

THE IMPRINT OF THE SOUL: PSYCHOSOMATIC AFFECTION IN  
PLATO, GORGIAS AND THE “ORPHIC” GOLD TABLETS

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The question “are we as human beings affected by foreign influences from artistic or technical sources?” was not significantly problematic to many ancient philosophers.<sup>1</sup> The source of affections was almost always considered external in Pre-Socratic, Platonic, Peripatetic, Epicurean, Stoic, and Middle- and Neoplatonic systems of thought. Even individuals within these philosophical schools who were invested in a refashioning of their own tradition, such as the Peripatetic Strato or the Stoic Posidonius, could not sustain the argument that affections were totally internal and devoid of exterior influence. It was more often the case that philosophers dwelt on a more technical question, closer to what Plutarch poses in his fragmentary *de Libidine et Aegritudine* (1):

ἡ μὲν πρόθεσις περὶ ἐπιθυμίας γέγονε καὶ λύπης, πότερον σώματος πάθος ἐστὶν ἢ ἐπὶ σώματι ψυχῆς· καὶ γὰρ εἰ τὴν αὐτοπάθειαν ἀπολύσεται τὸ σῶμα τούτων, οὐ διαφεύξεται τὴν αἰτίαν, ἀλλὰ διὰ σώματος πάθη φαίνεται, κὰν περὶ ψυχὴν ἀπελέγχηται.

The subject comes before us concerning desire and grief, whether the affection is particular to the soul or to the soul but occasioned by the body; for even if the body is shown freed of experiencing these affections itself, it will not be acquitted of the charge, but the affections are manifest through it, even if they are proven to concern the soul.

The subject of this litigation (the case of the soul versus the body) provides us with a more appropriate set of questions to pose to the ancient writers and thinkers: how and where do affections work? In what remains of Plutarch’s treatise, we have an historical introduction to the systems of affection that philosophers and physicians throughout Greek and Latin traditions hypothesized; Plutarch sets these systems, which conflict with one another, in alternating pairs, as if each system presented its advocacy or prosecution of the body. I wish to suggest that this tradition, involving the soul and the body and their manipulation

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<sup>1</sup> A version of this paper was read in a panel entitled “Affective Arts and the Production of Subject” which featured E. Del Chrol, Matt Fox, Robert K. Germany, and Philip Purchase. I would like to thank the panel presenters, Kevin van Bladel, William G. Thalmann, and the two anonymous readers of *Mouseion*, all of whom have read and commented on drafts of this paper, as well as those scholars present at the panel who offered helpful questions and discussion.

via affections, originates with the sophist and orator Gorgias, and, through the writings of Plato and the practices of “Orphic” initiates, becomes a canonical subject for discussion among philosophers. In order to confirm these origins, I will trace the subject of affection throughout the works of Gorgias, Plato, and the “Orphic” Gold Tablets, a set of 39 tiny matted gold plates unearthed throughout the Mediterranean basin which date from the fifth century BCE to the third century CE; these tablets feature recurrent variations on afterlife judgments and are often inscribed with letters in common formulaic metrical arrangements.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the disappointing loss of the argumentative portion of Plutarch’s *de Libidine et Aegritudine*, the historical summary remains. The oldest systematized treatment of affection mentioned in Plutarch’s summary is that of Democritus, who we are told was born around the time of Socrates’ birth and heard Anaxagoras speak in his youth.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, Plutarch neglects to mention the sophists, who, active in Southern Italy and Sicily, may have informed Democritus’ conventionalist stance on reality and the place of affection in the constitution of  $\phi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha\kappa\acute{\iota}\alpha$ .<sup>4</sup> The topic of the affective power of the arts and their role in producing states of subjectivity was exported hand in hand with the rapid popularization of rhetoric in the late fifth century BCE. An influx of foreign wisdom practitioners from Sicily and Magna Graecia to Athens, who were bringing what were thought to be remarkable new paradigms for the performance of speech—especially in the development of deliberative law and foreign policy—cross-pollinated with independent intellectual experiments in medicine, natural sciences, musicology and mathematics. A certain kind of secularization was infiltrating Athenian culture and commingling with institutions of politico-religious artistic representation on the stage and traditions of rhapsody.

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<sup>2</sup> I have arrived at this number using the most current categorization, recently published by Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston in *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets* (London 2007).

<sup>3</sup> D.L. 9.41; Suda s.v. Democritus. See J. Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (London 1982) 306.

<sup>4</sup> DK 68 A 135.63. This is a quotation attributed to Democritus by Theophrastus, *De Sensu*. On the convention in the perception of reality in Democritus, see Barnes (above, n. 3) 370–377. Socrates, in the *Theaetetus* (151e8–152e9), assumes conventionalist systems of affection under sophistic tutelage (here, specifically, Protagorean). For Democritus and Gorgias mentioned together (both are said to have been Isocrates’ teacher), see Censorinus 15.3 (DK 68 A 6) and Suda s.v. Hippocrates (DK 68 A 10). Gorgias was also the teacher of Polus, another Abderite.

sodic performance that had existed for at least a century.<sup>5</sup> The poetic and performative *agones* and their practice within religious festivals were cross-fertilized with deliberative and epideictic oration from a new sort of prominent force in the city, the political sophists, whom Plato's Eleatic Stranger would later define as "hucksters of the greatest shadows, and themselves shadows too, and the greatest phonies and the greatest magicians and the sophists' sophists."<sup>6</sup>

