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Eros, Paideia and Arête: The Lesson of Plato's Symposium

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Eros, Paideia and Arête: The Lesson of Plato's *Symposium*

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of
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Jason St. John Oliver Campbell

ABSTRACT

Commentators of Plato's *Symposium* rarely recognize the importance of traditional Greek conceptions of Eros, paideia and arête in understanding Plato's critique of the various educational models presented in the dialogue. I will show how Plato contests these models by proposing that education should consist of philosophy. On this interpretation, ancient Greek pedagogy culminates in a philosophical education. For this new form of education, the dialogical model supplants the traditional practices of *kléos* and poetic *mimēsis*, inextricably bound to *archaia paideia* and traditional forms of education. Plato's Socrates is searching for knowledge and immortality through an application of the philosophical method, one that relies on a conception of Eros and propagation. For Plato's Socrates, it is through Eros that ancient Greek *paideia* educates in matters of arête, but eros is not a passion for *kléos* or for a beautiful young man. Rather, eros is the passion for Beauty itself, a passion that is pursued through philosophical conversation with another, a life of arête. Thus, our investigation serves to define and criticize the various educational models and defend the claim that philosophy is best suited for educating the citizens of Athens.

General Introduction

Plato's *Symposium* differs from the other dialogues insofar as it lacks direct exchange between speaker and interlocutor, except for a minor episode between Socrates and Agathon. The *Symposium*, a series of speeches paying tribute to Eros, poses a number of difficulties for modern readers. A total of seven speeches are given, six of which pay homage to Eros. Alcibiades' speech, however, the final speech of the dialogue, diverges from this objective. Rather than praising Eros, Alcibiades provides a eulogy to Socrates, which has led some commentators to dismiss it as a digression. The speech of Alcibiades also disrupts the tone of the previous six speeches, insofar as the other speakers have agreed to temper their consumption of alcohol yet Alcibiades is very drunk. Nonetheless, Alcibiades' speech addresses key points of discussion, which suggests that despite his drunkenness, much of what is said echoes certain themes of the other speeches. For example, Alcibiades supports the traditional model of education, wherein the lover pursues the beloved. The beloved is able to receive an education because he is the object of desire. While this conception conforms to five of the six speeches it is in stark opposition to the educational model proposed by Diotima. Thus, despite his drunkenness, Alcibiades and the other five speakers, excluding Diotima, agree on how the education of the youth is to be undertaken.

The link between love and education, in virtue, requires the modern reader to examine what constituted education in classical Athens, especially how *paideia* included an erotic component. Ancient texts provide a number of clues that help the modern reader solve the puzzle of the relations between Eros, *paideia* and *arête*.

Socrates remarks in the *Republic* that traditional *paideia* consists of *gymnastikē* for the body and *mousikē* for the soul; thus, our analysis begins with an investigation of *mousikē*, which includes poetry. We find that poetry was used to teach virtue through its celebration of *kléos*, the remembered glory or renown of epic heroes. *Mimēsis*, or the practice of “imitation,” functions as the vehicle wherein the *kléos* of an epic hero is used to teach Athenian boys virtue.

In the *Republic*, Socrates includes tragedy in criticizing how poetry fails to serve as the vehicle and occasion of *paideia*. But we also know this from Aristophanes’ play, the *Frogs*, where Euripides says that “poets are teachers of men” (1053 ff). Socrates, however, denies this claim to knowledge insofar as an education in poetry, including tragedy, takes feeling good as attesting to the truth of what is said.

The importance of the body not only in its reaction to poetry, but also as a part of traditional *paideia* becomes clearer when we turn to these ancient texts that celebrate the institution of *sunousia*. Evidence about the erotic component of *paideia* also comes from Aeschines’ *Against Timarchos*, which records important information about homosexuality, law and education, to determine that *sunousia* is not the same as or merely the practice of pederasty.

The importance of *sunousia* is also evident in Pericles’ Funeral Oration, in which he employs the metaphor of the *erastēs* in inspiring one’s love of Athens. His speech gives us yet another valuable insight into Athenian education. Through his speech we understand the significance education plays in the construction of both his metaphor and its ability to reach a diverse audience.

No discussion of education — especially among those familiar with the dialogues of Plato — could proceed without consideration of the educational function of the Sophists. We, then, turn our focus to Plato's *Protagoras* and his textual criticism of Simonides' poem, noting the habit of sophists to appeal to poetic verse rather than justify their arguments. We conclude our discussion of sophistry by demonstrating how Socrates is able to launch an attack against the sophists and their claim to educate one in matters of virtue.

Athenians had substantial faith in the intellectual abilities of the democratic *polis*, which attests to the fact that public discourse was inextricably tied to it. The speeches of Athenian leaders, typically addressed the *polis* directly, and served as the primary form of communication. Thus, for the ancient Greeks, the democratic *polis* served as a locus of intellectual power and authority.

Armed with these insights, we return to Plato's *Symposium*. In the final two chapters of this analysis we discuss the correlation between the speakers and the educational models that they represent, all vying for dominance. Diotima and her discussion of the "ladder of love", serves as an alternative educational model: one equally accessible to men and women, one emphasizing the lover rather than the beloved and most notably, one defending a philosophical education. That Socrates represents this new educational model is the moving force behind the speech of Alcibiades. Despite Alcibiades' appreciation of Socrates' strange way of talking about virtue, Alcibiades ultimately — as his disgraceful end attests — is not moved by his love for Socrates to pursue an education in virtue. But presumably Plato was, for we learn about Socrates' plan in transforming Eros, *paideia* and *arête* in ancient Greece.

Chapter One

Archaia Paideia: *Mousikē* and *Gymnastikē*

Introduction

In discussing Ancient Greek education (*paideia*), it is necessary to distinguish the old educational system (*archaia paideia*),¹ or simply Old Education from New Education, as these educational systems subscribe to different pedagogical starting points.² Since this investigation serves to particularize the discussion of *paideia*, the general term “*paideia*” will not be used in an unqualified sense. The general use of the term for the purposes of this analysis, would only serve to confuse the discussion, as it is my suggestion that the complex structure of Ancient Greek education cannot adequately be defined under an all-encompassing term. Moreover, in particularizing the discussion of *paideia* one gains greater insight into the intricacies of the Ancient Greek educational system³ and one is

¹ The term Old Education or Philosophy proper, also known as the Superior Argument, in contrast to New Education or “sophistry”, also known as the inferior Argument, is fully explicated in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*. The term Old Education is a translation of the Ancient Greek (ἡ ἀρχαία παιδεία) (*Clds.* 961). I use scare quotes around sophistry because Aristophanes has biased his argument in favor of Old Education rather than New Education.

² See Kevin Robb’s essay, “Asebeia and Sunousia: The Issues Behind the Indictment of Socrates” in *Plato's Dialogues, New Studies and Interpretations*. ed. Gerald Press, Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield. 1993. p. 86-89. In a young boy’s formative years — from birth to fifteen he is taught under the Old Educational system, particularly in *mousikē* and *gymnastikē*. As Robb notes, the term *meirakion* applies to young men between the ages of 15 and 21. During the *meirakion* years, if he so aspires, he may begin to study under the New Education system. Hence, there is no overlap in the ages of those studying under the Old and New educational systems, the former beginning after the *meirakion* years, the latter beginning much earlier. It is important, moreover, not to conflate *meirakion* (young men 15-21) with the military training of the *ephēboi*, of the fourth century “mature youths” typically 18-21. For a discussion of the *ephēboi*, See Scanlon, Thomas F. *Eros and Greek Athletics* New York, Oxford University Press 2002. p. 87-88. See also Werner Jaeger. *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*. New York, Oxford University Press, Vol. 3. 1944. p. 248-250 for Plato’s account of the educational periods of children or Plato’s *Laws* Bk. VII. Ages 1-3 (788-793d6) ages 3-6 (793d7-794d2), the separation of boys and girls at age six (794c3) and so on.

³ As the discussion continues, the intricacies of the Ancient Greek educational system will be fully explained. The distinction between the Old and the New forms of education, the relevance of poetry, theater, literacy and political life, the transition from an oral to literate society, combined with the comic

better equipped to understand the shift in the pedagogical paradigm from the 6th to the 4th century BCE, i.e., the shift from Old Education to New Education. This is not, however, to suggest that these systems of education are in any sense antithetical. In fact, throughout the latter half of the 5th century, boys with aspirations of becoming politicians, after having completed their traditional education, had the option of entering political life, which required they become proficient speakers (*rhētores*) and continue their education under the guidance of *sophistai* or the “cleaver ones.”⁴ There was no essential conflict between the traditional and contemporary education these young men received.

In discussing the nature of Ancient Greek education, then, I will (1) identify and discuss two key components of *archaia paideia*, viz., *mousikē* and *gymnastikē*, (2) discuss the importance of *sunousia*, or the “association” between an older lover (*erastēs*) and his younger beloved (*erōmenos*), (3) argue for a distinction between *sunousia* and the practice of paederasty (4) incorporate the discussion of poetry into an analysis of theatrical performance and finally (5) discuss the correlation between the teachers of letters, (*grammatistēs*), and sophists, given the change in the political arena after the death of Pericles.⁵ It is only after these preliminary points are addressed — and a fuller

festivals all play an important role in understanding the significance of the term *paideia*. As such, a general analysis of Ancient Greek *paideia*, one not accounting for theatrical performance, or the role of Old Comedy in the 6th and 5th centuries generalizes rather than particularizes the analysis.

⁴ In Plato’s *Protagoras* Hippocrates asks Socrates if he can accompany him to Callias’ house, as Protagoras is in Athens. Of interest to this discussion are two important passages (316c) and (312b). In (316c) Socrates, speaking on behalf of Hippocrates, informs Protagoras of his desire to learn under the new educational system, in fact, Protagoras is a self-professed sophist (317b2). Before this passage, however, in (312b) Socrates asks Hippocrates if he intends on gaining the same education from Protagoras as he received from his educators under the old system, thereby, raising the possibility that the two educational systems were not in any essential conflict.

⁵ See Jeffery Henderson’s essay, “The Dēmos and the Comic Competition” in *Nothing To Do With Dionysos: Athenian Drama In Its Social Context*. Princeton University Press. 1990. p. 279-280. For Henderson, and ancient scholars alike, the death of Pericles marked a significant change in how the *dēmos* were governed. Prior to his death, the aristocracy assumed leadership; men of good repute, privilege and wealth controlled the *dēmos*. After the death of Pericles, however, men like Kleon, were able to rise to

conception of *paideia* purposed — that we might begin an analysis of the Platonic dialogues as a response to the educational practices of the Ancient Greeks. The concluding two chapters, then, will analyze Plato’s *Symposium* as a critique of the traditional forms of classical education, each character representing one aspect of Ancient Greek education.

Mousikē: The First Component of Archaia Paideia

Within the Ancient Greek educational system, the education of a child, if it was to be successful, must seek to nurture both the child’s mind and body, as Protagoras properly states, “they [the children] are sent to trainers, so that a good mind may have a good body to serve it” (*Prot.* 326b6).⁶ The fact that one’s introduction to *mousikē* (the art of the Muses) is prior to one’s introduction to *gymnastikē* is in no sense an arbitrary correspondence, as Glaucon explains to Adimantus.⁷ Moreover, it should be noted that *mousikē* also includes poetry as well as tales and fables. Furthermore, Socrates explains to Glaucon that *mousikē* and *gymnastikē* “will preside over the appetitive part which is the mass of the soul...and the most insatiate by nature of wealth” (*Rep.* 442a3-6). Without ever using the term, Socrates is suggesting that the aim of one’s educational training in *mousikē* and *gymnastikē* will contribute to one’s “self-control” or (*sōphrosunē*).⁸

power. Unlike Pericles, Kleon affiliated himself with the *dēmos*, as a member of the *dēmos*. For the Athenian stranger in Plato’s *Laws*, this affiliation is absolutely disastrous, i.e., not the particular affiliation of Kleon with the *dēmos* but any leader’s affiliation with the *dēmos* — or any case in which the leader does not differentiate himself from the *dēmos*. See Plato’s *Laws*, Bk. II, (658e5-659c8) and his critique of the Sicilian’s manner of judging the comedic competition.

⁶ See also (*Prot.* 312b), (*Laws.* 795d6-795e), (*Rep.* 376e-3), (*Clds.* 960-982).

⁷ See (*Rep.* Bk.2 376e4).

⁸ If, as Socrates claims, *mousikē* and *gymnastikē* “preside over the appetitive portion of the soul”, which is prone to indulgence and excess, then *insofar* as these components regulate the appetitive portion, they directly modify the behavior of the individual, thereby allowing the individual to exercise restraint or

The first component of traditional Greek education, *mousikē*, plays a great significance in preliterate 6th century Greece, so much so that the Athenian stranger in Plato's *Laws* suggests, "So by an uneducated man we shall mean one who has no choric training, and by educated man one whose choric training has been thorough" (*Laws*, Bk. II, 654b). The relevance of this claim is at least twofold. On the one hand, *archaia paideia* is an established pedagogical device for educating Athenian boys *prior* to the advent of literacy in the 4th century BCE.⁹ Insofar as *mousikē* facilitates the education of Athenian boys prior to a formalized school system — it offers both the youth and the society an opportunity to cultivate morality. On the other hand, and more importantly, the role *mousikē* plays in the formal education of Athenian youth directly contributes to honing their intellectual abilities, or at least those abilities prized by *archaia paideia*. The metaphorical association between the intellect and the role of *mousikē* is brilliantly illustrated in an often-overlooked passage in Plato's *Symposium*. Scholars have often dismissed as merely comical Alcibiades' contribution to the discussion in the *Symposium* but it is my suggestion that his statements are of the utmost importance if one is to understand the educational practices of the Ancient Greeks. Moreover, while I agree that

"self-control" in appeasing the appetitive portion. Hence, an individual properly educated — with a good body to serve a good soul — must also exhibit *sōphrosunē*. Nevertheless, the inverse relationship is not true, as merely having a good body does not necessitate proper education, as is clearly the case during Socrates' discussion with Charmides, in the *Charmides*.

⁹ The specifics concerning the advent of literacy in Ancient Greece are debated. By literacy we mean at least those citizens responsible for conducting the business of the *polis* who transmit and expand their culture can read and write. Our concern is not with the specific but the general transition from a preliterate Greece, generally considered 6th century Greece to a "fully" literate Greece, generally thought to have firmly established its roots during the early to mid 4th century BCE. For a specific discussion of this transition see Kevin Robb's *Literacy and Paideia in Ancient Greece*. Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1994. See also Alfred Burns. "Athenian Literacy in the Fifth Century B.C." *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol.42, No 3, (Jul.-Sep., 1981), p. 371-387.

his introduction (215a4), in a state of delirious drunkenness, is comical,¹⁰ I suggest that something more serious is being said:

And aren't you [Socrates] a piper as well? I should think you were — and a far more wonderful piper than Marsyas...the only difference between you and Marsyas is that you can get the same effect without any instrument at all — with nothing but a few simple words, not even poetry (*Symp.* 215b5-215c9).

His discussion focuses on the relationship between *mousikē* and the intellect. The first component of *archaia paideia*, *mousikē*, is not merely beneficial for the practical purposes of instrument playing and entertaining, as is evident in Eryximachus' dismissal of the flute girls (176e3) prior to the beginning of their discussion. The practice of "imitation" or (*mimēsis*) in Ancient Greek poetry, coincides with a conception of the remembered glory or renown (*kléos*) of poetic heroes.¹¹ It is also important to recognize that *mousikē* is necessarily tied to a very oral tradition of recitation and performance. *Mimēsis*, then, is as integral a component of *mousikē* as *mousikē* is to understanding *archaia paideia*. That is to say, once the distinction between *technē* and *mousikē* are

¹⁰ See Andrea W. Nightingale. *Genres in Dialogue: Plato and the Construct of Philosophy* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1995. p. 172-192. The relevance of Old Comedy will be discussed later in this analysis but Nightingale reminds us of the two essential components of Old Comedy, which are the ridiculous and the serious. Serious matters usually deal with politics and education while there is no constraint to the ridiculous. It is my suggestion, then, that instead of disregarding Alcibiades' speech as superfluous we need to view his speech as an exercise in Old Comedy. The ridiculousness of his drunken state in no way undermines the credibility of his speech, as in the introductory passages he is clearly arguing for the supremacy of Socrates' music, i.e., philosophy, over the traditional *mousikē*. Note also, the important distinction between music without words (*technē*) and music accompanied by words (*mousikē*). See Edward Lippman. "The Sources and Development of the Ethical View of Music in Ancient Greece". *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Apr., 1963), 195-196, for further elaboration on this distinction. With this distinction between *technē* and *mousikē* in mind, one is better equipped to understand the relevance of Alcibiades' emphasis in saying, "not even poetry" (215c9). That is, not even with the accompaniment of words is *mousikē* a match for the music that Socrates is able to produce. This claim does not essentially serve as a critique of *mousikē* as it serves as a compliment to the music that Socrates is capable of producing—philosophy—which produces the same effect, only Socrates is able to achieve this end without the aid of a musical instrument.

¹¹ The conception of *kléos* is closely tied to honor, which will factor in our discussion in the final two chapters of this analysis.

clear, and one realizes that the epic poems were typically set to music, then it is apparent that *mousikē* serves as a vehicle, wherein the morals of these poems are able to take hold of an individual's soul. More practically, *mimēsis* became an invaluable tool in education.¹²

Mousikē and Arête: An Education in Virtue

The practical needs of education in Greek antiquity also placed a heavy emphasis on morality, in particular the moral education of its citizenry through poetic *mimēsis*. This capacity for imitation, especially concerning the *kléos* of epic heroes, nurtured the moral foundation of the *dēmos*. Hence, the *dēmos* came to understand virtue, *arête*, during this preliterate phase of Ancient Greece, through poetic *mimēsis*. The poet — divinely inspired — set out to educate the *dēmos* on matters of morality and virtue. It was they that possessed the gift of *muthos*, which functions as a form of “speech that ‘simply speaks itself; it preserves, without ‘authorial intrusion’, an ancient and traditional wisdom that belongs simultaneously to everyone and to no one” (Waugh, 2002b, p. 214). The importance of the poet's role in *paideia* is clear in the following lengthy quote from Hesiod, worth quoting in its entirety since it is important for the later discussion of belief based on *mimēsis* as divinely inspired.

And these were the first words of all
The goddesses spoke to me,
the Muses of Olympia, daughters of Zeus
of the aegis:

¹² See Kevin Robb's *Literacy and Paideia in Ancient Greece*. Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1994. Chapter 8. Robb points out that prior to widespread literacy throughout Ancient Greece where texts were available to those with the inclination and resources to purchase them, these individuals, if they were to remember the stories of Homer would have to commit the epics to memory. Clearly, rhythm both in the metric foot of the line (or meter) and in the instrumentation of the accompanying lyre, typically, would contribute to an individual's memory. Thus, the practical purpose of *mimēsis* was in its ability to aid in the retention of detailed information. As the discussion continues, we will address Plato's disapproval of poetic *mimēsis*.

