Vincenzo Cicero

THE PLATONIC ANALOGIZATION OF MATHEMATICS AND ONTOLOGY ACCORDING TO GAISER. SOME CRITICAL REMARKS*

ABSTRACT. The present discussion, oriented towards the integration of Plato's literary dialogues and indirect tradition, focuses on two aporias of the interpretation that Konrad Gaiser proposed of the so-called Platonic agrapha dogmata. The first aporia concerns the relationship between "the idea of the good" and to hen (the first of the two fundamental principles of Plato's intra-academic teaching), which Gaiser identifies without residue. The second aporia regards the figure of the demiurge, whom the German scholar interprets as the dynamic aspect of to hen, subordinate to this. By highlighting the extraordinary carousel of analogizations and analogations that innervates the global Platonic thought, the essay aims to show that: 1) tagathón, the optimum, should not be identified with to hen, but must be understood as the superabundant khaos from which originally the two fundamental principles of the one and the indefinite dyad spring to determine the whole of being; 2) for Plato this "agathurgical" originality can be thematized by human thinking not through an irrefutable dialectical logos, but only through an eiko's mythos/logos capable of protologically and ontologically mastering the analogizing carousel: thus the demiurge reveals himself as the central mythosophical figure of the huge power of the optimum, exaphanic source - ecstantaneously - of the eternal as well as of the temporal/transient.

KEYWORDS: Plato. Agrapha dogmata. Konrad Gaiser. Tagathón. Demiurge.

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Άεὶ ὁ θεὸς ἀναλογίζεται. (Ps.-)Plutarch, *Quaestiones Convivales*, 718h

1. The huge power of geometric proportion in Plato's Gorgias, 508A

Now the wise men say, Callicles, that heaven and earth, gods and men are bound by commonality and friendship and order and temperance and justice [κοινωνία καὶ φιλία καὶ κοσμιότης καὶ σωφρωσύνη καὶ δικαιότης]; and that is why they call this whole universe the "kosmos"[, i.e. "worldorder"], not "disorder" or "dissolution" [ἀκοσμία η̈ ἀκολασία], my friend. But I think you don't heed them, though you're wise yourself. You haven't noticed that geometrical equality [ή ἰσότης ἡ γεωμετρική] has great power [μέγα δύναται] among divinities and humans.¹

This passage from the Platonic *Gorgias* (507E6-508A7), already very well known in antiquity, received a significant supplementary in notoriety in the last century thanks to the enrollment on the ultra-metaphysical payroll of Martin Heidegger. In fact, the German thinker remodulated the structural con-tainment [$\sigma v \epsilon \chi \epsilon \iota a$] of the four dimensions of the cosmos in Plato – heaven, earth, divinities, humans – in the fundamental tenor of one of his most famous theoretical figures: *das Geviert*, the fourfold of the world². And even if here the

¹ Plato, *Gorgias*, transl. Irwin (modified), Clarendon Press, 1979, p. 86.

² See the Bremen Conferences (1949), especially *Das Ding* conference; see M. Heidegger, *Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge*, Heideggers Gesamtausgabe Bd. 79, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 1994, p. 11 ff.

interest is directed to the Platonic speculative context, I don't exclude that the outcome of the present argumentation could benefit the critical reconsideration of Heidegger's ultrametaphysics elsewhere³.

Therefore, in the course of the "authorized mono(dia)logical fiction" which he develops before Gorgias and his acolytes (*Gorgias*, 506C ff.), Socrates declares that γεωμετρικὴ ἰσότης has such great power [μεγάλη δύναμις] to preform and conform the destiny of the regions of beings within the universal page, in the cosmic compagination. Indeed, the *dynamis* of geometric equality has so much force that it constitutes the precondition, formal *and* material, of this universe as κόσμος, as ordering.

A situation is not described here as if equality intervened in the cosmos already given, already subsisting, to produce commonality, friendship, etc. between the four hitherto chaotic regions of the world; but it is rather the proportion itself – that is, the equality of geometric relationships based on the same ratio nucleus – that together gives rise to *both* the cosmos and its structural dimensions. Before the principial deployment of the power of the $\gamma \epsilon \omega \mu \epsilon \tau \rho \kappa \eta$

³ Moments of this critical reconsideration can be found in several of my writings published from 2012 onwards.

 $i\sigma \delta \tau \eta \varsigma$ there can't be order and no ordering is conceivable, nor any orderly one – and orderliness is the minimum condition for anything to even be named.

But, moreover, before that initial deployment, any form of $\dot{\alpha}\kappa\sigma\sigma\mu$ ($\dot{\alpha}$ and $\dot{\alpha}\kappa\sigma\lambda\alpha\sigma$ (α , of disorder and dissolution, is also unthinkable, since these are only possible as a privation – defection and infection – of a *positum*, "positive" order. Before the original detonation of the geometric megapower, in short, neither order nor disorder can be thought of, but we can only hypothetically figure out a $\chi \dot{\alpha} \sigma \sigma$ – understood certainly not as opposed to the $\kappa \dot{\sigma} \sigma \sigma \sigma$ (which mysteriously, metaphorically, detonates and flows from it), but rather as an immense abyss *d'ogne luce e tenebra muto* ("of all light and darkness mute": remodulation of Dante, *Inferno*, v, 28), *khaos* as a very deep throat, an immense ineffable opening, or effable only, in fact, *analogica-mente*.

