All the speakers criticize the others. For example, Pausanias offers mild criticism of Phaedrus, saying that he has not distinguished between the heavenly and the common forms of love (180c-d). This is a criticism of his speech, and does not carry major implications for Phaedrus as a person -- unless we are to suppose him an especially promiscuous young man who fails to discriminate among lovers, for which there is no evidence at all.²⁸ Socrates however offers criticism that applies more directly to Phaedrus when he argues that no one dies for the *eromenos* but for immortal fame (208c-d). This argument denies Phaedrus' effort to redeem the *eromenos* and himself by claiming that he inspires acts of virtue. Phaedrus may provide the occasion for noble sacrifice, but he is not its object, and therefore does not deserve the honor he appropriates to himself by the description of love he offered in his speech. This is not a devastating critique, but it is of a piece with Socrates' general reduction of potential *eromenoi* to the role of useful implement for higher achievement (compare the role of the beautiful in facilitating giving birth).

More serious is Socrates' critique of Pausanias. He is a different kind of target: as a lover of Agathon, he is a potential rival to Socrates, who has set out this evening to enjoy Agathon's company (174a). This means that the attack will aim not to reduce him to the status of a useful *eromenos*, but merely to push him off. The attack on Pausanias is carried out in two waves: first in the speech of Socrates himself and then in the speech of Alcibiades.

One indirect, but undoubtedly distressing, criticism is found in Socrates' critique of Agathon. By forcing Agathon to acknowledge that he does not know what he was talking about (201c), Socrates

²⁷ Similarly, Charmides defines *sophrosune* as quietness or slowness, characteristics that would, if true, make him a paragon of virtue. Euthyphro attempts to define piety in a manner that will justify his own actions against his father. Lysis defines friendship in a manner that would validate his own friendship with Menexenus.

²⁸ In fact, his behavior in *Phaedrus* shows him to be quite snobbish in his choice of lovers.

not only shows Agathon himself to be lacking in sense, he also shows that Pausanias' claims to transfer wisdom and excellence are not very well founded.²⁹ In general, Socrates' speech raises doubts about the wisdom that Pausanias displayed and which he offers as a return for his *paidika*'s investment. Socrates' use of the birthing model of education offers an even more fundamental critique, since it implies that wisdom is found within oneself and is not acquired by the transmission of semen, or by any other external input.³⁰

In addition to raising doubts about the value of Pausanias' merchandise, Socrates expends considerable effort belittling Pausanias' desire for physical contact with young men. Pausanias' speech rests heavily not only on the assumption that he has something worthwhile to offer, but also that his enjoyment of sexual relations with young men is worthwhile. But if it is really a waste of time, then how do his supposed virtues really serve Pausanias' interests?

Pausanias does not of course say that engaging in sexual relations with a young man is a valuable way to spend one's time. He actually offers very little explanation for what he, the older lover, stands to gain from a relationship with a *paidika*. Although he says that he loves the young man for his soul, he does not explain what benefit he gains from indulging this spiritual affection, saying instead that the *paidika* should satisfy (*charizesthai*) a virtuous lover physically. Throughout his speech he minimizes the value of this benefit while magnifying the benefit he offers. If one didn't know any better one might think that Pausanias offers his services to young boys for purely altruistic purposes or for a trifle, something of no real worth, certainly not worth much in comparison with what he has to offer. And yet, the opportunity for relations with a young boy is of such value to him that he is willing to do the most slavish things (184d).

Socrates' erotic impulses are both lower and higher than those reported by Pausanias. By insisting that love of a beautiful body is indeed an important step in the so-called ladder of love, Socrates tarnishes the credibility of Pausanias' high minded denigration of love of the body. If we are right to discount Pausanias' claim to love the soul of Agathon and to acknowledge the very important role of the body in his relationship to Pausanias, Socrates' speech consigns Pausanias to the very lowest level of the ladder. Socrates puts the principle of promiscuity at a higher rung than the principle of loyalty, and, as the action of *Symposium* illustrates, he lives by that rule himself. He further undermines Pausanias by describing forms of eros more heavenly than any he has conceived, providing an explanation for how one could actually love the soul of a young boy as Pausanias claims to do.

Alcibiades' speech also plays an important role in refuting Pausanias. This speech is especially effective because as an external witness to Socrates' behavior it is not subject to the suspicions of a conflict between word and deed which undermine Pausanias' own speech. Alcibiades' testimony concerning Socrates show that Socrates actually does what Pausanias boasts to do. He takes Pausanias at his word, sincerely believing that there is little or nothing to be gained from the favors of a *paidika*. Pausanias never explains why he accepts a trade he describes as so imbalanced. Possibly, the trade is not so imbalanced after all, since he has no genuine virtue to offer. Indeed, he has said precious little about the nature of the virtue he teaches, and unless he is much superior to most of Socrates' eminent interlocutors he probably has no idea what virtue is in the first place. His lack of wisdom can be seen not only on the basis of his own speech and behavior, but also from the poor contents of the speech his well-trained *paidika*, Agathon, makes and the speed with which he succumbs to Socrates' criticism. Alternatively, Pausanias may not know how to distinguish gold from bronze. In contrast with this, Socrates actually refuses the trade (218e). He either possesses some virtue that is worth more than anything an adult can get from a young man or he sees that there is really no value in the sensual pleasures, as he says over and over again in the middle dialogues (ie. *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Republic*, and *Gorgias*).

Conclusion

The speeches in *Symposium*, and in the dialogues more generally, are self-referential and designed to enhance the reputation and confidence of the speaker.³¹ Although not an acceptable trait today, this mode of discourse was accepted and expected in ancient Greece. It was also of great value for philosophical disputation of the Socratic sort. Self-referential speech exposes the speaker to criticism and refutation not merely of disinterested opinions, but of principles that are central to his or her

²⁹ See Charmides' remark on the credit due to a teacher in Xenophon's *Symposium* (2.15). Perhaps it is not superfluous to add that there is something erotic in the beautiful Agathon's humble words to Socrates.

³⁰ See L. Brisson, above note 22.

³¹ The exception, of course, is Alcibiades who insults himself and praises Socrates, thus inverting sympotic expectations.

character, mentality and behavior. The refutation of these principles therefore leads not merely to the need for a more adequate theory, it also leads to the humiliation and breakdown of the speaker. In some cases, as apparently in the case of Agathon, there is an erotic motive to this process.

The cases of Phaedrus and Pausanias are rather mild, since neither of them is a direct object of Socrates' interest. But the speech of Alcibiades shows what kind of experience is in wait for Agathon. The Socratic refutation creates a profound disturbance in the soul of the speaker, instigating a collapse of personality which leads to the slavish adulation of Socrates that is reported not only by Alcibiades but also by Apollodoros and evidenced by the behavior of Aristodemos. Agathon is well on the way to a similar experience.

Appendix on Aristophanes:

Aristophanes' speech is at first sight difficult to fit into the pattern of boasting. Plato does not provide us with enough information concerning Aristophanes' personal life to enable us to evaluate the role his speech plays in forwarding his personal interests. Unlike other characters in *Symposium*, we are not told of any romantic interests he may have had. He seems to be the one speaker who does not attempt to sell himself to potential sexual partners, and indeed, his speech, with its insistence on natural partnership, contradicts any such intention. Possibly, he is the only speaker who does not attempt to advance himself in any way. But selling oneself is not the only form of self-promotion that occurs in *Symposium*, and I am not aware of any good reason to think that Aristophanes is an exception to the general rule. Given the prominence of self-promotion elsewhere in the composition, and in Athenian social life in general, we should expect the general pattern to hold here as well. If so, some of the elements of his speech, at least, should serve his personal interests. By taking this as an hypothesis, and considering what information we do have about Aristophanes we can derive a tolerably plausible portrait of the relationship between the man and the speech. Here I apply my reasoning in reverse and ask, What kind of a person must he have been if this speech is self-serving?

1) Aristophanes must have been strongly partial to homosexuality. The story of our original unity grants a natural status to those who possess the tendency to homosexuality. Two of the three human prototypes he mentions are prototypes for homosexuals, while only one out of three is a prototype for the heterosexual. He refers to the prototype of the heterosexual as androgynous, reminding the company that this word is used nowadays as a term of reproach (189e). He insults the descendents of these androgynous creatures, claiming that they are adulterers and adulteresses (191d-e). He praises men who are naturally homosexual, claiming that they possess manly virtues and tend to perform well in political activity (192a-b: this passage may have been added later in response to Xenophon; 193c). Interestingly, his mythological account of the origins of love allows no possibility of bisexuality, and in 192a he suggests that homosexuals who marry women (there was no same-sex marriage in ancient Greece) do so only because of social pressure (192b). This may reflect an exclusive predilection on Aristophanes' part for men. Although he praises male homosexuality, he has almost nothing to say about female homosexuality.

2) Beauty is not mentioned in Aristophanes' speech, and neither are other traits by which quality or excellence are judged. The fact that belongingness is the chief attraction in erotic love, and that traits of quality such as good-looks, wealth, intelligence, virtue, play no role at all, suggests that Aristophanes was not blessed with such things. Born around 446, Aristophanes would have been thirty years old in 416, the dramatic date of the party, about the same age as Agathon, but he is not said to be good-looking.

3) In contrast to Eryximachos, although Aristophanes provides a coarse materialistic explanation for the power of love, his explanation is not primarily sexual in nature. The inclination to unite with one's mate is a desire for an original wholeness or unity, not for the pleasures of sexual intercourse. The purpose of sexual intercourse is to produce children in the case of androgynous pairs and to provide satisfaction (*plesmone*) for homosexual men. (Homosexual women are not mentioned in this connection.) This satisfaction enables them to cease their embracing and turn to productive activities (191c). So, although he does attribute sexual obsession to heterosexuals, as we have seen, he says clearly that sexual pleasure is not the main attraction for homosexual couples (192c-e). This attitude too may reflect Aristophanes' own personal habits.³²

4) As we have noted, Aristophanes was not known for his good looks. Some parts of *Symposium* seem to suggest that Aristophanes was also of a rotund appearance. As I have argued, the speeches tend to describe eros in the image of the speaker himself, so the fact that Aristophanes

³² Socrates says that Aristophanes spends his whole time with Dionysius and Aphrodite (177e), but this is presumably a reference to his comic productions.

describes the original human creatures as round may suggest that he was too (but this may alternatively merely reflect on his bald head: *Peace*, 762-773). The idea that he was a fat man would give extra force to the fact that his hiccups are attributed to overeating (185c), and perhaps also fit his reputation as a big drinker (176b-c). Alcibiades says of Aristophanes that he is *geloios* and wants to be so (213c). This can be taken merely as a reference to his comic manner of speaking, but Alcibiades says this to explain why Socrates did not sit next to Aristophanes, but rather next to the beautiful Agathon. This comment therefore seems to imply that Aristophanes has an ungainly appearance.

5) The story of our original unity implies that the best matches are long-lasting and inviolable (although he admits that people do sometimes mate with the wrong partners: 191a-b). This suggests that he was a devoted partner, and not one who played the field.

In sum: Aristophanes' speech suggests that its author cut a roundish, ungainly figure, and was not popular as a lover. He was a confirmed homosexual who was deeply involved with a single partner, or hoped to be, but who aspired to spending his time not in love-making but in productive activities. The comic art is often cultivated by the outsider, and in Aristophanes' description of love as a pursuit of primal wholeness we may glimpse, together with a mockery of lovers, the deep longing of an unpopular man for some taste of true love.

La difficile analogia tra poesia e amore

Giovanni Casertano

I.

Alle pagine 205a-206a, nel suo dialogo con Socrate, Diotima stabilisce un'analogia tra la poesia e l'amore che ha un importante rilievo nella sua argomentazione. Come è noto, il dialogo avvenuto tra Diotima e Socrate, o meglio i dialoghi avvenuti in una serie di incontri tra i due personaggi (cfr. 207a), riportati dal personaggio Socrate agli amici riuniti nel *Simposio*, costituiscono il contributo di Socrate agli encomi di *Eros* che in quell'occasione si era convenuto di fare. In un articolo del 1997¹ mi sono occupato di questo "dialogo nel dialogo" e della sua importanza per la concezione platonica dell'amore, della morte e dell'immortalità². Qui mi occuperò di questa pagina del *Simposio*, cercando di mettere in luce il significato dell'analogia. Ma, per chiarirlo, sarà bene inquadrare la pagina all'interno del dialogo tra Socrate e Diotima.

Il problema che ci interessa viene introdotto da Diotima dopo la conclusione cui si è giunti in 205a: essere felici significa possedere (205a1: κτήσει) cose buone, e tutti gli uomini hanno la volontà (205a5: βούλησιν) e il desiderio (205a5: ἔρωτα) di possedere *sempre* le cose buone. Notiamo che qui *eros* è il desiderare, e cioè l'amare, ma l'amare le cose buone. A sua volta, questa conclusione è raggiunta, secondo il più classico metodo socratico, nel corso di un dialogo in cui uno dei personaggi interroga e l'altro risponde, solo che qui è Diotima che assume il ruolo che Socrate ha in altri dialoghi, e Socrate quello che in genere assumono i suoi interlocutori³. Sintetizzerò qui brevemente le tappe che hanno portato a questa conclusione, accennando ai risvolti metodologici che emergono chiaramente nell'andamento di questo dialogo.

Si comincia con una serie di qualificazioni di *Eros*:

1) *Eros* non è né bello né buono (201e).

2) È qualcosa di intermedio tra sapiente e ignorante (202a), e quindi tra bello e brutto, buono e cattivo (202b).

3) Non è un dio, perché questi è felice e bello, possiede già le cose buone e belle (202b-c), mentre Socrate già ha convenuto (202d1: ὁμολόγηκας) che è per la mancanza (δι' ἔνδειαν) di cose buone e belle che *Eros* le desidera.

4) È qualcosa di intermedio tra mortale e immortale, è un grande demone (202d).

Si continua con:

5) Il mito della sua nascita e la deduzione del suo carattere (203a-204a).

Segue un dialogo fatto di domande e risposte:

6) Una nuova domanda di Socrate: chi sono allora coloro che filosofano (204a8: οἱ φιλοσοφούντες)? Qui c'è da notare innanzi tutto la conferma del ruolo di Socrate nel dialogo con Diotima al quale accennavo prima: in genere, nei dialoghi platonici, ci sono due tipi di domande, quelle di chi sa e confuta chi non sa, svolgendo così la sua opera maieutica, e quelle di chi non sa e vuole apprendere da chi sa; il primo tipo è del Socrate abituale, il secondo del Socrate che qui discute con Diotima⁴. Ed è sintomatico, per quel che andremo argomentando, che Socrate non dica qui "i filosofi", ma: coloro che esercitano questo tipo di attività che è il filosofare.

7) È chiaro anche ad un ragazzino, è la risposta di Diotima: è necessario (204b4: ἀναγκαῖον) che *Eros*

¹ *Il (in) nome di Eros. Una lettura del discorso di Diotima nel Simposio platonico*; in «Elenchos» XVIII (1997), pp. 277-310.

² Sono poi ritornato su questi argomenti in altri studi: *Dal logo al mito al logo: la struttura del Fedone*; in G. Casertano (a cura di), *La struttura del dialogo platonico*, Loffredo, Napoli 2000, pp. 86-107; *Morte (dai Presocratici a Platone: ovvero dal concetto all'incantesimo)*, Guida, Napoli 2003, pp. 49-119; *O homem combatido: terapia do medo em Platão*, in «Cadernos de Filosofia. Publicação Semestral do Instituto de Filosofia da Linguagem» da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, n° 18/2005, Lisboa 2006, pp. 105-125.

³ Comprese le connotazioni psicologiche a questi ultimi riservate. E infatti Socrate si meraviglia di un'affermazione (201e8-9); riconosce la verità di una conseguenza apparentemente strana (202a10); insiste in una sua affermazione (202b6-7); deve ammettere di aver sostenuto una cosa contro le sue stesse convinzioni (202c-d); è frastornato dall'andamento del discorso, tanto da non avere ad un certo suo snodo una risposta da dare (204d10-11; anche 207c2); si meraviglia di certe conseguenze che necessariamente discendono dall'andamento del discorso (205b3); riconosce la verità di queste conseguenze (205c3, c10), pur mostrando qualche resistenza a riconoscerla (205d9), finché non può non accettarla in pieno (206a13); non capisce alcuni passaggi del discorso, inducendo Diotima ad una spiegazione chiarificante (206b9-10sgg.); si stupisce per l'apparente paradosalità di certe conclusioni, delle quali non riesce ancora a percepire la verità (208b7-9).

⁴ L'ha ben notato B. Centrone, *Introduzione a Platone, Simposio*, tr. e commento di M. Nucci, Einaudi, Torino 2009, p. XXVIII.

sia φιλόσοφος, perché si trova in una posizione intermedia tra il sapiente e l'ignorante, e quindi è l'amante e non l'amato: infatti τὸ ἐραστὸν è ciò che è veramente/realmente bello (204c4: τὸ τῷ ὄντι καλόν), mentre τὸ ἐρῶν ha tutt'altro aspetto (ἰδέαν), quello che ha già illustrato. Qui appunto si chiarisce che il nome "filosofo" può ora essere attribuito ad *Eros*, proprio perché è stata specificata l'attività sua propria.

