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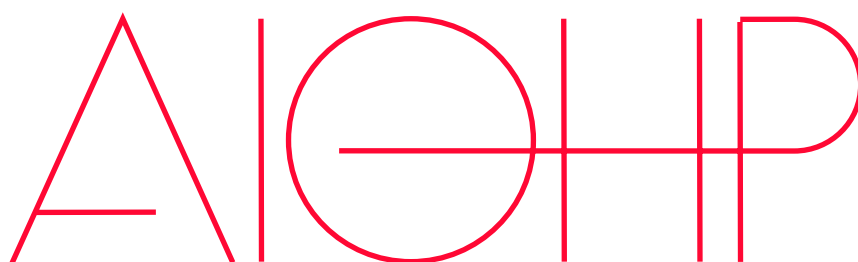
JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY OF GREEK AND LATIN

PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS

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The Muses and Reflexive Nature of the World in Archaic Greek Thought

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ABSTRACT

In Greek mythology, the Muses are not just inspiring agents of poetical creation, but their role is first of all a cosmological one: their birth crowns the process of cosmogony, bringing the world into the manifestation. As we try to demonstrate primarily in the course of Hesiod's *Theogony*, the song of the Muses celebrates and thus manifests the cosmos or the world-order through its articulation by means of the musical speech. As the world enters a new domain of appearance, new cosmological categories emerge. The first one being the *beauty* of the cosmos: as a world-order as well as the ordered whole, it can now manifest itself as beautiful. The second one being the possibility of *fiction*, of a delusive appearance: the complex reality can manifest itself in many incompatible ways, partial and thus potentially misleading. The third one being the *reflexivity* of the cosmos, founded on the reflexivity of the musical speech itself. The Muses are capable to manifest themselves, and even their own manifestation. By means of their song, the world becomes manifest to itself, too, and the complex system of divine powers gains a reflexive character. In the closing section, we sketch briefly what happens to this reflexivity in the domain of humans. Indeed, the mortals can gain immortality through the song of the Muses, expressed by inspired poets in human voice.*

* This study is a slightly reworked and abridged version of a Czech article of the same author (orcid.org/0000-0001-9147-1796), Luhanová 2014.

— The general image of the Muses tends to include some awareness of the role these goddesses play in inspiring the works of literature, especially poetry. The notion of a special divine power dedicated to this task is specific to Greek myths: no parallels are found in the pantheons of other nations. The ancient Greek concept of a Muse or Muses is, however, much broader, and their most important function is not to contribute to human artistic endeavours but to fulfil a certain cosmological task. This aspect of Muses was studied in detail by Walter F. Otto,¹ and Sylva Fischerová, a leading

Czech Classical scholar, follows in his footsteps when she claims:

The idea that musical and poetic talents are divine, and art is used by gods is part of at least the Indo-European heritage. Only in Greece, however, do we find a Muse who not only brings divine art and gives it to people, but also reveals and declares that she herself and her work is part of the order of the world, that it is part of its way of being.²

Through a musical word, that which is can reveal itself and relate to itself in its manifestation. And more specifically,

1 Otto 1955. Of importance in this context are also some smaller works from the 1950s that treat the subject of Muses in a more general context of mythic manifestation and self-revelation of being, especially *Der Mythos und das Wort* (1952–1953), *Der Mythos*

(1955), *Die Sprache als Mythos* (1958), collated in Otto 1987.

2 Fischerová 2006a, p. 63.

archaic thoughts expressed in the works of inspired poets can, thanks to this divine gift, relate to themselves, express themselves in speech, and apprehend themselves in a particular manner. Thanks to the Muses, there thus arises the primary ground of cosmic reflexivity that makes self-relating and self-understanding possible. In the following study, we trace the cosmological aspect of this phenomenon. In doing so, we rely especially on the treatment of this subject presented by Hesiod in his *Theogony*.

— THE WORLD MANIFESTS ITSELF IN A MUSICAL SPEECH

We can take as our starting point the story of the birth of the Muses, a point which W.F. Otto believes to be the key to a better understanding of the Muses and their role in the world of ancient Greece. The story of their birth is attributed to Pindar and its shortened version appears in the writings of Aelius Aristides:

Pindar went so far that he says that in the marriage of Zeus, upon Zeus asking the gods if they desired anything, they requested that he create for himself gods who would honour (κατακοσμήσουσι) in words and music these great deeds and all of his preparations.³

3 Aelius Aristides, *Πρὸς Πλάτωνα περὶ ῥητορικῆς*, 106: Πίνδαρος δὲ τοσαύτην ὑπερβολὴν ἐποίησατο ὥστε ἐν Διὶ γάμῳ καὶ τοὺς θεοὺς αὐτοὺς φησὶν ἐρομένου τοῦ Διὸς εἶ του δέοιντο αἰτῆσαι ποιήσασθαι τινὰς αὐτῷ θεοὺς, οἵτινες τὰ μεγάλα ταῦτ' ἔργα καὶ πᾶσάν γε διήτην ἐκείνου κατασκευὴν κατακοσμήσουσι λόγοις καὶ μουσικῇ. Translation Behr 1986, p. 145.

A similar 'ancient story' (παλαιὸς λόγος, τῶν παλαιῶν μῦθος) is also recounted by Philo of Alexandria.⁴ In his version, the creator of the world, after finishing the whole cosmos (ὁ σύμπας κόσμος), asked one of his assistants whether there was something missing among the things arisen. The assistant then replied:

... that everything was perfect and fully completed, but that there was just one thing missing, namely a **word praising** it, which should not so much **praise** as **announce** (οὐκ ἐπαινέσει μᾶλλον ἢ ἐξαγγελεῖ) the pervasive excellence ... because the **narrations** of god's deeds represent their fully sufficient **praise**, since they do not need any external addition as an **embellishment** (προσθήκης οὐδεμιᾶς ἔξωθεν εἰς κόσμον δεομένων).⁵

Zeus liked this idea, which is why he begat with Mnemosyne, embodied Memory, a generation of Muses, goddesses who celebrate and thereby complete the whole of the ordered world.

Where Pindar according to Aelius says that what the finished world needs for its completion is to be honoured, Philo emphasises that it is not about praise (ἐπαινεῖν) or adding something to what there already is. What the world needs to be complete is an account, or more precisely a narration (διήγησις) that would announce (ἐξαγγέλλειν), that is, express and tell in words, the divine

4 Philo Judaeus, *De plantatione*, 127–130.

5 Philo Judaeus, *De plantatione*, 127–128.

deeds and order of the world as it already is. Philo points out that divine actions do not require that anything be added: as soon as they are spoken, spelled out, they are their own tribute and praise. The world thus not only exists but thanks to a musical speech also manifests itself, whereby musical speech does not add anything to reality. It just makes reality explicit, expressed, and apparent in what it is, even in its dynamic aspect, that is, in capturing the events thanks to which reality acquired its definitiveness. Manifestation thus conceived therefore becomes, through the Muses, the way of being of the world and the song of the Muses is a cosmogonic act because it represents a constitutive culmination of a process it celebrates.

A BEAUTIFUL WORLD IN BEAUTIFUL, BUT POSSIBLY DECEPTIVE WORDS

Hymn is an ancient literary genre that celebrates and 'praises' divine realities and claims to have its origin in the Muses.⁶ Longer hymns articulate their content in two interconnected parts: *descriptio*, which captures the typical qualities, attributes, and sphere of agency of the god it celebrates, and *naratio*, the core of the story of the hymn, which explains a particular aspect of the god described

above.⁷ *Naratio* achieves this either by telling a story from the life of the divine power celebrated by the hymn, a story that captures the god's nature, or by applying a diachronic genealogical perspective, that is, by telling how the god was born and eventually found his or her place in the divine order. A hymn thus expresses the reality it celebrates in two distinct ways: by describing its essential nature and by recounting the process that led to its establishment.

Hesiod's *Theogony* represents a culmination of the hymnic form thus defined. The monumental construction of this work is unique, but its basic structure is analogical to some other longer hymns preserved as part of the Homeric

6 See a collection of *Homeric Hymns* where 'celebration' is usually expressed by the terms ἀείδειν or ὑμνεῖν. This collection contains both some more extensive hymns, which follow the structure described below, and shorter hymns, akin rather to an invocation of a deity to which a poem is dedicated and whose celebrated actions are briefly summarised in a few verses.

7 The distinction between *descriptio* and *naratio* was proposed in the context of analysing the structure of hymns in Miller 1986. Similarly, Richard Janko draws a distinction between a 'myth', i.e. a story told in the past tense, and 'attributes' in the sense of a description of properties of a divine being, recounted in the present tense; see Janko 1981. This duality is also noted in the Chadwicks' monumental overview of the history of literature; Chadwick – Chadwick 1940, p. 785. The Chadwicks note that the Greek hymnic form blends a timeless description of the kind that was in archaic world literatures usually associated with a celebration of divinity and is seen as a sign of a poem's sacred status, with a diachronic narration of stories that tends to be a form used in secular poetry, especially heroic epics.

The traditional philological approach tends to distinguish between 1. *invocatio*, an invocation of a divinity that includes the use of its name, epithets, etc., 2. *pars epica*, which elucidates the nature of the powers of the god addressed by the poet, and finally 3. *preces*, a concluding formulation of a wish whose fulfilment the poet asks for. This structure is found in both the short and the more extensive compositions in the *Homeric Hymns*. See e.g. Versnel 1981, p. 2.

tradition. The *Theogony* as a whole is a hymnic praise of Zeus's world order that takes the form of description of the cosmogonic process which led to the establishment of the world in its current form. The introduction, or *prooimion*,⁸ is designed as an independent hymn to the Muses.⁹ Musical speech, which Hesiod, as poet, relates, and which expresses a mythical story about the origin of the cosmos, not only recounts this story but also becomes its final act of completion. Through the Muses, reality assumes the shape of a word that can be uttered by a human mouth. Poets inspired by the Muses are thus not impartial, disengaged, external observers and reporters. On the contrary, poets, in virtue of their actions, by interpreting a musical word through the medium of human speech, become part of the order of the world and help complete its constitution. Poetic speech thus makes the subject of its depiction immediately present.

As soon as the world manifests itself through expression in a musical speech, an important new aspect comes into play, namely the beauty of the world that thus appears. Hesiod in his *prooimion* emphasises the beauty of the Muses and all their works, especially their 'splendid voice' (περικαλλής ὄσσα).¹⁰ and 'beautiful song' (καλή ἀοιδή).¹¹ The world as a whole, meanwhile, was already in the Archaic Period referred to by the term

cosmos,¹² which indicates that it is both organising and organised. A *cosmos* is not only the sum of all there is, but also the order that makes it a meaningful whole.¹³ The whole of what there is is then not only properly ordered but also beautiful.¹⁴ The semantic roots of the expression *cosmos*, which reach all the way to Homer, reveal that the term combines a meaning of a purposeful order¹⁵ with the meaning of a neat arrangement, ornament, or embellishment.¹⁶ The idea of beauty achieved by ordering, that is, by the creation of a properly ordered and organised whole where everything is in harmony with its surroundings and its context, is characteristic of Greek

8 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 1–115.

9 Cf. also Fischerová 2006b.

10 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 10.

11 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 22.

12 It is commonly assumed that the first to use the term *cosmos* to denote the whole of the universe was Pythagoras in the 6th century BCE (DK 14 A 21).

13 For more on the history and meaning of the term *cosmos*, see Kahn 1994, pp. 219–231.

14 Various pieces of evidence pointing to this aesthetic or 'cosmetic' use of the term *cosmos* are brought together by Šedina 1997, pp. 11–15. Cf. also Šedina 1995.

15 Often, though not exclusively, in connection with arraying the army, i.e. placing it in battle order, or in connection with adjusting the armour. For instance, in Homer, κοσμεῖν can refer to putting on one's armour (*Ilias*, II, 873), to arraying or marshalling the troops (*Ilias*, II, 474–476; III, 2–7), or even to pitching a camp (*Ilias*, VII, 52). Similarly, the expression κοσμήτωρ λαῶν denotes a someone who organises an army (*Ilias*, XVI, 375; *Odyssea*, XVIII, 152). This notion of proper arrangement can, however, also apply to food (*Odyssea*, VII, 13) or even to well-kept vegetable beds (*Odyssea*, VII, 127).

16 Hera, when preparing to entrap Zeus, is decorating herself, whereby her toilette is described using the term κόσμος (*Ilias*, XIV, 187). Even a nice bridle is an 'ornament', κόσμος, for a horse (*Ilias*, IV, 145). This use, where κόσμος denotes an ornament or a jewel, became quite common in Classical Greek.

thought as a whole. In order for the world to be apprehended as essentially beautiful, meanwhile, it must reveal or manifest itself: after all, 'beauty, if indeed it is beauty, must be manifest'.¹⁷

Both versions of the abovementioned 'ancient story' play on the duality of ordering and beauty inherent in the concept of *cosmos*.¹⁸ According to Aelius, the Muses are supposed to 'honor' the world, whereby the term κατακοσμέω refers not only to beautification but also, more commonly, to ordering, thus hinting on the cosmogenic process completed by actions of the Muses. In Philo's version, the Muses arrive at a point where the whole of the world (ὁ σύμπας κόσμος) is finished. This *cosmos* needs no addition of external things 'as an embellishment' (εἰς κόσμον), i.e. literally 'to become *cosmos*'. It only needs to be uttered, spelled out, to properly reveal itself in all of its beauty, in its cosmic nature. In the Archaic world, beauty is thus not an aesthetic addition. It is a cosmological category: appearing beautiful is the world's way of being, whereby the voice in which the divine *cosmos* speaks of its beautiful being are the Muses. Their speech is thus truly 'cosmic' and it is no coincidence that in ancient times, one of the terms for a poem was κόσμος ἐπέων,¹⁹ i.e. 'an

ordered whole of verses' or 'ornament made of poetic words'. In this way, the *cosmos* of poetic words and *cosmos* of reality revealed in them share the same essence.²⁰

The manifestation of reality in the medium of speech does, however, bring along yet another new element, namely the possibility of deception. Manifestation brings into the whole of reality a plurality of perspectives: that which is can appear in various ways and in some contexts, it can seem different from the way it is. Fictitious appearance thus becomes one of the ways of being of reality. That is also what the Muses say about themselves in the *prooimion* to the *Theogony* when they admit that their song can be both truthful and deceptive:

...we can make falsities and fallacies seem true, but when we want we're able to give truthful statements, too.²¹

This statement captures a factor that is of key importance in understanding the nature of a poetic depiction of the world. Nevertheless, the speech by which the goddesses characterise their own words is quite peculiar due

to denote his own poem (West 1992, fr. 1, 2), and cf. also κόσμος ἀοιδῆς in a fragment ascribed to Orpheus (DK 1 B 1).

20 Fischerová 2006b, p. 360.

21 ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα, ἢ ἴδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι, Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 27–28, translation Caldwell 2015. The key term here are the *pseudea*; this expression can be used to denote anything that is not in agreement with reality, i.e. both a deliberate lie and an error or a made-up nonsense.

17 Fischerová 2006a, p. 63.

18 Cf. also Kahn 1994, p. 220.

19 Democritus speaks in this way about Homer's work (DK 68 B 21), while Parmenides uses this expression (with the adjective ἀπατηλός, 'deceptive') to present a cosmology that was explained to him by a Goddess after she disclosed the truth to him. Solon uses the term

to its self-referential form.²² That is, when they admit to being skilled liars, we are forced to ask ourselves whether the Muses decided to reveal their true nature, or they are just trying to mislead us.²³ Can we and should we trust their worlds? In fact, the Muses' declaration that they can deceive cannot turn out to be false because if, in using it, the goddesses really wanted to mislead us, they would only confirm the truth of their claim. However, the speech of the Muses is not just a logical puzzle. After all, the purpose of it is above all to spell out the reality of the world! Let us therefore try and interpret their statement and its specific form within this cosmological framework.²⁴

22 Cf. the amazing career of words which the Cretan thinker Epimenides allegedly said when angry with his fellow islanders, namely that 'all Cretans are liars' (the statement is quoted in the *New Testament*, *Titus* 1:12, and ascribed to Epimenides by Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromateis*, I, 14). Possibly the first to realise the paradoxical nature of such self-referring statements was Eubulides of Miletus in the 4th century BCE. It was he who included in his list of seven logical paradoxes also the Liar Paradox, which states 'What I am saying now is false'; see Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum*, II, 108.

23 In contrast to deception, the goddess's professed ability to sing properly about reality did not give rise to doubts in ancient times. On the contrary, it may have been seen as an integral part of abilities of goddesses who see all there is and all there has been (*Iliad*, II, 485, cf. also *Odyssey*, VIII, 491) and in virtue of their being the daughters of Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory (Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 54, 915), which made them the chief power confronting forgetting.

24 This passage became the subject of many different interpretations. For a brief, yet useful overview, see Clay 1988, pp. 327ff.; for a more thorough overview, see Scodel 2001, pp. 115ff. The paradoxical form of the Muses' statement

It seems now that in a world that is and appears through speech, the possibility of existence of non-truth is very truthful. In other words, things can appear different from the way they are, and this potential is inherent in the way they exist. The possibility of appearance of things that are not is thus part of reality of a world whose being is completed by its appearance in a musical speech. Deception turns out to be the means of an appropriate expression of reality, because even speech that communicates deceptive content on a lower level adequately discloses truth about the being of this world. In this way, fiction that resembles reality is not just an imperfect imitation of truth but rather a consequence of elevating reality to a poetic state, a way of referring to its appearance in musical speech.

Truthful and truthlike musical speech can thus express not only what there really is but also what might be true. This truthlikeness, which can cause us to mistakenly think that possibility is reality or that a partial perspective represents the whole, is what underlies the enchanting, enthralling quality of musical speech and its ability to deceive the addressee. Deceit in general is an integral part of the cosmogonic process. It is both a consequence and a further cause of conflicts that take place between divine powers,

is treated by Pucci 1977, however he draws consequences for the nature of the *logos* only. We are not aware of any interpretation that pays attention to the self-referential nature of the statement and tries to apply it in the context of the reflexive being of reality that manifests itself.

conflicts which play a constitutive role in cosmogony. Be it the ruse prepared by Gaia (the Earth) thanks to which Ouranos (the Heaven) loses its position in favour of Kronos,²⁵ the trick which Rhea, with the help of Gaia, uses to deceive Kronos and open the way to Zeus,²⁶ or the compliments Zeus uses to outwit Metis and to prevent the birth of an offspring who would replace him as the ruler of the world²⁷ – all these are key turning points of cosmogony. And although these tricks gradually assume an ever more sophisticated form (we witness a gradual shift from a violent action executed by a sharp blade to deliberate use of coaxing and persuasion), the deceit has in all cases an analogical structure. The subject who is being tricked does not properly understand what is happening and what is at stake: without being aware of it, he or she views things only from his or her own narrow perspective. The subject of deceit is unaware of some crucial factors which set the current reality into a wider context whose meaning is determined not only by past events, but also, and more importantly, by certain undisclosed plans and intentions of the deceiver. This structure can be applied to interpreting the meaning of Muses' declared ability to deceive. In particular, what is deceptive is any partial perspective that is unaware of its partiality, and any speech that mediates a partial perspective is likewise

deceptive. This implies that because the Muses do not promise to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, they can mediate various partial ways of understanding reality, and thereby capture even conflict and strife.

It seems that a fitting way of capturing reality in its plurality, multiple layers, and incompatibility of various ways of revealing itself is this polyphony of the truthlike. A multiplicity of voices that expresses reality in its totality by apprehending the various partial perspectives revealed by their mutual conflict as partial, would in fact be a true speech. Listeners would be deceived only if they did not see through the limitations of each partial perspective, only if they thought it was the whole truth.²⁸ Musical speech, potentially always deceptive, thus seems more appropriate in comparison to a speech that could never lie because it reveals a deep truth about the conflicted nature of reality differentiated between being and appearing.

28 The insight that each and every limited, partial perspective is deceptive is a typical subject of Classical tragedy, since in a tragic conflict 'truth' is not in possession of either of the opposing parties. The nature of reality reveals itself more adequately in the potentially conflicting yet justifiable claims that stem from it. This is evident, for instance, in the quandary faced by Orestes in Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, a conflict rooted in incompatible claims rooted in the relation to a father and a relation to a mother. Already in the Archaic Period, however, this motif is also at the core of Homeric conflicts between gods, while in Hesiod's writings, it is expressed for instance in the argument between Zeus and Prometheus regarding proper treatment of mortals; see Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 532–616, *Opera et dies*, 42–105. For more on the context, see also Aeschylus, *Prometheus vincitus* and Vandvik 1943.

25 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 160ff.

26 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 485ff.

27 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 886–900.

From this perspective, a musical composition perceived as a revelation of the being of the world in one of the facets of its appearance – and therefore also the cosmological explanation provided by Hesiod – seems utterly true in the sense of adequately capturing the being of a thus understood reality.²⁹

REFLEXIVITY OF MUSICAL SPEECH AND OF THE WORLD IT REVEALS

From all of the above, it follows that musical speech is essentially reflexive. This speech reveals not only the reality it expresses, but through its ability to relate to itself, it can also disclose the nature of this appearance, a plurality of possibilities of appearing that is a way of being of reality, a plurality that completes the way the world is. A musical word is thus transparent to itself: together with what is being revealed, it manifests also itself, the sphere of manifestation as such.³⁰ This reflexivity is now present

on both levels that correspond to the two main hymnic parts of the *Theogony*: first as the Muses' self-relation, and then as a self-relation of the totality of the world, which in the medium of a musical word becomes apparent to itself.

We have already seen that the speech of the Muses can relate directly to itself. In Hesiod's hymn to the Muses, however, the goddesses do not reflect only on the nature of their speech. Instead, through the voice of the poet they also present a brief outline of its content and on top of that, they describe their own birth, nature, and purview of their divine actions.³¹ This corresponds to the task the Muses gave the poet during his initiation: in addition to praising the family of gods and singing about the past and the future, they also demanded that at the beginning and the end, he ought to praise them.³² Such a request also constitutes

disclosed but also of the fact that it appears. In other words, reality appears in its truth as appearing.

- 29 Cf. also Plato's statement (in Plato, *Respublica*, 382a ff.) according to which everything a god says must be true. This explicit claim, however, is influenced by a shift in the meaning of 'truthfulness' that took place between the Archaic thought and Classical philosophy. This meaning shift also probably corresponds to a deep change in the understanding of reality, so that while a Platonic god cannot but express truth, Archaic Muses proudly declare that they use potentially deceptive speech, because it adequately describes a reality that is inherently full of conflict and contradiction.
- 30 This interpretation of the Muses is defended by Walter F. Otto, especially in his study *Der Mythos und das Wort* (see note 2). He views their reflexive nature as a characteristic feature of Greek myth that has to rely on musical speech. In the speech of the Muses, truth appears in such a way that the person to whom it is revealed is aware not only of the reality thus

- 31 Form-wise, the speech of the Muses is presented in poems in three different ways: Firstly, and most commonly, directly, that is, when a poet speaks of deities in a third person (while sometimes enlivening the story by inserting direct speech); in this way, the poet usually speaks about the Muses. Secondly, and less commonly, Muses appear in an indirect narrative, i.e. in a story about a story, when a poet summarises what the Muses say (e.g. Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 45–49). And finally, we find some direct quotations of what the Muses say, that is, records of what the goddesses say about themselves in first person (Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 25–27). This category may also include the cosmogonic narrative that forms the main content of the *Theogony* (Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 116ff.), since it is possible that it is a direct quotation of the speech of the Muses.
- 32 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 34.

an obligation on their part, namely that they shall disclose to the poet their own divine being. After all, how else would a mortal access it? Hesiod's poem meets this request,³³ which implies that the Muses are both the source and addressees of the hymnic celebration. Hesiod's hymn should therefore be read also as a self-manifestation of the Muses in a musical speech as interpreted by human verses. This formal structure of a musical song indicates that the Muses can, in their own speech as interpreted by the poet, create a mirror that reflects them. After all, the goddesses want to hear praises sung to them, just like in the 'ancient story' recounted above, gods – who wanted the Muses to be born – wanted to hear themselves honoured.

A self-relating musical speech can also become a medium of self-relation for the reality it expresses, i.e. for the world order and individual divine powers that constitute it, and subsequently also for humans. Thanks to this duality of reflexive structure, musical speech is not just a 'mirror' of the world. It is also transparent to itself and ought to be accorded the same kind of being as the world it expresses, the world which finds in it its own completion. Likewise,

the world order that is being celebrated figures not only as an object but also as the addressee of a musical song. The totality of the world is, after all, a complex network of divine powers, established by a genealogical process where individual gods function as its constitutive elements.³⁴ When, at the end of organising and arranging the world, the gods wished to hear words that would properly celebrate this order and the divine deeds that established it, they requested a voice that would sing about them. The ultimate hymn that completes it all is then a cosmological song, which can capture them in their mutual relation, i.e. in their cosmicity.

Hesiod's hymn emphasises the reflexive duality especially in the case of Zeus, who is at the very centre of the cosmological paean. Zeus is the creator and guarantor of the world order, the father of people and gods, the best and mightiest of them

33 Hesiod starts his poem with the Muses (*Theogonia*, 1) and returns to them at the end, when cosmogony reaches a point when they are born (*Theogonia*, 915–917). The very end of the *Theogony* as it is available to us now thus forms a smooth transition to the following composition, the so-called *Catalogue of Women*, which is nowadays usually seen as a late addition. There is no agreement on the verse with which the *Theogony* actually ends: proposals range from verse 939 to 964. For a detailed discussion of this subject, see West 1966, pp. 398–399; 48–49.

34 This does not exclude the possibility that some gods help establish the order in a so-to-say negative way, for instance by presenting themselves as threats that need to be either newly integrated or suppressed. An example of the latter are the Titans who did not find a fitting place in Zeus's order and were, together with Kronos, thrown into an underground prison; see Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 729–733, 813–814). The former group, those who need to be reintegrated, includes mostly the old gods who in many cases form the basic spatial constituents of the world, but there is a degree of tension between them and the new Olympic order. For instance, the position of the Earth (Gaia), who sometimes helps Zeus as a prophetic force (Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 891), while threatening him at other times with her immense generative force (as in the birth of Typhon, *Theogonia*, 820 ff.) is ambivalent in this manner. For more on this subject, see also Bonnafé 1984, p. 211.

all,³⁵ the god who after defeating Kronos stamped on the world its current form when he determined the rules by which cosmos exists and delegated to other gods their spheres of power.³⁶ Hesiod's cosmological hymn reflects Zeus's privileged position also in virtue of being 'dedicated' to him in both senses of the word: Zeus's world order is the main subject of the musical celebration and Zeus is the main addressee of the hymn. The Muses are born at the end of the cosmogonic process, when Zeus consolidates his position by marrying goddesses of the old generation: the Muses are daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, a Titaness and embodiment of memory.³⁷ While they are born in Pieria³⁸ and often dance on the hill of Helicon,³⁹ their main seat is on the Olympus,⁴⁰ in the immediate vicinity of their father, in whom they originated and to whom they keep returning to please his mind.⁴¹ Just like the poet thus begins and ends his song with the Muses, so the song of the Muses has its beginning and end with Zeus.

