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**The Relation of Philosophy to Σωφροσύνη:
Zalmoxian Medicine in Plato's *Charmides***

Francis P. Coolidge, Jr.

Plato's *Charmides* is a dialogue about σωφροσύνη (*sôphrosynê*, sound-mindedness). Both Charmides and Critias, Socrates' principal interlocutors, fail to formulate a satisfactory definition in response to his questions. Thus, the dialogue seems to end in *aporia*, or perplexity. The confusion of the ending, however, stands juxtaposed to the suggestive character of its beginning. Before Charmides offers his definitions of *sôphrosynê*, Socrates both introduces the term and sketches its meaning while discussing the medicine allegedly practiced by the Thracian followers of Zalmoxis. The significance of this account of medicine (from 155e-158c) has been widely overlooked.¹ Since Socrates agrees to be introduced to Charmides under the pretext that he knows a cure for the head-illness from which Charmides suffers, it is easy to miss the import of Socrates' account because it seems merely to support this pretext. It has not been observed, however, that if Zalmoxian medicine is possible, then Socrates' philosophical inquiry is its foundational activity. Hence, Socrates transforms the pretense into a disguised presentation of himself as a philosopher. Since Zalmoxian medicine is said to engender *sôphrosynê*, Socrates' remarks serve to suggest a relationship between philosophy and *sôphrosynê*. Therefore, in the following, I will examine the discussion of Zalmoxian medicine with the aim of developing what it implies about *sôphrosynê* and its relationship to Socratic philosophy.

In the first part I look at the beginning of the dialogue and the implications of Critias' decision to present Socrates as a doctor when he introduces him to

¹ I will note only a few salient examples in the secondary literature. In an influential book, Tuckey 1951, 18-19 summarizes the passage in less than a paragraph without any development of its implications for an understanding of *sôphrosynê*. Indebted to Tuckey, Guthrie 1975, 158 offers a similar treatment. Santas 1973 omits consideration of the account, except to say (112) that Socrates, 'alludes to a parallel between health in the body and temperance in the soul (157d)'. Sprague 1976, 30 speaks for most commentators when she writes that, 'For my purposes, the really essential part of the *Charmides* is, of course, the Critias section (beginning at 162e)'. Although she goes on in the same sentence to say that, 'there are some points to be picked up from the earlier parts as well', she says nothing about Socrates' discussion of Zalmoxian medicine. By contrast, I have found Bruell 1977, Hyland 1981, and Benardete 1986 to offer illuminating, though by no means exhaustive, interpretations of the passage. Both those places where I am indebted to the latter works and those points where I significantly diverge in interpretation are indicated below. Translations of the *Charmides* are from West and West 1986, sometimes with small alterations of my own. Where I have cited Plato's Greek, I have followed Burnet 1903 except once (see n5 below).

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Charmides. Socrates tells Charmides that he has knowledge of a drug for his head which must be administered in conjunction with the use of incantation. A key difficulty in Socrates' description of Zalmoxian medicine has not been noted: his prescriptions for applying the incantation(s) are apparently inconsistent. In the second part I identify the understanding of *sôphrosynê* implicit in Socrates' discussion: *sôphrosynê* is the presence in soul of what is required for the restoration of health in body.² I also show that the possibility of Zalmoxian medicine requires the Zalmoxian doctor to be a Socratic philosopher; the question then arises in turn whether Socrates' philosophical inquiry enables him to be a Zalmoxian physician. In the third part I offer a way to interpret the apparent inconsistency in Socrates' discussion of the incantation: the most powerful use of Zalmoxian medicine would involve a treatment of the soul through incantation both prior to, and at the same time as, the administration of drug to the body. The fourth part, however, concludes that such a treatment of soul and body goes beyond what Socrates has to offer as a philosopher and is not necessary if Charmides' soul is presently sound-minded. The fifth part offers some conclusions about what Socrates could do as a philosopher to engender *sôphrosynê* in Charmides and thereby treat his illness if Charmides lacks sound-mindedness.

I. Prologue: The Introduction of Charmides to Socrates the Doctor

The *Charmides* begins as Socrates returns to Athens from the battle of Potidaea and goes to one of his customary places, the wrestling school of Taureas (153a). After being greeted by his acquaintances, he sits down next to Critias. In response to Socrates' questions about the state of philosophy and the young, Critias observes that his cousin Charmides, who is reputed to be the most beautiful of the young, is about to enter. Moreover, he says that Charmides is philosophical and poetical (155a). Critias sends his slave-boy to Charmides in order to introduce him to a doctor and suggests to Socrates that he pretend to have knowledge of a drug for the heaviness in the head which Charmides has when he gets up in the morning. After Charmides sits down next to Socrates, Charmides asks him whether he has knowledge of a drug for the head; then in the initial conversation, Socrates develops the aforementioned account of Zalmoxian medicine.

