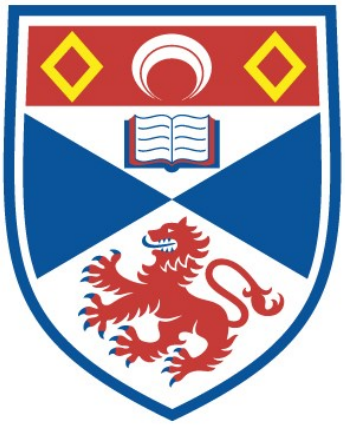
MYTH AND ARGUMENT IN PLATO'S *PHAEDRUS*, *REPUBLIC*, AND *PHAEDO*

Manlio Fossati

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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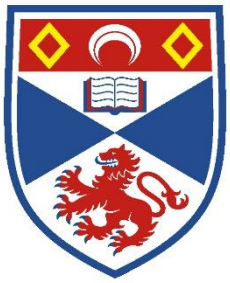

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at the
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January 2018

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Abstract

My thesis investigates the role played by eschatological myth in the arguments of Plato's *Phaedrus, Republic* and *Phaedo*. It argues that a reconsideration of the agenda followed by Socrates in each of these dialogues brings into view the contribution made by the mythological narrative to their argumentative line. Each of the three chapters of my thesis analyses the nature of this contribution.

The first chapter argues that the myth occupying the central pages of the *Phaedrus* contributes to developing one of the themes addressed in the dialogue, namely a link between the divine realm and the activities thought by Phaedrus to be unrelated to the religious sphere. By showing that Eros fosters imitation of the gods, the palinode makes an important contribution to this topic.

The second chapter proposes that the myth of Er and passage 608c2-621d3 in which it is included are an essential part of the line of argument of the *Republic*. I analyse the aims Socrates sets in Book 2 for his investigation into justice, and show that they include the description of the positive consequences of justice along with the benefits it causes in and by itself. By listing the rewards just people will receive from other people and the gods, passage 608c2-621d3 gives a description of the positive consequences of justice.

The third chapter argues that the argumentative line followed in the *Phaedo* finds its culmination in the eschatological myth. Socrates expresses a hope for post-mortem justice in his defence of the philosophical life. To render it plausible to his interlocutors he needs to show that the soul is both immortal and intrinsically intelligent. After vindicating these notions, Socrates presents in the concluding myth the image of an afterlife governed by ethical principles.

Acknowledgements

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Platonic myths are as fascinating for the images they depict as complex for the intricacy of the interpretative issues they raise. Scholarship on Plato has considered not only the exegesis of the ideas contained in the myths but also the status of those ideas. Two sets of reasons have induced scholars to believe that myths have a different status from the argumentative sections contained in the dialogues. First, the critique of poetry presented in the *Republic* has contributed to generating the idea that Plato establishes a clear-cut dichotomy between μῦθος and λόγος. Second, myth has seemed to many scholars a type of discourse less able to convey firmly grounded and entirely rational arguments. A famous and influential formulation of this idea is found in Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. According to the German philosopher myth is the refuge in the irrational that Plato needed to formulate concepts to which he could not give rational expression in the dialogical arguments of his dialogues.[1] Scholarship from Hegel to the late twentieth century has tended sharply to contrast μῦθος and λόγος. While the latter has been seen as rational, verifiable and apt for conveying concepts of high theoretical complexity, the former has been attributed opposite characteristics. Myth has accordingly been considered irrational, unverifiable and apt for communicating imaginative thinking. In the course of the decades opposite value judgements have been formulated on Plato's use of myth, often reflecting the evaluation of the power of reason and the importance of imaginative vision given by a cultural movement.[2]

Whether connoting it positively or negatively, scholars have tended to contrast myth with argumentative sections until the middle of the Twentieth Century.[3] A significant shift of paradigm begins to occur with the publication of an influential

[1] See Hegel 1963, 19-20.

[2] Zeller 1888 is a notable example of a scholar who considers the use of myth as an indication of the limitations to which philosophical thinking was subject in Plato's time. By contrast, Stewart 1960 regards Plato's myths as expressions of a transcendental feeling.

[3] Earlier in the Twentieth Century some scholarly contributions have appeared that study Platonic myth from a different angle. They focus on the question whether traditional myths were commonly believed in Athens and what impact Socrates' disbelief in them could have on the impiety charge made against Socrates. Tate 1933 and Tate 1936 argue that belief in traditional myth was widespread in the fifth and fourth century and played a role in causing Socrates' condemnation to death. Taylor 1933 argues that the charge against Socrates was motivated by his refusal of the *cultus* of the city rather than by his disbelief in the gods.

article published by Edesltein.[4] In "The Function of the Myth in Plato's Philosophy"[5] he argues that Platonic myth, although motivated by the finitude of human reason, is complementary to dialectic. Moving from the consideration that in Book 10 of the *Republic* Plato recognizes the existence of a controversy between philosophy and poetry, Edelstein underlines that this philosopher's criticism is directed not towards poetry in general but specifically towards the poetry contemporary to him and the myths narrated in it. If the critic of traditional poetry contained in Books 2 and 3 of the *Republic* culminates in the formulation of some principles a reformed poetry should follow, "Plato creates a mythology of his own"[6] in other sections of his works. The myths of his own creation fall according to Edelstein into two different categories: "those dealing with an account of the creation of the world and with an account of the early history of mankind, and those that deal with the fate of the soul before and after this life and have a bearing not on metaphysics or science but rather on ethics."[7] Those belonging to the first category are contained in the *Timaeus*, the *Critias*, and the *Politicus*; those forming the second are found in the *Phaedo*, the *Gorgias*, the *Phaedrus*, and the *Republic*. As Edelstein argues, cosmology and expositions of early human history take the form of myths because of the character that human reason has according to Plato. Whereas human reason is able to grasp only the immutable and the universal, what is particular and subject to change remains "guesswork"[8] and cannot be expounded in a dialectical argument. Ethical myths on the post-mortem destiny of the soul are motivated according to Edelstein by the fact that human beings, though endowed with reason, also have emotions. Although in ethics reason can reach certainty or at least a reasonably close approximation to it, men remain bound to fall prey to fears or to be inspired by hopes, and they need ethical myth to allay fears and shape hopes in an ethically commendable way.

[4] Frutiger 1930 anticipates some ideas that will be discussed and further developed in the later debate. In *Les Mythes de Platon* (1930) he proposes that Platonic myths convey views that Plato considers true but cannot prove. On this view myths, especially the eschatological ones, are relevant on the level of opinion.
[5] Edelstein 1949.
[6] Edelstein 1949, 466.
[7] Edelstein 1949, 467.
[8] Edelstein 1949, 468.

If Edelstein maintains that a correct appreciation of Platonic myth requires a distinction of the mythological sections into two different groups, Anton believes that it is possible to identify some characteristics common to Platonic myth in general. To understand the function myth fulfils in Plato's dialogue, Anton deems it an appropriate preliminary to clarify the reasons of his polemic against poetry and the myths it contained. Plato's criticism of myth targets exclusively traditional myth and is motivated by the fact the traditional myths have "the world of becoming as their proper domain."[9] The reforms he pursues aim to create and make available a form of myth that "dramatize[s] the idealities he came to see in the timeless world of the dialectic."[10] Being related to the realm of unchanging and eternal entities, Platonic myth is according to Anton not substitutive for but complementary to dialectic. It "illuminates rather than explains"[11] a domain that discursive reasoning investigates. Its complementary role to dialectic is also reflected by the position myth usually occupies in the dialogues: after dialectical arguments have been offered and argumentative discourse presented, a mythological section is inserted.

Unlike Anton, Annas sees a connection between the eschatological myth and the views proposed in the dialogue in which each of these myths is contained. In "Plato's myths of judgement"[12] she reiterates the warnings against the legitimacy of a clear-cut distinction between μῦθος and λόγος, and she advocates interpreting (eschatological) myth within the context provided by the dialogue in which they occur. With regard to the first point, she notes that, although the *Republic* contains a severe critique of traditional myths, "Plato nowhere says or implies that there is a single all-purpose distinction between storytelling and reasoning such that all stories are necessarily stupid or immoral."[13] If Plato does not unqualifiedly discount myth qua myth, Annas argues that "it is also a mistake to ignore the myths (or images) as being clearly dispensable." [14] Appropriate consideration is given to Plato's eschatological myths by linking them with the argument of the

[9] Anton 1963-4, 166.
[10] Anton 1963-4, 166.
[11] Anton 1963-4, 165.
[12] Annas 1982.
[13] Annas 1982, 121.
[14] Annas 1982, 121.

dialogue of which they are part. When this hermeneutical stance is taken, the different images of the afterlife judgement depicted in each of the eschatological myth appear as "reflections of differences in what the dialogues have argued."[15]

If Annas considers the eschatological myths as conveying images of the afterlife that reflect the peculiarities of the dialogue in which they are contained, Smith proposes that Platonic myth has the epistemological status of true opinion. Central to her thesis is the redefinition of the meaning of ψευδής. When Socrates discusses with Adeimantus the form of education suitable for the citizens of Callipolis, he divides the λόγοι that are told to the citizens into ἀληθεῖς and ψευδεῖς (377a). If it becomes clear in the following lines that the phrase ψευδεῖς λόγοι identifies myths, Smith argues that in this context ψευδής means fictional. The redefinition of the meaning of ψευδής allows her to conclude that in his criticism of contemporary poetry Socrates "is not objecting to the fact that myths or fictions are told about the gods – he does not believe that they are all lies – but he wishes nothing in this myths which contradicts what he holds to be true about the gods."[16] While Smith regards the "noble lie" as an instance of fiction that despite containing some factual inaccuracy fulfils the important function of fostering a sense of unity among citizens, she considers the myths of the *Timaeus* and the *Phaedrus* two different examples of true opinion. As she argues, "'true opinion' can refer both to correct understanding of sense particulars (which are not accessible to knowledge) and to correct understanding (though unaccompanied by an ability to give an account) of such things as 'soul' and 'justice' (which can be the object of knowledge)."[17] Accordingly the discussion of the *Timaeus*, referred to both as εἰκώς μῦθος (29d2, 68d2) and εἰκώς λόγος (53d5-6, 55d5), falls in the domain of true opinion because it explains how the sensible world has been created in resemblance to eternal images. The myth contained in the central pages of the *Phaedrus* offers an account based on true opinion in that it is intended to "help the participants to understand what love (madness and the soul, too) is, an exercise which is designed to bring one to a better understanding of subjects accessible to knowledge (theoretically one could have knowledge of

[15] Annas 1982, 122.
[16] Smith 1985, 29.
[17] Smith 1985, 34.

the Form of love, whereas one can never have knowledge, strictly speaking of a sense particular)."[18]

The relation of true opinion and myth is further investigated by Smith in a later article in which she identifies five functions of Platonic myth. As she argues, true opinion is central in the education of the non-philosophic men as they are incapable of, or uninterested in, acquiring knowledge. Given their cognitive status, myth plays two roles in their education: it allows them to acquire true opinion and it teaches them to control emotions. Acquisition of true opinion and control of emotions is fostered by myth in the soul of philosophical men too, as their education does not have a different foundation than that of the non-philosophic men but it builds upon that imparted to non-philosophic men. In addition to instilling true opinion and helping govern emotions, myth also benefits philosophical investigation in five respects: 1) it is playful and with its playfulness it contributes to philosophy, which "is a kind of 'playing with ides;'"[19] 2) it provides hypothesis that dialectic will test; 3) it helps prevent the dialogues from becoming a dogmatic exposition of doctrines; 4) it reorients the sight from the phenomenal world to the realm to which the forms and the soul belong; 5) it condenses in images the concepts proposed and formulated in the dialogues.

Although not directly connected with true opinion, myth is assigned a role in the epistemological process by McCabe too. To clarify the function myth performs in Plato's dialogues, she first explains how the process of understanding works. On the basis of the information given in the *Phaedo* McCabe suggests that understanding has two basic characteristics: it is "systematic"[20] and it requires "an active mind."[21] Systematic understanding is based on but not exhausted by what Socrates terms "simple-minded explanation." A simple-minded explanation, such as that which identifies the reason why Socrates is higher than Simmias by a head not in the head but in the form of largeness, is not exhaustive because it considers the form of largeness in isolation. Systematic understanding needs according to McCabe to take two more steps. It has to see how the form of largeness is

[18] Smith 1985, 37.
[19] Smith 1986, 25.
[20] McCabe1992, 53.
[21] McCabe1992, 55.

connected to the other forms and it needs to appreciate that the connected system identified incorporates a teleological principle. Why understanding requires an active mind is suggested according to McCabe by the role that dialectic and elenchus play in the philosophical investigation. A dialectical argument consists of a pair of set of connected propositions that lead to two contrasting conclusions. "The dialectical effect is achieved by each of the pair acting as a critique of the other."[22] In order to achieve understanding, the mind needs to carry out an evaluative process reexamining both sets of propositions. Having identified the assessment of two contrasting sets of propositions as a crucial element of systematic understanding, McCabe describes the function of myth in providing one set of propositions. The allegory of the Sun in the *Republic* and the eschatological myths of the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo* and *Republic* allow the process of understanding to unfold exactly because they "are discordant with the arguments of the dialogues."[23] By conveying a view at odds with that expressed in the dialogue, they provide a set of propositions that dialectic will confront and contrast with that provided in the preceding part of the dialogue. Similar is the function performed by the cosmological myth contained in the *Timaeus*, although the set of propositions it contains is provided for comparison with views advanced not in the same but in other dialogues.

If Smith and McCabe assign an epistemological function to Platonic myth, Halliwell proposes that in Plato's view myths convey moral messages in a way not substantially dissimilar from other forms of discourse. In "The subjection of Mythos to Logos"[24] he points out that in the *Republic* μῦθοι are considered part of the broader category represented by λόγος. In the critique of poetry contained in its second and third book, μῦθοι are in fact classified as ψευδεῖς λόγοι. The crucial point is, Halliwell stresses, not to decide whether Plato uses the adjective ψευδής in the meaning of false or fictive, but to appreciate that he considers mythological discourse as conveying "normatively powerful images and paradigms of human experience."[25] Plato is not interested in whether the facts narrated in a myth

[22] McCabe1992, 57.
[23] McCabe1992, 60.
[24] Halliwell 2000.
[25] Halliwell 2000, 103.

actually happened or not, but in evaluating the moral message contained in a mythological narration. Plato's attitude to myth is exemplified according to Halliwell in lines 338e-348a of the *Protagoras*. As it emerges from Socrates' discussion with Protagoras, the poet "speaks a λόγος" (344b6-7, λέγοι λόγον) and composes his verses with a particular intention (347a4, διανοούμενος). Accordingly, Socrates maintains that a poetic text can be questioned about "the outline and the intention" (344b3-4, τὸν τύπον […] καὶ τὴν βούλησιν). Since they are said by Socrates to convey a moral message that can be subjected to scrutiny, Halliwell concludes that μῦθοι are better understood as a subset of λόγοι than a peculiar type of discourse fundamentally different from them.

After the scholarship of the two closing decades of the past century has proposed that that mythological narratives can fulfil an ethical and epistemological function, the boundaries between between μῦθος and λόγος have been further blurred in subsequent research.[26] Edmonds' *Myths of the Underworld Journey*[27] has given a further contribution to establishing a new interpretative paradigm. In his book he proposes to define Platonic myths as traditional tales. This label has according to him the double advantage of avoiding arbitrary value judgements and of better accounting for Plato's criticisms of myth and his own use of it. As Edmonds suggests, the term "tale" captures two aspects of Platonic myth. First, it signals that myth can convey ideas expressed in other sections of a dialogue more briefly or in a more condensed fashion. Second, myth is "more memorable for the reader or interlocutor than the arguments because of the imagery and the narrative logic that holds the ideas together."[28] As such, it represents a heightened form of communication and a powerful tool for conveying a certain message. If Platonic myth qua tale has these two characteristics, in virtue of its being a *traditional* tale it has "two important effects - polyvalence and authority."[29] Myth uses symbolic language that evokes a range of different meanings and a multiplicity of associations. By employing a variety of traditional motifs, the form of communication established by myth occurs on different levels.

[26] A further impulse to abandon the dichotomy between μῦθος and λόγος has come from the critique of this approach made by Lincoln 1997.
[27] Edmonds 2004.
[28] Edmonds 166.
[29] Edmonds 167.

At the same time the occurrence of elements easily recognisable as part of the common cultural background gives an authoritative status to the narrative. Myth thus allows Plato to choose a particular version of a legend, to modify, or to include it in a new frame. While the multiple motives pre-existing in the poetic and mythological tradition give him the opportunity to shape his own tale, the reference to tradition gives to the new tale the authority possessed by tradition.

Edmonds' suggested label of traditional tale has been generally received positively and accepted explicitly by Werner.[30] This has contributed to building a broad consensus among scholars on two points. First, Platonic myth is no longer regarded as a type of discourse that should be programmatically contrasted with that used in the dialectical sections of the dialogues. Second, each myth is considered to have a relation with the topic treated in the dialogue of which it is a part and it is thus usually analysed in the context of the dialogue in which it occurs. Acceptance of this second point does not however imply that a particular myth is always considered to have a linear relation with the argument developed in the dialogue in which it is included. In recent years scholars have proposed *both* interpretations that highlight a close connection between the myth and the dialogue of which it is a part, *and* interpretations that emphasize some form of discontinuity between them. A notable example of the former tendency is Sedley's article "Teleology and myth in Plato's *Phaedo*."[31] In it he investigates how a notion formulated by Socrates in his discussion with Simmias and Cebes is developed more fully in the eschatological myth. Noting that in the description of his intellectual biography Socrates expresses the expectation for a teleologically organised cosmos, Sedley argues that the description of the cosmos given in the eschatological myth corresponds to this expectation. A prominent example of the opposite scholarly tendency – putting the emphasis on discontinuity – is Halliwell's "The Life-and-Death Journey of the Soul: Myth of Er."[32] In this chapter he considers the eschatological myth concluding the *Republic* "a nonepistemic, partly self-persuasive device."[33] Stressing that the prenatal

[30] Werner 2012, 108-118.
[31] Sedley 1990.
[32] Halliwell 2007.
[33] Halliwell 2007, 465.

mechanism of life choosing described in the myth suggests to the reader a fatalistic view of earthly life, Halliwell sees a contrast between the message given by the myth and the content of the argument developed in the previous books of the *Republic*.

The interest in Platonic myth has in very recent years led to the publication of two edited volumes, *Plato's Myths*[34] and *Plato and Myth*,[35] that reflect the recent tendencies dominating this field of study. The first volume contains ten contributions. Apart from the first[36] and the last,[37] each of the other eight focuses on a particular myth. In line with the current scholarly tendency, they move from two assumptions. They avoid sharply contrasting mythological discourse and argumentative sections and they analyse a particular mythological narrative within the context provided by the dialogue of which it is a part. Avoidance of the μῦθος/λόγος dichotomy does not however automatically imply that all these contributions consider a given myth an organic part of the argument offered in the dialogue that includes it. In "Glaucon's reward, philosophy debt: the myth of Er"[38] Ferrari explains the insertion of the myth of Er in the argument of the *Republic* as a tribute to Glaucon. As he argues, "not only is the myth addressed to Glaucon, it is adapted to his character and mental horizon."[39] One important character trait of Glaucon's is his eagerness to attain full recognition for his virtuous deeds. By showing that just men are rewarded, the myth of Er represents in Ferrari's view a tribute to Glaucon's desire to see men of noble character receiving the honour they deserve. Whereas Ferrari considers the myth of Er a narrative inserted in the *Republic* to gratify one of the characters featuring in the dialogue, Rowe identifies a closer connection between the eschatological myth of the *Phaedrus* and the rest of the dialogue. While maintaining that the myth is one of Plato's strategies for communicating with different types of audiences on a

[34] Partenie (ed.) 2011.
[35] Collobert, Destree, Gonzalez (eds.) 2012.
[36] In "Plato's eschatological myths" Inwood asks to what extent the images of afterlife depicted in Plato's eschatological myths are mutually coherent.
[37] McGrath's contribution "Platonic myth in Renaissance iconography" analyses some Renaissance illustrations depicting images described in Platonic myths.
[38] Ferrari 2011.
[39] Ferrari 2011, 116.

multiplicity of levels, Rowe argues that Socrates "integrates the myth thoroughly into a larger argumentative structure."[40]

Plato and Myth includes twenty contributions divided into two separate sections. The first discusses general questions concerning Platonic myth: it addresses topics such as the formulation of criteria for identifying mythological narratives in Platonic dialogues,[41] the merit of a literal interpretation versus those of an allegorical one of myth,[42] the categorization of myth as one of several literary strategies employed by Plato in his dialogues.[43] Even though the contributions contained in this section discuss not single mythological narratives but problems concerning Platonic myth in general, they follow the theoretical paradigm generally adopted in *Plato's Myths*. Accordingly, these contributions start from the assumption that it is not fruitful, as an interpreter of Plato, to establish clear-cut boundaries between mythological discourse and argumentative sections. More congenial to approaches applied in these contributions is e.g. to identify criteria for the identification of mythical narratives based "upon the concrete conditions of the communicative situations of the speaker and their listeners"[44] or to assume that "the border between *logos* and *mythos* […] does not divide what is philosophical in the dialogue from what is not philosophical."[45] The contributions included in the second section of this book centre on the discussion of a single mythological narrative and its relation with the dialogue of which it is a part. As in the case of the contributions included in *Plato's Myths*, their focus does not however imply that all these papers consider a myth as organically integrated in the argument of the dialogue. For example, Pender identifies in *Phaedo* "a network of ideas connecting the myth closely with the earlier discussion of life and death."[46] Although themes such as journeying, impurity, imprisonment, assimilation, and balanced opposition allows a connection to be established between the eschatological myth and the preceding discussion, the myth in Pender's view does not have a linear relation with the previous arguments. Rather,

[40] Rowe 2011, 136.
[41] Most 2012.
[42] Tarrant 2012.
[43] Ferrari 2012.
[44] Most 2012, 15.
[45] Ferrari 2012, 86.
[46] Pender 2012, 200.

the myth is "a detour from the previous mode of argument"[47] taken by Socrates to appease Simmias' fear of death, which has survived the last argument for the immortality of the soul. The relation between the myth and the preceding argument is considered even more problematic in Gonzalez's analysis of the myth of Er. He concludes his discussion by noting that "the myth [of Er] thematises everything that such [philosophical] reasoning cannot penetrate and master, everything that stubbornly remains dark and irrational."[48] As he stresses, the myth seemingly emphasizes the possibility for souls to choose their future live, but it describes a mechanism of life choosing that undermines their freedom to decide what life they will live. Whether real or apparent, the possibility of choice emphasized in the myth stays in Gonzalez's view at odds with the content of the argument developed in the rest of the dialogue, which does not lay strong emphasis on choice. By considering what receives little interest in the argument followed in the preceding books of the *Republic*, the myth is considered by Gonzalez to describe "what lies outside the boundary of philosophy, limiting its scope and continually threatening its project."[49]

Scholarship published from the 2000s seems to agree on two basic points: scholars do not see the distinction between myth and argument in terms of a clear-cut dichotomy and, with the exception of Ferrari,[50] they detect a relation between a mythological narrative and the argument of the dialogue of which it is part. As we have seen, consensus on this second point does not imply that all scholars agree on the nature of relation linking a particular myth with the argument of the relevant. Sedley and Rowe believe that the eschatological myth contains answers to questions posed at other stages of the dialogue. Halliwell and Gonzalez consider the relation between the myth and the views advanced in the argumentative sections of the *Republic* in terms of opposition and they propose that myth casts doubt on the positions endorsed in the argumentative sections of the dialogue.

[47] Pender 2012, 206.
[48] Gonzalez 2012, 271.
[49] Gonzalez 2012, 275.
[50] As we have seen on page 9, Ferrari 2011 argues that the myth of Er has been inserted in the *Republic* to meet Glaucon's expectations.

My own thesis accepts the main points of this interpretative paradigm and with its aid analyses the relation between (a) the eschatological myths contained in the *Phaedrus*, the *Republic* and the *Phaedo* and (b) the argumentative line followed in the dialogues of which each of them is part. Accordingly, I will consider a clear-cut dichotomy between myth and argument unhelpful to study the argumentative line followed in the aforementioned dialogues. Although I do not conceive of myth in terms of complete alterity with argumentative sections, I recognize that mythological narratives display some peculiarities of their own. The characteristics shared by Platonic myths can be aptly identified by a set of seven criteria that focus on the communitive situation between the speaker and the listener.[51] Platonic usually: 1) are monological, 2) are recounted by an older speaker to a younger audience; 3) are presented as deriving from an older source real or fictional in nature; 4) derive their authority from their real or alleged source; 5) are said to have a psychagogic effect; 6) are lengthier narrative section occurring at the beginning or at the conclusion of dialectical exposition; 7) narrate facts that cannot be verified.

Since any modern attempt to identify mythological narratives in the Platonic corpus remains espoused to the risk of projecting a conception of myth influenced by the contemporary understanding of it onto Plato's own conception, the application of these seven criteria requires some flexibility. Some of them admit occasional exception and the identified mythological narratives do not always need to match all the seven criteria. If applied in this spirit, these criteria allow the following fourteen sections to be identified as myths: *Phaedo* 107c–114c, *Gorgias* 523a–527a, *Protagoras* 320c–323a, *Meno* 81a–c, *Phaedrus* 246a–257, *Phaedrus* 274b–275b, *Symposium* 189c–193d, *Symposium* 203b–204a, *Republic* X, 613e–621d, *Statesman* 268e–274e, *Timaeus* 20d–25e, *Timaeus* 29d–92c, *Critias* 108e–121c, *Laws* 4.713a–e.

I understand my thesis as a contribution to the line of research that sees Platonic myths as narratives that, although displaying some peculiar characteristics, should not be programmatically contrasted with argumentative

[51] In selecting these criteria I am following Most 2012, 24 with some modification. The set of myths I identify below coincides with that proposed by Most 2012, 24.

sections. Considering the relation between myth and argument in terms of continuity and integration of the former in the latter, I will aim to show the specific nature of the relation existing between the eschatological myth contained in the *Phaedrus*, the *Republic*, and the *Phaedo*. In the chapter *Socrates' palinode in the* Phaedrus I will defend the thesis that the ideas expressed in the myth contained in the central pages of the *Phaedrus* are part of one of the threads of thoughts that run through the dialogue. In the chapter *The goodness of justice, human choice and the myth of Er* I will aim to show that the myth of Er and passage 608c2-621d3, in which the myth is included, are essential parts of the argumentative line followed in the *Republic* in that they contain answers to questions posed at previous stages of the dialogue. In the chapter *The afterlife myth as the culmination of Socrates' argumentative line in the* Phaedo I will argue that the eschatological myth is the culmination of the argumentative line followed in the dialogue because it contains the fuller formulation of the hopes that Socrates only sketches in the initial part of the dialogue.

To corroborate my thesis, I will aim to show that the agenda Socrates sets out to follow includes, requires or culminates in the ideas expressed in the eschatological myths. I will substantiate my claim by discussing evidence from both parts of the relevant dialogues – both the myth and the passages that precede it. The analysis of a set of evidence will complement that of the other. Identifying the argumentative line that Socrates follows in each of these three dialogues will help to clarify what threads of thought he intends to follow, what points he commits himself to addressing, or what notion constitutes the conclusive step of his argument. The analysis of the content of the eschatological myths will explain why the ideas conveyed in each of them are an important part of the agenda Socrates follows in the relevant dialogue.

Although considering two complementary sets of evidence, my approach will be careful to avoid circularity. My discussion of the agenda Socrates sets out to follow in each of these three dialogues will be independent from my discussion of the ideas conveyed in the eschatological myths. When I analyse the first set of evidence, my focus will be on the passages clarifying the agenda that Socrates will follow in the respective dialogue: the thread of religious themes running

through the *Phaedrus*; the first half of Book 2 of the *Republic* where Socrates and the brothers negotiate the agenda for the inquiry carried out in the following books; Socrates' formulation of a hope for justice in the afterlife and Cebes' reaction to it in the *Phaedo*. After ascertaining what Socrates' agenda includes, I will turn my attention to the analysis of the ideas formulated in the eschatological myths. I will contend that (some of) these ideas complement the agenda that I have previously and independently proposed Socrates follows in the dialogue.

A substantial part of each of my chapters will be thus occupied by the attempt to identify the agenda followed by Socrates. A large section of the chapter *Socrates' palinode in the* Phaedrus will be dedicated to identifying a thread of thoughts running through the dialogue. Remaining non-committal as to whether this thread is appropriately considered the main theme of the dialogue, I will highlight that a religious concern is felt throughout the dialogue. Love, rhetoric and oral speech are presented by Socrates as linked to the religious realm more closely than his interlocutor is initially prepared to recognise. The presence of allusions to the religious sphere has been already detected by other scholars and the view I will present in this chapter is not entirely new to Platonic research. Instead of presenting a completely innovative interpretation of the *Phaedrus*, this chapter is intended to illustrate the case of a Platonic dialogue in which the interplay between the views expressed in the myth and those proposed in the argumentative sections has already been detected.

My approach will yield fresh results when applied to the *Republic* and the *Phaedo*. In the chapters dedicated to these two dialogues I will propose a reconsideration of the agenda Socrates sets out to follow in each of them. As I will argue, his agenda is broader than commonly recognised by current scholarship and requires the ideas expressed in the eschatological myths to be complete. I will open my chapter *The goodness of justice, human choice and the myth of Er* with an analysis of the agenda that is set in Book 2 for Socrates' investigation into justice. I will highlight that, although Glaucon and Adeimantus are interested in learning only the benefits justice produces in and by itself, Socrates considers justice beneficial both in and by itself and for the positive consequences it causes. By identifying the claim Socrates commits himself to substantiating, I will be able

to identify a question (for the positive consequences it causes) that remains unaddressed until the passage 608c2-621d3 and the myth of Er included in it. The analysis of the part of the dialogue preceding the eschatological myth will also be central to the analysis I will carry out in the chapter *The afterlife myth as the culmination of Socrates' argumentative line in the* Phaedo. I will contend that two early passages are crucial to understanding the role played by the concluding myth in the argument of the *Phaedo*: Socrates' expression of the hope for justice in the afterlife and Cebes' reaction to it. As Cebes welcomes Socrates' hope, but poses strict conditions for recognising that this hope is plausible, I will analyse the stages followed by Socrates to meet the conditions set by Cebes.

After advancing a view on how the argumentative line of a dialogue unfolds, I will turn my attention to the content of the myths. Their analysis will allow me to illustrate what kind of relation exists between the ideas they convey and the argumentative line of the dialogues in which these myths are included. As I will argue, the eschatological myth occupying the central pages of the *Phaedrus* is part of a thread of thoughts followed in the dialogue because it shows that, as rhetoric and oral speech do, love also has a close link with the divine realm. By instilling in the lover and the beloved the desire to resemble the gods, love fosters a process of approximation of men to the gods. The myth of Er and the passage 608c2-621d3 in which it is included are essential parts of the argumentative line followed in the *Republic* because they answer questions explicitly posed in, or naturally arising from, Socrates' discussion with Glaucon and Adeimatus: the passage 608c2-621d3 illustrates the consequences of justice by ensuring that just people, when recognized as such, will be rewarded both during their life and in the afterlife; the myth of Er provides the foundation for Socrates' investigation into justice by showing that souls have a degree of freedom to decide whether or not to serve justice. The image of the afterlife depicted in the eschatological myth of the *Phaedo* is the culmination of the argumentative line of the dialogue because it contains the fuller formulation of the hopes Socrates already expressed in his defence of the philosophical life. In line with the expectations expressed by Socrates in that passage the myth promises that the souls are assigned different

dwellings after they depart from the body depending on the moral quality of the behaviour displayed during life on earth

Chapter 1: Socrates' palinode in the *Phaedrus*

Introduction

This chapter will open my study of the relation between the eschatological myths of the *Phaedrus*, the *Republic* and the *Phaedo* and the other parts of the dialogues where they are found. Before I illustrate my thesis on how the ideas Socrates expresses in his palinode relate to those he formulates in the rest of this dialogue, some preliminary considerations on my approach to myth are in order. Although I will propose that the relation between the myths and the rest of the dialogue in which they are included is different in the *Phaedrus*, in the *Republic* and in the *Phaedo*, my approach to these three eschatological narratives will be similar in the three cases.

A general feature of my approach to myth is that I will not consider the status of the ideas expressed in or outside the mythological sections markedly different. In this chapter I will propose a view that defines the status of the ideas conveyed in the eschatological myth of the *Phaedrus* in terms of the speaker's commitment to them, rather than in terms of the epistemic value of their content. I will argue that the myth contains both ideas for which Socrates is ready to vouch and ideas for which he is not. The selective character of the commitment to the ideas expressed is clearly visible in the case of this myth, but it can be perceived in other sections as well. As Socrates' commitment to the views he outlines in dialogical sections is not equally strong in all cases, the difference between the myth and the rest of the dialogue is nuanced.

I will address the question of the status of myth explicitly with reference to Socrates' palinode in the *Phaedrus*, because this dialogue offers more material relevant to the question than the other two I consider in this thesis. I will point out that this dialogue contains a passage in which Socrates consciously reflects on the status of the ideas he expresses in the palinode and delivers a mixed judgement on it. He admits that some of the ideas may not reflect his views accurately, but he declares his readiness to vouch for the reliability of others. Although Socrates does not provide a criterion to identify the ideas he considers reliable, I will

consider his mixed judgement a sufficiently clear indication that the myth includes ideas that contribute to his argumentative line.

In considering (some of) the ideas formulated in the palinode to belong to the argumentative line followed in the dialogue, I will align with the interpretations recently advanced by Ferrari[1] and Yunis[2] but sharply diverge from the view defended by Werner.[3] On the basis of a perceived mismatch between the epistemic principles formulated in the palinode and the information contained in it, Werner contends that the myth of the *Phaedrus* is intended to point towards the limitations of human knowledge and language, not to convey ideas to which Socrates would commit himself. In this chapter I will argue that no indication internal to the text suggests that the description of the nature and post-mortem destiny of the soul contained in the myth is considered by Socrates unreliable. In this respect my approach to the myth will be more similar to that followed by Ferrari and Yunis. Although they do not address the question of the status of myth directly, they both consider the ideas expressed in the palinode complementary or even integral to the argumentation Socrates offers in the *Phaedrus*. In my interpretation the function fulfilled by the palinode in the argumentative line of the dialogue is different from that identified by Ferrari and Yunis, but I will share with them the view that the ideas formulated in the myth complement those expressed in the preceding and following parts of the dialogue.

I will apply a similar approach to the myth of Er. Although I will not explicitly discuss questions related to the truth or reliability of the ideas formulated in this section, I will treat them as interacting with those Socrates expresses in the preceding part of the *Republic*. In so doing, I will adopt a hermeneutical stance common in the scholarship published in the last thirty years, but my approach is controversial in a different respect. Rather than questioning the epistemic status or the degree of reliability of the views articulated in the myth, part of the recent literature on the *Republic* proposes that the peculiar character of this myth lies in conveying ideas difficult to reconcile with those illustrated in the rest of the dialogue. Halliwell proposes that the quasi-deterministic view that the myth

[1] Ferrari, 1987.
[2] Yunis, 2005.
[3] Werner 2012.

adopts in his interpretation signals the unfinished status of the *Republic*.[4] Gonzalez contends that the myth highlights the elements resisting the rational plan outlined in the rest of the dialogue.[5] Against these views I argue that the ideas formulated in the myth show great continuity with those embraced in the preceding parts of the *Republic*.

My analysis of the eschatological myth concluding the *Phaedo* will be guided by assumptions similar to those at the basis of my discussion of the myths contained in the *Phaedrus* and in the *Republic*. Rather than drawing a contrast between the epistemic status and reliability of (1) the myth and (2) the dialogical sections, I will propose a thesis on how the ideas formulated in the former complement those expressed in the latter. In applying this approach, my contribution will follow the theoretical paradigm currently in place. Recent scholarship is concerned with ascertaining the relation between the mythological section and the preceding part of the dialogue, rather than questioning the status of the myth. Sedley,[6] Ebert,[7] and Pender[8] detect continuity between the ideas expressed in the eschatological myth and the complex theoretical notions advanced in the rest of the dialogue, although they identify different forms of continuity between the two sections of the dialogue. My analysis also finds continuity between them, but proposes yet another set of reasons why eschatological myth completes the argumentative line developed in the rest of the dialogue.

As I have signalled in the general introduction to my thesis, in this chapter I will argue that the myth contained in Socrates' palinode contributes to the argumentative developed in the *Phaedrus* by picking up one of the threads of thought followed in the dialogue. I will propose that the palinode contributes to showing that the topics discussed in the dialogue have a closer relation to the divine sphere than initially acknowledged by Phaedrus, by revealing that philosophical love encourages lovers to imitate gods. In defending my thesis, I will address questions that have been object of discussion for a long time: there

[4] Halliwell 2007.
[5] Gonzalez 2012.
[6] Sedley 1990.
[7] Ebert 2004.
[8] Pender 2012.

has been a long-running scholarly debate both about the truth status of the central myth of the *Phaedrus* and about its position in the argumentative sequence of a dialogue the unity of which has been felt problematic since antiquity. The religious dimension reflected in several passages of the dialogue has been noticed by several scholars who have detected its traces both in the vocabulary and in the attitude adopted by Socrates at certain stages. Linforth has investigated the similarities between Corybantic possession and the state in which Socrates says he is put by speeches.[9] Pache has studied the nymphs and their ability to possess places and people.[10] Parker has analysed how some mystery rites were introduced to Athens.[11] Yunis has highlighted the traces of vocabulary connected with esoteric rites in Socrates' description of the reminiscence of beauty.[12]

The question of the status of myth concerns not only Socrates' palinode in the *Phaedrus* but more generally the mythological narratives contained in the Platonic corpus. The function and reliability of the mythological narratives contained in the Platonic corpus have been evaluated in very different ways in the course of a long scholarly debate. Although in the past views have been proposed that radically questioned the truth status of Platonic myths, today's prevalent orientation is to regard the contents conveyed in them as part of the argumentative line developed in the relevant dialogue. This hermeneutical stance is also reflected in the evaluation of the central myth of *Phaedrus*.[13] The commentary on the *Phaedrus* authored by Rowe[14] does not issue particular warnings against treating the palinode as part of the argumentative line Socrates follows. A similar attitude is adopted by Yunis in his recent commentary.[15] In the article Rowe published in 2012, he moves from the explicit assumption that the myth is integrated in "the argumentative structure"[16] of the dialogue. However, severe doubts about the truth

[9] Linforth 1946.
[10] Pache 2011.
[11] Parker 1996.
[12] Yunis 2012.
[13] Werner 2012, 9-13 lists the scholarly contributions that argue for or against considering the contents of the mythological narratives included in the *Phaedrus* to be part of Socrates' argumentative line.
[14] Rowe 1988.
[15] Yunis 2012.
[16] Rowe 2012b, 136.

status of the myth have recently been voiced by Werner.[17] The mismatch between the epistemic principles embraced in the palinode and the information it conveys signals in his view that Socrates does not commit himself to the accuracy of the description of the nature the post-mortem destiny of the soul.

Given that my aim in the second part of this chapter will be to define how the palinode contributes to the line of argument of the dialogue, I will first turn my attention to the question of the truth status of the myth. I will highlight that in his discussion of rhetoric Socrates delivers a retrospective judgment on his palinode in which he asserts that some of the views expressed in it are accurate while others are misleading. Although he does not provide a criterion to distinguish the views he would vouch for from those he would not committed himself to, I will focus on the question of whether there is any indication that the description of the nature and the post-mortem destiny of the soul given in the palinode is considered unreliable by Socrates. My thesis will be that the palinode does not give sufficient information to settle this question but Socrates affirms that that knowledge of the soul is available to human being in his discussion of rhetoric. The epistemic principles formulated in the palinode and the information it provides on the nature of the soul do not clarify whether the soul is an entity of which knowledge can be gained. The passage 270b4-271b5 however clarifies that Socrates believes that the practitioner of philosophical rhetoric can and should have knowledge of the soul.

Showing that according to Socrates knowledge of the soul is available to human beings is a crucial step for the argument I will offer in the second part of the chapter. As I will argue that one of the aspects in which the proximity of love to the religious sphere manifests itself is the imitation of divine souls by human ones, it is central to my argument to ascertain whether the description of the nature and post-mortem destiny of the soul given in the palinode can be legitimately considered reliable. A strong indication in this direction will be given by showing that Socrates maintains that knowledge of the soul is available to human beings and there is no clash between the epistemic principles outlined in the palinode and the description of the nature and afterlife destiny of the soul given in it. Substantiating these two points will not provide irrefutable evidence

[17] Werner 2012.

that Socrates commits himself to the accuracy of the account given in the palinode, but it will shift the burden of the proof. If according to Socrates knowledge of the soul is available to human beings and the account of the nature and afterlife destiny of the soul is consistent with the epistemic principles outlined in the palinode, no indication internal to the text suggests that this account is among the contents of the palinode that Socrates considers unreliable.

After contending that no indication internal to the text casts doubt on the reliability of the ideas expressed on the soul in the palinode, I will aim to show how these ideas contribute to the development of the conversation Socrates and Phaedrus hold in the dialogue. The problem of finding a thread allowing the different sections of the dialogue to be connected to each other has concerned readers since antiquity. The apparent disjointedness of the first half of the dialogue, occupied by a series of three speeches on love, from the second, dedicated to a discussion of the requirements of true rhetoric, has triggered a debate on the identification of the theme unifying the dialogue. Already Hermias testifies to the existence of an ancient debate on this problem by reporting the variety of subtitles given to the dialogue by scholars prior to him.[18] Like ancient readers, modern scholars have also felt the urgency of this problem. As Werner reports in his article "Plato's *Phaedrus* and the problem of unity,"[19] four main approaches have been applied to this problem since the beginning of the twentieth century: "the thematic approach," "the non-thematic approach," "the debunking approach" and "the strategic approach."[20] Proponents of the first two approaches agree that an element unifying the dialogue can be identified but diverge on the level at which unity can be found. Those applying the first approach argue that the exploration of one or more themes, either love, rhetoric, philosophy or a combination of them gives the dialogue its unity. Non-thematic approaches allow their proponents to identify unity on a dramatic-literary level, in the recurrence of certain images and themes, or in the interplay between the words uttered by the characters and the deeds they perform. Scholars adopting a debunking or a strategic approach agree that the *Phaedrus* cannot be found meeting the modern

[18] See De Vries 1969, 22 for a list of subtitles given to the *Phaedrus* in antiquity.
[19] Werner 2007a.
[20] Werner 2007a, 93.

definition of unity but disagree on the reasons why the dialogue appears lacking unity to modern readers. According to the former the problem of unity is felt by later commentators due to a modification in aesthetic sensibility but was not urgent for Plato's contemporaries, who regarded the dialogue as meeting their definition of unity.[21] For proponents of a strategic approach the problem of unity is real but intentional. Through the juxtaposition of two different sections Plato intends in their view to invite the reader to reflect on the relation between madness and philosophy and on the degree of the conclusiveness possessed by the palinode.

Although in this chapter I propose a view on how the argument of the *Phaedrus* can be understood as developing, I do not intend to contribute directly to the debate on the unity of the dialogue. My main contentions will be that Socrates aims to show that the topics addressed – love, rhetoric and writing – bear a closer relation to the divine dimension than Phaedrus is initially prepared to recognize and that he uses the myth he retells in the palinode to show how love is related to the divine dimension. The myth performs thus an important function in developing Socrates' agenda. By illustrating that love and piety are related, it contributes to advancing Socrates' worldview. Socrates offers his palinode to correct the image of love that he depicted in his first speech and that Phaedrus approved full-heartedly. Similarly, the discussion of rhetoric brings to light a religious dimension in the art of giving speeches of which Socrates' interlocutor was unaware. The description of the advantages of oral speech also reveals, to Phaedrus' surprise, that the aim of speech giving is related to the divine sphere.

By arguing that the central myth of the *Phaedrus* plays an important role in revealing a thread of thoughts that Socrates proposes to his interlocutor, I apply an approach similar to that I will also follow in my discussion of the eschatological myths concluding the *Republic* and the *Phaedo*. In the following chapter I will propose that myth of Er completes the agenda Socrates sets with his interlocutors at the beginning of Book 2 of the *Republic* by containing the defence of an aspect that he considers constitutive of justice. At the beginning of Book 2 Socrates asserts that he considers justice as a good desirable both in and by itself and for

[21] A notable example of this approach is Heath 1989; See footnote 23 for details on his thesis.

the beneficial consequences arising from it. Glaucon and Adeimantus insist that Socrates focus only on the reasons why justice is desirable in and by itself. Although his interlocutors' insistence leads Socrates to dedicating the block of Books 2 to 9 to the point in which they are in interested, he completes the defence of his notion of justice in Book 10. In the myth of Er, and in the larger passage 608c2-621d3, he illustrates that just people are rewarded during their earthly life and after death by gods and other human beings. A crucial place in Socrates' agenda is, in the view I will advance, occupied by the eschatological myth concluding the *Phaedo* too. By containing the fuller formulation of a hope Socrates formulates at a previous stage of the dialogue, the eschatological myth forms the culmination of the argumentative line Socrates proposes to his interlocutors. In his defence of the philosophical life Socrates formulates the hope of an afterlife guided by ethical principles. Although his interlocutors welcome this hope, they request that the soul be shown both to continue existing and to retain its intelligence after the death of the body. Only after Socrates substantiates these claims to his interlocutors' satisfaction is he able to articulate more fully the hope he originally formulated. In the eschatological myth he describes an afterlife substantially different for souls that engaged in morally good conduct during their earthly life and for those who did not.

To corroborate my thesis on the function that Socrates' palinode performs in the *Phaedrus*, I will follow an approach that, despite some superficial similarities, differs from a thematic one in not aiming to establish the thematic pre-eminence of religiosity. Unlike scholars who consider a topic, such as e.g. philosophy, as the unifying theme of the dialogue, I do not seek to provide "evidence for regarding philosophy [or, in my case, religiosity] as the *main* theme of the dialogue (and not *a* merely a theme)."[22] My aim in this section is simply to argue that religiosity is a dimension to which love, rhetoric and oral conversation belong in Socrates' view and that the palinode makes an important contribution to this. My approach will also remain distinct from a debunking one. Proponents of the latter maintain that asking the question of unity in terms of the theme that unifies the dialogue is anachronistic. In the eyes of Greek readers unity is reached "in so far as the

[22] Werner 2007a, 108, Werner's italics.

content of the dialogue serves the function of the genre."[23] As a philosophical text is intended to encourage the practice of virtue and to promote philosophical reflection, it is unified when its content "servers that broader function."[24] On the account of proponents of a debunking approach, Greek readers would therefore consider the *Phaedrus* unified because its discussion of love, rhetoric and writing is intended to foster the readers' moral improvement. For my part, I do not intend to defend the claims that instilling a pious attitude is the ultimate aim of the *Phaedrus* and that the pursuit of this aim would appear to a Greek reader as the unifying element of the dialogue. I remain non-committal about whether highlighting the religious dimension of activities considered purely human by Socrates' interlocutor would be, according to a Greek reader, sufficient for fulfilling the function of a philosophical work. In showing that love, rhetoric and oral speech are regarded by Socrates as closely related to a religious dimension, I rather intend to claim that the need for shaping an attitude respectful towards the gods emerges as a thread linking three of the major topics addressed in the dialogue.

