

Article

What Is There to Be Ashamed Of? Nietzsche and Plato

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Abstract: The motif of shame represents an interesting and hitherto neglected intersection in the discussion of the relationship between Nietzsche and Plato. The first part of the essay recapitulates the function of this motif in Nietzsche’s culminating texts (mainly *Zarathustra* and *Gay Science*), while the second part focuses on the motif of shame in Plato’s work, specifically the two extreme contexts of death (*Apology*, *Crito*) and love (*Symposium*). It turns out that for both authors, shame is a constitutive moral phenomenon that is thematized in relation to logos. Shame and logos thus stand in close and contrasting relation. Their tension is decisive for the life of the soul, for its upward movement (Plato) or gradation (Nietzsche). It is therefore not a simple subjugation of the “bad”, irrational element by the “good”, rational component of the soul that plays the central role but an interplay of irreducible, mutually demanding moments. The interpretation of their interplay has both historical and systematic importance—it sheds new light on the relationship between these seemingly opposing philosophers and contributes to answering the following question: what is there to be ashamed of?

Keywords: shame; logos; Plato; Nietzsche

1. Introduction

In Plato’s *Symposium*, Alcibiades says to Socrates: “before this man alone I feel ashamed” (*Symp.* 216b3)¹. These words inspire this inquiry, which has both a systematic and a historical purpose. The systematic aim concerns the general question of the normativity of shame in terms of “what we should be ashamed of”. Once we ask this question, we are already reflecting on a specific feeling or emotion, using our speech. Traditionally, reflected speech has been called logos. My aim thus refers to the relation of shame and logos. These are interpreted as two irreducible dynamic moments, whose interplay is decisive for what we usually call “moral development”. It would be inappropriate to expect a concrete answer to this question from a philosophical treatise. What can be expected, however, is a better understanding of the dynamic character of shame and logos, due to which our perception of this question can move forward.

The historical aim concerns the question of the resemblance or difference between Plato’s and Nietzsche’s view of this question. The study of dialogical encounters and conflicts can be considered fruitful in so far as they contribute to understanding their actors. Fruitful conflict requires both unity, guaranteed by a shared interest, and a diversity of perspectives; otherwise, there is a risk of simple passing by. As is well known, Nietzsche is the author of the sharpest criticism of Plato; this criticism is spread throughout the whole of his work². Referring to the aforementioned words of Alcibiades, Nietzsche remarks of Socrates that he “made even the most exuberant youth tremble and shed tears” (*GS* [4], 340), which means that he made him feel sharply ashamed—through his logos. A deeper meaning of this remark should become evident.

Returning to Nietzsche’s clash with Plato may seem to be a fruitless exercise. Metaphysics versus antimetaphysics, a strictly morally divided universe versus the world “beyond good and evil”, the pathos of the immortal *psyche* versus instinctive physicality, and the metaphysics of punishment introduced in *Gorgias* versus a return to “childlike innocence”—this constellation at first sight lacks the common interest that would guarantee



Citation: Sikora, O. What Is There to Be Ashamed Of? Nietzsche and Plato. *Philosophies* **2024**, *9*, 76. <https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies9030076>

Academic Editors: Laura Candiottio and Rick Anthony Furtak

Received: 21 March 2024

Revised: 23 April 2024

Accepted: 20 May 2024

Published: 24 May 2024



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a fruitful clash with Plato. But this is not the case, as recent monographs by Müller [5], Anderson [3], and Clark and Dudrick [6]³ on the subject of the soul in particular demonstrate. Plato, to whom, as Krell ([8], p. 45) notes, Nietzsche formulates five hundred references, is central to his philosophical identity. At the same time, as the same author ([7], pp. 45–67) shows, the study of Nietzsche can contribute to a revitalizing reading of Plato. In what follows, I will try to show that this revitalizing can work in both directions: not only does Nietzsche enable us to see richness and plurality in Plato’s dialogues, but also, vice versa, the Platonic view helps us question some of the assumptions made by Nietzsche. This mutual reviving should become clear through the interpretation of the relationship between shame and logos in both authors.

This interesting intersection within the broad field of Plato—Nietzsche has so far been neglected in the literature. The fact that shame is controlled by rational discourse plays a vital role for both authors⁴. As such, it seems quite unproblematic. What is further unproblematic is the movement towards the *authenticity* of shame. This should not remain a mere “herd emotion” dependent on the sight of the many and our fear of it but an internalized, self-reflective “signal” or “echo” influencing our thought and action. It is not, then, a simple subjugation of the irrational element by the rational “part” of the soul but an interplay of irreducible, mutually demanding moments that both contribute to the movement of the soul and are themselves transformed in that movement. What exactly does this internalization and authentication look like? Can logos serve as an unambiguous guidance in this process? What role do others play in it?

As for terminology, I assume that the noun “shame” is basically synonymous with the German “die Scham”⁵ and the Greek “*aischyné*”. The same applies to the verb forms “to be ashamed”, “*aischynomai*”, and “(sich) schämen”. I leave aside the question of the semantic differentiations between “*aischyné*”, “*aischron*”, and “*aidos*”, as well as Aristotle’s codification of emotions in his *Rhetorics* as this has already been amply dealt with⁶. My point of departure is the situational and dialogical contexts of the relevant passages⁷. As readers of Plato will be aware, and as will become clear in what follows, the consideration of the other person that is constitutive of “*aischyné*” can have varying degrees of internalization and conscious authentication⁸. The motive of shame, therefore, cannot be treated as an occurring entity that can be objectively described, classified, and categorized. Neither of the two authors provides us with anything like a “theory of shame”. The relative stability expressed by the word “shame” is essentially situational and constellational in character; to remove the phenomenon of shame from its situated constellation deprives it of its materiality and meaning. This also means that its sensitive performance somehow reflects the whole of the relevant thought. Shame can be compared to a sounding board. The question is therefore not so much what shame as such is but rather what it reflects and in what situation, what resonates within it, and how this resonance relates to logos.

