

Sokrates As an Iconographic Form and Monologos

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Abstract

The main argument of the article is to approach Sokrates as an iconographic character, based on the Sokrates' Defense, written by Plato. The Sokrates character portrayed in the composition of Plato, has been approached in a multidisciplinary method and iconographic style. While the composition is resolved, the harmony between style and content has been determined and this harmony between the style and the content of the composition has been approached by monologos notion. In this way the monologos is seen as the Defense's form has been approached together with the Sokrates' portraiture.

In contradiction to the Plato's method of dialogos, the composition is based on monologue of Sokrates, whom holds the pledge (remark) of the god, which is the reason of poet Meletos' accusation, inner speech. The Monologos notion is the basic notion which emphasize on the unity of reality, while enlightening the harmony of discourse and action in the context of virtue. The establishment of the Defense as a monologue, supports the Sokrates' unity of discourse and action in a stylistic way. In that case, the changing oligarchic rightness is replaced by the rightness of discourse and action as a whole. The importance is not what right is what anymore, but the problematic related with the method. The method has been sampled by Sokrates on one hand as Heracles, an ideal human who makes a sample of internal feud, while on the other hand seen as the Foucault's parlance of Parrhesiasteste.

Key Words: Monologos, Parrhessia, Morality, Unity

Monologues

Apology was written by Plato (427 B.C. - 347 B.C.), apart from the dialogue with Melethos, as an inner speech or a monologue form. Other texts of Plato where Socrates is drawn out, are dialogues formed by dialectic methods and falsifying of the collocutor. Socrates continues his way in Dialogues, by using his collocutor. In the Apology, Socrates stands between the government and the Athenians, by asking the questions instead of the judges and answering as well. In other words, Socrates stands between the rules, which is defined as the “imperative rules and measures which define human activities” and the society, which is defined as the “mass of people which pursue on living, collaborate for most of the basic interests, live on the same piece of land and have a common crop”. Socrates, who is on trial against the rules is against the judge, who nonexistantly appears. Nonexistence of the judges, may be connected with the definition of the defamers as being a shadow. In that case, in the nonexistence of the rules, Socrates depicts the discourse as an individual or subject.

Self-portrait which was plotted to Socrates by Plato, gives the examples of right behavior and virtue. Virtue requires the harmony between discourse and action in context of rectitude. Virtue shows itself among the harmony between discourse (Statement-logos) and action as Socrates, faces the society. The honesty of Socrates under the law (logos) and society (acting area), requires an inner reckoning. Socrates must be virtuous against himself and in other words, must be conscious of his words. In this sense, the harmony will be seen when the didactic character and the composition of the text structure is considered.

Outer structure of the text, which is appeared in monologues for the readers, bears two layers. The first is the discourse of Socrates (Statement-logos) and the second is the action which covers the discourse and is in harmony. For the union of discourse and action, we can see discourse as a primary tool. Socrates must be in a monologue with himself, for overseeing the harmony of discourse and action, as well as actualizing the right action. In other words, he must be virtuous against himself. The outer structure of the text is established as an inner speech and monologue form. When the text of Socrates’ discourse for the virtue, which is structured in monologue form is evaluated, as the first layer of monologue; it prioritizes the inner dispute for defining the right action. The reader faces the inner dispute. In this way; evaluation of the harmony between virtue, discourse and action, brings forward the monologues, which is not only a semblance or coincidental form of writing, but approving the discourse.

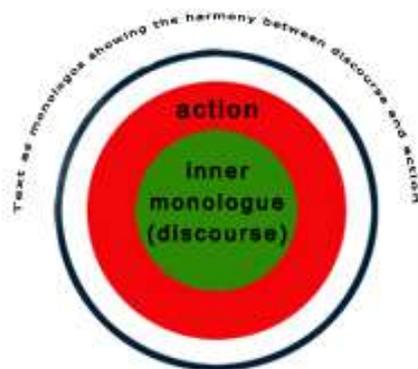


Figure 1: Text and Monologues

Apology of Socrates

Apology is consisted of three chapters. In the first chapter, Socrates is Melethos, who blames himself for defies against the rules of the government and the gods, with semblance of favor and patriotism; representing the poets with his conservative words. Melethos defends the governmental, oligarchic rules and regulations. According to Socrates, the words of the poets, like Melethos, are not

base on science (logos). (22c) They are the ones, who are not in comprehension of the glorified words or could not found the reasons according to criterion of wisdom. Socrates defines them as “messengers of gods”. In the following chapters, he casts a similar role. However logos will be spoken out with him. (31d) Unlike Melethos, Socrates does not legislate his words in an oligarchic level. He is not concerned about placing his statements in glorified measures which create euphoniousness.