But what was the precise danger that the political sophist posed to Plato's ideal city-state community? One significant threat was the tacit claim that the influence of the arts could be dominant over the ethical subject, e.g. the aristocrat who might abuse his wealth or the crowd that could revolt or, worse, the statesman whose natural capacity for kingly virtue and epistemology could turn tyrannical. In the *Gorgias*, which introduces many issues that would become topical in the Eleatic dialogues, Plato responds to this threat by challenging Gorgias himself, and in so doing he displays remarkable courage. But his dramatic representation of Gorgias is of a "muddle-headed" geriatric, a depiction undercut by the "unteachable stupidity" of the bland Polus and hyperbolized by the "ambitious" and "dangerously frank" Callicles.<sup>7</sup> Attempts to reconstruct any realistic portrait of one of the most influential thinkers of the fifth century BCE are undercut by these dramatic fabrications, and our endeavors to piece together the puzzle of Gorgias are compounded by the fact that our final picture, once fitted together, will carry such grand Platonic strokes. And yet Plato is still a painter, despite his attempts to suppress sophistic technology and mimetic arts in works such as the *Republic* and the *Gorgias*.<sup>8</sup> For Plato inherited certain discursive modes from the sophists; the influence of sophistry was simply inescapable, and Plato himself had to master sophistic techniques in order to suppress them. In this instance we find Plato, the grand master of the dramatic prose narrative, as a storyteller who adopted discursive modes from the sophists and actively attempted to engage and modify

<sup>5</sup> F. Solmsen, *Intellectual Experiments of the Greek Enlightenment* (Princeton 1975) 5.

<sup>6</sup> Here we find the definition for the *stasiastikos*, which Skemp translates as "party politician" but I take to be simply a politician whose primary interests are chauvinistic. See Pl. *Plt.* 303c1–3. On politicians who are afraid to be labeled "sophists" see Pl. *Phdr.* 257d4–e6. There is a relation between the shadows (as devalued imitations) here and painting and writing as "shadow" in the *Phaedrus* (276a8–b1).

<sup>7</sup> Such are the descriptive terms employed by E.R. Dodds, *Plato's Gorgias* (Oxford 1959) 9–15.

<sup>8</sup> Later in life, Plato may have found room for the mimetic arts and even the sophists in his city-state, as the *Sophist*, *Politicus* and *Laws* attest.

them.

Despite Plato's criticisms, there is room for good humor and for the deception of realism in Aristotle's sketch. Here we see a Gorgias elevated above the Platonic inkblot, whose ease with the world could be understood as intellectual as well as entertaining, and not without purpose. In his description of appropriate and inappropriate metaphors, Aristotle praises Gorgias for employing a metaphor that stands in opposition to metaphors that do not produce persuasion (*Rh.* 1406<sup>b</sup>15–19):

τὸ δὲ Γοργίου εἰς τὴν χελιδόνα, ἐπεὶ κατ' αὐτοῦ πετομένη ἀφῆκε τὸ περίττωμα, ἄριστα ἔχει τῶν τραγικῶν· εἶπε γὰρ "αἰσχρὸν γε, ὦ Φιλομήλα". ὄρνιθι μὲν γάρ, εἰ ἐποίησεν, οὐκ αἰσχρὸν, παρθένῳ δὲ αἰσχρὸν. εὖ οὖν ἐλοιδόρησεν εἰπὼν ὃ ἦν, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὃ ἔστιν.

But what Gorgias said to the swallow, when she flew over and let fall her droppings upon him, was the best of the tragic style. He said, "Shame on you, Philomela!" For if a bird had done this, there would be no shame in it; but shameful for a maiden! So he reproached her appropriately by calling her what she was, and not what she is.

I refer to this anecdote in order to highlight the correlation here (as elsewhere) between ethical modes of behavior, the constitutive power of the speech act, and the experience of a physical, material discomfort. In this case, it is Gorgias who is praised for employing the "best of the tragic style," which Aristotle here explains as relating to questions of being: Gorgias' metaphor is persuasive because it is neither "ridiculous" nor "too dignified" nor yet "too far-fetched." Is Aristotle assuming that the story of Philomela has some truth in reality? There is some doubt here about what reality is.<sup>9</sup> For Gorgias' act of naming is constitutive: the swallow could be any bird in the sky, but the act of calling it Philomela (what it once was, and no longer is) is a model for the "tragic style" of metaphor.

Perhaps by examining other parallel situations, we can get a clearer picture of Gorgias' poetics. For this is certainly not the first time that Gorgias has used a figure from the world of *mythos* to expound on his theories of existence and the possibilities of change; indeed, the tensions between *mythos* and *logos* are perhaps nowhere more richly expressed than in the *Encomium for Helen*. This epideictic exercise partakes in a long tradition within the Greek performative arts of producing a litigation about the guilt or innocence of Helen of Troy, a tradition implicit in the *Iliad* (3.164) and *Odyssey*, the extant fragments of Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women*, and lyric poems by Stesichorus and Sappho.<sup>10</sup> The tra-

<sup>9</sup> M. Untersteiner, *The Sophists*, trans. K. Freeman (Oxford 1954) 140–175.

<sup>10</sup> On the unsurprising relationship of litigation and speech-making, see E. Schiappa, *The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory in Classical Greece* (New Haven

dition does not end with Gorgias: it becomes more explicitly juridical in Euripides' *Helen* and *Trojan Women*, as well as in Seneca's play by the same name. But what marks Gorgias' treatment as distinct from those of his predecessors is the importation of pathology into the field of *mythos*, an importation that Plato would later echo in the judgments of the soul that conclude the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*.<sup>11</sup> We shall contextualize these hypothetical systems of pathology found within philosophy and sophistic epideictic by comparing them with another mythological treatment of the judgment of the soul found in the "Orphic" gold tablets.