My thesis shares the theoretical paradigm set by the scholarly works that consider the palinode an important part of the argumentative line of the *Phaedrus* but do not directly address the problem of the unity of the dialogue. Ferrari considers the myth fully integrated in the line of argument of the dialogue which it complements by expressing ideas less suitable to be formulated in the more analytical section of the dialogue that follows the palinode.[25] As he maintains, "just this […] is Plato's point in 'doing philosophy' in this dialogue through the two distinct and strikingly juxtaposed verbal paths of myth and dialectic. He allows neither path to reach a satisfactory goal; rather, one leads only to the other. If we want Plato's view on the philosophy displayed but not analysed in the

[23] Werner 2007a, 126. A prominent proponent of this view is Heath 1989. On the basis of an analysis of the criteria outlined by Aristotle for dramatic unity of narrative texts, he remarks that "the plot structure provides a platform on which many diverse, and perhaps divergent, material interests may be developed; and those interests need not in their turn be gathered under any over-arching thematic umbrella. It is sufficient (perhaps) if these interests are all in some way appropriate to the end or ends of the genre in question" (162). If dramatic unity is reached when the interests explored in a text are appropriate to the end pursued by the genre of that text, "in philosophical dialogue – presumably – […] they all contribute to philosophical illumination" (163).

[24] Werner 2007a, 126.

[25] Ferrari 1987.

dialogue's second part we must turn to the first; but there his view is presented only mythically; but if we turn back to the second part's philosophic account of the first in the hope of something more explicit, we find an analysis of its rhetorical style only, not of its substance…"[26] A similar view on the relation of the myth with the other part of the dialogue is articulated by Yunis. In his interpretation too, the palinode and the following part of the dialogue complement one another. The second and more analytical part of the dialogue carries out an analysis that aims to define an art of speaking on the basis of a principle internal to rhetoric itself: obtaining persuasiveness. The dialectical method that Socrates outlines in his discussion of rhetoric serves not the purpose of guiding the rhetorician to committing his art to truth but that of finding a more persuasive art of speech. "In the absence of an argument to establish rhetoric's dependence on philosophy, the burden of making that point falls entirely on the one place in the dialogue where the case is made for philosophy's absolute priority for ordering human affairs, and that is Socrates' Great Speech on eros."[27]

Adopting a hermeneutical stance similar to that of these two studies, I will defend my thesis by arguing for two points. First, I will aim to uncover the thread of allusions to the divine realm running through the dialogue. I will attempt to show that references to the religious sphere are observable in the setting of the conversation, in the acts performed by Socrates, and in the ideas he advances. Second, I will contend that the palinode picks up this thread. I will point out that the palinode illustrates a relation between human beings and gods based on the imitation of the latter by the former.

1 The reliability of the content of the palinode

Socrates' own assessment of the reliability of his palinode

In this part of the chapter I will argue that it is legitimate to consider some of the ideas expressed in the palinode as contributing to the argumentative line Socrates develops in the *Phaedrus*. I will begin my defence of this thesis by calling attention to the judgement Socrates delivers on his palinode in his discussion of

[26] Ferrari 1987, 34.
[27] Yunis 2005, 105.

rhetoric. As I will argue, the passage 265a6-c3 provides two reasons for maintaining that the palinode is integrated in the line of argument followed by Socrates in the dialogue. First, in this passage Socrates reuses the division of beneficial madness into four different kinds with which he opened his palinode and reasserts that love, the effect of which he described in his palinode, is one of these four types of madness. Second, Socrates openly asserts that the palinode includes along with less reliable details ideas he would vouch for.

In passage 265a6-c3 Socrates expresses his own judgement on the palinode he has offered to rehabilitate Eros. Although he admits that some of its aspects are not accurate, Socrates asserts that the palinode also presented correct views on Eros and praised him appropriately:

ΣΩ. […] μανίαν γάρ τινα ἐφήσαμεν εἶναι τὸν ἔρωτα. ἦ γάρ;
ΦΑΙ. Ναί.
ΣΩ. Μανίας δέ γε εἴδη δύο, τὴν μὲν ὑπὸ νοσημάτων ἀνθρωπίνων, τὴν δὲ ὑπὸ θείας ἐξαλλαγῆς τῶν εἰωθότων νομίμων γιγνομένην.
ΦΑΙ. Πάνυ γε.
ΣΩ. Τῆς δὲ θείας τεττάρων θεῶν τέτταρα μέρη διελόμενοι, μαντικὴν μὲν ἐπίπνοιαν Ἀπόλλωνος θέντες, Διονύσου δὲ τελεστικήν, Μουσῶν δ' αὖ ποιητικήν, τετάρτην δὲ Ἀφροδίτης καὶ Ἔρωτος, ἐρωτικὴν μανίαν ἐφήσαμέν τε ἀρίστην εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπῃ τὸ ἐρωτικὸν πάθος ἀπεικάζοντες, ἴσως μὲν ἀληθοῦς τινος ἐφαπτόμενοι, τάχα δ' ἂν καὶ ἄλλοσε παραφερόμενοι, κεράσαντες οὐ παντάπασιν ἀπίθανον λόγον, μυθικόν τινα ὕμνον προσεπαίσαμεν μετρίως τε καὶ εὐφήμως τὸν ἐμόν τε καὶ σὸν δεσπότην Ἔρωτα, ὦ Φαῖδρε, καλῶν παίδων ἔφορον.

SOCRATES: […] For we said that love is some kind of madness. Didn't we?
PHAEDRUS: We did.
SOCRATES: And that there are two kinds of madness, one caused by human illnesses while the other by a divine departure from customary norms.
PHAEDRUS: Very much so.
SOCRATES: When we distinguished four parts of divine madness as belonging to four gods, positing the prophetic inspiration as Apollo's, that of mystic rites as Dionysus', the poetic one as the Muses' and the fourth as Aphrodite' and Eros', we both said that the madness of love is the best, and, by somehow representing the erotic condition by a comparison, perhaps grasping some truth and perhaps being also mistakenly led in other direction, mixing together a not wholly unconvincing speech, we fittingly and piously sung a sort of playful mythical hymn to Eros, my and your master, watcher of beautiful boys.[28]

[28] My translation.

This "passage […] integrates the myth thoroughly into a larger argumentative structure: a division of types of madness. Seen in this way, the myth is part of Socrates' argument, not some adjunct to it. Its purpose was to inform us about a certain kind of divine madness, which it happens to do in a particularly colourful way: 'hymning' love, just as the first speech had 'impiously' denigrated it."[29] Socrates integrates his hymn to love into a larger argument by underlining that the description of the effects of love was part of an account of the benefit deriving from divine madness.

In the passage 265a6-c3 Socrates uses for the second time the division he made already at the beginning of his palinode. Before offering an argument for the immortality of the soul (245c5-246a2), which provided the basis for the description of the destiny of the soul after death (244b1-248c2) and the analysis of the power and the effect of love on incarnated souls (249b6-256e2), Socrates opened his speech by distinguishing four types of divine madness (244a6-245c1). First, he introduced prophetic inspiration (244a8-b5) and attributed to its influence the beneficial acts performed by the priestesses of Delphi and Dodona and by the Sibylla. The second type, presented at 244d5-245a1, was the inspiration of mystic rites and it was said to have effected purifications from ancestral faults. Third in Socrates' list was the madness sent by the Muses and it was presented as responsible for authentic poetic inspiration (245a1-a8). After these three types of madness had been presented and their beneficial effects illustrated, Eros was introduced as the fourth type of god-sent madness. At this stage Socrates stated that the aim of the following part of his speech would be to show the benefit given by love to men: "we, in our turn, must prove the reverse, that such madness is given by the gods to allow us to achieve the greatest good fortune" (245b7-c1). With these words it became clear that the division of divine madness into four kinds served the function of clarifying the nature of love before starting to praise its beneficial effect.

Although they are not all introduced in the same way in both passages, these four kinds of madness can be safely identified with those mentioned in lines

[29] Rowe 2012b, 136.

265b2-c3.[30] In both passages poetic inspiration is attributed to the Muses (245a1, 245a5, 265b4), and love is referred to as the kind of madness sent by Eros (245b6, 265b5). Prophetic inspiration and that of mystic rites are also easily identified with "Apollo's" and "Dionysus'." "When S. introduced the first three kinds of divine madness in the palinode he mentioned the Muses in connection with poetry (245a1) but not Apollo or Dionysus. But S. mentioned Delphi as his first example of prophetic madness (244b1); and S' second type of divine madness stressed the purifying aspect of initiatory madness (244e6-d5), which is easily connected with Dionysus as one of the chief gods of mystery cult […]."[31] Insisting on the division of divine madness into four groups in a passage outside the palinode signals that Socrates considers that division a contribution to the argument developed in the dialogue. If love is one of the types into which divine madness is divided, the mythical description of its effect is also properly regarded as a part of the argumentative line followed in the dialogue.

In addition to suggesting that the content of the palinode is intended by Socrates as contributing to the discussion held in the dialogue, the passage 265a6-c3 also contains some indication as to the level of Socrates' commitment to that content. Following these indications, it becomes possible to appreciate that Socrates' judgement on his own hymn is not clear-cut. Whereas he warns that not all of its aspects are equally reliable, he maintains that his hymn has praised Eros adequately. The first aspect that deserves attention is the use of the verb προσπαίζω (265c1) to describe the act of singing a hymn to Eros. As its primary meanings are "play" and "sport with,"[32] the choice of this verb signals that Socrates' hymn was at least in some of its passages playful. The suggestion that his hymn to Eros has a degree of playfulness is supported by the statement that it might not have been accurate in every detail. As Socrates underlines at 265b7-8, the description of the effect of love through images has created the possibility of

[30] Ferrari 1987, 60-67 considers the discrepancy between the division Socrates makes at the beginning of his palinode and the way he refers to it at 265b2-c3 indication that he wants to present ex post facto the process of division as being smoother. This slightly distorted presentation points in Ferrari's view towards the intention to the different goals pursued by philosopher and rhetorician.

[31] Yunis 2012, 195.

[32] LSJ *s.v.* προσπαίζω I 1.

"being also mistakenly led in other direction."[33] Despite these warnings Socrates refuses to discount unqualifiedly all the views he expressed in the palinode. Its playful character and occasional inaccuracies aside, the palinode, he maintains, offered the opportunity for "grasping some truth." Although he leaves the possibility open that it contains along with truthful elements deceptive ones too, Socrates believes that his hymn holds at least some persuasive power ("mixing together a not wholly unconvincing speech"). In addition to expecting that his hymn will be received positively by an audience, Socrates expresses a positive judgement on its intrinsic quality as well. As he states, the hymn has in fact praised Eros "fittingly and piously." As I will emphasize next the importance of the religious dimension throughout the *Phaedrus*, it is worth noting now that Socrates' retrospect stresses the piety and appropriateness with which the palinode praised a god – not just the illustration of collection and division.

In this section I have attempted to show that the content of the palinode is intended by Socrates to contribute to the line of argument developed in the dialogue. Focusing on lines 265a6-c3, I have pointed out that Socrates expresses a

[33] There have been various attempts to identify which elements are considered by Socrates truthful and which are not. Indications important to this identification are given in the passage 265c8-d1: "to me it seems that the rest was really playfully done, by way of amusement. But by chance two principles of method of the following sort were expressed, and it would be gratifying if one could grasp their significance in a scientific one." On this basis Yunis 2012 maintains that the only serious aspect of the palinode is the description of the processes of division and recollection. "By isolating the dialectical aspect (τούτων δέ) of his speech from everything else in them (τὰ μὲν ἄλλα) and emphatically labelling them as play […] while seeking to investigate the former, S. leaves the clear implication that dialectic is uniquely serious" (196). Extending the portion of text under his consideration to 265e2, Rowe 2012b argues that the definition of Eros and the description of the effects of love are also among the elements that Socrates thinks his first speech and the palinode described correctly. "Insofar as they were to be taken seriously, the two speeches [Socrates' first speech on love and the palinode] were about collection, division, and the definition of *erōs*; all the rest was mere play. And to the extent that the myth is part (in fact the main part) of Socrates' *demonstration* that the 'right-handed' *erōs* is a divine kind of madness, it must itself belong to what is to be taken seriously. It is not itself part of the 'play', *qua* story […]. To the extent that it 'allowed us to grasp some 'truth', the 'hymn in form of a story' was presumably not playful; its playful elements, whichever they were, will perhaps have just been any that might have 'taken us in a wrong direction'" (138, Rowe's italics). There is support in 265d5-7 for Rowe's suggestion that Socrates considers as truthful elements of his account not only collection and division but also his definition of love and at least part of the description of its effects: "just so with the things said just now about love, about what it is when defined: whether it was right or wrong, the speech was able to say what was at any rate clear and self-consistent because of that." In this case too, Socrates' judgement on his own account is nuanced. He underlines its clarity and self-consistency and attributes them to the fact that the account defines erōs. Despite the formal correctness of these procedures, Socrates remains non-committal about whether the nature of love was captured in a completely accurate way. Irrespective of the accuracy of this description, it is sufficient to show that at least some elements of the palinode are considered by Socrates truthful to conclude that his commitment to its content is at least partial.

judgement on the reliability of the account he gives in the palinode. As he asserts, not all details presented in the palinode are equally reliable, but some of them contribute to providing what he believes to be a correct representation of Eros. Although he does not provide a criterion for separating reliable from unreliable details, he declares that the account of Eros he gives in the palinode is in some parts convincing and appropriate.

The epistemological principles of the palinode

In this section and in the following one I will argue that no indication internal to the text suggests that the description of the nature and the afterlife destiny of the soul given in the palinode is considered unreliable by Socrates. My thesis will be that the palinode does not give sufficient information to decide whether or not Socrates believes that knowledge of the soul is available to human beings, but he answers it positively in his discussion of rhetoric. If defended convincingly, these points show that no indication internal to the text calls into doubt the reliability of the description of the nature of the soul and its post-mortem destiny.

In order to show that the palinode does not give any indication that calls into doubt the reliability of the description of soul's nature and post-mortem destiny, I will argue that no mismatch can be observed between the epistemic principles formulated in the palinode and the accounts of the soul provided on it. While I will proceed to the evaluation of the relevant information on the soul in the next section, in the present one I will outline the epistemic principles contained in the palinode that establish what type of entities can be object of knowledge and whether this knowledge is available to souls during their incarnate life.

I will begin my account of the epistemic principles outlined in the palinode by arguing that they state that knowledge refers only to the forms whereas sensible particulars are grasped by a cognitive act of less precision and lower epistemic level. To validate this claim, two points need to be substantiated. The forms need to be shown to be objects of knowledge and things different from the forms need to be identified as objects of cognition different in nature from knowledge. The passage 247c6-e2 provides evidence in support of both of these claims.

ἡ γὰρ ἀχρώματός τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος καὶ ἀναφὴς οὐσία ὄντως οὖσα, ψυχῆς κυβερνήτῃ μόνῳ θεατὴ νῷ, περὶ ἣν τὸ τῆς ἀληθοῦς ἐπιστήμης γένος, τοῦτον ἔχει τὸν τόπον. ἅτ' οὖν θεοῦ διάνοια νῷ τε καὶ ἐπιστήμῃ ἀκηράτῳ τρεφομένη, καὶ ἁπάσης ψυχῆς ὅσῃ ἂν μέλῃ τὸ προσῆκον δέξασθαι, ἰδοῦσα διὰ χρόνου τὸ ὂν ἀγαπᾷ τε καὶ θεωροῦσα τἀληθῆ τρέφεται καὶ εὐπαθεῖ, ἕως ἂν κύκλῳ ἡ περιφορὰ εἰς ταὐτὸν περιενέγκῃ. ἐν δὲ τῇ περιόδῳ καθορᾷ μὲν αὐτὴν δικαιοσύνην, καθορᾷ δὲ σωφροσύνην, καθορᾷ δὲ ἐπιστήμην, οὐχ ᾗ γένεσις πρόσεστιν, οὐδ' ἥ ἐστίν που ἑτέρα ἐν ἑτέρῳ οὖσα ὧν ἡμεῖς νῦν ὄντων καλοῦμεν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ ὅ ἐστιν ὂν ὄντως ἐπιστήμην οὖσαν·

For the being without colour or shape, impalpable, which really is, observable only by intellect, the steersman of the soul, and to which the class of true knowledge refers occupies this region. Since it is nourished by pure intellect and knowledge, the mind of a god and that of every soul that is concerned to receive what is fitting at last both rejoices seeing the being and is nourished and benefitted contemplating the true reality until the revolution brings it around to the same point. In the circuit it contemplates justice itself, moderation, and it contemplates knowledge, not that to which generation is added or which is different in different circumstances because it is of the things we now call real, but that knowledge that applies to the realm of what really is.[34]

This passage describes what the souls see when, after travelling across the sky, they reach the place above the heavens. This region is described as being occupied by things that possess the highest degree of ontological perfection. In the place above the heavens souls have access to a type of being that is qualified as that "which really is" (247c7). What souls can see in this place is described as "the true reality" (247d4). The forms of justice, self-control and knowledge are given as examples of the being which really is. As the forms have the highest degree of ontological perfection, so a cognitive act aimed at them reaches the highest degree of epistemic perfection. The connection between the ontological and the epistemic fields is clearly established when true being is described as the ontological realm to which "the class of true knowledge refers" (247c8). As Rowe notes, "The Forms […] are immaterial, graspable only by the mind, each of them just what it is and never anything else; knowledge which comes from that source will be knowledge pure and simple […]."[35] If knowledge of the forms is characterised by the highest degree of truthfulness, cognition of objects different from the forms remains on a lower epistemic level. In lines 247d5-e2 a clear contrast is highlighted between knowledge of the forms of justice and self-control on the one side and cognition of sensible particulars on the other. The latter is defined as "to

[34] My translation.
[35] Rowe 1988, 179.

which generation is added or which is different in different circumstances because it concerns the things we now call real." The reason why cognitive acts aimed at sensible particulars are bound to remain on a lower epistemic level is that sensible particulars lack stability: "physical things, which we see and touch, are only qualifiedly what they claim to be - e.g. because they are subject to change […]; any knowledge we have which relates exclusively to them is therefore also qualified […]. What counts as beautiful, for example, under one set of circumstances, will not count as such under another […]."[36]

While the passage 247c6-e2 identifies the forms as the only objects of knowledge, lines 248a1-6 show that knowledge is available to discarnate souls. Lines 248b4-5 establish a contrast between the knowledge acquirable in the place above the heavens and the cognition of things outside this place, thereby clarifying that knowledge is acquirable only by discarnate souls.

The place and modality of the acquisition of knowledge by human souls are described in lines 248a1-6: "the one [soul] which follows a god best and has come to resemble him most raises the head of its charioteer into the region outside, and is carried round with the revolution, disturbed by its horses and scarcely catching sight of the things that are; while another now rises, now sinks, and because of the force exerted by his horses sees some things but not others."[37] Even though the number of forms seen varies, the forms are clearly stated to be seen by discarnate souls (καθορῶσα, 248a4) when they reach the place above the heavens. Lines 248b4-5 establish a contrast between the different types of cognition available to souls in the place above the heavens and away from it: "and all of them [the souls], having experienced much distress, depart without having completed the sight of what is, and feed on opinion after departing."[38] In this passage the contrast already established in lines 247d5-e2 is presented again: knowledge of the forms is opposed to cognition of objects different from the forms. While lines 247d5-e2 already stated that cognitive acts aimed at objects different from the forms remain on a lower epistemic level than knowledge of the forms, this passage contains a new crucial element. It clarifies that once souls leave the place

[36] Rowe 1988, 179-180.
[37] Unless otherwise stated, all translations of the *Phaedrus* are by Rowe 1988.
[38] My translation.

above the heavens they no longer have access to knowledge of the forms. After reincarnation the only form of cognition available to them is restricted to opinion, "which is based on the world of appearance (this earthly world) and is opposed to knowledge."[39]

While these two passages show that knowledge of the forms can only be acquired by (some of) the souls in the place above the heavens, line 248c7 asserts that even the souls that have seen some forms there forget them at moment of reincarnation. As Socrates states, as soon as a soul becomes unable to follow in the train of the god it has previously chosen, it ceases to see the forms. In the very same moment at which it is deprived of their sight, this soul is dragged down after "being filled with forgetfulness and incompetence" (248c7).[40] The moment of detachment from the divine procession marks for a soul not only the impossibility of seeing new forms but also with the loss of memory of those seen already.[41] When a soul is implanted in body, it begins its earthly life without any of knowledge it possibly acquired in discarnate status.

The passages analysed so far have allowed us to identify the epistemic principles the palinode formulates concerning acquisition and object of knowledge. Knowledge refers exclusively to the forms and can only be acquired by discarnate souls in the place above the heavens. When reincarnated, souls forget the knowledge possibly acquired in discarnate status and cannot acquire new knowledge because sensible particulars are objects of cognitive acts of smaller precision and lower epistemic level that result not in knowledge but in some other kind of cognition. Although incarnate souls cannot increase the knowledge they have acquired in the place above the heavens, under specific circumstances they can recollect the one they have forgotten at the moment of

[39] Yunis 2012, 143.

[40] When departing from the place above the heavens, souls are filled both with forgetfulness and κακία. Rowe 1988 translates the latter "incompetence," but he notes that it could also have a moral sense (181). Ferrari 1987 proposes that the cause(s) for the fall of the souls from the place above the heavens to earth casts doubt that "the mythical narrative can be said to be 'explanatory' of the ethical behaviour in the kinds of life that we know" (133). While the souls are said to be dragged down to earth "because the meet some misfortune and are filled with forgetfulness and κακία" (248c6-7), it is in Ferrari's view not clear whether forgetfulness and κακία are intended as factors distinct from misfortune or as glosses of it. This ambiguity renders it difficult to evaluate the role of luck and undermine the ethical value of the behaviour of incarnate souls.

[41] Yunis 2012, 144 observes that "[forgetfulness] of the Forms and true Being begins as soon as the soul fails to attain sight of the super-heavenly realm in its latest attempt to do so."

reincarnation. Lines 249c4-8 shows that the process of recollection allow the souls that undergo it appropriately to regain memory of the forms they have seen in discarnate status. In describing how the philosopher recollects the knowledge acquired in the place above the heavens, these lines also suggest that there is no significant difference in clarity between the knowledge acquired in the place above the heavens and that regained through recollection. The description of the reaction of the philosopher's soul to the sight of the beloved's beauty given at 254b5-7 reinforces this point.

Lines 249c4-8 describe recollection in the following terms: "hence it is with justice that only the mind of the philosopher becomes winged: for so far as it [the mind of the philosopher] can it is close, through memory, to those things his closeness to which gives a god his divinity. Thus if a man uses such reminders right, being continually initiated in perfect mysteries, he alone through that initiation achieves real perfection." As the initial sentence suggests recollection is said to be possible not to every incarnate soul but only to a very specific group of them: those of the philosophers. The Law of Necessity clarifies why their soul are the only ones that can recollect the knowledge acquired in the place above the heavens: "the one [soul] which saw most [of the forms] shall be planted in a seed from which will be born a man who will become a lover of wisdom or of beauty, or devoted to the Muses or to love" (248d2-4). In virtue of having seen a high number of forms in the place above the heavens, the philosopher's soul remains in contact with the forms seen before incarnation. Although this contact is very limited on ordinary occasions, recollection renders it very close again, if the philosopher uses appropriately the reminders of the forms he finds during his earthly life.

While the most effective reminder is, as we will see shortly, the instantiation of beauty in the beloved boy, it is important to note the use of the term τέλεος (249c8) as a qualification for the philosopher who "uses reminders rightly." This adjective recalls to mind the adjective ἀτελεῖς at 248b4[42] and its occurrence at this

[42] The adjectives τέλεος and ἀτελής are reminiscent of the language of mysteries. Yunis 2012 highlights the use of "terminology associated with the cult […] to create a complex metaphor for several facets of S.'s reminiscence at once. Beauty's radiance and S.'s glimpse of it are linked to the ἐποπτεία (ἐποπτεύοντες, 250 c3), the Eleusinian cult's highest grade of initiation, in which the light of sacred torches (ἐν αὐγῇ καθαρᾷ, 250c4) breaks upon the night to put the cult's hidden,

stage suggests that the clarity of the knowledge regained through recollection is very similar to that of the knowledge acquired in the place above the heavens. In the already quoted lines 248b4-5[43] ἀτελεῖς qualifies those souls that are unable to complete the sight of the forms and are reincarnated. If failure to see all the forms causes souls to remain ἀτελεῖς, the use of the adjective τέλεος suggests by implication that, when recollection occurs, the soul of a philosopher is in a condition very similar to that of discarnate souls contemplating the forms in the place above the heavens.

If recollection allows the philosopher's soul to reacquire a degree of knowledge of the forms equal or very similar to that reached by discarnate souls in the place above the heavens, the activation of the recollecting process requires an appropriate sensible particular to be activated. Lines 250d1-3 inform us that beauty is the forms that can be perceived most easily among sensible particulars. Lines 250d6-e1 explain the reason: "as it is, beauty alone has acquired this privilege, of being most evident and most loved." Since beauty is easier to discern than the other forms,[44] a beautiful beloved is particularly apt to trigger recollection. The process of recollection cannot however be activated in every soul but it requires the soul that undergoes it to have seen a considerable number of forms in the place above the heavens. As the Law of Necessity shows, the souls that have contemplated the highest number of forms are implanted in the life of a philosopher. During their earthly life these souls have the possibility of recollecting the forms they saw in the place above the heavens but forgot at the moment of reincarnation if they encounter an instantiation of beauty in a beautiful beloved.

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sacred objects suddenly in view (ὄψιν τε καὶ θέαν, 250b5, φάσματα, c3). The purification rendered by the rite (ὠργιάζομεν, 250c1) corresponds to the pure state of the soul devoid of the body (250c1-5). The ecstasy of the rite and the blessedness of spiritual salvation (μακαρίαν, 250b5, μακαριωτάτην, c1) convey the bliss that is itself the means of extolling beauty's radiance" (149f).

[43] See p. 33.

[44] As to the reason why beauty is the easiest form to discern in the sensible world different explanations have been proposed. De Vries 1969, 149 suggests that what differentiates a likeness of the form of beauty from those of the other forms is its higher level of accuracy. Robin 1983, xcvi-xcvii proposes that the likenesses of beauty are more immediate than likenesses of the other forms. Ferrari 1987, 142-150 follows a very distinctive line. In his account beauty can be more easily seen because its instantiations announce themselves more immediately as objects of the viewer's concern. At the sight of a beautiful beloved the lover is prompted to care about him and to plan a philosophical life with him as a result of the care for him.

While lines 248b3-5 suggest that the level of vividness of the knowledge recollected by the philosopher is not inferior to that achieved through direct vision of the forms, the passage 254b5-7 confirms this point: "as the charioteer sees it [the beauty of the boy], he is carried back to the nature of the beauty, and again sees it standing with self-control on a holy pedestal […]" (254b5-7). When the soul of a philosophic lover sees beauty in a sensible particular, it is promptly remembered of the beauty in the place above the heavens. Once activated, recollection allows forms to become again present to the mind of the recollecting person. That recollection and direct vision of the forms do not considerably differ from each other is highlighted by the occurrence of εἶδεν at 254b6. If the use of verbs of seeing is a feature peculiar for the description of the process by which discarnate souls acquire knowledge, the use of εἶδεν at 254b6 stresses a clear similarity between recollection and direct vision of the forms.

The analysis of the passages discussed above has allowed us to ascertain what knowledge can be possessed by incarnate souls. As we have seen, knowledge only relates to the forms and it can be acquired only in the place above the heavens. When a soul is reincarnated, it forgets the knowledge it acquired in discarnate status. Despite the complete loss of knowledge souls suffer at the moment of reincarnation, some of them are able to regain it through recollection. Even if knowledge can be acquired only in discarnate status, it is also available during life on earth, provided that the soul has first acquired it in the place above the heavens and then regained it through recollection after being reincarnated.

Having ascertained that knowledge of the forms can be possessed by incarnate souls will help us see that the palinode does not provide a clear answer as to whether the soul is an entity that can be known by human beings. As I will argue in the following section, the information given in the palinode is insufficient for establishing what status the soul is given.

The ontological and epistemic status of the soul

In the previous section I have argued that knowledge only relates to the forms and that this knowledge can be possessed by incarnate souls. To complete the defence of the thesis that no information internal to the text calls into doubt the reliability

of the description of the nature and the post-mortem destiny of the soul given in the palinode, in this section I will concentrate on the information given on the soul. As I will contend, the palinode does not allow it to be decided whether there can be knowledge of the soul because it does not clarify whether or not the soul has the same ontological status that the forms. Despite the lack of information on the soul contained in the palinode, I will highlight that in his discussion of rhetoric Socrates affirms in lines 270b4-271b5 that the teacher of philosophical rhetoric possesses knowledge of the soul.

The difficulty of ascertaining the ontological and thus the epistemic status of the soul lies in the contradictory character of the information the palinode gives on this point. Two points seem to indicate that the soul has the same status as the forms: it is conceived of as immortal and it is presented as an entity that has relation to the forms. By contrast, three indications suggest that the soul is more similar to a sensible particular: its composite character, its being a particular and its existence inscribed in temporal and spatial coordinates.

The argument for the immortality of the soul that Socrates offers at 245c5-246a2 testify to the fact that the soul is conceived of as immortal in the palinode. The argument culminates in the conclusion that the soul is an ungenerated (ἀγένητον, 246a1) and immortal entity (ἀθάνατον, 246a1). The passage 247c6-e2 shows that the soul is treated as an entity that has relation to the forms. As Socrates asserts in, souls are able to take sight of "being which really is" (247c7) and "what is true" (247d4) in the place above the heavens. When they gain access to the forms, both the divine and the human souls are said to experience a feeling of well-being and relief. In the place above the heavens "the mind of a god is nourished" (247d1-2) and a human soul ""is glad" (247d3) and "is nourished by and made happy" (247d34) by the sight of the forms.

In addition to these two pieces of evidence it is worth mentioning that the word ἰδέα occurs with reference to the soul at 246a3, although this occurrence cannot be considered evidence that the soul is assimilated to a form. The word ἰδέα occurs six times in the *Phaedrus*, but it does not always refer to a form. Two occurrences in which its meaning is plainly not "form" are 251a3 and 253b7. In the first passage the word refers to the body of a beloved boy and can be translated

"shape." At 253b7 ἰδέα indicates the pattern that the life of Apollo exhibits and that the life of a boy loved by a follower of Apollo will be educated to follow.

While its being conceived of as an entity that is immortal and capable of having relation to the forms suggests that the soul has a status similar to that of the forms, other indications point in a different direction. In the palinode the soul is also presented as a composite substance, a sensible particular and an entity that exists in temporal and special coordinates. The composite character of the soul becomes apparent from the very beginning of the palinode, where the image of a winged chariot is introduced to represent the soul.[45] At 246a6-7 Socrates invites his interlocutor to liken the soul to "the combined power of a winged team of horses and their charioteer." This image, recurrent throughout the palinode, is conferred significant explanatory power very soon after being introduced.[46] At 246b1-4 the different quality of the horses is used to explain the difference between divine and human souls: "now in the case of the gods, horses and charioteers are all both good and of good stock: whereas in the case of the rest there is a mixture. In the first place our driver has charge of a pair; in the second place one of them he finds noble and good, and of similar stock, while the other is of the opposite stock, and opposite in nature; so that driving in our case is necessary difficult and troublesome." Whereas in the case of the gods the similar quality of the two horses renders the articulation of the soul in three parts less significant, the considerable difference in quality between the two horses indicates that the presence of three parts[47] in the human soul has relevant consequences on

[45] For an account that emphasis the moral and cognitive value of the appetitive and spirited parts of the soul see Nussbaum 1986, 213-223.

[46] Despite its strong explanatory power the metaphor of the chariot is not the only one associated with the soul in the palinode. Pender 2000 identifies and discusses four other images with which the soul is associated: wings or plumage, a plant's foliage, fresh shoots, and teeth coming through.

[47] There has been debate on how each part of the soul is appropriately understood as functioning. Two theses have been advanced. According to one, each part is a faculty that performs its function and only that. E.g. the rational part is regarded as having only the power of reasoning but no form of desire or appetite. Proponents of the other thesis consider each part of the soul as an agent. In this view each part of the soul is characterized by the predominant but not exclusive execution of a function. For instance, the rational part is such because it exercises reason in a greater proportion than the other parts of the soul but it also feels desire and has appetite, although to a smaller extent than the spirited and appetitive parts. Pender 2000, 197-199 summarizes the debate and sides with the proponents of the agent-thesis. Whether the parts of the soul are faculties or agents, their presence shows that the soul is not a homogeneous unity like a form but an articulated entity.

its behaviour. As this passage shows, the soul is not a homogeneous unity but an entity articulated in more parts.

Besides having a composite character, the soul is also treated as a particular in the palinode. That divine souls are a plurality is clarified by line 247b6: "those souls that are called immortal […]." The plural form signals that there exist more divine souls, and it openly suggests that each of the twelve gods referred to in 246e4-247a1 ("Zeus" and the "the army of gods ordered in eleven companies") has his own soul. Human souls are also presented as particulars. By describing the different behaviours adopted by human souls when attempting to follow the divine ones in the place above the heavens, lines 248a1-6 show that human souls are also a plurality: "of the other souls, the one which follows a god best […] raises the head of his charioteer into the region outside […]; while another one now rises, now sinks, and because of the force exerted by its horses sees some things but not others." The description of how the lover's soul regrows its wings at the sight of beauty (251a1-252a1) and the analysis of the behaviour adopted by each of the two horses at the presence of the beloved (253e5-255a1) confirms that each human being is assumed to have a soul.

That the soul exists within spatial and temporal coordinates is evident from the fact that its cosmic life follows successive cycles of reincarnation. The palinode contains both the description of souls at different times of their cosmic life and the outline of the rules regulating how often a soul must be reincarnated. The initial section of the palinode focuses on discarnate souls and depicts them travelling through the sky towards the place above the heavens (246d6-248b5). The central and the final sections shift attention onto incarnate souls and describe the effect love exerts on them during their embodied life (251a7-252a1, 253c7-255a1). The Law of Necessity regulates in which form of life a certain type of soul will be reincarnated and how long it will part of the cycle of successive incarnations (248e5-249b5).

The examined evidence points towards an ambiguous status of the soul, in between that of an eternal and that of a sensible particular. Although the information given on the soul in the palinode does not allow us to decide whether or not the soul is a type of entity of which knowledge can be acquired, lines

270b4-271b5 clarify Socrates' position on this issue. As emerges from the analysis of this section, Socrates maintains that knowledge of the soul is a requirement for proper teaching of philosophical rhetoric. When he explains the method of philosophical rhetoric through a comparison with the method adopted by contemporary medicine, he states that "in both it is necessary to determine the nature of something, in one [medicine] the nature of the body, in the other [rhetoric] the nature of the soul […]" (270b4-5). After receiving Phaedrus' agreement on this point, Socrates focuses attention on the conditions required to acquire knowledge of the soul: "then do you think it is possible to understand the nature of the soul satisfactorily without understanding the nature of the whole?" (270c1-2). Since it has been already agreed upon that the nature of the soul can be determined, Phaedrus' affirmative reply to this question clarifies that accurate knowledge of the soul is obtained when not only single aspects of it but the soul in its entirety is known.[48]

That accurate knowledge of the soul is a requirement for proper teaching of philosophical rhetoric is reaffirmed by Socrates at 270e2-5: "[…] It is clear that if anyone teaches anyone rhetoric in a scientific way, he will reveal precisely the essential nature of that thing to which his pupil will apply his speeches; and that I think is the soul." In these lines the soul is identified as what a rhetorician addresses when he speaks. Its knowledge is thus pivotal to choosing a particular type of speech that is able to cause the intended reaction in the addressee. The

[48] The reference of the word "whole" has been hotly debated. In the past some scholars have argued that the word means the universe and is a reference to the Presocratic debate on nature. More recent scholarship has been inclined to understand the word as highlighting the need for the teacher of philosophical rhetoric to know the soul in its entirety. Rowe 1988 comments on these lines as follows: "the whole *universe*, or merely the whole *soul*? Hackforth and de Vries must be right in opting for the second interpretation, because the following discussion, which starts from the proposition in c 1-2, says nothing about the need to study the universe and a great deal about the need to study soul in general" (205). Yunis 2012 interprets this passage on a very similar line, arguing that such interpretation is corroborated by Socrates' following intervention: "the meaning of the phrase 'the nature of the whole' is unclear and only becomes clear in what follows. In response to Ph.'s intervention on this point (270c3-4) S. explains that 'the nature of the whole' means viewing whatever object is under scrutiny, in this case the soul, with respect to a complete description of its active and passive interactions with other objects (270c8-e5 […]). Cf. *Smp.* 205b-c where τὸ ὅλον is used to refer to complex entities (*erōs*, poetry) conceived as wholes. Since τὸ ὅλον can also mean 'the universe' (*Lys.* 214b, *Phlb.* 28d) S.'s phrase has been taken to mean 'the nature of the universe' in reference to presocratic theories of nature such as that of Anaxagoras […]. But that interpretation would have S. looking back to 269e4-270a6 instead of forward to 270c8-e5, which runs against the way the passage unfolds and does not advance Ph. (or us) towards the knowledge of the soul that is required for good discourse" (211).

cardinal importance of knowledge of the soul for the teaching of philosophical rhetoric is stated again by Socrates at 271a4-8: "both Thrasymachus and anyone else who seriously teaches a science of rhetoric will first write with complete accuracy and enable us to see whether soul is something which is one and uniform in nature or complex like the form of the body: for this is what we say is to reveal the nature of something."[49]

After stressing that the person who teaches philosophical rhetoric needs to know the different types of soul, Socrates clarifies what knowledge of the nature of the soul consists in: "and in the second place, he [the teacher of philosophical rhetoric] makes clear under the influence of what [kind of speech] a soul does what or is affected by what"[50] (271a10-11). The teacher of philosophical rhetoric needs to show his pupil which kind of speech leads the soul to perform a certain action and what kind of speech causes it to be in a certain condition. Once he has made this knowledge available to the pupil, the teacher "will go through all the causes, fitting each [speech] to each [soul] and explaining what sort of soul's being subjected by to what sorts of speeches necessarily results in one being convinced and anther not, giving the cause in each case" (271b2-5). Knowledge of the soul is thus required to show what kind of speech exerts a persuasive effect on a certain kind of soul, and to explain why this relation exists.

The passages analysed above clearly show that Socrates believes that knowledge of the soul is attainable. In them he openly asserts that knowledge of the soul is a requirement for appropriate teaching of philosophical rhetoric. He states that the teacher of philosophical rhetoric needs to be able to transfer knowledge of the soul, and he explains in what this knowledge consists. The

[49] Yunis 2012 convincingly argues that in these lines "'multiform' [πολυειδές, translated 'complex' by Rowe] refers to the soul not as an entity with many parts but as one that exists as different types ([…] *Rep.* 10.612a); and the reference to bodily shape concerns the many types of bodily shape, not the many parts that make up the body" (213). Interpreting πολυειδές as a reference to the several types of soul to which a true rhetorician needs to be able to tailor his speeches does not imply denying that the structure of the soul is also multiform in the sense that it is formed by three parts. "S. spoke of hybris as πολυειδές in this [latter] sense (238a3). The soul is πολυειδές in this sense too. Although the palinode's image of the soul involves several parts (charioteer, god horse, bad horse, chariot, wings), the palinode's interest lies in describing how souls are affected by their prenatal heavenly experiences and thereby turned into different types (248d2-e3, 252c4-253c2). The types of human souls are about to be emphasized again in the rhetorical psychology (271b1-4, 271c9-272b4)" (212).

[50] My translation.

teacher of philosophical rhetoric needs to be able to distinguish the different types of soul, illustrate what prompts a soul to perform a certain action or to be in a certain condition, list what kinds of speech is persuasive for certain kinds of soul and explain why.

In the section *Socrates' own assessment of the reliability of his palinode* I have pointed out that Socrates integrates his palinode in the argumentative line of the dialogue and that he retrospectively assesses the level of reliability it has in his eyes. Although he admits that some of the views he expressed in it are misleading, he confirms his readiness to vouch for others. Even if Socrates does not provide a criterion to distinguish the former from the latter, the analysis I have carried out in the previous and in the present sections shows that the palinode does not give any indication that the description of the nature and the post-mortem destiny of the soul is unreliable. The epistemic principles formulated in the palinode do not allow it to be decided whether knowledge of the soul can be acquired by discarnate souls or possessed by incarnate ones. Positive evidence for this point is given by the analysis of the passage 270b4-271b5 in which knowledge of the soul is identified as a requirement of the philosophical rhetoric Socrates intends to propose.

The results achieved so far are of crucial importance for the analysis that I will carry out in the following part of the chapter. In the section *The link between philosophical love and the divine sphere* I will contend that the palinode highlights an aspect of the concern for a pious attitude towards the gods that is felt throughout the dialogue. Since I will argue that one of the reasons why philosophical love is entangled with the religious sphere is that it fosters imitation of the gods in the human souls, one of the passages on which my argument will be based is the description of the attempt of human souls to imitate divine ones in ascending to the place above the heavens. Having shown that the palinode gives no indication that calls into doubt Socrates' commitment to the reliability of the account of nature and post-mortem destiny of the soul make thus an important contribution to the solidity of the argument I will offer in the second part of this chapter.

2 The palinode and the religious sphere

References to the divine sphere in the settings of the *Phaedrus*

In this section I will begin to undercover the thread of allusion to the divine realm that runs through the entire dialogue. In its treatment of religion the *Phaedrus* is poised between playfulness and a serious suggestion that piety is a consideration in the evaluation of love, rhetoric and the merits of oral speech. Although it is not always possible to decide whether a reference to the divine sphere is ironic and, if so, to what extent,[51] In this section I will aim to show that the opening pages of the dialogue allow a religious undertone to be heard in the description Socrates gives of himself when he meets Phaedrus and in the landscape surrounding the characters.

Upon their encounter, Phaedrus tells Socrates that he has lately heard a speech Lysias gave on love (227c4-5). Intrigued, Socrates expresses his desire to hear the speech from him (227d2-5). As Phaedrus purports to be insufficiently skilled to reproduce a speech composed by one of the most impressive rhetoricians of the time (227d6-228a4), Socrates professes to be persuaded that Phaedrus would not have been satisfied before he had heard Lysias repeat his speech multiple times and had read the script of the speech himself (228a6-b2). Only after learning the speech thoroughly (228b4-5), Socrates continues, would Phaedrus have decided to take a walk and to his great pleasure encountered someone "sick with passion for speeches"[52] (228b6-7) and found in him a συγκορυβαντιῶντα (228b7).

The word συγκορυβαντιῶντα is a form of the present participle from συγκορυβαντιάω that means "join in Corybantic revels."[53] The Corybantes were mythic creatures associated with the celebrations of rites dedicated to different divinities. In Hellanicus' *Phoronis* (EpGF fr. 2a, p. 154)[54] they are presented as servants of the Great Mother and connected with the Couretes. Couretes and Corybantes were also associated in the mysteries celebrated in honour of Despoina in Lykosoura, as shown by the fact in the local sanctuary of Pan, "on the

[51] For an analysis that stresses an ironic undertone in many passages of the *Phaedrus* see Cook 1985, particularly pp. 433-434 on the interlocutors' discussion of the Boreas myth and pp. 438-439 on the beginning of Socrates' first speech.
[52] Rowe's translation modified.
[53] LSJ *s. v.* συγκορυβαντιάω
[54] See *Der Neue Pauly s.v.* Kureten, 936.

pedestal supporting the cult statue of the divine group Kouretes and Koribantes appear."[55] These two groups of gods are sometimes associated also in poetry, where "the Kouretes and the Korybantes dance about the new-born Zeus child or the enthroned Dionysus child."[56]

As associates and servants of the Mother, the Corybantes were attributed the power of causing and curing mental disturbance. Along with them, other gods, such as Hecate or Pan, were believed to share this power.[57] Although each god was held responsible for causing and curing a particular disease, it was not always clear which god to identify as responsible for a certain disease. Despite some ambiguity, the mental disease for which the Corybantes were considered responsible is identified in a passage of Plato's *Laws* as "fears caused by a feeble condition of the soul"[58] (790e8-9). The type of cure the Corybantes were deemed able to effect was homeopathic. They were believed "to operate a catharsis by means of an infectious 'orgiastic' dance accompanied by the same kind of "orgiastic" music – tunes in the Phrygian mode played on the flute and the kettledrum."[59] To the beat of this music "the dancers were 'out of their minds,' like the dancers of Dionysus, and apparently fell into a kind of trance."[60]

Since the Corybantes were connected with causation and cure of mental disorders, Socrates' self-portrait as a participant in the celebration of Corybantic rites assumes particular relevance. To determine it, Yunis notes that "the ecstatic mystery rites of the Corybantes suggest both the ecstatic initiation that is the primary metaphor for S.'s vision of true Being in the palinode […] and the initiatory madness of Dionysus that is akin to divine *erōs* as one of the types of divine madness (265b3)."[61] Yunis explains the reference to the Corybantic rites by highlighting two possible connections of them with later passages. First, he reads the initiatory character of mystery cults as a reference to the initiatory language

[55] Burkert 2006, 280.
[56] Burkert 2006, 173.
[57] See Dodds 1951, 77 for the gods held to possess this power. See Parker 1983, 244-247 for a discussion of some passages in which a character is represented as affected by a mental disease held to be caused by a god.
[58] My translation.
[59] Dodds 1951, 78.
[60] Dodds 1951, 78. Lines 553e8-554a1 of Plato's *Ion* is one of the passages from which Dodds draws information on the dancers' state of mind when they celebrate Corybantic rites.
[61] Yunis 2012, 89, Yunis' italics.

used to describe the soul's vision of the forms in the place above the heavens. Second, he interprets the state of frenzy of Corybantic dancers as an allusion to one of the four kinds into which Socrates will divide madness at the beginning of the palinode. These two connections are certainly possible, but a further reason can be offered to explain Socrates' self-description as a participant in the celebration of Corybantic rites. Helpful to see it is Linforth's remark that "when Socrates and Phaedrus read the speech of Lysias together, their enthusiasm and delight are said to be similar to the Corybantic experience."[62] Elaborating on this suggestion, it becomes possible to appreciate why the speeches delivered by Phaedrus and Socrates are likened to Corybantic rites. As previously remarked, Socrates describes himself as a person "sick with passion for speeches" (228b6-7). The cure for this form of sickness is, as becomes plain in the prosecution of the dialogue, hearing and delivering speeches. If participation in the activity of exchanging speeches is likened to the celebration of a mystery cult by Socrates' self-description as a Corybant, it seems legitimate to infer that the cure for Socrates' sickness is also presented as belonging to the religious dimension of the Corybantic rites. Despite suggesting that the exchange of speeches has an element in common with a cure effected by the celebration of mystery rites, this likeness does not imply that all three speeches delivered draw on equally strong inspiration from the gods. It rather alerts the reader that the topic discussed in these speeches is considered by Socrates as closely related to a divine dimension.

If Socrates' self-description as Corybant is the first hint that the topics discussed in the *Phaedrus* has a relation with a divine dimension, other signs pointing in the same direction are found in the description of the landscape surrounding Socrates and Phaedrus. While heading for the delightful place where Lysias' speech will be read aloud, they walk through the picturesque countryside on the East of Athens.[63] After turning to follow the Ilissus downstream (229a1), Phaedrus asks Socrates whether Boreas is said to have seized Oreithuia from the area through which they are walking (229b4-5). Socrates corrects his interlocutors by pointing out that according to a version of the legend Oreithuia has been

[62] Linforth 1946, 159.
[63] For the reconstruction of the route Socrates and Phaedrus follow and a discussion of previous relevant scholarship see Ryan 2012, 96-98 and Yunis 2012, xii and 91-92.

abducted from a place 300 to 500 m further down the Ilissus, at the crossing point regularly used by Athenians to reach the sanctuary in Agra. Intrigued by Socrates' knowledge of traditional tales, Phaedrus asks him whether he believes that the legend of Oreithuia's abduction can be plausibly explained by a rationalistic account (229c4-5). In his reply Socrates remains elusive, suggesting that if he were to mistrust this myth he would be a peculiar character but not clarifying how he qualifies himself (229c6-7). Mistrust in this myth, Socrates adds, would entail providing a rational explanation not only for it but for the entire corpus of traditional myths (229d5-e4). Distancing himself from that enterprise, Socrates professes himself more interested in investigating his own nature as the inscription in Apollo's temple in Delphi invites him to do (229e4-230a7). Still engaged in this discussion, Socrates and Phaedrus arrive at the place to which they were headed. Plato vividly describes the beauty of the place. A bushy plane-tree stands tall next to an agnus in bloom that casts shade all around and below it a spring of fresh water flows (230b1-7). Votive offerings suggest that the place is sacred to Achelous and the nymphs (230b7-8). A cooling breeze gently blows, the cicadas beautifully sing and a gentle slope covered in soft grass completes the description of the setting of the conversation Socrates and Phaedrus are about to begin (230c1-5).

