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#### REFERÊNCIA

CORNELLI, Gabriele. Separation of body and soul in Plato's Phaedo: an unprecedented ontological operation in the affinity argument. In: PITTELOUD, Luca; KEELING, Evan. (ed.). **Psychology and Ontology in Plato**. New York: Springer, 2019. v. 1, p. 23-31. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-04654-5>.

Philosophical Studies Series

Luca Pitteloud  
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# Psychology and Ontology in Plato

 Springer

# **Philosophical Studies Series**

**Volume 139**

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Luca Pitteloud • Evan Keeling  
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# Psychology and Ontology in Plato



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ISSN 0921-8599  
Philosophical Studies Series  
ISBN 978-3-030-04653-8  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-04654-5>

ISSN 2542-8349 (electronic)  
ISBN 978-3-030-04654-5 (eBook)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018967218

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This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG  
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

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# Introduction

This volume consists of a selection of papers presented at an international conference on Plato, which occurred at the Federal University of ABC, Brazil, in 2016. Present at the event were a number of scholars of international repute, along with a number of younger scholars, from Brazil and the rest of the world. The aim of the conference was to increase international dialogue and to discuss new approaches to Plato's philosophy, especially in the burgeoning fields of Platonic ontology and psychology. The selections in this volume include only works which discuss Plato's middle and late periods, periods which are increasingly studied both as precursors to Aristotelian philosophy and as having philosophical interest in their own right. Despite this cohesion of period, the papers themselves come from a wide variety of approaches and provide a good sense of the current state of Platonic scholarship worldwide.

The papers published in this volume focus on Plato's *Republic* (Notomi, Renaut), *Symposium* (Santoro), *Phaedo* (Cornelli), *Theaetetus* (Keeling, Gacea), *Sophist* (Gacea), *Timaeus* (Brisson, Renaut, Pitteloud), and *Laws* (Caram). Some are concerned more with psychology than with ontology or vice versa, but all of them deal in some way with both areas.

1. We begin with the *Republic*. In “Imagination for Philosophical Exercise in Plato’s *Republic*: The Story of Gyges’ Ring and the Simile of the Sun,” Noburu Notomi discusses two of the *Republic*’s most famous images. In *Republic* X, Plato notoriously casts a harsh light upon the practice of image-making, placing it in the third place in the ontological and epistemological hierarchies, with the Forms at the highest rung. Many commentators thereby conclude that his attitude toward images and image-making is unremittingly negative. Yet, Plato himself frequently uses images to convey his views, including (quite famously) in the *Republic*. Notomi attempts to resuscitate the tarnished image of images. He argues that images can represent reality in special ways for Plato and that imagination is an effective method of inquiry to reveal a reality heretofore unknown to us. To illustrate the epistemic utility of imagination, he first re-examines Plato’s famous image of Gyges’ Ring in *Republic* II, so as to demonstrate that Plato

- ascribes to images a special role of transforming our souls. He then turns to analyze the role of imagination in the Simile of the Sun in Book VI.
2. We will return later to the *Republic*. But first, Fernando Santoro (“Dionysian Plato in the *Symposium*”) puts us in a Bacchaean mood while leading us through the *Symposium*. The personalities in this dialogue are, he argues, representations of literary types. The *Symposium*’s characters wear different masks, each representing a different wisdom tradition. The dialogue celebrates not just Eros and Aphrodite but also Dionysus (177e), who (argues Santoro) can be found lurking beneath three masks worn in the *Symposium*. First, Aristophanes’ speech portrays a cosmogony based on a theogony with an Orphic inspiration. Second, Diotima’s speech, under the dialectic and ascetic mask of philosophy, intends to initiate us into the mysteries. The rite’s second step makes the jump from the particular to the universal. Finally, the confessional discourse of Alcibiades, in which he unmasks both himself and Socrates, is an epoptic revelation for initiates or else the desecration of a mystery. The third stage reveals a deep truth that is only revealed when one is taken by the madness or drunkenness of love.
  3. We turn next to the *Phaedo*, in Gabriele Cornelli’s “Separation of Body and Soul in Plato’s *Phaedo*: An Unprecedented Ontological Operation in the Affinity Argument.” The topic here is the distinction between body and soul. Cornelli argues that in fact two different construals of this separation are at work in the dialogue. There is, first, a moral separation, regarding what a philosopher should take care of: philosophers ought to mind the soul and not the body. A second separation is more ontological: the soul is so independent from the body that is declared to survive after its death. Although both concepts of this separation are familiar, due to the success they had throughout the history of Platonism until today, the duplicity of meanings expressed in the *Phaedo* leads to an irrevocable ambiguity. This ambiguity has usually been resolved by admitting that the moral dualism would be just a kind of anticipated death of the body, as *conditio sine qua non* for the full and successful practice of philosophy. What Cornelli suggests, however, is a quite different solution to the ambiguity. Contrary to the Forms, the soul can take on sensible features, and for this reason one must care for one’s soul above the body. This gives rise to the dialogue’s ethical aspects. Here it is the moral separation of body and soul, rather than any ontological assumption, that ends up guiding the moral and epistemological consequences of the dialogue. These consequences require a continual epistemological and moral effort of the soul.
  4. For the second part of the volume, we turn to Plato’s late period. Alexandru Ovidiu Gacea, in “Plato and the ‘Internal Dialogue’,” discusses that famous Platonic idea, found both in the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*, that thinking is a dialogue one has with oneself. Against some trends in the understanding of this idea, Gacea suggests that its “internal” aspect is best construed in physical terms. The idea that thinking is a dialogue is understood in terms of a number of distinguishable “voices” which form a microcommunity. We thereby learn that thinking is a physical process associated with breathing and that it consists of a “coming together” of multiple “voices.” “Inner dialogue,” he argues, is

