

Self-knowledge and Politics in the *Alcibiades I*

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Abstract

This paper offers a case for recognizing the *Alcibiades I* as a contribution to political philosophy. In so doing, it also shows that the dialogue is much more unified than it is usually considered to be in the scholarly literature. The paper focuses on the connection between two passages: the apparently aporetic passage of 124e1–127d5, in which Socrates questions Alcibiades about the content of political expertise; and Socrates' exhortation to Alcibiades to get to know himself as his soul (127e9–133c6). The section on self-knowledge provides central conceptual tools that help us articulate the political philosophy that is implicit in the aporetic passage. First, knowledge of one's humanity is key to politics, understood as an expertise that has people as its proper object. Second, politics deals with human beings qua human beings, not in accidental specialisations. Third, the section on self-knowledge instantiates political rule in the conversation between Socrates and Alcibiades. Fourth, the later section helps resolve the dilemma between friendship as unanimity and friendship as justice that brought 124e–127d to its aporetic close. Finally, the combination of the two passages yields two scenarios of political rule: one of education and one of cooperation. It shows, in essence, what is involved in Alcibiades' description of politics as an expertise that deals with people: it is rule of fellow rulers.

The Platonic *Alcibiades I* is well known as a protreptic text *par excellence* and contains a classic argument for the Platonic view that human beings are identical with their souls. In this paper I offer a case for reappraising this dialogue as contributing to political philosophy. I argue that there is an important connection between, on the one hand, the famous passage in which Socrates urges Alcibiades to get to know himself as his soul (127e9–133c6) and, on the other hand, an earlier, apparently aporetic passage in which Socrates questions Alcibiades about the content of political expertise (124e1–127d5). As I hope to show, the later passage contains essential concepts and arguments for solving the puzzles that at first prove insuperable for Alcibiades in the earlier passage. If my interpretation is plausible, the dialogue provides a positive view of what politics should be. A secondary implication of my interpretation is that the dialogue is much more unified than it is usually considered to be in the scholarly literature.

I will proceed as follows. After a brief overview of the dialogue (Part I), I will discuss some of the problems of argument and composition that scholars have identified in the text (Part II). In particular, I will consider a well-known attempt to demonstrate the unity of the *Alcibiades I*, offered by Julia Annas in 1985. Annas convincingly argues that the theme of self-knowledge is the guiding thread that unites the dialogue. Even Annas's article, however, does not provide a meaningful connection between the abortive account of politics given in Stephanus pages 124e1–127d5 (a part of the text to which I will refer as “the political section”) and the rest of the dialogue. Next, I analyse this political section in more detail (Part III). I then turn to the climactic passage of the dialogue (127e9–133c6), in which Socrates attempts to demonstrate to Alcibiades that he is identical with the best aspect of his soul. I will argue that this passage helps us to solve the difficulties treated in Part III and allows us to sketch the resulting view, the political philosophy which Socrates offers to Alcibiades (Part IV).

Let me make two preliminary remarks before turning to the text. First, I make no assumptions about, nor will I address, the issue of the dialogue's authenticity.¹ Second, the connections between this dialogue and other texts in the corpus are many. I have omitted reference to them in order to focus on the internal coherence of this dialogue.

1 The *Alcibiades I*

The *Alcibiades I* opens when Socrates expresses to Alcibiades his conjecture, which turns out to be true, that Alcibiades is amazed at Socrates' speaking to him only now, after having followed him for years, at a time when all the other lovers of Alcibiades have left. The reason for this behaviour, Socrates explains, is that Alcibiades is only now susceptible to the message that he cannot realise his enormous political ambitions – to rule the whole world – without Socrates. Socrates first shows that Alcibiades has no knowledge of politics, specifically of the themes about which the Athenian assembly deliberates. This is true regardless of whether Alcibiades identifies the topic of deliberation as justice or as what is advantageous – Socrates shows that these are in fact the same. When Alcibiades is finally convinced that he is indeed ignorant, he still proves resistant to Socrates' attempts to improve him. He objects that other Athenians

1 An overview of the debate about the dialogue's authenticity is provided in Jirsa 2009. The tendency in recent scholarship is to accept it; some evidence of this is that the four commentaries on the dialogue published in the last twenty years, in French (Marboeuf and Pradeau 1999), English (Johnson 1996, Denyer 2001) and German (Döring 2016), all judge in favour of authenticity. (This evidence is possibly skewed, as defenders of authenticity might be more inclined to devote a commentary to the text.)

also lack political knowledge and that his natural advantages will allow him to get the better of them. He is even prepared to assert his equality with the Spartans and Persians in terms of birth and possessions. Socrates counters with a speech about the lineage, wealth, and education of the Spartan and Persian heirs to the throne. These foreign princes are in fact so superior that Alcibiades' only chance at vanquishing them rests in the Greek excellences of care and craft. Socrates ends the speech by saying that Alcibiades should "know himself" (124a8–b1) and realise that the Spartans and Persians are his real rivals if he wants to rule the world, not other Athenians. Alcibiades now seems convinced that he must improve himself and asks Socrates how this must be done. Socrates then invites Alcibiades to identify the excellence which he wants to attain and, when Alcibiades turns out to be unable to do this, Alcibiades again admits his ignorance and his need for improvement. Socrates finally turns to the correct method of self-care and presents self-knowledge as a prerequisite for this. They identify a human being with his soul, and Socrates describes an analogy between an eye that sees itself in the eye of another and a soul that gains knowledge of itself in a soul. Socrates identifies this knowledge with *σωφροσύνη* and argues that this is necessary for happiness, both for Alcibiades and for the city. The dialogue ends with Alcibiades' vow to follow Socrates and Socrates' fear that the city may prove too strong for them.²

2 Problems of Composition

In an influential 1985 article, Julia Annas suggested that the unifying theme of the *Alcibiades I* is that of self-knowledge. Against evaluations of the dialogue as "philosophically a mess", or "a string of unconnected parts",³ Annas claims that the idea of self-knowledge, once properly understood as one's knowledge of one's place in the world, allows us better to see the philosophical unity of the text. Let us first look at the main points of disunity which she detects in the dialogue before offering her own proposal for unifying these.