The mention of the temple in Agra, Oreithuia's abduction, and the nymphs signals that the place where the *Phaedrus* is set has been visited, and is still inhabited, by gods and divinities. It is not entirely clear to which goddess the temple in Agra was sacred.[64] Artemis Agrotera and the "Mother" seem to be the two most likely candidates. If the cult was dedicated to the "Mother," the mention of the temple in Agra picks up the thread of allusions to mystery cults already emerged from the Socrates' reference to the Corybantes. If the temple is sacred to Artemis Agrotera, a connection is suggested with the unsettling experiences made during the cultic celebration of certain rites, as "Artemis Agrotera is (to simplify) a goddess of the wilds."[65]

Whether the temple in Agra was sacred to the "Mother" or to Artemis Agrotera, the divine presence becomes felt again in the place where Socrates and

[64] See Parker 2005, 55 for more details on the gods that had a cult in Agra.
[65] Parker 2005, 55.

Phaedrus hold their discussion. The beautiful place in which they have decided to recline is home to the nymphs. These divinities have an intermediate status between goddesses and mortals. According to a fragment from Hesiod they live a life more extended in time than human beings but they are not immortal.[66] They differ from goddesses not only in the mortal character of their lives but also in the local reach of their cult. Unlike goddesses whose cult has pan-Hellenic reach, "nymphs are associated with a particular location and features of the natural world: a forest, a garden, or a cave shrine where they live and are worshipped. Different kinds of nymphs are named according to the natural elements they are closer to: the Hamadryads live only as long as the trees they are intimately linked with, and the Oreads dwell in the mountains; Naiads and Hydriads are spring water nymphs, and Nereids and Okeanids inhabit the sea."[67]

In fifth-century Attica nymphs were usually worshipped not alone but in association with Pan. Most likely not originally Attic, the cult of Pan seems to have been introduced to this region after the battle of Marathon.[68] Once introduced, it became associated with that of the nymphs and was often celebrated in a cave. The process through which the cults of the nymphs and Pan came to become associated seems to have moved through two stages. "The Nymphs are regular denizens of caves from Homer onwards, and it must have been through taking up with them that Pan too adopted his habitat. […] Indeed, it often seems that the true owners of the Attic caves are the Nymphs, while Pan is, as it were, a lodger or a neighbour."[69]

When attention is turned to the *Phaedrus*, we notice that the place where Socrates and his interlocutor hold their discussion is not a cave but a meadow surrounding a spring of fresh water. This detail suggests that, although they are not named, the nymphs to which the place is sacred are probably to be identified either as Naiads or Hydriads. Their close connection with water is also highlighted by the mention of Achelous. He was considered the god of fresh water and often represented as father of the nymphs in Attic cultic reliefs – as he is by Socrates in

[66] Cfr. fr. 304 Merkelbach and West.
[67] Pache 2011, 38.
[68] See Parker 1996, 163-168 for the introduction of the cult of Pan to Athens and its association with that of the nymphs.
[69] Parker 1996, 165.

this dialogue (263d).[70] So much for the exact identification of the nymphs. It is even more important to note that Socrates adheres to the cultic practice common in Attica by associating the cult of Pan with that of nymphs. Although absent from the description of the place where Socrates and Phaedrus hold their conversation, Pan will be mentioned twice in the prosecution of the dialogue. At 263d5-6 Socrates praises the skill in speech-making that "the Nymphs, daughter of Achelous, and Pan, son of Hermes" are able to inspire. The prayer jointly made by Socrates and Phaedrus at the end of their discussion is offered to the entire group of divinities that inhabit the place. As the initial vocatives "dear Pan and all you gods of this place" (279b9) show, both Pan and the nymphs are among the addressees of the prayer. Socrates' association of the nymphs with Pan contributes to strengthening the link between the religious sphere and the topics addressed in his discussion with Phaedrus by presenting to his audience a familiar version of the cult.

Embedded between Socrates' self-description as a Corybant and the mention of the nymphs is the reference to the myth of Boreas and Oreithuia. As Socrates himself observes, there exist different versions of this myth, but most of them agree on the following points.[71] Oreithuia was a daughter of Erechtheus, an early king of Athens. She was abducted and brought to Thrace by Boreas, the god personifying the cold North wind blowing from that region. From the marriage with Boreas Oreithuia gave birth to Calaïs and Zētēs, who took part in the expedition of Argonauts. Despite being fathered by a god, Calaïs and Zētēs were not immortal, as their mother was human.

Narrating the encounter between a god and a mortal woman, this myth proves particularly apt as an initial topic for the discussion between Socrates and Phaedrus. As seen, their discussion is presented as a celebration of mystery rites through Socrates' self-description as a Corybant. The place where it is held is depicted as sacred to Pan and the nymphs. The topic that opens it strengthens its connection with the religious dimension by testifying that that place is believed to have witnessed an encounter between humans and gods. From its beginning, "the *Phaedrus* depicts a place filled with sacred spaces commemorating past

[70] *Der Neue Pauly, s.v.* Achelaos.
[71] See Simon 1967, 107-111 for details on the main version of the legend and variants of it.

encounters between the divine and the mortal realm, a landscape that Sokrates sees as imbued with the potential for divine possession and poetic inspiration that will be at the centre of his dialogue with Phaedrus."[72]

The signs of the impious character of Socrates' first speech

After focusing my attention on the allusions to the divine sphere detectable in the description of the initial scene of the *Phaedrus*, in the present section I will aim to show that religious concerns form a thread that connects Socrates' first speech with his palinode. The claim I will attempt to substantiate is that Socrates' first speech is presented as offensive to Eros and that the palinode is delivered to rehabilitate the god and reconcile Socrates with him.

The first indication that the delivery of his first speech causes Socrates a feeling of unease is given by his assertion that he will speak with his "head covered" (237a4). As he explains in the same statement, the reason for this decision is that in this condition "I can rush through my speech as quickly as I can" (237a4-5). If the need for rushing points towards a sense of embarrassment, shame is explicitly mentioned in the second part of the same sentence. As Socrates states, high speed in the delivery of his speech should allow him "not [to] lose my way through shame, from looking at you" (237a5). If this statement may *prima facie* be interpreted as an indication of Socrates' worries over his rhetoric skills, a more careful reading suggests that this explanation would not be plausible. "Not only is a better speech an easy task for S., but he does not suffer the conventional fear of humiliation. Rather, S. is ashamed of the argument impugning *erōs* that he is for the moment about to endorse (242c5-243d6) and his involvement in an epideictic competition that is a distraction from worthier pursuits (230a1, 242c4-d1)."[73] That Socrates is able to produce a better speech than Lysias and that he is not worried by the concerned of outdoing other speakers will emerge from the palinode and from the discussion of philosophical rhetoric (especially 273e5-e8) respectively.

[72] Pache 2011, 42.
[73] Yunis 2012, 110. The view that shame should be considered as caused not by fears of lacking rhetorical skill but by the provisional endorsement of an impious view on Eros is also embraced by De Vries 1969, 82.

Indication that Socrates feels ashamed for impugning Eros is however given for a second time already in the lines following Socrates' first speech. After Phaedrus' insistence that the discussion on love should not be concluded at the point at which it has been left by the abrupt conclusion of Socrates' first speech, Socrates agrees to give a new speech on the topic. The motivation for this decision is explained by Socrates with the following words: "when I was about to cross the river, my good man, I had that supernatural experience, the sign I am accustomed to having – on each occasion, you understand, it holds me back form whatever I am about to do – and I seemed to hear a voice from the very spot, which forbids me to leave until I have made expiation, because I have committed an offence against what belongs to the gods" (242b8-c3). This statement contains several indications that Socrates' relation with the gods has been disturbed. The mention of the *daimonion* is the first. "A well-known and crucial feature of S.'s characterization in Plato, the divine sign expresses S.'s pious attitude towards the divine while remaining distinct from the traditional gods of myth and cult; and it provides him with a (virtually absolute) safeguard against doing wrong while allowing him to maintain the stance of uncertainty regarding moral truths."[74] The identification of his *daimonion* as the source of the prohibition to leave the place of his conversation with Phaedrus is the first signal that Socrates' behaviour has in some respect failed to show due respect to the divine sphere. The expressed need for purification contributes to reinforcing the impression that the divine sphere has been violated. The concluding clause of the sentence provides further confirmation for this impression by containing Socrates' explicit admission that he has committed an offence against the gods.

Although Socrates makes the same admission a second time at 242c5-6, the nature of the offence still remains unspecified: "so I already clearly understand what my offence is." However, the following sentence ("I was making the speech, and I had a certain feeling of unease," 242c7-8) gives a first indication that the offence made by Socrates is the delivery of his first speech, and line 242e4 dispels the doubts: "so this was their [of Lysias' speech and Socrates' first one] offence towards Eros." While explicitly admitting that his first speech was "somewhat

[74] Yunis 2012, 122.

impious" (242d7), Socrates also indicates some of the aspects in which it distorted the image of this god. The speech in fact neither openly stated that Eros is a god nor described his lineage (242d9). By affirming that the madness caused by Eros is detrimental to the lover, the speech failed to recognise that "if Love is, as he indeed is, a god, or something divine, he could not be anything evil" (242e2-3). Socrates' shame for so grossly misrepresenting Eros even causes him to deny the authorship of the speech. As he says to Phaedrus at 242d11-e1, Eros is denied the divine status befitting him "by your speech, which came from my mouth, bewitched as it was by you."

If the acknowledgement of the impious character of his first speech strongly suggests that one of Socrates' main motivations for the delivery of the palinode is the need for purification, this view is confirmed by the words and the acts Socrates subsequently utters and performs. After voicing the need for purification a second time at 243a3, Socrates refers to "an ancient method of purification, which Homer did not understand, but Stesichorus did" (243a4-5). As Socrates explains, Stesichorus, when he was deprived of the sight as a punishment for the slander of Helen, promptly proceeded to appease the wrath of the gods. To clarify what course of action the poet followed, Socrates quotes the three initial verses of his *Palinode*:

> "This tale I told is false. There is no doubt.
> You made no journey to the well-decked ships
> Nor voyaged to the citadel of Troy." (243a8-b1)

After explaining what Stesichorus' purification consisted in, Socrates both compares and contrasts himself with him: "so I shall follow a wiser course than Stesichorus and Homer in just this respect: I shall try to render my palinode to Love before anything happens to me because of my libel against him, with my head bare, and not covered as it was before, for shame" (243b3-7). Whereas Stesichorus was first deprived of the sight and then regained it after rehabilitating Helen, Socrates declares that he will be more prompt to correct the offence by rehabilitating Eros before suffering punishment from him. That said, he announces that he will unveil his head, which he had covered before giving his

first speech, and will proceed to give his palinode to Eros. If the act of unveiling his head may metaphorically suggest Socrates' regaining of sight in the topic of love, the palinode is clearly presented as the means to correct the representation of Eros, distorted by the speech previously given: "then out of shame for what this man [the fictive addressee of the speech] would think, and out of fear of Love himself, I for my part am anxious to wash out the bitter taste, as it were, of the things we have heard with a wholesome speech" (243d3-5).

The link of philosophical rhetoric and of the proper manner of speech-giving to the divine sphere

In the last two sections I have tried to show that it is possible to identify a thread of allusions to the religious sphere in the first part of the dialogue. In the present section I will attempt to show that this thread also emerges in the second half of dialogue. Although less frequent, references to the religious sphere are observable at important stages of the argument in this part of the dialogue. In the following I will draw attention to the passages suggesting that one of Socrates' intentions is to relate his conclusions about philosophical rhetoric and oral speech to a pious and respectful attitude towards the gods.

Although religious worries remain in the background for most of the discussion of philosophical rhetoric, its concluding part contains a passage that links the pursuit of giving appropriate speeches with the divine sphere. After outlining the set of skills needed to practise philosophical rhetoric, Socrates acknowledges the difficulty of the task of acquiring them. To explain why one should be motivated to undertake it, he asserts that the ultimate goal of giving appropriate speeches is to adopt a behaviour that pleases the gods. "The sensible man ought to work through [this great deal of diligent study] not for the purpose of speaking and acting in relation to men, but in order to be able both to say what is gratifying to the gods, and to act in everything, so far as he can, in a way which is gratifying to them. For you see, Tisias – so say wiser men than us – the man who is in his right mind should not practise at the gratification of his fellow-slaves, except as a secondary consideration, but rather at that of good and noble masters" (273e8-274a2). This statement is significant for two reasons. First, it shows that Socrates

establishes a link between the exercise of rhetoric and the religious sphere. According to what he says in lines 273e8-274a2 the goal to be pursued in the art of speaking as well as in all other fields of human activity is in fact to please the gods, not other men. "The ability to speak and act was a traditional standard of achievement in Greek (male) world. […] Plato adapts the traditional view: pleasing the gods in these activities is turned into the proper measure of success, and pleasing the gods in one's discourse (κεχαρισμένα μὲν λέγειν) is but one aspect of the need of pleasing the gods in one's behaviour generally (κεχαρισμένως δὲ πράττειν τὸ πᾶν εἰς δύναμιν)."[75] By asserting that the ultimate goal of human activity is not to obtain success among other men but to please the gods, Socrates redefines the aim a rhetorician has to pursue. Unlike what Tisias and most of his contemporary authors of rhetorical handbooks advise their pupils, the rhetorician should consider success in law courts or public assemblies of secondary importance and devote his effort to speaking in a way that pleases the gods.[76]

While Socrates' statement at 273e8-274a2 is significant because it redefines the goal of rhetoric to render it consistent with a new set of values, it is also relevant for a second reason. By affirming that the aim of a rhetorician is to produce speeches that please the gods, Socrates provides the ultimate foundation for his argument in favour of philosophical rhetoric. The discussion of rhetoric was initiated by Socrates' observation that attention is yet to be turned to the question of how a speech, oral or written, is properly composed (259e1-2). As a response to Phaedrus, who following the opinion of contemporary teachers of rhetoric claims that plausibility rather truth should be the aim of a rhetorician's speech (259e7-260a4), Socrates offers an argument that for the sake of the present analysis can be summarized in four stages. First, he argued that in order to offer a plausible argument a rhetorician needs to know the truth, because only knowledge

[75] Yunis 2012, 222.

[76] Socrates firmly subordinates the importance of social success to the aim of pleasing the gods, but he does not discount the former completely. Provided that he sets gratification of the gods as his primary goal, the practitioner of philosophical rhetoric may also aim to compose speeches successful among his fellow citizens, as long as he is aware that pleasing them is nothing but a secondary aim. As Socrates stresses, "the man in his right mind should not practise at the gratification of his fellow-slaves, except as a secondary consideration, but rather at that of good and noble masters" (273e9-274a2).

of the truth allows him to identify the similarities between different things on which a plausible argument needs to be based (260b1-262c4). Second, with the help of the examples given in Lysias' speech and his palinode he outlined the dialectical processes that allow a rhetorician to learn the truth about the topic around which his speech revolves (262c5-266c1). Third, he explained that the practitioner of philosophical rhetoric also requires knowledge of the different types of human souls and of the ways they react to a particular type of speech (270b1-271b6). Fourth, he clarified that the practitioner of philosophical rhetoric needs to be able to identify what kind of speech is persuasive for what kind of soul in the actual moment at which he speaks (271e2-272b4).

With this point Socrates completes his argument and asks Phaedrus whether the art of giving persuasive speeches can be described otherwise. Phaedrus denies that other descriptions would reflect the true nature of rhetoric more accurately ("It is impossible, I think, Socrates, to accept any other description," 272b5), but declares that he is impressed by the difficulty of the task of becoming skilled in this art ("Yet it seems no light business," 272b5-6). To convince him that no shortcut is available, Socrates returns to briefly considering the opportunity that the crucial skill needed to practice philosophical rhetoric is to identify, and present to an audience, plausible arguments (272d2-2731a1). For a second time Socrates affirms that the person who knows the truth is also able to find arguments that seem plausible to an audience (273d4-6). On this account, he restates that philosophical rhetoric requires both the knowledge of the dialectical procedures and the ability to choose the right type of speech for right type of man (273d7-e5).

At 273e5 Socrates has reached the conclusion that he had already drawn at 272b4 and Phaedrus had approved at 272b5. In addition to it, he has shown that the entire set of skills he has outlined is required to practise philosophical rhetoric and that no shortcut is available to those who want to learn it. At this stage he returns to addressing Phaedrus' complaint that the task of learning how to practice philosophical rhetoric is highly demanding. To justify the "great deal of diligent study" needed to complete the task, in lines 273e5-274a2 he clarifies, as seen above, that the ultimate aim of all human activities, including speech giving, has to be gratification of the gods. "This statement on the proper use of rhetoric forms

a climax at the close of the inquiry into rhetorical art that began at 261a7. S. has avoided explicit treatment of the question of the proper use of rhetoric although it has been simmering below the surface through the entire dialogue."[77] Yunis identifies five moments in the dialogue at which the question of how and when it is appropriate to use the art of speech becomes relevant but is not answered explicitly: the comments on Lysias' speech made by Socrates upon meeting Phaedrus (227c8-d2), Socrates' uncertainty after the delivery of his first speech and before the decision of offering a palinode (242c7-d1), the critique of the use of rhetoric by contemporary politicians (257e1-258e10), Socrates' fictive example of captious rhetoric where the audience is misled into confusing a horse with an ass (2601-d2), the analogy between rhetoric and medicine (270b3-7).[78] Socrates' discussion of rhetoric is the moment of the conversation in which the question of the proper use of the art of speech is explicitly asked. The answer consists in the formulation of a complex set of rules for the composition of speeches. "In view of the full extent of true rhetorical art, which S. painstakingly emphasized (276a6-b2[…]) and has just finished defining, the sheer difficulty of attaining it means that only the pursuit of a high and noble purpose could justify the effort. The orientation towards the divine that S. periodically discloses (e.g. 229e5-230a1, 245c5-d1, 279b8-c3) and made into the focus of the palinode is here put forward in a self-effacing manner as the only conceivable basis for undertaking so huge a task."[79]

In lines 273e5-274a2 Socrates not only asserts that the ultimate goal of speech making is gratification of the gods, but he also states that all human activities should be aimed at pleasing the gods. While setting a general goal for human life, these lines indirectly suggest that Socrates also conceives of the next topic he is going to address as related to the religious sphere. When he has outlined the criteria for the composition of appropriate speeches ("so let that be enough on the subject of the scientific and unscientific character of speeches", 273b3-4),[80] Socrates turns to discussing the advantages and disadvantages of written and oral

[77] Yunis 2012, 221.
[78] Yunis 2012, 221-222.
[79] Yunis 2012, 222.
[80] Rowe's translation modified.

speech: “what we have left is the subject of propriety and impropriety in writing: in what way, when it is done, it will be done acceptably and in what way improperly. True?” (274b6-7). As he anticipated that men should aim to act in a way that pleases the gods in all of their activities, Socrates highlights that the discussion of oral and written speech is intended to ascertain which type of speech is more welcome to the gods: “so do you know how you will most gratify god by making speeches or by acting in relation to them?” (274b9-10).[81] By specifying that highlighting the advantages of oral over written speech serves the purpose of finding a way of gratifying gods in speaking and acting,[82] Socrates clearly asserts that the content of the discussion that he is initiating bears a close relation with the divine sphere.

While the link between the question of the more adequate way of making speeches and the religious sphere is established when the topic is introduced, the existence of this link is suggested a second time when the topic is concluded. “So now we have had due amusement from the subject of speaking; and as for you, go and tell Lysias that we two came dawn to the spring and the sacred place of the nymphs and listened to speeches (*logoi*) which instructed us to tell this to Lysias and anyone else who composes speeches (*logoi*), and to Homer and anyone else in their turn who has composed verses, whether without music or to be sung, and thirdly to Solon and whoever writes compositions in the form of political speeches, which he calls laws […]” (278b7-c4). While extending the validity of the conclusions reached to the three main areas of public speech, Socrates concludes the discussion by suggesting that the source of their validity is divine.

[81] Rowe’s translation modified. Rowe translates the last part of this passage “in relation to speeches, whether actually speaking (πράττων), or talking about it?” Besides hardly reflecting the basic meaning of πράττων, the translation “talking about” also seems not to reflect the goal of Socrates’ discussion on oral and written speech. By rising questions on the appropriateness of written speech, Socrates intends not only to hold a conversation on a topic that pleases the gods but also to identify the way of producing speeches that gratifies the gods the most. The translation “acting in relation to” speeches seems thus to reflect more accurately Socrates’ intention and the meaning of πράττων, especially on account of the fact that “beyond uttering (λέγων) discourses, there is a myriad of senses in which one acts (πράττων) appropriately or inappropriately in regard to discourse, e.g in listening, responding, obeying, rejecting, etc.” (Yunis 2012, 227).

[82] The devaluation of writing made in a written work opens several questions concerning the status of the works and its content. The paradoxical character so given to the *Phaedrus* is considered by Mackenzie 1982 one of the elements that, along with the allegory of anamnesis and the outline of the methods of dialectic and ἀντιλογία, are intended to stimulate the readers to begin philosophical enquiry.

By mentioning the spring at which he and Phaedrus recline, and the nymphs and Pan that inhabit it, Socrates focuses attention on the landscape that provides the setting of the dialogue. As we have seen in the section *References to the divine sphere in the settings of the* Phaedrus, the landscape surrounding Socrates and Phaedrus is presented as inhabited by gods and as a place where the human and the divine encounter each other. Shortly after meeting, Socrates and Phaedrus walk close to the spot from which Oreithuia was said to be abducted by Boreas. While attempting to identify the exact location of Oreithuia's abduction, they mention the temple in Agra (229c), sacred either to Artemis Agrotera or the Mother. The conversation itself is presented by Socrates as the celebration of a Corybantic rite. In this landscape inhabited by the gods, the nymph along with their associate Pan occupy a special place: the spring close to which Socrates and Phaedrus recline to have their conversation is sacred to them. By referring to Pan and the nymphs at the conclusion of his discussion on the advantages of oral speech, Socrates re-evokes the religious atmosphere pervading the setting of his conversation with Phaedrus and suggests that the conclusions reached on the topic just addressed are divinely inspired.

The same point is suggested again a few lines later. Socrates speaks of an author of written works who knows the truth about the topic about which he writes, is able to defend the arguments offered in his written works, and can show the weakness of written speech; such an author deserves to receive a title reflecting his abilities (278c4-7). As Socrates concludes, "to call him wise seems to me too much, and to be fitting only in the case of a god; to call him either a lover of wisdom – a philosopher – or something like that would both fit him more and be in better taste" (278d3-6). "φιλόσοφος is used in Plato's particular sense based on its compound elements, viz. one who desires, and therefore seeks to acquire, only what he or she does not already possess, in this case, the perfect wisdom that belongs to the gods (*Lys.* 218a-b, *Smp.* 203-204c) […]. φιλόσοφος is the appropriate term for the writer who meets the conditions laid out in 278c4-6 because it indicates his or her commitment to the kind of discourse that advances the pursuit of wisdom."[83] Although the type of writer Socrates describes falls

[83] Yunis 2012, 241.

short of possessing wisdom, his desire to acquire what only the gods possess stably and completely qualifies his striving as directed towards the religious sphere. Culminating in the definition of a figure that strives to achieve something attainable only by the gods, Socrates' discussion of written and oral speech proves to bear a close relation with the divine. Crucial to the definition of the type of writer in which his discussion culminates is the desire to approximate the gods by becoming wise and reaching a condition peculiar to the gods.

The link between philosophical love and the divine sphere

In the previous sections I have attempted to prove the existence of a thread of allusions to the religious sphere running through the *Phaedrus*. I have argued that the setting of the dialogue is depicted as place of encounters between the human and the divine and that Socrates' first speech is presented as an offence to Eros for which Socrates will apologize by offering a palinode containing a more pious representation of Eros. I have pointed out that references to the religious sphere also occur at import points of the discussion held in the second part of the dialogue. I have argued that both the rules Socrates outlines for philosophical rhetoric and the discussion of the merits of oral speech pursue, among other aims, that of providing an art of speaking that pleases the gods.

In this section I will attempt to show that the need for a religiously pious attitude is also reflected in the palinode, and so that, without giving a comprehensive account of the dialogue's unity, we can show how the palinode contributes to an argument or concern that runs through the whole dialogue.[84] I

[84] Werner 2012 has noted that "in the palinode Plato incorporates a wide range of motifs, images, and patterns from the mythic and poetic past" (116f). As he argues, motifs borrowed from traditional myth include the presence of gods, the image of the chariot, and the journey to the underworld (108-118). Each of these motifs may be more or less significantly re-elaborated by Plato but it retains some form of relation with tradition. As in traditional myths, the gods appearing in the palinode are individuals with their own names and spheres of activity; the image of the chariot, used by Socrates as a metaphor for the soul, is occasionally presented in the Homeric poems as a means of transportation employed by the gods, and it is the source of part of the metaphorical vocabulary used to describe Zeus inflicting punishment (lash, scourge and goad are examples mentioned by Werner); the descent into the underworld is a recurring motif in traditional myth and, although re-elaborated, the characteristics peculiar to the description of this journey are incorporated in Socrates' palinode or in other sections of the *Phaedrus*: lord of the dead, waters, ferryman, gates, boundaries, guards, different paths, imagery of paradise are according to Werner motifs shared by traditional descriptions of a *katabasis* and the imagery used in the *Phaedrus*. An investigation of motifs borrowed from tradition is also made by Pender 2007, although her focus is

will show that the palinode is introduced as a speech intended to correct the impious representation of Eros previously given by Socrates and it presents the relation between the human and the divine spheres in terms of the attempt of the former to resemble the latter.

The first indication that one of the palinode's aims is to offer a representation of love more closely related to the divine sphere is given in the opening lines. "Well then, my beautiful boy, you should understand this – that the previous speech belonged to Phaedrus son of Pythocles, of the deme of Myrrhinous; while the one I am going to make belongs to Stesichorus son of Euphemus, of Himera" (243e9-244a3). In this passage Socrates reuses a theme that he already used before beginning to deliver his palinode. While expressing the shame for giving a speech in which Eros was slandered and denied the divine character befitting him, Socrates arrived to deny the authorship of the speech and to attribute it to Phaedrus (242d11-e1). In this passage Socrates makes a further step by claiming that the palinode he is offering to purify himself is authored by Stesichorus himself. Besides suggesting that the analogy between his and Stesichorus' purification rites is even closer than he previously hinted, in this sentence Socrates presents Stesichorus as son of Euphemus and born in Himera. Both of these names are significant for their etymology. "The adjective *euphēmus* means speaking auspiciously (or 'silent', since the safest way to avoid offence to the gods is to say nothing); 'of Himera' suggests himeros, 'desire'. If Stesichorus was really the son of Euphemus, and from Himera, that is a happy coincidence."[85] Qualifying the alleged author of the palinode as "speaking auspiciously" and originating from a place with a name that echoes the word "desire" reinforces the idea that the content of the palinode will be respectful to the gods, and to the god of desire in particular. By insisting that the authorship of the previous speech is to

on borrowings from lyric poetry. A study of motifs and images recurring in the palinode and of their relation with other used in the preceding and in the following part of the dialogue is Lebeck 1972. Despite the valuable contribution these analyses, my discussion here takes a different direction. Instead of tracing the origin of the motifs used in the palinode back to a pre-existent background or analysing their relation with those recurring in other sections of the dialogue, I aim to highlight that some of these motifs are signs of religious worries.

[85] Rowe 1988, 171.

be assigned to Phaedrus,[86] Socrates marks again his distance from the speech he has already presented as offensive to Eros. The combined effect of Socrates' distancing himself from his previous speech and his qualifying the alleged author of the palinode as speaking auspiciously significantly contributes to heightening the expectation that the palinode will offer a pious representation of Eros.

While the palinode is presented from its very opening as intended to correct the offensive image of love given in Socrates' first speech, in its continuation it provides the explanation of why the topic of love, when properly treated, bears a close relation with the divine sphere.[87] In a first step Socrates rejects one more time the position defended in his previous speech: "the story is not true," if it says that when a lover is there for the having one should rather grant favours to the man who is not love with you, on the grounds that one is mad, while the other is sane" (244a3-5). The reuse of the quotation of Stesichorus' verse made before the beginning of the palinode for the first time (243a8) reinforces the idea that the first speech was impure. While rejecting yet again the content of the first speech, this statement also contains an initial explanation of the motivation leading to its rejection. Questioning the assumption that madness and sane mental state are sound reasons for blaming the lover and praising the non-lover prepares the reader for a more articulated assessment of madness. In the immediately following line Socrates promptly adds that madness is not a simple concept and that it cannot be unqualifiedly considered an evil for men (244a5-6). On the contrary, "the greatest of goods come to us through madness, provided that it is bestowed by divine gift" (244a6-8).

With this statement Socrates introduces the notion of a type of madness that is caused by the gods and affirms that it is a source of the most beneficial goods for men. This statement shows that madness can have a very close relation with the

[86] As Rowe 1988 notes, some scholars have wanted to attach significance to the mention of Phaedrus' patronym and demiotic: "Pythocles connects with kleos, 'fame,' Myrrinous with myrrhinē, 'myrtle': Thompson compares with *Republic* 372 b, where myrtle is mentioned as part of the trappings of festivity (but festivity of a simple, not luxurious, kind). On balance, though, it seems better to take the full designation of Phaedrus' name as a way of introducing the more obvious play on Stesichorus' (supposed) origins" (171).

[87] Price 1989 sees a relation between the re-evaluation of madness and the establishment of a close connection between humans and gods. The positive role attached to madness in the palinode explains in his view why "divine inspiration, the retrieval of one's original self, and the recollection of reality should turn out to be different facets of a single process" (68).

divine sphere, but it leaves it to be clarified what connection exists between madness and love. The immediately following passage provides the needed clarification by making a list in which love is included and described as one of the types of madness responsible for the highest goods form men. As seen in the section *Socrates' own assessment of the reliability of his palinode*, this list includes the four types in which Socrates articulates the concept of madness. The first three, mantic, telestic and poetic inspiration are listed in lines 244a8-245a8. At this stage Socrates pauses for a moment and underlines again that madness, when divine in origin, produces great goods for the human kind (245b1-2). After underscoring the beneficial character of divinely sent madness, Socrates introduces the main topic of the palinode: "we, in our turn, must prove the reverse, that such madness is given by the gods to allow us to achieve the greatest good fortune" (245b7-c1). Eros, referred to in this statement as "such madness," is presented as the fourth type of madness and the focus of a speech intended to show that it sent by the gods for the benefit of mankind.

While Socrates establishes a connection between erotic madness and divine sphere in the initial section of the palinode, in the prosecution of his speech he suggests that the relation between human and divine sphere takes the form of imitation.[88] One moment at which imitation of the divine behaviour can be observed is when discarnate souls travel across the sky to reach the place above the heavens. Divine souls are described as a harmonious community that easily proceeds towards its set destination without effort. Contrasted with the description of the divine community is the image of the human souls that struggle to reach the place above the heavens but are most often unable to travel as easily as the divine souls toward their destination.

[88] The *Phaedrus* is not exceptional among Platonic dialogues in presenting approximation to the gods as the goal of human life. As Sedley 1999 remarks, becoming like god so far as possible, ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, is set as the goal of human life also in the *Symposium*, the *Theaetetus*, and the *Republic*. In the *Phaedrus* this notion is characterised by the emphasis on assimilation not to god in general but to one particular god. Lines 252c-253c show how a lover educates his beloved to resemble the god that he followed in the celestial procession previously described in the palinode. If a polytheistic notion seems to be reflected in this image, Sedley argues that it is less radical than it may appear prima facie. Although the divine procession is led by twelve different gods, each of them is guided by a firm grasp of the forms. In view of that, Sedley concludes that "Plato is here harnessing traditional polytheism to a new pluralistic view of virtue: there are now not one […] but many ways of being good" (315). For a study of how the notion of assimilation to god is developed in the *Timaeus* see Sedley 1997.

The description of the divine procession is given in lines 246e4-247a6. All the gods are organized in twelve contingents, each of which led by one of the main gods. Among the twelve main gods only Hestia is excluded by the procession.[89] Zeus leads the contingent at the forefront while the other eleven follow. In this formation the gods travel across the heavens, enjoying blessed spectacles and performing each one's due. Envy has no part in the train and everyone who wishes it is allowed to join.

The description of the procession of the gods presents the image of a harmonious community where enmity and rivalry find no place. Each group follow obediently its leader, spectacles of happiness and blessedness are contemplated. Each god behaves justly, as underlined by what seems an indirect reference to the *Republic*. The phrase πράττων ἕκαστος αὐτῶν τὸ αὑτοῦ (247a6) has been connected with the definition of justice given in Book 4 of the *Republic*. "Both state and individual, Socrates argues there, will be just when the elements in them each *prattei ta hautou* (433 a, 435 b-c, 443 b ff.). The gods provide an example of a perfectly ordered and just community: each performing his allotted role, under the control of Zeus and his fellow Olympians, just as in the ideal state of the *Republic* the citizens will each fulfil the role allotted to them by nature, under the beneficial rule of the philosopher-guardians."[90]

Approximately one Stephanus page after the description of the divine procession Socrates presents the image of the human souls attempting to ascend to the place above the heavens (248a1-c2). All the human souls follow in the divine procession and attempt to reach the place above the heavens where the forms are, but they are not all equally successful. Depending on the number of forms they become able to see, the souls fall into in three different groups. The souls that are most capable of following their leading god can raise the charioteer's head to the

[89] Different explanations have been advanced for Hestia's exclusion. Yunis 2012 discusses some of them: "Hestia stays at home because there, at the hearth, is her proper place (*Hom. Hymn Aphrodite* 30), just as the other leading gods assume their proper place (κατὰ τάξιν ἣν ἕκαστος ἐτάχθη). Hestia was also associated with the earth (Soph. *TrGF* 615, Eur. *TrGF* 944, Anaxagoras DK 59 A20b), which would prevent her ascent to the top of heaven. Pythagorean influence was formerly supposed in order to explain the mention of Hestia, but the supposition is mistaken […]" (140).

[90] Rowe 1988, 179.

place above the heavens and have a short look at the forms (248a1-5).[91] The souls belonging to the second category, hampered by the unrestrained behaviour of their horses, cannot held up their charioteer's head for a long time and only glimpse some of the forms (248a5-6).[92] The third group of souls remains unable to see any of the forms because their horses' complete lack of discipline prevents the charioteer from raising his head to the place above the heavens (248a6-b3).

In the description of the procession to the place above the heavens, the human souls are characterized by the striving to resemble the divine ones. The souls that glimpse the forms are said to be able to do so because each of them "follows a god best and has come to resemble him most" (248a2). While greater approximation to the god allows the human souls to follow the divine more easily and to have fuller access to the realm of the forms, greater deviation from the standard set by the gods results in increased difficulty in seeing the forms. The souls whose horses are not properly restrained by the charioteer are able only to see a limited number of the forms. If these souls are only partially successful in imitating the orderly way of proceeding peculiar to the gods, the contrast with the divine souls becomes dramatic when Socrates describes the celestial travel of the souls that are reincarnated without having any glimpse of the forms. While "the chariots of the gods travel easily, being well-balanced and easily controlled" (247b1-2), the souls belonging to this category create great turmoil when they attempt to reach the place above the heaven. When they become unable to follow the circular route taken by the most skilled souls of the procession, they "are carried round together

[91] The interpretation that the souls belonging to this group see a large number of forms but for a short time seems the most natural. The text says that a soul belonging to this group "is carried around with revolution" (συμπεριηνέχθη τὴν περιφοράν, 248a3-4). While being carried around, the soul has the opportunity to remain in the place above the heavens for a long time. This opportunity however does not seem to entail that the time for which the soul sees the forms is equally long or that the view on them is always unobstructed. On the contrary, this soul too is disturbed by the unrestrained behaviour of its horses (θορυβουμένη ὑπὸ τῶν ἵππων, 248a4) and has a non-complete vision of the forms (καὶ μόγις καθορῶσα τὰ ὄντα, 248a4-5).

[92] It is not immediately clear what cosmic destiny will be faced by the souls belonging to this group. On the basis of lines 248c3-4 these souls seem to be exempt from reincarnation since they have seen some forms, although the number of forms seen is limited. By contrast, lines 249b5-6 and 249e4-250a1 suggest that they will be reincarnated in human shape, and the Law of Necessity seems to imply that reincarnation in the life of a philosophers will be attained by some of the souls belonging to this group, namely those among them that have seen the highest number of forms (248d2-4). Price 1989 remarks that in this respect both the imaginary and the aetiology of the myth is not entirely consistent (73). Despite the difficulty to build a coherent picture in which these details of the myth can fit, he however concludes that "its message is that divinity depends on cognitive success, incarnation on cognitive failure" (74).

under the surface, trampling and jostling one another, each trying to overtake the next" (248a7-b1). Moments of utter confusion follow in which due to the inadequacy of the charioteers in guiding their horses these souls become physically damaged by being crippled or having their wings broken (248b2-3).[93]

While the narration of the journey to the place above the heaven suggests that human souls strive to resemble divine ones, the theme of imitation of the gods becomes even more explicit when Socrates shifts the focus of his attention from the afterlife destiny of the soul to the relationship between a philosophical lover and his beloved. As he explains in the section 252c3-253c6, imitation of a god plays a crucial role in shaping the life of a philosophical lover and his beloved. The philosophical lover ordinarily displays the attitude that he has adopted from the gods in whose contingent he was; he looks for and chooses a beloved whose nature is similar to the one of that god; during the relationship he imitates and attempts to resemble that god as fully as he can; he strives to render his beloved as similar to that gods as possible for a human being.

That in a relationship a lover adopts an attitude similar to the god of which he was a follower is first shown by Socrates through two examples and then presented as general rule. The first group of lovers mentioned is the one of those who followed Zeus. When he travels across the sky, "Zeus orders everything" (246 e 5-6). If his followers share his characteristics (252 d 1-2), one aspect of their character they display will be to able "to bear the burden" (252c4) of love "with some sedateness" (252c3). Contrasted with the lovers who were part of the contingent of Zeus are those who followed Ares. They "become murderous and ready to sacrifice both themselves and their beloved" (252c7), as soon as they believe that their beloved has wronged them. By adopting the behaviour of the gods leading the contingent in which they were, followers of Zeus and Ares represent two examples of a general tendency. As Socrates clarifies in the following lines, "each man lives after the pattern of the god in whose chorus he was" (252d1).

[93] It is unclear whether the charioteer's failure to provide his chariot with a secure guide is a consequence of moral vice, bad luck, or both. The reason for the fall of a soul and its subsequent reincarnation is identified in the incompetence of the charioteers (κακίᾳ ἡνιόχων) at 248b2, in lack of appropriate training of the black horse (ᾧ μὴ καλῶς ἦν τεθραμμένος) at 248b3 and in some unspecified accident (τινι συντυχίᾳ) at 248c6.

As a lover's behaviour is similar to that of the god he followed, so the beloved is chosen on the basis of the resemblance that his nature shows with that of the god that the lover followed.[94] As Socrates explains at 252d5-6: "each selects his love from the rank of the beautiful according to character" (252d5-6).[95] By stating that a beloved is chosen on the basis of character, this sentence does not specify whether the beloved's character needs to be similar to the lover's or to the god's. This ambiguity does not however compromise the understanding of the sentence since, as already seen, the lover strives to render his character as similar to that of the god followed as possible. Three examples illustrate how similarity in character guides the lover's choice of a beloved. Followers of Zeus seek "someone like Zeus in respect of his soul" (252e2). To find him, "they look to see whether he is naturally disposed towards philosophy and towards leadership" (252e2-3).[96] When they find a boy with this character, followers of Zeus fall in love with him. Lovers who were in the contingent of other gods seek beloved with different characters but follow the same principle. "Those in turn who followed with Hera seek someone regal in nature" (253b1-2). The same tendency is exhibited by followers of Apollo and of the other gods, as Socrates asserts at 253b3-4: "those who belong to Apollo and the other gods proceed in the same way in accordance with their god and seek that their boy should be of the same nature" (253b3-4).

While similarity to the god he followed is the criterion adopted by a lover in choosing his beloved, deliberate imitation of that god becomes crucial for a lover after he enters a relationship with a beloved. The first occurrence of a form of the verb μιμεῖσθαι is at 252d2, where a lover is said to follow the pattern of life set by the god of which he was a follower, "honouring and imitating him as much as

[94] Nightingale 2004 notes further aspects in which imitation plays a role in the relationship between a philosophical lover and his beloved. The lover identifies and worships his beloved as an ἄγαλμα (251a6), which as Nightingale stresses specifically indicates an image of a god. As she argues, the reasons for the lover's behaviour towards the beloved is that "the beautiful body of the boy […] is an image of 'imitation of the Form of the beauty" (164). The attribution of such high a level of importance to the beauty of the body is considered by Nightingale indication of a revaluation of sense perception and especially sight.

[95] Rowe's translation modified.

[96] In the combination of philosophy and leadership Yunis 2012 detects an allusion to the quality required from the philosopher-kings in the *Republic*: "these traits, united in Zeus (246e4-5), reflect the natural conjunction of philosophical knowledge and ruling, exemplified by the philosopher-kings of the *Republic*" (157).

possible."[97] While the practice of imitation is mentioned only in passing in this line, more information on it is given in lines 252e5-a5. After falling in love (τότε, 252e6), lovers dedicate themselves to the task (τῷ ἐπιτηδεύματι, 252e5) of imitating the god that they followed. In order to do that, they need to recover customs and habits of that god and they have two ways for doing it. They can either learn them from other people, probably other lovers who followed the same god (ὅθεν ἄν τι δύνωνται, 252e6) or embark on this quest themselves (μετέρχονται, 252e7). If they choose this second option, lovers have many resources available (εὐποροῦσι, 253a1). As what they attempt to do is not discover but simply rediscover (ἀνευρίσκειν, 252e7)[98] customs and habits of this god, lovers accomplish their aim by "being compelled to gaze intensively to the god"[99] (253a1-2). At this stage they become possessed (ἐνθουσιῶντες, 253a3) and attain to the god with memory (ἐφαπτόμενοι αὐτοῦ τῇ μνήμῃ, 252a2-3). Since lovers followed the god they seek to imitate, they do not need to learn his customs and habits from the beginning but are able to use their memory to recollect them. Even though they were in the contingent of that god, lovers cannot make a perfect imitation of his divine customs and habits. They in fact remain limited by their human nature and can cultivate customs and habits of a god only "to the extent that it is possible for man to share in god" (253a4-5). By clarifying that a lover is able to imitate a god only as much as resemblance to the gods is possible for human beings, this sentence restates the existence of a limitation that is said to apply when the theme of imitation was first introduced. When a lover is said to honour and imitate the god he followed, the statement is qualified by the clarification that the lover resembles that god "as far as he can" (252d2).

Although the possibility of resembling a god is limited by human nature, the desire to imitate him or her is believed by lovers to arouse from their relationship. Since they consider their beloved responsible (αἰτιώμενοι, 253a5) for their eagerness to recollect customs and habits of the god they followed, lovers "fashion[…] and adorn[…] him like a statue, as if he were himself his god, in order to honour him and celebrate his mystic rites" (252d6-e1). Out of gratitude to

[97] Rowe's translation modified.
[98] Ryan 2012 correctly underlines that "the prefix must be attended to in translating it" (216).
[99] Rowe' translation modified.

their beloved, they undertake to educate them (ῥυθμίζοντες, 253b6) and to transfer to them the customs and habits of the god they have been imitating. In so doing, "they are trying as much as they can, in every way, to draw him into complete resemblance to themselves and to whichever god they honour" (253b8-c2). Although their success in transferring customs and habits of a god to their beloved is limited by the restrictions inherent to human nature, the lovers' company "is noble and brings happiness"[100] (253c4) to the beloved.

In stating that a relationship inspired by philosophical love encourages lover and beloved to become similar to a god, Socrates underlines an aspect in which love properly understood bears a relation with the divine sphere. Human souls, when they travel across the sky, strive to proceed in an orderly manner that resembles that of divine ones. Those human souls that succeed in this task reach the place above the heaven and glimpse the forms. When they are reincarnated, they keep some memory of the god they followed in the celestial procession and attempt to rediscover his or her habits. The erotic relationship they develop plays an important role in awakening the memory of that god in that it stimulates both the lover and the beloved to imitate the god in question. By encouraging imitation of a god, philosophic love proves to bear a relation with the religious sphere. This relation is not so much as suggested in Lysias' speech, where the only choice is which human being should be accepted and granted favour.

In showing that love and the divine realm are connected, the palinode picks up a thread of thoughts that already emerged at previous stages of the dialogue and will emerge again at later ones. As I proposed, Socrates, upon meeting with Phaedrus, suggests an analogy between their discussion and the celebration of Corybantic rites. The landscape in which they walk and converse is also depicted as a place that witnessed an encounter between the humans and the gods and is still inhabited by the gods in Socrates' day. Socrates' first speech is presented as an offence to Eros that calls for prompt apology. In offering an image of Eros that reflects the nature of the god, the palinode shows the relation existing between love and the divine sphere. While in his palinode Socrates explores the religious dimension of love, in the second half of the dialogue he undertakes to show that

[100] Rowe's translation modified.

rhetoric is also linked to the divine realm: in shaping his art of speaking and evaluating the merits of oral speech, the philosophical man is said to give priority to what pleases the gods. To summarize, we can say that the *Phaedrus* invites its readers to rethink interpersonal activities – erotic relationships, written and spoken communication – and suggests that they should not be conceived of as purely human or social activities, but rather should be brought into relation with the divine sphere. To this the palinode makes an essential contribution.

Chapter 2: The goodness of justice, human choice and the myth of Er

Introduction

In the present chapter I will aim to show that the myth of Er and, in some respects, the entire passage 608c2-621d3 in which the myth is included complete the argumentative line followed in the *Republic*, since they provide answers to questions posed at previous stages of the work but left open until this point. First, the defence of justice that Socrates promises in Book 2 to undertake is completed by the description of the rewards given to just people by other human beings and by the gods. Whereas up to the end of Book 9 only the benefits justice produces in and by itself are highlighted, the passage 608c2-621d3 gives a description of the positive consequences of justice: while in the initial part of this passage Socrates reassures Glaucon and Adeimatus that virtuous men, when recognised as such, will receive honour and good reputation, in the myth of Er he mentions the post-mortem rewards that will be given to souls that lived a virtuous earthly life. Second, the description of the process in which souls choose their future life confirms the fundamental assumption on which the entire work is based. From Book 2 to Book 9 Socrates offers a sequence of arguments intended to convince his interlocutors of the desirability of justice. Although not always in a straightforward way, the myth of Er shows that souls are able to decide which life they wish to live and are, therefore, free to serve justice or turn to evil. Finally, the myth of Er is an instance of mythological narrative that conforms to the rules outlined by Socrates in Books 2 and 3. (As we will see, the rules outlined in Book 10 do not apply.) Instead of presenting a mythological episode in the form of a traditional poetic composition, this narrative is an example of how myth can be employed to convey ethically valuable messages.

