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Accusing the accusers: Invective, identity, and "triangulated relations" in Plato's *Apology of Socrates*

Acusando os acusadores: invectiva, identidade e "relações trianguladas" na Apologia de Sócrates *de Platão*

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Abstract: This paper discusses an aspect of rhetoric in Plato's *Apology of Socrates*: invective, the modes that the defendant uses to attack, undermine the credentials, and diminish the credibility of his accusers, namely Meletus, Anytus, and Lycon (with side attacks also being hurled against others, including Aristophanes). "Accusing the accusers" encapsulates and refers succinctly to the use of invective on the principle that the best form of defence is attack. It is, specifically, examined how invective on the part of the defendant is articulated: what elements it is made up of, how it connects with and capitalizes on the general sociocultural context in classical Athens to deconstruct the identity of the accusers, and how useful it is in triangulating relations in court between the speaker, his opponent(s), and the audience – a technique that, as argued in scholarship, has tremendous potential to affect the verdict of the judges.

Keywords: *Apology of Socrates*; invective; identity; "triangulated relations"; inclusion; exclusion; emotions.

Resumo: Este artigo discute um aspecto da retórica na *Apologia de Sócrates* de Platão: a invectiva, os modos que o réu usa para atacar, minar as credenciais e diminuir a credibilidade de seus acusadores, nomeadamente Meleto, Ânito e Lícon (com ataques colaterais também sendo arremessados contra outros, incluindo Aristófanes). "Acusar os acusadores" resume e refere-se sucintamente ao uso de invectivas com base no princípio de que a melhor forma de defesa é o ataque. É, especificamente, examinado como a invectiva por parte do réu é articulada: de que elementos ela é composta, como ela se conecta e capitaliza o contexto sociocultural geral da Atenas clássica para desconstruir a identidade dos acusadores, e quão útil consiste em triangular as relações no tribunal entre o orador, o(s) seu(s) oponente(s) e o público – uma técnica que, como argumentado nos estudos na área, tem um enorme potencial para afetar o veredicto dos juízes.

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Palavras-chave: *Apologia de Sócrates*; invectiva; identidade; "relações trianguladas"; inclusão; exclusão; emoções.

There has been discussion for some time about rhetorical persuasion in the defence speech that Plato attributes to his teacher, in particular about whether the defendant was sincerely interested in persuading the judges to release him,[1] and what kind of rhetorical techniques are incorporated in the speech that is transmitted to us.[2] I do not side with those who think that Socrates did not care about persuasion, or that his defence speech was inadequate or displayed rhetorical incompetence. In a recent paper on the use of questions for rhetorical purposes in the *Apology*, I argue that their elaborate structure from the exordium to the peroration of the speech and their thoughtful exploitation by Socrates betray his strong interest in the art of winning over the judges and persuading them that he was the victim of slander – *diabolē*. Questions, I explain in my paper, aim to serve three major persuasive purposes:

> first, to help him get into the gist of the case and, using Meletus' answers to the interrogatories, to present rhetorical evidence for his innocence and for his accuser's lies [these are what I call *introductory or explanatory* questions, mostly manifested in 19b–23d]; second, to describe the *ēthos* of litigants [these are called *ēthos-depicting* questions, as they are in 24c–34d]; and third, to convey a message to the audience about the verdict Socrates thinks the judges should cast about him [these are the *investigatory* questions and can be found in 36b–41c] (Serafim, 2021b, p. 137).

[1] Danzig (2003, p. 287) argues, not quite convincingly in my view, that Socrates was not interested in rhetorical persuasion.

[2] On the rhetorical structure of the *Apology*, which consists of a preface, *tractatio*, and epilogue: Burnet (1924, p. 64-67), Strycker and Slings (1974, p. 21-25), and McCoy (2008, p. 24) offers useful information about how rhetorical techniques are used, in the *Apology*, for persuasion and for making "philosophical claims about the nature of wisdom, courage, piety and justice".

In fact, the *Apology* does not only indicate Socrates' interest in rhetoric, but also his masterly competence in exploiting it. The unfortunate ending of the case for him tells us nothing, in my view, about his speech – its value, structure, and the themes of rhetoric it includes.[3] There can be failed masterpieces, since the outcome of cases is not fully determined by the value of the speeches but also – perhaps, more importantly – by the general sociopolitical context and the historical circumstances, which inevitably have a huge impact upon how audiences think and feel about anyone involved in ethnic/civic, political, military, and other incidents. After all, Lysias also points out, in 19.3, that the defendant is in a disadvantageous position, "contending amid fear and slander and the gravest danger". But Socrates is competent to use rhetoric in a clever way; he renounces its use, for example – after all, it was his disciple who turned vehemently against the sophists and the means they used for persuasion – while, at the same time, using it. Specifically, he pleads his inexperience in speaking – which is itself a much-used *topos* in court oratory (17b–c) – and refuses, in 34c, to follow the tactics of others and bring his children in the courtroom and instruct them to mount the *bēma*, aiming to arouse dicastic compassion.[4] But in the concluding sections

[3] Whether the transmitted text of the *Apology* represents the *ipsissima verba* of what was said in court by Socrates or is a masterful forgery by his disciple, Plato, is still an unanswered question that generates much dissent and controversy. Grote (1875), Taylor (1911), Burnet (1924), Field (1930), Guthrie (1975), Brickhouse and Smith (1989), and Serafim (2021b, p. 135–153) are in favour of the historicist approach to the *Apology*. Staunch opposition to this approach is presented in Oldfather (1938), Chroust (1945, 1957), West (1979), Kato (1991), Rutherford (1995), Kahn (1996), and Danzig (2003, p. 293).

[4] Ample evidence shows that bringing children into the law-court was a common practice that aimed to influence the verdict of the judges by appealing to their compassion. In Aristophanes, *Wasps* 568–572, for example, Philocleon describes how a litigant uses the presence of his children in the courtroom to influence the dicasts. "And if none of this persuades us, he starts dragging his kids up there by the hand, daughters and sons, and I listen while they cringe and bleat in chorus and then their father implores me for their sake, trembling as if I were a god, to let him off in his audit: 'if you enjoy the bleat of the lamb, please pity the cry of the kid'". In lines 977–988, the whining puppies of the dog Labes are called to mount the rostrum and awaken the pity and the compassion of the dicast Philocleon, who cries, as he himself admits (claiming, however, that it was because of a hot soup; 983–984). Similar information about the

of the speech, in 41e–42a, he mentions his sons and asks the judges to undertake their virtuous upbringing.[5] Without the "theatrics" of having his children around him in court, the purpose of his reference to them is very much like that of other defendants: to appeal to the judges' sense of *ἐπιείκεια*. In Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 1374a27, 1374b1ff. *ἐπιείκεια* is defined as a means of tempering the strictness of the written legal statutes about the litigant's transgressions (cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1143a21ff. where *ἐπιείκεια* relates to forgiveness). Blatant appeals to the compassion and the softness of the judges risk weakening the position of the defendant by pointing to his guilt;[6] therefore, the indirectness of Socrates' appeal in the *Apology* points to his rhetorical genius.

In addition to the questions and the other rhetorical techniques that Socrates uses in the *Apology*, there are also examples of invective – not simply refutation of the accusations that the prosecutors levelled against him, but also hurling back accusations against them, attributing to them and castigating them for moral deficiencies and political, legal, and social misconduct. Moral and social accusations are two broad

impact of this practice upon the audience is also given by oratorical sources. In Lysias 20.34, for example, it is claimed that sometimes the judges are so much influenced by the whining of the speaker's children that "they overlook the father's transgressions on account of the children". In Demosthenes 21.99, the speaker refers to the (alleged) tactic that Meidias was about to use to elicit the pity of the judges: "pity, forsooth! He will group his children round him and weep and beg you to pardon him for their sakes. That is his last move. But I need not remind you that pity is the due of those who unjustly suffer more than they can endure, not of those who are paying the penalty for the misdeeds they have committed". Translations of texts in this paper are from Loeb Classical Library Editions, unless otherwise stated.

[5] Plato, *Apology of Socrates* 34c: "When he remembers his own conduct, if he, even in a case of less importance than this, begged and besought the judges with many tears, and brought forward his children to arouse compassion, and many other friends and relatives; whereas I will do none of these things, though I am, apparently, in the very greatest danger". 41e-42a: "When my sons grow up, gentlemen, punish them by troubling them as I have troubled you; if they seem to you to care for money or anything else more than for virtue, and if they think they amount to something when they do not, rebuke them as I have rebuked you because they do not care for what they ought, and think they amount to something when they are worth nothing. If you do this, both I and my sons shall have received just treatment from you".

[6] Harris (1994, p. 140), Carey (1996, p. 42), and Konstan (2000, p. 138).

categories of features that provide material for the articulation of invective in ancient literature, especially polemic oratory, as are forensic speeches and some symbouleutic (cf. the two groups of figures on p. 10–13). It may seem paradoxical for an apology to contain elements of attack or, as the first part of the title indicates, for the accused to level attacks against the accusers. Attic forensic oratorical practice (as well as oratory in later forensic traditions, most notably Cicero) indicates, however, that even in speeches that are designed to defend the life and actions of individuals, the speaker does not pass up the opportunity to attack his attackers. Demosthenes easily comes to mind, as he proved to be effective in condemning Aeschines in his masterpiece, *On the Crown* (speech 18), leaving to him no opportunity to win over the audience and defeating him by an overwhelming majority of votes (cf. Plutarch, *Demosthenes* 24.2.9–10). Accusations against the accusers aim devastating at their identity. What identity is and how invective, the means of deconstructing it, works in the legal processes of presenting prosecutions and apologies are discussed in what follows.