There are three striking features about the *Alcibiades I* if we compare it to other "early" dialogues.⁴ First, we should be surprised that part of what Socrates objects to in Alcibiades' ignorance is his ignorance of circumstances in Sparta and Persia, which Socrates sets out in his long exhortative speech (121a3–124b6). Usually with Socrates, it is not "facts" like these of which his

2 On the biography and ancient reputation of Alcibiades himself see Gribble 1999.

3 Annas 1985: 115.

4 This is how Annas refers to them (1985: 117), I prefer to make no claim as to the dating of the dialogue and its setting in the corpus.

interlocutors are blamefully ignorant, but ethical values or conditions.⁵ A second oddity is that, “once Alcibiades admits that he needs to learn, we return abruptly to the theme of politics, and an unexpected dilemma is thrust on us (124d-127d)” (1985: 117). The dilemma is between describing good government as the presence of friendship, and therefore agreement (*ὁμόνοια*) in the state, and describing it as a condition in which all citizens do their own things (*τὰ αὐτῶν πράττουσι*).

Surprisingly, Socrates retorts that these two notions are actually in conflict: for insofar as people mind *their own* concerns they have no basis for agreement with others. [...] the conclusion is in fact clearly outrageous, and it is hard to believe that Socrates is actually committed to it (1985: 117–118).

Annas suggests that the passage is best read as an invitation to clarify the relation between agreement and doing one’s own things, but thinks the passage and the dilemma are still out of place here.

The third “surprising” element of the dialogue Annas notes is that self-knowledge is presented as the remedy to Alcibiades’ poor condition. We would rather have expected an exhortation to learn about justice and prudence, not about himself (118).

Annas proposes to resolve these difficulties by first clarifying the nature of self-knowledge in this text. She emphasises the distance that separates a modern conception of self-knowledge that would involve introspection and would consist in knowledge of one’s individual personality, on the one hand, from an ancient understanding which makes self-knowledge an awareness of one’s place in society, on the other: “knowledge of who I am already presupposes a correct appraisal of my relations to others” (121). In her interpretation, it is the latter conception of which Plato aims to give a more profound account.

If we have accepted this correction to our view of what self-knowledge is, Annas argues, we will be able to see how the three surprising elements of the dialogue can be reconciled with the text’s central theme of self-knowledge. Alcibiades’ lack of knowledge about Spartan and Persian affairs directly impinges on his self-understanding as an ambitious politician (122). This is an ignorance of others that implies an ignorance of himself. The theme of self-knowledge thus accounts for the first difficulty.

Self-knowledge also accounts for the second difficulty, Annas claims. Once we understand that it involves a more objective knowledge of one’s place in

5 De Strycker, arguing against the authenticity of *Alc. I*, voices a broadly shared view in older scholarship in evaluating the speech as too long to be Platonic (in Bidez 1945: 107–109).

society, it will easily be seen that it also includes a knowledge of what is due to others. Hence, this self-knowledge is plausibly identified with justice: “it can easily come to seem natural to regard the virtue of *sôphrosunê*, interpreted as rightly understanding one’s place, as being the same virtue as the virtue of justice, giving others what is due to them. So Alcibiades has not been side-tracked” (123–124).

The third oddity which Annas detected, that self-knowledge, of all things, is presented as the cure to Alcibiades’ ignorance of politics and justice, can be explained and integrated once we properly see self-knowledge as the “inner aspect” of a virtue of which justice is the “outer aspect” (126). By getting to know himself, Alcibiades will also get to know what is due to others.⁶

I agree with Annas that the ancient understanding of self-knowledge involves a much more objectivist view than modern ideas about individual personality and the individual subconscious. She must be right to maintain that this makes it *prima facie* plausible that moral improvement can start out from self-knowledge. The speech about Spartans and Persians can also be integrated into this perspective as a demonstration of Alcibiades’ lack of knowledge about the external conditions that are relevant to his political ambitions.

The second oddity which Annas detects, however – the dilemma between agreement and justice – is far from being resolved by Annas’ account of self-knowledge. The connection that Annas sees between self-knowledge and justice is insufficient to explain why Socrates constructs such a remarkable conflict between agreement and justice, or between friendship and justice. The fact that justice is a theme is in itself not surprising, since it is already present in the previous conversation (cf. 109a5–112d6), so of course Alcibiades has not been “side-tracked” as far as a discussion of justice goes. The surprising element is the artificial-looking dilemma which Socrates constructs. Annas’s interpretation does not help the reader to resolve this dilemma or to explain its presence.

Apart from the possible fissures to which Annas draws our attention, the composition of the *Alcibiades I* may also be criticised as disjointed on other counts. Two aspects in particular deserve separate mention. First, the ending of the dialogue seems suddenly to lose interest in the self-knowledge that was so central only a few pages earlier. Socrates exhorts Alcibiades to pursue virtue, but he does not specify this as self-knowledge: it seems to be a generic

6 Annas continues her article by arguing that Plato deepens this objective understanding of self-knowledge by identifying it as one’s knowledge of oneself as an “impersonal self” (131). The interpretation of the passage in which Plato spells out the full extent of self-knowledge remains controversial, but for now it is enough to observe that this further interpretation of Annas’ does not add to her argument about the compositorial unity of the dialogue. Tsouna 2001: 51 follows Annas’ reading but adds reservations about her elimination of individuality.

exhortation to virtue. This is odd, since Alcibiades is willing to pursue virtue from the very beginning; the whole business of describing self-knowledge seems unnecessary to reaching this conclusion. And if it is specifically self-knowledge which Socrates wants Alcibiades to reach for, why would he exhort him to pursue virtue generally? Furthermore, Alcibiades vows to pursue justice, but has Socrates not just demonstrated to him that an aspiring politician first needs self-knowledge?

Second, Socrates' treatment of Alcibiades seems unduly harsh and unreasonable. After the long section about Alcibiades' ignorance of justice and of what is advantageous (106c4–116e1), Alcibiades admits to his ignorance for the first time (116e2–4). Then, after the speech, Alcibiades has also come to accept the need for self-improvement. This, one would think, puts him into exactly the position where Socrates wants him: aware of his ignorance and motivated to do something about it. Why then does Socrates follow up by means of another elenctic conversation?⁷ The dilemma between agreement and justice with which it ends is surprising, as Annas underlines, but the very presence of another elenctic section of the dialogue itself needs explanation. The section once more demonstrates Alcibiades' ignorance of politics, and indeed ends, once more, with Alcibiades' admission of ignorance and his willingness to be improved (127d6–8). Isn't this refutation for refutation's sake?

