Aoristo)))))
International Journal of Phenomenology, Hermeneutics and Metaphysics

Philosophy and poetry: a dialogue[1]

Filosofia e poesia: um diálogo

Profa. Dra. Gisele Batista Candido
Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro - UFRJ[2]

ABSTRACT

Considering the history of Philosophy, we can see that, before recognizing and stating the peculiarities of its practices, the philosophical discourse was born in intimate connection to poetry. By exploring moments of tension and proximity between poetic and philosophical discourses, the present essay is a reflection on this relationship over time. In order to do so, we focus on the works of authors such as Homer, Plato, Goethe, F. Schlegel, and Schelling as a strategy to show variations and emphasize some specific movements within this long dialogue.

KEYWORDS

Poetry; philosophy; Plato; Goethe; Schlegel

RESUMO

Considerando retrospectivamente os desdobramentos da filosofia, é possível observar que, antes de reconhecer e reafirmar as singularidades de seu exercício, o discurso filosófico tem sua origem intimamente associada à poesia. Evidenciando alguns momentos de cisão e outros momentos de contato entre o discurso poético e o discurso filosófico, o presente ensaio visa abordar e refletir sobre o diálogo entre esses dois discursos ao longo do tempo. Nesse horizonte, consideraremos estrategicamente os trabalhos de autores como Homero, Platão, Goethe, F. Schlegel e Schelling, a fim de evidenciar as oscilações e salientar alguns movimentos específicos dentro desse longo diálogo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Poesia; filosofia; Platão; Goethe; Schlegel

---

[1] The author would like to thank Leonardo Marques for translating the present essay, which was originally published in Portuguese: https://www3.ufrb.edu.br/seer/index.php/griot/article/view/973
[2] E-mail: giselebc@gmail.com.Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7182-3192

> 'What has philosophy,' he responded, 'what has the cold sublimity of that science to do with poetry?' 'Poetry,' I said, sure of my case, 'is the beginning and end of that science. Like Minerva from Jupiter's head it springs from the poetry of infinite divine being. And so too what is irreconcilable in it will finally flow together again in the mysterious wellspring of poetry.'
>
> Hölderlin, *Hyperion, or the Hermit in Greece*, p. 69

On the differences and similarities between the philosopher and the poet, Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935) writes: "We should not be surprised that one thing is the poet and the other is the philosopher, even though they are the same". (PESSOA, 2001, p. 250) Such a witty dialectical oxymoron - which distinguishes one position from the other while also concluding, in opposition to a deductive logic, that they are analogous - may sound less paradoxal and more conciliatory if we assume that philosophy and poetry are two different discourses, but they also have something in common, a fundamental and necessary connection. Based on this possibility, the present essay explores some of the key moments that marked the long and complicated coexistence between the philosophical and poetic discourses.

Before recognizing and reaffirming the peculiarities of the philosophical discourse, it is important to note that its origins are intimately connected to poetry. Homer's verses not only form an epic narrative about men coexisting with mythical creatures in a world ruled by gods but also offers the possibility of exploring philosophical experiences, since they bring issues related to the human condition.[3] In the Odyssey, for example, cunningness leads Odysseus to act rationally in a universe dominated by unknown and inexorable forces and reflect on his condition to circumvent or face the inexorable, be it natural or supernatural. Known for her intellect and cunningness, Athena reveals this when talking to the Homeric hero:

> Crafty indeed would he be, a real trickster, whoever outstripped you/ in all manner of wiles, even if some god were against you -/ obstinate, various-minded, insatiably clever, not even/ here in your land would you ever desist from your lying and cheating,/ telling the fraudulent tales that are dear to your soul from the ground up./ But come now, let us talk no longer of this, for we both are/ skilled in our cunning: as you among all mortal men are the best by/ far in counsel and speeches, so I among all of the gods am/ famous for wit and for

[3] Like all birth and death dates of all philosophers of classical antiquity mentioned in this essay, the exact dates of Homer's life are unknown. Herodotus says that Homer lived 400 years earlier than himself, that is, around 850 BCE. Considering the dates when the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were conceived, modern scholars believe Homer lived between the late ninth to the eighth centuries BCE. Some recent studies, however, have argued that he actually lived in the seventh century BCE, since, according to Gregory Nagy, Homeric texts were initially fixed only in the sixth century BCE.

wily devices. (HOMER, 2002, p. 256, v. 290-95)

According to Adorno (1903-1969) and Horkheimer (1895-1973) in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, "all the adventures Odysseus survives are dangerous temptations deflecting the self from the path of its logic. [...] The faculty by which the self-survives adventures, throwing itself away in order to preserve itself, is cunning." (ADORNO, HORKHEIMER, 2002, p. 38-9) *Odyssey*'s Book XII, for example, describes the episode when Odysseus meets the Sirens. Aware that the voice of the Sirens would attract him and his men to a deadly trap, pushing his embarcation against the rocks, Odysseus follows Circe's advice and instructs his men to fill their ears with wax to avoid the seductive voice of those creatures. Odysseus, however, refuses to fill his own ears, asking his men to tie him up to the ship's mast so that he could hear their voice without going after them. He could have changed his route to avoid Capri - the Sirens' island - or filled his ears with wax as his sailors had done. He preferred instead to live this experience, but guided by his intellect, which allows him to dramatically reduce risks.

