The Practice of True Philosophers in Plato's *Phaedo*

*Tonguç SEFEROĞLU**

Makale Geliş / Recieved:03.03.2019
Makale Kabul / Accepted:25.06.2019

Abstract

Plato's ideas on the practice of philosophers had highly influenced the way of doing philosophy in the West. Many scholars, ancient and modern alike, have explored Plato's conception of philosophy. This article is yet another attempt to understand the correct manner of doing philosophy for Plato. To this end, I examine Plato's Phaedo to contribute the growing body of literature on Plato's metaphilosophy. This study identifies that the attitude of true philosophers towards body and its pleasures together with their care of the soul separate them from other wise humans, and that true philosophers are aware of the limits of human cognition and epistemic access. I conclude that the practice of philosophers is partly shaped by their recognition of the value of human knowledge and the fallibility of this sort of knowledge.

Keywords: Plato, Phaedo, bodily pleasures, true philosophers, the care of the soul

Platon'un Phaidon'unda Hakiki Filozofların Faaliyeti

Öz

Platon'un filozofların pratiği üzerine düşünceleri Batı'daki felsefe yapma biçimini oldukça etkilemiştir. Antik ve modern pek çok bilim insanı Platon'un felsefe anlayışını araştırmıştır. Bu makale Platon için doğru felsefe yapma biçiminin ne olduğunun anlaşılmasına dair bir başka girişimdir. Bu amaçla, Platon'un meta-felsefesi üzerine yapılmış çalışmalara katkı sağlamak için Platon'un Phaidon diyaloğunu inceleyeceğim. Bu çalışma temelde şunları tespit eder: Hakiki filozofların bedene ve bedensel zevklere dair tavrı ile beraber ruha verdikleri değer, onları diğer bilge insanlardan ayırır ve hakiki filozoflar insanın bilme yetisinin ve epistemik erişimin sınırlarının farkındadırlar. Bu bağlamda, filozofların pratiği insani bilginin değerini ve bu tarz bilginin yanlış olabileceğini kabullenmeleriyle kısmen şekillenmistir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Platon, Phaidon, bedensel zevkler, hakiki filozoflar, ruhun değeri

---

* Öğr. Gör., Ardahan Üniversitesi, Felsefe Bölümü, tongucseferoglu@ardahan.edu.tr.

Künye: SEFEROĞLU, Tonguç. (2019). The Practice of True Philosophers in Plato's Phaedo. *Dört Öge*, 15, 15-36. http://dergipark.gov.tr/dortoge.

1. Introduction

This paper explores the way in which Socrates describes the practice of philosophers in the *Phaedo*. I argue that the true philosopher's willingness-to-die argument (hereafter the Willingness Argument) stresses that true philosophers are aware of the limits of their epistemic access. In this respect, I submit that true philosophers' awareness of the limits (and the fallibility) of human understanding provides a basis for the norms governing philosophical humility.[1]

In explaining philosophical humility, I scrutinize the *Phaedo* 63-69, which is generally entitled Socrates' defence. In this section, Socrates discusses the philosophers' desires, hopes and practice to expound why philosophers are willing to die.[2] The Willingness Argument states that if we desire wisdom and the truth, we ought to care for the soul; hence we ought to remain aloof from the body, its desires and bodily perception as much as possible. This is because, for Socrates, the soul can reason and approach knowledge best in as much as it is separated from the body.

Moreover, I argue that the Willingness Argument is a demarcation criterion which distinguishes a philosopher's practice from other sorts of inquiries. Therefore, the Willingness Argument partially shapes the ideas presented about correct philosophical argument. In a sense, by introducing the Willingness Argument, Plato sets the scene for the description of knowledge and of the method of inquiry.[3]

With the aim of explaining the relationship between the Willingness Argument and the practice of philosophers, I scrutinise Socrates' surprising question, whether Evenus is a philosopher, as Evenus is portrayed as a sophist/poet and an inventor of rhetorical methods, namely in the *Apology* and in the *Phaedrus* respectively. I suggest that Socrates uses the term *philosophos* in a narrow sense, as opposed to the idea that *philosophos* refers to any lover of wisdom in general. I argue that Plato underlines that sophists, whom he usually criticizes and whose practice he considers dangerous, can become philosophers by adopting the norms governed by the Willingness Argument; hence Plato gives a primary role to the Willingness Argument for the practice of philosophers.

In addition, I explore the nature of the embodied and disembodied states of the soul and compare their cognitive powers. I suggest that while the disembodied soul attains wisdom passively and instantaneously, the embodied soul tries to attain

1 What I mean by philosophical humility is to recognize the human cognitive fallibility and to become less confident when there disagreements. On this issue see Chirstensen 2013 and Evnine 2001.

2 Hereafter, when I write "the philosopher" or "the philosopher's practice", I specifically refer to "true philosophers" and "their practice".

3 Plato does not explicitly say that knowledge (τὸ εἰδέναι) and wisdom (φρόνησις) are different. See Phd. 66e1-e6. That said, they seem to differ in that wisdom can be achieved through the knowledge of things themselves. See Phd. 67e4-68a6.

wisdom by actively practicing philosophy. I also submit that although the embodied and disembodied states of the soul are ontologically the same, their cognitive powers are different; hence they are epistemologically different. Their distinctive cognitive powers fashion the ways in which each state of the soul attains wisdom.

2. Becoming a Philosopher

2.1. True Philosophers

I would like to begin by discussing Socrates' message to Evenus. This message introduces the practice of philosophers and the true philosophers' willingness to die. Allow me to quote the passage in which Socrates questions whether Evenus is a philosopher:

'So, Cebes, tell all this to Evenus, give him my best wishes and tell him, if he is in his right mind, to come after me as soon as possible. I leave, it seems, today: so the Athenians command.'

To which Simmias said: 'Fancy recommending a thing like that to Evenus, Socrates! I've often encountered him in the past, and from what

I've seen I imagine there's no way that he will follow your advice willingly.'

'Really?' said he. 'Isn't Evenus a philosopher?'

'I think he is,' said Simmias.

'Then Evenus will be willing, as will everyone who has a worthy claim to this activity. Though perhaps he won't use violence on himself, for they say that it isn't sanctioned' (*Phd*. 61b7-c10)[4].

Socrates presumably expects Simmias to reply that Evenus is a philosopher since his question begins with 'the negative of fact and statement'.[5] In his reply to this query, Simmias says, 'I think he is', although he does not strongly confirm that Evenus is a philosopher.[6] There are two questions to consider: [1] what does Socrates' question aim at, and [2] is Socrates ironical or serious? I suggest that Socrates tries to stress the significance of the Willingness Argument, thus he is serious about the advice that Evenus can become a philosopher if he follows the norms governed by the Willingness Argument.

Before proceeding to examine the Willingness argument, it is necessary to decide in which sense Evenus is called a philosopher; that is, whether Socrates refers to true philosophers or wise people in general. To begin with, it is not Socrates

4 All translations of the Phaedo are from Long & Sedley 2011.

5 Phd. 61c6 οὐ φιλόσοφος Εὔηνος; See LSJ s.v. II.2.12.

6 Phd. 62c7 Ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

who remembers Evenus. Rather, it is Cebes who reminds Socrates of Evenus, as Cebes tells Socrates a question asked by several people including Evenus:

> You know those poems you've been composing, your versifications of Aesop's tales and the proem to Apollo? Well, some people were already asking me about them, and in particular Evenus asked the day before yesterday what on earth your idea was in composing them when you came here, given that you had never composed poetry before. So if you care at all about my having an answer for Evenus when he asks me again –because I'm quite sure that he will ask – tell me what to say (*Phd*. 60c8-d7).