mirrored in the overall structure of Plato's works, and it represents the very way philosophical debate ought to be conducted, i.e., as an open-ended search for knowledge, one that never concludes with a definite, unified perspective on reality but that searches into to bring the plurality of "voices" into a responsive relationship.

5. Staying in the *Theaetetus* and continuing on a similar theme, Evan Keeling, in "Pathos in the *Theaetetus*," raises a challenge to the widely accepted view that subjective knowledge did not make its appearance until Augustine and that idealism was only made possible by Descartes. The theory of perception associated with Protagoras in the *Theaetetus* includes the view that one's *pathē* constitute truth and knowledge. As *pathos* usually means "experience," as it does in later Greek epistemology and psychology, this would seem to indicate that Protagoras or someone in his circle held that there is subjective knowledge: knowledge of our own experiences. Keeling argues that this is an illusion: in these passages, *pathos* denotes the quality of an external physical object, not an internal experience.
6. In "The Analogy Between Vice and Disease from the *Republic* to the *Timaeus*," Olivier Renaut analyzes Plato's famous analogy between health and virtue and vice and disease, with this paper focusing on the latter pair. He begins with the *Republic* before exploring this issue in the *Timaeus* as well. What is a strict analogy in the *Republic* seems to refer to a causal interaction between body and soul in the *Timaeus*: vice can emerge from a malign disposition of the body, and conversely, vice can cause or feed new bodily diseases in a disharmonious and neglected body. Renaut argues that, even so, there is a consistent use of the analogy between vice and disease in the *Republic* and the *Timaeus*. The fact that we tend not to blame people for their bodily diseases plus the claim that psychic diseases are involuntary in the *Timaeus* might seem to undermine the idea that we are morally responsible for them. Renaut argues, however, that the *Republic* and *Timaeus* account is compatible with the agent's responsibility regarding his ethical and physical good condition, within a strong normative approach of diseases, both from the body and the soul.
7. Next, Luca Pitteloud turns us full force to the *Timaeus* in his "Why is the World Soul composed by Being, Sameness and Difference?" Pitteloud discusses a number of vexed issues involving the Demiurge, the Receptacle, and especially the World Soul, trying to determine the relationship between the nature of the World Soul in the *Timaeus* and its functionality. The paper discusses the following dimensions of the World Soul: (a) its composition, (b) its mathematical structure, (c) its moving function, and (d) its cognitive function. Pitteloud reads the World Soul's ontological constitution as articulated within the framework of the teleological dimension of the discourse, showing that it is the two functions of the Word Soul (moving and cognitive) that justify why it possesses the structure of an intermediate mixture constituted from being, sameness, and difference. As such, it is the proper causality (*aitia*), which is exemplified by the Demiurge's teleological deduction in Timaeus' discourse, that determines the auxiliary causality (*sunaitia*), namely, the structure of the World Soul.

