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## SOPHROSYNE: PLATO'S KEY FOR SECURING CIVILIZATION

Pierre Beaudry, 8/11/2020

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### FOREWORD



*Sophrosyne* (1872) by Edward Burne-Jones

*Charmides* is possibly one of the least understood of Plato's dialogues, but whose significance is most important for our time. The dialogue is a difficult one because it is centered on the concept of *sophrosyne* (*σωφροσύνη*), a term that cannot be translated by any single word in any language, including Greek.

For Socrates, the idea of *sophrosyne* was so difficult to define that after an extensive discussion with Charmides and Critias, he concluded that he was incapable of giving it a precise meaning because the nature of the concept was so varied and contradictory in its application.

The mastery of the concept involves a profound understanding of both moderation and learned ignorance, and the challenge consists in discovering the nature of *sophrosyne* and how to truthfully apply the concept to oneself. In essence, the question is: How can you master the art of walking through fire with a sublime state of mind?

## INTRODUCTION: DAMNED IF YOU DO AND DEAD IF YOU DON'T

[...] “We will become a single land of brothers,  
nor shall we part in danger and distress.  
We will be free, just as our fathers were,  
and sooner die, than live in slavery.  
We will rely upon the highest God  
and we shall never fear the might of men.”

Friedrich Schiller, *Wilhelm Tell, The Rutli Oath*<sup>1</sup>

The long Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC) that Athens fought and the present interminable wars that the United States has been waging in the last two decades in East and Southwest Asia are based on the same principle of sophistry and lies whose aim is to bring down civilization. Athens has still not recovered from the loss it suffered more than two thousand years ago, because what was destroyed then was the very power of *sophrosyne*, a unique quality that has long been forgotten and which is required today in order for human civilization to progress. The question is: Will the United States follow the historical course as Plato proposed or as the Athenian politicians set for the people?

The subject of this report is a simple one and, therefore, should pose no difficulty to anyone, because everybody has what is required to figure it out; all you have to do is to willfully decide to master the idea of *sophrosyne*, which is to figure out how you know when you are properly thinking as a real human being. At the same time, this is a very difficult subject to understand because it involves accepting a life or death challenge that both Socrates and Lyndon LaRouche, amongst others, accepted. You will likely put your own life at risk if you attempt to take on this problem as Socrates and LaRouche did, in order to save civilization.

First of all, ask yourself the question: How do I know if this challenge is true or not? How do I know if I am thinking about the right thing when I think about *sophrosyne*? For instance, most of the time, I don't know when I am thinking, because when I think, I think about something else than my process of thinking, and therefore, I don't go beyond that specific object of knowledge. The question of *sophrosyne*, however, requires that one discovers the *coincidence of opposites*

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Schiller, *Poet of Freedom, Volume II*, Schiller Institute, Washington D.C., 1988, pp. 59-178.

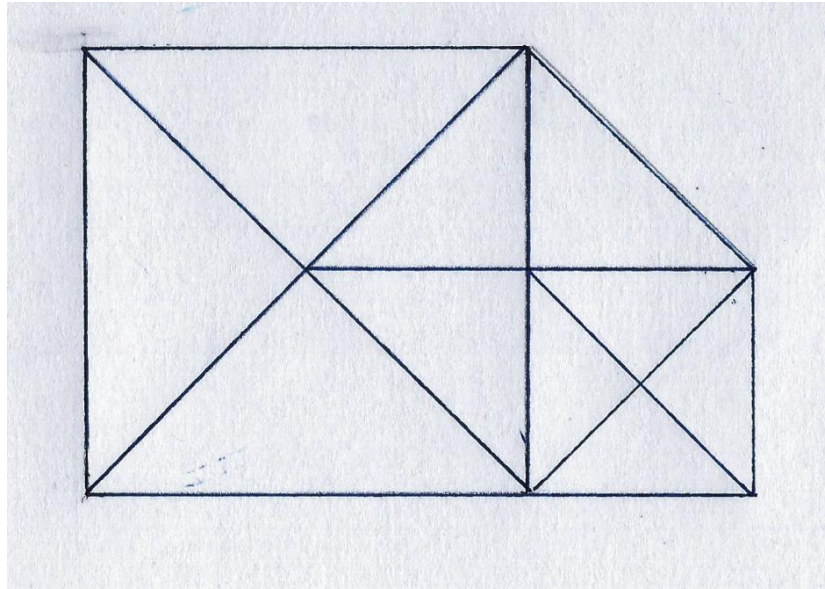
between what happens to your mind when you think about something, and when you think about what you are thinking about. Those are two very different objects and two very different actions fused into a single higher process, which must not be confused with any sort of lower object of perception. In other words, perception is not knowledge, and knowledge of *sophrosyne* is not a perception, but a sublime thought-object,