Socrates replies that he did not compose these poems to rival Evenus, yet he did so because of a certain dream, which visits him every now and then and orders him to 'make music and work at it'. Regarding the earlier occurrences of this dream, Socrates thought that 'it [the dream] was encouraging me and cheering me on to do what I was doing, like those who cheer runners' (*Phd*. 60e6-7). What Socrates must have been doing then was philosophy, which was 'the greatest music (*Phd*. 61a3-4 *μεγίστης μουσικῆς)'* for Socrates.

Socrates believed that his recent dream meant 'music as commonly understood *(Phd. 61a7 τὴν δημώδη μουσικὴν)'* rather than philosophy. Therefore, Socrates first decided on 'making a composition dedicated to the god [Apollo] whose festival was currently being held', and then 'to compose stories, not arguments *(ποιεῖν μύθους ἀλλ' οὐ λόγους)*', as a poet ought to do if 'he was going to be a poet'. However, since Socrates is 'no story-teller (*οὐκ ἦ μυθολογικός*)', he decided to use Aesop's stories and made compositions out of them (*Phd*. 60d8-61c1).

In this section, I think, Socrates is not ironical, as some scholars argue.[7] I deny the idea that Socrates does not care about story-telling at all. If Socrates were not caring about story-telling, it would hardly make sense that Socrates was spending his last days dealing with some stories. Nor would it make sense that Socrates concluded his final conversation by telling a myth.[8] Equally important, it would be senseless to advise his interlocutors to 'sing incantations (*ἐπάδειν*)' to the child inside them to get rid of the fear of death (*Phd*. 77e2-8).

---

7 For instance, Bluck (1955, p. 40) argues that Socrates' modesty is 'almost certainly ironical' by referring to the devaluation of poets for distorting the truth in the Republic. Similarly, Hackforth (1955, p. 33 fn.5) refers to the Apology (20a-b) where Socrates discovered that poets are not wise but ignorant. However, if myth-making was essentially bad, it would be hard to make sense of the myth in the last section of the Phaedo (107c-115a) and Socrates's offer to 'both look at different ways and speculate about (Phd. 61e1-2 διασκοπεῖν τε καὶ μυθολογεῖν)' the journey to the afterlife.

8 See Rep. II. 377-382; III. 387-392 for the correct use of myths in education.

If myths are 'spells' in some way,[9] then Socrates would not rule out story-telling as a means of communication and persuasion, though he is careful about the proximity of the myths to the truth. In this respect, Socrates is serious, though modest, when he declares that he is no story-teller, for composing stories is a difficult task that we should be careful about.[10]

2.2. The Meaning of Philosophos

Some scholars claim that Socrates calls Evenus a philosopher either in the sense that [a] Evenus is practicing a specific profession, namely the Socratic/Platonic concept of philosophy or that [b] Evenus is just a lover of wisdom.[11] It is argued that if we accept [a], we ought to suppose that Socrates ironically calls Evenus a philosopher, as Evenus is not portrayed thus in the other dialogues.[12] If we assume [b], we would consider Socrates as being sincere. In what follows, I first explore and raise objections to [b], and I show why we should read [a].

Firstly, [b] does not seem to comply with the rest of Socrates' defence since Socrates scrutinizes the practice of true philosophers rather than that of wise people (Ebert, 2001, p. 426). Secondly, Socrates can hardly expect that Simmias is going to approve that a lover of wisdom in general would embrace the Willingness Argument. In fact, Simmias observes that most people, including his own countrymen, would find it fitting that 'those who pursue philosophy really are near death, and that they themselves have realized that death is just what these people deserve', although most people, as Socrates says, do not really understand the Willingness Argument (*Phd.* 64a9-b6).

---

9 See Phd. 114d7 where Socrates advises his interlocutors to repeat the myths about the afterlife like a spell.

10 At Phd. 114d1-d4, Socrates expresses his doubts about the truth of the myth he told. For Tarrant (2012, pp. 50-59), Plato makes and distinction between "logos" and "muthos", and Plato uses myths only after logos has been finished. Dixsaut (2012, pp. 28-35) suggests that myths reaches readers more easily than logos since understanding the latter requires a certain knowledge about the language used in arguments.

11 Rowe (1993, p. 123) and Hackforth (1955, p. 34 fn.3) advocate broad reading. They suppose that when οἱ…φιλοσοφοῦντες signifies the lovers of wisdom in the narrower sense, "aright [ὀρθῶς]" is supplied, i.e. those who practise philosophy aright, as is the case at Phd. 67e4. For other uses of 'aright' see Phd. 64a4, 67b4, 67e4, 69d2, 69d4, 80e6, 82c3. However, this only proves that the addition of 'aright' entails a narrow reading, not necessarily that its absence signifies the philosopher in a broad sense. Even if this use is consistent, it can well be a result of Simmias's confusion of true philosophers and any lover of wisdom. Noticing this, Socrates might have decided to remove this confusion for Simmias by suppling 'aright', not for himself.

12 Ebert (2001, pp. 428-433) argues that when Socrates confers the title 'philosopher' on Evenus, he refers to him as a Pythagorean philosopher. However, I do not see any strong evidence either in the Phaedo or in the other dialogues that supports this claim other than hardly reliable doxographical reports. Cf. Peterson 2011, 169 fn. 7&8.

Here Simmias seems to refer to true philosophers, though perhaps he did not totally understand what Socrates has meant. Otherwise, it would be strange that those who love wisdom in general, for Simmias, deserve to die according to most people. That is, poets and politicians, for instance, are possibly fond of wisdom, yet most people would hardly think that they deserve to die. It therefore seems that the popular image of true philosophers develops out of their way of life, for true philosophers remain aloof from the pleasures of the body, which are possibly indicative of a worthy life for most people.[13]

In the narrow reading, we get into some difficulties. Above all, Socrates' interlocutors, and the readers alike, might be perplexed about calling Evenus a philosopher, as the man is referred to as a sophist, poet and rhetorician by Plato.[14] It would also seem strange that Simmias did not know Evenus' profession, although he often encountered him in the past (*Phd*. 61c4-5). In this respect, Simmias' approval that Evenus is a philosopher might favour claim [b] above, for Socrates sometimes uses the term lover of wisdom in a broad sense.[15]

However, if Plato desired to ridicule sophists and poets, he would have preferred a stronger figure to that effect, who would easily remind the readers of sophists and poets. If Plato had done so, Simmias would hardly think that that person is a philosopher and the irony would work better.[16] Then the allusion to Evenus, for whom Plato shows relative respect, intensifies the perplexity of the reader, who is now invited to scrutinize Socrates' point for calling Evenus a philosopher.[17]

3. Purification, Dying and Being Dead

In this section, I argue that philosophers, according to Socrates, ought to define their life and practice through the correct evaluation of bodily pleasures and pains.[18] By living in philosophical terms, philosophers will promote the goodness

13 See Phd. 64c10-65a8; 66b7-d7; 81c8-81e2; 82b10-c7; 83b5-c3. Burnet (1911, p. 29) notes that οι πολλοί 'think philosophers 'as good as dead' and look upon them as 'living corpses".

14 See Phd.60d9; Phdr.267a3. In the Apology 20a-b, Evenus is said to teach being a good citizen for a fee of five minas.

15 Rowe 1993, p. 123 and Rep.V.475b8-9.

16 For instance, Plato could have used a character portrayed in the Euthydemus and Gorgias. At any rate, I do not see any strong reason to take Socrates's message to Evenus as historically accurate, therefore Plato could have used another figure if he wished to make fun of sophists. However, Burnet (1911, p. 60) notes that 'we know from the Apology 20a3 that Evenus was at Athens about the time of the trial of Socrates.' However, this does not rule out the possibility that there are other sophists at Athens then.

17 Vlastos (1991, Ch.1) challenges the view that Socratic irony aims at deception by maintaining that the purpose of Socratic irony is to introduce riddles without any purpose of deception.

