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Sophistic, Eristic and Philosophy in Isocrates’ Proemium to *Helen*

By Ranko Kozić*

The proemium to the Encomium of Helen has revealed itself to be a perfect example of how interesting the study of Greek literature is, in so far as what barely seemed likely to yield promising results, namely a prologue to one of the least favourite literary genres, opened up new perspectives for unravelling the secrets of Isocrates’ allusive technique, the major one being that his polemic in the encomium was not launched against all the spiritual currents of his time, as previously thought, but only against the Sophistic, eristic and Antisthenes, his rival in a bitter struggle for the legacy of Socrates. After a long and deep analysis of the text, we came to the conclusion that Isocrates should be viewed as the forerunner of the new sophistic movement, instead of being regarded as “organizer of the spirit of the ancient sophistic,” as is evident from the fact that his method of montage, applied to the encomium as a whole and essentially based on the Socratic and Platonic concepts, won general acceptance among the exponents of the Second Sophistic.

Introduction: Proemium Filled with all Manners of Devices and Packed with Enigmas

The very fact that Isocrates’ *Encomium of Helen* is preceded by the proemium (1–15 or 4 Teubner pages in length), which drew the attention of Aristotle due to what appeared at first sight to be a loose connection between it and the main body of the encomium,¹ has already indicated that his work is filled with all manners of devices and packed with enigmas, the solution of which essentially depended on obtaining an answer to the key question: what was the author’s attitude towards the ancient sophistic and other intellectual currents of his own age? To tell the truth, the enigma of

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¹*Rh.* 3 14.1414b5: οὐθὲν γὰρ οἰκεῖον ὑπάρχει τοῖς ἐριστικοῖς καὶ Ἑλένη. As it seems, Isocrates was not only Socrates and Plato’s favourite orator but also Aristotle’s, as can be inferred from the fact that he even commended the orator for his approach by saying that “even if he wanders from the point, this is more appropriate than that the speech should be monotonous” (ἅμα δὲ καὶ ἐν ἐκτοπίσῃ, ἀρμόττει μὴ ὅλον τὸν λόγον ὁμοειδῆ εἶναι), as translated by J. H. Freese (LCL). Aristotle may also have alluded to Isocrates’ encomium when in the following passage from the *Rhetoric* (3 14.1415a4) he said that exordia may be derived from advice, citing the praise of Paris as an example of this, because he who is neither famous nor worthless remains, although he is good, obscure, which in itself is a piece of advice, something that fits well with Paris’ virtues that are praised by Isocrates in the main body of his encomium (41–48). The very fact that Aristotle has a broadly positive view of Isocrates’ approach applied to the proemium of his encomium provides the best possible proof that it is not possible to speak of the mutual animosity between the philosopher and the orator, as claimed by Blass (1892, 64–67). In this connection, it should be noted that Isocrates (436–338 B.C.) was an Athenian orator and the founder of the most influential school in the history of rhetoric, the main aim of which was to care above all for polished expression, as distinguished from Plato’s Academy. The school numbered among its pupils men of eminence from all over the Greek world.

providing the encomium with the proemium has attracted the attention of scholars chiefly at the beginning of the research in the nineteenth century,² a research that ended without producing any tangible results since the proemium's multi-layered structure was, unfortunately, not noticed. The reason for this lies in the failure to detect models used by Isocrates for conceiving his proemium, which was, as it seems, primarily a consequence of the false assumption that it was in no way possible to obtain fundamental results from what was widely regarded as one of the least favourite literary genres.

What kind of result is being referred to here can be inferred from the fact that it is symbol-laden, in so far as it turned out that in conceiving the opening passages for his proemium Isocrates derived his ideas primarily from the *Sophist*, in which the exponents of sophistry are characterized in a rather derogatory comparison as cunning beasts (226a: ποικίλον θηρίον), jugglers and imitators of realities (235a: γόητα καὶ μιμητὴν ἄρα θετέον αὐτόν τινα), as distinguished from the *Statesman* where they are even identified with centaurs and satyrs (303c: Κενταυρικὸν καὶ Σατυρικὸν τινα θιάσον). The very fact that we encounter the same characterization of the sophists of the older generation in Dio Chrysostom's *Fourth Discourse on Kingship*³ points not only to the continuity of ideas and concepts, but also to the conclusion that with his choice of models for the proemium Isocrates implied his irreconcilable and hostile attitude not, as was erroneously thought, towards Plato, but towards the ancient sophistic and eristic and their entire legacy, as discussed in detail below.

What we encounter already in the two opening passages from the proemium is a kind of *montage*, or rather amalgamation of ideas, with three of them derived from the *Sophist* (242d-e; 240c; 251b), one from the *Euthydemus* (303e–304a), the *Parmenides* (127d) and the *Phaedrus* (261d), and two from Aristotle: one from the *Metaphysics* (Δ 29.1024b33) and the other from the *Physics* (Θ 8.263a3), which, through subtle indications, gives us a hint against whom Isocrates' polemic is directed. The fact that the aforementioned method, as we will see later, enjoyed universal popularity in the period of the new sophistic gives us the right to speak of Isocrates as its forerunner, or rather originator, a point that will be further confirmed by the results obtained from solving the enigmas in the proemium itself. The very fact that Isocrates chooses Plato and Aristotle as his models has further undermined the argument about his hostility towards the leading philosophers of his time,⁴ as is evident, among other things, from the fact that one of the two ideas derived from Aristotle, namely the one from

²A good overview of the literature about previous research on the subject and the unity of the encomium in Münscher (1916, 2180–2185) and Blass (1892, 242–246). As to the unity of the encomium, it should be noted that in recent times scholars used to tackle the problem of the proemium in almost the same way as it was dealt with at the beginning of research by regarding it as thematically independent of the encomium, with Viidebaum (2021, 70) and Kennedy (1958, 80) representing a rare exception to the trend, the latter of whom sought to establish the unity of the entire speech by interpreting it as a Panhellenic document. Jaeger (1944, 67), Buchheit (1960) and Heilbrunn (1977, 147), to name just a few, took the opposite stance on the issue.

³Sophists are characterized as ignorant (28), tricky fellows (32), men attracting only simpletons and fools (35), lecherous eunuchs (35), miserable creatures (38), and moreover compared to both the monstrous brood of the Centaurs (130), and unruly and untrained dogs deceiving others in the hunting (34).

⁴Cf. Blass (1892) 28–41; 64–67. See also Gemelli Marciano (2007, 181) where Isocrates is regarded as a tough opponent of Plato on the basis of evidence from the *Busiris*, 28.

Metaphysics, played, as we shall see later, a crucial role in conveying a key message not only of the proemium but also of the entire encomium.

What served as a purely formal model for both the opening (1) and the second passage from the proemium (2–3), being of high importance for the interpretation of the encomium, was the passage from the *Sophist* (242d–e), in which the Eleatic Stranger gives a survey of the teachings about realities and principles in the Eleatic,⁵ Ionian,⁶ Sicilian,⁷ early Ionian (Pherecydes)⁸ and one unnamed school, with the aim of pointing out the complete confusion regarding their number which ranges from one to three: one reality in the school of the Eleatics, two in the teaching of Heraclitus, Empedocles and Pherecydes and three in that of the unnamed school. It is precisely the last-mentioned teaching that in the opinion of the Stranger provides a vivid example of improvisation and arbitrariness in the field of ontology, which reminded him of children's fairy tales, as can be concluded from the fact that the three aforementioned realities, as he put it, occasionally wage wars with each other, only to make peace between them and enter into a kind of marriage in order to produce offspring.⁹

That Isocrates used the aforementioned passage from the *Sophist* as a formal model to set forth his key theses in the opening passage of the proemium can be inferred from the fact that in the proemium's second passage we also encounter the same contrast between one and many whose similarity to both the aforementioned passage from the *Sophist* and the opening passage from the proemium was all the more difficult to notice as the author strove to the best of his ability to remove all traces of his heavy dependence on Plato in setting forth his theses. Leaving aside the aforementioned contrast between one and many, at first sight there was nothing to indicate any similarity between the two opening passages from Isocrates' proemium and the aforementioned passage from the *Sophist*, which in itself is a clear indication of how big the problem is. This is further evidenced by the fact that enigmas in the proemium's second passage had to be solved first as a necessary prerequisite for shedding more light on the puzzles in the opening passage in which the aforesaid contrast is only implicitly present, a contrast of paramount significance for ascertaining Isocrates' attitudes towards the Sophistic. Hence we will proceed in reverse order by first focusing our attention on the second passage from the proemium with the aim of applying the results obtained to the solution of the enigmas in the opening passage.

⁵242d: τὸ Ἐλεατικὸν ἔθνος ἀπὸ Ξενοφάνους τε καὶ ἔτι πρόσθεν ἀρξάμενον, ὡς ἑνὸς ὄντος τῶν πάντων καλουμένων. It is noteworthy to mention that that's the only reference in the dialogues of Plato to Xenophanes as the founder of the Eleatic school. Cf. Gemelli Marciano (2007, 258).

⁶ 242d–e: Ἰάδες δὲ καὶ Σικελαί [...] Μοῦσαι συνενόησαν [...] ὅτι ἀσφαλέστατον λέγειν ὡς τὸ ὄν πολλά τε καὶ ἓν ἐστίν, ἔχθρα δὲ καὶ φιλία συνέχεται.

⁷Ibid.: Σικελαί Μοῦσαι, i.e. Empedocles.

⁸ 242d: δύο δὲ ἕτερος εἰπών, ὑγρὸν καὶ ξηρὸν ἢ θερμὸν καὶ ψυχρὸν, συνοικίξει τε αὐτὰ καὶ ἐκδίδωσι.

⁹ 242c–d: μῦθόν τινα ἕκαστος φαίνεται μοι διηγέσθαι παισὶν ὡς οὖσιν ἡμῖν, ὁ μὲν ὡς τρία τὰ ὄντα, πολεμεῖ δὲ ἀλλήλοις ἐνίοτε αὐτῶν ἄττα πη, τοτὲ δὲ καὶ φίλα γιγνόμενα γάμους τε καὶ τόκους [...] παρέχεται. The fact that realities and principles enter into marriage and produce offspring implies the inherent power of multiplication so that the contrast between one and many is fully apparent in this passage from the *Sophist*.

The Second Passage of the Proemium (2–3): Isocrates' most Cherished Ideals against the Background of Zeno's Dichotomies and Stilpo's Eristic

By saying that, except for the contrast between one and many, there was nothing to indicate the similarity between the two opening passages from the proemium and the passage from the *Sophist* we mean above all the fact that out of five philosophical schools, against which a polemic was launched in the passage from the *Sophist*, only the Eleatic school of philosophy is mentioned in the proemium's second passage or, to be more precise, the two of its major exponents, Zeno and Melissus, whose teachings, along with those of Gorgias, are subjected to harsh criticism, as is evident from Isocrates' assertion that Melissus "made it his task to find proofs that, although things in nature are infinite, the whole is one."¹⁰ When in his criticism of Zeno Isocrates highlights the fact that the aforementioned exponent of the Eleatic school "ventured to prove the same things as possible and again as impossible" (*Hel.* 3: Ζήνωνα τὸν ταῦτ' ἀδύνατον καὶ πάλιν ἀδύνατον πειρώμενον ἀποφαίνειν), we can clearly see that he derives this idea from the passage of Aristotle's *Physics* in which Zeno's paradoxes of motion are characterized as impossible because One, or rather one specific distance, no matter how determined it might be, turns out to be infinite, as does its half, also divided into infinite number of halves that are to be covered.¹¹ As a result of which, motion and rest,¹² one and many are identical to each other, which implies that one and the same thing can be simultaneously similar and dissimilar,¹³ in motion and at rest,¹⁴ as stated by Socrates in his criticism of Zeno and Parmenides' doctrine. What is implicitly enclosed within this sharp criticism of Zeno is his method of dichotomy, which will turn out to be one of the crucial facts in an attempt to solve enigmas in the opening passage from the proemium, as we shall see later.

So now the important question arises as to why only the aforementioned exponents of the Eleatic school along with Gorgias – who even dared to assert that nothing exists of the things that are (*Hel.* 3: οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων ἔστιν), and thus outdid both Zeno and Melissus in paradoxicalities – are the subject of Isocrates' criticism in the second passage from the proemium. It is much easier to find an answer in the case of Gorgias, in so far as we have good reasons to assume that he was mentioned in this purely philosophical context, chiefly because Isocrates regarded him not only as his

¹⁰*Hel.* 3: ἀπείρων τὸ πλῆθος πεφυκότων τῶν πραγμάτων ὡς ἑνὸς ὄντος τοῦ παντὸς ἐπεχείρησεν ἀποδείξει εὐρίσκειν. Χφ. Πλατ. *Σοπη.* 242δ'ε' (ἀσφαλέστατον [...] λέγειν ὡς τὸ ὄν πολλά τε καὶ ἓν) and 240c (κινδυνεύει τοιαύτην τινὰ πεπλέχθαι συμπλοκὴν τὸ μὴ ὄν τῷ ὄντι, καὶ μάλα ἄτοπον). In this connection, it should be said that all translations of the passages from the *Helen* are by L. van Hook (LCL).

¹¹Θ 8.263a3: ταῦτα δ' ἄπειρα, τὰ δ' ἄπειρα ἀδύνατον διεξελθεῖν. Χφ. Αριστ. *Πημοσ.* Θ 8.263a3: τοῦτο δ' ὁμολογουμένως ἔστιν ἀδύνατον.

¹²Cf. *Phys.* Z 9.239b30: τρίτος δ' ὁ νῦν ῥηθεὶς ὅτι ἡ οὐστὸς φερομένη ἔστηκεν. συμβαίνει δὲ παρὰ τὸ λαμβάνειν τὸν χρόνον συγκεῖσθαι ἐκ τῶν νῦν.

¹³Plat. *Parm.* 127d: πῶς [...] ὦ Ζήνων, τοῦτο λέγεις; εἰ πολλά ἐσσι τὰ ὄντα, ὡς ἄρα δεῖ αὐτὰ ὁμοία τε εἶναι καὶ ἀνόμοια, τοῦτο δὲ δὴ ἀδύνατον.

¹⁴Plat. *Phaedr.* 261d: τὸν οὖν Ἑλεατικὸν Παλαμίδην λέγοντα οὐκ ἴσμεν τέχνη, ὥστε φαίνεσθαι τοῖς ἀκούουσι τὰ αὐτὰ ὁμοία καὶ ἀνόμοια, καὶ ἐν καὶ πολλά, μένοντά τε αὖ καὶ φερόμενα;

rival who composed the encomium on the same theme but also as a specific follower of the ideas cultivated in the aforementioned school of philosophy.¹⁵

We will get the answer to the remaining question only if we carefully study the reflection of Zeno and Melissus' ideas in the ensuing centuries. Truth be told, what we are referring to here is almost exclusively Zeno's influence, in so far as we very rarely encounter Melissus' name in later doxographic literature, most likely because of Aristotle's scathing criticism of his personality in both the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics* where he is viewed as an uncouth¹⁶ and, moreover, uneducated man,¹⁷ which in itself was, as it seems, sufficient enough to undermine his authority in the centuries to come. Despite the fact that, in sheer contrast to Melissus, there is no mention at all of Zeno's name in later doxographic literature,¹⁸ the influence he had on the men of letters in later times was fully evident, most likely as a result of Plato's account of him in both the *Parmenides* and the *Phaedrus*, in the latter of which he is characterized as a dialectician able to advocate on both sides of an issue.¹⁹

Due to his famous paradoxes, Zeno's influence on the men of letters in later times was not only evident but also considerable, as can be inferred from the fact that he was a favourite author among the exponents of the Megarian school of philosophy primarily interested in the creation of the so-called dialectical paradoxes,²⁰ as well as from the fact that, according to Gemelli Marciano (2013a, 125), Plato and his followers regarded his paradoxes of both plurality and motion as truly fundamental and thus worthy of careful studying and further elaboration. Xenocrates' usual practice of taking a version of Zeno's paradox of plurality, improved through discussion, as a starting point for his theory of indivisible line as the last limit of space is a telling example of this methodology.²¹ That the influence of Zeno's paradoxes was considerable in later times can be seen in the fact that Aristotle analyses and disproves his paradoxes of motion and space in the books Z and Δ of his *Physics*,²² which gave occasion for the later Neoplatonist Simplicius to defend Platonic interpretation of the paradoxes of plurality against the attacks to which it was exposed in commentaries on Aristotle.²³ And if we add the fact that Zeno's doctrine was also very popular among the exponents of philosophy of skepticism, who, unlike Plato and his followers, used his paradoxes of plurality to refute the existence of both one and many (Gemelli Marciano 2013a, 125), we will have a more complete picture of his influence in later times. Thus Zeno's teachings turned out to be the subject of an in-depth research in almost all schools of

¹⁵According to Seneca (*Ep.* 88.44), Zeno's doctrine is the same as that of Gorgias, i.e. *nihil esse: si Parmenidi* (scil. credo), *nihil est praeter unum, si Zenoni, ne unum quidem*. This also explains why Gorgias is mentioned in this purely philosophical context.

¹⁶φορτικός (*Phys.* A 3.186a7).

¹⁷ἄγροικος (*Metaph.* A 5.986b25). Cf. Gemelli Marciano (2013b) 202.

¹⁸Cf. Gemelli Marciano (2013b) 125.

¹⁹Cf. DL IX 25 where Aristotle is quoted as saying that Zeno was the inventor of dialectic. Cf. also Timon's of Phlius view of Zeno as ἀμφοτερόγλωσσος ("doppelzüngig"), expressed in the same context.

²⁰Gemelli Marciano (2013a) 125.

²¹*Alex. Aphr. ap. Simpl. In Phys.* 138, 3 (DK 29 A 22). Cf. Gemelli Marciano (2013a) 125.

²²Z 9.239b9 (DK 29 A 25), Z 2.233a21 (DK 29 A 25), Θ 8.263a3 (Zeno 20 Mansfeld), Z 9.239b14 (DK 29 A 25), Z 9.239b30 (DK 29 A 27), Z 9.239b5 (DK 29 A 27), Z 9.239b33 (DK 29 A 28); Δ 1.209a23 (DK 29 A 24), Δ 3.210b22 (DK 29 A 24). Cf. also Gemelli Marciano (2013a) 125.

²³Gemelli Marciano (2013a) *ibid.*

philosophy, which in itself represents a trend Isocrates was vehemently opposed to. And now we shall see the reason why.

As a result of this and other developments, Isocrates might become increasingly indignant about the fact that almost all schools of philosophy had been “infected by the virus” of paradox and that in the case of the Megarian school that virus mutated into forms of eristic, as can be inferred from Diogenes Laertius’ short account of the teachings of Isocrates’ contemporary Stilpo of Megara (II 113–120). Although Stilpo’s eristic represented the very opposite of Isocrates’ most cherished ideals of putting sound philosophical theories into political practice, the latter had an additional reason for being very dissatisfied with what was happening before his very eyes, as is evident from the fact that Stilpo even surpassed Socrates in popularity and that nearly the whole of Greece was attracted to him and joined the school of Megara,” because he excelled all the rest in inventiveness and sophistry, as Diogenes Laertius put it, (II 113: τοσοῦτον δ’ εὐρεσιολογία καὶ σοφιστεία προῆγε τοὺς ἄλλους). What was the most embarrassing for Isocrates was the fact that Stilpo turned out to be very skilful at drawing away disciples from other schools of philosophy, as can be inferred from the fact that he gained over the theorist Metrodorus and Timagoras of Gela from Theophrastus, Cleitarchus and Simmias from Aristotle the Cyrenaic philosopher; and as for dialecticians themselves, he drew away Paeonius from Aristides and made Diphilus of Bosphorus and Myrmex, who had both come to refute him, his devoted adherents. If we take into account the fact that besides these Stilpo won over Crates the Cynic and Zeno the Stoic (DL II 114), we get the impression that almost all schools of philosophy were more or less receptive to his eristic.

What was affecting Isocrates deeply was the fact that Stilpo also proved to be very skilful at winning over the rhetoricians themselves, as was the case with Alcimus, the first orator in all Greece (114), and it is not implausible that Stilpo might have drawn away pupils from Isocrates’ own school. It can be assumed with sufficient probability that the same state of affairs existed in the preceding period in the history of the school, with Eubulides of Miletus, Alexinus of Elis, Euphantus of Olynthus, Apollonius Cronus and Diodorus Cronus leaving an indelible mark on it, as can be inferred from the fact that, according to Diogenes Laertius (II 108–109), none other than Demosthenes attended the school of Eubulides, Euclides’ disciple, and thereby improved his faulty pronunciation of the letter R. Given an earlier date of the *Helen*, it seems more likely that Isocrates’ criticism of eristic was, as we will see shortly, directed, except for the likes of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, at Eubulides²⁴ and the period immediately preceding the time of Stilpo.

Thus all prerequisites are provided for focusing our attention on solving enigmas in the opening passage from the proemium in which we also encounter the contrast, albeit implicitly given, between one and many, the difference being that the aforementioned contrast is now transferred from the field of ontology to that of method and moreover applied to a fairly brief survey of the spiritual currents of Isocrates’ own age, which is

²⁴He was, according to Diogenes Laertius (II, 108), the author of many dialectical, i.e. sophistical, arguments in an interrogatory form as, for instance, *The Liar* and *The Sorites*, whereby he may have fallen into disgrace in Isocrates’ eyes, as can be inferred from the latter’s strong criticism of Socrates’ conversation with the exponents of eristic, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, in the *Euthydemus*. Cf. below n. 46.

why it escaped the attention of the scholars. In other words, what is involved here is the contrast between one philosophically grounded method yielding one accurate and reliable result and sheer inventiveness, displayed on a great many themes and expressing itself, among other things, in speaking on both sides of the question and having as a consequence a lot of contradictory results arising from many provisional, ad hoc approaches to the subject, which in itself is so reminiscent of Zeno's teaching in which, in full accordance with Socrates' criticism of Parmenides' method in the *Phaedrus*, all the differences between one and many, similar and dissimilar, motion and rest, disappear. We are now going to turn to the contrast in the opening passage from the proemium, which is more complex than the one we have discussed so far due to its being twofold.

The Opening Passage of the Proemium (1): Isocrates' Play on Contrasts and the Method of the New Rhetoric in the *Phaedrus*

When we say "more complex," we mean above all a play on contrasts, one of which is formal, and the other is of a substantial nature. The formal contrast is, as already said, created by barely perceptible allusions to the two aforementioned passages from the *Sophist* (242d–e,²⁵ 240c²⁶), as distinguished from a substantial one, which resulted from combining the patterns just mentioned with the content and key message of the remaining passage from the *Sophist* (251b) as well as with the content of the crucially important passages from the *Euthydemus* (303e–304a) and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (D 29.1024b33), and what this looks like in detail we will see shortly. What is involved here is a daemonic combination of patterns that necessarily had to cloud the view of researchers, which in itself speaks more than anything else about the true nature of not only Isocrates' but also the new sophistic, as is evident from the fact that Isocrates combines ideas derived from the aforementioned passages in such a good way that the human eye, as Philostratus would put it,²⁷ is by no means able to determine where the conceptual mimesis of one passage ends and the same one of another begins.

The very fact that the theses, as expressed in the aforementioned brief survey of spiritual currents in the opening of the proemium, do not refer, as was to be expected, to the tendencies in rhetoric of Isocrates' time, but, quite to the contrary, to some key postulates of the schools of philosophy, is a clear indication of who specifically might be responsible for establishing a close relationship between rhetoric and philosophy²⁸

²⁵Cf. nn. 5–9.

²⁶Cf. n. 10.

²⁷*Im.* 2.2 (representation of centaur's dual nature in painting).