3 Identifying the Political Art

In order to evaluate what role this second elenctic section plays within the whole of the dialogue, let us first analyse its contents and arguments.⁸ When Alcibiades has realised that he is ignorant and Socrates has in addition managed to convince him that he needs to do something about this ignorance, Alcibiades expresses his wish to learn from Socrates what method of improvement he should adopt. Socrates, however, directs this question back to Alcibiades.⁹

7 Renaud and Tarrant 2015 say: "The aim of the argument is presumably not to teach some positive knowledge to Alcibiades, but to shatter what is left of his conceit" (55). In a more general vein, De Strycker faults the dialogue for its episodic argumentation, which he compares to a chain of separately welded rings (in Bidez 1945: 112–113). Döring (2016: 124) claims that the questions of this section are "im weiteren Verlauf des Dialogs nicht wieder aufgegriffen."

8 In seeing an important substantive contribution in this section, I am following the lead of Olympiodorus, who, in his commentary on the *Alcibiades I*, offers a four-cause analysis of politics on the basis of this passage (177.19–180.10). The theory may derive from Iamblichus (see O'Meara 2003: 55).

9 As Döring observes, Socrates fends off Alcibiades' direct plea for instruction with words that echo Alcibiades' reluctance to admit to his need for improvement earlier: κοινή βούλη (119b1, 124b10, Döring 2016: 114).

He claims that he is just as much in need of improvement as Alcibiades and encourages him to think about the excellence which they want to attain: what excellence is this? In his attempt to give a description of it, and under Socrates' questioning, Alcibiades proposes a whole string of answers.

Alcibiades first responds in terms of the people who have the excellence that he has in mind. He first says that he wants to have the excellence of "good men" (οἱ ἀνδρες οἱ ἀγαθοί, 124e4). Socrates wants to know who these good men are, of course, since this is a fairly general and, though formally surely correct, uninformative description. Alcibiades supplies the specification that he means the people who get things done (οἱ πράττειν τὰ πράγματα, 124e6). This too obviously calls for specification: "what things?" asks Socrates (124e7), and who are the people that do them? (124e15).¹⁰ Alcibiades responds: the things that Athenian gentlemen do (ἅπερ Ἀθηναίων οἱ καλοὶ κάγαθοί, 124e16). Socrates (who perhaps senses that Alcibiades won't on his own be able to offer a descriptively more specific designation) proposes an equivalence between the phrase "gentlemen" and one or the other of the pair "intelligent"/"foolish" (φρόνιμοι/ἄφρονες, 125a1–3). Alcibiades of course chooses "intelligent".

Despite the initial promise of this new formulation, it soon falls victim to the same worry of generality: we still need to specify the things about which these people are intelligent. As Socrates shows by means of an example, a shoemaker too can be said to be intelligent, because he is intelligent with respect to making shoes. Calling these good people whose excellence Alcibiades wishes to have "intelligent" seems therefore no more helpful in identifying this excellence than the other attempts. Alcibiades then gives a response that paves the way for a different type of answer. He says that he means the excellence of the people who have the power to rule in the city (τοὺς δυναμένους ἀρχεῖν ἐν τῇ πόλει, 125b9).

Thus far, then, Alcibiades has identified the excellence which he and Socrates want to acquire in terms of the people who have this excellence (I have completed these from the more elliptical versions in the text).

Specification of the desired excellence in terms of people who have this excellence:

- (1) the excellence of good men.
- (2) the excellence of those who get things done.

¹⁰ Döring (2016: 117) observes that it is odd that Socrates does not wait for the answer to his first ("what") question before posing the second ("who"). Döring himself interprets this in view of Socrates' proposal in 125a1–3 and his desire to distinguish between the actual knowledge of actual rulers and the knowledge rulers ought to have. Whatever the reason, Socrates does keep the focus here on the identity of the people who have the excellence which Alcibiades desires.

- (3) the excellence of those who do the things that Athenian gentlemen do.
- (4) the excellence of those who do the things that intelligent people do.
- (5) the excellence of those with the power to rule in the city.

Each of these can be viewed as an answer in terms of the people who have this excellence, although the specifications of who these people are are also increasingly informative about the excellence itself. None of these answers convinces Socrates, however, because he does not find them specific enough. In connection with the last answer, (5), for instance, he points out that other crafts also “rule” things. So the questions turn towards the object of the excellence that Alcibiades wants to attain, and specifically towards the objects of the rule which Alcibiades mentioned in answer (5).

Alcibiades first identifies human beings (not horses) as the relevant objects of this rule (125b12). This too is open to many different specifications, as Socrates’ next questions imply: the rule Alcibiades means to refer to is probably not that over sick people, *qua* sick, or over sailors, etcetera. Faced with the pair of alternatives that Socrates offers him – is this rule a rule over people who do something or over people who do not do anything? – Alcibiades understandably chooses the more active of these two (τι ποιούντων, 125c2). But *what* do these people do? Alcibiades ventures the following answer: they associate together and deal with each other (συμβαλλόντων ἑαυτοῖς καὶ χρωμένων ἀλλήλοις, 125c4–7), adding: “the way we live in cities”. The addition in particular shows something of Alcibiades’ attempt to make Socrates see what he has in mind without having to spell it out completely in descriptive terms: you know, that which we do in politics!¹¹ But Socrates is unwilling to go along with this implicit construction of politics. Once more he presses the literal meaning of Alcibiades’ answer: do you mean rule by boatmen who deal with rowers? Or rule by flute-players who deal with members of the choir? Captains and choirmasters too, it turns out, manage people who communicate with and command other people. In other words, the description is still not specific enough (125c9–d4). Alcibiades tries to meet Socrates’ demands by saying that the relevant objects of this rule are people who share in the πολιτεία and who come into contact with each other (κοινωνούντων πολιτείας καὶ συμβαλλόντων πρὸς ἀλλήλους, 125d7–8). It is an answer that still does not satisfy Socrates.¹²

11 This (unsuccessful) appeal to shared background knowledge would also explain why Alcibiades starts his answer with οὐκοῦν τῶν, which is the unanimous MS reading. Denyer 2001 *ad loc.* emends to συνόντων, Döring 2016: 119 n. 183 to ὁμιλούντων.

12 I will return to these expressions below (page numbers 47–48).

The four answers that Alcibiades has given in terms of the objects of the expertise and more specifically of the rule which he aims for, have become increasingly dense without achieving descriptive precision.