#### SOPHISTS AND PHILOSOPHERS: MUTUAL AFFECTION

Since Mario Untersteiner's monograph *I Sophisti*, published in English in 1954, scholars in the Americas and Great Britain have posited relationships between affect (or *pathos*), epistemology, and reality. What interests us here is the direct relationship between speech and affect: as D.M. MacDowell notes in his edition, "The thing which most interests Gorgias about speech, in the *Encomium for Helen*, is not so much its use to state facts, but its use to arouse emotions and influence behavior."<sup>12</sup> The arousal or suppression of emotions, namely "fear, sorrow, joy, or pity," is a product of persuasive and delusive *logos* (*Hel.* 8–9):

εἰ δὲ λόγος ὁ πείσας καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπατήσας, οὐδὲ πρὸς τοῦτο χαλεπὸν ἀπολογήσασθαι καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν ἀπολύσασθαι ὥδε. λόγος δυνάστης μέγας ἐστίν, ὅς μικροτάτῳ σώματι καὶ ἀφανεστάτῳ θειότατα ἔργα ἀποτελεῖ· δύναται γὰρ καὶ φόβον παῦσαι καὶ λύπην ἀφελεῖν καὶ χαρὰν ἐνεργάσασθαι καὶ ἔλεον ἐπαυξῆσαι. ταῦτα δὲ ὡς οὕτως ἔχει δεῖξω· δεῖ δὲ καὶ δόξῃ δεῖξαι τοῖς ἀκούουσι.

But if it was *logos* that persuaded and deceived the soul, there is no difficulty in formulating a defense for that nor in discounting the accusation thus: *logos* is a remarkable dynast, who achieves the most divine effects by employing the smallest and most invisible body; for it [*logos*] is capable of stopping fear and relieving pain and causing joy and augmenting pity. I'll prove that this is true in reality; but proof must appeal to the opinion of my listeners.

1999) 126.

<sup>11</sup> For Schiappa (above, n. 10), Gorgias' main contribution here is that he "explain[s] how *logos* works." I agree with Schiappa, but I also find the arguments of Untersteiner (above, n. 9), J. de Romilly (*Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* [Cambridge, MA 1975] 3–11), and G.B. Kerferd (*The Sophistic Movement* [Cambridge 1984] 78–81) persuasive: this is a remarkably polysemous text that cannot be relegated to a simple teleological reading such as Schiappa's, which is perhaps too cautious at times, too particularly selective otherwise, in its methodology.

<sup>12</sup> D.M. MacDowell, *Encomium of Helen* (Bristol 1982) 37.

Here we see that speech operates materially, by means of the smallest and most invisible body.<sup>13</sup> Gorgias' ideas here about the material or somatic nature of speech are parallel to the atomism of Democritus, who posited that soul was "composed of primary and indivisible bodies" which could be disturbed by exterior forces<sup>14</sup>; Democritus, however, does not imagine that individual atoms were capable of affection, as Aristotle tells us (*Gen. corr.* 326 a1–3).<sup>15</sup> How individual atoms relate to movements in the soul is nowhere clear in Democritus' writings, but Gorgias provides us with a metaphor that would catalyze Plato and other philosophers in their attempts to define pathological systems.<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of how *logos* affects the body or the soul initiates more complex scientific hypotheses concerning the structure of the soul and its relation to the body.

Following the passage previously cited, Gorgias posits a comparison between the art he is practicing and poetry: he calls poetry *logos* with meter and explains how poetry, as a subdivision of *logos*, achieves those emotional effects previously mentioned (*Hel.* 9):

τὴν ποίησιν ἅπασαν καὶ νομίζω καὶ ὀνομάζω λόγον ἔχοντα μέτρον·

<sup>13</sup> Are there shared elements between Gorgias' and Orphic semiotics? The *sōma-sēma* paralogy espoused by the Orphics (Pl. *Cra.* 400b11–c10, *Grg.* 493a2–3) provides an interesting and apt hermeneutic framework for positing a relationship between the production of meaning and atomistic physics. A full treatment of this subject is yet unattempted, but I will venture some preliminary remarks. The paralogy explicit in *sōma-sēma* exemplifies how the Orphics (and, in my opinion, Gorgias) understood the relationship between ontology and linguistic representation: speech achieves its effects by the "smallest and most invisible body" which, here in Gorgias' *Encomium for Helen*, stands for all sorts of paronomasia (shifts in vowel length or sound, addition of consonant sounds, or consonant shifts). The playful Platonic Socrates enjoyed categorical comparison according to pun/paronomasia, but later Platonic authorities (the Eleatic Stranger, Timaeus, and the Athenian Stranger) show little interest in it.

<sup>14</sup> That Gorgias and the other sophists were invested in studying the physical sciences has been suggested by G.E.R. Lloyd, who does not explore in depth the writings of the sophists themselves because "the dearth of original texts again means that our inquiry draws a blank" (*Magic, Reason, and Experience: Studies in the Origin and Development of Greek Science* [Cambridge 1979] 87 with n. 146). This presentation is one attempt to resolve Lloyd's *aporia*.