2. Shame as “the History of Mankind”

In Nietzsche’s published works, as Alfano ([17], p. 1) points out, shame is thematized in more than a hundred places, which makes it a much more common topos than, for example, the popular motif of resentment⁹. There is, of course, a difference regarding the novelty of Nietzsche’s employment of both themes: while “resentment” acquires an original interpretation and centrality in *GM*, where it is explained as a toxic will to power (one would say, “power of the powerless”) giving birth to Christianity, the use of “shame” is based on a common understanding. In this work, inherited morality represents the greatest danger preventing man from reaching his greatest flowering and flourishing. From this, we can expect that shame as a moral phenomenon generated by the shared values and convictions will be criticized. In this line, new, reconstructed, and reevaluated morality will first of all call for liberation from the feeling of shame. Although two occurrences in *GM* seem to confirm this thesis, Nietzsche’s view, as can easily be shown, is far removed from it. So, in *GM* II.7 we read that “heaven got gloomy over man, according as the shame of man from man increased”, with this generating “the icy No of disgusted life”. This negation

“emerges only when the mud is there—the morbid hypersensitivity and moralizing that caused the animal species ‘man’ to eventually learn to be ashamed of all his instincts”. In GM III.14, in a similar manner, Nietzsche ironizes the position of the “honest”, “pious”, and “just”: “It’s a shame to be happy! There is too much misery!”.

Let us focus briefly on selected passages from Nietzsche’s culminating texts, in a sense Platonic *Thus spoke Zarathustra*¹⁰ and *Gay Science*, in order to show that the overall strategy does not aim at shamelessness but at the autonomous transformation of shame. Already in the Prefaces to *Zarathustra*, “painful shame” (“schmerzliche Scham”, Z [19] Prefaces, 9) is the analogous conjunction in the ape—human and human—overman differentiation. The shame that man feels at the sight of an ape, to whom he is too similar, should be the same as that which the overman feels at the sight of man. This means, firstly, that man is a transitional state that must be overcome and, secondly, that the desired form with the title of overman is not a being detached from shame but that shame is a necessary part of his moral consciousness. These words sound overly symbolic, like many of Zarathustra’s sentences. At the same time, they lead to an important, timeless question: what *are* we ashamed of, and what *should* we be ashamed of? This question presupposes that shame is not merely a biological, bodily given to which man is passively subject but has its own dynamic, however slow, and that it belongs to the sphere of normativity, however vaguely symbolized by the word “overman”. It is intimately connected with a basic conscious conviction that, for the sake of brevity, may be called “logos”—in Zarathustra’s words, “the ruling thought” (Z [19] I, “On Bestowing Virtue”). At the same time, shame remains “painful” (“schmerzlich”), which means there is a strange tension in actively controlling (or trying to control) something towards which one remains at the same time passive and in a state of suffering.

Other passages support this reading. So, Nietzsche does not hesitate to proclaim in his *Zarathustra*:

“To man himself, then, the knower says: the animal with red cheeks. What has man done to deserve this? Perhaps because he has been ashamed too often. O my friends! Thus says the knower: Shame, shame, shame, that is the history of mankind! And that is why the noble man decides not to shame others: he imposes upon himself shame of all that suffers” (Z [19] II, “On the Pitying”)¹¹

There are several key features to be found in this passage: that the history of humanity is the history of shame points first and foremost to the centrality that Nietzsche ascribes to this phenomenon in human culture. The backbone of history is not politics and warfare but something hidden that permeates human corporeality and thought and points to the prevalent distribution of values: shame (die Scham). Secondly, as already indicated, we see in this sentence an appreciation of the emotional, corporeal side of humankind, for shame has its physical manifestation; man is “an animal with red cheeks” rather than *zoon logon echon*¹². Furthermore, the term “history” suggests that shame is not something constant and unchanging but rather a historically changing phenomenon. If so, it cannot be an unconditional moral signal, an absolute compass, but something socially and culturally conditioned. Fourthly, there is the suspicion that the history of humanity is to be something more than the history of shame, that perhaps even its essential role, in which one can perceive the lack of freedom with regard to social pressure, is to be gotten rid of. Much too often, we have been ashamed.

This point is underlined by the short “history of the spirit” from the chapter “On the Three Transformations”: the spirit has not yet become a child who creates in free spontaneity, free from moral prejudices—symbolized by the camel stage—and from shame. In the same vein, in the passage “The stillest hour”, Zarathustra confesses “I am ashamed” (“Ich schäme mich”, Z [19] II, “Stillest hour”), expressing the shame of having to reveal his deepest knowledge. The dream revelation answers him: “You must still become a child and be without shame” (Z [19] II, “Stillest hour”). A childlike spirit, a liberated naivety, and a simple directness, without shame, are necessary for the realization of this great task. At the same time, it is obvious that shame has toughness and tenacity that does not allow

it to be simply subordinated to a conscious instruction. “You must still become a child” implies a transformation that is a gradual process with its own pace of growth. For one’s own task—so the passage could be interpreted—one must gradually mature (there we have a seeming paradox of “maturing into childhood”), and with this comes a gradual and simultaneous transformation and “reconstellation” of shame. Its first step lies in reflective speech involving the ability to pronounce “ich schäme mich”.

The fifth point, related to our first passage, concerns the relational character of shame. If people tend to control each other through the threat of shame, the noble person has no such need, which means that for him shame is at the same time a relational, pro-active, and protective emotion. As such, it affects both parties simultaneously: the actor and the one towards whom he acts. When the noble person imposes “shame towards all that suffers”, he wants to leave the sufferer his autonomy and intimacy; he does not want to break into it (be it under the mask of *Mitleid*) because he knows that the sufferer also has his shame. Shame towards the sufferer is therefore shame towards his shame. To shame is to make the other person feel ashamed, which is not compatible with a noble person. At the same time, Nietzsche’s decisiveness at this point raises criticism. The “shame towards all that suffers” can simply not be an ideal as it borders on insensitivity and selfish ignorance. “Suffering with the sufferers”, pity, and compassion cannot be criticized per se, as Nietzsche often does, simply because what the suffering person needs is acceptance, which is not authentic without real nearness. The willingness to be injured in this nearness seems to be an inevitable part of an authentic relationship, which Nietzschean rhetoric (and Nietzschean scholarship) too often overlooks.

Another important passage in *Zarathustra* contains the well-known words about the longing that drives him to “where the gods dance and are ashamed of all their clothes” (Z, [19] II, “On Human Cleverness”), which can be read as an expression of a free being that fully accepts nature, body, and nakedness. These are nothing shameful; on the contrary, what is after all shameful is concealing and hiding of one’s “natural self”. The words “shame for clothes” are repeated three times in the book. They are expressions of a “metaphysical desire” that points to the “insatiable” nature of our being in this world. The “shamelessness” of the ideal state is basically self-reflective as it amounts to full self-acceptance of personal bodily existence. In this ideal state, the object of shame becomes that which used to prevent it. This self-referential ideal of shamelessness needs to be distinguished from the respectful, protective shame that takes the sensitivity of the other seriously.