Several scholars have presented different views of the myth, and while developing my own thesis, I will engage with the most important of them. Part of the scholarly literature has maintained that the myth of Er occupies an uncomfortable position in the structure of the *Republic* because it is hard to reconcile with the project of the work in general and with the ideas expressed in

Book 10 in particular. To start with, this narrative has been read as a sudden and unjustified modification of Socrates' line of argument. According to Annas, "the myth of Er is a painful shock; its vulgarity seems to pull us back to the level of Cephalus, where you take justice seriously when you start thinking about hell-fire. It is not only that the childishness of the myth jars; if we take it seriously, it seems to offer an entirely consequentialist reason for being just, thus undermining Plato's sustained effort to show that justice is worth having for the agent in a non-consequentialist way."[1] Moreover, the content of this narrative has been considered difficult to reconcile with the message conveyed in the rest of the *Republic*. Whereas Books 2 to 9 aim to show that justice brings about good order both in the soul and in the city, some scholars have claimed that the myth of Er denies the very possibility for men to choose the good or turn to the evil.[2] In addition to these two objections concerning the consistency of the myth of Er with the agenda of the *Republic*, the inclusion of a mythological narrative in Book 10 has appeared to violate the principles illustrated in the critique of poetry contained in this same book. As De Luise remarks, it is difficult to explain "in which way it can be integrated in the set of arguments of Book 10, centred on the resumption of the critique of poetry and on the rejection of *mimesis* as an instrument of moral education."[3]

I aim to show that the myth of Er is not only entirely consistent with the project of the *Republic* but an integral part of it. In the section *The myth of Er as the*

[1] Annas 1981, 349.

[2] Halliwell 2007 regards the mechanism of life-choosing depicted in the myth as jeopardising freedom since "the choice of a new identity involves a prenatal fixing of what one's life will hold in store, in terms not only of physical endowment and social status but also of ethical character" (464). The episode in which the soul that chooses a tyrant's life is condemned to eat its own children reinforces, in his view, the idea that the myth conveys a profoundly fatalistic view. The sense of inability to modify one's destiny seems sharpened by the "eschatological tentativeness" (467) of the words pronounced by Socrates in his second intervention (619d7-e5), which suggest the idea that after a wrong choice of life even philosophy is incapable of improving a soul's condition. In order to partially underplay the depressing and alarming determinism emerging in Er's tale, Halliwell stresses "an instability between the mythic narrative and his [Socrates'] comment on it" (464). On this reading the completion of the destiny chosen before incarnation would be rendered somewhat less definitive by Socrates' exhortation to practice virtue and aim at moral improvement during life on earth. Given the narrow space anyway left to human choice, Halliwell suggests that the myth is used as "a nonepistemic, partly self-persuasive device" (465) intended rather to convince people of their moral freedom than to give evidence for it. The contrast between the quasi-deterministic view expressed in the myth and the *Republic's* main argument, entirely based on the assumption that men are left free to serve justice or turn to evil, is according to Halliwell evidence for the work's "philosophically incomplete status" (472).

[3] De Luise 2007, 312. All translations of De Luise's chapter are my own.

completion of Socrates' enquiry into justice I will argue that the myth of Er and the passage 608c2-621d3 in which it is included are essential parts of the argumentative line followed in the *Republic* because they answer a question posed at a previous stage. The description of the rewards just people receive from gods and other human beings complete the defence of the notion of justice Socrates embraces in Book 2 by illustrating the consequences arising from justice when some external factors are in place. In the section *The souls' freedom to serve justice* I will contend that the myth of Er provides the foundation for the enquiry into justice carried out in the *Republic*. By showing that, despite some limitations, souls are free to make ethically relevant choices, the view conveyed in the myth of Er renders meaningful the defence of justice Socrates has presented in Books 2 to 9. Finally, in the section *The myth of Er as an example of mythological narrative admissible in Callipolis* I will propose that the myth of Er qualifies as a narrative that Socrates would allow in Callipolis. As I will argue, the narratological typology of the myth of Er is not exactly the one identified by Socrates as permissible, but, if taken separately, none of the sections of the myth violate the rules formulated in Book 3.

1 The myth of Er as the completion of Socrates' enquiry into justice

The frame of Socrates' investigation into justice

As I have anticipated in the introduction, the function performed by the myth of Er and the passage 608c2-621d3 in which the myth is included is clarified if we go back to examine the assumptions made in Book 2. At this stage the conditions are stipulated under which Socrates will carry out his investigation into justice. In this section I will analyse some of the passages in which these conditions are stipulated. I will point out that a tension is detectable between the type of good Socrates considers justice to be and the notion of justice Glaucon and Adeimantus ask him to defend.

Although Socrates declares himself convinced of the persuasiveness of the argument in favour of justice he presented in Book 1 (357a1-3), he is compelled by Glaucon's and Adeimantus' scepticism to embark on a new discussion to

dispel the doubts his interlocutors still entertain. Whether his previous argument in favour of justice failed to appear convincing because, like Glaucon and Adeimantus, "we do not accept Socrates' own premises"[4] or because "the ahistorical character of Socrates' arguments in Book 1"[5] does not properly address Thrasymachus' claims or, more generally, because "in Book 1 Socrates' account of the advantages of justice and the disadvantage of injustice is too brief and imprecise to act as a motivational counterbalance to the powerful attraction of injustice,"[6] is not crucial for the present question. What is central is how the demands presented first by Glaucon and then by Adeimantus shape Socrates' answer.

The two brothers found Socrates' first attempt to defend justice unsatisfactory for two reasons: "(1) Glaucon wants to be shown that it is in every way better to be just than to be unjust. […] (2) In claiming that the just person is happy Socrates goes beyond what Glaucon wants him to prove; for we might show that the just person is better off, even if his justice does not make him happy."[7] To help Socrates meet the challenge he is posing him, Glaucon introduces at the beginning of Book 2 a division of goods into three categories: (1) the type of goods that are desirable not "for what we get out of it but because we embrace it for its own sake" (357b5-6),[8] such as aesthetic pleasure; (2) the kind "we are attached to both for its own sake and for what it gives rise to" (357c2-3), to which intelligence, sight, and health belong; (3) finally, there are certain goods, such as physical exercise, medical science, or money-making, that we desire "not for their own sake" (357c9) but "only for the sake of the wages and all other things that we get from them" (357d1-2). Socrates immediately proceeds to put justice in the "finest of the three" (358a-1) categories, the one including goods desirable both for their own sake and for the consequences ensuing from them.

Although convinced of the superiority of justice (358d6-7), Glaucon upholds injustice because he is persuaded that presenting the opinions that motivate people to prefer injustice over justice will lead Socrates to give a more precise account of

[4] Rowe 2007b, 43.
[5] Long 2013, 102.
[6] Long 2013, 103.
[7] Irwin 1999, 164.
[8] Translations of the *Republic* are from Rowe 2012a, unless otherwise stated.

the nature of justice.[9] There follows a speech in which Glaucon proposes a new contractarian account of justice which replaces Thrasymachus' one (358e4-359b7), designs a thought experiment aimed at showing that injustice would be preferred by anyone who could be unjust without being discovered (359d7-360d7), and "appeals to a counterfactual reversal of fortune between the just and the unjust person (360d8-362c8)."[10]

From the very start of Glaucon's speech a tension emerges between his expectations and what Socrates maintains justice to be. By expressing the wish to hear "what each of them [justice and injustice] is, and what effect each has the capacity to produce, in and by itself, when it's present in the soul" (358b4-6), Glaucon seems to intend to change the priorities of the argument Socrates is asked to present. According to his words, justice should be praised exclusively for its own sake, not both for itself and for the good consequences arising from it, as a good belonging to the second category. A similar shift seems to be indicated in the speech delivered by Adeimantus, who appears even more explicit than his brother in urging Socrates to concentrate exclusively on the benefits justice brings in and by itself. A defence of justice will be, in fact, considered convincing by him only if Socrates agrees to "take away the reputations that go with them [justice and injustice], in the way Glaucon urged" (367b3-6). Like Glaucon, Adeimantus talks as if justice belonged to the first of the three categories of goods.

The different categorizations of justice made by Socrates on the one hand and Glaucon and Adeimantus on the other are highly relevant not only for the correct reading of the brothers' speeches in question, but also for identifying the agenda Socrates will follow in his investigation into justice. Since the agenda followed in Books 2 to 10 is negotiated between Socrates and the brothers, clarifying the stipulations they make is crucial to understanding the development of the argumentative line of the *Republic* and the place that the myth occupies in it.

[9] For analyses of Glaucon's personality and the type of argument to which such a character is more sensitive see Ferrari 2011, 116-127 and O'Connor 2007.
[10] Irwin 1995, 185.

Two hypotheses on the argumentative line of the *Republic*

As I have attempted to show in the previous section, a difference emerges between the notion of justice Socrates embraces and the notion that Glaucon and Adeimantus ask him to defend. I will make more detailed analysis of the demands presented by Glaucon and Adeimantus in the following section. In the present one I will expound Annas' and Irwin's views on how Socrates' argumentative line unfolds. As it will become clear, an important reason why their accounts differ lies in the different interpretations the two scholars give of the demands posed to Socrates by Glaucon and Adeimatus. There is thus an important connection between our interpretation of the demands made in Book 2 and our interpretation of the *Republic* more generally – including the myth at the end.

After dispelling the doubts about the existence of a misfit between the requests the two brothers make in their speeches,[11] Annas contends that they both agree to "exclude the artificial consequences of justice."[12] Since Annas maintains that Glaucon and Adeimatus wish only the artificial consequences of justice to be excluded, she deems it possible to reconcile their demand with Socrates' decision to place justice in the second category. To see that, she considers it crucial to appreciate one difference that distinguishes justice from the other goods belonging to the second category, without however making it incompatible with them. "Justice, unlike knowledge and health, has two kinds of consequences, the natural and the artificial. […] It simply is the case that justice has artificial consequences and the other examples do not because justice depends for its existence on social conventions more than health or knowledge does, and because people more often have good reasons to simulate justice than they do to simulate health or knowledge."[13] If the two brothers are assumed to require the exclusion solely of the artificial consequences of justice when they demand to leave aside its rewards, they are not inconsistent, according to Annas, in maintaining that justice belongs to the second category of goods. On the contrary, they can be regarded as asking Socrates to praise justice both in and by itself and for its consequences, provided that the consequences examined by Socrates are not artificial. Therefore, "they

[11] Annas 1981, 66.
[12] Annas 1981, 66.
[13] Annas 1981, 68.

have not altered the nature of the demand made right at the beginning in the threefold division."[14]

On Annas' reading, Socrates completes the first part of the task assigned to him by Glaucon and Adeimantos near the end of Book 4, by drawing a parallel between justice and health. In this book Socrates shows that the soul structurally resembles the city, since the tripartite structure that both have allows the virtues found in the city to be transferred to the soul. At this stage he likens justice to something "preventing each element in him [the just man] from doing what belongs to others and stopping them from meddling in one another's roles" (443d2-3). An analogy between justice and health is then established in 444d. As "producing health is setting up the elements in the body so as to control and be controlled by one another according to nature" (444d3-4), so justice is "a matter of setting up the elements in the soul so as to control and be controlled by one another according to nature" (444d7-9). As Annas argues, the parallelism between justice and health serves the purpose of illustrating the desirability of justice in and by itself. "Health has good consequences, but we do not want to be healthy merely because of these: the difference between being healthy and merely appearing to be is important to us because it is the difference between being in a stably functioning physical state and being in an upset and unstable state in which the various organs are interfering with one other's proper functioning and the whole person feels insecure. Justice is supposed to be analogous to health in these ways."[15] Since Socrates is at this stage able to affirm that justice is worth serving because by its effect soul is put in a balanced and harmonious condition, "the Book 4 account does […] meet the first part of Glaucon challenge: justice has been shown to be a state worth having for itself and not only its consequences."[16]

The second part of the question Glaucon asked in Book 2 is answered, on Annas' reading, by Socrates in Books 8 and 9. The investigation of the corrupted regimes and the description of the deterioration experienced by the corresponding type of soul is intended to highlight the connection between the just life and happiness. In these two books Socrates shows that the deterioration of the city and

[14] Annas 1981, 68.
[15] Annas 1981, 168.
[16] Annas 1981, 168.

the corruption of the corresponding soul are tied to one another and become the more marked the closer the political regime comes to a tyranny. The soul loses its balance and the rational part becomes subjected to a more and more significant influence by spirit and appetite until the highest level of degradation is reached by the tyrannical man. To the increase of disorder among the three parts of the soul corresponds a proportional decrease in the level of happiness. When a man with a tyrannical soul who actually has the opportunity to become tyrant in his city is shown to be the unhappiest (576b6-8), the treatment of the types of political regimes and souls corresponding to them is completed. Socrates is in a position to establish that the kingly, the timocratic, the oligarchic, the democratic, and the tyrannical lives participate in a share of happiness which is highest for the first and lowest for the last (580c11-583b2 and 583b2-588b12). With the presentation of two further arguments for the just man to be the happiest, the second part of the question asked by Glaucon and Adeimantus in the Book 2 is given an answer and the entire project of the *Republic* comes, in Annas' view, to completion. "By the end of Book 4 justice was shown to be worth having for itself, desirable as health is, that is, whether or not it has good consequences. […] Books 8 and 9 have taken up the second part of the challenge: to show that justice has good consequences. This has been done partly by displaying the disadvantages of the various ways of being unjust and partly by the arguments that conclude that only the just person's pleasures are real."[17]

What according to Annas does not find a place in the economy of the *Republic* is the concluding section of the work where the immortality of soul is argued for and the rewards of justice described. Since Socrates has remained true to the conditions stipulated in Book 2, a further section containing a discussion of what in Annas' view was agreed to be neglected represents an unnecessary addition. If the stage reached by the argument at the end of Book 9 does not require, in her opinion, the inclusion of the myth of Er in the work, Annas considers the argumentative method employed in this narrative substantially different from that

[17] Annas 1981, 314.

used in the rest of *Republic*. As we have seen, she regards the myth of Er as "a painful shock".[18]

A different account of the demands presented to Socrates in Book 2 is given by Irwin. A crucial point of his interpretation is that he objects that the task assigned to Socrates is treating justice as a good belonging to the second category – beneficial both for its own sake and for its consequences. "Glaucon points out that if we were to defend justice as this sort of good, we cannot be satisfied with a defence that appeal simply to consequences."[19] Irwin is not very clear in stating that Glaucon utterly refuses to hear justice argued for as good both for its own sake and for its consequences. On the contrary, he maintains that according to Glaucon "such a defence fails to show that justice is not merely a good of the third, purely instrumental, type. […] An appropriate defence of justice must say what justice is, and explain why it is worth choosing for its own sake and for what it is in itself."[20] On Irwin's account Socrates is thus asked exclusively to highlight the benefit that justice produces in and by itself. Accordingly, the section of Books 2 to 9 must not be expected to contain arguments other than those suitable for convincing others that justice is worth serving for its own sake.

If the account given in Books 2 to 9 is assumed to be an attempt to highlight the intrinsic value of justice, the meaning of "for its own sake" needs to be clarified. Irwin maintains that Socrates does not establish an opposition between justice and happiness. On the contrary, he believes that pursuing the former naturally leads to achieving the latter. Indication that Socrates sees a connection between happiness and justice is given, in Irwin's view, by the words he says when he places justice in the second category of goods. The addition of the words "if we are to be blessed with happiness" (358a2-3) is regarded by Irwin as evidence that "the threefold division presupposes the supremacy of happiness, and the subordination of all three classes of goods to happiness, since they are all chosen for the sake of happiness."[21] Being just and being happy are not two temporally distinct moments, the first of which is the cause of the second. Rather

[18] Annas 1981, 349.
[19] Irwin 1995, 181.
[20] Irwin 1995, 181.
[21] Irwin 1995, 190.

than causal the relation is "logical."[22] Happiness is conceived as being a condition to which many factors contribute. Justice is, in its part, one of these factors. As Irwin clarifies, the relation between justice and happiness is understood properly, when justice is considered not simply one of the many factors contributing to happiness but as the predominant one. Socrates, in fact, "wants to show that although justice is not sufficient for happiness, it is dominant in happiness; being just guarantees by itself that just people will be happier than any unjust people, even if they are not happy, and even if all the goods that are distinct from justice belong to unjust people."[23]

In the framework established by Irwin Book 4 and Books 8 and 9 contain not two answers to two different questions but complementary parts of one single answer intended to respond one and the same question. Glaucon and Adeimantus asked Socrates to show that justice is desirable for its own sake because it leads to happiness irrespectively of external conditions. "In Book IV he [Plato] claims to have shown both that justice is an intrinsic good and that it is dominant in happiness."[24] Nevertheless, it still remains unclear what relation precisely exists between justice and happiness to allow the former to result in the second. After "Plato at the end of Book IV suggests that he has answered Thrasymachus (445a5-b5),"[25] Books 8 and 9 conduct the analysis of the effects justice has on the soul at a deeper level. The research is bound to remain incomplete in this case too, since the longer way could not be followed and it was not possible to give a full account of the form of the Good and its effects on the rational part of soul. Nevertheless, the treatment of the corrupted constitutions achieves the goal set in Book 2. "Socrates returns at the beginning of Book VIII to the promise he made at the end of Book IV to consider whether it is in our interest to be just or unjust (444e7-445b8). […] Plato seeks to show that the deviant constitutions are worse than the ideal, aristocratic constitution, and that therefore all the people with deviant souls are less well off than the persons with a just soul."[26] By the end of Book 9 Socrates has therefore completed the project he was encouraged by Glaucon to

[22] Irwin 1995, 191.
[23] Irwin 1995, 191.
[24] Irwin 1995, 244.
[25] Irwin 1995, 281.
[26] Irwin 1995, 281.

undertake. In Book 4 it was shown that justice allows the soul to function properly. After he has given the description of the soul of the timocratic, the oligarchic, the democratic, and the tyrannical man, Socrates can maintain that the connection between a just soul and a happy life has been established.

Irwin does not discuss the final section of the *Republic*. While it is unclear what function this section according to him performs in the argumentative line of the *Republic*, he clarifies that the question Socrates commits himself to answering is responded to by the end of Book 9. As Irwin maintains that in Book 2 Socrates agrees to show exclusively the benefit that justice produces in and by itself and that justice bears a strong harmony and happiness of the soul, he considers Socrates' agenda complete when justice is shown to be crucial for creating a harmonic and happy condition in the soul. While Irwin considers Socrates' task exhausted at the end of Book 9, he leaves undiscussed the role played by following book of the *Republic*, including the section in which Socrates describes the rewards earned by justice from gods and men.

As this account of their views shows, Annas and Irwin agree on three points: first, Socrates' investigation into justice is complete at end of Book 9; second, his investigation reaches an important intermediate stage in Book 4; third, the section that includes the myth of Er has no immediately clear function in Socrates' argumentative line. The disagreement between these two scholars is about what Socrates shows at each of these two stages. According to Annas, in Book 4 Socrates shows the benefit of justice in and by itself, while at the end of Book 9 he highlights the positive consequences of serving justice. By contrast, Irwin maintains that Book 4 and Books 8 and 9 contain two complementary parts of the same answer: Book 4 shows that justice is good for the soul in and by itself and Books 8 and 9 further clarify the connection between justice and happiness. The reasons at the basis of the disagreement between Annas and Irwin seem to be two: first, the identification of a different category of goods into which Socrates places justice; second, a different interpretation of the phrases "for its own sake" and "for its consequences." With regard to the first point, Annas maintains that justice is considered by Socrates as a good of the second category while Irwin argues that justice belongs, in Socrates' view, to the first category of goods. Concerning the

second point, Annas focuses her attention on the interpretation of the phrase "for its consequences" and contends that justice has both natural and the artificial consequences. However, she maintains that Socrates is asked to leave the artificial consequences aside and only to discuss the natural ones. By contrast, Irwin focuses on the meaning of the phrase "for its own sake" and argues that showing that justice is a good "for its own sake" entails highlighting that it is conducive to happiness since between justice and happiness there is a logical relation.

As these two points are very relevant to ascertaining how Socrates' argumentative line unfolds, I will analyse both of them in detail. In the following section I will discuss whether justice is considered by Socrates a good belonging to the first or to the second category. In the next one, I will attempt with the help of White to clarify the meaning of the phrases "for its own sake" and "for its consequences."

The brothers' demands, Socrates' evaluation and the agenda of the *Republic*

As we have seen in the section *The frame of Socrates' investigation into justice*, there is a tension between on the one hand, the demands of Glaucon and Adeimantus, and, on the other, Socrates' decision to place justice in the second category of goods. While he considers justice beneficial *both* for the effect it causes in and by itself *and* for its consequences that arise from it, the brothers are interested *exclusively* in the beneficial effect it produces in and by itself. In this section I will analyse how this tension reflects on the agenda Socrates sets for the investigation into justice that he will carry out in Books 2 to 10.[27] I will argue that,

[27] According to Ferrari 2010 Book 2 marks a turning point in the *Republic*. As he argues, from the beginning of this book the control of the conversation slips from the hands of the character Socrates and is taken gradually but increasingly firmly by the author Plato. Evidence of Socrates' loss of control is found by Ferrari in the passages in which the conversation takes a direction that it is difficult to assume that Socrates could have foreseen. Examples of this dynamic are in Ferrari's view the passage in which Glaucon rejects the city initially designed by Socrates for his investigation into justice (372d5-e1) and the sections of Book 5 in which is Socrates is led by his interlocutors to discuss topics he initially intended to pass over (449a7-451b7, 457c4-458b8, and 471d8-473b3). Counterpart to this set of evidence are in Ferrari's view the passages in which Plato makes his authorial presence felt. A prominent example he gives is the discussion on narratological patterns in which Socrates engages in the final part of Book 2. Since it ignores the narratological typology represented by the *Republic* itself, this discussion reveals in Ferrari's view the authorial control exerted by Plato. Ferrari completes the formulation of his thesis by proposing

as it turns out, the brothers' demands do not cause Socrates to omit the description of the consequences arising from justice but only to dedicate less attention to this point;[28] This will prove important for understanding that the myth is made essential by the notion of justice Socrates decides to defend despite the brothers' demands.

To show that the brothers are interested only in an explanation of the benefit justice produces in and by itself, I will first analyse the demands Glaucon presents to Socrates. Two passages show clearly that the description of the consequences arising from justice should be excluded from the argument in support of justice Glaucon encourages Socrates to offer. In lines 358b4-7 he formulates the following request:

ἐπιθυμῶ γὰρ ἀκοῦσαι τί τ' ἔστιν ἑκάτερον καὶ τίνα ἔχει δύναμιν αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ ἐνὸν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, τοὺς δὲ μισθοὺς καὶ τὰ γιγνόμενα ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἐᾶσαι χαίρειν.
I desire to hear what each of the two [justice and injustice] is and what power it has in and by itself when it is present in the soul, and to leave aside the rewards and the consequences arising from them.[29]

With this statement Glaucon renders it unambiguous that he intends to be informed only about the effect justice has in and by itself. There is lexical

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that the way Socrates is presented is related to whether he is in control of the conversation. In Book 1 when he controls the conversation he appears ironical and easily able to withhold knowledge from his interlocutors, while from the beginning of Book 2 he is portrayed as cooperative and inclined to adapt a didactic attitude.

[28] Rowe 2007a attaches much higher importance to the role played by Glaucon and Adeimantus. Their entrance on the scene marks in his view the moment from which Socrates begins to analyse justice from his interlocutors' point of view. While confronting Thrasymachus in Book 1, Socrates offers an argument in support of justice that Rowe considers sound but inadequate to persuade Socrates' interlocutor because it does not start from his premises. Glaucon and Adeimantus invite Socrates to make a new case for justice by giving speeches that show that they are not unimpressed by Thrasymachus' views. After accepting the challenge, Socrates presents a long and articulated argument for justice that moves from assumptions shared by his interlocutors. Indication of Socrates' readiness to meet his interlocutors on their ground is in Rowe's view his acceptance to dismiss what Glaucon calls the city of pigs (372d5) and conduct his analysis on the bases of the feverish city (372e8). The choice of the feverish city as the object of his investigation into justice leads Socrates, Rowe argues, to analysing phenomena as they occur in an imperfect word. The results yielded by this analysis are thus bound to lack precision. The mention of the longer road (435c-d, 504b-c) and the comparison of the incarnate soul with the see monster Glaucus are considered by Rowe admissions on Socrates' part of the limitations inherent to an investigation that moves from his interlocutors' assumptions.

[29] My translation.

confirmation that what Glaucon wants Socrates to omit are the consequences arising from justice. If we compare the words uttered by Glaucon in this passage with those he uses at the beginning of Book 2 to indicate the consequences that arise from a certain good, we observe that they are almost the same. In both cases the consequences arising from justice or from a certain good are described by a phrase combining a form of the verb γίγνεσθαι with ἀπό. In this passage Glaucon says τὰ γιγνόμενα ἀπ' αὐτῶν; at the beginning of Book 2 he uses a similar phrase twice: when he defines the category of the goods desirable both in and by itself and for the consequences he uses the phrase τῶν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ γιγνομένων (357c2-3); to describe the goods belonging to the third category, he identifies the consequences arising from them with the words ὅσα γίγνεται ἀπ' αὐτῶν (357d1-2). In addition to this similarity in the wording a further lexical correspondence can be detected: the beneficial consequences are presented as *rewards* both when the goods of the third category are defined at the beginning of Book 2 (τῶν δὲ μισθῶν, 357d1) and in the passage quoted above (τοὺς δὲ μισθοὺς, 358b6).

While in lines 358b4-7 Glaucon asks Socrates to omit from his investigation into justice the consequences that arise from it, he presents a very similar request a few lines later:

ἀπορῶ μέντοι διατεθρυλημένος τὰ ὦτα ἀκούων Θρασυμάχου καὶ μυρίων ἄλλων, τὸν δὲ ὑπὲρ τῆς δικαιοσύνης λόγον, ὡς ἄμεινον ἀδικίας, οὐδενός πω ἀκήκοα ὡς βούλομαι—βούλομαι δὲ αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ ἐγκωμιαζόμενον ἀκοῦσαι—μάλιστα δ' οἶμαι ἂν σοῦ πυθέσθαι. (358c6-d4)

I am at a loss because I am talked deaf by Thrasymachus and countless others, but I have not yet heard from anybody the argument in favour of justice, that it is better than injustice, in the form I wish – and I wish to hear it praised in and by itself. – But I think that I would learn this especially from you.[30]

In this passage Glaucon does not mention the consequences arising from justice but he clearly states that his interest lies in an explanation of the effect that justice produces in and by itself. The phrase αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ can be safely considered as referring to it, as clearly emerges from the analyses of lines 358b4-7. In them the

[30] My translation.

rewards of justice and the consequences arising from injustice on the one side are contrasted with the "power" (δύναμιν) each of them has on the other. To emphasize that the power he wished to be analysed is that exerted by justice (or injustice) in and by itself, Glaucon added the phrase αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτό. On this basis the occurrence of the phrase αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτό at 358d3 confirms that in this passage too Glaucon wishes Socrates to focus on the effect produced by justice in and by itself, although here he does not underline that he wants the consequences of justice to be omitted.

The request made to Socrates by Glaucon is presented by Adeimantus in very similar terms (366e5-367a1):

αὐτὸ δ' ἑκάτερον τῇ αὐτοῦ δυνάμει τί δρᾷ, τῇ τοῦ ἔχοντος ψυχῇ ἐνόν, καὶ λανθάνον θεούς τε καὶ ἀνθρώπους, οὐδεὶς πώποτε οὔτ' ἐν ποιήσει οὔτ' ἐν ἰδίοις λόγοις ἐπεξῆλθεν ἱκανῶς τῷ λόγῳ ὡς τὸ μὲν μέγιστον κακῶν ὅσα ἴσχει ψυχὴ ἐν αὑτῇ, δικαιοσύνη δὲ μέγιστον ἀγαθόν.

Regarding the question what each of the two [justice and injustice] does by its own power when it is present in the soul, even if unnoticed by both gods and people, nobody has ever yet sufficiently developed the thesis, in poetry or in prose, that the one is the greatest of evils that the soul has in itself while justice is the greatest good.[31]

Although in these lines Adeimantus does not directly mention the consequences arising from justice and injustice, he clarifies that he wishes to hear an account that praises justice and condemns injustice without discussing their consequences by narrowing the focus Socrates' account needs to maintain. He insists that Socrates should describe what effect justice or injustice produces by its own power (τῇ αὐτοῦ δυνάμει). This effect needs to be evaluated not for the implications it has on the external environment but for the reflections it has on the soul (τῇ τοῦ ἔχοντος ψυχῇ ἐνόν). Accordingly, Adeimantus invites Socrates to offer an argument showing the effect that justice and injustice have in the soul: as he asks, justice has to be shown to be the greatest of the goods that the soul has in itself (ὅσα ἴσχει ψυχὴ ἐν αὑτῇ) while injustice should be shown to be its greatest evil. That the soul should be the only area on which Socrates is asked to focus is

[31] My translation.

further clarified by the remark that he should describe the effect that justice and injustice produce "even if unnoticed by both gods and people."

If in the three passages previously analysed Socrates is presented with the request to exclude from his investigation the discussion of the consequences arising from justice, lines 367c6-d3 are significant because they reveal a clash between Adeimantus' and Socrates' position. In this passage the request for a limitation of the scope of the investigation is accompanied by the acknowledgment that Socrates deems justice desirable for the consequences arising from it too:

ἐπειδὴ οὖν ὡμολόγησας τῶν μεγίστων ἀγαθῶν εἶναι δικαιοσύνην, ἃ τῶν τε ἀποβαινόντων ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἕνεκα ἄξια κεκτῆσθαι, πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον αὐτὰ αὑτῶν, οἷον ὁρᾶν, ἀκούειν, φρονεῖν, καὶ ὑγιαίνειν δή, καὶ ὅσ' ἄλλα ἀγαθὰ γόνιμα τῇ αὐτῶν φύσει ἀλλ' οὐ δόξῃ ἐστίν, τοῦτ' οὖν αὐτὸ ἐπαίνεσον δικαιοσύνης, ὃ αὐτὴ δι' αὑτὴν τὸν ἔχοντα ὀνίνησιν καὶ ἀδικία βλάπτει, μισθοὺς δὲ καὶ δόξας πάρες ἄλλοις ἐπαινεῖν· (367c6-d3)

Since you have agreed that justice is among the greatest goods, those which are worth acquiring for the consequences ensuing from them but much more in and by themselves, like sight, hearing, understanding, health, and all the other goods fruitful by their own nature and not for their reputation, praise the aspect of justice in respect of which it benefits by itself the man who has it and injustice damages him, leaving it for others to praise good reputation and rewards.[32]

In the concluding section of the passage Adeimantus restates the point that he has already made at 366e5-367a1. The wordings used in the two passages are slightly different but they show recognisable similarities with each other. At 367d1-3 Adeimantus asks Socrates to focus on a particular aspect (τοῦτ' οὖν αὐτὸ) of the notion of justice he embraces. Accordingly, justice has to be shown to benefit the man who has it (τὸν ἔχοντα). Adeimantus does not directly mention the area in which the beneficial effect of justice should be demonstrated as he did in lines 366e8-367a1 where he underlined that he expected the soul to be shown the area in which justice exerts its beneficial effect and injustice causes damage. Even though in lines 367c6-d3 he does not mention the soul directly, Adeimantus

[32] My translation.

renders it clear that his request is for an argument showing the effect produced by justice in and by itself. By using the phrase αὐτὴ δι' αὑτὴν, which closely resembles the phrase αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ used by Glaucon at 358d3, he clarifies that he wishes Socrates to focus his analysis on the effect caused by justice in and by itself. Adeimantus' direct request to omit the praise (πάρες ἄλλοις ἐπαινεῖν) of rewards and good reputation (μισθοὺς δὲ καὶ δόξας) deriving from justice clearly suggests that the description of the consequences arising from justice should have no part in Socrates argument in favour of justice. Further confirmation that the phrase "rewards and good reputation" refers to the consequences of justice is given by Glaucon's use of the word μισθοὺς together with the phase "the consequence of justice" (τὰ γιγνόμενα ἀπ' αὐτῶν) at 358b5-6.

While restating that he is interested in hearing only the effect produced by justice in and by itself, Adeimantus also acknowledges that this is not the only reason why Socrates believes that justice is desirable. As he observes, Socrates has agreed that justice belongs to the category of the goods worthy of choice also "for the consequences ensuing from them" (τῶν τε ἀποβαινόντων ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἕνεκα). Adeimantus confirms that is aware that Socrates considers justice good both for its effect and its consequences by comparing the type of good justice is according to Socrates with the same goods Glaucon considers representative of the second category. Sight, hearing, understanding and health (ὁρᾶν, ἀκούειν, φρονεῖν, καὶ ὑγιαίνειν) are mentioned at 357c3 when Glaucon defines the characteristics of the goods of the second category, and they are listed again by Adeimantus when he summarizes Socrates' position at 367c6-d3.

Another point made in this passage needs some comment. Although Adeimantus acknowledges that Socrates considers justice a good belonging to the second category, the representation he gives of Socrates' position is not fully accurate. According to Adeimantus Socrates would not only believe that justice is desirable both for the effect it causes in and by itself and for the consequences arising from it, but he would also attach a different level of importance to each of the two reasons why he deems justice desirable: as reported by Adeimantus, Socrates' view would be that justice belongs to those goods that are desirable for the consequences arising from themselves "but much more" (πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον,

367c8) for the effect they produced in and by themselves. That Socrates does not establish a hierarchy between the reasons motivating the desirability of justice becomes clear from the words he utters at the beginning of Book 2 after Glaucon describes the three groups of goods he has identified:

Ἐγὼ μὲν οἶμαι, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἐν τῷ καλλίστῳ, ὃ καὶ δι' αὑτὸ καὶ διὰ τὰ γιγνόμενα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἀγαπητέον τῷ μέλλοντι μακαρίῳ ἔσεσθαι.
I think," I said "that [I will include justice] in the most beautiful category, the one that the person who is going to be blessed should love both for itself and for the consequences arising from it[33] (358a1-3).

Two points emerges from these lines: first, Socrates includes justice in the category he deems most beautiful; seconds, this category comprises goods that are desirable both for the effect they produce in and by themselves and for the consequences that arise from themselves. No hint is given that Socrates attaches more importance to the effect justice produces in and by itself than to the consequences arising from it.

If Adeimantus acknowledges that when the three categories of goods are defined, Socrates placed justice in the second, it remains to verify whether Socrates has maintained his opinion unchanged after the brothers ask him to put the focus of his investigation exclusively on the benefit justice produces in and by itself. A statement made by Socrates after the brothers have completed both their speeches is particularly relevant to ascertaining what position he intends to uphold. In reaffirming his commitment to defending justice, Socrates clarifies what points will be integral to his defence:

Ὅ τε οὖν Γλαύκων καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ἐδέοντο παντὶ τρόπῳ βοηθῆσαι καὶ μὴ ἀνεῖναι τὸν λόγον, ἀλλὰ διερευνήσασθαι τί τέ ἐστιν ἑκάτερον καὶ περὶ τῆς ὠφελίας αὐτοῖν τἀληθὲς ποτέρως ἔχει. (368c5-8)

"Both Glaucon and the others asked me to give aid in every way and not to give up the argument but to examine both what each of the two [justice and injustice] is and what the truth is about the advantage of each of them."[34]

[33] My translation.

As the terminology Socrates uses in this sentence is slightly different from that used in the passages previously analysed, it is difficult to determine with certainty what aspects of justice will, according to these lines, be integral to the investigation he will undertake. The first phrase, "what each of the two [justice and injustice] is," is vague and could point to the intention to provide a general definition of justice and injustice. The second phrase, "what the truth is about the advantage of each of them," is not identical with any of those with which either of the two aspects of justice was previously described. Despite the impossibility of finding exact parallels in similar contexts, the occurrence of the word ὠφελία suggests that the phrase is more likely to refer to the consequences arising from justice and injustice. ὠφελία has a similar semantic field to μισθός, which along with δόξας refers to the consequences of justice at 367d6. As ὠφελία possesses a variety of meanings that includes profit and gain, so can μισθός have "financial" meanings too, being able to signify hire and pay. Focusing on the similarity noticeable between some of the meanings of the two words, it does not seem implausible to see a connection between the advantage of justice (and the disadvantage of injustice), the truth about which Socrates promises in this sentence to investigate, and the rewards of justice that Adeimantus asked him to leave undiscussed at 367d3.

Whether or not this connection is plausible, a more relevant consideration suggests that Socrates deems it essential to his agenda to examine both the effect produced by justice in and by itself and the consequences arising from it. As we have seen, at 358a1-3 he openly asserts that he regards justice as a good desirable for both of these reasons. Even after Glaucon asks the focus of the investigation to be put exclusively on the effect produced by justice in and by itself, Adeimantus remarks at 367c6-d3 that Socrates has retained unchanged the notion of justice he initially embraced. If Adeimantus' request to limit the focus of the investigation had been successful, it would be natural to expect Socrates explicitly to remark after the conclusion of Adeimantus' speech that he will omit the consequences of justice. On the contrary, what he issues at that stage is an ambiguous statement

[34] My translation.

that adopts terminology not previously used in Book 2. Whether or not this statement can be seen as reaffirming the notion of justice initially embraced by Socrates, it clearly does not contain the open admission that he will omit from his investigation the discussion of the consequences arising from justice.

From the analysis I have carried out in this section a divergence emerges between Socrates' notion of justice and the requests made to him by Glaucon and Adeimantus. When presented with different notions of justice, Socrates promptly chooses one. After his choice, he is confronted by Glaucon and Adeimantus who ask him to focus exclusively on one of the aspects of the notion chosen. Despite their requests Socrates gives no sign that he is inclined to neglect the aspect of justice they are not interested in hearing described. Although Socrates continues to endorse the notion of justice he initially chose, an impact of the brothers' requests on a more limited point of the agenda he will follow seems to be observable. As we have seen, Adeimantus openly suggests the existence of a hierarchical order in the importance of the two aspects of Socrates' notion of justice. When at 367c6-d3 he remarks that Socrates considers justice desirable both for the effect it produces in and by itself and for the consequences arising from it, he alleges in the same passage that Socrates would attach "much more" (367c8) importance to the former than to the consequences. Analysis of the relevant passages has shown that Adeimantus' allegation does not found any support in Socrates' words. Socrates does not assert that he attaches a different level of importance to each of the reasons why he deems justice choiceworthy at the beginning of Book 2 when he places it in the second category of goods. Nor does he give any sign of correcting his view at 368c5-8 after the brothers ask him to direct the focus of his investigation exclusively to the effect produced by justice in and by itself. Although Socrates does not establish a hierarchical order between the two reasons why he deems justice choiceworthy in these passages, he will when he actually carries out his research. As we will see in more detail in the next section, the amount of space and attention dedicated to each of them is very unequal. The description of the effect produced by justice in and by itself occupies Books 2 to 9 while the consequences arising from justice are illustrated only in the final section of Book 10.

If it is plausible to assume that, albeit unsuccessful in convincing Socrates to omit the consequences arising from justice from his investigation, Adeimantus' request has an impact on the distribution of time and attention Socrates dedicates to each of the two points of his investigation, we can observe an interesting dialogical dynamic.[35] At the beginning of Book 2 we see Glaucon and Adeimantus revitalize the conversation that in Socrates' view had already reached a satisfactory conclusion.[36] In order to be convinced of the intrinsic value of justice, they require Socrates to resume his defence, presenting an argument exclusively focused on the effect caused by justice in and by itself and leaving undiscussed the consequences arising from justice.[37] Socrates readily accepts to embark on a new and more detailed investigation but he does not give any sign that he is prepared to omit the consequences arising from justice, which he had already declared a constitutive reason for the desirability of justice. When he carries out his investigation, he however seems to set the priorities of it in a way that takes the brothers' requests into account.

Analysing this dynamic, we can see that the intervention of Socrates' interlocutors is crucial to the development of the conversation. Although not accepted completely, their requests are decisive for convincing Socrates to embark on a more sustained investigation after he thought that his defence of justice had already received a satisfactory conclusion. Contrary to the brothers' requests, the new investigation will consider both the aspects Socrates deems integral to his notion of justice. In partial acceptance the brothers' demands, the space and attention dedicated to each of the two aspects constitutive to Socrates' notion of justice will be very unequal. As we will see in more detail in the following section, the description of justice in and by itself will occupy Books 2 to 9 whereas the consequences arising from it will be discussed in the section 608c2-621d3 and in the myth of Er included in it. Despite giving a description of the consequences arising from justice of limited length, the section 608c2-621d3 is

[35] For an important study of the importance of dialogical interaction between Socrates and his interlocutor in Plato's early dialogues see Stokes 1986, especially pp. 1-35 where he sets out the methodological principles of his approach.
[36] See the section *The frame of Socrates' investigation into justice*, in particular pp. 72-73.
[37] For a detailed analysis of how Glaucon's and Adeimantus' intervention helps Socrates to provide a more persuasive account of justice see Long 2013, pp. 99-108.

therefore crucial to completing Socrates' investigation in that it describes an aspect Socrates deems constitutive to his notion of justice.

Causes, consequences and the function of the myth of Er

In the previous section we have seen that Socrates considers justice desirable *both* for the effect it produces in and by itself *and* for the consequences arising from it. Although Glaucon and Adeimantus repeatedly ask him to focus exclusively on the effect justice causes in and by itself, Socrates neither modifies his notion of justice nor shows any readiness to omit the description of the consequences arising from justice. In this section I will argue that the section 608c2-621d3 and the myth of Er included in it contain this description. By describing the consequences arising from justice, this passage constitutes an integral part of the argumentative line followed in the *Republic*, in that it contains the defence of an aspect *Socrates*, unlike the brothers, considers integral to his notion of justice. My defence of this thesis will be articulated in two stages. First, I will argue that the description of the effect justice produces in and by itself is given by Socrates in the section extending from Book 2 to 9. In my second stage I will clarify that the consequences arising from justice are what follows from just behaviour in a certain external environment and point out that passage 608c2-621d3 contains the description of these consequences.

In the previous section we have seen that the effect produced by justice in and by itself is referred to by phrases such as αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ (358b4, 358d3), τῇ αὐτοῦ δυνάμει (366e5), αὐτὴ δι' αὑτὴν (367d2). While these phrases were helpful to distinguish this aspect of Socrates' notion of justice from the other (the consequences arising from justice), they are not very informative about what exactly the description of this aspect should contain. More helpful for this purpose is a phrase Adeimantus uses twice. At 367b4-5 Adeimantus asks to be shown "by doing what (τί ποιοῦσα) because of itself to someone having it, each of the two [justice and injustice] is, one a good thing, the other a bad one"[38] (367b4-5). Similarly, at 367e3-4 he expresses the wish to know "by doing what (τί ποιοῦσα)

[38] My translation.

because of itself to someone having it, each of the two [justice and injustice] is, one a good thing, the other a bad one […]"[39]

Adeimantus' use of the verb ποιεῖν is very significant because in other dialogues this verb is used to identify a causal relation. What produces something is identified as the cause of it in the *Hippias Major* and in the *Philebus*, and what produces something is expressed by a form of the participle of ποιεῖν in both cases. In the *Hippias Major* Socrates asks the following question that promptly receives Hippias' agreement: "is what causes something nothing different from its cause? Is it not so?"[40] (Τὸ ποιοῦν δέ γ' ἐστὶν οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ τὸ αἴτιον· ἦ γάρ;, 296e8-9). In the *Philebus*, Protarchus gives affirmative answer to a very similar question posed to him by Socrates: "What produces and the cause of something, I take it, differ in name only? We are justified in identifying what produces something and the cause of it?"[41] (Οὐκοῦν ἡ τοῦ ποιοῦντος φύσις οὐδὲν πλὴν ὀνόματι τῆς αἰτίας διαφέρει, τὸ δὲ ποιοῦν καὶ τὸ αἴτιον ὀρθῶς ἂν εἴη λεγόμενον ἕν;, 26e6-8).

If the participle τὸ ποιοῦν identifies a causal relation, a brief description of the notion of causation embraced in other Platonic dialogues is helpful to gain a clearer understanding of what kind of argument Adeimantus wishes to hear when he asks what justice causes. The *Phaedo* contains a detailed description of the notion of causation. I will limit myself here to focus my attention on a short section of it that is most important to my purpose. At 105b8-c2 Socrates attempts to clarify his notion of causation by investigating what causes something to warm. As he affirms, if he were asked what the cause of warmness is, he will give "a subtler answer now available, that it's fire" (105c2). Fire causes heat by a characteristic it intrinsically possesses. Explaining the effect fire will have depends not on the empirical observation of a number of cases in which fire is applied to a body, but on knowing what it causes by its nature. Along the same lines is the explanation Socrates provides for the cause that renders a number odd (105c4-7). What causes a number to become odd is oneness. In this case too, the effect something causes depends on the qualities it intrinsically possesses.

[39] My translation.
[40] My translation.
[41] Translation by Gosling 1975.

If we consider how the notion of causation Socrates embraces in the *Phaedo* operates in the *Republic*, we are in a position to appreciate that Socrates' explanation of what justice causes in and by itself extends from Book 2 to 9.[42] When it is present in the soul, justice produces harmony and happiness. Harmony is the condition of good order that comes about when justice allows each of the three parts of the soul to perform its own duty. The explanation of how this state is created by justice is complete by the end of Book 4 when Socrates reaches the conclusion that "each of the elements he [a just man] has in him is performing its own role in relation to ruling and being ruled" (443b1-2). Happiness is the condition created by the appropriate functioning of a compound whose parts have desires. As each of the three parts of the soul has its own form of desire, it is also capable of gaining its own form of pleasure (580d2-4). When harmony is created by justice, the ensuing order allows each part of the soul to satisfy its own desire. By virtue of the good order created by the presence of justice in his soul, the philosophical man is able to experience the pleasures deriving from the satisfaction of the desires of each of the three parts of the soul. With the declaration of the philosophical man as the happiest towards the end of Book 9 (582a7-d2), Socrates concludes his discussion of how happiness is caused by justice.

Happiness, as described in Book 9, cannot be reduced to the correct performance of the function assigned to each part of the soul; rather, it is the richer condition achieved when the orderly state of the soul allows each of its three parts to satisfy its own desire. By allowing each part of the soul to perform its function, harmony thus enables it to satisfy its own desire. Justice then produces a harmonic state in the soul that results in the possibility for each of its three parts to gain its pleasure and the whole soul to reach a state of happiness.[43]

While the effect justice causes in and by itself is described from Book 2 to Book 9, it remains to be shown that the description of the consequences arising

[42] White 1984 also believes that the type of causation described in the *Phaedo* is helpful to understand the type of argument Adeimantus expects Socrates to offer in support of justice: "if we examine what the relation between justice and happiness is portrayed as being, then it seems to me that we can see why Plato thought that it lay where the *Phaedo* makes us expect to see it, somewhere between a purely empirical connection and a definitionally established one" (414).
[43] Compare White 1984, 413.

from justice is given in the section 608c2-621d3. Only then can we appreciate the importance of Socrates, and his conception of justice, for this section of the *Republic*. The phrases I have translated "consequences arising from justice (or from goods such as justice)" in the previous section were two: τὰ ἀποβαίνοντα ἀπ' αὐτῶν and τὰ γιγνόμενα ἀπ' αὐτῶν. More careful consideration of the meaning of these two participles shows the merit of a slightly different translation, which clarifies in what sense these two participles describe a cause. When it is not used in a technical sense, the verb ἀποβαίνειν does not ordinarily describe the effect brought about by a certain cause. Its infinitive ἀποβαίνειν and its participle ἀποβαίνων more generally indicate something that happens, an event, what turns out from something else.[44] Similarly, if not used as a technical term, the verb γίγνεσθαι followed by the preposition ἀπό has the generic meaning of "coming from." In their non-technical meaning both verbs thus need not refer to an effect directly produced by a certain cause; they can refer, more loosely, to what results or follows from something when it is observed in its environment.

When Socrates and the brothers distinguish what arises from justice and the effect it produces in and by itself, they designate by the former effects dependent on a set of circumstances. This set of circumstances is precisely what Socrates was asked, but did not agree, to omit from his defence of justice: the rewards given to the just both by men and the gods. After describing at length the effect justice produces in and by itself, Socrates proceeds in the section 608c2-621d3 to explain what follows from justice, thereby illustrating the second of the two aspects he deems integral to justice.