Odysseus may be understood as the hero that represents the *allegorical anticipation of the triumph of reason*. In the words of Franklin Leopoldo e Silva:

> Cunningness in Odysseus represents the sudden awareness by man that he can beat nature and the supernatural through an specific human force that can't be physically measured, so that his initial disadvantage can become the key advantage against his enemy. In this sense *Odyssey* was interpreted by Adorno and Horkheimer as an allegory of the supremacy of human reason over natural and even supernatural forces. In this case Odysseus' voyage and the dangers he faces represented the emergence of rationality as the privileged tool for the triumph of man over the enchanted world. Odysseus' cunningness was the first representation of reason and its role in the conquest of the irrational [...]. And Odysseus' victories can be allegorically understood as evidence that reason is capable of overcoming all obstacles and presenting itself as the only valid criterion in the relationship with the world, a criterion that at the same time shows the supremacy of reason. (SILVA, 2018, s.d.)

When considering the Greek man in antiquity, Werner Jaeger writes that "[…] myth and heroic poetry are the nation's inexhaustible treasure of great examples: from them it derives its ideals and its standards for daily life." (JAEGER, 1946, p. 41) To Jaeger the poetic discourse of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* reveals a connection between the vitality and philosophical-spiritual force that was fundamental to the making of the Greek man. He explains this phenomenon:

> […] it is usually through artistic expression that the highest values acquire permanent significance and the force which moves mankind.

> Art has a limitless power of converting the human soul - a power which the Greeks called *psychagogia*. For art alone possesses the two essentials of educational influence – universal significance and immediate appeal. By uniting these two methods of influencing the mind, it surpasses both philosophical thought and actual life. Life has immediate appeal, but the events of life lack universal significance: they have too many accidental accompaniments to create a truly deep and lasting impression on the soul. Philosophy and abstract thought do attain to universal significance: they deal with the essence of things; yet they affect none but the man who can use his own experience to inspire them with the vividness and intensity of personal life. Thus, poetry has the advantage over both the universal teachings of abstract reason and the accidental events of individual experience. It is more philosophical than life (if we may use Aristotle's famous epigram in a wider sense), but it is also, because of its concentrated spiritual actuality, more lifelike than philosophy. (JAEGER, 1946, p. 36-7)

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are not the only works to have shown the dialogue between the poetic and the philosophical in classical antiquity. *Theogony*, the cosmogonical poem by Hesiod (750 a.C.-650 a.C.), and Greek tragedies also illustrate the heterogenous beginnings of philosophical discourse and its relationship to poetry. As a privileged space for explorations of problems that are so strongly related to the human condition, these poetic works shaped the philosophical reflections of Plato, Aristotle, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Adorno, and other philosophers to this day.

Poetry was a more direct instrument for some pre-Socratic thinkers such as Parmenides of Elea (530 a.C.-460 a.C.) and Empedocles of Acragas (490 a.C.-430 a.C.). Using the poetic form to criticize the pertinence of the poetry of Homer and Hesiod, the thinker Xenophanes of Colophon (570 a.C.-475 a.C.) "wrote verses, elegies, and iambs against Hesiod and Homer, mocking what they had said about the gods and also singing his verses in public". (LAERCIO, 1792, p.224) By criticizing the pernicious way these rhapsodists represented gods (with vices and defects) with his verses, Xenophanes contributed to the classic fight between poets and philosophers, influencing Plato in his effort to build a philosophical discourse based on a critique of and distancing from poetic practices.

*

Since the beginning philosophy has been surrounded by poetry. This tense and complicated relationship contributed to the development of the former over time. It is not an exaggeration to argue that poetry in philosophical discourse is part of the construction of what we understand as philosophy today.[4] When considering the

[4] According to Cláudio Oliveira, "The position of Socrates, as Plato's character, is the first to defend the exclusion of poetry and sophistic from philosophy. This act, in fact, defines the constitution of philosophy itself. Philosophy is founded and made by this exclusion." (OLIVEIRA, 2011, p. 17)

relationship between Platonism and poetry, Lukács (1885-1971) argues that "every platonist speaks his most significant words when he speaks about the poet". (LUKÁCS, 1974, p. 26) When defining philosophy, for example, Plato (428 a.C.-347 a.C.) necessarily needs to distinguish it from poetry. The latter, as *Íon* shows, supposedly came from supernatural, divine instances and depended on inspiration and not some kind of knowledge to establish itself: "For a poet is a delicate thing, winged and sacred, and unable to create until he becomes inspired and frenzied, his mind no longer in him". (PLATO, 1996, p. 14) Philosophy in turn produced a certain autonomy both in its principles and forms, not depending on gods but on man's self-determining search for knowledge. Thus, the poetic experience, as a kind of supernatural experience, is significantly distinct from *epistème* as an instrument for philosophical knowledge.