If therefore the entire cosmic page

heaven : earth :: divinities : humans

owes its fundamental structure to geometric equality, this must then be thought of much more deeply than $\dot{\alpha}\nu\alpha\lambda\circ\gamma$ ia (analogy, proportion): it must be considered decidedly as $\dot{\alpha}\nu\alpha\lambda\circ\gamma$ ioµ $\dot{\omega}\zeta$, analogization, formation of analogies, maker of proportional correspondences (and correspondents). Now, when Gaiser in the *Platons ungeschriebene Lehre* (Klett, Stuttgart 1968² [= *PUL*], p. 22) speaks, very

appropriately, of *Analogisierung von Mathematik und Ontologie*, of analogization of mathematics and ontology, he means neither a mere analogy, nor a simple coordinated series of analogies; instead he conceives precisely an analogical matrix, a system of hitherto unedited ontological-mathematical correspondences, decisive both for the future epistemic layout of Western mathematics and for a new speculative hermeneusis of being.

The question then arises of the difference between these two types of ἀναλογισμός.

2. Analogizing in general and in Gaiser

In the meantime, I propose a distinction between *analogation* and *analogization* [$\dot{\alpha}$ v $\alpha\lambda$ o γ ɛĩv κ α i $\dot{\alpha}$ v $\alpha\lambda$ o γ íξεσθ α ι, *Analogierung und Analogisierung*]⁴. The former indicates the act (even ordinary) of *grasping* or *considering* an analogy already given and recognized or in any case already disclosed (e.g. between the ages of human life and the phases of the day), the latter

⁴ Here the Greek suffix -ίζω must be taken in the *factitive* semantic direction, therefore in the sense of "I make analogous, I bring together". For the three semantic macroclasses of the form -ίζω (factitive, instrumentative, stative) cf. H. Schmoll, *Die griechischen Verba auf -ίζω*, Diss., Universität Tübingen, 1955 (quoted in L. Tronci, *Greco -ίζω e latino -izo/-isso/-idio* [in C. Consani (ed.), *Contatto interlinguistico fra presente e passato*, LED, Milano 2015, pp. 173-195], p. 176).

designates first of all the speculative action to *discover* or *institute* a new analogy between certain beings or spheres (just as between mathematics and ontology in the indirect Platonic tradition)⁵; above all, yet, analogization refers to the principial modality of *structuring* the real as such (as in the case of the cosmic page in the *Gorgias*).

Now, analogation seems to have a more objectual physiognomy, analogization in the first sense (discovering/instituting) more subjectual; but in reality we are dealing with different intersubjectual degrees, with different levels of linguistic sedimentation of material analogies. More repertorial is analogation, offering epistemically already accessible elements; more poietic is the discovering/instituting analogization, which is epistemic opening tout court.

Therefore, thematizing the Platonic analogization of mathematics and ontology in Gaiser means *not* first of all directing attention to the many and interconnected analogations between the two epistemic fields, amply elucidated by the German scholar in the hermeneutical-philological corpus of his writings⁶.

⁵ The analogization between arithmetic and ontology had already been initiated by the Pythagoreans, and it is no coincidence that the types of analogy formulas were elaborated and classified within the Pythagorean thought (see Philolaus, A 24 DK, and Archytas, A 23, B 2 DK).

⁶ For the discussion of the general context and the role of these analogies, see my essay *Analogia e ambiti ontologici* (1998), now in V. Cicero, *Parole come gemme*, il prato, Saonara

The different Platonic analogic tetrads that correspond to each other at various levels remain undoubtedly indispensable to illustrate the capillary penetration of the analogizing power [$\dot{\alpha}\nu\alpha\lambda\circ\gamma\iota\sigma\tau\iota\kappa\dot{\gamma}$ $\delta\dot{\nu}\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$] – to mention only the most important (see scheme 1):

SPHERE	TETRAD		
first ideal numbers	1 - 2 - 3 - 4		
mathematical dimensions	number – line – surface – body		
spatial dimensions	unit – length – width – depth		
stereometric forms	tetrahedron-octahedron-icosahedron-cube		
cognitive modalities of the soul	nous – dianoia – doxa – aisthesis		
bodily elements	fire – air – water – earth		
species of living beings	divine (stars) – winged – aquatic – terrestrial		
fundamental human races	gold – silver – bronze – iron		

PLATONIC EXAMPLES OF TETRADS

SCHEME 1

However, in the present thematization priority is given directly to $\delta \dot{\nu} \alpha \mu \zeta$ $\tau o \tilde{\nu} \dot{\alpha} \nu \alpha \lambda o \gamma \iota \sigma \mu o \tilde{\nu}$, to what Gaiser designates as the «fundamental assumption of the entire Platonic ontology» (*PUL* 22): the analogization between the global structure of reality (ideas – soul / mathematical entities – phenomena) and the mathematical structural law of dimensionality. In other words, what is appealing here is the Platonic gesture itself of elevating to an interpretative paradigm of the

⁽PD) 2012, pp. 9-62.

ontological hierarchy the set of analogical laws (i.e., based on proportional mediety) which in the dimensional series number–line–surface–body supervise the limit-passages [*Grenzübergänge*] from one (superordinate) dimension to the other (subordinate).