“You shepherds of the wilderness, poor fools,
nothing but bellies,
we know how to say many false things
that seem like true sayings,
but we know also how to speak the truth
when we wish to.”
So they spoke, these mistresses of words,
daughters of great Zeus,
and they broke off and handed me a staff
of strong growing
olive shoot, a wonderful thing;
they breathed a voice into me,
a power to sing the story of things
of the future, and the past (my emphasis), (Hesiod, *Theogony*,
25-32).

Summarizing the importance of poetic *mimēsis* Lippman writes,

so the epic, in turn, originally themselves sung, became the examples furnishing moral inspiration to successive generations. Also, the glory to which a hero aspires and for which he is willing to sacrifice his life is really a musical one, for it consists in the poetic celebration that immortalizes his deed...music and poetry have their highest function in the glorification of the hero and the education that is based on this (Lippman, 1963, p. 198).

Later in the *Symposium*, Eryximachus, the physician, suggests, “the art of music [is] to create harmony by resolving the discord between the treble and the bass...And just as we saw that the concord of the body was brought about by the art of medicine, so this other harmony is due to the art of music” (*Sym.* 187b-187c2). Eryximachus’ claim is more than a simple correlation, insofar as he testifies to music’s ability in procuring health,¹³ exemplified in the following quote from Hesiod’s *Theogony*,

¹³ See Plato’s *Laws* Bk. VII (790d1-790e4). The Athenian stranger explains to Clinias that mothers with newborn infants experiencing colic may “put a spell on their babies” while lulling them to sleep. He continues, “the encouragement of placidity of temper will play a prominent part in the development of moral excellence” (*Laws* Bk. VII, 791c7-9). I have already discussed the role of poetic *mimēsis* and its contribution to the moral excellence of the Athenian *dēmos*, note however, that one’s moral education begins from infancy — and the vehicle of its transmission is, again, *mousikē*. See also, Hesiod. *Theogony*. trans. by Richard Lattimore. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press. 1959.

So it is from the Muses, and from Apollo
of the far cast,
that there are men on earth who are poets,
and players on the lyre.
The lord are from Zeus; but blessed
is that one whom the Muses
love, for the voice of his mouth runs
and is sweet, and even
when a man has sorrow fresh
in the troublement of his spirit
and is struck to wonder over the grief
in his heart, the singer,
the servant of the Muses singing
the glories of ancient
men, and the blessed gods
who have their homes on Olympos,
makes him presently forget his cares, he no longer
remembers
sorrow, for the gifts of the goddesses
soon turn his thoughts elsewhere (Lattimore, 1959, 94-
103).¹⁴

It is because of the poets that men are able to forget their troubles. Music, then, whether spoken or sung, serves as a form of therapy. It also allows us, as human beings, to experience an epiphany. In Plato's *Charmides*, Socrates facetiously explains to Charmides that the cure for his headache is a charm, which accompanies a leaf that must be eaten. Socrates further explains, "without the charm the leaf would be of no avail" (*Charm.* 155e5-8), thereby reinforcing the claim that *mousikē* has the ability to cure physical ailment. Finally, see Aristotle. *The Politics*. trans. Ernest Barker, Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1948. p. 345 (*Politics* Bk. VIII, V, § 24). Aristotle argues that if *mousikē* has power or control over the soul it should be studied and taught to the young. It is also interesting to note that "music therapy" in the 21st century is being "prescribed" by physicians as an alternative to traditional Western medicine. See Gold et al., recent study, "Effects of music therapy for children and adolescents with psychopathology: a meta-analysis" in *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry*. 45(6):1054-1063, September 2004.

¹⁴ Ἐκ γάρ τοι Μουσέων καὶ ἐκηβόλου Απόλλωνος
ἄνδρες ἀοιδοὶ ἔασιν ἐπὶ χθόνα καὶ κιθαρισταί,
ἐκ δὲ Διὸς βασιλῆς ▪ ὁ δ' ὄλβιος, ὃν τινα Μοῦσαι
φίλωνται ▪ γλυκερὴ οἱ ἀπὸ στόματος ῥέει αὐδὴ ▪
εἰ γάρ τις καὶ πένθος ἔχων νεοκηδέϊ θυμῷ
ἄζηται κραδίην ἀκαχήμενος, αὐτὰρ ἀοιδὸς
Μουσάων θεράπων κλέεα προτέρων ἀνθρώπων
ὑμνήσῃ μάκαράς τε θεοῦς οἷ' Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν,
αἵψ' ὃ γε δυσφροσυνέων ἐπιλήθεται οὐδέ τι κηδέων
μέμνηται ▪ ταχέως δὲ παρέτραπε δῶρα θεάων (94-103).

With respect to the relationship between *mousikē* and health or *mousikē* as a "charm" for health the quote from *Theogony* may provide an example. Alliteration and assonance occur in lines (94-95)... Ἀπόλλωνος ἄνδρες ἀοιδοὶ and ἔασιν ἐπὶ (alliterating the "ε") and finally χθόνα καὶ κιθαρισταί (emphasizing the

For the Ancient Greeks, then, education through music, played a crucial role in developing an individual's ability to attain health, "knowledge", and virtue — health in the sense of harmony, as discussed by Eryximachus in the *Symposium*, (187b-187c2), "knowledge", as illustrated in Alcibiades' praise of Socrates, (215b5-215c9), and virtue through poetic *mimēsis*.¹⁵ Hence, without the contributions of *mousikē* Athenian youth would lack the necessary intellectual and moral education needed to live a virtuous life.

The Ancient Greeks did not conceive of poetry as we do, for we do not consider the primary purpose of poetry to be *paideia*. For us, the pedagogical purpose of poetry, if it has one, is to contribute to a well-rounded education — i.e., one consisting of study in the liberal arts and sciences. For the ancient Greeks, however, "Homer [was] the educator of Hellas" (*Rep.* 10. 606e-607). Indeed, he deserved to be studied as a guide by which to regulate one's whole life. For the ancient Greeks, then, poetry was an essential part of the education of Athenian citizens.¹⁶ Havelock nicely sums up the importance of poetry, and the civic function the poets served the Ancient Greek community:

poetry is central in [Ancient Greek] educational theory...It is clear...that the poets in general and Homer in particular were not only considered as the source of instruction in ethics and administrative skills but also enjoyed a sort of

/k/ of a voiced velar stop). The content is equally as important: Surely it is from the Muses and far-darting Apollo that there are men on earth who are poets and singers (my translation).

¹⁵ Note, "knowledge" appears in scare quotes because what constitutes knowledge — and how one attains knowledge — is a major point of contention in Plato's dialogue. In nearly every appearance, Socrates criticizes his interlocutor's claim to knowledge, and the notion that one acquires *knowledge* through *archaia paideia* or sophistry.

¹⁶ To be educated was to be sufficiently versed in the epic poems of Homer and to have choric training, as noted by the Athenian stranger (*Laws*, Bk. II, 654b). Moreover, the earliest forms of education for Athenian citizens were conveyed through the use of poetry, which was a gift of the gods transmitted through the Muses (*Laws*, Bk. II, 654a5). Hence, the conception of poetry throughout *archaia paideia* was one of divine inspiration — to question the truth or the intentions of the poet would in some sense be to challenge the gods themselves, and perhaps to jeopardize one's own piety.

institutional status in Ancient Greek society (Havelock, 1963, p. 27-29).

Socrates' Criticism of Traditional *Paideia*:

In constructing the ideal polis, Socrates sets out to investigate who will manage the task of educating the guardians (2.376c7). Glaucon, for the sake of argument, assumes Thrasymachus' position, as he believes Thrasymachus has abandoned his position too easily (2.358b). Thrasymachus has defended the position that justice is the advantage of the strong over the weak (1.338c), (1.341a), that it is disadvantageous to be just, (1.343d), and it is conversely advantageous to be unjust (1.343e5). Support for Thrasymachus' position is found throughout the poetic tradition, as Glaucon shows in the *Republic*.¹⁷ The following passage from Hesiod's *Works and Days*, cited in book two of the *Republic*, exemplifies Thrasymachus' position:

Evildoing in plenty a man shall find for the seeking.
Smooth is the way, and it lies near at hand and is easy to
enter, But on the pathway of virtue the gods put sweat from
the first step (*Works and Days*, 287), (*Rep.* 2. c6-d1).

Furthermore, Glaucon, in playing devil's advocate, adds that "the height of injustice is to seem just without being so" (2.361a4) and that the unjust man "benefits his friends and harms his enemies" (2.362c). In essence, it is easier to be unjust than it is to be just. Since the guardians of the ideal polis must be educated in matters of justice, and there is such dispute as to how one should be educated, Socrates must first determine who the educators will be, if he is to derive a proper conception of justice.

Where in antiquity did this conception that it is easier to be unjust than just find its rationale? Socrates provides some insight:

¹⁷ See *Republic* (2.358a8-b1), (2.360c4-8), (2.362c), (2. 365b-c), (2.365e5-366a3).

All [of the poets] with one accord reiterate that soberness and righteousness are fair and honorable, to be sure, but unpleasant and laborious, while licentiousness and injustice are pleasant and easy to win and are only in opinion and by convention disgraceful (2.364).

While it is noted that righteousness is an honorable characteristic of human nature, it is also noted that it is attained with great effort. A similar critique is mounted in the *Protagoras*, wherein Socrates cites Hesiod, “The gods have put sweat on the path to virtue...The summit’s reached, Hard though it was, thenceforth the task of light to keep it” (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 289), (340d-e).

As G.R.F. Ferrari writes,

The poets tend to exalt virtue so high that the path to reach it comes to seem impossibly arduous, while the wheeling and dealing that goes on below they attest (even as they condemn it) to be more practicable and more likely to bring pleasure and reward in this life (Ferrari, 1989, p. 111).

But Socrates’ criticisms of poetry and his arguments for its censorship focus on its role as the vehicle of education (Waugh, 1986, p. 5). How, then, was poetry used as a vehicle of education? For Plato, it is through *mimēsis* that the poet comes to teach the audience. *Mimēsis* can refer to the creative act of preserving someone’s tone or voice in writing a play.¹⁸ It can refer to the performer’s rendition of the written word and his ability, simultaneously to imitate and create within the confines of the text.¹⁹ But most importantly, for our specific discussion of Ancient Greek *paideia*, *mimēsis* refers to, “the over-all linguistic medium of the poet and his peculiar power through the use of this medium...to render *an account of reality*” (my emphasis), (Havelock, 1963, p. 25). This “rendering of reality” affects the beliefs of the audience, and as we know, affecting belief

¹⁸ See Havelock, 1963, p. 22.

¹⁹ See Havelock, 1963, p. 22-23.

is a staple in any educational model. Waugh writes, “For Socrates, the real problem with poetry lies in the mechanism by which it affects beliefs and behavior and in so doing accomplishes the task of education” (Waugh, 1986, p. 7).

How, then, is belief affected through poetic verse? Belief governs our conduct within the world. There is a direct relationship between belief, on the one hand and action on the other. Beliefs, however, are not fixed. We often change our beliefs and insofar as our beliefs are malleable, our actions are impressionable and subject to change also. It is of the greatest importance, then, that the most impressionable, viz., children, are protected from ideas that dogmatically fashion their beliefs, that is, beliefs which require no appeal to reason — those that offer no justification and mandate conformity. The same demand to censor children from these concepts is evident throughout books two and three of Plato’s *Republic* (2.377b4-c), (2.380b6-c), and (3.395c-d).

In attempting to determine the appropriate pedagogical model responsible for the education of the guardians, Plato’s Socrates recognizes that it is from childhood and through the process of forming beliefs that ideas shape the nature and character of men. Thus, Socrates remarks:

if [the guardians] imitate they should from childhood up imitate what is appropriate to them — men...but things unbecoming to free men they should neither do nor be clever at imitating...lest from the imitation they imbibe the reality (my italics) (3. 395.c-d).

The initial critique launched at the poets manifests in the conception that through “imitation” or *mimēsis* the individual can “imbibe the reality”: through the process of *mimēsis* one’s *belief* is affected, whether as performer or member of the audience. Insofar

as belief influences action, to participate in imitation increases the likelihood that the individual will enact what is being represented.

The poets, then, have the specific obligation to ensure that their representation of the gods conforms in such a manner as not to jeopardize the piety of the performer or the members of the audience. Since poetry is a vehicle for education, and the function of education is to affect belief, and since the formation of belief corresponds to how an individual acts within the world, then a deficiency in education will increase the likelihood for delinquency or impiety (*asebeia*) during adulthood. Thus, Socrates sets out to illustrate the connection between poetry, on the one hand (as an educational tool) and delinquency and impiety on the other (as an effect of poetic education).

Ferrari observes that, “fantasy has an effect on the development of character” (Ferrari, 1989, p. 111). In book two of the *Republic*, Socrates illustrates that, according to Hesiod, Cronus took revenge against his father (2.378a). In the *Euthyphro*, Euthyphro mentions to Socrates, lest he forget, that Zeus also moved against his father (Cronus) for swallowing his brothers (6a). Thus, the *belief*, as acquired from Hesiod, is that one is justified in “punishing one’s father’s wrongdoings” (2.378b3). The truth of this concept has its basis in emotion, namely, retribution or revenge. As Waugh notes,

truths communicated through poetry are not accepted because one has good reasons to accept them; they are believed because the poetry through which they are communicated generates positive emotions. That the poetry made its audience feel good is taken by them as attesting to the truth of its subject matter (Waugh, 1991, p. 53).

Euthyphro, as a character within the dialogue, defends the argument that all just actions are pious, which is clearly false, and offers as a defense Zeus’ action to move

against Cronus. Euthyphro “feels” as though he is doing a pious act and this feeling translates into the truth of the matter. Socrates, however, attempts to illustrate not only to Euthyphro but to Athenians themselves that such justification is flawed — as all pious actions *are* just but not all just actions are pious, e.g., one may be justified in seeking vengeance for the death of a family member but may, at the same time, not be pious in committing an act of murder.²⁰ Hence, Euthyphro may be just in moving against his father but it does not follow that he is also pious in such action. Euthyphro symbolizes this general misconception among Athenians, and Socrates’ critique of Euthyphro extends to a critique of Athenian culture and the poets for having instilled this conception through their characterization of the gods.

Since there is a relationship between belief and action, it comes to no surprise that Euthyphro’s *belief* in Hesiod’s characterization of the gods, serves to justify his *action* to prosecute his father for inadvertently killing one of his laborers, who himself, in a state of drunkenness kills an innocent man (4c2). In defense of his actions, Euthyphro comments, “now they are enraged at me when I proceed against my father for wrongdoing, and so they contradict themselves in what they say about the gods and what they say about me” (6a). This is why Socrates notes:

²⁰ See Aeschylus. 1906. “Agamemnon” in *Plays*, J.M. Dent and Sons LTD, trans. G.M. Cookson with introduction by John Warrington. London, p. 189-253. In the first of the trilogy set of Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, King Agamemnon has sacrificed his daughter prior to the Trojan war “A Father’s slaughterous hands foully imbrued, Hard by the altar, with her [his daughter’s] blood” (227-228). His wife and queen, Clytaemnestra, knows about their daughter’s murder — patiently waiting for Agamemnon to return home to seek her revenge, for a period of ten years. She stabs her husband, the king, three times (1559-1563) and revels in her blood-splattered clothing and his death (1563-1566). While she is clearly justified in avenging the slaughter of her daughter, her action is impious. This is the nature of the debate she has with the chorus. She asks, “Now in the name of Justice thou hurl’st down damnation...on my head...But when need was, durst cast no stone at him [Agamemnon]... who slew his own child, the darling of my womb...” (1590-1599).

Neither must we admit at all...that the gods war with gods and plot against one another (*Rep.*2.378b7)...the battles of the gods in Homer's verse are things that we must not admit into our city...For the young are not able to distinguish what is and what is not allegory (*Rep.*2.379d4-7).

It is important to censor the poets since in functioning as a vehicle of education, poetry affects the formation of belief, and as such determines one's actions. If it is inappropriate for Euthyphro to seek to punish his father, then, one should banish those stories that glorify such conceptions, namely, the banishment of poetry.

For the poet's audience feeling good is taken...as attesting to the truth of the subject matter (Waugh, 1991, p. 53). Ferrari expands and explains this observation: "A poetic performance...engages its participants not simply in the look but...in the whole 'feel' of the human action that it portrays" (Ferrari, 1989, p. 109). The features that enable an effective performance of poetry have effects on the audience that leaves them thinking about appearance, not reality. It is this facet of the poetic performance that is simultaneously its greatest strength and weakness, in that the appearance is beneficial insofar as it is properly identified as a representation. Nevertheless, if the appearance of truth is believed to be true, a multitude of epistemological problems unravel.

Finally, one should note that with respect to Plato's critique of poetry, insofar as Plato was successful in his attack, he sufficiently illustrated that poetry was unsuitable for contributing to the formation of one's belief, while simultaneously preserving truth rather than appearance. Clearly, poetry is capable of contributing to the formation of belief but it appeals to feeling and appearance in the formation of one's beliefs, rather than to fact, hence the role of metaphor in poetic verse.

If metaphor and imagery are tools used by the poet, and the purpose of metaphor and imagery are to color or accent rather than describe reality, then the poet cannot profess to educate, since the content of poetic education functions as an imitation and cannot make reality present to us. Hence, on a pedagogical stance, poetic *mimēsis* is not only incapable of contributing to knowledge, poetry misleads us into thinking appearance is reality, as Waugh writes,

For an artwork constructs another “reality” in addition to the world we inhabit, but it does so using the “stuff” of this world, so that work of art is also a “representation” or “imitation” of the world. That art may use this “stuff,” that it can represent the world “out there” —that representation is possible—attests to the instability of “reality.” In representing what is “out there” the work represents it as unstable, because art can make another “reality” out of it, which is also malleable that we speak in vain of the correct version, interpretation, description, or reading of it (Waugh, 1991, p. 56-57).

It is no wonder that Socrates insists that poetry cannot be the vehicle of education as it lacks the capability — as such — to present reality. As Havelock puts it: “Poetry is not so much non-functional as anti-functional...Poetry...indulges in constant illusionism, confusion and irrationality. This is what *mimēsis* ultimately is, a shadow show of phantoms” (Havelock, 1963, p. 25).

Gymnastikē: The Second Component of Archaia Paideia

The second component of *archaia paideia*, *gymnastikē*, is of equal importance in the education of Athenian boys. In the seventh book of Plato’s *Laws*, the Athenian Stranger is discussing the nature of “physical culture” or *gymnastikē* with Clinias, wherein a participant of *gymnastikē* is a dancer (*choreutēs*) or wrestler (*palaistēs*) (795d8). With respect to dance, G.M. Sargeant writes,

there are three aspects of musical dancing in early times: it is used as a religious rite; it has a social value; and aesthetically it is delightful for those who take part in it and for those who look on (Sargeant. 1969, p. 110).