The rise of rational behavior, allegorically embodied by the *Odyssey*'s hero, becomes the basis for Plato's distinction between poetry and philosophy. In Homer, however, reason served cunningness and trickery; here it should lead to truth and moral virtue.

Besides being condemned on the moral sphere - because of the influence that poets had over the *polis*, with verses that were full of harmful examples, but nonetheless had a certain appeal - poetry in Plato's *Republic* will also be separated from philosophy because of its mimetic formative characteristics. According to Socrates, they produced a disrupted relation between poetry and the world of Ideas, radically distancing the former from truth:

> Then we can fairly take the poet and set him beside the painter. He resembles him both because his works have a low degree of truth and also because he deals with a low element in the mind. We are therefore quite right to refuse to admit him to a properly run state, because he wakens and encourages and strengthens the lower elements in the mind to the detriment of reason, which is like giving power and political control to the worst elements in a state and ruining the better elements. The dramatic poet produces a similarly bad state of affairs in the mind of the individual, by encouraging the unreasoning part of it, which cannot distinguish greater and less but thinks the same things are now large and now small and by creating images far removed from the truth. (PLATO, 2007, 605b)

The platonic dialogues undoubtedly had a key role in the separation between poetry and philosophy. However, Plato did not completely exclude poetic practices from his reflections. Plato's *Republic*, for example, is marked by the expulsion of the poets from the platonic *polis* while also containing the narration of a myth by Socrates, a narrative that is markedly poetic.[5] Whether for propaedeutic purposes or

[5] Many different authors, such as Perceval Frutiger, Cassirer, and Luc Brisson were inspired by or developed studies about the role of the myth in the works of Plato, considering matters such as the function, meaning,

to attract and entertain his spectators, or even because strictly rational speculation revealed itself to be incapable of dealing with unresolvable questions such as the meaning of existence or the finitude of life, Plato used poetic tools to develop and even conclude his philosophical discourse, as in his use of the myth of Er, which is at the end of the *Republic*.

His harsh criticisms of the uses of myths by poets and rhapsodists was therefore more related to the harmful moral aspects of their verses and their mimetic forms than the use of myth itself.[6] In order to circumvent these problems, Plato will submit the uses of the myth to the moral parameter of the good example and use the *diegesis*, which was a simple form of narrative that did not make use of simulations. In many different moments of his writings, Plato abandons his characteristic dialectical arguments and uses a mythical narrative to transmit his ideas. The mythical discourse allows Plato to move beyond the realm of rational discourse and explore theories that exceed the strictly rational. In sum, without completely abandoning the primeval relation between the poetic and the philosophical, Plato's dialogues will bridge these two discourses through the myth.

Perhaps because more emphasis has been put on Plato's critique of poetry than on his decision to not completely exclude the poetic discourse from his reflections, the following philosophical tradition has frequently preferred to stress and take forward the project to delimit the enterprise, electing for this task the regularity of reason instead of the more intuitive forms that are more characteristic of poetry. However, despite the influence of the platonic critique in the delimitation of philosophy and its development over time, the enterprise has not always been marked by a complete distancing from poetry. This long, oscillating dialogue between the two discourses has also witnessed important approximations that have transformed philosophy. Authors that directly inspired and constituted the philosophical movement known as German Romanticism are among those who explored the approximation between the two discourses in radical new ways. Unlike Plato, they considered the intimate relationship between philosophy and poetry as a necessary and fruitful means for the rebirth and development of philosophical discourse.

While the critique of Homer marks the beginning of the separation between poetry and philosophy in classical antiquity, it is the work of another poet that will inspire the renewal of reflections on this dialogue in modernity. Offering an organic and global understanding of the world and man in permanent development (*Bildung*) in opposition to an uncontrolled rationalism, the work of Goethe (1749-1832) was enthusiastically explored by philosophers of the German Romanticism,

---

and the classification of the myth, as well as the meanings of allegory, and if there are any significant differences between the former and the latter. Although aware of these studies, here I choose to stress the uses of the mythical narrative as a strategy to observe the presence of the poetic discourse in the Platonic dialogues.

[6] Despite his many critiques of the poetic mimesis, Plato does not completely condemn it. When conceiving his ideal polis, por example, the philosopher will consider its use under certain philosophical, ethical, and political conditions.

who developed careful reflections on the balance between sentiment and reason as part of the making of a man integrated to nature through a combination of art and philosophy.[7]

If Plato used philosophy to criticize poetry, Goethe uses poetry to criticize some characteristics of philosophy. Moreover, Homer and mythical narratives were highly regarded by Goethe (unlike Plato).