The other two accusers are Anythos, representing the craftsmen and the law makers and Lycon, representing the rhetoricians. Socrates defends himself in the first chapter and establishes his discourse. In the beginning of the Apology, he states that his words and arguments will be brought forward impromptu. In the second chapter, he justifies that if he is found guilty, he will express the unity of discourse and life (action) against the deemed punishment.

In the jurisdiction which is in the hands of virtueless rulers, described in Plato’s allegories; as expressed in Apology, Socrates is standing for punishment, not correction. (26a) In the First Chapter, the apology of Socrates in the place of jurisdiction, is related with Melethos, representing the poets directly and Anyhtos, representing the craftsmen and the law makers including their foundations. Both persons are in query for their statements and their awareness of the statements. He expresses that the statement owners are not aware of their words which expressed in tales and places of jurisdiction; due to being instinctive (arbitral). (22c) The power of the discourse, must be sourced from the rectitude of words or in other words, from the harmony with actions. However the accusers are far away from the words of truth.

Socrates says that he is a stranger to the place of jurisdiction and not familiar with the dialect and rules of this place. Place of jurisdiction is envisioned as a place where statement is coming down to rules, where the statement of truth is absent (or depending upon the changing situation and facts, causing changes in means of values). These rules and changing values are questioned under social or cultural eligibility. Unreal pleasures and the shadows which are ruled by the virtue followers, are resemblance of worlds of illustrations, represented in the cave allegory of Plato. The accusations of the calumniators are remarked as non-contendable shadows.



Figure 2: BOTTICELLI, Sandro; The Calumny of Apelles; 1494-95; 62 x 91 cm; Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence¹

¹ As a matter of fact, this picture was based upon a lost ancient Greek painting, by Apelles (4th Century B.C.) This painting of Apelles was described by a writer named Lucion (2nd Century A.C.) Botticelli set forth from this written portrayal and painted concordantly. Calumny is shown by an attractive

The calumniators who accuse Socrates, describe him as a tale hero and define him with speculations as “someone who is trying to show the wrong as right” for the young ones and Socrates is afraid of becoming a myth by consisting of a figure or name like other notion personification.

In the beginning Socrates claimed that he does not have the information about right, while in the end of the Apology, he draws a portrait of a character who was assigned by god and guided by his voice (revelation). (31d) By renouncing his wisdom, he starts the apology, wise but unaware of this wisdom, Socrates shows the god Delphi as a witness². Questioning his own wisdom over people like politicians, craftsmen; Socrates reaches to the conclusion that the oracle had been using his name as an illustration, therefore his wisdom will not be a matter. Maybe at this point, the self forwarded criticism is similar to the criticism over the government. He implies that it is not possible to reach to the contextual provision of attributes like wisdom, virtue, goodness, because as long as they are mundane concepts; being a tool for the societies self property and benefits, they will face changes by means of situations and events.

In fact, essence and identity of concepts like goodness, truth and beauty could not be found in the observable earth. These concepts may only be perceivable by wisdom. We can perceive the virtue, which is the image of goodness, with the harmony of discourse and action. In order to establish the harmony between discourse and action in accordance with virtue, the truth of names, which consist of an illustration, must be subject to criticism. On the other hand, the attitude of Socrates who avoids definitions, is unlike mentioning the truthfulness but inexistence, absence of it. As if mentioning the truthfulness creates wrongness, while wrongness let truthfulness to be a possibility. Also relatively, laws as a whole of truth regulations, are in the hands of a group, far away from virtue, but claiming that have the wisdom and used not as a tool of education but punishment. In the arguments of Socrates, related with the place of jurisdiction, concordantly the place of jurisdiction and the function of jurisdiction is questioned by the virtue of Melethos. The discourse of Melethos, is consisted of nonsense education of the youth, while his actions create a contradiction.

