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**Socrates' Dreams of Platonism:
Derrida and Apuleius' *De Platone***

In the 'Envois' section of *The Post Card*, Jacques Derrida describes his 'feeling of hallucination...and of revelation' (9) at encountering the postcard image of Socrates writing under Plato's dictation. Derrida's text construes various positions for philosophy's 'old/odd couple' emitting from this image. One such position is projected through the imagery of dreaming. He presents a Socrates who 'dreams of writing' (49), then, later, imagines 'Plato's dream: to make Socrates write' (52). Within these two conceptions of dreaming and writing, Derrida is expressing the malleability of the reception of the relationship between Socrates and Plato in response to that offered in the Platonic dialogues and the subsequent tradition of Platonism.

There is, nevertheless, Platonic precedent behind Derrida's portrayal of the writing Socrates in the problematic dream at *Phaedo* 60d-61c. When asked by Cebes why he was turning Aesop's fables into verse on death row, Socrates tells of his dream that constantly ordered him to 'make music and work at it' (mousik_n po...ei ka^ TMrg£zou – 60e). Socrates wonders if he hasn't until now mistaken the dream, since he had always thought that it was encouraging him to keep up the 'greatest kind of music' of philosophy. Therefore, as a safeguard, he has adopted the 'ordinary' music of poetry on his deathbed and that is why he is composing poetry.

Between Plato's staging of Socrates' dream and Derrida's joint reconfiguration of Plato's dream to make Socrates write and Socrates' dream of writing, we have a text from the history of Platonism that not only acts as a significant reception of Socrates' dream in the *Phaedo*, but also preempts Derrida's reversal through the literary tradition of biographical anecdote. Apuleius' *De Platone et eius dogmate* begins with a biography of Plato which leads in to a doxography of Platonic natural and ethical philosophy. The biography contains the most extended version of an anecdote that presages the first meeting of Socrates and Plato. Socrates dreamt that he saw a cygnet (*cygnus*) fly from the altar of Cupid in the Academy and land on his lap. While there the cygnet turned into a fully-fledged swan (*olor*) and flew off 'entrancing the ears of men and gods with the music of its song' (*canore musico auditus hominum deorumque mulcentem*). The next day, when telling the dream to some friends, Socrates sees the young Plato and his father and says to those around him: 'This, friends, is the cygnet of Cupid from the Academy.'

My paper reads Socrates' dream in *De Platone* as a marked reworking of the dream on his deathbed in the *Phaedo* and the effect of such a reception on Derrida's projecting of their relationship in 'Envois'. I shall argue that both dreams mark the ideological and grammatological transition from the Socratic to the Platonic. For Plato, the dream and its interpretation cause Socrates to abandon his life-long philosophizing for poetic composition. Apuleius' account of the earlier dream shows the stages of Plato's development, before and after Socrates, ending with a focus on the music of his song. This dream transposes the figure of Plato onto the figure of Socrates on his deathbed through his relation to music. Furthermore, the earlier dream contains various prophetic moments beyond the life of Socrates, specifically the mention of the Academy. On account of this reference, most interpreters have read the dream as a story invented by later members of the Academy who would have been interested in associating such an omen with the Academy itself. According to my reading of the *Phaedo* dream, Socrates' interpretation acts as a form of prophecy for the inscription of his life in the Platonic dialogues.