Specification of the desired excellence in terms of the objects of this expertise:

- (6) the excellence of those with the power to rule human beings.
- (7) the excellence of those with the power to rule human beings who do something.
- (8) the excellence of those with the power to rule human beings who are in contact with one another and deal with each other.
- (9) the excellence of those with the power to rule people who share in the πολιτεία and who come into contact with each other.

These descriptions, which we can complete on the basis of Alcibiades' partial answers in the text and the specifications that came before, become longer and longer, not to say more and more tortuous. Yet Socrates still does not find the answers specific enough. Moreover, Alcibiades ends up repeating himself (συμβαλλόντων ἑαυτοῖς, 125c4 ~ συμβαλλόντων πρὸς ἀλλήλους, 125d7–8). Socrates marks this repetition by again (after (9) as after (8)) mentioning the expertise of captains and choir-masters as possible analogies for Alcibiades' target expertise.

Socrates seems to make a fresh start by asking for the name of this craft, and Alcibiades mentions "good judgement" (εὐβουλία, 125e6). Once more they turn to the object of the craft, since, as Socrates points out, there are many kinds of εὐβουλία, different kinds suited to different crafts (including the by now inevitable expertise of captains). So merely saying "εὐβουλία" won't help us identify what we are looking for. Alcibiades now has a helpful idea, however. He notes that captains do not just exercise good judgement, but they exercise good judgement with a view to the preservation and safe passage of their crew (126a1). Socrates encourages this line of thought and invites Alcibiades to specify the aim with respect to which the expertise they are seeking exercises good judgement. It is with a view to the better management and preservation of the city, Alcibiades responds (εἰς τὸ ἄμεινον τὴν πόλιν διοικεῖν καὶ σώζεσθαι, 126a4).

Alcibiades' mention of a "better" kind of management of the city almost begs for the follow-up question of what better management would lead to: what condition will the city be in when it is managed better? In other words, we may add (although Socrates doesn't): what is the good of the city? Alcibiades responds in terms that take the discussion in a new direction: the city is managed better when friendship comes to be in it and *stasis* or inner conflict is absent from it (ὅταν φιλία μὲν αὐτοῖς γίγνηται πρὸς ἀλλήλους, τὸ μισεῖν δὲ καὶ στασιάζειν

ἀπογίγνηται, 126c1–3). φιλία and στάσις are recognisable items from the lexicon of fifth- and fourth-century political discourse, so we understand what sort of thing Alcibiades is thinking of. Socrates seems to understand this too, by inviting Alcibiades to identify φιλία with either agreement or discord (ὁμόνοια or διχόνοια, 126c4). Alcibiades chooses agreement, as was to be expected. It now turns out, however, that Socrates does not just appeal to contemporary political discourse: he wants to account for agreement in terms of knowledge. On the analogy of agreement about mathematical relations, which results from people's shared knowledge of mathematics, he wants Alcibiades to specify a kind of knowledge that functions as the source of the agreement which Alcibiades has supposed to be present in a well-managed city (126c6–d7).

Instead of supplying a kind of knowledge that produces agreement in a relevantly political sense, however, Alcibiades refers to analogies from the domain of family relationships. He mentions three such analogies: the agreement between parents and their son, the agreement between brothers, and the agreement between husband and wife (126e2–4). Socrates focuses on the latter relationship and argues that it is impossible that there be agreement between husband and wife, at least if we also suppose that men and women have different domains of expertise and that agreement is, as they agreed before, the product of shared knowledge (126e5–127b6). It would seem to follow that there won't be friendship in such a situation either, since friendship was identified with agreement.

Alcibiades wants to push in the other direction, however. In his view, if people act within their own domains, this produces friendship (127b7–11). This view conflicts with his earlier account of friendship as agreement and of agreement as the result of shared knowledge, as Socrates is quick to point out (127c1–4). However, Socrates also offers Alcibiades a way to defend his new intuition by describing the situation in which each person performs his own tasks and does not meddle in the affairs of others as a just situation: each does what is just by doing his own work and his own duty. And a city in which justice reigns will also be a city of friendship, they say (127c5–10).

Specification of the desired excellence in terms of the goal of the expertise:

- (10) good judgement.
- (11) good judgement towards the better management of the city.
- (12) good judgement towards friendship in the city.
- (13) good judgement towards agreement in the city.
- (14) good judgement towards a division of labour in the city / justice.

Socrates uses the last three of these answers (12–14) to construct a dilemma which brings Alcibiades to his second admission of ignorance. I will consider

the details of this dilemma presently, but would first like to make two general comments on the whole set of answers.

First, Alcibiades uses language that fellow Athenians would normally have recognised as belonging to the sphere of politics. Phrases and words like *ἄνδρες οἱ ἀγαθοί, πράττειν τὰ πράγματα, καλοὶ κάγαθοί, ἄρχειν*, and *εὐβουλία* are perfectly ordinary designations for political actors and processes. The trouble is that they seem to derive their political sense from a vague agreement as to what politics is, one that narrows their meaning as compared to their literal sense. But what politics is is the very question they are discussing. And so, in his attempt to establish what politics is, Socrates *does* take these terms and phrases overly literally.¹³

Second, in considering (4), after the equation of *ἀγαθός* and *φρόνιμος*, Socrates points to the restricted, object-determined scope of being intelligent. A shoemaker is intelligent with respect to making shoes but not with respect to making clothes. Therefore he is good at making shoes but not at making clothes. We can call this a principle of “partial goodness”. As a consequence, the same person can be both good and bad (125b3–4). With this result in hand, Socrates asks Alcibiades: Does this assessment also hold of the people you call good? (125b6). Alcibiades’ rejection of this consequence constitutes an important restriction on the expertise that Socrates and Alcibiades are looking for. It must be an expertise that makes you not merely partially good.¹⁴

Let us now zoom in again on answers 12–14. We have seen that Alcibiades’ identification of the presence of *φιλία* and the absence of *στάσις* as the good condition of the city leads to the further identification of this good condition with *ὁμόνοια* (126c4). This substitution allows Socrates to return to his question about the object of knowledge, since agreement about something results from knowledge of that thing.

As we also saw, Alcibiades cannot really supply the relevant object, but instead provides another circumscription of *ὁμόνοια* that does not identify the object of knowledge:

13 For the contrast between the ordinary meanings of these terms and Socrates’ treatment of them see also Döring 2016: 116–120.