Already with the words with which he introduces it Socrates announces that the section 608c2-621d3 contains the description – so far absent – of the rewards given to just men and that that description is an integral part of his argumentative line. In lines 608c2-3 he remarks: "and yet […] we haven't even talked about the biggest rewards of excellence, the biggest prizes it has to offer," apparently implying that such a discussion is an integral part of their project as he conceives of it. At first Glaucon is surprised that there can be something more valuable than the happiness justice ensures to the soul (608c4-5). Socrates' answer is centred on

[44] LSJ *s.v.* ἀποβαίνω II 1.

the polarity between the limited time of human existence and the unlimited extension of eternity. The dismissal of the former as a time dimension in which anything of high relevance can take place (608c6-8) introduces the argument for the immortality of soul. After he shows, by arguing for the immortality of soul, that it is legitimate to project onto eternity the expectation of something truly valuable, Socrates can reintroduce the rewards of justice: "so hasn't our argument done all the things we promised for it – in particular, by not adducing the rewards of justice or the reputation it brings, in the way you were claiming Hesiod and Homer did" (612a8-b1). The mention of Homer and Hesiod clearly refers back to Book 2 where Adeimantus underlined the fabulous prizes promised to just men ("just as the noble Hesiod and Homer tell us," 363a8-b1), but asked Socrates to omit them from his praise. After justice in and by itself has been shown to be conducive to happiness, the first part of Socrates' argument is complete and the second can be addressed: "so, Glaucon, will anyone now be able to reproach us for taking the next step, and restoring to justice and the other parts of excellence all the various rewards they offer the soul, whether from men and from gods, both while a man is still alive and when he dies" (612b6-c3).

Lines 612c7-d1 provide further confirmation of how Socrates views their project: "I conceded to you that the just person should be thought to be unjust, because both of you asked me to; even if these things couldn't in fact be hidden from the gods, you thought it should be conceded for the sake of the argument." In these lines Socrates stresses that the possibility that justice remains unnoticed by the god is not actually a real one and that such a concession was made only to accommodate Glaucon's demand. In doing so, he clearly signals that he does not consider his argumentative line complete until such conditions are recreated as those that were commonly supposed, or at least hoped, to be in place. In fact, he immediately proceeds to withdraw the concession he made in Book 2: "I demand back from you on behalf of justice the good reputation she in fact enjoys, not just among gods but among men. It is time for us to agree that she is well thought of; time for her to come up und receive the prizes she bestows on those who possess her merely from being thought to do so, since now we know that she is no deceiver, and that if people truly take her to themselves, she truly does bestow on

them the blessings that come from being just" (612d4-10). Now Socrates appears as "the creditor. He has redeemed the arguments in favour of justice and can move on to demand repayment of the principal."[45] After uncovering the connection between justice and happiness, Socrates emphasizes once again that the second part of his argumentative line is yet to be supplied. To this purpose justice is given back its reputation so that it is possible to appreciate the consequences arising from it when certain external factors are at work.

After clarifying that the description of the rewards of justice is an essential part of his arguments, Socrates details the prizes given to just men by other men. As he remarks (613c9-d1), Socrates will bestow upon just men exactly the same rewards Glaucon bestowed upon unjust ones in Book 2. The just man will have the opportunity of holding public office, marrying women belonging to the highest rank, and giving their daughters in marriage to whoever they prefer (613d1-5). In comparison with the rewards offered by the gods, the honours conferred by men are of little importance. In the myth Socrates does not describe in detail the prizes virtuous souls will receive in the afterlife, but he mentions that they are held in store for them. As he states in lines 615a3-4, in the heavens virtuous souls are awaited by "pleasures and sights of unbelievable beauty."

The passage 608c2-621d3 and the myth of Er included in it are an essential part of the argumentative line followed in the *Republic*, inasmuch as they bring to completion the Socratic conception of justice adumbrated in Book 2. In Book 2 Socrates places justice in the category of the goods desirable both in and by itself and for their consequences; only at the end of Book 10 has he fully explained why justice deserves to be in this category. The dynamic between Socrates and the brothers is thus essential to understanding the place of this passage, and its myth, within the dialogue.

2 The souls' freedom to serve justice

The problem of freedom in the myth of Er

In the introduction I have proposed that the myth of Er completes the argument developed in the *Republic*, because, beside other reasons, it shows that souls are

[45] Morgan 2000, 207.

free to decide whether or not to be just. By showing that souls can decide what kind of life they will live, the myth of Er, I have contended, provides the ultimate foundation for the enquiry into justice Socrates carries out in the rest of the *Republic*. While in Books 2 to 9 he undertakes to argue that justice is desirable for the harmonious condition it creates in the soul, in the myth of Er he shows that the souls are free to choose whether or not to live a just life.

Nevertheless, evaluating the amount of freedom given to souls both prior to reincarnation and during earthly life is rendered complex by the plurality of factors involved in the choice. The concerns of Halliwell have been outlined already.[46] Gonzalez has also raised doubts that the souls depicted in the myth can be assumed to act freely. On his reading, two elements restrict the souls' freedom. First, clear limitations are imposed upon the souls at the moment of the choice of their future life. Souls are allowed to choose their life among a limited number of life patterns and they have to do so in a rigorously established order. Second, the prenatal choice seems to deny the possibility of making further choices during life on earth. The implications of the prenatal choice of life are further complicated according to Gonzalez by the fact that the factors chosen before reincarnation are purely external and do not include the disposition of the soul (ψυχῆς τάξις). Since the disposition of the soul "is determined by his [of the person to whom the soul belongs] choice of life" (618b4), prior to reincarnation the most important element of the future life of a soul cannot be directly chosen but will be influenced by the external factors previously selected in some, not clearly defined, way. Therefore, "one is 'allotted' not only a determinate and finite set of lives between which to choose, but also, once a particular life is chosen, one is 'allotted' a number of accidents that accompany such a life."[47]

Gonzalez maintains that not even a philosopher's knowledge is sufficient for ensuring the choice of a virtuous life. As he stresses, the souls coming from beneath the earth are said to choose more carefully and to obtain a happier life more frequently not due to their knowledge but because they "had suffered themselves and seen others suffering" (619d4). Moreover, as can be inferred by Socrates' second intervention, "even someone who philosophizes will still also

[46] See p.71, footnote 2.
[47] Gonzalez 2012, 265.

need the luck (*ten tou klerou tychen* 619d7) of not being the last one to choose (619e1-2)."[48] At this point Gonzalez highlights a tension between this last point and the reassurance by the priest of Lachesis that "even the person who comes up last, if he chooses intelligently, can look forward to an acceptable life, not a bad one, if he lives with determination" (619b3-4). In Gonzalez's view, the resulting contradiction can be explained but not solved by noting that the two statements are pronounced by two different characters. The trust in the importance of practising philosophy for making a satisfying choice remains deeply undermined by the fact that "Socrates, the true defender of reason, express[es] himself more sceptically."[49]

Given the significant restrictions imposed on souls' freedom, Gonzalez maintains that the "emphasis on *choice*"[50] placed in the myth is a signal of the inconsistency of this narrative with the rest of *Republic*, since the act of choosing is not given considerable relevance elsewhere in the *Republic* and choice in this particular case does not seem to be entirely free. On the basis of this and other elements[51] that on his account signal a tension between the body of the *Republic* and the narrative placed at its end, Gonzalez concludes that "the myth [of Er] thematises everything that such [philosophical] reasoning cannot penetrate and master, everything that stubbornly remains dark and irrational."[52]

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[48] Gonzalez 2012, 267.
[49] Gonzalez 2012, 269.
[50] Gonzalez 2012, 262.
[51] In addition to the already mentioned factors that according to his account restrict the souls' freedom, Gonzalez 2012 gives four other reasons for maintaining that the myth of Er is either not self-consistent or incongruous with the rest of the *Republic*. First, the myth seems to blur the boundaries between the location of the place where discarnate souls gather and *this world*. The description of discarnate souls is not always consistent as they are sometimes referred to with the female form, appropriate for ψυχαί, and sometimes with the masculine one, seemingly depicting them as persons who preserve their previous identity. Third, the "festival atmosphere" (261) of the souls' gathering stays at odds with the condition of disembodied souls and seems to discount the value of the transcendental beauty admirable in heavens. Fourth, the forgetfulness caused by the ingestion of the water of the river *Ameles* suggests that "the fate of humans is an entanglement of truth with oblivion, care with carelessness" (271).
[52] Gonzalez 2012, 271. The reading Gonzalez 2012 proposes is very relevant for the reasons he gives to explain the tension he detects between the content of the myth and the views expounded in the rest of the *Republic*. This tension signals, in his view, not the unfinished status of the work but a peculiar function assigned to the myth. Since the latter expresses what philosophical reasoning cannot articulate, a radical discontinuity emerges between the myth and the rest of the *Republic*. Completely independent from the arguments previously offered in the dialogue, the myth describes "what lies outside the boundary of philosophy, limiting its scope and continually threatening its project" (275).

Despite the doubts recently voiced by Halliwell and Gonzalez, other scholars have seemed more inclined to believe that souls have at least some room to make ethically relevant choices, although opinions diverge as to the amount of this room. At the end of the 1980s Thayer has advanced the view that the system of choice depicted in the myth requires souls to be thought of as free agents. According to Thayer, "that choice is possible is taken for granted. We will not find here any doctrine or defence of 'freedom of will.' In his manner of stating the fact of choice, and his assignment of responsibility to the one who chooses, rather than to divine agencies, Plato departs from a tradition in Greek thought according to which the gods in various ways and degrees cause moral blindness and evil in human conduct."[53]

More recently Ferrari has argued that "it is a mistake to interpret the myth's frequent references to necessity by having recourse to the theme of determinism or predestinarianism."[54] Despite rejecting the view that the cycle of reincarnation described by Er determines the souls' life in every respect, Ferrari maintains that the place in the lot can prevent a soul from having a happy life. Although the choice of a philosophical life is in Ferrari's view automatically conducive to happiness in the incarnate existence and in the immediately following time of disembodiment, the lot can prevent a soul from finding a philosophical life available. Accordingly, "the philosophical life remains a guarantee of happiness and reward in heaven. It is true, however, that the soul of one who led a philosophical life but is prevented by its place in the lottery from choosing another such life for his second incarnation, instead having to settle for a conventionally decent life, may well find itself caught up in the interchange of lives and making a bad choice for its third."[55]

As seen above, Thayer proposes that freedom of choice is assumed, although not argued, to be given to the souls in the myth of Er. Ferrari defends a more restricted claim: if the place assigned by the lot is not too unfavourable, the choice of a philosophical life is sufficient for achieving happiness in the incarnated life and in the immediately following period of disembodiment. After the questions

[53] Thayer 1988, 371.
[54] Ferrari 2011, 131, footnote 15.
[55] Ferrari 2011, 130.

posed by Halliwell and Gonzalez, a more extensive investigation seems to be required to ascertain what elements described in the myth potentially threat to undermine the possibility for the souls to make ethically relevant choice, both prior to incarnation and after embodiment. In the following I will aim to show that the text, although in some passages ambiguously, supports the claim that souls are portrayed as able to decide what kind of life they will live. I will first point out that three different factors need to be evaluated to determine the extent to which a soul is free: the lot, the life pattern and the *daimon*. I will then assess the relevance of the lot and contend that the lot may render it more difficult for a soul to choose the future life it desires, but it does not prevent a soul from eventually finding the life pattern it seeks. I will show that the life pattern entails external factors that influence the soul but I will argue that this influence is not deterministic. I will interpret the *daimon* as a force that tends to maintain the external factors unchanged. I will contend that the ingestion of the water of the river *Ameles* preserves the moral value of the choices made by incarnate souls during their earthly life because it causes them to forget post-mortem rewards and punishments.

The lot

In this section I will point out that according to the words uttered by the priest of Lachesis the three factors on which the degree of freedom of the souls depends are the lot, the life pattern, and the *daimon*. I will focus on the implications of the lot for the souls' choice of their future life and argue that it poses some limitations to the freedom of the souls but it does not deny it completely.

On the twelfth day of his journey through the cosmos Er witnesses the moment in which souls choose their future life. As he reports, before the souls appear in the presence of Lachesis "a spokesman then began by arranging them all in an orderly line, after which he took from Lachesis' lap some lottery-tokens and life patterns, and mounting on a lofty platform proclaimed: 'souls that live a day: once more the cycle begins for your mortal kind; once more will it end in death. No divine guide will be allotted to you; the choice of guide will be your own. Let the one who draws the first lot be the first to choose a life, and his choice will be

irrevocable. Excellence has no master; as each honours or dishonours her, so will his share of her grow or diminish. The blame is the chooser's, not god's'" (617d6-e5).

The words uttered by the priest of Lachesis give a first indication that the lot is not decisive in determining which life pattern a soul picks. According to his statement the lot establishes the order in which souls can proceed to make their choice. The first one can be supposed to enjoy a little advantage as the range of lives available will be wider. The priest of Lachesis is, nevertheless, careful to clarify that ἀρετή is the decisive factor in the choice. Since displaying a virtuous behaviour is an option open to every soul, the responsibility for the life chosen is held exclusively by the chooser himself.

If the words uttered by the priest of Lachesis appear difficult to reconcile with the objective difficulty that the last souls will encounter in finding a satisfying life, an explanation will be provided after a few lines. At 618a2 Er's report specifies that "there were far more [life patterns] than there were people present, and they were of every conceivable variety." The favourable disproportion between the number of life patterns available and the souls that have to choose one suggests that even the last soul will be given the possibility of choosing among a range of available life patterns instead of being compelled to pick the only remaining one.

Confirmation of this view can be found in the words spoken by the priest of Lachesis and reported in *oratio recta* by Socrates: "even the person who comes up last, if he chooses intelligently, can look forward to an acceptable life, not a bad one, if he lives it with determination. Let not the first be careless in his choice; let not the last despair of his" (619b3-6). The abundance of life patterns allows every soul to pick a life pleasing it, provided it has gained the required knowledge during its previous life and it employs it properly at the moment of choice.

This interpretative line seems, however, contradicted by a later statement. When he comments on the corrective function performed by the punishments suffered in Hades, Er concludes: "because of this, and because of the way the lots chanced to fall, most souls actually found their situations, bad or good, reversed." (619d5-7). Gonzalez infers from this passage that "Er gives the 'luck of the lot' as

a cause of many souls finding themselves exchanging a good life *for a bad life* and vice versa."[56] Although it is undeniable that the lot is mentioned as a factor involved in the process of life choosing, its actual relevance is not, however, precisely established. In this sentence the exchange of good and evils is, in fact, also attributed to the sufferings occurring to souls in Hades (619d5, διό). Since the corrective action of these punishments fosters the moral improvement of a soul and enables it to make a better choice (619d3-5), the lot cannot be regarded as the only determining factor.

The most serious objection against discounting the relevance of the lot has been found in Socrates' second intervention: "in fact, if on arriving in life here a person is always healthily engaged in philosophy, and the fall of the lot hasn't put him among the last to choose, the likelihood is – to go by Er's report from that other place – not only that he will be happy here, but that his journey from here to there and back again will not be rough and under the earth, but smooth and heavenly" (619d7-e5). Halliwell maintains that "Socrates himself, for sure, wishes to affirm that true happiness, and a 'smooth, heavenly journey' between this world and the next, will belong to one who philosophizes soundly. But not only does he qualify the affirmation, in contrast to the priest's hieratic confidence, with a degree of eschatological tentativeness (using the language of likelihood: the verb *kinduneuein,* 619e). He also hints that the very possibility of a philosophical life might be blocked by sheer contingency (a late place in the lot)."[57] The contrast between the confidence with which the priest of Laches reassures souls' freedom and the doubts voiced by Socrates brings Halliwell to speak of "an instability between the mythic narrative and his [Socrates'] commentary on it."[58] Socrates' words do not, however, seem significantly different in their meaning from the statement of the priest of Lachesis. If someone during his earthly life acquires the knowledge capable of enabling him to make the correct decisions (619e1, ὑγιῶς φιλοσοφοῖ), it is likely, Socrates says, both that he will fare well (619e3, εὐδαιμονεῖν ἄν) on earth (619e3, ἐνθάδε) and that he will pick a satisfactory life pattern before reincarnation (619e4-5, τὴν […] δεῦρο πάλιν πορείαν οὐκ ἂν

[56] Gonzalez 2012, 268, Gonzalez's italics.
[57] Halliwell 2007, 466.
[58] Halliwell 2007, 464.

χθονίαν καὶ τραχεῖαν πορεύεσθαι, ἀλλὰ λείαν τε καὶ οὐρανίαν). Although the mention of the lot leaves a certain amount of space for contingency, nowhere it is specified how significant the role played by luck is. On the contrary, Socrates' comment seems more optimistic about the portion of freedom exercised by souls since he explicitly acknowledges that the decision of practising virtue on earth by cultivating philosophy has a bearing on the choice of life.

The incidence of chance and the relevance of the lot can be examined in the case of Odysseus, who proceeds to choose his future life after having been allotted the last position. The memory of the toils involved in an existence devoted to the quest for honour induces him to seek an anonymous life for reincarnation.[59] Since he has been relegated "by chance" (κατὰ τύχην, 620c3) to the last place, Odysseus needs to "walk around a long time" (περιοῦσαν χρόνον πολὺν, 620c5-6) in search for the life of a private citizen free from business. At the beginning he faces difficulties in finding it (μόγις εὑρεῖν κείμενόν που, 620c6-7), but eventually he sees it and picks it gladly (ἀσμένην ἑλέσθαι, 620d2). Not only does he assert that he is completely satisfied but he also declares that he "would have done the same choice, even though he had obtained the first lot" (620d1-2). Luck or contingency do not seem to limit the freedom of a soul drastically: certainly they render its search more difficult but they do not prevent a soul from finding the desired life pattern, if it is sufficiently persistent in its search.

Two objections might be raised to this reading: first, it can be remarked that what happens to one single soul last in the lot is being generalized and employed to formulate a general rule about every single last soul's behaviour; secondly, it may be asked whether the life chosen by Odysseus is really good for him. As to

[59] It is intriguing to think that the image of an Odysseus choosing the life of a private citizen exemplifies "the method of hyponoetic doubling" (Freydberg 2007, 126). Freydberg's thesis moves from the assumption that the strict censorship imposed on poetry in the second and third book of the *Republic* is intended to select the contents suitable for the upbringing of the guardians but not for that of the philosophers. Freydberg substantiates his claim by drawing attention to a number of Homeric verses, such as 489-491 from the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*, that are condemned when the education appropriate for the guardians is outlined, but are on the other occasions used to illustrate one of Socrates' views. If ὑπόνοια or allegorical interpretation is forbidden to guardians but allowed to philosophers as the use of the aforementioned verses in lines 516d5-6 of the *Republic* suggests according to Freydberg, the mention of Odysseus in the myth of Er points toward a typically Socratic attitude. Once the underlining thought of the episode is decoded, it emerges that "the ὑπόνοια of Odysseus' mindful homecoming is precisely the choice in this life of a person who, like Socrates, minds his own business" (126).

the first point, it must be remarked that both the statement by the priest of Lachesis (619d5-7) and Socrates' comment on it (619d7-e5) stress a constant interaction between freedom and contingency without clearly specifying how to articulate it. In the myth the case of Odysseus is the one instance which has the clearest bearing on how to understand this interplay. Since what can be inferred from that particular occurrence neatly fits in the general framework outlined both by the priest of Lachesis and by Socrates, the conclusions drawn from its analysis amount not to arbitrary generalizations but to findings supported by, and helping to corroborate, the results already reached. The second objection fails to take into account that addressing the question of whether Odysseus' choice is satisfactory or not is beyond the scope of the present investigation, which solely aims at assessing what measure of freedom is given to the souls at the moment of choosing their next life. Even if the life of a private citizen free from business should prove an unsatisfactory choice for Odysseus, being able to make a wrong choice is evidence for the agent's freedom.

The life pattern

As we saw in the previous section, the lot can render it difficult for the souls to pick the life pattern they want, but it does not prevent them from eventually finding the life pattern they seek. In this section I will argue that the life pattern influences the earthly life of a soul, but this influence is not deterministic. I will point out that the disposition of the soul (ψυχῆς τάξις) is not included in the life pattern and it changes during a soul's earthly life, determining the moral quality of a soul's behaviour.

Life patterns (τὰ τῶν βίων παραδείγματα) include the factors shaping the existence of what is alive (except from plants, which do not figure among them). They can belong to human beings or to all kinds of animals: musical (620a8), wild (620d2) and tame (620d4). The richest variety is yet found among human lives: tyrannies, either brought to completion or overthrown and ended up in poverty, exile and beggary (618a5-7); sex (618b2-3); lives honourable either for their exterior shape on the account of beauty, strength or skill in gymnastic contests or for the nobility and the virtue of their ancestors (618a5-b3). Also available for

choice are wealth and poverty, illness and health and the conditions intermediate between them (618b7-8), nobility, low birth, condition of private citizen, public office, strength, weakness, readiness or inability in learning, as well as every such character that a soul has by nature or assumes by acquisition (618d1-5).

Analysis of these factors indicates that the souls' "choice involves not only the conditions which we generally consider as being the outcome of chance […], but equally elements that are generally held in contempt in the Platonic (or Socratic) hierarchy of care, a hierarchy in which bodily goods and external goods usually come last."[60] The choice process is further complicated by the fact that none of the listed conditions presents itself alone, but, as the priest of Lachesis (618b6) and Socrates (618c8) clarify, they are mixed with one another. Therefore, the souls are not able to pick selectively the single conditions they prefer, but they need to choose a "package deal,"[61] possibly containing factors they like along with others they may dislike.

Since the choice involves characteristics that are, once acquired, almost impossible to change (sex, a healthy or sickly constitution, nobility, wealth and so forth),[62] it seems hard to grasp the sense of the exhortation uttered by the priest of Lachesis: "excellence has no master; as each honours or dishonours her, so will his share of her grow or diminish" (617e3-4). One may think that these words refer exclusively to the moment of choosing a life pattern and imply that freedom can be exercised exclusively prior to incarnation. This claim would be, however, directly contradicted by Socrates' recommendations to look for somebody able to make a person "capable of, and skilled in […], making *always* and *in every circumstance* [ἀεὶ πανταχοῦ] the choice of a better life"[63] (618c3-5). The insistence on the necessity of acquiring a form of knowledge able to teach how to improve one's life "always and in every circumstance" seems inconsistent with a narrowly deterministic view. Some room for changing or modifying what has been once chosen must be given during life on earth.

[60] Larivée 2012, 240.
[61] Larivée 2012, 239.
[62] As Larivée 2012 reminds, "having been born male or female, rich or poor, beautiful or ugly, with disabilities or without, an aristocrat or a craftsman obviously implied a form of constraint much more serious and rigid in Ancient Greece than today" (255).
[63] My translation and my italics.

Shortly before Socrates' first intervention the priest of Lachesis mentions a factor that the souls cannot choose prior to reincarnation: ψυχῆς δὲ τάξιν οὐκ ἐνεῖναι διὰ τὸ ἀναγκαίως ἔχειν ἄλλον ἑλομένην βίον ἀλλοίαν γίγνεσθαι (618b3-4). For a correct reading of this passage it is crucial clearly to understand the exact meaning of the phrase ψυχῆς τάξις. In Book 9 there is an occurrence of the word τάξις undoubtedly referred to the soul: "if then […] a man is similar to the city, is there not necessarily the same disposition (τάξιν) in him too, is his [a tyrant's] soul not full of great slavery and servility and are those parts (τὰ μέρη) of it which were most respectable not enslaved, while the one most vicious and full of madness, though small, is tyrannizing?" (577d1-5).[64] These lines follow Socrates' description of the characteristics peculiar to the tyrannical man and are meant to bring to completion the discussion of the first point of the agenda announced in Book 2: by showing that the most just man is happiest, they conclude the description of the positive effect produced by justice in and by itself. Maintaining that a close similarity exists between the soul of a certain type of man and the corresponding city (577b10-c2), Socrates asserts that the soul of a man has the same disposition as the constitution of that form of city. As the constitution of a city is determined by the relation among its classes, the disposition of a soul is identified by the relation among its parts. Since towards the end of Book 4 Socrates and Glaucon have agreed that a human soul is divided into λογιστικόν, θυμοειδές and ἐπιθυμητικόν (441c4-6), it seems legitimate to conclude that the word τάξις, when referred to the soul, describes the relation among these three parts.

In a just man's soul "it belong[s] to the rational element (λογιστικόν) to rule, if it's wise and exercises forethought on behalf of the soul as a whole, and to the spirited element (θυμοειδές) to be its subject and ally. […] Then, when they've been looked after like this, and have truly learned and been educated in their proper rules, they will take charge of the appetitive element (ἐπιθυμητικόν)" (441e3-442a5). In a just man's soul the rational element exercises a firm leadership, but the equilibrium among the three parts of the soul is fluid and the overall disposition of the soul can vary significantly.

[64] My translation.

If attention is now drawn back to the words spoken by the priest of Lachesis, their meaning becomes clear: "the disposition of the soul was not included [in what was to choose] since it was unavoidable for it to become of a different sort after it had chosen another life" (618b3-4).[65] The *taxis* does not belong to the factors available for choice prior to reincarnation because it is not a condition a soul can expect to remain unchanged for the entire span of its life on earth. As Larivée remarks, "the *taxis* of the soul is not part of the package deal chosen by the individual preparing to be reincarnated, not because it would be possible for the soul to honour virtue regardless of the circumstances, but rather because in being reincarnated the soul preserves its precedent *taxis* which in turn will be affected by its new life conditions."[66] When a soul is reincarnated, it is subjected to a number of external factors that will modify its disposition. The changes of disposition a soul undergoes during its life on earth are caused by the multiple factors to which it is exposed, including those entailed in its life pattern, which will play a very significant role.

How "in being incarnated, the soul is […] thrown into a process of becoming that is conducive to affecting its disposition"[67] is shown by the process of modification that leads the soul of an oligarchic man to acquire the disposition of a democratic man's (559d5-560c4). Such a soul is already in a compromised status, since the right balance among its parts has been already upset. Instead of the λογιστικόν, the leadership has been taken over by the ἐπιθυμητικόν and by the related desire for wealth, which have enslaved the λογιστικόν and the θυμοειδές. The action of external factors can cause a further modification of that equilibrium. The taste of the "drones' honey" (559d6) along with the company of "wild and fiery creatures" (559d7), to which the son of an oligarchic father is attracted, loosen it. The "external help of a class of cognate and similar desires" (559e6), if provided, proves to be determinant in bringing the change to a "democratic" disposition to completion. Yet, outside influence can also act on the soul

[65] My translation.
[66] Larivée 2012, 243, Larivée's italics. Following this line of interpretation, De Luise 2007 maintains that "among the factors characterising a certain type of life to be chosen, there is nothing which can determine by itself its disposition [*taxis*], since the disposition will result from the combination of the transformations experienced by soul during its existence" (344).
[67] Larivée 2012, 243.

conservatively. If the father's reproach is severe enough, the oligarchic element regains strength and forms a "faction" (560a1) that engages in "battle" (560a2) against the "counter-faction" (560a2) represented by the democratic element. At this point the soul is divided: change can be resisted and the oligarchic disposition can be restored if a sense of honour becomes predominant. Once again the external environment proves decisive. If the father because of "his educative inability" (560a10) fails to keep his son's most dangerous desires in check, they grow strong again and seek the alliance of others cognate to them. Since the oligarchic element is weakened, no resistance can be opposed and the democratic one overtakes the "acropolis of the young's man soul" (560b6-7).[68]

As the present example shows, the relevance of external factors in the process of modifying the disposition of the soul is fully recognised in the arguments developed in the body of the *Republic*. That the same relevance is attributed to the environment in the myth of Er emerges from the words Socrates pronounces in his first intervention. In this passage Socrates exhorts the souls to choose their new life "reckoning up all the things just mentioned, and assessing the difference they make to the goodness of a life by being combined or kept a part: for example, what effect beauty will have for bad or good when mixed with poverty or wealth, and in company with what kind of disposition of the soul; being well or low born, being a private citizen or holding office, being strong or weak, being quick or slow at learning, or having any such natural attribute of mind, or indeed any acquired one – what effect these things have when mixed together with each other" (618c5-d5).

Even though a soul is shaped by the external factors to which it is exposed, it cannot be assumed to react to the influences to which it is subject in a deterministic manner. Socrates invites Glaucon, and indirectly the readers of the *Republic*, to look for somebody able to teach the knowledge necessary to make the best choices. The ability of "calculating all [external factors]" (618d5-6) must be demonstrated not only at the moment of picking up a new life pattern but

[68] In these lines attention is focused on the formation of a democratic soul, but the relevance of the surrounding environment can be appreciated in every transition from one disposition of soul to another. For the formation of a timocratic soul see *R.* 550a1-b7; for the formation of an oligarchic one see *R.* 553b7-d7.

"always and in every circumstance" (618c5). Every choice needs to be made "paying attention to the nature of his soul" (618d6) because the influence of every external factor contributes to modifying the disposition of the soul. "Suggesting a behaviour which should permanently guide the soul's strategies, this message has ostensibly a double aim: for the immediate time, it points out to Socrates' interlocutors the value of ethical formation, superior to the other goals achievable in this existence; for the future, it stresses the surplus of this formation, which can be used in the time span of more lives and remains an inalienable resource."[69]

A more precise indication of how education can act on the soul modifying its disposition can be found in Book 4. When he explains how a soul can be set in a disposition that allows it to be just, Socrates underlines that "it [is] a mixture of musical (μουσική) and physical training that will bring them [the λογιστικόν and the θυμοειδές] into accord with each other, stretching and nourishing the one with beautiful words and beautiful lessons and slackening the other by shooting it, taming it with harmony and rhythm" (441e7-442a2). Since the three parts of soul appears to stay in a fluid relation with each other, μουσική can strengthen the rational part and render the spirit more malleable. With this action it fosters a balanced disposition in which soul is virtuous.

The function of the knowledge mentioned in the myth is not much different from the one that μουσική is described to have in Book 4. As the latter is intended to strengthen the rational part and to temper the spirit, the former aims both to teach the ability of making the correct choices when picking a life pattern and to allow a soul to maintain the proper disposition after incarnation.

The interaction between the external factors and the disposition of the soul is complex. The environment influences the soul and modifies the relation among its three parts. Along with external factors, such as social and material conditions, the practice of philosophy and acquisition of knowledge need to be counted among the factors influencing the condition of the soul. Practising philosophy changes the relation among the three parts of the soul by reinforcing the guiding role of the λογιστικόν. Although the life pattern chosen prior to reincarnation influences the

[69] De Luise 2007, 346.

condition of the soul, the external factors to which a soul is subject after incarnation continue modifying its composition.

An outline will help us see how the condition of the soul changes. I will first analyse how external factors contribute to modifying the relation among the λογιστικόν, the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν during the earthly life of a soul. I will then proceed to present a hypothesis on how this relation is affected when the soul is separate from the body. The discussion of this point will be bound to remain speculative as it is based on an assumption the text cannot confirm: the survival of all the three parts of the soul after the death of the body. The well-known passage containing the analogy between Glaucus and the incarnate soul (611b9-612a6) warns the reader that the psychological analyses carried out by Socrates up to that point of the *Republic* consider the soul as it is when incarnate. As Socrates highlights, to discover the true nature of the disembodied soul, "we must use rational reflection to examine it properly, as it is purified from such things [its association with the body and the other things that harm it], and if you do so sufficiently well, we will find it something far more beautiful" (611c1-2). What the soul will look like when it is purified is not said by Socrates. His observation that full dedication to the pursuit of knowledge would "break[…] off the rocks and shells that currently cling all around it [the soul]" (611e4-612a1) has seemed to suggest that the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν are not permanent parts of the soul. However, a more cautious stance has seemed to be advised by Socrates' clarification that only by considering a soul when it fully dedicates itself to the pursuit of knowledge "one would see whether its true nature is to contain many kinds within it, or only one" (612a3-4). How these statements can be reconciled and Socrates' notion of the disembodied soul should be defined are questions that have find little agreement in scholarship. In recent years Woolf has underlined that "there is no reason not to take this [Socrates'] agnosticism at face value"[70] and has proposed that the passage 611b9-612a6 contains methodological warnings but not substantive indication on how Socrates conceives of the discarnate soul. Although advancing an interpretation of this passage along Woolf's line, Rowe has proposed that the true nature of the discarnate soul can be

[70] Woolf 2012, 151.

glimpsed in myth of Er. As he argues, "Socrates in Republic x is first content to leave it open whether there are many kinds of soul in us or only one, but then, in the eschatological myth with which he closes the whole work, he seems to rule out the second option."[71]

In proposing a hypothesis on how the relation among the λογιστικόν, the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν changes during the discarnate period of a soul's cosmic life, I do not imply that I consider the question of the nature of the discarnate soul settled. Rather, I intend to consider a further aspect of a question integral to my argument. While describing how change occurs in the condition of the soul during its earthly life is crucial to arguing that the soul has room for making ethically relevant choices, analysing how the relation among the λογιστικόν, the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν can be modified by post-mortem reward or punishment completes the description of the condition of the soul throughout its cosmic life. Although this part of the analysis remains based on an assumption that I do not claimed to be confirmed by the text, I nevertheless believe that it enriches my treatment of the topic.

As anticipated, I will start by analysing how the condition of the soul is affected by external factors during life on earth. I will analyse the case of a soul in which, immediately after reincarnation, the λογιστικόν is weakened and the ἐπιθυμητικόν strengthened by an alliance with the θυμοειδές. Due to the initial relation existing among its three parts, this soul will tend towards engaging in activities that allow its appetites to be satisfied. In so doing, the ἐπιθυμητικόν will grow further, reinforce its alliance with the θυμοειδές and become sufficiently strong to satisfy a variety of desires. The λογιστικόν will attempt to resist against the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν but it will eventually yield to them if it does not receive any support from the external environment. In the absence of support for the λογιστικόν the soul will continue engaging in a life devoted to pleasure and uninterested in knowledge.

If on the contrary the λογιστικόν receives some form of external support, it will be in a position to resist the attempt of the ἐπιθυμητικόν and the θυμοειδές to gain strength to its detriment. Valuable help to the λογιστικόν may come from the

[71] Rowe 2007a, 142.

external environment. The soul may find itself surrounded by other incarnate souls in which the ἐπιθυμητικόν is weaker and the λογιστικόν stronger. If their influence is sufficiently strong, the condition of this soul will be modified: the λογιστικόν will become stronger and gradually regain its position of leadership over the two non-rational parts.

Depending upon what external factors act on the soul and how it reacts to them, the composition of this soul will change during the time of its incarnate life. The leadership of the λογιστικόν, already compromised when the incarnate life of this begins, can become even weaker if the ἐπιθυμητικόν succeeds in satisfying its desires and growing. If however the λογιστικόν receives support from the external environment at the appropriate time, it can reaffirm its leadership over the soul.

Whatever the relation among its three parts comes to be, the external factors to which this soul is subject during its earthly life will cease to affect it when it is separated from the body. At this stage the soul is judged and is sent either to the sky or beneath the earth. I will now formulate a hypothesis on how the condition of the soul changes after separation from the body, moving from the assumption that discarnate souls retain the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν besides the λογιστικόν. I will first analyse how the relation existing among the three parts of this soul will change if a soul is condemned to punishment and then discuss how the relation between its three parts will be modified if it is rewarded with a thousand years in heaven.

A punished soul is at the moment of judgement found to have the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν in a position of strength while its λογιστικόν has lost its position of leadership. A first indication of how its disposition may change is given by consideration of the type of experience the soul will make beneath the earth. As Er reports, during the thousand years of their punishment souls witness "terrible sights"[72] (615d4) and experience "many and manifold fears"[73] (616a4-5). Although indirectly, lines 619d3-7 give some information helpful to understanding how these frightening experiences reflect on the composition of the soul: "most of those who had come up out of the earth, by contrast, had suffered themselves and seen others suffering, and so they did not make their choices in a

[72] My translation.
[73] My translation.

rush. Because of this, and because of the way the lots chanced to fall, most souls actually found their situations, bad or good, reversed" (619d3-7). These lines contain three important pieces of information: first, they state that the souls arriving from beneath the earth ponder the choice seriously instead of hurrying to pick a life without carefully considering the external factors it entails. Second, they explain that the reason why these souls use great care is the suffering they have experienced themselves or seen other souls experience beneath the earth. Finally, these lines imply that the care exercised by these souls is one of the reasons why many of them choose a better life than the one previously lived.[74]

For an attempt to assess the impact of punishment and the ensuing suffering on the condition of the soul it is highly relevant that suffering is said to render souls more careful in their choice. Greater care in choosing is likely to be an effect of a fairly stable position of leadership occupied by the λογιστικόν. If it is correct to suppose that punishment results in reinforcing the λογιστικόν, an explanation is needed of how this effect can be produced. While it is not very plausible to think that punishment exerts an effect on the λογιστικόν itself, which is subject to the influence of rational arguments, it seems more likely that the non-rational parts of the soul are affected by the correcting action of punishment. Accordingly, punishment acts upon the ἐπιθυμητικόν by reducing its size and thus undermining its ability to satisfy its desires. At the same time, punishment also exerts a form of influence on the θυμοειδές, weakening its alliance with the ἐπιθυμητικόν. Being reduced in its size and receiving less significant help from the θυμοειδές, the ἐπιθυμητικόν will become weaker and more likely to yield to the λογιστικόν. As a result, the λογιστικόν will be strengthened but not necessarily fully restored in a firm position of leadership. A disposition in which the λογιστικόν is strong but not in full control of the non-rational parts of the soul seems very consistent with Er's report. Er's report shows that souls coming from beneath the earth may choose a happier and more just life than their previous one but not all of them do.

If it is correct to suppose that punishment reinforces the position of the λογιστικόν, it remains to see how the relation among the three parts of the soul can change if the soul is sent to heaven. To be sent to heaven, this soul is found at

[74] See the section *The lot* for a discussion of the relevance of the lot for determining the reversal of the situations of many souls.

the moment of judgement to have the λογιστικόν exercising some form of leadership over the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν. This leadership does not have to be completely firm but it needs to be sufficiently strong to allow the soul to have conducted an overall just life.[75] To assess how the thousand years spent in heaven affect the disposition of this soul, the already quoted lines 619d5-6 provide a first important piece of information. In them Socrates observes that "most souls actually found their situations, bad or good, reversed" at the moment of choosing the next incarnate life. If, as we have seen, this reversal is partly the result of the choice of a better life made by souls coming from beneath the earth, it is reasonable to assume that it is also in part caused by souls arriving from the heaven choosing a more unjust and thus more unhappy life.

Those rewarded souls that choose an unhappy life do so because their λογιστικόν is no longer able to impose its leadership on the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν. Consideration of two points helps us explain why this condition can come to be in place: the relation that is likely to exist among the λογιστικόν, the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν of these souls already when they were deemed worthy of reward and the reflection that the type of experience offered by the thousand years spent in heaven may have on them. First, already when these souls were separated from the body, their λογιστικόν was likely not to have a firmly established leadership. To prevent the souls from committing injustice during their incarnate life, it needed support from the external environment and only so could it keep the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν under control. Second, when these souls are sent to heaven, the external factors influencing them change radically. While they enjoy "pleasures and sights of unbelievable beauty"[76] (615a3-4), this type of experience is not said to include any form of acquisition of knowledge. Their λογιστικόν ceases to receive the support that during their earthly life was provided by the external environment and played a crucial role in allowing them to live justly. Contextually, the experience of pleasures and sights

[75] It is intriguing to suppose that this soul was incarnated in the body of one of Callipolis' producers. The members of this class adopt a just behaviour and live a just life without practising philosophy or having theoretical knowledge of what justice is. The hypothesis that this soul belonged to one member of Callipolis' second or third class is explicitly formulated by Vegetti 2006, 1176, footnote 105.

[76] For an attempt to identify the reference of this phrase and a discussion of previous attempts see the section "The transition into incarnated life."

of unbelievable beauty reflects on their θυμοειδές. While the nature of the pleasures enjoyed in heaven is unlikely to be such that it appeals to their ἐπιθυμητικόν, the unbelievable beauty that the souls contemplate may stimulate their θυμοειδές. Growing as a result of this stimulation, the θυμοειδές may reach a critical size and become reluctant to maintain the already fragile alliance with the λογιστικόν. If the λογιστικόν, the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν come to be in a relation of this kind, it becomes possible to understand why these souls may rush to choose a life that appears speciously attractive but will lead it to commit injustice, although it has been deemed worthy of reward after its previous incarnate life. It is however important to note that this outcome is not unavoidable. As in the case of the souls coming from beneath the earth, the choice of a life different in its moral quality from the one previously lived is possible but not necessary. Although the sights of unbelievable beauty contemplated in heaven tend encourage the growth of the θυμοειδές, its growth may remain insufficient to compromise its alliance with the λογιστικόν.

This outline shows how the relation among the λογιστικόν, the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν may change during the cosmic life of a soul if all the three parts of the soul continue existing after the death of the body. Both continuity and change are observable in the disposition of a soul, although the extent of change considerably varies from a moment to another. While the disposition of the soul can change significantly, although gradually, during a soul's incarnate life,[77] it undergoes less considerable changes when the soul is separate from the body. When embodied, the soul is subject to a higher number of external factors that includes both those entailed in the life pattern and those to which the soul comes to be exposed in the course of its earthly life. After separation from the body many external factors cease to act upon the soul but the external environment does not completely stop affecting the composition of the soul. As I have suggested, post-mortem punishment and reward exert some influence on the soul, although

[77] Larivée 2012 observers that "insofar as the retributive sojourn lasts one thousand years, be it in the celestial or the subterranean region, we might expect that in this time the soul would evolve considerably, that it would learn (not only by 'digesting' the events of its past life but also by gaining from the experiences acquired in this milieu). This, however, does not appear to be the case […] It is clear […] that the privileged occasion for the transformation of the soul and the shaping of the self remains its incarnate life" (244).

this influence is more limited than that to which the soul is subject during its life on earth.

Related to the identification of possible changes occurring in the composition of the soul during its cosmic life is the question of how the previous incarnate life influences the choice of the following. According to Er's report, the experience gained in the past life plays a crucial role in determining in what life a soul will decide to be reincarnated. Orpheus chooses the life of a bird because his death at the hand of a group of possessed women stirs up his hatred for womankind (620a3-6). After losing his song challenge with the Muses, Thamyras decides to be reincarnated in a beautifully singing bird (620a5-6). Ajax decides to avoid reincarnation in a human form of life out of disappointment for the outcome of the judgment over Achilles' arms (620b1-3). Agamemnon makes a similar choice moved by the desire to avoid the suffering caused by his previous human life (620b3-4). The mythical builder of the Trojan horse Epeius picks the life of a female craftworker (620c1-2). Thersites, the ugly and abusive suitor, chooses the life of a monkey (620c2-3).

To account for the influence that the past life exerts on a soul at the moment of choosing its following life, a first explanation can be offered by highlighting the similarity between the condition of the soul at the moment of disembodiment and at the moment of the choice of the new life (on the assumption that a disembodied soul continues possessing the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν). As we saw, the relation among the three parts of the soul can change during the period of discarnate life but this change is much less significant than that occurring during the earthly life of a soul. Although punishment and reward can lead some souls to choose a life of a different moral quality from the previous one, they cause this change in souls in which the leadership is not firmly asserted either by the λογιστικόν or by the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν allied with one another. Even in these cases the change occurred is thus limited and a similarity between the condition of the soul before and after the thousand years of discarnate life is clearly recognisable.

An explanation based on this similarity remains however theoretical because based on an assumption, and partial because it fails to account for every aspect of

the souls' decision. What influences the choice of the souls is in fact not only the similarity between two types of life, as if a soul that lived a life devoted to the pursuit of honour chose another life devoted to the pursuit of honour. As the examples mentioned in Er's report suggest, the souls are guided by specific memories of the past life.[78] Orpheus' and Ajax' refusals to be reincarnated in a human life are motivated by their disappointment at a particular event that happened during their previous life. Agamemnon's choice is caused by a more general delusion but it is still related to the memories of the events of his past life. The lives chosen by Thamyras and Epeius resemble those in which they were previously incarnated in one important aspect: the talent for craftmanship or the ridiculous and abusive character.

As these examples suggest, the motivation leading souls to choose a particular future life is not only a possible similarity in the relation among the λογιστικόν, the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν at the moment of disembodiment and at the moment of the choice of the new life but also analogy or contrast between the preceding and the following life. If comparison with the previous life influences the choice of the new one, souls need to be assumed to be able to be keep memories of past events. How and in what part keeps them is not clear. It might be thought that the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν are inadequate to keep memories as the function of the former is to seek honour while the latter is devoted to the satisfaction of the desire. On that account it would seem plausible to hypothesize that memories are stored in the λογιστικόν. Although no textual evidence can provide final confirmation that the λογιστικόν is the part of the soul best suited to store memories, this hypothesis has the virtue of not needing any assumption about the nature of the discarnate soul. If the experience of the past life is stored in the λογιστικόν, the influence it exerts on the choice of the future life is explained irrespective of whether or not the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν are still present in the soul after separation from the body.

[78] According to De Luise 2007 not all memories are relevant to the choice of the future life. "Relevant is only the memory of the interiorized reasons for being just and, in case of difficulty, the ability to find somebody who could help us remember them" (353). The existence of an analogy or contrast between the life previously lived and that chosen for reincarnation seems however to suggest that memory of specific events or situations also plays a role.

However many parts the discarnate soul has, I hope that the outline I have given has highlighted two points concerning the soul in its incarnate status: the relation among the λογιστικόν, the θυμοειδές and the ἐπιθυμητικόν is subject to change and the way in which this relation changes in response to the external factors to which a soul is exposed is not deterministic. The prenatal choice of a life pattern does not therefore deny souls the possibility of making ethically relevant choices. Some external conditions are more favourable to the practise of virtue than others, but none of them can completely prevent a soul from being just. Education and philosophy play a crucial role in directing a soul toward engaging in a morally commendable conduct during life on earth and are highly relevant for a successful choice of life prior to reincarnation.

As seen in the previous paragraph, the lot can cause a soul some difficulties in choosing the life it prefers but does not conclusively determine its choice. Similarly, some external factors render it more difficult for a soul to be just. Their influence can, however, be counterbalanced by the exercise of philosophy. The knowledge acquired though its exercise allows the souls both to choose other external factors and to maintain a harmonious relation among each of their three parts.

The daimon

After analysing the roles of the lot and the life pattern, it remains to discuss the third element that the priest of Laches says that the souls choose before incarnation: the *daimon*. In this section I will point out that the traits of this figure are not entirely clear. I will propose that it can be interpreted as a sort of conservative force that prevents the eternal factors entailed in a life pattern from being changed before incarnation, and that renders it more difficult to modify them during life on earth.

The identification of the *daimon's* role has posed several interpretative difficulties, since the notion of *daimon* embraced in the myth of Er does not find exact correspondence in other notions of *daimones* in contemporary Greek culture. "The myth here positions itself in a manner hard to decode, in relation to a variety of earlier Greek thoughts about souls and *daimones*. It seems to fall

somewhere in between three different versions of a *daimon*: the agent of an individual's fortune (in traditional/popular thought), an entity underlining successive incarnations (Empedocles), and that which is self-constituted by an individual life (Heraclitus, Democritus)."[79]

Even though the function that the *daimon* performs in myth of Er does not perfectly tally with any of the ones traditionally fulfilled by this entity, comparative analysis of the characteristics it is given in the present narrative can be illuminating. When announcing to the souls how the process of life choosing will unfold, the priest of Lachesis mentions, besides the lot and the life pattern, the *daimon*: as he specifies, instead of being assigned a *daimon*, each soul will pick the one it wishes (617e1-2). While introducing a further element that the souls will be able to choose, this statement does not help clarify the attributions of this mythical figure. If in the Greek tradition "*daimon* is occult power, a force that drives man forward where no agent can be named,"[80] the specific role it is given in the myth remains unclear.

