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CONVENTION, TRANSITION, AND INTERVENTION IN PLATO'S *LYSIS*

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ABSTRACT

Plato's *Lysis* is a dialogue thematically structured around the notion of transitions. Yet, despite these structural features, the theme of transitions has rarely been mentioned in discussion of the dialogue's dramatic and philosophical content. When the term 'transition' has arisen at all, it has either been with reference to the *Lysis*' place within in the larger Platonic corpus as a 'transitional' or so-called 'Socratic' dialogue, or even more often, in connection with its odd status within this subset of Plato's works. To be sure, the *Lysis* has much in common with these other transitional or Socratic dialogues. Yet unlike these dialogues, the *Lysis* seems uniquely burdened with the unfortunate distinction of having a 'transitional problem'. It appears to be caught, or 'lost in transition' as it were, between two subject matters: ἔρως (erotic love) and φιλία (friendship).

In recent years, a reevaluation of the *Lysis* has yielded fresh attempts to discern a unified line of argument from what appears, on the surface, a series of failed attempts to define who, or what, is a φίλος (friend). Yet these renewed efforts to unveil the coherence of the *Lysis* have done little to dull its reputation for intractability. Even among Plato's works, over which interpretative disagreement is of course nothing new, the *Lysis* nevertheless stands out. Few dialogues, if any, have yielded such diametrically opposing interpretations. What can account for this predicament? In large part, I argue, it stems from a lack of clarity over the background against which Socrates is arguing in the dialogue. Despite the extensive scholarship devoted to the subject area over the past thirty-plus years, conventional ancient Greek views of ἔρως and φιλία remain thorny issues. Did the classical Greeks understand familial relations as a form of φιλία? To what extent did the notions of the useful (τὸ χρήσιμον) and beneficial (τὸ ὠφέλιμον) play a role, either

implicitly or explicitly, in their ordinary understandings of erotic and friendly love? And how exactly did they understand the relation between ἔρως and φιλία?

However we are supposed to understand the answers to these and related questions, one thing that is evident is that the dialogue itself clearly seems meant as an attempt to resolve *some* problem or problems concerning ἔρως, φιλία, or both. The one — and perhaps only — thing commentators have unanimously agreed upon is that it can hardly be an accident that, in addition to referring to the dialogue's namesake, 'Lysis' means 'solution', which in turn derives from the verb λύω or 'to loosen'. Most readings have taken this title to signify the dialogue's dramatization of Socrates' attempt to 'loosen' or liberate his youthful interlocutors from conventional conceptions of erotic, familial, and friendly relations that are revealed to be problematic. Yet, while this sense of 'loosening' as liberation is no doubt an important theme in the *Lysis*, the shared shortcoming of these readings, I will contend, lies in their failure to take account of deeper sense in which the dialogue's title signifies a 'loosening'. Exactly how the youths are liberated from these conventional conceptions can only be understood as a consequence of the dialogue's even more basic attempt to 'loosen' the conventional notions of ἔρως and φιλία themselves; a sense of 'loosening' that involves a blurring of the lines between these two notions.

I argue that the dialogue's dramatic details and the primary sense of 'loosening' that they invoke indicate a unifying argumentative structure underlying the *Lysis*. What this structure suggests is that more than merely a 'transitional dialogue', the *Lysis* is in fact a dialogue about transitions; in particular, those transitions that mark the emergence of both ἔρως and φιλία, the problems posed by these relations in their conventional forms, and the conceptual transformations necessary to overcome these problems.

INTRODUCTION

A 'Transitional Dialogue' or a Dialogue about Transitions?

Plato's *Lysis* is a dialogue thematically structured around the notion of transitions. It begins with Socrates, now an old man (γέρων ἀνήρ, 223b5), recalling how he was in transit "on [his] way from the Academy straight to the Lyceum" (203a).[1] His journey is interrupted by a chance encounter with Hippothales and Ctesippus, two young men through whom he is introduced to two even younger boys, the dialogue's namesake and his comrade Menexenus. As Socrates' initial exchange with both pairs of interlocutors soon reveals, they themselves are undergoing transitional stages in life.[2] Lysis and Menexenus are παῖδες, boys under eighteen who are becoming reflective for the first time about the basis of their friendship (φιλία), while Hippothales and Ctesippus are νεανίσκοι, young men on the brink of adulthood and coming to grips with erotic desire (ἔρως) and how it is to be pursued. The dialogue itself is also one that ends in transition. Having apparently failed to discover a satisfactory answer to the question that drives the bulk of his discussion with the youths, the question "who is a friend (φίλος)," Socrates remarks that "[he] had it in mind to stir up somebody else among the older people (τῶν πρεσβυτέρων) there" (223a) when the conversation is broken up. Plato leaves his reader to wonder whether this final, incomplete transition, from questioning the boys to consulting the older men, would have resulted in a resolution.

[1] The action of the dialogue is recounted in retrospect by Socrates himself to an anonymous interlocutor, who has no lines in the dialogue. As will be discussed in ch. 7 and the appendix of this dissertation, this manner in which the drama of the *Lysis* is presented to the reader is not an insignificant aspect of the dialogue.

[2] This much is clear from the context of the dialogue. However, commentators have struggled to identify the exact ages of the two sets of boys (cf. Nails 2003, p. 174, 202; Penner and Rowe 2005, p. 6 fn. 10). In ch. 1, I will discuss the source of this ambiguity through a consideration of the way in which age-classes or groups where distinguished in classical Athenian culture. I will argue there that we have good reason to see both Lysis and Menxenus and Hippothales and Ctesippus as representative of their respective age groups and of the problems typical of them.

Yet, despite these structural features, the theme of transitions has rarely been mentioned in discussion of the dialogue's dramatic and philosophical content. When the term 'transition' has arisen at all, it has either been with reference to the *Lysis*' place within in the larger Platonic corpus as a 'transitional' or so-called 'Socratic' dialogue, or even more often, in connection with its odd status within this subset of Plato's work. To be sure, the *Lysis* has much in common with these other transitional or Socratic dialogues.[3] As in other such dialogues, in the *Lysis* too Socrates devotes his attention to a definitional question, in this case, the question 'who, or what, is a friend'?[4] And like these other dialogues, the *Lysis* too ends in *aporia*. Yet the *Lysis* has additionally always been saddled with a unique problem that the other Socratic dialogues are not. In the case of the *Charmides*, *Euthyphro*, and *Laches*, for example, there is no question as to what their subject matters are; from the outset of each, it is clear that the topics under discussion are temperance, piety, and courage. Unlike these dialogues, however, the *Lysis*, seems uniquely burdened with the

[3] 'Transitional' could in fact be understood in two ways: to mean transitional from the standpoint of Plato's own development — i.e. as understood on a developmental approach to the Platonic corpus — or transitional from the standpoint of his readers — as understood on a unitarian or ingressive approach to the dialogues. The developmental approach has been especially influential since the mid-twentieth century. On this approach, his works can be organized from the starting point of an initial 'Socratic period', upon which we can interpret the sequence of dialogues by reference to Plato's intellectual biography. In the shorter, Socratic dialogues, Plato is generally taken to have started with early, more tentative attempts to define ethical terms before moving on to bolder, more positive theorizing that reaches its apex with the *Republic*. On the unitarian approach, the dialogues together express a single, unified philosophical vision, and that their variety is best explained on a pedagogical basis rather than in terms of a change in Plato's philosophy. It is not my primary aim in this dissertation to arbitrate this debate but rather to offer an interpretation the *Lysis* as a self-standing work. However, to the extent that I will argue that the *Lysis* displays much more dramatic and philosophical sophistication than it has been given credit for much of its modern reception (cf. fn. 6 below), I will argue that it should at the very least not be regarded as an immature work of philosophy. In the appendix of this dissertation, I will survey both the development and unitarian traditions as well as the *Lysis*' place in them. I will attempt to show there how both approaches offer compelling, and not necessarily incompatible, ways of understanding the dialogue.

[4] Sedley (1989) distinguishes between the questions, "what is φιλία?" and "who or what is a φίλος and to whom or what?", and he claims that the *Lysis* is concerned only with the latter question. However, as subsequent commentators have argued (e.g. Gonzalez, 1995; Penner and Rowe 2005), understanding the nature of the relation that is friendship depends on knowing what a φίλος truly is; that is, what is the ultimate cause and end of all loving and being loved. My interpretation supports this second way of understanding the relation between the notions of 'φιλία' and 'φίλος'.

unfortunate distinction of having a 'transitional problem'. It appears to be caught, or 'lost in transition' as it were, between two subject matters.

The dialogue opens with a lengthy exchange between Socrates and Hippothales, who is in love with the beautiful Lysis, and it deals with the question of the proper method of winning a beloved's affection. The dramatic focus sharply shifts, however, to a discussion first between Socrates and Lysis himself, and subsequently between Socrates and both Lysis and Menexenus for the dialogue's remainder, over the question of who or what is a friend. This change in topic is only further complicated by the fact that what starts out as an inquiry into ordinary friendship, understood as a *reciprocal* relationship between two equal members, eventually gives way to the notion of a 'first friend' (πρῶτον φίλον, 219c), understood as an ultimate, *irreciprocal* object of all friendly love (φιλεῖν).

For much of its modern reception, discussion of the *Lysis* focused on the problem posed by this vacillation, back and forth between irreciprocal and reciprocal forms of love, for determining the dialogue's central subject matter. While some saw it to be primarily about ἔρως and others as principally about φιλία,[5] from the late nineteenth century through most of the twentieth, commentators generally agreed on the perceived incomplete state of the dialogue's discussion, whatever its central focus is supposed to be. At worst, the *Lysis* was regarded a piece of philosophical confusion.[6] At best, it was seen to represent an

[5] Controversy over the subject matter of the *Lysis* began in the early twentieth century with a debate between von Arnim (1914) and Pohlenz (1913), with the former arguing that the dialogue is primarily about φιλία, while the latter that it was principally about ἔρως. For the history of their debate, see the appendix of Bolotin (1979). Those who follow von Arnim include Hoerber (1959), Hyland (1968), and Annas (1977), Robinson (1986), Price (1989), Pangle (2001), Rudebusch (2004) and Curzer (2014). Those who sympathize with Pohlenz include Friedlander (1964), Hayden (1983), Bolotin (1979), and Penner and Rowe (2005).

[6] Grote (1888, vol. 2, p. 184, fn. 2) reports that some German scholars of his time rejected Plato's authorship of the dialogue. Schleiermacher and Hermann accepted its authenticity but regarded it as a very early work marked with the 'adolescentiae vestigia'. Cornford (1939) and Guthrie (1975) offered similarly negative assessments, the latter of which wrote, "Even Plato can nod" (p. 156).

exploratory work that makes no serious attempt at a unified theory, but rather looks ahead to subsequent, more extended discussions of these topics.[7]

This longstanding perception, however, has slowly begun to change.[8] A reevaluation of the *Lysis* has yielded fresh attempts to discern a unified line of argument from what appears, on the surface, a series of failed attempts to define the friend.[9] Yet these renewed efforts to unveil the coherence of the *Lysis* have done little to dull its reputation for intractability. Even among Plato's works, over which interpretative disagreement is of course nothing new, the *Lysis* nevertheless stands out. Few dialogues, if any, have yielded such diametrically opposing interpretations.[10]

Take, for example, the famous protreptic discussion between Socrates and Lysis himself (207d-210d), in which Socrates' argues that Lysis' parents can only love him if in fact he is useful (χρήσιμος) and thus wise (σοφὸς), something that Lysis comes to concede he is not.

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[7] This general view of the dialogue is summed up well by Annas (1977) who writes that in "….the *Lysis* .... Plato is more interested in discovering and setting out intellectually attractive paradoxes than in getting to the root of the problems…. There is little attempt to organize the various dilemmas and suggestions with a view to any solution, or rendering coherent what emerges from the discussion" (p. 551). The later discussions alluded to are usually taken to be those found in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*. The *Lysis* has also been read with an eye looking ahead to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, as is the case with Annas ("Aristotle takes up and builds on Plato's negative conclusions" p. 539). Others who share this general view include Irwin (1977), Glidden (1980), Robinson (1986), Santas (1988), Price (1989), Roth (1995), and Carr (1996).

[8] Bolotin (1979), Bordt (1998, 2000) and Penner and Rowe (2005) constitute the three full-length commentaries that have been devoted to the *Lysis*. This rethinking of the *Lysis* has in part come about through the recognition of how it serves as an important example of Socratic protreptic and pedagogical strategies at work. Gadamer (1980) was an early proponent of this reading; cf. Teloh (1986), Tessitore (1990), Scott (1995, 2000), Renaud (2002), and Rider (2011). Other commentators who also see the dialogue to consist of more than just a set of unrelated, or loosely connected, problems that it fails to successfully address include Versenyi (1975), Gonzalez (1996, 2000, 2005), Kahn (1997), Pangle (2001), Jenks (2005), Nichols (2006 and 2009), Zuckert (2009) Joose (2010), and Curzer (2014).

[9] Bordt sums up this approach well where he writes: "[those] scholars who see the *Lysis* simply as a confused and obscure dialogue, seem to have a good case…. On the dramatic level of the dialogue it seems that Plato may simply have wanted to point out the difficulties and problems one has to think about if one wants to establish a theory of friendship." Nevertheless, he argues, this overlooks the fact that "several examples can be found in the dialogue where Plato himself seems to give us some hints that we should read the dialogue in a critical and reconstructive way" (2000, p. 158). See also Penner and Rowe (p. xiii) and Bolotin (p. 197).

[10] As one commentator writes: "Interpretations of the *Lysis* present a bizarre spectacle: consider practically any possible thesis about the dialogue and you will find that both it and its opposite have been defended" (Gonzalez 1995, p. 69).

Does Socrates really maintain that parental love — and, in fact, all love — is predicated on utility? And does he really intend us to take seriously the conclusion that Lysis' parents don't really love him? While some see this argument as the very basis for Plato's conception of love, others have argued that it can only be taken as intentionally absurd.[11]

Similarly contentious is the claim — alluded to but never explicitly stated throughout the course of the dialogue — that friendship is possible with wisdom itself, which by its nature "doesn't love us back" (212d; 218a-b). Does Plato really intend us to believe it is possible for there to be non-reciprocal forms of friendship, most notably, one with wisdom? Or does mean this claim to be taken, at most, metaphorically?[12]

Stark disagreement over local issues such as these has been mirrored at a global level. On the one hand, for instance, the *Lysis* as a whole has been interpreted as an extended *reductio ad absurdum* argument against an instrumental view of friendship. Contrastingly, others see it as not in fact focus on friendship at all, but rather on the articulation of a

[11] Gregory Vlastos (1973) famously takes Socrates seriously here. His reading serves as the basis for his well-known criticism of Platonic love: "The lover Socrates has in view seems positively incapable of loving others for their own sake, else why must he feel no affection for anyone whose good-producing qualities *he* did not happen to need?" (1973, pp. 8-9). The lesson of the *Lysis*, he concludes, is that we '"stand in need of a philosopher, like Socrates, to cure us by his dialectic, to break the illusion, and make us see that what we "really" love is something else[,]"' for "[to] say of another person that he or she is what we *really* and *truly* love would be to lapse, like the miser, into moral fetishism." This reading of Socrates' argument has been defended by Narcy (1997, p. p. 216) and Gonzalez (2000, p. 381). Others who reject this reading including Bolotin (1979, pp. 89-90), Roth (1995, p. 8), Kahn (1996, p. 282) and Bordt (1998, pp. 80, 137-8), and Penner and Rowe (2005, p. 36). Later in the dialogue (215b7-c1), Socrates argues that good men cannot be friends with each other because they have nothing to offer each other (215a-c). As will be discussed in ch. 5, this argument has similarly been a major sticking point for modern readers.

[12] Those who see Plato to be arguing for the possibility of non-reciprocal forms of φιλία include Bolotin (1979), Gonzalez (1995), and Penner and Rowe (2005). The latter, metaphorical reading is articulated most clearly by Curzer (2014): "If the first friend were a non-person, then the dialog between Socrates and the kids would be a sham. However, there is no textual evidence that Lysis and Menexenus think they are talking about non-persons here. Nor is there any specification of which non-person they might be talking about" (p. 365). Yet a third group of commentators see the *Lysis*' attempt to reconcile varying claims about different types of φιλία to ultimately flounder into conceptual confusion. Bordt (2000) writes: "The dialogue breaks down at exactly the point where the consistency of the major concepts of Plato's model of friendship – the Good, the Same, the *oikeion*, the *proton philon* – lead to difficulties" (p. 170). A similar assessment is offered by Robinson (1986): "Confused though the *Lysis* may be, there are underlying it real problems about the part friendship can play in man's pursuit of the good" (p. 83).

general theory of attraction or desire.[13]

What can account for such disparate interpretations? In large part, it stems from a lack of clarity over the background against which Socrates is arguing in the dialogue.[14] Despite the extensive scholarship devoted to the subject area over the past thirty-plus years, conventional ancient Greek views of ἔρως and φιλία remain thorny issues. Did the classical Greeks even understand familial relations as a form of φιλία? To what extent did the notion of the useful (χρήσιμος) or beneficial (ὠφέλιμος) play a role, either implicitly or explicitly, in their ordinary understandings of erotic and friendly love? And how exactly did they understand the relation between ἔρως and φιλία?[15]

However we are supposed to understand the answers to these and related questions, one thing that is evident is that the work itself clearly seems meant as an attempt to resolve *some* problem or problems concerning ἔρως, φιλία, or both. The one — and perhaps only — thing commentators have unanimously agreed upon is that it can hardly be an accident that, in addition to referring to the dialogue's namesake, 'Lysis' means 'solution', which in turn derives from the verb λύω or 'to loosen'.[16] Most readings have taken this title to signify the dialogue's dramatization of Socrates' attempt to 'loosen' or liberate the youths from conventional conceptions of erotic, familial, and friendly relations that are revealed to

[13] Proponents of the former, *reductio* reading include von Arnim (1914), Hoerber (1959), Kahn (1997), Bordt (1998, 2000), and most recently Curzer (2014). Proponents of the latter, 'general attraction' reading include Reshotko (1997, 2000) and Penner and Rowe (2005). Even others maintain that the *Lysis* offers multiple accounts of friendship, e.g. Hoerber, Pangle (2001), and Jenks (2005).

[14] Discerning just what this background is can be difficult in part because the *Lysis* is taken to constitute part of our body of evidence for what constitutes conventional views of love and friendship in ancient Athens. I will address this issue at length in chapter 1.

[15] For opposing views on the relation between family and friendship, see the discussion of Konstan (1997) and Gonzalez (2000) in ch. 1, sect. 2(a) and (d). For contrasting positions of the centrality of the notion of utility or benefit to conventional Greek conceptions of friendship, see Health (1987, pp. 73-74) and Konstan (p. 72-78). This issue with be addressed at length in ch. 1, sect. 3. On the question of the relation between ἔρως and φιλία, see the discussion of Dover and Davidson in ch. 1, sect. 1.

[16] As a solution of a difficulty (ἡ λύσις τῆς ἀπορίας), see Aristotle *EN* 1146b7, 1153b5.

be problematic.[17] Yet, while this sense of 'loosening' as liberation is no doubt an important theme in the *Lysis*, the shared shortcoming of these readings, I will contend, lies in their failure to take account of another, deeper sense in which the dialogue's title signifies a 'loosening'.[18] Exactly how the youths are liberated from these conventional conceptions, on my reading, can only be understood as a consequence of the dialogue's even more basic attempt to 'loosen' the conventional notions of ἔρως and φιλία themselves; a sense of 'loosening' that involves a blurring of the lines between these two notions.

The failure of these commentators to give due measure to this sense of the word, I will argue, derives from a general neglect of the dialogue's dramatic context. We learn early on (at 206d2) that the drama of the *Lysis* is set against the backdrop of the Hermaea festival, which celebrated the rites of the god Hermes.[19] Among other designations, Hermes was the patron god of young men and athletic contests (ἀγῶνες), and the dialogue depicts these rites as being celebrated by a gathering of youths in a newly built wrestling school (παλαίστρα). More broadly, however, Hermes was the god of boundaries and of the transgression of boundaries, and the *Lysis* indicates from the outset that this aspect of the

[17] This general view is captured well by Scott (2000): "Implicit in this interpretation of the *Lysis* will be the contention that the choice to feature a main character named Lysis – whose name means "loosing" or "setting free" – for this dialogue is not accidental. … It is a "loosing from latent trust in the familiar…. that is the aim of Socrates' careful problematization of established authority" (p. 53).

[18] The idea at its heart, of the mediation of opposites, was seen to be a central theme of the dialogue as early as Westermayer (1875). Gonzalez (esp. 1995) is the only contemporary commentator to draw on this idea, though without explicitly appealing to this sense of 'loosening'. My reading builds on his and in the process diverges from it in important ways that will be indicated throughout. In particular, I disagree with Gonzalez's overall assessment that Socrates carries out the project of the *Lysis* with "extremism" (2000, p. 389). For example, Gonzalez is one of the few commentators to side with Vlastos (1973) in seeing one of the central consequences of the dialogue's argument to be that Lysis' parents don't love him (cf. 2000, p. 381). I will argue that, while the dialogue contrasts the type of φιλία that Socrates establishes with Lysis with that between the boy and his parents, it does not do so to the exclusive of the possibility of the latter. Part of the task of the *Lysis*, I will argue, it precisely to show how friendship *as it conventionally understood* is possible in the first place.

[19] Burkert (1985, p. 158 ff.) provides a summary of the role of Hermes in Greek religion. Haden (1983) offers the most detailed account of the god's significance in the *Lysis*, yet as Gonzalez (2005, p. 38) points out, Haden's analysis does not go beyond exploring its sexual connotations.

god will become a central theme. Upon Socrates' entrance into the wrestling school (206d), we are told that the festival marks a special occasion when both younger men (οἳ νεανίσκοι) and boys (οἱ παῖδες) are intermingled (ἀνομεμειγμένοι) in the same place (206d) — suggesting that the two forms of human relationships that are first emergent at these two transitional ages, ἔρως and φιλία, as well as the problems inherent to each of them, will become 'intermingled' as well.

Hermes-related motifs also importantly shape Socrates' role in the dialogue. As the god of boundary-crossing, Hermes was also the protector of travellers and messengers, and he himself was the appointed convoy between the gods and mortals. As was noted at the outset (p. 1), the dialogue opens with Socrates cast in the role of a traveller, on his way from the Academy to the Lyceum.[20] Yet Socrates also understands himself to be a sort of convoy, as is evinced by his stage-setting assertion (at 204b9-c2) that he possesses a divinely dispensed knowledge of erotic matters, one which he attempts to impart to Hippothales through a demonstration with Lysis. Socrates will later identify himself as a lover as well (211d-212a), who, like Hippothales, is in pursuit of his own love interest. But uniquely, his love pursuit will serve to bridge the two forms of relationships, being an erotic passion (πάνυ ἐρωτικῶς) for a "good friend" (φίλον ἀγαθὸν).

Dramatic details such as these and the primary sense of 'loosening' that they invoke, I will argue, indicate a unifying argumentative structure underlying the *Lysis*. It is centered upon both ἔρως and φιλία, which, in their conventional forms, are revealed to be not only inherently problematic but also opposed to each other. The dialogue attempts to resolve these problems through, on the one hand, a relinquishing of certain traditional aspects of

[20] There is evidence that there were altars to Hermes or 'Herms' in both places. Cf. Guthrie, p. 89; Race, p. 1; Hayden, 348-9; and Burkhart, p. 185.

both forms of relations, while at the same time preserving other features central to each of them through their mutual integration or assimilation under a broader, more inclusive notion of friendly love.

What this argumentative structure suggests, I will contend, is that more than merely a 'transitional dialogue', the *Lysis* is in fact a dialogue *about* transitions. In particular, it is about those transitions that mark the emergence of ἔρως and φιλία, the problems posed by these relations in their conventional forms, and the conceptual transformations necessary to overcome these problems.

1. The Argument of the Dissertation

The most systematic attempts to understand the *Lysis* in this way have taken one of two general approaches: reading the dialogue as assimilating ἔρως to φιλία; or contrastingly, seeing it as reinterpreting φιλία in a way that brings it closer to ἔρως.

On the first approach, the purpose of the dialogue's opening conversation with Hippothales concerning ἔρως has been understood as either intended to dismiss ἔρως as a defective form of φιλία, or to show how erotic love represents in some way a precondition for genuine friendship. To some, what is problematic about ἔρως as depicted here is that it represents a crude form of friendly love rooted in instrumental value. Despite his best intentions, the manner in which Hippothales attempts to establish a relationship with Lysis betrays a basic failure to consider the boy's well-being; instead, it treats him like a passive object of pleasure and trophy piece.[21] To others, what Hippothales' ἔρως for Lysis epitomizes is a rudimentary view of attraction *per se*.[22] It explains the wish or desire for a

[21] E.g. Hoerber (1959) and more recently Curzer (2014).
[22] According to Bordt, the point of "the conversation between Hippothales and Socrates [is] not only [to introduce] the main subject into the dialogue, the question of friendship and love, but also [to refute] one

relationship with another person that must first exist before any such relationship can be formed. Yet, as Hippothales' failed emotive attempts to win over Lysis are taken to indicate,[23] pure attraction on its own is not enough to establish and build up a relationship. What must be added, and what Socrates goes on to introduce, are the elements of thought and rationality required to enter into a discussion with another person about the proper forms of love and friendship.

Yet, while this general approach offers an explanation for the dialogue's opening discussion of erotic love, it also raises further questions that it struggles to address. The prologue contains more than enough clues to suggest that ἔρως isn't meant to serve merely as a negative counterpoint to φιλία. As the details of his introduction and his initial questions to Hippothales suggest, Socrates himself is an ἐραστής (the traditional term for 'lover') in pursuit of καλοὶ (beautiful boys). Moreover, while it is true that the dialogue subsequently drops ἔρως to focus on φιλία, central aspects of the former reemerge. If the *Lysis*' central strategy is one of assimilating ἔρως to φιλία, why does the final third of the dialogue focus on *irreciprocal* φιλία? And why does Socrates himself go on to stress at the dialogue's dramatic climax that there is a distinction to be drawn between a true or genuine (γνησίος) ἐραστής as opposed to a pretend (προσποίητος) one (222a-b)?[24]

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extremely popular theory about what constitutes love and friendship — the idea that love is nothing but an intense feeling" (2000, p. 160 ff.). In line with his reconstructive approach (cf. fn. 9 above), however, this theory serves as an important element in the general outline of love and friendship that Plato develops: "Emotions and feeling give a reason for wanting a friendship but never an explanation for the friendship itself. …. Feelings can explain the wish for friendship but never the friendship itself" (p. 160).

[23] As Bordt notes, Hippothales' attempts at seduction "follow from [his] views about friendship and love. If one thinks that love is nothing but a feeling, the only adequate way to express the feeling is to write poetry and love-songs" (2000, p. 160).

[24] While Bordt does read the final third of the dialogue as aiming to contribute to a larger view of φιλία, he ultimately sees the *Lysis* to be unsuccessful in reconciling reciprocal and irreciprocal forms of friendly love. Cf. fn. 32 below. In large part, I will argue, this is attributable to the fact that Bordt fails to identify the distinctness of the problems associated with each ἔρως and φιλία from the dialogue's outset, problems which the rest of the dialogue aims to address.

The second approach, on which the *Lysis* is seen opposingly as reconceiving φιλία in light of ἔρως, offers an alternative explanation for why the dialogue begins with a discussion of erotic love. This reading takes the fact that the work develops progressively into a meditation on irreciprocal φιλία — understood as a love for a 'first friend' (πρῶτον φίλον) that is the ultimate object of all our actions — to suggest that what fundamentally unifies the *Lysis* is its attempt to offer a general theory of attraction or motivation.[25] The purpose of the dialogue's opening discussion of ἔρως is to demonstrate how it expresses the basic *form* of all types of attraction. Despite the fact that Hippothales fails to grasp the proper object of love and the proper manner of appropriating it, his condition nevertheless reveals what is essential to all motivation: that it is necessarily irreciprocal in nature, aimed at a good that cannot return our love in kind. Ἔρως is dropped as an explicit theme in the dialogue when Socrates moves on to show how, properly conceived, our relationship to this good is best understood as a form of φιλία; namely a love of wisdom (φιλο-σοφία). However, on this reading, this relationship is consistently understood from beginning to end as fundamentally irreciprocal in nature.[26]

Yet, whereas the previous approach leaves unexplained the dialogue's later focus on irreciprocal φιλία, this one gives rise to the opposite problem. Just as the first approach struggles to account for the reemergence of considerations of erotic love later in the

[25] The *Lysis*, according to Penner and Rowe (2005), presents "… an argument that springs from, describes, and partly justifies a specific theory – not just about friendship, but about love, including and especially the 'romantic' sort, and desire, all of which turns out to be treated together under the umbrella of *philia*. It is theory, indeed, about what drives our actions in general" (p. xii). See also Reshotko (1997): "[If] we read the *Lysis* with the sole intention of understanding Socrates' views concerning when human beings might properly be called friends to one another, we will likely be confused and disappointed. … Socrates' discussion focuses on a general theory of attraction" (p. 1). Contrast Curzer (2014) here, who argues: "there is no comprehensive account of desire in the *Lysis*" (p. 363, fn. 28).

[26] According to Penner and Rowe (2005), "[Plato] shows absolutely no interest in the general idea of reciprocity in the *Lysis*, except as something that crops up and immediately disappears in the course of a dialectical argument" (p. 56).

dialogue, so too this strategy is confronted with the fact that concerns about ordinary, interpersonal φιλία remain to the dialogue's very end.[27] In short, if the focus of the dialogue is non-reciprocal desire, why does Socrates end by acknowledging the newly-kindled reciprocal friendship between himself and the boys (223b)?

Collectively, these questions are in fact symptomatic of a deeper problem shared by both interpretative approaches. Despite their opposing strategies for showing how the opening discussion of ἔρως prepares for its broader investigation of φιλία, they similarly overlook the essential differences drawn at the dialogue's outset between the two relations, differences that mutually shape the argumentative structure of the *Lysis*.[28]

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[27] For both approaches, this general problem arises from tendency to conflate the problems of ἔρως and φιλία or overlook one of them entirely. Bordt speaks of Hippothales' ἔρως as representing "one extremely popular theory about what constitutes love *and* friendship" (p. 160, my italics). In doing so, he conflates ἔρως and φιλία as one subject matter, first here and again elsewhere. In their brief discussion of the prologue (p. 3-11) at the outset of their commentary, Penner and Rowe make note of Socrates' initial exchange with Lysis and Menexenus to highlight the eristic nature of the boys' φιλία. Curiously, however, they draw no further significance from this exchange, nor do they return to it in their later re-reading of the prologue (p. 189-92), which focuses exclusively on Socrates' relation to Hippothales.

[28] Bolotin's reading, by contrast, takes its cue from the characterizations of *both* ἔρως *and* φιλία found in the dialogue's prologue. On his reading, these characterizations are meant to dramatize a problematic tension that arises among friends out of a conflict of desires: between a desire for love — both that of another person and of one's own self — on the one hand, and for honor and community on the other (see esp, p. 73-82). As he puts it: "Both the desire for honor and the desire for love lead a man to be discontended with his place in his immediate circle. As a result, circles of friends… are always threatened with discord and with disintegration" (p. 74). This tension is first seen to play itself out through the depiction of the two older youths. We learn almost immediately that Hippothales' erotic passion has not only demanded his peers' attention (through his unceasing talk of Lysis: 204c-d) but at the same time also caused him to alienate them (by seeking the advice of an outsider in Socrates: 206b-c). These actions can, in turn, be seen to provoke the indignation and jealousy of Ctesippus, who goes on to ridicule the former's attempts at erotic seduction (205b-d). Hippothales and Ctesippus' relationship, on this reading, is paralleled in important ways by that between the two younger boys, Lysis and Menexenus. While the latters' relationship is not threatened by one of its member's erotic desire, it is by an analogous desire on the part of both boys to assert their own self-love or self-regard, a desire expressed through the wish to distinguish one's self as the oldest, noblest, and most beautiful (207b10-c12). Socrates' suggestion that it is wisdom and justice which are most of all characteristic of genuine friends (207d1-2) is seen on this reading to be hinting at a possible solution to this conflict of desires, a solution that the rest of the dialogue is an attempt to explore. On Bolotin's reading, wisdom does not ultimately serve as a way out of this conflict, at least in the sense of serving as a direct bridge between irreciprocal and reciprocal love. Rather, he contends, the way out is achieved indirectly, through the implicit suggestion at the dialogue's end that true self-regard or self-love consists in a friendship with one's own good, understood as the perfection of one's soul through wisdom.

However, while this third approach to a unified reading of the *Lysis* tries to pay appropriate due to the prologue's contradistinction between erotic love and friendship, it in fact conflates the problems raised there

While, like these two approaches, I too think that the dialogue aims to address problems introduced in the prologue concerning both ἔρως and φιλία as they are conventionally understood and practiced, I will argue that the *Lysis* articulates distinct problems inherent to each of them. The problem with ἔρως concerns how to *establish* a relationship between a lover and his beloved. Contrastingly, the problem with conventional φιλία is not a matter of establishing a relationship, but instead of *maintaining* one that aims at the mutual benefit of both of its members. Moreover, like the first two interpretative approaches, I too believe that the dialogue attempts to treat the problems associated with ἔρως and φιλία by reinterpreting these relations in a way that aligns them closer together. However, I will argue that the *Lysis*' strategy consists in a two-way assimilation of central aspects of both ἔρως and φιλία under a broader notion of friendly love. Socrates will transform ἔρως by showing that it requires a new form of communication with a beloved, one that adopts in part the competitive nature of the boys' φιλία. At the same time, he will demonstrate that genuine φιλία is rooted in an individual recognition of one's own lack of a good, a recognition that resembles Hippothales' erotic condition.

Understood in this context, I will argue that the fact the dialogue itself ends 'in transition', without an explicitly endorsed answer to the question 'who is a φίλος?', should not be taken as a sign that it fails to offer solutions to those problems. On my reading, the

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about them as a *single* problem, understood in terms of a conflict between satisfying one's strictly self-interested desires and one's desire for community. Yet if *this* is the problem that the rest of the dialogue is meant to address, what is the point of stressing — as the prologue clearly does — the obvious contrasts between Hippothales' ἔρως for Lysis on the hand, and Lysis and Menexenus' φιλία on the other? Hippothales is Lysis' lover, not his friend; he competes *for* Lysis, in particular, for his beauty "as an ornament" to himself (205e). By contrast, Menexenus is Lysis' friend, not his lover; he competes *with* Lysis, not only with respect to his age and status, but also, importantly, his beauty (207c). Like this third approach, I too think that the dialogue aims to address problems introduced in the prologue concerning both ἔρως and φιλία as they are conventionally understood and practiced. Unlike this reading, however, I will argue that the *Lysis* articulates distinct problems inherent to each of them.

Lysis purposefully resists offering such an answer that would entail ἔρως and φιλία can somehow be brought to a full realization or completion. Instead, it advocates a new understanding of those relationships on which they are inherently transitional in nature, an understanding that is part of a mature, on-going philosophical life.

2. Synopsis of Chapters

This dissertation falls two parts. The first part — chapters one to three — situates the philosophical project of the *Lysis*, as it is set out in the first half of the dialogue, within its cultural context. The second part — chapters four to seven — explains how Socrates carries out this project in full through the course of the second half of the dialogue.

Chapter One examines the social institutions of love and friendship in classical Athens with the aim of elucidating the nature of the *Lysis*' critique of them. Upon canvassing the main features of both ἔρως and φιλία in their conventional guises, I will go on to show how these relationships in their various forms are dramatically depicted in the dialogue. As this examination will reveal, pivotal to understanding both types of relationships is the manner in which they were seen to serve or benefit their participants. Subsequently, I will go on to examine the role that utility or benefit played in both erotic and friendly relationships in Athenian culture. Doing so, I will suggest, enables us to better characterize the nature of Plato's cultural critique in the *Lysis*. Rather than revisionist in the sense of proposing an outright rejection of convention, I will argue that the project of the *Lysis* is better understood as a clarifying endeavor, one aimed to show what the conventional understanding of these very notions entails once they are subjected to philosophical scrutiny.

Chapters Two and Three examine what the dialogue diagnoses to be problematic about ἔρως and φιλία in their conventional forms, as well as the manner in which it purports to resolve these problems. Understanding the *Lysis*' strategy here will involve a close study of both the dialogue's prologue (ch. 2) and Socrates' subsequent, extended conversation with Lysis (ch. 3).

I will begin by showing how the prologue serves two important functions in the larger project of the dialogue. First, it provides dramatic representations of traditional ἔρως and φιλία. These representations not only highlight the focal characteristics of each type of relation but also indicate how these characteristics create inherent problems for these relations. I will refer to these problems as ones of 'engagement' and 'association': the problem of how to establish an erotic relationship with one's beloved, on the one hand; and the problem of how to maintain a friendship, on the other. Second, the prologue provides clues as to Socrates' strategy for addressing these problems. This strategy involves an adoption and modification of central aspects of each relation as a way of rectifying what is problematic about the other.

I will go on to show how the primary purpose of Socrates' demonstration with Lysis is to carry out the aforementioned strategy. Socrates addresses the problem of engagement by employing a modified form of the discourse typical of conventional φιλία as it is exemplified by Lysis and Menexenus. Socrates employs a form of discourse through which he shows Lysis that he is lacking in something, in this case wisdom, through which alone he can be useful, and as a result, loveable. By showing Lysis not only that he is in fact useless, but also how in turn he might become useful, Socrates demonstrates to the boy the benefit of associating with a genuine ἐραστής. At the same time, Socrates addresses the problem of

association by employing a modified form of conventional erotic discourse as displayed by Hippothales. By demonstrating to Lysis that the common basis of all friendship is an erotic desire for wisdom, Socrates initiates the boy into a form of discourse that reinforces one's membership within the class or group of its practitioners, namely, lovers of wisdom.

In addition to explaining how Socrates' conversation with Lysis addresses the problems of the prologue, this reading also allows us to see how it serves as a bridge between the prologue and the rest of the dialogue. What Socrates demonstrates *per exemplum* through his conversation with Lysis, he will further develop dialectically through the remainder of the dialogue. The first half of the dialogue is not only promissory to what follows, but also mirrors in its actions (ἔργα) what the second half will show through argumentation (λόγοι); namely, that the problems of ἔρως and φιλία cannot be resolved in isolation from one another.

Chapters Four and Five examine the *Lysis*' dialectical engagement with the conventional understanding of the φίλος as it is reflected in both ordinary usage and the canonical tradition. Understanding the *Lysis*' critique requires making sense of Socrates' notorious one-on-one conversation with Menexenus (ch. 4) as well as the company's examination of 'the views of the wise', those views of the φίλος found in the works of the poets (ch. 5).

At best, Socrates' discussion with Menexenus has been viewed an exercise in eristic; at worst, it has been regarded as an inquiry based on a conceptual confusion that infects much of the rest of the dialogue. However, if there is a confusion to be attributed here, I will argue, it lies not with Plato's use of conventional Greek but rather with his contemporary readers. Socrates' inquiry into the conventional usage of the term 'φίλος' constitutes a 'back to bedrock' strategy that only makes sense within a proper understanding of the type

of cultural critique undertaken in the *Lysis*. What a careful consideration of the text shows is that the "impossible conclusion" (213b3) of this conversation stems not from any confusion on Socrates or Plato's part but rather from the criterion of explanation presupposed at the inquiry's outset. The point of this inquiry is not to expose a problem with this criterion but rather to show the limitations of an inquiry based on considerations of ordinary usage alone.

The examination of the views of the wise has been seen as a pivotal point in the dialogue on a revisionist reading of the *Lysis*' project. On this reading, the fact that Socrates ostensibly shows that the good (οἱ ἀγαθοὶ) cannot be φίλοι on the grounds that they cannot be useful or beneficial to each other must indicate rather that φιλία itself cannot be predicated on instrumental value. However, I will argue that this approach misrepresents Plato's main strategy. Rather than a rejection of these qualities, the point of this examination is to show how such conventional views that takes the role of utility or benefit in φιλία for granted nevertheless cannot explain how in fact these concepts play the fundamental role in friendly relations that they do. The upshot of this examination is not that utility or benefit has no place within a coherent account of the φίλος, but rather that conventional views themselves, even canonical ones, lack the conceptual resources to explain how beneficial relations between φίλοι are possible.

Despite their aporetic conclusions, the *Lysis*' investigations into conventional usage and the canonical tradition yields two important results. The first is that conventional understandings of the φίλος fail by their own terms; they cannot explain how φιλία, as it is conventionally understood, is possible. The second is that, in order to explain how indeed it is possible, we must return to the conceptual domain of ἔρως.

Chapters Six and Seven examine the *Lysis*' attempt to show not only how φιλία as conventionally understood is possible, but also the limitations of this understanding as well. This will entail coming to grips with the two accounts of the friend that Socrates himself advances for consideration. According to the first account, which I will refer to as 'the remedial view of the φίλος', friendship exists between the good and what Socrates calls 'the-neither-good-nor-bad' or an intermediate agent, someone or thing that loves some good on account of the presence of some evil, whether physical or psychic (ch. 6). On the final account, Socrates adopts a view that appeals to a notion last referenced at the end of the first half of the dialogue; on this view, the φίλος is what is οἰκεῖον or akin to us (ch. 7).

I will argue that the remedial account of the φίλος is in fact an explicit articulation of the conventional view of friendly love that Socrates appeals to in his earlier, private conversation with Lysis. This view explains not only how the types of beneficial relations constitutive of conventional φιλία are possible, but also how the ultimate source of such benefit, or 'first friend', is some type of knowledge or wisdom. Yet while the remedial account addresses problems previously left unresolved, it also gives rise to new ones. In particular, it is incapable of accounting for instances of reciprocal φιλία, the type that Socrates and Lysis appear to exemplify *par excellence*. Recognizing this point, I will suggest, provides a key insight into the nature of Socrates' subsequent critique of the remedial view. The limits of this account derive from the fact that it cannot explain what might be valuable about the first friend other than its remedial qualities; that is, it cannot explain why we might love it for some intrinsic qualities. What Socrates' critique shows is that understanding all forms of friendly love calls for a distinction between two types of

knowledge or wisdom: between technical knowledge or expertise and a distinct type of uniquely philosophical wisdom.

Socrates' final view of the friend as what is akin or belongs to us serves to explain two possibilities left unaccounted for on the remedial view. First, it explains how we can love something in a non-remedial way, i.e. for its own sake or intrinsically; a love that has, as its unique object, philosophical wisdom. On the basis of this type of love, this account also explains how genuine reciprocity is possible through a mutual love of this wisdom. I will go on to argue that key to understanding the final lesson of the *Lysis* is to view it in the context of the theme of transitions with which the dialogue began. In the case of both conventional ἔρως and φιλία, it is the understanding of 'transition' presupposed on these conceptions that results in their associated problems. Socrates' identification of philosophical wisdom with the notion of the akin reveals what was problematic about the understanding of 'transition' or 'success' that these concepts presupposed in the first place.

As the variety of conflicting interpretations bear witness — the present study being no exception — the *Lysis* is a difficult work to characterize. The appendix of this dissertation will subsequently be devoted to a consideration of the place of the *Lysis* within the Platonic corpus. After reviewing both the 'developmental' and 'unitarian' approaches to the dialogues as a whole, I will suggest that, while important, these considerations on their own are unable to resolve the question of the *Lysis*' status. What is required in this context, I will argue, is a consideration of the type of problems that the dialogue both addresses and leaves unresolved. I will consider what I take my dissertation to have shown to be two such questions concerning love and friendship that Plato leaves unanswered in the *Lysis*. The first concerns the source of our attraction to the ultimate object of φιλία. What is it about

the good *per se* that Plato thinks makes it attractive to us in a qualitatively different way than remedial goods? The second concerns Socrates' explanation, or lack thereof, of our desiderative shortcomings. Why, given our desire for this object, do we largely fail to appropriate it or to make it our own? Through an examination of how these questions arise and what resources the *Lysis* offers towards their resolution, I will argue that the dialogue is, most of all, a testament to the versatility of the Platonic corpus. While the *Lysis* can indeed be read prospectively, as looking forward to doctrines developed in other dialogues, particularly the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, it can also be read retrospectively, as implicitly presupposing such doctrines developed more fully elsewhere.

PART I

CHAPTER ONE

Conventional Athenian Conceptions of Love and Friendship

As was noted in the introductory chapter, a main tenet of this dissertation is the view that, through the course of the *Lysis*, Plato reshapes traditional conceptions of both erotic love and friendship in ways that overcome problems inherent to each of them. This presupposes that the views exemplified through the characters of the dialogue are in fact representative of traditional or conventional views of ἔρως and φιλία. But how can we know this to be the case? Which features of these relationships as they are depicted in the dialogue suggest that Plato is dealing with ordinary or received views of such relationships? The answers to these questions have broad implications for an interpretation of the work as a whole. For if the views of love and friendship represented in the *Lysis* are not in fact ordinary or typical ones, then, while the dialogue may well innovate with respect to what is problematic about them, such innovations would not necessarily represent a critique of traditional or conventional standards *per se*.

As will be seen, however, an examination of the primary sources for conventional views of love and friendship in ancient Greek culture in fact suggest that the views represented by Hippothales (ἔρως), Lysis and Menexenus (peer φιλία), and Lysis' parents (parental φιλία) exhibit features that were central to Athenian cultural norms.[1] The initial two sections of this chapter will examine the main features of both ἔρως and φιλία in their conventional guises as well as explore their representation in the dialogue itself. As this examination will reveal, pivotal to understanding both types of relationships were the manner in which they

[1] For the purposes of this discussion, I will focus on the conventional conceptions of erotic love and friendship in Athenian culture. In some but not all respects these conceptions overlap with Pan-Hellenic cultural norms more broadly. I will indicate where they do overlap and also in which respects Athenian practices were distinct or accentuated relative to Greek norms more generally.

were seen to serve or benefit their participants. Subsequently, in section three, I will examine the role that utility or benefit played in both erotic and friendly relationships in classical Athenian culture. Doing so, I will suggest, enables us to better characterize the nature of Plato's cultural critique in the *Lysis*. Rather than an outright rejection of convention, I will argue that the project of the *Lysis* is a clarifying one; that is, one aimed to show what the conventional conceptions of ἔρως and φιλία entail once they have been subjected to philosophical examination.

1. Conventional Ἔρως

The *Lysis* opens with a discussion about erotic love (203a1-204c2) and quickly characterizes its two main participants, Socrates and Hippothales, in terms of their relative experience in erotic matters or lack thereof. But what constitutes a lover, let alone a successful one? And how exactly was erotic love differentiated from friendly love or affection? It is these basic questions with which the present examination must begin.

(a) Ἔρως as a Species of Desire

Ἔρως, first and foremost, was a desiderative state not wholly confined to sexual desire.[2] In both pre-classical and classical Greece, ἔρως applied more broadly than just to cases of

[2] The foundational work in the area of ancient Greek love is Dover's classic *Greek Homosexuality* (1978). Dover's pioneering work established a paradigm for thinking about Greek views of love. According to Dover, (1) the Greeks primarily conceived of erotic love in terms of homosexual acts, and (2) these acts could primarily be understood in terms of a power dynamic of domination and submission. Building on Dover's work, a number of prominent scholars went on to further argue that in fact (3) the word 'homosexuality' does not reflect a historical reality that was true of the Greeks. See esp. Foucault (1978), Veyne (1978), Halperin (1990). Over the past two decades, a reevaluation of the Greek conception of love has challenged all three of these theses, especially the work of Davidson (2007).

Dover argued that the word 'ἔρως' primarily referred to male homosexual acts, in particular those acts performed within a pederastic relationship. While acknowledging that the visual and textual evidence was generally reticent when it came to explicitly homosexual acts, he maintained that in many cases such evidence could be taken to either gesture towards or euphemistically refer to more explicit 'concrete realities': "it is only when we insist, as we must, on translating such words as 'pursue' and 'accomplish' into concrete realities that the extent of the disguise which convention imposed upon the expression of homosexual eros becomes apparent" (p. 59). Moreover, Dover argued, underlying these realities was a social

sexual or even interpersonal desire.[3] Rather, it was defined in terms of two broad features: its passive and irreciprocal nature.

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order consisting of 'active' and 'passive' roles in which older men were expected to sexually dominate younger men (cf. esp. 100-109). Like Dover, Veyne stressed the distinction between active and passive roles in Greek homosexuality. But whereas Dover saw these roles as universal in application (see esp. p. 105), Veyne argued that this active/passive emphasis was a culturally specific one, in particular, a feature of Mediterranean societies obsessed while masculinity or 'machismo'. According to Veyne, this resulted in a 'sexual naivety' such that the gender of the person in the passive role was of no consequence for understanding the nature of such relationships: "[The] Greeks…. had no idea what homosexuality was. They did not classify sexual conduct according to sex, but according to social class and the categories of activity and passivity" (p. 17-18). This thesis was developed one step further by Halperin, who argued not simply that the Greeks had no conception of homosexuality, but that the absence of such a conception in Greek culture showed that it was not a biological category; homosexual and heterosexual attraction, strictly speaking, only emerged through much later cultural modes of distinguishing them.

In his comprehensive study, Davidson takes issue with all three of these theses. The problem with (1) is not only that there is little explicit evidence that supports Dover's 'euphemistic' mode of interpreting the primary visual and textual sources, but also that there are numerous examples in which the term 'ἔρως' and its cognates cannot possibly have a sexual connotation. For example, the primary textual sources contain examples of these terms applied not to sexual objects but to such abstract or non-personal objects as tyranny, expeditions, or cities such as Athens. "How can you understand Greek citizenship if you think that by calling them *erastai* Pericles is inviting his fellow citizens to 'sodomize the city'?" (Davidson, p. 104). A common strategy for accommodating these exceptional cases has been to argue that the primary meanings of these terms were their sexual connotations and that these other uses of them were secondary, metaphorical extensions of their application. However, these non-sexual cases could equally be explained by the fact that 'ἔρως' and its cognates had a broader primary connotation to begin with.

The difficulty with (2), Davidson points out, is that while sexual language can be understood as metaphors of dominance and submission (as it is in ours and other languages, ex. 'Up yours', 'Screw you', etc.), such usages are conspicuously absent in ancient Greek. "The Greeks commonly referred to sex in lots of ways – as taking pleasure, wrestling, blending, a 'mixing' (*mixis*), 'associating' (*homilia*), 'being close' (*plesiazo*), 'being with' (*sunousia*), 'marrying' (*gamo*), 'agitating' (*kineo*) – and, like people in many other cultures, including not so long ago our own, they worried about an exchange of vital fluids that might involve a dangerous drying out or loss of substance for the man, but never as 'fucking someone' in the modern sense with its modern connotations" (Davidson, p. 119-20).

Finally, the problem with (3), Davidson argues, is that it rests on an absolutist form of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis "that languages build quite separate worlds for the people who speak them" (p. 137). Davidson quotes Sapir himself who, in criticizing this ultra-strong position, wrote: '"While it may be true, [Sapir] continues, that the character of a culture very largely determines 'the externalized system of attitudes and habits which forms the visible "personality" of a given individual…. It does not follow … that strictly social determinants, tending, as they do, to give visible form and meaning, in a cultural sense, to each of the thousands of modalities of experience which sum up the personality, can define the fundamental structure of the personality…'"' (Davidson, p. 151).

[3] In Homer, the basic meaning of 'ἔρως' is mere 'desire', to which only context adds the sexual element. Cf. Ludwig (2002), pp. 125-6. A passage that demonstrates this well is where Menelaus complains about the Trojans' insatiability for war: "In all things there is satiety: both in sleep and lovemaking [φιλότης] and sweet singing and faultless dancing; one wishes to satisfy ἔρως for [all of] these more than for war" (*Il*. 13.636–9). Here ἔρως extends its meaning to include apparently trivial pursuits such as singing and dancing in addition to "love" or "lovemaking" (φιλότης) and war. For the Homeric use and senses of φιλότης, cf. section 2(a) below. Herodotus makes use of erotic terminology to describe the lust for power: "Tyranny has many ἐρασταὶ" (3.53). In his famous memorialization of those who had died in the first year of the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 2.34-46), Pericles invited her citizens to be ἐρασταὶ of Athens (2.43.1). Thucydides, describing the war-hungry Athenian armada sailing to Sicily, writes: "ἔρως fell upon all alike to sail forth" (6.24.3). In

Distinctive of ἔρως was the manner in which it was seen to be all-consuming and often uncontrollable.[4] A lover (ἐραστὴς) was typically depicted as someone who was sleep deprived, unable to carry out their ordinary daily affairs, and in general, someone temporarily lacking in their otherwise common sense.[5] Also distinctive of ἔρως is the fact that it was recognized to be a desiderative state constitutively one-sided or irreciprocal in direction.[6] Ἔρως inherently involved some form of distance or separation between a lover and the object of love that the lover aimed to bridge.[7] In fact, even when an ἐραστὴς was successful in their pursuit, that distance could never be completely eliminated. For while a lover's affection might be positively received by their beloved (ἐρώμενος or ἐρώμενη), it

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Euripides, an 'ἐραστὴς of children' is not a paedophile but someone 'eager for' sons (*Supp*. 1088), while Aristophanes refer to an 'ἐραστὴς πραγμάτων', literary, 'a lover of things people are up to', as another word for an informer or a 'busybody' (*Peace* 191).

[4] "'Ερως' is closely related to a number of other terms: 'ἀγάπη', 'πόθος', 'ἵμερος', and 'ἐπιθυμία'. 'ἀγαπάω' can also be used to say 'I love you', but in the sense of 'proud or affectionate regard', rather than implying the impassioned desire and yearning for intimacy associated with ἔρως. 'πόθος' expresses 'a longing', 'a yearning, or 'a crying out for'; it differs from ἔρως insofar as it lacks a targeted focus or specific object of affection. "Ἱμερος' can best be translated as a 'captivation' or 'sudden urge'; it differs from ἔρως insofar as it is directed at an object that is already present or imminent. In Greek mythology, Ἔρως is sometimes the brother, sometimes the father, of Πόθος and Ἵμερος, and he seems to combine aspects of the latter two: the energy of ἵμερος, the distance and longing of πόθος (Cf. Davidson, pp. 11-14). When used in relation to 'ἔρως', 'ἐπιθυμία' corresponds to pure physical 'lust' without the desire for intimacy implied by 'ἔρως'. Cf. Aristotle, *Topics* 146a, *Prior Analytics* 68a-b, and Davidson's discussion, pp. 34-5.

[5] Both pictorially and literarily, Ἔρως is often depicted as a mischievous god, equipped with either a bow and arrow or cattle-prod (Davidson, p. 14). The first represents the infective nature of erotic love, while the latter represents its driving or impelling nature.

[6] One of the dedications at the cult of Ἔρως under the Erechtheum in Athens provides insight into its irreciprocal nature. The dedication marked the spot where the youth Timagoras had leapt from the Acropolis on top of his lover, Meletus, who had just previous jumped to his own death upon being spurning by his beloved. Upon witnessing Meletus' suicide, Timagoras became overcome with ἀντεράσθεις or 'love in return' for his ill-fated suitor. What is important to note in this context, however, is that it is only after Meletus had committed suicide that TImagoras fell in love with him in return – not concurrently. In fact, rather than 'love in return', 'ἀντέρως' more often means 'contrary Ἔρως', the daemon that Queen Dido called upon when Aeneas left her (Servius ad *Aen*. 4.520). Even in Aristophanes' genealogical account of ἔρως in Plato's *Symposium*, in which he claims that lovers are halves of a once-united whole pinning for reunification with their severed half, ἔρως is irreciprocal: "Men who are sections of the male…. [are] born to be the lovers of boys (παιδεραστὴς) or the willing mate of a man (φιλεραστὴς), eagerly greeting his own kind" (191e-92b). Cf. Davidson pp. 17-18, 23-4. On the relation between ἔρως and φιλία, cf. section 2(a) below.

[7] Eros' wings are suggestive in this respect; like Hermes (the god of travel, boundaries), Iris (the rainbow), and Dawn, Eros belongs to the class of deities associated with movement and transition.

could not be returned in kind. Mutual or concurrent ἔρως, for the Greeks, was not a conceptual possibility.

This passivity and sense of distance distinctive of ἔρως was conveyed by the fact that the verb 'ἐρᾶν' took a genitive indirect object. This facilitated an understanding of an ἐραστὴς as a passive victim or bystander, someone who had found themselves, without any of their own doing, in a state of dependency, 'hung up' on someone or thing else.[8]

(b) Ἐραστὴς and Ἐρώμενος

Among interpersonal erotic love, the same basic features appear to have largely defined both heterosexual and homosexual relations, and in the case of the latter, both male and female.[9] Where these relations differed most, especially heterosexual and male-

[8] In the *Cratylus*, Plato offers an etymology of 'ἔρως' that reinforces this understanding. Following his discussions of πόθος ['"a desire for what is elsewhere (που) or absent] and ἵμερος [the name given to πόθος "when its object is present" because "it flows with a rush (ἱέμενος ῥεῖ) and sets on (ἐφιέμενος)" the object], Socrates offers an etymology of 'ἔρως': "ἔρως is so called *because it flows in from outside*, that is to say, the flow doesn't belong to the person who has it, but is introduced into him through his eyes. Because of this it was called 'ἔσρος' ('influx') in ancient times, when they used 'ο' for 'ω', but now that 'ο' is changed to 'ω', it is called 'ἔρως' because it 'flows in' from without'" (420a-b, my italics). In other words, the ἐραστὴς is penetrated 'from without' by ἔρως.

[9] In the case of both heterosexual and homosexual relationships, ἔρως is defined in terms of its passive and one-directional nature. Ἔρως as a deity is present in heterosexual mythological settings. In the Judgment of Paris, it is ἔρως who is depicted as convincing Paris to choose Aphrodite's gift, Helen. Moreover, Phaedrus explains that it was "for the sake of love [ἔρως]" that Alcestis died to bring her husband, Admetus, back from the dead (Pl. *Symp*. 179d).

At the same time, while Ἔρως himself is never defined as 'a god of homosexual love', he does appear to complement his mother, Ἀφροδίτη. While she, as a god of love in general, embodies the object of desire for women, Ἔρως can be seen as the embodiment of the object of love for boys (cf. Davidson, p. 14). Moreover, one important respect in which these relationships did differ is in terms of the autonomy of the respective ἐρώμενοι or ἐρώμεναι. Boys were still considered autonomous subjects, free to grant favor to whomever they wished, and couldn't be compelled without assent. Greek women, by contrast, were not autonomous but rather were constrained by law and contract. "There is no faith in relations with a respectable woman because she has no option but to 'be faithful'" (Davidson, p. 46; cf. Dover pp. 100-104).

The sources for female homosexually also suggest that it too shared many of the same general features of male homosexual ἔρως. One source is Sappho, whose poems address women in much of the same language (ex. pursuits, flights, gifts, etc.) used by male lovers to address their beloveds. Cf. Dover pp. 173-79 and Davidson pp. 401-6. Plutarch (*Life of Lycurgus*, 18.4) also reports that gentlewomen (ἀγαθαὶ γυναῖκαι) loved the maidens of Sparta in the same way as the men, implying formal, publicly recognized same-sex unions. One of the 'Maiden songs' from the poet Alcman (II.73-7) contains a dialogue between Spartan girls in which they admire each other's beauty and fantasize about other girls who are off-limits to them. A fourth example appears in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, book V, in which an anonymous female speaker has a conversation with her girlfriend Leaena, a courtesan, about the "man-like" love of the latter's lesbian clients,

homosexual erotic relationships, was with respect to age: there appears to have been much more of an age gap between heterosexual couples than between those in same-sex relationships.[10] Unlike heterosexual relationships, which were often intergenerational, homosexual relationships never were, and often involved a difference of just a few years.

Rather than discriminating age in terms of birthdays, the Greeks did so in terms of 'age-classes' or 'grades', which were defined by distinct stages of maturity.[11] The Athenians saw the male lifespan as consisting of four phases:[12]

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women "with a male countenance, who don't like undergoing it at the hands of men but get off by cosying up [*plesiazousas*] to women in the way men do." (cf. Davidson, p. 408).

One respect in which female homosexual relationships may have differed from their male counterparts is the degree to which the roles of ἐραστὴς and ἐρώμενος could be interchangeable, although not necessarily concurrently. In fr. 1, Sappho appeals to Aphrodite for help, recalling a prior instance in which her appeal was successful. On that occasion:

> With a smile on your immortal face you asked me what had happened to me this time, why I was calling on you this time, and what I most wished, with heart distracted to be done for me. 'Whom this time am I to persuade to your love? Who wrongs you, Sappho? For even if she flees, soon she will pursue; and if she does not accept gifts, yet she will give; and if she does not love (φιλεῖν), soon she will love even unwilling.' Come to me now too….

As Dover points out, there seems to be "a marked degree of mutual *eros*…. Assumed: the other person, who now refuses gifts and flees, will not merely yield and 'grant favours' but will pursue Sappho and will herself offer gifts. This obliteration of the usual distinction between dominant and a subordinate partner is contrary to what the evidence for Greek male homosexuality would have led us to expect" (Dover, p. 177).

[10] "In medieval Europe, following a pattern laid down by the Romans, marriageable age was twelve for girls and fourteen for boys, and it was only in the Victorian period that the age of consent began gradually to be raised. The Greeks were more or less in line with this pattern in disposing of their daughters" (Davidson, p. 68).

[11] The problem of determining age in ancient Greece is one of the most difficult issues in classic studies and one about which there has been very little consensus. For example, scholars have had difficulty specifying the age designated by the common term ΄μειρακίον' (stripling or young boy): speculation has ranged from seven years old to twenty (ex. Guthrie 1956, p.46; Dover, p.84; Strauss 1993, p.94; Todd, p. 42 n. 2). The most thorough study of the issue is Davidson's (cf. esp. pp. 71-82).

Contributing to this problem, according to Davidson, were three factors. First, "the Greeks, like most pre-modern or non-Western societies, thought about age in a very different way from the way we do ourselves; they were either not very interested or completely uninterested in dates or birth, and did not celebrate annual birthdays" (pp. 71-2). This was in part due to the fact that the Greeks' method for dating permitted only a proximate idea of how old someone was at any particular time. The Greeks followed a lunar calendar, which didn't fall cleanly within a yearly schedule. It required skipping the 'twenty-ninth day' approximately every other month to keep the first day of the month aligned with the new moon.

Second, each polis had its own slightly different method for determining the date and, subsequently, age. Each polis had its own system for deciding when a new moon cycle began and when a day needed to be lost, so that different cities' records often show that they were on slightly different days of the lunar month. Moreover, they started their new years at different times: for example, Athens and Delphi started their new years on the first moon after midsummer, whereas Thebes started it on the first moon after winter solstice.

A. Under-Eighteen: Boys (παῖδες)

B. Eighteen and Nineteen: Striplings or Cadets (μειρακία or νεανίσκοι)

C Twenty+: Men (ἄνδρες)

i. Twenty to Twenty-Nine: Young Men (νέοι)

ii. Thirty+: Seniors (πρεσβῦται)

Pictorial representations, aided by the fact that the classical Greeks did not shave, clearly distinguish between these age-classes in terms of two central features: height and facial hair. A boy (παῖς) is invariably depicted as an undersized male without a beard, while a stripling or cadet (μειρακία or νεανίσκοι) is portrayed as an unbearded male at full-height. Mature men are represented at full-height with beards, while progressively older men are depicted as having longer, fuller beards and receded pectoral muscles.[13]

Ἐρασταὶ — whom, though paradigmatically νέοι, might fall under any of the final three age-classes — were strictly prohibited from having a relationship with a boy until he

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Finally, societies pre-1800 AD reached puberty four or five years later than contemporary western societies. Diet likely played the largest role, both that of the child itself and the mother. For puberty to properly begin, a child must reach a certain body-weight. Perhaps surprisingly, differences in wealth do not appear to have correlated with early onset of puberty. We are told that the emperor Augustus did not celebrate his first shave until here was twenty-three years old (Dio Cassius 48.34,3). Cf. Davidson, pp. 80-1.

But while the Greeks were not very concerned about their actual dates of birth, they were very concerned with precise distinctions of age. For Athenian elites, their age-classes were written on boards in the town center, and later permanently inscribed on bronze. In anthropological terms, the ancient Greeks were an 'age-class society'. The chief mark of such a society is that its members are only assigned an age when they leave childhood, at which point they are separated into age-sets or grades of coevals or peers. Such sets would consist of boys who looked approximately the same age and their members would remain in the same sets for the majority, if not their entirety, of their lives. The level of age-set determined such fundamental features of civic life, such as when a certain set or grade would have the right to participate in certain religious ceremonies, public councils, and war. Cf. Davidson, pp. 74-8.

[12] Davidson, p. 78.

[13] Cf. Davidson, pp. 81-2. As he points out, contrary to the Greek gods of popular modern fantasy, the famous nude statues of Apollo and Hermes, usually lacking a beard, are in fact images of striplings or cadets. So too are the famous *kouroi s*tatues, which depict full-grown bearless males with their left feet forwards, the latter representing their advance away from boyhood towards manhood.

became a stripling or cadet.[14] Wealthy Athenian families had slaves, παιδαγωγοὶ (child-attendants/tutors), whose primary job was to chaperone boys under eighteen.[15] However, an ἐραστὴς was allowed to court his favorite (παιδικὰ) before the latter turned eighteen, so long as the former maintained his physical distance. In fact, erotic courtship of παῖδες was socially encouraged, as the number of ἐρασταὶ a boy had was seen as a sign of his status and beauty.

The primary communal gathering space for boys was the gymnasia (παλαίστραι), where they would exercise under the supervision of their tutors. The only other group of males that was allowed in the gymnasia at the same time were the striplings or cadets, i.e. those who had just turned eighteen.[16] However, they were forbidden from interacting with those under-eighteen, a regulation that clearly revealed an anxiety about interrelations between these two groups.[17] The one exception was on special holidays, most notably, the festival of Hermes or Hermaea, which figures prominently in the *Lysis*.[18]

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[14] As Pausanias, in his speech extolling the merits of Athenian pederasty over those of other Greek city-states in Plato's *Symposium*, puts it: "when [boys] begin to acquire some mind – a growth associated with that of down on their chins" (181d).

[15] Pausanias explains: "But it happens that fathers put tutors in charge of their boys when they are beloved, to prevent them from conversing with their lovers: the tutor has strict injunctions on the matter, and when they observe a boy to be guilty of such a thing his playmates and fellows reproach him, while his reproachers are not in their turn withheld or upbraided by their elders as speaking amiss; and from this it might rather be inferred that his behavior is held to be a great disgrace in Athens" (183c-d). A similar account is offered by Aeschines in his *Prosecution of Timarchus* 16.139. Boys of families that could not afford to maintain a παιδαγωγὸς were undoubtedly more vulnerable. The norms set by these age-classes were pervasive. As Xenophon reports, even in cases where ἐρασταὶ are accused of being in love with slave-boys, the defendants go to length to argue that the boys in question are in their late teens, eighteen or nineteen (*Hellenica*, 5.4,25; cf. Davidson, pp. 84-5).

[16] Laws forbade males of twenty or over (νέοι) from entering the gymnasium when under-eighteens were exercising. The strictest of penalties, including death, were enforced (cf. Aeschines 1.139).