14 Döring (2016: 118) interprets Alcibiades’ rejection as a straightforward failure to see Socrates’ illicit elision of a clause of respect. On this interpretation, no substantive criterion for political excellence results.

I think I mean the friendship and agreement with respect to which a father who loves his son is of one mind with him, as well as the mother, and a brother with a brother and a wife with her husband (126e2–4).¹⁵

In other words, Alcibiades appeals to the well-known paradigm of family relationships for political reality and for different constitutional systems.

It is the differentiation of social roles implied in the analogy, and especially in the first and the last pairs of the analogy, which provides Socrates with the material to construct his dilemma. On the basis of the intuition that there are specifically female branches of knowledge, like weaving, and specifically male branches of knowledge, like warfare, he argues that men and women do not have *ὁμόνοια*. And therefore there cannot be *φιλία* between them:

Insofar as the women do what's theirs (*τὰ αὐτῶν πράττουσιν*), they are not loved by their husbands [and *vice versa*]. So neither will cities be well-managed this way, when each does what is theirs? – Oh but I *do* think they will, Socrates. [...] It seems to me that there will also be friendship between people in this respect, that each does their own things (127a14–b11).¹⁶

Alcibiades, it turns out, also has the intuition that a differentiation of tasks *does* produce *φιλία*: a city will be peaceful when each does his own job. Socrates spells this out for him by introducing the terminology of justice. To act justly is to do one's own things. And if there is justice in the city, there will also be *φιλία* in the city.

So it looks like Alcibiades is working with two conceptions of *φιλία*: one that requires *ὁμόνοια*, one that excludes it. He will therefore have to choose between *ὁμόνοια* and justice. This dilemma then brings Alcibiades to a second admission of ignorance:

15 Ἐγὼ μὲν οἶμαι φιλίαν τε λέγειν καὶ ὁμόνοιαν, ἣν περ πατήρ τε υἱὸν φιλῶν ὁμοιοεῖ καὶ μήτηρ, καὶ ἀδελφὸς ἀδελφῷ καὶ γυνὴ ἀνδρὶ. My translation, here and throughout.

16 Ἦτι ἄρα αἱ γυναῖκες τὰ αὐτῶν πράττουσιν, οὐ φιλοῦνται ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνδρῶν. – Οὐκ ἔοικεν. – Οὐδ' ἄρα οἱ ἄνδρες ὑπὸ τῶν γυναικῶν ἢ τὰ αὐτῶν. – Οὐ. – Οὐδ' εὖ ἄρα ταύτη οἰκοῦνται αἱ πόλεις, ὅταν τὰ αὐτῶν ἕκαστοι πράττωσιν; – Οἶμαι ἔγωγε, ὦ Σώκρατες. – Πῶς λέγεις, φιλίας μὴ παρούσης, ἣς ἔφαμεν ἐγγιγνομένης εὐὶ οικεῖσθαι τὰς πόλεις, ἄλλως δ' οὐ; – Ἀλλὰ μοι δοκεῖ καὶ κατὰ τοῦτ' αὐτοῖς φιλία ἐγγίγνεσθαι, ὅτι τὰ αὐτῶν ἐκάτεροι πράττουσιν.

By the gods, Socrates, I don't even know myself what I mean, and I bet I haven't noticed that I was in a most shameful condition all along (127d6–8).¹⁷

4 Self-knowledge and Alcibiades' Political Philosophy

This second admission of ignorance is often seen as marking a new beginning in the conversation. This impression can be seen as being reinforced by Socrates' response to Alcibiades, in which he says that Alcibiades must remain confident and that he is of exactly the right age to become aware of his ignorance and to start taking care of himself. And indeed, Socrates *does* seem to start a new investigation when he asks:

Come then, what is it to take care of oneself (τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἐπιμελεῖσθαι) – so that it may not escape our notice that we are not taking care of ourselves, although we think we do – and when does a human being do this? When he takes care of what is his, does he then also take care of himself? (127e9–128a3).¹⁸

As an investigation of selfhood and self-care, this section *can* to some extent be read separately from the previous section. In so doing, however, we obscure the unity of this dialogue, and specifically the way in which the investigation of self-knowledge furnishes central conceptual tools to resolve the dilemma which Socrates constructs with answers (12)-(14) above. Reading the section on self-knowledge in isolation also makes it less clear why at the end of the dialogue, Socrates seems to think that self-knowledge will equip Alcibiades for politics, not just as a prerequisite for, but as constitutive of political knowledge.

So what happens in this section on self-knowledge? Alcibiades and Socrates first set out to discover “what we ourselves are” as opposed to what belongs to us. This then leads to the argument that is supposed to show that human beings are identical with their souls. When we speak of knowing “oneself”, we speak of knowing the soul. Alcibiades, consequently, should take care of his soul if he wants to take care of himself. This famous argument (which is actually a double argument, supplied in two versions) is couched in terms of “rule”

17 Ἄλλὰ μὰ τοὺς θεοὺς, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐδ' αὐτὸς οἶδ' ὅτι λέγω, κινδυνεύω δὲ καὶ πάλαι λεληθέναι ἑμαυτὸν αἰσχίστα ἔχων.

18 Φέρε δὴ, τί ἐστὶν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἐπιμελεῖσθαι – μὴ πολλακίς λάθωμεν οὐχ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιμελούμενοι, οἴομενοι δέ – καὶ πότ' ἄρα αὐτὸ ποιεῖ ἄνθρωπος; ἄρ' ὅταν τῶν αὐτοῦ ἐπιμελῆται, τότε καὶ αὐτοῦ;

(ἄρχειν) and “use” (χρησθαί), with the soul as the item that rules or uses the body (129e9–130a4). Two consequences follow from this identification of human beings with their souls: acknowledged experts like doctors and trainers turn out not to know themselves, because their knowledge concerns the body. And Socrates turns out to be the only real lover of Alcibiades, because he loves his soul and not his body. The section ends when Socrates gives a more precise account of what self-care and self-knowledge are, through the famous analogy between self-knowledge and self-seeing, when an eye sees itself as reflected in the eye of another. Souls must also engage in self-reflection and will in doing so discover that their essence is thought, φρόνησις (133b7–c6).

