SELINUS UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCES AND LITERATURE

PLATO: MEMORIES

- Research in knowledge theory,

the anthropology and the ethics –

By Rizwan Ashfaq

Supervised by
Dr. Salvatore Fava PhD

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Department of
International Law
program at Selinus University

Faculty of Arts & Humanities
in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in International Law

2022

THE ABSTRACT

Meno, Phaedo and Phaedrus expose Plato's doctrine of ἀνάμνησις; however, although they are presented differently, they present a unified argument. In addition, the doctrine raises questions related to Plato's epistemology, such as Innatism's nature, the contribution of experience to knowledge, and its function of myths. An examination of the theory's role in each dialogue is followed by a comparison with the other two dialogues. A recollection attempts to clarify the following experiences: the recognition of necessary truths, the use of universal concepts to describe contingent realities, and the spiritual conversion caused by a noble love. These three phenomena are explained by the recall of prenatal knowledge forgotten at birth. The unconscious memory of this knowledge shapes our experience of the world, even though we are not aware of it anymore. We can therefore describe this memory as an archetype. We need to engage in dialectic in order to recover prenatal knowledge and turn it into conscious knowledge by trying to collect in a definition all representations (real and hypothetical) of a given form. In contrast to the disembodied soul, the embodied soul is constrained by being confined to a synthetic grasp of forms through logos, as it resides in the realm of becoming. Thus, the doctrine of recollection is not only an epistemological theory, it also has an anthropological component: it suggests that the human soul is situated between being and becoming. As a result, anamnesis also has ethical implications. As human beings, since we are mediated by these two realms, we must align our actions with the archetypes of human excellence, which we can't ignore without alienating part of ourselves.

THE TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE INTRODUCTION

Everybody who has heard of Plato has heard of the doctrine of anamnesis or recollection. It is indeed an essential part of Plato's philosophical outlook. It is however not quite so easy to say what precisely the doctrine is[1]. Crombie noted the difficulty of accounting for the theory of reminiscence in 1963; fifty years later, we could make the same diagnosis. This situation is not attributable to the lack of zeal of the commentators, who produced a abundant literature on the subject[2], rather than to the difficulty of the topic. Anamnesis is characterized as a theory that identifies learning as the recalling of knowledge acquired before birth, which the dilettante is bound to find surprising. This definition is correct, but the more specific we make it, the more confusing it becomes. Exactly what is recorded within the memory of a prenatal knowledge? To what extent are we aware of it? How can it be accessed? These are questions that Plato never answers clearly.

Moreover, the interpretation of reminiscence is complicated by its inconstancy. It only appears there three times and never takes quite the same form[3], making the exegete's task comparable to Menelaus' struggle with Proteus. The anamnesis does not appear in dialogues where it was expected for epistemological reasons, such as in the Republic, the Banquet, or the Theaetetus. As a result, it places us directly in front of the question of the coherence of Platonic thought through its presentation in its corpus. It is all the more important to resolve these problems (of exegetical order) because reminiscence leads us to the heart of Platonic thought. In effect, if we are to believe Aristotle[4], Platonism is the

---

[1] Crombie, 1963, p.135.

[2] We will summarize the major contributions in our first chapter, which traces how philosophers and exegetes have treated reminiscence up to the present day.

[3] In the Meno she explains how we can recognize for ourselves the necessity of a mathematical demonstration and omits all reference to intelligible forms; in the Phaedo, she specifies how we can use concepts to talk about things that remain inferior to them; in the Phaedrus, it makes it possible to account for a noble love, capable of raising us to a more spiritual order of preoccupation than that of carnal pleasures.

[4] See Metaphysics A6.

result of two fundamental experiences: on the one hand, the observation of the unstable nature of sensible things by Heraclitus; on the other hand, the Socratic quest for the definition of the virtues, implying the existence of an object to be examined. In this context, Aristotle is interested in Plato in the context of a history of the understanding of the principles of being, and concludes that their meeting gave rise to the theory of forms, which explains the existence of concrete objects as a result of participation; since we situate rather on the basis of the theory of knowledge, remembrance is another offshoot of such unity: things constantly changing senses have an identity because they are related to the intelligible. In this sense, the history reflects the original problems that generated Platonism and immediately calls into question the epistemological value of sensation.

Lastly, in both the Meno and the Phaedrus, the exposition of the doctrine goes beyond the conclusion provided by this epistemological conclusion, moving into a narrative about the transmigration of souls. This intertwining of two distinct discourses brings to the fore another characteristic of Platonic philosophy: its use of myth - and leads us to question whether this is valuable.

Questions for research and defense of theses

In summary, reminiscence raises four problems. My research will attempt to answer these questions. To begin with, we need to clarify the present state of prenatal knowledge The soul. To understand its function, we must: Consider it as an archetype, which unwittingly conditions our relationship to the world. Secondly, we want to determine the degree to which reminiscence accounts for. It is essential to develop a unified doctrine without starting from a synthetic or synthesis. As it relates to the Platonic corpus[5]. Hence, the dialogues where anamnesis appears will be analyzed and the conclusions will be compared to the other dialogues. In this thesis, we assert that reminiscence is a coherent

[5] The Platonic anamnesis leaves the supporters of these two hermeneutical perspectives in a bind (see below, p.15 sq.).

theory whose variations depend on the function she is required to fulfill in each dialogue. As a result, it is related to epistemology in the Meno, to anthropology in the Phaedo, and to ethics and erotica in the Phaedra. The third point that we will discuss is the role experience plays in acquiring knowledge. The study of Plato's anamnesis reveals that, while he was not an empiricist, he gave the experience a significant place. To conclude, we will analyze the modes of discourse used (logos and muthos) to present the theory. By contrast, we will oppose those who would like to see in the myth the matrix of Platonic thought; rather, we will maintain that the anamnesis myths enunciate an understanding of the cosmos that always emerges from experience - whether it is a noble love or the observance of a good in practice.

The Method

We refuse to establish rigid rules to guide an interpretation of the dialogues: their literary form must be read with a spirit of finesse and is off-putting to a systematic method. Nevertheless, we can enumerate the different types arguments at our disposal and weigh their strengths and weaknesses. The most important arguments are textual. They consist of being based on elements of the text to assign a position to Plato. The presence in the same dialogue of a passage contradicting a textual element can cause us to reconsider his value ; we will then have recourse to other means to decide which passage favor[6].

Second, we must consider the dramatic arguments[7]. They consist in emphasizing an aspect of the dramatic setting of the work (the character of the characters, the dynamics

[6] An example of this kind of intratextual conflict is found in Meno: Socrates first asserts that the soul acquired knowledge at some point during its travels in Hades and the world (81c5- 7); he will later affirm that the truth rests in the soul “at all times” (86a8-9). We are therefore at grips with two textual elements which are neutralized by their opposition and we must resolve the disagreement by other arguments.
[7] This type of argument has become more important about reminiscence following the work of Klein (1965); see section 1.2.2.3, p.31 sq.

of their relationship, the beliefs they hold, etc.) to support or discredit an interpretation[8]. These elements are essential to understanding of the dialogues, but we must use them sparingly and support as much as possible in other ways. Indeed, they depend on the literary sensitivity of each and have a subjective dimension. Thus, the dramatic arguments are invaluable in pointing out avenues for interpretation, but insufficient on their own to constitute evidence capable of carrying the general belief. The third type of argument at our disposal is philosophical[9]. It consists to support or reject an interpretation based on value and philosophical interest the attribution of this position to Plato[10]. The Platonic dialogues are composed of way to make philosophical arguments inevitable, among other things by virtue of the presence of questionable or at the very least confusing reasoning on the part of characters. The author does not seek to teach us a doctrine; he encourages us to engage in philosophical activity. These arguments also have their share of danger: we risk using them to discredit ideas because they offend our preconceived opinions[11] and not for their intrinsic shortcomings. We baptized the last argument to be taken into account "the argument intertextual", which consists in supporting or rejecting a thesis by invoking passages found in other dialogues. Commentators adopting a unitary conception of Plato's work mainly resorts to this type of argument[12]. Due to the nature of our project, we will minimize their jobs and we have

---

[8] Thus, we could say that the initial presentation of the theory of reminiscence (81a-e) is motivated by a desire to overcome the discouragement shown by Meno by offering him a doctrine that satisfies his taste for grandiloquent expositions. He had revealed this inclination earlier in the dialogue, adding that he would stay with Socrates if the latter often spoke to him in this way (76e-77a). This argument suggests that Socrates was expounding the introductory presentation of myth for rhetorical motivations to expound the introductory presentation of anamnesis theory; we must therefore remain cautious about the conclusions that flow from it.

[9] We will see in our first chapter (see p.24 sq.) that this type of argument has gained importance with the rise of analytically oriented interpreters, starting with Vlastos (1965). Klein (1965) and like-minded hermeneutics also employ philosophical arguments as a means of dealing with Socratic irony.

[10] Thus, faced with the conflict noted between passages 81c5-7 and 86a8-9, we are tempted to favor the second; indeed, the acquisition of knowledge before birth does not solve the paradox of Meno (but postpones the problem to the first learning), while the attribution to the soul of a truth which belongs to it from time immemorial constitutes a more interesting and more solid position.

[11] We will see, in the course of our study (the best example is found in Rawson and Weiss, which we will examine in section 2.2.1, p.70 sq.), that some refuse to take reminiscence seriously by virtue of philosophical arguments based on their prejudices about knowledge.

[12] We can think of Fouille (1869) and Festugière (1936); see section 1.2.1.1, p.15 sq

often relegated them to Footnote. This is a fundamental point of our method: by virtue of the rarity of presentations of reminiscence and their inconstancy, it is better not to presume the unity of Platonic thought on this subject, but first develop an understanding of the role of the anamnesis in each dialogue in which it occurs. We let us therefore take the dialogues as autonomous sets, articulating a reflection whose intelligibility can do without doctrinal elements borrowed from other body members. An important consequence of this method will be to force us to leave to a later study the thorny question of the absence of the reminiscence of dialogues elaborating on the theory of knowledge, such as the Republic, the Banquet and the Theaetetus; to answer it would require us to embark on a complete analysis of the epistemology of these dialogues and would lead us too far. We will use nevertheless the intertextual arguments in certain specific contexts, with the aim to increase the plausibility of a thesis that we have established by other means[13].

The Plan

We have structured our text around the problem of the multiplicity of presentations of reminiscence. After an overview of the history of its reception, we deal with the function occupied by the doctrine in each of the three dialogues in which it appears, each time comparing the results obtained with the content of the other two. Our chapters two and three look at the epistemological aspect of the anamnesis in the Menon and we will compare our conclusions with the passages of the other two dialogues during the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter is mainly concerned of the Phaedo, which deals with recollection to prove the immortality of the soul and to specify its status when it incarnates; these considerations belong to what we have called the anthropological dimension of reminiscence. In our sixth chapter, we will examine the Phaedrus, where theory takes on an existential and ethical function. Before undertaking the study of the

[13] In our study of the Phaedo, we will thus appeal to the behaviors and discourses of Socrates through the Platonic corpus to question his adherence to the ascetic morality of dialogue.

dialogues, we want to devote a first chapter to the history of the reception of the doctrine, in order to root our research there.

CHAPTER 1

The State of the matter

The research questions that we have established as well as the method that we adopted are indebted to the history of the reception of reminiscence. By way of As a starting point for our investigation, we will draw an overall picture of how the doctrine has been dealt with to date; this preliminary research will make it possible to better understand the perspective of the authors to whom we will refer later and to situate our work in the history of our discipline. We will divide this first chapter into two sections: a first will summarize the philosophical criticisms opposed to the theory reminiscence and a second will examine problems of an exegetical order, concerning the place of remembrance in the Platonic corpus.

1.1 The Philosophical problems

The history of philosophy has taken the theory of anamnesis as the ancestor of modern theories of innateness, which are characterized by the refusal to take the mind for a tabula rasa; its proponents instead maintain that we are born with a predetermination to learn certain things[14]. Leibniz claims Plato for base his theory of innateness, especially in the New Essays on Understanding human and the Discourse on Metaphysics[15]. Eminent Neo-Kantians, such as Hartmann (1965c1909, p.180-1) and Natorp (1903, p.143-45) consider the reminiscence as a first expression in the history of

[14] The classification of reminiscence among the theories of innateness is questionable, since the myth of the Phaedrus and the introductory passage of Meno (81a-e) affirm that knowledge is acquired before entering a body. Thus we will speak of innateism in Plato in the sense that the soul already possesses knowledge at the time of its incarnation, without presuming anything about the condition of the soul itself. We will deal later (see sections 5.3 and 6.1.1) with the question of whether the mythical narrative should be taken at face value.

[15] We will use the abbreviations NE and DM to designate these works. We will return to Leibniz's position in chapter 3, section 2.2.6 (p.94 sq.), since his reflection can direct us towards an interpretation of reminiscence.

the philosophy of a reflection on the a priori structures of the mind[16]. These authors welcome the taking of awareness of the existence of knowledge independent of experience by Plato, but deplore the contamination of this epistemological accomplishment by psychological and metaphysical notions, which would have led him to conclude that pre-existence of the soul to incarnation. They therefore made a point of indicating the limits of this first version of innateism and highlighting illegitimate leaps between domains heterogeneous of which its author is guilty. We will see two variations of this reproach. First, Leibniz blames Plato for having concluded from the presence of a tacit knowledge within the soul prior to its explicit acquisition; second, the neokantians accuse Plato of superimposing considerations logical and psychological orders, which leads him to confuse the priority epistemology of the conditions of knowledge with the temporal priority of its acquisition.

1.1.1 Analogy of remembering

Leibniz accuses Plato of having gone astray for having followed too far the analogy of remembrance[17]. Indeed, the psychological process of recalling memory is based on the prior acquisition of knowledge; at the time of its acquisition, this knowledge was in us explicitly and consciously, but his memory gradually faded, until completely escaping consciousness. Leibniz himself resorts to the comparison with re-memory aplenty[18], in order to establish the difference between a thought and a knowledge and to prove the possibility of a knowledge removed from consciousness. However, he sees nothing more than an analogy in this: innate ideas have no been forgotten, but they are "hidden by nature" from the creation of the soul[19] (NE I.1, p.41; I.3, p.66). He also argues

[16] See Kim (2010, p.116n.116). Among the Platonic exegetes to have suggested such a comparison, let us note Stewart (1964, p.26-7) and especially Allen (1959-60), author of an influential article on this question.
[17] On this subject, see Hunter and Inwood (1984, p.428-9).
[18] See NE I.1, p.39, 41 and 49.
[19] As Hunter and Inwood (1984, p.431) point out, Leibniz thus recovers the suggestion of Simmias in the Phaedo (76d), which placed the acquisition of knowledge at the birth of man (replacing the "birth of man" by the "creation of the soul"). However, he avoids the objection of Socrates, inspired by the analogy with

against Plato (N E I.1, p.41) by asserting that an acquisition of innate ideas before birth would lead to a regression to infinity and would reduce them to the status of factual truths. Thus, he concludes that it is impossible from the punctual grasp of necessary truths, by virtue of their timelessness; they must rather belong to the spirit at all times and be recognized from within, even if this recognition is caused by an external stimulus.

1.1.2 Confusion between the fields of logic and psychology

The second objection, similar to the preceding one, but more learnedly formulated, is expressed this time by neo-Kantian commentators[20]. It consists in reproaching Plato to have confused a logical problem, concerning the conditions of possibility of knowledge, and a psychological problem, relating to the genesis of the formation beliefs in our mind. On a logical level, we can attest to the existence of necessary truths, as in mathematics, and recognize the inability to empirical experience to guarantee this necessity. However, determining how we form these ideas and learn, for example, that the sum of the angles of a triangle is one hundred and eighty degrees is no longer the province of philosophy, but of psychology. In other words, logic itself proceeds a priori and is concerned with the status of the proposals, their necessity or their contingency and their conditions of truth; as to how these propositions come to be formed in the mind, This is a question that depends on an empirical study of its functioning and therefore belongs to psychology. Plato therefore starts from a realization on the status logic of necessary truths, as in the case of mathematical demonstration du Menon, but then transfers his reflection to the field of psychology by trying to infer the cause of possessing this knowledge from the process of recollection. This confusion between the logical and psychological planes demeans the truths necessary for a contingent status, by

---

remembering, which consists in reproaching for leaving no time for the soul to forget knowledge. Indeed, he rather posits that innate knowledge is at first sight "forgotten", or "hidden" from consciousness (by "nature"). Hunter and Inwood (1984, p.431-2) note that this explanation continues to contain an element of mystery, of "myth" we could say, insofar as Leibniz personifies nature, which would come to hide the truth from inside the mind.

[20] See especially Natorp (1903, p.143, 145), who presents his criticism in these terms.

subordinating their realization by the soul to prenatal apprehension. Such a theory would ultimately bring the mind back to a
tabula rasa, presupposing that everything contained in the soul must have been acquired from a certain moment. Kant rather sees the a priori as the very structure of reason, of so that it is impossible to know it at a precise moment. As we say
Allen: "reason could never come to know it, precisely because there could be no reason without it[21]". The judgment of Leibniz and the Neo-Kantians on reminiscence therefore assigns to it a very precise place in the history of philosophy, as a first version, a
somewhat naive, of the theory of innateness. However, turning to the recent history of Platonic exegesis in the next section, we will see that this criticism must
be nuanced by virtue of the works of the second part of the twentieth century. We we will then be able to reflect again on the nature of the theory of knowledge Platonicism and the place it should occupy in the history of innateism in our three next chapters, dedicated to the epistemological dimension of reminiscence.

1.2 The Exegetical problems

Now that we have acquired an understanding of the philosophical issues of reminiscence, we will study the history of its modern interpretation. We begin by surveying the work relating to anamnesis before 1965, the date marking a turning point in the approach to our subject.

1.2.1 The Exegesis before year 1965

Schleiermacher, with the publication of his introduction to the German translation of corpus in 1804, inaugurates the modern era of Platonic exegesis. In this book,
the author wants to establish the order in which the dialogues are written, corresponding to the follow to learn about Platonic thought. He shows very little interest in the

[21] Allen (1959-60, p.171n.7); Allen's underlining. See Hartmann (1965c1909, p.180-1) for a similar conclusion.

question of reminiscence, which he never mentions. His chapter on the Phaedrus omits any reference to doctrine; he affirms all the same that the dialogue contains « the fundamental myth from which all the following, intervening in the totality of Platonic philosophy, develop, so that the more time passes, the more there is content that passes from the mythical element to the scientific element. For Schleiermacher, Platonic philosophy is therefore born in the myth and then emancipates little by little, becoming more "scientific" [22]thanks to the growing importance of the dialectic. No doubt as a consequence of this position, he pays little attention au Menon, who, according to him, is beginning to tackle the epistemological problems brought to light by the Theaetetus, but does so "provisionally, that is, by a hypothesis mythical" (Schleiermacher means reminiscence); on the contrary, "in the Sophist as well as in other dialogues clearly pertaining to this series, this same question is treated more dialectically and more scientifically[23]. Regarding the Phaedo, he notes that the dialogue shows the link between the universality of knowledge and the immortality of the soul (p.349), which was the conclusion of the passage on reminiscence (Phedo 76e-77a). The anamnesis therefore fits well with the chronology proposed by our author and perhaps this harmony explains the lack of attention he grant him.

Despite the schematic nature of its (never direct) references to reminiscence, we can already draw from this work two problems, which will continue to preoccupy commentators more than two centuries later. The first relates to the mode of speech used by Plato to present his theory to us: he is mythical in the Phaedrus, at half mythical and half argumentative in the Meno and quite argumentative in
the Phaedon. The second, more general problem concerns the gap between treatments of the anamnesis.

1.2.1.1 Synthetic approach

[22] Schleiermacher, 2004, p.124, trans. M.-D. Richard.
[23] Ibid., p.260.

After Schleiermacher, the interpreters, for more than one hundred and fifty years, will be divided into two camps. On the one hand, there are those who want to rebuild the system of Platonic philosophy with a method of “jointing”, which is based on the conviction of the deep unity of the corpus and involves picking here and there in the dialogues different elements to integrate them and form a whole. For these, each text contains a fragment of the thought of the Greek philosopher and the role of the exegete is to synthesize. On the other side, there are the commentators that we will name "evolutionists", who see in the heterogeneity of the doctrines of the different dialogues the sign of the development of a thought over time. For these, the role of the interpreter consists in reconstructing the narrative framework of the history of the evolution of this thought, trying to discover its causes. The reminiscence came to light problematic for proponents of both approaches. The anamnesis irritates the partisans of a synthetic approach by virtue of its different presentations, but also because of its rivalry with the theories of knowledge that found in the Republic and the Banquet. For example, Fouille (1869) manages to expose us to a unified doctrine because it is limited to its presence in the Phaedo[24] and ignores the tension between him and the spiritual vision of the Republic Guardians. Indeed, he takes reminiscence as the form of noêsis when the soul is incarnated (p.246);
however, this interpretation, interesting when limited to the Phaedo, cannot be extended to the entire corpus without argument, since other dialogues, the Republic in

[24] Indeed, Fouille wishes to establish the seriousness of reminiscence and invites us to distinguish the "uncertain hypotheses" about the existence of the soul before its birth, advanced in a mythical framework, from the doctrine of reminiscence itself (p. .248). He therefore pays little attention to the “allegories of the Phaedrus”. So we find again the uneasiness in front of the use of the myth that Schleiermacher showed. However, in the end, Fouille pays little attention to Menon, mentioning, almost parenthetically, that the theory also makes it possible to resolve a sophistic paradox on the acquisition of knowledge (p.249); he explains this solution by introducing a distinction from Theaetetus 131c (and not from Meno) between the possession (κτῆσις) and the use (ἕξις) of knowledge. This reference is perhaps relevant, but requires further explanation, since Socrates makes no allusion to innate knowledge. In general, the passage from one dialogue to another without justification leaves us dubious. Moreover, although he links the theory of reminiscence to that of ideas (p.249), Fouillee gives no reason for the absence of forms in the Menon.

top of the list, rather promote the attainment of noêsis in this life[25] Festugière (1936), in a work which is interested in contemplation in Plato and which therefore deals above all with the Banquet and the Republic, the question arises of the relationship between reminiscence and contemplation (p.189-90n.2; 214-16). Where Fouille took the anamnesis as the specific form of noêsis for the incarnated soul, Festugière the sees rather as its condition: we can contemplate during the incarnation in because of our memories of a plenary contemplation before birth. This solution involves cutting off the recollection of all discursive knowledge[26] and must therefore be rejected[27]. Finally, we can cite the work of Goldschmidt (1947), who, placing himself in a synthetic perspective, only carries out his project by avoiding any mention of the reminiscence[28]. We exposed the troubles caused by reminiscence to these three commentators having a synthetic aim not to denigrate their work, but rather to show

[25] See eg. Republic VII 532a6-b1, 534a2-5.

[26] Festugière wants to respond to Aristotle's criticism of the theory of forms, who reproaches Plato for having "hypostatized concepts" (p.214). To this end, he insists on the existence of a non-propositional relationship to forms, of the order of contemplation; thus, in a fundamental experience, an experience (and not a definition) would reveal the identity between being and the intelligible (see p.218). He is therefore keen to distinguish our ability to form, use and define concepts, which is an essentially linguistic skill, from contemplation: “Without doubt, through thought, I conceive the idea of horse, of greatness, of justice. Moreover, I “know” that the horse in itself, that greatness in itself, that justice in itself exist. Can I say that I “contemplate” them? Thus, to explain the possibility of the contemplation of forms, Plato would have invented the theory of anamnesis which would account for our earthly contemplation as being "the consequence, imperfect, limited, difficult, of a contemplation that was once easy and full". (p.216).

[27] The problem with this rationale is that no dialogue presents such a relationship. If we exclude the Meno (which is not concerned with contemplation), the Phaedo and the Phaedrus seek to explain our use of the logos to relate us to the world of particular things; associating reminiscence with contemplation in order to oppose them to discursive knowledge is therefore impossible. See on this subject Friedländer (1969, p.370n.14); Brisson (1997, p.159-160) also suggests that the anamnesis is present in the Timée because it would be the extension of sensation and our ability to name the sensitive. Moreover, if reminiscence was the condition of contemplation, its absence from the Republic is inexplicable.

[28] Goldschmidt classifies the dialogues according to the link between their structure and the method they employ (p.33), using in this regard as a guide the methodical presentation proposed in Letter VII, supplemented by books VI-VII of the Republic (p.3). Now, the result of this enterprise with regard to reminiscence is that it is completely ignored, despite the pages devoted to Meno, Phaedo and Phaedrus. For example, Goldschmidt affirms that “the great novelty of Meno, the great methodological progress which it accomplishes over the preceding dialogues, resides in the method by hypothesis”; he neglects to mention reminiscence and the only time he alludes to it is to call it "mere encouragement from Socrates", appealing to the story told by wise men and women in divine things to overcome discouragement of Menon (p.118-119).

how difficult it is to assign a place to recollection in the corpus.

1.2.1.2 Evolutionary approach

If the anamnesis gives a hard time to the partisans of a synthetic approach, it nor is it kinder to those who take an evolutionary perspective.

Let us first mention that the use of reminiscence to establish a chronology of Platonic dialogues turned out to be a failure. Indeed, even the absence of the presentation of the theory of forms in the Menon is not enough in this respect[29]. The attempt to Lutoslawski (1897, p.353) to use the anamnesis to show the posteriority of the Phaedrus Phaedo is no more conclusive[30].

An instructive example of an attempt at chronological classification is given to us by Robin (1908, p.181-83), who, after concluding that the reminiscent of the treatment of love in the Banquet, draws the consequence that the Banquet must be an older work:

[29] The most obvious difference between the treatments of reminiscence (and therefore the most likely to be used to establish a chronology between the dialogues) indeed concerns the theory of forms; it is essential to the presentation of the Phaedo and the Phaedrus (since the intelligible realities are the objects brought back to memory), but the Meno does not mention it. However, even this criterion turns out to be inadequate to conclude on the anteriority of Meno, since an endless debate opposes the commentators as to whether the theory of forms is presupposed in this dialogue. The references given by Zeller (1876, p.126-27n.82) tell us that this subject was already controversial during the first half of the nineteenth century. Zeller himself takes sides for the necessity of presupposing the theory of ideas in the Meno, because only universal concepts can be the object of reminiscence. As representative of the opposite position, we can mention Grotes (1856), who affirms that Meno implies the theory of forms, since the anamnesis has the function there of explaining the acquisition of all the sciences, this which involves empirical sciences. This argument does not carry conviction, because Plato excludes knowledge resulting from experience from the number of true knowledge. A century later, the question still divides exegetes, as shown by the debate between Ross (1951) and Gulley (1954). We can conclude that this question is too delicate to be used as support for the establishment of a chronology.

[30] He affirms that the Phaedrus holds the theory of reminiscence as certain (250a), whereas the Phaedo still expressed doubts on this subject (72e). This argument must be rejected, since the more assertive character of the Phaedrus may be attributable to the mythical context which leaves more freedom to the author; moreover, the reservations expressed by Socrates on the whole of his myth later in the dialogue (265b) neutralize this argument.

How to suppose, if the Banquet was posterior to Phaedrus and that it was also at Menon, as is usually admitted without very convincing reasons [...], and also in the Phaedo, that Plato, being in possession of the theory of anamnesis, would not have remembered the applications that he already had do to the problem of love? How to suppose that he had neglected a solution so profound and so closely linked with the most essential dogmas of his philosophy? Each of the degrees of the methodical ascent that leads to Beauty is in effect a means of provoking reminiscence: the Banquet had not yet clearly brought out this idea; the Phaedrus the brings to light in a decisive way.

Robin's argument lacks clarity: his thesis only seems valid for the position relative of the Banquet and the Phaedrus, given that neither the Meno nor the Phaedo bind (from the less, explicitly) eros and anamnesis. What's more, even about the relationship between the Banquet and the Phaedrus, the argument begins to crumble when we look at the overview of dialogues concerned with the theory of knowledge. It is worth

worth considering this question, since its scope goes beyond that of the argument of Robin and is in fact at the heart of the problem of the place of reminiscence in the corpus. Indeed, we could make an argument similar to Robin's about

of the Republic: if Plato believed in the theory of anamnesis at the time of writing this dialogue, how could he have omitted to mention it when he wants to distinguish his vision of education from that of the sophists (VII 518b-c) or when he seeks to attract our attention to the sensations capable of arousing thought (VII 523a-526a)? Thus, the Republic should be either before or after the presentation of the Meno (who opposes the conception of sophistical teaching) and Phaedo (who shows how certain sensations arouse thought). We can still satisfy this requirement, since the generally accepted chronology[31] indeed places the Menon and the Phedon before the

[31] This chronology is based on two arguments: a stylistic one, whose history is well traced in Brandwood (1990) and whose conclusions are brought together by the same author in the introduction to A Word

Republic. However, the reminiscence reappears in the Phaedrus, a dialogue judged to be later than the Republic, among other things because of the version of the dialectic found there, announcing the method of the dialogues of old age. However, to suppose the abandonment of the anamnesis in the Republic then its rehabilitation in the Phedre would be too extravagant. Moreover, the vast majority of exegetes of this period opt for another solution: reminiscence would be presupposed by the Republic. In addition to the two epistemological passages mentioned above33 (518b-c; 523a-526a), reference is made to the following two extracts: first, in 498d, Socrates asserts that he will redouble his efforts in order to convince Thrasymachus and the others with his arguments, or at least in order to be useful to them in their next lives; second, in 621a, Socrates refers to "the Plain of Oblivion" where souls must drink water that makes them lose their memory before being reincarnated. We can see an allusion to the anamnesis in these two crossings; however, this anamnesis differs from the reminiscence theory Platonic, as formulated in the Phaedo and the Phaedrus, since, in both case, it is not the contemplation of forms that is forgotten or recollected, but rather events or arguments with which we have been confronted in our existence singular. As for epistemological passages, their association with reminiscence has its share of problems. First, in 518b-c, Socrates asserts that, unlike what the sophists think, the dunamis of knowledge is already in the soul, which must only be oriented towards the right objects; but, as Bluck remarks (1961, p.51), it is not knowledge that is in the soul here, but only power to acquire it. The parallel with 523a-526a is more convincing, but we

Index to Plato (1976, p.xvi-xviii) . The second argument relies more on doctrinal criteria; the best study in this respect is in Vlastos (1991, ch.2). As for us, we find the establishment of a chronology on the basis of stylistic criteria uncertain – we will consult on this subject the article by Vretska (1958). Its establishment on doctrinal aspects is a complex question, to which our work should provide some answers. On the doubts that can be entertained in relation to Plato's interpretive enterprise based on chronological considerations, see Howland (1991). We must therefore be careful with questions of chronology and avoid using this as a basis for establishing a controversial position.

we always come up against this objection: if Plato believed the theory of reminiscence, exegetes of this period opted for another solution: reminiscence would be presupposed by the Republic[32]. In addition to the two epistemological passages mentioned above[33] (518b-c; 523a-526a), reference is made to the following two extracts: first, in 498d, Socrates asserts that he will redouble his efforts in order to convince Thrasymachus and the others with his arguments, or at least in order to be useful to them in their next lives; second, in 621a, Socrates refers to "the Plain of Oblivion" where souls must drink water that makes them lose their memory before being reincarnated. We can see an allusion to the anamnesis in these two crossings; however, this anamnesis differs from the reminiscence theory Platonic, as formulated in the Phaedo and the Phaedrus, since, in both case, it is not the contemplation of forms that is forgotten or recollected, but rather events or arguments with which we have been confronted in our existence singular.

As for epistemological passages, their association with reminiscence has its share of problems. First, in 518b-c, Socrates asserts that, unlike what the sophists think, the dunamis of knowledge is already in the soul, which must only be oriented towards the right objects; but, as Bluck remarks (1961, p.51), it is not knowledge that is in the soul here, but only power to acquire it. The parallel with 523a-526a is more convincing, but we we always come up against this objection: if Plato believed the theory of reminiscence appropriate, even necessary, to explain this operation, why not have it "remembered"? After all, many elements made it relevant

[32] This position is so widespread that Shorey (1903, p.19n.109) can evoke it as a sign that Plato does not reveal all his doctrine to us in each dialogue: "If Plato must tell all he knows in every dialogue, why is ἀναμνησις not associated with ἔρως in the Symposium and the Republic? »
[33] Many authors refer to these passages. See eg. Adam (1901, p.98, note at 518c), Gulley (1954, p.200) and Bluck (1961, p.50-51).

this exhibition. Thus, the consensus of commentators of that time for recognize the presupposition of the anamnesis in the Republic does not rest on a strong textual foundation; its existence is rather due to the convenience that so many saw in it supporters of an evolutionary interpretation than those who place themselves in a synthetic perspective[34].

Another chronological question debated by early commentators concerns the disappearance of the theory of reminiscence in late dialogues. The origin of this controversy is still found in Robin (1935, p.88-89), who considers it as corollary to a revision of Platonic epistemology between maturity and old age; at this time, Plato would have abandoned the thesis of the knowledge of being by intellectual apprehension in favor of a theory where it is defined in its relationships[35]; therefore, the method of division would have replaced reminiscence. Tea exegetes have rejected this suggestion[36], showing themselves attached to their conviction of the presupposition of the anamnesis in the dialogues of old age. Nevertheless, the disappearance of reminiscence in these dialogues remains enigmatic. Let us note, to conclude this section, the debate initiated by a publication by Gulley (1954),

---

[34] Indeed, without this presupposition, the narrative framework of the story of Plato's intellectual evolution becomes difficult to follow, while the proponents of unity refuse to admit that Plato has abandoned a major thesis in a central dialogue, because that would imply an evolution.

[35] See eg. this passage from page 89: "From the day in fact when Plato recognizes that, to define its object, it is not enough to say that it is the intelligible essence and when he makes it consist in the relations by which the Being is constituted, there can hardly be any question of recollections which are reminders of simple and immediate intuitions. If knowledge no longer consists in apprehending realities, even if they are purely intelligible, learning cannot consist in remembering these realities, but rather in making an effort to think of the relationships that constitute these realities. »

[36] The proximity of the doctrine of reminiscence and the method of division in the Phaedrus constitutes the strongest argument in this respect (see for example Cherniss, 1944, p.47n.36). Robin's response, who, having anticipated the argument, dismisses it by pleading the transitory character of the Phaedra (p.88), leaves us skeptical. Cherniss (1944, p.46-47) offers another interesting argument: “the formal method [scil. the division method] alone may lead to any number of definitions of the same thing unless one has the additional power of recognizing the essential nature that is being sought. In short, diaeresis appears to be only an aid to reminiscence of the idea. Cherniss may be going too far in suggesting that reminiscence is presupposed by the method of division, but we agree with him on the incompleteness of this method, which cannot function on its own.

discussed by commentators the following decade. The article is excellent, since it alone summarizes all the controversies relating to reminiscence that have taken place so far[37]. Its central part (p.197-204) deals with the relationship to sensory experience implied by the history. Leaning on the Phaedo, Gulley considers it absurd that the passage on the anamnesis considers a knowledge of the forms starting from the sensation, opposing this thesis Plato's hatred of the senses in the rest of the dialogue. He concludes (p.198) that "[the] explanation must be that he did not see the full implications of his new theory of anamnesis. He therefore suggests that the Phaedrus corrects the error of the Phaedo in presenting reminiscence as a long and painful process, asking for a "reasoned generalization from the repetition of multiple occurrences[38]". Gulley's interpretation of the Phaedo aroused strong opposition[39]. Nevertheless, he is right to point out the tension inherent in the dialogue as regards sensation: as a whole, the dialogue considers the senses useless, even harmful, to the acquisition of knowledge, while the passage on anamnesis assigns them a necessary role.

In conclusion of this study of Platonic exegesis before 1965[40], we can

---

[37] The first part (p.194-97) looks at the absence of forms in the Menon and the last part (p.209-12) at the disappearance of reminiscence in the late dialogues.

[38] reasoned generalization from repeated instances (p.200).

[39] He has essentially been criticized for presupposing too rigid a sense of "knowing" in the Phaedo (see e.g. Hackforth, 1955, p.75), which was unnecessary: Plato may mean that we remember the form only insofar as we use this concept to relate to sense experience, without having full knowledge of its nature. Gulley's position on the Phaedrus also seems problematic to us, even if it aroused less criticism from his contemporaries. Indeed, how could reminiscence in this dialogue constitute a process of reasoned generalization based on multiple occurrences, when it manifests itself in the phenomenon of love, where a single person is enough to make us remember the beauty? Rather, the text must mean that reminiscence is necessary to explain our use of general concepts covering several particular cases.

[40] We have left aside certain works that fit less into the narrative framework that we have chosen to adopt. We have omitted neo-Kantian studies, such as that of Natorp (1903, p.143-45), Hartmann (1965c1909, p.180-81), Allen (1959-60) and Stewart (1964, p.26-27), because we dealt with it in the first part of this chapter. We have also given little importance to studies of a more historical nature, which focus on the relationship of Platonic theory with earlier versions of anamnesis, particularly among the Pythagoreans. To this end, Cameron's book (1938) is not convincing (see the criticism made of it by Cherniss 1940); one will rather consult Cornford (1952, p.56-58), Vernant (1960) and Bluck (1961, p.61-75). We have also

already draw many lines of thought for our subject. First, note the difficulty of assigning a place to the anamnesis in the Platonic corpus, this theory showing as rebellious to attempts to establish the narrative of the evolution of thought Platonic than to its integration in a synthetic perspective. For this there are two reasons: one is due to variations in the presentations of reminiscence (both in its content than in the mode of discourse that presents it), the other arises from its absence in dialogues where his presence seemed natural.

1.2.2 The contributions in 1965 and their repercussions

The year 1965 marks a pivotal moment for the history of Platonic exegesis on reminiscence, due to the publication of three important studies: on the one side those of Vlastos and Gosling (analytical approach) and on the other that of Klein (from a "literary[41]" approach). This work will mark out the debates about history for the rest of the twentieth century. We will now summarize these contributions and assess their repercussions in the Menon and the Phedon[42] during of the next sections.

---

excluded two books published on the subject of reminiscence, those of Klever (1962) and Huber (1964); our decision is explained because of their lack of historical repercussion, attributable no doubt to their language of publication (especially in the case of Klever), to the lack of conciseness (in the case of Huber – see on this subject the scathing criticism of Skemp 1967) and their conclusions quickly overtaken by the major studies that will appear shortly after their publication, which we will deal with later in this chapter. Finally, we would be remiss if we did not mention the remarkable article by Ovidia Hansing (1928), which our history has neglected for two reasons. First, it is an avant-garde study, anticipating many suggestions proposed more than thirty years later, so that it hardly fits into the story we want to tell about the evolution of the exegesis on reminiscence. Moreover, probably because it was a study ahead of its time, it found little echo among its contemporaries and subsequently fell into oblivion. Bluck (1961, p.59-60) is one of the rare authors to mention it, without recognizing its value.

[41] We have chosen to use this label to refer to this approach, but we do not mean by this that Klein and his successors are interested in the dialogues only for their literary qualities, without worrying about their philosophical content; on the contrary, they consider it necessary to take into account the dramatic dimension of the dialogues to access their philosophical substance.

[42] We exclude the Phaedrus because, due to the allusive character of the reference to recollection, it is treated by the interpreters in the general economy of the myth, so that they do not develop a theory of reminiscence itself. Nevertheless, we can mention, among the authors influenced by Klein, Griswold (1986) and Ferrari (1987); Werner's book (2012) draws on both approaches.

1.2.2.1 Vlastos and the analytical method applied to Menon

Let us first highlight the article by Vlastos (1965), entitled “Anamnesis in the Meno”. This study differs not so much from previous comments in terms of the originality of the thesis he puts forward[43], but for the method he uses, constituting thus the first “analytical” treatment of reminiscence in this dialogue. The originality of this approach can be seen by comparing it to that of Gulley (1962), in their common opposition to Ross (1951, p.18). Ross asserted that the servant of the Menon would discover the answer to the geometry problem empirically, by observing the figures drawn by Socrates. Vlastos criticizes Gulley for limiting himself to a textual argument[44] in its refutation of Ross and rather poses the question of whether Plato could have dispensed with diagrams in his demonstration (p.145). To do this, he imagines different alternative experiences that Plato could have chosen for illustrate the same theory without the need for sensitive support (p.145-48). He concludes that we could “cut off” the conversation between Socrates and the servant and “stick” to his place an invented dialogue where the child would discover the solution to a problem arithmetic using questions without altering the logical content of the discussion (p.146). This suggestion is characteristic of the paradigm shift hermeneutic operated between Gulley and Vlastos: whereas the first is based on textual elements, the second aims rather at the ideal content of the dialogue, independent of its concrete wording. Vlastos' approach therefore has the merit of having brought

[43] Vlastos thinks that remembering explains our ability to extend our self-knowledge by following logical connections. However, as he indicates himself, others have supported this thesis before him. Vlastos refers to Cornford (1952, ch.4), Guthrie (1956, p.107-114), Bluck (1961, p.8-17), Gulley (1962, ch. I) and Crombie (1963, p.50 -52, 136-141). Note that Cornford (see p.52), Guthrie (see p.112-13) and Bluck (see p.9) have in fact very different theses from Vlastos, insofar as they consider that innate knowledge is inherently unconscious or tacit, which Vlastos rejects (see p.153n.14). The assimilation by Vlastos of his own position to that of these authors shows that at this time, exegetes were not yet debating this question and that they were unaware of the importance of such differences.

[44] Thus, commenting on Gulley's statement about the lack of mention of sense experience in the servant's questioning, Vlastos concludes: "This is true, but settles nothing. For it is open to the retort that Plato does not have to mention sense-experience in order to direct attention to it. (p.144). »

more philosophical reflection on reminiscence[45].

Another way in which Vlastos has helped reinvigorate interest in the reminiscence lies in the distinction between the study of anamnesis and the analysis of "data" on which it is based[46] (p.143). Indeed, Vlastos is enthusiastic about the access that Plato offers us to the facts on which he based himself for establish his theory. He therefore conceived the project of putting in parentheses all assumption about this doctrine and to focus only on the experiences that she must explain, in order to determine the exact phenomenon that Plato wanted to conceptualize. It is only once this phenomenon has been sufficiently elucidated that he wonders why Plato had recourse to the theory of reminiscence to explain it. This approach allows Vlastos to bypass the spontaneous reaction of the contemporary reader, who smiles at a thesis involving the transmigration of souls; rather, it emphasizes the interest and the philosophical depth of the problems with which Plato was struggling. Vlastos believes he is doing so well in this company that he concludes his study with this reflection:

The theory of recollection in the Meno is the work of a profoundly religious spirit united with a powerful philosophical mind. Those who come to our text without sympathy for its religious inspiration are apt to look at this union with annoyance and to think that Plato might have been a great philosopher or, at any rate, a good one, had it not been for his religion. The results of this paper, they may then think, fully confirm this feeling. For do they not come to this: that when the data of the theory are analyzed as they have been here, they exhibit a process of inference and insight which can be explained very well by Plato's theory, provided only it be stripped of just those features of it which are directly assignable to its religious provenance? (p.166)

This conclusion thus testifies to the conviction of Vlastos to have proposed a interpretation of the anamnesis that makes the theory philosophically interesting.

---

[45] We consider this approach insufficient on its own to provide a full understanding of the Platonic texts. In this regard, see the criticism that O'Brien (1991) makes of Scott (1991) and of what he calls "the Oxford school", which could just as well apply to Vlastos.

[46] This division structures the whole of his article, the first part of which considers the "data" and the second the theory which must explain them.

Later in this study[47], we will criticize this interpretation. However, we recognize that Vlastos' approach, going beyond the letter of the text to aim for its ideal content, has awakened interest in the philosophical tenor of the doctrine of reminiscence and proved fertile for Platonic studies.Vlastos has influenced many interpreters of Meno. In clear continuity with this authors, let us mention the work of Moravcsik (1971), Thomas (1978), Canto-Sperber (1991a) and Jenks[48] (1992).

In a similar approach, but with a different interpretation, let us mention first the contributions of Irwin (1974, 1977 and 1995), followed by Fine (1992, 2003, 2007 and 2014), who developed Irwin's theses and supported them more systematic. These authors claim that Socrates felt no need to assume prenatal knowledge to respond to Menon's paradox, but that the true opinions acquired in this life suffice in this respect; as a result, the theory of reminiscence only serves to explain our ability to favor true opinions over detriment of the false ones when the rebuttal reveals a contradiction between them[49]. Finally, we can link to Vlastos the study by Scott (2006), who interprets the anamnesis in the tradition of the "Oxford school", whose hermeneutical premise is to focus on the logical dimension of Platonic texts by purging them of their metaphysical and religious[50] elements. For Scott, the passage on remembering supposes that we have latently within us true propositions which explain our ability to follow logical connections; he considers that reminiscence allows to attain knowledge as true propositions as well as remembered are related to each other and integrated into a whole coherent[51].

[47] See below, section 2.2.2, p.72 sq.
[48] All these exegetes indeed consider that we have in us certain propositions or certain concepts and that reminiscence consists in following the logical links from these to increase our knowledge.
[49] We will propose a refutation of Fine's thesis in section 2.2.4, p.85 sq.
[50] The initiator of this movement is Burnyeat; see his 1977 article, which deals with reminiscence.
[51] We will propose a refutation of Scott's thesis in section 2.2.3, p.79-90.

1.2.2.2 Gosling and the analytical method applied to the Phaedon

Vlastos' study was on the Meno; in 1965, another contribution, signed by Gosling, attacks the Phaedo from an analytical perspective. This article had an impact on the secondary literature of this dialogue comparable to that of Vlastos on the Meno, with perhaps less happy results. Gosling's approach is characterized by a meticulous attention paid to the introductory passage of the doctrine (Phaedo 73b-74a), which bears on remembrance in a daily sense (independent of any charge metaphysical). As with Vlastos, it is not the thesis[52] that matters here, but the method. Gosling inaugurates a way of approaching reminiscence in the Phaedo which consists in rigorously treating each textual element independently (in generally going back to the introductory passage), in order to subsequently construct a interpretation of the passage based on this analysis[53]. If such an approach can produce convincing results when applied to a Cartesian author, it does not adapt well to the mode of expression chosen by Plato: the dialogues, by virtue of their imitation of a oral conversation, are far from making a systematic and precise use of language; the analyze without taking it into account and without first gaining an understanding overview of the text leads to errors, even hermeneutic deviations where the interpreters compete in ingenuity to solve artificial problems, created by the use of an inappropriate method for the object in question.

The analytical studies on the anamnesis in the Phaedo published in the wake of that of

---

[52] Gosling maintains the following thesis: the introductory passage poses as a condition for reminiscence the awareness of the deficiency of the image compared to the original; however, requiring an awareness of all the differences between the image and the original would constitute too strong a condition; Rather, Socrates means that we must be aware of the image status of that which provokes recollection. Accordingly, Gosling thinks he can establish that “to fall short in resemblance is not to fail in that property in which you do resemble, but to lack some further property which would be needed for total resemblance (p.161). »

[53] Although Gosling's approach can, like Vlastos', be described as "analytical", it is nevertheless very different: Vlastos ignores the details of the text (even if it means rewriting it!) in order to achieve its ideal logical content. ; Gosling is not interested in the ideal logical content of the text as a whole, but begins by rigorously and systematically analyzing every detail without an overview, so as to first establish the meaning of the parts of the text, and only then move towards its general meaning.

Gosling over the next decade[54] thus got bogged down in a number of ever-increasing problems[55] due to the lack of a "synoptic view" of their perspective. In this regard, we must welcome the publication of Bostock's book (1986) on the Phaedo, who, without neglecting the points of detail raised by his predecessors[56], has the deserves to have refocused the debate. In fact, it addresses the main question of passage, concerning the status of innate knowledge that must be explained by the theory of reminiscence[57]. Taking up a classic thesis, but formulating it in a more precise by giving it a linguistic twist, he suggests that this knowledge bears on the meaning of words referring to forms: the general understanding of the meaning words, sufficient to use them in a correct way to describe our experience, testifies to our recollection of things intelligible by sensation.

This return to the essential question posed by the passage from reminiscence and the clarity of the thesis put forward in this regard prepared the ground for Scott's interpretation of anamnesis[58], whose works (1987, 1995 and 1999) are among the most

---

[54] The most important are found in Ackrill (1973) and Gallop (1975).

[55] Here is an overview of these problems. On the introduction to the passage of reminiscence, we first looked at the conditions of reminiscence (73c1-d1); it has been asked whether these are necessary or sufficient conditions (Gosling, 1965, p.155; Gallop, 1975, p.115-16), what it means to "recognize X" (Ackrill, 1973, p. 182-83; Gallop, 1975, p.116-17) and what the expression "to be the object of another knowledge" meant (Ackrill, 1973, p.183-85; Gallop, 1975, p.117 -18). We have also questioned the meaning of the remark on remembering from resemblance (Ackrill 1973, p.185-90) and what was meant by Socrates' statement about the need to be aware of the deficiencies one thing to another to remember (Gosling, 1965; Ackrill, 1973, p.190-92; Gallop, 1975, p.118). We then looked at the scope of the "we" used by Socrates (Ackrill, 1973, p.192; Gallop, 1975, p.120; Bostock 1986, p.67-69; Scott 1987, p.354-56 , Bedu-Addo 1991, p.38-39, Franklin 2005, p.290 and 301). Regarding the passage where Socrates differentiates Equality from equal things (74b7-c6), we wondered in what sense equal things appear equal to one and unequal to another (Gallop, 1975, p.121 -23; Bostock, 1986, p.73-78); in what sense equal things are deficient in relation to equality (Ackrill, 1973, p.192-95; Gallop, 1975, p.126-29 and Bostock, 1986, p.85-94) and finally what did the expression "things being equal themselves" used by Socrates (Gallop, 1975, p.123-25; a complete article is devoted to the question by Wedin, 1977 and Apolloni, 1989; see also Bostock, 1986, p.78- 83).

[56] See previous note for exact references.

[57] See p.69-71 and 94-101.

[58] Scott published his first study on reminiscence in 1987, the year after the publication of Bostock's book. In this article, he refers twice to Bostock as offering the most thorough exposition of what he calls the Kantian understanding of reminiscence (p.353n.16). He pays special attention to Bostock later (p.357), discussing some of his arguments.

influential in the end of the twentieth century. Disagreeing with Bostock[59], Scott argues that only philosophers, having already acquired a knowledge of forms by other means, can recall intelligibles; consequently, this theory is irrelevant to the explanation of the everyday use of language or the formation of concepts. Even though Scott argues for her thesis in the three dialogues where she appears, the Phaedo is the one where the stakes are the most important[60]. This interpretation has aroused strong opposition[61]. Nevertheless, we recognize that the contributions of Scott prompted a re-reading of the texts which led to a deepening of the general understanding of anamnesis in contemporary exegesis.

1.2.2.3. Klein and the literary approach

The third important study to appear in 1965 was that of Jacob Klein[62], A Commentary on Plato's Meno. In this work, Klein devotes more than a hundred pages to reminiscence (pp. 88-202), including a long digression on this theme from outside the Menon (p.108-172). This study is distinguished by the attention paid to dramatic setting of the work[63]. Klein is

---

[59] Moreover, commentators wishing to discuss Scott's theses thereafter often oppose Bostock to him as representing the classical position. See eg. Ferejohn (2006, p.220-24).

[60] Indeed, for the Meno, the question of knowing if we remember ourselves on a daily basis does not arise, while the treatment of the Phaedrus of reminiscence is very summary.

[61] Note especially the articles by Osborne (1995), Williams (2002) and Franking (2005). We will offer our own refutation in section 4.1.1, p.146 sq.

[62] Klein is a close friend of Léo Strauss, initiator of a new approach to texts on the history of philosophy (especially political philosophy); this consists in taking into account that philosophers, for fear of persecution, hold a double discourse in their writings: an exoteric, accessible to all, and an esoteric, that only other philosophers can decipher (see Strauss, 1941) . Both through his writings (see among others City and Man, 1964, which contains an interpretation of the Republic) and through his pupils (Benardete, Bloom, Rosen, etc.), Strauss exerted an undeniable influence on the Platonic exegesis. Given that Strauss's contributions are controversial and often denigrated (see especially Burnyeat, 1985), let us mention that Klein, even if he recognizes a hermetic character to the dialogues, does not share his fixation on political philosophy and does not interpret the dialogues in this direction. It would therefore be ill-advised to confuse their hermeneutical perspective

[63] One can see the revolution implied by this proposition when one compares it on this subject with the judgment of Goldschmidt (1947, p.2), who opposes the dramatic considerations to the philosophical ones.

certainly not the first to study the aspect literary dialogues, but he deplores "how little light the various attempts to cope with it throw on the actual drama aimed at in any given dialogue[64]". The originality of Klein consists in showing that taking into account the dramatic framework of a dialogue is essential to access its philosophical substance. One of the main reasons explaining both the need to consider the dramatic context as well as the failure commentators having tried it results from the famous Socratic irony. Irony implies a distance between what is said and what is thought, so that we do not
We can take everything Socrates says at face value. For Klein, we
must read the Platonic dialogue with great thoroughness and literary sense and philosophical, in order to pierce the true intentions of the discussion leader. However, the doctrine of reminiscence would be a case in point of Socratic irony, so that the
reader must beware of showing the same credulity as Menon[65] in front of
exposition of this theory. According to Klein, Socrates would not believe the account of the prenatal contemplation of forms by the soul; reminiscence would rather present a model which would give a pictorial representation of a psychic faculty, which he calls "dianoetic eikasia", found in the Republic[66]. In dialogues where
reminiscence appears, Socrates would have coated this doctrine with a myth in order to stimulate our ardor and incite us to devote ourselves to the effort of learning[67]. Klein is thus the first interpreter to seriously challenge the thesis of the presupposition of
the anamnesis in the Republic, accepted by the vast majority of his predecessors; to contrary, he thinks that the remembrance disappears in this dialogue because it is replaced
by scientific design. The presentations of reminiscence only do take up the theory of the Republic in a mythical form. With this fine, insightful, but also sibylline work, Klein established a new approach to reminiscence, which consists in believing that for reasons

[64] Klein, 1965, p.5.
[65] Menon indeed memorizes everything that is told to him without a critical mind, on the condition that it is an impressive theory.
[66] See eg. p.129.
[67] See especially p.170-72.

dramatic and pedagogical, Socrates (and by extension Plato) hides his thought about of this theory. After this suggestion by Klein, Plato's adherence to the belief of a prenatal acquaintance became suspect in the eyes of many interpreters; he now had to consider the possibility that Plato would use memory to illustrate a deeper conception of innateness, likely to withstand criticism philosophical ideas that we exposed in the first section of this chapter. Anderson's article (1971) takes up Klein's approach to the Meno, noting the aporias aroused by reminiscence and the clues that suggest that Plato was aware. The work of Ebert[68] (1973 and 2007) and Weiss[69] (2001) goes in the same senses. While these commentators raise some interesting points, they obscure often the philosophical interest of the passages on anamnesis, which they treat as a comedy, so they don't have the depth that Klein did. Klein's influence on the Phaedo proved to be more fruitful[70]. First, we have to mention the work of Dorter (1972, 1982), who is interested in the fact that the doctrine or reminiscence cohabits with a rival theory of knowledge in this dialogue; the latter, which he baptizes the "theory of purification", indeed sees the acquisition of know as the progressive purification of the soul until the attainment of a integral contemplation of forms. The interest of this rivalry is enhanced by the fact that it has repercussions on the scale of the corpus, where certain dialogues (Banquet, République) make the promotion of the acquisition of knowledge by intellectual vision and other (Menon, Phedre) by reminiscence. Dorter hesitates between

[68] In the 1973 article, he claims that the geometric demonstration only offers a structural analogy between the stages of the learning process and that of remembering; however, Menon, due to his deficient conception of knowledge (based on the model of sensation), fails to go beyond the mythical version of the theory of reminiscence. In the 2007 article, he seeks to show, by a close reading of the passage, that Socrates never claims to believe in the anamnesis himself, but rather that it is Meno who acquiesces to the questions posed by Socrates in this sense. .

[69] According to Weiss, Socrates only teaches the answer to the servant. She concludes that the whole reminiscence theory is a vast farce and should not be taken seriously. Rather, she believes that the Meno defends the Socratic position that moral knowledge is not accessible to human wisdom, but that only opinion is, an opinion acquired by refutation and which therefore always remains subject to reversal. by a new argument.

[70] In addition to the two authors we will mention, we can cite Burger (1984), Ahrensdorf (1995) and again Ebert (1994).

two solutions to reconcile these theories. Most often[71], he thinks, like Klein, that the anamnesis constitutes a mythical version of the other theory, more interesting on the philosophical level: "the doctrine of recollection may be intended not literally but metaphorically, and in particular as a genetic myth depicting the relationship between the embodied soul and the forms[72]". However, he ends both his article on the matter (1972, p.218) and the chapter on the reminiscence of his book on the Phaedo (1982, p.69) on the same conclusion, which offers an alternative interpretation:

…it would not be surprising if he felt that the mind's relation to the forms could not be expressed exactly, but could be characterized in different ways that express different aspects of this relation. Thus, it may be more accurate to suggest not that recollection is a metaphorical version of purification, but that both doctrines are intended only as approximations. It may even have been to prevent our taking either of them literally, that Plato made use of these two not entirely reconcilable accounts[73].

Through his study, Dorter therefore returned to the problem of the difficulty of assigning a room for reminiscence in the corpus. By virtue of his final hypothesis on the complementarity of anamnesis and purification, we can consider Dorter as a precursor to Kahn's work of the last decade[74]. The introduction to the Phedon composed by Dixsaut (1991) also comes from the angle approach defined by Klein[75]. The originality of this interpretation lies in the argument it provides for understanding the pre-existence of the soul at incarnation in a logical rather than temporal sense (see p.103-4); she goes up to conclude that "[the] pre-existence should not be understood chronologically, the anteriority must be understood as an ontological superiority and as a

[71] Dorter, 1972, p.212-218; 1982, p.65-68.
[72] Dorter, 1982, p.68.
[73] This is the 1982 text, with a minimal and non-significant difference with that of 1972.
[74] We will come back to this work in the last section of this history (see section 1.2.3.4, p.49 sq.).
[75] The reason why we see Klein's influence in it is due to the author's propensity not to take the text at face value, but to see in it a deeper meaning, accessible to readers more versed in philosophy.

condition epistemological[76]. Dixsaut thus opens the door to a reading of reminiscence that makes a much more philosophically sound doctrine, resistant to criticism that we proposed at the beginning of this chapter and bringing it closer to the idealism modern.

As this brief history shows, studies of the last third of the twentieth century on reminiscence are distinguished by the use of new methods. They put in highlights the importance of giving weight to dramatic arguments (Klein) and of a philosophical nature (Klein and Vlastos) in relation to textual arguments, which opened up a much wider range of hermeneutical possibilities.

1.2.3 Recent studies

In conclusion of this history of the exegesis of reminiscence, we want to now deal with the recent contributions that have influenced our study[77] and of which we we are indebted.

1.2.3.1 Dixsaut

First, let us mention the penetrating study by Dixsaut (2006). The author draws our attention to the proximity of two different memories in Plato: the first is a safeguard of perception or teaching, is attached to the physical condition of man and comes under a linear temporality; the second (the one linked to the

[76] Dixsaut, 1991, p.103.

[77] We leave aside recent studies by Fine (2014, p.31), McCabe (2015, p.190-207) and Benson (2015, p.49-91). We consider in fact that there is not a great innovation in the treatment that Fine makes of the same thesis that she had defended in 1992; moreover, the systematic absence of reference to commentators of an allegiance other than analytical, already worthy of reproach in 1992, is unforgivable in 2014. McCabe's chapter is not without interest, but it concerns above all the paradox of Menon and does not bring much new to the subject of reminiscence. Finally, Benson treats the question from the angle of the conditions given by Socrates to resolve Meno's paradox, which adds little to the perspective in which we will conduct our research.

reminiscence) is purely intellectual, always eludes us (it must be reproduced each time anew) and consists in the progressive reappropriation of a total knowledge lost as a result of the incarnation. The influence of Dixsaut will be felt above all in our section on the anthropological aspect of reminiscence in the Phaedo (chapter 5), where we will develop the duality it suggests.

1.2.3.2 Brisson

Brisson's recent works[78] on reminiscence (2007 and 2008) are also very useful. In the 2007 article, Brisson attacks the introductory passage of the anamnesis in the Menon and suggests that it carries a hidden meaning, deeper than its meaning of surface[79]. In the 2008 article, he is interested in the link between muthos and anamnêsis, considering that a presentation on the soul must be mythical, by virtue of the statute intermediate ontology of it. We will look at the role of speech mythical at section 6.1.1[80].