The second component of *gymnastikē*, viz., wrestling or (*palē*) also plays an important role in *archaia paideia*, the first component of *gymnastikē* being the dance or (*choros*). Wrestling, too, is an essential component of Ancient Greek *paideia*, as young men would gather at the wrestling school or (*palaestra*) to receive their instructions. In fact, Socrates' conversation with Charmides and Critias takes place in the wrestling school. Within the *Charmides*, the setting plays as significant a role as the dialogue itself. Wrestling and all forms of physical exercise serve not only to strengthen the body but also to cultivate the soul. In suggesting that Charmides should strip and show his soul, Socrates alludes to the conception that a noble body is accompanied by a noble soul (Waugh. 2002, p. 290). In a discussion with Glaucon, Socrates suggests, “And even the exercise and toils of gymnastics he will undertake with a view to the spirited part of his nature to arouse that rather than for mere strength, unlike ordinary athletes, who treat diet and exercise only as a means to muscle” (*Rep.* Bk. III, 410b4-7). The proper purpose of *gymnastikē* was the cultivation of *arête* and *sōphrosunē*. Who, then, is the gymnastic educator?

The instructor of physical education is known as the *pedotribe* — (παιδοτριβης). In his discussion of the *pedotribe* Marrou writes,

The thing we know most about is the way wrestling was taught. The *pedotribe* used to teach the different positions or “figures” — σχήματα — in turn, and then the wrestler would use them in the actual match (Marrou. 1956, p. 175).

Physical exercise, in particular wrestling, is an essential tool in disciplining young boys, one that assists in one's transition from boyhood into manhood. Many rules of conduct and discipline, however, govern the behavior of the boys while in the *palaestra*. These rules, too, are a staple of *archaia paideia*.²¹ It is, therefore, the responsibility of the boys to follow the instruction of the pedotribe, whether concerning technique or conduct. He is their mentor and they his students. This relationship between student and instructor will be discussed below. One need not forget that a great sense of pride and accomplishment in the instillment of courage and bravery during wartime directly reflected on the nature of this relationship. As a defense of *archaia paideia*, Philosophy proper comments, "It is my system of student tutoring [i.e., in the *palaestra*] that raised the men who fought so bravely at Marathon" (*Clds.* 986).

²¹ See. Aristophanes. 2000. *Clouds* trans. Peter Meineck, with an introduction by Ian C. Storey. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company. p. 67. To illustrate the variety of rules that governed one's conduct in the *palaestra*, Philosophy proper, representing *archaia paideia*, [and not what Plato or his character Socrates mean by philosophy] in an argument with Sophistry, explains the detailed regulations that must govern one's conduct within the *palaestra*. This regulation were in place to ensure attention was paid to the education of the youth and that the youth understood and upheld proper decorum, rather than allowing the beautiful bodies of the students to distract from the coursework. Sexual temptation, within the *palaestra* must have been great because even Socrates comments,

All the people in the palaestra crowded about us, and at the moment...I caught a sight of the inwards of his [Charmides] garment, and took the flame. Then I could no longer contain myself...I felt that I had been overcome by a sort of wild-beast appetite (*Charm.* 155d2-8).

See also Shapiro, H.A. "Courtship in Attic Vase Painting" in *American Journal of Archaeology* Vol. 85, No. 2 (Apr., 1981), p. 135. Shapiro suggests that it is at the *palaestra* where most of the courting took place. The regulation for one's conduct in the *palaestra* was not limited to decorum. See Crowther, N.B. 1977. "Weightlifting in antiquity. Achievement and training". *Greece and Rome*. 24: 111-120, where he discussed the systematic and regimented training athletes underwent. Also See Crowther, N.B. 1985a. "Studies in Greek athletics. Part 1". *Classical World*. 78: 498-558 and Crowther, N.B. 1985b. "Studies in Greek athletics. Part 2". *Classical World*. 79: 73-136, for his discussion on the proper holding techniques of the wrestlers. Finally, See Plato's *Laws* Bk. VII, 796a2-796b4 for the rules that govern 'stand-up-wrestling'.

Thus, is the Ancient Greek conception of *paideia* a complex, multilevel, pedagogical system, concerned with both the education of one's mind and one's body. As a strict pedagogy, *archaia paideia* is composed of two divisions, *mousikē* and *gymnastikē*, each of which is composed of their respective constituent parts, viz., *mousikē*, composed of poetry and the remembered glory (*kléos*) of poetic heroes, meant to teach morality — and *gymnastikē*, composed of wrestling, (*palē*), and dance, (*choros*). *Mousikē* plays a necessary role in the intellectual cultivation of a student's mind and *gymnastikē* plays a necessary role in the cultivation of a student's body. Both branches of *archaia paideia* seek to teach virtue, arête; this fact underlies the “system” of education. The cultivation of the mind and the body does not presuppose, however, a division between the two.

The first component of *gymnastikē*, then, the dance, facilitates *mimēsis*. As poetic *mimēsis* allows the poet to express *kléos* and arête in his rendition of an epic poem, so, too, is the dancer capable of expressing the virtue of an epic hero, which was to be emulated by the spectators. In an insightful passage, Lippman writes,

The imitation takes the form of pantomime, but not as a conscious art exercised with detachment; instead it becomes an identification of the initiates with the actual followers of Dionysus, and through them, with the god himself. In this activity we have the archetype of *mimēsis* and of drama (Lippman, 1963, p. 190).

It is important to note that the pantomime is not a conscious exercise; the steps of the dance are not choreographed, rather, the dancer, or more accurate the “devotee” is

possesses. The trance-like state of the improvisation may be said to channel or identify the devotee with Dionysus himself, through an intoxicating melody.²²

It may be misleading to suggest however, that dance, in the context of religious worship is imitation. Fitton elaborates,

When the word [*mimēsis*] is used of cult-acts, then clearly this is not imitation, for the worshipper did not imitate the god but impersonated or acted the role of the god (Fitton, 1973, p. 261).

Initially followers of Dionysus, both men and women, paid homage to their deity — the god of fertility and wine, through discordant and erratic dance, which unsettled many Greeks. In his conversation with Clinias the Athenian stranger comments,

As for the dances of bacchanals and their like, which present what is called a ‘mimic’ exhibition of persons in liquor, under the designations of...satyrs...The most correct course, I think, [is to]...declare it unfit for a citizen (*Laws* Bk. VII, 815c-d).²³

²² See Aristotle. *The Politics*. trans. Ernest Barker, Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1948. p. 350. The hysteria of religious music is perfectly identified by Aristotle in the following quote,

These persons, as we can observe for ourselves, are affected by religious melodies; and when they come under the influence of melodies which fill the soul with religious excitement they are calmed and restored as if they had undergone a medical treatment and purging. . (*Politics* Bk. VIII, VII, § 4).

As Aristotle has written, the music “fills the soul,” i.e., the infinite has commingled with the finite — man must therefore benefit from this interaction, as discussed in the previous footnote. It should be clear that the reason for music’s ability to procure health rests in the devotee’s belief of the divine. That is to say, it is the belief that the divine is manifest within, channeled through a combination of *mousikē* and *gymnastikē*, which treats devotees with their ailments. The intoxicating melody soothes the soul and the movements of the dancer, accompanied by the narration of the speaker serves to embody the divine, i.e., to manifest the divine within. The word (*enthousiasmos*), for example, en-theos-iasmos literally means — ‘the state of having the god within one’. See also Lawler, Lillian B. *The Dance in Ancient Greece*. Connecticut : Wesleyan University Press. 1964. p. 76, for a further discussion.

²³ Lawler suggests that some of Dionysus’ companions were satyrs or ‘goat men’, since the goat was sacred to the gods (Lawler, 1964, p.78). Her explanation puts the Athenian stranger’s comment to Clinias in its proper context. The Athenian stranger is referring to actual dancers in mentioning satyrs, as the followers of the Dionysiac cult “appeared with horned head-dresses, goat-skin trunks and sometimes footwear contrived to resemble cloven hoofs” (Lawler, 1964, p. 78).

The role of religious music and dance in *archaia paideia* is underwritten by the gods.

Most of the Greeks seem to have believed that the dance was divinely inspired — a direct creation of the gods, by them revealed to chosen mortals, who then taught it to their fellow men (Lawler, 1962, p. 5).

It has also been illustrated in the discussion where Protagoras suggests, “they [the children] are sent to trainers, so that a good mind may have a good body to serve it” (*Prot.* 326b6). We began the discussion of *archaia paideia* with the recognition that it was composed of *mousikē* for the soul and *gymnastikē* for the body: (*Prot.* 312b), (*Rep.* 376e3), (*Laws.* 795d6-795e), (*Clds.* 960-982), and Aristotle’s *Politics* (Bk. VIII, IV). For the Ancient Greek both the soul and the body were essential in the cultivation of *arête* and in the education of Athenian citizens.

Chapter Two

Archaic Paideia: *Sunousia* and the Practice of Paederasty

Introduction

One cannot discuss paideia in Ancient Greece or Plato's criticism of it, without explaining the Ancient Greek practice of *sunousia*. *Sunousia* consists of an emotional and erotic relationship between two males; it is often part of the education of an adolescent male from the upper-class.

Paederastic relationships during antiquity can take many forms, which allows for different foci of study among modern scholars. Some focus on the laws that regulated sexual intercourse between the lover, (*erastēs*), an older man, and his beloved, (*erōmenos*), a younger boy;²⁴ others, on the representation of homoerotic courtships among gentlemen, (*kaloι kagathoi*);²⁵ and still others on the representation of young Athenian males on Attic vase-paintings.²⁶

A discussion of sexuality in ancient Greece is complicated for a number of reasons. To specify our investigation I will use the term 'sexuality' in the sense that many constructionists do, as the ancient Greeks did not view sexuality as an identity.²⁷

²⁴ Cohen, David J. "Law, Society and Homosexuality in Classical Athens", 117 *Past and Present* (3) 1987, p. 3-21.

²⁵ For an in depth discussion on the nature of the *kaloι kagathoi* See Harris, Edward M. 1995. *Aeschines and Athenian Politics*: New York: Oxford University Press, p. 18-23. It is important not to anachronistically attribute "hereditary privileges" to members of the *kaloι kagathoi*, as it was possible for one to eventually attain such position independent of heredity.

²⁶ See Shapiro, H.A. "Courtship in Attic Vase Painting" in *American Journal of Archaeology* Vol. 85, No. 2 (Apr., 1981), p. 133-143.

²⁷ There is a strong essentialist tone in contemporary discussions of homosexuality in Ancient Greece, suggesting, at least implicitly, the universalization of sexuality across time. This conception stands in opposition to a Foucauldian or constructionist position. The cultural construction of sexuality is evident in Foucault's comment that "In [Ancient] Greece, truth and sex were linked, in the form of pedagogy, by the transmission of precious knowledge from one body to another; sex served as a medium for initiation

Sexuality as a cultural construction stands in contrast to sex, the physical activities producing pleasure and/or reproduction, although sexual pleasure is culturally constructed and not merely physical. For the ancient Greeks, the practice of *sunousia*—the relation of an *erastēs* with his *erōmenos*—is embedded in a set of cultural practices and norms very different from our own. *Sunousia* functions as an accepted pedagogical practice in early Greece, one which requires critical examination if one is to appreciate the function of ancient Greek *paideia*, and Plato’s criticisms of it.

On contemporary conceptions of sex and sexuality, *sunousia* could not be an acceptable pedagogical practice, for although there may be an erotic component in pedagogy, sexual activity has no place in education, especially sex between an older teacher and an adolescent student. While the association between sexuality and one’s acquisition of knowledge through education is certainly foreign to contemporary readers, an attempt to understand ancient Greek pedagogy independent of its association of sex and sexuality fails to grasp the true nature of ancient Greek *paideia*. Moreover, in presenting a descriptive analysis, one concerned with explicating the ways that fostered an association between sexuality and education, one must recognize that Plato critiques the association of sexuality with education insofar as it fails to transcend the physical for an intellectual love. Plato, then, is critical of the erotic component of education taking the form of sexual activity, but his reasons are different from those of contemporary society.

into learning” (Foucault, 1978, p. 61). The ancients did not articulate homosexuality *as an identity*, suggesting that one should avoid attaching the label ‘homosexual’ to the sexual activities of the ancient Greeks. The point, then, is that whether on essentialist or constructionist grounds, the application of the terms ‘homosexual’ or ‘homoerotic’ to the practice of *paideia*, particularly *archaia paideia*, is a misnomer, since the application of such terms presuppose that the Ancients recognized homosexuality as a means of identification.

In ancient Greece, a good education is a prerequisite for all aspiring members, which meant that each prospect was sufficiently trained in *mousikē*, *gymnastikē*, and poetry (Harris, 1995, p. 20). Beyond such traditional education or perhaps as its final stage is the “association” of an older man with a younger boy, which is known as *sunousia*. This is distinct from the eroticism inextricably linked with paederastic courting, although much of the literature fails to demarcate one from the other. One’s aspiration to become a *kalos kagathos* required education. While it is true that sexual “favors” may be exchanged between an *erastēs* and his *erōmenos*, the education of the youth was paramount. Strict laws and social practice regulated sexual activity and education.²⁸ The *kaloi kagathoi* — the beautiful and good, and also wealthy — wanted to ensure their sons received the best education, since a good education was essential in becoming a gentleman. Protagoras reinforces this conception in his discussion with Socrates.

All this [education] is done by those best able to do it —
that is, by the wealthy — and it is their sons who start their
education at the earliest age and continue in the longest
(*Prot.* 326b6-c3).

I will argue, then, that while *sunousia* contains erotic components, when used in a discussion of *archaia paideia*, *sunousia* refers — primarily — to the “enculturation”²⁹ of Athenian youth through their paideutic association with an older, wiser, and more virtuous man, whereas the practice of paederasty refers — primarily — to Hellenic homoeroticism. This is an important conceptual difference. An investigation of the social

²⁸ See Cohen, David J. “Law, Society and Homosexuality in Classical Athens”, 117 *Past and Present* (3) 1987, p. 6 or Plato’s *Laws* Bk. VIII.

²⁹ Kevin Robb discusses *sunousia* as a process of enculturation in “Asebeia and Sunousia: The Issues Behind the Indictment of Socrates” in *Plato’s Dialogues, New Studies and Interpretations*. ed. Gerald Press. 1993

acceptance of sexual practices during antiquity rests outside the scope of our analysis of Ancient Greek *paideia* and will not be discussed, although the Platonic dialogues contain references to homoeroticism and its legislation in Hellenic society.³⁰

Our investigation focuses, first, on legal provisions in the regulation of homoerotic behavior, as associated with *archaia paideia*. Second we will concentrate on the relation between *sunousia* and the educational practices of the Ancient Greeks from the 6th to the 4th centuries B.C..

David Cohen writes,

The legal provisions regulating various forms of homoerotic behavior may be grouped in three categories: laws relating to prostitution; laws relating to education and courtship; and, finally, general provisions concerning sexual assault (Cohen, 1987, p. 5).

The second legislative provision, which regulated “education and courtship”, is central to our investigation. Plato’s dialogues serve as the best source for such an analysis; as

³⁰ See Plato’s *Laws* Bk. VIII, 836c. In his discussion with Clinias, the Athenian stranger illustrates the difficulty surrounding legislation attempting to regulate sexual practices among members of its citizenry, as such legislation would take as its justification the fact that in nature the male of a species does not concern himself carnally with another male of the same species. The Athenian stranger illustrates to do so would be considered “unnatural”. The Athenian stranger claims, “Were one to follow the guidance of nature and adopt the law of the old days...[pronouncing] it wrong for male[s]...to do carnally with youthful male[s]...[fetching] his evidence from...animals, pointing out that male does not touch male in this way...in would be at variance with the practice of your society” (*Laws* Bk. VIII, 836c-c5). The same, however, is not true for man — as man is capable of sexual congress with another man. With respect to this fact, the term “unnatural” cannot apply to homoeroticism, since we, as human beings, are part of the natural world. Legislation for the Ancient Greeks focused on the courtship of an *eromenos* with his older *erastes* and regulation of the sexual act. For Ancient Greek men, ejaculation was typically reached *intercrurally*, i.e., through the insertion of the penis between the thighs of an *eromenos*. Dover writes, “The thighs [of a young boy] seem to have been a powerful stimulus” (Dover, 1978, p. 70). Anal sex, (*euryproktos*), was also a source of sexual gratification, but not as common. See Shapiro’s discussion in “Courtship in Attic Vase Painting” in *American Journal of Archaeology* Vol. 85, No. 2 (Apr., 1981), p. 85. See Cohen, David J. “Law, Society and Homosexuality in Classical Athens”, 117 *Past and Present* (3) 1987. p. 3-21. For example, Cohen discussed the laws that prohibited an older slave from acting as an *erastes* to a free boy, which is fully explicated in Aeschines’ *Against Timarchus* (138-40). In Plato’s *Lysis*. The mere fact that a slave had governorship over Lysis was itself reproachable, See (208b9-208c8). Moreover, Plato’s characters often discuss the legislative censure necessary to restrain an over zealous *erastes* from dominating an “effeminate” *eromenos*, (*Laws* Bk. VIII, 836e1-e4), (*Sym.* 184c-c8). Much, then, is need to adequately regulate the sexual conduct of the Athenian citizenry.

Shapiro writes, "...the fullest and most reliable written documentation of the *erastēs-erōmenos* relationship is in the dialogues of Plato..." (Shapiro, 1981, p. 143). I will also incorporate Aeschines' investigation of male sexual activity and law, as Fisher notes, "Aeschines' speech is in fact our best source for Athenian laws regulating sexual behavior between males...in classical Athens" (Aeschines, 2001, p. 25). Plato's discussion of the process of courting and Aeschines' analysis of the regulation on homoeroticism will contribute to a fuller understanding of homoerotic-education in antiquity.

It is interesting to note the language used by Pausanias in the *Symposium* when discussing the laws and the sexual metaphors that underlie legislative regulations. Pausanias comments, "Thus, wherever the laws enacts that it is wrong to yield to the lover, you may be sure that the fault lies with the legislators — that is to say, it is due to the *oppression* of the rulers and the *servility* of their subjects" (my emphasis), (*Sym.* 182c8-3). Later he uses the same terminology to discuss the nature of the relationship between the *erastēs* and the *erōmenos*, saying, "...for his friends would accuse him of the most abject *servility*..." (my emphasis), (*Sym.* 183a6). Rulers assume the role of the "vicious lover," and the citizens of the *polis* assumes the role of the submissive partner. This relationship of dominance, with rulers over members of a submissive citizenry could not have facilitated proper legislation; thus Pausanias' conclusion that, "...you may be sure that the fault lies with the legislators." But the blame also lies in the servility of the people, for the relationship between the city and the *polis* should emulate the "virtuous lover," as Pausanias has described.