<sup>15</sup> Even so, the terms are not entirely clear. Barnes (above, n. 3) 476 reminds us that when Aristotle claims "that fire, the stuff of Democritean souls, is 'the most incorporeal (*asomatos*) of the elements (*de An.* 405a6 = DK 68 A 101)," he means only that the *psyche* is very fine or rare (cf. Philoponus, DK 68 A 101); '*asōmatos*' is used loosely, as we might use 'insubstantial'."

<sup>16</sup> While Gorgias' treatment of *logos* is predisciplinary, it does, as Lloyd (above, n. 14) 84 notes, "attempt something approaching a general statement concerning persuasion and the role of argument within it."

ἥς τοὺς ἀκούοντας εἰσῆλθε καὶ φρίκη περίφοβος καὶ ἔλεος πολὺδακρυς καὶ πόθος φιλοπενθής, ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίων τε πραγμάτων καὶ σωμάτων εὐτυχίαις καὶ δυσπραγίαις ἴδιόν τι πάθημα διὰ τῶν λόγων ἔπαθεν ἡ ψυχὴ.

In my opinion, all poetry is by custom and by name *logos* with meter. Shuddering fright and tear-laden pity and mournful longing invade those who hear it, and, through *logoi*, the soul suffers its own suffering at the fortunate and unfortunate events of the affairs and bodies of other people.

The emphasis here is on the affective power of poetry, which, as a subdivision of *logos*, catalyzes emotions such as fear, pity, and desire; furthermore, the power of *logoi* causes *pathemata* appropriate to each soul, which suggests that while the prose or poetic rhapsode<sup>17</sup> confers emotions upon people, souls become individuated according to the particular reception of the general *logos*.<sup>18</sup>

*Logos* is not necessarily marked by persuasion, a notion that Gorgias highlights. For *logos* can be with or without persuasion, which must be demarcated as a supplement to absolute performative power. Whatever *logos* is when unpersuasive is not entirely clear, since the text is corrupted beyond safe assumption. But when *logos* is persuasive, it renders its listeners incapable of independent action (*Hel.* 12):

λόγος γὰρ ψυχὴν ὁ πείσας, ἢν ἔπεισεν, ἠνάγκασε καὶ πείθεσθαι τοῖς λεγομένοις καὶ συναινέσαι τοῖς ποιουμένοις. ὁ μὲν οὖν πείσας ὡς ἀναγκάσας ἀδικεῖ, ἡ δὲ πεισθεῖσα ὡς ἀναγκασθεῖσα τῷ λόγῳ μάτην ἀκούει κακῶς.

For *logos*, when it persuades, forces the soul, the persuaded, both to obey what was said and to approve what has been done (to it): the persuader commits injustice on the grounds that he compelled [the soul], but the soul, persuaded, is wrongly slandered on the grounds that she was compelled by *logos*.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> For the term “prose rhapsode,” see Schiappa (above, n. 10) 98–102.

<sup>18</sup> Compare Socrates’ definition of Protagorean affection/perception at *Pl. Tht.* 152c1–3. Socrates’ description of Protagorean physiology in the *Theaetetus* incorporates elements of Heraclitean and Democritean physics, and it is difficult to establish what exactly is Protagorean, Heraclitean, Democritean, or the broad stroke of Plato. That perceptions are peculiar to each individual, despite the general origin of the agent, is imported upon this “fluxist” physiology (*Tht.* 159e7–160a4). Cf. *Cra.* 385e4–386a4, but also Sextus (DK 68 A 114), who assumes that Democritus and Plato both used the *peritrope* against Protagoras’ system of affection/perception (cf. Barnes [above, n. 3] 542–543).

<sup>19</sup> ἀκούει κακῶς here is taken to mean “is slandered” in the sense found at *Lys.* 8.3. On slander in its juridical context, see J. Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People* (Princeton 1989) 151 and 182.

The language here returns us to the dramatic situation of the performance: it is, at least in form, a litigation over the guilt or innocence of Helen. Yet we see a similar kind of forensic structure as in the fragment of Plutarch's *de Libidine et Aegritudine* cited above. Here, though, the trial over the guilt or innocence of Helen is paralleled by a trial involving *logos* and the soul. Thus I have put forth one of many possible interpretations of this polysemous text: it presents a trial involving mythological characters that can be read allegorically as a trial involving the constituent parts of a human being and their capacity for corruption by means of the power of affection.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, Gorgias tells us the precise nature of the power of *logos*: it creates an imprint or a stamp upon the soul, and as such it structures the soul as drugs structure the body (*Hel.* 13–14):

ὅτι δ' ἡ πειθῶ προσιούσα τῷ λόγῳ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐτυπώσατο ὅπως ἐβούλετο, χρὴ μαθεῖν πρῶτον μὲν τοὺς τῶν μετεωρολόγων λόγους, οἵτινες δόξαν ἀντὶ δόξης τὴν μὲν ἀφελόμενοι τὴν δ' ἐνεργασάμενοι τὰ ἅπιστα καὶ ἄδηλα φαίνεσθαι τοῖς τῆς δόξης ὄμμασιν ἐποίησαν .... τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ λόγον ἔχει ἢ τε τοῦ λόγου δύναμις πρὸς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς τάξιν ἢ τε τῶν φαρμάκων τάξις πρὸς τὴν τῶν σωμάτων φύσιν.

To show that persuasion, when added to speech, also imprints the soul in whatever way it wishes, one should learn first the *logoi* of the astronomers,<sup>21</sup> who, supplanting opinion for opposite opinion, destroy one and bring the other to completion, make manifest what is unbelievable and unclear to the eyes of opinion ... the power of *logos* has the same relation<sup>22</sup> to the structuring of the soul as the order of drugs to the nature of bodies.