1.2.3.3 Rawson and González

We will combine the work of Rawson (2006) and Gonzalez[81] (2007), because of the kinship of their position. These two studies are very well conducted and have greatly enriched our understanding of reminiscence. Since these works support the most recent and original thesis on reminiscence, we want to take a moment to critique it, so as to explain why we think it is necessary to consider the matter again.
The study by Gonzalez (2007) stands out for its angle of approach to Menon; in effect,

---

[78] Brisson also published an article in 1999 where he was more interested in the relationship between the anamnesis in Plato and other related stories, often with religious connotations, where the soul had to keep its memory so that its judgment had a senses. We should also mention his introduction to Phedre (2004c1989), where he treats myth from a synthetic perspective.
[79] In agreement with Brisson, we will support in section 2.1.1. (p.59 sq.) that the introduction to reminiscence cannot be taken literally.
[80] See below, p.255 sq.
[81] We are also indebted to the earlier work of Gonzalez (1998a and b) where he approached reminiscence by linking it to the existence of non-propositional knowledge within the soul. We will discuss this position in section 2.2.5, p.90 sq.

he wonders about the sense in which we can say that “the truth of beings exists always in the soul[82]” (Meno 86b1-2) and notes the failure of all attempts exegetical about it. Indeed, either they adopt a conception of knowledge innate too weak, unable to provide a starting point for Socratic inquiry, either, on the contrary, this conception is too strong and makes the investigation futile, its result being already known. Gonzalez therefore proposes his own thesis, according to which the truth is present in the soul as the object of an innate desire (p.289); the ingenuity of this solution comes of the fact that desiring a thing makes it possible to be in contact with it without fully own.

Rawson (2006) constructs his article around the distinction between two versions of innateism: the first, which he calls "dispositional", excludes all innate content of knowledge, but attributes to the mind only the capacities of produce in response to certain external stimuli; the second, which he calls "no dispositional,” places knowledge itself in the soul from birth. Socket Literally, reminiscence is therefore situated in this second category. Rawson suggests limit the importance of the anamnesis by taking it as an image of the true Plato's theory of knowledge, in order to attribute to it a conception disposition of innateism, more solid philosophically. He thus asserts that for Plato, only a desire for knowledge would remain in the soul at birth and that learning would consist in transforming this desire into knowledge thanks to skills innate. Let us therefore consider the arguments of our two authors. Rawson strives to show that despite what the occurrences of the theory of reminiscence, Plato adhered to a dispositional variant of innateism. He bases his thesis on the following three points, for which he proposes a argument:

[82] This is a way of asking the question which makes it possible to bring together most of the important studies published on reminiscence in the Menon since 1965. The method which we have employed in the section on the Menon of our first chapter is directly inspired.

(1) The presentation of the doctrine in the Meno and the Phaedrus is not to be taken seriously.

(2) The Phaedo presents a version of innateism not somewhat reduced dispositional capacity and only as a provisional model.

(3) Banquet and Republic theories of knowledge are incompatible with the anamnesis: these two dialogues rather prefer alternative models that fall under a dispositional conception of innateness.

Rawson (p.145-148) thinks that the dispositional model of "mental pregnancy", presented in the Banquet, is the model best able to represent the position Plato's epistemology. In this dialogue, Diotime describes the development of our conceptions of beauty such as the development of an embryo (p.146-7), which would give birth to logoi with each new step climbed by the lover on the ladder of love. Thus, the images of beauty fertilize the initial potentiality of the lover, so that his understanding progresses and is articulated in his speeches. Rawson concludes that the soul is deprived of knowledge at birth, but possesses only "this inarticulate innate potentiality, expressed in the beginning as a confused desire rather than as a belief about beauty (p.148)". The exposure of the soul to various types of beauty (physical, moral, gnostic and finally beauty itself) enables this potential to be developed.

Gonzalez (2007) takes a position similar to that of Rawson and also believes that the soul does not "contain" knowledge; he considers it rather a movement perpetual towards truth (p.297), a movement that he likens to eros (p.292). Gonzalez bases his interpretation above all on a reading of the Symposium. As such, he identifies four textual elements (p.289-91):

(B1) The characterization of the philosopher (the lover of knowledge) as an intermediary between ignorance and knowledge (204a) implies that eros is in some way in contact with the knowledge, but without having it.

(B2) The genealogy of Eros as the son of Penia and Poros expresses the same idea, since it evokes a mixture of lack and possession.

(B3) The description of knowledge as constant concern (μελέτη) for what constantly flees (207e-208a) only makes sense within the framework of a characterization of eros as an intermediary between having and not having; the implicit suggestion of passage would therefore be that our relationship to knowledge is by nature erotic.

(B4) Socrates recognizes that desire is desire for what is ours own, on the condition that what is really ours clean be good (205d10-e7).

However, the Lysis throws a interesting light on this assertion (221d-e); the dialogue associates the object of desire with what belongs to us in an intimate way, so that his deprivation is felt as lack. Gonzalez concludes from this that the object of eros is both what belongs to us and what we lack.

As to how eros can provide us with a usable starting point to discover knowledge, Gonzalez responds philosophically and not textual. He concludes that eros must be a rational desire that somehow "sees

what he desires (p.292). To support this position[83], he once again refers to a textual element from the Symposium, according to which eros not only desires the knowledge, but is able to provide it (203d6-7). He concludes that the rebuttal is sufficient on its own to allow the Socratic inquiry to progress, since in eliminating the false claims of knowledge that silenced desire, it reactivate desire.

Rawson and Gonzalez's theses have notable similarities and flaws similar, so we will proceed to their common criticism. We them
We will oppose two arguments: one philosophical and the other textual.
On a philosophical level, we wish to question the possibility that a desire innate is sufficient to explain the constitution of knowledge. Our two authors are unclear as to how a desire can be transformed into awareness. They are also at odds with each other when it comes to characterize this desire, since Rawson posits that a "confused desire" belongs to the soul at the
birth (p.148), while Gonzalez speaks rather of an “informed desire[84]”. the development of this opposition reveals a problem in the attempt to bring the innate knowledge to a desire.

Let's start by seeing how Rawson presents things. He says we have in us from birth this "unarticulated potentiality", this "confused desire", which will allow us, thanks to a good education, to rise on the ladder of love up to the knowledge. This education is described by Rawson as a climb "through ascending cycles of desire, mental birth, recognition of a higher beauty and further

[83] Gonzalez also refers to Scott and Welton (2000, p.151) who thus interpret the association of eros with a messenger.
[84] “informed desire” (p.292). The context shows that the adjective does not mean "which has no form", but rather "which has information ».

desire[85]". Rawson mentions on at least two other occasions that the rise of the ladder of love requires the recognition of different forms of beauty[86]. In this description, he therefore asserts that desire is part of a circle which involves the recognition of beauty and that it is this recognition that causes the exaltation of desire. In other words, desire is in a relationship of dependence on something else that comes give it its object. What is this other thing? In the Phaedrus, which we will examine presently, this "something else" is identified with reminiscence – and the expression used by Rawson ("re-cognition") evokes, as if by chance, strongly this doctrine[87].

As for Gonzalez's thesis, which posits in the soul an informed desire, capable of provide knowledge by itself, the whole problem lies in "information" of this desire. If we refer to our daily experience of desire, we know that desiring is insufficient to acquire the object of our desire, no matter how exalted of this one. In fact, a strong desire is likely to get us its object only in a derivative sense, if it gives us the energy and the discipline to achieve our end. Now, the passage from the Banquet (203d6-7) to which Gonzalez refers to affirm that eros "desires wisdom and is able to provide it" should rather be interpreted in this sense. Placed in its context, this quotation draws a conclusion from the genealogy of Eros, who takes as much from his mother (Penia) for his poverty, as from his father (Poros) for his inventiveness. Eros can therefore provide wisdom not because he found it within himself, but rather because he is industrious and possesses the energy necessary to discover means

---

[85] p.147, we underline.

[86] "At each stage, the recognition of a more adequate conception of beauty is associated with begetting or delivering a logos" (p.147); "Rather, this inarticulate innate potentiality […] is developed or actualized through successive stages (recognizing physical beauty, then beauty of souls and customs, then beauty of knowledge, then the Form)" (p.148, passim).

[87] It is not necessary to go so far as to claim that the anamnesis theory is implied in the Banquet passage for our purposes; it suffices to note that Rawson's reading of the Symposium is incapable of sticking to the position of desire alone to account for our acquisition of knowledge. He must add a "recognition" of beauty, the nature of which he does not explain and which strangely resembles reminiscence.

of obtaining it[88]; thus, the first three characteristics that Eros takes from his father (203d5) make him courageous (ἀνδρεῖος), vigorous (ἴτης) and intense (σύντονος). This passage therefore emphasizes the great energy of Eros which allows them to discover ways to circumvent the difficulties they encounter, and not on its "information".
No textual element therefore supports the thesis of an “informed desire”; the base philosophy of this thesis is also problematic, insofar as all the desires that we know are by themselves incapable of obtaining their object, little regardless of their level of intensity. To speak of an "informed desire" is to have recourse to a metaphor, in the sense that the innate dimension of our relationship to knowledge is represented in desire term; however, mere desire is by itself insufficient to enable the development of a necessary and universal knowledge.
Thus, the first problem of the thesis which reduces innate knowledge to an innate desire is its inability to explain, on a philosophical level, how the exaltation of a such a desire can give us knowledge.

Another argument, on a textual level this time, casts doubt on this thesis. Indeed, the palinody of the Phaedrus deals a hard blow to our authors, since the dialogue puts the desire in a relationship of dependence on reminiscence. But before making this point, let's see what our authors say about this dialogue. Gonzalez speaks relatively little of the Phaedrus, which is surprising given the thesis he supports. He limits himself to saying this (p.294):

(1) Socrates explicitly links reminiscence and desire. In a footnote (n.24), he refers to Robin (1908[89], p.180) to conclude that love is the condition of reminiscence.

[88] Eros is therefore a good reflection of the resourcefulness and inventiveness of his father (Poros). For the same reason, we cannot accept Gonzalez's argument (p.290) about the genealogy of eros: although "Poros" can be translated, in a derivative way, as "wealth", it is more natural (and more in accordance with the text) to take it as an "expedient", "the one who manages to pass ».
[89] Gonzalez quotes the 1964 edition, in which the passage in question is found on page 149.

(2) Socrates characterizes the forms as objects of desire and asserts that if the forms were visible they would cause terrible erotic passions (250d4-6).

The second point is of no importance for our purpose: it goes without saying that for Plato forms are objects of desire, but it does not follow that knowledge innate in the soul can be reduced to this simple desire. As for the first point, we think that the link drawn between reminiscence and desire is on the contrary problematic for the thesis by González. Indeed, Socrates affirms that reminiscence is the condition of desire (and not the opposite, whatever Robin says). Thus, he explains, after the passage which describes the anamnesis:

So that's where all this talk about the fourth form of madness: in this case, when, seeing the beauty from here below and remembering the true (beauty), we take wings and that, provided with these wings, one experiences a strong desire to to fly away without succeeding… (249d-e, trans. Brisson)

In this passage, the growth of the wings (and the desire that accompanies it) is caused by the remembering true beauty at the sight of one of her images. Thus, the report established between eros and anamnesis in the Phaedrus makes the first depend on the second. Subsequently, dialogue cannot agree to bring innate knowledge back to desire; he poses at contrary a serious problem with this thesis, by maintaining that the desire needs the reminiscence to be awake. The same problem concerns Rawson's thesis. In order to minimize the importance of the anamnesis in the Phaedrus, the latter insists on the fact that many models of the knowledge are present in the Palinodie (p.140): eidetic vision, nutrition spirituality, remembrance and growth of wings. According to Rawson, the wings represent an innate potentiality for philosophical knowledge (p.141), which comes under the alternative model to that of reminiscence. In other words, Rawson sees the four models of knowledge presented in the Phaedrus as being superimposed one on

the other, without structure or order, in a competitive relationship. For sole support of this thesis, he mentions Socrates' later judgment on the myth: "when he looks back on this vivid mixture of models (see kerasantes, 265b), Socrates warns Phaedrus against taking it too seriously (p.141)". Rawson thus suggests that Socrates would discredit on the palinody because it associates incompatible models, which would be indicated by its use of the participle "kerasantes" (mixing). However, in the passage in question, Socrates claims to have mixed the true and the false about the passion of love, without specify further. He is therefore far from associating this "mixture" with a confusion between incompatible epistemological models! Moreover, to consider in detail the palinodie, this "mixture" does not appear at all like a confused heap of incompatible patterns; on the contrary, a structure skilfully built allows the four models to be integrated into an orderly whole. Thereby, the "mental vision" of things in themselves is reserved for the condition of the soul before incarnation and is contrasted with that of a recollection of forms after the birth; dialogue can thus highlight the impossibility of direct access to forms in this life and the need to go through their images. The vision and the reminiscence are not presented either as alternative models to that of the growth of the wings, but they are tuned with him, through the fourth model (spiritual nutrition): it is the vision (for the soul outside the body) and the anamnesis (for the embodied soul) of the intelligible realities which ensure the nutrition of wings, allowing their growth. In other words, the pattern of wing growth (which represents the development of desire[90]) is placed in a relationship of dependence on model of recollection, thus suggesting that desire needs reminiscence to grow. As an appendix to these arguments, we can still invoke an intertextual argument, concerning a passage from Philebus (33c-35d, especially 35b-d) which develops makes explicit the suggestion we found in the Phaedrus, namely that desire must depend on memory. Indeed, within the framework of an analysis of the pleasures specific to the soul, the Philebus is interested in the nature of sensation,

[90] See 252b.

memory and desire. The examples used in this passage do not concern the relation of the soul to the forms intelligible; they only refer to bodily sensations, to memories of these sensations and the desires they arouse. However, there is no indication that the relations identified here between memory and desire do not remain valid for the desires spiritual. The Philebus therefore explains sensation as a form of tremor which reaches the soul (33d) and the memory as the safeguard of this feeling (34a). By the way, Socrates takes advantage of this (34a-d) to offer a definition[91] of reminiscence, understood here in its everyday meaning, independent of any metaphysical charge, which occurs when the soul recovers by itself, independently of the body[92], a sensation or a forgotten knowledge. Strictly speaking, desire is never defined by Socrates, but he specifies that he who desires is always “empty” and wishes to be filled. This This observation leads Socrates to conclude that one cannot desire without first remembering. In Indeed, he who is "empty" can desire only insofar as he is of a certain way "in contact" with the repletion, which cannot come from the body, which is empty (35b), and must therefore arise from the soul: "There remains then only his soul which can to be in contact with repletion, and that obviously by memory. Because by means what else could she touch her[93]? Thus, memory becomes the condition of desire, so that the presence of a desire implies a memory of its object :

---

[91] He actually offers two definitions: (1) reminiscence occurs when the soul grasps independently of the body and by itself, what it has suffered with the body (34b); (2) reminiscence occurs when the soul regains possession again by itself of a feeling or knowledge of which it has lost memory (34b-c). These two definitions are given consecutively, with no explanation for this duplication. We notice that the second differs from the first by integrating the possibility of remembering a knowledge that is not a sensation; it also raises the need for the soul to forget what it remembers. Note also that this second definition arouses less enthusiasm on the part of Protarch. We leave to the exegetes of the Philèbe the task of finding the reasons for this duplication.

[92] This definition seems to be antagonistic to the theory of the Phaedo, according to which the soul remembers things themselves from a bodily sensation. However, this is not the case, for in the Phaedo a sensation triggers the reminiscence, but the soul must nevertheless by itself regain the knowledge of the form, because this knowledge is not in the sensation.

[93] 35b9-c1, trad. Pradeau.

And this momentum, which the [scil. the living being] leads to opposite impressions, shows that there is a certain memory of opposing impressions. – Perfectly. - In thus demonstrating that it is memory that leads the being living towards the desired objects, our reasoning has still made manifest that the impetus, the desire and that which governs all living beings are the work of the soul. – It is not can be more exact. (35c-d, trans. Pradeau)

The link traced between desire and memory by the Philebus is therefore the same as that noted in the Phaedrus, namely that desire follows the remembrance of what is missing. Thereby, insofar as desire depends on a memory, the position of a desire in the soul involves an antecedent memory, so reminiscence theory allows to explain why we have a desire for the intelligible and not the contrary. Platonic innateism cannot therefore be reduced to a desire for knowledge. We therefore consider it necessary to reject Rawson and Gonzalez's suggestion to reduce the innate dimension of our knowledge to a desire, so we will have to develop our own interpretation of the epistemological aspect of reminiscence, what we will do in the next three chapters. Note that despite our disagreement, these authors greatly influenced our study; their thesis has the merit of attracting our attention to the importance of considering the theory of anamnesis in relation to the doctrine of eros and we will come back to this question during our study of the Phedre, in section 6.1.3.1[94]

1.2.3.4 Kahn

Finally, we are indebted to Kahn's work on reminiscence (2003, 2005, 2006 and 2010). In these four studies, the author returns to two of the most important questions.confusing about the anamnesis namely (1) the link between its three different presentations and (2) the place of recollection in the corpus, especially in relation to others rival theories of knowledge, such as those put forward in the

[94] See p.289 sq.

Symposium and the Republic. Because of their influence on our research, we need to examine more
Kahn's theses in detail. We will focus on the 2010 article, where Kahn
gives us the most recent and most successful treatment of the subject.
In this study, faced with the multiplicity of forms taken by the Platonic theory of knowledge, Kahn asks himself the question of their unity and suggests remedying this problem thanks to an approach he calls “perspectivist”:

… we must seek, according to the principle of perspectivism, the philosophical unity that underlies the plurality of literary expressions. The diversity of patterns in the knowledge in different dialogues will correspond, for so to speak, on the literary surface of the dialogues, while the unity of Plato's thought on this subject will be located in their deep structure. […] At the same time, perspectivism as a principle *of interpretation implies that such a unit cannot be grasped by any single wording and final. Each formulation is determined by the particular circumstances and issues specific to such or such dialogue*[95]*.*

The hermeneutic principle of perspectivism involves distinguishing between differences in the presentation of the theory and the deep unity that underlies them. The thesis of Kahn varies however on the nature of the divergences of presentations of a same doctrine. At the beginning of the article (p.70), he affirms that Plato offers various formulations of his theories for philosophical reasons, because there is "no privileged formulation” of reality, but only “partial formulations”.
The impotence of language to speak integrally of forms and of the human soul would require the use of multiple perspectives, each capturing different aspects of the same phenomenon. However, in the passage we have quoted, just as when Kahn strives to illustrate his hermeneutic principle from the theory of

[95] Khan, 2010, p.71, trans. D. El Murr).

knowledge, he suggests that the different presentations are due not to philosophical reasons, but to literary and rhetorical motivations[96]. What is more, when the time comes to show what relationship unites the doctrines of vision and remember, rather than seeing them as two ways of describing the same epistemological experience, Kahn considers that these are two theories complements that must be amalgamated[97]. In the final analysis, he refuses any advantage epistemological to the visual model, but concludes that only rhetorical and literary motivations for its presentation; the true philosophical substance would belong rather to the theory of reminiscence. So Kahn breaks his promise to make sense philosophical to the diversity of patterns discovered from one dialogue to another; he relegates rather this multiplicity has a "style effect". The summaries proposed by the author of the presentations of the visual model or the theory reminiscences also leave us wanting more: these tend to be simple gatherings of common elements. Thus, comparing the allegory of the cave and the story of the perfect initiation told by Diotima, he concludes: « a philosophical interpretation must take into consideration the fact that the two texts present patterns of the same type: the cognitive ascent of objects sensitive to the realm of intelligible Forms, culminating in a revealing vision[98]" (p.72). More far, he relates the three presentations of the doctrine of reminiscence to a single "deep structure" as follows:

---

[96] See among others p.78.

[97] Thus, he asserts that such a juxtaposition is possible (even necessary) to complete the epistemology of the Republic, because the latter cannot make the apology of an intuitionist theory, as suggested by the visual model of knowledge , by virtue of the importance of dialectics and the use of logos to arrive at the truth (p.78). As support, he indicates (p.78) that, in the Phaedo and the Phaedrus, the theory of reminiscence is present jointly with that of noetic vision. Kahn does not seem to notice the importance of this reservation. Indeed, it is precisely to highlight that the human soul cannot, in its incarnated form, access a vision of forms that the myth of the Phaedrus relegates this experience to the prenatal existence of the soul, establishing thus a contrast to embodied knowledge. We cannot therefore simply amalgamate the theories: rather we must take note of the tension between the conceptions of the knowledge of his dialogues.

[98] Kahn, 2010, p.72, trad. D. El Murr.

The scheme underlying the Platonic theory of knowledge is expressed in the formula of Meno: « the truth of beings is present in our soul. " Whether provoked by the Socratic interrogation (in the Meno), by reflection on the deficiencies of sensory experience (in the Phaedo) or through the experience of love (in the Phedre), if the awakening of our soul to the understanding of noetic form is so exciting is that it is a return to our inner self, to the primordial nature of the soul[99].

The danger of the method used appears in such conclusions: Kahn abstracts from different dialogues what their presentations have in common and elevates this community to the rank of "underlying schema"; consequently, the substance of the various theories is diluted and the philosophical residue of this alchemy is thin. Kahn therefore seems to have extracted the "surface structure" rather than the "deep structure" of the anamnesis. We took some time to discuss Kahn's article and mark our reluctance as to the conclusions he arrives at, but we welcome all the same his contribution; in fact, we find promising his original thesis, that variations between the theories found from one dialogue to another would have a philosophical motivation. Kahn, however, puts the cart before the horse by launching from the outset in a comparison of the different dialogues before having accomplished a in-depth analysis of each of them[100]. To verify his hypothesis, one would have to start by determining the function fulfilled by each of the presentations on the one hand reminiscence and on the other hand of the visual model in their respective dialogues; Once this step completed, compare on one side the dialogues dealing with the anamnesis with each other and on the other those presenting the visual model, in order to determine their level of consistency; only then would we be able to compare the theory of intellectual vision to that of reminiscence and determine their level of coherence and the meaning of their differences. These differences may be attributable to purely literary reasons as Kahn believes; it is also possible

[99] Ibid, p.80.
[100] In his defence, Kahn recognizes the schematic and programmatic nature of his presentation (p.74-75).

that these are two alternative (but adequate) ways of conceptualizing the same epistemological experience; a third possibility would be that we are dealing with two imperfect conceptualizations, which complement each other by grasping each what the other hides. In any case, we cannot assume conclusions. It is therefore a vast project, impossible to achieve in a single study. We will content ourselves with carrying out the first part: we will deal with the three presentations of the theory of reminiscence in their literary and philosophical context and let's compare them. This project will structure the rest of our study: we We will thus propose a detailed commentary of each passage on the anamnesis, in emphasizing the predominant component of doctrine in this dialogue; we We will then compare our conclusions with the presentation of reminiscence in the other two dialogues dealing with anamnesis.

CHAPTER 2

Reminiscence and epistemology in the Menon: Statement of the problem

The history of philosophy has mainly retained reminiscence as a theory epistemological and we will begin our study by taking it from this angle. However, the Menon deals with this aspect in more depth and we will consider it first; we will then compare our conclusions with the presentation of the doctrine in the Phaedo and the Phaedrus, so as to determine its consistency on this point.

As mentioned in the previous Chapter[101], Gonzalez, in a recent article (2007), summarized the epistemological problem of reminiscence in a single question: in what sense can we say that the truth of beings is always in the soul (Menon 86b1-2)? The anamnesis theory asserts that this truth is found in the soul as remembering knowledge acquired before birth; however, we still have to specify its nature (are they proposals, concepts, etc.) and its status (is it present to our consciousness or has it been completely forgotten[102]?). Gonzalez shows that by seeking to give an answer to this question, we come up against the following dilemma, which recalls Meno's paradox (80d5-81a5): if the soul already possesses the knowledge of a explicitly, the search is useless; but if she possesses it only in a way tacit, then this knowledge cannot provide a starting point for investigation. We must therefore advance a conception of innate knowledge that makes it available to serve as a starting point for research without making it useless because its result is already in our possession. To solve this puzzle, we will start by establishing the textual elements to take into account (chapter 2; section 2.1), then we will embark on a review

[101] See above, p.38 sq.

[102] Another way to ask the question would be to ask whether this memory implies tacit or forgotten knowledge.

dialectic of the solutions proposed by the commentators (chapter 2; section 2.2); we will return later to the interpretation of the most important passages (chapter 3; section 3.1) and finally advance our own solution (chapter 3; section 3.2).

2.1 Examination of the passages to be taken into account

We will begin our study of the Meno by listing the passages related to our subject. However, we immediately encounter a difficulty on this subject, by virtue of a textual conflict between the introductory passage (81a-e) and the conclusion Socrates reaches at the end of the questioning of the servant[103] (86b). So we have to decide which passage we have to hold back.

Let's begin by exposing the tension between the two passages. To answer the paradox of Meno, Socrates advances an authoritative argument, citing the revelations of the priests and wise priestesses in divine things (81a sq.). Menon marvels at this story, but he is not convinced, however, and asks for a demonstration. Socrates will question so one of his servants, stopping at key moments of the episode, to help Menon to correctly interpret what happened. Now, the conclusions reached by Socrates following his proof of the anamnesis by examination of the child are somewhat different from those he had asked in the mythical introduction of the dialogue. Indeed, if we compare the conclusions of two passages, we obtain the following table:

(1) Thus, since the soul is immortal, that she was born many times and that she has seen all things here below as in Hades… (81c5-7)	(A) So then if the truth of beings is always in our soul… (86b1-2)

[103] Gulley (1962, p.17) was the first to suggest that a distinction should be made between the two presentations of the theory in the Menon: "It is important, in considering this distinction, to recognize as two separate and different presentations of the theory of recollection the presentation of it in terms of religious ideas (81a-d), and the presentation of it on the basis of the dialogue with the slave (81e-86c).[...] The importance of recognizing this is that it is on the language of this introductory presentation that scholars often base the view that in the Meno Plato makes no distinction between the experience of the soul in this life and its experience prior to this life. »

(2)… it is impossible that there is not what unless she learned. There is so no wonder she is able to remember the virtue and other things (81v7-9).	(B)… the soul is immortal… (86b2)
(3) Given the kinship of all the nature and the fact that the soul has everything learned, nothing prevents the remembering only one thing, what men call learning, him make find all the rest, if we are valiant and seeks tirelessly. (81c9- d4)	(C)… so that one must take courage and what you do not find yourself know now, that is to say what you don't remember, undertake seek it out and remember it. (86b2-4)

(1) [104]

We find that if we swap the first two elements of one of the lists,
we get an almost perfect match. A crucial difference is however at the level of the moment of the initial apprehension of the truths: whereas the mythical introduction attributes the acquisition of knowledge to specific times (the soul having acquired knowledge over its many lives and passages in Hades), the conclusion of the second passage affirms that we always have the truth within us. This discrepancy seems to us all the more important as it concerns one of the reasons that motivated the criticism of Leibniz; this indicated that the soul could gain knowledge of the truths needed at a specific point in time without these losing their necessary character. In the next section, we set out the arguments advanced against the literal interpretation of the passage introduction; taken together, these constitute damning evidence of this
effect. We will therefore suggest that the passage may have a symbolic value, but cannot be taken literally.

2.1.1 Exclusion of the introductory passage (81a-e)

Let's start by considering (1) the textual arguments that lead us to exclude the

[104] As with all passages where the translator is not indicated, this is our own translation.

introductory passage[105]. First, (1a) Socrates attributes his initial exposition to sources exterior (of priests and priestesses, 81a-b). He thus distances himself from this doctrine, which raises the question of whether he approves of it unconditionally[106]. Moreover, as Anderson[107] (1971, p.228) points out, (1ai) he resorts to an argument authority to establish this thesis; in itself, this type of argument is never convincing, but it is even less so by virtue of the very nature of the theory which it wishes to found, that all learning should come from within ourselves and not from an external source:

This passage at the very least indicates that Socrates is unwilling to claim what follows as his own. It also, if taken seriously, means that Socrates learned of the theory of recollection not by recollection, nor by means of the dialectic, but by "hearing" it and remembering it – precisely the king of "learning" process which Meno has gone through with Gorgias, and which has been subjected to severe how throughout the dialogue up to this point. (Anderson, 1971, p.228)

Socrates did not discover the doctrine of anamnesis on his own, but he did. heard and remembers, just as Meno learned his lessons from Gorgias. To take the theory of reminiscence seriously, we should reject any its "revealed" part and stick to what we can see for ourselves, that is to say to what we can deduce from the demonstration given by the lesson of

---

[105] We will stop only at the only arguments which seem to us worthy of mention. Thus, the argument of Ebert (1973, p.179 and 2007, p.192-4), who strives to show that Socrates never claims in his own name the metaphysical elements of the theory of reminiscence, but is content to ask questions to Menon, does not convince, since the theory of reminiscence returns in other dialogues where Menon is not present. Ebert tries to make the same type of argument for the Phaedo, where again it is the acquiescence of Simmias that would ratify the doctrine and not Socrates. This argument is too extravagant. See Gonzalez's review of it in his review (1996).

[106] See Ionescu (2007, p.49).

[107] Anderson is followed in this regard by Weiss (2006, p.9).

geometry[108]. However, this demonstration can convince us of the innate dimension of the knowledge, but cannot found the thesis of a soul reborn several times impregnated with recollection of his prenatal visions (81c-d). Moreover, it is clear that (1aii) the sources attributed to this myth encourage our suspicion. Indeed, as Weiss remarks (2001, p.65-66), priests have a personal interest in supporting this thesis, since they do so "in order to be able to make account of the offices they perform" (81a11-b1). Moreover, Fine (1992, p.214) and Rawson (2006, p.142) notes that the end of the dialogue discredits these sources[109] (99c-d). Rawson thinks priests are "unreliable"; in fact,

Socrates asserts that, although soothsayers say great things, they "do not understand nothing they say" (99d5). The problem of the inspired is not of the order of veracity of their speech, but rather of their lack of understanding. In the case of the theory of reminiscence, we can ask ourselves what this lack of understanding involves. Perhaps this is the literal interpretation of the doctrine expounded in the introductory passage which constitutes an ignorance of its deeper meaning[110]?

A second strong textual argument against those who believe that Plato conveys a theory to which he adheres unconditionally is (1b) the fact that

---

[108] In the same vein, note the remark of King (2007, p.403), according to which the theory of reminiscence violates the introductory principle of dialogue, which explains that one must know the nature of a thing before one can know it. the properties (71b). Now, the doctrine of anamnesis informs us about a property of knowledge (the mode of its acquisition), but the nature of knowledge itself will only be defined later in the dialogue (97e-98a) as a sequence through causal reasoning. This argument tends to indicate that for Socrates, the theory of reminiscence would not, strictly speaking, be knowledge about knowledge, which is further reinforced by the disavowal of the theory that we have just considered.

[109] Indeed, Socrates speaks of "diviners" and not of "priests" at the end of the dialogue, but, since both owe their speech to divine inspiration, the same judgment applies in both cases.

[110] Interpreters who take this narrative literally include Vlastos (1965, p.166) and Tigner (1970). Anderson (1971, p.228-29), Jenks (1992, p.321 sq.) and Ebert (1973, p.175 sq. and 2007 p.187 sq.) believe on the contrary that Socrates only responds to a sophisticated way to the sophisticated paradox of Menon, in order to allow the investigation to resume. In the same line, Weiss (2001, p.69) thinks that Socrates is only parodying myths of Pythagorean origin. Most interpreters (see e.g. Canto-Sperber 1991a, p.76-77; Scott 1995, p.33-34; Brisson 2007; Ionescu 2007, p.49) opt for an intermediate position, namely that the elements of the story of the priests must be taken in an allegorical way. This is also the solution we will recommend.

Socrates himself shows reservations in this regard. Indeed, at the end of the passage on the reminiscence, Socrates concludes that he would not fight for any point of his speech, if this is to argue that the search for truth makes us better, braver and less lazy[111] (86b-c). Some[112] have deduced from this that Socrates did not take seriously the anamnesis, but told a myth whose belief could make us best. Anyway, this passage reinforces our first argument (1ai), according to which the knowledge of the introductory passage was not acquired by recollection, since Socrates admits that he does not have the full assurance of one who has recognized a truth by itself. The uncertainty of Socrates does not mean that we must condemn the whole theory, but although it cannot be taken entirely literally. Gold, the first part to be questioned is his introductory exposition: he is both more extravagant and philosophically weaker than the conclusions that will follow the geometry lesson. In addition to these textual elements, we can point to a dramatic argument which inclines us to think that Socrates advances this introduction for rhetorical reasons. Many commentators[113] have indeed noticed that (2) this exposition is composed of way to please Menon and his taste for the marvelous[114]. We must recall that Socrates had conceived the project of introducing Meno to philosophy (76th sq.) and that to convince him to undergo this initiation he had to please him by respecting his habit and his appreciation of bombastic theories. The work of Ebert (1973,

---

[111] This distance taken from the theory of reminiscence motivates us to reject the assertion of CantoSperber (1991a, p.35), who believes that Socrates is more assertive in the Meno than in what she calls the "Socratic dialogues", because of the presentation of the theory of reminiscence. For a position opposed to that of Canto-Sperber, see Tarrant (2008, p.8).

[112] See Klein (1965, p.183), Anderson (1971, p.234), Weiss (2001, p.64 and 125), Ebert (2007 p.197) and Rawson (2006 p.142).

[113] See Klein (1965, p.182), Canto-Sperber (1991a, p.76), Turner (1993, p.129), Weiss (2001, p.64) and Scott (2006, p.81).

[114] See Scott (2006, p.81): “he uses recollection as an incentive to make Meno eager to inquire, and almost panders to his desire for the exotic in the initial exposition of recollection. And a few lines further down: “The use of allusions to ancient myths and a recitation of lyric poetry is part of the same strategy: whetting his appetite for the exotic and thus luring him into making the effort to inquire for himself. Tarrant (2008, p.41) also remarks that this quote was “tailored to whet Meno’s appetite”.

p.175-77 and 2007, p.185-190) offer certain support for this interpretation, since, through a meticulous study of the style of the mythical exposition, the author establishes that it is of a pastiche of the style of Gorgias, admired by Menon. The dramatic context and the study stylistics of Ebert therefore incline us to recognize the rhetorical dimension of the text.

Finally, (3) on the philosophical level, let us note that the thesis supported by the initial exposition is incapable of resolving Menon's paradox, but only does postpone the problem to the first prenatal learning[115]. Indeed, Menon asked how it was possible to learn what we know nothing about; nothing more explanations, the problem remains unsolved: whether the first apprenticeship is placed before or after birth makes no difference. Thus, limited to its initial presentation, the reminiscence does not respond to the paradox; the function of this presentation is therefore not philosophical and should rather be situated on the side of rhetoric. After the demonstration given of the theory by the examination of the servant, Socrates revises this thesis and affirms that knowledge belongs to the soul at all times, which is a position much more solid on the philosophical level and allows this time to resolve for good the Menon's paradox. Let's take a moment to gather our conclusions. First, many clues suggested to us that the introductory presentation should not be taken seriously of the anamnesis. Indeed, Socrates learned this theory by hearsay and not by reminiscence (1ai) and shows reservations about it (1b). Second, the doctrine is communicated by priests deprived of true knowledge, so that they do not not understand what they are saying (1aii). Third, this introduction has a

[115] See, among others, Gulley (1954, p.196), Allen (1959, p.166), Klein (1965, p.95 and 179), Anderson (1971, p.226 and 228), Rousseau (1981, p .339), Weiss (2001, p.71) Warnek (2003, p.274) and Ebert (2007, p.184). It seems to us that Brisson (1999, p.40) grasps the problem well, explaining that this first presentation of the theory of reminiscence remains locked in an empirical conception of knowledge: "According to the religious tradition evoked by this passage from Menon, it is obvious that the prior knowledge involved is first and foremost empirical, but in the broad sense of the word, since it must also encompass what is happening in Hades. We therefore claim that the definitive version of reminiscence makes it possible to go beyond this conception of knowledge, by attributing to the soul a knowledge that it has always possessed. See also Moravcsik (1971, p.60), Scott (2006, p.96) and Tarrant (2005, p.42).

protreptic function, in the sense that it incites Menon to resume the dialectical inquiry. Indeed, in his disavowal of the doctrine, Socrates says he is ready to fight for no point of his theory, except that we will become better by searching with the hope of discovering the truth (1b). Moreover, the study of the style of the passage and the dramatic context of the dialogue shows us that Socrates uses rhetoric to satisfy Menon's taste for the marvelous and thus encourage him to resume the investigation dialectic (2). Finally, the need not to take the initial passage at the foot of the letter is philosophically palpable, given that this initial formulation (3) is unable to resolve Meno's paradox, but only pushes its problem at first learning. We can therefore conclude that the introduction reminiscence is not a revelation to be accepted without showing wit critical. At best, this is a first hypothesis, advanced while waiting for him propose a rigorous demonstration, or even a story filled with symbols that he must be interpreted[116]. After questioning the servant, Socrates returns to this theory and presents a stronger version. Consequently, we will not retain the passage of introduction among the key passages to take into account in our interpretation.

2.1.2 Catalog of key passages

Now that we have discarded the introductory talk, we can enumerate the remarkable passages that an interpretation of the doctrine of anamnesis in Meno must take into account. We can first list three key episodes of the dialogue at this subject.

(1) The theory of reminiscence must respond to the paradox of Menon (80d-e). He wondered:

[116] Comme nous l'avons vu, Socrate considère que les gens inspirés ont une opinion vraie (plutôt qu'une connaissance) parce qu'ils disent la vérité sans rien comprendre à ce qu'ils racontent : il est donc possible que les prêtres et prêtresses ne réalisent pas que leur récit peut avoir un sens métaphorique. Nous considérons que l'article de Brisson (2007) donne une excellente interprétation du passage, en prenant ses éléments comme des symboles indiquant une conception plus profonde.

(a) How can we look for something that we don't know anything?

(b) How can we recognize having found it?

An interpretation of the doctrine must show how it makes it possible to solve these two problems and thus make possible and sensible inquiry into the nature of virtue[117].

(2) Socrates illustrates his theory by questioning a servant;
he manages to discover the solution of a problem complex geometry without receiving outside help other than the questions put to him (82b-84b). An interpretation of doctrine must account for the success of this enterprise. We will refer to this episode as "the geometry lesson".

(3) Towards the end of the dialogue, while the protagonists are concerned with distinguishing between true opinion and knowledge, Socrates concludes that the latter is obtained through the chaining of true opinion by an aitias logismos, this which he assimilates to a reminiscence (97e-98a). A satisfactory interpretation can account for this connection of true opinions and the expression "aitias logismos".

These three passages constitute the textual basis on which an interpretation of the anamnesis must be based. In addition to these three episodes, it is also necessary to take into notes the following textual elements of secondary importance:

(4) The servant has always had knowledge within him (85d3-7) and we have within us the truth of beings at all times (86b1-2).

---

[117] Moline (1969), suivi par Devereux (1978, p.118), Canto-Sperber (1991a, p.247n.104 et 248-49n.108) et Gonzalez (2007 p.287), a en effet raison de relever que le défi initial de Menon ne concernait pas la possibilité de connaître en général, mais était un défi lancé à Socrate et au type d'enquête qu'il pratique en raison de sa déclaration d'ignorance. Canto-Sperber (1991a), qui reconnaît que l'objection de Menon porte sur la façon dont s'est déroulée l'enquête jusqu'à présent (p.72), croit néanmoins (p.74) que la reformulation de Socrate n'est qu'un « développement assez naturel de la formule de Menon », puisqu'elle durcit l'opposition entre « connaître » et « ne pas connaître », sans laisser place à un possible intermédiaire. Sur le lien entre l'enquête socratique et le paradoxe de Menon, on consultera également Devereux (1978, p.118) et Gonzalez (2007, p.287).

(5) The servant gets only true opinions at the end of
the interview, which can become knowledge through the
frequent resumption of exercise (85c9-d1; 85e-86a).
(6) When the servant was refuted and took
aware of his ignorance, but has not yet reached
positive result, Socrates considers that he has already started the
reminiscence process (84a3-4).

Finally, a last passage deserves our attention. It is not directly related
with the anamnesis, but we consider it fundamental for an interpretation of this
theory. This is the first philosophical distinction of dialogue:

(7) Socrates admits to being unable to decide whether virtue can be taught,
because he does not know what it is; however, it is impossible to
knowing how a thing is (ὁπῶν τι) without knowing what it is
is (τί ἐστιν). He supports this assertion with an analogy:
it is impossible to know if Meno is handsome, rich and noble
without knowing who he is (71b).

This last passage already contains a certain conception of knowledge, which
justifies its inclusion in an interpretation of reminiscence. As such, we
are indebted to the work of Gonzalez (1998a, p.155-8; 1998b, p.256-9). This
the latter begins by showing the flaws in the classical interpretation of this passage,
which considers that all knowledge is propositional in nature, so that the
priority principle would mean that we cannot know the properties
accidentals of a thing before its essential properties. He lists three reasons for reject this
interpretation (1998a, p.155-6; 1998b, p.257-8). First, true or not,
this theory is far from self-evident; on a dramatic level, it is therefore
surprising to see the protagonists take it for granted.

Second, on a philosophical level, such an interpretation hardly fits to the analogy used by Socrates. Indeed, what would it mean to know the "essential properties of Meno"? It's even more embarrassing to know why we cannot know accidental properties about Menon (like its wealth) before knowing its essential properties. Third, on the intertextual level, Gonzalez points out a passage from the Republic which constitutes a major piece of evidence against the classical interpretation. Indeed, at the end of the first book, Socrates rejects the conclusions he and Thrasymachus arrived at because that it is impossible to know if justice is a virtue before knowing what it is (354b-c). This assertion is reminiscent of Menon's principle of priority. But what could be an essential property of justice, if we are to discard even virtue? Thereby, the classical interpretation fails in its attempt to account for the unfolding drama of the dialogue, of the analogy proposed by Socrates and of a textual element of a another dialogue which recalls the principle of priority; it must therefore be rejected. Gonzalez suggests an alternative interpretation, which consists in considering that the principle of priority means rather that it is impossible to know a property of a thing (essential or not) before knowing the being of this thing. The knowledge of being is therefore not of a propositional nature[118] (since any proposition about a thing indicates a property of it) and Gonzalez characterizes it rather as being a familiarity developed by the Socratic inquiry into this nature. This interpretation allows to put forward an excellent interpretation of the analogy with the knowledge of Menon; in indeed, we cannot know anything about Menon before visiting him on our own and discover the truth of what is said about him. On a dramatic level this time,

[118] Gonzalez speaks of acquaintance, which we translate as “familiarity”, because Gonzalez understands this word in the everyday sense, and not in the technical sense of “immediate cognition of a simple object” (1998a, p.157).

this interpretation has the advantage of joining a major theme of the dialogue, which denigrates knowledge based on the testimony or teaching of others[119]. In the same way that one knows the road to Larisse by dint of taking it oneself and that the servant discovers the solution to a geometry problem without anyone teaching it, we really knows Menon only by rubbing shoulders with him; the same goes for virtue. Admittedly, Gonzalez's interpretation brings new difficulties. Indeed, by putting a knowledge of the nature of things which is not propositional, he must explain, on a philosophical level, the usefulness of the prerequisite of a definition of virtue (for ex. 71d), as well as, on the intertextual level, the various passages in Plato which associate knowledge with the ability to give a logos[120]. As such, our answer differs from his and we will expose it in section 3.1.3.21[121].
Now that we have in our possession a list of the passages to be taken into account for the interpretation of the theory of reminiscence, we will engage in a dialectical study of the different positions that have been put forward by the interpreters about this doctrine. We will then be able to better identify the challenges posed by this theory.

2.2 Dialectic inquiry

Before examining the different positions taken by commentators on the nature of the innate knowledge posed in the Meno, we will take a step back to set out the different possible positions on the question of the status and nature of the memory of prenatal knowledge. We have divided it into four

[119] Menon is indeed inhabited by the conviction that any acquisition of knowledge must be based on the teaching of others, which must be stored in his memory. This is a point very well developed by Klein (1965); see e.g., at page 188: "Just as his answers are not his answers, his judgments but merely reproduce the opinions of others, his questions are not really questions since they do not stem from any desire to know. Nor do they grow out of a background of continued exploration which may give rise to problems and alternative solutions. »
[120] Voir Phedon 76b, 78b, Banquet 202a, République 531e, 534b.
[121] Voir infra, p.122 sq.

lines of questioning.

(I) What is the nature of the memory of knowledge prenatal?

Is it (Ia) proposals (including or not including definitions);

(Ib) concepts; (Ic) a hunch; (Id) a disposition or (ie) an object of desire?

(II) What is the epistemological status of this memory? Does the soul possess from birth

(IIa) a knowledge to strictly speaking or simply (IIb) true opinions?

(III) What is the extent of its content?

Is it (IIIa) limited to a few elements from which the rest can be found, like axioms? Or on the contrary

is it (IIIb) total knowledge, which therefore includes all true knowledge?

(IV) Is it present in consciousness?

To what extent have we forgotten this memory?

he can be (IVa) explicit, (IVb) latent.

The elements of each category are likely to be combined with those of the others. Thus propositions can be knowledge or opinions, known only partially or totally, explicitly or latently[122]. However, not all types of psychic reality accommodate themselves equally. many of these combinations. Considering, for example, that the epistemological baggage nature of the soul is limited to dispositions, the rest of the distinctions become obsolete. Let us now turn to the study of the different positions to have been maintained by the hermeneutical tradition on this problem. To do

[122] Menon is indeed inhabited by the conviction that any acquisition of knowledge must be based on the teaching of others, which must be stored in his memory. This is a point very well developed by Klein (1965); see e.g., at page 188: "Just as his answers are not his answers, his judgments but merely reproduce the opinions of others, his questions are not really questions since they do not stem from any desire to know. Nor do they grow out of a background of continued exploration which may give rise to problems and alternative solutions. »

this, we will choose one or two distinguished representatives of each position, which we will consider in greater depth from way to show its strengths and limitations.

2.2.1. Rawson and Weiss: preconceptions about the nature of awareness

Rawson (2006) is keen to interpret reminiscence theory as a model and to subordinate to a dispositional conception of innateness because of the narrowness of its representation of what innate knowledge can be. In this sense, it comes close Weiss (2001): neither takes the history seriously because they think that a non-dispositional innateness implies (IIIb)[123] a sum (Ia) of propositions (IVa) explicitly present in consciousness. Thus, the examination of these interpreters will give the opportunity to set aside this position, because it generates consequences absurd. Because of these, our authors have come to doubt the seriousness of the reminiscence theory. This reaction is exaggerated and stems from an inability to to think of innateness differently than according to the terms by which they define it. Next, we will examine alternative ways of conceiving Platonic innateness.

As we have seen previously[124], Rawson builds his article around the distinction between dispositional and non-dispositional innateness. He considers that all nondispositional innateism is naïve. This judgment stems from a conception of the knowledge that is necessarily propositional in nature, so that assigning a nondispositional innateness to Plato would amount to believing that "many or all true proposals are already in our minds since birth[125]". However, Rawson rejects this interpretation insofar as it contradicts other passages of the Meno (p.143):

---

[123] The Roman numerals refer to the table of possible positions presented in the introduction to section 2.2, on p.69.

[124] See above, section 1.2.3.3, p.38 sq.

[125] Rawson (2006, p.139); we underline.

Though Socrates speaks briefly and loosely of innate epistēmē in his interpretation of the geometry lesson (85d), he must really mean this: the geometry lesson shows, and Socrates later emphasizes, that epistēmē requires the conscious ability to give a proper account, which is rare[126] (85c, 98a).

This remark highlights Rawson's blindness to the possibility of a tacit knowledge, which would make it possible to say both that we all have the knowledge in us (in a tacit way) and that only certain people have a knowledge true that they can account for. However, there is no need to call on elements texts to prove the absurdity of attributing propositional knowledge to the soul absolute and explicit: all would then be scholars and the philosophers useless; we we wouldn't even need to remember! Weiss presents a similar argument (2001, p.115): since the servant has not a real knowledge at the end of the survey – he only has (5)[127] opinions true – and that reminiscence requires having (4) prior knowledge to inside himself, Weiss concludes that he could not remember.
In these arguments, Weiss and Rawson refuse to consider the possibility of a innate knowledge possessed latently by the servant[128]. It is because they lock themselves in this rigid conception of knowledge that our two authors refuse to take reminiscence seriously. We can conclude that assigning (IVa) explicit and (IIIb) total knowledge to the soul leads to serious difficulties and that before doubting the seriousness of the theory, it is better to begin by reconsidering question this interpretation.

[126] In fact, neither of the two passages indicated by Rawson (85c and 98a) speaks explicitly of the need to be able to "account" (logon didonai): one mentions the need to repeatedly question the servant and the other affirms that one must attach the true opinions by a reasoning of causality.
[127] The Arabic numerals in parentheses refer to the catalog of key passages (see section 2.1.1, p.65 sq.).
[128] See the criticism that Gonzalez (2007 p.285) makes of Weiss, which also applies to Rawson.

2.2.2 Vlastos: the axiomatic model

Vlastos (1965) articulates a more elaborate understanding of reminiscence. He brings back the epistemological content innate to (Ia) propositions and (Ib) concepts (IIIa) in limited number, explicitly present in the soul[129] (IVa). Thus, like Rawson and Weiss, Vlastos maintains that all knowledge is propositional in nature; however, it differs from them due to the limit it places on the number of innate knowledge, which he reduces to a few elements.

Vlastos structures his article around a distinction on the acquisition of knowledge, which he division between the perception of inter- and intra-propositional logical relations. The "interpropositional" relations concern the logical links that make it possible to infer a proposition from its premises[130]. This link allows us to extend our knowledge on our own, without outside help. Likewise, these premises must themselves be deduced from higher premises, until the attainment of propositions logically primitive, “whose “binding” could no longer be derived by entailment from an other, but must lie wholly within themselves[131]. » The meaning of this last expression, according to which the primitive propositions would have "a connection which must rest entirely within themselves,” seems obscure, but it refers undoubtedly to the "intrapropositional" logical relations, which we are going to consider just now. The “intra-propositional” logical relations designate the links between the different components of a proposition, i.e. words that refer to concepts. The question "What is X?" is about that kind of relationship. In this case, acquiring of knowledge (reminiscence) consists in “gaining insight into the logical structure

[129] We will not criticize Vlastos on this point, since we have already done so in the previous section. The position of Vlastos is not incompatible with the possibility of considering that innate knowledge is present in a latent way in the soul: this is moreover the position adopted by Canto-Sperber (1991a), who claims to follow Vlastos while making the apology of a tacit knowledge present inside the soul.

[130] Vlastos' position joins that of Gulley (1954, p.194-5), Crombie (1963, p.139) and Moravcsik (1971, p.67-8).

[131] Vlastos (1965, p.155).

of a concept, so that when faced with its correct definition one will see that the concepts mentioned are analytically connected[132]". By the "logical structure of the concept", Vlastos refers to the classic conception of the concept, which gives it a structure "definitional". For example, the concept of man could be defined by two other concepts: rational animal. Although Vlastos remains vague on this issue, we we can assume that each of the concepts used in the definition can be analyzed new to simpler concepts; this method therefore also points to "logically primitive concepts" and deepen the logical structure of a concept implies analyzing it ultimately in its primitive concepts. Vlastos' thesis has the advantage of providing a clear interpretation of two passages crucial. Indeed, it makes it possible to account for the identification of reminiscence with (3) a sequence by an aitias logismos, explaining that it is a question of linking a conclusion to its premises; similarly, he can explain (2) the geometry lesson by indicating that the demonstration works from inferences, which is debatable, but sustainable. Where the shoe pinches is about the answer he advances to the problem posed by (1) Menon's paradox, especially as regards the question of the opportunity to start the search. Indeed, to do this, Vlastos must specify what is the innate content available at the start of the inquiry. However, Vlastos' position is particularly confused on this point. According to his interpretation, we can increase our knowledge through the perception of relationships interpropositional, which involves deducing a proposition from its premises. The most natural solution would therefore be to suggest that the mind disposes from an innate knowledge of "logically primitive propositions", from from which he could deduce all the other true propositions. Indeed, given that the way to acquire knowledge of a proposition is to deduce it from proposals already known, we would have no starting point for the enterprise of deduction if the logically primitive propositions were not innately known. The soul would have certain "axioms" from which

[132] Vlastos (1965, p.157).

she could deduce the truth. However, Vlastos does not adopt this solution; the reason is probably due to his refusal to consider the possibility of the existence of tacit knowledge[133]. In effect, by assuming that all knowledge is explicit, he cannot recognize a knowledge logically primitive propositions, since then we would all agree immediately on their nature and number. Vlastos therefore adopts another solution: he affirms that we ignore the proposals logically primitive and must discover them. Therefore, only a proposal whose we would know the truth without having deduced it can provide an adequate starting point for a search; we could use this to go back to the premises of which it can be deduced, repeating the process until the primitive premises are reached.
This reversal of method causes various problems, the most serious of which is perhaps to know where this initial true proposition comes from from which we can start the ascent: how to know if such a proposition is true, since it is not primitive and has not been deduced from propositions which are[134]?
Perhaps we can answer this difficulty by referring to the method by hypothesis, found in Meno (87b-89a) and which Vlastos probably has in mind. Socrates starts from a question – namely, whether virtue can be taught – and seeks to go back to its conditions of possibility. Virtue is taught if it is knowledge and it is knowledge if only knowledge is good. However, far from praising this method, the dialogue considers it inadequate, which appears both textually and philosophical. On the textual level, Socrates resorts to it reluctantly, to accommodate Menon's irrational desire to discover whether virtue can be taught before knowing what that she is (86d-87d). At the end of the interview (100b), Socrates considers their discussion insufficient to assure their conclusions, and this, not because they failed to back to some "logically primitive proposition", but rather because they have neglected to question the nature of virtue. On a philosophical level, to establish

[133] However, a position which posits in the soul a tacit knowledge of logically problematic propositions would also be problematic, for the question then becomes how this tacit knowledge can be used to begin the inquiry.
[134] Moreover, since this proposition is not innately known, it seems that Vlastos' explanation leaves no room for innate content within the soul.

that “knowledge alone is a good”, Socrates does not go back to hypotheses more origins, but rather engages in the study of different goods. However, even this investigation is insufficient: after noticing (empirically) the absence of teachers of virtue, he revises his conclusion and realizes that true opinion is as useful as awareness. In other words, for having neglected to question the nature of knowledge, he has not realized that he is not defined by his truth nor by his usefulness, because these characteristics are shared with true opinion. Thus, our two arguments against the recourse to the method by hypothesis to support the reading of Vlastos return each time to the necessity of first inquiring into the nature of a thing before consider its properties. This prescription brings us (7) back to the principle of priority. Formulated in the jargon of Vlastos, the priority principle would give precedence to the perception of intrapropositional relations on deduction. So maybe this is the presence in us of "innate concepts" which allows us, by the analysis of the structure logic of these, to discover an adequate point of departure for the Socratic inquiry? However, this solution is also inadmissible. Indeed, any attempt to appeal to "concepts" to account for the innate epistemological content in Plato comes up against the strangeness of the thought of the latter to the concept of concept. To complicate the things, we understand the word "concept" in two different senses, both being however also useless for an explanation of Platonic innateness. Initially meaning (which is probably the meaning advocated by Vlastos), a concept constitutes a ideal and abstract entity, the same for all, of which each makes a representation more or less adequate; in this sense, it is hardly distinguishable from the Platonic form and does not cannot be identified with what is innately "in" the soul, since, by definition, it is not private. To say that we have an innate knowledge of these concepts would be tantamount to saying that we have an innate knowledge of forms, which does not progress.

In a second sense, the concept is a psychological entity, a representation mind deprived of a thing. Thus, if Epictetus and Voltaire disagree about

the possibility for a slave to be free is because they have different concepts of freedom. By taking the word "concept" in this sense, we therefore refer to our way to design things; however, this one is changeable and incapable of constituting a point starting point for the explanation of intrapropositional relations. Thus, Thrasymachus and Socrates would analyze the concept of justice differently, one considering it to be a part of the vice and the other of the virtue. The interpretation of Vlastos, which consists in identifying the innate content with propositions and to concepts, must therefore be rejected: on the one hand, the notion of innate concept applies with pain to Plato; on the other hand, the possibility of knowledge of propositions logically primitive contravenes the principle of priority, so that the investigation Socratic would have no starting point. This rebuttal by Vlastos shows so how difficult it is to maintain that the innate knowledge of the soul must be (Ia) propositional and (IVa) explicit, even limiting the number of propositions known in this way (IIIa). The next author that we will study proposes as a result to lay tacit knowledge within the soul.

2.2.3 Scott: Latent Innate Propositions and the Model of consistency

Although Scott[135] (2006) shares with Vlastos a propositional conception of knowledge, their positions differ quite a bit. While Vlastos considered that we had partial and explicit innate knowledge, Scott thinks that Meno's innateness consists of (IIIb) the totality (Ia) of the propositions and definitions that it is possible to namely, which are in the soul (IVb) latently. These proposals are not first that (IIb) true opinions, which gradually change into knowledge at as they are attached to other proposals. The first thing that can be criticized for this interpretation is that it does not specify what that it means by proposals that would be in the soul in a tacit way. The concept of "latent proposition" lacks clarity and requires an explanation. A proposal latently known formulated in a language? Since it is a

[135] We present this position based on Scott's treatment of it because it is with this author that we find the most elaborate version of it. It should be noted, however, that Scott is indebted to his master, Burnyeat, and his treatment of reminiscence (see Burnyeat 1977).

innate knowledge, these propositions cannot at least be expressed in a particular language. Perhaps there is a way to suggest that they belong to a kind of protolanguage, without determined form? This would require the addition of a theory complex and extravagant and would require at the very least more clarification. Moreover, as Vlastos did, Scott (p.108) reduces innate knowledge to the perception of logical relationships, but unlike Vlastos, he attributes this ability not to the application of rules of inference from logically primitives, but rather to the latent knowledge of the deduced propositions, which gives us a criterion allowing us to recognize the correctness of the sequence of arguments, for example, in the context of a mathematical proof. In other words, if I can deduce q of p, it is because I already knew q in a latent way and that by seeing p, I I remembered. On a philosophical level, this interpretation does not take into account the fact that propositions are deduced by following certain rules, which are always the same. In identifying the logical links necessary for contingent mnemonic links between propositions, Scott cannot explain that the deduction works by the application constant of a limited set of rules. Our author is aware of this problem, but he is content to affirm that the interpretation of Vlastos, which holds the reminiscence for a theory of inference, is perhaps a more plausible version of innateism, but that it is not found in Plato (p.108-9).

Nevertheless, Scott (p.109) is concerned about the quantity of propositions that will thus have to be innately known. In fact, the problem is much more serious than it appears. claims: insofar as an infinity of deductions are possible, it will be necessary to know innately an infinity of proposals. Worse, since it is possible to deduce false propositions from false premises, we will also have to know false propositions innately. Scott thinks the Menon is not aware of this kind of difficulty, but nevertheless suggests that a more economics of reminiscence will be proposed in the Phaedon and the Phaedrus:

Here [scil. in Phaedo and Phaedrus] Socrates argues that knowledge (of definitions) of forms is innate. Thesis definitions act as principles (‘explanations ’or ‘causes ’to

use the terminology of the Phaedo 100b1-102a2). Even though the Meno avoids any mention of transcendent forms, the priority of definition [scil. (7) the priority principle] implies that definitions of forms constitute principles from which other proposals can be derived.

Even if it is an interesting suggestion, Scott does not retain it for the Menon, without giving an explicit reason for doing so. He seems to consider that there is no enough textual elements to support it and instead attributes it to a further development of Plato's thought. Textually, Scott manages to give a solid interpretation of (2) the lesson of geometry, seeing in it the demonstration of the servant's ability to follow a proof by "remembering" the logical links between propositions (reduced therefore to mnemonic links). His interpretation of (3) reminiscence as the chaining of a true opinion by an aitias logismos is much more problematic. He takes his interpretation of this passage from Burnyeat (1980) and the concept of "understanding" that he develops, according to which knowledge is acquired by grasping a set of proposals in their relationships[136]. This interpretation is generally called the "interrelational model" or the "coherence model", because it considers that knowledge involves relating different elements in such a way as to make a coherent whole. It is therefore the consistency of the entire system that is the guarantee of the truth of the opinions that compose it[137].

The first argument we can raise against this conception is that the consistency model violates (7) the priority principle, regardless of interpretation what we do. Indeed, schematically, the model of coherence stipulates that one does not can know a thing only by its relations to the other elements of the system of which it is part. The principle of priority, on the contrary, stipulates that one cannot know the

[136] See Scott, 2006, p.179.
[137] Among the supporters of this theory, we find Hackforth (1955, p.141-2), Allen (1959-60, p.173), Irwin (1974, p.753, 766 and 771), Canto-Sperber (1991a, p.88-90) and Nehamas (1985, p.25 sq.).

relations of an element to others before knowing this element itself. It's our prior knowledge of this element which then allows us to determine which are its relations to the other elements of the system.