> The analogization of mathematics and ontology leads to the principles of all things precisely because within the sphere of mathematical entities it is possible to systematically reduce all data to a few axioms and fundamental assumptions.

Thus, the entire PUL can be considered a general and particular test of the synergical action, both oppositional and mediating, of the two fundamental principles of the indirect Platonic tradition, $\tau \delta \, \epsilon v \, \kappa \alpha i \, \dot{\eta} \, \dot{\alpha} \delta \rho \iota \sigma \tau \sigma \varsigma \, \delta \upsilon \dot{\alpha} \varsigma$, the one and the indefinite dyad – principles that are expressed *in and through*, not only *before and beyond*, every sphere of being. The cooperative *tension* [*Spannung*] of the principles is distributed uniformly in the dimensional chain thanks to the proportional means, in turn in correspondence with tension between the anterior

dimension (structuring limit) and the posterior dimension (towards the limitless, but participating in the limit of the anterior). The two tensions – the protological and the ontological, the latter as a mirror reflection of the former – have in the dimensional series the epistemic paradigm thanks to which Plato was able to better understand both and communicate in public – in different ways, depending on the type of audience – the results of this understanding.

What is then the speculative physiognomy of Plato's protology? The synergical co-originality of one and dyad appears as the ultimate horizon of his philosophizing: but does this horizon perhaps prevent us from thinking of a further *Platonic* "instance", this time *inhorizontable*, anterior and ulterior to the two fundamental principles? The elaboration of this central issue of Plato's philosophy has an intimate connection with the gesture of analogization, it calls into question the second meaning identified above, the structuring of being.

3. The two senses of ἀναλογισμός in Plato and the ἄρρητον

In the *PUL*, the *Gorgias* passage about analogization is quoted only once, in the second part ("Geschichte und Ontologie", p. 222)⁷, and the γεωμετρικὴ ἰσότης

⁷ In Italian this part (*PUL* 203-289 and 392-416) has been revised and published in a separate volume with the title: *La metafisica della storia in Platone*, trans. by G. Reale, Milano 1991²

is put in direct connection with the supreme knowledge [*höchstes Wissen*] prerogative of the philosopher, i.e. with the noetic-theoretical and dialectical knowledge of the good. This knowledge goes far beyond the degrees of somato-therapeutic knowledge (hence the techniques: gymnastics, medicine, cosmetics, cookery [γυμναστική, ἰατρική, κομμωτική, ὀψοποιική]) and psycho-political knowledge (techniques: legislation, jurisdiction, sophistry, rhetoric [νομοθετική, δικαιοσύνη, σοφιστική, ῥητορική]) (cf. *Gorgias* 464B-466A).

Moreover, in the context of the Platonic dialogue the dialectical *höchstes Wissen* also allows for an effective brachylogical articulation of these two "technique" tetrads. In fact Socrates (465BC; see scheme 2) says:

Therefore, in order to avoid being macrological, I want to tell you in the manner of geometricians [ĭv' οὖν μὴ μακρολογῶ, ἐθέλω σοι εἰπεῖν ὥσπερ οἱ γεωμέτραι], so you [Polo] will be able to follow me, as cosmetics is to gymnastics, so is sophistry to legislation, and as cookery is to medicine, so is rhetoric to justice.⁸

 $(1988^{1}).$

⁸ Plato, *Gorgias*, transl. Irwin (modified), p. 33.

"TECHNIQUE" TETRADS AND THEIR ANALOGATIONS IN PLATO'S GORGIAS

KNOWLEDGE TECHNIQUES					
SOMATO-THERAPEUTIC KNOWLEDGE	PSYCHO-POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE				
gymnastics, medicine, cosmetics, cookery	legislation, jurisdiction, sophistry, rhetoric				
γυμναστική, ἰατρική, κομμωτική, ὀψοποιική	νομοθετική, δικαιοσύνη, σοφιστική, ῥητορική				

ANALOGATIONS IN *GORGIAS* 465BC cosmetics : gymnastics :: sophistry : legislation cookery : medicine :: rhetoric : justice

SCHEME 2

Therefore *Gorgias*, in two short passages (the first in 465BC almost incidental, the other in 508A speculatively incisive), shows both essential senses of Platonic $\dot{\alpha}$ v $\alpha\lambda$ o γ i $\sigma\mu$ o $\dot{\varsigma}$: 1) the first sense (discovering/instituting), widely and in detail documented from Gaiser, it is precisely the structural innervation of philosophical (dialectical) knowledge, for which in Plato mathematics and ontology are co-instituted «in a relationship of reciprocal illumination and foundation» (*PUL* 298; cf. 14, 37); 2) in the second sense (structuring), thanks to the geometrical megapower and the two co-original principles, being is articulated eminently – and therefore knowledge, which has to correspond to being with its own analogizations and analogations, is subordinately structured – so, this ontosyntactic sense innervates the whole compagination of reality, and thus pre-imprints the speculatively unavoidable task of thinking about the relationship between protology and ontology in Plato.