The song of the Muses is not, however, limited to Zeus either in its content or by being addressed to him exclusively. The 'divine voice'⁴² of the Muses reveals the rules or customs that

regulate the universe and the nature of all divine powers who are in charge of upholding and maintaining them.⁴³ The subject of their celebration is the whole family of immortal gods,⁴⁴ that is, not only the actually ruling generation of Olympians⁴⁵ but also the older powers, be it those whose suppression had confirmed Zeus as the supreme ruler (such as the Titans and giants)⁴⁶ or the primordial gods who play the role of cosmogonic beginnings (the Earth, the Sky, the Night).⁴⁷ In a diachronic genealogical narration, the Muses are 'telling of things that are, of things in future that shall be, and things that were before, out of their mouths in sweet, unwearied harmony the voice flows...'.⁴⁸ The song of the Muses is presented here as a cosmological prophetic statement⁴⁹ that should be interpreted through the prism of a shared foundation of the musical composition and the whole of the world. The 'unwearied harmony' refers to the singing of the paeon that is at the same time the final act of cosmogenesis. This completion,

35 Hesiodus, *THEOGONIA*, 47–49.

36 εὖ δὲ ἕκαστα | ἀθανάτοισι διέταξε νόμους
καὶ ἐπέφραδε τιμᾶς, Hesiodus, *Theogonia*,
73–74.

37 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 53–54, 915–917.

38 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 53ff.

39 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 1ff.

40 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 75.

41 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 36–37; 51–52; 75.

42 ἄμβροτος ὄσσα, Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 43.

43 πάντων τε νόμους καὶ ἡθεα κεδνὰ | ἀθανά-
των κλείουσιν, Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 66–67.

44 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 44.

45 Esp. Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 11–15.

46 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 16–20; 50.

47 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 45–46; cf. also 20.

48 εἰρῶσαι τὰ τ' ἐόντα τὰ τ' ἐσόμενα
πρὸ τ' ἐόντα, | φωνῇ ὀμηγεῦσαι, τῶν δ'
ἀκάματος ῥέει αὐδὴ, Hesiodus, *Theogonia*,
38–39, translation Caldwell 2015.

49 Cf. for instance *Ilias*, I, 70, where we find a similar formula describing the knowledge of prophet Calchas (ὃς ἤδη τὰ τ' ἐόντα τὰ τ' ἐσόμενα πρὸ τ' ἐόντα). On the close relation between prophets and poets, see also Dodds 1951, p. 217.

culmination of creation, consists in the uttering and listening. In the tradition, there exists a *topos* where the song of the Muses is an integral part of the feasts of gods. Hesiod, too, paints a remarkable picture where the voice of the Muses fills the whole abode of the deathless, the mountain top of Olympus resounds with a song of praise that spreads around,⁵⁰ and when the Muses move, even the black Earth, ancestor of all gods, hums along and reverberates in the rhythm of their song and dance.⁵¹ Gods view themselves in their long-desired mirror with pleasure: they listen to a voice in which their own being is completed by being disclosed to themselves. Cosmos, the world order created by gods and their relations, thus becomes capable of relating to itself.

— IN PLACE OF A CONCLUSION: MUSICAL SONGS IN THE SPHERE OF THE MORTALS

Musical gifts are not altogether denied to mortals, either: not only gods, but even a chosen person on whom the Muses had bestowed the gift of interpreting divine song in human speech can hear the divine voice that reveals the being of reality. 'Give me an oracle, Muse, and I shall be your prophet', says Pindar⁵² when commenting on the transposition of divine voice into the medium of human speech. What happens now with

the reflexivity of musical word, when a poet translates it into a form suitable for ears of mortals? Can human speech preserve the possibility of self-reflection that is an essential characteristic of a divine speech? Such questions would deserve a close study on their own. Let us just note that the possibility of self-relation is not lost in transposition into the level of human speech, but it does acquire some new dimensions.

Expression of the transient human existence in words of praise is above all one of the privileged ways in which a moral being can participate in the permanent being of the divine order.⁵³

53 According to Hesiod, gods are beings who 'exist forever' (αἰεὶ ἔόντες, Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 105): they are born but they never pass away, thus escaping the otherwise inviolable symmetry of birth and death; this applies to the being of the world as a whole as well. The philosophical heir of this conception is Plato; see Plato, *Timaeus*, 41a ff. and Sedley 2010.

Monsters beings occupy a special position, since while divine, they can also be mortal (e.g. Gorgon Medusa, the Lernaen Hydra, the giant Geryon, and others, see esp. Hesiodus, *Theogonia* 270ff. and 295ff.). The monstrous character of these beings expresses their liminal position within the order. They embody a fading of the constitutive difference between the mortal and the deathless. Consolidation of the cosmic order therefore requires their liquidation, a task that usually falls to one or another of the heroes, whereby heroes, themselves products of mixed unions between gods and people, are similarly hybrid and liminal beings. Especially noteworthy example of this is Zeus's son Heracles, who as the 'long arm' of the highest of the gods ended up killing so many monsters that he was accepted into the Olympic pantheon (see Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 950–955). A fateful meeting of a monster and a hero thus paradoxically reaffirms the distinction between the mortal and immortal, since while the monstrous divine being dies, an offspring of a god and a mortal woman receives his share in the fully divine deathless existence.

50 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 40–42.

51 περὶ δ' ἴαχε γαῖα μέλαινα | ὕμνεύσαις,
ἐρατὸς δὲ ποδῶν ὑπο δούπος ὀρώρει,
Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 69–70.

52 μαντεύεο, Μοῖσα, προφατεύσω δ' ἐγώ,
Race 1997, fr. 150.

A poem dedicated to a celebrated hero brings 'undying glory' (κλέος ἄφθιτον), keeps him alive in collective memory and prevents his fall into the abyss of forgetting. In other words, to be celebrated in a poem is to gain immortality.⁵⁴ We had already noted that Muses are the daughters of Mnemosyne, i.e. Memory. In this context, musical speech turns out to be a crucially important two-way link between the divine order and human world: the word of a poet reveals and reminds mortals of the divine order⁵⁵ in order to help them lead their lives in fitting harmony with it.⁵⁶ At the same time, it has the power of turning a human life into an unforgettable story, thus elevating it to a level of non-transitory, permanent being.

This significantly enhances the poet's status: after all, it is poets who turn human subjects of their stories into immortal heroes. This appearance in the medium of poetic speech constitutes a culmination of the constitution of human existence. Archaic people, whose individuality was constituted not internally but by the way they appeared

on the outside, needed others to be fully constituted. They became who they were only in the image reflected in the eyes of others.⁵⁷ Poets could express this personal appearance in a musical speech, and thus preserve it and spread it even after the mortal subject of a poem succumbed to death and the non-appearance of the underworld. And as long as a mortal lives on in the poem, so does the poet, too, who expressed the mortal's being and who is well aware of his exceptional status. 'So also you, O Polycrates, will have a glory of song that is unwilting, as in line with the song and with my own glory of song,' says Ibycos to the tyrant Polycrates, whom he praises.⁵⁸ In Hesiod's compositions, poet's individuality comes to the fore quite forcefully: in the *Theogony*, Hesiod describes how he became a poet and in doing so, for the very first time in the European tradition, he claims a poem as his own under his own name.⁵⁹ In the *Word and Days*, Hesiod then not only speaks about his life, but based on personal experiences also chooses a particular addressee from his surroundings, namely his own brother.⁶⁰

54 See Detienne 1979, p. 23. The understanding of speech as a medium through which immortality can be achieved is also shared by Plato (on poetry in particular, see e.g. Plato, *Symposium*, 209d).

55 Cf. for instance the introductory verse of the *Hymn to Apollo*, where instead of the common formula about the poet's desire to celebrate gods, we find something different, namely 'I will remember and I won't forget ...' (Μνήσομαι οὐδὲ λάθωμαι, *Hymnus ad Apollinem*, 1). A similar opening is found also in the *Hymn to Dionysus* (μνήσομαι, *Hymnus ad Bacchum*, 2).

56 An excellent example of this is Hesiodus, *Opera et Dies*.

57 This characteristic of constitution of archaic individuality is convincingly demonstrated in Vernant 1989.

58 Page 1962, fr. 1a, 47–48.

59 Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 22.

60 From a different perspective, the individuality of a poet in Hesiod is also treated in Griffith 1983. Griffith shows that Hesiod's approach to authorship is not radically new: it is rooted in a much older epic tradition. At the same time, he also emphasises that the appearance of the author in first person is, in Hesiod's works, always motivated by a specific purpose and particular context. In other words, this self-relating is not a goal in itself.

A poet as interpreter of musical words is therefore not quite transparent, he or she is not a mere loudspeaker whose existence ideally should not be even noticed. On the contrary: each poet interprets the divine voice in his or her own, unique way.⁶¹ In the function of an interpreter, a poet has a word to say in the poem and can claim his or her function proudly. And it is just possible that here, when

speaking of poets who, while disclosing the nature of the world, left the shadows of anonymity and spoke about themselves, we are touching upon not only one of the sources of European reflexive thinking, but perhaps also one of the roots of the distinctly European sense of individuality.⁶²

(Translated from Czech by Anna Pilátová)

Let us also add, that against this background, the traditional question of the extent to which Hesiod enters his creations as their individual author and to what extent this is a matter of a *topos* and self-stylisation, seems somewhat anachronistic. After all, if individuality is indeed constituted in appearing to others through musical speech, then literary (self-)stylisation does not conceal but co-creates the poet's 'true' individuality!

61 This issue is dealt with in Nancy 1982. According to Nancy, divine voice is accessible to a person only in the plurality of unique communications and this plurality is its essential feature. There are various ways in which poets interpret the divine voice and these differences are part of the nature of the divine voice as addressed to particular persons.

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Transmigrating Soul Between the Presocratics and Plato*

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the nature of transmigrating soul in the early Greek thought, most notably in the thought of Empedocles and Philolaus. It argues that, in general, soul was conceived as a kind of subtle ‘matter’. The turning point Plato who strive to guarantee soul’s immortality by connecting it with transcendent, but also immaterial Forms. This accentuates the intellectual character of soul, and this holds also in eschatological context, but at the same time transforms the categories in which we tend to think about it until today.

— The following text traces changes in the notion of transmigration (reincarnation) of the soul in early Greek philosophy. Its aim is to highlight several perhaps less known and less obvious facts related to a shift in the understanding of transmigrating soul that occurs between the Presocratics and Plato, who connects its existence with the immaterial Forms. Although it could be argued that the main motivation for a theory of transmigration is to answer the age-old existential question ‘what comes after death?’, we leave this issue intentionally aside.¹ Similarly, one could compare

arguments for and against transmigration, and it would be an interesting philosophical debate² but that, too, we leave to others. In the following, what we try to trace in the various ancient transmigration theories is their position within the overall philosophical scheme of some Presocratics and especially the often

uncommonly interesting theoretical problem with a far-reaching general impact.

1 Author of this article would like to emphasise that he personally has no clear view regarding the validity of the theory of reincarnation but regards it – especially in the context of ancient philosophy – as an

2 Christian orthodoxy, for example, had to define its position with respect to Plato’s philosophy whose position is at least at first glance more logical: If souls exist eternally, they necessarily exist already before entering a body, and must therefore be reborn again and again, cf. Wallis 1995, pp. 100–105. It should also be noted that the Christian Church had strictly prohibited reincarnation at the fifth ecumenical council, that is, at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553.

rather surprising ontological status of the soul within these theories.

A soul which temporarily leaves its original body only to subsequently enter another is a likely subject of remarkable debates. Such considerations, together with other aspects of Presocratic psychology, have contributed to the great philosophical synthesis of Plato, who treats the issue of transmigrating souls especially in his *Phaedo* (but also in the *Timaeus*). Though the present text focuses mainly on the notion of the transmigrating soul in Presocratic writings, this subject also highlights the substantial divide brought about by Plato's teachings, especially by his theory of ideas, transcendent Forms located 'outside' the sensible world. This break divides Presocratic and Classical philosophy, which in many ways represent two rather different ways of understanding the world.³ At the same time, this subject also brings to light some of the roots of Platonic understanding of the soul, an approach which exerted a far-reaching influence for centuries to come.

— I. THE MYSTERIOUS ORIGINS OF TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS IN GREECE

It is well known that in the works of Homer (app. 8th century BCE), that is, in the oldest written stratum of Greek thought, soul (ψυχή) is best described

in terms of a difference between a living person and a dead body. Usually, it is seen as something akin to the 'life force' that leaves a person who lost consciousness or, more usually, who is at the point of death and enters the Hades.⁴ Since the very beginning of Greek thought, it has thus been closely connected with afterlife. The souls which Odysseus summons from the Underworld are mere shadows of people who had died. They retain resemblance with their previous appearance and some sort of individuality, but to communicate with the living, they first need to drink some blood. Human thought thus seems to be, at least during life, closely linked to corporeality, which – as in the famous scene of Odysseus' sacrifice to the dead on his way home – the souls of the deceased regain for at least a fleeting moment in the form of blood.⁵ Over time, there

4 Cf. e.g. Snell 1960, pp. 8–15, Bremmer 2010, pp. 12–15, Cairns 2014.

5 Homer, *Od.* XI.23ff. The only exception among the dead is the soul of Teiresias, who even after death receives from Persephoneia φρένες and a νόος, *Od.* X.490–495. This is also why, unlike other souls, Teiresias recognises Odysseus and addresses him even before partaking of any blood, *Od.* XI.90–99, 139–154, 390. Even so, the souls in Hades remember some past events on the earth and perform certain activities in Hades, e.g., 488–491, 568–575. Some souls, meanwhile, receive their punishment, 576–600, or reward, 601–604, in the Otherworld. Moreover, with the exception of Teiresias, 100–137, who retains the power of prophecy symbolised by the abovementioned parts of the body (φρένες and νόος) even in Hades, they no longer know what is happening in the world, 155–162, 492–503. They merely recall their previous existence, 181–203, 405–434, 553–562, and are called 'phantoms', εἰδῶλα, which in later

3 That is also why we in the following, we use texts of only those authors who are not religious thinkers but philosophers, and in whose work, a theory of transmigration based on rational arguments is at least to some extent part of a general theoretical scheme of the world.

appear in the Greek religious thinking of the archaic period various notions that take the original idea of a soul as a life force one step further, so that souls do not stay permanently in Hades, wherever it may be located, but rather transmute in ways determined by their previous deeds. We do not know whether the notion of metempsychosis was first developed by the mysterious Orphics,⁶ by shamans,⁷ or brought into the Greek world through contact with India mediated by the Persian Empire.⁸ There is

too little evidence to definitively decide between the various hypotheses which had been proposed.⁹ What is certain

and claims that at the time in question, the only such theory can be found in India, in the *Upanishads*, e.g. in the *Bṛhadaranyakopaniṣad*, whereby he adds that he managed to win Burkert over for his view as well, cf. Burkert 1997, p. 35. The main problem with this interpretation, however, is that the origins of the notion of transmigration in India are at least as mysterious as its origins in Greece and cannot be explained by a 'diffusion model', cf. Long 1948, p. 10, Bremmer 2002, p. 24, Obeyesekere 2002, pp. 1–18. Moreover, it is quite unclear how the new idea could have passed through the entire Persian Empire without leaving any significant traces, only to spread quite widely not only in northern Greece but also, including in a popular version, in southern Italy, northern Greece, Sicily, and Crete. Richard Seaford informed me that although there are numerous references in Greek texts to Indian customs and beliefs before 326 BCE when Alexander crosses the Indus, there is not a single mention of a philosophical or cosmological *idea* specified as Indian. I would like to thank him for sharing with me this conclusion from his forthcoming book on the subject.

Greek means quite characteristically 'images', or σκῑαι, that is, 'shadows'. We can thus speculate that as soon as a human soul is finally freed from its body in a funeral pyre, 218–222 – a procedure that needs to be undertaken if the soul is to enter Hades, *Il.* XXIII.62–108 – it loses contact with this world. The contact can be restored once the soul is again infused with corporeality in the form of blood, cf. Renehan 1980, p. 108, Cairns 2014, par. 22.

6 A balanced account of the Orphic phenomenon can be found in the works of Guthrie 1952, Brisson 1995, and Parker 1995, cf. also Burkert 1985, pp. 296–301, Bremmer 2002, pp. 15–24, and Edmonds 2014. Apart from bone tablets from Olbia dated to around 500 BCE, Orphic eschatology is described in so-called gold leaves, some of which date to as early as the 4th century BCE and the text they contain is probably even earlier, cf. Graf and Johnston 2007, Janko 2016.

7 A 'shamanic' origin of the notion of transmigration was defended especially by Dodds 1951, ch. 5, following Meuli 1935, by Cornford 1952, ch. 6, by Burkert 1972, and by Vernant 2006, pp. 129, 384–385. For a critical assessment, see Kahn 1969b, Bremmer 1983, pp. 24–53, 2002, ch. 3, and recently also Zhmud 2012, ch. 6, Gregory 2013, pp. 133–135, 177, and Lloyd 2014, pp. 39–43.

8 Kahn 1969b, 2001, p. 19, with n. 36, criticises the notion of shamanistic origins of the theory of transmigration

9 If one had to choose between the options proposed above, the 'shamanic' explanation of the origins of the transmigration theory is in the end more convincing, especially in its moderate form, i.e., when it is not interpreted as a putative religious influence from Siberia ('diffusion hypothesis') but rather as a relatively universal manifestation of archaic human thought, cf. Ustinova 2009, pp. 47–51. Moreover, despite the claims of various previous anthropological research, there seems to be some evidence for reincarnation in shamanism. See, e.g., DuBois 2009, pp. 7, 44, 49, 53, 231, cf. also Mihai 2010, pp. 271ff, 2015, p. 123, and Kingsley 2010, pp. 144–147, with further literature, esp. p. 145: 'This shamanic dimension of beliefs and practices related to rebirth is inseparably bound up with the enormous importance attributed by

is that some hints at the notion of soul travelling to various places after death (which resembles transmigration) are found in early fifth century poet Pindar (522/518 – after 446),¹⁰ and it is mentioned by some other contemporary authors.¹¹ Naturally, various forms of transmigration are found in writings of the time and the idea has its more popular and more intellectual forms.

According to tradition, the earliest author who advocated a theory of immortal soul and who could be seen as a philosopher in a broad sense of the word is Pherecydes of Syros (*flor.* 544/1). He was an interpreter of mythological theology, author of the first Greek book in prose, and the legendary teacher of Pythagoras, a thinker who is usually credited with introducing this theory to Greece. This may well be the main reason why the doctrine of transmigration was later ascribed also to Pherecydes.¹² Yet

it is only in later Presocratic thinkers, whose work survives in at least some fragments, that we can follow more closely how the new notions fit into the overall scheme of the world, in other words, in whose philosophy we can reconstruct the nature and form of a transmigrating soul.

II. EMPEDOCLES

The extant fragments of Empedocles of Acragas (app. 495–435 BCE) pose a challenge when we try to reconstruct an overall scheme that would include both the religious passages pertaining to transmigration and his physical teaching, which presupposes four elements alternately united and torn apart by Love and Strife. Yet separating these two aspects of Empedocles' philosophy and claiming, as scholars often used to, that they belong to two distinct poems from different parts of his life, a rational youth and mystical old age (or the other way around) is as an interpretative approach quite untenable today.¹³ In contrast to an inconclusive remark made by a late

shamans to inheriting the spirits of ancestors ... as well as animals...' For a similar claim, see also Obeyesekere 2002, esp. pp. 15–18; in the following pages, Obeyesekere lists many examples of traditional societies where ancestors are linked to reincarnation. He does, however, criticise the theory of a shamanic origin of the concept of reincarnation, esp. pp. 200–204, 233, 239–241. Obeyesekere offers in his book a broader comparative perspective, but his account of the origins of reincarnation in both India and Greece relies perhaps too heavily on externalist and social explanations.

10 Pindar, *Ol.* 2.56–80; fr. 133 Snell–Maehler, quoted in Plato, *Meno* 81b–c, cf. Long 1948, pp. 29–44, and Lloyd-Jones 1985.

11 See most notably Xenophanes, DK 21 B 7, and Herodotus, *Hist.* II,123.

12 Cf. especially fragment DK 36 B 4 by Ion of Chios and other texts in Schibli 1990,

pp. 1–13, 104–127. See also comments in Bremmer 2002, pp. 12–13.

13 The views of various scholars on this issue are aptly summarised by Bollack 2003, pp. 29–36, and Viték 2006, vol. I, pp. 87–88; cf. also Trépanier 2017, pp. 130–134. Regardless of whether Empedocles actually wrote two distinct poems, *Φυσικά* and *Καθαρμοί*, the recent discovery of his previously unknown verses in papyrus *Strasb. Gr. Inv.* 1665–6, which deal with both physics and religion, seems to confirm the overall unity of his thought. For the text, translation, and commentary on the papyrus, see Martin and Primavesi 1999, Janko 2004.

commentator upon his philosophical predecessor Parmenides,¹⁴ in Empedocles' work, the presence of an elaborate conception of transmigration of the soul can be proven with the most reasonable certainty. According to his words, transmigration happens to 'daimons to whom life long-lasting is apportioned' (δαίμονες οἷτε μακροαίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο), meaning across their various reincarnations.¹⁵ They can be reborn not only as land animals, fish, and birds, but also as plants, which is within Greek transmigration theories a rather exceptional notion.¹⁶

On the other hand, one also ought to consider what happens to the *daimons* when Strife prevails and the whole world again disintegrates in the four basic elements, from which it had been created by Love. If everything without exception consists of the four elements, then *daimons*, too, must inevitably perish. This conclusion seems to be confirmed by the fact that during the uniting of the elements, a kind of 'long-lived gods' (θεοὶ δολιχαίωνες) was created alongside other beings. They share with *daimons* their longevity and are probably identical with them.¹⁷ It is also likely that this

is just another way of referring to what both the earlier and later Greek tradition calls the soul (ψυχή) with its eschatological implications.¹⁸ The term *daimon*,

gods. In B 115, Empedocles declares himself to be one of the *daimons*, in B 23 and 112 he even claims to be a god, and in B 146 he describes the apotheosis of prophets, poets, physicians, and rulers (whereby according to some indirect testimonies he believed himself to belong to all of these categories). On the ancient Greek notion of *daimon*, see Burkert 1972, pp. 179–181, Timotin 2012, and Sfameni Gasparro 2015.

18 In fragments attributed to Empedocles, the term soul (ψυχή) appears only once in DK 31 B 138, trans. Wright, in the phrase on the 'drawing of life with bronze' (χαλκῷ ἀπὸ ψυχῆν ἀρύσας), which probably describes the killing of a sacrificial animal. The term ψυχή probably refers here to the life force violently expelled from the animal during the sacrifice. On the other hand, the provenance of this fragment, usually ascribed to Empedocles, seems to be in doubt, cf. Picot 2006. The term θυμός which appears in B 128.10 and B 137.6 in a similar context of violent sacrifice or killing in general (which Empedocles resolutely rejects) is usually seen as denoting the seat of emotions. It leaves the dead body together with the soul, cf. Bremmer 1983, pp. 54–56, 74–75, 84.

It would, however, be premature to assume that Empedocles did not believe in the transmigration of a human *soul*, which would then have to be something other than a transmigrating *daimon*. Firstly, even the *daimon* appears in connection with transmigration in extant fragments only once (elsewhere, we find references to either Empedocles himself or to a 'knowing man'), and secondly, it was the theory of transmigration that motivated Empedocles' rejection of the killing of living beings, during which a body is 'bereft' of its ψυχή or θυμός. The most likely conclusion thus seems to be that *daimon* is just another name for a transmigrating soul, which is understood primarily as a life force, consciousness, and the seat of personal identity. Such a conclusion is in accordance with ancient authors who

14 Simplicius, *In Arist. Phys.* 39.17–20, quoting Parmenides' fragment DK 28 B 13, cf. Burkert 1972, p. 284, and Bremmer 2002, p. 13.

15 Empedocles, DK 31 B 115.5, trans. Wright.

16 Empedocles, DK 31 B 117, 129.

17 Empedocles, DK 31 B 21.12, 23.8, trans. Wright. It seems that Empedocles uses the words δαίμων and θεός more or less synonymously. In B 59.1, the former term probably denotes the elements, cf. Wright 1995, *ad loc.*, p. 212, which are in B 6 identified with individual Olympic

meanwhile, is used – as was common at the time – in the sense of a fated determination of a reincarnating being which, as Empedocles claims, defiled itself by killing living creatures.¹⁹ If, however, the transmigrating *daimons* are indeed creatures composed of the four elements, this interpretation results in a somewhat odd conclusion, namely that the *daimons* are, just like everything else, roughly speaking corporeal or ‘material’ in the sense of being part of the world we live in and perceive with our senses.²⁰ One

could perhaps imagine them as a sort of invisible wisps of air mixed with a fiery substance, such as aither or another fine matter.²¹ After all, Empedocles posits a close connection between physicality and thought,²² though thinking does not seem to be closely linked to the transmigrating *daimon* or, as we are inclined to believe, the soul.

Knowledge of the foundations of the world is, in Empedocles’ view, absolutely crucial because it is the only way of avoiding the stain left on humans by spilling the blood of living beings.²³ Yet it seems that the abilities enabling such knowledge are not located primarily in the soul. One could thus claim that a *daimon* determines primarily the human fate and is not directly connected to the depth of understanding. One might also claim that the transmigrating part of

treated Empedocles’ *daimons* as souls, cf. Trépanier 2017, pp. 135–136.