The second argument that we can oppose to the coherence model is to stop at Socrates' affirmation of knowledge as a form of bond. Gold, Socrates does not claim that an opinion is stabilized by any valid link with any other opinion of the same status as the first, but it specifies that an opinion becomes knowledge when reasoning links it to its cause (αἰτία), by reasoning which goes back to her. No textual element justifies to associate this cause with a second opinion of the same status; besides, never Socrates does not suggest that an opinion becomes more certain or better known because it has been related in multiple ways, but it always uses the singular. We can conclude that it does not describe a process in which belief is gradually strengthened through each new link drawn with another element of the system, but rather that there is rupture between the moment when opinion is left to itself and the moment when a badge connection is discovered with an object having a privileged status with respect to this opinion. To recover the image of Socrates, chain many slaves to each other will not prevent them from running away, no matter how many of these links! To make sure you keep them in your possession, you have to attach them to something instead. What is this object capable of serving as a cause for an opinion and allowing the transformation of it into knowledge when it is attached to it? The most surprising, is that Scott had found the answer, 70 pages earlier, but did not remembered and did not link it to the present situation. Indeed, as we have seen, it suggested (p.109), referring to the Phaedo, that the definition of forms acted as principle (or explanation, or cause!), so that the priority principle implied that definitions were propositions from which other propositions were to be

derivatives[138]. From this perspective, wouldn't the natural conclusion be to say that a proposition becomes known when it is attached to the definition of the thing on which one is she wearing? Admittedly, from the perspective of the interpretation of the principle of priority that we have adopted, we will not retain the opinion of Scott, who considers that a knowledge of forms is necessarily definitional knowledge, since any definition requires enumerating properties that can only be known once times the essence of the thing itself is known. So we will say that what it takes to chain a true opinion to transform it into knowledge, this is the nature of this thing[139], which acts as the cause of its properties. For example, that's what virtue is who determines (causes) whether it teaches itself or not[140]. Scott's interpretation, which reduces the innate content of knowledge to proposals present latently in the soul, which would be transformed into knowledge by linking them, must therefore be rejected. First, the concept itself of "latent propositions" is suspect. Second, it is a weak position and philosophically uninteresting, which reduces the need for logical connections to contingent mnemonic links. Finally, this interpretation rests on a conception of knowledge which implies that it develops through the implementation relationship of as many propositions as possible, with the aim of forming a whole coherent, which does not make it possible to give a satisfactory explanation of the passage (3) which makes knowledge a sequence through a reasoning of causality.

2.2.4 Fine and the tendency to choose the true

[138] It is interesting to compare these conclusions with a passage from Gorgias (500e-501a). Socrates makes the distinction between technê and "routine" because one knows the nature (φύσις) and the cause (αἰτία) of what he does, while the other acts only from memory. and habit. The contrast between knowledge of nature and cause versus knowledge of memory and habit is interesting to place in the context of Meno, where the eponymous character only remembers the definitions of virtue he heard without having a real knowledge of its nature. See Dye (1978, p.43).

[139] Gonzalez (1998a, p.349-50n.83) studies the meanings of the word logismos in the work of Plato to show that it is often associated with knowledge of the nature of things. We find this position in other commentators (e.g. King 2007, p.404-05 and Brisson 2008, p.183).

[140] Thus, if virtue consisted of propositional knowledge, then it could be taught, since it would be a question of stating the corresponding propositions to a student who would have to remember them.

Fine[141] believes that the reminiscence theory does not respond directly (1) to the paradox posed by Menon. Indeed, she considers that these are the true opinions acquired in this life that makes philosophical research possible. The theory of reminiscence rather comes to explain why, when two opinions turn out to be contradictory, we choose to keep the opinion true:

I suggest that the theory of recollection is introduced, not as a direct reply to the paradox (the elenctic reply plays that role), but to explain certain facts assumed in the electic reply. For example, the elenctic reply assumes that in inquiring, we tend to favor true over false beliefs. plato believe that this remarkable tendency cannot be a brute fact, but requires further explanation; the best such explanation, in his view, is the theory of recollection. (Fine 1992, p.213)

Thus, Fine does not recognize any innate knowledge, but only (Id) a disposition to favor the true. Gonzalez (2007, p.279) addresses the following reproach to Fine:

she leaves both the nature and ground of such a tendency completely unexplained, even though this is precisely what any adequate account of the thesis of anamnesis must explain[142].

In fact, Fine gives a certain explanation, but this one is particularly confusing. Indeed, in the passage we quoted, she asserts that Plato accounts for our tendency to favor the true because of a knowledge we would have had in a previous existence. This statement seems to suggest that we basically keep of our memory a memory (forgotten) of the

[141] Fine sets out his position three times (1992, p.213-15, 2003, p.4-5 and 2014, p.171); she clarifies some of these positions (2007) in a long critical review of Scott's book on Meno. We will concentrate on the initial presentation of the thesis, which seems to us the clearest. A position similar to that of Fine is found in Irwin (1974, 1977 and 1995).
[142] Gonzalez underlining.

knowledge possessed before birth and that this memory is reactivated when we have to choose between two opinions contradictory, so we opt to maintain the true opinion. Subsequently, we would expect Fine to assimilate this memory of acquired knowledge in a previous existence to (IVb) a latent knowledge. Yet, in introduction to Plato on Knowledge and Forms (2003), it explicitly rejects this possibility:

The theory of recollection is often thought to be a theory of innate knowledge. And it is often thought that Plato appeals to it in order to reject premiss (2) of the paradox: though we all have knowledge innate in us, we can none the less inquire by making our innate but tacit knowledge explicit. In my view, however, the theory of recollection is not a theory of innate knowledge. For Plato emphasizes that, though we once knew, and can come to know again, we do not know now, we do not have innate knowledge. Nor is the theory of recollection introduced as a direct reply to the paradox. Rather, it is meant to explain the remarkable fact that, when faced with contradictions among our beliefs, we tend to favor the true ones over the false ones. (p.4-5)

Here we see the confusion in Fine's thought: if it is the knowledge of a lifetime knowledge that explains that we favor the truth today, this knowledge does not must it not always be present in some way in our soul? But if this knowledge is not consciously present in our soul (and it is not). certainly not), must it not be there in a tacit way? If Fine is so reluctant to consider the possibility of tacit knowledge, it is undoubtedly because she thinks also that knowledge is necessarily propositional.[143] Now, we have seen in the previous section, in our refutation of Scott (2006), the problems

[143] See Fine (2007, p.361): "We may say, if we like, that knowledge is innate in us: but only only if we are careful to be clear that what that means is just that proposals that are suitable as the content of the cognitive condition – certain truths – are in some sense in us. »

tacit propositional knowledge thesis[144]. If we ignore this problem, Fine can give a relatively satisfactory (1) to Menon's paradox. She considers that the solution to the paradox can be explained by virtue of the eclectic method of Socrates. According to the author, the method consists in pointing out a contradiction in our opinions; placed in front of it, the interlocutor will tend to choose to keep the opinion true, because of the reminiscence of his prenatal knowledge. Take for example the passage where Menon defines virtue as the art of acquiring beautiful things (78d-79c). When Socrates makes him noting that this acquisition must still be just to be virtuous, Menon chooses to reject its definition rather than consider the possibility of an antagonism between the virtue and justice. However, note that without further explanation, this interpretation is fade: Fine gives no real reason for our tendency to favor the true. She almost seems to consider it a “magical” ability: when we see a contradiction, presto, without reason, we choose to maintain the true opinion[145]. Thus, we agree with the criticism of Gonzalez quoted at the beginning of this section: this interpretation lacks substance; it is more of an observation than of an explanation.

In addition to this lack of precision in his position, Fine fails to account for the two other fundamental passages for the interpretation of the theory of

---

[144] Fine (2007, p.353-62) explains the criticisms she addresses to Scott's theory in an article where she discusses Scott's book on Meno; his criticisms are more textual, while ours are more philosophical.

[145] Besides, Fine cannot explain why this function sometimes fails. A good example is found in Thrasymachus' reaction to the first refutation of his definition of justice (Republic 339a-e), where Socrates shows him that it is not possible to bring justice back to the advantage of rulers. Sometimes they make mistakes about what is to their advantage. Thrasymachus responds by refusing to grant that rulers can err (340c-341c), which shows that his choice is not motivated by a tendency towards truth; he only made his opinions more consistent by prioritizing the opinion most dear to him, namely that justice is the advantage of the strongest. Thus, without further explanation, we might believe that refutation helps to clarify the hierarchy of our preferences regarding our opinions, which can lead us to abandon the less important ones when they turn out to be incompatible with others. However, this result of the elenchos does not imply an innate tendency to prefer the truth, but an ability to make our beliefs more coherent by choosing those that are more dear to us. We nevertheless think that the elenchos allows us to progress towards the truth because of the innate dimension of our knowledge, but for different reasons from Fine; we will explain our solution in section 3.2 (p.130 sq.).

reminiscence. First, Fine makes no connection between the passage that identifies (3) the transformation of a true opinion into knowledge by an aitias logismos to a reminiscence. Fine holds this aitias logismos as being a justification of order explanation of a thing, often referring to its definition (2003, p.6-7).
However, it is mostly in its failure to account for (2) the geometry lesson that the weakness of Fine's position is revealed. As for his solution to the paradox de Menon, she explains the success of this episode by virtue of our ability to choose the true opinions rather than false opinions, when the Socratic refutation reveals the contradiction between them. However, this is not what happens in the geometry lesson. Indeed, Socrates does not refute the servant by showing him the contradiction between two of his views; rather, it shows him that an erroneous result stems from his beliefs. Thereby, the first answer of the servant, according to which the duplication of the area of the square results of duplication on his side, rests on his belief (confused and unformulated) in the equivalence between the cause and its effect for this operation. To refute his answer, Socrates shows him (in fact) that a quadruple area is obtained by the duplication on the side - there is no question here of two contradictory opinions put in parallel, between which the servant is forced to make a choice! Irwin (1995 p.134), who adopts a position similar to that of Fine, makes a desperate attempt to try describe the success of the geometry lesson in terms of a tendency to choose the truth when two opinions turn out to be contradictory:

He was able to revise them [scil. his beliefs, after having rebuts] in a reasonable direction. He did not adjust all his other geometrical views to make them fit the principle that a figure with sides double the length of the sides of a second figure also has double the area of the second figure.

How to take Irwin seriously? The servant does not have the capacity to adjust all his other geometric beliefs to his initial answer as he suggests (by the way, what would that entail?); it is therefore not an intuition for the truth that prevents it. Thus,

Fine's solution is ultimately inadequate for explain what happens in (2) geometry lesson[146]. not give a very convincing explanation of the other. For our investigation, it is however, even more important to retain Fine's reluctance to admit a tacit knowledge to explain our tendency to choose the true opinion, which must be attributable to his belief in the propositional nature of knowledge. So after these first four attempts, we understand the need to consider a innate knowledge that is not propositional in nature, what our neighbor author will allow us to do.

2.2.5 Gonzalez (1998a and b): the intuitionist model

So far, we have seen the failure of interpreters to argue that the innate knowledge had to be propositional, whether they regard it as being (IIIb) total or (IIIa) partial, (IVa) explicit or (IVb) tacit. Due to these failures, we must question the very possibility that innate knowledge can be propositional in nature, which will be maintained by the next author studied. In his 2007 article (p.280, n.6), Gonzalez returns to the position he supported in 1998b and considers it an example of a position that sees into the soul (Ic) a non-propositional intuition[147] of (IIIb) the set of (IIa) knowledge. He criticizes this position (in the 2007 article) because such an intuition should be the result of the investigation and not what makes it possible. As he mentions, the article of 1998b attempted to remedy this problem by speaking (IVb) of an “obscure intuition

In conclusion, Fine's suggestion that we don't really have a knowledge in us, but rather a disposition to favor true opinions when discussion reveals a contradiction in our belief system, must be dismissed. Indeed, it fails to account for two key passages on

[146] We will suggest later (section 3.1.3.3, p.124 sq.) that the truly productive moment of refutation is when the interlocutor is reduced to aporia, when awareness of a problem forces invention. of a solution which makes it possible to remedy this. This explanation is better suited to the geometry lesson, the crucial moment of which is precisely when the servant realizes that no whole number can answer the problem posed.

[147] Among the commentators advocating a similar position, see Bluck (1961, p.12-13) and Thomas (1978, p.129-30).

reminiscence and does not and tacit" (1998b, p.273), but he reproaches him now (2007) for not having clarified the meaning of this expression and of not having explained how such knowledge was possible. It is worth taking a moment to clarify the 1998b position, to better understand the criticism made of it in the 2007 article and thus know why it must be rejected. Note first that the word "intuition" is problematic and that Gonzalez generally avoids it[148], preferring instead acquaintance (familiarity) or awareness. Indeed, using the word "intuition" in relation to Plato evokes a common interpretation of noêsis in the Republic as a form of immediate capture of intelligible forms. It goes without saying that such an interpretation of this term should be reserved to describe the activity of the soul which has attained most perfect knowledge, after a long philosophical training. It would be difficult to imagine what a tacit noêsis could look like[149] and that is why Gonzalez considers it necessary to clarify what is meant by "intuition obscure and tacit. The advantage of speaking of acquaintance rather than intuition is that there is no doubt that familiarity admits degrees (1998b, p.240, 252; 1998a, p.157-8), so that it is simpler to conceive how the inquiry can progress from a familiarity distant to an intimate familiarity with the object of research. This concept of acquaintance provides an excellent description of the progression of understanding of protagonists about the nature sought, understanding allowed by the survey dialectical, despite the absence of propositional results. That's what makes the big richness of the position of 1998a and b and which makes this book so enlightening on the functioning of the Socratic dialectic.

Nevertheless, this lexicological correction remains insufficient to spare the article of 1998b of the 2007 critique. The problem is the following: familiarity with the object

[148] The 1998b article uses the word "intuition" only six times, including only once (p.273) to describe his own conception of innate non-propositional knowing.

[149] Gonzalez seems to lean towards this interpretation in his note 87 (1998b), when he refers to the distinction of Hyland (1995, p.182) between the "archaic noêsis" and the "telic noêsis", but this distinction is not found not in Plato. In our view, it is better to reserve the word "intuition" in French to translate noêsis in the sense of immediate and integral intellectual grasp and find another expression to describe the knowledge that is innately located in the soul.

of research develops through the dialectical inquiry into its nature, so that this familiarity is not innately present. Indeed, consider the following analysis from the geometry lesson:

The discussion with the slave shows us that the search for, and refutation of, definitions and propositional hypotheses can awaken a knowledge that is not itself definitional or propositional (call it 'acquaintance' or 'recognition' or what you will). Yet the ambiguous word 'awaken' should remind us that we still do not know exactly how such an elenctic method can give rise to such knowledge. It seems that this knowledge would already have to be in us in order for Socrates's elenchus to be able to 'awaken' it. But this is exactly what Socrates has sought to show in his discussion with the slave: that the knowledge of τοτί is already withinus and need only be 'recollected.' (1998b, p.271)

Thus, for the inquiry to develop a familiarity with the object of the research, there must already be in the soul some knowledge of the nature of the thing. In this passage, Gonzalez explains that dialectical research helps to awaken a familiarity (with the nature of a thing), which was until then "dormant", we might say, to spin the metaphor. That's why Gonzalez doesn't just talk of a tacit and obscure intuition, but also of a "tacit and obscure awareness" (p.274). The problem is that an "awareness" that is tacit and obscure seems as problematic as a tacit and obscure noêsis, so that the 2007 critique still holds. Indeed, we are then practically speaking of an unconscious consciousness(unaware awareness). In other words, to maintain the thesis of 1998b, according to which the survey makes it possible to develop familiarity with the object of research, it is necessary to posit in the soul a relationship with the being of a thing which is more original that this familiarity (because a familiarity cannot be tacit), but which makes the development of this possible familiarity[150].

[150] This is what the 2007 article attempted to do by suggesting that there is a desire in the soul for the truth. Without minimizing the importance of eros in Plato, we showed in the previous chapter (see section 1.2.3.3) that such a desire could not replace the innate epistemological content of the soul and that the reminiscence of this content was even the condition of the awakening of eros.

Thus, considering Gonzalez's position in his 1998b article and the reasons for his withdrawal in 2007 allow us to understand why he is not useful to appeal to an intuition within the soul to found knowledge, even in a relaxed version where this intuition is conceived as an awareness, which admits different degrees. Indeed, even if our awareness of the nature of a form can progress, this progression cannot be explained by itself: it is not possible that the progression of our awareness of a thing is based on the awareness that we already have of this thing. Also, even though we think it is just to describe the progress we make in knowledge as a progress of deepening our awareness of the nature of things, we must find a another form of relationship to the nature of things, which would be innate and unconscious, but yet available, to explain this progression[151]. Gonzalez's study also allows us to see to what extent the concept of a "tacit knowledge" is problematic: in our refutation of Scott, we have seen that latent propositional knowledge was difficult to conceive; we see now that a latent intuition causes so much trouble[152].

2.2.6. Leibnizian reading: innate ideas

Leibniz is neither a contemporary commentator nor an interpreter of Plato. However, he there is a striking kinship between the theory of knowledge that he develops in the New essays on human understanding[153] and the theory of reminiscence that we we find in the Meno and the Phaedo, to the point where Leibniz's thought in this regard So we want to take a moment to consider Leibnizian notions of innate ideas, of necessary truths, of virtual and actual knowledge, because this study sheds an interesting light on reminiscence in Plato. We will see that in somehow, Leibniz offers a synthesis of the positions of Vlastos and Gonzalez; he

[151] As we will see in section 3.1.3.3 (p.124 sq.), the elenchos will be the preferred method to achieve this progress in our knowledge. We will also see in section 3.2 (p.130 sq.) that this capacity of the elenchos requires the presence within us of what we will call “archetypes”, which determine how we relate to experience.

[152] We can add, with Fine (2007, p.262), that Plato would not use an expression like “latent knowledge”, since knowledge requires the ability to explain why our opinions are true.

[153] From now on, the abbreviations "New trials" or simply "NE" will be used

indeed advances a deductive model whose axioms correspond to innate ideas, of which we have tacit knowledge, likely to be transformed into intuition (explicit) by their definition. The most obvious link we can make between the Leibnizian theory of ideas innate and the theory of reminiscence concerns the exposition that is made of this theory in the Phaedo. Once we have grasped this parallel, a link between the necessary truths and Meno's geometry lesson will also become clear. Too, we shall therefore begin by exposing the relations between the thought of Leibniz and the Phaedo, so as to be able to show how Leibniz's philosophy is susceptible to help us interpret the Meno. Innate ideas have considerable extension for Leibniz, who exemplifies "being, substance, one, the same, cause, perception, reasoning and quantity other notions that the senses cannot give" (NE, II.1, p.70). In §26 of the Discourse of Metaphysics (henceforth DM), which makes explicit reference to the theory of Platonic reminiscence, Leibniz shows himself above all interested in differentiating ideas thoughts, in order to clarify the notion of innate idea and to explain why the fact that we are not at first sight aware of possessing them does not exclude their presence within the soul. He therefore argues that the "content" of the mind is can almost be seen as an interpretation of Plato, or at least as being inspired by the Greek philosopher and developed from similar intuitions[154]. much larger than what we are thinking. To prove it, the New Essays (p.41) appeal to the multitude of things on our minds, but without realizing it, because they are "hidden by memory", so that there is no absurdity in thinking that nature has hidden in us something original knowledge. But if the idea is not a thought, then what is? The Discourse on Metaphysics suggests that it is "an immediate object of thought or […] some permanent form which remains in us when we do not contemplate it" or even when it is

[154] We also know that Leibniz has a great interest in Plato. Indeed, not only does he mention it in connection with his discussion of innate ideas both in the New Essays and in the Discourse on Metaphysics, but he also wrote an Abridged Phaedo and an Abridged Theaetetus. In a useful article, Hunter and Inwood (1984) have already begun to draw a parallel between the innateness of Leibniz and Plato, but focusing mainly on the differences in their conception of the moment of acquisition of knowledge and Importance of language in explaining the possibility of making progress in a priori knowledge. In this section, we will push the parallels further.

“that quality of our soul as expressing some nature, form or essence […] whether we think about it or not. (DM §26) » Thus, the idea is the object of a thought and this object, because it is always available to be thought about when the occasion arises. present for the consciousness, is located in us at all times.
To prove the existence of innate ideas, Leibniz resorts to an argument from poverty stimulus: given that we can discover necessary truths and that these cannot come from the senses while keeping such a necessity, it is necessary that "the mind has a disposition (both active and passive) to draw them itself from its background (p.42)”. Since sensitive data is not sufficient to explain our access to necessary truths and that we are naturally inclined to approve these when they are distinctly perceived[155], Leibniz concludes that there are in us ideas innate, on which these necessary truths are based and which can become objects of thought when we pay attention to it and think about it properly.

The argument from the poverty of the stimulus is therefore an argument derived from the existence of necessary truths (like 1+1=2). As Scott (2006, p.103-5) points out, it is of an argument different from that of the Phaedo, which demonstrates rather than the « ideas » (like that of equality) cannot come from the senses, since no occurrence does not realize them perfectly. Nevertheless, we can think that Leibniz presupposes an argument like that of the Phaedo, since it affirms, without thinking that it is necessary to demonstrate, that the square and the circle are innate ideas, for they do not not come from the external senses (N E I.1, p.45). Moreover, he also asserts that one would not consider such ideas if we had never seen or touched anything, although they obviously do not come from the senses (NE I.1, p.40), which again recalls the

[155] We will come back to the technical meaning that Leibniz gives to this term on the following page.

Phaedon[156]. Leibniz considers that this unconscious possession of innate ideas cannot be reduced to a simple capacity, making the difference between "having a thing without using it" and “only to have the ability to acquire it[157]” (NE, p.41-2). He explains that no only the mind has the faculty of knowing innate ideas, but it still has the "faculty to find them in oneself, and the disposition to approve them when he thinks about them properly. (NE, p.47).

What does it mean to “think properly” about an innate idea? For Leibniz, it is a question of think clearly and distinctly. This injunction reminds us of Descartes, difference that Leibniz was concerned with developing precise criteria which would make it possible to determine whether we are thinking clearly and distinctly and have therefore updated our innate knowledge of an idea. He therefore opposes an obscure knowledge to a clear knowledge and confused knowledge to distinct knowledge159 in defining what makes the clarity and distinction of knowledge as follows: knowledge is clear when its object is recognized and differentiated; a clear knowledge is distinct either when it is a question of a primitive notion, or, in the case of a complex concept, when all the marks that make it possible to differentiate this object of another can be enumerated and are clearly known (as defined above). The Leibnizian theory therefore implies the presence in us of innate ideas which belong to the soul forever (because they could not have been acquired by the senses or in any other way without losing their universality) and which can become objects of thought insofar as we pay attention to them. One should understand

[156] See 75a-c.

[157] Hunter and Inwood (1984, p.429) propose a distinction which throws an interesting light on this thesis of Leibniz. They distinguish Leibniz from tabula rasa theorists, who see the soul as having an "undetermined potential" to know, so that it builds knowledge from what is given to it from without, while Leibniz (and also Plato, according to our authors) posits rather that the soul has a "determined potential" to know precisely such and such ideas. This distinction is correct, on condition that we do not conclude that Leibniz adheres to what Rawson (2006) calls a "dispositional innateism", because, and this is a crucial point, Leibniz explains the presence in us of this "determined potential" by the existence of innate ideas within the soul.

that these innate ideas, insofar as they have not yet been thought out, are in the soul without our being aware of it (we have an obscure knowledge of it). Leibniz therefore adheres to a conception of innateism according to which innate ideas are What does it mean to “think properly” about an innate idea[158]? For Leibniz, it is a question of think clearly and distinctly. This injunction reminds us of Descartes, difference that Leibniz was concerned with developing precise criteria which would make it possible to determine whether we are thinking clearly and distinctly and have therefore updated our innate knowledge of an idea. He therefore opposes an obscure knowledge to a clear knowledge and confused knowledge to distinct knowledge[159] in defining what makes the clarity and distinction of knowledge as follows:

knowledge is clear when its object is recognized and differentiated; a clear knowledge is distinct either when it is a question of a primitive notion, or, in the case of a complex concept, when all the marks that make it possible to differentiate this object of another can be enumerated and are clearly known (as defined above).

The Leibnizian theory therefore implies the presence in us of innate ideas which belong to the soul forever (because they could not have been acquired by the senses or in any other way without losing their universality) and which can become objects of thought insofar as we pay attention to them. One should understand that these innate ideas, insofar as they have not yet been thought out, are in the soul without our being aware of it (we have an obscure knowledge of it). Leibniz therefore adheres to a conception of innateism according to which innate ideas are present in us (IVb) in a latent way, waiting to be brought to consciousness when they become an object of thought.The parallels between Leibniz and the theory of reminiscence do not end with the Phaedo. On the contrary, Leibniz's favorite episode is rather the interrogation of the servant by Socrates, to whom he refers both in the

---

[158] See NE II.29, p.205-13. A very useful summary of these criteria is found in Russell (1900, p.168), from which we draw here.

[159] Leibniz adds a distinction between inadequate and adequate knowledge, which we neglect because of its uselessness in interpreting Plato. Separate knowledge is adequate when all of its marks are also distinctly (in addition to clearly) known.

Discourse on Metaphysics (§ 26) and in the New essays (p.40). He takes this lesson as a demonstration of the existence of what he calls the “necessary truths”.
The New Essays finally discuss innate ideas rather little and are interested much more to these "necessary truths", acquired by the mind in itself by doing operations on innate ideas (NE I.1, p.43, 48), which he opposes to factual truths, which require the help of the senses. It is within the framework of the discussion of the existence of such truths that Leibniz refers to the Menon geometry lesson. Indeed, he considers that this passage demonstrates that we can acquire certain truths "by carefully considering and arranging what one has already in the mind, without using any truth learned by experience or by tradition of others” (NE I.1, p.40). A similar conclusion is drawn from the description of the same episode in the Discourse on Metaphysics (§26):

Which shows that our soul knows all this virtually, and needs only animadversion to know the truths, and, consequently, that it has at least those ideas of which those truths depend. We can even say that she already has these truths, when we take them for the relations of ideas.

What is particularly interesting in this explanation of the lesson of Menon's geometry is that it offers an interpretation of the theory of reminiscence which makes it possible to unify the presentations which are made of it in the Menon and in the Phaedo. Indeed, we have in us certain innate ideas (of which we become conscious through a process of “reminiscence”); we can then connect these different innate ideas in order to discover truths required ; the necessary truths were therefore in us in a virtual way, since it was only a question of explaining the connections between the innate ideas for the discover. Thus, Leibniz considers that innate ideas exist (IIIa) in number limit ; however, insofar as the necessary truths can be deduced from from these innate ideas without resorting to the senses, he considers that they too are innate, but only in a virtual way (NE I.1, p.43, 48). Leibniz's position allows us to give a satisfactory explanation of good many of the key passages that we have identified. First,

for Leibniz, our ability to arrive at the knowledge of necessary truths rests on our knowledge innate ideas; indeed, the latter, once brought to the clarity of the definition, serve as axioms from which we can deduce the necessary truths[160].

This relationship suggests to us an interpretation of the third key passage, according to which (3) it is necessary to link an opinion by a reasoning of causality to make it a awareness. Indeed, we can acquire a knowledge of necessary truths
because these are deduced from (chained to) our knowledge of innate ideas.

Moreover, Leibniz's philosophy makes it possible to give an excellent explanation of (2) geometry lesson. Translated into the language of Leibniz, the discovery of
way to double the area of a square (by constructing a second square on the
diagonal of the first) would be the example of a necessary truth, which results from operations of the mind made from the innate idea of the square. Indeed, ultimately, if the servant can recognize the truth of the solution proposed by Socrates, it is because he understood that the diagonal of a square divides its area in two; he then has in hand all the elements to construct the correct answer itself, or at the very least for the
recognize when Socrates shows it to him. Now, this opinion (the division of the area of the square
in two by the diagonal) stems from the very nature of the square and it is underlined from the departure (82b-d), when Socrates enumerates its essential properties[161]. It is therefore the knowledge of the nature of the square which allows him to know that the answer proposed to the end of the episode is true. Thus, if we can recognize the truth of the solution of this geometric problem, it is because it arises from operations carried out on the idea of the square[162]. According to Leibniz's vocabulary, the side length of a double square is known innately, but virtually, insofar as it is possible to arrive at

---

[160] In this respect, Leibniz therefore reminds us of the model advocated by Vlastos, which we considered previously (see section 1.2.2.1, p.24 sq.), with the difference that this time the axioms (the innate ideas) are known in a innate, but unconscious.

[161] Weiss (2001, p.84 sq.) has offered a solid argument to maintain that it is indeed the diagonals which cross the square which are mentioned by Socrates at the beginning of the interview.

[162] The square is among the innate ideas according to Leibniz (NE I.1, p.45).

this necessary truth by only performing mental operations on the innate idea of square. As regards the knowledge of the nature of the square, Leibniz considers that it it is an idea that is present in our soul, but that it is there first only in a dark and confusing way. The square is obscurely designed until we have not learned to use this notion, that is to say until we have learned to recognize a square by learning the language. However, at this time the knowledge is still confused for those who are unable to define what a square is so as to distinguish it from other things that we know. So he is strong possible that the servant with little education and having never had a geometry master (85th) had no explicit (separate) knowledge about the properties of the square[163] before the start of the survey. Nevertheless, when Socrates states them, he recognizes immediately that these are necessary characteristics of the square. That knowledge was present in the soul, but it was not explicit before being stated. In summary, if we make a Leibnizian reading of the geometry lesson, we we can say that the servant can recognize the final solution to the problem because he sees how this derives from the innate idea of the square, which Socrates had clarified (with a design) and distinguished (by listing the essential properties) at the beginning of investigation ; thanks to this innate knowledge become distinct, the server can see that a diagonal necessarily divides the area of the square in two, so that a second square, built on the diagonal of the first, will contain four halves of the first and will have therefore a double area. Leibniz's theory of innate ideas may thus seem to offer a excellent interpretation of the theory of reminiscence. We find, however, that this correspondence is misleading when we try to generalize it to the whole practice of the Platonic dialectic. First you have to realize that the questioning of the servant relates to a mathematical problem, which lends itself particularly good at Leibniz's theory; however, if we consider the

[163] Moreover, even if it were to turn out that he had such knowledge, that does not change anything, since the demonstration would have worked just as well with an interlocutor who does not have such knowledge.

moral questions, the differences with Plato become salient. Leibniz is like this unable to solve (1) Meno's paradox, insofar as a solution to it must explain how we can begin and complete a research on the nature of virtue from the innate dimension of knowledge. In the New Essays, Leibniz questions the innate dimension of morality in the second chapter of the first book (NE I.2). According to him, it is necessary to distinguish between two types of innate practical principles: those which are known by light (i.e. by knowledge) and those who are known by instinct. As an example of a known principle by instinct, Leibniz mentions seeking joy and avoiding sadness. He ... not however gives no example of practical principle known by light, which in itself is already disturbing. Many passages indicate that he still contemplates these rules under a deductive model taking as axioms some innate ideas. For example, he affirms: “moral science […] is not otherwise innate than arithmetic, because it also depends on demonstrations and natural light (p.54)”. Leibniz insists (p.58) on the fact that the innateness of these principles does not imply that all men recognize, because innate knowledge is at first obscure and it "takes a lot attention and order to perceive clearly and distinctly what is known innately”. To simplify things and formulate them in a more "Platonist", we could say that Leibniz believed in the existence of something as an "innate idea of the good", which we could know in the same way than the idea of the square and from which it would be possible to deduce the principles of moral, as the servant deduces the length of the side of a square of double area from of the idea of the square. We had seen that a problem with the design of Vlastos was its inability to explain how we could come to know the propositions logically primitives of his axiomatic system. Leibniz remedies this problem by asserting that they depend on innate ideas tacitly present in the soul, that we can know explicitly by directing our attention to it. Thus, the position of Leibniz implies a hybrid position between the axiomatic model of Vlastos and the intuitionist theory of Gonzalez (1998a and b), insofar as the moral principles are deduced from certain ideas, which are themselves known by an intuition

designed on a visual model[164]. Indeed, innate ideas are discovered "by the natural light" or "by paying attention to it" (e.g. NE I.1, p.49). As we have seen, Leibniz is in this respect the worthy heir of Descartes: for him the knowledge of innate ideas is done by directing our attention towards these ideas, until they appear to us clearly and distinctly; we can there arrive through a verbalization exercise, which requires identifying the brands to differentiate the idea under consideration from another. Thus, confronted with a man in disagree with him on the natural principles of morality, Leibniz could only do the apology for a more attentive examination of the ideas on which they are based. There is therefore for him no difference in method in mathematics and in morals: in both cases, it is to obtain a clear and distinct knowledge of certain innate ideas and to apply diligently rules of inference on these ideas to become aware of the truths necessary they entail. Now, in the Meno, defining virtue happens to be an exercise of a different order than that of the definition of the square. In the case of the square, it goes as Leibniz says: we pass from obscure knowledge to clear (but confused) knowledge when we learn to use the word "square" correctly, then we move from one confused knowledge to distinct knowledge when we turn our attention on what a square is and let us express what are its essential properties, which are immediately recognized as such by anyone who knows how to use the word " square ". It is different with virtue. Indeed, the way we learn to using the word "virtue" and the way most people generally use it has no nothing systematic: all sorts of discordant beliefs intertwine in these different uses, so learning the language is insufficient for us give a "clear" knowledge of what virtue is. As a result, the exercise of definition (allowing distinct knowledge) is much more complex than that which is to simply verbalize how we use that word. For example, Menon has a conception of the good linked to power and wealth[165], so that any definition of virtue which would not make room for these two elements would seem to him immediately suspicious. Thus, the definition of virtue cannot consist in simply

[164] Thought must apprehend innate ideas as vision apprehends colors
[165] See ex. 78b-c.

“to pay attention” to how we use this word. Besides, we
let us see that in the moral field the method of Socrates is not a method
axiomatic and deductive, but is rather dialectical and consists in the refutation of
the interlocutor, indicating the conflicts within his network of beliefs or
the unacceptable consequences that flow from its definitions, so that it
can come up with a better definition. Although Leibniz's theory of innate ideas
is of precious help in enabling us to understand Platonic innateness, the
parallels that we can draw between the two authors find their limit in
the lack of distinction that Leibniz makes between the fields of mathematics and
moral. To be able to solve (1) Menon's paradox, we need a theory of innateness
able to account for the possibility and the interest of the eclectic inquiry into the
moral issues. The critical examination of the next author will allow us to progress
in that direction.

2.2.7. Hare and the ability to use a word

Hare, in his study “Philosophical Discoveries” (1960), does not aim to
give an interpretation of reminiscence, but rather to use this theory to solve a problem
related to the philosophy of language. Nevertheless, in doing so, he develops an
intelligent and fruitful interpretation, which would benefit from being better known,
even if, as presented, it does not stand up to a confrontation with the texts.
Hare believes that Plato introduced the theory of reminiscence to explain our (Id)
disposition to use a word correctly, which precedes the dialectical activity by which
we seek to define it. He illustrates this theory with an image, which contrasts the ability
to participate in a dance whatever (he gives the example of the eightsome reel; we will
rather speak of the « set square ») and the ability to say how it is danced. To better
understand his position, it is worth taking the time to expose this analogy.
The author wants to show that the activity which consists in saying how the square set is
danced for someone who already knows how to dance it (without having a “theoretical”
knowledge of this dance) does not consist of establishing a rule on how the square set

must be danced nor in an empirical judgment that apprehends what the square set is. First, it is not about establishing a rule, because the dancer seeks to transcribe the rules inherent to his activity into words: he is not in the process of establishing how the dance will be danced, but only wants to verbalize the knowledge of the dance which he already possesses and which is already established. However, this is not an empirical judgment either; indeed, the dancer does not observe an unknown situation that he is busy describing, but rather seeks to express knowledge they already have in a non-linguistic way. Yet, even though he is not empirical, this judgment nevertheless seems synthetic; indeed, the dancer discovers something he did not know, since he was unable to say spontaneously how the square set is danced. In this example, the dancer therefore acquires a knowledge (verbal) of knowledge that he already possessed (in a non-verbal way). The author sees a parallel with reminiscence: in this case too it is a question of acquiring knowledge already present in us. Hare uses this analogy to represent our use of words and thus explain the solution to (1) Menon's paradox. Indeed, we can (1a) undertake the research into the nature of virtue and (1b) recognize that we have discovered the good answer, because, prior to the survey, we already have know-how which allows us to use the word "virtue" correctly, as the dancer possesses a know-how that allows him to dance correctly[166]. This know-how is not verbalized and this is what dialectics allows. Plato says that we "remember" because that we already know how to use this term and that it is from this unverbalized knowledge that we will acquire "new" knowledge through its expression in a definition. Hare is nevertheless critical of Plato: he considers (p.161) that the know-how that allows us to use a word correctly has no

[166] Hare's thesis receives clear support in the interpretation of Bedu-Addo (1983, p.239), who considers that Socrates and Meno "are drawing upon their previous expreience of what each of them supposes to be instances or cases of what virtue is like". Indeed, in a remarkable article, BeduAddo inscribes this remark in his more global thesis according to which we already find in the Meno the germ of the theory which will be developed in the Phaedo, according to which reminiscence functions from concrete cases which allow us to remember the nature of things

not acquired in a previous existence, but rather “on our mothers ’knees”.
Even setting aside this criticism, Hare's position cannot be a
valid interpretation of Plato. First, on the textual level, it ignores what is produced as part of (2) the geometry lesson. Indeed, the solution of the problem by
the servant does not consist in the verbalization of his know-how about the use of the language. Second, the author ignores Platonic metaphysics. Indeed, for Plato, the use of the word "virtue" that we learned "on the knees of our mothers” is different from the nature of virtue; common usage of the word virtue is not only a pale reflection of this shape.[167]

Let us set aside these two exegetical arguments for a moment, to ask ourselves if Plato can hold his own against Hare's criticism. Beyond what Plato thinks he is doing, can we to demonstrate, on a philosophical level, that dialectics does something other than verbalize the knowledge implicit in our use of words, the source of which is not some prenatal knowledge, but simply learning the language in this life? Such was the unique source of this knowledge, the dialectic would only make explicit language conventions and would not allow us to arrive at a universal truth. However, to our surprise, certain textual elements of the Meno go in this direction, by making the apology of the need for an agreement and a convention so that the dialectic can function. The importance of such an agreement is underlined at two key moments. Let's take first the episode where Socrates defines the figure (74b sq.) as what always accompanies the
color, in order to show Menon what type of answer he is looking for to his question on the nature of virtue. Meno accuses this definition of naivety, because it lends itself to the objection of those who claim to be ignorant of what color is. Socrates responds by distinguishing discussion with professionals from controversy and conversation between friends; in the latter, it is appropriate to respond in accordance with what the other claims to know. As an example of this mode of conversation, Socrates offers a

[167] Certainly, this is not problematic for Hare, whose aim is not to comment on Plato and who is well aware of distancing himself from it.

new definition of the figure, for which Menon confirms knowing each of the elements: the limit, the solid and the surface[168]. Socrates therefore seems to believe that without this first chord, the exercise of definition would be little better than a verbal jousting between eristics. Yet the question remains whether this initial agreement involves that Socrates and Meno only draw conclusions from an arbitrary basis, established only by agreement. A second passage of the Meno emphasizes the need for primordial agreement to be able to advance together on the path of knowledge, but this time on a more fundamental plan, which concurs in a troubling way with Hare's thesis. At the beginning of the geometry lesson (82b), which must serve as proof for the theory of reminiscence, Socrates asks Meno if his servant is Greek and if he speaks Greek, after which he ensures that the servant knows what a square is and what its properties are fundamentals. We rarely pay attention to this short preamble, which nevertheless has something exploding. Access to universal truth buried deep in the servant's soul requires the use of a conventional tool: language. Without this link conventional language, the servant would not have discovered the necessity that unites the diagonal of a square to the duplication of its area. The language, transmitted by our predecessors and by our community, gives us the means to speak about something thing between us. As we have seen, according to Hare's position, he is the only reason why we are never in absolute darkness at the start of a investigation and that the first part of Menon's paradox does not apply.
Thus, because he speaks "Greek" and has learned "what a square is" (how to use this word), the servant already knows certain characteristics of the square and can recognize an example when it is drawn on the ground. We observe the same in Meno for virtue, since he recognizes certain characteristics of virtue (for

[168] For us, the existence of two definitions of the figure is explained by the need to proceed from concepts for which Menon agrees. From the perspective of the present work, however, we prefer to save a complete study of this thorny question. We refer the interested reader to this one to the commentators who deal with it. Thus, Klein (1965, p.60-70), Brague (1978, p.97), Gonzalez (1998a, p.161 sq.) and Weiss (2001, p.30-31) argue for the superiority of the first definition, while Loyd (1992, p.176-77) and King (2007, p.399-400) for the second.

example, that a virtuous action cannot go against justice) and certain cases of virtue (for example, that there is a virtue of the servant[169]); however, he is unable to define it. The need for this prior agreement therefore adds grist to the mill to the criticism of Hare: the survey rests on a fundamental agreement as to how a word is commonly used and involves the knowledge of a language learned "on the knees of our mothers"; therefore, we are entitled to ask ourselves if Socrates and his interlocutors are doing something other than manipulating language conventions that do no connection with truth, when they try to define virtue and the rest. How? 'Or' What whether the agreement between Socrates and his interlocutor about the terms that serve to to define the figure or on the characteristics of the square is something other than a convention passed between ignoramuses, without epistemological value?

To answer this problem, we must realize that dialectics does not not only bring a reflective report on our use of language, but that it disentangles also different conflicting uses. Indeed, within the same society, there is no not a single consistent usage for each term, but on the contrary, especially in the case of Moral concepts like 'virtue' have different competing uses. By example, Thrasymachus would use the word "justice" in a different way than Cephalus. In the same vein, the condemnation of Socrates was judged just by some and unjust by others. Confronted with these different uses, the dialectic seeks to establish what is correct use; it therefore has a normative dimension, which it could not have if it merely reflected existing usages. According to the famous image of Theaetetus, in addition to give birth to souls, Socrates also knows how to discriminate between the truth and the falsity of offspring of the birth over which he presided[170]. Before examining how dialectics can fulfill such a role, we must first see that the same individual can himself make discordant uses of the same word, without realize that these uses arise from conflicting beliefs about

[169] For recognition of this feature and case, see 73c sq.

[170] See Theaetetus 150a-b: "So this is how far the profession of midwife extends: less far than my own role. Because there is an additional thing that is not possible for women: sometimes giving birth to imaginary beings, sometimes real beings, and the thing is not easy to diagnose. (trans. Narcy)

the concept being used. Thus, we have within us different beliefs (unexamined and unspoken) that influence our use of the word “virtue”; however, these beliefs are often inconsistent and give rise to inconsistent linguistic usage. This is a dot capital. For example, Menon's belief in the identification of the good with health, riches and honors (78c-d) may conflict with another belief, which forbidden to associate virtue and injustice; it is by exploiting this contradiction that Socrates manages to refute it. The description of the dialectic proposed by Hare is therefore incomplete. Indeed, it is true that Socrates sometimes tries to get his interlocutor to correctly formulate this that he thinks and that this can be understood as an exercise in verbalization of the use what he does with a term. Nevertheless, Socrates also exposes the contradictions that stem from an inconsistency between the different beliefs held by an individual. So the Socratic refutation has different functions. She can tell her victim that he has not correctly formulated the belief in the source of the use he makes of a term; this scenario agrees with Hare's interpretation. However, she can also signify that different beliefs of the interlocutor are inconsistent; in this case, she helps him become aware of a contradiction among his opinions. Finally, she can show that unacceptable consequences flow from this definition and thus encourage the search for a better solution[171]; the geometry lesson corresponds to this third case. Now, what about the part of the dialectic that aims to verbalize the uses that we make of a term? Whether they are conflicting or not, should we grant Hare that

the uses that the dialectic wants to verbalize were learned "on the knees of our mothers”? On this subject, we can reproach Hare for ignoring the point underlined in big traits by Leibniz and the supporters of innate ideas, namely that the theory of reminiscence explains that we have the possibility of accessing truths universal and to ideas that cannot come from experience or teaching. Mathematical truths are prime examples. Among these, we must of course think first of the geometry lesson: when Socrates asserts that the square

[171] This role will be particularly important in our explanation of the ability of rebuttal to yield positive results. See section 3.1.3.3, p.124 sq.

has four equal sides, there is something here that goes beyond the order of convention, even if he does not advance any demonstration to prove it. All recognize that a square has four equal sides, no matter what language they talk. We are convinced that the agreement between the servant and Socrates on this subject does not can be limited to a simple agreement, but that it is the sign of a recognition deeper than a square should be. We can therefore conclude that, at least for mathematical concepts and for other universal concepts such as equality (the example of the Phaedo), the use correctness of words can only be a matter of convention alone and must depend on a knowledge analogous to that posed by the partisans of innate ideas. What about moral concepts like virtue? Show that these are not of a conventional nature is more difficult. Nevertheless, we can be sure one thing: the human being is not completely indeterminate, so that the self-realization and the attainment of happiness are always understood within some tags. Also, inasmuch as virtue is what enables a man to realize his own excellence as a man, this cannot be completely conventional. Thus, under the different conflicting opinions of virtue, must stand hide the reality of it. The whole question is to know how to characterize by following our innate access to this reality. As a result of this dialectical investigation, the two positions that appear the fruitful for interpreting reminiscence are those of the innate ideas of Leibniz and of the disposition to use a Hare term. However, these two positions are based on opposite bases. In Leibniz, innate ideas are knowledge content to which we can gain intellectual access by directing our attention to them; by As a result, Leibniz's theory is unable to provide a satisfactory interpretation of the eclectic dimension of the Socratic dialectic; it makes it possible to account for (2) the geometry lesson and (3) the identification of the aitias logismos with reminiscence, but is powerless to explain how this theory can resolve (1) the paradox of Menon on moral subjects. Hare considers that there is no innate content of knowledge within the soul, but only an acquired disposition to use a term; his theory can therefore resolve (1) Menon's paradox, by asserting that the inquiry quenches our unverbalized knowledge of how to use the word

"virtue". Hare cannot, however, account for (2) the geometry lesson and our ability to recognize universal realities and necessary truths. We have therefore need an intermediate theory between that of the innate ideas of Leibniz and that of Hare's acquired disposition to account for the epistemological aspect of reminiscence in the Menon. We will propose such a solution in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Reminiscence and epistemology in the Menon: Solution of the problem

In the last chapter, we noted the difficulties relating to the precision of the nature and status of the memory of prenatal knowledge. The conclusion of our dialectical examination indicated to us the need to find an intermediate term between the innate ideas of Leibniz and the acquired disposition to use a term of Hare. Before to put forward our own solution, we want to come back to the three key passages in the subject of reminiscence, in order to deepen them according to the results of this dialectical inquiry.

3.1. Interpretation of key passages

In the previous chapter, we studied how many authors have including the three most important passages of the Meno for the interpretation of the reminiscence. We therefore want to take some time to gather the conclusions that result from our critical examination of it and establish our own understanding of these passages. We will begin by considering the texts on (2) the lesson of geometry and (3) the meaning of the sequence by an aitias logismos as transformation of opinion into knowledge; indeed, the understanding of (1) the answer to the paradox is complex and will be easier to deal with once the other two clarified passages.

3.1.1. geometry lesson

We have seen that Leibniz's position gave a satisfactory interpretation of (2) geometry lesson. The reason why the servant can recognize by himself the truth of the solution to Socrates' problem is ultimately because he sees that this

solution follows from the nature of the square; indeed, the square is necessarily divided into two by its diagonal, so that a figure built on it will be composed of four halves of the first and will therefore have double the area. Thus, the resolution of problem required an explicit knowledge of the essential properties of the square, which which the servant became aware of at the start of the interview. The question remains however as to why he was able to recognize these properties of the square in this way. Leibniz gave a satisfactory solution to this problem by assuming an "innate idea" of the square. However, the transfer of this solution to the problem of the nature of virtue cause difficulties. Indeed, we have opinions about virtue conflicts that make it so difficult for us to recognize his definition, as evidenced by the investigations of Socrates.

3.1.2. The aitias logismos

The geometry lesson therefore suggests an interpretation of the nature of (3) the aitias logismos conforms to our interpretation of the principle of priority (7). In our refutation of Scott[172] (2006), we concluded on this subject that the sequence of which it is question asks to link the property of a thing to its nature. Indeed, it is because the servant sees that the solution follows from the nature of the square that he can recognize it for true. Another interesting case on this subject is that of Anytus, questioned by Socrates towards the end of the dialogue (89e-95a). We will take the time to review this discussion, because it shows us a man having a true opinion without knowledge and allows us to reflect on what is missing from this opinion to become a true know[173] that he will take Socrates for a sophist, so that his opinion of the sophists, although that it is true, leads him all the same to make errors.
Thus, to have knowledge of propositions such as "virtue is acquired by teaching" or "the sophists corrupt those who frequent them", these

[172] See above, section 2.2.3, p.79 sq.
[173] As Tarrant (2008, p.66) remarks: “Anytus is there for roughly the same reason as the slave was earlier. Both act as a concrete example of epistemological states. »

propositions must be grounded in the knowledge of what “causes” them, i.e. the nature of the virtue or the sophist. Indeed, he who knows the nature of a thing knows the purpose of its properties. For example, one who knows the nature of virtue will be able to know if it is taught, since it is this nature that determines it: it allows to determine why it is taught or not[174]. This proposal, however, offers only a partial solution to the problem of knowledge, because the question remains how to know the nature of each thing to which judgments must be chained. To really know if a thing has a property, it is necessary to know the nature of this thing, because it is this nature which will guarantee the presence or not of the property in question. But how shall we then know this nature itself? Knowing the nature of a thing in turn imply knowing the "cause" of this nature, in chaining it also by an aitias logismos? Can we wonder about the “cause” of the virtue, or the "cause" of the sophist? It does not mean anything. Moreover, no passage from Meno does not suggest to us that it is possible to discover a "cause" in the natures of things[175].

Anytos shows an unshakeable belief in the correctness of his negative judgment on the sophists (92a-c). What is more, this judgment, which accuses the sophists of being corrupters, is true. Despite the truth of Anytos' judgment and his belief that he had reason, he does not have any real knowledge. What is he missing?
Anytos has only one true opinion because he is incapable of explaining himself, of justifying his conviction and provide a basis for it. To achieve this, Anytos should know what what is a sophist; that would allow him to know why a sophist corrupts those who rub shoulders with him. But Anytos does not have such knowledge: the proof is However, the importance of being able to know these natures is indisputable, since without this knowledge it is impossible to truly know anything! In

[174] On this subject, see note 140.
[175] Certainly, in the Republic, the good will appear as such a cause. However, to refer here to the knowledge of good to solve this problem would be to try to illuminate the brightest from the darkest, given the difficulty that this passage in the Republic poses.

Indeed, to recognize the correctness of a judgment on a property of a thing, it is necessary know the nature from which this property proceeds; however, if we do not have a knowledge of this nature itself, the recognition of the property which proceeds will not be true knowledge. So we need to know how we can arrive at a knowledge of the nature of things.

3.1.3. The solution to Menon's paradox

(1) Menon's paradox asks two questions:

(a) How can we search for something we do not know nothing?

(b) How can we recognize having found it?

We could sum up Socrates' response to Meno's paradox as following: it is not for us to acquire knowledge about a thing of which we know nothing, but rather to come to recognize a knowledge that we already have within us. The whole problem is how to get there.

3.1.3.1. Knowledge accessible at the beginning of the investigation

Here we must draw inspiration from Hare's position on this question. According to him, the Socrates' response to this paradox is to assert that we are never in complete ignorance about the nature of things, but which we already have in us a provision that allows us to recognize certain instances or characteristics of this nature. However, this capacity already implies a certain relationship to the sought-after nature, so that the dialectic can take this use of the word as a starting point of the investigation. This disposition to use a word is not thought out at first glance. in consciousness and language, that is, we can use a word without being able to define it; thus, the dialectical inquiry, even if it bears on a knowledge that we already have (a know-how), allows us all the same to acquire a new awareness.

However, we have seen that the functioning of the dialectic was much more complex than Hare thinks. Indeed, the same man can make uses discrepancies of the same word, uses which reflect its adhesion to beliefs conflicting about this concept. The reason why we may have us of such conflicts between contradictory beliefs is due to their non-examined. Thus, we have inside us, in addition to an innate relationship to nature things, different competing beliefs equally unreflected in the consciousness, which come to contaminate in all sorts of ways our use of the word. The most men are therefore spontaneously in this state of total double ignorance, where they ignore what they "know" (innately) and what they don't know (the false beliefs they hold without having taken the time to examine them). By way of Consequently, the dialectical work does not consist only in the verbalization of the spontaneous use that we make of a word, but also in an uprooting of all the false opinions that have become embedded in our souls. The dialectic must therefore bring us to a maximum awareness of what we know and do not know not. For the dialectic to be able to give positive results, it would therefore be necessary that we have in us a kind of original disposition to use a term, which the critical examination of opinions would make it possible to find. However, the nature of such original disposition is difficult to determine[176].

3.1.3.2. The need for definition

The definition aims first to bring our underlying understanding of the use that we bring a concept to consciousness, so that we can examine it and acquire thus a reflexive relationship[177] to this understanding to determine if it is coherent and true. However, when a partner of Socrates is refuted, it is difficult to discern whether

[176] We leave this question open for the moment. We will make our suggestion in this regard in section 3.2.
[177] We will use the terms “reflective rapport” and “reflexivity” extensively in the following pages. By this, we simply want to distinguish the state of someone who spontaneously uses a term on a daily basis from someone who questions and reflects on this use, trying to group them together in the same definition.

this refutation means that he had a false opinion or if it rather indicates that he did not not well expressed what he knew yet. Rebuttal can reveal two types of problems with the definition proposed by the interlocutor: (i) it conflicts with a case recognized by the interlocutor as being an example of the nature wanted[178]; (ii) it contradicts a characteristic that the interlocutor attributes to the nature sought or with another of his beliefs[179]. In both cases, it is difficult to establish whether the rebuttal means that an opinion has been misstated or whether the interlocutor was simply in error. Indeed, Meno grants that the virtue of the slave is to obey and that an action cannot be virtuous without being just[180]; since then, how to know if his unfortunate definition reflects a poor knowledge of the nature of virtue or if it does not rather reveal an inability to verbalize this comprehension? After all, his ability to recognize the possibility of a virtue for the slave and the necessity of virtue to be in accordance with justice testifies to a understanding of virtue different from the definition he had given of it[181].

We can argue that, in fact, Menon never deeply adhered to the definitions he proposes on the subject of virtue, since, having never had a reflecting on these opinions, he did not really know them. The only opinions with which we can profoundly agree are those whose examination dialectic confirms the truth[182]. If an opinion fails the rebuttal test, is that our adherence to this opinion stemmed from a misunderstanding of this opinion. Our membership was the result of a misunderstanding: we believed in a thing because we didn't really know it, because we took it for something other than what it was[183]. The definition avoids this

---

[178] For example, when Meno defines virtue as the ability to command, Socrates asks him if the virtue of the slave is to command (73c sq.).

[179] In the example of the previous note, after having mentioned the virtue of the slave, Socrates asks if to command without justice is virtuous.

[180] We always refer to the refutation of the definition found in 73c sq.

[181] We always refer to the refutation of the definition found in 73c sq

[182] This is an important theme of Gorgias, where Socrates repeatedly asserts that his interlocutors are basically in agreement with him, even if they claim otherwise. See Gorgias 466e, 474b and 495e.

[183] The problem thus posed recalls the treatment of the possibility of error in the Theaetetus: the image of the dovecote (196e-200d) treats this as a mistake. According to this image, we have in our soul a dovecote

misunderstanding by ensuring that we have correctly identified nature examined by distinguishing them from related concepts[184]. So no matter what we think we know when our opinions are in the unreflected stage, the only opinions which really belong to us are those which would be confirmed by the examination, a time that the correctness of the definition will prove that our opinion bore indeed on the nature at stake. Thus, by developing a reflexive relationship to our opinions, dialectics makes it possible to to really know these opinions and to know which we deeply subscribe to. However, we have not yet clarified why the dialectic can play this role.

3.1.3.3. The elenchos, the aporia and the knowledge of our opinions

We have explained how (a) the inquiry into the nature of virtue can begin thanks to the beliefs underlying our daily use of a word, that it is verbalize, in order to highlight the conflicts that oppose them or the consequences undesirables they entail. What about the second part of Menon's paradox, who was wondering (b) how will we recognize that we have discovered the nature of virtue? Le Menon does not offer a direct answer to this question, but he shows how we can progress toward the truth (and know that we progress). This progression is ensured by the refutation and the aporia it arouses. As we have just seen, the first step in acquiring a reflective relationship about one's beliefs is to try to verbalize them. Once the definition is established, begins the work of the Socratic refutation[185] (elenchos); the result of the elenchos is to push the respondent to a first reflexive return on his opinions: the experience of

---

where birds fly and the error would occur when, wanting to grab a bird, we catch the wrong one. Deepening this parallel would be promising, but it would take us too far.

[184] The definition makes it possible to distinguish one thing from others, but it does not allow us to be given the being of the thing. It is for this reason that he who knows is capable of giving a logos of what he knows, but the memorization of this logos is incapable of giving us knowledge: this definition informs us about the identity of this thing and not about his being.

[185] The refutation proceeds from the three means listed in the previous section: (i) showing that the definition of X is in tension with a case recognized by the interlocutor as belonging to X; (ii) show that the definition conflicts with another belief of the interlocutor; (iii) show that the definition leads to absurd consequences.

the aporia. What does the aporia consist of? Consider how Socrates explains to Meno the advantages that derive from the experience of the aporia for the server:

Do you understand again, Menon, how it is already advanced on the path to reminiscence? First, without knowing what the side of the eight-foot square, which he does not know still not, he thought he knew and replied with the assurance of a man who knows, having no conscience to be in the aporia (οὐχ ἡγεῖτο ἀπορεῖν). But now, he is aware of being in the aporia (ἡγεῖται ἀπορεῖν), and, if he doesn't know, he doesn't think he knows. […] By having it placed in the aporia and numbing it like the torpedo, have we wronged him? - I do not believe that. – At this it seems to me, we rather did him a great service to find out what it is. (84a-b, passim)

The description of the servant's progress thus draws our attention to the taking of awareness of its aporia. He was in trouble from the start, but he ignored it The refutation exercise to which Socrates submits the child, guiding him step by step towards the realization of his error, thus leads him to the realization of his inadequacy.
The experience of the aporia thus leads him to a first reflexive return to his opinion where it is recognized as false. For the servant, the realization of his ignorance comes with the recognition of the problem as problematic. As long as the interlocutor is convinced of having the answer to the question posed, he remains blind to the difficulties resulting from his conviction. The refutation thus has a second advantage, which is to make us take realize there is a problem. Moreover, the refutation makes it possible to realize the nature of the problem. This realization is capital, because, as Aristotle[186] says, to understand how a knot is tied is critical to its unraveling.
For this reason, after making the servant aware of his aporia, Socrates announces that it is from this aporia (ἐκ ταύτης τῆς ἀπορίας) that he will find the answer to problem (84c12-d1). Indeed, the servant had attempted a first response

[186] See Metaphysics 995a29.

by asserting that the duplication of the square is done by the duplication of its side. When Socrates refutes this answer, the child concludes that one side must be larger than two feet and smaller than four. He therefore suggests the only remaining value: three feet. This answer is already closer to the truth than the first. By showing the defect of the proposed answer (it is too large), the refutation carries within it an indication towards better response; thus, this first refutation allowed the servant to understand that he had to look for a side smaller than four, but larger than of them. However, when Socrates in turn refutes this answer, a new facet of the problem is revealed: the answer cannot be an integer. The servant understands that his approach is fundamentally flawed and that is when he get in trouble. As part of the geometry lesson, Socrates will guide his companion towards the answer, taking care to make him acquiesce at each step of the demonstration[187]. When he arrives at the correct answer, the servant is aware that this answer is better than the previous one, because he sees why she answers this which had appeared problematic to him thanks to the refutation[188].
We therefore see how much a conception of refutation like that of Vlastos[189] (1991, p.119) is poor. This states:

But how far does this [scil. rebuttal] take the boy? Only as far as convicting him of error. Elenchus is good for this, and only this. It does not begin to bring him to the truth he seeks.