In the Apology, Socrates is seen as Parrhesiasteste with the interpretation of M. Foucault. Parrhesia means “To say everything” “It is a discourse action, where the speaker with way of interrelation of honesty-realty, way of danger-his life, self criticism-himself or criticism-other people, freedom and assignment-ethical rules” The most important feature of Parrhesia is that it harbors the risk inside. Threat of death is one of these risks.

Socrates prefers the goodness of death, rather than the evil of dishonorable. He defends that the fear of death can be used by the evil rulers and by not defending the reality, the feared ones will bow before the evil rules. Also, according to Socrates the fear of the unknown, which is death; will mean to know something that we do not know.

Socrates As An Iconographic Character

Socrates was portrayed as an iconographic character in the Apology of Platon and he was spatialized. The iconographic structure requires the mythos to be beyond time and space, as an imagery that can be comprehended with mind, as well as considering the social structure. Logos-rule and truthfulness are embodied with Socrates as non definable words. Socrates is described as the

woman, holding a torch and dragging her victim from the hair towards the right side of the painting and in front of the symbol of justice with comfrets. The two figures with allegory of illiteracy and suspicion, whispers to the ears of the justice, while the other two figures with allegory of betrayal and lies, form the hair and clothing of the allegory of calumny. At this moment, a skinny figure as an allegory of jealousy asks for a right to speak. In the details of the left side of the painting, regret is shown as an old woman. Regret always comes late. Venus stands next to her as a naked reality. The nakedness and the gesture of Venus, shows that reality is visible, the most beautiful of all and belong to heaven; not being a temporal subject like calumny.

² The question asked to the oracle, “Is there anyone wiser than Socrates?” is interesting. The truth seen in the cup of Pythos and the reality seen on the surface of the mirror must be examined additionally

goodness image of the visible world or the articulation of logos. In virtue of him, logos is expressed as the law makers discuss about the rotten and with no cause (arbitrary) without awareness of the content of what they express. Socrates does not define truth, because he defines one by one as the images estrange him from reality. However he puts what is considered right and the foundations to discussion. The aim of Socrates is not to destroy these structures or their collocutors completely but to disturb them like a “horse fly”.

Platon projects Socrates, who is the symbol of virtue in the visible world, as a person who shares a proportion from the goodness idea and even the rightness himself. In the visible world there is only one³ goodness idea which is covered with virtue. There is one source. The mind perceived goodness idea, does not show itself with full flamboyance in the visible world’s Socrates who is in a human body. However Socrates has been granted a share from the light of goodness. The idea of light and goodness, which is conceivable in temporal context, is the reason of everything and it is considered that it has a verbal form. The eternal and immortal goodness idea has been spatialized in the mortal body of Socrates. By this was Socrates, as a messenger of goodness has been granted a share from the celestial. With this form, as a demigod who was fallen to the earth, Socrates bears the words (remarks) of god, which is the reason why Melethos accuses him (40 b, 31d)

At the first glance, Socrates may be seen as one of the illustrations of a concept personification. As Socrates’ name, his body is also consisted of an illustration. (23b) However apart from the mythological personifications, he is related with human and the actions of human directly. Like Hercules; Socrates is beyond the allegory of “human”, in the society and subject to rules and the spatial humanism in human form and even if he rejects this idea, ironically, he is the institutionalized form.



Figure 3: CARRACCI, Annibale, The Choice of Hercules, 1596, 167 x 273 cm, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples⁴

Plato, portrayed Socrates as a rendition of the struggle of visible earth’s virtue (harmony discourse-action) under life (society-law). The philosopher mission given to Socrates by god, in order to test himself and people, caused him to change to beyond human form, which is one of the accusations towards him. In order to prevent the image of Socrates’ beyond human entity, it is

³ Monologues.