Critias' manner of introduction is strange for two reasons. First, if Charmides is philosophical, it would seem unnecessary for Socrates to pretend that he has knowledge of a drug for a sort of 'headache'. Second, it is surprising that

² Bruell 1977, 148-149 sees that the discussion of Zalmoxian medicine entails that moderation (sound-mindedness) is a necessary condition for [the restoration of] health but resists ascribing any understanding of sound-mindedness to Socrates because he professes to be ignorant about it later in the dialogue. I am not claiming that Socrates believes that *sôphrosynê* is merely a necessary condition for the restoration of health nor am I arguing that he fully understands what such a condition is. Rather, I see Socrates recognizing that the recovery from illness presupposes a certain degree of self-control, observation of personal limits, and moderation in appetite; thus, the understanding of *sôphrosynê* as a necessary condition for the restoration of health both implies and unites some of the central meanings of the term. For a comprehensive review of the meanings of *σωφροσύνη* in Greek literature from Homer to the Patristic era, see North 1966.

Socrates, without irony or protest, goes along with this dissimulation. Two implications can be drawn. First, despite his praise of Charmides' philosophical and poetical soul, Critias' resort to pretext in making the introduction suggests that Charmides is either not very philosophical or more interested in having the others in the wrestling school continue to admire his beautiful body. Socrates has already made it clear that he wants to strip Charmides' soul before seeing him naked (154e). Second, Socrates' unqualified agreement to Critias' dissimulation suggests that the ruse conveys something truthful about who Socrates is and what he has to offer as a philosopher to a youth such as Charmides. Hence, it is appropriate to examine Socrates' discussion of medicine with an eye for what it implies about his activity as a philosopher and his interlocutor's incapacity.

In response to Charmides' question about whether he has knowledge of a drug for the head (155e), Socrates answers affirmatively. He says that the drug is a certain leaf; the drug is only effective if it is applied at the same time that one chants an incantation. In two subsequent formulations, however, Socrates prescribes the use of either an incantation or certain incantations prior to the application of the drug.³ Thus, the second and third descriptions of the use of incantation seem to be inconsistent with the first.

This apparent inconsistency is important because the incantation(s) purport to engender *sôphrosynê* in the soul. The drug, or leaf, on the other hand, is meant to provide a cure for the body. Thus, the discussion of the use of incantation, if it is not incoherent, implies a two-fold relationship between sound-mindedness and the body in the practice of Zalmoxian medicine. The meaning of this relationship will unfold as I discuss the practice of medicine which Socrates purports to have learned from one of the Thracian doctors of Zalmoxis. The resolution of the 'inconsistency,' however, will not occur until part three.

II. Philosophy as Zalmoxian Medicine and the Nature of *Sôphrosynê*

Socrates' discussion of the Thracian doctor's approach to medicine follows Charmides' assent to, and praise of, the principle, that it is necessary to treat the whole body along with the affected part (156b-d). In his discussion, Socrates broadens the principle: just as it is necessary to treat the part along with the whole body, so it is necessary to treat the body along with the soul (156d-e). Thus, by analogy, just as the head is part of the body, so the body is part of the

³ At first (155e) he says that [the cure] is a certain leaf (*φύλλον*) that requires the concurrent use of an incantation in order to make one entirely healthy. In his second formulation of the use of drug and incantation (157b-c) he says that his instructor, a Thracian doctor, taught him both the incantations and the drug, and insisted that the soul must be treated first by the incantation [in order to make it sound-minded] (157b); Socrates then asserts (at 157c) that in order to follow the commands of the Thracian, Charmides must first submit his soul to chant the incantations prior to Socrates' application of the drug. After Critias interjects that Charmides is 'reputed to be quite the most sound-minded by far of his contemporaries' (157d), Socrates offers his third formulation (158b-c): if sound-mindedness is already present and sufficient for Charmides, then the incantations are unnecessary and the drug should be given immediately; otherwise, Charmides must chant the incantations before the drug is applied.

soul.⁴ Socrates claims that the Thracian's critique of the Greek doctors is that they are ignorant (*ἀγνοοῖεν*) of the whole (*τὸ ὅλον*)⁵ to which care must be given (*ποιεῖσθαι*) if the part is to be in good condition; thus, many diseases elude them (156e).