[187] To avoid the trap into which fall those who believe that the lesson of geometry is nothing more than a disguised teaching, it is necessary to realize that this consent is the sign that the child follows each step of the demonstration and understands the chain reasoning. See Hoerber (1960, p.91), Bluck (1961, p.12 and 16), Klein (1965, p.104) and Scott (2006, p.101 sq.).
[188] We can contrast this problem, which appears to be problematic thanks to the work of preliminary refutation, with the way in which Menon introduces the preliminary question of the dialogue, independently of any context. On this subject, see Nehamas (1985, p.2-3) and note 1 of CantoSperber (1991a, p.209-210). Brague (1978, p.128-29) offers an insightful interpretation of the situation, stating that, unlike dialectics, sophistry does not know how to question itself, but only takes up school questions.
[189] Scott (1995, p.37) also misses this constructive aspect of refutation, so he cannot accept it as part of the reminiscence process.

Textually, this conclusion is at odds with what Socrates says, when
this affirms that the child has already progressed on the path of reminiscence after the refutation (84a3-4) and will discover the truth from the aporia (84c12-d1). More importantly, philosophically, Vlastos lacks the capacity for refutation to show his victim why his opinion is wrong and what he would need to be better[190].

This understanding of the role of refutation helps to explain why the inquiry can progress from the first attempt to define the interlocutor: the Socratic inquiry takes its orientation in the results of the refutation. Indeed, those who see for themselves the nature of the problem already have a idea of what the solution will have to overcome to be fair. So this knowledge drawn from the experience of the aporia, allows him to recognize a better solution. The Socratic inquiry therefore makes it possible to move from the conviction of knowing to the realization of the inadequacy of his opinion by becoming aware of the problems it raises. It develops criteria that will make it possible to recognize a better response, that is to say a response that escapes the difficulties of which the interlocutor has become aware, thanks to the refutation of his previous opinions[191].

So far, we've tracked the minion's progress as part of a mathematical investigation. For our purposes, it is important to draw a parallel with the progress that can be made in a moral inquiry, the object of which is the definition of nature of a virtue. In such cases, we have seen[192] that Socrates uses two methods
to refute his interlocutors and plunge them into an aporia: either (i) he mentions to them characteristics of the virtue sought which conflict with their definition, either (ii) it

---

[190] We tend to agree with Bluck (1961, p.15): "the reduction to ἀπορία prepares the way for the eliciting of the correct reply not only by eliminating false opinions and creating a desire to replace them by true ones, but also by offering positive hints or evidence of which use can be made in the search. »

[191] We can see again how much our thesis differs from that of Irwin (1977 p.139 and 1995, p.134) and Fine (1992, p.209 and 2003, p.5), according to which reminiscence consists of a inclination to choose the true when two opinions turn out to be contradictory. When Socrates shows the contradiction between two opinions, his interlocutor is not led by the "magical" intervention of reminiscence to choose the true opinion, he is rather led to choose the opinion in which he believes most deeply. Thus, as we have seen, refutation consists in showing an "impasse" in the conception of an interlocutor who must then seek ways to resolve it; the new conception is preferred not because it is considered intuitively better, but because the interlocutor knows that this new definition solves the difficulties previously encountered.

[192] See above, p.122.

tells them of cases (real or hypothetical) that violate their definition.
In other words, the engine of the Socratic dialectic is our ability to identify certain characteristics and examples of the virtues; if our recognition of these characteristics and of these cases is only a product of our training by the education of our community, then Hare is right and the dialectic only manipulates agreements. However, if Plato is correct in thinking that there is some analogy between mathematics and morality (without this relationship being as narrower than Leibniz would have it), we can assume that this recognition arises from the existence of eternal natures with which our soul maintains a relationship innate[193]. Thus, all the legitimacy of the elenchos in morality rests on the existence of this « memory ». of a prenatal knowledge" which provides us with an original relationship with the nature of virtue. To develop a complete interpretation of the epistemological component of the reminiscence, we must therefore explain how we must conceive this report originary to account for our ability to recognize the attribution of certain characteristics and certain concrete cases to virtue, without making this relationship nor a propositional knowledge or intuition.

3.2. The archetypal status of the memory of prenatal knowledge

Our study of the key passages allows us to conclude that the dialectic proceeds from the way we use a concept, not in order to simply propose it a verbalization (as Hare thought), but rather to purify this use of false opinions that we have acquired in this life. Indeed, for the elenchos to be

[193] We can formulate the same argument based on our conclusions on section 2.2.5 (p.90 sq.), where we had treated the position of Gonzalez (1998a and b). Gonzalez suggested describing our relationship to the being of things as a familiarity. Thus, the more the interlocutor is refuted and becomes aware of the various problems relating to the nature of the virtue in question, the more his familiarity with the being of this virtue increases; it is therefore able to propose better definitions. As we have indicated, the increase in this familiarity, permitted by refutation, must depend on another source. For the refutation of a definition of virtue to increase our familiarity with its nature, the refutation must mobilize the innate relationship we have with it. Now, since the refutation functions by referring to the cases and to the characteristics recognized by the interlocutor, it is necessary that certain characteristics or certain recognized cases be produced by our original relation to his nature.

legitimate in morality, we must have the natural capacity to recognize
the belonging of certain characteristics and certain cases to the different virtues,
although learned beliefs can disrupt this process. We saw two
reasons to support the existence of this innate relationship: on the one hand, in the case of
mathematics, we have the ability to recognize the essential characteristics
figures like the square; on the other hand, in the case of morality, we have the capacity
to progress towards a deeper understanding of these natures when the refutation
and the experience of the aporia confront us with the insufficiency of our opinions. We
now come to the point where we can draw our conclusions about the nature of the
innateness of Meno, by positioning this innate relationship to the nature of things in the
panorama of possible positions that we sketched at the beginning of section 2.2.
First, the relationship with the truth of beings, insofar as it belongs to the soul before
even learning the language cannot be there consciously; he disposes by
following a latent status (IVb), which we prefer to characterize as “unconscious”.
The reason for this terminological preference is due to our interpretation of the solution to
the Meno's paradox, which involved knowing how we could develop a
reflexive relationship to knowledge, allowing us to know what we know and do not
don't know. When we have an opinion without knowing if this opinion is true or
no, we have no knowledge of this opinion; hence, wisdom (as
knowledge of what we know and do not know) is a higher form of
self-knowledge and involves having a greater awareness of the nature of one's
opinions. Thus, our innate relationship to the nature of things is unconscious and all the
effort of the dialectic consists in bringing it to the highest possible level of consciousness.
As a consequence of this unconscious status, our innate relationship to the truth of beings
cannot be identified neither (IIa) with true knowledge nor (IIb) with true opinions. In
Indeed, a knowledge strictly speaking is necessarily a knowledge which is
knows itself, whose verbalization has allowed the reflection in consciousness, of
so that it would be wrong to speak of knowledge for our unconscious relationship to

truth of being. Our dialectical examination[194] has moreover repeatedly exposed the difficulties engendered by attempts to conceptualize knowledge unconscious. Nevertheless, it would be equally incorrect to consider that it is of “true opinions”. In dialogue, a “true opinion” becomes knowledge when it is chained by an “aitias logismos”. However, we must not "add" anything to our innate epistemological content to transform it into knowledge: it is not a question of take an opinion already present and provide it with a justification that proves its truth; it is rather necessary to pass an unconscious content to consciousness. Moreover, we have seen that the linking by the aitias logismos implied linking an opinion to the nature of the something on which it depends. However, we have also determined that it is with this nature itself that we have an innate relationship and that without it we could do nothing to know. The innate relationship that we have to the nature of things cannot be considered as a true opinion capable of being transformed into knowledge by an aitias logismos, since it is on the contrary the condition of possibility of any knowledge of the nature of things. This is why we believe that the distinction between opinion and knowledge is inapplicable to the epistemological status of our innate relationship to nature things. This distinction is valid for our beliefs, for which we can determine if we only have true opinions or if we know the underlying reasons supporting them. But insofar as the content innate epistemological is in our soul without our being aware of it, we do not we can give it the status of opinion or knowledge. So we have to find a third term that allows us to characterize our relationship to this truth, what we will provide later in this section.

Let us now move on to the question of whether our relationship to the truth of beings is (IIIa) limited to a few elements or (IIIb) constitutes total knowledge. In position of Leibniz, the innate ideas (IIIa) are limited to a few elements, from which it It is possible to discover all the necessary truths by deduction. The position of

[194] See section 2.2.

Plato is less clear. The problem becomes apparent when we try to see the relationship between the nature of a thing and its properties. Take the case of the diagonal which separates the square into two equal parts: is it part of the nature of the square (and therefore of what we know innately) or is it one of the properties of the square, that so we would only know virtually at birth? This problem arises particularly for the Menon, because of the principle of priority (7) and our interpretation of it. We reported above[195] how Gonzalez (1998a, p.155-56) exposes the flaws in the traditional interpretation principle of priority, according to which this principle means that it is necessary to know the essential properties of a thing before knowing its accidental properties.
As an alternative, he makes the following suggestion:

Knowledge of virtue as a whole is not reducible to knowledge of its different aspects or of the different ways in which it is "qualified." As a result, what virtue is would strictly speaking not be definable, since any definition would provide merely a list of properties and to know such properties is not the same as to know the thing itself. The definition may state something true of virtue, but it will still leave unexplained what virtue is in its unity and wholeness. (Gonzalez, 1998a, p.157)

As noted in the article "Nonpropositional Knowledge in Plato" (1998b, p.265), this position is analogous to the distinction proposed by Rosen (1991, p.251) regarding forms between their identity and their unity. According to Rosen, the identity of a form is what
makes it possible to differentiate one thing from another, while unity (we could say being) brings together all of its properties taken as a whole[196]. A form is

[195] See above, section 2.2.5, p.66 sq.
[196] We therefore disagree with Gonzalez (1998b, p.246) when he suggests that "Perhaps a thing's 'qualities' are all of its properties, accidental and so-called 'essential'), while its 'being' or 'whatness' ' is what underlies these properties but cannot be reduced to any or all of them. Indeed, for us, the being of the thing is not "subjacent" to the qualities, it is not their support, but rather it is their unified totality, a totality which can only be broken down into parts mentally. , by analysis.

a form, it has a unity and any attempt at rational analysis, that is to say enumeration of its properties, breaks this unity and deviates ipso facto from what this thing itself. Thus, a list of properties, even exhaustive, would not present the thing itself, since it would still lack unity. Moreover, a list of properties cannot be exhaustive, since we can list an infinity of them.

This is why we content ourselves with enumerating the properties which make it possible to distinguish one thing from another, i.e. those which make it possible to constitute its identity. Any definition can only give us the identity of a thing, that is to say list the properties that allow it to be distinguished from others, without these properties constitute in themselves the being of the thing. According to this interpretation, the principle of priority would indicate the necessity of having knowledge of the unit (of the being, ti estin) of a thing before knowing its identity (how it is, poion ti).

In order for it to allow true knowledge, our innate relationship to the truth of beings should concern the unity of the thing, which is consistent with the unconscious status e t prelingagier[197] that we have recognized in this relationship. We therefore think that the prenatal knowledge, on which rests our innate relationship to the truth of beings, must therefore be (IIIb) complete knowledge, although we lack indications clear about this. It remains for us to determine the nature of the memory that allows our innate relationship to the truth. We have shown, in our refutation of Scott's position, that being given that this knowledge is innate and unconscious, it can in no way be reduced to (Ia) propositions. Nor can it be (Ib) concepts like a shown our refutation of Vlastos[198]. Considering Gonzalez's position (1998a and b) and his own criticism of this position (2007), we also concluded that this knowledge could

[197] Indeed, the unity of the thing cannot be expressed in language and consequently in consciousness, because language cannot do otherwise than enumerate the properties of the thing.

[198] We have seen that a concept must correspond to one of the following two things: either an abstract entity having an identity independent of the idea that people have about it, in which case the concept is an object of knowledge (like the forms) and is not a psychological entity already present within the soul capable of providing a starting point for investigation; either a concept is the mental representation that we have of a thing, but then this mental representation, which may be erroneous, cannot serve as a starting point for an investigation to discover the nature of a thing.

not to be (1c) an intuition, because of the "unconscious" status of this knowledge. Indeed, a "intuition" has the immediate character of what is present directly to consciousness, so that to speak of an unconscious intuition is a contradiction in terms.
Thus, for a consciousness of the thing to be able to develop and deepen, it must drink from a source other than itself.
Finally, we rejected the possibility of identifying this innate relationship to a (Id) arrangement. In this regard, we have already considered the position of two authors: Fine, who asserted that we have a disposition to favor true opinions when two of our opinions appear contradictory and Hare, who considered that we had a disposition to use a word correctly. We have seen that the two authors wanted use this disposition to found the possibility of the Socratic dialectic, but we had to reject their position because of the incompleteness and inaccuracy of their understanding of how it works. Against Hare, whose position seemed to us more fertile[199], we saw that the dialectic was not limited to a verbalization of the rules of language use; in Indeed, this verbalization is only a starting point. Once our definition is formulated, the refutation allows on the one hand to diagnose the contradictions inside a belief system of an individual and on the other hand to judge the value of a belief considering the validity of the consequences flowing from it. In addition, our analyzes of geometry lesson led us to conclude that by virtue of our ability to recognize the nature of a square beyond the language convention on this subject, we had need a knowledge analogous to that of the innate ideas of Leibniz. In other words, the use of words is not a primary fact of human convention, but it is is explained on the basis of a (logically prior) relation to intelligible natures. Without this report, we would be unable to explain our ability to recognize the truth of the definition of the square and other mathematical forms and the necessity of truths who as a result. Therefore, in order to characterize the innateness of Menon, we

[199] Against Fine, we noted that when two opinions turn out to be contradictory, the choice of the interlocutor does not necessarily correspond to the opinion which is the truest, but rather to the opinion which has the most importance for him. , so that only shows that we prioritize our beliefs, not that we remember anything.

believe that the best expression is that of archetype. The idea of using the word "archetype" to describe an innate psychological reality is borrowed from Jungian psychology. For Jung, an archetype is both innate, unconscious and shared by all. Moreover, the archetype is the source of different symbolic representations, that is to say that, without our being aware of it, there acts in us and is observed in our disposition to produce certain symbols or representations. Thus, the unconscious produces, without our knowledge, representations symbols that emanate from archetypes; we can, however, acquire a relation reflexive to these thanks to the analyst's questions, which allow us to take consciousness little by little; this exercise therefore recalls the maieutic role of questions of Socrates. However, we do not want to push further the parallel between the two authors. The archetype in Jung does not have an epistemological function, but is rather the psychological origin of recurrent symbolic motifs. So, using the word "archetype", we seek to describe a psychological reality using a analogy with Jung, but we don't want to bring the two closer together thinkers[200]. Ultimately, the word "archetype" allows us to describe the relationship epistemological we have to the truth of beings because an archetype is something something that formats our vision and our representation of things, but which is never glimpsed himself. Using the word "archetype" to characterize our innate relationship to the nature of things makes it possible to respond to the challenge launched by Gonzalez (2007, p.289), who exposed the problem following, with reference to the study by Ross (1987):

Another author, K.L. Ross, has captured the difficulty here particularly well in attributing to Plato a conception of knowledge as both immediate because pre-discursive (p.174)

[200] Beck (2008, p.57) considers that if we take the theory of reminiscence symbolically, it is "remarkably similar" to that of Jung. However, what she means by "symbolically" is unclear and we cannot follow Beck in this suggestion.

and non-intuitive because latent and inexplicit (p.170-3).

But then the question becomes: how can knowledge be both immediate and non-intuitive? Gonzalez, as we saw when discussing his position[201], seeks a reality psychological likely to explain how the investigation can start without make it useless. We have rejected Gonzalez's proposal on this subject, namely that the truth would be in the soul as an object of desire. Instead, we propose to identify memories of prenatal knowledge to "archetypes", which the soul does not know not strictly speaking, but with which it nevertheless maintains a relationship immediate and non-intuitive, since they determine our (non-reflective) relationship to world. Indeed, archetypes condition our identification of sensible things and our use of language, even if the competition of acquired beliefs contaminates their influence. The use of the word "archetype" to characterize the way in which nature of things is found in the soul thus makes it possible to account for the possibility to maintain an unconscious, non-propositional (immediate) and non-intuitive relationship with these natures. So the reason why we think the word "archetype" is the most more enlightening to characterize the innate relationship of the soul to the nature of things for Plato is that it allows us to emphasize the unconscious character of this report. Indeed, we are not aware of the archetype; its existence is not visible only through its effects, insofar as it is the source of our identification of certain things as equal, beautiful, etc[202]. Not only does the archetype explain the recognition of concrete cases encountered, but it also allows the production, thanks to the imagination, of an infinity of hypothetical cases which correspond to this nature. For example, we can not only recognize the image of a triangle when we see one, but we can also shape by imagination an infinity of triangles. Now, we can use our imagination in this way without

[201] See section 1.2.3.3, p.38 sq.
[202] Once again, this relationship is generally drowned in a set of acquired beliefs that contradict it and make it difficult to grasp it consciously.

have a propositional knowledge of the triangle nor a nôesis of the being of a triangle: this is a capacity that we have spontaneously, as soon as we have learned to use the word. In his refutations, Socrates constantly uses this imaginative ability to oppose the definitions of his interlocutor of cases hypotheticals he had overlooked. Perhaps the simplest example is that of the refutation of Cephalus' definition of justice in the Republic (331b-d). Cephalus had defined justice as being the return of the deposit received; Socrates opposes him the case hypothetical of a friend who entrusted us with a weapon while he was sane and who asks us again when he lost his mind. We are all capable of imagining such cases before justice can be defined or fully understood. That capacity is, moreover, essential to the functioning of the Socratic dialectic. In our interpretation, it is attributable to the presence in the soul of memories of its prenatal knowledge, which therefore behave like archetypes of the triangle, of the righteousness, etc. Note that this notion of archetype is similar in some respects to « innate ideas ». of Leibniz, but they differ from him on an essential point. As we have seen, the ideas innate in Leibniz are perceived by directing our attention to them. According to Ross (1987, p.7), it is in fact precisely because she avoids this intuitionist conception of innate ideas that the Platonic theory is original and worthy of consideration:

Plato's greatest achievement in this theory was to avoid what we now may call intuitionism: the notion that the truths of being and value are somehow obvious, evident, or self-evident and that all we need do to recognize them is attend in thought to our spontaneous beliefs (our "intuitions") with sufficient seriousness. All the strangeness of Platonic metaphysics and epistemology is at the service of this one

pivotal point. The key is Plato's notion that our knowledge[203] is obscure and latent because it is only remembered.

Thus, while Plato believed that the Forms were present to us at one time through perception or intuition, they are present to us now only through memory. Thus, Leibniz's theory of innate ideas remains prisoner of a conception intuitionist of knowledge, according to which we first have a vague intuition of the forms that need to be explained later; by the same token, it is subject to the criticism that we noted about the intuitionist model[204] , unable to explain how an intuition can deepen itself. With the concept archetype, we overcome this problem: it is by seeking to reflect in the language the use we make of terms and disentangling the different contradictions that this exercise raises in our belief system that we we manage to bring the archetypes to consciousness by translating them into language by the definition. In conclusion, let us note that with the notion of archetype, we have found a third alternative term to “knowledge” and “opinion” to characterize the status of our innate memory of prenatal knowledge. Indeed, an archetype is neither an opinion nor a knowledge, since it determines without our knowledge our representations and our use concepts and language to relate us to our experience.

3.3. Confirmation from key passages

We can therefore now summarize our conclusions about the Meno in returning to the key passages identified in section 2.1.2. We will see how the attribution of the status of archetype to the memory of our prenatal knowledge allows to give a correct interpretation. First (1) Menon's paradox is solved as follows: we can (1a) begin research into the nature of virtue from the beliefs underlying our use of this term; we will try to verbalize these beliefs to state

[203] For our part, we prefer to avoid calling "knowledge" for what is not in the soul in a conscious way and that is why we prefer to speak of archetypes. Archetypes are first known by their effects, that is, by the way in which they influence our experience.
[204] See above, section 2.2.5, p.90 sq.

a n e definition of virtue. Now, our beliefs, being acquired by influences external, are often false and in conflict with each other; subsequently, the refutation allows us to eliminate several of them by forcing us to choose those that hold most dear. However, refutation can allow us to (1b) progress towards the truth because it appeals to cases and characteristics that belong (regardless of convention) to the virtue sought. We don't have one explicit knowledge of this virtue, but we have in us a memory of a prenatal knowledge which behaves like an archetype: it is thanks to this archetype that we can produce by imagination an infinity of examples hypotheticals of this virtue which allow us to test the proposed definition. Thereby, since refutation involves recognizing cases belonging to the nature of virtue, what allows the archetype of virtue, we can conclude that (6) the aporia which result already implies progress on the path of reminiscence.

We were also able to report on (2) the geometry lesson. In this one, the servant can recognize the solution proposed by Socrates as true because he understands that it follows from the nature of the square. Indeed, since the diagonal divides the square in two, a second square, built on the diagonal of the first, will be made up of four halves of the first and will therefore have a double area. So the servant has could agree to this solution because he was able to recognize the properties of a square once stated, which is explained by the presence of an archetype of the square in his mind. The servant therefore had in him the solution to the problem (4) "of all time", because by virtue of the archetype of the square, it was in him in a "virtual" way. (taking this term in the sense advocated by Leibniz). However, at the end of the investigation, it has not yet made explicit all the necessary knowledge implied by the nature of the square, so that it still only has (5) opinions[205]. Finally, (3) reminiscence

[205] On this subject, we refer the reader to the excellent article by Beddu-Addo (1983, p.236), which shows that the servant is not yet sufficiently aware of what a square is and that he will be able to acquire by following new demonstrations. When he reaches a sufficient knowledge of this nature, he will no longer need the supervision of Socrates and will be able to construct his own proofs. This knowledge of the

consists of a sequence by an aitias logismos in due to the (7) priority principle. According to this, it is not possible to truly knowing the property of a thing before knowing the being of that thing itself. Now, we can know the natures of things because of the presence in us of a

memory of a prenatal acquaintance, which behaves like an archetype. Thus, the reminiscence consists in verbalizing our prenatal knowledge of the being of things to starting from the recognition of the concrete cases that belong to it; this recognition is made possible by the archetypal capacity provided by the memory of the prenatal knowledge. Thus, linking the properties of a thing to its nature by a reasoning is indeed a reminiscence. We can therefore conclude that the notion of archetype allows the best interpretation of the key passages of the dialogue. Of course, we are not claiming that Plato had in mind this precise expression to describe the type of innateness to which he subscribed nor that he expected the reader to find it as well. Plato is content with present his conception of innateism under the banner of reminiscence and it is up to us to interpret it and distinguish it from other versions of innateness that we know. We consider that the notion of archetype fulfills this function and makes justice to the originality and philosophical interest of Platonic innateness.

---

nature of the square will not depend on a new method, but on the explanation of the archetype of the square by the resolution of analogous problems. See also Gonzalez (1998a, p.171): “The process by which both [scil. knowledge and true opinions] will be attained is the same: the boy’s true beliefs have been "awakened" through questioning; these beliefs will become knowledge by being further "awakened" through frequent repetition of this questioning. »

CHAPTER 4

Reminiscence and epistemology in Phaedo and Phaedrus

We have shown that the notion of archetype makes it possible to better account for the status of the memory of prenatal knowledge in the Menon. We want now consider the epistemological dimension of other dialogues to determine to what extent we find there this same conception of innateness.

4.1. Phaedo

In the Phaedo, after letting Cebes remind us of the episode of the lesson of geometry (73a-b), Socrates abandons this demonstration of the theory of reminiscence and offers a new proof. He proceeds this time from the insufficiency of the sensitive to allow us to arrive at a knowledge of things in themselves. He uses the example of equality, affirming that the concrete things we designate as equal sometimes show themselves equal, sometimes unequal, so that they cannot be the source of our knowledge of equality itself; if things are equal we make you think as an equal, it must be by a psychological association with something that we had already known, but which we have forgotten; it is therefore a remembrance. According to the classical understanding of this passage[206], this argument would explain how all men could acquire a concept of equality, beauty, justice, etc.
We would therefore have in us a memory of the forms themselves which, reactivated by the concrete things that resemble them, would be enough to explain how we come to forge universal notions. As we will see in section

4.1.1. Rebuttal of Scott's position

[206] See eg. Cornford (1935, p. 108), Gulley (1954, p.197 sq.; 1962, p.31 sq.), Gosling (1965), Ackrill (1973, p.177-95), Gallop (1975, p. 120), Bostock (1986, p.66 sq.), Kelsey (2000) and Franklin

An interpretation of reminiscence in the Phaedo based on the notion of archetype is only possible, however, on the condition of accepting the classical understanding of the passage. This argues that the exposition of the doctrine explains how the Men acquire their general notions from empirical experience. However, this theory was the victim of a virulent attack on the part of Scott[207] (1987, 1995, 1999 and 2006). This author maintains that the experience of the reminiscence of a form, such as exposed in the Phaedo, would only concern philosophers who had already acquired prior knowledge of it; the passage from the Phaedo would therefore not explain the manner in which all men acquire general notions, but would rather expose a capacity specific to accomplished philosophers, having acquired by other means the knowledge of forms. Given the importance of this issue for our understanding of reminiscence and on the other hand the influence of Scott's work, we consider it necessary to examine this thesis in detail. We will discuss the argument he offers in this respect in his book on the subject (1995), which proposes the most comprehensive treatment. This examination will also be an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the epistemological aspect of the theory of reminiscence in the Phaedon.

4.1.1.1. Scott's Arguments

Let's start by summarizing Scott's arguments to support his understanding of the reminiscence in the Phaedo. The first two are textual. When Socrates asks Simmias if we say equal is something, Simmias responds with yes, and adds the adverb θαυμαστῶς to show his enthusiasm (74b1). Scott (1995, p.56) sees this as a point in his favour:

[207] A few authors have subscribed to Scott's interpretation of the passage, including Dixsaut (1991, pp. 98-101) and Bobonich (2002). Moreover, some interpreters adopt intermediate positions, such as that of Bedu-Addo (1991), who maintains that there are two types of reminiscence: one which begins in childhood and which explains the formation of concepts from sensible things, and a second, specific to the philosopher, which starts from the realization of the deficiency of sensible things in relation to general notions and which leads to a knowledge of the nature of forms. See also Williams (2002, p.147).

Whatever Socrates is talking about, it is an object of wonder (thauma), and this is hardly an appropriate way to refer to the fact that sticks or stones are equal.

Even if we discard the fact that Williams (2002, p.142-43) showed that the adverb used by Simmias does not have the significance that Scott ascribes to it[208], the argument remains without strength. Scott seems to reason thus: if Simmias is surprised when Socrates mentions equality, it must be a question of the form of the equal[209]; however, if it is a question of the form of equal, Socrates must aim only at philosophers and not at ordinary people, for these the latter ignore even the existence of forms. This reasoning is balanced on an "all or nothing" conception of knowledge. Scott neglects to consider the possibility of an unconscious relationship with forms, sufficient to explain the daily use of concepts to relate us to experience. There is much to bet that Scott does not consider this possibility because he remains a prisoner of a propositional conception of knowledge, which does not admit degrees. Our conclusion of the last chapter, namely that the memory of prenatal knowledge was in the soul as an archetype, proposes a conception of innateness allowing respond to this criticism, since the archetype determines our representations without we are aware of it. Another passage evoked by Scott (p.56-57) as an argument in his favor is the one where Socrates clarifies that he speaks of equality in itself and not of equality from one stick to another stick (74a11-12). According to him, the rejection of this possibility proves that there is no question of the usual concept of equality:

This [scil. a statement about the equality of two ends of wood] is the kind of statement that Socrates dismisses as irrelevant to his argument, and yet it is precisely in such

[208] Williams gives four examples, taken directly from the Phaedo, where the use of the adverb does not serve to point out something particularly astonishing.
[209] Even that is debatable: Williams (2002, p.147) maintains that, on the contrary, Simmias, familiar with the doctrine of forms, would have no reason to be surprised.

statements that our humdrum grasp of concepts and meanings is manifested. That Socrates is prepared to dismiss such statements so early in the argument is a good indication that recollection is not to be invoked to explain our ordinary grasp of 'equal.'

Williams (2002, p.143) remarks that this argument does not prove anything: by this precision, Socrates simply means that the equality in question is not the equality of such and such things, but equality in itself; however, this may very well correspond to the usual concept of equality. This error reveals an embarrassing confusion in the thinking of Scott: He doesn't seem to differentiate between the common concept of equality and the different things being equal. Indeed, he claims that if reminiscence explained the formation of common concepts, Socrates would limit himself to speaking of equal things. Scott's third argument is philosophical. He claims (p.57) that concrete things which have a property x could not arouse a recollection of the form X if we did not have another way to identify them beforehand like x:

If, on the other hand, we have not already recollected the form, then, on the assumption that recollection is meant to explain concept formation, we cannot recognize the equal stick as an equal stick, and so, in the absence of any associative bond, it cannot serve as a stimulus for recollection.

This argument is inadmissible; To be convinced of this, it suffices to resort to the example given by Socrates to introduce reminiscence, which evokes the possibility of remembering Simmias from his portrait (73rd). According to Scott's argument, for remember Simmias from his portrait, we would need a way to know that this is a portrait of Simmias independent of our prior knowledge of the last. However, this is an absurd requirement: the only reason that allows us to knowing that this is a Simmias image is our

prior knowledge of it. It is therefore precisely because things that are equal make us think of equality that we can conclude that we unwittingly have a relationship with equality itself, a relation necessary to recognize equal things as equal. Fourth, Scott (p.58) asserts that Plato has another theory than reminiscence to explain the formation of common concepts; this would be entirely based on Perception. The clearest proof of the existence of this theory would be found in 78d1-e5, where Socrates, opposing forms to sensible things, affirms that only seconds are objects of perception:

Plato asserts quite unequivocally that the particulars are perceived whereas the forms cannot be. So, to use the example of the form of equality that he cites in 78e1, this implies that the sticks, their equality included, are perceptible.

Besides the fact that we still see Scott's confusion between the common concept of equality and different things being equal, Scott presupposes here what must be proved. The question is whether, without having a reminiscence of forms, we could perceive equality and other forms through our senses. The passage referred to by Scott is not of no help in this regard. The author finally affirms (p.59-61) that the fourth condition of reminiscence,
that we can remember a thing from its image only if
we wonder how the image is deficient in relation to the original (74a), is it valid only for philosophers. Indeed, ordinary people are unaware of the sensory object deficiency: “Platonist may go around saying that sticks and stones fall short of being like the form of equality but who else does? (p.59-60) »
This is the strongest of Scott's arguments. Williams (2002, 145-46) offers the following rebuttal:

The observation embodied in Scott's question is true, but I is absolutely beside the point. Philosophers may be the only ones who realize the implication of our workaday concept of equality, but those implications are there to be noticed – as one can easily see by

putting the right sorts of questions to any randomly selected group of undergraduates. They may never have thought about the perfect equality or perfect beauty to which their mundane concepts point, and they may never have thought through the comparative judgments those concepts allow them to make; but the cognitive resources are already there, needing only the right sort of encouragement to be brought into full consciousness.

Williams' observations are accurate and illuminating, but Scott could respond than a simple ability to become aware of the deficiency of equal things by relation to the equal itself is insufficient to fulfill the condition advanced by Socrates. The manner in which we resolve this question is decisive for the interpretation of the argument. However, there are few textual elements that allow us to do this. Nevertheless, let us note that it would be an unreasonable requirement to ask for a full awareness of all the aspects in which an image is deficient in relation to the reality to affirm that there is anamnesis[210]. After all, do we need to have noticed that Simmias' nose is a little longer in this portrait than the real one to remember him? On a philosophical level, we can illustrate our opposition to Scott's thesis by referring to the painting by René Magritte, entitled this is not a pipe, which represents a pipe in a very realistic way. The table is hard-hitting because it first arouses our revolt: “Mais oui, c’est une pipe! ", we let us be indignant; it is then that we become aware that the artist means that this is just a picture. We knew from the start that it wasn't a real blowjob, but we needed to read the title of the painting for this knowledge to be brought to the consciousness. The state of one who looks at the painting and first thinks “this is a pipe” is analogous to that of common men before particular things. Thus, on the philosophically at the very least, we can conclude that there is no need

[210] On this subject, see Gosling (1965, p.155) and Gallop (1975, p.p118-1). Franklin (2005, p.302 and p.310) claims that this condition is not a necessary condition for an image to cause us to remember an original, but rather a necessary condition for recognizing that there is good reminiscence.

to be fully aware of all the differences in an image so that it makes us reminiscent of the original.

4.1.1.2. Textual arguments against Scott's thesis

Let us now see which passages go against Scott's interpretation.

At first glance, the portion of the argument at 74d-75c is very boring for Scott's thesis. This section wants to prove the pre-existence of the soul to the embodiment. The argument wants to show, at least at first glance, that all our sensations involve the reminiscence of forms; knowledge of forms should therefore precede our first sensations and be placed before birth. However, if all the sensations imply the reminiscence of the forms, it is obvious that all make the experience of reminiscence. Scott (p. 62-63) offers an alternative interpretation of the argument, which we can summarize in six steps:

> (1) Sensation is the only means of becoming aware of forms in this life (for a soul who would ignore them completely).
>
> (2) It is impossible to have a feeling that reminds us the Equal without comparing the Equal to things that are equal.
>
> (3) The comparison between equal things and the Equal requires a prior knowledge of the form.
>
> (4) This prior knowledge cannot have been acquired by this life otherwise than by sensation by virtue of (1).
>
> (5) This prior knowledge cannot, however, have been acquired by sensation since such an acquisition would, in turn, necessarily have generated a comparison between the Equal and things that are equal, by virtue of (2), so that we would again need to ask an acquaintance prior to such acquisition, under (3).

(6) Thus, by virtue of (4) and (5), the first knowledge of the forms is postponed before birth.

This convoluted reconstruction of the argument of the Phaedo is certainly ingenious, but it does violence to the text; indeed, not only does the argument not follow this unfolding, but he says explicitly that from the first time we saw things being equal, we considered that they aspired to be like the Equal[211]:

Ἀναγκαῖον ὅρα ἡμῖν προειδέναι τὸ ἴσον πρὸ ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου,
ὅτε τὸ πρῶτον ἰδόντες τὰ ἴσα ἐνενοήσαμεν ὅτι ὀρέγεται μὲν πάντα ταῦτα εἶναι οἷον τὸ ἴσον, ἐνδεέστερα δὲ ἔχειν;
(74e2-4).

To maintain his interpretation, Scott must read this statement in an original way, in taking the "τὸ πρῶτον" with the verb "ἐνενοήσαμεν", rather than with the participle "ἰδόντες" as it is natural to do. Thus, as much the reconstruction of the argument that the reading of the text required by Scott's position appear forced and little convincing. Another embarrassing passage for Scott's thesis is the following:

So not everyone, Simmias, seems to you the [scil. forms] know? – Not at all. - They remember what they once learned? - This is necessary. (76c1-5)

This passage seems to indicate that all remember the forms, but that only the true philosophers know them. Scott's strategy (p.64-65) to counter this argument is to argue that the subject of the first sentence differs from that of the second[212]. This is again an unnatural way to read the text and it must be supported by serious arguments. Consider those he advances.

---

[211] This assertion should be understood only in line with Williams' interpretation mentioned above: it is a tacit recognition, not a fully conscious one.

[212] In support of this reading, we can mention that the question of the referent of the pronoun "we" during the argument of reminiscence in the Phaedo has given rise to many debates among interpreters. On this subject, see the references mentioned in note 55.

Referring to passage 76a4-7, he asserts that the alternative proposed to Simmias was the following: either that all have the knowledge of forms, or that those who learn (i.e. the philosophers) rediscover the knowledge of forms. Thus, in the quoted passage, it should be understood:

So not everyone, Simmias, seems to you the [scil. forms] know? – Not at all. – They [scil. the philosophers] therefore remember what they have learned a day.

Let us see if the argument can be understood in this way. Note first that, in a first time, Simmias is unable to determine if all have the knowledge of the shapes or whether those who learn remember the shapes (76a-b). However, according to Scott, he is clear that the conversation, from the beginning, is only about philosophers and that Simmias is well aware of this. If so, how can Simmias even thinking about hesitating here? Knowing that not everyone is a philosopher, he would choose the second option. However, Simmias cannot decide. Simmias' hesitation is fatal to Scott's interpretation. But there is worse. Faced with Simmias' inability to make up his mind, Socrates offers to show him that not everyone has a knowledge of forms since they are incapable of giving a logos of it. Simmias then says something important: he believes that only Socrates is capable of giving a logos of forms (76b7-9). Thus, following Scott's interpretation, one would have to conclude that Socrates is the only true philosopher, and that he alone has experienced reminiscence[213].

The problem of how Simmias was able to follow the discussion until now, him who has never had either reminiscence or knowledge of forms, given that in his own admission he is incapable of giving a logos. Thus, Scott's reading must be

[213] On this subject, see Ackrill (1973, p.192).

rejected.Let's start from the beginning, to try to give a more coherent interpretation to the text. Socrates has just established that we have a knowledge of the equal himself before our birth (74d-75c). It remains to be established whether, having possessed this knowledge before birth, it is
remained intact after birth or if, on the contrary, it has been forgotten. To prove the second alternative, Socrates shows that it is impossible for everyone to have knowledge conscious of the forms, since all could then give a logos of them. If not all have no such knowledge, they must have forgotten it at birth; as a result, all remember, but to different degrees. The philosophers push this recollection much further, to the point of being able to give a logos of forms. Thus, zero need to opt for Scott's extravagant interpretation of 76c4-5: Socrates simply says that all remember (and therefore do not have perfect knowledge since they were born) because everyone has forgotten. Those who learn (philosophers) manage to bring back this forgotten knowledge (which operates in the experience of sensation to unbeknownst to men) to consciousness, by giving a logos of it.

4.1.1.3. Philosophical arguments against Scott's thesis

We have seen that Scott's arguments are powerless to support his thesis; what's more, certain passages remain in tension with it. However, this thesis still includes a more general problem. One of its fundamental presuppositions is that the common notion of X has nothing to do with the shape of X, since both are acquired by different methods: one by generalization from sensation and the other by pure thought. This is perhaps tenable in the case of concepts like justice: some might maintain that the definitions of Polemarch and Cephalus (the representatives of the common position) have nothing to do with the design philosophy of justice to be presented in later books of the Republic.
But what then of the example that Socrates advances in our passage, that of legal? What could be a form of equality that would be different from the concept common of equality? The answer is clear: nothing at all – there is necessarily

continuity between the common concept of equality and the philosophical conception of this last. This problem is enough to discredit Scott's thesis, but there is worse.
Let us grant for a moment that the passage speaks only of the form of equality and that this the latter is entirely foreign to the common concept of equality. But then, what about this common concept of equality? Won't he also be different from all the equal things? Will not equal things be deficient in relation to him? Short, everything Socrates says about the form of equality will also apply to the common concept of equality and it will be necessary to pose a knowledge of the latter before birth, next to prenatal knowledge of forms. It would be too extravagant; besides, Scott thinks that our common concepts are all derived from experience (p.58, 68-9).
Moreover, we could add, with Williams (2002, 150), that if we accepts Scott's thesis, it would be hard to see how anyone could come to the knowledge of shapes:

It follows that what beautiful particulars derive from Beauty itself is not the property that in our pre-philosophical language we call 'beauty,' but instead some other property. And until we start doing philosophy, we apparently have no beliefs about that property; we do not even notice it. Our pre-philosophical beliefs are perfectly coherent and adequate on their own terms without any reference to Forms; normal beliefs in no way imply the Forms.

So what would ever prompt us to make the immense cognitive leap to the Forms?
Thus, not only does Scott's thesis have little textual support, but it still entails serious philosophical difficulties, so that we must reject it. To the extent that concrete things are deficient in relation to notions generalities of common men, it is necessary to recognize an element transempirical in sensation, a certain degree of reminiscence of forms.
Man can use the logos to relate to the world because he maintains a

innate relationship with things themselves, whether he is aware of it or not[214]. Men ordinary people are far from being fully aware of the gap that exists between things practices and the general concepts they use; this awareness corresponds at the moment of the awakening of the desire for the intelligible which launches the philosophical inquiry[215]. It there is therefore continuity between common notions and philosophical knowledge: the second is the deepening of what is already implicit in the first and the two drink from the same source[216]. This continuity is not, however, that of a ascending line, but is rather punctuated by different levels, the first of which is the awareness of the ontological deficiency of the sensible world and of its status image in relation to the intelligible world[217].

We have taken the time to discuss Scott's thesis in great detail because the important echo of this thesis among contemporary commentators. We consider that we have gathered enough arguments to be able to resume our study of reminiscence with the assurance that its exposure in the Phaedo refers well to the use that we all make of general notions. But, as we have seen, the notion of archetype makes it possible to account for the possibility of such a use without

---

[214] This is the opinion of Franklin (2005, p.296-97) who notes that sensible things are named after form (78e2, 102b2). See also Allen (1959-60, p.172) and Cornford (1935, p.108): "All judgments involve the use of some common term; and Plato cannot mean to deny here that uneducated people make judgments. Plainly he means that they have not such knowledge described in Republic vii. And the Phaedo may only mean that though children do make judgments such as 'This is like that 'and mean something by them, they have only a dim and confused apprehension of the Forms such as likeness. »

[215] Our position is therefore to be inscribed in the same line as the intermediate position of Bedu-Addo (1991).

[216] We again agree with Franklin (2005, p.309) on this specific point: "Thus, we may say that the argument for recollection in the Phaedo explains concept acquisition, but we must be careful to add that these are concepts of an extraordinary kind. Plato believes that reflection on our ordinary concepts will, under the right conditions, yield philosophical understanding of explanatory essences. « .

[217] The aporetic dialogues offer many examples of this first step in philosophy (see e.g. Eutyphron 5d-6a, Laches 190e, Meno 71d-72a, Republic I 331b-c. see also Theaetetus 146c-d and Sophist 239d-240a): Socrates questions his interlocutor about a virtue and, certainly, the latter begins by indicating concrete cases of this virtue, thus proving that he is unaware of the distance between these concrete cases and the form sought; Socrates responds to his interlocutor by making him see this deficiency, as he does in our passage from the Phaedo with the equal in relation to equal things. When the interlocutor has attested to this deficiency, the reminiscence of the nature of the form sought can continue through dialectical examination.

first of all let us be aware of it. We will explore how this notion allows an adequate interpretation of the Phaedo in the next section.

4.1.2. The Reminiscence Argument in the Phaedo

Now that we have established that reminiscence in the Phaedo is indeed a theory that questions the origin of our use of general notions, we we can move on to the examination of our thesis. We therefore want to determine in which measures the notion of archetype allows an adequate interpretation of the status of the memory of prenatal knowledge in this dialogue[218].

The argument on the reminiscence of the Phaedo does not recognize us a direct intuition forms, but nevertheless considers that their memory determines the way in which we relate to the sensible world; therefore, the only way to arrive at a explicit knowledge of forms is to reflect on the implications of our experience of the world. By using the example of the equal to represent our relationship with things in themselves in general, Socrates establishes that we derive our knowledge of the equal itself from of (ἐκ) our sensations of equal things; thus, without these sensations, we would not have never knew the equal himself[219]. Now, these things being equal are deficient in relation to the equal itself, since they show themselves sometimes equal and sometimes unequal[220]; they are therefore unable to explain our use of such

---

[218] We are going to consider the Phaedo's argument for reminiscence in its broad outlines, in order to see to what extent the memory of prenatal knowledge plays the role of archetype. We will, however, offer an in-depth treatment of the passage in the section reserved for the Phaedo of chapter 5.

[219] See previous note.

[220] This passage has raised many debates on the sense in which equal things sometimes appear equal and sometimes unequal. It has thus been suggested that (1) although equal things appear equal, on closer inspection they are not (Hackforth 1955, p.74; Bluck 1955, p.63; Allen 1959, p.168), in the same way that there are no perfect circles in nature; (2) the same things, seen from a certain angle, will appear equal, but from another angle (or to another observer), unequal (Dorter 1982, p.54-60, and Bedu-Addo 1991, p. 38); (3) the same thing, compared to a second, will be equal, but to a third, unequal (Gerson 1999, p.7, Bostock 1986, p.75, and Franklin 2005, p.304-05); (4) two things that are equal in some properties (number, size, etc.) will be unequal in other properties (Osborne 1995, p.227, Franklin 2005, p.305). For a discussion of these different options, see Gallop (1975, p.121-123). Thesis (4) involves a much stronger concept of equality than the argument needs and must be rejected. As for theses (1) to (3), we believe that it is not necessary to decide for one or the other since they are not mutually exclusive (in this, our position

concepts to describe them[221]. then, if we know equality itself from deficient things as to this
equality these equal things must make us think of something other than themselves (75b4- 7; 76d9-e4), which is a reminiscence (74c11-d2). We will therefore only acquire the knowledge of the equal itself neither empirically nor by an apprehension intuitive of this equal; rather, we are reclaiming knowledge that was ours previously, by reminiscence, from sensory images of equality (75e5-8).
However, this knowledge is not in us explicitly, since the conscious possession of knowledge implies the ability to give it a logos (76b-c); therefore, we must have forgotten this knowledge at birth.
In this explanation, Socrates tells us that we had in us the knowledge before the incarnation and that we forgot it at birth (76c-d); however, he neglects to specify what is the status of the memory of this forgotten knowledge between birth and when we remember it[222]. If prenatal knowledge was irretrievably lost, its previous acquisition would be useless to find the knowledge in this life; it must therefore dwell in some way in the soul. The most people are unaware that their experience of the world involves the recollection of certain forms and show themselves incapable of giving a logos of these forms; their remembrance of the things themselves nevertheless manifests itself in the way they attribute meaning to concrete things, designating them as beautiful, as equals, etc. The daily relationship we have with things themselves

---

is the same as Dixsaut 1991, p.100). We consider, however, that Dorter (1972, p.204-06; 1982, p.54-60) has convincingly shown that thesis (1) cannot be sufficient and that it is necessary to take into account the deficiency of our perception of equal things in addition to the deficiency of equal things.

[221] See 74b-c, 74d-e, 75a11-b3 and 75b7-8.

[222] Bostock (1986), wanting to answer the question “what is it that we are all supposed to know”? (p.69), had suggested that we all know what equal is in the sense that we all know the meaning of the word "equal" (p.69), because we use it in our daily conversations without problem (p.70). Bostock refers here to the knowledge that results from our learning (reminiscence) from the sensible, and not to the knowledge that explains this reminiscence. Indeed, Socrates' argument is that we acquire this knowledge of the equal from the sensible (74b4-6, 74c7-10, 75a5-9 and 75e3-5). Thus, according to our interpretation, it is the memories of the forms, acting as archetypes in relation to the experience, which explain that we acquire an average understanding of the meaning of a word, sufficient to use it on a daily basis.

is therefore at the same time unconscious, non-verbalized and non-intuitive; it is only one predisposition to recognize intelligible realities in their sensible images. Thereby, the memory of our prenatal knowledge in the Phaedo has the status of an archetype, since an archetype is characterized by its ability to determine our experience without that we have no conscious knowledge of an important consequence of describing our innate relationship to things themselves as being archetypal in nature is to highlight the analogy between Platonic theory of knowledge and ontology. In a word, the memories of the prenatal knowledge (the archetypes) are to the sensations (on the epistemological) what forms are to sensible things (on the ontological level). Indeed, the Phaedo considers that concrete things are what they are because that they participate in forms[223]. It is the forms that give their being to things sensitive. On the other hand, the passage on reminiscence implies that we attribute a meaning to our sensations because we relate them to our memory of forms. Thereby, as the psychological counterpart of forms, archetypes play a role analogous to the ontological role of the latter, by allowing us to recognize the being of sensible things and attribute meaning to our sensations. Because of the Platonic concept of "participation", some commentators use the word "archetype" to describe the forms themselves, since they constitute "original types", models from which all sensitive copies are produced. Our choice of the word “archetype” to designate psychological entities corresponding to our innate relationship to things themselves thus aims to highlight highlights the parallelism between ontology and the theory of knowledge Platonic. The soul can know being by virtue of the kinship[224] which unites it to it; that kinship manifests itself in the analogy between, on the one hand, the intelligible forms which play the role of archetype in relation to sensible things and on the other side the memory of the prenatal knowledge which plays the role of archetype as regards

[223] See eg. 100c2-7.
[224] The kinship of the soul to intelligible things is a recurrent theme of the Phaedo; see eg. 79d3-4.

sensations. It is therefore because the memory of prenatal knowledge plays an archetypal role in our relation to experience that we can recognize in it the intelligible forms from which sensible things derive their being by participation.
The use of the notion of archetype to characterize our memory of knowledge prenatal therefore makes it possible to propose a coherent interpretation of the Phaedo and the Meno. We have no innate knowledge of forms per se, but we rather have a relationship with things-in-themselves through sensory experience; we could not in fact attribute a meaning to sensible things without recognizing in them intelligible. Now, it is because we recognize in experience such realities which go beyond the contingency of becoming that it is possible for us to manage to deduce from necessary truths, as evidenced by our ability to discover for ourselves the solution to a mathematical problem.

4.2. Phaedrus

The central Phaedrus myth provides neither argument (as in the Phaedo) nor demonstration (as in Meno) to support the thesis of reminiscence, but just put it down. As we will see in our section on the Phaedrus of the sixth chapter[225], the type of discourse employed by Socrates explains this dogmatism, since the myth avoids the requirement of proof. The epistemological aspect of the theory in the Phaedrus is therefore less significant than in the other dialogues.
According to the palinody of the Phaedrus, the embodied soul maintains a relationship with the forms because that it preserves the memory of a prenatal contemplation. Indeed, she would have seen the supra-celestial realities of the plain of truth in a repeating procession every ten thousand years. Taken at face value, this story places the apprehension of the realities intelligible at a certain point in time, so that, unlike the affirmation of Meno, the soul would not have within it the truth of beings "of all time" (Meno 86a6-10). However, since the palinody of the Phaedrus is labeled

[225] See section 5.3, p.244 sq.

as myth (Phedre 265c1), we must ask ourselves if this discourse has the same status as that of the story of the priests and priestesses of Menon. We actually judged that the latter had a symbolic value and proposed a temporary hypothesis whose the epistemological consequences should not be drawn with too much rigor. In order to to gather our considerations on the Phaedrus myth in one place, we have presented our arguments on this subject at the beginning of the sixth chapter, to which we refer the reader[226]. For the moment, we can nevertheless present two reflections on the Phedre allowing to validate the use of the notion of archetype to describe the relationship innate of the soul to true realities. We will first consider the myth in its together, taking it literally, to show that, even on this reading, our interpretation remains valid; We will then focus on the description of the memory of forms, so as to measure the coherence of the Phaedrus with our conclusions on the Meno and the Phaedo.

4.2.1. The innate relationship to real realities

At the beginning of the decamillennial procession, the soul appears deprived of a knowledge or of a memory of forms; however, it has wings that guide its movement to these realities. Thus, if we take this part of the myth literally, the the thesis of Gonzalez[227] (2007) imposes itself: the truth of beings would be found in the soul of prima facie as an object of desire, since the soul does not have the knowledge at the beginning of the procession, but only the wings that can lead to it; gold, the wings represent eros[228]. However, the situation becomes more complex when we take into account what is produced at the time of incarnation: the soul then loses its wings and its orientation towards intelligible realities; by the same token, the (intentional) object of desire does not correspond more to the forms[229] and only the memory of their

[226] See section 6.1.1, p.255 sq.
[227] See section 1.2.3.3, p.38 sq.
[228] See 252b.
[229] We will return to this point in detail in section 6.1.3.1 (see below, p.289 sq.), which we summarize here.

contemplation remains in the soul. the relationship between memory and desire has therefore been reversed. In the second part of the palinody (249d sq.), Socrates indeed explains that the soul experiences no eros at first glance seeing images of things in themselves, except for beauty (250b); but even in this case, the desire felt arises first on the body of the one who possesses it (250e), then on his soul (252nd) and then on the divine occupations pertaining to the common character which he shares with him[230] (252e-253a). Only lovers holding Zeus will develop a eros which will take true beings as its object[231]. We can conclude that the
relationship of the incarnated human soul to the truth of beings is not only of nature erotic; on the contrary, the anamnesis is necessary to reactivate this desire. However, the remembering forms can awaken eros for being itself because the soul has already had an erotic relationship to knowledge; thus, when she becomes aware of her dimension spiritual, she realizes that her satisfaction comes from knowing the realities intelligible. For this reason, what is remembered cannot be identified with a simple proposition, as analytical philosophers such as Vlastos or Scott[232], nor to a clear and distinct idea as asserted by Leibniz or Descartes[233]. notion of archetype allows us to better reconcile the epistemological and erotic relationship of the soul to knowledge. Indeed, the archetype can only be grasped through images that frustrate the soul with full satisfaction; as the soul pursues the desire it discovers first in the recognition of beauty, it is drawn towards less and less terrestrial objects, which correspond more to his anticipations and reveal to him ipso facto his kinship with the beings intangible. The memory of things in themselves therefore does not correspond to a "content" of knowledge, but it is the mark of the soul's belonging to another order of reality, implying dissatisfaction in our worldly relationships. The innate memory of forms is not “information” stored in the depths of memory, but it is

[230] We will develop this point in section 6.1.3.4, p.293 sq.
[231] See 252e2-3 and 249c.
[232] See sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3, p.72 sq.
[233] See section 2.2.6, p.94 sq.

manifests itself in our use of language to account for our experience;
this takes on its meaning when linked to the realm of the intelligible, the only one capable of to fill in. The notion of archetype therefore makes it possible to better describe the relationship of the soul to true realities, which can only be apprehended through the mediation of sensible things, without that these give her the satisfaction she seeks.
In conclusion, let us remember that even if the myth suggests that before the incarnation, the soul had an erotic relationship to forms more original than its epistemological relationship, relationship is reversed at the moment of incarnation: with the loss of wings, the desire for forms is lost and only a remembrance of prenatal knowledge remains in the soul. This memory functions as an archetype, escaping consciousness, but we allowing nevertheless to recognize certain forms in the sensitive images and thus awaken our desire for those who appear beautiful to us. Since it allows to rediscover a desire, the memory cannot be identified with clear and distinct ideas or to propositions, which have nothing erotic about them; it must correspond to our belonging to another world, which is better defined by the notion of archetype, since an archetype is never fully realized in sensitive images and therefore marks our belonging to another order of reality.

4.2.2. The characterization of the memory of true realities

In order to confirm this conclusion, we now want to deal with how the memory of intelligible realities is characterized in the short passage (249b6-c4) which exposes the theory of reminiscence. First, this memory is possessed by everyone, but unconsciously (in the sense that we do not immediately maintain a reflexive relationship to this knowledge). Socrates says in effect that the souls not having cast their eyes on the plain of truth during the decamillennial procession cannot incarnate in a human body (249b5-6). It gives the following explanation:

It must indeed be understood[234] *that man, when he speaks in function of an eidos, goes from several sensations to a unity which he embraces by reasoning*[235]*. But this is a reminiscence of those things which our soul saw when it traveled with the god raising his gaze above this which we now call "being", raising our heads towards what really is.* (249b6-c4)

It is therefore because of their use of language, which refers to intelligible realities, that all men must have contemplated the true being to experience the reminiscence[236]. As for the unconscious character of this memory, it stems from the need to distinguish between the reminiscence experienced by all men when they use language and that practiced by philosophers alone[237]. The two forms of anamnesis are differentiated by the presence or absence of reflexivity in relation to it. In the first case (described in 249d5-6 and 254b5-6), remembrance operates without the knowledge of ordinary people, who use universal notions to talk about concrete things, without

---

[234] The γάρ, translated as "indeed", comes to explain why the souls incarnating in a human body must have contemplated the true being.

[235] In this translation, we understood that the verb συνίναι is completed by a participle clause (ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἶδος λεγόμενον). We judged that the text had a better meaning by taking "ἄνθρωπον" as the subject of "λεγόμενον", even if the syntax lent more to make it the subject of the verb « συνιέναι".

[236] On this subject, see Werner (2012, p.102-3 and 104).

[237] Some (see e.g. Gulley 1954, p.200) think (like Scott) that reminiscence is the lot of philosophers only. We rather believe that it is necessary to differentiate the stages of reminiscence. The recognition of genres in the multiplicity of sensations is an experience in which all share, so that all experience reminiscence at this level at least. Moreover, Plato introduces the passage on reminiscence to explain why a soul deprived of the contemplation of true being is prohibited from incarnation in a human body (249b). This prescription only makes sense if all men take part in the anamnesis process. Thus, we agree with Werner (2012, p.103) when he states: "Having "seen" the Forms in our prenatal state is a precondition for being born in human form. This is because the very ability to use and to understand language – the ability that is unique to human – requires that we make reference to Forms. That said, philosophers take the anamnesis exercise much further. Thus, Morgan (2000, p.219-221) differentiates between two types of reminiscence, naming the first "intuitive recollection" and the second "philosophical recollection". This distinction makes it possible to neutralize the strategy of Scott (1987, p.360-63) to prove that the Phaedrus does not promote a reminiscence experienced by all. He affirms that if the position he supports is in conflict with the text, that of his opponents is just as much. However, these tensions disappear when we distinguish between two types of anamnesis. We will finally note the position of Griswold (1986, p.115) who affirms that only philosophers make use of reminiscence, but that the use of language is a necessary condition. In our view, this is the same position as the previous one, but formulated in a different way.

suspecting the gap between the two. The notion of archetype makes it possible to account for the status of the memory that allows this relationship to forms. The philosophical anamnesis (described in 249b6-d3) implies the wise use of sensitive images such as means of recalling intelligible realities (249c6-7). The practice of dialectic, basing itself on the recollection aroused by experience, will lead the
philosopher towards the appropriation of the eternal truth of supra-celestial beings, which he carries in his soul like the memory of his prenatal contemplation.
Second, the myth contrasts the epistemological capacities of the soul before and after its incarnation: when the soul frees itself from the body, it can apprehend the realities true directly, analogous to color vision[238]; on the contrary,
once embodied, such apprehension is impossible for it, so that it is limited to
an indirect knowledge of the intelligibles, which results from the anamnesis aroused by their semblance[239]. In other words, the constitution of human knowledge depends on a prior immediate knowledge, which the mind retains in its unconscious strata
and that it is incapable of reappropriating itself without the mediation of sensory images[240]. Alone the soul liberated from the body can aspire to the contemplation of the eternal realities of plain of truth; also, at the moment of incarnation, this knowledge

[238] Both for the divine soul and for the soul out of the body, the lexical field of vision is omnipresent to describe the knowledge of the true beings of the plain of truth: the pilot of the soul contemplates (θεωρέ-ω, 247c1 247d3, 248b6, c3, 249c2, c3, 250a4, b8; the forms on the celestial vault are seen (θεατή, 247c7); in the case of human souls, this contemplation (θέα, 248b4) is imperfect.
[239] Indeed, as soon as the soul is in the body, the image of the vision of forms is replaced by that of memory, and the terms of the lexical register of sight are now used in their literal sense to refer to contemplation. of physical objects capable of arousing reminiscence: the gathering by reasoning from multiple sensations towards a unity is a reminiscence (ἀνάμνησις, 249c2) of what we once saw; the philosopher applies himself by memory (μνήμη, 249c5) to what makes a god a god; he uses real objects as means of remembering (ὑπόμνημα, 249c7), but remembering (ἀναμιμνήσκω, 250a1) is thus not easy for everyone and only a few have a sufficient memory (μνήμη, 250a5). When he sees (ορά-ω, 249d5, 251e2; ἰδέ-ω, 250a6, 251a3, a7, 253e5, 254b4, b5, e8; θεά-ομαι, 250e2; βλέπω, 251c6) the earthly likenesses or other earthly likenesses forms, either he is troubled because of the insufficient perception (διασθάνομαι, 250b1) he has, or he remembers (ἀναμιμνήσκω, 249d6; μνημή, 254b5) the true beauty whose emanations fill his eyes (251b2), but can hardly contemplate (θεά-ομαι, 250b5) the gender of the other forms. He who has forgotten his initiation does not look towards (προσορά-ω, 250e3-4) forms, but turns towards pleasure.
[240] On this subject, see Werner (2012, p.103).

withdraws from consciousness and remains present in the way it determines our experience. The notion of archetype makes it possible to grasp this condition.