On the other hand, if you do think about your thinking, and you think it is important to share your ideas about it with others, then, ask yourself: What level of consciousness do you require to know the truth about such a state of mind as *sophrosyne* and what are the political consequences of applying or not applying such ideas to society? That is the underlying subject matter of Plato's *Charmides* dialogue.

### THE CASE OF THE SLAVE BOY IN THE MENO

First and foremost, consider Socrates' question to the slave boy in Plato's *Meno* dialogue: "How do you double the surface of a square?" What does the slave boy do? He draws a square in the sand and he doubles the side of that square to get a larger one, which turns out to be four times the size of the original one. What was he thinking? In fact, he wasn't thinking. He was responding to his self evident sense perception whereby one plus one equals two; and he ended up with one plus one equals four. That trust in sense perception can be quite perplexing. The boy was merely reacting, and reacting is not thinking. Any animal can do that. The fact that he reacted prevented him from discovering the pathway to go from a lower to a higher manifold.

But then, when Socrates helped him by asking him to reflect on what he was thinking, the slave boy began to realize that what he had to think about was the difference between the linear and the surface domains. That is when he realized that doubling the length of a line could not determine anything on the manifold of a surface. On the other hand, if you divide the surface of a square into two equal parts at the vertices, you can discover how to double that square by rotational action. Thus, there exists a transfinite form of action between going from a line to a surface.



The doubling of the square by rotation

Another example: “How do you know when you are thinking?” Just as in the case of doubling the square, there are two different ways to answer that question, because you are dealing with two different levels. The first one is: I don’t know that I am thinking if I am simply reacting to an object of sense perception. And the second is: I know that I am thinking whenever I investigate the process by means of which I am able to control myself before responding to a burning question. There is an incommensurable and transfinite difference between the two levels: one is Aristotelian, the other is Platonic.

The first answer belongs to the discrete manifold of simple apprehensions of things perceived in themselves, because when you think about something, you are not reflecting on the knowledge that made the object possible; you are merely dealing with an impression, you are reacting to a discrete object of sense certainty. However, sensing is not thinking.

On the other hand, when you are thinking about your process of knowledge, you are performing an action of thinking on a higher level than the level of discrete perceived objects; you are causing a change in the universe, you are adding

something new in the universe which did not exist before and which makes it grow. This second higher level subsumes the first level and can best be identified as a transfinite manifold. Animals function at the level of the discrete manifold of sense perception, while human beings only function at the level of the transfinite manifold. That is the underlying epistemological and political difference between man and animal.

### WHAT IS THE NATURE OF SOPHROSYNE?

*“Life without this sort of examination is not worth living.”* Socrates, *The Apology*, (38a).

In Greek mythology, *Sophrosyne* was the goddess of “good spirits” (*eudaimonia*) who escaped *Pandora*’s Jar after it had been opened and all of its contents infested the world with disease, death, and other destructive evils. According to the original story by Hesiod, the so-called “*Pandora* Box” was a large jar that Zeus had given to *Pandora* to get even with Prometheus for having stolen fire from heaven and given it to humans.



The goddess Ma'at, <https://www.worldhistoryedu.com/maat-the-egyptian-goddess-of-truth-law-order/>

*Sophrosyne* represents the principle of moderation and prudence in both thinking and acting that reflects a sound and humble human mind, a mind which is able to silently endure physical and mental pain and whose life does not depend on sense perception. *Sophrosyne*'s counterpart is *Ma'at* from ancient Egypt, the goddess of proportion and harmony, who represented the principle of balance and justice weighing good against evil in all human souls after they die.