Identity, to start with, is an overarching term that was introduced by psychologists in the 1950s, referring to the traits that most succinctly describe individual or collective "self", what one *does* or what others think one *does* (akin to the theories of S. de Beauvoir, M. Wittig, and M. Foucault about "self" as performance) that best describe *being*.[7] Definitions point to the notion of "self" being used interchangeably with "identity".[8] Pinning down the key features of identity as discussed in an

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[7] De Beauvoir (1973, p. 301), Butler (1986, p. 35-49 and 1990, p. 129).

[8] Weinreich (1986, p. 14), for example, defines identity as follows: "a person's identity is defined as the totality of one's self-construal, in which how one construes oneself in the present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future; this allows for definitions of aspects of identity, such as: One's ethnic identity is defined as that part of the totality of one's self-construal made up of those dimensions that express the continuity between one's construal of past ancestry and one's future aspirations in relation to ethnicity". In a similar vein, Hall (1989) understands that "identity emerges as a kind of unsettled space, or an unresolved question in that space, between a number of intersecting discourses.... [Until recently, we have incorrectly thought that identity is] a kind of fixed point of thought and being, a ground of action... the logic of something

admirably enormous cross-disciplinary collection of theories,[9] I argue elsewhere that identity is "a sort of predicate that is attached to individuals or collectives by themselves and others, and describes their nature, traits, and actions" (Serafim, 2021a, p. 122). Identity has two fundamental dimensions: first, it can be both *individual* (or *personal*),[10] when there is only one bearer, and *collective*, when a community is marked in a specific way (*e.g*. a community of pious men or women, a community of foreigners etc.); and second, a prerequisite for identity construction is *recognition* or *identification*, i.e. how an individual or a community is perceived by themselves or by others, or perhaps better, what features are attributed to an individual or a community by themselves or by a third party.[11] Identity is based on the tripartite scheme *identifier-identified-context of identification*, and it encompasses every aspect of bodily and intellectual conduct which has the potential to present an individual or a community as being *X* or *Z*: character and behaviour (*ēthos*), upbringing, education, occupation and way of life, physique, actions, origins, religious allegiances and practices, indications of morality and, of course, words (as ancient thinkers also indicate, *e.g*. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1450b8, 1454a17–19; *Rhetoric* 1417a20–22, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1103a17ff, 1112a16–17, 1163a22–23; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Lysias* 8).[12]

Invective is a violent attack against a person's identity, an attempt to present "self" or "self-indicating" traits in the most damning way, a conscious effort by one person to undermine, diminish, stigmatize, and destroy the perception others have of someone else. The consciousness of this effort and its very purposes underline the violence of the process

like a "true self". [But] identity is a process, identity is split. Identity is not a fixed point but an ambivalent point. Identity is also the relationship of the other to oneself".

[9] Hogg and Abrams (1988, p. 2), Clifford (1988, p. 344), Hall (1989), Wendt (1992, p. 397), Deng (1995, p. 1), Jenkins (1996, p. 4), and Gee (2000, p. 99-125).

[10] Individual or personal identity is what defines every and any individual through biographical information, unaltered mental and physical characteristics (*e.g*. intelligence and skin color), role identities in the broad socio-cultural system of hierarchy and beliefs (*e.g*. father, employer), and a combination of private and public experiences.

[11] See Taylor (1994, p. 25-73), İnaç and Ünal (2013, p. 223), and Hicks (2014, p. 10-15).

[12] This comprehensive survey of theories about identity draws on Serafim (2021a, p. 121-123).

of "identity assassination". If we pin down the definitions of invective that have been proposed not only in classical scholarship but also in interdisciplinary theory, we realize that one feature is recurrent: violence. Invective is fundamentally violent, polemical, and immeasurably aggressive. For G. Kennedy, "invective is a statement expressive of inherent evils" (Kennedy, 2003, p. 10). E. Dussol (2006, p. 164) understands invective as a means of demolishing the image of individuals, institutions, and social groups through an act of verbal violence.[13] C.E. Schutz eloquently argues that "invective, ridiculing or insulting of someone, becomes the substitute for violence. Political adversaries can express their anger, contempt, sense of difference without disrupting the fragile peace of political societies" (Schutz, 1977, p. 67).[14] V. Arena defines invective as "a literary genre whose goal is to denigrate publicly a known individual against the background of ethical societal preconceptions, to the end of isolating him or her from the community" (Arena, 2007, p. 149). This succinct definition and clarification of the notion of invective is faulty, in my view, in one point only: in that it attributes the status of genre to invective, needlessly narrowing its meaning, application, and function in literatures around the world and in different times and cultural environments (*e.g.* ancient and contemporary literature; ancient Greek, Roman, Christian, European, Chinese). Invective is rather a technique that can be incorporated in several genres whenever the aim is to denigrate individuals or groups, undermine their credentials and turn the audience cognitively (i.e. by thoughts and emotions) against the targets.[15]

The overarching character of invective – its wide-ranging features, its incorporation into a large variety of texts, and the multiplicity of purposes it serves – is underlined by the research output of an ambitious large-scale, transcultural, and intertextual project, which is funded by the National Science Centre, Poland (grant number 2021/41/B/HS2/00755), is led by Rafał Toczko, and is being conducted in collaboration with me at the Nicolaus Copernicus University. The project, building on and

[13] In a similar vein: Powell (2007, p. 1-2) and Novokhatko (2009, p. 12).

[14] On invective as a means of interpersonal violence, see also: Riess (2012).

[15] There are still debates about whether invective should be approached as a genre or a mode of discourse; *e.g.* Powell (2007, p. 1-23).

exploiting the knowledge that is produced by several multi-disciplinary theories, re-defines invective as a cultural phenomenon that takes meaning from the general cultural context of a given era (i.e. moral, legal, aesthetic, socioeconomic, political, religious, and other) and re-examines it in a wide range – wider than in any other known project on the same topic – of extant verse and prose texts, fragments, and scholia from Homer to proto-Christian literature up until the fifth century AD. The project understands invective as any mode of argumentation that aims at denigrating the target and destroying identity, leading to "triangulated relationships", a term that refers to how invective sustains communication between the speaker, his opponent(s), and the audience. For invective to work, there must be a contract signed between two parties: the one who accepts the values and norms of the community, which are championed by the speaker in collaboration with the audience, and the other who defies or violates them. Accusations, for example, against someone of being impious capitalize on general hostility towards that person and the real anxieties people have about impiety, with the aim of disposing the judges and other audience members negatively against the adversaries of the speaker, who are presented as being impious.[16]

Triangulation has gained scholarly interest after the attempt of C.J. Classen (1991, p. 195-207) to examine the importance of *ēthopoiia*, i.e. the depiction of characters, to allow the speaker to insinuate himself into the favour of the audience, while estranging his opponent from the group.[17] Triangulation in the law-court is also examined from the point of view of making addresses to the audience,[18] of asking questions that are accumulated in high numbers in specific parts of speeches,[19] and of the use of imperatives by the speaker to talk about, and intermittently to, his opponent and convey messages to the audience about him.[20] It is argued in this paper, in reference to Socrates' tactics in the *Apology*,

[16] On impiety and the (legal, moral, and religious) reaction of the community: Serafim (2021).

[17] Also: Serafim (2017a, esp. Chapter 4).

[18] Martin (2006, p. 75-98) and Serafim (2017b, p. 26-41), (2020a, p. 71-98).

[19] Serafim (2020b, p. 1-19) and (2020c, p. 229-248).

[20] Serafim (2020b, p. 1-19) and (2021c, p. 388-417).

that he, like other defendants in the law-courts, attacks the *ēthos* of his opponents with the purpose of creating a persona for them that will alienate the audience, inviting the judges and Athenian onlookers to detach themselves from the accusers, his prosecutors, and associate themselves with him. Given that the accusers are shameful liars, to side with their accuser is a noble act of intellect and justice. "Accusing the accusers" entails, in other words, two strategies at once: to create and reverse "the *ēthos* of sympathy", i.e. to depict a positive image of the speaker and a negative one of his opponent, to maintain sympathy for the former and the lack of it for the latter.[21] The triangulated dynamics of relationships in the law-court are effectively explained by the social identity theory of H. Tajfel and J. Turner, with two overlapping groups that have an immense impact upon the audience in decision-making contexts: the "in-group", i.e. those who espouse values about which the target of invective is defiant, that is the "out-group".[22]