How might this section fit with the previous, politically oriented one? I would like to describe four possible connections and then discuss a terminological and conceptual correspondence that may prove illuminating. First, in getting to know himself, Alcibiades is answering the question “what is a human being”. This is obviously so because he is himself a human being, but the questions are also put in terms of “human beings”. If we remind ourselves that Alcibiades has described the excellence he wants to attain as the ability to rule people who deal with people, we can begin to see that this anthropological investigation helps to specify what politics is. So insofar as human beings are the object of the expertise of ruling that Alcibiades and Socrates were seeking in the political section, this expertise of self-knowledge is also at least part of what it takes to be a politician. We get the same result if we apply the concept of care. When Socrates advances the requirement that you must know something in order to care for it, this applies to political caring just as much as to self-care. Of course Alcibiades’ first priority is himself, because it is he who is in bad shape. But political rule will be care for one’s subjects. Improvement of one’s fellow citizens will therefore presuppose knowledge of what they are: knowledge of their humanity.

A second and related point concerns the difficulty of identifying politics. We saw that earlier in the dialogue Alcibiades struggles to give an identifying description of the political art. The terms he proposes are more deictic than descriptive. He finds it difficult to identify a *specific* domain with which politics is concerned. Also, this has to be an excellence which is not subject to the problem of partial goodness. Now we see that self-knowledge can deliver this: it is hard to specify a domain for it because it is concerned with the essence of human beings, not with accidental specialisations. And the excellence of self-knowledge also preserves goodness: you are good as that which you are, *qua* human being.

Third, the mechanism of self-care which Socrates describes in the analogy of eyes and souls can be seen as an instantiation of political rule. Socrates is

making Alcibiades better in respect of his soul, i.e. in respect of what he is. Alcibiades is supposed to do the same, as Socrates goes on to say:

If you are to conduct the affairs of the city correctly and well, you will have to give the citizens participation in excellence (134b11–c1).¹⁹

Alcibiades, it seems, will have to play the part of Socrates with respect to the city.²⁰ It is only by orienting themselves towards φρόνησις and wisdom, Socrates argues, that both Alcibiades and the city “will discern and know yourselves and your goods” (134d7–8). So this is what rule really looks like: making the citizens know themselves and in that way realise what is good for them.

Fourth, the account of self-knowledge allows us to resolve the dilemma between agreement and justice. Let us start with the second concept, justice. Alcibiades had thought that there would be justice, and therefore friendship, in the city when people stuck to their particular social roles. They have distinct domains of activity which are “their things”. But in fact, only through knowledge of yourself will you know what is yours and what belongs to what is yours (these *depend* on the former). As Socrates puts it:

We were completely wrong to agree just now that there are some who don't know themselves but do know what is theirs [e.g. doctors who know the body], and others who know what belongs to what is theirs [e.g. farmers who know food, which belongs to the body]. For it seems to be the preserve of one person and of one craft to discern all of these: oneself, what is one's own, and what belongs to what is one's own (133d10–e2).²¹

How can Socrates claim this? An intermediate step is provided by the principle which he submits for Alcibiades' approval immediately after the identification of self-knowledge:

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- 19 Εἰ δὴ μέλλεις τὰ τῆς πόλεως πράξειν ὀρθῶς καὶ καλῶς, ἀρετῆς σοι μεταδοτέον τοῖς πολίταις.
- 20 Werner 2013 offers a helpful tripartition of reflections in the relationship between Socrates and Alcibiades: one of mimetic irony in which Socrates adapts his discourse to Alcibiades' current state, a second in which Alcibiades can observe his own statements and feelings in response to Socrates' questions, and a third in which Socrates serves as a model for Alcibiades to imitate (319–320). On the mirror motif in the dialogue cf. Joosse 2018: 33–36.
- 21 Οὐκ ἄρα πάντι ὀρθῶς ὠμολογοῦμεν ὁμολογοῦντες ἄρτι εἶναί τινας οἱ ἑαυτοὺς μὲν οὐ γινώσκουσιν, τὰ δ' αὐτῶν, ἄλλους δὲ τὰ τῶν ἑαυτῶν. ἔοικε γὰρ πάντα ταῦτα εἶναι κατιδεῖν ἐνός τε καὶ μίας τέχνης, αὐτόν, τὰ αὐτοῦ, τὰ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ.

Would we be able, if we did not know ourselves nor were sound-minded, to know our own bads and goods? (133c21–23).²²

Self-knowledge is presented as a prerequisite for knowledge of what is ours. Note that this passage puts it in terms of, as I have rendered it, “our own bads and goods” (τὰ ἡμέτερα αὐτῶν κακά τε καὶ ἀγαθὰ, 133c23). The phrase is ambiguous between what we would normally consider “goods”, in the sense of possessions, and things that are actually good for you. In this section more generally, Socrates seems to speak of “what’s ours” in an elliptical way to refer to “our goods”, as if he wants to make clear that only what is good for you really counts as your property.²³ On either reading, it makes sense to consider self-knowledge a prerequisite for knowledge of what’s ours, although it would be a prerequisite in a different way. In the case of goods in the traditional sense, it is right to say that you need to know person X in order to know, of things α and β , that they are X’s. It seems, however, that you don’t need a very deep knowledge of X for this end. Things are different for “goods” understood as “what is good for you”. In order to know what is good for a particular entity, you need to know the nature of that entity. This idea is not new: back in 128a1–3, it underlies Socrates’ transition to self-knowledge once they agree that you must care for yourself. Moreover, if we understand goods and bads in this normative sense, it appears that self-knowledge is more than merely a prerequisite for knowledge of what’s yours. It is plausible to think that self-knowledge also provides knowledge of what is good for you, at least in the respect that it is good for you. It will not magically give you knowledge of other things in the world, but it is plausible to think that it will identify those aspects of other things that are conducive to your (well-)being.²⁴

This gives new content to the description of justice in the political section. If being just is to do one’s own things, as was claimed there, then only someone who knows himself knows how to be just. This applies on either of the two interpretations of “one’s own goods” I have outlined just now.

22 Ἄρ’ οὖν μὴ γιγνώσκοντες ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς μηδὲ σώφρονες ὄντες δυναίμεθ’ ἂν εἰδέναι τὰ ἡμέτερα αὐτῶν κακά τε καὶ ἀγαθὰ;

23 Note how from τὰ ἡμέτερα ... ἀγαθὰ of 133c22, Socrates speaks of τὰ Ἀλκιβιάδου (d1–3) and τὰ ἡμέτερα (d5–6), continuing to use such phrases when he extends the argument from Alcibiades to the city (τὰ αὐτοῦ ... καὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων, 133e4; τὰ τῶν ἄλλων, καὶ τὰ τῶν πόλεων), but ending again by referring to τὰ ἡμέτερα ἀγαθὰ (in 134d8). Cf. Döring 2016: 140–141.

