Speaking Silences: Silence Substituting Speech in the Later Platonic Tradition

Voort, Charlotte van der

Speaking Silences

Silence Substituting Speech in the Later Platonic Tradition

Thesis Research Master Classics and Ancient Civilizations
Faculty of Humanities, Leiden University

Charlotte van der Voort
Supervisor: dr. R.M. van den Berg
Second reader: prof. dr. C.C. de Jonge
20th of January, 2023
33705 words

Universiteit
Leiden

Et haec una est de philosophiae virtutibus, quia cum orator non aliter nisi orando probetur, philosophus non minus tacendo pro tempore quam loquendo philosophatur.

'In fact, this is one of philosophy's virtues: whereas an orator is tested only when he speaks, a philosopher practices his wisdom by a timely silence no less than by his speech.'

Macrobius, *Saturnalia* VII 1.11 (Tr. Kaster 2011)

Contents

The End of a Sonorous Era?

'Wer vermöchte es, einfach vom Schweigen zu schweigen?'
Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache.*[1]

I Meanings of Silence

The sudden silence in a conversation carries with it the enigma of the unspoken. Imagine a situation in which one suddenly keeps silent. What does this mean?[2] It can be a form of reticence of someone who is unsure what to say. Silence can be the evasion of language when the voice falters due to emotion – whether it is sorrow or anger. Silence can be a punishment when one refuses to speak any longer with the other, or it can be a sign of affection between two lovers who no longer need words to express their feelings. Silence can emphasize a sense of boredom on the part of the listener, but also a sign of deep concentration and attention. There is no such thing as *the* meaning of silence. It can mean anything that language could have expressed instead – or even more.

In his work *Du Silence,* cultural-anthropologist David Le Breton emphasizes the polysemantic nature of silence and remarks that 'silence takes on a meaning that cannot be understood outside of the cultural uses of speech, outside of the participation status of the speakers, outside of the circumstances and content of the exchange and the personal history of the individuals involved. […] No meaning pre-exists the silence, it does not embody any self-evident truth.'[3] Since silence's meaning is versatile and thus has to be interpreted on the basis of its specific, communicative, and cultural context, silence is a topic that has intrigued scholars from a variety of fields, such as (cultural) anthropology, (socio)linguistics, literary studies, feminist and gender studies, trauma studies, psychology and psychotherapy, and philosophy.[4]

---

[1] Heidegger (1985:144). Quoted by Knowles (2013:13).
[2] While it is impossible to list all the possible meanings, Johanneson (1974) tried by giving a list of twenty types of silences.
[3] Le Breton (1997:78-79); my translations.
[4] Good overviews of the literature on silence are provided by Jaworski (1997), Kenny (2011), and Bindeman (2017). Except for those already mentioned, important works on silence are Hall (1959), *The Silent Language* (cultural anthropology), Hedges & Fisher Fishkind (1994), *Listening to Silences: New Essays in Feminist Criticism* (feminist studies), Clair (1998), *Organizing Silence: A World of Possibilities* (communication), Glenn (2004), *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence* (interdisciplinary, but mostly literary studies, feminist studies, rhetoric), Santos (forthcoming), *Cultures of Silence: The Power of Untold Narratives* (multidisciplinary, mainly cultural studies).

This thesis deals with the theme of *literal* silence in philosophical texts and dialogues of the later Platonic tradition (from the first century AD to the sixth century AD). With 'literal silence' I mean *the phenomenon or act of silence that is explicitly indicated in a text*. This is different from, for example, the concept of 'silencing', which denotes the suppression of voice(s) of particular (marginalized) groups, and can occur without any explicit reference to silence or speech. Before turning to antiquity, I start with modern approaches to silence. Insights from other disciplines help to shape a framework in which the meaning of silence can be examined. There is, after all, much more to say about silence than only that its meaning depends on the context. These modern perspectives on silence help to unravel the enigma of the unspoken and characterize the types of silent moments that we will encounter in this thesis later on.

II Grasping the Unspoken

In their influential work *Perspectives on Silence,* a bundle of essays from linguistic, anthropologic, and psychologic perspectives, Deborah Tannen and Muriel Saville-Troike focus on 'a relatively neglected component of human communication – silence'.[5] In the opening chapter, Saville-Troike remarks that 'the significance of silence can usually be interpreted only in relation to sound, but the reverse is also the case, with the significance of sound depending on the interpretation of silence'.[6] Sound and silence are interdependent, both in social spaces (e.g., the essence of the quiet section in trains depends on the ever noisy character of public transport) as in language itself: silence delimits the beginning and ending of words, sentences, and full speeches. For that reason, Saville-Troike concludes that 'just as with speech, silence is not a simple unit of communication, but is composed of complex dimensions and structures'.[7] She decomposes silence's complex structure by identifying several oppositions. Firstly, a distinction is made between silence that is and is not part of communication.[8] Communicative silences can be merely structural and non-propositional (i.e. pauses between words or sentences) or communicative acts in their own right that convey propositional content (e.g., in some cultures you greet the other by keeping silent, or questions like 'Your name is -----?'). Furthermore, within communicative silent acts, a distinction is made between verbal acts (writing, sign language) and nonverbal acts (kinesics, arts).[9]

[5] Tannen & Saville-Troike (1985:xi).
[6] Saville-Troike (1985:3).
[7] Eadem (1985:4).
[8] Ibidem.
[9] Saville-Troike also connects the meaning of silence to speech-act theory introduced by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1969) If silence is communicative, its locution ('what is said?', i.e. nothing) is always the same but its illocutionary force ('what is meant?') and perlocutionary effect (the effect brought about on the other) differ. For silence as speech-act, see Guillaume (2018), or Dauenhauer (1980) who defines silence as a 'conscious performance'.

Whereas Tannen and Saville-Troike are predominantly interested in what I call the speaker's silence, linguist Dennis Kurzon focuses on the listener's silence in his work *Discourse of Silence*. In this work, Kurzon develops a model to analyze an interlocuter's silent response to another interlocuter.[10] For this, Kurzon uses the Saussurian semiotics as starting point: language signs consist of a 'signifier' (the expressive form) and a 'signified' (the content that is conveyed). Silence is a zero-signifier because of its lack of a linguistic form, but often has a signified.[11] In order to analyze those silences, Kurzon introduces the 'modality of silence': the signified content of silence can be expressed by replacing it with the sentence 'I [modal verb] not speak'. This results in Kurzon's model of silence.[12] He first makes a distinction between unintentional and intentional silences: in the former case one *cannot* speak, and in the latter one *can* but decides intentionally to remain silent. Unintentional silences arise from psychological inhibitions, such as shyness or intense emotions, or from physical disabilities, such as muteness. Intentional silences are alternatives to speech and can, therefore, be expressed with modal verbs as 'I *will*/*may*/*must*/*shall* not speak'. This category he divides into internally intentional silences (speaker decides not to speak; 'I *will* or *shall* not speak) and externally intentional silences (another person or situation may not allow speech; 'I *may* or *must* not speak').

Perhaps even more interest in the phenomenon of silence than linguists have had can be found among philosophers, especially those from the nineteenth and twentieth century such as the stillness in the work of Søren Kierkegaard (especially in his work *Fear and Trembling* of his pseudonymous John de Silentio), Martin Heidegger's 'Sygetics', and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's 'primordial silence beneath the noise of words'.[13] Like linguists, they approach silence in relation to language and sound; but unlike linguists, philosophers are interested in a type of silence that does not serve a communicative goal in particular. This is the type that philosopher Bernard Dauenhauer in his monograph on the ontology of silence calls 'deep silence'; this philosophical kind of silence 'is *not correlated with a specific utterance* in a fashion which would permit reciprocal mapping',[14] but is still related to language.[15] The literary theorist and philosopher Roland Barthes gives a useful frame for understanding two different types of relations between deep silence and

[10] Kurzon (1998:25-50).
[11] Kurzon (1998:7-9).
[12] Kurzon (1988:45).
[13] Quote from Merlau-Ponty is from *Phenomenology of Perception*, Landes' translation (2012:190). For more on the theme of silence with these philosophers, see Bindeman (1981; 2017) as starting point.
[14] Dauenhauer (1980:16), my italics. Dauenhauer (1980:6-25) distinguishes three types of silence: 1) intervening silences between words; 2) fore-and-after silence that marks the silence before and after an utterance as a whole; 3) deep silence that is not subordinate to an utterance.
[15] Emphasized by Dauenhauer (1980) throughout his book, e.g. (4): 'even though silence can occur in conjunction with phenomena other than sounds, it is nonetheless essentially linked to one or more types of active human performances which I will hereafter call, for brevity's sake, utterances.'

language.[16] In *Neutral,* he makes the linguistic distinction between the Latin verbs *tacere* ('silence of speech') and *silere* ('stillness, the absence of movement and of noise' or 'silence of nature or of divinity').[17] Barthes remarks that '*silere* would refer to a sort of timeless virginity of things, before they are born or after they have disappeared (*silentes* = the dead)' and '*silere* in short [is a] preparadigmatic condition, without sign'.[18] *Silere*, thus, precedes language, whereas *tacere* is part of language. Therefore, Thomas Gould summarizes Barthes by saying '*silere* names a silence that transcends language […], *tacere* names a silence that is immanent to language'.[19]

Both conceptualizations occur in the (modern) philosophical thoughts on silence. One – highly debated – example of this is Ludwig Wittgenstein's seventh and last proposition of his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophus*: '*Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen*' ('Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent').[20] The proposition is a metalinguistic negation and imperative. The unsayable – the domain of *silere* – cannot be exposed by language, and therefore one's only proper response is the imperative act to remain silence: *tacere* – which Wittgenstein himself does, for his *Tractatus* ends with a black page. This is the struggle of silence.[21] Because it is unable to speak of *silere* without putting it into language, Barthes remarked that *silere* and *tacere* 'become synonyms, but to the benefit of *tacere*: nature is so to speak sacrificed to speech: there is no longer silence outside speech'.

Perhaps because of the uncanniness of speaking about the unspeakable, almost no philosopher devoted a full work to the topic of silence. An enthralling exception to this is Max Picard's *The World of Silence* (originally *Das Welt des Schweigens*). Without the aim of being systematic but rather with the aim of devoting himself hymnally to silence, Picard starts his first chapter with a poetic description of silence: 'Silence is nothing merely negative; it is not the mere absence of speech. It is a positive, a complete world in itself. […] There is no beginning to silence and no end: it seems to have its origins in the time when everything was still pure Being. […] In no other phenomenon are distance and nearness, range and immediacy, the all-embracing and the particular, so united as they are in silence.'[22] To Picard, silence is a positive, and not a negative defined as the absence of speech or sound. He emphasizes that silence precedes speech: 'silence is the firstborn of the basic phenomena. […] Speech came out of silence, out of the fullness of silence.'[23] Also for

[16] Barthes (2005:21-29)
[17] Barthes (2005:21-22). The distinction in Latin between *tacere* vs. *silere* correspond with the Greek words σιγάω vs. σιωπάω. Montiglio (2000:11-12) argues that there is not a clear-cut distinction in usage, at least not in Greek.
[18] *Ibidem*.
[19] Gould (2019:8).
[20] Ogden's translation (1922).
[21] Bataille (1988:13): 'the word silence is still a sound.'
[22] From the English translation (1964:1-2).
[23] Idem (1964:5, 8).

that reason, 'speech must remain in relationship with the silence from which it raised itself up. It belongs to human nature that speech should turn back to silence, for it belongs to human nature to return to the place whence it has come.'[24] For Picard, silence is the origin and the end.

At the end of his work, Picard laments that once silence existed 'as a *world'* and that one had to 'break through the covering of silence' before one could express a thought. Nowadays, there are only 'fragments, as the remains of a world' of silence.[25] Because of that, ideas 'are absorbed into [a man's] own emptiness, they rush at him, they swirl around him. Man no longer thinks, he has his thinking done for him.'[26] Maybe it is this loss of silence that has turned thinkers to silence again. In the last years, many manifestos against noise are published that call for silence as the way to "find one's self".[27] These mark the end of a sonorous era and the longing for *the world of silence*.

Perhaps it is this theme of the last years that made me want to hear and understand the silence of the past. From now on, this thesis will delve into the silence of antiquity, and the philosophical silence of late antiquity in particular. The modern approaches briefly discussed in this paragraph help to characterize the silent moments we will encounter. The oppositions of non-communicative vs. communicative, nonverbal vs. verbal, (external vs. internal) unintentional vs. intentional, and immanent vs. transcendent silence will recur throughout this thesis. In the following paragraphs, we will see that antiquity was a sonorous era in its own right. Late antique philosophers, in contrast, turn to silence, in a manner that is perhaps not very different from modern philosophers. But unlike Picard, those ancient philosophers did not want to break primordial silence with their thinking. They want their thinking to transcend into primordial silence.

III Sound and Silence in Archaic and Classical Greece

The ancient world was a logocentric world.[28] The spoken word was central in politics, in court, and in theatre. Reading was often done out loud.[29] Religious and ritual practices required words. Electra, for instance, indignantly asks in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* (96)*:* 'do I need to pour out libations dishonorably in silence (σῑγᾶ ἀτίμως)?'[30] And philosophy as well was a vocal act: the Socratic dialogues are, for instance, about the exchange of words and falling silent in aporia is a sign of

[24] Idem (1964:21).
[25] Idem (1964:221, 211).
[26] Idem (1964:222).
[27] Examples of popular books about silence are Maitland's (2008) *A Book of Silence,* Cain's (2012) *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking,* and Kagge's (2016) *Silence: In the Age of Noise.*
[28] Mortley (1986a:11-60); Montiglio (2000:4-6).
[29] It is often assumed that silent reading became normal in the fourth century AD. The article of Knox (1968) shows that there is evidence for silent reading already from the fifth century BC onwards.
[30] Quoted by Montiglio (2000:10). Translation Sommerstein (2008).

philosophical failure.[31] Therefore, in his *Apology* (by Plato), Socrates asks why he does not 'keep silent and live a quiet life' (Σιγῶν δὲ καὶ ἡσυχίαν ἄγων, 37e), and answers that this would be 'to disobey the god [Apollo] and because of this it's impossible to lead a quiet life' (τῷ θεῷ ἀπειθεῖν τοῦτ' ἐστὶν καὶ διὰ τοῦτ' ἀδύνατον ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν, 38a).[32] Socrates was the talking philosopher, except maybe at two remarkable moments when Socrates stands still and contemplates in silence (Pl.*Symp*.175c, 220c). In the classical Greek period, *logos*, meaning both 'speech/word' and 'reason', became the distinct characteristic of human nature: λόγον […] μόνον ἄνθρωπος ἔχει τῶν ζώων ('man alone of all animals possesses speech', Aristotle, *Politeia* 1253a.11-12). For the Greeks, '[o]ral mastery and control of language are the essential features that define humanity', as John Heath summarized in his book *The Talking Greeks*.[33]

Against the vocal background of antiquity, moments of silence may easily escape our attention. The topic of silence, therefore, remains relatively unnoticed in classical scholarship – at least when we compare it to other fields. Not differently from other fields, silence is defined in various ways and is studied by classical scholars from a variety of perspectives. In recent years, scholars have studied silence in the archaic and classical periods from cultural and literary perspectives. Two major works that explore *literal* silence in *literary* texts are the works of Silvia Montiglio, *Silence in the Land of Logos* (2000), and the volume *The Regions of Silence* (1987) edited by Maria Grazia Ciana. More recently, the edited volumes *Le Funzioni del Silenzio nella Grecia Antica* (2015) by Paola Bernardini, and *Faces of Silence in Ancient Greek Literature* (2020) by Efi Papadodima, focus on a broader concept of silence, such as silencing in relation to othering, rhetorical silences as the praeteritio, and 'silence' as the omission of certain words or names (e.g., in the case of *damnatio memoriae*).[34]

These works show that – despite the diversity of silent moments and their meanings – there was a 'code of silence', at least in archaic and classical Athenian thinking.[35] Montiglio points out that in a world where speech (*logos*) was the organizing principle, appearances of silence denoted often a specific sentiment, which she calls 'horror of the void'.[36] Homeric heroes stand out for their mighty speeches (κρατερὸν […] μῦθον, *Il.*1.25), they constantly fight verbally, and even do not die

[31] Heath (2005:259-314) analyzes silence in Plato's dialogues, and shows how Socrates imposes silence on the other interlocuters and how silence is a sign of failure ('the shame of silence', 296).
[32] Translation Emlyn-Parry. Libanius (314-394AD), a pagan rhetor, has written a defense speech for Socrates in which he states: σιωπῶν γὰρ οὐ Σωκράτης ἐστίν 'when he is silent, he is not Socrates' (*Decl.* 2.31; tr. Crosby & Calder 1960).
[33] Heath (2005:171). Cf. Gera (2003)
[34] 'Silencing' is a concept of much interest to literary theorists. For classical literature, see e.g. Lardinois and McClure(2001).
[35] Montiglio (2000:9): 'The very existence in Greece of a "code of silence" that involves the body and pervades cultural manifestations as diverse as religious rituals, Homeric epic, drama, and medical texts, point to a shared tendency to associate an absence of words with specific gestures and postures' an association, in turn, which suggests that for the Greeks silence was a highly formalized behavior, much more so than it is for us.'
[36] Montiglio (2000:289).

in silence.[37] Instead, they speak till the very last end, as is the case with Hector: 'thus he spoke, and the end of death covered him' (*Il.*22.361).[38] If a Greek hero fell silent, that oftentimes was because of an intense emotion,[39] such as fear (Chryses for Agamemnon, *Il.*1.33-34), grief (Antilochus becomes speechless after hearing about Patroclus' death, *Il.*17.695), or awe after a compelling speech: 'all remained quietly in silence' (οἳ δ᾽ ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ).[40] In Greek drama as well, silence signifies often a strong emotion, but is also a way to cover what may evoke these emotions. In *Oedipus Tyrannus* for instance, Teiresias is introduced by the chorus (v.300) as him 'who dispose[s] all things, those that can be explained and those unspeakable' (διδακτά τε ἄρρητά τ᾽).[41] Oedipus asks Teiresias to reveal the truth, but Teiresias refuses (v.330). Teiresias wishes to remain silent: 'things will come of themselves, even if I veil it in silence (σιγῇ στέγω, v.341)'. Oedipus forces him to speak up and then hears what he no longer wants to hear: the unspeakable truth (ἄρρητ᾽ ἀρρήτων v.465).[42]

Also the democratic society was marked by the importance of the spoken and free word (*parrhesia*), or as Socrates remarks 'Athens, where there's the greatest right to speak' (Pl.*Gor.*461e). Restrictions to (free) speech were imposed on women and slaves, who were believed to be 'outside the community of rational discourse'.[43] In Xenophon's *Oeconomicus,* for example, Ischomachus explains that he 'domesticated' his wife to carry a conversation (χειροήθης ἦν καὶ ἐτετιθάσευτο ὥστε διαλέγεσθαι, VII.10), implying that without help his wife would not have fully mastered speech.[44] In a similar vein, Aristotle remarks that the enslaved can apprehend *logos* but do not possess it (ὁ κοινωνῶν λόγου τοσοῦτον ὅσον αἰσθάνεσθαι ἀλλὰ μὴ ἔχειν, *Pol.* 1254b.22).[45] For the Athenians, the absence or misuse of speech, therefore, is a characteristic of 'the other'. Most exemplary is perhaps the Spartan society as the ultimate other that was known for its aversion to talkativeness, as Plato, for instance, remarks: 'our city, Athens, is, in the general opinion of the Greeks, both fond of talk (φιλόλογός) and full of talk (πολύλογος), but Lacedaemon is scant of talk (βραχύλογον)' (*Laws* 641e).[46]

---

[37] Also Achilles is described as 'a speaker of words and a doer of deeds' (*Il.* IX.944). For silence in Homer, e.g., Montiglio (2000:46-81,267-275), Catenacci (2015), Lardinois (2020).
[38] Montiglio (2000:80). Translations of the *Iliad* from Wyatt (2003).
[39] See Lardinois (2020:9-12) for the emotions that silence expresses in the Homeric epics.
[40] See Foley (1995) for this recurring phrase in Homer.
[41] Translation Lloyd-Jones (1997).
[42] For this passage, see also Montiglio (2000:197-198). The deeds of Oedipus are called unspeakable because they are taboos (patricide and incest). Montiglio (2000:38) describes ἄρρητος as 'something charged with a religious force that suppresses speech'.
[43] Gera (2003:207-212).
[44] Women and slaves in classical Greece were caught between the conviction of talking too little and talking too much; see Heath's (2005) fourth chapter.
[45] Both examples I owe to Gera (2003:207).
[46] David (2009:118) refers to this; translation Bury (1928). See his chapter for the Spartans' taciturnity. For the 'othering' result of silence in Greek culture and literature, see Heath (2005:171-212).

In this 'land of logos', as Silvia Montiglio calls the Greek civilization in the archaic and classical period, 'silence [is] an abnormal phenomenon while sound seems to be the norm'.[47] In her rich analysis of different instances of silence in Greek culture, Montiglio notices that in the archaic Greek language silence was originally defined 'as a state, a condition, rather than as act' by the adverbs ἄνεω, ἀκήν, and σιωπῇ – conversely, the verb σιωπάω was not often used.[48] In ancient Greek thinking, 'silence is a token of marginality'; it often denotes a sentiment of passivity, and must be ended by and through speech.[49] Silence was the inglorious failure of speech.

IV Silence in Ancient Philosophy

As the classical period transitioned into late antiquity, an awareness of and interest in the limits of *logos* gradually arose.[50] From the Hellenistic period onwards, the Greco-Roman world cannot be called the 'land of logos' any longer,[51] although the soundscapes of the ancient world remained noisy in Roman times.[52] The Hellenistic schools of philosophy were all more or less aimed at reaching a state of *ataraxia* ('free from trouble'). For the Sceptics, reason was inefficient since it can produce opposing results. Hence, any judgment should be suspended (*epoche*), which creates a state of tranquility in the end: *ataraxia*.[53] On the way to *ataraxia*, one first has to reach the state of *aphasia* ('non-assertion'), 'a mental condition of ours because of which we refuse either to affirm or to deny anything' (Sex. Emp. *PH*.I.192).[54] Epicurus, in turn, calls in his fourteenth proposition of his *Kuria Doxai* (DL. X.139-154) for 'the security of a quiet private life (ἐκ τῆς ἡσυχίας) withdrawn from the multitude'.[55] Also the Stoics emphasize the importance of silence. According to Sextus Empiricus, the Stoics redefined Aristotle's description of man possessing logos alone: 'they assert that Man does not differ in respect of uttered reason (τῷ προφορικῷ λόγῳ) from the irrational animals (τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων) […], but in respect of internal reason (τῷ ἐνδιαθέτῳ)'.[56] We are distinct from (other) animals for we are capable of thinking in silence. Many Stoics, for that reason, call for silence;[57] Epictetus, for instance, says in his *Encheiridion* (33.2): 'be silent (σιωπὴ) for the most part, or else make only the most necessary remarks, and express these in few words'.[58]

---

[47] Montiglio (2000:6).
[48] Eadem (2000:46-48)
[49] Ibidem.
[50] See Mortley (1986a:110, 159-161).
[51] As Montiglio (2000:4) notes.
[52] See Laurence (2017) for the soundscape of the Roman world.
[53] Cf. Sex.Emp. *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* I.12.For Sceptisicm and silence, Mortley (1986a:33-38).
[54] Translation Bury (1933). See also Bett (2000:16, 37-39), where he discusses a testimonium of Timon (DC53) who calls for *aphasia*.
[55] Translation by Hicks (1931).
[56] *Against the Logicians* II.275-276. Translation Bury (1935). Referred to by Mortley (1986a:32).
[57] This inspires also modern-day stoics, e.g., Holiday's *Stillness is the Key* (2019).
[58] Translation Oldfather (1928).

The idea of silent thinking is not specific to the Hellenistic thinkers – it was after all a minor theme in their philosophies. Although silence as a topic is largely absent from classical philosophy,[59] Plato already remarked that the dialectical process of doing philosophy and the process of thinking resemble each other, and that thinking is just silent speech (*Soph.*263e; cf. *Theaet.*189e-190a): 'thought (διάνοια) and speech (λόγος) are the same; only the former, which is an inner conversation without voice (διάλογος ἄνευ φωνῆς) of the soul with itself, has been given the special name of thought.' In *Parmenides*, Plato arrives at the conclusion that the Parmenidean one cannot be named or thought of (142a), and in *Timaeus*, he states that speaking about the demiurge-god is almost impossible (28c). Even more famous has become 'Plato's silence': the idea that Plato had alleged secret doctrines that he did not uncover in his writings.[60] In *Phaedrus,* Socrates claims that oral teaching is superior to written teachings (276a), and what is written down runs the risk of being misunderstood (275d). In the *Seventh Letter,* which authenticity is highly debated, "Plato" states he did not write down the subjects about which he was serious and nor will he do (431c).[61] This, in combination with Aristotle' one-off remark about Plato's τὰ λεγόμενα ἄγραφα δόγματα (*Physics* 209b.14-15), has inspired a long tradition of exegesis of Plato's works. Later Platonists bring these ideas, silent thinking, and unspoken doctrines, into fruition and make silence a major theme.[62] For later Platonists, contemplating the higher hypostases is accompanied by the gradual silencing of the individual (see CHAPTER II).

Several monographs have been written on the theme of philosophical silence (i.e. silence that is philosophically meaningful). The century-old monograph of the Benedictine monk Odo Casel, *De Philosophorum Graecorum Silentio Mystico*, lists several 'silent' passages from Greek philosophy showing the importance of the theme to Greek philosophers, Neoplatonists in particular, and argued that silence of the mystery cults was transformed by later philosophers.[63] Casel focuses mainly on what is called apophatic discourse, the method of understanding the divine by using negations (also known as the *via negativa* or negative theology). Seven decades later, Raoul Mortley argues in his *From Word to Silence*: *The Rise and Fall of Logos* that Greek philosophical thinking

[59] Mortley (1986a:124, cf.110-118): 'In the classical period, language is not questioned, nor is silence advocated. The discovery of logos was too recent an achievement, and too successful a tool for it to be challenged in such way.'
[60] Especially the Tübingen School was (in)famous for their exegesis of Plato's unwritten doctrines. For some recent interpretations of Plato's silence, see Rhodes (2003:25-31, 40-112) and Lamberton (2018). Lamberton (2018:151) argues that the exegesis of Plato's silence is nothing more than hermeneutically interpreting the unclear meanings of Plato's works.
[61] Butti di Lima (2021) on composition of the *Seventh Letter* and its possible author(s).
[62] Mortley (1986a:118-124, 154-158) states that the intellectual milieu in the first centuries AD, where philosophy merged with theology/theosophy, such as in the works of Philo and the Gnostics, may have catalyzed the interest in silence.
[63] Casel (1919:2): '*silentium mysticum a mysteriis ad philosophiam transierit*'. His concept of silence is rather static and not much theorized upon. As I will show, silence is a dynamic concept. Nonetheless, Casel's monograph is a good point of departure.

developed from *logos* to *sigè*: after the rise of *logos* as human rational power in the classical period, a distrust arose of this all-encompassing power resulting in reflections on the limits of language and reason, and thus also on the virtue of silence. In his second volume, *The Negative Way, Christian and Greek*, Mortley follows the development of the *via negativa* in Christian theology and later pagan philosophy, like Casel but more extensively. Nicholas Banner's *Philosophic Silence and the 'One' in Plotinus* (2018) examines the ineffability of the One and the rhetoric of apophatic discourse that is the only way to talk about the highest metaphysical hypostasis.[64] The interest of these scholars lies primarily in the conceptualization of silence as apophatic discourse and the linguistic strategies to speak about the unspeakable, and thus not in the phenomenon of silence itself. When they mention literal silence is remains a rather static concept.

Nevertheless, literal silence is an important theme in later ancient philosophies as well, as this thesis aims to show. At the end of his two-volume monograph, Mortley clarifies the difference between silence and the *via negativa*: 'Silence is the absence of speech. […] The negative way is always part of language: it is a linguistic manoeuvre.[…] The way of silence is just this total absence of concepts: it is the way of silence which constitutes the complete annulment, which the negative fails to achieve.'[65] Whereas apophatic discourse is part of language, (literal) silence is external to language – and has, therefore, a power that language is lacking. Mortley's description of silence is, however, limited; as modern philosophers as Picard emphasized, silence itself is not a negative ('total absence of concepts' or 'a complete annulment') but a positive, a presence. Is this also true for the late antique philosophers? And what is their 'way of silence' that Mortley touches upon?

V Aim, Focus, and Structure of This Thesis

This thesis focuses on *literal* silence in the later Platonic philosophy (first to sixth century AD). As we have seen, there is a gradually growing intellectual interest in silence in later times. The meaning of silence is no longer merely cultural (as holds for the classical period), but silence becomes philosophically meaningful as well in this period. This holds true especially for philosophical thinkers in the Platonic tradition, with their interest in silent thinking and unspeakable doctrines. To date, apophatic discourse in the Platonic tradition has interested scholars quite extensively, but a synoptic perspective on literal silence is still lacking. This thesis aims to show the rich treatment

[64] Banner (2018:19-20) defines his topic of philosophic silence as: 'a speech act which combines rhetorics of hiding and revealing when dealing with the philosophic truth event'. Even though I focus on a different concept, namely literal silence (and not apophatic discourse), his work was useful for me to get an overview of silence in the works of philosophers before Plotinus. The same holds for Mortley (1986a-b).
[65] Mortley (1986b:250-252).

of literal silence in the later Platonic tradition, how it is a dynamic concept transformed over time, and how it relates to and transcends apophatic discourse.

We must be aware that silence and discourse cannot be understood separately when dealing with philosophical texts: the moments of silence handed over to us are conveyed and reflected on through the medium of language. Therefore, the research in this thesis revolves around the relation between silence and discourse, and examines how the meaning of literal silence develops against the background of (dialogic) discourse in later Platonic philosophy.[66] This is conducted by focusing on explicit mentions of silence or the limits of discourse in the studied texts, and by analyzing them within the frame of the opposites distinguished above. In her study on the cultural conception of silence, Montiglio remarked that the 'meanings [of silence] may be expected to change not only from civilization to civilization, but also within the same civilization across time'.[67] Comparably, in this thesis, I argue that philosophic silence was transformed from a contradiction of discourse to a substitute and transcendence of discourse. Or to use the earlier-mentioned dichotomies: philosophic silence developed from communicative (and sometimes even verbal) to non-communicative and non-verbal silence, from immanent to transcendent silence.