[17] A founding myth concerning the practices of Greek Love was the abduction of Pelop's son Chrysippus, a boy, by the stripling Laius, prince of Thebes. In the myth, Laius' love and ultimate rape of Chrysippus is deemed a 'παρανόμος ἔρως' (illegal *eros*) and 'ἄθεμιτος ἔρως' (banned *eros*), and it was held to be the initiating cause responsible for the tragedy of Laius' son, Oedipus. Cf. Davidson's discussion, p. 86, of the Pisander-scholium ad E. *Phoenissae* 1760 (*FGrHist* 16 F 10). At the same time, 'inappropriate' interactions between νεανίσκοι and παῖδες were hardly uncommon. A group of images — such as those depicted on 'the Cup of Persuasion', 'the Sosias Cup', 'the Gotha Cup', and 'the Peithinos Cup' — show flirtatious exchanges

(c) Methods of Persuasion

As the fine line between what was and wasn't considered prohibited interaction between ἐρασταὶ and ἐρώμενοι suggests, the conventions of seduction for homosexual ἔρως in Athenian culture were organized like a game or contest (ἀγών) designed to test potential ἔρασταὶ and ἐρώμενοι alike.[19] The former were encouraged to chase the objects

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between beardless cadets and under-height boys (cf. Davidson, pp. 426-39). Moreover, this extreme protection of παῖδες appears to have been particular to Athenian practices. For example, it was not the case in Sparta, Plutarch reports: "Nor was this all; one of the noblest and best men of the city was appointed παιδονόμος, or inspector of the boys, and under his directions the boys, in their several companies, put themselves under the command of the most prudent and warlike of the so called εἴρενες (Eirens). This was the name given to those who had been for two years out of the class of boys, and μελλείρενες, or Would-be Eirens, was the name for the oldest of the boys. This εἴρην, then, a youth of twenty years, commands his subordinates in their mimic battles, and in doors makes them serve him at his meals" (*Life of Lycurgus*, 17.2)

[18] While erotic relationships between young men in their twenties and striplings (i.e. those certified as eighteen) were the culturally encouraged norm, there were undoubtedly also (a) relationship between older men and younger men already in their twenties (i.e. those older than a stripling), and (b) relationships in which the roles were reversed, with striplings taking the roles of ἐρασταὶ and the older men (or women) taking the role of ἐρώμενοι. Cf. Davidson, pp. 88-96. In the case of (a), some of the ἐρώμονοι depicted on vases clearly depict young men. Moreover, in Plato's *Phaedrus*, Socrates and Phaedrus name Isocrates and Lysias as their respective 'favorites', παιδικὰ, although Isocrates was probably well into his twenties, and Lysias probably even older. Evidence of (b) can be found in Xenophon and Plato. In his *Persian Expedition*, Xenophon criticizes his former commander Meno, the Thessalian who was put in charge of installing a pretender on the Persian throne. After suggesting that he had only gotten the post because of his looks, he claims that, when Meno himself was beardless, he had been the ἐραστὴς of a man with a beard (*Anabasis*, 2.6,28). Similarly, in his *Symposium*, Xenophon takes issue with Alcibiades the Younger, the son of the famous Alcibiades, for "keeping a courtesan before he came of age" (4.28). In Plato's *Charmides*, when the dialogue's namesake enters the scene, not only do the older men turn their heads, but so too do the boys present: "The reaction of the men was not surprising, but it was the boys who caught my attention, for none of them had eyes for anything else, not even the littlest of them; on the contrary, all were gazing at him as if he were a statue" (155a).

While, then, it was true that there were exceptions to the rule that older males court younger males, what was also true is that younger males were not supposed to perform the role of love-struck suitor, courting older men. Part of the rationale concerned the norms of beauty: erotic pursuit was aimed at the most beautiful males, and those considered most beautiful were the younger ones. Phaedrus attests to this in Plato's *Symposium* when he criticizes Aeschylus' for implying that Achilles was the ἐραστὴς of Patroclus, rather than vice versa: "Aeschylus talks nonsense when he says that it was Achilles who was in love with Patroclus; for he excelled in beauty not only Patroclus, but all the other heroes as well, being still beardless and much younger, by Homer's account" (180a).

The other reason that younger men were discourage to pursue older men was that it subverted the hierarchy of the age-class society that was Athens, in which seniority meant authority. Despite the 'natural order' that such societies espoused and reinforced, there were always tensions between senior and junior grades, occasionally even resulting in full-scale, age-class civil wars. On the Cretan Civil War of 220 BC, see Davidson, p. 90. It is precisely for unsettling this order, and in so doing 'corrupting the youth', that Davidson speculates Socrates was put to death; cf. pp. 92-6.

[19] E.g. Plato's *Symposium* 184; Euripides' *Hippolytus* 1051-2; Pindar *OL* 10.53-5, fr. 159. The notion of a game or contest played an important role in the context of φιλία as well, as will be seen in section 2(b) below.

of their affections, while the latter were likewise encouraged to resist these advances. The Athenians had a host of derogatory terms both for men who sought to exploit boys purely for sex and for boys who submitted before they came of age or for dishonorable motives such as political influence or money.[20]

This game of seduction was also an unabashedly public affair, especially in Athens.[21] Among the most common practices were writing acclamations of a boy's beauty (κάλλος) in public places and composing songs of praise known as παρακλαυσίθυρα or "laments by the door" because ἐρασταὶ often sung them while camping out in their favorites' doorways.[22] Images of the enactment of such acclamations and similar scenarios — e.g. lovers presenting their beloveds with cocks, hares and other presents — are depicted on late archaic and early classical Athenian vases.[23]

(d) What was Given and What was Received

When a boy consented to a lover's advances, he was said to 'grant them favor' or 'χαρίζεσθαι'. In practice, 'χαρίζεσθαι' could generally be taken euphemistically to mean 'sexually oblige'.[24] However, within the idealized conventions of Athenian homosexual

[20] 'καταπύγων/κατάπυγος' was used to attack men of power, alluding to general bad morals and in particular sexual degeneracy and unrestrained sexuality. It could be used to insult members of either sex as well as the person in either the aggressor role or the passive role. 'κίναιδος' meant something like 'lewd-fellow' or 'man-woman', and generally denoted effeminacy and aggressive lewdness. It often denoted 'a boy with an effeminate nature', where that implied a effeminate exterior, which was in turn taken to be an outward expression of a willingness to take the passive role. Cf. Davidson, pp. 52-67.

[21] Cf. Pausanias' speech in Plato's *Symposium*, in which he celebrates what he sees as the superior nature of the Athenian erotic practices over those of other Greek city-states (182a-b).

[22] Cf. Pausanias' speech, *Symp.* 183b and discussion of it by Dillon (2004), p. 106.

[23] The καλός-acclamations that covered Athenian vases sometimes indicate that the painters themselves were ἐρασταὶ of the boys they praise. Cf. Davidson, pp. 474-5.

[24] Like ἔρως, χάρις was not considered to be intrinsically homosexual. The sphere of the Graces, the deities of χάρις, also extended to heterosexual married couples. While χάρις does occur more often in our sources for homosexual ἔρως, this is due more to the public nature of Athenian homosexual ἔρως — which in term derived from the autonomy afforded male citizens — than any exclusivity to that domain. Since, unlike women, men were not restricted to the household, they were in much more public and more extensive

ἔρως, this sexual exchange was viewed as the epitome of the noblest form of χάρις: charity or grace. In defining the noblest form of χάρις, Aristotle appeals to the favor that an ἐρώμενος grants an ἐραστὴς, precisely because the boy is doing a 'most difficult' (χαλεπὸς) favor for someone who is desperately in need, a favor in which the boy has supposedly no self-interest (*Rhet*. 2.7.1385a-b). In this idealized way, the exchange was primarily conceived not as a sexually asymmetrical one at all but rather an asymmetrical act of kindness, as though the ἐραστὴς suffered from an affliction for which he was assisted by someone who took no pleasure in the act itself.[25]

In exchange for this act of charity, a boy was supposed to receive an 'education' (παιδεία) from his lover, one aimed to steer the boy towards the acquisition of virtue (ἀρετὴ) and wisdom (σοφία).[26] Again, of course, reality often fell short of this ideal. A beloved's consent would often be won over by the prospect of wealth or the opportunity for political advancement.[27]

(e) Hippothales and Lysis

Turning to the dialogue itself, it is apparent that Hippothales and Lysis each exemplify the core traits distinctive of a conventional, would-be ἐραστὴς and his prospective ἐρώμενος or παιδικά.

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contact with each other, resulting in greater testimony of the practices of homosexual seduction. Cf. Davidson, pp. 45-6.

[25] Implied in this exchange is the idealization of the so-called 'frigid' or 'reluctant' ἐρώμενος: the act of charity was predicated on the presupposition that the boy didn't actually enjoy the sexual exchange; the more he did, the less in turn it was considered an act of charity. Davidson, p. 50.

[26] For the distinction between 'vulgar' and 'heavenly' ἔρως, see Pausanias's speech in Plato's *Symposium* (184d-e) and Socrates' speech in Xenophon's *Symposium* (8.9-10).

[27] Pausanias implies as much at 184e-85a. Examples of such 'vulgar' ἔρως are discussed by Lysias, *Or*. III, *Against Simon*, and Aeschines, A*gainst Timarchos*. For discussion, cf. Dillon, pp. 112-26. Aristotle writes that: "erotic friendship is for the most part swayed by the feelings and based on pleasure. That is why [the young] fall in and out of friendship quickly changing their attitudes in the same day" (1156a31-b6).

We immediately learn through Socrates' opening encounter with the cadets, Hippothales and Ctesippus, that Hippothales exhibits the type of passivity distinctive of someone in the all-consuming grips of ἔρως. As Ctesippus reports to Socrates, Hippothales is prone to "wearing out the ears" of him and their other peers by "by stuffing them with [the name] 'Lysis'" (204c7-d1). Moreover, Ctesippus complains, as tiresome as these repetitive καλὸς-acclamations are, even worse are the boy-hymns that Hippothales composes and sings aloud "in an extraordinary voice that we have to put up with listening to" (204d3-7).

Also emphasized in the prologue is the distance or separation from the object of love typical of erotic desire. Upon persuading Socrates to converse with Lysis so as to provide a demonstration of how a lover should converse with his beloved (206b9-c3), Hippothales observes from the back of the crowd gathered around, worried that his visible presence might annoy Lysis (207b4-7). This anxiety is highlighted once again at the end of this conversation, when Socrates almost exposes Hippothales. He recounts how he was about to remark, "this is the way, Hippothales, in which you should talk to your favorite," before checking himself upon noticing that the cadet was "contorted with anguish" (210e5).[28]

The text further provides a sense of the respective ages of Hippothales and Lysis. We learn at the dialogue's outset (204a2) that its setting will be a gymnasium, the shared yet segregated public space for νεανίσκοι and παῖδες alike. Exactly how far apart Hippothales and Lysis are in age is not specified. The νεανίσκος Hippothales may have been several years older than the παῖς Lysis or ahead by only a year such that, when Lysis passed out of

[28] It is not clear from the text that Lysis had been previously aware of Hippothales' ἔρως for him. It is clear, however, that he at least becomes so aware of it by the end of the dialogue (cf. 222a-b), as will be discussed in chapter 7.

the age-class of boys, his cohort fell just one year behind that of Hippothales. Nevertheless, Hippothales' behavior — the practice of καλὸς-acclamations and boy-hymns — was, as seen above, standard for νεανίσκοι on the verge of becoming νέοι.

One aspect of the drama that calls for explanation is how Socrates, who at the dramatic date of the dialogue is considered an old man (γέρων ἀνήρ, 223b5), is allowed to enter the gymnasium as he does (206d ff.). It may have been the case that men of his age, like the boys' tutors, were seen as too old to constitute a real threat.[29] But the occasion of Socrates' entrance also provides another explanation for the unusually lax enforcement of gymnasia rules. It happens to occur during the Hermaea, the festival of Hermes, which marked the one period in the calendar during which cadets (οἱ νεανίσκοι) and boys (οἱ παῖδες) were allowed to mingle together (ἀνομεμειγμένοι) (206d1-2).[30] Similarly, it marked the rare occasion during which παιδὲς like Lysis and Menexenus were left unattended by their παιδαγωγοὶ, who were permitted to celebrate the festivities separately (223a ff.).[31]

[29] It is not indicated exactly how old Socrates is in this dialogue and we can only speculate. But we have good reason to think that Athenian readers themselves would have had a good idea. For all the flaws of the Greeks' method of determining age, one thing it was useful for was writing about the past (cf. Davidison, pp. 76-77). Since all of Plato's dialogues are written after 400 BC and set in the prior era in which Socrates and his contemporaries flourished, it would have been relatively easy for Plato and his audience to determine the age of any of his characters relative to one another. To do so, one simply had to determine the year-hero of someone's age-class, i.e. the name of one of forty-two heroes that were given each year to the group of those determined to be eighteen and enrolled into the citizen-body. It was the same name that was 'relinquished' by the age-class that had reached the age of sixty and was subsequently retiring from civic and military responsibilities. Once one knew a person's year-hero, they could simply go to the town center and calculate when someone in that year's hero group was a stripling or cadet, and likewise determine the relative ages of other character by comparison. "Sometimes, of course, [Plato's] characters were still alive, and well known to his audience, thus giving extra vividness to a previous epoch. Readers might know Lysis as a mature man, or even a venerable old man, Seventy to their Fifty. So when Plato introduces him in the *Lysis* as a Boy not yet Eighteen, you would have a vivid sense of how long ago the dialogue was set. It was like having a human date-chart set out in front of you" (Davidson, p. 77).

[30] The Hermaea is also mentioned in Aeschines I.10.

[31] Lysis will go on to attest that his παιδαγωγὸς does indeed rules over him (208c3), and we can expect that at least part of the latter's role involved protecting the boy from Hippothales and other potential ἐρασταί. The fact that young men and boys were in general *not* allowed to mingle in the palaestra clearly indicates that, in accord with conventional Athenian norms, love advances were ordinarily prohibited and would have been prevented by tutors or trainers.

Nevertheless, this age difference between Socrates and the rest of the gymnasium's attendees appears to demand a type of protocol that is required even during these festive circumstances. A conversation with Lysis is arranged only through the mediation of the boy's best friend, Menexenus, whom in turn is introduced via the conduit of Ctesippus, Menexenus' older cousin (207a-b).[32]

Finally, we also learn that the manner in which Hippothales has previously attempted to court Lysis takes the very form of an ἀγών or contest typical of conventional erotic practices. In his critique of Hippothales (205d-206a), Socrates suggests that the young man's poems essentially amount to an all-too-premature victory song. Although Hippothales may think that he is honoring the boy with his songs — "But it is not to myself, Socrates…. that I am composing or singing" (205d7-8) — he is really "composing and singing an encomium to [himself]" (205d5-6). As a result, should the young man somehow win Lysis' affection in this way, Socrates explains, "what you've said and sung will be an ornament to *you*, and truly encomia, as if you were the victor" (205e3-4) As will be seen in the next chapter, Socrates' critique of conventional ἔρως will take issue not with the fact that it takes the form of a contest, but rather with its conception of the aim of this contest and of the manner in which it is to be pursued.

2. Conventional Φιλία

In addition to conventional ἔρως the *Lysis* draws attention to three forms of conventional φιλία. In order to see how Socrates' newly-formed friendship with the boys

[32] Similarly in the *Charmides*, when Socrates converses with the dialogue's namesake, Plato makes several points of noting that the latter was at this time already at least eighteen and a cadet or stripling (μειράκιον, 154b5; νεανίσκος, 154d1; νεανίαν, 155a4). Even so, Plato has Socrates ensure that Charmides' guardian, Critias, is present for the conversation and has Socrates say to the older man: "Even if he happened to be younger it would not be shameful for us to converse with him in front of you" (155a4-6).

— confirmed by the dialogue's closing line — presents a new model for φιλία, it is necessary to understand both the shared as well as distinctive features of these three conventional forms.

(a) The Many Senses of 'Φιλία'

While 'φιλία' is often translated as 'friendship' in our contemporary sense, it was a much broader term for the Greeks. In addition to the non-familial, close relationships that we generally call 'friendships', the term 'φιλία' also denoted familial and business relations among others.[33] Unlike ἔρως, which was distinguished by its passive and irreciprocal nature, φιλία was both active and reciprocal.[34] Lacking the irrational and all-consuming character of erotic love (ἐρᾶν), friendly love (φιλεῖν) was rational and self-possessed, characterized by the type of mild, warm feelings that are associated with 'friendliness' or

[33] In his broad study of friendship in the classical world, David Konstan (1997) distinguishes φιλία both from amatory and familial relations. His position, however, has been sharply criticized on both fronts. Contrary to his claim that there was "sharp distinction between amorous and amicable ties" (p. 6), Davidson cites a number of sources that indicate to the contrary that friends could also be 'amorous' or 'amatory' (Xenophon, *Mem*. 3.11,4 and 15; 2.6,28-33; Plato, *Symp*. 183c). Similarly, as will be discussed in more detail in section 2(d), Gonzalez (2000) makes a case for the previously longstanding view, first articulated by Dirlmeier (1931) and later by Whitlock Blundell (1989), that φιλία included blood-relations. In places in his own work Konstan himself waivers on drawing such sharp distinctions. He concedes that amatory and amicable relations do in fact "bleed into each other" (1993, p. 11) and that "the form *philia* does in fact cover relationships far wider than friendship, including the love between kin and the affection or solidarity between relatively distant associates such as members of the same fraternity or city" (1997, p. 9). Nevertheless, he defends his stricter interpretation by arguing for "a different range of meanings of the terms *philos* and *philia*" (p. 9). While a conclusive arbitration of Konstan, Davidson, and Gonzalez's views falls outside of the scope of this dissertation, through the course of the rest of this chapter I will present much evidence for the traditional, broader conception of φιλία. Moreover, I will argue through the course of my study of the *Lysis* that the dialogue itself helps to substantiate the traditional, broader conception.

[34] The world 'φιλία' is a post-Homeric term. Homer himself did not explicitly distinguish between ἔρως and love more broadly. As was noted above (fn. 3), in Homeric Greek the basic meaning of 'ἔρως' is mere 'desire', to which only context adds a sexual connotation. While 'ἔρως' does figure in scenes describing sexual love in the works of Homer, it plays a different, more limited role compared to what it was to play in classical Greek. In addition to denoting friendly or affectionate relations between individuals, families, and states, Homer also uses the term 'φιλότης' to indicate sexual love or desire. Sexual intercourse itself is often denoted by the verb 'μείγνυμι' (to mingle), and the love or desire that accompanies such intercourse is not 'ἔρως' but 'φιλότης' (for example, *Iliad* 3.445). A passage at the end book III of the *Iliad* invokes both 'ἔρως' and 'φιλότης'. Seeing Helen, ἔρως "wraps around" Paris' diaphragm and he recalls when they mingled in φιλότητι in bed; he tells her that he now desires (ἔραμαι, cognate with ἔρως) her even more than the day they first met (441–7). For discussion, see Dover (1978) p. 50 and Ludwig (2002), p. 125.

'kind-regard'. Moreover, unlike ἔρως, which inherently involved a distance or separation from its object, φιλία entailed the elimination of any such distance. Whereas 'ἔρως' denoted a desire for a relationship, φιλία referred to a relationship already established. This relationship, furthermore, was one characterized by reciprocity; both members of a φιλία were recognized to be φίλοι to each other.

This active and reciprocal nature of φιλία was indicated by the fact that 'φιλεῖν' takes an accusative direct object rather than a genitive object like 'ἔρως'. For, rather than conveying the type of involuntary dependency on a loved object distinctive of 'ἐρᾶν', the type conveyed by the construction "I am in love *with* you," 'φιλεῖν' signifies a direct, active engagement with another person, the type designated by the verb construction used to say "I love you." Just as in English the construction "I love you" has a much broader scope than "I am in love with you," so too in Greek 'φιλῶ' could be said to a spouse, child, parent, sibling or non-familial friend, whereas 'ἐρῶ' was restricted to erotic contexts.[35]

Despite this polarity, however, ἔρως and φιλία were understood to be intimately related. There was nothing intrinsically chaste or unerotic about φιλία. In fact, for the

[35] It is important to note, of course, that while these relationships were all reciprocal the first two, martial and parental, were not equivalent to the latter, a φιλία between two equal male citizens. As was noted above (fn. 9), a Greek wife lacked autonomy in matters of love. As Theognis writes: "A boy gets credit [χάρις], but a woman can never have a companion of trust, instead she is destined to love [φιλεῖν] the man who is around." Still, it was not unexpected for a wedded couple to develop φιλία. In his *Letter on Friendship*, Plutarch writes: "For a marriage is better when it comes from blending φιλία on both sides" (fr. 167). Aristotle too, of course, recognized a type of φιλία between husband and wife, but it is an example of what he refers to as a φιλία between unequals (*EN* VIII.7.1158b15). In such cases, the reciprocity that friendly always require can be present only if it is "proportionate" rather than "strict" – that is, only if "the better and the more useful partner… [receives] more affection than he gives" (*EN* VIII.7.1158b23). Nevertheless, of the three types of φιλία that he discusses — those based on advantage, pleasure, and character — Aristotle still seems to think that, given the requisite proportionate equality, the highest type of friendship based on character can still exist between unequal and thus husband and wife (*EN* VIII.13.1162b35). Φιλία between husband and wife was thought to be cemented by having children. As a proverbial verse attributed to Menander puts it: "the greatest link of φιλία is the birth of children" (*Monos*. 736). In *On the Murder of Eratosthenes*, Euphiletus says he began to trust his wife and put all his affairs in her hands when she gave birth to a παιδίον, considering this the greatest tie of intimacy (οἰκειότητα) (Lysias 1.6). On the similar 'friendship of inequality' between parents and children, see esp. Aristotle *EN* VIII.7.1158b15-25 and VIII.12.1161b15-1162a30.

Greeks, the highest form of φιλία was that which developed between an ἐραστὴς and his ἐρώμενος, once the ἐρώμενος came of age and willingly entered into a relationship with his ἐραστὴς.[36] When that transpired, what was previously an erotic pursuit became a relationship of φιλία. While the two members of such a φιλία might still be sexual lovers, their relationship was no longer defined in terms of the same anticipatory passion distinctive of falling and being in love with someone.

As will be seen in the context of the dialogue, it is this 'genuine' or 'noble' form of φιλία (γνησία φιλία) that Socrates will attempt to model for Hippothales through his conversation with Lysis and Menexenus (cf. 222a6). However, despite the preeminence accorded to pederastic φιλία, as was noted above, 'φιλία' designated a broad range of relationships. The question thus arises: what was distinctive of the types of φιλία that did *not* develop through erotic pursuit? In particular, what features characterized the type of φιλία that existed between unerotic coevals or classmates like Hippothales and Ctessipus, and Lysis and Menexenus, who were already friends as boys?[37] And what about the type of φιλία shared between family members?

[36] It is this type of φιλία, Pausanias explains, that springs from "the Heavenly Aphrodite" rather than the vulgar "popular" type, the latter of which is directed at both "women as well as boys" and is "set on the body more than the soul" (181b ff.). The higher form, by contrast, "partakes not of the female but only of the male… in fondness for what has the more robust nature and a larger share of mind," and is grounded in a desire "to be with them always and share everything with them all lifelong" (as Pausanias was and did with Agathon). It is this superior ἔρως that results in the type of "strong friendships [φιλίας] and communions [κοινωνίας]" exemplified by the Athenian Tryannicides, Aristogeiton and Harmodius and the Theban Army of Lovers (182c; 1178e). See also Plutarch's *Life of Pelopidas* 18.2. One definition of ἔρως was in fact "hunting for intimates [φίλοι]" (Stob. II.115.1-4). The Stoics defined ἔρως as the 'friend-making impulse' (Stob. II.115.1-4). Cicero defines it as 'amor amicitiae', which translates as an 'ἔρως for φιλία' (*Tusc. Disp*. VI.70). Cf. Davidson, pp. 32-4.

[37] This didn't mean that there weren't coevals who in fact were lovers; it just wasn't the normatively endorsed practice. As a result, such cases were not documented; they 'fell under the radar', textually speaking. Cf. fn. 18 above.

(b) Φίλοι *as Moral Rivals*

In the case of coevals or peer friendships, a focal aspect was the role that competition (ἔρις) played in forming and shaping them. Rather than being deleterious to friendly relations as some contemporary intuitions might regard them, the Greeks saw competition and rivalry as foundational to both civic φιλία and friendship between equals more generally.

Competition, particularly in the form of athletics, was seen as a means of forging and strengthening social bonds.[38] From the eight to the fourth century, Athenian athletics were influenced by, and in turn helped to shape, the rise of the polis' public self-awareness. Athletic games were a way of implementing the administrative and political goals of Athenian leaders, and in turn, such events determined much of the city's topography and festival calendar.[39] The relationship between athlete and community was a symbiotic one: "The Athenian as victor, benefactor or spectator gained glory, recognition, or pleasure; and the city benefitted from flattering festivals and facilities, and from an enhanced civic consciousness."[40]

The same forces at work in the athletic domain were recognized to be at play in public life. In this respect, athletic competition was understood to be a microcosm of a healthy

[38] Cf. Kyle, *Athletics in Ancient Athens* (1987) and Scanlon, *Eros and Greek Athletics* (2002). As Kyle explains: "The reason is simple. Athletics were a public, integral, and potentially unifying or disruptive element in the civic experience of the Athenians" (p. 177).

[39] "When Solon wanted to quiet the state, when Pisistratus and Pericles wanted to advance the state, when Themistocles and Kimon wanted to lead the state, and ultimately when Lycurgus wanted to revitalized the state, they paid attention to the athletic life of Athens" (Kyle, p. 177). Conversely, "[as] elsewhere in late classical Greece, Athenian athletic facilities gained monumental stature in this era…. The Lyceum was enhanced or expanded, possibly to accommodate increasing educational, philosophical and social functions…. Even entering the Hellenistic Agora, gymnasia were to be indispensible components in the physical form of this *polis* as the centre of philosophy and culture" (p. 176).

[40] Kyle, p. 177. Aristotle echoes this point: "Victory also is pleasant, and not merely to the competitive but to everyone … The pleasantness of victory implies of course that combative sports and intellectual contests are [in themselves] pleasant" (*Rh*. 1370b32-1371a1).

polis. A primary source of motivation for both the athlete and citizen more generally was φιλοτιμία or 'love of honor'.[41] In the civic domain, the honor in question was the type of reputation that was achieved through some form of self-sacrifice for the greater welfare of the polis, paradigmatic examples of which took the form of financial contributions to the community or bravery in the line of battle.[42] Importantly, the type of honor associated with φιλοτιμία could not be achieved through acts of self-aggrandizement such as conspicuous displays of private luxury. When used positivity, 'φιλοτιμία' often connoted 'patriotic' rather than merely 'ambitious', and 'φιλοτιμεῖσθαι' was considered synonymous with 'to treat the people well'. [43] Understood in this context of public service, φιλονικία or 'love of winning' was similarly treated as a virtuous source of motivation.[44] Both were associated with the community of good men (ἀγαθοὶ): the φιλοτιμία of fellow citizens was understood in terms of a "contest of good men" (Dem. XX 107); and φιλονικία was constitutionally encouraged in order to instill "rivalry over virtue (ἀρετὴ)" (Xen. *Lac.* 4.2) amongst the citizen-body.[45]

At the level of personal relationships, further evidence that competition played a central role can be found in Aristotle.[46] The testing of friends likewise took the form of an ἀγὼν or contest for what is καλὸς or noble; in this case, fellow competitors strove to outdo each

[41] See esp. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the time of Plato and Aristotle* (1974), pp. 229-34.
[42] In providing financial backing (Aeschines II.111; Dem. XXVIII.22, XLII.25); resources such as cavalry (Dem. XLII.44); in disregard of one's safety in battle (Dem. XX.82; Lys. XVI.18); in prosecution of criminals in the interest of the community (Aeschines I.96). Cf. Dover (1974), pp. 230-31.
[43] On the φιλότιμος as patriotic: [Xenophon on Epameinoda's motives] φιλίτιμοι men "think it an honorable death to die in the attempt to bequeath dominion over the Peloponnese to their fatherland" (Xen. *Hell*. VII 5.18f.). On φιλοτιμεῖσθαι as 'treat people well': "Because the result of rewarding too many citizens [even if some are undeserving] is to encourage many to do you good service (φιλοτιμεῖσθαι), but the result of rewarding no one, even if deserving, is to discourage emulation in all" (Dem. XX.5). Insofar as the polis valued its own reputation amongst the rest, it could be also described as motivated by φιλοτιμία (Dem. XVIII.66). Cf. Dover (1974), p. 231.
[44] Ex. Lys. Ii 16; Xenophon *Ages*. 2.8.
[45] Cf. Dover (1974), p. 231 and pp. 233-4.
[46] Cf. Anne Marie Dziob, 'Aristotelian Friendship: Self-love and Moral Rivalry' (1993).

other in virtuous activity.[47] According to Aristotle, not only can our friends be our rivals, but they are best qualified to be so, since "we do not compete with those whom…. [we] take to be far below us or far above us… we compete with those who follow the same ends as ourselves" (*EN* 1166a14). It is this moral rivalry over the same ends that generates shame, envy, emulation, and ultimately the highest form of friendship. For it is precisely our rivals in virtue, Aristotle explains, "before whom we should be ashamed to do anything really wrong (*Rhet*. 1381b20), and "those who take us as their models or other people, it may be, like ourselves, whose rivals we are. For there are many things that shame before such people makes us do or leave undone" (*Rhet*. 13811b20). In sum, moral rivalry was seen as a vital impetus for the highest form of φιλία among peers.[48]

At the same time, these very sources of motivations that were seen to underlie healthy forms of competition were also recognized to be capable of degenerating into vices. Unrestricted, φιλοτιμία was susceptible to devolving into aggression, pride and boastfulness.[49] Likewise, 'φιλονικία' could also be used as a derogatory term, synonymous with "quarreling and trying to outbid one another."[50]

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[47] Aristotle makes the comparison with athletics explicit: "…. as in the Olympic Games it is not the most beautiful and strongest that are crowned but those who compete…. those who act rightly win the noble and good things in life (1099a3-5).

[48] "It is characteristic of good men neither to go wrong themselves nor to let their friends do so" (*EN* 1166a14). For Aristotle, the actions of the good friend are identical to those of the genuine self-lover, i.e. the good man who is said to be his own best friend because he is the guarantor of his own good actions. Each can reliably be counted upon to sustain the relationship, either with another or oneself. Cf. Dziob, p. 792.

[49] Herodotus describes φιλοτιμία as "an unhappy possession [κτῆμα σκαιόν]" (III 53.4). Recounting the degeneration of Athenian political culture after Pericles' passing, Thucydides writes that men acted "in accordance with their private ambitions [ἰδίας φιλοτιμίας] and individual gain" (II 65.7) In Aristophanes' *The Frogs*, Dionysos scoffs at Heracles' warning of strange beasts and other horrors on route to the underworld, claiming that he was "putting on a show"; knowing "that I have a stout heart… he was trying to get the better of me' (φιλοτιμεῖσθαι) (280-2). In Euripides' *Iphagenia in Aulis*, Odysseus is described as being "seized by a love of popularity [φιλοτιμίᾳ ἐνέχεται], a fearful evil" (527). Cf. Dover (1974), pp. 232-3.

[50] Ex. Demosthenes: "As it is, however, because you thought that something of this sort [i.e. injustice] might occur through rivalry and malice and enmity or through some other pretexts [διὰ φιλονικίαν καὶ διὰ φθόνον καὶ δι' ἔχθραν καὶ δι' ἄλλας προφάσεις], you made your court a place of

(c) Lysis and Menexenus

As in the case of conventional ἔρως, the opening scene of the *Lysis* provides evidence that the dialogue is also deeply concerned with civic and peer φιλία as these were traditionally practiced.

The very first line of the dialogue tells us that Socrates was on his way from the Academy to the Lyceum, which were Athens' most famous gymnasia or wrestling schools. The underlying theme of competition is only further amplified by the fact that he is diverted from his course and invited into a newly-built wrestling school, where the youths have gathered for the Hermaea festival (204a2-3).[51]

The dialogue's opening also provides indications of the institutional role that competition played in fostering civic and peer φιλία. The contents of Hippothales' poems as relayed by Ctesippus (205b4-d4) shed light on the symbiotic relationship between athlete and polis. We learn that Lysis' forefathers were victorious at the Pythian, Isthmian and Nemean games (205c2-6). Their victories as representatives of the city have in turn made Lysis' family famous. That such competitive practices played a formative role in shaping peer friendships among παῖδες is also apparent early on. When Socrates enters the gymnasium (206d7 ff.), he finds the boys playing with knucklebones (ἀστράγαλοι), which were used in a variety of adolescent games.[52]

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refuge for those who have been wronged, and through this right action on your part, men of Athens, you have saved all those who have suffered wrong" (XVII.5-6). Thucydides couples φιλονικία with greed: "The cause of all these evils was the lust for power arising from greed and ambition [φιλονικεῖν]; and from these passions proceeded the violence of parties once engaged in contention" (III 82.8). For φιλονικία in the context of family quarrels, see Dem. xlv 14; tied to drunkenness, see Lys. Iii 43. Cf. Dover (1974), p. 234.

[51] The *Charmides* and the *Euthydemus* are also set in gymnasia. However, the fact that this gymnasium is newly built in the *Lysis* places more emphasis on it. Cf. Gonzalez (2003), p. 17.

[52] Knucklebones seem most strongly to characterize children in contrast to adult males. As a cynical saw attributed to a number of political leaders puts it, "You fool children with knucklebones, but men with oaths"

Yet the *Lysis* also subtly alludes to the problems that unabated competition can pose for peer φιλία. The first instance of this type of φιλία identified in the text, that between Lysis and Menexenus, is immediately characterized in terms of their rivalry as peers in a way that hints at the danger such rivalry may pose (207b8-c12). Socrates first addresses them by asking whether they dispute (ἐρίζεῖν, 207c3) about such matters as who is older, of nobler family, and more beautiful, all of which they concede to doing. Socrates' choice of verb here is significant. 'ἐρίζεῖν' is a cognate of 'ἐριστικὸς', which designated the type of competitive argumentation pursued solely for the sake of one-uping one's opponent.[53] The dialogue, thus, is attune to both the benefits as well as the problems that competition poses for the types of friendship that were centrally defined by it.

(d) Φίλοι *as* Οἰκεῖοι

Just as competition or moral rivalry was not only a source of φιλία but also a potential impediment to it, so too family relations were seen as a foundation for φιλία, though a similarly problematic one.

While the view has not gone uncontested, most scholars, following Homeric scholiasts, have held that in archaic Greece 'φίλος' referred in the first instance to one's kin (οἰκεῖος or συγγένής) and only in the second instance to intimate non-blood relations.[54] Hesiod

(Plut. *Mor*. 229b). One of the most famous status by Polyclitus depicted two boys playing knucklebones, and these were commonly included in school scenes. Cf. Golden (2015), pp. 46-7.

[53] Menexenus is said to be 'contentious' (ἐριστικός: 211b8), a trait which he no doubt learned from his cousin Ctesippus (as suggested at 211c), whose competitive aggressive nature is displayed in this dialogue through his attack on Hippothales. Ctesippus also displays a talent for eristic competition in the *Euthydemus*, where he competes, rather successfully, with the brothers Euthydemus and Dionysodorus (298a-300a). Cf. Gonzalez (2003), pp. 17-18. The subjects of the boys' disputations also call attention here. One might wonder to what extent questions regarding one's age, status, and beauty can be legitimately answered. Cf. chapter 2, section 3 for discussion.

[54] One ancient scholiast (EQT) on *Odyssey* 1.238 writes: "οἰ φίλοι are οἰ οἰκεῖοι and those belonging to the family." The medieval commentator Eustathius of Thessalonica concurs with this reading and also expands on it in a scholion on *Iliad* 3.163: "In many places the poet uses the word φίλος to refer to those related by blood… φίλους are those of the same blood." This reading of the usage in Homer and other text has been

himself endorses this priority, writing: "Do not make a comrade (ἑταῖρος) equal to a brother" (*Op*. 707). In the classical age, this traditional ranking became subject to critical scrutiny.[55] Yet the very emergence of such criticisms indicates that blood relations not only retained the status of φιλίαι in the classical age but were also still widely regarded as the primary form of φιλία in post-archaic Greece.[56]

Representative of this type of critique is the tension depicted in Sophocles' *Antigone*. Whereas Antigone cites the facts that Polyneices is her kin (45-46, 48) and her φίλος (73) as obligating her to provide her brother with a burial, Creon regards the duties to state as overriding and even nullifying familial loyalties (182-90). This critique is taken one step further in Euripides' *Orestes*, in which the titular character proclaims: "That's it! Possess

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defending in modern times by F. Dirlmeier (1931, 7-21), J. C. Fraisse (1974, 40), and L. F. Pizzolato (1993). For discussion, see Gonzalez (2000), pp. 383-5.

Konstan (1997) questions this orthodoxy, arguing that: "[as] a substantive, *philos* retains the looseness or breath of the adjective" (p. 31). Here he follows Robinson (1990), who argues that 'φίλος' as an adjective is always used in a looser, affective sense (as in "dear") rather the possessive sense ("one's own" or "οἰκεῖον"). Robinson is himself responding to Eustathius and other, modern commentators who have maintain that "φίλον" has the meaning "οἰκεῖον" either some or all of the time. As Gonzalez points out, however, this debate presupposes a dubiously sharp dichotomy between these two senses of 'φίλος'. At the very least, they do not preclude one another: "something could be d*ear* precisely because it is *one's own*" (p. 384). Moreover, even instances in Homer (ex. *Il*. 19.321, *Od*. 8.584-86) that appear to contradict the orthodox view that substantively 'φίλος' refers primarily to family — instances that describe certain friendships as even closer than familial relations — can in fact, upon examination, be seen to reinforce it. In such cases, the familial relation is used a point of reference in the way that, e.g., honey is used to described something sweet as "sweeter than honey." Cf. Dirlmeier p. 22 and Fraisse, p. 41; cf. also Gonzalez's (2000) discussion of them, pp. 385-87.

[55] See, e.g. Xenophon's *Hiero* 3.7-8: "The firmest friendships [φιλίαι], I take it, are supposed to be those that unite parents to children, children to parents, wives to husbands, comrades to comrades."

[56] Konstan draws on a number of examples to argue that in the classical period the scope of 'φίλος' sharpens "to designate a party to a voluntary bond of affection and good will… [one that] normally *excludes* both close kin and more distant acquaintances" (p. 53, my italics). One example he cites as evidence for this new restricted range of the noun φιλία a passage in Plato's *Meno*, which appears to imply a distinction between friends and family: "May such a madness never seize any of my relations or friends [μήτε οἰκεῖον μήτε φίλον]" (91c1-3). However, as Gonzalez notes (2000, p. 386), other passages in Plato and elsewhere counterbalance ones like that from the *Meno*. For example, in the *Republic*, Socrates describes a person's father as their "oldest friend [φίλων ἀρχαιότατον]" (574c3). Moreover, as was already noted (fn. 33 above), Konstan acknowledges that through the classical period the noun 'φιλία' continues to denote relations of kinship as well as non-familial bonds of affection. As Gonzalez points out, while Konstan's analysis overlooks important evidence and as a result overreaches in drawing too strong of a conclusion, it nevertheless helps to shed light on the broader philosophical and conceptual developments of the period. While familial relations remained a paradigmatic case of φιλία relations, this identification of φίλος with οἰκεῖος was also beginning to be challenged during the classical period in literary and philosophical circles.

friends, not kindred only! / Someone who is not of one's household but shares ones ways / Is more possessing as a φίλος than a whole host of blood relations!" (804-6). Orestes' proclamation can be read as a renunciation of Hesiod's adage prioritizing blood relations above all other criteria as the standard for determining φιλία.[57]

The non-Platonic sources for the views of Socrates and his disciples indicate that they too were critical of traditional kinship as a criterion for φιλία. Xenophon records that Socrates was accused of "[causing] those conversing with him to dishonor not only their fathers, but their other relations as well, by saying that those who are sick or those who seek justice are helped not by their relations, but by doctors or lawyers" (*Mem*. 1.2.51).[58] Xenophon himself testifies to the veracity of such accusations (1.2.53) before adding that Socrates went so far as to maintain that what we consider "our own" most of all, our bodies, are worth no more than spittle if they are useless (ἀνωφελές) (1.2.54).[59]

[57] As Gonzalez points out, this passage and others like them "would lose their force and become trite if it were not the case that many people at the time still believed that all of their relations were φίλοι and φίλοι in the truest sense of the word" (2000, p. 388).

[58] As will be seen in chapter 3, a similar argument is offered by Plato's Socrates' in the *Lysis*, *i*n the course of his private conversation with the dialogue's namesake. In *The Clouds*, Aristophanes satirizes Socrates by, among other things, having his student, Pheidippides, justify his disobedience to father by arguing that the duty of respecting one's father is based on conventions that are ungrounded in nature: "Was it not then a man like you and me, who first proposed this law, and by speaking persuaded the ancients? Why then is it less lawful for me also in turn to propose henceforth a new law for the sons, that they should beat their fathers in turn?.... Observe the cocks and these other animals, how they punish their fathers; and yet, in what do they differ from us, except that they do not write decrees?" (1420-9).

[59] On how this Socratic line of criticism was taken up by his followers Aristippus, Antisthenes, and Aeschines, cf. Gonzalez (2000, pp. 388-9). Aristotle also indicates that the view of the φίλος as what is useless was associated with Socrates: "These, then, are two opinions about friendship…. But there are others that are closer and more akin to the facts of observation. Some think that it is not possible for the bad to be friends, but only for the good. Others think it strange that mothers should not love their own children…. Others hold that only what is useful to a friend, the proof being that all men actually do pursue the useful, and discard what is useless even in their own persons (as the older Socrates used to say, instancing spittle, hair and nails" (*EE* VII.I, 1235a5-39). Socrates is called γερῶν to distinguish him from the younger namesake who appears in the *Statesman*. He is presumably Plato's usual 'Socrates' and the Socrates that Aristotle tends to associate with Socratic intellectualism.

(e) Lysis and His Parents

As in the case of ἔρως and peer φιλία, familial φιλία figures prominently in the *Lysis* from the dialogue's very outset. It takes center stage in the context of Socrates' private conversation with Lysis (207d-210d). As will be seen (ch. 3), this conversation plays a pivotal role in the overarching argument of the dialogue. At least one of its purposes is to redefine what it means to be οἰκεῖος to someone.

The centrality of familial φιλία emerges even before Lysis' initial appearance in the dialogue. Upon first learning the name of Hippothales' beloved from Ctesippus, Socrates confesses to having no familiarity with the boy (204d10-e1), to which Ctesippus replies: "That's because people don't mention his own name all that much; instead he's still called by his paternal title, since his father is so widely known" (204e1-6).[60] In this sense, Lysis belongs to his father as his offspring. When Socrates begins his conversation with the boy, moreover, he starts from the assumption that his parents' love for him is rooted simply in the fact that he is their natural offspring. Socrates opens his argument with the premise that Lysis' parents must love him very much (σφόδρα φιλεῖ) simply because he is their son and οἰκεῖον, a premise that Lysis endorses.

Yet, through the course of their conversation, Socrates argues that Lysis' parents cannot possibly love him unless he is useful (ὠφέλιμος) on account of being wise or knowledgeable. Moreover, as Socrates goes on to show, Lysis cannot in fact be wise and

[60] Cf. Dover (1974), pp. 272-75. However, compared with the legal rules other ancient societies, namely with the Roman ones, Athenian paternal power was not absolute, or in Aristotelian terminology, "despotic" (*EN* 1160b-1161a). In Athens, paternal power ended when the son came of age, at 18, whereas in Rome, a son did not have legal autonomy while he had a living male ascendant; the personal power of that ascendant over him included the right of life and death, which did not exist in Athens. Rather, in Athenian society the relationship between father and son was similar to a monarchy; the father had an authority over his son and a responsibility for their welfare. Cf. Aristotle, *Pol*. 1.1259a38-b18; for discussion see Cantarella (2011) p. 336 and Golden (2015) pp. 87-8. On the importance not only of inheritance but also one's family name, see Dillon (2004), pp. 73-7.

therefore useful.[61] He goes on to conclude that it is only "[if] you become wise (σοφὸς), my boy, [that] all people will be φίλοι to you and all people will be οἰκεῖοι to you" (210d1-4). Socrates' use of the term 'οἰκεῖοι' here is significant, for it is clear from the context he is not suggesting that, by becoming wise, all people will somehow become his blood relations. Rather, by the conversation's end, Socrates has redefined what it means for someone to be οἰκεῖος to another.

As can already be seen, central to this reinterpretation of the notion of "belonging" is the role played by knowledge or wisdom. As Socrates will argue, something can only become "one's own" through the knowledge of how to properly use it (210b5). It is through the acquisition of such knowledge that someone will not only be loved by others but will come to be regarded as οἰκεῖοι to them. Socrates' argument thus offers Lysis a new understanding of what it means to be loved on account of belonging. At the outset of their discussion, Lysis accepted the traditional view that he belonged to his father by blood, and therefore was a φίλος to him by that very fact. By the conversation's end, Socrates will have shown that true belonging is a matter of becoming wise, on account of which the wise person is a φίλος to everyone.

3. The Role of Utility in Athenian Conceptions of Love and Friendship

As was seen in the previous section, Socrates appears to draw a distinction between conventional φιλία based on blood-ties on the one hand, and φιλία based on the type of usefulness or benefit that derives from knowledge or wisdom on the other hand. Indeed,

[61] I agree with Gonzalez, among others, that rather than being an *ad hoc* argument serving the sole purpose of humilitating Lysis, this argument was central to Socratic thought. However, I disagree with Gonzalez that Socrates carries it out with "extremism" (2000, p. 389). I side closer to Penner and Rowe in thinking that his argument allows Lysis' parents to have some form of love for him — only not the fullest, philosophical form. Cf. chapter 3 and 7 below.

through the course of both the *Lysis* and other dialogues, the notions of benefit and wisdom play prominent roles in his treatment of desire more broadly: what we love[62] is what is useful (τὸ χρήσιμον), beneficial (τὸ ὠφέλιμον), or good for us (τὸ ἀγαθὸν), and in the case of all three, this is wisdom or knowledge. But the question here arises as to what extent Plato is really innovating with respect to the role of these concepts in the economy of Greek folk-psychology. For not only does the notion of utility or benefit appear to have played a prominent role, either implicitly or explicitly, in conventional Athenian conceptions of friendly relationships in general, but so too does the concept of knowledge and more specifically the benefit derived from it.

(a) Utility in Familial, Erotic, and Peer Relationships

There is little doubt that blood relations were also accompanied by the emotional bonds we think of as typical of familial relations, especially in the case of parents and their children.[63] At the same time, however, at least some of the same evidence that bears testimony to such bonds also testifies to the reality of the practical value of children. In a society without pension plans and in which funerary rituals were important

[62] Whether that be ἐρᾶν, φιλεῖν, etc.

[63]Some historians have argued that high mortality rates amongst children made emotional commitments to offspring difficult for both individuals and societies at large. Still, the weight of evidence overwhelming suggests that the Athenians loved their children and grieved for them deeply when they died. Some of the most striking statements of deep attachment to children come from Greek tragedy (ex. *Eur*. *Supp*. 1087-1088) Nor are these sentiments restricted to contexts of childlessness and loss. Aristotle lists both *euteknia* "having good children," and *polyteknia*, "having many children," as among the components of happiness. In the context of his scientific investigations, he explains that while nature provides for the care of the young of all species by implanting a parental love of offspring, in lower animals this feeling only lasts until birth or until the baby reaches its complete development. However, in the most intelligent species, which include of course humans, there is intimacy and attachment (*synetheia kai philia*) between parent and child even after offspring are fully grown (*Gen*. *An*. 3.753a8, cf. *EN* 8.1155a17). Further evidence concerning Athenian attitudes towards children can be found in the orators. Cf. Golden's discussion (2015), pp. 70-97.

responsibilities of one's descendants, children served a fundamental role.[64] This practical significance is reflected in the very term for 'relatives', 'ἀναγκαῖοι'; as a derivative of 'ἀνάγκη', 'necessity', it implies duty to be the fundamental basis for familial relations.[65] Moreover, as historians have noted, the very attempt to draw a clear distinction between the sentimental attachment and practical value of such relations overlooks how intertwined they were for the ancient Greeks, as is exhibited by the fact that the word 'τόκος' meant both "child" and "interest on a loan or investment."[66]

As was noted above (sect. 2c), despite the official ideology of Athenian pederasty, it is clear that many pederastic relationships were based on pleasure-seeking, financial and political advancement, or a combination of all three.[67] But even in cases of 'noble' as

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[64] A law sometimes ascribed to Solon required Athenians to provide food and lodging for their parents when they were alive and proper burial when they died. Cf. Arist. *AthPol*. 56.6, Xen. *Mem*. 2.2.13, Lys. 13.91, Aesch. 1.13. For a complete list, see Golden, p. 79, fn. 75.

[65] For sources, see Golden, p. 79, fn. 79.

[66] For puns on the word *tokos*, "offspring," and "interest," see, e.g. Ar. *Nub* 1156, Pl. *Rep*. 6.506c-507a, 8.55e, Arist. *Pol*. 1.1258b6. The relation between interest and affection was an issue in antiquity too; see Democr. 68 B 278D-k, Plutarch's essay *On Affection for Offspring* (Mor. 493a-497e), and the commentary by Lambert (1982), pp. 11-14.

As Golden explains: '"This should not rule out an attempt to apply our own understanding to ancient phenomena, here as elsewhere, but it does suggest how difficult the task can be. And perhaps how futile, too. How could we tell if many or most Athenians did in fact care for their children only because they brought them certain benefits? To quote E. P. Thompson: "Feelings may be *more*, rather than less, tender or intense *because* relations are 'economic' and critical to mutual survival." The more parents need and depend on children, in other words, the more they will care for them, like them or not. It is certainly theoretically possible to differentiate this care from what some have come to consider the real thing, concern for children as unique human individuals, though many parents do not find it so simple. But I do not know how a historian would make such a distinction with any confidence, and I suspect an Athenian could not help"' (Golden, pp. 80-1). As I will argue in chapter 3, to their detriment Penner and Rowe downplay the practical importance of children to their parents.

This tight connection between practicality and sentiment is apparent in the *Lysis* itself. In the context of Socrates' conversation with Menexenus, he draws approvingly on a quotation from Solon: "Happy the man who has as friends (φίλοι) his children, and solid-hoofed horses, scent-sniffing hounds, and a host abroad" (212e3-4; Solon 23W). Here, children are put on a par with horses, hounds, and guest-friendships. Later, Socrates will speak of the common case of a man who values his son above all other things (219D). While we have reason to read Plato as arguing analogically in the latter example, the fact that he can appeal to this example here speaks to his recognition of the connection between sentiment and practicality.

[67] For discussion of the more disreputable side of pederastic practices, cf. Davidson, ch. 16, and Dillon (2004), pp. 112-26. For Aristotle on erotic relationships based on pleasure, see fn. 27 above; on how pleasure is a type of utility relation, cf. *EN* VIII.1155a19-21.

opposed to 'vulgar' ἔρως, there was not a clear distinction between sentiment and practicality. Even though a consensual exchange between a lover and beloved was, at least initially, conceived as an asymmetrical act of kindness,[68] there was still an exchange of benefit in the form of the boy's subsequent 'education'. Even a relationship that met the highest conventional standards of pederastic etiquette was no less a part of a boy's introduction to their lover's social milieu and world of connections.

These blurred lines between sentiment and practicality also characterized peer friendships in ancient Athens. The rudimentary nature of Athenian law, particularly the absence of a comprehensive system for keeping track of and enforcing contractual agreements, made developing friendships beyond the household a necessity. If one could not rely on friends for protection, one had little hope of maintaining one's status, let alone extending one's influence. This need to foster and preserve peer friendships went hand in hand with the virtues of φιλοτιμία and φιλονικία.[69] Virtue was measured in terms of the benefit one bestowed upon one's friends and the harm one inflicted upon one's enemies.[70]

The idea that the utility or benefit associated with these conventional forms of φιλία derived from a type of practical knowledge or wisdom was also a common one. This was

[68] I.e. as though the ἐραστὴς suffered from an affliction for which he was assisted by someone who took no pleasure in the act itself. See section 1(d) above.

[69] The utility to both individual and polis of *philotimia* and *philonikia* in the civic domain was already noted (sect. 2b above); the 'advantage' of the honor in question was the type of reputation that was achieved through self-sacrifice, either at the expense of one's own profit, interest, or even life. Demosthenes writes of the 'reasonableness' (*epieikeia*) of those who are willing to *philotimeisthai*: "You deprive the people of the (sc. the services of) those who might *philotimeisthai*, by giving clear warning that no one who confer a benefit on the people will gain any advantage at all from it (xx 103). Cf. Dover (1974) p. 230.

[70] "You have recognized that the ἀρετὴ of a man is to conquer his friends in benefaction and his enemies in harm" (Xen. *Mem*. ii 6.35). As Dover (1974) writes: "A Greek may apply to any situation or procedure the criterion, 'Does it enable me to harm by enemies and help my friends?'" (p. 180, drawing on Ar. *Birds* 420f., Soph. *Ant*. 643f., Xen. *Anab*. i.3.6, *Hiero* 2.2). Plato himself discusses this conventional view in the *Republic*. At 331e, Socrates shifts from the definition of justice as 'rendering what one has received from another' to one he attributes to Simonides, 'rendering to each man what is owed', which Polemarchus elaborates as owing good to one's friends (*philoi*) and ill to one's enemies (*echthroi*) (332a). I will discuss the role that this formula plays in the conventional view of φιλία in chapters 4 and 5.

especially true in the case of peer friendship, but also evident in the case of the other two forms as well. An essential part of financial and political success, no less survival, for a noble Athenian was identifying prospective friends who possessed the right types of skills with an eye to assisting them in some way so as to place them into one's debt.[71] As was also seen in the case of pederastic relationships, a boy was commended for rendering service (ὑπουργεῖν) to someone who could make a contribution towards his education. This relationship was seen as analogous to an apprentice submitting to a master in order to learn a trade.[72] Even in the case of parent-children relationships, one can see the investment that parents made in their children's rearing and education as one into the types of skills that might contribute to one's household.

(b) The Notion of Utility in the Lysis

As was already seen in the prior discussion of familial φιλία, Socrates will himself propose in the *Lysis* that the friend is someone or thing that is good and useful on account of knowledge. Yet, if the notions of utility and even knowledge, at least in a practical sense, played such important roles in the traditional Greek conceptions of love and friendship, the question thus arises: what exactly is novel or innovative about Socrates' proposal?

While indeed innovate, what makes Socrates' proposal in the *Lysis* compelling, I will suggest, is its absorption, rather than eschewal, of this tradition in which the concepts of

[71] Xenophon (*Mem*. II.9.4), explains how Socrates advised his friend Crito, a man of considerable wealth, as to how to rid himself of *sykophantai*, which was a major problem for rich men in the Athenian democratic system, where prosecution on all manner of charges was left up the initiative of 'public-spirited' individuals. Socrates suggests forming a friendship with a poor but honest politican (*rhetor*) called Archedemos. Xenophon tells us that the relationship was a mutually beneficial one; so much so that Crito's friends were so impress by the value that he was getting out of Archedemos that they all wanted to borrow him. Cf. Dillion (2004), p. 82.

[72] "We might think of Timarchus becoming an apprentice of the doctor, or Euathlus, or Critobulus or Alcibiades learning sophistry from Protagoras or Socrates. Pausanias might be thinking of himself sitting at the feet of Prodicus, or Phaedrus and Eryximachus following Hippias of Elis discoursing on philosophy" (Davidson, p. 423).

the useful (χρήσιμος), beneficial (ὠφέλιμος), and the good (ἀγαθὸς) were inextricably tied to the notion of a φίλος.[73] Rather than a wholesale rejection of the conventional understandings of love and friendship and the concepts constitutive of them, Socrates' project is one of clarification. His aim in the dialogue is to show what these concepts in fact entail once their implications are subjected to philosophical scrutiny.

Within this tradition, as was seen above, the value of being a φίλος is at least partly a function of the utility or benefit that it confers. That Socrates is himself a part of this tradition can be seen in a key passage in the *Lysis*, in which he introduces the topic of his discussion with Menexenus (cf. ch. 4), the question "who is a friend," by describing his lifelong pursuit of 'a good friend':

> "Since I was a boy I've actually always had a desire for a certain kind of possession (κτήματός του), like everyone else, only it's different things for different people: one person has a desire to get horses, while for another it's dogs, for another, gold, for another, public honors; but as for me, I don't get excited about these things – what *I*'m absolutely passionate (πάνυ ἐρωτικῶς) about is getting friends (τὴν τῶν φίλων κτῆσιν), and I'd wish for a good friend (φίλον ἀγαθὸν) more than for the best example any man has of a quail or a cock, and – Zeus – I'd wish, myself, more for that than for the best horse and dog and I do believe – I swear by the Dog! – more than the gold of Darius I'd much sooner get me a friend, or rather, more than getting Darius himself; that's how much of a friend-lover *I* am." (211d-e)[74]

[73] Plato seems fully committed to the claim that the good is that which benefits. This claim figures prominently in *Republic* I where Socrates argues that the good has a function, namely to benefit (335d3-8); it is the function of the good to benefit, and accordingly the good person benefits everyone (333e-335e). For this reason, virtue, which is good, cannot be an expertise (τέχνη), for expertise like medicine can be used to both good and bad effect (to heal and to poison). If understood as an expertise, virtue too could be used to good and ill effect (332d-334b). In *Republic* II, Socrates asserts the theological axiom that God is good (379b1) and he follows it up by adding that "the good is benefit" (379b11). It follows that, since God is good, He must always benefit (379b). My discussion here has been helpfully informed by Vogt (forthcoming, p. 9). These views are echoed in other dialogues as well. Friends, properly speaking, benefit each other, and since the agent is good, he does begrudge someone else benefits (no *pthonos*, *Phdr*. 253b7). As it is said in the *Timaeus*, "None that is good is ever grudging" (29e1-3; cf. *Phdr*. 247a7).

[74] This passage bears much resemblance to one in Xenophon:

> I once hear Socrates expressing views about friendship which I thought would be extremely helpful to anyone in the acquisition and treatment of friends. He said that although he often heard it stated that a good and sure friend was the best of all possessions, he noticed that most people gave their attention to anything rather than the acquisition of friends. He say that they took pains to acquire houses and lands and slaves and cattle and furniture, and tried to preserve what they had; but in the case of a friend, who according to them was the greatest blessing, most of them never considered how to acquire one or how to retain those that they had. (*Mem*. II.4.1-3)

While Socrates confession may well contain ironic force, it nevertheless reflects the same basic conceptual commitments as the conventional Greek view of the φίλος. However he ultimately understands the nature of a good friend, it is someone or thing that shares the same basic property as other valued acquisitions (κτήματα): it is something seen as beneficial to the desiring agent or φιλῶν.

As was already noted above (sect. 2e), Socrates explicitly draws the further connection between the utility of a φίλος and knowledge in the context of his private conversation with Lysis: "If therefore you become wise (σοφὸς), boy, everyone will be friends (φίλοι) to you…. since you will be useful (χρήσιμος) and good (ἀγαθὸς) (210d1-3). Here he appeals to a series of examples of practical skills (chariot-racing, estate management, the culinary arts, and medicine) in order to show that everyone loves (φιλεῖν) what is good or truly beneficial and that the source of such benefit ultimately resides in some type of knowledge or wisdom. As will be seen (ch. 3), Socrates' statement relies on a brief allusion to one of his so-called 'Socratic paradoxes': that no one would willingly resist the aid of the wise (210b3-5). However, Socrates does not make explicit here the conceptual connections between desire, goodness, and benefit that are necessary to defend this claim as does in other dialogues.[75] Instead, he simply appeals to conventional intuitions about the relation

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Commenting on this passage, Dillon (2004) writes: "[This passage] seems at first sight thoroughly paradoxical, as, from all the evidence we can muster, it was plainly a primary concern of Athenians that they should be well supplied with friends. In the sort of society which we have been examining it could not be otherwise. One can only conjecture that what Xenophon's Socrates is maintaining is that where most people fall down is in testing the *quality* of their friends. What Socrates appears to be advocating, in fact, is an even more pragmatic and calculating approach to the acquisition of friends than was currently practiced" (p. 79)

[75] Plato draws out this connection explicitly in the *Meno* (77b4-78b). In reply to Meno's second response to the question of what virtue is, "virtue is to desire beautiful things and have the power to acquire them" (77b), Socrates restates the first phrase of his response, "to desire beautiful things," as "to desire good things" (77b6-7). Meno initially thinks that some people desire good things and others bad things. When Socrates asks him whether those who desire bad things believe those bad things to be good or to be bad, Meno thinks that both cases are possible. But Socrates goes to argue that the second case is impossible. He first asks Meno

between desire, goodness, and benefit as these concepts are implicated within the conceptual web of meaning associated with being a φίλος.[76]

It is in drawing out the implications of this web of meaning, I will suggest, that the *Lysis*' unique contribution consists. First, Socrates will show that wisdom, in a philosophical sense, is the ultimate object of desire.

In the case of those other dialogues in which he does make explicit the connections between desire, goodness, and benefit — especially the *Euthydemus* and *Meno* — Socrates further appeals to common sense intuitions to show that, unlike other goods such as money, health, and even natural virtues like courage, which can be used both beneficially and harmfully depending on the circumstances, wisdom is always used in a useful or beneficial manner.[77] Still, while his discussions in these contexts purport to show that

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to consider an agent who desires bad things that he thinks to be bad, and he asks Meno whether the agent thinks that bad things benefit (ὠφελεῖν) him, or in fact knows that they harm (βλάπτει) him. Again, Meno thinks that both cases can occur. But Socrates insists on a close conceptual tie between the bad and the harmful. To see something as bad is to see it as harmful, and to be harmed is to be miserable and unhappy, which no one wants to be. Therefore no one desires what is bad (78a). It follows that the first clause in Meno's account of virtue, "to desire good things," applies to everyone, not just to the virtuous (78b). Of course, this exchange is one of the core passages of the Socratic Paradox that everyone desires the good. For present purposes, the important point to note the close association of the good and the useful on the one hand, and the bad and the harmful on the other. Cf. Vogt (forthcoming, p. 9-10). The fact that Plato does not spell out this connection as explicitly in the *Lysis* should surprise us; we should not expect him to in every dialogue. It is reasonable to assume that he intends the dialogues to be read together. As I will suggest below, just as the *Meno* helps to flesh out some implicit assumptions in the *Lysis*, the latter too can be seen to extend strains of thought found in the former.

[76] According to this notion, someone or thing is a φίλος if it benefits the person to whom it is φίλος, regardless of whether the person involved thinks so or not, i.e. regardless of their conscious psychological states or intentions.

[77] See previous footnote. Later in the *Meno* (87e-88a), Socrates goes on to argue that wisdom (φρόνησις) is the useful (τὸ ὠφέλιμον), and wisdom is virtue, either all of it or a part of it (89a). In the course of this discussion, two claims are hypothetically set up as central: that a good person is a useful person, and that virtue is useful (87e1 and 4). These hypotheses lead the interlocutors to take a closer look at what kinds of things are useful (ὠφελεῖν). We get an initial brief list: health, strength, beauty, wealth. However, it is objected, these very things can also bring harm. Correct use (χρῆσις) needs to rule over them if they are to be useful. If not used correctly, they bring harm. Discussion turns to another set of goods: temperance, justice, courage, being learned, memory, etc. With respect to these things, Socrates argues that, whatever in them is not knowledge, sometimes benefits and sometimes harms. For example, courage with wisdom benefits, courage without wisdom harms (88b). Socrates continues his proposal (couched in hypothetical terms) as follows. If virtue is in the soul and is by necessity always useful, virtue must be wisdom. Everything else in the

wisdom is the only thing that can always be used beneficially, they do not show that wisdom is beneficial or useful for some reason *beyond* the correct use of other goods. Thus, while Socrates shows in these dialogues that we only pursue what is beneficial and that the only thing that is always beneficial is wisdom, he does not show why wisdom is beneficial for its own sake.[78]

In the *Lysis*, Socrates extends this line of reasoning with respect to wisdom in the context of inquiring as to the reasons why a person becomes a friend to someone or something in the first place. He will go on to show that while our love for other people or the types of knowledge they exemplify[79] may often derive from the benefit they supply us in acquiring other goods such as wealth, health, and even happiness, these cases cannot account for all instances of friendly love. In such cases, the friend is loved in a remedial sense, i.e. for the sake of relieving us of some preexisting evil such as poverty or illness. As Socrates will go on to argue, if someone or thing can only every be good (ἀγαθὸς) to us, and thus a φίλος, "because of the bad" (δὶα κακὸν), then it would follow that "separately and for its own sake it is of no use (αὐτὸ δ'ἐαυτοῦ ἕνεκα οὐδεμίεαν χρείαν ἔχει)" (220d4-c7). Yet, he will insist, there are clearly cases in which we consider someone or thing good, and thus a friend, in the absence of any remedial purpose. In order to draw this distinction between these two types of cases of friendly love, I will argue, Socrates implicitly but pervasively appeals to a distinction between two types of knowledge: technical knowledge or expertise

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soul is only beneficial if it is used with wisdom; if used with foolishness, it is harmful. In itself, it is neither useful nor harmful. A similar such account is offered in the *Euthydemus* (278e3-281e). Though he discusses these matters in different terms in the *Republic* (for example, in terms of which kind of person shall have which kinds of desires, Book VIII-IX), it is plausible to assume that he continues to think that only the virtuous person shall deal with money, health, and so on, in the right kinds of ways. Cf. Annas' discussion, (1999) ch. 2.

[78] For a reading on which Socrates maintains an instrumental view of wisdom, see Irwin (1977), ch. 4, and (1992).

[79] In describing the φίλος in the *Lysis*, Socrates often alternates between the person possessing a type of knowledge (e.g. a doctor) and the type of knowledge itself (the τέχνη of medicine).

and philosophical wisdom. It is philosophical wisdom alone that can be loved separately and for its own sake.

In the process of drawing this distinction between these two types of friendly love, Socrates will also show in the *Lysis* that genuine interpersonal relations of φιλία can only be grounded in philosophical wisdom.

In order to explain the difference between these two types of friendly love, Socrates will argue that the cause (αίτία) of love in the second, non-remedial type of cases lies ultimately in a kinship that we as lovers share with the object of desire, in this case, philosophical wisdom. Insofar as we have a kinship with this object, moreover, we also share a kinship with one another as lovers of wisdom. In such cases, interpersonal love is still motivated by a desire for what is beneficial. Yet what motivates a lover to love a beloved is not some feature extraneous to the beloved themselves. A genuine lover (γνήσιος ἐραστὴς), Socrates will argue, responds to and promotes some good feature of their beloved simply because of its intrinsic worth. It is our kinship to wisdom, and through it to one another, that alone opens the possibility for interpersonal love that is truly symmetrical, i.e. resting on the same basic feature of the beloved or φιλούμενος in both directions.

Exactly how radically new this account is will take the dissertation as a whole to evaluate. But even on this preliminary basis one can see how at least one key concept traditionally associated with the notion of a φίλος is transformed through Socrates' innovations. As was seen as in discussion of Socrates' confession above, he too adopts the conventional idea of a friend as an acquisition or possession. We are now in a position to see something of the ironic force of his confession. Socrates claims to have never acquired a good friend, and we can now grasp, in a preliminary way, as to why. While ordinary

material goods generally become 'ours' through a process of acquisition, after which no further activity is required, 'having' or 'possessing' wisdom is for Socrates an ongoing activity.[80] Insofar as genuine interpersonal friendship is only possible through philosophy, the process of acquiring another person as a friend will likewise be an ongoing, indeed never-ending, activity as well.