What characterizes Nietzsche is high sensitivity to the layered nature of interpersonal coexistence, to hierarchies, gradations, and degrees of growth. He refers to this sensitivity as the “pathos of distance”, which implies that people do not move on the same plane and are therefore not equals; it implies a sensitivity and a flair with which he detects the often damaging, corrupting, and debilitating effects of interpersonal relationality. It is not the arrogant superiority of the economically powerful but an awareness of the uniqueness of one’s own being in the world. It rejects the “democratic”, universalist, and naively optimistic faith that wants everything for everyone, that wants, in a false brazenness, to publish everything, to see everything, and to speak into everything. Such an ambition is base and contemptible, for it implies a total lack of nobility and—shame:

“Conversely, what is perhaps the most disgusting thing about so-called scholars, the devout believers in ‘modern ideas’, is their *lack of shame* [Mangel an Scham], the careless impudence of their eyes and hands that touch, taste, and feel everything. And there might still be a greater relative nobility of taste and tactfulness of respect within a people these days, within a lower sort of people, namely within the peasantry, than among the newspaper-reading demimonde of the spirit, the educated” (BGE [2], 263)

Today, instead of talking about newspaper readers, we should be talking about the shamelessness or lack of tact of modern media users. Shame in a dispositional, proactive form is a virtue in this passage because it is closely related to tact, taste, and respect. To stay with the Nietzschean tone, shamelessness and lack of tact are signs of the modern

“democratic” mentality, which has a claim on everything, allows one to speak about and interfere in everything, and to “touch, taste, and feel” everything, as Nietzsche puts it. Simple ignorance (in terms of an uneducated state), thanks to the ability to feel shame, surpasses the educated. If shame turns out to have a number of functions in Nietzsche, the key question is not how many exactly; the more interesting question is whether and in what direction it can be transformed in accordance with logos, or, the “ruling idea”.

3. Not to Be Ashamed before Oneself

What is scattered in the symbolic speech of Zarathustra is explicitly stated in *Gay Science*. At the climax of the book, at the very end of the third section (followed by the key sequence 276, opening section four with the motif amor fati), Nietzsche writes unequivocally:

273. *Whom do you call bad?*—He who always wants to put people to shame.

274. *What is for you the most human thing?*—To spare someone the shame.

275. *What is the seal of freedom attained?*—No longer to be ashamed before oneself¹³.

Here, Nietzsche formulates one of the variations of his “ruling logos”, a kind of triune “categorical imperative”, which links the key motifs of wrongness and free humanity through the motif of shame. Wrongness consists in the will to constantly shame others; humanity is its opposite: to spare the other from shame, not to humiliate, and not to take advantage of the other’s failure and defeat. The free one (not in an indeterministic sense but in an existential one) is then the one who is not ashamed of himself, who is able to fully accept his actions, and who is capable of the great “yes” formulated in the following aphorism 276 at the beginning of book IV. What is important about these simple, compelling statements is the central role ascribed to shame in the questions of the good and the bad. This aspect brings Nietzsche close to Plato.

Does this imperative to “shame no one (not even oneself)” mean something like the elimination of shame? Surely not. First of all, this instruction and the phenomenon of shame need to be taken seriously: shame is already there. It can be wrong to shame someone in front of others, for example, with overwhelming criticism. At the same time, shaming others can become highly desirable, and to refrain from such criticism, for example, out of fear or for personal gain, can be wrong. Nietzsche is not saying that we should not shame others at all; he is saying that it is wrong to want to constantly shame, that is, to want to constantly impose negativity and humiliation on others and to seek enjoyment in this humiliation. The point is to recognize the sharpness of shame and to deal with it appropriately, humanely; to recognize the right moment and the right measure. Dealing with shame tactfully is the key to becoming more human.

As for the first person and the “seal of freedom attained” from 275, to which both the above-mentioned childhood motif and the final sequence of the “seven seals” in *Zarathustra III* are related, here too it is not a matter of immunizing myself against feelings of shame and disgrace; the point is to act in such a way that shame does not arise against my person in relation to my own actions. Is man then a vassal of shame? Does freedom then consist in evasive maneuvers? It seems evident that Nietzsche is concerned with finding a path somewhere in the middle between the extremes of “shamelessness” and “evasion”. The words “no longer” in GS 275 indicate a transformation of one’s self-perception as well as one’s behavior. This transformation does not throw away shame: what I was ashamed of before, I am no longer ashamed of, which does not mean that I cannot be ashamed of anything because the sentence also applies in reverse: what I was not ashamed of before, I am ashamed of now. What is important is the difference between “I am no longer ashamed of myself” and “I am no longer ashamed of anything”. The freedom referred to in aphorism 275 therefore remains linked to shame as a *condition for its development*. Finally, it is important to read the three components of the shame imperative in their mutual conditioning. This takes the form that “no longer be ashamed of myself” is conditioned by “spare someone shame” since to shame the other would itself be an object of shame.

This imperative does not cover all of the modalities of shame, such as the above-mentioned modality of distance-maintaining shame. If we are to attempt a summary, then this much can be said: for Nietzsche, shame is a hidden and at the same time an essential symptom and indicator of a re-evaluating movement in morality. This, I believe, also applies to Plato's Socrates, and it will be a question to what extent the triune imperative of shame applies to him. Shame is certainly not something that can be freely disposed of and easily overcome by, say, sufficient rational argument—it is too embedded in human corporeality, personal agency, and “history of the body”. At the same time, however, it is not an immutable given. It has its own mutability and situatedness in each individual, which is closely related to the transformation of the understanding of oneself, the world, and others. But in order for this understanding to be effective at the level of shame, it must be appropriated or “digested”, it must be part of a gradual holistic maturation. The human task, according to Nietzsche, is to mature towards a radical autonomy that grows out of the body, which does not transcend the physical but penetrates it and is carried by it.

In contrast to the care of the soul from Plato's *Apology*, we can speak of the care of the body, but this must not be confused with cosmetics applied for the sake of others. Authentic care of the body is carried out simply because being in the world is corporeal from the first breath to the last, that is, this world itself is corporeal. Corporeality does not imply theoretical materialism or ethical hedonism; authentic care of one's own corporeality begins with a humble recognition of one's own bodily situatedness and aims at the gradation of a personal energy field. This is accompanied by a growing distance from those who are incapable of this—especially because of their shame—and who would like to betray this gradation¹⁴. This distance is maintained by shame, which protects one's own achieved depth from the intrusive curiosity of others. This type then transforms its original herd, inauthentic shame, into authentic shame, subordinate to the life task and serving as a protective instinct¹⁵.

4. The Most Beautiful Plant of Antiquity

Let us turn our attention to Plato, called by Nietzsche “the most beautiful plant of antiquity” (*BGE*, [2], Preface), and of whom we can read in *GS* ([4], 340):

“The dying Socrates’—I admire Socrates’ strength and wisdom in everything he did, said—and did not say. This mocking and love-sick mischief-maker and pied piper of Athens, who made the most exuberant youth tremble and shed tears, was not only the wisest speaker that ever lived: he was equally great in silence.”