Even with the scope of merely literal silence in later Platonist thought, it is impossible to be exhaustive in this thesis. Therefore, I structure my thesis thematically and (dia)chronologically to touch upon the – in my eyes (or ears) – texts most crucial for the development of philosophical silence. In CHAPTER I, I focus on the silent philosopher trope in the (Neo)Pythagorean tradition (that often was synonymous with the Platonic tradition). The treatments of these silent philosophers show that silence was seen as a philosophic virtue and a (better) alternative to language. CHAPTER II focuses on quietness as a characteristic of the first principle and as an ontological posture to reach the supreme principle in Middle Platonic and Neoplatonic thought. This chapter involves the inevitable *via negativa* and searches for the limits of discourse – and the silence beyond. Speech turns out to be deficient and their silence becomes non-communicative and transcendent. In CHAPTER III, I examine how the thoughts language's limits impact the dialectical method. The focus here is on how the literary form can convey silence. I show how the silent listeners and monologic ends of the Platonic dialogues of Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, and Boethius represent the transcendence of language and discursive thinking. This is their 'way of silence'.

[66] With this research question, I echo Montiglio's (2000:3): 'How does silence resonate against this vocal background [of ancient Greece]?'
[67] Montiglio (2000:4).

CHAPTER I

Silence as a Statement

PYTHAGOREAN SILENCES AS ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF DISCOURSE

'Sometimes I regret to have spoken, but I never regret to have remained silent.'
Xenocrates (c.396-c.314 BC).[68]

Silence and philosophy are related. This may hold for modern philosophy, but it certainly does for (post-classical) ancient philosophy. This chapter traces the silent philosopher trope in the (Neo)Pythagorean tradition.[69] The Neopythagoreans are not a unified group of philosophers, but a group of philosophers from several centuries who were explicitly said to be indebted to Pythagoras' philosophy, often combined with or based on Platonism.[70] This chapter starts off in the first century AD, with the essay of the Middle Platonist (but also Neopythagorean)[71] Plutarch 'On Talkativeness' – and on its opposite, silence. This essay is exemplary of the idea that silence is a philosophical virtue. The second paragraph searches for the roots of this connection between silence and philosophy by delving into the mystical silence of Pythagoreans and their secret doctrines. This culminates into the last paragraph which examines two examples of Neopythagorean silent philosophers in Late Antique texts. All the silences in this chapter contrast with speech and discourse; silence is a choice to make a good appearance, to keep outsiders out, or to make a statement.

I. Silence as a Philosophic Virtue

One of the essays in the *Moralia* of the prolific writer Plutarch (46-c.119AD) is called Περὶ ἀδολεσχίας, '*On Talkativeness*'.[72] In this essay, the νόσημα τῆς ψυχῆς 'soul's sickness'(502C; cf.

[68] Testimonium by Valerius Maximus, *Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilium* VII.2, ext.6: '*dixisse me* [...] *aliquando paenituit, tacuisse numquam*'. My translation.
[69] Banner (2018:78-81) briefly discusses silent philosophers as trope.
[70] Dillon (2014:250) defines Neopythagoreanism as: 'Neopythagoreanism is a branch of Platonism that emphasizes the role of number in the cosmos and which regards Pythagoreanism as the origin of this emphasis. Neopythagoreans thus show devotion to what they chose to regard as the basic principles of the Pythagorean philosophical system, the One and the Indefinite Dyad, although these principles are, in fact, Platonic.'
[71] Dillon (2014:266-268) and Joost-Gaugier (2018:105-106) call Plutarch a 'Neopythagorean', since he shows a interest in and knowledge of Pythagoreanism, e.g. in *De Genio Socratis* or *Life of Numa.*
[72] The Greek is from Pohlenz (1929).

510C) that is called ἀδολεσχία is attacked, and the virtue of silence is eulogized.[73] In the opening line, Plutarch sketches what the problem is with garrulous persons, and what the possible cure is (502B-C; tr. Hembold):

Δύσκολον μὲν ἀναλαμβάνει θεράπευμα καὶ χαλεπὸν ἡ φιλοσοφία τὴν ἀδολεσχίαν. τὸ γὰρ φάρμακον αὐτῆς, ὁ λόγος, ἀκουόντων ἐστίν, οἱ δ᾽ ἀδόλεσχοι οὐδενὸς ἀκούουσιν· ἀεὶ γὰρ λαλοῦσι.	It is a troublesome and difficult task that philosophy has in hand when it undertakes to cure garrulousness. For the remedy, words of reason, requires listeners; but the garrulous listen to nobody, for they are always talking.

Talkativeness needs to be cured. Philosophy offers this cure (φάρμακον αὐτῆς), and λόγος is the medicine.[74] Plutarch is the first to make loquacity not only a social but also a serious philosophical problem.[75] The structure of Plutarch's essay is similar to a medical treatment:[76] it first gives a diagnosis of why talkativeness is problematic (502B-504E), followed by examples of the bad consequences of excessive talking and the benefits of remaining silent (504E-510C), and by possible treatments of the talking-disorder in the end (510C-514A).[77] Talkativeness is problematic because the inability to keep silent results in the inability to listen (καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἔχει πρῶτον κακὸν ἡ ἀσιγησία, τὴν ἀνηκοΐαν, 502C).[78] For this reason, οἱ λόγοι ('speeches' or 'words') cannot take root in loquacious persons (502D-E): 'one might think that babbler's ears have no passage bored through to the soul, but only to the tongue.'

This is why the task of philosophy in curing garrulity is so difficult: philosophy works through λόγοι that appeal to one's λόγος (reason) and requires therefore listeners, but the talkative person cannot listen at all.[79] Therefore, the talkative should learn how to be silent. Plutarch cites a verse by Sophocles to illustrate this (502E): ὦ παῖ, σιώπα· πόλλ᾽ ἔχει σιγὴ καλά ('hush, child: in silence many virtues lie').[80] The two greatest virtues of silence are 'hearing and being heard' (τὸ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκουσθῆναι, 502E). The garrulous person fails to achieve either: he is unable to listen and his so-desired listeners run away or refuse to pay attention to his excessive talking (502F-503D). This makes talkativeness even worse than drunkenness: for the drunk is only loquacious when

[73] Good discussions of this essay in Beardslee (1978), Van Hoof (2010), Nikolaidis (2011), and Burns (2015).
[74] Plutarch here plays with Plato's description of writing as a *pharmakon* in *Phaedrus*.
[75] Beardslee (1978:265): 'Plutarch's essay lifts the notion of ἀδολεσχία from the level of popular ethics to the level of serious philosophical ethics.'
[76] Edmons' translation (1967).
[77] See Ingenkamp (1971), for the pattern of κρίσις and ἄσκησις in Plutarch's ethical essays. Cf. Burns (2015:44-55). See Beardslee (1978:269-270) for an elaborate overview of the essay. The medical language in this essay cannot be missed: next to κρίσις (510C) and ἄσκησις (510C, 515A), we find θεράπευμα (502A), φάρμακον (502B, 509C, 509E, 510D), ἴαμα (510D) and ἰατρείαν (510C).
[78] Hembold (1939:397) notes that the words ἀσιγησία and ἀνηκοΐα are 'pseudo-medical terms'.
[79] Beardslee (1978:267). Plutarch also wrote an essay on proper listening, Περὶ τοῦ ἀκούειν τῶν φιλοσόφων, in which the silence of the student is mentioned (39A, 39B, 42A).
[80] Radt (1977), Sophocles fr.81.

inebriated, while the talkative always talks too much, drunk or sober (504B).[81] This also contrasts drunkenness to silence: 'silence is something profound and mystical and sober, but drunkenness is a babbler, for it is foolish and witless, and therefore loquacious also' (Οὕτω τι βαθὺ καὶ μυστηριῶδες ἡ σιγὴ καὶ νηφάλιον, ἡ δὲ μέθη λάλον· ἄνουν γὰρ καὶ ὀλιγόφρον, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ πολύφωνον, 504A-B). The description of silence as something βαθύ 'deep' and μυστηριῶδες 'like mysteries', and later also as something σεμνόν 'holy' and ἅγιον 'sacred' (510E), points to the divine nature of silence (σιγή) – which is something to which I return in the next paragraph.[82]

Because of his excessive talking, the garrulous person causes many problems. Plutarch illustrates this with examples of how the revealing of a secret has led to the ruination of men, cities, and empires (504E-505D, 506E-510B). In contrast, the virtue of remaining silent is praised as a heroic deed (505D-506E). Leaena, for example, a courtesan belonging to the conspiracy of the tyrannicides Harmodius and Aristogeiton, was questioned after the partly failed assassination of the Athenian tyrants and was commanded to reveal the names of the co-conspirators. She kept silent, a heroic deed for which she was honored by the Athenians later with a bronze statue of a tongueless lioness set up in the vestibule of the Acropolis (505E-F). Plutarch concludes with the adagio: 'No spoken word, it is true, has ever done such service as have in many instances words unspoken; for it is possible at some later time to tell what you have kept silent, but never to keep silent what once has been spoken' (Οὐδεὶς γὰρ οὕτω λόγος ὠφέλησε ῥηθεὶς ὡς πολλοὶ σιωπηθέντες· ἔστι γὰρ εἰπεῖν ποτε τὸ σιγηθέν, οὐ μὴν σιωπῆσαί γε τὸ λεχθέν, 505F).[83] Talkativeness can only bring danger to the talker: it results in hatred, annoyance, scorn, squandering, or destruction (510D).

The cause of talkativeness is a psychological failure of one's λόγος (reason) controlling the body. Plutarch explains this by the example of Odysseus (506A), whom he calls 'most eloquent' (λογιώτατον) and 'most silent' (σιωπηλότατον) – indicating that being versed in speech and being reticent are no opposites. When Odysseus did not reveal himself to Penelope yet, his reason (λόγος), according to Plutarch, 'ordered his eyes not to weep, his tongue not to utter a sound (τῇ γλώττῃ μὴ φθέγγεσθαι), his heart not to tremble or bark' (506A).[84] Hence the cure of garrulity is to be found in

---

[81] Plutarch compares the abuse of speech more often with the abuse of food and wine, e.g. (504E, 509C, 512E, 513D, 515A); see also Hoof (2010:165 n.42).

[82] Cf. 505F: σιωπᾶν θεοὺς [...] ἔχομεν 'being silent we have gods'. For the religious nature of silence in Plutarch, see Beardslee (1978:274-275), who also connects this work of Plutarch with the theme of silence and talkativeness in early Christian literature. For the mystical nature of silence, see Casel (1919: esp. 87-88) Van Nuffelen (2007). Van Nuffelen argues that mystical silence is associated with the truth (2007:29): 'Because of this structural link between mysteries and truth, mystical silence becomes a sign of truth. Without having to reveal it, it points to the place where the truth can be found. Because of this unique quality - it points to the highest truth but does not have to reveal it - mystical silence becomes a very powerful tool of truth-suggestion. It allows the interlocutor to claim the truth without having to offer a proof for it as demanded by philosophy.'

[83] Interestingly, Plutarch in the last two cola does not make a distinction between 'being still' (σιγάω) and 'keeping silent' (σιωπάω). See n.17 *supra*.

[84] Beardslee (1978:277) discusses this passage.

using λόγος in a proper way (thus in philosophy as the opening line of this essay stated). Plutarch gives his readers a medicine (φάρμακόν) in two steps: firstly a talkative person has 'by the application of reason (ἐπιλογισμός) to discover the shameful and painful effects that result from it' (510D), and secondly he 'must apply [his] reasoning powers (χρηστέον ἐπιλογισμῷ) to the effects of the opposite behavior, always hearing and remembering and keeping close at hand the praises bestowed on reticence (τῆς ἐχεμυθίας[85] ἐγκώμια), and the solemn, holy, and mysterious character of silence' (τὸ σεμνὸν καὶ τὸ ἅγιον καὶ τὸ μυστηριῶδες τῆς σιωπῆς, 510E). These are made concrete by six tips for training (ἄσκησις): do not rush to answer questions, pay attention to the content of answers, do not talk about your favorite subjects, turn to writing – as Plutarch himself with this quite loquacious essay[86] –, talk mostly with your superiors to get accustomed to silence, and ask yourself whether a remark is really necessary (511F-514F).

What do we learn about speech and silence from Plutarch's essay? It contains a moralistic lesson: speech can become harmful when used irrationally, whereas silence is ἄλυπον καὶ ἀνώδυνον ('without pain and without suffering', 515A), as Plutarch summarizes in his very last sentence. Learning how and when to be silent is part of social etiquette but is also a philosophical exercise. The two main benefits of silence, 'hearing and being heard', can make one a good philosopher.[87] Becoming an eager listener and thoughtful speaker can only be achieved by the proper application of *logos*. Silence is here associated with virtue, reason, and philosophy. The type of silence discussed by Plutarch is mainly a form of immanent silence and of intentional silence (a deliberate choice to keep silent).[88] However, Plutarch also transiently touches upon the divine and mystical nature of silence (504A-B, 510E). In the next paragraph, I elaborate on the idea of the mystical roots of philosophic silence by focusing on the first 'silent' philosopher: Pythagoras.

II. Mystically Closed Mouths of the Pythagoreans

'The historical figure of Pythagoras has almost vanished behind the cloud of legend gathered around his name', as Charles Kahn describes the *Nachleben* of Pythagoras (c.570-490 BC), a mysterious sage and wonder-worker that is described as a philosopher, religious leader, or even

[85] This is a rare word (lit. 'keeping the word (secret)'). Plutarch uses it twice in relation to Pythagoras (*Life of Numa* 8.6; *De Curiositate* 519C). It is also used five times by Iamblichus in his *De Vita Pythagorica,* and by some other authors. See Burkert (1972:179n.101) and Banner (2018:60): 'Iamblichus seems to indicate that the term 'taciturnity' (ἐχεμυθία) is a piece of specifically Pythagorean jargon.' The word denotes the silence of the initiates in the presence of profanes, see my next paragraph.

[86] Hembold (1939:395) and Beardslee (1978:273) note the irony that Plutarch's essay is quite lengthy.

[87] Bias (503F) and Zeno of Elea (504A) are praised for their silence, Socrates (512B) for his manner of asking questions, and Plato (510E) for preferring brevity – according to Plutarch.

[88] In the text we find 29 instances of words derived from σιωπή and just 9 from σιγή, which also points to the focus on 'silence in speech' instead of a transcendent silence. See n.17 *supra.*

charlatan in modern scholarship.[89] The theme of (mystical) silence is one of the aspects of the 'legend of Pythagoras'.[90] In his *On the Pythagorean way of Life* (περὶ τοῦ Πυθαγορικοῦ βίου, or *De Vita Pythagorica*) chapter XVII, Iamblichus (c.245-325 AD) describes how Pythagoras examined novices before they were initiated into his circle.[91] One of the most remarkable aspects of this 'inquiry' is the following (XVII.72.5-8; tr. Dillon & Hershbell):[92]

τοῖς προσιοῦσι προσέταττε σιωπὴν πενταετῆ, ἀποπειρώμενος πῶς ἐγκρατείας ἔχουσιν, ὡς χαλεπώτερον τῶν ἄλλων ἐγκρατευμάτων τοῦτο, τὸ γλώσσης κρατεῖν, καθὰ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν τὰ μυστήρια νομοθετησάντων ἐμφαίνεται ἡμῖν.	[Pythagoras] ordered a five-year silence for those coming to him, testing how they were disposed to self-control, since more difficult than other forms of self-control is mastery of the tongue, as is revealed to us by those who instituted the mysteries.

According to Iamblichus, amongst all things that Pythagoras brought to light, such as the best *politeia*, legislation, and *paideia*, was also 'silence' (ἐχεμυθία, *VP*. VI.32). It is hard to say something about the 'original' Pythagoras and the Pythagorean silence since almost all knowledge on Pythagoras leans on much later sources – centuries later in the case of the most comprehensive biographies by Diogenes Laertius (*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* VIII) Porphyry (*Vita Pythagorae*) and Iamblichus.[93] These later authors deal more with the legendary 'image' than with the historical figure of Pythagoras, making them the most comprehensive but perhaps also the least authentic.

The importance of silence to Pythagoras and his circle is, however, mentioned by the earliest sources we have, and became a major theme in these later sources.[94] The quinquennial silence mentioned by Iamblichus, for example, was meant to test self-control (ἐγκράτεια) of the candidate-disciples.[95] After the silent years, only those candidates who passed Pythagoras' test were admitted: 'For five whole years they had to keep silence (πενταετίαν τε ἡσύχαζον), merely listening

[89] About the historical Pythagoras exists much debate. Guthrie (1962) argued Pythagoras was a philosopher and scientist, while Burkert (1972 [1962]) argued that Pythagoras was more like a religious sage. Lloyd (2014) discusses the scholarly debate.

[90] For silence and secrecy with Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans, Casel (1919:29-35), Burkert (1972:178-179, 185, 191-192), Bremmer (1995:65-70), Petit (1997), Montiglio (2000:27-28), Riedweg (2005:101-103), Knowles (2013:104-107), Gemelli Marciano (2014:144-145), and Banner (2018:56-61).

[91] Dillon & Hershbell (1991:27-29) and Lurje (2002:238-242) give an overview of the work. Iamblichus' *De Vita Pythagorica* was part of a ten-volume work about Pythagoreanism, meant as an introduction for the pupils of his philosophical schools. Only the first four books survived, which are called *On the Pythagorean Way of Life* (see O'Meara 1990:30-52).

[92] Greek is from Klein (1975).

[93] The chapters of Laks, Macris, and O'Meara in the book *A History of Pythagoreanism* (2014) form a good introduction to these texts. The texts of Diogenes Laertius and Porphyry seem to deal mostly with the same sources, whereas Iamblichus also used other sources.

[94] Burket (1972:178-179). The sources are (in chronological order) Isocrates, *Busiris* 29; the comical poet Alexis fr. 197 (= Por. *VP* 19); Aristotle fr. 192 (= Iam. *VP* 31), Aristoxenus fr. 43 (= D.L. 8.15). For the earlier sources on Pythagoras, see Lloyd (2014).

[95] Not all sources agree on the duration. Aulus Gellius, for instance, says that it consisted of two years (*NA* I.9.4).

to his discourses without seeing him, until they passed an examination, and thenceforward they were admitted to his house and allowed to see him' (D.L. VIII.10; cf. Iamb. *VP* 17.72).[96]

Members of the Pythagorean circle were called ὁμάκοοι 'fellow hearers' (Iamb. *VP*. XVII.73), and came together in the ὁμακοεῖον 'place to hear together' (Iamb. *VP*. VI.30, XVII.74; Porph. *VP*.20; cf. Philolaus fr.1a).[97] After their admission and their initiatory silence, the Pythagorean disciples were faced (literally, since they were then allowed to see Pythagoras) with another type of silence. What they heard within the Pythagorean circle had to remain a secret.[98] Among these secret doctrines (the ἀπόρρητα 'things-not-spoken') were for instance the prohibition to eat beans, to pick up crumbs that fell off the table, and to eat white roosters and sacred fish (D.L. VIII.34-35 = Aristotle fr.195), or even to eat meat at all.[99] Living by these precepts is called the Pythagorean way of life. The more philosophical doctrines consisted of the belief in an immortal soul, metempsychosis (Pythagoras was said to be a reincarnation of the Trojan hero Euphorbus; D.L. VIII.4-5, Porph.*VP*.28, Iamb.*VP*. XIV.63), and the circularity of time (Porph. *VP*.19). We know about all these doctrines, for they did not remain secret and were revealed by later (non-Pythagorean) authors. Aristotle, for instance, is said to have disclosed some of the secret doctrines: 'And Aristotle records, in his writings on the Pythagorean philosophy *On the Pythagoric Philosophy* [which are lost], that the following division was preserved by these men in their very secret doctrines (ἐν τοῖς πάνυ ἀπορρήτοις): that of rational, living beings one kind is divine, another human, and another such as Pythagoras' (fr.192 Rose = Iamb.*VP* VI.31).

The Pythagorean doctrines were for Pythagoreans' ears only, however, as Aristotle's pupil Aristoxenus explained when he wrote that 'not all his doctrines were for all men to hear' (μὴ εἶναι πρὸς πάντας πάντα ῥητά; fr.43 Wehrli = D.L. VIII.15; cf. Porph.*VP*.19). Pythagoras, lecturing these doctrines to his disciples, urged them to keep the doctrines secrets (Iamb.*VP* XX.94; cf. XXIV.246; tr. Dillon & Hershbell):

Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν ἐν τῷ λαμβάνειν τὴν διάπειραν ἐσκόπει εἰ δύνανται ἐχεμυθεῖν (τούτῳ γὰρ δὴ καὶ ἐχρῆτο τῷ ὀνόματι) καὶ καθεώρα εἰ μανθάνοντες ὅσα ἂν ἀκούσωσιν οἷοί τέ εἰσι σιωπᾶν καὶ διαφυλάττειν.	First, then, in testing (those who came to him) he considered whether they were have to "hold their talk" (for this is the term he used). And he observed whether they were able to keep silent and to preserve carefully whatever they heard while learning.

[96] Translation Hicks (1931). Passages are also quoted by Montiglio (2000:27-28).
[97] Iamblichus (*VP*.81) says, basing himself on Aristotle, that there were two rival schools of Pythagoreanism: the *acousmatici* and the *mathematici*, both claiming to be the followers of Pythagoras. On this, see Burkert (1972:193ff.)
[98] Petit (1995:288) argues that there are three types of Pythagorean silence: 'un silence *préparatoire*, lié au "noviciat" pythagoricien, un silence *ritual* (*euphêmia*), et un silence observé en présence des profanes (*ekhemuthia*)'. His second type of silence is not specific to the Pythagoreans, see Montiglio (2000:16) who characterizes εὐφημία as 'speech and silence at the same time: well-omened speech and the silencing of ill-omened words'.
[99] This is debated, see Burkert (1972:182).

The word used here, ἐχεμυθεῖν (in §246 also the hapax legomenon ἐχερρημοσύνη), literally means 'keeping the word (secret)'.[100] This secrecy about their doctrines resulted in a clear in-group (esoteric) and out-group (exoteric), which makes their silence a way of othering outsiders. Their vow for ἐχεμυθία went far. Iamblichus, in a chapter on the Pythagorean virtue of σωφροσύνη, tells us the story about the fourth century BC Pythagorean 'martyrs' Myllias and Timychia (*VP* XXXI.188-194), a story he took over from earlier sources.[101] When their Pythagorean group was on the move, they were chased by the troops of Dionysus II, tyrant of Syracuse, after they refused a friendship with this 'philosopher-king'. They would have escaped but encountered a field full of beans that they could not cross because of their Pythagorean precept. Although Dionysus' plan was to catch them all alive, all Pythagoreans were killed (§191), except for the couple Myllias and the pregnant Timychia who strayed apart from the group (§192). Dionysus offered them to συμβασιλεῦσαι out of respect for their philosophy; they refused. Dionysus promised to release the pair only if they would tell him why their fellow Pythagoreans would not tread on the beans. Myllias responded that he would rather tread on beans than tell the tyrant the reason. Consequently, the pregnant Timychia was tortured to reveal the reason. She, however, bit off her tongue and spit it out in front of Dionysus, showing that her fear to reveal the Pythagorean secrets was greater than her fear of a tyrant.[102] Biting off one's own tongue shows of how strict the Pythagorean secrecy was thought to be.

The quinquennial silence of the Pythagoreans was meant as a test for the candidates to examine whether they could be reticent about the Pythagorean doctrines to which they would be initiated: '*Verschweigen* presupposes the ability of *Schweigen'* as Jan Bremmer put it.[103] In his article, Bremmer speculates about the question why the Pythagoreans would have had such secrecy about their doctrines. A reason could be the connection with the mystery cults of that time, a connection that we already saw in the quotes of Plutarch (510E) and Iamblichus above (XVII.72.5-8).[104] Since it was said by ancient sources that there was a connection between Pythagoras and Demeter, Burkert and Montiglio argue that the Pythagorean silence is indebted to the Eleusinian Mysteries.[105] Montiglio points out that the Pythagorean doctrines were called μυήσεις ψυχῆς ('initiations of the

[100] See n.85 *supra*.
[101] Iamblichus (189) mentions Hippobotus and Neanthes as sources (both ca. third century BC), but Porphyry's VP.61 mentions Aristoxenus (fourth century BC).
[102] This story also cited by Banner (2018:79).
[103] Bremmer (1995:69).
[104] Bremmer (1995:68-70) suggests three possible reasons: a connection with the mysteries, secrecy as liaison between the members, or secrecy to deal with other competing philosophical circles.
[105] Burkert (1972:178) and Montiglio (2000:27-28), on the connection between Pythagoreanism and mystery cults, the Eleusinian in particular. Ancient sources suggest that Pythagoras' house was called 'Temple of Demeter' (DL. *Vitae* VIII.15 and Porph. *VP* 4 (= fr.78 of Timaeus)). Pythagoras was also associated with the god Apollo, for his name (and that of his mother's) may refer to the Pythia, and Pythagoras would have called himself 'Hyperborean Apollo'. On this, see Riedweg (2005:72ff), Rowett (2014:112-117). There is also a connection with Orphic mysteries, see Betegh (2014).

soul', Iamb.*VP*.XVII.74). According to her, the word μυήσεις, 'mysteries', is likely related to or derived from the verb μύω 'closing one's eyes or mouth', since 'the initiates close and lock their mouth (μύειν καὶ κλείειν τὸ στόμα τοὺς μεμυημένους) nor do they repeat those things to anyone who is not initiated' (scholion to Aristophanes, *Frogs* 456a).[106]

Already in the *Hymn to Demeter* (c.650-550 BC), the aetiological myth in which the Eleusinian Mysteries are introduced, the importance of silence is emphasized.[107] The *Hymn* is filled with silence when Demeter comes into the house of Eleusis' king Celeus and sits there still and silently (ἀκέουσα, […] ἄφθογγος […] οὐδέ τιν᾽ οὔτ᾽ ἔπεϊ προσπτύσσετο vv.192-199). To this epiphany Celeus' daughter responds with venerable silence (τὴν δ᾽ αἰδώς τε σέβας τε ἰδὲ χλωρὸν δέος εἶλεν v.190) and the epiphany leaves her awestruck for a long time afterward (ἄφθογγος γένετο χρόνον, vv.281-282).[108] At the end of the *Hymn*, Demeter 'revealed the conduct of her rites and taught her Mysteries' (δρησμοσύνην θ᾽ ἱερῶν καὶ ἐπέφραδεν ὄργια, v.476), and these ὄργια 'are not to be transgressed, nor pried into, nor divulged; for a great awe of the gods stops the voice' (σεμνά, τά τ᾽ οὔπως ἔστι παρεξίμεν οὔτε πυθέσθαι / οὔτ᾽ ἀχέειν: μέγα γάρ τι θεῶν σέβας ἰσχάνει αὐδήν, vv.478-479).[109] The mysteries thus had to be kept secret: an exoteric should not hear about these (πυθέσθαι), and an esoteric should not speak about these (ἀχέειν).[110]

In the *Hymn to Demeter*, we encounter two different types of (human) silence. There is reverent quietude or even muteness (ἄφθογγος) during and after the encounter with the goddess. This is an (externally) unintentional type of silence imposed by the divine: one *cannot* speak due to the epiphany.[111] The other type of silence, the secrecy about the rites and mysteries, is in the *Hymn* partly unintentional (it is explicitly imposed by Demeter), but also partly (internally) intentional: one knows that the rituals should be kept secret, and *chooses* not to talk about them. It is the latter that underlies the Pythagorean silences. The quinquennial test and the secrecy about the Pythagorean doctrines are intentional silences as well; it is a deliberate choice to σιωπᾶν or ἐχεμυθεῖν, 'to remain silent'.

---

[106] Scholion by Tzetzes, quoted in Montiglio (2000:25). Ibidem the etymology of μυήσεις. Cf. Mortley (1986a:113).
[107] On this *Hymn* and the Eleusinian Mysteries, see Foley (2013), or Mylonas (2015:224-286). For silence in the Eleusinian Mysteries, Casel (1919:3-27), Montliglio (2000:23-38).
[108] Scarpi (1987:23-33) analyzes silence in the *Hymn to Demeter*.
[109] Text and translation from Foley (2013).
[110] Point made by Casel (1919:4): '*Ergo neque πυθέσθαι (audire) neque ἀχέειν (loqui) licet de mysteriis*.' If one did speak about the mysteries, one was punished, as we learn from Plutarch's *Life of Alcibiades* XXII.4.
[111] Scarpi (1987:24) distinguishes silence by choice or by imposition; the muteness here is an example of imposition. See also Casel (1919:23): '*In hymno Homerico το σέβας disertis verbis rationem silentii exhiberi supra exposuimus.'*. cf. Montiglio (2000:33-38).

III Silent Neopythagoreans

Whether he was a true philosopher, a mathematician, or rather a religious sage, Pythagoras has had a significant influence on later philosophy in antiquity. Especially the Academic school of philosophy admired Pythagoras as the 'father' of philosophy.[112] That Pythagoreanism influenced the works of Plato is indisputable but the degree of influence Pythagoreanism had is much debated in recent scholarship.[113] Nonetheless, the pupils and successors of Plato paint a clear Pythagorean picture of Plato. Aristotle, for example, says in his *Metaphysica*, that Plato's philosophy was the successor of Pythagorean (numerological) philosophy "in most respects" (πολλὰ τούτοις ἀκολουθοῦσα, 587a).[114] Also Plato's direct successors as the head of the Academy, Speusippus and Xenocrates in particular, saw Pythagoras as the predecessor of Platonic philosophy.[115] They start to 'Pythagoreanize' Platonic metaphysics, and especially his "unwritten doctrine": Speusippus, for instance, ascribed the principle of the One and the Indefinite Dyad to Pythagorean philosophers, although it was, in fact, Platonic.[116] From the earliest reception of Plato's philosophy, there was a tendency of Pythagoreanizing Plato and of Platonizing Pythagoreanism.

After a decline in the interest for Pythagoreanism for some centuries, Pythagoreanism flourished again from the first century BC, and reached its peak in late antiquity.[117] Those philosophers who see the divinely inspired Pythagoras (e.g. Iamb. *VP*.1) and his philosophy as a central element in the development of Greek philosophy, are called 'Neopythagoreans' in modern scholarship.[118] The Neopythagoreans were not interested in a historically accurate presentation of Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism. Rather, they create an eclectic construct of Pythagoras to make him the source of their own (often Platonic and sometimes Aristotelian) philosophical views. This tendency of Pythagoreanizing occurred in particular amongst Middle Platonists and Neoplatonists, continuing the earlier fusion of Pythagoreanism and Platonism.[119]

---

[112] Kahn (2001:12-15) argues that Pythagoras' reception changed from satirical into admiration among Platonists.