8. With Luc Brisson's "Can One Speak of Teleology in Plato?," we continue our exploration of the *Timaeus*. Apropos of Pitteloud's discussion of teleology, Brisson asks if we ought to take there to be teleology in the *Timaeus* and how it should be understood. To answer this question, the Demiurge's reasoning (the way he wishes to fashion the best possible world) must be related to the way the universe is ordered. As we find also in Aristotle, there is a psychological description of the function of the first Unmoved Mover (object of desire) in order to explain, the world, in Plato, the teleology appears within the Demiurge's *nous*.
9. We conclude with the *Laws* and the end of Plato's own philosophical career. In "*Nomos: logismós ton epithymion*. *Laws* VI and VII and the (de)formation of Desires," Juliano Paccos Caram investigates how a city's laws and educational structure influence the desires and the virtue of its citizens. The focus will be on how correct education and laws influence the desires of the citizenry, with an eye toward the role of the formation and distortion of desires in the moral education of young politicians.

We hope this volume will be helpful both to new and advanced scholars of Plato's philosophy, those who wish to examine Plato's psychology and ontology and all their richness and complexity. These are fruitful areas to explore, and any insights Plato had to share with us deserve to reach a wider audience.

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# Chapter 3

## Separation of Body and Soul in Plato's *Phaedo*: An Unprecedented Ontological Operation in the Affinity Argument



Gabriele Cornelli

This paper aims to address the problem of the separation of body and soul in Plato's *Phaedo*, in search of both its ontological features and moral consequences. Apart from the normal approach and use of dialogue as a literary and philosophical milestone for all body-soul dualisms of the history of philosophy, I believe two different ways of understanding this separation are outlined in the dialogue. The first one would indicate a moral separation, regarding what a philosopher should take care of: philosophers are supposed to mind the soul and not the body.<sup>1</sup>

There are several pages within the dialogue in which this thesis, widely taken up by tradition, is mentioned. It will be sufficient to mention the first page of dialogue where this issue is raised to give a glimpse of the moral extent of the idea of the separation of body and soul.

'Do we believe that there is such a thing as death?'

'Certainly,' replied Simmias.

'Can we believe that it is anything other than the separation of the soul from the body? And do we believe that being dead is the following: the body has been separated from the soul and come to be apart, alone by itself, and the soul has been separated from the body and is apart, alone by itself. Can death be anything other than that?'

'No, that's what it is,' he said.

Consider then, my friend, if you too turn out to think what I do. I believe that the following points will give us a better understanding of the things we are looking into. Does it seem to you in character for a philosophical man to be eager for such so-called pleasures as those of food and drink?'

'No, not at all, Socrates,' said Simmias.

'How about those of sex?'

'By no means'.

<sup>1</sup> On the standard version of the body-mind problem in the *Phaedo*, see Fierro (2013).

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'What about the other sorts of attention given to the body? Do you think someone like that holds them in high regard? Take, for example, acquiring superior clothing and shoes and the other ways of adorning the body: do you think he values them, or attaches no value to them except in so far as he absolutely must take an interest in them?'

'No value, I think,' he said, 'at least if he's truly a philosopher'.

'In short, then, do you think,' he said, 'that such a man's concern is not for the body, and that, as far as he can, he stands apart from it and is turned towards his soul?'

'Yes, I do'.

'So first of all is it clear that in matters like these the philosopher releases his soul as much as possible from its association with the body, he above all other people?'

'So it seems'.

'And ordinary people think, don't they, Simmias, that life isn't worth living for someone who finds nothing of that kind pleasant, and who takes no interest in bodily things. They think that he who **gives no thought to the pleasures which come via the body is pretty close to being dead**'.

'Yes, what you say is quite true'.

(*Phd* 64c-65a – Transl. Sedley&Long)

So, the first meaning of the separation, the moral one, regards a philosopher who *gives no thought to the body and turns himself towards his soul*. This separation, operated by *those who particularly disdain the body and live in philosophy* (*Phd* 68c), is said being *pretty close to being dead*, because of course death is nothing other than this separation between body and soul.<sup>2</sup>

A second way to address this separation between body and soul is the one I would call an ontological separation: the soul is so independent from the body that is declared to survive after his death.

Again, it is worth remembering here one of the several pages dedicated to the proofs (and the myths) of the immortality of the soul. I'll choose the final argument, not because the argument is regarded by Plato as conclusive (*pace* Frede 1978, p. 27) but because it seems to finally undermine the considerable criticism of Simmias and Cebes and to reach their consent:

'So because the immortal is also indestructible, surely soul, if it really is immortal, would also be imperishable, wouldn't it?'