4. Socrates as Lover and Friend

If this chapter is any indication, then, the *Lysis* is a dialogue deeply concerned with conventional views of love and friendship and the problems internal to those views. In the next two chapters, I will consider how Socrates diagnoses what is problematic with these conventional understandings of ἔρως and φιλία and how he proposes to resolve these problems.

As will be seen, however, the dialogue as a whole will be an extended attempt to address these problems. What distinguishes the next two chapters — a discussion of the *Lysis*' prologue and dramatic structure (ch. 2) and Socrates' private conversation with Lysis (ch. 3) — is the manner in which Socrates identifies and addresses these problems there. Socrates will take up the role of an expert in erotic matters, one that will contrast starkly with the role he assumes later, hinted at in his confession above, as an unsuccessful lover. The nature of his personae both here and later, I will argue, serve as important clues to his argumentative strategy. In the first part of the dialogue (203a-211d), Socrates will address the problems of ἔρως and φιλία *in concreto*: by demonstrating through his interactions with Hippothales and Lysis how, in practice, to resolve these problems. In the dialogue's

[80] Aristotle gives expression to this idea in claiming that φιλία involves a disposition to care for another person: a person is my friend, in part, because of a shared activity, without which the friendship dissolves (*NE* 8.5).

second part (211e-223b), Socrates will elaborate on his demonstration by stepping back and addressing these same problems *in abstracto*: by demonstrating through a series of arguments why these problems cannot be resolved in isolation from one another. In order to see how the two parts of the dialogue complement each other in this way, we must start at the beginning, with Socrates on route, in between the Herms.

CHAPTER TWO

The Prologue (203a-207d) and the Dramatic Structure of the *Lysis*

Though largely unacknowledged by commentators, the perception of the *Lysis* as an immature work is undoubtedly tied in part to the tone and mood of its prologue.[1] Even among those of other so-called "Socratic dialogues," its opening scene seems particularly light-hearted. While, like other such dialogues, it begins with Socrates characteristically seeking out conversations, absent are any allusions to the political hostilities they provoked, as found, for example, in the *Euthyphro*. Moreover, the opening conversations he engages in here seem relatively inconsequential by comparison. Contained are none of the concerns with power and tyranny found in the *Charmides*, the dangers of sophistry underlying the *Protagoras*, and the earnest issues of fathers and sons that set the terms of the *Laches.*[2] Instead, the focus of the opening scene with Hippothales is the latter's ridiculousness (καταγέλωτα) as a lover, which is emphasized not once but three times. Even Socrates' brief, initial encounter with Lysis and Menexenus, which first gives rise to the topic of wisdom, is characterized by laughter. The droll nature of these exchanges is amplified by the fact that they have seemed largely disconnected with the rest of the dialogue. After Socrates' initial exchange with Hippothales, the latter does not speak again for the remainder of the dialogue,[3] nor is ἔρως explicitly mentioned again except in passing

[1] Commentators have not even agreed on what constitutes the prologue. Some lump together this opening passage along with Socrates' private conversation with Lysis (207d-210d), the focus of the next chapter, as mere stage-setting for what they perceive as the dialogue's actual philosophical content, e.g. Annas (1977) and Gadamer (1980). Cf. fn. 4 below. My reasons for demarcating what I take to constitute the prologue will become clear over the course of this chapter.

[2] This isn't to say, of course, that ἔρως and φιλία aren't serious subject matters. However, the manner in which these topics are introduced here has almost universally been taken to reflect a lack of the maturity and philosophical gravitas with which they are introduced in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*.

[3] Although he doesn't speak again, Hippothales is mentioned by Socrates one further time at 222b, in what constitute a climactic moment in the dialogue. This passage will be discussed in ch. 7, sect. 1(b).

near the end of the dialogue (221e). And while Socrates takes up the issue of wisdom further in his subsequent one-on-one conversation with Lysis, this conversation too has been largely written off as propaedeutic, meant to prepare the boy for what serious philosophical discussions the dialogue does contain.[4]

For these and related reasons, commentators on the *Lysis* have largely dismissed the prologue and its stage-setting elements as philosophically insignificant to the dialogue's later arguments. Even the most extensive and detailed study of the *Lysis* suggests that "[to] dwell too long on the detail of 203-7 — the 'introduction' — is to run the danger of being heavy-handed, and of spoiling a passage remarkable for its lightness and humor (whatever degree of seriousness is hiding beneath)."[5] While there is no disputing its humor, I hope to show that the philosophical themes and problems lurking underneath are crucial to a full understanding of the dialogue. Rather than run the risk of being heavy-handed, it is precisely a neglect of one or more key aspects of the prologue, I will argue, that has led even the most sympathetic readers of the *Lysis* to mis-assess central threads of its overarching argument.[6]

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[4] According to Annas, "[serious] discussion in the *Lysis* of what friendship is" only begins with Socrates' conversation with Menexenus at 212b-213d (1977, p. 532). Even Gadamer (1980), who recognizes the importance of the drama of the *Lysis* to its arguments, only begins his analysis with Socrates' discussion with the boys starting at 212b. Commentators who have ignored the prologue have also generally been skeptical about a unified reading of the *Lysis* (cf. the introductory chapter, fn. 7).

While different commentators have shed light on the importance of the dialogue's characters, particular themes associated with them, and Socrates' pedagogical method in relation to both, none have effectively show how these all work together within the prologue as a whole and how, in turn, they are tied to the dialogue's overarching argumentative aims. Studies the *Lysis*' *dramatis personae* include Hoerber (1945-6), Friedlander (1964), and Tessitore (1986). The theme of competition is discussed by Bolotin, Tindale (1984) and Gonzalez (1995). Socrates' pedagogical strategy is examined by Gadamer (1980), Teloh (1986), and Scott (2000). My reading of the prologue is in many ways influenced by Gonzalez's (2003); however, among other things, his both underplays the importance of and mischaracterizes the structural contrast between Hippothales and Socrates as lovers.

[5] Penner and Rowe, pp. 191-2.

[6] For all its humor, the prologue provokes for any reader of Plato the serious question regarding Socrates' appropriation of the youth, an issue that of course would constitute the basis of one of the charges in his

I will begin (section 1) by explaining how the opening scene serves two dramatic functions: it emphasizes the theme of transitions as well as draws a contrast between two types of lovers, a contrast that will be central to the rest of the dialogue. I will then examine how the prologue provides dramatic representations of the conventional forms of both ἔρως and φιλία (sections 2 and 3). These representations not only highlight the focal characteristics of these relations but also indicate how these characteristics result in problems inherent to each of them. As I will go on to suggest, these problems take different yet related forms. The problem that emerges from the manner in which traditional ἔρως is conceived and practiced is what I will term 'a problem of engagement', i.e. a problem concerning how to establish an erotic relationship in the first place. On the other hand, the forces that shape traditional φιλία — particularly in the form of peer φιλία[7] — results in 'a problem of association', a problem regarding how to maintain a friendship that has already been established. I will then go on to argue that it is only through an appreciation of all of the prologue's elements, an appreciation that is lacking on other interpretations, that one may see not only how exactly these problems are connected but how the dialogue aims to address them (section 4). Finally, I will show how the prologue already contains clues as to how the dialogue will address these problems at length (section 5). In the process, I will suggest that, as a result of the dialogue's larger strategy, a further question emerges concerning the nature of erotic love, one to which Plato himself is attuned. To see how the dialogue attempts to address this further question will require understanding the

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prosecution. But the lack of any explicit allusion to this danger here is not without reason. The only implicit allusion to this danger comes at the end of the dialogue (223a), when the boys' tutors return from the adult festivities to break up the conversation. As will be seen, Socrates' encounter with the boys occurs within a sacred space that celebrates transitions, the Hermaea festival, and Socrates will fulfill the Hermeutic role as mediator of these transitions.

[7] Cf. chapter 1, section 2b.

importance of the contrast drawn between two types of lovers to the dramatic structure of the work as a whole.

1. Transitions and Two Lovers

The *Lysis*' opening scene (203a1-204c2) introduces the dialogue's overarching theme of transitions and a contrast that will be central to that theme: one between an inexperienced lover and an expert in erotics.

The theme of transitions is apparent in the very first lines. The dialogue begins with Socrates relating to an unnamed hearer how "[he] was on [his] way from the Academy straight to the Lyceum," when upon reaching "the small gate where the spring of Panops is" (203a2-3) — a spring likely associated with Hermes[8] — he chanced upon Hippothales and Ctesippus, together with a group of other youths.[9] Socrates reports that, upon being asked by Hippothales, "Socrates! Where is it you're on your way, and where from?" (203a6-b1), he responded: "From the Academy. … I'm on my way to the Lyceum" (203b2). This apparent redundancy in having Socrates reiterate his origin and destination is hardly accidental. Rather, it immediately calls attention to his wayfaring state.[10]

Clues regarding the relation of this theme of transitions to the dialogue's explicit subject matters, ἔρως and φιλία, also emerge through Socrates and Hippothales' initial exchange.

[8] The name 'Πάνοπος' may refer to a historical Athenian hero, but it may also be an epithet of Hermes, if seen to refer to his slaying of Argus the all-seeing (Ἄργος Πάνοπτης), the hundred-eyed giant that guarded the nymph Io, whom Hera had transformed into a cow as punishment for sleeping with Zeus. In order to free Io, Zeus commanded Hermes to slay Argus. Cf. Race (1983), p. 1, Haden (1983), p. 346, and Gonzalez (2003), p. 42.

[9] Outside of the *Lysis*, we know next to nothing about Hippothales, though a Hippothales turns up in Diogenes Laertius (III.46) as a pupil of Plato's (Nails 2003, p. 202). About Ctesippus, we learn in the *Euthydemus* that he was a student of the sophist brothers Euthydemus and Dionysodorus (303e-304a), which the *Lysis* appears to allude to at 211c4-5 by noting that Menexenus developed his knack for disputation through his association with his older cousin.

[10] It also calls attention to the types of places that the Academy and Lyceum were, i.e. gymnasia. As discussed in ch. 1, sect. 2(b-c), these were associated with competition, which was central to the Greek conception of φιλία. See further this chapter, sect. 3, below.

Hippothales calls Socrates over to a nearby door behind which lies a newly-built wrestling school (παλαίστρα). There, the former explains, he and the other youths "spend most of [their] time in discussions" (ἐν λόγοις, 204a2-3), the participants of which, he does not hesitate to add, include "quite a few beauties (πολλοὶ καλοί)" (203b8). We soon also learn that it is the occasion of "the Hermaea festival" when "the younger men (οἱ νεανίσκοι) and the boys (οἱ παῖδες) are all mingled together (ἀνομεμειγμένοι)" (206d1-2). Importantly implied by the ceremonial circumstances is the fact that these two groups are generally *not* mingled together. As we learn, this is a rare occasion on which Lysis and Menexenus' παιδαγωγοὶ are not watching over them, as they too are off celebrating the festival (223a ff.).[11] Not only, then, does the occasion mark a temporary suspension of Socrates' journey but so too of the normal routines of each group of youths.

The opening scene also draws a contrast between Hippothales and Socrates. Despite Hippothales' invitation to join their circle, Socrates is initially circumspect, demanding: "[before] that I'd like to be told what I'll be going in *for*, and *who* is the beauty (τίς ὁ καλός)" (204b1-2). Hippothales is evasive: "One of us thinks it's one person, Socrates… another another"; but Socrates presses him: "who do *you* think it is, Hippothales? This is what you should tell me" (204b4). The young man immediately blushes (ἠρυθρίασεν, 204b5), and then blushes much more deeply still (πολὺ ἔτι μᾶλλον, 204c3) when Socrates, seeing the effect of his questioning, adds that "*this* you *don't* need to tell me – whether you're in love with someone or not; for I know that you're not only in love (ἐρᾷς), but already pretty far along in it" (204b5-8).

[11] See again my discussion in ch. 1, sect. 1(b), of the differences between νεανίσκοι and παῖδες and the role played by παιδαγωγοὶ in preventing interaction between the two groups of youths.

Socrates agrees to join the company on the heels of Hippothales' tacit revelations, and we can speculate as to why. We soon learn that the latter's intentions in inviting Socrates are much more deliberate and personal than he at first lets on. Hippothales will share that he has hopes Socrates can "give [his] advice about the line one should take in conversation, or what he should do, to become endeared (προσφιλὴς) to his favorite (παιδικοῖς)" (206b9-c3). Yet even before Hippothales expresses this openly, Socrates seems to perceive in the former's erotic experience an inchoate awareness of his own shortcomings, an essential precondition for philosophical immersion.

Later on, Socrates will more directly draw a connection between recognizing one's need or want and thus desire for something good (ἀγαθὸν) or beautiful (καλὸν) with philosophy (218a ff.).[12] Here, he merely hints at such a relation. He explains that he can recognize Hippothales' state because, while he is "of mean ability, indeed useless (φαῦλος καὶ ἄχρηστος), in respect to everything else… this much has been given [to him]… from god, the capacity to recognize quickly a lover (ἐρῶντά) and a beloved (ἐρώμενον)" (204b8-c2).[13] As was seen, Socrates is cast at the dialogue's outset as a wayfarer in the literal sense. Here, he identifies himself as one in another, metaphorical sense: as an intermediary for the gods who serves to impart divine knowledge for human benefit.[14]

[12] Socrates will in fact go so far as to draw a relation of identity between the good and the beautiful: "For I say that the good is beautiful" (216d2). Socrates will also implicitly identify the good with wisdom. "[Those] who love wisdom" (φιλοσοφεῖν), he will explain, are precisely those "who, while possessing this bad thing, ignorance, are not yet made ignorant or stupid, but are still aware of not knowing the things they do not know" (218a-b). Cf. here Jennings (2011), pp. 21-22.

[13] Cf. *Symposium* 175e, 177d, and 193e; *Phaedrus* 257a; and *Theages* 128b ff. Socrates never refers to his gift as a form of wisdom, so in truth it is not really an exception. As Lowenstam has suggested, "when Socrates claims knowledge of *ta erotica*, he is not asserting that he possess a certain type of substantive knowledge but that the only thing he knows is how much he lacks and desires knowledge" (1985), p. 88. D.L. Roochnik (1987), pp. 117-29, comes to a similar conclusion.

[14] Cf. Gonzalez (2003), p. 42.

Yet, while highlighting his role as an expert in love, the opening scene also contains clear allusions to Socrates' role as a lover as well. As his sojourning status suggests and his initial interrogation of Hippothales indicates, Socrates is someone who is in pursuit, at least indirectly, of 'καλοὶ' (beautiful boys).[15] Despite his expertise, moreover, we will soon enough be given reason to see Socrates as a lover who, like Hippothales, has hitherto been unsuccessful in his love pursuit. At dialogue's end, he will even admit that he too, as he claims of Hippothales near its start (205d5), has been shown to be "ridiculous" (καταγέλαστος, 223b4-5) in his pursuit. A question that will become important for interpreting the dialogue's final word on love and friendship is whether we are intended to see Hippothales and Socrates as equally ridiculous as lovers — and if not, why.[16]

2. Hippothales' Erotic Love for Lysis

Socrates turns first to the representatives of the cadets or striplings (οἱ νεανίσκοι), Hipppthales and Ctesippus, and to the problem associated with the type of desire first emergent at their age: erotic love (204c3-206b8). I will refer to this as 'a problem of engagement', a problem that concerns how to establish an erotic relationship. The nature of this problem is disclosed through the course of Ctesippus' initial critique of Hippothales and Socrates' expansion on it.

Before Hippothales has a chance to collect himself, Ctesippus inserts himself into the conversation, exclaiming to Socrates: "Now you ask him [Hippothales] the name [of his beloved], and he blushes!" (204d8). Yet, the cadet decries, should Socrates pass "even a

[15] As was seen above, before accepting Hippothales' invitation, Socrates demands that he'd "like to be told what I'll be going in *for*, and *who* is the beauty (τίς ὸ καλός)" (204b1-2). I note here that Socrates is only indirectly in pursuit of καλοὶ, for as will be seen, his real object of pursuit is "a good friend" (cf. sect. 5 below).
[16] Most commentators have altogether failed to recognize the significance of this contrast. Those who have recognized it (esp. Penner and Rowe) have mischaracterized it, largely by noticing only to the differences between Hippothales and Socrates without recognizing the similarities. Cf. sect. 5 below.

little time" with Hippothales, the latter will wear the older man out too, just as he's "defeaned [the] ears" of his peers "by stuffing them with [the name] 'Lysis'" (203c5-d1). Ctesippus goes on to report that "if he has a bit of drink," Hippothales will often wake them from their sleep by calling out the boy's name. And "as dreadful as these things are," they are hardly so at all compared to the poems and bits of prose Hippothales writes about Lysis, which "he even *sings* to his beloved, in an extraordinary voice that we have to put up with listening to" (204d3-7).

Brushing aside Hippothales' initial denial of any such compositions, Ctesippus goes on to detail their contents. They recount, he divulges, the accomplishments of Lysis' family in athletic competitions and its mythical lineage going back to Heracles and thus ultimately Zeus (205c2-d4).[17] Ctesippus derides such subject matter as "ridiculous" (καταγέλαστον) on the grounds that Hippothales "is a lover [ἐραστὴν], with his mind fixed more than anyone else's on the boy, and yet he doesn't have anything of his own (ἴδιον) to say that even a *boy* couldn't say," but is instead capable merely of repeating "what the whole city celebrates" (205c2).

The specific nature of Ctesippus' critique speaks less to their particular relationship than to their general age-group.[18] Hippothales' awkward attempts at seduction are

[17] "… about Democrates, and Lysis, the boy's grandfather, and about all the boy's ancestors, their wealth and racehorses and victories at the Pythian and Isthmian and Nemean Games in chariot-teams and single-horse rider – *that's* what he puts in the poems he recites, and stuff that's even older news that that. It was the reception given to Heracles that he was going through in some poem the day before yesterday – how because of their kinship with Heracles their ancestor received Heracles as a visitor, the ancestor being himself descended from Zeus and the daughter of the founder of the deme; things old women sing about, and lots of other things of the same sort, Socrates" (205c2-d3).

[18] The dramatic function of Ctesippus' critique of Hippothales has resisted characterization, largely due to the fact that the exact nature of their relationship is left implicit. Unlike the unequivocal identification of Lysis and Menexenus as friends that follows (207c), Hippothales and Ctesippus are never explicitly described as such. Bolotin argues that the lack of explicit reference to a friendship between the two young men reflects the fact that "they are not so much friends but members of a group" and that Ctesippus humiliates Hippothales out of his own jealousy stemming from "Hippothales' preoccupation with Lysis" and "his deference to

indicative of the transitional period of young manhood that is marked by the emergence of erotic desire, and the outcome of such seductive efforts is an important touchstone for assessing a successful transition to adulthood. Ctesippus' critique of Hippothales highlights what is at stake in this transitional stage. His jab that "even a boy" could write such compositions about Lysis' family insinuates that Hippothales' efforts fall miserably short of the erotic standards reflective of a successful transition to full manhood.

On the heels of Ctesippus' revelations, Socrates agrees that Hippothales has indeed shown himself to be "ridiculous" (205d5). The reason, according to Socrates, is that the cadet's poems essentially amount to an all-too-premature victory song.[19] Although Hippothales thinks that he is honoring the boy with his songs — "But it is not to myself, Socrates…. that I am composing or singing" (205d7-8) — he is really "composing and singing an encomium to [himself]" (205d5-6). As a result, Socrates explains, should Hippothales somehow win Lysis' affection in this way, "what you've said and sung will be an ornament to *you*, and truly encomia, as if you were the victor" (205e2-4). On the other hand, should he fail, "the greater the encomia… so much the greater the beautiful and good things you'll seem to have been deprived of, and appear ridiculous [καταγέλαστος] as a result" (205e4-206a1). To make matters worse, it is this latter outcome that is almost

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Socrates" (1979, p. 73). However, there is more in the text that speaks to their φιλία than does not. From Hippothales' initial account to Socrates, we learn that the two engage in the type of activities typical of intimate comrades of their age-group, hanging out around the gymnasia conversing and admiring the boys (203b7-204a3). Ctesippus' report to Socrates (204c3-d8) is also suggestive in a number of ways that the young men are more φίλοι than simply acquaintances. Implied by his report is the fact that he and Hippothales often drink together and at least occasionally sleep in close quarters of one another. The fact that Hippothales often talks and sings openly about Lysis in Ctesippus' company, moreover, indicates a level of intimacy between the two. In fact, it is Hippothales who proposes that Ctesippus rely the contents of his compositions on his behalf when asked by Socrates to recite a sampling of his compositions about the boy (205b4-5). If anything, then, the fact that their φιλία is not explicitly stated speaks more to the transparently conventional nature of their relationship than anything else. Cf. here Jennings (2011), p. 23.

[19] See again ch. 1, sect. 1(c), which discusses how the conventions of seduction for homosexual ἔρως in Athenian culture were organized like a game or contest (ἀγών) designed to test potential ἔρασταὶ and ἐρώμενοι alike.

assured, Socrates insists, for "whenever anyone praises them and builds them up, these beautiful boys become full of pride and haughtiness [φρονήματος καὶ μεγαλαυχίας]" (206a3-4).

While Socrates diagnoses Hippothales to be a benighted lover, he doesn't appear to regard him as atypical by conventional standards. Hippothales' ἔρως for Lysis is couched in the conventional terms of an 'ἐραστὴς' (lover) and a 'παιδικὰ' (favorite/beloved) (205a1-2). As was seen in ch. 1, distinctive of this type of relationship was an asymmetry or lack of reciprocity in affection between lover and beloved.[20] Hippothales himself implicitly alludes to this asymmetry upon finally revealing his motive in seeking out Socrates' advice. He hopes to learn how to become "endeared" (προσφιλὴς, 206c2) to Lysis, which entails an acquisition of affection from the boy but not a reciprocation of his own erotic state. [21]

Socrates' diagnosis of Hippothales' ridiculousness, then, can be seen as a broader diagnosis of what is problematic about conventional ἔρως, and in particular, its mode of

[20] Ch. 1, sects. 1(a-b).

[21] Considered within the context of traditional ἔρως, it is natural to read Socrates here as gently reprimanding Hippothales for being unreflectively egotistical, for desiring Lysis only as trophy without any thought for the boy's own well-being. E.g. Gonzalez, who writes: "What Socrates seeks to expose here is that the kind of *eros* found in Hipppothales treats the beloved as a completely passive object to be possessed for the lover's own glory and therefore, rather than being truly concerned with the welfare of the beloved, is fundamentally selfish" (2005, p.24). See also e.g. Teloh, pp. 69-82, and Penner and Rowe, pp. 169-70. Yet while not wholly inaccurate, these readings neglect important dramatic motivations and connections. For example, it overlooks those aspects of Hippothales' erotic condition that compel the young man to engage with Socrates in the first place, as well as the latter's motivations for complying. As was noted above (sect. 1), Hipppthales displays in important ways the preconditions for philosophical discussion, which Socrates was seen to be in pursuit of from the dialogue's beginning. Commentators have also overlooked deeper similarities between Hippothales and Socrates himself. While I will explore these similiarities in more depth in sect. 5, it is important to note from the outset that, while lacking experienced and knowledge, there is no glaring evidence that Hippothales is an insincere or disingenuous lover. He appears genuinely disconcerted to learn that his encomia for Lysis are really expressions of self-praise (205d9-10) in a way that unabashedly self-interested ἐραστὴς would likely not. Nor, when he finally asks for Socrates' advice on how to become "endeared to his favorite" (206c4-7) does he use the explicitly figurative language of conquest — "winning victory" (205d6) and "hunting prey" (206a9-10) — that Socrates himself employed (206c2-3). Finally, Hippothales enthusiastically arranges for Socrates to meet and converse with Lysis himself, which suggests that, rather than a typical jealous or covetous lover, he is open to emotional and intellectual growth. On these last points, cf. Vann (2006), pp. 8-10).

discourse.[22] On Socrates' diagnosis, the problem with conventional ἔρως as it is conceived and practiced is twofold. On the one hand, even when its practitioner succeeds by the conventional means or method, he cannot establish a genuine relationship with his beloved. Moreover, those means in general have the opposite effect of repelling one's beloved.

As was seen, what makes Hippothales' poems ridiculous, at least in part, is the lack of self-consciousness that they display; rather than actually addressing Lysis, they are really works of self-glorifications, since the compositions will commemorate Hippothales' own victory should he win the boy's affection. This lack of self-awareness points to an underlying limitation of encomia as a mode of discourse. Even if he were to somehow win over Lysis with his poems, Hippothales would nevertheless be singing *to* himself *about* himself. In such a case, Lysis would be reduced to the status of a trophy. As Ctesippus critically notes, Hippothales has nothing of "his own" or "personal" (ἴδιον, 205b8) to impart to Lysis that isn't just common knowledge or hearsay. Insofar as a genuine relationship involves the development of some degree of intimacy through interpersonal communication, even in victory Hippothales would in a sense be no closer to the boy than he had been previously.[23]

[22] Nigthingale's (1993) discussion is particularly illuminating here. See esp. pp. 114-16.

[23] What justified calling Hippothales' compositions "ridiculous", in Ctesippus' eyes, was the fact that Hippothales has nothing more to say than "even a boy could say," which is merely to repeat what already "the whole city celebrates" (205c1-3). What presumably makes this ridiculous is that, despite having "his mind fixed more than anyone else on the boy," Hippothales is no closer to Lysis than any other Athenian citizen. Nightingale offers a similar assessment: "The reader, however, is clearly meant to recognize the folly of Hippothales' erotic discourse – to see how his flattering encomia serve as the currency which he uses to purchase the things he craves. Hippothales' 'intellectual' offerings and the sexual favours that he expects in return are both reduced to the level of commodities: so far from offering an education in virtue, Hippothales' 'pedagogy' corrupts both him and his beloved by turning their relationship into a commercial transaction" (p. 116).

Equally problematic is the fact that Hippothales' encomiastic discourse actually has the reverse effect of making one's beloved conceited and proud (206a4), and thus making the latter feel that he doesn't need the ἐραστής.[24] Socrates will later argue that those who are truly self-sufficient (ἱκανὸς αὐτῷ, 215a7), i.e. those who are the truly good, are in no need of and so therefore incapable of friendship (215a6-c2).[25] In order to acquire his beloved's friendship, then, a lover must adopt a form of communication that makes him recognize that he is not self-sufficient, but rather in need of a good that he has hitherto been unaware of and which only the lover can help him to attain.

While Socrates' critique only explicitly highlights what is wrong with Hippothales' approach to erotic seduction, then, it does establish certain *desiderata* that a successful approach must meet. On the one hand, it must take a form of communication that bridges the distance between lover and beloved through some type of shared discourse. At the same time, this form of discourse must not only be successful at winning over the beloved's affection but must also accomplish this by provoking the beloved to see that they need the lover in a way that genuinely contributes to their own well-being.

[24] The repellant effect of Hippothatles' encomia on Lysis are already implicitly indicated in in the text. When the conversation does ensue, Hippthales stands behind the enclosed circles of listeners, using them as a cover "in such a way that he thought Lysis wouldn't catch sight of him, because he was afraid of annoying him" (207b7-8). This is emphasized again at the conversation's conclusion as Socrates notes: "I noticed that [Hippothales] was in agony of embarrassment at what we had been saying, and I remembered how, in standing near, he wished to hide himself from Lysis" (210e5-7).

[25] Some commentators, esp. Curzer (2014) pp. 359-60, have argued that Socrates' implicit point here is precisely the opposite and that his argument is a *reductio ad absurdum* of an instrumental view of friendship. I discuss and reject this reading in ch. 5, sect. 4.

3. Lysis and Menexenus' Friendship

Socrates next turns to the representatives of the boys (οἱ παῖδες), Lysis and Menexenus,[26] and he addresses the nature of their relationship, one of φιλία, about which they are becoming reflective for the first time (206b9-207c12).[27] In doing so, Socrates also hints at a problem associated with φιλία in its conventional form, one I will refer to as 'a problem of association', a problem concerning how to maintain a friendly relationship.

When Hippothales admits at long last that it was in fact his aim to ask for Socrates' advice, the latter is willing to help but replies that it is easier to demonstrate (ἐπιδεῖξαι) with the boy in person than to explain (εἰπεῖν) (206c4-7). Hippothales suggests a plan to carry out Socrates' proposed demonstration. The latter is to accompany Ctesippus into the wrestling school and start up a conversation amongst themselves, which should be enough to draw Lysis, who is "exceedingly fond of listening" (φιλήκοος, 206c10), towards them.[28] Their plan is successful, as Socrates' entrance into the wrestling school lures first Lysis' constant companion, the bolder Menexenus, into conversation, followed by both boys together.[29]

As was seen in ch. 1, sect. 2(c), Lysis and Menexenus display both the positive and negative aspects that accompany traditional peer φιλία. Socrates first asks: "which of the

[26] Like the older youths, little is known about Lysis and Menexenus. Lysis' tombstone has been found and indicates that his personage was consistent with his character and status in the dialogue. Menexenus turns up as the sole interlocutor in the dialogue named after him. Cf. Nails (2003) p. 202, and Penner and Rowe, p. 6, fn. 10.

[27] Later, Socrates will raise the possibility that even babies are already φίλοι to the parents (212e-13a). Whether or nor Plato believes this (Socrates ostensibly refutes it there), the dialogue clearly suggests that it is only at Lysis and Menexenus' age/stage of life that φιλία emerges in an explicit way, between boys of the same group, as a problem to be reflected upon and addressed.

[28] In this respect Lysis is similar to Hippothales, who was eager to hear Socrates' lessons on erotics.

[29] Socrates explains that: "… Lysis kept turning around to look at us, and it was clear that he wanted to come over to us. So then for a time he was at a loss about what to do, hesitating to come over to us on his own[.]" (207a6-9). In this respect of not knowing what to do, Lysis is again similar to Hippothales. Menexenus self-assertion here mirrors Ctesippus' injection to the conversation earlier.

two of you is older?" (207c1). When Menexenus replies that this is something they dispute over (ἀμφισβητοῦμεν),[30] Socrates remarks that they must then "also dispute (ἐρίζοιτ' ἄν) about which [of them] is the nobler" (207c3). When Menexenus again responds in the affirmative, Socrates suggests that they must also then disagree "about which [of them] is more beautiful" (207c5), at which both youths laugh. Age, nobility of birth, and good looks were all conventional criteria of goodness and superiority in classical Athens.[31] The fact that the boys dispute over these matters indicates not only that they are of the same age group and social class, but also that, despite their friendship, each wants to be recognized as their counterpart's superior.

Not simply are they competitive, however, but their competitiveness takes a particular form, as Socrates' choice of words in this passage subtly indicates. The verbs 'ἀμφισβητέω' (207c2) and 'ἐρίζω' (207c3) means 'to disagree or argue with,' but they also can have the more specific connotation of being contentious for its own sake rather than for the sake of the truth. An 'ἐριστικός' person — which Socrates refers to Menexenus as latter on (211b8) — conceives of argumentation as a competitive game meant to be won by any means necessary, without regard to the truth of the matter.

[30] Bordt (1998, p. 104) thinks that the boys could not really have argued about their respective ages because they would have known how old they were. Penner and Rowe (2005), p. 13, fn. 1, disagree that they necessarily would have known but still concede his point: "why shouldn't two young boys be imagined as disputing about something they knew perfectly well as indisputable, if it mattered to them enough?" Both, however, overlook the fact that, for the Greeks, age discrimination was determined not by birthdays but in terms of age-classes or grades, which were defined by distinct stages of maturity. It is thus entirely plausible that Lysis and Menexenus might have disputed over who was older. See again my discussion of age-classes in ch. 1, sect. 1(b).

[31] For a compellation of evidence of these criteria in the primary sources, see Dover (1974): on social class, pp. 34-41, 109-115; on age, pp. 102-108; and on looks or appearance, pp. 69-73.

Causally, yet in sharp contrast to his previous questions, Socrates next goes on to rule out wealth as a possible point of contention — and in doing so, makes the first explicit mention of φιλία in the dialogue:

> '"Naturally, I won't ask which of you is the richer; after all, the two of you are friends (φίλω), aren't you?"
> "Certainly, we are," they replied.
> Well, friends are said to have everything in common (κοινὰ τά φίλων λέγεται), as the saying goes; so in this respect there will be no difference between you — at least if your telling of your friendship (τῆς φιλίας) is true"' (207c7-11).

Having gained their concession yet again, Socrates recalls that he was just about to ask the boys a further question, namely, "which [of them] is wiser and more just [δικαιότερος καὶ σοφώτερος]" (207d1-2). The centrality of this question to what follows is dramatically underscored by the fact that Socrates is prevented from receiving an answer; the brief conversation is interrupted by an anonymous figure who explains that Menexenus has been requested by the wrestling-master (207d2-3).

Unlike conventional ἔρως, then, the problem concerning conventional φιλία is not a matter of establishing a genuine relationship but instead of maintaining one, in particular, a relationship that aims at the mutual benefit of both of its members. In contrast to the distance and uncertainty that marked Hippothales' ἔρως for Lysis, the two boys are already friends, a bond based on the reciprocity and intimate knowledge that comes with "sharing all things in common."[32] The problem for φιλία is rather: how can the traditional view that "friends have everything in common" — a view that Socrates clearly seems to want to maintain — be reconciled with the equally traditional value assigned to competition

[32] In this way, the boys possess a shared personal or private (ἴδιον) knowledge of one another that is exactly the type absent in Hippothales' poems, which contain only what "the whole city" already knows about Lysis. Cf. this chapter, sect. 2 above.

within friendship?[33] Socrates, as was seen, hints at such a possibility by contrasting wealth, as an improper basis, with wisdom and justice, as proper bases for friendly competition. But the question still remains: how exactly does competition over the latter goods, rather than the former, preserve the maxim that friends possess all things in common?

4. The Problems of the Prologue

In addition, then, to underscoring the importance of the notion of transitions to the dialogue's dramatic context, and in particular the centrality of two transitional stages that the two groups of youths present at the festival represent, the prologue identifies these stages with the emergence of ἔρως and φιλία, as well as diagnoses problems inherit to these relationships as they are conventionally conceived and practiced. As was seen in section 1, the prologue also draws an indelible contrast between Hippothales as an inexperienced and unsuccessful lover and Socrates as an expert in love. But how, if at all, are these themes and problems related, and how might they serve as a unified basis for the rest of the *Lysis*' inquiry?

Most of what attention has been devoted to the prologue has focused on its discussion of ἔρως, largely in attempt to explain why this topic that figures so prominently at the dialogue's outset subsequently seems to disappear from its purview.[34] One way has been

[33] The significance of this brief exchange between Socrates and the boys, as well as the general role that wisdom must play in resolving this problem, is recognized by, among others, Bolotin (1979), pp. 81-2, Tindale (1984), pp. 105-6, and Gonzalez (2003), p. 21. While each is insightful in their own ways, however, they fail to fully connect this problem to the others problems and themes introduced in the prologue. See further my discussion in the next two sections.

[34] Many scholars have simply ignored this initial discussion of ἔρως completely, for example, Hoerber (1959), Annas (1977), Santas (1988), Roth (1995), and Carr (1996). However, the prologue contains more than enough clues to suggest that ἔρως isn't meant to serve merely as a negative counterpoint to φιλία. As was seen in section 1 above, the details of Socrates' introduction and his initial questions to Hippothales suggest that he is himself an ἐραστής in pursuit of καλοὶ. Moreover, not only does the fact that Socrates inquires of Hippothales about "[his] manner of dealing with [his] beloved" (205b2-3) itself implies that he thinks there is a *correct* manner of erotic courtship, but he in fact intimates to being familiar with it, as his claim to a god-given knowledge of erotic matters, and his agreement to provide Hippothales with a demonstration in these

to see the purpose of Socrates' conversation with Hippothales as intended to show how ἔρως is a defective form of φιλία, albeit one that represents a precondition of genuine friendship.[35] On this approach, Hippothales' ἔρως for Lysis exemplifies a rudimentary view of attraction *per se*. It represents the wish or desire for a relationship that must exist in the first place for any such relationship to ever develop. Yet Hippothales' encomiastic efforts to win over Lysis ultimately fail because pure attraction, as expressed through its associated mode of discourse, is not enough on its own to establish a relationship with another person. It must be supplemented with the type of rational discourse that enables a genuine reciprocal exchange, the type that Socrates goes on to model through the course of the rest of the dialogue.

However, in its effort to explain the role of ἔρως by interpreting it as conceptually aligned with φιλία, this reading of the prologue focuses exclusively on Socrates' conversation with Hippothales; it leaves unaddressed the significance of his exchange with Lysis and Menexenus.[36] Yet the dramatic context clearly intends the reader to see the

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matters, would suggest. As will be seen in the next chapter, Socrates will actively assume the role of ἐραστής in his one-on-one discussion with Lysis. Socrates is depicted as an ἐραστής seducing his παιδικά in other dialogues as well, e.g. the *Charmides* (155d3-e2; 176b2-c9) and *Euthydemus* (282b3-6). In the *Symposium*, Socrates asserts to have learned "correct pederasty" (211b5-6) from the priestess Diotima, which in the *Phaedrus* is referred to as "pederasty with philosophy" (249a2). Cf. Gonzalez (2003), pp. 25-7.

[35] According to Bordt, the point of "the conversation between Hippothales and Socrates [is] not only [to introduce] the main subject into the dialogue, the question of friendship and love, but also [to refute] one extremely popular theory about what constitutes love and friendship — the idea that love is nothing but an intense feeling" (2000, p. 160 ff.). In line with his reconstructive approach, however, this theory serves as an important element in the general outline of love and friendship that Plato develops: "Emotions and feeling give a reason for wanting a friendship but never an explanation for the friendship itself. …. Feelings can explain the wish for friendship but never the friendship itself" (p. 160). Although he doesn't discuss the prologue at all, a similar reading is compatible with Curzer's (2014) larger reading that the dialogue is fundamentally a refutation of an instrumental view of friendship. Ἔρως, on such a reading, would constitute the crudest form of in instrumental conception of φιλία as one based for the ἐραστὴς exclusively on sexual pleasure.

[36] Yet, it is the two younger boys, after all, who are first described as actually *being friends*. Bordt's neglect of Socrates' initial exchange with Lysis and Menexenus is attributable in large part to the fact that he fails to identify the distinctness of the problems associated with each ἔρως and φιλία from the dialogue's outset, problems which the rest of the dialogue aims to address. Bordt speaks of Hippothales' ἔρως as representing

prologue as contrasting these two conversations.[37] Hippothales is Lysis' lover as opposed to his friend. He competes with other ἐρασταὶ for Lysis, so as to win the beautiful boy "as an ornament" (κόσμος, 205e2) to himself. By contrast, Menexenus is Lysis' friend as opposed to his lover. Rather than competing for his counterpart's affection, he competes with Lysis, seeking to outdo him in all things, including beauty. Any adequate reading of the prologue thus must explain Socrates' separate discussions with both groups of youths.

On one such attempt to do so, these discussions are together meant to dramatize a problematic tension that arises among friends due to a conflict of desires: between a desire for love — both that of another person and of one's own self — on the one hand, and a desire for honor and community on the other.[38] In the case of the young men, Hippothales' erotic desire has not only demanded his peers' attention (through his unceasing talk of Lysis, 204c3-d8) but also alienated them (through his seeking the advice of an outsider in Socrates, 206b9-c3), actions that in turn can be seen to provoke the indignation and jealousy of Ctesippus. While the relationship of the younger boys, Lysis and Menexenus, is not threatened by one of its member's erotic desire, it might be seen to be so by an analogous desire on the part of both boys to assert their own self-love or self-regard, a desire expressed through the wish to distinguish oneself as the oldest, noblest, and most beautiful (207b8-c12).

"one extremely popular theory about what constitutes love *and* friendship" (2000, p. 160, my italics). In doing so, he conflates ἔρως and φιλία as one subject matter, first here and again elsewhere.

[37] Gonzalez (2003), p. 25, is the only commentator I know to fully recognize this point.

[38] Bolotin writes: '"We see in Hippothales' preoccupation with Lysis, and in Ctesippus' resentment of his deference to Socrates, the typical weakness of such a circle of "friends." As members of such a group men try to satisfy both their desire to share love and their desire for honor or respect. Yet while attempting to satisfy both of these desires in the same community, they are generally unable to fulfill either adequately. Both the desire for honor and the desire for love lead a man to be discontented with his place in his immediate circle. As a result, circles of friends – including political communities of "free and equal" friends – are always threatened with discord and with disintegration"' (1979, pp. 73-4).

Yet, in attempting to pay appropriate due to the prologue's contradistinction between erotic love and friendship, this reading conflates the problems raised there about them as a single problem. If the dramatic context is any indication, the problems that beset ἔρως and φιλία are not identical. The distance that characterizes Hippothales' ἔρως for Lysis — or the problem of engagement — is reflected by the fact that the former's predicament is discussed outside the palaestra, with the boy inside. The rivalry that marks the boys' φιλία — or the problem of association — is contrastingly reflected by the fact that their relationship is introduced inside the wrestling school. The nature of the problems associated with these relationships also explains why the two types of relationship are incompatible in their conventional manifestations. To use a wrestling metaphor: ἔρως, as practiced by Hippothales on Lysis, seeks the submission of its object; however, φιλία as practiced by Lysis and Menexenus, is inherently resistant to submission insofar as it involves its members trying to outdo each other.[39]

As was seen, the prologue is also importantly shaped by a contrast between Hippothales and Socrates as two lovers. On another reading, the point of Socrates' conversation with Hippothales is not to show that Hippothales' erotic love for Lysis is a defective form of φιλία (as on the first reading above), but rather that he exemplifies a defective form of ἔρως.[40] Hippothales' failure in method reflects a deeper failure to grasp

[39] This also explains why the dialogue begins with a conversation with Hippothales rather than the boys, even though Hippothales virtually disappears after the prologue. For the two forms of relationships to develop, this must be initiated from the standpoint of ἔρως. Only by a lover guiding a beloved to submit to something higher than the lover himself can the boy come to understand a form of friendship that doesn't consist of a form of competition for its own sake, but rather of a form of collaborative competition for the sake of something higher than themselves.

[40] According to Penner Rowe (2005), it serves to provide the basis for what is taken to be the dialogue's larger project of developing a general theory of desire or attraction. Though surprisingly in their otherwise detailed commentary on the dialogue, Penner and Rowe pay relatively little attention and place little emphasis on the prologue, they revisit it in a chapter at the end of their study in which they argue that a re-reading of it

the proper object of love. Socrates' subsequent demonstration is really meant to re-orient the young ἐραστὴς towards a recognition that the true object of his erotic striving is in fact wisdom.[41]

But, again, to see the significance of the prologue wholly in terms of this contrast is to similarly neglect other important aspects, particular Socrates' other conversation with Lysis and Menexenus.[42] What needs to be answered is how Socrates *qua* lover will address not only what is problematic about conventional ἔρως, but also what is problematic about conventional φιλία as it is exemplified by the boys. How, if at all, are his solutions to these problems related? If the setting of the Hermaea festival and his presence at it are any clues, Socrates will attempt to resolve these problems through an intermingling of essential aspects of both ἔρως and φιλία, one that is foreshadowed by the intermingling (ἀνομεμειγμένοι) of the youths themselves (206d1-2).

It is only through an appreciation of all of these elements found in the prologue, I will argue, that these questions concerning its purpose within the dialogue as a whole can be answered. The final section of this chapter will explore what light the prologue sheds on Socrates' prospective resolution to these problems. In doing so, it will also point the way to

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"confirms and deepens" (pp. 189 ff.) their overall interpretation. What it indicates, according to Penner and Rowe, is that "the real focus of the *Lysis* [is] the contrast between two types of lover, as represented by Hippothales, on the one hand, and his 'genuine' counterpart on the other… Socrates," (p. 191) a contrast marked by the absence and presence, respectively, of knowledge or wisdom.

[41] According to Penner and Rowe, "[Plato] shows absolutely no interest in the general idea of reciprocity in the *Lysis*, except as something that crops up and immediately disappears in the course of a dialectical argument…. reciprocal loving will just be a case where subject is also, coincidentally, object and object is coincidentally subject" (p. 56).

[42] In their brief discussion of the prologue (pp. 3-11) at the outset of their commentary, Penner and Rowe make note of Socrates' initial exchange with Lysis and Menexenus to highlight the eristic nature of the boys' φιλία. Curiously, however, they draw no further significance from this exchange, nor do they return to it in their later re-reading of the prologue (pp. 189-92), which focuses exclusively on Socrates' relation to Hippothales and the role of ἔρως in the prologue.

seeing how the dialogue as whole will address a broader question concerning erotic striving more generally.

5. The Seeds of a Socratic Solution

While Socrates' solutions to these problems will require the rest of the dialogue to be developed fully, the seeds of his solutions are already hinted at in the prologue.

Socrates' answer to the question, 'how should one converse with their beloved?' (206c2-3), is hinted at throughout his exchange with Hippothales, in which the ideas of rational thought and shared discourse are clearly contrasted with the latter's encomiastic approach. Early on, when Hippothales denies writing the compositions that Ctesippus ridicules him for, Socrates intervenes, explaining: "Hippothales, I am not for a moment asking to hear your verses, or any song you may have composed to the young lad; what I'm asking to hear is what your thought (τῆς διανοίας) is, so that I may know your manner of dealing with your beloved" (205a9-b3). In other words, Socrates is interested in learning about the content of Hippothales' writings rather than their aesthetic presentation.[43] Moreover, as was seen, when Hippothales finally does openly ask Socrates for his advice, the latter explains that this can best be conveyed only through conversation (διαλέγεσθαι, 206c6) with the boy himself. The exact form of this conversation is not made explicit here, but it is not hard to anticipate. It will take a form opposite of the type of flattery that Hippothales' approach consists of, a type of discourse that, unlike the latter's, doesn't "fill up" the boy with "pride and arrogance" (206a4).

In this last respect, Lysis and Menexenus' friendship suffers from a contrary problem: it is based on a type of discourse that is competitive to an extreme, a type predicated on

[43] Cf. here Nightingale (1993), pp. 115-16.

competition for its own sake or eristic one-upmanship. In his exchange with them, Socrates seemed to hint that one way in which φιλία can retain what is healthy about competition while still being true to the adage that "friends have everything in common" is through a pursuit of wisdom. In contrast to such conventional markers of goodness as age, nobility, and beauty, wisdom offers not only a true means of comparison[44] but also a goal that can reconcile the role of competition within φιλία with the possibility of mutual benefit, which is essential if any genuine friendship is to be maintained. What is distinctive about the competitive pursuit of wisdom is that it inverts the traditional relationship between competition and benefit. Rather than being at risk of loss through defeat, it is precisely through defeat or refutation that one stands to benefit the most.[45] Getting the boys to recognize wisdom as the proper basis of their friendship will amount to nothing less than getting them to see that they too harbor a latent erotic passion for something that they both lack.[46]

Each of Socrates' suggestions for how to address the problems associated with ἔρως and φιλια, then, draw on aspects of the relationship associated with the opposing group of youths. Socrates' solution to the problem of engagement will involve a new type of conversation with one's beloved, a type that adopts the competitive aspect of the boys' φιλία but drops its eristic aspect. At the same time, his solution to the problem of

[44] Not only are nobility and beauty indefinite means of comparison, but as was discussed in ch. 1, sect. 1(b), for the Greeks so too was age, since they did not determine age by birthdate but by age group or class. That wisdom offers such a means of comparison is indirectly indicated later at 218a-b, where Socrates will draw a three-way distinction between: (1) those who are fully ignorant and subsequent *not* lovers of wisdom; (2) those who are only partially ignorant insofar as they are aware of what they don't know, and consequence *are* lovers of wisdom; and (3) those who are *already* wise and no longer need, and thus *can't* love, wisdom. I will discuss this distinction further in ch. 6.

[45] Cf. Bolotin (1979), p. 82.

[46] In a climate passage at 221e, Socrates seemingly equates φιλία, ἔρως, and ἐπιθυμία as one general desiderative state. Importantly, his claim there is directed at Lysis and Menexenus, in his conversation with whom Socrates had previously not even mentioned ἔρως, let alone taken the notion up as an explicit topic of discussion.

association in turn lies in a type of recognition of one's lack of a good and one's need for others to attain it, a type of recognition that is characteristic of ἔρως as it is exemplified by Hippothales.

These clues, then, provide a sense of how Socrates will resolve the transitional problems inherent in erotic love and friendship as they are conventionally understood and practiced. But they also foreshadow a further question that will emerge through the course of the dialogue concerning the nature of erotic love more generally. Near the end of the *Lysis*, Socrates will go so far as to suggest that the genuine lover, one who adopts the correct mode of communication with his beloved, will necessarily (ἀναγκαῖον) be befriended by him (222a6-b2). In such a case, the lover wins the beloved's friendship because the latter needs the friendship of the lover in order to gain access to a higher good — a good which, as was already seen, Socrates hints to be wisdom itself. Yet while Socrates will again allude to our desire for wisdom, he will also emphasize the fact that wisdom itself has no need for its lovers and thus does not love them in return (212d7-8).

Here a further question emerges: how can a lover — in this case, *both* the ἐραστὴς *and* his παιδικά — establish a relationship with a beloved if the beloved in question doesn't need the lover in return?[47] That this question is central to the dialogue can be seen by returning to the topic of Socrates' own love pursuit broached at the end of section 1 and

[47] Very few commentators take up the question of how φιλία is possible with a self-sufficient friend (φιλούμενος) such as wisdom itself. One exception is Scott (2000), who attempts to articulate the issue in terms of trust: "Even though Plato does not employ any… form of the word "trust" (*pistis*)… the Lysis delineates three levels of trust – entrusting (placing something in another's care), explicit trust (presupposed in any act of entrusting), and wholly latent trust, of which one is completely unaware" (pp. 65-66). The last, latent sense of trust is his way of characterizing how the dialogue addresses the above problem. I will address this issue further in ch. 7.

examining more closely the way in which the prologue, and the dialogue as a whole, juxtaposes Hippothales and Socrates as lovers.[48]

After his impending one-on-one conversation with Lysis (207d1-210d8, the topic of ch. 3), Socrates will turn to question Menexenus, who now returns to the scene from attending to the festival sacrifices (211a1-2). Socrates introduces the question that will be the focus of their subsequent inquiry[49] by first describing his lifelong pursuit of "a good friend" (φίλον ἀγαθὸν; 211e3), telling Menexenus that "since I was a boy, I have been absolutely passionate" (πάνυ ἐρωτικῶς) about the "acquisition of friends" (πρὸς δὲ τὴν τῶν φίλων κτῆσιν) (211e2-3). The reason for this preamble, he explains, is that "these are the very things" he wants to ask Menexenus about, who is "experienced (ἔμπειρον) in them." For, while the latter has already acquired a friend in Lysis "at such a young age" (212a2), Socrates claims to be so far from possessing a φίλος that he doesn't even know "in what way one person becomes a friend to another" (212a5-6).

Socrates' autobiographical interlude sheds light on the relation between Socrates and Hippothales as lovers in at least three significant respects.[50] First, it explicitly establishes what was implicit in the prologue: that Socrates conceives of himself too as a lover with a single-minded focus on the object of his love. Second, Socrates' claim that he lacks the knowledge necessary to acquire this object, and thus needs someone more experienced to

[48] This is the one place in my analysis of the prologue where I will look beyond it in order to draw out the comparison between Socrates and Hippothales established there.
[49] "When one person loves another, which of the two becomes a friend of the other: the lover of the loved, or the beloved of the lover? Or does it make no difference?" (212b1-2).
[50] Most of the major commentators, including Bolotin (1979), Bordt (1998, 2000), and Gonzalez (1995, 2000, 2003), all fail to discuss the significance of the dramatic parallels between Hippothales and Socrates. Penner and Rowe (2005) are one exception; however, they focus only on the significance of the differences between the two characters, and in doing so overlook the important similarities between them. My discussion below is informed by the insightful discussion by Vann (2006), pp. 10-21. Vann, however, does not directly connect the juxtaposition of Hippothales and Socrates to the problem of erotic love as articulated above.

instruct him on how to do so, mirrors at least ostensibly[51] Hippothales' earlier tacit acknowledgement of his ignorance in erotic matters, which he seeks to remedy through Socrates' instruction. Third, Socrates' 'erotic education' is structurally analogous to that of Hippothales. Just as the latter's admission of his love for Lysis at the dialogue's outset (204b5) serves as the dramatic impetus for Socrates' demonstration of how a lover should talk to his beloved in his one-on-one conversation with the boy (207d1-210d8), so too Socrates' confession of his lifelong pursuit at 212a5-6, roughly the midway point in the dialogue, motivates the remaining discussions to follow, which first consider the views of the φίλος handed down by "the wise" (σοφοί) — Solon, Homer, Hesiod, Empedocles, and Heraclitus (212e-216b) — before finally turning to Socrates' own mantically-inspired account (216c ff.).[52]

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[51] On the question of Socrates' sincerity here, see my discussion in ch. 4, sect. 1.

[52] This juxtaposition of Hippothales and Socrates as lovers and of their respective love pursuits is further reinforced by the similar descriptions Plato uses to characterize them. (i) Both lovers' beloveds are characterized as "beautiful and good": Lysis is "beautiful and good" (καλός τε κάγαθός; 207a3), while the φίλος, Socrates' beloved, is "the beautiful and good" (τάγαθὸν καλόν εἶναι; 216d2). (ii) Both of these beloveds, moreover, are difficult to catch as a result of their beauty: Lysis because he is presumed to be as arrogant (μεγαλαῦχος) as any other young beauty would be (206a10), while the φίλος because it is "soft, smooth, and sleek" (μαλακῷ τινι καὶ λείῳ καὶ λιπαρω" 216c7) which is why "it is easily slipping through our fingers and getting away from us" (διολισθαίνει καὶ διαδύεται; 216d1). (iii) Both lovers are also comparted to hunters (θηρευταὶ): Hippothales is like an unskilled one who has "started up his prey and made it more difficult to catch" (206a9-10), while Socrates, having outlined the remedial view of the φίλος, temporarily compares himself to "a hunter" who is filled with delight "at the satisfaction of getting hold of what I was hunting for" (218c4-5). (iv) Both Hippothales and Socrates' love pursuits result in a state of drunken weariness. Caught in his passion, Hippothales will get drunk (ὑποπίῃ) and wakes his companions with songs about Lysis (204d1), raving like a madman (ληρεῖ τε καὶ μαίνεται, 205a7-8), while Socrates becomes "dizzy" (είλιγγιῶ, 216c5) and ultimately "drunk" (μεθύομεν, 222c2) due to the arguments about the φίλος that he and the boys consider. (v) Both Hippothales and Socrates are unwittingly deceived by their own words: Hippothales thinks his poetry is in praise of Lysis but it is really an encomium to himself (205d-e); Socrates celebrates too soon before realizing that the accounts of the φίλος considered "are no better than a set of braggarts" (218d2). (vi) Both lovers' pursuits result in them speaking nonsensically: Hippothales is mocked by Ctesippus for "babbling" (ληρεῖ; 205a7) and singing like a young boy (205c-d), while Socrates suggests in retrospect that the accounts of the φίλος considered are "mere nonsense (ὕθλος τις), like a poem that has been badly put together (ποίημα μακρὸν συγκείμενον)" (221d6-7). (vii) Both lovers become lost for words: Hippothales seeks out Socrates' advice in the first place because he doesn't know what to say to win Lysis' affection (206c), while the examination's final *aporia* leaves Socrates to remark: "So what more can we do with our argument? Or isn't it clear that there's nothing?" (222e). (viii) The love pursuits of both lovers are impeded by external forces: usually, Hippothales is prevented from approaching the boys by their tutors

Importantly, however, Socrates' autobiographical interlude also differentiates him from Hippothales by establishing him as a lover of what he refers to as 'a good friend' (ἀγαθὸς φίλος). In his affective state, Socrates can thus be seen to occupy a middle space between Hippothales on the one hand, and Lysis and Menexenus on the other.[53] Unlike Hippothales, who in his erotic passion isn't looking for a friend, and unlike Lysis and Menexenus, who consider themselves to have already acquired a friend in each other, Socrates is in erotic (ἐρωτικῶς) pursuit of a friend that is — or is *the* — good.

Despite the fact that Socrates is a self-professed expert in erotics, then, he is also a lover in pursuit of a beloved that his expertise doesn't seem to be of any aid in helping him to acquire. It is important to note here that this problem exists whether or not the good friend that Socrates longs for is wisdom itself or simply another person, presumably someone who is wise. Later on (215a-c), Socrates will argue that good people, insofar as they are good, cannot love each other, let alone anyone else. The reason, Socrates will explain, is that the good cannot love, for loving entails a need or dependence, and the good are by definition self-sufficient. The problem of Socrates' love pursuit, then, is a problem about how, if at all, non-reciprocal φιλία is possible, whether the object of friendly love is another person or not.

While it is only at the end of the dialogue that we receive a possible solution to this problem, the prologue already contains the beginnings of it. It does so, however, by way of

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(παιδαγωγοὶ), the Hermaea festival being the one exception (206d); it is these very same παιδαγωγοὶ who ultimately return in a drunken state and break up the group's discussion (223a1-b3). (ix) Finally, as noted in sect. 1 above, both lovers end up been shown to be ridiculous though the course of their love pursuits: Hippothales is called "ridiculous" (καταγέλαστε) by both Ctesippus and Socrates due to his encomiastic approach to erotic seduction (205b7; 205d5), whereas Socrates claims that he and the boys "have made ourselves ridiculous" (κατα γέλαστοι γεγόναμεν), since "people here will say…. that we think that we're friends of one another… but haven't yet been able to find out what the friend is" (223b4-8). Cf. Vann (2006), pp. 15-16.

[53] Cf. Gonzalez (2003), pp. 27-8).

raising a further, related problem. In Socrates' discussions with each set of youths, we learn that both Hippothales and Lysis share a common quality, namely, that of being a keen listener (206c10; 207b4-7). In this respect, they are similar or alike (ὁμοῖος), and one might well think that similarity or likeness is a plausible basis for φιλία itself. However, it is precisely this basis that will later be ruled out on the grounds that likes cannot benefit one another, and beneficial relations are necessary to establish friendly relations.

In the next chapter, Socrates will appeal to just such a relation of benefit and thus of friendship. There, in the context of his private conversation with Lysis, he will argue that not only are people naturally friendly towards those who are wise because the latter are useful or beneficial, but they are also akin (οἰκεῖοι) to them as well, which suggests that people are related somehow to wise people and even possibly to wisdom itself. A question that remains to be answered, and one that will loom large over the rest of the dialogue, is: how exactly are we to understand this relation of kinship and how, if at all, is it different from likeness or similarity?

CHAPTER THREE

An Erotic Education (207d-210d)

With Menexenus having departed to attend to the festival sacrifices (207d2-4), Socrates is left alone with Lysis to perform his promised demonstration for Hippothales. While he was not lying when he said that it would be easier to demonstrate (ἐπιδεῖξαι) than to explain (εἰπεῖν) how one ought to speak to his beloved (206c4-7), nonetheless the content of Socrates' demonstration will not be unconnected to the demonstration itself.

As was seen in chapter two, section 1, the prologue contrasts Hippothales' uselessness as a lover with the usefulness of Socrates' divine gift. Despite his self-professed uselessness (ἄχρηστος) in all other matters (204b8-c1), Socrates hinted there that he not only possesses a diagnostic expertise when it comes to erotics — an ability to identify a lover and their prospective beloved — but that he also possesses a discursive expertise as well — the ability to speak with καλοὶ themselves in such a way as to successfully win over their favor. The above contrast is made complete when Socrates finally assumes the role of ἐραστὴς in his private conversation with Lysis. As will be seen in this chapter, the lesson of Socrates' demonstration is twofold. For Lysis, on whom this demonstration is conducted, the lesson is an explicit one: in order to be truly loved, the boy must become useful (χρήσιμος), which in turn will require him to become wise (σοφὸς). In the case of Hippothales, for whom the demonstration is conducted, the lesson is an implied one: in order to win one's beloved's affection, one must be useful to them, something that requires, among other things, showing one's beloved *how* to become useful.

Like the prologue, commentators have struggled to situate this conversation within the larger context of the dialogue. Not only does it share with the prologue the appearance of

being extraneous to the rest of the work (cf. ch. 2, fn. 4) but it is beset with an additional problem, namely, that the argument Socrates advances in his conversation with Lysis appears clearly flawed in key places. A common approach to addressing these interpretive difficulties has been to view Socrates' demonstration as having a restricted function within the dialogue as a whole.[1] On this reading, it serves strictly as a propaedeutic interlude, meant to prepare Lysis for the more straightforwardly philosophical discussions about the φίλος that are to follow. So understood, whatever fallacious reasoning Socrates employs in this conversation can at least be seen as meant to awaken the boy to the value of philosophy.

Yet there are reasons to be skeptical of this reading. Not only is Socrates' conversation with Lysis the only discussion in the dialogue in which Socrates considers a thesis about who or what is a φίλος that does not result in *aporia*, but unlike in subsequent discussions the thesis under consideration appears to be Socrates' own.[2] Moreover, we have *prima facie* reason to make the best sense possible of Socrates' line of argument here. For if indeed at least part of his aim is to awaken Lysis to the value of philosophy, it would seem counterproductive to do so by way of specious reasoning.[3]

Rather than merely an ancillary episode, I will argue that Socrates' one-on-one conversation with Lysis in fact plays a foundational role in the larger argument of the

[1] E.g., Kahn (1996), Bordt (1998, 2000), and Rider (2011). In the case of many commentators, this view is merely implied insofar as they ignore the prologue and Socrates' conversation with Lysis altogether, seeing what serious philosophical discussion the dialogue contains to only begin with Socrates' conversation with Menexenus at 212b-213d. Cf. ch. 2, fn. 4.

[2] In the discussions that follow this one, Socrates will attribute the views about the φίλος under consideration to other authorities, most notably, "the wise" such as Solon, Homer, Hesiod, Empedocles, and Heraclitus. The only other view that Socrates appears to introduce as his own is the final view that the φίλον is what is οἰκεῖον. Some commentators maintain that Socrates does not in fact introduce this view as his own but rather as a mantically-inspired account like the remedial view that precedes it. Cf. Rudebusch (2004), p. 68. However, we have good reason to read this argument as Socrates' own; in particular, because as will be seen, it is connected to the argument that Socrates develops here in his conversation with Lysis.

[3] The most developed reading along these lines is Rider's (2011), which I discuss throughout this chapter.

dialogue.[4] Through the course of their conversation, Socrates will demonstrate how to address the problems inherent to both conventional ἔρως and conventional φιλία as these were diagnosed in the prologue. Key to Socrates' mode of demonstration, I will suggest, is the manner in which it adopts and modifies aspects of the modes of discourse typical of each of these conventional forms. Seen in its proper light, moreover, the argument Socrates develops is not in fact fallacious but rather promissory: it appeals to premises whose justification is only fully borne out through Socrates' subsequent conversations with the boys.

I will begin by offering an analysis of Socrates' demonstration on which it falls into three main stages (section 1). I will then go on to suggest that this demonstration gives rise to two sets of questions: one concerning how Socrates argues through the course of it, i.e. his argumentative intentions, and the other concerning what he actually argues, i.e. the conclusion of his argument (section 2). After considering and rejecting a prominent approach to these questions (section 3), I will offer a new reading of Socrates' demonstration that properly situates it not only in relation to the problems posed in the prologue, but also in relation to the remainder of the dialogue as a whole (sections 4-6).

[4] Readers who see Socrates' conversation with Lysis to contain a serious philosophical purpose generally fall into two camps. Those who see the dialogue to be primary a mediation on friendship argue that, like the prologue, this conversation is meant to rule out another popular thesis about friendship, "that utility is a sufficient reason for friendship" (e.g. Bordt 2000, p. 160; see also Curzer 2014, pp. 354-56). Alternatively, those who see the dialogue to principally aimed at developing a theory of desire or attraction argue that Socrates' conversation with Lysis primarily serves to provide a framework for that theory (e.g. Penner and Rowe 2005, pp. 12-38). I will discuss and reject both approaches below.

1. Socrates' Conversation with Lysis

Like Hippothales' poetry, which focused on Lysis' family lineage, Socrates' conversation with Lysis will also focus on the boy's family, particularly his relationship with his father.[5] Socrates' demonstration takes as its starting point the ordinary observation that Lysis' parents must undoubtedly love him, as would be expected of any normal parents. However, it ends rather extraordinarily by concluding that they can *only* love him if in fact he is useful (χρήσιμος), which in turn he can only be if he is wise (σοφὸς) — something that Lysis comes to concede he is not. In this section, I will show how Socrates develops his argument in three stages: an initial reorienting stage in which he inculcates in the boy a desire towards wisdom; a exhortative stage in which Socrates fan this newly kindled desire; and a culminate humbling stage in which he demonstrates that Lysis as yet lack the requisite wisdom.

(a) 207d5-209c5 —Reorientation

Socrates begins by identifying an apparent tension between Lysis' parents' sentiments towards their son and their actions. By doing so, he introduces Lysis to the centrality of wisdom to his own happiness, and in the process, re-orientates the boy towards a new understanding of his relationship with his parents.

Socrates first gains Lysis' concession to two seemingly straightforward propositions: that Lysis' parents love him very much (σφόδρα φιλεῖ), and that consequently they must

[5] The importance of Lysis' father to the boy's own identity is indicated even before his first appearance. Upon first learning the name of Hippothales' beloved from Ctesippus, Socrates confesses having no familiarity with the boy (204d10-e1), to which Ctesippus replies: "That's because people don't' mention his own name all that much; instead he's still called by his paternal title, since his father is so widely known" (204e2-4). Cf. discussion in ch. 1, sect. 2(e).

wish him to be as happy as possible (εὐδαιμονέστατον) (207d5-7). On the basis of these claims, Socrates goes on to infer:

> '"And is a human being happy, in your opinion, if he were to be a slave (δουλεύων) and if it were not possible for him to do anything he desired (επιθυμοῖ)."
> "No, by Zeus, not in my opinion."
> "Then, if your father and mother love you (φιλεῖ) and desire that you become happy (εὐδαίμονά), it's entirely clear that they exert themselves so you should be happy (εὐδαιμονοίης)."
> "Well, how could they not?"' (207e1-6)

The fact that Lysis' parents love him and wish to see him happy would seem to be obviously incompatible with any desire on their part to "enslave" him. Yet enslave their son, Socrates suggests through a series of examples, is precisely what they do. Lysis is neither allowed to drive his father's chariot (208a2-4), control the mules (208b3), nor touch his mother's weaving (208d2-5). Even worse, his parents have subjected him to the authority of a slave, his tutor (παιδαγωγός, 208c6), and as a result, the boy doesn't even possess "control over [his] own self" (208c1-4).

What allows Socrates to draw out this apparent tension is a premise that Lysis implicitly endorses: the idea that happiness consists precisely in the opposite of enslavement so understood, namely, the ability to do whatever one desires.[6] Appealing to this premise can be seen to serve two aims: one with an eye looking back to Socrates' conversation with Hippothales, and another looking ahead to the rest of his argument with Lysis.