According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, the term *sophrosyne* comes from Ancient Greek σωφροσύνη (sōphrosúnē, “soundness of mind, prudence, temperance”) from σώφρων (sōphrōn, “sane, moderate, prudent”) (from σῶς (sōs, “safe, sound, whole”) φρήν (phrēn, “mind”)) + -σύνη (-súnē, abstract noun suffix). By its very nature *sophrosyne* also causes other qualities to fuse within the mind, such as prudent, wise, and modest (σωφρονέω); self-correction, repress, and contain (σωφρονίζω); moderate, wise, and sober (σωφρονητικός). It is not merely a coincidence that *Sophoniskos* (counselor) was the name of Socrates' father and that the word *sophonisterion* means house of correction. The variability of the Greek concept is not merely due to a matter of taste, it is also the result of the degeneration of the culture within the Greek society as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

Epistemologically, *sophrosyne* (σωφροσύνη) is a multi-faceted ancient Greek concept referring to the ideal character of the human mind, which Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato recommended for all leaders of Greece, and that Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides prominently represented in their plays. In his *Phaedrus* dialogue, Plato wrote: “And when that manner of judging leads our reason toward the best and we become dominated by it, we call that domination, *soundness of mind* (σωφροσύνη); but when it is the desire which drags us

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<sup>2</sup> In her book, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca New York, 1966, p. 192, Helen North noted the difficulty of defining the Greek term: “The difficulty arose (and still arises) not only because σωφροσύνη was a peculiarly Greek concept, but because its meaning varies so much for the Greeks themselves, differing at different stages of historical development, for different authors, even in different contexts of the same author's work.”

irrationally toward pleasure and dominates us, the name for that form of domination is *hubris* (ὕβρις).<sup>3</sup>



(432 BC) Athenians against Corinthians. Scene of Socrates saving Alcibiades during the opening period of the Peloponnesian War. 18th century engraving by Wilhelm Müller after the drawing, 1788, by Jakob Asmus Carstens.

During the Lucurgan period of 334-322 BCE, the Athenian Greeks had created a compulsory two-year state-funded College program called “*Ephebeia*”, for 18 to 20 year old boys. The program included military and administrative apprenticeship, and mostly the apprenticeship of *sophrosyne*. The students, called “*ephebes*,” were trained to become the elite of the City-State. According to

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<sup>3</sup> Plato *Phaedrus*, (238a), (Translation P.B.).

Heraclitus, “*Sophrosyne* is the greatest virtue, and wisdom is speaking and acting the truth, paying heed to the nature of things.”<sup>4</sup>

In contrast with the city of Sparta, the *Ephebeia* program of Athens was based on instilling moderation, piety and patriotic fervor to the *ephebes* with the purpose of motivating them to free Athens from Macedonian domination and its evil principle of oligarchical rule. The institution was destroyed when the pro-Macedonian ruling oligarchy abolished it after the Athenian defeat in the Lamian War of 322 BCE, a year after the death of Alexander the Great.

The values incorporated in the term *sophrosyne* can only exist truthfully when combined into a well-balanced individual who is both sound of mind and of heart as opposed to an individual filled with self-aggrandizement and revenge. *Sophrosyne* was considered by Plato to be one of the four cardinal virtues along with courage, justice, and truth.<sup>5</sup>

The idea of balance and integrity is also found in the Asiatic teachings of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. A similar conception is found in Vedic philosophy, especially in the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata. According to Vincent deLuise, M.D.:

“The universality of these ideas can be found, for example, in Hinduism, where parallels to *Sophrosyne* are seen in the concept of *dharmā* (the law supporting the order of the universe), in the *hathayoga* (the balancing of opposite forces), and in the tenet of *artha*. The *artha* is one of the four *puruṣārthas* (Sanskrit पुरुषार्थ : "goals of life") within Vedic belief, which concern themselves with the concept of "proper living" as espoused in its great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Thus, Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Hindu philosophies each contain similar concepts embedded within *Sophrosyne*.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Hyland, D. A. 2008. *Plato and the Question of Beauty*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p. 105.

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *Republic*, 487a3.