'It absolutely must'.

'In that case, when death attacks the human being, the mortal part of him dies, it seems, whereas **the immortal part departs intact and undestroyed, and is gone, having retreated from death**'.

---

<sup>2</sup>Broadie (2001, p. 307) and Carone (2005, p. 245) rightly stressed the relevance of this ethical dualism in the *Phaedo*. Woolf (2004) proposes a further and very sharp distinction between a weaker, called *evaluative* dualism, and a stronger *ascetic* reading of the separation. For Pitteloud (2017, pp. 58–82), the separation between soul and body must be understood in the light of the separation between Forms and sensible objects. See also Pakaluk (2003) on the *maximization* of the death as core concern of a philosophical life: the philosopher aims to be as dead as possible while alive; hence, he welcomes the maximal condition of death, when it arrives (2003, p. 99).

(*Phd* 106d-e - Transl. Sedley&Long)

Although both concepts of this separation could seem pretty familiar, due to the success they had throughout the history of Platonism until today, the duplicity of meanings expressed by the Platonic pages carries on an irrevocable ambiguity. This ambiguity has been usually resolved admitting that the moral dualism would be just a kind of anticipated homicide of the body, as condition sine qua non for a full and successful practice of philosophy.

This same *lectio* happens to be suggested by Socrates himself, while he's taking the separation of the soul from the body as *τεθνάναι μελετῶσα ἁδίως*, *practice to die easily* (*Phd* 81a1-2). We can see here a process of simple conformation of the philosopher to the inevitable ontological reality of this dualism.

The huge success of this moral conformation of the philosopher in the history of Western thought allows Dixsaut to rightly claim that:

*[Le Phédon] est le texte entre tous que a permis la substitution du platonisme aux Dialogues, car l'on s'accorde à y trouver la formulation achevée de la théorie des Idées, et l'expression la plus radicale de l'ascétisme, voire même, avant la lettre, du christianisme de Platon.* (Dixsaut 2001, p. 219)

But to what extent this ontological separation actually goes—I mean how strong should be regarded the body-soul dualism in Plato's dialogues—is an endless unresolved debate. It's not my aim here to offer an account of the ongoing discussion between the scholars who think that Plato is a strong dualist and the ones who think that his dualism should be taken with a grain of salt.<sup>3</sup>

My paper will simply assume two undemonstrated (but well-referenced) starting points: (a) Plato's dualism is far from being a strong substance dualism, like the one we are used to after Descartes (Broadie, 2001); (b) Plato's idea of an independent existence of the soul apart of the body, which would represent the strongest dualistic approach, is not a definitive, coherent theory one can find in Plato's writings. Carone is right in claiming that Plato kept an open mind as to whether the soul is something immaterial or not, in a way that makes later historical transitions, such as the theories of Aristotle and the Stoics, far less abrupt than one may think (2005, 230).<sup>4</sup>

What I suggest here, therefore, is a quite different solution for the ambiguity between moral and ontological dualism. My suggestion is that we should pay the proper attention to the ontological and epistemological ductility of the soul. Bostock (1986, 119 @*Phd*. 79c) called it the chameleon-like traits of the soul, enabling the soul to assume bodily features to meet the sensible world.

The central page here is 79c and I'll devote my paper more closely to it from now on. We can find the page inside what has been called the *Argument from Affinity*

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<sup>3</sup> See Ostenfeld (1987), Frede (1999), Broadie (2001), Carone (2005), Fronterotta (2007), and Fierro (2013) for a wider account of the debate.

<sup>4</sup> At the same time I distance myself from Carone (2005). She claims that Plato, in his later dialogues, would have left behind the strong dualistic commitments of the *Phaedo* by allowing that the mind may be the subject of spatial movements. I believe some kind of indecision and nuances on his dualistic approach can be seen right from the *Phaedo* itself, i.e. from at least the middle dialogues. See also Johannsen (2000) claiming that in the *Timaeus*, Plato is ascribing spatial properties to soul and body alike.