[113] Plato mentions Pythagoras and his followers once (*Rep.*600b). Several interlocuters in Plato's dialogues were Pythagorean philosophers (e.g. Echecrates, Simmias, and Cebes in *Phaedo*, and Timaeus in the eponymous dialogue) and there are several Pythagorean traces (such as reincarnation in *Phaedo*, *Gorgias* and *Republic*; cosmology and metaphysics in *Timaeus* and *Philebus*). The Pyrrhonian philosopher Timon even suggests that Plato plagiarized *Timaeus* from a Pythagorean source (Timon fr.828 SH; see Riedweg (2005:116-118)). Recent scholars as Huffman (2013) and Palmer (2014) argue that there are the Pythagorean influences in Plato, but urged that they are not pervasive. Others, however, argue that Plato was deeply indebted to Pythagoras, e.g. Guthrie (1962), and more recently Horky (2013).

[114] Riedweg (2005:117-118).

[115] Dillon (2014) on the Pythagoreanizing tendency of Plato's successors.

[116] Testimonium in Proclus' *Commentary on the Parmenides* (Book 7 38.32-40.7 Klibansky/Labowsky), quoted in Dillon (2014:251). Xenocrates kept one hour of silent meditation daily (DL. *Lifes* IV.11).

[117] Nigidius Figulus, a contemporary of Cicero, allegedly reintroduced Pythagoreanism, e.g. Joost-Gaugier (2018:101).

[118] Overviews of Neopythagoreanism are found in O'Meara (1989), Riedweg (2005:113-133), Joost-Gaugier (2018:79-134), and Huffman's(2019) entry 'Pythagoras', especially paragraph 4. See Cornelli (2013) on the difficulties with the term 'Pythagoreanism' in the scholarly tradition, but also in antiquity itself.

[119] Huffmann (2019) remarks that: "'Neopythagorean" is a modern label, which overlaps with two other modern labels, "Middle Platonist" and "Neoplatonist," so that a given figure will be called a Neoplatonist or Middle Platonist by some scholars and a Neopythagorean by others." Cf. Dillon (1996a:341-383) and Thesleff (1961).

Carl Huffman distinguishes three different strands of Neopyhtagoreanism.[120] The first focuses on the metaphysical aspects of the "Pythagorean" philosophy, such as the abovementioned (actually Platonic) principles of the One and the Dyad, that formed the basis of the Plotinian metaphysical system. The second strand continues the Pythagorean arithmetic and harmonic theories. And lastly, the third strand focuses more on the Pythagorean life and practices, and considers Pythagoras as an example of living the 'ideal moral life'. Some texts in this last category emphasize the Pythagorean silence of these Neopythagorean sages. In the remainder of this paragraph, I examine two main examples of Neopythagorean silent philosophers: Philostratus' biography of Apollonius of Tyana and the anonymous biography of Secundus the Silent.[121]

Apollonius of Tyana [122]

In the first century AD a wonderworker would have lived whose deeds are, according to some, similar to or even surpass those of Jesus of Nazareth: Apollonius of Tyana (died in 96 AD).[123] In the enormous biography *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* by Flavius Philostratus (c. 170-245 AD),[124] we are told how Apollonius would have predicted a plague epidemic in Ephesus and rescued the city from it (IV.5-10), expelled a demon from a person (IV.20), brought a young dead woman back to life (IV.45), cured several people from illnesses or divine wraths (VI.38-43), miraculously escaped from prison (VIII.8), remotely "witnessed" the murder on emperor Domitian (VIII.25-27; cf. Pythagoras' gift of bilocation, Porph. *VP*.27, 29), ascended to heaven after his own death (VIII.30), and how his soul visited people's dreams afterwards (VIII.31).[125] Even after this brief synopsis of Philostratus' comprehensive work, it becomes clear that some aspects of the *Life of Apollonius* are fictional.[126] From the outset, Philostratus programmatically explains his purpose. He composed the work at empress Julia Domna's (c.170-217 AD) request, who was fond of rhetorical discourses (τοὺς ῥητορικοὺς πάντας λόγους ἐπήνει καὶ ἠσπάζετο, I.3.2).[127] Its purpose was to honor

[120] See chapters 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 in Huffman (2019).
[121] Banner (2018:80-83) briefly discusses these two as well.
[122] There is little known about the historical Apollonius, see Flinterman (1995:62, 67-88). He is mentioned by Flavius Philostratus in his *Lives of Sophists* and by Lucian in *Alexander or the false prophet*. Apollonius is believed to have written *Letters* (see Penella 1979) and a *Life of Pythagoras,* from which Porphyry (*VP*.2) and Iamblichus (*VP*.254-264) quote.
[123] According to Porphyry, Apollonius surpasses Christ (*Against the Christians* esp. fr.60 & 64); cf. Sossianus Hierocles *FGrHis*t IV A 1064 T 4. Eusebius of Caesarea responds to this and disagrees, *Preparation for the Gospel* IV 12–13.
[124] There are several Philostrati (Flinterman 1995:5-14), and this work is by Flavius Philostratus (Flinterman 1995:15-28). There is also a discussion about the correct Greek title of the work, see Boter (2015).
[125] Flinterman (1995:54-59) gives an overview of the work.
[126] There is debate about the fictionality of the work. According to Philostratus, he bases his work on the memoir 'tablets' that are written by Apollonius' fellow traveler and friend Damis (I.3), but scholars think that Damis is fictional, e.g. Bowie 1978:1653-1671. Others disagree, e.g. Flinterman 1995:79-88. This debate also revolves around the question of what genre Philostratus' text is: is it a 'truthful' biography, or rather an entertaining novel. Francis (1998) summarizes this discussion, and argues that ancient readers did not distinguished truth and fiction in our way.
[127] Greek from Boter (2022).

Apollonius and 'to profit to those with an inclination to learning' (I.3.2).[128] The *Life of Apollonius* is therefore quintessentially a rhetorical hagiography playing with historiography, philosophy and other genres, as is characteristic of the Second Sophistic, a term Philostratus coined (*Lives of Sophists* I.18).[129]

Moreover, Philostratus emphasizes that he wants to clear Apollonius' name. Whereas Philostratus knows him because of his 'truthful wisdom, which he practiced philosophically and sincerely' (ἀπὸ ἀληθινῆς σοφίας, ἣν φιλοσόφως τε καὶ ὑγιῶς ἐπήσκησεν, I.2.1), other people consider Apollonius to be a 'a sorcerer and misrepresent him as a philosophic impostor' (μάγον ἡγοῦνται αὐτὸν καὶ διαβάλλουσιν ὡς βιαίως σοφόν, I.2.1). To clear him of the charge of magic, Philostratus apologetically presents Apollonius as a philosophical saint and hero ('a daimonic and divine man', δαιμόνιός τε καὶ θεῖος I.2.3), who lived in accordance with the Pythagorean philosophy.[130] The *Life of Apollonius* even starts with a paragraph on Pythagoras and his disciples, and Apollonius is introduced in the second chapter as Ἀπολλώνιον […] θειότερον ἢ ὁ Πυθαγόρας τῇ σοφίᾳ προσελθόντα, ('Apollonius approached wisdom in a more inspired way than Pythagoras', I.2.1). Like Pythagoras, Apollonius abstained from meat, wine, and sex (I.13), grew his hair, wore no shoes (I.8), travelled to Babylon (I.25ff.), India (II-III), Egypt (VI) and the rest of the Roman empire (IV-V), and – most crucially – he practiced silence.[131] For these reasons, Apollonius is seen among the first and most famous Neopythagorean philosophers.[132] Although an infinite amount can be (and is) said about Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius,* I focus on how the Pythagorean silence is conceptualized in this work.[133]

Philostratus repeatedly conceptualizes the Pythagorean silence as a substitute to speech.[134] At the very beginning, Philostratus explains the purpose of the Pythagorean initiatory silence (*VA* I.1.2-3; tr. Jones, adapted by me):

καὶ ὅ τι ἀποφήναιτο ὁ Πυθαγόρας, νόμον τοῦτο οἱ ὁμιληταὶ ἡγοῦντο καὶ ἐτίμων αὐτὸν ὡς ἐκ Διὸς ἥκοντα. καὶ ἡ σιωπὴ δὲ ὑπὲρ τοῦ θείου σφισὶν ἐπήσκητο· πολλὰ

The things Pythagoras has revealed, his disciples considered law, and they honored him as an envoy from Zeus. Hence silence on the divine was practiced by them, for they heard many divine and

[128] Translations by Jones (2005).
[129] Kahn (2001:142).
[130] Flinterman (1995:60-61) for the apologetic aspect. For Apollonius of Tyana and Pythagoreanism, Kahn (2001:142-146), Riedweg (2005:125), Praet (2009), Flinterman (2014:353-357). Philostratus' depiction of Apollonius as a philosopher has not been considered very convincing. Jones (2005:9) remarks that '[p]hilosophically, these conversations [between Apollonius and others] are conducted on a very amateurish level.'
[131] Note about Pythagoras' travels. When Apollonius stayed in India, he learned that the Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis stemmed from the philosophy of the Brahman sages (III.19).
[132] Kahn (2001:141).
[133] Which says little to nothing about the historical Apollonius. Flinterman (2014:354) remarks that Apollonius' 'Pythagoreanism may have been a legitimization of his reputation as a miracle-worker more than anything else'.
[134] Banner (2016:81-82) also writes about silence in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*. I agree with his interpretation of 'the theme of silence as discourse' in this work.

γὰρ θεῖά τε καὶ ἀπόρρητα ἤκουον, ὧν κρατεῖν χαλεπὸν ἦν μὴ πρῶτον μαθοῦσιν, ὅτι καὶ τὸ σιωπᾶν λόγος.

secret things which would have been difficult to keep when they did not learn first that even to keep silence is a form of discourse.

A connection is established between the divine content of the doctrines Pythagoras brought to light (ἀποφήναιτο), their ineffability (θεῖά τε καὶ ἀπόρρητα), and the practiced silence by the Pythagorean pupils. Philostratus mentions here κρατεῖν as the goal of the Pythagorean silence, making it ambiguous whether this is about self-control (the ἐγκράτεια mentioned earlier), about power over outsiders (the othering mentioned earlier), or just about *grasping* the ἀπόρρητα.

Philostratus exploits the theme of Pythagorean silence when it comes Apollonius' life. In book VI, after Apollonius is asked by the Egyptian gymnosophists whether he would prefer their philosophy or that of the Indian sages, he explains that he chose to follow Pythagoras, the 'first man who found the doctrine of silence' (πρῶτος ἀνθρώπων […] σιωπῆς εὑρὼν δόγμα, VI.11.3), and his 'unspeakable wisdom' (σοφίας ἀρρήτου). He tells the Egyptians a parable of how Philosophia once displayed all her doctrines; all the separate doctrines tried to win him over, but Apollonius' attention was drawn to 'the ineffable kind of wisdom' (σοφίας εἶδος ἄρρητον, VI.11.5) that stood apart and in silence (ἐσιώπα). She promised him a life full of toils (μεστὴ πόνων), a life without meat, wine, wool, and love, and with the δεσμὰ γλώττης 'bit/bond of the tongue', for which he will be rewarded in return with σωφροσύνη 'prudence', δικαιοσύνη 'justice' and προγιγνώσκειν 'the power of foreknowledge' (VI.11.6).

We learn at the beginning of the hagiography that Apollonius had chosen the Pythagorean way of life and also practiced Pythagorean silence. When Apollonius was asked why he has not written any books despite his intellectual and rhetorical skills, he answers ὅτι οὔπω ἐσιώπησα 'because I have not yet fallen silent' (I.14.1). After that question, Apollonius starts with a quinquennial silence and while silencing 'his voice, his eyes and mind read many things and stored many things away in his memory' (I.14.1).[135] The voice is contrasted with the eyes and the intellect (μὲν […] δ'), and Apollonius becomes a Pythagorean pupil through his silence (but reading instead of listening). Philostratus emphasizes that Apollonius' silence was οὐ ἄχαρις, meaning that he was not socially non-reciprocal.[136] Although he did not speak, he could answer people by signaling with his eyes, hands, head (οἱ ὀφθαλμοί τι ἐπεσήμαινον καὶ ἡ χεὶρ καὶ τὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς νεῦμα, I.14.2; cf. I.15.1-2), or even by writing things down (I.15.3). Apollonius admits that his quinquennial silence

[135] There is a connection between silence and seeing / the intellect in VI.11.2, when it is described that Apollonius stayed silent and fixed his inner gaze on what was said (Ἐπισχὼν οὖν ὀλίγον, καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐρείσας ἐς τὰ εἰρημένα). With this description of a 'inner gaze' Philostratus creates a Platonic image.

[136] Van Berkel (2020: esp.70) shows that the concept of *charis* represents an ongoing process of successful social interactions, and is important to the concept of *philia*. This is in line with Philostratus' depiction of the silent Apollonius as φιλέταιρόν τε καὶ τὸ εὐμενὲς (I.14.2).

was a hard task (ἐπιπονώτατον). We are given two examples when it was difficult for Apollonius to keep silent; in both cases, the silent Apollonius came to a city that was in turmoil, and he becomes there an overly Pythagoras-like saint, making the inhabitants silent by his nodding or gestures 'as if at the Mysteries' (ὥσπερ ἐν μυστηρίοις ἐσιώπων, I.15.2) or 'out of reverence for him' (οἱ […] ἐσιώπησαν ὑπ᾽ ἐκπλήξεως τῆς πρὸς αὐτόν, I.15.3), after which he solves the difficulties for the inhabitants.[137]

Apollonius' silence – almost always indicated by the variants of the word σιωπή – is always contrasted to speech. Apollonius 'could not speak when he had much to say' (πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ εἰπεῖν ἔχοντα μὴ εἰπεῖν, I.14.2), but he found a way out: Apollonius gestures, nods, and writes. His silence thus is immanent, exceptionally communicative and sometimes even verbal. Moreover, his silence enables Apollonius to read, learn, and memorize more. His silence is thus a sign of wisdom.[138] Others 'listen' to his silence and are helped by his 'unspeakable wisdom' that he took over from Pythagoras. When Apollonius' friend Damis offers him to be his translator when they travel around the world, Apollonius answers that understands all languages, but learned none. This surprised his friend, but Apollonius explained: 'do not be surprised that I know all the human tongues; for I surely also know all the things humans keep silent about' (μὴ θαυμάσῃς, […] εἰ πάσας οἶδα φωνὰς ἀνθρώπων· οἶδα γὰρ δὴ καὶ ὅσα σιωπῶσιν ἄνθρωποι, I.19.2). Silence is a substitute for speech.

Secundus the Silent

Σεκοῦνδος ἐγένετο φιλόσοφος. οὗτος ἐφιλοσόφησε τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον σιωπὴν ἀσκήσας, Πυθαγορικὸν ἐξειληφὼς βίον.	Secundus was a philosopher. He philosophized all his days while practicing silence, having chosen the Pythagorean way of life.

These are the opening sentences of the *Life of Secundus*, an anonymous and relatively short biography written at the end of the second century AD.[139] We know nothing about the author and as little about the portrayed 'Secundus the silent philosopher', although his biography became immensely popular throughout the (early) medieval period and was translated in dozens of other languages.[140]

---

[137] There is, to my opinion, some irony here by overstating the power of silence.

[138] Banner (2018:82).

[139] Text (and translation) from Perry (1964:69, l.1-2); I will refer to this edition with page numbers and line numbers. The translation is adapted by me (in all citations, for Perry's translation is somewhat loose). There is some critique on Perry's edition, for he chose only one manuscript from the 11th century as the basis for his text, while fourteen other Greek manuscripts were known by that time and also some papyrus fragment from the third century that he did not take into account, see Pearson (1997) and Overwien (2016:341-343). Conversely, Perry's edition interestingly also gives an Armenian, Syrian, Latin, and (partly) Arabic version of this text, for it was widely distributed through the ancient world and was translated into many different languages, see Heide (2014). On its date, Overwien (2016:340).

[140] Possibly the philosopher Secundus is the same Secundus as the Athenian rhetorician (Phil. *Lives of Sophists* I.24), for both lived during Hadrian's time, see Bowerstock (1969:118-120). Perry (1964:3) thinks this is unlikely, since nothing familiar to the rhetor Secundus is cited in the *Life,* and vice versa, but does not doubt that Secundus was a real historical person. I, however, see no reason why Secundus cannot be a completely fictitious.

To our interest is Secundus' depiction as a silent Pythagorean philosopher. Secundus' vow of silence, however, is strange when compared to our earlier discussion on silent Pythagorean philosophers: whereas these philosophers took a five-year vow of silence as a Pythagorean training, Secundus has remained silent for almost his whole life. The biography sheds light on Secundus' reasons for lifelong taciturnity (τὸ δ' αἴτιον τῆς σιωπῆς, Perry 68.2-3): Secundus, who was sent away as a young child for education and who became a long-haired and bearded Cynic, heard the 'popular' statement ὅτι πᾶσα γυνὴ πόρνη 'that every woman is a whore' (Perry 68.5).[141] He tested this by offering money to the maid of his mother, asking her to sleep with her mistress. Secundus' mother agreed, looking forward to σαρκικῶς αὐτῷ συμμιγῆναι 'have carnal intercourse with him' (Perry 70.4). Secundus, lying in his mother's bed and not recognized by her because of his Cynic appearance, went to sleep without having intercourse with his mother, but told her about his 'philosophical' inquiry the morning after. His mother was so ashamed, that she committed suicide. Secundus, like Oedipus who *did* sleep with his mother, took one of his senses: he blamed his own tongue for his mother's death (διὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ γλώττης ὁ θάνατος τῆς μητρὸς ἐγένετο, Perry 70.13) and decided to stop talking for the rest of his life (ἀπόφασιν καθ' ἑαυτοῦ ἔδωκεν τοῦ μὴ λαλῆσαι τοῦ λοιποῦ· καὶ μέχρι θανάτου τὴν σιωπὴν ἤσκησεν, Perry 70.13-15).[142]

Secundus' silence caught emperor Hadrian's attention, who wanted to test Secundus' devotion to silence. He forced him to talk: 'speak, philosopher, so that we come to know you; for it is not possible to observe the wisdom in you when you say nothing' (λάλησον, φιλόσοφε, ἵνα μάθωμέν σε· οὐ γάρ ἐστι δυνατὸν σιωπῶντος τὴν ἐνοῦσάν σοι σοφίαν ἐπιγνῶναι, Perry 72.2-4). Secundus remained silent after the emperor's insistence. Hadrian even sentenced him to death but asked the executioner in private only to kill Secundus when he would break his silence. The executioner tried to convince Secundus to speak, falsely promising him to live when he would talk (τί σιωπῶν ἀποθνήσκεις; λάλησον καὶ ζήσῃ, Perry 72.22). Even with the sword in his neck, Secundus refused. Secundus' self-control surprised Hadrian (θαυμάσας τὴν τοῦ φιλοσόφου ἐγκράτειαν, Perry 74.12) and Hadrian asks him: 'in observing silence you have imposed upon yourself a kind of law, and that law of yours I was unable to break down. Now, therefore, take this tablet, write on it, and converse with me by means of your hands' (Perry 74.13-15). In the rest of the biography, which comprises two-thirds of the work, Secundus silently answers twenty philosophical questions by Hadrian all starting with τί ἐστι(ν) 'what is…?'.[143]

---

[141] The biography of Secundus is misogynistic. On the tenth question, 'what is woman?', at the end of the work follows a jaw-dropping enumeration of the evil of women. Overwien (2016:350) suggests that misogyny was one of the main reasons that this text became so popular, for similar misogynist statements in the Byzantine *gnomologia* were widespread.
[142] Overwien (2016:344).
[143] Banner (2018:81) argues that, except for the silence, there is nothing Pythagorean about the *Life of Secundus*. However, Perry (1964:9-10) suggests that these τί ἐστι-questions are in the Pythagorean style, for Iamblichus explains

Except for the duration, Secundus' silence is comparable Apollonius'. Secundus' silence is contrasted to speech throughout the biography: his hypothesis caused him to keep silent, his silence is tested by tempting him to speak, and at the end, he silently communicates with Hadrian. Again, silence is thus immanent, communicative, and verbal, making it a sign of Secundus' wisdom. The anonymous author of the biography clearly connects Secundus' choice for taciturnity with the Pythagorean way of life, even though we do learn about other aspects of Secundus' life that fit this description. It may be that the silent philosopher and (Neo)Pythagoreans became synonymous at that time.[144]

IV Conclusion: Silent Speaking

In this chapter, I have traced the theme of silence as a philosophical virtue in the (Neo)Pythagorean (and therefore also often Platonic) tradition. The Pythagorean way of life with its quinquennial test in silence and the secrecy about the doctrines – taken over from the mystery cults – connected the ability to remain silent with philosophy. This ability is a form of self-control, ἐγκράτεια, and especially of 'the mastery of the tongue' (Iamb. VP.72). Therefore, the tongue re-appears with all the silent martyrs we have seen: Leaena was honored by a tongueless statue of a lioness, Timychia had bitten off her own tongue, and Secundus blamed his tongue for his grief over his mother. In the story of Apollonius, the female who represents the Pythagorean doctrine promised him a δεσμὰ γλώττης. The word δεσμός refers to, on the one hand, the 'muzzle of the tongue' the Pythagoreans had by their prohibition to talk openly about their doctrines, but, on the other hand, metaphorically refers to the 'bonds of union' this silence created: the Pythagorean silence was a way of creating an in-group and othering the out-group.

Although the sources on Pythagorean silence cited in this chapter may not say much on the historical Pythagoreans, they all show an interest in literal silence with philosophers in later times. The silences (often denoted by σιωπή) are contrasted with speech: in Plutarch's essay, it is talkativeness that has to be cured by *logos*, with the Pythagoreans speech becomes a possible danger, and Apollonius and Secundus find their silent ways to communicate their knowledge. Whereas silence may started as a way to conceal esoteric wisdom, it becomes also a sign of wisdom, for the real philosopher is a good listener and practices silence 'to hear and be heard'. Therefore, silence is

(VP.18 82-83) that the philosophy of the *acousmatici* consists of oral instructions in the form of τί ἐστι-questions. This is convincing I think, although it is also reminiscent of Socrates' questions in Plato's early dialogue.

144 Banner (2018:82): 'the idea that a philosopher might choose absolute silence was familiar enough to the general reading public, probably through popular traditions about Pythagoreanism, that no explanation was thought necessary.'

not contrasted with *logos* but only with λαλεῖν, ἀδολεσχεῖν or φωνή. Garrulity has to be cured with *logos*, and silence is a sign of this *logos:* καὶ τὸ σιωπᾶν λόγος.[145]

In the several passages discussed in this chapter, we have seen that Pythagorean is an imminent (related to speech), intentional (a choice), and sometimes communicative and verbal (written down or gestured) type of silence. We also have seen that silence is associated with the divine in some texts: 'the solemn, holy, and mysterious character of silence' (τὸ σεμνὸν καὶ τὸ ἅγιον καὶ τὸ μυστηριῶδες τῆς σιωπῆς, Plut. 510E), 'divine and unspeakable things' (θεῖά τε καὶ ἀπόρρητα, Phil. *VA* I.1.2-3), 'reverence for the gods stops the voice' (θεῶν σέβας ἰσχάνει αὐδήν, *Hymn to Demeter* v.479). In the next chapter, I follow this connection between the divine first principle, and silence, particularly within the Neoplatonic tradition.

[145] This opposes Mortley's (1986a) main argument that there is a tendency of growing distrust in the power of logos and confidence in silence.

CHAPTER II

Silence and the Ineffable First Principle

THE SILENT WAY OF AND TO THE PLOTINIAN ONE

'All who fathom Thy mystery sing a song of silence'
πάντα σύνθεμα σὸν νοέοντα λαλεῖ σιγώμενον ὕμνον
The *Hymn to God.*[146]

In *Timaeus*, Plato's dialogue in which he introduces the demiurge-god as the organizing principle of the cosmos (28a), Plato states that 'to discover the maker and father of this everything [i.e. the cosmos] is a task, and to speak about the one discovered to all people is an impossible task' (τὸν μὲν οὖν ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς εὑρεῖν τε ἔργον καὶ εὑρόντα εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον λέγειν·, 28c).[147] Plato's description of εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον λέγειν is ambiguous: it either means that it is impossible to state *anything* about the 'maker and father', or that it is impossible or undesirable to communicate it to *everyone,* while it is possible to explain to some.[148] Comparably in *Parmenides,* Plato enigmatically state that the one to which 'no name, no account, no knowledge, no perception, and no opinion [belongs]' (οὐδ᾽ ἄρα ὄνομα ἔστιν αὐτῷ οὐδὲ λόγος οὐδέ τις ἐπιστήμη οὐδὲ αἴσθησις οὐδὲ δόξα, 142a),[149] and calls the Good in *Republic* ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας 'beyond essence' (509b). Whereas Plato did not theorize extensively about the ineffability of these, later Platonists did comprehensively.[150] These puzzling statements by Plato prompted later Platonists to theorize about the cosmos' origin, and about ways to talk about the unspeakable first principle. One way is the *via negativa*, the use of negations to denote what the absolute principle is not.

[146] Greek of the hymn Ὢ πάντων ἐπέκεινα ('O Thou beyond everything') is from Migne (1857-1866:508)**.** Translation is Welzen's (2005), who ascribes this hymn to Gregorius of Nazianzus; Banner (1986b:98) treats Proclus as the hymn's author. Clark (2012) discusses the authorship and concludes – based on Sicherl (1988) – that ps.-Dionysius the Aeropagite is the most probable author. A 'hymn of silence' also occurs in the Nag Hammadi Library, in *The Discourse on the Eighth and the Ninth* 58 (Robinson 1988:325).

[147] This passage is much discussed in the scholarly literature about apophasis in the Platonic discourse, see e.g. Casel (1919:72-155), Dillon (1993:101), Banner (2018:146-147). *Timaeus* was even considered to be the 'Platonist's Bible', see Runia (1986:57), cf. Hägg (2006:82-86); Banner (2018:147ff.).

[148] Dillon (1993:101); Banner (2018:146ff.).

[149] Neoplatonist reflect much upon *Parmenides* for understanding the One and the *via negativa*. See Gerson (2016).

[150] The fourth volume of Festugière's (1954) monumental work *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* traces the unknowable and unspeakable first principle in (Middle) Platonist thought, and shows that there is continuity in the Platonists' thought from ineffability to transcendence. Mortley (1986b:16-18) agrees that there is continuity, but denies that Plato's works already contained developed thoughts on the *via negativa* (contra Festugière 1954:140).

This chapter traces the unspeakable in later Platonic thought and revolves around the Plotinian One, its ineffability, and the quiet ascent to it. The first paragraph builds up to the analysis of Plotinus in the subsequent paragraph, and focuses on the ways to talk about the ineffable in Middle Platonist thought. The last paragraph discusses the ineffable first principle after Plotinus. For the period before and after Plotinus, I chose to focus on one author whose work contributed greatly to the thinking about the ineffable, respectively Alcinous for Middle Platonism and Damascius for Neoplatonism. As I show, the supreme principle becomes more and more inaccessible in Platonic thought. It will turn out that the *via negativa* becomes complexified in Plotinus' and especially Damascius' thought, and becomes rather a *via silentii*.

I Middle Platonism on Speaking about the Ineffable: Alcinous' Three Ways

Characteristic of the philosophical interest in the period between Plato and Plotinus is 'an increasing intellectual commitment to a totally transcendent first principle or god'.[151] This intellectual commitment arose among Middle Platonists, Gnostics, and Hermetics from a renewed interest in the thinkers of the past – Plato and Pythagoras – and in metaphysical questions about the origin of reality.[152] In this section, I take a leap through this period and focus on the ineffability of the first principle and the associated epistemological techniques on how to speak about the ineffable, such as represented in Alcinous' *Didaskalikos*, the most comprehensive work of Middle Platonism handed over to us that functioned as an instructor's guide for Platonist teachers from the second or third century AD.

In the tenth chapter of *Didaskalikos*, Alcinous discusses Plato's physics and the first principle.[153] He introduces this as 'which Plato declares to be more or less beyond description' (ἣν μικροῦ δεῖν καὶ ἄρρητον ἡγεῖται ὁ Πλάτων, X.1), referring to Plato's statement in *Timaeus* (28c).[154] In the next sections, Alcinous elaborates on this unspeakableness by, ironically, attributing it several features (X.3-4; tr. Dillon):[155]

Καὶ μὴν ὁ πρῶτος θεὸς ἀίδιός ἐστιν, ἄρρητος, αὐτοτελὴς τουτέστιν ἀπροσδεής, ἀειτελὴς τουτέστιν ἀεὶ τέλειος, παντελὴς τουτέστι πάντη τέλειος·	The primary god, then, is eternal, ineffable, 'self-perfect' (that is, deficient in no respect), 'ever-perfect' (that is, always perfect), and 'all-perfect' (that is, perfect in all respects);

[151] Banner (2018:147).
[152] Hägg (2006:73-74) distinguishes these two factors and discusses the development of apophatic discourse. For the interest in the first principle among Middle Platonists, see Dillon (1996a). For Platonists and the other groups, see especially the work of Festugière (1954).
[153] For the author and date of *Didaskalikos*, Dillon (1993:ix-xv).
[154] The Greek is from Louis (1945) and the translation is Dillon's (1993).
[155] Passage is also discussed by Wolfson (1952), Festugière (1954:95-102), Mortley (1986:16-17), Carabine (1995:71-83), Banner (2018:154-155), and in the commentary of Dillon (1993).

[…] Ἄρρητος δ' ἐστὶ καὶ νῷ μόνῳ ληπτός, ὡς εἴρηται, ἐπεὶ οὔτε γένος ἐστὶν οὔτε εἶδος οὔτε διαφορά, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ συμβέβηκέ τι αὐτῷ, οὔτε κακόν (οὐ γὰρ θέμις τοῦτο εἰπεῖν), οὔτε ἀγαθόν (κατὰ μετοχὴν γάρ τινος ἔσται οὗτος καὶ μάλιστα ἀγαθότητος), […] οὔτε κινεῖ οὔτε κινεῖται.	[…] God is ineffable and graspable only by the intellect, as we have said, since he is neither genus, nor species, nor differentia, nor does he possess any attributes, neither bad (for it is improper to utter such a thought), nor good (for he would be thus by participation in something, to wit, goodness),[156] […]. Also, he neither moves anything, nor is he himself moved.