It is here that we encounter the metaphor of the stamp or imprint that Plato and Aristotle both employ, in different ways, when conceptualizing the relationship of the soul to the body.<sup>23</sup> This relationship is

<sup>20</sup> See P. Struck, *Birth of the Symbol: Ancient Readers and the Limits of their Texts* (Princeton 2004) 45, 115–117, 149–151 on allegorical hermeneutics and *mythoi*.

<sup>21</sup> The idea that “astronomers” can render the stars invisible or visible is as old as the *Enuma Elish*, although its import is not lost on Plato, whose interactions with Babylonian astrology have not been completely examined. For some preliminary remarks, see Lloyd (above, n. 14) 131–133. On the subject of “astronomers” as babbling rhetoricians, see Socrates’ criticisms of Anaxagoras at *Phdr.* 269e10–270a8. Cf. *Ap.* 19b.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. MacDowell (above, n. 12) 37 with n. 14.

<sup>23</sup> For the affective imprint in Plato’s works, see below. Aristotle uses the notion of “imprint” in his metaphor of the constitution of the body and soul (*de An.* 412<sup>b</sup>4–8, trans. W.S. Hett): “If then one is to find a definition which will apply to every soul, it will be ‘the first actuality of a natural body possessed of organs.’ So one need no more ask whether body and soul are one than whether the wax and the impression it receives are one, or in general whether the mat-



complicated and lacks clear consistency in the corpus of Platonic writings, given the multiplicity of authorities who espouse conflicting psychological and physiological hypotheses.<sup>24</sup> First, I will focus on the myth of the judgment of the soul by Rhadamanthus, Minos and Aeacus at the end of Plato's *Gorgias*. I will then draw comparisons between this litigation and those found in comparable myths throughout the *Republic* and the "Orphic" gold tablets found at Thurii. These myths follow in the tradition espoused by Gorgias of employing the form of litigation to posit hypotheses that define the constitution of the soul and its pathologies. As we shall see, the Platonic Socrates construes the power of affect as both evidence of a corrupt ethical subject and as the proper punishment for a guilty soul; the gold tablets, on the other hand, materialize affection and employ it for the pursuance of blessedness in the afterlife. The key link for all these eschatological systems is the affection that takes the form of an imprint.

Despite the complex relationship of soul to body in the Platonic corpus, there is one point of agreement among all the extant dialogues: the soul and body are separated at death, which is defined by Socrates simply as "the separation of the two things, the body and the soul, from one another" (524b2–4). According to the myth in the *Gorgias*, which Socrates strangely calls a "logos" (523a1–2), the soul of a human being, once separated from its body, comes before one of the judges in order to receive its sentence. The body, we are told, still shows marks of the *pathēmata* it has received throughout life (524b4–c1). But when the soul approaches to receive its judgment, it too makes a display of its affections (524d2–525a7):

Now this situation seems to me, at any rate, to be the same for the soul too, Callicles. For all the affections (*pathēmata*) of nature as well as those which the human has through experience of each thing in his soul are manifest in the soul, when it has been stripped naked from the body. So when they come before the judge, those from Asia before Rhadamanthys, he stops them and examines the soul of each, without prior knowledge of what sort it is, but often taking hold of some haughty king or some other king or dynast he discerns that no bit of the soul is healthy, but it has been whipped thoroughly (διαμεμαστιγωμένην) and is full of wounds from perjury or injustice, which each affair of his has leveled against the soul, and that all things

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ter of each thing is the same as that of which it is matter." For Aristotle's views on the affections of the soul, see especially *de An.* 403<sup>a</sup>3–19.

<sup>24</sup> One could suggest that the ideas of Socrates, Timaeus, the Eleatic Stranger, and the Athenian Stranger represent the development of Plato's own hypotheses concerning the soul and its relationship to the body. Perhaps it is more convincing to conceptualize a set of dramatic voices whose theories accord at times but compete at others.

are crooked thanks to lies and impostures, and there's nothing straight since it was nourished without truth ... and looking upon such a soul he sends it straight off to prison without honor, where it is destined upon arrival to undergo its due sufferings (*pathēmata*).

Socrates presents us with a *mythos* that he calls a *logos* "because it has truth value."<sup>25</sup> He explains that the soul, upon death, will display both its natural affections as well as those received from worldly experience. But he suggests that the negative affections, those considered both ethically and legally questionable, are the consequence of malnourishment and injustices rendered towards other people or a community. Here, the soul gives proof of such affections because they appear as mastigations or whippings on it; the metaphor follows Gorgias' "stamping" or "molding" of the soul mentioned above, but the thrust is significantly more violent and disturbing, emphasizing the enslavement of the soul to its own sins in terms that would have terrified an élite citizen in Athens perhaps even more effectively than the playful flirtations of Gorgias' speech.