In his *Conversations with Goethe*, Eckermann describes this characteristic of the German poet: "Dined with Goethe. We talked of Homer. I remarked that the interposition of the gods immediately borders on the Real." At other moment of his dialogue with Goethe, on *Faust*'s mythical figures, Eckerman says: "'Antiquity,' said I, 'must be very living to you, else you could not make all these figures step so freshly into life, and treat them with such freedom as you have'". (GOETHE et al, 1850, p. 240, 350)

Schelling in turn writes about the mythological nature of Goethe's *Faust*:

> To the extent that we can evaluate Goethe's *Faust* from the fragment now before us, we must say that this poem displays quite simply the purest, most inward essence of our age: content and form created from that which is contained in the whole age, and even from that which the age carried or is still carrying in its womb. Hence, we can call it a genuinely mythological poem. (SCHELLING, 1989, p. 74)

Goethe revives an ancient German myth in his *Faust*. The first written register of Faust comes from 1587, when the editor Spies published *The History of von Dr. Johann Fausten.* Faust became a mythical figure since then, a symbol of human ambitions that would be revived by various authors of western literature, such as Goethe himself, Christopher Marlowe, Byron, Heinrich Heine, Thomas Mann, Valéry, and Fernando Pessoa, among others.

As a symbol of excessive rationalization, Goethe's *Faust* has a protagonist whose aspiration is part of an uncontrolled rational appetite that in turn reveals itself to be as unbearable as devastating in the absence of other virtues. Scornfully, in a dialogue with God, Mephistopheles talks about such a condition: "I merely see how mankind toils and moils./Earth's little gods still do not change a bit,/ are just as odd as on their primal day./Their lives would be a little easier/if You'd not let them glimpse the light of heaven -/they call it Reason and employ it only to be more bestial than any beast." (GOETHE, 2014, v. 280-85)

[7] Márcio Suzuki also writes about this critical position in Goethe: "He sees philosophy with reticence, but does it consciously since he studied ancient and modern philosophical systems and developed a very rich and consistent worldview. The problem with philosophy has deeper roots: for the so-called German pre-Romanticism, also known as *Sturm und Drang*, a movement of which he was part in his youth, modern philosophy is part of a great system of rationalization of the world that should be resisted. Enlightenment was the peak of the effort to dominate nature, and belief in the progress of Lights projects on this same nature a technical anthropomorphic finalism, as if total rationalization was the ultimate objective to be reached by the history of humanity. (SUZUKI, 2005, p. 202)

On his condition, Faust himself says:

> I've studied now, to my regret,/Philosophy, Law, Medicine,/and - what is worst - Theology/from end to end with diligence./Yet here I am, a wretched fool/and still no wiser than before/I've become Master, and Doctor as well,/and for nearly ten years I have led/my young students a merry chase,/up, down, and every which way -/and find we can't have certitude. (GOETHE, 2014, v. 355-60)

Motivated by his insatiable and uncontrollable learning appetite, in his pact with Mephistopheles, Faust asks for the satisfaction of his thirst for knowledge through excess, through the access to the Whole. His request is denied by Mephistopheles, who argues that it is characteristic of human nature to have a limited life. In reaction to this, Faust asks: "What am I, then, if there is no attaining/ those crowning heights of humanness/toward which my every fiber's straining?" (GOETHE, 2014, v. 1800). Mephistopheles replies that: "The upshot is: you are just what you are./ Pile wigs with countless curls upon your head,/ wear shoes that lift you up an ell,/ and still you will remain just what you are." (GOETHE, 2014, v. 1805-10)

In spite of all riches, of all artifices and strategies, of all knowledge, Faust, like any other man, will always be what he has always been, thus his rampant knowledge - Mephistophele warns - will only torment him.

According to Marcus Mazzari, this lack of control stimulated by insatiable knowledge leads

> Faust to take the titanic role of representative of all of humanity. As Schöne argues, a critique to this unconditional desire for totality appears in the words of Abbé at the end of Wilhelm Meister: 'He who will accomplish or enjoy every thing in his full nature, he who will connect everything without himself in such a species of enjoyment, must waste his time in perpetual unsuccessful efforts. (GOETHE, 2010, p.175)

With *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, Goethe became popular for inaugurating a new literary genre in Germany, the "coming-of-age" novel (*Bildungsroman*), which focuses on the growth experience of its protagonist based on the historical and social conditions that surround him. The idea of coming-of-age that appears in this novel pervades and is reconfigured in many other writings by Goethe, also marking German romantic authors. In one of his fragments, F. Schlegel (1772-1829) is explicit about this: "The French Revolution, Fichte's philosophy, and Goethe's *Meister* are the greatest tendencies of the age." (SCHLEGEL, 1991, p. 46)

Under the influence of the writings of Aristotle (384 a.C.-322 a.C.) and other philosophers[8], Goethe sought to think man in intimate symbiosis with nature,