19 Cf. especially Heraclitus’ fragment DK 22 B 119, trans. Kahn, modified: ‘man’s character is his fate (δαίμων)’; and Democritus’ fragment DK 68 B 171, trans. Graham: ‘happiness (εὐδαιμονίη) does not reside in herds or in gold; soul (ψυχή) is the dwelling-place of the guardian spirit (δαίμονος)’; cf. Laks 1999, p. 252, Timotin 2012, pp. 21–24, 32–33, and Sfameni Gasparro 2015, p. 414.

20 See also Plutarch, *De def. orac.* 418e ff., who claimed that Empedocles’ *daimons* are mortal, cf. Trépanier 2014, esp. p. 175, with n. 7, 2017, pp. 135–139, and Curd 2013, pp. 135–136. (The conclusion that *daimons* are composed out of the four elements was reached, independently of Trépanier, in the Czech version of this article, cf. Hladký 2010, pp. 22–23.) I do, however, disagree with Trépanier’s interpretation of *daimons* as part of the body, see Trépanier 2017, pp. 139–143. On the materiality of the *daimons*, see also Barnes 1982, pp. 495–501, Wright 1995, pp. 57–76, 271–272, Inwood 2001, pp. 55–68, Curd 2005, pp. 142–143, and McKirahan 2010, pp. 284–290, cf. also Gregory 2013, pp. 179–180, 183. For an overview of an alternative interpretation, according to which *daimons* are portions of Love (or sometimes conceived of as parts of the *πρὶν ἑρῆ* from Empedocles’ fragment DK 31 B 134), see Karfik 2014, par. 25–30, and Therme 2014, par. 13–17. This suggestion was first advanced by Cornford 1912, pp. 224–242, then followed most

notably by O’Brien 1969, pp. 325–336, and Kahn 1969a, pp. 19–27; cf. also Curd 2013, pp. 135–136. This hypothesis, however, is not based on any ancient sources at our disposal.

21 Trépanier 2017, pp. 143–144, based on a testimony of Theodoret, *Graec. aff. cur.* V,18.9–10 = Empedocles, DK 31 A 85/4 Viték: ὁ δὲ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς μῖγμα ἕξ αἰθερώδους καὶ ἀερώδους οὐσίας, jointly with unfortunately poorly preserved verse DK 31 B 9.1, suggests that Empedocles thought of the transmigrating soul as a mixture of aither (celestial fire) and air.

22 See especially Empedocles’ fragments DK 31 B 17.14, 103, 105, 106. The term *πράπιδες* seems to refer to the ability to acquire divine knowledge of the world, B 110 and 132, and, rather interestingly, the ability to recall past reincarnations, B 129, cf. Long 1948, pp. 20–21 (but see recently Macris, Skarsouli 2012).

23 Empedocles, DK 31 B 2–4, 8, 9.3–5, 11–12, 15, 17.14, 23.9–11, 39, 112–114, 129, 136–147, cf. Curd (2005), pp. 150–154.

a person must be closely linked to the principle of Love, which is responsible for unity and harmony in the combination of the four elements.²⁴ These are, however, the ultimate constituents of everything in the world, including the human soul or the *daimon*. We shall also see that a version of the idea of the soul as a harmony of elements found its way into the thinking of the Pythagoreans. Moreover, the fate of the soul seems to be determined by whether its behaviour is motivated by Love or Strife.²⁵ These are the principles responsible for the creation and destruction of the world but they are also present in living beings as the basic emotions which determine their actions. In any case, however, one can conclude that if the *daimon* indeed consists of the elements and its fate is connected to the cosmic principle of Love, then the two aspects of Empedocles' legacy, i.e., religion and natural science, are not in conflict.

III. PHILOLAUS AND THE PYTHAGOREANS

Unfortunately, of the actual philosophical views of Pythagoras (app. 570–490 BCE), a thinker who fascinated his contemporaries no less than his followers, very little is known.²⁶ It is, however, rel-

atively certain that – in connection with the 'Pythagorean life' based on a strict observance of various religious and moral rules – he and his followers believed in transmigration.²⁷ Somewhat better attested is the philosophy of his one hundred years younger follower Philolaus (app. 470–385 BCE), who was inspired by Pythagoras' thought either directly or through his disciples. According to Philolaus, the soul (*ψυχή*) is a life force that does not have an especially close

author convincingly challenges later ancient reports on original Pythagoreanism, i.e., reports written under a strong influence of Academic, Neopythagorean, and Neoplatonic reinterpretation of the legendary sage Pythagoras and his followers. Burkert distinguishes between the traditional depiction of Pythagoras' 'shamanic lore' and his mathematical 'science', accepting only the former as historically possible.

This, however, seems to leave some room for Pythagoras in some way engaging in investigations of a mathematical kind. Pythagoras (or, which is less likely, his immediate followers) could thus ascribe to some numbers a particular meaning (*tetractys*, cf. Iamblichus, *Vita Pyth.* 82 = DK 58 C 4,82), emphasise the importance of mathematical harmony in the world or create a theory of a breathing universe. The Pythagorean notion of harmony that unites contrary principles in the world may have inspired Heraclitus' fragment DK 22 B 8, 10, 51, 54, cf. also B 40, 129, see Kahn 2001, pp. 1–4, 14–17, 34–38. Huffman 2014b is rather critical of Kahn's conclusions but even he admits that Pythagoras probably believed the world to be structured according to numbers. On Pythagoras and Pythagorean tradition, see further Huffman 2014a and Zhmud 2012.

24 Empedocles, DK 31 B 23.4, 27.3, 96.4, cf. Kahn 1969a, pp. 21–25.

25 Empedocles, DK 31 109.3, 115.14, cf. Wright 1995, pp. 107, 271–272. Empedocles also speaks about the *θυμός*, usually conceived as the seat of emotions, in the context of ritual killing, cf. n. 18 above.

26 The main work defining current research into early Pythagoreans (e.g., those before Plato) is still Burkert 1972, where the

27 Cf. Huffman 1999, pp. 68–70, and Huffman 2009, 2014b. Pythagoras' teaching about the transmigration of the soul (*ψυχή*) is parodied already by Xenophanes in DK 21 B 7, see also Herodotus, *Hist.* IV,95–96, Aristotle, *De an.* I,3 407b20–23 = 58 B 39.

connection to the mind (νόος). The soul is associated with sensation (αἴσθησις) because the principle of both is situated in the heart (καρδία).²⁸ This means that the soul is primarily a centre of feelings and emotions and as such, humans share it with other animals.²⁹

According to Philolaus, the cosmos and everything in it is harmoniously fashioned (ἀρμόχθη) from limiters (περαίνοντα) and unlimiteds (ἄπειρα).³⁰ The soul, therefore, like everything else, must be a kind of harmony of these opposites, one placed probably in some sort of fine matter.³¹ As in other thinkers belonging to Pythagorean tradition, we find some testimonies to the effect that for Philolaus, the soul is subject to transmigration.³² According to some

scholars, it is difficult to reconcile this idea with localisation of the soul in a particular part of human body or with the concept of soul as a harmony.³³

philological arguments revises some older views of earlier scholars who argued against this fragment's authenticity: 'The greatest barrier to accepting the fragment as authentic is the way in which the word ψυχᾶ (soul) is used, for here it clearly is, as in Plato, a comprehensive term embracing all the psychological faculties. We might suppose that Philolaus had anticipated this usage except that in F 13 it is used in a much narrower sense as one among many psychological faculties, and meaning something like "life".'

33 See Philolaus, DK 44 A 23 for the soul conceived as harmony. As Huffman 1993, pp. 329–330, significantly claims: 'Thus if we focus on the most reliable evidence we have for Philolaus' view on soul, F 13 and Aristotle's report about Pythagorean views on soul, it appears very likely that Philolaus thought of the soul in largely material terms as a group of constantly moving elements in attunement located in the heart. ... But if Philolaus did put forth such a materialistic account of soul (ψυχῇ), how are we to reconcile this with a Pythagorean belief in immortality of soul as is presupposed in the doctrine of transmigration. ... Some have thought that Philolaus in fact might not have believed in immortality... This seems to me a real possibility.' The notion of soul as either physically present in the body or as harmony does not, however, seem to necessarily preclude the possibility that soul refers to that part of the self that undergoes successive reincarnations, which implies also an eschatological function. Huffman further develops and refines his interpretation in Huffman 2009, taking into account some conclusions by Sedley 1995, pp. 22–26. (I did not have Huffman's important contribution at my disposal when preparing the original Czech version of this article, which shares some conclusions with Huffman, cf. Hladký 2010, pp. 25–26.) For a rather sceptical approach to the issue of transmigration in early Pythagoreans, see Zhmud 2012, pp. 387–394, who, however,

28 See Philolaus, DK 44 B 13, which describes the location of various physical and mental abilities in humans. Both the principle (ἀρχή) of the soul (ψυχᾶ) and sensation (αἴσθησις) are linked to the heart (καρδία). Unlike, for example, the mind (νόος), whose principle is located in the head and ascribed only to humans, the soul is said to be present in all animals (ζῶον).

29 Cf. Huffman 2009, pp. 22–26.

30 Philolaus, DK 44 B 1, cf. B 2, A 9. On the harmony as an organising principle of the world, see B 6. Philolaus' world seems to be mathematical in nature, and therefore also knowable as such, B 3, 4.

31 Cf. Aristotle, *De an.* I,4 407b27–32 = Philolaus, DK 44 A 23, see Huffman 1993, *ad loc.*, pp. 328–330, 2009, pp. 29–34, and further Aristotle, *Pol.* VIII,5 1340b18–19 = 58 B 41.

32 Of key importance here is Philolaus' fragment DK 44 B 14, cf. Plato, *Gorg.* 493a and *Crat.* 400c, according to which '... on account of certain penalties the soul (ψυχᾶ) is yoked to the body and is buried in it as in a tomb (ἐν σάματι)'. Huffman 1999, *ad loc.*, pp. 403–406, on the basis of

If, however, we accept that Philolaus indeed advocated a theory of transmigration, it would follow that in his view, too, the soul which undergoes reincarnations is corporeal or 'material' in the same sense as in Empedocles, i.e., that it is part of the sensible cosmos.³⁴ For Philolaus, as for some of his contemporaries, it seems connected with air, in particular with the first gulp of air a newborn child breathes in.³⁵ On the other hand, according to indications which appear in connection with the Pythagoreans, its proper nature should be aethereal or fiery.³⁶

That would fit rather well with Aristotle's testimonies in his *On the Soul*. He claims that according to the Pythagoreans, souls are tiny particles of matter moving in the air such as can

be seen in a sunbeam.³⁷ They are thus linked to light, namely as once again a kind of subtle fire carried by air. A little further, Aristotle argues against the conception of transmigrating soul as a harmony of (bodily) elements, a view he ascribes to both the Pythagoreans and Empedocles.³⁸ Moreover, according to Aristotle's generally accepted assertion, Pythagoreans did not believe that numbers³⁹ exist 'outside sensible objects': they identified them with material things. But the same should then analogically hold of souls since they, too, like everything else, seem to be corporeal. Aristotle also claims elsewhere that the first thinker to posit the

distinguishes too strictly between the natural and religious ideas of the early Pythagoreans, cf. also Gregory 2013, pp. 131–133, 139–141.

34 Huffman 1993, pp. 328–332, 2009, Sedley 1995, pp. 22–26.

35 Philolaus, DK 44 A 27 = *Anon. Lond.* 18.8–29 Ricciardetto, cf. Sedley 1995, pp. 24–25; on similar views among Presocratics, cf. Emmel 1918, pp. 5–10, Waszink 1954, pp. 176–178.

36 See the so-called *Pythagorean Notes* (*Hypomnemata*), which due to their eclectic nature may well contain some genuinely Presocratic ideas, Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae* VIII,26–30 = DK 58 B 1a,26–30, cf. Kahn 2001, pp. 74–75, 79–83, Long 2013, pp. 150–154, but see also Laks 2013 for a contemporary discussion. Hippasus of Metapontum, DK 18 A 9, also claims that soul is fiery (πυρώδη), but one ought to note that he considered fire to be the main cosmic principle, which is why he has been compared to Heraclitus, DK 18 A 7, 8, cf. Zhmud 2012, p. 387, 2014, pp. 94–95, and Palmer 2014, p. 212.

37 Aristotle, *De an.* I,2 403b28–404a20 = DK 58 B 40, trans. Smith: '...the motes (ξύσματα) in the air which we see in shafts of light coming through window... The doctrine of the Pythagoreans seems to rest upon the same ideas; some of them declared the motes (ξύσματα) in air, others what moved them, to be soul. These motes were referred to because they are seen always in movement, even in a complete calm.' See also Aristotle, *Probl.* 15 913a5ff. In the first passage, this opinion of the Pythagoreans is subsumed under the notion of the soul proposed by Democritus (and Leucippus, DK 67 A 28/1), according to which it is a kind of fire and warm and, moreover, is composed of material particles. Cf. Huffman 2004, pp. 328–329, 2009, pp. 22–23, Edmonds 2014, par. 38. Aristotle refers to this theory when criticising the view that soul is (self-) motion, an idea which was among the Pythagoreans upheld by Alcmaeon, who compared it to the motion of heavens. Aristotle, *De an.* I,2 405a29–405b1 = Alcmaeon, DK 24 A 12/1, cf. Huffman 2017.

38 Aristotle, *De an.* I,3–4 407b13–408a34.

39 On the issue of numbers in Pythagoras, see n. 26 above.

existence of incorporeal principles outside the sensible world was Plato.⁴⁰ Such an introduction of another metaphysical level of reality must have, however, to at least some extent involved the concept of the soul. He is therefore the next thinker we ought to consider.

— IV. PLATO

Naturally, we cannot discuss in detail all dialogues where Plato develops his notion of the soul and its fate after death, including transmigration. We offer therefore only a brief overview of those passages where he deals with the philosophical conceptions of transmigrating soul proposed by his predecessors. These texts can form a basis for a comparison, thus enabling us to point out where and in what respects Plato transforms previous tradition and how these changes affect the general metaphysical and cosmological background of his own philosophy into which he situates his concept of the soul.

In his *Phaedo*, Plato (427–347 BCE) deals with the abovementioned Presocratics or at least some of the conceptions they proposed.⁴¹ His main

interlocutors in this dialogue are Simmias and Cebes who used to ‘keep company with Philolaus’,⁴² and even the notion which is being refuted here is very Philolaus-like: the soul is an invisible and immaterial harmony (ἁρμονία ἀόρατος καὶ ἀσώματος) between the elements which make up the body.⁴³ Socrates, however, objects to the notion that at the moment of death, the soul must perish together with the body.⁴⁴ This idea is linked to another objection raised against the teaching about transmigration. It is noted that one cannot exclude a possibility that after a certain number of reincarnations a soul could in the end perish. The body is seen as a sort of a cloak (ἱμάτιον), which a soul in the course of an incarnation creates always anew and which changes in its other lives.⁴⁵ A similar notion of a body being a sort of a cloak or clothing

40 Aristotle, *Met.* I,6 987b27ff, XII,6 1080b16ff, the entire chapter I,6 of the *Metaphysics* deals with the origins of Plato’s theory of the Forms as principles independent of sensible objects, see also I,8 989b29ff, cf. Huffman 1993, p. 413, Palmer 2014, p. 216, *pace* Zhmud 2012, pp. 412, 439, 2014, p. 108. For more on the relevance and originality of Aristotle’s presentation of Pythagorean theories as opposed to later interpretations coming from the Academy, see Burkert 1972 and Huffman 1993, cf. also Casertano 2013.

41 For a detailed interpretation of the *Phaedo*, see most notably Dorter 1982, Bostock 1986, and Dixsaut 1991.

42 Plato, *Phd.* 61d–e. According to a tradition, Echecrates, the man who listened to Phaedo’s description of the end of Socrates’ life, was also a student of Philolaus, cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae* VIII,46.4 = DK 14 A 10/2, and Iamblichus, *Vita Pyth.* 251.4, 267.24 = DK 14 A 16,251.4, DK 58 A 1. It seems, however, that Plato endorses Philolaus’ theories especially in *Philebus* 23c–27c, cf. Huffman 1993, pp. 106–107.

43 Cf. Huffman 1993, pp. 324–325, 330–331.

44 Plato, *Phd.* 85e–86d. The hypothesis that this theory may have originated with Philolaus is supported by the enthusiastic endorsement it receives from his student Echecrates, 88d, trans. Grube: ‘...the statement that the soul is some kind of harmony has a remarkable hold on me, now and always, and when it was mentioned it reminded me that I had myself previously thought so.’ Cf. Sedley 1995, pp. 10–13, 22–26.

45 Plato, *Phd.* 86e–88b. On both objections, see Dorter 1982, pp. 98–114, and Dixsaut 1991, pp. 118–121.

into which a person is born is also found in Empedocles.⁴⁶ All of this would very well correspond to the situation we found in the theories of both of the previous thinkers, according to whom the soul is ultimately corporeal or perhaps rather composed of physical elements. In Plato's *Phaedo*, Socrates thus claims quite significantly that we should not be afraid like children that when soul leaves the body, wind will blow it apart and disperse it. Here he probably hints at an earlier idea which Aristotle attributes to the 'so-called Orphic poems'. According to his testimony, the soul enters the body after being carried to it from the external world by the winds (ὕπὸ τῶν ἀνέμων).⁴⁷

Plato's Socrates relatively easily refutes the first objection, namely that soul is a harmony with an immediate link to the body.⁴⁸ During his refutation,

Socrates presents his own theory of the Forms, which helps him prove that the soul brings life into the body and therefore cannot perish.⁴⁹ For our purposes, what is important is not the fact that the validity of Socrates' argument has often been challenged, but that in this context, soul is once again understood mainly as a principle of life.⁵⁰ On the other hand, Socrates also stresses that soul should be seen as distinct from the body. Rather than being like a body, it is the Forms to which it is 'more akin and alike', whereby the Forms are to be understood as immaterial principles of things existing in the sensible world. They are simple, knowable by reason, and indestructible, which is also why the soul survives even after the body's death. Under the influence of passions, the soul can sometimes indeed become 'like a body' (σωματοειδής), which then influences its fate after death.⁵¹ It thus seems that even according to Plato, the soul is not incorporeal *sensu stricto*. Metaphorically speaking, one can claim that the soul stretches between the corporeal world of the senses and incorporeal Forms, whereby its relation to the Forms is the basis of its true essence.⁵² By

46 Cf. Empedocles, DK 31 B 126, trans. Wright: '[Necessity] clothing [the *daimon* (?)] in an unfamiliar garment (χιτῶνι) of flesh.' On Empedocles as the source of this image of a cloak in *Phaedo*, see Dixsaut 1991, p. 359, n. 203. It seems, moreover, that Empedocles was the first author in Greece to use this metaphor of body as a clothing of the soul, cf. Treu 1954, p. 39, Viték 2006, vol. III, p. 550, and Edmonds 2014, par. 34–35. In a similar vein, Aristotle claims that according to the 'so-called poems by Orpheus', formation of the body of a living being is similar to 'the weaving of a net' (τῇ τοῦ δικτύου πλοκῇ), *De gener. animal.* II,1 734a16–20 = *OF* 404 F Bernabé = fr. 26 Kern.

47 Plato, *Phd.* 77d–e, Aristotle, *De an.* I,5 410b27–30 = *OF* 421/I F Bernabé = fr. 27 Kern, cf. Edmonds 2014, par. 43. See also *Pythagorean Notes (Hypomnemata)* preserved by Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae* VIII,30 = DK 58 B 1a,30: 'the reasons of soul are winds' (τοὺς δὲ λόγους ψυχῆς ἀνέμους).

48 Plato, *Phd.* 90c–95a.

49 Plato, *Phd.* 95a–107b, cf. Dorter 1982, pp. 115–161, Bostock 1986, pp. 135–201, Thein 2008, pp. 103–236.

50 Cf. also Plato, *Phaedr.* 245c–246a, where the soul is said to be in constant movement (ἀεικίνητος) and thus immortal because it moves on its own (αὐτοκίνητος) and is not moved by anything external, cf. Karfik 2004, pp. 221–226.

51 Plato, *Phd.* 63e–69e, 77e–84b, trans. Grube, cf. Karfik 2004, esp. 79–84, Betegh 2018.

52 This seems to be true even about the wicked soul that is fully absorbed by the

postulating the existence of immaterial and incorporeal Forms, Plato thus substantially transforms the way the soul should be conceived of and, at least in certain respect, brings it closer to being an immaterial entity. Moreover, in the *Phaedo* as well as in his other dialogues, Plato's conception of transmigration is quite significantly linked to his famous doctrine of *anamnesis* or recollection. It enables us to 'remember' mathematical and other rational truths which the soul had learned when it was freed from a body. Transmigration thus plays a role in acquisition of rational knowledge of immaterial principles.⁵³

Leaving aside now some further developments of Plato's concept of soul here,⁵⁴ we should turn our attention to

material body. On the other hand, due to its position in-between two levels of reality, even the most virtuous soul cannot be detached from the matter completely.

53 *Phd.* 72e, *Phaedr.* 249b–c, *Meno* 80d ff, cf. Burkert 1995, p. 118, see also Sedley 1995, p. 13.

54 The key passage where Plato presents his account of soul is naturally the *Republic*, IV 435e–442d, but its treatment falls beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that in the *Republic*, the picture outlined above is elaborated further. The embodied soul is divided in three parts, whereby the rational one is immortal and undergoes reincarnation, while the other two, namely spirited and appetitive, are mortal. This picture need not, however, substantially contradict our main exposition; see *Republic* X 608c–612a, where soul is said to be simple. This claim is followed by the famous myth about Er, where Plato gives an elaborate account of transmigration. This seems to indicate that for Plato, the difference between the soul and body is a complex issue. Soul's mortality or immortality depends on which parts we refer to and on their particular relation to the body, but at

the *Timaeus*, where Plato also deals with some earlier Presocratic concepts. In some passages in this dialogue, he seems to react to Empedocles and his ideas.⁵⁵ The situation is somewhat similar to the *Phaedo*, where it is likewise implied that the soul, which is connected with the body, is the source of its movement and is neither fully corporeal nor fully incorporeal.⁵⁶ Of particular importance, however, is a distinction Plato makes at the beginning of the dialogue (a parallel of which is also found in the *Phaedo*) between the sensible world, known by perception and subject to constant becoming and ceasing to be, and the Forms, which the soul grasps with the mind (νοῦς) and which are the only entities that truly exist.⁵⁷ The rational part of us is said to be immortal and transmigrating core of the human soul. It is located in the head and like in Empedocles, it is called *daimon*.⁵⁸ As in

the same time, soul is still seen as a unitary entity, see e.g. Karfik 2005. Cf. also Lorenz 2009, par. 3,2.

55 Cf. Hladký 2015, pp. 75–82. It is also worth noting that tradition links this dialogue with the Pythagorean *Timaeus* of Locri, while Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae* VIII,85 = Philolaus, DK 44 A 1,85, even relates an anecdote according to which Plato, in writing the dialogue, used Philolaus' book which he bought for a large sum of money.

56 Plato, *Tim.* 34a–36e, 41b–43a, 69c–72d.

57 Plato, *Tim.* 27d–28a, 30b–c.

58 Reason was given to us literally 'as a *daimon*', while the soul is assigned or chooses its fated *daimon* also in Plato's other dialogues (*Phd.* 107d6, 108b3, 113d2, *Resp.* 617e1, 620d8) but nowhere is it identified with the *daimon* in this way. It may thus be an instance of Empedoclean influence, much like the notion of necessity (ἐξ ἀνάγκης) in the description

the abovementioned Presocratic thinkers, it is also related to the fiery element located in heaven.⁵⁹ Analogically to the *Phaedo*, however, its fate during transmigration depends on whether during our lives we pay more attention to the sensible world or to the exercise in philosophy, in particular to observations of the regular revolutions of the heavenly bodies. The ultimate principles of these movements, however, are known through reason and, being an expression of the motion of the world-soul, they seem to be also dependent on the immaterial Forms.⁶⁰ In this particular point, the difference from Empedocles, who links the fate of the *daimon* mainly to its previous defilement by killing, is evident.

V. PROBLEMS OF MONISM AND DUALISM, IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE

We are now in a position to draw some broader conclusions from the previous

exposition on the transformation of the notion of the soul between the Presocratics and Plato.

1. According to available evidence, Plato indeed seems to be the first thinker who alongside the sensible world postulated something independent of it, to wit the incorporeal Forms, knowable by reason.⁶¹ Another author who could be considered in a search for the origins of distinction between the corporeal and incorporeal is Parmenides. Indeed, in Parmenides' work, too, the immutable reality knowable by reason is opposed to the changeable and deceptive world of the senses. It seems, however, that in his work, the immutable world is rather just the foundation of all of the apparent, merely illusory change. Although these two realms are perceived and known in different ways, they are in fact identical.⁶² This seems to have been noted by Parmenides' immediate followers, who, too, interpreted this

of transmigration in *Tim.* 42a3–4, which likewise seems to echo Empedocles, DK 31 B 115.1; cf. Wright 1995, p. 272, Trépanier 2017, p. 177, n. 87. After all, even the description of the cycle of transmigrations which follows in *Tim.* 90e–92c should be seen as a playful presentation of his theory rather than as a thoroughly serious presentation. What Empedocles and *Timaeus* have in common is, for example, the fact that the stages or places souls pass through during their transmigration are linked to the four elements, cf. Hladký 2015, pp. 79–82. For an overview of Plato's conception of the *daimon*, see Timotin 2012, ch. 3; on the interpretation of the function of the soul in the *Timaeus* in general, see Karfik 2004, pp. 149–220, 2005, Betegh 2018.