The last point we want to make about reminiscence concerns a element specific to the Phaedrus, the only dialogue to attribute to the soul a partial memory of real realities. The myth explains this imperfection by the animal dimension of our nature. Indeed, the escapades of the bad horse of the psychic team have prevented from hoisting us in a stable way on the celestial vault; consequently, our prenatal contemplation of forms, which determines our potential to remember, is always inferior to the total knowledge that a god can possess. Thus, there is a "vertical" difference between men, some having a greater potential for philosophy, but also a "horizontal" difference, since each soul has seen different portions of the plain of truth, giving it a perspective unique epistemology. The position of the Phaedo on this subject is not specified, because the dialogue gives us little information about the knowledge that the soul would have experienced before birth. the Menon is opposed to the Phaedrus, since, in the introductory presentation of the reminiscent, Socrates affirms that “the soul, being immortal and born to many times, and having contemplated all things (πάντα χρήματα) both here below and in Hades, cannot do otherwise than to have learned everything (Menon, 81c)”. Likewise, in conclusion to his questioning of the servant, Socrates is confident in his ability to find “all other knowledge” (85th). This question therefore divides our two dialogues. The position on the reminiscence of the Phaedrus is linked to other passages of the same text. For example, the conception of the dialectic, presented towards the end of the dialogue using an agricultural metaphor (276e-277a), implies that the philosopher "sows" discourses in the different souls, "discourses which are not sterile, but which have in them a seed from which will come other discourses which, pushing other natives, will always be able to assure this seed of immortality 241. »

This passage therefore recognizes the existence of different naturals, which will give different fruits when fertilized by the same dialectical discourse. Thus, unlike the Menon, the Phaedrus is more sensitive to the possibility of an unequal potential of

men for philosophy and to each person's own perspective on truth242.
At the beginning of our study, in section 1.1243, we examined the reproaches of Leibniz and Neo-Kantians to the Platonic theory of reminiscence. As a conclusion to our treatment of the epistemological dimension of the reminiscence of last three chapters, we want to come back to the accusation of “psychologism” made with regard to Plato by the Neo-Kantians, which consists in affirming that Plato mixes two types of explanation: one resides on the logical plane and is limited to the study of propositions, their status and their truth conditions, the other is situated on the psychological and is more interested in how our mind forms certain beliefs rather than others. It is interesting to note that Russell (1900, p.160-1) addresses the same reproach to Leibniz. In this review, Russell brings a nuance same text. For example, the conception of the dialectic, presented towards the end of the dialogue using an agricultural metaphor (276e-277a), implies that the philosopher "sows" discourses in the different souls, "discourses which are not sterile, but which have in them a seed from which will come other discourses which, pushing other natives, will always be able to assure this seed of immortality[241]. »
This passage therefore recognizes the existence of different naturals, which will give different fruits when fertilized by the same dialectical discourse. Thus, unlike the Menon, the Phaedrus is more sensitive to the possibility of an unequal potential of men for philosophy and to each person's own perspective on truth[242].
At the beginning of our study, in section 1.1[243], we examined the reproaches of Leibniz and Neo-Kantians to the Platonic theory of reminiscence. As a conclusion to our treatment of the epistemological dimension of the reminiscence of last three chapters, we want to come back to the accusation of “psychologism”

[241] 277a, Brisson.
[242] The Phaedrus is therefore closer in this respect to the elitism of the Republic.
[243] See above, p.8 sq.

made with regard to Plato by the Neo-Kantians, which consists in affirming that Plato mixes two types of explanation: one resides on the logical plane and is limited to the study of propositions, their status and their truth conditions, the other is situated on the psychological and is more interested in how our mind forms certain beliefs rather than others. It is interesting to note that Russell (1900, p.160-1) addresses the same reproach to Leibniz. In this review, Russell brings a nuance interesting: insofar as knowledge is linked to truth, an inquiry that asks how we come to recognize necessary truths is not identical to an inquiry which seeks only how we are formed such or such beliefs. Indeed, the truth belongs to the domain of logic, so that to know how we recognize the truth, it is not possible to stick to a purely psychological point of view. Russell concludes that the study of recognition of universal truths in the human mind is a search "hybrid", as it mixes two fields of knowledge. As for us, we consider that this designation is only a label and that it obliterates the real mystery of human nature: the distinction between logic and psychology is useful, but what is intriguing is precisely the superposition of these two fields in the human knowledge. How is it that a consciousness that unfolds in the time can have access to timeless truths? It is this mystery that motivates the reminiscence theory. Indeed, it allows Plato to recognize and point out the enigma posed by this act of thought, where the soul accomplishes the connection between an event contingent and an eternal truth, in a superposition of two temporal orders different. This ability of man to start from the contingent to achieve the necessary raises questions about human nature, questions that cannot receive fully scientific answers, but which are no less worth asking. Beyond the epistemological theory that it seeks to articulate, reminiscence wants also propose a conception of the human soul capable of explaining this astonishing property of our thought, which can access, from experience, truths of another order. This dimension of reminiscence theory is what we have called its anthropological dimension and will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Reminiscence and anthropology

In the previous chapter, we concluded that memories of knowledge prenatal functioned as archetypes, unknowingly conditioning our relation to the world from intelligible realities. However, this way of relating to sensitive things raises questions about the nature of man. How a soul located in time and space have access to universal realities and necessary truths? To what "type of being" must the soul belong in order to be able to allow such a relationship? The experience of reminiscence therefore sends us back to ourselves and forces us to question ourselves about what, in our nature, explains our simultaneous access to these two realities. The Phaedo uses the theory of anamnesis in the framework of a reflection on the duality of the human soul and we will begin our study of the anthropological dimension of reminiscence through this dialogue. We We will then turn to the Menon and the Phaedrus to compare our discoveries there.

5.1. Phaedo

On the dramatic level, the Phaedo presents us with an interlocutor who remembers that he remembers[244]. In fact, the mise en abyme is even more dizzying: Simmias will remember (in the episode of the dialogue) having already remembered (because Socrates has often held this speech) that he remembers (because learning in this life is only possible on the basis of prenatal knowledge). In a wonderful article, Robins (1997), after indicating the correspondence between the logos of reminiscence

[244] This is the only dialogue that presents us with this situation. Indeed, as Robins shows (1997, p.438-9), Menon, not taking an active part in the questioning of the servant, does not himself experience reminiscence. We will come back to this question in section 5.1.3.1, p.210 sq.

in the Phaedo and the erga of the dialogue, links it to the question of the knowledge of self; he thus maintains that Socrates wants to make Simmias understand that he has in himself resources to improve their understanding of things (p.450-51). However, if the relationship between this reminiscence of reminiscence and self-knowledge must be studied, Robins has only begun to explore this question. In this chapter, we we will take Robins' intuition much further, to the point of making it an essential aspect not only for the interpretation of the reminiscence episode, but also for the full dialogue. We will propose a reading of the dialogue (especially the first sections[245], from 61d to 84b) which emphasizes the importance of remembering the reminiscence for self-understanding[246]. The way in which the soul conceives itself is a central theme of the Phaedo, even if the question "what is the soul?" is never tackled head-on. The dialogue shows rather (in the erga and not in the logoi) how the soul comes to forge a understanding of itself. We will undertake to reconstruct the process by which the soul comes to such understanding, emphasizing the importance of awareness of reminiscence. Thus, we will expose the links between (1) the (epistemological) relation of a soul to the real, (2) the ontology it adopts and the (3) resulting self-understanding. We will support the following thesis: the essential factor of the understanding that the soul is self-made is its relation to the anamnesis. There are three stages of knowledge of itself that we will make explicit during our interpretation. The first is the one where situate most people, who do not realize at all that they are remember; consequently, they are unaware of the existence of intelligibles and do not grant reality than to what is sensible and material. Consequently, they understand each other themselves as a material thing. The second stage is that attributed by

[245] There are good reasons to believe that these passages form a unified block. See on this subject Pakaluk (2003, p.108-9).

[246] We mean this self-knowledge in a different sense from Robins. For the latter, it is limited to the awareness of the possession of innate notions capable of nourishing the dialectical inquiry. However, the important thing to arrive at a knowledge of oneself is not to determine what the soul has in itself, but rather to know the soul itself.

Socrates to the "true philosophers[247]", who are aware of the existence of the intelligible, but who have forgotten (or who have not noticed[248]) the role of sensation in this discovery. Accordingly, these philosophers divide reality into two substances foreign and non-communicating (intelligible things and sensible things); being since the soul is more like intelligible things and the body more like things sensitive, these philosophers understand their soul in the mode of intelligible forms and conceive of their embodied condition as an imprisonment in a substance foreign. Dialogue does not introduce us to the third stage, but it is implied by reflection on the passage on reminiscence. At this point, the soul reflects on how whose intelligibles she came to know; she then realizes that she is recollected from sensation. This realization leads him to pose, beyond the dichotomy between things in themselves and concrete things, the existence of intermediaries (the forms "in us") without which a sensible reality could not lead it to intelligible. Moreover, the condition of the embodied soul is no longer that of a intelligible reality prisoner of a body that hinders it, but rather that of a reality intermediary between the sensible and the intelligible, which must use the body as an ally to overcome its limits and regain knowledge. By realizing and responsibility for his ignorance (rather than throwing this responsibility on the body), the soul can thus embark on the true apprenticeship that dialectics allows it.

5.1.1. ordinary men

First, we want to consider the average understanding of the soul,

[247] We will see that this name has an ironic connotation.
[248] In Greek, it is the same verb, λανθάνω.

which corresponds to that which the ordinary man forges for himself. As we have seen[249], all men share in reminiscence, but most ignore it, so they use universal concepts to relate to experience without suspect the existence of an intelligible reality.

Ordinary men therefore live at the level of sensation, seeking those which are joking and running away from others. Because of the force by which such sensations strike, the soul cannot do otherwise than attribute being to the things which provide (83c), so that "nothing else seems true to him than that which has a form body[250], which can be touched, seen, eaten and used for love (81b)". Such a soul therefore adheres to an ontology which is limited to the sensible and the corporeal.

As a consequence of this conception of reality, ordinary men conceive themselves themselves according to these beacons and treat the soul itself as a sentient and bodily. Thus, they fear for their soul, "[that] the very instant it is separated from the body and where it comes out like a breath or smoke, dispersed, it does not flies away and is absolutely nothing (70a, trans. Dixsaut). " We see, in this passage[251] where Cebes reports the fears of the multitude, that the people ordinary people conceive of the soul as a concrete thing[252], identifying it with the most subtle they know, the smoke and the breath.

5.1.2. The "true philosophers"

The next position belongs to what we will call the « true

---

[249] See our rebuttal of Scott (1995) at section 4.1.1, p.146 sq.

[250] As such, we can consider that the way in which the scholars who deal with "what is called the investigation of nature (peri phuseôs historia, 96a)", insofar as they limit their study to the sensible, would be the scholarly version of the common position.

[251] See also 77d, where the same position is assigned to the children, another sign that it is a primitive position. In 80d10, the same position is again assigned to "most people ».

[252] As such, we can say that the soul-harmony theory, which Simmias will present later in the dialogue (85th sq.), is the scientific elaboration of common opinion. Moreover, Simmias himself admits having formed this opinion in the manner of many (92c).

philosophers[253]». This position is examined very early in the dialogue (64a sq.), before even to begin the demonstration of the immortality of the soul.

Does Socrates agree with these philosophers? The text lacks precision on this subject: sometimes he speaks as if he himself subscribed to their conclusions; nevertheless, in virtue of his modesty, we find it hard to believe that he would attribute to himself this title. Moreover, attributing this thought to others rather than speaking in its own proper name puts a distance between itself and this position. Moreover, when Socrates recognizes the wisdom of others, it is rarely without an ironic connotation. We we can therefore entertain doubts on this subject. On the other hand, the two interlocutors of Socrates, Simmias and Cebes are both quick to give their assent to the position supported by true philosophers. We cannot determine with certainty if this position corresponds to theirs[254], but we can at the very least assert that while their beliefs differ from those of the true philosophers, Simmias and Cebes are not aware of this at the beginning of the dialogue.

Note also that these "true philosophers" are not identified with an individual particular, neither to a precise group, nor to a determined philosophical school; they seem rather correspond to something like the idea of a philosopher; they are abstract philosophers, philosophers without a body. As we will see, this absence of body symbolizes the problem of their position.

True philosophers know the existence of things-in-themselves, that by which they distinguish ordinary men who attribute being only to sensible things likely to give them pleasure and pain. In dialogue, the real

---

[253] In fact, this group is designated in different ways during the dialogue: "The true philosophers" (οἱ ὡς ἀληθῶς φιλόσοφοι, 64b9, 64E2, 83B5), "those who rightly philosopher" (οἱ φιλοσοφοῦντες ὀρθῶς, 67d8, 67E4, 69D2, 80E6, 82C2-3), "Those who apply correctly to philosophy" (οἱ ὀρθῶς ἁπτόμενοι φιλοσοφίας, 64A4-5), "The true friends of knowledge" (οἱ ὀρθῶς φιλομαθεῖς, 67b4), those who are called friends of the rightly knowing (οἱ δικαίως φιλομαθεῖς, 83e5) or simply “the friends of knowledge” (οἱ φιλομαθεῖς, 82d9, 83a1-2, 83e5). When he is about to repeat a speech he attributes to this group, Socrates calls them “the renowned philosophers” (οἱ γνησίως φιλόσοφοι, 66b2).

[254] After all, the two interlocutors of Socrates will propose an objection to the latter by advancing an alternative conception of the relationship between the soul and the body to that which we find among the “true philosophers”.

philosophers neglect to specify where they got the knowledge of the realities intelligible. Simmias, when asked if he admits their existence, replies affirmatively in a very enthusiastic way (“We certainly declare it, for Zeus! », 65d), but he concedes it to Socrates without proof. Further in the dialogue, Socrates convinces Simmias that we derive this knowledge from the sensible through the experience of reminiscence255; however, by the time the position of the real philosophers is examined, Simmias himself has forgotten that we remember256.
This forgetfulness of Simmias corresponds to the problem of true philosophers: by their recognition of the existence of the intelligible, their position constitutes progress over compared to that of ordinary men; however, they lack knowledge reflective on this progress, that is, they lack the knowledge of the source of affirming that if their beliefs differ from those of the true philosophers, Simmias and Cebes are not aware of this at the beginning of the dialogue.
Note also that these "true philosophers" are not identified with an individual particular, neither to a precise group, nor to a determined philosophical school; they seem rather correspond to something like the idea of a philosopher; they are abstract philosophers, philosophers without a body. As we will see, this absence of body symbolizes the problem of their position.
True philosophers know the existence of things-in-themselves, that by which they distinguish ordinary men who attribute being only to sensible things likely to give them pleasure and pain. In dialogue, the real philosophers neglect to specify where they got the knowledge of the realities intelligible. Simmias, when asked if he admits their existence, replies affirmatively in a very enthusiastic way (“We certainly declare it, for Zeus! », 65d), but he concedes it to Socrates without proof. Further in the dialogue, Socrates convinces Simmias that we derive this knowledge of the sensible through the experience of reminiscence[255]; however, by the time the position of the real

[255] See 74b4-7, 74c7-10, 75a11-b3 and especially 75a5-8.

philosophers is examined, Simmias himself has forgotten that we remember[256].
This forgetfulness of Simmias corresponds to the problem of true philosophers: by their recognition of the existence of the intelligible, their position constitutes progress over compared to that of ordinary men; however, they lack knowledge reflexive on this progress, that is to say that they lack the knowledge of the source of this discovery of the intelligible. Because they don't realize[257] that this source is the sensitive and the reminiscence, their understanding of reality and of themselves finds biased. The lack of reflection on the source of their knowledge of the intelligible leads them into a drift, where they divide reality into two worlds not communicators and understand themselves according to this duality, conceiving themselves as an immaterial soul trapped in a material body. We will see, first time, how the true philosopher comes to divide reality into "two worlds" unable to communicate; We will then consider how this dichotomy affects his understanding of himself, insofar as the philosopher seeks to situate himself in relation to these two realities that he recognizes.

5.1.2.1. Ontological and epistemological dichotomy

Let us first consider the passages which attribute to true philosophers an ontology dichotomous. From their first mention in the dialogue (65a-68c), the true philosophers maintain that the soul does not perceive things like justice and goodness through the senses (65d4-9), but instead “perceives them through another meaning than those who have the body as their instrument” (65d11-12). So the philosophers distinguish two realities (things-in-themselves and sensible things) and distribute their knowledge to two distinct faculties (the senses and thought).

This position also appears in the argument that Dixsaut (1991, p.107) calls,

---

[256] See 73a-b.
[257] Again, in Greek, the same verb, λανθάνω, means “not to notice”, but also “to forget”.

aptly, "the alternative" (78b-84b). The argument breaks down into three parts: a first which is situated on the ontological plane, a second on the epistemological and a third part on the ethical level[258]. Considering the two first parts of the argument, we do not wish to determine whether they succeed to support the thesis of the immortality of the soul, but rather we want to bring out the presuppositions (ontological and epistemological) on which the argument rests; we wish indeed to show that it implies a rigid opposition between two sides of reality, to which must correspond a rigid opposition on the two modes of access to this reality. To establish his proof, Socrates begins by wondering about the type of thing capable of dispersing, that is to say, that which is composed of several parts. He asserts that only sentient objects scatter, unlike things intelligible (78c-79a); secondly, he shows that the soul rather resembles to intelligible things (79a-b). We already see that the principle of the argument is to oppose two realities. On the one hand, there are things in themselves, which are invariable, identical and admit no change; on the other side, there are multiple things that do not retain their identity and are never similar either to themselves or to other things. Come then the question of which member of the alternative soul and body resemble the more. Since things in themselves are invisible, unlike things changing, Socrates concludes that the soul resembles the former and the body seconds. Such an argument only makes sense if everything that exists is shared between the categories of the sensible and the intelligible, so that if we recognize in the soul certain characteristics common to intelligible things, we must attribute to it all the characteristics of the intelligible, including immortality[259].

The second part of argument (79c-e) goes in the same direction. This argument makes a

[258] This third part of the argument will not concern us in this section.

[259] Obviously, this is fallacious reasoning: the commonality of certain characteristics between the soul and intelligible things in no way implies that all their characteristics are common. This will also be the basis of the argument of Cébès (86e-88b), who will affirm that the fact that the soul lasts longer than the body and therefore resembles more on this point the intelligible does not imply that be immortal.

reference (79c2-3) to previous conclusions (65d), which recognized the existence of two types of reality (concrete things and things-in-themselves), each grasped by a different faculty (sensitive perception and thought). This passage, as well others[260], presents knowledge as an apprehension by the soul of an object which would be peculiar to it, an apprehension analogous to the grasping of sensible things by the senses[261]. We see therefore that sensation and thought are opposed as being two distinct epistemological modes, not cooperating with each other and aiming at objects different[262]. What particularly interests us in these arguments is the extreme polarization from which they operate. Things themselves and concrete things are seen as two diametrically opposed realities, having nothing in common, one being always the same and the other always changing. Similarly, the epistemological part of the argument conceives sensation and thought as two faculties having nothing to do with each other, each bearing on a type of object having no connection with the other guy. The result is the opposition of two series:

(1) things in themselves – identity – invisibility – thought
(2) concrete things – change – visibility – feeling

Once the two series have been established, one wonders to which series belong the soul and the body. In other words, the mode of argument used in this passage proceeds to from a binary logic, which predetermines that the relationship between the soul and the body in will be a strict opposition; indeed, it is a question of knowing in which of two series it both must be classified.

[260] See also 66d8, 83b4, 84a8-b1.
[261] See Gallop (1975, p.88-89): “It (scil. l’âme) seeks ‘vision ’or ‘grasp ’of its objects, analogous to the seeing or touching of material things. It is an organ of intellectual sight or touch, or a 'subject' by which the truth is apprehended. »
[262] Note that in this argument, the theory of reminiscence, according to which the sensation of an object is essential to provoke in us the thought of intelligible things, is completely « forgotten ».

5.1.2.2. The pure soul prisoner of the body

Let us now turn to the question of how this ontological and epistemological has repercussions on the conception of themselves that the real philosophers. True philosophers are distinguished from ordinary men because of their recognition of the intelligible, which leads them to oppose these two sides of the reality that are the sensible and the intelligible. Thus, ordinary men, who, knew only the sensible, understood themselves as a sensible thing; of the same way, the true philosophers, contrasting sensible things with things intelligible, are understood on the model of this opposition, that is to say as a intelligible thing (a soul) imprisoned in a sensible thing (a body).

5.1.2.2.1. pure soul

Let's start by considering the textual evidence that confirms to us that the real philosophers conceive of their soul as something intelligible. In his comment on the mythical epilogue of the "alternative" argument, Gallop (1975, p.144) invites us to note "the stress (see on 83b1-2) upon the soul's being 'alone by itself, 'which is correlative to the state of the Forms (cf. 66e-67a). In fact this parallel between the soul "purified" and the forms, marked by the attribution to the soul of the formula "αὐτὴ καθ' αὑτήν" (generally reserved to designate a "thing itself in itself", αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτό) is found in many places: when we die, the soul will dissociate from the body and exist αὐτὴ καθ αὑτήν (64c7, 70a6); is when she flees the body and finds herself αὐτὴ καθ' αὑτήν that she reasons to the best of her abilities (65v5, 65d1, 67e7); it will not have knowledge until it is separated from the body by death and to be αὐτὴ καθ' αὑτήν (67a1); given its kinship with the intelligible, it attaches itself to this reality as soon as it finds itself αὐτὴ καθ' αὑτήν (79d4). This last mention makes tell Burger (1984, p.99):

But what is this psyche that dies? Always abiding in logismos and thus actualizing its kinship with the monoeidetic, it seems to be no longer a psychê, but a being itself by itself.

Burger got it right. All the passages we have just noted where the expression appears αὐτὴ καθ' αὑτὴν to designate the soul support the following three points:

> (1) The activity of the pure soul is the thought of things themselves in themselves.
> (2) This thought works best when it is most possible separated from the body.
> (3) It is after severing his ties with the body through death that such a thought will be fully realized.

So the position of true philosophers is that the soul, by itself, is nothing but than a thought of things in themselves. The only reason for the lack of a full intellection of these things in themselves is the hindrance of the body; consequently, when the soul is completely rid, nothing will prevent this thought which will be perfectly actualized: the soul cut off from the body is perfectly "itself in itself" (αὐτὴ καθαυτή), that is, pure thought of things which are themselves in themselves (αὐτὰ καθ' αὑτά). This identification of the soul entirely liberated from the body with the things themselves provides information on the question of the immortality of the soul, which is linked to its temporality and its spatiality. As for temporality, the question is whether the soul participates in the "becoming", that is to say of the temporality of concrete things, which are born, change and eventually perish. The characterization of the soul as existing "itself in itself" implies that it is more a matter of the temporality of things in themselves: it remains in a constant thought of things eternally identical to themselves.
The spatiality of the soul is also closely related to the central problem of the Phaedo.

Thus, the first formulation of the question which gives impetus to the proofs of the immortality of the soul concerns the space in which the soul finds itself when separated from the body. Cebes is ready to concede that if the soul remains outside the body, we can hope that a better fate awaits him, but he fears (69e-70c) that the soul, once separated of the body, disperses and no longer exists anywhere. This phrase comes up twice (70a2, a6) and when Socrates takes up the question of Cebes, he formulates it as having for stake to know if the soul of the dead is in Hades or if it is not there. The question is not bad: when the soul is no longer in the body, where is it? Hades is over far assimilated, by etymological play, to the realm of the invisible and of things in themselves (81c11). Once purified, the soul would therefore "join" the "invisible" things, that is to say the things in themselves. Now these things, strictly speaking, do not occupy any space! Beauty itself is not in a woman or in a landscape, but she is in itself. In terms of spatiality, the purified soul would therefore no longer be in no foreign body, but rather in itself, as things in themselves are.

We can therefore conclude that the true philosophers represent the soul on the model of a thing in itself, because they consider that by virtue of its very nature, it belongs neither to the temporality nor to the spatiality of concrete things; on the contrary, the pure soul exists outside of time and space in an eternal thought of things themselves. It goes without saying that this understanding of the soul makes the conception of its problematic incarnation at the highest point. In the next section, we Let us consider how true philosophers attempt to explain this condition to themselves.

5.1.2.2.2. Imprisonment in the body

We have seen that the ontological duality to which true philosophers adhere inclines to conceive the nature of the soul as a separate form, as a pure thought, cut off from all bodily functions, whose activity is exercised on the model of intellectual view. From this perspective, the most coherent conception of the relationship between the soul and the body would be to adopt a radical duality, according to which soul and body are foreign substances forced to coexist against their nature. Blade

pure is thus imprisoned in the body and this confinement is the cause of its incapacity to contemplate intelligible realities. To prove that this conception of the relation of the soul to the body is present in the dialogue, we have grouped under four headings the textual elements which support. (1) The pure soul is imprisoned in a body that obstructs its vision Spiritual. The first passage supporting this view is right at the end of the prologue. of Phaedo. Socrates invites Évènos to "follow" him and affirms that he will do so, if he is really a philosopher (61b-c), but without killing himself, since it's forbidden. Socrates clarifies this enigma a few pages later, when he asserts that philosophy is a practice of death (64a), an affirmation on which we we'll be right back. When Cébès asks him to explain the prohibition of suicide, Socrates uses the "formula of the mysteries" according to which "we are assigned to a prison (φρουρᾷ[263]) and we must not deliver (λύειν) ourselves nor flee" (62b). As Socrates admits, this formula is obscure, but it inclines to think that the body would be for the soul a prison in which it would be locked up for the time of his earthly life. Socrates does not directly propose such a interpretation, but we find later in the dialogue a passage which supports this understanding of the text. Indeed, while Socrates describes the conversion of the soul to philosophy, he explains that before this conversion, the soul, being closely linked to the body, « was forced to examine the beings as through the bars of a prison » (82nd). This passage implies that the soul retains the faculty of intellectual vision once embodied, but is obstructed by the body; by virtue of this veil, she would now find itself forced to glimpse only the intelligible realities.

(2) Metaphors of the Artificial Junction of Body and Soul

We must add to these passages all those which give us the impression that the soul and the body are tied together, as if they were two natures quite foreign, but which would be "glued" to each other by artificial means. The

[263] For a discussion of possible translations of this term, see Gallop (1975, p.85-6) and Dixsaut (1991, p.328 n.57). We will bring, in this paragraph, arguments which support us the translation of the phroura by "prison".

metaphor of the links that bind soul and body is found first in a passage (67c5-d2) which considers that the work of philosophy and of death consist in
loosen the bonds that hold soul and body together. The same metaphor of
unbinding of the body constantly recurs in the epilogue of the argument of
« the alternative »[264]. A little further on, Socrates, recalling the conclusions of the passage on reminiscence, concludes that it implied that our soul existed "before being attached (ἐνδεθῆναι) to the body" (92a1). In addition to using the "links" metaphor to to represent the constrained and unnatural union of soul and body, Socrates resorts to related metaphors, according to which the soul has been "glued" (προσκεκολλημένην, 82e2) to the body, that each pleasure "nails" it (προσηλοῖ, 83d3) and "pins" it (προσπερονᾷ, 83d4) to him. All this lexical field contributes to presenting the soul and the body as two distinct entities, which are not intended to coexist, but which are forced into relationship by artificial means.

(3) Identification of the Work of Philosophy and Death

Another passage corroborating the conception of the "body-prison" is found in explanation of the association that Socrates sees between death and philosophy, which makes him maintain a good hope in the face of the ordeal that awaits him. This assimilation is due to community of their goals, since both would aim at the separation of the soul and the body. Indeed, death separates[265] the soul and the body so that each finds himself "isolated in itself" (64c). To show that the same is true for philosophy, Socrates proceeds here from an epistemological argument (65a-68c). When the soul
seeks to know through sensation, it finds itself deceived by the body, because
truth escapes the senses; on the contrary, the soul reasons best when it is cut off from any contact with the body and isolated in itself (65a-66a). So the philosopher
"sends the body for a ride and detaches itself from all association and contact with it

[264] Eg. 80e5, 82e6, 83a3.
[265] For a discussion of the philosophical problems involved in this conception of death, see Gallop (1975, p.86-7).

(65c)" and his soul "despises the body, shuns it and seeks to isolate itself in itself" (65cd), which therefore implies that death and philosophy work for the same work.

(4) Purification as (spatial) estrangement from the body

True philosophers, thinking that the body is an obstacle to thought, conclude that "As long as we live, the way to come closest to knowledge is to avoid mixture and community of the body, except in case of absolute necessity (67a)". The philosophy attempts to purify the soul, that is, to "separate the soul as much as possible of the body and accustom it to gathering and condensing itself into itself, [fleeing] on all sides out of the body, and to dwell as much as possible, now and in the future, alone in itself, as if freed from its links with the body (67c-d)". This passage therefore associates the purification of philosophy with a spatial distancing: the role of philosophy would be to gather the soul into itself rather than leaving it dispersed throughout the body. Later, Socrates will tell us that the real philosophers "stand aloof (ἀπέχονται) from all bodily desires" (82c2-3) and that the soul of the true philosopher "stands at a distance (ἀπέχεται) from desires, pleasures and punishments as much as possible" (83b5-7), thus again contributing to the conception of purification as distancing. The conclusion of this line of argument is particularly telling:

So what we call death is an unbinding and a separation of the soul from the body?" Yes, absolutely," he said. – And untie the soul, those, we say, who never stop to apply themselves to it with ardor are above all, or rather not, are only those who philosophize rightly, and the exercise which is proper to philosophers consists in this: in a unbinding and separation of the soul from the body? You do not do not think so? - It's obvious. (67d, trans. Dixsaut)

The protagonists conclude here that the work of philosophy and that of death are exactly the same: separating the soul from the body. The body is designed as a imprisonment and death as a liberation for the soul, which can then unite without

reserve for the true object of his desire: truth, being and things themselves. the portrait thus drawn by the arguments of true philosophers implies that the soul and the body are two opposite entities that death separates. Philosophy, by isolating the soul from the body as much as possible, "precedes" this separation and allows the soul to live in a state as close to death as possible.

According to this conception, the best state for the soul is undoubtedly death and we understand why Socrates had to resort to religious motives (the Orphic adage) to explain the ban on suicide. Indeed, what philosophy does not achieve that imperfectly and at the cost of laborious efforts, death seems to realize it in one stroke, perfectly and for good[266]. In other words, there is no rational motivation to to live and it must be sought from the side of the divine commandment.

5.1.2.2.3. Alternative conception to that of the "body-prison"

Despite the testimony of all these passages, the conception of the incarnation as a imprisonment of a pure soul, corollary to a conception of purification as a flight and a distancing from the body, is far from being attributed to the Phaedo by all commentators. It's not a whim on their part. Indeed, each of the four headings of the previous section can be confronted with textual elements which contradict. To make our exhibition smoother, we will proceed by an order different from the previous section, but we have marked the correspondence of headings by recovering the same numbering.

(3') The work of philosophy is not the same as death, but is only analogous to it. Until the first eschatological passage (80e-82a), the dialogue leads us to believe that all souls, once dead and rid of the body, reach the pure thought of

[266] See Burger (1984, p.44), who considers that preparation for death is useless, since death will in any case achieve what philosophy struggles to achieve: "Yet the value of this preparation is unintelligible, for if death itself is a release of the psychê from the body, it must automatically lead to the goal consisting of union of "the pure with the pure.'"

the intelligible[267]. However, from this passage it becomes clear that Socrates considers that most souls do not attain pure thought after death. In fact, the body would have so bewitched them with his desires and pleasures that they would now believe that only sensible and bodily things are true (81b). Only the soul purified by philosophy can leave the cycle of reincarnations and find itself among things in themselves; all the others, because of the desire for the body that dwells in them, will join new bodies to start another life. These first eschatological considerations therefore imply an alternative conception of relationship between soul and body to that of a pure soul enclosed in a body. In effect, soul and body would be united in two different ways. In a way they are united like two entities attached to each other: it is this union that will be broken with the dead. But in another way, the soul and the body are united by virtue of a transformation of their nature resulting from their proximity. Because she gets used to seek the pleasure that the body gives him, the soul itself takes on a dimension bodily. However, this corporeal dimension acquired by the soul during its incarnation remains intact at death. The soul retains the same "portion of corporeity" when it leaves the body. Only philosophy can purify this "defilement" of the soul.

(4') The purification of philosophy does not consist in a distance from the body. The conception of the purification of the soul is therefore now different from that which we found in the passages examined in the previous section (e.g. 67c-d), which considered that the role of philosophy was to "remove" the soul as much as possible from body, as does death. Indeed, the eschatological considerations of Socrates now imply that the estrangement caused by death does not release the soul from bodily dimension acquired through commerce with the body. Therefore, the purification could be a matter of spatial separation or physical distancing. We

[267] The only passage which can dispel this impression is found in 69c-d, where Socrates, referring to a formula of the mysteries, suggests that not all men will be rewarded after death, but only those who have purified themselves from the body. .

understand that the reasoning of the "true philosophers", according to which death and philosophy corroborated the same work, was really a “shortcut” (66b):
if it is true that the work of both consists in separating soul and body, it is
yet of a “separation” understood in two different senses[268]! Death separates the soul and the body, but does not purify them, philosophy purifies the soul, but does not separate them physically. The relationship between philosophy and death is therefore not one of identity, but of analogy.

(2') Certain metaphors indicate that the soul is mixed with
body and not joined to it by artificial means. At the beginning of the argument from the alternative, Socrates asserts that only that which is composed can disperse, regardless of whether this composition is artificial or natural (78c). Even if Socrates does not do so in this passage, it is interesting to ask how member of this alternative belongs the composite of soul and body. Earlier we have noted all the metaphors of the "bond", which suggest that soul and body are joined by artificial means (ropes, glue, nails or pins). Such metaphors imply that soul and body are totally separate entities, forced to live together by “unnatural” (artificial) means. There are however some
passages that offer an alternative conception, employing metaphors that
suggest a union not limited to a spatial junction by means
external, but which present this union rather as a natural compound. In effect,
Socrates talks about community and sharing the essence of the soul with the body (ἡ ὁμιλία τε καὶ συνουσία τοῦ σώματος, 81c5), in a way that evokes sexual union,
union therefore much more intimate than the artificial link of the pin; in the same line, he mentions that the soul is “kneaded” (συμπεφρυμένη, 66b5) with the body or that it would be "infected" (ἀναπιμπλῶσθαι, 67a5 and 83d10) by him, which, in both cases, implies a mixture of their two natures. After comparing the pleasures and pains of nails that fix the soul to the body (83d), Socrates offers a metaphor that tempers this idea of artificial junction by affirming that the soul sows and takes root

[268] We follow Dixsaut (1991, p.81).

(σπειρομένη ἐμφύεσθαι, 83e1) in the body[269]. At this lexical field, we can add certain passages which suggest that the embodied soul takes on a bodily form. This is how Socrates himself seems to recognize the limits of his metaphor of the "nail" when he affirms that by "nailing" the soul to the body[269], the pleasures in fact give the soul a bodily form[270].

(1') The soul is not imprisoned by the body, but is contrary to his sovereign. Unlike the passages seen in the previous section, the Phaedo does not consider always that the soul is the prisoner of the body, that it is at odds with it and must to run away. Some passages rather consider the possibility of a harmonious relationship with the body, where the soul, far from being a prisoner of the latter, commands it. We see this proposition first towards the end of the argument from the alternative (79e-80a), where Socrates affirms that the soul is more divine than the body since it is she who commands[271]. This argument is not the most convincing to support the thesis of the immortality of the soul, since in fact it is often the body that commands. Nevertheless, he is an important passage for our purpose, since Socrates envisages there for the first time the possibility of a harmonious relationship between soul and body. The same suggestion returns later, this time at the end of the refutation of the conception of Simmias of soul-harmony (94b-95a). Socrates establishes that the capacity of the soul to opposing the desires of the body indicates that it has a will of its own; she is not therefore not an epiphenomenon resulting from the balance of tensions between the elements bodily. We therefore find here for the second time the mention of the possibility of a body obedient to the soul, which opens the door to a conception of the relationship between two that is “harmonious” rather than antagonistic.

Finally, the possibility of a healthy relationship with the body is present in a way symbolic in the dialogue, in the relationship that Socrates maintains with Crito. In

---

[269] Note that in Greek, the etymological root of the verb “ἐμφύω” is very close to the word “φύσις” and therefore suggests that soul and body are a natural compound and not artificial.

[270] ποιεῖ σωματοειδῆ, 83d5; see also 81c4 and 81e1.

[271] See Gallop (1975, p.141).

throughout the dialogue, Crito serves as an intermediary between Socrates and everything that closely concerns or by far his body. During his first appearance (58e-60a), he receives the charge of drive Socrates' wife back. It is also in the company of his old friend that
Socrates will have his last interview with his children and relatives (116b3). Crito intervenes to share the executioner's instructions, which asks to minimize the discussions to prevent overheating of the body from harming the action of the poison (63d-e). It is also he who asks Socrates how to dispose of his body when the poison has
does its work (115a-e). Finally, Socrates rebukes Crito to dangle the
possibility of drinking and having sex before his execution (116e-117a).
The character of Crito actually represents the good relationship you need to have with the body: Crito intervenes and interrupts the conversation (63d) as the body interrupts the philosophy (66c-d) to convey the desires and fears of the body, but it has
nevertheless was used to listening to Socrates, recognizing his wisdom and obeying him. Socrates do not get angry with Crito and do not try to run away from this man who lives at the level of the body; on the contrary, he considers him as one of his friends. In the same way, intelligence must command and the body must be accustomed to bowing to its authority, which which will make it possible to achieve friendship and harmony within man. This element of dramatic setting of the Phaedo is therefore an allegorical representation of the good relationship of the soul to the body.
Thus, we do seem to have two rival conceptions overlapping over the course of
of Phaedo. The following table summarizes our conclusions in this regard.

	The imprisoned soul	**The sovereign soul**
(1) Relationship to body	The soul is imprisoned in the body. (62b; 82nd)	The soul governs the body. (79e-80a; 94b-95a)
(2) Metaphors used for describe this relationship	Soul and body are joined by artificial means. (67c5-d2; 80e5, 82e2; 82e6; 83a3; 83d3; 83d4; 92a1)	The soul is mixed with the body and shares its nature. (66b5; 67a5; 81c4; 81c5; 81e1; 83d5; 83d10; 83e1)
(3) Relationship between the work of the philosophy and of death	Philosophy and death are working on the same work. (64c; 65a-66a)	The work of death and philosophy are only analogues. (80e-82a)
(4) Design of cleansing	Purification consists of a distance in space. (67a; 67c-d; 67d; 82c2-3; 83b5-7)	The soul remains defiled even when she is far away body. (80e-82a)

5.1.2.2.4. The hermeneutical embarrassment around the anthropology of Phaedo

Thus, we have seen that dialogue presents two mutually exclusive of the relationship between soul and body: one that makes the body a prison for the soul and another that considers that the soul mixes with the body. As a consequence of the presence of these two rival conceptions, the interpreters are divided into two camps at the subject of anthropology supported by this dialogue. On the one hand, there are the partisans of a radical dualism[272], who refer to our headings 1, 2, 3 and 4 to support their position; on the other side, there are supporters of a more moderate opposition[273], for which the soul would be an intermediary between the sensible and the intelligible, which claim passages mentioned in our 1', 2', 3' and 4' headings.

[272] See eg. Goldschmidt (1949, p.67 and 109), Hackforth (1955, p.49), Gallop (1975, p.143) 143), Olshewsky (1976, p.391), Bostock (1986, p.28) and Pakaluk (2003).
[273] See Burger (1984, p.44), Rowe (1984, p.167), Dixsaut (1991, p.81), Dorter (1982, p.80), Dilman (1992, p.74-77), Stern (1993, p.34), Ahrensforf (1996, p.49-50), Gotshalk (2001, p.30, 33-34, 36, 39), Sherman (2013, p.226).

Pakaluk (2003) is undoubtedly the one who presents the most energetic defense of the radical dualism. His main argument consists in attacking the 3' thesis, according to which the work of philosophy would only be analogous to death; to do this, he insists on the passages of the fourth rubric (4) of the first series, which affirm that the purification of the soul must be a distancing from the body:

If no more than that were meant (scil. if the work of the philosophy was only analogous - and not identical - to death), then, for all his asceticism, a philosophizing would not be one jot closer to the condition of being dead than anyone else. (p.100)

Pakaluk notes some parallels between this position and the alternative argument. (p.109) and concludes that the argument of the alternative (78b-80e) is a recovery of the position of the defense of Socrates (61d-69e), where Socrates actually presents the thesis of the true philosophers. Yet he neglects to mention all the eschatological passages which unequivocally imply that death and philosophy separate the soul from the body in a different meaning; indeed, as we have seen, death separates the soul from the body without purify, while philosophy purifies the soul without separating it from the body. Thus, faced with the dissonance between the two series that we have noted, Pakaluk adopts the strategy of the ostrich: it emphasizes the coherence of the first series, but systematically ignores all textual elements of the second. Fortunately, not all proponents of the first conception are so biased. Gallop (1975, p.90-91), for example, notices the dissonance between (1) and (1'):

We may ask, for example, how the soul can at once 'bring life' to the body (105c-d), 'rule and be master' of the body (80a, 94b-d), and yet be a 'prisoner' within the body, cooperating in its own captivity (82e-83a).

The dialogue contains no single, logically coherent 'doctrine' that might answer such questions.As we have already suggested, we believe that this tension is not attributable

to an "inconsistency" in Plato's thought, but rather to the fact that two positions rivals are at stake in these passages. For the rest, Gallop (p.143) thinks that the passages where (2') Socrates speaks of the soul as if it came to participate in the element bodily, as in 81c4-d5, have a metaphorical meaning:

Unpurified souls are here portrayed not as immaterial substances, but as phantoms or insubstantial wraiths. They are described in terms that could not literally apply to the soul in its essential, incorporeal nature. How could an incorporeal thing be 'interspersed with a corporeal element' (c4-5), be 'weighed down '(c10, or 'fall back into another body, and grow in it '(83d10-e1)?

Such language, taken literally, describes interaction between one material substance and another. Bostock (1984, p.28), uses the same line of argument to confine Plato to a radical dualism:

…when a non-philosopher dies, he suggests that the soul is not after all completely separated from the body, but remains 'interspersed with a corporeal element '(81c4). But this is surely not an explanation that we should take seriously […]. If we do take it seriously, then it will imply that the non philosopher's soul is in life extended throughout his body, and retains this shape after death, with some material particles somehow 'clinging 'to it. […] But obviously this interpretation of the Phaedo is absurd. It treats the soul as if it were made of some quasi-material stuff, and just the kind of thing that might be blown apart by the wind, especially if you happened to die in a storm (77e1). It is not what Plato means to suggest at all, and when he spoke of a soul being 'interspersed with a corporeal element 'he obviously meant to be understood as speaking figuratively.

These quotations show us that Gallop and Bostock clearly saw that radical dualism that they attribute to Plato could not cover all the passages of the dialogue, so that they give the passages of the second series a metaphorical status. Note that the

supporters of the second series adopt the same strategy and assign a value symbolic to the passages of the first series! Here are some examples :

This prison represents not merely a confinement within the body (life) as the earlier one did, but the additional devotion to the corporeal at the expense of the spiritual. (Dorter, 1982, p.80) Socrates in fact talks as if the irrational desires belong to the body. But we need not take his language here too literally: these desires are not 'bodily' in the sense that t h e body feels them by itself [...] but in the sense that they require the body for their fulfillment; and also because we come to possess them by virtue of having a body. (Rowe,1984, p.167) Between the death that makes us die to what has not importance, and the one that truly transports the soul "over there", what relationship to establish? The relationship is due to a opinion, to a conviction that is expressed in the ease with which die, in both senses of the word. To be honest, she is to play on words. (Dixsaut, 1991, p.81) Ostensibly, the concern is with an immortality pertaining to the soul in her going-away-there after death. In news, Socrates is speaking reflexively of a rather different form of immortality, one gained in that going-abroad-there which is involved in the soul's life-long philosophical endeavor. […] Simmias and Cebes understand Socrates in literal fashion but the reflective import of his speech is not to be found in the argument as they understand it. (Gotshalk, 2001, p.39)

Thus, this overview of the different positions of the commentators confirms our conclusions of the two preceding sections: there are indeed two series of passages which come from two antagonistic positions, so that the commentators believed themselves obliged to interpret one of the two series as being a metaphor for the other. The position attributed to the "true philosophers" (according to which the pure soul, thought on the model of things in themselves, is a prisoner of the body) is therefore indeed in conflict with a second position, which sees a much closer relationship between soul and body. Thus, we do not think that one series is a metaphor for the other, but rather that these two positions must be attributed to different protagonists. We

now want to bring some arguments to dissociate Socrates and Plato from the first position of the « true philosophers ». First, the theory of the asceticism of the true philosophers does not agree well with the life of Socrates. Indeed, on the intertextual and dramatic level, we have no another portrayal that would make Socrates such a killjoy. As remarked Hackforth (1955, p.49):

But, outside the Phaedo, his general attitude does not seem to be that of an enemy of the 'flesh 'and its pleasures; Hey can on occasion enjoy his wine, and drink with the best; goal he is, in the Greek phrase, 'master of himself '(κρείττωναὑτοῦ), one who is not to be overcome by pleasure (ἥττωνἡδονῆς).

It has also been noted[274] that the mention of the young child of Socrates (60a) implies that he has indulged in the pleasure of sex even recently. In front, there contradiction between the dramatic representation of Socrates and the asceticism advocated in the dialogue, Hackforth concludes that it must be a properly Platonic doctrine and non-Socratic:

The aim ascribed to the true philosophizing in our present section – the greatest possible detachment of soul from body – is then a Platonic rather than a Socratic doctrine. And it is one which Plato never wholly abandoned, though he never elsewhere proclaims it with quite so much fervour. (p.49)

Apart from the fact that the differentiation between Plato and the historical Socrates is an undertaking risky, even impossible[275], we can question the character Platonist of the passage; indeed, Hackforth himself does not believe that the asceticism of Phaedo is supported with equal vigor elsewhere in the corpus. Gallop and Rowe are even more affirmative:

[274] See eg. Dorter (1982, p.27).
[275] On this subject, see the works of Dorion, among others his introduction to the Memorabilia (2000) and his article in the Cambridge Companion to Socrates (2011).

Nowhere else in Plato is asceticism so uncompromisingly extolled. (Gallop, 1975, p.88)
…there is no single other dialogue in the whole of the Platonic corpus that comes close to matching the Phaedo's apparent endorsement of a life of asceticism. (Rowe, 2007, p.97)

Note again that the asceticism of Phaedo astonishes Goldschmidt (1949, p.73-74), who reads Plato from the perspective of offering a unified interpretation of the corpus; he considers that the Phaedo is the only dialogue to conceive the relations of the soul of the philosopher with his body as necessarily hostile, since the other rather view these relationships as friendly by virtue of his self-control. In an awkward passage, he tries to argue somehow for us convince that these two conceptions ultimately amount to the same thing[276]. His embarrassment shows that the asceticism of the Phaedo fits badly into the perspective synthetic which is his.

A final argument, of an intertextual nature, is likely to support the distancing of Socrates of the true philosophers. Indeed, the possibility that Socrates assigns a position to "ideal" philosophers while distancing himself from this position gains in credibility of the fact that the Phaedon is not the only dialogue where the main interlocutor has use of such a process. First, in the central digression of Theaetetus (172c-177c), Socrates describes philosophers who ignore the way to the market and are unable to recognize their neighbor as they are preoccupied with universal things (173c174a). This passage therefore refers to philosophers very different from Socrates, the latter spending all his time at the market and having a clear interest in certain individuals (143d). Some interpreters have thus offered a convincing argument for

[276] "Depending on whether the soul dreams of being disembodied or assumes its present situation, its relationship with the body will be hostile or friendly. But the two attitudes differ only in appearance, because the escape can never be of long duration and because the association with the body runs the risk at any moment of becoming too intimate, so that the soul, for better to direct his body, must constantly take care to maintain the distances. The temporary escape that spares useful solitudes that the necessities of life each time take care of interrupting. "The asceticism of the Phaedo" in no way contradicts the prescription of the Timaeus to coordinate the movements of the body and those of the soul. (Goldschmidt, 1949, p.73).

assert that Plato's position is not that of these disembodied philosophers, but rather the Socratic position[277].

Secondly, in the passage introducing the image of the sun in the Republic (505b-d), Socrates distinguishes between two conceptions of the good. The first is that of the most people, who put it in pleasure (like the ordinary men of our dialogue); the second is that of "refined people" (κομψότεροι), who put him in the thought (φρόνησις), as true philosophers identify phronesis with the ultimate object of their desire (see Phaedo 66e3). Now, having indicated these two propositions and having shown their limits, Socrates proposes a third solution.

The last comparison is even more significant: in the Sophist, the Stranger d'Élée distinguishes two positions on the subject of being, from which he wishes to distance himself (245e249c). The first is that of the materialists, who, like ordinary men in the Phaedo, consider that only tangible reality exists and therefore place being in " the body ". The second is that of the "friends of forms", who recognize the existence of immaterial forms, known by thought. These "friends of forms" oppose moreover, corporeal things, known by sensation, which exist in the mode of becoming, to intelligible things, which exist in the mode of being; they consider by these two realities as being separate from each other (248a). This dichotomy is the same as that proposed by the true philosophers in the Phaedo. What's more, the criticism that the Stranger offers of this position is also relevant for our purpose: he reproaches the friends of forms for not recognizing the necessity of intelligence, life and soul, which involve movement (248d-249d).

In other words, the Stranger reproaches the "friends of forms" for having neglected to take into account themselves; they have divided what exists according to an opposition which excludes the soul. This criticism is therefore analogous to that which we address to the real philosophers. So here we have three other examples where the discussion leader distancing oneself from positions attributed to “scholars”, scholars who adopt a very

[277] See eg. Stern (2008, p.163-170).

similar to that of the true philosophers of our dialogue.
By virtue of all these arguments, we therefore believe that it would be a mistake to associate Socrates (and Plato) with the position of the true philosophers[278].
By way of conclusion, we can summarize the position of the "true" philosophers of the following way. Unlike ordinary men, they recognize the existence intelligible things, which they distinguish from sensible things. However, they do not no reflective return on the way in which they came to know the intelligible, so that they are unaware that this knowledge has been acquired through the sensitive, by reminiscence. Without this self-reflection which would have suggested to them the existence of a link between the sensible and the intelligible, the true philosophers rather oppose these two realities and seek to distribute all beings according to the cleavage established by this dichotomy. Thus, true philosophers, realizing that their souls are more like to the forms, understand this soul on the model of the forms, considering that it is destined to exist by itself, in a pure thought of forms to which it is related. In the binary logic that inhabits them, the real philosophers conceive of this thought on the model of sensitive perception, as a form of spiritual vision. The incarnation is conceived as a union forced and artificial with a body that is by nature totally foreign to the soul. This imprisonment obstructs the vision of the pure soul, as bars obstruct the sight of the prisoner, so that she can no longer think properly about the things themselves in this condition.

5.1.3. The soul as intermediary and the remembrance of reminiscence

Ordinary men only care about concrete reality. The real ones philosophers have discovered the intelligible, but without taking into account what has allowed this discovery. The Socratic philosopher, in addition to the sensible and things in themselves, also knows himself, insofar as he is aware of the help of the sensible

[278] This is also the position of certain commentators, such as Burger (1984, p.39) and Rowe (2007, p.112).

in his discovery of forms, in an epistemological experience that he calls "the reminiscence". As a consequence of their dichotomous conception of reality, true philosophers saw as a pure soul, thought on the model of separate forms, prisoner of a body, so that the whole problem of existence consisted in knowing how to detach from its grip. Reflection on the source of our knowledge of forms allows to go beyond the position of true philosophers; since this reflection consists of a "reminiscence of reminiscence", we will analyze the passage where Simmias does this experiment. The dialogue uses the history lesson as a argument to prove the existence of the soul before birth. We will focus our attention to what the argument implies about our understanding of the embodied soul; we will see that it is characterized by the fact that it occupies a intermediate position between the sensible and the intelligible.

5.1.3.1. Simmias and reminiscence

As Socrates concludes his presentation of the first argument about alternation opposites, Cébès interrupts it (72nd sq.) to raise the agreement of this conclusion with a theory that Socrates used to expound, according to which all learning is a reminiscence. Unlike his friend, Simmias has forgotten the theory and asks Cebes to remind him of it. The latter therefore explains to him that when one questions the men, these speak according to what it is, which would be impossible without let there be knowledge and right reason in them (ἐπιστήμη καὶ ὀρθὸς λόγος). The clearest proof of this theory is obtained by directing the attention of one's interlocutor towards the figures of geometry. Seizing the ball on the leap, Socrates invites Simmias, if he is still incredulous, to look at things from another angle. Simmias denies being skeptical: "I only ask, he says, to experience the very object of the discussion: reminiscence! (73b6-7)" Cebes 'exposition has already allowed to remember and to be persuaded, but he will still listen with pleasure to what

that Socrates wants to add. We can already underline some important points of this prologue. First, well that Socrates often expounded the doctrine of anamnesis, Simmias does not remember. That's not the only time Simmias gets forgetful. Immediately after the presentation reminiscence, Simmias will criticize the argument for only proving the pre-existence of the soul to the incarnation and not its survival to the body, thus forgetting the conclusions of the alternation of opposites argument (77b-c); when presenting his argument to the subject of soul-harmony (85b-86d), Simmias will again forget the argument of reminiscence, as Socrates will not fail to remind him (91st-92nd). Worse, when the discussion about reminiscence, Simmias seems to forget oblivion itself! In

indeed, when he indicates to Socrates the possibility of an acquisition of knowledge at the birth, Socrates replies that there would then be no time left when the soul could have forget knowledge; Simmias, sheepish, withdraws his argument: "…I didn't

insight (ἔλαθον) that I spoke to say nothing! » The verb used by Simmias (λανθάνω) also means "to forget" and its use here signals "forgetting

oblivion" by Simmias. So, by virtue of Simmias' forgetful nature, we

will have to distinguish between what he retains of the theory of reminiscence and what he can be drawn from it. Simmias is not the perfect interlocutor to understand and retain the theory of reminiscence, but he is superior to Menon[279], who never engages in the practice anamnesis, but observes its effects in a servant. Simmias rather wants experience reminiscence himself. Robins (p. 439) draws the following conclusions:

[279] Robins (1997, p.438-39) was interested in the relationships that could be made between the presentation of reminiscence in the Menon and the Phaedo by emphasizing the relationship to reminiscence that have Menon and Simmias. He thus notices that Meno listens to the argument and observes the demonstration of it by attending the geometry lesson, but does not experience it himself; after the demonstration, even if he agrees with Socrates' conclusion, he does not take it into account in the rest of the dialogue; when Socrates suggests that given the absence of a teacher of virtue, virtue cannot be learned (96b-c), he does not recall that the theory of reminiscence calls this conclusion into question. Further, Meno is unwilling to implement Socrates' recommendations and refuses to resume the inquiry into virtue, insisting instead that the question of whether virtue s 'teaches.

Unlike Meno, Simmias, if he is persuaded by Socrates' arguments, is to see recollection as something that he has been and can continue to be engaged in. Unlike Meno's slaveboy, he does not now recollect something for the first time, but turns out, if Socrates' arguments are valid, to have been recollecting for some time. If Simmias accepts all this, it will make a difference to his understanding of his own soul and of what he is doing in learning.

We believe that these remarks have an important bearing: Simmias remembers constantly, but is unaware of it; the absence of the remembrance of reminiscence the leads to endorsing the position of true philosophers and agreeing to their conception of the soul as a separate form trapped in a body.
Unlike Simmias, Cebes remembers the doctrine and his summary seems to be a reference to the Menon[280], as evidenced by the following points:

(1) Reminiscence can result from questions.
(2) It implies that we already have knowledge within us.
(3) Geometry is a favorite field to observe it.

The link between this summary and the Menon is too close not to see it as a reference. However, Cébès does not master the theory in all its subtleties.
Dixsaut (1991, p.343n.128) remarks that it obscures important elements of the demonstration: by affirming that people, when they are well questioned, "express everything as it really is," Cebes skips the crucial stage of refutation and of the resulting aporia[281]. Dixsaut is therefore right to suggest that Cebes recites the theory of reminiscence in an external way, but without having appropriated it; he has only one opinion on the theory of reminiscence, but this opinion is not a

[280] We take up here the observations of Dixsaut (1991, p.343n.128); see also Gallop (1975, p.115).
[281] See above, section 3.1.3.3, p.124 sq.

knowing that experience would have allowed him to recognize. In this chapter, Cebes is ina state similar to that of Meno. Dixsaut (p.345) also argues that the anamnesis theory of Phaedo, such as the will present Socrates, will come to remedy the shortcomings of the theory of Cébès by restoring the forgotten mediators, thanks to the proposed analysis of the experience of perception. That explanation is true, but insufficient, because it does not make it possible to account for the differences between the exposition of doctrine between the two dialogues. If the only intention of Socrates was to correct the story of Cebes, he could have stuck to a revival of the exposition of the Menon theory. Moreover, such a demonstration would also have sufficed to fulfill the explicit mission of reminiscence theory in the Phaedo, which is to contribute to the proof of the immortality of the soul. The reasons that push Socrates to explore a new angle of approach to his theory preferred are therefore deeper and relate to issues that concern the whole dialogue. In fact, we will see that the role of the theory of reminiscent in the Phaedo is to clarify the nature of the incarnated soul as mediator between things in themselves and concrete things. Thus, the transformation of the anamnesis performed between the Meno and the Phaedo is explained by the importance of the question of the relation of soul and body in the Phaedo; indeed, the presentation of the anamnesis calls into question the conception of the relationship of the soul to the body as imprisonment.

5.1.3.2. The importance of feeling

The most obvious gap between the position of true philosophers and that which we we find in the passage on reminiscence concerns the relationship to sensation. The true philosophers proposed a rigid ontological dichotomy, where things intelligible things and sensible things constituted two parts of reality having nothing in common, to which we had access through two distinct epistemological faculties: sense for sensible things and thought for intelligible things. Thus, they concluded that the senses were useless for the thought of things intelligible and that we should refrain from using it. The passage on the

reminiscence thus supports a position very different from that of the true philosophers, for he considers the sensible as necessary to the knowledge of the intelligible. That difference causes headaches for interpreters, forced to do a job of contortionist to reconcile the two positions. For example, Dixsaut (1991, p.357 n.184), commenting on the passage where true philosophers insist on the necessity of cutting oneself off from the senses to examine the things that really exist (83b), concludes:

The reserve is essential, since one cannot remember, therefore learn, only on the occasion of a perception. But a time the soul has passed from perceiving to conceiving (cf. 73c sqq.), it no longer needs to resort to the senses: the examination dialectic only moves within the intelligible(cf. Rep. VII, 511c).

We disagree with Dixsaut on this point: the sensible is not just a opportunity to perceive the intelligible, but it remains a constant source inspiration for Socrates. It is true that Socrates' treatment of the dialectic sometimes seems to imply that it can ultimately do without the sensitive. The clearest passage in this respect is the one mentioned by Dixsaut: the image of the Line in the Republic[282] (509d-511e). In the Phaedo we can think of the introduction of the "last argument", where Socrates claims to have ceased to want to find the truth of things in experience to take refuge rather on the side of arguments (99e-100a). However, such a practice of dialectics, which would cut itself off completely of the sensitive, never takes place either in the Republic, or in the Phaedo, or elsewhere in the body. The only exceptions are the second part of the Parmenides and the treatment of major genres in the Sophist (two passages where Socrates does not lead the discussion). However, in both cases, the exercise is not within the reach of a beginner, coming just become aware of the existence of things intelligible by

[282] However, even in this passage, it is only the most seasoned philosophers who reach this summit, after a long education.

reminiscence. Experience remains an essential support for dialectics for a long time. time, as evidenced by the practice of Socrates in the vast majority of dialogues[283]. For example, in the "last reasoning" (95e-102a), Socrates constantly refers to experience to support their thinking; it tells us, for example, that the snow cannot accommodate the heat in it, or that Simmias may have in him sometime greatness when compared to Phaedo, sometimes smallness when compared to Socrates. Such judgments are synthetic judgments; it is experience that we learn that the snow melts on contact with the heat or that Simmias shows up sometimes big and sometimes small. Sensitive things are thus a source of inspiration for our reflection on intelligibles because of their image status; they are not simply "other" than the intelligible, as the true philosophers had posited, but they are also "same." Obviously, we do not want to argue that Socrates is in fact an empiricist: experience is important because it allows us to remember[284], but it cannot be a source of knowledge in itself.

We can therefore conclude that even if the highest practice of dialectic could do without the point of experience, this is true only for philosophers more accomplished; the vast majority of philosophers (including Socrates) have to resort to the anamnesis allowed by the experience. The role of reminiscence therefore goes beyond the simple awareness of the existence of forms. On the contrary, the knowledge of the forms must draw for a long time from the reminiscence permitted by the sensory experience.