To explain the function of the *daimon* in this context, Heraclitus' fragment "character is a man's daimon" (DK 119, ἦθος ἀνθρώπωι δαίμων) has been quoted as a parallel.[81] On that basis Adam argues that "this δαίμων is the personification of its [a soul's] destiny throughout that particular life."[82] This suggestion points in the right direction, but further clarification of what destiny implies in the myth of Er is needed. Since, as we have seen, the external factors entailed in the life pattern influence but do not ultimately determine the development of the disposition of the soul, it would be inconsistent to assume that the destiny chosen prior to incarnation is immutable. A helpful hint is given in the passage 620d6-e6, where Lachesis is said to "send the spirit that a person chose with him as a guardian of his life and executor of the choices he made"[83] (620d8-e1). According to his words, the function of the spirit seems to consist in ensuring that the set of factors entailed in the life pattern remain unchanged during the transition of a soul to incarnate life. This view is corroborated a few lines further below where the

[79] Halliwell 2007, 467.
[80] Burkert 2006, 180.
[81] E.g. Adam 1902, 454, and Halliwell 1988, 184.
[82] Adam 1902, 454.
[83] My translation.

spirit is portrayed as "ratifying the fate (μοῖραν) each person received in the allotted order" (620e3-4).[84] At this point there occurs, for the first time in the myth (apart from the mention of the goddesses with this name at 612c2), the word μοῖρα.

"Life pattern and daimon appear in the text as interconnected choice objects, the first representing the inseparable compound of factors to which one decides to be subjected, the second the dynamic result provided to soul."[85] Apparently the set of external factors are called life pattern as long as they are available for a soul to choose, but then, after having been chosen, they are described as μοῖρα. During the transition to earthly life the *daimon* performs the function of ensuring that the chosen life pattern does not undergo any change before incarnation. When a soul is led under the spinning of the rotation of Clotho's spindle, its *daimon* ensures that the terms of its choice are applied without modification. Subsequently, its *daimon* accompanies the soul to Atropos where it verifies that the chosen destiny is made "irreversible" (620e5) by the action of the goddess. Finally, the soul and its spirit pass beyond the throne of Necessity and reach the plain of Forgetting, from where in the middle of the night they are reincarnated.

As the quoted passages show, spirit and μοῖρα regularly appear in conjunction. If the hypothesis that the external conditions forming a life pattern are called μοῖρα once they are actually chosen by a soul, the spirit's function is to ensure that the external factors are not changed before incarnation. The force that drives man forward where no agent can be named – Burkert's description of a *daimon* – is thus reinterpreted in the myth recounted by Socrates as a conservative force that renders more difficult the modification of the external factors initially chosen by a soul.

If this interpretation is correct, the role attributed to the *daimon* is completely in line with the message emerging from the rest of the myth. Before incarnation a soul chooses the external factors to which it will be initially subject. After incarnation the disposition of the soul will be constantly changed by the external factors to which a soul is subjected and the knowledge it will acquire. The *daimon* acts as force that renders the external factors more stable and less easy to change.

[84] My translation.
[85] De Luise 2007, 350.

The transition into incarnated life

In the previous sections I have analysed the three elements that the souls choose before being reincarnated. I have argued that the lot can render it more difficult for a soul to find the desired life pattern but it cannot prevent a soul from eventually finding it, if this soul is sufficiently persistent in its search. I have contended that the external factors entailed in a life pattern exert some influence on the disposition of the soul but I have pointed out that this influence should not be understood in deterministic terms. I have interpreted the *daimon* as a conservative force that renders more difficult the modification of the external factors entailed in a chosen life pattern. To complete my discussion, I now need to turn my attention to the moment in which the transition to incarnate life occurs. In this section I will argue that the ingestion of the water of the river *Ameles* preserves the value of the moral choices of incarnate souls by erasing their memory of post-mortem punishments and rewards.

The transition into incarnate life completes the narration of the vicissitudes experienced by discarnate souls. The act of drinking the water of the river *Ameles* allows the journey in the world beyond to be a concluded episode in the cosmic life of a soul. If on a literal level the ingestion of the water of the *Ameles* marks the (provisional) conclusion of the discarnate time of the souls, it fulfils an important function in preserving the moral value of the choices they will make during their incarnate life.[86] To appreciate this point, it is important to clarify what the souls forget by action of this water. At 615a1-2 the souls arriving from beneath the earth are said to recall "all the terrible things they had suffered and seen on their journey under the earth." The souls coming from the heavens are said to have contemplated "sights of unbelievable beauty" (615a3-4) during their discarnate existence.

[86] The ingestion of the water of the river *Ameles*, performed by every soul without distinction (the obvious exception represented by Er is not relevant at this point), is interpreted by Gonzalez 2012 as casting a sinister light on what life on earth is. As he argues, earthly existence is meant to be a condition inalterably characterised by ignorance, if even "philosophers must ingest a certain oblivion and carelessness" (270). Before drawing this pessimistic conclusion, more attention should be, however, paid to what souls see in the heaven and then forget by effect of the water of the river *Ameles*.

Some scholars have attempted to identify what the "sights of unbelievable beauty" are and they have drawn a parallel between them and the forms.[87] Closer consideration of the text does not however seem to confirm the existence of this parallel. At 509a the form of the Good is referred to as what "is to be valued even more than they [knowledge and truth] are," but its incomparable beauty is never mentioned. In the myth of Er there is no mention of the doctrine of recollection and no trace of the more technical language used in the *Phaedrus* when the place above heaven is said to be "occupied by being which really is, which is without colour or shape, intangible, observable by the steersman of the soul alone, by intellect, and to which the class of true knowledge relates" (247c6-d1). The expression "sights of unbelievable beauty" rather seems reminiscent of the characteristics attributed to the outer surface of the earth in the *Phaedo*. When Socrates introduces the description of the earth, he announces to the surprised Simmias that "there are many wondrous regions" (108c6). After stressing the rather unattractive appearance that nature has in the cavities where humans live, Socrates contrasts it with the splendour of the outer surface of the earth, which is "in no way worthy to be compared with the beauties in our world" (110a7). The colours that can be admired there are more glowing and brilliant, covering a part that is "purple, marvellous for its beauty" (110c3) and one that is golden.[88] The parallel between the place where Er reports that souls enjoy "sights of unbelievable beauty" and the outer surface of the earth is supported also by the analogous function that these two regions are said to fulfil. In the *Republic* "pleasures and sights of unbelievable beauty" are reserved for "the soul from the heavens" (615a3) as a reward for their virtuous conduct during their previous life on earth. In the *Phaedo* Socrates explains that "those who are judged to have lived in a particularly holy way are freed and released from the places inside the earth

[87] Halliwell 2007 suggests that the wording "sights of unbelievable beauty" seems to be "echoing the form of the good, 509a" (451).

[88] Pender 2013 18-29 considers the celebration of the colourful nature of the true earth one of the allusions to Empedocles contained in the myth retold by Socrates. As she suggests, the insistence on colours, along with several linguistic parallels, echoes the activity of painters mixing colours and drawing paintings to which Aphrodite's mixing of the four elements is compered by Empedocles (DK31 B23). In addition to the mentions of Glaucos (108d4, 108d6), which in the interpretation embraced by Pender have a Pythagorean echo, this allusion to Empedocles suggests Plato's intention to mark continuity and discontinuity with Empedoclean and Pythagorean doctrines.

as from prisons, and arrived at the pure dwelling and live on [upper] earth"[89] (114b6-c2).

If the comparison between the place where Er reports virtuous souls dwell and the outer surface of earth is plausible, the function of the forgetfulness caused by the ingestion of the water of the river *Ameles* acquires considerable importance. On a strictly literal reading of the myth it explains why Er, whose soul is forbidden to drink this water (621b5), can recall, and report on, the vicissitudes his soul experienced during its discarnate time, whereas other souls cannot. More importantly, forgetfulness of the afterlife rewards validates the authenticity of the moral choices made by souls on earth. If post-mortem rewards and punishments are forgotten shortly before incarnation, they will not play any role in inducing incarnate souls to turn to the good or to avoid evil.

In these terms, the notion of the afterlife embraced in the myth proves to be entirely compatible with that entertained in the rest of the *Republic*.[90] From Book 2 to 9, Socrates undertakes to show that justice is worth pursuing because it creates a balanced condition in the soul. The promise of post-mortem rewards represents a new and different reason for turning to justice. As seen in the section *The myth of Er as the completion of Socrates' enquiry into justice*, those rewards show that justice is worth choosing not only in and by itself but also for its positive consequences. Nevertheless, awareness of a happier afterlife could become a stronger motivation to pursue justice than the desire of a harmonious status of the soul. By stating that post-mortem rewards are held in store for virtuous souls but memory of them is forgotten by the souls before incarnation, Socrates both demonstrates the value of the consequences of justice and preserves that of justice in and by itself.

The myth of Er shows that the souls are given the possibility of making ethically relevant choices both prior to reincarnation and during life on earth. Factors dependent on contingency, such as the place in the lot, render it more difficult for a soul to find the life it desires, but do not prevent it from eventually

[89] My translation.
[90] As seen in the Introduction, Annas 1981 complains that the myth of Er "seems to offer an entirely consequentialist reason for being just, thus undermining Plato's sustained effort to show that justice is worth having for the agent in a non-consequentialist way" (349).

succeeding in its search. Similarly, the external factors entailed in the life pattern exert some influence on the moral conduct of the souls, but they do not conclusively determine their moral choices. Punishments and rewards the soul will receive after separation from the body also play little role in determining the conduct of incarnate souls, as their memory is forgotten by the souls shortly before incarnation.

The message conveyed by the myth proves, therefore, to be an integral part of the argumentative line of the *Republic*. The investigation Socrates carried out in Books 2 to 9 shows that justice produces good order among the three parts of the soul and allows the rational one to retain the leading position that befits it. This condition is, in turn, most apt for each part of the soul fully to enjoy the pleasure appropriate for it. Up to the final section of Book 10 Socrates left, however, one crucial question unanswered: he had not yet clarified whether the choice between good and evil is possible or human conduct is entirely determined by chance and divine will. The concluding myth provides an answer to this question, by showing that although they are subject to some external limitations, souls can make ethically relevant choices. In doing so, the myth is in this further respect the culmination of the line of argument Socrates has developed in the *Republic*.

3 The myth of Er as an example of mythological narrative admissible in Callipolis

The relation of the myth of Er with the Homeric tradition

In the previous parts of the chapter I have argued that the myth of Er and the section 608c2-621d3 in which the myth is included are essential parts of the argumentative line of the *Republic* for two reasons. First, they complete the defence of the notion of justice Socrates embraces in Book 2, by illustrating the positive consequences arising from justice when certain external factors are in place. Second, the myth of Er provides the foundation for Sorcates' investigation into justice. Book 2 to 9 contain an articulated argument showing the desirability of justice, but they do not discuss whether people are free to decide whether to be just or not. The myth of Er shows that, although external factors impose limitations on them, human souls are able to make ethically relevant decisions and

that common ways of speaking, such as holding a *daimon* responsible for one's troubles, do not respect the full extent of human choice.

I will now turn my attention to the question of the conformity of the myth of Er with the rules formulated in the *Republic* for the narratives allowable in Callipolis. My proposal will be that, although the myth does not exactly follow the narratological typology accepted in Book 3, none of its sections, taken separately, violates the rules formulated in that book. In this section I will begin defending my thesis by highlighting the relation existing between the myth of Er and the Homeric tradition is best understood in terms of rivalry.

Plato's intention to link the myth of Er with the Homeric tradition is suggested from the very words with which Socrates introduces his narrative:[91] "I won't tell you one of Alcinous' (Ἀλκίνου) stories […] but the one of a brave (ἀλκίμου) man, Er son of Armenius, a Pamphylian"[92] (614b2-4). The mention of Alcinous evokes Books 9 to 12 of the *Odyssey*, which were known also as Alcinous' *apologoi* and contained the narration of the vicissitudes experienced by Odysseus before arriving at Alcinous' court.[93] Consideration of the content of these four books of the *Odyssey* reveals a closer analogy with the myth of Er. Both contain a description of the afterlife. The eleventh book of the *Odyssey* includes Odysseus' *katabasis* in Hades and Socrates' myth narrates Er's journey in the realm of the dead.[94] Careful analysis reveals two further points of similarity: the eight Sirens

[91] Segal 1978 argues that the myth of Er is but one example of Plato' engagement with Homer in the dialogue. Showing acknowledgement for, and rivalry with, the Homeric tradition, "the *Republic* itself purports to be a new kind of poetry and a new kind of myth. It replaces Homeric myth with a new 'mythology' of the soul as it is developed in books 8 and 9 and more explicitly in the closing myth of book 10" (333).

[92] My translation. Various etymologies have been proposed for the name Er. If the name is of Hebrew origin, it may mean "awake." Starting from Colotes, Er has also been identified with the Iranian Zoroaster. For a list of possible origins and identifications of Er see Halliwell 2005, 170,171. Irrespective of the origin of his name, Nightingale 2005, 77 suggests that the function performed by Er in the myth reminds that of a θεωρός, because he undergoes similar stages to a θεωρός'. He departures from his community after he is placed on the pyre in the belief that he is dead; he enters a new dimension different from the one he previously inhabited when he is arrives in the neither-world. With his return to earthly life he re-joins his community of origin in possess of new knowledge.

[93] Halliwell 2007 notes that Socrates' opening words encourage the reader both to compare and contrast the myth he is retelling with Homeric poetry.

[94] Albinus 1988 investigates the significance of the theme of *katabasis* in the myth of Er and in *Republic*. Noting that *katabasis* in the realm of the dead is often associated with anabasis as return to life in the Orphic tradition, he analyses cases in which "correspondence or inverted relationship between life and death" (99) have a metaphorical meaning. in this Platonic work. Following this line, he focuses on the ascent from the cave and the following descent into it, on Er's arrival at the

featuring in the myth of Er remind the reader of the two demons figuring in the twelfth book of the *Odyssey*, and the presence of Odysseus among the souls about to choose their next life is an obvious reminder of the *Odyssey*.

If these analogies suggest that the myth concluding the *Republic* is intended to follow in the Homeric tradition, a more detailed analysis shows that the relation between the myth of Er and the *Odyssey* is less straightforward than it may seem *prima facie*.[95] Although mentioned at the very beginning, Alcinous is immediately displaced by a "brave man" named Er. The substitution, underlined by the play on the words Ἀλκίνου and ἀλκίμου, appears to point to some sort of rivalry between the two works. Reeve suggests that "*Alkinou* might be taken as a compound of *alkê* (strength) + *nous* (understanding) and *alkimou* as a compound of *alkê* + *Mousa* (a Muse). Socrates would be saying something like: it isn't a tale that shows strength of understanding that I'm going to tell but one that shows the strength of the Muse of story-telling."[96] If Reeve's thesis has the merit of highlighting a tension existing between the myth of Er and the *Odyssey*, his etymologic analysis and especially the conclusions drawn from it appear less convincing. A connection between *μος and μοῦσα seems in fact neither supported by etymologic evidence nor anyhow hinted at by Socrates. On the contrary, it seems unwarranted to assume that Socrates intends to contrast poetry and argument. As seen in the previous part of this chapter, the myth of Er and the section of which it is a part contain an answer to a question posed at a previous stage of the dialogue. If the myth plays a role in the argumentative line of the *Republic*, there is no obvious reason to contrast it with the preceding part of the dialogue. A more plausible interpretation of the opening line of the myth is that the allusions to the Odyssey signal a tension between Plato's myth and the Homeric tradition. As Halliwell suggests, "the myth can be read as a philosophically transfigured *Odyssey*, with the soul's quest for eternal happiness, and the many dangers that imperil it, replacing the hero's quest for home.

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meadow where souls choose their future life and his return to earthly life, and on the descent of Socrates and his interlocutors to the Piraeus at the beginning of the *Republic* and Er's ascent to realm of the dead at the conclusion of the work.

[95] Halliwell 2007, 447f highlights that the myth of Er contains elements peculiar to traditional myths and to historiography

[96] Reeve 2004, 319, footnote 25.

Odyssean motifs reinforce the point: the integration of (eight) Sirens into a model of cosmic Harmony (617b), for instance, rewrites their status as (two) seductive but destructive demons in *Odyssey* 12, and the catalogue of figures at 620a-c contains several Odyssean echoes, including a refiguring of Odysseus himself as a soul that has learnt the futility of human honor seeking (*philotimia*)."[97] Since several Homeric reminiscences are present in the myth of Er but all of them are reworked to fit the new context, it seems correct to conclude that what Socrates retells at the end of the *Republic* is "a reinvented myth, as such one contribution to Plato's larger project of (re)appropriating the medium of myth for his own philosophical purposes."[98]

The rules for Callipolis' μῦθοι

In this section I will argue that the suitability of the myth of Er for admission in Callipolis has to be evaluated on the basis not of the rules established in Book 10 but of those formulated in Book 3. As I will point out, the rules established in Book 10 do not concern the myth of Er because they only apply to poetry. I will then outline the rules that Socrates imposes on *mythoi* admissible in Callipolis. I will highlight that the only type of poet Socrates allows in Callipolis is the one who imitates worthy characters in his performance but narrates in the third person the deeds committed by unworthy ones.

Although the myth of Er has a connection with Homeric poetry, it is pivotal not to lose sight of a crucial point. Despite Socrates' intention of competing with Homer, the narrative he presents at the end of the *Republic* is not in verse. In the light of this basic fact the relevance of the problem concerning the consistency of the myth of Er with the guidelines outlined in Book 10 needs to be drastically discounted. In this section of the *Republic*, in fact, Socrates is concerned exclusively with imposing restrictions on poetry. His discussion culminates in the formulation of a principle that applies only to poetic production: "the only kind of poetry that can be admitted to the city are hymns to the gods and encomia to the good" (607a3-4). Similarly, when Socrates establishes which literary genre has to

[97] Halliwell 2007, 447.
[98] Halliwell 2007, 447.

be expelled from the ideal city, he pronounces a sentence of banishment that excludes only a particular type of poetry: "if you admit the Muse seasoned with lyric or epic verse, pleasure and pain will become kings in your city" (607a5-7).[99]

If a prose narrative such as the myth of Er cannot be assumed to be subject to the restrictions that Socrates imposes in Book 10 exclusively on poetry, more complicated is the problem concerning the consistency of this narrative with the guidelines outlined in Book 3. At this stage the topic of Socrates' discussion is broader since it includes everything that belongs to the sphere of μουσική.[100] After clarifying that this category encompasses all kind of speeches, both the true and the fictive ones (376e8-11), Socrates focuses on the latter. These are then further subdivided into two further categories: the grander and the lesser stories. After a brief examination of the latter (377a3-c5), which are represented by the stories wet-nurses tell to children (377a3-c5), the grander stories are discussed at greater length. Although Socrates is chiefly interested in the works of Hesiod, Homer and the other poets (377d3-4), he clarifies that the limitations he is setting apply both to the poetic production of the most eminent figures of tradition and to the lesser stories recounted to children during their earliest years of their upbringing. "So apparently the first thing we must do is to supervise our story-tellers, approving any story they put together that has the required quality and rejecting any that doesn't" (377c1-3).

Confirmation that the myth of Er is assumed to be subject to the type of control described in this passage is of a linguistic nature. The target of Socrates' censure are μῦθοι in general as it is made evident by the fact that the authors who must be put under supervision are called μυθοποιοί and the story they compose μῦθοι. Similarly, both the lesser and grander stories are referred to with the word μῦθοι (377a3, a5, b5, c5, c8, d4). When Socrates makes his final comments on the myth of Er, he labels the tale he has just finished recounting μῦθος (621b8). Given the

[99] My translation.

[100] As Gastaldi 1998 points out, the semantic field of the word μουσική is very broad. "With this term the Greek language describes culture in general, the different spheres of which are placed under the patronage of the Muses. It should not be forgotten – and the Platonic analysis itself shows it – that a non-secondary role is played by music proper, both vocal and instrumental. The polysemy of this word justifies the development of the discussion between Socrates and Adeimantus, which begins from a specific field of *mousike*, that of *logoi*, a broad category that includes all speech production on which Greek education is based" (342, my translation, Gastaldi's emphasis).

complexity of its plot and the difficulty of its topic, this narrative is unlikely to fall into the category of the tales wet-nurses tell to children. It is more natural to suppose that the myth of Er would be considered by Socrates part of the category of the greater stories. Although they are exemplified by the works of Homer and Hesiod to help Glaucon focalize the subject of discussion, the greater stories are never said by Socrates to be all written in verse.

Since the myth of Er belongs to the narratives subject to the limitations outlined in Books 2 and 3, it must comply with them if it is to be a μῦθος admissible in Callipolis. In his critique of poetry Socrates formulates a set of criteria according to which different kinds of narratological typologies can be distinguished. With regard to the narrative technique (λέξις) three different possibilities are available: pure narrative (ἁπλῆ διήγησις, 392d5), when the development of the plot is entirely reported by a narrator speaking in the third person; narrative effected through imitation (διὰ μιμήσεως, 392d5-6), when the narrator is completely absent and the words of the characters are directly reported; and a mixture of both (δι'ἀμφοτέρων, 392d6).

On the basis of this formal distinction, three different kinds of narrator can be distinguished depending on how they combine these narrative techniques. First, the style of the "truly fine and good person" (396c1-2) is considered. As Socrates maintains, "when a man of the right quality arrives at a point in the narrative where a good man is saying or doing something, he'll be ready and willing to report it as if he really were that other person himself; he won't be ashamed at this kind of imitation […] When he comes to something unworthy of himself, on the other end, he'll refuse any serious attempt at assimilating himself to the inferior individual, except perhaps for brief moments when the other person does something worthwhile" (396c6-d6). This kind of narrator will use, therefore, both imitation and pure narrative, preferring the former when he portrays honest men and resorting to the latter when dishonourable people are the subject of his representation. Probably because unworthy people are represented more frequently, the proportion between μίμησις and ἁπλῆ διήγησις will be unequal, with μίμησις being employed much more rarely. Opposite to this narrator is the mean man who is keen on, and takes pleasure from, imitating everything. As a

consequence, the narrative technique he employs will "be wholly through imitation, by voice and gesture" (397b1-2). As a third option, Socrates introduces the narrator who opts for a mixture between the techniques of the other two (397a7-8).

It is crucial to note that the distinction between these three types of narrator is not between the type of narrative technique they use. "What differentiates the good man's style from that of someone who 'thinks nothing unworthy of himself' is its governing aim or motivation. The good man style is governed by a normative conception of how one should behave and speak. The extent to which it uses μίμησις is merely secondary to this consideration. Perhaps someone with this motivation will use no dramatic enactment and narrate everything in his own voice, but not because μίμησις as such is bad: he will use μίμησις if it conforms to his overall aim of assimilating himself to the preferred way of acting and speaking."[101]

After describing the three typologies of narrative available, Socrates proceeds to evaluate their conformity to the moral values to which a form of art allowed in Callipolis must conform. The poet who is able and keen to imitate everything cannot be admitted in the ideal city since he does not discriminate between ethically acceptable and unacceptable models but turns himself into any of them without distinction. On the contrary, Socrates recommends the poet who is willing exclusively to imitate commendable characters as the only one who produces art meeting the ethical standards set by Callipolis: "for ourselves we'd go on employing the more austere and less pleasing poet and story-teller, to our benefit, because he'd imitate the good person's way of expressing himself" (398a8-b2).

The compliance of the myth of Er with Callipolis' rules

In the previous section I have pointed out that Socrates' outlined rules clearly stipulate when μίμησις is allowed and when pure narrative is required. In this section I will contend that the myth does not fully adhere to that set of rules, but, taken separately, none of its passages violates the rules formulated by Socrates.

[101] Janaway 1995, 100.

My conclusion will then be that the myth of Er is a narrative that could be allowed in Callipolis.

The narratological typology of the myth of Er is complex and articulated. After Socrates introduces the myth he is about to retell, he presents almost the entire narration in indirect speech. Embedded in it, three interventions of characters figuring in the myth (one of the soul encountered by Er and the priest of Lachesis) are reported in direct speech (615d3-616a4, 617d6-e5, 619b3-6). Moreover, Socrates interrupts the exposition of Er's report twice with his own comments (618b7-619b1, 619d7-e5).

The tale concluding the *Republic* does not perfectly fits, therefore, in the schema drawn by Socrates. A "'foregrounded' *oratio obliqua*"[102] interrupted by direct speech, comments of the narrators, and including in itself free indirect speech (620d1-2) is a narratological typology that is not considered in the tripartite classification proposed in the Book 3. However, the alternate employment of direct and indirect speech is in keeping with the ethical concerns voiced by Socrates. Since the two interventions in direct speech (618b7-619b1, 619d7-e5) that interrupt the *oratio obliqua* framing the entire narrative are Socrates' recommendations on the ethically proper behaviour, they are not instances of μίμησις, and do not, therefore, require the narrator to identify himself with any character. Two of the three sequences of words pronounced by characters featuring in the myth are attributed to the priest of Lachesis (617d6-e5, 619b3-6). On these occasions imitation does occur, but this type of μίμησις is fully consistent with the guidelines drawn in Book 3, since the speaking character is authoritative and in his words he remind the souls of their responsibility for the choice of their new life. The remaining intervention (615d3-616a4) may appear more difficult to reconcile with the moral restrictions imposed by Socrates. Although it is pronounced by a character without a precise moral connotation (one of the many souls), it is not, however, a case of μίμησις in the proper sense: it contains, in fact, a narrative in which an episode with ethical relevance for the rest of the souls (the sufferings occurring in Hades to those who have committed incurable evils) is expounded.

[102] Halliwell 2007, 449.

Due to the "intricacy of layering"[103] it reveals, the myth of Er appears to follow a narratological typology more complex than any of those outlined by Socrates in Book 3.[104] As seen, those guidelines recommend when to use direct imitation and narration but do not consider the case of interventions made by the narrator to give moral advice. Despite the complexity of its narratological structure, the myth of Er does not, however, contain any passage that, if taken separately, violates the guidelines established by Socrates. On the contrary, the choice of reporting the facts in *oratio obliqua* seems to underline the difference between this narrative and traditional poetry. Whereas the imitation employed by the latter aims to elicit the emotions of its audience, the narratological structure of the myth of Er indicates the intention of distancing the listener/reader from the narration. Although the spectacle of souls choosing their future life is "a cause of wonder, at once pitiable and comic" (620a1-2), "we spectators are not induced to feel pity, or only so in a sort of distant, ironic way."[105]

As we saw above, the myth is an attempt to compete with the Homeric tradition. The several references to the *Odyssey* are indication of the intention to establish a dialogue with traditional poetry. The choice of prose and the reworking of Homeric motives are evidence for a conscious break with tradition. Themes with high moral significance such as post-mortem justice and the destiny of souls after the death of the body are re-appropriated and presented in a new form. The compliance with the rules Socrates outlines in Books 2 and 3 clearly signals that the myth of Er is presented as a narrative that can be included in the repertoire of Callipolis' myths. The ethical message this tale conveys and the narratological patterns it follows are entirely appropriate for the upbringing of Callipolis' citizens and the education of its soldiers.

[103] Halliwell 2007, 449.
[104] Halliwell 2007 notes that "if we compare this technique of writing with the tripartite scheme of diegetic modes established by Socrates in Book 3 (392c–398b), we find that the telling of Er's story stretches and complicates the categories of that typology" (449).
[105] Destrée 2012, 124.

Chapter 3: The afterlife myth as the culmination of Socrates' argumentative line in the *Phaedo*

Introduction

Over the last fifteen years the eschatological myth of the *Phaedo* has attracted increasing scholarly interest. In that time commentaries on the *Phaedo* have dedicated significantly longer sections to the analysis of the myth[1] than older ones did.[2] Several recent articles examine this myth specifically.[3] Although the increased interest has led to more thorough and precise analyses of the content of the mythological narrative, few treatments are framed as attempts to place it in the broader context of the dialogue or to assess its significance for the argumentation developed in the rest of the dialogue. With the notable exceptions of Sedley,[4] Pender[5] and Ebert,[6] hardly any other scholarly work has appeared that discusses the problem of the relation between the myth and the rest of the *Phaedo*.

This chapter is intended to be a contribution to the debate initiated by these three scholars. The thesis I will advance is that the eschatological myth is the culmination of the argumentative line followed in the dialogue, in that it allows Socrates to give a more articulated expression to the expectations for the afterlife he expressed in his defence of the philosophical life. As its culmination, the myth is, I will contend, tightly integrated in the argumentative line of the dialogue. Its presence is fully justified, and even required, by the argumentative steps Socrates makes in the course of the dialogue. Whereas the myth depicts the image of an afterlife governed by ethical principles, Socrates' interlocutors require him to show that the soul is immortal and intrinsically intelligent; only then will they consider the image depicted in the myth plausible. The myth and the rest of the dialogue are thus, on the interpretation defended here, different parts of an

[1] The analysis of the concluding myth occupies twenty-five pages in Rowe 1993, sixteen in Frede 2005, thirty-four in Ebert 2004, and the sixteen-page chapter written by Schäfer in Müller 2011.
[2] An obvious example would be the still very valuable commentary published by Gallop in 1976, which dedicates not more than three pages to the analysis of the myth.
[3] Sedley 1990, Betegh 2011, Pender 2012.
[4] Sedley 1990.
[5] Pender 2012.
[6] Ebert 2004.

argumentative line that culminates in the presentation of the image of an afterlife in which morally good souls fare better than evil ones.

To show more clearly what the contribution of this chapter is intended to be, I will first position my approach among the existing ones in the scholarship. In the remainder of this introduction I will outline in detail Pender's and Ebert's views and compare my approach with theirs.[7]

In her article "The rivers of Tartarus: Plato's geography of dying and coming back to life"[8] Pender argues that the myth is connected with the rest of the dialogue. Her argument in support of this thesis is articulated in three parts. She identifies a network of ideas that links the myth and the dialogue; she shows the literary strategy with which the myth is inserted in the final part of the dialogue; and she argues that the content of the myth supports the teleological view expressed by Socrates at a previous stage of the dialogue.

The network of ideas linking the myth with the preceding part of the dialogue includes "journeying; impurity; imprisonment; assimilation; and balanced opposition."[9] As Pender argues, the theme of the journey is reflected in Socrates' conception of death as separation of the soul from the body, in the notion of the transmigration of the souls and in the description of the afterlife destiny of the soul as ἀποδημία (61d10-e3). The dialectic between pure and impure is a thread running through the discussion of philosophy as a means to purify the soul from bodily contamination. The theme of the imprisonment of the soul in the body and its liberation through philosophy is introduced in the passage 82d9-83a5. The principle of assimilation is prominent in three passages of the dialogue: it is embraced in the Affinity Argument, it is reflected in the image of the impure souls wandering around graves and not being allowed into Hades, and it is illustrated by the relegation of the souls that privileged the satisfaction of bodily pleasures on

[7] Sedley 1990 also regards the concluding myth as developing a notion introduced by Socrates at a previous stage. Pointing out that in his intellectual biography Socrates formulates the hope that Anaxagoras will provide him with a teleological explanation for the form and position of the earth, the sun and the planets (97d7-98c2), Sedley argues that the myth contains an, albeit brief, explanation of that sort. I consider my approach complementary to Sedley's but different from it in two respects. I focus my attention on a different notion (an afterlife governed by ethical principles instead of a teleologically organized universe) and I am interested in analysing the argumentative steps Socrates needs to make in order to render the fuller formulation of his hope plausible to his interlocutors.

[8] Pender 2012.

[9] Pender 2012, 200.

earth to the region of the Tartarus where the preponderance of the bodily element renders the practice of philosophy impossible. "Pairs of opposites feature throughout the interlocutors' discussion on death and the dialogue at large,"[10] and are identifiable in the contrasts between life and death, dying and coming to life again, generation and destruction. The theme of opposition is introduced at an earlier stage, when Socrates remarks that pleasure and pain are "attached to a single head" (60b8), and becomes central to the Cyclical Argument.

After outlining the main ideas operating in the dialogue, Pender shows that the myth is integrated in the concluding section of the dialogue through a careful strategy. Accordingly, the concluding section of the *Phaedo* comprises three distinct parts, the final argument for the immortality of the soul, the eschatological myth and the narration of Socrates' death, and between each of these three parts there is a transition signalling the conclusion of one and the beginning of another.

The section comprising the Final Argument is according to Pender characterized by the use of dialectic to address the problem of the immortality of the soul. The transition out of this section is marked by the gradual shift of the discussion towards a more personal level. This shift is in her view signalled by Socrates reference to "our souls" (106e9) and by his gently putting aside Simmias' remaining doubt at 107a8-b3. In these lines Simmias accepts the conclusions of the argument presented by Socrates but underlines that "the size of the subject under discussion" (107a9-b1) and "human weakness" (107b1) compel him to retain some doubts. Socrates' response is to reassure his interlocutor by stressing that careful analysis of the hypothesis at the basis of the argument allows the argument to be pursued "to the furthest point to which man can follow it up" (107b8). Simmias' affirmative reply ("what you say is true" 107b10) is interpreted by Pender as a strategy to show that "he is not accepting the truth of the argument so far but accepting the view that the search of knowledge can lead to a definite end, where the seeker seeks no further."[11]

The sentences with which Socrates introduces the eschatological myth and his emphasis on the religious connotation of Hades are considered by Pender further indication that "Simmias' doubts are not being roughly dismissed but gently set

[10] Pender 2012, 202.
[11] Pender 2012, 204.

aside."[12] As she points out, Socrates' conclusions that the soul "needs care, not only for the sake of this time in which what we call 'life' lasts, but for the whole time" (107c2-4) and that death "would be a godsend for the wicked" (107c6) derive from assumptions provisional in character. Both of the clauses in question are, in fact, preceded by a protasis stating, in the first case, that a soul needs care for the sake of eternity "*if* a soul is immortal" (107c2),[13] and, in the second, that death would be a stroke of luck for the evil "*if* death were the separation from everything" (107c5-6).[14] As Pender maintains, "the 'if' here shows that Socrates is sensitive to Simmias' doubts and does not wish simply to override them."[15] These sentences do not clarify whether Simmias' doubts are dispelled completely, and neither does the following one ("Since [ἐπειδή], in fact, it [the soul] is evidently immortal, there would be [ἂν εἴη] no other refuge […]," 107c8-d1). Although the causal nexus ἐπειδή seems to take the immortality of the soul for granted, the following optavive ἂν εἴη is interpreted by Pender as a concession to Simmias' remaining doubts.

If the passage 107c1-d2 marks the point at which Socrates begins the transition into the myth, the reappearance of the religious notion of Hades confirms according to Pender Socrates' intention to appease Simmias' fears through a type of discourse that appeals primarily to emotions. The notion of Hades is transformed in the course of the dialogue and charged with a more philosophical meaning, created by exploiting the play on words between ᾅδης (Hades) and ἀϊδής (invisible). If the word Hades at 107d3 the word Hades carries both its philosophical and its religious connotation, the religious valence becomes preponderant in the prosecution of the myth. The occurrence of the verb λέγεται at 107d4 and of the adverb ἐκεῖσε at 107d5 is considered by Pender to indicate the transition into a mythical narration which evokes Hades in Homeric terms. The transition is regarded as completed when Socrates refers to the account of the underworld journey made in "Aeschylus' *Telephus*" (107e5).

[12] Pender 2012, 206.
[13] My italics.
[14] My italics.
[15] Pender 2012, 205.

If a quotation from Aeschylus signals the completed transition into myth, in Pender's view the movement out of the myth is marked by Socrates' comparison of himself to a tragic hero at 115a5-6 ("as a tragic hero might say, "destiny doth summon me"). Despite this quotation, the tone of the final part of the dialogue is set by the immediately following colon: "and it's just about time I made for the bath" (115a6). The refocusing of the attention on the everyday is made through the mention of the bath in this colon and through the references to the act of "washing" (115a8) and to the "dead body" (115a8) of Socrates. The shift away from the eternal horizon of the myth to the time of human life is indicated, Pender notes, by the phrase ὥρα τραπέσθαι.

The third reason why the eschatological myth is connected with the rest of the dialogue is according to Pender that it supports the teleological view expressed in the *Phaedo*. As she argues, "for all their horrors, the regions of the Tartarus are nevertheless part of a just and ordered universe."[16] The rational order of the universe described in the myth is in her view apparent in the design of Tartarus and in the presence of judges administering punishment. Although the judges are explicitly mentioned only at 114b5-7, direct reference to judgement is made at 107e1, at 113d1-4 and at 113d7-8. The presence of universal order in the underworld is reflected, Pender notes, in the existence of physical laws regulating the movement of waters and in the disposition and in the course of the rivers. The swing of the Tartarus has a regular rhythm and the level to which the rivers can descend into Tartarus is fixed.[17] The rivers are furthermore symmetrically disposed and they flow separately from one another, the separation in their courses being vital to the differentiation of punishment inflicted on the groups of souls relegated on each of the rivers.

Pender's article helpfully highlights links between the eschatological myth and the preceding part of the dialogue. By identifying a network of ideas operating

[16] Pender 2012, 223.

[17] Pender 2013 29-58 points out that the swinging movement of the Tartarus is an allusion to Empedocles. In DK31 B100 Empedocles describes how the process of breathing in leaving creatures functions (1-25) and uses a simile with a *klepsydra* to illustrate it (9-21). Pender underlines that the image of the water entering in the *klepsydra* echoes that of the rivers flowing into the Tartarus. This allusion, which has multiple ramifications both in the vocabulary and in the ideas used, is in her view indication of Plato's intention to mark both continuity with and discontinuity from Empedocles' thought.

both in the myth and in the rest of the *Phaedo*, it uncovers threads that link Socrates' description of the afterlife with the preceding sections of the dialogue. By describing the strategy through which the transitions are made between (a) the Final argument and the myth and (b) the myth and the description of Socrates' death, the article shows that the concluding part of the dialogue comprises three sections organically integrated with one another. Finally, by highlighting that the myth contains a number of elements that point towards the existence of a rational order in the universe, Pender's contribution suggests that Socrates' notion of the afterlife supports a teleological principle outlined at a previous stage of the dialogue. What lies outside the interest of her article is to investigate how exactly the notion of an afterlife embracing an ethical principle is anticipated at earlier points in the dialogue and in some respect required by the argument Socrates begins to develop from the opening of the dialogue.

The main difference between my approach and Pender's paper is that I focus my attention on investigating what relation exists between the concluding myth and the argument of the dialogue in its entirety. I relate the myth to the formulations of the hope for justice in the afterlife Socrates presents in his defence of the philosophical life to justify his fearless attitude towards death. In establishing a connection between these early passages and the concluding myth, I also aim to explain how the arguments for the immortality of the soul relate to the description of an afterlife governed by ethical principles given in the myth. For this purpose, I analyse the interaction between Socrates and his interlocutors, focusing especially on the implications of Cebes' reply to Socrates' defence of the philosophical life. Pointing out that at this stage Cebes requires the delivery of evidence that the soul survives and retains intelligence after the death of the body before he accepts the plausibility of Socrates' hope, I propose that the central part of the dialogue provides the basis on which this hope can appear plausible. In the view I defend, the eschatological myth is therefore the culmination of the argumentative line followed in the *Phaedo*. The image of an afterlife embracing ethical principles Socrates depicts in the concluding myth is the fuller articulation of a hope he formulates at an early stage; the section of the dialogue comprised

between these two passages contains the arguments that substantiate the assumptions on which this notion rests.

A hypothesis on the place the myth occupies in the argumentative line of the dialogue has been formulated by Ebert. As he maintains, Plato indicates already at an early stage of the work that the dialogue will include a myth expounding the post-mortem destiny of the soul. Ebert observes that "this tale [the myth] was announced by Socrates […] That this announcement was not given attention [by scholars] is in some sense not surprising, for it is actually very distant from what it announces; nevertheless, it is still an announcement. The announcement is made at 61d9-e4."[18] The passage in question runs as follows: "well, I myself can speak about them [Philolaus' arguments against suicide] only from hearsay; but what I happen to have heard I don't mind telling you. Indeed, maybe it's specially fitting that someone about to make the journey to the next world should enquire and speculate [διασκοπεῖν τε καὶ μυθολογεῖν] as to what we imagine that journey to be like; after all, what else should one do during the time till sundown?"[19]

When commenting on these lines, Ebert refines his thesis. "That Socrates' proposal is not developed but dropped depends on the fact that Cebes, ignoring Socrates' suggestion, insists on receiving an explanation of why, according to the authority previously quoted by Socrates, suicide is not allowed (61e5-6). The discussion of this question and the related one about the philosopher's willingness to die (comp. 62c9ff) is followed by a discussion of the immortality of the soul. But this long discussion seems from the point of view of the proposal formulated at 61d-e a long digression that is concluded at the end of the last argument; after his final remark on the immortality of the soul Socrates can therefore return directly to the topic he introduced before the beginning of this discussion."[20]

When compared with Ebert's, my approach shows one similarity but also important differences. Like Ebert, I link the representation of the afterlife given in the myth with the hope for justice after the end of the earthly life that Socrates

[18] Ebert 2004, 430. All translations of Ebert's commentary are my own.
[19] A verb derived from the root *μυθ is used a second time in the *Phaedo*. After Cebes expresses doubts about the soul's continued existence and intelligence, Socrates asks him whether he "would like to speculate on these very questions [διαμυθολογῶμεν], and see whether this is likely to be the case or not" (70b6-7).
[20] Ebert 2004, 431.

formulates in his defence of the philosophical life. Unlike Ebert, I believe that the central pages of the dialogue are not simply an excursus from Socrates' main interest but a section that performs a crucial function in his argumentative line. Calling attention to Cebes' reply to Socrates' defence of the philosophical life, I propose that the arguments for the immortality of the soul provided by Socrates perform the important function of rendering plausible his hope for justice in the afterlife – or rather to removing an obstacle to its plausibility. These arguments respond, in the view I defend, to the objections Cebes wishes to see answered before considering Socrates's hope plausible. Accordingly, the concluding myth is not simply a fuller articulation of a hope previously expressed but the culmination of an argumentative line requiring preliminary steps before it is able to achieve completion.

To identify the function performed by this extensive and very dense section of the dialogue, I will propose that attention needs to focus on the precise wording with which Cebes' reacts to Socrates' defence of the philosophical life. As I will point out, in lines 69e7-70b4 Cebes welcomes Socrates' hope of an afterlife governed by ethical principles but declares that he will consider it plausible only if the soul can be shown to be immortal and retain intelligence after separation from the body. Once connected with Cebes' requests, Socrates' four arguments for the immortality of the soul can be identified as the attempt to provide the foundation on which the hope for an afterlife governed by ethical principles appears plausible to Cebes.

Socrates' expectations for an afterlife governed by ethical principles

In this section I will aim to show that in his defence of the philosophical life Socrates justifies his positive attitude towards death with the hope for an afterlife governed by ethical principles. As I will point out, he first formulates the hope that after dying he will enter the company of gods and perhaps extraordinary men, and successively he further specifies the formulation of this hope by stating that he expect to enter an afterlife governed by ethical principles.

The first formulation of the hope for an afterlife filled with happiness is found at the very beginning of Socrates' defence (63b4-69e5). To explain the apparent contradiction between the convictions that (i) during earthly life men are entrusted to god's custody and (ii) philosophers should be willing to die, Socrates expresses his trust in the possibility of continuing to live in the company of gods in the afterlife too. "Come on then, […] I'll try to defend myself more convincingly before you than before the judges. For if I didn't believe, Simmias and Cebes, […] that I'll be at the presence first of other gods, wise and good, and then of dead people, better than those of here, I'd do wrong not being upset at my death. But now know well that I've the expectation that I'll come up to good people – and I wouldn't insist on that too much – but I do expect to come to gods, that are very good masters; know well that, if I insisted on some of these point, that would be this. Therefore I'm not particularly upset for this reason" (63b5-c4). In this passage Socrates expresses confidence in the existence of a pleasant afterlife and identifies this confidence as the reason for his attitude towards death. As he explains, the company he will join after dying will render his afterlife pleasant. He declares himself persuaded that he will encounter distinguished men who died before him, and he formulates the hope that he will be able to join even the gods. Although the possibility for him to join the company of good men is considered by Socrates to have a lesser degree of certainty, the prospect of being in the company of gods is asserted with confidence.

Whereas these lines explain the reason for Socrates' attitude towards his own death, they do not clarify whether the expectation for a good afterlife is legitimate for him alone, and, if so, why. If Socrates makes no mention in these lines of the fact that different post-mortem destinies will be met by different people, a distinction in the quality of the afterlife that people should expect depending on their conduct on earth is introduced by him in the immediately following lines. "I'm in good hope (εὔελπίς) that there is something for the dead and, as we said just now, something much better for the good than for the bad" (63c5-7). According to Socrates' words, people's conduct during their life on earth will affect how they will fare once they have died, virtuous men being promised a much more pleasant destiny than unjust ones.

The hope that just people will be rewarded after death is the first formulation in the dialogue of the expectation of an afterlife governed by ethical principles. A few lines below Socrates restates that he entertains the expectation that he will be met by a good destiny in the afterlife and that he faces death with confidence. "But I wish now to give an account to you, who are my judges, [to explain] that it seems to me that a man who really spend his life in philosophy is reasonably confident when he is about to die, and that he is in good hope that he will obtain greatest goods there, when he has died"[21] (63e8-64a2).

Socrates commits himself to giving an account justifying that someone who has practiced philosophy is confident at the moment of death and that this person legitimately entertains the hope for happiness in the afterlife. Although these lines do not contain the articulated formulation of the notion of an afterlife embracing moral principles, they suggest it on the assumption that practising philosophy entails becoming or being virtuous. Socrates declares that the expectation to receive "greatest goods" after death is plausible not simply for him but for any person who belongs to a specific category: the philosophers. Although at this stage the identification between philosophers and virtuous people has not yet been made explicit, it will be at 69c3-d2 as we will see. Besides indicating people belonging to a specific group as entitled to entertain a hope for happiness in afterlife, lines 63e8-64a2 also highlight again a nexus between the expectation for a happy afterlife and a confident attitude towards death. The relation between the two is not expressed through a causal clause but their juxtaposition clearly suggests a correlation. The philosopher is reasonable in facing death without fear and he entertains the plausible expectation that he will receive goods after he dies. Accordingly, there is a close relation between the philosopher's attitude towards death and the quality of the afterlife he hopes for.

Whereas lines 63e8-64a2 do not develop the notion of an afterlife governed by ethical principles, the passage 69c3-d2 insists on the markedly different destinies virtuous and wicked people will meet in the afterlife. "And those who established the mystery rites are likely to be no people of little value but to have really long ago announced in riddles that whoever arrives in Hades uninitiated and profane

[21] My translation.

will lie in slough but whoever arrives there pure and initiated will dwell with the gods. For, as those connected with the rites say, 'many are the wand bearers but few the inspired.' These are in my opinion no others than those who have practised philosophy aright"[22] (69c3-d2). "Socrates makes use of elements derived from the Eleusinian Mysteries that underline the character of a quasi-religious revelation."[23] Irrespective of the religious tradition to which these beliefs can be ascribed, in these lines Socrates clearly asserts that the conduct during life on earth will affect the condition in which people will be in the afterlife. While those who failed to make the appropriate initiations are bound to be in a poor state after death, the initiated ones will enjoy a privileged condition. The initiated are, as Socrates specifies, those who have engaged in philosophy in the appropriate way during life on earth. While he does not clarify in what proper engagement in philosophy consists, Socrates openly affirms that those who appropriately engage in it are the initiated who are entitled to entertain the hope for a pleasant afterlife.