[8] Goethe also wrote a "Supplement to Aristotle's poetics", where, in opposition to Plato's moralizing view of

glimpsing structural connections between everything that exist:

> Close your eyes, prick your ears, and from the softest sound to the wildest noise, from the simplest tone to the highest harmony, from the most violent, passionate scream to the gentlest words of sweet reason, it is by Nature who speaks, revealing her being, her power, her life, and her relatedness so that a blind person, to whom the infinitely visible world is denied, can grasp an infinite vitality in what can be heard. (GOETHE apud WULF, 2015, p. 9)

When considering the acts of Nature, the German poet notes that every being, including men, lives under a process of transformation and growth, which gives them specific characteristics in combination with the limitations of each being and in connection to the whole.[9]

According to Goethean logic, the giraffe, for example, has a long neck to satisfy its specific vital and environmental necessities at the expense of the limits of its body. Thus what stimulates the development of a certain part is also what makes other parts to remain latent; limits shape the species. This harmonic process is not restricted only to the biological, but to all domains, including the arts.[10] In this context, myths, which for him have the timeless force of equally configuring contemporary issues and understandings, have an interesting role since they can virtuously shape the balance of this Goethean dynamics. What Aphrodite has in beauty she lacks in other aspects. Such a limitation does not necessarily lead to disadvantages. Her beauty would not be so evident and effective if she also had other remarkable characteristics such as force or cunningness on that same level. Moreover, thinking of this balance in broader terms, if Olympian gods did not have different and complementary characteristics it would be hard to keep a divine balance in the Olympus.

Tragedy, he "moves away from the perspective that considers catharsis based on the moralizing effect that it causes on the spectator and interprets it as an internal component of the composition itself of the tragic poem." (TOLLE, 2000, p. 123). According to Márcio Suzuki, "when a matter receives a determination or form in Aristotle, it moves from potency to act. To become act means that it has reached completeness, a finishing, an end. […] Goethe will take advantage of Aristotle's observations, who he believed understood nature better than any modern author. The organism only shows its form and end when acting, or, in other words, the present is what shows more clearly its form and its end." (SUZUKI, 2005, p. 206) In his article *The years of Goethe's apprenticeship*, Suzuki also writes about the philosophical influences of the poet, reflecting on the role of Kant, along with Spinoza, Jacobi, Herder, Schiller, among others, in Goethe's development.

[9] On Goethe's understanding of the articulation between form and end, Walter Benjamin writes: "Kant's definition of the organic as a purposiveness whose purpose lay inside and not outside the purposive being, was in harmony with Goethe's own concepts. The unity of the beautiful, natural beauty included, is always independent of purpose - in this Goethe and Kant are of one mind." (BENJAMIN, 1982, p. 81)

[10] Suzuki writes: "When one moves from the mineral world to the vegetable world, from the vegetable world to the animal world, and from these to the artistic or literary universe, there is metamorphosis. This allows us to think that all domains are connected but also have their own delimitation and autonomy. This is how the artistic process is not conceived as pure and simple mimesis anymore, but as transmutation, "creative imitation," in the expression of Moritz, approved by Goethe." (SUZUKI, M. 2005, p. 217)

Goethe shows with his work the interaction and connections between the microcosm of men to the macrocosm of the world. To know himself, man necessarily needs to know the world, and to know the world he necessarily needs to know himself. Without closing himself off and restricting his development to the safety of rational speculation, the man of global - and not total - making must explore his different skills, which include both imagination and understanding, reason and sensibility. Poetry will be a privileged space for this broad, inclusive, and fertile development since inasmuch as the creativity, which is stimulated by his link to the intuitive and the imagination, expands the fields for the workings of reason and the construction of broad knowledge.

In sum, if Plato had a critical look at poetry without entirely abandoning it, Goethe in turn suspiciously looked at philosophy without completely rejecting it. Unlike the platonic critique that led to the distancing between the two forms, the German poet's critique of the rampant rationalization of the world and his celebration of intuition stimulated his interlocutors to consider the benefits of the reconciliation between the poetic and philosophical discourses since such an approach privileged the organic integration of man to the world.

*

In one of his fragments, F. Schlegel writes: "all art should become science and all science art; poetry and philosophy should be made one." (SCHLEGEL, 1991, p.14) As a source of inspiration and object of critique, German idealism also influenced the Romantic movement, which, on the one hand, saw especially in Kant's (1724-1804) *Critique of Pure Reason* and Fichte's (1762-1814) *Science of Knowledge* the development of the possibilities of consciousness based on a rigorous critical reflection. On the other hand, it also saw the limitations of an excessively theoretical speculative system - restricted as it was to the formality of philosophical language[11] - in visiting in more sensitive and spontaneous ways this intermittent and diverse thing called life.[12] According to "what could be called the 'program' of Romanticism: the artificiality of