²⁸This is evident by the fact that 16 out of 26 instances of his self-interpretation in the *Antidosis* refer either to *philosophia* (41, 50, 147, 162, 170, 175, 176, 181, 183, 195, 205, 209, 215, 243, 247) or *philosophantes* (250), as opposed to 8 instances in which the author identifies as a sophist (148, 155, 168, 197, 203, 220, 235, 237). The remaining two instances are also highly indicative of Isocrates' view of oratory, with both of them referring to *rhetores* (190, 256), i.e. his rivals regarded as exponents of a superficial and common training and moreover identified with *sykophantes* by the public opinion of his own age. But the problem lies in the fact that in the same narrow context terms 'philosophia' and 'sophistike' have the same meaning (195: *philosophy*, 197: *sophist*, 203: *sophist*, 205: *philosophy*) with

and enforcing this tendency that will find its reflection in Eunapius' *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, where the sophists of late antiquity are almost exclusively regarded as philosophers. This is evident not only by the title of the work,²⁹ but also by the lengthy prologue (453–457) dealing solely with the state of biographical sources for the philosophers of the aforementioned epoch and culminating in a short account of the lives of Plotinus and Porphyrius and their mutual relationship.

Isocrates' survey of particularly characteristic spiritual currents of his own age in the opening of the proemium begins with (1) the egoistic exponents of an unnamed school of thought “who were much pleased with themselves, if, after setting up an absurd and self-contradictory subject, they succeeded in discussing it in tolerable fashion,”³⁰ and it goes without saying that they were always driven by a desire to search for ever new topics, which in itself implies a great deal of subjects (= plurality, inventiveness, improvisation). Thereafter follows the mentioning of those (2) who have grown old “asserting that it is impossible to say, or to gainsay, what is false, or to speak on both sides of the same questions”³¹ (which is equivalent to saying that only one thesis is possible) as well as those (3) “maintaining that courage and wisdom and justice are identical, and that we possess none of these as natural qualities, but that there is only one sort of knowledge”, or rather method, as we shall see later, “concerned with them all”³² (which is equivalent to saying that only one method is acceptable). And at the end of the opening passage Isocrates mentions those (4) who “waste their time in captious disputations that are not only entirely useless, but are sure to make trouble for their disciples” (which implicitly assumes a great many topics as well as many provisional, ad hoc approaches to the subject).³³

the result that it appears at first sight not to be possible to discern where philosophy ends and where the Sophistic begins. But the appearances are deceptive, as is evident from the fact that in one of the aforementioned instances (155) the sophists of the older generation (Gorgias) are referred to as the “so-called sophists” in sharp contrast to his own art of speaking and philosophizing.

²⁹As far as the title of Eunapius' work is concerned, the very fact that sophists are relegated to a position of secondary importance immediately strikes the eye, but the fact that they are mentioned together with philosophers is an enigma in itself, especially taking into account that a lengthy proemium to the *Lives* exclusively deals with the philosophers. What is involved here is a tautology, very likely influenced by Socrates' characterization of his own philosophy as a noble and true-born art of sophistry in the *Sophist* (231b: γένει γεννάια σοφιστική). Cf. Philostratus' assertion (*VS*, 480–481) that methods of the philosophers and sophists are essentially identical since both are crucially based on divination, the only difference being that the philosophical method resembles the prophetic art which is controlled by man, or – one can also say – by *logos*, as distinguished from that of the sophists, reminding him of the style used by oracles and soothsayers, which in itself points to the doctrine of *mania* and *sophrosyne* alternately pulsating in the soul of philosopher, as distinguished from that of the rhapsode (poet), in which only *mania* palpitates, as expressed in both the myth of the winged chariot in the *Phaedrus* (244a–257b) and the emblematic image of poet and rhapsode in the *Ion* (533d), respectively. On the interrelatedness of *logos* and *mania* in Plato's philosophy cf. Reale (2000) 231 n. 132.

³⁰εἰσὶ τινες οἱ μέγα φρονούσιν, ἣν ὑπόθεσιν ἄτοπον καὶ παράδοξον ποιησάμενοι περὶ ταύτης ἀνεκτῶς εἰπεῖν δυνηθῶσιν.

³¹καὶ καταγεγηράκασιν οἱ μὲν οὐ φάσκοντες οἷόν τ' εἶναι ψευδῆ λέγειν οὐδ' ἀντιλέγειν οὐδὲ δύο λόγοι περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν πραγμάτων ἀντειπεῖν.

³²οἱ δὲ διεξιόντες ὡς ἀνδρία καὶ σοφία καὶ δικαιοσύνη ταυτὸν ἐστὶ, καὶ φύσει μὲν οὐδὲν αὐτῶν ἔχομεν, μία δ' ἐπιστήμη καθ' ἀπάντων ἐστίν.

³³ἄλλοι δὲ περὶ τὰς ἔριδας διατρίβουσι τὰς οὐδὲν μὲν ὠφελοῦσας, πράγματα δὲ παρέχειν τοῖς πλησιάζουσι δυναμένας.

If we take a closer look at Isocrates' theses on the spiritual currents of his own age we shall notice yet another of Isocrates' games of hide-and-seek, which consists in the fact that the first and the fourth thesis are essentially identical (a great many themes, inventiveness, absurdity, uselessness, many provisional, ad hoc approaches, creating problems involving the whole of society), which is also true for the second and the third one (only one thesis and one method are acceptable) so that one can rightly speak, instead of four theses, of the two pairs of theses, each of which can be regarded as a supplement to its own counterpart in the same group. In other words, the fourth thesis can be viewed as a specific supplement to the first, and the third thesis as a modification, or rather correction, of the second, something that will have, as we shall see later, far reaching consequences for the interpretation of the encomium. It isn't difficult at all to conclude that the relationship between, and the right order of, the theses is characterized by chiasmus which can be represented graphically as ABBA. And it is equally easy to conclude that by choosing to present his theses in the aforementioned form Isocrates wanted to conceal his heavy dependence upon the passages from the *Sophist* he took as a model.

This game of hide-and-seek was very difficult to perceive due to, among other things, the fact that in the opening passage of the proemium, which appeared at first sight to be randomly composed by design, there are no indications of contrasts as a stylistic device used by the author to set forth his theses, all the more so since their right order or the optimum grouping assumed, as we have already seen, the form of chiasmus. The failure to notice these barely visible contrasts in the opening of the proemium was the main reason why a polemic against all the spiritual currents of his own age, including the philosophy of Plato and Socrates, has been ascribed to Isocrates, but nothing, as we will see below, could be further from the truth.

The contrast of a formal nature in Isocrates' fairly brief presentation of his theses in the opening passage from the proemium is created by purely numerical relationships. Thus the contrast between one and many realities in the aforementioned passage from the *Sophist* becomes in the proemium the contrast between handling one and the same lofty philosophical subject matter – essentially based on only one acceptable method (*diairesis*) and moreover characterized by perfection³⁴ – and discoursing on a great deal of the most paradoxical, absurd and self-contradictory themes, having as a consequence a lot of wrong and inaccurate results arising from many provisional, ad hoc approaches to the subject (*Hel.* 8: τοσοῦτον δ' ἐπιδεδωκέναι πεποιήκασι τὸ ψευδολογεῖν). It should also be said that, no matter how perfect, handling a relevant theme does not necessarily exclude the possibility of supplementing, enlarging and elaborating on it, as can be inferred from the fact that, under Socrates' influence,³⁵ Isocrates looks upon his own encomium as an ideal model for others to compete with him within the framework of the same conceptions and ideas (*Hel.* 69: ἢν οὖν τινας

³⁴As opposed to Zeno's dichotomies, a more natural way of partitioning the phenomenon is a necessary prerequisite for this, as is the case with one of the first attempts to give a definition of the Sophistic in the *Sophist* (224c–d), with *synagoge* appearing in it as one of the two opposite, alternating principles of the same method, as will be detailed below.

³⁵What is being referred to here are the philosopher's unrelenting efforts to improve and perfect the initial definition of a particular phenomenon, as was the case with the Sophistic in the *Sophist*.

βούλωνται ταῦτα διεργάζεσθαι καὶ μηκύνειν, οὐκ ἀπορήσουσιν ἀφορμῆς, ὅθεν Ἐλένην ἔξω τῶν εἰρημένων ἔξουσιν ἐπαινεῖν).

After all that has been said so far, it is no coincidence that half of the models used for conceiving the opening passage for the proemium were taken from the *Sophist* in which the ancient sophistic is met with scorn and harsh invectives, as evidenced by the fact that in the definitions of the aforementioned movement its exponents are, as already seen, identified with ignorant persons, jugglers, imitators of realities and even manipulators (*Soph.* 235a), with their art consisting only in forcing the others who converse with them to contradict themselves (268c-d). And it is certainly not coincidental that the key word in the aforementioned definition (θαυματοποιικὸν μῦθον) found its reflection in the proemium itself (*thaumatopoiiai*).³⁶ What is involved here is a polemic Isocrates himself wanted to join, so as to prove himself to be, as we shall see later, worthy of the legacy of his great masters, Socrates and Plato, by trying to walk in their footsteps,³⁷ very well aware of the limits to his abilities. But he consistently tried to conceal his dependence upon his masters, as evidenced by the fact that he not only toned down the language of his polemic but also used, instead of the names of his rivals and adversaries, the generic and less specific term ‘eristic’ that has been wrongly associated with Socrates and Plato³⁸ in previous research on the subject, despite the fact that there was no reason for such an assumption. This is evident by the fact that the controversial wording *alloy de peri tas eridas diatribousi* in the fourth thesis clearly refers to the likes of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, or rather Eubulides of Miletus, namely the true exponents of the sophistic and the so-called philosophical eristic.

The very fact that the advice tinged with bitter irony, which Socrates gives to his interlocutors (Euthydemus and Dionysodorus) in the *Euthydemus* (304a), found its reflection in the fourth thesis – and what is being referred to here is his recommendation that they should beware of talking before a number of people and be content only with talking to each other by themselves, in private, and give this same counsel to their pupils also, namely that they should never converse with anybody except them and each other since their teaching poses a great threat to the common weal and the education of the youth – points to such a conclusion. The only difference is that Isocrates speaks of the troubles the proponents of this method make for their disciples in one such school, which can be explained by what was said above about his careful strategy of concealing his models.

Thus the contrast of a formal nature between one and many, as expressed in the *Sophist*, tends to become sharper and to grow into one of a substantial nature, as

³⁶Cf. *Soph.* 268c–d (τὸ δὲ τῆς ἐναντιοποιολογικῆς εἰρωνικοῦ μέρους τῆς δοξαστικῆς [...] οὐ θεῖον ἀλλ’ ἀνθρωπικὸν τῆς ποιήσεως ἀφωρισμένον ἐν λόγοις τὸ θαυματοποιικὸν μῦθον), *Isocr. Hel.* 7 (πρὸς τὰς θαυματοποιίας διατελοῦσι) and 224a (θαυματοποιικὴν τέχνην).

³⁷Cf. *Phaedr.* 266b–c, where Socrates maintains that he regards anyone capable of looking at the same time towards One and Many and, as a result of this, of both analytically partitioning the phenomenon (*diairesis*) and synoptically reducing the partitioned to a single idea (*synagoge*) as a god in whose footsteps he would follow with religious fervour. Quite contrary to what is said, Heilbrunn (1977, 159) asserted that Isocrates was locked in conflict with both Plato (in the opening passage) and his fellow writers (in the rest of the encomium).

³⁸Cf. Münscher (1916, 2181), where Plato is seen as Isocrates’ opponent, with almost the same attitude taken by Kennedy (1958, 77), Lesky (1971, 632) and Eucken (1983, 44–56).

aforementioned dialogue Socrates explains his method of bringing together in one idea the scattered particulars and, by contrast, of dividing into many what was naturally collected into one by using the new myth such as that of the winged chariot points to the depth dimension of the aforementioned parallelism. This is further corroborated by the fact that Isocrates' encomium is essentially based on the theses on beauty, advocated by Socrates in the *Phaedrus*, as shall be shown in a subsequent study on the new myth in the *Helen*.

One might wonder where we have found a strong link between the contrast of one and many, as expressed in the *Sophist* and the *Phaedrus* (Socrates' explanation of his own method through the new myth of the winged chariot), and Isocrates' proemium. We have found it well hidden in the third thesis of the opening passage from the proemium in which it is said "that courage and wisdom and justice are identical, and that we possess none of these as natural qualities, but that there is only one sort of knowledge (*episteme*) concerned with them all," as translated by van Hook. His rendering of the thesis into English, except for being literal, appears at first sight to be so abstracted that we gain the impression that Isocrates intentionally wanted to withhold an essential detail from us by, among other things, incorrect usage of the term 'episteme.' Perhaps it would make more sense to use the chess analogy and speak of Isocrates being forced to make a move, and now we shall see the reason why.

Isocrates was faced with the challenge of having to conceal his heavy reliance on his models, which in itself forced him to employ, as a last resort, the terms of Socratic and Platonic philosophy, packed with hidden meanings. More specifically, in the proemium's third thesis Isocrates uses the term 'episteme' instead of the one perfectly fitting into the context, namely 'methodos.'⁴⁵ It is only through substitution of the former (*science*) with the latter (*methodos*) that Isocrates' third thesis gains clarity, as can be inferred from what seems to be a more accurate translation which reads as follows: "Others maintain that courage and wisdom and justice are identical, and that we possess none of these as natural qualities on account of the fact that we get knowledge about them all *by applying only one method.*" At first glance, it is clear that what is involved here is the method based on the two opposite, alternating principles (*synagoge, diairesis*), and what is still lacking is the name of those who employ it, which will make the contrast in the proemium even more visible. We have found it in the aforementioned context of the *Phaedrus* (266b–c) in which all those capable of employing the aforesaid method are regarded as gods and called dialecticians by Socrates.

Thus the sharp contrast between eristics and dialecticians, as expressed in the sophistical method represented by Euthydemus and Dionysodorus and that of Socrates respectively, was brought to light already in the opening passage from the proemium. In other words, we cannot, as is too often the case, speak of Isocrates' polemic against all spiritual currents of the period, but only of the invective against the eristics and

period of time, as was otherwise the case with the *Panathenaicus*. Particularly characteristic is the fact that, according to Diogenes Laertius (III 87), the beginning of the *Republic* was found several times revised and rewritten. For complete uncertainty about which of Plato's dialogues is to be put first, cf. DL III 62.

⁴⁵It is indicative that in one of the opening passages from the *Statesman* (260e), in which the term 'episteme' and, to a lesser degree, 'techne' is predominantly used, we encounter yet another one having the same meaning, namely *methodos* translated as *Untersuchung* by Schleiermacher (1818).

sophists, as can be concluded from the contrasts that might be perceived only after solving enigmas in the proemium.

Ironically enough, not even these findings were sufficient for us to fully grasp the subtle play on contrasts in the opening passage from Isocrates' proemium. If the above might lead us to believe that, in an attempt to conceal his models, Isocrates was incapable of anything more highly valued than both the linear structure of his theses and the strict avoidance of every kind of accentuation, he nevertheless convinced us of the contrary by bringing the subtle nuances to his second and third thesis to such an extent that it might be said that he outdid himself. What we mean by 'subtle nuances' is a highly allusive technique applied to the second pair of the theses, consisting of the second and the third one, something that gave birth to inner contrast of crucial importance in the understanding of the encomium's final message.

Inner Contrast in Isocrates' Theses as an Evidence of a Bitter Struggle for the Legacy of Socrates

Thus we are now in a much better position to see what Isocrates' play on contrasts looks like, in so far as the inner contrast between the second and third thesis, concerning Socrates, Plato, dialecticians and eristics, came to be added to the framing (outer) contrast between the two aforementioned pairs of theses, with one pair consisting of the first and fourth thesis (eristics, sophists), and the other of the second and the third (dialecticians, philosophers).⁴⁶

Isocrates' technique of bringing the subtle nuances to his theses was motivated by his desire to launch a fierce attack upon his rivals and yet to tone down a polemic

⁴⁶Now we encounter a problem in so far as the eristic itself is two- or, to be more precise, threefold: rhetorical, sophistical and philosophical, with an added difficulty that primary source evidence is sparse. What kind of problem we are facing can be inferred from Diogenes Laertius' assertion (II 106) that Euclides' followers were called Megarians after him, then eristics, and at a later date dialecticians, which suggests at first sight that in the time of Eubulides and Stilpo there was no distinction made between eristic and philosophy in the aforementioned school. Despite the fact that primary source evidence is sparse, the examples Diogenes Laertius gives of Stilpo's (II 116, 119) and Menedemus' eristic (II 134, 135) are quite sufficient to confirm the assumption that there are no noteworthy differences between the so-called philosophical eristic of the Megarian school and that of the exponents of the Sophistic, as pursued by Euthydemus and Dionysodorus. But if we study more closely a survey of the Megarian doctrine in Diogenes Laertius, we will find out that in the aforesaid school of thought eristic was equated with dialectic, or rather philosophy, on formal grounds because the Megarians put their arguments in the form of question and answer (II 106), which in itself was reminiscent of Socratic dialogue. One possible explanation for this type of equation between eristic and philosophy may have to do with the fact we found at the very end of the survey, i.e. in the Life of Menedemus of Eretria (II 125–144), where it is asserted that, although in his doctrines he was a Platonist, yet he made sport of dialectic, which in this case, *mutatis mutandis*, means eristic. That the most famous exponent of the school, Stilpo of Megara, also practiced eristic in the form of a joke can be inferred from the fact that Menedemus despised the teachers of the school of Plato and had a great admiration only for Stilpo (II 134). This can explain why Isocrates felt such a strong antipathy for eristic even in the form of a joke, and why an unnamed person listening to and expressing disapproval with Socrates' comical dialogue with Euthydemus and Dionysodorus in the *Euthydemus* (304d–306c) is to be identified solely as Isocrates. Most probably, the exponents of the Megarian school were exhibiting a strong tendency toward eristic in the form of a joke as an ersatz to Socratic irony, since they were incapable of applying their master's method in teaching and dialogue.

against them, and this was only possible by making covert allusions to them, otherwise based on such ones in the writings of others, as a result of which a first glance immediately gave the false impression that all intellectual currents of the period came under his criticism. As indicated above, Isocrates succeeded in achieving almost the impossible by using of allusions, i.e. to make a fierce polemic against the exponents of both the sophistic and the so-called philosophical eristic, such as Euthydemus, Dionysodorus and Eubulides of Miletus,⁴⁷ shine through the peaceful stream of his narrative, in full accordance with Philostratus' view (*VS* 564) of Herodes Atticus' oratory, which is compared to gold dust shining beneath the waters of a silvery eddying river. If we take into account what has been said so far about Isocrates' method applied to the encomium we can reasonably assume that this characteristic of his style was widely accepted in the period of the Second Sophistic, which in itself provides yet another argument supporting the assumption that he was one of its forerunners, as will be detailed below.

The same sort of fierce polemic also filters through the second thesis and its illusive tone of reconciliation, the only difference being that this time Isocrates makes allusions to Antisthenes' definitional rigorism and drags, except for Plato, none other than Aristotle into the polemic with the aim to hide behind his harsh criticism of the aforementioned rigorism characterized in the *Metaphysics* as being nothing short of utter stupidity.⁴⁸ We encounter these same irreconcilable attitudes to Antisthenes, albeit without explicit mention of his name, also in the *Sophist* (251b) where Plato dons the mask of the Eleatic Stranger who apparently alludes to Antisthenes when speaking of elderly men who take pleasure in saying that we must not call a man good but must call the good good, and a man man. When again the aforementioned stranger refers to elderly men and their poverty of intellect (251c), which makes them admire such quibbles, we can clearly see that Plato's criticism of Antisthenes is no different from that of Aristotle if we leave aside his tendency to conceal the names of his rivals.⁴⁹ It is this very fact, insignificant though it may seem at first glance, that points to the conclusion that Isocrates adopted the allusive technique applied to the opening passage of the proemium from Socrates and Plato and the dialogues with the sophistic as the main subject.

⁴⁷Given an earlier date of the *Helen*, it seems more likely that Isocrates' criticism of eristic was directed against Eubulides since it is logical to assume that a similar situation prevailed in the time of Eubulides.

⁴⁸Δ 29.1024b33: Αντισθένης ᾗτετο εὐήθως μηθὲν ἀξιῶν λέγεσθαι πλὴν τῷ οἰκείῳ λόγῳ, ἐν ἐφ' ἐνόç. It is noteworthy that Aristotle when dealing with the moral character of an orator in the third book of his *Rhetoric* (17. 1418b16) says that, since sometimes, in speaking of another, we may be accused of abuse or boorishness, we must make another speak in our place, pointing out none other than Isocrates as an example of this. Given that Aristotle had a broadly positive view of Isocrates' art of speaking, as expressed in several passages from *Rhetoric*, it is impossible to understand how he was constantly trying to besmirch Isocrates, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Isocr.* 18) put it.

⁴⁹A fierce rivalry between Plato and Antisthenes could be viewed as a consequence of their ambition to create Socratic literature as a new genre, something that necessarily involved leaving their own imprint on their master's work and teachings closely related to practical ethics. On the rivalry, cf. DL III 35 and Münscher (1916) 2151. As opposed to that, Viidebaum (2021, 91) holds that "rather than criticizing his contemporary intellectuals individually (Antisthenes, Plato, Aristotle, etc.) it could be argued instead that Isocrates treats them rather as a derivative or second-order group of Socratics, thus suggesting that Isocrates' most profound opponent, and one Isocrates is most committed to challenging in his work, is Socrates."

Thus we are now facing the phenomenon of an inner and sharp contrast between the second and the third thesis in the opening passage of Isocrates' proemium, as evidenced by the fact that in the latter he declares himself to be a follower of the analytical-synoptical method, as advocated by Socrates in the *Phaedrus*, as opposed to the former in which all his intolerance to Antisthenes was reflected no matter how hard he tried to make only a vague allusion to it.

All of this raises a big question – why is it that Isocrates resorts to a polemic against Antisthenes and yet right at the start of the proemium, if we take into account the fact that the latter had more in common with dialecticians than eristics? To explain this, there is, it seems, no other way than to assume their bitter struggle to be recognized as the true heirs to the legacy of Socrates, and the very fact that both of them had a special relationship of trust and loyalty with Socrates⁵⁰ and nurtured ambitions to set themselves up as the only true followers of his ideas points to this conclusion. And they had good reason to nurture them, as evidenced by the fact that Antisthenes is characterized as the true heir to the spirit of Socrates⁵¹ in Xenophon's *Symposium*, which induced some scholars to conclude that not only Xenophon's view of Socrates⁵² but also Socratic theology in the *Memorabilia* (1, 4; 5, 3) was adopted from Antisthenes.⁵³ By contrast, Isocrates could be proud of getting much praise not from Xenophon,⁵⁴ a disciple of Socrates, but from Socrates himself, who prophesied a splendid future for him in the *Phaedrus* by saying that, if he continues to occupy himself with his present studies, he should so excel in them that all who have ever treated of rhetoric shall seem less than children, compared to him. In order to explain this, Socrates pointed out that these studies will not satisfy Isocrates, but a more divine impulse will lead him to greater things due to the fact that something of philosophy is inborn in his mind (279a). This is the reason why Socrates, upon Phaedrus' remark on Isocrates as his favourite friend (278e) replies with the warm words "my favourite Isocrates," which betray all his intellectual proximity to, and very close relationship with Isocrates.⁵⁵ Far from being prone to consider, as many others do, Socrates' words

⁵⁰That is evidenced by the fact that Antisthenes was in a group of the most dedicated followers of Socrates, gathered around him on the last day of his life (Plat. *Phd.* 59b), as distinguished from Isocrates who, according to Pseudo-Plutarch (*X orat.* 838), conceived no little sorrow for Socrates, inasmuch that the next day he put himself in mourning, or, according to Hermias of Alexandria (*In Phaedr.* 264. 20) mourned the death of his master for a whole year.

⁵¹Natorp (1894, 2540).

⁵²Joël (1893). Cf. Natorp (1894, 2540).

⁵³Dümmler (1889, 64).

⁵⁴According to Münscher (1916, 2151), none other than Xenophon helped Isocrates become closer acquainted with Socrates. According to Diogenes Laertius (II 55) Isocrates wrote an encomium on Gryllus, Xenophon's son.