18 Scholars debate whether the philosopher's practice amounts to "asceticism" or "correct evaluation of pleasures". By asceticism, it is meant that it is the philosopher's practice to "actively" avoid that which is bodily, such as pleasures, money etc. (Ebrey 2015, pp. 2-14). By correct evaluation, scholars mean that the philosopher should evaluate bodily affections correctly, and

of the soul in this life and receive valuable rewards from the gods after death. In addition, I scrutinize the following questions: [1] in what sort of practice should philosophers engage their interest, and [2] what are the limits to the practice of philosophers?

3.1. The Practice of Dying and Being Dead

Socrates defines "being dead (*τὸ τεθνάναι*)" as follows: 'the body has been separated from the soul and come to be apart, alone by itself, and the soul has been separated from the body and is apart, alone by itself' (*Phd*. 64c4-8).[19] Socrates then explains why this is the sole pursuit of philosophers:

"It [the soul] reasons best when it is being troubled neither by hearing nor by sight nor by pain, nor by a certain sort of pleasure either, but when it as much as possible comes to be alone by itself, ignoring the body, and, as far as it can, doesn't associate or have contact with the body when reaching out to what is real." (*Phd*. 65c5-9).[20]

Later, Socrates links the practice of philosophers with their eagerness to separate the soul from the body; he says, 'according to us it is those who really love wisdom who are always particularly eager – or rather, who *alone* are always eager – to release it [the soul], and philosophers' practice is just that, release and parting of soul from body' (*Phd*. 67d7-10). Here, it is necessary to observe that Socrates is talking about '*τὸ μελέτημα*' of philosophers; he seems to consider their practice as 'training oneself for an actual event or situation'.[21] In this respect, the correct philosophical practice consists of preparing ourselves for the state of being dead, i.e. our life in the other world, like an athlete who exercises for a championship, where she would be rewarded.[22]

---

feeling pleasures and pains is not wrong as such. See Woolf 2004, p. 98; Russell 2005, pp. 87-92.

19 The use of the perfect infinitive, τεθνάναι, might denote either 'the state of being dead' or 'the completion of the process of dying' (Rowe 1993, p. 127). In this passage, "τεθνάναι (being dead)" and "death (Phd. 64c8 ὁ θάνατος)" are used interchangeably, and it seems to refer to the state of being dead. See also Gallop 1975, p. 226 n.3.

20 A similar thought reiterated at Phd. 66e4-5: 'it is impossible to have pure knowledge (καθαρῶς γνῶναι) of anything when we are in the company of the body'. See also Phd. 65d11-e4.

21 See also "practice for death (Phd. 81a1-2 μελέτη θανάτου)"; "practise to be ready for really being dead (80e6-81a1 τῷ ὄντι τεθνάναι μελετῶσα ῥᾳδίως)"; 'they [the souls of the bad] are bound, in all likelihood, into whatever sorts of character they happen to have practised in their life (81e2-3 μεμελετηκυῖαι τύχωσιν ἐν τῷ βίῳ)'. The LSJ Greek Lexicon reports that μελέτη is used to mean "to go through one's exercises in actual war (II.2)" or "rehearsal of orators (II.3)". See Rowe 1993, p. 145.

22 What Long (2015, pp. 107-110) remarks about the relationship between physical training and the practice of philosophers is noticeable: 'Athletics and physical training provided Plato with the most obvious analogy he could find for elaborating his own ideal of a life devoted to training and perfecting the mind as distinct from the body.' The soul/body analogy, for Long,

For Socrates, 'the sole pursuit of those who correctly engage in philosophy is dying and being dead' (*Phd*. 64a4-6). Now, I would like to quote a passage where Socrates discusses the relationship between the practice of philosophers and the concept of purification:

'And doesn't purification turn out to be the very thing we were recently talking about in our discussion, namely parting the soul from the body as much as possible and habituating it to assembling and gathering itself from every part of the body, alone by itself, and to living alone by itself as far as it can, both now and afterwards, released from the body as if from fetters?'

'Certainly,' he [Simmias] said.

'So is it this that is named "death": release and parting of soul from body?'

'Yes, entirely so,' he said (*Phd*. 67c5-d6).

Both the process of purification and the practice of philosophers aim to separate the soul from the body; hence we train for dying and being dead, no matter whether we occupy ourselves with purification or philosophy.[23] Moreover, there seems to be a distinction between "dying *(ἀποθνήσκειν)*" and "being dead *(τεθνάναι)*". I suggest that by this distinction, Socrates stresses the difference between "the process of dying" and "its completion".[24] I argue that dying and being dead correspond to the two concepts related to purification, namely the process of purifying oneself and the final state of purity, respectively.[25]

In this respect, while we can practice dying and purifying during life, being dead and the final state of purity are *completions* that can only be achieved after actual death. On the one hand, I suggest that dying and purifying are contraries to living and pollution respectively.[26] Being dead, on the other hand, is contradictory

goes as far as the idea that 'a philosophical education as therapeutic, in the idea that faults of character are diseases of the soul, and in the idea that moral virtues are the manifestation of a soul that is stable, robust, and as glistening as the sheen on an athlete's well- toned body. The ideal of mental/moral health promoted the importance of systematic exercise (askesis), meaning that living well requires constant practice, self- examination, and self- discipline'.

23 Socrates later tells his interlocutors that 'those who truly love wisdom are in reality practising dying, and being dead is least fearful to them of all people (Phd. 66e4-6 Τῷ ὄντι…οἱ ὀρθῶς φιλοσοφοῦντες ἀποθνήσκειν μελετῶσι, καὶ τὸ τεθνάναι ἥκιστα αὐτοῖς ἀνθρώπων φοβερόν)'. Here, too, there is a distinction between dying and being dead.

24 Burnet 1911, p. 21; Rowe 1993, p. 135. ἀποθνήσκειν (present infinitive active) stresses "continuance" while τεθνάναι (perfect infinitive active) emphasizes "completion with permanent result"..

25 Socrates says that 'as long as we have the body and our soul is fused with bodily evil, we'll never properly acquire what we desire, namely, as we would say, the truth (Phd. 66b5-7)'.

26 Regarding death, at the Phaedo 71d5-7 Socrates asks Cebes, 'Don't you say that being dead is the opposite of being alive? (οὐκ ἐναντίον μὲν φῂς τῷ ζῆν τὸ τεθνάναι εἶναι;)', and Cebes confirms. Regarding purification, although Socrates does not clearly say that pollution and purification are opposites, the following propositions implies oppositions: [1] thought alone

to being alive. There is no third option to take that might render both the statements "Socrates is dead" and "Socrates is alive" false. That is, Socrates is either dead or alive.[27]

That said, it is possible to be neither fully pure nor fully impure. That is, we can be partially pure. The state of partial purity is not a completion, and it is not possible to be fully pure as long as we are alive due to the body's influence. In this respect, although the state of purity and being dead do not have the same relation to their opposites, neither can be attained during life. This impossibility would suffice to illustrate my point that the pairs, of dying/purifying and being dead/final state of purity, denote different ontological statuses.[28]

As stated above, pursuing dying and being dead are different. I have suggested that dying is related to our activities in this world, while being dead, not unexpectedly, is related to the soul's life in the other world. True philosophers are interested in pursuing dying and being dead since they both try to be truly virtuous in this world and desire to attain pure wisdom in the other world.[29] Besides, for Socrates, without pursuing true virtues in this world and without purifying ourselves, we cannot attain pure wisdom in the other world.[30]

I presume that it is possible for a person to pursue dying with a view to understanding it, yet being dead cannot be practiced as long as we are alive. That said, Socrates talks about the pursuit of both, being dead and dying; hence he seems to believe that we can practice being dead while we are still alive. As mentioned above, Socrates is talking about *τὸ μελέτημα,* the rehearsal or preparation, of philosophers to separate the soul from the body. In this respect, philosophers' business in this world is to prepare their soul for the afterlife by means of rehearsing being dead and dying, rather than achieving them. That is*, τὸ μελέτημα* of philosophers denotes the ways in which they live to purify themselves and try to be worthy of dwelling with gods.