The Thracian's critique is puzzling. On the one hand, since the Greek doctors do not treat the soul along with the body, it would seem that all diseases should elude them; the Thracian's critique fails to explain why Greek medicine is successful at all. The Thracian does not say that all diseases elude the Greek doctors; thus, despite his critique, he implicitly concedes a limited effectiveness to Greek medicine. On the other hand, it is not clear what the whole is 'to which care must be given', nor what care must be given, nor whether 'the whole' is the same as 'the whole to which care must be given'.

Evidently, the primary meaning of the whole (to which care must be given) is the soul. For the Thracian claims (156e-157a) that it is necessary to treat the soul first and foremost because everything starts from there for the body and the entire human being (*παντὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ*, 156e7-8). But what the soul is remains completely dark. Whether soul itself is individuated into particular souls or not is left indeterminate; how the soul differs from the entire human being remains obscure. The Thracian does, however, imply that both the entire human being and the body are 'parts' of the soul.⁶ This suggestion is puzzling. One would expect the Thracian to say that both the body and the soul are 'parts' of the entire human being, for a human being is both body and soul. What is the relation between the body and the entire human being and in what sense are both 'parts' of the soul?

This primary meaning is not the only possible meaning of the whole (to which care must be given). Even if treatment of the soul is 'first and foremost' in the event of illness in the body, it is still possible that the soul itself is 'part' of a larger whole that requires care if the soul is to be in good condition. For even though the Thracian has implied that disease *per se* (like everything else good or bad for the body or the entire human being) begins with the soul, he has not established that the soul's causality of disease is unaffected by the soul's placement in a greater sense of the whole. Differently stated, it may not be possible to treat the soul without considering its relation to a larger whole. If so, then this

⁴ A number of commentators have observed this point. See for example, West and West 1986, 20 and Bruell 1977, 147n13.

⁵ With West and West 1986, rather than following the reading of Burnet 1903, *τοῦ ὅλου ἀμελοῖεν* ('they [the Greek doctors] are careless of the whole'), I follow BT's *τὸ ὅλον ἀγνοοῖεν* ('they are ignorant of the whole'). For a critique of Burnet and a defense of this reading, see Van Der Ben 1985, 15n13.

⁶ Benardette 1986, 17 comments that, 'Soul seems to be both the whole of which body is a part and a part of what Socrates calls the entire human being. As a part it is the source of all good and bad for the body and the entire human being; but Socrates does not say what it is as the whole.' On the other hand, he does not say that it is a part [of the entire human being] either. If 'everything starts from the soul, both good and bad things for the body and for the entire human being, and they flow from there just as from the head to the eyes' (156e6-157a1) then, just as the eyes are part of the head, so the body and the entire human being are parts of the soul.

greater sense of the whole will require attention if certain diseases are not to elude doctors. Moreover, if this greater sense of the whole is itself 'part' of an even larger whole (in a way that is relevant to the treatment of the soul), then this still larger whole will also require care during the treatment of the soul. In the end, if the soul needs to be treated in view of its placement in a larger whole or wholes, then care relating to the greatest of these wholes (hereafter, the ultimate sense of the whole) will be the most profound practice of medicine.

If disease is not to elude the practice of medicine, doctors must not be ignorant of the whole. At the very least, they must not be ignorant of what the soul is and whether or not there is an ultimate sense of the whole. Hence, they must first be concerned with *what* the whole is. For prior to knowing the whole which requires care, doctors must be concerned with what the whole is. Thus, philosophical inquiry, or the exercise of care concerning what the whole is, must be the first, or foundational, practice of Zalmoxian medicine.

Socrates reports that the Thracian doctors of Zalmoxis are said to immortalize (ἀπαθανατίζειν, 156d6) people; thus, Socrates implies that a complete treatment of soul eliminates the cause of a person's mortality. Hence, it is right for the Thracian to say that Zalmoxis is a god (156d8), for if one had the wisdom required by a complete treatment of the soul, one could be called a god. Since both the wisdom of the gods and the achievement of immortality seems out of reach, it appears that the culminant practice of Zalmoxian medicine is impossible. The foundational practice of Zalmoxian medicine is possible, however, if one can exercise care concerning what the whole is without being either wise like a god or simply ignorant of the whole like a Greek doctor.

The foundational practice of Zalmoxian medicine will be possible if one can exercise care concerning what the whole is prior to having knowledge of the whole. Such care will be inquiry concerning what the whole is while one is ignorant of the whole. While one is ignorant of the whole one must recognize that one is ignorant of the whole; otherwise, if Zalmoxian medicine were possible, it would collapse into Greek medicine (for in this case both Zalmoxian and Greek medicine would fail to recognize ignorance of the whole and the need for inquiry concerning what the whole is).