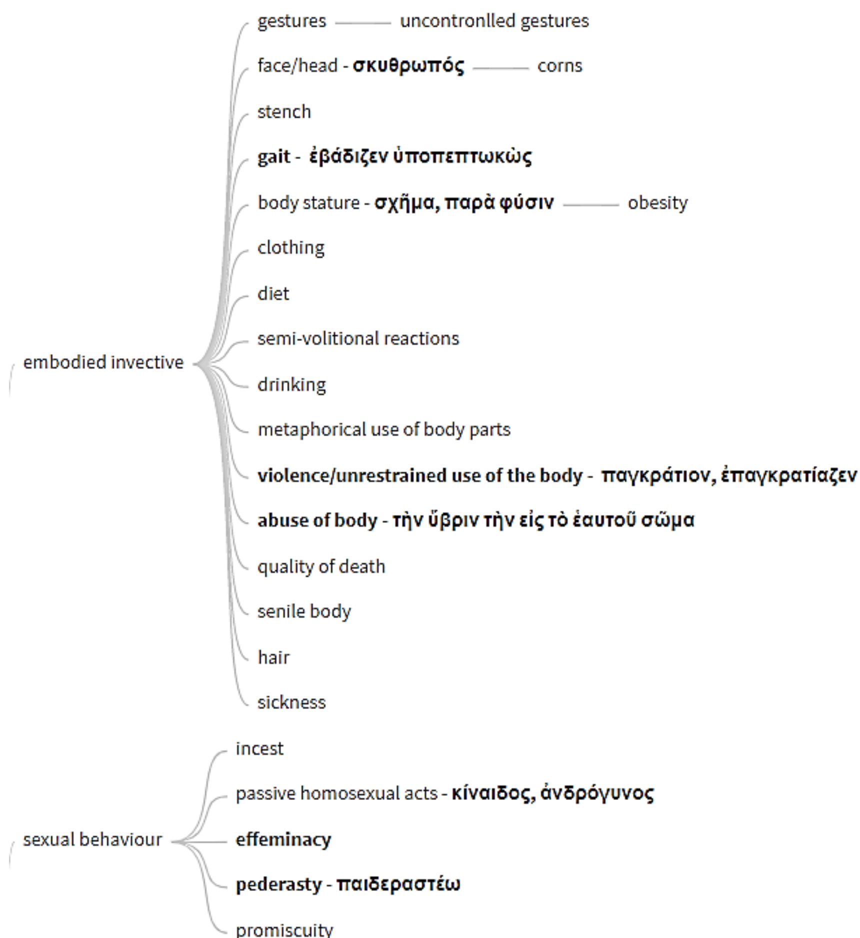
But what are the features of invective that help the speakers deconstruct identities and sustain triangulated relationships in court? Several scholars have attempted to define the fundamental features of invective. W. Süss was, to the best of my knowledge, the first to compile a list of these features: "servile heritage; barbarian (non-Roman) background; having a non-elite occupation; thievery; non-standard sexual behaviour; estrangement from family and community; melancholy disposition; unusual appearance, clothing, or demeanour; cowardice; bankruptcy" (Süss, 1920, p. 247-254).[23] For C. Craig, (Ciceronian) invective comprises the following features: embarrassing family origin; being unworthy of one's family; physical appearance; eccentricity of dress; gluttony and drunkenness, possibly leading to acts of *crudelitas* and *libido*; hypocrisy for appearing virtuous; avarice, possibly linked with prodigality; taking bribes; pretentiousness; sexual misconduct; hostility

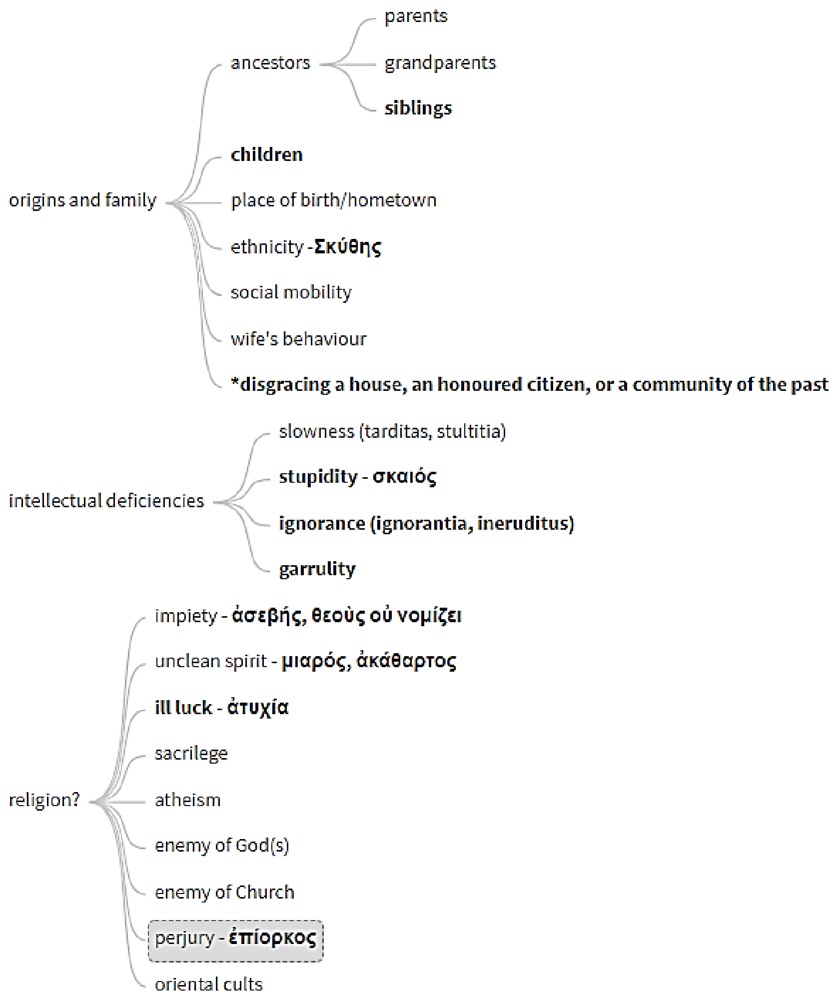
[21] On "the *ēthos* of sympathy": Wisse (1989, p. 34, 58-59), Amossy (2001, p. 6-7), Riggsby (2004, p. 181), and Serafim (2017a, p. 26).
[22] On social identity theory: Tajfel and Turner (1979). Also: Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk (1981, p. 494-511), Conover (1984, p.760-785), and Lau (1989, p. 220-223). On the dynamics of out-group hostility or in-group solidarity in ancient literary texts and contexts: Huddy (2003, p. 511-558), Hall (2006, p. 388), and Arena (2007, p. 151).
[23] Also: Opelt (1965, p. 129), Corbeil (2002, p. 201).

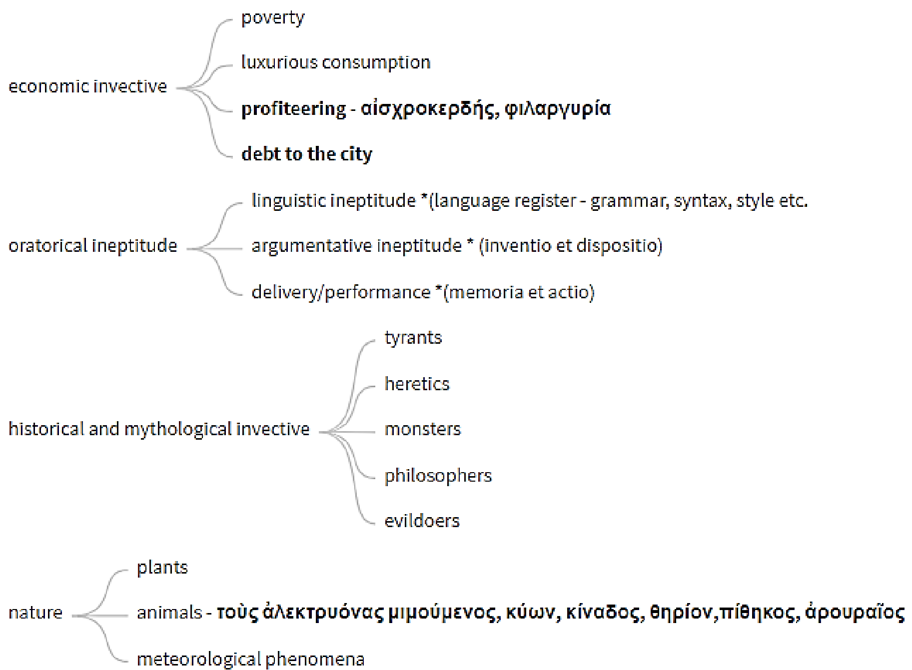
to family; cowardice in war; squandering of one's patrimony/financial embarrassment; aspiring to regnum or tyranny; cruelty to citizens and allies; plunder of private and public property; oratorical ineptitude (Craig, 2004, p. 190-191). More recently, S. Papaioannou and A. Serafim offer a re-examination of how (Old) comedy is used in ancient Greek and Romen oratory to sustain attacks, with emphasis on specific patterns of *onomasti kōmōidein*, most prominently incongruity, language and imagery that draw on comedy, and stock comic characters.

