

Tools, powers and activities in Proclean dialectic

Text 1: The “logical methods”

πρέπουσι δὲ αἱ λογικαὶ μέθοδοι τοῖς περὶ τὰ ψυχικὰ στρεφομένοις εἶδη, πείραι καὶ <μαίεαι καὶ> ἔλεγχοι καὶ ὀρισμοὶ καὶ ἀποδείξεις καὶ διαιρέσεις, συνθέσεις τε καὶ ἀναλύσεις.
(*In Parm.* V.987.25-28)

It is the logical methods that befit those who concern themselves with psychic forms, namely testings, [maieutics,] refutations, definitions, demonstrations and divisions, syntheses and analyses.

Text 2: Synthesis is equivalent to division, definition and demonstration taken together

καὶ γὰρ συνθέσεων χρῆται καὶ ἀναλύσεων, αἰ μὲν ἐξ ὑποθέσεων ὀρμῶσα καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς ἀπὸ τῆς πρὸ αὐτῆς ἐπιστήμης λαμβάνουσα, χρωμένη δὲ ταῖς διαλεκτικαῖς ἀπάσαις μεθόδοις, περὶ μὲν τὰς ἀρχὰς διαιρέσει τῶν εἰδῶν ἀπὸ τῶν γενῶν καὶ τοῖς ὀριστικοῖς λόγοις, περὶ δὲ τὰ μετὰ τὰς ἀρχὰς ἀποδείξει καὶ ἀναλύσειν (*In Eucl.* 57.18-24)

[Geometry] uses sunthesis and analysis. It always proceeds from hypotheses, receiving its principles from the science superior to it. It also uses all the dialectical methods: concerning the principles, it uses divisions of the species from genera and definitions, and for what comes after the principles, demonstrations and analyses.

Text 3: The four powers of the dialectical method

Τὸ μὲν οὖν εἶδος ὅλον τῆς διαλεκτικῆς μεθόδου τοιοῦτον, νοερὸν ὄντως καὶ ἐπιστημονικόν, ἀλλ'οὐχὶ δοξαστικόν καὶ παντελῶς ἄστατον καὶ ἀόριστον κατὰ τὴν γνῶσιν. Ὑπὸ δὲ ταύτην τὴν μίαν καὶ ὅλην μέθοδον αἱ τέτταρες τελοῦσι δυνάμεις, ὀριστικὴ, καὶ διαιρετικὴ, καὶ ἀποδεικτικὴ, καὶ ἀναλυτικὴ· (*In Parm.* V.1003.3-8)

This is the whole form of the dialectical method, truly intellectual and scientific, but neither doxastic nor completely unstable and undefined with regard to knowledge. To this single and complete method are subordinated four powers: definition, division, demonstration and analysis.

Text 4a-b: The three activities of the dialectical method

Τρεῖς εἰσὶν, ὡς τὸ ὅλον εἶπεῖν, ἐνέργειαι τῆς ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐπιστημονικῆς μεθόδου ταύτης
(*In Parm.* I.653.6-7)

Three are, to describe it completely, the activities of this truly scientific method.

Τρία τοίνυν ἔργα τῆς διαλεκτικῆς· τὸ μὲν καθαρτικὸν διὰ τῶν ἐλέγχων, ὡς αὐτὸς ἐν Σοφιστῇ φησιν· ᾧ καὶ ὁ Σωκράτης χρῆται πολλῶ πρὸς τὸ σοφιστικὸν φῦλον, τὴν διπλὴν ἀγνοίαν σωφρονίζων· τὸ δὲ ἀπ' ἐναντίας τούτῳ τῶν ὄντων ἀναμνηστικόν, ᾧ τοὺς εὔπεφυκτάς ἀνήγεν ἐπὶ θεωρίαν, αὐτὸ μόνον ἐμφαίνων τὸ ἀληθές· τὸ δὲ ἐπ' ἄμφω διατεῖνον, καὶ τὰ μὲν ἐλέγχον, τὰ δὲ προκαλούμενον εἰς τὴν ἀλήθειαν· ὥστε ἐν πολλοῖς τε ἄλλοις ὁ Σωκράτης διαλόγοις καὶ ἐν τῷ Λύσιδι δῆλός ἐστι γυμνάζων τοὺς λόγους. (*In Parm.* V.989.12-22)

Three are the activities of dialectic. The first purifies by means of refutation, as Plato says in the *Sophist*; Socrates uses a good deal of it against the race of sophists, chastising their double ignorance. The second, on the contrary, reminds one of true realities; through it he used to lead the

well-born to contemplation, revealing to them what is true in its simplicity. The third extends to both of these activities, it refutes as well as exhorting to see the truth: in many other dialogues and especially in the *Lysis*, Socrates is clearly exercising his reasonings.