8) Ora Socrate chiede qual è l'utilità di *Eros* per gli uomini (204c). Il termine utilizzato è χρεία (204c8), un termine che indica allo stesso tempo il vantaggio, l'utilità, ma anche il bisogno, la necessità, e quindi la mancanza, e quindi la richiesta: come a sottolineare che la condizione di filosofo di *Eros* indica sempre un'attività che è l'espressione di un bisogno necessario, un bisogno che richiede sempre e rinnovatamente di essere soddisfatto, ma allo stesso tempo è appagante, perché apportatore di un vantaggio che è proprio solo di chi filosofa. Ma la risposta di Diotima non è immediata; come spesso accade nella metodologia del discorrere e dell'indagare platonico, per rispondere a questa domanda bisogna trasformarla in un'altra, e quindi chiedersi: perché *Eros* è rivolto verso le cose belle? O, ancora più chiaramente (204d5: σαφέστερον): chi ama le cose belle, ama; che cosa ama (204d5-6: ἐρᾷ ὁ ἐρῶν τῶν καλῶν τί ἐρᾷ;)? Che diventino sue (204d7). In altre parole, non basta chiarire che un certo nome appartiene a colui che esercita una certa attività, ma bisogna chiarire anche qual è l'oggetto, il *fine* di quell'attività.

9) Ma anche questa risposta desidera (204d8: ποθεῖ), ha bisogno di un'altra domanda, in questo procedere del discorso che allarga sempre più i suoi confini e ridefinisce i termini che usa per giungere ad una migliore comprensione dell'oggetto della sua ricerca. La nuova domanda è: cosa accade a chi possiede le cose belle (204d10-11)? Socrate non sa rispondere.

10) Diotima allora trasforma ancora la domanda, cambiando (204e1: μεταβαλόν) i termini e usando 'bene' al posto di 'bello'⁵, ma mantenendo inalterata la struttura della domanda: chi ama le cose buone, ama; che cosa ama (204e2-3: ἐρᾷ ὁ ἐρῶν τῶν καλῶν τί ἐρᾷ;)? Che diventino sue; e cosa accade a chi possiede le cose buone? che sarà felice (204e7: εὐδαίμων), e non occorre domandare oltre, perché qui la risposta ha raggiunto un termine (205a3: τέλος), dal momento che non ha senso chiedere ancora "perché un uomo vuole essere felice?".

È a questo punto che viene stabilita la conclusione di 205a5-8 che ho riportato all'inizio. Ed è da sottolineare il fatto che questo fine perseguito da tutti appartenga alla sfera della vita nel suo intero, e non solo alla sfera della ricerca teoretica; il che era stato chiaramente espresso già nella relazione tra bello e bene. Ma su questo ritornerò.

II.

La nuova domanda di Diotima, che lascia sconcertato Socrate, è a questo punto: allora perché non diciamo (205a9: φάμεν) che tutti amano (205a9: ἐρᾶν), dal momento che tutti amano sempre le stesse cose, ma diciamo che alcuni amano ed altri no? Socrate si meraviglia di questo fatto (205b3). Ma Diotima gli dice che non deve meravigliarsi, perché in effetti noi, isolata (205b4-5: ἀφελόντες) una certa specie di amore (205b4-5: τοῦ ἔρωτός τι εἶδος), la *denominiamo* (205b5: ὀνομάζομεν) amore, *imponendogli il nome dell'intero* (205b5: τὸ τοῦ ὅλου ἐπιθέντες ὄνομα), mentre per le altre specie usiamo altri nomi (205b6: ἄλλοις καταχρόμεθα ὀνόμασιν). La questione posta qui da Diotima, e la spiegazione che ne dà, sono significative del fatto che, se c'è un problema che non ha mai cessato di interessare Platone, questo è il problema del linguaggio, cioè di quella peculiare attività dell'uomo che consiste nel cercare di rendere chiari a se stessi i rapporti reali tra le cose nel momento in cui vengono tradotti in *nomi*, cioè in parole. In altri termini, c'è un'attività che consiste nello stabilire nomi, che vengono imposti (ὀνομάζομεν, ἐπιθέντες) alle cose; questi nomi sono legati in modo stretto alle idee – qui non c'interessa stabilire il senso e il valore di questo legame. Queste relazioni sono problematiche, perché non sono fisse e stabilite una volta per sempre, ma variano a seconda degli usi che ne facciamo, delle finalità che ci proponiamo nella nostra indagine, del campo di riferimenti che volta a volta utilizziamo. Ma le spiegazioni di Diotima sono anche un esempio di come quel metodo diairetico "scoperto", applicato e difeso nei cosiddetti dialoghi dialettici, sia stato in realtà una costante nella metodologia e nella dialettica platoniche.

Cerchiamo allora di schematizzare il ragionamento di Diotima: c'è un intero – un genere –

⁵ L'equivalenza di bello e bene è abbastanza comune nella cultura greca classica, e Platone la approfondisce in senso specificamente filosofico. Il che non significa che l'equivalenza non resti abbastanza problematica. Per il bello come la capacità di suscitare un desiderio intenso che spinge l'anima verso il mondo delle idee, cfr. Centrone, cit., pp. LI-LIII.

che si divide in molte specie⁶; il nome di quest'intero è "amore"; noi isoliamo una specie di quell'intero e le attribuiamo lo stesso nome dell'intero, cioè appunto "amore". Notiamo che non si dice qui quali siano le altre specie dell'intero "amore", né quali siano i loro nomi. Ora, l'amare è un'attività, e, come abbiamo visto prima a proposito del filosofare e del filosofo, chi esercita quell'attività ne deriva anche il nome, per cui si chiama "amante". Ad una sola specie dell'intero noi attribuiamo il nome che è lo stesso dell'intero, cioè amore, e quindi attribuiamo il nome "amante" solo ad alcuni uomini che esercitano quell'attività specifica e non a tutti, cioè a tutti gli uomini che esercitano le altre attività specifiche dell'amore. Verosimilmente – anche se non viene detto – non attribuiamo il nome di "amanti" nemmeno a tutti gli uomini che esercitano l'attività che corrisponde all'intero, che cioè amano e vogliono le cose belle e buone.

Socrate chiede spiegazioni, e Diotima fa un esempio, quello appunto della produzione e della poesia, cioè della ποίησις. Ora, è da notare che Platone, per esemplificare appunto quanto ha appena dichiarato sull'amore e sui nomi ad esso collegato, usa esplicitamente il termine ποίησις nel suo duplice significato di attività produttiva in generale, e di attività produttiva di poesia: queste due attività hanno lo stesso nome, appunto ποίησις. La ποίησις è infatti qualcosa di ampio (205b8: τι πολύ), un genere che comprende molte specie. Essa è caratterizzata dal fatto, qualunque sia la sua specificazione, di produrre qualcosa che prima non c'era: ogni causa (αἰτία) per cui qualsiasi cosa passa dal non essere all'essere (205b9: ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ ὄν ἰόντι) è dunque ποίησις, sicché anche le operazioni (205c1: ἐργασίαι) di tutte le tecniche sono ποιήσεις, e i loro artefici (δημιουργοί) sono ποιηταί (205c2). Ma attenzione: sono ποιηταί, ma non si chiamano ποιηταί (205c4), bensì hanno altri nomi (205c3-4: ἄλλα ἔχουσιν ὀνόματα). Invece una sola parte (205c5-6: ἐν μέρει) della ποίησις intera – quella concernente musica e metri – è designata col nome dell'intero (205c6-7: τῷ τοῦ ὅλου ὀνόματι προσαγορεύεται). Solo questa parte quindi è ποίησις, e si chiamano ποιηταί quelli che la posseggono (205c7-9).

Mi pare chiaro che qui il gioco è appunto quello di assumere una sola parola in due significati diversi: ποίησις è l'intero, è il nome che designa tutte le attività che producono qualcosa; e ποιήσις è anche il nome di una sola parte di quell'intero, quella che concerne la musica e le composizioni metriche. Il fatto che chi esercita l'attività in generale di produrre qualcosa, e quindi, in base alla "regola" già ricordata, dovrebbe assumere il nome proprio di quell'attività, non viene invece chiamato col nome proprio dell'attività, si spiega solo col fatto che il termine usato, ποίησις, ed il nome ad esso collegato, ποιηταί, viene usato ambiguamente, in maniera cosciente. Insomma, ποίησις è l'attività produttiva in generale, e ποιηταί, cioè produttori, sono coloro che la esercitano, ma non si possono chiamare ποιηταί, cioè poeti, perché questo nome di "poeti" è riservato a coloro che esercitano una sola specie di quell'attività generale, e cioè coloro che compongono musica e versi. Nell'esempio compare anche un altro nome, in 205c1, e cioè δημιουργοί. Questo nome appartiene a tutti coloro che esercitino una qualunque attività compresa nel genere ποίησις, inteso come attività produttiva, quindi appartiene anche a coloro che esercitano l'attività particolare del comporre musica e versi, e che si chiamano col nome dell'intero. E allora questi ultimi si chiamano non solo in base al nome della specie – "poeti", come produttori di opere di musica e in versi –, ma anche, ovviamente, in base al nome dell'intero – "artefici", "demiurghi". Non è detto esplicitamente, ma possiamo anche completare lo schema dicendo che anche gli altri "artefici", i demiurghi che esercitano altre specie dell'attività produttiva, hanno un doppio nome: essi infatti si chiamano demiurghi, e poi pittori, scultori, architetti, e così via.

L'esempio della ποίησις è chiaro; è chiaro cioè il meccanismo in base al quale un certo nome da noi usato viene inteso in un senso più ristretto rispetto allo stesso nome, quando usato in senso più generale. A questo punto (205d1) viene introdotta l'analogia con eros, esplicitamente dichiarata tale (οὕτω τοίνυν). Solo che lo schema della dimostrazione applicato all'esempio di ποίησις non è altrettanto chiaro quando viene applicato ad eros. Vediamo.

Anche qui ci troviamo di fronte ad un genere, o ad un'attività intesa in senso generale, che chiamiamo eros. Ricordiamo che questo genere aveva ricevuto già due nomi, eros, appunto, e βούλησις, la volontà di possedere sempre le cose buone, che è comune a tutti gli uomini (205a5-7). Chi esercita quest'attività, quella cioè di ricercare e di amare sempre le cose buone, dovrebbe ricevere lo stesso nome, cioè "amante", solo che noi, era stato detto, non diciamo che tutti "amano", cioè sono "amanti", anche se tutti amano queste stesse cose (205a9-b2). E questo perché, abbiamo visto, noi isoliamo una certa specie di eros, e la chiamiamo appunto eros, col nome dell'intero, mentre per le

⁶ Uso qui i termini di genere e specie, anche se nel testo Platone usa i termini "intero" e "parti", poiché mi sembra che il senso sia lo stesso. Del resto, anche se conosceranno in Aristotele un loro uso sistematico, i termini di genere e specie erano già comunque ben presenti, nello stesso senso "aristotelico", nel testo platonico: si veda in particolare *Soph.* 267d5-6, dove si parla appunto della divisione τῶν γενῶν κατ' εἶδη.

altre specie di quell'intero ci serviamo di altri nomi (205b4-6). Seguiva poi l'esempio della *poiēsis* (205b-c), dopo il quale inizia la dimostrazione per quanto riguarda *eros*.

C'è un'attività, in generale (205d1: τὸ κεφάλαιον), cui diamo il nome di *eros*; in realtà, non le diamo un solo nome: si tratta infatti di un *desiderio* (205d2: ἐπιθυμία) di cose belle e buone e di felicità che noi chiamiamo "il potentissimo e ingannevole *eros*" (205d2-3: ὁ μέγιστός τε καὶ δολερός ἔρως)⁷. Quindi ci sono due nomi a designare questo genere, *eros*, appunto (che riceve a sua volta altre due qualificazioni), e desiderio, ἐπιθυμία; ma questa assimilazione di amore a desiderio era stata "preparata" in effetti da molto tempo, almeno da 204a, da quando cioè la natura "media" di amore tra divinità e umanità, tra sapienza e ignoranza, lo aveva legato al livello della tensione, del desiderio appunto, e quindi della filosofia. Ora, questo genere può essere distinto in una molteplicità di specie che indicano direzioni e fini particolari in diversi campi; gli esempi di questa tensione (cfr. il τρεπόμενοι di 205d4) sono il guadagno, la passione per la ginnastica (205d4: φιλογυμναστία) e la passione per la sapienza (205d4: φιλοσοφία). Tutti coloro che sono presi da questi desideri/amori non si dice che "amano" e quindi non possono essere chiamati "amanti". Dall'altra parte c'è una certa forma/specie (205d6: ἐν τι εἶδος) di *eros* che prende il nome dell'intero, e quindi si chiama "amore", il nome di quest'attività si chiama "amare" e coloro che esercitano questo tipo di attività si chiamano "amanti" (205d7-8: ἔρωτά τε καὶ ἐρᾶν καὶ ἐρασταί). A differenza di quanto accadeva nell'esempio della produzione e della poesia, dove coloro che esercitavano l'attività particolare del produrre e si chiamavano perciò "poeti", col nome dell'intero, venivano individuati come gli artefici di composizioni musicali e in versi, qui *non si dice chi siano e come si chiamino* gli uomini che esercitano quest'attività specifica di *eros* e quindi ricevono il nome dell'intero, "amanti". Può stupire innanzi tutto che non siano i filosofi, che qui costituiscono una delle molte specie che appartengono al genere *eros*, mentre in 204a-b erano stati indicati come coloro che più di tutti gli altri incarnano la posizione intermedia tra sapienza e ignoranza caratteristica di *eros* come amante di sapienza e filosofo, e quindi "amante" (204c3: τὸ ἐρῶν). Qui invece i filosofi non possono ricevere il nome di "amanti", perché appartengono ad una delle molte specie di *eros* che non ricevono il nome dell'intero. Chi sono dunque gli "amanti"?

Mi pare che nel testo platonico non ci sia una risposta esplicita a questa domanda. Potremmo quindi tentare di trovarla solo nel prosieguito del discorso. Innanzi tutto, in chiara polemica con il discorso di Aristofane, si dice che amore non è né della metà né dell'intero, *a meno che questo non sia in qualche modo un bene* (205e2-3: εἰ μὴ τυγχάνη γέ που... ἀγαθὸν ὄν). Questa specificazione è indicativa, mi pare, che qui si sta parlando ancora dell'*eros* come genere, dal momento che questo era stato indicato come amore/desiderio delle cose buone (205d1-2), e quindi non può riferirsi alla specie particolare di amore che acquista il nome dell'intero. In effetti si può dire *semplicemente* (206a3: ἀπλοῦν) che gli uomini amano il bene (206a3-4). Ma bisogna aggiungere che amano anche possederlo, e possederlo per sempre (206a6-9); in generale (206a11: συλλήβδην), allora, si può dire che *eros* è rivolto al bene e a possederlo per sempre. Non possiamo, mi pare, intendere queste righe come esplicative della specie particolare di *eros*, dal momento che si sta parlando sempre di *eros* come amore per le cose buone; anche stilisticamente le tre specificazioni di 205d1, τὸ κεφάλαιον, di 206a3, ἀπλοῦν, di 206a11, συλλήβδην, stanno ad indicare sempre che si tratta dell'*eros* come intero. Socrate concorda con tutto quanto detto da Diotima, ma a questo punto il discorso della sacerdotessa cambia registro.

III.