The aphorism refers both to the death scene in *Phaedo* and to Socrates' encounter with Alcibiades in *Symposium*. Nietzsche criticizes Platonism for its exaggerated rationality and metaphysical dualism but above all for its latent hatred of this world and of life, which is supposedly implied in the motif of the sacrifice of the rooster to Asclepius in *Phaedo*. The sting of this criticism is expressed in the same aphorism 340:

“Whether it was death or the poison or piety or malice—something loosened his tongue and he said: ‘O Crito, I owe Asclepius a rooster’. This ridiculous and terrible ‘last word’ means for those who have ears: ‘O Crito, *life is a disease*’. Is it possible that a man like him, who had lived cheerfully and like a soldier in plain view of everyone, was a pessimist? He had merely kept a cheerful demeanour while all his life hiding his ultimate judgement, his inmost feeling! Socrates, Socrates *suffered from life!*” (*GS* [4], 340)

It is not important whether the historical Socrates “suffered from life” but whether Plato's philosophy is carried by this spirit—the spirit, it must be said, with which Nietzsche's Zarathustra fights to death¹⁶. In what follows, I will try to show two things: first, that in Plato's Socrates we can speak of a similar movement of transformation of one's understanding of the self, the world, and the other, connected with the transformation of shame. The logos fundamentally transforms the perception of what is and what is not to be ashamed of. One can observe here a similar resistance to the “herd”, habitual shame,

and an effort to cultivate it into a form related to a newly insighted life task. Secondly, this analogy is undermined by the differentiation offered by the nature of the dominant idea of Plato's Socrates. The latter is characterized on the one hand by logical clarity and, on the other, seems to lead out of this life. This is evident in the peculiar relationship between shame, love, and death and at first sight confirms Nietzsche's diagnosis of Socrates' latent hatred of life.

In order to explore this analogy and differentiation, I would like to discuss two connections: the connection of shame or disgrace with death and then with love. For the first connection, I will use passages from the *Apology* and *Crito* (the context of death), and for the second from the *Symposium* (the context of love). Why exactly these dialogues, when there are others with prominent occurrence of shame, such as *Gorgias* or *Phaedrus*? I do not intend to provide a summary of the richness of the use of shame in Plato. Firstly, *Symposium* is recalled by Nietzsche; then, *Apology* presents the emblematic essence of Socratism; *Crito* shows its remarkable application in relation to death, *Symposium* in relation to love. These suffice to react properly to Nietzsche's main objection against Plato. These dialogues also show what is familiar to readers of Plato, namely, the Platonic–Socratic transformation of the motif of shame, *aischyné*, which consists in subordinating this phenomenon to logos oriented towards the highest good. The logos oriented towards the good is the decisive instance that determines the appropriateness of shame; this logos is thematized by Socrates, who himself becomes its embodiment. This logos is supposed to be the instance capable of giving our lives a clear direction, our actions a clear form, and our dilemmas a clear way out. What raises doubts is its alleged unambiguity.

5. Shame and Death

Let us start with *Apology* in 28b. After explaining and refuting Meletus' slander and accusation, Socrates raises the crucial objection: "And here are you not ashamed [*úk aischyné*], Socrates, that you have devoted yourself to such a task, for which you are now in danger of death?" In other words, are you not ashamed that your whole mission is ending in utter failure? Is not it a shame that your life's project has turned into a death sentence? The answer is first of all traditional, for Socrates places himself in the heroic tradition as its proper successor; in this tradition the hero chooses death rather than shame, and shame, on the contrary, would be to want to avoid death at all costs. In the second step, however, the heroic motive is transcended by an essentially internal motive—Socrates is faithful to his place, and that place is his divine mission, the content of which is to examine himself and others. For him, therefore, the real shame would be to abandon this mission. The stability of place, the *stabilitas loci*, is for Socrates the defining characteristic of his existence, and this stability is constituted by the stability of his logos. Shortly, the *stabilitas loci* is based on the *stabilitas verbi*.

The second motive that refutes the above objection of shame concerns the relationship with death. The fear of death is an expression of shameful ignorance, "*amathia eponeidistos*" (*Apol.* 29b), which is a rather strange and extreme connection here, closely related to Socrates' human wisdom, his "*anthropiné sofía*". The fear of death is supposed to mean that we regard death as evil, that is, that we think we know what we do not really know. It may be that, on the contrary, death is something to look forward to as much as possible. It is not shameful to die, it is shameful to fear death. If there is anything to be avoided, it is disobedience to the known good, that is, to what we know and do not know, however "primitive" this knowledge might be. What is known as good must remain the norm of life unless something better is known. Shame belongs to the one who defies it, for there is no other norm.

So the roles are reversed: it is not Socrates who is shameful but the Athenians. Socrates will not stop philosophizing, even if he dies a hundred times, because this is the good he has learned, and for him to philosophize is to transmit this learned good to others. He does this in the familiar words addressed to the Athenians, later repeated to Alcibiades: "You are not ashamed [*úk aischynei*] to care about money, so that you may have it, and about reputation

and honor; but about reason and truth and the soul, so that it may be the best, you do not care?" (*Apol.* 29d–e). An enthusiastic preacher who turns himself and others away from life in its instinctive, bodily nature—that might be the Nietzschean objection, a preacher who peculiarly associates virtue with death, a preacher who preaches a strange pseudo-intellectual “idiocy” and calls into question natural and fundamental human emotions, especially fear of death. Socrates does not so much provoke new enquiry as question and frustrate all enquiry by pointing to the utter inadequacy of human knowledge compared to the divine. God or the divine is a crucial witness to the credibility of his defense, and Socrates refers to it ten times, a fact that is still somewhat underestimated in references to Socrates’ intellectualism.

Besides God, the second witness of his defense is poverty (“*penia*”, *Apol.* 31c3, and even “*penia miria*”, “immeasurable poverty”, 23c1), which shows the intensity and devotion with which he gave himself to his mission. The same poverty is one of the parents of Eros in *Symposium*, grounding the character of lack and desire. It is important for our purpose, then, that there is a transformation in the motif of this *aischynein*. Socrates responds to the objection of the shameful nature of his actions with a counter-objection of the shameful nature of the actions of his opponents: first, the shameful nature of preoccupying oneself with the manifold tasks of life rather than with *phronesis*, truth, and the soul; second, and more specifically, the epistemic position called “shameful ignorance”, which means that one falsely ascribes to oneself knowledge of things about which one knows nothing.