The *topos* of "molding" or "stamping" the soul current in the *Gorgias* also figures in Book 7 of Plato's *Republic*. After he offers the myth of the cave as a *paradeigma* for human existence, Socrates ventures a hypothesis that the soul, which might have the same virtues as the body (note the dualistic comparison here), "might have had struck from it the leaden weights of birth and becoming, if it had been hammered straight from childhood" (519a8–b1).<sup>26</sup> The weights, which include eating, gluttony, and pleasures of the sort, function like excrescent parts (*προσφυεῖς*) that direct the soul's gaze downwards.<sup>27</sup> The process of dialectic, so argues Socrates, promises release from the downward gaze to the upward visualization of the divine reflections and shaded images of real things, but "without all the senses" (532a1–d1). Socrates and Glaucon revisit this metaphor in Book 10 (611b–612a), where Socrates recalls this passage in tandem with another in which he and Glaucon had imagined the soul as a many-headed monster sculpted from wax.<sup>28</sup> In order to direct their attention appropriately, Socrates appeals to the

<sup>25</sup> *Grg.* 523a2–3. On *logos-mythos* in the *Gorgias*, see K. Morgan, *Myth and Philosophy from the Presocratics to Plato* (Cambridge 2000) 158–159, 187–191.

<sup>26</sup> I am pointing here to the malleability of the soul; elsewhere (*R.* 587b–590d), Socrates and his interlocutors imagine the soul as a piece of wax that can be sculpted into many monstrous shapes. In the *Theaetetus*, perhaps written contemporaneously with the last books of the *Republic*, Socrates and Theaetetus assume that memory and perception are conceptually comparable in the "wax block (*κῆρινον ἐκμαγεῖον*)" in our souls (191c8–e1; cf. 194c5–195a9).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *R.* 485d–486a.

<sup>28</sup> See n. 26; and for Aristotle's adoption of this metaphor, see n. 23 above.

immortality of the soul which can only be understood when the soul has been properly separated from the body, a process that mirrors proper diaeresis. “We’ll find it more beautiful by far, and we’ll determine justices and injustices more distinctly than all the things we’ve recently described,” Socrates claims. “You see, recently we spoke truth about it, how it appears at present” (611c4–7). Next, Socrates describes the sea-dwelling Glaucus who has lost many original limbs thanks to the currents of the sea and has gained other excrescent parts (προσπεφυκέναι) in the form of oysters, seaweed and rocks. The consequence of this, Socrates tells Glaucus, is that he no longer possesses his original nature but seems rather “entirely like a monster”; all of this, we learn, is comparable with the soul which has been “afflicted by thousands of evils” (611d1–7).

Socrates then tells Glaucus that the soul, like Glaucus, can be stripped of these “accretions of earth and stone,” and that consequently the soul will be revealed in its purity:

And then someone could see its true nature, whether it is multiform or simple, or however it is precisely. But, at the moment, I’d say we’ve described it sufficiently as to the affections (*pathē*) and forms it takes in human life (612a3–6).

Here, the term *pathē* is commonly understood to mean “character,” although this interpretation neglects to account for the pathology of the soul, which, in its parallel with the story of the crustacean Glaucus, both loses limbs and accumulates new ones.

This whole passage, which features an implicit comparison between the sea-monster Glaucus and Socrates’ interlocutor Glaucus, prepares the participants and the reader for the myth of Er, in which we have a *mythos* describing the judgment of souls at a crossroads; the correspondences with the *Gorgias* are not to be missed. Socrates claims that the unjust men, once they reach old age, “will be trampled in the mud by foreigners and fellow-townsmen, whipped (μαστιγούμενοι), and, those things you described as coarse—said truly—being put on the rack and given the brand, all those things which you heard from me that they suffer (πάσχουσιν)” (613d8–e3). The repetition of whippings here confirms the Platonic Socrates’ description of the soul’s judgment in the *Gorgias*. But here Socrates is not yet talking about the soul at the crossroads; what happens to unjust old men is only a *paradeigma* of what awaits the unjust soul when it comes before the judges.<sup>29</sup> Once the soul has left its body, Socrates tells Glaucus, it comes to a blessed place (a

<sup>29</sup> Later on, when the souls line up before the herald who distributes new lives from the lap of Lachesis, these new lives are called “lots” and “*paradeigmata* of lives” (617d4–5).

meadow)<sup>30</sup> with two chasms connected to the underworld and two which offer entrance and exit from heaven; “judges sit amidst these, who, whenever they render a judgment, order the just to take the entry to the right and up to heaven, after they’ve attached the marks (σημεία) of the judgment to their chests; they order the unjust to take the entry to the left and down, wearing those marks (σημεία) of all the things they did on their backs” (614c1–d1). Here, we hear an echo of the myth of the judgment in the *Gorgias*, but in this case the anonymous judges attach signs to the souls, marking their status as unjust or just.<sup>31</sup> Here, the judges control the souls’ presentation by assigning them appropriate meanings, and it is presumed that the souls cannot escape these markings, because each then departs for its allotted destination.

The analogy with what happens to unjust men when they reach old age is confirmed by the reference to affection/suffering once the souls of the unjust have completed their penalty in the underworld. As the souls of the judged approach the chasms that lead to their appointed destinations, they meet with the souls of others who have completed their thousand-year inhabitation in the underworld or in heaven, and they exchange stories. Socrates tells Glaucon that those who ascend from the underworld “talk with one another, while weeping and wailing, as they called to memory the number and nature of things they suffered (πάθοιεν) and saw in their journey under the earth,” while, “in contrast, those who came from heaven, positively affected (εὐπαθείας), recounted the especially beautiful, indescribable sights” (614e6–615a4). We can speculate that these very sights were what affected those in heaven; what the souls which returned from Hades suffered is unclear, but it is defined in contradistinction to the beautiful sights of Heaven. In both cases, however, the soul is affected before and after the litigation, a theme compatible with the myth of the soul’s judgment in the *Gorgias*.