59 Cf. Karfik 2004, p. 102.

60 Plato, *Tim.* 90a–d.

61 Cf. Renehan 1980, pp. 127–132.

62 It is, for example, quite characteristic that Parmenides' fragment DK 28 B 7/8, starting with verse 42, smoothly passes from ontology to cosmology, whereby the cosmos, taken as a whole, seems to become a sort of link between Parmenides' two worlds. And similarly, Simplicius preserves Eudemus' remarks to the effect that Parmenides' Being was interpreted cosmologically as the world, cf. Simplicius, *In Phys.* 133.21–29, 142.28–143.8 = Eudemus, fr. 44–45 Wehrli = Parmenides, test. 37, 38 Coxon. On Eudemus' interpretation of Parmenides, further see also Simplicius, *In Phys.* 115.11–116.5 = Eudemus, fr. 43 Wehrli = Parmenides, test. 36 Coxon. (I would like to thank the late Tomáš Drvota for bringing this testimony to my attention.) For an overview of the discussion, see Kraus 2013, pp. 467–469.

author in a materialist way.⁶³ Similarly, a transcendent world distinct from our cosmos is quite clearly absent from the conceptual framework of the atomists.⁶⁴

Moreover, Anaxagoras' Mind (*voûς*) should not be understood as something incorporeal and utterly distinct in its nature from all other things – just different from them.⁶⁵ Similarly, within a broader context of the issue of incorporeality in Presocratic thought, Empedocles' Love and Strife are likewise clearly 'part of the natural world'.⁶⁶ Anaxagoras' Mind or Empedocles' Love and Strife and their activities are thus inseparable from the things in which they take place and upon which they act as forces. They shape the world from within and create more complex structures out of and within the elementary components. As such, they are indeed different from other physical things,

but they are still of the same nature. Finally, another candidate for an incorporeal entity in early Greek thought is Heraclitus' Logos, according to which everything happens, the ultimate background of all cosmic changes.⁶⁷ However, although all things are formed by it, the Logos itself exists within the world and is inseparably entangled with it. It is therefore difficult to maintain that it is a non-physical principle.

We would like to claim that Plato's postulation of the incorporeal entities, most notably the transcendental Forms, ultimately led to a profound change in the theory of transmigration received from previous thinkers. While in Plato's philosophy the soul does not lose its connection with the human body and the world, so that even its immortal part is located in the head, if its immortality is to be guaranteed, it must, as we have seen, also maintain its relation to the eternal Forms. According to Empedocles and the Pythagoreans, on the other hand, the soul is ultimately grounded in corporeality, in physical existence. And though Philolaus may have understood harmony, which was in his view the very foundation of the soul, as something incorporeal, the problem is – as seen from the Platonic perspective – that his was a harmony of elements placed in the changeable sensible world, i.e., its existence was grounded in the elements and subject to destruction. This is also the gist of Plato's main objection in the *Phaedo*.

63 Sedley 1999, pp. 113–125, cf. also Long 1996.

64 See n. 77.

65 In Anaxagoras' fragment DK 59 B 12, trans. Curd, the Mind is said to be 'the finest of all objects and the purest'. There thus seems to be no sharp distinction between it and other things (see also Plato's criticism of Anaxagoras in the *Phaedo* 97b–98b, where Socrates in the end realises that the *voûς*, unlike the Forms, cannot function as a sufficient cause explaining the nature of the world). Curd 2005, pp. 142–143, 2007, pp. 192–205, on the other hand, argues for Anaxagoras' Mind being non-material, but see a discussion in Rechenauer 2013, pp. 774–775, and Inwood 2001, p. 51–52.

66 Curd 2013, p. 136. It seems, however, difficult to admit that Life and Strife are at the same time 'physical but not material, not stuffs', as Curd claims, commenting critically upon Renehan 1980. Cf. also Wright 1995, pp. 32–34.

67 Heraclitus, DK 22 B 1, cf. Curd 2013, pp. 114, 124.

2. One could object to the reconstruction of Empedocles' and Pythagorean teaching presented here – according to which a soul is a transmigrating but at the same time necessarily corporeal entity – by pointing out that nothing like that is stated anywhere *expressis verbis*. The core of problem is that we see the whole issue from a different perspective than the Presocratics. Though perhaps unconsciously, we tend to identify the soul with something incorporeal. Yet where there is no difference between the natural, sensible world and another world, the Forms, it makes no sense to distinguish between the corporeal and the incorporeal. Moreover, it seems that the worldview of some Presocratics, such as Thales, Heraclitus, or even Empedocles, and perhaps also the early Pythagoreans, was close to panpsychism, that is, the belief there is soul in everything.⁶⁸ Similarly, the elements of which it is composed seem to have been conceived by at least some Presocratics of not as inert stuff or dead matter, but as alive, and sometimes even as active and rational principles.⁶⁹

If we were to ask Empedocles or Philolaus about the nature of the transmigrating soul and its composition, they would quite possibly reply that it had originated from the same principles as the rest of the world. These are probably joined in the soul so as to form a kind of harmony which is not itself material but still ultimately grounded in and dependent on the physical elements it holds together. Perhaps the stuff the soul is composed of it is just 'finer', 'purer', or 'more durable' than anything else, being most probably composed mostly of subtle air and/or fire-aither.⁷⁰ This also fits well with some eschatological concepts documented from fifth century Athens, according to which souls after death travel up to reach the aither, an

2010, and Gregory 2013; cf. Hladký (forthcoming).

68 See Thales, DK 11 A 22, cf. Gregory 2013, pp. 65–67; Heraclitus, DK 22 B 113, cf. B 45, cf. Kahn 1979, pp. 119, 128–129, 221; Empedocles, DK B 31 17.14, 103, 110.10, cf. Trépanier 2004, pp. 31–33; the *Pythagorean Notes* (*Hypomnemata*) preserved by Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae* VIII, 27–28, 31–32 = DK 58 B 1a, 27–28, 31–32, cf. Kahn 2001, pp. 81–82, Long 2013, pp. 157–158. For a history and contemporary discussions of panpsychism, see Goff, Seager, and Allen-Hermanson 2017.

69 For Parmenides, see Long 1996, for Empedocles, see Curd 2016 and Rowett 2016; a more general overview is given by Lloyd 1966, pp. 232–272, Trépanier

70 Betegh 2006 distinguishes between a 'journey model' and a 'portion model' of the soul in early Presocratics. He also shows, however, that in some cases this distinction cannot be applied strictly, and this holds especially of some early Greek philosophers who had distinctively eschatological ideas about the nature of the soul that survives the death of the body. One may also note that Heraclitus is another author who claimed that in the case of the 'best', most exceptional individuals, the fiery soul survives the death of the body, at least for some period of time, as argued most notably by Kahn 1979, pp. 245–261, 327, n. 286; cf. also Burkert 1972, pp. 362–363, with nn. 64, 66, Mihai 2010, pp. 558, 565, 577, 2015, pp. 48, 63, 154. This conception, however, resembles not a theory of transmigration but rather the later Stoic idea of survival of the 'leading' part of the soul, the *hēgemonikon*, SVF I, 522, II, 811, cf. Hladký (forthcoming).

element which is akin to it.⁷¹ Instead of Platonic transcendence or de facto dualism of two spheres of reality, what we find here is immanence or monism of one world.⁷² Nonetheless, these notions are somewhat misleading since both pairs of concepts are mutually intertwined and can be defined only in relation to each other. And in the world where Plato's predecessors speak of the soul, such distinctions make little sense. Everything was contained in one cosmos and there was nothing beyond or 'outside' its borders (if, indeed, it had any).

When trying to define the ontological status of a transmigrating soul in Presocratic thought, we (and other interpreters) have to come to terms with the, at a first glance, somewhat surprising fact that the Presocratics viewed soul as something corporeal and situated in the natural world just like everything else, although it undergoes regular transmigrations. This is a point where, consciously or not, we are profoundly influenced by the Platonic legacy. This

is why it is so difficult to find adequate terms for a fitting description of the situation portrayed by the Presocratics. As noted above, distinctions such as ideal/material,⁷³ transcendent/immanent, or dualism/monism necessarily fail (though the last pair seems to be the most adequate) because the world to which the Presocratic soul belonged was fully united and conceptual divisions of this kind cannot be properly applied to it. It was a world where there was no transcendent principle to which a soul, like in Plato, could relate, a principle that would guarantee its existence. We therefore believe that if we are to arrive at a satisfactory understanding of the Presocratic position as distinct from the Platonic one, we should admit that these distinctions are inadequate. It is,

71 Euripides, *Hel.* 1013–1016, *Orest.* 1086–1087, *Sup.* 531–536, 1139–1141, fr. 839.8–14, 908b.3–4, 971, 1013 Nauck, Aristophanes, *Pax* 832ff., and some tomb inscriptions, *CEG* 10 = *IG* I³ 1179, *CEG* 535, *SEG* XXXVIII,440, cf. Burkert 1972, pp. 357–363, Renehan 1980, p. 112, Egli 2003, pp. 94–114, and Mihai 2010, 2015, pp. 106–113, with further references.

72 'Immanence', as employed in this context, is very close to the somewhat fashionable term frequently used in the tradition of French Spinozism, while the term 'monism' has here a sense similar to that used by Ernst Haeckel, an eminent German biologist, religious reformer, and founder of the *Deutscher Monistenbund*.

73 Cf. Long 1966, pp. 256–267, and Karfik 2004, par. 39, who distinguish two different interpretative approaches of scholars to Empedocles, a 'mystic' and a 'materialist' one. To list just a few authoritative statements by other scholars, Trépanier 2017, p. 135, claims that 'most Presocratics are best described as default materialists'. O'Brien 2006, pp. 56–57, with n. 19, speaks about 'unconscious materialism' in connection with Empedocles, and elsewhere, O'Brien 2005, p. 338, maintains that the 'Presocratic philosophers have not awoken from Plato's dream [i.e. *Tim.* 51e6–52d1], if we are to judge from Parmenides, Anaxagoras and Empedocles, none of whom appears to have any conception of reality that is not extended in space.' Kahn 2001, p. 82, observes about the doctrines contained in the *Pythagorean Notes* (*Hypomnemata*): 'In this respect, the psychology of the *Notebooks* belongs to a tradition of what we may call mystical materialism – a tradition that begins with the Presocratics and continues throughout antiquity.'

after all, well known that a similar situation where analogous distinctions are ill-fitting can be encountered in the case of other than Presocratic thinkers.

3. While the main function of the soul as a principle of life and by extension also a vehicle of a personal as well as moral identity remains unchanged, Plato's postulation of an independent realm of the incorporeal Forms requires a transformation of a soul so that it can relate to it. In Empedocles' writings, soul's fate in the course of incarnations evolves mainly from contaminations due to previous wrongdoings caused by its attachment to Strife, and any requirement of understanding the nature of the world is linked to eschatology only loosely. For Philolaus, it seems that it is the soul that is associated with sensation and emotions and its principle is situated in the heart that is being reincarnated.⁷⁴ The emotional part of our self, which is identified with the soul and its fate after death, also naturally leads to a requirement of compassion with animals and other living beings. Souls enter them during the cycle of transmigration and they are composed of the same elements as humans.⁷⁵

Plato, on the other hand, claims that a soul has to strive to be as close to the Forms as possible, in other words, to become rational. From now on, the core of human soul is identified with its rational part, which is the part that enters the cycle of transmigration in the first

place.⁷⁶ And while knowledge of intelligible principles is thus still linked to the soul's highest, rational part, knowledge of the sensible world is mediated by the body.⁷⁷ While in archaic Greek thought, the mind (*vóoc*) is the thinking capacity that enables us to see deeper into the nature of our world,⁷⁸ in Plato, attention turns to a completely different order of reality. We have just noted that the soul as a principle of life becomes rational through its relation to the Forms, eternal and transcendent intelligible principles. The soul thus attains a degree of independence from the physical world. It finds itself, metaphorically speaking, outside it, somewhere in-between the physical world of the senses and the intelligible Forms. In virtue of its not quite physical existence, it can thus attain knowledge of the Forms which are found beyond the sensible world.

⁷⁴ See Huffman 2009.

⁷⁵ Cf. Sorabji 1993, pp. 131–132, 172–175, Huffman 2009.

⁷⁶ Cf. Burkert 1995, p. 118, and Obeyesekere 2002, pp. 249, 255, 276–277, 283–287. This important shift brought about by Plato's new conception of the soul naturally has some immediate consequences. As Huffman, p. 41, claims: 'It seems awkward and barbarous to suppose that the full range of human intellectual capabilities are present in the animal but, of course, unable to express themselves.'

⁷⁷ Kahn 1985, pp. 19–21, argues that while some form of distinction between sensory and rational knowledge can be traced back to Parmenides and his followers including the Pythagorean Philolaus, its more systematic form appears only later, in Democritus, and a definitive form of the distinction was formulated by Plato, cf. Democritus, DK 68 B 11, 125, 191. Huffman 1993, pp. 311, 314–315, 319, notes that a similar distinction can be found also in Philolaus, DK 44 B 13.

⁷⁸ Cf. Snell 1960, pp. 12–15, and von Fritz 1945, 1946.

Therein lays the main difference between Plato and the Presocratics (especially those discussed above), in whose view the soul is always physical and united with the world in which it fully belongs. Platonic dualism posits an ontological distinction between the physical, sensible world and the transcendent Forms and between our cognitive capacities that relate to these two levels of reality. The Presocratics, on the other hand, do not believe that our mind relates to a reality fundamentally different from the sensible world. In their view, the mind tries to penetrate 'only' some sort of deeper, more fundamental layer of the phenomenal world, which as a whole, however, cannot be anything but unified and one.

4. Throughout these considerations, it appears that Plato was exceptionally successful in promoting a distinction between the sensible world and the intelligible Forms and any return to the 'innocence' of his predecessors is challenging in the extreme. Plato's sharp division of reality exerted enormous influence in centuries to come, where a similar form of dualism is found frequently and sometimes even in unexpected places. When we leave aside Plato's immediate followers, most notably Aristotle, and make a huge leap forward in time, we can see that this is the case of a thinker far removed from ancient Greece, one from the very beginnings of modern philosophy, namely Baruch Spinoza. Quite significantly for such a comparison, it has been claimed that the Presocratics and other early Greek thinkers are close to pantheism, which characterises the

philosophy of this thinker.⁷⁹ As is well known, Spinoza believed that a person belongs to two attributes among infinitely many that can be ascribed to a substance, to wit the 'attribute of extension' (*attributum extensionis*) and 'thinking' (*cogitationis*).⁸⁰ Although he posits one substance underlying all there is, in relation to these two attributes he does not – contrary to expectation – advocate a position close to a unitary monism or immanence of Preplatonic thinkers. From the very outset, he presupposes a distinction between thinking and physicality, two realms which are parallel to one another. This separation can then be mended only thanks to a metaphysical presupposition of unity of all attributes on the deepest ontological level of one all-encompassing substance. Spinoza thus follows not only in the tradition of Cartesian dualism, which defines an insurmountable distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, but even in the long tradition reaching all the way to Plato and revitalised by his Renaissance followers.

In Plato's view, however, these two sharply distinct levels of reality are still connected by a soul which relates partly to the physical world and partly to the intelligible Forms. This makes his dualism somewhat less sharp,⁸¹ but despite

79 Cf. Gregory 2013, esp. pp. 13–15, 51–52, 55–56, 66–67, 75, 203–204. For the history and contemporary discussions of pantheism and panentheism, see Mander 2016 and Culp 2017.

80 Baruch Spinoza, *Ethica*, II, *scholium* to prop. 7, cf. *scholium* to prop. 21.

81 Cf. Dorter 1982, pp. 179–191.

all the qualifications, his conception of the soul clearly constitutes a fatal step in such a direction. It is the moment when the conceptual field opens within which, it would seem, we still pursue our philosophical quests. A comparison with the Presocratics shows, however,

that a similar kind of conceptualisation of the body and soul is not the only possible one and has some important theoretical presuppositions at its background.

(Translated from Czech by Anna Pilátová.)

ABBREVIATIONS

Editions:

- Coxon, A. H. (2009). *The Fragments of Parmenides* (introd., ed., trans., com. by A. H. Coxon). Las Vegas; Zurich; Athens: Parmenides Publishing (edited with new translations by R. McKirahan; 1st edn. 1986).
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Socrates as the Paradigmatic Figure of Practical Philosophy*

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ABSTRACT

This philosophical essay aims to return to the Socratic problem, ask it anew, and make an attempt to find its possible solution. In the introduction, the author briefly discusses to genesis of the Socratic problem and the basic methodological problems we encounter when dealing with it. Further on, it defines five basic sources of information about Socrates on which the interpretation tradition is based. Then the author outlines two key features of Socrates' personality, aligned with the vast majority of sources: (1) Socrates' belief that he has no theoretical knowledge; (2) Socrates' predilection towards practical questions, and the practical dimension of his activity. In conclusion, the author expresses his belief that it is just this practical dimension of philosophy that has been in the 'blind spot' of the modern study of Socrates which paid too much attention to the search for his doctrine. The history of philosophy, however, does not only have to be the history of doctrines, but can also be the history of reflected life practices which inspire followers in their own practices while reflecting on them. The author therefore proposes to understand the historical Socrates as the paradigmatic figure of practical philosophy.

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— Socrates is one of the most iconic and at the same time most controversial figures of the history of philosophy from the 18th century to the present day. On the one hand, he is the most iconic figure because the modern tradition accepted the influence which had been attributed to Socrates by the ancient tradition, particularly Plato and Aristotle, both of whom have become the ancient philosophers *par excellence* for modern times. On the other hand, Socrates' controversy results from the modern idea of philosophy as a type of thought system presented in the form of a text that can be critically examined.

The paradox to which this condition has led is obvious – what do we do with the 'philosopher founder' who did not write a single text, and whose

philosophical thinking remains hidden in the works of those who wrote about him? In the 19th century this paradox resulted in the so-called Socratic problem, first formulated by Friedrich Schleiermacher, and later developed by many others. The question can simply be formulated as follows: who was the historical Socrates, so as to not contradict the principles that Xenophon called Socratic, and yet also inspired Plato to present him in his dialogues in the way that he did?¹ The aim of our essay is to ask the Socratic question again, briefly look at the figure of Socrates in the context of Socratic literature, and make an attempt to find a possible answer.

1 Schleiermacher (1852), p. cxlii.

— SOCRACTIC PROBLEM

Socrates is not the only ancient philosopher who wrote nothing. Among many others we mention Pythagoras, Pyrrho, Epictetus, or Ammonius Saccas. We learn about them only through the accounts and quotes preserved by their pupils, followers, commentators and critics. In order to reveal the views of a non-writing philosopher, these accounts need to be critically evaluated, and comparisons drawn. Our endeavour will lead to many methodological problems. Why they are particularly conspicuous in Socrates is owing to the fact that his name is contained in a relatively large number of genres of various texts which often offer very different images of Socrates.

This diversity is also caused by the fact that both classical and Hellenistic authors used to interpret a particular philosopher not as an individual historical person but rather as a representative of a certain type of thinking and behaviour which they either criticised or praised from their position. Everyone who tries to create a consolidated picture of Socrates eventually comes across the question: 'Do we judge our conception of Socrates by what we find in the sources or do we judge the sources by what we think we already know about Socrates?'²

Let us highlight some of the main methodological problems that accompany the attempts to reconstruct the views of the historical Socrates. It might seem that if two sources about Socrates are in opposition with regard

to the same subject, one of them must be untrue. However, this does not necessarily have to be the case. They may, for example, refer to another period of Socrates' life, or to a different context in which Socrates addressed the particular subject. Nor is it possible to unambiguously assume from the consistency of multiple sources that they reflect the view of the historical Socrates for the following reason: we cannot retroactively guarantee the mutual independence of these resources, or their independence from another source used by the given authors but not preserved for us, or the general image of Socrates in the given time which did not have to correspond to the views of Socrates himself,³ of which, by the way, Plato's Socrates complains in the *Apology* (18b–d).

Eventually, similar problems associated with the search for the historical Socrates have prompted some interpreters to believe that Socrates is a myth – a literary fiction generated by a group of writers at the beginning of the 4th century BC.⁴ Even if we reject such an

3 Lacey (1971), pp. 367–368.

4 A clear analysis of scholarly views on Socrates in the 19th and 20th centuries is given in J. Gajda-Krynica (2006), pp. 36–49. According to her, Xenophon's version of Socrates is championed above all by J. Brucker, H. Weissenborn, H. Arnim, H. Gomperz, A. Döring, L. Strauss, and D. Morrison. F. Schleiermacher, J. Burnet, A. E. Taylor, C. Siegel, and H. Maier give preference to Plato. K. Joel and D. Ross lean towards Aristotle's views. E. Zeller, G. Vlastos, W. K. C. Guthrie, U. Wilamowitz, W. Jaeger, and A. Diés attempt to produce a synthesis. E. Duprée, out of all, sees Socrates most as a fictional character, while O. Gigon, A.–H. Chroust and E. Howald do not regard him as

2 Lacey (1971), p. 366.

extremely sceptical interpretation, we can still see that the interpretation tradition essentially agrees only on two facts: that Socrates was sentenced to death at the age of 70 in 399 BC, and that he never wrote anything himself.⁵ At least, he did not write down anything philosophical, given that Plato, in his *Phaedo* (60d–61b), has Socrates say that in jail he wrote the metrical version of Aesop's fables and the hymn to Apollo, having been inspired by an ever-recurring dream.

When looking for an image of the historical Socrates, the textual tradition is based on the following 5 sources of information. The first three are composed of the texts of Socrates' younger contemporaries. The oldest of the sources, Aristophanes, depicted Socrates in his comedies, above all in the *Clouds*, and via brief referrals in the *Birds* and the *Frogs*. The second group of sources is composed

of the writings of the historian and philosopher Xenophon – his *Memorabilia*, *Symposium*, *Apology*, *Oeconomicus*, and a short passus in his *Anabasis* (3, 1, 4–5). The third group consists of Plato's Dialogues in which Socrates emerges as the main speaker.⁶

Aristotle's writings form the fourth group. Although Aristotle's knowledge of Socrates is only mediated, mainly through Plato's Academy, and his surviving work does not systematically address him, his account is nevertheless valuable especially because Socrates' name is usually mentioned in relation to some philosophical problem or an attitude, thus suggesting a possible fashion of Socrates' philosophical views.

The last group of information sources includes a wide range of authors from about the 5th century BC up to the 3rd century AD. Among them are Socrates' contemporaries and pupils such as Antisthenes, Aeschines of Sphettus, Euclid of Megara, Phaedo of Elis, Simon 'the Shoemaker' of Athens, and others. The texts of these authors have been preserved in either a very fragmented way, or we only know of them from doxographers, which is regrettable, as otherwise

a philosopher. Gajda-Krynica (2006), pp. 58–60 herself joins this opinion, and at the end of her study she concludes that Socrates was not a philosopher, since he offered no philosophical doctrine. The current basic sources for the study of Socratic issues are the compendiums of Vlastos (1971), Ahbel-Rappe and Kamtekar (2006), Bussanich and Smith (2013), and most recently Stavru and Moore (2018).

5 All doxographic tradition agrees on Socrates' lack of writing. The exception is Epictetus who attributes considerable writing activity to Socrates (Arrian, *Epicteti dissertationes* 2, 1, 32). In this instance, however, we are probably dealing with a misunderstanding caused by mistaking writings on Socrates with those by Socrates; cf. Lacey (1971), p. 366, n. 1. The problem of authorship in ancient philosophical literature is most recently discussed by Škvrnda (2017b). For the trial with Socrates see Kalaš (2008).

6 According to Vlastos (1991), pp. 46–47, (1994), p. 135 these are principally the so-called earlier (elenctic) dialogues of Plato – *Apology*, *Charmides*, *Crito*, *Euthyphro*, *Gorgias*, *Hippias Minor*, *Ion*, *Laches*, *Protagoras*, *Republic I*; then the transitional dialogues – *Euthydemus*, *Hippias Major*, *Lysis*, *Menexenus*, *Meno*; to these he adds passages from the middle period dialogues: the speech of Alcibiades in the *Symposium* (215a–222b) and the two bibliographical passages in the *Phaedo* (57a–61c, 115c–118a).

they would most likely belong to the most important sources of knowledge of Socrates' life and views. In the fifth group there are also all the later works referring to Socrates in any way. Of these, perhaps the most interesting texts are the shorter ones about Socrates, created in the Roman period and during the so-called second sophistry, by authors such as Diogenes Laërtius, Libanius, Plutarch, Apuleius, Maximus of Tyre, and Dion of Prusa. Let us now take a closer look at the preserved images of Socrates individually.

— SOCRATES OF ARISTOPHANES

The earliest text to mention Socrates is the *Clouds*, Aristophanes' comedy played in 423 (and reworked a few years later – cf. *Nubes* 518–562) when Socrates was about 46 years old. It is the only text on Socrates written during his lifetime that has been preserved in its entirety. The faithfulness of Aristophanes' image of Socrates is mostly categorically rejected by scholars. His partial rehabilitation was brought about by E. Taylor (1951), Vander Waerdt (1994), L. Edmunds (1986), A. Bowie (1993), and M. Montuori (1981).⁷

It should be noted, however, that Socrates' contemporary followers took the Aristophanes' image of him seriously while opposing it (Plato *Apology*

18b–d, 19b–d; Xenophon *Apology* 14–15, *Memorabilia* 1, 1, 11–16). Aristophanes' choice of Socrates for a character in his comedy indicates at least the assumption that Socrates had already been known to a relatively broad audience who would associate him with 'modern' intellectual extravagances (cf. Plato *Apology* 19b–20c).

Aristophanes' Socrates combines two main motifs – the examination of the physical universe (*physis*) associated with non-traditional religious attitudes typical of some older philosophers, and the sophist 'both sides' argumentation. The Socrates of the *Clouds* is the leader of a paid philosophical school called a 'thinking-house'. We find him watching the sky from a hanging basket, while his pupils 'fix their eyes so on the ground' to 'seek things underground,' with their 'rump turned up towards the sky' because 'it's taking private lessons on the stars' (*Nubes* 186–194).⁸

Aristophanes' Socrates devotes his time to astronomy, geography, zoology, and grammatical exploration; he introduces new deities while rejecting the classical gods of the Greek Pantheon as old-fashioned. At the same time he teaches rhetoric, especially the way how to outwit the inferior, i.e. unjust argument (*hetton logos*) over the superior, i.e. just argument (*kreitton logos*) as a means to win litigation. In the traditional history of philosophy, Aristophanes' Socrates could be characterised as a utilitarian eclectic, and a syncretist

7 The last of these explores the possible Anaxagoric background to Socrates' views. In his recent dissertation, F. Škvrnda (2017a) gives an interesting attempt at reconstruction of the historical Socrates on the basis of analysing the contemporary religious and cultural background.