This passage contains the formulation of the hope, already expressed at the beginning of Socrates' defence of the philosophical life (63b5-c4), that people who engage in proper conduct during their life on earth will dwell with the gods after dying. At this stage (69c-d) Socrates articulates more fully the conception of an afterlife governed by ethical principles by sharply contrasting the post-mortem condition of virtuous men with that of wicked ones. The blessed life of the former and the harsh condition of the latter are presented as completely opposite poles. While the promise to dwell with gods and the prospect of lying in slough are powerful admonishments to engage in virtuous conduct during life on earth, they also indicate that the afterlife is governed by ethical principles.

The passages analysed in this section show that the reason for Socrates' fearless attitude towards death lies in the very specific expectation he has for the afterlife. He believes that after his death he will be able to join the company of gods and perhaps of distinguished men died before him. This hope rests in turn on the expectation that the afterlife will embrace ethical principles, keeping in store rewards for those who lived life on earth virtuously and punishment for those who did not. As a virtuous earthy life is specified as that spent in the practise of

[22] My translation.
[23] Ebert 2004, 149.

philosophy, the afterlife hoped for by Socrates will allow philosophers, himself included, to be in a happier condition than those who failed to engage in philosophy during their earthly life.

The conditions under which Socrates' expectations for the afterlife appear plausible to Cebes

Passages 63b4-c7, 63e8-64a2 and 69c3-d2 show that Socrates expresses his expectation for justice in the afterlife in order to justify his fearless attitude towards death. They do not however clarify precisely *how* this notion relates to the line of argument developed in the rest of the dialogue. In this section I will argue that Cebes' reply to Socrates' defence (69e7-70b4) shows what relation exists between post-mortem justice and the argument for immortality.

After Socrates finishes delivering his defence, Cebes replies with the following words:

> Socrates, the rest seems at least to me to have been said well, but the points about the soul cause much mistrust among people who fear that, as soon as it gets separated from the body, the soul is not anywhere anymore, but on that day on which the man dies it is destroyed and perishes, immediately separating from the body, and, going out of it, it is gone, dispersed like breath or smoke and flown off, and it is nowhere at all. Because, if it were somewhere, gathered in and by itself and separated from those evils that you have described just now, there would be a great and fine hope, Socrates, that what you say is true. But perhaps this need no little reassurance and guarantee, that the soul both still exists and has power and φρόνησις after the man has died[24] (69e7-70b4).

In his reply Cebes explicitly asserts that he welcomes the idea of an afterlife governed by ethical principles. If his initial statement ("the rest seems at least to me to have been said well," 69e7) is too vague to be safely interpreted as referring to Socrates' expressed expectation for justice in the afterlife, Cebes' reference to this notion becomes more direct at 70a6-b1 ("because, if it were somewhere, gathered in and by itself and separated from those evils that you have described

[24] My translation.

just now, there would be a great and fine hope, Socrates, that what you say is true"). Clearly Cebes' "hope" is not just for the soul's survival, given that the survival of the soul is a condition for the fulfilment of his hope: rather, his hope is for something over and above mere survival. The term "hope" (ἐλπίς) contributes to specify further which part of Socrates' speech Cebes wishes to be true, since it establishes an implicit connection with the notion of an afterlife governed by ethical principles, referred to by Socrates with the same word. In his defence of the philosophical life Socrates describes the expectation of a post-mortem reward as something for which he is "in good hope" (εὔελπις, 63c5) and has "plenty of hope" (πολλὴ ἐλπὶς, 67b8). The expectation of fully acquiring the knowledge only partially acquirable during earthly life is presented at 67c1 as a thought that fills Socrates' journey in the afterlife "with good hope" (μετὰ ἀγαθῆς ἐλπίδος).

If it is reasonable to identify "the rest" of the things said by Socrates, and approved by Cebes, with the expectation for justice in the afterlife, Cebes asserts in his reply to Socrates' defence that he welcomes the idea of an afterlife governed by ethical principles, but that he wishes Socrates to set adequate foundation for this notion before he can be fully convinced by it. He is ready to consider Socrates' expectation plausible only on the condition that Socrates substantiates two points about the soul: "that the soul both still exists and has power and φρόνησις after the man has died" (79b3-4).

There is broad agreement among scholars that Cebes' request to Socrates is for the validation of two claims about the soul, one of which concerns its survival after the death of the body, while the other relates to its possess of some power after separation from the body.[25] In the following two sections I will analyse the object of these requests in more detail.[26] At the present stage I am most interested in noting that Cebes' willingness to consider Socrates' hope for justice in the

[25] Gallop 1975, 103-104, Rowe 2001, 152, Ebert 2004, 163-167 and Frede 2005, 34 agree that Cebes' reply contains a twofold request: he wishes the soul to be shown both to continue existing, and to retain intelligence, after separation from the body.

[26] See the section *The argumentative line followed by Socrates to prove the immortality of the soul* for my analysis of the formulation of Cebes' first request and of how it is modified in the course of the dialogue until it comes to specifically asking for an argument for the immortality of the soul. See the section *Socrates' evidence that the soul is intrinsically intelligent* for my discussion of what φρόνησις refers to in Cebes' reply.

afterlife is conditional on the delivery of convincing arguments showing that the soul will both continue existing and retain phronesis after the death of the body.

After describing the conditions posed by Cebes, I wish to consider the dramatic interaction in the dialogue and the extent to which Socrates is pushed off course by his interlocutor's requests. On his last day Socrates wishes to explain to his interlocutors why to their surprise he welcomes the arrival of his own death. Socrates says at first that he has the expectation for his soul to join the company of distinguished men and even of the gods. He then further clarifies his position by formulating the hope that different destinies await those who lived a virtuous life and those who did not. After hearing Socrates expressing this hope, Cebes affirms that he welcomes it but voices some doubts about its plausibility. If he is to believe that the afterlife will be different for souls with different moral qualities, Cebes wishes, as a preliminary step, to be given evidence that after the death of the body the soul will both survive and retain intelligence. In response Socrates happily agrees to argue for the two points he is asked to substantiate: "what are we to do? Would you like us to speculate on these questions, and see whether this is likely to be the case or not?" (70a5-7). Cebes' expression of enthusiasm for this prospect is followed by Socrates' acknowledgement of the importance of ascertaining that the soul will continue existing and retain φρόνησις after the death of the body: "Well, […] I really don't think anyone listening now, even if he were a comic poet, would say that I'm talking idly, and arguing about things that do not concern me" (70b10-c2).

All the same, the readiness to discuss further the points his interlocutor desires to hear proved does not cause Socrates to abandon the goal he stated at the beginning of his defence of the philosophical life. While Socrates readily accepts temporarily to shift his attention to the questions of the survival of the soul after the death of the body and of the nature of the soul at that stage, he signals even during his discussion of these topics that his final aim is to give fuller articulation to his hope that virtuous souls will fare better in the afterlife than the others. As we will see in the prosecution of this chapter, a briefer description of the afterlife

is given before the concluding myth.[27] After the conclusion of the Affinity Argument, Socrates believes that the evidence provided is sufficiently convincing for proceeding to describe his notion of an afterlife governed by ethical principles. As his description is met by the perplexity of his interlocutors who continue to entertain doubts about the immortality of the soul, Socrates is compelled to present the Final Argument. Only after it will he return to address the point that he believes that adequately explains his positive attitude towards death: at this stage Socrates can present an articulated and detailed description of an afterlife organized according to moral principles.

If we compare how the interaction between the interlocutors affects the development of the argumentative line of the *Phaedo* with the dynamic existing between Socrates and the brothers in the *Republic*, we can make some interesting observations. In the chapter dedicated to the *Republic*, we have seen that Glaucon and Adeimantus play a crucial role in resuming a conversation that Socrates considers already concluded at the end of Book 1. Socrates readily agrees to engage in a discussion that shows in more detail why justice is preferable to injustice. The role of the brothers is however not exhausted in the successful attempt to revitalize the conversation. A divergence between their notion of justice and Socrates' emerges as soon as they explain on what point the discussion should focus. Although Socrates does not appear prepared to modify his notion of justice, the argument that he provides seems to be sensitive to his interlocutors' demands in that it dedicates a significantly higher amount of space and attention to the point that they are more interested in, although it does not omit treating the one that according to Socrates' notion completes the description of justice.

In the *Republic* Socrates' interlocutors fulfil two functions. First, they encourage Socrates to give a more detailed account of the main topic of the

[27] It is interesting to note that the text handed down to us by the manuscripts contains a reference to the existence of an afterlife differentiated for virtuous and wicked souls at the end of the Cyclical Argument. After Socrates summarizes the conclusions reached in the Cyclical Argument, the text reports the sentence καὶ ταῖς μέν γε ἀγαθαῖς ἄμεινον εἶναι, ταῖς δὲ κακαῖς κάκιον (72e1-2, "and [that] virtuous [souls] fare better while wicked fare worse"). Burnet brackets this sentence probably because, unlike the process of coming back to life, the generation of people from the dead and the existence of the souls of the dead, the conclusion that souls of different moral quality will met different destinies in the afterlife is not supported by any of the points developed in the Cyclical Argument. Although Burnet is probably correct deleting these lines, it is worth mentioning that the text transmitted to us incorporates even at this point two lines containing a reference to an afterlife governed by an ethical principle.

dialogue that in their opinion has not yet be treated with the required depth. Secondly, they exert some influence on setting the agenda that Socrates' argument will have to follow, although their influence is reflected not in the choice of the points the agenda will follow but in the weight that each of the chosen points will carry. In the *Phaedo*, the interlocutors with whom Socrates converses perform one single but no less important function. Simmias and especially Cebes urge Socrates to prove the two assumptions that they consider necessary to find plausible the expectation Socrates intends to articulate. From the beginning of his defence of the philosophical life Socrates shows himself interested in explaining that his positive attitude toward death is motivated by his expectation for an afterlife governed by an ethical principle. By voicing doubts about the survival of the soul after the death of the body and the nature a surviving soul will have, Cebes calls into question the very possibility of the existence of an afterlife. Socrates sees himself obliged to reassure his interlocutor(s) that there is an afterlife. The central part of the discussion held in the dialogue is then occupied by the arguments Socrates offers in response to Cebes' worries that the hope he formulated does not rest on a sufficiently firm basis. Socrates argues to Cebes' satisfaction that the soul will survive after the death of the body and retain its intelligence, and only then does he return to the topic of his initial interest and gives a fully articulated description of how souls will encounter different destinies depending on the moral quality of the life they lived on earth.

The argumentative line followed by Socrates to prove the immortality of the soul

In the previous section we have seen that the hope for post-mortem justice is mentioned at an early stage in the discussion, and that Cebes is ready to consider this hope reasonable only if Socrates corroborates two claims: that the soul survives after the death of the body and that it is endowed with intelligence even after separation from the body. In order to show the steps taken by Socrates to render plausible the formulated hope for justice in the afterlife, I will turn my attention to the analysis of the argumentative line he follows to substantiate his first claim.

My aim will be to ascertain what claim exactly Socrates is asked to prove and when his interlocutors maintain that he has provided the required evidence. My thesis will be that Socrates' argumentative line is articulated in three stages. (1) In his defence of the philosophical life Socrates embraces the notion that the soul is a substance distinct from the body. The block of the first three arguments, step (2), is elicited by the request to validate the unspecific claim that the soul survives after the death of the body, and it fails to convince Socrates' interlocutors. Socrates' Final Argument, step (3), addresses the very specific claim that the soul is immortal and imperishable and it obtains Cebes' full approval. Simmias' remaining doubt, I will contend, concerns rather the limitations of human reason than the insufficiency of the argument.

In arguing that Socrates establishes the immortality of the soul in three steps, I do not wish to make the claim that the reasons he offers in each of these steps would necessarily appear valid to the modern eye. What I take into consideration is simply the dialogical dynamic. Accordingly, I turn my attention to the demands Simmias and Cebes pose to Socrates and to their reactions when Socrates completes his arguments.

To defend my thesis, I will turn my attention to three sets of passages. First, I will focus on those lines of Socrates' defence of the philosophical life that show that he assumes that body and soul are distinct substances. Secondly, I will analyse the passages in which Cebes formulates the claims he requires Socrates to substantiate in order to prove that the soul will exist after the death of the body. Third, I will turn to the sections in which Cebes and Simmias express their opinions about the success each of arguments presented by Socrates has reached.

In his defence of the philosophical life Socrates embraces the notion that soul and body are distinct substances.[28] While the definition of death he provides at 64c4-8 assumes that soul and body are distinct, several ideas he expresses in his

[28] The view that in the defence of the philosophical life Socrates proposes and develops the notion of substance dualism has been advanced by Pakaluk 2003 and my account is indebted to his. A reading of Socrates' defence along this line marks a significant shift from more common interpretations, which tend to emphasise some sort of circularity in Socrates' argument. Accordingly, scholars highlight that the positive attitude philosophers adopt towards death is justified by Socrates by maintaining that "all who actually engage in philosophy aright are practising nothing other than dying and being dead" (64a4-6). With minor differences in their accounts, Burnet 1911, 27, Gallop 1975, 86 and Rowe 2001, 135 agree that the argument presented by Socrates in his defence of the philosophical life is circular.

defence reinforce this notion. The conception of philosophy he outlines, the contempt he asserts that philosophers have for the body and the activity through which according to him philosophers acquire knowledge are indications that the soul is independent from the body.

The notion that soul and body are distinct substances emerges in the definition of death Socrates provides at 64c4-8: "[do we suppose that death] is nothing but the separation of the soul from the body? And that being dead is this: the body's having come to be apart, separated from the soul, alone by itself, and the soul's being apart, alone by itself, separated from the body?"[29] According to Socrates' words, death is equivalent not to annihilation but to the separation of the body from the soul. Since the moment of death coincides with the separation of two substances that were previously conjoined, the time posterior to death (the condition of "being dead" in Socrates' words) is characterized by the gathering of each of these two substances separately from one another.

If lines 64c4-8 advance the notion that body and soul are distinct substances, in lines 64a4-6 Socrates identifies the practice of philosophy as the activity that aims to separate the soul from the body already during life: "other people are likely to fail to notice that those who engages in philosophy aright practise nothing else than dying and being dead." Since death is the moment in which the soul gets separated from the body, Socrates affirms that the practice of death acquires special relevance for philosophers. By actively engaging in the preparation for death and the ensuing condition of being dead, they strive to separate what is joined during life. Their attempt to separate body and soul points in turn towards their awareness that body and soul are distinct substances.

After the description of philosophy as preparation for death indirectly suggests that the philosophers are aware that body and soul are distinct substances, the section 64c10-65c9 shows more clearly that philosophers conceive of body and soul as separate.[30] In lines 64c10-65a8 Socrates argues that philosophers do not value the body. To clarify their attitude towards the body, he emphasises two

[29] Gallop's translation.

[30] Pakaluk 2003, 103-104 argues that in addition to embracing the notion of substance dualism, Socrates' defence also contains an argument in support of this notion. In proposing this view, Pakaluk seems however to assume a level of formalization for which this section of the *Phaedo* does not provide evidence.

points: philosophers discount the pleasure deriving from food and drink and sex (64d2-5) and they are no interested in embellishing the body with clothes, shoes or other adornments (64d8-e3). While negligence of bodily pleasures and adornments for the body reveals philosophers' attitude towards the body, the hindrance caused by the body to the acquisition of knowledge is described as an even more important indication of philosophers' contempt for the body. Socrates presents sight and hearing as sources of disturbance for the search of truth in which the soul engages (65a10-b7), and he describes the body in general as a cause of deception for the soul (65b9-10).

Philosophers' negligence and contempt for the body acquire full significance when consideration is given to the activity practised by their soul and the condition required for it. Since "in the act of reasoning one of the realities come to being manifest to it [the soul], if anywhere at all" (65c2-3), reasoning itself is the activity to which the soul is primarily devoted. The soul however "performs the act of reasoning in the best way in the moment in which it is not troubled by any of these [the senses] […], but it gathers itself by itself as much as possible, neglecting the body, and it tends to the reality when it has no communion with it [the body] as far as it can" (65c5-9). From the passages 65c2-3 and 65c5-9 it clearly emerges that the soul practices a specific activity (reasoning), it is disturbed in the execution of this practice by the body and it is the more successful in this practice the more separate from the body it becomes. The existence of an activity peculiar to the soul and the hindrance caused to it by the interference of the body testify to the fact that soul and body are different substances to which different functions pertain: reasoning and sense perception.

After Socrates embraces the notion that the soul is a substance distinct from the body, Cebes does not challenge this notion. As we have seen in the previous section, Cebes asks him to show that the soul will survive and retain intelligence after the death of the body if his formulated hope for justice in the afterlife is to appear plausible. At this stage we will see that the request for evidence for the survival of the soul is formulated in non-technical terms when Cebes presents it in his reply to Socrates' defence of the philosophical life. The claim he requests

Socrates to validate is unspecific and does not consider the distinction between survival and immortality of the soul.

Cebes' desire to know what will happen to the soul after the death of the body is generically motivated by the "deep mistrust" (πολλὴν ἀπιστίαν) that it will survive. To overcome this mistrust, he does not ask for an ἀπόδεξις, a clearly articulated argument, such as that Socrates announces (245c4) and gives in the *Phaedrus* (245c5-246a2). Cebes is content with "reassurance and guarantee" (παραμυθίας […] καὶ πίστεως). The claim he wishes to be substantiated is presented three times in negative formulations and once in non-technical terms. At 70a2 and 70a6 Cebes voices the fear that after the death of a person the soul is "nowhere anymore" (οὐδαμοῦ ἔτι, οὐδὲν ἔτι οὐδαμοῦ, respectively). When he gives a more articulated expression to this fear at 70a1-5, he uses the traditional images and language borrowed from poetry. By formulating the doubt that "on that day on which the man dies it [the soul] is destroyed and parishes, immediately separating from the body, and, going out of it, it is gone, dispersed like breath or smoke (ὥσπερ πνεῦμα ἢ καπνὸς διασκεδασθεῖσα) and flown off (διαπτομένη)" (70a1-5), he resorts to the collective imagery of his time rather than voicing objections articulated by a certain philosophical school. The comparison of the soul with "smoke" (70a5) that after the death of the body "may be dispersed [διασκεδασθεῖσα]" (70a5) is an image drawn from the Homeric poems.[31] Similarly, the connection of the soul with breath is traditional and may date back from Homer.[32]

Even when Cebes formulates his requests to Socrates in positive terms, he does not use philosophical jargon. At the conclusion of his reply, Cebes presents the two claims he wishes to be argued for: in addition to evidence that the soul retains intelligence after separation from the body, he requires an argument confirming that "the soul […] will still exist after the person has died" (70b3-4). The formulation of his request is quite generic. It gives little indication as to whether he wishes Socrates to show that the soul is immortal or simply that it survives the death of the body. The language used is not technical: death is referred to not as

[31] Comp. Hom. *Il.* 23.100-1 ψυχὴ δὲ κατὰ χθονὸς ἠΰτε καπνὸς |ᾤχετο" and *Il.* 16.865 and 22.362 ψυχὴ δ' ἐκ ῥεθέων πταμένη Ἄϊδος δὲ βεβήκει.
[32] See Rowe 2001, 153.

separation from body and soul, as it was in Socrates' defence of the philosophical life, but generically as the moment when a person dies. Words such as 'immortal' or 'imperishable' do not occur. Even if this line is read in conjunction with the request to be assured that the soul will not be dispersed or fly off after the death of the body, it does not clarify what is entailed in the claim that the soul survive after the death of the body. Formulated in these terms, the request fails to consider that the soul may survive after the death of the body for a limited period but be destroyed after a longer span of time. As we will see below, Cebes will focus on this problem in his objection to the Affinity Argument and redefine the claim he will ask Socrates to validate. At this stage however, the survival of the soul after the death of the body is the claim that Cebes presents to Socrates and Socrates readily accepts to discuss and validate (70b5-8, 70b10-c3).

Socrates' first attempt to meet the challenge with which he has been confronted is represented by the Cyclical Argument. Although Cebes agrees with the steps Socrates takes to develop this argument, neither he nor Simmias give any indication that they agree with the conclusions reached by the argument. Cebes, who is Socrates' more immediate interlocutor in this section of the dialogue, gives his approval at several stages of Socrates' reasoning (70d6, 70e9, 71a5, 71a8, 71a2, 71b5, 71b11, 71c8, 71d4, 71d6, 71d8, 71e3, 71e7, 71e11, 71a9-10, 72d4-5), but he remains silent after the conclusion of Socrates' argument. After completing his argument, Socrates summarizes the results he believes to have achieved: "and we're not deceived in making just those admissions: there really is such a thing as coming to life again, living people *are* from the dead, and the souls of the dead exist"[33] (72d6-e1). None of his interlocutors make any statement to confirm or even only suggest that he considers these conclusions valid. Instead, Cebes introduces a new topic that will lead Socrates to deliver his second argument.

From 73c1 Socrates begins presenting the Recollection Argument. As it was the case for the Cyclical Argument, the steps taken by Socrates to develop it receive the approval of his interlocutor (73c3, 73d4, 73e4, 73e8, 74a1, 74a4, 74a8, 74b1, 74b3, 74b10, 74c3, 74c6, 74c10, 74c12, 74d3, 74d8, 74e5, 74e8, 75a4, 75a9-10, 75b3, 75b9, 75b12, 75c3, 75c6, 75d6, 75e1, 75e8, 76a8, 76b7, 76b10-

[33] Gallop's italics.

12, 76c3, 76c5, 76c8, 76c10, 76d5-6), although in this case his interlocutor is Simmias and not Cebes. Again along a line similar to that of the Cyclical Argument, expression of agreement during the development of the argument does not imply satisfaction with the conclusions reached. In this case however the argument is followed by a discussion that clarifies why Simmias and Cebes consider the evidence provided unsatisfactory.

Although Simmias and Cebes maintain that Socrates' argument is valid, neither of them believe that it satisfactorily proves that the soul survives after the death of the body. The reason for the insufficiency of the argument is identified first by Simmias and then described by Cebes in very similar terms. Simmias points out that on the basis of the conclusions reached in the Recollection Argument "it doesn't seem to me to have been shown whether the soul will still exist even we have died" (77b1-3). As he observes, evidence that the soul existed before entering the body does not allow it to be ruled out that the soul will be disperse when the body dies (77b5-9). On a very similar line, Cebes remarks that Socrates has carried out only half of the task he had been requested to complete (77c1-2). Sufficient evidence has been in fact provided only for the pre-existence of the soul to the body (77c2-3). To be complete, the argument still needs to show that the soul will survive after the death of the body (77c3-5).

After an attempt to reassure his interlocutors that Cebes' request has already received a satisfactory answer (77c6-d5), Socrates swiftly proceeds to acknowledge their perplexity before they express it openly. As he admits, Simmias and Cebes wishes the investigation to be carried out in more detail (77d6) because "the childish fear" (77d7) still haunts them. They are afraid, he observes, that "wind will blow away (διαφυσᾷ) and disperse (διασκεδάννυσιν) the soul once it has exited the body" (77d8-e1).

The imagery and the language used by Socrates in these lines signals that it is the notion of the survival of the soul the question that was addressed by Cyclical Argument and the Recollection Argument and that remains open after the two arguments have failed to convince Cebes and Simmias. The metaphor of the soul being dispersed after the death of the body was introduced by Cebes in his reply to Socrates' defence of the philosophical life. Unlike Cebes, Socrates does not

compare the soul with wind and smoke, but he depicts an image in which the wind itself will blow away and disperse the soul. In addition to the imagery, the word choice is very similar in both passages. Although Socrates does not mention smoke (πνεῦμα) and he replaces the verb διαπέτεσθαι with διαφυσᾶν (77d8-e1), like Cebes he uses the verb διασκεδάννυσθαι to refer to the dispersal of the soul (77e1) and the verb ἐκβαίνειν (77d8) to allude to the separation of the soul from the body. As the choice of a very similar metaphor indicates that Socrates is reconnecting to the question Cebes asked him, so does his language confirm that the question he intends to answer has retained the same unspecific terms. As we have seen, Socrates claims that the conclusions reached by the Cyclical Argument with those drawn from the Recollection Argument provide a satisfactory response to his interlocutors' request. In an attempt to convince them, he affirms that the two arguments he has provided validates the claim that "it is necessary for it [the soul] to exist even when [someone] dies, since it is necessary for it to be generated anew" (77d3-4). This statement reveals close similarity with the final sentence of Cebes' reply to Socartes' defence of the philosophical life. Like Cebes previously, in this passage Socrates refers to the survival of the soul in non-technical terms: the verb he uses is εἶναι (77d4) with which he affirms the existence of the soul without specifying whether its existence is finite or infinite in time. Again on a very similar line to Cebes', Socrates' way of referring to death is generic. Instead of giving the technical description of it as the process of separation of the soul from the body as he did in his defence of the philosophical life, he opts for the ordinary phrase "after one has died" (ἐπειδὰν ἀποθάνῃ, 77d3-4).

As the discussion held after the conclusion of the Recollection Argument confirms that the question initially posed by Cebes has remained framed in the same terms, the survival of the soul after the death of the body is the claim that Socrates undertakes to substantiate when he resumes his investigation. His next attempt to meet this challenge is the Affinity Argument. Although the dialogical dynamic in place while the argument is delivered is similar to that followed by the characters during the Cyclical Argument, the interlocutor's reaction is different. Cebes gives his approval to Socrates multiple times (78b18, 78c5, 78c9,78d8-9, 78e5, 79a5, 79a8, 79a11, 79b3, 79b15, 79c1, 79c9, 79d8, 80a6) while he develops

his arguments. Unlike the Cyclical Argument, the conclusions of the Affinity Argument receive the approval of one of Socrates' interlocutors, although he will later show that they are in his view insufficient to substantiate the claim they address. At 80a10-b5 Socrates lists the points he believes the arguments corroborates. Soul and body belongs to fully distinct realms. While the latter belongs to the group of mortal, multiform, perishable and inconstant entities, the soul shows similarities with what is divine, immortal, intelligible, uniform, imperishable and constant. After formulating these conclusions, Socrates asks Cebes to express his opinion on them: "Can we say, dear Cebes, anything else against that to claim that it is not this way?" (80b5-6). Cebes' prompt reply is affirmative: "We can't" (80b7). Apart from Cebes' approval, this exchange does not give clear information on the opinion Simmias entertains about the success of the Affinity Argument at this stage of the conversation. Apart from Cebes' approval, this exchange does not give clear information on the opinion Simmias entertains about the success of the Affinity Argument at this stage of the conversation.

While the conclusions of the Affinity Argument initially receive Cebes' approval, they subsequently appear insufficient to both Simmias and Cebes to guarantee that the soul will exist after the death of the body. Addressing problems that in their view have not yet received a satisfactory answer, each of them voices an objection to the views established by the Affinity Argument. Stressing that something divine such as the harmony of a lyre is not necessarily immortal, Simmias lodges an objection (85e3-86d4) that is not crucial to the development of the argumentative line followed by Socrates. In lines 91e2-95a3 Socrates offers three reasons to prove his interlocutor's position ill-grounded. Simmias admits that each of the three reasons is convincing (92c11-e3, 94b3, 95a3) and agrees to drop his objection.

Unlike Simmias', Cebes' objection insists on a serious weakness of the Affinity Argument and it allows Cebes to redefine the claim that needs to be addressed to dispel every doubt that the soul may be destroyed. By referring back to the discussion held immediately after the delivery of the Recollection Arguments, the opening sentences of Cebes' objection seems to suggest the

almost complete failure of the Affinity Argument. As he affirms, "the reasoning seems to me to be at the same point, and the charge the same that we brought in the previous discussion" (86e6-87a1). In the immediately following lines Cebes points out what notion he already considers well established and what part of the argument he thinks still wanting. "That our soul existed before being implanted in this [the human] form" (87a1-2) rests in his view on sufficiently solid evidence (87a3-4). By contrast, "that it [our soul] is still somewhere after we have died" (87a4) is not in his eye equally well established (87a5). In these statements he expresses exactly the same view he adopted when he was discussing the merits and shortcomings of the Recollection Argument. As we have seen, at that stage Cebes remarked that "only half of what should be" (77c2) is proven, acknowledging that the pre-existence of the soul to the body has been adequately argued for, but complaining that the claim that the soul will survive after the death of the body has yet to be validated.

Although the level of success reached by Socrates in proving the survival of the soul after the death of the body is perceived by Cebes to be the same before and after the Affinity Argument, it would be incorrect to conclude that the Affinity Argument has exerted no influence on Cebes' view. Despite denying that sufficient evidence for the survival of the soul has been provided, against Simmias' opinion he is prepared to admit that the soul lives for a longer span of time than the body. He observes: "I do not agree with Simmias' objection that the soul is not stronger and longer-lasting than the body" (87a5-6).

The refusal to admit that the soul will survive after the death of the body and the acceptance that the soul is longer-lasting than the body may seem to be in contradiction with each other. The image (εἰκόνος, 87b3) Cebes proceeds to present shows how these two views can be reconciled, and it helps Cebes redefine the claim he wishes to be validated (87b4-d3). A weaver pre-exists the cloaks he weaves and lives longer than a single clock weaved. Although he consumes several cloaks during the course of his life, he will eventually die before the cloak he weaves last. Applied to the relation between soul and body, this image suggests the following according to Cebes. The body is weaker and deteriorates constantly. The soul is longer-lived and able to weave the body afresh when it deteriorates.

Despite its stronger nature, the soul will die after weaving the body afresh a number of times. Bereaved of what rebuilds it, the body also will die shortly after (87d3-e5). Having established this comparison, Cebes recapitulates the points he is willing to concede before formulating the claim he wishes Socrates to validate. He accepts that the soul exists before the body (88a3-4); he is also willing to admit that a soul will be reincarnated after a body dies (88a4-6). What he refuses to concede is that the cycle of reincarnation does not increasingly weaken the soul until the soul at some point perishes (88a8-b3).

By adopting this position, Cebes further clarifies his opinion on the arguments Socrates has presented so far. In addition to reconfirming his acceptance of the conclusions of the Recollection Arguments, he also implicitly acknowledges that the Affinity Argument constitutes a progress in Socrates' argumentative line, although as yet this progress is insufficient in his view. Cebes' admission that a soul is reincarnated in multiple bodies is consistent with the acceptance of the conclusions of the Affinity Argument. The notion of an existing similarity between the soul and the immortal is clearly compatible with the view that the soul follows a cycle of multiple reincarnations. Although this view would be supported even by weaker claims about the notion of the soul that would describe the soul simply as capable of lasting longer than the body, it is entirely plausible to assume that Cebes would be willing to accept the stronger claim since he asserted at 80b7 that he accepts the conclusions of the Affinity Argument.

What Cebes at this stage still considers unsupported by any evidence is a claim that is not directly addressed in the Affinity Argument. By refusing to exclude that the process of reincarnation deteriorates and eventually destroys the soul, Cebes focuses attention on the insufficiency of an argument that shows that the soul is *similar* to the immortal but not immortal.[34] Insistence on this weakness signals the insufficiency of the claim the Affinity Argument addresses rather than the incorrectness of the argument itself. Once the soul is thought to be able to follow a potentially perpetual cycle of reincarnations,[35] the notion of the survival of the

[34] The weakness of the conclusion that the soul is similar to the immortal is commonly recognized by scholarship and it is often considered a sign that Plato does not defend the validity of the Affinity Argument (Ebert 2004, 266-267, Frede 2005, 73-74, Rowe 2001, 189).

[35] As we will see in the final section of this chapter, Socrates affirms in the concluding myth that some souls escape the cycle of reincarnation. However, exceptions to the principle that each soul

soul becomes problematic. If the soul is reincarnated in multiple bodies, evidence that it will survive the death of one or more of them does not guarantee that it will survive the death of *all* those bodies in which it will be incarnated. If the cycle of reincarnation is perpetual, a guarantee that the soul will always survive the death of a body in which it is incarnate can be given only by evidence of the immortality of the soul.

When, in his reply to Socrates' defence, Cebes requested evidence that the soul will survive after the death of the body, he did not mention or consider the possibility that a soul would face multiple reincarnations. Socrates' adoption of the reincarnation doctrine introduces a further level of complexity. This complexity is not immediately understood by his interlocutors, who, as we have seen, continue to frame their question as if the demonstrandum were the survival of the soul after the death of one single body.

After introducing the image of the weaver, Cebes reformulates the question in a way that clearly stresses the problems arising from the involvement of the soul in a potentially perpetual circle of reincarnations. As he insists, Socrates needs to present an argument that can satisfy someone who "would no longer agree that it [the soul] does not suffer in these multiple generations and it eventually perishes completely in one of these deaths, and would affirm that nobody knows this death and this separation from the body that causes destruction to the soul" (88a10-b2). In this statement Cebes highlights the limitations of the notion of the survival of the soul. By considering the possibility that the soul "suffers" in the cycle of incarnations, he implicitly admits that it will survive the death of a number of bodies. The emphasis on the suffering caused by the process of reincarnation calls attention to the fact that it remains insufficient to prove that the soul will survive after some of the bodies in which it has been incarnate. Until the doubt is dispelled that the process of reincarnation may result in the deterioration of the soul, it is not possible to determine how many bodies a soul will survive. Subsequently a person cannot know at the moment of death whether the soul will continue existing after his or her body has died.

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follows a cycle of reincarnation are not mentioned either when he introduces the doctrine of reincarnation at the beginning of the Cyclical Argument (70c5-8), or when Cebes refers to the tenets of this doctrine in his objection to the Affinity Argument.

If confidence at the moment of death is unreasonable until evidence is provided that the soul will survive the death of all bodies from which it separates (88b3-4), Cebes defines the claim that Socrates needs to validate. A confident attitude towards death is justified, he clarifies, only for somebody who is able to "prove that the soul is both completely immortal and imperishable (παντάπασιν ἀθάνατόν τε καὶ ἀνώλεθρον)" (88b5-6). Once it is accepted that the soul faces a perpetual cycle of reincarnations, the guarantee that it will survive the death of the body from which it is separating in a certain moment can be given only by evidence that the soul is both immortal and imperishable.

Socrates accepts the challenge and presents the Affinity Argument in order to meet it. During its delivery the interaction between Socrates and Cebes is constructive, and the interlocutor's contribution is more significant than that made during the delivery of the previous arguments. At the opening of the argument, Socrates invites Cebes to adopt a more active role: "Do not give me as an answer whatever I ask you about, but by imitating me"[36] (105b5-6). These prima facie puzzling words are plausibly explained by Rowe, who proposes that Socrates is suggesting something along the following line: "When I ask about the F-ness of anything […], do not reply 'F-ness', but instead something on the following model (b8-c6)."[37] Whereas on the argumentative level Socrates' invitation leads Cebes to explaining a certain property as caused not simply by the appropriate Form but by the presence of something bringing that Form with it, on the dialogical level it results in Cebes' increased participation in the conversation. If in the majority of cases he limits himself to giving his approval to Socrates' steps (105d2, 105d5, 105d5, 105d12, 105e5, 105e7, 106a2, 106a7, 106a11, 106c4, 106e4, 106e7) as he did in the Cyclical Argument and in the Affinity Argument, he also provides more informative answers (105c11, 105d15, 105e1).

The conclusions Socrates reaches in the Final Argument are greeted by Cebes' full approval. In a first stage the soul is argued to be an immortal entity (ἀθάνατον). At the conclusion of this section Socrates asks Cebes whether he considers the argument in support of this point convincing (105e8). Cebes' answer is unconditionally affirmative: "In a fully adequate way indeed" (105e9). A very

[36] Translation by Rowe 2001, 259.
[37] Rowe 2001, 259.

similar dynamic is observable when Socrates finishes to argue that the soul is imperishable. He asks: "[…] If the soul happens to be something immortal, would it not be something imperishable (ἀνώλεθρον) as well?" (106e3). This time too Cebes' agreement is complete: "Strictly necessarily" (106e4). After obtaining his interlocutor's approval on each of the two parts in which he divided his argument, Socrates recapitulates the conclusions reached. At this stage, he insists, it has been satisfactorily shown that "the soul is something immortal and imperishable and that our souls will really exist in Hades" (106e9-107a1).

Cebes' prompt agreement is followed by a more cautious response from Simmias. As we have seen already in the introduction to this chapter,[38] Simmias does not give his unconditional approval to the Final Argument. His reservations however are not motivated by specific objections to the argument but by more general considerations. As he remarks, "but at least (γε) on the basis of what has been said I no longer have myself a reason to mistrust" (107a8-9). "What has been said" has the same reference as "the arguments" in the statement Cebes makes at 107a3 and both phrases refer to the Final Argument.[39] Simmias is thus asserting that the Final Argument does not give him reason for doubt. However, the limitation "at least" (γε) suggests that, if not the Final Argument, some other point may. The following sentence clarifies that Simmias entertains some residual doubt: "due to the complexity of the topics the discussion revolves around and because I have a low esteem of human weakness, I am compelled to retain in myself some mistrust about the argument" (107a9-b3). Simmias' doubt is caused by the limitations of human reason and the difficulty of the topic addressed. Although the argument itself does not seem him incorrect or insufficient to support the claim under scrutiny, the immortality of the soul is in Simmias' eyes too complex a notion to be understood fully by human intellect.

Socrates addresses Simmias' concern with a reply of similar generality. After praising him for having spoken and expressed his doubts (107b4-5), he mentions the "first principles" (107b5) and admits that "even though they are trustworthy for you, nevertheless they need to be investigated further" (107b5-6). What

[38] See pp.135-136.
[39] Rowe 2001, 265, plausibly remarks that "τὰ λεγόμενα has the same reference as οἱ λόγοι in a3, b1, and τὰ εἰρημένα in b2-3."

exactly these first principles are is difficult to ascertain and is a matter of controversy in scholarship.[40] More important for the assessment of the success the Final Argument reaches in the eyes of the characters is that, by a wide scholarly agreement, these principles include the theory of forms, which is crucial to the Final argument. By clarifying in the two following sentences what degree of certainty he believes these principles have, Socrates implicitly suggests what level of reliability he thinks can be attached to the Final Argument. "And if you analyse them adequately, I believe, you'll be able to follow the argument to the extent to which it is possible for a human to follow. And when this becomes clear, you will not look for anything further" (107b6-9). Socrates' answer has more than one part. In the initial part of the sentence he reassures Simmias and Cebes (διέλητε, and ἀκολουθήσετε are plural forms) that a thorough analyses of the first principles will allow them to follow the λόγος. What λόγος refers to is difficult to determine with certainty, but the identification of it with the Final Argument can be defended.[41] If the first principles, which Socrates invites his interlocutors to examine, include those on which the Final Argument is based, it is plausible to conclude that what their analysis will render possible to follow is the Final Argument. If this identification is correct, at 107b6-8 Socrates implies that the Final Argument is both self-consistent, which Simmias never denies, and based on a solid metaphysical foundation.

In line 107b8 Socrates introduces however a limitation. As he clarifies, understanding the self-consistency and foundation of the Final Argument will remain possible only to the point to which human understanding can stretch. Even though it is self-consistent and based on a solid foundation, the Final Argument produces a proof of the immortality of the soul the validity of which remains limited by the finitude of human reason. Although human limitations cannot be

[40] Burnet 1911, 124 maintains that the first principles referred to in this passage are exclusively the theory of Forms as expounded in the *Phaedo*, in particular at 100b5. Gallop 1976, 222 believes that they include *at least* the theory of Forms. Ebert 2004, 410 agrees that these principles include the theory of forms but proposes that they could also refer to the pre-natal existence of the soul and to "very general presumptions that were made [in the *Phaedo*] implicitly and without further consideration" such as the proposition that the immortal is also everlasting (106d3).

[41] Rowe 2001, 265 maintains that λόγος indicates an argument "that will establish (within the limit of human capacity) the soul's immortality – but that will evidently be a variant of the one just completed." He does not however explain why he assumes that the argument referred to by λόγος needs to be different from the one just completed by Socrates.

overcome, lines 107b8-9 seems to contain a reassuring statement. Once Simmias and Cebes understand it, the Final Argument will provide them with a satisfactory answer.

The Final Argument is accepted although some reservations are expressed.[42] These reservations concern not the argument itself but the limitations of human knowledge. After the delivery of the Affinity Argument Socrates has presented a reasonably safe argument for the immortality of the soul and vindicate, to his interlocutors' satisfaction, one of two claims Cebes required him to validate in order to consider plausible the hope for justice in the afterlife. When that claim was presented for the first time, it was formulated in non-technical terms and lacked sufficient clarity. Socrates accepted nevertheless to vindicate it and offered a series of arguments in response to it. Once completed, the Cyclical Argument did not receive any comment that conveyed the opinion of Socrates' interlocutors about its success. The Recollection Argument was considered by Simmias and Cebes adequate for validating a claim different from the one that it had been intended to address. The Affinity Argument played an important role in helping Cebes redefine his initial claim. Although it initially received a mixed judgement with Cebes accepting its validity and Simmias remaining silent, this argument was subsequently denounced by Cebes as insufficient for the claim addressed. In formulating his objection, Cebes clarified that the claim Socrates needed to validate was no weaker than the immortality of the soul. With the Final Argument Socrates presents a proof of the immortality of the soul that convinces Cebes and is considered by Simmias as safe as human reason can provide.

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[42] Hackforth 1980, 165-166 and Gallop 1976, 222 agree that Socrates' expressed skepticism concerns not the soundness of the Final Argument but the power of human reason. On a different line, Ebert 2004, 409-411 believes that Socrates signals the insufficiency of the Final Argument. In his view lines 107b4-8 have a rather pessimistic undertone about the power of human reason and that Socrates' remark at 107b8-9 reveals "the understanding of the impossibility of further acquisition of knowledge" (my translation). If lines 107b4-9 cast doubt on Socrates' opinion about the soundness of the Final Argument, Cebes' rushed acceptance that the since immortal the soul is also imperishable without consideration of the polysemy of the term (106d3) suggests in Ebert's view that "Plato does not leave his reader in the uncertainty about the insufficiency of the arguments for the immortality of the soul presented up to that point" (411, my translation). While it is Cebes who accepts too swiftly the connection between immortal and imperishable, "Plato lets the Socrates of this dialogue react in a way that suggests that the insufficiency of the arguments presented is clear to him" (411, my translation). On yet another line, Sedley 1995 proposes that Simmias' residual skepticism signals not the insufficiency of the Final Argument but the inadequacy of Simmias' attitude towards doubt and, more generally, of his method of enquiry.

Socrates' evidence that the soul is intrinsically intelligent

In the previous section I have proposed a way of tracing the argumentative line followed by Socrates to convince his interlocutors that the soul is immortal. In this section I will turn my attention to the arguments Socrates offers to corroborate the second claim Cebes asks him to substantiate: the permanence of φρόνησις in the soul after the death of the body.

After a short preamble in which I will argue that, when used by Cebes in his reply to Socrates, φρόνησις is best translated "intelligence", in this section I will analyse the passages relevant to the question of the nature of the discarnate soul. I will remain non-committal about whether Socrates' evidence can withstand close scrutiny, but I will show that it is considered sufficiently convincing by Simmias and Cebes. The task of listing the reasons Socrates offers for the permanence of intelligence in the discarnate soul is complicated by the fact that he does not treat the problem of the nature of the soul systematically. For this reason, collecting the evidence Socrates provides for the intrinsically intelligent nature of the soul cannot amount to identifying and assessing an argument specifically intended to prove this claim.[43]

My thesis will be that in Socrates' eyes the Recollection Argument provides evidence that the soul is endowed with intelligence before incarnation and the Affinity Argument moves from the assumption that the soul has an intrinsically intelligent nature; I will then turn my attention to passages 91e2-95e6, 107c1-4, 107c8-d2, and 107d2-4 and show which claim is regarded as validated by character.

Before turning attention to the evidence Socrates provides to substantiate the second of the claims Cebes requests him to validate, it is in place to ascertain what

[43] Frede 2005 maintains that Cebes' request to be shown that the soul will continue to be intelligent after separation from the body "would arouse the expectation that the most important question for the prosecution of the discussion will be that of the nature of the soul. This is, however, not only not answered in the core of the dialogue, but it is not even asked *expressis verbis*. Plato lets it only indirectly glimpse how he conceives of the soul whose immortality he wants to proof" (34). Frede correctly highlights that Socrates does not address the question of the nature of the soul directly and that he never lists or describes the characteristics of the soul before arguing for its immortality. This does not, however, exclude the possibility that some of the claims made by Socrates in passing give indications as to the nature that he maintains that the soul has.

this claim entails. The translation and the referent of the word φρόνησις are controversial.[44] I will argue that in Cebes' reply to Socartes' defence of the philosophical life φρόνησις is best translated "intelligence" and indicates the faculty of acquiring knowledge irrespective of the level of knowledge gathered by using this faculty. Although the translation "wisdom" would reflect the meaning that the word φρόνησις has both in standard Attic Greek and in Socrates' defence of the philosophical life (65a9, 66a6, 66e3, 68a2, 68a7, 69b3, 69a10, 69b6, 69c2), two reasons suggests that Cebes refers to "intelligence" when he asks Socrates to show that the soul will retain φρόνησις after separation from the body.

First, in his reply to Socrates Cebes makes no reference to philosophers, but he generally appeals to what "men fear" (70a1). As we have seen in the previous section, he employs non-technical language and uses images drawn from traditional poetry and crystallized in the collective imagery when he asked to be reassured that the soul will survive after the death of the body. As this practice suggests that Cebes is addressing a problem concerning not exclusively philosophers but people in general, a very similar impression is given by the concluding line of his reply. Even in this line, Cebes presents his requests to Socrates without singling out philosophers as a specific category. By contrast, he asks to be given reassurance that the soul will continue both to exist and possess some power and φρόνησις "when the man has died" (70b3). As the subject of the temporal clause clarifies, Cebes' request is for the validation of two points concerning the soul as such and not the soul of people belonging to the particular group formed by the philosophers. While φρόνησις is a faculty Cebes wishes to be reassured every soul possesses, wisdom is presented by Socrates in his defence of the philosophical life as a quality strived for exclusively by philosophers. The diverse extension of the categories of people to which φρόνησις refers in Socrates

[44] Burnet 1911 remarks that "here, then, φρόνησις is not equivalent to σοφία, but is used in its popular sense, answering the Homeric φρένες" (70). A very different view is advocated by Gallop 1995, who maintains that "phronēsis is the solemn tern for the condition of the soul for which the philosopher yearns […], attainable only in communication with the Forms" (102). Proposing a view similar to Burnet's, Ebert 2004 suggests that φρόνησις carries different, although related, meanings in Socrates' defence and in Cebes' reply to it. The relation between them is explained by him in the following way: "the possession of φρόνησις, which Cebes now [in his reply] describes as a requirement for conscious existence, is also a prerequisite for the attainment of the φρόνησις as the goal of the philosophers' striving. The present argument [69e7-70b4] is not about the hope but the requisites necessary for the attainment of what this hope is for" (165-166, footnote 1).

defence of the philosophical life and in Cebes' reply renders it very unlikely that has the same referent in both cases.

Secondly, it is hardly plausible to assume that wisdom is a quality possessed by *all* the souls mentioned in the section 80c1-84b8 and in the eschatological myth concluding the dialogue. As both sections consider a wide range of souls different in their moral quality and in the level of knowledge they possess, it becomes clear that souls are maintained by Socrates to survive separation from the body regardless of their moral quality and level of knowledge they possess. If souls with a low level of knowledge are also deemed able to survive the death of the body, it seems inconsistent to think that Socrates seeks to show that in the afterlife *all* souls retain a high level of knowledge, despite the fact that some of them have never acquired it.

On the contrary, if φρόνησις identifies merely the ability to acquire knowledge, the notion of a soul endowed with this ability would be compatible with that embraced both in Cebes' request and in Socrates' description of the afterlife. On this interpretation, it would not be difficult to think that Socrates is asked to show that after separation from the body every soul retains the ability to acquire knowledge regardless of the level of the knowledge it has gathered using an ability it intrinsically possesses. Similarly, souls with no level of knowledge can easily be thought to retain after the death of the body an ability that they possess but have not used during their life on earth.