Text 5: Contemplation of truth and refutation of falsity use the same methods

πλάνη γὰρ τὸ μὴ μόνον ἀληθείᾳ σκοπεῖν ὅπως ἀποδεκτέον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ψευδῆ διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν μεθόδων ἐκπεριτρέχειν ἐλέγχοντα. (In *Parm.* V.995.30-33)

The “wandering” (*sc.* the third activity) consists not only in examining how we should demonstrate what is true, but also in roaming around what is false by refuting it, through of the same methods.

Text 6: Dialectic also uses instruments

Οὔτε γὰρ ἐπὶ μόνον τὸν Ἀλκιβιάδην ἀναφέρειν προσήκει τὴν τοῦ διαλόγου πρόθεσιν, ὡς τινες ὑπέλαβον (ἢ γὰρ ἐπιστημονικὴ θεωρία τὸ κοινὸν ὄρᾳ καὶ τὸ διατεῖνον ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ὁμοίαν ἔξιν)· οὔτε τὰ ὄργανα τὰ διαλεκτικὰ προτείνειν ὡς σκοποὺς τῆς συνουσίας, οἷον τὴν προτροπὴν ἢ τὴν μαιείαν ἢ τὸν ἔλεγχον, ἀλλ' ὄρᾳν εἰς τί καὶ ταῦτα τέλος ἀνατείνεται. (In *Alc.* 7.18-8.3)

It is not appropriate to refer the aim of the dialogue to Alcibiades alone, as some have supposed (for scientific contemplation sees what is common and extends to every state that is similar to it), nor to raise the dialectical instruments – such as exhortation, maieutics and refutation – to the rank of purpose of the conversation, but one should examine what goal they pursue.

→ **What are the relations between those instruments and the powers & activities of dialectic?**

Text 7: Power, activity and instrument in Aristotle

Ὡς μὲν οὖν ἡ τμησις καὶ ἡ ὄρασις, οὕτω καὶ ἡ ἐργήγορσις ἐντελέχεια, ὡς δ' ἡ ὄψις καὶ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ ὄργάνου ἢ ψυχῆ. (De *Anima* II.1, 412b-413a)

As for cutting [with an axe] and seeing, wakefulness is an activity, and soul is like the sight, the power of the organ/instrument.

Text 8: The First Alcibiades is divided in three parts: purification, exhortation, recollection

προηγῆται μὲν κεφάλαιον ἓν, τὸ τὴν ἄγνοιαν ἀφαιροῦν τοῦ λόγου καὶ τὰ ἐμπόδια τῆς ἐπιστήμης τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ διὰ τὴν γένεσιν ἀναστέλλον πολλοῖς δὴ τισι καὶ παντοδαποῖς συλλογισμοῖς· δεύτερον δὲ ἐπὶ τούτῳ τέτακται τοῦ διαλόγου μέρος, τὸ κατασκευάζον ὡς οὐ χρὴ τοῖς φυσικοῖς πλεονεκτίμασι ἀρκοῦμενον ἀπολιμπάνεσθαι τῶν κατὰ τὴν τελείαν ἀρετὴν ἐπιτηδευμάτων· τρίτον δὲ ἐπὶ τούτοις τὸ τὴν ἀνάμνησιν πορίζον τῆς ἀληθινῆς ἡμῶν οὐσίας καὶ τῆς ἐπιμελείας τῆς ὀρθῆς τὴν εὐρεσιν καὶ τέλος τὸ προσῆκον ἐπάγον τῇ ὅλῃ προθέσει τῶν λόγων; τρία τοίνυν ταῦτα τοῦ προκειμένου διαλόγου μέρη. (In *Alc.* 14.8-17)

First comes one chapter that removes ignorance from reason and eliminates from knowledge obstacles that are in it due to becoming, by means of several various syllogisms. After that, the second part of the dialogue argues that one must not be so satisfied of his nature advantages as to forfeit the practices conform to perfect virtue. After these, the third part provides the recollection of our true being and the discovery of the proper care and brings an end which correspond to the purpose of the conversation. Three, then, are the part of the present dialogue.

→ **Are those parts activities or instruments ?**