⁵⁵Socrates' critical attitudes at the close of the *Euthydemus* (304d–306c) towards an unnamed orator who can be, as he put it, described as the border-ground between philosopher and politician should be understood rather as a correction of his prophesy in the *Phaedrus* than a polemic against Isocrates due to the fact that the second part of his prophesy did not come true, as a result of which Isocrates, instead of becoming a true philosopher, remained staying in the border-ground between philosopher and politician. Socrates' final assertion that, except for being indulgent towards such an ambition, we should be glad of anyone, whoever he may be, who says anything that verges on good sense, and labours steadily and manfully in his pursuit, serves as proof of this (306c). On friendship between Plato and Isocrates, cf. DL III 8.

as an example of irony and ridicule,⁵⁶ we are of the view that what is involved here is the philosopher's genuine and sincere attitude which most likely pleased Isocrates, so much so that in full accordance with the aforesaid prophesy he called his own rhetoric philosophy⁵⁷ and used the term as a means to disassociate himself from the sophistical rhetoric of his own age.⁵⁸

The rivalry between Isocrates and Antisthenes came from their personal development paths that form a perfect parallel, as evidenced by the fact that both of them were disciples of the sophists Protagoras,⁵⁹ Gorgias⁶⁰ and Prodicus⁶¹ (with Hippias⁶² featuring only on the list of Antisthenes' masters), only to give up this legacy, turn to Socrates⁶³ and view their mission almost exclusively as a popularization of his ethical teachings, with Isocrates proving to be much more successful,⁶⁴ as can be concluded from the fact that, according to Blass (1892, 41), Dionysius of Halicarnassus essentially based his ethical ideas on Isocrates' popularization teachings and thus exerted a decisive influence for centuries to come.

It is hardly possible to imagine the course of the aforementioned bitter fight for the legacy of Socrates without interference by Plato, who might be irritated by

⁵⁶ Cf. Raeder (1905, 276), Geel (1838, 11), Münscher (1916, 2151 and Norlin (1928) xviii ("half-playful words of Socrates in the *Phaedrus*"). It is noteworthy that this view on the issue does not agree with what we read in Cicero's (*Orat.* 42) where Socrates' prophesy is regarded as a genuine and sincere attitude to the genius and the promise of Isocrates.

⁵⁷ Blass (1892, 28) saw it as Isocrates' unbelievable arrogance and thus came to the wrong conclusion that this is one of the main reasons why Plato alienated himself from the orator and eventually became his opponent.

⁵⁸ To tell the truth, Isocrates in all likelihood felt compelled to use the term 'philosophy' to describe not only a sophistical practice of teaching (*C. soph.* 11) but also Polycrates' rhetoric (*Bus.* 1), so as to avoid the danger of seeming to be both arrogant and pretentious in the eyes of his contemporaries when describing his own rhetoric as a philosophy and that of his rivals as a common type of sophistry. But, despite all this, Isocrates does make a clear distinction between his 'philosophy' and that of others in his self-interpretation in the *Antidosis* (209-211) by referring to the former as *melete, epimeleiai, philoponiai*, or, in other words, gymnastics of the mind (*phroneseos askesis*) in sheer contrast to the latter characterized as *teratologiai*, i.e. mental juggling, with *epimeleia* being along with *sophia* the keyword of both Plato's *Alcibiades* and Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, in the latter of which *sophia* was equated with *enkrateia*, something that points to the possibility that these keywords were borrowed from Socrates' political testament in the *Alcibiades* (123c-124b). The very fact that in Plutarch (*Aud. poet.* 43f; 48d) we find similar characterization of what was described by Isocrates as 'philosophy' of his rivals, with followers of such a sophistic being equated with popular lecturers or superficial persons bent on acquiring mere information, allows us to conclude that what Isocrates had in mind was just this kind of knowledge.

⁵⁹ Article by Suidas provides highly unusual piece of information about Isocrates heavily relying on both Protagoras and Gorgias for preparing and delivering his speeches. Diogenes Laertius (IX 53) provides us, too, with details about Protagoras' influence on Antisthenes. Cf. Natorp (1894) 2539.

⁶⁰ Quint. *Inst.* 3.1.18, Cic. *Sen.* 13. For Gorgias' influence on Antisthenes, cf. Natorp (1894, 2539) and Montanari (2022, 366) who, unlike the former, regards the evidence of Antisthenes' training in the school of Gorgias as controversial.

⁶¹ Cf. Münscher (1916) 2152 and Natorp (1894) 2539.

⁶² Cf. Natorp (1894) 2539.

⁶³ Cf. Dindorf (1852) 254, 2. See also DL VI 2, where Antisthenes is referred to as Socratic, as is otherwise the case in Xenophon (*Mem.* 3.11.17, *Symp.* 4.43-4.84). For Socrates' influence on Isocrates, cf. also Münscher (1916) 2152.

⁶⁴ It seems that due to his crass behavior Antisthenes, unlike Isocrates, had only a few pupils (DL VI 4; Ael. *VH* 10.16), which is at variance with the laudatory view of him held by both Theopompus (DL VI 14) and Xenophon (*Symp.* 4.61). See also DL VI 15 and Natorp (1894) 2539.

Antisthenes' daring ambition to write Socratic dialogues,⁶⁵ all the more so since by doing so the latter entered his, so to speak, forbidden ground. As it seems, that is the main reason why Plato came out against him in a number of his dialogues, with some of them (*Theaetetus*, *Euthydemus*, *Cratylus*, *Lesser* and *Greater Hippias*) written with the express intent of refuting his teachings.⁶⁶ In other words, Plato and Antisthenes engaged in a polemic and kept it going, as opposed to Isocrates who only wished to join in as an interested observer, all the more so since he himself was concerned and his task was made so much easier by the fact that Plato set the tone for the controversy, as a result of which Isocrates saw no better alternative than to align himself with him by using his most effective weapon – refined allusive technique.

One of the beauties of the opening passage from the proemium is reflected in the fact that we revealed in it yet another parallel which is even more heavy with meaning than the one previously discussed. What we are referring to here is the fact that in one of his early works, *Encomium of Helen*,⁶⁷ Isocrates wanted to pay off a debt of gratitude owed to Socrates for the prophesy foreseeing his excellence in rhetoric in the *Phaedrus*, one of Plato's early dialogues, representing a specific manifesto of his philosophy⁶⁸ in the same sense as the encomium, Isocrates' early work, can be viewed as a specific programme of his own 'philosophy.' That same 'philosophy' was regarded by Dionysius of Halicarnassus as a popularization of Socratic and Platonic ethics for centuries to come as far as all those are concerned who lacked the ability to brood over the aforementioned philosophers' train of thought and follow it out into all relevant details and ramifications (Blass 1892,41). Thus, Isocrates has already indicated his intention to bring his own views on literature into conformity with Socrates or, rather, Plato's criticism of literary creativity and, above all, poetry, as expressed in the third book of the *Republic*, with one extremely important and yet in previous research on the subject overlooked detail in the main body of the encomium supporting this assumption.⁶⁹

⁶⁵Cf. DL II 64 with reference to *Socratic Dialogues* as Antisthenes' work. In this connection, we should mention Wilcox (1943, 113) and his assertion that 'logoi' and 'antilogikoi' in Isocrates' lists of 'kinds of prose' in the *Antidosis* (45) and the *Panathenaicus* (1–2) are nothing other than the Socratic dialogues. In marked contrast to him, Too (2008, 119–120) regards it as a reference to sophistic works." See also Viidebaum (2021) 73.

⁶⁶Cf. Natorp (1894) 2540. See also DL II 47: "of all those who succeeded Socrates and were called Socratics the chief were Plato, Xenophon, Antisthenes." According to Gigon (1992, 412), of all the disciples of Socrates only Plato and Aeschines "haben diese Fiktion in der Art des Dramas durchgeführt: man sieht Sokrates und seine Freunde unmittelbar agieren, ohne daß der Verfasser selbst überhaupt in Erscheinung träte," as opposed to Xenophon and other Socratics who join in the dialogue from the outset and "den Dialog ausdrücklich als eine Erinnerung an Selbsterlebtes berichten."

⁶⁷According to Blass (1892, 25), the work seems to have been written almost immediately after the period of Isocrates' activity as a logographer. Although the date of the encomium is generally put about 370 B.C., we agree with Mathieu-Brémond (1956, 160) and Lesky (1971, 632) who would give an earlier date. See also Jebb (1893, 96–103) and Blass (1892) 242.

⁶⁸Cf. Reale (2000, 5) and Viidebaum (2021, 69) who uses almost the same expression for Isocrates' encomium. Similarly, Blass (1892, 28) speaks of "Antrittsprogramm von Platons Lehrthätigkeit in der Akademie."

⁶⁹What Isocrates used as a starting point for writing his encomium was Socrates' assertion in the aforementioned poetological book of the *Republic* (391c–d) that he and his interlocutor Adeimantus will not believe nor suffer it to be said that Theseus and Peirithous attempted such dreadful rapes.

But we will be in a better position to fully understand the importance of Isocrates' bringing his own views on literary theory into conformity with Plato's attitudes towards literary creativity for trends and tendencies in the centuries to come only if we slightly modify the contrasting notions of the eristics and dialecticians, emerging in the opening passage from the proemium by using their respective generic terms. Thus the modification made a nicely contrasting pair of *rhetoric* and *philosophy*, as evidenced by the fact that the so-called sophistic eristic is indissolubly linked to rhetoric, as opposed to dialectic, inextricably connected with philosophy and moreover used by Socrates in the *Phaedrus* (266b) as a method for basing the new rhetoric on philosophy, and this is yet another reason why Isocrates identified his own rhetoric with philosophy.⁷⁰

Thus the proemium to the *Helen* provides us with the chief evidence for a bitter struggle between philosophy and rhetoric for the primacy in the education of the youth, a struggle on which von Arnim (1898, 4–114) spent a whole chapter of his extensive monograph and yet lost sight of the fact that Isocrates' proemium contains essential details that could help us gain a better understanding of the aforementioned bitter feud. So it was inevitable for him to get the wrong impression about rhetoric and, by the same token, the ancient sophistic winning an overwhelming victory over philosophy⁷¹ and thus achieving undisputed dominance of the latter in the period of the Second Sophistic. But a major problem with this conclusion is that it won almost general acceptance among the scholars,⁷² which has caused research on both Isocrates and the new sophistic to be caught ever since in a vicious circle, as evidenced by the fact that in one of the model monographs in our field of study Isocrates is referred to as an “organizer of the spirit of the ancient sophistic.”⁷³

⁷⁰Leaving aside Socrates' characterization of his own philosophy as a noble and true-born art of sophistry (cf. n. 29), what Isocrates meant by calling himself sophist can also be inferred from two instances of the use of the verb *sophisteuo* in the sense of *teaching the subject-matter of philosophy* in Diogenes Laertius' account of the lives of Aeschines the Socratic (II 62) and Timon of Phlius (IX 110). In this connection, it should be noted that Brancacci (1985) coined the term *rhetorike philosophousa* to describe accurately this type of rhetoric.

⁷¹In an attempt to prove his thesis, von Arnim (1898, 77–84) points to the fact that an almost parallel turning to rhetoric occurred in both the Peripatos and the Academy when headed in the third century B.C. by Lyco and Arcesilaus respectively. He overlooked details regarding the total victory won by philosophy over rhetoric in the age of Carneades whose predominance in philosophy was such that even the rhetoricians would dismiss their classes and repair to him to hear him lecture (DL IV 62).

⁷²What is meant here are studies by Rohde (1915), Norden (1915), Boulanger (1925), Graindor (1930), Kroll (1940), Gerth (1956), Bompaire (1958) and Reardon (1971). Cf. opposing viewpoints as expressed in our studies “ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΗΣΑΝΤΕΣ ΕΝ ΔΟΞΗΙ ΤΟΥ ΣΟΦΙΣΤΕΥΣΑΙ: An Enigmatic Depiction of the Second Sophistic in Philostratus and Eunapius' Lives of the Sophists or What is Indeed the Mentioned Sophistic?”, *AJPH* 2022, 1(1), 51–70, “Philosophical plasma in Dio Chrysostom's Fourth Discourse on Kingship and Socrates' Political Testament in Alcibiades”, *AJHA* 2024, 11 (2), 119–154, “Symbols, Enigmas, Political Allusions and the Legend of Socrates in Dio Chrysostom's Olympic Discourse,” *AJHA* 2025, 12 (1), 53–84, “Rohde's Theory of Relationship between the Novel and Rhetoric and the Problem of Evaluating the Entire Post-Classical Greek Literature,” *AJHA* 2023, 10 (3), 193–220 as well as in the study by Brancacci (1985).

⁷³Schmid–Stählin (1940) 214.

The Rest of the Proemium (4–15): Isocrates' Self-Interpretation and the Sorry Debacle of the Ancient Sophistic

In the remaining part of the proemium, we continue to encounter the same play on contrasts as in the opening passage, the only difference being that the play is now transferred to the personal level of the author and his mission at a turbulent time, something that helps us to completely solve the puzzles appearing at the beginning of the exordium. Heavily influenced by the *Sophist* and yet unpromising at first glance, the second passage from the proemium turned out to be unexpectedly laden with symbolism. In order to understand the aforementioned symbolism, we must carefully examine a conversation Socrates holds with the Eleatic Stranger in the work just mentioned as well as the main topic around which their discussion revolves and the dialogue's beginning and end. The conversation essentially starts with Socrates' question addressed to the Eleatic Stranger as to whether people in his country consider the names 'sophist,' 'statesman,' 'philosopher' to be one, or two, or, as there are three terms, three, dividing them into three classes, whereupon Stranger replies that they consider them three (217b), something that served as a prelude to the main topic of the dialogue such as a precise definition of the name 'sophist,' one of which was an outright condemnation of the Sophistic, verging on mockery (223b: ἰτέχνης θηρευτικῆς, ζῳοθηρίας, πεζοθηρίας, χερσαίας, ἡμεροθηρικῆς, ἀνθρωποθηρίας). The aforementioned definition aside, Isocrates seems to have been highly impressed by the dialogues' implicit message saying that only a philosopher can be a true statesman, as a result of which he could not help but call his own rhetoric philosophy, all the more so since he himself was driven by a desire to play the role of statesman. When, on the comparatively rare occasions, Isocrates labels his rhetoric as Sophistic he seems to have taken example from Socrates' identifying his own philosophy with a noble and true-born art of sophistry in the famous passage from the *Sophist* (231b: *genei gennaia sophistike*).⁷⁴

As Isocrates was very well aware that he was incapable of making the second part of Socrates' prophesy in the *Phaedrus* (279a) come true, and since he was very eager to combine in his political course of action the ideal of a statesman with that of philosopher, he was compelled to seek a middle way between philosophy and rhetoric, which consisted in the fact that he elaborated on the key principles of Socratic and Platonic philosophy so as to adapt them to the spirit of the time, i.e. that of popularization, in full accordance with Socrates' view of his overall skills, as expressed at the close of the *Euthydemus* (304d–306c). It is precisely this that Isocrates admitted openly in the proemium by saying that it is difficult to reach the heights of greatness of the others (13: τῶν δὲ χαλεπὸν τοῦ μεγέθους ἐφικέσθαι), i.e. of his own models, as a result of which he was left with no alternative other than to instruct his fellow citizens, including his own pupils, in the practical affairs of the government (4: περὶ τὰς πράξεις ἐν αἷς πολιτευόμεθα, τοὺς συνόντας

⁷⁴This can explain why Socrates was referred to as the sophist par excellence in Aeschines' discourse *Against Timarchus* (173), something that leaves open the possibility that Isocrates when calling himself sophist used the term in the sense of being Socrates' follower.

παιδεύειν).⁷⁵ When this practical discipline was shortly thereafter characterized as *ton politikon episteme* (9) and its subject that of the greatest moral value (12), we can fully comprehend the reasons why he had a strong dislike for the exponents of the ancient sophistic and eristic who, in his view, care nothing at all for either private or public affairs and “take most pleasure in those discourses which are of no practical service in any particular.”⁷⁶

But what is more important is that in the same context we find historical evidence of inestimable value about the decline and the sorry debacle of the ancient sophistic. The aforementioned debacle occurred almost immediately after the brief period of its glory or, to be more precise, in the following generation of the sophists, as can be inferred from the fact that the captious and useless themes handled by the sophists of the previous generation are, to Isocrates' utter amazement, still being recycled in his own time despite the fact that the new treatment of the mentioned themes is, in his view, far less elaborate and overwrought than that in the compositions of Protagoras, Gorgias and other unnamed exponents of the movement (2).

The far-reaching significance of this evidence becomes fully apparent only if placed in relation to the evidence found in Dio's 54th discourse, i.e. his short essay on Socrates dealing with those sophists who won such admiration and their works that have already perished in his own time despite having been carefully written down and edited so that nothing remained but their name alone.⁷⁷ How much and to what extent the aforementioned authentic testimonies to the sorry debacle of the ancient sophistic complement each other can be inferred from the fact that both authors emphasize the close relationship between the decadence of the movement and its exponents' express intent to make money,⁷⁸ having a direct, pernicious effect on a very large number of their orations devoid, as Dio put it, of the slightest sense, with Isocrates (*Hel.* 8) shedding further light on the decline by accusing the sophists of mendacity they caused to increase to such a degree that it pervades all of society.

It is this key word ‘mendacity’⁷⁹ that indicates the true nature of Isocrates art of speaking, in so far as he wanted to dissociate himself from the sophistic legacy at all costs by speaking the truth, and the only way to achieve this was to essentially base his oeuvre on the principles of one methodologically and ethically founded philosophy

⁷⁵Heilbrunn (1977, 159) sees this as an instance of Protagorean influence on Isocrates. Quite to the contrary, what is involved here is an echo of the legend of Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (2.7.1). See below n. 76.

⁷⁶*Hel.* 6: τούτοις μάλιστα χαίρουσι τῶν λόγων οἱ μηδὲν πρὸς ἔν χρησιμοι τυγχάνουσιν ὄντες. This can be regarded as an echo of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* in which Socrates is represented as an expert in almost all practical disciplines such as military art (3.1–5), home economics (2.7–8), house-keeping (2. 9–10), doing sustainable business and account-keeping (2.8), with his solidarity with all the members of the community going so far as to induce him to not only help others with his advice, but also to carry like an athlete their own burden on his back (2.7.1). According to Dörrie (1975, 895), Plato's philosophy was practically oriented as well.

⁷⁷*Or.* 54.4. Cf. the same evidence in Aelian (*VH* 1.23) where Gorgias and Protagoras are regarded as being as far short of others in wisdom as boys are of men.

⁷⁸*Or.* 54.1: χρήματα πορίζειν. Cf. *Hel.* 6: οὐδενὸς αὐτοῖς ἄλλου μέλει πλὴν τοῦ χρηματίζεσθαι παρὰ τῶν νεωτέρων.

⁷⁹*Periergia* (*Hel.* 2) in the sense of *unnecessary work, futile affectation*, as expressed in the praise of bumblebees (12), salt (12), misfortune (10) and the life of beggars and exiles (8), assumes, along with mendacity, characteristics of a key word in Isocrates' confrontation with the legacy of the ancient sophistic.

such as that of Socrates and Plato.⁸⁰ As regards methodology, Isocrates went so far as to disapprove of all the other spiritual currents, with the exception of the philosophy of Aristotle.

This manifesto of Isocrates also had a literary dimension, otherwise closely connected with a state building one, as can be inferred from the contrasting pairs in the proemium such as useless things – the useful ones (5: *achresta* – *chresima*), trivial themes – famous subjects (13: *mikra* – *chalepa* i.e. *mšgeqoj œconta*), false statements–truth (4: *pseudes logos* – *aletheia*), buffoonery – dignity (11: *skoptein* – *semnynesthai*) and levity – seriousness (11: *paizein* – *spoudazein*), with the first terms in the pairs relating to eristic and sophistic rhetoric, and the last pair having particular significance for Isocrates' poetics. By this we mean that Isocrates was incapable of creatively discovering ways in which to elaborate on the concepts of Socrates and Plato's philosophy just as he was unable to fully adopt the basic characteristic of Socratic style such as the mixture of the serious and the laughable, made manifest in none other of Plato's dialogues than the *Phaedrus*, where Socrates while talking about the lofty subject matter, as expressed through the myth of the winged chariot, is at the same time poking fun at Phaedrus of Myrrhinus as if he were a small, snotty child.⁸¹

Thus Isocrates was yet again compelled to seek a middle way which, as we have already seen, consisted in the amalgamation, or rather *montage* of literary-philosophical patterns,⁸² most often barely recognizable, as was the case with the opening passage from the proemium. Even more important is the fact that this method won almost general acceptance in the period of the Second Sophistic, as can be inferred from its reflection in both Philostratus and Lucian's oeuvre, which in itself is yet another indication that Isocrates may rightly be regarded as a forerunner of the new sophistic.

Sheer Inventiveness in Literature (*kainotes*) like a Freak: Reflections of Isocrates' Method in the Second Sophistic

What is being referred to here is *kainotes* (*Hel. 2: τούτους ἐπὶ τῇ κοινότητι τῶν εὐρημένων φιλοτιμουμένους*), which in the proemium assumes characteristics of a generic term encompassing all the above characteristics of the topics addressed by the exponents of the ancient sophistic: *achresta* (useless things), *mikra* (trivial themes), *pseudes logos* (false statements), *skoptein* (buffoonery) and *paizein* (levity). All this

⁸⁰What is being referred to here are *diairesis* and *synagoge* or the two opposite, alternating principles of the same method. It can rightly be said that the aforementioned method is Isocrates' *techne* which ancient scholarship attributed to the orator, with Walker (2011, 90) trying to prove its existence and Roochnik (1996, 288) challenging his assumptions by arguing that Isocrates, instead of the strict handbook approach, offered a kind of teachable knowledge that makes none of the hard and fast claims of a *techne*. Cf. also Viidebaum (2021) 87–89.

⁸¹*Dom. 4: κένταἀακα καεζὸμενοῖ Fa...drou toà Murrinous...ou kateirwneÚeto*. Norden (1915, 109) overlooked this reference when asserting that of all the ancient theoreticians of style only Aristotle (*Rh. 3 7.1408b11*) noticed an ironic note in Socrates, or rather Plato's dithyrambic diction in the *Phaedrus*. For the widespread ideal of the mixture of the serious and the laughable in Medieval European Literature, see Curtius (1961) 419–434.

⁸²Perhaps we are dealing here with what Isocrates called the secrets of his art, with none other than Speusippus being the first to divulge them, according to Diogenes Laertius (IV 2).

becomes all the more important when we take into account the fact that the same term is used by Lucian in his short essay of programmatic character, *Prometheus es in verbis* (*To One who Said "You're a Prometheus in Words*), to describe a method diametrically opposed to his own, i.e. *montage*, which, unlike the former characterized as a pure invention (3: *kainotes, kainopoein, kainourgon*), is essentially based on older models,⁸³ or rather archetype.⁸⁴

Lucian, as was otherwise the case with Isocrates, had a deep-rooted aversion to the method of inventiveness, which caused him to represent it in a grotesque way either as a completely black Bactrian camel or a man of two colours, half jet-black and half dazzlingly white, the colours equally divided, or in other words as a freak (*Prom.verb.* 4).

Far from being satisfied with painting these grotesque images, Lucian felt the need to represent the method of invention even in the form of a symbol (*Prom. verb.* 3), which in itself becomes all the more important as aesthetic criteria of great significance for the Second Sophistic are inherently associated with the symbol itself, namely criteria established by Socrates and applied by Isocrates himself (cf. n. 83). What is being referred to here are Prometheus' human figures made of clay and becoming living creatures as soon as Athena breathes into the mud and thus makes the clay models live, which means that the life span of the aforementioned method fully corresponds to that of men, something that was confirmed by the evidence in Isocrates' encomium about the sorry debacle of the ancient sophistic, the life span of which has turned out to be identical to that of humans. It can with good reason be said that by using of the symbol Lucian makes indirect reference to *montage*, or rather amalgamation, as his own method capable, unlike originality, of bestowing immortality upon the author, i.e. of guaranteeing him life in eternity instead of a life limited in time. This explains his unwavering assertion (*Prom. verb.* 4) that he would be so ashamed of his work if it were based solely on invention and thus proved to be graceless that he would surely trample it under foot and destroy it once for all.