---

by itself and unalloyed (αὐτῇ καθ' αὑτὴν εἰλικρινεῖ τῇ διανοίᾳ) can acquire wisdom and truth (Phd. 66a1-6), [2] the body contaminates the soul (Phd. 66b5-6), [3] thought can become alone by itself and unalloyed if it can totally get rid of the body (Phd. 67a1-b1), [4] 'it is not sanctioned for someone impure to grasp something pure (Phd. 67b2 μὴ καθαρῷ γὰρ καθαροῦ ἐφάπτεσθαι μὴ οὐ θεμιτὸν ᾖ)'.

27 Pakaluk (2003, p. 91) observes that 'there are things that are neither dead nor alive,' e.g. stones. However, since Socrates is talking about humans as animated beings, they cannot be both dead and alive.

28 Williams (1969, p. 218) discusses contraries and contradictories, though he does not distinguish the process of purifying oneself and the final state of purity. Bostock (1986, pp. 47-51) notes that the scope of the cyclical argument is ambiguous since the relationship between life and death (contradictories) is not the same as that between small and large (contraries).

29 Phd. 68b4 καθαρῶς…φρονήσει.

30 See Phd. 69c2-d3 for the idea of initiation and purification. I will examine this topic further below.

However, we need to note that Socrates also mentions the pursuit (*Phd*. 64a6 *ἐπιτηδεύουσιν*) of being dead and dying. Unlike *μελετάω* and its cognates, *ἐπιτηδεύω* does not imply preparation, as Rowe finely remarks.[31] To support his point, Rowe refers to a passage of the *Gorgias*, which reads, 'if a man took care (*ἐπετήδευε*) to grow his hair long, his corpse will have long hair, too (524 c4-5)'. Then *ἐπιτηδεύω* indicates an action that is pursued and is actually done, and its effects continue after that action is complete.

Here, it is fortunate that Socrates uses *ἐπιτηδεύω* in the context of life and death. More fortunately, Socrates, a bit later, says, 'all that's in the soul is evident after it has been stripped naked of the body, both things that are natural to it and things that have happened to it, things that the person came to have in his soul as a result of his pursuit of each objective' (*Gorg*. 524d4-7).[32] In this respect, our pursuits in this life affect our souls. Since true philosophers' pursuit is being dead and dying, each action they do with a view to this pursuit brings them closer to the truth and wisdom, for the soul alone by itself can acquire them. Then *ἐπιτηδεύω* denotes that true philosophers' pursuit is being dead and dying (thus they are true philosophers' business or interest), while *μελετάω* and its cognates refer to their practice and preparation to pursue this business successfully.

Therefore, being dead and dying are the true philosophers' goals whereas the things they do to separate the soul from the body as much as possible are the true philosophers' preparations. That is, true philosophers ought to act from the perspective of their pursuit and business. Then, in their pursuit or inquiry of being dead, true philosophers scrutinize the immortality of the soul and its afterlife. On the one hand, Socrates adopts a cautious position about the soul's afterlife, probably because it is beyond the limits of human experience (*Phd*. 114d1-8). On the other hand, Socrates is firmer and offers more positive results about the immortality of the soul than the soul's afterlife, although Socrates still thinks that his friends should pursue the argument about the immortality of the soul further.[33]

The pursuit of dying, on the contrary, is within the limits of human experience. We can practice dying, which is associated with purifying ourselves. True philosophers can articulate what their experience *qua* philosophers is (as practicing dying); hence they can describe the ways in which they separate the body from the soul and what they feel during this process.

---

31 Rowe (1993, p. 135) points out that Socrates uses ἐπιτηδεύω 'in the sense of 'making it one's practice' (cf. Gorg. 524c), not in the sense that one practices on the piano'.

32 Socrates also says that 'each of his [the Great King's] actions has stamped upon his soul (Gorg. 525a1-2)'.

33 For the necessity of further inquiry about the immortality of soul, see Phd. 107a1-9. For the possibility of misgivings, see Phd. 84c6-8.

3.2. The Embodiment of the Soul

True philosophers try to separate the soul from the body, and this is their chief occupation. The purpose of this section is to examine the embodiment of the soul and its effects on the soul's cognitive powers.[34] I argue that the practice of dying, on the one hand, signifies a process in which philosophers try to purify their soul from the influence of the body. Being dead, on the other hand, is the final state of purity, which can be achieved after death if we have been successful in purifying ourselves during life.[35]

Firstly, the disembodied soul, if it is purified successfully, would directly and instantly attain wisdom in Hades and true philosophers encounter wisdom (or the truth) as a consequence of their practice in this world. In other words, true philosophers acquire wisdom in Hades automatically.[36] Secondly, true philosopher attain wisdom (or the truth) in this world as a result of their vigorous search, that is, true philosophers actively pursue wisdom in this world.

During both the embodied and disembodied existences, the soul's nature is the same. That is, both the soul by itself and the embodied soul are invisible and immaterial, no matter whether it is in Hades or in this world.[37] However, the soul's cognitive power varies according to the conditions of the realms in which it exists. That is, during the embodied existence, the body hinders the soul's search for truth and wisdom. In this case, philosophy, for Socrates, comes to help the soul. Let me quote Socrates' take on the role of philosophy in the purification of the soul:

---

34 The idea of embodiment seems to be referred to in the recollection argument. Cebes says, 'but it [sc. to be reminded] would be impossible, unless our soul were existing somewhere before it was born to this human form (Phd. 72e7-73a2 τοῦτο δὲ ἀδύνατον, εἰ μὴ ἦν που ἡμῖν ἡ ψυχὴ πρὶν ἐν τῷδε τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ εἴδει γενέσθαι·'. See Phd. 70b3-4 'It [sc. disembodied soul] has some power and wisdom (τινα δύναμιν ἔχει καὶ φρόνησιν)'. For Dorter (1972, p. 212), soul's power is its permanent existence, and the disembodied soul's wisdom is '(pre-empirical) disposition for knowledge'.

35 There can surely be degrees of purification. The most purified are philosophers, no matter what the purification amounts to. See Pakaluk 2003, pp. 98-102. I agree with him that there are degrees of the separation of the soul and body, which indicates that the philosopher achieves separation "strictly" but "to some degree".

36 By the term 'automatically', I do not mean that philosophers attain wisdom in Hades without conscious thought or attention. Rather, my point is that they come to have wisdom without actively searching for it.

37 See Phd. 79b4-c1. Cf. 81c1-81d2 where Socrates says that some souls are 'drifting, as it is said around monuments and tombs, the very places where certain shadowy apparitions of souls (ἄττα ψυχῶν σκιοειδῆ φαντάσματα) really have been seen'. In this case, however, what is seen is not psychē but phantasma. Moreover, Socrates does not commit himself to this view since he attributes it to others by saying 'as it is said (Phd. 81c11 ὥσπερ λέγεται)'. See Hackforth 1955, p. 89 fn.2; Gallop 1975, pp. 143-144. cf. Archer-Hind 1883, pp. 95-96 who claims that soul's long association with the body makes it "ingrained (81c6 σύμφυτον)". Moreover, in the final argument for the immortality of the soul (See Phd. 105bff), Socrates talks about the soul as such, not the embodied or the disembodied soul, as not admitting of death.

"[T]he lovers of learning are aware that when philosophy takes over their soul, the soul really is bound thoroughly in the body and stuck to it, and is forced to consider the real things through it as if through a cage, and not on its own through itself, and that it drifts in utter ignorance… Philosophy, they are aware, persuades the soul to distance itself from the senses, except to the extent that use of them is necessary, and encourages the soul to collect and gather itself alone into itself, and to trust nothing but itself, concerning whichever real thing, alone by itself, the soul has intelligence of, when the soul too is alone by itself" (*Phd*. 82d1-83b2).