It is well known that, coherently with the main direction of his research (the philological reconstruction of Plato's indirect tradition in connection with his literary dialogues), Gaiser stopped on the threshold of this task, beyond which we effectively move in a territory dominated by the ineffable. In the introduction to the *PUL* we read (p. 5):

The superior value of the oral Platonic doctrine compared to the dialogues therefore does not consist in being undoubtedly communicable from a didactical point of view, since for Plato all types of logical-expressive discussion, even thoughts and representations of the soul, remain, with respect to the essence of the thing, «reproductive» [*abbildhaft*] [cf. *TP* nr. 11]. [...] Ultimately, we must take into account a wider difference between the sphere of the didactically communicable and *a sphere of the totally "ineffable"* [*das gänzlich "Unsagbare"*] (τὸ ἄρρητον): the knowledge of ontological principles *in itself* is subtracted to logos and reserved for a "mystical"-intuitive experience [*Letter VII* 344AC].

However, just on the basis of the double meaning of $\dot{\alpha}\nu\alpha\lambda\rho\gamma\sigma\mu\phi\zeta$, I believe that the expression *das gänzlich Unsagbare*, referring to Platonic thought, is inappropriate⁹. In fact, if Plato refers to an $\ddot{\alpha}\rho\rho\eta\tau\sigma\nu$, to an unspeakability, this is never definitive, ultimative, absolute, but always commensurate with the

⁹ Gaiser's observation (*PUL* 11) can't compensate for such inadequacy: «Finally, attention must be drawn to Plato's manifest conviction that individual knowledge, first collected in a conceptual-systematic way, after a long preparation can be grasped directly "synoptically" with a type of intuition, to be experienced with absolute certainty [durch eine Art Intuition unmittelbar 'zusammengeschaut' und so mit absoluter Gewißheit in Erfahrung gebracht werden]».

philosopher's capacity for noetic synopsis and dialectical penetration. And the double analogization, to the highlighting of which Gaiser decisively contributed, testifies that Platonic philosophizing is headed by a "formal" unconditioned, omniconditioning human mind, starting from which the following "moments" become adequately thinkable and speakable: being in its various spheres (ideal, psychic/mathematical, phenomenal), the two fundamental ontosyntactic principles (one and indefinite dyad), the "geometric" *megadynamis*, and $\tau \dot{\alpha}\gamma \alpha \theta \dot{o}v$ itself – the abysmal and exuberant, the vertiginous and overflowing, the hyperideal *optimum*.

Given the modality in which it is emerging, I want to call this unconditioned: $\tau \delta \, \alpha \lambda \alpha \lambda \sigma \eta \sigma \mu \delta \nu$ – the constitutive eidetic structure of the human psyche within which everything pananalogically mirrors itself. Its effability belongs to a mythosophical logos, which is why analogism implies a reconsideration of the demiurgic figure.

4. The Platonic εἰκὸς μῦθος and the mythosophemes

Gaiser's interpretation of the demiurge is exposed in the final pages of the first part of the *PUL* (pp. 193-195 and nn. 165-167). Characterized by the expressions «divine creator of the world» [*göttlicher Urheber der Welt*], «divine

reason» [göttliche Vernunft], the demiurge for Gaiser must be understood «as the dynamic aspect of the "idea of the good"» [als der Dynamis-Aspekt der "Idee des Guten"], «as an operating force [wirkende Kraft] of configuration and knowledge» (*PUL* 193): the demiurge is transcendent nous [transzendenter Nus] (n. 166), subordinate to the "idea of the good" (to one, the first principle), from which it borrows the modus operandi; but superordinate to the cosmic soul, since he generates it by composing it through «the most beautiful of bonds» (κάλλιστος δεσμῶν), the ἀναλογία (*Timaeus*, 31C); and, in the intermediate ontological sphere of the κοσμικὴ ψυχή, the demiurgic nous acts, configuring and unifying, in synergy with the ananke, i.e. with the dynamic, deforming and particularizing aspect of the second principle (the indefinite dyad) (*PUL* 194 s.).

Now, I believe that Gaiser's non-insistent attention to the demiurge depends on the almost total absence of explicit occurrences of this mythical figure in the indirect Platonic tradition¹⁰. I will therefore try to bring out the limits of Gaiser's interpretation from a – here inevitably rapid – hermeneutic-speculative reading of the $\delta\eta\mu$ ουργικά of the *Timaeus*¹¹.