Shame is presumed knowledge without any real backing; Socrates leads us to admit that we ultimately know much less than we think, and to acknowledge this uncomfortable truth—and not only that but to live from this strange truth anew, in spite of social pressure. Socrates is here a kind of precursor of the critique of reason, leading not to an expansion but to a withdrawal, back beyond the proper human limits that people tend to overstep in their conceit. But what remains within these limits, this tiny remainder, is ultimately something sufficient because it contains the primitive and sufficient differentiation of worse and better, which is essential for the conduct of human life. In the end, it is only a matter of following the known better, which, in Socrates’ words, is something unquestionable and, contrary to Nietzsche, unambiguous. Shame falls under the autonomous control of this sufficient insufficiency. However, even *Apology* shows that things are not that simple because the autonomy of the minimalist logos is supported by another kind of logos—daimonic “*foné tis*” (30d, 40a), the voice of the oracle in Delphi (21a), or other dream signs (33c). Socrates does not rely so much on his autonomous logos as on his dialogue bringing together the plurality of these logoi.

This is also to be seen in the dialogue with Crito, in this follow-up of *Apology*, this private defense, in which shame again plays an important role and in which we again witness a reversal of roles, in which the shameful nature of the action directed at Socrates is challenged by logos and Crito becomes the tempter of shameful nature¹⁷.

He first appeals to the imprisoned Socrates and urges him to escape precisely so that the shame does not fall on himself, namely, that he could have helped Socrates to escape but did not do so because he was stingy (*Crito* 44c). Shame here is a phenomenon produced by the opinion of the crowd and the morality constituted by that opinion. Crito is not concerned with Socrates as a person of a tragic fate, he is not even primarily concerned with the loss of his friend but with his own image in the eyes of others, his reputation built on mediocre understanding, speeches, and pseudo-moral condemnations saying: “Look at this Crito, he could have saved him and didn’t”. He wants to be spared this disgrace, so he tries to offer Socrates a way out.

Crito sharpens his insistence by using words like betrayal—Socrates is a traitor who betrays himself, his beliefs, his opponents, and his sons, whom he abandons. He then repeats the crucial motif of shame: “I am ashamed of you and of us, lest the opinion should arise that the whole business with you was caused by a kind of cowardice on our part” (45e); in this phrase, shame is linked to cowardice, “*anandria*”, referring to inability to save Socrates from prison. Again, the point is that others condemn moral failure and thus create

a bad reputation (*doxa*). Finally, in 46a, the motif of shame is again present in the summary formulation—Socrates' refusal to escape is not only something bad (*kakón*) but will bring shame on him and his friends (*aischra soi kai hēmin*).

Shame or disgrace is thus tied to the moral condemnation of the majority society, and Socrates' effort is, like in Nietzsche, to transform this inauthentic shame into an autonomously authentic form through the clear primacy of the exploring logos, to which everything else in the diversity of human experience—including the experience of shame—is to be subordinated. There is no need to recapitulate the rest of the dialogue; we can just recall the words characterizing the primacy of the inquiring logos:

“For I am such, not only now but always, that of what is mine I listen to nothing but that rational thought [*logos*] which, on reflection [*an moi logizomenó*], seems best to me” (*Crito* 46b4–6)¹⁸

The clear emphasis lies on “*logos—belistos fainetai*”, namely, “*an moi logizomenó*”. Socrates tries to derive from this categorical imperative that flight would be something shameful. As is well known, another logos comes into the scene, the speech of the laws as personified authority, but this is subordinated to the aforementioned categorical imperative to “follow the best logos”. This “following” then allows one to distinguish between simply “living” (“*zén*”) and “living well” (“*eu zén*”), where “*eu*” is the same as “*kalos*” and “*dikaios*”. The speech of laws is thus the application stage of the basic Socratic imperative. The key point here is that insisting on one's imperative amounts to insisting on the judgements of the community. The personification of laws is necessary in order to conceive of the legal sphere as an entity that does something to us and can be harmed in some way. One should not harm—not even the laws. The sophistication of the whole argument is that to harm the law is to harm oneself, thus underlining the autonomous character of Socratic ethics¹⁹.

What is vital is the subordination of the shame to the movement of the logos oriented by the good. Shame in itself, without the support of logos, is not an argument; one must not automatically submit to it but examine its origin. If this origin is in conflict with the ruling logos, this emotion must be left to fade away (to starve to death, one would say). At the same time, however, it is very difficult to transfer this constellation of shame and logos to others. Socrates does not convince Crito in the dialogue of the same name or in the *Phaedo*, just as he does not convince the judicial assembly or his friends in prison in his “private defence” (*Phd.* 63e–64a). This seems to confirm the inadequacy of Plato's logos in relation to the human bodily nature, emotionality, and strength of “herd instinct”, which therefore requires compensation in the form of the power structure of the state, as sketched in *Crito*. However, this inadequacy and insufficiency can also be understood as pointing to the essentially autonomous character of the “ruling logos”, which so to speak replicates the personal–bodily character of shame.

6. “This Is the Only One of Whom I Am Ashamed”

After the context of death, let us turn briefly to the context of love. Plato's *Symposium* represents the dramatic tension between, on the one hand distancing oneself from this world and, on the other hand, clinging to it in concrete physicality. The intoxication and joviality contrast with the strange seriousness expressed in Diotima's speech, which culminates in the familiar “ladder of love”, leading only to that position, where, if any, “it is worth living” (*Symp.* 211d2). There is a curious detail in this speech, namely, that Diotima has arranged for the plague to be postponed for ten years (*Symp.* 201d5). This can be read, among other things, as a reference to the temporal urgency of our being in the world and to the inscrutable workings of evil, which previous eulogists of Eros have neglected. This ascent, or escape, must be made as quickly as possible, for we do not know when it may be jeopardized by the misfortunes and calamities of which this world is full. Diotima proclaims that the only position “worth living” is that of “higher initiation into beauty” (*Symp.* 210a2); on the contrary, the idea of a life dedicated to a particular person is marked as petty and trivial (*Symp.* 210b7). These remarks point to the connection between love and death, which is openly specified in the understanding of love, characterized as procreation

and birth in beauty, as the means by which mortals can gain a share in immortality. This world becomes the world of transition, so the human being. One cannot avoid recalling Zarathustra's motif of "Übergang" and "Untergang" tightly joined with love and desire for self-overcoming (Z [19] Prefaces, 4)—this allows us to call Zarathustra "Platonic".