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[6] Socrates' opening argument takes the following form.
(P1) Person A loves person B only if A wants B to be as happy as possible.
(P2) B is happy only if B is free to do whatever B desires.
(C1) Therefore, A loves B only if A wants B to do what B desires. (From P1, P2)
(P3) If someone wants some event to occur, they will allow it to take place. (Unstated)
(C2) Therefore, A loves B only if A allows B to do what B desires. (From C1 and P3)
(P4): But Lysis' parents don't allow him to do anything he desires to do. [From examples]
(C3): Therefore, Lysis' parents do not love Lysis (From C2, P4)

First, it enables Socrates to deflate whatever effect Hippothales' encomia might have had on Lysis, which Socrates earlier warned could only have the result of inflating the boy's pretensions (cf. ch. 2, sect. 2). Whereas Hippothales' encomia eulogized, among other things, his family's great wealth and athletic victories, Socrates here points out to Lysis that not only does he lack access to this wealth, which is controlled by others, but he is also barred from the very symbols of his forefathers' victories; Lysis is not even allowed to whip the mules, let alone take the reins of his father's champion horses (208a-b). Even his noble body (γενναίος σώμα, 209a1-2), Socrates suggests, which sets Lysis apart from other καλοί,[7] is not effectively his own but rather under the control of his tutor.

Upon neutralizing Hippothales' encomia in this way, one might expect Socrates to go on to point out that the source of the apparent tension between his parents' sentiments and their actions lies precisely in the above conception of happiness. If we reject the idea that happiness consists in doing whatever one desires, we can accept that Lysis' parents love their son but also prevent him from doing certain things due to their love. However, rather than rejecting this conception of happiness, Socrates in fact argues for the centrality of knowledge or wisdom to this conception.[8]

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[7] Socrates recounts his first impression of Lysis upon entering the wrestling school: "… he was standing there among the boys and younger men with a garland on his head, and standing out by his looks, worth talking about not just for his beauty (τὸ καλὸς), but for his beauty-and-goodness (καλός κάγαθός)" (206e10-207a3).

[8] Penner and Rowe characterize the conception of happiness on which this argument turns as Lysis' 'childish conception of happiness' (p. 21). See also Rider (2011), pp. 47-8, who refers to it as the 'occurrent desire satisfaction view of happiness', which he dismisses as obviously false on the grounds that Socrates explicitly refutes variants of it elsewhere, e.g. *Gorgias* 466b-475e; *Euthydemus* 278c-82a; *Alcibiades I* 117d-18a, 133d-34a; *Charmides* 171d-e, 173a-74c; and *Protagoras* 352c-56c On their view, the argument as a whole is a *reductio ad absurdum* argument of this fundamental conception (Penner and Rowe pp. 31-2; Rider, p. 58). However, as Rider himself notes, the precise view that Socrates refutes elsewhere is rather the limited claim that the ignorant person cannot be happy, even if they can always do what they want or satisfy their occurrent desires (p. 48). This reading overlooks the way in which Socrates draws on this initial appeal to Lysis' conception of happiness as way of converting him to a conception of happiness that, although formally the same, is substantially new by the argument's end. Beginning from this initial conception of happiness based on the ability to do whatever one desires, Socrates converts Lysis to a conception on which happiness

When Lysis responds to the question as to why his parents "would so terribly prevent you from being happy and from doing whatever you wish" (208e4-5) by suggesting that "it's because I am not yet old enough" (209a4), Socrates does not accept his answer. Yet rather than explaining that the problem lies with equating "being happy" with "doing whatever one desires," Socrates takes direct issue with Lysis' answer. He argues that age cannot be the issue since "there is a certain amount that your father and mother *do* entrust to you without waiting until you come to age" (209a4-7), such as reading, writing, and playing the lyre (209a-b). When asked why his parents allow him to do as he likes in these cases but not in others, Lysis responds that "I imagine that it's because these are things I understand (ἐπίσταμαι) whereas the others I don't" (209c2) — this time to Socrates' approbation.[9] In fact, he tells Lysis, "as soon as your father considers (ἡγήσηται) you to be wiser (βέλτιον…φρονεῖν) than himself, he will turn over (ἐπιτρέψειν) *everything*, including himself and his estate, *to you*" (209c4-6).

By introducing knowledge or wisdom as a condition for happiness, then, Socrates re-orientates Lysis towards a new understanding of his relationship with his parents. Whereas previously the boy understood his happiness, i.e. his ability to do whatever he wants or desires, to be dependent on his unquestioned trust in his parents' love, he is now led to see that his happiness consists in the ability for his parents to trust in him, a trust that is dependent on his acquisition of knowledge.

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consists in the ability to do what one *truly* desires, i.e. what one desires in a way that is informed by knowledge or wisdom.

[9] Socrates exclaims: "Very well, you best of men (ὦ ἄριστε)" (209c3).

(b) 209c6-210c5 — Exhortation

Rather abruptly, Socrates goes on next to generalize from the above claim concerning wisdom: if Lysis becomes wise, he argues, not just his mother and father but indeed *everyone* will entrust him to do whatever it is that he desires.

Just like his father, Socrates now suggests, so too Lysis' neighbor (ὁ γείτων) will "observe the same rule" (ὁ αὐτὸς ὅρος); he will turn his own household over to Lysis "at such a time as he considers [Lysis] to be wiser about estate-management than himself" (209c6-d3). In fact, the Athenians at large will entrust the management of the entire polis to Lysis "at such a time as they perceive that [Lysis] thinks sufficiently well" about statecraft (209d4-5). Indeed, Socrates continues, even the Great King — ruler of all Asia and enemy of the Greeks — would entrust to Socrates and Lysis rather than to himself or his own son "everything else in regard to which we seem to him wiser (δόξωμεν αὐτῷ σοφώτεροι) than they are" (210a8).[10]

The 'rule' (ὅρος) that Socrates appeals to here relies on an implied connection between friendly love (φιλεῖν), knowledge, and the benefit (ὠφέλεια) or utility (χρῆσις) that derives from knowledge.[11] A desiring agent will entrust, and thus befriend, someone

[10] He would trust Socrates and Lysis over his own son to prepare the royal stew if the two them "demonstrated to [the King] that [their] thinking about food preparation was finer than his son's" (209e1-2). Similarly, if the prince's eyes were diseased, the King would prevent his medically untrained son from touching his own eyes, but "if he assumed (ὑπολαμβάνοι) that [Socrates and Lysis] were skilled in the medical art — even should [they] wish to open his eyes and sprinkle ashes inside them" he would entrust his son's care to them (210a2-4).

[11] I refrain from providing the Greek equivalent for 'knowledge' here because Socrates employs many different terms to refer to the state that Lysis must achieve in order to receive the trust of others. Lysis begins by saying, "these are things I know [ἐπίσταμαι]" (209c2). Yet, it is significant that Socrates does not continue to use Lysis' term. Rather, in what follows he appeals to vaguer constructions such as: "think better [βέλτιον φροωεῖν]" (209c4, 209d2-3); "think sufficiently well [ἱκανῶς φροωεῖς]" (209d5); "think more finely" [κάλλιον φρονοῦμεν] (209e2); "think correctly" [ὁρθῶς φρονεῖν] (210b1)]. Socrates eventually shifts to "prudent" or "wise thinkers" [φρόνιμοι] (210b1) and "possessing intelligence" [ωοῦν κτησώμεθα] (210b6), before ending with the term "wise" [σοφὸς] (210c9). This variation is noted by Rider (2011), p. 49, fn. 21, but he does not offer an explanation for it. The question arises here: why does Socrates resist using a uniform

knowledgeable in some field or expertise insofar as the former sees this relationship as beneficial. [12]

In summary fashion, Socrates goes on to assert "that with respect to those things in which we become wise thinkers (φρόνιμοι),"

> "... everyone will turn them over to us, Greeks or non-Greeks, men or women, and in these areas we will do what we want (βουλώμεθα), and no one will willingly (ἐκὼν) get in our way, but we will be free and in control of others, and these things will be ours (ἠμέτερά), for we will benefit from them; …." (210a9-b6)

If we become wise thinkers (WT) in some area of expertise E, according to Socrates:

a. Everyone (Greeks or non-Greeks, men or women…) will turn things in E over (ἐπιτρέψουσιν) to us.
b. We will do whatever we want (βουλώμεθα) in E.
c. No one will willingly (ἐκὼν) obstruct us (ἐμποδεῖ) in E.
d. We will be free (ἐλεύθεροι) with respect to E.
e. We will be in control of others (ἄρχοντες) in E.
f. These things will be ours (ἠμέτερα), for we shall benefit (ὀνησόμεθα) from them.

However, he quickly follows this up by similarly enumerating what will opposingly occur "with respect to those areas where we do not acquire intelligence (ἂν νοῦν μὴ κτησώμεθα)":

> '"… no one will turn things over to us to do what we think best, but everyone will stand in our way as much as they can, not only those who aren't our kinsmen, but also our father and mother and anything else that may belong more closely to us than these, and we ourselves in such cases shall be subject to others, and the things in question will be alien (ἀλλότρια) to us, for we shall derive no benefit from them. Do you agree to this account of the case? "
> "I agree, he said."' (210b6-c5)

If we do not become wise thinkers (NWT) in subject area E, then:

g. No one will turn things in E over to us.
h. We won't be given permission to do what we think best

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term for the cognitive state in question? The reason, I will argue through the course of this dissertation, is that the argument of the *Lysis* will hinge on an important distinction between two types of knowledge or wisdom: practical or technical knowledge (τέχνη) and wisdom of a distinctive philosophical kind (σοφία).

[12] This is made explicit in what immediately follows; cf. sect. 1(c) below.

i. Everyone will obstruct us from doing what we want in E.
j. We will be subject (ὑπήκοοι) to others in E, and hence
k. We will be ruled over by others.
l. Things will be alien (ἀλλότρια) to us with respect to E, for we will get no benefit from them.

Through this inference, Socrates reaches the exhortative climax of his demonstration.[13] As was seen at the outset of their conversation, Lysis understood his parents' love for him to entail their desire to see him happy. Moreover, according to the implicit conception of happiness appealed to there, Lysis' parents' desire for their son's happiness in turn entailed their desire to see him acquire the freedom to "do whatever [he] wishes" (207e6). What Socrates went on to subsequently show was that his parents, or indeed anyone else, would only entrust him with some sphere of activity to the extent that he had a working knowledge or mastery of it. Here, Socrates drives home to Lysis the point that it is only by becoming knowledgeable that he can become happy, for it is knowledge alone that affords the freedom to do as one wishes.

[13] Socrates has been seen to draw an unjustifiable inference here; e.g., Rider (2011), pp. 51-3. In what immediately preceded, he appealed to the idea that people entrust matters in an area of expertise to those whom they *consider* (ἡγήσοῦται) to be more capable or wiser thinkers in that subject area than themselves. Here, however, Socrates seems to unjustifiably draw the even stronger conclusion that people will invariably turn things over to those who *really are* more capable or wiser thinkers in the relevant respects. To compound matters, Socrates himself appears to express his own skepticism about such a conclusion elsewhere. In the *Apology* (21c-e) and the *Gorgias* (459a), for example, he complains about how poorly the majority of people are at distinguishing between those individuals who are truly wise from those who merely appear to be so.

To judge Socrates as inferring invalidly here, however, overlooks a significant caveat in consequence (c) of (WT). There, in the context of drawing the conclusion that everyone will entrust matters to Socrates and Lysis in those areas that they achieve wisdom, Socrates qualifies his statement by noting that "no one will *willingly* or *voluntarily* (ἑκὼν) obstruct us if we become wise." Rather than concluding that people uniformly recognize and acquiesce to those who actually are wise, Socrates leaves open the possibility that they can and do obstruct the latter. He qualifies this point only by insisting that, when people do obstruct the wise, they do so involuntarily. In light of this caveat, Socrates' conclusion (WT-NWT) can also be seen to be of a piece with the principle he implicitly appealed to in the context of prior examples, which appeared weaker insofar as it was qualified by the concept of judgment (ἠγήστηαι). To say that no one willingly or voluntarily obstructs those who are wiser than themselves is equivalent to saying that no one obstructs those whom they consider to be wiser. What the above caveat adds to this principle is the notion that when Lysis' father or anyone else judges inaccurately the state of his son's thinking relative to their own, they do so against their true desires.

(c) 210c5-d8 – Humbling

Just as quickly as Socrates draws this exhortative conclusion, he goes on to expose Lysis' own shortcomings with respect to it. Socrates concludes his demonstration by showing that Lysis as of yet *isn't* wise and therefore not only must be unhappy but also *unlovable* to his parents as well.

Socrates returns full-circle to the question with which their conversation began: do Lysis' parents love him? In doing so, he establishes that becoming wise is not only necessary to happiness but also to being loved or befriended as well:[14]

> '"And so will we be friends (φίλοι) to anyone, or will anyone love (φιλήει) us in those areas in which we are useless [ἀνωφελεῖς]?"
> "Certainly not," he said.
> "So therefore, neither does your father love you nor does anyone love anyone else, to the extent [καθ' ὅσον] that he is useless [ἄχρηστος]."
> "It seems not," he said.
> "If, therefore, you become wise (σοφὸς), my boy, everyone will be friends to you and everyone will belong (οἰκεῖοι) to you – for you will be useful and good – but if you do not, neither anyone else nor your father will be friends to you, nor your mother or others belong to you."' (210c5-d4)

Socrates' qualifications suggest that he is again appealing to the same connection between love, knowledge, and benefit that underwrote his previous claims. No one — not even one's parents — loves or befriends someone with respect to those areas in which they are useless (ἐν οἷς ἂν … ἀνωφελεῖς) or to the extent that one is useless (ὅσον ἂν ᾖ ἄχρηστος).[15] Opposingly, Socrates infers that if one becomes wise, one will not only be loved, but will somehow make others to belong or become akin (οἰκεῖοι) to oneself as well. In appealing to this conceptual link between love, knowledge, and benefit, Socrates thus subverts the very basis of Lysis' initial presupposition concerning his parents' love of him. Their bond to their

[14] See again fn. 12 above.
[15] I discuss the interpretation of this passage further below in this chapter, sect. 3, fn. 25.

son, and indeed anyone else's, is not to be understood in terms of blood relations at all, but rather strictly in terms of a relationship of benefit-conference.

Up to this point, Socrates has thus established the conditional claim that no one will love Lysis, including his parents, unless he is wise. In his closing exchange with the boy, Socrates goes on to deliver his final protreptic blow by arguing that Lysis *is* actually ignorant and therefore must be unlovable to his parents and indeed anyone else:

> '"And so is it possible to think big (μέγα φρονεῖν) in those areas where you are not yet understanding (μήπω φρονεῖ)?"
> "How could it be?" he said.
> "But then, if you need a teacher (διδασκάλου), you are not yet understanding."
> "True."
> "Neither, then, are you big-minded (μεγαλόφρων), if in fact you're still foolish (ἄφρων)."
> "By Zeus, Socrates," he said, "I don't think so!"' (210d4-8)[16]

Socrates tacitly draws upon Lysis' earlier admission that he still has a tutor who controls him (208c3-4) to infer that the boy is not yet φρονεῖν (understanding) and therefore must be foolish (ἄφρων) and hardly big-minded (μεγαλόφρων).

Whatever else this argument is intended to demonstrate one thing is clear: Socrates' conclusion is meant to serve as a capstone to his demonstration for Hippothales. As was already seen in the initial stage of Socrates' demonstration, his examples there served in

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[16] His final sub-argument takes the following form:
(P1) If a person is not yet understanding (μήπω φρονεῖ) in area E, he is not thinking big (μέγα φρονεῖν) in E.
(P2) If he needs a teacher in E, he is not yet thinking in E.
(P3) Lysis has a teacher. (See 208c)
(C1) Therefore, Lysis is not yet thinking (μήπω φρονεῖ). (P2, P3)
(C2) Therefore, Lysis is foolish (ἄφρων). (C1)
(C3) Therefore, Lysis is not big-thinking. (From P1, C1, C2)
(P4) Lysis' parents, or anyone else, only loves those who are wise and useless. (from 210c5-d4)
(C4) Lysis' parents do not love Lysis. (from P4 and C3)
While 'φρονεῖν' can mean both 'to understand' and to merely 'to think', the inference only works if 'φρονεῖν' means in the first instance 'to understand', rather than merely 'to think' in some insufficient way that requires a teacher to help one to understand some subject matter. Cf. Rider (2011), p. 56. But there is good reason to read 'φρονεῖν' here as 'to understand'. To φρονεῖν in the way necessary to gain the freedom to do as one really wants, and obtain the love of others, one needs knowledge or understanding. This is borne out by the fact that in those things that Lysis does have knowledge – reading, writing, lyre-playing – he doesn't need a teacher; he can "do as he likes" (209b3-8).

part to counteract the young man's encomia, which Socrates had earlier warned could only have the effect of filling up one's beloved "with pride (φρονήματος) and arrogance (μεγαλαυχίας)" (206a4):

> "Hence, anyone who deals wisely in love-matters, my friend, does not praise his beloved until he prevails, for fear of what the future may have in store for him. And besides, these handsome boys, when so praised and extolled, become full of pride (φρονήματος) and arrogance (μεγαλαυχίας); do you not think so?" (206a1-4)

Socrates' final statement to Lysis above makes explicit the contrast he wishes to draw between Hippothales' approach and his own. Socrates concludes his demonstration with Lysis by driving home the point:

> "Neither, then, are you big-minded (μεγαλόφρων), if in fact you're still foolish (ἄφρων)." (210d7; cf. full quotation again above).

By showing Lysis to be neither a wise thinker (φρόνιμος) nor big-minded (μεγαλόφρων), he has cut down whatever pride (φρονήματος) and arrogance (μεγαλαυχίας) the boy might have previously harbored.

2. Two Questions Concerning Socrates' Demonstration

In one sense, as its final stage above would seem to indicate, the broader purpose of Socrates' demonstration is clear, namely, to humble the young Lysis. As Socrates himself recounts, immediately upon concluding his conversation with the boy, his first inclination was to tell Hippothales as much directly: "That is the way, Hippothales, in which you should talk to your favorite, humbling and cutting him down to size, instead of puffing him up and spoiling him, as you do now" (210e2-5).[17] Nevertheless, the text itself leaves unanswered important questions concerning both Socrates' argumentative intentions as well as the significance that we as readers are meant to draw from his conclusion.

[17] Socrates recounts, however, that "I checked myself and withheld my speech" when he noticed that Hippothales "was in an agony of embarrassment at what we had been saying" (210e). I will discuss this passage again in chapter 4, sect. 1.

First, how seriously are we to take Socrates' explicit argument at his word? This question arises because his argument rests on at least two controversial inferences. First, one may question the 'rule' on which the second, exhortative stage of Socrates' demonstration is based (cf. sect. 1b above). As was seen, Socrates derives this rule on the basis of a series of examples that start from a consideration of his parents' actions and end with a similar consideration of those of the Great King. Yet, on the surface at any rate, Socrates' generalization from the local case of his parents to more global ones involving all Athenians and even the King of Persia seems to amount to a gross overstep of reasoning. While it may be reasonable to assume that Lysis' father will pass on his estate to his son once he deems Lysis better capable of managing it than himself, one may seriously question whether the same can be said for Lysis' neighbor, the Athenians at large, or the Persian King. If anything, it seems much more reasonable to assume that, for the same reasons as Lysis' father, they too will turn their affairs over to their own sons once they become of age, rather than to Lysis. In other words, it would seem that control and freedom are determined not solely, or even primarily, on the basis of a person's cognitive abilities, but also due to such considerations as age, family connections, and social standing.

One may question the inferential basis of the third and final 'humbling' stage of Socrates' demonstration as well (cf. sect. 1c above). There, as was seen, Socrates draws upon Lysis' earlier admission that he still has a tutor who controls him (208c3-4) to infer that the boy lacks understanding (φρονεῖν) and is therefore foolish (ἄφρων). Yet this move seems on the surface to be fallacious: for, by inferring from the fact that Lysis does not φρονεῖν (understand) that he must therefore be ἄφρων (foolish or mindless), Socrates seems to be unjustifiably ruling out the possibility of some middle ground between full

understanding and complete ignorance.[18] In fact, the surrounding context seems to support just such a possibility. For we know that Lysis has already learned some things (reading, writing, lyre-playing), which would suggest that, while he may not be not φρονίμος in the strong sense of possessing a comprehensive practical wisdom, he is not completely ἄφρων either.

The problem of interpreting Socrates' argumentative intentions thus gives rise to a dilemma. If, on the one hand, he intentionally argues on invalid grounds, the question arises as to how effective his protreptic strategy can ultimately be. For his demonstration is not meant merely to humble Lysis, but also to exhort him towards a love of wisdom. Yet how good of a start in philosophy can Socrates be providing for the boy if the latter is made to accept the demonstration's conclusions on invalid grounds? If, on the other hand, Socrates is in fact arguing in good faith here, how are we to make sense of his underlying line of reasoning? He doesn't seem to offer any explicit clues, let alone ones that a philosophical novice like Lysis could pick up on. Once again, the same question arises but for a different reason: how good of a start in philosophy is Socrates providing for Lysis if, at best, the boy is left in the dark about the core ideas that this argument presupposes?

The second set of questions that arise concern the intended upshot of Socrates' demonstration. These arise due to what most commentators have seen as the unpalatability of its explicit conclusion. Simply put, it seems impossible that Socrates could really maintain that, because Lysis is not yet wise, his parents cannot possibly love him. Yet, if indeed Socrates intends us to draw a weaker conclusion, how exactly is it to be reconciled with the explicit letter of his argument?

[18] The Stoics, of course, deny that there is a middle ground (e.g. *SVF* 3.539). As will be discussed in this chapter, sect. 5, and further in ch. 6, this is not Socrates' view in the *Lysis*.

Here again, answering this question gives rise to a dilemma. If we take Socrates' conclusion at face value, we must accept the strong conclusion that Lysis' parents don't really love him because he is unwise.[19] Alternatively, we might interpret Socrates to be drawing a weaker conclusion: not that Lysis' parents do not love him, but simply that they do not entrust some things to him because he lacks wisdom.[20] In this case, rather than evidence against their love for him and their wish to see him happy, Lysis' parents' reluctance to entrust certain matters to their son is in fact evidence for these very desiderative states. However, this reading runs into a problem of its own. For Socrates' broader argument is predicated on the premise that *all* love is a desire for the benefit that derives from knowledge. If Lysis' parents' love for their son isn't predicated on this desire and is an exception to this principle, then how are we to explain it?[21]

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[19] This reading was first endorsed by Vlastos (1973) pp. 6-11, and later reaffirmed by Gonzalez (2000). Gonzalez writes: "What is assumed here is a necessary connection between loving someone and being able to entrust your possessions to that person. Given what Socrates says, the connection appears to be the following: if Lysis is not wise, his parents will not be able to entrust him with their possessions, therefore they will find him useless, therefore they will not love him. In short, what we have here is a clear case of scholars not liking what Socrates says and trying desperately to make him say something else" (p. 381). However, this reading seems as counterintuitive as the idea that Socrates doesn't befriend Lysis, despite the boy's ignorance. As will be seen below in section 4, there are strong reasons to believe that Socrates does in fact befriend the boy. These reasons suggest that Plato wants his readers to try to understand how similarly Lysis' parents might also love their son despite his ignorance, albeit perhaps in a relatively benighted way relative to Socrates' own affection for the boy.

[20] This reading is endorsed by, among others, Bolotin (1979), pp. 89-90, Bordt (1998), p. 80, Penner and Rowe (2005), pp. 21-38, and Rider (2011), pp. 54-55.

[21] Penner and Rowe try to avoid this having to explain Lysis' parents love for Lysis in terms of such a desire, even though they acknowledge that "[when] Socrates gets fully into his stride in the latter parts of the *Lysis*… it *is*, after all, some sort of idea of 'utility' that dominates his treatment of *philia*: what we love, whenever we love (or wish, or desire, or ….), is the useful, the beneficial, or what is good for us. …. that might still be enough to make the claim expressed in the last sentence of the last paragraph look problematical: does Socrates think our interpersonal relations are based on utility, or doesn't he? Is he just confused on the issue?" (p.34) As a way of resolving this problem, they suggest that when Socrates concludes that Lysis' parents will not love him unless he is "useful and good" (210d2), that he means that they will not love him unless he is useful and good *for himself*. They argue: "It is worth emphasizing that the benefit or advantage of the one loving is not talked about in the argument, only that of the one loved; 'without benefit' (*anepheles*) in 210C6, 'useless' (*achrestos*) in C8, and 'useful and good' (*chresimos …. Kai agathos*) in D2 all need to be read in light of 210a9-c4, and so in terms of the uselessness/usefulness of a person *to himself*" (p, 36, fn, 60).

However, their reading of 210a9-c4 is far from obvious. While Socrates claim that becoming wise (φρόνιμοι) will enable us "to do as we please," this does not mean that Socrates is solely concerned here with

3. A Deflationary Reading

One way to avoid the first dilemma above is to see Socrates arguing fallaciously yet for instructional purposes. On this reading, while Socrates explicitly exploits a connection between love, benefit, and knowledge, his argument is really intended to serve as a *reductio ad absurdum* argument of the very idea that utility could be a necessary or sufficient condition for φιλία.[22] According to this deflationary approach, parental love is the prime instance of a type of φιλία that isn't based on utility. The relationships cited at the very outset and ending of Socrates' demonstration are seen to further substantiate this reading. Just prior to his private conversation with Lysis, Socrates explicitly refers to Lysis and Menexenus *as friends*. Even more importantly, at the end of their conversation, Socrates indicates that he himself has formed a friendship with the boy.[23] If Lysis is loved and

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the benefit or advantage of the loved one in question. After all, his entire argument leading up to this conclusion is based on the idea that people will only entrust, and thus befriend, someone that they consider knowledgeable because that person will be beneficial *to the one loving*. Moreover, as Penner and Rowe acknowledge above, the notion of desire that dominates the dialogue's treatment of φιλία is one on which friendly love is a desire for what is beneficial or useful to the desiring agent. They too acknowledge that this desire is ultimately a desire for wisdom (p. 38). If, then, there is a way to account for Lysis' parents' love for their son without seeing it as an exception to the principle that friendly love is a desire for the benefit that derives from knowledge or wisdom, this would clearly offer a more coherent reading of the *Lysis*' argument. It is just such a reading that I purport to offer in the rest of this chapter and beyond.

[22] Curzer (2014), pp. 354-55, argues for a strong version of this reading, according to which the conversation is meant to show that utility cannot be even a necessary condition for friendship. Bordt (1998, 2000) defends a weaker reading, on which the point of the conversation is to show that "[utility] is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for friendship" (2000, p. 162). See also, Kahn (1996), p. 282. Bordt (2000) explains that Socrates' 'rule' (209c7), that generalizes from the example of his parents to that of the Great King, is purposefully meant to be absurd because he is constructing a *reductio ad absurdum* argument of the idea that utility is sufficient for φιλία: "The first example seems rather straightforward: His father will allow him to run the household if Lysis is competent to do so. … But now Socrates claims that Lysis' neighbor will do exactly the same; this already sounds weird … The last examples are as funny as they are absurd: the king of Persian will of course never allow Lysis to throw ashes in the eyes of his son, nor will he allow him to put tons of salt in the soup. … Utility is not a sufficient condition [for friendship]" (p. 161). While this explanation does not directly account from the second questionable inference noted in sect. 2 above — from the fact that Lysis lack understanding to the conclusion that he must be unwise or foolish — it largely defuses it as well if the argument is a *reductio* of its main premise.

[23] Cf. section 4 below.

befriended by all three despite the fact that he is useless and unlovable by the explicit standards of this argument, it must follow that the problem lies with these standards.

This reading offers a solution to the second dilemma regarding Socrates' conclusion as well. According to this reading, while Socrates does indeed conclude that Lysis' parents don't love him because he is unwise and therefore useless, it does not follow that we as readers are meant to take his conclusion seriously. Rather, it should be taken as a cue that there is something wrong with the very premise that such a friendship could be based on utility in the first place.[24]

However, we have good reasons to doubt this line of interpretation. First, there are strong indications both external and internal to the dialogue that Socrates does indeed take seriously the connection between friendly love, utility, and knowledge. As was seen in ch. 1, sect. 3, the notion of utility or benefit appears to have played a prominent role in conventional Athenian conceptions of friendly relationships in general. The blurred lines between sentiment and practicality characterized all forms of friendships in ancient Athens, not only familial but pederastic as well as peer relationships. In this light, Socrates' examples aren't so obviously absurd as his quick inference from considerations about

[24] Bordt (2000) argues that the logic of Socrates' argument also indicates that his conclusion is not meant to be taken wholeheartedly. He contends that Socrates invalidly derives the conclusion that "Lysis is only loved *insofar as* he is useful on the basis of the weaker claim at 210c8 that Lysis is not loved insofar as he is useless. According to Bordt, this second claim is unproblematic, for parents love their son because he is their son and *not* because he is useless. Socrates' supposed sleight of hand here is thus meant to caution the careful reader against taking the argument's explicit conclusion seriously. However, this reading of 210c8 is incorrect. 'καθ ὅσον' means 'to the extent that', not 'because'. This point summarized at 210c8 is stated more fully at 210c5-6: "Well, then, are we going to be anyone's friend, or is anyone going to love us as a friend in those areas in which [ἐν οἷς ἄν] we are useless?" It is not fallacious to infer from this that we will be loved only in those areas in which we are useful. If Lysis' parents, then, love him only in those areas in which he is useful, it is reasonable to infer that they do not love him simply insofar as he is their son. Cf. Rider (2011), p. 55, fn. 30; Gonzalez (2000), p. 381, fn. 7.

Lysis' father to conclusions about all Athenians and even the Great King might at first suggest.[25]

The dialogue itself also provides reasons not to take conventional friendships for granted. As was discussed in ch. 2, sect. 3-4, while Lysis and Menexenus are described as friends in the prologue, their friendship is characterized there in conventional terms that were seen to pose a problem for their friendship. If their relationship is any indication, then there is also reason to think that, similarly, neither his parents' nor Socrates' relationship with Lysis should be accepted at face value, as aspects of the drama intended simply to be taken for granted. Rather, the fact that they seem to be in tension with the explicit conclusion of Socrates' argument should be seen as indicative of a problem for these relationships are they are conventionally understood — a problem that Plato wants his readers to resolve through an understanding of the dialogue's larger argument.

This deflationary interpretative approach also fails for another, equally important reason: it fails to satisfactorily explain how Socrates' demonstration addresses the problems that were raised in the prologue. How, if at all, could a *reductio* argument of an instrumental account of friendship serve to address the problem that Socrates' demonstration is explicitly meant to address, namely, Hippothales' problem of how to effectively speak to one's beloved so as to win their affection? If the explanation of that problem in ch. 2, sect. 2, is on the right track, addressing that problem involves, among other things, showing one's beloved how as a lover one *can* in fact be beneficial or useful to

[25] Just as in today's world, a wealthy estate owner like Lysis' neighbor might very well have hired a manager to oversee his property (an ἐπιτρόπος); and no different than today, he would have sought out someone with managerial acumen. The same could be said about the Athenians when selecting leaders, and the Great King when hiring cooks, doctors, and governors. Cf, Rudebusch (2012), p. 9, who cites ancient historical examples from the Mediterranean world of using enemies as slaves, and of making use of the talents of slaves with expertise.

them. It seems highly counterintuitive that one might demonstrate this by effectively showing one's beloved that friendship cannot be grounded in a relation of benefit.

This last problem for the deflationary approach suggests what might have already seemed obvious from the outset: that the problems of the prologue provide a set of criteria for an adequate understanding of the purposes of Socrates' demonstration. It is only by considering Socrates' demonstration more directly in light of these problems, I will argue, that we can satisfactorily address the interpretative problems posed in the previous section.

4. Towards a New Interpretation

In chapter 2, sections 2-3, it was seen that the prologue identifies problems concerning both conventional ἔρως and φιλία, ones that were referred to there as transitional problems of engagement and association. As was also discussed in ch. 2, sect. 5, the prologue provides clues as to Socrates' strategy for addressing these problems, a strategy that involves a mediation of aspects of both conventional ἔρως as it is exemplified by Hippothales and conventional φιλία as it is practiced by the boys. Rather than refuting a view of friendship based on utility, the primary purpose of Socrates' demonstration with Lysis is to carry out this strategy.

As was diagnosed in the context of Socrates' opening conversation with Hippothales, the problem of engagement is one concerning how to establish an erotic relationship with one's beloved in the first place. Building on Ctesippus' initial critique, Socrates argued that encomiastic discourse was not only an ineffective means to addressing this problem but was in fact symptomatic of it. Even if Hippothales somehow were to win Lysis over through his encomia, Socrates suggested there, he would still be no closer to the boy than he was

now. For whatever favor from the boy he might acquire through his encomia, it would not necessarily result in some greater degree of intimacy with his favorite. Since encomia are in fact nothing more than an indirect form of self-praise, they cannot serve as the basis for interpersonal communication. Equally problematic was the fact that encomiastic discourse of the sort employed by Hippothales actually has the reverse effect of making one's ἐρώμενος conceited and proud (206a4), and thus feeling that he has no need for the doting ἐραστής.

How Socrates' demonstration addresses this problem is already apparent in two ways. Unlike Hippothales' compositions, which have nothing personal (ἴδιον) to say about Lysis (205b8-c1),[26] Socrates engages directly with the boy and inquiries into the most personal relationship that he has thus far had, namely, that with his parents. Second, rather than praising the boy through his relation to his family, Socrates humbles the boy in a way that forces him to question and examine the very basis of his relationship with his family.

These elements of Socrates' demonstration can be seen to draw on essential aspects of conventional φιλία as it is exemplified by the younger boys. As was seen also seen in ch. 2, sect. 3, Lysis and Menexenus' relationship is based on a competitive rivalry over their shared qualities: their wealth, nobility, and beauty. These qualities serve as the basis for their argumentative attempts to prove to one another that the other is lacking in these qualities relative to himself. Like the boys, Socrates too employs a form of discourse through which he shows Lysis that he is lacking something, in this case wisdom. But rather than simply showing Lysis that he is lacking with respect to wisdom, Socrates also indicates

[26] As was discussed in ch. 2, sect. 2, Hippothales' poems are exclusively about the wealth, victories, and lineage of Lysis' ancestors, topics that "the whole city already knows" about (205b9).

to him how to improve in this respect, and in doing so, demonstrates to the boy the benefit of associating with a genuine ἐραστής.

While the explicit aim of Socrates' demonstration is to solve the problem associated with conventional ἔρως, his demonstration also implicitly points to a solution to the problem inherent to conventional φιλία as well. The problem of association, as it was referred to in ch. 2, concerned the problem of how to maintain a friendship while still accommodating within it a place for competition. Socrates addresses this problem by introducing a new element into the form of discourse typical of conventional φιλια. As was alluded to above, Lysis and Menexenus' eristic mode of discourse inherently involves the distinguishing of oneself as superior to, and thus in some sense the separating of oneself from, one's φίλοι. By demonstrating to Lysis that the common basis of all friendship is a desire for wisdom, Socrates initiates the boy into a form of discourse that has the opposite consequence. Rather than forcing its practitioners to distinguish and separate themselves from each other, philosophical discourse as exemplified in Socrates' demonstration has the contrary effect of reinforcing one's membership within the class or group of its practitioners.

Just as his solution to the problem of engagement drew on conventional φιλία, Socrates similarly draws on conventional ἔρως to resolve the problem of association. He does so by employing a modified form of Hippothales' mode of discourse. Given the obvious differences between Hippothales' and Socrates' approaches to erotic seduction, it is easy to overlook that Socrates' demonstration also employs a type of encomium, in this case to

wisdom.[27] Insofar as it aims at exhorting Lysis to pursue wisdom, Socrates' demonstration involves a praise of the rewards and glories that accompany wisdom, should one become wise.

Yet, while this reading explains how Socrates' demonstration addresses the problems of the prologue, it still leaves unanswered the questions raised concerning it in section 2 above. Particularly pressing here is the second set of questions concerning the problem of explaining, or explaining away, Socrates' explicit conclusion that Lysis' parents can't in fact love him. This set of questions is especially urgent because this reading of Socrates' demonstration takes seriously its central premise that all love is a desire for the benefit that derives ultimately from knowledge or wisdom. If indeed we are meant to take this premise seriously, however, it remains to be seen how not only Lysis' parents but indeed anyone else, including Socrates, might still love Lysis in spite of the fact that he is unwise.

As was already noted in section 3 above, the dialogue itself suggests that Socrates does in fact establish a friendship with the boy by the conversation's end. Immediately following the conclusion of his argument, Socrates reports how, rather than displaying anger or despair upon being shown to be ignorant and thus apparently unlovable, Lysis asked him "in a most playfully and friendly manner (μάλα παιδικῶς καὶ φιλικῶς)" to "tell Menexenus," who had just returned, "what you have been telling me" (211a2-5). But if Socrates endorses the principle that all love desires wisdom, then there seems to be a problem of accounting not only for how Socrates can befriend Lysis, but also how Lysis can in turn befriend

[27] Nightingale (1993) overlooks this parallel in her analysis of the contrast between Hippothales and Socrates' modes of discourse in the *Lysis* (pp. 114-116). However, in the same article, she points out that Socrates makes use of a form of encomia in the *Symposium* while still transforming it in the process. Her analysis of the *Symposium* could equally well be applied to the *Lysis*: "Socrates' 'eulogy' … challenges encomiastic discourse by refusing to finalize, to reify, to memorialize its subject. … Virtue and knowledge, in short, are a way of life — a creative process — not objects that can be won like a trophy" (p. 129).

Socrates. For what makes Socrates' demonstration distinctively different from Lysis and Menexenus' mode of discourse is the fact that he himself does not claim to outdo Lysis with respect to wisdom. His demonstration does not involve him asserting, nor entail in any implicit way, that he himself possess the quality necessary to be loved. Rather, it implies at most that he possesses the ability to make clear to Lysis what that quality is.

If Plato's subtle hints concerning Socrates and Lysis' newly forged friendship are any indication, then the puzzle of accounting for interpersonal love in the absence of wisdom is one that Plato wishes his readers to grapple with. In order to understand how this puzzle is ultimately resolved, we must return to the first set of questions raised in section 2 above concerning Socrates' argumentative strategy in the first place.

5. Socrates' Argumentative Strategy

As the first dilemma articulated there showed, even if we are to read Socrates as arguing in good faith through the course of his demonstration with Lysis, a question still arises as to how effective his argumentative strategy can be. For how good of a start in philosophy could Socrates be providing for Lysis if the boy is left in the dark about the core ideas that this argument presupposes? This question appears all the more pressing when one considers the full intent of Lysis' request to have Socrates repeat his demonstration on Menexenus. When Socrates notes that Menexenus is "contentious" (ἐριστικὸς), Lysis immediately replies: "that's exactly why I want you to have a conversation with him… so that you can rough him up (ἵνα αὐτὸν κολάσῃς)" (211b9-c3). One may wonder whether Socrates' lack of full transparency with Lysis has had the effect of only reinforcing, rather than reforming, the boy's predilection for eristic competition that was seen earlier to characterize his friendship with Menexenus.

Yet this worry stems in large part to a failure to take full account of his final exchange with Lysis. When asked by Lysis to repeat his λόγοι on Menexenus, Socrates first responds that the boy should do so himself, encouraging him "to recollect them as well as you can, so that you tell him the whole of it clearly," and adding that "if you forget any of it, ask me again when you come across me next" (211a9-b2). This exchange ends in a compromise. While Lysis promises to make good on Socrates' recommendation, Socrates grants his further request to instead take up a different line of argument with Menexenus until it is time for both of the boys to leave (211b3-5).

This brief epilogue is significant for two reasons. First, Socrates' promise to reiterate the argument with Lysis at a later date suggests that he himself endorses the contents of these λόγοι sincerely. Even more importantly, we have good reason to see Socrates' agreement to take up a different line of argument with Menexenus — "Well, I must do so… since it is you [Lysis] who bid me" (211b6-7) — as only half-hearted. In truth, I will argue, each of Socrates' subsequent conversations, first with Menexenus and then with both boys, will effectively serve to provide a justification for each of the implicit premises that his demonstration with Lysis depended on. The rest of the dialogue is in fact an extension of that demonstration. When, then, Socrates asks Lysis to remember the argument of his demonstration and repeat it on his friend at a later time, he intends him to do so with the hindsight of the elucidation of its latent premises that is provided through the conversations to follow.[28] It is by looking ahead, therefore, that we can glean how Socrates ultimately justifies the most controversial claims in his demonstration with Lysis.

[28] While the remainder of this dissertation will attempt to explain how the dialogue accomplishes this, the rest of this section will serve as a roadmap. Gonzalez (esp. 2000, pp. 389-97) and Penner and Rowe (2005, ch. 11) are the two other main commentators to consider how Socrates' argument with Lysis anticipates ideas

The first of those claims was the 'rule' that Socrates appealed to in the exhortative stage of his demonstration (section 1b), which relied on an implicit connection between love, benefit, and knowledge. I will argue that the point of Socrates' subsequent three conversations with the boys — the focus of chapters 4 to 6 — is to show how philosophical reflection on conventional intuitions about the relation between these notions reveals that the ultimate object of friendly love is wisdom. In the next chapter, Socrates will consider conventional applications of the term 'φίλος' as the starting point for a broader inquiry into the question of determining who or what is a friend. An important result of this inquiry will be that conventional usage in fact supports two different uses of the term 'φίλος': one reciprocal and one irreciprocal. In chapter 5, through a consideration of the canonical views of the φίλος found in the writings of the poets and cosmologists, Socrates will go on to show that reciprocal forms of φιλία cannot, in the first instance, explain the type of relation of benefit that is essential to any and all forms of φιλία. Through the course of introducing his divinely-inspired account of the φίλος in chapter 6, Socrates will demonstrate that relations of benefit are, first and foremost, irreciprocal relations that appeal to some type of knowledge or wisdom as the source of benefit. As will be seen, Socrates' divinely-inspired account seems to simply articulate the conventional understanding of the relationship between friendly love, benefit, and knowledge that is introduced in Socrates' private conversation with Lysis. What it will also reveal, however, is that conventional intuitions about the relationship between these notions cannot be

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that will be developed later in the dialogue. Gonzalez focuses on how this conversation plants the seed of the notion of the οικεῖον that will emerge at the dialogue's end. Penner and Rowe, on the other hand, consider how Socratic intellectualism is introduced here. While both readings are insightful in their own ways, in my view they fail to fully situate Socrates' discussion with Lysis within the overarching theme at work here, namely, the assimilation of conventional ἔρως and φιλία under a higher, philosophical understanding of friendly love.

reconciled without the introduction of a further, unconventional notion: the idea of an intermediate being or what is neither-good-nor-bad.

It is this notion of the intermediate that also helps to explain the other controversial inference in Socrates' initial demonstration with Lysis. By inferring that Lysis must be unlovable from the fact that he is unwise,[29] Socrates seemed to rely on a dubious denial of a middle ground between understanding and ignorance. In the context of his account of the intermediate as friend to the good, however, Socrates will go on to carve out just such a middle ground. There, having distinguished between "those who are already wise" and thus "no longer love wisdom," and those "who are so ignorant as to be bad" that they are "no lovers of wisdom," Socrates explains that:

> "there remain those who, while possessing this bad thing, ignorance, are not yet made ignorant or stupid, but are still aware of not knowing the things they do not know. It follows, then, that those who are as yet neither good nor bad are lovers of wisdom, while all who are bad, and all the good, are not." (218a6-b3)

Socrates' earlier inference that Lysis must be foolish (ἄφρων) because he lacks understanding (μήπω φρονεῖ), then, does indeed appear to elide an important epistemological category that Socrates himself recognizes. It is in light — rather than in spite — of this subsequent distinction, however, that one might nevertheless see him as having good reason to end his demonstration with Lysis the way he does. At this early juncture in the dialogue, Lysis cannot yet be included among this middle group of those who, while ignorant, are at least aware of not knowing the things they do not know — not before, that is, he is fully subjected to Socrates' protreptic treatment. After all, the aim of Socrates' overall argument is, in effect, to *initiate* him into the group of lovers of wisdom.[30]

[29] Cf. this chapter, section 1(c) above.
[30] Cf. this chapter, section 4 above.

In order for Lysis to be so initiated, however, Socrates must get him to recognize his own prior ignorance. In light of this later threefold distinction, therefore, the final inference of Socrates' argument with Lysis can in fact be seen to be warranted.[31]

Finally, in addition to helping to explain Socrates' argumentative strategy with Lysis, it is this middle category of the intermediate that also points to a solution to the problem of explaining friendly love in the absence of wisdom. Socrates can endorse *both* the principle that love is based on the benefit that derives from wisdom *and* the conclusion that Lysis is ignorant and therefore useless, while at the same time nevertheless befriending him, because Lysis himself can be understood to undergo a transformation by the end of their conversation: one from being ignorant with respect to wisdom, i.e. not aware of not knowing the things that he does not know, to being a genuine lover of wisdom, i.e. one who is so aware. While such lovers are partially ignorant, they are also at least partially wise insofar as they recognize wisdom as the source of benefit. Insofar as they possess this wisdom, however limited it may be, lovers of wisdom like Socrates and Lysis can be beneficial to each other and thus friends. At the same time, Lysis' parents' love for their son can be seen to approximate this love as a benighted form of Socrates' own embrace of the boy. However, as will be argued in chapters 6 and 7, in order to fully address the question of how reciprocal love is possible, Socrates will have to go beyond the explicit terms of his demonstration with Lysis here and his own divinely-inspired account of the φίλος. In

[31] Rider (2011) argues that Socrates must be intentionally arguing fallaciously here, for by this point in the conversation "from Socrates' perspective, [Lysis] may now appreciate he *lacks* the wisdom he needs" (p. 57). However, it is hard to see how he appreciates this lack, or that Socrates should take him to appreciate it, *before* having been fully subjected to the demonstration. Central to Lysis seeing the full implications of this demonstration is a lesson he will only come to learn through the course of the rest of the dialogue's discussion, namely, that there is distinction between the types of knowledge that Lysis already possesses, i.e. the technical types of knowledge involved in playing the lyre and in reading and writing (209a-b)) and philosophical wisdom. It is only through latter type alone — or at least a recognition of it — that one can remove oneself from the state of being ἄφρων.

particular, he will have to appeal to a distinction between two different types of knowledge: technical knowledge, or the type that is only loved for instrumental purposes; and the type that is loved for its own sake, philosophical wisdom.

6. Action and Argument

While this programmatic reading of the remainder of the dialogue will require defense, it *prima facie* offers an explanation not only for why Socrates makes implicit use of the above principles in his conversation with Lysis in the way that he does, but also for how he ultimately intends to justifies them in a way that might be discernable to Lysis.

This reading also allows us to see how Socrates' demonstration serves as a bridge between the prologue and the rest of the dialogue in another respect. In section 4, I argued that Socrates' demonstration serves to address the problems of engagement and association that were seen to beset conventional ἔρως and φιλία by adopting and modifying aspects of the forms of discourse associated with each of them. In other words, then, Socrates' demonstration is a demonstration through *deed* (δία ἔργα): he resolves these problems through the example of his own actions, by exemplifying traits of both conventional ἔρως and φιλία in a modified form. Over the course of the remainder of the dialogue, I will argue, Socrates will more fully develop the same view of love and friendship in a more explicitly dialectical manner (δία λόγους). Rather than exemplifying these traits in the guise of an expert in erotics, Socrates will take on a different guise, that of lover and seeker of a 'good friend'. In doing so, he will show how the concept of φιλία cannot be understood without presupposing an erotic desire for wisdom, and at the same time, how

this desire can only be fully explained within a framework that also accounts for reciprocal friendship.[32]

The remainder of the dialogue, then, can be seen as a further iteration of the very same argument presented in the first part of it. Viewed in this way, Socrates' exhortation to Lysis to repeat that argument on Menexenus in light of the conversations to follow (211a6-b2; see again section 5 above) is also an exhortation to us, Plato's readers, to come to grips with the symbiotic relationship between these two movements of the dialogue.

[32] Gadamer (1983, p. 6) was the first to notice the important interrelation between the arguments (λόγοι) of the *Lysis* and the actions of its characters (ἔργα). Drawing on Gadamer's insight, I suggest that this contrast between action and argument is most fully evident in the relationship between what roughly constitutes the dialogue's two parts. This is not to say Socrates does not still display in some sense through his actions the assimilation of the central aspects of ἔρως and φιλία through the course of the rest of the dialogue. After all, he does implicitly treat the remainder of the dialogue as an extension of his initial demonstration with Lysis (cf. ch. 7, sect. 1b). However, these two halves function in different ways to reinforce the same message: that the problems associated with the conventional understandings of love and friendship can only be resolved through their assimilation under a higher unity.

PART II

CHAPTER FOUR

The Uses and Abuses of Convention (210e-213d)

The end of Socrates' private conversation with Lysis is marked by a dramatic about-face. As was seen in chapters 2 and 3, the dialogue opened with Socrates professing to Hippothales to possess a divinely-bestowed knowledge of erotic matters, a knowledge that he then went on to demonstrate on Lysis by leading the boy to see the necessity of becoming wise to his relationship with his parents or indeed anyone else. By the end of his demonstration, moreover, Socrates appeared to have planted the seed of friendship with the boy himself.[1] Yet, when he resumes the conversation with Menexenus, who now returns to the scene, Socrates' stance is radically different. He claims not only to have never previously acquired a good friend (φίλον ἀγαθὸν) despite his life-long pursuit of one, but also to not even know how to go about doing so. Rather than fulfill another's request as he had with Hippothales, Socrates now asks Menexenus to guide him in the acquisition of friends.

Socrates' conversation with Menexenus also marks an important transition in another sense. Unlike his previous encounter with Lysis, his discussion with Menexenus marks the first in a series of exchanges with both boys that all result in *aporia*. Even among these inconclusive episodes, however, Socrates' initial conversation with Menexenus stands out as seeming especially misconceived from its inception. It takes as its starting place a consideration of the ordinary application of the term 'φίλος' itself, i.e. whom we call a 'friend' when one person loves another. Yet despite what might appear to be an intuitive

[1] In spite of his explicit claims about the φίλος throughout it. As was seen in ch. 3 (sect. 4), by the letter of Socrates' argument, no one can be a friend to another person without being wise. Moreover, as was discussed there, Socrates himself never claims to be wise.

point of departure for an inquiry into who or what is a φίλος, the ensuing conversation quickly leads to an impossible conclusion: that "neither those who love (οἰ φιλοῦντες) are to be φίλοι nor those who are loved (οἰ φιλούμενοι) nor those who both love and are loved" (213c5-7). As Socrates himself will acknowledge at the end of this discussion, it appears that "there has been something wrong with our inquiry all along" (213d1-2).

In the eyes of most commentators, what goes awry is the fact that the conversation tacitly relies on an equivocation between different senses of 'φίλος': an active sense that entails reciprocity, and a passive sense that does not. As such, readers are left with two options. At best, the equivocation is intentional, part of Socrates' implicit aim of teaching Menexenus a lesson by beating him at his own game.[2] At worst, the equivocation betrays a confusion on Plato's own part, one that not only leads Socrates and Menexenus' conversation astray, but indeed much of the remaining dialogue as well.[3]

In fact, however, if there is a confusion to be attributed, I will argue, it lies not with Plato's use of conventional Greek but rather with his contemporary readers. As a careful consideration of the text will show, the 'impossible conclusion' of this conversation stems not from an equivocation on Socrates or Plato's part but rather from the criterion of explanation presupposed at the inquiry's outset. The upshot of this conclusion is not that

[2] Annas (1977) writes: "Now it is obvious that these paradoxes are boring and trivial, and that Socrates' difficulties here are of a purely verbal nature and could be cleared up quickly by paying attention to the various uses of *philos* in ordinary Greek" (p. 533). See also Gadamer (1980), pp. 10-11. Such a reading is not ungrounded in the text. As will be seen, Menexenus is described as "disputatious" (ἐριστικὸς, 211b11), having been taught eristics by his cousin, Ctesippus (211c3). If the point of the exchange is merely to humble Menexenus just as Lysis had been humbled previously, then Socrates' autobiographical prelude can be seen as a way of stoking the boy's ego before beating him at his own game. However, while the humbling of Menexenus is no doubt a part of the point of this passage, this restricted reading overlooks its philosophical significance. As will also be discussed below (sect. 3), other commentators read this exchange as meant to reinforcing the primacy of ordinary, reciprocal friendship; esp. Curzer (2014), pp. 356-58.

[3] Robinson (1986) writes: "It will be better if I say now that I do not myself believe that Plato did mean this passage to be read in this way. If Plato was fully aware of all the ambiguities latent in the word *philos* we would expect him to keep clear of them himself and steer the reader clear of them in the rest of the dialogue" (p. 71). Cf. this chapter, sect. 3, fn. 19 below.

there is something wrong with the criterion but that the type of explanation in question cannot be arrived at through a consideration of conventional usage alone. Nevertheless, I will suggest, despite its *aporia* this examination is not a fruitless one. Socrates' inquiry into the conventional usage of the term 'φίλος' constitutes a back-to-bedrock strategy that makes sense within the *Lysis*' critique of conventional conceptions of love and friendship.

I will begin by showing how the dramatic interlude between Socrates' demonstration with Lysis and his exchange with Menexenus contains important clues that reinforce the interpretation argued for at the end of the previous chapter, namely, that the remainder of the dialogue is intended to be a continuation of Socrates' earlier demonstration with Lysis (section 1). After offering an analysis of Socrates' elenchus of Menexenus (section 2), I will go on to consider two prominent interpretations on which his argument relies on an equivocation of different senses 'φίλος' (section 3). As I will go on to argue, however, both readings neglect key aspects of this exchange. I will then go on to propose an alternative reading of the passage (section 4), one that places the conversation squarely within the context of the Lysis' larger project. Finally, I will end by indicating how this inquiry paves the way for the conversations to follow. (section 5).

1. A Socratic Interlude

In the previous chapter (section 6), I suggested that what Socrates demonstrates by example through his conversation with Lysis, he will go on over the course of the rest of the dialogue to prove dialectically. I also indicated there that Socrates' exchange with Menxenus constitutes the first step in this second movement of the dialogue. The brief passage that bridges Socrates' conversation with Lysis and his discussion with Menexenus (210e1e-212a7) supports this interpretation in two important ways.

First, this interlude provides a dramatic resetting of the dialogue; it marks the only other time, aside from the prologue, that all the characters in the dialogue make an appearance.[4] With Socrates' demonstration reaching its conclusion, Hippothales reenters the dramatic fold, though without so much as speaking a word. Socrates recounts how he was just about to once again readdress the cadet by admonishing and exhorting him: "That is the way, Hippothales, in which you should talk to your favorite, humbling and reducing him, instead of puffing him up and spoiling him, as you do now" (210e2-5). However, Socrates recalls, "I managed to catch myself and bit my tongue" upon noticing Hippothales "distressed and thrown into confusion by what was said" and remembering that "he had placed himself so as to avoid Lysis' noticing him" (210e5-6).[5]

By contrast, Lysis does not appear to be the slightest bit discouraged by his conversation with Socrates. As was discussed in chapter 2, Socrates reports that despite being subjected to this demonstration, Lysis responded "in a friendly and playful manner"

[4] Surprisingly, no other commentators to my knowledge have noticed this. Aside from Socrates, the three other main characters — Lysis, Menxenus, and Hippothales — will be referred to altogether one last time near the end of the dialogue at 222b1-2, where Socrates draws his distinction between a genuine and pretend lover.

[5] According to Curzer (2014), Plato's point in having Socrates hold back here is "to put the reader on guard against uncritically accepting Socrates' coming claims in the rest of the dialogue" (p. 356.). On his reading, as was discussed in ch. 3, sect. 3, and will be discussed further in ch. 5, sect. 4, the dialogue as a whole is meant to be taken as an implicit critique of an instrumental view of friendship, and this passing comment is meant to flag the reader to this underlying purpose. However, aside from the independent reasons to reject this broader reading discussed in ch. 3 and 5, there is a far simpler reading of Socrates' hesitation here; namely, that he resists out of a desire not to further embarrass the already distressed Hippothales. While we can only speculate, Hippothales' distress can be explained in at least two ways. On the one hand, Hippothales may simply be disconcerted by the fact that Socrates has exposed Lysis' ignorance and thereby embarrassed the boy, perhaps thinking (mistakenly) that it has also harmed his favorite in some way. On the other hand, and perhaps more likely, Hippothales might be upset because he now realizes the effect Socrates' conversation has had on Lysis; as was discussed in the previous chapter (sect. 4), Socrates appears to have won Lysis' friendship by the conversation's end. If jealousy is at least part of the explanation for Hippothales' emotional state, it speaks to the fact that he is still stuck in the conventional understanding of erotic love, that is, an understanding of love that seeks the exclusive possession of the boy (cf. ch. 2, sect. 2). What Hippothales fails to see is that a genuine relationship with his beloved can only be established on the basis of a relationship that each individual has with a higher object of irreciprocal love, a relationship that is open in principle to everyone.

(211a3), asking Socrates to repeat his argument on Menexenus, who just returned from the sacrifices to sit beside his friend (211a3-4). As we soon learn, Menexenus is known to be "contentious" (ἐρισικός, 211b8), having been reared in sophistic argumentation by his cousin, Ctesippus (211c5). It is for this very reason that Lysis wishes Socrates to repeat his demonstration on his comrade: "so that you [Socrates] might rough him up (αὐτὸν κολάσῃς)" (211c3).[6] When Socrates declines Lysis' request, suggesting that the boy himself practice the argument on his friend, Lysis proposes that Socrates discuss something else with Menexenus — "so I may also hear it too, before it is time to go home" (211b4) — to which Socrates agrees.

It is at this point that Ctesippus makes his final appearance, interrupting Socrates and Lysis by asking: "what are you feasting on, the two of you alone (αὐτὼ μόνω), without allowing us a share in your talk?" (211c10-d1). Despite openly agreeing to accommodate Ctesippus' request for disclosure, however, Socrates does not actually reveal the subject of Lysis and his prior conversation to the rest of the company. Instead, he simply claims that Lysis didn't understand some aspect of what they were discussing; one which, Socrates claims falsely, Lysis in turn suggested that his comrade, Menexenus, might know, marking

[6] One might think that Lysis has unamicable intentions here. Bolotin (1979) argues that: "In order to overcome his own humiliation, he arranges by stealth to have the returning Menexenus chastened, and not just ridiculed, in his presence. This is no mere continuation of their friendly rivalry. Lysis' action, while playful and harmless enough, contains the seeds of betrayal" (p. 106). However, this reading is an extreme one. By all indication, while having been subjected to Socrates' refutation, there is no indication that Lysis found this treatment disagreeable. The fact that he wants his comrade, Menexenus, to undergo a similar treatment in no way entails that he wishes for something that is against Menexenus' best interests. In fact, far from betraying their friendship, Lysis' intentions may well be taken as a sign of his friendly concern for Menexenus. As Aristotle will later go on to suggest, being a friend will often entail being willing to resist one's friend when doing so is their overall best interest (*NE* 4.6). That Plato might intend something similar is suggested by Lysis' own language. The word that he uses in asking Socrates to "rough up" or "discipline" Menexenus, 'κολάδζειν', originally meant "to prune." The purpose of pruning a plant or bush is to make it grow healthier; this goal justifies the temporary thinning of the plant's leaves. Later in the dialogue, Socrates uses the same term to describe how a parent would correct their infant child (213a1). In a similar manner, it can be seen as the role of a friend to "prune" their comrade by helping to correct the latter's judgment. Cf. Jennings, p. 67.

the latter boy's — and the dialogue's final character's — reentrance into the conversation (211d1ff.).

This brief dramatic resetting hints both at the progress that has been made thus far and the work that remains to be accomplished. On the one hand, it sheds light on the recently forged friendship between Socrates and Lysis. Ctesippus uses a pronoun in the dual number (αὐτὼ μόνω, 211c11) to refer to Socrates and Lysis, one which, throughout the dialogue, is used only to describes friends.[7] Two further clues confirm this newly-formed friendship. First, unbeknownst to the other youths, Socrates seems to have established a pact with Lysis much like the one he previously made with Hippothales (206c4-d6). Socrates' dissembling with Ctesippus indicates his recognition that, just as Hippothales did not want Lysis to know the larger purpose of Socrates' conversation with the boy, so too Lysis does not want Menexenus to know his desire to see his comrade similarly humbled. Moreover, in asking Lysis to "come to [his] assistance" (ἐπικουρήσεις) if Menexenus tries to refute him in turn (211b6-8), Socrates uses a term associated with mutual aid or alliance, a conventional mark of friendship that will emerge more explicitly later in the dialogue (215a2).

At the same time, this brief exchange also indicates that Socrates and Lysis are hardly yet on a pair. While now friends with Lysis, Socrates hints that the boy is still far from fully grasping the lesson of their conversation. Rather than saying to Ctesippus that Lysis confessed or admitted to not understanding some part of their discussion, he says that Lysis *didn't* understand something (211d2-3). The former would have been false since Lysis never admits to not understanding Socrates' argument. What started out as a

[7] Specifically referring to Lysis and Menexenus (207c6 and 8) or simply to "two friends" in general (212d2).

demonstration for Hippothales alone, then, has in fact become a demonstration for all the youths in attendance.

The second important feature of this interlude is that it reveals what will be the starting point for the second movement of the dialogue, namely, an examination of the conventional uses of the term 'φίλος' and its verbal cognates. Socrates introduces the topic of his discussion with Menexenus — the question, 'who is a φίλος?' — by describing his lifelong pursuit of a "good friend" (φίλον ἀγαθὸν):

> "Since I was a boy I've actually always had a desire for a certain kind of possession (κτήματός του), like everyone else, only it's different things for different people: one person has a desire to get horses, while for another it's dogs, for another, gold, for another, public honors; but as for me, I don't get excited about these things - what I'm absolutely passionate (πάνυ ἐρωτικῶς) about is acquiring friends, and I'd wish for a good friend (φίλον ἀγαθὸν) more than for the best example any man has of a quail or a cock, and - Zeus - I'd wish, myself, more for that than for the best horse and dog and I do believe - I swear by the Dog! - more than the gold of Darius I'd much sooner get me a friend, or rather, more than getting Darius himself; that's how much of a friend-lover (φιλέταιφός) *I* am. Accordingly, when I see you and Lysis together, I am quite beside myself, and congratulate you on being able, at such an early age, to gain this possession so quickly and easily; since you, Menexenus, have so quickly and surely acquired his friendship, and he likewise yours: whereas I am so far from acquiring such a thing, that I do not even know in what way one person becomes a friend to another, and I am constrained to ask you about this very point, in view of your experience." (211d7-212a7)

It is easy to read Socrates here as setting a trap for the young Menexenus; by professing to have no friends, he can lead the boy into seeing that it is the latter who has no conception of who or what a friend even is. However, seen in the light of Socrates' prior conversation with Lysis, we have *prima facie* reason to accept his confession at face value.[8]

In that previous conversation (ch. 3, sect. 1), we saw Socrates argue that people only love others insofar as they are wise. In arguing for this conclusion, Socrates did not purport

[8] In giving voice to his famous desire for friends, Socrates repeatedly and emphatically speaks of them as possessions (κτήματα), which carries a connotation of utility insofar as possessions are generally garnered for the utility that resides in them. As was discussed in ch. 1, sect. 3, this way of conceiving of friendly relations was not unconventional by the standards of classical Athens. Still, this is not to say that Socrates' way of speaking doesn't have ironic force here; see again ch.1, sect. 3(b).

to be arguing for something unusual. Rather, he appealed to everyday examples in which people were seen to possess common types of knowledge or expertise, such as chariot-racing (208a) or medicine (209e-10a), that served as the basis for everyday Greek friendships. The question thus arises as to why Socrates considers himself to be such an outlier in this respect, that is, as having failed to secure any beneficial relationships based in some type of knowledge. One answer might be that, in his search for 'a good friend', Socrates has a different type of knowledge in mind, one much more difficult to substantiate; namely, a type of wisdom that is distinctively philosophical. If so, we can see how he might sincerely claim to have had such a difficult time finding a good friend in anyone or thing.[9] Despite his divine gift for erotics, then, Socrates is in the same position with respect to a good friend as Hippothales is with Lysis; both are gripped by an erotic longing that has hitherto been unfulfilled.

Socrates goes on to relate his biographical remarks to the immediate inquiry. Since, as he professes, he does not know in what way (τρόπον, 212a7) one person becomes a friend of another, and since Menexenus is "experienced" in this respect (ἔμπειρον, 212a8),[10] Socrates begins by posing the question to the boy:

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[9] Socrates' ambiguous use of the term 'good friend' (φίλον ἀγαθὸν) here is telling here. It could be read in two ways: either in a personal sense to refer to a 'good friend', or in an impersonal sense to refer to 'a friend that is good'. On the one hand, the fact that Socrates' 'good friend' has been so difficult to attain suggests that he is referring to something as allusive as wisdom, However, on the other hand, he refers to himself as a 'friend-lover' or 'lover of comrades' (φιλέταιφός, 212e8), which suggest that the object of his pursuit is a comrade (ἑταῖρος) in the ordinary sense. The likely answer here is that, at this stage of the dialogue, Plato wants to keep both possibilities as live ones for the reader to entertain. The general principle appealed to in Socrates' private conversation with Lysis, i.e. that we love others insofar as they are wise, would also explain why Socrates has yet to be befriended by anyone. While he may be an expert in erotics, by his own admission, he is not wise. Of course, he *has* acquired the friendship of Lysis. But how exactly he has done so is — as I suggested in ch. 3, sect. 4 — still a puzzle to be explained.

[10] The irony of this passage is evident in the terminology employed here. The use of 'τρόπον' here (cf. also 205b2) foreshadows the final account of the friend as what is οἰκεῖον, according to which there is some τρόπος in the soul (222a2-3) which explains why someone loves the people and things that they do (see also 212a5 and 217e3). The implication that Menexenus is better suited to know how or why someone becomes a

> When someone loves (φιλῇ) someone else, which of the two is it that becomes a friend (φίλος) of the other, the one who loves (ὸ φιλῶν) of the loved (τοῦ φιλουμένου), or the loved one (ὸ φιλούμενος) of the lover (τοῦ φιλοῦντος)? Or is there no difference? (212a8-b3).

The inquiry, then, that will serve as the basis for the remainder of the dialogue — the inquiry into the nature of the friend — begins as an inquiry into the everyday applications of the word 'φίλος'. But what purpose does this strange episode serve? In order to properly situate this conversation in the larger argument of the *Lysis*, it will first be necessary to show what role it doesn't play. In order to show even this, however, we must first briefly inspect the exchange in its outline.

2. Who is a Friend?

Socrates' inquiry with Menexenus takes the form of an attempt to determine whether any one relation of loving can alone serve as a necessary and sufficient condition for friendship. Menexenus offers four answers to the above question,[11] and in the case of each, Socrates goes on to show that it is susceptible to a counterexample.

(i) If X loves Y, then both X and Y are friends to each other (212b3-5).

(ii) Unless both X and Y love each other, neither is a friend (212c7-d1).

(iii) If X loves Y, then Y is a friend to X. (212e6-7)

(iv) If X loves Y, then X is a friend to Y (213b5-6).

(i) Menexenus first responds that, when one person loves another, "it makes no difference" (212b3) whom we say is a friend to the other, the lover (ὸ φιλῶν) or beloved (ὸ

φίλος through his experience as the φίλος of Lysis is similarly ironic insofar as experience (ἐμπειρία) is contrasted with the ability to provide a cause or explanation (αἰτία) through argument (λόγοι). By the end of the dialogue, Socrates' ability to offer a αἰτία (221c-d) of φιλία will supplant whatever value can be attributed to Menexenus' 'experience'. Cf. *Gorgias* (465a2-6), where Socrates similarly argues that, unlike τέχνη, ἐμπειρία is is without λόγος and thereby affords no αἰτία of the particular φύσις in question. Cf. here Glidden (1980), p. 288, fn. 1.