Alcinioüs emphasizes that the primary principle is ineffable (ἄρρητος) but this does not keep him from contributing several predicates to it: it is 'eternal' (cf. *Tim*. 29a) and 'self-perfect', 'ever-perfect' and 'all-perfect' (and later he describes it also as 'divinity, essentiality, truth, commensurability, good', X.3).[157] As John Dillon noted, for Alcinous the divine principle is not simply unspeakable but μικροῦ δεῖν καὶ ἄρρητον, making it possible for him to say *something* about it. In the passage cited above, Alcinous describes the divine, next to the positive statments, by negations, first of logical statements, and then of other attributes. With the last opposition οὔτε κινεῖ οὔτε κινεῖται, Alcinous refers to and contradicts Aristotle's Unmoved Mover (*Metaphysica* 1072a), making his first principle an Unmoved Non-mover.[158]

Subsequently, Alcinous unfolds three (epistemological) ways to approach the ineffable (X.5-6): by abstraction (κατὰ ἀφαίρεσιν),[159] by analogy (κατὰ ἀναλογίαν), or by contemplative ascent (θεωρῶν … ἀνιούσῃ ψυχῇ), which became later known as respectively the *via negativa*, *via analogiae*, and *via eminentiae*.[160] The *via negativa* is illustrated in the section above (X.4) by the negation of several opposites. For the *via analogiae,* Alcinous compares the first principle to the sun (cf. Pl.*Rep*.508b.ff.), and for the *via eminentiae* he refers to the kalological ladder of Diotima (Pl.*Symp*.210a.ff.). These three ways are the exceptions of how one can talk about the unspeakable – which is 'graspable only by intellect' (νῷ μόνῳ ληπτός).[161]

Alcinous' account is one of the most comprehensive representations of the *via negativa* (called *aphairesis* by Alcinous) in Middle Platonist thought – many Early and Middle Platonist's writings are (partly) lost – but his emphasis on the first principle's unspeakableness was '*un lieu*

[156] For Alcinous, the first principle is the demiurge and the Good, as stated in X.3. See Dillon (1993:106).
[157] According to Dillon (1993:104) these epithets are also epithets used by the Neopythagoreans Nicomachus and Philolaus to refer to the monad and dyad.
[158] Also briefly noted by Dillon (1993:108), who also argues that the opposition refers to the end of Plato's *Parmenides*.
[159] Banner (2018:155): 'To the Aristotelean term 'apophasis' the Platonists, from Alcinous on, generally prefer the term 'aphairesis', but with the same meaning of 'removal' of concepts rather than predication of concepts.' Cf. Wolfson (1952:120) and Mortley (1986b:106).
[160] Dillon (1993:109-110).
[161] In chapter 4, Alcinous makes a distinction between *nous* as the divine agent of judgment, sense-perception as the instrument of judgment, and *logos* as the means of judgment. *Nous* is opposed to *logos*, for it is part of discursive thinking. In 4.2 Alcinous suggests that *nous* is only possible for the divine, and *logos* for men.

common' among Middle Platonists.[162] The Platonist rhetorician Maximus of Tyre (late second century AD), in his *eleventh oration* on Plato's first principle, connects to the idea of ineffability also the idea that the divine cannot be heard: θεῖον αὐτὸ ἀόρατον ὀφθαλμοῖς, ἄρρητον φωνῇ, ἀναφὲς σαρκί, ἀπευθὲς ἀκοῇ 'the divine itself cannot be seen by the eye or spoken of by the tongue or touched by the flesh or heard by the ear' (XI.9; tr. Trapp 1996). Nonetheless, he believes that the soul's highest, noetic part can comprehend the divine since it ὁρατὸν δι' ὁμοιότητα καὶ ἀκουστὸν διὰ συγγένειαν 'can see it in virtue of their similarity, and hear it in virtue of their kinship' (*op. cit.*).

Many scholars have studied the ineffability of the first principle and the related *via negativa* in the Platonic tradition.[163] The interest of this chapter does not lie primarily in the *via negativa* but in the role silence plays regarding the ineffable first principle in Neoplatonist thought. We will see that Plotinus and Damascius transform Alcinous' way of *aphairesis* into a form of silence. The passage of Maximus constitutes a bridge to the next section: the divine cannot be spoken of but it also cannot be heard. In Plotinus, it becomes a silent realm of solitude.

II Quiet "Realm" of the Ineffable One in Plotinus' *Enneads*

With Plotinus (c.204-270 AD), the Platonic tradition took an influential turn. Plotinus studied in Alexandria under the mysterious Platonist philosopher Ammonius Saccas who prohibited his pupils to tell or write anything about their philosophical doctrines (an oath all of his three students broke eventually; Porph. *V.Plot.* 3.22ff.), and became a teacher of Platonic philosophy in Rome at the end of his life.[164] According to Porphyry, his most prominent pupil, Plotinus did not write his teachings down till the end of his career when his students encouraged him to do so (*V.Plot.* 4.5; 5.6; 18.20). Even when he had written things down, Plotinus was reluctant to distribute his books and he was believed to have tested his readers extensively before giving them copies (*V.Plot.* 4.15-18).[165] Ammonius' and Plotinus' alleged 'esotericism' about their teachings is reminiscent to the mystical and Pythagorean esotericism we encountered in CHAPTER I – a link that becomes clearer when Plotinus describes the 'initiation' to the One in mystical terms (see *infra*).

Thanks to Porphyry, who ordered Plotinus' writings and published them posthumously, Plotinus' *Enneads* became known to a broader public than he himself would have envisioned, and

[162] Banner (2018:152-153).
[163] E.g., Casel (1919:72ff.), Wolfson (1952), Festugière (1954:92-140), Whittaker (1969), Mortley (1986a:125-158; 1986b), Carabine (1995), Banner (2018:esp.147-175).
[164] Dodds and Dillon call Ammonius Saccas the 'Socrates of Neoplatonism' (2012). Because of the vow of secrecy, Dörie (1955) considered Ammonius to be a Pythagorean, which Dodds (1960) doubts for the lack of evidence. For this secrecy, O'Brien (1992; 1994), Banner (2018:41-43), Mazur (2020:233-253). Plotinus' fellow students were Erennius and Origen.
[165] Also reminiscent of Plato's critique on writing (*Phaedr.*275e) as Gerson (2017:20) notes.

made Plotinus considered the father of Neoplatonism in modern times – a term that would sound strange in Plotinus' ears who saw himself as just an exegete of Plato (*Ennead* V.1.8). This strand of new Platonism that Plotinus ushered is characterized by a rigid scheme of reality that consisted of three layers, 'hypostases' (e.g., V.1): 'the One', the first principle that is beyond being and unlimited in any way, which generates Intellect, that thinks itself and thereby thinks the intelligible Forms, and, generated by Intellect, Soul which shapes the physical world of matter. This system of emanation is the result of Plotinus' effort to synthesize and reflect upon his intellectual heritage, such as the philosophical ideas of Platonism (and Pythagoreanism), Aristotelianism, and Stoicism, but also religious sentiments from Judaism, Gnostics, and Hermetics (that flourished in and around Alexandria, in the first to third century AD).

The latter group may be of particular interest here since silence was 'in the air' in ancient Alexandria, the place of Plotinus' study years. The Valentinian Gnostics, for instance, had as their first principle the dyad of Father or *Bythos* (Depth) and *Sige* 'Silence' (Irenaeus *Adv. Haer*.I.1, II.1), or saw Silence as the Father's primordial state (*Valentinian Exposition*, NHC XI.22, 23, 26).[166] The Sethian Gnostics, who are believed to have influenced Plotinus, hypostasize an 'Unknown Silent One' at the top of their metaphysical system, and advertise silent contemplation (e.g., *Marsanes*, NHC.X.7-9).[167] I will not elaborate in this thesis on the relation between Gnosticism and Plotinus, but with these brief examples I want to point to the central role of silence in these religiomystical traditions that may have influenced Plotinus' conception of his One's tranquility (although Plotinus does not use the word σιγὴ), something which was not present among his Platonist predecessors.[168]

In the next four subsections, I delve into Plotinus' Enneads and examine why Plotinus says that 'we must go away in silence' regarding the One (VI.8.11.1). First the ineffability of the One is examined, followed by an analysis of the One's tranquil emanation and our tranquil return to it. The third section deals with the practice of *aphairesis* to uncover the One in us, and the last section shows the mystical language Plotinus employs for this. [169]

---

[166] Mortley (1986a:51-58, 121-123). In the *Nag Hammadi Codex*, silence is mentioned almost two hundred times, often related to the highest principle.

[167] Turner (2001:192-197; 520-522; 702-703) on the Silent One, and for comparison with Neoplatonism (582-588). Mazur (2020: esp. 236-260) discusses the relation between Plotinus and Gnosticism; he suggests that Ammonius was a Gnostic and that the silence about Plotinus' youth has to do with his shame of being influenced by Platonizing Gnosticism.

[168] It is hard – and not my goal – to prove a link between the Gnostics on silence and Plotinus on his quiet One. Nevertheless, Mazur (2020:261ff.) suggests that the Plotinian ritual praxis of ascent resembles the Gnostic praxis of contemplation. More research on resemblance between Plotinian quietness and Gnostic silence is needed. Intriguingly, Plotinus does not use the word σιγὴ (or cognate terms). We only can guess for his reasons: by avoiding this term that was much used by Gnostics, did Plotinus put himself against that tradition?

[169] I am not the first to write on Plotinus and the One's ineffability. For my analysis, I owe insights to Wolfson (1952), Mortley (1975), O'Meara (1993:54-59), Sells (1994:14-33), Carabine (1995:103-154), Hoffmann (1997), and especially Banner (2018:176-240) on how to talk (negatively) about the One in Plotinus. Carabine and Banner also discuss the practical implications (practical aphairesis) of Plotinus' mystical language. However, these scholars focus (solely) on negative discourse, without connecting it to the One's tranquility, an aspect discussed e.g. by Schroeder (1992) and

Speaking Paradoxes of the One

In the everlasting philosophical search for the First Cause of all reality, Plotinus arrived at his dazzling 'the One' (also named the Good, Father, King, Beauty).[170] The problem with the demiurge-god (Plato) or self-thinking *Nous* (Aristotle) in earlier philosophies is their composite state: a creator with his creation, a thinker with its thoughts, a unity with its multiplicity (e.g., V.3.10.23-27; V.3.49.11).[171] Plotinus, therefore, hypothesized that there must be an ultimate origin prior to this unity-in-multiplicity: the One.[172] This raises the question how there can be a multiplicity of things out of perfect unity. Plotinus deals with this in *On the Generation and Order of the Things Which Come after the First.* This essay begins as follows (V.2.1.1-9; tr. Gerson et al., adapted CvdV):[173]

Τὸ ἓν πάντα καὶ οὐδὲ ἕν· ἀρχὴ γὰρ πάντων, οὐ πάντα, ἀλλ' ἐκείνως πάντα· ἐκεῖ γὰρ οἷον ἐνέδραμε· μᾶλλον δὲ οὔπω ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἔσται.

Πῶς οὖν ἐξ ἁπλοῦ ἑνὸς οὐδεμιᾶς ἐν ταὐτῷ φαινομένης ποικιλίας, οὐ διπλόης οὔτινος ὁτουοῦν;

Ἢ ὅτι οὐδὲν ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ, διὰ τοῦτο ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντα, καὶ ἵνα τὸ ὂν ᾖ, διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸς οὐκ ὄν, γεννητὴς δὲ αὐτοῦ· καὶ πρώτη οἷον γέννησις αὕτη· ὂν γὰρ τέλειον τῷ μηδὲν ζητεῖν μηδὲ ἔχειν μηδὲ δεῖσθαι οἷον ὑπερερρύη καὶ τὸ ὑπερπλῆρες αὐτοῦ πεποίηκεν ἄλλο·

The One is all things and is not one thing. For it is the principle of all, but is not all, though all is like it; for all did, in a way, run to there, or rather is not there yet but will be.

How, then, do [all things] come from simple One, given that in it there is none apparent variegation nor any doubleness that is self-identical?

In fact, it is because there was no-thing in it by which all things came from it; and, in order that Being should exist, by which it is itself not Being, but the generator of it. Indeed, this is, in a way, the first act of generation. Since it is perfect, due to its neither seeking anything, nor having anything, nor needing anything, it in a way overflows and its superabundance has made something else.

Everything originates from the One, that is itself everything (since all things originate from and 'run' back to it) and no-thing (since itself *is not;* cf. 6.8.16.1ff.).[174] With this paradoxical genesis, Plotinus innovates the conception of the first principle thus far; from Plato's ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα only the father remains in Plotinus' system (the One is sometimes called Father; e.g., V.1.3.20ff. V.1.6.37ff.): the creation is an act of genesis (γέννησις), metaphorically visualized above as an 'overflowing' (οἷον ὑπερερρύη) of everything out of the no-thing, rather than a craftsman's act (cf. III.2.2.12).[175] Everything that comes forth stands in relation to the One: it (metaphorically) longs to return to the One.

Wakoff (2016). My interpretation in this chapter is a synthesis of all their readings and my own insigths, connecting the One's status of beyond being with its ineffability, its tranquility, and Plotinus mystical language.

[170] On the different names for the One, Carabine (1995:105-111).

[171] Armstrong (1940:2), Banner (2018:183).

[172] For an introduction to Plotinus' system and his One, e.g., Armstrong (1940), O'Meara (1993), Aubry (2022).

[173] All translations are from Gerson et al. (2017). This passage is adapted to make the translation closer to and as puzzling as the Greek. I take over the printed layout of Gerson et al. Greek is from Henry & Schwyzer (1951-1973).

[174] Also discussed by Sells (1994:27-31).

[175] Point made by Schroeder (1992:43-44).

The description above may come across as dazzling, paradoxical, and incomprehensible. This experience is how it is meant to be. The One is beyond being, as Plotinus explains, and thus beyond Intellect and intellection (cf. VI.9.3.36-38).[176] To say that the first principle is beyond being (cf. I.3.20; I.7.1; VI.9.9), is in itself a paradoxical statement: how can you say that something *is* beyond being? Elsewhere, Plotinus thus asks: 'But what is it that is not existing [i.e. the One]? In fact, we should go away in silence (Ἢ σιωπήσαντας δεῖ ἀπελθεῖν), and we should investigate no further since we have been forced into an impasse regarding our judgment (καὶ ἐν ἀπόρῳ τῇ γνώμῃ θεμένους μηδὲν ἔτι ζητεῖν)' (VI.8.11.1-3).[177]

What is beyond being is in essence beyond knowledge (e.g., I.7.1; V.3.17; V.4.1) and beyond language (e.g., V.3.13). The problem with knowing and speaking is that they comprise a duality, whereas the One is 'alone, deserted by all, and radically simple' (III.6.9). 'Each act of thinking […] has to be something manifold' (ὡς ἑκάστη νόησις, […] ποικίλον τι δεῖ εἶναι, VI.7.39), and 'one should not make the Good two even in conception' (οὐ ποιητέον οὐδ' ὡς εἰς ἐπίνοιαν δύο, VI.8.13.2-3). This duality holds for the highest level of intellection to discursive thinking on the soul's level: 'discursive thinking (τὴν διάνοιαν) must, if it is to say something, go from one thing to the other. It is, in this way, successive (οὕτω γὰρ καὶ διέξοδος). But what sort of succession is there for that which is completely simple?' (V.3.17.23-25). Language, like thinking, is discursive by its succession of words or concepts and is dual in nature (signifier and signified).[178] This makes the first principle ineffable: 'in truth, no name suits it' (ᾧ ὄνομα μὲν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν οὐδὲν προσῆκον, VI.9.5.32), it is ἠλογήθη 'not to be reasoned/spoken about' (V.3.10.31), and hence is unspeakable (ἄρρητον, V.3.13.1) and unwritable (οὐδὲ ῥητὸν οὐδὲ γραπτόν, VI.9.6.11).[179] Even 'the name 'One' just denotes the negation of plurality (V.5.6.26).[180] Plotinus therefore, speaking and writing about the One, faces a problem (V.3.14.1-8; tr. Gerson et al.):[181]

Πῶς οὖν ἡμεῖς λέγομεν περὶ αὐτοῦ;	How, then, do we speak about it?
Ἢ λέγομεν μέν τι περὶ αὐτοῦ, οὐ μὴν αὐτὸ λέγομεν οὐδὲ γνῶσιν οὐδὲ νόησιν ἔχομεν αὐτοῦ.	In fact, we do speak in some measure about it, but we do not speak it, nor do we have knowledge or intellection of it.
Πῶς οὖν λέγομεν περὶ αὐτοῦ, εἰ μὴ αὐτὸ ἔχομεν;	How, then, do we speak about it if we do not have knowledge or intellection of it?

[176] Except for the above-mentioned statement from *Republic,* it seems to be Plotinus' innovation to elaborate on the implications of this for the knowability and effability of the beyond-being, as O'Meara (1993:54-55), Carabine (1995:148), Banner (2018:181-182) argue. The principle's beyond-being was not present in Middle Platonism. Plotinus enigmatically says that this was already present with 'the ancients' (VI.8.19.12ff.)
[177] My translation. Passage is also briefly discussed by Banner (2018:226) and Coope (2020:81).
[178] Banner (2018:190).
[179] The negations used for the One are reminiscent of Plato's *Parmenides*. For a comparison, Carabine (1995:116-119).
[180] Wolfson (1952:125) on how positive statements in Plotinus are often also negations; cf. Banner (2018:213).
[181] Passage discussed by O'Meara (1993:56).

Ἢ, εἰ μὴ ἔχομεν τῇ γνώσει, καὶ παντελῶς οὐκ ἔχομεν; Ἀλλ' οὕτως ἔχομεν, ὥστε περὶ αὐτοῦ μὲν λέγειν, αὐτὸ δὲ μὴ λέγειν. Καὶ γὰρ λέγομεν, ὃ μὴ ἔστιν· ὃ δέ ἐστιν, οὐ λέγομεν· ὥστε ἐκ τῶν ὕστερον περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγομεν. Ἔχειν δὲ οὐ κωλυόμεθα, κἂν μὴ λέγωμεν.

In fact, if we do not have knowledge of it, does it follow as well that we do not have it at all? But we have it in such a way that we can speak about it, though we cannot speak it. For we say what it is not; what it is, we do not say, so that we are speaking about it on the basis of things posterior to it. We are not prevented from having it, even if we do not say it.

Twice Plotinus emphasizes in this passage that we cannot speak the One itself (οὐ […] αὐτὸ λέγομεν) but that we can speak *about/around* it (λέγομεν […] περὶ αὐτοῦ): describing the One is 'like circling around it from the outside' (ἡμᾶς οἷον ἔξωθεν περιθέοντας, VI.9.3.52).[182] The reason for Plotinus and others to speak about the unspeakable is 'by way of directing others towards it, waking them up from discursive accounts to actual looking (ἀνεγείροντες ἐκ τῶν λόγων ἐπὶ τὴν θέαν)' (VI.9.4.13-14). This is done so mainly by telling what the One is not (λέγομεν, ὃ μὴ ἔστιν), using the *via negativa,* as we saw: it is no-thing, not-being, ineffable, *et cetera.*

But if we return to the opening of V.2 cited above, we see that Plotinus does more than solely negate the One. He combines negations with saying what the One is: τὸ ἓν πάντα καὶ οὐδὲ ἕν.[183] This sentence denotes the 'simultaneous immanence and transcendence' of the One: it is (present in) all while it also transcends all, making the One unlimited (ἄπειρος or ἀόριστος; cf. V.5.10.20-21; VI.8.9.43; VI.7.32.16; VI.9.6.10-12).[184] This results in what Michael Sells calls 'apophatic dialectical logic': since language delimits (saying 'it is X', implies that it is not not-X), the unlimited may be only imitated in language by violating the logical law of self-contradiction (saying that both X and not-X).[185] Plotinus' paradoxical statements reflect the simultaneous immanence (saying that it is) and transcendence (and saying that it is not) of the One in language, but also point out the deficiency of language by duplicating its already existing duality.[186] The paradoxes show how we 'circle around' the One by going from one opposition to the other.

In the end, however, we can try to speak around the One, but everything we state are mere metaphors and paradoxes, not grasping its real essence.[187] Hence Plotinus states that 'we are in no position to find anything to say about it, let alone anything properly applicable to it' (οὐδὲν ἂν εὕροιμεν εἰπεῖν οὐχ ὅτι κατ' αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ περὶ αὐτοῦ κυρίως, VI.8.8.4-5). [188] Speaking the One (κατ' αὐτοῦ) is impossible, and speaking around the One (περὶ αὐτοῦ) is strictly speaking impossible

[182] Ibidem.
[183] On positive statements, Armstrong (1940:1-13).
[184] Banner (2018:180).
[185] Sells (1994:21). Armstrong (1940:28-29) called this 'negative theology of positive transcendence'.
[186] Sells (1994:21ff.) sees this 'dialectic of immanence and transcendence' as 'the means by which language is transformed from the referential to *theoria'*. I think Sells takes the power of language too far (this paradoxical language is not the same as *theoria*), since for Plotinus language is in the end inadequate.
[187] Banner (2018:178-180).
[188] Banner (2018:222-228) discusses this passage and the ways to speaks 'improperly' cataphatically about the One.

as well (οὐδὲ […] κυρίως). Only for guiding others towards the One we can try περὶ αὐτοῦ […] λέγειν. This is also what Plotinus emphasizes in VI.7.36 when he says that 'understanding or touching' of the One is called by Plato the 'greatest subject of learning' (μέγιστόν […] μάθημα, 36.4-5; cf. *Rep.*505a) in the sense of 'learning something about it beforehand' (μαθεῖν τι πρότερον, 36.6). Plotinus contrasts then two ways to do this: rationally learning about versus experiencing the One (Διδάσκουσι μὲν […] πορεύουσι δὲ). The former consist of rational means such as 'analogies and negations and knowledge of what derives from it and specific degrees of the ascent [*Symp.* 211c]' (ἀναλογίαι τε καὶ ἀφαιρέσεις καὶ γνώσεις τῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναβασμοί τινες, 36.7-8), the discursive methods that were also discussed by Alcinous.[189] The latter is described by a series of the soul's moral purification and ascent to Intellect: 'purifications and virtues and adornments [*Gorg.* 504d] and securing footholds in the intelligible world [*Rep.* 511b] and establishing ourselves in it and feasting on it' (καθάρσεις […] καὶ ἀρεταὶ καὶ κοσμήσεις καὶ τοῦ νοητοῦ ἐπιβάσεις καὶ ἐπ' αὐτοῦ ἱδρύσεις καὶ τῶν ἐκεῖ ἑστιάσεις, 36.9-10).[190] Thus speaking or learning about the One is inferior to one's experience of unification. Therefore, Plotinus states that to truly approach the One we have to 'remove everything [i.e. predicates, attributes], and say nothing about it' (Πάντα ἄρα ἀφελὼν καὶ οὐδὲν περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰπών, V.5.13.12-13). Why and how should this be done?

Tranquil Origin, Tranquil Return

Plotinus did not write the *Enneads* only to disclose how reality is, but also to guide his readers to experience unification themselves. We just have seen how hard this guidance is when the philosophical journey's end is unnamable. In this section, I follow the quiet route from the One to us and back from us to the One.

Let us start with the One. Some of the 'cataphatic' statements Plotinus uses is that the One is in rest (ἐν ἡσύχῳ, I.7.15) and silent (σιωπήσεται, V.1.4.35).[191] In *On the Three Hypostases,* Plotinus unfolds the first act of genesis from the One into Intellect and the latter's nature of Being, Difference, and Identicality (ὄν, ἑτερότης, ταυτότης, V.1.4.35), with the latter two also described as Motion and Stability (κίνησιν […] στάσιν): Intellect needs Difference/Motion to think itself and Identicality/Stability to be unchangeable. Plotinus explains the One's stillness by the reverse direction of Intellect to One: 'if you were to remove Difference, it would become one and fall silent.' (ἢ ἐὰν ἀφέλῃς τὴν ἑτερότητα, ἓν γενόμενον σιωπήσεται, V.1.4.38-39). The One is a complete *aphairesis*, the removal of all things. The same holds for the other way around: since the

[189] Mortley (1975:374); Banner (2018:214).
[190] For these lines I follow the translation of Bussanich (1988:173). I also owe a better understanding of this passage because of his commentary (1988:193-196).
[191] Banner (2018:193).

One is changeless and motionless, its emanation happens ἐν ἡσύχῳ 'in rest/tranquility' (e.g., I.3.4.17; I.7.15; III.7.11.14; III.9.6.4). As Plotinus explains, the One is tranquil because it is μηδ' ἐφιέμενον ἄλλου 'not desirous of something else' (I.7.14) but αὐτῇ μονῇ […] εἶναι 'it is in solitude in itself' (I.7.1.18) and thus self-sufficient and not pursuing anything else. In this tranquility (ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν), it generates Intellect, metaphorically described by Plotinus as the sun staying in its place (ἀεὶ μένοντα) and bringing forth light (V.3.12.34-44). The image of abiding is often used of the One (μενεῖν; cf. I.6.7.23ff. III.8.10.7; VI.9.9.8). Frederic Schroeder analyzed that this abiding (μένειν) and tranquility (ἡσυχία) are connected: it is the One's stable state of being non-occupied.[192] The overflowing of all reality is thus accomplished in total tranquility.[193]

Let us now turn to ourselves: we are embodied souls that, according to Plotinus, always long for the return to our origin (ἐπιστροφή e.g., I.6.1.1ff.; I.6.7.17; V.5.12.7ff.). Whereas our soul emerges from its quiet origin, our bodies are anything but tranquil: 'the soul indeed originating from the divine, is quiet, in accordance with its character when standing in itself, whereas the body, thrown into turmoil by weakness, being itself in flux, and shaken by the blows from outside' (Ἡ μὲν δὴ ἐκ τοῦ θείου ψυχὴ ἥσυχος ἦν κατὰ τὸ ἦθος τὸ ἑαυτῆς ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς βεβῶσα, τὸ δὲ ὑπ' ἀσθενείας τὸ σῶμα θορυβούμενον καὶ ῥέον τε αὐτὸ καὶ πληγαῖς κρουόμενον ταῖς ἔξω, VI.4.15.18-21).[194] Therefore, as a true Platonist befits, we should leave the sensible world of our bodies behind, and focus us on our intelligible 'homeland' (I.6.8.17).[195] This is done by making our bodies and soul tranquil again: 'Let not only its encompassing body and its surging waves be tranquil, but all that surrounds it [i.e. soul]; let the earth be tranquil, the sea and the air be tranquil, and heaven itself, its better part [i.e. intellect]' (Ἥσυχον δὲ αὐτῇ ἔστω μὴ μόνον τὸ περικείμενον σῶμα καὶ ὁ τοῦ σώματος κλύδων, ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶν τὸ περιέχον· ἥσυχος μὲν γῆ, ἥσυχος δὲ θάλασσα καὶ ἀὴρ καὶ αὐτὸς οὐρανὸς ἀμείνων,V.1.2.14-17).[196] Only in this tranquil state, we can return. The opposite state of being tranquil – being desirous or occupied with something – will not help us on our way: 'it is necessary not to pursue it, but to remain in stillness, until it should appear, preparing oneself to be a contemplator, just like the eye awaits the rising sun' (οὐ χρὴ διώκειν, ἀλλ' ἡσυχῇ μένειν, ἕως ἂν φανῇ, παρασκευάσαντα ἑαυτὸν θεατὴν εἶναι, ὥσπερ ὀφθαλμὸς ἀνατολὰς ἡλίου περιμένει, V.5.8-3-5). Just as the sun – as Platonic metaphor for the supreme – arises over the horizon, the One

[192] Schroeder (1992).
[193] Intellect as well is characterized by its quiet state (III.2.2.16; V.3.7.13-16; V.9.8.8; VI.8.5.37; VI.9.5.14). Although Intellect is not radically simple but a composite of a thinker and its thoughts, it finds itself at rest as well: 'the stillness of Intellect is an activity free from occupation with other things (V.3.7.15). Again, the emanation from Intellect is quiet: 'Intellect […] fashioned everything while remaining undisturbed and quiet' (Νοῦς […] ἀτρεμὴς καὶ ἥσυχος τὰ πάντα εἰργάζετο, III.2.2.15-16). Intellect is a stable unity-in-totality.
[194] 'The blows from the outside' are sense-perceptions, cf. Pl.*Tim.*67b.
[195] Cf. Plato's *Theaetetus* (176b) where it is stated that we must escape this world and become like god.
[196] Wakoff (2016:80-82) analyzes these mentions of *hesuchos*.

arises over our horizon (i.e. the delimitation) of the intelligible, as long as we 'abide in tranquility' (ἡσυχῇ μένειν) as the higher hypostases do themselves.[197]

Schroeder gives an intriguing interpretation of this quietness by connecting the tranquility and abiding of the One with Plotinus' visualization of emanation as a reflection (of light). Platonic philosophy is extremely sight-based: the *Ideas* are etymologically related to the verb stem for 'seeing' and the philosopher's goal is contemplating (θεωρία) these Ideas (e.g., *Rep.*514a-520a). In Plotinus' philosophy, vision and contemplation are dominantly present as well. Already in the first stage of emanation, Intellect is described as an 'image of the One' (εἶδος […] αὐτοῦ, V.2.1.17) and as contemplating the One (V.2.1.10-12), thus as being seen and simultaneous seeing. All other stages of emanation generate images of themselves. This creation Plotinus describes as mirroring: 'all Beings produce on others or on another a mirroring of themselves' (Ποιούντων γὰρ πάντων ὄντων εἰς τὰ ἄλλα ἢ τὸ ἄλλο τὴν αὐτῶν ἐνόπτρισιν, III.6.12.12-13). The mirror is the perfect metaphor to visualize the relation between the source and its generated subject, but also to capture its delusional effects.[198]

The delusional effects come best to the fore in Ennead *On Beauty* (I.6.8.9-10) where Plotinus compares the soul that longs for its own reflection in the material world with Narcissus: 'anyone who runs up to the image wanting to grasp it as though it was real, like the man who wanted to grasp his beautiful reflection floating on the surface of the water'. Instead, we should look for the source of the reflection. And thus, Schroeder concludes, our souls have to become quiet again to function as the perfect mirror for the higher hypostases, since they 'may be so reflected when the reflective surface is in a state of quiet, i.e., is not disturbed'[199] – or in Plotinus' words: 'the soul, when this sort of thing in us in which images of discursive thinking and of Intellect are reflected is still, they are seen' (ψυχὴν <u>ἡσυχίαν</u> μὲν ἄγοντος τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν τοιούτου, ᾧ ἐμφαίνεται τὰ τῆς διανοίας καὶ τοῦ νοῦ εἰκονίσματα, ἐνορᾶται ταῦτα, I.4.10.13-14; cf. III.8.6.10-15; V.1.2.14ff; V.1.6..13ff).

'Abstract everything!'