The Toruń project presents a more systematic and all-inclusive list of features, as shown in the following two major groups of mind maps:

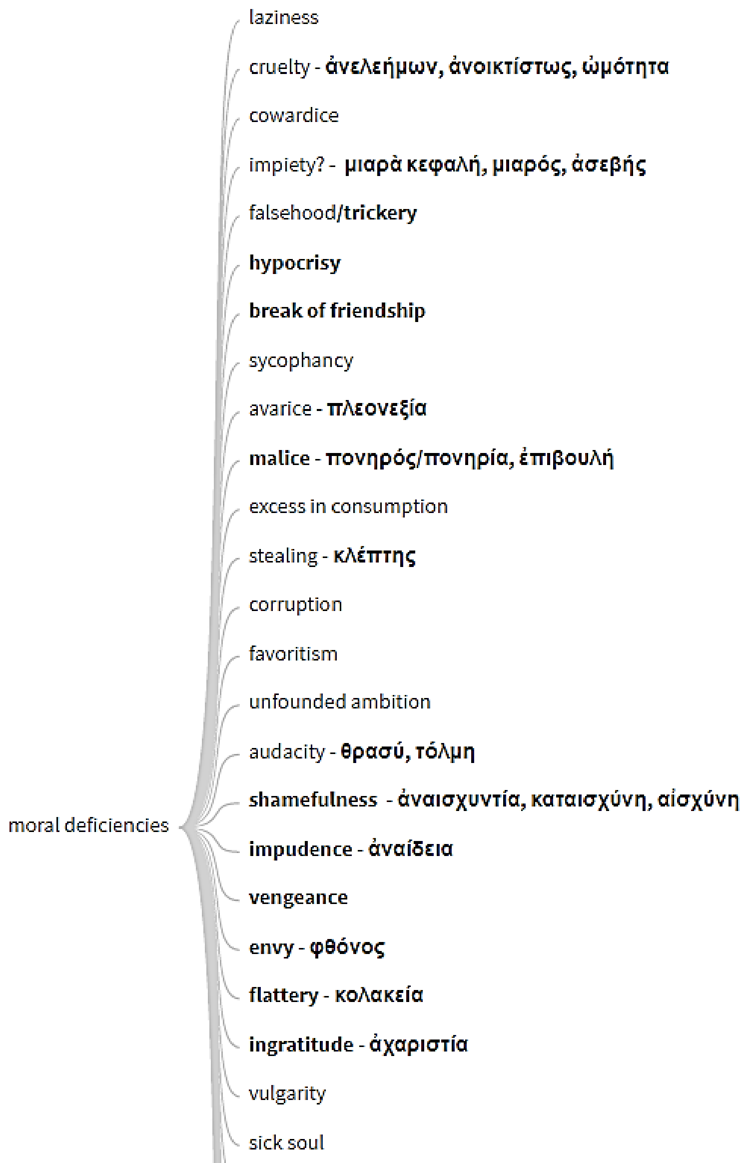
Figures 1a-f: Content-based invective mind map

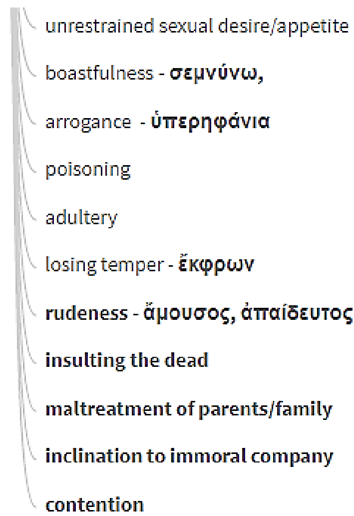



origins and family
ancestors
parents
grandparents
siblings
children
place of birth/hometown
ethnicity - Σκύθης
social mobility
wife's behaviour
*disgracing a house, an honoured citizen, or a community of the past
intellectual deficiencies
slowness (tarditas, stultitia)
stupidity - σκαιός
ignorance (ignorantia, ineruditus)
garrulity
religion?
impiety - ἀσεβής, θεοὺς οὐ νομίζει
unclean spirit - μιαρός, ἀκάθαρτος
ill luck - ἀτυχία
sacrilege
atheism
enemy of God(s)
enemy of Church
perjury - ἐπίορκος
oriental cults


economic invective
poverty
luxurious consumption
profiteering - αἰσχροκερδής, φιλαργυρία
debt to the city
oratorical ineptitude
linguistic ineptitude *(language register - grammar, syntax, style etc.
argumentative ineptitude * (inventio et dispositio)
delivery/performance *(memoria et actio)
historical and mythological invective
tyrants
heretics
monsters
philosophers
evildoers
nature
plants
animals - τοὺς ἀλεκτρυόνας μιμούμενος, κύων, κίναδος, θηρίον,πίθηκος, ἀρουραῖος
meteorological phenomena

profession*
actor - ἐτριταγωνίστεις
prostitute - μισθαρνέω, πορνεύω
teacher
gladiator
mime
tavern-keeper
pimp - πορνοβοσκός
fruit-seller - ὀπωρώνης
clerk - γραμματοκύφων, ὑπογραμματέας
marginalized/low standing social groups
outlaws
magicians/sorcerers - γόης
beggars
prostitutes
eunuchs
slaves
military invective
cowardice - δειλίᾳ
desertion - λιποταξία, τῶν λιπόντων τὴν τάξιν, ἀστρατεία
treason
debunking military record/attacking the pretense of being a good soldier/officer


moral deficiencies
laziness
cruelty - ἀνελεήμων, ἀνοικτίστως, ὠμότητα
cowardice
impiety? - μιαρὰ κεφαλή, μιαρός, ἀσεβής
falsehood/trickery
hypocrisy
break of friendship
sycophancy
avarice - πλεονεξία
malice - πονηρός/πονηρία, ἐπιβουλή
excess in consumption
stealing - κλέπτης
corruption
favoritism
unfounded ambition
audacity - θρασύ, τόλμη
shamefulness - ἀναισχυντία, καταισχύνη, αἰσχύνη
impudence - ἀναίδεια
vengeance
envy - φθόνος
flattery - κολακεία
ingratitude - ἀχαριστία
vulgarity
sick soul



Source: Parts of a database created by Rafał Toczko and Andreas Serafim for the project "The History and Rhetoric of Invectives in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Polemics", National Science Centre, Poland, grant number 2021/41/B/HS2/00755.

Figure 2: Form-based invective mind map

Source: Parts of a database created by Rafał Toczko and Andreas Serafim for the project “The History and Rhetoric of Invectives in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Polemics”, National Science Centre, Poland, grant number 2021/41/B/HS2/00755.

Mind maps with the content-based and form-based features of invective are being compiled by the research team of the Toruń project while a large part of the transmitted texts of Attic and Roman oratory is being read and investigated (including the whole transmitted corpus

of the Ten Attic Orators – 151 speeches; the enterprise of reading the materials of the project is still in progress). In the preceding figures, the reader can see not only the themes and topics of invective (its content) and the stylistic, grammatic, and syntactical tropes by which invective is manifested in speeches (its form), but also keywords that explicate both broad categories of features. These groups of features allow a penetrating reading of the transmitted text of the *Apology* to discover patterns and features of invective that are incorporated in it and gauge the level of congruity between the Socratic attacks and those that are levelled against adversaries in the transmitted corpus of Attic speeches.

A few other works in classical scholarship recognize and discuss the features and purposes of invective in the *Apology*. Hesitant progress has been made; one of the most complete and insightful papers on invective is that of E. Buis, who, in his "Rhetorical Defence, Inter-poetic *Agōn*, and the Reframing of Comic Invective in Plato's *Apology of Socrates*", explains the strategic mechanisms of comic invective, i.e. how and for what purpose techniques of invective that draw on comedy appear in the *Apology* to enable the speaker to trivialize his opponents, ridicule them, and undermine their credentials. Using the Aristophanic *Acharnians* as a case study parallel to the *Apology*, Buis identifies several techniques of attacking people and tries to establish their association with comedy. This is a daunting task that in some cases leaves the readers with questions about the suggested interconnection between comedy and invective, as it is admittedly not easy to conclude whether comedy influences rhetoric or vice versa. H. Tell's "Anytus and the Rhetoric of Abuse in Plato's *Apology* and *Meno*" (2013), narrower in focus and thematic purpose than Buis' work, discusses the occurrences of the term *diabolē* and explains how this is used as a means of identifying those who trot out unjust accusations against Socrates. Other works on the rhetoric of abuse in Plato mostly investigate the cultural context which sheds light on the accusations that the defendant says he unfoundedly received from his adversaries (Worman, 2008).[24]

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[24] Kamen (2020, p. 82), referring to the strategy of Socrates to debunk the accusations that are trotted out against him, is right to argue that "another way to dismiss one's opponent's invective was by repeatedly calling it *diabolē* or *loidoria* (or worse),

Although Buis is most effective in finding and commenting on the *loci* within the *Apology* where Socratic invective against his opponents and prosecutors can be found, I do not agree with all the conclusions he draws. In 28a, 31d, and 35b, for example, I cannot trace any patterns of invective: in 28a, Socrates refutes the accusation of being a wrongdoer, as mentioned in Meletus' indictment;[25] 31d presents the attempt of Socrates to debunk ridicule that Meletus hurled at him;[26] and 35b instructs the judges about how to react towards two different types of men, one who does not act fittingly in the law-court and ridicules the city – no clear mention is made of the three accusers of Socrates, Meletus, Anytus, and Lycon – and one who keeps quiet.[27] Accusing the accusers can be found, I argue, in the following eighteen sections:

signaling to the jurors that it is not to be trusted. This is in fact one of Socrates' favorite strategies in the *Apology* (*e.g*., 18d, 19a–b, 20c, 20e, 21b, 23a, 23e, 24a, 28a, 33a, 37b)".