In Pausanias' proposal to form new legislation regulating sexual congress between an *erastēs* and an *erōmenos*, he also defends an idealized conception of the city, devoid of “servility” and oppression”,

We must therefore combine these two laws—the one that deals with the love of boys and the one that deals with the pursuit of wisdom and the other virtues—before we can agree that the youth is justified in yielding to his lover. For it is only when lover and beloved come together, each governed by his own especial law—the former lawfully enslaving himself to the youth he loves, in return for his compliance, the latter lawfully devoting his services to the friend who is helping him to become wise and good—the one sharing his wealth of wisdom and virtue, and the other drawing, in his poverty, upon his friend for a liberal education—it is then, I say, and only then, when the observance of the two laws coincides, that it is right for the lover to have his way (183d-e).

The section of his speech from 184c until the end is more appropriately seen as a discussion of the practices of *sunousia*, for the fundamental purpose of the latter is the “enculturation” of the youth, instilling virtue, and education, and sexual gratification is of secondary importance. Contrast Pausanias' speech, then, with the speech of Philosophy proper in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. Aristophanes writes,

let me begin by explaining how education was run in the good old days when my just cause was predominant and discretion was the aspiration of every man. First it was given that boys should be seen and not heard... These boys were taught fine, patriotic songs... and if any boy engaged in classroom buffoonery or attempted to torture music by singing in the cacophonous, newfangled style... he was given a damned good thrashing for deliberately perverting the Muses! Also while sitting in the gymnasium the boys had to keep their legs closed in order that they not expose the spectator to any inappropriate and offensive sights... They were not permitted to entice older lovers with effeminate voices, or seductive looks, nor mince around pimping themselves out to all and sundry! (*Clas.* 961-980).

Aristophanes criticizes homoeroticism. Pausanias, however, attempts to defend *sunousia* although he sometimes conflates it with the practices of paederastic courtship.

To understand paideia, it is necessary to demarcate those conceptions formerly conflated. *Archaia paideia* refers — primarily — to “enculturation”, to use Robb’s terminology, whereas paederasty refers — primarily — to Hellenic homoeroticism. *Sunousia* and paederasty are not the same practice, despite their superficial similarities. This can be seen in the laws affecting conduct in the *palaestra*.

The *palaestra* was an optimal setting for courting young Athenian boys, but it was also a place of education. What, then, were the laws, which regulated one’s conduct in the *palaestra*, ensuring that sexual desire did not conflict with the boys education?

Aeschines writes,

consider the case of the teachers. Although the very livelihood of these men, to whom we necessarily entrust our own children, depends on their good character, while the opposite conduct on their part would mean poverty, yet it is plain that the lawgivers distrust them; for he expressly prescribes, first, at what time of the day the free-born boy is to go to the school-room;...and when he is to go home. He forbids the teacher to open the school-room, or the gymnastics trainer the wrestling school, before sunrise, and he commands them to close the doors before sunset; for he is exceeding[ly] suspicious of their being alone with the boy, or in the dark with him (*Tim*, 9-10).

The Ancient Greeks had no qualms, then, about mandating laws to secure the well being of their young men. During daylight, the *palaestra* was a suitable setting for education. The hours prior to dawn and after dusk, however, were unsuitable times for education.

The legislative regulations discussed by Aeschines are important in our investigation for two reasons. First, these regulations illustrate the obvious concern the

Athenian *dēmos* had for protecting their young — especially their boys. Second, these legislative regulations ensured that the facilities were in fact used for the education, which suggests the importance the *dēmos* placed on education. Insofar as the codified laws stipulated appropriate hours, wherein boys could receive instructions and hour prohibiting such instruction, the law reinforces the importance placed on “instructional time”, thereby holding instructors accountable for what was taught and how the time was spent during the hours between sunrise and sunset. The laws (*nomoi*) stipulated, “If any one enter in violation of this prohibition, he shall be punished with death” (*Tim.* 12). And the regulation included the trainers or (*pedotribe*) also, “A gymnasiarch who does permit this [illegal access to the boys] and fails to keep such a person out of the gymnasium, shall be liable to the penalties prescribed for the seduction of a free-born youth”. (*Tim.* 13). There is no confusion about what inappropriate conduct consisted, as the law clearly mandated that a violation of the law would result in death.

The clarity of the laws concerning the sexual conduct in the gymnasium and schoolroom, primary settings for education, should be contrasted against the lacuna of legislative regulations concerning the practice of paederasty. Granted this gap is due in part to limited archeological findings concerning this highly specified topic. But there may be a philosophical explanation for this apparent gap. On the one hand, in his speech against Timarchus, Aeschines directly cites the laws (*nomoi*), which precisely defines the regulations and the punishment for violating such regulations, viz., death. Again, these regulations pertain specifically to educational settings. Now, contrast this fact with Pausanias’ suggestion in Plato’s *Symposium*, wherein he says, “...gentlemen [*kaloi kagathoi*], may I point out that, while in all the other states of the Hellas the laws that

deal with Love are so simple and well defined that they are easy enough to master, our own code is most involved” (*Sym.* 182a7-182b). What account can be made for the “apparent” legislative disparity between the laws regulating appropriate sexual behavior, which are clearly defined with respect to educational facilities, but which are “most involved”, to use Pausanias’ words, with respect to Greek life?³¹

It is my suggestion that legislators themselves recognized a distinction between the practice of pederasty, on the one hand, and the “association” (*sunousia*) of an *erastēs* with an *erōmenos*, on the other, the justification of which would further particularize our discussion of Greek *paideia*. This recognition of difference offers an appropriate explanation for the “apparent” legislative lacuna.

Athenian laws sought to protect their boys and their educational institutions from corruption and debauchery and in the same sense recognized the importance of the private lives of its citizenry, which accounts for the confusion Pausanias has with interpreting the law. In the funeral oration of Pericles, we hear that:

The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. There, far from exercising a jealous surveillance over each other, we do not feel called upon to be angry with our neighbors for doing what he likes, or even to indulge in those injurious looks which cannot fail to be offensive, although they inflict no positive penalty. But all this ease in our private relations does not make us lawless as citizens (Thuc. 2. 37-38).

The distinction between *sunousia* and the practice of pederasty is supported by this apparent legislative lacuna. The laws concerning the lives of adults must have been harder to codify, while simultaneously acknowledging the privacy of the citizenry, which

³¹ For the sake of clarity, we should remind ourselves what else Pausanias says in the *Symposium*. In suggesting that there is a lacuna in the legislative regulations, I am not referring to “missing laws”. I am, as is Pausanias, referring to the apparent contradictions one arrives to if one follows the law.

would account for Pausanias' confusion in interpreting the law. Regulations needed to be codified, but that is, to use an old adage, "easier said than done". Pericles, himself, asserts that the intention of the law is not to "exercise a jealous surveillance" over its citizenry, and regulating the practices of paederasty can be a complicated business. However, the law is explicit in its prohibition and punishment for infractions pertaining to the regulation of educational facilities and of its educators. Hence, *these laws*, while still generally concerned with regulating sexual behavior, were directly concerned with, as I have said, (1) safeguarding the students, and (2) safeguarding the educational institution. This suggests — as it is impossible to "prove", a legal distinction between the practice of paederasty, on the one hand, and *sunousia*, on the other, legislation for the latter was unconcerned with recognizing the privacy of the youth, as they are not yet of age. Without this paternalism in Greek law, corruption and debauchery would surely follow. Note, however, as is still true in our contemporary society, the difficulty in regulating or "enforcing" fundamentally private matters concerning sexual congress.³²

Sunousia and *Archaia Paideia*

What, then, is *sunousia*, if it is not the same as the practice of paederasty? What is the relationship between *sunousia*, on the one hand and *archaia paideia*, on the other?

³² See State v. Laforrest, 71 Vt. 311, 312 (1899), People v. Doggett, 188 P.2d, 792 (Cal. App. 1948). For anti-sodomy laws, specifically between members of the same sex, See. Arkansas M 5-14-111, Kansas M 21-3505 and Missouri M566.090. See also, "Powell Regrets Backing Sodomy Laws" in the *Washington Post*. Oct. 26, 1990, Appendix Tab 13. To quote the *Washington Post* directly, "Powell, who retired in 1987, provided the fifth vote to uphold the law and reject arguments that the constitutional right to *privacy* covers homosexual conduct". (my italics). As this is a discussion of the Ancient Greeks and not contemporary legislative regulations, a detailed analysis of this case is out of place. But Pericles noted, the privacy of the citizenry is important to rulers and legislators alike, which as we have seen, citing Pausanias, leads to confusion in interpreting the law. However, no such confusion arises with respect to the laws regulating sexual behavior concerning the education of Athenian youth or the educational system as such, because legislators do not have to acknowledge the privacy of children. Rather, these laws tend to be paternalistic in their construction, which leads to the conclusion that legislators recognized a distinction between sexual behavior concerning the educational system and sexual behavior outside of the educational purview.

Our analysis of *sunousia* must first acknowledge, as Kevin Robb has already illustrated, that it is inextricably tied to the oral and fundamentally preliterate traditions of classical Greece. As he writes, “*Sunousia* was an important, cherished feature of oral Greece...[it] was, in the preliterate ages of our species, a fundamental and daily exercise, necessary to survival” (Robb, 1994, p. 197-198). The epic poems of Homer played an important role in the education of Athenian youth, instilling such conceptions as morality, piety and justice. Prior to the rise of literacy throughout the Hellenes, entire passages and systems of formulae enabling extemporaneous composition had to be committed to memory. Robb writes, “Greek *Mimēsis*...had its origins...in the ancient demands of oral memory and the manner in which a complex *paideia* had been communicated to a people” (Robb, 1994, p. 220). The hero’s *kléos* acts as a normative “ought”, for how else could ethics and morality be taught in a preliterate society? Carrying out the lessons of epic poetry in a society dominated by oral instruction encouraged the “association” between “the younger generation and the older”. This association fortified the obligation to social order, while simultaneously educating the youth of *arête*. The education of virtue dominated the preliterate educational system and even when the youth of Athens were educated in the sense of learning their letters, those institutions that developed in Greece’s preliterate ages persisted. The *sunousia* that evolved out of necessity persisted as members of the older generation educated the youth in return for, among other things, sexual favors.

For the Ancient Greeks, then, pedagogy and sex were inextricably bound. Therefore, since the laws regulating sexual activity within the educational setting were clearer and more consistent than those regarding the prohibitions of sexual behavior outside the educational setting, one is justified in drawing a distinction between *sunousia*,

primarily concerned with education, on the one hand, and the practice of paederasty, a social convention, on the other. For Plato, however, arête is not to be conceived in the traditional sense, i.e., as attained through *kléos* and poetic *mimēsis*, nor should the erotic competent of *paideia* take the form of sexual activity between the *erastēs* and *erōmenos*. The model of active and passive partners in the pursuit of virtue is refuted by Plato, which is exemplified in the failure of Alcibiades and his deficiencies as a student of Socrates. Thus, Plato is able to defend an active/active model—explicated in the speech of Diotima, which stands in contrast to the failures of Alcibiades and the practice of *archaia paideia* that educated him. The specific “association” between an *erastēs* and *erōmenos*, then, serves only to catalyze a further pursuit of Eros, *paideia* and arête, which leads one up the “ladder of love” for an appreciation of universal Beauty, rather than the particular beauty of an *erōmenos*. This distinction between Philosophy and traditional educational systems, unfolds in the final two speeches of Plato’s *Symposium*, as we learn of Diotima’s new way of speaking—philosophy.

Chapter Three

Eros and Athenian Education

Introduction

We have analyzed the many facets of *archaia paideia*, attempting to refine our conception of Greek *paideia* in general. Our discussion of *paideia* must also include an investigation of rhetoric and oration, which was central to the political discourse of the city and therefore served as an important vehicle for *paideia*.³³ Oration and rhetoric are not to be contrasted with *archaia paideia*, but should be considered as an extension of the traditional educational model. As we will see throughout this chapter, the *topoi* employed in rhetoric and oration, to convey complex metaphors, has its basis in the practices of *archaia paideia*, in particular the “association” between the *erastēs* and his beloved *erōmenos*.

Pericles’ Metaphor of the *Erastēs*

The funeral oration of Pericles for the first of the fallen soldiers, after the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, inspires one’s love for Athens and one’s sense of honor in being an Athenian. This is accomplished by Pericles’ metaphor of the *erastēs*,³⁴ for Athenian citizens should love Athens as the *erastēs* loves his beloved *erōmenos*. Hence, the lover (*erastēs*) should pursue Athens as the beloved (*erōmenos*). It is customary that

³³ One learns virtue by participating in the life of the polis, as Socrates notoriously informs the members of the jury during his trial, (38a-4) and then again in the *Meno* where he states that “a man’s virtue lay in directing the city well” (73a4-5). Thus, the concept of virtue is intimately tied to one’s participation with the polis.

³⁴ Thucydides writes, “τὴν τῆς πόλεως δύναμιν καθ’ ἡμέραν ἔργω θεωμένους καὶ ἔροστιάς γιγνομένους αὐτῆς” (my emphasis), (Thuc. 2.43.1) translated as: “you should gaze, day after day, upon the greatness of Athens and become her lovers” translation from Simon Hornblower, *A commentary on Thucydides: Vol. 1*. New York, Clarendon Press. © 1991, p. 311.

such a panegyric be delivered in honor of the fallen soldiers.³⁵ Pericles, in his opening statements recognizes the practice of custom and law, which mandates that such an occasion occur, saying, "...this speech [is] part of the law...it becomes my duty to obey the law..."(2.35). But Pericles uses this opportunity not only to honor the soldiers but the people of Athens as well, including the *metics*, or resident aliens, and the women of Athens. The account of his speech is found in Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War*. Pericles proclaims: "We open our city to the world, and never by alien acts exclude foreigners from any opportunity of learning or observing" (2.39).³⁶ Pericles was careful to address not only the citizens of Athens who were free Athenian men, but the population of Athens as such. The genius of his oration rests in the fact that he personifies the city and accentuates its beauty and the soldiers' undying love for her. The soldiers—and citizens—as *erastēs*, are encouraged — *actively* —to pursue their love for Athens as the lover pursues his beloved (*erōmenos*). In an earlier part of the speech Pericles says, "Such is the Athens for which these men, in the assertion of their resolve not to lose her, nobly fought and died" (2.41). He then calls upon citizens, metics and women to renew their love for Athens as well, "...you should gaze, day after day, upon the greatness of Athens and become her lovers" (2.43.1), the significance of which will become clear.

The inclusiveness of his oration and the vivid depictions of one's love for Athens culminate in the following quote, "For it is only the love of honor (*philotimia*) that never

³⁵ See. Thucydides. 1951. *The Complete Writings of Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War*. The unabridged Crawley translation with an intro. by John H. Finley. New York: The Modern Library, p. 102-103. The beauty of Pericles' speech is not that it had to be given, as a stipulation of his office and the laws that governed, but that he gave it so well and with such sincerity. His sincerity and ability to excite the *dēmos* with words of inspiration are timeless hallmarks of good oration.

³⁶ He continues, "...if I must say anything on the subject of female excellence to those of you who will now be in widowhood, it will be all compromised in this brief exhortation" (2.45).

grows old; and honor it is, not gain...that rejoices the heart of age and helplessness” (2.44).³⁷

For Pericles, the drive for immortality is reflected in this conception of love, obviously modeled after the practice of *sunousia* and *philotimia*, as it was this educational model he used in rearing his sons (Paralus and Xanthippus) before they received a more formal education in rhetoric and sophistry.³⁸

The hero’s *kléos* translates into the normative “ought”, i.e., the means by which ethics and morality are taught in a preliterate society. Plato, a 4th century author, situates his characters in or about the 5th century, in which moral education was still essentially tied to narrative (*speech*), be it poetic *mimēsis* or the rhetoric of Funeral Orations: the same principles were used to educate the Athenian *polis* in matter of *arête* and proper conduct. It is an educational model which was presupposed by Pericles, and rightfully so, as no elaboration was needed to explain *how to* love Athens. It was presupposed because Pericles could have assumed that most, if not all of the citizenry, were educated under the pedagogical methods of *archaia paideia*, which would allow for the metaphor to take root. This is implicit in his remarks. The audience would already know the structure of the (*erastēs/ erōmenos*) relationship, and recognize its direct connection with education. They would immediately recognize when Pericles says, “they each of them individually received that renown (*kléos*) which never grows old” (2.43) that such a conception was

³⁷ With respect to *philotimia*, Charles Guignon elucidates,

for people in premodern societies the central concern was with *honor*, that is, with doing well in the performance of one’s socially prescribed roles. It follows that, in such societies, the primary orientation of life was “outward” rather than inward: what mattered was *how one was faring in the shared undertakings of communal life* (my emphasis), (Guignon, 2004, 149)

³⁸ See *Protagoras* (314e-315b) and *Meno* (94b).

connected with their formative years in *archaia paideia*, where they were taught morality through a similar pedagogical method, albeit based in poetic verse. Thus, it is a latent understanding of the traditional Athenian educational model, which allows Pericles' metaphor to work. In that he relates the *polis* with the *erastēs* signifies his respect for the audience, they are the older, wiser and *active* participant according to the metaphor. They are teachers and educators (of successive generations) and his speech is merely a reminder of this fact. Pericles says,

Yet you who are still at an age to beget children must bear up in the hope of having others in their stead; not only will they help you forget those whom you have lost, but will be to the state at once a reinforcement and a security...those of you who have passed your prime must congratulate yourselves with the thought that the best part of your life was fortunate (2.44).

Pericles encourages the citizens to pursue Athens, as an *erastēs*. The shared life of the *polis* suggests that all citizens, in their love of Athens, contributed to the perpetuation of Athens. One's love for Athens reflects one's love of honor — as honorable men and women must yield an honorable city. Hence one's love for Athens serves as the means by which Athens is itself an honorable city. Pericles suggests that *philotimia* “never grows old” and motivates his audience, in times of helplessness and despair, to recognize that the love of honor will ease the pangs of life.

Any citizen, metic or woman present that day must have been filled with a sense of pride and honor, as the general of the Athenian military honors both the fallen soldiers and the population of Athens. Such speeches, throughout the course of history, elicit a

call to action within the population. Such speeches serve to identify its population as distinct and of significance.³⁹

The tragic poet Aeschylus had inscribed on his epitaph the following:

Under this monument lies Aeschylus the Athenian,
Euphorion's son, who died in the wheatlands of Gela. The
grove of Marathon with its glories can speak of his valor in
battle. The long-haired Persian remembers, and can speak
of it too (Kahn, 1962).