The idea of making our soul ἥσυχος sounds simple, but how should we do this? The answer to this question is related to the question of where we have to look when we are contemplating the One. A reading of the second part of *On Beauty* (I.6.7-9) can help us to answer both questions. In the treatise's first part, Plotinus has explained the different levels of Beauty, with at the top the One that creates beautifulness in all other layers of reality. In the second part, Plotinus exhorts his readers to return to the One. Although it is unlimited and not bound to a certain place, Plotinus

[197] Wakoff (2016:81-82) discusses this metaphor.
[198] Clark (2016:83-90) discusses the mirror metaphor in Plotinus.
[199] Schroeder (1992:54).

gives three different descriptions of the One's location in relation to ourselves: the One is above (ἀναβατέον I.6.7.1; ἀναξόμεθα, I.6.8.18; ἀναβαίνων, I.6.9.34), it is our homeland somewhere out 'there' (ἐκεῖ, I.6.8.15; I.6.9.35; I.6.9.43), and it is in or with ourselves (ἔνδον, I.6.9.1; ἐπὶ σαυτὸν, I.6.9.8). The idea of the One being above us is Platonic (cf. the anagogical movement in *Rep.*515e, *Phaedr.*246c, *Theaet.*175b). With the description of the One as external *and* internal to us Plotinus creates again the paradoxical simultaneous immanence and transcendence of the One. These we should not take as spacious descriptions, but as representations of the One as alien *and* familiar to us. This resonates with Plotinus' description of our souls longing for the One as a form of nostalgia: our souls wandered apart but want to return to their homeland (I.6.8.17-23); we once were *at* the One, but we are not any longer and do keep this homeland somewhere *in* us.

Before expanding on this internality of the One, I first focus on Plotinus' description of our journey to the One 'there' above. Similar to Plato's picture of the soul as a charioteer in the *Phaedrus*, Plotinus describes the individual soul as descended from the One and longing to ascend again (I.6.7.2-7; tr. Gerson et al.):[200]

Ἐφετὸν μὲν γὰρ ὡς ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἡ ἔφεσις πρὸς τοῦτο, τεῦξις δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀναβαίνουσι πρὸς τὸ ἄνω καὶ ἐπιστραφεῖσι καὶ ἀποδυομένοις ἃ καταβαίνοντες ἠμφιέσμεθα· οἷον ἐπὶ τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἱερῶν τοῖς ἀνιοῦσι καθάρσεις τε καὶ ἱματίων ἀποθέσεις τῶν πρὶν καὶ τὸ γυμνοῖς ἀνιέναι·	[I]t is desired as good, and the desire is directed to it as this, though the attainment of it is for those who ascend upward and revert to it and who divest themselves of the garments they put on when they descended. It is just like those who ascend to partake of the sacred religious rites where there are acts of purification and the stripping off of the cloaks they had worn before they go inside naked.

Here Plotinus depicts the descended soul as clothed (ἠμφιέσμεθα). These garments – i.e. the sensible beauties that distract us (I.6.7.24-31) – we have to put off (ἀποδυομένοις) if we want to return. We should not behave like Narcissus and chase the reflections our soul has left behind in the material world (I.6.8.8-16), but like Odysseus who left the sensible beauties of Circe and Calypso behind and returned to his homeland (I.6.8.16-22).[201] Plotinus explains that we should not take this Odyssean journey literal, for it is a journey not with our feet but with our eye(s): 'just shut your eyes (οἷον μύσαντα)[202], and change your way of looking, and wake up. Everyone has this ability, but few use it. What, then, is that inner way of looking (ἐκείνη ἡ ἔνδον βλέπει)?' (I.6.8.26-9.1). We have to change our external looking into the less-used internal looking, for that is where

[200] Passage is also discussed by Carabine (1995:128), Kalligas (2014:207-210), and Clark (2017:59-62). Mazur (2013:343-358) suggests that Plotinus was influenced by the Gnostics for the mystical image in this passage.
[201] Brilliant interpretations of the Odysseus and Narcissus passage are found in Hadot (1976:99ff.) and Lavaud (2018).
[202] Note the mystical language. See the fourth subsection. Cf. Banner (2018:221).

we can find our origin. How this inner contemplation is done, Plotinus describes with another metaphor (I.6.9.8-10; tr. Gerson et al.):[203]

οἷα ποιητὴς ἀγάλματος, ὃ δεῖ καλὸν γενέσθαι, τὸ μὲν ἀφαιρεῖ, τὸ δὲ ἀπέξεσε, τὸ δὲ λεῖον, τὸ δὲ καθαρὸν ἐποίησεν, ἕως ἔδειξε καλὸν ἐπὶ τῷ ἀγάλματι πρόσωπον[.],	[B]e like a sculptor who, making a statue that is supposed to be beautiful, removes a part here and polishes a part there so that he makes the latter smooth and the former just right until he has given the statue a beautiful face.

The internal contemplation must be done like a sculptor removing excessive parts. 'In the same way', Plotinus says, 'you should remove superfluities' (οὕτω καὶ σὺ ἀφαίρει ὅσα περιττὰ, I.6.9.11). By doing so the sculptor-soul sculpts the perfect face that looks back at the sculptor. And at that moment, contemplator and contemplated become one (ὅμοιον ποιησάμενον […] ἐπιβάλλειν τῇ θέᾳ, I.6.9.29-30), reaching unification.

The verb used in all these passages, ἀφαιρέω, is striking. This is the same word that is used for the linguistic *via negativa*. Plotinus' journey to the One is a journey of *aphairesis*. Both Deirdre Carabine and Nicholas Banner point out that next to epistemological (linguistic) aphairesis, Plotinus exhorts us to practical *aphairesis*.[204] This contains several stages: removing redundant sensitive concerns from the soul (the garment put off above), and subsequently removing even more so that we leave Soul behind and come to Intellect, and eventually to the One (as the sculptor-soul; cf. VI.7.34.2-4; VI.8.8..12-15).[205] Such is the conclusion when Plotinus describes how the soul unifies with the One: 'How, then, can this come about? Abstract from everything[!]' (Πῶς ἂν οὖν τοῦτο γένοιτο; Ἄφελε πάντα, V.3.17.38).[206]

The full practical *aphairesis* coincides with linguistic aphairesis. For at the end of VI.8, Plotinus states (VI.8.21.25-29; tr. Gerson et al., largely adapted by me):

ἀλλ' ὅταν αὐτὸν εἴπῃς ἢ ἐννοηθῇς, τὰ ἄλλα πάντα ἄφες. Ἀφελὼν πάντα, καταλιπὼν δὲ μόνον αὐτόν, μὴ τί προσθῇς ζήτει, ἀλλὰ μή τί πω οὐκ ἀφῄρηκας ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐν γνώμῃ τῇ σῇ. Ἔστι γάρ τινος ἐφάψασθαι καὶ σέ, περὶ οὗ οὐκέτι ἄλλο ἐνδέχεται οὔτε λέγειν οὔτε λαβεῖν·	But whenever you speak or think of it, remove all other things. Once you have removed all, leave it alone; do not try to add anything, in order to avoid that you somehow did not have taken something away from it in your understanding. For it is possible for even you to get hold of something about which nothing is allowed to say or grasp.

I think we should combine Schroeder's interpretation with Carabine's and Banner's, and connected ἡσυχία and μένειν also with ἀφαιρέω as important aspect in the process of unification. Only when

[203] Remes (2007:179-212), Davidson (1993), and Hadot (1993:21ff.) analyze this passage.
[204] Banner (2018:218-222) says to coin the term 'practical *aphairesis*', but this is already described by Carabine (1995:128-133) who calls it 'the practical application [of] *aphairesis*'.
[205] The unification with the One is generally described in two stages: first the soul that loosens itself from discursive thinking and that ascends to Intellect, and second the unification with the One. See, for instance, Davidson (1993:7).
[206] Passage discussed by Banner (2018:219).

one takes everything away, in word, in thought, and in reality, one can, while abiding in tranquility, unite with the supreme. By taking everything away one becomes ἥσυχος 'quiet', just as the One is ἥσυχος from the outset. That is why Plotinus stated that 'we should go away after being silenced' (σιωπήσαντας δεῖ ἀπελθεῖν, VI.8.1.1) when we pursue unification: we should transcend our capability for language and all other attributes we 'put on' when we descended.

And Do It Secretly

What about the unification itself? Something I passed by in the previous section, is the comparison of the soul's purification to sacred religious rites (οἷον ἐπὶ τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἱερῶν, I.6.7.5), and with initiates who strip off their clothes before entering a temple. This metaphor is employed again later on in *On Beauty,* when Plotinus asks: 'How can one see the 'inconceivable beauty' which remains in a way within the sacred temple, not venturing outside, lest the uninitiated should see it?' (Πῶς τις θεάσηται κάλλος ἀμήχανον οἷον ἔνδον ἐν ἁγίοις ἱεροῖς μένον οὐδὲ προιὸν εἰς τὸ ἔξω, ἵνα τις καὶ βέβηλος ἴδῃ;, I.6.8.1-3). The metaphor of the One as inner sanctum reoccurs as well in V.1.6: the One 'as if inside a temple, remaining tranquil while transcending everything' (ἐκείνου ἐν τῷ εἴσω οἷον νεῷ ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ ὄντος, μένοντος ἡσύχου ἐπέκεινα ἁπάντων, 6.11-12), and we should pray to it 'without spoken words' (οὐ λόγῳ γεγωνῷ, 6.9) and our souls should contemplate 'the statues that are in a way fixed outside the temple' (τὰ οἷον πρὸς τὰ ἔξω […] ἀγάλματα ἑστῶτα, 6.13-14), which seem to be the intelligibles.[207] Plotinus describes the experience within the One/temple as if it is an initiation from which the uninitiated should be excluded.[208] The language and metaphors he employs, is reminiscent of the language about the mystery cults: the soul's purification is like *katharsis* (I.2.4.1; I.6.7.6; I.6.9.10; VI.7.36.9) and initiatory rites.[209]

This mystical language culminates at the end of *On the Good or the One,* the last Ennead in Porphyry's order, where Plotinus explains how one can (or actually cannot) communicate the experience of unification (VI.8.21-23). The last paragraph answers this question and starts as follows (VI.9.11.1-4; tr. Gerson et al. 2017; adapted CvdV)

> Τοῦτο δὴ ἐθέλον δηλοῦν τὸ τῶν μυστηρίων τῶνδε ἐπίταγμα, τὸ μὴ ἐκφέρειν εἰς μὴ μεμυημένους, ὡς οὐκ ἔκφορον ἐκεῖνο ὄν, ἀπεῖπε δηλοῦν πρὸς ἄλλον τὸ θεῖον, ὅτῳ μὴ καὶ αὐτῷ ἰδεῖν εὐτύχηται.
>
> This is indeed what the command of the mysteries makes clear, not to communicate it to the uninitiated; since that [i.e. the One or the content of the not-to-be-communicated] is not communicable, it forbids explaining the divine to anyone who has not had the good fortune to see for himself.

[207] Schroeder (1992:57-60) compares representational art with reflection, the latter being more accurate though but both superior to imitation.
[208] Banner (2018:232-233) discusses the temple metaphor.
[209] Idem (2018:221).

Explicitly Plotinus compares communication about the One with the mystery cults: οὐκ ἔκφορον ἐκεῖνο ὄν. The One is not communicable, which leads not to an intentional silence as was the case with the Pythagoreans, but to an unintentional silence imposed by the nature of the One. Plotinus continues with why one cannot explain the mystical unification after experiencing it: 'since it was not two, but the seer was one with what was seen […] he was a one, and contains no difference relative to himself, nor in any other respect' (Ἐπεὶ τοίνυν δύο οὐκ ἦν, ἀλλ' ἓν ἦν αὐτὸς ὁ ἰδὼν πρὸς τὸ ἑωραμένον, […]Ἦν δὲ ἓν καὶ αὐτὸς διαφορὰν ἐν αὑτῷ οὐδεμίαν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἔχων οὔτε κατὰ ἄλλα, 11.4-9). Being one and surpassing difference, one cannot think or talk about it(self) (οὐδὲ λόγος οὐδέ τις νόησις, 11.11), as we have seen already. Instead, the unified (VI.9.11.12-21; tr. Gerson et al.):

> ὥσπερ ἁρπασθεὶς ἢ ἐνθουσιάσας ἡσυχῇ ἐν ἐρήμῳ καὶ καταστάσει γεγένηται ἀτρεμεῖ, τῇ αὑτοῦ οὐσίᾳ οὐδαμῇ ἀποκλίνων οὐδὲ περὶ αὑτὸν στρεφόμενος, ἑστὼς πάντη καὶ οἷον στάσις γενόμενος. […] ὥσπερ τις εἰς τὸ εἴσω τοῦ ἀδύτου εἰσδὺς εἰς τοὐπίσω καταλιπὼν τὰ ἐν τῷ νεῷ ἀγάλματα, ἃ ἐξελθόντι τοῦ ἀδύτου πάλιν γίνεται πρῶτα μετὰ τὸ ἔνδον θέαμα καὶ τὴν ἐκεῖ συνουσίαν πρὸς οὐκ ἄγαλμα οὐδὲ εἰκόνα, ἀλλὰ αὐτό·
>
> […] was in a way ravished or ecstatic [*Phaedr.* 253a] in solitary quiet, in an unwobbling fixedness, unwavering from his own substantiality in any way, not rotating about himself, entirely stable, as if he were the stability itself. […] It is like someone who enters the inner sanctum and leaves behind the statues of the gods in the temple. And these are the first things one sees on leaving the inner sanctum after the vision within. The intimate contact within is not with a statue or an image, but with the One itself.

Plotinus creates the image of one, robbed of everything (ἁρπασθεὶς), in a solitary quiet (ἡσυχῇ ἐν ἐρήμῳ), that is completely stable and not rotating about himself (οὐδὲ περὶ αὑτὸν στρεφόμενος). Someone being One cannot περὶ αὐτοῦ […] λέγειν 'talk about it', since it does no longer circle around the One. The experience of unification is, again, like entering the inner sanctum (τὸ εἴσω τοῦ ἀδύτου εἰσδὺς – note the *alpha privative* here, 'entering the inside of the not-to-be-entered', by which Plotinus again employs paradoxical apophatic dialectical logic). The divine statues are Intellect or the Ideas that need to be transcended and to which one returns falling from the One.[210]

In these passages, Plotinus blends the mystical language of secrecy with the philosophical language of the ineffable: "understanding" the One is reserved only for those who experienced it.[211] No one should talk about the One, for one cannot talk about the One – comparable to

[210] In IV.8.1.1-11, Plotinus describes the puzzling experience of falling from the intelligible world into the material world.

[211] Banner (2018:222; cf.217) points to this secrecy trope: 'Plotinus is not revealing the nature of the encounter with the One, but rather employing the mystery trope of philosophic silence […].' I am reluctant to follow Banner's characterization of Plotinus' discourse as philosophic silence, which Banner defines as apophatic discourse (n.64 *supra*), for I would not call this 'silence'. Nevertheless, Plotinus does reflect on the concept of literal silence in these passages, and, as I argue, innovates mystical silence into transcendent silence. In the end, Banner (2018:241) concludes that Plotinus' 'unsaying the ineffable' stood in the mystical tradition of not-saying what has to be kept secret. I do not fully

Wittgenstein's seventh proposition. When Plotinus says that 'if someone, has seen it [i.e. the One], he knows what I mean when I say how beautiful it is' (Εἴ τις οὖν εἶδεν αὐτό, οἶδεν ὃ λέγω, ὅπως καλόν, I.6.7.2-3), he doesn't say cataphatically that the One is 'beautiful' but gives an indication that can only be understood through the experience itself and by those who have experienced it (or metaphorically: who are initiated). Similarly, Porphyry tells that he has seen that Plotinus attained unification and describes this as 'an indescribable state of perfection' (ἐνεργείᾳ ἀρρήτῳ, *V.Plot.*23.18-19): he blends the idea that this experience should not be spoken of and cannot be spoken of. Even Plotinus' description of the unification of a ravished, ecstatic solitary quiet or entering the inner sanctum are just ἀναλογίαι that function as stepping stones to our own experience with the One. Beyond that, *we must go away in silence*. Now we may understand why Plotinus was reticent to write down his philosophy – but we can be glad he did.

IV Later Neoplatonism: Damascius' Radical Transcendent Silence

Plotinus had left his successors with a philosophical conundrum: how could the One be the origin and cause of all beings, while simultaneously transcending all reality and hence standing in no relation to its effects? Some try to solve this by adding ones ('henads') between the One and Intellect to explain the transcendent causality (Syrianus, Proclus), and others allow for a radical transcendent principle above the First Cause (Iamblichus, Damascius).[212] All of these later Neoplatonist also reflect on the related question on the ineffability of the first principle(s) and the epistemological techniques, such as the *via negativa*, to approach it.[213] Proclus (412-485), in his *Commentary on the Parmenides,* for instance, elaborates on apophatic discourse more than anyone had done before.[214] While Proclus remarks that negations have a much broader referent than affirmations ('negations tend to simplify things from the circumscribed in the direction of being uncircumscribed', ἀναπλωτικαὶ δέ εἰσιν αἱ ἀποφάσεις ἀπὸ τῶν περιγεγραμμένων ἐπὶ τὸ ἀπερίγραφον 6.1074),[215] he remarks that negation still refers to something (namely anything except for the negated), and that the One 'is exalted above all contrast and all negation' (*exaltatum est […] simplicitatem ab omni opposition et omni negatione*).[216] In the final words of his commentary, Proclus

agree with this: the mystical (and Pythagorean) tradition was about an embodied experience, while Plotinus' quietness is transcendent. Again, silence is taken here to statical.

[212] Greig (2020:1-72) for an overview of the Neoplatonists' attempt to solve this conundrum.

[213] Mortley (1986b:85-127) deals with the pagan Neoplatonists' thoughts on the *via negativa*. Mortley (1986b:106) also shows that the Neoplatonist start using the word *apophasis* (a term explained by Aristotle) instead of *aphairesis*.

[214] See e.g., Mortley (1986b:97-118), Steel (1999), Jurgin (2019).

[215] Also cited by Mortley (1986b:108-109). Greek is from Steel (2007-2009); translation from Morrow/Dillon (2018:427), slightly adapted by me.

[216] The last part of Proclus' work is only transmitted by a Latin translation of William of Moerbeke. Cited lines come from Klibansky/Labowski (1953:70-71).

reflects on *Parmenides'* statement that even saying that the one is unknowable and ineffable is impossible in the end (*Parm.*142a),[217] and concludes that: 'For by negating he himself [Plato in the *Parmenides*] has removed all negations. But with silence he concludes this contemplation about the One' (*Nam per negari et ipse remouit <omnes> abnegationes. Silentio autem conclusit eam que de ipso theoriam,* 76.6-7).[218] With this sentence and this silence, Proclus' commentary ends, unfortunately, without much theorizing on the role of silence.[219] The idea of concluding in contemplative silence is, however, further developed by Proclus' successor.[220]

In the first chapters of *Problems and Solutions Concerning First Principles* (ἀπορίαι καὶ λύσεις περὶ τῶν πρώτων ἀρχῶν), Damascius (c.480-c.550), the last scholarch of the Platonic Academy before its closing in 529AD, unfolds a true philosophy of silence. *First Principles* is one of the last and also one of the most complex works of antique Neoplatonism.[221] This has not only to do with Damascius' comments on many earlier Neoplatonic writings (Proclus' *Parmenides Commentary* in particular) but also with the work's aporetic structure: Damascius starts with problems, *aporiai,* gives (self-contradicting) solutions to these, and then again questions his solutions resulting in new *aporiai.*[222] The first part of the work (§1-8/W-C.1-26) deals with the Neoplatonic dilemma of the 'so-called One' that is transcendent to and immanent of all: if the first principle transcends everything, it is no longer part of all, and if it is part of all, it cannot transcend everything. To solve this dilemma, Damascius introduces another absolute first principle that is radical transcendent (non-related to all) and beyond the conventional One as the First Cause (related to all): the Ineffable (τὸ ἄρρητον or sometimes ἀπόρρητον; based on Iamblichus, see §43-49).

While much is and can be said of Damascius' Ineffable, I focus here only on the silence about and surrounding it.[223] Damascius explains that the One was approached in the Platonic tradition by 'by means of analogy and by negations, [...] and being led to this away from what is less valuable, the things of our world, toward what is more valuable, δι' ἀναλογίας ἀναγόμενοι καὶ δι' ἀποφάσεων, [...[ποδηγούμενοι ἀπὸ τῶν παῤ ἡμῖν ἀτιμωτέρων πρὸς τὰ τιμιώτερα §5/R.I.8.22/W-

[217] Morrow/Dillon (2018:490-491) discuss Proclus' treatment of the dazzling *Parmenides'* statement.
[218] Klibansky/Labowski (1953:76-77).
[219] Mortley (1986b:117) argues, contra Beierwaltes (1965:361-362), that 'negation of negation' should not be interpreted as a positive step towards a pure affirmation (such as is developed later by Meister Eckhart), but only as the negation of any linguistic expression. Steel (1999), in his an analysis of Proclus' negations, arrives at the same conclusion.
[220] Mortley (1986b:97-127) compares the reflections on the use of negations in Proclus' and Damascius' work.
[221] Rappe (2010:3-61) gives an excellent introduction to this work.
[222] On the aporetic structure of Damascius' work, e.g., Rappe (2000:197-230), Franke (2004), Caluori (2017), or Vlad (2019).
[223] The distinction and relation between the One and the Ineffable is complex and beyond the scope of this section, see Greig (2020: 277ff.). For the Ineffable, e.g. Casel (1919:154), Mortley (1986b:119-127), Dillon (1996b), Lavaud (2008), Van Riel (2011), Vlad (2017; 2019); for analyses of silence in Damascius' *First Principles,* see Hoffmann (1997:376-391), Gersh (2013:140ff.), Vlad (2016).

C.10.19-21; cf. §26/W-C.69.14-15), referring to the three methods described by Alicnous.[224] Although the One retracts itself from any description (τὸ δὲ ἓν οὕτως ὡς πᾶσαν σύνθεσιν ἐκφεῦγον λόγου, *op. cit.*), it still can be linguistically approached by these ways because of its relation to all reality. Therefore, Damascius points out that this is a difference between the One and the Ineffable: 'So the One is in this way both ineffable and effable; but let us honor in perfect silence that other principle' (Τὸ μὲν δὴ ἓν οὕτω ῥητὸν καὶ οὕτως ἄρρητον· ἐκεῖνο δὲ παντελεῖ σιγῇ τετιμήσθω, §5/R.I.9.9/W-C.11.15; cf. §8/W-C.25.4-7). Whereas we still can say that the One is 'ineffable' and '*unknowable'* (§7/W-C.17-20), in regard to the Ineffable we must 'confess that we have neither knowledge nor ignorance but rather transcendent ignorance' (ὑπεράγνοια, §29/R.I.56.8/W-C.84.18; cf. §7/W-C.16.18-19).[225] We even cannot unknow the Ineffable, for we do not know what we do not know, and thus must transcend our ignorance. In a similar vein, we also have to transcend the unsaying of the absolute principle (§7/R.I.15.20-25/W-C.21.15-22.; tr. Rappe, adapted CvdV):[226]

> ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ ἀπόφασις λόγος τις, καὶ τὸ ἀποφατὸν πρᾶγμα, τὸ δὲ οὐδὲν, οὐδὲ ἄρα ἀποφατόν, οὐδὲ λεκτὸν ὅλως, οὐδὲ γνωστὸν ὁπωσοῦν, ὥστε οὐδὲ ἀποφῆναι τὴν ἀπόφασιν δυνατόν· Ἀλλὰ ἡ πάντη περιτροπὴ τῶν λόγων καὶ τῶν νοήσεων αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐμφανταζομένη ἡμῖν ἀπόδειξις οὗ λέγομεν. Καὶ τί πέρας ἔσται τοῦ λόγου, πλὴν σιγῆς ἀμηχάνου καὶ ὁμολογίας τοῦ μηδὲν γιγνώσκειν, ὧν μηδὲ θέμις, ἀδυνάτων ὄντων, εἰς γνῶσιν ἐλθεῖν;
>
> But denial is a kind of discourse, and what is denied is made is the subject, but the [Ineffable] is nothing, nor something deniable, nor sayable at all, nor thinkable in any way, so that it is not even possible to deny the denial. Rather, the demonstration [of the Ineffable] imagined by us, about which we speak, consists in the complete overturning of discourse and thought. And what will turn out to be the limit of discourse, except exceptional silence, and the agreement to know nothing about these which are not permitted, since these are impossible, to enter into knowledge of?

Damascius here reflects on and rejects Proclus' *'per negari […] remouit <omnes> abnegationes'* (or the conclusion in *Parm.*142a)*,* since his absolute principle – which is not literally indicated in this passage – cannot be a denial, let alone a denial of a denial, for a denial refers to something. Discursivity, language and thinking must be left behind by overturning (περιτροπὴ) these resulting in 'exceptional silence' (σιγῆς ἀμηχάνου).[227]

---

[224] Passage is discussed by Mortley (1986b:121).Translations are based on Rappe (2010), but adapted to stay closer to the Greek. The Greek is from Westerink & Combès (1986). There exist several reference systems to *First Principles;* I refer to the paragraph numbers maintained by Rappe and W-C, the edition of Ruelle, and the page and line numbers in W-C.

[225] Mortley (1986b:122-123) emphasizes and explains the importance of hyper-ignorance.

[226] Passage also discussed by Mortley (1986b:121), Hoffmann (1999:385-386), Rappe (2000:212), Vlad (2016:196)

[227] As Rappe (2000:212-213) points out, the *peritropè* is the concept of dialectical contradiction much debated in Skepticism. It refers to a kind of argument that is self-refuting. Damascius' aporetic method is practiced *peritropè.* Cf. the mention of *aphasia* p.14 *supra.*

Somewhat later Damascius explains that for our ascent 'the best approach is simply to maintain quiet, remaining in the secret sanctuary of the soul' (μάλιστα μὲν ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν, ἐν τῷ ἀπορρήτῳ μένοντας ἀδύτῳ τῆς ψυχῆς, §8/R.I.16.10/W-C.22.14), and that we must 'bring our labor of [searching for the] truth into the harbor of the unspoken that surrounds it [the Ineffable]' (εἰς τὴν περὶ αὐτοῦ σιωπὴν καθορμιοῦμεν τὰς τῆς ἀληθείας ὠδῖνας, §8/R.I.18.23/W-C.27.9-10). The former quote echoes Plotinus' language of 'abiding in tranquility' (ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν […] μένοντας), the 'sanctuary' (ἀδύτῳ) of the One, and its secrecy (ἀπορρήτῳ). The latter depicts the 'abiding' as well with the metaphor of being moored (καθορμιοῦμεν) in the harbor of the unspoken (σιωπὴν) that surrounds the Ineffable because of the impossibility to express it. Both passages point to a performative and immanent silence: the soul's *Schweigen* as an "expression" of surrendering to one's hyper-ignorance. By the approach of tranquility and taciturnity (ἡσυχία and σιωπή) we may reach the 'exceptional silence' (σιγή), which seems to be the Ineffable itself: when Damascius describes the relation between the One and the Ineffable, he says 'it [the One] is nearest the inconceivable principle [the Ineffable], it as it were abides in the sanctuary of transcendent silence' (ἐγγυτάτω γὰρ ὂν τῆς ἀμηχάνου ἀρχῆς, εἰ θέμις οὕτως εἰπεῖν, ὥσπερ ἐν ἀδύτῳ μένει τῆς σιγῆς ἐκείνης, §29/R.I.56.9/W-C.84.19-20). The One's proximity to the Ineffable is compared to the inner sanctum's proximity with its honored divinity, namely the σιγή ἐκείνη.[228]

Laurent Lavaud concluded that Damascius describes two types of silence: 'Le silence qui est "la limite du discours" et simple "aveu d'inconnaissance" n'est donc pas absolument identifiable au "sanctuaire inaccessible de ce silence extraordinaire" propre au principe'.[229] Lavaud sees the former type as immanent silence, and the latter as transcendent silence, because 'le silence du pur principe ineffable en effet ne saurait être la simple limite négative du discours'.[230] I do not fully agree with Lavaud, however, for I think that he confuses the different references to silence. Besides the exhortation 'to honor in perfect silence' (ἐκεῖνο δὲ παντελεῖ σιγῇ τετιμήσθω), the tranquility (ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν), the soul's secret sanctuary (ἀπορρήτῳ ἀδύτῳ), the taciturn harbor (σιωπὴν), and sanctum's silence (σιγῆς ἐκείνης), we have encountered the 'complete overturning of discourse and thought' (περιτροπὴ τῶν λόγων καὶ τῶν νοήσεων) that can reveal the Ineffable, and the 'limit of discourse' (πέρας τοῦ λόγου) that is nothing else than exceptional silence (σιγῆς ἀμηχάνου). I do see two types of silence here, but differently from Lavaud: a performative silence and a radical

[228] I hence do not agree with Vlad (2016:198), who says 'we can assume that this silence itself is "close" to the ineffable, but not the ineffable itself'. It is not the silence that is close to the Ineffable (the inner sanctum in Vlad's reading), but the inner sanctum being close to the silence. What surrounds the Ineffable is σιωπή not σιγή. Cf. Hoffmann (1999:386): 'le silence extraordinaire qui habite l'*adyton*'.
[229] Lavaud (2008:54).
[230] *Ibidem*.

transcendent silence.[231] The latter – for it has to be put in language but is beyond the limit of discourse – is described with the noun σιγή, or Damascius leaves it literally unsaid (e.g., two times in the block quotation above). The former type is methodological in nature, but not in an intentional sense for the Ineffable imposes its unspeakableness on the lower hypostases.[232] The Ineffable is surrounded by secrecy (ἀπορρήτος) and *Schweigen* (σιωπή) in the next hypostasis (the One), and our souls first have to enter this secret sanctum or harbor of the unspoken by completely overturning discourse and thought. Through this we abide in tranquility, coming to a standstill. By transcending this performative silence we go beyond the limits of tranquility and taciturnity and reach the Ineffable.

Performing silence is what Damascius' work aims to do with its readers. As is often observed, with his aporetic method in *First Principles,* 'Damasicus […] drives discourse to the limits of its intelligibility in order to show where it breaks down and yields to the ineffable that cannot be rationalized'.[233] Damascius teaches us implicitly how to anchor in silence, how to overturn discourse to eventually transcend our taciturnity into a complete state of hyper-ignorance, hyper-nothingness, and hyper-stillness.

V Conclusion: A Tradition Culminating in Silence

In this chapter, I followed the first principle in the works of Alcinous, Plotinus, and Damascius to show how the way to the supreme is more and more silenced. Alcinous held that the supreme principle is almost ineffable, but expounded on ways to talk about the ineffable, such as the *via negativa*. Whereas Alcinous remarked that his first principle still is 'graspable by intellect', Plotinus innovatively placed his One beyond being and Intellect and problematized our capability to have knowledge of it. We should pursue experiencing the One by purifying ourselves and becoming tranquil (ἥσυχος) as our origin. The *aphairesis* Alcinous spoke about as a linguistic tool, becomes a practical tool with Plotinus. We should peel off all layers of reality to attain unification. The way to the One is a way of silence (σιωπήσαντας). With his mystical language about unification, Plotinus blends the immanent silence of secrecy of the (Pythagorean) initiated with the transcendent silence imposed by the ineffable. Compared to the silences we encountered in the previous chapter, Plotinus takes over that silence is a philosophically performative act (it has a generative power in

[231] Gersh (2014:150) distinguishes between performative and constative silence: 'silence *showing* what something is indirectly by being silent and negation *stating* what something is indirectly by using denials'. The apophatic method I would not call a type of silence.