¹⁰ With the exception of a direct quotation in *Testimonia Platonica* (3^{rd} part of *PUL* [= *TP*]) nr. 69 and an occurrence in Gaiser's note to *TP* nr. 52 (the passage from Porphyry quoted by Cyril is in any case important from a demiurgic perspective).

¹¹ For transcendental or speculative hermeneusis, and its distinction from exegetical

Timaeus' discourse «from the genesis of the cosmos to the nature of humanity» [ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως ... εἰς ἀνθρώπων φύσιν, 27A5-6] in the homonymous Platonic dialogue defines itself as an εἰκὸς μῦθος or εἰκὸς λόγος, the likely, reasonable, credible, plausible myth or speech ¹². First of all, it distinguishes itself from the other two modalities referred to in the opening lines of the text: ὁ πλασθὲν μῦθος and ὁ ἀληθινὸς λόγος, the invented myth and the true story, which refer to the "dialogically most recent" narrative examples, i.e. Er's journey to the underworld and the conflict between ancient Athens and Atlantis¹³. The fable of the valiant pamphylian soldier Er returned from the afterlife is a myth suitably made up by the character Socrates to exalt the importance of Hades and of personal responsibility also towards *post mortem*; as regards instead the story that Critias reconstructs through mnestic dazzles, the "veracity" (ἀλήθεια) of which it would be the bearer has a clearly "historical", "factual" character,

hermeneusis, cf. V. Cicero, *Il Platone di Hegel*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1998, pp. 3-4. The theoretical framework of the present interpretation of the Platonic demiurge is in my *Sapienza muta*, Morcelliana, Brescia 2023 (= SM), part. § 8.

 ¹² εἰκὸς μῦθος in *Timaeus*, 29D2, 59C6, 68D2; εἰκὸς λόγος in 30B7, 48D2, 53D5-6, 55D5, 56A1, 56B4, 68B7, 90E8; κατὰ τὸ εἰκός, 56C8-D1; τὸ εἰκός, 72D7.

¹³ Cf. *Respublica*, X, 614A-621D (also III, 386AC), e *Timaeus*, 21E-25D. It hardly needs to be remembered that the *Timaeus* is set the day after the discussion presented in the *Republic*.

although it is surprising that the "facts" recalled are at least of fourth (re)telling¹⁴.

Furthermore, the εἰκὸς μῦθος/λόγος is introduced in parallel with the ἀνέλεγκτος καὶ ἀνίκητος λόγος (29B ff.), the irrefutable and invincible discourse, to which it is in turn «likely and proportionate» [εἰκός ἀνὰ λόγον ἐκείνου]; and later on it is joined by νόθος λογισμός, the bastard, artificial reasoning (52B2), with which it is possible to grasp the amorphous spatiality of the receptacle of every image and generation. Within the framework of the great epistemological analogies of *Timaeus*, 27D-29D and 47E-53B, these three types of reasoning are involved in the following relationships (scheme 3):

TYPE OF REASONING	CORRESPONDING HUMAN FACULTY	EPISTEMIC DIMENSION		ONTOLOGICAL STATUS	FORMAL STATUS	"FAMILIAR" METAPHOR
ἀνέλεγκτος λόγος	: νοῦς	: ἀλήθεια	::	οὐσία, τὸ ὂν ἀεί, τὸ ὅθεν φύεται τὸ γ	: παράδειγμα	: πατήρ
νόθος λογισμός	: ὄνειρος	: ἀνάγκη	::	χώρα, τὸ ἐν ῷ̓ γίγνεται τὸ γ.∞	: ὑποδοχή	: μήτηρ
εἰκὸς μῦθος/λόγος	: πίστις-αἴσθησις	: δόξα	::	γένεσις : τὸ γιγνόμενον ἀεί	: εἰκών	: ἔκγονος
irrefutable discourse	: intellection	: truth	::	essence, always being, from which arises the g. ^{ed}	: paradigm	: father
spurious reasoning myth/likely discourse	: dream : belief-sensation	: necessity : opinion	:: ::	space, in which the g. ^{ed} is generated genesis, always generated	: receptacle : image	: mother : child

GREAT EPISTEMOLOGICAL ANALOGIES OF 'TIMAEUS' 27-29, 47-53

SCHEME 3

Now, εἰκὸς μῦθος/λόγος is the sign and at the same time the guarantor of the extreme human limits: in fact it unfolds in the self-awareness that on the

¹⁴ This $\lambda \delta \gamma \circ \zeta$ passed from an Egyptian priest of Sais to Solon, then to Critias the elder, then to Critias the younger, the interlocutor of Socrates and Timaeus. The last Critias (460/450-403 BC), Plato's uncle, was one of the Thirty Tyrants.

generation and concretion of the universe human thinking cannot achieve any stable knowledge, but always only "credible", provisional and approximate notions. The approximation to the truth and the credibility, however, don't happen accidentally to the likely myth/discourse, but on condition that it is modeled *in proportion* [$\dot{\alpha}v\dot{\alpha} \lambda \dot{\alpha}\gamma ov$] to a double affinity: 1) to the generation or to becoming, that is to the being itself to which the eikòç µῦθος is here reproductively, semantically akin [συγγενές] and of which it is an interpreter (*Timaeus*, 29B5)¹⁵, and 2) to $\dot{\alpha}v\dot{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\gamma\kappa\tauo\varsigma \lambda \dot{\alpha}\gammao\varsigma$, i.e. in analogy to true and irrefutable reasoning (29C1), to which it is structurally, syntactically congener; in both cases, modeling can take place in the best way when the story is respectively 1) oriented in correspondence with the fundamental articulations of becoming, and 2) structured according to the analogization of mathematical forms and the cosmic page. In both cases, we are faced with two notable mythosophical moments.