⁴ Hercules has been used as a symbol of every being in the view. As a young man, Hercules has come to parting ways without knowing which way to go. In both sides a woman appear and try to convince him to choose her side. The woman on the right is Pleasure and the one on the left is Virtue. Virtue shows a rocky way. Hercules must choose one of them and even he is aware that it will be a difficult road, he chooses virtue. The prize at the end of the road is immortality.

expressed that even he is seen or shown as different, he is a human being. (34d) All the advices that he has given and the expression that he is a human after the godly countenance, causes alienation against Socrates; to recognize that he is again made from “flesh and bone” and he is only someone who was granted a share from the goodness idea, a human just like other humans. Now we are not facing a Hercules or Venus statute, but a human granted a share from goodness living in history. The goodness idea, is applied to the practical life by the help of Socrates’ discourse about virtue, by transferring the godly and good one from godly (or conceptual) place. Socrates’ virtue, which is the harmony of discourse and action or according to M. Foucault’s definition, Parrhesia’s pursue of “honesty of saying the truth”.

Maybe Plato had built a structure, deconstructing the elder traditions, rules and signs, new and relative (nominative) belief system, observable as an archetype to Christianity. It was reorganized in a central structure, but not becoming a religion completely, pruning polytheistic beliefs which banishes a mass of people with images⁵.

The perception of Socrates as a threat and his trial, becoming a victim of the evil system is one of the pieces which strengthen Plato’s system. Plato sacrificed Socrates at the end of the trials is a forfeit for an enigmatic belief system which will grow again on mythos. If it is accepted that the new system or the new order will be constructed over sacrifices or heroes, then if Socrates died naturally, crushed under a mule; in this case the meanings of the words said on the place of jurisdiction would be unknown, where we can see the strong but castrated mule⁶ (27e) and Socrates would not be a hero. The important thing is the virtuous and demigod Socrates was both like everyone and not like everyone.

Socrates mentioned about an ability that was inside him since his youth. He tells that an internal voice protects him against some things. This voice has left him during the trial. Socrates chose to die with honor for truth, like Achilles, rather than choosing a dishonored life, where his death was a salvation from the world of calumny. During his passing he questions why we fear of death, by not knowing what is death. Plato also portrays the scene where poor Socrates is on trial in the other world with other heroes and real judges. This scene is a small frame from the hero myth with detailed description. The one who seeks truth will not be guilty in the last trial.

Conclusion

Socrates became immortal after his sacrifice. A death like this makes immortal, while the desire of immortality kills. (32b⁷, 37c, 39b, 41d) An immortality not only in religious meaning, but as a voice and enigma let out from the image and inside the minds of people. This design strengthens the (maybe the centrifugal) organization of Plato. Immortality and spatial desires (for example portrait paintings of Roman burial traditions or the grave praises that show the dead person different than who he/she is) create images which are not independent from space or social context and for propaganda reasons.

Consensus images establish the unconscious, while strengthening the social, dialectic and oligarchic structure, legislating the meaning. After the trial, where the judges charged on death; Socrates casted aside from his body, becoming a reason of the change of pure time and mind or be subject to reason. This body is the one which does not change, but the enabler of change.

Plato’s portrayal of Socrates, show relevancy to the Christian iconography (an even other old beliefs) For this reasons it is found natural that world of ideas has a relation with the projection of

⁵ The center of the structure shows differences under space and dialectic manners. Actually it is mandatory to evaluate a variability based social context with a single center, where reality, absence of truth and oligarchic structures exist. Under this definition, it is possible to evaluate the truth inside oligarchy, Apology itself and especially the place of jurisdiction as a metaphor and proceed with political discourse

⁶ “If you really kill me, allow an example no matter it is funny. You can not easily find an horsefly like me, a gods obstacle, big and Gallant, but slow due to bigness to poke the government which is like a horse” (30e)

⁷ Example of Parrhesia

other worlds and other universes. The place of jurisdiction is portrayed in the other world at the end of apology.

Also some of the problematics, which appears in Plato's other dialogues like truth of names, rules and law makers, discourse and education of youth has been discussed in the Apology of Socrates. However the main problem of the text is locked in Socrates who was a victim of discourse, unity of discourse and honesty, establishing a moral context. The moral context is supported the texts format and maybe gives an idea about the methods of following compositions.

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