Symposium can be read as a possible elaboration of the question outlined in the paradigmatic *Apology*, namely, what it actually means to care for the soul and what virtue the Athenians should be ashamed of neglecting. This care takes the form of an ascent to the one unchanging, absolute beauty that guarantees the right *arete*. What distinguishes it from *Apology* is the possibility of crossing the boundary that separates mortals from the immortal gods, for the higher initiation is also a higher way of gaining a share in immortality (*Symp.* 212a8).

The point of Alcibiades' exuberant eulogy of Socrates is to present Socrates as an embodied example of this way ("I myself honour the things of love, I am devoted to them above others, and I urge others to do so", *Symp.* 212b5–6) and to show the effect of this erotic example on others. The motifs of shame and disgrace play a crucial role in the personal confession of Alcibiades, which combines the intoxication of wine with an emphasis on truthfulness. Socrates, initially the lover of Alcibiades, is the one who shames, and he does so in two ways: firstly, he shames by making Alcibiades see his own defects, flaws, and inadequacy as in a mirror, so that he is ashamed of himself; secondly, he shames by ostentatiously rejecting his physical affection, thus psychologically hurting and humiliating him. There is a reversal of roles in Socrates: just as in *Apology* Socrates changes from the accused to the accuser, so in the *Symposium* he changes from the inviter to the invited, from the lover to the beloved (*Symp.* 222b). The relationship between Socrates and Alcibiades has features of both tragedy and comedy, mixing seriousness with ridiculousness, love with hate. He compares Socrates to the mythical figure of Marsyas, who enchanted others with his play on the aulos—similarly, Socrates enchants others with his speeches and puts them in a state of rapture. Let us quote a decisive passage:

"Before this one of all men, a feeling arose in me which no one would have sought in me, namely, shame: of this one alone I am ashamed. For I am aware that I cannot deny the duty of doing what he urges me to do, but that in leaving I am giving in to the desire to be honoured by men. Therefore I flee from him like a runaway slave and avoid him, and whenever I see him I am ashamed of my confessed faults" (*Symp.* 216b1–7)

At a key point in Alcibiades' confession, we hear: "*egó de túton mónon aischýnomai*", before this alone I am ashamed. Socrates, with his wondrous speeches, is the only one who can shame the proud, conceited, and shameless Alcibiades. He does not try to humiliate him or criticize him in any way in front of others. It is not easy to say what exactly Socrates does and why it is only him who is able to make him feel ashamed. What his speeches do is force Alcibiades to admit to himself that it is not political prestige that he should be concerned with but "himself"—and this is exactly the spirit of the words of *Apol.* 29d–e quoted above, which could have been addressed to Alcibiades: "You, excellent man, are an Athenian, a citizen of the community which is the greatest and most renowned for its wisdom and power, and you are not ashamed to care about money, so that you may have it, and about reputation and honour; but about reason and truth and the soul, so that it may be the best, you do not care?" Socrates makes Alcibiades experience this very shame by being able to be a transparent mirror in which Alcibiades can see himself and his false preferences, and when Alcibiades wishes Socrates' death, he wishes the destruction of that mirror and the view of himself that he sees in it. So the point is that Alcibiades is a source of shame to himself—through Socrates—and Socrates as a reflective surface only allows him to see this. This shame has a kind of immediate effect, but it wears off after a while, and Alcibiades again seeks to be worshipped by the crowd, seeking "*timé hypo tón polón*" (*Symp.* 216b5)²⁰.

Because of his logos, Socrates is the impetus for Alcibiades' self-contempt, which makes him an object of hatred but also of strong affection. In the following depiction, this affection is used by Socrates for a second, sharper shaming, when, in his dead passivity,

he refuses to return this physical affection, which touches Alcibiades deeply. Socrates is portrayed as someone who engages in a pedagogical seduction, using various masks of outward appearances, like Silenus, who hides the true content within himself. He makes Alcibiades believe that he is charming with his physical beauty, thus catching him on a hook, so to speak, and then cruelly leading him astray; by allowing himself to be seduced by Alcibiades, he shows him by his unwavering passivity that physical beauty and physical love play no substantial role but are merely the outer cover for the real beauty to which he painfully leads his poor lover.

The question would be whether this kind of humiliating shame can act as a motive for the other to climb the stages of love and whether it cannot also initiate the opposite movement, the possibility of which is suggested by the ambivalence of love and hate. We are thus witnessing an interesting paradox in which the splendor of Alcibiades acts as a bait, initially for Socrates but eventually for Alcibiades himself, who is to try to discover behind it the possibility of another, deeper beauty—a beauty that he can perceive in Socrates.

In the Alcibiades passage, shame is closely linked to the dominant logos. This logos is no longer a logical application of mere “*eu zén*” based on that “*belistos fainetai*” as in *Crito*; it cannot be reduced to rationalist *elenchos* showing an opponent’s statements to be unsubstantiated. Why would and should one love (or at least find a basic interest) in the process of detecting logical inconsistencies? *Symposium* shows the importance of desire for philosophy, which also has its specifically erotic form. As the story of the birth of Eros tries to express, the logos of philosophy is born of desire. It is the logos of love of wisdom, of which Socrates himself is the incarnation, but not only of love of wisdom, for he is also called “mighty hunter, mighty sorcerer, magician and sophist” (*Symp.* 203e). Socratic logos as depicted by Plato manages to unite colorful richness and plurality of *logoi*. At the same time, the logos of love of wisdom is not something unambiguously pleasant and appealing; on the contrary, it can be “crueler” than the “bite of the viper” (*Symp.* 218a), sharper than the surgical steel²¹. Whether the accepted *pharmakon* becomes a medicine leading to openness to wisdom or a poison affirming arrogance, or just something ineffective, remains open. In accord with the ambivalence of “*pharmakon*”, there is a remarkable ambivalence about the shameful lesson Socrates gives Alcibiades. We find its echo in the final, “Nietzschean” instruction, namely, that “the same man should be able to compose both comedies and tragedies” (*Symp.* 223d).

7. Conclusions

“Every deep spirit needs a mask,” says Nietzsche in aphorism 40 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, where the mask motif is explained as a manifestation of protective shame²². Alcibiades’ depiction of Socrates as a Silenian being, a being of many layers and extraordinary plasticity, comes close to the deep soul described by Nietzsche, who deliberately hides behind his masks and who gradually reveals more and more faces. Thanks to the fundamental role of the motif of shame, it is clear that these authors, associated as thesis and antithesis with the beginning and end of European metaphysics, respectively, grow unexpectedly close to each other. Shame, linked to logos, appears in them as a fundamental indicator of the transformative movement of the soul as an embodied living center. It is an imaginary sounding board through which the logos in its innermost nature becomes audible. In its name, both carry out a kind of reassessment of existing values and a transformation of shame towards an essentially authentic indicator of achieved health. What can we learn from the synoptic view of the two authors and their opposing perspectives? While the Nietzschean perspective teaches us to see much more ambiguity in the Platonic logos than he often admits, as well as its dangerous nearness to non-dialogical sophistry, the Platonic perspective helps us see striving for personal growth connected with strong sensitivity towards others in Nietzsche. From this perspective, one can also question Nietzsche’s emphasis on the need for a mask, for there are situations in which it is appropriate not to conceal but to reveal the beauty and depth of the soul. Although the reader has no other choice but to purify her own logos, each of both, due to his opponent, can still inspire.