Therefore, I call a *mythosopheme* the figurative element of a philosophical story/discourse that manages to effectively show the speculative physiognomy of a phenomenon or a conceptual context only in the mode of a εἰκὸς μῦθος. In the

¹⁵ Timaeus says (29B4-5): «as if the discourses are akin to the things of which they are an interpretation» [ώς ἄρα τοὺς λόγους, ὦνπέρ εἰσιν ἐξηγηταί, τούτων αὐτῶν καὶ συγγενεῖς ὄντας].

demiurge, the protagonist of the $\varepsilon i \kappa \delta \zeta \lambda \delta \gamma \circ \zeta$ of the *Timaeus* who probably represents the supreme among the Platonic mythosophemes, should now be recognized in my opinion the best opportunity to reconstruct Plato's philosophical system, by welding together the literary dialogues and the unwritten doctrines, and thus regaining it fruitfully for the contemporary debate.

5. The optimum and the exaphanic tract of demiurgic analogization

The "idea of the good"¹⁶ is not an iδέα, nor a γένος or an εἶδος. Gaiser is so aware of these negative determinations that he always writes the locution in quotation marks, because for him it is exactly equivalent to the intra-academic designation of the first of the two principles (ή πρώτη μονάς, τὸ ἕν, *TP* 32):

> Principles are designated predominantly as "one" and "dyad" (or "bigand-small") ["Eins" und "Zweiheit" (oder "Groß-und-Kleines")], but still in this quantitative-mathematic designation the other aspects always are coincluded. Thus, for example, the principle of one is none other than the "idea of the good" ["Idee des Guten"], since the unity, mathematically seen at the same time in the phenomenon of the mean and the measure, can be valid as foundation of every order [Grund aller Ordnung] and, therefore, as the foundation of the aretè. Similarly, by coordinating the opposition of stillness (stability) and movement (mobility) to the two principles, Plato may fully deduce and explain, on the basis of the mathematical structural model, also the different forms

¹⁶ ή ἰδέα τἀγαθοῦ (Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1218b8).

and species of *kinesis*. (*PUL* 19 f.)¹⁷

But Gaiser's identification of $\tau \dot{o} \dot{a}\gamma \alpha \theta \dot{o}\nu$ with the $\pi \rho \dot{\omega} \tau \eta \mu \rho \nu \dot{a}\varsigma$, with the protological $\tau \dot{o} \tilde{\epsilon}\nu$, "in a *global* Platonic sense" does not work. It is true that in the indirect, mathematically marked tradition, the two fundamental principles one and dyad appear to constitute the insurmountable theoretical horizon of philosophizing; and Gaiser points out that «nowhere do the testimonies lead decisively beyond the dualistic conception of the doctrine of principles» (*PUL* 13). However, certain passages of the dialogues – also famous and crucial – undoubtedly point towards a further perspective, capable of mythosophically accounting for the possibility that protology is not the last speculative word of Platonic philosophy.

With the reference to two of these dialogic *loci* I start to conclude my argument.

A. Philebus, 65A1-5.

If therefore we cannot catch the good [$\tau \dot{o} \dot{\alpha}\gamma \alpha \theta \dot{o}v$] with one idea [$\mu i \tilde{\alpha} i \delta \dot{\epsilon} \alpha$], then grasping it with three [ideas] – beauty and symmetry and truth [$\kappa \dot{\alpha} \lambda \lambda \sigma \sigma \omega \mu \epsilon \tau \rho i \alpha \kappa \alpha \dot{\alpha} \dot{\alpha} \dot{\lambda} \eta \epsilon \epsilon \alpha$] – we say that this, [understood] as one alone [$\tilde{o} i \sigma v \tilde{\nu}$], would be correctly hold responsible [$\dot{o} \rho \theta \dot{\sigma} \tau \tau$ ' $\ddot{\alpha} v \alpha i \tau \iota \alpha \sigma \alpha i \mu \epsilon \theta$ ' $\check{\alpha} v (= \alpha i \tau i \alpha)$] of what is in the mixture

¹⁷ For occurrences of the phrase "Idee des Guten" cf. *PUL* 19, 91, 193s, and notes 165-166 (only on p. 91 does the "idea of the good" occur without being identified with the one).