Put more strongly, if Zalmoxian medicine is both possible and distinct from Greek medicine, then its care in relation to the whole must begin with a care concerned with *what* the whole is that arises out of a recognition of ignorance of the whole; for a recognition of ignorance of the whole must both engender its foundational practice and distinguish it from Greek medicine. Thus, in the end, if Zalmoxian medicine is neither Greek nor impossible, the wisdom that it presupposes is the unique wisdom that Socrates claims to possess in the *Apology* (21d): what he does not know, he does not suppose that he knows. Hence, Socrates' discussion of Zalmoxian medicine implies that if Charmides' disease has eluded the Greek doctors, and if an 'alternative' (Zalmoxian) medicine is possible, then he needs a physician who is a philosopher exactly like Socrates. Socrates' pretense of knowing Zalmoxian medicine requires that he actually be himself. Moreover,

since Socrates exercises care concerning what the whole is through his philosophical inquiry, his philosophical inquiry is the foundational practice of Zalmoxian medicine.⁷ It remains to be seen whether Socrates' foundational practice of Zalmoxian medicine could be sufficient to treat Charmides' malaise. It is evident, however, that Socrates agrees to Critias' ruse because, ironically, the pretense requires him to be who he is.

Yet, if Charmides is to see Socrates as he is, then Charmides must be truly philosophical, for if Charmides is to recognize that Socrates practices Zalmoxian medicine by philosophizing, then he must reflect philosophically on what Socrates has said. This is not to say that it is necessary for Charmides independently to go through the aforementioned reasoning; rather, I see Socrates hoping that Charmides will question him about what he has ostensibly learned, so that Charmides will come to recognize because of his inquiry that Socrates engages in the foundational practice of Zalmoxian medicine.⁸ Thus, Socrates' account of Zalmoxian medicine both implies that his inquiry is medical and serves to test whether Charmides is philosophical as Critias has claimed (155a). For perhaps Critias' description of Charmides as philosophical was intended to be a pretense, just like his introduction of Socrates as medicinal.

Thus far it is not clear how the soul is to be treated. Hence it is not clear whether Socrates' care concerning what the whole is could be sufficient to treat what underlies Charmides' illness of the head. In order to address the soul's treat-

⁷ This claim is at odds with the assertion of Vlastos 1991, 47 that the Socrates of the 'earlier' dialogues is exclusively a moral philosopher; Vlastos adds in n12 that, 'His arguments sometimes trench on other topics, but the only theses he investigates elenctically are propositions in the moral domain.'

Vlastos and I have come to different conclusions because we have different ways of reading the dialogues; unlike Vlastos, who argues that Socrates' inquiry in the 'earlier' dialogues is constrained by the method of elenchus (1983, 27-28), I see Socrates' inquiry to include episodes of non-elenctic investigation. For example, I read his discussion of Zalmoxian medicine as an instance of his inquiry (formulated in the 'medical' terms pertinent to his dialogue with Charmides). If Socrates is not wise, he does not know what the whole is; his discussion, however, provides him with a way of exploring the whole (and seeing the importance of understanding its nature) in view of the part-whole relations involved in the treatment of the body. If Socrates' discussion is an instance of his inquiry, then not all instances of his inquiry in the 'earlier' dialogues are elenctic nor is he exclusively a moral philosopher.

⁸ It might be objected that Socrates believes the Thracian's tale and thus sees Zalmoxian medicine originating in the wisdom of the god Zalmoxis; hence, Socrates' discussion of Zalmoxian medicine cannot be said to imply that his philosophical inquiry is its first, or foundational, practice. But such an objection overlooks that Socrates has agreed to pretend that he has knowledge of a drug for Charmides' head; thus, the whole discussion needs to be read as an explicit fabrication: Socrates never met the Thracian. Indeed, as West and West 1986, 19n14 suggest, Herodotus' treatment of Zalmoxis (iv 94-96) would indicate that the doctors of Zalmoxis (and their incantations) are a Socratic or Platonic invention.

Socrates is careful merely to report that the Thracian doctors are 'said' to make people immortal; likewise, he simply reports the Thracian as saying that Zalmoxis is a god. Thus, Socrates never commits himself to the view that Zalmoxian medicine is founded on the wisdom of the gods and able to make people immortal; instead, he implies that if someone were to practice Zalmoxian medicine, then this practice would start with inquiry into the whole.

ment, Socrates must move from the Thracian critique of Greek medicine (156e) to the etiology of disease in the body (156e-157a), and then to a discussion of soul therapy (157a).