As mentioned earlier, Socrates has argued that philosophy is the pursuit of dying and being dead and true philosophers' practice is separating the soul from the body. In the quote above, philosophy helps the soul to become by itself as much as possible, as the senses are "full of deceit" and they exacerbate the soul's cognitive capacities (*Phd*. 83a4-5). In this respect, if the soul loses its ability to attain wisdom in this world, it would not be due to a change in the soul's nature, or essence. Rather, the soul is restricted by the body so that it cannot attain wisdom. That is, the body is a bad companion to accompany the soul on its search for truth; hence the body drives us away from the right course while, 'following philosophy they [those who care at all about their own soul] head in the direction in which it leads' (*Phd*. 82d5-7).

3.3. Wisdom in Hades

For Socrates, philosophers are genuinely in love with wisdom,[38] and 'he [the true philosopher] will be quite sure that he will have a pure encounter with wisdom nowhere else but there'.[39] Encountering wisdom in Hades, I argue, is the immediate result of the practice of true philosophers in this world. Here I take *ἐντυγχάνω* to mean *happening upon,* and I believe that philosophers' acquisition of wisdom in Hades happens upon them thanks to their pursuit and practice in this world.[40] In other words, philosophers hope to encounter wisdom in Hades, thus

38 Socrates says 'they [those who truly love wisdom] hope to attain that with which they were in love throughout life (Phd. 68a1-2 οἱ ἀφικομένοις ἐλπίς ἐστιν οὗ διὰ βίου ἤρων τυχεῖν—ἤρων δὲ φρονήσεως). Gallop (1975, p. 102) states that 'phronesis is a solemn term for the condition of the soul for which the philosopher yearns'. See Phd. 66e3, 68a2, 68a7 and 68b4.

39 Phd. 68b2-3 σφόδρα γὰρ αὐτῷ ταῦτα δόξει, μηδαμοῦ ἄλλοθι καθαρῶς ἐντεύξεσθαι φρονήσει ἀλλ' ἢ ἐκεῖ. Just before this, Socrates asks 'will someone who is genuinely in love with wisdom and has strongly conceived this same hope that nowhere but in Hades will he have a worthwhile encounter with it (ἐντεύξεσθαι αὐτῇ ἀξίως λόγου), resent dying and go there less than cheerfully?', then answers 'he will not, at least if he is really a lover of wisdom'.

40 David Sedley, to whom I am highly grateful and indebted, told me that 'in context, ἐντυγχάνω refers in quasi-personal terms to hope of "meeting" one's beloved in Hades'. Although I agree that ἐντυγχάνω could surely mean this, I believe that here Socrates might not be using it in that sense. When Socrates talks about the hope of seeing one's beloved, he says that 'very many people have readily consented to go after them into Hades, led by the hope that there they will see the people they longed for and be with them (Phd. 67a3-7)'. In this particular context, Plato

practicing philosophy with the hope of attaining wisdom, and that encounter itself is "worthy of *logos (ἀξίως λόγου)*".[41]

Furthermore, Socrates also touched on the relationship between the soul and body during the embodied state when he was arguing that suicide is not sanctioned. In this passage, Socrates tells his interlocutors, 'what is said in secret accounts about these matters [relating to suicide], that we human beings are in a sort of prison [in the body] and that one must not release oneself from it or run away, that seems to me a weighty saying and one that is not easy to penetrate' (*Phd*. 62b3-6).[42] Socrates, unfortunately, does not explain the body-prison (or ward) analogy, but I think it is plain that [1] "we" implies that our souls define who we are, and that, [2] from the point of the view of the prisoner, the prisoner's presence in the prison does not alter her nature or essence.

Socrates seems to assume the first point throughout the *Phaedo* and I will not discuss it here.[43] Regarding the second point, it is pertinent to observe that a prisoner's (or ward's) power of sight does not change, unless of course her eyes are bruised.[44] Her vision none the less is limited to what she is seeing through the bars, on the one hand, and the bars distort her vision, on the other.[45] In this respect, the soul's presence in the body made the soul's cognitive capacity deteriorate and the soul's epistemic access is limited by the body.

uses συνέσεσθαι at Phd. 67a6, which might mean either "to be with", "to join with" or "to live with". In other words, these people hope to be with their beloved ones, while philosophers hope to encounter wisdom. This is because philosophe including Socrates, are not sure whether they have practiced philosophy. David Sedley also remarked that 'Socrates uses [ἐντυγχάνω] at the Apology 41b for the prospect of meeting Palamedes et. al. in Hades'. In the relevant section, however, Socrates assumes that if the soul is immortal, 'it would be a wonderful way for me to spend my time whenever I met (ὁπότε ἐντύχοιμι) Palamedes… to compare my experience with [him]'. It seems to me that Socrates comments on the life that he assumes to live in Hades and ὁπότε (whenever) seems to refer to an action that is often repeated.

41 Phd. 68b1. cf. Herodotus 6.112.10 'worthy of record'; Rep. IV 436b3 'the standards of our argument'; Phdr. 270c1 'a serious understanding'.

42 For my purposes, there is no need to decide what "φρουρά (ward)" implies, that is, whether our soul is in guard-duty of its post, i.e. body, or the body is a prison where the soul is punished. For the possible renderings and the likely source of this idea see Strachan 1970. I prefer to use prison, as for my purposes it does not matter whether I use prison or ward.

43 Phd. 115c3-116a1 for Socrates's idea that after he drinks poison and dies, he will already be gone. At 115c6-8, Socrates says, 'I'm not convincing Crito that I am Socrates here, the one who is now holding a conversation…Instead he supposes that I'm that corpse which he'll shortly be seeing'. See also Long 2015, pp. 54-55

44 I do not think that the body has the power to alter the soul's nature or essence, although the body is a bad influence for the soul. See also fn. 237 above.

45 It is not possible to know exactly what Socrates' prison cell looked like and what his conditions were. We are told that Socrates was chained (Phd. 59e6-60a1), there is a stool, a bed (89a8-b1) and a bathroom (116a2-3), and it is big enough for 10 or more people. No mention of a window is made, but we can conjecture that there was one since Phaedo could realize that 'it was already nearly sunset (116b6)'.

3.4. True Philosophers' Object of Desire

Let me now consider what Socrates says about true philosophers in Hades and the conditions they live in there:

"Those people who established the rites for us are no ordinary people, but in reality have long been setting a riddle when they say that whoever comes to Hades without initiation and the rites *(ἀμύητος καὶ ἀτέλεστος)* will lie in filth, whereas someone who arrives there purified and initiated *(κεκαθαρμένος τε καὶ τετελεσμένος)* will dwell with gods. For in fact, as those involved in the rites put it, "many carry the fennel-wand, but few are inspired". The latter, in my opinion, are none other than those who have pursued philosophy correctly *(οἱ πεφιλοσοφηκότες ὀρθῶς)"* (*Phd*. 69c4-d2).

In the quote above, Socrates makes a two-stage distinction: firstly, he distinguishes the wicked (those who will lie in filth) from the good, and, secondly, the truly good (those who are purified and initiated) and those who appear to be good.[46] In other words, Socrates initially makes a distinction between the wicked and the virtuous, then between the truly virtuous, i.e. between philosophers and illusorily virtuous people, whoever they are.[47]

Socrates classifies a non-philosopher as a "body-lover", who is either a "money-lover or "honour-lover", or both (*Phd.* 68c1-3).[48] Philosophers, as mentioned above, are lovers of wisdom, and they hope to have a pure encounter with *phronesis* in Hades. In addition, encountering wisdom in Hades is worthy of *logos*. Here I take *ἀξίως λόγου* as denoting something "worthy of record" in the sense that encountering wisdom in Hades deserves attention and analysis. That is, although philosophers will have a pure encounter with wisdom only in Hades, examining and documenting this encounter is valuable. I submit that not only is practicing being dead and dying a philosopher's prime pursuit (so that they will have a pure encounter with wisdom), but philosophers should also attain a serious understanding of wisdom in this world.