[σύμμιξις (of πέρας and ἄπειρον)], and for this, as it is good, the mixture becomes something good.¹⁸

The way, also linguistic, to grasp here not inadequately the meaning of the Platonic τὸ ἀγαθόν passes through its theoretical declination in the superlative. Tò $d\gamma \alpha \theta \delta v$ is the exuberant, the enormously powerful, the excellently exceeding, overflowing, the superabundant - in one word: the optimum¹⁹. It, which gives containment to everything, is the uncontainable, the vertiginously abysmal. In the context of the Philebus, the consideration of the optimum pertains to the investigation of the four supreme $\gamma \epsilon v \eta$ of reality (limit, limitless, mixture of the two, cause of the mixture), and it corresponds precisely to aitía; but the optimum is more properly a ὑπεργένος, with such an overflowing dynamis (64E5) that three iδέαι are necessary for human thinking to be able to prepare unitedly the theoresis: κάλλος και συμμετρία και αλήθεια, beauty and symmetry (commensurability) and truth. Three eminent and interdependent ίδέαι, each in turn a paradigm of paradigms – according to a solidary tripartition that is still today extremely fruitful epistemologically²⁰.

¹⁸ Cfr. Plato, *Philebus*, transl. Gosling (modified), Clarendon Press, 1975, p. 69.

¹⁹ The Latin word *optimum* refers precisely to the meaning of an extraordinary fertility.

²⁰ For the epistemological importance of this tripartition, even if with a slightly different terminology, cf. V. Cicero, *Comunanza dell'essere e libertà del sapere*, Preface to F. De

In the context of the *present* discussion, oriented towards the integration of literary dialogues and Plato's indirect tradition, the taxonomy of the "four *genera*" now allows us to identify three distinct levels of speculative discourse, which I list in an ascending direction:

a) the *ontological* level, in which being (from ideas to phenomena) is confirmed as the cosmic product of the mixture of the two fundamental principles;

b) the *protological* level, in which π έρας and ἄπειρον, limit and limitless, represent the principial dynamic instances of the one and of the indefinite dyad, which in the structuring/mixture of being (therefore of the cosmos) cooperate *symmetrically*, i.e. thanks to the analogizing μέτρον, mathematically verifiable, flowing from the ultraprinciple;

c) the "*agathological*" level²¹, to call it not entirely improperly, in which human thinking has the possibility of intuitively grasping the optimum as "one and triune"; however, while it pours into the three "meta-ideas" beauty– symmetry–truth, $\tau \delta \dot{\alpha} \gamma \alpha \theta \delta v$ remains *in itself* epistemically unspeakable, and

Benedetto, L'anima e la matematica, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2011, pp. 5-12.

²¹ Agathology is indeed the name that Rosmini, in his Introduction to Philosophy (Casuccio, Casale 1850, p. 365 f.), assigned to the ethical doctrine of the good as such. Sylvain Delcomminette speaks convincingly of Platonic "agathologie" in his commentary on the *Philebus* (585 ff., 629 ff.).

effable only mythosophically as vertiginous demiurgic khaos. It therefore appears, much more than an ulterior instance, a kind of *inhorizontable ecstance*.

B. Parmenides, 156DE.

The suddenly [$\tau \delta \dot{\epsilon} \xi \alpha (\phi \nu \eta \zeta$] seems to signify something from which there is a change [$\mu \epsilon \tau \alpha \beta \delta \lambda \dot{\eta}$] towards one or the other condition [towards movement or towards stasis]. For it is not from stasis [$\sigma \tau \dot{\alpha} \sigma \iota \zeta$] still in stasis that there is change, nor from movement [$\kappa (\nu \eta \sigma \iota \zeta)$] still in movement that there is change; instead it is the suddenly, this strange nature [$\phi \prime \sigma \iota \zeta \, \check{\alpha} \tau \sigma \pi \delta \zeta$] which is in the midst [$\mu \epsilon \tau \alpha \xi \dot{\nu}$] of movement and stasis, [and] is not in any time [$\dot{\epsilon} \nu \, \chi \rho \dot{\delta} \nu \phi \, \circ \dot{\delta} \epsilon \nu \dot{\iota}$], that towards which and from which the moved changes in being and the state in being moved.²²

This is a dialogic passage which has no counterpart in the indirect Platonic tradition, nor does it find statements capable of rivaling it in speculative depth. Indeed, while the locution $\tau \dot{o} \dot{\epsilon} \xi \alpha (\phi v \eta \varsigma)$ (i.e. the substantivation of the adverb $\dot{\epsilon} \xi \alpha (\phi v \eta \varsigma)$, "suddenly") constitutes a *hapax legomenon* of Plato's written work, it is all the more surprising that, of the strange (atopic) mediation between $\sigma \tau \dot{\alpha} \sigma \iota \varsigma$ and $\kappa (v \eta \sigma \iota \varsigma$ to which the word refers, there is no trace in the classic treatment of the species of movement in book X of the *Laws* (893B-895B). As we know, in the *PUL* Gaiser dedicates an entire chapter to this doctrine (pp. 173-201), comparing

²² Cf. Plato, *Parmenides*, transl. Hermann (modified), Parmenides Publishing, Las Vegas– Zürich–Athens 2010, p. 177. For the discussion of the passage cf. my SM § 8.

it in detail with various *TP* (nr. 22B', 29, 31, 32, 44A, 55A, 55B, 68, 71, 72), and in fact his general observation is as clear as shareable (*PUL* 179):

The opposition of stillness and movement is grounded, as is the opposition of identity and diversity, in the unique opposition of principles. [...] The hierarchy of species of movement must be understood not only in a formal sense, but also, at the same time, in an ontological-cosmological sense.