#### MOLDED SCRIPTS: THE “ORPHIC” GOLD TABLETS

We can conclude with Plato and *Gorgias* by noting the shared elements of Gorgianic psychosomatics and Platonic metaphysics in the “Orphic” gold tablets. In the *Encomium for Helen* as well as the *Gorgias* and *Re-*

<sup>30</sup> It is called a λειμῶνα at *R.* 614e2–3.

<sup>31</sup> How Orphic should we consider this passage? See n. 13 above. There are conspicuous resonances of *Tht.* 191d4–e1, where the “wax block” (see n. 26), the “gift of Mnemosyne, mother of the muses,” is imprinted (ἀποτυποῦσθαι) in order to remember things seen or heard or conceived “as if we are making marks of signet rings (ὡςπερ δακτυλίων σημεία ἐνημαιομένους).” The reference to Mnemosyne sounds particularly Orphic (see the “Orphic” lamellae I A 1–4, I C 1 in G. Pugliese Carratelli, *Le lamine d’oro orfiche* [Milano 2001]).

*public*, we saw that the definition of the soul involved its contradistinction to the body and that affection was at least partially responsible for the constitution of the soul. There are shared elements here with several of the “Orphic” gold lamellae, most especially II B 2<sup>32</sup> from Thurii (fourth/third century BCE), which prescribes for the initiate how to proceed to the underworld once s/he has died.

ἀλλ' ὀπότεαμ ψυχὴ προλίπηι φάος Ἑλίοιο |  
 δεξιὸν εὐθεΐας δ' ἐξίκεναι πεφυλαγμένον | εὐ μάλα πάν(τ)α.  
 χαῖρε παθῶν τὸ πάθη | μα· τὸ δ' οὐπω πρόσθε ἐπεπόνθει·  
 θεὸς ἐγ | ἐνου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου· ἔριφος ἐς γάλα | ἔπετες.  
 χαῖρ(ε) χαῖρε, δεξιὰν ὁδοιπορῶν |  
 λειμῶνάς τε ἱεροὺς καὶ ἄλσεια | Φερσεφονείας.

But whenever [your] soul abandons the light of Helios  
 Advance straight (?) to the right, while being well on guard for all things.  
 Rejoice, you who have endured the suffering; you have never suffered  
 this before.

You've become a god from a mortal; a kid, you fell into the milk.  
 Rejoice, rejoice, taking the road to the right  
 To the holy meadows and groves of Persephone.

The text of this lamella, which was buried in a tomb along with another gold sheet (III 1) whose text featured dozens of *voces magicae* (in the form of *symbola*)<sup>33</sup> to be pronounced in order to gain entrance into the appropriate place of the underworld, reminds the initiate's soul to take “the road to the right to the holy meadows and groves of Persephone,” which echoes the grove of judgment in Plato's *Republic* and follows in a tradition found in other gold tablets.<sup>34</sup> The lamella speaks of

<sup>32</sup> All notation and identification of the “Orphic” gold tablets follows Pugliese Carratelli's Italian edition (above, n. 31). One may also examine the more recent editions of A. Bernabé, *Poetae Epici Graeci*, Testimonia et Fragmenta, Pars II Fasc. 2 (München/Leipzig 2005) 487 F, and Graf and Johnston (above, n. 2).

<sup>33</sup> The text of lamella III 1 (Thurii, fourth/third century BCE; Bernabé 492 F), within which this lamella was enfolded, features several interesting symbols, and the word *symbola* occurs in tablets I A 4 (Entella, third century BCE; Bernabé 475 F) and II C 2 (Pherai, middle of the fourth century BCE; Bernabé 493 F).

<sup>34</sup> For Plato, see n. 29 above. One “Orphic” gold tablet, II C 2 (Pherai, middle of the fourth century BCE; Bernabé 493 F), also features the meadow, but others seem to describe a similar landscape of the dead which involves elements that are traditionally found in meadows such as springs and trees. This tablet also features particular *symbola* that ought to be pronounced upon entrance to the underworld:

σύμβολα· Ανδρικε | παιδοθυρσον· Ανδρικεπαιδοθυρσον.  
 Βριμῶ· Βριμῶ. εἰσειθ(ι) ἱερὸν λειμῶνα· ἄποινος γὰρ ὁ μύκτης.  
 Symbols: Andrikepaidothurson! Andrikepaidothurson!  
 Brimo! Brimo! “Come to the holy meadow; for the initiate is without punishment.”

the initiate's soul which has "endured the suffering" and prepares for a new existence, marked by an advance along the road to the right, a theme that resonates with many of the other gold plates and the ascent to heaven in the myth of Er.<sup>35</sup> In other plates, the initiate's soul must approach Persephone and/or Hades, or the guardians (φύλακες; note the Platonic correspondence) and speak the proper formula in order to attain passage. Here, we find that the affected soul, while it is contextualized within language that smacks of litigation and judgment,<sup>36</sup> is expected to recall particular formulas in order to gain entrance to blessedness in the afterlife; unlike the Platonic soul, which must atone for its sins and wear them as signs, the "Orphic" soul must have the knowledge of *symbola* granted to an initiate.<sup>37</sup> If, however, the initiate's soul forgets the words, then the gold tablets, which probably functioned as phylacteries for the living initiate, are present to remind the postmortem soul what words to speak in order to persuade the judge/s.<sup>38</sup>

We find here, in the "Orphic" gold tablets from Thurii, a curious confusion of the *topoi* that we have been discussing here.<sup>39</sup> The initiate's

<sup>35</sup> In several plates (I B 1–7), the initiate is told to drink from the spring to the right of a white cypress tree. In others (I A 1, 3, 4), the initiate is told to pass by the spring that lay to the right of the house of Hades and to drink from the lake of Mnemosyne.