[25] "Well then, men of Athens, that I am not a wrongdoer according to Meletus's indictment, seems to me not to need much of a defence, but what has been said is enough. But you may be assured that what I said before is true, that great hatred has arisen against me and in the minds of many persons. And this it is which will cause my condemnation, if it is to cause it, not Meletus or Anytus, but the prejudice and dislike of the many. This has condemned many other good men, and I think will do so" *(Apology of Socrates,* 28a).

[26] "That something divine and spiritual comes to me, the very thing which Meletus ridiculed in his indictment. I have had this from my childhood; it is a sort of voice that comes to me, and when it comes it always holds me back from what I am thinking of doing, but never urges me forward. This it is which opposes my engaging in politics. And I think this opposition is a very good thing" (*Apology of Socrates* 31d).

[27] "Such acts, men of Athens, we who have any reputation at all ought not to commit, and if we commit them you ought not to allow it, but you should make it clear that you will be much more ready to condemn a man who puts before you such pitiable scenes and makes the city ridiculous than one who keeps quiet" (*Apology of Socrates* 35b).

Table 1

Addressee	Section	General *topos* (content)	Specific *topos* (content)	Form-based *topos*
Anytus, Meletus, Lycon	17a	moral deficiencies, political, legal, and social misconduct	falsehood/trickery, sophistry	
Anytus, Meletus, Lycon	17b-c	moral deficiencies	falsehood/trickery, shamefulness, sophistry	
Anytus, Meletus, Lycon	18a	moral deficiencies	falsehood/trickery	
Anytus, Meletus, Lycon	18b	historical and mythological invective	evildoers	comparison
Anytus, Meletus, Lycon	18d	moral deficiencies, political, legal, and social misconduct	envy, sycophancy, sophistry	
Anytus, Meletus, Lycon	23e	moral deficiencies, political, legal, and social misconduct	falsehood/trickery, sycophancy, sophistry	
Anytus, Meletus, Lycon	24b			irony
Meletus	24c	political, legal, and social misconduct, moral deficiencies	abusing court processes, hypocrisy	
Meletus	24d-24e, 25c-d			irony
Meletus	26e	moral deficiencies, political, legal, and social misconduct	cruelty, abusing court processes	
Meletus	27a	moral deficiencies, political, legal, and social misconduct	falsehood/trickery, abusing court processes	prosopopoeia
Meletus or Anytus	30d	political, legal, and social misconduct	illegality	
Anytus, Meletus, Lycon	31b	moral deficiencies	shamefulness	
Anytus, Meletus, Lycon	39b	moral deficiencies	vengenance, cruelty	

Source: This is part of a database created by Rafał Toczko and Andreas Serafim for the project "The History and Rhetoric of Invectives in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Polemics", National Science Centre, Poland, grant number 2021/41/B/HS2/00755.

The table indicates some noteworthy patterns of invective in the *Apology*: nearly all patterns fall within two major content-based groups: "moral deficiencies" and "political, legal, and social misconduct". An additional pattern, in 18b, is that of "historical and mythological invective" – the present accusers of Socrates are compared to historical evildoers and his dangerous and villainous past accusers, with the statement that the defendant always has to cope with such enemies.[28] It

[28] "For many accusers have risen up against me before you, who have been speaking for a long time, many years already, and saying nothing true; and I fear them more than Anytus and the rest, though these also are dangerous; but those others are more

should also be noted that invective is evenly distributed in the *Apology* from exordium to peroration. The even distribution indicates Socrates' constant concern and attempts to undermine his accusers, acuser and annihilate the accusations that they trotted out against him. In principle, even a credible accusation turns out to be treated as incredible if the source is of dubious credibility or of no trustworthiness whatsoever. What is mentioned in the "general *topos*", further broken down and explained in the "specific *topos*", mostly aims to castigate the accusers of Socrates for immorality and legal misconduct, in ways which enable the speaker to capitalize on the real anxieties the judges and the other Athenians in court have about specific types of bad citizens, *e.g*. the sycophant or the sophist, and arouse hostility in them against Meletus, Anytus, and Lycon. It is important to note that the speaker, beginning already from the exordium in 17a, addresses the judges many times not in their occupational capacity but (in addition to the onlookers) in their civic capacity: (ὦ) ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι.[29] The civic address in the *Apology* indicates an attempt to demarcate the crucial audience to which the decision about Socrates was entrusted by the Athenian constitution, since there would have been other Greeks attending such a high-profile trial.[30] The civic address is also an attempt on the part of the speaker

dangerous, gentlemen, who gained your belief, since they got hold of most of you in childhood, and accused me without any truth, saying, "There is a certain Socrates, a wise man, a ponderer over the things in the air and one who has investigated the things beneath the earth and who makes the weaker argument the stronger" (*Apology of Socrates* 18b). On the various groups of the accusers of Socrates, past and present: Tell (2013).

[29] The speakers have at their disposal a choice of three main styles of address: civic (ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι), judicial (ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί) and descriptive (ὦ ἄνδρες). There are also some notable variations in the ways in which these standard and main patterns of address are used, *e.g*. what I call "circumstantial addresses", *ad hoc* addresses that are used in specific cases and institutional contexts only. There is, for example, the ὦ βουλή address that is used in speeches delivered before the *Boulē* in Athens. On the distinction between the three styles of addresses and the impact this may have upon the audience: Martin (2006, p. 75-88), Serafim (2017b, p. 26-41, 2020a, p. 71-98).

[30] We know from other speeches, *e.g*. Aeschines 3.56, that the law-court contests of Demosthenes with Aeschines caught the interest of the Athenians as well as other Hellenes: "and all the Greeks who are anxious to hear this trial" (καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὅσοις ἐπιμελὲς γέγονεν ἐπακούειν τῆσδε τῆς κρίσεως).

to sustain triangulated groupings in court: he and the members of the audience he apostrophizes belong to the same civic group and espouse the same values, whereas the speaker's accusers denounce what keeps the community of the Athenians together.

This process of inclusion and exclusion is sustained by the reference to Socrates' accusers as being liars. The moral terms that are used for the articulation of this accusation heighten the tone of the Socratic invective. From the onset of the exordium, both direct accusations of falsehood (17a: ἀληθές... οὐδὲν εἰρήκασιν and ἐψεύσαντο – tautology in context aims to amplify the accusation of falsehood; 18a: ψευδῆ κατηγορημένα)[31] and moral terms (17b: τὸ μὴ αἰσχυνθῆναι, ἀναισχυντότατον εἶναι – repetition increases the harshness of the accusation; 31b: ἀναισχύντως) that accompany the accusations (17b: οὐδὲν ἀληθὲς εἰρήκασιν) indicate the attempt of the defendant to instrumentalize core Athenian values to hit his opponents hard.[32] The accusation of shamelessness is ubiquitous in Attic oratory, deployed whenever the aim is to indicate that adversaries have transgressed the moral code that holds the community together. The notion of *aischynē* that is used in the *Apology*, unlike that of *aidōs*, which is not a precise synonym for the former,[33] denotes a serious breach of honour (whereas *aidōs* has inhibitory force, as Konstan argues). The opposite of *aischynē*, *anaischyntia* "shamelessness", is "a lack of feeling or insensibility

[31] "How you, men of Athens, have been affected by my accusers, I do not know; but I, for my part, almost forgot my own identity, so persuasively did they talk; and yet there is hardly a word of truth in what they have said. But I was most amazed by one of the many lies that they told — when they said that you must be on your guard not to be deceived by me" (*Apology of Socrates*, 17a).

[32] "For I thought it the most shameless part of their conduct that they are not ashamed because they will immediately be convicted by me of falsehood by the evidence of fact, when I show myself to be not in the least a clever speaker, unless indeed they call him a clever speaker who speaks the truth; for if this is what they mean, I would agree that I am an orator — not after their fashion. Now they, as I say, have said little or nothing true; but you shall hear from me nothing but the truth" (*Apology of Socrates*, 17b).

[33] On the etymological and semantic difference between *aischynē* and *aidōs*: Cairns (1993, p. 13-14), Konstan (2003, p. 604-608). The notion of *aidōs* means "awe", "reverence", as Konstan (2003, p. 605) notes, or even a sense of sticking to decency to avoid abashment.

(*apatheia*) with respect to the kinds of ills that arouse shame" (Konstan, 2003, p. 611). "Shame is an aversive experience that involves feelings of humiliation, inferiority, and worthlessness, and the transgression is interpreted as a reflection of a 'bad self' rather than a trivial incident" (Mayer; Paulus; Krach, 2021, p. 110). Individuals who do not have this sense are excluded from the rest, who do have it – this is how Socrates establishes in the minds of the Athenians in court that his accusers are excluded from the group "he and they" create and that which the civic community also sustains. This "he and they", Socrates and the Athenians, becomes "we" and is sharply juxtaposed with "them", as *sophrosynē*, the feature of the "we" group is contrasted with *anaischyntia*, the feature of the "they" group – οὗτοι πάντες, as the speaker crisply says in 18d.[34] Those who are shameful because of falsehood have no *sophrosynē*, a virtue that the law-abiding, moral, and good-in-nature Athenians espouse. These are the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, akin to the social identity theory, that are designed to influence the judicial verdict after cognitively affecting the judges. The attribution of *anaischyntia* to the legal wrongdoers aims to arouse hostility – in the form of contempt, rage, and loathing – for the targeted individuals.