It is now necessary to investigate how philosophers attain a serious understanding of a pure encounter with wisdom and how they can *actually* have that wisdom. To this end, I show that by distinguishing *catharsis* and *catharmos*, Plato,

---

46 In Rep. II. 363d5-6, Socrates states that those who are profane and unjust humans are buried in filth. See Rowe 1993, 151; Burnet 1911, 45.

47 See Phd. 69b5-8. I discuss this passage below.

48 For Socrates, non-philosophers live their life from the point of view of the body, its pleasures and pains; hence they think that what is bodily, or visible, is real (See Phd. 81b2-5). Their world-view, then, determines their ontology. That is, both philosophers and non-philosophers feel what is bodily and in the body, though the latter lives from the perspective of the soul. Robins (2003, pp. 4-7) argues that a philosopher's ontology is different since she becomes aware that, or is shown that at some point, sense-perception does not attain that which is real.

as it is suggested, draws a distinction between 'the state of purification – if the virtues are states' and 'what brings it [*sc.* purification] about' (Rowe, 1993, p. 151).[49] That is, for Socrates, 'temperance, justice and courage are a kind of purification *(ἢ κάθαρσίς τις)* from everything like this [pleasures, fears, *etc*.] and that wisdom itself is a kind of rite to purify *(καθαρμός τις ἦ)* us' (*Phd*. 69b8-c3).

3.5. Purification, Purificatory Rites and Virtues

Socrates describes *catharsis* in terms of the soul-body relationship and their separation:

"Parting the soul from the body as much as possible and habituating it to assembling and gathering itself from every part of the body, alone by itself, and to living alone by itself as far as it can, both now and afterwards, released from the body as if from fetters" (*Phd*. 67c6-d2).

Earlier in the *Phaedo*, 61c8-9, Socrates argued that true philosophers are willing to die, and he described death as the separation of the body from the soul in the *Phaedo* 64c4-7. Then *catharsis* is the pursuit of true philosophers and it is the result of practicing being dead and dying. That is, 'those who really love wisdom who are always particularly eager – or rather, who *alone* are always eager – to release it [the soul] (translators' italics)', and *catharsis* is thus the aim of the practice of philosophers (*Phd.* 67d7-1).

Virtues, for Socrates, are some kind of *catharsis*. Socrates distinguishes fake-virtue from true-virtue. Again, I suggested that Socrates distinguishes the wicked from the good people, then the truly virtuous and the fraudulently virtuous people. Socrates then relates the fraudulently good people to those who possess fake-virtues, as these people exchange pleasures for greater pleasures, fears for lesser pains, and pains for lesser pains.[50]

These people, for Socrates, appear temperate now 'because they fear being denied other pleasures, which they desire, they abstain from one set of pleasures because they are overcome by another set of pleasures' (*Phd.* 68e5-7).[51] That is, "those who keep their composure (hereafter well-ordered people)" are able to overcome some pleasures only because they are overcome by other pleasures (*Phd.* 69a2).[52] For example, I might abstain from the pleasure of eating now so that my stomach will be empty for drinking wine later, which is more pleasant for me.[53]

49 By the state of purification, I simply mean the state of complete purity.

50 The Greek is μείζω πρὸς ἐλάττω (Phd. 69a7-8), which is in relation with pains and fears. It is probably 'ἐλάττω πρὸς μείζω in the case of pleasures' (Rowe 1993, p. 149).

51 Socrates calls this kind of temperance "simple-minded".

52 See 68e1 οἱ κόσμιοι (well-ordered) = οἱ σώφρονες (temperate). Cf. Burnet 1911, p. 41.

53 Sedley (2014, p. 69) gives a more eloquent example: 'The conventionally brave, for example, attach negative value to pain and death in battle, regarding both as fearful, but as nevertheless

For Socrates, the fraudulently good people exchange 'pains for pains and fear for fear, greater for less, like currencies' (*Phd*. 69a6-9). However, 'for the purpose of virtue this [*sc.* becoming temperate because of intemperance] is not the correct exchange' (*Phd*. 69a6-7). For Socrates, 'just one thing is the correct currency, in return for which one must exchange all these [*sc.* pains, pleasures and fears]: I mean wisdom' (*Phd*. 69a9-10). Regarding the distinction between real and fake virtues, Socrates says:

"Now when all things are bought and sold for this and with this– with wisdom – they really are, I suspect, courage, temperance, justice and in sum true virtue, regardless of whether pleasures, fears and everything else like that are added or removed. But when they are kept apart from wisdom and exchanged for one another, that sort of virtue is, I fear, a kind of illusion: it is really fit for slaves,[54] and contains nothing sound or true" (*Phd*. 69b1-8).

There is need to remark that Socrates first says, "for this (*τούτου*)", which is genitive of price, then "with this (*μετὰ τούτου*)", which is genitive of accompaniment. The rendering of this phrase depends on the use of *καὶ*. [1] If it is copulative, Socrates would be saying pleasures and pains should be exchanged for wisdom and with wisdom. [2] If *καὶ* is linking alternatives, Socrates would be amending exchanging for wisdom to exchanging with wisdom.

Some scholars favour [2] since [1] implies that wisdom can be decreased or increased through the exchange (Rowe, 1993, pp. 149-150). As it is the case regarding all analogies, there is need to be careful when we interpret the currency analogy (Bluck 1955, p. 155).[55] That said, I submit that both uses, i.e. for wisdom and with wisdom, make sense in different contexts. For Socrates, true philosophers

worth risking in order to avert potentially worse suffering, such as the enslavement of one's entire city. What they are thus doing is treating pleasure, pain and the like as their currency, and using that currency to calculate the relative merits of alternative choices.'

54 "ἀνδραποδώδης (slavish)" is opposed to "ἐλευθέριος (fit for a freeman)". However, I do not think that possessing fraudulent virtues places their possessor into the class of wicked people. In the Republic IV 430b6-9, Plato distinguishes 'this power to preserve through everything the correct and law-inculcated belief about what is to be feared and what isn't is what I call courage' and 'the correct belief about these same things, which you find in animals and slaves, and which is not the result of education, to be inculcated by law, and that you don't call it courage but something else'. That is, the latter is 'fitting for slaves (b8 ἀνδραποδώδη)' too; hence it is not courage but something else. Note also that Socrates calls the temperance of well-ordered people "simple-minded temperance (68e5)". Therefore, I presume that the two-stage distinction mentioned above still holds. There are coward, so not-virtuous, slaves in comparison with those appearing to be courageous but who are actually something else.