La nuova domanda che ora viene introdotta è: qual è il modo (206b1: τρόπον) e in quale attività (206b2: ἐν τίνι πράξει) si possono riconoscere lo sforzo e la tensione (206b2: σπουδὴ καὶ σύντασις) che possono essere chiamati *eros*? Noto che ancora non si dice esplicitamente se si tratterà di *eros* come intero o di quella sua specie particolare che prende il nome dell'intero. Ci troviamo di fronte, comunque, a quelle bellissime pagine finali del discorso di Diotima sulla causa e sul fine di *eros* che costituiscono una delle caratterizzazioni più alte dell'"amore platonico". Non è il caso qui di esaminarle in particolare, ma solo di ripercorrerle per sommi capi, con l'intenzione di vedere se e in che modo esse ci consentano di rispondere alla domanda che ci siamo posta. La risposta alla nuova domanda è: partorire nel bello sia secondo il corpo sia secondo l'anima (206b7-8): *eros* infatti non è

⁷ Gli studiosi affermano che si tratta probabilmente della citazione di un verso; in realtà, mentre è spiegabile la qualificazione di *eros* come una grande potenza, non è chiaro perché qui esso venga qualificato anche come δολερός, che significa ingannevole, infido, ed è un aggettivo che conosce solo una qualificazione negativa.

amore del bello, ma desiderio di procreazione nel bello, perché la procreazione è ciò che di eterno e immortale spetta a un mortale, dal momento che l'immortalità si desidera necessariamente insieme al bene (206e-207a). E qual è la causa di questo *eros* e di questo desiderio (ancora associati, come si vede), di questo stato terribile (207b1: δεινῶς διατιθέμενα) in cui si trovano tutti gli esseri viventi? Per gli uomini si potrebbe pensare anche che si tratti di una disposizione derivante da un ragionamento (207b7-8: ἐκ λογισμοῦ), ma per gli altri animali? La risposta è che la natura mortale cerca per quanto è possibile di essere sempre e di essere immortale (207d1-2: ἡ θνητὴ φύσις ζετέῃ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν αἰετὲ καὶ ἀθάνατος). Si tratta di un vero e proprio artificio (208b2: μηχανῆ) col quale tutti, uomini e animali, partecipano dell'immortalità. In effetti gli uomini si trovano in uno stato di terribile *eros* (208c4: δεινῶς διάκεινται ἔρωτι)⁸ per acquistarsi gloria eterna e immortale: essi quindi “amano” ciò che è immortale (208e1: τοῦ ἀθανάτου ἐρώσιν). Gli ἐρωτικοί (208e3) secondo il corpo procreano figli e, così *credono* (208e4: ὡς οἴονται), si procurano ricordo e immortalità e felicità; gli ἐρωτικοί secondo l'anima procreano saggezza e ogni altra virtù, e la più bella saggezza è quella che riguarda le città (208e-209a).

Le due bellissime pagine che seguono, 208e-210e, disegnano il percorso dell'uomo erotico che *tocca* il bello (209c2), che è il primo grado degli *erōtiká*, quello fino al quale anche Socrate può essere iniziato, mentre al grado perfetto e contemplativo (210a1: τὰ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά) Diotima non sa se Socrate sarà capace di giungere. Questo non le impedisce però di tracciare anche questo percorso più impegnativo; non converrà perciò insistere troppo sul carattere di “iniziazione misterica” del discorso di Diotima: il linguaggio è certamente, e volutamente, quello dei misteri, ma il percorso che traccia Diotima è percorribile da ogni uomo “gravido nell'anima”, dotato cioè di buone qualità e disposto a seguirlo. Ed anche Socrate, evidentemente, l'ha seguito, se ne è convinto, ed ora cerca di convincere anche gli amici, segno appunto che si tratta di una “iniziazione”, se si vuole continuare ad usare questo termine, chiaramente pedagogica, anche se strettamente legata ad *eros* (212b1-3). Si tratta della famosissima ascesa – non ascensi – all'idea del bello, inseguendo la bellezza nella sua forma/idea nei corpi, nelle anime, nei comportamenti, nelle leggi, nelle conoscenze, fino a giungere al πολὺ καλόν (210d1), al τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος... τοῦ καλοῦ (210d4), dove non ci si acquieta estaticamente, ma si procreano discorsi belli e magnifici (210d5) in un amore per la sapienza privo di invidia (210d6: ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ). E questo è appunto il τέλος τῶν ἐρωτικῶν (210e4), un'acquisizione istantanea (210e4: ἐξαίφνης), ma da un lato preparata da un percorso educativo lungo e difficile, e dall'altro foriera di un nuovo atteggiamento nel mondo.

Concludendo: possiamo dire che abbiamo individuata la specie particolare di *eros* che prende in nome dell'intero, ed alla quale noi applichiamo il nome dell'intero? Possiamo indicare chi siano quegli uomini ai quali soltanto possiamo applicare il nome di “amanti”, che, in analogia con l'esempio della ποιήσις, non possiamo applicare invece a chi partecipa del genere più ampio di *eros*? Non mi pare che nel testo platonico ci sia una risposta esplicita a queste domande; mi pare invece che il testo apra a varie soluzioni, e che comunque l'analogia *eros-poiēsis* presenti delle difficoltà. Tentando di rispondere, potremmo dire che in effetti *tutto* il testo che segue la domanda di Diotima si riferisca all'*eros* come genere: in tal caso, la domanda rimarrebbe senza risposta, non solo, ma ne risulterebbe anche che i nomi di “amore” e di “amante” in questo caso sarebbero attribuiti a coloro che esercitano l'attività corrispondente al genere/intero, e quindi l'analogia con la *poiēsis* verrebbe meno, perché quei nomi apparterrebbero a chi partecipa dell'*eros* come intero e non come specie. Oppure potremmo dire che *tutto* il testo si riferisca invece all'*eros* come specie: in tal caso i nomi di “amore” e “amante” sarebbero attribuiti a chi percorre *tutto* il viaggio verso l'idea del bello e riesce a coglierla. Ma, se fosse così, ne risulterebbe una grande stranezza, e cioè che i filosofi non potrebbero essere chiamati “amanti” del bello e del bene, dal momento che in 205d si dice chiaramente che essi percorrono una delle molte altre vie attraverso le quali si ricercano le cose buone e la felicità, via ben distinta da quell'unica specie/idea di *eros* che sola può far sì che si usino i nomi di “amore”, “amare” e “amanti”; e questo in contrasto con 204b, dove si era detto che i filosofi sono appunto gli “amanti” della sapienza, e quindi ricevono comunque il nome di “amanti”. Oppure potremmo trovarci di fronte ad una di quelle situazioni, non infrequenti in Platone, in cui la “retorica argomentativa”, comunque di altissimo livello, anche emozionale, prende il sopravvento sul rigore razionale delle dimostrazioni preannunciate. Quello che invece vorrei sottolineare è l'aspetto più tipico di questa concezione dell'amore, che, genere o specie che sia, si dimostra sempre come una forza che coinvolge l'essere

⁸ Il “disporsi amorevolmente” viene qualificato due volte (207b1, 208c4) con il termine δεινῶς, usato avverbialmente. Il termine in effetti ha una duplice valenza, potremmo dire una negativa (temibile, terribile, pericoloso), ed una positiva (straordinario, forte, potente, mirabile): qui credo che indichi appunto una forza straordinaria che non dipende da un ragionamento, ma coinvolge tutto l'essere dell'uomo, indipendentemente dalla sua volontà. L'altra qualificazione di questa forza, δολερός, che abbiamo trovato in 205d3, aveva invece una connotazione solo negativa.

umano nella sua totalità. L'*eros* insomma è quella forza che consente all'uomo "amante" di raggiungere un fine che appartiene alla sfera della vita, e non solo a quello della pura ricerca razionale: l'essere felici, che è il fine di ogni uomo, comporta certamente una capacità "contemplativa" che ha a che fare col mondo delle conoscenze, ed appartiene quindi alla sfera teoretica, ma è anche e inseparabilmente la traduzione in pratica di questa dimensione, che consiste nel "partorire" belli ed eccellenti discorsi sulla vera virtù, ha a che fare cioè con la sfera della *vita in comune* degli uomini: consiste insomma in un rinnovato atteggiamento di vita che esclude ogni malevolenza e gelosia tra gli uomini: ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ.

Onoma e holon in Symp. 204e-206a: che cosa nomina il nome “eros”

Francesco Aronadio

ABSTRACT

Sarà preso in esame il passo 204e-206a, tematizzando la funzione argomentativa e il valore concettuale attribuiti alla riflessione sul nome *eros*.

La pagina platonica appare di primo acchito caratterizzata, sotto diversi profili, da una certa ambivalenza. In primo luogo, si noterà come, da un lato, il nome appaia fuorviante, mentre, dall'altro, sia proprio la considerazione del nome a instradare verso l'esito dell'argomentazione (e cioè che l'oggetto dell'*eros* è il permanente possesso del bene).

Diotima, infatti, afferma che si dà una discrepanza fra il vero significato del nome *eros* e il suo uso corrente: *eros* designa in realtà uno *holon* (il desiderio di possedere *ta agatha*), benché sia solitamente riferito solo a una sua parte (il desiderio a sfondo sessuale). Le modalità del rapido argomentare di Diotima (che peraltro si radicano nella concezione referenzialistica del nome quale emerge dal *Cratilo*) riservano allo *holon*, come oggetto intenzionato dal nome indipendentemente dalle restrizioni nell'uso, un ruolo guida ai fini della comprensione dell'*eros*.

Ci si potrà, allora, chiedere quale rapporto sussista fra questo *holon* e le sue parti, sia sul piano del nome (la complessiva area semantica di *eros* vs le sue accezioni ristrette) sia sul piano del nominato (*to agathon* vs altri specifici oggetti di *eros*). Ne emerge un altro fattore di ambivalenza: l'interpretazione dominante, facendo leva sull'uso di *koinon* in 205a (l'*eros* nella sua accezione ampia è *koinon* a tutti gli uomini), propende per configurare tale rapporto come una relazione fra universale e particolari, fra un genere e le sue specie. Ma il prosieguo dell'argomentazione sembra andare in una direzione diversa, come traspare dall'affermazione di Diotima, la quale, benché abbia appena richiamato l'attenzione sullo *holon* che il nome *eros* nomina, nega che *eros* aspiri a uno *holon* tranne che non si trovi a essere *agathon*: il che induce a ripensare i rapporti concettuali fra le nozioni di *holon*, *koinon* e *agathon*.

Alla luce di ciò si mirerà a mostrare come la riflessione sul nome *eros* presentata da Diotima non costituisca solo un espediente retorico, ma assolva anche una funzione argomentativa essenziale ai fini del rinvenimento di: 1) due differenti accezioni dello *holon*, l'una accolta da Platone (valenza strutturale e identitaria), l'altra respinta proprio perché imperniata sulla relazione genere-specie (carattere compositivo e connotati finanche fisicistici dello *holon*); 2) un'accezione del *koinon* per cui esso designa non una generalità, ma la determinazione essenziale di una realtà ontologicamente individua; 3) una analogia, se non un isomorfismo, fra la dinamica linguistica del nome *eros*, nel suo essere intenzionato al suo referente, e della natura propria dell'*eros*, nel suo essere aspirazione verso un suo oggetto intenzionale; 4) un'anticipazione implicita della successiva caratterizzazione dell'*eros* come tensione al bello in sé.

La riflessione sul nome *eros* assolve pertanto non solo la funzione di estendere ad un'area più ampia la valenza dell'*eros*, ma anche quella di prospettare un'articolazione interna di tale area nella quale si delinei una dinamica verticale da un'accezione corrente e fuorviante a un'accezione autentica e paradigmatica, corrispondente alla dinamica verticale dal bello empirico al bello in sé.

The Picture of Socrates

Chair: Christopher J. Rowe

Alcibiades' Refutation of Socrates

Edward C. Halper

Close examinations of individual arguments in Plato's dialogues usually ignore the dramatic elements, and studies of the characters and the drama of the dialogues often pass over the arguments. This paper argues, first, that Plato includes the speech of the Alcibiades in the *Symposium* as a kind of dramatic refutation of Socrates' (or rather Diotima's) argument that love is rooted in a universal desire to possess the good and *necessarily* results in an ascent of the ladder of loves (to the level of which one is capable) and in a "giving birth in beauty." Alcibiades serves as a counter-example. More than that, though, the paper argues that the extraordinary insight into Socrates that Alcibiades displays helps the reader grasp Diotima's mistake—indeed, the contradiction—that is inherent in her account and that that must be Plato's intention. Third, I suggest that Plato provides an anticipatory refutation of Gregory Vlastos's famous paper: he included Alcibiades in the *Symposium* in order to illustrate the disastrous consequences of taking an individual as the object of love. Finally, although Alcibiades undermines Socrates' speech, there is an important sense in which he also affirms it. If this analysis or something like it is correct, the *Symposium* uses its dramatic action and descriptive passages to further its argument.

I

Although it has been little discussed in the literature, one striking and pervasive detail of Socrates' long encomium to love is the necessity it ascribes to the actions of the lover.¹ He *must* (δεῖ) begin by pursuing beautiful bodies, love one body and, then, come to see that the beauty in any one is akin to that of another body; and he must (δεῖ) thereafter pursue the beautiful form in all bodies and despise any one body (210a-b). Then, he must grasp that the beauty of the soul is more honorable (τιμιώτερον) than that of bodies, and, in consequence, the lover must care for the soul of the beloved. Inasmuch as all souls can be beautiful, the lover will seek to make other souls better and so "be forced to consider beauty in customs and laws" (ἀναγκασθῆναι αὐθελῆσαι τὸ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις καλόν—210c3-4) and from there to ascend to love of knowledge. Most of the verbs in this passage are infinitives governed by δεῖ. According to this account the lover is forced to ascend to the pursuit of higher objects.

There is a qualification here. The ascent must occur only if love "leads rightly" (210a4-7). We can surmise that love does not lead rightly if the lover is unable to grasp that the higher levels are more beautiful or if he does not pursue them for some other reason. If the right conditions are not present, the lover's ascent can be frustrated; but if those conditions are present, it is necessary. What accounts for this necessity?

Socrates' speech in the *Symposium* does not have the logical tightness of his arguments elsewhere, but I think we can answer the question. Indeed, I think the parts of this speech fit nicely together if we understand the speech to be aiming to show this very necessity. In its fanciful beginning, Socrates declares that love is not a god, but the offspring of Resource and Need. Just what is it that the lover needs? The lover needs the Good, but so does everyone else. To distinguish the lover from the non-lover, Diotima claims that the lover generates in the beautiful.² She reasons that because the lover wants to possess the Good forever (206a), he creates, insofar as he can, something that persists. (Wanting to possess what is beautiful [204d, 211c-d], the lover makes beautiful things or himself becomes beautiful.) Thus, animal life is sustained indefinitely by the creation of offspring, whereas acts of virtue and noble speeches bring a person immortal fame.

We can appreciate the significance of this reasoning by recognizing how implausible it is on the surface. The Good is eternal, of course, and it is human to want to possess it forever. Why, though, would one suppose that possessing *eternity* or some semblance of it would bring one closer to possessing the *Good*? Diotima's account recalls the Demiurge of the *Timaeus*, and it is equally problematic. Seeking to imitate the forms, the Demiurge fashions a cosmos that is, so far as possible,

¹ Martha Craven Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 179, notices "all these 'must's,'" and proposes that they represent a felt need to diminish unbearable sexual tension. There is no textual evidence for this claim, nor is there any textual ground to think that the ascent has a "negative motivation," namely, to escape from physical contact. Rather, the lover's positive desire for Beauty draws him upwards. Desire and "tension" must continue inasmuch as they motivate the climb.

² This account reverses the metaphor of the *Theaetetus* where it is the beloved who gives birth (150a-151d, esp. 151a).

eternal (cf. 29d-30a with 37c-d).³ In my view, the reasoning in both dialogues is cogent because both are making the same implicit assumption: what is good persists, whereas what is bad does not. As Plato has Socrates explain in the *Gorgias*, the craftsman brings about order and organization in a matter and, doing so, he makes it good (503e-504e; cf. *Tim.* 30a). That is to say, the craftsman creates a being by ordering and organizing a matter. What enables this object *to be* is also what allows it to persist in being, and the order that allows it to persist fits the artifact to do its job and, thereby makes it beneficial. So, in creating offspring, acts, or speeches that persist, the lover not only has a share of eternity, but necessarily has a share in the goodness, that is, a share in the principle of order and organization, that allows there to be things that are, to a greater or lesser degree, eternal.

A sign that this reasoning, or something like it, is implicit in the *Symposium* is that we can now understand how the lover differs from those who pursue the good in other ways and also how one lover differs from another. The lover strives to possess the good by creating something that will be organized in such a way that it could persist forever. Thus, the lover's *need* for the Good is met by creating an imitation of the Good, and he can be called a lover because he has *resourcefulness* to make such an imitation. These imitations differ in how long they persist and, thus, how well they imitate the Good. A beautiful speech is assumed to be more long lasting than a child and the beauty "in" which the creator of the former creates is closer to Beauty itself than the beautiful body in which the latter creates. Hence, lovers who produce the former come closer to possessing the Good forever than the latter. Perhaps a parent comes as close to eternity with successive generations of offspring as the author of a beautiful poem, but the latter has a more immediate and direct role in creating an object that could itself persist eternally and his creation is intrinsically better because it occurs "in" the soul, something closer to Beauty itself. Inasmuch as nothing generated by the lover could ever be truly eternal, his desire to possess the Good must motivate him to be ever generating anew. Finally, since all lovers strive to possess the Good forever by generating objects (in the presence of Beauty), since some objects, those that are more long-lasting, allow their generator to come closer to their goal, lovers *must* constantly seek to generate objects that are more long-lasting. That is to say, the lover is *forced* by his need to possess the Good forever to exercise his resourcefulness and continually seek to generate those objects that, being closer to eternity themselves, will bring him closer to his goal. To be sure, not everyone is capable of climbing this ladder. Indeed, most people remain on its bottom rung. Nonetheless, for those who are capable, the *necessity* of climbing the ladder is the result of the nature of love.