In line with what has been said so far about Isocrates' self-interpretation, it will come as no surprise to learn that his poetics-related attitudes are reflected in yet another landmark work of the Second Sophistic, Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*. What is being referred to here is one of the central passages from the proemium, in which Isocrates, by way of comparison, points to his own 'philosophical' method by saying that "to be a little superior in important things," or rather topics, "is of greater

⁸³*Prom. verb.* 3: *archaioteron ti tou plasmatos*. Under the influence of the emblematic concept in the *Ion* (534a–b), the method of *montage* is visualized by Lucian in both the *Piscator* (*The Dead Come to Life or the Fisherman*) 6 and the *Imagines* (6–7), in the latter of which painting with words the portrait of Panthia is represented as if the greatest names of fine and plastic arts shared the task of portraying with each other and consequently shaped that part of her figure in the elaboration of which they were thought to be peerless, in full accordance with Socrates' theses on fine arts, put forward in his conversations with Parrhasius the painter and Cleito the sculptor in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (3. 10. 1–5; 3. 10.6–15).

⁸⁴*Prom. verb.* 3: *πρὸς τὴν φύσιν ἐρεχθῆσαν ἐπιμιμήσων*. Cf. Diogenes Laertius (III 13), where Plato is quoted as saying that ideas "stand in nature like archetypes (*paradeigmata*), and that all things else bear a resemblance to the ideas because they are copies of these archetypes," as translated by Hicks (LCL). This can explain the appearance of the conceptual couple "archetypa and *paradeigmata*," describing the essence of Lucian's art in *Pro imaginibus* (*Essays in Portraiture Defended*),¹⁰ the sequel to the *Imagines*. Thus Lucian's *archetypa* and *paradeigmata* turned out to be nothing other than an allusion to the method of the new rhetoric in the *Phaedrus*.

worth than to be pre-eminent in petty things that are without value for living” (5: πολλὸν κρεῖττον περὶ τῶν χρησίμων ἐπιεικῶς δοξάζειν ἢ περὶ τῶν ἀχρήστων ἀκριβῶς ἐπίστασθαι). The opening passage from Philostratus’ *Lives* (480), dealing with the philosophical nature of the ancient sophistic, faithfully reflects these attitudes of Isocrates, as can be inferred from the fact that the exponents of the aforementioned spiritual current discussed the themes that philosophers treat of, the only difference being that the latter, by their method of questioning, set snares for knowledge, and advance step by step as they confirm the minor points of their investigations, but assert that they have still no sure knowledge of that whereof they speak, which is a clear allusion to the Socratic method. As opposed to them, the sophists of the old school assume a knowledge of that whereof they speak and introduce their speeches with such phrases as “I know,” or “I am aware,” or “I have long observed,”⁸⁵ which in itself points to the conclusion that Philostratus essentially based his view of the sophistic method on the particularly characteristic passage from the *Euthydemus*,⁸⁶ a dialogue that, as we have already seen, also served as a model for Isocrates in his confrontation with the Sophistic.

These concordances between Isocrates and the two major exponents of the Second Sophistic pointed of themselves to the importance the authors of the Second Sophistic attached to his methodological and poetological principles, but not to their strategic significance, otherwise not easy to see since the author displays a marked propensity to communicate the basic principles of his poetics by way of enigma or barely noticeable allusion. That his methodological principles have a strategic significance was already announced in the second passage from the proemium, namely in his polemic against both the exponents of the ancient sophistic and the two disciples of Parmenides, Zeno and Melissus, whose method is characterized as a claptrap (*terthreia*) due to the discrepancy between their words and their deeds (*Hel. 4: en tois logois ... en tois ergois*), having as a consequence a lack of tangible results. All of this points to both Alcibiades’ discourse in Plato’s *Symposium* (215b) and the early dialogue *Laches*, in which Socrates is characterized (implicitly in the former, explicitly in the latter) as an ideal musician precisely because he “tuned himself with the fairest harmony” by making “a true concord of his own life between his words and his deeds.”⁸⁷

⁸⁵It is logical to assume that the wording ἐκεῖνοι τὰς ἐρωτήσεις ὑποκαθήμενοι καὶ τὰ μικρὰ τῶν ζητουμένων προβιάζοντες οὐπω φασὶ γινώσκειν (*VS* 480) implies Socrates and his method, as opposed to the phrasing προοίμια γοῦν ποιεῖται τῶν λόγων τὸ ᾧδα καὶ τὸ ᾧγνώσκω καὶ ᾧπάλαι διέσκεμμαι, which might point, except for the prophecies by the Pythia, to Homer and his knowledge of all the possible worlds.

⁸⁶294b: ἢ καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, τοὺς ἀστέρας ὅποσοι εἰσὶ, καὶ τὴν ἄμμον ἐπίστασθον. Cf. Philostratus (*VS* 481): καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ τοῦ Πυθίου ἐστὶν ἀκοῦειν οἶδα δ’ ἐγὼ ψάμμου τ’ ἀριθμὸν καὶ μέτρα θαλάσσης. It should be noted that Philostratus employed ideas from the *Euthydemus* to praise the ancient sophistic, as opposed to Isocrates who used them to criticize it. This difference can be explained by the fact that Philostratus admits the parallel existence of two types of the ancient sophistic, one poetical and another historical (i.e. Socratic), with the former being essentially equivalent to the Homeric poetry.

⁸⁷*Lach.* 188d: μουσικὸς ἁρμονίαν καλλίστην ἡρμοσμένος τῷ ὄντι ζῆν αὐτὸς ἑαυτοῦ τὸν βίον σύμφωνον τοῖς λόγοις πρὸς τὰ ἔργα. That Isocrates embraced this Socratic ideal can be inferred from his understanding of philosophy as a broad intellectual activity primarily undertaken for practical purposes as well as from his heavy dependence upon the theses on close relationship between theoretical

That Isocrates' poetics and his political course of action were of major strategic significance to the exponents of the Second Sophistic can be inferred from the fact that his main thesis on the need to make a true concord of one's own life between one's own words and deeds, put forward in his polemic in the proemium against the sophists, eristics and Eleatics, is reflected not only in Philostratus' work mentioned above⁸⁸ but also in that of the two major exponents of the Second Sophistic in its early and late phase, Aelius Aristides and Chrysanthius,⁸⁹ respectively.

How popular this ideal of making a true concord of one's own life between one's own words and deeds was in the period of the Second Sophistic can be inferred from its radicalization, or rather militarization in Aristides' *Reply to Plato: In Defense of Oratory* (Or. 2.299),⁹⁰ in which *rhetorica militans* is advocated in full accordance with Xenophon's practical application of the aforementioned ideal,⁹¹ which can make us aware of how important the role played by this and other ideals of Socrates was in the emergence of the new sophistic as an intellectual current and how strong the aversion was that the major exponents of the movement secretly felt to Roman imperial rule,⁹² namely exponents that were left with no alternative other than to faithfully adhere to the key principles of Socrates' political testament in the *Alcibiades*

interpretation and practical application of philosophy, as advocated by Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. Cf. n. 76.

⁸⁸VS 502 (Critias' failure to make a true concord of his own life between his words and his deeds). In his *Life of Antiphon of Rhamnus* we encounter, as was otherwise the case with Isocrates' proemium to the *Helen*, even censure of the sophistic-based forensic oratory, evidently inspired by Socrates' attitudes towards the same phenomenon in the *Gorgias* (VS 499: ῥητορικὴν δὲ ἐπαινοῦσι μὲν, ὑποπτέουσι δὲ ὡς πανοῦργον καὶ φιλοχρήματον καὶ κατὰ τοῦ δικαίου ξυγκειμένην). Philostratus' closing remark that rhetoric of such a type fully deserves to be (scil. instead of Socrates) a theme that Comedy makes fun of speaks volumes about his attitudes towards oratory and the importance of the legend of Socrates for the emergence of the Second Sophistic as a vibrant intellectual movement.

⁸⁹Cf. Eunap. VS 501, in which it is said that "in him the Platonic Socrates had come to life again," as evident from the fact that "in his ambition to imitate Socrates he carefully formed himself from boyhood on his pattern," as translated by W. C. Wright (LCL). In the same context magical powers are ascribed to Chrysanthius' art of speech in so far as it, like the most charming and sweetest song, caresses not only the ears of the listeners, but also, thanks to its lovely rhythms, insinuates itself into all men's ears in full accordance with the key principle of the new rhetoric, as advocated for by Socrates in the *Phaedrus* (273e). For the influence of the *Phaedrus* on the Second Sophistic, see Trapp (1990) 141.

⁹⁰Aristides divides Socrates' legacy into early and late, theoretical and practical, so as to be in a position to uphold the view that "secure evidence of Socrates' views comes not from what he said later, when he thought the time had now come to end his life, but from what he manifestly did when he had the power to prevent the things or not," as translated by M. Trapp (LCL).

⁹¹*A Reply to Plato: In Defense of Oratory* (or. 2), 301: τὸ μὲν τοῖς ὅπλοις ἀμύνεσθαι τοῖς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις βεβιωκόσι τῶν προσηκόντων ἐστίν, τὸ δὲ αὐτοῖς τοῖς λόγοις ἀμύνεσθαι ἐν ἀλογίᾳ θετέον; At the very beginning of Eunapius' *Lives* (453) Xenophon is presented as unique among all philosophers because he, like Socrates himself, adorned philosophy not only with words but with deeds. We encounter the same ideal in Isocrates' *Evagoras* (47), where the author, in full accordance with Socrates political testament in the *Alcibiades*, maintains that "a war of all Greeks against barbarians is a sacred duty because he believes that civilization in order to survive must be a militant force," as Norlin (1928, xxxviii) put it. This further strengthens the assumption that Xenophon and Isocrates were the first executors of the aforementioned testament. Cf. n. 58.

⁹²Cf. hidden allusions to Socrates' political testament in the *Alcibiades* at the close of Dio Chrysostom's *Olympic Discourse* (Or. 12).

such as *sophia* and *epimeleia*,⁹³ on which Isocrates' literary creativity and his political course of action were essentially based, as can be inferred from his self-interpretation in the *Antidosis*.⁹⁴

Conclusion

Close analysis of the text has shown the unity of the *Encomium of Helen*, as evidenced by the fact that its proemium revealed itself to be of major strategic significance not only for gaining a better understanding of the encomium's key message but also for decoding Isocrates' poetics and unravelling the secrets of his allusive technique, the major one being that his polemic in the encomium was not, as previously thought, launched against all the spiritual currents of his time, but only against the Sophistic, eristic and Antisthenes, his rival in a bitter struggle for the legacy of Socrates. The proemium's strategic significance is also revealed in the fact that it throws further light on Isocrates' method of *montage* essentially based on the Socratic and Platonic concepts, which in itself suggests the assumption that he should be viewed as the forerunner of the Second Sophistic instead of being regarded as "the organizer of the spirit of the ancient sophistic," as claimed by some prominent researchers.

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⁹³These political ideals also had a literary dimension, as is evident from the fact that Socrates himself unreservedly recommended the ethical-political aspect of his teaching (*Alc.* 105d) to his interlocutor Alcibiades as a literary and philosophical basis of his own testament.

⁹⁴Cf. n. 28.

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THE GARDEN IN THE BOARDROOM: Exploring Epicurean Ethics for Sustainable Business Practices

*By Oidinposha Imamkhodjaeva**

This paper delves into the often-misunderstood philosophy of Epicureanism, arguing that its emphasis on ataraxia (tranquility) and aponia (absence of pain) offers valuable, if unexpected, insights for fostering sustainable business practices. Moving beyond the common association of Epicureanism with hedonism, the paper explores how its core tenets – including moderation, simple living, the importance of friendship, and the pursuit of natural pleasures – can guide businesses towards environmentally and socially responsible conduct. The paper examines how these principles can translate into practical strategies for resource management, stakeholder engagement, and long-term value creation, ultimately proposing that the "garden" of Epicurean philosophy can offer a fertile ground for cultivating sustainable business ethics. While Epicurus himself cultivated a small, self-sufficient community, an approach insufficient for today's complex challenges, the urgent environmental crisis demands a broader application of these principles. Therefore, the modern "Garden" of Epicurean thought must extend beyond individual efforts to encompass the entire planet, becoming a universal necessity embedded in the fabric of our global economy. This requires corporate and civic leaders to champion mutual aid over destructive competition, and to prioritize frugality and prudence over reckless consumption, thereby cultivating a global community that embodies Epicurean well-being and addresses the critical need for a sustainable future.

Keywords: *Epicurus, ataraxia (tranquility), aponia (absence of pain), friendship, natural and unnecessary desires, phronesis (wisdom), sustainability and "garden".*

Introduction

In an era of accelerating ecological breakdown, mounting inequality, and global uncertainty, the dominant models of business—rooted in competition, consumerism, and short-term gain—are increasingly seen as unsustainable. While environmental policy and technological innovation are often highlighted as solutions, the ethical frameworks that shape business values and behaviors deserve equal scrutiny. This paper proposes an unconventional but timely source of ethical insight: Epicureanism.

Epicurus was an ancient Athenian philosopher with three basic ideas: (1) The most important thing in life is enjoyment. (2) You need very little to be able to enjoy life. (3) Most people make themselves unhappy by fearing or desiring things that either don't exist or aren't important.

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In rich capitalist countries, most of us are part of a business culture that tells us other things are more important than enjoyment. Instead, our culture tells us that we should be ruled by fear of failure and desire for success.

You're taught to think of yourself as a "brand" to be marketed rather than just being yourself. (Berkeley Executive Education, 2006). You're told to be unhappy with what you have no matter how much it is.

A capitalist economy would fall into recession or depression without continuing growth in production and consumption. Once you have all you think you need (however "need" is defined), you have, by definition, no need for further growth. So capitalist economies require a constant transformation of "wants" into "needs" and a continual rise in the material "standard of living" to keep growing.

These imperatives have made capitalism a powerful engine of growth. But there are limits to growth, and the world is approaching them, as writers such as Harrison Brown, Robert Heilbroner, Ivan Illich and E.F. Schumacher pointed out long ago.

Natural resources, especially fossil fuels, are becoming scarcer and more expensive. The techniques needed to obtain these scarce resources, such as deep water ocean drilling and hydraulic fracturing for oil and gas, are becoming more expensive and destructive. Meanwhile the burning of fossil fuels is triggering catastrophic climate change.

Mohandas K. Gandhi is often quoted as saying that the world has enough resources to satisfy everyone's needs, but not enough to satisfy everyone's greeds, although he may not have said it in those exact words. (Snopes.com, 2025)

Gandhi advocated small-scale production - village spinning wheels rather than the machinery of textile mills - that would provide a modest living for all. (Gandhi, 1957, p. 489-496)

It may be physically impossible to endow everyone in the world with a material standard of living equal to that of the average person in rich countries such as the USA. The Global Footprint Network's Earth Overshoot Day study indicates that it would take five planets equal to Earth to supply everyone in the world with a standard of consumption equal to that of the average American.

For this reason, there is need for a philosophy that values sustainability, contentment and stability more than growth, ambition and the "creative destruction" valued by certain modern economists and business executives.

Many philosophies embody these values. Taoism in China, Jainism in India, Stoicism in Ancient Greece and Rome are three examples. Epicureanism is another. Its method is reason and its goal is happiness. Epicurus's philosophy encourages us to reassess the nature of the good life—not as the accumulation of wealth or power, but as the cultivation of sufficiency, balance, and connection. In this light, the Epicurean "Garden" is not merely a private refuge from the world, but a potential model for sustainable world.

This paper will explore how these Epicurean ethics, particularly their emphasis on moderation, simple living, and the pursuit of natural pleasures, can offer a powerful framework for addressing the pressing challenges of our modern, growth-driven world and fostering truly principles of prudence, mutual aid, and ecological consciousness—civic and business leaders can play a transformative

role in addressing the planetary crisis. Although Epicurus's original vision was small in scale, the urgency of our global challenges demands a broader application. The Garden must now become planetary. In doing so, Epicureanism emerges not as a relic of ancient thought, but as a vital ethical resource for cultivating sustainable business practices in the 21st century.

Most of what we know about Epicurus is from the writings of Diogenes Laertius. He wrote a life of Epicurus and a summary of his principal doctrines, and preserved three of his letters. Other sources include quotations of Epicurus by other ancient writers, including a list of sayings attributed to Epicurus discovered in the Vatican Library.

This reliance on secondary sources and fragments makes a comprehensive understanding of Epicurean thought a scholarly endeavor, piecing together a philosophy that, despite its fragmented transmission, offers profound insights into human well-being and, as this paper argues, sustainable practices.

Life and Times of Epicurus

Epicurus lived during a troubled time, when Athens and other Greek city-states were overshadowed by the rise of Alexander the Great and wars between vast empires ruled by Alexander's successors.

The future philosopher was born on the island of Samos in 341 BCE, the son of an Athenian colonist. He reportedly took to philosophy at the age of 12 or 14, when he reportedly had asked his teacher to explain a reference by the poet Hesiod about chaos being the first thing formed in the world, and the teacher replied this was a matter for philosophers. (Rist, 1972, p. 1)

He went to Athens in 323 BCE to do two years military service, which was necessary to qualify for Athenian citizenship. During that time his family relocated to Colophon in Asia Minor after the Athenians on Samos were evicted by the Macedonians.

Epicurus joined them and lived there for the next 10 years, studying under a follower of Democritus. He opened his own school in Mytilene, a city in the Aegean, in 311, then was forced to relocate to Lampsacus in Asia Minor a year later, possibly having been forced out by mob violence organized by Aristotelians. His three brothers were among his first followers. (Oates, 1940, p.10)

He moved to Athens in 306 and remained there until his death. He acquired a house and garden there, called the Garden of Epicurus, which was also the name of his community. It endured for centuries after his death.

It was based on equality of rank and mutual aid, not the rule of an individual or privileged class, at a time when city-state democracy was overshadowed by huge empires ruled by warlords and autocrats. He defied Athenian cultural norms by accepting women and slaves as equal members. It must be admitted, though, that everyone in the community deferred to Epicurus; in that respect, he was "more equal than others."

He didn't take part in Athenian public life, but he never left Athens, despite invasions and sieges. Athens was sometimes a battleground in the conflict between Demetrius and Cassander, heirs of two of Alexander's generals. (Scott-

Kilvert, 1973, p 333-383). During one siege, food was so scarce that he had to ration beans to a specific number per person in the community. (Diano, Encyclopedia Britannica)

This act, while born of necessity, highlights a practical approach to resource management and a commitment to ensuring the well-being of all members, even in dire circumstances – a lesson in prudent allocation and communal responsibility that resonates with modern concerns about resource scarcity and equitable distribution.

Unlike in other communities, such as the Pythagoreans, the Epicureans did not hold their wealth in common. Epicurus reportedly said that to ask followers to give up the right to private property would have reflected a lack of trust, which would have been incompatible with friendship.

He was not a collectivist or an authoritarian. Rather he advocated a moral revolution that rejected the relentless pursuit of individual wealth and disregard for communal well-being, which has led to the current crisis. Unlike in Garrett Hardin's "lifeboat ethics," Epicurus did not believe in fighting over scarce resources. His inclusive approach to well-being strives to ensure everyone has enough to satisfy their natural and necessary desires.

Epicurus died in 271BCE. On the day of his death, he reportedly wrote a letter to his friend, Idomeneus, saying, "On this truly happy day of my life, as I am at the point of death, I write this to you. The disease in my bladder and stomach are pursuing their course, lacking nothing of their normal severity, but against all this is the joy in my heart at the recollections of my conversations with you. Do you, as I might expect from your devotion from boyhood to me and to philosophy, take good care of the children of Metrodorus." (Fragments, O'Connor, 1993, p. 93)

This shows that he truly valued friendship; it wasn't just a reciprocal arrangement of "I help you, you help me." Friendship that went beyond transactional relationships was the necessary glue that held the Epicurean community together.

Basic Teachings

Epicureanism is one of the four great schools of Greek philosophy, along with Platonism, Aristotelianism and Stoicism. The founders the other three, Plato, Aristotle and Zeno of Citium, all left voluminous writings. Epicurus himself also was said to be a prolific writer. His biographer, Diogenes Laertius (180-240 CE), said he wrote more than 300 rolls. (Oates, 1940, p.59) Unfortunately, only a few survive.

He taught that the things needed for happiness are Ataraxia (tranquility) and Aponia (absence of pain); or, in other words, mental and physical health. Mental health consists of freedom from fear and freedom from unnecessary and unnatural desires.

This distinction between necessary and unnecessary desires is crucial to understanding Epicurean ethics and its relevance to contemporary issues of consumption and sustainability.

In his letter to Menoeceus, Epicurus wrote: "We must consider that of the desires some are natural and others idle: of the natural desires, some are necessary while others are natural only. Of the necessary desires, there are those that are

necessary for happiness, those that are necessary for the body's freedom from disturbance, and those that are necessary for life itself. A firm understanding of these things enables us to refer every choice and avoidance to the health of the body or the calm of the soul, since this is the goal of a happy life. Everything we do is for the sake of this, namely, to avoid pain and fear. Once this is achieved, all the soul's trouble is dispelled, as the living being does not have to go in search of something missing or to seek something else, by which the good of the soul and of the body will be fulfilled". (O'Connor, 1993, p. 64-65)

Elsewhere he wrote, "It is impossible to live pleasantly without living prudently, well, and justly, nor is it possible to live prudently, well, and justly without living pleasantly. The man for whom this latter condition is impossible cannot live prudently, well, or justly; he for whom the former is impossible, cannot live pleasantly...". (Principal Doctrines 5, O'Connor, 1993, p. 70)

Epicurean pleasure is not a fleeting sensation but a state of being cultivated through virtuous and rational living. This emphasis on prudence, well-being, and justice forms the ethical bedrock of Epicureanism, distinguishing it sharply from a simplistic pursuit of hedonism and providing a philosophical grounding for the sustainable practices discussed in this paper.

One common belief about the Epicureans is that they were greedy for pleasure, especially delicious food. In comic plays, they were depicted as gluttons. This is based on Epicurus' saying that "the beginning and root of every good is the satisfaction of the stomach." (Fragments 59, O'Connor, 1993)

What Epicurus meant was that satisfaction of primary needs, such as food, water and shelter, are essential, but if you have these things, and also have friends, you have all you need to be happy.

But the Epicureans were not ascetics. They didn't practice self-denial for its own sake. They didn't object to drinking fine wines or eating gourmet food if they were offered. Epicurus said that a plain diet would make fancy food all the more delicious. He wrote, "We think highly of frugality not that we may always keep to a cheap and simple diet, but that we may be free from desire regarding it." (Fragments, Oates, 1940, p. 47) He said the problem comes when you come to like fancy food so much that you can't enjoy plain food.

This teaching on moderation and the nature of desire is critical for understanding their approach to consumption and its implications for sustainable living, suggesting that true pleasure lies not in endless acquisition, but in the appreciation of what is sufficient and natural.

The Epicureans' rivals, in the Academy of Plato and the Lyceum of Aristotle, accused them of sexual orgies. Epicurus scholar J.M. Rist said this is an exaggeration, but he admitted that it is true that Epicurus did not advocate nor require celibacy, only a recognition that sexual pleasure was not a necessity. (Rist, 1972, p.10-11)

Epicurus wrote to a follower, "I hear from you that carnal appetites make you too eager for sexual pleasures. If you do not break the laws, disturb well-established customs, upset any of your neighbors, do bodily harm to yourself, or waste your resources, give in to your inclinations as you please. However, you cannot avoid being impeded by one of these barriers. For sexual pleasure

has never done anybody any good. One must be content if it has not done actual harm.” (Vatican Sayings 51, O’Connor, 1993, p. 82)

The other thing needful for happiness, he wrote, was friendship. Friendships provide security because friends help each other out in time of need. Epicurus taught that just knowing you have a friend you can rely on gives you freedom from fear. To have a friend, you must be a friend, and so you should not have so many friends that you cannot fulfill your obligations to all of them.