As observed, the Thracian taught that everything starts from the soul, both good and bad things for the body and the entire human being (156e); thus, both disease (a bad thing for the body) and the restoration of health (a good thing for the body) are caused by the soul. Hence, as discussed, the Thracian asserts that the soul must be treated first, if the body (and its parts) are to be in beautiful condition (*καλῶς ἔχειν*, 157a). This is not to say that treating the soul is sufficient for curing the body,⁹ rather, the Thracian teaches (157a-b) that once the soul has been treated to the point where *sôphrosynê* has come to be and is present in the soul, then it is easy to provide health for the body.

The Thracian is not clear whether it is necessary to make use of medication to provide health for the body; presumably, at least in some cases, only the restoration of *sôphrosynê* regarding the appetites (for example, regarding the appetite for food) is needed for a treatment of the body. In these cases, however (just as when using medication), there are secondary physical causes at work in the *cure* of the body. For example, the movement from immoderation to moderation changes the diet and so the nutrients for the body. If immoderation in diet were the cause of physical illness (for example, stomachache), then the restoration of *sôphrosynê* without any additional treatment would cure the body. The Thracian's lack of clarity thus takes into account that it may or may not be necessary to make use of a drug (in the case of Charmides, a leaf for the head) to establish health in the affected organ(s).

If a person is suffering from physical illness, this does not necessarily mean that he or she presently lacks *sôphrosynê*. All that the presence of illness implies is that, at some point in time, a lack of *sôphrosynê* in soul was the first cause of the presence of disease in the body. Someone who is ill, however, may gain *sôphrosynê* after the onset of illness and still lack a cure for the body. Thus,

⁹ West and West 1986, 20n16 observe, 'Note that if head is to eyes as soul is to body, and whole is to part, then the body is part of the soul! If so, *all* diseases would be "psychosomatic." The Greek doctors, who distinguish soul from body, seem more sensible than the Thracians.' Their point needs clarification, for the Thracian claim is that all diseases have a causal origin in the soul; this is not a claim that the soul is the only cause of disease, nor is it to say that disease does not exist in the body. Most importantly, the Thracian does not claim that treatment of the soul is all that is necessary for a cure of illness in the body. The discussion of Bruell 1977, 148-149 on this last point is quite acute. Hence, the Thracian is not aligned with the Christian Scientist, who would reject the need for medication. Thus, Hyland 1981, 41 is off the mark when he suggests that Zalmoxian medicine is a pagan version of Christian Science.

Hyland, in a letter, concedes my 'general point' and invites a public response to his reply that if (as he argues) Charmides' headaches are from hangovers, then in his case a recovery of *sôphrosynê* would comprise his entire cure; thus, the dialogue in the *Charmides*, insofar as it is instrumental to this recovery, could be roughly described as 'pagan science'. If, however, 'pagan science' means 'a pagan version of Christian Science', then such a description is misleading because there is no evidence that Socrates rejects the use of medication, even if in Charmides' case it were to prove to be unnecessary.

sôphrosynê is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for the recovery from physical illness. As discussed, the Thracian has already implicitly conceded that certain diseases can be treated by Greek medicine; thus, it becomes clear that the Greek doctors can treat disease following the soul's recovery of *sôphrosynê*. Since Greek medicine is able to treat some diseases effectively, it follows that it is sometimes possible to recover *sôphrosynê* in a natural fashion (without doctoring). On the other hand, those diseases which are correlated with the loss and ongoing absence of sound-mindedness will resist Greek treatment.

Having discussed the etiology of disease, Socrates describes the soul's therapy. At this juncture Socrates reports the Thracian as teaching that the soul is treated by the use of certain incantations which are beautiful (*καλούς*) speeches (157a). It is possible that the Thracian means that all beautiful speeches are these incantations that treat the soul, but it is more likely that he simply means that all of these incantations are beautiful speeches. For the use of these speeches brings *sôphrosynê* into being in the soul, which in turn makes it possible to establish health in the body by the use of suitable medication (if medication is needed). It would be odd if the Thracian wanted to claim that every sort of beautiful speech was instrumental to *sôphrosynê* or that only the aforementioned incantations were instances of beautiful speeches; thus, it is likely that he means that these incantations fall into a larger class of *καλούς λόγους*. Since, however, these incantations restore the soul to the condition that is presupposed by the cure of physical disease, *sôphrosynê* is the presence in soul of what is necessary for the restoration of health in the body. This conception of *sôphrosynê* is never discussed in the rest of the dialogue; it implies, but is broader than, some of the demotic, or ordinary, meanings of *sôphrosynê* associated with habit and appetite, such as moderation and self-control. For some degree of moderation and self-control in appetite (for example, in the consumption of alcohol) is necessary if one is to regain health when suffering from physical disease.