<sup>6</sup> Vincent deLuise, M.D., *SOPHROSYNÉ, AND WHY WE NEED HER NOW*, a Musical Vision. “Essays and thoughts at the nexus of music, art and medicine and the transformative power of the humanities on the healing of the body and spirit. As humanity hurtles through time and space in this fast-paced twenty-first century, hard questions must



## THE *CHARMIDES* DIALOGUE

This early dialogue by Plato is special because it deals with the education of youth and is aimed at perfecting their maturing process for the purpose of making them citizens and leaders of the City-State of Athens. The same attention to pedagogy may be applied to Plato himself, since he was a young author when he wrote this dialogue.

The reading of the *Charmides* requires thoughtful patience and insightful self-corrections on the part of the modern reader, because he is not prepared for a number of implications that Plato inserted in his narrative, nor is the reader prepared for the long and convoluted forms of reasoning that Socrates uses. The reader must therefore discover that Socrates has a higher purpose than simply defining the meaning of a difficult concept. Although this form of presentation will later be discarded by Plato, the investigative form he chose is quite pleasant to a mind who seeks the interplay of psycho-epistemological scenes filled with grace and thoughtfulness.

It is essential to be as close as possible to the original Greek text and to use translations cautiously. In the present case, I have used the translation by the Oxford liberal, Benjamin Jowett, who translated the term *sophrosyne* by “temperance.” I also referred to a French translation by the Sorbonnard, Alfred Croiset, who translated the same term by “wisdom.” The two translations must be used with caution because, although they are acceptable, both omit certain subjective aspects of the human personality of the characters; that is, they neglect to reflect their true underlying intentions.

For example, it is important for the modern reader to understand that Charmides and Critias have opposite personalities. At the time of Plato, the reader would have known that and would have kept it in mind. The reader would know that Charmides was a timid and modest eighteen year-old, while Critias was a tyrannical leader, a self-assured mature man with the vanity of an author, and the

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again be asked about what exactly it is that we are doing here, and even more urgently, what it is that we are doing with our lives. We are stressed out, anxious, off-kilter and unbalanced.”

arrogant hubris of an aristocrat. Those qualities are essential to recognize and to reflect on, in order to better understand the tone and the intention of Plato's dialogue in the context of a post-war period. Among other things, the reader must also look for the range of interplay between the two personalities and must seek to find a solution to the paradox of the *coincidence of opposites*.

### **THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THE FORECASTING SUBJECT OF THE CHARMIDES**

At the time of his encounter with Socrates, Charmides (Plato's uncle) was being raised by his first cousin, Critias, who was also a relative of Plato's, a brother of his mother, Perictione. Later in life, both Charmides and Critias joined the Aristocratic Party of Athens, and both became members of the Thirty Tyrants ruling Athens with Spartan support after Athens lost the Peloponnesian War. Led by Critias, the Thirty Tyrants represented a reign of terror, which executed, exiled hundreds of Athenians, and seized their properties. Those who disagreed with Critias were either exiled or executed.

The Peloponnesian War is a turning point in history, because it established the odious victory of oligarchism over the "Athenian democracy," and set the stage for oligarchism to rule over Europe for the next 2,000 years. Therefore, this subject matter is one of the most important thought-object that people must be thinking about, during this present period, because history could repeat itself.

The Peloponnesian War was the longest and most destructive war that Athens waged in its history. The war against Sparta and other cities completely destroyed the Socratic and Platonic intention of peace in Greece and imposed the sophistry of warfare (war by fabricated evidence) as a way of life; that is, war based on lies as a matter of course.

Among the Athenian educated elite, Charmides and Critias became political leaders who both demonstrated that they could not apply the principle of *sophrosyne* to the political domain. Plato used those real characters to illustrate his pedagogical view of the political and epistemological quality that a leader should have in times of war as in peace, but also to forecast the danger that Greek

civilization was facing. Therefore, the real subject matter of the *Charmides* can also be considered to be how to become morally fit to survive.