[11] As will be seen in the next section below, Socrates qualifies his question at 212c7-d1 to account for the further possibility that, in order for someone to be a friend to another, both must love each other.

φιλούμενος). On this view, two people can become friends to each other solely on the basis of unreciprocated love, i.e. even if just one person loves the other, without the need for that love being reciprocated by the other person involved.

As Socrates immediately goes on to point out, however, this proposal is too weak to account for all instances of being a φίλος. It not only leaves open the possibility that a subject of friendly love, the φιλῶν, might not be loved in return by the person whom they love, the φιλούμενος, but also that they may even be hated (μισεῖσθαι) in return as well (212b6-7). "This is the sort of thing," he explains,

> CE1: "… that lovers (ἐρασταὶ) too sometimes think they experience with their favorites (παιδικά): they love (φιλοῦντες) their favorites as much as possible, but some of them think that they [the lovers] are not loved in return, while others think they're even hated." (212b7-c2)[12]

This counterexample — which clearly alludes to Hippothales' relationship (or lack thereof) with Lysis[13] — is accepted by Menexenus without hesitation. Its force seems to derive simply from the intuition that a person cannot be a friend to someone who hates them. However, this intuition is anything but baseless. As will become evident, it is strongly grounded in the conventional Greek understanding of what it means to be both a friend and an enemy (ἐχθρὸς).

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[12] Surprisingly, Socrates describes a lover's feelings for his beloved here as a form of φιλεῖν as opposed to ἐρᾶν. There has been no precedent for this move thus far in the dialogue. Earlier, Socrates described Hippothales' affection for Lysis as erotic (205a4) in clear distinction from the friendly affection shared between Lysis and Menexeus (207c8) and by Lysis' parents and their son (207d6). One possible explanation for Socrates' use of the term 'φιλεῖν' rather than 'ἐρᾶν' here is that he already blurring the lie between ἔρως and φιλία by describing the difference between erotic love and friendly love as a matter of degree. The fact that the erotic lover is described as "loving [his favorite] as much as possible (φιλοῦντες οἷόν μάλιστα)" suggests that erotic love is being understood as simply as friendly love in a superlative degree (cf. *Laws* 837a9).

[13] While we are not explicitly told that Lysis hates Hippothales or is even aware of him [cf. ch. 1, sect. 1(e)], the latter's failed prior advances and his entreaty to Socrates for erotic advice clearly attest to the fact that Lysis does not reciprocate his lover's affections. Moreover, the possibility of even stronger emotions — or at least Hippothales' perception of them — is suggested by the fact that, throughout Socrates' one-on-one conversation with Lysis, Hippothales hides from the boy's line of sight out of fear of annoying him (207b4-7; 210e5-7). Lysis' hesitancy towards Hippothales is further reinforced at the climatic end of the dialogue (221e5-b2).

(ii) In light of the above counterexample, Socrates reposes his initial question, "who is friend to whom?" While he once again offers the first two possibilities (that "the lover is a friend to the loved," and "the loved is a friend to the lover"), he now offers the further, stronger option that "neither of them, in such a case, [is] a friend of the other, unless both of them love each other" (212c7-8), an option that the boy hesitantly affirms. In other words, two people can become friends only on the basis of reciprocated love.

However, Socrates points out, whereas the previous proposal was too weak to account for all instances of being a φίλος, this new one is now too strong. If, as this new position implies, "there is no such thing as a friend for the lover whom is not loved in return" (212d4-5), then, Socrates explains:

> CE2: "… there are no horse-lovers (φίλιπποί) either, when the horses don't love them back, or quail-lovers (φιλόρτυγες), or for that matter dog-lovers (φιλόκυνές) and wine-lovers (φίλοινοι) and exercise-lovers (φιλογυμναστaὶ) and wisdom-lovers (φιλόσοφοι), if wisdom (σοφία) does not love them in return." (212d5-8)

These counterexamples differ from the previous one in two crucial respects. First, all of them refer to non-personal objects of friendship. Second, and as a result of the first difference, while these objects may not be capable of returning or reciprocating love,[14] they are equally incapable of hating their lovers, which appears to preclude the type of scenario presented by the counterexample to (i).

Having thus shown the first proposal — that someone is a φίλος if they are either a lover (ὸ φιλῶν) or a beloved (ὸ φιλούμενος) — to be too weak, and the second proposal — that someone is a φίλος only if they are both a lover and a beloved — to be too strong, Socrates proceeds to examine the two remaining possibilities: that someone is a φίλος only

[14] Of course, while one may say that certain animals, such as dogs and horses, do in fact love their owners, the point here is that they cannot reciprocate their owners' love in the same way distinctive of interpersonal φιλία.

if they are a beloved (φιλούμενος); or that someone is a φίλος only if they are a lover (φιλῶν).

(iii) Socrates' previous set of counterexamples naturally point to the third proposal: namely, that whenever someone loves someone or thing else, it is the beloved that is a friend. To substantiate this proposal, he appeals for the first time in the dialogue to poetic authority, in this case Solon, who writes:

> Happy the man who has as friends (φίλοι) his children, and solid-hoofed horses, scent-sniffing hounds, and a host abroad. (212e3-4)[15]

Menexenus immediately concedes that the poet must have spoken the truth, which, Socrates goes on to explain, entails that whenever one person loves another person or thing, the beloved is a friend to their lover "whether it loves him or even hates him" (212e5-7).

However, he goes on to argue, this proposal also leads to absurd consequences. "For instance," he explains, on this view:

> CE3: "… new-born children, who have either not begun to love, or already hate (μισοῦντα), if punished by their mother or their father, are yet at that very moment, and in spite of their hate, especially and pre-eminently friends to their parents." (212e7-213a3)[16]

This counterexample appeals to the same intuition behind his counterexample to (i), namely, that no one can be a friend to, or have as a friend, someone who hates them. However, whereas there Socrates offered no further explanation of his counterexample, regarding it to be simply intuitive that a lover could not be a friend to their beloved if the

[15] Solon fragment 23W.

[16] While we are not prepared for this counterexample in the same way that Hippothales' relationship with Lysis foreshadowed Socrates' first counterexample, it can be seen to draw on Socrates' treatment of familial love in his earlier, private discussion with Lysis. Even though Lysis is old enough to consciously love his mother and father, we are never explicitly told that he does so. We might well imagine, moreover, Lysis developing feelings of resentment towards his parents, just as any other adolescent who is prevented from doing whatever they please and is punished (τυπτοίμην) when they disobey (208e1).

latter hated the former in return, here he provides a further explanation for what is particularly troubling about the implication of (iii). If a beloved is a friend to their lover, regardless of whether the beloved reciprocates their lover's affection or even hate them, it follows that:

> "'Many, then, are loved by their enemies, and hated by their friends, and are friends to their enemies and enemies to their friends, if it's what's loved that's a friend and not what loves. And yet it's highly unreasonable (πολλὴ ἀλογία), my dear friend, or rather, I think, it's actually impossible (ἀδύνατον), to be enemy to friend and friend to enemy." "You appear to be right there, Socrates, he said."' (213a8-b6)

Socrates makes explicit here the semantic connection between loving (φιλεῖν) and being a friend (φίλος) and hating (μισεῖν) and being an enemy (ἐχθρὸς). A lover cannot be said to have as a friend a beloved who hates them, for that would amount to saying that the lover is loved by their enemy and hated by their friend. Yet loving someone and hating someone are just what is implied in being a friend and being an enemy.[17]

(iv) Given the untenability of the previous proposal, Socrates concludes that there is only one possibility remaining: whenever one person loves another person or thing, "it must be the person who loves (τὸ φιλοῦν) that is a friend of the one whom is loved (τοῦ φιλουμένου)" (213b3-4).

But this lands them into a similar predicament as (iii):

> "…. we shall find ourselves compelled to agree to the same statement as we made before, that frequently a man is a friend of one who is no friend, and frequently even of an enemy, when he loves one who loves not, or even hates; while frequently a man may be an enemy of one who is no enemy or even a friend, when he hates one who hates not or even loves" (213b7-c4)

To suggest that a lover is a friend of their beloved, even when the beloved hates them in

[17] As will be seen in sect. 4 below, there is a further important conceptual connection at work here: 'being a friend' entails benefiting, and benefiting from, someone, while 'being an enemy' entails harming, and being harmed by, someone. This connection is one central to what I will refer to below as 'the golden rule' of conventional φιλία.

return, amounts to saying that the lover is a friend of an enemy, and the beloved an enemy of a friend.

Socrates concludes his discussion with Menexenus by summarizing the quandary into which the investigation has led them:

> "What then are we to make of it….. if neither the loving are to be friends nor the loved, nor both the loving and loved together? For apart from these, are there any others left for us to cite as becoming friends to one another?" (213c5-8)

Now fully perplexed, Menexenus confesses that he "sees no way out at all" (213c9). For his own part, Socrates himself questions whether "all along something has been wrong with our inquiry" (213d1-2), and suggests that it is not worth pursuing further on the grounds that it leads down a "difficult path" (213e4). But what exactly has gone wrong with this line of inquiry?

3. Is Socrates Engaging in Eristics?

Many, if not most, commentators have argued that the underlying mistake is either an intentional one, the result of Socrates deliberately engaging in eristic argumentation as a way of humbling Menexenus, or unintentional, a product of Plato's own confusion.[18] Either way, on this general view Socrates is seen to be conflating two different senses of 'φίλος': an active sense, in which 'φίλος' means 'friend' and implies reciprocity (if A is a friend of B, then B is a friend of A); and a passive sense, in which 'φίλος' means 'dear' or 'beloved' and does not entail reciprocity (B is dear/beloved to A, but A is not necessarily dear/beloved to B). One cannot infer that someone is a 'φίλος' in the passive sense of 'dear' or 'beloved' from the fact that they are φιλῶν (loving) any more than one can infer that someone or

[18] Those who see Socrates as deliberately engaging in eristics include, e.g. Annas (1977), p. 53; and Gadamer (1980), pp. 9-10. Those who see Plato himself to be confused include Robinson (1986), p. 71; Konstan (1997), p. 30; and Nichols (2009), pp. 169-70. Cf. the introduction to this chapter, fns. 2-3.

something is a 'φίλος' in the active sense (friendly) from the fact that they are φιλούμενος (loved). However, according to this reading, it is this very semantic ambiguity that Socrates exploits in the process of deriving a counterexample to each possible relations of loving (i-iv)[19]

Alternatively, while no less fallacious, some see Socrates' reasoning as having a more philosophical purpose; namely, to show that becoming a φίλος requires reciprocation.[20] Crucial on this reading is the second stage of the elenchus, at which point Socrates proposes, in addition to the first set of options considered, the further possibility that

[19] Robinson (1990) fleshes out this reading fullest: "What happens is that Plato [1] first rejects an explanation of the reciprocal sense of φίλος by pointing out that there is a passive sense, then [2] dismisses the passive sense by playing on the reciprocal sense, and finally [3] dismisses the active sense by the same play on the reciprocal sense" (p. 71, my numbering). "What happens is roughly as follows. [1] Menexenus allows Socrates to interpret him as believing that if one man φιλῇ another, then both are φίλοι. Menexenus in fact is thinking of friends as always coming in pairs. But isn't it possible, says Socrates, that one man may like another without being liked in return? Ah well, they aren't friend (φίλοι) in that case, says Menexenus. [2] So unless they both like each other, says Socrates, neither is a φίλος. But what about men who are φίλιπποι or φίλοιωοι or φιλόσοφοι, asks Socrates. They like all these things – horses, wine, wisdom – without the like being returned; but surely all of these things are φίλα to them (that is to say "valued by them"). Oh yes, says Menexenus. [3] So to become a φίλος all you have to do is to be liked, become φίλούμενος. But in that case if I am liked by a man I myself hate, he becomes my enemy just by being hated by me, and I become his friend by being liked by him even though his is my enemy. But being friends with one's enemy is absurd and impossible. The only remaining alternative then is that one becomes a φίλος not by being liked but by liking; and this leads to the same absurdity: I might like someone who hated me, and that would not make us friends. So now what can we say? Men are not φίλοι because they like other men, nor because they are liked by them, nor because they both like and are liked. This is a swift but I think accurate summary of this bewildering passage" (pp. 70-1).

[20] According to Curzer, this argument "shows that friendship requires mutual love. So interpreted, this argument is not tangential. It does address the question of how to befriend someone, although incompletely. The argument shows that to befriend others, it is not enough to love them: one must also somehow induce them to reciprocate" (p. 357-58). As he concedes, Socrates explicitly leaves "open the options not only mutual friendship, but also non-mutual friendship between a lover and a non-loving non-enemy [i.e. cases where X loves Y, and Y neither loves nor hates X]. ….. "However," he goes on, "I think these possibilities are *implicitly* excluded by two facts. First, Socrates earlier *contrasts* his examples of non-mutual friendship – having horses, dogs, and quail (as well as money, fame, and gamecocks) – with having friends (211d-e). Second, Hippothales loves Lysis, and Lysis is indifferent to Hippothales, yet Hippothales describes Lysis only as a *potential* friend (206c). Socrates' justaposition of (b) people who do not return love and (c) people who return love with hate is not a presentation of two unrelated cases. Rather Plato is making the point that friendship requires mutual love by considering (c) the hating non-lover as an extreme case of (b) the indifferent non-lover" (p. 357). As I will argue below, Curzer is mistaken on both counts. First, he misdiagnoses the contrast that Socrates draws in this confession. There are equally, if not stronger, reasons to see him not as drawing a contrast not between non-reciprocal and reciprocal friendships, but rather between different types of non-reciprocal friendships. Second, Plato does in fact draw a contrast between the hating non-lover and the indifferent non-lover as a possible φιλούμενος. The latter is possible as an impersonal object of φιλία such as wisdom. Cf. sect. 4 below.

"neither of them [the lover or beloved] is a friend of the other, unless both of them love each other" (212c7-8). According to this reading, this strong reciprocity requirement simply gives expression to the reciprocal nature of φιλία. While Menexenus seems to grasp this point by initially endorsing the reciprocity requirement, he ultimately abandons it in the face of what amount to eristic counterexamples suggested by Socrates (the idea of a horse-lover, etc., 212d5-8). The implicit lesson of this elenchus — one that, on this reading, Socrates wants the boys to learn for themselves — is that recognizing the strong reciprocity requirement as essential to becoming a φίλος is the only way out of the discussion's *aporia*.

However, there are good reasons to reject both of these readings. On the first reading, as was seen, Socrates supposedly equivocates between the active and passive senses of 'φίλος' in order to confuse Menexenus. However, this seems implausible when one considers that the very distinction between the active and passive senses of 'φίλος' — the distinction between 'lover' or 'φιλῶν' and 'beloved' or 'φιλούμενος' — is transparent from the very outset of the argument.[21] Socrates' initial question to Menexenus makes this distinction explicit: "When someone loves (φιλῇ) someone else, which of the two is it that becomes a friend (φίλος) of the other, the one who loves (ὁ φιλῶν) of the loved (τοῦ φιλουμένου), or the loved one (ὁ φιλούμενος) of the lover (τοῦ φιλοῦντος)? Or is there no difference? (212a8-b3; see again section 1). Moreover, the remainder of the discussion maintains this distinction between loving (φιλῶν, φιλεῖν) and being loved (φιλοῦμενος, φιλεῖσθαι) throughout.[22]

[21] This is perceptively pointed out by Glidden (1980), pp. 276-77.
[22] In Socrates' restatement of the original question at 212c5-8, these terms are again clearly distinguished: "Which of the two, then, is a friend of the other? Is the loving (ὁ φιλῶν) a friend of the loved (τοῦ

But why then has Socrates appeared to equivocate here to so many commentators? The reason stems from a grammatical difference between the highly inflected nature of ancient Greek compared to English. In English, there is no common term that an English speaker could derive from 'friend' or 'lover' and 'beloved'. In Greek, by contrast, the adjective 'φίλος' is a member of a group of adjectives whose syntactic role is derived from that of the corresponding verb.[23] Whenever the verb 'φιλῶ' can be said of a subject, regardless of whether it is in the active sense, 'φιλεῖν', or the passive sense, 'φιλεῖσθαι', so too the corresponding adjective, 'φίλος', can be predicated of that subject. In other words, a subject can be called 'φίλος' if they are either a φιλῶν or a φιλούμενος.[24]

Of course, the fact that 'φίλος' can be derived from both 'φιλῶν' and 'φιλούμενος' does not entail that the sense in which φιλοῦντες are φίλοι does not differ from the sense in which φιλούμενοι are φίλοι. Rather, it helps us to see what Socrates would have to have concluded were he in fact to have exploited two different sense of 'φίλος'. He would have had to conclude that someone is not φιλῶν (friendly) although they are a φίλος and that

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φιλουμένου), whether in fact he is loved in return or is even hated, or is the loved (ὸ φιλούμενος) a friend of the loving (τοῦ φιλοῦντος)? Or again, is neither of them in such a case friend of the other, if both do not love mutually?" Again, in the third proposal, Socrates makes this distinction clear: "This argument shows that it is not the lover (ὸ φιλῶν) who is a friend, but the loved (ὸ φιλούμενος)" (213a4-5). Similarly, Socrates explicitly defines ἐχθρὸς to mean the person who is hated (ὸ μισούμενος) rather than the one who hates (ὸ μισῶν) (213a5-6). It is on this basis that Socrates draws the inference that "many are loved (φιλοῦνται) by their ἐχθροὶ or hated (μισοῦνται) by their φίλοι, so that they will be φίλοι to their ἐχθροὶ and ἐχθροὶ to their φίλοι, if the one loved (φίλούμενος) is φίλον rather than the one who loves (τὸ φιλοῦν)" (213a6-b2). Once more, in the final proposal Socrates makes the referent of 'φίλος' explicit — "it is the loving (τὸ φιλοῦν) that must be a friend of the loved (τοῦ φιλουμένου)" (213b5-6) — and he draws a similar inference as the previous one on this basis.

[23] As Glidden points out: "[A] Greek speaker would derive *philos* from *philon* and *philomenos* with the same ease as he would derive *glykus* from either *glykazein* (to sweeten) or *glykazesthai* (to be sweetened), *thermos* from either *theron* (heating) or *theromenon* (becoming warm), and *leukos* from either *leukoun* (to whiten) or *leleukomenos* (to become whitened)" (1980, p. 278).

[24] In fact, in the conversation with both boys that immediately following this one, Socrates draws the very inferences that being loved implies being φίλος (215a3) and that loving implies being φίλος (215b2).

someone is not φιλούμενος (loved) although they are a φίλος.[25] However, this is not the conclusion that he reaches. What he does argue is that not everyone or thing that is a φίλος is necessarily (i) either a φιλῶν or a φιλούμενος, (ii) both a φιλῶν and a φιλούμενος, (iii) a φιλούμενος, or (iv) a φιλῶν.

Rather than equivocating on different senses of 'φιλος', then, Socrates' counterexamples are simply meant to show that each conventional usage of the term 'φίλος' permits of a counterexample. Socrates is looking for an explanation that accounts for the entire range of recognized cases of being a φίλος, and the adequacy of any such explanation is determined by its success in doing so. While the first possibility — (i) that someone is a φίλος when they are either a φιλῶν or a φιλούμενος — is one licensed by the relation between the adjective and the verb regardless of the corresponding verb in general, it is not in some cases, i.e. cases where a lover is hated by their beloved.[26] The same is true with respect to the third and fourth possibilities — (iii) that someone is φίλος when they are a φιλούμενος and (iv) someone is a φίλος when they are a φιλῶν — each of which express the separate sufficiency of the active and passive inflections of the verb. While it is possible for someone to be called a φίλος because they are φιλῶν or because they are φιλούμενος, here again there are exceptions as Socrates' counterexamples show.

These same considerations also weigh against the second reading noted above, according to which the point of the conversation is to implicitly justify reciprocity as a

[25] If Socrates were to draw such a conclusion, it could hardly have made for an effective eristic argument. Not only does the dialogue itself indicate that Menexenus is aware of eristic word play, but the difference between loving and being loved is made transparent by the argument itself. See again fn. 22 above.

[26] Contrary to any interpretation that supposes Socrates to be confusing Menexenus about the two different senses of 'φίλος' (active and passive), or to be confused about them himself, equivocation plays no role in Socrates' actual argument. What causes Menexenus to go back on his initial answer — that 'it makes no difference' whether we can the lover [x] or beloved [y] a friend when one person loves another (212b2-3) — is the fact that this first option does not hold true uniformly, in particular, in cases where y doesn't love, or even hates, x. The distinction between active and passive is irrelevant to why the option itself fails.

necessary condition for being a φίλος, i.e. (ii) that someone is a φίλος only when they are both a φιλῶν and a φιλούμενος. The principle of reciprocity is rejected because it simply cannot account for every circumstance in which 'φίλος' is predicated of a subject as dictated by everyday conventional Greek practice. As Socrates' appeal to popular and poetic usage indicates, there are a variety of cases in which people are said to be φίλοι to impersonal objects — in the case of animals, wine, athletics, and wisdom (212d5-8) — and these objects are recognized as φίλα as a result, even though such objects are incapable of reciprocation. Here again, vernacular serves as the criterion to which Socrates' search for a uniform explanation of what it means to be a φίλος is held.[27]

4. The Problems of Convention: Part I

But if the investigation's *aporia* does not result from a semantic ambiguity or a failure to recognize reciprocity as a condition for being a friend, why then does it arise? On my reading, the *aporia* is a consequence of Socrates exposing what amounts to the contradictory character of the conventional understanding of what it means to be a φίλος.[28]

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[27] As Penner and Rowe maintain, part of the reason for the failure to recognizing Socrates' point here is "no doubt another reflection of what *we moderns* might ourselves have expected from a treatment of friendship [i.e. that Socrates consider φιλία exclusively in terms of reciprocal loving]" (p. 56); see also Glidden (1990), p. 285. However, it is worth noting here that while Socrates motivates his objection to the idea that friendship necessarily involves reciprocal loving by appealing to ordinary language, Aristotle seems to adopt the opposite approach of appealing to ordinary language to show that friendship requires reciprocity. Aristotle denies that 'φιλία' "can be applied to affection [φιλήσει) for soulless things [ἀψύχων]" (1155b27-28) on the grounds that we cannot wish good things for their own sake and because they cannot reciprocate our love (1155b28-31). Since Socrates suggests that we can have love for soulless things (e.g. gymnastics and wisdom) and for those things which do not love us back (horses and quail), it would seem that Aristotle and Socrates fundamentally disagree in this respect. While the question of whether Plato or Aristotle are right with respect to what Greek conventional usage permits cannot be addressed in full here, I agree with Gonzalez's (2003) assessment of Plato's ultimately justification: "[What] is important for an understanding of the *Lysis* is that Socrates refuses [to simply define φιλία as necessarily reciprocal and to treat non-reciprocated love as something different, with a different name, 'φιλήσις', because] he is not willing to disassociate the non-reciprocated love for something like wisdom from the reciprocal love between two people" (p. 28).

[28] My reading of this passage is most similar to that of Glidden (1980) and Penner and Rowe (2005). I differ from their readings in two ways. Glidden argues that the point of the passage is to show that any attempt to determine an account of the φίλος on the basis of conventional usage is flawed because syntax cannot be the starting place for a philosophical explanation (p. 276). However, Glidden sees the lesson of this exchange to

By looking to the conventional application of the word for a uniform explanation of the full range of instances of being a φίλος, Socrates shows that the conventional application of the word inevitably runs up against conventional intuitions about the conditions of φιλία. However, Socrates' purpose in exposing contradictions in the conventional conception of the friend is not primarily a negative one. As will be seen below and again in the next chapter,[29] exposing its contradictory nature does positive work towards developing an internally consistent account of the friend — one that both does justice to those conventional intuitions about the conditions of φιλία while at the same time going beyond them.

The problem with the first, third, and fourth proposals is that they conflict with the 'golden rule' of the conventional conception of φιλία, one that Menexenus agrees to without hesitation just as would any other late fifth-century Athenian;[30] namely, that it is impossible to love someone who hates you. For the classical Athenians, the notion that someone hates you entailed that they wish to do you harm or, at the very least, wish harm to befall upon you.[31] The converse of this idea is expressed by Socrates himself at the outset

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be a solely negative one; there are no implicit lessons to be learn beyond the fact that syntax cannot be the starting point for philosophical explanation. I will argue that, while the broader lesson applies, the exchange also has a positive role to play insofar as it points in the direction that philosophical explanation must take. Penner and Rowe similarly suggest that the point of the exchange is to determine a universal account of the φίλος "that will cover all examples of x's loving y, including cases where reciprocity is actually ruled out by the nature of the object, i.e. because it is non-human, or even inanimate; or because, in the case of the infant, it isn't yet capable of loving" (2005, p. 56). While I agree with their reading so far as it goes, they miss or at least don't make explicit the reason that the search for such an account fails, namely, the fact that what Socrates is showing is how conventional usage is undermined by conventional intuitions themselves.

[29] Hence the title of this section.

[30] The dramatic date of the *Lysis* is thought to be circa. 409 BC. Cf. Nails (2003), p. 317.

[31] Glidden refers to this as "the popular consensus" (1980), p. 285. See also Penner and Rowe (2005), pp. 53-4. As was discussed in ch. 1, sect. 3(a), for the Greeks the relation between being a friend and benefitting and between being an enemy and being harmful was a tight one. "You have recognized that the ἀρετὴ of a man is to conquer his friends in benefaction and his enemies in harm" (Xen. *Mem*. ii 6.35). As Dover (1974) writes: "A Greek may apply to any situation or procedure the criterion, 'Does it enable me to harm by enemies and help my friends?'" (p. 180, drawing on Ar. *Birds* 420f., Soph. *Ant*. 643f., Xen. *Anab*. i.3.6, *Hiero* 2.2). Plato himself

of his previous conversation with Lysis at 207d ff. Appealing there to Lysis' own conventional intuitions, he immediately infers from the fact that Lysis' parents love him that they must therefore wish for him to be as happy as possible (ὡς εὐδαιμονέστατον, 207d7)[32]

On the conventional Greek conception of loving and hating, then, just as loving someone entails wishing for their happiness, hating someone likewise entails not wanting them to be happy or wishing them to be unhappy. On this conception, it is impossible to love someone who hates you because it is impossible to love someone who wishes to do you harm. As was seen in discussion of the role of utility in the conventional Greek view of love and friendship (ch. 1, sect. 3), friendly love is inextricably tied to the notion of benefit. To love someone who wishes to do you harm runs contrary to this very principle of conventional Greek folk psychology.[33]

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discusses this conventional view in the *Republic*. At 331e, Socrates shifts from the definition of justice as 'rendering what one has received from another' to one he attributes to Simonides, 'rendering to each man what is owed', which Polemarchus elaborates as owing good (ἀγαθόν τι) to one's friends (φίλοι) and ill (κακὸν τι) to one's enemies (ἐχθροὶ) (332a-b).

[32] As was also discussed in ch. 1, the relationship between loving someone and seeing one's relationship with that person as contribution to one's own happiness was a tight one. While parental love was no doubt rooted in sentiment, it was also intricately tied to the benefit derived from parenthood. See again ch. 1, section 3(a).

[33] As Penner and Rowe point out, one might think that this view runs contrary to another commonsense assumption that someone, x, might love someone else, y, in spite of the fact that x is not sufficiently aware that y will attempt to harm x. Moreover, it might be argued on top of this that, as a straightforward matter of observation, what people believe about being harmed or benefited has nothing to do with whether they have these feelings of love or hate towards those who hate them. Some people just love others, the objection runs, regardless of what they believe about any harm or benefit they will receive from that person. This is the case, as Penner and Rowe note, because "[the] temptation to grant that this is a case of loving y is particularly strong, given the natural penchant we have for granting people first-person authority over what the objects are of their psychological states" (p. 55). However, as they argue, "it is not just ordinary observation that is being applied here. There is a theory about love, feelings and beliefs presupposed by the objection. We might call the theory presupposed by the objection *the theory of brute love and brute hatred*" (p. 239). Contrary to this view, Penner and Rowe argue that this view of first-person authority is already abandoned by a presupposition that Socrates injects implicitly into the conversation, namely, the claim that all friendship is for the sake of benefit to oneself. On the basis of an explanation of this sort, one might suppose that that when x thinks x loves a y that will harm x (whether x knows this or not) there is something else z which is what x loves and to which x falsely believes y is a means. While I agree with Penner and Rowe's view in principle, I think that we don't even need to appeal here to distinctly Socratic doctrine to make sense of what the 'golden rule' of conventional φιλία entails. As was discussed in ch. 1, sect. 4, Socrates' project in the *Lysis* is a

In his first proposal to Menexenus, Socrates suggested that whenever one individual loves another, both the φιλῶν and the φιλούμενος are each φίλοι to one another (212b3-5). Yet the uniform endorsement of this proposal allows that one can call either A or B a φίλος even in such a case where B does not love or even hates A, a possibility that violates the intuition underlying the golden rule of φιλία. Similarly, the uniform endorsement of the third and fourth proposals require that a lover has a friend even in someone who hates them or is a friend to someone who hates them. Yet again, the conventional understanding of what it means to be a φίλος prohibits these options; one cannot have as a φίλος, or be a φίλος to, someone who wishes to cause them harm or unhappiness.

The second proposal also runs up against this conventional understanding, although in a different way. Unlike the other three, which entail cases that violate the golden rule of Greek φιλία, this proposal precludes cases that are supported by popular usage. On the second proposal, an individual is a φίλος only if they are both a φιλῶν and a φιλούμενος. Yet as was seen above (section 3), this reciprocity requirement is too strong, since there are cases in which both lovers and loved ones are φίλοι in circumstances where no reciprocity is possible. There are lovers of animals, lovers of wine, lovers of sport, and lovers of wisdom. In each case, not only is the lover or φιλῶν a φίλος of their beloved object, but so too is the object or φιλούμενος a φίλος of their lover, even though it is incapable of returning its lover's affection.

Socrates' elenchus of Menexneus thus shows that a uniform explanation of what it is to be a φίλος cannot be derived from a consideration of the conventional usages of the term itself. Despite its explicit *aporia*, however, there are reasons to think that this conversation

clarificatory one; the principles that Socrates appeals to are ones that are implicit in the conventional view itself.

points in the direction of such an explanation. Key in this respect is Socrates' refutation of the second proposal, which is different than the other three in ways already alluded to above.

First, the second proposal does not violate the conventional understanding of a φίλος in the way that the other three proposals do. Proposals (i), (iii), and (iv) all left open the possibility of relations of friendship that involved friend-enemy pairs.[34] Yet such pairs directly contradict the conventional understanding of what it is to be a φίλος as it is preserved in the golden rule. By contrast, option (ii) does not entail relations of friendship that contradict this understanding. Instead, it rules out certain relations of friendship that are also endorsed by conventional usage. At the same time, the second set of counterexamples indicate only that reciprocity cannot be *required* for someone to become a friend, as the examples of the animal-lovers, wine-lovers, sports-lovers, and the philosopher are meant to show.

Still, one might well wonder why these examples do not also violate the golden rule of conventional φιλία. How can one be a friend to someone or thing that does not actively wish — or, in the above examples, is incapable of wishing — for one's happiness in return? What exactly distinguishes these cases of non-reciprocal friendly love from others that do in fact violate the rule?

Socrates does not explain this here, but a distinction seems possible on the basis of the type of beloved objects in question. In cases of non-reciprocal friendly love involving persons as the non-reciprocating object of affection, it follows from the rule above that such individuals do not actively wish to benefit their lovers. Yet, in the absence of such a

[34] (i) That X and Y are friends to each other even if X love Y and Y hates X; (iii) that Y is a friend to X even if Y hates X; and (iv) that X is a friend to Y even if Y hates X.

wish or good will, it is hard to see how a lover (φιλῶν) could stand to benefit from a relationship with such an individual. Where the beloved is another person, cases of non-reciprocal love seem to be limiting cases of antithetical ones, yet instances of the latter type of cases nonetheless.[35] A precondition for acquiring the friendship of another person, it appears, is a desire on the other person's part to see their lover benefited through their relationship.

However, the conditions for φιλία are arguably different in cases that involve impersonal objects like animals, wine, sports, or wisdom, objects that are incapable of reciprocating either love or hate.[36] What seems different in these cases is that good will towards their lover is not a precondition for being beneficial to their lover. Of course, such objects can also still be harmful to their lovers as well.[37] Yet in such cases, neither is ill will or hatred a precondition for the object being harmful. In cases involving non-personal objects of affection, then, neither the benefit nor harm to the lover is dependent in any way on a desiderative state of the object involved. In this way, it is possible to see how conventional usage can support these cases of non-reciprocal friendship without violating the golden rule of conventional φιλία.

While, then, this inquiry does not result in a uniform explanation of what it means to be a φίλος, it does indicate two different ways in which someone can be a friend to someone or thing else. On the other hand, someone can be a friend to another through reciprocity: an

[35] Glidden (1980) does not draw a distinction between cases involving a personal and non-personal beloved (p. 285). On his view, all antithetical cases are merely special instances of the nonreciprocal, so Socrates can obtain his counterexamples by attending to the antithetical case alone. What Glidden overlooks, however, is the way in which non-loving, non-personal φιλούμενοι can still benefit their lovers in ways that non-loving, personal ones cannot.

[36] Infant children seem like a special case here. While they are personal in a way that horses, sports, and wine are not, they are not yet capable of actively wishing harm towards their parents.

[37] The most obvious example might be the wine-lover (φίλοινος), whose beloved might be beneficial insofar as they contribute to their lover's happiness but also harmful if loved to an extreme.

instance where A not only loves B, but B loves A as well. On the other hand, someone can become a friend to something else in cases where the beloved in question, while not reciprocating, does not hate in return either. In other words, a non-mutual friendship can exist between a lover and a non-hating beloved. What remains to be seen is how we are to understand the relation between these two possible ways of being a φίλος. In particular, the question remains as to whether there is a respective priority between them: is one dependent on the other, and if so, how?

That the inquiry points in this direction is further reinforced by two dramatic clues. First, the dialogue subtly hints that Lysis himself recognizes the distinction drawn above between mutual and non-mutual types of φιλία. When at the conversation's end Menexenus confesses that he "is unable to see any way out" of the *aporia*, Socrates follows up by asking him: "Can it be, Menexenus, that all through there has been something wrong with our inquiry?" (213d1-2). However, it is Lysis, having been silently listening the entire time, who now interrupts to answer, "*I* think so, Socrates." While the boy does not go on to elaborate as to what exactly he sees the problem to have been, Socrates nevertheless attributes Lysis' interruption to his newfound "taste for philosophy" (ἡσθεὶς τῇ φιλοσοφία, 213d7). On one level, Socrates' commendation here can simply be taken at face value. However, as was seen, philosophy itself was one of the examples of non-reciprocal friendship that Socrates mentioned as an exception to the reciprocity requirement. A lover of wisdom is precisely someone who is not loved in return (μὴ ἀντιφιλῇ) by wisdom (212d8). Hence, Socrates' comment here can also be seen to indicate his recognition and

approval that Lysis has grasped the positive upshot of this inquiry.[38]

Moreover, this way of understanding its intended result helps to further illuminate Socrates' earlier autobiographical prelude to his conversation with Menexenus. As was discussed in section 1 above, Socrates appears there to leave open the possibility that his lifelong love interest, "a good friend," could be an impersonal object such as wisdom. This possibly is only reinforced by the fact that philosophy is one of the aforementioned examples of non-reciprocal friendship.

5. Beginning Again from Bedrock

Far from an isolated episode, then, Socrates' conversation with Menexenus plays a central role in the larger argument of the dialogue. It serves in essence as a return to the bedrock of conventional usage as the starting point towards a new philosophical understanding of the friend. Although it ends in *aporia*, Socrates' inquiry with Menexenus into the nature of the φίλος through a consideration of conventional usage is not an entirely fruitless one. While the investigation showed that no single usage could explain every instance in which the expression 'φίλος' is legitimately predicated of a subject, it also revealed the types of relations to which a genuine application of the term might apply. Still, this inquiry could only ever serve as a starting point at best. What the elenchus of Menexenus also shows is that an inquiry into the nature of the friend must ultimately move beyond considerations of semantic usage alone. What is required is an account that

[38] Lysis learned these points, at least implicitly, in his private conversation with Socrates. There, Socrates concluded that wisdom not only wins the friendly love of others but also establishes a kinship (οἰκεῖον) with them. What this conclusion doesn't explain, however, is how wisdom could provide the basis for reciprocal love. What is missing is any indication that if he does become wise — and thus good — Lysis would similarly befriend his parents or anyone else who loves him on account of his wisdom. Menexenus, who was attending to sacrifices during that conversation, consequently fails to recognize the one way to qualitatively distinguish cases of non-mutual friendship involving (a) a lover and a non-loving beloved and (b) a lover and a hating beloved.

explains the cause (αἰτία) of loving and being loved, that is, whatever characteristic is intrinsic to each φίλος that makes them a φιλῶν or a φιλούμενος in the first place.[39] It is to this task that Socrates turns next in considering the views of the wise.

[39] At the dialogue's end, Socrates will make this point explicit by arguing that what makes two people friends is some characteristic or quality of soul they share that makes them 'naturally οἰκεῖοι" to each other (221e5-6).

CHAPTER FIVE

Conventional Wisdom (213e-216b)

The end of Socrates' discussion with Menexenus marks a midway point in the dialogue, one highlighted by elements of a transition both forward and backward.

On the one hand, it marks the introduction of new voices in Socrates and the boys' inquiry into the nature of the φίλος. Up until this point, the dialogue has only seen Socrates either present himself as an expert in love or as a complete non-expert in friendship, one who must consult another member of the company, Menexenus, for advice. On the heels of the latter's admitted perplexity (213c10-11), however, Socrates does not take back his initial confession to not know "in what way one person becomes a friend to another" (212a6-8). Instead, he suggests that the company must turn elsewhere for a Hermes-like guide; in this case, to the views of the poets and cosmologists, who are "fathers (πατέρες) and guides (ἡγεμόνες) in wisdom" (214a2).[1]

At the same time, the introduction of 'the views of the wise' marks a reintroduction of concepts that figured important earlier in Socrates' private conversation with Lysis. In particular, these views of the φίλος appeal to the concepts of the useful (χρήσιμος) and the beneficial (ὠφελήσιμος), notions that were intimately connected with wisdom in the first part of the dialogue.[2] Relatedly, the examination of the views of the wise will also explicitly introduce, for the first time in the dialogue, the notions of the good (ἀγαθὸς) and the bad

[1] While the concept of wisdom does not play an explicit role in this discussion, Socrates' reference to the poets and cosmologists in this way is clearly meant to indicate that its presence remains in the background. As was seen in the previous chapter, Socrates clearly suggests that the notion of a non-mutual friendship with wisdom is possible (212d8). Moreover, as I suggested at the end of ch. 4, sect. 4, he implicitly attributes Lysis' comprehension of the previous discussion's *aporia* to the boy's budding taste for philosophy (ἡσθεὶς τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ) (213d9).

[2] As I argued in the previous chapter (sect. 4), the conceptual relationships between friendly love and benefit on the one hand, and hatred and harm on the other hand, already play an implicit yet central role in Socrates' conversation with Menexenus.

(κακὸς) as essential concepts for defining the friend and its opposite.[3]

The views of the wise present two contrasting positions: on the one hand, that friendship is predicated on likeness (ὁμοιότης); and on the other, that it is unlikeness (ἀνομοιότης) or opposition (ἐναντιότης) that serves as the basis of φιλία. As with Socrates' prior one-on-one exchange with Menexenus, this one also ends in *aporia*. However, the nature of this *aporia* has been seen to be significantly different. In particular, Socrates' refutation of a variant of the first view — the view that it is between those who are good that friendship exists most of all — has raised the suspicion of a number of commentators. Socrates will argue that the good cannot be φίλοι to each other because they cannot be useful or beneficial to one another. Rather than accept Socrates' refutation at face value, these readers insist that Plato's real view here must be an implicit one. On this reading, the fact that the good cannot be useful or beneficial to each other, and therefore cannot be φίλοι, must indicate that φιλία itself cannot be predicated on these qualities.[4]

However, I will argue that this approach misrepresents Plato's main strategy in the *Lysis*, a strategy that is rooted not in outright revisionism but rather in conceptual clarification.[5] Rather than a rejection of these qualities, the point of this examination is to show how such conventional views that take the role of utility or benefit in φιλία for

[3] In fact, the notion of the good has been associated with the friend in two prior instances: (1) at the end of Socrates' demonstration with Lysis (210d1-3); and (2) in the context of Socrates' confession (211e3). However, the conceptual relation between being a friend and being good to someone is only made explicit in this passage.

[4] This reading was first advocated for by Von Arnim (1914) and subsequent defended in some form or another by Herber (1959), Kahn (1995), Bordt (2000), and most recently Curzer (2014). Curzer sums up this reading as follows: "*Of course*, good people *qua* good can befriend each other. That is, each befriends the other because of the other's virtues rather than because of the other's wealth, status, etc. …. The problem is [the] premise [that people befriend other people only if the others are useful to them]. [The] argument is a *reduction ad absurdum* of IAF [the instrument account of friendship]" (p. 359).

[5] Cf. ch. 1, sect. 3(b). My reading of this passage draws on those offered by Bolotin (1979), Glidden (1981) and Penner and Rowe (2005). The ways in which I divert from their readings will be made evident below.

granted nevertheless cannot explain how in fact these concepts play the fundamental role in friendly relations that they do. The upshot of this examination is not that utility and benefit have no place within a coherent account of φιλία, but rather that conventional views themselves, even canonical ones, lack the conceptual resources to explain how beneficial relations between φίλοι are possible.

I will begin by once again showing how the dramatic details at the outset of this discussion shed important light on the focus and aim of this inquiry (section 1) before offering an analysis of the two views under consideration as well as Socrates' refutation of them (section 2). Doing so, I will suggest, raises two important questions about the nature of the examination (section 3). I will then go on to consider a prominent approach to addressing these questions, one predicated on the revisionist strategy mentioned above (section 4). As I will go on to show, this approach neglects not only important features of the immediate argumentative context, but also the relation of this inquiry to Socrates' foundational discussion with Lysis. In the remainder of this chapter (sections 5-6), I will offer an alternative reading of both Socrates' refutations of the views of the wise as well as the underlying point of the inquiry as a whole. As will be seen, this examination of conventional views of φιλία ultimately returns the focus of the dialogue back to features last associated with erotic love, and in doing so, advances the dialogue's broader, Hermes-related theme of boundary crossing.

1. A Turning to the Guides in Wisdom

As one might expect from Socrates' explicitly proposed topic, this conversation, like the previous one, will examine conventional conceptions of what it means to be a φίλος. Attention to the dramatic details of the conversation indicate that in fact the dialogue is

about to reach a pivotal point in this examination. Three details in particular are worth noting here.

First, Plato makes much use here of the metaphor of a journey, and in particular of an important juncture in such a journey. As was seen at the end of his conversation with Socrates (chapter 4, section 2), Menexenus' perplexity was compared to a dead end (ού πάνυ εύπορῶ, 213c9). In a similar manner, Socrates now remarks, "I think… that if we were inquiring correctly we could never have gone so sadly astray" and he suggests that they "not follow [the] present line any further, since our inquiry looks to me a rather hard sort of path" (213e1-4). Instead, he proposes that they "make for the point where we turned off (χρῆναι ἰέναι) and be guided by the poets" (213e5-214a1).[6] On its own, of course, the use of the notion of a journey or path as a metaphor for philosophical inquiry is hardly remarkable. What makes it important in this context is the fact that this notion had not been mentioned since the very outset of the dialogue (20203a1), when Socrates entered on route from the Academy to the Lyceum and was rerouted through his encounter with Hippothales. This second, metaphorical reference to the idea of a turn in the road or journey comes almost exactly at the dialogue's halfway point (213e4-214a1). Just as Socrates' divergence from his expected path initiated the dialogue's conversation, so too this turning to the poets suggests that the dialogue itself has reached a turning point.[7]

[6] What 'point' exactly is this? Socrates does not clearly say, but it appears to refer back to his quotation of Solon at 212e3-4, which he used to support the idea of cases of non-reciprocal φιλία between a lover and a non-loving, non-enemy (i.e. a beloved that doesn't hate its lover in return but doesn't reciprocate their love either).

[7] As common as this metaphor may be, it should also not be lost here that Hermes was the protector of travelers. As was seen in part one, Socrates himself first appears in the dialogue as a traveler, on route from the Academy to the Lyceum, and also acts as a Hermes-like figure in guiding both Hippothales and Lysis in the ways of ἔρως and φιλία respectively. It might appear that he relinquishes this intermediary role here by abdicating his position of authority to 'the wise' (i.e. the poets and cosmologists). However, this is not entirely the case; it is, after all, Socrates who 'guides' the company to the views of the poets. While, then, he explicitly

Also noteworthy here is the fact that the ensuing conversation focuses on reciprocal φιλία. It was seen in the previous chapter that, in the course of their inquiry, Socrates and Menexenus considered both reciprocal and non-reciprocal conceptions of φιλία and that, for the first time in the dialogue, philosophy was presented as an example of the latter (212d7-8). As was also seen there, it is Lysis' "taste for philosophy" (ἠσθεὶς τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ, 213d7) that provokes Socrates to reengage with him in a consideration of the views of the wise. Yet, as it turns out, these views will involve, at least explicitly, only reciprocal conceptions of φιλία.[8] As was just noted above, Socrates himself indicates that the previous inquiry with Menexenus is related to this impending discussion of the views of the wise. In particular, the point where they appeared to "turn off" seems to refer to his appeal to Solon (212e1-4), whose passage made explicit reference to different types of irreciprocal φιλία (cf. fn. 5 above). This raises the question: why did Plato have Socrates entertain the idea of irreciprocal φιλία in the prior discussion with Menexenus only to drop it here, especially when he seems to indicate that these two conversations are importantly related?[9]

The third noteworthy aspect of this brief interlude is that it marks the first time since Socrates' initial exchange with them in the prologue (207b8-c12) that he will engage in conversation with both Lysis and Menexenus together. As was seen in the previous two chapters, Socrates' conversations were exclusively one-on-one affairs: first with Lysis alone (207d-210d) and then with Menexenus (212a-13d). As was noted both at the end of the last chapter and in the previous paragraph, Socrates presently shifts the conversation back

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relinquishes the station of expert that he assumed in part one, he still implicitly maintains an intermediary role here.

[8] As will be seen, while the second view of the wise based on unlikeness is introduced on the pretense of reciprocity, it in fact only makes sense as a form of irreciprocal φιλία. Cf. sect. 5 below.

[9] I revisit this question at the end of this chapter. Cf. section 6 below.

once again to Lysis.[10] However, Menexenus will also play an important role in this conversation as well. At its end, it is Menexenus who this time interjects (just as Lysis did previously at 213d2-3) to endorse the final view of the wise proposed, namely, that it is those who are unlike or opposites who are friends (216a ff.). Curiously, it is this endorsement that prompts Socrates to suggest that this view results in a problematic consequence eerily similar to that encountered at the end of his conversation with Menexenus alone: it entails that "the enemy is a friend to the friend, [and] the friend a friend to the enemy (216b3-4). Clearly, Menexenus' interjection here does more than simply offer Lysis dramatic respite. Rather, it serves as a signal to the reader that Plato intends these two conversations to be seen as intimately connected.[11]

These dramatic details suggest that the dialogue has reached a crucial point in its analysis of conventional views of the φίλος. Discerning just what this stage amounts to, I will argue, involves answering two important questions that arise through the course of Socrates and the boys' examination of the views of the wise. But first it is necessary to understand the nature of the views under consideration.

[10] As was noted in ch. 4, sect. 4, it is Lysis who, having listened attentively to Socrates and Menexenus' exchange, can't now resist interjecting, "*I* think there has [been something wrong with the inquiry]" (213d2-3). Socrates reports that, immediately upon having done so, the boy blushed (ἠρυθρίασεν, 213d4). As Penner and Rowe note (p. 72, fn. 5), there is a clear allusion here to Hippothales' own bashfulness earlier: "Lysis blushes for having spoken up, whereas Hippothales blushed instead of speaking up at 204b-c." But as regards to whether "there is any significance in the contrast[,]" they concede "we pass it on, without having any answer to offer." There is in fact a significance in this contrast, one that concerns the conditions of erotic awareness. As was seen in chapter 1, it was Hippothales' blushing (203b5, 205c3) that revealed to Socrates the former's erotic condition. It was suggested there that it was his recognition of Hippothales' state that convinced Socrates to see the older youth as a proper candidate for philosophical conversation and to assist him through a demonstration of his own erotic expertise. Similarly, here it is Lysis' blushing that reveals the boy's "taste for philosophy" (213d9), which in turn motivates Socrates to turn the conversation back to Lysis. The significance of erotic awareness will reemerge again at the end of this chapter; cf. sect. 6 below.

[11] Curiously, commentators have generally failed to mention this point, let alone comment on its significance.

2. The Views of the Wise

As was seen in chapter 4, what the elenchus of Menexenus showed is that an inquiry into the nature of the friend cannot rely simply on a consideration of the conventional usages of the term 'φίλος'. What is required is an explanation that accounts for the cause (αἰτία) of loving and being loved, i.e. whatever characteristic is intrinsic to each φίλος that makes them a φιλῶν or a φιλούμενος to begin with. Socrates' examination of the views of the wise constitutes an examination of two such possible explanations of this latter type handed down by tradition.

Through the course of this examination, Socrates will reintroduce concepts central to the conventional conception of the φίλος that last appeared in his foundational demonstration with Lysis (ch. 3): the good and bad, the related concepts of benefit and harm, as well as the central conduit of benefit, knowledge or expertise.

(a) Likes as Φίλοι

Socrates first considers the view found in Homer, who writes:

"Always god leads the like (ὀμοῖον) to the like (ὀμοῖον)." (214a6)[12]

[12] Homer, *Odyssey* 17.218. These words are spoken contemptuously by the goatherd Melantheus when he sees the swineherd Eumaeus guiding a disreputable looking beggar. Melantheus is deceived, however, for the pair are not alike in the way he supposes. The beggar is Odysseus disguised as an ugly old man, so that he can return to Ithaca undetected by his enemies. Eumaeus, for his part, may have as poor an appearance as the transformed Odysseus, but the enslaved swineherd is the son of a king (*Odyssey* 15.455ff.). As will be seen below (p. 157), Socrates similarly appeals to a passage from Hesiod to support the contrary view that unlikes are friends. However, it too seems to be taken out of context. Rather than in fact supporting the view that unlikes are friends, the quote comes from a passage that seems to support the contrary view, that competition between likes benefit the like parties involved. Both Nichols (2009), pp. 170-1, and Curzer (2014), p. 358, fn. 16, argue that Plato uses these quotes to in fact undermine the credibility of Socrates' refutations of the views of the wise. For instances, in the case of the Homeric passage, Nichols argues: "Athena leads these likes together in order to give Odysseus access to his enemies for the sake of revenge, not in order to bring them [Eumaeus and Odysseus] together as friends, as Socrates suggests" (p. 170). However, interpreting such significance in Socrates' application of these quotations is tenuous at best. First, it is not clear how exactly reading this passage in its original context is supposed to undermine Socrates' refutation of the view that likes are friends of likes. One could just as well take it to implicitly gesture towards his refutation in this case. Second, and even more to the point, the most charitable reading of these quotations is one on which Plato does not intend us to make heavy weather of the context of these passages. The quotations themselves are

As Socrates goes on to explain, this same idea that "like is always necessarily a friend to like" (214b3-4) is also present in the writings of "the most wise" (τῶν σοφωτάτων) who write about "nature" and "the whole" (214b5).[13] But with respect to what are likes friends to likes? As quickly emerges, two premises are implicit here: first, that 'like' means 'people who are similar in character'; and second, that the only two types of character are 'the good' and 'the bad'. In chapter 2 (sect. 3), it was seen that Lysis and Menexenus are similar in respect to age, class, wealth, and physical beauty (207b8-c12). But when considering whether likes are friends, Socrates does not discuss any of these similarities. Instead, he identifies likeness solely by reference to the notions of goodness and badness, and relatedly, usefulness and harmfulness. He first considers the possibility (i) that the bad could be friends with each other before considering the view (ii) that the only likes who can be friends are in fact the good.

(i) Socrates immediately raises an objection to the first option: "half of the saying cannot be true," he explains, "if the wicked (πονηροὶ) are like one another" (214c4-5). Socrates offers two reasons for why bad people cannot be friends with each other.

First, he argues that bad people who associate with each other cannot help but commit

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simply meant to invoke views common to conventional discourse, which in turn were given philosophical expression in the form of Pre-Socratic cosmologies. As Socrates indicates, both views based on likeness and unlikeness served as the basis for positions developed by "those who debate and write about nature and the whole" (2145-6; see also 215e3-7). In both their cosmological forms, the views based on likeness and unlikeness are taken seriously, the expositors of which are likely Empedocles and Heraclitus. Cf. fn. 13 and 48 below.

[13] This is the first indication that Socrates takes these views to apply not simply to human relationships, but to relationships more broadly. Socrates does not indicate to which natural philosopher he refers, but we know from Aristotle (*EN* 1155b7) that the idea that "like is drawn to like" was associated with Empedocles. Unlike Aristotle, who considers such cosmic principles to be outside the purview of ethical inquiry (*EN* 1155b9), Socrates doesn't but rather sees human relationships as a species of attraction more generally. While, then, Socrates' discussion here seems to be based in an ordinary, reciprocal conception of friendship, he is expanding the scope for what qualifies as possible friendly relations. At the same time, as Glidden points out: "it would be imprudent to regard them as metaphysical extracts rather than popular views expressed in poetry and taken up by cosmologists" (1981, p. 43)

injustices against one another:

> "In our opinion, the nearer the one who is wicked (πονηρὸς) comes to the wicked (πονηρῷ) and the more he associates with him, the more hated (ἐχθίων) he becomes. For he does injustice (ἀδικεῖ), and presumably it is impossible for those who do and suffer injustice (ἀδικοῦντας δὲ καὶ ἀδικουμένους) to be friends." (214b8-c3)[14]

For the first time since his initial conversation with Lysis (ch. 3), Socrates reintroduces here the notion of harm or injustice (ἀδίκη).[15] In doing so, moreover, he appeals once more to the conventional web of meaning associated with being an enemy (ἐχθρὸς). In his previous conversation with Menexenus (ch. 4), Socrates was able to appeal to the boy's intuitions in drawing the inference that hating or being hated entailed being an enemy. Still implicit there was the fact that what underpinned this connection was the assumption that hating someone entailed wishing to do that person harm and being hated entailed having harm wished upon oneself. Here, Socrates explicitly draws the connection between doing harm, being hated, and being bad. One cannot be friends with someone who is bad, for they by definition are someone who wants to do harm or injustice, and it is taken as simply a fact of Greek folk psychology that no one wants to be around those who want to harm them.[16]

Second, Socrates argues that bad people lack psychic harmony and therefore the type of stability necessary to be a friend:

> "… those who are bad (κακούς) … are never alike (μηδέποτε ὁμοίους), not even themselves to themselves (αὑτοὺς αὐτοῖς), but are impulsive (ἐμπλήκτους) and unsteady (ἀσταθμήτους); and when a thing is unlike itself and variable it can hardly become like or friend to anything else." (214c7-214d1)

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[14] Cf. *Apology* 25c7-8, 25d10: "bad men always do something bad to those closest to them at any moment."

[15] There in the context of their private conversation, Socrates playfully suggests that Lysis must have wronged his parents in some way to have made them to want to prevent him from doing what he wishes and thus being happy (208e1-3).

[16] Implicit here is the further condition that a bad person cannot abstain from harming those around them because, in one way or another, he mistakenly think it is good to do so. Cf. *Gorgias* 466e7, 467a5; *Republic* 567b, 576a.

The idea here is that the κακοὶ are so at odd with themselves that they cannot be said to be like themselves in any sustained sense, let alone similar to anyone else. But why does being bad entail a lack of consistency or stability of character? Socrates is not as transparent here.[17] The point seems to be that there is no rhythm or reason involved in being bad. In fact, it involves the very absence of coherence or consistency.[18] If, then, likeness was a quality or standard that constituted being a friend, the bad would exemplify the very opposite of that quality. Insofar as they are bad, such individuals are constitutionally incoherent.

(ii) Since it is impossible for the bad to be φίλοι with each other, Socrates goes on to suggest an alternative understanding of this account based on likeness. The "wise ones" often speak "in a riddling way," he explains to the boys. When they say that like is friend to like, what they really mean is "that those who are good (ἀγαθοὺς) are alike (ὁμοίους)" and that "he who is good is a friend (φίλος) to the good — he alone to him alone (μόνος μόνῳ) — while he who is bad never enters into true friendship (ἀληθῆ φιλίαν) either with good or bad" (214d5-7).

But Socrates has a strange suspicion that there is something awry with this result as well. His refutation of this interpretation also takes two stages. He first argues that likes

[17] However, we do receive a clue earlier in the dialogue. In his private conversation with Lysis, Socrates explains how someone who is not a wise thinker "will be alien to his family, even to those closer to him" (210c2-3). The person closer to one even than their own family seems here to refer to one's own self. The point, then, is that the absence of knowledge or wisdom makes one alien or estranged even to oneself insofar as one can't act in accordance with one's own true desires.

[18] Socrates' argument at *Republic* 349d-350c, comparing the just person to the musician or doctor, helps to illuminate Socrates' point here: "Consider then with regard to all forms of knowledge and ignorance whether you think that anyone who knows would choose to do or say other or more than what another who knows would do or say, and not rather exactly what his like (ὁμοίῳ) would do in the same action" (350a3-9). The point is that being good or just is a matter of benefiting, and since benefiting is requires knowledge, being good requires following a rule or norm prescribed by such knowledge. In the absence of such knowledge, one's actions follow no intelligible order. See also Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* VII.6, 1240b16-17: "the bad man is not a single person but many, and a different person in the same day, and impulsive (ἐμπλήκτος)."

cannot be friends to likes with respect to their likeness (214e3-215a3):

> "Is the like person friend to the like to the extent that he is like him (καθ'ὅσον ὅμοιος), and is such a person useful (χρήσιμος) to another such? Let me put it another way: when anything whatever is like anything else, what benefit (ὠφελίαν) can it offer, or what harm (βλάβην) can it do, to its like, which it could not offer or do to itself? Or what could be done to it that could not be done to it by itself? How can such things be valued (ἀγαπηθείη) by one another, when they provide no aid (ἐπικουρίαν) for each other? Is it at all possible?"

Just as previously he made explicit the conceptual connection between being harmful and being an enemy, so too here for the first time since his private conversation with Lysis Socrates explicitly draws on the conventional view that the φίλος is useful or beneficial (χρήσιμος/ὠφελὴς). But why does Socrates think that likes cannot be friends insofar as, or to the extent that, they are alike? In order to answer this, we need an understanding of what Socrates has in mind when he refers to likes, and again, the answer appeals to the conceptual web of meaning associated with the traditional understanding of the φίλος. Since being a φίλος essentially consists in being beneficial, likeness in terms of friends consists in the type of utility each offers the other. Yet from their very similarity it follows that there is no benefit (ὠφελία) or aid (ἐπικουρία) an individual can derive from their like counterpart which they could not derive from their own resources. And this of course applies to both members of the relation. Since they make no contribution to each other in this way, Socrates concludes that those who are alike cannot be valued (ἀγαπηθείη) by each other, and consequently cannot be φίλοι to each other.

In the second stage of his refutation (215a3-215c2), Socrates goes on to ask: "Granted that the like is not friend to like, could the good still be friends to the good *insofar as he is good*, not insofar as he is like?" (215a3-5). He rejects this possibility as well, but for a different reason. While likes, insofar as they are alike, cannot be friends because neither

can provide benefit (ὠφελίαν) to the other, the good, insofar as they are good, cannot be φίλοι because neither *needs* any benefit to be provided for them.

> '"But again, will not the good, insofar as he is good, be in that measure sufficient for himself (ἱκανὸς αὐτῷ).
> "Yes."
> And the sufficient has no need (οὐδενὸ δεόμενος) of anything, by virtue of his sufficiency.
> "Of course."
> And if a man has no need of anything, he will not long for (ἀγαπᾠη) anything.
> "Presumably not."
> And that which does not long for anything will not love anything.
> "I should think not."
> And one who does not love is no friend."' (215a6-b2)

Since the good are by definition self-sufficient, they have no need for anything outside of themselves. Since they have no need for anything, they cannot long for anything, nor love anything, since loving something entails a longing for it (ἀγαπᾠη). Thus, the good cannot be friends insofar someone who is good cannot be a lover or φιλῶν.[19]

(b) Unlikes as Friends

As if to bolster his prior refutation, Socrates recounts having hear someone once claim that in fact "like was most hostile to like, and so were good men to good men" (215c5-6). According to Socrates, his anonymous source in turn cited Hesiod as witness (μάρτυρα) to this view, who wrote:

> "And potter is angry with potter and singer with singer
> And beggar with beggar." (215c8-d1)

Likes cannot be friends, according to this account-giver, for in fact "things that are most alike are filled with envy (φθόνου) a love of victory (φιλονικίας), and enmity (ἔχθρας)" (213d2-3). This rationale recalls the double nature of competition as a conventional marker of friendship discussed in ch. 1 (sect. 2b). As was seen there, while a love of honor

[19] The question remains, however, whether the good can still be a friend to someone else insofar as they are beloved or φιλούμενος. Cf. sect. 5 below.

(φιλοτιμία) and love of victory (φιλονικία) were viewed to be positive and healthy aspects of φιλία when pursued in the spirit of virtue and for the public good, they were also recognized to be potentially deleterious to friendly relations as well.[20]

What this destructive potential inherent in likeness indicates, Socrates explains, is that it is people or things most unlike (ἀνομοιότατα) who or which are friends (215d4). He cites the account-giver's examples of the types of unlike pairs who make for the most natural φίλοι.

> "…. for the poor man must necessarily be a friend to the rich, and the weak to the strong, for the sake of their assistance, and also the sick man to the doctor; indeed, every person who lacks knowledge (πάντα δή τὸν μὴ εἰδότα) must cherish the knowledgeable (τὸν εἰδότα) and love him." (215d4-7)

The theory of unlikes appears to address the very problem that beset the view that likes are friends with likes by identifying the key elements necessary to its solution.

As was seen above, being a φίλος was predicated on a capacity to benefit (214e5-7). Since likeness was measured in terms of such a capacity, likes could not possibly provide any aid or assistance (ἐπικουρίαν, 215a2) to each other. By contrast, what characterizes a pair of unlikes is a disparity with respect to some capacity to benefit. It is precisely the absence of such a capacity in one party and its presence in the other that serves as the basis

[20] *Works and Days* 25-6. This quotation is supposed to show that those who are most similar bear a grudge against each other. However, the thrust of this criticism conflicts with the context of the surrounding passage in Hesiod. There, Hesiod distinguishes between two kinds of "strife" (ἔρις: 11). One is cruel and "makes battles thrive, and war" (14). But other is "an aid to mortals. She [Ἔρις] urges even lazy men to work" (20). The second type of strife compels men to compete with each another for financial success. As this type of competition encourages more work and consequently more wealth for everyone, "this strife is good for men" (24). One can see in this way how "potter benefits potter." If there are two or more in a single polis, they each must work harder to produce a better product given the competitive marketplace. Thus, Hesiod's point seems to support rather than take issue with the idea that likes could be friends. While Socrates had argued that likes could not benefit each other insofar as they are like, this interpretation of Hesiod suggests that likes can (at least indirectly) offer each other something, namely, competition. As was noted above, Curzer (2014) and Nichols (2009) argue that this quotation in fact undermines Socrates' ensuing critique. For my reasons against this reading see again fn. 12. Ultimately, as will be seen in ch. 7, Socrates himself is driving towards a similar point as that proposed by Hesiod, namely, that the souls that are akin to one another assist each other in the pursuit of wisdom.

of their φιλία. For instance, the sick person and the doctor are friends precisely because the sick person lacks health and the doctor possesses a skill that could restore it to them.

This passage is significant for a further reason: it is here, again for the first time since Socrates' conversation with Lysis, that the connection is explicitly made between benefit and some kind of knowledge or wisdom or expertise. The account-giver summed up his examples in terms of knowledge, explaining that "every ignorant person (τὸν μὴ εἰδότα) must cherish (ἀγαπᾶν) the knowledgeable (τὸν εἰδότα) and love (φιλεῖν) them" (215d6-7).

Despite the apparent advantages of this view over the previous one, however, Socrates wastes little time in refuting it as well. Upon asking whether the account-giver spoke well (εὐ ᾽λεγεν) in asserting that "what is most opposite (ἐναντίον) is most a friend (φίλον) to its opposite (ἐναντίω)" (216a4-5),[21] it is Menexenus who answers in the affirmative, reentering the conversation for the first time since the end of his own individual conversation with Socrates (213c9). Socrates goes on to invoke the "logic-choppers" (ἀντιλογικοι) — a clear reference to the boy's own eristic predilections[22] — who would pounce on this answer as one leading to absurd consequences:

> '"And what answer shall we give to them? Shall we not be forced to admit that what they say is true?
> "We shall."
> So then, they will demand, is a hating thing friend to the friendly thing, or the friendly to the hating?
> "Neither," he replied.
> But is the just (δίκαιον) a friend to the unjust (ἀδίκῳ), the moderate (σῶφρον) to the undisciplined (ἀκολάστῳ), and the good (ἀγαθὸν) to the bad (κακῷ)?
> I do not think so."' (216b1-b6)

If it is a disparity in the capacity to benefit that constitutes the basis of φιλία, then it would

[21] Socrates goes on to generalize his point here to one that applies to the natural world more broadly. The remainder of this account will be taken up in sect. 5 below. As will be suggested there, Socrates' expansion on this account points the way to a positive result.
[22] Socrates' reference to these unnamed 'logic choppers' is another indication that this passage completes a line of argument that began with Socrates' conversation with Menexenus. Cf. sect. 1 above.

seem that the most natural friends would be the good and the bad.[23] After all, it is the good, by definition, who possess the capacity to benefit most of all, and the bad its opposite, i.e. the lack of such a capacity or the propensity to harm.[24] Yet this implication runs up against the golden rule of conventional φιλία already invoked earlier in Socrates' conversation with Menexenus (213b2-5); it is absurd for someone to be a friend to their enemy, i.e. someone who intends harm towards them, or to be an enemy to a friend, i.e. someone who intends to benefit them.[25]

3. Two Questions

In the process of rejecting both views of the wise, Socrates' examination raises two sets of questions regarding each refutation.

First, and rather straightforwardly, can Socrates really be serious in his assertion that the good can't be φίλοι to each other? It seems difficult to fathom that the good are devoid of love, especially for one another. Indeed, Socrates' conclusion runs contrary to a well-established Greek conventional as well as philosophical tradition that treats friendship between the good ('virtue-friendship') not simply as a form of φιλία but as the highest or primary form.[26] Could Socrates be implicitly indicating here, at the dramatic crossroads of the dialogue, something different than his explicit conclusion? Rather than drawing out the logical conclusions of the conventional understanding of the φίλος as someone or thing that

[23] Along with those pairs mentioned in the quotation above that exemplify the qualities inherent in goodness and badness respectively, i.e. justice and injustice, temperance and intemperance.
[24] For why badness is not or does not entail a capacity, strictly speaking, see again fn. 18 above.
[25] See again my discussion in ch. 4, sect. 4.
[26] Although it is difficult to find passages in conventional sources that explicitly link those who are good or virtuous with the highest form of friendship, the view is in many ways implied by the conventional Greek conception of φιλία itself, i.e. it is those who are best as being a friend that are the most virtuous. As Xenophon writes: "You have recognized that the virtue [ἀρετὴ] of a man is to conquer his friends in benefaction and his enemies in harm" (Xen. *Mem*. ii 6.35). Cf. ch. 1, sect 3(a). The view that the highest form of φιλία is of course developed and defended by Aristotle, *EN* 1156b, *EE* 1236b.

is beneficial, could he instead be implicitly critiquing this very notion itself?