(*Phd* 77a-80b). The argument starts from the statement of a substantial difference between sensible and intelligible dimensions. This difference depends on the attributes of mutability, identity/simplicity and consequently visibility. While the sensible world, and the body within it, is non-identical to itself, hence changeable, on its side, intelligible reality, to which the soul is similar, is always identical to itself (*αύτὸ καθ' αύτό*, 78d6), hence unchangeable. Reality in itself, which means the Forms (*τὸ ἴσον, αύτὸ τὸ καλόν, αύτὸ ἔκαστον δὲ στιν* 78d3-4), does not admit any possibility of *μεταβολὴ*, of change, while *τά πολλά καλά* (78d10), the plurality of the beautiful things (human beings, horses, clothes, etc.), will never be identical to themselves, or each one to the other.

At this point Socrates' argument gives a step forward, introducing the issue of visibility:

Now isn't it true that these you could touch, see and perceive with the other senses, but that when it comes to those that stay identical, you could never get hold of them with anything other than the reasoning of your thought, such things being unseen and not visible?

(*Phd* 79a 1-4 Transl. Sedley&Long, slightly modified)

In this case—Socrates' reasoning is going further—we should very likely admit the existence of two different genres or classes (*εἶδη*) of things that are *τὸ μὲν ὄρατόν* and *τὸ δὲ ἀιδέ*, the visible and the invisible ones. Once Socrates leads the interlocutor to admit, starting from the simple existence of invisible things, that something like a genre (*εἶδος*) of the invisible actually exists, it's easy for him to take the argument to the conclusion, playing a double checkmate to the interlocutor: (a) Socrates is now able to ascribe to the *εἶδος* of the invisible what had previously held (79a1-4) of the invisible things, which means what is invisible is unchangeable, always identical to itself; (b) he's now in the position to claim that, of the two constituent parts of the individual, the body is more akin (*όμοιότερον*) to the visible, while the soul is more akin to the invisible (79b15).<sup>5,6</sup>

It is noteworthy that this Argument from Affinity doesn't generally enjoy much respect from the scholarship. According to Apolloni (1996, p. 5), *the lack of sympathy and enthusiasm for this argument is not difficult to understand*. In fact—still quoting Apolloni:

The main thrust of this chain of arguments is clearly very weak. That the soul is more similar to the Forms than it is to bodies does not establish how it is similar. And so it falls short of showing that it is similar in that both the soul and the Forms are indestructible or indissoluble (...). If the conclusion leaves open the possibility

<sup>5</sup> Here it is important to note that the word *εἶδος* doesn't have, in the passage under discussion, the technical meaning of idea/form. This connotation of the word is going to play an important role later on in the dialogue (see *Phd* 103e).

<sup>6</sup> Fierro (2013, p. 21) rightly points out that the comparative *όμοιότερον* here (along with the superlative *όμοιότατον* @80b) reveals that the ontological difference between the soul and the body is more attenuated than the one between the intelligible and the sensible realms. Casertano (2015 @79b) follows a similar line of thought: "this comparative leads, logically to (1) that the soul is not the invisible, but it is more invisible than the body; (2) that the body is also similar to the invisible, but less invisible than the soul".

that the soul is nearly indestructible, then it is destructible after all, in which case the argument falls short of establishing what it was supposed to. (Apolloni, 1996, pp. 5–6)<sup>7</sup>

Elton (1997, p. 313) sees in the argument an *object lesson in how not to do good philosophy*. Dorter (1976, p. 298) roundly claims that *the argument is clearly not intended to be a rigorous one*.

A similar complaint has been filed by Trabattoni (2011). When Socrates says that the soul is akin to the invisible (because only the forms are really invisible), the argument is fatally undermined, claims Trabattoni. Only the invisible itself is unchangeable and indestructible, not something (like the soul) which is simply akin to it (Trabattoni, 2011, p. 107 n123).

Even Bostock (1986) considered the argument, built on these likenesses, *somewhat shaky* (Bostock, 1986, p. 119).

Actually this complaint is not new. We can find it filed in Porphyry's *Contra Boethus*, for instance. The text is preserved in Eusebius of Caesarea's *Praeparatio Evangelica*. Eusebius, immediately after quoting a generous passage of Socrates's argument from affinity, refers to Porphyry's explanation of the correct meaning of the passage (Eus. PE 9. 27.20.1). Eusebius' polemic here is clearly directed against Boethus' criticism of the weakness of the argument.<sup>8</sup>

However, this recurrent complaint of the scholarship regarding certain inconsistency in the argument of the similarity of the soul with the ideas seems to disregard a central issue in the economy of the dialogue: the main frame of the dialogue as a whole is to persuade Simmias and Cebes to agree that the soul is immortal. Not surprisingly, this very same idea can be seen in the dramatic introduction to the argument from affinity itself: Socrates commits himself to undo the childish fear of the death of Cebes and Simmias, through an effort of persuasion and charm (*Phd* 77d-e). This effort results in the argument under discussion. I hope I'll be able to demonstrate that this Socratic persuasion should be seen as more than a dramatic strategy of Plato. I would like to be able to claim that a kind of inversion of the ontological logic could be at play here.