The attribution of the behaviour and practices of sycophants to the accusers of Socrates – not only Meletus, Anytus, and Lycon, who are named, but also perhaps to Aristophanes, who is implied (for example in 18d with a reference to his professional and dramaturgical quality – "writer of comedies", κωμῳδοποιός) – is a drastic escalation of the accusation that is hurled against them of falsehood/trickery. The terms "sycophancy" and "sycophant" are never used verbatim and openly in the speech: the references, in 18d and 23e, to slander (*diabolē*), with an additional reference in the former to envy (*phthonos*), are markers of sycophancy. *Phthonos* is one of the motives of the sycophant,[35] and *diabolē*, "the perversion of justice" (Carey, 2004, p. 3), is the purpose. In Aeschines' words, "*diabolē* is sycophancy's own sister" (2.145); in

[34] On the association of *aidōs* and *sophrosynē* in Plato: Cairns (1993, p. 373).

[35] Envy, or *phthonos* in Greek, is an emotion that has been considerably examined in recent classical scholarship, such as in the thorough studies of Walcot (1978), Konstan and Rutter (2003), and Sanders (2014).

the same section, he goes on to define sycophancy as "when one person, insinuating an accusation in the minds of the people, calumniates a man [διαβάλλῃ τινά] in all the meetings of the Assembly and before the Boule".[36] Let us go back to the *Apology*: it is not clear why Socrates does not openly and directly accuse his three prosecutors and the other accusers of being sycophants, but he rather describes their conduct in such a way as to starkly point to the typical sycophant. This is perhaps because the purpose of the tacit description would have been easily comprehensible to the audience and because the accusers, despite spreading lies, did not have all the qualities of a sycophant, *e.g*. blackmailing.

But even an implicit description that aims to exploit the negative emotional attitudes of the Athenians, especially their fears, insecurities, and prejudices, and to generate anger is enough for the speaker to attain his purposes. There is evidence for the enmity felt by Athenians towards sycophants: Aristotle, for example, notes that calumny is productive of hatred and anger (*Rhetoric* 1382a2–3; cf. Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 725–726, 517–519).[37] Anger is caused by an individual's perception and evaluation of an external provocatory situation, such as a threat or other circumstantial triggers such as unfairness, offensive behaviour, or disagreement. Anger is purely cognitive: it is exercised inwards, i.e. it is driven by the mind, and expressed both inwards (in the form of thoughts and attitudes towards the object that elicits emotion) and outwards (in the form of verbal or non-verbal reactions to the trigger of the emotion – another indication of how dependent upon each other enmity and anger are).[38] Researchers argue that anger triggers "reactive

[36] Harvey (1990, p. 103-121) details the most important features of the sycophant: "monetary motivation"; "false charges"; "sophistic quibbling"; "slanderous attacks"; the sycophant "frequently takes people to court"; "acts after the event and rakes up old charges". Spatharas (2021, p. 153) also refers to *ponēria*, "villainy".

[37] On sycophancy: Lofberg (1917, p. 19-25), (1920, p. 61-72), MacDowell (1978, p. 62-66), Harvey (1990, p. 103-121), Yunis (1996, p. 253-254, n. 31), Christ (1998, p. 48-71), Pernot (2005, p. 24-25), and Serafim (2017a).

[38] "Is it not about right and wrong, and noble and disgraceful, and good and bad? Are not these the questions about which you and I and other people become enemies, when we do become enemies, because we differ about them and cannot reach any satisfactory agreement?" (Plato, *Euthyphro,* 7d).

aggression",[39] since the intensity and rapidity of its unfolding has a huge effect upon cognition, compromising the effectiveness of cognitive processing, decision-making, and self-restraint.[40] It is by anger that Socrates attempts to have his accusers excluded from the "we" group that he repeatedly throughout his speech aims to form with the judges and the other Athenians in court.

It is also notable that there are, in 17a,[41] 18d,[42] and 23e,[43] accusations against Socrates' opponents of what I call "sophistry", the skillful use of rhetoric with the aim of deceiving the audience by distorting the truth. References to sophistry are common and repeated features of oratorical speeches; Aeschines 1.175, for example, brings an accusation against Demosthenes of being a sophist and of using his skills to deceive the judges.[44] This is in line with the notorious accusation against Demosthenes that he relies too much on speeches which he has meticulously prepared in advance, a practice that provokes general suspicion of chicanery and deception "because of their great rhetorical

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[39] On the link between anger and aggression: Berkowitz (1993, p. 1-46), Blair (2012, p. 65-74), and Coccaro, Noblett, and McCloskey (2009, p. 915-925).

[40] Gable, Poole, and Harmon-Jones (2015, p. 163-174) and Garfinkel et al. (2016).

[41] "How you, men of Athens, have been affected by my accusers, I do not know; but I, for my part, almost forgot my own identity, **so persuasively did they talk**; and yet there is hardly a word of truth in what they have said. But I was most amazed by one of the many lies that they told — when they said that you must be on your guard not to be deceived by me" (*Apology of Socrates*, 17a).

[42] "And all those **who persuaded** you by means of envy and slander — and some also persuaded others because they had been themselves persuaded — all these are most difficult to cope with; for it is not even possible to call any of them up here and cross-question him, but I am compelled in making my defence to fight, as it were, absolutely with shadows and to cross-question when nobody answers" (*Apology of Socrates*, 18d).

[43] "Since, then, they are jealous of their honor and energetic and numerous and **speak concertedly and persuasively about me**, they have filled your ears both long ago and now with vehement slanders. From among them Meletus attacked me, and Anytus and Lycon, Meletus angered on account of the poets, and Anytus on account of the artisans and the public men" (*Apology of Socrates*, 23e).

[44] "So I do beg you by all means not to furnish this sophist with laughter and patronage at your expense. Imagine that you see him when he gets home from the courtroom, putting on airs in his lectures to his young men, and telling how successfully he stole the case away from the judges" (Aeschines, 1.175).

skill" (τῆς πολλῆς ἐπιτεχνήσεως), as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in *Isaeus* 4.23–24, points out (cf. Aeschines 2.156: "those unholy rhetorical tricks", τὰς δ' ἀνοσίους [τῶν λόγων] ταύτας τέχνας; Plutarch, *Demosthenes* 8.4–6 where there is a reference to Pythias' barbed comments on Demosthenes' speeches that have a "smell of lamp" because he prepares them in advance). A similar accusation against his own accusers is made by Socrates in his *Apology* 17b–c: that he is speaking impromptu and without having honed rhetorical/court skills, whereas his accusers are much better and more meticulous in crafting speeches ("not, however, men of Athens, speeches finely tricked out with words and phrases, as theirs are, nor carefully arranged"). References to meticulous rhetorical crafting of slanderous speeches, which are concertedly (συντεταμένως, 23e) directed against Socrates and are reinforced or even caused by the accusers' personal vices – hybris, mentioned in 26e,[45] and μοχθηρία, "vengeance", in 39b[46] – present the speaker as the victim of a well-orchestrated plot. The figure of the *hybristēs*, anyone who behaves badly towards people, whether full citizens or even slaves, either verbally or physically, is invariably and unambiguously negative in ancient sources – an indication of moral badness, cruelty beyond measure, and lack of education, a marker that Aeschines points to in 1.137.[47] The laws in

[45] "But for heaven's sake, do you think this of me, that I do not believe there is any god? 'No, by Zeus, you don't, not in the least'. You cannot be believed, Meletus, not even, as it seems to me, by yourself. For this man appears to me, men of Athens, to be very violent and unrestrained [ὑβριστὴς καὶ ἀκόλαστος], and actually to have brought this indictment in a spirit of violence and unrestraint and rashness" (ἀτεχνῶς τὴν γραφὴν ταύτην ὕβρει τινὶ καὶ ἀκολασίᾳ καὶ νεότητι γράψασθαι). Invective in this section is based upon the broader theme of "abusing court processes" (figure on p. 20) *(Apology of Socrates*, 26e).

[46] "And now I, since I am slow and old, am caught by the slower runner, and my accusers, who are clever and quick, by the faster, wickedness. And now I shall go away convicted by you and sentenced to death, and they go convicted by truth of villainy and wrong. And I abide by my penalty, and they by theirs. Perhaps these things had to be so, and I think they are well" *(Apology of Socrates*, 39b).

[47] "I make this distinction: to love those who are beautiful and self-controlled is the condition of a generous and sympathetic soul, but to hire someone for money and to behave grossly I hold to be the act of a hybristēs and an uneducated man. And I say that

Athens maintain that the *hybristēs* should be punished (cf. Lysias 6.15).[48] The presentation of the orchestration of a plot against the defendant is yet another attempt on his part to elicit the sympathy of the audience and invite the judges to treat him with fairness, but also to get enraged at those who victimize an innocent man to serve their own personal agendas. After all, the judges themselves may, at some point in their lives, be the victims of a similarly slanderous and injurious plan by sophists or slanderers and sycophants. They should, therefore, empathize with Socrates and turn against those that would threaten their own lives too.