Insofar as Aeschylus was an esteemed poet and chose, rather, to be remembered as an Athenian who died for his love of Athens, his epitaph prefigures the funeral oration of Pericles some twenty years later. Aeschylus' identity as an Athenian and soldier was of enough importance to him that he chose to be remembered as such, rather than how we have come to remember him. In one of his most famous lines Pericles says, "heroes have the whole earth for their tomb" (2.43), which explains why "those slain at Marathon, who for their singular and extraordinary valor were interred on the spot where they fell" (2.34). This sense of one's love for Athens in fact, identified a people.

Such love of Athens and esteem for those who fought at Marathon was not relegated to politicians. In a rare moment of earnestness, Aristophanes writes, "It is my system of student tutoring that raised the men who fought so bravely at Marathon" (*Clds.* 986). Undeniably, then, Eros factored heavily into political life, and it too served as a vehicle for educating Athenian citizens.

Joanne Waugh writes, "It was in public discourse such as the Funeral Oration that the love of Athens was made visible, *the very act of speaking* these words and listening to

³⁹ An analogy in recent memory is John F. Kennedy's exhortation in his inaugural speech as President: "...ask not what your country can do for you: ask what you can do for your country".

them, generated, like physical desire, *heat* and excitement” (my emphasis), (Waugh, 1997, p. 215). Throughout the Platonic Dialogues there are countless examples where speech either excites or represses sexual — physical — desire.⁴⁰ Sara Monson comments on Pericles’ allusion to *sunousia* in rallying the citizens of Athens,

Pericles’ metaphor reinforces the conventional notion of eroticism and love relations because it relies precisely on normal negotiations of *active* and *passive* roles in a pederastic love relationship to illuminate the demands of democratic citizenship (my emphasis), (Monson, 1998, p. 497).

To understand the significance of Monson’s claim, two words need clarification, viz., ‘active’ and ‘passive’. In using the term ‘active’ Monson is referring to the role the *erastēs* plays in traditional Greek education (*archaia paideia*); and in using the term

⁴⁰ Waugh’s reference to “heat” and its correlation with speech is essential to our discussion of Eros as an effective pedagogical device. The relation between speech and sexual desire plays heavily in our analysis of Pericles’ Funeral Oration. Both are equally important in Ancient Greek culture, and both can be used to lure one away from, or closer to, a virtuous life. In the *Charmides*, for example, when confronted with the raw sexuality of Charmides, Socrates says, “I caught a sight of his inward garment, and took the *flame*...[later]...I began by degrees to regain confidence, and *my natural heat* returned” (my emphasis), (*Char*, 155d2 and 156d). In the *Symposium* Alcibiades comments, “the way [Socrates] got through that winter was most impressive...[he] made less fuss about walking on the ice in his bare feet than we did in our shoes” (*Symp*. 220b2). See, Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York:W.W.Norton, 1994). Sennett writes, “Body heat was the key to human physiology: those who most concentrated and marshaled their bodily heat had no need for clothes” (Sennett, 1994, p. 33). See also, the *Timaeus* where Socrates says,

we have not yet considered the origin of flesh, or what belongs to flesh, or of that *part of the soul* which is mortal...First, let us inquire what we mean by saying that fire is hot, and that about this we may reason from the dividing or cutting power which it exercises on our bodies...and cuts our bodies into small pieces (κερματίζει), and thus naturally produces that affection which we call *heat* (θερμός, κέρμα), (my emphasis), (Tim. 61d-62a5).

Thus, in support of Waugh’s claim that, “It was in public discourse...that the love of Athens was made *visible*” (my emphasis), we note Socrates’ statement: “...*nothing* is visible where there is no fire” (my emphasis), (Tim. 31b4). Her observation that “the very act of speaking these words and listening to them, generated, like physical desire, *heat* and excitement”, rests on the fact that there was a very real connection between speech and its primordial bond with our flesh, i.e., fire/heat. One should lend ear to the interpretation that, very literally, the citizenry’s love of Athens is both necessary and sufficient, i.e., Pericles’ personification of the city. The existence of Athens as a city is itself contingent on the citizenry’s lover for her.

‘passive’ she is referring to the *erōmenos*. It is the *erastēs* (lover) who pursues the *erōmenos*, (beloved). The *erastēs*, in courting a younger *erōmenos*, gives to the *erōmenos* and receives gratification (*charizomai*), entering into a sexual companionship with the young boy. This is the nature of the exchange, *paideia* for Eros. Hence, as discussed in chapter two of this analysis, the sex act itself was always secondary to the “association” (*sunousia*) between the boy and his *erastēs*. In discussing the active and passive roles of *archaia paideia* it is clear that the *erastēs* and the *erōmenos* are considered the active and passive participants respectively. Thus, if Pericles relies on this metaphor and suggests that “...you should gaze, day after day, upon the greatness of Athens and become her lovers” (2.43.1), and the lover is synonymous with the *erastēs* — and the *erastēs* is the active participant in the “association” between the two parties, then so too should we, the citizenry of Athens, *actively* pursue our love of Athens. But how is this love pursued?

For Athenians, public discourse served as an indispensable component of the democratic *polis*—embodied in both flesh and stone.⁴¹ To reinforce the point, Thucydides makes this point forcefully,

Our public men...are fair judges of public matters...we Athenians are able to judge at all events if we cannot originate, and instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, *we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all* (my emphasis), (2.40).

The clearest example — integral to this discussion — of the affect of Eros as Athenian education, on an individual’s decision making process is in Socrates’ discussion with Crito just before his execution. Socrates finds himself jailed and awaiting his execution the following day (43d4). While jailed, Socrates’ childhood friend Crito gains

⁴¹ See, (Waugh, 1997, p. 213), (Sennett, 1994, p. 33-34), (Zanker, 1995, p. p. 10).

permission from the guard to sit and talk with him (43b). The discussion between Crito and Socrates begins with Crito pleading for Socrates to escape from prison (44b4). Socrates will not base his decision on emotion and will only make such a decision based on the application of reason — even if it means losing his life.

Through his discussion with Crito, Socrates explains that he cannot escape from prison for two reasons. First, he cannot escape on the grounds that during the trial he had the opportunity to choose banishment as his punishment (52c). Secondly, Socrates states that he cannot escape because it would be wrong to do so, offering a number of examples (50a-54d). Socrates arrives at this point by showing that the city provides for its citizens and in the provision for its citizens there is an implicit agreement between the citizens and the city. This implicit agreement is an acceptance of the laws and policies of the city (50b). Therefore, despite Socrates being harmed by the city, he concludes that returning harm with harm (escaping from jail) is unjust.

It is Socrates' education, his understanding of Eros and his love for Athens, the fact that he has lived for seventy-one years in Athens, and has reared children in Athens (52c), which necessitates his conformity with the law. Such, is the affect of Eros as Athenian education. Pericles writes, "...as a city we are the school of Hellas" (2.41.1). For Pericles, the educational motif is an effective political device because it is easily accessible to the general population, i.e., it is a familiar model. It elicits a call to action through a direct association of *kléos*, a pedagogical tool of *archaia paideia*, used to teach morality. The educational motif also reinforces the relevance of discussion/speech as integral to the political arena. Participation as an Athenian — in the Assembly or

palaestra, agora or within the household — required discussion/speech, and as such, people directly contributed to the legislative regulation of Athenian politics.

While Pericles' metaphor offers an account of a citizen's relationship with Athens, using the already established (*erastēs/ erōmenos*) "association" — one between a lover and his beloved — his metaphor suffers from some inherent problems, which jeopardize both *sunousia* and *archaia paideia*. In the discussion of *archaia paideia*, for example, it was noted that the "association" between the *erastēs* and the *erōmenos* was an active/passive relationship, as illustrated in Monoson's claim that, "Pericles' metaphor...relies precisely on normal negotiations of active and passive roles in a...love relationship" (Monoson, 1998, p. 497).

The nature of their relationship was one of mutual exchange, as the *erōmenos* would receive an education in *mousikē, gymnastikē*, and most importantly *arête*, and the *erastēs* would receive companionship, sexual favors and general gratification (*charizomai*). As Monoson writes, "Pericles' *erastēs* metaphor proposed that individuals understand the demands of Athenian citizenship to involve reciprocal relations of mutual exchange between themselves and the city" (Monoson, 1998, p. 495). The metaphor works insofar as the nature of the exchange between the *erastēs* and *erōmenos* reflects an idealized conception of the lover/citizen dichotomy, i.e., since Eros is inextricably bound to the Athenian conception of citizenry, one can only be a citizen if one *actively* expresses love for Athens. Again, the expression of love takes the form of speech and participation in Athenian politics since public discourse serves as an indispensable component of the democratic *polis*, for the Assembly was the means of arriving at

decisions in government.⁴² Hence, the citizens' love for Athens is pursued to the same degree as the *erastēs* pursues his *erōmenos*. This however, becomes problematic.

The problem with Pericles' metaphor rests in the passivity of the *erōmenos* in his (active/passive) model. His metaphor presupposes the traditional conception of Athenian *paideia* as inextricably tied to Eros — as *the* vehicle of education — which is exactly what Plato's Socrates is attempting to supplant. In the *Symposium*, for example, Pausanias remarks,

Now it is the object of Athenian law to make a firm distinction between the lover who should be encouraged and the lover who should be shunned. And so it enjoins pursuit in certain cases, and flight in others, and applies various touchstones and criteria to discriminate between the two classes of lover and beloved.

Unlike Pericles, Socrates is suggesting that love should represent an active/active, rather than active/passive model. He notes, in a conversation with Menexenus and Lysis in the *Lysis*,

in general...if one man...is desirous and enamored of another, he *can never have conceived* his desire, or love...without in some way belonging to the object of his love...It cannot possibly be then, but that a true and genuine lover is loved in return by the object of his love (my emphasis), (221e11-222a8).

Pericles' metaphor fails because one “can never have conceived” of loving Athens, since as the metaphor holds the citizen is to the *erastēs* as Athens is to the *erōmenos*, the *erōmenos* is passive and also fleeting.⁴³ According to Socrates, then, one cannot hold

⁴² See, (Waugh, 1997, p. 213) and (Starr, 1990, p. 29)

⁴³ Note, it was frowned upon for a man to be a dedicated “homosexual” as he was expected to marry and have children. For example, Carnes writes,

claim to a feeling of love if the object of one's love does not love one in return. But Jeffery Carnes perfectly summarizes the central point we shall pursue:

the seeker of truth is consistently described in erotic terms as an *erastēs* of knowledge. The *erōmenos* disappears: the human who would be the object of desire turns out to be only the stimulus toward contemplation of absolute Beauty, and should himself be involved in actively pursuing Beauty and Knowledge, the forms of which, fixed and remote, become the only true passive objects in the equation of desire (Carnes, 1998, p. 110).

A fuller explanation of this notion will be explored in the final two chapters of this investigation. Pericles' Funeral Oration, however, was not a failure. He, as his contemporaries did, used pedagogical topoi in relation to his metaphor of the *erastēs* to communicate, effectively, a complex notion, namely, a citizen's love for Athens through an educational paradigm. We have seen that such indoctrination served to guide even Socrates in his decision not to flee his execution, which testifies to the efficiency of political oration/legislation. Nevertheless, unlike Pericles, Socrates recognizes that to communicate a conception of Eros as Athenian education, one must first recognize that to love is to be loved, and that the ultimate end of one's love cannot be vested in an individual, as individuals grow old and die, or betray our love, but must be vested in the conception of Beauty as eternal. A new educational paradigm must recognize, as Carnes writes, one's involvement "in actively pursuing Beauty and Knowledge", which inevitably leads to free and open inquiry, since such inquiry is unobstructed by

Given the abundance of evidence that attraction to both youths and women was considered the norm for Greek men, and given Plato's relentless attention to transgression throughout Aristophanes' speech, there is no reason to think that the reluctant bridegrooms of 192a-b [referring to Pausanias' and Agathon's relationship] are anything other than transgressive (Carnes. 1998, p. 112).

convention. The groundwork, then, for free and open inquiry and the introduction of sophistry as a viable educational model, becomes contingent on dismantling the (active/passive) model of the (*erastēs/erōmenos*) dichotomy inherent in the pedagogical methods of *archaia paideia*.

Chapter Four

The Transition from Archaia Paideia to New Education

The previous three chapters were devoted to the role of *paideia*, in particular *archaia paideia*, in fifth century Athens; in this chapter the emphasis shifts to its dissolution. It is hard to see how *archaia paideia* could have been supplanted without the rise of the sophists.

There are many differences between *archaia paideia* and sophistry but they share one common feature in that they both “aimed at the attainment of *arête*” (Webster, 1973, p. 58). We have discussed how *arête* was taught under the old educational system, now our investigation focuses on discussing sophistry’s role in the education of *arête*. As Werner Jaeger puts it:

Arête had from the very first been closely bound up with education. But as society had changed, so also had the ideal of *arête*, and with it the way to achieve *arête*. Everywhere in Greece, therefore, attention was now focused on the principal question: *What type of education leads to arête?* (Jaeger, 1939, p. 286).

One of the central tenets of the sophist is the possibility of teaching *arête*. The attainment of *arête* was central to being an Athenian citizen, and the sophists argue that *arête* could be attained through their training. As the cultivation of Athenian men *necessitates* an education in *arête*, if the sophists are correct, the cultivation of Athenian citizens encourages them to seek out the sophists. The Athenian’s aspirations to be among the *kalos kagathos* required that they live as virtuous men, which required that they *learn* to live virtuously. “The question is to whom shall they turn to form such a

traditional Athenian gentlemen, one who can manage his *oikos* or household, know how to honor his parents, and follow such upper-class properties as properly maintaining a web of guest-friendship...” (Robb, 1994, 200). The sophist argued that they had the ability to education the young men of Athens in matters of justice (*dikē*) and virtue (*arête*). This claim, however, caused tensions to mount between proponents of the two forms of Greek *paideia*.

Proponents of *archaia paideia*, such as Aristophanes, argue that sophistry simply teaches one to “argue a wrongful case and defeat the Superior Argument” (*Clds*, 884). Nevertheless a number of sophists, in particular Protagoras, were able to defend the claim that the sophistic method was capable of educating the youth in matters of virtue (*arête*).

What, then, is the defense of the claim that *arête* can be taught using the sophistic method? In Plato’s *Protagoras*, Hippocrates, a young man of Athens aspiring for political office, is accompanied by Socrates and introduced to Protagoras, a professed sophist and educator (317b2). Socrates inquires as to the benefits Hippocrates will gain in learning under the sophistic method (318a3), to which Protagoras responds, “you will go home a better man...Each day you will make progress to a better state” (318a6-8). Protagoras is here speaking of the attainment of *arête*, which confuses both Socrates and Hippocrates. Socrates comments, “I did not think this [*arête*] was something that could be taught” (319b). Socrates, says, “I used to think that it was by no human diligence that good men acquired their goodness, but now I am convinced” (*Prot.* 328e1). But the relationship between the poets and the sophists is not one of opposition so much as it is one of succession. To quote Werner Jaeger:

They [the sophists] were the heirs of the educational tradition of the poets; they were the successors of Homer and Hesiod... We cannot grasp their historical position until we give them their proper place in the history of Greek cultural education, as the inheritors of the poetic tradition (Jaeger, 1939, p. 296).

Prior to the sophistic movement *mimēsis* celebrated the remembered glory (*kléos*) of a fallen hero, and in so doing, ethics and morality were communicated in a preliterate society. With the advent of literacy, individuals could be taught the names and ethos of Greek society through the interpretation of texts. The sophistic claim is more direct in its assertion, in that it professes to teach *arête*, but also — and more profoundly — that *arête* can be taught through textual analysis. This is only possible because of increasing literacy among the citizens of Athens. If the sophistic method is capable of teaching *arête*, the sophist must demonstrate *how* this method educates one in matters of virtue. This is done through the use of reason and the analysis of texts. The distinction, therefore, between the pedagogical practices of *archaia paideia* and the sophistic movement, made possible by the advent of Greek literacy, consists in different methods of attaining *arête*, and a fundamental difference in the appropriation of poetry, viz., a distinction between poetic *mimēsis*, in the case of *archaia paideia*, and textual commentary, in the case of “new education”.

This is reflected in Socrates’ conversation with Protagoras. To illustrate that virtue can be taught, Protagoras offers a myth. One should not confuse the myth with a justification for his argument; the myth functions only to illustrate the logic that is implied from its narrative. Thomas Cole suggests that the myth offered by Protagoras “is

a reasonably accurate report of the Sophist's teaching rather than an invention of Plato” (Cole, 1991, p. 60).

Before mortals inhabited the earth, Prometheus and Epimetheus were given the responsibility of allocating powers to the creatures (320d3). Epimetheus distributed all the powers he had been given, without equipping the human race (321c). Upon this discovery, Prometheus “stole from Hephaestus and Athena the gift of skill in arts, together with fire” (321d). With these powers, humankind sought to establish cities and protect themselves from wild beasts (322b-5). However, “when they gathered...they injured one another for want of political skill” (322b6). Thus, Zeus instructed Hermes to bring humanity the “qualities of respect [*aidos*] for others and a sense of justice [*dikē*” (322c2) of which all were to share equally (322d).

The question arises as to the method or process wherein “everyone shares a sense of justice and civic virtue” (323a6). How is it that we come to share these powers? Protagoras dismisses the possibility that our capacity for sharing a sense of justice and virtue are innate (323c4), by pointing out that we do not hold those physically or mentally inept responsible for their ineptitude. For example, if a madman were to bite his caretaker's arm, we would not be warranted in calling such an action unjust, as the madman is not accountable for his actions. He is not accountable because he cannot comprehend that his action is prohibited. Thus, if “everyone shares a sense of justice and civic virtue” *and* these characteristics are not innate, *yet* we hold competent persons accountable for their actions, then we are justified in punishing those who are competent for knowing that their actions are prohibited yet still perform the act (323e-324b4). However, “...to hold such a view amounts to holding that virtue can be instilled by

education” (324b5). That is to say, if the competent person knows that the action is punishable, and knowledge of this fact was not attained innately, then this knowledge must have been attained through one’s education, wherein the individual was *taught* that such an act is prohibited and punishable.

What is at stake is the manner in which the sophistic method or “new education” professes to instruct individuals in matters of virtue. Both proponents of *archaia paideia* and the sophistic method defend the claim that virtue can be taught; what is at issue, then, is establishing the distinction between the pedagogical models. On the one hand, the sophistic method is justified by “proofs” as is evident in Protagoras’ language when discussing our shared sense of justice and virtue (323a5). On the other hand, the language of *archaia paideia* is radically different, and one does not speak of proofs and justifications, but of speaking and acting as a hero. How, then, is poetry used in the sophistic method as a means of argumentative justification?