24 On knowledge of one’s “vrai soi” as providing knowledge of what is good for one cf. Brunschwig 1996: 80; see also the more recent comments, more sympathetic to an individual reading of self-knowledge, of Rider 2011: 405–407.

The first part of the dilemma was governed by the notion of *ὁμόνοια*. The results of the section on self-knowledge show that this can be reconciled with justice: both are rooted in the same self-knowledge. *ὁμόνοια* is present in the city if the citizens know themselves and the things that are good for them. If the conversation of Socrates and Alcibiades is a paradigm for the relationships between citizens, these citizens will very much be of one mind. Their knowledge is focused on the same thing, i.e. their shared essence as thought and their shared goods, and the way in which this knowledge is acquired is – there is room for controversy here, but at least to an important extent – in the meeting of their minds.²⁵ (And again, specialisation is a secondary matter: we are concerned with human beings as human beings. The analogy of family roles turns out to have been misleading for political *ὁμόνοια*, because in real politics we are concerned with human beings *qua* human beings.)

These four points support reading the section on self-knowledge as providing the key to a better understanding of the themes of the political section. Alcibiades was right to describe politics as an expertise that deals with people. He now knows that it deals with them *qua* people (this much was right about his answers in terms of the object of political expertise). Politics is able to care for its subject matter because it can procure what is good for people, on the basis of its knowledge (prodded by Socrates, Alcibiades has correctly identified people in possession of knowledge as the relevant political actors). Alcibiades should now also be able to resolve the dilemma between justice and agreement by appealing to self-knowledge as their common origin (thus clarifying the goal of political expertise).

Let us try to tease out one more consequence of combining the political section and the self-knowledge section. Alcibiades' answers in the political section become increasingly elaborate, as we saw. In the section itself, Socrates does not seem to be satisfied that these answers single out the domain of politics, a worry which he substantiates by adducing other kinds of expertise that also have the characteristics that Alcibiades mentions as definitive of politics. If we look back on this section at the end of the dialogue, however, we can also appreciate Alcibiades' answers as increasingly detailed about the structure of politics. In order to see this, let us consider an interesting correspondence between some of Alcibiades' answers and the details of Socrates' anthropological argument.

25 See Joosse 2014: 2–5 for an overview of the debate between “theological” and “dialectical” readings. Proponents of the former, including Bos 1970, Brunschwig 1996, and now Döring 2016, also allow for an important role for interhuman exchange.

When Alcibiades identifies politics as governing people who deal with other people, in response (8), he uses the verb *χρησθαι*, “to deal with” or “to use”. This is the very verb that (together with *ἄρχειν*) bears so much weight in Socrates’ later argument. Socrates employs it to speak of the soul as using the body, from which he infers that the soul is identical with the human being. *ἄρχειν* too is used again, for it was of course the central term for the activity of political expertise: “ruling” or “governing”. It seems, therefore, that Socrates takes up (in close association) two terms which Alcibiades had used (in close association) in defining political excellence, in order to construct his argument for identifying the human being with the soul. It is worth exploring what this correspondence implies.

It may be objected that Alcibiades and Socrates are speaking of very different things when they use the term *χρησθαι*. In answers (8) and (9), Alcibiades describes political expertise as the excellence of those with the power to rule human beings who are in contact with one another and deal with each other, and as the excellence of those with the power to rule people who share in the city and who come into contact with each other. In the Greek, the former response uses the terms *συμβαλλόντων ἑαυτοῖς καὶ χρωμένων ἀλλήλοις*, the latter *κοινωνούντων ... πολιτείας καὶ συμβαλλόντων πρὸς ἀλλήλους*. The verb *συμβάλλω* has a wide range of meaning, which is why I have opted for the broad rendering “being in contact with”. Alcibiades may have in mind anything from business transactions and contracts to joint projects, gatherings, and contributions, or simply occasions when people happen to meet each other. The emphasis seems to be on projects in which people deal with each other horizontally, on a basis of equality. This, or so goes the objection, is a very different kind of “dealing with” than the “use” which the soul makes of the body.

I think the objection is right about the much more horizontal nature of what Alcibiades understands by people dealing with each other. But this does not make it unreasonable to see a textual link between Alcibiades’ answer (8) and Socrates’ anthropological argument. A strong reason to hold on to that link is Socrates’ reinterpretation of Alcibiades’ answer. As we saw, he points to the lack of specificity of both (8) and (9) by appealing to the analogies of captains and choirmasters. He does so in the following terms. First he generalises the point: “you mean ruling people who deal with people?” (*ἀνθρώπων λέγεις ἄρχειν ἀνθρώποις χρωμένων*; 125c6–7) and then asks whether Alcibiades has in mind a ruling over “boatswains who deal with rowers” (*κελευστῶν χρωμένων ἐρέταις*; 125c9); or over “aulos-players, who lead people in song and deal with choral dancers” (*ἀλλ’ ἀνθρώπων λέγεις ἄρχειν αὐλητῶν, ἀνθρώποις ἡγουμένων ᾠδῆς καὶ χρωμένων χορευταῖς*; 125c13–d1). In both analogies Socrates turns

Alcibiades' horizontal "dealings" into vertical ones. In a three-place chain of command, the captain rules the boatswain, who directs the rowers (the job of the *κελευστής* being to tell the time in order that everyone row to the same beat). The same goes in the case of the choir, where the trainer of the choir directs the aulos-players, who give the tune to the singers/dancers. In the second case, Socrates makes the vertical structure explicit by adding *ἡγουμένων*, "leading", as a near-synonym for *χρωμένων*. The middle term in the chains of command stands to the lowest in a relationship of *χρῆσθαι*: that is very similar to the relationship of *ἄρχειν* in which the highest stands to the middle. These structures of use and rule are clearly hierarchical and as such fit well with the vertical relationship between soul and body which Socrates posits in the anthropological argument.