Socrates openly states in 30d that he has been involved in the trial and made a defence not for himself but for the Athenians. Untrue (not to call it ironic) as this statement is, it reveals the strategy of the speaker to arouse the empathy of the audience for himself and create a "we" group – Socrates, the defender of the judges, and the judges themselves. This kind of inclusion would generate, as argued above, exclusion: that of the prosecutors, who are presented in context not simply as attacking the speaker but also as being in sharp and stark opposition to the other Athenians. Social identity theory and the theories about triangulated relations shed light on the dynamics of persuasion in 30d and in other instances of invective in the *Apology*. But 30d has another noteworthy reference beyond the insistent references to Meletus or Anytus as acting illegally to condemn a good man to death, exile, or disfranchisement – this is what is labelled as "illegality" in the table on p. 18 that presents the instances and themes that sustain the articulation of invective in the Socratic speech.[49] The noteworthy element is the reference to the gods. The text is as follows:

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it is noble to be loved in a non-corrupting way, but it is shameful to be persuaded by the hire-fee and prostitute oneself" (Aeschines 1.137. Translation: Fisher, 2021, p. 51).

[48]"Whoever wounds a man's person, in the head or face or hands or feet, he shall be banished, according to the laws of the Areopagus, from the city of the man who has been injured, and if he returns, he shall be impeached and punished with death" (*Lysias*, 6.15).

[49] "He might, however, perhaps kill me or banish me or disfranchise me; and perhaps he thinks he would thus inflict great injuries upon me, and others may think so, but I do not; I think he does himself a much greater injury by doing what he is doing now – killing a man unjustly" (*Apology of Socrates*, 30d).

> νῦν οὖν, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, πολλοῦ δέω ἐγὼ ὑπὲρ ἐμαυτοῦ ἀπολογεῖσθαι, ὥς τις ἂν οἴοιτο, ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, μή τι ἐξαμάρτητε **περὶ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δόσιν ὑμῖν** ἐμοῦ καταψηφισάμενοι.
>
> And so, men of Athens, I am now making my defence not for my own sake, as one might imagine, but far more for yours, that you may not by condemning me err in your treatment **of the gift the god gave you**.

Unjust and unlawful murder, like the one Socrates claims his accusers are plotting against him, whether this be physical or symbolic (death as the destruction of his reputation among the Athenians that would lead to exile and *atimia*, a metaphorical civic and legal "death" that the impious are doomed by the constitution to suffer), is also an act against the will of the gods. The man who is tried for impiety accuses his prosecutors of committing impiety themselves, superbly turning the tables on them. That a murder is an act of impiety is well-stated in ancient sources: in his speech, *Against the Stepmother for Poisoning*, to give an example, Antiphon presents the murder the stepmother committed as such (§27), also pointing out that the gods are mindful of the wronged (§31). In the *Second Tetralogy*, it is mentioned that a murderer would profane the sanctity of the divine precincts by setting foot within them (2.2.10; 5.11, 12, 15). Impiety, even when committed by individuals, risks the punishment of the whole community; that is why the Athenians thought that it was their obligation, not simply their right, to take retribution for impiety, if they wanted to avoid making the gods angry and turning them against the whole community (Antiphon 4.1.3; Isocrates 16.6; Lysias 6.3, 10, 53; Pseudo-Demosthenes 59.77; Euripides, *The Phoenician Women* 69–74; Herodotus 7.133–137; Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.2.32, 5.4.1).[50]

The reference to the gods, beyond the evident purpose of incriminating Anytus or Meletus, also has the tacit purpose of warning the judges as to how they should carry out their judicial duties in a decent, just, and god-fearing way. This strategy, also used frequently in other

[50] Serafim (2021a, p. 38).

speeches of Attic oratory, invites the judges to envisage themselves as being observed by an unseen but omnipresent and omniscient divine audience which demands that justice be delivered. They are also invited to understand that they are potentially punishable if they fail to satisfy the divine demand (cf. Demosthenes, *Against Aristogeiton* 1.11).[51] It has been argued that this represented a tacit surrogate for the audit process.

> The ballot in the ancient law court was secret and, in practice, nobody could ever know exactly how each of the judges voted, while, at the same time, none of the judges was obliged to undergo the state process of examination of accounts (*euthyna* or *euthynai*) after the end of his judgeship. The reference to divine inspection and the implied presence of the gods aims, therefore, to offer a subtle surrogate for the audit process and elicit strong emotional reactions among the judges (e.g. anxiety, fear, apprehension) – reactions that have the potential to win over the audience and create a cognitive/ mental disposition in the judges that would serve the speaker's purposes (Serafim, 2021a, p. 39).

Fear, as a way of controlling people and affecting the cognitive attitudes (both thoughts and emotions) that reflect upon their decisions, is most effective, as well-theorized in ancient sources, for example in the Aristotelian *Rhetoric* (1382a21–26): "let fear be defined as a painful or troubled feeling caused by the impression of an imminent evil that causes destruction or pain". A long-standing area of psychological research into attitude change has focused on the role played by a specific emotion in persuasion: the study of appeals to fear. Increased fear can be associated

[51] "Before you cast your votes, each of the judges must reflect that he is being watched by hallowed and inexorable Justice (τὴν ἀπαραίτητον καὶ σεμνὴν Δίκην), who, as Orpheus, that prophet of our most sacred mysteries, tells us, sits beside the throne of Zeus and oversees all the works of men. Each must keep watch and ward lest he shame that goddess, from whom everyone that is chosen by lot derives his name of judge because he has this day received a sacred trust from the laws, from the constitution, from the fatherland—the duty of guarding all that is fair and right and beneficial in our city" (Demosthenes, *Against Aristogeiton* 1.11).

with decisive actions designed to remedy the fear-inducing threat.[52] "Fearing the gods, in particular, is a workable incentive to ethical behaviour, since it assumes that the inspection is constant and persistent, and that the resulted sanctions are eternal", as I argue elsewhere (2021a, p. 37).

Another reference to the gods can be found in 27a, where Socrates tries to refute the accusation of impiety that is brought against him. Here is the text:

> For he seems, as it were, by composing a puzzle to be making a test: "Will Socrates, the wise man, recognize that I am joking (χαριεντιζομένου) and contradicting myself, or shall I deceive him and the others who hear me?" (ἐξαπατήσω αὐτὸν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους τοὺς ἀκούοντας) For he appears to me to contradict himself in his speech, as if he were to say, "Socrates is a wrongdoer, because he does not believe in gods, but does believe in gods." And yet this is the conduct of a jester (καίτοι τοῦτό ἐστι παίζοντος).

Two major patterns of invective are mentioned on the chart on p. 18: "falsehood/trickery" and "abusing court processes". The first is made manifest by the strong and unambiguous verb ἐξαπατήσω, "I will deceive". The invective in 27a is a sharp escalation of the accusation that is made in 24c, where pretension and hypocrisy are attributed to Meletus; in the defendant's words, "pretending [προσποιούμενος] to be zealous and concerned about things which he never cared at all". Now, in 27a, the accusation is not of hypocrisy, as nebulous as this seems to be in 24c, but the forcible one of deliberately and concertedly peddling lies to the judges and the public. Socrates renders the persona and the voice of Meletus – this is the so-called *prosōpopoeia*, i.e. the act of having an abstract, imagined, or absent entity speaking – to present the alleged words of his accuser, attributing to him with forceful emphasis what he does repeatedly in the *Apology*: the quality of a shameless liar. *Prosōpopoeia* is a means of heightening the emotional character of a

[52] Janis and Feshbach (1953, p. 78-92), Leventhal, Singer, and Jones (1965, p. 20-29), Baron et al. (1992, p. 323-346), and Gleicher and Petty (1992, p. 86-100). On fear as a means of controlling the law-court audience: Rubinstein (2004, p. 188-189) and Konstan (2006, p. 129-155).

moment and maximizing the influence that the speech is designed to have on the cognitive/emotional condition of the audience.[53] It should be noted that the verb ἐξαπατήσω denotes, in context, a double-edged action: it is directed at two objects, both Socrates and the law-court audience. The reference to the audience is reasonable, as the prosecutors aim to persuade the judges about the validity of their assessment of the life and conduct of Socrates. But the reference to him is not what one would expect: nobody could effectively and credibly (even try to) persuade Socrates that he is a wrongdoer (because of impiety). Far from being a mistake that an inexperienced speaker commits, this is, I argue, an attempt by Socrates to put himself into a "we" group – "we, the victims of the accusers" vs "they, our accusers and deceivers". Triangulation of relations in court and the activation of in-group solidarity and out-group hostility is designed to impact upon the cognitive disposition of the audience towards both the defendant and the prosecutors.

The repeated reference to Meletus as a jester – with two participles χαριεντιζομένου and παίζοντος – is what is labelled as "abusing court processes"; the same accusation is made a few sections earlier, in 24c, with the verb χαριεντίζεται.[54] This is, I argue, an implicit attribution to him of the persona of *bōmolochos*, "buffoon". A buffoon suffers from lack of restraint and perception: "[he] is one who cannot resist a joke. He will not keep his tongue off himself or anyone else, if he can raise a laugh, and will say things which a man of refinement would never say, and some of which he would not even allow to be said to him" (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1128a34–1128b1; cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1108a24–25 where buffoonery is considered an indication of social vulgarity).[55] Buffoonish behaviour would be annoying in court, where matters ought to be taken seriously. Meletus as a buffoon is someone the judges should

[53] On *prosōpopoeia* in Attic oratory: Westwood (2017, p. 57-74).