This explanation of the logical necessity of the climb involves three components, the beloved, the lover (who is resourceful and needy), and what he generates. However, the goal of the climb is to gaze on Beauty itself, and one who does so (a) knows what it is to be beautiful (211c8-d1) and (b) gives birth to true virtue (212a2-7). This latter must be the virtue that is simply knowledge, the goal of all Socratic dialogues. But there is an ambiguity here, for (a) and (b) both belong to the lover. Does the ascent end when the lover himself comes as close as humanly possible to being Beauty itself or when, because of this encounter, he somehow generates true virtue in another? Indeed, a parallel issue pervades the account the beauty of a beautiful body inspires generation in that beautiful body, and the result is another individual; but the beauty of a young soul inspires beautiful speeches that make *that* soul better (210c). How can the beloved benefit from these speeches if he is already beautiful, for insofar as something is beautiful it needs nothing? Presumably, he becomes still more beautiful in soul. Presumably, it is part of climbing the ladder to generate, first, something wholly external to beauty, a child, then, some increase in the beloved's beauty, and, finally, one's own self as beautiful. The first of these offspring do not truly belong to the lover. Only at the ultimate level is his product himself. At that stage, the lover becomes more like Beauty itself, self-sufficient and able to inspire virtue in others. Surprisingly, though, there is no real mutual interaction. The lover creates; the beloved does not. There is nothing here about the mutual love of lovers, both centerpieces of the accounts of love in the *Lysis* (212b-213c) and the *Phaedrus* (253d-257a)⁴ and both essential for human relationships to endure. On Diotima's ladder, only the lover's relation with Beauty itself is legitimate. Human love falls by the way.

³ David Keyt, "The Mad Craftsman of the *Timaeus*," *The Philosophical Review* 80 (1971): 230-35, claims that the Demiurge mistakenly imitates the nicks and scratches of his model, rather than its substantial character.

⁴ This lengthy passage could be read as Socrates' reply to Alibiades' speech were it not apparent that the mutual benefit it describes did not occur. Note that 256a-b illustrates the proverb Socrates mentions at *Symp.* 174b.

II

With this understanding of Socrates' argument, we can turn to Alcibiades' speech. It is obvious that he has not climbed the ladder of loves. Had he done so, he would likely have been at the symposium with Socrates and the others. If Alcibiades lacked the intellectual capacity to climb the ladder or if he were not a lover, he would not pose a problem for Socrates' account. If, however, neither of these nor any other exception to the account applies to Alcibiades, he is a counterexample to that account. In this case, just as Socrates' speech undermines those that come before, the speech of Alcibiades would undermine Socrates' argument that climbing the ladder is necessary.

Whereas the other speakers deliver encomia to love, Alcibiades gives an encomium to Socrates, even though he came to the banquet intending to crown Agathon (212e). One repeated theme is that Socrates runs after all attractive boys (213c-d, 216d, 222b), but that he not really love with any of them. Others, perhaps other speakers at the banquet, may feign an interest in philosophy to secure physical intimacy, but Alcibiades suggests that Socrates feigns an interest in beautiful boys to engage them in philosophy (218a-b). Without having heard Socrates' speech, Alcibiades comically describes how it feels to be the beloved of someone who climbs the ladder of loves from the love of a particular boy to the universal love of all beautiful bodies.

A second theme of Alcibiades is Socrates' moral character. This is what he refers to when he compares Socrates to a statue of Silenus, ugly on the outside but filled with "gods" (215b). The "gods" are the virtues. That no one is more moderate in his sexual appetites is illustrated by Socrates' firm resistance to Alcibiades' most explicit enticements (217a-219d). His moderation in respect of food, drink, and physical comfort is evidenced by his imperturbability to hardships, including the cold, on military campaign (219e-220c). His courage is manifest at Potidea where Alcibiades claims he outshone the notably courageous Laches and not only rescued Alcibiades but insisted that the latter receive an award for courage (220d-221b). It is clear from this description that Socrates has attained the beauty of the soul that he describes as the next rung on the ladder of loves (210b-c). In consequence of this beauty he "gives birth to such discourses as make young men better" and comes "to gaze on the beauty of activities and laws" which he sees as akin to his own soul. Alcibiades fully recognizes the aim of these discourses and their power, he acknowledges his shame in resisting them (215e-216c).

The next rung of Socrates' ladder is the love of knowledge, an object that he *must* come to after the love of laws (210c-d). As we saw, Socrates claims that the lover of knowledge creates many beautiful speeches and eventually comes to the knowledge of Beauty itself (210d). Gazing on Beauty itself, his soul becomes truly virtuous and immortal (212a-b). This step of the ladder receives cursory treatment in Alcibiades' account. He ascribes knowledge (*φρόνησις*) to Socrates (219d), he speaks of the Socrates and his companions, including himself, as smitten with the madness and Bacchic frenzy of philosophy (218b), and he mentions Socrates' arguments about blacksmiths, cobblers and other ordinary activities that, nonetheless have deep inner meaning and are important for becoming truly good (221d-222a)—arguments that could as well stem from the preceding rung, the love of the beautiful soul.⁵ But what probably best describes Socrates' love of knowledge, the practice of philosophy, Alcibiades can only describe externally, as his standing fixed to a place contemplating a philosophical problem all night (220c-d).⁶

My aim here is not to summarize Alcibiades' speech, but to rearrange it to understand its import. Alcibiades warns us that his speech will be disordered—he ascribes this to his own drunkenness and Socrates' bizarreness (214e-215a). When we unscramble his speech, we see that Alcibiades covers precisely the same ground as Socrates. He, too, describes the ladder but, of course, from his own perspective. He makes clear what Socrates cannot say without arrogance, that Socrates has climbed the ladder himself. (By putting the speech in the mouth of Diotima, Socrates can describe the ladder without implying that he himself has stood at the summit.) Alcibiades' account of Socrates' love of knowledge is brief and external, likely reflecting his lack of direct personal engagement with philosophical issues, as I said. It contrasts sharply with his description of Socrates' love of all physical beauty and of beautiful souls: here Alcibiades' understanding and appreciation are profound. Of all Socrates' interlocutors, Alcibiades is the only one who gives a description that comes close to grasping who he is. Meletus, Meno, Gorgias, and Protagoras appreciate the power of Socrates' intellect, but they cannot grasp his ideas. Alcibiades understands Socrates' virtues, he

⁵ C. D. C. Reeve, "A Study in Violets: Alcibiades in the *Symposium*," in *Plato's Symposium: Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, ed. James Lesher, Debra Nails, Frisbee Sheffield (Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2006), 129, 141: "Alcibiades' portrait [of Socrates] unwittingly mimics Diotima's."

⁶ Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 184, recognizes this last as sign of Socrates' ascent.

understands that the homey arguments Socrates is always making aim to produce virtuous souls, he sees Socrates' actions as a manifestation of his virtue, and he loves Socrates because of his virtue (219d).⁷

Why, then, does Alcibiades remain unaffected by those arguments? Why does he not himself become virtuous? Why does he not come to appreciate law or to be a philosopher? This cannot be because he is not led rightly or intellectually deficient; for Socrates is his teacher, and Alcibiades understands Socrates—far better, it seems, than Apollodorus or Aristodemus, both of whom we know from the dialogue's beginning did try to emulate Socrates. Alcibiades understands Socrates so well that he must “stop [his] ears and tear [him]self away from [Socrates], for, like the Sirens, he could make [Alcibiades] stay by his side till [Alcibiades dies]” (216a-c).⁸ Indeed, there is some reason to think that Alcibiades truly desires philosophy, for he wants to seduce Socrates in order that the latter might teach him all he knows (217a). He may suppose that a fallen Socrates could not refuse to teach him how to win arguments (cf. 213e; *Prot.* 336b-d),⁹ but, again, he sees that the arguments Socrates constantly uses are “of the greatest importance to anyone who wants to become a truly good man” (222a). Alcibiades understands the ladder of loves, but he does not climb the ladder. No one is more disappointed in himself than Alcibiades, yet he says nothing by way of self-defense or explanation. (Instead, he speaks to his audience as the “jury . . . that is to sit in judgment of Socrates' amazing arrogance and pride” [219c]—as if Socrates is on trial rather than himself.) The depth of appreciation that Alcibiades displays for Socrates makes his own failure to pursue philosophy unintelligible and that, I suggest, is Plato's point: Alcibiades serves to undermine the universality that Socrates claims for his account. Alcibiades recognizes his *need* for the good, and he has the *resourcefulness* to pursue it—as evidenced here by his resourcefulness in contriving circumstances in which to seduce Socrates. Apart from Socrates' soul, he loves Agathon for his beauty; but he does not climb the ladder.¹⁰ Evidently, Socrates is wrong about love.

There is another dramatic detail here that raises questions about Socrates' speech. Alcibiades compares Socrates to Pericles and other orators (215e4-7); Socrates clearly gets the prize. Although he briefly refers to his arguments (λόγοι at 221d7-e1 cannot be “speeches”), there is nearly no mention of dialectic. The only place Alcibiades does mention it points up how ineffectual it is: Socrates ignored Alcibiades' attempts to seduce him and continued his usual dialogue (διαλεχθεῖς) (217b2-7). Phaedrus and Agathon realize that Socrates would prefer dialogue to giving a speech (194d-e), but Alcibiades appears not to notice. For him, Socrates *always* gives speeches, and Socrates' earlier speech is not at all a departure. Surprisingly, Socrates also omits dialogue from his speech; he claims to be persuaded (πέπεισμαι δ' ἐγώ) by Diotima (212b),¹¹ and his lover gives birth to speeches (210d4-6). But a speech addresses an entire audience and cannot be questioned: it must be defective. Socrates' omission of dialogue from his speech would seem, then, to reflect the defective form of any speech, but Alcibiades' omission of dialogue appears to reflect his own inability to interact with Socrates. He faults Socrates' actions, but not what Socrates says. His comparison of Socrates' arguments to the Silenus statues (222a)—ridiculous on the outside, containing a god within—suggests the problem: one cannot question a god as one must question a philosophical argument. He cannot engage Socrates because he is convinced that Socrates is right.

Alcibiades' entry into the dialogue belongs to what is commonly regarded as the dramatic action of the dialogue, in contrast with its arguments. We have seen, though that this dramatic action cannot be divorced from the dialogue's philosophical content. The drama here refutes Socrates'

⁷ Socrates' assertion that Alcibiades is sober after all (222c) returns the compliment Alcibiades had paid to him (220a) and signifies, perhaps, Socrates' appreciation (misplaced, it turned out) of his moral character.

⁸ Alcibiades' own inability to pursue philosophy undermines Michael Gargarin, “Socrates' *Hybris* and Alcibiades' Failure,” *Phoenix* 31 (1977): 35–37, argument that Socrates' *hybris* is to blame. Gargarin thinks that, through dramatic clues, the dialogue presents Socrates as having achieved a knowledge of beauty that separates him from his interlocutors/lovers and frustrates their attempts to pursue knowledge with him.

⁹ Or does he suppose, like Agathon at 175c-d, that proximity to Socrates will make knowledge will flow into him? Of course, neither is a way to acquire knowledge, but they point to a central theme in the dialogue.

¹⁰ Elizabeth S. Belfiore, *Socrates' Daimonic Art: Love for Wisdom in Four Platonic Dialogues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), compares Agathon to Alcibiades. Both are beloved by Socrates and both accuse him of *hubris*. She argues that Agathon does not pursue philosophy because he lacks a passionate nature (p. 184). In my view, it is more in keeping with the dialogue to say, rather, that Agathon lacks the need of the lover, a point that emerges not only in his speech on Eros, but also in Socrates' pun on his name (174b). As Belfiore notes here, scholars are divided on whether Socrates or Alcibiades is to blame for his failure. I think both sides are mistake. The dialogue blames neither. The *Alcibiades* I, if authentic, confirms the brilliance of Alcibiades' understanding of Socrates.

¹¹ This persuasion is a mere belief that is not produced by arguments (cf. *Crito* 46b); Belfiore, *Socrates' Daimonic Art*, 155. She explains how Socrates' speech is persuasive (pp. 159-60), but does not mention how uncharacteristic of Socrates this is.

argument or, as we will see, refines that argument. If this is right, then Socrates cannot be Plato's "mouthpiece" in the *Symposium*.

III

The case of Alcibiades is unintelligible. Socrates' account would make love intelligible. In presenting this account, albeit in the Diotima's name, Socrates is contradicting himself. On one hand, he declares that love is not a god but an intermediary between the gods and the physical world (202e). As such, love stands between knowledge and ignorance as somehow akin to true belief (202a). On the other hand, the speech he presents purports to expound knowledge of love. The necessity of climbing the latter is a mark of this assumed intelligibility. As we saw, it is because the lover needs the Good and has the resourcefulness to pursue it, he *must* ever seek ways of coming closer to possessing the Good. Alcibiades' example refutes this tacit claim of intelligibility. If, though, love is not fully intelligible nor entirely unintelligible, it must be an intermediate, as Socrates had said. So it is that what is presented as a counter example serves ironically to support Socrates' account. As the *Timaeus* might have put it, the account is a likely story. That there is a notable exception confirms its being merely a likely story.

Alcibiades, however, would seem to think that ladder story is true in only one case, that of Socrates. Throughout the speech, he refers to Socrates as a kind of god, and at the end he insists that Socrates is truly unique (221c). Evidently, he means to say that it is only Socrates who pursues virtue and philosophy as a lover. Again, I think that the opening of the *Symposium* is meant to refute this claim by showing Socrates had a profound effect on turning his companions to the pursuit of philosophy. Indeed, Alcibiades declares that his "whole life has become one constant effort to escape from him and keep away" (216b). Sadly, Alcibiades succeeded too well.¹²

Socrates' speech describes a movement toward philosophy that *must* transform all lovers and, perhaps, all people; Alcibiades describes the movement that is unique to Socrates. Whereas Socrates sees the lover as coming to love the universal, Alcibiades himself loves Socrates as a uniquely divine individual. Because he sees Socrates as unique, he supposes he cannot emulate him. We can speculate that his supposed defacing of the Herms is somehow connected to the thought that they, with their prominent genitals, were impersonating the divinity that the self-controlled Socrates more truly manifested and that Alcibiades' supposed profaning of the Eleusinian mysteries was an affirmation that not they but the mysteries into which Diotima initiated Socrates are the legitimate Eleusinian mysteries (210a).¹³

In a famous paper, "The Individual as Object of Love in Plato," Gregory Vlastos argues that Plato was mistaken in supposing that a universal, rather than a particular person is the legitimate object of love.¹⁴ He reasons that one who loves Beauty cannot do what is essential to love: wish for another's good for that person's own sake by having "imaginative sympathy and concern for what [our fellows] themselves think, feel, and want." Alcibiades does not agree. He is convinced that Socrates cares deeply about what he wants—so deeply that Socrates convinces him that politics and crowd-pleasing cannot possibly bring him closer to it (216a-c; cf. 220d-e). Vlastos is mistaken about what a lover desires: for Plato, as for most of us, someone who truly desires good for another does *not* exhibit "sympathy" for or acceptance of (wrong-headed) goals the other has set for himself, but works with him to rectify those goals. Martha Nussbaum agrees with Vlastos that love for the universal is misguided.¹⁵ That is why she thinks Socrates represents a threat to Alcibiades. Since, she reasons, Alcibiades sees Socrates as a unique individual and loves him for himself, Alcibiades' love

¹² On the tragi-comic dimension of Alcibiades, and Socrates as well, see Edward C. Halper, "Humor, Dialectic, and Human Nature in Plato," *Epoché: A Journal of the History of Philosophy* 15 (2011): 319–30.

¹³ Gary Alan Scott and William A. Welton., *Erotic Wisdom: Philosophy and Intermediacy in Plato's Symposium* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), 182–83, arrive at the opposite conclusion: they think Alcibiades' crimes were attacks on Socrates. They ascribe his failure to excessive pride.

¹⁴ Gregory Vlastos, "The Individual as Object of Love in Plato," in *Platonic Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 26, 32–33. Vlastos begins his paper by discussing Aristotle's remarks on friendship in the *Rhetoric* and Plato's *Lysis*, and what follows depends heavily on his interpretation of them. (Later, Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher* [Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991], 41–44, claims that Socrates' harm to Alcibiades was an unintended consequence of his pursuit of the universal; he does not exonerate Socrates.) Vlastos's article spurred a great deal of discussion on whether ancient Greek accounts of friendship are egoistic or altruistic. In my view this is a false dichotomy. Ideal relationships are both; see Edward C. Halper, "Plato and Aristotle on Friendship," in *Form and Reason: Essays in Metaphysics* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 35–55.