5.1.3.3. Reminiscence, sensation and temporality

In the previous section, we saw the importance of sensory experience in the acquisition of knowledge of forms; we will now consider the consequences of this realization on our conception of the human soul. Let us begin by recalling the introductory passage (73c-

[283] As we have seen in section 3.2 (see supra, p.130 sq.), Socrates' method would be futile if he could not appeal to concrete or hypothetical cases relating to the form that his interlocutor is trying to define.

[284] For this reason, as we saw in section 3.2, (p.130 sq.), imagination can often substitute for experience as such: we can imagine Simmias' comparison with a more big and smaller without needing to experience it.

74a), where Socrates wants to recall what is meant by "anamnesis" in our current use of the word. This passage is decisive for understanding the role of the soul as an intermediary. and we will study it in detail. The word ἀνάμνησις has a common acceptance, independent of any implication in subject of the prenatal existence of the soul. We talk about remembering when the present perception of an object x generates in our mind the thought of an object y that we knew previously, without the two objects belonging to the same to know. For example, the sight of a lyre evokes the memory of its owner or the sight of Simmias reminds us of Cebes. Recollection can also be caused by a object x which is an image of person y being remembered; in this case we have to be aware of the difference between x and y[285]. Socrates' argument is to show that sense perception involves a remembering a prenatal knowledge which is analogous to the recollection that we we experience on a daily basis, what he intends to illustrate by considering the case of equality (74a-75a). Before considering this example, note that Socrates' remarks on everyday reminiscence emphasize the opposition between two times and two different places: a reminiscence implies a present sensation of an object in the world that stirs in our minds the thought of what we have known previously. Reminiscence thus opposes what occurs in physical space to what what is happening "in" the mind and what is happening now to what happened previously. We will see that these oppositions take on a new meaning when Socrates turns to "metaphysical" reminiscence. After this account of remembering in its everyday sense, Socrates demonstrates the necessity of supposing an experience analogous to daily reminiscence in order to explain the possibility of human knowledge. To prove his thesis, he will proceed from the paradigmatic example of the knowledge of the equal. Socrates remarks that we[286] affirm that equality itself exists, that we know

[285] See note 210 on this subject.

[286] Some interpreters claim that this "we", unlike the following one, must refer to the Platonic philosophers and not to all people, since only these philosophers recognize the existence of forms (see the references given in note 55). This is a hermeneutical error on which the thesis of Scott (1987 and 1995) is based; we have refuted this in section 4.1.1 (p.146 sq.). We rather think that this first "we" refers to all men (see Botock 1986, p.67-68 who arrives at the same conclusion). Indeed, all men will recognize that

what it is itself and that it is distinct from equal things (74a-b). The formulation of the question with which Socrates begins his reflection is interesting: he wonders where (Πόθεν, 74b4) we get the knowledge of equality. doing so, the text immediately invites us to consider the question relative to the spatiality of things themselves. Socrates' conclusion will be that we take such knowledge from (ἐκ) equal things. We derive knowledge from the equal to start (ἐκ) from equal things, which exist in space, but we do not take it into (ἐν) them: the argument will show that the "place" in which we take this knowledge is the soul itself. Perception is powerless to find by itself in concrete things the knowledge of the equal, because these show themselves sometimes equal, sometimes unequal, while equality itself[287] is never unequal[288] (74b-c). Yet, although the perception is personal and situated, something universal and absolute emerges from this perception, something which is not in the perception, but which nevertheless comes of her[289]. It is for this reason that Socrates considers that there is a reminiscence when feeling equal. In the second part of the argument, Socrates wonders how far back the knowledge of the equal provoked by the sensation of equal things. It starts with notice that all the sensations of things give us the impression of being deficient compared to the equal, which would be impossible without prior knowledge of equal. He goes further by saying that concrete things want (βούλεται. 74d9-10)

---

the equality of two sticks is not equality itself, but only a case of equality, and all agree that equality itself is not may appear sometimes equal and sometimes unequal. All would have answered in the same way as Simmias, needing at most a few additional questions (on this subject, see Williams 2002, p.145-46, who explains that one can experiment with a class who have no knowledge of Platonic forms). No need to have an elaborate theory of separate forms to make this observation. We therefore agree on this point with Bedu-Addo (1991, e.g. p.49) in asserting that everyone forms a certain notion of things-in-themselves, even if only philosophers recognize the existence of things-in-themselves.

[287] There have been a swarm of attempts to account for the fact that Socrates at this time uses the plural "the equals themselves". Like most interpreters, we consider that the plural can be taken as a synonym for "the equal itself". For a discussion of the matter, see Mills (1957), Haynes (1964), Gallop (1975, p.123-25), Wedin (1977), Bostock (1986 p.78-83), Apolloni (1989) and Dixsaut (1991 p.356-57n.136).

[288] On this subject, see supra, note 220.

[289] See Franklin (2005, p.306-07).

or, as will be said later, that they desire[290] (προθυμεῖται, 75b7-8) and that they aspire to (ὀρέγεται, 75a2, b1) to be something other than what they are[291] (74d9-10). The attribution of intentional states such as desire to inanimate objects risks surprise. However, a closer reading allows us to propose a alternative interpretation. The text in fact insists three times on the fact that we think that these objects desire to be otherwise[292]. These three passages reuse each the same verb, ἐννοέ-ω, to underline the fact that it is in our thought that finds the attribution to equal[293] things of the desire to be similar to the equal. It's about therefore of a projection[294], which allows us to explain why state intentional are attributed to inanimate beings. We were shooting from (ἐκ) things equals the thought (in us) of equality and this thought is the source from which we attribute a desire to concrete things. The projection of an aspiration of things concrete for things themselves is therefore a form of anticipation of our own desire for universal things. Sensation informs us of what is present here and now. However, for the philosopher, the perception of concrete things is accompanied by the perception of their inability to "be what they are"; he sees in these concrete things the absence of forms and consequently attributes to them a desire to be other than them. are. The Phaedo therefore explains the absence perceived in the empirical world by the

---

[290] Some authors have suggested that the importance of desire in the argument from reminiscence is anticipated in the examples of reminiscence given by Socrates. See Lindenmuth (1988, p.14-15), Dixsaut (1991, p.99), Williams (2002, p.147) and Gonzalez (2007, p.295).

[291] We agree with the authors (e.g. Dixsaut 1991, p.99 and Bedu-Addo 1991, p.37, Franklin 2005, p.302) who consider that the stage of becoming aware of the deficiency of concrete things in relation to forms is the work of philosophers alone. Supported argument for this view can be found in Morgan's (1984) article.

[292] "So we agree on this point: when someone sees an object, he thinks in his mind (ἐννοήσῃ, 74d9): "This thing that I now see wants to be like another reality, but it is in lacks and cannot be as this other is, but is inferior to it. (74d-e)"; "It is therefore necessary that we have known the equal before that time when, having seen for the first time equal things, we have thought in our minds (ἐνενοήσαμεν, 75a1) that they all aspire to be identical with the equal, but still lacking. (74e-75a)"; "But it is from the sensations that we must think in our mind (ἐννοῆσαι, 75a11) that all the equalities in the sensations aspire to what is equal, but they are deficient in relation to it (75a-b) . »

[293] The interpreters who comment on this passage (see for example Bostock 1986, p.85-94) forget this important precision: Plato does not say that equal things want and desire to be equal in themselves, but that when we see the things being equal, we think they want it and desire it.

[294] See Dixsaut (1991, p.99) and especially Gonzalez (2007, p.294-95).

reminiscence of a past presence, which is accompanied, for the one who took consciousness of this absence, of a hope or a desire for a re-presentation in a distant future (the hope of a reunion with things themselves after death[295]). the "past" to which the experience of sensation refers is a past situated before the existence human being, in which the soul, pure from all contamination of the body, was "itself in itself", occupied with a continual thought of things themselves in themselves.
We will only be able to find this pure thought after death, in a future where the soul, freed from all association with the body, will rejoin the state it was in before to enter the cycle of reincarnations[296].
The linear time of becoming in which human existence unfolds (which is divided before and after without these two moments meeting) is thus inserted into a more encompassing temporality, a cyclical temporality (where the before joins the after). the cycle of reincarnations closes when the soul returns to its original state of purity, state in which temporality is neither linear nor cyclical, but consists of the eternal repetition of things that are always identical to themselves.
If we consider the question by setting the soul apart, as Socrates does, by example, in the argument of the alternative (78d-e), we have the impression that these two temporalities are irreconcilable: on the one hand, there are always changing things and on the other, things that are always the same. However, according to dialogue mythology, the cycle of the soul makes it pass from one temporality to another: from what is always identical to what is always different. This passage of the soul makes it a hybrid reality, which makes it possible to ensure the link between the "two worlds" of intelligible realities and sensitive. The bodily act of perception, located in the present moment, is accompanied for the man of a memory and (potentially) of a desire that

[295] See eg. 66e-67b.
[296] We therefore cannot agree with Dorter (1972, p.213), who asserts that the image of purification is superior to reminiscence because it associates the relation of the soul to forms with an eternal present while that the other has an indeterminate past. Indeed, both images refer to a time other than the present (past and future) which represents an eternal present in both cases.

plunges him into another time, respectively the past and the future. However, it is about a past and a future both situated outside a human life and which refer to the temporality of repetition of the identical in which the things themselves are inscribed[297]. This is the right moment remind us of Socrates' remarks on reminiscence in the sense everyday life, which emphasized the opposition between two times and two places different (73c): a reminiscence involves a present sensation of an object in the world that stirs in our minds the thought of what we have known before.

Thus, reminiscence establishes a link between two experiences belonging to two times different and two different places. In the case of reminiscence in the metaphysical sense, a present sensation of an object located in the world arouses in our mind the memory of an eternal and universal reality. Inside the soul, a link is drawn between the world of becoming and the world of being, which implies the participation of the soul in two types of reality. In section 1.1.2[298] we saw how interpreters Neo-Kantians reproached Plato for having neglected to distinguish the logical domain (in subject of the conditions of possibility of knowledge) of the psychological domain (where one wonders how certain thoughts manage to form in the soul). In conclusion in chapter 4[299], we noted that Russell made the same reproach to Leibniz, before correcting himself and acknowledging that insofar as the question concerned on how we will acquire universal knowledge (and not only a thought), the survey was “hybrid”. This solution hides the real problem, which is to know how a "temporal" consciousness can access truths timeless or how the logical and the psychological can come to meet.

How can a consciousness that unfolds in time overcome contingency? of its representations? The purpose of the theory of reminiscence is therefore to do justice to the strangeness of this experience by attributing it to the previous existence of the soul,

---

[297] See Dorter (1982, p.77): “The presence of the eternal in the temporal and a certain relationship between the eternal and the soul – rather than the pre-existence of individual consciousness – are what were shown. »

[298] See above, p.11 sq.

[299] See above, p.172.

where it participated in another mode of existence and temporality, that of things in themselves; so, it retains the ability to recognize these things in themselves and the necessary truths they imply. The theory of reminiscence therefore suggests that the soul has a status intermediary between concrete things and things themselves in themselves in because of its ability to access timeless beings (a thing itself) and
space (a thing in itself) in the present of the sensation of spatiotemporally situated things. The real philosophers posed a disjunction between the space and the time of the world concrete and that of things-in-themselves in order to determine which of the two the soul belonged; the theory of reminiscence links these two worlds and constitutes what we could call human space and time, where the universal is perceived in the particular and where the now is invested by the always. The experience may take
its meaning for the soul by being interpreted in relation to intelligible realities. The reflection on the experience of reminiscence therefore leads us to consider the soul
as an intermediate reality between the sensible and the intelligible, in the sense that it implies a mediation between these two realities by virtue of its participation in their respective time frames.

5.1.3.4. Reminiscence and oblivion

After having established that the sensation of equal things must provoke in us the reminiscence of previously acquired knowledge, the next stage of
the argument aims to show Simmias that knowledge of things-in-themselves must have place before birth (75a-d). Since our knowledge of the equal in itself on the one hand cannot come from sensation and on the other hand would not happen to us without sensation, our knowledge of the equal must precede our sensations. However, since we have of our senses from birth, our knowledge of the equal must be prior to it.
At this point, Simmias offers a final objection: is it not possible that we
acquired knowledge at birth (76c-d), since we still have this
time? Socrates refutes this objection by pointing out that we would then have no time left to forget the knowledge. This is when Simmias apologizes for

not to have noticed (ἔλαθον) to have spoken without saying anything.
As mentioned[300], Simmias is forgetful in nature. Given
emphasis on this point, we think it is worth taking a moment to
reflect on the meaning for the human soul of this "forgetting" and the reasons that
may explain Simmias' inability to remember.
Socrates defines forgetting as "the loss of knowledge (ἐπιστήμης ἀπορβολή,
75d10-11)". This is already a strange definition, since it seems to assume that
only knowledge can be forgotten; it would have been fairer to consider that the thing
forgotten is a memory or an impression. The definition of forgetting is nevertheless
adapted to the situation of the incarnating soul, since at this moment the only thing it
owns (and forgets) is knowledge. In fact, she keeps no trace of her
past existences. In this respect, we must underline the particular character of the
memory of the soul before its incarnation. Unlike many other versions of the
doctrine of reminiscence[301], according to which the soul retains a memory of
events of his past lives, the memory posited by Plato in the doctrine of
the anamnesis is not one of events, but rather of objects; indeed, the soul
retains no memory of his individual experiences and history
metempsychic, but retains only a memory[302] of things in themselves. We can
thus suggest that the memory of things-in-themselves is a memory of a different type
from ordinary memory, which retains specific and specific events that arrive over time;
there is every reason to think that this memory perishes with death
of the body, leaving us no possibility of remembering our existences
previous. This conclusion is supported by the study by Dixsaut (2006), which
distinguishes two different memories attributed to the soul by Plato. Still according to
Dixsaut, the first memory is the safeguard of perception or teaching. That
memory is attached to the bodily condition of man and arises from a temporality

[300] See above, p.210.
[301] On this subject, see the excellent article by Brisson (1999, p.32 sq.). See also Hackforth (1955, p.76-77).
[302] See previous note.

linear; it thus retains the different perceptions and teachings that present themselves to her in a contingent temporal sequence. The second memory, that of the reminiscence, is a purely intellectual memory, independent of the body, which does not can be saved in its entirety. This memory consists of the reappropriation, piece by piece, of a knowledge lost following the incarnation. This distinction between two memories implies that our memory of prenatal knowledge is of a different order. than the memories of the first memory.

Now, in the same way that there are two memories in Plato, there are also two forgettings: one relates to the first memory and is made over time, the other is related to the second memory and is due not to the passage of time, but to the incarnation and entry for the soul in time. As we have seen, when Socrates concludes the existence of prenatal knowledge, Simmias suggests that the soul did not acquire the knowledge before birth, but rather at the same time as birth, "because there still remains that time (76c15)". Socrates quickly dismisses this objection, arguing that there would then be no "other time" left to us where the soul could have forgotten. It is here capital to notice that the forgetfulness of our knowledge of things in themselves is of another order than the forgetting of normal memories: "normal" forgetting occurs over time and by lack of attention. In the case of "ordinary" memory, our memory fades gradually, which Socrates takes the trouble to underline in his exposition introductory on daily recollection (73e1-3). But in the case of forgetting associated to things in themselves, no time passes; forgetting is rather due to an event: the incarnation, which acts as a trauma by causing us to lose all of a sudden all our knowledge of things themselves. Socrates seems to continue here to argue from a linear conception of time[303], according to which forgetting occurs at a time subsequent to the time when we acquired knowledge;

[303] In fact, on reading the text rigorously, we notice that Socrates never makes such an assertion, but that it is Simmias who rejects as absurd the possibility of concomitant learning and forgetting. Socrates, on the contrary, seems to consider this to be a possible hypothesis (although requiring further explanation): "Do we lose them (scil. prenatal knowledge) at the same time as we acquire them? or can you tell us another time? (76d3-4)

however, this forgetting is not due to the “use of time”, but happens “all of a sudden”, "in an instant", in a moment without temporal extension which corresponds to the event of the incarnation; it is thus distinguished from “normal” forgetting, which occurs gradually, over time. We can therefore conclude, with Dixsaut (2006, p.15), that the two forms of forgetting and the two memories on which they depend are linked at two different times:

These two kinds of memory relate not only to two different kinds of experience, but to two kinds of temporality: the first is acquired in the “time which advances” (προευμένου τοῦ χρόνου, Parm. 152a3-4), his omissions are partial and arise from contingent causes. The second is exercised from the total oblivion of a total knowledge that the soul strives, itself and only by itself, to reacquire in pieces, such that any advance is a return for her.

To assert that the soul undergoes a "total oblivion of a total knowledge" with the incarnation risks to mislead. Indeed, forgetting is “total” in the sense that all things are forgotten at once and that no conscious trace remains at the moment of birth. Nevertheless, since the soul has the ability to remember, the forgetting that follows the incarnation cannot be absolute; lost knowledge must remain in the strata unconscious of the soul, without which the sensations could not arouse its recollection. This forgotten knowledge in the unconscious of the soul corresponds to what we had designated, in the three preceding chapters, as being the archetypes which modulate our experience. It is by virtue of these memories that the soul continues to participate in the temporality of things themselves. Prenatal knowledge, as total knowledge of the things in themselves that exist according to the temporality of being, is an incompatible knowledge, by its very essence, with consciousness, conceived as a temporal flow where representations are linked together one after the other. Indeed, this consciousness exists in the mode of becoming and the contingency that accompanies it. Thus, the incarnation is a trauma for the soul precisely because it forces it to become consciousness in the flow of

becoming; by as a result, it loses its immediate and intuitive relationship to things themselves; the only report that the soul maintains with the forms is therefore unconscious, so that the memories of these are present in her as archetypes, which unwittingly determine her relation to experience. In other words, the "forgetting" that occurs at the incarnation corresponds to the emergence of temporal consciousness for the soul; this event implies the split between conscious knowledge (the fact of having grasped a knowledge, to hold it and not lose it, λαβόντα τοῦ ἐπιστήμην ἔχειν καὶ μὴ ἀπολωλεκέναι, 75d9-10) and archetypes, without which the first could not happen. Conceived in this way, oblivion is as much an event (the moment when the soul incarnates) as a condition – the condition of the embodied soul, which lives according to the temporality of becoming. Insofar as oblivion is not absolute, the soul also continues to participate in the temporality of things themselves, even if this participation is primarily completely removed from consciousness. Thus, ordinary men constantly recollect things in themselves without their knowledge (again, this is expressed in Greek by the use of the verb λανθάνω, which also means “to forget”), that is to say, without this knowledge (and this recognition) going back to the consciousness. To succeed in overcoming oblivion, the archetypes must be translated into a medium suited to temporal consciousness. In our passage, Socrates proves that the soul forgot by indicating to Simmias that not all men are able to give a logos of the things themselves (76b-c). Being able to give a logos is to verbalize the knowledge used without our knowledge in the sensation to constitute sensory experience, so that this verbalized knowledge is reflected in consciousness[304]. It is therefore in the logos that we find an intermediate medium. between archetypes and temporal consciousness, allowing us to present the

[304] The dialogue alludes a few times to this conception of the dialectic. Just before the passage we have just considered, in 75c-d, Socrates wants to generalize the observations made about the equal to the set of things in themselves, so that he specifies: "For it goes without saying that our present reasoning is no more about the equal than about the beautiful in itself, the good in itself, or the just, or the pious – in a word, about everything on which we imprint the mark “what it is, ” both in our questions when we question and in our answers when we answer. (75c10-d3, trans. Dixsaut)" In the same spirit, we can

first in a form acceptable to the second. Thus, the soul continues to know all things in their unconscious unity, "out of time"; this knowledge cannot however, enter consciousness only if it is transcribed in a mode that can apprehend oneself in a temporal sequence, which language and memory allow, where each proposition can be considered one after the other and linked by memory. In the next section, we will deepen this link between the dialectical use of language and reminiscence.

5.1.3.5. Reminiscence and dialectic

We concluded the previous section by noting the need to make use of dialectic of logos to consciously monopolize the memory of knowledge prenatal. We must remember that the links between dialectic and reminiscence had been underlined from the outset by the introductory presentation of Cébès, which referred au Menon, thus suggesting to us that the conclusions of this dialogue were not forgotten. In this section, we want to deepen the links between dialectic and reminiscence, so as to show the insufficiency of the position of the true philosophers from this angle.

As we have seen, the reasoning of true philosophers takes for granted a except that there are two types of realities (things in themselves and concrete things) and on the other hand that we have two different faculties to access it: on the one hand side, the sensation which is made by the body and which grasps concrete things and on the other, the thought which is done by the soul alone and apprehends things in themselves. Thus, given that sensation does not relate to the things themselves, true

---

mention a later passage, in the argument of the alternative, where the same remark is made: "the essence itself, of which we give the logos of being both when we question and when we answer… (78d1-2)". We know that the mention of the process of questions and answers is a means used by Plato to refer to the dialectic (see Dixsaut, 1991, p.348n.142, which refers among others to Cratylus 390c8). Besides these particular passages, we can finally mention that the whole of the dialogue testifies to the importance of dialectics, insofar as it shows how Socrates and his interlocutors, thanks to their processes of questions and answers, manage to deepen a topic and clarify their thinking. Socrates confirms the benefits of such a process in the central passage (88b-91c) where he warns his friends against the dangers of misology and encourages them to take courage and continue to examine these questions for themselves.

philosophers conclude from this that the body is only an embarrassment for their thought; while waiting for the death that brings us liberate, the only thing to do is to "purify" ourselves by practicing avoiding as many relationship with the body as possible. This reasoning conceals an important flaw: because the senses provide access to distinct objects from things-in-themselves, it does not necessarily follow that the senses are not no help in thinking these things in themselves. Indeed, if the true philosophers had referred to the experience of sensation, rather than sticking only to argument, they would have recognized the necessity of experience to recollect things in themselves. Similarly, if they had reflected on the source of their knowledge of things in themselves, they would have found that it could not happen without the use of the senses. In consequence of its abstraction, their reasoning is simplistic and reductive: they oppose two series (on the one hand: soul – thought – things in themselves; on the other: body – sensation – concrete things) and conclude that the body, being in the second series, does not can help to think things in themselves, which are in the first. The logos, without the support of experience, makes a hollow treatment of concepts by enclosing them in rigid oppositions, such soul/body; feeling/thought; concrete things/things in themselves, which recall the Pythagorean opposition tables, without noticing the existence of more complex relationships that unite them, due to the existence of intermediaries that make it possible to overcome the oppositions between the polar terms. The theory of reminiscence proposes on the contrary a conception of the embodied soul and its faculties which makes it possible to make it an intermediary and thus ensure a link between the “two worlds” concrete things and things in themselves. After being afraid of going blind from contemplating concrete things with his eyes, Socrates decides to take refuge on the side of the logoi (99d-e) and therefore recommends a dialectical method to progress on these questions (101d-e). Nevertheless, this flight to logoi does not imply abandonment of the experience. Indeed, as we we saw earlier, throughout his "last argument" we see Socrates constantly refer to experience to support their reasoning; for example, it notes the inability of the snow to accommodate the heat in it or changes in our

evaluation of Simmias' greatness according to the person to whom he is compared. The last argument articulates a conception of concrete things that refutes the one made of them the true philosophers, who considered them only in opposition to things themselves, insofar as they were “never and in any way the same, and no more vis-à-vis themselves than in the relationships that connect them to each other. others (78e2-4, trans. Dixsaut)”. According to the last reasoning, concrete things instead possess certain characteristics in a stable manner; sometimes the loss of these characteristics even implies their destruction: "not only does the Form itself deserve its name, for the time of always, but there is also something else which, while not being the Form in question, nevertheless always possesses, when it exists, the character specific to it (103e, trans. Dixsaut)”. This is the case with fire, which can stay on fire without being hot. Hence, besides separate forms, there also exist the forms "in us" (102d), which are impossible to grasp without experience and which yet provide information about things in themselves.

By relying solely on the logoi, we risk becoming discouraged very quickly from possibility of reaching the truth; indeed, when one argues “empty”, without inspiration drawn from experience, one can prove a thing as well as its contrary, which is exploited by the followers of the “ἀντιλογικοὺς λόγους” (90c1). In effect, it is a mistake to believe that the logoi constitute the supreme reality and that it is up to them the only ones who have to get over it. In fact, the logoi are themselves only an image of the things themselves (99d-e). Ultimately, the "true philosophers" have made themselves fall into this trap: it is by following the logic of the reasoning that they deduced, from the fact that things in themselves are not sensible, that sensation was of no help to know them; they concluded that the soul would reason better without its help and that they therefore had to cut themselves off from all dealings with the body. However, if they had referred to their experience, if they had tried to acquire a reflective relationship about it, they would have realized that sensation is essential to being able to become aware of things themselves. Experience, when it lacks reasoning, leads only to

absurdities on the theoretical level, of the kind pointed out by Socrates in his autobiography; in the same way, the reasonings must remain in touch with experience, which contains the archetypal projections of forms and which is therefore capable of nourishing reflection on them. But if the logoi get divorced from experience, they run the risk of fabricating rigid and empty oppositions, worthy speeches by controversialists, incapable of grasping the complexity of the relationships between things that require experiencing the intermediaries that bind them.

The first part of the dialogue (61d-91c), excluding the passage on reminiscence[305], thus illustrates, in the erga, the dangers of a logos cut off from experience, which becomes entangled in empty divisions and oppositions; This part ends with the warning against misology (88b-91c). The autobiography of Socrates (95a-102a) shows the contrary, in the logoi, the dangers of a science that is rooted entirely in experience, as naturalist philosophers did; this passage ends with a reflection on the dangers of the intellectual blindness that results from such practice (99c-102a). Thus, reasoning without rooting in experience exhausts itself in empty oppositions, while experience alone, without the reflective contribution arguments, destroys intelligence. Rather, we must practice dialectics, where the protagonists discuss their beliefs and refer to experience to determine whether their hypotheses agree with it. In this respect, a final argument, which we could qualify as “metatextual”, testifies to the importance of linking erga to logoi for Plato. We can indeed to think that Plato wrote dialogues that mix erga and logoi because the two are essential: the logoi teach us in words while the erga show us how this teaching was acquired, so that we can judge for ourselves its value. Thus, considering the nature of learning in the erga of dialogue rather than in the logoi of true philosophers, we note precisely the importance of experience for learning, since we

[305] Some might criticize us for advancing an interpretation that places the presentation of reminiscence in the middle of an argument incompatible with it. However, we believe, on the contrary, that this is precisely the function of this passage: it indicates to us the limits of the argument of true philosophers by "reminding" us of the importance of experience in becoming aware of the existence of separate forms.

let us see Socrates constantly looking for inspiration for his arguments in this one. The discourse of the dialectic is therefore what makes it possible to verbalize the reminiscence that operates without our knowledge in our experience of the sensible world in such a way as to bring back this know to consciousness. In this sense, the dialectic makes it possible to push the recollection much further than what occurs in the experiment and constitutes an intermediary between sensation and the pure thought envisaged by true philosophers. Without being an empirical method, dialectics could not function without experience. Who moreover, the Phaedo illustrates the dangers of a thought that cuts itself off from experience and sinks into "logical and empty" oppositions.

5.1.3.6. What Simmias retains from the reminiscence

The section on reminiscence concludes with a summary (76d-77a) where Socrates resumes the two conditions for proof of the existence of the soul before birth. Those conditions are: (1) the existence of things-in-themselves; (2) reporting and comparing everything that comes from the senses to things in themselves. Socrates considers himself to have proved the second condition, so that the preexistence of the soul at birth depends on the existence of the things in themselves. Here's how the discussion ends:

Is it not so, and is there not an equal necessity (ἴσην ἀνάγκην) between the existence of these things [scil. the things in themselves] and that of our souls before birth, of so that if the first did not exist, the second did not more? – It seems to me that this necessity is the same, and prodigiously Socrates! Simmias said. And our argument

admirably takes refuge in the similarity of existence (εἰς τὸ ὁμοίως εἶναι) from our soul before birth to the essence that you were talking about just now. (76e-77a)

Simmias draws a conclusion here which in no way follows from Socrates' argument. This the latter, in fact, only asserted that the proof of the prenatal existence of the soul was only valid insofar as the things-in-themselves existed, without concluding anything about the similarity of their respective mode of existence. It is therefore Simmias who shoots this conclusion, by asserting that this is the refuge of the argument; it is even this last observation that truly convinces him. Moreover, when Socrates him recall again the theory of reminiscence (92b-c), Simmias reiterates this conclusion, which seems to be all he retained from the reminiscence:

Reasoning about reminiscence and learning was stated under a hypothesis valid. We said, in effect, in a way, this: our soul exists before arriving in the body, in the same way way that this essence which bears the name of « what it is » τοῦ "ὃ ἔστιν"). And me, this hypothesis, I am myself persuaded, I admitted her in a satisfactory manner and correct. (92d-e)

This summary of Simmias omits the demonstration offered by Socrates to explain that we could not judge concrete things equal in perception without drawing this knowledge of ourselves. The only thing he retains is the conclusion about the similarity between the mode of existence of the soul before birth and that of the forms. Now this conclusion, it is Simmias who draws it and not Socrates. Indeed, Socrates did not speak that of the dependence between the thesis of the prenatal existence of the soul and that of the existence of forms. Earlier he had also mentioned that all learning is remembering a knowledge that is proper to us (οἰκείαν ἐπιστήμην, 75e5), without however, to affirm that the existence of the soul was similar to that of the forms. More far, in conclusion of the argument of the alternative, Socrates will affirm that the soul is « more similar » (ὁμοιότερον) to the invisible species than the visible (79b16-17) and that it

is "related" (συγγενὴς) to realities which remain similar to themselves[306]. Thus, Socrates never asserts that our soul has an existence similar to things in themselves, but rather that it is related to them, which is an important distinction.
We see here how what Simmias retains from the theory of reminiscence is likely to lead to the position of true philosophers. Indeed, true philosophers come to conceive their soul on the model of the existence of separate forms, which what Simmias is doing here. In the same way, Simmias never ceases to forget oblivion, which precisely marks the transformation of the soul during its incarnation. This « forgetting oblivion » characterizes the position of the true philosophers, who conceive the embodied soul like a pure soul enclosed in the body, thus inclining them to conceive the philosophy as an exercise in estrangement from the body and death as a release. Indeed, if the soul sees perfectly the intelligible realities when it is freed from the body, she must detach herself from it as much as possible to regain this faculty. By taking into account forgetting as a temporalization of the relationship of the soul to knowledge, we understand that the latter is unable to capture knowledge at once of eye, as she perhaps could in her disembodied condition; she must now to reclaim this knowledge, "piece by piece", as the suggested Dixsaut, which requires the help of logos and dialectics. However, this knowledge through the logos needs the body for many reasons. First, we have already seen that to avoid exhausting oneself in vain oppositions "logical and empty", the logoi had to drink from the anamnestic source of sensory experience[307]. Moreover, as Phaedo and Echecrates testify, it is easy to acquire a false conviction about the validity of a logos (88c-d), so that the assistance of others is necessary to indicate to us the objections that we have

[306] On this passage, see Festugière (1936, p.111-2).
[307] As we have shown in section 4.1.2 (p.159 sq.), reminiscence cannot only be the occasion to become aware of the existence of forms, but must support the whole of the dialectical exercise. which takes root in the experience.

neglected. This need for others makes the body necessary[308], as an intermediary to the communications[309]. The purification of the soul cannot be limited to gathering itself within itself and cut itself off from all contact with the outside world provided by the body; on the contrary, she must take control of this body in order to use it in order to enter into

relationship with men likely to nourish his quest for knowledge. We saw

in a previous section[310] that Socrates considered on several occasions in relation healthy with the body, which would consist not in running away from it, but rather in directing it. So we have to use our body in such a way that we can practice dialectics and overcome forgetting by the effort to give a logos of the anamnesis resulting from the sensation[311]. In this section on the passage of reminiscence in the Phaedo, we have read through the text in the order in which it was presented, in order to find a conception alternative of the relation of the soul and the body; however, the awareness of the experience epistemology of recollection (what we could also call "the

---

[308] Besides, as Stern (1993, p.39) remarks, Simmias could not even hear the depreciation of the senses made by Socrates in the name of the true philosophers without himself making use of the sense of hearing.

[309] It is for this reason that the death of Socrates retains all its tragic character, even if his arguments convince us. Indeed, during the dialogue, Socrates succeeds in convincing his interlocutors of the immortality of the soul and of the preferable fate that awaits it once rid of its body. Despite this conviction, Phaedo and the other disciples feel sad at the death of their master, not out of pity for the latter, but for themselves: they are going to lose a companion of great value and no argument from Socrates console for this loss (see 58e-59a and 117c-d). One could even say that every persuasive argument adds to the feeling that there will be loss when the body that makes the argument is no longer there. In the same vein, we can think of the cases of Plato and Echecrates, who missed the master's last interview for bodily reasons, one being ill and the other abroad. In both cases, we see the importance of the body to have the opportunity to discuss with people who can enrich our understanding of things.

[310] See p.197 sq.

[311] It is for this reason that the death of Socrates retains all its tragic character, even if his arguments convince us. Indeed, during the dialogue, Socrates succeeds in convincing his interlocutors of the immortality of the soul and of the preferable fate that awaits it once rid of its body. Despite this conviction, Phaedo and the other disciples feel sad at the death of their master, not out of pity for the latter, but for themselves: they are going to lose a companion of great value and no argument from Socrates console for this loss (see 58e-59a and 117c-d). One could even say that every persuasive argument adds to the feeling that there will be loss when the body that makes the argument is no longer there. In the same vein, we can think of the cases of Plato and Echecrates, who missed the master's last interview for bodily reasons, one being ill and the other abroad. In both cases, we see the importance of the body to have the opportunity to discuss with people who can enrich our understanding of things.

reminiscence of reminiscence") finally indicates to us the intermediate status of the soul and implies refusing the ontological dichotomy promoted by the true philosophers. In conclusion to this section, we want to resume the three headings that we had used to present the position of ordinary men and real philosophers and apply them to the Socratic position, which results from taking consciousness of the soul as intermediary.

First, on the ontological level, the third position implies that there is not only sensible things and things-in-themselves, but also intermediaries between these two poles; it is about the soul and what will be called later the "forms in us" (102d), without which it would be impossible to remember.

On the epistemological level, knowledge is no longer conceived on a binary model, where two different faculties (the senses and the thought) are responsible for grasping two realities different (the sensible and the intelligible), but we have introduced the intermediaries of reminiscence and dialectical logos. Through reminiscence we become aware from the intelligible thanks to the sensible; by the dialectical logos, we translate the memory of prenatal knowledge in a mode accessible to temporal consciousness.

On the level of self-conception, the experience of reminiscence allows the soul to to reveal itself as neither a sensible thing nor a thing in itself, but a intermediate reality between the two. Indeed, the true philosophers, by understanding themselves as pure souls existing on the pattern of separate forms, closer to the truth compared to ordinary men, for whom the soul was a sensible thing; however, they were still wrong, for they did not know the way whose intelligible realities we come to know, which implies that we do not can't be one ourselves. The incarnated soul therefore participates both in temporality of the sensible, insofar as its consciousness unfolds in time, and both to the temporality of things-in-themselves, insofar as it is capable of recognize the universal through its representations.

5.2. Menon

Le Menon never wonders about the nature of man; however, the problem studied in the dialogue is nevertheless linked to this question. Menon, by identifying the good with health, wealth and honor (78c), is dependent on a certain conception of nature human; this involves situating one's identity on the bodily plane (the well-being of one's body) and interpersonal (the good opinion that others have of him); it is therefore a a position analogous to that of the ordinary men of the Phaedo. A greater understanding high of virtue, which would imply knowledge and philosophical research, requires a different understanding of human nature. Indeed, to explain the duty of man to submit to justice, we must think of the soul in relation to realities whose truth imposes itself on her. Beyond its capacity to respond to the paradox de Menon, the account of reminiscence also makes it possible to suggest such a reform. Indeed, insofar as the soul has access to a timeless truth, its identity goes beyond the individual body it inhabits and its contingent relations, but resides rather in the relationship to this knowledge that it keeps within it at all times. At this title, it is interesting to return to the conclusion of the passage on reminiscence. As we saw in the introduction to section 2.1[312], there is a difference between the thesis put forward by the revelation of the wise priests and priestesses in things divine (81a-e) and the one following the geometry lesson. In the opening story, Socrates concludes, from the position of the immortality of the soul, that it must have seen everything during her many stays in Hades and on earth, so that she must keep memories (81c-d). However, after questioning the servant, Socrates reverses completely the order of the demonstration, starting from the results of his investigation to conclude to the immortality of the soul, by resorting to reasoning at least doubtful[313]. Indeed, the servant has never had a geometry teacher, but is nevertheless able to recognize the need for demonstration to the point of noting by himself his mistakes and knowing that the final answer is the right one; Socrates concludes that he must have acquired this knowledge in "another time" (ἐν ἄλλῳτινὶ χρόνῳ

[312] See p.56 sq
[313] See eg. Klein (1965, p.180) and Scott (2006, p.93, 97 and 112-118).

86a1) and that it had to be provided "in advance" (85th). Until then, there is no tension with the conclusions drawn from the story of the priests. Socrates concludes that this "other time" in which he acquired knowledge must be that in which he was not yet a man; by later, his soul must not have acquired this knowledge at a precise moment, but rather possess it "at all times" (τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον, 86a8), "since it is obvious that the existence and non-existence of a man is all the time" (86a). That conclusion contradicts the opening statement which suggested that the soul had had the opportunity to acquire this knowledge during his various incarnations; worse, she seems rely on a crude sophism, which consists in taking the "non-existence of a man" like an indivisible moment, in which nothing could happen. The possibility of an acquisition of knowledge at a precise moment before birth is completely ignored[314]. How could Plato not have noticed this mistake elementary, having considered a few pages earlier the very possibility that is here concealed? However, although it results from an error in the development of the argument, this new thesis is a philosophically sounder position than that of the[315] introductory passage. There is therefore reason to think that the logical leap we have noted is intentional and aims to indicate a deeper conception of the soul and its relationship to necessary knowledge. Indeed, the only way to make the argument valid is to take the state of the soul before incarnation as being separate from the time of becoming: it is about "another time", in which nothing "happens", but where the soul remains only this that it is purely by itself. The argument would thus rather indicate the belonging of the soul to two different temporalities: on the one hand to the temporality of becoming, of the fact that it is present in a body, on the other hand in the temporality of being and essence, which always remains the same. Thus, the reminiscence would focus above all on the strangeness of this experience where the temporality of being meets that of becoming at the interior of a soul that recognizes the necessary from the contingent.

---

[314] See Canto-Sperber (1991a, p.76)

[315] Indeed, as we saw on page 63, to affirm that the acquisition of knowledge in this life is possible by virtue of an earlier acquisition does not resolve Meno's paradox, but only pushes back its first learning problem.

The passage on reminiscence in the Menon is therefore not limited to a theory epistemological, but suggests another way of conceiving human nature, in linking to a reality (and a temporality) that goes beyond its singular existence and destines it to philosophical inquiry. In this regard, reminiscence is also likely to have an ethical function and help solve the problem of the nature of virtue; however, we will leave the treatment of this question to our section on the Menon from the next chapter[316].

5.3. Phaedrus

As was the case for the epistemological dimension of the theory of reminiscence, the myth of the Phaedrus does not demonstrate his conception of human nature, but he exposes it. The particular interest of resorting to myth from a perspective anthropology is to give free rein to the imagination to shape the history of the soul, so as to be able to account for its present condition throughout this story. Gold, the most striking feature of this condition concerns the inherent lack of the soul human. This is observed at two levels. First, the soul finds its happiness in contemplation of the absolute realities of the plain of truth, but it finds itself separated of these; as a result, it retains the need for it and seeks to fill this void. Blade human being is also afflicted with a second lack, symbolized by the loss of the wings which made it possible to direct its movement towards the true realities. Thus, not only the human soul is deprived of the forms that would make it happy, but it does not even know that these would make her happy, so that she does not direct her movement towards they; not only does she not have the object of her desire, but rather she seeks instinctively the sensitive pleasures that will always leave her unsatisfied. It's this human condition, characterized by this double lack, which makes recourse to myth unavoidable. Indeed, we will see in the next section that by virtue of this lack, the human soul is intelligible only in the light of a "narrative of the fall" which explains

[316] See section 6.3, p.305 sq.

what the soul was and what it has lost.

5.3.1. The human soul before incarnation

To understand the philosophical significance of using a myth to make account of the characteristic emptiness of the human soul, let us take a moment to reflect on the following analogy. Imagine a truncated pyramid. First, it is worth dwell on how we designate this solid. We use the name "truncated pyramid" because the solid is intelligible with respect to a pyramid "whole" from which the upper part would have been cut off; so we have to tell a micro story where a full pyramid would have had its part amputated superior. In this analogy, the truncated pyramid represents the embodied soul and the pyramid full the soul before incarnation; indeed, like the truncated pyramid, the soul human in its embodied form is intelligible only by telling a story that explains how she lost the integrity of her being, so that she finds herself scarred of the seal of incompleteness. When we say that the name "truncated pyramid" implies a narration of a time when the pyramid would have been full, we are not talking about a chronology real; the story represents the way we understand the figure. But we understand this by subtraction, taking an ideal figure from which we let us cut off a piece in thought. The chronology thus posed represents only the how we conduct our thinking. This process is reminiscent of what Frutiger (1930) calls the "genetic-symbolic myths" or more simply the "genetic myths", which he characterizes as follows:

… the future that is drawn there corresponds to an order logic and not to a temporal succession, because it is nothing but the symbol of the march of thought ranging from the general to the specific, from the essential to the accessory, from simple to complex. […] Instead of break down a given object into its various elements, it

made to grow before our eyes, for a purely didactic (διδασκαλίας χάριν); he tells the story imaginary, which manifests one after the other, and each in its rank, the multiple characters whose simultaneous presence constitutes its own nature; he lends it an evolution which faithfully reproduces, transposed in an ideal time, the hierarchy of concepts[317].

Throughout the section devoted to genetic myths, the author confines himself to attributing to the ideal time of these myths a "composition" function; he considers that Plato uses temporal succession to make a model more complex by adding new elements, synthetically. The formation of the ideal city from its origins in book II of the Republic is a signal example of this type of "myth". the genetic myth would therefore be epistemologically equivalent to an analysis conceptual. The difference between the two would only be a matter of form, each having its advantages: the genetic myth is less clear and lends itself more to misunderstandings, but takes on a livelier and more pleasant form for readers (p.191-192).

However, when describing the myths he considers genetic, Frutiger himself does not stop at this understanding. A particularly interesting case for our subject is his analysis of the myth of the androgyne in the Banquet (p.196-7), which he place in this category:

Similarly, when the myth of Aristophanes tells us how present humanity has succeeded the old one, it is not a question in no way to explain the sexual instinct by the split of primitive beings whose two halves seek to rejoin, in order to restore the original unity. Because the true goal of this singular fable, which is not etiological that in appearance, it is not to shed light on the reader on the cause or origin of love, but on its

[317] Frutiger (1930, p.191); it is Frutiger who underlines.

nature and its modalities. The lover who, far from the loved object, feels miserably incomplete, longs to merge with it, so that their two lives become one; the things therefore happen as if the σώμα of a whole pre-existing were, after a momentary separation, pushed again towards each other by an invincible force. This analysis of the androgyne myth is remarkable; however, does it not imply not a process different from "composition"? Does the narrative add elements little to little to account for the phenomenon of love? On the contrary, it proceeds in the sense inverse, by subtraction. He shows us how human nature comes from a original split, responsible for the emptiness that overwhelms him and for the love felt at the recognition of his half. As for our truncated pyramid, we start from a everything from which we subtract a part.

Now, this analysis of the myth of the androgyne can be applied to the myth of the Phaedrus, which works the same way, but with a more elaborate narrative, so as to make account of the possibility of inner transformation permitted by noble love. In Indeed, the relationship between the embodied and disembodied conditions of the soul joins the Frutiger's conception of genetic myths, insofar as, in both cases, the presented timeline does not refer to real time, but symbolizes walking of thought. However, contrary to Frutiger's explicit understanding of these myths[318], the narration of the story of the soul in the Phaedrus does not proceed composition, but by subtraction: Socrates describes an original state from which something thing would have been cut off[319]. This difference is crucial, since, unlike the use of time for purposes of composition, the thought which is done by subtraction from the thread of a chronology cannot be replaced by a conceptual analysis. In effect, according to the central myth of the Phaedrus, the human soul is essentially characterized by a lack; however, one cannot obtain a lack by synthesis or by analysis. The story

[318] As we have just seen, this understanding is not necessarily consistent with his treatment of it.
[319] Before us, Dorter (1972, p.215-7) had suggested considering the Phaedrus myth as a genetic myth, in reference to Frutiger. As we now see, it is a suggestion that we can retain, on the condition of extending the conception of genetic myth to all discourses which use time to represent the unfolding of thought.

mythical is not, in this case, a cosmetic or pedagogical choice from Plato to
expense of the clarity of the conceptual analysis: human nature is intelligible only
telling the story of his belonging to another world and his expulsion from it.
Thus, neither analysis nor synthesis can account for the human condition of
so as to be able to explain noble love.

5.3.2. The shortcomings of the human soul

We will now study in more detail the way in which the myth accounts for the
double lack of the human soul thanks to his story. We will see that it highlights
the first lacks by comparing the human soul to the divine soul and the second by
recounting the failure of the lower souls during the decamillennial procession.
Divine souls are those with the highest spiritual status. This superiority is not
not attributable to their intellect, since he is represented by a coachman in the same way
as the intellect of other souls; it is more a matter of their driving principles. In effect,
unlike lesser souls who own a bad horse that drags them
towards sensible pleasures, the divine soul has only good couriers, so that it is
completely free from any form of animality. As a result, it is endowed with a
regular movement, always carried by wings which direct it towards true beings
and which allow him to rule the entire cosmos without selfish interest (246b-c).
Thanks to this easy-to-handle coupling, the coachman easily guides the soul to the vault
from the sky where she can contemplate the true realities that will nourish her wings
(247c). Socrates specifies that the soul will have to return inside the world to nourish its
horses (247e): thus, it is because of the equestrian element of the soul that it does not
can dwell in an eternal contemplation of true realities. In fact, this one
the destiny for action in addition to contemplation. In the case of divine souls, this
action involves the governance of the entire cosmos; in the case of souls
lower, this action concerns the direction of a particular body.
In comparison with the divine souls, the inferior souls possess a bad horse,

which represents their animality and which inclines them to the pursuit of bodily pleasures[320]. It is by virtue of the pranks of this horse that they will not arrive, like the souls divine, to extract oneself completely from the sensible world to hoist oneself up on the vault of heaven, but that they will manage, at best, to get their heads out of it. Due to the instability of upward movement of the soul, disturbed by the escapades of the infernal horse, the soul thus finds itself deprived of the food its wings need, which wither, depriving it vertical orientation that would allow him to find his satisfaction. So we find the explanation of the two lacks inherent in the human soul: on the one hand, it is by virtue of the motor principle of the soul (its equestrian element) that it cannot be constantly united with the real beings of the plain of truth; on the other hand, it is because of its animality (the bad horse) that the soul is deprived of its wings, which allowed their movement to be oriented towards what could give him satisfaction.

It is also necessary to underline a last characteristic specific to the human soul, which defines in opposition to merely animal souls. Note first that the soul human is endowed with the same "constitution" as the animal soul, which explains moreover that she can pass from a human body to a beast's body from one incarnation to the other (248b). Nevertheless, souls who have seen no vision of the plain of truth can never take on a human body (247d, 248b). So in this life it is the memory of the forms which distinguish the human soul from other inferior souls. The souls of animals, having no memory of their experiences, no longer have any belonging to the world of the intelligible; the story of the decamillennial procession has no interest in understanding such souls, who live a life completely immersed in the sensitive and entirely dedicated to the search for pleasure. It is otherwise with the human soul, which, by virtue of the experience of reminiscence, lives in the superposition between two orders of reality.

Thus, the myth of the Phaedrus allows us to learn about the specificity of the condition human, which is characterized on the one hand by a spiritual void due to the absence of

[320] See eg. 255e and 256c.

knowledge of true realities and on the other hand by ignorance of what is capable of satisfying this void. However, unlike other animal species, the human soul remains in contact with this reality thanks to memory and reminiscence, so that she has the possibility of redirecting the movement of her existence towards these realities, which symbolizes the growth of its wings. Thus, although it is not brought to the fore in the Phaedrus and the Menon, the reminiscence is there linked to an anthropological theory analogous to that of the Phaedo; according to this theory, the soul has an intermediate status between concrete things and things in themselves. In a sense, the most proper characteristic of the soul, by virtue of this intermediate status, is this necessary interpretation of oneself (which leads the soul to to understand oneself as a sensible thing, as an intelligible thing or as a intermediary[321]) and the resulting self-determination[322]. The soul has this power to understand herself differently and to shape her life according to this understanding, so that it will take actions which will in turn be decisive for how this understanding will evolve or strengthen. This interaction between what the soul knows, how it understands itself and how it acts will constitute what we could call the proper movement of the soul, which we will study in next chapter.

[321] On the subject of the transformation of the soul in contact with pleasures (see Phaedo 81c4, 81e1 and 83d5), Socrates affirms that the soul which spends too much time with the body “takes on corporeal form”; perhaps this statement should be taken as a metaphor meaning that she then understands herself as bodily.

[322] It is in a similar sense that Broadie (2001, p.305-6) speaks of the soul as a valuing power: "the soul for Plato is essentially a valuing power: a power to create and maintain for itself the life it truly desires and thinks good, along with that lifestyle's accoutrements or freedom from accoutrements. »

CHAPTER 6

Reminiscence, eros and ethics

In the previous chapter, we saw that reminiscence was an experience properly human and that it revealed the intermediate status of our soul, by virtue of our archetypical relationship to experience. We now want to consider the "existential and ethical dimension" of the anamnesis. By this expression, we want mean that reminiscence not only allows us to modify the way we understand ourselves, but also to redirect our desire and modify the evaluation moral of our actions. Indeed, awareness of the archetypes that determine our experience arouses a desire for the intelligible that has the potential to transform our life.

6.1. Phaedrus

The Phaedrus is the ideal dialogue to inform us about the relationship between eros and anamnesis, since the theory of reminiscence is presented there within the framework of an apologetic discourse on the value of eros. The peculiarity of the presentation of the anamnesis in the Phaedrus is to take place within the framework of a myth. Thereby, unlike the M e n o n and the Phaedo, which support the doctrine with a demonstration and an argument, the theory of reminiscence is simply posed in l e Phedre, who can afford this freedom because of the mythical character of his speech[323]. As in the Phaedo, the reminiscence of the Phaedrus explains our capacity to recognize a transempirical reality through sensation. It is not limited however not to an epistemological theory. Indeed, the theory of reminiscence is part of a myth that tells the story of the origin and belonging of the soul to a reality of another order than that of sensible things. The realities

[323] This treatment of the particularity of reminiscence within the framework of the Phaedrus myth is considered by Partenie (2009, p.9-10).

intelligible are not only the only objects that can bring us real knowledge, but they are also the ultimate object of our eros, the only one capable of fill the spiritual void that overwhelms us. However, just as she has forgotten its vision of the forms at incarnation, the soul has no desire for them at its birth. The discourse of the Phaedrus shows how love for another allows him to to regain. In the previous chapter, we studied how the myth characterized the human soul as lack, in opposition to gods and animals. In this chapter, we will seek to clarify how reminiscence is likely to to initiate a change of existential orientation in those who experience it, as he regains desire for what is likely to bring him real satisfaction.

6.1.1. The interpretation of the myth

In this section on the Phaedrus, we will therefore seek to determine how the reminiscence of the form of beauty through its image in another can lead to the blossoming of eros for true reality; Socrates deals with these questions in the second portion of his speech, from 249d. However, this section is not intelligible only in the light of the whole of the "palinodie" recited by Socrates. Too, to clarify the links between anamnesis and eros in the Phaedrus and better understand the existential and ethical dimension of this doctrine, we will consider the whole myth.

The questions of the identification, use and categorization of myths in Plato are among the most complex and the most debated for the interpretation of the dialogs; despite the difficulty of the question, the presence of the theory of reminiscence within a myth forces us to take a moment to clarify the preferred approach to this type of discourse. In the previous chapter, we have already dealt with the capacity of myth to account for the human soul, in opposition to divine and animal souls; we are now going to try to interpret the myth in its together. We will stick to the approach favored up to now: we do not assume the possibility of accounting for all the Platonic myths of the

same way. The introductory remarks we will make now are valid
for the central Phaedrus myth; as to whether they apply to other myths
in Plato, this is a question that would require a detailed study of these myths and
of the dialogical context in which they take root[324].
The most important problem raised by the recourse to myth concerns its relation to
dialectic. Should we take it as an overcoming of the dialectic, as the
revelation of an absolute truth, which is literally exposes us such things
that they are, or constitutes an allegory whose meaning must be deciphered? Should we
rather see it as an assumption subject to revision by more rigorous discourse
of dialectics? Or again, should it be taken as an epistemological process
having a value equal to the dialectic, but bearing on an object which escapes it? We
We will provide answers that apply to the Phaedrus myth in this section.

6.1.1.1. Myth and supra-rational intuition

First, we want to dismiss the position of some commentators
with a more romantic sensibility[325], who see in myth the attainment of a truth
supra-rational where intelligence would go beyond the borders of reason to achieve
to knowledge of a higher order[326].
This design cannot hold for many reasons. First, in terms
intertextual, it is not coherent with the reflection in which Socrates engages in
repetition in the Platonic corpus on its own method. Indeed, he always asserts,
without hesitation, that dialectics – and not myth – is the most
high and most likely to lead us to the truth[327].

---

[324] For a similar position, see Werner (2012, p.17).
[325] We find a representative representative of this conception in Reinhardt (2007, see for example p.87, 157 and 174.). For more references, see Edelstein (1949, p.464) and Werner (2012, p.12n.28).
[326] Hackforth (1952, p.72) adopts this position and gives the following explanation: "…for the most part the myth is the vision of a poet whose images are not disguised doctrine but spring form a nonrational intuition: the reader must therefore allow his rational and critical faculty to be suspended as he reads, seeking to feel with the poet rather than 'understand' him and turn his poetry into prose. For a more recent defense of this position, see Trabattoni (2012, p.315 sq.).
[327] See Werner (2012, p.12-13). Friedländer (1969, p.209) adopts a similar position.

Second, textually, Socrates shows clear reservations about the myth
center of the Phaedrus, when he considers it retrospectively, during his reflection on
the art of rhetoric:

And then, somehow, as we depicted the amorous passion, we have probably reached on one side some truth, while perhaps misleading us on the other: composing with this mixture a discourse that was not totally devoid of persuasiveness, we have fabricated, by way of play, a hymn that told a myth, full of propriety and restraint, in honor of your master and the mine, Phedre, Eros, who watches over handsome boys. (265bc, trans. Brisson)

Thus, Socrates does not affirm that his speech is true in its entirety, but that it
mixes the true and the false and that it was composed "like a game" (or "in a way
kidding"). It would therefore be imprudent to take the myth as a revelation of the
truth. Third, philosophically, not all myths can be put on a
equal footing – simply being a myth cannot guarantee truth. Now, what is it
who will distinguish the true myth from the false myth? How the one who states the myth
will he be able to know if it is a divine inspiration or an illusion? How the
can the reader decide which myths to believe? So we need another
discourse, superior to myth, which can guide and judge it. Eventually, the conception of
human intelligence from this position comes into play.
contradiction with what the myth itself depicts for us[328]. Indeed, according to the myth,
the human knowledge is attained by remembering the vision of true beings of
the plain of truth (249b-c); however, the story of Socrates is far from being limited to the
memory of these beings. Thus, if we take myth as a revelation of truth, Socrates

[328] On this subject, see especially Griswold (1986, p.152), which we follow in this argument: "The palinodie is thus mad in the sense that if it is true the person narrating it could not know it is true (given the criteria for knowledge presented within the myth itself). The madness consists at least in part in the myth's lack of reflexivity and self-consciousness – a defect that characterizes the creations of ordinary poetic inspiration, too, as Socrates' criticisms of poetry in Republic X show. »

would render guilty of the same wrong that we reproach the "true philosophers" of the Phaedo: not remembering reminiscence when composing your myth.
In other words, taken literally, the content of the myth excludes the possibility of knowing this content: it lacks coherence with itself and goes beyond the borders of knowledge that he nevertheless traces on his own. If all knowledge is reminiscence of intelligible realities, how could Socrates know the history prenatal of the soul, of which there is no reminiscence? We must therefore reject the thesis that makes myth a dogmatic statement revealing a truth that goes beyond the boundaries of reason.

6.1.1.2. The myth as hypothesis

A second hermeneutical possibility consists in taking the myth as a hypothesis. Performers who have taken this path fall into two factions: (1) those who affirm that the myth advances certain hypotheses likely otherwise to be reworked by dialectics; (2) those who consider rather than myth pose hypotheses about objects that are inaccessible to dialectics.
In our view, both positions contain some truth; we will examine the first in this section and the second in the next. supporters of the first position are again divided into two: (1a) [329] some think that the myth poses by hypothesis of results already acquired by dialectic, but whose demonstration in the this context would lead us into too long digressions; (1b)[330] other think that the myth comes rather to pose certain hypotheses which will serve thereafter as

[329] See eg. Edelstein (1949, p.473) and especially Partenie (2009, p.9-10).
[330] This is already, in a sense, the position of Zeller (1876, p.161-3), who considers myth as an anticipation of what dialectics may discover later. Frutiger (1930, p.219) also adopts this position, with the important reservation that he thinks that only certain myths have this function, such as that of the Politician or the birth of Eros. However, Frutiger excludes the Phaedrus myth from this category; rather, he classifies it among the "para-scientific" myths, which seek to "complete the results of the λόγος, extend its lines beyond the limits of pure reason, supplement, as δεύτερος πλοῦς, the dialectic when it collides to some impenetrable mystery" (p.223). See also Werner (2012, p.41).

starting point for dialectical inquiry[331].

Without deciding this question, we can concede to these interpreters that many elements of the Phaedrus myth, posed without argument, are the subject of a rational investigation in other dialogues of the corpus. We can think, for example, to the following questions: is the soul simple or does it contain parties[332]? If it does, what is the nature of these parts[333]? Are there any separate forms? What is the nature of these forms and what is their relationship to things concrete[334]? As we recalled in the introduction to this section on the Phaedrus, la réminiscence elle-même est une occurrence de ces théories posées par le mythe sans démonstration, mais qui en reçoit une dans un autre dialogue. Ainsi, le mythe du Phedre rassemble une panoplie de théories pour lesquelles nous trouvons une argumentation dans d'autres dialogues[335]. Un des intérêts du mythe est d'intégrer ces différentes théories dans un tout, sans s'embarrasser des démonstrations interminables[336] qui ne permettraient pas au lecteur d'acquérir la vision synoptique[337] de toutes ces théories et de leurs relations avec la nature de l'âme. Cependant, si nous concédons que cette vision du mythe comporte sa part de vérité, l'ensemble du mythe ne peut être ramené à une synthèse de théories susceptibles d'être débattues de façon dialectique. En effet, tout l'aspect narratif du mythe, tout ce qui a trait à l'histoire prénatale de l'âme, échappe à cette explication. Par exemple, nous ne pouvons fonder dialectiquement la nécessité pour l'âme de choisir une nouvelle vie tous les mille ans ! Pour rendre compte de la narration des aventures

---

[331] These two approaches are not exclusive. See Smith (1985, p.38-39) and Morgan (2000, p.185), who explicitly combine them.

[332] Republic IV 436a-b.

[333] Republic IV 436a-441c.

[334] Parmenides 130a-135d.

[335] Thus, Mattéi (1996, p.167) affirms that the "symbolic and philosophical richness [of the myth] is due to the close interweaving of four theories which are like the four pillars of the Platonic edifice: the theory of the immortality of the soul, the theory of Ideas, the theory of reminiscence and the theory of love. »

[336] Socrates thus affirms that the composition of a discourse on the nature of the soul would take an inordinate amount of time and that he would rather give an image of it (246a5).

[337] See Griswold (1986, p.149): "The capacity of Socrates 'well-composed imagery to convey a synoptic understanding of the issues would seem impossible to realize in the medium of bare analyses, arguments, propositions. See also Mattei (1996, p.5).

prénatales et posthumes de l'âme, nous avons donc besoin d'une autre position sur la nature et la fonction du mythe.

6.1.1.3. Myth and exploration of the irrational

The performers of the second group mentioned in the previous section consider that the main function of the myth is to advance hypotheses likely to make account of what is beyond the scope of the dialectical logos.
Among these, it is worth considering the reflections of Frutiger (1930), who classifies the Phaedrus myth among the myths he calls "para-scientific" (p.210). This category includes myths whose function is to advance hypotheses about objects inaccessible to reason. Here is what Frutiger (p.212) affirms on the subject which interests us :

As for the modes of existence of the disembodied ψυχή, it is clear that neither reason nor experience can make known. This is why the evidence in favor of the immortality of the soul are followed by eschatological myths describing the future life as Plato imagines it if not to know everything positive.