Second, as was just alluded to above (section 2), Socrates' refutation of the final view that it is unlikes who are friends seems to lead the conversation back in a circle: the idea that these opposites could be φίλοι appeared to have already been ruled out in Socrates' previous conversation with Menexenus. In that discussion, Socrates asserted that it was "unreasonable" (ἀλογία) and "impossible" (ἀδύνατον) that one could be hated by one's friend and loved by one's enemy, or be a friend to one's enemy and an enemy to one's friend (213b2-5). But, as was seen, it is just these unreasonable and impossible consequences that appear to follow from the view based on unlikeness. If this discussion has merely ended up in the same *aporia* that the previous one led to, then in what sense has this examination of the views of the wise resulted in some progress, if any at all, in Socrates and the boys' larger inquiry into the nature of the φίλος?

4. A Refutation *Ad Absurdum*?

The apparent audacity of Socrates' conclusion that the good cannot be φίλοι has led numerous commentators to view it as meant to be taken by the cautious reader as intentionally absurd.[27] In fact, such commentators see Socrates' conclusion as a watershed moment in what they take to be the dialogue's larger project of refuting the conventional view of φιλία as a relation based on benefit or utility. As was seen in chapter 3 (sect. 3), a similar concern was raised about Lysis' relationship with his parents. On this line of interpretation, the conclusion that the boy's parents could only really love their son if he was in fact useful to them was seen to a *reductio ad absurdum* of the argument's central premise that people will only befriend those whom they consider to be useful to

[27] This reading was first advocated for by Von Arnim (1914) and subsequent defended in some form or another by Herber (1959), Kahn (1996), Bordt (2000), and most recently Curzer (2014). Cf. fn. 4 above.

themselves. On this reading, then, Socrates' apparent refutation of the thesis that it is the good who are friends with each other carries this line of reasoning to its logically absurd conclusion; if friendship is predicated on usefulness, then the highest form of friendship is not even possible.

This way of addressing the first set of questions above also offers a way of addressing the second set concerning the trajectory of the dialogue up until this point as well. On this reading, the fact that Socrates and the boys' examination of the views of the wise results in the same *aporia* as the previous inquiry into the uses of the term 'φίλος' is an implicit indication that a critical assumption about φιλία has again been overlooked. If we continue to assume that friendship is based on utility, so this reading goes, we end up back in the absurd position of having to assert something implausible, namely, that one can be a friend to one's enemy or an enemy to one's friend (213a6-b1; 216b2-4).

However, this reading fundamentally misunderstands the task that Socrates sets for himself in addressing the conventional understanding of what is a φίλος. In chapter 3, section 3, it was seen that we had strong reasons to view Socrates to be arguing sincerely in his initial conversation with Lysis that the friendship of his parents, or anyone else, does indeed depend on the boy's ability to be useful and therefore wise, since wisdom or knowledge is the source of all benefit or utility.[28] In fact, careful attention to the elements of his argument there also strongly indicates that Socrates similarly intends us to take seriously his refutation of the thesis that the good are friends with the good.

First, the conclusion of Socrates' initial discussion with Lysis raises a question as to how

[28] As I argued in chapters 1 and 3, and will develop further in the next two chapters, rather than a wholesale rejection of the conventional understanding of φιλία and the concepts that make it up, Socrates' project is a clarifying one. His aim both there and throughout the dialogue is to show what the concepts on which this conventional understanding is based entail when subjected to scrutiny.

the good could reciprocate friendly love to anyone at all.[29] There, he concluded that the wise person not only wins the friendly love of others but also establishes a kinship (οἰκεῖον) with them. This conclusion is important in two respects. In an inconspicuous manner, Socrates very casually equates here being wise with being good and being good with being useful. Only "if you become wise (σοφὸς)," he tells Lysis, "will all people be φίλοι to you and all people be οἰκεῖοι to you," since only through wisdom "will you be useful (χρήσιμος) and good (ἀγαθὸς)" (210d1-3). This explains why we love the good; namely, because they are useful or beneficial on account of their wisdom or knowledge. What it doesn't explain, however, is how wisdom could provide the basis for reciprocal love. What is missing is any indication that if he does become wise — and thus good — Lysis would similarly befriend his parents or anyone else who loves him on account of his wisdom.

Moreover, while Socrates' conversation with Lysis does indicate the possibility of two types of φιλία, neither of them involve reciprocal love between the good or wise. The paradigmatic type of φιλία that Socrates' account appeals to is a type of non-reciprocal or non-mutual friendship between those who are ignorant and those who are wise; an ignorant person will love a wise person, but a wise person will have no reason for returning this love. Yet, as was also seen (211a ff.), by the end of their conversation Socrates appears to have established a friendship with Lysis, a friendship that *does* appear

[29] He will go on to provide further reasons in the rest of the dialogue. At 217a4-6, Socrates will claim that: "the healthy body … has no need of the medical expertise or of assistance; for it is in sufficient condition, so that no one who's in a healthy condition is a friend to the doctor because of his health." A body possessed of its proper good, health, is already self-sufficient, and therefore doesn't need external benefit from the person or thing associated with that type of benefit, i.e. the doctor or the medical expertise. At 218a2-3, Socrates will go on to make a similar claim about the human soul. He claims that the "the ones who are already wise (σοφοὺς), whether these are gods or human beings, no longer love wisdom (μηκέτι φιλοσοφεῖν)." The good, it is asserted, are already as wise as they can be and so perfectly sufficient (ἱκανὸς) unto themselves.

to be reciprocal. However, this φιλία is one that develops between two members who, under the assumptions of the discussion, are both *not wise*.[30]

Socrates' foundational discussion with Lysis, then, appears to support a straightforward reading of Socrates' refutation of the view that the good are friends. Still, one may wonder whether this addresses the source of the alleged absurdity of Socrates' refutation; namely, the idea that good persons are somehow self-sufficient in such a way that prevents them from being friends. On what philosophical basis, if any at all, does Socrates claim that the truly good person, or the one who is wholly wise, would really be lacking in nothing (ὸ οὐδενὸς δεόμενος, 215a7-8)? For example, does the *Lysis* contain the resources to address the familiar charge that the wisdom of the good person is not enough to prevent them from being in want in certain circumstances, e.g. when in poverty or being tortured on the rack?[31]

In fact, however, Socrates' conversation with Lysis also provides the basis for an answer to this worry as well. At the climax of the exhortative stage of his demonstration,[32] Socrates draws a series of conclusions from his prior claims regarding love, wisdom, and happiness. "[With] respect to those things in which we become wise thinkers (φρόνιμοι)," he tells Lysis, not only will everyone entrust matters to them, but in these affairs "we will be free and in control of others" (210a9-b5). He adds one final inference that is important in the present context: that those things we become wise in "will also be ours (ἠμέτερα) for we will benefit (όνησόμεθα) from them" (210b5-6). The relevant idea here is that merely

[30] See again ch. 3, sect. 4.
[31] The broader problem of the self-sufficiency of wisdom or virtue for happiness in ancient Greek ethics is addressed in Nussbaum's (1986) classic. A more recent reassessment of Plato's Socrates' position is offered by Russell (2012). Cf. my discussion of Russell in fns. 35-6 below.
[32] Cf. ch. 3, sect. 1(b).

owning or possessing something in the conventional sense does not properly make it one's own. While the ignorant may acquire as many external goods as possible, they don't properly own them because they don't know how to benefit from them. On Socrates' reasoning, only the wise person can truly call anything their "own" insofar as only they know how to properly use them.[33]

This notion of true or genuine possession through knowledge offers a way of understanding the claim that the good are self-sufficient. As was seen, the good are said to be self-sufficient insofar as they are in want of nothing (215a7-8). One way to understand this lack of want or need is in terms of the true possession of external goods, which consists of the wisdom to know how to use those things correctly so as to properly derive benefit from them.[34] On this understanding of self-sufficiency, what the good person still arguably requires are the appropriate circumstances in which to use these goods wisely and beneficially.[35] Nevertheless, even in circumstances in which they can't actually realize the usual benefit that accrues from using things properly (e.g. in circumstances of being tortured on the rack, in a state of poverty, etc.), the good person is still self-sufficient

[33] Socrates' doesn't use the verb 'to use' (χράομαι) here, but the underlying idea is implied here through the verb 'to benefit' (όνίνημι).

[34] Socrates' point here is complimentary to his argument in the *Euthydemus* (280b ff.) where he argues that if a man has wisdom, then he has no further need of good fortune (εύτυχία), since wisdom is the same as, or leads to, good fortune. There he makes a distinction between possessing good things (κεκτῆσθαι τάγαθα), which makes the good man good, and the correct use of the good things possessed (χρῆσθαι), which makes the good man happy (εύδαίμονα). Socrates points out that the possession of good things is insufficient for happiness and doing well; one must also use these good things rightly, which can only be done under the guidance of wisdom.

[35] Arguably, because the notion of proper use is a controversial one. On some readings of Socrates' arguments in the *Euthydemus*, e.g. Russell (2012), wisdom or the capacity for the proper use of externals allows one to act well in all circumstances: '"The better way to resolve this tension is to treat wisdom in the *Euthydemus* as a skill that does well with whatever is at hand, where those things themselves are neither good nor bad. When Socrates says at 218d that things like health and wealth can be made "greater goods," it seems, he is still speaking about them in everyday terms, whereas at 281e he finally breaks with everyday talk and denies that such things really should be counted as goods at all. In fact, even the Stoics would sometimes call some "indifferent" things "goods" in debate, just because "good" is such a familiar term"' (p. 147).

insofar as they possess the requisite know-how to use things correctly, which is the only way in which such things can properly be said to belong to anyone in the first place.

Regardless of whether this conception of self-sufficiency through true possession is understood in an ideal or merely practical sense,[36] it affords a way of explaining why the good cannot be friends to each other. Even if a good person can be said to potentially lack the circumstances in which to employ such wisdom, such circumstances are not the type of thing that another good person can provide.[37] The only thing that the good person *qua* good can offer another good person is the wisdom to use things correctly; yet it is precisely this wisdom that a good person, by definition, already possesses. On this understanding of self-sufficiency, then, we can make sense of Socrates' claim that the good "neither long for one another in each other's absence…. nor have need for one another in each other's presence[,]" nor, in general, "value each other highly" (215b4-6).

One way to make Socrates' rejection of the possibility that the good can be friends to

[36] Penner and Rowe (2005) argue for a reading on which the type of self-sufficiency here is to be understood in a practical as opposed to ideal sense, i.e. one on which the wise person can be said to have 'practicable self-sufficiency' in that they are able to self-provide the benefits to themselves that are available in non-ideal circumstances (cases in which a virtuous man being tortured on the rack, or a wise man living in abject poverty) they find themselves in, but not 'ideal self-sufficiency,' which would relieve them of these circumstances (pp. 92-3). Penner and Rowe draw on Aristotle's discussion to draw this conceptual distinction. For Aristotle (*NE* I.10), virtue and wisdom are not enough for self-sufficiency, for true self-sufficiency requires the right external circumstances and good fortune. Even if we grant that wisdom is the only thing productive of benefit, and ignorance the only thing productive of harm, there are still times when external circumstances and bad luck can render the wisdom of the good impotent. According to Penner and Rowe, "[for] the Socrates of the *Lysis* … goodness and — maximum, practical — self-sufficiency seem to be made to go together (p. 93). While no doubt compatible with the *Lysis*, nothing in the dialogue itself rules out a reading that presupposes an ideal understanding of self-sufficiency. The question as to whether Plato's Socrates defends a practical or ideal conception would require an appeal to other texts, in particular the *Euthydemus*. Cf. my discussion of Russell's (2012) reading above, fn. 35. The question of these competing interpretations aside, even Penner and Rowe concede that their reading has the appearance of being "too scholastic" (p. 90). As suggested above, I think that we can make sense of Socrates' conception of self-sufficiency in the *Lysis* without an appeal to outside sources, but rather solely on the basis of Socrates' claims about wisdom in his private discussion with Lysis.

[37] If anything, it is only someone who is *not fully good* that might be able to provide such circumstances insofar as they present the opportunity for the good person to benefit someone else. See again Socrates' discussion of the view predicated on unlikes at 215d4-7.

each other more palatable is to understand his criteria for being good as so demanding that in fact there are no ordinary human beings who fulfill them. As I will argue in the next two chapters, the remainder of the dialogue offers good reasons to interpret Socrates in just this way.[38] However, the immediate context already provides hints in this direction.

Immediately following his refutation of the view that the good are friends, Socrates asks Lysis whether, in retrospect, they have been "deceived on the whole" (ὅλῳ τινὶ ἐξαπατώμεθα: 215c3-4).[39] His choice of words here is significant. At the outset of their conversation, Socrates had used the same term, 'τοῦ ὅλος' ('whole'), when attributing the view that likes are friends not only to Homer but also to natural philosophers who "write about nature and the whole (τοῦ ὅλου)" (214b4-5).[40] The term 'whole' might be taken to refer here to the collective interdependence of the different parts of nature. But if the good are self-sufficient in the sense articulated above, i.e. devoid of any need for the benefit that another person could provide, it is difficult to see how they could be a part in a larger network of interdependence. One way to read Socrates' remark that he and the boys have been "deceived on the whole," then, is as calling attention to their prior implicit assumption that a wholly good person might still be part of the whole like any other human being and

[38] The view that there really are no existing persons who are good, and hence self-sufficient and in want of nothing, also becomes explicit in Socrates' subsequent discussion. At 220d4-7 Socrates asks the boys: "is not this the nature of the good — to be loved because of the bad by us who are midway between the bad and the good [τῶν μεταξὺ ὄντων τοῦ κακοῦ τε καὶ τάγαθοῦ], whereas separately and for its own sake it is of no use?" The specifics of this passage will be treated in chapter 6, but what is important for present purposes is that Socrates identifies himself and the boys as "midway between the bad and the good," a category of persons who are neither wholly bad nor good. This class of persons, which will subsequently be termed "the-neither-good-nor-bad" (τὸ μήτε ἀγαθὸν μήτε κακὸν), is comprised of those who have ignorance present in them, but are aware of, and hence not wholly corrupted by, their ignorance. They still desire wisdom, unlike the two other classes, the bad (who are wholly corrupted by their ignorance), and the good (who are already wise). Curzer (2014) seems to ignore this point (pp. 360-1). As Nightingale (1993) explains in her discussion of the *Symposium*, "Socrates insists on the existence of absolute goodness and on the impossibility of the perfect instantiation of this goodness in the human world" (p. 130).

[39] This point is astutely observed by Jennings (2011), pp. 100-1.

[40] Cf. section 2(a), fn. 13 above.

any other part of nature.

By alluding in this way to the good person's god-like independence from the rest of the natural world, Socrates only further emphasizes the interdependence of ordinary mortals. It is no surprise that the very next view he goes on to consider, the view that it is unlikes who are friends, appeals to just such an interdependence between different persons and different parts of nature.

5. The Problems of Convention: Part II

If, then, Socrates' examination of the views of the wise is not intended to serve as an outright rejection of the conventional concept of the φίλος as one predicated on the notion of benefit or utility, what purpose does it serve in the larger argument of the *Lysis*? On my reading, as in the case of his prior discussion with Menexenus concerning the conventional applications of the term 'φίλος', this examination is similarly aimed to show how conventional views of the φίλος are internally inconsistent. The point of this examination, however, is not to abandon these conventional presuppositions outright. Rather, it is to show that a thorough understanding of them points in the direction of a deeper, philosophical understanding of their implications.[41]

In the previous examination with Menexenus, the concepts of utility (χρῆσις) and benefit (ὠφέλεια) and their opposite harm or injustice (ἀδικία) were largely dormant.[42] They arise here in the context of considering canonical views of traditional wisdom that explicitly appeal to the types of properties that make someone loved and thus a friend

[41] My reading of this passage is most similar to that of Glidden (1981), pp. 43-5. As in the case of his (1980) examination of Socrates' conversation with Menexnus, however, Glidden (1981) doesn't fully explore the potential positive upshot of this examination of the views of the wise. For one reading of the implicit lesson here, cf. Bolotin (1979), p, 142. While I agree with Bolotin's general point, he does not connect it to the underlying theme of how conventional views of the φίλος are internally inconsistent.

[42] Although they were implicit in the notion of being a friend and being an enemy at 213a-c. Cf. ch. 4, sect. 4.

(φίλος) or hated and thus an enemy (ἐχθρὸς). However, despite the fact that they explicitly appeal to such notions, Socrates' examination of these views reveals that they cannot explain the very idea of how someone or something can be useful or beneficial, and so a friend, to someone else. The point of his examination is thus to show how such conventional views that take the role of utility or benefit in φιλία for granted nevertheless cannot explain how in fact it plays the fundamental role in friendly relations that it does.

The problem with the view based on likeness is that it is too restrictive. Likeness, whether it is between bad members or good ones, prevents or eliminates the possibility of beneficial relations. On the one hand, the bad cannot be friends with each other because badness itself precludes the property of being beneficial: 'φίλος' and 'πονηρὸς' (wicked/ base, 214b8-c1) are contradictory terms.[43] On the other hand, while goodness entails the property of beneficence, a relationship between two members equally good precludes the possibility of benefit-conference. The good cannot benefit each other insofar as they are alike, for their likeness consists precisely in their capacity to benefit; nor can the good benefit each other insofar as they are good, for their goodness entails a lack of need for being benefited. Contrastingly, the view based on unlikeness is too inclusive. Unlikeness allows for the possibility of beneficial relations; however, it also allows for the possibility of unbeneficial or harmful relations. Since goodness and badness are unlikes *par excellence*, this view would require that the good be friend to the bad, which runs contrary to the golden rule already agreed upon earlier in Socrates' conversation with Menexenus that no one is friend to their enemy nor enemy to their friend.

But as in the case of the previous inquiry with Menexenus, it is precisely the different

[43] The bad also lack the consistency or steadiness (σταθερότης) that is distinctive of being beneficial; cf. 214c6-d1. I will discuss the significance of this quality further in the appendix, sect. 2.

ways in which these options fail that point in the direction of a solution to the problem of discerning the conditions for beneficial relations.[44] Whereas in the case of likeness Socrates showed that *no* likes, insofar as they are alike, are friends, in the case of unlikeness he demonstrates only that *not all* unlikes, insofar as they are unlike, can be friends.[45] What Socrates' refutation rules out once again is the possibility of deriving a general principle, this time on the basis of beneficial relations between unlikes.[46] However, his refutation does not preclude the possibility that some relations between unlikes are indeed genuinely beneficial.

Socrates himself hints at just such a solution at the end of his refutation. Having introduced the view based on unlikes as passed down from the anonymous account-giver, Socrates goes on to relate that this account-giver "extended his argument in an even grander style":

> "... it is between things most opposed (ἐναντιώτατον) that friendship is chiefly to be found, since everything desires (ἐπιθυμεῖν)[47] its opposite, not its like. Thus dry desired wet, cold hot, bitter sweet, sharp blunt, empty fullness, full emptiness, and likewise the rest on the same principle: for the opposite is nourishment (τροφὴν) for its opposite, for like could derive no enjoyment from its like." (215e1-216a1)

This extended account is important in two respects. First, it modifies the terms in which the theory was initially described: instead of "unlikes" (ἀνόμοια), it is now "things most opposites" (ἐναντιωτάτα) that are said to most properly be friends. Second, it also explains the cause of attraction between opposites in terms of a desire for nourishment (τροφὴν)

[44] It is worth noting here that the implied lesson of this discussion complements that of the prior discussion. Whereas there Socrates and Menexenus could not discern a relation of loving that was expansive enough to subsumes *all* cases of actual loving, here Socrates and the boys cannot discern a relation that restrictive enough to subsume *only* actual cases of loving.

[45] Cf. Bolotin (1979), p. 142. See also fn. 41 above.

[46] As was seen in ch. 4, he similarly ruled out the possibility of deriving a general principle for friendly relations on the basis of linguistic usage.

[47] The last time Socrates used this term 'ἐπιθυμεῖν' in the *Lysis* was in his private conversation with Lysis (207e1 ff.). However, this is the first time Socrates use it explicitly to describe the relationship between friends.

that can only be achieved from one's opposite.[48]

Yet it is this explanation that entails the conclusion that runs contrary to the golden rule of conventional φιλία. If it is nourishment through opposition that produces friendship, then it follows that what is bad must be nourishment for what is good and vice versa. Yet as was seen, the idea that the good could be a friend to the bad or the bad to the good is equivalent to the idea that one could be a friend to one's enemy or an enemy to one's friend. The notion of nourishment through opposition preserves reciprocal loving, but it does so at the price of severing a necessary connection between the concept of the friend (φίλος) and the concepts of the good (ἀγαθὸς) and the beneficial (ὠφέλεια). If the good could be a friend to the bad, then the good could regard as a φίλος someone or thing that is inherently harmful (ἄδικος), which again runs contrary to conventional Greek folk psychology.[49]

Importantly, however, this notion of nourishment through opposition does not serve to explain the other instances of friendship between unlikes mentioned at the outset of the account-giver's story; namely, those between the poor person and the rich, the weak person and the strong, and the sick person and the doctor (215d4-7). First, not all of these relationships are strictly speaking between opposites; a sick person is not the opposite of a doctor but rather of a healthy person. Moreover, the notion of nourishment through opposition does not aptly describe the cause of attraction in these cases, for the desire for aid or assistance here is clearly one-sided; the sick person looks to the doctor for assistance but not vice versa. What characterizes these pairs is not the fact that they are opposites in

[48] The view in question here is one that could be attributed to Heraclitus (e.g. fr. 80). Euryximachus attributes a similar view to Heraclitus in his speech in the *Symposium* at 187a: '"Heraclitus intends as much by those perplexing words, "The One at variance with itself is drawn together, like harmony of a bow or lyre"'' (fr. 45).
[49] On why the bad cannot love (φιλεῖν) the good, see the discussion below.

general, but rather opposites in a particular respect. As was seen, the account-giver summed up his examples in terms of knowledge, explaining that "every ignorant person (τὸν μὴ εἰδότα) must cherish (ἀγαπᾶν) the knowledgeable (τὸν εἰδότα) and love (φιλεῖν) them" (215d7).

Still, the question remains unanswered: what exactly distinguishes the poor, weak, and sick person from the bad person *per se*? After all, the bad person is just as in need of assistance from the good as the poor, weak, and sick are in need of assistance from their counterparts. What distinguishes the types of deficiency characteristic of the bad person, e.g. injustice and intemperance (215b4-5), such that unlike the poor, weak, and sick who can befriend their non-deficient counterparts, the bad cannot befriend the good?

The difference appears to be a cognitive one. What characterizes the poor, weak, and sick collectively is a recognition of the type of goods that would rectify their deficiencies.[50] Not only do they need or are dependent upon their corresponding goods, but this need results in a desire for the specific types of aid or assistance represented by these goods. By contrast, what characterizes the unjust or intemperate person is the fact that, while they too are deficient with respect to their corresponding goods, their deficiencies do not result in a desire for these goods. This is not to deny that the bad person may well still interact with the good, nor that through this interaction they aim to procure something they perceive to be good or advantageous to them.[51] However, in failing to recognize their need for the good *per se*, i.e. the quality that makes the good *qua* good, the bad fail to procure what is inherently beneficial about the good.

[50] 'Recognition' should be taken here in a broad sense, on which even the body can recognize in a biological sense what it needs.
[51] Just as anyone else, the bad person seeks what they consider to be beneficial for them. See again ch. 1, sect. 3(b), and ch. 3, sect. 1(b).

This cognitive difference also helps to explain why the relationships between the poor, sick, and weak and their respective goods do not violate the golden rule of conventional φιλία in the same way as the relationship between the bad and the good *per se*. It is not clear whether, on this account, the deficient is beneficial to the non-deficient, e.g. the sick person to the physician, insofar as they provide the relevant opportunity for the non-deficient or good to perform their respective functions.[52] What is clear, at any rate, is that the sick person does not harm the physician. By contrast, the bad genuinely harms the good in two ways. First, insofar as the bad person by definition actively hates or seeks to harm another, they harm the good person as they would anyone else. Second, insofar as the bad person does not seek to benefit from the specific type of good represented by the good person, they fail to provide the relevant opportunity for the latter to perform their function *qua* good.

6. An Erotic Reawakening

Socrates' investigation of the views of the wise thus points to a solution to the problem of accounting for the conditions of a beneficial relation. At the same time, however, it also gives rise to a new problem.

Without explicitly saying so, the first phase of Socrates' extended conversation with the boys (chapters 3 and 4) is one marked by a shift from ordinary presuppositions about conventional, reciprocal φιλία to new principles that lead us back into the territory of ἔρως. As was seen in this chapter, the conditions for a beneficial relation include not only (a) a

[52] This is ultimately Bolotin's view of the specific relationship between the lover the of wisdom and wisdom itself; see esp. (1979), pp. 192-3. For a more general view along the same lines, see Rudebusch (2004), pp. 77-8. For my discussion and ultimate rejection of their views, cf. ch. 7. Of course, the sick person may exemplify a different type of good that the physician, *qua* private citizen, may themselves be in need of. But in such case, the sick person is not beneficial *qua* sick person. For related discussion, cf. ch. 6, sect. 3 and sect. 5(b).

need on the part of one party for the type of good represented by the other party, but also (b) a recognition of this need that manifests itself in the form of a desire for the specific good in question. We have already encountered such a relationship in the prologue of the dialogue, namely, Hippothales' relationship with Socrates. As was seen in ch. 2 (sect. 2), Hippothales was not only in a desperate state of erotic longing, but also aware of his lack of knowledge regarding how to satiate it. This self-awareness is made explicit through his request for Socrates' assistance regarding "the line one should take in conversation, or what he should do, to become endeared (προσφιλὴς) to his favorite (παιδικοῖς)" (206c2-3). Hippothales' request for assistance represents the very type of recognition constitutive of (b) the second condition for a beneficial relation noted above.

In the process of offering the beginnings of an explanation for how a beneficial relationship is possible, however, this investigation also raises a worry about how exactly *reciprocal* relationships can be accounted for within this framework. As was noted in section 1 above, Socrates and the boys' examination of the views of the wise is, from the outset, an examination of views of reciprocal φιλία, i.e. ones that purport to explain why both parties are friends to each other. However, the implicit solution that emerges from this examination to the problem concerning how beneficial — and thus friendly — relations are even possible only accounts for instances of irreciprocal or non-mutual φιλία. In his initial explanation of the account-giver's view, Socrates only explicitly indicates that the beneficiary in such beneficial relations is a friend to the relevant benefactor. In the case of the medical example, it is the ill person who is a friend to the physician. Yet while the ill person loves the doctor for the sake of assistance, there is no similar reason for the physician to be a friend to the ill person *per se*, nor the strong to the weak, and so forth.

As will be seen in the next chapter, Socrates will explicitly take up the question of how to characterize the conditions for the type of recognition involved in irreciprocal or non-mutual beneficial relations. In the process of doing so, I will argue, he will also implicitly take up the problem of how to account for reciprocal relations of benefit as well.

CHAPTER 6

The Limits of Convention (216c-221d)

The climatic final stretch of the *Lysis* begins with a new posture on the part of Socrates and a new view of the friend that is reflective of this posture.

As was seen in Part I (chapter 2, section 1), Socrates assumed at the outset of the dialogue the role of an expert in ἔρως. At the beginning of Part II (chapter 4, section 1), however, he took up a diametrically opposite role: that of a lifelong seeker of 'a good friend', yet one so unsuccessful that he didn't "even know in what way one person becomes a friend of another" (212a4-6). In contrast, Socrates now adopts the role of a diviner (μάντις, 216d5), a role that appears to mediate between his two prior ones.[1] Like his first role, this one is also a divinely-inspired one; but similar to the second, it assumes no pretension of expertise.

His new role is also importantly reflective of the new view of the φίλος that he now advances: that it is what is intermediate or neither-good-nor-bad (τὸ μήτε ἀγαθὸν μήτε κακὸν) that is a friend of the good (216c2-3). While the first part of the dialogue focused on ἔρως and the problem of how to become a successful lover, the second part focused on φιλία and the question of how, and why, someone becomes a friend to another person or thing. Like his new role, Socrates' new thesis draws elements from both previous discussions. For the first time, he explicitly considers a theory of φιλία that is explicitly irreciprocal or non-mutual.[2]

There is widespread consensus that, if a positive view of love, friendship, or both is to

[1] As will be seen in ch. 7, Socrates introduces his final view of the friend as his own hypothesis.
[2] This type of view is anticipated in both his one-on-one conversations with both Lysis and Menexenus (cf. ch. 3, sect. 4; ch, 4, sect. 4).

be found in the *Lysis*, this passage is central to understanding it. However, this is where the consensus ends; perhaps no passage in the dialogue has provoked as many varying interpretations. The reason for this is twofold. As difficult as it is to pin down exactly what Socrates' theory of the φίλος here is about, it is just as difficult to determine why he will eventually reject it.

Central to Socrates' view is the idea that, as intermediate beings, our love for the good is predicated on its remedial properties: its ability to relieve us of the presence of something bad. But as Socrates will go on to argue, our love for the good must ultimately terminate in a love for something that isn't loved for the sake of anything else; friendly love must end with a πρῶτον φίλον or 'first friend'. But what is this first friend and what is the reason for our unconditional love for it?[3]

Upon positing the necessity of the first friend, Socrates goes on to argue that the remedial account of the φίλος cannot properly account for our love of it. He will go on to suggest that this account results in an absurdity, namely, that in loving the first friend, we love it for the sake of the bad. To make matters more obscure, Socrates will additionally contend that there are certain cases in which friendly love is predicated not on any remedial property of the beloved object, but rather merely on the basis of desire (ἐπιθυμία) alone. But what is the source of this apparent absurdity and how, if at all, can desire alone fill the void apparently left open by the remedial view? [4]

[3] Commentators have proposed five main possibilities: (1) the first friend is the idea or form of the Good itself; (2) the first friend is the quality of goodness in anything that people desire for their own sake; (3) the first friend is happiness; (4) the first friend is a person that is valued for their own sake; and (5) the first friend is wisdom. Cf. fn. 30 below.

[4] Not only has the exact nature of Socrates' critique been much disputed but so too has the scope of this critique. Does it amount to a total rejection of the remedial view or merely a partial rejection? Relatedly, commentators have widely disagreed over the relationship between this account and Socrates' final account of the friend as what is οἰκεῖον. I will take up each of these issues below.

I will argue that key to understanding the nature of the remedial account, as well as Socrates' critique of it, is the tacit yet crucial role that knowledge or wisdom plays in the discussion.[5] The remedial account of the φίλος, I will suggest, is in fact an explicit articulation of the conventional understanding of friendly love that Socrates appeals to in his earlier, private conversation with Lysis.[6] This account explains how knowledge or wisdom is not only the ultimate basis of Lysis' relationship with his parents but also of other conventional forms of friendship as well. Conspicuously, however, this view also leaves unaccounted for other instances of φιλία. In particular, it cannot account for the friendship that now exists between Socrates and Lysis. Recognizing this point, I will suggest, provides a key insight into the nature of Socrates' critique of the remedial view of the φίλος; understanding all forms of friendly love calls for a distinction between two types of knowledge or wisdom.

After providing a brief explication of Socrates' mantically-inspired view (sections 1-2), I will go on to explain what I take to be the significance of this view by showing how it both addresses questions left unresolved at earlier stages in the dialogue while at the same time raises a new one regarding the possibility of genuine reciprocity (section 3). I will then examine Socrates' critique of the remedial view (section 4) and argue that, in order to fully understand its significance, one must see how it both appeals to the explicit terms of Socrates' initial conversation with Lysis while also looks beyond it (section 5). I will end

[5] Insofar as I see the role of knowledge or wisdom to be central to this passage, I am in agreement with Penner and Rowe. However, I disagree with their reading of the nature of Socrates' critique of the remedial view. What they miss most of all, I will argue, is the importance to this critique of a distinction that Socrates implicitly appeals to between two different types of knowledge or wisdom: technical knowledge and philosophical wisdom.

[6] Importantly, however, while the remedial view explains how love is possible on the conventional understanding of friendly love, it can only do so by appealing to certain non-conventional notions; in particular, the notion of the intermediate. Cf. sect. 3 below for discussion.

this chapter by identifying what I take to be the conclusion that Plato wishes his readers to draw from Socrates' critique (section 6).

1. The Intermediate as Friend

Having refuted both views of the wise based on similarity and opposition respectively, Socrates proposes a new account based on a notion that lacks any precedent in the dialogue up until this point:

> "But there is still this point to consider; for perhaps we are yet more mistaken, and the friendly has really nothing to do with all this [similarity and opposition]; it may rather be something neither-good-nor-bad (τὸ μήτε ἀγαθὸν μήτε κακὸν) that will prove after all to be what we call friend of the good." (216c1-4)

The fact that the proposed object of friendly love is the good is unsurprising, given the outcome of the examination of the conventional views of the wise in chapter 5.[7] But the category of the neither-good-nor-bad — hereafter, interchangeably the NGNB or 'intermediate' — is a new one that Socrates claims to come to him in the form of a divination.[8] What is also new is the explicitly non-reciprocal nature of this relationship. According to this account, φιλία consists of the neither-good-nor-bad as the subject of

[7] As was seen there (sect. 5), the only possibility for friendship that remained was an asymmetrical relationship between *some* unlikes, in which case one member lacking in a type of good (e.g. wealth, health, strength) could benefit from another member who possessed it.

[8] Socrates' introduction of this new account gives rise to one of the most puzzling passages in the entire dialogue. Upon Socrates' initial statement of the remedial account — that "it may rather be something neither-good-nor-bad that will prove after all to be what we call friend to the good (216c3) — Menexenus responds confusedly by asking, "How do you mean?" (216c3). Socrates offers an explanation, yet one that does more to mystify than to clarify his initial statement. In reply to Menexenus' request for clarification, Socrates claims that he is himself dizzy from the argument and unable to properly answer, offering only that he is "inclined to agree with the ancient proverb that the beautiful is friendly [τὸ καλὸν φίλον εἶναι]" (216c6-7). What suggest this to him is the elusiveness of the friend: "It certainly seems like something soft and smooth and slippery; which is actually why, perhaps, it is easily slipping through our fingers and getting away from us; that is, because it's the sort of thing that does that" (216c7-d2). Upon offering this strange characterization of the φίλος, Socrates subsequently goes on to declare that "the good is beautiful [τάγαθὸν καλὸν εἶναι]" (216d3), and upon gaining Menexenus' agreement, reiterates his main thesis, this time assuming the role of a diviner in stating that "what is neither-good-nor-bad is friendly to what is *beautiful and good* [τοῦ καλοῦ τε καὶ ἀγαθοῦ]" (216d3-4). However, nothing is subsequently made of this expansion of the remedial account to include the beautiful; indeed, the latter notion is dropped in the very next formulation of the remedial account of the φίλος, starting at 216e7-217a2. I will discuss the significance of this passage further in this chapter (sect. 5) below as well as in the appendix (sect. 2).

friendly love (φιλῶν) and the good as the object of that love (φιλούμνεος).

Socrates goes to explain the rationale behind this new account in terms that appeal to his previous examination of the views of the wise. Those views allowed for the possibility of three types of loving relations, each of which was ruled out through the course of the examination: that the bad could be friends, the good could be friends, and that the good and bad could be friends to each other. The failure of those views revealed that in order for loving relations to exist at all, there must be not two but three kinds of entities involved in them: the good and the bad, but also those in-between these two categories, the neither-good-nor-bad (216d5-7). The introduction of this new class allows for two further possibilities: that the neither-good-nor-bad are friends to each other; and that the NGNB is a friend to the good.[9] Yet since likes cannot be friends as the previous examination showed, Socrates immediately notes that "what is of the same sort as the-neither-good-nor-bad won't be friend to the neither-good-nor-bad" (216e6-7).[10] "It follows," he explains, that "to one thing only does one thing alone become a friend: the neither-good-nor-bad to the good" (216e7-217a2).

The addition of this new category, then, allows for a new type of relationship that avoids the problems posed in terms of likeness and opposition. What Socrates has yet to explain is the basis for this new relationship: why does the NGNB love the good? Socrates turns to this task next.

[9] There also exists, theoretically, the possibility that the NGNB could be friend with the bad. But as the previous examination showed, the bad cannot be friends with anyone or thing; cf. ch. 5, sect. 2(a).

[10] Socrates does not spell out his rationale here, but we can infer that, as in the case of other likes, the reason the NGNB cannot be friends with each other is because they cannot benefit each other. Part of the task of my interpretation in the remainder of this dissertation is to show how in fact Plato implicit points to a way in which NGNB uniquely *can* benefit each other.

2. Socrates' Divinely-Inspired Account

Central to Socrates' reasoning for this new view that the intermediate is a friend to the good is the notion of presence (παρουσία). He articulates this concept in two stages: first in terms of the human body; and second as it applies to the soul.

According to Socrates, "whatever is neither-good-nor-bad becomes a friend (φίλον) of the good (τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ) because of the presence of an evil (διὰ κακοῦ παρουσίαν)" (217b4-6). What is novel about Socrates' new account is the notion of corruption or contamination that is implied in it; because the intermediate is in-between the good and the bad, its constitution can be affected by the presence of evils. This influence in turn determines what the intermediate desires and loves and explains why it can be a friend to the good.

Socrates draws a distinction between two types of presence: what we may refer to as partial and complete presence.[11] As he explains: "some things are themselves of such a sort as whatever it is that is present (οἷον ἅν ᾖ τὸ παρόν), while others are not" (217c3-4). He illustrates this distinction through the analogy of hair color. If Menexenus' youthful hair was covered with white powder, then whiteness would be present (παρόν) to his hair in a partial sense; his hair would be white due to the powder, but it still wouldn't be truly or inherently white. However, when Menexenus becomes an old man and his hair turns white naturally, then whiteness will be present to his hair in a complete sense: his hair will be truly or inherently white.

Just as in the hair example, Socrates explains, "what is neither-good-nor-bad is sometimes not yet bad (μήπω κακὸν) though an evil is present (κακοῦ παρόντος)" (217e4-6). It is this partial presence of the bad that makes the NGNB desire (ἐπιθυμίας), and hence

[11] Socrates does not offer actual terms for 'partial' and 'complete' presence but rather explains their difference through appeal to the analogy of dyed and naturally greying hair.

become a friend to, the good (217e7-8). Similar to the case of aged hair, however, "there are times when [the NGNB] has already become such [i.e. bad]" (217e4-5). When the presence of bad in the NGNB becomes complete, its presence deprives (ἀποστερεῖ) the intermediate entity of its desire (ἐπιθυμίας) for, and thus its friendship (φιλίας) with, the good (217e8-9).

Socrates first offers as an example of the effect of the presence of evil upon an intermediate entity the case of the human body (217a3-b4).[12] A human body (σῶμα) is NGNB because while it can alternate between good and bad states of health, it generally exists in some intermediary condition. A body that comes into possession of its proper good, health (ὑγίειαν, 217a6) is one that approaches or approximates a good instance of its kind. One that is completely overtaken by the opposite of health, disease (νόσον, 217a7), becomes in turn a bad instance of its kind. But there remains a third state that is applicable: when disease is present to a body, but the body is not completely overtaken by the disease.

On this account of the φίλος, Socrates goes on to explain, the healthy body (ὑγιαῖνον σῶμα), one that is already a good thing of its kind, cannot be a friend to the medical art (ἰατρικῆς) because its condition is sufficient (ἱκανῶς) and thus has no want of or need for its benefit (ὠφελίας) (217a4-6). For the opposite reason, the body that has completely succumb to disease cannot a friend to the medical art either, for it has already become fully corrupted (217b6-c1). Thus, it is the ill body (κάμνων), one that is afflicted with disease but

[12] Socrates draws this analogy both in personal and impersonal terms: in terms of a sick person's friendship for a doctor and a sick body's desire for medicine (217a3-b1). The fact that Socrates sees these relations to be interchangeable here indicates that the type of desire in question is not defined in terms of conscious psychological states but rather teleological relations. As Glidden (1981) writes: "In both cases the condition dictates and explains the agent's behavior, why the patient goes to his physician, why the φίλος falls in love or at least seeks out some object. … [One] can describe the body's desire in a number of ways — as wanting its medicine, for instance, or desiring what will be good for it, as being φίλον toward such a good. All such descriptions are true, not because that is the way the patient conceives it, but because that is the body's condition" (pp. 51-2).

has not yet completely succumb to it, which is alone a friend to the medical art; such a body "is compelled because of disease to welcome and to love (φιλεῖν) the medical art" (217b3-4).

Socrates offers a parallel explanation in terms of the human soul (ψυχὴν). Like a sick body, it is a soul affected by the partial presence of ignorance (ἄγνοια) that makes it a friend to its proper good, wisdom.

> "It is for just these reasons that we would say that those who are already wise, too, no longer love wisdom (μηκέτι φιλοσοφεῖν), whether these are gods or human beings; nor, again, would we say that those people love wisdom who have ignorance (ἄγνοιαν) in such a way as to be bad, for no person who is bad and ignorant loves wisdom. There remain, then, those who have this bad thing, ignorance, yet are not yet ignorant (ἀγνώμονες) or stupid (ἀμαθεῖς) by it, but still think themselves not to know what they don't know." (218a2-b1)

The wise (σοφοὺς) — whether there are any mortals among them or not[13] — are by definition already wise and thus free of ignorance. Since they exist in a permanent state of wisdom, they no longer desire or love it. By the same token, those "who have ignorance in such a way as to be bad" with respect to wisdom cannot be friends to wisdom either; for their ignorance has deprived them of the desire for, and so the possibility of friendship with, wisdom.[14] The only possible philosophers or "friends to wisdom" (φιλοσοφοῦσιν) are those whose souls are afflicted only by the partial presence of ignorance such that, although ignorant, they are still capable of learning. It is this partial presence of ignorance that, at the same time, constitutes an awareness of one's intermediate state and brings one into a friendship with wisdom.

Similar to the manner in which he began his account, Socrates concludes it by once

[13] See again my discussion in ch. 5, sect. 3, for reasons why Socrates does not intend any mortals to be included in the category of the good.
[14] Are there any bad people? Socrates is less transparent on this issue than the question of whether there are any fully good people. I discuss this issue further in ch. 7, sect. 2, and the appendix, sect. 3.

again appealing to the principles of similarity and opposition. Neither can those who are alike, the completely wise, be friends with each other anymore than those who are opposite, the completely ignorant and the wise. Only those who are in-between or intermediary with respect to wisdom can desire, and hence become friends to, the wise or wisdom itself.

3. The Remedial Model of Friendship

Socrates' mantically-inspired account offers a new model of the φίλος. Rather than a model based on attraction through likeness or nourishment through opposition, on this view the friend (φιλούμενος) is a cure or remedy for our impairments as intermediate beings.

Building on the previous two discussions (chapters 4 and 5), this new account can be seen to further substantiate the largely implicit line of argument that Socrates advanced in his demonstration with Lysis (ch. 3). In particular, it does so in three ways. First, it continues to elucidate the moral psychology of love on which that argument rested. Second, it provides an explanation for what otherwise appeared to be that argument's logically specious conclusion. And finally, this new remedial account of the φίλος suggests an answer to the question that remained outstanding at the conclusion of Socrates and Lysis' private conversation, namely, what serves as the basis of their newfound friendship? Yet, at the same time as this account of the friend seems to offer such an answer to this last question, it also raises a new puzzle about the very possibility of reciprocal φιλία.

First, this account articulates explicitly for the first time in the dialogue how a relationship of benefit is possible within the conceptual framework of the conventional understanding of the φίλος. On that understanding, someone or thing is a φίλος to someone

else if they benefit and are thus good to that person. As Socrates' new account here illustrates, a relation of benefit is one of inequality between a subject of friendly love that needs and thus desires a good that only the object of that friendly love can provide. Moreover, as Socrates' examples above corroborate, the good in question is, or at least derives from, some type of knowledge or wisdom. In articulating how this relation of benefit works on the remedial account of the friend Socrates does so in terms of the medical art (ἰατρικὴς), which was one of the main types of knowledge that Socrates appealed to in his initial discussion with Lysis in the context of offering examples of conventional φιλία.[15]

Yet while the remedial account of the friend explains how beneficial relations are possible within the conventional framework, it does so by introducing a decidedly unconventional notion: the notion of the intermediate. As was seen in the last chapter, the reason that this framework could not explain relations of benefit is that it relied on a too constrictive ontology. The notion of an intermediate class of beings, along with the related notion of presence, enables Socrates to offer a uniform account of the φίλος in terms of the traditionally associated concepts of the beneficial (ὠφελήσιμος) and useful (χρήσιμος).

[15] As was seen in ch. 3, sect. 1(b), Socrates draws the inference that, if Lysis becomes wise, not only his father but indeed everyone will entrust their affairs to him. Just like his father, so too Lysis' neighbors and the Athenians at large will observe "the same rule" (ὸ αὐτὸς ὅρος) if they consider him to be wiser in the relevant matters than themselves. Socrates concludes this series of examples by claiming that the Great King of Persia himself would entrust to Socrates and Lysis the care of his own son "if he assumed that [Socrates and Lysis] were skilled in the medical art [ἠμᾶς δέ υε εί ὑπολαμβάνοι ἰατρικοὺς εἶναι]" (210a2). The remedial account of the φίλος also helps to address the first problem that Socrates' conversation with Lysis appeared to pose; cf. ch. 3, sect. 2 and sect. 5. The problem, it appeared there, was that Socrates' generalization on the basis of the initial example about Lysis' father seemed to amount to a gross overstep in reasoning. What ultimately validates Socrates' generalization is a point only made explicit through his articulation of the remedial account. Implied on the conventional conception of φιλία is the understanding that loving relations are objective relations of benefit, that is, relations that make no necessary appeal to conscious feelings or psychological states. Cf. 12 above.

In addition to elucidating the connection between these concepts, Socrates' new account sheds light on his private conversation with Lysis in another way. Socrates concluded his demonstration by drawing an inference that, while protreptic in motivation, appeared to be explicable only in terms of an eristic strategy on his own part.[16] Upon exhorting Lysis by showing him that people only love (φλοῦντες) those who are wise, Socrates capped off his argument by claiming to have shown that Lysis is unwise and hence unloved. Yet this claim seemed to rely on a dubious inference. Socrates inferred from the fact that Lysis lacks understanding in important matters (μέγα φρονεῖν) that the boy must therefore be foolish (ἄφρων). In doing so, he appeared to elide an important epistemological category, namely, that someone could possess some knowledge without being wise.

Yet, as was seen in the previous section, it is just such a category that Socrates' new remedial account appeals to in explaining the soul's friendship to its own proper good. The difference between those intermediate beings whose souls are completely corrupted and those whose souls are only partially so is a recognition on the part of the latter group of their own respective state of ignorance. It is this recognition that not only forestalls their complete ignorance but also compels them to love wisdom. In light of this new threefold distinction, one might retrospectively see Socrates as having had good reason to end his demonstration with Lysis in the very way that he did.[17] The aim of Socrates' argument there, after all, was to *initiate* the boy into the group of lovers of wisdom. In order for Lysis

[16] Cf. ch. 3, sect. 1(c) and sect. 2.
[17] It is at this stage of the *Lysis*' discussion that we can see perhaps most clearly the point of Socrates' earlier exhortation that Lysis reflect on their initial conversation and repeat it with Menexenus with the hindsight acquired through the remainder of the conversation (211a9-b2).

to be so initiated, Socrates needed to get him to recognize his own prior ignorance.[18] It was only by coming to be aware of his prior state that Lysis could become aware of "the things [he did] not know" (218b1) and subsequently develop a desire for wisdom. At *that* juncture, Lysis could not yet be included among this middle group — not *before* having been fully subjected to Socrates' protreptic treatment.

This new remedial account of the φίλος, then, helps to explicate not only the underlying premises but also the logic of Socrates' foundational demonstration with Lysis. In fact, however, it does even more. Its introduction of an intermediate category of lovers of wisdom offers a potential solution to a puzzle that Socrates' initial demonstration left outstanding: a puzzle concerning how to account for Socrates and Lysis' new friendship. Central to the argument of Socrates' demonstration was the premise that we love only those who are wise. Yet, as was seen (ch. 3, sect. 4), Lysis is shown not to be wise and Socrates himself never claims to be either.[19] How, then, can they have become friends to one another by the conversation's end as Socrates seems to suggest (211a)? For the first time, we appear to be presented with a possible answer to this question. It is their shared intermediate status as lovers of wisdom (φιλοσοφοῦσιν, 218b2) that serves as the basis of

[18] Socrates' rejoices over Lysis newfound "taste for philosophy" 213d7; cf. my discussion of this passage in ch. 4, sect. 4. A question might arise here: if Lysis only enters this middle ground of lovers of wisdom by coming to an awareness of his own ignorance through Socrates' refutation, does that entail that he previously belonged to the group of completely corrupted souls, i.e. people who are not only ignorant but unaware of their ignorance? The answer is presumably 'no', for Socrates seems to conceive of complete corruption as a final state that a person cannot recover or extricate oneself from, I will discuss what room Socrates' trifold dichotomy of entities leaves for intellectual and moral progress in ch. 7, sect. 4, and the appendix, sect. 3.

[19] The fact that both Lysis and Socrates can't be wise is implicitly reinforced in the context of Socrates' explanation of the remedial view. There is an important disanalogy between Socrates' otherwise complementary explanations of what constitutes the respective goods of the body and the soul. The physically sick person is say to become friends with *either* the medical expertise or with its possessor, the doctor. But this interchangeability is absence in the second case; the ignorant but not fully ignorant person is said to be in love only with wisdom. The reason, we can infer, is that there simply are no experts in the latter case. Cf. Penner and Rowe, pp. 117-18.

their new friendship. Through Lysis' initiation into the group of lovers of wisdom by Socrates, both the old man and the boy acquire a friend in the other in the process.

Despite the fact that it seems to provide the basis for an explanation of how reciprocal friendship is possible, however, the remedial account in fact precludes its very possibility. For, as was seen at the conclusion of his explanation of this account (cf. section 2 above), Socrates rejected the notion that intermediate lovers could be friends to one another *qua* intermediates[20] on the same grounds that he rejected all friendships based on likeness: that likes have no benefit to offer one another (218c3-5). How then are we supposed to understand the type of friendship that clearly exists between Socrates and Lysis? The beginning of an answer to this question, I will argue, lies in Socrates' own subsequent critique of the remedial account of the friend. In particular, it lies in the conception of the good — and, by extension, of wisdom — that this view presupposes.

4. Socrates' Critique

Socrates initially expresses delight upon completing his account, like that of "a hunter, at the satisfaction of getting hold of what I was hunting for" (218c4-5). However, he is quickly overcome by a sense of misgiving:

> "…. a most strange suspicion came over me that the conclusion to which we had agreed was not true… I am afraid, I replied, that in our search concerning the friend we have come upon false arguments that are no better than a set of braggarts (ἀνθρώποις ἀλαζόσιν)." (218c5-8)[21]

Socrates goes on to identify two problems with this conception of the φίλος. The first problem concerns the object of φιλία. The second concerns the cause of φιλία, which

[20] Importantly, this does not prohibit two people from being friends to each other *qua* other descriptions, e.g. as a doctor or lawyer. Someone who is a doctor may be a friend with someone who is a lawyer, for each may benefit one another in their own respective ways. But this does not constitute a reciprocal friendship. For such a relationship to obtain, two individuals must love each other on the basis of some shared quality or characteristic.

[21] Socrates' metaphor harkens back to his initial criticism of Hippothales. Cf. ch. 1, fn. 52, n. (v).

Socrates diagnoses in two stages.

(a) The 'First Friend'

Socrates first argues that this account of the φίλος results in an infinite regress, one that can only be halted by positing an ultimate or final object of all friendly love, what he will refer to as a "first friend" (πρῶτον φίλον, 219d1). What this in turn reveals, according to Socrates, is that there is only one real friend in the fullest sense of the word, and that all others are but images (εἴδωλα) or approximations of it.

He begins by pointing out that his initial explanation of the remedial account of the φίλος largely left implicit the structure of desire on this account. On that explanation, the NGNB was said to be a friend to the good "because of something" (διὰ τι), namely, the bad (218c1). However, Socrates now explains, when someone is a friend to someone (or something) else, it must not only be because of something, i.e. the bad, but also "for the sake of something" (ἕνεκά του) (218d8-9). To illustrate, he returns to the paradigmatic medical example. The sick person is friend of the doctor, or the body of the medical art, *because of* disease (διὰ νόσον) and *for the sake of* health (ἕνεκα ὑγιείας) (218e4-5). What becomes clear, then, is that the NGNB is friend to the good both because of *an enemy* (διὰ τὸ ἐχθρὸν), such as disease, and for the sake of *a friend* (ἕνεκα φίλου), such as health.

Once this structure of desire on the remedial account is made explicit, however, it becomes evident that it results in an infinite regress. For if medicine is loved by the body for the sake of health, health too must be a friend because of something (διὰ τι) and for the sake of something (ἕνεκά του). Yet if a friend (φιλούμενος) is in every case loved for the sake of another friend, there will always be a further friend for whose sake a friend is loved.

According to Socrates, there is only one way to escape this regress: by positing what he

calls a 'first friend'.

> '"Now are we not bound to weary ourselves with going on in this way, unless we can arrive at some first principle (ἀρχήν) which will not keep leading us on from one friend to another, but will reach the one original friend (πρῶτον φίλον) for whose sake all the other things can be said to be friends?"
> "We must."
> "So you see what I am afraid of —that all the other things, which we cited as friends for the sake of that one thing, may be deceiving (ἐξαπατᾷ) us like so many images (εἴδωλα) of it, while that original thing is truly a friend."' (219c5-d4)

Positing this first friend brings to a halt the regress but it also reveals another potential problem. It now turns out that all non-terminal friends, i.e. things that are friends for the sake of another friend, may not be real friends at all but "many images" (εἴδωλα) of the one original or first friend. As Socrates goes on to explain, when we call such things as medicine or even health 'friends', "we find ourselves uttering a mere phrase" (ῥήματι φαινόμεθα λέγοντες αὐτό, 220b1).[22] The only thing that is really (τῷ ὄντι) a friend is that ultimate object in which "all these so-called friendships terminate" or that which is "a friend for the sake of nothing else that is a friend" (220b4-5).

So far, then, Socrates' reassessment has revealed that there is in fact only a single friend in the full sense, the πρῶτον φίλον, which is the true object of all friendly love and desire. This notion precludes the question, 'for the sake of what is this friend loved?' For the first friend is, by definition, not loved for the sake of any other friend, since it is that friend for the sake of which everything else is desired. But the question can still be asked here: why, or because of what, is the πρῶτον φίλον desired at all?

(b) Socrates' First Thought Experiment

Socrates' answer this question reveals a further, much more serious problem with the

[22] Socrates offers two analogies here to explain how we value the first friend (219d-220a): first, in terms of the way that a father values his son above anything else; and second, the way in which we value good or silver not for its own sake but for the sake of what we want to do or buy with it. I discuss these analogies below, fn. 31.

remedial account of the φίλος: this account entails that, just like those apparent 'images' of it, even the first friend can really only be loved as instrumentally valuable in its own right.

Socrates now points out that if the only true friend is the first friend, or that which is a friend for the sake of no further friend, then the first friend must also be the good.[23] But, as his initial explanation of this account revealed, "it is because of the bad (διὰ τὸ κακὸν) that the good is loved" (220b8). Together, Socrates suggests, these two claims lead to a disturbing result: that the first friend or the good is loved *for the sake of the bad*, or more precisely, for the sake of ridding us of evils.

To demonstrate this, he first proposes a thought experiment that again appeals to the medical analogy. He asks the boys to consider:

> "If [the good and the neither-good-nor-bad] remained after evil had been cleared away, so that it [i.e. evil] had no contact with anything, whether body or soul or any of the other things that we count as neither bad nor good in themselves, would the result be that good would be of no use to us, but would have become quite a useless thing? For if there were nothing left to harm us, we should feel no want of any assistance; and thus we should have to face the fact that it was because of the bad that we felt such friendly affection for the good, since the good is a cure (φαρμάκον) for the bad, while the bad is a disease, and if there's no disease there is no need for a cure." (220c2-d4)

If, as this analogy entails, we may conceive of the bad as a disease (τὸ δὲ κακὸν νόσημα), and the good as a cure or remedy for the bad (ὡς φάρμακον ὂν τοῦ), then there would seem to be no further need for the remedy that is the good if the disease were cured. On this thought experiment, then, it appears to be "the nature of the good … to be loved because of the bad (δὶα κακὸν) by us who are midway between the bad and the good, *whereas separately and for its own sake it is of no use* (αὐτὸ δ'ἐαυτοῦ ἕνεκα οὐδεμίεαν χρείαν ἔχει)" (220d4-7).

[23] If, as the remedial account claims, the intermediate is a friend to the good, then whatever is the good must also be the first friend.

Yet, if this is the case, Socrates goes on to argue, we are faced with a most puzzling conclusion, namely:

> "… that friend to us (τὸ ἄρα φίλον ἡμῖν), to which all the others terminate (ἐκεῖνο είς ὅ ἑτελεύτα πάντα τὰ ἄλλα) [i.e. the first friend] … [is] a friend to us *for the sake of an enemy* (ἐχθροῦ ἕνεκα), and if the enemy should be removed we have no friend, it seems, anymore." (220d8-e5)

But how can we love the first friend *for the sake of an enemy* (ἐχθροῦ ἕνεκα)? Having explicitly distinguished the "because of" (διὰ τι) and the "for the sake of" (ἕνεκά του) relations above (sect. 4a), Socrates now appears to conflate them, suggesting that the πρῶτον φίλον is loved *both* because of (διά) the bad *and* for the sake of (ἕνεκά) the bad.[24]

Spelled out more carefully, however, Socrates' thought experiment gives rise to a substantial problem for the remedial account of the friend. Up until this point in his critique, this account of the φίλος has given rise to two possible varieties of friends. The first type (i) consists of friends that are loved because of some bad (and hence enemy) and for the sake of some further good (and thus friend). These φίλα include such things as medicine and health.[25] Φίλα of this sort ultimately terminate in a first friend that is unique insofar as (ii) it alone is a friend that is loved because of bad and thus inimical things but not for the sake of any further friend.

Yet, if the above thought experiment is correct that the good is only of use as a cure for the bad, then while the final good or first friend is not a friend for the sake of any further friend, it is also not a friend for the sake of itself either.[26] As Socrates states quite carefully, if this thought experiment holds, then "it is the nature of the good to be loved…. because of

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[24] As a result, one may well think that Socrates is guilty of committing a verbal fallacy, either as an unconscious mistake or purposefully so as to confuse the boys. See Lamb's comment in the Loeb translation, p. 60. However, both Shorey (1930), pp. 380-383, and Penner and Rowe (2005), p. 134, argue, I think correctly, that Socrates is making a substantial inference. See my discussion that follows.
[25] See again sect. 4(a) above.
[26] Socrates is careful not to say that it is loved for its own sake anywhere in the dialogue.

the bad (δὶα κακὸν) by us who are midway between the bad and the good, *whereas separately and for its own sake it is of no use* (αὐτὸ δ᾽ἐαυτοῦ ἕνεκα οὐδεμίεαν χρείαν ἔχει)" (220d4-7; see again p. 189). If the good or first friend is not a friend for its own sake, then it appears that it can only be a friend to us for the sake of relieving us of those things that are bad.

Rather than relying on a mere verbal fallacy, then, Socrates' thought experiment exposes a serious problem: if the first friend is loved solely as a cure for the bad, then it would effectively cease to be a first friend, for it would not be loved for its own sake but rather only for the extrinsic results that accrue from it.

(c) Socrates' Second Thought Experiment

While the previous two phases of Socrates' critique were hardly straightforward, their underlying points are discernable. Socrates now enters the final stage of his critique, one that is even more difficult to decipher. He extends his previous thought experiment by considering whether, in addition to the bad, there might be another cause of loving and being loved. If there is, then clearly the presence of the bad and its eradication cannot be the only basis for friendship. Socrates goes on to suggest that one such cause is desire (ἐπιθυμία) itself.

He first considers a strategy of moving from the counterfactual to the actual: if every bad thing were to disappear from the world, he asks, might there not still remain some things that are the objects of friendly love? Perhaps even in the absence of all evil, he suggests, there might still exist desires like hunger and thirst so long as there existed human beings and "other living things" (τἆλλα ζῷα, 221a2), the only difference being that these desires, unlike ours, couldn't result in harm. But Socrates quickly rejects this strategy.

Before the boys can answer, he declares the question to be "ridiculous" (γελοῖον, 221a4).

Instead, he adopts the opposite strategy: by considering the nature of our desires in the actual world, Socrates suggests, we might be able to draw conclusions about a counterfactual world in which evil is absent:

> '"Yet this, at all events, we do know – that, as things are now, it is possible for a man to feel hunger as a hurt, and also to be benefited by it. You agree?"
> "Certainly."
> "And so, when a man feels thirst or any other desire of the sort, he may sometimes desire beneficially, sometimes desire harmfully, and sometimes desire neither [beneficially nor harmfully] [ἐνίοτε μὲν ὠφελίμως ἐπιθυμεῖν, ἐνίοτε δὲ βλαβερῶς, ἐνίοτε δὲ μηδέτερα]."' (221a5-b3)

Socrates seems to suggest that, while all desires are attended by some kind of pain or longing, there is a distinction between the types of objects that can be longed for. Some such desires are beneficial insofar as they result in the obtaining of some good, possibly as a remedy to some evil.[27] Other desires, those misguided by a mistaken sense of the good, are harmful insofar as they result in some evil (e.g. addiction or bodily harm). Yet, according to Socrates, there is still a further class of desires, those that are neither beneficial nor harmful. In such cases, our desires do not stem from some need to relieve ourselves from some evil, whether it be real (as in the case of the first or 'beneficial' type of desires) or merely perceived (as in the case of the second or 'harmful' type of desires).

But what kinds of desire does Socrates have in mind? Aside from alluding to some types of hunger and thirst, he does not elaborate. Instead, he draws an abrupt and unexpected conclusion; for the first time in the dialogue, he brings together ἔρως and φιλία. Out of the blue, he now adds that it is impossible "for one who desires (ἐπιθυμοῦντα) and loves passionately (ἐρῶντα), not to love as a friend (φιλεῖν) that which he desires or loves

[27] Are the 'beneficial' desires that Socrates has in mind here beneficial in a remedial sense, i.e. beneficial insofar as they remedy some preexisting evil, or in some way that doesn't rely on the presence of some preexisting evil? The text is silent here.

passionately" (221b7-8).

5. Interpreting Socrates' Critique

What is Socrates' critique of the remedial model of the φίλος intended to demonstrate? Contrary to some commentators, Socrates' introduction of the first friend is not intended to invalidate all other subordinate friendly relations.[28] In fact, the notion of the first friend explains why we value such subordinate friends in the first place. Rather, the problem lies in the fact that the remedial model can only explain our love for the first friend in the very same terms as our love for subordinate φίλα, that is, as a cure or remedy for the bad. The problem is that this type of explanation does not seem to aptly capture our relationship to the first friend; we love it not simply as a cure for some evil but for its own intrinsic worth.

The final part of Socrates' thought experiment seems intent to show that there in fact do exist some desires that cannot be explained in a remedial fashion. One might think, then, that this points the way to offering a satisfying explanation for our love of the first friend or good. But the desires that Socrates appeals to here are the meanest of sorts, appetitive desires for food, drink, and sex. How, if at all, are these desires meant to shed light on our relation to the first friend or good?[29] In order to address this question, two prior questions must first be answered concerning the initial two stages of Socrates' critique. First, what in fact is the first friend that Socrates discusses at length but never explicitly identifies? And second, once we have an idea of this first friend in view, what limitations exactly does the remedial account impose upon our relation to it?

[28] The *locus classicus* of this reading is Vlastos (1973), pp. 6-11; for an updated reading along similar lines, see Curzer (2014), pp. 361-63.
[29] If the *aporia* is to contain Socrates' own view, then the good will return as the object of friendly love. Cf. ch. 7, sect. 2.

(a) What is the First Friend?

What are we to understand as fulfilling the role of the first friend? Perhaps no other question to which the *Lysis* gives rise has provoked as many varying answers.[30] However, both the immediate context of Socrates' exposition of the remedial view of the φίλος and the broader context of the dialogue as a whole suggest that the implicit focus of his attention is, once again, wisdom.[31]

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[30] Commentators have proposed five main possibilities: (1) the first friend is the idea or form of the Good itself (Glazer 1935; Levin 1971; Peters 2001); (2) the first friend is the quality of goodness in anything that that people desire for their own sake (Versenyi 1975; Robinson 1986; Gonzalez 1995; Reshotko 1997); (3) the first friend is happiness (Irwin 1986; Price 1990); (4) the first friend is a person that is valued for their own sake (Curzer 2014); and (5) the first friend is wisdom (Schoplick 1968; Kahn 1997; Penner and Rowe 2005). As a number of commentators have noted beginning with Vlastos (1973), pp. 6-11, there is little textual evidence to support the idea that Socrates has in mind here (1) the idea of the Good. It is worth noting that these possibilities are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, Penner and Rowe argue that the first friend is wisdom, but that wisdom is good for the sake of happiness. They see wisdom as a high-order instrumental good, such that by possessing it one is practically sure to attain happiness (pp. 148-53). While I agree that happiness and wisdom are interrelated in the *Lysis*, I will argue that the relationship between them crucially hinges upon a distinction between technical and philosophical wisdom. The latter type, unlike the former, is intrinsically valuable.

[31] Socrates offers two analogies to illustrate the relationship between "friends in speech only" or non-final friends, and "what is truly a friend" or the first friend. According to the first analogy, our love of the first friend is like a father's love for his son (219d6-e7). The father "values his son above all possessions" (219d6-7). If his son had drunk hemlock, the father would also value what he believed (ἡγεῖσθαι) to be an antidote for it, e.g. wine and the relevant vessel for drinking it. But he would still draw a distinction in value between the wine and the cup and his son, recognizing the wine and cup as "for the sake of something" and his son as "that something for whose sake all the rest are applied" (219e7-220a1). Similarly, Socrates suggests that while we often say we value money, "nothing could be further from the truth" (220a1-6). In truth, we value only whatever we want to buy with it. On the line of interpretation according to which the first friend is the quality of goodness in anything that people desire for their own sake (cf. fn. 30, n. 2), the fact that Socrates offers multiple examples suggest that the first friend is just any of the many persons or things that we might be thought of as desiring for their own sake (Versenyi 1975, pp. 192-3; Robinson 1986, p. 175). However, there are strong reasons to reject this approach. These 'examples' are treated by Socrates as analogies. Throughout these examples, Socrates is careful not to use the term 'φιλεῖν', resorting rather to such expressions as 'περὶ πολλοῦ ποιῆται' (make much of, 219δ5-6), 'περὶ παντὸς ποιούμεθα' (make everything of, 220a4), and 'προτιμᾷ' (prefer, 219d7). It is only after appealing to these analogies in these ways that he then goes on to ask the boys, "[then] does the same account apply to the friend (φίλον) as well? (220a6-7). Cf. further Penner and Rowe, pp. 140-43.