Epicureans say communities should be based on mutual advantage of all its members. These teachings foreshadow the Social Compact theory of John Locke. Epicurus wrote: “Natural justice is a pledge guaranteeing mutual advantage, to prevent one from harming others and to keep oneself from being harmed. ... There is no such thing as ‘justice in itself.’ It is always, rather, always a certain compact made during men’s dealings with one another in different places, not to do harm or be harmed. ... Broadly considered, justice is the same for all, because it is a kind of mutual benefit in the business of men’s interactions with one another. ... If someone makes a law which does not result in advantages for men’s dealings with each other, it no longer has the force of justice.” *The Principal Doctrines*, O’Connor, 1993, p. 31, 32, 36, 27, 74, 75)

But for him, friendship was something deeper than a mutual assistance pact, for reasons that are disputed among scholars. (Rist, 1972, 127-139) He wrote, “Of all things that wisdom provides for living one’s life in happiness, the greatest by far is the possession of friendship.” (*Principal Doctrines* 27, O’Connor, 1993, p, 73).

This stress on true friendship is what makes Epicureanism more than just a philosophy of selfish hedonism. It means that there are other values than avoiding pain and enjoying moderate pleasure for oneself.

Epicurus and Sustainability

A number of observers point out how the Epicurean ideals of moderation, simplicity and natural pleasures fit well with the need for a sustainable society.

One teaching of Epicurus was phronesis, or sober calculation. The "Letter to Menoeceus," explicitly highlights the importance of phronesis. Epicurus advised, "For it is not continuous drinking and revels, nor the enjoyment of women and young boys, nor the enjoyment of fish and other viands that a luxurious table provides, which produce the pleasant life, but sober reasoning, which examines the motives for every choice and avoidance, and which drives away those opinions resulting in the greatest disturbance of the soul."

(a) Food sufficiency and hedonic pleasure

Valérié Hémar-Nicolas, of Paris-Saclay University in France, and Liselotte Hedegaard, of Roskilde University in Denmark, in a 2023 article entitled “Food sufficiency, an approach rooted in the ethics of Epicurus,” pointed out the pressing need for “a sustainable food model that incorporates economic growth, social justice and environmental protection to meet current needs

without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own" (Hémar-Nicolas & Hedegaard, 2023, p.2)

One problem with acceptance of sustainable practices is that they are often presented as a form of austerity and self-sacrifice. Hémar-Nicolas and Hedegaard (Ibid, p, 2–28) said this is all wrong. They said the key to sustainable food production and distribution is to show that sustainable practices can make food consumption more pleasurable. This may require forming new habits, which is in line with the Epicurean philosophy of preferred rational pleasure over the unthinking satisfaction of appetites.

Unprocessed food is usually more nutritious and also tastier than processed food. But human beings are programmed to desire foods that are high in sugar, fat and salt (Ibid, p. 3) - a pleasure that arguably is natural, but also unnecessary in today's world and, past a certain point, harmful.

"Eating well" means eating in moderation, seeking out natural food and natural materials, and preparing food ourselves rather than eating prepared foods. Hémar-Nicolas and Hedegaard admit that this may feel troublesome at first, but reason and reflection tell us that these practices will not only be more sustainable in the long run, but produce greater pleasure, satisfaction and well-being.

"For example," they wrote, "cooking a dish for the first time instead of buying it ready-made may initially result in negative emotions, such as failure or frustration with giving up another more attractive activity. However, this displeasure can eventually lead to self-satisfaction and amplified taste pleasure. This shift from displeasure to pleasure is grounded in sensory experiences (stimulation of the senses, greater nimbleness to cook, etc.) and social experiences (e.g. exchanging recipes, receiving gratitude from other eaters, etc.)." (Ibid, p, 12)

Hémar-Nicolas and Hedegaard call on the food industry to develop sourcing, distribution, marketing and advertising to make the consumer's acquisition, preparation and consumption of food more pleasurable and to make consumers more mindful of the pleasures of food. I would say that the European Union's "Farm to Fork" strategy serves as an example of this growing emphasis on sustainability.

One could add that awareness of local products, whose flavors are closely linked to their land of origin and avoid long transportation distances, should also be encouraged.

It is significant that these two scholars combine a background in management (Hémar-Nicolas) and philosophy (Hedegaard) and that their article was published in *Recherche en Applications en Marketing*, a publication of l'Association Française du Marketing, rather than a philosophy journal. It is an indication of the growing recognition by commercial interests in the relevance of both sustainability and philosophy in today's world.

(b) Epicureanism and a sustainable world

Ecophilosopher Freya Mathews said philosophy, including environmental philosophy, must be not only theory, but a way of life. (Mathews, 2023, p.1-20). Epicureans, like the Stoics, taught ways of life that transformed consciousness in ways that the world needs today.

“The contentment that would accrue from the Epicurean way of life, lived in comfort but without adornment, close to nature, in colloquy with intelligent companions who share the practitioner’s path, seems hard to deny,” she wrote.

“Plausible too is the central intuition that in tailoring ourselves to the often exaggerated or arbitrary conventions and expectations of society, we are likely to miss the central point of life, which is simply to register and rejoice in the reality of our existence. To register the reality of our existence may indeed be to experience a sense of sufficiency and plenitude that no other experience can begin to equal. The Epicurean way of life then surely retains its relevance and appeal today.” (Ibid, p. 7)

Edward Howlett Spence also wrote that external policies may not be enough to save a world threatened by climate change, diminishing natural resources, and increasing pollution, population and energy consumption per capita. Policies that do not allow for a sustainable good life are bound to fail, he says, and Epicureanism may be a path to the sustainable good life. (Spence, IOP Conference Series, 2009)

He wrote that technological progress may enable more people to satisfy their natural and necessary desires for good and shelter. On the other hand, technological change creates new needs. One can argue that Internet access has become necessary for a good life. And it fosters unnatural and unnecessary desires, such as the desire for such things as the most advanced flat-screen TV.

Emily Austin, author of *Living for Pleasure: an Epicurean Guide to the Good Life*, said Epicurus would advocate a society in which everyone had enough to satisfy their natural and necessary desires, and was happy with this. But in contemporary society, she wrote, success is more valued than satisfaction.

She wrote, “Those content to have enough are often considered suspicious, as though their failure to work for more makes them lazy or complacent. Working constantly becomes a badge of honor, even as it crowds out more desirable goods like time with friends and family.” (Austin, 2023, p. 142)

Gerald Gutenschwager argued that Epicureanism offers a solution to the main problems facing our destructive, high-growth society - the economic problem of overproduction, the resulting environmental destruction and the ethical failure of the growth imperative to provide a meaningful and happy life.

He pointed out the similarities between Epicureanism and Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs, each one building on the previous one and making possible the next one - at the base (1) the biological necessities of life, then (2) safety, (3) friendship and membership in a group, (4) self-esteem and the respect of others and at the peak (5) “self-actualization,” the realization of one’s potential.

He said Epicurus created a small, loving community, free from fear, which provided for simple material needs and allowed satisfaction of emotional and spiritual needs. He said Epicurus created a small, loving community, free from fear, which provided for simple material needs and allowed satisfaction of emotional and spiritual needs.

“How ironic!” Gutenschwager added. “Almost the entire evolution of humanity since Epicurus has gone in the opposite direction, especially with the rise of economic theory, individualism and the technological society, which have brought a culture of egoism, competition, conquest and arrogance, and with ultimate

consequences that may well circumscribe significantly, if not conclusively, human life on our planet.” (Gutenschwager, 2013, p. 66-90)

John O’Neill gave Epicureans credit for providing evidence that reduced consumption does not mean a reduced quality of life, which is important for sustainability. “However, these virtues disappear when we turn to the question as to why sustainability might matter in the first place. Hedonic accounts of welfare cannot give us an account of the way the future might matter to our own lives. The future like the past does not matter to us.” (O’Neill, 2006, p.168). To Epicurus, death is oblivion and what happens after death cannot affect one’s present happiness.

O’Neill contrasted Epicurean hedonism with Aristotle’s idea of eudaimonia, or human flourishing. Aristotelians seek excellence by cultivating the virtues, while Epicureans seek enjoyment by cultivating natural and necessary pleasures. He said the first is objective; the other, subjective. Also, Aristotle believed that political participation, which is an integral part of the modern environmental movement, is necessary to a good life, but Epicurus did not.

Aristotelianism is not opposed to Epicureanism, O’Neill said, but it contains things the latter philosophy lacks. He said that, according to Aristotle, it is not possible to determine the meaning and impact of someone’s life until after that person is dead, which means Aristotelianism is necessarily future-oriented in a way Epicureanism is not. (O’Neill, 2006, p. 168-171)

But in fact, the Garden was not a place of isolated indulgence, but of intergenerational care, ethical cultivation, and sustainable living. While Epicurus did not engage in public politics, he enacted a quiet revolution by modeling a way of life that prized long-term tranquility over short-term gratification, sufficiency over luxury, and community over individualism. These values align closely with the very principles sustainability requires: living within limits, caring for others, and thinking beyond immediate desires. Far from being indifferent to the future, the Garden offers a living example of how deeply rooted personal contentment can foster enduring, socially and ecologically responsible lives.

The Roman Stoic philosopher, Seneca the Younger (4 BCE - 65 CE), described the Garden, which still existed in his day, as follows: “Go to his Garden and read the motto carved there: ‘Stranger, here you will do well to tarry; here our highest good is pleasure.’ The care-taker of that abode, a kindly host, will be ready for you; he will welcome you with barley-meal and serve you water also in abundance, with these words: ‘Have you not been well entertained?’

“This garden,” he says, “does not whet your appetite; it quenches it. Nor does it make you more thirsty with every drink; it slakes the thirst by a natural cure, a cure that demands no fee. This is the pleasure in which I have grown old.” (Seneca’s Letters, Book I, Letter XXI)

Epicurus and Modern Business

One must be careful not to claim too much about present-day application of Epicurean ideas to modern business. Few if any business owners or managers

claim to follow the teachings of Epicurus, in the way that some claim to be followers of the teachings in Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* or the novels of Ayn Rand.

Epicurus himself thought the quest for wealth was an unworthy pursuit. He wrote, "To love ill-gotten wealth is impious; [but even] to love wealth justly earned is [still] shameful. For even with justice on your side, it is unseemly to be thrifty to the point of meanness... A life of freedom cannot acquire many possessions, since to accomplish this requires servility to the rabble or to kings; but such a life possesses everything in unfailing supply. If somehow such a life does happen to acquire many possessions, it will also know how to distribute these to win the neighbors' good will." (Vatican Sayings 43, 67, O'Connor 1993, p. 81,84)

This was the prevailing philosophical view in the context of his time. Adam Smith's idea that self-interest could be tamed and made a force for good did not exist.

But if you look at today's business world with an Epicurean squint, you can see companies trying to combine the profit motive and the general good.

One example is the new emphasis on work-life balance which, according to Zarak Mumtaz, founder of the Hayal Agency, a marketing services company, reflects the Epicurean value of mental tranquility and balance. (Mumtaz, 2025)

Basecamp, a project management company, is a noteworthy example of this. It limits the employee work week to 40 hours, and to 32 hours in summer. Employees are forbidden to work overtime, but they are given control over how they spend, so that work time is not wasted in useless meetings and reports. Basecamp, unlike some tech companies, does not offer amenities on-site such as gourmet meals or workout rooms. It prefers that employees go home when the work day is done. (Boogaard, 2017; Nguyen, 2020)

Management values calm deliberation over intense effort. Hao Nguyen of Balance the Grind, a consultant firm on work-life balance, said motivational slogans he's seen on wall of high-tech companies include such things as "*Move fast and break things*," "*Fail early, fail fast, fail often*," and "*Fear is the disease, hustle is the antidote*." He said the equivalents at Basecamp are "*Calm is profitability*," "*Calm is reasonable expectations*," "*Calm is about 40 hours of work a week*," and "*Calm is about sustainable practices that can run for the long-term*." (Nguyen, 2020)

It should be noted, though, that while Epicurus advocated Ataraxia (tranquility) as a way to avoid unhappiness, Basecamp advocated calmness is a means to ensure long-term corporate survival and profitability. The two goals are not the same, but they are aligned.

Similarly, there is an analogy between a present-day business corporation adopting sustainable practices and followers of Epicurus limiting their desires to natural and necessary pleasures. The two goals are not the same, but they also are aligned and show the way to a better future.

Here are some examples of sustainable business practices:

Smith & Hawken: This garden tool distributorship, founded in 1979, is the best-known of a number of successful companies founded by Paul Hawken, an organic gardener himself and a well-known advocate of sustainable business

practices. One of his practices was to send catalogs (printed on recycled paper) only to those who requested them, which kept tons of paper out of landfills. He quit as CEO in 1992, saying he wanted to devote himself to writing and lecturing. Hawken, like Epicurus, believed in limiting consumption to what was useful and necessary. Like Epicurus, he strongly believed in a healthy diet and lifestyle and sought to promote them by example. (“Smith & Hawken Ltd.,” Encyclopedia.com, n.d.)

Patagonia Clothing and Gear: On 2011’s Black Friday, the start of the Christmas shopping season, Patagonia ran a full page ad in the New York Times under the headline, “Don’t Buy this Jacket,” featuring one of its best-selling products. “As is true of all the things we make and you can buy,” the ad said, “this jacket comes with an environmental cost higher than its price.” It mentioned that manufacture of the jacket required 135 liters of water and generated 20 pounds of carbon dioxide. But it promised that Patagonia was doing everything it could to make a durable, recyclable product, and asked customers not to buy things unless they really need them. This aligns with the Epicurean emphasis on moderation and limiting unnecessary desires. (Kuang, 2025; Patagonia Inc., 2025)

Interface Inc.: This company is a leader in making carpet tile, whose raw materials include nylon, fiberglass and polyvinyl chloride, which usually wind up in landfills. Its founder, the late Ray Anderson (1934-2011), had an epiphany in 1994 when an employee gave him a copy of Paul Hawken’s *The Ecology of Commerce*, which argued for the need to reduce per capita use of resources and energy by 80 percent. He committed the company to the eventual production of 100 percent recyclable products, and achieved a 30 percent reduction in emissions and solid waste in the first four years. The company has continued to make progress, and recently committed to reducing carbon emissions by an additional 50 percent by 2030 and to become carbon negative without offsets by 2040. This showcases a commitment to living in harmony with nature and minimizing harm, which resonates with Epicurean values. (Patton, 2013; Interface Inc., 2025)

Ecovative Design: This company uses mycelium, a type of mushroom, to create biodegradable packaging and building materials as a replacement for plastics and other non-renewable materials. They also make synthetic bacon. This aligns with the Epicurean appreciation of natural pleasures and the desire to live in harmony with nature. By replacing harmful plastics with natural alternatives, they demonstrate a commitment to minimizing harm and promoting ecological balance, which can be seen as a practical application of Epicurean environmental ethics. (Cumbers, 2023)

These companies, through their actions, demonstrate that businesses can thrive by embracing values that align with Epicurean principles. Their focus on sustainability, moderation, community, and natural pleasures reflects a growing recognition that businesses have a responsibility to contribute to a better world, aligning with the idea that "the good life" should be a central concern for businesses.

The companies mentioned above have not only contributed to a more sustainable and ethical world but have also reaped benefits in terms of profitability and positive social/environmental impact:

Enhanced Brand Reputation and Customer Loyalty: Companies like Patagonia and Smith & Hawken have built strong brand reputations by aligning their values with those of their customers. This has led to increased customer

loyalty and advocacy, which translates into higher sales and profitability. This aligns with the idea that businesses that prioritize ethical considerations can build stronger relationships with stakeholders.

Cost Savings and Efficiency: Companies like Interface have found that sustainable practices can lead to significant cost savings through reduced waste, energy efficiency, and resource optimization. This demonstrates that environmental responsibility and profitability can go hand in hand, aligning with the Epicurean emphasis on "sober calculation" (phronesis) in resource management.

Attracting and Retaining Talent: Companies with strong ethical and sustainable practices are more attractive to talented employees who want to work for organizations that align with their values. This can lead to increased employee engagement, productivity, and retention, reflecting the Epicurean emphasis on creating a harmonious and supportive work environment.

Positive Social and Environmental Impact: By adopting sustainable practices, these companies have contributed to a healthier environment, reduced pollution, and promoted social equity. This positive impact not only benefits society but also enhances the company's reputation and strengthens its relationships with stakeholders, aligning with the Epicurean emphasis on community and social well-being.

Innovation and Competitive Advantage: Companies like Ecovative Design have gained a competitive advantage by developing innovative sustainable products and services. This demonstrates that sustainability can be a driver of innovation and business growth, aligning with the Epicurean emphasis on adapting to changing circumstances and finding creative solutions to challenges.

These case studies demonstrate that businesses can thrive even though they have values that align with Epicurean principles. By focusing on sustainability, moderation, community, and natural pleasures, businesses can create a positive impact on the world while also achieving financial success. This reflects a growing recognition that businesses have a responsibility to contribute to a better future for all, aligning with the idea that, according to Epicurus, "the ethical life will be a divine one," where ethical living leads to a higher form of well-being.

Conclusion

While Epicurus himself shunned politics and cultivated a small, self-selected community, a group that was largely self-sufficient, such an approach is insufficient for the challenges of today's world. To address the growing environmental crisis, all individuals, including corporate executives and business owners, must embrace Epicurean principles. Indeed, some businesses as we mentioned above, already exemplify these values, prioritizing long-term well-being and responsible practices over short-term excesses. The imperative now is to transform these commendable individual efforts into a universal necessity, embedding Epicurean wisdom into the very fabric of our global economy.

To address the growing environmental crisis, all individuals, including corporate executives and business owners, must embrace Epicurean principles. Indeed, some

businesses as we mentioned above, already exemplify these values, prioritizing long-term well-being and responsible practices over short-term excesses. The imperative now is to transform these commendable individual efforts into a universal necessity, embedding Epicurean wisdom into the very fabric of our global economy.

For this transformation to occur, corporate and civic leaders play a vital role in making the public understand that the desire for unnatural and unnecessary pleasures is a key contributor to today's sustainability crisis. The educational system should promote awareness of one's desires and needs, so young people are not attracted to unnecessary and unnatural pleasures. It is incumbent upon them to persuade policymakers in business and government to use their power to elevate natural and necessary pleasures.

This shift will lead to corporate and political leaders prioritizing mutual aid over destructive competition, and valuing frugality and prudence over reckless consumption. In doing so, we begin to cultivate a global community that embodies the core tenets of Epicurean well-being.

Epicurus's original "Garden" was a sanctuary for philosophical inquiry and simple self-sufficient living, providing a haven where individuals could pursue tranquility and contentment. However, the pressing environmental concerns of our era demand a vastly expanded vision for this philosophical ideal. The modern "Garden" cannot be confined to a small, isolated group; it must extend its boundaries to encompass the entire planet. Perhaps there could be an explicitly Epicurean movement, with a network of "Gardens" in the form of small affinity groups, uniting to practice a modern form of Epicurean philosophy. This global "Garden," in whatever form it takes, implies a collective commitment to sustainable practices, where the pursuit of genuine human flourishing aligns with the health of our shared environment.

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Making the History of Philosophy: A Feminist Critical Analysis

By Maya Subrahmanian*

The main objective of this article is to discuss the androcentrism in the discipline of philosophy, by examining the exclusion of women from the philosophical canons. It is indispensable to analyze how the issues of power and knowledge worked in the making of the history of philosophy worldwide by omitting women thinkers. There were enormously efficient intellectual women from ancient times; but they were not heard much, and they were never included in the books on the history of philosophy. There is a need to rewrite the history of philosophy to place the critical thinking and intellectual engagements by women philosophers to make them enter the canon. Feminist philosophy has abundant resources to explore the existing scopes of philosophy such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics and further critical areas. The discussions of socio-political philosophy cannot avoid the philosophy of feminism and gender, to analyze social phenomena including injustices based on religion, region, ethnicity, class, caste, etc. Those aspects have been neglected in the history of moral philosophy with its dominant rationality, abstract absolutism, along with misogyny. This article attempts to critically analyze these issues by discussing the philosophical contributions of some women thinkers from Western and Eastern cultural contexts who initiated debates over areas of moral and social philosophy. Such an attempt is made here by referring mainly to the inputs by two women thinkers from ancient and modern time in the West and the East. Aspasia and Diotima from ancient Greece, Sulabha and Gargi from ancient India, Wollstonecraft and Beauvoir from the modern Western context, Tarabai and Ramabai from the modern Indian context, would provide the points of discussion in this article. These women philosophers are discussed in a limited way and later interventions in feminist ethics are mentioned as examples to argue the relevance of women thinkers and to address the issues of their exclusion from the history of philosophy.

Keywords: History of Philosophy, Patriarchy, Power, Gender, Feminist Ethics, Feminist Philosophy, Women Thinkers

Introduction

All prominent compilations on the history of philosophy would show that philosophy has always been patriarchal in its contents and methods. There were enormously efficient female intellectuals in antiquity and later periods, but they were not heard much, and they were never included in the books on the history of philosophy. Addressing this issue historically, some women thinkers from philosophy departments in Western countries initiated documenting the female philosophers and their works with websites and published books.¹ The female name Hypatia of

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¹Waithe, 1987. Gardner, 2023, O'Reilly, and Pello, Eds. 2023. Also see the link <https://ecc.historyofwomenphilosophers.org/#hwps>.

Alexandria was well-known for her intellectual engagements as a Neo-Platonist philosopher and mathematician during 4th century CE.² But her works were lost due to the attacks from the powers of religious authorities, who eventually executed her publicly. The dynamics of various institutional power and gender are palpable from Hypatia's murder; still, no later philosophers attempted to get her name listed in any documentation on the history of philosophy, until feminist philosophers' initiative. Recent references show that there were other names of women thinkers such as Theano, Themistoclea etc. who existed around 5th century BCE during the time of Pythagoras.³ Later during Socratic and Platonic periods in the history of Western philosophy, there were women thinkers such as Aspasia, Diotima, Hipparchia, Arete etc. from ancient Greece.⁴ Some of them appear as strong characters in Plato's dialogues. But no later studies on those Socratic dialogues written by Plato, took up the women interlocutors in the dialectical enterprise developed in ancient Greece. And that shows how the male-centric power structures in philosophy was constructed by careful exclusion of female names.

With reference to the documentation edited by Mary Ellen Waithe, some women philosophers were identified in the medieval and early modern periods, but they also did not become part of the Western philosophical canon.⁵ Women in antiquity have made many important contributions to classical philosophy in Asia too.⁶ In ancient India many women were engaging intellectually with sages and seers in Vedic and Upanishadic periods around 1000 BCE.⁷ The female names among ancient Indian philosophers include Lopamudra, Maitreyi, Gargi, Sulabha etc. These women appeared in ancient Indian scriptures as engaging in dialectics along with male sages and seers elaborating upon topics as rhetoric, spirituality, self, enlightenment and gender too. Not only in Vedic tradition but in Buddhist tradition also we can find women philosophers. During Buddha's lifetime between 800-600 BCE, there were women known as *Theris* or elderly, who literally contributed thorough their philosophical poems that were later compiled as *Therigatha*.⁸ In medieval period Akka Mahadevi wrote poems (around 12th century CE) on spirituality as well as rejection of social norms, and Pandita Ramabai, Tharabai Shinde, Savithribai Phule etc. were women who wrote social-philosophical treatise in modern period.⁹

Due to the commencement of Women's Studies and Gender Studies as academic departments, some universities have started including women thinkers' names and works in the curriculum of philosophy in recent decades. There was no discussion regarding the inclusion of women philosophers into the canon until feminists from philosophy departments in the West initiated it in the late modern

²It is evident from the fact that the Society for Women in Philosophy, which was founded in 1972 by some Western feminist philosophers, initiated a journal in the name Hypatia and first published it in 1986.

³Waithe, Ed.1987

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶See Pang-White, 2023; Kim, 2022; Waithe and Dykeman, Ed. 2023.

⁷Waithe and Dykeman, Ed. 2023.

⁸Pollock, 2015. Chakraborty, 2018.