<sup>36</sup> The language of litigation and economic transaction is stronger in other lamellae, including II A 1–2 (also from Thurii, fourth/third century BCE; Bernabé 489–490 F), which tell the initiate that s/he "ha[s] paid the penalty for unjust deeds" (ποιῶν ἄνδ' ἀνταπέτεις ἢ ἔργων ἕνεκα οὐτι δικάζων). Cf. Pl. R. 364a–c.

<sup>37</sup> The extent to which this landscape and judgment of the dead contains shared elements with traditional (i.e. Middle-New Kingdom) Egyptian texts has not been adequately studied. But, as Gunther Zuntz and M.L. West have pointed out, there are repetitions of the cypress tree and the thirst of the dead in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, especially Chapter 58; I have also located shared elements between the gold lamellae and Egyptian stelai from the seventh to the first centuries BCE; I hope soon to publish the fruits of this study, which I have presented recently at the 2006 Association of Ancient Historians Annual Meeting "Crossing Boundaries" at Stanford University (May 7, 2006). See G. Zuntz, *Persephone* (Oxford 1971) 385–393, and West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient* (Oxford 1971) 63–65.

<sup>38</sup> Adeimantus, in *Republic* 2, speaks of the followers of Musaeus and Orpheus who employ sacrifices and "silly sorts of pleasures" to effect "solutions and purifications of injustices" both for the dead and the living (R. 364e3–365a3). On the gold tablets as phylacteries, see R. Kotansky, "Incantations and prayers for salvation on inscribed Greek amulets," in C. Faraone and D. Obbink, eds., *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Oxford 1991) 115 with n. 54.

<sup>39</sup> Perhaps here we can detect the actual influence of sophists like Protagoras on customs in Thurii, where he was said to have written laws for the new colony in 445 BCE (D.L. 9.50).

soul, which, having already endured sufferings, descends to the underworld as a defendant, is promised release from this *pathēma* provided s/he recite the proper terms,<sup>40</sup> which have been inscribed on the gold tablets themselves. The metaphor of molding/imprinting has transgressed the bounds of metaphysics and become manifestly physical in the “Orphic” gold tablets: the tablets themselves are molded, imprinted metal, and they are the instruments of persuasion that produce release for the soul during judgment in the underworld. The inscriptions are metrical, and as such they correspond with the “incantations” (ἐπωδαῖς) which Adeimantus says the Orphic<sup>41</sup> magicians and priests use to receive power from the gods whom they persuade (*R.* 364b5–c5; cf. *Phdr.* 244b6–245a9). Like the κημεῖα described in the myth of Er, which testified to the souls’ status, these inscribed plates may have been placed on the chest of the deceased as a mark of the soul and its legitimate merit in the blessed places of the underworld.<sup>42</sup> We are left to wonder, then, whether or not the “Orphic” gold plates signified the initiate’s soul, inscribed and molded by the *pathēmata* of life and imprinted with the *symbola* that s/he should recall upon departure from the earthly world. The “Orphic” gold tablets, on this reading, would literalize the system of affection espoused by Gorgias: persuasive *logoi* would have left a material imprint on the initiate’s soul and, once s/he has reached her final judgment, effect joy.<sup>43</sup>

To conclude, we have traced the history of a set of intellectual experiments in Greek culture which posit hypotheses concerning the nature of the soul and the body and the influence of affection as a constitutive or definitive element in understanding this complex relationship. In these intellectual experiments, we can trace metaphorical threads (e.g. the idea of the imprint) and discursive techniques (e.g. the proposition

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<sup>40</sup> This is implicit in tablet II B 2 (Bernabé 487 F), but it is explicit in the other tablets from Thurii.

<sup>41</sup> Walter Burkert takes these practitioners to be the *Orphotelestai*; see *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (Cambridge, MA 1971) 125 with n. 30. The ancient sources include Thphr. *Char.* 16.11 and Plu. *Lac. apophth.* 224e. These *manteis* and *agurtai* are said to offer books of Musaeus or Orpheus as instruments of persuasion (*R.* 364e3).

<sup>42</sup> It is difficult to assess where many of the plates were found in the grave sites. Certainly, the oldest extant lamella I A 1 (Hipponion, early fourth century BCE; Bernabé 474 F) was placed either on the chest of the deceased female initiate or deep into her throat. Gold and silver plates were commonly worn rolled up along with other magical charms in a pouch that formed the pendulum of a necklace. See Kotansky (above, n. 38) 114–115. For the metaphor of *sēmeia* in reference to Orphic “memory,” see n. 31 above.

<sup>43</sup> Thanks to William G. Thalmann for reminding me of this.

of a pathological system related through a *mythos*) back to one of the few complete extant speeches of the sophist and orator Gorgias of Leontini, a figure whose full import upon ancient philosophy has not yet been fully realized. Yet even the few tantalizing scraps of his fragments show a remarkable engagement with the problem of affection and its place within the systems of rendering justice in fifth century Athenian culture, a theme that Plato would translate into eschatology, and that the initiates who were buried with “Orphic” gold lamellae would actualize in the form of inscribed incantations. Centuries later the old man from Chaeronea would revive the judgment of the soul in a peripatetic vein, tracing back a tradition of disputation as far as Democritus and Plato but echoing the neglect of sophistic hypotheses concerning the power of affection.

INTRODUCTION TO THE HUMANITIES PROGRAM  
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