8 Translation: B. B. Rogers; in Aristophanes I. The Loeb Classical Library, 1930.

of the older natural philosophy and the new ethics of the sophists, prone to mysticism.⁹

— SOCRATES OF XENOPHON

The second group of sources traditionally used in the search for the historical Socrates includes the writings of Socrates' pupil Xenophon of Athens. According to contemporary philosophical historiography he was more of a historian and a man of letters with a weak feel for philosophy, which leads to the conclusion that he was unable (unlike Plato) to deeply understand Socrates' philosophy. Interestingly, however, in the 18th century, Xenophon's image of Socrates was still considered to be as reliable as (or even more so than) Plato's and a similar attitude was held by many authors of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, too. Of the earlier advocates of Xenophon let us mention J. J. Brucker and his *Historia Critica Philosophiae*, who followed the line of his predecessors;¹⁰ the contemporary ones include D. Morrison (1994), L.-A. Dorion (2006), and M. A. Flower (2017).

Xenophon's image of Socrates is almost the exact opposite of that of Aristophanes. In religious affairs, his Socrates holds traditional views (*Memorabilia* 1, 3–4; 4, 3), refuses the practices of the sophists, is not concerned with the theoretical examination of the natural world (*fysis*), and finds the studies in geometry or astronomy

meaningful only to the extent that they are useful for everyday life (*Memorabilia* 4, 7). He has a circle of pupils whom he teaches for free.

Xenophon's Socrates is less ironical in his treatment of others and more 'down to earth' than Plato's. The Elenctic Method (the method of counteracting opponents' opinions), characteristic of the Socrates of Plato's early dialogues, is used only as a preparatory stage; afterwards he makes no qualms about voicing his own views. However, these are not presented in the form of theories. Xenophon emphasises that Socrates had never promised to be a teacher of virtue (*arete*); on the contrary, he called for his pupils to follow the way he himself lived (*Memorabilia* 1, 2, 3; 1, 2, 17) and acted (*Memorabilia* 4, 4, 10).

Xenophon's Socrates is a moralist in the best sense of the word, a philosopher who solves practical problems, finds fitting examples from life, and is always willing and able to provide useful advice to which he even uses his *daimonion* (cf. *Memorabilia* 1, 1, 4). It was not by chance that many Hellenistic philosophers and moralists considered Xenophon's style and his presentation of Socrates as the ultimate example of writing and living.

— SOCRATES OF PLATO

In the 19th century, the originally positive assessment of Xenophon's account of Socrates changed under the influence of F. Schleiermacher's work; he considered Xenophon a statesman rather than a philosopher. In his view, Xenophon's intention was to defend his teacher from

9 For Socrates as a "pythagorizing mystic" see Škvrnda (2015).

10 Cf. Montouri (1981), p. 22; Malusa (1993), p. 229.

criticism rather than systematically interpret his views which he – unlike Plato the philosopher – was unable to correctly understand.¹¹ This attitude of Schleiermacher was accepted by the majority of contemporary scholars who even often radicalised them.¹²

The idea of Socrates as Plato's great teacher, the founder of dialectics, and the father of modern philosophy was born; an idea that would be shared, with greater or lesser amount of scepticism, by most 20th century authors. Among the most influential works of the 20th century which attempt to reconstruct the philosophy of the historic Socrates on the basis of Plato's dialogues is *Socrates. Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (1991). The author G. Vlastos – in connection with the stylometric studies dividing Plato's dialogues into the early, middle and late ones – earmarks two types of Socrates the philosopher. The first one is the historical Socrates (Socrates_E – Socrates Earlier), and the other one is the Socrates of Plato (Socrates_M – Socrates Middle). However, Vlastos' model was soon exposed to serious objections of some academics.¹³

If we are to compare Plato's and Xenophon's Socrates, then the former is more speculative and very reticent in expressing his own attitudes. He is a tireless debater and an adroit thinker who often casts doubt on dominant opinions. The typical and widely used method

of Plato's Socrates is the *elenchos* – logical refutation of his fellow debaters' opinions, which he bases on exposing the contradictions in the claims they themselves offered. He often accents his 'ignorance', says he has no knowledge and therefore he cannot teach anything to anybody. He compares himself to a midwife in that that he himself is unable to give birth to thoughts, but he can help others to deliver their own thoughts; nevertheless, it is necessary to examine whether the newborn are true (*Theaetetus* 150a–151d).

The mission of Plato's Socrates is to constantly explore himself as well as his fellow citizens. He examines whether they take care of both their virtue and souls, and whether they are really wise when they declare themselves to be wise (*Apology* 23b, 29c–30b).¹⁴ From the modern perspective, Plato's picture of Socrates comes across as the most philosophical, and the majority of contemporary interpreters still find it the most credible. At the same time, the midwifery of the Platonic Socrates is a good justification for the diverse and original views of Socrates' followers, including Aristippus and Antisthenes, Euclid and Phaedo. His constant denial of his own wisdom which could be transferable to

11 Schleiermacher (1852), p. cxxxviii.

12 Cf. Zeller (1877), pp. 100–101.

13 Nehamas (1992), Nails (1993), Kahn (1996), McPherran (2011), Vasiliou (2013), and Prior (2013).

14 In contrast to Xenophon and Aristotle, Plato's Socrates admits to being interested in exploring *physis* in his youth (*Phaedo* 96a–100a; cf. Diogenes Laërtius 2, 45; Sextus Empiricus *Adversus Mathematicos* 7, 8; Cicero *Academicæ Questiones* 1, 4, 15), or to the fact that he studied with Sophists (Plato *Meno* 96d, *Charmides* 163d). This caused several scholars to divide Socrates' life into two phases; cf. Vander Waerdt (1994), pp. 66–75.

someone else can serve as a major explanation for his non-writing. In short, Plato's Socrates could be characterised as a typical intellectual, ironist, sceptic, and moral philosopher.¹⁵

— SOCRATES OF ARISTOTLE

There is another source of information on Socrates' philosophy believed to be credible: that of Aristotle who came to Athens about 30 years after Socrates' death; he was familiar with not only Plato's dialogues but also the dialogues of other Socratics, as well as the period of oral tradition referring to Socrates.¹⁶ In the body of Aristotle's works, we find (just) over 40 references to Socrates. What is so valuable in his testimony is, inter alia, that he is clearly aware of the differences between the historical Socrates and the Socrates of Plato's dialogues. The reconstruction of the historical Socrates based on Aristotle's accounts was attempted by O. Gigon (1947). However, most modern scholars understand Aristotle as a credible addition to Plato's picture of Socrates.

Aristotle tells that the historical Socrates devoted his attention to the moral virtues (*ethikas aretas*) and he was the first one to seek their general definitions, but unlike Plato, he never regarded neither universals nor definitions as existing in separation, i.e. he did not postulate them as Forms

(*Metaphysica* 1078b9–32). In agreement with Xenophon, Aristotle's Socrates disregards the study of the physical universe (*Metaphysica* 987b2). His Socrates used to ask questions and not to answer them; for he used to confess that he did not know. He would not refute the views of his opponents by putting forward a different view and proving its plausibility, but through questions and answers he would show a contradiction in the claims made by the opponents themselves (*Sophistici Elenchi* 165b3–6, 183b7–8).

Aristotle's Socrates held the position of ethical intellectualism and claimed that knowledge is a necessary and sufficient condition for our conduct. For this reason, it is impossible to suffer from *acrasia* (lack of self-control) – indeed, once we learn what is good, we act accordingly; in other words, our poor decisions are exclusively a matter of our ignorance rather than a drive of the irrational parts of our soul (*Magna Moralia* 1182a15–26; *Ethica Eudemia* 1216b2–9; *Ethica Nicomachea* 1145b23–27). From a modern point of view, Aristotle's Socrates can be characterized as a typical moral philosopher, the founder of analytical ethics, and a proponent of strong ethical intellectualism.

— SOCRATES OF SOCRATICS

The fifth (and the last) group of authors describing Socrates is, as aforementioned, a very diverse one covering the period from about the 5th century BC until the 3rd century AD. It consists of other Socrates' pupils (except Xenophon and Plato) whose works

¹⁵ We already find this form of understanding the character of Socratic philosophy in the so-called Second and Third Academy, which were known by their development of scepticism.

¹⁶ Cf. Guthrie (1971), pp. 38–39, Suvák (2007), pp. 14–15, n. 20.

have been preserved only in the form of fragments as well as references and shorter texts dedicated to Socrates and created in the Roman period and during the so-called second sophistry. Modern commentators either ignored this group, or viewed it very suspiciously. A partial change came about as late as the end of the 20th century, especially thanks to Giannantoni's collection *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquiae* (1990). Research in this field is still in its initial stages. Of the works devoted to it let us mention at least the second part of the collection edited by Paul A. Vander Waerdt (1994), and the collections edited by Rossetti and Stavru (2010) and by Suvák (2014).

Apart from Plato and Xenophon, there are about 12 other authors of the so-called Socratic dialogues whom we know a little better, and the list of the names of all the Socratics in the Giannantoni Collection exceeds 70.¹⁷ And it is exactly these Socratics and their so-called Socratic schools (in the modern tradition sometimes referred to as 'minor' as opposed to the Academy and the Lykeion) who may play a crucial role in the quest for the image of the historical Socrates and assessing his impact. The influence of many of them was enormous. The later Hellenistic mainstreams either claimed their founders to have been Socrates' direct pupils (the Cynics of Antisthenes and the Cyrenaics of Aristippus), or they vehemently avowed themselves to Socrates' legacy (academic sceptics and stoics).

¹⁷ Cf. Clay (1994).

Most of the 'minor' Socratics were critical of the 'metaphysical' speculations of the Plato and Aristotle type. Their exploration was mainly focused on matters of practical ethics. As an example of how the 'minor' Socratics understood Socrates let us mention Aeschines and his *Alcibiades* dialogue preserved in a fragmentary form. Socrates implies to Alcibiades that he has no useful knowledge to teach him. Nevertheless, he believes that if he stays with him he can make him a better person through his love. Finally, having brought him to acknowledge his ignorance, he gives him a gift of the statue of Themistocles; whenever he looks at it he will remember his own imperfection by comparing himself to the famous general.¹⁸

— SOCRATIC PROBLEM AGAIN

So who was the historical Socrates and what philosophical position did he hold? Was he Aristophanes' sophist, utilitarian eclectic, and mystic? Or Xenophon's moralist? Or Plato's ironists and sceptic? Or was he Aristotle's creator of ethical intellectualism? Or the practical ethicist of Aeschines and many other Socratics? Each of these images offers a Socratic doctrine, or rather a certain set of philosophical attitudes that he adopted. At the same time, each of these images has its own relevance and is defensible. It seems, however, that the philosophical thinking of these many 'Socrateses' is

¹⁸ Fr. VI A 50–53 (Giannantoni), Suvák (2007), p. 23. The similarly anti-theoretical philosophy of Antisthenes is most recently analysed by Suvák (2017), see also Zelinová (2016).

impossible to combine into a consistent image of one and only Socrates. This has led many interpreters to claim that Socrates was not the author of any philosophical doctrine and therefore he cannot be considered a philosopher. However, it resulted in a paradox – the non-writing philosopher propelled many of his contemporaries and followers into philosophical writing, teaching and living.

But if we look back once more at the authors discussed in our essay, we can discover two important features of Socrates' personality. The first one is the claim that Socrates believed that he had no (theoretical) knowledge; this claim is unambiguously corroborated by Xenophon, Plato and Aristotle, and neither is it dismissed by other Socratics. The only exception is Aristophanes whose Socrates is inundated with various doctrines (which can be understood as comic hyperbole).

The second feature is that of Socrates' predilection towards practical questions and the practical dimension of his work. This feature is most evident in Xenophon, the 'minor' Socratics, and the Hellenistic tradition. Socrates of Plato's "early" dialogues, albeit more sophisticated and more sceptical, also deals primarily with practical questions, while Plato raises no doubts of the power and importance of his activities.

Moreover, practical dimension of Socrates' character should be clearly identified in Plato's "middle period" dialogues too. Most obvious example is the *Phaedo*. At the beginning of the last discussion with his friends, Socrates

claims that "a man who really has spent his life on philosophy is steadfast when he is about to die and optimistic..." (63e10–64a1), hence "...those who engage with philosophy in the right way are practicing nothing else but dying and being dead" (64a6–8).¹⁹ Although the ensuing discussion is "theoretical" and "metaphysical" in many aspects, the end of the dialogue clearly aims at practical point, as Kohen rightly notes: "Indeed, rather than using his final breath to utter some sort of profundity that would followed blindly as Socrates' true and final teaching, Socrates instead direct his interlocutors back to the unresolved argument they have been having about the soul's immortality".²⁰ This is the final echo of Socrates' claim in *Apology*, that "the unexamined life is not fit for a man to live" (38a6–7). Neither profundity nor theory, but certain way of living (and dying) is what should be considered most.

Another example is the *Republic*, dialogue famous for the "Platonic" tripartite immortal soul, theory of the state, using geometry and great metaphysical allegories. However, closer look on dialogue shows, as Rowe suggests, that the philosophical, literary, and rhetorical style is not so different from Plato's "earlier" one and that the *Republic* continues with

19 Translation: Ch. Emlyn-Jones, W. Preddy; in Plato I. The Loeb Classical Library, 2013.

20 Kohen (2011), p. 72. Kohen's article gives more arguments to show how the Plato's Socrates, especially of the *Apology*, *Crito* and *Phaedo*, "is carefully crafted to serve as a new model for heroic behaviour that ought to be emulated" Kohen (2011), p. 46.

those ideas that surface and dominate the so-called “Socratic” dialogues, ideas such as the virtue is knowledge, that a just person will harm no one and that no man goes wrong willingly.²¹ The very “Socratic” topics such as justice, good, and education are discussed throughout the dialogue, and according to Rosen the *Republic* “is not a treatise on politics but a dramatic portrait of people conversing about the connection between justice and the good”.²² The city-soul analogies repeatedly raising a questions on human character and the way of living. Finally, at the end of the *Book IX*, when Socrates abandons the question whether the city they have been founding and discussing could exist or not, he concludes that it is “a model up in heaven for anyone willing to look and if he sees it, found himself on it” (592b1–3).²³ We are back “down to earth”, being asked to create our lives here and now in certain proper way.

Another “middle” dialogue, the *Phaedrus*, should be profitably read as a dialogue on education, since both rhetoric and philosophy have an educational function and leads the souls to different way of living. The well-known critique of writing (274c–275e) does not imply that any written text is in fact useless; “only that it should not be written (nor read) without awareness of the danger of writing, together with the sense that what ultimately matters is *neither* writing *nor* speaking but the way of life in

which they can find a worthy place”, as Ferrari brilliantly pointed out.²⁴ There is no room to go deeper in *Phaedrus* or further to other Plato’s dialogues; however, it is hard to find a single one where a certain way of living and thinking plays no role.

Apart from Plato “later” dialogues, the most theoretical impression is probably given by Aristotle’s Socrates, although even his Socrates has no theoretical knowledge. And when Aristotle describes Socrates as the first person to look for the general definitions of moral virtues, he actually makes him the founder of the part of philosophy which he calls practical. In this case, not even Aristophanes is an exception; in the *Clouds*, Strepsiades attends Socrates’ lessons for purely practical reasons (to get himself rid of debt). And although he himself fails in learning – because of his ineptitude and conservatism – his son does succeed, which eventually leads to a tragicomic end of the play. Indeed, Aristophanes’ Socrates can also be primarily grasped as a (a)moral philosopher dealing with practical issues.

CONCLUSION

When Homer, in the second Book of *Iliad*, invokes the sisterhood of Muses to reveal the names of the leaders and the number of ships fighting under Troy, he says that they (the Muses) are omnipresent and omniscient, while we mortals know nothing except through *kleos*, and we have no real knowledge (*Iliad* 2, 485–486). I think these verses are

21 Rowe (2006), p. 20.

22 Rosen (2005), p. 2.

23 Translation: Ch. Emlyn-Jones, W. Preddy; in Plato VI. The Loeb Classical Library, 2013.

24 Ferrari (1987), p. 221.

spot on, regarding our position on the Socratic problem. Unlike Homer, however, we have no access to Muses who would reveal the ‘truth’ about Socrates. What has ensued after Socrates is *kleos* – in both meanings of the word; *kleos* as rumour or report, and *kleos* as fame or glory. Why should we not understand the legacy of Socrates as reports and rumours left behind by Socratics, their followers and critics, on the actions of their hero? The reports whose task is to inspire (or caution) their contemporaries and next generations to do similar acts, and follow a similar way of thinking and living.

Such an idea does not have to be absurd as long as we are aware of what P. Hadot points out in his *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (1995): that the entire Greco-Roman tradition sees philosophy foremost as practical in its goals, as a way of life.²⁵ I think that it is exactly this practical dimension of philosophy that was in the ‘blind spot’ of most modern study of Socrates, which focused too eagerly on the search for his doctrine.

But how we should understand such thing as “practical dimension

of philosophy” when speaking about Socrates? When in Plato’s *Phaedrus* Socrates is asked whether he think the mythological story on Boreas abduction of Oreithuia from Ilissus is true, he answers that it would not be odd to him to doubt it and give some reasonable interpretation. However, then he would need a lot of spare time to interpret all other mythical stories and creatures. But he never had time to do it for the following reason: “I am still incapable of obeying the Delphic inscription and knowing myself. It strikes me as absurd to look into matters that have nothing to do with me as long as I’m still ignorant of this respect... I investigate myself rather than these things, to see whether I am in fact a creature of more complexity and savagery than Typhon, or something tamer and more simple with a naturally divine and non-Typhonic nature” (229e5–230a6).²⁶

Of course, this does not mean that Socrates considered mythical stories or reasonable interpretations worthless. Socratic tradition shows him open to discussing any topic and searching any reasonable explanation. But such doings cannot be properly conducted without concerning what they are for us, how they could help us to live the good life. Such heritage should be recognized in many Socratic writings and also inspired later Hellenistic philosophies where “physics” and “logic” are worth to be studied because they help us to see where we are placed in the world, how

25 The practical dimension of Socrates’ thinking is also highlighted by Jan Patočka (1991), who sees his philosophy in a ‘life plan’ (p. 125), or ‘style unity of the life’ (p. 147). For the differences and similarities between Patočka’s idea of ‘care of the soul’ and Foucault’s idea of ‘care of the self’ see Hladký (2010), pp. 149–154. For the difference between the care of one’s self and the knowledge of one’s soul see Hobza (2009). For the hypothesis that some of the early Greek lyricists should be considered as forerunners of practical philosophy, see Porubjak (2018).

26 Translation: R. Waterfield; in Plato: *Phaedrus*. Oxford University Press, 2002.

do we perceive it, and how do we think. However, final goal of such studies is “ethics” – the way of life. No matter how complex all those philosophies were and how much they differ each other, finally they were trying to answer the same “practical” question of how to become better friend to ourselves and to each other, and how to live milder, calmer, and happier life to reach eudaimonia. Without the figure of Socrates, whoever he *really* was, such philosophical tradition is hard to be imagined.

Thus, the history of philosophy does not only have to be the history of theories

and doctrines, but also the history of reflected life practices which inspire followers in their own practices as well as reflect on them. From this point of view, we could perceive Socrates’ philosophy as the mission of a certain (philosophical) type of life lived to inspire his contemporaries. They, afterwards, each in their own way, initiated the entire ensuing tradition. Consequently, the historical Socrates could be interpreted as the paradigmatic figure of practical philosophy. I leave it to the reader to decide whether the Socratic problem is cracked open by such an interpretation or not. ■

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Aristotle's Theory of Language in the Light of *Phys.* I.1

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of my paper is to analyse Aristotle's theory of language in the context of his *Physics* I.1 and via an analysis and an interpretation of this part of his *Physics* I try to show that (i) the study of human language (*logos*) significantly falls within the competence of Aristotle's physics (i.e., natural philosophy), (ii) we can find the results of such (physical) inquiry in Aristotle's zoological writings, stated in the forms of the first principles, causes and elements of the human speech (*logos*) and (iii) the analogies (*Phys.* 184b13-14) made by Aristotle at the very end of the first chapter make better sense if we consider them in the broader context in which Aristotle recognizes language as a complex natural phenomenon we are born into and which has to be not only biologically, but also socially developed through our lives. Hence, I aim towards a more naturalistic reading of Aristotle's views on language.

I. INTRODUCTION

The general objective of my paper is to contribute to the discussion of how we can reconstruct Aristotle's theory of language.¹ I openly aim towards a more naturalistic and more pragmatic reading of Aristotle's views on language and I will try to justify my approach to this issue via a textual² analysis and interpretation

of the first chapter of the first book of Aristotle's *Physics*.³

Before I start, I would like to make a short illustration of my approach to Aristotle's theory of language. I reckon if Aristotle had been pushed to answer the following question "What kind of entity is a phoneme?" he would answered it something like this: a phoneme is a physiological entity, it is a psychological entity, it is an acoustic entity and it is also an abstract entity. So, all these

1 The issue of Aristotle's theory of language and the topics related to this subject (Aristotle's theory of meaning, Aristotle's theory of signification), has been of systematic concern to such scholars as Kretzman 1974, Irwin 1982, Manetti 1993, Charles 1994 & 2000, Whitaker 1996, Bäck 2000, Modrak 2001, De Rijk 2002, Walz 2006, Castagnoli & Di Lascio 2012 and Joseph 2017.

2 In this paper, I follow C. D. C. Reeve's translation of Aristotle's *Physics* published in 2018.

3 Those interested in historical commentaries on the first book of Aristotle's *Physics* would be satisfied by a detailed overview they can find in McMahon 1957. There have been several modern English translations of important historical commentaries to the first of book of Aristotle's *Physics* published recently, see e.g., Themistius 2012 or John Philoponus 2006.

answers are correct. But at the same time, he would add that no individual answer or combination of answers is absolutely correct by itself.

Why do I think so? Because in his writings Aristotle clearly and rigorously distinguishes several ways of methodological examination of the same phenomenon. He is aware of the fact that we can examine every phenomenon from various perspectives and that different goals lead us towards different answers. With respect to this, we should not forget also the frequency with which Aristotle uses the *πολλαχῶς λέγεται* phrase in his writings. The phrase clearly indicates that Aristotle always distinguishes different perspective from which one analyses subject matter.

In any case, in his zoological writings (*HA*, *PA*, *GA*) Aristotle examines human language as a natural phenomenon related to its bearers (i.e., to living beings of the human natural kind).⁴ For this very reason, I decided to take a closer look at the opening chapter of Aristotle's first book of his *Physics* where he sets up the basics for scientific inquiry concerning nature and its objects.⁵

The specific aim of my paper is to analyse Aristotle's theory of language in the context of his *Physics* I.1 and via

analysis and interpretation of this part of his *Physics* I try to show that (i) the study of human language (*logos*) significantly falls within the competence of Aristotle's physics (i.e., natural philosophy), (ii) we can find the results of such (physical) inquiry in Aristotle's zoological writings, stated in the forms of principles, causes and elements of human speech (*logos*) and (iii) the analogies (184b13-14) that Aristotle presents at the very end of the first chapter make better sense if we consider them in the broader context in which Aristotle recognizes language as a complex phenomenon we are born into and which has to be not only biologically, but also socially developed.

II. WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO DO SCIENCE? WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO POSSESS A SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING?

Let's start with the first paragraph. "Since in all methodical inquiries in which there is knowledge—that is, scientific knowledge—of things that have starting-points, causes, or elements, it comes from knowledge of these (for we think that we know each thing when we know its primary causes and primary starting-points, all the way to its elements), it is clear that in the scientific knowledge of nature our first task must be to try to determine the starting-points." (*Phys.* 184a10-a16).

The first paragraph indicates that we know something insofar as we know its primary causes and primary starting-points, all the way to its elements. To see the proper message of

4 More naturalistic approach to the study of Aristotle's views on human language can be found in Zirin 1974, Zirin 1980, Laspia 2018.

5 For precise analysis of a method proposed by Aristotle in his first book of *Physics* see Bolton 1991. For complex interpretation of a method used in the whole area of scientific inquiry about nature and its objects see e.g., Lennox 2010.

this paragraph one needs to know the broader context of Aristotle's thinking about methodological inquiry which could provide us with understanding of some phenomena. In the *Posterior Analytics* Aristotle claims that to know something is not only to know *hoti* (that something is the case), but also to know *dioti* (why something is the case).⁶ It is also well known that for Aristotle *epistémé* (scientific knowledge or understanding) is a state of the soul that enables its possessor to give demonstrative explanations in the form of *apodeixis* (demonstration) which is a special sort of *syllogismos* (deduction) which starts from scientific starting-points (*archai*).⁷ What are those starting points?

III. WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION? STARTING-POINTS, CAUSES AND ELEMENTS

According to *APo* I.10, 76a37-b22, specifically scientific starting-points are of just three types. But those special to demonstrative science are definitions of the real essences of the beings studied by particular science.⁸ Real definitions analyse the real essence of the natural objects into its “elements and starting-points” (*Phys.* I.1, 184a23). The real essences of those objects are definable, though indemonstrable within the (natural) science. The real definition makes intrinsically clear what the nominal

definition made clear only by enabling us to recognize instances of named phenomenon in a fairly, but imperfectly, reliable way. People who know *hoti* but do not know *dioti* are not able to offer a real definition, which must state the cause.⁹ E.g., “Thunder is a noise in the cloud” is only a nominal definition which declares the usage of the word “thunder” as the correct wording for noise in the cloud. But to offer a real definition of thunder to someone who wants to understand the phenomenon of thundering, it is necessary to include the cause in the definition. We are ready to explain thundering when knowing the efficient cause of that natural phenomenon. Why does it thunder? Due to the extinguishing of fire in the clouds. Therefore, thunder is a noise in a cloud caused by an extinction of fire.¹⁰ But before we are ready to offer an explanation of something *via* stating the starting-points, causes and elements we have to know how they are obtained.

IV. WHAT KIND OF KNOWLEDGE IS NEEDED BEFORE ONE CAN START DOING SCIENCE?

What is the natural route to knowing something? Let's consider the second paragraph: “And the natural route is from things that are knowable and more perspicuous to us to things that are more perspicuous and more knowable by nature, since the same things are not knowable to us as are knowable unconditionally. That is why we must

6 See *APo* II.1, 89b23-35.

7 For an extended analysis of *archai* (first principles) and its role in human knowledge see Irwin 1988.

8 Reeve 2018, p. 179.

9 See also *Met.* I.1, 981a28-30.

10 See *APo* II.10, 94a1-10.

in this way advance from things that are less perspicuous by nature but more perspicuous to us to the things that are more perspicuous by nature and more knowable.” (*Phys.* 184a17-a21).

