

PhD Program in Philosophy
North Western Italian Philosophy Consortium

Scientific and Didactic Relation

Name Cesare Simone Astorino
University Università degli Studi di Pavia
Name of Tutor Prof. Franco Ferrari
Cycle XXXVII

Suggested name of the Supervisor (IF different from the tutor)(for 1st year students)

(A) Didactics

1) List of institutional or curricular courses

- FINO Common Core (Skills, Philosophical reasoning and methods, June seminar)
- Aristotle Reading Seminar
- History of Philosophical Historiography
- History of Philosophy work in progress
- Workshop: *Providence and Free Will from the post-Hellenistic Age to the Middle Ages*, June 8-10, 2022

2) List of working papers written in those occasions

What is Being? An Extensive Reading of Soph. 248e-249a (June Seminar paper)

3) List of other courses you have followed

Storia della filosofia antica by Prof. F. Ferrari (University of Pavia)

Storia della filosofia tardo antica by Prof. F. Ferrari (University of Pavia)

Storia della filosofia antica lm by Prof. F. Trabattoni (University of Milan)

(B) Research and diffusion

1) List of seminars and conferences you have participated to

- (18/02/22) *Aristote et le Sophiste. Lecture croisée en Métaphysique Lambda*, by Anca Vasiliu, online.
- (28/03/22) *Material Objects*, by Thomas Sattig, Anna Marmodoro, Claudio Calosi, Alessandro Giordani, online.
- (20/04/22) *Aristotle's best Reasons to live in a Democracy*, by Jean Marc Narbonne, Thierry Gontier and Silvia Fazzo, online.

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- (04/05/22) *Sarah Broadie's "Plato' Sun-Like Good. Dialectic in the Republic"*, discussion of the volume by Christopher Rowe, online.
- (06/06/22) *Prospettive su Copernico nei dibattiti sulla Rivoluzione Scientifica*, by P. D. Omodeo, Turin.
- (07/06/22) *Genesi, validità e fini della scienza: epistemologia storica*, by P. D. Omodeo, Turin.
- (8-10/06/22) *Providence and Free Will from the Post-Hellenistic Age to the Middle Ages* by F. M. Petrucci, A. Corbini, M. Di Giovanni, P. D'Hoine, Turin.
- (23-24/06/22) *June Seminar*, Genoa.
- (29-30/06/22) *FINO Graduate Conference: Contemporary Issues Across Ethics and Epistemology*, Pavia.
- (06/09/22) *Heidegger and the Greeks*, by R. College and C. Romano, online.

2) List of Talks (in some of the above-mentioned conferences)

3) List of published or submitted papers

(C) Project of the dissertation

1) Update of the planning of your research program

Throughout his dialogues, Plato seems to be committed with a “two-words theory”, which suggests the existence of two different and separated realms. The former is the realm of Forms, the latter is our world, inhabited by imperfect and changing objects. While the vast majority of Platonic scholarship is taken up with Forms and their issues, the present project is devoted to Plato’s view of empirical objects.

To the extent that scholars have addressed the issue, they have been chiefly concerned with some striking passages excerpted from the *Phaedo* and especially from the *Timaeus* and the receptacle section. On the contrary, this project attempts to enquire the nature of sensible objects not by focusing on remarkable passages, but by stressing the recurring characterisation of our world in terms of “image”. By tackling the issue from this viewpoint, I expect to prove how relevant is an enquiry on the status of the sensible world to understand Plato’s metaphysics. Indeed, as Michael Frede puts it, Plato only introduces his Forms because he thinks the ordinary objects of experience in a certain way. Hence, unless we understand how Plato conceives of them, we will not be able to see why he need to postulate Forms and the other metaphysical causes.

Apparently, this proposal is not a novelty in Platonic studies. H. Cherniss, R.E. Allen, E. N. Lee, for instance, argued for a copy-model theory, in which objects stand to Forms as tempo-

rary reflection of a mirror, namely as insubstantial adumbrations of something other than themselves, thereby amounting to nothing but a negative *pendant* of the intelligible realm. Yet, the attempt to assimilate all sorts of images to that of mirror reflection seems to me at least questionable, for Plato uses various sorts of images to illustrate his views of the relation between Forms and sensible participants. Moreover, these exegeses fail to account for Plato's embark on a detailed analysis of the world of becoming. To counter these unpleasant outcomes, I deem necessary to stress the positive facet of the image description, namely its power to provoke an ascent and to lead its viewer beyond itself, towards the object it imperfectly imitates.

During the first year, I have been mainly concerned with a deep study of the secondary literature on the issue, by focusing both on those scholars who reads Plato's objects in terms of images (e.g. Allen, Cherniss, Lee, Patterson, White, Perl, Poetsch) and on those who either (nearly) disregards this characterisation (e.g. Fine, Mann, Buckels, Karamanolis, Gerson) or primarily focuses on Plato's Heracliteanism (e.g. Irwin, Kahn, Fronterotta, Ademollo).

Then, I have started to carry out an analysis of the Platonic lexica for images and mimesis, in order to see whether there are differences among the words he employs throughout the dialogues, or not. Although I have come to acknowledge that such a lexical distinction is not sharply stated in the corpus (as Halliwell has rightly maintained), I have noticed that the contrast between a positive and a negative facet of the image is a pivotal tenet of Plato's philosophy (see Palumbo and Poetsch), against those critics who argue for a complete rejection and condemnation of images by Plato (see, for instance, Vernant's readings).

Henceforth, I will devote myself to a deep analysis of Plato's dialogues. First of all, I will examine passages from the *Sophist*, the *Cratylus* and the *Republic* to account for the aforementioned distinction between two kinds of images, a good and a bad one. Indeed, the *Sophist* discusses the concept of image not only by attempting a definition of it and showing how the issue is entangled with the reality of not being (239c 9 – 240c 6), but also by distinguishing likeness-making from apparition-making (235a 10-236d 8). Book II, III and especially X of the *Republic*, on the contrary, seems to claim that imitation is inherently degenerated insofar as it captures «the appearance of things, but not the reality and the truth» (596e) and I shall try to prove how these conclusion does not undermine the value of sensible objects as good images of the intelligible cosmos. In the *Cratylus*, by enquiring the so-called argument of “Two Cratyluses”, I will restate the essential features of images, namely their simultaneous sameness and difference with models.

Then, I will analyse the *Timaeus*, where the description of the world both as image (*εἰκῶν*) and as cult statue (*ἄγαλμα*) and the genesis of empirical objects are stated at their best. Finally, I will attempt to prove the power of empirical objects *qua* images to lead the viewer beyond themselves, by examining “recollection” both in the *Phaedo* and in the *Phaedrus* and the “epistemic ascent” of the Philosopher in the *Simposium* as well as in the *Republic*. In the background, I shall take due consideration to the religious context and lexica. Indeed, the relation between objects as images and their models cannot be fully understood, so I claim, without referring to the Greek traditional religion, Mysteries and epiphanies.