[232] Vlad (2017:60). Casel (1919:154): '*Ergo ex silentio primi principii Silentium hominis oritur.*'

[233] Franke (2004:20); cf. Caluori (2017:278): 'I thus suggest that Damascius considers silence to be the correct rational attitude towards the Ineffable, […] due to the aporia (in the subjective sense) that the thinker rightly experiences when attempting to grasp that object.'

the case of the One, or a transgressing power in case of ascending individuals), but his philosophical silence has no specific signified any longer: it refers to nothing-and-everything, whereas the Pythagorean silence often referred to specific doctrines. It also is no longer an exercise in controlling the tongue; rather, becoming tranquil is about losing one's body. The embodied silence of (Pythagorean) mysticism turned into a transcendent experience.

With Damascius the concept of silence becomes even more transcendent than in Plotinus. His highest principle is beyond the apophatic. The Ineffable remains in exceptional silence and is surrounded by the unspoken. Comparably to Plotinus, Damascius exhorts us to become tranquil and taciturn. But different from Plotinus, this anchoring ourselves in the unspoken is not the final step. Transcending this, we experience the σιγή of the Ineffable, a word never used by Plotinus. Perhaps the most intriguing part of Damascius' work is how his language represents silence. As stated, his aporetic method reflects the complete overturning of language. In a similar way, the Ineffable, radical transcendent silence, is "expressed" by avoiding using a referent, except for an occasional ἄρρητον, τό, or σιγή. Damascius was, however, not the first to use creative ways to express philosophically meaningful silence in language, as we will see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

Silent Listeners and Later Dialogues

DIALECTICAL ASCENTS AND REVELATIONS

'And such is the life of gods and godlike, happy humans […]: an escape of the alone in the alone.'
Καὶ οὗτος θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων θείων καὶ εὐδαιμόνων βίος […] φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον.
Plotinus, *Ennead* VI.9.11.46-48

Plato turned his teacher's method of διαλέγεσθαι 'conversing' into a written form of philosophical dialogues.[234] The art of conversation that Socrates spoke highly of is developed by Plato into his dialectical method of philosophical inquiry based on questioning, defining, and analyzing what things really are, just like thinking is the inner dialogue of the soul (*Tht.*188e; *Soph.*263e).[235] The dialectical method leads to the first principle: 'only the dialectical method […] proceeds […] to the actual first principle' (ἡ διαλεκτικὴ μέθοδος μόνη […] πορεύεται […] ἐπ᾽ αὐτὴν τὴν ἀρχὴν, *Rep.*533c; cf.511b).[236] For Neoplatonists, the dialectical method still proves to be the way up but ends in silence. Plotinus, in his dense *On Dialectic* (I.3), defines ἡ διαλεκτική as 'the capacity to *say* in a reasoned way (ἡ λόγῳ περὶ ἑκάστου δυναμένη ἕξις εἰπεῖν) what each thing is, and in what way it differs from other things, and what it has in common with them' (I.3.4.1-4). Dialectic works *through logos,* the formative force that connects the higher realms with the lower.[237] Plotinus remarks that when dialectic has gone through all intelligible Forms 'it arrives at the starting point [and] remains still, for, to the extent that it is there in stillness, no longer busying itself with many things, but having become One, it just looks' (ἐπ᾽ ἀρχὴν ἔλθῃ, τότε δὲ ἡσυχίαν ἄγουσα, ὡς μέχρι γε τοῦ ἐκεῖ εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ, οὐδὲν

[234] Nikulin (2010:2ff.).
[235] There is no clear definition of 'dialectic' in Plato. Kahn (1997) traces the development of dialectic throughout Plato's dialogues. Larsen et al. (2022) give a polysemantic analysis of Plato's dialectic; their introduction gives an overview of the state of the art, and argues against the developmental view. Bénatouïl (2018) for dialectic after Plato.
[236] Translation Emlyn-Parry.
[237] V.1.3.7-8: 'Just as *logos* that is put into an utterance comes from the *logos* in the soul, so is soul the *logos* of Intellect too' (οἷον λόγος ὁ ἐν προφορᾷ λόγου τοῦ ἐν ψυχῇ, οὕτω τοι καὶ αὐτὴ λόγος νοῦ). Plotinus saw thinking, just as Plato, as the soul's inner speech (I.2.3.27-28). For this he was not only indebted to Plato, but also to the Stoic conception of the λόγος σπερματικός as generating principle. Philo developed the distinction of λόγος ἐνδιάθετος (interior reasoning) and λόγος προφορικός (uttered reasoning), which is thought to be of Stoic origin; Kamesar (2004). This was developed further in early Christian thinking; see Lashier (2014).

ἔτι πολυπραγμονοῦσα εἰς ἓν γενομένη βλέπει, I.3.4.16-18).[238] It may not come as a surprise after the previous chapter: dialectic's end, when it transcends its discursive activity, is quiet.[239]

This chapter revolves around how dialectic's silent end is represented in several later Platonic dialogues. In late antiquity, Platonism merged with the increasingly dominant Christian philosophy. Central to this chapter are three works by Platonic Christians who revive the genre of Platonic dialogue but give it a striking twist: their dialogues end as monologues. My aim is not to delve into the Christian roots and doctrines on silence and discourse here.[240] Rather, this chapter focuses mainly on the remarkable ends of their dialogues. For this, we have to understand what it means to be a silent listener. By means of Augustine's *Confessiones,* I show how (Neo)Platonic dialectic merges with the Christian God's authoritative and generating Word and results in an emphasis on silent listening as the end of the dialectical quest. Subsequently, after a brief reflection on the Platonic dialogue form, I analyze the monologic ends of Gregory of Nyssa's *De Anima et Resurrectione,* Augustine's *De Magistro,* and Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae.* As I will argue, speakers turn into silent listeners when they experience the revelation revealed by their mediating teachers.

I The Christian Way of the Neoplatonic Ascent: Augustine's *Confessiones*

In Augustine's *Confessiones*, Platonism meets the Christian tradition. By demonstrating how Augustine Christianizes the Neoplatonic ascent, I want to show that it results in an emphasis on silent listening as the end of the dialectical quest, an insight crucial for the next paragraph.[241]

Some months before his conversion to Christianity in 386, Augustine was intellectually "converted" to Platonism, as he describes in *Confessiones* book VII.[242] After he had received *quosdam platonicorum libros ex graeca lingua in latinam versos* (VII.9.13), probably some works by Plotinus and Porphyry, Augustine saw parallels between the Platonic teachings and the Scripture.[243] The

[238] Translation Gerson et al., adapted. I pass by the more complex definition of Plotinus. See Schiaparelli (2009:255-263) and Stanburry (2014:125-128) for good analyses.
[239] Cf. Proclus, in his *Commentary on the Parmenides*: '*ad ea quidem enim que velut preianualia unius deducet* […] *hec tota dialectica methodus'* (KL VII.74.15-16) and '*oportet purgari ab omni dialectica operatione'* (KL VII.74.29).
[240] Silence and speech are important themes in (early) Jewish and Christian philosophy: God communicates in silence, can impose silence, and God's ineffability and the negative theology becomes fully developed at the end of antiquity. A good introduction to Christian silence is given by Macculloch (2013). The works of Mortley (1986a:39-60; 117-124; 154-158; 1986b:33-42; 63-84; 128-251) discuss silence and the *via negativa* in the works of Philo, Gnostics, and other Christian philosophers. See also Carabine (1995) on the development of Christian apophasis.
[241] Silence is a major theme in Augustine's works, see e.g., Mazzeo (1962) and Smith (2000).
[242] Some scholars argue that in 386 AD, Augustine was rather converted to Neoplatonism than to Christianity. See Boone (2015) for the scholarly debate and different stances on this. Dobell (2009:20-27) argues for a development in Augustine conversion in 386 as a merely Platonic version of Christian devotion, to 395 as the moment Augustine is fully converted to Christianity and starts to reject Platonism.
[243] E.g., Brown (2000:79-107), Dobell (2009:12-20), Zwollo (2018:442-456) for the influence of (Neo)Platonism on Augustine. Dobell (2009:12-13) summarizes the scholarly debate about the books Augustine received.

Plotinian philosophy of all reality emanating from one supreme principle (VII.9.13) and the possible return to our origin by turning inward (VII.10.16) attracted Augustine. The most important parallel Augustine saw was 'the very same idea, […] albeit not in precisely the same words, that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God' (VII.9.13; referring to John 1:1).[244] The mediating role of the Plotinian Intellect in the creation of all resembled for Augustine the mediating role of the Word (i.e. the Son) in Christianity.[245] It inspired Augustine to attempt two ascents in a Platonic style to contemplate God (VII.10.16; VII.17.23), that did not fully succeed.[246] Only later, Augustine writes, he learned that the Neoplatonic works did not describe the doctrine of the Word made flesh: the incarnation of Christ and his teachings (VII.9.14). This made the Neoplatonists' works only of limited use to Augustine (VII.20.26): they taught him to focus on the intelligible realm, but only showed him the goal (*quo eundum sit*) but not the way (*viam*). Nonetheless, as we will see, Augustine's successful ascent to God later is still full of Plotinian imagery.

The role of the Word (*verbum*, λόγος) as the generating principle of all (Gen.1:1-29) and as communication between the divine and the human should not be understood in a sonorous way.[247] Augustine explains (*Conf.*XI.6.8) the difference between hearing sonorous words and 'hearing' the divine Word: 'the words created in time' (*haec ad tempus facta verba*) or words sounded in time (*verba temporaliter sonantia*) are perceived by the *auris exterior menti*, whereas the *auris interior posita* is focused on the eternal Word (*aeternum verbum tuum*), which abides in silence (*aeterno in silentio verbo tuo*) since it arises out of a vacuum (cf. VII.6.8; XII.3.3). Temporal words are problematic for they *fugiunt et praetereunt* 'flee and pass away', while God's Word *manet in aeternum* 'abides forever'.[248] While the formative principle of logos echoes throughout almost all antique philosophy, the emphasis on God's authoritative speaking is a crucial difference between pagan Platonism and Christian philosophy.

Augustine's conversion reads as a story about losing and hearing voices, as Philip Abbott has argued.[249] It all starts with the conversion story of Marius Victorinus, a teacher of rhetoric and Platonic philosophy whose translations Augustine had received (VIII.2.3-5.12). He is taught about

[244] Translations of the *Confessiones* are from Hammond (2014) and (2016).
[245] Brown (2000:89-90).
[246] The second ascent is highly influenced by Plotinus' *On Beauty* (I.6)
[247] We already saw the importance of silence with the Gnostics; cf. Mortley (1986a:49-60). Other early examples are given by Mazzeo (1962:192) of Ignatius Martyr (d. c.108/140 AD): 'God, who manifested himself through Jesus Christ his son, who is his Word proceeding from silence' (*Epist. ad Magnesios* 8.2). Cf.Abbott (2022:550).
[248] For Augustine, problems with discursivity arise from the fragmentation of the eternal into the temporal – and not so much because of the One scattered into many, as Plotinus problematized. Mortley (1986b:204) points this out as a fundamental difference between both. For Augustine and other Christians, God was a unity consisting of a trinity, which is a topic that I do not delve into further.
[249] I am indebted to Abbott (2022:549-557) for the analysis of Victorinus' and Augustine's conversion.

the 'humility of Christ, which is hidden from the wise and revealed to infants' (VIII.2.3), and became 'a child of your Christ and an infant baptized' (*puer Christi tui et infans fontis*, VIII.2.4), after he abandoned 'the school of wordiness rather than your Word by whom you make eloquent the tongues of infants' (*loquacem scholam deserere maluit quam verbum tuum, quo linguas infantium facis disertas*, VIII.5.10). The theme of infancy ('speechlessness') returns when Augustine's ability to speak is flowing away, which mark the start of his conversion.[250] Upset his asks himself 'where is that fluent tongue now?' (*ubi est lingua?*, VIII.7.18), and Augustine is left in 'wordless agitation'(*muta trepidatio*, VIII.7.18; cf.VIII.8.19; VIII.12.28). Silenced and distressed, Augustine runs into a garden and speaks to God (*dixi tibi*, VIII.12.28). The famous scene follows: he hears a voice (*audio vocem*, VIII.12.29) *as if* from a boy or a girl (*quasi pueri an puellae*), that sings "*tolle lege, tolle lege*". Augustine grabs the Pauline book that he has left on the table and reads in silence (*legi in silentio*, VIII.12.29), just as he had seen Ambrose reading in silence but did not understand Ambrose's reasons for that (VI.3.3).[251] In book IX, we learn that Augustine has followed Victorinus' example, and withdraws his 'tongue from its daily work in the marketplace of loquacity' (*subtrahere ministerium linguae meae nundinis loquacitatis*, IX.2.2).[252] From that moment, Augustine uses his tongue only for *sonos pietatis* 'sounds of devotion' (IX.4.8).

After his conversion, Augustine experiences another ascent with his mother Monica (IX.10.23).[253] In its description, we see evident traces of the Plotinian quiet ascent inwards. While resting from their trip to Ostia, Augustine and Monica – away from other people (*ego et ipsa soli*; *ergo soli* IX.10.23) – discuss the eternal life of saints and the dismissal of the physical senses. During their discussion (*dum loquimur,* IX.10.24), they raise themselves up longing ardently for the One (*idipsum*), and gradually move through the physical world and heaven, and ascend by interior thinking, speaking, and marveling at God's works (*ascendebamus interius cogitando et loquendo et mirando opera tua*). Entering into and transcending their own mind, they reach God, 'the place of unfailing abundance' (*venimus in mentes nostras et transcendimus eas, ut attingeremus regionem ubertatis indeficientis*). After their ascent, they 'returned to the clamor of our usual kind of speech, in which the word both begins and ends' (*remeavimus ad strepitum oris nostri, ubi verbum et incipitur et finitur*). In this worldly voice, they continue – albeit in one very long sentence as if their speech becomes everlasting – and wish that everything can become still (expressed by *silere* six times):[254] the 'tumult of the flesh', the earth, sea and sky, every tongue, every linguistic sign, and every being (IX.10.25). While all keep

[250] Abbott (2022:551). Infancy is a Christian trope, for the New Testament speaks of Christians as God's children.
[251] Mazzeo (1962:191): 'at the very moment that St. Augustine is waiting for the voice of the silent inner teacher, he reads in silence'.
[252] Abbott (2022:552).
[253] E.g., Dobell (2009:213-227) and Soskice (2002:454ff.) discuss the Ostia ascent and point out that, compared to the Platonic ascents earlier, the emphasis lies on audition here.
[254] Abbott (2022:556).

silent (*taceant*), they turn their ear to Him, and: 'He alone spoke, not through these [things made silent], but by his own self, so that we heard his Word, not by means of a tongue of flesh, nor by the voice of an angel […], but we heard it itself' (*loquatur ipse solus non per ea sed per se ipsum, ut audiamus verbum eius, non per linguam carnis neque per vocem angeli* [...]*, sed ipsum* [...] *audiamus*).

The echoes of the Plotinian ascent are plenty: the Ostia ascent is a turn inwards, done isolated (*soli*), a move beyond the human mind, possible when everything becomes still, and it is a transient experience for they return to the sensible world of the spoken word (cf. Plot.IV.8.1.1-11). There is also difference, however.[255] The Christian ascent is guided by speaking and hearing. It is not a full transcendence of the body as with Plotinus but more like a revelatory experience that stills everything. Later in the *Confessiones*, Augustine explains that 'God's Word, that is the beginning speaks to us' (*verbum tuum, quod et principium est* […] *loquitur nobis*, XI.8.10). It speaks through the gospel, which speaks *per carnem* (i.e. through Christ) to 'the ears at the outside' (*foris auribus*), 'so that people would believe it, and seek it within, […] where the good and only teacher instructs all his disciples. Here I hear your voice, Lord' (*ut crederetur et intus quaereretur* […]*, ubi omnes discipulos bonus et solus magister docet. ibi audio vocem tuam,* XI.8.10; cf. XI.9.11). God's Word is authoritative, and its guiding role is a crucial difference from the purely Platonic ascents Augustine experienced earlier. Augustine's dialectical quest for God thus consists of three steps, preceded by the preliminary step of losing one's mundane voice: one has to hear and speak the divine voice (through the scriptures), move toward interior thinking and speaking, and finally transcend and hear the revelatory Word itself when everything else has become silent.

II Dialogues Turning into Monologues

The remainder of this chapter revolves around the question of how the conceptions of silence and dialectic impact the literary forms of some later Platonic dialogues. For Plato, although we cannot know the exact function of his dialogues,[256] the dialogue form and his dialectical method were connected.[257] Plato's successors, however, did not write many philosophical dialogues.[258] Instead,

[255] Differences are discussed by Soskice (2002:454-458). He sees the shared experience as a difference, but Augustine does emphasize isolation (*soli*). Abbott (2022:557) remarks that the emphasis on listening is a difference: 'While Plotinus and other Platonists also believed in a silent divine realm, unlike Augustine, they did not describe the tacit aspect of divinity as paramount to their ascents.' I hopefully proved otherwise in the previous chapter.

[256] Long (2009:48) guesses about Plato's reasons for writing in dialogue form, and argues they may represent: 'intellectual discoveries, teaching such discoveries to others and converting others to the life of philosophy'. Kahn (2012:159) suggests that Plato's preference for dialogues may be connected with his distrust of writing.

[257] Long (2009) shows the diversity of dialogue form in Plato: it alters between dialogues with equal opponents, sympathetic yes-men, or even with oneself.

[258] Clark (2009:124): 'the absence of Platonist dialogue remains a puzzle'. Jażdżewska (2022: 89-125) shows that the philosophical dialogues were not abandoned in the Early Academy, but lost its preeminence. Of course, philosophical dialogues were written throughout antiquity, e.g. by Aristotle (lost), Cicero, Lucian, and Plutarch.

they wrote mainly handbooks or commentaries on Plato's works for an educated circle, or produced essays, letters, or speeches for a broader audience.[259] The literary form of Plotinus' works is different from his predecessors, and is more closely related to Plato than it may seem. As observed by several scholars, the *Enneads* resemble Plotinus' oral teachings that consisted of (lengthy) philosophical discussions: the *Enneads* take the form of a dialogue (marked by conversational particles) between Plotinus and another voice that questions or objects him by raising doubts or pointing to other philosophical viewpoints.[260] With Plotinus, the dialectical method 'of saying what each thing is' (I.3.4.1-4) is molded into an inner dialogue as if his philosophical turn inward is symbolized by its form.[261]

The dialogue form flourished in late antiquity as is shown in the recent monographs of Averil Cameron and Alberto Rigolio. Both demonstrate that some of these (often Christian) dialogues adopt again a Platonic model and (Neo)Platonic imagery.[262] In this section, I discuss three examples of Platonically inspired philosophical dialogues that share a striking feature: they end as monologues while one of two interlocutors keep silent.[263] It is as if they combine the aporetic Platonic dialogue with Plotinus' internalized dialogue. I start with Gregory of Nyssa's *De Anima et Resurrectione,* in which the dialogue form end when the dogma of the resurrection is revealed. Next, I treat Augustine's *De Magistro,* a dialogue about the inefficacy of verbal language, whose changing literary form symbolizes Augustine's encouragement to turn inward. Something similar happens in Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, whose monologic end has puzzled scholars.[264] Taken together, we see that the silence of the monologue's listeners is a positive sign: it represents a revelatory experience beyond verbal language that strikes silent.

Macrina the Mystagogue: Gregory of Nyssa's De Anima et Resurrectione

The dialogue *De Anima et Resurrectione* (c.380) is set during the deathbed of Macrina, Gregory of Nyssa's devout sister.[265] After the death of their brother Basil, the Cappadocian church father,

---

[259] Smith (2014) discusses the literary genres of Platonists. Nikitas (2019:113) discusses a common distinction later commentators to Aristotle's work make (Ammonius *In Cat.* 4.15-27, and Olympiodoros *Prolegomena* 7.2-23): τὰ διαλογικὰ vs. τὰ αὐτοπρόσωπα. They speak highly of the latter as meant for a specific philosophical audience, and disdain the former as exoteric and meant for novice thinkers.

[260] Smith (2014:116-117) and Brisson (2019:178-179).

[261] Smith (2014:116-117) argues that Plotinus' *Enneads* 'are structured around the principle of self-discovery'.

[262] Recently there is much research on the dialogue form in late antiquity, e.g. by Cameron (2014) and Rigolio (2019) who discuss dozens of examples of Christian dialogues. Rigolio (2019:2) shows that the Platonic dialogue was not the norm in late antiquity, however.

[263] I know of one other example of a Platonized dialogue ending in a monologue: Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* (second century). Just as Macrina, reveals the mystery of Christ (94.4: μυστήριον ἀποκαλύπτοντι). For this example, there seems to be a connection between some Christian gospels that alter between dialogue and monologue.

[264] See n.283 *infra.*

[265] Rigilio (2019:98-102) for a scholarly overview. Cameron (2014:7) calls it 'the most Platonic of Christian dialogues', but she excluded the Latin tradition.

Gregory wanted to find some solace with his sister. He finds some consolation, but not in the form one might expect. What unfolds is a lengthy discussion *On the Soul and Resurrection,* in which Macrina, whom Gregory calls his ἀδελφὴ καὶ διδάσκαλος, teaches about the immortality of the soul, as did Socrates on his deathbed in the *Phaedo,* and about the afterlife that may await. Before the conversation starts, Gregory tells us that Macrina first let his emotion rage: 'she, like those who are skilled in the equestrian art, first, allowed me to be swept along for a little while by the violence of my grief and, after this, tried to speak up with reason by guiding the disorder of my soul with her own ideas as if with a bridle' (Ἡ δὲ κατὰ τοὺς τῆς ἱππικῆς ἐπιστήμονας ἐνδοῦσά μοι πρὸς ὀλίγον παρενεχθῆναι τῇ ῥύμῃ τοῦ πάθους, ἀναστομοῦν ἐπεχείρει μετὰ ταῦτα τῷ λόγῳ, καθάπερ χαλινῷ τινι τῷ ἰδίῳ λογισμῷ τὸ ἀτακτοῦν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπευθύνουσα, GNO2/C198).[266] The dialogue is full of Platonic imagery, such as the soul as charioteer here or references to Diotima's speech in Plato's *Symposium,* but Macrina mainly voices the Scriptures to teach Gregory.[267]

For this chapter, I am mainly interested in the dialogue's end. After Macrina has shown Gregory that the soul must become free of emotions and passions for its way up to God, she reassures him that, also if he is too attached to his body, he does not have to be 'without hope' (C245), for the body will be built up again after its dissolution by death. Gregory remarks that he recognizes that Macrina is speaking about the resurrection. The dogma of resurrection he calls 'true and worthy of belief from the teaching of Scripture and not to be doubted' (μὴ ἀμφιβάλλῃ)' (GNO80/C245). Nonetheless, Gregory says, 'since the weakness of human thought relies somehow on more accessible arguments for belief' (ἡ ἀσθένεια τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης διανοίας, τοῖς χωρητοῖς ἡμῖν λογισμοῖς, μᾶλλον πρὸς τοιαύτην πίστιν ἐπιστηρίζεται, GNO80/C245), it still is a good idea to converse about the dogma of resurrection for those who do not believe it. Gregory raises several issues that outsiders could have, and Macrina answers them all.[268] Thereafter, Gregory himself is left with some last doubts: do we resurrect in the state we left our bodies after death? (C261-264) He argues how horrible it would be to resurrect with 'bodies bent down and deformed by extreme old age' (C261). But on the other side, if our bodies change after the resurrection, they are not stable, and how would that be different from our bodies during life? Macrina answers Gregory's doubts with a long uninterrupted speech (C264-272).[269] She remarks that Gregory with

[266] Translation Callahan (1999), to which page numbers I refer. I refer also to the pagenumbers in Spira's (2014) *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* for the Greek. Passage discussed by Williams (1993:231) and Wessel (2010:374).
[267] Wessel (2010:373-380) discusses the Platonic dialogue form, and argues this allows Gregory to combine the sometimes contradictory ideas of pagan philosophy and the scriptures (378): 'Through his self-conscious appropriation of an antiquated genre, Gregory developed a new kind of Christian discourse, in which the provisional arguments of pagan dialectic enabled the truth of Scripture to emerge in a meaningful tension with the insights of Greek philosophy.'
[268] Explicitly stated by Gregory, see C256-257.
[269] Williams (1993:231-232) comments on this shift: 'the dialogue form not only enacts what it discusses (the protracted exploration of an emotion) but, later on, allows Macrina to modify her initial rigorism in response to Gregory's objections on behalf of the emotions.'

his 'so-called art of rhetoric' has circumvented the truth of the resurrection. Macrina rejects Gregory's rhetorical oppositions and says (tr. C265/GNO112):

ἀλλ'ὁ μὲν ἀληθὴς περὶ τούτων λόγος ἐν τοῖς ἀποκρύφοις τῆς σοφίας θησαυροῖς τεταμίευται τότε εἰς τὸ ἐμφανὲς ἥξων, ὅταν ἔργῳ τὸ τῆς ἀναστάσεως διδαχθῶμεν μυστήριον, ὅτε οὐκέτι δεήσει ῥημάτων ἡμῖν πρὸς τὴν ἐλπιζομένων φανέρωσιν.	The true reasoning on these matters is stored in the hidden treasures of wisdom and will come into the open only when we have experienced the mystery of the resurrection; then there will no longer be any need for a verbal statement of what is to be hoped for.

Only those who have been taught about the mystery of the resurrection, know its truth. Macrina reveals the splendor of resurrection and explains that the body resurrects in a perfect divine state when the soul is purified. For sake of the possible opponents' arguments, Macrina emphasize, she discusses the resurrection further, although it needs no proof (οὐδενὸς ὑποδείκνυσιν).

The start of this monologic end of *De Anima* is significant. The use of the word μυστήριον – which also resonates with the mysteries spoken of in the New Testament (e.g. 1.Cor.15:51) – signifies that what comes is a revelation. As Guy Stroumsa has shown, the word μυστήριον in Christian late antique philosophy did not refer any longer to esoteric wisdom, for these so-called mysteries were not kept secret (e.g., Macrina's monologue here), but underwent a semantic transformation and denoted rather 'something that cannot be entirely described in words'.[270] This is also what Macrina makes clear; there is no need for any verbal statement (οὐκέτι δεήσει ῥημάτων). However, what seems not to be different from the earlier mysteries is that the recipient of the revelation becomes awestruck: Gregory becomes a silent listener and there is no need for further dialogical pondering.[271] But why could Macrina reveal the mystery of resurrections with her words? The answer may be found in the *Life of Macrina,* a hagiography Gregory wrote some years later. In that work, he thinks back to Macrina's last moments and remarks that 'she had transcended the common nature [...] as if she was an angel' (ἐκβεβηκέναι τὴν κοινὴν φύσιν ὑποωοούσης […] οἷον ἀγγέλου τινὸς; GNO395;C179).[272] On the verge of death, Macrina has become an intermediary figure, somewhere between the divine and the human, able to reveal the divine truth.[273]

[270] Stroumsa (2005:162); cf. "Mystery', in its Christian garb, has now become something ineffable, which cannot be fully expressed by words, rather than something which must remain hidden' (168).
[271] This point is already made by Macrina earlier (C217).
[272] Greek from Jaeger et al. (1952).
[273] Burrus (2005) and Boersma (2013:109-116) discuss Macrina's transcended state from a gendered perspective (including the Platonic models of Socrates and Diotima).

An Inner Teacher and a Silent Student: Augustine's De Magistro

De Magistro (c.390) is a Platonic[274] dialogue between Augustine and his sixteen-year-old son Adeodatus – who died before his eighteenth birthday (c.389; *Conf.*IX.6.14).[275] It is Augustine's last dialogue before he abandoned the genre. In *De Magistro*, father and son explore the limits of dialogue, by questioning if we can learn and teach through the medium of language. Although relatively short, the work delves deeply into semiotics.[276] The dialogue starts with Augustine's question: 'When we speak, what does it seem to you we want to accomplish?'[277] Both agree that speaking is used for *docendi et commemorandi* 'teaching and reminding' others (1.2). Augustine explains (1.2-3.6) that words are signifiers (*signa*), and both interlocutors conclude that some signifiers can be described by other signifiers (*signa signis monstrari*, 4.7), but that there are things (*rebus*) that can be explained without signifiers (*sine signis*), such as 'walking' by the act of walking itself. This forms the basis for their further inquiry.[278]

The rest of their discussion consists of three parts and each is concluded with reflections on the dialectical procedures. The first part concerns a lengthy discussion (4.7-8.20) on the notion that signifiers can be signified by other signifiers. At 8.21, Augustine pauses and reflects on the discussion so far. He admits that the dialogue contains many detours but explains these were needed for 'exercising the mind's strengths and sharpness' (*exercendi vires et mentis aciem*). Now Adeodatus is ready for the second part (8.22-10.32) which is about signifiables (*significabilia,* i.e. perceptible *res* that can be signified). Augustine shows that things precede their signifiers (9.25), and that knowledge of the thing itself is more important than knowledge of the sign, for the latter is only attained by the former (9.26). They also agree that signifying and teaching are not the same, but that we signify to teach (and not *vice versa*; 9.29). Adeodatus then concludes that it is not possible to teach without signifiers. Augustine remarks that this contradicts what they had said in the beginning (4.7): that some things can be explained without signifiers but through actions (e.g., 'walking'). Here the second reflection starts: Adeodatus admits that he is caught in aporia and that his mind is not sharp enough to enlighten this contradiction (10.31). Augustine praises his son's hesitation (*dubitationem tuam non invitus accipio*; 10.32) and his request for help, since aporia can also result in the danger of *odium vel timorem rationis* 'hatred and mistrust of reason' (cf. Pl.*Phd.*89d-e), Augustine says, when allegedly firm arguments are overturned. Augustine rehearses their earlier conclusion that actions can be taught without signifiers.

---

[274] The dialogue is Platonic in content (the emphasis on recollection and interiority) and in form (see n.238 *infra*).
[275] Bermon (2007:21-23) about the date of the work. It is presumably a homage to his son.
[276] The most extensive reading of *De Magistro* is found in the extensive commentary of Bermon (2009), who also points out the connections with Peripatetic, Stoic, and Sceptic philosophy.
[277] Translations by King (1995). The Latin I take from Daur (1970).
[278] Crosson (1989) analyzes the dialogue's tripartite structure and gives a good overview.