55 Russell (2005, p. 95) stresses that 'surely in saying that wisdom can be 'exchanged' for other things, and that other things can be 'bought' with it, like a coin, Socrates does not mean to say that by exercising my wisdom I shall come to have less wisdom to exercise'. We should also remark that Socrates says, 'as it were (69a9 ὥσπερ)' a currency, which seems 'to limit or modify an assertion or apologize for a metaphor (LSJ, s.v. II)'.

should give up pleasures and desires in exchange for wisdom. That is, philosophers should remain aloof from the body and its desires, and try to gain wisdom as much as possible.[56] On the other hand, true philosophers should always act with wisdom, since by using wisdom they would become truly virtuous and accumulate more wisdom.[57]

Moreover, since those who truly love wisdom would never buy pleasures and pains, they only care for accumulating wisdom. That is, true philosophers always sell pleasures and buy wisdom in exchange.[58] For instance, one might ask whether it is the case that, as it were, drinking costs 4 minas in my own scale of pleasures and eating 8 minas. If I am fond of drinking, but not eating, the latter would add more to my pleasure. That is, if I do not buy the pleasure of eating, then I can buy the pleasure of drinking, which is more pleasant for me. Thus, well-ordered people possessing fake-virtues are able to calculate how much they save by not buying the pleasure of eating and how much they need to pay for the pleasure of drinking (*Phd*. 68e1-69a4).[59]

However, real-temperance, and perhaps other real-virtues too, belong 'only to those who particularly disdain the body and live in philosophy' (*Phd*. 68c10-12). For

56 We, naturally, can voluntarily stay away from pleasures. However, we might not be able to avoid pains, either physical (e.g. headache) or psychological (e.g. loss of a loved one) that are inflicted on us by external cause. For instance, we might suffer severe and frequent headaches, although there is nothing deliberate about it. Regarding the exchange analogy, well-ordered people might choose something less painful now in exchange for something more painful then, yet they do not to do so with wisdom. In this respect, exchanging greater pains for lesser pains has the same mechanism that well-ordered people use in case of calculating pleasures.

57 Sedley (2014, p. 70) argues that 'virtues are genuine virtues only in so far as their possession or exercise is informed by wisdom, that is, enacted wisely', since 'wisdom inspires the virtues by motivating them, as their ultimate goal'.

58 Gosling & Taylor (1982, p. 93) claim that currencies are instruments used for exchange so that they do not have any intrinsic value. Then if wisdom is a currency, no matter whether it is the right one, wisdom should be an instrument for ruling over pleasures and pains rather than being an end. I, however, agree with Russell (2005, p. 96): 'the 'exchange…for…' relation is asymmetric: I can exchange (καταλλάττεσθαι) my nickel for (ἀντὶ) your piece of candy, but, of course, I cannot exchange your candy for my nickel. The exchange Socrates has in mind is not one of using wisdom to secure other things, but of trading those other things for wisdom—that is, I take it, managing one's dealings with other things so as to become a wiser person.' In this respect, "for wisdom" seems to signify "for the sake of accumulating wisdom".

59 I agree with Woolf 2004 and Russell (2005, pp. 78-79) that the evaluative reading is more informative regarding the practice of philosophy. This is because this reading puts emphasis on the use of reason, which is a fundamental theme of the Phaedo and the theory of pleasure advanced in it. The behavioural avoidance, which is stressed by the ascetic reading, does not need to lead to a philosophical life. For instance, I might avoid pleasures of drinking, eating and so on and might ignore promoting the soul at the same time. On the other hand, the indifference to bodily pleasures, which is emphasized by the evaluative reading, demands a certain understanding. That is, for believing that eating and drinking are trivial, we need to understand the nature of pleasure and why bodily pleasures are deceitful and beguiling. This understanding, I think, is a must for the philosophical life. See Butler 2012, pp. 105-106.

Socrates, temperance 'is not being in a flutter about one's desires, but rather being disdainful towards them and staying composed'; hence true philosophers are really temperate. For Socrates, if we consider 'other people's temperance', we find their temperance to be "absurd" (*Phd*. 68d2-3). This is because, as mentioned above, other people become temperate because of intemperance. That is, we might call someone temperate because she is not eating too much now, yet this avoidance is not because she cares for her soul, but because she loves drinking more than eating.

I suggest that the currency analogy should be read in terms of the market value, so to speak, rather than coins themselves. That is, while well-ordered people regulate the market value of actions from the perspective of the body and its pleasures, true philosophers determine the value of actions from the perspective of the soul. True philosophers primarily care about the soul, as they aim at ameliorating it as much as possible by accumulating wisdom and hope to have a pure encounter with wisdom in Hades. Therefore, for philosophers, wisdom is the most valuable and the only true currency.

In addition, it would be helpful to look at the relationship between exchange and currency. Fortunately, Plato offers a theory for this in the *Republic*. When discussing the economics of the primitive community and the way in which this community is sharing, buying and selling products, Socrates says, '[*Rep. II.* 371b4-7 for sharing products by selling and buying], we will have a market-place and a system of coinage for the sake of exchange' (*Rep. II.* 371b8-9). If so, the need of sharing products comes first, which was the reason for establishing a city (*Rep. II.* 371b4-7). Secondly, we need a market-place and a currency for buying, selling and exchanging.

Likewise, in the *Phaedo*, the need of buying, selling and exchanging pleasures, pains and desires arises firstly. Then for the sake of fulfilling this need, we form an evaluative model. From an individual perspective, it is up to me to price each of the pleasures, pains and desires. In this respect, well-ordered people can calculate prices correctly according to their own scale of pleasures, yet they still do so for the sake of the body and maximise its pleasures.

To sum up, well-ordered people might sometimes seem temperate, as they are abstaining from a set of pleasures to maximize another set of pleasures. However, at other times, they would seem intemperate, for they are trying to maximize their pleasure. True philosophers, on the contrary, will always be temperate since for them only wisdom is worthy of accumulation. Since wisdom is maximized by means of separating the soul from the body, they determine the exchange rate with the purpose of nourishing the soul, as it were. That is, true philosophers exchange all pleasures and desires *for* wisdom and they act *with* wisdom in order to accumulate more wisdom. In a sense, then, true philosophers use wisdom to obtain more wisdom.

3.6. Shadow-painting and Purification

Let me now consider another metaphor used in the same section, which aims at explaining the difference between true and fake goodness. This examination, I think, will help us to have a better understanding of the role of purification. For Socrates, "true virtue accompanied by wisdom (b3 *ἀληθὴς ἀρετή, μετὰ φρονήσεως*)", e.g. "real (b8 *τῷ ὄντι*) courage, temperance and justice", is a sort of *catharsis* (*Phd*. 69b3-c1). However, as we have seen earlier, we can only have a pure encounter with wisdom in Hades. If so, do true philosophers use another kind of wisdom, say a less pure kind, in this world to exchange pleasures, pains and desires, and to become courageous, temperate and so on?

Socrates argues that 'when they [pleasures, pains, *etc*.] are kept apart from wisdom and exchanged for one another, that sort of virtue is, I fear, a kind of illusion: it is really fit for slaves and contains nothing sound or true' (*Phd*. 69b5-9). As quoted in the paragraph above, the accompaniment of wisdom makes a virtue real in contrast with an illusion of it. For instance, if we appear temperate now because we desire to maximize another sort of pleasure later, our temperance would not be a token of real virtue (Rowe, 1993, p. 150).

Here, it would be helpful to review briefly what *skiagraphia* is. According to the LSJ Greek Lexicon, it is 'painting with the shadows (*cf. σκιαγραφέω*), so as to produce an illusion of solidity at a distance'. *Skiagraphia* had to be viewed from a certain distance, since a viewer cannot get what the painting is about with a close-up look (Keuls 1978, p. 74). In the *Phaedo* passage, however, Socrates does not seem to focus on how a *skiagraphia* is viewed best, but how it is produced in the first place.[60] Since *skiagraphia* is painted by using various intensification of colours and the use of colours in the right amount is necessary for an effective *skiagraphia*, well-ordered people, likewise, are able to calculate the right amount of pain and pleasure which make them appear virtuous (Keuls 1978, pp. 81-83).