¹⁵ Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 181, imagines valuing the universal to require regarding everything beautiful, all bodies and souls, as interchangeable. On the contrary, one who grasps the beauty of all beautiful bodies sets aside the physical possession of any one (210b4-6).

would be undermined by his climbing the ladder.¹⁶ She would explain Alcibiades' not climbing the ladder as a heroic stand to preserve his love of Socrates as an individual. This is not the character Plato presents to us in this dialogue. Instead, the *Symposium* shows Alcibiades evaluating Socrates by the same *criterion* Socrates uses to evaluate him, moral virtue: he is stunned by the degree of Socrates' courage and self-control. He is in love with a moral virtue that exceeds anything he has encountered. What makes Alcibiades so puzzling is not his commitment to unintelligible experience, as Nussbaum imagines, but his appreciation of Socrates *because* Socrates has climbed the ladder. Moreover, he knows that philosophy is at the core of Socrates' virtue. He may believe Socrates' mad devotion to philosophy is an individual quirk (218b), but he knows that philosophy is not a hobby and that it is responsible for the moral virtue that makes Socrates so attractive. Alcibiades' dilemma is that he cannot recognize the value of philosophy without himself pursuing it, but he cannot give up his political aspirations. His soul is divided. It is, I propose, as if Plato had anticipated Vlastos and Nussbaum and included a character designed to illustrate the disastrous consequences of taking an individual as the object of love.

To be sure, Alcibiades and Socrates could simply agree that the pursuits of the other, though legitimate, are not for them. But, then, they would not engage in activities together. It is this latter, rather than wishing another well, that Plato (and Aristotle) take as central to a love relationship. For the same reason, if each of them takes the other as his end, their activities will not share the same end. Nor is the individual as an object of love any more attainable than the Good as an object of love. What makes the Good the more suitable object of a sustainable relationship is its universality: both lovers can pursue it as an end. The *Symposium* shows Socrates presenting a beautiful speech about love, a speech that nicely incorporates the insights of the previous speeches, but there is little of the direct engagement with interlocutors that is so prominent in other dialogues. The end of all the symposiasts is a universal, Beauty or Good, but they pursue it as individuals. Alcibiades helps the reader to see what is missing, for the reader recognizes that Alcibiades could engage Socrates in philosophical discourse but mysteriously chooses not to do so. And Alcibiades wants to have Socrates' knowledge for his *own* individual (political) ends, something that Socrates cannot pursue and share with him. Whereas Socrates speaks of a lover's *necessary* ascent up the ladder of loves and sees its culmination is his *individual* communion with the Good, Alcibiades' speech inadvertently makes clear the essential correctives, namely, that this ascent is not an individual endeavor but one best undertaken with another and that the other may, for no reason at all, be unable to undertake or complete it. The *Symposium* does not discuss whether it is better to pursue the Good jointly as lovers by creating discourses and speeches or to pursue one's more private interests, but the contrast between Socrates' joyous begetting of speeches with others and Alcibiades' drunken debauchery and, despite the other revelers, his isolation is a dramatic endorsement of a suitably corrected version of Socrates' account.

Bibliography

- Belfiore, Elizabeth S. *Socrates' Daimonic Art: Love for Wisdom in Four Platonic Dialogues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Gagarin, Michael. "Socrates' *Hybris* and Alcibiades' Failure." *Phoenix* 31 (1977): 22–37.
- Halper, Edward C. "Humor, Dialectic, and Human Nature in Plato" *Epoché: A Journal of the History of Philosophy* 15 (2011): 319–30.
- , "Plato and Aristotle on Friendship." In *Form and Reason: Essays in Metaphysics*, 35–55. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993.
- Keyt, David. "The Mad Craftsman of the *Timaeus*." *The Philosophical Review* 80 (1971): 230–35.
- Nussbaum, Martha Craven. *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Reeve, C. D. C. "A Study in Violets: Alcibiades in the *Symposium*." In *Plato's Symposium: Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, edited by James Lesher, Debra Nails, and Frisbee Sheffield, 124–46. Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2006.

¹⁶ Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 198, thinks Alcibiades and Socrates represent two irreconcilable ways of knowing. She argues that Alcibiades' seeing Socrates as an individual entails not only seeing his virtue but also seeing Socrates as a whole (p. 190). Her argument relies on Alcibiades' using an image to describe Socrates (signaling that Socrates is not a fully intelligible universal) and declaring that he is going to speak the truth (214e–215b). My objection is that in the *Apology* Socrates claims to speak the truth (17b–c) and also uses an image to describe himself (30e). Further, she says nothing about the begetting in beauty that is the center of Socrates' account of love.

Scott, Gary Alan, and William A. Welton. *Erotic Wisdom: Philosophy and Intermediacy in Plato's Symposium*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008.

Vlastos, Gregory. "The Individual as Object of Love in Plato." In *Platonic Studies*, 3–42. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

----- . *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991.

Platon als Lehrer des Sokrates

Rafael Ferber

ABSTRACT

Dass Sokrates Lehrer Platons war, ist ein unbestrittenes historisches Faktum. Eine umstrittene Frage ist es dagegen, wo wir die Grenze zwischen dem historischen (bzw. frühen platonischen) und dem platonischen Sokrates anzusetzen haben. Der Vortrag soll die These vertreten, dass Platon diese Grenze durch Einführung der „weisesten Diotima“ (Smp.208b8) markiert hat. Da – unabhängig von der Frage, ob Diotima eine historische Figur war – aus dem Munde Diotimas Platon spricht, kann in gewissem Sinne auch Platon als Lehrer des Sokrates bezeichnet werden.

Der Vortrag hat drei Teile:

In einem ersten Teil soll (I) ein kurzer Überblick ueber die sogenannte „sokratische Frage“ gegeben werden, wie sie sich insbesondere in der Diskussion zwischen Unitariern (Ch. Kahn) einerseits und Vertretern einer philosophischen Entwicklung (G. Vlastos, T. Penner, Ch. Rowe, T. Brickhouse/ N. Smith et al.) andererseits zeigt. In einem zweiten Teil (II) soll gezeigt werden, dass die dividing line zwischen dem historischen und dem platonischen Sokrates nicht in der unterschiedlichen Moralpsychologie liegt. Weder markiert die dreigeteilte Seele (vgl.R.440a-b) den entscheidenden Unterschied (Penner/Rowe) noch liegt sie in der These: "In the Socratic account, appetites make presentations of goodness; in the platonic account, appetites make actual judgments of goodness." (Brickhouse/Smith)¹. Im dritten Teil (III) soll nachgewiesen werden, dass die Unterscheidung durch Platon selber durch die Einführung von Diotima bezeichnet wurde. Dabei soll insbesondere folgender Satz genau interpretiert werden: „Soweit nun, o Sokrates, vermagst wohl auch du in die Geheimnisse der Liebe eingeweiht zu werden; ob aber, wenn jemand die höchsten und heiligsten, auf welche sich auch jene beziehen, recht vorträge, du es auch vermöchtest, weiß ich nicht.“ (Smp.209e5-210a2, uebs. F. D. Schleiermacher). F. M. Cornford schreibt dazu: „I incline to agree with those scholars who have seen in this sentence Plato’s intention to mark the limit reached by the philosophy of his master“². F. M. Cornford könnte sich damit auf Otto Apelts Anmerkung zur Stelle beziehen: „Die Figur der Diotima verdankt ihr Dasein wohl der Phantasie des Platon. Sie dient ihm dazu, Sokratisches und Platonisches Erkenntnisgut scharf voneinander zu unterscheiden.“³ Diese alte These, dass Platon mit Diotima Sokratisches und Platonisches Erkenntnisgut scharf zu unterscheiden versuchte, soll neu begründet und in ihren Konsequenzen entfaltet werden.

¹ Th. Brickhouse/N. Smith, *Socratic Moral Psychology*, Oxford 2010, p. 205.

² F. M. Cornford „The doctrine of Eros in Plato’s Symposium” in: *The unwritten philosophy and other essays*, Cambridge 1950, 68-80, quotation p.75

³ Platon, *Gastmahl*, neu übersetzt und erläutert v. O. Apelt, Leipzig 1926, p. 82, n. 54.

Sócrates aprendiz y maestro de Eros: conocimiento erótico y profesión de ignorancia en Platón, *Symposium*

Graciela E. Marcos de Pinotti

La imagen de Sócrates que brindan los diálogos platónicos responde a una concepción de la actividad filosófica que hace hincapié en la aspiración de saber antes que en su posesión efectiva. La consciencia de carencia, la problematización, el reconocimiento de no saber y la permanente disposición a examinar las propias opiniones en aras de la liberación de la falsa presunción de saber son rasgos que el Sócrates platónico encarna y valora más que todo porque ponen en marcha el proceso de indagación en que consiste la filosofía. Esta concepción, reflejada tanto en los primeros diálogos como en la célebre imagen de Sócrates como "mayéutico" o partero espiritual en *Tht.* 157c2-d2, está presente también en *Symp.*, cuya caracterización de Eros desplegada en 203c6-e5 evoca a Sócrates en cuerpo y alma. Ciertos rasgos asociados tradicionalmente a la práctica socrática de la filosofía aparecen en *Symp.*, sin embargo, bajo una luz nueva, que deja ver aristas hasta entonces inexploradas, a veces paradójicas, de una imagen de Sócrates que contrasta, en cierto modo, con la ofrecida en otros diálogos. Me refiero a su profesión de ignorancia (i), a su negativa a ser considerado maestro (ii) y a su particular concepción acerca de la naturaleza del saber y del modo de transmisión de la verdad (iii). Al menos tres pasajes del diálogo no condicen, en principio, con estos rasgos. En *Symp.* 177d7-8 Sócrates admite tener conocimiento acerca de las cosas del amor (*tâ erotiká*), lo cual aparentemente contradice su habitual profesión de ignorancia. Luego en *Symp.* 199a8-b5, anuncia que dirá la verdad sobre *eros*, lo que está en tensión con su usual negativa a transmitir una verdad con pretensión enseñante.¹ El conocimiento de *tâ erotiká* que Sócrates reivindica, por otra parte, procede de Diotima, algo que a simple vista choca con sus habituales reservas acerca de la posibilidad de transmisión directa de saber desde un individuo a otro.

Mi propósito es examinar el conocimiento erótico que Sócrates admite poseer y, sobre esta base, despejar las tensiones apuntadas. La habitual maestría de Platón para adaptar sus ideas a un diálogo particular le permitiría en *Symp.* hablarnos de Sócrates/filósofo indirectamente, hablándonos de Eros,² y describir positivamente, como conocimiento erótico, la conciencia de carencia y la habitual profesión de ignorancia que dan sentido a su práctica refutativa. El conocimiento erótico, sostendré, no es saber que se pueda encontrar y capturar, sino disposición a buscar nacida de la apetencia de conocimiento que anida en el alma del filósofo. En tanto envuelve el reconocimiento de los límites del propio saber, supone estar en posesión de verdades acerca de *éros* pero no ya la seguridad de estar en lo cierto, asumiendo la forma de un saber provisorio que impulsa a Sócrates al examen permanente. Tampoco en este punto, entonces, habría excepciones a su profesión de ignorancia. Por otra parte, de acuerdo con la descripción de la instrucción recibida de Diotima, el punto de partida de este conocimiento sería una opinión recta (*orthê dóxa*), a mitad de camino entre el conocimiento y la ignorancia, un tipo de saber que *puede* ser transmitido de un individuo a otro y cuya eficacia en el plano práctico ha sido siempre reconocida por Platón. Al reivindicar este tipo de conocimiento, Sócrates se mantendría fiel, otra vez, a su profesión de ignorancia, aplicado a una búsqueda infatigable que redundaría en el mejoramiento de sí mismo.

¿Cómo compatibilizar la ignorancia que Sócrates profesa habitualmente con su reconocimiento de saber de las cosas del amor?

Por empezar, la de Sócrates no es la mayor ignorancia, propia de quien cree saber lo que no sabe y se cierra a toda búsqueda (*Rep.* II 382b6-7, *Symp.* 204a2-6), sino la de quien reconoce no saber y se dispone a indagar. Envuelve un saber del no saber, o de los límites del propio saber, distintivo de quien tiene un persistente anhelo de conocimiento. Si bien su formulación más célebre la proporcionan los pasajes de *Apol.* donde Sócrates declara que no sabe pero tampoco cree saber (21d5-6, 22e3-4, etc.), puede considerarse paralela la ofrecida en *Men.* 98b2-5, donde al igual que en *Symp.*,

¹ Más aún, su rol en *Symp.* ha sido interpretado como el de activo progenitor y productor de ideas, lejos de la imagen de mayéutico que niega su propia fertilidad, que no produce él mismo conocimientos sino que ayuda a otros a que den a luz sus propias ideas. Cf. Dover (1980), n. *ad loc.* *Symp.* 208b7-209e4, 151: "a midwife's role is not a progenitor's".

² Sobre la "asimilación" Eros/Sócrates en la descripción de Diotima, especialmente en su explicación del nacimiento de Eros en *Symp.* 203b-d, cf. Osborne (1994), 94s. Hornsby (1956), 38, hace hincapié en que "Alcibiades employs the same terms in the panegyric on Socrates as Socrates used when he described Love". En esta dirección cf. también Dorter (1969), 232; Gagarin (1977), 29, etc.

Sócrates pone énfasis en que su saber lo es de una sola cosa. En ese caso se trata del reconocimiento de que la recta opinión y el conocimiento son cosas distintas. "si alguna cosa puedo afirmar que sé —y pocas serían las que afirmo—, dice allí Sócrates, esta es precisamente una de las que pondría entre ellas". La distinción entre *orthè dóxa* y *epistéme* reaparece en *Symp.* 202a5, pasaje al que volveré luego.

Reconocer que la opinión recta *no* constituye conocimiento, o que la sabiduría humana reside en *no* creer saber lo que no se sabe, son formulaciones negativas que apuntan a la precariedad de nuestro saber y dan sentido a la práctica refutativa de Sócrates, consistente en someter a prueba las opiniones y socavar la ilusoria confianza en que ya se conoce. Y bien, en *Symp.* hay indicios de que el conocimiento erótico que Sócrates declara poseer es un saber esencialmente negativo que funda ese tipo de práctica.

Así p.e. cuando en *Symp.* 177d7-8, Sócrates dice no saber nada excepto las cosas del amor (*oudén phemi állo epístasthai è tà erotiká*), queda claro que se trata de un conocimiento singular, único, que contrasta con la vastedad de lo que ignora. La posesión de tal conocimiento no solo no contradice su habitual profesión de ignorancia, sino que se presenta como inseparable del reconocimiento de los límites del propio saber. A lo mismo apunta Sócrates al anunciar el relato acerca de Eros que oyó un día de labios de una mujer de Mantinea, Diotima, "sabía en esta y otras muchas cosas (*taútá te sophè ên kai álla pollá*, *Symp.* 201d3)". El contraste es claro entre las pocas cosas que Sócrates admite saber y la vastedad del conocimiento de la sabia que lo instruyó en las cosas del amor. Notemos que lejos de estar reñida con su conciencia de no saber, la declaración socrática de que posee conocimiento erótico hace hincapié en el carácter limitado de cuanto se sabe. Luego en *Symp.* 202d1-2, al subrayar que "Eros, por carecer de cosas buenas y bellas, desea precisamente eso mismo de que está falto", se hace explícito que el conocimiento erótico lo es de un cierto bien del que se carece y que se instituye en objeto de deseo.³ En tanto conciencia de carencia, se trata de un conocimiento atravesado por una radical negatividad. La posterior afirmación de que Eros es necesariamente un filósofo, i.e. un amante de la sabiduría, en medio del sabio y del ignorante (*anankaiôn Érota philósophon eínai, philósophon de ónta metaxù eínai sophou kai amathouês*, 204b4-5), muestra que el bien que constituye su objeto no es otro que la sabiduría. Eros designa así el impulso a filosofar de quienes, como Sócrates, se aplican a la búsqueda del conocimiento que no tienen pero cuya posesión anhelan.

Platón expresa en términos positivos, como conocimiento de las cosas del amor, un tipo especial de saber muy cercano al que adjudica habitualmente a su maestro. Es significativo el juego de palabras, en *Symp.* 199b8-c2 y e7, entre el verbo *erotáo*, interrogar a alguien, y el sustantivo *éros*, mediante el cual se expresaría que *tà erotiká* es tanto el arte de interrogar como el arte erótico,⁴ vínculo apuntado también en *Cra.* 398c5-e5. Si a ello añadimos que el progreso erótico es, al mismo tiempo, un progreso en la filosofía,⁵ no sorprende que en *Symp.* Platón presente a Sócrates como alguien que domina ambos artes. Cuando éste declara honrar las cosas del amor y practicarlas sobremanera, "recomendándolas a los demás y elogiando, ahora y siempre, el poder y la valentía⁶ de eros, en la medida en que soy capaz" (*Symp.* 212b5-8), entiendo que está refiriéndose a su práctica habitual de la filosofía.⁷ En todo caso, si hasta el momento Platón supo poner el acento en el costado negativo, refutativo, del interrogatorio socrático dirigido a la liberación de la falsa presunción de saber, ahora se centra más bien en su aspecto constructivo, productivo, cristalizado en una práctica de la filosofía que redundaba en el perfeccionamiento de sí. Desde la ignorancia socrática, condición de toda búsqueda, en *Symp.* la atención se concentra en la búsqueda misma en que consiste la filosofía y en el papel activo que asume quien la emprende. Es en este contexto donde Platón describe la práctica socrática en términos de técnica erótica.