At this point it becomes evident how Socrates might treat Charmides' head-illness through his care concerning what the whole is. For by means of beautiful speeches, *sôphrosynê* comes to be in the soul; once *sôphrosynê* is present in the soul, it is possible to cure disease in the body. If Charmides is in need of sound-mindedness, and if Socrates' beautiful speeches concerning the whole engender *sôphrosynê*, then Socrates can treat him by philosophizing. It is not clear, however, whether these beautiful speeches of philosophy can be what the Thracian means by incantation for the soul. I shall return to this issue in part five.

Socrates follows his discussion of the treatment of the soul with the second formulation of the relationship between drug and incantation (157b-c). He claims that the Thracian taught him both the drug and incantations; the Thracian insisted that he not treat the head with the drug unless he first treated the soul with the incantation (157b). Thus, Socrates says that only if Charmides submits his soul to chant the Thracian incantations will he apply the drug to the head; otherwise, he says, there is nothing that 'we' (Socrates or the Thracian) can do (157c).

This second formulation appears to contradict the first. For Socrates first

claimed that the incantation is chanted at the same time that the drug is applied; here he says that the incantation is to be used prior to the application of the drug. It is, of course, possible that Socrates' discussion is simply incoherent. It seems evident, however, that Socrates is trying to convey something meaningful about *sôphrosynê* and its relation to philosophy in his discussion of Zalmoxian medicine; thus, this interpretative alternative should be a last resort, following the failure to find meaning in another reading. If Socrates' account is not incoherent, then he means that incantation is to be used both prior to, and at the same time as, the administration of drug.

III. The Practice of Zalmoxian Medicine:

From Care for the Whole to Care for the Part and Whole

If the incantation is to be used both prior to, and at the same time as, the administration of the drug, then the soul must be treated both prior to, and at the same time as, the treatment of the body. The soul must be treated first because it is the cause of both disease and the restoration of health in the body. Socrates' account of Zalmoxian medicine, however, does not explain why it is necessary to treat the soul with incantations at the same time that the drug is administered to the body. It would seem that if the soul possesses *sôphrosynê* the use of the incantations is no longer necessary.

At this juncture I want to consider a contemporary application of 'Zalmoxian medicine'. For the example of a 'Zalmoxian' recovery from nicotine addiction illuminates why, at least in some cases, it appears necessary to treat the soul both before, and concurrently with, the body.

It is well known that it is extremely difficult for most people to stop smoking cigarettes. Most people quit for a time and then are compelled to start again. The Thracian would no doubt ridicule attempts to cure the addiction and the merely physiological disorders associated with smoking through a treatment of the body alone. The Zalmoxian cure of the smoking disorder would seem to require first attending to the condition, or malaise, of the psyche which fosters the addiction. Yet the cure would also involve care for a host of physiological complications, including dependence on nicotine, which must be treated if the addiction and its associated diseases are to be cured. As discussed, the Thracian would argue that it is not enough to treat these physiological complications unless the soul's malaise is addressed first. The Thracian asserts that unless the soul is treated, in some sense the entire human being, or person, remains ill; if the entire human being is not well, any cure of the physiological complications will not suffice to prevent the person from resuming smoking.

It is, however, possible to purchase an herbal tea (comprised of 'leaves') which is designed to alleviate the acute symptoms of nicotine withdrawal.¹⁰ One person who successfully used this tea told me that it was only effective if one was ready

¹⁰ 'Smoker's Tea', which contains Lobelia, is manufactured by Traditional Medicinals and is available without prescription (or 'incantation') at health food stores.

and determined to quit. If one was 'ready and determined' (sound-minded), the tea was a marvelous antidote for the episodic symptoms; if one was not, the tea was of no use. This testimony supports Socrates' second formulation: the treatment of soul must precede the use of the leaf. Yet, the woman who successfully used the tea told me that along with the tea she needed to summon all of her resources during the episodes of nicotine craving. She needed to repeat some of the words of healing (the 'incantations' that initially brought her to readiness) while she suffered the craving and used the medicated tea. Thus, in the end, her testimony supports the first and second formulations together.

The example sheds some light on why, when the soul lacks *sôphrosynê* and the body requires medication, the treatment of soul must both precede and accompany the treatment of the body. In this example, medication of the body is necessary, since the initial treatment of soul is not sufficient to cause physical healing. In this instance, however, the soul has not been fully treated until the body is completely well. For the body is part of the soul; in this case, even though the whole both can and must be treated prior to the part, the whole cannot be entirely well until all of its parts are. Thus, the medication of the body requires the concurrent completion of the treatment of the soul. To return to the smoking example, it would be right to say that those recovering from cigarette addiction are not completely sound-minded until they have successfully taken care of themselves during the episodes of nicotine craving. Caring for the malaise that supports the addiction is a necessary but not a sufficient treatment of soul; in addition, the soul must be cared for insofar as it experiences a specific suffering in body because of disease.