According to Curzer (2014), the notion of the 'first friend' refers to *people*, in particular, those who are befriended for their own sake rather than for their utility to the befriender. However, as Curzer acknowledges, "Socrates stretches the term 'friend' to cover not only people, but everything desired" (p. 365). To account for this discrepancy between his strict reading and what the text allows, Curzer proposes that "[for] Plato and sophisticated readers, 'first friends' may be understood either this way or as non-persons which are intrinsically, rather than merely instrumentally valuable to the befrienders. Plato signals this by switching to vague talk about 'friendly things' when talking about first friends. Claims about 'things' in the *Lysis* may be understood on two levels: literally, they are about friendships with people; metaphorically, they

As was seen in his initial explanation of the remedial account (section 2 above), Socrates explains the respective goods of both the body and soul in terms of different types of knowledge or wisdom. The friend to the partially diseased body, or one that has yet to be fully corrupted by illness, is the medical expertise. Similarly, the friend to the partially ignorant soul, one that has yet to be fully corrupted by its ignorance, is wisdom or σοφία. Moreover, without explicitly saying so, Socrates suggests that there is a hierarchy with respect to these two types of knowledge or wisdom. When he goes on to articulate the structure of desire on the remedial view, which entails the necessity of positing a first friend as the ultimate object of all friendly love, he returns to the medical art (or doctor) as an example of a non-terminal friend, i.e. one that is loved for the sake of another, superordinate φίλος, in this case, health. Yet, as he points out, health too must be a friend for the sake of some further, unspecified friend.

But if neither the medical art nor its product, health, can be the first friend, could it be philosophical wisdom, σοφία? Yet couldn't philosophical wisdom also be for the sake of something further, namely, happiness (εὐδαιμονία)? While Socrates is almost entirely silent on the topic of happiness throughout the dialogue, it does figure importantly in his private conversation with Lysis. At the very beginning of their conversation, Lysis readily agrees to Socrates' inference that, if his parents love him as Lysis claims they do, then they must want him to be as happy as possible (207d5-7). But as Socrates goes on to show by

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are about 'friendship' with things. At the literal level, first friends are people befriended for their own sake, while at the metaphorical level, the first friend of NGNB people is wisdom, befriended to cure character flaws. Combine these claims. If I befriend Izzy for her sake, then I ultimately want what is good for Izzy. If Izzy is NGNB, then gaining wisdom is good for her. So if Izzy is literally my first friend, then wisdom for Izzy is metaphorically my first friend. My ultimate motivation for befriending Izzy is Izzy's wisdom, not solely mine." He goes on to try to clarify: "When persons are first friends, they are non-means, and the friendship is reciprocal. When non-persons are first friends, they are means, and the friendship is non-reciprocal" (p. 366, fn. 38). However, this reading stretches the limits of the text to the point where it requires us to conceive of some 'first friends' as instrumentally valuable.

the end of their conversation (210d8), in fact Lysis' parents can only love their son, and Lysis can only be happy, if he becomes wise. What exactly, then, is the relationship between happiness and wisdom?

(b) Socrates' Refutation

It is this question, on my reading, that Socrates wants us to consider in his first thought experiment (220b6-e5). The point of that experiment is to show that the remedial account of the friend cannot properly express the relationship between happiness and wisdom. In particular, this account cannot explain how wisdom could possess anything more than an instrumental role in one's happiness.[32]

As was seen (sect. 4b), what Socrates' first thought experiment shows is that, on the remedial view of the friend, the first friend can only be conceived as having extrinsic value. While it may be the case that it is not pursued for the sake of any other φίλα, "separately and for its own sake it is of no use (αὑτὸ δ᾽ἐαυτοῦ ἕνεκα οὐδεμίαν χρείαν ἔχει)" (220d6-7) aside from alleviating us from the bad. As this thought experiment makes explicit, on the remedial view the first friend can only be conceived as analogous to the medical art, which serves as a remedy for bodily ills (φαρμάκον, 220d4). If, then, the first friend is in fact a type of knowledge or wisdom, given the constraints of the remedial view, this knowledge or wisdom can only be conceived of along the lines of a τέχνη or technical expertise. Yet, as Socrates' own prior explanation of the necessity for positing a first friend in the first place

[32] On another approach, the argument is a *reductio ad absurdum*. Cf. Penner and Rowe, pp. 133-39, and Bordt (1998), pp. 209-19. On this reading, the result that the good be desired because of the bad effectively deprives the good of any content but the absence of bad, i.e. make the good the privation of bad. "On such a picture of the good, the bad (i.e. evil) is the only real thing: where we speak of 'the good', we are just speaking of the absence of bad. The good can be dropped from the ontology" (Penner and Rowe, pp. 134-35). Since this result is obviously absurd, the remedial account must be false, on this reading. This reading might seem compelling give the supposition that Plato thinks that goodness is necessarily loved, regardless of the presence of badness. Yet while it may be correct to assume this in some contexts, it cannot the case here; for in this passage, the very topic of discussion is the conditions of the lovability of goodness. Cf. Joose (2010), p. 287.

showed, no technical expertise (whether it be medicine or any other) can serve the role of the first friend; for, we can always ask, 'for the sake of what is it a friend?' Socrates' first thought experiment merely reinforces this point. While we may not be able to find a further friend for the sake of which we pursue the first friend, the remedial view cannot provide an account of what might be valuable about the first friend other than its remedial qualities. In the end, it cannot explain why we might love the first friend for its own sake.[33]

This same instrumental understanding of wisdom is also present in Socrates' private conversation with Lysis (ch. 3).[34] There, Socrates showed the boy that his parents will only love him, and in general people will only love others, to the extent that he or anyone else is wise. What is also presupposed in this conversation is the fact that people love the wise because of the usefulness of the latter's wisdom toward serving some further ends. Wisdom, in this conversation, is broadly understood as a means to achieving the types of benefits associated with the respective τέχναι. Socrates' demonstration draws on such areas of expertise as chariot-driving (208a2-3), controlling mules (208b2-3), spinning wool (208d2-5), and household management (209d1-3). It culminates with an appeal to the medical art (210a2-8) when Socrates suggests that even the Great King, should he consider

[33] A worry might arise here: if the point of Socrates' critique is to show that, on the remedial account, technical forms of knowledge like medicine can only be of instrumental value to us, the same problem might be thought to arise for philosophical wisdom (σοφία). After all, in his initial explanation of this account Socrates explains that, just as the body desires medicine as a cure for physical illness, so too the soul desires wisdom as a cure for its equivalent form of psychic illness, ignorance (218a2-b3). Isn't philosophical wisdom, then, also loved only instrumentally, for the sake of ridding us of ignorance? However, it is precisely on the heels of articulating the remedial view as it applies to the soul that Socrates expresses his doubt about this view as a whole (218c4-d4). In other words, it is precisely his recognition that we do not relate to philosophical wisdom in this way that leads to his critique of the remedial view.

[34] The dialogue begins with a subtle allusion to the central importance of the topic of knowledge of wisdom. Hippothales informs Socrates that the newly formed palaestra in which the conversation will take place is run by Miccus, whom Socrates refers to as a 'qualified professional' (ἱκανὸς σοφιστὴς, 204a6-7). Whether this designation is meant to refer to his philosophical or sophistic expertise (Penner and Rowe's view, p. 4, fn. 2) or some technical expertise, particularly wrestling (Nails 2003 view, p. 174), it is unclear from the text. We are told later at 207d3 that Menexenus had been requested by the wrestling master (παιδοτρίβην), but not told whether this is Miccus himself.

Socrates and Lysis experts in medicine, would entrust the two of them with the very well-being of his own son.

In the same way that Socrates articulates people's love of wisdom here in terms of the external benefits it provides, he also attempts to motivate Lysis to pursue wisdom by appealing to the external rewards that it engenders:

> '"This is how it is, then," I said, "my friend, Lysis; with respect to the things about which we become wise thinkers (φρόνιμοι) everyone will turn things over to us, Greeks or non-Greeks, men or women, and in these areas we will do what we want (βουλώμεθα), and no one will willingly (ἑκὼν) get in our way, but we will be free and in control of others, and these things will be ours (ἡμέτερά), for we will benefit from them."' (210ba9-b6)

What is desirable about becoming a wise thinker on this account offered here is the fact that it will result in everyone "turning things over to us," and the ability to "do what we want (βουλώμεθα)," with "no one…. willingly (ἑκὼν) getting in our way" such that "we will be free and in control of others."

We can reimagine the problem posed by his first thought experiment aimed to show that the remedial account cannot explain our love of the first friend or good, but this time in the context of Socrates' initial discussion with Lysis. The thought experiment was intended to show that, if all evils were eliminated from the world, then on a remedial understanding we would have no further use for the good. Similarly, if Lysis was not prevented by his parents from doing whatever he wanted to do in the first place, then there would be no need or motivation for him to pursue wisdom.

This reading also reveals why, although it can account for some types of φιλία, the remedial account of the friend cannot account for reciprocal φιλία.[35] What the remedial view presupposes is an inequality between two parties, at least one of which has some type

[35] See again sect. 3 of this chapter above.

of knowledge or expertise that the other stands to benefit from. What this view cannot account for is a type of friendship that presupposes an equality between the two members. While two members may indeed love each other on the remedial view, they can only love each other for different qualities that they find useful or beneficial. In this sense, then, friendly love understood in a remedial sense is always a form of irreciprocal love.[36]

Understanding Socrates' initial thought experiment in terms of the relationship between technical knowledge and happiness not only allows us to make sense of it as a critique of the remedial account of the φίλος, then, but it also illuminates the manner in which Socrates appeals to conventional norms of φιλία in his initial conversation with Lysis. However, if this reading is correct, then it also appears to pose a problem for my larger interpretation of the dialogue as a whole. In ch. 3, I argued that Socrates' private conversation with Lysis served as a foundation for the view of the φίλος that would be developed over the course of the remainder of the dialogue. Yet, if Socrates' critique of the remedial view is also applicable to the view of the φίλος developed in his earlier conversation with Lysis, then the view of the φίλος espoused there would appear to fall short of providing a template for the rest of the dialogue, if indeed the work is meant to provide a positive account of the friend at its conclusion.

[36] Xenophon offers an illustrative example of this type of friendship in *Mem.* II.9. There, Socrates offers his wealthy friend Kriton advice on how deal with a common problem faced by men of his status: συκοφάνται or blackmailers, i.e. people who take the rich to court on dubious charges in order to be paid off. Socrates advises Kriton to befriend Archedemos, a poor but honest politician, who successfully repels the συκοφάνται. Through their newfound relationship, both men acquire different types of benefit: Kriton is relieved of his legal annoyances, while Archedemos prospers financially from the good reputation that he subsequently acquires. Aristotle refers to these types of relationships as 'unequal friendships' *EN* 8.3 1156a6 ff. For further discussion, see Dillon (2004), pp. 78-83.

This problem has a particular urgency given Socrates' exhortation earlier at 211a9-b2.[37] There, as was discussed in chapter 3, section 5, he tells Lysis to repeat the argument of his demonstration on Menexenus at a later date, with the hindsight of the remainder of the discussion that follows. But if the view of the friend advocated for there is fundamentally flawed, how are the boys supposed to learn about our relationship to wisdom by reflecting back on that conversation in light of the rest of the discussion? Are they supposed to look back and see that the view developed there of friendly love based on wisdom is in fact untrue?

(c) Desire

To answer these questions, I suggest that we must turn to Socrates' second thought experiment and its role in his larger critique of the remedial view of the friend. As was seen above (sect. 4c), this experiment is intended to show that there are some friendly relations that are not caused by the presence of some bad or evil; rather, such relations are motivated by desire (ἐπιθυμία) itself. As was also seen, however, Socrates provides little in the way of elucidation, except for a cryptic identification of φιλία with ἔρως and ἐπιθυμία (221b7-8). In order to properly understand the point of this thought experiment, on my reading, we must turn back to Socrates' relationship with Lysis, particularly as it is founded through their initial conversation. It is this relationship, I will argue, that provides the key to understanding our relation to philosophical wisdom and, through it, our reciprocal friendly relations with each other.

As was seen, this experiment aimed to show that there are some desires that are

[37] See again ch. 3, sect. 5, above. One answer here is that Socrates' must start somewhere with Lysis, in particular, with the boy's own presuppositions about friendship. But this doesn't mean this initial starting point can't serve as the basis for a reevaluation of those presuppositions.

"neither beneficial nor harmful" (221a7-b3) in the sense that they do not aim to alleviate us from some evil, whether real or perceived [see again sect. 4(c) above]. Socrates mentions here certain types of thirst or hunger but does not elaborate on them. Instead, he draws the conclusion that among such desires is erotic love.

If the dialogue itself provides any example that fits these criteria, it comes through an understanding of Socrates' friendly love towards Lysis. Despite his explicit appeal to the remedial model of the φίλος in the context of their conversation, Socrates' affection towards Lysis constitutes an exception to that model. As was seen in chapter 2, Socrates' walk from the Academy to the Lyceum in pursuit of καλοὶ (beautiful boys) hardly seems to be a quest for the type of friend that will help to rid him of some evils.[38] In fact, as was seen in his discussion with Lysis, the boy is practically useless in all technical areas that might be beneficial in this way. Yet Socrates still seeks out Lysis' friendship — insofar as he seeks out the friendship of καλοὶ in general — and sees it to be worth pursuing regardless of the boy's usefulness to him in any technical sense.

Like Hippothales, Socrates is an ἐραστὴς and ἔρως was seen to be one of the desires that isn't reliant on the presence of some bad or evil. But what is the difference between Hippothales and Socrates' love for Lysis, and how might discerning this difference help to answer the question as to how we might be a friend to wisdom for its own sake rather than merely for its extrinsic or instrumental value? One possible answer — although Plato barely hints at it in the *Lysis* — is that our love for philosophical wisdom is motivated not

[38] This is one place where I agree in part with Curzer (2014), who writes: "Could Socrates be a NGNB person, befriending Lysis in order to use him as an aid to inquiry? No, if Socrates were merely seeking a study-buddy, he would not waste his time on Lysis. Young, unsophisticated interlocutors can offer charming naivete and fresh perspectives, but these do not compensate for experience and training. Socrates would choose someone more sophisticated, and thus more useful than Lysis" (p. 361).

by a need to eliminate some evil but rather by its beauty alone.[39] Like Hippothales, Socrates is attracted to Lysis' beauty.[40] But unlike Hippothales, Socrates is not attracted primarily to his attractive exterior but to the beauty of his philosophically inclined soul.[41]

To see the full implications of Socrates' desire account of the φίλος we will have to turn to his final account of the friend in chapter 7. But one thing is already clear at this stage. If there is a type of friendly love that is not dependent on eliminating some evil, then it is possible that such a love could serve as the basis for reciprocal φιλία. What made the remedial view incapable of accounting for such a possibility was the fact that it prevented two people from loving each other for the same qualities (cf. section 3 above). But if there is a type of love that appeals to a different principle — whether it is beauty or something related — then it may also be possible for this to serve as the basis for genuine reciprocal attraction.

6. A Rejection of Convention?

Socrates concludes the final stage of his refutation on a note of astonishment:

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[39] See again fn. 8 above. As was noted there, Socrates' introduction of the remedial account gives rise to one of the most puzzling passages in the dialogue. Responding to Menexenus' request for clarification, Socrates engages in a strange interlude in which he appeals to the relation between the good and the beautiful: he first suggests that he is "inclined to agree with the ancient proverb that the beautiful is friendly [τὸ καλὸν φίλον εἶναι]" (216c6-7); he subsequently goes on to declare that "the good is beautiful [τάγαθὸν καλὸν εἶναι]" (216d3); finally, upon gaining Menexenus' agreement, he reiterates his main thesis, this time assuming the role of a diviner in stating that "what is neither good nor bad is friendly to what is *beautiful and good* [τοῦ καλοῦ τε καὶ ἀγαθοῦ]" (216d3-4). However, nothing is subsequently made of this expansion of the remedial account to include the beautiful; indeed, the latter notion is dropped in the very next formulation of the remedial account of the φίλος, starting at 216e7-217a2. Whatever else might be the point of this interlude, the context implies that Socrates is proposing a relation of identify between the good and the beautiful. One might think his claim that "the good is beautiful" (216d3) is the more restricted claim that everything good is beautiful while still allowing for some beautiful things that aren't good. However, the fact that he treats the good and the beautiful as identical is shown by the fact that, from 216e7 on, he treats the object of love exclusively in terms of the good. If something other than an identity relation were in question, it would be possible for us to love things either for their goodness or their beauty. Cf. Penner and Rowe, pp. 102-3. I will discuss this passage in full in the appendix, sect. 2.

[40] Socrates recounts the first time he laid eyes on Lysis: "he stood among the boys and youths with a garland on his head, a distinguished figure, worth taking note of not only for his beauty [τὸ καλὸς], but also for his beauty-and-goodness [καλὸς τε κάγαθὸς]" (206e9-207a3).

[41] I will discuss Hippothales' motivations in more detail in ch. 7, sect. 4, and the appendix, sect. 3.

> "Can it really be the case, as we were saying just now, that desire is the cause of friendship, and that what desires is friend to that thing it desires and at such time that it desires it, and that what we were previously saying being a friend was, was some kind of nonsense, like a poem that's been badly put together?" (221d2-6)[42]

As was seen, however, Socrates hasn't completely rejected the remedial view altogether.[43] In fact, it is still a valid way of describing many or even most types of φιλία, which rely on a technical or instrumental conception of knowledge and the benefit or utility that it offers. He has only refuted it as it might apply to certain desires including, most importantly, the desire for philosophical wisdom. But what is the cause of these desires? It is this question that Socrates will go on to address in the final discussion of the dialogue.

[42] Socrates' metaphor here once again harkens back to he and Ctesippus' initial criticism of Hippothales. Cf. ch. 1, fn. 52, n. vi.

[43] In this respect, I disagree with those readings that see the final view of the φίλος as what is οἰκεῖον, developed in the dialogue's final movement, as meant to completely replace the remedial view. Cf. Bordt (1998), pp. 209-19, Rudebusch (2004), p. 68, Penner and Rowe, pp. 153-56. Rather, on my reading, the final view of the friend as what belongs or is akin is meant to supplement the remedial view insofar as it can account for those type of φιλία that the remedial view cannot explain. Cf. Bolotin (1979), pp. 174-76; Pangle (2001), pp. 313-15, 321-23. However, I think Bolotin mischaracterizes (a) 'the enemy' as our defective selves and (b) our love of remedial goods on the one hand, and our love for what is οἰκεῖον to us on the other, in terms of a contrast between selfish and selfless love; cf. Bolotin (1982), pp. 423-429. Pangle's reading also fails insofar as she sees the account of the φίλος as what is οἰκεῖον as independent of any understanding of our relationship to the good. On my reading, it is this account that in fact explains our relationship the good *per se*.

CHAPTER 7

A Socratic Departure (221e-223b)

The *Lysis*' denouement marks a return to the motifs that shaped the dialogue's opening. Without explicitly demarcating an end to his prior critique of the remedial view, Socrates seamlessly launches into the final account of the φίλος to be considered, the view that the friend is what is οἰκεῖον or "belongs" to us (221e3).[1] Making the introduction of this account even more conspicuous is the fact that, unlike those previous, it goes unpreceded by any allusion to its source.[2] As quickly becomes apparent, however, the source can be none other than Socrates himself. For Socrates will soon reprise the role that he last assumed in his private conversation with Lysis (ch. 3): that of expert in erotic matters. Moreover, for the first and only time since the prologue, we are made aware of whom Socrates' target audience has been all along: the reticent Hippothales. As he now goes on to explain with the young cadet in the background, it is precisely on the basis of this view of the friend as what is οἰκεῖον that we can explain whom a genuine ἐραστὴς or lover is and how such a lover is necessarily loved in return by his beloved.[3]

And yet despite Socrates' reprisal of the role of erotic expert, there is an important difference between his earlier conversation with Lysis and his concluding discussion with both boys here. Whereas Socrates' conversation with Lysis did not end in *aporia* — the one

[1] As Penner and Rowe point out (2005, p. 157, fn. 1), this passage runs continuous with the previous inquiry into the remedial view. This transition between these two passages, or lack thereof, has contributed to much of the disagreement among commentators over whether this final view is even meant to be considered as an independent or self-standing account of the φίλος. Cf. fn. 4 below.

[2] There is no reference here to his status as an unrequired lover of a 'good friend' such as preceded his one-on-one conversation with Menxenus (cf. ch. 4, sect. 1); absent too is any appeal to the views of the wise or any pretense of drawing on divine inspiration in the way that he did in the case of the remedial view of the friend (cf. ch. 5, sect. 2 and ch. 6, sect. 1).

[3] One might surmise from this that in fact Socrates had never relinquished this role at all and his many personae and appeal to other sources of authority along the way have simply been a part of his larger demonstration for the young cadet Hippothales. This is one aspect of Penner and Rowe reading the prologue and its relation to the rest of the dialogue (p. 189) that I am in agreement with.

and only time in the dialogue — this discussion, like the previous three, does. If Socrates is to be seen here as completing a larger demonstration for Hippothales in how a lover should talk to their beloved, can that demonstration really be seen as successful if it ends without any explicit resolution? In short, what are we to make of Socrates' parting words to Lysis and Menexenus that, despite the fact that they are now friends, they have been unable to discover what the friend is (223b3-8)?

Socrates' final account of the φίλος has not been without its detractors. While some see it as a superfluous capstone to what is argumentatively interesting in the dialogue, others see it as one more constructive yet flawed attempt to define the friend.[4] Even among commentators who see Socrates to implicitly endorse an account of the φίλος at the dialogue's end, there is substantial disagreement over what this endorsement signifies. To some, this endorsement is no different than that found in other 'Socratic' or 'definitional' dialogues. To others, however, this endorsement itself contains a tacit acknowledgement of the limits to which the notion of the φίλος can be subjected to philosophical analysis. To these commentators, Socrates' parting words have been taken to suggest that philosophical inquiry is inherently inadequate for explaining the nature of the friend in such a way that it must be supplemented by the dramatic enactment of friendship among the dialogue's personae.[5]

[4] Some commentators have regarded it as so unimportant philosophical as to simply leave out any discussion of it (e.g. Annas 1977, Carr 1996). Others have acknowledged it only to dismiss it, such as Price (1989), who writes: "this new suggestion comes to the scene abruptly and departs in failure" (p. 8). Similar in this respect are Guthrie (1975), p. 149; Levin (1971), pp. 532-54; and Kahn (1996), pp. 290-91. While Bordt (1998, pp. 141-43) notes the connection between the last definition and Socrates introductory conversation with Lysis, he ultimately concludes that this final account ends in failure. Cf. fn. 21 below.

[5] Commentators who espouse some form of this reading include Versenyi (1975), Gadamer (1980), Tindale (1984), Tessitore (1990), and Gonzalez (1995). Those who take issue with this line of interpretation include Wolfsdorf (2008) and Penner and Rowe (2005). Cf. sect. 3 below for discussion.

I will argue that, while this debate is instructive, both sides of it fail to accurately characterize the significance of the dialogue's final *aporia*. Rather than focusing on the question of whether or not the friend can be defined, I will suggest that the key to understanding Socrates' final lesson is to view it in the context of the theme of transitions with which the dialogue began. In the case of both conventional ἔρως and φιλία, it is the understanding of 'transition' presupposed on these conceptions that result in their associated problems. Socrates' identification of philosophical wisdom with the notion of the akin reveals what was problematic about the understanding of 'transition' or 'success' that these conceptions presupposed in the first place.

I will begin by examining Socrates' new account of the φίλος, on the basis of which he offers a new explanation of reciprocal φιλία (section 1). Central to understanding both, I will argue, is the implicit role played by philosophical wisdom. Turning to the final *aporia* itself, I will offer a reading that reinforces my interpretation of the passage as a whole (section 2). After explaining how the *aporia* has given rise to a debate over the very definability of the φίλος, I will argue that the terms of this debate overlook what is significant about the final *aporia* to the dialogue's main concerns (section 3). I will then show how this reading sheds light on Lysis and Hippothales' relationship (section 4) before ending with some final considerations of what it means to love another philosophically in the *Lysis* (section 5).

1. The 'Οἰκεῖον' as Object of Desire and Socrates' Inference

Offering hardly a hint of transition from his prior critique of the remedial account of the friend (cf. fn. 1 above), Socrates goes on to make a series of startlingly quick yet consequential claims. Upon offering a new account of the φίλος, for the first and only time

he draws together both ἔρως and φιλία in the context of interpersonal relationships.

(a) Socrates' New Definition

As was seen in the second phase of his previous thought experiment (ch. 6, sect. 4c), Socrates proposed that, contrary to the remedial account of the φίλος, some desires could be the cause of at least some forms of φιλία on their own without being precipitated by the presence of any preexisting evil.[6] Yet, this proposal left two questions unanswered. First, what then is the impetus for such desires, if it is not the presence of some evils or ailments? And second, what is the object (or objects) of these desires, if not some corresponding remedial good meant to alleviate such evils?

Socrates now goes on to explain that the cause of such desires is some lack or need (τὸ ἐνδεὲς) in us, the desiring agents, and that the object of these desires is that which is akin or belongs (τὸ οἰκεῖον) to us, given the type of agents that we are.

> '"But, I said, that which desires (τό ἐπιθυμοῦν), desires whatever it's lacking (ἐνδεὲς). Isn't that so?"
> "Yes."
> "And what is lacking (τὸ ἐνδεὲς), in that case, is friend of whatever it's lacking (τὸ ἐνδεὲς ἄρα φίλον ἐκείνου οὗ ἄν ἐνδεὲς ᾖ)."
> "It seems so to me."
> "And what becomes lacking is whatever has something taken away from it (οὗ ἄν τι ἀφαιρῆται)."
> "Of course."
> "It's what belongs to us (τοῦ οἰκείου), then, that's actually the object of love (ἔρως) and friendship (φιλία) and desire (ἐπιθυμία), as it appears, Menexenus and Lysis."' (221d6-e5)

Unlike the remedial view, which identified three essential entities in any relation of friendly love — an intermediate lover, some evil understood to be the cause of love, and some good that is the object of love and cure for the respective bad — this new view accounts for love

[6] As was suggested at the end of ch. 6, sect. 6, Socrates' critique of the remedial view does not amount to a wholesale rejection of that view as a way of explaining some or even most of our friendly desires.

in terms of only one such entity: the akin.[7]

The desiring agent desires that which is akin to them because that object is lacking or needed. But what is lacking or needed in such a case is not a remedy or cure that can only be specified by reference to some evil, but rather something that has been taken away or deprived from us (ἀφαίρεμα). The relevant sense of lack or deprivation here is not deprivation in an actual sense, i.e. deprivation of something we actually previously possessed, but rather deprivation in a normative sense; what we lack is something that we need, or should have, even though we have never previously possessed it, at least fully. Insofar as what has been deprived from us is something that belongs to us, what is οἰκεῖον to us is something that belongs to us in a normative sense as well, like physical faculties that we should have but for whatever reason don't in fact possess.

The point is that there is a qualitative difference between the things that we lack that belong to us and the things we may lack in a remedial sense.[8] The things that we lack in a remedial sense are contingent and circumstantial. Should an agent's predicament change,

[7] This does not mean, of course, that the categorical distinction between the good, bad, and NGNB is therefore rejected. As will be seen in sect. 2 below, the good and the NGNB constitute the two types of entities involved in genuine οἰκεῖον relations.

[8] Even if Socrates' distinction is valid, one might wonder to what extent the line of reasoning by which Socrates derives this definition of the friend as 'what belongs to us' from a consideration of the notion of desire relies on a series of conventional associations rather than any logical or conceptual necessity. Joose (2010) contends that "[here,] as in the case of the appeals to poets and proverbs, Socrates is exploiting common associations with love in order to find a concept that can explain it, rather than following an argument to its logical conclusion" (p. 289; cf. Rowe 2000, 213, fn. 31; Bordt 1998, p. 222). According to this reading, Socrates obfuscates between two different senses of lack; one normative and one actual. In order for the line of reasoning to work, 'lack' (τὸ ἐνδεὲς) here must be understood in terms of 'needing', not simply in terms of 'not having'. However, the worry is that in the inferential step from 'lack' to 'taken away' or 'deprived' (ἀφαιρῆται), lack can only be understood in the sense of actual deprivation. Yet this reading fails to consider the sense of 'taken away' or 'deprived' appealed to elsewhere in the *Lysis*. Earlier, Socrates and the boys agree that the presence of the bad can 'deprive' (ἀποστερεῖ, 217e8) an intermediate being of its desire for the good, thus resulting in such a being ultimately becoming bad. But it not necessarily the case that, at some earlier time, bad people themselves were neither-good-nor-bad and subsequently lost their desire for the good. Socrates' point is a normative one; just as you can desire and lack something that you never previously possessed, so too you can be deprived of something that you never previous possessed. Cf. Rudebusch (2004), pp. 70-1; Penner and Rowe (2005), pp. 158-59.

e.g. their state of health or financial situation, these things may no longer be desirable to them. At best, remedial goods can only remove impediments to our ability to pursue further goods. In the case of those things we lack that are οἰκεῖα to us, however, our desires for them are not contingent on our circumstances in the same way. We do not desire them to eliminate some evil, even if that evil is merely the absence of the things that belong to us. Unlike remedial goods, our love for those things that are οἰκεῖα to us cannot vary due to the ordinary changing circumstances of everyday human life.[9] Οἰκεῖα goods are ones that are good for us in themselves or for their own sake, and our need and desire for them is a permanent and defining feature of the types of beings that we are. As a result, to conceive of a happy life that does not include these things would amount to conceiving of a type of happiness that could only belong to an alien (ἀλλότριον) form of life.

We are now in a position to see why what is truly οἰκεῖον to us — and what is the object of ἔρως, φιλία, and ἐπιθυμία (221b7-8; 221e3-4) — can only be a philosophical type of wisdom or knowledge.[10] As was seen in the last chapter (sect. 4b), Socrates' critique of the remedial account of the friend showed that it can only explain our desire for the first friend or good *per se* in instrumental terms. While it may be the case that we do not desire this good for the sake of any further friend, on the remedial view it can still only have value to us as a remedy, i.e. as a means to eliminating some evil. As a result, the only type of

[9] Cf. Pangle (2001), pp. 316-17, who draws on Aristotle *EN* 1152b33-1153a6, 1154b15-20, and 1173b13-20.
[10] The view that friendly love is a desire for what is akin is of course reminiscent of Aristophanes' account of ἔρως in the *Symposium* (189c-193d), which Socrates takes issue with in his own speech there (205e). Aristophanes explains that erotic love is a desire for "our other half," a human being with which we originally formed a whole before we were split into two by Zeus. For Aristophanes, then, erotic love is a desire for wholeness. However, Socrates argues that the fact that something belongs to one is an insufficient reason for loving it; what is required is that it is good for one (205e). It follows from this that we would terminate our relationship with what is 'ours' if we considered it to be harmful, and indeed "men are prepared to have their own feet and hands cut off if they feel these belongings are harmful" (205e4-6). The upshot of Socrates' critique in the *Symposium* is that the primary object of our desire is the good; not the akin. However, this does not rule out that what in fact is akin to us *is* the good. Indeed, this is just what Socrates argues in the *Lysis*.

knowledge that can serve as the first friend on this view is a type of technical knowledge, the type that serves an instrumental role relative to happiness.

This understanding of philosophical wisdom as the good or first friend is largely implicit in Socrates' earlier, foundational conversation with Lysis (ch. 3). To the extent that it is present there at all, it is not through the explicit terms of his demonstration but rather through his engagement with the boy himself.[11] However, Socrates does provide one subtle clue concerning the first friend at the very end of their conversation. There, for the first and only time in that discussion, Socrates alludes to the notion of philosophical wisdom (σοφία) and ties it to the notion of what is οἰκεῖον.[12]

> "If, therefore, you become wise (σοφὸς), my boy, everyone will be friends to you and everyone will belong (οἰκεῖοι) to you – for you will be useful and good – but if you do not, neither anyone else nor your father will be friends to you, nor your mother or others belong to you." (210d1-4)

The generality of Socrates' claim here is striking. It may simply be intended to encapsulate the central point of his demonstration with Lysis, namely, that in order to be befriended, one must be knowledgeable or wise. Yet Socrates may already here be alluding to a deeper point about the ultimate object of love that distinguishes it from all other forms of knowledge. As was seen in chapter 6, section 5(b), technical forms of knowledge could form the basis of particular types of φιλία, ones in which their members had different skills that they could offer to their counterparts. But what Socrates suggests here is different; if Lysis becomes σοφὸς, then *all people* will be friends and οἰκεῖοι to him. Philosophical wisdom is

[11] As was suggested at in ch. 6, sect. 5(c).

[12] As was noted in ch. 3 (fn.11), Socrates curiously avoids using a single term to refer to the state that Lysis must achieve in order to receive the trust of others. One explanation for why Socrates resists using a uniform term for the cognitive state in question is that the argument of the *Lysis* hinges on an important distinction between two types of knowledge or wisdom: practical or technical knowledge (τέχνη) and wisdom of a distinctive philosophical kind (σοφία). The fact that the latter term appears at the climatic end of Socrates' demonstration with Lysis suggests that this distinction is one that the rest of the dialogue will develop.

the one thing that we all desire collectively, despite the different contingent circumstances that dictate our lives. We desire it not to remedy particular aspects of our lives, but because it belongs to us as the intermediate beings that we are.[13]

(b) Ἔρως, Φιλία, and the Conclusion of Socrates' Demonstration

In addition to explaining the cause and object of at least some of our desires for friendship — and most notably our desire for and love of philosophical wisdom — Socrates now proclaims that this account of the friend as what is οἰκεῖον also explains how reciprocal love is possible.

> '"The two of you, in that case, if you're friends to each other, in some way naturally belong (φύσει οἰκεῖοι) to one another."
> "No doubt about it," they said together.
> "And if, then, any one person desires (ἐπιθυμεῖ) any other, my boys, or loves passionately (ἐρᾷ) for him, he wouldn't ever desire (ἐπεθύμει), or love passionately (ἤρα), or love as a friend (ἐφίλει), if he didn't actually in some way belong (οἰκεῖός) to the one he is feeling passion for (τῷ ἐρωμένω), either in relation to the soul or in relation to some characteristic (ἦθος) or ways (τρόπους) or form (εἶδος) of the soul."
> "Absolutely," Menexenus said; but Lysis was silent.
> "Very well. What naturally belongs to us (φύσει οἰκεῖον), then – it's become evident to us that it's necessary for us to love it."
> "It seems so," he [Menexenus?] said.
> "It's necessary (ἀναγκαῖον), in that case, for the genuine lover (γνησίῳ ἐραστῇ), one who's not pretending (προσποιήτῳ), to be loved (φιλεῖσθαι) by his favorite."
> At that Lysis and Menexenus barely somehow nodded assent, while Hippothales, due to his pleasure, turned all sorts of colors.' (221e5-222b2)

Socrates identifies two types of reciprocal οἰκεῖοι relationships: one between mutual φίλοι and one between a ἐραστὴς and his παιδικὰ. He first appeals to Lysis and Menexenus' own friendship as a putative example of the first type. If in fact they are friends as they assume themselves to be, Socrates suggests, then they must naturally belong (φύσει οἰκεῖον) to

[13] What is the relation between technical forms of knowledge and philosophical wisdom? I explore this issue in the appendix, sect. 2. The fact that all people love, and are οἰκεῖοι, to philosophical wisdom does not of course entail that everyone loves it in the right way. Many people may still think that technical forms of knowledge are more valuable without recognizing the true object of their desire.

each other.[14] Similarly, he goes on to claim, a lover who genuinely (γνησίος) loves his beloved must also necessarily be loved (ἀναγκαῖον φιλεῖσθαι) by the latter in return.

But what warrants such inferences? Since Socrates' introduction of the remedial account of the friend (216c1 ff.), the discussion has focused solely on an irreciprocal conception of φιλία, one on which friendly love presupposes a non-symmetrical relation of benefit.[15] Here, without any explicit justification, Socrates contends that the view of the φίλος as what is οἰκεῖον, which was seen above to account for cases of *irreciprocal* φιλία left out by the remedial view, can also explain how *reciprocal* φιλία is possible as well. In the absence of an explicit story, Socrates' attempt to bridge this gap between irreciprical and reciprocal friendship appears to rely on an equivocation between two different senses of the adjective 'οἰκεῖος': the neuter 'οἰκεῖον' on the one hand, which applies to *an object* that belongs to us (i.e. the good), and the masculine 'οἰκεῖος' on the other hand, which applies to *a person* with whom we are akin.[16] The problem is that while the first sense implies an irreciprocal notion of 'belonging', on which an object belongs to its owner but not vice versa, the second sense implies a reciprocal understanding of 'belonging', on which

[14] According to Bolotin, the conditional nature of Socrates' claim is meant to cast doubt in the careful reader about the status of Lysis and Menexenus' friendship after all: "it is clear that this moment marks a rupture in the friendship of Mexenus and Lysis" (1979, p. 187). For similar views, see Pangle (2001), pp. 321-22; Curzer (2014), pp. 367-68. However, the condition can also just be read to straightforwardly state the conditions for genuine φιλία. There is no other indication that Plato's concern here is to cast doubt on the boys' friendship. If anything, Socrates' conclusion is meant to encourage the boys to cultivate their friendship on the newfound basis of philosophy, the beginning of which seems to be confirmed by the dialogue's closing line. Socrates' final statement is passed over by all above except Bolotin. For what is problematic about his reading, cf. fn. 22 below.

[15] Arguably even earlier, starting with the second view of the wise predicated on unlikes at 215c-216b. Cf. ch. 5, sect. 5-6.

[16] This reading is defended by Robinson (1986), p. 76, and Bordt (1998), pp. 225-26. Rudebusch (2004) argues that Socrates' inference here is not one that explains how two intermediate beings can be friends to each other. Rather, Rudebusch contends, "the present discussion is still working under the mode of friendship that Socrates 'like a mantic' divined (216d3), namely, that 'what is neither good nor bad loves what is beautiful, i.e. good' (216b-c). The discussion has not abandoned that model, but is seeking to elaborate it by identifying the cause of the love of the intermediate for the good'" (p. 75, fn. 16). However, it would be bizarre if Socrates were not talking about reciprocal φιλία here, given his explicit reference to the friendship between Lysis and Menexenus and the genuine lover and his favorite.

being akin to someone entails that they are also akin to oneself.

What this reading misses, however, is that these two types of relations might be different but related. Rather than equivocating between them, one might understand our relation to what is οἰκεῖον to us as the explanatory basis for our οἰκεῖοι relations to each other. In other words, it is the shared love of two individuals for what is οἰκεῖον to each of them individually that also makes them οἰκεῖοι to each other.

That Socrates intends us to understand these akin-relationships in this complementary manner is suggested by the language in which these relations are introduced.[17] When introducing the account of the friend as what is akin at 221e ff., Socrates expresses this οἰκεῖον-relation in unqualified terms: "it's what belongs to us (τοῦ οἰκείου), then, that's actually the object of love (ἔρως), friendship (φιλία), and desires (ἐπιθυμία)." However, in drawing the above consequences of this account in terms of reciprocal friendship at 221e5-222a3, Socrates qualifies his statement in a subtle yet significant manner. Someone could not truly be a friend to another person, according to Socrates, unless they belonged (οἰκεῖος) to them in some way (πῃ) "in relation to their soul, either in some character (ἦθος), some manner (τρόπους), or form (εἶδος)" (222a2-3) In other words, it is our psychic relation to what is οἰκεῖον to each of us individually that serves as the basis for our psychic relation to like-minded others.

Just as philosophical wisdom could alone serve as the object of our οἰκεῖον-desires, so too it alone can explain our akin relationships with others. Insofar as technical knowledge can only serve as the means to some extrinsic good, so too a person can only be instrumentally valuable to another if the latter person's good is external to whatever value

[17] Cf. Penner and Rowe (2005), pp. 162-64.

the former is seen to possess or represent. However, since philosophical wisdom is what is akin to us, and thus an intrinsic good, so too one person can be intrinsically good to another if they partake in wisdom, even if this just means being a genuine lover of wisdom. While one person may nevertheless help another in their acquisition of wisdom, this aid isn't merely instrumentally valuable but rather an expression, however approximate, of the very same wisdom itself.[18]

This explanation of the relationship between οἰκεῖον and οἰκεῖοι relationships also helps to explain the second type of reciprocal φιλία indicated above, and even more importantly, the manner in which it is stated. As was seen, Socrates states not only that peer φιλίαι depend on οἰκεῖοι relations, but so too do relationships between ἐρασταὶ and their παιδικαί. Moreover, Socrates states that a genuine lover (γνησίος), as opposed to a pretend one (προσποιήτος), will *necessarily* (ἀναγκαῖον) be befriended in return (φιλεῖσθαι) by their beloved. In such cases, the οἰκεῖοι relation between them is one determined "by nature" (φύσει, 222a5). Granted that a genuine lover is one who wants to help their beloved become wise, and that the beloved loves wisdom as what naturally belongs to them, it follows that the beloved must necessarily love their lover in return.[19]

[18] On this reading, then, it is our shared kinship with the good that enables us, as intermediate beings, to belong by nature to each other. But a question still remains here: how can the good be a friend to an immediate being if it does not love? Rudebusch (2004) offers an answer. According to Rudebusch, an intermediate lover and the good belong together in the way a dependent and guardian do. "The intermediate lacks and hence desires and loves the good as a dependent needily loves its guardian. Because of and in requital of this need, the good cares for and benefits the intermediate just as a guardian loves its dependent" (p. 77). However, as Rudebusch stresses, 'guardian-love' must be understood without the notion of desire (p. 78). However, nowhere in the *Lysis* does Socrates allow for the possible of love without desire. The lesson regarding irreciprocal friendship in the dialogue, as I understand it, is that the good can be our friend *without* loving us, because it still benefits us. What is radical about the *Lysis'* conception of φιλία is that in its most fundamental form, i.e. our φιλία with the good, being beneficial and thus a friend does not require love at all.

[19] Socrates' conclusion here at 221e5-222b2 can be seen to be the fulfillment of the second half of the dialogue that began with his discussion with Menexenus (ch. 4), a discussion which investigated the conventional understanding of the φίλος. Socrates began that discussion by asking Menexneus: "I am so far from acquiring [a friend] that I do not even know in what way [τρόπον] one person becomes a friend of

However, while this explanation helps to explain *why* the genuine lover must necessarily be loved in return by their favorite, it does not explain *who*, in this case, the genuine ἐραστὴς happens to be. Socrates' mention of Hippothales — the first since the dialogue's prologue — suggests what we might have come to suspect all along, namely, that the rest of the discussion since Socrates' private conversation with Lysis (ch. 3) was in fact an extension of his explicit demonstration there in erotic seduction. While Lysis and Menexenus are content enough to accept that they are οἰκεῖοι, and hence φίλοι, by nature, they hesitate to accept the conclusion that the befriending of a lover on the part of their favorite might be something ordained "by nature." That Lysis hesitates even more than Menexenus is understandable, for Socrates' conclusion seems to suggest that Hippothales is perhaps a genuine lover of the boy, one whom Lysis must necessarily befriend in return, an implication that Hippothales reacts to with delight (222b2).[20]

Is Socrates merely playing a ruse on the boys? Is his distinction between a genuine lover and a pretend one a hint to his naïve interlocutors as to whom the genuine lover has been all along, namely, himself? And what, if anything, is this passage meant to suggest about the broader theme of transitions? I will return to the significance of this passage after assessing the final *aporia*; for I will subsequently argue that the significance of both this passage and the final *aporia* cannot be fully understood in isolation from one another.

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another; I wish to ask you this very since you are experienced [in this matter]" (212a4-7). The irony of Socrates' conclusion is apparent in at least two ways. First, his use of 'τρόπους' at 212a5 foreshadows his use of 'τρόπος' at 222a3 where he indicates that it is some τρόπους of soul that explains why a genuine lover loves his παιδικὰ. Moreover, Socrates' suggestion at 212a7 that Menexenus is well suited to know how someone becomes a friend to another through his 'experience' (ἔμπειρον) is ironic in light of the fact that, as Socrates goes on to show, such knowledge requires an account (λόγος) of the cause (αἰτία), something that ἔμπειρία cannot afford (cf. *Gorgias* 465a2-6). See here Glidden (1980), p. 288, fn. 1.

[20] As Rudebusch (2004, p. 73, fn. 14) points out, the final premise of Socrates' inference — ""Very well, I said: what belongs to us by nature has been shown to be something we must necessarily befriend" (222b5-6) — is direct solely at Lysis, who is the immediate antecedent of the reply that follows: 'It seems so, he said' (ἔφη, 222a6).

2. The Final *Aporia*

Despite signaling what appeared to be the successful conclusion to his larger demonstration for Hippothales, Socrates cautions against an unwavering endorsement of the account under consideration. Despite the apparent solutions that the notion of the akin offers to problems of reciprocal and non-reciprocal love, a simple question remains: how exactly is 'being akin' to someone or thing different from simply 'being alike' to them? As was seen in his previous examination of the views of the wise (ch. 5), the problem with the view that like is friend to like is that likes cannot be useful or beneficial to one another, and as Socrates reiterates here, "it is out of tune to agree that what is useless is a friend" (222b8-c1). Unless a difference between the relation of belonging and that of likeness can be specified, there remains a question as to how the former relation confers benefit in a way that the latter does not.

Rather than attempting to explicitly address this question, however, Socrates instead suggests — in light of the fact that he and the boys are now "drunk" from the arguments (222c2) — that they temporarily grant that these two relations are different. Even so, Socrates goes on, any attempt to further specify the akin relation leaves the company with a dilemma. Should they say that:

(i) "The good is akin to everyone/everything, and that the bad is alien to everyone/everything?" (τάγαθὸν οἰκεῖον ... παντι, τὸ δὲ κακὸν ἀλλότριον εἶναι;)

OR

(ii) "The bad is akin to the bad, the good is akin to the good, and the neither-good-nor-bad is akin to the neither-good-nor-bad?" (τὸ δὲ κακὸν τῷ κακῷ οἰκεῖον, τῷ δὲ ἀγαθῷ τὸ ἀγαθόν, τῷ δὲ μήτε ἀγαθῷ μήτε κακῷ τὸ μήτε ἀγαθόν μήτε

κακὸν;) (222c3-7)

The boys choose the second horn and the account appears to break down, for despite their temporary agreement to treat kinship and likeness as different, the former relation now seems to collapse into the latter. Before Socrates has a chance to resume the examination by "stirring up one of the older boys (πρεσβυτέρος)" in the gymnasium (223a2), Lysis and Menexenus' tutors finally arrive, fresh from the festivities, to take the boys back home.

Does the final *aporia* represent, as many scholars have thought, a genuine failure to discover a satisfactory account of the friend, and as a result, to reconcile ἔρως and φιλία, and irreciprocal and reciprocal love more broadly?[21] Or can we see the dialogue to be tacitly advocating a view of the φίλος, one that might even allow us to make sense of Socrates' brief yet suggestive allusion to such a reconciliation? If we are to perceive the *Lysis* as gesturing towards a view beyond its final *aporia*, it must come from a reading on which Socrates implicitly supports an interpretation of one of the two horns of the dilemma above.

(a) The Second Horn

When the boys choose (ii) — the claim that "the bad is akin to the bad, the good is akin to the good, and the neither-good-nor-bad is akin to the neither-good-nor-bad" — Socrates draws out the consequences of this view, explaining:

> '"In that case, I said, we've fallen back into the very statements regarding friendship which we discarded the first time around; for the unjust person will be friend to the unjust and the bad to the bad no less than the good to the good."
> "It appears so," he [Menexenus?] said.

[21] For a list of commentators who read the *Lysis* in this way, cf. the introductory chapter, fns. 6-7. Representative here is Bordt, who writes: "How can we understand the unity of the last goal of every desire, the *proton philon*, with the Good, and the unity of the Good with the *oikeion*? This is a question which finds no answer in the *Lysis*. The dialogue breaks down at exactly the point here the consistency of the major concepts of Plato's model of friendship — the Good, the Same, the *oikeion*, the *proton philon* — lead into difficulties" (2000, pp. 170-1).

> "And what's more, if we say that being good and belonging are the same thing, won't the good person be friend only to the good?"
> "Yes, absolutely."
> "And yet we thought we had refuted that too, ourselves; or don't you remember?"
> "We remember."' (222d1-8)

Choosing (ii) the thesis that each type is akin, and thus a friend, to each type entails choosing essentially "the very statements regarding friendship [that were] discarded the first time around." The thesis in question is the first view of the wise based on likeness (214a-215c). Socrates' examples here recall his prior refutation of that view. As was seen at 214b8-c4, he rejected the possibility that bad could be friends with bad on the grounds that the bad, by definition, do harm to those with whom they associate. Given the impossibility of the bad being friends, and thus belonging to each other, the only other possibility is that "being good and belonging are the same thing" such that "the good person [is] friend only to the good" (222d4). However, as Socrates reminds the boys (222d7), they had already refuted this possibility as well on the basis that the good are self-sufficient and thus incapable of friendly love.[22]

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[22] Gonzalez (2000) argues that when 'Socrates asks whether this alternative [that the good and the τὸ οἰκεῖον are the same] is not simply a return to the already refuted view that the good is φίλος only to the good (222d6) …. The attentive reader must reply, "No"' (p. 394). Rather, according to Gonzalez, this alternative is meant to refer back to the first option at 222c3-5 that 'the good belongs to everyone.' However, if 222d5-6 was intended to refer to this option, Socrates would effectively be saying that their rejection "of the things said about friendship … the first time around" (222d1-2) would entail their rejection of *both* horns of the final dilemma: *both* that the good 'belongs' to everyone *and* that different things 'belong' to different people. But that could hardly be the case for two reasons. First, the previous arguments leading up to 222d2) simply do not entail the rejection of both options, but rather reinforce the first option. Moreover, it is hard to see how exactly it could follow from the claim that "being good and belonging are the same thing … [such that] the good person [is] friend only to the good" (222d4) that, in turn, the good then belongs to *everyone*. Cf. Penner and Rowe 2005, pp. 178-9. I took think that Socrates wants to implicitly lead the boys back to the first option, but in a different way; see my discussion that follow.

Alternatively, Socrates has been seen to be implicitly endorsing an alternative understanding of the thesis at 222d4; cf. Friedlander (1964), pp. 96-101, and Bolotin (1979), pp. 192-93. Rather than reading the claim that "the good is friend only to the good" as a thesis about interpersonal friendship, as the company previously had at 214d-215c, we are now to interpret it instead to mean that those who are truly good can only be truly or fully a friend *to their share of what is good*, understood in terms of an individual's pursuit of wisdom. On this reading, the dialogue does tacitly advocate a view of the φίλος at its end; but in doing so it aims to make a point about the ultimate *irreconcilability* of ordinary, interpersonal friendship with an individual's relationship to wisdom. Cf. fn. 14 above. This approach, however, is problematic for two reasons.

Curiously, however, Socrates is silent with respect to one pair of likes included in his statement of the second horn above; namely, "that the neither-good-nor-bad is akin to the neither-good-nor-bad" (222c6-7). One possible explanation for this omission is simply that he has already explained why like cannot be friend with like, and that his allusions to his prior reasons against two of these relations — that the bad could be friends and that the good could be friends — are enough to remind the boys what was problematic about the view as a whole.[23] At the time of Socrates' rejection of this view, in fact, the category of intermediate entities had yet to be introduced. Moreover, when Socrates does introduce this category as part of the remedial account of the friend, he immediately goes on to explicitly reject the possibility that the neither-good-nor-bad could be friends with each other and does so on the very same grounds that he rejected the other possibilities, namely, that intermediate agents (just as bad or good ones) could not benefit each other (216e6-7).

However, since that time, Socrates has offered a new account (221e5-222b2) of how interpersonal φιλία may be possible, namely, by being οἰκεῖοι to each other.[24] This omission to outright reject this possibility, then, suggests that it remains a live one.

First, it entails that Socrates in fact *rescinds* what he appears to suggest just prior at 221e5-222b2, namely, that his account of the friend as what is οἰκεῖον *does reconcile* irreciprocal and reciprocal φιλία; cf. sect. 1(b) again. Even if we concede the possibility of such a reversal, moreover, this reading seems to run up against the text elsewhere as well; notably, with respect to Socrates' parting words to Lysis and Menexenus at 2235-8. If the culminating point of his conversation with them was to demonstrate that the philosopher's pursuit of his own good can only be compromised by ordinary human relationships, then it would seem that what makes his parting statement paradoxical is the fact that it is false. In particular, his claim that he now considers himself and the boys *to be friends* would, on this reading, be belied by the supposed point of the thesis at 222d4. Yet one well question whether the irony of Socrates' final words can really be reduced to a falsehood, especially one so directly at odds with the apparent friendship that Socrates developed through the course of his discussion with the youths. Cf. Nichols (2006), p. 9.

[23] This is Penner and Rowe's view, p. 179.

[24] While Socrates does not explicitly use the term 'intermediate' at 221e5-222b2, nothing gives us reason to think that the category was rejected along with the remedial view as a uniform account of the φίλος. In fact, the appearance of this term in Socrates statement of the second horn of final dilemma at 222c6-7 only reaffirms that it remains central to the dialogue's argument.

(b) The First Horn

Unlike the option the boys choose, the first horn of Socrates' final dilemma — the view that "the good belongs to everyone/everything, while the bad is alien to everyone/everything" (222c3-5) — does not collapse the distinction between the akin and the like. Instead, this horn gives rise to two questions: who or what does 'the all' or 'everyone' (παντὶ) in this claim refer to; and how exactly is this view supposed to account for interpersonal friendship?

A consideration of the immediate context indicates that 'παντὶ' in this case must refer exclusively to all intermediate agents.[25] The possibility that it might extend more broadly to all types of entities — good, bad, and neither-good-nor-bad — is ruled out by the passage itself. On the one hand, the claim itself rules out the bad as a possibility; the fact that "bad is alien to all" entails that nothing can belong to the bad, let alone the good. Likewise, the claim also rules out the good as a possibility; for if, among other things, the good also belonged to the good, the distinction between belonging and likeness would once more collapse, resulting in the same predicament as the second horn that Lysis and Menexenus choose. The one remaining option is that 'παντὶ' ranges over the neither-good-nor-bad. In short, Socrates must be using 'παντὶ' as a masculine rather than a neuter noun to mean "everybody" or "each one of us [humans]." So understood, this horn is merely a restatement of Socrates' initial formulation of the οἰκεῖον account of the φίλος. As intermediate agents, we desire the good, or philosophical wisdom, as something that belongs to us as a fulfillment of the type of agents that we are.

It is this horn of the dilemma, then, that it appears Socrates implicitly endorses. Still, it

[25] Cf. Woolfsdorf (2008), pp. 249-50.

only explicitly appeals to the neither-good-nor-bad's relationship to *the good*. It is silent with respect to the NGNB's φιλία with another intermediate being. How, if at all, does Socrates connect our belonging to the good with our belonging to each other?[26] In fact, as was seen in section 1(b) above, he already offered something of an explanation of how the two types of φιλία are connected through erotic reciprocity. It is through our individual love of, and kinship with, the good that we love and belong to each other. What makes the good οἰκεῖον to each of us also makes us οἰκεῖοι to one another.

Admittedly, Socrates never explicitly draws this connection in the course of his discussion with Lysis and Menxenus. However, the dialogue's final lines seem to confirm just how our relation to the good makes our relation to one another possible. Socrates explicitly notes there that he and the boys have by now indeed become friends, even though their quest to find an account of the friend has left them ridiculous (223b4-8).[27] We have reason once again to take Socrates as being earnest here.[28] Even if he endorses the view of the friend as what is οἰκεῖον, there remains a sense in which they have yet to discover the friend insofar as wisdom is not something truly in their possession. Nevertheless, it is through their joint pursuit of the friend — and through it, their joint pursuit of wisdom — that Socrates and the boys' φιλία is established.

3. Is the Φίλος Indefinable?

It is this ending to the *Lysis*, and the relationship between its arguments (λόγοι) and dramatic actions (ἔργα) more broadly, that has provoked disagreement over the dialogue's status among other Socratic or aporetic dialogues.

[26] According to Rudebusch (2004), p. 77, Socrates doesn't intend to at all. See again fn. 16 above for my reasons for disagreeing with his interpretation.
[27] I will return to the significance of Socrates' parting words in the appendix, sect. 3.
[28] cf. ch. 1, sect. 3(b); ch. 4, sect. 1.

In the eyes of many of its readers, the *Lysis*' final *aporia* has been seen to reflect something unique about its subject matter. While other Socratic dialogues also end without an explicitly endorsed account of the subject matter in question, usually one of the virtues, Socrates does not purport to exemplify the subject matter either, whether it be courage, temperance, justice, or wisdom. By contrast, as was seen, despite the fact that Socrates and the boys "have failed to yet discover what the φίλος is" (222b7-8), they have nevertheless become friends. What this is taken to suggest is that philosophical inquiry is inherently inadequate for explaining the nature of the friend in such a way that it must be supplemented by the dramatic enactment of friendship among the dialogue's personae.[29] The dialogue's final *aporia* and paradoxical ending are inevitable, on this reading, because the nature of the friend and friendship resists articulation — it cannot be stated in words, but only shown or enacted.

Opposingly, others maintain that there is no tension between the explicit *aporia* in which the dialogue concludes and Socrates' implicit endorsement of the final conception of the friend based on the notion of kinship or belonging.[30] Rather than identifying something unique about the *Lysis*' inquiry, these commentators emphasis that the final *aporia* in fact reflects a dramatic theme common among the early dialogues. Namely, it draws a contrast or highlights a tension between conventional and Socratic-Platonic ethical beliefs that is

[29] Commentators who espouse some form of this reading include Versenyi (1975), Gadamer (1980), Tindale (1984), Tessitore (1990), Gonzalez (1995). According to Gadamer, the shortcoming lies not so much with philosophical inquiry as Socrates' interlocutors: "[If] one follows the evolution of the discussion in regard to the reciprocal relationship between *logos* and *ergon*, things take on a meaningful sequential order. One suddenly recognizes that any discussion which Socrates conducts about friendship with two young boys *must* end in an *aporia*, for children do not yet know what friendship is and how complex a relationship an enduring friendship creates between the friends. The confusion in which these half-children are left is not to be viewed as negation per se; rather it is an indication of the incipient maturation of their own existence as human beings" (p. 6). By contrast, Tindale contends that the dialogue's upshot is that friendship "will always be something that cannot be said" (p. 107).

[30] The main commentators in this camp are Penner and Rowe (2005) and Wolfsdorf (2004) and (2008).

meant to serve the pedagogical function of forcing the reader to weigh the rational merits of these alternatives for themselves.[31] If the *Lysis*' final *aporia* points to any limitations with Socrates' definition of the friend, they are not ones unique to its subject matter but rather ones shared by Socratic inquiries more generally.[32]

Yet, what these divergent readings of the dialogue's denouement share is a failure to fully recognize the broader role that the concept of transition, both in a conventional and uniquely Platonic sense, plays in the *Lysis*. If my reading of the final *aporia* in the previous section is correct, then we do indeed have good reason to see Socrates as implicitly endorsing the account of the φίλος as what is οἰκεῖος. In this sense, then, the straightforward reading is correct to maintain that the concept of the friend is not an ineffable one. However, what the quietist reading speaks to, if not accurately characterizes, is that this concept of belonging or being akin presupposes an understanding of the notion of transition that can only be properly appreciated in the context of the *Lysis*' larger discussion of convention and innovation.[33]

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[31] "In sum, the aporetic conclusions in some early dialogues especially demonstrate Plato's emphasis on the process of rational enquiry and justification. In sacrificing explicit endorsement of a particular proposition, *aporia* serves to endorse the authority of reason" (Wolfsdorf, 2004, pp. 26-7). Similarly, Penner and Rowe write that the final *aporia* of the *Lysis* "is Plato's way of indicating his awareness of the highly radical nature of the claim he has argued for, that the good is what 'belongs' to everyone, and what everyone desires, and correspondingly of indicating his awareness of the attraction of the view that Lysis and Menexenus take up …. But this is not to say that he is in any way apologizing for the first position. The situation is exactly reversed: it is not the first but the second position, it's more ordinary rival, that causes the impasse" (p. 181).

[32] This is Penner and Rowe's general conclusion: "Even if the two boys had agreed [to the first horn, i.e. that the good belongs to everyone],… it would in a way also be true that Socrates and they 'haven't yet been able to find out what sort of thing the friend is', insofar as they would still have needed to discover the detailed specifications of that thing that we truly desire, of what is truly our 'friend' and naturally 'belongs' to us. …. They would, in fact be much in that sort of situation in which Socrates of the *Apology* claims to be, of 'being 'wise' to the extent of being aware of his own ignorance, while actually knowing nothing of substance. In that sense, impasse or *aporia* looks a reasonable outcome for the Lysis as a whole, as it is for at least some other Platonic dialogues" (2005, pp. 187-88).

[33] My reading here is influenced by Gonzalez (1995), esp. pp. 83-84, who alone among contemporary commentators has suggested that the central difference between the view of the φίλος found in Socrates' initial discussion with Lysis and the view discernable at the dialogue's end is a difference in the type of knowledge or wisdom with which the highest form of φιλία is concerned. I part with him, however, in the

As was argued in ch. 2, the dialogue is structured around the traditional conceptions of love and friendship and the problems of transition associated with each of them. In the case of conventional ἔρως, this problem was one of engagement, or one concerning how a lover is to engage with their beloved in such a way as to establish a relationship with them. In the case of conventional φιλία, the problem was one of association, or one concerning how to reconcile friendship with the competitive rivalry that accompanies it. What is common to both of these problems is the fact that the conceptions of love and friendship that give rise to them do so at least in part because they conceive of the fulfillment of these relationships as fixed or finite achievements. As Socrates' discussion with Hippothales revealed, the unconscious aim of the latter's encomia was to win the contest of ἐραστὴς and παιδικὰ with Lysis, and in doing so, to be recognized as victor with the boy serving as his trophy (205e1-206a4). Similarly, as Socrates' initial conversation with Lysis and Menexenus revealed, they take their friendship for granted as something already secured through their age and class affiliation. In both cases, it is the fixed manner in which these relationships are conceptualized that result in their associated problems. It is because conventional ἔρως views its object as a possession that the encomiastic discourse it employs reifies this object through memorialization. Similarly, it is because conventional φιλία is based on the static concept of affiliation through shared status that it is threatened to be broken down through

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conclusion that he draws on the basis of this difference, namely, that "the dialogue still ends in genuine *aporia* since the exact nature of the kinship that defines philosophy and friendship is a mystery" (p. 86). What defines the exact nature of this kinship on my reading is precisely the fact that, unlike other types of conventional φιλία, it is inherently transitional in the manner described below.

In defense of his reading, Wolfsdorf (2008) also examines occurrences of 'οἰκεῖος' and 'οἰκειότης' in other Platonic dialogues, in particular, the *Republic* and the *Gorgias* (pp. 253-57). He suggests there that these other appearances reinforce the understanding of belonging found in the *Lysis*, namely, (a) that what is οἰκεῖον to an entity in an excellence that is particular to the type of entity that it is, and (b) that it is the object of intrinsic desire. I do not dispute that these features are essential to the understanding of belonging found in the *Lysis*; I only dispute that they are the only main features that are essential to the understanding of it found there.

competitive rivalry.

What Socrates' account of the φίλος as what is οἰκεῖον rectifies is this presupposition of a fixed or finite end that underlies these conventional conceptions of love and friendship. Contrary to Hippothales' implicit understanding of erotic fulfillment, a true beloved is not someone or thing that can be captured once and for all, like the prey of a hunting expedition (206a9-10). Nor too is friendship something established simply through age-class and social standing. By resisting the reification of the object of erotic love, Socrates transforms the discourse of both ἔρως and φιλία. Since the akin is something that can't be fully attained, it is something that transcends conventional kinship.

4. The Problem of Erotic Transition

In contrast with the *Lysis*' final *aporia*, one aspect of the dialogue over which there has been almost universal consensus is the climatic end of Socrates' demonstration (221e5-222b2), and in particular, the implication of his distinction between a genuine (γνησίος) and a pretend (προσποιήτος) lover.

In the eyes of most readers, the irony of the passage is hardly difficult to glean. What the delighted Hippothales fails to grasp is that Socrates' distinction between genuine and pretend lovers is, in the present context, meant to apply to the two of them, with *Socrates* representing the genuine article.[34] After all, it has been Socrates who, through the course of his private conversation with Lysis and indeed the dialogue as a whole, has been able to benefit Lysis by guiding him into a kinship with the ultimate object of love, wisdom. It is thus Socrates who must be akin to Lysis, and thus necessarily be befriended by him in return. Under the pretense of demonstrating for Hippothales how he might win Lysis over,

[34] This reading is strongly defended by the likes of Gonzalez (1995), pp. 85-6; Penner and Rowe (2005), p. 170; and Wolfsdorf (2008), pp. 246-47.

then, Socrates has in fact covertly seduced the boy for himself.

Indeed, there are several indications that suggest Plato wishes us to recognize the implication of this distinction in this very manner. Not only, as was evident in the prologue, does Hippothales lack the type of knowledge that a genuine lover requires in order to benefit their beloved, but there are subtle hints here at the dialogue's end that the young cadet has learned little from Socrates' demonstration.[35] The word Socrates uses for a pretend lover, 'προσποιήτος', can have poetic associations, which may well be read as an allusion to Hippothales' poems for Lysis. Moreover, upon hearing Socrates draw the conclusion that a genuine lover is necessarily befriended by their favorite, Hippothales is described as "having turned all sorts of color from pleasure" (ὑπὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς πανωτοδαπὰ ἡφίει χρώματα, 222b2), a possible allusion to hedonistic motivations governing his interest in Lysis. Without addressing the issue directly, the argument of the dialogue makes clear that the good and the pleasurable cannot be identical.[36] To love properly is to benefit or promote what is beneficial in one's beloved. If Hippothales' motives are purely hedonistic as this allusion might suggest, then they can only be self-directed ones without any consideration for the boy's welfare.

Yet, while these hints suggest strongly that Hippothales can hardly be a genuine lover, at the same time they do not constitute the full extent of the dialogue's complex reflections on Hippothales and Lysis' relationship. The *Lysis* offers several further clues that we are meant to contemplate the nature of this passage in light of the dialogue's larger

[35] Cf. Wolfsdorf (2008), pp. 247-48.

[36] Cf. ch. 6, fn. 8 and 39 for discussion of Socrates' mysterious interlude at 216c4-d4. As was noted there (fn. 39), whatever else might be the point of this interlude, the context implies that Socrates is proposing a relation of identify between the good and the beautiful. As Penner and Rowe note: "What Socrates intends is apparently that beauty will *reside in* goodness. In short, according to his view there will be only one object of love, and not two. And this is of absolutely central importance, not just in itself, but because the whole dialogue began in a context dominated by the idea of love specifically of (Lysis', physical) beauty" (pp. 102-3).

philosophical themes.[37]

Throughout the dialogue, Plato makes efforts to highlight similarities between Hippothales and Lysis. Not only are both similar in their disposition for shyness but also their disposition for listening.[38] These similarities on their own are significant, but not necessarily enough to guarantee a kinship between Hippothales and Lysis. For as the final *aporia* indicates, a central theme in the *Lysis* is the problem of how to distinguish mere likeness (ὁμοιότης) from genuine kinship (οἰκειότης). As Socrates' refutation of the views of the wise demonstrated, likeness *per se* is not a condition on which friendship can be established. What is required is not just any similarity but a shared orientation towards the good, which, as the dialogue has continually suggested throughout, is philosophical wisdom.