The second paragraph indicates that we do not build our scientific knowledge and our ability to demonstrate it out of nothing. Based on *APo* I and II, it is clear that Aristotle presupposes that we possess some kind of pre-existing knowledge of a non-demonstrative nature. So, Aristotle tells us that it is very natural that when we start to make a methodological inquiry, we already do possess some kind of non-demonstrative and pre-existing knowledge. We ‘know’ things that are more perspicuous to us in a weaker sense, and we advance to things that are more perspicuous by nature. But what is the nature of objects that are more perspicuous to us? An answer to this question can be found in the next sentence of Aristotle’s text.

— V. HOW TO PROCEED FROM THAT WHICH IS CONFUSED TO THAT WHICH IS DIFFERENTIATED?

Let’s continue with the first half of the last paragraph: “The things that are in the first instance clear and perspicuous to us are rather confused. It is only later, through a division of these, that we come to know their elements and starting-points. That is, why we must proceed from the universals to the particulars. For it is the whole that is more knowable by perception, and the universal is a sort of whole. For the universal embraces many things as parts.” (*Phys.* 184a22-b10).

To return to the previous question, (what is the nature of objects that are more perspicuous to us), we can now see that those objects are universals and they are rather confused. This means that such objects cannot satisfy our requirement to lay down the basic principles of science. Therefore, I suggest following Reeves¹¹ in distinguishing (i) confusing and raw starting-points or principles which we possess naturally *via* our perceptual habits and also *via* our ordinary linguistic practise from (ii) explanatory relevant starting-points which we derived from the previous ones through the process of division (*diairesis*).¹²

The role and importance that Aristotle ascribes to the process of division (*diairesis*) and its results can be found in *APo* II.13 and II.14. By *diairesis* we conceptually pick up those items (relevant attributes, causes or elements) which we need as the parts of the broader items – definitions and demonstrations. To divide means to pick up something from previously posited item or previously presupposed whole.

— VI. HOW TO PROCEED FROM THE UNIVERSALS TO THE PARTICULARS?

In the process of division, we divide something broader (which has been previously somehow grasped or postulated by the operation of abstraction) into more (at least into two) narrower parts.

¹¹ See Reeve 2018, pp. xiv-xlv.

¹² A complex assessment of the role prescribed to the procedure of division by Aristotle can be found in Falcon 1997.

However, we recognize those parts as parts of the whole only conceptually. So, our natural route is to start with something which is broader, more universal and acquired (collected) through our sense-perception (and therefore not clearly distinguished) and to proceed downwards until we reach particulars.

There is a huge discussion about the meaning of the phrase καθ' ἑκάστα in this chapter of Aristotle's *Physics*.¹³ However, to allow space for my main point, I just confess that I follow the interpretation that understands particulars as the lowest level kind of species (ideally, the *infimae species*). The reason why I do that is that only such interpreted ultimate particulars fulfil the requirement to be results of the *diairesis* procedure and only such comprehended particulars can take part in definitions which we need to establish the demonstrative science in the form of *apodeixis*. To clarify his message, Aristotle attaches three analogical examples which should help us to comprehend what he has in mind.

VII. ANALOGY TO THE ROUTE OF GRASPING THE FIRST PRINCIPLES, STATING THE CAUSES AND REACHING THE ELEMENTS

Let's start with the last part of Aristotle's text. "The same thing happens in a way with names in relation to their account. For a name like "circle" signifies a sort of whole in an undivided way, whereas the definition divides it into its particular [elements]. And children at first suppose all men to be their fathers and all women

their mothers, only later coming to divide up each of them." (*Phys.* 184a22-b10). Aristotle wants to be understood well, hence he attached analogies. He tries to indicate that the route from the universal and rather confused to the particular and precise (differentiated) is somehow similar to (a) the name – account relation. But this is a very general analogy which is illustrated in its turn by two specific examples – by (b) the definition of a circle and by (c) the language acquisition analogy.

I think it could be helpful to ask what these examples have in common. Beyond a doubt, all of them are about names, more precisely about the noun-kind of names ("circle", "fathers" "men" etc.). All of them are about named objects, i.e., sense-perceptible entities (like a particular circle I drew on a sheet of paper or concrete individuals like my father or the man over there). All of them include a procedure of division (dividing some pre-existing and confused objects into their parts) and finally, all of these examples are about a process of transformation of something which is indeterminate into something which is definite and somehow basic or fundamental.

Let's look at Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Here we can find the definition of circle. A circle is "a plane figure that extends equally from the centre".¹⁴ I think what Aristotle wants us to realize is the following. A name like "circle" or "father" signifies a sort of whole in an undivided way, whereas *via* a process of division we arrive at definitions which divide

¹³ See e.g., Ross 1936 (pp. 456-458) and Owens 1981.

¹⁴ *Rhet.* III.6, 1407b26-27.

something formerly undifferentiated into its particulars. Hence definition reveals the *differentia specifica* and this makes the essential features of the object we want to scientifically understand precisely comprehensible.

Now we can turn our heads towards the language acquisition analogy once again. “And children at first suppose all men to be their fathers and all women their mothers, only later coming to divide up each of them.” (*Phys.* 184b12-14). It seems to me that this analogy makes better sense if it is read in the context of *APo.* II.14, where Aristotle warns scientists not to confine themselves to traditional class-names (*koina onomata*). Such a behaviour could be harmful to science. If scientists limit themselves to attributes expressible only by common terms, they miss a chance to identify explanatory, relevant distinctive features of the natural objects they want to study and understand.¹⁵ I think that ordinary words (*koina onomata*) signify the muddle of elements and principles given us through our experience (sense-perception, memory) and through the process of *epagógé*. Hence, I think that for Aristotle, the first task of the scientific approach is to analyse perceived phenomena and ordinary concepts. If we do so, we will be able to distinguish the parts of these sensory and linguistic muddles and we will arrive at the particular things underlying them. Only then we can securely set up the demonstrative science. Therefore, I suggest rejecting the notion that Aristotle is some

kind of naïve epistemological realist who advocates a direct correspondence between our thinking and the world. Neither is he some kind of innatist who presupposes that we somehow directly grasp the right forms of the natural objects we observe. I think that the last analogy vividly indicates that Aristotle sees the acquisition of language as a social process in which we stabilize our “wordings”. We first learn to hear and to pronounce “wordings” in the right situations (referring to the objects successfully) and only through this process, with the help of new “wordings”, do we develop our ability to analyse (to differentiate) our formerly muddled concepts arrived at as the results of our direct observations, memories or experiences.

VIII. CONCLUSION

What can we gain from Aristotle’s *Phys.* I.1 for a reconstruction of his theory of language? To scientifically understand nature and its objects, we need to grasp objects of a different character, not the objects of our ordinary experience. We are looking for objects which could help us explain why some natural phenomena occur regularly because, for Aristotle, science is all about explaining what happens always or at least for the most part. We can ask e.g., Why is it so that human beings manifest themselves *via* language? To answer this question, we need to start with the identification of those objects which can help us to understand language, namely principles, elements and causes. Before we start our scientific inquiry, we have to realize that the objects of our everyday

¹⁵ Cf. *APo.* II.14, 98a13-19.

experience, collected *via* our memory and described by our ordinary language offer us only confused concepts (such as writing, speech, sound, sentences, meaning and so on). Without further analysis (*diairesis*) of our confused concepts about language we are not ready to obtain precise and theoretically-sensitive concepts that could help us to understand and explain human language.

To legitimize my interpretation, I should be ready to show whether there is such a procedure in Aristotle's corpus. Whether Aristotle was looking for the principles, i.e., real definitions of natural objects and their attributes when studying human language. Did he analyse natural phenomena, and did he identify the basic building blocks (elements = material causes) of which our speech is made, our language consists of? And finally, did Aristotle explain a state of affairs *via* specifying some features or some objects which are responsible for it? My answer is yes. Aristotle did exactly so. He identified theoretically-sensitive objects (air, soul, reason/nous, differentiation, phonemes, syllables, logical conjunctions etc.) which help us to understand and explain natural phenomenon of human language.

In Aristotle's *History of animals* and *De anima* we can find a note on the material cause of human language. Aristotle identifies the material cause of human language with air. He claims human speech is made of air, which we produce in our lungs, exhale by our midriff and modulate *via* our 'vocal cords'. But instead of vocal cords, Aristotle enlisted the whole complex of bodily organs such

as lungs, windpipe, trachea, larynx, pharynx, tongue, lips etc.¹⁶

In his *De Anima* Aristotle enounces the efficient (or moving) cause of human language. The efficient cause of our language is our soul. Human language is caused by a human soul possessing the faculty of reason (at least in the stage of *dynamis*, which could be developed and manifested later on).

If we look at Aristotle's political writings, namely at his *Politics*, we can find another perspective on the final cause of human language. Aristotle proclaims that "the function of language is to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and so also the just and unjust, for it is peculiar to man in comparison with other animals that he alone has the perception of good and bad, just and unjust and other such things."¹⁷ One can ask whether assignment of such a purpose is not an idealistic one and whether it is accessible to all of us. My opinion on this is as follows, even though the telos of human language is achieved in the society spontaneously, it is not achieved by all of us. One needs to use the language for noble purposes.

Working on the basis of the foregoing I conclude that the phenomenon of language could be understood only when analysed from a variety of perspectives, *via* categories of principles, cause and elements. In Aristotle's writings, our human language is part of our human organism, so its study certainly falls

16 See *DA* II.8, 420b5-421a6 and *HA* IV.9, 535a29-535b2.

17 *Pol.* 1253a13-17 (Here I use the translation by Zirin 1980).

within the competence of natural philosophy, i.e., physics.

But at the same time our language also exceeds our bodies, makes itself semi-independent (or let's say it has an objective existence in the world) and therefore it is accessible to others. For that very reason, we are able to study the language *per se*, language as a system. It is this perspective that Aristotle applies when studying the parts of our language (in his *Poetics*), the effects of our speech acts (in his *Rhetoric*) and the rules of our linguistically expressed reasoning in his writings on logic (*Cat.*, *De Int.*, *APr*, *APo*, *Top.*, *SE*).

Therefore, reconstruction of Aristotle's theory of language could be successful only when we apply a more integrationist approach. Only then it will be possible to explain how Aristotle's views of language (laden by different perspectives and different goals of study) are connected to each other.

— APPENDIX:

A TERMINOLOGICAL REMARK

When talking about human beings I use the terms 'language' and 'speech' interchangeably. The reason for that is as follows. From Aristotle's zoological writings we can reliably extract the idea of logical subsumption among concepts of noise, voice, speech and language.¹⁸ Human language (*logos*) is kind of speech

(*dialektos*), every speech is kind of voice (*phóné*) and every consciously produced voice is kind of noise (*psofos*), but not *vice versa*. Aristotle ascribes voice only to those living beings which produce noise *via* their respiratory system. This is a physiological requirement. But the voice must be caused by the souls of animals and it must be accompanied by *phantasmata*. This is a psychological requirement.¹⁹ Next, he distinguishes the speech-kind of voice and he names it *dialektos*. *Dialektos* is an articulated voice. So, there is a physiological requirement of articulation, which in fact is the ability of an animal to join the discrete units of voice into more complex units according to some rules. And as far as these rules are concerned, there is also a social requirement for the way in which speech is transmitted from one individual to another in the living community. Finally, on top of that, Aristotle recognized even *logos* which is a species-specific kind of speech attributed only to human beings and only to those who possess capacity of nous. But it must be clarified that to achieve a fully developed manifestation of human language one has to develop it socially. Last of all, we must not forget that for Aristotle every linguistic assertion and human language as a whole is meaningful only by convention (κατὰ συνθήκην), not as an instrument.²⁰

18 Cf. *HA* IV.9, 535a27-b3.

19 Cf. *DA* II.8, 420b26-32.

20 Cf. *De Int.* 17a1-2.

ABBREVIATIONS

Aristotelés		<i>DA</i>	<i>De Anima</i>
<i>Cat.</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>HA</i>	<i>History of Animals</i>
<i>De Int.</i>	<i>De Interpretatione</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>Parts of Animals</i>
<i>APr</i>	<i>Prior Analytics</i>	<i>GA</i>	<i>Generation of Animals</i>
<i>APo</i>	<i>Posterior Analytics</i>	<i>Rhet.</i>	<i>Rhetoric</i>
<i>Top.</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Politics</i>
<i>SE</i>	<i>Sophistical Refutations</i>	<i>Phys.</i>	<i>Physics</i>

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Etymology and Meaning of προαίρεσις in Aristotle's *Ethics*

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ABSTRACT

Abstract: In *NE* III.2 1112a13 Aristotle raises the following question: “What is προαίρεσις?”. But προαίρεσις has different meanings and it is practically untranslatable into modern languages, as are most crucial terms of classical Greek. In this article, the author attempts to explain what προαίρεσις is for Aristotle. The author first presents the etymology of the term προαίρεσις based upon Aristotle’s remarks in his ethical treatises and shows that the term does not reflect what προαίρεσις is for him. Second, the author outlines characteristics of the uncontrolled person and indicates, on this ground, what Aristotle’s προαίρεσις is not. Finally, the author points out that προαίρεσις in the full sense involves two elements – the orrectical-deliberative element and the decisional-functional element – and sketches out their features.

INTRODUCTION

In *NE* III.2 1112a13 Aristotle raises the following question: “What is προαίρεσις?”, whereas in *EE* II.10 1225b19-20, he notes that one might be in doubt about the genus to which προαίρεσις belongs. But contemporary commentators have bigger doubts as to what προαίρεσις is. For this term has several meanings¹ and it is practically untranslatable into modern languages, as are most crucial terms of classical

Greek². However, it does not mean that προαίρεσις cannot be understood. Thus, an attempt at interpreting Aristotle’s προαίρεσις is not a completely hopeless task. Nonetheless, one must be careful not to be tempted to replace προαίρεσις with one word or to narrow its many

1 The term προαίρεσις occurs in different contexts and may mean, for example, “choice”, “decision”, “purpose”, “undertaking”. On the notion of προαίρεσις and the number of appearances of it in Greek writing or language, see Gauthier and Jolif (in Aristotle (1959), pp. 189-190). See also Formichelli (2009), pp. 21-32 who additionally presents the occurrence of προαίρεσις in the Aristotelian Corpus.

2 It should be noted that the main Greek terms are in principle untranslatable into modern languages: ἀρετή, εὐδαιμονία, ψυχή or just προαίρεσις are examples of such terms. This is due to the fact that they occur in a different and temporally distant cultural reality. The practice of using a one-word equivalent for the Greek notion is essentially an obstacle to becoming acquainted with semantic variability of it in different contexts. Thus, some commentators think that basic Greek terms should be left in transliteration or in Greek font and they ought to be treated as tool words with different meanings, see e.g., Adkins (1972), p. 4.

meanings down to only one³. That is why I will not translate this term throughout the paper and leave it in the original version⁴.

This article consists of three sections. In the first section, I present the etymology of the term προαίρεσις based upon Aristotle's remarks in his ethical treatises and show that etymological comments do not reflect what προαίρεσις is for Aristotle himself.

In the second section, I refer to the passage *NE* VII.10 1152a15-24 in which Aristotle claims, among others things, that ἀκρατής or the uncontrolled person has a decent προαίρεσις. This raises a question, because he insists in another place that προαίρεσις verifies human characters better than actions (*III.2* 1111b6)⁵. Thus, there is the following puzzle: If

προαίρεσις of ἀκρατής is decent, it will be a problem to distinguish between the character of the uncontrolled person and the character of the decent person or the serious one. Therefore, I outline features of the uncontrolled person, especially, of the melancholic and weak one. Next, I consider an example of an uncontrolled behavior that can be useful for understanding προαίρεσις. I try to indicate, on that basis, what Aristotle's προαίρεσις is not. I put forward a suggestion that προαίρεσις in the full sense, according to Aristotle, is none of the things included in a list of features, nor their arrangement. Hence, προαίρεσις cannot be reduced to any of these features: setting a goal nor to thoughtful undertaking nor to preferential choice, i.e., choice of one course of action rather than another, nor to deciding about proceeding with the realization of a thoughtful undertaking or a preferentially chosen course of action nor to deciding about proceeding with what is chronologically first in the sequence of steps which lead to reaching the set goal. At all events, προαίρεσις ought to be something more than the configuration of them, that is, if προαίρεσις is to be understood as a better verifier of human characters than actions.

In the third section, I attempt to demonstrate that προαίρεσις, as interpreted by Aristotle, consists of two elements – the orrectical-deliberative element and the decisional-functional element – and I try to sketch out their features.

to verify from the deeds what sort of person someone is".

3 See e.g., Nielsen (2011), p. 385, note 6) who suggests that προαίρεσις is a tricky term.

4 Commentators differently translate the term προαίρεσις used by Aristotle in *Ethics*. See e.g., Aquinas, Thomas (in Aristoteles (1949)) – *electio*; Irwin (in Aristotle (1985)) – *decision*; Crisp (in Aristotle (2000)) – *rational choice*; Dirlmeier (in Aristoteles (1962)) – *Entscheidung*; Gauthier i Jolif (in Aristotele (1958)) – *décision*; Gromska (in Arystoteles (1956)) – *postanowienie* (in English – *resolution*); Kenny (1979) – *purposive choice or choice*; Ostwald (in Aristotle (1962)) – *choice*, but see also Glossary – *choice, or moral choice*; Sorabji (1980) – *deliberative choice*; Tricot (in Aristotele (1959)) – *choix préférentiel*; Wróblewski (in Arystoteles (1977)) – *postanowienie, czyli świadomy wybór* (in English – *resolution, that is, conscious choice*); Zanatta (in Aristoteles (2012)) – *scelta deliberata*.

5 Cf. *EE* II.11 1228a2-3 and 1228a11; but see also 1228a15-17: "Furthermore, it is because it is not easy to discern what sort of προαίρεσις it is that we are forced

I. THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE TERM ΠΡΟΑΪΡΕΙΣ IN ARISTOTLE'S ETHICS

The term προαίρεσις consists of an adverb πρό (before) and a noun αἵρεσις (choosing or taking, seizing, grasping with the hand). Literally, it means “choosing one thing before another” or “taking one thing before another”. The adverb πρό, however, can be understood preferentially or temporally⁶.

The first interpretation would suggest that προαίρεσις is a preferential choice, i.e. a choice of one thing in preference to another or a choice of one course of action in preference to another⁷. Thus, προαίρεσις would require a comparison of alternatives.

In the case of the second interpretation the point can be understood in two ways: a] the adverb πρό can underline the point that προαίρεσις is made on the basis of deliberation that is prior to action⁸ – temporal as “before the action”; b] the adverb πρό can stress the point that προαίρεσις means to decide about

doing what is chronologically first in the deliberated sequence of steps which lead to achieving the set goal⁹ – temporal as “first in action”.

However, it must be added that there is another understanding of the adverb πρό. It is underlined by Nielsen ([2011]: 408) that the preferential and temporal understanding are not exhaustive. The adverb πρό can emphasize that the agent picks out the act for the sake of a specific goal and takes the position in front of it with the purpose to defend it¹⁰. Thus, πρό in προαίρεσις can also accentuate the idea that the agent is about to protect a certain goal in order to achieve it¹¹. What, however, does Aristotle himself say about the etymology of the term προαίρεσις?

In *EE* II.10 1226b2-8 – after emphasizing προαίρεσις is neither belief (δόξα) nor wanting (βούλησις)¹² – Aristotle

6 See e.g., Brown (in Aristotle (2009), p. 220) who maintains that the adverb πρό – in προαίρεσις – means both “before” and “in preference to”. However, she suggests that the first meaning emphasizes what happened before the action. She says that “choice is of one course of action rather than another, but it also [...] is *what has been decided by an earlier deliberation* (i.e. before the action)”.

7 The partisan of preferential understanding of the adverb πρό is, e.g., Aquinas, Thomas (1949), p. 128.

8 The partisan of the first temporal understanding of the adverb πρό is e.g., Irwin (1999) who points out in his comment to *NE* III.2 1112a15-17 that “what is decided is what has been previously deliberated (to *probouleumenon*)”.

9 The partisan of the second temporal understanding of the adverb πρό is e.g., Joachim (1955), pp. 100-101.

10 “This is a use of ‘*pro*’ that is evident in expression such as ‘*stēnai pro Trōōn*’: standing in front of, and hence in defense of, the Trojans. Latin uses ‘*pro*’ in a similar sense in expressions such as ‘*pro bono*’ (an abbreviation of ‘*pro bono publico*’, for the common good)”, Nielsen (2011), p. 408, note 39. See also Bostock (2000), p. 39, note 21 who insists that “‘choice-for-the-sake-of’, i.e., a choice made with some definite end in view” fits to Aristotle’s account of προαίρεσις.

11 Nielsen (*ibidem*), p. 408 thinks that Aristotle wants us to hear all three senses of the adverb πρό in προαίρεσις.

12 A few lines earlier Aristotle excludes the possibility that προαίρεσις could mean appetite (ἐπιθυμία) or spiritedness (θυμός), because both types of desire are typical for animals, whereas προαίρεσις does not occur in animals (*EE*

comes to the conclusion that προαίρεσις is the result of the combination of both these things. For they are present during realization of προαίρεσις. And he underlines that it is also shown, if only to a certain extent (δηλοῖ δέ πως; b6), in the name itself for “προαίρεσις is choosing/taking; not simply, but one thing before another, and this is not possible without examination and deliberation. Therefore, προαίρεσις is the outcome of deliberative belief”¹³.

In NE III.2 1112a13-17 – after underlining that προαίρεσις is not one of the things discussed before, i.e. ἐπιθυμία, θυμός, βούλησις, δόξα¹⁴ –

II.10 1225b26-27). Indeed, προαίρεσις is a distinct feature of human beings. And probably for this reason too, Aristotle thinks that προαίρεσις can be a human trait on the basis of which people’s characters are better fixed.

13 ἡ γὰρ προαίρεσις αἴρεσις μὲν ἐστίν, οὐχ ἀπλῶς δέ, ἀλλ’ ἐτέρου πρὸ ἐτέρου· τοῦτο δὲ οὐχ οἷόν τε ἄνευ σκέψεως καὶ βουλῆς. διὸ ἐκ δόξης βουλευτικῆς ἐστὶν ἡ προαίρεσις; EE II.10 1226b6-9.

14 In both *Ethics* Aristotle indicates certain features of προαίρεσις based on the outlined distinctions between προαίρεσις and four other phenomena of ψυχή, namely appetite (ἐπιθυμία), spiritedness (θυμός), wanting (βούλησις) and belief (δόξα). By juxtaposing προαίρεσις with ἐπιθυμία and θυμός, he concludes that προαίρεσις concerns the “good” or “bad”, whereas ἐπιθυμία and θυμός concern the “pleasure” or “pain”. Against the background of the distinction between προαίρεσις and βούλησις, he shows that προαίρεσις has only to deal with things that depend on us and are doable, whereas βούλησις may also refer to things that do not depend on us and are not doable. In turn, when it comes to the discrepancy between προαίρεσις and δόξα, he argues that προαίρεσις is classified on the basis of whether it is good or bad, whereas δόξα is classified on the basis of whether it is

Aristotle poses the question whether the object of προαίρεσις is what has been obtained by prior deliberation (τὸ προβεβουλευμένον; a15). The question seems rhetorical, as Aristotle adds “προαίρεσις is connected with calculation and thought – and even the name appears to signify that the object of προαίρεσις is in fact choosing/taking before another”¹⁵.

In MM¹⁶ I.17 – after underscoring that προαίρεσις is not the same as βούλησις (1189a12-13)¹⁷ – the Author states that προαίρεσις is as its name suggests: “Therefore, whenever we *take* the better in exchange for the worse – when it is a matter of choice – the term ‘τὸ προαιρεῖσθαι’ would seem to be correctly used”¹⁸.

true or false (see EE II.10 1225b26-1226b2 and NE III.2 1111b12-1112a11).

15 ἡ γὰρ προαίρεσις μετὰ λόγου καὶ διανοίας. ὑποσημαίνειν δ’ ἔοικε καὶ τοῦνομα ὡς ὄν πρὸ ἐτέρων αἰρετόν; NE III.2, 1112a15-17.

16 There are disputes as to the authenticity of the MM. Some commentators argue that MM is the work of Aristotle (see e.g. Schleiermacher (1835), Düring (1966)). Others claim it is not (see e.g. Jaeger (1923), Kenny (1978). Bobonich (2006) remarks that some ethical analyses in MM differ from analogical analyses in EE and NE. And this is – in my opinion – the case with etymology of προαίρεσις. For in MM the explanation is founded on the preposition ἀντί, while in EE and NE it is founded on the adverb πρὸ (see, however, note. 19).

17 A few lines earlier the author of MM declares that προαίρεσις is not desire (ὄρεξις) by referring to an argument, which is analogical to the argument in EE (see note 12). But there is a difference, for in EE II.10 1225b25-26 ὄρεξις is the general term for three types of desires, i.e., appetite, spiritedness and wanting, while in MM ὄρεξις refers rather to the first two.

18 ὅταν οὖν ἀντικαταλλαττώμεθα τὸ βέλτιον ἀντὶ τοῦ χείρονος ἐν αἰρέσει ὄντος,

Etymological notes do not exclude preferential nor temporal meanings of the adverb *πρό*¹⁹. But Aristotle clearly emphasizes that *προαίρεσις* remains in close relation with calculation and thought²⁰. So, there are reasons to assume that the adverb *πρό* refers primarily, in the case of *προαίρεσις*, to deliberation (*βούλευσις*), that is, to practical thought which precedes an action that ought to lead to achievement of a set goal. Indeed, the deliberation consists in discovering and developing a reliable way to the realization of the established goal. However, it does not follow that *προαίρεσις* involves the consideration of alternatives and choosing only one of them.

In *NE* III.3, where Aristotle studies deliberation, it is shown that it is a search which relies on finding the means needed to achieve the designated

goal. It is true that he permits situations in which a given goal can be achieved in many ways. Then, in such circumstances, the task of deliberation is, first of all, to find the easiest and finest way to do so (1112b17). In this sense, *προαίρεσις* could take the form of a preferential choice and to be a choice of one of several alternatives that have been previously considered. But it does not follow that it must be so and thus, that a preferential choice is the constitutive component of *προαίρεσις*. There are also situations in which the established goal can be achieved through only one means. In such circumstances, the task of deliberation is to consider how it will come about through this means and how this one can be obtained (b17-18). Thus, *προαίρεσις* does not have to take the form of a preferential choice. It does not have to be “choice of one thing in preference to another or of one course of action in preference to another”. What is required for *προαίρεσις* is to perform some sort of intellectual work, that is to make an investigation combined with analysis (*ζητεῖν καὶ ἀναλύειν*; b20) and finally to discover (*εὕρεῖν*; b19) the way that guarantees the accomplishment of designated goal. But it is necessary to add that the process of seeking may be successfully completed, when such a way is possible at all and the discovered way is possible for the person who was looking for it.

