

THE EXISTENTIAL DIMENSION OF PHILOSOPHICAL WISDOM
IN PLATO'S *THEAETETUS*.
MORAL AND SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF SOCRATES' MAIEUTICS

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The question about what it is that makes one a philosopher is certainly not less intriguing than the questions posed by the philosopher himself. We may reasonably assume, if only for a start, that what makes one a philosopher is a specific way of experiencing reality (living the world, receiving stimuli). This kind of experience is only possible thanks to a special mode of sensibility – let us call it the *philosophical sensibility*. It is not easy to provide a clear definition of this notion, just as it is not easy to clarify what is really meant by “the philosophical way of experiencing reality”. It appears that the matter is puzzling even for the philosopher himself and that the puzzle is nearly as great as the ones he is trying to solve. However, one thing seems to be sure: the subject of our query is not one of the philosopher's purely intellectual or, widely speaking, cognitive skills, although the *philosophical sensibility* is certainly based on such skills. The crucial factor is the moral and spiritual sensibility.

It may be said that what we might call the *philosophical experience* – or better, the *philosophical way of experiencing reality* (it is a process rather than a single act, although such acts may also happen to some philosophers, at least under certain circumstances), together with the specific mode of sensibility (intellectual, moral and spiritual), are the source of the philosopher's whole creative activity, or, at least, its most essential part. This experience determines the way the philosopher grasps the world as well as the categories he employs, but also, which is not unimportant, the way he forms his personality and his whole life. The authenticity of the philosopher's work stems from the authenticity of the philosophical experience. The task of analyzing the experience and the corresponding sensibility is probably the most difficult challenge for a historian of philosophy, but also the most fascinating, because it seemingly touches the very living core of philosophy. Both the difficulty and the fascination increase when Plato's case is considered. Plato's philosophy unravels the greatest mysteries of