⁹O'Reilly, Catharine R and Pello, Caterina. Eds. 2023; Chakravarti, 1998; Shinde, 2004.

times. *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* published in 1967, which contains articles on over 900 philosophers, did not include an entry for any of them. Thus, it becomes indispensable to analyze how the issue of intertwined power and knowledge, worked in the making of the history of philosophy both in the global West and East. When women thinkers took it as obligatory and discussed the issues of making the history of philosophy documented, the necessity for making a new area called philosophy of gender and feminism arises for sure. It is required to declare the method of gender analysis as part of feminist philosophy and the different streams in it. One stream of work is to see the fact that philosophical works of women philosophers through various time periods were excluded from the history of philosophy. It will include the feminist critic of the narrations and documentation of history of philosophy as patriarchal, and a documentation of women philosophers to rewrite the history of philosophy. Another stream of feminist philosophy is to understand the philosophical contributions of women thinkers who initiated different modes of analyses in varied fields of philosophy.

It is noteworthy that along with the documentation of women thinkers and their integration into the philosophical canons, various attempts are being made in recent years to do studies on the works done by women in philosophy. In *A History of Women Philosophers*, Mary Ellen Waithe (1987) has documented women philosophers from worldwide in four volumes, comprising female thinkers in the classical world, from 500–1600 CE, from 1600–1900CE and later.¹⁰ References show that before the attempt of Waithe (1987) in the second half of 20th century in doing the documentation of women philosophers, Gilles Menage had written *Historia Mulierum Philosopharum* in the 17th century (1690) on women thinkers, though it was not translated very soon into English.¹¹ He had found around sixty-five women thinkers from various writings in antiquity and dedicated this book to the most intellectual woman of his time Anne Lefevre Dacier.¹² Other than this documentation of women thinkers by a male thinker, later in the 19th century another prominent male philosopher John Stuart Mill has written women's issue in his book *The Subjection of Woman* (1869). Though we find such rare thoughts among philosophers on women and their historical condition, it is also notable that while other areas of the humanities are at or near gender parity, philosophy remained more male-centered. Though this scenario has rapidly changed in the West during last few decades, it is only recently at least some modern and postmodern woman philosophers are studied in developing ontological and epistemological insights at the research areas in India. In interdisciplinary research projects the women thinkers are included but not much in the curriculum of philosophy departments. So that, it is apparent that there is a prerequisite to rewrite the history of philosophy to place the critical thinking and engagements by women philosophers in detail.

An analysis on the contributions of some female philosophers by placing them in the particular historical and geographical contexts would facilitate the

¹⁰Waithe, Ed. 1987.

¹¹Twomey, 2023:137.

¹²*The History of Women Philosophers*, translated from the Latin with an introduction by Beatrice H. Zedler, Lanham: University press of America (1984).

interpretation of patriarchy in the documentation of the history of philosophy. Such an attempt is done here by referring mainly the contributions by two women thinkers from each ancient and modern time philosophy in the West and the East. Aspatia and Diotima from ancient Greece, Sulabha and Gargi from ancient India, Wollstonecraft and Beauvoir from modern Western context, Tarabai and Ramabai from the modern Indian context, would provide the points of discussion in this article. The works of these women philosophers and some later interventions of female thinkers are deliberated in a limited way as examples to argue the presence and relevance of women thinkers, and thus to address the issues of their exclusion from history of philosophy.

Women Thinkers in Ancient Western Philosophy

During the pre-Socratic period there were women philosophers who themselves wrote texts of various themes especially on moral philosophy, and there are claims of them being the earliest texts by women in the West. These women are called Pythagorean women and the collections by *Stobaeus: Eclogarum Physicarum and Florilegium* in 5th century CE and other writings in Dutsch (2020) and Pomeroy (2013) compile their existence as philosophers.¹³ Since philosophy and history are all dominated by male protagonists, these women are to be labelled as pre-Socratic thinkers or Pythagorean women. It provides evident gender insensitivity in terminological and historical enterprise that they were named as Pythagorean women following Pythagoras. This also resonates the patriarchal power structures in the realm of making of knowledge. Though most of these women were presented as either a lover or wife of Pythagoras, there were also women who were teaching Pythagoras. Diogenes Laertius (180-240 CE) noted that Pythagoras got his ethical views from a woman priestess named Themistoclea.¹⁴ The scarcity of references doesn't give space for any critical analysis on this point to evaluate whether any higher position was attributed to her during that time. But obviously her name also hasn't constituted a school of philosophy in her name. Theano who is known as the wife of Pythagoras had written philosophical works but her legacy didn't make the canon. With the evident chronological confusions in documenting ancient history, Theano could also be identified to be a name before Pythagoras around 5th or 6th century BC, and so she might be appropriate with the time of Thales to provide thoughts on, her being a replacement for the so-called first philosopher Thales, according to a feminist point of view.

A feminist analysis on presentation of the group of female philosophers who lived during Pythagorean period, would have to notice the status of women as domestically tied and subordinated. It is mentioned as a great point that the women who wrote a series of letters and treatises and were also known to be experts of the household.¹⁵ There are many discussions about the feminine virtue and home making in the texts that would brew gendered concepts, but Pythagorean school restricted even men to keep monogamy and to be religiously dutiful. Some observed

¹³Twomey, 2023.

¹⁴Ibid, p.136.

¹⁵Ibid.

that in both stages of the history of Pythagoreanism, in the fifth-century Pythagorean societies and in the Hellenistic Pythagorean writings, the women who are credited with authoring texts were viewed as an intellectual, a thinker, a teacher, and a philosopher. But ‘the available evidence is more complex and conveys the idea of the Pythagorean woman as both an expert on the female sphere and a well-rounded thinker philosophizing about the principles of the cosmos, human society, the immortality of the soul, numbers, and harmonics.’¹⁶

Although we can find online references and writings nowadays on later women philosophers such as Aspatia, Arete, Diotima, Hipparchia etc. who were active between 5th and 3rd century BC, and they are not even mentioned in any documented books on ancient Western philosophy generally referred in university curriculum.¹⁷ During their life period, academic philosophy was generally confined to the male philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, to place them as the fathers of Ancient Western philosophy. The woman thinker Aspatia is a name mentioned by Plato in *Menexenus*, in which Socrates says Aspatia taught him. Though the topic in those dialogues is given as funeral oration, rhetoric, gender issues etc. are all being topics in dialogues of Aspatia as well as Diotima in the dialectics. On Aspatia’s life there are many different versions that would show her as courtesan at one level and as a thinker and philosopher from whom Socrates learnt a lot.¹⁸ She also has been a character in play written those days along with Pericles as counterpart. It is well known that people such as Aristophane pictured women intellectuals cynically.¹⁹ The power structures in knowledge systems would get revealed if we look at this particular female character, whose sexuality and gender are being scrutinized by male literary artists.

The woman named Diotima (440 BC) as a character who develops the idea of *Eros* in Plato’s *Symposium*, is understood as Socrates’ teacher or mother by some readings. She is just taken as mythical character by some people, but also imagined as the same person as Aspatia by some scholars. Waithe asserts from a feminist analysis that Diotima must be a real woman who existed those days since her ideas that are presented seem to be different from that of both Socrates and Plato.²⁰ The power structures in knowledge systems would get blurred if we look at this particular female character. Why Plato created this character as an interlocutor among all other men, is a question to be thought about, no matter if she really existed or not. Most of the names heard during Socratic-Platonic time period, could be contested since they appear as characters engaging with dialectics in Plato’s writings. Diotima is given high hand in the dialectical course among male thinkers who dominated the social discussions, and even she is placed to win Socrates through arguments. Her discussions are proving that the knowledge making is beyond gender. And her situatedness as an interlocutor makes us rethink gender in Plato’s philosophy and his lifetime in Greece. Sheffield explains gender categories are an explicit feature of the text *Symposium*, but Plato’s playful

¹⁶[https://www.cambridge.org/core/publications/elements/cambridge-elements-series/women-in-the-history-of-philosophy/listing?aggs\[productTypes\]\[filters\]=ELEMENT&sort=canonical.date:desc](https://www.cambridge.org/core/publications/elements/cambridge-elements-series/women-in-the-history-of-philosophy/listing?aggs[productTypes][filters]=ELEMENT&sort=canonical.date:desc).

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Henry, 1995.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Waithe, 2023.

provocative use of them is not just dialectical ploy to reflect on then existing social norms of sexuality and gender.²¹ The gender-muddled portrait of Diotima, placing her as female figure of Socrates and making her substantiate the philosophical thinking is beyond gender, doesn't necessarily prove Plato as gender neutral. Sheffield sounds to subscribe to the idea that Plato was not misogynistic and was even gender sensitive to imagine Philosopher Queens who have responsibility for civic education in the Republic. This is taken as an argument for understanding that moral education was not exclusively male-centered. But it is notable that Plato has also made contradictory statement in the same book that women are not rational as men and they cannot be leaders. The text proposes at some level the State would be ruled by men and women are also creatures to be ruled and taught by men leaders. The idea of Queen might have been as a counter part for King for Plato, that's why even Diotima was represented as a female version of Socrates. Arguments of Diotima might have been presented by Plato to establish the equality between sexes which was not in the society during his time. Peter Adamson also points out that the communism in Book 5 of Republic, which has only a limited appeal for the modern feminists.²²

Whatever may be the contradictory case in the Republic, the book Symposium tried to prove virtue and even philosophy as gender neutral. It suits to the wish of intellectual women in various socio-cultural contexts would dream, since they are facing gender discrimination and power plays under conceptual systems of knowledge. Diotima's part in Symposium would lead us to accept the dialectics Plato brought in through her evidently facilitate thinking over gender aspects. Sheffield maintains that Plato tried to evoke the situatedness of the gender by recognizing the importance of embedding the philosophical thinking within socially articulated spaces that are dominated by men. Identifying the situatedness that the knowing subjects itself gives us much space to make the gender issues involved in the process of making knowledge. The interlocutors are not innocent and waiting outside the violations of language and culture, but they had all kinds of arrogance to face a woman. Diotima brings in the genealogy of love meant by *Eros* is the love for truth. Socrates also joins in developing this concept by arguing human beings who produce knowledge also attains eudaimonia just like the people who produce offspring for that purpose. *Eros* and eudaimonia are not only physical aspect but mental or conceptual basically.²³ The arguments in Symposium around these topics would allow the interlocutors to do in-depth scrutiny of the existing prejudices on gender, love, value, truth etc.

The prominent part that makes history in the philosophical canon is the dialectical engagement that Diotima did with interlocutors for placing physical pregnancy and metal pregnancy equally relevant to attain *eudaimonia*. The dialectics on *eros*, goes on to the themes of pregnancy, midwifery and birth, to validate women and men both could be pregnant in soul or in body. Those who are pregnant in soul could create wisdom and virtue, and they are also humans who could thus attain eudaimonia regardless of gender. Pregnancy is categorized as

²¹Sheffield, 2023.

²²Adamson, 2023.

²³Plato, Symposium, Trans. Christopher Gill, Penguin Classics, 1999, Penguin Books, London.

female, but the philosophical point is that physical pregnancy is a much larger phenomenon, which covers human creativity of all kinds. This is grounded in clarifying genus and species correctly, and is made more explicitly about *eros* as the desire for knowledge about truth. As Sheffield noted down there is no sublimation in this account of sexual *eros* onto *eros* for knowledge and so on; nor is *eros* for the intelligible form of a metaphor. The whole of desire for good things and happiness is *eros* (205d1-2).²⁴ It is also notable that the mythical stories about the birth *Eros* from resourceful Poros and resourceless Penia, being discussed by Diotima in a different way.

However, the critical issue from feminist point of view then is to identify the risk involved in conclusions that would hold philosophical thinking is beyond gender. The discussions on topics such as moral education, reproduction, beauty, pregnancy, midwifery, giving birth etc. are going on to prove the philosophical thinking is beyond gender or gender-neutral. Though both ideas are problematic according to the modern and postmodern feminist critical thinking, these were very strong interventions that can happen in the patriarchal symposiums in ancient Greece. Though Diotima's existence as a real woman is in question, we could find a real woman named Hypatia in Neo-Platonic period. Her writings are lost due to the rivalry from religious power against her intellectual freedom that enlightened many young people to become non-believers during that time. This shows the patriarchal power structures existed from antiquity through religion and later through developing social and moral institutions such as democratic State, judiciary, academy and family, in Western countries.

Feminist Philosophers' Engagements in Modern Western Thought: Some Excerpts

Though there are references about women in philosophy engaging with the so-called fathers of modern rationalist philosophy in early modern period, they didn't enter the canon. All those women who have been systematically excluded from philosophical thought were brought into books as feminist women philosophers in late modern time. This was done by women at various philosophy departments who consciously made feminist arguments to address the androcentrism in the discipline. Noted modern philosophers recorded are many, but Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) and Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) are taken here as examples for discussing the contributions by women philosophers in modern time. Since the dominant discussion ever in moral philosophy caused women being perceived as ethical and moral carriers, it is essential and suitable to take the contributions of women thinkers in the field of moral philosophy to make a feminist analysis. According to feminist thinkers, the major discussions of morality during the rationality dominated modern world never tended to be gender sensitive. In a way it developed a more severe patriarchy than that seem to have existed in ancient moral philosophy and social organization.

Feminist philosophers have criticized the historical exclusion of women from the philosophical tradition, through their engagement with various areas of thought systems. Many modern women thinkers worked with philosophy departments in

²⁴Sheffield, 2023, p.30.

the global West have developed metaphysical, epistemological and ethical philosophy. It is notable that the area of ethics had been a great concern for women thinkers as it affected the worldview and thus the everyday life. Feminist philosophers thought that more deliberations are mandatory on the dominant moral philosophy, as the patriarchal ethical dimensions were always around women human beings, historically making them responsible for any moral flaws within the social institutions. Women are always conceived as the vehicles of morality in cultures and societies due to these basic concepts. If we take a look at the contributions of women philosophers during modern times, we could see they initially wrote with regard to ethics by developing feminist ethics. Mary Wollstonecraft and Simone de Beauvoir as important thinkers among the most known feminist philosophers in modernity, made their interventions and initial writings in the area of ethics. Wollstonecraft discussed the rights of women and de Beauvoir analyzed the contemporary male ethicists to develop a feminist ethics by writing her first book *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947).

Traditional philosophy would doubt whether feminist ethics had any philosophical basis at all. Then what is defined as philosophical and non-philosophical is another question that should be thought about. A revisit into the areas/branches of philosophy, and methods of philosophizing is entailed in the discussion of feminist ethics. An investigation into the women in philosophy, who ventured into the introduction and perpetuation of feminist philosophy, ethics constitute the major feminist version of philosophizing. The historically acclaimed traditional version of ethical theorization is being questioned by feminist philosophers of ethics, for its arguments of reason and justice. Thus, feminist ethics becomes critical as well as creative, to include emotion, interdependence, vulnerability etc. to bring out an ethics of care, instead of an ethics based on reason and universality as defined by traditional ethicists. Gardner, in her book *Women Philosophers* (2003) has elaborated on the dominant model of moral philosophy which was traditionally developed by the moral concerns of particular class of men known in philosophy.²⁵ She also explains the exclusion of women from the history of philosophy and the social pressures and limited access to educational and publishing possibilities that would have made women philosophers invisible. While modern women philosophers started intervening into the traditional ethical issues with reference to their own excluded status, they developed the area of feminist ethics.

Miller opines that, even when purporting to be universal in scope, much of Western ethics has been falsely so.²⁶ Ethical theories answer two key questions about our shared moral lives. They ask basic questions as what ought to do and how should one live etc. The critical endeavour of feminist ethics analysed how other ethical theories recommend acting and living in ways that both fail to detect and contribute to the oppression of women. The creative endeavour of feminist ethics can take the next crucial steps of determining how we ought to act and how we can live well through specifically feminist methods. Feminist ethical theories describe right action and good character in ways that express distinctly feminist values. The creative aim of feminist ethics is ultimately to imagine and create the mechanisms to overcome women's oppression. In the project of feminist ethics we can find various streams as virtue ethics, care ethics, liberal feminist ethics,

²⁵Gardner, 2003.

²⁶Miller, 2017.

transnational ethics, relational ethics, Intersectional ethics etc.

Mary Wollstonecraft who lived in the period of eighteenth-century enlightenment in Europe, is found as the first person who tried to write about women's rights and initiated feminist ethics. But her version of feminist ethics was also a kind of virtue ethics as that was articulated in the noted work *Nicomachean Ethics* by Aristotle, the main fore-father of ethics in Western philosophy. So, it was after about twenty centuries, a woman proclaimed the rights of women through her writings. The book *A Vindication of Rights of Women*, published by Wollstonecraft in 1792 made a revolution in ethics, and highlighted some roots for a feminist ethics during the era of much celebrated Kantian ethics in Europe. Kant was developing his moral philosophy, by his notable books *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788, known as the second *Critique*), *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790, the third *Critique*) and *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797). Feminist ethics of Wollstonecraft started with an analysis of subjugation and oppression faced by women, a concept that never has been the subject matter of traditional philosophy. But she was never listed as an enlightenment philosopher among those who thought and wrote during the so-called Eighteenth-century Enlightenment era.

Virtue ethics of Wollstonecraft differed from the Aristotle's virtue ethics in this sense of neglect on oppressions in society that denied rights of women. But she refers the point of self-love from Aristotle and propounds a kind of virtue ethics and it is an all-encompassing moral theory which holds that the best life for individuals is commensurate with a good society and good family. Interestingly enough self-interest and our public duties are argued as identical and not at odds when we realize what is truly good for ourselves and for others. "Wollstonecraft's argument for a moral friendship between man and woman becomes the main contribution to develop a feminist ethics that would solve the oppressed state of being experienced by female entities. The political, social, economic, and personal equality of women would be assured by such feminist version of ethics of self-interest and ethics of friendship that were even misunderstood as narcissistic in studies on classical virtue ethics of Aristotle. Though Aristotle considered women as incapable of reasoning and thus inferior to men, Wollstonecraft utilized his concept of self-interest to upgrade women's self-confidence to make sure on the justice they themselves were denied. The element of self-love as a virtue for all human beings would upgrade the status of women who exercise such ethical stance, according to Wollstonecraft."²⁷

Wollstonecraft discussed the leading moral philosophers of her time especially Kant, Hume and Rousseau extensively. According to her, the prominent ethical theories as deontology of Kant and utilitarianism developed by Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) did only very limited analysis of systems of oppression. Though the book *The Subjection of Women* [(1869) 1970] by John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) is a noteworthy exception that proposes for the equality of the sexes, (he wrote it with his wife, Harriet Taylor Mill.) philosophers' general neglect of oppression is to be criticized. This issue of insensitivity towards lifeworld experiences of oppression and discrimination might be due to the fact that those who wrote the texts of the Western

²⁷Holt, 2021.

philosophical canon were mainly men and they were rarely subjected to oppression themselves. Their lifeworld was different from those of women who experienced subjugation and so they never could theorize the ethical issues properly addressing all kinds of human entities.

Perspectives on ethics were developed by philosophers with no gender sensitivity, and that has facilitated the making of society patriarchal and social mores as misogynist. This issue has been discussed by the feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir in modern time, by posing the very ontological questions on ethical discussions. She critically refers Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard and Sartre for deriving a feminist version of existentialist mode of ethics, and proceeds to refer Husserl for defining ethics on her own way. She has elaborated critical points on the existing ethical explanations by philosophers, to expound new forms of ethics. During her existentialist phenomenological enquiry and ethical interpretations, she wrote on the moral norms prescribed by the societies as anti-woman to compile a book, *Ethics of Ambiguity*, a long philosophical essay first published in 1947. Simone de Beauvoir raised a main objection against existentialism that the precept 'to will freedom' is only a hollow formula and offers no concrete content for action'.²⁸ According to her there is an ethics, only if there is a problem to be solved. With this statement de Beauvoir invokes Hegelian 'displacement' to understand ethics, but draws a critique on the 'aufheben' which could be understood as transcendence or rejection. She asserts the importance of being in the world instead of rejecting it, and accepting the ambiguity involved in it. Beauvoir's ethics establishes the responsibility of being in the life world, not only as a valuable choice but also as the genuine freedom. The moral freedom is in order to create the space for an authentic morality capable of being realized within the situational relationships which is the characteristic of the human condition. The trap of transcendence towards an absolute is problematized by her by showing the ambiguity in defining ethics simply rationally on the basis of universals. This kind of an ethics enable us to understand the issues between individual and collective cases of oppressed and the oppressor.²⁹

But the later initiatives in feminist ethics turned to be taking up the situational relationship aspect of Beauvoir into another concept of relationality in the late 1980s. The rise of relational ethics as a prominent step within feminist ethics, was initially in conjunction with the works of different female philosophers such as Nel Noddings. In an analysis of women's moral decision-making in the 1980s that turned into a book named as *In a Different Voice* (1982) by a psychologist Carol Gilligan, claimed that she found a difference in the way men and women perceived moral problems. While women gave prominence to care and empathy for the relationship, men took justice and rights as measure for moral decision making, as per the result of her empirical analysis. Through this she tried to propagate an ethics of care, and that got high momentum and acceptance as feminist ethics. But there are various criticisms within feminist scholars against this kind of feminist ethics which is reassuring the stereotypical gender concepts that conceive femininity as more caring and empathetical while masculinity got conceptualized otherwise. A few years after Gilligan, Nel Noddings published *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and*

²⁸De Beauvoir, 1948:78.

²⁹Maya, 2020.

Moral Education (1984), which provided a deeper analysis into the care concept by identifying people as the care provider and the care receiver along with the processes involved in caring. In this book, Noddings argued that morality requires a sentiment of 'natural care' which she calls as pre-ethical, just like the caretaking that a mother engages in for her child, or a maternal animal for her offspring are equally examples of this natural care.³⁰ Though she concludes that care ethics is applicable and relevant for all regardless of gender, the motherly natural care concept was taken under scrutiny for feminist criticism citing the issues of essentialism, parochialism and slave morality.³¹

With reference to such criticisms her revised version of the feminine approach to ethics, appeared with the renewed subtitle *A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* in 2013, in which she develops the concept of relational ethics within feminist ethics. But relationality theory also undergoes criticisms since relationality and care ethics would raise the issue of autonomy for women themselves who fought for it with feminist philosophy. Marilyn Friedman is an American philosopher, the W. Alton Jones Chair of Philosophy at Vanderbilt University, talks about the issue of autonomy within the relationality theory.³² Relational theorists of ethics find the autonomy as only a matter of degree and of life stages. Human beings are not born autonomous but becomes autonomous through stages of inter-dependence. This fact was not considered as important aspect by the traditional ethicists as Kant who proposed ethical judgments as categorical and thus deontological or duty bound. This kind of rationality based categorical judgements will not assure justice to all human beings according to feminist ethics, especially because it conceived only men as rational beings and thus the authority of moral judgements. Recent developments in feminist ethics are based on relationality of human existence, and such arguments by feminist philosophers also addressed the dominance of rationalist metaphysics and epistemology in the Western history of philosophy.

Women Philosophers in Ancient India: Myth and Reality of the Religious Discourse

Though the academic realm of Indian philosophy doesn't recognize female names, in India there were women in the Vedic period and Buddhist tradition that dates back to 800-1000 BCE.³³ The history of philosophy in India is closely connected to religious scriptures, and women thinkers were also appearing in them. No matter the women behind the female names were myth or reality, the texts of religion is a proof to conclude there were female philosophers in ancient India. Vedas, Upanishads and Epics are depicting female characters who are strongly engaging with philosophical discussions around themes of virtue, duty, ethics, spirituality etc. Various references claim that women sages in India were intellectuals and had engagements with the male counterparts in Vedic and Upanishadic periods. About 30 names of women are there in the Rig Veda itself. There were women

³⁰Noddings, 1984.

³¹Card,1990; Robinson,1999; Davion,1993; Toronto,1994.

³²Friedman,1997.

³³Waithé, Dyken. Eds. 2023.

scholars like Lopamudra, Visvavara, Ghosha, Sikata, Nivavari, Apala, Soorya, Indrani, Urvasi, Sarama, Joohu, Vagambhruni and Poulomi Sachi are well known women, who are revered and are associated with individual Rig Veda *Manthras*.³⁴

In the oldest text of the Upanishads, written around 700 BCE- 1000BCE, excerpts from the philosophical conversations of the female philosophers Gargi and Maitreyi with the sage Yajnavalkya are available. Maitreyi, Gargi and Sulabha were names in Upanishads as intellectual women who engaged debates with male sages.³⁵ Though Gargi and Sulabha as wandering *yogini* or *sanyasinis*, who made arguments with men, Gargi is popularly tied with Maitreyi mentioned as the intellectual wife of Yajnavalkya. It might be because both of them had dialogues with sage Yajnavalkya. But Gargi is as unique as Sulabha mentioned in Mahabharatha, because they were intellectual women who were not householders to be a wife. They were philosophers who devoted to knowledge making, but they never got enough reference in the Vedic and Upanishadic tradition that we include in the discipline of Indian philosophy.