The pedagogical model of the sophistic movement required that its educators were “authorit[ies] in poetry” (339). For the sophists, poetry still played an essential role in the cultivation of *arête* and the sophists were known for their ability to interpret and analyze poems. Interestingly, however, poetic verse was still “performed” by sophists — though not in the sense of recitation. Josiah Ober notes, “Quotations of poetry and citations of historical precedent could enliven a speech and help to buttress the argument by the inspired wisdom of the poet and the authority of past practice. The technique held a great risk for the speaker however” (Ober, 1989, p. 178). With respect to the sophistic movement, in general, and its pedagogical model, in particular, citing poetry during public speech, whether presenting before members of the council or in a more intimate

setting, required that the sophist did not assume the “appearance of a well-educated man giving lessons in culture to the ignorant masses” (Ober, 1989, p. 179). The sophists might appear as such to their audience because of the sophists’ command of poetic texts; i.e., their ability to make “a special study of literature” (Ober, 1989, p. 179). They did not simply listen to the recitation of poetic verse. Clearly, this ability to engage in textual criticism was a definite argumentative advantage in a culture still captivated by the charms of poetic verse.

Since few if any were so versed in the poetic tradition as to challenge a sophist outright, it would not ordinarily be a problem for the sophists if the content of the poetic verse was distorted to accommodate or justify a particular argument. Notoriously, however, Plato’s Socrates in the *Protagoras* was sufficiently versed in the poetic tradition and capable of arguing on matters of poetry.

The sections spanning 339-347 of Plato’s *Protagoras* are unmistakably his attempt to illustrate to his contemporaries that he too “can do poetry”. For our investigation of Ancient Greek *paideia* one should also note, as Jaeger writes, “In the history of the human mind, the sophist are a phenomenon quite as necessary as Socrates or Plato; in fact, without them, Socrates and Plato could never have existed” (Jaeger, 1939, p. 291). Our focus in this section is not to argue whether sophistry is better or more thorough than philosophy, only to assert that, as a pedagogical model, the sophistic method regularly employed poetic verse in defense of its position. The incorporation of Socrates’ critique of the sophistic model is only used to illustrate the various methods sophists employed to counter such argumentative demands for justification.

Protagoras begins with the assertion that proficiency in poetic verse is an inextricable component of one's education (339). Pertaining to their discussion of virtue, Protagoras initiates his conversation with Socrates in an analysis of a poem from Simonides, a poem that investigates the issue of virtue (339b). Perhaps, Protagoras asks, if Socrates is familiar with the poem or if he would have Protagoras recite it (339b3). It is unclear, however, when Socrates responds "I know it and have given it quite a lot of study" (339b4). The poem is merely a template that frames their discussion of virtue; the *context* of their conversation has as its conceptual boundary the *content* of the poem. Protagoras suggests that there is a contradiction in the poem (339d), to which Socrates responds, rather gracefully, by explaining the difference between *being* and *becoming* (340c4-340d). The oscillation between retort and answer, within the confines of poetic verse, illustrates the functional capacity of poetry to accommodate "analytic" analysis, in the colloquial sense.

Their discussion continues and Socrates further illustrates his point in an investigation of another verse. Rather than debating the content, however, Socrates and Protagoras resort to debating an interpretation of a word within the verse, viz., the word 'hard' (341a3). The verse is as follows:

The gods have put sweat on the path to virtue, The
summit's reached, hard though it was, thenceforth the task
is light (340d2-6).

Various interpretations of the word 'hard' are offered (341b-c) and (341d-e). Protagoras rejects Socrates' interpretation and justifies his own through a "proof" (341e), which relies on a preceding verse from the poem (341e3). This level of specificity is a pedagogical advancement over passively receiving an orator's recitation of the same

poetic verse, without the ability to specify meaning. Nevertheless, Socrates denies the claim that poetry is an effective pedagogical tool, as the sophists do not practice analysis and justification—both staples for philosophical thought—rather, their appeal to poetic verse presupposes that poetry functions as a representation of reality, which it does not. Since Socrates has demonstrated the inability of Simonides’ poem to educate one in matter of *arête*, Protagoras, in his appeal to this poem, cannot also profess to teach what Socrates has already refuted.

To understand the sophistic movement one has to acknowledge the need for its existence, in that it served a particular function, and attracted a specific class of student. Sophists had a method of presentation and a lucid understanding of the cultural needs of the Athenian *demos*. In an explanation of how the sophists conducted business throughout Athens, we turn our attention to Plato’s *Greater Hippias*, wherein he writes:

The eminent Gorgias, the Sophist of Leontini...spoke most eloquently before the Assembly...giving demonstrations to the young...he earned and took away with him large sums of Athenian money...our distinguished friend Prodicus...was much admired for his eloquence before the Council...he made an astonishing amount of money by giving demonstrations to the young...[Hippias brags]...I have made more money than any other two Sophists you like to mention, put together (*Gr. Hipp*, 282b-282e7).

This form of education was essential for young Athenian males aspiring, as Hippocrates says, to “make a name” (316c) for themselves. The shift from *archaia paideia* to the sophistic method does not suggest that these systems of education are in any sense antithetical. In fact, throughout the latter half of the 5th century, boys with aspirations of becoming politicians (*politikoi*), after having completed their traditional education, had the option of entering political life, which required they become proficient

speakers and continue their education under the guidance of an accomplished sophist. Jaeger writes, "...the new problem of the connection between state and intellect...was to bring the sophistic movement into being...[that is]...of the relation between a great intellectual personality and the community in which he lived" (Jaeger, 1939, p. 282). In a similar vein, Ober notes; "Skill in public address was sine qua non for the politician. This meant not only skill at putting words together but also in putting them across" (Ober, 1989, p. 113). With only a few sophists and a city of young Athenian males aspiring for political office it is clear that sophists could earn large sums of money. Their ability to earn such high wages was directly correlated with the growing need for "professional speech" in the political arena. Thus, the need for a technical mode of speaking and a systematic analysis of speech and text, necessitated the development of the sophistic movement.

How, then, did sophists conduct their "business," i.e., their exchange of knowledge for money? First, the sophist would give a public presentation of his rhetorical skills (282b5). T.B. Webster estimates that there could have been as many as 1,720 eighteen-year-old Athenian males during the late fifth and early fourth century,⁴⁴ as this age would have been prime to enter political office. With so many aspiring politicians and so few sophists to educate the young men on matters of statesmanship, it is to no surprise that they were capable of earning large sum of money.

Members of the Assembly must have encouraged this association between the sophist and the young men of Athens. A successful presentation before the heads of the city profited the sophist but also profited the city itself, as younger men, newly educated

⁴⁴ See Webster. 1973, p 61.

in the art of oration and rhetoric, would have inevitably replaced elder statesmen. The sophist, then, served an integral role in the preservation of the political infrastructure throughout Athens.

Indeed this form of education would benefit all parties. Sophists would benefit from attaining a wage. The city would benefit because the newly trained student would possess the knowledge “not merely to obey the laws, but to create laws to guide the state” (Jeager, 1939. p. 290). Finally, the student would benefit in learning how to become a better man and citizen — in learning virtue — and a better politician in learning how to argue and reason. However, Plato adamantly opposes the sophists and Socrates effectively demonstrates the inability of sophistry to educate the youth in matter of virtue in his discussion with Protagoras. Sophistry fails as an educational model, insofar as its claims to truth are themselves contingent on the analysis and application of poetic verse and therefore fails to produce a logical proof. Poetry takes feeling good as attesting to truth (Waugh, 1991, p. 53); through context, however, one’s feelings are easily manipulated. Thus, Medea’s actions, for example, can be made to seem just, and as such, the weaker position defeats the stronger.

Chapter Five

Eros and Education in the First Five Speeches of the *Symposium*

Introduction

Throughout the last four chapters, we have discussed the role of Ancient Greek *paideia* in the education and “enculturation” of Athenian boys. Within the dialogues, Socrates challenges the claims of poetry, rhetoric and sophistry. Socrates, however, has not described which form of education can fulfill this goal. It is for this reason that we will analyze the *Symposium* as a dialogue both describing and defending a philosophical education.

Phaedrus

In Phaedrus’ speech, the techniques of epic poetry are employed in praising Love. Within the *Symposium*, he represents the shortcomings of an education in the epic tradition. The hero, at the core of Homeric epic, is distinguished from the gods, as “Homeric epics operate on two planes, which form entirely separate worlds – the world of men and the world of gods” (Trypanis, 1977, p. 79). Phaedrus begins his speech with the claim that Love is a great god (178a7) and argues that there is no genealogy for the god of Love (178b). Unbegotten, the god of Love serves as the “creative principle,” wherein “all our highest good” is derived (178b5-c2). With respect to the world of men, Phaedrus asserts that for young men the greatest blessing they can receive is to attract a generous lover (*erastēs*), (178c).

An inherent characteristic of the world of men is the need for society, as we are social beings, and the protection or expansion of values through war and conquest.

During battle, the epic hero is continually confronted with either choosing a homecoming (*nóstos*) or immortal fame (*kléos*), i.e., he is confronted with the choice of leaving the battlefield or dying in hopes of attaining *kléos*, yet one should never sacrifice one's *kléos* for *nóstos*.⁴⁵ This conception is perfectly represented in Phaedrus' claim that,

For the lover would rather anyone than his beloved see him
leave the ranks or throw away his arms in flight – nay, he
would sooner die a thousand deaths (179a-a4).

If the beloved is “anxious to make a name for himself in the city” (*Pro.* 316c), and to accomplish this task requires the tutelage of a lover, any acts of transgression against the city would immediately nullify his “association” with his lover — as a means of safeguarding the lover's reputation and honor. Therefore, not only is this form of education beneficial to the lover it is invaluablely beneficial to the city. Phaedrus, representing the epic tradition, appeals to *kléos*, saying:

for the very presence of Love kindles the same flame of
valor in the faintest heart that burns in those whose courage
is innate. And so, when Homer writes that some god
'breathed might' into one of the *heroes*, we may take it that
this is what the power of Love effects in the heart of the
lover (my emphasis), (179a5-b3).⁴⁶

⁴⁵ See Gregory Nagy. *The Best of Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry*. (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1979) p. 35-40. In Homer's *Iliad* (22.100-110) Polydamas urges Hector to retreat “the people to the city”, to which Hector refuses. The thought of their deaths lay heavy on his conscience and he imagines that the people will say, “it would have been much better to fight against Achilles, and to slay him, or else be killed by him before the city” (22.108-110). As Nagy writes, “For Achilles, the *kléos* of the *Iliad* tradition should be an eternal consolation for losing a safe return home” (Nagy, 1979, p. 29). In his confrontation with Achilles Hector proclaims, “Now death has come to me, let me not die ignobly without glory. Do something great so men will long remember” (*Iliad*, 22.300-305).

⁴⁶ Phaedrus' reference to Homer's *Iliad* supports the argument that his speech supports and defends various techniques of epic poetry. The goddess Athene is said to have breathed strength into Diomedes, wherein he was able to kill thirteen men single-handedly (10.560). It is important to note that Diomedes did not flee for *nóstos* and longevity but fought for *kléos* and immortality.

In so emulating these men, they, too, may attract the eye of a lover and receive an education, thereby attaining arête. Hence, the cycle is continued and the city ensures its survival with each repetition.

Phaedrus suggested that we, as men, participate with immortality, through having the gods kindle the “flame of valor” (179a6) during our time of most need (in defense of the city). It is through this interaction with the gods that we define our existence in being honored by the gods (179e7). This honor, however, comes at a great cost as the “flames of valor,” breathed from the gods, cause men to sacrifice their lives in defense of both their city and their beloved. Thus, the lover is always near to the gods (180b), and will eternally be remembered for his glory and bravery in defense of his city and his beloved. Unfortunately, however, such honor is only attained in one’s death.

Pausanias

Pausanias represents the shortcomings of an education received at the hands of the sophists. He employs the lessons of the sophists in justifying the practice of paederasty.⁴⁷ Bury writes, “...[Pausanias] is fundamentally a sensualist, however refined or specious may be the form in which he gives expression to his sensualism” (Bury, 1932, p. xxvi).

Pausanias, a student of sophistry,⁴⁸ begins by amending Phaedrus’ eulogy to love, claiming that there are two goddesses rather than one, viz., the heavenly Aphrodite and the earthly Aphrodite. (180d9-11). On his view, this distinction is critical as the conception of love varies from one goddess to the other. For Pausanias, since there are

⁴⁷ See Neumann, Harry. 1964. “On the Sophistry of Plato’s Pausanias” in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 95. p. 261-267; R.G. Bury, *The Symposium of Plato* (Cambridge 1932); G.M.A. Grube, *Plato’s Thought* (Boston 1958).

⁴⁸ See, R.G. Bury, *The Symposium of Plato* (Cambridge 1932) p. xxxvii, and (*Protagoras*, 315d6), and finally, Neumann, Harry. 1964. “On the Sophistry of Plato’s Pausanias” in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 95. p. 264.

two goddesses, one heavenly and the other earthly, “it follows, then, that Love should be known as earthly or heavenly according to the goddess in whose company his work is done” (180e).

Pausanias argues that love of the earthy Aphrodite is the source that elicits “passions of the vulgar” (181b2). It is a confused love, attracting, as the object of its desire, both males and females. If a man is not steadfast and consistent in his actions, this reflects poorly on his character. Unregulated desire indicates one’s lack of *sōphrosunē* or temperance.⁴⁹ For Pausanias, an act in itself “is neither good nor bad” (181a), of importance is the intention behind the act. He suggests “the outcome of each action depends on how it is performed” (181a2). Harry Neumann writes, “For Pausanias, the moral worth of spiritual love rests upon the lover’s intention. In itself no activity — including love — is noble or base” (Neumann, 1964, p. 262). Thus, a noble love seeks the heavenly rather than the earthy Aphrodite and is restricted by the law, which fosters action through punishment.⁵⁰

The proper conception of love, then, according to Pausanias, is that of the heavenly Aphrodite. Pausanias says, “...heavenly Love springs from a goddess whose attributes have nothing of the female, but are altogether male” (181c). An *erastēs* will not take an ineligible boy as his *erōmenos*, i.e., a prepubescent boy.

⁴⁹ Note, it was frowned upon for a man to be a dedicated “homosexual” as he was expected to marry and have children. For example, Carnes writes, “the relationship between Pausanias and Agathon [referring to the *Symposium*] is said to violate the Greek protocol for age dissymmetry (Carnes, 1998, p. 112), which demonstrates Pausanias’ commitment to sensualism.

⁵⁰ We have already spoken in detail about the regulation implemented in the *palaestra*, which sought to restrict the natural tendencies of the *pedotribe*, responsible for the education of young boys during the hours of dawn to dusk. See also, Marrou, H.I. 1956. *A History of Education in Antiquity* trans. George Lamb. New York: The New American Library. p. 175; and Plato’s *Laws* Bk. VII, 796a2-796b4 for the rules that govern ‘stand-up-wrestling’. See also, Aristophanes. 2000. *Clouds* trans. Peter Meineck, with an introduction by Ian C. Storey. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company. p. 67 for a continued discussion on conduct and legislation.

Previously, Pausanias has said, “that the action itself, as such, is neither good nor bad” (181a). Thus, the act of courting a boy is neither good nor bad, since it is not the act but the intention behind the act that determines its value. It is deemed a bad action because, “no boy can please [his *erastēs*] until he has shown the first signs of intelligence” (181d2). Pausanias claims, “there should be a law to forbid the loving of mere boys” (181e).⁵¹ In this statement he is both condemning the love of young boys and implicitly suggesting that such an act or propensity to act is natural, which would account for the need to legislate conduct. Pausanias knows, however, that no one can argue contrary to his position, for such an argument must refute the claim that intelligence is the true object of one’s love.⁵² An argument to the contrary would also be forced to defend the stance that it is the boy — himself — that is the true object of one’s love. On this argument, intelligence is unimportant, or at least secondary to the boy’s physical beauty, and therefore one would be justified in loving a boy if he did not show the “first signs of intelligence”.

Pausanias, then, turns his attention to the just love of an *erastēs* with an *erōmenos*. The courting between an *erastēs* and his *erōmenos* is governed by a strict code of

⁵¹ It is interesting to note what is said about Pausanias in the *Protagoras*,

and beside [Prodicus] on the neighboring couch sat Pausanias from Cerameis and with him someone who was still a young boy — a lad of fine character I think, and certainly very good looking. I think that I hear that his name is Agathon, and I shouldn’t be surprised if *Pausanias is particularly attracted to him* (my emphasis), (*Protagoras*, 315e).

Note that “the *Protagoras* takes place around 433 B.C., approximately sixteen years before the *Symposium*”, while Agathon was still a child. (Neumann, 1964, p. 262). While it is certainly not stated that Pausanias was the lover of a prepubescent Agathon, it is interesting to note that they were lovers during the time of the *Symposium* and their relationship “is said to violation the Greek protocol for age dissymmetry” (Carnes, 1998, p. 112).

⁵² Though it appears that this is Pausanias’ position we will see that it is not, i.e., Pausanias does not hold true to the claim that intelligence is the true object of one’s love.

decency. The *erōmenos* cannot “yield too promptly to solicitation” or if his “surrender is due to financial [hardship]” (184a4, 184b); such a union is deemed immoral and they are held in contempt. This code of decency ensures that the submission of an *erōmenos* to an *erastēs* is “made for the sake of virtue” (184c4). Furthermore, Pausanias argues that, in the event that the *erōmenos* is “duped...there would still have been something noble in his mistake” (185a6-185b1), i.e., in the event that the *erastēs* is not a virtuous man but is perceived as such, and therefore courts a young *erōmenos* under the guise of education, even if this is discovered by the *erōmenos*, his mistake will still have been noble. For Pausanias, it is not the act itself but the intention behind the act; thus, the *erōmenos*, intending to further his education, in the pursuit of *arête*, would not be held morally culpable for his mistake — since his intentions were pure. Neumann writes, “Success in his enterprise will mean that boys allow themselves to be seduced in return for instruction in sound moral philosophy” (Neumann, 1964, p. 264). Keep in mind that the true object of Pausanias’ love, as he himself has claimed, is intelligence, which is a progression from Phaedrus’ argument in that the object of Pausanias’ desire is intangible; it is a concept rather than a person (allegedly). However, as we near the conclusion of his speech, we notice that the object of Pausanias’ desire is not intelligence at all but for the “lover to have his way” with the *erōmenos* (184e4, 185b5). Neumann writes,

He would have them convinced that an upright character, honor, intelligence and trustworthiness are the ultimate desiderata...but [if] boys may and should do anything for the sake of spiritual progress...[then] This means that it would be disgraceful for them to reject Pausanias’ demands...[which] is meant to make it difficult, if not impossible, for his favorite to elude his sophistic wiles (Neumann, 1964, p. 264-265).