Pains and pleasures are like colours through which well-ordered people draw an illusory picture of being virtuous. Here, there are two distinctions: the one is between the virtuous state (e.g. painting) and how that state is achieved (e.g. painting with shadows with right intensification colours), the other between fake virtues (achieved through exchanging greater fears and pains for lesser ones, and lesser pleasures with greater ones) and real virtue (achieved with wisdom). Now, as discussed above, true philosophers' pursuit is separating the soul from the body

60 If, surely, we have a closer look at well-ordered people, we realize what they really are, that is not truly virtuous. In the Republic II 365c3-4, Adeimantus tells Socrates that a person might think that 'I should create a façade of illusory virtue (σκιαγραφίαν ἀρετῆς) around me to deceive those who come near but keep behind it the greedy and crafty fox of the wise Archilochus'. Well-ordered people in the Phaedo seem to do the same, though Socrates does not tell us whether these people wish to deceive others.

as much as possible. They then should act from the point of view of the soul and maximizing wisdom because the accompaniment of wisdom would enable them to rule out the body, its desires and pleasures.

Again, as suggested above, *catharsis* refers to the state of true virtue and *catharmos* denotes that by which we attain that state, i.e. with wisdom. In this respect, I suggest that wisdom is a set of principles, or, theologically speaking, "rituals", by which the state of purification, or of true virtue, is attained. These principles guide true philosophers in their pursuit and enable them to separate the soul and the body as much as possible. If we consider the relationship between knowledge, wisdom and virtue, *phronesis* has epistemological and methodological bearings, as it enables true philosophers to attain knowledge in this world. This is just as purificatory rites (*katharmoi*) and initiations (*teletai*) endow us with "blessedness", such as "eating raw meat" in Bacchic mysteries.[61]

To sum up, true philosophers desire wisdom, yet they can have a pure encounter with it in Hades. The body hinders us, or more precisely our soul, to have a pure knowledge of something since it is not possible to view the things themselves with the soul itself as long as the soul is with the body. If true philosophers can only attain wisdom in Hades, then how does wisdom help them to become truly virtuous in this world?

Socrates comments on the acquisition of pure knowledge as follows:

"But we really have shown that if we are ever to have pure knowledge of something, we must be separated from the body and view things by themselves with the soul by itself. The time when we will have that which we desire and whose lovers we claim to be, namely wisdom, will be when we are dead, as the argument indicates, and not while we are alive" (*Phd*. 66d7-e4).

If we cannot attain wisdom during life, then should true philosophers look for something else during life that will enable them to obtain real virtue? This would, nonetheless, be an embarrassment because Socrates frequently underlines that true philosophers desire wisdom and they would not content themselves with pursuing something else. Thus, I suggest that we do not need to possess pure wisdom to live a virtuous life. Rather, if we live in respect of wisdom and for the sake of accumulating wisdom, we would separate the soul from the body as much as possible; we would thus purify ourselves. That is, a true philosopher's desire to attain pure wisdom motivates them to pursue separating the soul from the body and to purify themselves. In doing so, true philosophers get ready to have a pure encounter with wisdom and view things by themselves in Hades (Futter, 2015, p. 57).

61 For these rituals see Burkert & Raffan (translator) 2013, pp. 290-293.

4. Conclusion

This paper scrutinizes Socrates' defence speech in Plato's *Phaedo*. I have examined the Willingness Argument and its role in understanding the correct practice of philosophers. According to this argument, true philosophers aim at separating the soul from the body, hence the reason they do not get any resentful feeling towards death, after which their soul will become alone by itself. I have suggested that to point out the connection between the Willingness Argument and the correct practice of philosophers, Plato stresses that even a sophist can become a true philosopher by pursuing dying and being dead, hence the reason for alluding to Evenus, the poet and sophist.

By pursuing separating the soul from the body, true philosophers prepare themselves for the afterlife and try to come "closest" to the knowledge of the being of things themselves (*Phd*. 65d11-e4).[62] That is, true philosophers aim to develop the cognitive powers of the soul so that they can attain wisdom and knowledge in Hades. The impossibility of a pure encounter with wisdom, of viewing things by themselves and of the final state of purity during embodiment, is the source of philosophical humility, which partly shapes the practice of true philosophers. In this respect, the *Phaedo* has a metaphilosophical aim, which is to provide insights for the correct method of philosophical practice.

To conclude, even though true philosophers are aware that they cannot attain the final state of purity, they still pursue it and try to separate the soul from the body. That is, true philosophers are aware of the limits of their pursuit and cognitive capacity. Plato then tries to establish the epistemic norms which are compatible with our epistemic access. I submit that philosophical humility is an accurate basis of these norms, as it takes our cognitive fallibilities into account. Therefore, the metaphilosophical dimension of Socrates' defence speech presumably frames the dialogical model and the philosophical method developed in the *Phaedo*.

Bibliography

Archer-Hind, R. D., (1883). *The Phaedo of Plato*. London: Macmillan & Co.

Bluck, R. S., (1955). *Plato's Phaedo*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited.

Burkert, W., (2013). *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*. Trans. J. Raffan. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Burnet, J., (1911). *Plato's Phaedo*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Butler, T., (2012). "A Riveting Argument in favor of Asceticism in the Phaedo." *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 29.2.

62 Sedley (1989, pp. 377-378) points that according to the myth in the Republic 10, Er learns the laws of the 'underlying principles of celestial motions' in a temporary disembodied state although the true astronomy is granted to philosophical souls in this life in the Republic 7. But still, Er's disembodiment, for Sedley, 'is used to symbolize the radical break from incarnate perspectives,' and hence it puts us back to the Phaedo.

Christensen, D., (2013). "Epistemic Modesty Defended 1." *The Epistemology of Disagreement: New Essays*. Ed. David Christensen and Jennifer Lackey. New York: Oxford University Press.

Dixsaut, M., (2012). "Myth and Interpretation." *Plato and Myth: Studies on the Use and Status of Platonic Myths*. Ed. Catherine Collobert, Pierre Destrée and Francisco J. Gonzalez. Leiden: Brill.

Dorter, K., (1972). "Equality, Recollection, and Purification." *Phronesis* 17.

Ebert, T., (2001). "Why Is Evenus Called a Philosopher at Phaedo 61c?" *The Classical Quarterly* 51.2 (423-434).

Ebrey, D., (2017). "The Asceticism of the Phaedo: Pleasure, Purification, and the Soul's Proper Activity." *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 99.1.

Evnine, S. J., (2001). *Learning From One's Mistakes: Epistemic Modesty and the Nature of Belief*. Vol. 82.

Futter, D. B., (2015). "The Death of Socrates." *Philosophical Papers* 44.1.

Gallop, D., (1975). *Plato. Phaedo (Translated with Notes)*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Gosling, J. C. B. and C. C. W. T., (1982). *The Greeks On Pleasure*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.,

Hackforth, R., (1955). *Plato's Phaedo*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Keuls, E. C., (1978). *Plato and Greek Painting*. Leiden: Brill.

Long, A. and David, S., (2011). *Plato: Meno and Phaedo*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Long, A. A., (2015). *Greek Models of Mind and Self*. Harvard University Press.

Pakaluk, M., (2003). "Degrees of Separation in the "Phaedo"." *Phronesis* 48.2.

Peterson, S., (2011). *Socrates and the Philosophy in the Dialogues of Plato*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Robins, I., (2003). "'Phaedo' 82d9-84b8: Philosophers' Understanding of their Souls." *Apeiron* 36.1.

Rowe, C. J., (1993). *Plato. Phaedo (Greek text with introduction and detailed textual commentary)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Russell, D., (2005). *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sedley, D., (1989). "Teleology and Myth in the Phaedo." *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*. Leiden: Brill.

—. (2014). "The unity of virtue after the Protagoras." *Unité et origine des vertus dans la philosophie ancienne*.

Tarrant, H., (2012). "Literal and Deeper Meanings in Platonic Myths." *Plato and Myth:Studies on the Use and Status of Platonic Myths*. Ed. Catherine Collobert, Pierre Destrée and Francisco J. Gonzalez. Leiden: Brill.

Vlastos, G., (1991). *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Williams, C. J. F., (1969). "On Dying." *Philosophy* 44.169.

Woolf, R., (2004). "The Practice of a Philosopher." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*.