Thus, the preferential interpretation of the adverb *πρό* can be misleading. For *προαίρεσις* does not have to include the choice of one thing in preference to another. In this sense, the temporal

ἐνταῦθα τὸ προαιρεῖσθαι δόξειεν ἂν οἰκεῖον εἶναι; *MM* I.17 1189a14-17.

19 In *MM* the adverb *πρό* appears in I.17 1189a34, where the author points out an inseparable connection between *προαίρεσις* and thought: “If, then, *προαίρεσις* is certain desire, [that is] determined by deliberation, [that is] accompanied with thought (Εἰ τοίνυν ἡ *προαίρεσις* ὁρεξίς τις βουλευτική μετὰ διανοίας), the ‘voluntary’ cannot be identical with ‘*προαιρετόν*’. For we do many things voluntarily before thinking and deliberating about them (ἐκόντες γὰρ πολλὰ πράττομεν πρὸ τοῦ διανοηθῆναι καὶ βουλευσασθαι) – for instance, we sit down and stand up, and do many other things like that voluntarily but without having thought about them – whereas each action taken in accordance with *προαίρεσις* is in connection with thought” (1189a32-1189b1).

20 On the matter of close relation between *προαίρεσις* and deliberation in *MM*, see note 19.

interpretation of the adverb *πρό* is more promising, because *πρό* can stress that a thoughtful undertaking has come into play in *προαίρεσις* and therefore, it could simply be taking on something after prior deliberation. However, it may well suggest that it is about taking on something that was indicated by deliberation as chronologically first in the sequence of steps which lead to the achievement of the goal laid down.

The temporal interpretation of the adverb *πρό* seems to be confirmed by the summary note of III.3. Aristotle underlines that *προαίρεσις* is desire, determined by deliberation, for something that is up to us²¹. The statement draws attention to the connection of *προαίρεσις*, *βούλευσις* and *ὄρεξις*, and it is also important because of this connection. However, it does not follow that it is impossible to maintain the preferential interpretation of the adverb *πρό*. Rather, the point is that the application of the adverb *πρό* is not limited to its preferential understanding. Thus, given situations in which various alternatives of action must be considered, it may be suggested that in some contexts the preferential understanding of the adverb *πρό* is not wrong.

However, it must be added that Aristotle introduces his etymological remarks using phrases²² that seem to suggest that the explanation of the origin of the term *προαίρεσις* does not fully

reflect what it is for him. Admittedly, the Greek term does not reflect the relation between deliberation and desire in realized *προαίρεσις*. Furthermore, it does not indicate the connection between *προαίρεσις* and action.

Let's repeat again, Aristotle underlines the point that *προαίρεσις* means desire qualified by deliberation (*βουλευτική ὄρεξις*; 1113a11). This could suggest that *προαίρεσις* signifies desire which has gained an imprimatur of reason²³. Hence, it becomes a real desire to achieve a goal in accordance with an algorithm elaborated in the framework of deliberation. After all, wanting a goal is equivalent to wanting reliable means to achieve it, but only those that are in our power.

I think, however, that Aristotle is interested in something more. I will try to demonstrate that Aristotle's *προαίρεσις* consists of: a] setting the goal; b] thoughtful undertaking or preferential choice, where both assume deliberation about how to achieve the designated goal but second requires

21 ἡ προαίρεσις ἂν εἴη βουλευτική ὄρεξις τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν; *EN* III.3 1113a10-11.

22 See δηλοῖ δέ πως; *EE* II.10 1226b6; ἔοικε [...] ὡς; *NE* III.2 1112a16-17; δόξειεν ἂν; *MM* I.17 1189a17.

23 See e.g., Charles (2011), p 204 who suggests that *προαίρεσις* ('preferential choice' in his translation) is not "a combination of intellect and desire but rather a distinctive type of state: intellectual desire or desiderative intellect". It could be added that in *EE* II.10 1225b20 Aristotle raises the following question: "Where to locate *προαίρεσις*?" and he does not answer this question. In *NE* he does not even pose a similar question. Perhaps this is because *προαίρεσις* fulfills the function of the link which merges the rational and irrational dimension of *ψυχή* into a harmonious whole. Thus, it is difficult to formulate an unambiguous answer to the question "Where to locate *προαίρεσις*?".

deliberation on alternative courses of action; c] making the decision about proceeding with a thoughtful undertaking or preferentially chosen course of action; d] proceeding with the realization of the determined course of action, that is, taking on what has been determined by deliberation as chronologically first in the sequence of steps that lead to the achievement of the designated goal; e] continuation of action that leads to the achievement of that goal. Thus, Aristotle's προαίρεσις in the full sense ought to contain these five moments or features. This claim can be shown through the study of προαίρεσις in the case of the uncontrolled person.

II. THE UNCONTROLLED PERSON AND ΠΡΟΑΪΡΕΙΣ

In NE VII.7 1150b19-28 Aristotle shows two basic kinds of uncontrolled person: the impetuous uncontrolled person (προπετής ἀκρατής) and the weak one (ἀσθενής ἀκρατής). He additionally distinguishes within the first type the melancholic uncontrolled person (μελαγχολικός ἀκρατής) and the swift one (ὀξύς ἀκρατής)²⁴. When it comes to Aristotle's interpretation of προαίρεσις, it is NE VII.10 1152a15-20 that deserves attention:

"So the uncontrolled person is not like those who know and have regard for their knowledge, but like those who are asleep or drunk. Although they act voluntarily – for they know in a way

both what they are doing and for the sake of what they are doing it – they are not wicked; their προαίρεσις is decent. As a consequence, they are only half-wicked. They are not unjust either, since they do not draw up an action plan of their bad deeds. One type of the uncontrolled person is not apt to abide by the results of their deliberation, while another, the melancholic type is not even apt to deliberate at all. So, the uncontrolled person is like a city-state that passes all the indispensable decrees and has serious laws, but it makes no use of them"²⁵.

Aristotle points to general features of the uncontrolled person. They act voluntarily, because they are aware of what they are doing and in a way for what goal. Thus, they are responsible for their acts. Furthermore, they do bad things. But they are not unjust, even though they do unjust things. For they lack vicious dispositions or acquired states of being able to act unjustly²⁶. So, if they act unjustly, they will not do it deliberately. Indeed, they are not plotters²⁷. He also maintains that they are not wicked, but only half-wicked

25 οὐδὲ δὴ ὡς ὁ εἰδὼς καὶ θεωρῶν, ἀλλ' ὡς ὁ καθεύδων ἢ οἴνωμένος. καὶ ἐκὼν μὲν (τρόπον γὰρ τινα εἰδὼς καὶ ὁ ποιεῖ καὶ οὐ ἔνεκα), πονηρὸς δ' οὐ· ἢ γὰρ προαίρεσις ἐπιεικής ὡς θ' ἡμιπόνηρος. καὶ οὐκ ἄδικος οὐ γὰρ ἐπίβουλος ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν οὐκ ἐμμενετικός οἷς ἂν βουλευέσθαι, ὁ δὲ μελαγχολικός οὐδὲ βουλευτικός ὅλως. καὶ ἔοικε δὴ ὁ ἀκρατής πόλει ἢ ψηφίζεται μὲν ἅπαντα τὰ δέοντα καὶ νόμους ἔχει σπουδαίους, χρήται δὲ οὐδέν; NE VII.10 1152a14-21.

26 See e.g., NE V.8 1135b24 or VII.8 1151a10-11.

27 See e.g., NE V.8 1135b20.

24 On the matter of typology of uncontrolled persons, see e.g. Charles (2011), pp. 187-209.

(ἡμιπόνηρος; a18). We can surmise why they are wicked from the expression “half-wicked” – their actions are bad. But why are they only half-wicked? Are they only half-wicked, because they lack vicious dispositions or acquired states of being able to do bad things? Possibly, but Aristotle insists that their προαίρεσις is decent (ἐπιεικής).

In this passage προαίρεσις is, at first glance, a general goal. That is what the analogy with a state’s laws refers to. For the uncontrolled person possesses knowledge about things they ought to never do in their life²⁸. In other words, it seems that in this context Aristotle understands προαίρεσις either as a general policy in life reflecting the person’s understanding of *eudaimonia* or as a goal that leads us in pursuit of *eudaimonia*. After all, the uncontrolled person is like a city-state that has serious laws, but makes use of none of them. Indeed, they possess knowledge – the equivalent of serious laws – but they do not use it. For they are like being in a dream or

drunk when they are doing something. Thus, they surrender to desires of irrational *psuchē* and do not follow their selves as rational beings. As a result of the lack of self-control, they listen to another aspect of themselves which does not fulfill, however, the function of an authoritative element in the structure of a human being. Nonetheless, Aristotle speaks about two different types of the uncontrolled person and the difference between them that can throw light on our understanding of προαίρεσις.

The lack of self-control (ἀκρασία) is brought on by excessive desire in the case of the melancholic uncontrolled person. And for this reason, they do not deliberate at all. In consequence, they do not deliberate before acting. Thus, it is not possible to observe *dissonance* between the elaborated action plan and the actual course of action in their case. In fact, they do not take any action plan because of their impulsiveness. That is why they act on the spur of the moment²⁹. Thus, in the matter of the melancholic uncontrolled person, when Aristotle says that the lack of self-control is contrary to one’s προαίρεσις he probably has in mind προαίρεσις as a general goal. And since προαίρεσις of every uncontrolled person is decent, we can assume that a general policy of life will

28 See e.g., *NE* IX.8 where Aristotle studies an *aporia* as to whether one ought to love oneself or someone else more (πότερον δεῖ φιλεῖν ἑαυτὸν μάλιστα ἢ ἄλλον τινά; 1168a28-29.). He shows that people criticize those who love themselves most and condemn them as “self-lover” in general (a29-30). And he stresses that they also accuse them of doing nothing apart from what concerns their own good (a31-33). So, those who make a value judgement in saying this, must possess knowledge that selfishness is a bad thing. But at the same time he underlines that such people or most of them do not use that knowledge and satisfy their appetites or non-rational aspect of their *psuchē* at the expense of others (1168b15-22). And it ought to be added that they satisfy their non-rational aspect of their *psuchē* at their own expense as rational beings.

29 It should be noted that the swift uncontrolled person is also guided by emotion (see e.g. *NE* VII.7 1150b21-22). But they are different from the melancholic uncontrolled person for they deliberate to some extent, though, as a result of an impetuous desire, they are unable to complete it. See e.g., Charles (2011), p. 194.

be *decent* in the case of the melancholic uncontrolled person.

The lack of self-control of the weak uncontrolled person is brought on by weak desires. But they are able to deliberate (βουλευτικός). In fact, they can deliberate before taking action that ought to lead to realization of the designated goal. And they are capable of deliberating by using a “moving back” strategy. They can begin the calculation from the desired situation and finish it after they get to the initial situation. Thus, they commence with the goal and move backwards through means, until they arrive at the first cause, which is the last in the process of discovery. As a result, they discover the sequence of steps that they are to follow, where the last is the first one to take. Indeed, those who deliberate ought to investigate and to analyze as with a geometrical figure³⁰. Nevertheless, they do not stand by what they have deliberated as a result of their susceptibility to relatively weak affective reactions (πάθη)³¹. Thus, they fail to be

practical, though they finish their deliberation and reach the good result from the point of view of some goal held fixed in mind. In other words, they do not realize what they have planned because of their unstable character, that is to say, on account of their vulnerability to be affected by non-insistent πάθη. There are discrepancies between their action plan and what they actually do. Thus, the weak uncontrolled person is not so bad as to reach the level of internal integrity that would confirm that they focus their life on an evil goal and strive for it deliberately³². And when Aristotle says that the lack of self-control is contrary to one's προαίρεσις he must have something more in mind about προαίρεσις than it was in the case of the melancholic uncontrolled person. Since the weak uncontrolled person deliberates before taking action and reaches the conclusion, their προαίρεσις will include a thoughtful undertaking or

30 “For the person who deliberates seems to investigate and to analyze [...], as he would in the case of a geometrical figure” (ὁ γὰρ βουλευόμενος ἔοικε ζητεῖν καὶ ἀναλύειν τὸν εἰρημένον τρόπον ὥσπερ διάγραμμα; NE III.3 1112b20-21).

31 See e.g., NE VII.8 1151a1-5: “Among uncontrolled people those who are excitable are better than those who have [action] plan but do not stand by it. For the latter are overcome by less affective reaction and, unlike former, are not without prior deliberation. For the [latter] uncontrolled person is like those who are quickly drunk and after little wine, that is, after less than most people” (αὐτῶν δὲ τούτων βελτίους οἱ ἐκστατικοὶ ἢ οἱ τὸν λόγον ἔχοντες μὲν, μὴ ἐμμένοντες δὲ ὑπ’ ἐλάττονος γὰρ πάθους ἡττώνται,

καὶ οὐκ ἀπροβούλευτοι ὥσπερ ἄτεροι· ὁμοῖος γὰρ ὁ ἀκρατὴς ἐστὶ τοῖς ταχὺ μεθυσκομένοις καὶ ὑπ’ ὀλίγου οἴνου καὶ ἐλάττονος ἢ ὡς οἱ πολλοί). It is clear, that Aristotle has in mind the weak uncontrolled person when he declares that the latter are overcome by less *pathē* than most people.

32 For Aristotle, a truly bad person has a corrupt character (κακός, πονηρός). They are characterized by an inner harmony between rational and sensorical-orectical functions of ψυχῇ. A sign of this harmony is a combination of character defects (ἡθικαὶ κακίαι), i.e. *competences* of ψυχῇ in sensorical-orectical function, and cunning (πανουργία), i.e., *competence* of reason in practical function. In fact, persons with a corrupt character are the master of evil, because they take actions based on προαίρεσις and for themselves (see e.g., NE VII.7 1150a20).

a preferential choice, depending on the situation. And since προαίρεσις of every uncontrolled person is decent, we can assume that both a general policy of life and a thoughtful undertaking or preferential choice will be *decent* in the case of the weak uncontrolled person.

As a consequence, προαίρεσις of the melancholic uncontrolled person differs from προαίρεσις of the weak uncontrolled person, although both are decent: προαίρεσις of the first will be limited to the setting of some goal (which is not bad); προαίρεσις of the second is something more, because deliberation is always a search for the means in light of having set down the goal. And since they conclude their deliberation, they will end it with a thoughtful undertaking or preferential choice.

Major characteristics of the weak uncontrolled person allow to assume that προαίρεσις is the combination of setting some goal and result of deliberation about how to achieve it. However, the deliberation is ended when it is completed by a thoughtful undertaking or preferential choice. Consequently, we could assume that προαίρεσις of the weak uncontrolled person includes such an undertaking or choice.

But it can be shown, against the background of the uncontrolled person's behavior, that could only apply to the weak one, that Aristotle's προαίρεσις is not limited to a thoughtful undertaking or preferential choice. I am going to show that προαίρεσις of the uncontrolled person could include making the decision about proceeding with the realization of an action plan or even

proceeding with the realization of the determined course of action, that is, taking on what has been determined by deliberation as chronologically first in the sequence of steps that lead to the achievement of the designated goal within the framework of the action plan developed. To show it, I will consider a certain example of behavior of the uncontrolled person.

We can imagine the uncontrolled person who realizes that they have an obesity problem. And we can assume that they deliberate before acting and consider possible action plans that would help them lose weight. For example, they take into account eating less sweets or jogging regularly, or following a slimming diet combined with physical activity³³.

Let us assume that our uncontrolled person comes to the conclusion, as a result of their own deliberation, that the last possibility is the most promising. They are going to change their eating habits and start exercising regularly. However, they know little about diets and slimming exercises. So, they plan to seek advice of a dietitian and to consult with a personal trainer. Thus, they make the preferential choice of one

33 Thus, there will be a preferential choice in the proposed example. However, it is already known that a preferential choice does not have to be an element of προαίρεσις. Of course, the example could be modified, because we could assume that our uncontrolled person considers only one way to lose weight – for example, a slimming diet combined with physical activity – and ends the deliberation with the thoughtful undertaking and not with the preferential choice.

course of action and decide to start the weight loss process from what is chronologically first in the sequence of steps that will lead to the achievement of the goal. In consequence, they try to register in a diet counseling center.

Hence, we can acknowledge that our uncontrolled person comes to the decent προαΐρεσις, which is not reduced only to the setting of the goal, that is, the losing weight (the goal that harmonizes with the general policy in life reflecting person's understanding of *eudaimonia*). But their προαΐρεσις also includes the preferential choice, making the decision about proceeding to the realization of the action plan and even proceeding with the realization of the determined course of action.

Let us imagine that they could not register in a diet counseling because of an objective reason – it is, for instance, too late and the counseling center is already closed. Thus, they put off the beginning of the weight loss process until the next day. But the next day they do not keep their preferential choice and do not put what they decided to do the previous day into action – they do not proceed with fulfilling the action plan and do not register in a diet counseling center. But they *abandon* it not because it is beyond their power. It is rather caused by their characteristic instability – instead of reaching for a telephone, they grasp something sweet. Consequently, their προαΐρεσις is decent, but what they actually do does not follow their plans and even their decision about proceeding with realization of a preferentially chosen course of action. The result is

not surprising, since the uncontrolled person goes against προαΐρεσις (see e.g., *NE* VII.8 1151a7).

However, what type of uncontrolled person is in our example? No doubt, it is not the melancholic one, because they do not deliberate before acting. But is it the weak one? It might be, though it is not clear, since our uncontrolled person makes the decision about proceeding with a preferentially chosen course of action and even tries to take on what has been determined by deliberation as chronologically first in the sequence of steps that lead to the achievement of the designated goal. Nonetheless, if a person is not serious, there will be room for the lack of self-control, because it is caused by conflict within the desires of *psuchē* between what is good and what is pleasant (*EE* VII.2 1237a7-9).

But it is significant that Aristotle attributes προαΐρεσις a special role. He emphasizes that human characters are better verified by προαΐρεσις than by action (*NE* III.2 1111b6). This is why, we judge who someone is on the grounds of προαΐρεσις (*EE* II.11 1228a2-3). But it is hard to accept that it is possible to say “they are the uncontrolled persons”, if we only consider their προαΐρεσις – after all, their προαΐρεσις is decent. In fact, we will be able to recognize that someone is the uncontrolled person if we take into account not only their general policy in life, but also their preferential choice or thoughtful undertaking and even their decision about proceeding with realization of designated goal in line with accepted action plan. Our example ultimately has a gap between

what has happened before the potential beginning of realizing the designated goal and the actual beginning or implementation of that goal. When there is no such interval, it is difficult to determine what the scope of the *activity* of προαίρεσις is. So, it is not clear whether the *activity* of προαίρεσις ends before the action starts or whether it *overlaps* with the action. But the occurrence of the interval allows us to assume that the *activity* of προαίρεσις *does really overlap* with action and it is a specific moment of it, at least in the sense that προαίρεσις starts the action. Ultimately, Aristotle underlines the point that “προαίρεσις is the origin of action – that from which the motion begins”³⁴. But we could add that προαίρεσις is the beginning to a higher degree than the moment of starting something, because προαίρεσις not only begins the action, but it is also *responsible for* its course. For the adverb πρό in προαίρεσις can also point out that the agents pick out the act for the sake of a specific goal and take the position in front of it with the purpose of defending it, which means they aim to achieve the set goal to the best of their ability³⁵.

Thus, the example seems to suggest that Aristotle’s προαίρεσις is not

to be limited to setting a goal nor to a thoughtful undertaking nor to a preferential choice nor to the configuration of them. But it also seems to imply that προαίρεσις can be something more than deciding about proceeding with realization of what has been thoughtfully undertaken or preferentially chosen. If such a view was wrong, it would be questionable that human characters are better defined by προαίρεσις than by action³⁶. We would have a problem with distinguishing between the uncontrolled person and the decent person (ἐπιεικής) or the serious one (σπουδαῖος), since προαίρεσις of second and third person is also decent. After all, Aristotle often identifies the decent person with serious one³⁷.

III. WHAT IS ΠΡΟΑΪΡΕΣΙΣ FOR ARISTOTLE?

I have suggested, at the end of section 1, that προαίρεσις in the full sense, according to Aristotle, ought to consist of: a] setting the goal; b] thoughtful undertaking or preferential choice, where both assume deliberation about how to achieve the designated goal but second requires deliberation on alternative courses of action; c] making the decision

34 πράξεως μὲν οὖν ἀρχὴ προαίρεσις—ὅθεν ἡ κίνησις; NE VI.2 1139a31-32.

35 Thus, there is the question – whether the *activity* of προαίρεσις extends only to the commencement of action or does it go on during the action and eventually ends with (successful) completion of it. As Broadie (1991), p. 212 notes, “a prohairetic response [...] is always [...] posed for possible revision”.

36 It does not have to be understood that human characters are defined solely with reference to προαίρεσις, and the actions do not matter. Of course, they are important. But the actions themselves are insufficient (see e.g., NE V.8 1135b2-8). And there would be also a problem with distinction between the uncontrolled person and the truly bad person (see note 32) without taking into account προαίρεσις.

37 See e.g., NE IX.4 1166a12-33.

about proceeding with a thoughtful undertaking or preferentially chosen course of action; d) proceeding with the realization of the determined course of action, that is, taking on what has been determined by deliberation as chronologically first in the sequence of steps that lead to the achievement of the designated goal; e] continuation of action that leads to the achievement of that goal. Thus, Aristotle's προαΐρεσις can not be reduced to any of the moments included in points a], b], c] and d], nor to their arrangement.

To show that προαΐρεσις consists of these five moments listed above, I have outlined features of the uncontrolled person, especially, of the melancholic and weak one, based on the passage *NE VII.10 1152a15-24*. Aristotle underlines the fact that προαΐρεσις of every uncontrolled person is decent. Since the melancholic uncontrolled person does not deliberate before acting I have demonstrated that προαΐρεσις is limited to a general policy of life in the case of them. But it turned out that προαΐρεσις of the weak uncontrolled person is something more, because they deliberate before taking action and conclude it, i.e., they end deliberation with the good result. Therefore, their προαΐρεσις may include a thoughtful undertaking or a preferential choice, depending on situation. Indeed, major characteristics of the weak uncontrolled person has allowed to assume that προαΐρεσις of the weak uncontrolled person is the combination of setting some goal and a thoughtful undertaking or a preferential choice.

Next, I have considered an example of an uncontrolled behavior and against the background of it I have shown that Aristotle's προαΐρεσις can also include making the decision about proceeding to the realization of an action plan and even the attempt to take on what has been determined by deliberation as chronologically first in the sequence of steps that lead to achieve the goal within the framework of the action plan developed.

But Aristotle attributes προαΐρεσις a special role, because he emphasizes that human characters are better verified by προαΐρεσις than by action. However, the above-mentioned moments in points a], b], c] and d] as well as the configuration of them can belong to a certain kind of the uncontrolled person³⁸. So, if προαΐρεσις of ἀκρατής is decent, it will be a problem to distinguish between the character of the uncontrolled person and the character of the decent person or the serious one. Thus, Aristotle's προαΐρεσις ought to be something more, if it is to be understood as a better verifier of human characters than actions.

According to the interpretation given at the end of section 2 "something

38 Of course, it is not the melancholic one, because they do not deliberate before acting. Nor it is the swift one, because they do not conclude the deliberation process. However, it remains the open question whether it is the weak one. Anyway, the uncontrolled person, in our example, tries to take on what has been determined by deliberation as chronologically first in the sequence of steps that lead to achieve the goal within the framework of the action plan developed. It may be that Aristotle's typology of the uncontrolled person is not complete.

more” indicates that the activity of προαίρεσις overlaps with the action. But the activity of it is not limited to the start of the action. The uncontrolled person, in our example, tries to begin the action with what is chronologically first in the sequence of steps which lead to reaching the set goal. Therefore, προαίρεσις must be the beginning to a higher degree than the moment of starting something. It not only begins the action, but it is also *responsible for* its course. And that is why προαίρεσις takes also into account the third understanding of the adverb πρό, that is, “πρό” as *standing in front of, and hence in defense of something*. Indeed, προαίρεσις in the full sense, according to Aristotle, must also include the continuation of action that leads to reaching the set goal. Thus, I think Aristotle’s προαίρεσις is constituted by two elements: the orrectical-deliberative element and the decisional-functional element³⁹.

39 I was inspired by Formichelli’s distinction (2009), p. 147 to look at προαίρεσις in this way. For he distinguishes dispositional and occurrent προαίρεσις. The first accentuates the fact that we have deliberated about the specific situation we are facing, the second underlines the fact that the deliberation is effectively realized in action at that time. Furthermore, I am in debt to other commentators. As Kenny (in Aristotle (2011), p. 159) suggests, “carrying out a monastic vow or a New Year’s resolution seems to be the closest thing in modern life to making an Aristotelian προαίρεσις (‘choice’ in his translation)”. In turn, Price (2011), pp. 309-310 notes that προαίρεσις (‘choice’ in his translation) “is more than a desire: when the time is due it becomes an attempt, and (if all goes well) an action”.

I can not fail to owe a debt of gratitude to Petrycy, Sebastian z Pilzna (old print [1608]; reprint [in:] Arystoteles [2011]: 205-217) who translates προαίρεσις by “choice or undertaking”. In my opinion⁴⁰, the expression is not used accidentally. I think he tries to demonstrate that Aristotle’s προαίρεσις in the full sense consists of: 1] “undertaking” in the sense of the set goal⁴¹; 2] “own choice” in the sense of the preferential choice and decision about proceeding with the process of realization of the set goal in accordance with accepted action plan⁴²; 3] “undertaking” in the sense of starting and continuation of the action that leads to the achievement of the set goal⁴³. Thus, one can get the impression that Petrycy attempts to show that: i] Aristotle’s προαίρεσις is a kind of the link between “choice” and “undertaking”; ii] “choice”

40 See Smolak (2018), pp. 327-348.

41 See Petrycy (in Arystoteles (2011), p. 217) and my comments with respect to that in Smolak (*ibidem*), pp. 344-345.

42 See Petrycy (in Arystoteles (2011), pp. 208-209). Petrycy distinguishes two kinds of “choice”: “common choice” and “own choice”. The first is “taking something” caused by an affective reaction. Thus, it is not made on the basis of deliberation. The second is the immanent principle of the realization of thoughtful actions, and as a consequence it is made on the basis of deliberation. The person who makes own choice must be *actor agendi*. Indeed, προαίρεσις of such a person ought to consist of preferential choice and making the decision about proceeding with a preferentially chosen course of action. I present my interpretation of Petrycy’s “own choice” in Smolak (*ibidem*), pp. 338-342.