Thus, Pausanias' speech is self serving as he has structured his argument so no shame may fall on a willing *erōmenos* who is duped by an *erastēs*, which ensures that as long as an *erastēs* appears to have an interest in the moral cultivation of the *erōmenos*, no blame can fall on either party. However, for Pausanias to suggest that "it is right for the lover to have his way" demonstrates that he is unconcerned with the pursuit of intelligence once he has justified his taking advantage of the *erōmenos*. For how could the *erōmenos* deny his *erastēs* erotic pleasure in exchange for a substantial education? If the *erōmenos* is duped and taken advantage of by the *erastēs*, then all is fair, since his intentions were just.

Eryximachus

In Eryximachus' speech there are three key points, all of which pertain to the Ancient Greek concept of the art of medicine. First is the nature of opposites (ἐναντί) and its relation to health (186b2-186d5); second, the reconciliation of these opposites in maintaining physical harmony (186d6-187e8); and finally, the cosmological nature of medicine and its relationship with the divine (188a-188e4).

Eryximachus, the physician, and son of Acumenus,⁵³ begins his speech on love in agreement with Pausanias, insofar as one should desire a virtuous love and shun the desire for sexual gratification (186a-b1). He also argues that one should desire that which promotes health and soundness of mind, while avoiding sickness and over indulgence,

⁵³ See (*Phaedr*, 268a8). Acumenus is also a physician (*Phaedr*, 227a4) and it is alleged, rather scandalously that Eryximachus and his father were, "implicated in the business of the "profaning of the mysteries" (Andoc. i. 35); at least, there was a certain Acumenus who was also among the denounced (*ibid.* i. 18) and the name is a very unusual one, so that it looks as though the denounced persons were our physician and his father" (Taylor, 1956, p. 216-217).

defining medicine as, “the science of what the body loves, or desires, as regards repletion and evacuation” (186c6-7).

Eryximachus’ speech suggests that there should be a harmony of the body, which, in turn, requires the control of the soul over the body. Learning temperance and exercising self-control is the means of overcoming our vulgar desires. He establishes a series of empirical and binary oppositions such as “hot and cold, sweet and sour, and wet and dry” (*Sym*, 186d9). What significance do these oppositions have to the paideutic practice of the medical arts?

Eryximachus states that he will defend his profession as a physician (186b2) in his praise of Eros. He holds true to his medical education by explaining the importance of opposites, stating, “bodily health and sickness are both distinct and dissimilar, and unlike clings to unlike” (186b5). In his commentary of Eryximachus’ speech, Alfred E. Taylor comments,

The body is, in fact, composed of “opposites” which are at strife with one another, the hot, the cold, the dry, the moist, etc.; medicine is the art which produces “*love and concord*” between these opposites (my emphasis), (Taylor, 1956, p. 217).

The second phase of Eryximachus’ speech discusses the reconciliation of these opposites, as he notes, “[we] must be able to reconcile the jarring elements of the body, and force them, as it were, *to fall in love* with one another” (my emphasis), (186d6). Similarly, it is stated that “what constitutes health is the equilibrium of the formative properties, wet, hot, dry, cold, bitter, sweet, and the rest” (fr. 51b).⁵⁴ Health, as opposed to disease, is itself in opposition and is reconciled by a balance between “repletion and

⁵⁴ (Pseudo-) Plutarch, *Tents of Philosophers* 5.30 (*Moralia* 911 A-C), (Van der Eijk, 2000, p. 105).

evacuation” (186d). Eryximachus’ point is made clearer though Heraclitus’ analogy of musical harmony (186e1-187c5).

The treble and bass both perform opposite functions in the creation of musical harmony, treble occupying higher octaves and bass those lower. Despite there contrasting function, treble and bass work in accord for the creation of musical harmony.

Eryximachus says,

medicine is under the sole direction of the god of love...the same holds good of music...harmony is due to the art of music, as the creator of mutual love and sympathy... harmony is concord, and concord is a kind of sympathy, and sympathy between things which are in conflict is impossible so long as that conflict lasts (186e, 187a, 187c2, 187b3-b5).

It is through reconciling the opposition of these two musical elements (treble and bass) that we experience musical harmony. If “harmony is concord”, and “concord is a kind of sympathy”, and sympathy is a resolution of conflict, then concord, too, is a resolution of conflict; and if “sympathy is a creation of music”, then, since “concord is a kind of sympathy”, concord, too, is a creation of music; moreover, since music is “under the sole direction of Love” and since concord is both a creation of music and a resolution to conflict, then Love is the concord of conflict.⁵⁵ This extensive explanation is necessary to justify the claim that Love is the concord of conflict or of opposition. Thus, it is through Love that we find harmony, health and a balanced life. Later in his speech, Eryximachus says “Love brings together those opposites of which I spoke” (188a2).

The conclusion of Eryximachus’ speech on Love encompasses the totality of creation. He falls victim to the same accusation of which he indicts Pausanias, saying,

⁵⁵ “Harmony is concord” (187b2). “Concord is a kind of sympathy” (187b2). “Sympathy is a creation of music” (187c3). “Concord is a kind of sympathy” (187b2).

“since Pausanias broke off, after an excellent beginning, without having really finished,” (185e7). Nevertheless, he begins his speech situated in empirical claims, and strict reason, and ends with muddled abstractions on the observation of astronomers tracking the movement of the stars (188b2-5) and claiming that Love governs the animal kingdom, vegetables, herds, crops, frost, hail, blight and even the seasons of the year (188a-b5).⁵⁶ Victoria Wolz captures the grandeur of his intellectual embellishment, writing, “...Plato might thus be said to present Eryximachus as a living example of those who, in words of Socrates in the *Apology*, “on the strength of their technical proficiency claim a perfect understanding of every other subject, however important” (Wolz, 1970, p. 332). Wolz is not alone in her suggestion as Ludwig Edelstein writes,

How can medicine have taught [Eryximachus] that Eros rules not only men and animals and plants, but all things, human and divine alike? This assertion, it seems, indicates a rather ludicrous pride in the importance of the medical art and stamps Eryximachus as the prototype of the arrogant doctor (Edelstein, 1945, p. 89).

Taylor’s view on Eryximachus is somewhat more charitable,

We may...call [Eryximachus] a “pedant,” if we do him the justice to believe that the pedantry is, of course, part of the fun of the evening and is presumably intentional. The learned man is presumably amusing himself, as an eminent man of science might do to-day in an after-dinner speech, by making a little decorous “game” of his own professional occupation (Taylor, 1956, p. 217).

In conclusion, then, it is important to note that, with respect to our investigation of the paideutic practices of Ancient Greeks, Eryximachus, unlike the previous two speakers, readily identifies his speech as emblematic of his professional education. There

⁵⁶ Note, this is even a violation of his own discipline since medicine teaches that the conception of human nature begins with the universe and gradually accounts for man (Jaeger, 1945, p. 306), whereas, Eryximachus succeeds in doing exactly the opposite.

is no question that his speech reflects the education he has received as a physician but as such reflects the shortcomings of an education in the medical arts. His speech serves as a template for understanding medical pedagogy, which, to be charitable, may account for concordance of empirical phenomenon, which is itself non empirical. Nevertheless, the shortcomings of his speech suggest shortcomings in the pedagogical model of medicine. Thus, neither epic poetry (Phaedrus), sophistry (Pausanias), nor the medical arts (Eryximachus) are sufficient educational models for young Athenian boys.

Aristophanes

Harry Neumann writes, “Aristophanes’ speech in Plato’s *Symposium* has often been viewed as an ingenious, amusing example of Old Comedy...” (Neumann, 1966, p. 420). In our analysis of Aristophanes’ speech, we will investigate the techniques of Old Comedy employed by Plato’s Aristophanes to “ridicule” those abstracted eulogies to Eros,⁵⁷ in so doing, Aristophanes separates himself from the other speakers. K.J. Dover comments on the essential difference between Aristophanes’ speech and the three that preceded him,

Every other speaker argues to some degree in abstract terms, even if the argument disguises itself, in traditional form, as an exposition of the attributes of a supernatural being. Only Aristophanes commits himself whole-heartedly to the particular and the perishable; he takes it for granted that and individual reunion with his unique, individual ‘other half’ is an end in itself (Dover, 1966, p. 47).

⁵⁷ Thus far in the *Symposium*, Phaedrus, Pausanias and especially Eryximachus, either denied the role of our embodiment (physicality, sexuality, genitalia, and reproduction) or have made reference to it only in passing. Their laudations to Eros have abstracted love to concepts of “just love” (*dikaios erōs*), “just laws” (*dikaios nomoi*) and cosmological accounts of Eros. As we shall see, in Plato’s account of Diotima’s speech, sexual reproduction is important, though obviously not of sole importance. Kenneth Reckford writes, “The comic poet’s humor will clear the air of much abstraction and pretense inherent in the previous speech...” (Reckford, 1987, p. 90).

In Aristophanes' speech (189c2-193d5) the first technique of Old Comedy employed is his claim that there originally was a third sex (189e). Dover notes, "We know that [the] mythological burlesque [was]...common in Old Comedy" (Dover, 1969, p. 139). Aristophanes says,

the race was divided into three; that is to say, besides the two sexes, male and female, which we have at present, there was a third which partook of the nature of both...each of these beings was globular in shape, with...four arms and four legs and two faces (189d7-9, 189e5-190a1)

Zeus decided to sever the globular beings — because they are attempting to scale the heights of heaven" (190b5) — one from the other (190d), reducing their strength by half (190d1) but multiplying their number twofold (190d2), which unlike the eradication of the giants (190c2) preserves the "offerings and devotions" (190c4) the gods receive from their devotees. If, however, there is any trouble, Zeus will sever them again, "and they will have to hop about on one" (190d5-8). The moral, then, of the Aristophanic myth, is, first, "to fear, that if we neglect the worship of the gods, they will split us up again" (193a3) and second, "to make two into one, to bridge the gulf between one human being and another" (191d1-3). In his commentary of Aristophanes' *Birds*, Dover writes, "The gods are treated...not as the august beings worshiped in hymns and processions to temples, but as Punks and Rumpelstilskins drawn from the nursery-stories of an unusually sophisticated, confident and irreverent nursery" (Dover, 1972, p. 30). The same technique is employed when Plato's Aristophanes says, "[the gods] didn't want to blast them out of existence with thunderbolts...because that would be saying good-bye to all their offerings and devotions, but at the same time they couldn't let them get altogether

out of hand” (190c1-5). The gods are characterized as indifferent to the human plight and the separation anxiety that identifies our struggle for happiness.

The Aristophanic myth (189d5-193b6) also defies the conventional decorum of the previous three speeches, which is another essential characteristic of Old Comedy, because it makes direct reference to genitalia and sexuality, for one would be ill equipped to speak on a third sex without reference to genitalia. Reckford writes,

[Aristophanes] is also bringing us home to our own bodies and the feelings associated with them. His special interest, of course, is human sexuality. Most obviously, he takes us downward from the head to (of course!) the genitals...we realize that the previous speakers had quite ignored these parts (Reckford, 1987, p. 72).

For Aristophanes, sexual intercourse is important for the propagation of the species, “[Zeus] moved their members round to the front and made them propagate among themselves, the male begetting upon the female” (191c-c3) but as importantly, Aristophanes recognizes the ability of sexual intercourse to satisfy desire,⁵⁸ “if man should conjugate with man, he might at least *obtain such satisfaction* as would allow him to turn his attention and his energies to the everyday affairs of life” (my emphasis), (191c5-c7). Dover writes, “The seizure of sexual opportunity is felt even more strongly to be the hallmark of a man, and the complete absence of inhibition in sexual word and deed

⁵⁸ This is not to suggest that the fulfillment of sexual desire is an end-in-itself for Plato’s Aristophanes, for such a categorization would be incorrect. He says, “...the purely sexual pleasures of their friendship could hardly account for the huge delight they take in one another’s company” (192c2-4). Reckford notes, “Pausanias and Eryximachus had not only taken an intellectual, or clinical, approach to sex. They had depersonalized it” (Reckford, 1987, p. 72). Aristophanes focus is not to exalt sex or even sexuality but to recognize its importance in who we are as human beings, which will factor in later speeches.

is one of the most striking features of Aristophanic comedy” (Dover, 1972, p. 38). Plato holds true to this characterization of Aristophanic comedy.⁵⁹

Aristophanes was initially supposed to speak after Pausanias (185c6) but was smitten with a severe case of the hiccups (185c8) and deferred to Eryximachus (185d1), who suggested that he tickle his nostril to sneeze, which would cure his hiccups (185e1). After the conclusion of Eryximachus’ speech Aristophanes says,

Yes, I’m better now, [speaking to Eryximachus]...but not before I had recourse to sneezing — which made me wonder, Eryximachus, how your orderly principle of the body could possibly have called for such an appalling union noise and irritation (189a-4).

Remember, Eryximachus suggested that “harmony is concord” and a concord of opposites, yet his cure for Aristophanes’ hiccups called for a concord of “noise and irritation”, hardly opposites. Aristophanes seemingly undermines Eryximachus’ entire argument by using his error as the butt of a joke. Eryximachus even warns Aristophanes, saying, “Now, Aristophanes, take care...and don’t try to raise a laugh before you’ve even started.”(189a5). To which Aristophanes, retracts his comment saying “I take it all back” (189b3). Aristophanes also makes Pausanias and Agathon the butt of a joke,

Now I don’t want any coarse remarks from Eryximachus. I don’t mean Pausanias and Agathon, for all I know they may be among the lucky ones and both sections of the male (193b5-c1).

Within the speech of Aristophanes, then, any number of paideutic elements, specific to Old Comedy, aid in the composition and characterization of his speech. Thus, if

⁵⁹ Plato’s Aristophanes makes reference to: privates (190a), members (191c), “sexual pleasures” (192c3), “satisfaction” (191c6) lesbianism (191e), the “virile constitution” “of the nation’s youth” (192a), and sexual position (191b8-c), just to name a few topics of discussion. Clearly, Plato holds true to the unabashed nature of comedy.

Pausanias and Agathon are truly happy, they have succeeded in surmounting separation.

It is Eros, then, which has brought them together, as “[E]ros is the drive to overcome this unnatural bifurcation through a return to primitive integrity” (Neumann, 1966, p. 421).

Agathon

The evening’s festivities are taking place at Agathon’s home (172a8) the day after he has won the prize for his *first tragedy* (173a9).⁶⁰ He begins his speech by reminding his guests that their duty, in singing praises to Eros, “is first to praise him for what he is, and secondly, for what he gives” (195a6). Agathon, then, proceeds to describe the nature and characteristic of Eros, and to establish the benefaction to which we are recipients. He begins with his description of Eros, saying:

[Eros] is the youngest of gods, which is proved by his flight...and his escape, from the ravages of time, who travels fast enough — too fast, at any rate, for us poor mortals (195a11-b1).

Agathon, then, amends his suggestion that Eros is immortal, to directly assert, “Love, in his *imperishable youth*, is...the youngest [god] of them all” (my emphasis), (195c), which correlates with his own daintiness and beauty,⁶¹ leading us speculate about the focus of his speech. Alfred Taylor writes,

the theme of his discourse is to him no more than a peg on which to hang his garlands of language. There had been real feeling, under all the burlesque and the grossness, in

⁶⁰ Despite Agathon’s prize for his first tragedy, none of his actual works remain in their entirety. Aristotle, however, in the *Poetics*, alludes to how wonderful a tragic playwright Agathon — the person — must have been, writing, “[the dramatization of the fall of Ilium in its entirety] was enough to ruin even a play by Agathon” (XVIII, 1456a15-20), suggesting that even a playwright, as prestigious as Agathon could not recover from such a mistake. Fragments of Agathon’s work are scattered throughout Aristotle’s *Ethics* (VI.2.1139b9-10), (VI.4.1140a19) and *Rhetoric* (II.19.1392b8), (II, 2.24.1402a10) but the largest segment of Agathon’s works are cited by Athenæus in *The Deipnosophists*, (V, § 1), (X, § 80), and (XII, §, 37). For a complete listing of the fragments of Agathon in the original, See: Nauck, August. *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*. (Hildesheim, Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung) 1964. p. 763.

⁶¹ (*Protag.* 315d), *Th.* 130ff., cf., *Ar. fr.* 326.

the speech of Aristophanes; from Agathon we get only
“words, words, words” (Taylor, 1956, p. 222)

Agathon is capable of using beautiful language to describe Eros, but there is no meaning in what he is saying. His encomium on Eros is self-absorbed and reflects the shortcomings of an education in tragedy. His hymn to Eros also reflects how enamored he is with himself—he is the beloved, he is the object of Love’s desire and his encomium is given to demonstrate his rhetorical skills rather than to praise Eros. The loftiness of absurdity reaches its peak in the following quote,

Moreover, his life among the flowers argues in himself a loveliness of hue, for Love will never settle upon bodies or souls, or anything at all where there is no bud to blossom, or where the bloom is faded. But where the ground is thick with flower and the air with scent, there he will settle...and there he loves to linger (196a9-b2).

Indeed, art of this caliber manipulates both our perceptions and our reality. We misconstrue the wordiness of his speech as having sustenance, as we naturally tend to look for meaning. Unfortunately, however, no matter how deep one may dig, the bulk of Agathon’s encomium on Eros is utterly vacuous; this is not to suggest that it is without purpose. He says,

[Eros] makes the dispositions and the hearts of gods and men his dwelling place—*not, however, without discrimination*, for if the heart he lights up be hard he flies away to settle in a softer (my emphasis), (195e2-5).

The tragedy of his speech is his inability to look beyond his own beauty and accomplishments. He is essentially captivated, not with Eros, but with his own particular beauty, and softness and daintiness, since Eros only dwells in the softest of hearts. He is

able, then, to offer such praises to Eros because he, literarily, is the embodiment or receptacle of Eros. His softness and daintiness necessitate this “fact”.

Chapter Six

Socrates

Socrates' speech revisits a discussion with Diotima, a woman of Mantinea (201d) who "brought about the postponement of the plague of Athens" (201d2-3).⁶² It was she who taught Socrates the philosophy of Love (201d4-5) and her "method of inquiry by question and answer" that Socrates now employs (201e1-2). Until Socrates' account of Diotima's speech, the female played no participatory role in the encomiums on Eros.⁶³ Though this analysis is not a feminist account of Diotima's speech, one cannot deny Socrates' deliberate incorporation of the female, both in reference and in metaphor.⁶⁴

To begin, then, we must first discuss the parents of Love. Unlike Phaedrus' creation mythology (178b), Diotima argues that Love was begotten from both a man, Resource, and a woman, Need (203b-c). Since, half Love's parentage is of his mother's (Need), he is neither delicate nor lovely, which refutes Agathon's claim (196d1), as he is unshod, unkempt and nomadic. In, what will prove to be an important passage, Diotima notes:

Love is never altogether in or out of need, and stands,
moreover, midway between ignorance and wisdom. You
must understand that none of the gods are seekers after

⁶² Saxonhouse writes, "by postponing it, though, the plague struck Athens during the Peloponnesian War, at a time when it would have the most devastating effects" (Saxonhouse, 1984, p. 20).