From that vantage point, the primary focus of this dialogue is not only the discovery of the meaning of *sophrosyne*; it is also the discovery of the underlying subterfuges and means of sophistry that people use in order to reveal whether they have or have not the required quality of *sophrosyne*. Socrates targets Charmides first because no one was better suited to explain the nature of *sophrosyne* than someone who was said to be endowed with that virtue. However, Charmides cannot help but to blush when Socrates asks him: “Have you or have you not this quality of temperance?”<sup>7</sup>

Although Socrates admits that Charmides may reflect the quality of humility (*σωφροῦν*), he, nevertheless, doubts whether Charmides is truly a *sophrosyne* or if he merely has a timid disposition. This is why Socrates is questioning whether Charmides answers his questions truthfully or if he merely wishes to please his cousin Critias who is standing next to him. In the end, Socrates has to confess: “But now I have been utterly defeated, and have failed to discover what that is to which the lawgiver gave this name of temperance or wisdom.”<sup>8</sup>

The negative appearance of Plato's conclusion should not lead the reader to conclude to some Socratic mental failure or to some skeptical proclivity on his part. Socrates is merely urging the reader to adopt a higher measured sense of learned ignorance in discovering for himself that no truth could ever come from any linear knowledge of deductive logic but only from the true science of good and evil.

### SOPHROSYNE AND THE TRANSFINITE

The Greek notion of *sophrosyne* is difficult to translate because the reality that the Greek word refers to has so many facets that each language has to find its own self-corrective pathway of etymological and epistemological identification to capture its illusive definition. However, there is another reason. Plato generally

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<sup>7</sup> Plato, *Charmides*, (158c)

<sup>8</sup> Plato, *Charmides*, (175b)

attributes the notion to a sense of obedience to the inner laws of harmony and proportion between mind and body, an inner sense of morality, which is the pathway to a higher level of thinking. In the *Charmides*, Socrates captured the gist of this idea when he applied the concept of *sophrosyne* to both mental and physical headaches:

“For all good and evil, whether in the body or in the whole man, originates, as he declared, in the soul, and overflows from thence, as if from the head into the eyes. And therefore, if the head and body are to be well, you must begin by curing the soul – that is the first and essential thing, and the cure of the soul, my dear youth, has to be effected by the use of certain charms [or incantations], and these charms are fair words, and by them temperance is implanted in the soul, and where temperance comes and stays, there health is speedily imparted, not only to the head, but to the whole body. And when he taught me the cure and the charm he added, ‘Let no one persuade you to cure his head, until he has first given you his soul to be cured by the charm. For this,’ he said, ‘is the great error of our day in the treatment of human beings, that men try to be physicians of health and temperance separately.’”<sup>9</sup>

This “Thracian charm” or “incantation,” as Socrates called it, is an excellent cure for headaches provided one endures the pain for the benefit of improving one’s own mind for the sake of mankind. That is the secret to the process of resolution of this difficult question; that is the pathway for resolving paradoxes by means of the *coincidence of opposites*.

Then, Socrates sets up a series of opposites, as so many headaches for the reader to resolve, one after the other, as Plato does later in the *Parmenides*. Socrates pursues this argumentation until Critias attempts to trap him by stating that to “Know thyself” must be the solution to the meaning of *sophrosyne*. Of course, Critias is simply bluffing, because he knows that for Socrates, the only thing that he knows is that he doesn’t know. But, Socrates shows him his own fallacy by stating:

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<sup>9</sup> Plato, *Charmides*, (156e-157b).

“Then, the wise or temperate man, and he only, will know himself, and be able to examine what he knows or does not know, and to see what others know and think that they know and do really know, and what they do not know and fancy that they know when they do not. No other person will be able to do this. And this is wisdom and temperance and self-knowledge – for a man to know what he knows, and what he does not know. That is your meaning? Yes, he said.”<sup>10</sup>

Whenever you discover the same difference between two opposites in your own mind, then, you know you have discovered the pathway to their coincidence, because those differences are to be treated proportionally in the same way. But, that, by itself, will not produce *sophrosyne*.

The difference between two minds who each reflect on each other and on themselves together, with respect to the same thought-object, both reflect in such a way as to cause each other to be the same. However, when they each reflect different content, each to himself, this causes them to be different, as if they were a sort of mirror image of each other, but in opposite ways, such that they never can coincide. In fact, their coincidence can only take place on a higher transfinite plane, bringing their opposition into a higher form of unity of agreement, only when this thought-object takes place under the condition of a total commitment to justice for mankind, *agape*.