Gargi Vachaknavi, is the daughter of sage Vachaknu, popularly known as a philosopher who composed several hymns that questioned the origin of all existence. In Brihadaranyaka Unpanishad King Janaka of Videha, who is also seen in the later text of epics Mahabharatha, is mentioned as organized a *brahmayajna*, a philosophically oriented ritual around the fire sacrament, and Gargi was one of the eminent participants. There she challenged the sage Yajnavalkya with a volley of perturbing questions on the soul or '*atman*', a main metaphysical idea of Upanishads and later Vedic schools. Gargi's arguments and questions confounded the learned man who had till then silenced many eminent scholars. Her question - "The layer that is above the sky and below the earth, which is described as being situated between the earth and the sky and which is indicated as the symbol of the past, present and future, where is that situated?" - flattened even the great Vedic men of letters.

Ruth Vanitha says Sulabha was mentioned in Rg Veda with a whole *samhitha* in her name, which was later lost. She becomes another example for how the writings of women and the writings on free women were disappeared due to patriarchal power play in making knowledge and documenting history and knowledge.³⁶ 'Sulabha was a peripatetic Indian ascetic yogini who engaged in lengthy philosophical debate with philosopher King Janaka. We do not know precisely when she lived. The account of their discussion is reported in the epic Mahabharata. Their debate covers many philosophical issues including the nature of being, of personhood, of certainty, and of women's capacity for enlightenment. In that regard we find Suhabha arguing that "My body is different from your body. But my soul is not different from your soul..." A complete translation of the debate between philosopher-King Janaka and ascetic yogini Sulabha is included in Ruth Vanitha's writings in the book *Women Philosophers from Non-Western Traditions: The First Four Thousand Years*.³⁷ The anachronism in Sulabha being mentioned in Rg Veda, Upanisad and Mahabharatha would create complexity in believing her as a real woman.³⁸ She is a character appearing in the Epic

³⁴<https://samyuktajournal.in/researching-the-icons-women-seers-in-the-rig-veda/>.

³⁵Mookherji, 1998.

³⁶Vanitha, 2003.

³⁷Vanitha, 2024.

³⁸Ibid.

Mahabharatha who engages in serious dialectal process with King Janaka who was also mentioned in earlier texts of Upanishads. So the existence of both Janaka and Sulabha as real persons could be debated, but the point to be taken here is that the topics of gender in philosophy were introduced through their dialogues.

In the text Mahabharatha that is thoroughly dialogical, Sulabha's greatest contribution is to offer one of the most explicit accounts on how to engage in dialogue with others.³⁹ When She enters as a wandering ascetic woman for the dialogue with Janaka, he asks her humiliating questions about ethnic background and family status. Her gender becomes a topic for insulting her with a doubt on her intellect to engage in dialectics and she was publicly put down by the King before starting the dialogue. But her arguments that perplexed his thoughts obliged him to accept the female thinker, though he tried initially to degrade her in the name of social status and identity. Without giving a direct response to the King's insulting questions, Sulabha argues that there should be a structured way to engage in debates between interlocutors. By doing so, she points out towards an ethics of conversation. She also demonstrates that how one thinker makes an argument is part of what measures one's knowledge claims.⁴⁰ Brian Black maintains that her arguments address the issues related to the experiences of women.⁴¹ He opines that what Sulabha says is a genuine female perspective and relevant to remember the way we understand women philosophers in Indian context. If Sulabha was a real woman or just a character, is irrelevant question since it gives us thought provoking ideas of engendered ethics and methods of dialectics. Myth and reality would not make a difference since Indian philosophy in antiquity revolves around mythical stories in texts of religion. It is the same case with knowledge making and imparting methods worldwide, that they listen to mythical or folkloristic stories to follow the ideas given by characters in them. So Sulabha's dialogues that flourish on rhetoric, ethics, gender, worldly life, renunciation and spirituality etc. would definitely make her enter into the canon of Indian philosophy.

Though the chronology would seem to be vague in locating Vedas and Upanishads, numerous arguments provide an idea to fix them at least one thousand years before Common Era. With similar questions of historical timing, Buddhist women thinkers also existed in history as per references that became available for researchers in recent decades. The first ever written document by women worldwide, is supposed to be the *Therigatha*- a collection of philosophical poems written in Pali language by early Buddhist *Bhikkunis* (Buddhist nuns) known as *Theris*. These women were intense in intellectual level to make critical analysis of worldly life. They sound like strong feminist who left the subordination related miseries in the households joined Buddhist monasteries. There were such women thinkers even from the time of Buddha, and their existence through their writings proves the feminist philosophical thought dating back to the 8th century BCE. There are many names such as Soma, Sumangalamata, Mutta, Uttara, Sujata, Rohini, Vimala, Nandutara, Anopama etc. who have written powerful philosophical analysis on aspects of life through the poems included in *Therigatha*. 'Basic

³⁹Black, 2023.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid, p.41.

Buddhist ideas common to all schools of early Buddhism are obvious in the poems of Therigatha.⁴² The ideas about cosmology, the law of moral cause and effect or rebirth, nirvana, four noble truths, *dhamma*, *pratityasamudpada* are all rectified in the verses of Therigatha. Some readings on the poems explicitly claim that ‘Sumangalamata celebrated the life by becoming a homeless world-renunciation and escaping the pestle and cooking pots of the ‘householder’.⁴³ Soma also fought against conceptions such as the domestication of women and her cooking skill, by attacking the ideas about the ‘two-finger intelligence of women’.⁴⁴ Though not in the position meant of the term ‘householder’ in its feminist critical perspective for which denotation is of man in power, the women who became *Bhikkhunis* obviously entered to renunciation to free them from the ‘household worker’ status of subordination. And this reveals the deep-rooted subjugation of women in family system of Indian culture, no matter what religion they followed.⁴⁵ The same reason is ostensive towards the exclusion of women thinkers from the history of philosophy.

Women Thinkers in Modern India and the History of Social Philosophy

In the modern period, we can identify many women in India who contributed to socio-political philosophy and activities with ideologies for social transformation. They are not recorded as thinkers in the history of socio-political philosophy. Women in India had done their role through their life activities and also by writing down their thoughts. Pandita Ramabai is a social thinker and social reformer lived during 1858-1922, who contributed to Indian philosophy extensively with her activities as well as writings. She did a hermeneutic account of *Manu-Smrti* to ponder her critical views on the anti-woman Hindu customs that are propounded by the text, while fighting with her own life situations spoilt by superstitions of religion. Christian concepts are also debated by her strongly on its patriarchal elements after her conversion to Christianity. She had converted to Christianity in abhorrence with Hindu customs that torture women in many ways at various stages of life through the superstitious ideas. But later she found Christian concepts were also problematic due to its patriarchal nature, that she experienced after her conversion to Christianity and work in England.

She worked for sensitizing people about the Hindu customs that are anti-woman. She pointed out the superstitions about Hindu wives and widows, herself having survived such life experiences. She converted to Christianity with a testimony that ‘there were only two things on which all the sacred Sanskrit texts such as *Dharmasastras*, the epics, the *Puranas*, and the modern poets, the popular preachers of the present day and orthodox high-caste men, were agreed. That is, women of high and low caste were bad, worse than demons, unholy that they could not get *Moksha* as men could.⁴⁶ Ramabai proclaimed that *Manu-Smrti* is one of the best

⁴²Pollock, 2015, p.xxiv.

⁴³De Lamotte, Meeker, et al. 1997.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Subrahmanian, 2015.

⁴⁶Chakravarty, 1998.

examples for scriptural attempt to make women hateful beings in the eyes of the world. It is true to any feminist critical analysis that the ancient Hindu texts have influenced the mind-set of people to conceive the gendered entities, and to prescribe woman as only there to serve the man. The famous quotes such as ‘*na sthree svathanthryamarhathi*’ (woman doesn’t deserve freedom) from *Manu-Smrti*, the text known as the handbook of law and order in India, are still being celebrated in modern society and even at the wedge of postmodernism.⁴⁷ Ramabai looked at this text to see how women are given low status in Hindu religion. With reference to the text, we will find many verses to be debated on its tendency to fix the woman’s status as domesticated, secondary and subordinated to men.⁴⁸

Ramabai who wandered around the world then to discuss women’s low status caused by religious ideas, irritated the church authorities. They couldn’t justify Ramabai’s rationally philosophical approach towards Christianity and the way she argued about how religion oppressed women. The question of propriety of Ramabai teaching English men was merely a façade for the religious authorities to question her. They feared the status of ‘professor’ might go to Ramabai, and it would make more difficulty to control her. There was a great anxiety also that Christianity would lose its hold over her while she returned to India from England. But she concentrated more for working with educating women and changing the community in which she was born and suffered as widow. For raising fund to do those works she travelled to America and engaged herself in lecturing and writing on issues of gender in religion-oriented societies, though Anglican missionaries were ambivalent to her trip.

In 1882 Ramabai had come to Pune and founded the *Arya Mahila Samaj*, just before her departure to England for conversion to Christianity.⁴⁹ It was the same year Tarabai Shinde, published ‘*Stri-Purusha Tulna*’ (A Comparison of men and Women) to debate the inequalities that women suffered in Indian religious societies. Tarabai also vehemently criticized the texts of religion that controlled the thinking capacity of women. Omvedt declares the works of Ramabai and Tarabai as early Indian feminism, and asserts that it was due to their efforts there was a beginning of education for girls in India.⁵⁰ Tarabai Shinde's *A Comparison between Women and Men*, written in Marathi originally and published in 1882, provides us with one example of such a woman's voice, speaking directly and passionately on the ways in which she saw men in colonial society as having silenced and disempowered Indian womenfolk.⁵¹

Nevertheless, Tarabai was born into a middle-class family, she got education and some exposure to address social hierarchy of caste, religion and gender. While learning to read and write in Sanskrit, Hindi and at least the mother-tongue was not easy for a girl during her time in modern India, she experienced that freedom and thus worked for other women too. She was vigilant in social reform activities along with Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule who initiated the social reform movement *Satyashodhak Samaj*. They established a school of untouchables in

⁴⁷Maya, 2008.

⁴⁸See, Subrahmanian, 2015 and Maya, 2008.

⁴⁹Omvedt, 2006:26.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹O'Hanlon. 1994.

1848. Tarabai and Ramabai worked to start a shelter and education for upper-caste young widows during the same decade. It is to address the pathetic life condition of huge number of young Brahmin widows who were not allowed to remarry or pursue any other interest as education and employment.

The social reform activities resulted from the thinking and speaking faculty of women philosophers were concealed in the history compilation in India due to patriarchal religion and culture. Women thinkers such as Ramabai and Tarabai put forward radical views as they debated on various factors that oppress women. They attempted to make women visible by making conceptual dialogues in the society and working along with various other women socio-political activists who never got listed in any documented history of social philosophy. These women have done their best works that would free women individuals to think and live outside subordinated situations in institutional structures of household, caste, class, ethnicity, region, religion, culture etc. Unlike the Western countries, India being a country with such multiple factors of intersectionality that would play with gender inequality in social organizations, thinkers would have to identify that in philosophizing.

Observations

It is obvious that the women thinkers worldwide contributed immensely into the intellectual realm, but were excluded from the philosophical canons. The reason for the exclusion also doesn't require any proof than the fact that the historical developments of philosophical thinking were compiled and recorded by male thinkers only. The power dynamics that play at multiple levels to exclude and subjugate women in the social life are evident in the realm of making knowledge as well. Even if philosophy is an academic area to think over anything and everything, it seems the thinkers and academics consciously avoided the thought on social inequality based on gendered hierarchy. Any analysis that will enable us to clarify the androcentrism in the field of philosophy, would also facilitate us to understand the issue of exclusion of women worldwide from the philosophical enterprise. The omission of women philosophers in documented philosophy is explained by the feminist philosophers in the West during recent decades. They took it as their responsibility to document female thinkers' names and works.

There are many women philosophers in the history of thought systems all over the world, and to understand what they thought and wrote about philosophical problems is crucial. In ancient Greece where philosophical thought is supposed to have born in the Western context, we can find many women who existed even before the starting of prominent Socratic period. We could observe many women thinkers along with Pythagoras, though they didn't have their own identity than being addressed as Pythagorean women. These women engaged with discussion on life and household matters by philosophically treating them to derive ethics and moral laws. Though they are depicted as women who are experts in household as well as intellectual activities, it is important to take note of their existence. Then we could see many names including Aspasia and Diotima in Socratic period who debate over various concepts including gender, as interlocutors in the dialogues of Plato.

In Indian context, there are many women from Vedic and Upanishadic texts, who we find as initial philosophers engaged with intellectual pursuit. Among them Sulabha and Gargi prove to be philosophers who did debates with reference to liberation and led their life in intellectually spiritual engagements. Sulabha is different from the other women characters who were depicted as wives or mothers of any sage or King, as she was a wandering *yogini* or *sanyasini* (female ascetic) who immerse in philosophical arguments. Gargi is popularly tied with Maithreyi who is mentioned as the intellectual wife of Yajnavalkya. It might be because of the references that both of them had dialogues with sage Yajnavalkya. But Gargi is as unique as Sulabha mentioned in Rg-Veda and Mahabharatha, for she lived as individual and intellectually spiritual woman. They were philosophers who devoted to knowledge making, but they never got enough reference in the Vedic and Upanishadic tradition that we include in the discipline of Indian philosophy. Early Buddhist *Bhikkunis* who wrote *Therigatha* were not like the spiritual characters of women earlier depicted from the Vedic and Epic texts in Indian Hindu tradition. They were mostly women who came out of the householders' pestle to free them to the liberated state. They wrote on such subjugated states of women in the households with mundane worldly life no matter they belonged to which religion.

We could find a comparative element in the ancient women thinkers of the West and East. Diotima during Socratic period also brings in the topic of liberation of women in her dialectics as the ancient Indian female thinkers did. And it is noteworthy that she takes the discussion into a philosophy beyond gender, as the way Sulabha did. Both these women philosophers, though appeared as characters in books, proposes the possible existence of women thinkers and the gender discussions in ancient time, in a way suggesting to transcend the gender and be spiritual. The style of arguments they make are of dialectics and the contents in the dialogues are to be understood as a call for gender equality as well as liberation for women. This liberation is akin to the spiritual state that could be attained by women too which was denied to them in any religion conceptualized by male world. Sulabha questions the prominent Indian scriptural argument that women would attain *Moksha* or salvation only with their husband by serving them. Diotima questions the pregnancy concept and *eudaimonia* by arguing that pregnancy is not just physical but it could be intellectual and thus of producing wisdom. Both these women seem to be subscribing spiritual and intellectual existence of women, by marking a similar path of renunciation among women philosophers from East and West.

Diotima and Aspatia from ancient Greek philosophy, Gargi and Sulabha from ancient Indian philosophy, prove to be dialecticians who contributed into metaphysical and spiritual matters in philosophy. These women were highly engaged with dialectical and rhetoric arguments with male philosophers. Dialectics being the first ever philosophical method, it is tangible that women thinkers also subsidized into that enterprise. If we check with the women thinkers in modern western philosophy, we can see many philosophers who thought and wrote on the diversified areas such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics etc. Women philosophers who dealt with ethics and developed feminist ethics are important to be noted especially because women are always conceived as the carriers of

morality proposed by patriarchy in various societies worldwide. These women philosophers questioned the existing normative moral philosophy by declaring and rejecting them as gender insensitive rationality-based theories developed by men protagonists. Though they followed some sort of virtue ethics established by the philosophical fathers and fore-fathers, they have developed their own ethical concepts that would address social issues of inequality and injustice that women face due to the existing patriarchal moral concepts prevailing even in the modern society. Later modern women thinkers are bringing out new versions of relational ethical philosophy where autonomy and inter-dependence are conceptualized differently. Along with relationality the multiple forms of patriarchy with reference to religion, region, class, caste, ethnicity etc. are being addressed by feminist socio-cultural philosophy.

In Indian context we cannot find much early modern women thinkers from specifically philosophy departments, though recent decades witness writings on feminist philosophy. The nineteenth century social reform activists such as Ramabai and Tarabai are illustrations of the way in which religion oriented patriarchal philosophy in India was questioned by women. These women wrote critical notes on the scriptures that are counted as the basis of Indian philosophy. It is noteworthy that the modern India and ancient India witnessed women attacking the scriptural misogyny to develop gender sensitive philosophy. The ancient women thinkers both in Greece and India would seem to be debating over spirituality to suspend the aspects of binary conceptions such as mind Vs body and man Vs woman. Same issue is discussed in a different method by modern feminist philosophers to reject the dominant rationalist thought of dichotomy developed by male protagonists.

Concluding Remarks

Women thinkers who existed during various historical periods worldwide were never noticed, even by the academic public, since the power of making knowledge and recording it was all in the hands of men, just as was the case with other forms of power. The central issue of this article was that all compilations on the history of philosophy had been inherently patriarchal, since they systematically excluded the significant contributions of women thinkers. The article justifies the need for a critical re-evaluation and rewriting of this history of philosophy, to integrate the marginalized voices and to address the androcentrism within the discipline. In essence, the article serves as a feminist critique, advocating a more inclusive and accurate representation of philosophical history that acknowledges and values the intellectual contributions of women, thereby challenging the male-centric narratives that have dominated the field. Feminist socio-political philosophy initiates the conceptual discussion of the patriarchal history of philosophy that eliminated women thinkers in its documentation. Though women philosophers of all historical periods have contributed in various branches of philosophy such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics etc., their names are not included in the documentation of history of philosophy. This was criticized by feminist philosophers in recent centuries and attempts are still ongoing to document women thinkers and include them into the canons.

This article attempted an analysis on the contributions of some female philosophers

by placing them in the particular historical and geographical contexts to facilitate the interpretation of patriarchy in the documentation of the history of philosophy. This was done by referring mainly the contributions by two women thinkers from each ancient and modern time philosophy in the West and the East. Aspatia and Diotima from ancient Greece, Sulabha and Gargi from ancient India, Wollstonecraft and Beauvoir from modern Western context, Tarabai and Ramabai from the modern Indian context, delivered the points of discussion in this article. These women philosophers are discussed in a limited way and some later interventions of female thinkers in the area of feminist ethics are mentioned as examples to justify the relevance of feminist philosophy and to address the issues of their exclusion from history of philosophy. In-depth analyses of these female thinkers and the areas they deliberated are still to be investigated.

The commencement of Women's Studies and Gender Studies as academic departments, brought up the feminist critics from various disciplines, but women philosophers are still absent from various lists. This fact reminds us the urgency to revisit the curriculum of academic philosophy and to include the works of women philosophers. The philosophy of late modern feminists and postmodern thinkers is getting some attention in recent past to develop insights and critics on ethical, ontological and epistemological aspects in the interdisciplinary research realm. Still, there is a need to consciously connect them to philosophy departments by rewriting the history of philosophy to place the women philosophers from all time periods to make them enter the canons. Interventions by feminist philosophers into the contents and methods of patriarchal traditional philosophy would definitely bring a change in making the history of philosophy gender sensitive.

It is quite evident from various references recovered in recent decades that women in the history of philosophy engaged with their contemporary male thinkers and took part in philosophical debates with them who were prominent during their times. Thus, they developed feminist philosophy which has abundant resources to explore the existing scopes of philosophy such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and aesthetics, along with further critical analytical methodologies. And the discussions of socio-political philosophy cannot avoid the philosophy of feminism and gender, to analyze social phenomena including injustice based on religion, region, ethnicity, class, caste etc. This article engrossed in discussing these issues by citing some excerpts from the works done by women thinkers during different historical stages. Still more attempts are to be made by philosophers to take part in the process of addressing the exclusion of women philosophers from the history of philosophy, by tracing their works and conversing with their thoughts.

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The Divine Animal. Denaturalisation of the ‘Human’ and the Construction of the Animal ‘Other’

*By Jorge Hernando Pacheco Gómez**

Some pre-psychoanalytic proposals by Friedrich Nietzsche describe cruelty and fear as the Western principles of humanisation. Consequently, through negation, the identity of an animal ‘Other’—non-human, feared, and devalued—is constructed. Within this animal are represented the natural and instinctual values from which the human being distances itself. Through the ‘material and symbolic’ death of that animal, the human is constructed and exalted. According to the German thinker’s psychological formulations, a transvaluation of the Western principles of humanisation is necessary in order to preserve that which, as life, reveals to us the Real and divine dimension of our animality.

Keywords: *forgetting, memory, drive, culture, animal.*

Introduction

Human beings have often been defined as animals—whether rational, political, or metaphysical. However, each of these attributes that accompany and distinguish the ‘human-animal’ are in fact expressions, manifestations, or elaborations of what we call ‘culture’. Thus, if we are to reduce the human to a ‘cultural animal’, the following questions arise: What can we understand by culture? What does it mean for an animal to have culture? And in what way can animality generate culture?

The German philosopher and writer Vanessa Lemm revisits Friedrich Nietzsche’s thought to address these questions. According to the author:

In contrast to the Western traditions of Humanism and the Enlightenment, Nietzsche sets out to investigate culture not as a rational and moral phenomenon, but as a phenomenon of life. From this perspective, culture is not interesting because it serves as a means through which humanity separates or emancipates itself from animality, as these traditions often assume, but because it is permeated by animality.¹

This inversion, present in Nietzsche’s work and highlighted by Vanessa Lemm, allows us to understand ‘reason’ and ‘morality’ as phenomena of culture, not as its origin. Likewise, culture appears to be permeated by an animality that overflows and surpasses it.

Distancing himself from both biologicist and spiritualist perspectives, Nietzsche seeks to overcome the anthropocentric rationalism of religion, morality, and science—

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¹Vanessa Lemm. *La filosofía animal de Nietzsche*, Cultura, política y animalidad del ser humano. (Santiago de Chile: Universidad Diego Portales, 2010), 16

frameworks from which culture has been conceived as detached from animal life. This point of view, referred to by Margot Norris as “biocentric,”²; This perspective promotes, in the German thinker, an antagonistic differentiation between ‘culture’ and ‘civilization’.

The inversion that Nietzsche proposes as “his great work” was announced in 1882 as “the death of God,” in the voice of the madman, *Der tolle Mensch*, in aphorism 125 of *The Gay Science*. A year later, it would be Zarathustra, the prophet of God's death, who would proclaim this death and the beginning of his path of transvaluation.

The isomorphism between that announced purpose and his biocentrism should not be seen as a mere inversion of values that preserves the same structure, merely reversing its direction or meaning. Nietzsche does not deny the greatness of human reason, nor of the achievements of culture and civilization. While the Enlightenment tradition and positivism regard the human being as legislator and judge of nature, Nietzsche seeks to dissolve this dualism, observing and describing the human—all too human—as driven by instinct, with his animal nature speaking politely through him.

I have divided this essay into three main parts, each corresponding to the three questions posed at the end of the first paragraph of this introduction. Thus, in the first part, I address the question of what we can understand by culture, presenting Nietzsche's antagonism between culture and civilization. The second part aims to analyze what it means for an animal to have culture, seeking to understand and overcome the aforementioned antagonism. The third part aims to explain how animality can generate culture. Here, the concept of the ‘divine animal,’ as formulated in the title, is introduced, in the context of the genealogical interrelation between animality, forgetting, and memory.

This research is inscribed within a broader dialogue with the intellectual currents of the nineteenth century, acknowledging that Nietzsche's critique of the denaturalization of the human has profound antecedents in idealist philosophy as well as in the romantic sciences of the period. Although Nietzsche's project of transvaluation stands as singular, it is nevertheless rooted in a rich tradition that had already inaugurated the search for the “divine animal” in the interplay between soul and nature.

Man: A Sick Animal? What does it mean for an Animal to have Culture?