En consonancia con su profesión de ignorancia, Sócrates rehúsa habitualmente describirse a sí mismo como maestro capaz de transmitir saber alguno, insistiendo en que nada enseña. Aquí, en cambio, anuncia que dirá la verdad (*Symp.* 199a8, b3) sobre ello y si bien lo hará a su manera —sin

³ Sobre la estrecha conexión entre eros y deseo cf. Warner (1979), 330-331. Sobre la negatividad inherente a eros y su "naturaleza esencialmente temporal", cf. Roochnik (1987), 117-120.

⁴ Reeve (1992), 92-93, para quien "when Socrates claims to know *tà erotiká*, we ought I think to understand Plato to be doing something rather complex. He is presenting Socrates as claiming to know the art of questioning ... and at the same time that art is being identified with, or at least importantly related to, the art of love".

⁵ Cf. Osborne (1994), 93: "...the progress in love is progress in philosophy, and hence the guide will be not only an expert in love, but also a philosophy teacher".

⁶ La referencia a la valentía de Eros apunta seguramente, explica Rowe (1998), n. *ad loc.* *Symp.* 212b7-8, 202, a lo esforzado (*ponoi*, 210e6) del ascenso.

⁷ Sócrates habría incursionado en la filosofía, por ende habría tenido experiencia en *tà erotiká*, antes de su encuentro con Diotima, práctica que a la luz de la instrucción recibida posteriormente, puede ser descrita en términos de un elogio a Eros.

intentar competir con los discursos dados hasta ese momento y sirviéndose de las palabras y giros que le surjan—, hay de su parte una clara voluntad de exponer ante sus interlocutores un discurso verdadero. Presentarse como portavoz de una verdad, unido a su previa admisión de saber acerca de las cosas del amor, choca, otra vez, con sus habituales reservas para transmitir un saber positivo.

La dificultad puede en parte despejarse si asumimos que ni el usual reconocimiento de ignorancia por parte de Sócrates ni su rechazo de toda pretensión enseñante son incompatibles con la posesión de opiniones verdaderas, sino únicamente con la seguridad de estar en lo cierto. Ni Sócrates ni sus interlocutores suelen estar privados de opiniones, al contrario, de hecho la práctica refutativa ilustrada en los primeros diálogos platónicos parte de las *dóxai* de los interlocutores y las pone a prueba.⁸ Lo que singulariza la búsqueda socrática no es, en fin, la falta de opiniones sino la permanente disposición a someterlas a examen, de modo que si el conocimiento de *tà erotiká* envuelve la posesión de verdades acerca de eros, Sócrates puede reivindicar este saber sin por eso traicionar su profesión de ignorancia. Ahora bien, que el conocimiento erótico tiene carácter de *dóxa* es claro a partir de la explicación que ofrece Sócrates de su procedencia: es un saber que le ha sido transmitido por otra persona, Diotima. Mediante el recurso de desplazar la conversación a un pasado remoto, Platón hace que Sócrates pase de interrogador molesto y temido a ingenuo examinado, que dice lo que dice no como fruto de su sabiduría superior al resto de los hombres, sino como una revelación de la vidente.⁹ Sócrates, receptor privilegiado de la verdad acerca de eros, es capaz a su vez de transmitirla a sus pares sin abandonar en ningún momento su posición de indagador ni su profesión de ignorancia. Acude a Diotima consciente de que necesita maestros (207c: *gnòus hóti didaskálon déomai*) y se beneficia de su sabiduría, pero con inocultables dificultades para seguir su explicación (cf. p.e. 209e5-210a4). De este modo puede presentarse como experto (*deinós*, 207c3) y como portavoz de verdades acerca de las cosas del amor sin cejar en su búsqueda infatigable. Sócrates es maestro sin dejar de ser aprendiz de las cosas del amor.

Si el conocimiento erótico, en tanto conciencia de carencia, envuelve el reconocimiento de la precariedad de lo que se sabe y llega a Sócrates en la forma de un saber de oídas, a título de *dóxa*, buena parte de las dificultades que fueron apuntadas al comienzo se despejan. Cabe preguntarnos, sin embargo, dónde han quedado las reservas de Platón sobre la posibilidad de que el conocimiento pueda transmitirse de un individuo a otro ¿Por qué el saber erótico habría de ser inmune a las críticas de que suele ser objeto la *dóxa*, a mitad de camino entre la ignorancia y la sabiduría? En lo que sigue ensayaré una respuesta a la cuestión.

Lejos de concebir el saber como algo pasible de ser capturado, o como algo que uno encuentra y de lo que se apropia, Platón lo presenta a menudo como un bien alumbrado con mucho esfuerzo tras una ejercitación constante. Ello es "principio básico de la educación socrática"¹⁰, pero también el núcleo de su tesis de que conocer es recordar. Esta concepción contrasta con la de Agatón, quien al menos en dos ocasiones se sirve de una concepción de la enseñanza como transmisión directa, aun automática, de saber.

Una es en *Symp.* 175c8-d3, cuando invita a Sócrates a echarse a su lado para, a través de este contacto (*haptómenós*), poder él beneficiarse con la sabia idea (*sophón*) que se le presentó a aquél en el portal y retrasó su entrada, dando por supuesto que la ha encontrado y la posee. La sabiduría está entendida por el poeta como un objeto físico¹¹ y como un bien de cambio pasible de atesoramiento y cesión a otro. Dado que el discurso de Agatón está inspirado en Gorgias (*Symp.* 198c2-6), en este pasaje ha podido verse una referencia al modelo de enseñanza pregonado por los sofistas,¹² en que el saber es una suerte de mercancía objeto de intercambio entre maestro y discípulo antes que el producto de un arduo proceso de búsqueda y conquista personales. La réplica de Sócrates es irónica tanto en su propósito como en la inversión del beneficio que ha de esperarse:¹³ bueno sería que la

⁸ El diálogo *Symp.* constituye, claro, un caso especial, pues en lugar de una discusión acerca de eros al modo de los primeros diálogos, como una sucesión ininterrumpida de intentos de definición más o menos afortunados, presenta una estructura compleja donde se suceden distintos *lógoi*, cada uno de los cuales expone sobre las cosas del amor desde su singular perspectiva.

⁹ Jaeger (1944), 578.

¹⁰ Friedländer (1960), citado *infra* n. 13.

¹¹ El uso de los verbos *heurisko* y *écho* reforzaría esta idea, al igual que el giro *tò sophón* (175d1) empleado por Agatón, que alude a la sabiduría como objeto antes que como estado del alma.

¹² Cf. Reale (1997), 60.

¹³ Cf. Tarrant (1958), 95. Como afirma Friedländer (1960), 8-9, la analogía "that wisdom does not flow from the fuller into the emptier man as water runs from the fuller into the emptier vessel, suggests a basic principle of Socratic education.

sabiduría fuera de tal naturaleza que al ponernos en contacto unos con otros, fluyera de lo más lleno a lo más vacío de nosotros, en cuyo caso es él quien valora estar sentado junto a Agatón, que lo llenaría de su "mucho y hermosa sabiduría". La suya propia, acota Sócrates, "es insignificante, incluso discutible¹⁴ como un sueño (...*phaúlē tis ân eîe, ê kai amphibetêsimos hōsper ónar oûsa*)", mientras que la de Agatón es brillante y prometedora (*Symp.* 175d5-e5).

Ironías aparte, la caracterización que hace Sócrates de su saber evoca la afirmación de *Men.* 85c de que las opiniones –i.e. las opiniones verdaderas alcanzadas por el esclavo de Menón gracias al interrogatorio socrático–, "son como un sueño (*hōsper ónar*)", queriendo expresar con ello que no estamos aún en posición de dar razón de ellas y que son efímeras, inestables, hasta tanto alcancemos la comprensión del porqué. Por otra parte, sobre la base de lo dicho por Agatón, Sócrates se sirve de la imagen del conocimiento como líquido, fluido,¹⁵ metáfora retomada y reformulada en *Symp.* 210d3-4, donde "el vasto mar de lo bello" (*tò polù pélagos toû kaloû*) expresaría, en contraste con la posición de Agatón, la vastedad e inconmensurabilidad del "líquido" de la idea de belleza, océano inagotable que estrictamente ningún recipiente o contenedor podría atesorar. En la perspectiva de Agatón, en cambio, quien aprende es una suerte de recipiente o contenedor que se "llena" de conocimiento procedente de otro, convirtiéndose de ese modo de ignorante en sabio.¹⁶

Luego en 196e4-197a1, Agatón funda su afirmación de que Eros ha de ser un poeta sabio en su capacidad de hacer poeta a otro, unido al supuesto de que lo que uno no tiene o no conoce, ni puede dárselo ni enseñárselo a otro.¹⁷ Este supuesto, sin embargo, es falso a la luz de la figura de Sócrates como el verdadero maestro, que enseña sin dejar de profesar ignorancia e incentivando a otros a que busquen y encuentren por sí mismos. La existencia de Sócrates como maestro constituiría la prueba de que no solamente es posible dar o enseñar lo que *no* se posee o *no* se conoce, sino que únicamente aquello que no se tiene pero se anhela poseer se convierte en objeto de una búsqueda conjunta en la cual, únicamente, acontece la enseñanza.

A la hora de explicar por qué la transmisión de conocimiento erótico por parte de Diotima, aun cuando las verdades que lo constituyen tengan el rango de *dóxai*, es inmune a las críticas que Platón suele dirigir a este tipo de saber, debemos circunscribirnos a la opinión recta (*orthè dóxa*), a mitad de camino entre sabiduría e ignorancia. Es la noción que Diotima trae a colación en *Symp.* 202a5 y cuya diferencia con el conocimiento, significativamente, es una de las pocas cosas que Sócrates admitía conocer en el pasaje de *Men.* 98b2-5 antes mencionado. A la luz de la concepción de *orthè dóxa*, un tipo de saber cuya eficacia práctica Platón siempre ha reconocido, tiene sentido que Sócrates presente como verdad un discurso del que no es capaz de dar razón, pero que así y todo le merece plena credibilidad por las consecuencias provechosas que depara darlo por verdadero.

Un ejemplo que quisiera traer a colación, pues lo considero paralelo en cierto sentido al que nos ocupa, lo brinda *Men.* 81b4-d6. Allí, en respuesta a la paradoja que pone en tela de juicio la búsqueda de conocimiento, Sócrates se remonta al relato de origen órfico-pitagórico que afirma la inmortalidad del alma. Dice haberlo oído de hombres y mujeres sabios en asuntos divinos (81a5-6: *akékoa gâr andrôn te kai gunaikôn sophôn peri tà theía prágmata*) y declara que confía en su verdad porque "nos hace laboriosos e indagadores" (81e), vale decir, porque darlo por verdadero mueve a adoptar un curso de acción preferible al que se seguiría de tener por verdad el argumento de Menón. Lo que otorga credibilidad a ese relato es su valor práctico, su influjo sobre nuestra conducta: si le damos crédito y actuamos conforme a esa creencia, nos volvemos mejores.¹⁸

Agathon, full of knowledge, and Socrates as the ignorant man are poised in ironic counterpoint".

¹⁴ Rowe (1998, n. *ad loc.* *Symp.* 175e3-4, 133) remite a *Apol.* 23a-b, donde esa sabiduría de tipo inferior solo tiene de tal el nombre, dado que, según interpreta Sócrates la respuesta del oráculo, solo los dioses son sabios. Si bien la presente afirmación de *Symp.* tiene sentido en el contexto sin necesidad de apelar a *Apol.*, ambas obras comparten un sentido predominante de Sócrates como indagador de la verdad.

¹⁵ Como fluída será la forma de Eros mismo (*hugròs tò eîdos*, 196a2), lo que lo hace capaz de envolvernos por todas partes, de entrar y salir de las almas con facilidad. Cf. Dover (1980), n. *ad loc.*, 126.

¹⁶ Sabemos, sin embargo, sobre la base de *Prt.* 314a-b, que a diferencia del alimento del cuerpo, que es posible adquirir y transportar en un recipiente, los conocimientos, alimento espiritual, no puede uno menos que llevarlos consigo, "en la propia alma". Y también sabemos que para Platón hay en el alma verdades que son punto de partida de la búsqueda de saber y que gracias a una práctica esforzada pueden devenir conocimiento.

¹⁷ Brisson (2005), n. *ad loc.* 196e1-2, 204, destaca el singular juego entre *poietès* y *poieîn*: "Eros est un poète qui peut produire non pas une oeuvre, mais celui-là qui produit cette oeuvre, c'est-à-dire un poète". En cuanto a que no es posible dar o enseñar excepto lo que se posee o conoce, observa con razón (n. *ad loc.* 196e5-197a1, 205) que tal concepción, "qui mène tout droit au paradoxe de Ménon, s'accord avec l'image des vases communicants évoquée par Socrate au début du *Banquet* (175d-3)".

¹⁸ Cf. espec. *Men.* 86b8-c1. En similar dirección se desarrolla el mito del final de *Rep.* Una vez expuesto el destino del alma tras la muerte, Platón afirma su valor curativo. El relato, así como ha quedado a salvo gracias al soldado Er, "nos puede salvar a nosotros, si le damos crédito" (*Rep.* X, 621c1). En esta dirección apunta el comentario de Dover (1980) *ad loc.* 212b1-c3, 159, quien remite a *Phd.* 114d. A propósito de la expresión *kalòs kindunos* en 114d6, varios estudiosos

Y bien, el relato sobre Eros que Sócrates expone, que oyó una vez de labios de la sabia sacerdotisa de Mantinea, tiene un estatuto similar. Es un relato que también se inscribe en el pasado, que procede de alguien cuya sabiduría excede el punto de vista mortal y que enlaza filosofía e inmortalidad. La sabiduría que ostenta Diotima es la de una experta religiosa cuya palabra persuade antes de que su sentido último se haga comprensible, como la palabra del oráculo délfico en *Apol.* 20e ss., o la que da apoyo a la tesis de que conocer es recordar en el pasaje recién mencionado de *Men.* En ambos casos se pone de manifiesto la confianza de Platón en una tradición religiosa que es fuente de verdad para la filosofía,¹⁹ que encuentra en ella fundamento y sentido. En ambos, también, se la expresa a través de un relato cuya verdad está fuera de toda duda y que merece crédito porque siembra en nosotros la virtud.²⁰

La dimensión fundamentalmente práctica del conocimiento erótico es indudable. En primer lugar, no olvidemos que los discursos sobre Eros que integran el diálogo no son meramente *sobre* Eros, sino *en alabanza a* Eros (177a ss.), de modo que deben no solo presentar una concepción de él, sino también un concepto de bien conforme al cual Eros es elogiado.²¹ Y así como la sabiduría de Diotima se traduce en un beneficio en el plano práctico –aun siendo extranjera, la mujer habría prestado un servicio inapreciable a la ciudad, ilustra Sócrates, salvando a Atenas de una peste (*Symp.* 201d3-5)–, así también disponer de verdades sobre eros conduce a una práctica de la filosofía que deriva en el perfeccionamiento de sí mismo. La dimensión práctica del conocimiento erótico subyace a la pregunta que hace Sócrates, una vez que Diotima ha expuesto cuál es la naturaleza de Eros, por su utilidad (*chreían*, 204c8) para los hombres, así como se pone de manifiesto en la respuesta a esta pregunta, cuando tras describir el último paso de la *scala amoris*, Diotima detalla la suerte del filósofo que ha logrado elevarse a la contemplación de la belleza. A quien contempla la belleza le será dado "engendrar, no ya imágenes de virtud, al no estar en contacto con una imagen, sino virtudes verdaderas", ya que está en contacto con la verdad. De amante del saber pasará, por haber engendrado y alimentado una virtud verdadera, a ser amado por los dioses (*theophileî*) y, si es que algún hombre puede serlo, llegará a ser inmortal también él (*Symp.* 212a4-7).

Sócrates, persuadido de la verdad de lo dicho por Diotima, intenta a su vez persuadir a los demás de que en esta empresa de volverse virtuoso, no hay mejor colaborador que Eros. Es entonces cuando afirma honrar las cosas del amor y practicarlas sobremanera, "ahora y siempre", en alusión, podemos suponer, a su actividad filosófica. No podemos saber a ciencia cierta si por esta vía le es dado o no a Sócrates completar el ascenso y engendrar la verdadera virtud, lo que en alguna medida lo colocaría por encima de lo humano, o si su práctica de la filosofía lo confina a una búsqueda infatigable, impulsada por un anhelo que nunca se colma.²² Este es uno de los tantos enigmas que Platón deja abiertos.