### **AVOIDING THE DISCRETE MANIFOLD**

Whenever translators of Plato's dialogues complain about the Socratic form of “logical quibbling” as an irritation for the reader, they are blinded by a fallacy of composition. The *Charmides* is a case in point. Many translators simply miss the point that the “quibbling” they identify is actually a means of creating perplexity in the logical region of the reader's mind. Socrates uses a polemical means of discovering a sense of humility in the reader's mind, and that is why Aristotelians tend to get irritated when they read Plato. Socratic “quibbling” and “ironies” are irritants for those who believe in the discrete manifold of sense perception, where

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<sup>10</sup> Plato, Op. Cit., (167a).

everything is demonstrably made to be deductively reduced to the perceptions of things in themselves, the result of which is always paradoxical.

But what does it mean to think at the level of the discrete manifold? It means going along to get along, because, if you don't, it may cost you your life. The deadly aspect of the discrete manifold is that its standard of measure is the "lesser than" and the "greater than" of a linear extension. In a way, every time you think small, you think in a discrete manifold, because it is on the level of sense perceptions that you are expected to remain; that is the level of deductive logic, and the level of self-evident impressions, that your local oligarch wants you to spend the rest of your life contemplating. For Socrates, refusing to go along with the discrete manifold meant taking his life in his own hands. As when Socrates refused to go along with political leader, Critias, and disobeyed the orders of the Thirty in the case of the execution of Leon of Salamis. Plato reported Socrates saying in the *Apology*:

"When the oligarchy came into power, the Thirty Commissioners in their turn summoned me and four others to the Round Chamber and instructed us to go and fetch Leon of Salamis from his home for execution. This was of course only one of many instances in which they issued such instructions, their object being to implicate as many people as possible in their crimes. On this occasion, however, I again made it clear, not by my words but by my actions, that the attention I paid to death was zero (if that is not too unrefined a claim); but that I gave all my attention to avoiding doing anything unjust or unholy. Powerful as it was, that government did not terrify me into doing a wrong action. When we came out of the rotunda, the other four went to Salamis and arrested Leon, but I simply went home. I should probably have been put to death for this, if the government had not fallen soon afterward. There are plenty of people who will testify to these statements."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Plato, *Apology*, translated by Hugh Tredennick, *The Collected Works of Plato*, Huntington and Cairns (ed.), Princeton U. Press, 1980, p. 4-26. (32cde).

What Socrates identified here is that he feared injustice more than he feared death. To choose death over injustice is, in reality, the sublime quality of *sophrosyne*. The leaders of the Thirty had no possible means of understanding the nature of that Socratic decision, because it was derived from a higher measure of incommensurable proportionality as opposed to a perceived measure of length.<sup>12</sup> As a result, his irritation of Critias and his disobedience to such an unjust command did more to identify the virtue of *sophrosyne* than any other form of action. His public refusal gave the hopeful people of Athens the courage to bring down that government soon after. This irritation may be the underlying motive that Critias used to have Socrates condemned to death.

In his *Memorabilia*, (Book I, Ch. 2.) Xenophon reported on the subject of a confrontation which took place between Socrates and the group of Thirties, including Critias. Xenophon states that he did not believe the accusation against Socrates about “corrupting the youth,” but that he was put to death because he had the courage to confront Critias. Xenophon reported:

“[31] As a consequence Critias also hated Socrates, so that he still bore it in mind against him when as a member of the Thirty he became legislator along with Charicles and he wrote into the laws that one is not to teach an art of speeches, threatening him and not having any way to attack him, but bringing to bear against him what the many censure the philosophers collectively for and slandering him before the many. For I myself never heard this from Socrates; nor did I perceive anyone else who claimed that he heard it.”<sup>13</sup>

Xenophon reported that when Socrates was summoned before Critias and Charicles, the latter stated in a fit of rage: “Socrates, since you are ignorant, we

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<sup>12</sup> If the reader should be interested in this question of geometry, he can refer to my last report: [WHERE IS THE NOOSPHERE LOCATED?](#)

<sup>13</sup> Xenophon *Memorabilia*, Translated by Amy L. Bonnette., Book I, Chapter 2., pp.5-11. See original Greek text at: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0207%3Abook%3D1%3Achapter%3D2%3Asection%3D28>

give you the following orders that are easier to learn: don't converse with the young at all!"<sup>14</sup>

Now you can understand why LaRouche characterized the discrete manifold in opposition to the continuous manifold. The discrete manifold is the domain of sense perception of individual things considered as self-evident perceived realities which are linear, finite, and relate mostly to shadows; that is, to lies. Such "realities" are generally described by mathematicians as pairwise interactions along straight-line pathways because they are incapable of resolving the non-linear ontological paradoxes of the *coincidence of opposites*. No matter how you look at it, or when you apply it to history, the discrete manifold is the end of the road for civilization.