If we therefore agree with Frutiger that the life of the soul outside the body cannot be of a rational knowledge, we still have to solve a capital question: to what source Plato draws on to invent such a detailed description of posthumous life and prenatal of the soul? Frutiger's response is disappointing in this respect: he attributes it to a "religious intuition" (p.223). In other words, Plato would proceed in the same way than Homer and Hesiod and would cease to be a philosopher to abandon himself to delirium poetic. We must reject this hypothesis, since the Phaedrus myth mocks the

poets and soothsayers, to whom he attributes a relationship to intelligible realities lower than that of the man who devotes himself to physical effort[338]. Plato does not compose his myths by following a blind inspiration, but he constructs them with great care, following a precise plan, in order to account for the experiences of the soul. For the to show, we will bring out, in the continuation of our study of the Phaedrus, the inherent structure myth, which will establish that it is a controlled and non-delusional composition.

6.1.1.4. The myth as an explanatory hypothesis of the experiences of blade

So, if we put aside religious intuition, where do the assumptions about of the prenatal and posthumous life of the soul? An author likely to help us is Brisson (2004, p.49-50), who considers that the soul, being neither a visible thing nor a separate form, cannot be grasped either by the senses or by the intellect. How? 'Or' What do we know the soul then? We know it as an explanatory hypothesis of the movement, which could not be perpetuated without the existence of a self-propelled principle immortal (245c-246a). Brisson notes that it is impossible to determine what kind of thing the soul is, but that it is rather necessary to say "what it looks like", by a representation which uses visible things to give an image of them. He resumes here the analyzes of his main work on myth in Plato (1982, p.83):

In the case of sensitive things, the imitation implemented is equivalent to a representation, whereas in the case of realities which, while not pertaining to the sensible world, are not, however, intelligible forms — the divine, the immortal part of the human soul and all the past as that it is no longer an object of tradition — imitation becomes evocation, since it makes appear in the world sensible, and as if it were sensible realities, realities which are by nature of another order.

[338] See 248d-e.

This description applies perfectly to the Phaedrus, which uses the image of the winged chariot to propose a representation of the soul. The soul cannot grasp itself directly nor by the intelligence, since it is not an intelligible form, nor by the meaning, since it is not a sensible reality; the soul is therefore limited to a indirect knowledge of itself, based on its effects. This is what Socrates means, when he affirms, in the introduction to the central myth: understand the truth about the nature of the divine and human soul, considering its experiences and actions (ἰδὸν παθητὲ καὶ ἔργα, 245c2-4)". The story told by the myth[339] about the soul would therefore be an explanatory hypothesis of its experiences using sensitive objects to symbolize his hypothetical constitution[340]. In the case of the Phaedrus, the soul experience that motivates the composition of the myth is easy to identify: it is the experience of noble love. The existence of such experience and the inability of the first two speeches to account for it motivate the composition of a new discourse, in which the myth is inserted. So, after having pronounced his first speech, a divine signal stops Socrates; he concludes that he has offended Eros with a speech that made it something bad (242b sq.) and feels the need to compose a "palinodie" to redeem his fault. It specifies the reason pushes him to judge his first speech bad in the following paragraph:

Suppose indeed that there is, to hear us, someone of noble and benevolent character, and who is or who has already been the lover of someone endowed with such qualities; if we declare that those who love are drawn into great aggressiveness for trivial reasons, that they are jealous of the young boys they like and make them wrong, he will believe, I

[339] We believe, with Griswold (1986 p.147) that the description of the nature of the soul is the subject of Socrates' discourse: "the topic is the soul; the rest is brought in to the extent necessary to explain what the soul is. »

[340] See Collobert (2012, p.100): "…myth consists of linking two types of reality: the visible/sensible and the intelligible/invisible. The link amounts to a transfer by witch a sketch of the intelligible is transported into the world of experience. The myth allows us to experience in a specific way the intelligible, that is to have a sensible access to a representation of the truth. This analysis therefore applies to the myth of the Phaedrus, with one difference: the soul is indeed invisible, but it is not an intelligible reality.

suppose, to hear people brought up in the sailors, and who have never had the spectacle of a love worthy of a free man and it will take a lot to that he agrees with us on the reproaches that we do in Eros. (243c-d, trans. Brisson)

We therefore find there the fundamental reason which guides the composition of the palinody of Socrates: the experience of true love contradicts the first two speeches of the dialogue, which make it a bad thing. More importantly, by virtue of the very understanding of the soul they posit (implicitly for Lysias, explicitly for the first discourse of Socrates), these discourses are incapable of accounting for such experience[341]. Thus, it is the attempt to give meaning to the phenomenon of love noble that motivates the entire discourse of the palinodie; indeed, the existence of such experience forces us to modify our understanding of ourselves in order to be able to take charge of her[342].

6.1.1.5. The myth as allegory

We have seen that the soul is unable to know itself directly, but must be based on his experiences. Socrates' second discourse thus aims to articulate an understanding of the soul from the experience of love, representing this soul with visual images (246a). By virtue of this passage, we must ask whether the myth should be interpreted as an allegory of the nature of the soul and its elements like symbols.

Werner (2012, p.35 and 84-85n.76), referring to the warning given by Socrates to the subject of the myth of Boreas and Orithya as to the allegorical interpretation, thinks that we must reject any interpretation of this order. At the other end of the spectrum of hermeneutical attitudes is that of Griswold (1986), who undertakes the task

[341] We will demonstrate this inability in section 6.1.2.1.1, p.270 sq.
[342] See Griswold (1986, p.147-8), but especially Sinaiko (1965, p.113), who explains very well how the second discourse is rooted in the experience of love.

herculean way of giving each detail of the myth a symbolic value, guided by the following principle: "the interpreter must assume that a Platonic myth is perfectly composed, and so that every detail has some point to it relative to the whole of the myth[343]. Different exegetes place themselves between these two extremes. Among these, Frutiger (1930, p.216-17) believes that only “the infernal judges, the chariot of the soul and so many other images of the same kind” should be taken as symbols; by
On the other hand, he refuses the allegory of certain dogmas:

...it is without a doubt distorting the thought of Plato that identify the immortality of individual souls to the eternity of impersonal reason, the reminiscence of innate ideas, metempsychosis to transformation continuance of the psychophysical substance, the retribution after death to some vague idealistic formula, etc. (Frutiger, 1930, p.216-7)

Frutiger moves in a circle: he establishes what "Plato's thought" is by his decision not to allegorize certain elements of the myths, then in the name of this "thought of Plato" that must not be distorted, it forbids allegorizing these elements.
We must therefore reject this suggestion. We nevertheless think that Frutiger is right to want to adopt an attitude intermediate between that of Werner and Griswold. First, the systematic closure of Werner to the allegorical interpretation cannot stand. Werner himself (p.59) interprets the image of the winged chariot as a figurative representation of the psychology of Republic. In the same way, the soul is certainly not literally endowed with wings. Now, if the wings are an image, what about the structuring of space[344]? The position intelligible forms in a high place is it not controlled by the image wing? Thus, the different places of the myth should also be interpreted in a way allegorical. We therefore see that the question of where to place the limit of

[343] Griswold (1986, p.142).
[344] This is a point to which we will return later (section 6.1.2.1.4, p.276 sq.), when we study in detail the structure of the soul. An analogous idea is found in Dixsaut (2012, p.41), who considers that the difference between the structure of space proposed in the Phedon and the Phedre corresponds to the difference between the two dialogues.

the allegorization of myth cannot be so easily dismissed as Werner does.
Brisson (1982, p.158) notes two rejections of allegorization in the corpus: in addition to the passage of the Phaedrus, he notes that of Republic II (378d-e). The passage of the Republic refuses allegory because the myth is taught to young children with still limited intellectual capacities; this prescription is not about our myth, that Socrates does not tell to children. As for the prohibition in the Phaedrus, we can dispute its application to the central myth for two reasons. First, Socrates believed that an allegorical interpretation of every detail involved too big a task. Therefore, we do not necessarily have to avoid all allegory, but we need a principle to limit the number of details to be taken in this meaning, which we will propose in the next paragraph. Second, the warning uttered by Socrates about the myth of Boreas attacked the naturalist interpretation myths, which seeks to reduce their marvelous elements to physical realities and tangible; in this light, a symbolic interpretation of the myth, where a Typhoon can be used to represent the violent and irrational aspect of man, is not prohibited: Socrates also uses this allegory himself in the wake of his prescriptions against the allegorical interpretation of myths[345] (230a)!
Griswold's attitude also seems problematic to us, as it returns practically to sanctify the myth of Plato, as if it had been composed by a divine intuition[346] and that he was the repository of a higher truth, encrypted by the symbol[347]. The general problem we see with Griswold's interpretation is to make each element of the myth a symbol by itself carrying a meaning. For example, he considers the absence of mention of the vehicle in the description of the soul harness as being in itself a symbol of the absence

[345] On this subject, see Ferrari (1987, p.11-12) and Morgan (2012, p.326).
[346] Griswold (1986, p.142-3). does not seem so far from adopting this position.
[347] It will be noted that this is the attitude of Socrates in the Cratylus, when he says he is possessed by the divine science of Euthyphro (396d).

of unity of the parts of the soul, which must therefore be harmonized by the action of the coachman (p.93-94). However, how can we know whether to give such a scope to this element? textual? Rather, we must keep in mind that the elements of the myth are first significant in their relationships and structure. For example, it is not the dark horse in itself which represents the epithumia; rather, it is the relationship between the dark horse and the tick, in the context of driving a chariot, which represents the relationship between intelligence and epithumia. Similarly, as we have just noted, the wing is not not significant in itself independently of a structuring of space. Griswold does not show himself to be a stranger to this idea, but he does not stick to it in a systematic and tends to interpret every detail without first gaining insight into the structure of the whole myth. Thus, our method of interpretation will be distinguished from his in the sense that it will first seek to show the general structure of the myth, we providing a framework from which it will be possible to judge the relevance of the interpretation of such and such a detail.

Let's take a moment to summarize the findings of our preliminary study. We determined that the central myth of the Phaedrus had a hypothetical status, and this, on two different planes. First, he poses (without demonstration) and assembles different theories likely to receive philosophical treatment, such as the tripartition of the soul, the existence of intelligible realities with which concrete things maintain an image relationship and the theory of reminiscence. The myth thus allows to take a synoptic look at these different theories, which must also be each considered independently by the dialectical inquiry and which are therefore subject to revisions depending on the outcome of this undertaking.

Second, the myth aims to produce a visual representation of the soul for remedy its intermediate status. Indeed, the soul cannot be seized either by the meaning or thought, but is rather hypothesized from its effects. Thus, the true source of the myth, what motivates its composition, are the different experiences of the soul, from which it is possible for us to articulate a understanding of ourselves. It is therefore not a supra-rational intuition that

motivates the composition of the central myth, but rather the desire to make sense of the experience of love and to link this experience to the general definition of the soul as a self-propelled principle[348]. Thus, if such an intuition is put out of play, there arises the question of how Plato went about constructing his myth. We have already brought some elements of response to the section on the Phaedrus of the chapter previous[349], where we saw that the myth allowed to explain the condition human as being marked both by a need for forms and an ignorance of what need. We are now going to resume this work in a systematic way, returning to the psychological theory of first speech and its insufficiency to account for of the experience of love.

6.1.2. Structural analysis of the myth

In the previous section, we saw the need to start by acquiring an overview of the structure of the myth to determine what the details are significant. We will now focus on this structure and try to show how it allows us to advance an understanding of the soul capable of give meaning to the phenomenon of noble love. We will thus see how the myth structures the parts of the soul, the regions of space and the great eras of time in always keeping in view the phenomenon of love which it seeks to account for.

6.1.2.1. The embodied soul

In order to understand the architecture of the second speech, we must see to what extent it makes it possible to correct the faults of the preceding discourse. We will therefore start with return to the psychology of the first speech, in order to show its inability to render account of noble love. We will then see what are the fixes made to this psychology through second discourse and how these can best account for

[348] On the will of the myth to link the experience of love to the conception of the soul as self-propelled movement, see Werner (2012, p.53).
[349] See section 5.3, p.244 sq.

of the phenomenon of love.

6.1.2.1.1. Insufficiency of first speech psychology

At the beginning of his first discourse (237b-238c), Socrates insists on the need to start by defining what we are talking about to avoid doing what most people do who do not realize their ignorance (237b-c). At first he refuses to define love as "the desire (ἐπιθυμία) of beautiful things", since all desire them, even those who are not in love (237d). Socrates therefore distinguishes in each of us two different "forms" (ἰδέα) which "direct and lead us" (237d-238a). The the first is natural and concerns the desire for pleasures (ἐπιθυμία ἡδονῶν), while the other, which is an opinion, is a trend towards the best[350]. These two tendencies are within us and are being fought over; when ordered opinion triumphs, we call it temperance, while when it is desire we call it excessive behavior. Thus, love would be this excess which results from triumphs over the desire for pleasures relating to beauty, when it gets the better of our opinion about what is suitable (238b-d).

The first discourse of Socrates therefore distinguishes two forms within the soul, all two of the driving principles capable of directing it. Of these two forms, only one is natural: the desire for pleasures; on the contrary, the opinion which tends to maintain rectitude and the order is acquired. This psychology therefore makes of man an animal whose natural tendencies (desires) are moderated by the moral principles established by society and acquired through education. According to this dichotomy, eros (and this remains true also for the noble sake of the second speech) cannot belong to the acquired tendency, since it is a natural impulse and a force of

[350] The psychology of the first discourse is thus the heir to the (prephilosophical) opposition recognized by Greek civilization between, on the one hand, the violent and chaotic world of nature (phusis) and, on the other, the serene and salutary order of the human nomos which comes to limit our animal tendencies. We will consult the fascinating work of Thornton (1997) on the Greek conception of eros for a treatment of this opposition.

"disturbance" in relation to what public opinion deems "correct". It is moreover because that this drive ignores the rules defining "normality" that the second discourse classifies eros as a form of madness[351].

By virtue of this binary psychology, Socrates' first discourse must classify eros among the bestial impulses, which make us regress to animality. The problem of this discourse is therefore its inability to account for the experience of noble love, of which the aim greatly surpasses the simple desire for the pleasure of beauty. Indeed, if it is yet another disruption that takes us away from normality and propriety, it is not not to make us regress from social man to wild animal, but rather to make us elevate to a higher mode of existence[352], bringing us closer to the divine. Taking into account of this power of love therefore implies making important revisions to the simplistic psychology of first speech.

6.1.2.1.2. The Two Horses and the Psychology of First Speech

The image of the winged chariot, used to represent the soul in the second speech of the Phaedrus, is one of the most famous metaphors of the Platonic corpus; yet we have little studied its genesis. First, we want to consider the transformations implied by this image in relation to the psychology of the first speech.

First, the second discourse does not make a clean sweep of the psychology of the first – at the contrary, he takes it up entirely, but by making it more complex by adding elements additional. Indeed, the two horses of the winged team correspond to the two trends identified in the first speech. This detail is rarely noted by commentators, who are in a hurry to establish cross-checks between the dialogues and

[351] See for example the reaction of the recent initiate, who now disdains “uses and proprieties” (252a4-5).
[352] For a treatment of love as madness that allows us to rise towards the intelligible, see Brisson (2004, p.48).

bring the tripartition of the Phaedrus closer to that of the Republic[353]. Yet this parallel is less obvious than it seems. Of course, the Republic also divides the soul into three parts: the logos, the thumos and the epithumia. Now, if the logos corresponds fairly well to the coachman of the Phedre and the epithumia to the bad horse, the identification of the good horse thumos is problematic. Indeed, in the Republic, the thumos is first identified with the emotion of anger[354], while the good horse is never described as angry and is on the contrary docile. It's rather the bad horse who gets angry against his teammates (254c7).

If we take a closer look at the nature of the good horse, we find that he is attracted by honor, moderation, and modesty (253d6-7); these virtues are all related to the social dimension of our nature[355] (253d5-6) and would therefore be naturally associated with this "opinion acquired" by life in society on what is good. Besides, Socrates will specify that the good horse is attached to opinion (253d7). Of course, besides the moderation (whose link with thumos seems weak), honor and modesty[356] have their seat in the thumos and our aim here is not to assert that there is no relation Indeed, the two tendencies posed in the first speech were on the one hand, the respect for opinion as to what is correct, what the good horse unreservedly embodies, and on the other hand, the desire for pleasures, which also corresponds perfectly to the bad horse[357]. We can therefore conclude that the second discourse takes up the

---

[353] The equivalence between the psychology of the second discourse of the Phaedrus and book IV of the Republic is “obvious” in the eyes of Hackforth (1952, p.72). Similarly, Rowe (1986, p.177), Nicholson (1999, p.163), Brisson (2004, p.42), Morgan (2012, p.334) and Werner (2012, p.59) pose it without feel the need to argue. Sinaiko (1965, p.55) and Griswold (1986, p.96) also assimilate the parts of the soul of the Phaedrus to those of the Republic, but without explicitly referring to this dialogue.

[354] See eg. Republic IV 440a5. Translators use the expression “irascible part” to refer to this one.

[355] This goes without saying for honor and modesty. As for moderation, it will be noted, in agreement with Brisson's note on this passage (1989, p.216n.257), that it is the virtue of social cohesion in the Republic and the only virtue that all classes must master (IV 430c-432a).

[356] See the section on Plato in the Cairns book (1993, section 6.4).

[357] Let us also recall that these two forces were “the two forms within us which direct and lead us” (ἡμῶν ἐν ἑκάστῳ δύο τινέ ἐστον ἰδέα ἄρχοντε κα-6 μ3-γγε). Rowe (1986, p.177) is therefore on the wrong track by assimilating the coachman to the “acquired opinion” of the first speech, since it is indeed the good horse that is attached to the true opinion (253d7). Griswold (1986, p.96) is closer to the truth by associating the bad horse with the conception of the eros of the first speech. However, we must be more

psychology of the first, by representing by two horses the two tendencies revealed in this speech. From then, it is the other elements added to this model that should make it possible to make account of the phenomenon of noble love. These other elements are: the tick and the wings.

6.1.2.1.3. The coachman

The coachman has two types of faculties: the first relate to his abilities intellectuals and seconds to his power of direction over the two horses. On the intellectually, the coachman's faculties are still divided into two. He first has a form of "intellectual vision", which allows him to directly contemplate the realities of the plain of truth before the incarnation; he then has a memory that keeps in it the memory of this contemplation and which is responsible for a reminiscence more or less salient in view of the sensitive images of these realities.
between the psychology of the Republic and that of the central myth of the Phaedrus; we want only to emphasize the imperfection of the parallel and the fertility of the comparison with the psychology of first speech. The coachman's memory, which allows the experience of reminiscence, is the pivot of all
the discourse of Socrates: without this memory, the account of the decamillennial procession of
souls would be useless, because it is she who ensures continuity between the prenatal history of the soul and its incarnated life. As we saw in section 5.1.3.3[358], the specificity of the human soul is attached to this memory, which implies a mediation between two orders of reality. Likewise, without memory, the prenatal history of the soul would not elucidate the phenomenon of love. Indeed, the explanation of the experience of love proposed by the second discourse is based on recognition, through the vision of a beautiful body, of something which goes beyond the singularity of this body and which

---

precise: the first discourse considers that we have natural tendencies towards pleasure and that eros would be the condition of the soul where this tendency has triumphed over the opinion acquired for the good.
[358] See p. 216

would be beauty itself; the role of the coachman's memory in this explanation is to account for this irruption of the intelligible into concrete experience. So we can move on the hypothesis that the whole procession of souls is composed by the author of the myth of way to explain what the "driver's memory" should be to make intelligible the experience of love. The ability of the coachman to direct the human soul is not without interest either. Note first that the coachman does not himself exert a driving force on the core[359], but commands horses by speech (253d7-e1) or opposes their movement by handling of the whip, the prod and the harness[360]. This is one of the main reasons for using the image of a chariot to represent the soul: the purpose is not so much to exploit the similarities between the intellect and the coachman himself; the interest of the image is rather structural and puts in parallel the relation of the coachman to the horses with that of the intellect to the social and bestial dimensions of its nature. In indeed, the use of the adjective sumphotos in 246a6 implies that the soul is in fact much more unified than its representation by a winged carriage leads one to believe. The interest of the image is rather to show the guiding role that the intellect can play, even if it is itself deprived of driving force.

6.1.2.1.4. The wings and the structure of space

The last element added to the soul is the wing. Unlike the other components, the wings are not always present, although the soul still retains the ability to to grow. The wing can grow when the soul sees or remembers beauty, wisdom and the other realities of the plain of truth (246d-e, 249d-e sq.). Insofar as the wing can be lost, it cannot represent the desire (ἐπιθμία) of beauty, since this is always present (237d), but must rather represent eros, which the name attests of “feathered” that the gods give him (252b). In the first discourse, eros was the

[359] Even though the soul is entirely covered with feathers (see 246a6), the wings have no motive power as such; rather, they give the vertical orientation to the movement of the soul.
[360] See eg. 253e4-5, 254c1.

type of excess that results from the triumph of desire for the pleasures of Aphrodite. Right here, Eros is the madness that results from the triumph of desire for true being. In his story, Socrates gives us an important clue that can help us shed light on what the wing represents: he explains that the wing is the most divine of things bodily, because it has the power to drag the bodies upwards (246d). The wing is therefore a symbol that functions in concert with an axiological hierarchy of the vertical axis of space. The "low" (earth) is where the "solid" things reside (bodies), where the wingless soul is found (246c). The souls who lead a bestial (sub-human) existence will be sent to the dungeons under the earth (τὰ ὑπὸ γῆς δικαωτήρια, 249a6-7), while those who behaved well (in a super-human) are rewarded with a sojourn in some celestial region (τοὐρανοῦ τινα τόπον, 249a7-8). Heaven is also the place where perfect souls govern the cosmos (246b7-c2) and it is also where souls participate in the great procession every ten thousand years (246e-247b). Finally, the highest place is the plain of truth, which is situated "beyond the sky" (τὸν ὑπερουράνιον τόπον, 247c3). This positioning in the space of the plain of truth tells us that the places of myth are not physical places, since real beings do not, strictly speaking, occupy any position in space; they are rather "in outside" of space (i.e. they have no spatial extension) and that is what is represented by their position "beyond the sky" (τὸν ὑπερουράνιος τόπον, 247c3). Onne can therefore literally take the "ascension" of souls, since it is not by a local displacement that one reaches the beings of the plain of truth. We we can conclude that the places of the myth act as symbols and that the hierarchy placed between the underground prisons, the earth, the sky and the plain of truth represent a scale of the ontological status of different beings; the acquisition and loss of wings represent the ability of the soul to move through these different ontological levels. The last point of importance about wings is that they feed and grow through the vision of beauty, wisdom, goodness and other realities of the plain of

the truth (246d-e, 249d-e sq.). This characteristic must be linked to the fact that the soul which has wings rule the whole world through all the sky, while the soul that has them lost attaches to a solid body and governs only that one (246c); in other words, the acquisition or loss of wings goes hand in hand with an understanding of oneself where the soul be, having contemplated goodness, beauty and wisdom, renounce its "ego" and rejoins the universal soul by embracing the cosmic order (cf. 246b6-7), that is, ignoring the universal realities, rebels against this order and chooses to govern a body particular and to pursue an individual interest. We can assume that it is virtue of this principle that there is no envy among the gods (247a7) and that souls who compete with each other during the procession see their damaged plumage (248b).

6.1.2.2. The structure of time

As we have seen, the representation of the soul as a winged chariot implies already of itself the symbolic hierarchization of the vertical axis of space, without which the wing would be deprived of meaning. It is equally instructive to consider how the myth conceives and structures time, since it is by making the soul evolve through the different periods that he cuts out in himself that Socrates reveals to us his different psychic abilities. The myth conceives of time as cyclical and divided into revolutions of 10,000 years, each composed of 10 cycles of 1,000 years. The lower souls spend about the tenth of each of these cycles to live in a body and the rest to be punished or reward according to the justice of their behavior. However, Socrates is mainly interested in what happens between these cycles, that is, what seems to happen out of time, or at least in a time other than the time of earthly existence[361].

[361] Robin (1985, p.cii-ciii, n.1) wonders about the duration of the revolution and hesitates between a day and a year. For us, attributing a temporal extension to the revolution is most problematic, because during this time the world is left abandoned to the salutary guidance of souls. We are therefore more of the opinion of Hackforth (1952, p.80), who affirms that the palinodie does not take place in a precise time: "the revolution is not conceived as occupying any definite time" (this is Hackforth which underlines).

Between each 1,000 year cycle, the lower souls choose the life they will lead in the next cycle, while before a new decamillennial revolution, they take part in a great procession which determines their intellectual potential[362] by depending on the quality of their contemplation of true being. We thus see that the myth distributes over three different times three dimensions of human life: each 1,000 year cycle is about human action, which is rewarded or punished tenfold according to his ability to control his animal impulses to align himself with what is right (his morality); each "intercycle" (between each cycle of 1,000 years) concerns the choice existential, which will determine the life of the soul in the next cycle; finally, the procession, which takes place between two decamillennial revolutions, determines the knowledge of the soul of the true being or at least its ability to know it. Thus, moral action, life choices and knowledge are distributed by the myth over three different periods, which follow one after the other.

What makes this structure of cosmic time particularly interesting is that it is reflected exactly in Socrates' description of the phenomenon of noble love. Indeed, this presentation (249d-256e) is divided into three sections. The first one section (249d-252c) explains the amorous madness aroused by the vision of the image of the beauty in a boy by the recollection of real beauty. This part develops therefore the intellectual dimension of the feeling of love, insofar as this feeling involves a recognition of the form of beauty in the beloved.

The second section (252c-253c) deals with the inner transformation that can occur through a loving relationship, when we recognize in the beloved the god followed in the procession and that we choose to conform to this ideal. That

[362] The procession of souls is also an opportunity to take on its own character, depending on the god followed during the ascent (252c-d). However, the emphasis is more on the ultimate vision of true realities, towards which the whole narrative converges.

part therefore concerns the way in which love makes it possible to give a new direction to our existence and corresponds to the choice of lives in the intercycles[363]. The third section (253c-257b) relates the conquest of the beloved by the lover and the inner struggles aroused by this enterprise. It concerns the constraint of the drives animals by the coachman; indeed, this one must resist the temptation of the enjoyment of the image of beauty and stick to an upright conduct that turns the mind towards spiritual dimension of the experience of love. Thus, this last part deals with the self-mastery and moral conduct that make possible access to a love noble. To reinforce the parallel between the description of love in three stages and the structure ternary of cosmic time, we can note that the three constitutive moments of

[363] There are also interesting links to be drawn between the episode of the choice of a life in the millennial intercycles and that of identification with a god in the description of love. In the myth, the first life is not chosen, but is imposed according to the degree of contemplation of true beings that each soul has reached, according to the decree of Adrastea. We can nevertheless assume that the nine types of life described by this decree represent the great beacons of the choices that the souls will have to make after the subsequent millennial cycles. However, there are undeniable parallels between these life choices and the god with whom the lover identifies. Thus, the highest existence, that of a man called to become a philosopher (φιλόσοφος, 248d2-3), corresponds to one who recognizes himself as a follower of Zeus, who loves knowledge (φιλόσοφος, 252e3); similarly, the second most important type of life is that of a king (βασιλεύς, 248d4) who obeys the law, while the soul who was a servant of Hera goes to a royal-souled boy (βασιλικὸν, 253b2). Other types of life of the adrasted decree are also explicitly associated with a divinity in the Phhedre: indeed, the fifth existence is dedicated to mantling and telestus (ἑέμπτην μαντικὸν ἵἱον ἤ τινα τελεστικὸν ἕξουσαν, 248D7-E1); Now, the mantile is associated later at Apollo and the Telestique in Dionysos (μαντικὴν ἐὲὲἰίόωννςςόλλωνος ἑέέλλςν, ἑιύόσου Δὲ τελεστικήν, 265b3-4), as the sixth, the poetic (248E1-2) is associated with the muses (265B4) . We can add that the two other occupations associated by Socrates with the first type of life, namely “the friend of beauty” (ὁ φιλόκαλος, 248d3) and the “musical” and erotic man (μουσικός τις και ἐρωτικός, 248d4), may correspond respectively to Aphrodite, to the muses and to Eros (who are mentioned following the other divinities that we have just named, in the recapitulation of the types of madness in 265b4-a5). Apart from these associations directly suggested by the text, others impose themselves: thus the demiurge and the cultivator (248e2-3) are naturally associated respectively with Hephaestus and Demeter. For other lives, some less obvious associations can be suggested, such as between Hermes and the gymnast or Ares and the king who loves war and command. However, our purpose is not to suggest that it is possible to draw a one-to-one parallel between every way of life and every deity. Certain problems make such an identification impossible: first, there is not an equal number of major deities (11) and types of life (9); second, we have already resorted to lesser deities (the Muses, Eros) in our identification; finally, some lives will be difficult to link to a deity (notably the last two, because of their pejorative character). Nevertheless, we can conclude that there are some potential conflicts between the deity followed during the procession and the choice of a life in the intercycles: what becomes of the soul who has followed Hephaestus in the procession, but has chosen a philosopher's life? Our intention is not to resolve this conflict, but to use the fact that there is a conflict to support our thesis, according to which the choice of an existence before a cycle of a thousand years is on the same level as identification with a god in the experience of love.

love are not presented in chronological order, but in an order that reflects cosmic time. Indeed, sticking to the chronological order, the third section of the explanation of the phenomenon of love, where Socrates describes the struggle of the coachman with the bad horse, should be placed between the recognition of beauty in the young boy and the recognition of the god followed in the decamillennial procession. This displacement makes it possible to conform the account of the experience of love to the sequence of cosmic time, thus emphasizing their parallelism.

6.1.2.3. Parallel between the structure of the soul and the structure of time

We have just seen how the structure of cosmic time is mirrored in the three constituent moments of the phenomenon of love. We can draw a same parallel with the structure of the soul, as it is composed of a charioteer, wings and of horses. Indeed, the pilot essentially represents the cognitive abilities of the soul and it is he who provides the link between the soul and the objects of knowledge, either by his vision or by his memory. Now, the pilot has the same relation to the soul as the procession. compared to the whole of time and that the passage on the reminiscence of beauty by in relation to the whole description of the phenomenon of love. We had seen, in effect, that the role of the procession in the division of time is mainly to explain our cognitive abilities. Similarly, the first part of the explanation of love by Socrates (249d-252c) relates the intellectual and cognitive dimension of this experience, where the soul remembers its prenatal vision of beauty.

In considering the significance of the wings, we have suggested that their absence or presence indicated the existential orientation of the soul: either it is assimilated to a body individual and behaves selfishly, or it identifies with the universal order and contributes to its harmony. The myth also traces an explicit link between the choice life and wings (between each 1,000 year cycle, 248c-249b), since the soul that chooses three times a life dedicated to the love of knowledge or to a philosophical love assign wings; the reason is undoubtedly that the choice to devote oneself to

philosophy involves detaching oneself from a selfish interest and taking an interest in universal concerns[364]. The acquisition of wings therefore goes hand in hand with identification with the cosmic order. It is necessary to place in this same order of preoccupation the identification with a god, who unfolds in the second stage of the description of true love (252c-253c); this episode indeed relates a change in the way in which the lover understands himself, which engages the whole of his existence, since he begins to identify with his divine patron and to try to imitate him as much as possible. We can therefore conclude that the wings of the soul, the choice of a life in the intercycles and the identification with a divinity in love occupy a similar place in their respective systems. The third element that remains for us to consider in each of our three systems is relating to the action and its moral evaluation. In the case of the winged chariot, the horses represent the driving principle of the soul. It is by virtue of the impetus of the horses that the chariot moves, while the coachman has only power to steer and brake the action; it is therefore by virtue of the control of the coachman over the horses that the soul can evidence of self-control. In the description of the amorous phenomenon, only the third part (253c-257b) makes appeal to the image of the chariot and Socrates takes the trouble to describe in detail the characteristics of the two horses (253c-e). It is at this moment that the result of the struggles inner relationships between the elements of the soul will determine whether lovers give in to their sexual urges or if they stick to a chaste love guided by a desire for the know (256a-e). Thus, this whole part of the text revolves around the question of the passage to the action and the moral stakes of this action, and this, from the initial vision of the handsome boy (253rd), which arouses the violent escapades of the bad horse and the attempts of the coachman to calm them down. Finally, in the myth, each cycle of 1000 years is linked to the conduct of the soul embodied, who is rewarded or punished according to the morality of the actions she has

[364] Thus, the philosopher, who is the only one whose thought is winged (249c4), detaches himself from what arouses human passions and concerns himself with divine things (249c8-d3); in the same way, one who feels true love "neglects the things below" (249d8) and cares neither for his friends, nor for his family, nor for his fortune, nor for customs (252a), that is to say of all the forms of interest linked to his individual identity.

accomplished in his life (249a). This section of the myth therefore concerns human action and his moral judgment, which completes our demonstration of the identity of the structures soul, cosmic time and love.

It is interesting to point out that the phenomenon of love actually fits into the framework of an embodied life, so that according to the "cosmic" division of time in the myth, he should be concerned only with the action and its moral value. Yet we have just noted that the description of the phenomenon of love corresponds to the three parts observed in the structure of cosmic time – thus, a part contains in itself the structure of the whole. This mise en abyme spurs us towards the possibility a symbolic reading of the structure of the myth, where the different elements including the myth is constituted represent, in their interactions, different dimensions of the embodied life. To explore this further, we will examine in the next section the influences observed between the adventures of the soul for each of the three sections of the cosmic time.

6.1.2.4. The transformations of the soul

Up to now, we have been busy working out the structure of the first speech. We discovered that it is built around a repeating tripartition in the parts of the soul, the divisions of cosmic time and the constituent moments of noble love. The reason for this structural repetition is still obscure. The next stage of our analysis will consist in showing the link between this recurrent structure and the initial definition of the soul, highlighting the myth. In this passage (245c-246a), Socrates

begins by arguing for the immortality of the soul[365] from its nature self-propelled[366], then concludes that this self-propelled character constitutes the essence and the definition (οὐσία τε καὶ λόγος, 245e3) of the soul. The soul is therefore that which moves by itself (τὸ ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦ κινούμενον, 245e3). He announces to us (246a) that the myth will have intended to give an image of its form (ἰδέα).

---

[365] Specifically, the text says that every soul (ψυχὴ πᾶσα) is immortal (245c5). The meaning of this phrase has been constantly debated, trying to determine whether Plato was talking about each (individual) soul or rather the soul as a whole, that is, the soul of the world. Frutiger (1930, p.130-34) takes a position for the individual soul, arguing that when Plato designates the soul of the world a little further (246b), he adds the article, while when he uses the expression "πᾶν σῶμα" (without the article) in another context is obviously to say "every body". Robinson (1971, p.345) abounds in the same direction, by specifying that the individual soul designates here the "noetic soul"; he claims that one cannot see in it a reference to the soul of the world, without which the precision brought later, according to which it is necessary to consider the nature of the soul as much human as divine (245c2-4), would not have not his place. Hankinson (1990, p.3-4) also opts for the position that it is a question of the individual soul, because this interpretation is the only "clearly intelligible". Bett (1986, p.11-15) and Griswold (1986, p.84) see no evidence in the dialogue to support the belief in a "world soul". They nevertheless believe that the argument regards the soul as a form of matter (stuff) analogous to water or electricity which retains the same properties notwithstanding the quantity dispensed; both authors use the expression "mass term" to describe it. Blyth (1997, p.186) argues that immortality is attributed to a character common to all souls. Hankinson (1990, p.4) criticizes this position for ignoring the question of individual immortality, to which one could reply that this is not what the argument is concerned with. As for us, with Hackforth (1952, p.64-64), we believe that it is not necessary that Plato have a precise meaning in mind and that the argument remains valid in both cases. This is also the position of Demos (1968, p.134), Hankinson (1990, p.4-5) and Brisson (1989, p.208-9n.165), although the first two prefer take the expression as a reference to the individual soul and Brisson to the soul of the world.

[366] We are not interested here in this evidence, but rather in what it reveals about the nature of the soul. For a study of the evidence for the immortality of the soul, see Sinaiko (1965, p.45-49), Demos (1968), Hackforth (1952, p.64-8), Robinson (1971), Griswold (1986, p.78-87), Burger (1980, p.51-3), Bett (1986), Hankinson (1990) and Blyth (1997). Brisson (2004, p.36) refers to Laws X 892a-899c. It should be emphasized that this argument appears foreign to the rest of the dialogue and to Plato's usual method. Thus, Demos (1968, p.134) considers that the argument differs so much from the style of the rest of the dialogue that he believes in a later addition, a conclusion which for us is a bad method. Hankison (1990, p.1) and Osborne (1999, p.276) argue that taken out of context, one could easily imagine reading Aristotle rather than Plato. As for us, without disputing that the argument fully belongs to dialogue, we are led to believe that it is not considered by its author as a definitive and unshakable argument, but rather as an economical means of establish the immortality of the soul and allow the myth to be exposed without further ado. See Osborne (1999, p.276-77), who goes in a similar direction by adding that argument serves to mark the limits of deductive discourse.

This definition of the essence of the soul must be linked to the presentation of the image which follows[367]. So far we have dealt with the soul and the myth in which it is embedded. in a “static” way, that is, by focusing on its structure. However, to link this structure to the preliminary definition of the soul as automotion, it is necessary
consider the nature of soul movement in myth. To clear it, you have to determine the interaction between the three parts of the structure highlighted in section former. Let us remember the activities of the soul for each part of time cosmic: (1) embodied existence and subsequent retributions fulfill thousand-year cycles and correspond to the time allotted to moral action and mastery self; (2) at each "intercycle", so every thousand years, the soul chooses a new life ; we have therefore attributed this period to self-determination; (3) at the end of each decamillennial revolution, the soul takes part in a great procession, which will determine what she knows of true reality. We now want to show how what happens in each of these periods determines what will happen in the following period. The myth begins by describing the decamillennial procession[368]. After this, the souls whose contemplation is imperfect take place in a body. For the first incarnation, the life they will lead depends on the degree of contemplation of the being to which they have arrived. There is therefore a direct link established between the results of the procession and how the soul will determine its life in its first existence. For subsequent incarnations, souls will have the chance to choose the life they desire[369]. However, we guess that this choice will depend on the degree of reminiscence of the true being obtained during their previous life: the soul that has remembered

[367] On this subject, see Werner (2012, p.52-54).
[368] The list of these lives has challenged several commentators. Hackorth (1972, p.82-84) considers that its principle lies in the value of each life for society. Griswold (1986, p.102) and Brisson (2004, p.46) note the “mirror” structure of the list, insofar as each of the occupations of the second half responds to those of the first in reverse order and in is a degenerate form.
[369] Thus Robin (1985, p.civ) speaks of “double eschatology” since destiny depends both on the procession and on the previous life.

this one in his first incarnation will be more inclined to choose the life of a philosopher than that of a tyrant. In the same way, the existential choice made by the soul in the intercycles influences the moral conduct he will adopt in the future life: choosing to become a tyrant will involve doing certain immoral acts[370]. Finally, the circle of influences closes, because the myth reveals to us that the conduct adopted in the embodied existence will in turn be the determining factor for the success souls in the procession. Indeed, it is by virtue of "forgetting and perversion" (248c7) that the soul is unable to rise to the plain of truth. So the soul that has engaged in unjust conduct during his incarnated life strengthened the wrong horse and the one who has not remembered the true being is not aware of the goal pursued, of so that it engages in useless competitions with its rivals which damage its wings (248b). We can therefore conclude that the conduct adopted by the soul during his incarnated life determines his success in the procession.

The myth thus establishes relations of dependence between the results obtained by the soul at each of the three parts of time: the vision of the true being at the end of the procession determines the first life chosen during incarnation; the nature of this life engages the soul to certain actions which will enable it to tame the bad horse and to remember the true being to some extent; remembrance and self-control will guide the soul in its choice of life during its next cycle, which will influence his actions again, and so on until a new procession, where his degree of remembering the true being and his mastery of the wrong horse will decide the quality of his contemplation of hyperuranic realities.

6.1.3. The existential aspect of reminiscence

In the previous sections, we have cleared the ternary structure of the myth and identified the dependency relationships between each of the three parties. We want now show that these relations constitute a symbolic representation of the

[370] We can therefore say, with Werner (2012, p.83-84), that the share of personal responsibility for explaining our fate is difficult to determine.

factors influencing the self-moving movement of the soul, as we observe it in the description of the phenomenon of love (249d sq.). Indeed, this development aims to to realize the capacity of the soul to rise above its concerns hedonistic and orient his eros towards knowledge. History plays a central role in this existential reorientation, since the psychic movement is set in motion by the recall beauty from one of its images.

6.1.3.1. anamnesis and eros

To understand the self-propelled movement of the soul, one must determine how man can rediscover eros for intelligible beings and thus orient himself towards their awareness. We have named this aspect "the existential dimension of reminiscence". Let us first consider to what extent the supra-celestial realities are the objects natural eros. In itself, the prenatal contemplation of true beings makes it possible to make account of the recollection of things themselves, but leaves the existence of a desire to their regard without explanation. The fact of having already seen something is insufficient in itself to condition a desire to see him again. It is in order to mark their desirability that the supra-celestial realities are associated with "food" for thought (247d1-3) and the "food" that suits the best part of the soul (248b7-c1). Not only the coachman saw the plain of truth, but he found his "delight" there (247d4). The intelligible is therefore associated with the object of desire proper to the guiding principle of the psyche[371]. In addition to nourishing thought, the contemplation of supra-celestial realities provides also the food of the plumage of the soul (246e1-4, 248c1-2), which allows it to rise in the hierarchy of beings. The divine souls, whose walk is freed earthly inclinations, can maintain themselves at the top of the hierarchy of the living rejuvenating periodically at the plain of truth. Inferior souls suffer from a less enviable condition, since the escapades of the infernal horse limit their

[371] The Phaedrus stands out in this respect from the Meno, by adding a nutritious metaphor to the visual metaphor to describe the relationship of the disembodied soul to separate forms. The Phaedo also uses a nutritive metaphor to represent the relationship of the soul purified from the body to the things themselves (84b1).

contemplation and ruin their plumage, precipitating them into a mortal body. Deprivation of wings at the moment of incarnation signifies that the psychic movement is immediately amputated from its natural orientation towards intelligible realities and therefore ignores their desirability. Unable to contemplate things in themselves directly, only memory can bring to the embodied soul the food that will invigorate its plumage. The understanding the existential dimension of reminiscence involves deepening how it can revive the desire for the knowledge of forms.

6.1.3.2. The status of beauty

In the majority of cases, the memory of intelligible realities is insufficient to revive our desire for them; in fact, only beauty retains enough brilliance to arouse, at the sight of a body that participates in it, a sufficient memory in this respect (250b-c). In what is the peculiarity of beauty? Socrates invokes its greater visibility, because it produces clear images, which directly touch the sharpest of our senses[372] (250cd). Here is an explanation of the feeling felt when our gaze crosses a beautiful object, feeling which is of the order of a vague contemplative admiration, whether in front of a pretty girl or a beautiful landscape. However, at this point in the discourse, we are short of resources to account for the particularity of emotions

[372] For further exploration of this idea of the greater visibility of images of beauty, see Nicholson (1999, p.198-201). Commentators have delved deeply into the causes of beauty's special status. Thus, Robin (1908, p.221-4) strives to show the remarkable link that exists between the beautiful and the good, concluding that the beautiful must ultimately be only one aspect of the good (p.184). Griswold (1986, p.112-113) notes that the lexical field used by Socrates in his description of the prenatal contemplation of beauty insists on the completeness and perfection it brings, thus suggesting that beauty is what allows us to aspire to an "existential completeness". As Brisson notes (2004, p.213n.222), this metaphor is borrowed from the vocabulary of the Mysteries. Now, if we willingly agree with Griswold that the mention of an existential completeness is important, we do not see, without further argument, how beauty would be different from other forms in this regard. To do this, it would probably be necessary to combine Griswold's remarks with Robin's analyzes of the good. Without presenting itself as such a synthesis, Ferrari's analysis (1987, p.149) proposes a solution of this kind: "Rather, Plato seems to think of it as the value that has in addition to its intrinsic worth the function of arresting and directing the attention to the totality of values in a human life – hence its place in the earlier stages of the philosophical life. Beauty is the integrator; it has the ability to make all aspects of the best human life, sensible as well as intelligible, into a whole. »

awakened by the beauty of a man or a woman, who are of another order than those tested in front of a beautiful mountain, however impressive it may be[373]! However, only human beauty gives rise to desire, so the understanding of love implies taking into account the specificity of the transport it generates. We
We will provide some answers on this subject in our commentary.

6.1.3.3. The object of eros

Images of beauty provoke a more vivid memory because of their clarity.
However, since reminiscence operates without our knowledge prior to the practice of philosophy, he who remembers beauty[374] ignores the cause of his love; he attributes this feeling to the boy himself and interprets the felt desire as having the latter for object. In the case of a soul whose memory is insufficient, the desire is fixed on the body of the beloved, which she sees as an opportunity to indulge in sexual pleasure (250e-251a). We discover here the first explanation of the insignia character of the human images of beauty374 (250e; 253e-254b): unlike landscapes, they stir up the animal portion of our nature and its taste for voluptuousness[375].
"The recent initiate" (251a1-2), for his part, because of the brilliance of the beauty perceived, lives this appearance as a spiritual experience and is overwhelmed by it (251a4). In taking up the metaphor of the winged chariot, the last part of the description of the phenomenon lovers (253c-257b) represents this amazement by the backward reversal of the coachman, who thus punishes the hybristic horse, by pulling on the reins (254b7-c3; d7-e5). This episode marks the need to tame the animal portion of one's nature to reach a more spiritual eros, which facilitates the intensity of the memory of

[373] This is all the more important since the Phaedrus shows himself to be well aware of the beauty of the landscapes, as evidenced by Socrates' enthusiastic description of the place where the interview takes place, which opens with this exclamation: "By Hera! What a beautiful (καλὴ) place to stop! (230b)
[374] This explanation was already in the first discourse (238c-d).
[375] See Santas (1992, p.306) and Lebeck (1972, p.168).

beauty. Thereby, when the lover has mastered the wrong horse after repeatedly snubbing it occasions (254e5-8), his desire can take a higher object; however, it is still fixed on the beloved (rather than on the form of beauty), as was the case with the man who surrenders to lustful love; however, unlike the latter, it does not consider the beloved not as an instrument of pleasure, but as a god[376], and this, because of the transcendent character of the vision that he experiences.

6.1.3.4. The god in us

The problem posed by the reappropriation of eros for true beings is clarified: since it is the images of beauty that awaken eros, how can desire manage to project beyond the image and take the forms themselves as their object? To solve this problem, the second discourse of the Phaedrus appeals to a second type of reminiscence, where the soul remembers the god followed in the procession. Indeed, even if we are initially attracted by the appearance of the boy, we we will fall in love with him only if we recognize in him our own character. The semblance (physical) of true beauty must resemble us (morally) for us to fall in love. Thus, while the carnal desire was directed towards the body of the beloved, noble love is rather directed towards his soul[377]. Socrates relates this second condition to the origin of our true character, inherited of the god followed in the decamillennial procession (252c-e). Thus, spiritual eroticism results from the conjunction of two reminiscences: on the one hand, we remember ideal beauty from its image in the body of the beloved; on the other hand, we we remember our divine patron from his image in his soul. The cause madness in love is therefore the association of beauty and the self by the reunion of their pictures in another. Now, the lover does not see himself as he is in his beloved; there is sees his "ideal", that is to say a divinity on the example of which he will try to

[376] See 251a5-7, 252d6-e1 and 254e8-255a1.
[377] See eg. 251e1-2: “Those […] who depend on Zeus seek, for a beloved, someone whose soul would be that of a Zeus” (trans. Brisson; italics ours).

shape his existence and that of his darling:

Those therefore, I say, who depend on Zeus seek, for beloved, one whose soul would be that of a Zeus. Too do they examine whether, by nature, he aspires to knowledge and whether he aspires to command; and when, having found it, they are in love, they do everything to make it conform to this model. Now, if this is an occupation in which they are not not yet committed, they apply themselves to it, learn where they can and set themselves on the hunt; and, when they are on the track, they manage to discover, for their own ways, the nature of the god that is theirs, because it is for them a necessity to hold their gaze reaching out to this god. Then, when, by memory, they reach it, they are possessed by the god and they borrow its behavior and activity insofar as it is possible for a man to partake of divinity. (252e253a, trans. Brisson)

The recognition of one god in the other thus becomes the means of discovering a god in himself[378]. The same goes for the beloved, who, due to the phenomenon of "counter-love[379]", recovers on his own the desires of the lover, which he himself has inspired. His eros is therefore fixed on his partner, in whom he recognizes the same idealized self-image. Thus, whether one has a natural like Zeus, Hera or of Apollo, we will only fall in love with a boy endowed with the same dispositions that we and this passion will allow us to develop together the qualities inherent in this character. Erotic madness makes it possible to learn to know oneself, to discover what is divine in oneself and to exploit it to reach its full potential[380].

---

[378] Impossible not to think of the First Alcibiades (132d-133b), where Socrates affirms that we know ourselves by plunging our gaze into the best part of the soul of others, this part by which we resemble a god and where we see ourselves as in a mirror.

[379] See 255d-256a.

[380] We can establish a clear opposition on this point between the first and the second discourses of Socrates. He specifies that true lovers have "no envy or constraining malevolence towards their beloved, but they make every effort to lead him to perfectly resemble themselves and the god they honor" (253b7-c2). . However, Socrates had said the opposite in his first speech, by affirming that the lover, to obtain satisfaction, wants to maintain as much as possible the beloved in a state of inferiority (238e-239c).

At this moment, eros has as its object neither the body nor the soul of the boy, but rather the ideal represented by the god, which results in the adoption of his habits and activities[381] (τὰ ἔθη καὶ τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα, 253a3-4). No matter what deity they are consecrated, the occupations borrowed from a god will aim at a higher goal than the bodily pleasure, since the divine soul is disinterested in it. For example, a soul under Ares will seek military triumphs and a servant of Hera a good administration. However, this eros, now fixed on an ideal self and the activities attached to it, is still not oriented towards the realities hyperuranic. In fact, only lovers holding Zeus will dedicate themselves to the philosophy (252e3, 256a7); but "philosophical thought is the only one to be winged, because There is an interesting parallel to be drawn between the sequence of objects on which eros is fixed in the Phedre and the different stages of the perfect initiation of the Banquet (209e-211c). In the Banquet, the initiate discovers beauty in the following way: (1) beauty in a body; (2) beauty in all the bodies; (3) beauty in souls; (4) beauty in occupations and uses (τὸ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις καλόν, 210c3-4); (5) beauty in knowledge; (6) the shape of the beauty itself. In the Phaedrus, we have seen that the lover passes from (1) eros to the body of the beloved, to (2) eros for his soul and finally results in (3) eros for beautiful occupations.

We will soon see that a soul under Zeus will devote himself to (4) the love of knowledge, which last test where the unruly horses combine in a last effort for the succumb to physical pleasure. Only philosophers will overcome this ambush (256a7-8), while those whose reserve was inspired solely by concern for

[381] There is an interesting parallel to be drawn between the sequence of objects on which eros is fixed in the Phaedrus and the different stages of the perfect initiation of the Symposium (209e-211c). In the Banquet, the initiate discovers beauty in the following way: (1) beauty in a body; (2) beauty in all bodies; (3) beauty in souls; (4) beauty in occupations and uses (τὸ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις καλόν, 210c3-4); (5) beauty in knowledge; (6) the form of beauty itself. In the Phaedrus we saw that the lover goes from (1) eros for the body of the beloved, to (2) eros for his soul and finally ends in (3) eros for the beautiful occupations. We will soon see that a soul under Zeus will devote himself to (4) the love of knowledge, which should lead him to (5) the love of beauty itself. Thus placed in parallel, the only difference between the two initiations is that the lover of the Phaedrus sticks to a single person and therefore skips the second stage mentioned in the Symposium.

appearances will be tempted (256b7-c5). The triumph over the animal portion of our nature, which brings her closer to divinity and to leaving the cycle of reincarnations[382], therefore implies the discovery of the true object of our desire, the only one capable of guard against carnal pleasure by the full satisfaction it brings.

6.1.3.5. The movement of the soul

In section 6.1.2.2[383] we noticed that the cosmic time division corresponded to three determining factors of human existence: (1) knowledge true realities during the decamillennial revolution, (2) the choice of a life between every cycle of a thousand years; (3) moral conduct through self-control (training punishment or reward) during each of these cycles. The myth shows that what happens at each of these stages influences what happens at the next one. However, these same factors come into play in the narrative of the soul reclaiming its orientation existential for forms. Indeed, (1) the reminiscence of the form of beauty brings (3) a control of the escapades of the infernal courier, which then makes it possible to remembering the god followed and (2) choosing to conform one's activities to his; those who adopt the philosophical life will be able to achieve (3) a better mastery of the bad which should lead him to (5) the love of beauty itself. Thus placed in parallel, the only difference between the two initiations is that the lover of the Phaedrus sticks to one person and jumps by therefore the second stage evoked in the Symposium. horse and succeed in (1) remembering intelligible realities. So we can conclude that the tripartition of cosmic time corresponds to the different elements that come into play in the way the soul moves itself, according to the definition liminary of the myth[384]. Indeed, the praise of love tells us how these three factors influence each other in this experience, in such a way as to allow those who have the potential to find the best orientation for psychic movement.

---

[382] Read 256b2-7 and compare with 248e-249a.
[383] See above, p.278 sq.
[384] Griswold (1986, p.111) is therefore not wrong in considering that the way the soul understands itself is an important factor in the way the soul moves itself. However, this is not the only factor.

Let's take a moment to summarize our conclusions about the Phaedrus myth. First he presents the relationships between the different parts of the soul through the image of the winged chariot, thus revising the psychology of first speech by adding two elements: (1) a
coachman having the memory of a prenatal contemplation of forms, a specific desire and the ability to master both couriers; (2) wings that allow the soul to soar
on the ontological scale. Second, it divides the vertical axis of space into three regions[385] which represent an ontological hierarchy: mortals inhabit the earth,
the gods the sky and the true beings the place that is on the roof of the world. As we have seen, this symbolism works in concert with the image of the wings that the soul can gain or lose depending on the objects on which its eros is fixed.
Third, the myth also divides time into three parts, which represent the three factors influencing the movement of the soul, in their interactions: the knowledge of intelligible realities (corresponding to the decamillennial procession), the self-determination (identified with choosing a life between millennial cycles) and finally the moral action by the control of one's animal inclinations (which takes place in the embodied life). We can conclude that Socrates' second speech is constructed in such a way as to correct the psychology of the first and to account for the experience of noble love and its power to redirect the self-moving movement of the soul towards interests of a higher order than hedonistic concerns. Thus, if living the experience of love oneself makes it possible to reorient one's own soul through identification with a divinity, reflecting on the phenomenon of love enabled Socrates to revise his conception of the soul in general. On the level of desire, the myth shows us how, starting from the anamnesis of the form from beauty, eros can come to take supra-celestial beings as its object; he fixes himself first on the physique of a handsome boy, then on his soul, before moving on to our ideal identity that inclines us towards

[385] It takes four regions if we add the underground prisons where souls who behave in an immoral way are punished.

occupations of a higher order, for finally lead, for the souls having the character of a Zeus, to the true realities.

Thus, the reminiscence of beauty in a beautiful body can gradually reorient psychic movement in such a way as to make him rediscover the ultimate object of his desire, which lies in things in themselves.

6.2. Phaedo

The attribution of an existential and ethical function to reminiscence is found also in the Phaedo. In the previous chapter, we showed how taking awareness of reminiscence plays an essential role in understanding that the soul acquires by itself. We have thus listed three stages (that of the man ordinary, of the true philosopher and of the Socratic philosopher) where the soul adopted a ontology, an epistemology and a coherent understanding of itself, according to of the degree of consciousness she had of her recollection of the things themselves. We we shall now return to these three stages and show how they condition the orientation of the desire of the soul and are accompanied by adherence to an ethic.

6.2.1. Ordinary Men and the Ethics of Pleasure

As we saw in Section 5.1.1[386], ordinary men have no awareness of remembering: they consider that only corporeal things are real and that these are known by the senses. They therefore conceive of the soul itself as corporeal and identify it with a very subtle substance, related to the breath or smoke. Different textual elements show that the self-understanding of these men determines the object of their desire. Thus, when it is understood as being corporeal nature, the soul desires the care of the body and the goods capable of giving it provide bodily pleasures (64d, 66c-d): wealth, power and honor

[386] See supra, p.178 sq.

(82c). On a moral level, such a conception of the self leads to a utilitarian ethic of calculation. pleasures and pains. Socrates indeed explains to us (68b-69a) that people ordinary people are courageous out of fear of greater suffering and moderate out of taste for greater pleasure, so that they trade pleasures for pleasures and pain against suffering, as one changes money. So we see how the understanding of the soul of itself as a corporeal thing is at the source of a certain conception of virtue. The movement of the soul of ordinary men is therefore enclosed in a circle vicious: considering that only corporeal things exist, the soul understands itself to be corporeal in nature; by virtue of this understanding of itself, she desires bodily pleasures; desiring bodily pleasures, she develops an action (framed by an ethic) that allows it to multiply them; constantly being preoccupied with the question of pleasures and sufferings, it attributes being solely to things that provide it, that is, to corporeal things; Because of this ontology, it understands itself as being a corporeal thing, etc. So, he is fair to say that the prison in which ordinary men hold themselves is "the work of desire" (82nd), since the soul which understands itself as body desires pleasures which will maintain it in this understanding of itself.

6.2.2. True Philosophers and Asceticism

The “real” philosophers (who divide reality by opposing sensible things and intelligible without being aware of the intermediaries) are distinguished from men ordinary by their recognition of intelligible things. However, they lack reflexivity on the way in which they became aware of the existence of these realities; by next, by virtue of the incorporeal character of these, they imagine that the senses are useless to know them. By virtue of the opposition they pose between things sensitive and intelligible, true philosophers understand themselves on the model of this opposition, that is to say as "pure soul", conceived in the image of separate forms, imprisoned in a body that prevents her from realizing her nature (see 65c, 66b and 66d-3). Because he takes the incarnation for an imprisonment, the deep desire for the true

philosopher is to be separated from the body as much as possible and therefore to die (64b). Indeed, he feels only contempt for the body and for its pleasures; turning away from these, he tends to a state near death (64c-65a). Thus, he considers that whoever revolt in the face of the imminence of death is not a "true philosopher" (67e-68b). As a result of this desire, true philosophers develop an ethics of deprivation of pleasures and estrangement from the body. They stay away from pleasures for fear that they would further nail their soul to the body and compel it to hold for true corporeal things (83b-c). So true philosophers see the body like a fatality:

Desires, appetites, fears, simulacra of all kinds, futilities, it fills us with it so well that, as they say, for real and for good, because of him [scil. the body] it will only be us never possible to think, and about nothing. […] But these riches, it is the body that forces us to acquire them, it is its service that makes us slaves. (66c-d passim, trans. Dixsaut)

According to this passage, men are the slaves of the body, which fills it for good with desires of all kinds and which compels her to acquire wealth. The real philosophers never consider the possibility of taming the body, as does the driver of the Phaedrus with the infernal horse. As a result of their belief in the inevitability of conflict between soul and body, true philosophers develop an ethic of asceticism. According to this, the achievement of thought is purchased at the price of the pleasures and desires of the body which one must deprive oneself of (69a-b), with the conviction that this sacrifice will bring about real thought. The problem of true philosophers is to have forgotten the theory of reminiscence, which would have reminded them that the thought of the embodied soul is different from that of the separated soul. Indeed, the flight of the body is insufficient to overcome the ignorance of the embodied soul; the soul

must, on the contrary, make use of the sensible to remembering and dialectics to put into words what she has thus remembered; however, both require the help of the body[387].

6.2.3. The Socratic philosopher and self-control

Finally, when the soul realizes that it needs the help of the body to to know the intelligible, it realizes the existence of intermediaries between things in themselves and ever-changing things; itself is one of those intermediate things, since it knows the intelligible from the sensible.

On the plane of desire, the soul which understands itself as being of a intermediary between the sensible and the intelligible therefore desires not to die like the real philosophers, but on the contrary live in the company of other philosophers; it's in effect through conversation with them that she will be able to progress in her quest for wisdom. Desire, which is no longer completely disembodied, can attach itself to beautiful souls, with which to pursue the philosophical quest.