Then Augustine continues with an *oratio perpetua* (10.33-14.46), an uninterrupted monologue, that forms the third part of the discussion.[279] In his exposition, Augustine raises questions that he answers himself, and argues that nothing is learned through signs (*nihil* […] *quod per sua signa discatur*, 10.33), but that all things are 'exhibited and exposed' (*exhibit atque ostendit*) by God. This is the case for things perceived both by the senses (*sensibilia;* 10.33-12.29) and by the mind (*intelligibilia*; 12.40-14.46). The first are not taught by words but by – very Platonically – recognizing the images one has within (*non discit meis verbis, sed recognoscit ablatis secum et ipse imaginibus*, 12.39). In the case of the intelligibles, we look immediately upon the things perceived by the mind by the 'inner illumination of the truth' (*interiore luce veritatis*, 12.40). 'A listener' (*auditor*) is then 'taught not by [...] words but by the things themselves made manifest within when God discloses them' (12.40).

Is speech not useful at all? Not exactly, Augustine explains, for the 'weakness of discernment' (*imbecilitate cernentis;* 12.40) can complicate the illumination of the Inner Teacher. When one is not able to discern the whole, one can be questioned about parts (*de istis partibus interrogator*). In this case, he is 'guided by words' (*verbis perducitur*), not in the sense that words do teach (*non tamen docentibus verbis*) but by raising questions he can learn within (*intus discere*). Augustine reflects (14.46) on his *oratio perpetua,* and says that if his son is illuminated by the Inner Teacher, he knew everything all along, and for that reason, Augustine saw no reason to ask questions any longer. The work ends with Adeodatus thanking his father's guidance in *orationi tuae, qua perpetua usus es,* and has no doubts left: 'that private Oracle answered me about everything exactly as you stated in your words' (*mihi responderet secretum illud oraculum, ut tuis verbis asserebatur*).

De Magistro is a reflection on the use of language, dialogue, and dialectic. Its content is reflected in the form: such as dialectic should move from the question-and-answer exercise towards God's inner teaching, Adeodatus moves from speaking to silence, and the work from dialogue to monologue.[280] *De Magistro* is not the only dialogue of Augustine that ends with a monologue. Augustine wrote eight dialogues between 386 and the start of his priesthood in 391, and almost all of them end in an *oratio perpetua*.[281] Erik Kenyon provides a holistic reading of this particular structure of the Augustinian dialogues. He argues that Augustine's dialogues follow a threefold method that he calls ARP: an aporetic dialogue (A), followed by reflection on the act of the dialogue

[279] The term *oratio perpetua* is used in Augustine's *Contra Academicos* III.7.14.

[280] Lerer (1985:51-56) treats *DM* as an important text to understand the *Consolatio,* and points to the silent student in *DM*. I am, however, not fully convinced by his reading that Adeodatus is unable to converse with his father, and that the monologue is used to point out 'the need for […] silent reading': it rather is a revelation that guides Adeodatus to transcend any form of language.

[281] In chronological order: in Milan (386-387)*De Ordine, De Beata Vita, Contra Academicos, Soliloquia;* in Italy and Africa (388-391): *De Immortalitate Animae, De Libero Arbitirio, De Animae Quantitate, De Magistro, and De Musica* (first part written earlier). The *Soliloquia* (incomplete) and *De Musica* do not end in an *oratio perpetua*, although it is suggested (Kenyon 2018:142-143) that *De Immortalitate Animae* was meant as the third book of the *Soliloquia.*

(R), and finally a monologue that gives a plausible solution to the aporia (P).[282]According to Kenyon, Augustine was inspired to this structure by combining the aporetic (Platonic and) Ciceronian dialogues (A) and the Plotinian self-reflexive treatises (P).[283] *De Magistro* follows this pattern: the first two dialogical parts build up to Adeodatus' aporia, and the third monologic part is Augustine's revelation about the Inner Teacher.

Although Augustine concludes that language is inadequate for learning, he does not reject discourse completely: in this last part, he guides Adeodatus to the Inner Teacher by showing him His inner teachings. At the start of the dialogue, Adeodatus and Augustine discussed if speech is needed for prayer. There Augustine remarked: 'there is no need for spoken words [in prayers], except perhaps to speak as priests do, [...] not that God might hear, but that men might do so and by remembering might, with one accord, be raised to God' (1.2). In the end, Augustine becomes like a priest – just as in his real life at that moment – who guides others.[284] By keeping silent, Adeodatus shows he has reached dialectic's silent last step: after dialogic and monologic guidance, he has reached his Inner Teacher.[285] The literary shift from dialogue to monologue mark Adeodatus' progress from speaker to silent listener. This resembles the dialectical path of the Ostia ascent in the *Confessiones*; there as well we saw an outward dialogue, followed by an interior soliloquy, and finally by silent listening to God's Word.[286]

Lapsing into Silence with Boethius' De Consolatione Philosophiae[287]

When classical antiquity crumbled down, Boethius wrote his swan song *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (c.524), a work full of (Neo)Platonic philosophy and a (slighter) touch of Christian philosophy.[288]

---

[282] Kenyon (2018:30-31) applies ARP to all Augustinian dialogues, except for *De Magistro,* for he considers ARP there too obvious (22). Stock (2010) interpreted the shift from dialogue to oration differently; he reads the *Soliliquia* programmatic for the other dialogues, and argues for a shift from external dialogue to inner dialogue (*oratio perpetua*). His argument is not so strong when we consider that *Soliloquia* also end in aporia, showing that even inner dialogue does not have revelatory power.

[283] Kenyon (2018:57-81) argues that the Augustinian dialogues are Platonic in essence, although Augustine probably had not read a full dialogue by Plato. He argues that the combination of the aporetic Ciceronian model and the Plotinian result in the Platonic dialectic of elenchus and hypothesis.

[284] Clark (2009) reflects on Augustine's genres, and remarks that after his ordination as a priest in 391, Augustine abandoned the dialogue form. Clark (2009:122-134) reflects on Augustine's reasons: as a priest or bishop, Augustine may had to voice his authority (for which a puzzling dialogue does not fit); the audience consisted of educated and uneducated people (for whom the dialogue may be not clear enough); and Augustine began to doubt the power of dialogue to resolve (intellectual) conflict.

[285] Stock (2010:206): 'We have moved from words to silence, from dialogue to contemplation, and from signs to realities.'

[286] Stock (2010:72, 214) sees *Confessiones* as a soliloquy. Kenyon (2018:232) argues that *Confessiones* follows ARP: for the work consist of two halves: a narrative, dialogical part (book I-IX) and a non-narrative, monological part (X-XIII).

[287] This section is largely based on an earlier paper by me (2022); the main argument is the same, albeit in a rewritten form, but some of the notes and quotes inevitability overlap.

[288] The *Consolatio* is reminiscent of Plato's *Phaedo*. Marenbon (2003:11) notes that 'Greek Neoplatonism was by far the most important' to Boethius, more than Christian philosophy, although Augustine influenced him as well (14).

After years devoted to philosophy in Rome and to politics in Ravenna, Boethius, as one of the highest officials at the court of the Ostrogothic king Theodric, fell prey to the unstable political situation, and was sentenced to death due to political intrigue (*Cons.*I.4.23). Mourning his imminent and too-early death, Boethius writes the Platonic dialogue *Consolation of Philosophy*. Overcome by strong emotions, the imprisoned first person of the dialogue (henceforth Boethius, although he is not named in the dialogue) falls into distrust of philosophy's powers. In a conversation with the personification of philosophy, Philosophia, he re-establishes his faith in the stable knowledge philosophy offers. This dialogue is conspicuously characterized by moments of silence: it all begins and ends with Boethius' silence.[289] Boethius' silence at the end has puzzled scholars, but we will see that it – again – marks the dialectical endpoint.[290]

The *Consolatio* starts with an elegiac poem dictated by the 'grieftorn Muses' – the work is a sequence of poetry (M) and prose (Pr) parts – in which Boethius wept over his lost fortune (I.1M.22). His outcry is a cry in silence, as Boethius emphasizes in the first prose line of the work: *haec* […] *mecum tacitus ipse reputarem* 'these I was thinking to myself in silence' (I.1Pr.1).[291] Then from above his head, Boethius sees Philosophia descend (*supra verticem visa est mulier*, I.1Pr.3), and is awestruck (*mihi* […] *reverendi*) by the epiphany. He cannot determine her height, for one time she is like a human and at the other time 'the crown of her head touched the heavens; and when she lifted her head higher yet, she penetrated the heavens themselves, and was lost to the sight of men' (I.1Pr.10-13). Philosophia is evidently lost to Boethius, for his sight was dimmed with his tears (*acies lacrimis mersa*, I.1Pr.44), and he was dumbstruck (*obstipui; tacitus*; I.1Pr.46-48). Philosophia starts singing (I.2M) and speaking (I.2Pr) to Boethius, but he, bereft of his senses, does not react (cf. I.4Pr.1-3). 'Do you recognize me?'[292], Philosophia asks (I.2Pr.7-9), 'Why do you say nothing (*Quid taces*)? Were you silent because you were ashamed or stupefied (*pudore an stupor siluisti*)? […] I can see that you are quite stupefied (*te, ut video, stupor oppressit*)'. Boethius was not 'merely taciturn, but altogether speechless and dumb' (non *modo tacitum sed elinguem prorsus mutumque*, I.2Pr.9-10). His silence is unintentional and unphilosophical; he is dumbstruck by bodily emotions.

---

[289] Lerer (1985) is, to my knowledge, the only one who discusses Boethius' silence extensively. I owe some interpretational insights to him. However, I disagree with his overall interpretation. Lerer (1985:230) argues that 'the tone, structure, and method of the Consolation's conclusion turn the prisoner into a reader who is no longer inside the text but rather outside it. […] the prisoner inside the fiction and the reader outside it have now merged into one. […] The prisoner has moved from participant to audience, and his silent accession to Philosophy's authority matches the reader's experience of silently absorbing her doctrine.' Lerer's (1985:16ff.) analysis is based on his interpretation of Boethius' plan of 'reading and writing' (commenting on the philosophical tradition) and Augustine's silent reading in the *Confessiones*. To my opinion, Lerer is too eager to interpret Boethius as a reader in the *Consolatio*, since there is no textual evidence for this in the *Consolatio*. I will argue that the prisoner in the *Consolatio* is not outside but inside the text of Philosophia.

[290] Payne (1981:67), Marenbon (2003:145), Relihan (2007:191) see Boethius' silence as a sign of the dialogue's failure.

[291] Latin text and translation are Tester's (1973), sometimes slightly adapted by me.

[292] Gruber (2006:96): '*Stereotype Frage bei Epiphanien*'.

Philosophia turns away from Boethius who cannot see, speak, and hear well, and diagnoses him: 'he is in no real danger but suffers only from lethargy, a sickness common to deluded minds. He has for a little forgotten his real self' (I.2Pr.11-12). After a while, Boethius starts to recognize his *medicantis faciem* 'healer's face', *nutricem* 'nurse', and *magistra* 'teacher' (I.3Pr2-7), and is able to talk again. By asking questions, she examines Boethius and concludes that he forgot the universe's purpose (I.6Pr.23-32) and the human essence (I.6Pr.33-38), which she summarizes as 'you have forgotten what you are' (*quid ipse sis, nosse dedisti*; I.6Pr.40). Boethius suffers philosophical dementia, and his diagnosis is full of (Neo)Platonic imagery.[293] Boethius admits that he 'heard it once, but grief has weakened my memory' (*audieram sed memoriam maeror hebetavit;* I.6Pr.26-27). He is like the opposite of a Pythagorean pupil: not reticent but unable to tell about philosophical doctrines. Philosophia then unfolds a threefold therapy plan of (I.5Pr.38-44) soft (II.1Pr-II.4M), stronger (II.5Pr-II.8M), and bitter medicines (III.1Pr-8M). The three treatments are thematically strikingly similar; they all are about (ill)fortune and happiness, and it is only Philosophia's method that changes from a rhetorical approach to practical knowledge, to theoretical philosophy.[294]

From the outset, we have learned that Boethius was silently thinking with himself (*mecum tacitus ipse reputarem;* I.1Pr.1), which makes us wonder whether Philosophia is really another voice. Later in the first book, when Boethius accuses Philosophia of encouraging him to become a philosopher-king and thus to be active in politics, he addresses her by 'you, and God, who has planted you in the minds of philosophers (*tu* […] *et qui te sapientium mentibus inseruit deus;* I.4Pr.28-29). The verb *insero* returns at the end of Boethius' rhetorical speech: 'but you, planted in me, drove from my soul's depts all desire for mortal things' (*atqui et tu insita nobis omnem rerum mortalium cupidinem de nostri animi sede pellebas*, I.4Pr138-140). In her answer, Philosophia confirms Boethius' words by echoing the idea of *nostri animi sedes:* 'I seek […] the storeroom of your mind (*tuae mentis sedem requiro*), in which I have laid up not books, but what makes them of any value, the opinions set down in my books in past times' (I.5Pr.23-25). These sentences seem to point out that Philosophia is the personification of Boethius' own philosophical knowledge, and because of his philosophical forgetfulness, he did not recognize her initially (and has forgotten himself). This makes the dialogue a discussion of two different voices in Boethius' head ('thinking is the inner conversation the soul

[293] Boethius' symptoms are very (Neo)platonic motifs: he has lost his sight (cf. Plato's cave allegory) and is a wanderer exiled from his homeland (cf. Plot.I.6.8). These are brilliantly discussed by Donato (2013a:57-91) and (2013b), although he does not connect this to Boethius' silence.

[294] Magee (2009:83-84) and Donato(2013c:417-421) analyze Philosophia's gradual therapy. The graduality is foreshadowed by Philosophia's appearance: she has a dress with the letters Pi (practical) and Thèta (theoretical), connected with a ladder (I.1Pr).

has with itself', Pl.*Tht.*188e; cf. Aug. *Soliliquia*). One voice is dictated by Boethius' emotions and mortal concerns, and the other is a philosophical voice that comes from within.[295]

The theme of silence recurs throughout Philosophia's treatment. At the end of the stronger medicines, Philosophia accuses Boethius of pursuing immortality by concerning himself with his future fame (*future famam temporis*; II.7Pr.50-51), after he expressed his hope that his 'virtue might not wither with age in silence' (*ne virtus tacita consenesceret*, II.7Pr.3-4). Philosophia tells him an educational anecdote about 'a man falsely assumed the title of philosopher' (II.7Pr.70) for he wrongly took arrogant fame (*superbam gloriam*) for true virtue (*verae virtutis*). Another man, testing 'the triviality of this kind of arrogance', insulted him and said that a true philosopher would bear all insults. The faux philosopher underwent the insults for a short time and asked: 'Now do you recognize that I am a philosopher?' To which the other responded: 'I should have, had you kept silent' (*intellexeram, si tacuisses*; II.7Pr.76-77). Philosophia here refers to the silent philosopher trope we have discussed in CHAPTER I, and contrasts the chatty fame-seeker to the silent philosopher. As she explains, the latter does not pursue fame but the soul's immortality by being 'freed from earthy things' (II.7Pr.86). After this 'strong treatment', Boethius has implemented Philosophia's lesson, he describes himself as *me audiendi avidum stupentemque arrectis adhuc auribus* 'eager to listen further and struck silent with still attentive ears' (III.1Pr.1-2; cf. 9: *audiendi avidus vehementer;* 15: *audendi cupidum*). Philosophia confirms Boethius' changed mindset (*tuae mentis habitum*): 'you were so absorbed, silent and attentive, by what I was saying' (*verba nostra tacitus attentusque rapiebas*, III.1Pr.10-11). Different from the beginning, when Boethius was unintentionally dumbstruck and bereft of his senses, he now pricks up his ears intentionally. His desire to listen now makes him a true philosophical pupil and ready for Philosophia's last treatment.

In his book *Boethius and Dialogue*, Seth Lerer points out that the *Consolatio*'s content and form are transformed throughout the work. It develops from a discussion about fate and fortune (II), and a Platonic exposition on happiness and the Good (III), to discussions on God in relation to evil (IV), free will, and providence (V), while at the same time there is a meta-discursive development from rhetoric and logical argument (I-II), to Boethius' eagerness to learn (III.1Pr-8M) and to be equally involved in a dialectical discussion (III.9Pr-IV.6Pr), to transcending the limits of human discourse (V.4Pr.ff.).[296] When Boethius and Philosophia come to discuss the divine order of all things and the inevitable conclusion that all things are rightly done by God (*recte fieri*; IV.5Pr.26) though they can seem ill-fortune from the perspective of men, Philosophia admits that

[295] Jean de Meun, a medieval translator of the *Consolatio*, already wondered that "Boethius establishes and represents himself in the part of the human being troubled and tormented and misled by sensible passions, and establishes Philosophy in the part of the human being raised aloft and pursuing intelligible good.' (quoted by Donato (2013c:407).
[296] Lerer (1985:94-236): 'The prisoner's move from lethargic silence, through oratory, rhetoric, dialectic, and philosophy represents the development of a mind traced through different levels of language use' (235).

for an exposition on 'a matter greatest of all […] almost no discourse, however exhaustive is sufficient for it' (IV.6Pr.7-9). Philosophia gives it a try in a longer speech and explains that the difference between human *fatum* and divine *providentia* is a matter of perspective: 'as reasoning is to intellect, […] so is the moving course of fate to the unmoving simplicity of providence' (IV.6Pr.79-82).[297] Human discursive reasoning (*ratiocinatio*) is deficient to grasp the *providentiae stabilem spimplicitatem*. Therefore, human discourse is deficient as well; Philosophia acknowledges that 'it is not allowed to a men either to comprehend with his natural powers or to unfold in a conversation (*explicare sermone*) all the devices of the work of God' (IV.6Pr.196-199). Boethius, after some struggle,[298] acknowledges that all things that happen are in essence good, but has one doubt left: how can free will exist if God foreknows everything? Boethius gives a philosophical speech that ends in aporia (V.3Pr). In a Platonic poem (V.3M), he reflects on the harmony between the 'two truths' (V.3M.3) of divine providence and free will. While the human mind may think they are in discord, it (*mens*), however, 'is not totally forgetful of itself' (*non in totum est oblita sui*, V.3M.23), and is able 'to keep the whole, [and] lose the separate parts' (*summamque tenet singula perdens*, V.3M.24; cf. 28-31). These lines contrast with Boethius' self-dementia at the beginning: now Boethius understands the origin of his mind and its possibility to remember the supreme.

The poem is programmatic for the last paragraphs of the *Consolatio*. Boethius recognizes that must transcend to the whole, and should not be stuck at separate parts of God's creation (i.e. foreknowledge and free will). This resolution is symbolized by the silencing of Boethius' voice: Philosophia answers Boethius in an uninterrupted monologue to the end. At the start of her speech, she explains Boethius' doubts arose from the limits of human reasoning (*humanae ratiocinationis*) that 'cannot approach the simplicity of divine foreknowledge' (*diviniae praescientae simplicitatem*, V.4Pr.7-8). If these limits can be transcended, *nihil prorsus relinquetur ambigui* 'no ambiguity whatsoever will remain' (V.4Pr.9). Philosophia expounds that humans have a share in the divine mind, and thus adhorts: 'let us be raised up, if we can, to the height of that highest intelligence' (V.5Pr.50-52), for there the mind can contemplate 'the simplicity, shut in by no bounds, of the highest knowledge' (V.5Pr.56). In her monologue, Philosophia asks and answers questions herself in indirect speech (*Quaero* […] *inquires*; V.4Pr.11-28; *inquam* […] *ita disseris*; V.5Pr.6-41; *si dicas* […] *fatebor* […] *respondebo*; V.6Pr.95-98-100; *inquies* […] *respondebo*; V.6Pr.139-141; *quid igitur inquires?* V.6Pr.148). Four times the questions are answered by *minime* (V.4Pr.25,52; V.6Pr.77,151). Philosophia thus absorbs Boethius' voice that only echoes some indirect questions, answers, or '*minime'* in the last chapters.[299]

---

[297] Lerer (1985:209).
[298] Lerer (1985:214ff.) discusses this relapse to human reasoning.
[299] Gruber (2006:400): '*eigene Antwort der Philosophie'*. Cf. Lerer (1985:229). Some editors, such as Loeb's (1973) put *minime* between quotation marks, suggesting that it is Boethius' answer, but there are no linguistic signs for this.

When Boethius' emotional and mortal voice fades out, only his intellectual voice remains. And this intellectual voice exhorts to transcend; 'you', Philosophia addresses the silent other in the last poem, 'who with upright face do seek the sky, and uncover your forehead / you should also bear your mind aloft' (*qui recto calum vultu petis exserisque frontem / in sublime feras animum quoque*; V.5M.13-14).[300] This description of the human essence resonate with Philosophia's first appearance as moving between men and heaven (I.1Pr.10-13), suggesting that it is the philosophical part of the human mind that has the power to ascend. Boethius' silence has thus improved from a lethargic kind of silence imposed by his emotions, and an intentional silence as the studious pupil, towards eventually a silence that marks his transcendent movement. Within his inner dialogue, his dissonant mortal voice is silenced, and all that remains is his philosophical voice that guides him to divine knowledge.

III Epilogue: the Enigma Unraveled

This chapter has discussed three later Platonic dialogues that enigmatically end without an epilogue. Like Gregory, Adeodatus, and Boethius, we are left in silence. It is not a negative silence, however. The three dialogues have some remarkable similarities. They are about teaching and dialectical quests. They reflect on the deficiencies of human language and thinking. The revelations about what is beyond are given by a teacher who has an intermediate position: Macrina is already transcending her mortal existence, Augustine speaks like a guiding priest, and Philosophia (or the philosophical mind) moves between earth and heaven as if she symbolizes Intellect itself. The proper response to the revelation is silence. Like Aristotle's saying that initiates οὐ μαθεῖν τί δεῖν, ἀλλὰ παθεῖν καὶ διατεθῆναι 'must not learn something but must undergo and be put in a certain state' (fr.15 Rose), the dialogues' pupils become passive listeners to their teacher's revelation.[301] This idea is reflected in their literary form by turning the dialogues into monologues. That all three authors are Christians is not accidental, I think. Besides the increasing dominance of Christianity in late antiquity, we also saw by means of Augustine's conversion narrative how the Platonic inwardness of the intelligible and dialectical route to it merged with God's authoritative Word. The supreme principle may be ineffable but speaks to us. Listening to other authoritative voices that guide us to the truth, we might hear it. In silence.

[300] Gruber (2006:395) remarks that the poem's rhythm rises when it's about the ascent. Note also the resonances of *exserisque frontem* with Philosophia as *insita nobis*; whereas she was covered before, now the philosophical part of the mind is uncovered.

[301] Bert van den Berg revealed this fragment and parallel to me. The context of this testimonium (Synesius' *Dio* 8) emphasizes the ἄλογος ('speechless'/'irrational') state of initiates.

Resonances of the Unspoken

"… σῖγ' ἔχε, μύστα."
"… keep silent, initiate."
Chaldean Oracles, fr. 132.[302]

This thesis started with the notion that there is no such thing as *the* meaning of silence. Silence does not merely denote the absence of speech. Rather, we saw that modern philosophers like Max Picard emphasized that silence 'is a positive, a complete world in itself'.[303] Silence speaks in its own right. It 'is eloquent' and can carry countless meanings.[304] In this thesis, I traced literal silences in the later Platonic tradition in order to show how its meanings transform against the background of discourse. My study is not a voice in the void. The monographs of Odo Casel, Raoul Mortley, Nicholas Banner, and Silvia Montiglio inspired me to approach the topic of silence thematically and diachronically. Montiglio pointed out that classical Greece was a 'land of logos' in which silence was an abnormal phenomenon. Casel, Mortley, and Banner showed me the philosophers' interest in silence in later times, but all did mainly in an indirect way because of their primary focus on the apophatic discourse of secrecy. Due to their approach, they understood silence as a rather static concept. What remained in the margins of their works, became the focus of my research: silence itself and its conceptual transformation throughout time.

Because silence is reflected on through the medium of language, I examined the relationship between literal silence and discourse. The conceptual oppositions of non-communicative vs. communicative, unintentional vs. intentional, and immanent vs. transcendent helped to identify different instances of silence. For it is impossible to treat all silent moments in the later philosophical tradition (at all, but particularly in one thesis), each of my three chapters concerned one main theme: the relation between silence and 'practicing' philosophy in the Pythagorean tradition (CHAPTER I), between silence and the supreme principle in the later Platonic tradition(CHAPTER II), and between keeping silent and the dialectical method in later Platonic dialogues (CHAPTER III). In the first chapter, I have shown that silence was conceived as a

[302] Majercik (1989) fr.132 = Proclus *In Crat.* CXV.22.
[303] Quoted on p.10.
[304] Scarpi (1989:23).

philosophical virtue as opposed to talking too much or talking without discipline. The silences of the Pythagoreans were intentional and immanent, and also often communicative: they hid specific doctrines by keeping silent. The second chapter showed how the First Principle became increasingly unattainable in later Platonist thought. Whereas Middle Platonists believed the supreme could be approached via abstractions, Plotinus placed his One in a quiet realm beyond language and knowledge. Its quietness is thus not immanent to language but transcends human linguistic abilities. Only by removing one's mortal concerns and becoming tranquil oneself, one can attain tranquil unity. Damascius even went one step further: his first principle was even beyond the silence of the unspoken in a realm of hyper-silence. In the third chapter, I looked at how the limit of discourse is reflected in the literary form of the later Platonic dialogues of Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, and Boethius. As I have argued, the quiet end of dialectic merged with the Christian idea of God's authoritative voice. When a teacher reveals divine truth, interlocutors became silent listeners since this is the proper response to such a revelation.

To summarize the silences discussed in this thesis, I discern the following types of philosophical silence – moving, in a Platonic way, from the least philosophical to the highest principle of philosophy:

Aporetic silence: The unphilosophical, unintentional, and immanent silence that is imposed by either the body and emotions (internally) or by others (externally). This silence does not communicate anything: one is dumbstruck and speech falters. This happened, with some of Socrates' opponents, and, for example, with Boethius at the start of the *Consolatio*.

Student's silence: The intentional and immanent silence connected to the virtue of listening. One chooses to keep silent to learn from another. We saw this in Plutarch's advice, and in the case of the Pythagorean pupils, Adeodatus, and Boethius. This silence can be communicative; Philosophia, for example, understood Boethius' eagerness to learn by his silence.

Secretive silence: The often intentional and immanent silence (*verschweigen*) to conceal a specific propositional content of secret doctrines (that could be communicated as Apollonius and Secundus did). Also known as mystical silence. In the case of the Pythagoreans, the silence was intentional and about self-control and esoterism. Plotinus pointed to unintentional silence imposed by the divine, which resonates with the secrecy Demeter imposed on her initiates in the *Hymn*.

Exceeding silence: The transcending silence that is the result of one's experience of ascending to higher hypostases or a philosophical revelation. The way to it may be performed intentionally (such as the practical aphairesis of Plotinus) and immanently (the dialectical conversations of Gregory, Augustine, and Boethius), but the result is a

temporary unintentional and transcendent tranquility. It resonates with the experience of being awestruck by an epiphany.

Transcendent silence: The stable silence that characterizes the supreme principle. It is completely beyond human capacities of speaking and knowing, and thus everlastingly transcendent. Whereas this stillness could be experienced through 'exceeding silence' in Plotinus' thought, Damascius placed his Ineffable even beyond the capacity of remaining silent in a realm of hyper-stillness.

Mortley argued in his monograph *From Word to Silence* that 'the way of silence is just th[e] total absence of concepts: it is the way of silence which constitutes the complete annulment, which the negative [way] fails to achieve'.[305] We have seen that the *via negativa* is limited for the later Neoplatonists and is overturned to silence, but is this silence an absence or complete annulment? Not at all. Viewed from the human perspective the transcendent silence may be the total absence, but viewed from the silent One itself it is the complete opposite: it is the self-sufficient origin that brings forth everything, among which sound and speech. Its silence is a complete validation. Also if we look at the other ways of silence (the student's, mystic's, or ascending one's), we see that their silences are not the absence but the presence of something else (the lesson, secret, ascent or revelation). Perhaps only the aporetic silence is a mere absence, but this absence of knowledge has a huge philosophical potential. By philosophizing, one may climb this ladder of silence.

Despite the wordy length of this thesis, much is still left unsaid. The "series of footnotes to Plato" is too extensive to treat comprehensively. This thesis did not aim to give a full overview of silence in the Platonic tradition in late antiquity. Instead, I wanted to show the importance of silence in the later Platonic tradition that is often passed by unheard. There are many more silences that deserve scrutiny, for these silences resonate beyond their time in our modern ideas on silence. Furthermore, I aimed to show that 'silence' is not a monotonous concept, but is as diverse as discourse could be. Casel's thesis that 'the mystical silence is transferred from the mysteries to philosophy' is true but simplistic.[306] The silence of the Pythagoreans, which is connected with the body and self-control, is not the silence of the Neoplatonists, which transcends the body and loses the self. The Neoplatonic stillness enables unified contemplation, but the revelations enable listening to a divine truth. The different silences flow into each other while being transformed throughout antiquity with every author: from silence as a contrast to speech with the Pythagoreans, silence as passive experience of a revelation, to silence as a transcendence of discourse with the Neoplatonists. The archaic 'horror of the void' has become a thrill of totality.

[305] Quoted on p.16.
[306] Casel (1919:2).

Bibliography

Text Editions & Translations

Boter, G. (2022). *Philostratus: Vita Apollonii Tyanei*. (Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana) Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.

Bury, R.G. (1928). *Plato X: Laws I*. Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.

Bury, R.G. (1929). *Plato: Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*. Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.

Bury, R.G. (1933). *Sextus Empiricus: Outlines of Pyrrhonism*. Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.

Bury, R.G. (1935). *Sextus Empiricus: Against the Logicians*. Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.

Callahan, V.W. (1999 [1967]). *Saint Gregory of Nyssa. Ascetical Works*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press.

Daur, K.D. (1970). *Sancti Aurelii Augustini : Contra Academicos, De Bea Vita, De Ordine, De Magistro, De Liero Arbitrio*. Turnhout: Brepolis.

Dillon, J.M. & Hershbell, J. (1991). *On the Pythagorean Way of Life*. Atlanta (GA): Scholars Press.

Dillon, J.M. (1993). *Alcinous : Handbook of Platonism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Emlyn-Jones, C. & Preddy, W. (2013). *Plato: Republic, Books 6-10*. Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.

Foley, H. (2013). *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter: Translation, Commentary, and Interpretive Essays*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gerson, L.P. (ed.), Boys-Stones, G., Dillon, J.M., King, R.A.H., Smith, A., Wilberding, J. (transls.) (2017). *Plotinus: The Enneads*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hammond, C.J.-B. (2014). *Augustine: Confessions, books 1-8*. Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.