By contrast, in cases where the soul has naturally regained *sôphrosynê* but the body remains ill, treatment of the body does not require one to treat the soul concurrently; as discussed, these are the cases in which Greek medicine is successful. It is not clear whether in these cases concurrent treatment of the soul occurs 'naturally', or whether it is unnecessary because of a different whole-part relation between soul and body.

IV. The Question of Soul: Is Charmides Sound-Minded?

In the aforementioned second formulation of the relationship between the drug and the incantation, Socrates presents the strongest version of his pretense to be a doctor. *If* Charmides lacked *sôphrosynê*, and *if* he needed the drug, and *if* the Thracian had taught Socrates *both* the incantations *and* the drug, and *if* Socrates possessed it, then Socrates could cure Charmides in both body and soul. Such a cure, however, would require Charmides to submit himself completely, body and soul, to Socrates.

By strengthening his pose as a doctor, Socrates goes beyond what he has to offer as a philosopher and his earlier discussion of Zalmoxian medicine. For, as observed, if Greek medicine is possible, then it is possible for people who have lost *sôphrosynê* to regain it unconsciously, or naturally, while their doctors remain ignorant of the whole; Greek medicine is effective in those cases when

medication is offered to people who have naturally regained their sound-mindedness. It is not clear whether Charmides has naturally regained his sound-mindedness; thus, it is not clear whether he needs to submit himself to the incantations.

At this point Critias intervenes. Evidently he is eager to defend his praise of Charmides and has recognized that Charmides need not make use of the incantations if he is already distinguished in the very quality of soul that the incantations purport to engender. Since Critias has already assured Socrates that Charmides' soul is noble and good (*καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθός*, 154e4), Critias finds it sufficient to observe that Charmides is reputed to be distinguished in 'this very thing' for which Socrates claims to have the incantation (157d).

After Critias reiterates his praise by claiming that Charmides is reputed to be the most sound-minded of his peers (157d), Socrates considers the natural, or familial, reasons why this might be the case; he observes that Charmides comes from an exemplary family. The esteemed stature of Charmides' ancestors suggests that he might be naturally distinguished in sound-mindedness. Charmides' illness, however, makes Socrates' praise of his lineage ambiguous, for the Thracian has implied that the presence of sound-mindedness precludes the development of disease. Thus, if Charmides is ill, it must be true that at some point in time he lacked sound-mindedness despite his reputation and family heritage. It may be the case that he has naturally regained his *sôphrosynê*, or it may be that he still lacks it. Thus Critias' appeal to Charmides' reputation is not sufficient to establish that he is sound-minded. Hence, following his encomium of Charmides' family background, Socrates presents him with two alternative treatments.

Socrates tells Charmides that if he is sufficiently sound-minded, then he no longer needs the incantations of Zalmoxis or Abaris the Hyperborean and the drug should be given to him immediately. But if he still seems to be in need of these incantations, then he must chant before the drug is administered (158-c). Socrates then insists that Charmides himself must say whether or not he agrees with Critias (that he has a sufficient share of sound-mindedness).

Two things are striking about this last formulation of the relationship between drug and incantation. First, it is surprising that the testimony of the 'patient' should be grounds for the presence of *sôphrosynê*. In fact, Charmides refuses to testify on his own behalf; even if he did, however, it is easy to imagine that Socrates would then have asked him why he believed that he was or was not sound-minded and so the dialogue about the nature of *sôphrosynê* that ensues would have begun in another way. Second, the first part of this last formulation genuinely contradicts the first. It cannot be reconciled with the first the way the second formulation can, for Socrates indicates that if Charmides is sufficiently sound-minded, then the drug should be applied without the use of incantation. As Socrates' discussion of medicine draws to a close, it is worth pondering the divergence of the end from the beginning.

V. The Question of Treatment: To What Extent Can Philosophy Heal?

To review: in his initial remarks about the drug (the first thing Charmides asks Socrates about), Socrates said that the drug was only effective if it was applied at the same time that one chanted an incantation (155e). In his second formulation (157b-c) and in the second part of the third formulation (158c1-2), he said that the incantations ought to be used prior to the administration of the drug; the first part of the third formulation (158b5-c1), however, stipulates that the drug should be applied without the use of the incantations, if Charmides is sufficiently sound-minded. Thus, while the second formulation and the second part of the third can supplement the first (as discussed), the first part of the third genuinely contradicts the first. Through this contradiction Socrates contrasts Zalmoxian and Greek medicine and concedes a conditional efficacy to the latter. The first formulation presents the Zalmoxian use of medication (with incantation) while the first part of the third presents the Greek (without incantation); moreover, the first part of the third implicitly concedes a conditional efficacy to the Greek use of medication by acknowledging that if Charmides is sound-minded then he only needs the drug and not the incantations.