43 See Petrycy (in Arystoteles (2011), p. 217) and my comments with respect to that in Smolak (*ibidem*), pp. 345-347.

and undertaking” are specific aspects of Aristotle’s προαίρεσις⁴⁴. But it must be added that each one of “understanding” is in a different relation to “choice” of action plan. “Undertaking” in the sense of 1] is prior to it; “undertaking” in the sense of 2] is after it. Thus, “undertaking” sets boundaries for προαίρεσις. And “choice” is made within these boundaries. But the boundary of “undertaking” in the sense of 2] is movable and it changes jointly with carrying out the action that aims to achieve the goal already laid down.

So, what are the constitutive elements of Aristotle’s προαίρεσις in my interpretation? The orectical-deliberative element underlines the fact that προαίρεσις is either a general policy in life reflecting the person’s understanding of *eudaimonia* or a goal that leads us in pursuit of *eudaimonia*. But it also stresses that προαίρεσις is a thoughtful undertaking or a preferential choice. Thus both are preceded by deliberation, that is, by intellectual work that consists in searching for the best course of action and in discovering a reliable way to accomplish the designated goal. And such an examination is founded on the “moving back” strategy. According to it, what is at the end of the calculated way is the starting point of the process which leads to the achievement of that goal. Hence, within the orectical-deliberative element of προαίρεσις, the *auctores agendas* set the goal and come to a thoughtful

undertaking or to a choice of the best course of action, and both ought to lead to the achievement of the designated goal. Indeed, in several places Aristotle indicates that προαίρεσις is “desire qualified by deliberation” (βουλευτική ὄρεξις).

The decisional-functional element emphasizes that *auctores agendas* must: a] make the decision about proceeding with realization of what they have undertaken or chosen; b] proceed with realization of the action plan and continue on this path. Thus, the decision-functional element highlights two things.

Firstly, it accentuates that *auctores agendas* decide about proceeding with realization of what they have undertaken or chosen after deliberation and carry out what they have decided. It is important, because it may happen that to make a decision does not have to result in proceeding with action. However, it can not concern the situation in which an action is not started, because it is impossible to take such an action at a given moment or it is necessary to verify the accepted action plan as a result of the current difficulties or new data. It is rather about the situation in which *auctores agendas* do not act, even though it is up to them and failure to take an action undermines the opportunity to achieve the goal set by them. Thus, the decisional aspect of the decisional-functional element underlines the fact that the decision is fulfilled.

Secondly, it shows that προαίρεσις begins the action and defends it in its course. Thus, *auctores agendas* carry out the action which is chronologically first

44 It is confirmed by Old-Polish language at the turn of the XVI century, because the conjunction “or” is not limited to an alternative.

in the sequence of steps of the adopted action plan and they take responsibility for the realization of it. Indeed, they begin the realization of the action plan and also continue to implement it. Therefore, they guard against any kind of problems that could thwart the reaching the set goal. Of course, it is about problems that the avoidance is up to them. Thus, the functional aspect of the decisional-functional element underlines the fact that the sequential phases of the action plan are implemented.

The decisional-functional element complements the orrectical-deliberative one. Hence, it seems that Aristotle's προαίρεσις in the full sense takes place when *auctores agendus* carry out the line of action they have planned and decided to realize it. If indeed προαίρεσις better determines human characters than actions, then it will be questionable whether this criterion of προαίρεσις will be fulfilled without the decisional-functional element.

There are also additional advantages to this interpretation of προαίρεσις. It includes three understandings of the adverb πρό – that is, preferential, temporal and as *standing in front of, and hence in defense of something*. Moreover, it makes that such understanding of προαίρεσις covers its various meanings.

— CONCLUSION

As I have argued, προαίρεσις in the full sense, according to Aristotle, consists of: a] setting the goal; b] thoughtful undertaking or preferential choice, where both assume deliberation about how to achieve the designated goal but second

requires deliberation on alternative courses of action; c] making the decision about proceeding with a thoughtful undertaking or preferentially chosen course of action; d] proceeding with the realization of the determined course of action, that is, taking on what has been determined by deliberation as chronologically first in the sequence of steps which lead to the achievement of the designated goal; e] continuation of action that leads to the achievement of that goal. In other words, προαίρεσις also overlaps with the action and *take care* of its course.

This interpretation is not without foundation, because the points a], b], c] and d] are insufficient for a full assessment of human characters based on προαίρεσις. For Aristotle underlines the fact that προαίρεσις of every uncontrolled person is decent. Meanwhile, the above-mentioned moments in points a], b], c] and d] may belong to προαίρεσις of the uncontrolled person: “setting the goal as a general policy of life” (a]) is common for all kinds of the uncontrolled person; “thoughtful undertaking or preferential choice” (b]) appears or can appear as moment of προαίρεσις in the case of the weak uncontrolled person; “making the decision about proceeding with a thoughtful undertaking or preferentially chosen course of action and even trying to take on what has been determined by deliberation as chronologically first in the sequence of steps which lead to the achievement of the designated goal” (c] and d]) is present in the examined example of the uncontrolled behavior. But “continuation of action that

leads to the achievement of the set goal in accordance with accepted action plan" (e) requires the agent acts from a firm and unshakeable character (*NE* II.4 1105a30-33). If a person is not serious, there will be room for lack of self-control (*EE* VII.2 1237a7-8). Indeed, the serious person is the measure in the field of human affairs (*NE* IX.4 1166a12-13), and thus, in terms of προαίρεσις.

I would also like to remind the reader that I have mentioned, in *Introduction*, that the term προαίρεσις has different meanings and is practically untranslatable into modern languages, as are most crucial terms of classical Greek. But Aristotle often uses terms drawn from common language in the treatises and reinterprets them or assigns them technical meanings. That is also the case of προαίρεσις. Thus, if I were to be tempted to translate προαίρεσις, I would probably use the expression proposed by Petrycy, Sebastian z Pilzna, that is, "choice or undertaking", or I would limit myself to using the term "undertaking"⁴⁵. For

"choice", in the sense of *liberum arbitrium*⁴⁶, does not have to be the key component of προαίρεσις.

Furthermore, it can be added that "undertaking" means "przedsięwzięcie" in the Polish language. And it contains in itself three moments from the orectical-deliberative and decisional-functional elements, that is, deliberative, decisional and functional. Thus, "przedsięwzięcie" is: i] determined by deliberation; ii] taken on the basis of decision; and iii] carried out in accordance with action plan that is determined by deliberation.

Besides, the term "przedsięwzięcie" (przed-się-wzięcie) combines elements similar to those constituting the προαίρεσις. For it consists of the adverb "przed" – in English "before" – which has *inter alia* preferential and temporal meaning, i.e., in principle, equivalent of the adverb πρὸ, and of the noun "wzięcie" – in English "taking" – i.e., in principle, equivalent of the noun αἴρεσις.

45 See e.g., Rowe (in Aristotle (2002)) who renders προαίρεσις by "undertaking" in several places of *NE*. See e.g., I.1 1094a1-2: "Every sort of expert knowledge and every inquiry, and similarly every action and undertaking (προαίρεσις; a2) seems to seek some good"; I.4 1095a14-16: "[...] since every sort of knowledge, and every undertaking (προαίρεσις; a14), seeks after some good, let us say what it is that we say political expertise seeks, and what the topmost of all achievable goods is"; I.7 1097a20-21: "[...] in every activity and undertaking (προαίρεσις; a21) it is the end" [it needs to be added that he uses "undertaking", when he translates *tōn praktōn hapantōn* (of all practical undertakings) in the next line]. But it seems that προαίρεσις is not used as technical term in these phrases. As

Brodie (in Aristotle (2002), p. 262) notes in commentary to I.1. 1094a2, Aristotle will give προαίρεσις a stricter meaning, that is, "decision" in the context of his theory of deliberate action in III.2-3. Furthermore, in the *Introduction*, she points out that "as we find it (that is, προαίρεσις) in the non-philosophical writings of some of his (that is, Aristotle's) contemporaries is usually translated by 'undertaking' or 'policy'" (*ibidem*), p. 42.

46 See Arendt (1978), p. 62 who claims that προαίρεσις, the faculty of choice "is the arbiter between several possibilities" and "In Latin, Aristotle's faculty of choice is *liberum arbitrium*". But it must be recalled that it is not necessary to take into account "to choose between alternatives" as a part of προαίρεσις.

ABBREVIATIONS

Aristotle		<i>NE</i>	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
<i>EE</i>	<i>Eudemian Ethics</i>	<i>MM</i>	<i>Magna Moralia</i>

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Aristotle vs. Boole: A case of the Universe of Discourse

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ABSTRACT

I will present a case study comparing Aristotelian and modern predicate logic. The traditional square of opposition embodied certain relations between propositions. When rewritten into the language of modern logic, the relations embodied in the traditional square mostly disappear. As a matter of fact, some conservative versions of predicate logic, namely sortal logic, preserve relations in the square. I will argue that the explanation of the fact is that modern logic accepts the so-called principle of wholistic reference. The principle was stated initially by Boole with respect to his concept of a so-called universe of discourse. According to the principle, each and every proposition refers to the universe of discourse as such. The difference between Aristotelian and modern logic will thus be portrayed as a difference in the concept of what are we talking about in the universal propositions.*

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INTRODUCTION

Although Aristotelian logic¹ is interpreted as only a minor part of canonical modern extensional logic, namely first-order logic, there still remains one point deliberately neglected and unmentioned, this being the assumption of nonempty terms. When Lukasiewicz proved the completeness and decidability of Aristotelian logic², it was in respect to the universe of unary first-order predicates, but predicates which are nonempty, i.e. which denote at least one individual. Without this assumption,

Aristotelian logic as part of modern extensional first-order logic lost its essential features: the square of opposition collapses and several hitherto valid modes of syllogism yield invalid patterns of inference. The reason, as it is usually claimed, is that first-order logic does not require the nonemptiness of terms and in this sense is much broader than Aristotelian logic. In this article, I would like to demonstrate that the key lies not in the question of the nonemptiness of terms, but in the concept of the universe of discourse as the subject of our propositions.

ARISTOTELIAN VS. MODERN LOGIC

The above-mentioned problem can be illustrated with the item of the square of

1 By the term "Aristotelian logic", I mean rather broadly the logic of Aristotelian tradition. It is true that some followers of Aristotle changed some of his essential ideas, so I would like to keep the most "orthodox" line possible.

2 See Lukasiewicz 1957.

opposition³. In the square, there is e.g. a relation of subalternation: the relation holds between universal (SaP, A for brevity) and corresponding particular judgement (SiP, I for brevity) (for simplicity, we will consider the affirmative judgements only). The relation of subalternation implies that if A judgement is true, we may immediately infer that I is also true. The inference SaP/SiP is consequently a pattern of valid inference.

If these judgements are rewritten into the language of modern first-order logic, in short FOL, we will get $\forall x S(x) \rightarrow P(x)$ for A and $\exists x S(x) \wedge P(x)$ for I. The point is that under some conditions the first formula, $\forall x S(x) \rightarrow P(x)$, can be true but under the same conditions the second formula, $\exists x S(x) \wedge P(x)$, is false, so it could not be the case that we can infer the second formula from the first one. The above-mentioned condition is simply that the predicate “S” is empty, i.e. nothing falls under the predicate. Under this condition, the antecedent of the formula $\forall x S(x) \rightarrow P(x)$ is false (no x is S). The entire formula is now an implication and according to the definition of implication in FOL, an implication with a false antecedent is true (ex falso quodlibet). Formula $\exists x S(x) \wedge P(x)$ is also a conjunction and at least one of the conjuncts, namely S(x), is false. According to the definition of conjunction in FOL, a conjunction with at least one false conjunct is false. In summary, if the predicate S is empty, the inference

from A to I is invalid, so generally in FOL the inference from A to I is invalid.

— SORTAL LOGIC

Timothy Smiley has demonstrated that a relatively conservative modification of FOL will ensure the validity of the essential features of Aristotelian logic, namely, the square of the opposition mentioned above⁴. This modification is called sortal first-order logic (SOL). SOL is a version of first-order logic. The key concept of SOL is obviously the concept of a sortal. The simplest and widely accepted interpretation of sortals is that they provide a criterion for counting items of a kind, as it is in Cocchiarella’s definition of a sortal concept – “a socio-genetically developed cognitive ability or capacity to distinguish, count and collect or classify things”⁵. Typical examples of sorts are tigers, cats, tables, etc., in short, countable items.

SOL now introduces a so-called sortal quantification. The key idea could be stated as follows: in a sentence e.g. all men are mortal, its canonical interpretation in first-order logic tells us that for every object it is the case that if the object is S, then the object is also P. This sounds somewhat odd because the original sentence does not seem to be “about” all objects. In SOL, the original sentence is reformulated in a way that the universal quantifier does not quantify over all individuals, but over the individuals which fall under S, put briefly, quantifies over all Ss. If we wish

3 A general overview of the topic may be found in Parsons, 2017. The Czech reader may consult on this issue Vlasáková, 2015.

4 See Smiley, 1962.

5 Cocchiarella, 1977, p. 441.

to reformulate SaP/SiP inference in SOL, we will get this:

All As are B - $\forall a B(a)$

Some As are B - $\exists a B(a)$

This inference is valid in SOL. So, as it was said above, a relatively conservative modification of FOL will preserve the validity of subalternation (and consequently of the square of opposition in general). This fact brings us to the question as to what is really the key difference between Aristotelian logic and FOL?

UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSE

The original idea was that the difference is in the assumption of nonempty terms in Aristotelian logic, because first-order logic does not require the nonemptiness of terms. This reason could be called into doubt with some success, however, for in first-order logic the grammatical subject of its formulae is always an individual constant or individual variable. First-order logic therefore requires each individual constant to denote an object in the domain of quantification—which is usually understood as a set of “existing” objects. Individual variables in first-order logic range over a domain of individuals. In first-order logic there exists the requirement that the domain of quantification should be nonempty. In a nutshell, any possible grammatical subject of a first-order logical formula either denotes an object in the domain (constant) or ranges over a nonempty domain of individuals and therefore in a certain sense the latter logic also requires the nonemptiness of its terms.

In conclusion, the difference between first-order logic and Aristotelian logic does not necessarily turn on the issue of the emptiness of its terms.

We will follow the idea that the key lies in the concept of the universe of discourse.⁶ George Boole was the first who used the expression “universe of discourse” in English. It was concretely in his book *The Laws of Thought* (1854). For Boole, “universe of discourse is in the strictest sense the ultimate subject of the discourse”⁷. What does this mean? “In every discourse, whether of the mind conversing with its own thoughts or of the individual in his intercourse with others, there is an assumed or expressed limit within which the subjects of its operation are confined. The most unfettered discourse is that in which the words we use are understood in the widest possible application, and for them the limits of discourse are co-extensive with those of the universe itself”⁸. Universe of discourse is thus the most extensive class of all objects, symbolised by 1. In Boole’s logic, any subsequent specialization of the subject of the proposition is construed as a concept based on the concept of the universe of discourse in addition to whatever else it involves, e.g. to say “Water is fluid” is equivalent to “Water is a fluid thing”, or “human” has a logical form “entity, that is a human”. John Corcoran calls it the principle of wholistic reference – “each and every ...

6 The following passage about Boole is already contained in my article Šebela (2018).

7 Boole 2006, p. 30.

8 Boole 2006, p. 30.

proposition refers to the universe of discourse as such”⁹. But what can be said about the nature of the objects, which constitutes the universe of discourse? Boole at the beginning of his 1854 book wrote that there is a dispute concerning the meaning of the signs used as names in the process of thinking. According to Boole, “By some it is maintained, that they represent the conceptions of the mind alone; by others, that they represent things”¹⁰. In other words, Boole discusses the clash between idealism and realism and he himself claims that signs represent things. This statement is, in my view, a good illustration of John Corcoran’s thesis that the concept of logic as a formal ontology begins with Boole (in contrast to Aristotle’s project of logic as formal epistemology)¹¹. To refute the position that names represent the conceptions of mind, means to refute the epistemological disputes about the possibility of the human mind to acknowledge objective reality. This observation can be reinforced by the fact that Boole’s original concept presupposes only one fixed universe of discourse, but in the 1854 version the pluralistic multi-universe framework is proposed. This enlargement (or deliberation) makes logic in a way independent from epistemological limitations of knowledge, because in this framework the given universe of discourse is a matter of choice.

9 Corcoran 2004, p. 498.

10 Boole 2006, p. 18.

11 Corcoran 2003, p. 278n.

UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSE IN MODERN LOGIC

FOL now takes the idea of the universe of discourse from Boole. In FOL, the universe of discourse is simply the set of all things one’s quantifiers range over. In SOL, in contrast, the universe of discourse is divided into groups, into sorts. Even the variables in SOL are variables which range over the appropriate sort only. If we wish, however, to introduce “classical” quantifiers, we could easily implement them into the theory (the technical details are not important here). The main difference between FOL and SOL thus lies precisely in the “nature” of the universe of discourse. How does this difference influence the validity or invalidity of the above-mentioned subalternation?

The answer is in the problem of the subject of proposition, simply in the task of what we are talking about in a given proposition. Modern logic in general shares Boole’s idea, already cited, that the “universe of discourse is in the strictest sense the ultimate subject of the discourse”. For FOL, the subject of each and every proposition is the universe of discourse as such, in its “most unfettered” sense. As mentioned above, John Corcoran calls it the principle of wholistic reference. Once again, according to the principle, “each and every ... proposition refers to the universe of discourse as such”. This idea, as it stands, sounds quite odd, but has become a widely accepted part of logic textbooks under the name of the Boolean interpretation of categorical statements¹². In the influential book

12 Copi 2014, p. 193.

An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method, by Cohen and Nagel, one can read, for example, that “the proposition *All street-cleaners are poor* declares that in its universe of discourse there are no individuals who are both street-cleaners and not poor”¹³. Boolean interpretation has a significant consequence – if the proper subject is the universe of discourse, which is always nonempty, then there is no need for the grammatical subject of the sentence to denote anything. Concretely, if we take the proposition that *All street-cleaners are poor*, it seems unproblematic to rewrite it in the language of FOL as $\forall xP(x)$. This formula says that all objects are poor. For this reason we need to input an antecedent into the given formula, namely the antecedent, that if any object is a street-cleaner, then it is poor. Thus, the appropriate formula of FOL is $\forall x S(x) \rightarrow P(x)$. Categorical propositions can thus become hypotheses about the universe, hypotheses with possibly empty grammatical subjects. This is why the truth of the categorical propositions in FOL does not require the nonemptiness of its grammatical subjects. This liberation only holds, however, for the universal propositions, because particular propositions are taken as existential statements about the universe, e.g. the proposition *Some street-cleaners are poor* is taken as affirming the existence of at least one object, which is both a street-cleaner and poor. If universal propositions in FOL do not require, however, the nonemptiness of its grammatical

subjects but particular propositions do require it, the subalternation is blocked. The price of this move is the fact that subalternation very often seems an unproblematically valid inference, as e.g. Cohen and Nagel observe: “The conclusion we have reached, that universals do not imply the existence of any verifying instances, while particulars do imply it, will doubtless seem paradoxical to the reader”¹⁴.

UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSE IN ARISTOTELIAN LOGIC

Can there be some analogue of this concept in Aristotelian logic? The very term is out of the discussion here, of course, but terms such as “entity” or “being” are a traditional part of Aristotelian vocabulary and can be invoked here. So, does the sum of all the entities in Aristotelian logic plays the same (or at least a similar) role as the universe of discourse in modern logic? The answer is no. This answer is also a key to the difference between the logic in the question of the validity of the square of opposition. For Aristotle, in fact, the differences between various kinds of objects are of a logical importance.

Firstly, as John Corcoran states it, “in his logic, Aristotle did not recognise the universal term ‘entity’ or ‘thing’”¹⁵. The absence of evidence, however, is not evidence of absence, so it would be appropriate to search for some more direct support. There is in fact an indication that Aristotle did not allow for

13 Cohen and Nagel 1998, p. 40.

14 Cohen and Nagel 1998, p. 42.

15 Corcoran 2003, p. 272.

his content words to have a universal extension. It is his well-known aporia generis argument. The original passage in *Metaphysics* concerns the concept of being and one and is as follows:

“But it is not possible that either one or being should be a single genus of things; for the differentiae of any genus must each of them both be and be one, but it is not possible for the genus taken apart from its species (any more than for the species of the genus) to be predicated of its proper differentiae; so that if one or being is a genus, no differentia will either be or be one”¹⁶

Aristotle’s argument can be (for the concept of being) reconstructed as follows:

No genus is predicated of its differentiae.
Being is predicated of its differentiae (or else they would not be).
 Being is therefore not a genus.

I do not want to evaluate this argument here, but I would just like to conclude that this argument means that the most natural counterpart of Boole’s concept of the universe of discourse cannot play an analogical role in Aristotelian logic. If being is not a genus and genus is predicated univocally, then being is not even a univocal concept.

Generally, for Aristotelian logic it is an important thing that the universe of objects is divided and grouped into parts. Some indirect evidence can be offered for this claim. The special case is the concept of so-called term negation.¹⁷

16 *Met. B*, 998b24–27.

17 The following passage is taken from Šebela, Sedlár (2018).

Term negation can be traced back to Aristotle’s *De Interpretatione*,¹⁸ where so-called indefinite names and verbs are studied. These names and verbs are obtained (in English) by adding a prefix such as ‘not-’, ‘un-’ or ‘non-’ to regular names and verbs. ‘Not-man’ and ‘not-ill’ are, for example, indefinite names. Aristotle observed that sentence pairs containing a name (verb) in one sentence and the corresponding indefinite name (verb) in the other are contrary, i.e. they cannot be simultaneously true:

“If it is true to say ‘It is not-white’, it is also true to say ‘it is not white’: for it is impossible that a thing should simultaneously be white and be not-white.”¹⁹

Such pairs are not necessarily contradictory, i.e. one may be false without the other being true:

“everything is equal or not equal, but not everything is equal or unequal, or if it is, it is only within the sphere of that which is receptive of equality.”²⁰

Hence, statements of the form ‘S is not-P’ are not equivalent to ‘S is not P’:

“In establishing or refuting, it makes some difference whether we suppose the expressions ‘not to be this’ and ‘to be not-this’ are identical or different in meaning, e.g., ‘not to be white’ and ‘to be not white’. For they do not mean the same thing, nor is ‘to be not-white’ the negation of ‘to be white’, but ‘not to be white’ [is].”²¹

It is apparent from *Met.* 1055 that Aristotle thinks of term negation as being

18 *De Intepr.* 16a30n, 16b 11n.

19 *Pr.An.* 51b42–52a4.

20 *Met.* 105510n.

21 *Pr.An.* 51b5–10.

connected to the genus of a predicate — there may be things that are neither *P* nor not-*P*, but no such thing can be found within the genus of *P*.

The concept of a category mistake is additional indirect evidence.²² In Aristotle, one can find a discussion of two kinds of what is currently called a category mistake, i.e. the mistake when entities belonging to a particular category are presented as if belonging to another category. In the *Topics*, he refers to sentences such as “angle and knife are sharp”²³. The one who claims that the “sharp” applies the same way to the angle and knife would commit a category mistake because the angle and the knife are entities of different categories (here it is quantity and substance). This kind of a category mistake is, however, a kind of equivocation and can be removed by pointing out the variety of ways in which we understand the sharpness of the angle and the knife. In addition, the equivocation can be explained without reference to a category mistake, and some equivocations cannot be explained by reference to a category mistake, for example, if we attribute the sharpness to the smell and color, which are both qualities. Another kind of categorical error, a proper category mistake, is in the *Second Analytics*²⁴. Aristotle speaks of an essential and accidental predication, and says, with an obvious reference to Plato’s doctrine of ideas, that the “predicates which do not signify

substance must be predicates of some other subject, and nothing can be white which is not also other than white”. The error that Aristotle has in mind here can be illustrated by the phrase “White is white”. Whiteness is an accident, and if we want to talk about some idea of whiteness, “white in itself”, which might be in place of the subject of the judgement, then it should be possible to predicate about such a subject, for example, to be white. “Being white” is, however, an accidental predicate, i.e. an appropriate thing may possibly not have it. This would lead to the absurdity that the white color might possibly not be white. This kind of category mistake differs from the previous one because it cannot be removed by reference to the different meanings of the word.

In summary, for Aristotle it is the conviction that the universe is so to speak sorted into a different group of a great logical importance.

— UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSE IN SORTAL LOGIC

What is the situation in SOL? The proposition *All street-cleaners are poor* is also about the universe of discourse, but in this case the universe is sorted, so we are speaking only about the appropriate sort in the given proposition. If the sort are simply street-cleaners, then we can rewrite in SOL as $\forall s P(s)$. The formula is thus not an implication, so it is not a hypothesis about the universe. For the variables in SOL there is now the same requirement as in FOL, namely the requirement that the domain of quantification should be nonempty. This means,

22 The following passage is taken (and translated) from my book Šebela (2015).

23 *Top.* 107a3-17.

24 *An. Post.* 83a30-33.

in the case of SOL, that sorts are always nonempty. This is the key difference, which makes subalternation in SOL valid.

— CONCLUSION

As we have seen, subalternation is a valid inference in Aristotelian logic, but is invalid in FOL. The reason for the invalidity is in the different logical form of universal propositions. The difference

is caused by the fact that the subject of these propositions is the universe of discourse in FOL. To harmonise modern and Aristotelian logic in this point we only need to sort the universe of discourse and make the appropriate sort be the subject of these propositions. Needless to say, to sort the universe of discourse into parts is an idea which seems to be very close to the Aristotelian conception of categorisation of the world. —

ABBREVIATIONS

Aristotle

An. Post. *Analytica posteriora*

De interpr. *De interpretatione*

Met. *Metaphysica*

Pr. An. *Analytica priora*

Top. *Topica*

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