⁶³ Phaedrus suggests that "Love is unbegotten" (178b), Pausanias says, "But the heavenly Love springs from a goddess whose attributes have nothing of the female, but are altogether male" (181c1-2), Eryximachus dismisses the flute girls "let her play to herself or the women inside there" (176e5), the Aristophanic myth hold no affinity for propagation as Aristophanes comments, "They [male-male] have no natural inclination...to beget children", and Agathon makes no reference to the female, as he is primarily concerned with himself.

⁶⁴ Clearly the reference is to Diotima, as it is her speech. The metaphor, as we shall see, is one of propagation (206c-212c) and the dual parentage of Love, viz., Resource (representing the male) and Need (representing the female).

truth. They do not long for wisdom, because *they are wise*—and why should the wise be seeking the wisdom that is already theirs? (my emphasis), (203e3-204a3).

In a previous part of his speech, Socrates demonstrates that one cannot want or desire what one already has (200c-d). Rather it is to be said that what one has, one desires to preserve (200d3). Similarly, the gods do not desire wisdom, for they are already wise. With respect to ignorance, however, Diotima comments,

Nor...do the ignorant seek the truth or crave to be *made wise*. And indeed, what makes their case so hopeless is that, having neither beauty, nor goodness, nor intelligence, they are satisfied with what they are, and do not long for the *virtues* they have never missed (my emphasis), (204e3-7)

This passage is the first indication that the focus of Diotima's speech is not only Love but also education. First there is the distinction between wisdom (σοφία), on the one hand, and ignorance (ἀγνοια) on the other. In her speech to Socrates, Diotima suggests that one can “be made wise” (204a4). Thus, she implies that there is a process or a method, wherein one “can be made wise”. Such a process is *paideia*. Her account of this process, then, is an account of *paideia*. It is the account of how one goes about attaining wisdom, how the acquisition of wisdom unfolds. Second, every form of education considered in our analysis: poetry, sophistry, music, rhetoric, the medical art, comedy and tragedy, all professed to teach virtue, arête. Virtue was a staple in Athenian education and among the *kaloï kagathoi*—of which Socrates' audience is largely composed—virtue was taught under the institution of *sunousia*, the “association” between an *erastēs* and his *erōmenos*. Thus, it is to no surprise that Diotima says, “[they] do not long for the *virtues* they have never missed”, in other words, “one cannot miss what one does not know”. It is

through education, then, that one comes to know. On Diotima's view, the ignorant are guilty of *misology*, a hatred of wisdom or the desire "to be made wise".

The question is posed by Socrates, "who are these seekers of truth, as they are neither the wise nor the ignorant" (204a8-9), to which Diotima responds, "They are those that come between the two, and one of them is Love...*Love is the lover of wisdom*" (my emphasis), (204b2-5). Without an understanding of Ancient Greek *paideia* this statement makes little sense. How can Love be a lover of wisdom? If, however, we interpret this statement, under the pedagogical language of *sunousia*, Love is the "lover" or companion of wisdom, which is the beloved. One is now able to understand the significance of Diotima's otherwise opaque statement that she is "not altogether surprised at [Socrates'] idea of [Love], which was, judging by what [he] said, that *Love was the beloved rather than the lover*. So naturally [he] thought of Love as utterly beautiful, for the beloved is in fact beautiful..." (204b8-c1). Two points of clarification are needed. First, remember that Socrates says, "[Diotima] used the same argument on me that I've just brought to bear on Agathon" (201e4-5). Socrates proves Agathon wrong, demonstrating that "Love has no beauty, but is lacking in it" (210b3), to which Agathon professes, "I did not know what I was talking about" (201c2). Second, Diotima informs Socrates that it is natural to think of Love as the beloved *because* "the beloved is in fact beautiful" (204c2-3). Neither Agathon nor Socrates "[knew] what [they] were talking about". How can Love be the beloved (204c1) if to be the beloved Love must be beautiful (204c2-3), and as Diotima demonstrates to Socrates and Socrates to Agathon, "Love has no beauty, but is lacking in it" (201b3). Love cannot be the beloved, because to be the beloved is to be beautiful, and love is not beautiful, "but is lacking in it". Diotima successfully shows the contradiction

in Socrates' reasoning, as Socrates uses the same tactics, *which he learned from Diotima*, to refute Agathon.

If, however, Love is not the beloved but the lover, and to be the lover is to be the educator, then Love cannot be educated, rather, Love educates. Thus, if it is correct to suggest that Diotima's discussion with Socrates pertains to *paideia*, the first lesson in being "made wise" is the recognition that Love has the capability of educating its beloved. If love educates, then love as described by Diotima, will not follow the active/passive model of the *erastēs* and the *erōmenos*. This will become clearer later in the dialogue.

Since, Love lacks beauty (201b3) and "everything longs for what it lacks" (200a8), it follows that "[Love] is longing to make the beautiful his own" (204d6). Hence, beauty is the object of Love's desire, because "[h]e'll gain happiness" (204e5-6) — as an end in-itself — since there's no need to ask why men should want to be happy" (205a1).

As for the lover, Diotima comments:

I know it has been suggested...that lovers are people who are looking for their other halves [(191a4-5)], but as I see it, Socrates, Love never longs for either half or whole of anything except the good [and]...Love longs for the good to be his own forever (205d8-206a9).

This is obviously a critique of the Aristophanic myth, but more importantly, Diotima has established that the object of Love is the Good, and the Good cannot be attained in the here and now, for it is an eternal longing, "Love longs for the good to be his own forever". Diotima now poses the most important question of the dialogue to Socrates, asking, "...what course will *Love's followers* pursue?" (206b). As those pursuing Love

are forever pursuing the good, and Love is the lover (*erastēs*) rather than the beloved (*erōmenos*), and the educator rather than the educated, then “Love’s followers” (206b)—philosophers—are forever pursuing education, for they are educators insofar as they seek *sophia* and teach others to seek it as well. Socrates is dumbfounded by her question and pleads for her to respond. Diotima says, “To love is to bring forth upon the beautiful, both in body and in soul” (206b6-7).

Paideia and the Ladder of Love: A Pursuit of Immortality through Education

Diotima describes for Socrates what course Love’s followers should pursue. She suggests that “when we reach a certain age our nature urges us to procreation” (206c2-3). Novel in our analysis of the *Symposium* thus far, is the suggestion that the female plays a participatory role in the pursuit of Eros. Prior to Diotima’s remark, none considered the role of the female as bearing any importance in their encomia on Eros. Aristophanes even went so far as to suggest that descendents of the male-male “have no natural inclination to marry and beget children” (192b). For Diotima, however, the importance in procreation is not gestation but conception. She asserts,

Conception, we know, takes place when man and woman come together, but there’s a divinity in human propagation, an immortal *something* in the midst of man’s mortality which is incompatible with any kind of discord (my emphasis), (206c4-7).

Diotima suggests that “there is a divinity in human propagation” (206c5). She has set to define what the others have failed to accomplish, namely, what that “something” is, i.e., the vehicle wherein we all, men *and women alike*, participate in immortality.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ With the exception of Aristophanes, the previous speakers, though ignoring the importance of conception, did acknowledge love’s connection to immortality. Phaedrus suggested that we, as men, participate with immortality through, having the gods kindle the “flame of valor” (179a6) during our time

Interestingly, she is able to correlate the conception of propagation not only with the female but also with the male. She says, “when the procreant is big with child, *he* is strangely stirred by the beautiful” (206d6-7).

To understand what the procreant is pregnant with, one must first recognize that, for Diotima, propagation not only refers to biological propagation it also refers to the propagation of one’s self through an ability to “[call] something into existence that was not there before” (205b9-10). Hence, “...this [ability] is the one deathless and eternal element of our mortality” (206e7-8). Diotima concludes this initial phase suggesting,

since we have agreed that the lover longs for the good to be his forever [(206a9)] it follows that we are bound to long for immortality as well as for the good—which is to say that Love is a longing for immortality (206e8-11).

In relation to *paideia*, the desire for immortality is equally as intense as the desire for biological propagation. The fact that we have the ability to “[call] something into existence that was not there before” (205b9-10), whether in the form of the creation of art or prose or scientific discoveries, suggests that we equally possess the ability to propagate our ideas, and through them seek immortality. Diotima notes that “[t]he application of the principle to human knowledge is even more remarkable” (207e5). Just as we change over time, from infancy to old age (207c9-207e4), so too does our knowledge change, i.e.,

things we know increase, while some of them are lost, so that even in our knowledge we are not always the same, but

of most need (in defense of the city). Pausanias suggests, “the lover whose heart is touched by moral beauty is constant all his life, for he has become one with what will never fade” (183e6-8), Eryximachus suggests that it is the “art of divination, with its powers to distinguish those principles of human love that tend to decency and reverence, is, in fact, the source of concord between god and man” (188c5-d), Aristophanes, firmly grounded in the flesh, makes no reference to immortality at all. Agathon’s entire speech was filled with suggestions of the youthful immortality of Eros (195c) who “makes the dispositions and the hearts of gods and men his dwelling place” (195e2-3). As we have demonstrated throughout the previous chapter, all these suggestions are flawed in their reasoning.

the principle applies as well to every single branch of knowledge (207e5-9).

Thus, the transition from recognizing that “there is a divinity in human propagation” (206c5) to our ability to “[call] something into existence that was not there before” (205b9-10) coupled with “a longing for immortality” (206e10) posits knowledge as an object of desire. We know that we have the ability to create, something that would otherwise not exist, like an epic poem, or piece of art. We also know that through biological propagation our progeny will replace our generation. In the creation of an idea, as in the creation of biological progeny, we leave something that will *remain in existence* after our deaths. Hence, it is through the act of creation both biological and conceptual that we aspire for immortality. This aspiration, however, on the conceptual level, requires life-long-education, i.e., unlike *archaia paideia*, the philosopher must have no end to her desire for learning. In *archaia paideia* one is capable of mastery, which allows one to progress into the political realm *after* basic education. Diotima particularly notes, however, the difference for the philosopher,

When we say we are studying, we really mean that our knowledge is ebbing away. We forget, because our knowledge disappears, we have to study so as to replace what we are losing, so that the state of our knowledge may seem, at any rate to be the same as it was before (207e9-13).

The purpose for our fevered and life-long pursuit of wisdom is that we are unlike the gods, who are already wise (204a1-3); we are neither ignorant nor wise, but rest somewhere in between (204a8-9). Thus, is the object of our eternal desire the wisdom of the gods. In so aspiring, however, we must commit ourselves to a life of education and learning, and in the process *leave behind* our creation, i.e., our speeches and treatises,

paintings and music, and so forth. “This... is how the body and all else that is temporal partakes of the eternal” (208b). Diotima is not denying that we will die; rather she insists the philosopher, too, can aspire for immortality, without having to resort to death.

Through the conception of life and propagation, the notion that only *kléos*—immortality as the subject of song—can give one immortality has been refuted. There should no longer be a need for a speech such as this:

Yet you who are still of age to *beget children* must bear up in the hope of having others in their stead; not only will they help you to forget those whom you have lost, *but will be to the state at once a reinforcement and a security* (my emphasis), (*Thucy.* 2.44).

In Pericles’ funeral oration, the reason to “beget children” is so that the city may use them as “*a reinforcement and a security*”, i.e., in their eventual deaths, in defense of the state, they will achieve immortality through the pursuit of their love of honor (*philotimia*) and fame (*kléos*). Diotima says, “men’s great incentive is the love of glory, and that their one idea is, ‘To win eternal mention in the deathless roll of fame’” (208c4-6). She refers to Alcestis’ sacrifice for Admetus (208d), which directly relates to Phaedrus’ speech where he uses the same example (179b6). Thus, unlike the pursuit of *kléos*, the propagation of ideas through one’s longing for wisdom, allows one to attain the same end, immortality, without having to resort to death.

Diotima continues her discussion of wisdom asserting that “the most important kind of wisdom” is “that which governs the ordering of society” (209a6-7). Society, for the Ancient Greeks, is ordered by many things, including the practice of *sunousia*. It would be incorrect to suggest that Diotima is arguing that we do away with the institution, she is not; she is arguing that we should transform it. Instead of looking at the

temporary relationship between an *erastēs* and his *erōmenos* as an end in-itself, i.e., as the end to Greek *paideia*, we should, “undertake the other’s education” (209c1). In so doing, we begin our ascent up the “ladder of love”. The *erastēs* “will fall in love with the beauty of one individual body” (210a9). Through the practice of *sunousia* the *erastēs* falls in love with the beauty of his *erōmenos*, but this is not as Pausanias suggested an end-in-itself (183e8). Diotima says, “his attention should be diverted from institutions to the sciences...he will be saved from a slavish and illiberal devotion to the individual loveliness of a single boy, a single man, or a single institution” (210c6-d2). A liberal education functions as the best pedagogical method for educating the youth. This contemplation and interaction with various bodies of knowledge eventually culminates with the recognition of “one single form of knowledge, the knowledge of [B]eauty” (210d6-7), which is “an everlasting loveliness which neither comes nor goes...for such beauty is the same on every hand, the same then as now” (211a-3). Thus, the “ladder of love” begins with individual instances of beauty, then progresses to the recognition of a multiplicity of beauties, including beautiful institutions, then to learning and learning in general “until at last he comes to know what beauty is” (211c7).

The “ladder of love”, however, does not simply end once one attains knowledge of what beauty is. The suggestion that it does, fails to recognize that virtue, for the Ancient Greeks, was a foundation for education. Instead of teaching virtue through the *kléos* of epic heroes, we are now equipped to teach virtue through the “ladder of love”, described above. Thus, it is the truth “and not the seeming” (212a2) that teaches virtue. Diotima’s speech culminates with the following:

for it is virtue's self that quickens him, not virtue's semblance. And when he has brought forth and reared this perfect virtue, *he shall be called the friend of god*, and if ever it is given to man to put on immortality, it shall be given to him (212a2-6).

The Speech of Alcibiades: The Death of *Archaia Paideia*: (213c4-223d11)

Alcibiades bursts in drunk, and offers a speech. Though there is no debate about his intoxication, there is much truth in his words. He says, “Drunkards and children tell the truth — drunkards anyway” (217e2). Rather than follow custom and present a eulogy to Love, Alcibiades presents a eulogy to Socrates, as he is emblematic of the true lover, the lover of wisdom—the philosopher—that Diotima described. Alcibiades' speech is an encomium to Socrates. Alcibiades says,

Socrates went out in the same old coat he'd always worn, and made less fuss about walking on the ice in his bare feet than we did in our shoes. So much so, that the men began to look at him with some suspicion and actually took his toughness as a personal insult to themselves (*Sym.* 222b2-4).

Compare Alcibiades' statement with that of Pericles:

On the one hand, the friend who is familiar with every fact of the story, may think that some point has not been set forth with that fullness which he wishes and knows it deserves; on the other, he who is a stranger to the matter may be led by envy to suspect exaggeration if he hears anything *above his own nature*. For men can endure to hear others praise only so long as they can severally persuade themselves of their own ability to equal the actions recounted: when this point is passed, envy comes in and with it incredulity (my emphasis), (Thuc.1951, p. 103).

And finally Alcibiades adds,

Anyone listening to Socrates for the first time would find his argument simply laughable: he wraps them up in just the kinds of expressions you'd expect of such an insufferable satyr...But if you open up his arguments, and really get into the skin of

them, you'll find that they are the only arguments in the world that have any sense at all, and that *nobody else's are so godlike* (221e-222a2).

This echoes Diotima's remark that, "if ever it is given to man to put on immortality, it shall be given to him [the true lover]" (212a5). If we agree that Socrates is the true lover, then we must agree that he will be in some sense immortal. We have learned that Love was begotten from Resource and Need, it is Need that serves as the condition for the possibility of desire, because one cannot desire what one already possesses. It is through Need that we come to seek immortality. Continually Socrates denies himself pleasures that were all too accessible to him, including Alcibiades (219c-4). He refuses to escape from prison (46c1-2) when given the opportunity by Crito, (46a7-9), he refuses to succumb to his "wild beast appetite" when confronted with Charmides' astounding beauty, (155d2-e3), he refuses to remain silent and lead an unexamined life, (38a3) when given the opportunity of exile, he even refuses to simply wait until sunset to drink his hemlock and dies with "the sun still upon the mountains" (116d7-e1). One achieves immortality, then, through a philosophical education, by leading a life of continual questioning, by seeking answers, by communicating with others. The relationship between the teacher and the student, from Archelaos to Socrates, from Socrates to Plato, from Plato to Aristotle, from Aristotle to Theophrastus and so on is a preservation of thought. Despite the fact that these men have long since died, the theories they unmasked, the questions they asked, are timeless, and as such, they too are immortal.

Philosophy is the culmination of the Ancient Greek pedagogical model. The "association" of *sunousia* and *archaia paideia* — as an end — is shown to fail in Alcibiades' inability to learn from Socrates' instruction. Alcibiades remains under the

assumption that it is the *erōmenos* who is beautiful and the object of desire, as an end, which is but the first rung on the “ladder of love”. Alcibiades says,

you have my eulogy to Socrates, with a few complaints...about the unspeakable way he’s treated me. I’m not the only one, either; there’s Charmides, and Euthydemus, and ever so many more. He’s made fools of them all, *just as if he were the beloved, not the lover* (222a6-10).

It is not that Socrates cannot recognize the beauty of these men but that he recognizes their beauty as merely an instantiation of the form of Beauty. In surrounding himself with beautiful men and various forms of knowledge, Socrates begins his progression up the “ladder of love”. It is to no surprise, then, that “[Socrates] had the insolence, the infernal arrogance, to laugh at [Alcibiades’] youthful beauty and jeer” (219c-2). Alcibiades should realize that his eulogy to Socrates is misplaced because even Socrates is no end in himself. But Alcibiades never really grasps this, saying to Agathon, “I’m telling you this for your own good, so that you’ll know what to look out for, and I hope that you’ll learn from our misfortunes” (222b2-3).

In conclusion, then, philosophy, a “friend of wisdom”, is the life-long pursuit of knowledge, attained through continued questioning and conversation, wherein our love of learning inspires, within us, the desire to propagate our ideas. Philosophical dialogue in which all participants are lovers, and therefore active, is the means of propagating these ideas, and in so doing, these procreants attain immortality. The *erōmenos*—the Good itself—*acts* on the philosophers as they are drawn up the Ladder of Love. Unlike the epic heroes in pursuit of the same end, willing to sacrifice their lives for honor and glory, the philosopher attains immortality through the generation of life and ideas, rather than its

destruction. So it is that we are still in conversation with Socrates made immortal in Plato's dialogues.

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