[11] Although recognizing the possibilities and advantages of philosophical reflections over poetic experiences, Kant thought the connection between them to be unnecessary and even harmful, since philosophy could have the abstract sophistication of its conceptual framework contaminated by the more sensible forms of language that could not contribute to the logical form of its discourse. Moreover, for him the straight connection between poetry and philosophy was only healthy while the latter did not have a specific vocabulary: "The first philosophers were poets. It took time, namely, to discover words for abstract concepts; hence in the beginning supersensible thoughts were represented in sensible images. [...] On account of the poverty of language, one could only philosophize in poetry at that time." (KANT apud Suzuki, 1998, p 55)

[12] For the Romantics, according to Suzuki, "Philosophy 'staunches and has to staunch' against life, 'since life is precisely this, which can't be known [*begriffen*]'. Life cannot be reached by any concept (*Begriffe*). In face of this 'ineffable' (*Ein Unaussprechliches*), philosophy must stop being an schematic faded view, an artificial product (*Kunstprdukt*), to become effective knowledge, a piece of art (*Kunstwerk*). Faithful to the science-doctrine, Romanticism affirms that the system of human spirit has to be reinvented each time; but - a properly Romantic addendum - all philosophy is 'individual', a mixture of philosophy and a-philosophy', and only in this way the science-doctrine or the philosophy of philosophy can become *effective* philosophy." (SUZUKI, 1998, p. 96)

philosophical construction must be 'returned' to life, transforming it into a piece of art. Man has to simultaneously be philosophy and life, 'ideal life' and 'real philosophy' – a living theory of life. (SUZUKI, 1998, p. 97)

Through his fragmentary writing F. Schlegel indeed moves philosophy to a more poetic realm as part of his effort to integrate different discursive genres and build a kind of universal and infinite romantic genre, sensitive to how reflections are born and transformed as well as to the spontaneity of consciousness in all its brightness. The fragmentary writing privileges meaning in a constant process of development. In this way it brings within it not only what is explicit, but also what remains silent and can only be obliquely glimpsed. Besides containing the poetic and the philosophical, the fragment is a creation that reflects the disperse and intermittent flows of consciousness, stimulating the imagination with its gaps and pushing the reader to develop his reading in a freer and more participative way, participating even in the reconstruction of its meaning.

More than bringing philosophical thought to life, poetry complements philosophy, which in turn raises poetry with the resourcefulness of its spiritual clarity.

According to Márcio Suzuki, for Schelling (1775-1854) "philosophy was 'born and fed by poetry', thus one could expect that, once they are fully concluded, philosophy and 'all the sciences that are conducted by poetry to perfection… will again pour, like separate rivers, into the universal ocean of poetry, from where they came from.'" (SUZUKI, 2001, p. 12)

Language and mythology (a form of poetic discourse) can be traced back to a pre-conscious past in the development of a man, when imagination and intuition had a preponderant role in the process, a past that nonetheless persists and discreetly shapes the rational conquests of our present consciousness. Since it depends on language for its constitution, philosophy is not capable of completely eliminating this pre-cognitive characteristic of language from its practices. Ignoring this presence makes philosophy less conscious of its own operations. Because of this, F. Schlegel argues that the study of language is essential, including its tacit and rudimentary forms, so that one can critically reflect about philosophy itself and men as a whole. Both myth and language carries the transition from unconsciousness to consciousness that precedes and produces the history of reason and consciousness itself.

On this characteristic of language, Schelling also writes:

> Since, without language, not only may no philosophical consciousness be contemplated, but no human consciousness at all, the foundation of language could not, then, have been laid by consciousness, and yet the more deeply we penetrate into language, the more clearly is it revealed that its profundity exceeds by far that of anything created in the most conscious way. (SCHELLING apud SUZUKI, 1998, p. 209)

When dealing with the origin of language, Schelling somewhat recognizes that it can be seen as a kind of faded mythology that sacrifices the originality of its symbolic force in favor of an schematizing universality.[13] Myth in turn will be described by him according to this symbolic force, which is lacking in language. Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho writes about the symbolic value of the myth in Schelling, noting the influence of Goethe over him:

> By recommending to Schelling, who had just transferred to the University of Wüzburg, the romantic painter Martin Wagner, born in that city, requesting any possible support in material and intellectual terms to help develop that great emerging talent, Goethe wrote him on the 29th of November of 1803: "If you can make him understand the difference between the allegorical and symbolic approaches you will be his benefactor for so many things are based on this." The request was well addressed. Schelling in his laborious old age was the thinker who worked the most, in all of the Philosophy of mythology (after 1842), on the struggle against the allegorical interpretation of the myth - a stubborn heritage of the Stoics and in the repeated affirmation that the myth speaks for itself and about itself: it does not speak of anything else. But already at the time, many years earlier, he already had the concept of symbol in this same sense. After receiving Goethe's letter, he prepares himself to teach for the second time his course on the Philosophy of Art, given at Iena the previous winter, in which he teaches the eminently symbolic nature of the figures of the Gods. (FILHO, 2004, p. 110)