I suspect scholarship is generally expecting from Socrates the statement of an ontological dualism stronger than the one he is actually willing to admit. Many scholars have complained about the fact that the soul is not incorruptible, like the forms are. But the fact is that soul is not incorruptible. In my view, Socrates' argument does not want to say that it is.

Indeed, even though Socrates' argument seems to stress the common invisibility of the soul and forms, he does not even try to bring the two together when it comes to the immutability. While the forms are, by definition, unchanging, the soul, on the contrary, is permanently subject to change.

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<sup>7</sup>Apolloni (1996, p. 7) is rightly trying to recover the argument's value, by taking it as a deductive proof and a philosophically more worthy of attention piece than, for example, the arguments of the reminiscence or the final argument.

<sup>8</sup>Boetus' criticism and text have been regrettably omitted by Eusebius. For a discussion of this omission, see Gertz (2011, pp. 126–29).

Here is the passage:

Weren't we also saying some time ago that whenever the soul uses the body for investigating something, whether through seeing or through hearing or through some other sense—for to investigate something through the body is to do so through the senses—it is dragged by the body into things that are never identical to themselves, and she walks around in confused state, staggering like drunk, being attached to realities like these? (*Phd.* 79c2-9).

The term *ταράττεται* (which we translated to *be in a confused state*) and the passage as a whole refer to a parallel discussion held a few pages before, more precisely at 66a5. Here the senses are perceived as a hindrance (*ταράττοντος*, 66a5), preventing the embodied soul to reach the truth (see Rowe, 1993, p. 186). Similarly, in the passage we translate above, this process is described by Socrates mainly to warn of the dangers of perversion of the soul when it wants to use the body to investigate the sensible world.<sup>9</sup> We are going to call this process *somatization* of the soul, since the term *σωμάτοειδής* is referred twice in this passage (*Phd* 81b6 and 81c4).

Something in this description of the somatization of the soul grants an unprecedented ontological possibility. Surprisingly enough, the soul, unlike the forms, which are invincibly immaterial, may even take bodily traits.

This vivid portrait of the soul, which, staggering like drunk (*ῶσπερ μεθύουσα*), is dragged by the body and walks around in confused state (*Phd* 79c), seems to want to reveal something more precise than the usual concept of the soul being attached to the body.

Two things are noteworthy here:

- (a) The first, as already announced, is that the soul seems to take bodily traits. The poisoning of the soul (said to be drunk) seems to suggest that. This picture is substantially different from the one of a simple imprisonment of the soul inside a bodily shell. The latter case, in fact, would not imply any kind of contamination.
- (b) The process of incarnation of the soul into the body does not appear to be the result of a passive entrapment of the soul by the body. On the contrary, what apparently is going on here is the soul moving towards the body and wanting to make use of it in order to know the world through the senses (the term used here is, of course, *αἰσθησίς*, significantly repeated twice @ 79c4-5).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Another image, quite expressive, of the inevitability of this somatization is the one of the souls wandering as ghosts by the tombs (*Phd* 81d). See Gertz (2011, p. 29) on the reading of this very passage by Ammonius.

<sup>10</sup>Both the ideas of the *palingenesis*, which is a core point in the first argument for the immortality in the *Phaedo* (70c-72e), and the *anamnesis*, the second argument (72e-77a), also imply a kind of inclination of the soul towards the coupling with the body (in the first argument) and a positive function of the senses since knowledge is the result from an interaction between the information that our senses give us and universal notions, under which we classify our sense data (see Fierro, 2013, p. 24, and Scott, 1987, p. 348).

Bostock (1986), as we mentioned, in his commentary on the dialogue saw in the soul, depicted as it is here, *chameleon-like characters*, allowing it to take bodily traits in order to grasp the sensible world:

This assigns the soul a chameleon-like character—it simply takes on the nature of whatever it is thinking of—and is not much of a ground for saying that it is more like what is unchanging than what is changeable. (Bostock, 1986, p. 119)

The soul, therefore, can turn, and, more than that, she wants to transform itself in order to feel the world through the body.