Reflection, however, on the movement from the first formulation to the third (considered as a whole) reveals a movement from a formulation that suggests Socrates knows both the drug and the words necessary for whatever headache Charmides might have, to a formulation that asserts that he knows the drug for the body and the words for the soul, to a formulation that concedes the possibility that Charmides' illness may not be treatable by his 'beautiful words'. Thus, the formulations culminate in Socrates' implicit admission of his ignorance; he does not know whether he can actually treat what ails Charmides.

If Socrates could actually treat Charmides' headache, then philosophical discourse would have to serve one of two functions. The first possibility is that it could correct what underlies Charmides' physical ailment, if this ailment stems from a lack of moderation or self-control and is not associated with organic disease. For example, if (as Hyland 1981, 41 suggests), Charmides' morning headaches are from hangovers (and not, for instance, from a brain tumor), then it is possible that an association with Socrates rather than drink could heal him. Such a correction, of course, would require Socrates to be sound-minded and his words more enchanting than the dictates of Charmides' immoderate appetite (if this is at the root of his illness). This is not to say that Socrates must persuade Charmides to become sober; rather, if Charmides is charmed by Socrates to the point that he alters his drinking habits in order to be with him, then his hangovers will disappear. Such a treatment would be efficacious only if Charmides' headache does not require medication in addition to this implicit recovery of an ordinary, or demotic, sense of sound-mindedness.

As observed, Socrates (as a philosopher) retreats from the pretense of the first two formulations to an admission of ignorance in the third. The first two formulations are shaped by Socrates' pose of knowing how to cure Charmides. This is

not to say that the pose is not part of the third formulation; for the third formulation still refers to the drug that brought Charmides to Socrates, the drug that Charmides apparently thinks he needs. Rather, unlike the first two, the third can be seen as consistent with the recognition of ignorance underlying what Socrates, as a philosopher, can offer Charmides. Nor is this to overlook that the first two formulations, considered together, offer an interesting suggestion about the sort of treatment required by certain kinds of diseases (such as those involved in addictions) that elude a merely physiological approach to medicine. Socrates, however, is not a doctor or Charmides' guardian; he can only offer the words of enchantment that the lovers of wisdom use. This may suffice for a healing of soul or it may not; if it does suffice, then a drug may still be necessary for Charmides' headache.

The second possibility is that Socrates' philosophical discourse could treat a disorder of soul with psychosomatic effects that has been introduced by the *polis*. For example, it is possible that Charmides is, at some level, oppressed or weighed down by the mindless adulation that is being given him; perhaps he feels this burden 'on his head' every morning as he awakes. If it is true that Charmides is at least to some degree philosophical, then as he spent time with Socrates and became charmed by his care concerning what the whole is, he would no longer be so affected by the admiration offered his body.

It is apparent, however, that Socrates does not have a drug for the head. Indeed, as he initially pretended to be doctor, he only claimed to have knowledge of the drug (155e). Hence, the third formulation retreats from the hyperbole of the second, 'if you...chant the incantations, I will apply the drug to your head' (157c), to the suggestion that, 'if you are sufficiently sound-minded...the drug for the head should be given to you now' (158c). If Charmides is sound-minded and his head-illness persists, then he simply needs medication. If he merely needs medication, then the appropriate drug should be administered, and there is nothing that Socrates can do for him.

As observed, the third formulation, which acknowledges Socrates' ignorance, emerges after the hyperbole of the second. The second formulation is not only the height of Socrates' posturing that he is a doctor who knows how to cure Charmides; it also goes beyond the teachings of Zalmoxis (although it purports to follow the Thracian), for it fails to recognize the natural recovery of *sôphrosynê*. The second formulation makes the restoration of health completely dependent upon the use of incantation. It is Critias who limits the exaggeration of the second formulation (just as it was he who initiated the ruse); later in the dialogue, just as Critias restrained Socrates' pretense to be a doctor, Socrates will discipline Critias' pretensions to understand what *sôphrosynê* is. Socrates' role as a doctor, however, suggests how philosophy may engender sound-mindedness; in the end, those who will be healed by the philosopher's beautiful words are those whose

souls are restored, not by an unknown nature, but by the philosopher's enchantment with the whole.¹¹

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