On the other hand, the continuous manifold is the opening of the door to immortality. It is a transfinite multiply-connected manifold which is open-ended to future progress, but is representable only through a non-linear process of constructive geometry of the Gauss-Riemann type.<sup>15</sup> In other words, it is impossible to represent the living changing processes of human beings in a society based on the discrete manifold, because the discrete manifold is incapable of recognizing them as thought-objects. What is required for understanding the nature of *sophrosyne* is a non-linear least action approach that Lyndon LaRouche described as non-algebraic functions similar to what you can derive from Cusa's isoperimetric principle.<sup>16</sup>

When one studies LaRouche's writings, one is subjected to a similar epistemological framework as the one Plato constructed in the *Charmides* dialogue. The pedagogical point that LaRouche often made with respect to the loss of literacy in our modern cultures, regarding developing and transmitting a transfinite quality of mind among individual people, reflected a similar situation as the loss of the concept of *sophrosyne* in ancient Athens. With the aim of restoring the same quality of learned ignorance spirit as displayed by Socrates, Lyn wrote:

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<sup>14</sup> Xenophon, Op. Cit., p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> See Lyndon LaRouche, [Brunelleschi and the Quantization of Space](#), 21<sup>st</sup> Century Science & Technology, July-August 1989.

<sup>16</sup> See Lyndon LaRouche, [On the Subject of Metaphor](#), The Schiller Institute.



“The study of topology, originally from the standpoint of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’s mind respecting analysis situs, past Riemann surfaces, through Georg Cantor, indicates to us, in significant part, the existence of general, transfinite principles of cardinal ordering of non-algebraic constructions, which are to a valid physics, in general, as the form of mathematical-physics-like aspect of language-communication is to the substance of the creative thinking on physics matters.

“When we examine more intimately the role of a non-algebraic constructive geometry and also of well-tempered bel canto polyphony, in defining the morphological and physics qualities of a literate form of language, we see the matter in less inadequate terms of reference.”<sup>17</sup>

That is how to define the process of transformation that the Greeks called, *sophrosyne* and that is how public opinion has to be transformed today. Thus, the reader should be reminded that denouncing the abuses of the discrete manifold may cost him his life. There is no danger that such a denunciation could come from a British oligarch, because, as Lord Palmerston once said: “We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, if you don’t have *agape*, you cannot have *sophrosyne*; and that is the Achilles heel of any oligarchical form of government.

## CONCLUSION

The concept of *sophrosyne* is a crucial axiomatic concept which implies a life and death decision for every human being today, because it is a call to all vigorous souls to unite their forces worldwide. During the next few weeks and months, the LaRouche organization’s work will be decisive in this matter, because the *sophrosyne* quality that leaders such as Donald Trump, Xi Jinping, and Vladimir Putin will soon have to embrace will be absolutely necessary in order to

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<sup>17</sup> Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., *Economics and Natural Law: A World Under the Rule of Law*, EIR, Vol. 47, No. 17, April 24, 2020, p. 7. Originally published in *The Science of Christian Economics*, chapter VIII, EIR, Vol. 18, No. 22, June 7, 1991.

<sup>18</sup> Palmerston speech, House of Commons, 1 March 1848.

rid the world of oligarchism, and bring the human species to a higher level of civilization.

He who demonstrates the virtue of *sophrosyne* through a series of moderate and humble questions and paradoxical actions, will access humility and power at the same time, because he will realize that he doesn't quite know how to define precisely the difficult pathway to the future, as Socrates did, because what is required is not a brilliant answer to every problem thrown at you, but rather, the discovery of the way by means of which one is able to express *agape*; that is, the benefit of others, and that is what Socrates was aiming to demonstrate in Plato's *Charmides*.

**FIN**