Facing this sort of ontology of the incarnation outlined above, therefore, the possibility of an unprecedented meaning for the psychophysical dualism insinuates itself surreptitiously within the Platonic pages.

The vocabulary of the somatization of the soul, to confine ourselves exclusively to these arguments from affinity pages, includes terms like κοινωνέω (80e4), σύνειμι (81b3 e 81c5), and ὄμιλία (81c5), as well as the aforementioned adjective σωματοειδής (81b6 e 81c4), in addition, of course, to the very term συγγένεια (79d3), which traditionally names the argument as a whole.

But a correct understanding of the meaning of this dualism will probably depend on how we would translate a central term for Socrates' argument. The aforementioned modalities of somatization of the soul are possible—Socrates says—due to the fact that the soul is σύμφυτον with the body (*Phd* 81c6).

Here is the full passage:

Instead, I suppose, [the soul] will be intermingled with the corporeal, which the body's company and coupling, because of their constant coupling and because of its long practice, have made *grown together*. (*Phd.* 81c4-7—Transl. Sedley&Long with some modifications)

I here adopt Rowe's translation of the term σύμφυτον as *made grown together in [the soul]*, pointing here to a botanical metaphor (Rowe, 1993, p. 193). I do that, however, with a slight but quite significant correction: while Rowe is thinking about a body growing inside the soul (like a stone that grows at the root of a tree—specifies Rowe), I believe that the term σύμφυτον is ontologically stronger than Rowe is actually prepared to admit. The fascinating idea hidden in the term is the one of a body that grows *along with* the soul.

My correction, not by chance, follows a *lectio facilior* in translating σύμφυτον. Rowe's elegant solution is that the term refers to the process, but I believe it has more to do with the result of the growing together. So, there would be in the term σύμφυτον, more precisely, the indication of a connaturality between body and soul. A good example of the use of the term can be found in Aristotle's *Topics*, where he says: “ἡ ἀλγηδὸν διάστασις τῶν συμφύτων μερῶν μετὰ βίας,” *pain is the violent interruption of naturally attached parts* (Arist. *Top* 145b2-3). The term συμφύτων means here precisely the union of parts to such a natural point that a separation could only be violent (and, consequently, generates pain).

The coupling of body and soul, so, does not appear to be accidental, like it would be in the case of a stone growing inside the root of a tree, as Rowe suggested. On the contrary, it is like the two parts naturally joined in the aforementioned definition of

pain from Aristotle's *Topics*. Like two brothers or sisters, for instance, who grew up together and whose violent separation can only cause pain.

The vocabulary of this communion and connaturality between the body and the soul seems to put in serious trouble, therefore, any interpretation of the argument from affinity which wants to look at the argument exclusively from the point of view of the soul having affinity with the invisible and unchangeable. What is described here, rather, is the struggle of the soul in its double (chameleonic) nature: grown along with the body but aspiring to the company of invisible gods (81a10). For, as we said, in this case there would be, within the scholarship, an unjustified emphasis on an ontological dualism which will be stronger than the one emerging from these pages. The soul, in the argument from affinity, is not incorruptible as the forms are, because its ontological status would not allow it, due to its inescapable physical traits.

Consequently, instead of being a strong ontological premise, the separation of body and soul could be understood as something to be conquered with violence and pain, to refer ourselves once again to the image quoted above from Aristotle's *Topics*.

The ontological dualism seems to depend on a permanent effort of the individual, both epistemological and ethical.<sup>11</sup> What I'm willing to claim here is that the very ontological resistance of the body-soul dualism relies on the effort of the individual to keep the two separated.

Thus, a moral separation precedes the ontological one, not the other way round, as we have been usually taught to believe. The Platonic dualistic ontology seems to want to rely on the search for truth and happiness (81a 6-7) of a soul chameleon in its wandering through the sensible world, along with the body with which it grew up and developed.

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<sup>11</sup> Pakaluk (2003, p. 99) inspired this conclusion in his inquiring to what extent does a true philosopher achieves a philosophical life by practicing death in living. Our conclusions here are quite different, of course, since he's not willing to admit some kind of influence of the epistemological and ethical effort of the philosopher on the ontological endurance of the dualism. This latter idea has been discussed in a recent talk with Thomas Johannsen at Brasenose College, Oxford. I'm deeply grateful for his insights, and I should admit that this paper owns a large debt to him.

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