Hammond, C.J.-B. (2016). *Augustine: Confessions, books 9-13*. Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.

Helmbold, W.C. (1939). *Plutarch: Moralia*. Vol. VI. Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.

Hicks, R.D. (1931 [1925]). *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Vol. II. Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.

Hicks, R.D. (1931 [1925]). *Diogenes Laertius; Lives of Eminent Philosophers. Vol. II*. Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.

Jaeger, W., Cavernos, J., Callahan, V.W. (1952). *Gregorii Nysseni Opera Ascetica. Vol. VIII, Pars I*. Leiden: Brill.

Jones, C.P. (2005). *Philostratus*: *The life of Apollonius of Tyana*. 2 vols. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Kaster, R.A. (2011). *Macrobius: Saturnalia. Books I-II*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

King, P. (1995). *Augustine: Against the Academics, The Teacher*. Indiapolis & Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.

Klein, U. (1975). *Iamblichus: De Vita Pythagorica* (add. et corr. to the edition by L. Deubner, 1937). Stuttgart: Teubner.

Lloyd-Jones, H. (1997). *Sophocles: Ajax, Electra, Oedipus Tyrannus*. Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.

Louis, P. (1945). *Albinos. Épitomé*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.

Majercik, R. (1989). *The Chaldean Oracles*. Leiden: Brill.

Migne, J.-P. (1857-1866). *Patrologiae Cursus Completus (Series Graeca)*. Paris: Migne.

Morrow, G.R. & Dillon, J.M. (2018). *Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Oldfather, W.A. (1928). *Epicurus: Discourses III-IV, Fragments, Encheiridion*. Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.
Perry, E.B. (1964). *Secundus, the Silent Philosopher; the Greek Life of Secundus*. Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press.
Places, É. des (1974). *Numénius. Fragments*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
Pohlenz, M. (1929). *Plutarchi Moralia,* Vol. 3, *De Garullitate*. Leipzig: Teubner, 279-311.
Pomeroy, S.B. (1994). *Xenophon: Oeconomicus, A Social and Historical Commentary.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Rackham, H. (1944). *Aristotle: Politics.* Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.
Rappe, S. (2010). *Damascius' Problems and Solutions Concerning First Principles*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.
Robinson, J.M., et al. (eds.) (1988). *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (3rd edition). New York: Harper Collins.
Ruelle, C.É. (1889-1899) *Damascii Successoris Dubitationes et Solutiones*, vols. 1 & 2, Paris: Klincksieck.
Sommerstein, A.H. (2008). *Aeschylus. II: Oresteia : Agamemnon, Libation-bearers, Eumenides*. Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.
Spira, A. (2014). Gregorii Nysseni. De Anima et Resurrectione: Opera dogmatica minora. Gregorii Nysseni Opera Vol. III Pars III. Leiden & Boston: Brill.
Steel, C. (2007-2009). *Procli in Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, Vols. I-III, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Stewart, H.F., Rand, E.K & Tester, S.J. (eds. & trs.) (1973). *Boethius: The theological tractates, The Consolation of Philosophy.* Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.
Trapp, M.B. (1994). *Maximus Tyrius Dissertationes* Stuttgart-Leipzig: Teubner.
Trapp, M.B. (1997). *Maxiums of Tyre: The Philosophical Orations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Westerink, L.G. & Combès, J. (1986). *Damascius: Traité des Premiers Principes, Vol. 1 : de l'Ineffable et de l'Un.* Paris : Les Belles Lettres.
Wyatt, W.F. (2003). *Homer: Iliad* Vol.1&2. Cambridge (MA) & London: Harvard University Press.

Secondary Literature

Abbott, P. (2022). 'The Sound of Silence: Augustine's Soundscape for the Christian Empire', *Vigiliae Chrisitianae 76*, 537-558.
Armstrong, A.H. (1940). *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus: An Analytical and Historical Study.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Aubry, G. (2022). 'The One as First Principle of All', in: Gerson, L. & Wilberding, J. (Eds.), *The New Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 90-112.
Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to Do Things With Words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Banner, N. (2018). *Philosophic Silence and the 'One' in Plotinus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Barthes, R. (2005). *The Neutral: Lecture Course at the at the College de France 1977-1978* (transls. R.E. Krauss & D. Hollier). New York: Columbia University Press.
Beardslee, W.A. (1978), 'De Garrulitate (Moralia 502B–515A)', in: Betz, H.D. (ed.), *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature (Studia ad Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti 4)*. Leiden: Brill, 264-288.
Beierwaltes, W. (1965). *Proklos. Grundzuge seiner Metaphysik.* Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann.
Bénatouïl, T. (2018). 'Introduction: Dialectics in Dialogue', in: Bénatouïl, T. & Ierodiakonou, K. (eds.), *Dialectic after Plato and Aristotle.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-16.
Berkel, T.A. van (2020) *The Economics of Friendship: Conceptions of Reciprocity in Classical Greece.* Leiden & Boston: Brill.
Bermon, E. (2009). *La Signification et L'Enseignement: Texte Latin, Traduction Française et Commentaire du* De Magistro *de Saint Augustin.* Paris Vrin.

Bernardini, P.A. (2015). *Le Funzioni del Silenzio nella Grecia Antica: Antropologia, Poesia, Storiografia, Teatro: Convegno del Centro Internazionale di Studi Sulla Cultura della Grecia Antica (Urbino, 9-10 ottobre 2014*). Pisa & Rome: Fabrizio Serra Editore.
Betegh, G. (2014). 'Pythagoreans, Orphism and Greek Religion', in: Huffmann, C.A. (ed.), *A History of Pythagoreanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 149-166.
Bett, R. (2000). *Pyrrho, his Antecedents, and his Legacy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Bindeman, S.L. (1981). *Heidegger and Wittgenstein: The Poetics of Silence*. Lanham & London: University Press of America.
Bindeman, S.L. (2017). *Silence in Philosophy, Literature, and Art*. Leiden: Brill.
Boersma, H. (2013). Embodiment and Virtue in Gregory of Nyssa: An Anagogical Approach. Oxford.
Boone, M. J. (2015). 'The Role of Platonism in Augustine's 386 Conversion to Christianity', *Religion Compass 9*, 151-161.
Boter, G. (2015). 'The title of Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana'*, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, *135*, 1-7.
Bowerstock, G. (1969). *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Bowie, E L. (1978). 'Apollonius of Tyana: Tradition and reality', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt 16* (2), 1652–1699.
Bremmer, J.N. (1995). 'Religious Secrets and Secrecy in Classical Greece'. In: Stroumsa, G.G. & Kippenberg, H.G. (eds.), *Secrecy and Concealment: Studies in the History of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Religions*. Leiden: Brill, 61-78.
Breton, D. Le (1997). *Du Silence*. Paris: Métailié.
Brisson, L. (2019). 'Translating the Enneads Today', *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition 13,* 173-184.
Brown, P. (2000 [1967]). *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Burnet, W. (1972 [1962]). *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (transl. by Minar, E.L.). Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.
Burns, A. (2015). *Diatribe and Plutarch's Practical Ethics*. Dissertation, University of Iowa.
Burrus, V. (2005). 'Is Macrina a Woman? Gregory of Nyssa's *Dialogue on the Soul and Resurrection',* in: Ward, G. (ed.) *The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology*. Malden, Oxford & Auden: Blackwell Publishing, 249-264.
Bussanich, J. (1988). *The One and Its Relation to Intellect in Plotinus: a Commentary on Selected Texts*. Leiden: Brill.
Butti de Lima, P. (2021). 'Plato's Seventh Letter: Composition and Incongruences', *Méthexis*, *33*(1), 102-116.
Cain, S. (2012). *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*. London, etc: Penguin.
Caluori, D. (2017). 'Aporia and the Limits of Reason and of Language in Damascius', in Karamanolis, G. & Politis, V. (eds.), *The Aporetic Tradition in Ancient Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 269-284.
Cameron, A. (2014). *Dialoguing in Late Antiquity*. Washington: Center for Hellenistic Studies.
Carabine, D. (1995). *The Unknown God: Negative theology in the Platonic tradition Plato to Eriugena*. Leuven: Peeters Publishers.
Casel, O. (1919). *De Philosophorum Graecorum Silentio Mystico*. Giessen: A.Töpelmann.
Catenacci, L. (2015). 'Odisseo e il falso nome Aithon (Hom. Od. 19, 183)', In: Bernardini, A. (ed.*), Le funzioni del silenzio nella Grecia antica*, 103-13.
Ciani, M., ed (1987). *The Regions of Silence: Studies on the Difficulty of Communicating*. Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben.
Clair, R.P. (1998). *Organizing Silence: A World of Possibilities*. Albany (NY).: State University of New York Press.

Clark, G. (2009). 'Can We Talk? Augustine and the Possibility of Dialogue', in: S. Goldhill (ed.), *The End of Dialogue in Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 117-134.
Clark, R.K. (2012). *Words Cannot Name Thee: A Hymn to God and Its Author*. Informally published paper, retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/51145177/Words_Cannot_Name_Thee_A_Hymn_to_God_and_Its_Author
Clark, S.R.L. (2016). *Plotinus: Myth, Metaphor and Philosophical Practice*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
Coope, U. (2020). ' Freedom and the One', in: Coope, U., *Freedom and Responsibility in Neoplatonist Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 73-94.
Cornelli, G. (2013). 'Pythagoreanism as an historiographical category: historical and methodological notes', in: Cornelli, G., McKirahan, R. & Macris, C. (eds.), *On Pythagoreanism*. Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 3-46.
Crosson, F. (1989). 'The Structure of the *De Magistro'*, *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes 35,* 120-127.
Dauenhauer, B.P. (1980). *Silence: The Phenomenon and Its Ontological Significance*. Bloomington (IN): Indiana University Press.
David, E. (2009). 'Sparta's Kosmos of Silence', in: Hodkinson, S & Powell, A (eds.), *Sparta: New Perspectives*. Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 117-146.
Davidson, A.I. (1993). 'Introduction: Reading Hadot Reading Plotinus', in: Hadot, P. (1993 [1987]). *Plotinus or the Simplicity of Vision*. (transl. Chase, M.). Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1-16.
Dillon, J.M. (1992). 'Plotinus at Work on Platonism', *Greece & Rome 39* (2), 189-204.
Dillon, J.M. (1996a [1977]). *The Middle Platonist: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*. Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press.
Dillon, J.M. (1996b). 'Damascius on the Ineffable', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie 78* (2), 120-129.
Dillon, J.M. (2014). 'Pythagoreanism in the Academic tradition: The Early Academy to Numenius', in: Huffmann, C.A. (ed.), *A History of Pythagoreanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 250-273.
Dobell, B. (2009). *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion: The Journey from Platonism to Christianity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Dodds, E.R. (1960). 'Numenius and Ammonius', in: Dodds, E.R. et al. (eds.), *Les Sources de Plotin: Dix Exposés et Discussions*. Genève: Foundation Hardt, 1-60.
Dodds, E.R., & Dillon, J.M. (2012). 'Ammonius (2) Saccas', in: *The Oxford Classical Dictionary (4th ed.)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Donato, A. (2013a). *Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy as a product of Late Antiquity*. London: Bloomsbury.
Donato, A. (2013b). 'Forgetfulness and Misology in Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy 21*(3), 463-485.
Donato, A. (2013c). 'Self-Examination and Consolation in Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy', *Classical World 106* (3), 397-430.
Dörrie, H. (1955). 'Ammonios, der Lehrer Plotins', *Hermes 83* (4), 439-477.
Festugière, R.P. (1954). *La Réveleation d'Hermès Trismégiste. Vol IV: le Dieu Inconnu et la Gnose*. Paris : Librairie Lecoffre.
Flinterman, J. (1995). *Power, Paideia & Pythagoreanism: Greek Identity, Conceptions of the Relationship Between Philosophers and Monarchs and Political Ideas in Philostratus'* Life of Apollonius. Leiden: Brill.
Flinterman, J. (2014). 'Pythagoreans in Rome and Asia Minor around the turn of the common era', in: C. Huffman (ed.), *A History of Pythagoreanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 341-359.
Foley, J.M. (1995). Sixteen Moments of Silence in Homer. *Quaderni Urbinati Di Cultura Classica*, *50* (2), 7-26.

Francis, J.A. (1998). 'Truthful Fiction: New Questions to Old Answers on Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius'*, *American Journal of Philology 119*(3), 419-441.
Franke, W. (2004). 'Of the Ineffable: Aporetics of the Notion of an Absolute Principle', *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics 12* (1), 19-39.
Gemelli Marciano, M.L. (2014). 'The Pythagorean way of life and Pythagorean ethics', in: Huffmann, C.A. (ed.), *A History of Pythagoreanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 131-148.
Gera, D.L. (2003). *Ancient Greek ideas on speech, language, and civilization*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.
Gersh, S.E. (2013). 'From the One to the Blank', in: Gersh, S.E., *Being Different: More Neoplatonism after Derrida*. Leiden: Brill.
Gerson, L.P. (2016). 'The 'Neoplatonic' Interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides'*, *International Journal of the Platonic Tradition 10* (1), 65–94.
Gerson, L.P. (2012). 'Plotinus on Logos', in: Wilberding, J. & Horn, C. (eds.), *Neoplatonism and the Philosophy of Nature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 17-29.
Glenn, C. (2004). *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
Glucker, J. (2020). 'Plato in the Academy: Some Cautious Reflections', in: Kalligas, P., Balla, C., Baziotopoulou-Valavani, E. & Karasmanis, V. (eds.), *Plato's Academy: Its Workings and its History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 89-107.
Goldhill, S. (ed.) (2009). *The End of Dialogue in Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Gould, T. (2019). *Silence in Modern Literature and Philosophy: Beckett, Barthes, Nancy, Stevens*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
Greig, J. (2020). *The First Principle in Late Neoplatonism*. Leiden: Brill.
Gruber, J. (2006). *Kommentar zu Boethius' De Consolatione philosophiae*. Berlin and New York: De Gruyter.
Guillaume, X. (2018). 'How to do things with silence: Rethinking the centrality of speech to the securitization framework', *Security Dialogue* 49(6), 476-492
Guthrie, W.K.C. (1962). *A History of Greek Philosophy: The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* (Vol. 1). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Hadot, P. (1993 [1987]). *Plotinus or the Simplicity of Vision*. (transl. Chase, M.). Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.
Hägg, H.F. (2006). *Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Apophaticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Hall, E.T. (1959). *The Silent Language*. New York: Doubleday.
Heath, J. (2005). *The Talking Greeks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Hedges, E. & Fisher Fishkin, S. (eds.) (1994). *Listening to Silences: New Essays in Feminist Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Heide, M. (2014). *Secunduns Taciturnus: Die arabischen, äthiopischen und syrischen Textzeugen einer didaktischen Novelle aus der römischen Kaiserzeit*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
Heidegger, M. (1985 [1959]). *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. Frankfurt am Main; Vittorio Klostermann.
Hoffman, P. (1997). 'L'Espression de l'Indicible dans le Néoplatonisme grec de Plotin à Damasicius', in: in: Lévy, C. & Pernot, L. (eds.), *Dire L'Évidence (Philosophie et Rhétorique Antiques)*. Paris & Montréal: L'Harmattan, 335-390.
Holiday, R. (2019). *Stillness is the Key*. New York: Portfolio/Penguin.
Hoof, L. van (2010). 'On Talkativeness', in: Hoof, L. van, *Plutarch's Practical Ethics: The Social Dynamics of Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 151-175.
Horky, P.S. (2013). *Plato and Pythagoreanism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Huffman, C. (2013). 'Plato and the Pythagoreans', in: Cornelli, G., McKirahan, R. & Macris, C. (eds.), *On Pythagoreanism*. Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 237-270.

Huffman, C. (2019, fall edition). 'Pythagoreanism', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (ed. by E.N. Zalta). Retrieved on 30-10-2022 from https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/pythagoreanism/.
Ingenkamp, H.-G. (1971). *Plutarchs Schriften über die Heilung der Seele*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
Jaworski, A. (1993). *The Power of Silence: Social and Pragmatic Perspectives*. Newbury Park, CA.: Sage. Jaworski, A. (ed.) (1997). *Silence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
Jażdżewska, K. (2022). *Greek Dialogue in Antiquity: Post-Platonic Transformations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Johannesen, R.L. (1974). 'The Functions of Silence: A Plea for Communication Research', *Western Speech 38* (1), 25-35.
Joost-Gaugier, C. (2018). *Measuring Heaven: Pythagoras and His Influence on Thought and Art in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press.
Jugrin, D. (2019). 'The One Beyond Silence: The Apophatic Henology of Proclus', *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Philosophia 64*(1), 63-87.
Kagge, E. (2017 [2016]) *Silence: In the Age of Noise* (translated by B.L. Cook). New York: Pantheon Books.
Kahn, C. (1997). 'The Emergence of Dialectic', in: Kahn, C., *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 292-328.
Kahn, C. (2012). 'The Philosophical Importance of the Dialogue Dorm for Plato', in: Fink, J. (ed.), *The Development of Dialectic from Plato to Aristotle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 158-173.
Kahn, C.H. (2001). *Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans. A Brief History*. Indianapolis, Cambridge (MA): Hackett Publishing Company.
Kalligas, P. (2014). *The Enneads of Plotinus, Volume 1: A Commentary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Kamesar, A. (2004). 'The *Logos Endiathetos* and the *Logos Prophorikos* in Allegorical Interpretation: Philo and the D-Scholia to the Iliad', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies 44*, 163-181.
Kenny, C. (2011). *The Power of Silence* (1st ed.). London: Routledge.
Kenyon, E. (2018). *Augustine and the Dialogue*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Knowles (2013). *On the Way to Silence: Heidegger and the Greeks*. Dissertation, The New School for Social Research.
Knowles (2013). *On the Way to Silence: Heidegger and the Greeks*. Dissertation, The New School for Social Research.
Knox, B.M.W. (1968). 'Silent Reading in Antiquity', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies 9,* 421-435.
Kurzon, D. (1997). *Discourse of Silence*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
Laks, A. (2014). 'Diogenes Laertius' *Life of Pythagoras*', in: Huffmann, C.A. (ed.), *A History of Pythagoreanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 360-360.
Lamberton, R. (2018). 'The ΑΠΟΡΡΗΤΟΣ ΘΕΩΡΙΑ and the Roles of Secrecy in the History of Platonism', in : Kippenberg, H. & Stroumsa, G. (eds.), *Secrecy and Concealment*. Leiden: Brill, 139-152.
Landes, D.A. (2012). *Merleau-Ponty: Phenomenology of perception*. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge.
Lardinois, A. & McClure, L. (eds.) (2001). *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Lardinois, A. (2020). 'The Sound of Silence: Performing Silence in Greek Epic and Lyric Poetry', in: Papadodima, E. (ed.), *Faces of Silence in Ancient Greek Literature: Athenian Dialogues I*. Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 9-26.
Larsen, J.K., Haraldsen, V.V. & Vlasits, J. (eds.). (2022). *New Perspectives on Platonic Dialectic: A Philosophy of Inquiry*. New York & Oxford: Routledge.
Lashier, J. (2014). 'The Logos of God', in: Lashier, J., *Irenaeus on the Trinity*. Leiden: Brill.

Laurence, R. (2017). 'The Sounds of the City: From Noise to Silence in Ancient Rome', in: Betts, E. (ed.), *Senses of the Empire: Multisensory Approaches to Roman Culture*. London: Routledge, 13-22.
Lavaud, L. (2008). 'L'ineffable et L'Impossible : Damascius au regard de la Déconstructio', Les *Éditions de Minuit 96* (1), 46-66.
Lavaud, L. (2018). 'L'Odyssée et l'exode: les mystiques de Plotin et Grégoire de Nysse', *Le Philosophoire 49* (1), 81-91.
Lerer, S. (1985). *Boethius and Dialogue. Literary Method in the Consolation of Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Lloyd, G. (2014). 'Pythagoras', in Huffmann, C.A. (ed.), *A History of Pythagoreanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 24-45.
Long, A. (2009). 'Plato's Dialogues and a Common Rationale for Dialogue Form', in: S. Goldhill (ed.), *The End of Dialogue in Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 45-60.
Lurje, M. (2002). 'Die Vita Pythagorica als Manifest der neuplatonischen Paideia', in: Von Albrecht, M. (ed. and transl.), Dillon, J., et al. (2002). *Iamblichus: Pythagoras: Legende – Lehre – Lebensgestaltung*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 221-254.
Macculloch, D. (2013). *Silence: a Christian History*. New York: Penguin Group.
Macris, C. (2014). 'Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras'*, in: Huffmann, C.A. (ed.), *A History of Pythagoreanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 381-398.
Magee, J. (2009). 'The good and morality: Consolatio 2-4', in: Marenbon, J. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 181-206.
Maitland, S. (2008). *A Book of Silence*. London: Granta.
Marenbon, J. (2003). *Boethius*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
Mazur, Z. (2013). "Those Who Ascend to the Sanctuaries of the Temples": The Gnostic Context of Plotinus' First Treatise, 1.6 [1], *On Beauty'*, in: Corrigan, K. & Rasimus, T. (eds.). *Gnosticism, Platonism and the Late Ancient World*. Leiden: Brill, 329-368.
Mazur, Z. (2020). *The Platonizing Sethian Background of Plotinus's Mysticism*. Leiden: Brill.
Mazzeo, J.A. (1962). 'St. Augustine's Rhetoric of Silence', *Journal of the History of Ideas 23* (2), 175–196.
Montiglio, S. (2000). *Silence in the Land of Logos*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Mortley, R. (1975). 'Negative Theology and Abstraction in Plotinus', *The American Journal of Philology 96* (4), 363-377.
Mortley, R. (1986a). *From Word to Silence. Vol I: The Rise and Fall of Logos*. Bonn: Hanstein.
Mortley, R. (1986b). *From Word to Silence. Vol II: The Way of Negation, Christian and Greek*. Bonn: Hanstein.
Mylonas, G. (2015). *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Nikitas, D.Z. (2019). 'The Early Literary Construct of Boethius: In *Isagogen Porphyrii commenta, editio prima*', in: Golitsis, P. & Ierodiakonou, K. (eds.), *Aristotle and His Commentators: Studies in Memory of Paraskevi Kotzia*. Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 107-130.
Nikolaidis, A.G. (2011). 'Plutarch's 'Minor' Ethics: Some Remarks on De garrulitate, De curiositate, and De vitioso pudore', in Roskam, G & Stockt, L. van der (eds.), *Virtues for the People: Aspects of Plutarchan Ethics*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 205-222.
Nikulin, D. (2010). *Dialectic and Dialogue*. Redwood City: Stanford University Press.
Nuffelen, P. van. (2007). 'Words of Truth: Mystical Silence as a Philosophical and Rhetorical Tool in Plutarch', *Hermanthena*, 9-39.
O'Brien, D. (1992). 'Plotin et la Voeu de Silence', in: Brisson, L. et al. (eds.), *Porphyre: la Vie de Plotin, vol. II*. Paris: Vrin.
O'Brien, D. (1994). 'Plotinus and the Secrets of Ammonius', *Hermathena* 157*,* 117–153.
O'Meara, D. (2014). 'Iamblichus' *On the Pythagorean Life* in context', in: Huffmann, C.A. (ed.), *A History of Pythagoreanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 399-415.
O'Meara, D.J. (1993). *Plotinus: An Introduction to the Enneads*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

O'Meara, D.J. (1989). *Pythagoras Revived: Mathematics and Philosophy in Late Antiquity*. Oxford & New York: Clarendon Press & Oxford University Press.
Overwien, O. (2016). 'Secundus the Silent Philosopher in the Ancient and Eastern Tradition', in: Cupane, C. & Krönung, B. (eds.), *Fictional Storytelling in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond*. Leiden: Brill, 338-364.
Palmer, J. (2014). 'The Pythagoreans and Plato', in: Huffman, C. (ed.), *A History of Pythagoreanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 204-226.
Papadodima, E. (ed.) (2020). *Faces of Silence in Ancient Greek Literature: Athenian Dialogues I*. Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter.
Payne, A.F. (1981). *Chaucer and Menippean Satire*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
Pearson, L. (1969). 'Review of Perry's edition', The American Journal of Philology 88, 93-95.
Penella, R. J. (1979). *The letters of Apollonius of Tyana : a critical text with prolegomena, translation and commentary*. Leiden: Brill.
Petit, A. (1995). 'Le Silence Pythagoricien', in: Lévy, C. & Pernot, L. (eds.), *Dire L'Évidence (Philosophie et Rhétorique Antiques)*. Paris & Montréal: L'Harmattan, 287-296.
Picard, M. (1964 [1948]). *The World of Silence*. (translated by S. Godman) Chicago: Henry Regnery Company.
Praet, D. (2009). 'Pythagoreanism And The Planetary Deities:The Philosophical And Literary Master-Structure Of The *Vita Apollonii'* in: Demoen, K. & Praet, D. (eds.), *Theios Sophistes: Essays on Flavius Philostratus'* "Vita Apollonii". Leiden: Brill, 283-320.
Radt, S. (1977). *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* Vol. 4. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
Rappe, S. (2000). *Reading Neoplatonism: Non-discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus, and Damascius*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Relihan, J.C. (2007). *The Prisoner's Philosophy: Life and Death in Boethius's Consolation*. Notre Dame (IN): Notre Dame University Press.
Remes, P. (2007). *Plotinus on Self: The Philosophy of the 'We'*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Rhodes, J.M. (2003). *Eros, Wisdom, And Silence. Plato's Erotic Dialogues*. Columbia & London: University of Missouri Press.
Riedweg, C. (2005 [2002]). *Pythagoras: His Life, Teaching, and Influence* (transl. by Rendall, S.). Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.
Riel, G. van (2011). 'Damascius', in: Gerson, L. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 667-696.
Rigolio, A. (2019). *Christians in Conversation: A Guide to Late Antique Dialogues in Greek and Syriac*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Rowett, C. (2014). 'The Pythagorean Society and Politics', in: Huffman, C. (ed.), *A History of Pythagoreanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 112-130.
Runia, D. (2016). *Philo of Alexandria and the* Timaeus *of Plato*. Leiden: Brill.
Santos, L. ed. (forthcoming, 2023). *Cultures of Silence: The Power of Untold Narratives*. London: Routledge.
Saville-Troike, M. (1985). 'The Place of Silence in an Integrated Theory of Communication', in: Tannen, D. & Saville-Troike, M. (eds.), *Perspectives on Silence*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 3-18.
Scarpi, P. (1987). 'The Eloquence of Silence: Aspects of Power Without Words', in: Ciani, M. (ed.), *The Regions of Silence: Studies on the Difficulty of Communicating*. Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 21-40.
Schiaparelli, A. (2009). 'Plotinus on Dialectic' *Archiv Für Geschichte Der Philosophie*, *91* (3), 253-287.
Schroeder, F.M. (1992). *Form and Transformation: A Study in the Philosophy of Plotinus*. Montreal: McGill-Quenn's University Press.
Searle, J.R. (1969). *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Sells, M.A. (1994). *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Sicherl, M. (1988). 'Ein Neoplatonischer Hymnus unter den Gedichten Gregors von Nazianz', in: Duffy, J. & Peradotto, J. (eds.), *Gonimos: Neoplatonic and Byzantine Studies Presented to G.Westerink*. Buffalo: Arethusa, 61-83.
Smith, A. (2014). 'The Non-Commentary Tradition', in: Remes, P. & Slaveva-Griffin, S. (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Neoplatonism*. London & New York: Routledge, 115-125.
Smith, J.K.A. (2000). 'Between Prediction and Silence: Augustine on How (Not) to Speak of God', *The Heythrop Journal 41*, 66-86.
Soskice, J. M. (2002). 'Monica's Tears: Augustine on Words and Speech', *New Blackfriars 83*, 448-458.
Stanbury, M.A. (2014). *Metaphysics and Dialectic: Plotinus' Reception of Aristotle as Mediated by Alexander of Aphrodisias*. Dissertation, University of Notre Dame.
Steel, C. (1999). "Negatio Negationis': Proclus on the First Lemma of the First Hyposthesis of the *Parmenides',* in: Cleary, J.J. (ed.), *Traditions of Platonism; Essays in Honour of John Dillon.* Aldershot & Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Company, 351-368.
Stock, B. (2010). *Augustine's Inner Dialogue*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Stroumsa, G. (2005 [1996]). *Hidden Wisdom: Esoteric Traditions and the Roots of Christian Mysticism*. Leiden: Brill.
Tannen, D. & Saville-Troike, M. (eds.) (1985). *Perspectives on Silence*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.
Thesleff, H. (1961). *An Introduction to the Pythagorean Writings of the Hellenistic Period.* Åbo: Åbo Akademi.
Turner, J.D. (2001). *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition.* Quebec & Paris: Less Presses de l'Université Laval & Peeters.
Vlad, M. (2016). 'Damascius and Dionysius on Prayer and Silence', in: Dillon, J.M. & Timotin, A. (eds.), *Platonic Theories of Prayer*. Leiden: Brill, 192-212.
Vlad, M. (2017). 'Stepping into the Void: Proclus and Damascius on Approaching the First Principle', *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition 11*, 46-70.
Vlad, M. (2019). *Damascius et l'ineffable: récit de l'impossible discours*. Paris: Vrin.
Voort, C. van der (2022). *Quid Taces, Boethius? The theme of silence and the dialectical method in* De Consolatione Philosophiae. Paper Research Master Classics and Ancient Civilizations (course: Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy in context. Philosophy and Literature in Late Antiquity), Leiden University.
Wakoff, M. (2016). 'Awaiting the Sun: A Plotinian Form of Contemplative Prayer', in: Dillon, J.M. & Timotin, A. (eds.), *Platonic Theories of Prayer*. Leiden: Brill, 73-87.
Welzen, H. (2005). 'Intertextuality: Traces of Mysticism', in: Chatelion Counet, P. & Berges, U. (eds.), *One Text, A Thousand Methods; Studies in Honor of Sjef van Tilborg*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 317-347.
Wessel, S. (2010). 'Memory and Individuality in Gregory of Nyssa's Dialogus de anima et resurrectione', *Journal of Early Christian Studies 18* (3), 369-392.
Whittaker, J. (1969). 'Neopythagoreanism and Negative Theology', *Symbolae Osloenses, 44*, 109-125.
Williams, R. (1993). 'Macrina's Deathbed Revisited: Gregory of Nyssa on Mind and Passion', in: Wickham, L.R. & Bammel, C.P. (eds.), *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity: Essays in Tribute to George Christopher Stead.* Leiden: Brill, 227-246.
Wittgenstein, L. (1922 [1921]). *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (transl. C.K. Ogden). London: Routlegde.
Wolfson, H. (1952). 'Albinus and Plotinus on Divine Attributes', *Harvard Theological Review* 45(2), 115-130.
Zwollo, L. (2018). *St. Augustine and Plotinus: the Human Mind as Image of the Divine.* Leiden: Brill.


Universiteit
Leiden