The first passage in which Socrates indicates that the soul is endowed with intelligence is in the Recollection Argument. In the attempt to convince Simmias that the soul is immortal, Socrates resorts to the doctrine of learning as recollection. As he explains at 73c1-2, "if anyone is to be reminded of a thing, he must have known that thing at some time previously." After illustrating this principle by remarking that a lover is reminded of the beloved person when he sees an object belonging to them, Socrates further generalizes it. Recollection occurs both when a thing reminds of something of a similar kind and when it reminds of something of a different kind. Accordingly a sensible thing can remind somebody of another sensible thing, as in the case of the example of the lover reminded of the beloved person. A sensible thing can also remind somebody of a

form, like the equal itself. When we look at equal logs or stones, we are, Socrates says, reminded of something which is equal not like "a log to a log or a stone to stone or anything else of that sort, but some further thing beyond all those, the equal itself" (74a10-13). Since two sensible things equal to one another fall short of the equal itself, Socrates continues at 74e9-75a3, "we must previously have known the equal, before that time when we first, on seeing equals, thought that all of them were striving to be like the equal but fell short of it." Socrates' assumption at this stage is that, since two sensible things equal to one another strive to be like the equal itself, but fall short of it, they cannot generate in our mind the idea of it. If, when we look at two equal things, we are nevertheless reminded of the equal itself, Socrates concludes at 75c4-5 that "we must have got it before we were born."

By concluding that we must have known the notion of equal itself before birth, Socrates clearly implies that our soul is able to gain knowledge of the forms and is therefore endowed with intelligence before incarnation. If in this passage Socrates implies rather than asserting that the soul has intellectual power before incarnation, in a following passage he states it with open words. After showing that we have prenatal knowledge of the forms (75c4-5), he proceeds to consider two further options: "we are born knowing or we are later reminded of the things we'd gained knowledge of before" (76a9-b2).[45] In this passage Socrates is discussing whether during their incarnate life souls retain the entire knowledge they gain before incarnation or they forget part of it at the moment of incarnation. The different degrees of knowledge demonstrated by people is considered by Socrates evidence that some people have more knowledge than others because they are "reminded of what they once learned" (76c4). Since he has already excluded that souls acquire knowledge after being incarnated in a human body (76c6-7), Socrates concludes that "our souls did exist earlier, Simmias, before entering human form, apart from the bodies; and they possessed intelligence" (76c11-13).[46]

The Recollection Argument, and particularly the recollection doctrine on which it relies, show that the soul exists before incarnation and possesses intelligence at

[45] Gallop's translation modified.
[46] Gallop's translation modified.

that moment of its life. The prenatal existence of the soul and its ability to acquire knowledge before incarnation are explicitly asserted in the passage 76c11-13. The correlation between existence of the soul before incarnation and existence of the forms is also observed by Simmias: "it's absolutely clear to me, Socrates, […] that there's the same necessity in either case, and the argument takes opportune refuge in the view that our soul exists before birth, just as surely as the Being of which you're now speaking" (76e8-77a2).

Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to conclude that the Recollection Argument provides entirely satisfactory answers to the demands initially presented to Socrates. In fact, Simmias only accepts that "our soul exists before birth" (77a1), but he remarks that "whether it will still exist, however, after we've died, doesn't seem, even to me, to have been shown" (77b1-3). The same reservations are also voiced by Cebes, who underlines the incompleteness of the evidence provided by the Recollection Argument: "it seems that half, as it were, of what is needed has been shown – that our soul existed before we were born; it must also be shown that it will exist after we've died, no less than before we were born, if the proof is going to be complete" (77c1-5). What holds for existence applies also to intelligence: Socrates still needs to show that the soul retains intelligence after separation from the body.

If the Recollection Argument only provides evidence that the soul is intelligent before incarnation, the Affinity Argument shows that the soul is endowed with intelligence for the entire length of its cosmic life. Although it does not contain a direct proof of the intrinsically intelligent nature of the soul, the argument is based, among others, on the assumption that the soul is intrinsically intelligent.

The argument starts by drawing a distinction between two classes of things: the composite and incomposite ones. While the former are subject to decomposition (78c1-2), incomposite things are immune to it (78c3-4). Incomposite things also have the characteristic of always remaining in the same state and condition (78c6-7); composite ones "vary and are never constant" (78c7-8). The class of things that always remain in the same state includes "the being itself, […] the equal, the beautiful itself, what each thing is itself, that which is" (78d1-4).[47] The many

[47] "what each thing is itself, that which is" is in italics in Gallop's translation.

beautiful things, such as men, horses, cloaks, form the class of what varies and is never constant (78d10-e1). A fundamental characteristic of what belongs to the latter class is to be accessible through sense-perception (79a1-2); by contrast, what is always in the same state and condition can be grasped only through intelligence and reasoning (79a2-4).

After describing the characteristics of mutable things and those of immutable ones, Socrates is in a position to decide in which class the soul belongs. To this purpose he reminds Cebes that every person has a body and a soul (79b1-2). If the body is promptly included in the category of the things which are perceptible to the senses (79b6) and therefore mutable, the soul seems a likely candidate for falling into the category of the immutable things. While its being invisible gives a first indication in this direction (79b12-15), confirmation that the soul is similar to the immutable is given by its intelligent nature. Its peculiar way of acquiring knowledge confirms, in fact, that intelligence is a fundamental characteristic of the soul. "Whereas whenever it [the soul] studies alone by itself, it departs yonder towards that which is pure and always existent and immortal and unvarying, and in virtue of its kinship with it, enters always into its company, whenever it has come to be alone by itself, and whenever it may do so; then it has ceased from its wondering and, when it is about those objects, it is always constant and unvarying, because of its contact with things of a similar kind; and this condition of it is called intelligence, is it not?" (79d1-7).[48] Since the soul is intelligent and therefore capable of interacting with immortal and unvarying realities, it is also, as Cebes agrees, itself immutable (79e2-5). On this basis Socrates can easily bring his argument to completion and assert that the "soul is most similar to what is divine, immortal, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, unvarying, and constant in relation to itself" (80b1-3).

If the assertion that the soul possesses intelligence is for Socrates only an intermediate step by which he can come to the conclusion that the soul is immutable, it is of cardinal importance for the purpose of the present chapter. What Socrates says in lines 79d1-7 can be appreciated in its full significance when it is contrasted with his immediately preceding words. At 79c2-8 Socrates reminds

[48] Gallop's translation modified.

Cebes that "whenever the soul uses the body as a means to study anything, either by seeing or hearing or any other sense […] then it is dragged by the body towards objects that are never constant; and it wanders about itself, and is confused and dizzy, as if drunk, in virtue of the contact with things of a similar kind." When it is incarnated, the soul can remain attached to the body and use sense perception as a mean of acquiring knowledge. In this condition its quest for truth is meant to remain unaccomplished because the soul is disturbed and confused by the bodily element to which sense perception is connected. However, as Socrates underlines at 79d1-7, the soul also has the possibility of gathering itself alone by itself and carrying out its enquiry without relying on the information provided by the senses. When the soul enters in contact with eternal things and gains knowledge of them, it makes use of its intelligence.

Whereas the Affinity Argument assumes, rather than proving, that the soul can have interaction with the eternal, it embraces the notion of an intelligent soul. In doing so, this argument does not offer specific reasons in favour of the intrinsically intelligent nature of the soul, but it shows that Socrates, when arguing for the immortality of the soul, conceives of it as intrinsically intelligent.

Up to this point we have seen that the Recollection Argument provides evidence that the soul possesses intelligence before being incarnated and the Affinity Argument presupposes the notion of a soul endowed with intelligence. At this stage we need to consider whether Simmias and Cebes still regard the evidence in support of the notion of an intrinsically intelligent soul as compelling in the concluding part of the dialogue.

Whereas the Final Argument does not make any specific reference to the nature of the soul,[49] the section immediately preceding it (91c6-95e6) does. It contains Socrates' reply to the objections Simmias and Cebes raise against the immortality of the soul after the Affinity Argument, and includes a number of passages very relevant to the question of the nature of the soul. The first group of passages shows that the evidence provided by the recollection doctrine that the soul is

[49] Frede 2005 remarks that Socrates' Final Argument "does not say anything about whether the soul retains its intellectual power, and it cannot either perform this task. For if the soul is considered for its properties qua life principle, the argument is valid not only for the human soul but also for that of the other creatures" (149f).

intelligent before incarnation is still considered valid. The second one suggests that Cebes no longer considers necessary a proof that the soul is intelligent after disembodiment.

After briefly summarizing his interlocutors' objections against the notion of the immortality of the soul, Socrates asks them: "then do you reject all of the previous arguments, or only some of them?" (91e1-1) From their answers it emerges that both Simmias and Cebes continue to be convinced by the recollection doctrine. Cebes remarks: "for my part I was wonderfully convinced by it [the recollection doctrine] at that time [when it was introduced in the exposition of the Recollection Argument], and remain so now, as by no other argument" (92a2-3). Simmias promptly declares that he shares Cebes' view on the recollection doctrine: "and I'm of the same mind […] and I'd be very surprised if I ever came to think otherwise about it" (92a4-5).[50]

As we have seen above, the recollection doctrine entails both that the soul exists before incarnation and that it is endowed with intelligence at that time. Socrates is careful to underline both these points. He touches upon the first when he verifies whether his interlocutors consider any of the arguments presented previously in the dialogue still valid. Cebes' and Simmias' positive replies about the Recollection Argument, respectively at 92a2-3 and 92a4-5, entail that they both still believe that souls exist before being implanted in a body, as the words "our souls must exist elsewhere before being imprisoned in the body" clearly show. Socrates underlines the second point at 95c4-9. In these lines he refers to the fact that during its time before incarnation the soul also gains knowledge of the forms and is therefore intelligent, as a notion already embraced by Cebes: "as for showing that the soul is something strong and god-like, and existed even before we were born as men, nothing prevents all that, you say, from indicating not mortality, but only that the soul is long-lived and existed somewhere for an immense length of time in the past, and knew and did all kind of things." Cebes'

[50] In the section of his commentary devoted to the interpretation of the Recollection Argument Ebert 2004 underlines that Simmias accepts the conclusion that the prenatal existence of the soul and the existence of the forms are closely connected. Commenting on the passage 76e8-77a5 he remarks that "indication that Simmias appropriates this (alleged) conclusion of the Recollection Argument is also given by the fact that he refers to it again during the subsequent discussion of the harmony theory when he declares to prefer the assumption of the recollection to the thesis that the soul is harmony" (246).

reply a few lines later (95e4-6) confirms that he recognizes himself in Socrates' words.

Besides showing that Simmias and Cebes consider valid Socrates' evidence that the soul is intelligent before incarnation valid even after the objections they raise in response to the Affinity Argument, the section just examined contain a further passage relevant to the question of the nature of the soul. Lines 95b8-e6 signal that the worry that the soul may lose its intelligence after disembodiment is no longer a real concern for Cebes. Before meeting his interlocutor's objection, Socrates offers a summary of it at 95b8-c4. "The sum and substance of what you're after is surely this: you want it proved that our soul is imperishable and immortal, if a philosophic man about to die, confidently believing that after death he'll fare much better yonder than if he were ending a life lived differently, isn't to be possessed of a senseless and foolish confidence". As Socrates continues, Cebes would not be satisfied with a proof that "the soul is something strong and god-like, and existed even before we were born as men" (95c5-6), because he would consider such evidence only sufficient to show that the soul lasts longer than the body and exists and is endowed with intelligence before incarnation (95c7-9). Cebes' worry is, in fact, as Socrates underlines at 95d1-2, that "its [the soul's] very entry into a human body was the beginning of its perishing like an illness." To alleviate Cebes' worry, it would be insufficient to prove that the soul is reincarnated not in one body but in more bodies successively (95d4-6). In fact, as Socrates concedes, "anyone who neither knows nor can give proof that it [the soul]'s immortal should be afraid, unless he has no sense" (95d6-e1). Cebes replies that he considers his position correctly described by Socrates' summary: "no, there's nothing at present I want to take away or add; those are my points" (95e4-6).

A comparison between this section and Cebes' reply to Socrates' defence of the philosophical life shows that Cebes has changed his position and no longer demands a proof of the intrinsically intelligent nature of the soul. As seen in the section *The conditions under which Socrates' expectations for the afterlife appear plausible to Cebes*, Cebes welcomed the hope for an afterlife governed by ethical principles but underlined that he would consider this hope plausible only on the

condition that "when the man has died, his soul exists, and that it possesses power and intelligence" (70a8-b1).[51] Accordingly, Cebes required the soul to be shown capable both of surviving the death of the body and of retaining its intelligence after separation from the body.

As clearly emerges from the summary of his position presented by Socrates at 95b8-e3, at this stage Cebes continues to be concerned with establishing under which conditions a philosopher can die "confidently believing that after death he'll fare much better yonder than if it were ending a life lived differently" (95c2-4). If the hope that Cebes wishes to appear plausible has remained the same, the conditions required for it to seem plausible to him have changed. As Socrates remarks twice ("you want it proved that our soul is imperishable and immortal," 95b9-c1; "anyone who neither knows nor can give proof that it [the soul]'s immortal should be afraid, unless he has no sense," 95d6-e1), Cebes requires only a proof of the immortality of the soul. Whereas he has become more specific in demanding an argument not generically for the survival of the soul after the death of the body but specifically for the immortality of the soul, he has dropped the other point that he previously wanted to hear proven. In the section 95b8-e3 no mention is in fact made of the wish to hear further reasons in support of the intrinsically intelligent nature.

The reasons why after the Affinity Argument Cebes drops one of the two points he initially wished to hear defended can only be a matter of speculation. Perhaps he believes that, by proving that the soul acquires knowledge of the forms before incarnation, the recollection doctrine automatically implies that the soul is intelligent by nature. It could also be suggested that Cebes maintains that the Affinity Argument, albeit insufficient for proving that the soul will necessarily exist after the death of the body, provides sufficiently strong evidence that the soul is intrinsically intelligent. None of these two hypotheses could, however, be confirmed by textual evidence.

What clearly emerges from the text is that after Socrates' Final Argument Cebes does not consider it necessary to hear any further argument for the intrinsically intelligent nature of the soul and Socrates does not consider it

[51] Rowe's translation modified.

necessary to present one. After Socrates completes his Final Argument, Cebes fully accepts it and does not raise any further objection ("well, Socrates, for my part I've no further objection, nor can I doubt the arguments at any point," 107a2-3). By this point the immortality of the soul has been demonstrated, at least to Cebes' satisfaction.

Three passages show that, in Socrates' view, the conclusions reached after his Final Argument are sufficient for making the transition to the concluding myth. Immediately after hearing Simmias' response to his Final Argument, Socrates states that "if a soul is immortal, then it needs care, not only for the sake of this time which what we call 'life' lasts, but for the whole of time."[52] (107c1-4) A similar statement is made by Socrates a few lines below: "but since, in fact, it [the soul] is evidently immortal, there would be no other refuge from ills or salvation for it, except to become as good and wise as possible" (107c8-d2). If both these passages signal that Socrates considers the amount of evidence accumulated after the conclusion of his last argument sufficient for introducing the topic of the post-mortem destiny of the soul, a third passage shows that Socrates feels justified to maintain that the soul will retain its intelligence after disembodiment: "for the soul enters Hades taking nothing else but its education and nurture" (107d2-4). Cebes and Simmias do not voice objections at any of these three stages or suggest that evidence for the intrinsically intelligent nature of the soul is lacking. On the contrary, the first interruption to Socrates' exposition of his afterlife myth is the request for an explanation of the nature of the earth made by Simmias at 108d1-3.

Socrates' first formulation of his expectations for justice in the afterlife

After the Affinity Argument Socrates has provisionally reached agreement with Cebes that the soul will survive after the death of the body, and he has shown that the soul is intrinsically intelligent. As we have seen in the section *The argumentative line followed by Socrates to prove the immortality of the soul*, immediately after the Affinity Argument is delivered, Cebes' approves it and Simmias does not express his opinion on it. They will both raise objections in the

[52] "Is" is in italics in Rowe's translation.

later course of the conversation, but the argument is not challenged at this stage. In the section *Socrates' evidence that the soul is intrinsically intelligent* we have seen that Simmias and Cebes challenge neither the evidence given in the Recollection Argument for the intrinsically intelligent nature possessed by the soul before incarnation nor the assumption that the soul is intrinsically intelligent made in the Affinity Argument. Since Socrates has, at least provisionally, responded to Cebes' demands, he can bring his attention back to the formulation of the hope for justice in the afterlife, a hope he first expressed in his defence of the philosophical life. Even though a detailed representation of an afterlife governed by ethical principles will need to wait until after the Final Argument, the passage 80c1-84b8 contains a sketchier image of it. We can thus call this passage the first formulation of his hopes.[53]

After reassuring again his interlocutors about the survival of the soul with a brief and less theoretically more simple argument (80b8-e1),[54] Socrates introduces a distinction between the kinds of destiny awaiting different types of souls.[55] He describes first the post-mortem destiny of the virtuous souls: "if it [the soul] is in that state [οὕτω μὲν ἔχουσα], then, does it not depart to the invisible, which is similar to it, the divine and immortal and wise; and on arrival there, isn't its lot to be happy, released from its wandering and folly, its fears and wild lusts, and other ills of the human condition, and as is said of the initiated, does it not pass the rest of time in very truth with gods?" (81a4-9). By referring back to the words said by Socrates at 80e1-81a2, οὕτω at 81a4 clarifies that the souls that will dwell with the gods are the purified ones. Since these are the souls that practiced philosophy on earth (80e6), this passage established three points crucial for developing the picture of an afterlife embracing ethical principles. First, a group of people, the philosophers, is singled out. Second, the members of this group are given a moral qualification: through practising philosophy during their earthly life, philosophers are said to purify their souls and thereby practice virtue. Third, virtuous souls are said to have the legitimate expectation of a reward in the afterlife. They will go to

[53] Pakaluk 2013, 109 and Ebert 2004, 269 detect a link between this passage and Socrates' defence of the philosophical life.
[54] Frede 2004, 270 detect an ironic undertone in these lines.
[55] Ebert 2004 remarks that "the contrast that Socrates draws in the entire passage 80c2-84b7 is the one between the different destinies of philosophical and non-philosophical souls.

a place where they will dwell with the gods and attain the wisdom they strived for on earth.

To complete the picture of an afterlife governed by ethical principles, Socrates needs to identify a group of wicked people, explain in virtue of what behaviour they deserve moral condemnation, and describe what punishment will be inflicted upon them in the afterlife. In the following lines Socrates proceeds to identify the group of souls that departs from the body "interspersed with the corporeal, which the body's company and coupling have rendered part of its nature through coupling and long practice" (81c4-6).[56] Since it failed to purify itself through the practice of philosophy, a wicked soul is "separated from the body when it has been polluted and made impure, because it has always been with the body, has served and loved it, and been so bewitched by it, by its passions and pleasures, that it thinks nothing else is real save what is corporeal" (81b1-5). Due to the habits it cultivates during its earthly life a soul of this kind "has been accustomed to hate and shun and tremble before what is obscure to the eyes and invisible, but intelligible and grasped by philosophy" (81b6-8). Since it remained attached to the bodily element and despised the realm of the unseen, this soul is identified as wicked and said to face an afterlife destiny of punishment. "Such a soul [a wicked one] is weighed down, and dragged back into the region of the seen, through fear of the invisible and the Hades; and it roams among tombs and graves, so it is said, around which some shadowy phantom have been seen, such wraiths as souls of that kind afford, souls that have been released in no pure condition, but while partaking in the seen" (81c9-d4).

If the impossibility of entering the realm of the unseen is a punishment inflicted on impure souls, it is not the only one they face. In addition to preventing them from accessing the realm of the unseen, the corporeal element that remains attached to them after the death of the body forces them to a new incarnation before any portion of time is experienced in separation from it. As attachment to the body during earthly life causes souls to remain attached to a corporal element after the death of the body, so too the principle guiding the process of reincarnation is the affinity between the previous and the subsequent life.

[56] Gallop's translation modified.

Accordingly, souls that indulged in drinking, eating or sexual pleasure "are likely to enter the form of donkeys and animals of this sort" (81e6-82a1); those that, motivated either by personal or political reasons, committed violent crimes "will enter the form of wolves, hawks and kites (82a4-5). Those who "have practised popular and social goodness, 'temperance' and 'justice' so-called" (82a11-b2) will meet a happier destiny, since they will be probably reincarnated "into a race of tame and social creatures similar to their kind, bees perhaps, or wasps or ants" (82b5-7). This group of souls is even entitled to entertaining the hope to "return to the human race again, and be born from those kinds to decent men" (82b7-8).[57]

As the analysis has shown, the image depicted in lines 80c1-84b8 contains three elements crucial to the establishment of an ethical principle governing the afterlife. Incarnated souls are divided into two groups according to the type of behaviour in which they engage. The behaviour displayed by each of the two groups of souls is qualified either as commendable or reprehensible. The moral quality of the behaviour displayed by the souls reflects both on how a soul is judged on earth and on the destiny it will face after separation from the body. The afterlife is said to hold in store rewards for virtuous souls and sufferings for wicked ones.

[57] The inclusion of animal life in the forms into which a soul can be reincarnated has induced some scholars to detect an ironic undertone in the passage. Gallop 1975 remarks that "the notion of reincarnation in animals is Pythagorean (cf. DK 21 B 7), and is developed here with savage irony. […] How can the soul be essentially rational in virtue of its kinship with the Forms, and yet be reborn in animal bodies? This is a point […] of further conflict between the view of the soul's nature exposed in the Affinity Argument and what is actually said about it" (144). When the tone of this passage is evaluated, two points deserve consideration. First, the inclusion of animals in the forms of life into which a soul can be reincarnated is genuinely Pythagorean, as Gallop himself acknowledges and emerges e.g. from fragment DK21 B7. Second, comparison with other Platonic dialogues shows that this section of the *Phaedo* is not exceptional within the Platonic corpus in admitting the possibility for human souls to be reincarnated in animals. In the *Republic* Orpheus' soul chooses the life of a swan (620a2-6), Thamyras' that of a nightingale (620a6-7), Ajax' that of a lion (620b1-3). In this passage the transmigration of a soul from the animal to the human form is also allowed for as the incarnation of the soul of a swan into the shape of a human being shows (620a7-8). Following this line, the law of *Adrasteia*, which in the *Phaedrus* is said to regulate the process of reincarnation, also admits of the transmigration of souls from human to animal life and vice versa (249b3-4).
In light of these considerations the position adopted by Frede 2005 seems appropriately balanced: "if irony plays a role here, it should be detected in the fact that Socrates suggests that luxurious men are in reality donkeys, violent ones wolves, and citizens well-behaved but not interested in philosophy merely bees or ants in human shape. Of course, it would be exaggerated to try interpreting reincarnation and transmigration of souls merely as allegories. But certainly the parable of the metamorphosis into animals serves in the first instance the purpose of showing the value of each form of life and not that of creating a prophecy about the future" (72).

Not surprisingly, there is a debate about how seriously Plato is committed to this account,[58] but Socrates' expectations have been given one brief development – and my account of the dialogue's argumentative sequence shows why this is the right occasion for it. Queries about the soul's intelligence have been addressed, and a case had been made for the soul's continued existence. As we see, however, this is not enough to satisfy Simmias.

The eschatological myth as fully articulated expression of Socrates' hope for justice in the afterlife

If I have convincingly defended the thesis I advance in this chapter, the myth should now appear as the final stage of the argumentative line followed by Socrates in *Phaedo*. As I attempted to show, the previous parts of the dialogue contain Socrates' answers to the demands Cebes poses to him after the conclusion of his defence of the philosophical life. Before considering plausible his formulated expectation for an afterlife governed by ethical principles, Cebes requires him to show that the soul survives and retains intelligence after the death of the body. As I have argued, Socrates' four arguments for the immortality of the soul are intended to meet both of Cebes' requests. To complete the defence of my thesis, I need to address one last point in order to render it plausible that the eschatological myth is the culmination of Socrates' argumentative line: showing that the eschatological myth contains a more fully articulated expression of the hope for post-mortem justice Socrates formulated in his defence of the philosophical life.

In the myth souls are said to be divided into groups after disembodiment. Accordingly, souls that have lived a virtuous life are entitled to live on the upper earth, while those that have not are relegated in the inner earth. The latter souls are further divided into subgroups and each of these subgroups is assigned a particular region of the inner-earth depending on the gravity of the crime committed. Similarly, virtuous souls face different post-mortem destinies depending on the level of purification reached, those that have practiced philosophy being granted a bodiless life in purer dwellings than the other ones.

[58] See the previous footnote.

That different destinies await different souls is hinted at already in the opening of the myth.[59] Challenging a notion entertained in Aeschylus' *Telephus*, according to which "it is a single path that leads to Hades" (108a1), Socrates asserts that "it is seems to be neither simple nor single" (108a1-2). After depicting the geography of the upper and the inner earth, he explains that upon arrival in Hades souls are judged on their conduct during their earthly life and divided into two groups. "Now when those who have died arrive at the region to which the spirit conveys each one, they first submit to judgment, both those who have lived honourable and holy lives and those who have not" (113d1-4). The twofold division between virtuous and wicked souls drawn in this passage is elaborated further in the immediately following lines of the myth.

Socrates first describes the destiny awaiting wicked souls. These souls are divided into subgroups, each of which is sent to one of the different regions of the inner earth depending on the gravity of the crime committed. The souls that have conducted a morally intermediate life "journey to Acheron, embark upon certain vessels provided for them, and on these they reach the [Acherusian] lake" (113d5-6). Those which have committed incurable evils are "hurled by the appropriate destiny into Tartarus, whence they nevermore emerge" (114d5-6). Those which have committed curable evils split into two groups: the souls of those who have wronged mother or father and the ones of those who have perpetrated a murder. While in a first stage both groups of souls "must fall into Tartarus" (114a3-4), after one year they are thrown out of Tartarus and dragged along different rivers: "the homicides along the Cocytus, and those who have assaulted mother and father along the Pyriphlegethon" (114a5-7).[60] While the former and the latter are led, each by the stream of the river in which they are floating, to a spot close to the Acherusian Lake, they both beg for their victims' forgiveness and are allowed to be reincarnated if they receive it.

[59] The idea that the afterlife will hold in store different destinies for virtuous and wicked souls is not Plato's own invention. Already the *Odyssey* depicts the heavy punishments inflicted on Tityus, Tantalus and Sisyphus (11.576-600). Examples of rewards are the promise of a blessed afterlife in Elysium made to Menelaus in the *Odyssey* (4.563-564) and the image of the members of the fourth race living on the Isles of the Blessed depicted by Hesiod in the *Works and Days* (167-173). For a discussion of images of post-mortem rewards and punishments available to Plato from tradition see Edmonds 2004, 196-199.

[60] Gallop's translation modified.

Although both the Cocytus and the Pyriphlegethon flow close to the Acherusian Lake, Socrates underlines that none of them mixes its waters with those of the Acherusian Lake (113b3, 113c5-6). Not only does this clarification provide a geographical detail but it also sheds further light on the criteria applied for punishing evil souls. The "rivers are not permitted to mingle with one another, since each must remain distinct as part of its task of providing the appropriate experiences for the particular class of souls it carries around (113d-114b). In effect, then, the rivers provide different penalties which must not become confused, since such a lack of discrimination would be inconsistent with the justice of the universe."[61]

As the relegation of wicked souls to a region of the inner earth confirms Socrates' expectations for an afterlife embracing ethical principles, so too does the ascent of the virtuous ones to a region located above the hollows in which men live. "But as for those who are found to have lived exceptionally holy lives, it is they who are freed and delivered from these regions within the earth, as from prisons, and who attain to the pure dwelling above and make their dwelling above ground" (114b6-c2).[62] As evil souls are assigned to different subterraneous regions according to the gravity of the crime committed on earth, virtuous ones ascend to different regions according to the level of purification they have reached. "Among their number, those who have been adequately purified by philosophy live bodiless for the whole time to come, and attain to dwelling places even fairer than these, which is not easy to reveal, nor is the time sufficient at present" (114c2-6).[63]

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[61] Pender 2012, 225.

[62] If we bear in mind that in a previous passage of his myth Socrates asserted that souls inhabit different parts of the upper earth, "some dwelling inland, some living by the air, as we live by the sea, and some on islands surrounded by the air and lying close to the midland" (11a4-7), it becomes clear that, as Edmonds 2004 suggests, Plato reworks traditional elements to create his own image of afterlife. "Plato here manages to combine the traditional features of the Isles of the Blessed with the idea that souls ascend to rejoin the aither" (214). While "Plato's islands in the air are his version of the traditional Blessed Isles, and they share many of the same features fund in tradition" (216), Plato's own contribution to creating the image of afterlife Socrates depicts remains significant. "By relocating the Blessed Isles to the air, Plato reconciles two different strands of the tradition and works them into his picture of a cosmos set in order with the heaviest and most mixed things at the center bottom and the lightest and most pure at the highest edges" (215).

[63] In assigning a privileged place to purified souls, Plato draws on traditional themes but reworks them to fit his own purposes. "Plato's myth works within the tradition to place philosophy at the

Due to the lack of information contained in this passage it is difficult to understand how exactly Socrates imagines the realm to which the exceptionally pure souls ascend. "This realm, like the realm above the heavens in the *Phaedrus*, is so far beyond mortal experience that 'of that place beyond the heavens none of our earthly poets has sung, and none shall sing worthily' [*Phdr.* 247c2-3]."[64] While the comparison with the *Phaedrus* is probably misleading, because in the *Phaedo* no indication is given that pure souls reach a place where they can contemplate the forms, it seems more plausible to maintain that "this hint of indescribable realms accessible through philosophic purification should not be taken to put philosophy or philosophers on a higher level than the gods […]. Just because mortals can meet the gods on the true surface of the earth does not mean that the gods cannot ascend to higher realms."[65]

Despite the sketchy details on the region to which souls purified by philosophy ascend, the information given on the other regions assigned to souls after disembodiment is sufficiently detailed to confirm that the image depicted in the myth meets Socrates' expectations for the afterlife. As seen at the beginning of this chapter,[66] in his defence of the philosophical life Socrates formulated the hope that "there is something in store for those who've died – in fact, as we've long been told, something far better for the good than for the wicked" (63c5-7). In the concluding myth "the different regions [of the earth] are […] presented as places of reward and punishment, with the outermost or 'higher' entailing always a better experience for souls than the 'lower.'"[67] The presence of multiple regions in the

highest level of human activity, equating it to the most revered purifications and initiations and assimilating its rewards to the most blissful afterlife reserved for the greatest and most worthy of the heroes of myth" (Edmonds 2004, 216).

[64] Edmonds 2004, 215.

[65] Edmonds 2004, 215-216.

[66] See the section *Socrates' expectations for an afterlife governed by ethical principles*.

[67] Pender 2012, 217. Pender 2012 argues that the image of the afterlife depicted in the myth not only meets the ethical expectations held by Socrates in his defence of the philosophical but also embraces the epistemological principles formulated in the *Phaedo*. As she reminds, one of the central points of the Affinity Argument is that when, the soul contemplates the forms, "it is always constant and unvarying, because of its contact with things of a similar kind" (79d5-6). As the contact with the eternal entities renders philosophical souls akin to the forms, so does the interaction with body render non-philosophical souls "interspersed with the bodily element" (81c4-6). On the basis that "the soul's nature changes according to the company it keeps" (218), Pender proposes that each region of the earth has peculiar ontological characteristics that match the moral qualities of the souls assigned to it. Whereas souls that have purified themselves form the bodily element through the practise of philosophy are sent to a region where they live "without the body"

earth is a fuller articulation of the expectations for post-mortem justice Socrates formulates in his defence of the philosophical life. As described in the myth, the earth is so structured as to allow each soul to occupy as high a place as high the level of its moral perfection is. In fulfilment of Socrates' hope that the souls that fare best after disembodiment are "none other than those who have practised philosophy aright" (69d2), souls that have purified themselves through the practice of philosophy "attain dwelling places even fairer than these [those assigned to virtuous but non-philosophical souls]" (114c4-5).

In the light of these considerations it seems legitimate to regard the concluding myth as the culmination of the line of argument followed in the *Phaedo*, although most of the relevant evidence lies outside the myth. The investigation conducted previously in this chapter has shown that a narration of the destiny facing souls in the afterlife was announced already in Socrates' defence of the philosophical life but had to be postponed until Socrates laid down the basis on which his hope for the existence of an afterlife could appear reasonable to his interlocutors. The analysis carried out in this section has brought to light that, by holding in store rewards for virtuous souls and punishments for wicked ones, the afterlife described in the myth meets the expectations expressed by Socrates in his defence of the philosophical life.

(114c), the souls that failed to reach this level of purification are sent to regions where the bodily element is present to a different extent. As Pender argues, "the earth's surface - the true earth - is explicitly identified as a physical region" (219) by, among other things, the growth of "trees and flowers and fruit" (110d4-5) and the presence of "true light" (109e7). By contrast, the concentration of the bodily element is higher in the inner earth and becomes maximal in Tartarus. This region is in fact not only characterised as physical by the presence of rivers, but is also presented as a "super-body" (Pender 2012, 220).

Conclusion

My thesis analyses the relation between the eschatological myths of the *Phaedrus*, the *Republic* and the *Phaedo* and the argumentative line followed in their respective dialogues. It argues that this relation is different in each of these three dialogues. Socrates' palinode is part of a thread of thoughts followed in the *Phaedrus*; the myth of Er and passage 608c2-621d3, in which the myth is included, are essential parts of the line of argument developed in the *Republic*; the eschatological myth of the *Phaedo* is the culmination of the argumentative line followed in that dialogue.

As I have attempted to show, the relation between the eschatological myth and the rest of the dialogue is closer in the *Republic* than in the *Phaedrus* and closer still in the *Phaedo* than in the *Republic*. The ideas contained in the central myth of the *Phaedrus* are part of a thread of thoughts running through the dialogue. They pick up one of the themes running through the dialogue, but they do not address points without which the discussion of the theme would lack essential parts. In the *Republic* and in the *Phaedo* the eschatological myths are essential parts of the argumentative line of their respective dialogues, although in each of the two dialogues for different reasons. The myth of Er and passage 608c2-621d3 that includes it are integral parts of the line of argument followed in the *Republic* because it contributes to answering questions posed at previous stages; the eschatological myth of the *Phaedo* is the culmination of the argumentative line followed in the dialogue because it contains the fuller formulation of a hope that Socrates formulated at an earlier stage but needed to render plausible by preliminarily substantiating some notions.

To clarify more exactly what relation I propose that exists between the ideas conveyed in the eschatological myths of the *Republic*, the *Phaedo* and the *Phaedrus* and the rest of their respective dialogues, I offer an outline of the argumentative line followed in each of these three dialogues.

The myth occupying the central pages of the *Phaedrus* further develops a theme running through the dialogue. I have defended this thesis in two steps: first, I have argued that Socrates commits himself to some of the ideas he expresses in that myth; second, I have argued that some of the ideas expressed in the myth

highlight the link between love and the divine realm. If, as I have proposed, one of Socrates' aims in the *Phaedrus* is to show that the three main topics he addresses, love, the art of speaking and the advantages of oral speech, have deeper religious significance than his interlocutor is initially prepared to admit, the eschatological myth makes a significant contribution to accomplishing this aim. In several passages contained in it, Socrates presents Eros as capable of stimulating the desire to resemble the gods.

I have substantiated my first point by pointing out that Socrates commits himself to some of the ideas formulated in the palinode and by arguing that no textual evidence suggests that the description of the nature and the post-mortem destiny of the soul are unreliable according to Socrates. I have shown that in passage 265a6-c3 Socrates delivers a judgement on the reliability of the ideas he formulated in the palinode. He admits that some of them are not accurate, but he declares his readiness to vouch for others. Although Socrates does not provide a criterion to identify the ideas he would commit himself to, I have argued that no mismatch can be detected between the description of the nature and the post-mortem destiny of the soul and the epistemic principles outlined in the palinode. Although humans can have knowledge only of the Forms, the palinode remains ambiguous about the ontological status of the soul. Positive evidence that knowledge of the soul is available to human beings is given by passage 270b4-271b5 where Socrates asserts that the teacher of philosophical possesses knowledge of the soul.

Since the text does not contain evidence that the description of the nature and the post-mortem destiny of the soul given in the palinode are unreliable, I have discussed how these ideas contribute to the conversation he holds with Phaedrus. Remaining non-committal as to whether this thread is the main theme, or simply one of the themes, discussed in the dialogue, and as to how we should understand the unity of the dialogue, I have argued that one of the aims pursued by Socrates is to show that love, the art of speaking and oral speech are linked to the divine realm. By revealing the connection between love and the religious sphere, the myth, I have contended, contributes to developing a thread of thoughts Socrates follows in the dialogue. As I have proposed, the religious undertone is already set

in the initial pages of the dialogue: the reference to the myth of Boreas and Oreithuia and the mention of the temple in Agra and of Pan and the nymphs suggest that the landscape where Socrates and Phaedrus walk and talk is inhabited by the gods. The conversation they will have is presented as the celebration of a Corybantic rite by Socrates' self-description as a person "sick with passion for speeches" (228b6-7) and as συγκορυβαντιῶντα (228b7). The religious undertone is felt again when Socrates' first speech is presented as impious. Three elements contribute to suggesting that it faults Eros: a sense of unease that Socrates feels before beginning to give it, the need for purification he voices after concluding it, and a reference to Stesichorus that suggests that Socrates' palinode will correct the impious representation of Eros previously given. A link with the divine realm also emerges in the discussion of the art of speaking and of the merits of oral speech. As Socrates explains, the ultimate goal of the art of speaking is to please the gods. Similarly, the discussion of the merits of oral speech is intended to define a way of providing speeches that is welcome to the gods. The eschatological myth addresses the theme of religiosity in two ways. First, it is presented by Socrates as speech that will convey a pious representation of Eros. Second, it shows that, when represented piously, Eros proves to foster the lovers' desire to resemble the gods.

While I propose that Socrates' palinode picks up a thread of thoughts running through the *Phaedrus*, I have argued that the myth of Er and passage 608c2-621d3 in which the myth is included are essential parts of the argumentative line of the *Republic*. This passage, I have contended, contains the answer to two questions posed at previous stages of the dialogue: it describes the effects arising from justice when some external factors are in place, and it suggests that the souls have a degree of freedom sufficient to decide whether or not to turn to justice.

To explain why the first of these two points is an essential part of the argumentative line followed in the *Republic*, I have turned my attention to the stipulations made by Socrates and his interlocutors at the beginning of Book 2 and argued that the discussion of this points completes the agenda Socrates set at that point. At the beginning of Book 2 a tension become visible between Socrates' categorization of justice and Glaucon's and Adeimantus' expectations. While the

former considers justice a good desirable both in and by itself and for the consequences arising from it, the latter are interested in hearing only the reasons why justice in good in and by itself. I have proposed that this tension is resolved in a compromise: Socrates will explain why justice is a good desirable both in and by itself and for the consequences arising for it, but he will dedicate a significantly greater amount of time to addressing the point in which the brothers are interested. I have maintained that the positive effects produced by justice in and by itself are both a harmonious state of the soul and its ensuing happiness. Their description is offered by Socrates in Books 2 to 9. I have argued that the consequences arising from justice when certain external conditions are in place are illustrated by Socrates in passage 608c2-621d3, which therefore performs a structural function in the argumentative line of the *Republic*. In the initial part of this passage Socrates describes the honours just men receive from other people, and in the myth of Er he mentions the rewards they will receive in the afterlife.

Besides containing an answer to a question posed in Book 2, the myth of Er, I have proposed, is an essential part of the argumentative line of the *Republic* because it provides the foundation for Socrates' investigation into justice. Whereas in Books 2 to 9 Socrates highlights the beneficial effects produced by justice, I have contended that in the myth of Er he suggests that the souls have a degree of freedom sufficient for deciding whether or not to be just. Despite some external limitations imposed on them both before and after incarnation, the souls are able to choose what kind of life they want to live. I have underlined that at the moment of choosing their future life pattern the souls must follow an order firmly established by the lot, but the number of life patterns available for choice is higher than that of the souls choosing. As the case of Odysseus shows, even a soul that is last in the order is able to find the life pattern it seeks if it is sufficiently determined in its search. The chosen life pattern entails a variety of external factors, such as sex, physical appearance, intelligence, social standing, etc., but it does not include the disposition of the soul. As I have proposed, this phrase indicates the relation among the three parts into which Socrates divides the soul in Book 4. The relation among rational part, spirit and appetitive part is fluid and changes during life on earth. The external factors entailed in the life pattern and

those chosen subsequently influence the disposition of the soul, but education and philosophy do as well. Although the life pattern influences the disposition of the soul, this influence is thus not deterministic.

To complete my discussion of the myth of Er, I have argued that this narrative would qualify as a myth allowed to circulate in Callipolis. I have pointed out that, since this mythological narrative is not in verse, it is subject to the rules formulated in Books 2 and 3 but not to those set out in Book 10, as the latter apply only to poetry. According to the rules formulated in Book 3, a narrator is allowed to imitate only morally commendable characters, while he must report in the third person the deeds performed by unworthy ones. Since it contains passages in which the narrator directly intervenes to express moral recommendations, the myth of Er follows a narratological typology more complex than that authorized in Book 3. However, none of the passages contained in the myth, if taken separately, is found to violate the rules outlined in that book.

Whereas the myth of Er and passage 608c2-621d3 that contains it are, in the interpretation I have advanced, essential parts of the argumentative line of the *Republic*, I have argued that the eschatological myth of the *Phaedo* is the culmination of the argumentative line of that dialogue. Whereas the myth of Er and passage 608c2-621d3 that contains it are, in the interpretation I have advanced, essential parts of the argumentative line of the *Republic*, I have argued that the eschatological myth of the *Phaedo* is the culmination of the argumentative line of that dialogue. By providing a comprehensive description of an afterlife embracing ethical principles, the myth gives fuller articulation to a hope Socrates formulates at an earlier stage of the dialogue and renders plausible in the course of his discussion with Simmias and Cebes. Central to my defence of this claim is the analysis of two sections contained in the initial part of the dialogue: Socrates' defence of the philosophical life and Cebes' reply to it. In the former I have identified a set of passages in which Socrates justifies his positive attitude towards death with the hope that virtuous people will fare better in the afterlife than wicked ones. In his reply Cebes affirms that he welcomes this hope but he will consider it plausible only if Socrates is able to substantiate two claims about the souls. The soul needs to be shown to be both immortal and intrinsically

intelligent. On this basis I have interpreted the part of the *Phaedo* between Cebes' two requests and the beginning of the eschatological myth as Socrates' attempt to support those two claims.

I have proposed that Socrates follows three stages to provide a basis for the notion of the immortality of the soul that his interlocutors consider reasonably solid. In his defence of the philosophical life he shows that soul and body are distinct from each other. In response to Cebes' reply he offers the block of the first three arguments for the immortality of the soul in which he unsuccessfully addresses the rather vague claim that the soul will survive after the death of the body. After Cebes reformulates the claim he wishes to be substantiated, Socrates presents the Final Argument that his interlocutors recognize to be a proof as solid as human reason can provide that the soul is immortal and imperishable. After analysing how Socrates validates the first claim, that of immortality, I have turned my attention to identifying the reasons he offers in support of the second one, namely the claim about the soul's intelligence. I have attempted to show that, although he does not present a unitary argument for the intrinsically intelligent nature of the soul, Socrates disseminates evidence in support of this notion and this evidence is considered satisfactory by his interlocutors after the conclusion of the Affinity Argument. More specifically, I have argued that the Recollection Argument contains evidence that the soul is intelligent before incarnation and the Affinity Argument implies that the soul has an intrinsically intelligent nature. The evidence provided in the Recollection Argument about the nature of the soul is still openly accepted by Simmias and Cebes after the conclusion of the Affinity Argument. The absence of a direct question about the intrinsically intelligent nature of the soul from Cebes' list of objections to the Affinity Argument signals that he no longer considers the loss of intelligence after disembodiment a real possibility for the soul.

I have argued that the passage 80c1-84b8 offers a first, sketchy representation of an afterlife reflecting the hope Socrates expresses in his defence of the philosophical life. As I have contended, the description of the destiny met by the souls after separation from the body reflects ethical principles: souls are divided into two distinct groups according to the moral quality of the behaviour they

displayed during their incarnate life; while souls that chose wicked conduct are represented as wandering around after the death of the body, virtuous souls are said to be able easily to enter the realm of the invisible.

After vindicating, to his interlocutors' satisfaction, the claims he had been asked by Cebes to address, Socrates is able to give full articulation to the hope he formulated in his defence of the philosophical life. In the concluding myth he thus presents an image of an afterlife embracing ethical principles. As soon as they arrive in the world beyond, he says, the souls are divided into two main groups: that of the wicked souls and that of the virtuous ones. Each of these two groups is then sent to the region of the earth befitting it, where it is further split in subgroups. Wicked souls are relegated in different places of the inner earth depending on the gravity of the committed crime: those which have conducted a morally intermediate life are relegated to the river Acheron, those which have committed incurable evils are imprisoned in the Tartarus, those which have committed curable evils are relegated either to the Cocytus or to the Pyriphlegethon. By contrast, virtuous souls are immediately freed from the subterraneous regions: souls that lived a virtuous life are sent to the upper earth, those which also purified themselves through the practice of philosophy are assigned to even finer dwellings.

The most important contribution that I hope to have made to the study of the *Phaedrus*, the *Republic*, and the *Phaedo* is to show precisely how the eschatological myth is integrated in each of these three dialogues. Following the modern tendency to interpret each myth in the context provided by the respective dialogue, I have proposed that the relation between an eschatological myth and the dialogical sections is different in each case. The ideas formulated in the mythological sections contribute, are essential parts, or form the culmination of the argumentative line of the dialogue in which they are included.

The eschatological myth of the *Phaedrus* enriches the set of ideas discussed in the dialogue. If the importance of pious behaviour is identified as one of the threads of thought running through the dialogue, the eschatological myth proves to make a contribution to the conversation held by Socrates and Phaedrus. By showing that lovers strive to approximate the gods, the myth highlights the link

between love and the divine sphere. In doing so, this narrative allows us to see that the engagement in an erotic relationship shares a feature with the practice of philosophical rhetoric and oral speech: these three activities have a relation with the divine sphere. The myth of Er and passage 608c2-621d3 that includes it are integral parts of the line of argument followed in the *Republic* because they contribute to answering questions posed at previous stages. By showing that just people are rewarded during their earthly life and after death by gods and other human beings, this passage shows why justice is a good also desirable for the consequences arising from it. This explanation completes the defence of justice in such a way as to match Socrates' categorization at the beginning of Book 2. By suggesting that the soul retains a degree of freedom sufficient to make ethically relevant choices, the image of the choice of a future life depicted in the myth provides the foundation for the defence of justice Socrates presents in Books 2 to 9. The illustration of the benefits of justice acquires its full meaning when the choice of serving justice is shown to be possible. The eschatological myth of the *Phaedo* is the culmination of the argumentative line followed in the dialogue because it contains the fuller formulation of a hope that Socrates formulated at an earlier stage but needed to render plausible by substantiating some preliminary notions. In his defence of the philosophical life Socrates justified his positive attitude towards death with the hope to enter an afterlife governed by ethical principles. In order to consider this hope plausible, he was requested to show that after the death of the body the soul both continues to exist and retain intelligence. After substantiating these claims to his interlocutors' satisfaction, Socrates is able to present a fuller articulation of his hope in the eschatological myth.

I hope that I have shown that the relation between myths and dialogical sections is different in different Platonic dialogues. My analysis of the *Phaedrus*, the *Republic* and the *Phaedo* has shown that generalizations about the relation between the mythological narratives and dialogical sections in Platonic dialogues do not withstand the evidence provided by the texts. A Platonic myth performs a specific function within the dialogue in which it is included and this function is different depending on the dialogue. The three dialogues I have considered contain myths that are recounted by Socrates. As I have contended, each of these

myths has proved to contribute to the agenda Socrates follows in the respective dialogue, but the precise nature of this contribution proved to be different in the *Phaedrus*, the *Republic* and the *Phaedo*.

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