F. Schlegel in turn does not establish in absolute form any hierarchy of precedence or superiority between mythology and language. He instead understands them as complementary forms of a single spiritual experience of man, the wit. He ultimately understands mythology as a kind of language with popular appeal and language as a promising mythology. This relative difference between the two would only be overcome, according to the romantic project, after poetry and philosophy became a single thing.[14] Inspired by this position, F. Schlegel offers a poetic view of the history of philosophy and attempts to interpret it as a great mythological system. Focusing especially on what escapes the explicit intention of each philosopher and what inspires them - the unconscious movements that pervade speculative

[13] "One is almost tempted to say that language itself is just etiolated mythology, that what mythology still preserves in living and concrete distinctions might be preserved in language only in abstract and formal ones." (SCHELLING, Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie. *Werke*, VI, p. 54; also cited in SUZUKI, 1998, p. 209).
[14] Suzuki writes about this issue in Schlegel: "Ultimately mythology can and should also be thought as a language: 'a new mythology will emerge: this does not mean anything other than the emergence of a new language." But the opposite is also true: at the moment when 'poetry and philosophy become a single thing then humanity will also be a single person" and "maybe language itself will become mythology." At the peak of the fusion between poetry and philosophy there wouldn't be a preponderance of language of myth nor of the myth over language." (SUZUKI, 1998, p. 212)

constructions, motivate consciousness, and get a rational character according to the desire of each - he sees the philosophy of each author as a myth that continues and forms in its own way a great mythical narrative. In the words of Márcio Suzuki:

> For him [F. Schlegel], the obscurities that philosophers try to solve, the controversies in which they engaged, the stimulating passages that they collected from previous systems are all part of a great mythical narrative that is transmitted and transformed from generation to generation: "Many intricate controversies from modern philosophy are like the sagas and gods of ancient poetry. They reappear in every system, but transformed." (SUZUKI, 1998, p. 227)

As we can see, the radicality of the approximation between poetry and philosophy suggested by these two authors frequently reminds us of the symbiosis that appears in Homer's verses, in Greek tragedies, in the works that preceded the Platonic dialogues, and many others that also contributed to the specification of philosophy. In this context, and in opposition to the perspective that looks at myths only as an allegorical and rudimentary anticipation of philosophical experiences, Schelling considers the symbolic power of myths comparable to the force that Ideas have for philosophy: "Ideas in philosophy and gods in art are the same." (SCHELLING apud FILHO, 2004, p. 111) In a similar way, F. Schlegel subverts a certain philosophical perspective that considered mythology as a simple pre-philosophical attempt to explain the world, considering instead the possibility of thinking the history of philosophy as a great mythical narrative.

In a sense the Romantic movement goes in the opposite direction of Plato. While the latter reflected on the virtues of philosophy by distancing it from poetry, the romantics hoped to reconnect the two discourses and considered that this connection offered a promising future for philosophy.

*

As we can see, studying the dialogue between poetry and philosophy can reveal a profound connection to the intrinsic and historical constitution of philosophy and to the most intimate demands of human beings.

In this short essay we strategically explored a few selected cases and offered a limited approach to show changes over time and to stress some specific movements within this dialogue. However, even with such a restricted framework, the history of this relationship suggests that it is not arbitrary to think that, from the beginning, philosophy never stopped appropriating, thinking, frequenting, diverging, reflecting, in sum, engaging in a dialogue with poetry.

Neither at the beginning nor at the peak of the process of specifying philosophical discourse did it become completely separated from the poetic. Based on the ancestry of this relationship, even philosophers who choose to ignore the

poetic dimension, whether for indifference or disgust, mark their position in this dialogue. In this sense, and in opposition to the option of these philosophers to follow a strictly rational path, as if such an option could ensure clarity and the elimination of any poetic aspect from their discourses, Adorno and Horkheimer make the following point in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*:

> The more completely the machinery of thought subjugates existence, the more blindly it is satisfied with reproducing it. Enlightenment thereby regresses to the mythology it has never been able to escape. For mythology had reflected in its forms the essence of the existing order - cyclical motion, fate, domination of the world as truth - and had renounced hope. In the terseness of the mythical image, as in the clarity of the scientific formula, the eternity of the actual is confirmed and mere existence is pronounced as the meaning it obstructs. The world as a gigantic analytical judgement, the only surviving dream of science, is of the same kind as the cosmic myth which linked the alternation of spring and autumn to the abduction of Persephone. The uniqueness of the mythical event, which was intended to legitimize the factual one, is a deception. (ADORNO, HORKHEIMER, 2002, p. 20)

By examining the oscillations and changes in the dialogue between the poetic and philosophical discourses we can see that the openness of the philosopher to the poetic leads to more flexible, diversified, and global reflections. We can see, in fact, that the rationalization of the sciences and the restriction of their field is marked by analogies and connections to the process of singularization of the philosophical discourse at the expense of the poetic.