In the first part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883), Nietzsche presents a situation in which his prophet, out of love for mankind, descends from the mountain to announce the overman; however, faced with the scorn and laughter of the people, he preached:

Must their ears be broken first, so that they may learn to hear with their eyes? Must one thunder like kettledrums and preachers of penance? Or do they only believe those who

²Vanessa Lemm takes up several arguments from the book *Beasts of the Modern Imagination*. In it, Margot Norris refers to this new approach to culture—one that begins from the perspective of life—as “biocentric”; a biocentric tradition of thinkers, writers, and artists (including Nietzsche), who do not create by imitating the animal, or in the manner of the animal, but rather create as animals themselves, with their animality taking the floor, giving voice.

stammer? They have something of which they are proud. What do they call that which fills them with pride? They call it 'culture'—it is what distinguishes them from goatherds. That is why they do not like to hear the word contempt applied to them. So I will speak, then, to their pride.³

At the time when Zarathustra was born, Nietzsche speaks of a revelation, through which his previous approach to biology and positivism was overshadowed by the brilliance of his idea of the 'eternal recurrence'. From this new perspective, the image of unity and law that religion and science aimed to find in nature is lost in the face of a chaotic nature, filled with multiple emanations of the will to power, which Nietzsche calls *Trieben* (drives) and *Instinkt* (instincts).

These emanations, as expressions of the will to power, strive to become more, to affirm and increase their power through the domination of other emanations; this view of nature presents it as a stage of constant struggles and confrontations among all forms of life, leading to a continuous pluralization of substantially singular ways of life. As a result, for Nietzsche, every cell of every organism is a living memory of the struggles and dynamics that preceded it. In this way, in his conception of 'culture', Nietzsche distances himself from spiritualism, avoiding the anthropomorphic references of science and religion; but also from materialism, avoiding a biologicism that would reduce culture to a mere means of species preservation. In both cases, the German thinker highlights a disconnection between culture and animal life.

Nietzsche's concern with the "denaturalization of the human" does not arise in an intellectual vacuum; rather, it is inscribed within a critical dialogue with the philosophical and scientific currents of the nineteenth century. Although the radicality of the *Umwertung aller Werte* is singular, the problem of the relation between the human and the animal had already been explored by German Idealism and the Romantic sciences. For instance, the work of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling and of theorists of the unconscious such as Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert and Carl Gustav Carus had already laid the foundations for a conception of the human psyche not confined to consciousness. Carus, in particular, regarded the unconscious as the great "mystery" underlying being and life.

This approach had already generated a worldview which, as Albert Béguin underscores in his work *The Romantic Soul and the Dream*, sought the laws that "govern the outer world and the inner life of consciousness," thereby creating an "analogical conception between universe and soul" so fully elaborated that it even "preceded the lyrical adventure" (Béguin, 2015, 2). This Romantic intuition of a profound unity between cosmos and soul, and of the imagination's capacity to access transcendent truths, resonates with Nietzsche's proposal. In this sense, Nietzsche's wager is not that of a creator *ex nihilo*, but rather that of a continuator who radicalizes the Romantic legacy, reorienting the notion of the unconscious and of the Dionysian toward a genealogical critique of those values that obstruct vitality.

³Although for the works in German I rely on the most accepted Spanish translations, I also refer, preferably, to the editions in their original language. In this case, Nietzsche's quote in German does not speak of culture in the literal sense of the word *Kultur/Cultura*, but rather of *Bildung*, formation, as a process, cultivation, related to the word *Bild*, image." Friedrich Nietzsche. "Zarathustra's Vorrede, 5" en *Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen. [Erster Teil]* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), 6.

In the aforementioned quote from Zarathustra, 'culture' is a source of pride in men, and is referred to with the term *Bildung*, showing its formative character, as a process, the image of oneself that is constructed and cultivated. The impulses from which culture has emerged are not sympathy, compassion, or benevolence; there are two principles or impulses that operate in the emergence or rise of morality. The first impulse is fear—it belongs to the primitive phase of morality, the longest stage of our development; from this stage, fear is imprinted as a mark and remains throughout the subsequent development. Fear appears in two of man's relationships: first, in relation to nature, and second, in relation to other individuals. Fear arises in the face of the unknown, that which cannot be foreseen or controlled, that which presents itself as a threat.

Nietzsche explains that this persistence of fear in our later development is due to the fact that it acts as a fundamental instinctive mechanism, aimed at preventing variations or changes regarding situations that have already been dominated and stabilized, both in relation to nature and to others. These controlled and stabilized situations are customs; therefore, they constitute the primitive content of morality and culture. It is common to find a primitive tendency in morality, still widespread, that seeks to avoid or even fight against anything that deviates from custom, from the norm, from the rule, from traditional values. Thus, fear is one of the main affective sources of herd morality; which is a morality of weakness, of rejection of high, independent spirituality.

Accordingly, it is possible to observe that fear of one's neighbor is more original than love of one's neighbor. Nietzsche states in *Beyond Good and Evil* that:

'Love of one's neighbor' is always something secondary, partly conventional and seemingly arbitrary in relation to fear of one's neighbor. Once the structure of society as a whole seems to have been established and secured against external dangers, it is this fear of the neighbor that creates new perspectives for moral evaluation."⁴

Supposing danger—the cause of fear—could be eliminated, this morality would also be abolished, since it would no longer be necessary! The author adds, a few lines after the previous quote: "Anyone who examines the conscience of today's Europeans will always have to extract the same imperative from the fear of the herds: 'We want that one day there be nothing left to fear!'"⁵

In this sense, the imperative upon which this morality is founded leads to homogenization, to the rejection of difference, to the safeguarding, preservation, and protection of customs, and to a distrust of that with which we are unfamiliar.

Culture functions as memory, which is reproduced through the customs and traditions that shape morality; thus, it becomes inscribed in individuals through a process of training and domestication into the norms and customs of society. This is made possible by instilling spontaneous and instinctive feelings of rejection toward what is bad or different, and spontaneous and instinctive acceptance of what is good, customary, and familiar.

⁴Friedrich Nietzsche. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse, Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft*. JGB 1886., § 201, <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/JGB> (Accessed February 11, 2022)

⁵*Ibidem*.

Therefore, this process of moralization or enculturation is constructed without ideas, without theorizing, or concepts. It is common to observe that we are not drawn to the good through moral concepts; our actions and reactions of attraction or repulsion toward a moral fact occur more swiftly through feelings and affects, in an instinctive and immediate way, than through reflection or reasoning.

The second principle that, according to Nietzsche, allows us to understand how this training takes place, is cruelty. Niemyer explains that “Nietzsche, before making a moral judgment of this principle, seeks to understand it ‘beyond good and evil’, that is, psychologically. Cruelty, for him, is a fundamental characteristic of human nature that can be found in all eras of human history and in all aspects of human culture everywhere.”⁶

In the second book of *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (GM, 1887), Nietzsche offers a set of examples and situations in which the exercise of cruelty has been viewed with pleasure, satisfaction, and exuberance, adorned with picturesque and harmless names. It is not the infliction of pain and suffering itself that generates this attraction to cruelty, but rather the capacity to experience power and dominance over other people, over our surroundings, and even over our own inclinations and instinctive reactions.

Cruelty, together with fear, lies at the foundation of the so-called ‘moral instincts’, which are imprinted and serve as stimulants of memory—from which moral systems and culture emerge. Through cruelty, Nietzsche states: “die Kultur und die Civilisation haben auf die Zucht eines Raubtiers, eines interessanten Tierchens, des Menschen, hingewirkt.” - “Culture and civilization have aimed at the breeding and taming of a predator, an interesting little animal: the human.”⁷ In *Daybreak* (*Aurora*), Nietzsche notes in passing: “A slap to the child, and he will not repeat the action. . .”—pain and cruelty are intense and effective stimulants of memory.

By virtue of this process of enculturation, we incorporate—meaning, we introduce into our bodies—the acceptance and rejection of the values and criteria that society requires of us in order to be part of it. This training, through which we internalize instinctive reactions, operates independently of our will and of our conscious knowledge. Hence the earlier quote, where not even the most refined and hypocritical conscience suspects this process.

This culturally formative function of cruelty and fear operates as a regulatory institution of our good and bad behavior—such as penal punishment. It serves to organize the chaos of other *Trieben* (drives) in the name of collective well-being, through a particular system of customs, so that punishments and new sufferings do not need to be reproduced. The suffering inflicted upon the author of a transgression is a concrete way in which society reminds the individual of the memory of what ought and ought not to be done. In all societies, access to culture—the exit from animality—consists in giving form to chaos, in shaping the chaos of vital impulses and instinctive reactions. Where such impulses remain unshaped and unordered, there is no culture. This shaping occurs in many ways; the coercive method typical of the West is only an error.

⁶Christian Niemyer. *Diccionario Nietzsche*. (Madrid, España: Siglo XXI, 2012), 123

⁷Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche. *Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift*. (Leipzig, Deutschland: Verlag von C. G. Neumann. Digitale Kritische Gesamtausgabe. 1887), I-§11

Nietzsche considers that the fundamental error of the West lies in identifying moralization with denaturalization. What Western morality has done is to separate us from our nature, to oppose—on the basis of Christian and Platonic dualistic prejudices—nature and morality as enemies, conceiving reason, spirit, and morality as a telos, and nature as something to be rejected. Western morality incites denaturalization, the concealment and encryption of instincts. As a result, the modern Western man appears as a divided being, incomplete, unanchored, neurotic, and delusional.⁸

Nietzsche defines man in *Zur Genealogie der Moral* as: “kranker, unsicherer, wechselhafter, unbestimmter als jedes andere Tier, es steht kein Zweifel daran: er ist das kranke Tier” — “sicker, more insecure, more changeable, more indeterminate than any other animal; there is no doubt about it: he is the sick animal.”⁹ Fear, cruelty, along with this denaturalization, turn man into an animal that represents its animality through lack and deficiency, one that condemns its instinct and denies its potential. His sickness presents man as a divided being, a being who represses and buries much of his vitality. Unlike other animals, man feels called to give himself a destiny; he is also an unfixated animal.

Nietzschean Antagonism between Culture and Civilization

Jaspers, despite the disdain that the German philosopher claimed to feel toward human beings, finds it rich and fruitful that man is an unfixated animal. Precisely for that reason, he has the possibility to give himself an origin and a meaning—to produce himself. (Cf. Jaspers 1950, pp. 136–161). It is precisely the use man has made of that faculty which provokes Nietzsche's deepest revulsion. Instead of making something greater of himself, he submits to norms and criteria grounded in the absolute and the ethereal.

The analysis of the possible uses of that faculty leads Nietzsche to affirm, in the words of Vanessa Lemm, that “the formations and transformations of culture and of human-animal life are defined in terms of the fundamental antagonism between culture and civilization.”¹⁰ In one of his notes from the spring–summer of 1888, Nietzsche writes:

“Die Gipfel von Kultur und Civilisation liegen weit auseinander: man hüte sich, über den abgründlichen Antagonismus von Kultur und Civilisation sich zu täuschen. Die grossen Cultur-Momente waren immer, moralisch geredet, Zeiten der Corruption; dem entgegen waren die Zeiten der aufgezwungenen Thierzähmung des Menschen (“Civilisation”) immer Zeiten der Intoleranz gegen die geistig kühneren Naturen. Die Civilisation will etwas anderes als die Kultur: vielleicht etwas Umgekehrtes.”

“The peaks of culture and civilization lie far apart: one should beware of being deceived about the abyssal antagonism between culture and civilization. The great moments of

⁸Friedrich Nietzsche. *Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift.* (Leipzig, Deutschland: Verlag von C. G. Neumann. Digitale Kritische Gesamtausgabe. 1887), III § 21

⁹*Ibidem.*, III § 13

¹⁰Vanessa Lemm. *La filosofía animal de Nietzsche, Cultura, política y animalidad del ser humano.* (Santiago de Chile: Universidad Diego Portales, 2010), 39

culture were always, morally speaking, times of corruption; by contrast, the times of imposed animal taming of man ('civilization') were always times of intolerance toward the more daring and spiritual natures. Civilization wants something different from what culture wants—perhaps even something opposite [etwas Umgekehrtes]."¹¹

Nietzsche mentions a set of characteristics in which Kultur and Zivilisation stand in opposition to one another; they diverge at their peaks, in their aims, and in their grand historical moments. The triebhafte Dynamik previously discussed also allows for a clearer understanding of this antagonism. Kultur and Zivilisation impose themselves upon one another—the culmination of one marks the weakening of the other. Zivilisation regards animality and the boldest and most spiritual natures as its enemies; this intolerance toward their freedoms coincides with the forced domestication of the animal within the human being.

Kultur is defined by Nietzsche as immoral and corrupt; it is free from the "imposed and forced animal domestication" that characterizes Zivilisation. In the great moments of Kultur, it asserts itself over Zivilisation, enabling the freedom of both the animal and the spirit. The opposition between Kultur and Zivilisation positions the latter as the error of an imposed moralization, while Kultur represents the truth in which animal freedom returns within the human. If we revisit this relationship in triebhafte terms, Zivilisation signifies the dominance of the Apollonian—the narcotic, the accepted, the norm, and the dream-state of the animal. Kultur, by contrast, aligns with the Dionysian—the exuberance of life and the intoxication of the animal.

How Animality can Generate Culture. The 'Divine Animal'

Since his well-known lecture of February 1869 in Basel, Nietzsche makes use of the terms Instinkt (instinct) and Trieb (drive or impulse)¹². Instinkte are presented there as natural impulses, inherent in nature, which animate human activities. There is virtually an instinct for every human activity. Reality, in this framework, is attributed to the conflicting diversity of instincts, wherein unity appears as an artificial mixture—a conventional rank of subjective appearance.

In contrast to the minor forces or impulses that constitute instincts, Triebe are presented in Nietzsche's discourse as true foundations and driving forces of universal history; they are, so to speak, the 'great' instincts. As Assoun clarifies:

The defining characteristic attributed is Tiefe (depth). The Trieb is associated with a force that operates subterraneously within the unconscious of peoples. The Instinkt is the calm and continuous form that acts with the perennial rhythm of life; the Trieb, by contrast, is the force of dynamic eruption. Both are Träger und Hebel— supports and levers— of

¹¹Friedrich Nietzsche. *Samtliche Werke in 15 Bänden. Kritische Studienausgabe*, Giorgio Colli y Mazzino Montinari. (Berlin: De Gruyter Verlag, 1988), 10

¹²Trieb and Instinkt are semantically close and similar concepts, yet they are not identical. I consider that their differentiation has been, to a large extent, underestimated and overlooked by many translators. This is particularly significant given that Nietzsche's foundational training was in philology, and one of the central concerns in his work is the genealogical analysis of language and its relation to education, culture, and morality.

appearances. It is philology that turns or makes Nietzsche into a psychologist; what defines his psychology is the ability to perceive the Sprachinstinkt (instinct of speech) as the deepest of all.¹³

This same distinction between Instinkt and Trieb is present in Freudian work from its beginnings; in particular, starting in 1905, it became one of the fundamental concepts of psychoanalytic doctrine. In order to avoid confusion and to highlight the psychic specificity of the human being, Freud distinguished between 'instinct' understood as a tendency, 'an inclination,' 'a primitive and preformed impulse'; and the term Trieb, 'drive,' chosen to designate that libidinal charge which mobilizes the motor and organic activity of man, and which is, in turn, at the source of his unconscious psychic functioning.

That comparison which philological exercise enables Nietzsche to make reveals to the contemporary European his condition as a nihilistic animal, devoid of meaning, metaphysical, estranged from life and the earth, uprooted, fatigued, weak, fragile. In contrast with the ideal of man that prevailed among the Greeks. However, as has already been explained, for Nietzsche, there is nothing innate in the individual; there are only energies that are molded, shaped through a fragile process of enculturation. Both intellect and behavior are the fruits of education. Likewise, both the domestication and imprisonment of Instinkt, and the liberation of its immorality, are formative processes. In 1878, in paragraph 219 of the second volume of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, Nietzsche writes:

On the acquired character of the Greeks. – We are easily seduced by the celebrated brilliance, transparency, simplicity and order, the crystalline naturalness and at the same time the crystalline artificiality of Greek works, into believing that everything was simply given to the Greeks [...] But nothing could be more hasty or unsustainable. The prose history from Gorgias to Demosthenes reveals labor and struggle to emerge from obscurity—chaotic, tasteless, and disordered—into light, in a process reminiscent of heroic labor: paving the first roads through forests and swamps. The dialogue of tragedy constitutes the true creative act of the dramatists, due to its uncommon brilliance and precision, within a popular structure inclined toward symbolism and suggestion, and it was especially educated by the great tradition of lyric poetry.¹⁴

In this work, we observe Dionysus as the prefiguration of the will to power, as the highest prototype of the affirmative exercise of forces. The Dionysian is presented as an affirmation of the general character of life, as that which is equally powerful, equally blessed in all its transformations. The great perfection and compassion of the Greek gods was capable of approving and sanctifying even the most terrible and questionable qualities of life, in the service of an eternal will to procreate, to fecundity, to eternity.

This passage also speaks of the transition the Greeks experienced—from that culture of Homeric or pre-Olympian religiosity, to the Apollonian and civilizing

¹³Paul-Laurent Assoun. *Freud y Nietzsche*, (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1984), 80

¹⁴Friedrich Nietzsche. *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister 1878, zwei Bänder.* § 219. Leipzig: Verlag von E. W. Fritsch. 1886. En: <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/MA-I> (Accessed in October and November 2020)

configuration achieved with the Olympian gods. There is a kind of Apollonisation, in which it became necessary to educate and prefigure the tragic, the dark, and the horrifying aspects of life through rigor and discipline. Nietzsche seeks to decipher why Greek Apollonism had to emerge from a Dionysian clandestinity; he writes in a posthumous fragment from the period of *The Antichrist*:

The Dionysian Greeks needed to become Apollonian—that is, to liberate their will from what is monstrous, manifold, uncertain, and terrible, turning it into a will of moderation, of simplicity, of adjustment to rules and concepts. At the core lies the excessive, the desert-like, the Asiatic: the courage of the Greek consisted in his struggle against his Asiaticism; beauty was not given to them as an inheritance, nor was logic, nor the nature of their customs. All of that they conquered, they desired, they wrestled for—it is their victory.¹⁵

Thus, Nietzsche's transvaluation project, through which he seeks to overcome European nihilism, attends to an increasingly refined and purified understanding of Greek culture, taking it as a point of reference for such overcoming. This understanding is not achieved by Nietzsche through an exclusively philological exercise; the forms of Greek art are, at the same time, reflections of forms of morality—that is, they are ways of evaluating, judging, valuing, acting, and making decisions; they are also attitudes toward life.

In his effort to explore these aspects of the past, Nietzsche identifies the Apollonian and the Dionysian as forms of confrontation and complementarity within Greek art. These are categories constructed by Nietzsche to associate them with two states of the human body: dream and intoxication. By dream, Nietzsche refers here to dreaming—that is, the production of images and representations, appearances, the imaginary. For Nietzsche, those appearances are Apollonian. It must be remembered that Apollo, nicknamed Φοῖβος, is the god of φῶς (light), the god of the Delphic oracle, of the Muses, and, above all, of civilization. Apollo is the creator of juridical and moral systems, of the sciences in general. The Apollonian, therefore, refers to order, clarity, the production of measured elements; and its function is to represent individualized forms or images, as well as to contribute to order and culture.

The category of the Dionysian is entirely different. Dionysus is the god of wine, sexuality, and intoxication. What characterizes him is the state he provoked during the festivals, through music, dance, exuberance, and frenzy. In those states, one experiences the dissolution of the ego, its disintegration, its loss or confusion. Because of this, the Dionysian can give rise to artistic forms different from the Apollonian—such as music, dance, theatre, or mime: non-individualized forms of art.

The Dionysian and the Apollonian, for Nietzsche, are two distinct states that are nevertheless joined. Apollonian and Dionysian creations arise from the same force—a power to create, which is also a power to destroy and disintegrate. It is the same force of life and nature that simultaneously produces beings and causes them to perish. The Greeks, in their pre-Olympian religions—as found in Homer—recognize suffering, pain, and tragedy as fundamental parts of life; in their narratives, the horrors of human

¹⁵Friedrich Nietzsche "Geburt der Tragödie, III" Nachgelassene Fragmente Frühjahr 1888. 14 [14], en: <http://www.nietzschesource.org/eKGWB/index#> (Accessed in February, 2022)

existence are neither hidden nor silenced. From this period, one finds stories of Minotaurs, Gorgons, Cyclopes, and Chimaeras.

To overcome those horrors, the Greeks invented the Olympian religion, providing a transfigured, beautified, and pleasing vision of life. What the Apollonian spirit does is to transfigure human existence, through the Olympian gods, in an artistic and poetic manner—so as to make it acceptable and desirable. The Olympian religion does not cloud, silence, or deny precarity; on the contrary, it exalts it. The Dionysian is as necessary for the Greeks as the Apollonian. The tragedies represent the horror of life—but transfigured and beautified.

The ability to achieve such unity, and to become aware of this complementarity, resides in the fact that—for the German thinker—in the primitive layers of our psyche there exist not only destructive impulses and desires. There also exists what Nietzsche called the “divine animal”: ancient instincts that regulate unconscious and inevitable impulses. These allowed our ancestors not only to survive, but even to flourish amid adverse, unknown, and hostile environments.

The body is one of the central features of Nietzsche’s psychological formulations. His conception is not Körper, but Leib. In it, the body is not an organic, biological entity, but a pulsional one—charged with will and vital impulses. The body is characterized by its material, animal, and earthly nature, in which thoughts, feelings, and emotions intervene—elements that are in constant struggle and superposition. Behind these struggles, unifying those forces, is the body itself; it constitutes a great Self, a Great Reason, and within the body dwells an even greater wisdom.

This pulsional conception of the body is present in psychoanalysis from its origins; it allows Freud to propose a distinction between two notions of reality in German: Wirklichkeit and Realität. The loss of reality to which Freud refers in psychosis is not of effective reality (Wirklichkeit), but of reality as such (Realität). The libido that the psychotic has withdrawn from the world (Realität) is used instead to cover his ego—in his own desire, in effective reality (Wirklichkeit). Because of this, the symptom for the psychotic is delusion and hallucination—that is, where he has deposited his libido, what appears is precisely what he has renounced: the Norm, the order of language, of form—Realität. The neurotic, on the other hand, has deposited his libido into Realität—the reality of language and culture—which has been extracted from the material reality of his own body, from his instincts, his biological nature—Wirklichkeit. That is why it is there, in the place of lack—in his body and in his emotions—that the neurotic later deposits the symptom.¹⁶

In contrast to the foregoing, we find that, for Nietzsche, the modern individual has lost contact with these ancestral instincts—with his own animality and corporeality. His trust has been placed solely in his consciousness, his weakest and most fallible organ. Because of this, the human being stumbles blindly through unconscious life. Yet, as previously mentioned, in the deepest layers of the mind dwell our archaic helpers—those drives of animality and vitality; if he learns how to use them, they may assist him in many of life’s situations where consciousness proves incapable.

¹⁶Pacheco Gómez, Jorge. (2015-04-13) Lectura psicoanalítica de las inmediaciones de lo indecible. Colecciones Escuela de Estudios en Psicoanálisis y Cultura. (Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Sede Bogotá), 60. En: <https://repositorio.unal.edu.co/handle/unal/53352>

This type of man has existed throughout history, having emerged in different places and times as the fruit of luck or fortune. Nietzsche posits that: “There is no linear or unified evolution of humanity; what exists is the evolution of each culture in a becoming marked by interruptions, regressions, and discontinuities—a becoming that pursues no predetermined end, nor obeys any metaphysical purposes.”¹⁷ Therefore, one may indeed find individuals who, within the framework of their respective cultures, constitute higher individuals. The Nietzschean experiment consists in taking that which has appeared as isolated cases, and making it the objective of an educational project.

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¹⁷Nietzsche, Friedrich. Der Antichrist, Fluch auf das Christenthum 1888. § 219. En: Nietzsche Source. Digital Critical Edition (eKGWB). <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/AC> (Consultado en marzo 2022)

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