Ediciones, traducciones, comentarios:

Dover, K. Plato, *Symposium*, Cambridge, Cambridge U.P., 1980 = Dover (1980)
Rowe, C. J. Plato *Symposium*, Warminster, Aris & Philips, 1998 = Rowe (1998)
Brisson, L. Platon, *Le Banquet*, Paris, GF-Flammarion, 2005 = Brisson (2005)

Bibliografía citada:

Brickhouse, Th. & Smith, N., "The Paradox of Socratic Ignorance in Plato's Apology", *History of Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1984) 2, 125-131 = Brickhouse-Smith (1984)
Dorter, K., "The Significance of the Speeches in Plato's *Symposium*", *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 2

(Brisson, Vicaire, Dixsaut, etc.) coinciden en que *kalós* significa en este caso 'útil', o 'ventajoso'.

¹⁹ Cf. Brisson (2005), 63-64. Brickhouse - Smith (1984), 127, destacan como uno de los rasgos más singulares de la filosofía de Sócrates su confianza en diversas formas de adivinación como fuentes de verdad.

²⁰ En *Rep.* II, 382c ss., Platón justifica la construcción de relatos que "asemejen lo más posible la mentira a la verdad" (382d2-3) y mantiene que los buenos relatos, sean verdaderos o falsos desde el punto de vista fáctico, tienen consecuencias provechosas para el alma, beneficio debido a que *no* están reñidos con la verdad, sino diseñados en conformidad con ella.

²¹ Cf. Dorter (1969), 216.

²² Según Gagarin (1977), 28, podemos inferir "that Socrates has reached the end of the lover/philosopher's journey, has had his own vision of true Beauty, and now possesses knowledge and virtue. This conclusion is nowhere explicitly stated, but it is confirmed by the physical appearance of Socrates at the banquet (...) the beautiful and wise Socrates is no longer/philosopher, but must be a wise man and consequently an object of love. Reeve (1992), 112-113, en cambio, con apoyo en la expresión "*agálmat'aretês*" (*Symp.* 222a4) en el discurso de Alcibiades –imágenes o estatuas de virtud que Sócrates, como las estatuas de los silenos, atesora en su interior– y en *Rep.* 517d9, donde *ágalma* designa las estatuas vistas por los prisioneros en la caverna, considera que "Socrates is being presented as someone who has not seen the beautiful itself" y que "has nothing better than images of the virtues to offer to Alcibiades".

(1969) 4, 215-234 = Dorter (1969)

Edmonds, R., "Socrates the Beautiful. Role Reversal and Midwery in Plato's *Symposium*", *T.A:P.A.* 130 (2000), 261-285

Friedländer, P., *Plato III*, trad. H. Meyerhoff, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969 (1960) = Friedländer (1960)

Gagarin, M., "Socrates' *Hybris* and Alcibiades' Failure", *Phoenix* 31 (1977), 22-37 = Gagarin (1977)

Hornsby, R., "Action in the *Symposium*", *The Classical Journal* 32 (1956) 1, 37-40 = Hornsby (1956)

Jaeger, W., *Paideia. los ideales de la cultura griega*, trad. W. Roces, México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1967 (1944) = Jaeger (1944)

Osborne, C., *Eros Unveiled. Plato and the God of Love*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994 = Osborne (1994)

Reale, G., *Eros, demonio mediador. El juego de las máscaras en el Banquete de Platón*, trad. R. Rius y P. Salvat, Barcelona, Herder, 2004 (1997) = Reale (1997)

Reeve, C., "Telling the Truth about Love: Plato's *Symposium*", Cleary, J. & W. Wians, *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* III (1992), 89-133 = Reeve (1992)

Roochnik, D., "The Erotics of Philosophical Discourse", *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 4 (1987) 2, 117-129 = Roochnik (1987)

Tarrant, D., "The Touch of Socrates", *The Classical Quarterly* 8 (1958) 1/2, 95-98 = Tarrant (1958)

Warner, M., "Self, and Plato's *Symposium*", *The Philosophical Quarterly* 29 (1979) 117, 329-333 = Warner (1979)

Platone, la virtù e un gioco di specchi: guardare il filosofo con gli occhi del φιλότιμος

Federico M. Petrucci

Alcibiade ubriaco irrompe nel *Simposio*, e una svolta scuote il dialogo: il suo discorso, ibrido di lode e biasimo, impone una riflessione sulla figura di Socrate. Alcibiade potrebbe cogliere alcune carenze delle posizioni espresse da Socrate o, al contrario, causare un netto abbassamento del discorso per la propria pochezza; in ogni caso, quando egli, uomo timocratico - quale è secondo recenti studi¹ -, prende la parola la forza teoretica del *Simposio* sembrerebbe ormai indebolirsi. E tuttavia, un'analisi dialettica del rapporto tra le dottrine espresse da Socrate e quelle introdotte da Alcibiade (apparentemente meno impegnative) può ricomporre tale apparente frattura². In questo breve intervento vorrei concentrarmi sulle possibili interazioni tra questi due piani, tentando di indicare:

- che nella descrizione delle virtù di Socrate prodotta da Alcibiade, il φιλότιμος proietta sul filosofo il proprio modello di virtù;
- che tra questa descrizione "orientata" e l'autentica virtù del filosofo sussiste comunque una dialettica organica;
- che proprio grazie a questo "gioco di specchi" Platone può descrivere il filosofo come capace anche di agire in modo virtuoso all'interno del contesto della πόλις.

Il discorso di Diotima si apre con un riferimento netto all'esigenza conoscitiva propria del filosofo, per poi chiarire, nell'approssimarsi verso la *scala amoris*, la distanza tra l'*eros* del filosofo e quello, ben più tradizionale, proprio dei φιλότιμοι (208c-d). Questi ultimi, al fine di acquisire gloria eterna, *sono pronti a correre pericolosamente pericoli di ogni genere ancora più che per i figli, e a spendere ricchezze e a faticare fatiche d'ogni tipo e a morire al posto di altri*³ (καὶ ὑπὲρ τούτου κινδύνους τε κινδυνεύειν ἔτοιμοί εἰσι πάντας ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ ὑπὲρ τῶν παίδων, καὶ χρήματα ἀναλίσκειν καὶ πόνους πονεῖν οὐστίνασοῦν καὶ ὑπεραποθνήσκειν). [trad. it. di Matteo Nucci]. Così si aspira a una ἀθάνατος ἀρετή (208d5-6). Il termine ἀρετή è qui da intendere in termini tradizionali, quelli dell'agire in modo coraggioso e valoroso per procurarsi gli onori pubblici. Diverso è invece il fine di chi è gravido nell'anima, il quale aspira ad acquisire φρόνησίν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν (209a4). Questi, se svolge in modo corretto la propria formazione, se vive in modo compiuto la vicinanza intellettuale con un altro come lui, vede nei λόγοι περὶ ἀρετῆς (209b8) un frutto - con un chiaro parallelismo rispetto al tipo umano precedente - più importante anche dei figli (209c2-6). Ancora più significativo è che costui, il filosofo, giunga, apprendendo i grandi misteri della contemplazione del bello ideale, a una vera *virtù* piuttosto che a εἶδωλα ἀρετῆς (212a2-7). Nel volgere di poche pagine, dunque, all'avvicinarsi dei tipi umani considerati corrisponde l'implicito sviluppo semantico di una nozione chiave, ἀρετή, che da presidio tradizionale diviene la complessa base dell'identità morale del filosofo.

Un simile quadro sembrerebbe condurre verso una prospettiva fortemente caratterizzata in senso intellettualistico: la realizzazione compiuta dell'intera virtù passa per il momento più alto a cui può accedere la conoscenza umana, la contemplazione dell'idea. Pare così riprodotto un modello classico, ben rintracciabile, ad esempio, in un noto passo del *Fedone* (68b8-69c3): a forme non intellettualisticamente fondate di virtù - εὐθήης σωφροσύνη e ἀνδρεία δειλία -, proprie di chi non è filosofo, Platone oppone l'unica vera moneta per la virtù compiuta, la φρόνησις. In entrambi i passi, in effetti, sembra essere elevata al rango di unica virtù quella fondata sulla conoscenza e svalutata quella, tradizionale, propria dell'uomo timocratico, che consente nella società l'accesso agli onori politici e militari. Quest'ultima, definita anche πολιτική e δημοτική (*Phaed.* 82a11), è dunque una virtù di secondo livello che anche nel *Simposio* Platone sembrerebbe svalutare, relegandola nell'ambito della φιλοτιμία, molto lontana dalla vera virtù filosofica⁴. In effetti, se il dialogo non comprendesse il colpo

¹ Ai quali si rimanda per argomentazioni più dettagliate circa questo punto; cfr.. M.C. Howatson, F.C.C. Sheffield (eds.), *Plato. The Symposium*, Cambridge 2008, XXVI-XXVIII e partic. B. Centrone, M. Nucci, *Platone. Simposio*, Torino 2009, XXXVII-XXXVIII.

² La critica ha ormai ampiamente riconosciuto una correlazione stretta tra il discorso di Socrate e quello di Alcibiade, benché circa i caratteri di tale rapporto non ci sia una convergenza; per uno *status quaestionis* aggiornato cfr. P. Destrée, *The Speech of Alcibiades (212c4-222b7)*, in C. Horn (ed.), *Platon, Symposium*, Berlin 2012, 191-205.

³ Questa e le seguenti traduzioni sono di M. Nucci, in Centrone, Nucci, *op. cit.*

⁴ L'associazione, implicitamente raccolta già nella tradizione platonica (cfr. ad es. Plot. I 2, con L. Gerson, *A Platonic Reading of Plato's Symposium*, in J. Leshner, D. Nails, F.C.C. Sheffield (eds.), *Plato's Symposium. Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, Washington 2006, 56-57), è stata sostenuta da B. Centrone, M. Nucci, *op. cit.*, XXX. Una dimostrazione

di scena dell'ingresso di Alcibiade, uno dei suoi contributi all'etica platonica sarebbe di questo tipo. Ma alcuni segnali nascosti tra le parole del φιλότιμος per eccellenza possono indurre a disegnare un quadro più complesso e forse meglio integrato in una lettura dialettica della teoria morale di Platone.

Non è difficile notare che molti degli elementi salienti del ritratto del filosofo prodotto da Diotima sono presenti nella descrizione dell'ἀτοπία di Socrate delineata dallo sguardo - forse appannato, ma comunque profondo - di Alcibiade. La potenza degli ψιλοὶ λόγοι di Socrate sconvolge l'anima dell'uomo timocratico, la rende in qualche modo consapevole della sua schiavitù, delle sue carenze interiori che si manifestano nel momento stesso in cui si fa strada nella politica Ateniese (215c-216a). Ancora più importante è che Socrate disprezzi l'attaccamento alla bellezza fisica, la ricchezza, quella τιμή "τῶν ὑπὸ πλήθους μακαριζομένων" che invece perseguono Alcibiade e i φιλότιμοι il cui eros era stato criticato da Diotima nei passi richiamati precedentemente (216e): Socrate pensa "che questi possessi non abbiano alcun valore e che non siano nulla". E in effetti le aspirazioni di Alcibiade rimangono ignorate da Socrate, che continua invece a infondere i suoi λόγοι ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ. La prospettiva etica già chiara nelle parole di Diotima si concretizza così nel rifiuto di Socrate dello scambio della bellezza vera, interiore, per una solo apparente (218e).

È di fronte a questo atteggiamento che Alcibiade introduce la lode delle virtù di Socrate, passo su cui verterà il resto dell'analisi e che sarà osservato come uno dei nuclei in cui Platone, scegliendo con cura uno dei suoi personaggi, può offrire una possibile riflessione "dall'interno", prospettica, sulla virtù (219d-222a).

In primo luogo, il rifiuto di Socrate segnala, agli occhi di Alcibiade, le sue σωφροσύνη e ἀνδρεία, virtù che si sovrappongono subito dopo a φρόνησις e καρτερία (219d3-7). Dice Alcibiade:

Poi, dopo questo, sapete in che stato d'animo mi trovo? Io che ritenevo di essere stato disprezzato e che però ammiravo la sua natura e la temperanza e il coraggio, poiché avevo trovato un uomo come non avrei mai creduto di poterne incontrare per saggezza e fermezza⁵. [trad. it. M. Nucci]

Ma a quale tipo di virtù fa riferimento Alcibiade? Il testo non offre indicazioni circa la comprensione da parte di Alcibiade delle ragioni per cui Socrate lo rifiuta: sembra cioè sfuggirgli la relazione essenziale tra il superamento dei valori fisici o sociali e la riflessione filosofica. Anzi, la lode compare nel momento stesso in cui Alcibiade attacca ancora l'ἀτοπία di Socrate, la sua totale devozione ai discorsi, raccontando il rifiuto subito. Ciò conferma quanto è già ipotizzabile in linea generale, cioè che Alcibiade non faccia riferimento alle virtù "filosofiche" - ad esempio, al possesso compiuto di tutte le virtù per come tematizzate nel quarto libro della *Repubblica* -, bensì a dimensioni generiche, tradizionali, di σωφροσύνη e ἀνδρεία. In caso contrario si dovrebbe attribuire ad Alcibiade una consapevolezza teoretica non riscontrabile in questo testo né in altri: occorrerebbe attribuire ad Alcibiade una "deduzione" che invece, probabilmente, Platone vuole lasciare al lettore. E in effetti la temperanza mostrata da Socrate è, agli occhi di Alcibiade, la moderazione di fronte alle provocazioni di un bellissimo innamorato: una simile nozione potrebbe facilmente essere definita, in termini tradizionali, come αἰδώς - direbbe così Carmide - o come continenza - la intenderebbe in questo modo, e con grande disprezzo, Callicle -. Ancora, l'ἀνδρεία qui menzionata non è che un'articolazione di questa virtù tradizionale, ovvero la forza di resistere. A conferma giunge la menzione della φρόνησις, che in questo passaggio sembra appiattirsi sul tono non filosofico delle tematizzazioni implicite precedenti e sulla successiva καρτερία, che allude ancora, evidentemente, alla forza dell'azione, del rifiuto, di Socrate. Le nozioni evocate da Alcibiade sembrano fare riferimento, almeno negli aspetti di "rivalutazione positiva" del rifiuto, a un retroterra tradizionale: le nozioni di saggezza e temperanza attribuite a Socrate sono riconducibili a un severo profilo di aristocrazia antica, che ad esempio rifiuta la ricchezza come valore in sé e per sé valido, che assume come modello di comportamento la moderazione⁶. Dunque, il riconoscimento del possesso di σωφροσύνη e ἀνδρεία

della peculiare semantica di "virtù" nel contesto della prima parte del discorso di Socrate è inoltre proposta da C.J. Rowe, *Il Simposio di Platone. Cinque lezioni sul dialogo con una breve discussione con Maurizio Migliori e Arianna Fermani* (a cura di Maurizio Migliori), Sankt Augustin 1998, 45-52. Dal discorso di Diotima emerge invece una vera virtù filosofica, con connotazioni proprie, del tutto legata alla conoscenza; cfr. anche F.C.C. Sheffield, *Plato's Symposium. The Ethics of Desire*, Oxford 2006, 133-153 (che evidenzia soprattutto la differenza nelle finalità e, parallelamente, nei caratteri dei rispettivi fini).

⁵ Τὸ δὲ μετὰ τοῦτο τίνα οἶσθέ με διάνοιαν ἔχειν, ἡγούμενον μὲν ἡτιμάσθαι, ἀγάμενον δὲ τὴν τοῦτου φύσιν τε καὶ σωφροσύνην καὶ ἀνδρείαν, ἐντετυχηκότα ἀνθρώπων τοιοῦτων οἷω ἐγὼ οὐκ ἂν ᾄμην ποτ' ἐντυχεῖν εἰς φρόνησιν καὶ εἰς καρτερίαν;

⁶ Non si tratta, ovviamente, di una prospettiva pauperista, estranea all'etica greca canonica: ma la ricchezza non conferisce di per sé una statura "morale" - ad esempio se si tratta della condizione degli "arricchiti", cfr. ad es. Theogn. I vv. 39-60 o 145-158 -, né può essere acquisita senza valore, in assenza del quale, anzi, ogni possesso si distrugge (si pensi, ad esempio, ai termini entro i quali Esiodo loda la ricchezza). In altri termini, il rifiuto di Socrate deve essere ricondotto comunque nel quadro tradizionale del valore della moderazione.

sembra fondato su un retroterra etico almeno in parte tradizionale e - elemento forse più importante - è garantito a Socrate dalla semplice azione del rifiuto: Alcibiade non coglie le basi filosofiche dell'atteggiamento di Socrate⁷, ma le azioni del filosofo sono evidentemente temperanti.

La descrizione di un Socrate "virtuoso" prosegue e pare finalizzata a inquadrare ancora aspetti dell'ἀτοπία del filosofo in un contesto di forza d'animo straordinaria, benché sempre legata alla capacità di agire con forza e resistenza. Ecco dunque Socrate degno di lode perché resiste al freddo e alla fame (220a-b) o che, "rapito" dal proprio pensare, rimane immobile, in piedi, da alba ad alba (220c-d). Non sembra però esservi, agli occhi di Alcibiade, uno scarto tra simili manifestazioni: mentre sfuggono le motivazioni dell'ἀτοπία, i suoi tratti più tipicamente filosofici (il rapimento intellettuale di Socrate) si mescolano con atteggiamenti ammirevoli perché degni di lode secondo una prospettiva tradizionale, come la capacità di resistere in situazioni avverse.