On the ethical level, it is therefore no longer a question of fleeing the body through a practice rigorous asceticism, but rather to govern the body with a view to self control; thus, the Socratic philosopher knows how to use his body to maximize the interesting conversations, as Socrates does on his last day and as he encourages Simmias and Cebes to do it between themselves when he is no longer there (78a). At first glance, our conclusions about the Phaedo may seem to contradict those of Phaedrus. Indeed, we have just seen that, in the Phaedo, desire is first of all on sensible things, then on intelligible things, to finally settle on philosophical souls. In our analysis of the Phaedrus, we considered that the desire attaches itself first to a beautiful body, then to a beautiful soul, then, eventually, to intelligible things themselves. However, these two sequences are not

[387] Thus, in Book VII of the Republic, where thought is again conceived on the model of spiritual vision, Socrates explains that this vision requires a whole preliminary education, which involves exploiting the sensations that arouse thought (523a- 526c) and the practice of dialectics (531d-535a). In this educational program, the moral dimension is certainly important, but it is far from sufficient to provide the vision of forms, which is however believed by the true philosophers of the Phaedo.

contradictory only in appearance. Indeed, in the Phaedrus, when desire succeeds in take intelligible forms for object, the soul does not cease to desire others, as we see at the end of the second discourse (256a-b); however, the other is no longer desired only for itself, but by virtue of its ability to accompany us in our quest for knowledge. Similarly, when we suggest that philosophical souls are the ultimate object of desire in the Phaedo, we do not want not to say that the other becomes desirable for himself: it is rather because at the last stage of self-understanding, the soul considers that it cannot know beings true by shutting itself in itself and must instead turn to dialectics and practice with men likely to help him progress in this quest.

In other words, we must not confuse the moment, in the Phaedrus, when the desire for a man attaches himself to the soul of a boy before practicing philosophy with the stadium ultimate self-understanding of the Phaedo, where the soul desires the other insofar as it allows him to become wiser.

6.3. Menon

Our study of the existential and ethical aspect of reminiscence in the Phaedrus and the Phaedo is likely to help us clarify the link between reminiscence and virtue in the Menon, which is a central question of the dialogue. We will thus study how the reminiscence implies on the one hand a desire for knowledge and on the other hand the need to take into account universal standards recognized by intelligence in our behavior.

6.3.1. The desire for knowledge and the experience of the aporia

Let us first see what the dialogue tells us about desire, since we have seen that the orientation of desire is a key element in the way the soul decides to conduct its life. The question of desire is approached in the introduction to the third attempt to define virtue by Meno (77a-78d), who defines it as "the desire for beautiful things and

the ability to procure them (77b4-5). After having identified the beautiful and the good (77b), Socrates remarks that no one can desire what is bad knowing that it is wrong (77b-78b), so this part of the definition is unnecessary. Yet this conclusion is too quick. Although we all desire the good, we differ in things that we identify as good. For example, when Socrates asks him what is good, Meno replies that it is about health, wealth and honor (78cd); however, later in the dialogue, these things will be considered as not being good only for those who have the intelligence to use them well (87e-88a). So, although we all desire the good, we do not all desire the same things, since we do not don't all take the same things for goods[388]. Knowledge is absent from the initial list of Menon's possessions. For him to know is not a good in itself, but it is a means of gaining honor, which is a real good[389]. His intellectual interests are not in truth, but in grandiose and tragic[390]: he is not driven by a genuine desire to know[391], but rather seeks opinions that are likely to impress[392]. As a result of his lack of curiosity, he is reluctant to make the necessary efforts himself to

[388] For a more in-depth treatment of this passage, see Anagnostopoulos (2003 p.172-3).
[389] This can be seen immediately in the introductory reply of Socrates (70b-71a), who pleasantly equates Larissa, where Meno comes from, with a place of wisdom, while ignorance reigns in Athens. He attributes the cause to the visit of Gorgias, who would have inflamed the Thessalians with love for knowledge. This assimilation is obviously ironic and Menon knows very well that Gorgias has no other claim than to train orators – it is moreover precisely this trait that he likes in him (95c). However, this joke is already revealing of the relationship that Meno has with knowledge: it is Gorgias who introduced him to the love of knowledge and it is in his own way that he loves it, that is- that is to say, in the manner of an orator, insofar as knowledge enables him to seduce the crowds.
[390] This is the reason why Socrates considers that his definition of color pleases him, even if it is inferior to that of the figure (see 76e).
[391] See Anderson (1971, p.233): "he does not have 'a craving to know – 'something which neither Socrates nor dialectic, nor perhaps anything else, can give him. He does have a craving to impress others, and therefore he would like to seem to know (which explains his predilection for resounding statements), but the effort actually required to pursue knowledge is beyond him. See also Klein (1965, p.188) and Gonzalez (2007, p.292-3).
[392] See Klein (1965, p.72): "his thinking is always "colored" by what other people say and by what has some standing in the eyes of the world. If this condition is to a large degree the general condition of men, it seems to characterize Meno in his very being. »

know the truth[393], but asks others to give him the answer so that he can memorizes[394]. Menon nevertheless draws great value from his knowledge of virtue, about which he has disserted with brilliance hundreds of times (80b). Menon therefore did not an erotic relationship to knowledge, but an instrumental relationship: knowledge is a way to look good in front of others. How can the erotic character of knowledge be discovered under such conditions? According to Socrates, knowledge is always desirable for those who become aware of their ignorance; so, this is the rebuttal Socratic which will make it possible to arouse this desire.

We have just seen that Menon constructs his own identity around the fact that he is someone who knows what virtue is; this opinion of himself explains why he is so disoriented by the refutation of Socrates who confronts him with his ignorance of this question (79e-80b). Indeed, the aporia with which Menon finds himself confronted is not only an epistemological aporia, but also an existential aporia: he leads his life according to his conception of virtue and the conviction that he is someone who knows what virtue is; therefore, the elenchos provokes in him an identity crisis, which explains his reluctance to admit his verdict. The servant, who has about the duplication of the square the same assurance as Menon as to virtue[395], does not feel that his identity is in danger when he is refuted, so he admits his ignorance no more ways. Having noted the falsity of the answer and its lack of resources to solve the problem before him, he finds himself willing to seek with pleasure and now conceives a desire for knowledge (84b-c). Thus, the refutation, when we accept his verdict, not only has an epistemological function, but also an erotic function: it awakens in us a desire which is now fixed on the

---

[393] See Canto-Sperber (1991a, p.24): "he is at once lazy, impetuous and impatient for immediate answers. »

[394] See Scott (2006, p.60): "Right from the beginning, we have seen how Meno appears as someone imbued with the ethos of memorizing answers to be recycled at a later time. See also Gonzalez (1998a, p.173).

[395] The parallel is underlined by Socrates, when he asserts that the servant would not have hesitated to present his solution many times in front of large crowds (83c).

solution to the problem posed. The refutation therefore allows the person who bears the cost of it to discovering knowledge as an object of desire, which involves alignment consequence of his understanding of himself and his conception of excellence human with this new good that he discovers[396].

As we saw in section 3.1.3.3[397], reminiscence requires doing the experience of refutation and the aporia that follows (84a), given that the realizing our mistake is already pointing us towards a better answer. The reminiscence therefore also has an existential function, insofar as it leads us on the one hand to question our identity and on the other hand to discover a desire for knowledge, which therefore constitutes a new goal in relation to which we can organize our life.

6.3.2. Virtue as the Service of the Truth in Us

The question of the nature of virtue is related in another way to the theory of virtue. reminiscent of Menon. To realize this, it must be understood that the doctrine insists on our ability to recognize a truth beyond our will, to which we we have to agree. To trace the importance of this theme, we will return on the value placed by the eponymous character on power and freedom and indicate how Socrates always points on the contrary to the necessity of submitting to a body that is beyond us. After being reproached by Socrates for defining a swarm of virtues rather than to indicate the nature of it, Menon believes that he is being asked to indicate the virtue most more important; he therefore declares that it resides in the power to command the men (73c-d). Now, if this definition is of little interest in instructing us on the nature of virtue, it reveals Meno's taste for power. This theme

---

[396] The parallel with a passage from Theaetetus (168a) is obvious. After indicating the proper use of refutation, Socrates, personifying Protagoras, concludes: "For if you do so, those who have to do with you will impute to themselves, and not to you, the trouble and the impasse which are theirs: you, they will look for you and love you, while they will take themselves in hatred and, fleeing themselves, they will throw themselves in the quest for knowledge to become other and get rid of those whom 'they were before (trans. Narcy). »

[397] See supra, p.124 sq.

also comes back in the following definition (78b): after having defined virtue as the desire for beautiful things and the power to procure them, the first part of the definition is deemed unnecessary, so that virtue is again reduced to power. Of more, after all the pains taken by Socrates to refute the paradox of Meno, this the latter still refuses to resume the inquiry into the nature of virtue and asks (86cd) to return to the question of its acquisition; he offers no reason to justify this caprice. Socrates marks his distress with an important precision for the interpretation that we propose dialogue, namely that Menon makes no effort to to command himself, presumably to be free. We see in this mockery that for Socrates, freedom is not an absolute value – in this case, obedience to priority principle would have been preferable[398].

In opposition to this absolute value attributed by Menon to power and freedom, Socrates constantly reminds us of the virtues of obedience. Thus, when Menon defines the virtue as the power to command men, Socrates tells him that the virtue of the slave is rather obedience (73d). Further in the dialogue, when the time comes to choose an interlocutor to illustrate the theory of reminiscence, Socrates turns to a servant of Menon. The choice to question a servant is significant: the dialogue wants to show that virtue consists in a certain service of the truth[399], which the servant will succeed much better than the "free" and power-filled men who are Menon and Anytos. Finally, when the time comes to distinguish knowledge from true opinion, Socrates offers an analogy with the statues of Daedalus (97e-98a), which flee when unbound, as slaves flee when unbound chained. Likewise, the truth implies a chaining by aitias logismos, which is a reminiscence. The opinions we have must not frolic according to our will, but be chained by solid reasons, rooted in our knowledge of the nature of things. Reminiscence involves the recognition of a truth which is superior to us and to which we must chain our opinions and our

[398] As Canto-Sperber (1991a, p.280n.186) puts it, Socrates has little regard for freedom if it only involves commanding others. The important thing is to submit to the commandment of truth.

[399] In the Eutyphron, piety is thus conceived as the service of the gods (13d sq.). We can also link this thesis to the passage from the Phaedo (62a-c) where Socrates affirms that we are the slaves of the gods.

will, because this truth is our true master. Throughout the dialogue, Menon always sees the good in external things (money, honour) and virtue in what makes it possible to produce such goods (essentially power). As he continually brings virtue back to his ability to produce something other than herself, Socrates always tells her that she should rather reside in a certain way of doing things[400]. Human excellence does not reside not in the accumulation of external goods, but in a certain way of being which is reflected in all our actions. The nature of this way of being is never specified.
in the dialogue, but, as we have just seen, it implies the recognition
of the existence of a truth that is beyond us. According to our interpretation of the theory of reminiscence, these truths, heritages of prenatal knowledge, are in us as
archetypes and influence how we relate to the world. In U.S
delivering virilely and relentlessly to the dialectical investigation, we will be able to take more aware of these norms that determine us, so as to harmonize our life and
our beliefs with them and thus make our existence more harmonious.
Reminiscence in the Meno is therefore also associated with an existential doctrine and ethics. Indeed, in the experience of the aporia provoked by the refutation, which already constitutes an advancement in reminiscence compared to the double ignorance, we conceive a desire for the intelligible which inclines us to orient our life towards the well thus discovered. Moreover, because of our ability to recognize truths
necessary and universal, we can redefine human virtue as a way
to be anchored in the recognition of such truths; therefore, the virtuous man
is the one who seeks to know the universal norms in order to submit to them, and not the one who has the absolute power to satisfy his unthinking desires.
In all our dialogues, the anamnesis therefore includes an existential dimension, in the extent to which the awareness of the memory of our prenatal knowledge is capable of redirecting our desire and transforming the way we conduct our

[400] On this subject, see Weiss (2001, p.24-26). Thus, Socrates tells him that the main thing is not to command or acquire beautiful things, but to do so with justice, courage, etc. (see 73d and 78d-79b).

life. In the Phaedrus, the development of a desire for forms thus comes from the gradual realization that we remember the form of beauty in
the experience of love. In the Phaedo, it is rather the realization of the trickery of the sensitive[401] which allows us to become aware of the presence in us of notions universal; we therefore develop a desire for the practice of dialectics, capable of helping us to reflect in the logos the nature of the forms that are within us. In the Meno, the awareness of our ignorance through refutation puts us in embarrassment, because we realize our inability to put into words the notions in relation to which we lead our lives; therefore, we are developing a desire for knowledge of these notions. We therefore enumerate three ways of convert to philosophy: either by deepening the spiritual dimension of our desire for beauty, either by astonishment at the deficiency of the sensitive, or by the aporia into which the Socratic[402] elenchos plunges us. Nevertheless, these three conversions are related: they all involve an awareness of our tacit relationship to certain norms or universal notions, of which we are first unable to report. Philosophy is therefore born in the realization of the importance in our lives of universal notions that determine us in a way archetypal, but of which we are not at first aware aware. Following our study, we can conclude that reminiscence is indeed a coherent theory, whose variations are due to the different functions it is called upon to play from one dialogue to another. The use of the expression "schema",

[401] See 83a; we will also consult the autobiography of Socrates in 95th sq., where the discovery of the inability to stick to an empirical explanation of the world leads Socrates to posit the existence of intelligible forms.

[402] Note that each dialogue also highlights the danger inherent in this type of conversion. In the case of the Phaedrus, desire runs the risk of remaining fixed on images of beauty and not passing to the next level (258e-259d): this is the case of the eponymous character in the dialogue, who always remains fascinated by the beauty of discourse, to the point of forgetting to question their truth (see for example 257c1-4 and 275b-c). In the Phaedo, on the contrary, the observation of the trickery of the sensible risks provoking a disgust for the sensible and for the body which results in the refusal of life: this is the case of the “true philosophers”. In the case of Meno, the refutation of the opinions which determine our identity risks being perceived as a threat: this is the reaction of Meno (and to a certain extent of Anytos), who revolts against the verdict of Socratic inquiry and refuses to resume discussion.

suggested by Kahn[403] for its greater flexibility in relation to "doctrine", we seems appropriate to designate the thought underlying the various presentations of history; we therefore recover it on our own account. In the first chapter, we We had reproached Kahn[404] for having identified the schema of reminiscence by bringing together the common elements of the different exhibitions, without doing the "background work" implied by the meticulous treatment of the doctrine in each of its contexts. By consequently, its conclusions remained vague and lacked depth. We now want to resume the results of our study, but this time in a synthetic perspective, in order to present the scheme of Platonic reminiscence[405], as shown by our analyses. We will therefore summarize our conclusions on the three aspects of the anamnesis and formulate our definitive answer to the other three questions of research defined in the introduction The archetypal function of the memory of forms Let's start by returning to the question of the status of our memories of prenatal knowledge. We have suggested that they correspond to archetypes, which determine our experience without our realizing it. The choice of the word "archetype" for describing Platonic innateism highlights the analogy between ontology and epistemology it implies. To put it succinctly, the shapes are sensitive to what archetypes are to sensations, each involving singular (sensory things and sensations) to universality (of being and awareness). The doctrine of reminiscence is thus based on the conviction in the identity, or at least the kinship, between the nature of intelligence and the structure

[403] See Kahn (2010, p.76).
[404] See supra, p.51 sq.
[405] Note that each dialogue also highlights the danger inherent in this type of conversion. In the case of the Phaedrus, desire runs the risk of remaining fixed on images of beauty and not passing to the next level (258e-259d): this is the case of the eponymous character in the dialogue, who always remains fascinated by the beauty of discourse, to the point of forgetting to question their truth (see for example 257c1-4 and 275b-c). In the Phaedo, on the contrary, the observation of the trickery of the sensible risks provoking a disgust for the sensible and for the body which results in the refusal of life: this is the case of the "true philosophers". In the case of Meno, the refutation of the opinions which determine our identity risks being perceived as a threat: this is the reaction of Meno (and to a certain extent of Anytos), who revolts against the verdict of Socratic inquiry and refuses to resume discussion.

ontology of the cosmos[406]. The "things themselves" give their being to things concrete and the archetypes give their intelligibility to the sensations of these things concrete. Thus, reminiscence must be opposed on this point to modern idealism, according to which a priori knowledge corresponds to the subjective structures of reason. The thinkers of this current, to stick to the security provided by intuitive input and of their subjectivity, indeed consider that it is possible to recognize in us the presence of certain a priori knowledge; however, they refuse to identify with the structure of reality. The certainty obtained by this restriction of rationality to the sphere of subjectivity is paid at the price of the hypothesis of an external world foreign and "irrational", haunted by some Kantian "thing in itself". The theory of reminiscence shows a more confident attitude towards the outside world, considered familiar, by virtue of the analogy between the structure of being and that spirit. Plato's adversaries will call this belief naïve; she has nevertheless the advantage of avoiding the hypothesis, unintelligible by definition, of a world that one cannot know at all “in oneself”.

The epistemological role of sensation due to the archetypal character of Platonic innateism, the soul does not have at first sight of a reflexive relationship to the nature of things and cannot hope to discover it by intuition: the memories of his prenatal acquaintance manifest themselves in his experience of the world without her realizing it, allowing her to attribute meaning to sensitive things. The soul has mediate access to forms, through sensitive images; it must therefore devote itself to the practice of

[406] This is not a new idea. Already, Hansing (1928, p.253) suggested: “The whole doctrine is based, so the present writer thinks, on the fact that mind is akin to what is most real. Reality and soul are closely and intimately united, and therefore soul is capable of knowing the Ideas, of contemplating and appropriating the immutable ideals, and of progressively attaining unity with the rational principle of the universe. Similarly, Kahn (2006, p.131) concludes one of his studies on reminiscence thus: “Ultimately then, Plato’s epistemology merge into his ontology. It is because reality has some definite structure that the soul must have a version of the same structure. I suggest that this notion of kinship or formal identity between the mind and the world, between the soul and the Forms, is the deep meaning of recollection. These two authors support their assertion by referring to Timaeus 35a and 41a, where we learn that the same "ingredients" were used to constitute the human soul and the soul of the world: the same and the other. Thus, our thesis is not new, but it is much more precise, showing exactly how the structure of intelligence is similar to intelligible forms by the attribution of archetypes to the soul.

dialectics in order to bring prenatal knowledge to consciousness. Although knowledge aims at ideal realities, human knowledge cannot be constituted without empirical anchoring. The Phaedon dramatically showed the impasses into which a logos that seeks to function autonomously, independent of anamnestic source experience. Indeed, the "true philosophers", resorting to uprooted arguments of their experience, sank into rigid polar oppositions (on the one hand: intelligible – immobility – invisibility – thought – soul; on the other: sensible things – change – visibility – sensation – body) that obscured the intermediaries discovered in experience. Human thought must be rooted in experience, because this is the only place where she can access the memory of her acquaintance prenatal by anamnesis[407]. Reminiscence and anthropology

Due to the archetypal status of the memory of prenatal knowledge, the soul human being belongs both to the ever-changing temporality of becoming and to the temporality of being and its eternal repetition of the same; it therefore implies a mediation between the two. Indeed, the soul, deprived of an intuition of forms, is incapable of knowing the universal immediately, but must fall back on the reminiscence caused by particular things. The human soul is therefore related with intelligible forms, but it does not exist itself in their mode. May be that after death, once freed from all bodily ties, the "pure" soul can maintain itself in an eternal contemplation of things themselves; however, the embodied soul, driven by the flow of its representations, is incapable of grasping the unity of forms intuitively and must fall back on a synthetic grasp, through the dialectical effort to embrace in a logos the unity of the multiple occurrences encountered. The man therefore opposes both the animal, which lives only in the singularity of its singular experiences, and to the divinity, which enjoys constant contemplation and

[407] It is worth recalling that this interpretation does not make Plato an empiricist. For the empiricist, the universal is reached by induction, by the accumulation of similar experiences and the abstraction of their particularities. In reminiscence, the universal is not to be abstracted from a multiplicity of similar cases accumulated over more and more experiences; it is always already there, but requires the reflexivity of the logos thanks to the dialectical exercise to be brought to full consciousness.

plenary of being in its integrity. On the contrary, the human soul relates to its experience through the logos, which it can use by virtue of the reminiscence that it inspire sensible things and which implies the recognition of the universal in the particular. By virtue of reminiscence and the archetypal nature of the spirit, the soul human therefore occupies an intermediate position between being and becoming.

Reminiscence and Ethics The kinship of the human soul with the ontological structure of the cosmos implies that it is not possible to live like an animal on the level of sensations without denying a part of ourselves; indeed, certain ideal norms, such as justice, are imposed on our reason in a necessary way. However, by virtue of the archetypal nature of the remembrance of prenatal knowledge, we must also not run away from our body and to despise the sensations it procures; to think to reach the integral intuition of the forms by the rigor of asceticism aims a science reserved for the gods. human wisdom remains partial and incomplete by virtue of its linking to the singularity of a body, but it is not zero for all that. The Socratic philosopher, assuming the human condition, engages with courage and perseverance in the practice of dialectic; he wonders about the nature of things, based on their occurrences in the experience, in order to achieve an increasingly reflexive and synthetic logos, able to overcome the aporias encountered in the discussion. Therefore, wisdom human being is not in disembodied contemplation, but in reflection on the bodily experiences through dialectics, thus allowing the realization of the most great unity possible between the two aspects of our nature.

The function of myth the last point to which we want to return by way of conclusion to this study concerns the mode of discourse of reminiscence. In the Phaedo and in the reflections on the geometry lesson of Menon, the anamnesis is presented as a theory rational (logos). In both cases, it aims to report on an experience: that of the ability of an ignoramus to recognize the solution to a problem on his own complex mathematics in the Menon and that of the inadequacy and deficiency of sensitive things in relation to the notions we use to describe them in the

Phaedon. Thus, the perplexity (aporia) aroused by the experience motivates the formulation of the theory (logos) of reminiscence to overcome these difficulties. The Doctrine of the anamnesis therefore aims to resolve the aporiai and restore their coherence to the erga of the awareness. Now, if the formulation of the theory of reminiscence seeks a way out to the impasses of experience, how can it agree with the myth, as in the Phedre and in the introductory presentation of the Menon? Is not the myth precisely a discourse that crosses the boundaries of human experience and ventures to describe the spatial and temporal regions which transcend it by an unverifiable discourse? As theory (logos), reminiscence explains our relationship to experience by virtue of of our belonging to another order of reality, known prior to our existence.
It is therefore an incomplete doctrine: it points to an existence prior to incarnation for the soul, but simultaneously implies the impossibility of knowing the latter truly, since there is only anamnesis of the things themselves. If the soul cannot reach a full understanding of itself by relying only on experience and argument, it can therefore at least arrive at a knowledge of this insufficiency: she can realize that by virtue of her experiences, rational speech is powerless to account for its nature. To overcome this new aporia, it will have need another type of discourse: the myth. As we saw in our section on the Phaedrus of the sixth chapter, the myth is also grounded in experience, insofar as it seeks to articulate a understanding of the soul and the cosmos that manage to restore meaning to sensory experience. Thus, in the Phaedrus, the composition of the myth is motivated by the experience of a noble love and the impossibility of accounting for it without telling the subject of the soul the story of its coming from another world for which it can find a desire. We have shown that the vertical axis of space is structured there way to represent an ontological gradation; it works in conjunction with the image of a winged soul, symbolizing its ability to climb this ladder thanks to the elevation of her self-understanding[408]. The myth thus represents a

[408] Let us remember that the human soul can lead an animal or divine existence, depending on the object (pleasure or knowledge) targeted by its movement.

axiological hierarchy which makes it possible to classify the different types of human existence into depending on the orientation of their eros. But the myth goes beyond mere representation: by projecting this hierarchy onto the very structure of the cosmos, it reifies it; dignity superiority of philosophical life is no longer a subjective appreciation, but it is presented as a fact, an element of reality. The myth, however, does not come to found this scale of values; on the contrary, it could not have been composed if this hierarchy had not previously been recognized. Where does she come from then?

By way of conclusion to the exposition of the theory of reminiscence in the Menon, Socrates will say that he would not fight for any point of his theory, except to maintain the moral value of the belief in the possibility of philosophical inquiry, which makes us better, braver and less idle (86b8-9). Socrates recounts his myth in order to encourage Menon to resume the dialectical examination, with the conviction that this activity will make it better. He can have such certainty about the value of dialectics because he himself recognized the good in the life he led. Therefore, it is to from the well recognized in the practice of philosophy that Socrates can imagine what must be the structure of the cosmos as well as the story of the soul to make sense to this experience. While dialectical logos seeks to conceptualize reminiscence drawn from the experience of concrete things, the muthos captures the hierarchy of value recognized subjectively in the practice of dialectics to project it onto the structures objectives of the cosmos; it therefore shapes the regions of space and time inaccessible to human experience in harmony with the self-understanding that emerges from this experience. This is why Socrates will affirm, as an epilogue to the myth of Phaedo, that an intelligent man will not take everything he says literally, but will rather believe that it is "about so" (Phaedo 114d): it is a plausible representation of the cosmos by virtue of the experience of the good recognized through of the practice of philosophy. For Socrates, the myth thus comes to frame and support a practice whose value has already been approved; it makes it possible to equip a neophyte like Menon with beliefs that give an objective representation of the scale of value subjectively recognized by a philosopher like Socrates, thus facilitating the

reorientation of his desire and his existence towards philosophical activity. We can therefore conclude that it is because of its existential and ethical dimension that the theory of reminiscence lends itself to being expressed also in the form of myth.

CONCLUSION

Following our study, we can conclude that reminiscence is indeed a coherent theory, whose variations are due to the different functions it is called upon to play from one dialogue to another. The use of the expression "schema", suggested by Kahn[409] for its greater flexibility in relation to "doctrine", we seems appropriate to designate the thought underlying the various presentations of history; we therefore recover it on our own account. In the first chapter, we We had reproached Kahn[410] for having identified the schema of reminiscence by bringing together the common elements of the different exhibitions, without doing the "background work" implied by the meticulous treatment of the doctrine in each of its contexts. By consequently, its conclusions remained vague and lacked depth. We now want to resume the results of our study, but this time in a synthetic perspective, in order to present the scheme of Platonic reminiscence[411], as shown by our analyses. We will therefore summarize our conclusions on the three aspects of the anamnesis and formulate our definitive answer to the other three questions of research defined in the introduction.

The archetypal function of the memory of forms

Let's begin by returning to the question of the status of our memories of prenatal knowledge. We have suggested that they correspond to archetypes, which determine our experience without our realizing it. The choice of the word "archetype" for describing Platonic innateism highlights the analogy between ontology and epistemology it implies. To put it succinctly, the shapes are

[409] See Kahn (2010, p.76).
[410] See above, p.51 sq.
[411] The exposition of this diagram has a value in itself, insofar as it allows us to grasp what makes the anamnesis unit; however, it should not replace the different presentations of the doctrine, each having a value in their particular context.

sensitive to what archetypes are to sensations, each involving singular (sensory things and sensations) to universality (of being and awareness). The doctrine of reminiscence is thus based on the conviction in the identity, or at least the kinship, between the nature of intelligence and the structure ontology of the cosmos[412]. The "things themselves" give their being to things concrete and the archetypes give their intelligibility to the sensations of these things concrete. Thus, reminiscence must be opposed on this point to modern idealism, according to which a priori knowledge corresponds to the subjective structures of reason. The thinkers of this current, to stick to the security provided by intuitive input and of their subjectivity, indeed consider that it is possible to recognize in us the presence of certain a priori knowledge; however, they refuse to identify with the structure of reality. The certainty obtained by this restriction of rationality to the sphere of subjectivity is paid at the price of the hypothesis of an external world foreign and "irrational", haunted by some Kantian "thing in itself". The theory of reminiscence shows a more confident attitude towards the outside world, considered familiar, by virtue of the analogy between the structure of being and that spirit. Plato's adversaries will call this belief naive; she has dramatically showed the impasses into which a logos that seeks to function autonomously, independent of anamnestic source experience. Indeed, the "true philosophers", resorting to uprooted arguments of their experience, sank into rigid polar oppositions (on the one hand:

[412] This is not a new idea. Already, Hansing (1928, p.253) suggested: “The whole doctrine is based, so the present writer thinks, on the fact that mind is akin to what is most real. Reality and soul are closely and intimately united, and therefore soul is capable of knowing the Ideas, of contemplating and appropriating the immutable ideals, and of progressively attaining unity with the rational principle of the universe. Similarly, Kahn (2006, p.131) concludes one of his studies on the reminiscent thus: “Ultimately then, Plato’s epistemology merge into his ontology. It is because reality has some definite structure that the soul must have a version of the same structure. I suggest that this notion of kinship or formal identity between the mind and the world, between the soul and the Forms, is the deep meaning of recollection. These two authors support their assertion by referring to Timaeus 35a and 41a, where we learn that the same "ingredients" were used to constitute the human soul and the soul of the world: the same and the other. So our thesis is not new, but it is much more precise, showing exactly how the structure of intelligence resembles intelligible forms through the attribution of archetypes to the soul.

intelligible – immobility – invisibility – thought – soul; on the other: sensitive things – change – visibility – sensation – body) that obscured the intermediaries discovered in experience. Human thought must be rooted in experience, because this is the only place where she can access the memory of her acquaintance prenatal by anamnesis[413].

Reminiscence and anthropology

Due to the archetypal status of the memory of prenatal knowledge, the soul human being belongs both to the ever-changing temporality of becoming and to the temporality of being and its eternal repetition of the same; it therefore implies a mediation between the two. Indeed, the soul, deprived of an intuition of forms, is incapable of knowing the universal immediately, but must fall back on the reminiscence caused by particular things. The human soul is therefore related with intelligible forms, but it does not exist itself in their mode. May be nevertheless the advantage of avoiding the hypothesis, unintelligible by definition, of a world that one cannot know at all "in oneself". The epistemological role of sensation due to the archetypal character of Platonic innateism, the soul does not have at first sight of a reflexive relationship to the nature of things and cannot hope to discover it by intuition: the memories of his prenatal acquaintance manifest themselves in his experience of the world without her realizing it, allowing her to attribute meaning to sensitive things. The soul has mediate access to forms, through sensitive images; it must therefore devote itself to the practice of dialectics in order to bring prenatal knowledge to consciousness. Although knowledge aims at ideal realities, human knowledge cannot be

[413] It is worth recalling that this interpretation does not make Plato an empiricist. For the empiricist, the universal is reached by induction, by the accumulation of similar experiences and the abstraction of their particularities. In reminiscence, the universal is not to be abstracted from a multiplicity of similar cases accumulated over more and more experiences; It is always already there, but requires the reflexivity of the logos thanks to the dialectical exercise to be brought to mindfulness.

constituted without empirical anchoring. The Phaedon that after death, once freed from all bodily ties, the "pure" soul can maintain itself
in an eternal contemplation of things themselves; however, the embodied soul, driven by the flow of its representations, is incapable of grasping the unity of forms intuitively and must fall back on a synthetic grasp, through the dialectical effort to embrace in a logos the unity of the multiple occurrences encountered. The man therefore opposes both the animal, which lives only in the singularity of its singular experiences, and to the divinity, which enjoys constant contemplation and plenary of being in its integrity. On the contrary, the human soul relates to its experience through the logos, which it can use by virtue of the reminiscence that it inspire sensible things and which implies the recognition of the universal in the particular. By virtue of reminiscence and the archetypal nature of the spirit, the soul human therefore occupies an intermediate position between being and becoming.
Reminiscence and Ethics

The kinship of the human soul with the ontological structure of the cosmos implies that it is not possible to live like an animal on the level of sensations without denying a part of ourselves; indeed, certain ideal norms, such as justice, are imposed on our reason in a necessary way. However, by virtue of the archetypal nature of the remembrance of prenatal knowledge, we must also not run away from our body and to despise the sensations it procures; to think to reach the integral intuition of the forms by the rigor of asceticism aims a science reserved for the gods. Human wisdom remains partial and incomplete by virtue of its linking to the singularity of a
body, but it is not zero for all that. The Socratic philosopher, assuming the human condition, engages with courage and perseverance in the practice of dialectic; he wonders about the nature of things, based on their occurrences in the experience, in order to achieve an increasingly reflexive and synthetic logos, able to overcome the aporias encountered in the discussion. Therefore, wisdom human being is not in disembodied contemplation, but in reflection on the

bodily experiences through dialectics, thus allowing the realization of the most great unity possible between the two aspects of our nature.

The function of myth

The last point to which we want to return by way of conclusion to this study concerns the mode of discourse of reminiscence. In the Phaedo and in the reflections on the geometry lesson of Menon, the anamnesis is presented as a theory rational (logos). In both cases, it aims to report on an experience: that of the ability of an ignoramus to recognize the solution to a problem on his own complex mathematics in the Menon and that of the inadequacy and deficiency of sensitive things in relation to the notions we use to describe them in the Phaedon. Thus, the perplexity (aporia) aroused by the experience motivates the formulation of the theory (logos) of reminiscence to overcome these difficulties. The Doctrine of the anamnesis therefore aims to resolve the aporiai and restore their coherence to the erga of the awareness. Now, if the formulation of the theory of reminiscence seeks a way out to the impasses of experience, how can it agree with the myth, as in the Phedre and in the introductory presentation of the Menon? Is not the myth precisely a discourse that crosses the boundaries of human experience and ventures to describe the spatial and temporal regions which transcend it by an unverifiable discourse? As theory (logos), reminiscence explains our relationship to experience by virtue of of our belonging to another order of reality, known prior to our existence.
It is therefore an incomplete doctrine: it points to an existence prior to incarnation for the soul, but simultaneously implies the impossibility of knowing the latter truly, since there is only anamnesis of the things themselves. If the soul cannot reach a full understanding of itself by relying only on experience and argument, it can therefore at least arrive at a knowledge of this insufficiency: she can realize that by virtue of her experiences, rational speech is powerless to account for its nature. To overcome this new aporia, it will have need another type of discourse: the myth.

As we saw in our section on the Phaedrus of the sixth chapter, the myth is also grounded in experience, insofar as it seeks to articulate a understanding of the soul and the cosmos that manage to restore meaning to sensory experience. Thus, in the Phaedrus, the composition of the myth is motivated by the experience of a noble love and the impossibility of accounting for it without telling the subject of the soul the story of its coming from another world for which it can find a desire. We have shown that the vertical axis of space is structured there way to represent an ontological gradation; it works in conjunction with the image of a winged soul, symbolizing its ability to climb this ladder thanks to the elevation of her self-understanding. The myth thus represents a axiological hierarchy which makes it possible to classify the different types of human existence into depending on the orientation of their eros. But the myth goes beyond mere representation: by projecting this hierarchy onto the very structure of the cosmos, it reifies it; dignity superiority of philosophical life is no longer a subjective appreciation, but it is presented as a fact, an element of reality. The myth, however, does not come to found this scale of values; on the contrary, it could not have been composed if this hierarchy had not previously been recognized. Where does she come from then?
By way of conclusion to the exposition of the theory of reminiscence in the Menon, Socrates will say that he would not fight for any point of his theory, except to maintain the moral value of the belief in the possibility of philosophical inquiry, which makes us better, braver and less idle (86b8-9). Socrates recounts his myth in order to encourage Menon to resume the dialectical examination, with the conviction that this activity will make it better. He can have such certainty about the value of dialectics because he himself recognized the good in the life he led. Therefore, it is to from the well recognized in the practice of philosophy that Socrates can imagine what must be the structure of the cosmos as well as the story of the soul to make sense to this experience. way to represent an ontological gradation; it works in conjunction with the image of a winged soul, symbolizing its ability to climb this ladder thanks to

the elevation of her self-understanding. The myth thus represents a axiological hierarchy which makes it possible to classify the different types of human existence into depending on the orientation of their eros. But the myth goes beyond mother representation: by projecting this hierarchy onto the very structure of the cosmos, it reifies it; dignity superiority of philosophical life is no longer a subjective appreciation, but it is presented as a fact, an element of reality. The myth, however, does not come to found this scale of values; on the contrary, it could not have been composed if this hierarchy had not previously been recognized. Where does she come from then?

By way of conclusion to the exposition of the theory of reminiscence in the Menon, Socrates will say that he would not fight for any point of his theory, except to maintain the moral value of the belief in the possibility of philosophical inquiry, which makes us better, brave and less idle (86b8-9). Socrates recounts his myth in order to encourage Menon to resume the dialectical examination, with the conviction that this activity will make it better. He can have such certainty about the value of dialectics because he himself recognized the good in the life he led. Therefore, it is to from the well recognized in the practice of philosophy that Socrates can imagine what must be the structure of the cosmos as well as the story of the soul to make sense to this experience.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ackrill, J.L. 1973. “Anamnesis in the Phaedo: Remark on 73c-75c. » In Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos. Ed. E.N. Lee, A.P.D. Mourelatos, and R. Rorty. Assen: Van Gorcum. p.177-195.

Adam, J. 1900. The Republic of Plato. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ahrensdorf, P.J. 1995. The Death of Socrates and the Life of Philosophy: An Interpretation of Plato's Phaedo. Albany: State University of New YorkPress.

Allen, R.E. 1959-60. Anamnesis in Plato's Meno and Phaedo. Tea Review of Metaphysics 13: 165-74.

Anagnostopoulos, M. 2003. “Desire for Good in the Meno”. In Desire, Identity, and Existence: Essays in Honor of T.M. Penner, Reshotko, Ed. N. Reshotko. Kelowna: AcademicPrint. & pub. p. 171-191.

Anderson, D.E. 1971. "The Theory of Recollection in Plato's Meno" Southern Journal of Philosophy 9(3): 225-235.

Apolloni, D. 1996. “Plato’s Affinity Argument for the Immortality of the Soul”. Journal of the History of Philosophy 34(1): 5-32.

.1989. “A Note on auta ta isa at Phaedo 74.” Journal of the History of Philosophy 27(1): 127-34.

Beck, M.C. 2008. The Quest for Wisdom in Plato and Carl Jung: a Comparative Study of the Healers of the Soul. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.

Bedu-Addo, J.T. 1991. “Sense-experience and the argument for recollection in Plato's Phaedo » Phronesis 36(1): 27-60.

. 1984. "Recollection and the Argument 'from an Hypothesis' in

Plato's Meno. » Journal of Hellenic Studies 104: 1-14. . 1983. "Sense-Experience and Recollection in Plato's Meno." »
American Journal of Philology 104(3): 228-248.
Benson, H. H. 2015. Clitophon's Challenge: Dialectic in Plato's Meno, Phaedo, and Republic. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Bett, R. 1986. “Immortality and the Nature of the Soul in the Phaedrus”. Phronesis 31(1): 1-26.
Bluck, R.S. 1961. Meno. Edited with Introduction and Commentary by R.S. Bluck. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
. 1959. "Plato's Form of Equal." Phronesis 4(1): 5-11.
. 1958a. “The Phaedrus and Reincarnation”. The American Journal of Philology 79(2): 156-164.
. 1958b. “Plato, Pindar, and Metempsychosis”. The American Journal of Philology 79(4): 405-414.
Blyth, D. 1997. “The Ever-Moving Soul in Plato’s “Phaedrus””. American Journal of Philology 118: 185-217.
Bobonich, C. 2002. Plato's Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Bostock, D. 1986. Plato's Phaedo. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Boter, G.J. 1988. “Plato, Meno 82C2-3. Phronesis 33(2): 208-215.
Brague, R. “Critique of anamnesis. Comment on Mrs. Lesley Brown", Philosophical Review of France and Abroad 181(4): 621-625.
— . 1978, The Remainer: supplement to the comments of Menon de Plato. Paris: The Beautiful Letters.
Brandwood, L. 1990. The Chronology of Plato's Dialogue. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
— . 1976. A Word index to Plato. Leeds: W.S. Maney & son limited.

Brisson, L. 2008. “Reminiscence in Plato”, in J. Dillon and M.-E.
Zovko, Platonism and Forms of intelligence, Berlin: Academia
Verlag. p.p. 179-190.
—— . 2007. “Reminiscence in the Menon(81c5-d5)”, GorgiasMenon: Selected papers
from the seventh Symposium Platonicum, ed.
M. Erler and L. Brisson, Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, pp. 199-
203.
—— . 2004c1989. Phaedra. Introduction, commentary and notes.
New ed. correct. and update. Paris: Flammarion.
—— . 1999. "Reminiscence in the Menon (80th-81st) and its religious background", in
Anamnese e Saber, ed. J.T. Santos, Centro
of Filosofia da Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon: Impresa Nacional
- Casa da Moeda, pp. 23-61.
—— . 1997. "Plato's Theory of Sensation in the Timaeus: How it
Works and What it Means » Proceedings of the Boston Area
Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy, Leiden: BRILL, pp.147-176.
— . 1982. Plato, Words and Myths: How and Why
Plato named the myth? Paris: Francois Maspero bookstore.
Broadie, S. 2001. “Soul and Body in Plato and Descartes”.
Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 101(1): 295-308.
Brown, L. 2008. “Review of Scott, Plato’s Meno.” philosophical
Review 117(3): 468–71.
— . 1991. “Knowledge and reminiscence in the “Menon””, Revue
philosophy of France and abroad 181(4): 603-619.
Brown, M. 1967. “Plato Disapproves of the Slave-boy’s Answer.”
Review of Metaphysics 21(1): 57-77.
Burger, R. 1984. The Phaedo: A Platonic Labyrinth. New Haven: Yale
UniversityPress.
. 1980. Plato's Phaedrus: A Defense of a Philosophical Art of

Writing. Alabama: University of Alabama Press.
Burnyeat, M.F. 1985. “Socratic Midwifery, Platonic Inspiration”. Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies 24: 7-16.
. 1980. "Socrates and the Jury: Paradoxes in Plato's distinction between knowledge and true belief”. Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, suppl. 54: 173-91.
. 1977. “Examples in Epistemology: Socrates, Theaetetus and G.E. Moore”. Philosophy 52: 381-396.
Cairns, D.L. 1993. Aidos: The Psychology and Ethics of Honor and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Cameron, A. 1938. The Pythagorean Background of the Theory of Recollection, Mensaha: G. Banta ed.
Canto-Sperber, M. 1991a. Menon: Translation, Introduction and Notes. Paris: Flammarion.
. 1991b. "Menon's paradox and knowledge definitional: response to Dominic Scott", Philosophical Review France and Abroad 181(4): 659-663.
Cherniss, H. 1944. Aristotle's criticism of Plato and the Academy. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.
— . 1940. “Review of The Pythagorean Background of the Theory of Recollection by Alister Cameron”. The American Journal of Philology 61(3): 359-65.
Collobert, C. 2012. “The Platonic Art of Myth-Making: Myth as Informative Phantasma » In Plato and Myth Studies on the Use and Status of Platonic Myths, Ed. C. Collobert, P. Destrée and F. González. Leiden: BRILL, pp.87-108.
Cornford, F.M. 1952. Principium Spientiae: the origins of Greek philosophical thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

— . 1935. Plato's Theory of Knowledge: the Theaetetus and the Sophist of Plato. London: Routledge.
Crombie, I. M. 1963. An Examination of Plato's Doctrines. II: Plato on Knowledge and Reality. London: Routledge & Keagan Paul.
Dancy, R.M. 2004. Plato's Introduction of Forms. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Demos, R. 1968. "Plato's Doctrine of the Psyche as a Self-Moving Motion". Journal of the History of Philosophy 6(2): 133-145.
Devereux, D. 2008. "Meno Re-examined". The Philosophical Quarterly 58: 703-708.
. 1978. "Nature and Teaching in Plato's Meno" Phronesis 23(2): 118-126.
Dilman, I. 1992. Philosophy and the Philosophical Life: A Study in Plato's Phaedo. New York: St. Martin's Press.
Dimas, P. 1996. "True Belief in the Meno." Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy 14:1–32.
Dixsaut, M. 2012. "Myth and Interpretation". In Plato and Myth Studies on the Use and Status of Platonic Myths, Ed. C. Collobert, P. Destrée and F. Gonzalez. Leiden: BRILL, pp.25-46.
. 2006. "Plato and his two memories" In Memory and memory: Six studies on Plato, Aristotle, Hegel and Husserl, ed. AT. Brancacci. Naples: Bibliopolis, pp. 13-45.
. 1991. Phaedon. Paris: Flammarion.
Dorion, L-A. 2011. "Rise and Fall of the Socratic Problem." In The Cambridge Companion to Socrates. Ed. D.R. Morrison, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-25.
. 2000. Memorables. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
Dorter, K. 1982. Plato's Phaedo: An Interpretation. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

. 1972(3). “Equality, Recollection and Purification”.
Phronesis 17: 198-218.
Dye, J.W. 1978. "Plato's Concept of Causal Explanation." » Tulane
Studies in Philosophy 27: 37-56.
Ebert, T. 2007. “The Theory of Recollection in Plato's Meno” in
Gorgias–Menon: Selected Papers from the Seventh Symposium
Platonicum, ed. M. Erler and L. Brisson, Sankt Augustin: Academia
Verlag, pp. 184-198.
. 1994. Sokrates Als Pythagoreer Und Die Anamnesis in Platons
Phaidon. Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur.
. 1973. “Plato's Theory of Recollection reconsidered. Year
Interpretation of Meno 80a-86c. », Man and World, 6(2): 163-181.
Edelstein, L. 1949. “The Function of the Myth in Plato's Philosophy.”
Journal of the History of Ideas 10(4): 463–81.
Ferejohn, M.T. 2006. “Knowledge, Recollection and the Forms in
RepublicVII. In Blackwell Guide to the Republic, ed. G.X.
Santas, Maiden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. p.p. 215-33.
Ferrari, G.R.F. 1987. Listening to the Cicadas: a Study of Plato's
Phaedrus, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Festugière, A. J. 1936. Contemplation and contemplative life according to
Plato. Paris: Vrin.
Fine, G. 2014. The Possibility of Inquiry: Meno’s Paradox from
Socrates to Sextus. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
—— . 2007. “Inquiry and Discovery: A Discussion of Dominic Scott,
Plato's Meno". Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy 32: 331–67.
—— . 2004. ‘Knowledge and True Belief in the Meno’, Oxford Studies
in Ancient Philosophy 27 (2004), 41–81.
—— . 2003. Plato on knowledge and forms: selected essays. Oxford
and New York: Clarendon Press and Oxford University Press.

—— . 1992. “Inquiry in the Meno. In The Cambridge Companion to Plato, ed. R. Kraut, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.p. 200-226.
Fouillee, A. 1869. The philosophy of Plato: exposition, history and criticism of the theory of ideas. Paris: Ladrange.
Franklin, L. 2005. “Recollection and Philosophical Reflection in Plato's Phaedo”. Phronesis 50(4): 289-314.
—— . 2001. “The Structure of Dialectic in the Meno”. Phronesis 46(4): 413–39.
Friedlander, P. 1969c1958. Plato. I: An introduction. Transl. H. Mayerhoff. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Frutiger, P. 1930. The myths of Plato philosophical study and literary. Paris: F.Alcan.
Gallop, D. 1975. Phaedo. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Gentzler, J. 1994. “Recollection and “The Problem of the Socratic Elenchus”. Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy 10: 257–95.
Gerson, L.P. 1999. “The Recollection Argument Revisited”. Apeiron 32(4): 1-15.
Goldschmidt, V. 1949. The Religion of Plato. Paris: Presses French academics.
. 1947. Plato's dialogues: structure and method dialectic. Paris: University Press of France.
Gonzalez, F. 2015. ““I Have to Live in Eros“: Heidegger’s 1932 Seminar on Plato's Phaedrus » Epoché 19(2): p.217-240.
. 2007. "How is the Truth of Beings in the Soul?" Interpreting Anamnesis in Plato. », Elenchos 28(2): 275-301.
. 1998a. Dialectic and Dialogue: Plato's Practice of Philosophical Inquiry. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University

Press.
. 1998b. “Nonpropositional Knowledge in Plato”. Apeiron 31(3): 235-284.
. 1996. “Review of T. Ebert: Sokrates als Pythagoreer und die Anamnesis in Platos Phaidon”. Journal of History of Philosophy 34(3): 452-454.
Gosling, J. 1965. “Similarity in Phaedo 73b Seq. Phronesis 10(2): 151-161.
Gotshalk, R. 2001. Loving and dying: a reading of Plato's Phaedo, Symposium, and Phaedrus. Lanham, Md: University Press of America.
Griswold, C.L. 1986. Self-Knowledge in Plato's Phaedrus. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Gulley, N. 1962. Plato's theory of knowledge. London: Methuen.
. 1954. "Plato's Theory of Recollection", Classical Quarterly 48(3): 194-213.
Guthrie, W.K.C. 1956. Protagoras and Meno. Toronto: Penguin.
Hackforth, R. 1955. Plato's Phaedo. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
. 1952. Plato's Phaedrus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Hankison, R.J. 1990. “Implications of Immortality”. Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy 6(1): p.1-27.
Hansing, O. 1928. "The Doctrine of Recollection in Plato's Dialogues." The Monist 38(2): 231-262.
Hartmann, N. 1965. Platos Logik of Breasts. Berlin: W. de Gruyter. c1909. Giessen: A. Töpelmann.
Hare, R.M. 1960. “Philosophical Discoveries”. Mind 69, p.145-162.
Haynes, R.P. 1964. “The Form Equality as a Set of Equals”. Phronesis 9(1): 17-26.

Hoerber, R. G. 1960. “Plato’s Meno”. Phronesis 5(2): 78-102.
Howland, J. 1991. “Re-reading Plato: the Probelm of Platonic Chronology » Phoenix 45(3): 189-214.
Huber, C.E. 1964. Anamnesis bei Plato. Munich: Max Hueber in Komm.
Hunter, G. and Inwood, B. “Plato Leibniz, and the Furnished Soul”. Journal of the History of Philosophy 22(4): 423-34.
Hyland, D.A. 1995. Finitude and Transcendence in the Platonic Dialogs. Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press.
Ionescu, C. 2007. Plato's Meno: an interpretation. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
Irwin, T. 1995. Plato's Ethics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
. 1977. Plato's Moral Theory. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
. 1974. "Recollection and Plato's Moral Theory." Review of Metaphysics, 27(4): 752-72.
Jenks, R. 1992. “On the Sense of the Socratic Reply to Meno’s paradox”. Ancient Philosophy 12(2): 317-330.
Joly, H. 1980. The Platonic reversal: logos, episteme, polis. 2nd ed. correct. Library of the History of Philosophy. Paris: J. Vrin.
Kahn, C. H. 2010. “The importance of dialogic form for Plato”. Transl. D.El Murr. In Aglaia: around Plato. Blends offered to Monique Dixsaut. Ed. A. Brancacci, D. El Murr and D.P. Taormina.
. 2006. “Plato on Recollection” In A Companion to Plato. Ed. H.H. Benson. Maiden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., pp.119-32.
. 2005. “Why the Doctrine of Reminiscence Is Absent of the Republic ". In Studies on the Republic of Plato, ed. Mr. Dixsaut, A. Larrivee and F. Teisserenc, Paris: Vrin, pp. 95-103.
. 2003. “On the Philosophical Autonomy of a Platonic Dialogue: the Case of Recollection. In Plato as Author, ed. A.N.

Michelini. Leiden: BRILL, pp.299-312.
Kelsey, S. 2000. “Recollection in the Phaedo”. Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy 16: 91-121.
Kim, A. 2010. Plato in Germany. Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag.
King, M. 2007. "The Meno's Metaphilosophical Examples" Southern Journal of Philosophy 45(3): 395-412.
Klein, J. 1965. A Commentary on Plato's Meno. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
Klever, W. N. A. 1962. Anamnēsis en anagōgē; gesprek puts Plato in Aristoteles over het menselijk kennen. Assen: Van Gorcum.
Lebeck, A. 1972. “The central myth of Plato’s Phaedrus”. Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies 13(3): p.267-290.
Leibniz, G.W. 1921. New Essays on Human Understanding. Paris : Ernest Flammarion.
. 1686. Discourse on metaphysics.
Lindenmuth, D.C. 1988. "Love and Recollection in Plato's Phaedo." Ancient Philosophy 8:11-18.
Lloyd, G.E.R. 1992. “Plato and the mysteries of mathematics”. Phronesis 37(2): 166-83.
Lustoslawski, W. 1897. The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic; with an account of Plato's style and of the chronology of his writings. London, New York: Green and Co.
Mattéi, J.-F. 1996. Plato and the mirror of myth: from the golden age to Atlantis. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
McCabe, M.M. 2015. Platonic Conversations. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
. 2009. “Escaping One’s Own Notice Knowing: Meno’s Paradox Again”. Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 109: 233–56.
Mills, K.W. 1957. "Plato's Phaedo 74b7-c6", Phronesis 2(2): 128-

147.
Moline, J. 1969. “Meno’s Paradox”. Phronesis 14(2): 153-161.
Moravcsik, J. 1971. “Learning and recollection”. In Plato, I:
Metaphysics and epistemology. A collection of critical essays, ed.
G. Vlastos. Garden City NY: Anchor bks. Doubleday & co.
Morgan, K.A. 2012. “Theriomorphism and the Composite Soul in Plato. »
In Plato and Myth Studies on the Use and Status of Platonic
Myths, Ed. C. Collobert, P. Destrée and F. Gonzalez. Leiden: BRILL,
pp.323-342.
. 2000. Myth and Philosophy from the Presocracies to Plato.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
. 1984. "Sense-Perception and Recollection in the Phaedo."
Phronesis 29(3): 237-51.
Natorp, P. 1903. Platos Ideenlehre; eine Einführung in den Idealismus.
Leipzig: Durr.
Nehamas, A. 1985. “Meno’s Paradox and Socrates as a Teacher”. Oxford
Studies in Ancient Philosophy 3: 1-30.
Nicholson, G. 1999. Plato's Phaedrus: The Philosophy of Love. West
Lafayette: Purdue University Press.
O’Brien, D. 1991. “Menon’s Paradox and the Oxford School: Answer
to Dominic Scott”, Philosophical Review of France and
the Stranger 181(4): 643-658.
Osborne, C. 1999. ““No” Means “Yes”: The Seduction of the Word in
Plato's Phaedrus". Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in
Ancient Philosophy 15: p.263-281.
. 1995. “Perceiving Particulars and Recollecting the Forms in
the Phaedo”. Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 95: 211-233.
Olshewsky, T. M. 1976. “On the Relations of Soul to Body in Plato and
Aristotle. » Journal of the History of Philosophy 14: 391-404.

Pakaluk, M. 2003. “Degrees of Separation in the “Phaedo” (Plato)”. Phronesis 48(2): 89-115.
Partenie, C. 2009. Plato’s Myths. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Rawson, G. 2006. “Platonic Recollection and Mental Pregnancy. » Journal of the History of Philosophy 44(2): 137-155.
Reinhardt, K. 2007. Plato's Myths. Transl. A.S. Reineke Paris: Gallimard.
Robin, L. 1985. Phaedra. Plato: Complete Works. Introduction by L.Robin. Paris: The Beautiful Letters.
. 1932. Plato. Paris: F.Alcan.
. 1908. The Platonic Theory of Love. Paris: F.Alcan.
Robins, I.N. 1997. “Recollection and self-understanding in the Phaedo”. The Classical Quarterly 47(2): 438-51.
Robinson, T.M. 1971. “The Argument for Immortality in Plato’s Phaedrus”. In Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy. Ed. JP Anton and G.L. Kustas, Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, p.345-353.
Ross, K.L. 1987. “Non-Intuitive Immediate Knowledge”. Ratio 29(2): 163-79.
Ross, W.D. 1951. Plato's Theory of Ideas. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Rousseau, M.F. 1981. “Recollection as Realization: Remythologizing Plato » Review of Metaphysics 35(2): 337-348.
Rowe, C.J. 2007. Plato and the Art of Philosophical Writing. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
. 1986. Phaedrus. Warminster, Wiltshire: Aris & Phillips.
. 1984. Plato. Brighton: Harvester.
Russell, B. 1900. A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz, with an Appendix of Leading Passages. Cambridge: Cambridge UniversityPress.

Sallis, J. 2009. “Speaking of the Earth: Figures of Transport in the Phaedo”. Epoch: A Journal for the History of Philosophy 13(2): 365-376.
Santas, G. 1992. “The Theory of Eros in Socrates ’Second Speech”. In Understanding the Phaedrus: proceedings of the II Symposium Platonicum. Ed. L. Rossetti. Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, p.305-308.
Schleiermacher, F. 2004. Introductions to the dialogues of Plato (1804-1828); lessons in the history of philosophy (1819-1823). Transl. MD Richard. Paris: Deer.
Scott, D. 2006. Plato's Meno. Cambridge studies in the dialogues of Plato. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
. 1999. “Platonic Recollection”. In Plato. Ed. G.Fine. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 93-124.
. 1995. Recollection and Experience: Plato's Theory of Learning and Its Successors. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
. 1991. “Does Socrates Take Meno’s Paradox Seriously? », Philosophical Review of France and Abroad 181(4): 627-641.
. 1987. “Platonic Anamnesis revisited”, Classical Quarterly, 37(2): 346-366.
Scott, G.A. and Welton, W.A. 2000. “Eros as Messanger in Diotima’s teaching”. In Who Speaks for Plato? Ed. G.A. Press. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
Sherman, D. 2013. Soul, World, and Idea: An Interpretation of Plato's Republic and Phaedo. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books.
Shorey, P. 1903. The Unity of Plato's thought. Chicago: The University of ChicagoPress.
Sinaiko, H.L. 1965. Love, Knowledge, and Discourse in Plato; Dialogue

and Dialectic in Phaedrus, Republic, Parmenides. Chicago: University of ChicagoPress.
Skemp, J.B. 1967. “Review of Carlo E. Huber: Anamnesis bei Plato”. Gnomon 39:829-31.
Smith, J.E. 1985. “Plato’s Myths as ‘Likely Accounts’, Worthy of Belief. » Apeiron 19: p.24-42.
Stern, P. 2008. Knowledge and politics in Plato's Theaetetus. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press.
. 1993. Socratic Rationalism and Political Philosophy: An Interpretation of Plato's Phaedo. Albany: State University of New York Press.
Stewart, J.A. 1964. Plato's Doctrine of Ideas. New York: Russell & Russell.
. 1905. The Myths of Plato. London; New York: Macmillan.
Strauss, L. 1964. City and Man. Chicago: Rand McNally
. 1941. "Persecution and the Art of Writing." Social Research 8(4): 488-504.
Tarrant, H. 2005. Recollecting Plato's Meno. London: Duckworth.
Taylor, A.E. 1926. Plato: The Man and His Work. London.
Taylor, C.C.W. 2008. “Plato’s epistemology”. In The Oxford Handbook to Plato. Ed. G.Fine. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 165-190.
Teloh, H. 1986. Socratic Education in Plato's Early Dialogues. Our Lady: University of Notre Dame Press.
Thomas, J.E. 1978. Musing on the Meno, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
Thornton, B.S. 1997. Eros: The Myth of Ancient Greek Sexuality. Boulder: Westview.
Tigner, S.S. 1970. “On the Kinship of all Nature in Plato’s Meno”.

Phronesis 15(1): 1-4.
Trabattoni, F. 2012. “Myth and Truth in Plato’s Phaedrus”. In Plato and Myth Studies on the Use and Status of Platonic Myths, Ed. C. Collobert, P. Destrée and F. Gonzalez. Leiden: BRILL, pp.305-322.
Turner, J.S. 1993. “The Images of Enslavement and Incommensurability in Plato's Meno". Interpretation 20(2): 117-134.
Vernant, J.-P. 1960. “The Hesiodic Myth of Races. Analysis test structural. » Revue de l'histoire des religions 157(1): 21-54.
Vlastos, G. 1991. Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
. 1965. “Anamnesis in the Meno”. Dialogue 4(1): 143-167.
Vretska, K. 1958. “Platonica III”. Wiener Studien 71: 30-45.
Warnek, P. 2003. “Tiresias in Athens: Socrates As Educator and the Kinship of Physis in Plato's Meno". Epoch 7(2): 261-289.
Wedin, M.V. 1977. “'Auta ta isa' and the Argument at Phaedo 74b7-c5”. Phronesis 22(2): 191-205.
Werner, D.S. 2012. Myth and philosophy in Plato's Phaedrus. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
Weiss, R. 2006. “Learning without Teaching: Recollection in the Meno”. Interpretation 34(1): 3-21.
. 2001. Virtue in the Cave: Moral Inquiry in Plato's Meno, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Williams, T. 2002. “Two Aspects of Platonic Recollection”. Apeiron 35(2): 131-152.
Zeller, E. 1876. Plato and the Older Academy. Transl. S.F. Alleyne and A. Goodwin, London: Longmans, Green and Co.