One way to make this lexical correspondence philosophically productive is to insert the anthropological unit of body and soul into the two lowest terms of the analogies of captains and choir trainers. Alcibiades has seen something true about politics because politics really is a matter of ruling people who themselves stand in a relationship of rule to something else: their bodies. Each person's soul is a boatswain with respect to his body. In this construction, the relationship of "rule" is continuous across politics and anthropology, the difference between them being their respective objects of rule. It seems to me that this interpretation does not do enough justice to the fact that it is *people* who occupy the lowest term in the chains of command in Socrates' examples and in Alcibiades' description of politics.

Another way in which the lexical correspondence might be exploited would be to infer from it a structural analogy between politics and the anthropological unit of body and soul. As the body stands to the soul, so the ruled stand to the ruler (such a figure of thought has, in fact, been influential in the history of political thought).

I think it is plausible to think that some such structural analogy is implied by the verbal correspondence. The analogy must be modified, however, to account for a major difference between two of the comparanda. The body is not only ruled by the soul, but it is unable to rule itself. In politics, however, the ruled are in fact ruled by the ruler, but they are also able to rule themselves. Political rule is rule over other principles of rule.

This analogy and this difference can help us account for two different political scenarios. The first is that represented by Alcibiades' current condition (and, we may suppose, that of Athens as a whole). Socrates ends the dialogue by pointing out to Alcibiades that he is in a shameful condition, a condition the name of which he does not even dare to utter. Just before, Socrates assured himself of Alcibiades' consent to the thesis that it is better to be ruled than to rule if one does not possess virtue (i.e. self-knowledge) (*πρὶν δὲ γε ἀρετὴν ἔχειν*,

τὸ ἄρχεσθαι ἄμεινον ὑπὸ τοῦ βελτίονος ἢ τὸ ἄρχειν ἀνδρὶ, οὐ μόνον παιδί, 135b7–8). In general terms, Socrates claims that it is expedient for a bad man to be a slave (δουλεύειν, 135c2). The difference between the structure of the anthropological unit and the structure of politics can explain why this is a matter of slavery. Human beings are themselves principles of rule. They do not suddenly turn into instruments by being ruled. Their slavery consists in the fact that, although they are principles of rule, they are now being ruled.

Nevertheless, as Socrates and Alcibiades have agreed, someone who is ignorant is best off in a condition of slavery. An ignorant person is guaranteed to fail in action, so that he will fail to procure what is good, both for himself and for the things and the people he rules. When someone is ruled by another who is wise, the ruler will know what is good for his subject, will make sure that this is procured, and in so doing will improve his subject. In the case of human beings, this means that the ruler will make sure the ruled acquires self-knowledge, since this is the best condition for human beings. Rulership of this type is, as I suggested before, exemplified in the relationship between Socrates and Alcibiades. This first political scenario is a scenario of education.

This description of the first political scenario brings us to a second modification of the analogy between politics and the anthropological unit. They are not merely analogous, because the wisdom that is the ruling principle in the soul is also the ruling principle of politics. In this ruling principle, the two manifestations of rule, that of the city and that of the individual, coincide.

The second political scenario which the (dis)analogy between anthropological rule and political rule helps us understand is that of cooperation. It can be understood as the end point of the educational relationship of the first scenario. When people have acquired self-knowledge and consequently know what is theirs and what is good for them, they will themselves be able to pursue what makes them happy and to act faultlessly. They will have become able to rule. They will act justly because they do what is theirs, but they will also act in agreement with their fellow rulers because they act from the same knowledge. Rather than a situation of vertical rule, this scenario is one of cooperation, in which Alcibiades and the city together act “by looking towards that which is divine” (note the plurals in 134d1–5). In this sense it is much closer to the horizontal scenario that Alcibiades envisaged when he spoke of people dealing with each other than to the vertical examples that Socrates adduced. While Alcibiades’ formulation in (8) speaks of a level of rule over and above the level in which people deal with each other, the situation that obtains when citizens have acquired self-knowledge is one in which the level of rule is of a piece with the level of people’s mutual dealings with each other. It is the level anticipated by Socrates’ remarkable statement at 130d8–10, where he analyses his conversation with Alcibiades as an association through words in which each

uses his soul towards the other's soul (ἐμέ καὶ σέ προσομιλεῖν ἀλλήλοις τοῖς λόγοις χρωμένους τῇ ψυχῇ πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν).²⁶

The scenario of cooperation also shows what was true about Alcibiades' other answer (9), that political excellence is shown by those who rule people who share in the πολιτεία. Here too, the level of rule over and above people's dealings with each other turns out to be of a piece with these dealings, and more specifically to be constitutive of the citizens' sharing in the πολιτεία – where this is understood as the ruling framework of the city, the guiding wisdom displayed by all self-knowing citizens.

5 Conclusion

We started by noting a number of puzzles about the internal coherence of the *Alcibiades I* and about the ending of the dialogue. I have argued that the section on self-knowledge is intimately linked to the political section that precedes it. It can be interpreted as solving the major dilemma developed in this political section and as giving more substantive content to the descriptions which Alcibiades has offered of political expertise. The connection between these two parts of the text also explains why Socrates moves from talking about the content and method of self-knowledge to an exhortation to pursue virtue in general as the way to become politically successful, and why Alcibiades can respond to this exhortation by pledging to pursue justice. Virtue has turned out to be self-knowledge, which is practiced through the just action – a human being's very own affair – of philosophical dialogue.

After his first admission of ignorance, Alcibiades' second search for the nature of politics is far from futile, even if Socrates' elenctic strategy may give the impression that it is: it provides a description of politics that can be understood once we see that a political expert has knowledge of himself and of what is his. From self-knowledge follow agreement and justice, and with them the best condition of the city. This will be a city, moreover, in which experts enslave non-experts in order to make them fellow experts. As joint experts, they will then share in rule: their rule is over fellow rulers whose rule agrees with

26 The most plausible interpretation of this phrase, in my view, would construe χρωμένους as taking both τοῖς λόγοις and τῇ ψυχῇ as its objects. Alternatively τοῖς λόγοις could be taken independently from χρωμένους as an instrumental clause with προσομιλεῖν; in either case, the ψυχῇ, the user of the anthropological argument, is surprisingly cast in the role of thing used. See Johnson 1999: 5–6 on some implications of the idea of using the soul for the anthropological argument and Joosse 2014: 10–14 for the identification of human beings with the wisdom that uses λόγος.

theirs. Their shared humanity offers them the common orientation to judge good from bad, theirs from not theirs.²⁷

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