Ma le più chiare indicazioni circa le basi dell'ammirazione da parte di Alcibiade per Socrate sono fornite dal passo successivo, in cui viene esaltato il suo coraggio in guerra (220d5-221c1):

Se poi volete, nelle battaglie - e infatti è giusto riconoscergli anche questo - quando ci fu la battaglia in cui gli strateghi mi diedero il riconoscimento al valore, nessun uomo mi salvò se non lui, che non volle abbandonare un ferito e riuscì a mettere in salvo sia me che le armi. E io, Socrate, anche allora insistei con gli strateghi perché dessero a te il riconoscimento al valore, e di questo almeno non mi rimprovererai né dirai che mento. Ma mentre gli strateghi guardavano alla mia posizione sociale e volevano dare a me il riconoscimento al valore, tu stesso fosti ancora più premuroso degli strateghi perché lo ricevesti io e non te. E ancora, uomini, vale la pena contemplare Socrate, quando il nostro esercito si ritirava in fuga da Delio; mi capitò infatti di trovarmi accanto a lui, io a cavallo, lui con le armature da oplita. Si ritirava, quando ormai i nostri uomini erano dispersi, insieme a Lachete; e io per caso mi trovo lì e appena li vedo li esorto ad aver coraggio e dicevo che non li avrei abbandonati. E in quel caso potei contemplare Socrate meglio che a Potidea - io infatti avevo meno paura per il fatto di essere a cavallo - innanzitutto per quanto superava Lachete in fermezza; eppoi mi sembrava, Aristofane, come dici tu, che lui camminasse laggiù, come anche qui, "a testa alta, lanciando occhiate di sbieco", guardando tranquillamente amici e nemici e mostrando chiaramente a chiunque, anche da molto lontano, che se qualcuno avesse toccato un uomo simile, si sarebbe difeso con enorme vigore. Perciò si ritirava con sicurezza, lui e il suo compagno; infatti, in guerra, quelli che si comportano così, i nemici neppure li toccano, mentre inseguono chi fugge disordinatamente⁸.

Dunque, Socrate si mise a rischio per salvare Alcibiade e le sue armi, e a Delio apparì più ἔμφρων di Lachete, muovendosi con tranquillità, fermezza e vigore negli scontri: senza cavallo, nella ritirata, non mostra paura. Il ritratto che ne esce incute, come spesso ripete Alcibiade nel suo discorso, "meraviglia", in quanto Socrate eccelle per coraggio e fermezza, perché rispetta i valori tradizionali

⁷ Si tratta, dunque, di un "errore" prospettico di Alcibiade, che pur tenta di comprendere le scelte di Socrate; questo errore, peraltro, non è necessariamente alternativo rispetto a quelli già segnalati dalla critica; cfr. partic. Th.A. Szlezák, *Platon und die Schriftlichkeit der Philosophie*, trad. it. Milano 1988, 345-350, o M. Nucci, *La visibilità della virtù*, «Bollettino della Società Filosofica Italiana» 169 (2000), 13-18. Parallelamente c'è una relativa convergenza tra gli studiosi nell'affermare che Socrate ha a questo punto raggiunto almeno un livello dell'asceta (cfr. ad es. Rowe, *Il Simposio*, cit., 53-54). Più problematica e discussa è invece la possibilità di attribuire a Socrate (cioè, al Socrate come immagine del filosofo in questo contesto del dialogo platonico) la realizzazione dell'asceta all'idea. Si tratta di una *vexata quaestio*, non certo limitata a quest'opera, su cui è impossibile soffermarsi. Si può tuttavia escludere che la possibilità non si dia per ragioni drammatiche - cioè perché Socrate deve apprendere i contenuti della *scala amoris* da Diotima: in effetti, il dialogo con Diotima è confinato al passato -. Ci si potrebbe anche chiedere che tipo di conoscenza abbia Socrate delle idee di cui parla nel suo discorso, se sia possibile attribuirgli una descrizione superficiale, della quale non sarebbe in grado di rendere ragione, o ancora se vi siano gradi intermedi tra la virtù filosofica compiuta legata alla φρόνησις (e non, evidentemente, alla σοφία) e alla conoscenza delle idee e la virtù incompleta a cui si fa riferimento nella prima parte del discorso di Socrate. Sul problema cfr. Centrone, Nucci, *op. cit.*, XXVII-XXVIII.

⁸ εἰ δὲ βούλεσθε ἐν ταῖς μάχαις - τοῦτο γὰρ δὴ δίκαιον γε αὐτῷ ἀποδοῦναι - ὅτε γὰρ ἡ μάχη ἦν ἐξ ἧς ἐμοὶ καὶ τᾶριστεία ἔδοσαν οἱ στρατηγοί, οὐδεὶς ἄλλος ἐμὲ ἔσωσεν ἀνθρώπων ἢ οὗτος, τετρομένον οὐκ ἐθέλων ἀπολιπεῖν, ἀλλὰ συνδιέσωσε καὶ τὰ ὅπλα καὶ αὐτὸν ἐμέ. καὶ ἐγὼ μὲν, ὦ Σώκратες, καὶ τότε ἐκέλευον σοὶ δίδοναι τᾶριστεία τοὺς στρατηγούς, καὶ τοῦτό γέ μοι οὔτε μέμνη οὔτε ἐρεῖς ὅτι ψεύδομαι· ἀλλὰ γὰρ τῶν στρατηγῶν πρὸς τὸ ἐμὸν ἀξίωμα ἀποβλεπόντων καὶ βουλομένων ἐμοὶ δίδοναι τᾶριστεία, αὐτὸς προθυμότερος ἐγένου τῶν στρατηγῶν ἐμὲ λαβεῖν ἢ σαυτὸν. ἔτι τοίνυν, ὦ ἄνδρες, ἄξιον ἦν θεάσασθαι Σωκράτη, ὅτε ἀπὸ Δηλίου φυγὴ ἀνεχώρει τὸ στρατόπεδον· ἔτυχον γὰρ παραγενόμενος ἵππον ἔχων, οὗτος δὲ ὅπλα. ἀνεχώρει οὖν ἐσκεδασμένων ἤδη τῶν ἀνθρώπων οὕτως τε ἅμα καὶ Λάχης· καὶ ἐγὼ περιτυγχάνω, καὶ ἰδὼν εὐθὺς παρακελεύομαι τε αὐτοῖν θαρρεῖν, καὶ ἔλεγον ὅτι οὐκ ἀπολείψω αὐτό. ἐνταῦθα δὴ καὶ κάλλιον ἐθεασάμην Σωκράτη ἢ ἐν Ποτειδαίᾳ - αὐτὸς γὰρ ἦττον ἐν φόβῳ ἢ διὰ τὸ ἐφ' ἵππου εἶναι - πρῶτον μὲν ὅσον περιῆν Λάχης τῷ ἔμφρων εἶναι· ἔπειτα ἔμοιγ' ἐδόκει, ὦ Ἀριστόφανες, τὸ σὸν δὴ τοῦτο, καὶ ἐκεῖ διαπορεύεσθαι ὡσπερ καὶ ἐνθάδε, <βρενθυόμενος καὶ τῶφθαλμῷ παραβάλλον>, ἡρέμα παρασκοπῶν καὶ τοὺς φίλους καὶ τοὺς πολεμίους, δῆλος ὢν παντὶ καὶ πάνυ πόρρωθεν ὅτι εἴ τις ἄγεται τοῦτο τοῦ ἀνδρός, μάλα ἐρρωμένως ἀμυνεῖται. διὸ καὶ ἀσφαλῶς ἀπήει καὶ οὗτος καὶ ὁ ἐταῖρος· σχεδὸν γὰρ τι τῶν οὕτω διακειμένων ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ οὐδὲ ἄπτονται, ἀλλὰ τοὺς προτροπάδην φεύγοντας διώκουσιν.

dell'oplita e le regole sociali che lo vincolano, quale quella di riportare le armi. Ma anche in questo caso la descrizione appassionata di Alcibiade evidenzia una forte distanza rispetto a una lettura filosofica del coraggio. La prova maggiore di questo è fornita dall'inciso relativo al "riconoscimento al valore": Socrate non lo vuole, mentre Alcibiade aspira proprio ad esso, e ringrazia implicitamente Socrate per una rinuncia che suppone in qualche modo generosa e sofferta⁹. Agli occhi di Alcibiade la virtù di Socrate è ancora tradizionale, una fermezza che ricorda immagini di battaglie cantate dai lirici, che riprende terminologia e contenuti delle virtù spartane rappresentate da Tucidide: si tratta di una virtù dell'*azione*, del tutto immersa nei valori della πόλις.

Ciò non impedisce, tuttavia, che l'*azione* di Socrate possa essere considerata come virtuosa al di là dell'inadeguatezza dell'"analisi" del comportamento implicita nelle parole di Alcibiade; al contrario, il comportamento di Socrate, proprio perché di Socrate e in base all'ascesa descritta da Diotima, deve essere dettato da una base filosofica, cioè dal *possesso di una virtù compiuta* a monte delle *azioni virtuose*.

Osservando la lode dal punto di vista di Alcibiade si ottiene dunque un quadro coerente, l'immagine di un Socrate ἄτοπος per la sua attività filosofica ma al contempo in grado di agire in modo straordinariamente virtuoso. E tuttavia, la stessa descrizione difficilmente potrebbe risultare lusinghiera in una prospettiva propriamente platonica, o anche, restringendo la prospettiva, in base al discorso di Diotima¹⁰. In effetti, se da un lato le *azioni* descritte da Alcibiade sono in ogni caso virtuose, le motivazioni individuate non evidenziano alcuna matrice filosofica, anzi si appiattiscono su una morale tradizionale, del tutto simile a quella di chi aspira al riconoscimento sociale (come conferma lo stupore per il rifiuto di Socrate degli onori pubblici, considerato atto di generosità). In questo senso la virtù di Socrate sembrerebbe - paradossalmente - porsi al livello dell'uomo timocratico, tanto distante dal filosofo nella prospettiva indicata da Diotima.

Da questa - troppo breve - analisi delle sezioni considerate è possibile trarre tre conclusioni interrelate.

In primo luogo, Alcibiade si conferma immagine del φιλότιμος, distante da qualsiasi consapevolezza di tipo filosofico: egli coglie la virtù nell'agire di Socrate, ma proietta sul filosofo le proprie categorie, le motivazioni tradizionali che lo spingerebbero alla virtù¹¹.

In secondo luogo, il fatto che il filosofo compia azioni virtuose e che sia riconosciuto come virtuoso da Alcibiade spinge a rimodulare in generale lo scarto tra l'agire del φιλόσοφος e quello del φιλότιμος. Il φιλότιμος non può *essere realmente e completamente* virtuoso poiché non *conosce* il vero (come insegna Diotima), ma può *agire* in modo virtuoso ed essere educato a farlo. Il filosofo, invece, per la contemplazione raggiunta e la φρόνησις filosofica acquisita, conosce il vero ed è completamente virtuoso (come testimonia Diotima), ma al contempo *agisce* in modo virtuoso (come chiarisce un osservatore d'eccezione, Alcibiade). Il fatto che per Alcibiade questa dialettica si ponga nei termini di una discrasia tra l'ἀτοπία di Socrate e le sue gesta straordinariamente virtuose¹² dipende proprio dall'incapacità del φιλότιμος di cogliere la relazione essenziale tra conoscenza, possesso della virtù e agire virtuoso, una relazione che si concretizza solo nel filosofo. Parallelamente, descrizioni nette come quelle presenti nel *Fedone* o nel discorso di Diotima sono tali perché tendono a una distinzione analitica e mirata tra le figure dal punto di vista "della filosofia", cioè sulla base dell'*essere*

⁹ Ciò non implica che ogni pubblico riconoscimento al valore sia da rifiutare (al contrario, anche lo stato platonico della *Repubblica* prevede onori). E tuttavia il fatto che Socrate agisca in modo virtuoso non implica che Platone accetti i presupposti della morale tradizionale, che anzi vuole riformare: in questo senso il rifiuto degli onori e le relative osservazioni di Alcibiade rimarcano ancora il polo "dell'*atopia*" del filosofo nella πόλις storica (controbilanciato dal valore riscontrabile nel suo agire).

¹⁰ In questo senso ci si allontana dalla prospettiva di integrazione netta tra i discorsi di Socrate e Alcibiade tentata, ad esempio, da D. Scott, *Socrates and Alcibiades in the Symposium*, «Hermathena» 168 (2000), 25-37: pur evidenziando il cambiamento di prospettiva nei due discorsi, Scott non sottolinea la distorsione nella descrizione della virtù prodotta da Alcibiade.

¹¹ Un altro caso evidente di proiezione su Socrate di un punto di vista proprio di Alcibiade, e tipico del φιλότιμος, si ha a 214 d2-4, quando a Socrate viene attribuito il desiderio di encomi e implicitamente l'invidia per encomi attribuiti ad altri: è evidente dai passi citati in precedenza, invece, che è proprio Alcibiade ad aspirare a onori personali nell'ambito pubblico (ma anche a un'attenzione esclusiva da parte di Socrate); cfr. B. Centrone, M. Nucci, *op. cit.*, XXXIX. Questa conclusione, inoltre, oppone argomenti contro la tesi (argomentata, ad es., da E. Belfiore, *Dialectic with the Reader in Plato's Symposium*, «Maia» 36 (1984), 47-48) per cui Alcibiade avrebbe raggiunto un certo livello dell'iniziazione ai misteri, in particolare quello del riconoscimento di τὸ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις καλὸν (210 e4). In effetti, la prospettiva timocratica evidenziata da Alcibiade si riflette nella valutazione delle attività, delle loro motivazioni e delle loro finalità: Alcibiade riconosce attività che, se considerate unitamente alle loro motivazioni, sono il frutto di immagini di virtù, il che conduce nuovamente al di fuori dei grandi misteri.

¹² Discrasia che è stata oggetto diffuso di interpretazioni, spesso volte a ricomporre i tratti di contrasto tra la condanna e la lode.

virtuoso, del possesso dell'autentica virtù. Ma se si aggiunge a quel punto di vista quello, tradizionale e politico, di Alcibiade, si ottiene un quadro completo e plastico.

Infine si può rintracciare una delle ragioni per cui Platone affida ad Alcibiade quest'ultimo discorso¹³. Far pronunciare al campione della timocrazia, che non coglie le basi filosofiche delle gesta di Socrate, una simile lode delle azioni virtuose consente a Platone di evidenziare come le azioni del maestro siano non solo compatibili con ciò che la città richiede ai suoi cittadini, ma addirittura compiute con livelli di eccellenza. Così, se Diotima ha elevato il filosofo ai grandi misteri, alla contemplazione delle idee, sottraendogli l'attenzione per gli onori, Alcibiade - perché proprio questi può farlo in modo immediato - gli restituisce la dignità del cittadino virtuoso secondo uno sguardo tradizionale. Ora, la dialettica tra queste due polarità rappresenta un argomento implicito a sostegno del fatto che il filosofo, asceso all'idea, può ridiscendere nel mondo in modo compiuto, essere accettato e anzi lodato per il suo agire virtuoso¹⁴.

Così Socrate è lontano dal pensatoio in cui vorrebbero relegarlo i suoi detrattori, lontano dal ruolo di corruttore, e paradossalmente lontano anche dall'immagine denigratoria del filosofo che potrebbe essere delineata da un Callicle. Il filosofo, anzi, è in grado anche di *manifestarsi* come campione dell'*azione* virtuosa. E questo è ciò che Alcibiade, benché senza cogliere le basi morali di tali capacità, è probabilmente il più qualificato a mostrare.

¹³ Ragioni, queste, che approfondiscono - a causa del carattere specifico del personaggio - quelle più generali di una possibile immedesimazione del lettore con Alcibiade (cfr. partic. E.Belfiore, *Dialectic with the Reader cit.*, 44-45); anzi, in tal caso il lettore è chiamato a valutare le parole di Alcibiade ed eventualmente a rintracciare l'errore che esse contengono.

¹⁴ Questo elemento apologetico si può aggiungere agli altri presenti nel dialogo, e in particolare impliciti nel discorso di Alcibiade, spesso evidenziati dalla critica.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Dipartimento di Filologia, Letteratura e Linguistica - Via Luigi Galvani, 1 - 56126 Pisa ph
+39 050 2215690/2215616 - fax +39 050 2215151 - e-mail symposium.pisa@humnet.unipi.it

SECRETARIAT

A.I.C. Asti Incentives & Congressi - Piazza San Uomobono, 30 - 56126 Pisa
ph +39 050 598808 - fax +39 050 598688 - e-mail symposium2013@aicgroup.it