However, Gaiser's position is no longer convincing when, as we have seen (§ 4), the figure of the demiurge is subordinated to the first principle – to $\tau \circ \tilde{\epsilon}v$, $\tau \circ \pi \epsilon \rho \alpha \varsigma$, which Gaiser identifies with the "idea of the good". Far from merely representing the dynamic aspect of the one (alias the "idea of the good"), the demiurge is an "agathurgic" figure, that is the mythosophical translation of the *megadynamis* of the optimum, before and beyond the synergical-oppositional dynamism of the same two principles, as *Timaeus*, 37D, suggests:

The demiurge thought of making a mobile image of the eternal $[\alpha i \omega v]$, and while he arranges the heavenly order, of the eternal that remains in unity he makes $[\pi \sigma i \epsilon i]$ an eternal image $[\alpha i \omega v i \epsilon i \epsilon \omega v]$ proceeding according to the number, which we have called "time" $[\chi \rho \delta v \sigma \varsigma]$.²³

Here the demiurge shows that his figure belongs to the constitutive thirdness of platonic philosophy, because he makes possible all unity and duality (multity)

²³ Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, transl. Waterfield (modified), Oxford University Press, Oxford 2008, p.
25.

and all their sensible and intelligible links. In this passage on the genesis of chronos, in fact, three different types of temporality pertain to the entities involved: a) the intelligible or noetic entity has *aionic* temporality (from αἰών, "eternal"); b) to the sensitive or aesthetic entity pertains the *chronic* temporality (from χρόνος, the "time" ordinarily understood, with its three aspects: past, present, future); c) instead the demiurge, whom Plato calls «father generator» [o γεννήσας πατήρ (37E)], does not belong so much to a temporal dimension, but rather he is the root of all temporality: the exaphany (from $\xi \epsilon \alpha (\phi v \eta \zeta)^{24}$, the suddenness of the ecstant - not "instant" (in-stans), in fact, which refers to an insistence within the stasis, but precisely "ecstant" (ek-stans), a word that best expresses the coming out of stasis, without for this being still in kinesis (see scheme 4). The Platonic demiurge is neither eternal nor temporal-transient, but *exaphanic*: he works by suddenly breaking, from the non-manifest of the optimum in itself, into the ecstant, starting from which the known temporal dimensions unravel (aionic, chronic, kairotic, astronomical, synchronic etc.).

²⁴ The etymology gives an excellent starting point for the incisive translation of τὸ ἐξαίφνης: "ex" indicates coming-from; "aiphnes" is a variant of ἀφανής, "unmanifest, not (fore-)seen" (cf. Liddell-Scott, p. 286): in fact τὸ ἐξαίφνης is the sudden irruption of a novum of/from the non-manifest in one or more temporal dimensions. Hence the noun exaphany (*ἐξαφάνεια, on the model of ἐπιφάνεια|epiphany, "manifestation, apparition").

DEMIURGE AND EXAPHANY



SCHEME 4

The fundamental structure of temporality in Plato (Parmenides, 156de; Timaeus, 37D; TP 55A, 55B).

The scheme shows how the irruption of the exaphany takes place through analogization, establishing essential proportional links between the various speculative spheres (both protological and ontological). Indeed, it is only thanks to its function of "material" $dva\lambda o\gamma \omega \psi v$, i.e. dynamic-energetic, that can be grasped/mirrored by humans through the morpho-eidetic analogizing channel²⁵ –

²⁵ This analogizing channel is what I call "the as" or "tò ἀνάλογον", the transcendental of transcendentals (see SM §§ 4, pp. 6-9), which with the mythosopheme of the demiurge reveals itself as *the* proportional structure of the manifestation of the divine exaphany, «almost the Deity inclined privilegedly to give (and to give itself to) human temporality in the suddenness

it is only through this "materiality" springing from the optimum that the ecstant configures both the modulations of the synergical opposition of *hen* and *dyàs*, and the relationship between *aión* and *chronos* as a link between model and copy, and the relationship between *stasis* and *kínesis* as an analogation of being and becoming.

To the understanding of this Platonic carousel of analogizations and analogations, Gaiser has provided a remarkable philological support, the value of which is far superior to its hermeneutical-speculative limits, on which I have focused more in the present contribution. An effort that would undoubtedly be wasted, if the complex analogizing of Plato's thought did not prove to be still formidably *optimal*, fertile, for current philosophy.

of a dazzling, ecstatic, ecstantaneous, rapid and enrapturing irruption» (ibid., p. 55).

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