The different aspects of the relationship between poetry and philosophy not only reveal the characterizations and fate of the two enterprises, but also connects to the fate of human being itself, who is constantly grappling with the tensions between life and thought, intuition and reason. This is not to simplistically argue that life is identified only with poetry and thought with philosophy. Since the beginning the two discourses are interconnected and could hardly have established themselves in pure form, without one influencing - even if through negation - the other. Thus life and thought share an unavoidable intimacy: if, on the one hand, we need to be alive in order to think, on the other, we experience life through thought or, in other words, thinking is a form of living. To look at the balance of these two forms is to look at the making of philosophy and man, a relationship that, like a beating heart, constantly moves between moments of contraction (delimitation and specialization) and distension (expansion and flexibility). To separate life from thought, or the poetic from the philosophical for that matter, is to act arbitrarily and provisionally. Philosophy ultimately needs to be open for philosophy so that its discourse does not get lost in its own abstract possibilities. A thought that does not touch life is a thought that is limited to the abstraction of its own exercise. To remain restricted to the conceptual world can offer us the safety of having clear and univocal statements,

but these certainties will be sterile if they do not touch ordinary mundane experience, if they remain limited to abstract safety. We can, however, accept thought as an extension of life so that we can consider the complementarity instead of the schism between these two discourses. How each philosopher incorporates poetry in his reflections largely determines the nature of his work.

In sum, as Pessoa used to argue, philosophy and poetry may be distinct discourses, but there is a relation of complementarity that characterize and unavoidably unite them.

REFERENCES

ADORNO, T. W.; HORKHEIMER, M. *Dialectic of enlightenment:* philosophical fragments. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2002.
BENJAMIN, W. *Goethe:* The Reluctant Bourgeois. *New Left review*, n. 133, p. 69-, 1982.
____. *Ensaios Reunidos:* Escritos sobre Goethe. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2009.
FILHO, R. R. T. Ensaios de Filosofia Ilustrada. São Paulo: Iluminuras,2004.
GOETHE, J. W. *et al. Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret;* [S.l.]: London, Smith, 1850.
____. *Fausto* – Uma tragédia. Primeira Parte. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2010.
____. Os anos de aprendizagem de Wilhelm Meister. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2012.
HÖLDERLIN, F. *Hyperion, or the Hermit in Greece*. Cambridge [England]: Open Book Publishers, 2019.
HESÍODO. *Teogonia* – A Origem dos Deuses. São Paulo: Iluminuras, 1995.
HOMERO. *Ilíada.* Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2012.
____.; MERRILL, R.; WALSH, T. R. *The odyssey*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.
JAEGER, W.; HIGHET, Gilbert. *Paideia: the ideals of Greek culture*. Third English edition ed. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946.
LAERCIO, D. *Vidas de los filósofos más ilustres*. Tomo II. Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1792.
LUKÁCS, G. *Soul and form*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1974.
NAGY, G. Homeric Poetry and Problems of Multiformity: The "Panathenaic Bottleneck" in *Classical Philology* n. 96 - 2, 2001.
OLIVEIRA, C. Introdução. In: PLATÃO, *Íon*. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2011.
PESSOA, F. Alberto Caeiro – *Poesia Completa*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2001.
PLATO; LEE, H. D. P.; LANE, M. S. *The Republic*. 2nd ed. (rev.) ed. London: Penguin, 2007.
____.; ALLEN, R. E. *Ion: Hippias minor; Laches; Protagoras*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996. (The dialogues of Plato, v. 3).
SCHLEGEL, F. v. *Conversa Sobre Poesia.* São Paulo: Iluminuras, 1994.
____. *Philosophical fragments*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
SCHELLING, F. W. J. v.; STOTT, D. W. *The philosophy of art*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.
SILVA. F. L. Mito e razão na "Odisséia". disponível em: *Portal Arethusa*. http://arethusa.fflch.usp.br/node/36 Acesso em: 13/04/2018
SUZUKI, M. A *Ciência Simbólica do Mundo in Poetas que Pensaram o Mundo.* São Paulo: Cia das Letras, 2005.
____. *A Forma e o Sentimento do Mundo*. São Paulo: Ed. 34, 2014.
____. *Filosofia da arte ou arte da filosofia?* in SCHELLING, Filosofia da Arte. São Paulo: 2001.
____. *O gênio romântico.* São Paulo: Iluminuras, 1998.
____. Os anos de aprendizado de Goethe. In: *Revista Discurso*. n.42 ano: 2012

Aoristo)))))

International Journal of Phenomenology, Hermeneutics and Metaphysics

TOLLE, O. Suplemento à poética de Aristóteles. In: Revista Trans/Form/Ação. no. 23. ano: 2000
WULF, A. *The invention of nature*: Alexander von Humboldt's new world. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015.

Submitted: October 15, 2020

Accepted: November 15, 2020