[54] "Such is the accusation. But let us examine each point of this accusation. He says I am a wrongdoer because I corrupt the youth. But I, men of Athens, say Meletus is a wrongdoer, because he jokes in earnest, lightly involving people in a lawsuit, pretending to be zealous and concerned about things or which he never cared at all. And that this is so I will try to make plain to you also" (*Apology of Socrates*, 24c).

[55] On the personage of the buffoon: Wilkins (2000, p. 88-90) and Halliwell (2008, p. 22-26, 40, 311, 314).

not take seriously, nor should they consider his words credible, reliable, and trustworthy. It is interesting, of course, that this presentation of his accuser as a *bōmolochos* is accompanied by another reference to him as being a dangerous audience-deceiver. This twofold presentation seems to be a conscious choice of the defendant, not a contradiction in terms as one may reasonably think: by referring to his opponent as a buffoon, Socrates runs the risk of trivializing him and the harm his slanders could cause. But by presenting him as a slanderous buffoon who is good at deceiving not simply the audience but also the receiver of invective himself, the speaker invites the audience to think of the prosecutor as a vulgar slanderer, whose lack of restraint, perception, and respect for legal processes and etiquette is, and should be, annoying to those involved in a trial, and whose baseless accusations should be rejected outright.

Invective is also articulated by means of form (stylistic, grammatic, and syntactic). An instance of comparison in 18b and one of *prosōpopoeia* in 27a have already been discussed. There are a few sections where irony is also evident: 24b, 24d–24e, and 25c–d. *The Ironic Defense of Socrates: Plato's Apology* by D. Leibowitz presents instances of irony and canvasses their features and the purposes they serve. I am not examining, like Leibowitz, every instance of any kind of irony, but rather the instances that are directed against the accusers of the defendant. This means that irony is meant to be understood in this paper not as a pose of feigned ignorance which aims to entice the discussants into making refutable statements – what is known as "Socratic irony" or "Socratic *eirōneia*", two terms that are taken by scholars as not being synonymous –[56] but in a rather narrower way as "when a speaker deliberately highlights the literal falsity of his or her utterance, typically for the sake of humour", what D. Wolfsdorf calls "verbal irony" (in contrast with "situational irony that entails a certain incongruity between what a person says, believes, or does and how, unbeknownst to that person, things

[56] On attempts to understand, define, and argumentatively describe "Socratic irony" (or *eirōneia*): Gottlieb (1992, p. 278-279), Gordon (1996, p. 131-137), Vasiliou (1999, p. 456-472), (2002, p. 220-230), Lane (2006, p. 49–83) specifically on the difference between irony and *eirōneia*, and (2011, p. 237-259).

actually are" [Wolfsdorf, 2007, p. 175]).[57] Irony is, in other words, the expression of the opposite meaning of what is ostensibly the true and the expected one. It is precisely incongruity, i.e. the construction of a set of expectations which are then juxtaposed with an unexpected conclusion, or the gathering of antithetical or anomalous components into the same event or image, that creates a sense of biting humour and sustains comic invective – a way of targeting, attacking, and ridiculing an individual (or a group).[58] Buis rightly underlines the importance of comic invective, arguing that "by replacing vulgar humour with subtle irony and refined hilarity, the *Apology* responds to Aristophanes' caricature of Socrates, and, by means of an elaborated literary amalgamation, establishes its final authority over comedy" (Buis, 2021, p. 83). This is true about the past accusers of Socrates.

Ironical statements are also directed against Anytus, Meletus, and Lycon, as in the following sections:

> 24b: Now so far as the accusations are concerned which my first accusers made against me, this is a sufficient defence before you; but against Meletus, **the good and patriotic, as he claims, (τὸν ἀγαθὸν καὶ φιλόπολιν, ὥς φησι)** and the later ones, I will try to defend myself next.

[57] Also: Vlastos (1991, p. 21, 43).

[58] Two modern theorists, I. Kant and A. Schopenhauer also discuss the incongruity theory. For Kant, in his Critique of Judgement (1790 [1911], p. 223), "laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing". Schopenhauer explains incongruity in terms of the difference between human perceptions and the reality around us, while Kierkegaard explains the "comical" in terms of the discrepancy between what is expected and what is experienced. Morreall (2009, p. 11) rightly argues that "the core meaning of incongruity in various versions of the Incongruity Theory, then, is that some thing or event we perceive or think about violates our standard mental patterns and normal expectations". See Papaioannou and Serafim (2021, p. 5). On comic invective in ancient Greek and Roman oratory: Serafim (2020d, p. 23-42) and Papaioannou and Serafim (2021). On comic invective, humour, and laughter in general: Hughes (1987), Richlin (1992), Corbeill (2006), Miner (2006), Spatharas (2006, p. 374-387), Rosen (2007), Halliwell (2008), Worman (2008), Beard (2014), Dutsch and Suterand (2018), Kish (2018).

> 24d-e: And yet does it not seem to you disgraceful and a sufficient proof of what I say that you have never cared about it? But tell, **my good man (ὠγαθέ)**, who makes them better? "The laws."

> 25c-d: But besides, tell us, for heaven's sake, Meletus, is it better to live among good citizens, or bad? **My friend (ὦ τάν)**, answer; for I am not asking anything hard. Do not the bad do some evil to those who are with them at any time and the good some good? "Certainly." Is there then anyone who prefers to be injured by his associates rather than benefited? Answer, **my good man (ὦ ἀγαθέ)**; for the law orders you to answer.

Irony of this kind is repeatedly used in Attic oratory, for example in Demosthenes 42.29 where the accused, Phaenippus, is apostrophized and called "my good man" (ὦ βέλτιστε), and 58.32 where the speaker's opponent is called "this worthy fellow" (ὁ χρηστὸς οὗτος). Ironical references to opponents, such as the ones made in the Demosthenic speeches and in 24d–e and 25c–d of the *Apology*, may simply be thought of being a means of adding to the performative liveliness of an orally delivered speech and heightening the audience's interest in it. After all, apostrophe, "turning aside to address someone or something other than the audience – usually one's opponent in a hostile way" (Usher, 1999, p. 364), is thought to have "an emotive effect on the normal audience, since it is an expression, on the part of the speaker, of a pathos which cannot be kept within the normal channels between speaker and audience" (Lausberg, 1998, p. 338-339). Beyond their role in enhancing the liveliness of a speech, ironical statements such as the one in 24b aim, arguably, at stating what the speaker desires to say, but has neither the time to explain nor the proofs to credibly support. By mentioning with disbelief both the moral qualities of Meletus and the civic and patriotic credentials he laid claim to, the defendant makes an innuendo about the lack of these qualities – especially the lack of patriotism, a heavy and offensive accusation against an Athenian citizen. The strategy is yet again one of sustaining out-group relations: given that patriotism entails the idea of belonging to a community, of sharing the same fatherland, *patris*, i.e.

the land and its sociopolitical, cultural, religious and moral institutions, the lack of it is automatically equal to the opposite. A non-patriot, as the defendant implies Meletus is, is one who cannot relate to the institutions of the *polis*, espouse the core values that distinguish that *polis* from others and underline its distinct communal identity, and conform to the expectations of the community – hence, a person who is excluded from the court judges.[59] The defendant, in levelling such a severe accusation against one of the prosecutors in passing and in the context of irony, can be said to aim to avoid the obligation to further explain what he is claiming. Ironical statements are what I call "latent assassins": being, mostly, brief and sharp (only seven words are used in 24b to make the ironical point about Meletus' non-patriotic credentials) and having a sense of lightweight utterances (*e.g*. expressions of jokes), they do not necessarily demand factual substantiation, even when (or, if) the audience gets the implicit points they aim to convey and bears them in mind.

When I started taking notes to prepare this paper on invective in the *Apology of Socrates*, I did not imagine that rhetorical and cultural practice would have been so multi-layered and so firmly connected with the general socio-cultural context and rhetorical practice in classical Athens that I would need more than 10,000 words to describe its use, features, and purposes in the defence speech that Plato attributes to his teacher. What you read in the pages of this paper, is a full thesaurus of patterns that the accused uses to hurl invective against his accusers, patterns that draw on and exploit a wide range of prejudices, beliefs, and aspects of the cultural mindset of the ancients. References to sycophancy, sophistry and the use of rhetoric for deception, outlaws such as the *hybristēs* and *bōmolochos*, morality, legal and political practices, patriotism, and the gods are materials useful for articulating attacks against the identity of prosecutors, stirring up emotions, and sustaining triangulated relationships that are designed to affect the cognitive mindset of the dicasts and influence their verdict. Socrates lost the case, but this does not diminish the value of rhetoric in his defence, a feature of which is invective. One conclusion that emerges from the analysis this paper offers is unbiased: that it is a fallacy for scholars to

[59] On patriotism: Crowley (2020, p. 1-18) and Serafim (2021a, p. 125).

argue that they know everything about invective in ancient literature. To embark on the enterprise of recognizing it and canvass its features and purposes in a wide variety of texts is as challenging but also rewarding for researchers as is a game of minesweeper for those who do not know where the bombs are located. For you cannot know with accuracy what features invective in rhetorical speeches has, just as you cannot be sure about where the bombs in a minesweeper game are hidden. It is worth trying to find them.

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