This thesis can be supplemented by a broader view. The Platonic idea points up the ladder of love to the fullness of beauty, which allows one to live a life of true virtue, a life worth living, and a life of beauty (*Symp.* 211d–212a). If Socrates, as a disciple of Diotima, leads everything to beauty itself, it is only in order to return to this world to live in its newly seen beauty. The movement towards beauty does not lead away from this world into false idealism, for, as the Alcibiades passage shows, it is inseparable from the “truth movement” of one’s own soul, which, through this movement, becomes fully itself and is thus able to carry out a double task: to read beauty in this world and to produce beauty in this world.

Nietzsche’s criticism of “idealism” concerns to a great extent various forms of Platonism rather than Plato. Moreover, if we recall Nietzsche’s “ruling logos”, as he formulates it in *Gay Science*, the parallel grows stronger: “I want to learn more and more to see beauty in the necessity of things:—so I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. Amor fati: from now on, let this be my love!” (*GS* [4], 276). Thanks to the motif of holistic love, expressed by the conjunction *amor fati*, those initially intersecting perspectives of *Symposium* and *Gay Science* take the same direction. This connection makes one question anew the validity of Nietzsche’s fundamental objection to Plato in *GS* 340. From the view of *Symposium*, Nietzsche’s condemnation of Socrates’ “existential pessimism” is untenable as unjustified rhetoric. The sacrifice of the rooster to Asclepius is an expression of gratitude—not for saving Socrates from this life but for saving the life of logos. Just as Schopenhauer can be said to be the “terrible child” of German Idealism ([28], p. 388), Nietzsche can be called an *enfant terrible* of Platonism²³, the “child” who effectively prevents Plato from becoming an inanimate dogma and who helps us to see in him “the most beautiful plant of antiquity”. The same animating movement can be taken in the opposite direction, and behind the masks of “Nietzscheanism” we can see a Nietzsche who wants to make the world more beautiful.

Funding: This research was supported by the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ The original draft of this study was published in Czech under the title: Stud a logos. K nietzschovsko-platónské polemice, in: *AITHER*, 2023, 29, 80–100. I refer to Plato’s dialogues by standard abbreviations, using Burnet’s edition; for Nietzsche, I use the following abbreviations: *A* for *The Antichrist*, *BGE* for *Beyond Good and Evil*, *EH* for *Ecce Homo*, *GM* for *Genealogy of Morality*, *GS* for *Gay Science*, *KSB* for *Sämtliche Briefe*, *TI* for *Twilight of the Idols*, and *Z* for *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In the case of Nietzsche’s texts, the number or entry after the abbreviation of the work refers to the aphorism or section title.
- ² Nietzsche’s approach to the Platonic corpus is not unambiguous: in many places, he sharply differentiates between Plato and the (historical) Socrates, while in others he works with Socrates as Plato’s subject and creation. E.g., (*EH* [1] “Untimely” 3): “Thus Plato used Socrates as Plato’s semiotics”. Further, in *BGE* ([2] 190): “He, the most daring of all interpreters, who took the whole of Socrates from the street as a popular theme and pop-song, to vary it endlessly and impossibly: namely, in all its own masks and multiplicities”. In this vein, what follows is not a description of the differences detected by Nietzsche between two historical figures; I work with “Socrates” exclusively as a Platonic motif. Anderson ([3], p. 16), for example, takes the same approach: “if in this book I refer to Socrates in my own voice, then... I intend nothing else than the character Socrates as created by Plato, and any interest or excellence I attribute to this Socrates belongs solely to his creator, Plato”.
- ³ Clark and Dudrick [6] attempt to interpret Nietzsche’s conception of the soul from the first book *BGE* on the basis of, not in contrast to, the tripartite division of the soul in Plato’s Republic. They try to argue “that Nietzsche does not accept Plato’s theory of the soul but that he regards it as a hypothesis that his own psychology attempts to refine” ([6], p. 163). Their proposal then goes like this: “Nietzsche accepts Plato’s hypothesis that human behavior is to be explained in terms of an internal or unobservable structure, the causal properties of which are specified in terms of the interrelations of its elements. However, he

takes these elements to be simply the drives and affects. He transforms Plato's appetites into drives, turns Plato's spirit into a property of all drives—the will to power—and denies that reason provides an independent source of motivation, rendering it as a set of motivationally inert cognitive capacities" ([6], p. 167). Their position is in many ways refined by Janaway [7], who proposes a more direct connection between the tripartite soul in Plato and Nietzsche's concept. I do not find the presumption that Nietzsche's aim in *BGE I* is to provide any kind of systematic theory of "soul" convincing. In my view, its aim is to argue against prevailing philosophical prejudices, nothing more.

4 Using the term "logos" I refer to the original semantic breadth, with the dominant motif of "reflective speech". A more precise distinction between Platonic and Nietzschean logos is beyond the scope of this study. What "logos" means for both is directly shown in relevant citations and interpretations. For recent elaboration of this, see Müller ([5], pp. 234–244). In rough outline, one could distinguish the "idealized logos" from the logos as a perspectival manifestation of life, embedded in corporeality and agency but closer look can problematize this difference.

5 Nietzsche also uses the terms "Schande"/"zu Schanden" (e.g., in *GS* [4] 99; *A* [9] 59; and 62, *GM* [10] I, 11) or "Schmach" (*A* [9] 26).

6 On emotions in Plato generally, see Blank [11]; for the most recent interpretation of the various forms of emotions in Plato, see Candiotti—Renaut ([12], pp. 238–284). On the motif of shame as "*aischyné*", cf. Konstan [13]; on the cultural context of "*aischyné*" in Greek thought, cf. Allen-Hornblower [14]; on the synonymy of "*aischyné*" and "*aidos*", cf. *Leg.* II.671d3 ("shame and shyness"); and on their differentiation, cf. *Chrm.* 160e3–5. Also, cf. Cairns ([15], pp. 374–385 and 398–430), according to whom "*aidos*" adopts the features of habitus, "*hexis*". It is evident that in *Phaedrus* Plato clearly differentiates between "*aichyné*" (shame) and "*aidos*" ("respect and shyness", also translated as "modesty" or "reverence"), this being directly the property of the "good horse" (*Phdr.* 253d).

7 As for "*aischyné*", we can refer to the meaning stated in *Leg.* 1.646e10–647a2, anticipated in *Prot.* 322c: "But we are often afraid of reputation, judging that we are considered bad when we do or say something unpleasant; and this fear we—and I mean everyone—call shame".

8 The key role of reflexivity is underlined by Rotenstreich ([16], p. 86): "What really matters is the recognition; there is no accountability without recognizing ourselves in our deeds as doers of the deeds. There is no recognition of ourselves without self-identification; and recognition and self-identification are just the two sides of the same coin. There is no self-identification without self-reflection and there is no self-reflection without reflection. Shame as a phenomenon brings these aspects of the human subject into active manifestation".

9 Alfano ([17] 2013, p. 11) gives this definition of shame in relation to Nietzsche: "the emotion one feels when one is or imagines oneself as the object of contempt". One can agree with this summary (*ibid.*, p. 11–12): "Nietzsche seems to think that shame is an inevitable emotion in humans, and so our aim should be to regulate it rather than simply promote or eradicate it". However, his categorization of shame into four kinds looks rather accidental, without systematic clarity and with an a priori decision to agree with everything Nietzsche has to say. His employment of digital methods does not seem to make any substantial contribution to an understanding of the ambivalence of shame.

10 In a letter to Overbeck of 22 October 1883, Nietzsche confides, "I am more and more astonished at how little I know of Plato and how very Platonic Zarathustra is" ("...wie wenig ich Plato kenne und wie sehr Zarathustra πλατωνίζει". *KSB*, [18] 6, Nr. 469, p. 449). Müller ([5], p. 234) lists four ways in which Plato's dialogues are comparable to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: "(1) As texts, they have a narrative structure; as composed narratives, they interpret a philosophical theme as an event and thus provide a context for the world of human life. (2) The speech and event sequences of dialogue and narrative are oriented towards the extremely charismatic protagonists Socrates and Zarathustra. (3) Nietzsche and Plato are present in the charisma of their protagonists in a special way, without this presence being able to be conceptualized. They thus point beyond their protagonists. (4) Zarathustra's parables and the Platonic—Socratic myths transform the discursive procedure of philosophical speech into poetic speech". However, we could go on with other, more substantial parallels, like the motif of desire/love as an elementary driving force, or the symbol of godlike sun.

11 "Oh meine Freunde! So spricht der Erkennende: Scham, Scham, Scham—das ist die Geschichte des Menschen!" The Platonic analogy to the archetypal meaning of shame for humankind would be the passage in *Prot.* 322c, and the biblical analogy would be the motif of nakedness in *Genesis*.

12 This is mirrored by the fact that in the strictly rationalist *Critique of Practical Reason*, the motif of shame appears only once. See Kant ([20] p. 119; *AA V*, p. 88).

13 "Wen nennst du schlecht?—Den, der immer beschämen will. Was ist dir das Menschlichste?—Jemandem Scham ersparen. Was ist das Siegel der erreichten Freiheit?—Sich nicht mehr vor sich selber schämen". *GS* [4], 273–275.

14 On the gradation of the personal energy field cf. *EH* [1], "Clever", 29–45.

15 On the motif of the life task cf. *EH* [1], "Clever", 43–44.

16 The same motif of suffering from life is repeated in *TI* ([21], "The Problem of Socrates", 29–30). In Nietzsche's attacks on Plato's Socrates, we can read (so my interpretation) his attack on his own existential pessimism.

17 Regarding the overall view of Socrates' argumentative strategy in the *Crito*, one can agree with the interpretation given by Stokes [22]; however, what is questionable is the overemphasis on situational hermeneutics that does not allow one to give the key motives a broader than situational meaning.

- 18 ὡς ἐγὼ οὐ νῦν πρῶτον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀεὶ τοιοῦτος οἷος τῶν ἐμῶν μηδενὶ ἄλλω πείθεσθαι ἢ τῷ λόγῳ ὃς ἂν μοι λογιζομένῳ βέλτιστος φαίνεται. J. Patočka ([23], p. 75) recalls the emblematic character of this key passage: “A sentence which a sculptor of imperial times carved on the famous Pharnesian bust of Socrates to mark the essence of Socrates’ person.”
- 19 Within the rich literature on this topic, Patočka’s position is still interesting ([23], p. 79): “For Socrates persists in obedience not because he is convinced of the sovereignty of the community over the principle of philosophy, but because he regards philosophy as the principle of the community and does not want to abandon it, wants to feel himself its subject and servant to the end. The philosopher must be loyal to the community, to his fatherland, to his society and to his own—precisely out of loyalty to philosophy, which must not become a kind of escape, but is destined for reality. Such is the sense of *Crito*, such is the sense of Socrates’ resistance to ‘paying back the injustice’ to the community”. On the ambivalent relationship to democracy, cf., e.g., Kraut ([24], p. 55): “Democracy, the political system that granted the many the power to kill its greatest benefactor, is no longer regarded as a regime with which a philosopher can or should be satisfied. . . . If a few possess knowledge, they alone should rule, and others should obey”.
- 20 Cf. de Luise ([25], p. 38): “Shame is now no longer induced from outside, but from within consciousness. Its role is to guide Alcibiades as a moral subject in the search for himself, which cannot be mirrored by any existing models and certainly is not fulfilled by already codified ones”. There is, of course, a sort of outer impulse: without Socrates no shame would have taken place, while in the case of Alcibiades the shame is strictly relational, not internalized, as de Luise suggests.
- 21 For an interesting parallel, cf. Zarathustra’s speech “On the Bite of the Viper” (*Z* [19], I, 59–60).
- 22 “All that is deep loves the mask; the deepest things even feel hatred for the image and likeness. Should not the antithesis be the very disguise in which the shame of a god walks? . . . These are not the worst things to be ashamed of: there is not only deceit behind the mask—there is so much good. . . . Every deep spirit needs a mask: moreover, a mask is constantly growing around every deep spirit, thanks to the constantly erroneous, that is to say shallow, interpretation of every word, every step, every sign of life that it provokes”. For the interpretation of the same words with reference to the “doctrine of perspectivism”, see Lewin ([26], p. 10); for an extensive discussion of the issue of masks in *Z*, see Rosen [27].
- 23 Let us repeat Nietzsche’s words from a letter to Overbeck: “. . .how much Zarathustra πλατόνιζει. . .”. *KSB* [18], 6, p. 449.

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