Under what category are we to assign Hippothales and Lysis' shared dispositions for shyness and, more importantly, for listening? Do they represent a mere likeness or some indication of a genuine kinship? It is this question that Plato nudges us to consider. In fact, there are several indications that Hippothales and Lysis' shared love of listening is among the very characteristics of soul (222a3) essential for a disposition towards philosophical

[37] One might wonder whether Socrates leaves Lysis unduly vulnerable by not offering the boy explicit guidance regarding who might be a genuine lover. A similar complaint is raised by Vlastos (1971) in the context of the *Euthyphro*. While Socrates "[does] his best to lead Euthyphro to the point where he could see for himself the right answer" with respect to the charge of murder he has brought against his father, according to Vlastos, Socrates' unwillingness to explicitly advise Euthyphro results in a "failure of love" (p. 16). Just as in the case of Euthyphro, whose subsequent course of action will have serious ramification for his father and himself, so too Lysis' subsequent decision with respect to whom to take as a lover is not a trivial one. Penner and Rowe push back against this worry: "Socrates has put his conclusion in about as provocative a way as he could, for a pair of young boys who are no doubt aware of the effect their beauty has on older males — older males like Hippothales, whose reaction confirms, if confirmation were needed, how [222]a6-7 would have to be taken by anyone who hadn't followed the argument. … neither of the boys should really be hesitating at Socrates' conclusion; or at any rate Lysis has no cause to hesitate. The lesson of that first conversation he had with Socrates to which the latter's immediately preceding contributions, in 221e-222a, have referred the boy (and us), was…. that the one who loves wants the one he loves to be wise, because wisdom gives happiness (and loving someone involves wanting that person to be happy)" (pp. 168-69).

[38] Cf. 204b5-c3, 206b5-c3, 207a3-b8, 213d1-3. For discussion, cf. ch. 2, fn. 28, ch. 5, fn. 10.

wisdom. After all, it was Hippothales' initial desire to listen and learn from Socrates regarding how a lover ought to speak to their beloved that results in the conversation of the dialogue in the first place (206c1-3). Moreover, it was Lysis' intense concentration on Socrates' elenchus of Menexenus that led the old man to applaud the boy's taste for philosophy (ἡσθεὶς τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ, 213d7). While these considerations on their own may not be sufficient to suggest a kinship between Lysis and Hippothales, they are compounded when one recognizes that the theme of listening figures large in the dialogue as a whole.

The first respect in which it does so concerns the specific character of the dialogue itself.[39] Of the three Platonic works devoted largely to the topics of love and friendship, the *Lysis* is the only one in which Socrates himself narrates the entire discussion of the dialogue.[40] And while the *Lysis* is not the only Platonic dialogue that is narrated by Socrates, it nevertheless stands out even among these as well. Whereas such similar dialogues contain considerable detail regarding the circumstances of their narration, Plato is silent with respect to Socrates' narration in the *Lysis*; there is no indication as to where or when the narration takes place.[41] Even more importantly, Socrates makes no allusions to whom his listeners are. Since he never addresses them directly, we do not even know whether he is speaking to a single individual or to a group. What makes the absence of such allusions

[39] The significance of the narrative structure of the dialogue is noticed by Nichols (2009), ch. 4, see esp. pp. 155-62. I discuss my disagreement with her overall interpretation of the dialogue and its place in the larger context of the Platonic corpus in sect. 5 below as well as in the appendix, sect. 1.

[40] The *Symposium* is narrated by Apollodorus, who in turn heard about the dinner party from one of its attendees who was a friend of Socrates, Aristodemus. Apollodorus notes that Socrates himself later confirmed some of the details provided by Aristodemus (*Symposium* 173b) while still leaving out some of the details that Aristodemus had since forgotten (180c and 223c). The *Phaedrus* is structured explicitly as a dramatic dialogue rather than narrated or recounted. While the drama involves Socrates agreeing to deliver a message to Isocrates, it does not involve him recounting his conversation with Phaedrus (*Phaedrus* 278b-279b).

[41] The six dialogues narrated by Socrates include the *Protagoras*, *Euthydemus*, *Lysis*, *Charmides*, *Republic*, and the *Lovers*. In the *Protagoras* and the *Euthydemus*, Socrates' narration includes a dramatic prologue between Socrates and his addressee (*Protagoras* 309a-310a; *Euthydemus* 271a-272e). Only the *Lovers* is similar to the *Lysis* in giving us no information about the narration itself. Cf. Nichols (2009), p. 156, fn. 11.

all the more striking is the fact that, unlike the circumstances of his narration in the *Lysis*, Socrates in fact provides his listeners with a quite vivid account of the actual circumstances in which his conversation with the youths takes places. Within the first few Stephanus pages, we learn in great detail about the contents of Hippothales' poems, the activities of the youths within the gymnasium, and the unique circumstances of the Hermaea festival. Moreover, as was seen through the course of this dissertation, far from being superfluous, these details are crucial to understanding both the problems associated with the conventional forms of ἔρως and φιλία as well as Socrates' treatment of them.

These two contrasting aspects of the *Lysis* — the paucity of details pertaining to the circumstances of Socrates' narration as opposed to the abundance of details regarding the conversation being narrated — suggest two things. The first suggests that Plato deliberately refrained from referencing any circumstances that might prevent us, his readers, from supposing that Socrates is speaking directly to us. The second aspect indicates, contrastingly, that Plato wants us to listen carefully to Socrates' narration. Indeed, the centrality of the theme of listening is writ large at a key transitional point in the dialogue at 211a9-b2, roughly the dialogue's midway point. Socrates' admonition to Lysis to remember their private conversation and repeat it on Menexenus at a later date is equally an admonition on the part of Plato to us, his readers.

Nor is the importance of the theme of listening restricted to the dramatic level of the text. In fact, the theme is reinforced at a philosophical level, one that pertains to the very question of Hippothales' status as a lover. As was seen in his exposition of the remedial view of the friend, Socrates draws a distinction between the partial and complete presence of evil, first with respect to the body and then the soul. In the latter case, Socrates draws a

threefold distinction between the wise, who no longer love wisdom because they already possess it, the fully ignorant, whose souls are so corrupt that they are no longer capable of being lovers of wisdom, and the intermediate, who are lovers of wisdom precisely because they "are still aware of not knowing the things they do not know" (218b1). Constitutive of this intermediate status, then, is the capacity to recognize one's own ignorance, a capacity that at the same time constitutes a desire and openness to learn. As was seen at the beginning of the dialogue, it is Hippothales who first displays such a desire and openness in asking Socrates to advise him in erotic seduction.[42]

It cannot be denied that Hippothales appears to bode poorly as a prospective lover in many respects. But if these clues are any indication, Plato wants us to view the dialogue's characters within the context of the larger theme of transitions that structures it. Within this context, Hippothales is best viewed as somewhere in-between, on the precarious and uncertain road to becoming a genuine lover.[43]

5. Loving Another Philosophically in the *Lysis*

As was discussed at the outset of this dissertation, attempts to come to grips with the central message of the *Lysis* have inevitably led commentators to gravitate etiher to φιλία or ἔρως as the work's conceptual focus. These two tendencies derive in part from competing understandings of Plato's project: one that sees it as a rejection of tradition and another that sees it as a self-conscious product of that tradition. Yet viewing the dialogue primarily through the prism of φιλία or ἔρως has prevented these commentators from

[42] One might consider Hippothales' attitude in relation to the famous opening exchange of the *Republic* between Socrates and Polemachus. When Socrates replies to Polemachus' playful demand that he must prove himself the stronger man or be retained by asking "why is there not left the possibility of persuading you that you ought to let us go?", Polemachus responds by asking in turn: "But could you persuade us, if we refused to listen?" (327c). Hippothales' desire to listen in the *Lysis* constitutes at the very least an openness to persuasion, a disposition not shared by all of Socrates' interlocutors.

[43] I will discuss the limitations of being a mere listener in the appendix, sect. 3.

recognizing the precise manner in which the *Lysis* is both a critique and a product of its cultural heritage. This is no clearer than when considering how these approaches attempt to reconcile the relationship between interpersonal friendship and a philosophical love of wisdom in the *Lysis*.

On the one hand, as was discussed at various points in this dissertation, those who read the *Lysis* as primarily concerned with φιλία see it as a rejection of the conventional Greek conception of friendship, on which its participants understood their relation to one another in terms of an exchange of utility or benefit. On this reading, Plato's aim in the work is to argue that a true understanding of the φίλος is one that dispenses with the notions of utility and benefit except as a means to promoting the good of one's friend. By interpreting Plato's aim in this way, commentators have gone to the lengths of arguing that even wisdom, properly understood in relation to a genuine friend, can only play a subordinate role in loving another.[44] On the other hand, those who read the *Lysis* as primarily concerned with ἔρως see it as an attempt to develop a universal theory of desire. On this reading, by contrast, other people can only ever play an instrumental role in aiding individuals to achieve their ultimate good.[45] As one might suspect, these two interpretative

[44] As was seen in ch. 6, fn. 31, according to Curzer (2014) the notion of the 'first friend' refer to *people*, in particular, those who are befriended for their own sake rather than for their utility to the befriender. While Curzer acknowledges that "Socrates stretches the term 'friend' to cover not only people, but everything desired," he attempts to account for this discrepancy by proposing that "[for] Plato and sophisticated readers, 'first friends' may be understood either this way or as non-persons which are intrinsically, rather than merely instrumentally valuable to the befrienders" (p. 363). However, in attempted to clarify his position, Curzer later writes: "When persons are first friends, they are non-means, and the friendship is reciprocal. When non-persons are first friends, they are means, and the friendship is non-reciprocal" (p. 366, fn. 38). Even if his position can be made consistent, there are broader reasons for being skeptical of his reading. See my discussion above.

[45] According to Penner and Rowe (2005), the upshot of the theory of attraction presented in the *Lysis* is that "we (as we say) love our children or our friends that they are means to our own happiness — this, even though it may seem to put our children and our friends on a par with mere commodities, these too being (at any rate sometimes and in some circumstances) means to our happiness. The difference between our children and (say) our hi-fi equipment is that, as we put in in the previous chapter …. our children and friends

approaches are beset with opposite obstacles. While the first is forced to relegate wisdom to an instrumental role in interpersonal φιλία, the second cannot explain what fundamentally distinguishes a friendship based on philosophy from any other.

Contrary to the first approach as I have attempted to articulate and defend through the course of this dissertation, the idea that any friendship let alone that of the highest form could exist in the absence of benefit, particularly the benefit that derives from knowledge or wisdom, is an idea that is altogether foreign to the *Lysis*. This is not to say, of course, that Plato doesn't challenge conventional understandings of love and friendship in the dialogue. But as has been seen through the course of this dissertation, he does so not by rejecting the notion of advantage or benefit but by clarifying the source of such benefit in a way that resolve problems with these conventional understandings.[46]

What is crucially absent on the second approach is a qualitative distinction between different types of benefit and benefitting, a distinction that is mirrored, as was seen in chapter 6, section 5(b-c), by one between different types of knowledge or wisdom: one

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are 'at very nearly the highest level of means to our own good', while our hi-fi equipment will be a much lower-level means – if it is a means at all" (p. 260; see also pp. 33-36, 257-60). While I agree with their view that our love for other people depends on a beneficial relation, on my reading Plato distinguishes between two types of interpersonal φιλία: ordinary or non-philosophical friendships that are derive their benefit ultimately from some type of technical knowledge; and philosophical friendships that are based in a mutual love for philosophical wisdom.

[46] The diametrically opposite view is proposed by Nichols (2009). She argues that rather than philosophy serving as a model for friendship, it is conventional φιλία that serves as the model for philosophy. Rather than challenging the conventional model, then, Nichols reads Plato to adopt the much more conservative stance of accepting and reaffirming the convention. In his review of her book, Gonzalez (2010) points out that Nichols' reading strains the text both at its outset and close. Despite acknowledging that, in his initial private conversation with Lysis, Socrates "stretches the word 'kindred' beyond its ordinary meaning" (p. 164), she interprets him as highlighting the dangers of challenging the conventional sense of 'οἰκεῖος' (p. 165). Moreover, Nichols denies that the final scene of the *Lysis* — in which the tutors interrupt the conversation despite Socrates and the boys' protests — illustrates any opposition between philosophy and the political community (pp. 190-191). Yet, as Gonzalez argues, her conclusion that "philosophy defines itself in terms of ordinary human experience" ignores the details of the text. Nevertheless, I disagree with Gonzalez conclusion that "[there] is … absolutely nothing conventional or conservative about the conception of friendship and community developed in the dialogue" (p. 4). It equally fails to do justice to the nature of Plato's project in the *Lysis*, which as I have argued throughout is a clarificatory rather than revisionist one in the strong sense of a wholesale rejection of the conventional Greek understanding of love and friendship.

technical and the other philosophical.[47] These distinctions are exhibited in the different ways that Lysis is loved by his parents and by Socrates. While Lysis' parents love their son, they nevertheless do so on the basis of qualities that are still contingent and circumstantial, i.e. ones that are extrinsic to Lysis' true nature (φύσις). It is Socrates alone who loves and values Lysis on account of that nature, which is his philosophically inclined soul. Socrates does so, moreover, not simply because it is Lysis' nature but because it is something intrinsically good and beautiful that is essential and constitutive to what makes Lysis the intermediate type of being that he is.[48]

The *Lysis* thus ends with a kind of a paradox. On the one hand, the types of φιλία based on the kinds of knowledge that we may fully grasp are and always will be impermanent in nature. On the other hand, the type of φιλία based on the kind of knowledge that is perpetually incomplete is the only lasting type of φιλία so far as is humanly possible.[49]

[47] The only commentator to really notice this to my knowledge is Gonzalez (1995), p. 83. However, he does not explain in any depth how this distinction emerges as central to the dialogue's argument. What he leaves largely implicit, I've tried to make explicit, particularly in the last two chapters. Cf. my discussion in the appendix, sect. 2.

[48] My reading here is influenced by Sheffield (2011); see esp. pp. 262-70. However, Sheffield sees these conceptual distinctions as ones only apparent in the *Phaedrus*. On her reading, "[the] exploration of friendship in the *Lysis* is inconclusive" (p. 251). As I have attempted to show through the course of this dissertation, the *Lysis* draws just such a distinction between types of φιλία on the basis of the different types of knowledge or wisdom they are rooted in.

[49] A number of commentators have seen the *Lysis* as arguing for the possibility of multiple forms of φιλία; e.g. Hoerber (1959), Hayden (1983), Pangle (2001), Jenks (2005). On my reading, the *Lysis* allows for two types of friendship based on the two types of knowledge or wisdom, technical and philosophical. I discuss the rationale for this twofold distinction further in the appendix, sect. 2.

APPENDIX

The *Lysis'* Place in the Platonic Corpus

The *Lysis* is indeed a difficult work to characterize. On the one hand, it lends itself to underestimation as an unripe meditation. It is a work brimming with youth both in its personae and subject matter. Absent is any sign of resistance or hostility to Socratic philosophy of the likes found elsewhere.[1] Here, perhaps more than any other place in Plato's dialogues, Socrates approaches the mode of a teacher. And yet at the same time the *Lysis* is a work of immense subtlety. From its very outset the dialogue reflects back on itself, informing what proceeded in a manner that demands the utmost attention of its readers. It requires as much to see that, far from indecisive, the *Lysis* deals not simply with ἔρως or φιλία but the interrelation between them. While then addressing problems faced by adolescents with adolescent interlocutors, the dialogue is anything but adolescent in its argument.

It is this complex nature of the *Lysis* that has made it difficult to situate in the Platonic corpus. Most of the attention that has been devoted to doing so has focused naturally on its relation to the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, the two other Platonic works that address the topics of love and friendship. But how are we supposed to understand this relationship? Is the *Lysis* a prelude of sorts, albeit one more sophisticated than has previously been

[1] There are no challenges of the likes presented by Callicles in the *Gorgias* and Thrasymachus in *Republic* I. The one indication of some type of hostility is found in the encounter with the boys' tutors at the end of the dialogue (223a-b). However, this hostility is not indicative of resistance to Socrates *per se*. As was noted in ch. 1, tutors regularly accompanied boys to the gymnasia as a means of protection against ἐρασταὶ in general, the Hermaea festival being one notable exception.

credited, to these larger works?[2] Or is it in fact Plato's Socrates' last word on the questions pertaining to love and friendship?[3]

Addressing these questions unavoidably entails contextualizing them within the much larger debate between 'developmentalists' and 'unitarians' regarding the interrelationship between Plato's dialogues. This at least century-and-a-half long debate is, of course, one that cannot be settled in the space of a single appendix.[4] Fortunately, such a task is not required here. While the respective merits and drawbacks of these heuristic perspectives are important to have in view, I will argue that any attempt to arbitrate this debate ultimately still leaves much room for interpreting the significance of the *Lysis* in Plato's philosophical landscape.

I will begin by briefly surveying the developmental and unitarian approaches, noting in the process the main obstacles to each approach (section 1). Taking stock in this way, I will suggest, indicates that any attempt to locate the *Lysis* in Plato's corpus must ultimately take root at a more local level, one that examines the particular limitations of the work itself. In the next two sections, I will go on to consider two questions pertaining to the *Lysis*' argumentative limits: one that concerns the source of our attraction to the ultimate object of desire (section 2); and another concerning Socrates' explanation (or lack thereof) of our desiderative shortcomings (section 3). I will argue that while shedding light on these

[2] E.g. Kahn (1996) and Penner and Rowe (2005). Kahn sees the *Lysis* as anticipating views developed in the *Symposium* (pp. 258-81), whereas Penner and Rowe see it as preceding at least the *Phaedrus* (pp. 307-12). I will discuss both views below.

[3] E.g. Gonzalez (1995) and (2010), Nichols (2009), and Zuckert (2009).

[4] The two main contemporary works to tackle this debate are Kahn (1996) and Annas (1999). As both Kahn (p. 38) and Annas (p. 4, fn. 6) note, even broadly construed, developmentalism and unitarianism are not the only alternatives. Another is to read each dialogue separately, making no claims about the connection of ideas between them. As Annas notes, the one commentator to do this rigorously is Grote (1888). According to Grote, "Plato is a searcher, and has no yet made up his mind" (I, 246). "Each of his dialogues has its own point of view, worked out on that particular occasion" (II, 278). However, this approach has not been historically influential.

problems does not in itself resolve the question of the *Lysis*' status in the Platonic corpus, it at least clarifies the type of considerations pertinent to addressing it. I will close with some reflections on the continuity of the *Lysis*' central themes in Plato's writings as a whole (section 4).

1. Locating the *Lysis*

On the developmental approach, which was initially motivated by stylometric studies in the late nineteenth century, the dialogues can be classified in a way that reflects three different stages — an 'early', 'middle', and 'late' stage — in the evolution of Plato's thought.[5] This approach understands Plato to have started his philosophical career writing the shorter "Socratic" or aporetic dialogues that in turn paved the way for his more constructive 'middle' dialogues, which reached their high-water mark with the *Republic*.[6]

[5] The development approach was the dominant approach over at least the last half of the twentieth century. The developmental view was introduced by Karl Friedrich Hermann in 1839 and later developed by commentators such as Guthrie (1975) and Vlastos (1991). Stylometric attempts to substantiate it began with Lewis Campbell's 1867 edition of the *Sophist* and *Statesman*, in which he argued for the late date of these dialogues on the basis of both literary and stylistic observations of features common to them and to the *Philebus*, *Timaeus*, *Critias* and *Laws*. He thus identified what has come to be known as the late group or Group III. Campbell also noticed that the *Theaetetus*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic* have more traits of diction and sentence structure in common with this group than do the other dialogues, recognizing the existence of what has since been identified as the middle group or Group II. Independent attempts to establish the chronology of the dialogues on linguistic grounds were taken up by the German scholars Dittenberger (1881) and Ritter (1888). Another contemporaneous discovery was made by Blass (1874), who, in his history of Attic rhetoric observed that the avoidance of hiatus, systematically practiced by Isocrates, is adopted by Plato in only a few of his works, including the *Phaedrus*, but above all in the six dialogues independently identified by Campbell as the late group. The first attempt to bring these studies together was made by Lutoslawski (1897); subsequent such attempts to establish a sequence for all the dialogues on stylometric grounds have been made by Ledger (1989) and Brandwood (1990). For a survey of the history of the developmental approach, see Kahn (1996), pp. 38-48.

[6] Since many of the dialogues traditionally regarded as Socratic fell in the earliest of the three groups of dialogues established on stylometrical grounds, such studies seemed to confirm the developmental approach. This development has often been identified as a move away from the position of the historical Socrates himself to a phase where Plato innovates his own views. This view is developed by Guthrie (1975) and Vlastos (1991). However, attempts to establish the philosophy of the historical Socrates independently of Plato's dialogues have been called into question; see esp. Kahn, pp, 73-87. Annas points out: "[Even] if we are skeptical as to our getting enough independent of a hold on Socrates to find a development from the historical Socrates to Plato, and take it that Socrates in Plato is just that, Plato's Socrates, there still remains, for us modern interpreters, an internal Socratic problem: there might still be a transition from Plato's version of Socrates to Plato's own ideas. And this is, I think, the current orthodox view, if any can be called orthodox:

Philosophically speaking, this transition is seen to be marked by two major developments. Relinquished is the 'early' Socratic view of the soul as something thoroughly rational, along with its correlative stance that virtue, understood to a type of knowledge, is sufficient for happiness. Developed in its place is a tripartite psychology that, while retaining the constitutive role of virtue in the happy life, nevertheless acknowledges the necessity of non-rational habituation within the appropriate political context. Accompanying this new moral psychology is also a metaphysical framework that locates the objects of moral knowledge in the Forms.

The *Lysis*, with its Socratic moral psychology, explicitly aporetic ending, and lack of explicit appeal to any notion of the Forms,[7] is seen on the developmental reading to fall squarely among the early group of dialogues. Alongside such other works as *Euthyphro*, *Laches*, and *Protagoras*, which are devoted to the more familiar Socratic task of inquiring into the nature of the virtues or their interrelation, the *Lysis* is seen as an early attempt by Plato to work out the implications of a Socratic view of desire.[8]

Developmentalism has been met with criticisms on two fronts. First, its critics have argued that stylometric efforts to substantiate the developmental approach fails by its own standards because such orderings of the dialogues in terms of grammatical style fall short of offering a single, linear arrangement that matches a developmental reading of the dialogues understood in terms of philosophical content.[9] Although this criticism has been

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many scholars believe in the development of Plato's through from the early to the middle dialogues, without necessarily taking a stand on the external Socratic problem" (1999, pp. 25-6).

[7] However, several commentators have argued that what 'οἰκεῖον' ultimately refers to is in fact the Platonic Form of the Good; e.g. Glaser (1935); Levin (1971); Peters (2001). Cf. ch. 6, fn. 30.

[8] Cf. e.g. Glidden (1980) and (1981); Irwin (1995); and Penner and Rowe (2005).

[9] This intermediate group of dialogues, defined in terms of content, includes at least two or three — the *Symposium*, *Phaedo*, *Cratylus* — that stylistically fall into the earlier group. Moreover, defined stylistically, the intermediate group excludes these dialogues but includes the *Parmenides* and *Theaetetus*, two works

substantiated through stylometric comparisons, one may nevertheless question how reasonable such a high standard is for tracking the maturation of something as fluid as writing style. Developmentalists may concede that a single linear ordering may indeed be impossible to establish, while still maintaining that the more modest achievement of establishing roughly three stylistically distinct groups of dialogues is enough to substantiate a broadly developmental reading.[10]

An arguably more pressing problem with the developmental reading lies in its methodological assumptions. Even if it were possible to establish a stylometric ordering of the dialogues that perfectly aligns with a development reading in terms of philosophical content, this would not be enough to confirm that Plato's thought took shape in the manner that this approach depicts. One would still need to assume that Plato's writings do indeed faithfully reflect his intellectual autobiography. In other words, the developmental reading implicitly relies on the assumption that what Socrates argues for in any particular dialogue

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generally considered "late" dialogues from the standpoint of content. "One should also note here that the results of stylometric analysis, if strictly interpreted, actually locate the *Symposium* — normally treated, in the modern period, as a 'middle' dialogue — as one of the *earliest* group of works (admittedly very large) in the Platonic corpus, along with the *Lysis* (Penner and Rowe, p. 305, fn. 24). Moreover, the attempt to establish a complete linear ordering for the dialogues on stylometric grounds has produced no consensus after a century of work. "And this is what we might expect, since the attempt is based upon the fallacious assumption that chronological order will in every case be reflected in stylistic change. Although many if not all studies confirm the division into three groups, two different studies — even two studies by the same scholar — rarely if ever produce the same ordering for dialogues within each group" (Kahn 1996, pp. 38-48). A related problem is the fact that at least some dialogues seem to contain philosophical aspects characteristic of two different groups. Fundamental to the developmental view is that there is a marked transition between the aporetic "early" works, and the non-aporetic, doctrine-espousing "middle" works that is to be explained in terms of a growth in Plato's philosophical confidence: after first faithfully depicting Socrates as an *ad hominem* questioner based on the latter's own manner of philosophizing, Plato goes on to presents him as an expounder of doctrine that he, the student, builds on his teacher's edifice. However, this general approach runs seems incapable of explaining instances where Plato presents Socrates *in the same dialogue* as *both* the questioner of other's pretensions, with no position of his own, *and* as the expounder of doctrine. In such cases, it would seem inapt to appeal to a broader trend in the overall scope of Plato's works in order to render consistent passages that occur within the same dialogue. See Annas' (1999) discussion, pp. 18-21.

[10] Attempts "to establish a linear ordering, stylometry in the last hundred years… has served only to obscure, and hence undermine confidence in, the one solid, objective (or at least, reliably intersubjective) result of the chronological studies that began with Campbell. This is the modest but decisive achievement of dividing the dialogues into three groups." Kahn (1996), pp. 45-6.

(or, in the case of some 'later' dialogues, what the main speaker in question argues for) reflects Plato's own philosophical convictions at the time of composition.[11] However, we have a *prima facie* reason not to read the dialogues in this manner, for it arguably negates the purpose of writing in a dialogue form in the first place. The primary philosophical advantage of the dialogue as a literary form is the fact that it allows the author to effectively distance themselves from the arguments presented in order to compel the reader consider the arguments for themselves rather than taking them on authority.[12] It is hard not to imagine that this aspect played a fundamental role in Plato's own motivation for appropriating the genre in the first place. Yet this authorial distance would effectively be eliminated, along with any advantage a philosophical dialogue has over a straightforward treatise, if discerning Plato's thinking were simply a matter of considering what is advocated for by the character of Socrates (or the main speaker in question).

It is these very methodological considerations that have revived a unitarian approach to the dialogues: the view that, together, they express a single, unified philosophical vision and their variety is best explained on pedagogical grounds rather than in terms of a fundamental change in Plato's philosophy.[13] The dialogue form is uniquely suited to this

[11] Cf. Annas (1999), pp. 26-7.
[12] Cf. Kahn (1996), pp. 59-70; Annas (1999), ch. 1; and Wolfsdorf (2004).
[13] The unitarian approach was the predominant approach from ancient times up until the nineteenth century. Annas (1999) does not herself defend a particular version of this approach but rather explores this tradition as it existed among Neoplatonist, Stoic, and Skeptical writers, a tradition well summed up by Arius Didymus, who writes: "Plato has many voices, not, as some think, many doctrines" (p. 9, *Eclogae* 2). Modern Unitarians include Schleiermacher, von Arnim, Shorey, Jaeger, Friedlander, and the Tubingen school. For discussion, see Kahn (1996), pp. 38-9. The unitarian approach does not preclude that there was *any* development in Plato's thought. Rather, it precludes only a *single* definitive order purporting to be reflective of his philosophical development, according to which he moved from one set of ethical and metaphysical positions to another, incompatible set. Such an approach, however, is still compatible with a reading of the dialogues on which they offer different approaches to the same problems, and changes of view one some issues overlap and coexisting with unchanged views on other issues. "It is a far cry from this to the assumption that there is a development in Plato's thought which is systematic and linear, changing from one position to another where the two cannot be held simultaneously. It is this much stronger assumption which is often found, and one sign of this

task, according to unitarians, precisely because it facilitates an 'ingressive' mode of progressive disclosure, i.e. a process of initiating a philosophical reader through incrementally higher and more difficult levels of understanding. On this ingressive model, the dialogues are best understood not in terms of their place in Plato's intellectual biography but rather their function within the dialogues conceived as a whole. In the case of the "early" or "Socratic" dialogues, this function is primarily a propaedeutic one; they are meant to prepare the reader for the more metaphysically robust views presented in such "middle" works as the *Symposium*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic*.[14] Key in this respect are the aporetic nature of the Socratic dialogues. The explicitly negative conclusions of these dialogues, which are often offset with implicit suggestions towards a positive thesis about the topic in question, are understood as intended to bring the reader to the first stage of enlightenment: a recognition and appreciation of the types of problems that a philosophical life is called to address.

On the standard unitarian approach, the *Lysis* is best understood in this propedeutic vein as a work purposefully crafted to introduce the philosophical neophyte to the problems that arise out of erotic and friendly desire. By bringing the reader to grasp these

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is the related assumption that there is such a thing as *the* order of the dialogues, that is, that the dialogues can be placed in a single definitive order reflective the development of Plato's thought" (Annas 1999, p. 12). This approach doesn't even preclude a general division of Plato's dialogues into three separate groups – early, middle, and late – so long as that division is understood not in terms of Plato's own intellectual development, but rather of a systematic disclosure of his philosophical outlook. This latter approach is maintained by Kahn (1996), see esp. pp. 47-8.

[14] According to Kahn, the early works can adequately be understood only from the perspective of these middle works: "Evidence in support of this claim will be of two kinds. On the one hand, we find passages in the threshold dialogues that are enigmatic, puzzling, or somehow problematic, for which the solution or clarification will be provided by a text or a doctrine in the middle dialogues. And on the other hand, we find texts in the middle dialogues that deliberately emphasize their continuity with ideas and formulations familiar from the earlier works. An example of the first sort is the gradual emergence of the terminology for dialectic. An example of the second sort will be the formula for the Forms, presented in the *Phaedo* and repeated in the *Republic*, which unmistakably echoes the *what-is-X?* question of the dialogues of definition" (1996, p. 60).

problems, the *Lysis* can be seen to prepare them for the types of considerations found in more metaphysically provocative works such as the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*.[15]

However, the standard unitarian reading gives rise to questions of its own. In particular, it presupposes a set of criteria for determining how to read the dialogues in an 'ingressive' manner. Ingression or immersion into the Platonic worldview, on this reading, is primarily a matter of exposure to the metaphysical worldview of the Forms. Yet, it is possible to appeal to other aspects of the dialogues that suggest a different model of progressive disclosure. One such aspect is the chronological setting of the dialogues.[16] In addition to the authorial distance it affords, another advantage of the dialogue form — one discussed in ch. 1 — is its ability to convey a dramatic chronology. The dialogue form was a particularly effective genre for writing about the past. Plato's contemporaries would easily have been able to discern the dramatic dates of the dialogues and as a result the respective ages of Socrates and the other characters at the times these conversations are represented as having taken place.[17] Through the dialogue form, Plato thus made it possible for his readers

[15] Aside from the pedagogical advantages of the dialogue form, Kahn argues that another "consideration that lies behind Plato's reluctance to disclose his philosophical position goes deeper and is more difficult to formulate. The ingressive mode of exposition has, I suggest, been chosen by Plato because of his acute sense of the psychological distance that separates his world view from that of his audience. …. it would be difficult to overstate the discrepancy between this view of human destiny and the typical attitudes and values of Greek society in the fifth and fourth centuries BC. The world we know from Attic tragedy and comedy, from the history of Thucydides and the pleading of the orators, is a world of petty pride, heroic passion, ordinary lust and greed, unlimited ambition and utter ruthlessness. In such a world the metaphysical vision just described seems almost grotesquely out of place" (1996, pp. 66-7).

[16] "[For] the ancient Platonists[,]" Annas explains, "there was no such thing as *the* order of the dialogues; there were many orders, and the differences between them were seen as significant only from a pedagogical point of view. … One is an ordering of the dialogues in terms of their dramatic dates" (1999, p. 27).

[17] As was discussed in ch. 1, ancient Athens was an age-class society, which used a system of year-heroes a way of demarcating the year that a cohort would leave childhood and become official members of the tribe. "This system, of course, could be very useful for those writing about the past. All Plato's dialogues, for instance, are set in a prior era. Written after 400 BC, they evoke real historical figures who flourished before that date, notably the people around Socrates, who was executed at Seventy in 399. It would be relatively straightforward therefore for Plato to know how old any of his characters were at any time, and how old relative to one another; all he had to do was find out their year-hero, and then go down to the town centre and calculate that when someone in year 'This Hero' was a Stripling at Eighteen, then someone in year 'That

to compare different conversations that Socrates engaged in at different points in the philosopher's life.

Contrary to the standard unitarian model, the dramatic chronology of the dialogues indicate that Plato intended his readers to imagine the conversation related in the *Lysis* as having occurred well after both of the conversations in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*.[18] Taken seriously as an organizing principle for reading the dialogues, dramatic chronology suggests that, rather than a preparatory work for these other dialogues, the *Lysis* should be understood more as retrospective dialogue, reflecting Plato's Socrates' later thoughts on love and friendship. Nor is this principle an implausible guide for assessing the philosophical content of these dialogues. Unlike the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, the *Lysis* is arguably the only one of the three to address in a systematic way the problems of both love and friendship and — if the main thesis of this dissertation is correct — to do so successfully.[19] Moreover, perhaps evincing this theoretical success, it may be argued that

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Hero' was Twenty-Eight, someone in year 'The Other Hero' had just become a Senior, and so on. Sometimes, of course, his characters were still alive, and well known to his audience, thus giving extra vividness to a previous epoch. Readers might know Lysis as a mature man, or even a venerable old man, Seventy to their Fifty. So when Plato introduces him in *Lysis* as a Boy not yet Eighteen, you would have a vivid sense of how long ago the dialogue was set. It was like having a human date-chart set out in front of you" (Davidson 2007, p. 77).

[18] Nails (2003) has the *Phaedrus* fictionally set sometime between 418-16 BC, the *Symposium* in February, 416, and the *Lysis* in the early Spring of 409 (pp. 314-17). See also Zuckert (2009), pp. 510-11. The dramatic date of the conversation Socrates narrates in the *Lysis* is indicated primarily by the age of two of the participants, Ctesippus and Menexenus, in relation to their depiction in the *Euthydemus* and the *Menexenus*. It is possible to date the *Lysis* around the same time or shortly after the *Euthydemus* based on the roles that Ctesippus occupies both dialogues. In the *Euthydemus*, he is shown to learn eristics from the sophistic brothers, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, whereas in the *Lysis* he is said to have himself taught Menexenus the ways of eristic argumentation (211c5). As was noted at the outset of this dissertation, Socrates himself is depicited as already an old man (γέρων ἀνήρ, 223b5) at the time when the *Lysis* is depicted as taking place.

[19] As both Penner and Rowe (pp. 300-3) and Sheffield (pp. 252-4) argue, the *Symposium* does not address the issue of φιλία in any systematic way, but is concerned mainly with the problem of individual happiness. While the *Phaedrus* arguably addresses both topics, as Sheffield proposes through the course of her article, it does not do so with nearly the same explicitness of focus as the *Lysis*. Cf. ch. 7, fn. 48. Zuckert (2009) argues that the *Lysis* contains a critique of both the definitions of love presented in the two earlier dialogues. "In the *Symposium* Socrates (in the guise of Diotima) suggested that human *eros* begins with the desire for a particular beautiful young person but that it culminates in the love of the beautiful itself. In the *Lysis* he

the *Lysis* also represents a practical success in a way that the other two dialogues do not. It is the only one of the three in which Socrates is depicted as actually succeeding in developing a friendship.[20]

Nor is the fact that the *Lysis* contains no mention of the Forms on its own a decisive indication of the function of the dialogue in the larger corpus. There are many factors that may account for this, one in particular being the maturity of his interlocutors. Yet this does not necessarily entail that Plato requires, at the same time, a different level of maturity on the part of his readers. From the author's perspective, a full understanding of the *Lysis* may presuppose that his reader is familiar with the Forms even though he is not addressing them explicitly.[21]

These considerations do not, of course, constitute a decisive critique of the standard unitarian approach any more than are those that were seen to have been leveled against

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argues that the erotic desire to possess what we now lack, even if that is what is held to be most dear, the *proton philon*, does not constitute an adequate definition of friendship. In the first place, the relation is not mutual. He who holds the good – or knowledge – most dear is not himself held to be dear (or a friend). Nor does the 'friendship' last, if the desire is satisfied and the good possessed. In the *Phaedrus* Socrates had thus suggested that a lover perceives the image of the god he would become, if he could, in the case of his beloved. The lover's attempts to enable his beloved to realize the potential indicated by is imaging of the divine arouse a reciprocal affection and corresponding desire to improve him on the part of the beloved. As lover and beloved change roles, they become more like and their desire mutually felt. In the *Lysis*, however, Socrates points out not only that all 'loves' are not mutual, but also that people who do the same things tend to compete with each other. The friendships he seeks to establish with his young associates are not relations among people who are or ever become completely alike" (p. 511). See also Nichols (2009), pp. 154-55. While I disagree in large part with both Zuckert and Nichols, their interpretations are important insofar as they serve as not-so-implausible examples of how the *Lysis* might be read as philosophically developing on the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* rather than the other way around.

[20] "Some years after Socrates leaves Agathon's dinner party with Aristodemus in town, and a few years after Socrates follows Phaedrus outside of the city walls to hear Lysias' speech, Socrates discusses friendship with two young boys at a palaestra. He admits to them and the others present that ever since he was young he desired to acquire friends, but he is so far from succeeding that he does not even know how one becomes a friend of another (211d-212b). If we can take Socrates at his word, he counts neither Aristodemus nor Phaedrus as a friend. When Phaedrus asks to be included in Socrates' prayer at the end of the dialogue bearing his name, because "the things of friends are common," Socrates says only "let us go [back to the city]" (279c). Socrates' response can be contrasted with his remark at the end of the *Lysis* that he considers himself and his two young interlocutors to be friends (223b)" (Nichols 2009, p. 152). For a similar reading of Socrates' relationship with Aristodemus in the *Symposium*, see Nightingale (1993), pp. 121-3.

[21] On such a reading, the 'first friend' would constitute a type of place-holder for the Forms.

the developmentalist approach. Together, however, these considerations do point to certain limitations to the types of resolutions that a debate of this global nature affords. On the one hand, if one restricts the options to developmentalism and the standard unitarian view, one may well question to what extent a debate exists at all. For all their purported differences, it is possible for these approaches to substantially overlap; it may well be the case that some order or orders of the dialogues represent *both* an intellectual biography *and* a unified philosophical vision, one that Plato conceived more or less from the outset of his writing career.[22] On the other hand, if we take seriously, as ancient commentators did (cf. fns. 13 and 16 above) criteria for understanding the unity of the dialogues beyond those maintained by the standard unitarian approach, a difficult question arises concerning how we are to evaluate different, and possibly conflicting, criteria. On what basis, if any, could we establish a priority of one type of 'progressive disclosure' over another?

Addressing such global questions is beyond the scope of this appendix. The more modest aim of what remains is to consider what we can glean regarding the place of the *Lysis* in the Platonic corpus on the basis of its own philosophical resources and limitations. What specific problems do they resolve and which issues do they leave open to further inquiry? In what remains, I will consider what I take my dissertation to have shown to be the two questions about love and friendship that Plato leaves unanswered in the *Lysis*, each of which I alluded to in previous chapters.[23] The first concerns the source of our attraction to the ultimate object of φιλία. What is it about the good *per se* that Plato thinks makes it attractive to us in a qualitatively different way than remedial goods? The second concerns

[22] This is essentially Kahn's view (1996), see esp. pp. 47-70. He writes: "The different stages of Group I provides us with various points of entry, various degrees of ingress, into the Platonic thought-world that finds its fullest expression in the *Republic*" (p. 48).
[23] Cf. ch. 6, section 5(c) and ch. 7, section 4.

Socrates' explanation — or lack thereof — of our desiderative shortcomings. Why, given our desire for this object, do we largely fail to appropriate it or to make it our own?

Through an examination of how these questions arise and what resources, however limited, the *Lysis* offers towards their resolution, I will argue that the dialogue is, most of all, a testament to the versatility of the Platonic corpus. While the *Lysis* can indeed be read prospectively, as looking forward to doctrines developed in other dialogues, particularly the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, it can also be read retrospectively, as implicitly presupposing such doctrines developed more fully elsewhere. Examining the limits of the *Lysis*, I will argue, reveals just how unlimited a reading of his dialogues Plato affords his readers.

2. The Object of Φιλία

As a way of explaining instances of friendly love that go unaccounted for on the remedial view, Socrates was seen to argue that such instances derive from a desire for what is οἰκεῖον or akin to us, that is, something that belongs to us although in some sense we have also been deprived of it. As was suggested at the time (ch. 7, sect. 1a), one way to understand the difference between desires for remedial goods and οἰκεῖον-desires is in terms of their essential or non-essential relation to human nature. While remedial desires depend on contingent aspects of particular circumstances (e.g. whether one is sick or not), our desires for what is οἰκεῖον to us are essential to our natures as desiring agents. However, while this explanation may help to differentiate remedial- from οἰκεῖον-desires, it does not explain what makes these οἰκεῖα, or things that uniquely belong to us, attractive to us in the first place. What is it about οἰκεῖα such that we would be attracted to them even in the absence of any evils altogether? As was discussed in ch. 6 (sect. 5c), Socrates offers what seems to be the beginnings of a potential answer to this question in terms of the role

played by beauty. However, as abruptly as Socrates introduces the notion, it is just as abruptly dropped without any explanation. The *Lysis* thus leaves us without an explicit answer that explains the distinct manner of our attraction to goods that are οἰκεῖα to us as opposed to our desire for remedial goods.

Here is one place where both the developmental and standard unitarian approaches broadly align. Both entail that we need to look beyond the *Lysis* to find a theory that explains our attraction to non-remedial goods, most of all to the *Symposium*.[24] However, a

[24] The relation between the *Lysis* and *Symposium* has been interpreted in at least four ways. (1) One way that the *Symposium* has been read as developing upon the *Lysis* is by suggesting a new moral psychology, or at least casting doubt on the Socratic, monistic model; e.g. Price (1997), p. 254. However, there is little by way of explicit evidence that the *Symposium* marks a departure from the moral psychology of the *Lysis*. Cf. Penner and Rowe, pp. 303-4. (2) Price (1989/1997, pp. 98, 257) also argues that the *Symposium* marks a positive departure from the *Lysis* in terms of defining or explaining φιλία itself. Again, however, there is little concrete evidence in the *Symposium*, in particular Socrates' speech, that suggest a markedly different view from that presented in the *Lysis*. If anything, the *Symposium* is more tacit on the topic of friendship; "the account of the highest immortality we can achieve, albeit concerned with the production of excellence…. is still an account of the good that we all desire for ourselves, or our own happiness" (Penner and Rowe, p, 303; see also Sheffield 2011, pp. 252-4). (3) According to Penner and Rowe, the *Symposium* in fact "adds nothing of *philosophical* substance" to the view of φιλία developed in the *Lysis*: "Although it may appear to give us somewhat different tools to work with, but we remain to be convinced that they are not actually the same as the tools we are offered in the *Lysis*, and that it is more than the presentation of them that is different" (p. 305 ff.). They argue that "the key idea in the *Symposium*, of *eros* as desire for 'procreation in the beautiful' (206c ff.), is in essence a colorful elaboration of Socrates' conclusion about the genuine lover in the *Lysis* 222a6-7, albeit a brilliant – brilliantly colored – and suggestive elaboration." In essence, according to Penner and Rowe, the *Lysis* and *Symposium* offer us exactly the same sort of puzzle: "how to account for our desire for the happiness of others within an egoistic framework" (p. 303). However, this view too seems wrong; the two dialogues do not offer us exactly the same sort of puzzle, for it is the *Lysis* alone that is directly concerned with the problem of how to account for our desire for the happiness of others. Cf. Sheffield: "How persons are valued within a happy life, and whether they are to be loved 'for their own sakes' are further questions not addressed by the Symposium's broad discussion of desire" (p. 253). See also Gonzalez (1995): "The *Lysis* stresses something that the *Symposium* does not, that friendship and love generally are based upon a kinship with the good through which the good belongs to us without being possessed by us. This idea is not incompatible with what is said in the *Symposium*. …. The difference, however, is that while this suggestion is not at all pursued in the *Symposium*, it is the main theme of the *Lysis*" (p. 88).

A more compelling view of the relation between the *Lysis* and the *Symposium* concerns (4) their respective discussions of the relationship between the good and the beautiful. Cf. my discussion in ch. 6, sect. 5(c). Kahn (1996) writes: "This crucial connection between the good and the beautiful [in the *Lysis*] is tossed out by Socrates ("I say that the good is beautiful," 216d2) at a moment when he claims to be giddy with *aporia*, and does not know what he means himself. Plato thus presents us with a series of enigmatic hints that form a kind of puzzle for the uninitiated reader to decipher, but that become intelligible when interpreted from the perspective of Socrates' speech in the *Symposium*. For there again the beautiful will be identified with the good as object of desire (204e), thus establishing the fundamental identity between *eros* as desire for the beautiful and more general human desire for happiness and the good" (p. 267). However, Kahn offers little by way of analysis of either dialogue. In her (2006a) article, Richardson Lear explores in depth the role of beauty

closer reading of the *Lysis* reveals that it poses more than just a problem left to be answered; it also contains, albeit incomplete, the framework of just such a theory that may serve as a solution to this problem. In order to see how both this problem arises in the *Lysis*, as well as how the dialogue contains the basis for addressing it, we must return to a strange passage in which Socrates introduces the remedial view of the φίλος in the first place.

Upon Socrates' initial statement of the remedial account — that "it may rather be something neither-good-nor-bad that will prove after all to be what we call friend to the good" — Menexenus responds confusedly by asking, "How do you mean?" (216c3). Socrates offers an explanation, yet one that does more to mystify than to clarify his initial statement. What it does signal, however, is that for the first time since his discussion with Hippothales in the prologue, his discussion with the boys will focus on irreciprocal love. Indeed, what follows contains a number of allusions to Socrates' initial discussion with Hippothales concerning erotic seduction, and in particular, to his description of the young lover's beloved, Lysis.

In reply to Menexenus' request for clarification, Socrates claims that he is himself dizzy from the argument and unable to properly answer, offering only that he is "inclined to agree with the ancient proverb that the beautiful is friend (τὸ καλὸν φίλον εἶναι)" (216c6-7). What suggests this to him is the elusiveness of the φίλος: "It certainly seems like something soft and smooth and slippery; which is actually why, perhaps, it is easily slipping

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in relation to goodness in the *Symposium*, in the particular, the role that two key attributes of beauty — self-sufficiency (ἱκανὸς αὐτῷ) and steadiness (σταθερότης) — play in Plato's account. See also Richardson Lear (2006b) in this context. In what follows, I argue that the same features are also discernable in the *Lysis*. By showing how in fact they are, I will suggest that, contrary to Kahn, the *Lysis* contains the resources that allow one to read it either prospectively or retrospectively in relation to the *Symposium*.

through our fingers and getting away from us; that is, because it's the sort of thing that does that" (216c7-d2). Socrates' allusion here clearly recalls his suggestion earlier, in his initial discussion with Hippothales, that a beautiful beloved is similarly "difficult to catch" (206c). Upon offering this strange characterization of the φίλος, Socrates subsequently goes on to declare that "the good is beautiful (τάγαθὸν καλὸν εἶναι)" (216d2), and upon gaining Menexenus' agreement, he reiterates his main thesis, this time assuming the role of a diviner in stating that "what is neither-good-nor-bad is friendly to what is *beautiful and good* (τοῦ καλοῦ τε καὶ ἀγαθοῦ) (216d3-5)." This association of the good with the beautiful occurs only one other time in the dialogue, once again in the prologue. There, upon entering the gymnasium and seeing Lysis for the first time, Socrates remarked that the boy was "worth talking about not just for his beauty but for his beauty and goodness (καλός τε κάγαθός)" (207a2-3).

Whatever else this explanation is meant to accomplish, one upshot seems clear: Socrates seems to draw a relation of identity here between the good and the beautiful.[25] And yet nothing is subsequently made of this expansion of the remedial account of the φίλος to include the beautiful; indeed, the latter notion is dropped in Socrates' very next formulation of it (216e6-217a2). Although Socrates never returns to the notion of beauty again in the *Lysis*, as was seen, he does return to the related notion of ἔρως in the context of critiquing the remedial view and proposing in its place his desire theory of the φίλος (220b6-221d6). In addition to arguing that the remedial view offers an inadequate

[25] As Penner and Rowe note, "[one] might suppose here that he was saying that everything good is beautiful, while still allowing that there were some beautiful things that were not also good. However, the fact that he wants nothing less than to identify the good and the beautiful is shown by the fact that, from then on, he treats the object of love exclusively in terms of the good; if anything other than identity were in question, it would be possible for us to love things either because they are good, or because they are beautiful" (pp. 102-3).

explanation of our love for the first friend, Socrates went on to contend that there exist some desires that simply cannot be explained in this way. Socrates does not elaborate on the kinds of desires he has in mind, but he does suggest that erotic love is one of these types of desire.[26] In ch. 6, I suggested that a clue to understanding the desire theory is to view it in light of Socrates' relationship with Lysis. Socrates' own affection towards Lysis seems to be a clear exception to the remedial model of friendly love. He is not attracted to the boy on account of any utility, for as Socrates goes on to demonstrate in their private conversation, Lysis is in fact useless in any practical sense. Rather, Socrates is drawn to the boy on account of his beauty, initially as it is manifested through his handsome exterior, but ever more so as the dialogue progresses as it is manifested through the quality of his soul.[27]

But while Socrates' relationship with Lysis offers a paradigm for conceptualizing the types of desire that he sees as exceptions to the remedial model, on its own it does not explain the basis of this type of attraction. Of course, Socrates will further develop the desire account of the φίλος by explaining that the types of desire in question are desires for what is οἰκεῖον or akin to us. Moreover, as the final *aporia* implicitly suggests, Socrates' erotic desire for Lysis is but a single manifestation of our universal desire for the first friend or good itself, which belongs to or is akin to us given the intermediate type of beings that we are. But rather than explain the basis of this non-remedial form of desire, the

[26] For, as he goes on to conclude, "it is impossible for one who desires (ἐπιθυμοῦντα) and loves passionately (ἐρῶντα) not to love as a friend (φιλεῖν) that which he desires or loves passionately" (221b7-8).

[27] As was seen in the opening chapter, Socrates' walk from the Academy to the Lyceum in pursuit of καλοὶ (beautiful boys) hardly seems to be a quest for friend that will help to rid him of evils. In fact, as his discussion with Lysis revealed, the boy is generally useless in all technical areas of expertise that might be practically useful. Yet Socrates still seeks out the boy's friendship (insofar as he seeks out the friendship of καλοὶ in general) and sees it to be worth pursuing regardless of Lysis' useful to him in any technical sense. Moreover, as the dialogue makes evident, he was justified in his pursuit; Lysis' beautiful exterior faithfully mirrors the internal goodness of a wisdom-loving soul (207a3; 222a2-3).

notion of the akin in fact only serves to repose the problem at a global level: Why exactly do we see the good *per se* as something that belongs to us? What is it about the good — be it philosophical wisdom, a philosophical soul, or something else — that makes us desire it in some categorically distinct way from remedial goods?

In a fashion that one might think typical of a Socratic dialogue, then, the *Lysis* presents its readers with a problem about the source of our attraction to the good that it appears to leave unresolved. One potential way to explain the source of this attraction would be through the relation between the good and the beautiful that Socrates himself alluded to and Plato reinforced through his characterization of Socrates' relationship with Lysis. But as was seen, as abruptly as Socrates introduces the notion of the beautiful, Socrates abandons it. Without an account of the distinct manner in which we are attracted to the beautiful, we are thus left without an explanation for the distinct manner of our attraction to the goods that are οἰκεῖα to us as opposed to our desire for remedial goods.

This would indeed be the case if this were all that the *Lysis* had to offer. In fact, however, the dialogue has more to say, albeit indirectly, about the potential role of beauty in our attraction to the genuine good. Seeing how requires revisiting an even earlier stage in Socrates and the boys' conversation, in particular, their discussion of the views of the wise, and more specifically, Socrates' critique of the view that friendship is based on likeness (ὁμοιότης). There, in the context of arguing that neither the bad nor the good can be friend with each other, Socrates emphasizes two key characteristics of the good: a steadiness (σταθερότης) or unchanging quality, and self-sufficiency (ἱκανὸς αὐτῷ). It is these very qualities, I will suggest, that make οἰκεῖα-goods beautiful and thus attractive in a way categorically distinct from remedial goods.

Socrates draws attention to the first quality in his refutation of the possibility that the bad might be friends with the bad. As was seen (ch. 5, sect. 2a), he offers two criticisms of this possibility: first, that the bad, by definition, could only ever do harm to one another; and second, that bad people lack psychic harmony and therefore the type of stability necessary to be a friend. It is his second critique that is relevant here. Socrates argues that:

> "… those who are bad (κακούς) … are never alike (μηδέποτε ὁμοίους), not even themselves to themselves (αὑτοὺς αὐτοῖς), but are impulsive (ἐμπλήκτους) and unsteady (ἀσταθμήτους); and when a thing is unlike itself and variable it can hardly become like or friend to anything else." (214c7-214d1)

The idea here is that the κακοὶ are so at odd with themselves that they cannot be said to be like themselves, let alone anyone else.[28] By contrast, we can infer here that what distinguishes the good from the bad is their steadiness or unchanging quality. But what, we might ask, does being 'like oneself' have to do with being a φίλος, where that involves benefiting one's friends? The answer seems to be that it is an essential quality of the good that they are unchanging; the good, by definition, always benefits, for if were to change it could only ever become something that harms and could no longer have the essential quality of usefulness that is distinctive of a friend.[29]

The second quality of self-sufficiency is central to Socrates' refutation of the view that good can be friends to each other. As was also seen in ch. 5, sect. 2(a), having first rejected the possibility that the good could be φίλοι insofar as they are alike (καθ᾽ ὅσον ὅμοιος) on the grounds that likeness precludes the ability to provide benefit (ὠφελίαν) to one another, Socrates goes on to argue that neither can the good be φίλοι insofar as they are good (καθ᾽

[28] As was discussed in ch. 5, fn. 17. this idea has precedent earlier in the dialogue. In his private conversation with Lysis, Socrates explains how someone who is not a wise thinker "will be alien to his family, even to those closer to him" (210c2-3), an allusion that seems to refer to one's own self. Cf. Rider (2011), p. 53.
[29] The claim that the good is that which benefits figures prominently in *Republic* I where Socrates argues that the good has a function, namely to benefit (335d3-8); it is the function of the good to benefit, and accordingly the good person benefits everyone (333e-335e). See again ch. 1, sect. 3(b), fn. 73.

ὅσον ἀγαθὸς), for their goodness precludes either of them from needing any benefit to be provided to them.

> '"But again, will not the good, insofar as he is good, be in that measure sufficient for himself (ἱκανὸς)."
> "Yes."
> "And the sufficient has no need (οὐδενὸ δεόμενος) of anything, by virtue of his sufficiency."
> "Of course."
> "And if a man should have no need of anything, he would not long for (ἀγαπῴη ἄν) anything."
> "Presumably not."
> "And that which could not long for anything could not love (ἄν φιλοῖ) anything."
> "I should think not."
> "And one who does not love is no friend."' (215a7-b3)

Insofar as the good agent is self-sufficient, they have no need for anything and thus cannot long for anything outside of themselves. Since he cannot long for anything, he cannot love. Hence, the good cannot be a friend in the sense of being a φιλῶν or lover.[30]

Although Socrates does not explicitly draw a connection between the qualities of steadiness and self-sufficiency, one can see how these two qualities are interconnected. Insofar as the good is self-sufficient and thus in need of nothing, they are unchanging; for to change from a state of self-sufficiency would necessarily entail changing into something opposite.[31] But the opposite of self-sufficiency is a state of neediness and thus dependency. Thus, insofar as the good is by definition self-sufficient, they are also unchanging.

The good *per se* thus appears to have as essential qualities both a steadiness and self-sufficiency. But the question still remains how these qualities are related to the beautiful nature of the good, and in particular, how they serve as the source of our attraction to it. If the source of attractiveness of the first friend or good *per se* derives not from a remedial

[30] Although, as the rest of the dialogue bears out, the self-sufficiency of the good, i.e. wisdom, does not prevent it from being a friend in the sense of being a beloved or φιλούμενος.
[31] Cf. Socrates' argument from opposites at *Phaedo* 70e-72b

capacity but rather from their self-sufficiency and steadiness, why in fact do these qualities make us feel that the good somehow belongs to us? One way of understanding how they might play such a role is by considering our relation to these two types of goods in terms of our intermediary status.

For intermediate being like us, who are continually trying to reduce the presence of the bad in our lives, remedial goods derive their attractiveness from their capacity to relieve us from some necessary evils.[32] It is thus not hard to see why remedial goods culminate in the different forms of technical knowledge, as it is just such things as medicine, carpentry, and household management that fulfill this capacity best. Yet as Socrates' first thought experiment showed (220b6-e6), remedial goods can never serve a role beyond that of a cure or remedy. In the absence of corresponding evils, such goods would have no further use. Their attractiveness, therefore, derives from their capacity to relieve us from the evils that accompany human life as a matter of mortal or physical necessity. Were that necessity somehow removed or eliminated, so too would be the source of attractiveness of remedial goods.

If the good *per se* does not derive its attractiveness from its capacity to relieve us from necessary evils, why do we find it attractive? One answer is that its attractiveness derives precisely from the fact that it is separated from this order of necessity. It is in this context

[32] The same dichotomy is arguably found in the *Symposium.* Cf. Richardson Lear (2006): "It may help to consider a case of being moved to act by an experience of good that is not at the same time an experience of beauty. I have in mind painful or embarrassing or just tedious medical treatments. The ordinary patient does not find these treatments beautiful and may in fact be repelled by them, considered just in themselves. Even if a person chooses medical treatment because, ultimately, he wants immortal happiness, it seems thoroughly unreasonably to describe his choice as "giving birth in the beautiful." If a good thing does not strike a person as beautiful, then I cannot see how its beauty functions as a midwife. It is heartening to notice that every example Diotima mentions of giving birth in beauty is a case in which the lover is actually attracted by his beloved's beauty. This suggests that Socrates thinks of giving birth in beauty as a special case of the universal pursuit of perfect happiness" (p. 14).

that one can see the qualities of self-sufficiency and steadiness playing an important role as the basis of the true good's attractiveness. As intermediate beings, we desire not only goods that relieve us of our temporary evils, but also the type of good that helps us to transcend this world of temporal evils. Insofar as we see the good as something that belongs to us, we also see ourselves as belonging to a divine order that is distinct from our physical existence. The self-sufficiency and steadiness of the good *per se* remind us that our true happiness consists beyond simply the alleviating of transitory evils.[33]

In this sense, then, the *Lysis* gestures towards yet another kind of 'loosening' or 'dissolving'; one not simply from parental authority, blood relations, and conventional mores, but a freedom from physical necessity itself. This freedom is one that is exemplified through the very action of Socrates' conversation with the boys. Just like the Hermaea festival, their philosophical conversation is a respite from ordinary life as it is lived by everyone else aside from Socrates.[34] Of course, this reprieve cannot last. Insofar as the boys are forcibly dragged home at the tutors' hands, the company is dragged back into the world of remedial necessity.

3. Desiderative Failure in the *Lysis*

As was also seen in chapters 6 and 7, while Socrates introduces the category of the intermediate as a part of the remedial account of the φίλος, this notion is one that survives

[33] It is this view of the role of beauty that Richardson Lear discerns in the *Symposium*. As she writes: "The divine is beautiful because it manifests its immortal possession of the good. This is why Diotima says that beauty in all things harmonizes with the divine and is the midwife of creativity. Most of the time, we go through life with our heads down, being mortal, thinking mortal thoughts. We are absorbed in ordinary prudential calculation, figuring out how to get food, and clothes, and other goods for tomorrow and the next day and the next. Beauty — the manifestation of godlike permanence and self-sufficiency — reminds us that our aspirations for happiness are of a different order' (2006, p. 19).

[34] The difference between these two types of lives is epitomized at the dialogue's closing through the contrast between Socrates and the boys on the one hand, and the boys' tutors, who have finally returned from the festivities, on the other. While the tutors, who are themselves slaves, have sought relief in the ordinary course of getting drunk on wine, a relief they wear on their appearance (223b1-2), Socrates and the boys are instead "drunk on the λόγοι" (222c1-2).

his critique of this account. The notion of the intermediate is one, then, that remains at the core of the *Lysis*' final say on friendly love. However, this notion itself gives rise to a different problem, one that is also ostensibly left unresolved at the dialogue's end. This problem emerges because, in the course of introducing the category of the intermediate, Socrates seems to identify this group with all lovers of the good, which includes everyone. But not all intermediate agents strive for the good in the same way or to an equal degree. This problem can be seen to be exemplified by the character of Hippothales. As was noted, Hippothales appears to exemplify many of the traits of an intermediate lover. And yet Hippothales seems to fail to grasp in the end what a true relationship with his beloved, Lysis, consists in. The problem, it may seem, is that cognitive failure may not be enough to explain cases like Hippothales: the trifold dichotomy between the bad, the good, and the intermediate is not enough to explain the variety of desiderative failure. What is missing is some further delineation of the types of forces at work within the intermediate agent themselves.

Here again, the developmental and standard unitarian readings broadly align. On these readings, while at the same time as explaining the Socratic view of desire, the *Lysis* points to its limitations. In doing so, it paves the way for a more sophisticated account of desiderative failure, one that allows for the type of psychic conflict found in works like the *Phaedrus*.[35] Once again, however, the *Lysis* contains more resources for addressing this

[35] Representative here is Penner and Rowe, who write: "That the *Lysis* and the *Phaedrus* complement each other, despite their fundamental differences, is in line with our general view that *the* significant doctrinal shift in the Platonic corpus, perhaps even including what are agreed to be the dialogues written last, is that abandonment of Socratic psychology — Socratic intellectualism — which results from the introduction of the theory of irrational (executive) desires in *Republic* IV. It is this shift that makes possible the two different speeches in the *Phaedrus* (237a-24d): *of course* the darling, the beloved, ought to give love to the non-lover…. *if*, that is, all *eros* stemmed from irrational desires, i.e. desires for pleasures as opposed to desires for good. But, as we discover in Socrates' second speech, not all *eros* is like that (though some is). …. The important

problem than has generally been acknowledged. To see how both this problem arises in the context of the *Lysis* as well how it is addressed, we must return once again to Socrates' exposition of the remedial view, and in particular, to its introduction of the notion of the intermediate.

Socrates appeals to this very notion to overcome a problem of desiderative failure in the first place. As the discussion of the views of the wise reveal (ch. 5, sect. 2), both views result in a type of desiderative failure. The view based on likeness preclude the very possibility of friendly love. Since being a φίλος was predicated on a capacity to benefit, and since likeness was measured in terms of such a capacity, likes could not possibly provide any aid or assistance (ἐπικουρίαν) to each other and thus no reason for friendly love between them. In this respect, the view based on unlikeness seemed to fair better. Since what characterized a pair of unlikes is a disparity with respect to some capacity to benefit, it is precisely this disparity that might serve as the basis of their φιλία.[36] Yet while the view based on unlikeness did not preclude the possibility of friendly love in general, it had the

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contrast, there in the first speech, is between two kinds of things — evidently intended as mutually exclusive — which rule and lead us: the desire for pleasure that is in our nature and the acquired judgment which aims at what is best. These, the first speech tells us, when in situations of conflict, involve the one dragging us irrationally towards pleasure, the strength of the other leading us to what is best. This particular version of *eros*, based entirely on the desire for pleasure that is in our nature, is lumped together with gluttony and drunkenness as another form of a polymorphous *hubris* (an 'excess' that 'has many names', 238a2). ….Thus the only form of *eros* envisaged in the first speech is one that produces action solely by means of irrational desires for what is immediately pleasant: something that is always dragging us away from wisdom…..The dismal picture of *eros* in Socrates' first speech leads to his recantation in his second, the 'palinode'. Now, in this second speech, *eros* is no longer restricted to irrational appetite for the pleasure of the moment. In fact the he primary case of *eros* that is considered in the palinode is, we would argue, all but identical with the very case of ('genuine') *eros* that Socrates puts before us in the *Lysis*. We now have *eros* originating, in the primary or best form, from the rational part of the soul — and after that we are given a second-best form, still higher than the degenerate *eros* of the appetitive ('hubristic', 'excessive') part of the soul, originating from the part of the soul having to do with honor." Thus, according to Penner and Rowe, "the palinode of the *Phaedrus* strongly confirms the account of *eros*, and of *philia* that we have presented in our account of the *Lysis*. The palinode sees Plato restoring *Socratic* friendship and *eros* to the best human beings after the disaster that befalls most humans as a result of the parts of the soul doctrine — the disaster that consists in the degenerate *eros* of appetite" (2005, pp. 308-12).

[36] For instance, the sick person and the doctor are friends precisely because the sick person lacks health and the doctor possesses the skill that can provide them with it.

opposite problem of entailing too many cases of friendly love. In particular, it entailed that the bad could be a friend to the good. This in turn entailed the familiar problem that it ran contrary to the 'golden rule' of conventional φιλία, according to which someone or thing — i.e. the good — could not be a friend to something else that was harmful to it — the bad. But this consequence also entailed a new problem pertaining to desiderative failure. It entailed that someone or thing — in this case, the bad — could be a friend to something else that it didn't recognize as good or beneficial for them. Socrates' critique of the view based on unlikeness thus lay bare a further criterion for φιλία: the conditions for friendly desire include not only a need for some benefit, but also in some sense a recognition or awareness of that need.[37]

It is to address this issue that Socrates introduces the category of the intermediate and the associated notion of presence (cf. ch. 6, sects. 1-2). What is novel about Socrates' new account is the notion of contamination it entails; because the intermediate perpetually exists in a state in-between the good and the bad, it is constantly subject to the presence or absence of each. As Socrates goes on to show, it is the presence of evils and the absence of their corresponding goods that explains why the intermediate loves (φιλεῖν) — and thus unlike the bad — can be a friend to the good.[38] In the course of his critique of the remedial view of the φίλος, Socrates dispenses with the notion of presence, at least as a way of

[37] 'Recognition' or 'awareness' in a broad sense here. If we recall, Socrates explains the remedial account both in personal and impersonal terms, i.e. in terms of a sick person's relationship with their doctor as well as an ill body's desire for the medical craft (217a3-b4).

[38] As was seen in ch. 6, sect. 2, central to this account is a fundamental distinction between two types of presence (τὸ παρόν): partial and complete presence. An intermediate entity that is affected by the partial presence of the bad is one that, while contaminated by the bad, has not thoroughly become bad. In such a case, the presence of the bad causes the intermediate entity to desire the good corresponding to the evil that is present. However, an intermediate entity can become so completely contaminated by the presence of the bad that it deprives it of its desire for and love of the good (217a-218a).

accounting for our desire for the first friend or good *per se*.[39] However, as was seen in the dialogue's final *aporia*, he never relinquishes the notion of the intermediate itself. Here the criterion of recognition is transformed. In the case of the good *per se*, the formal conditions of friendly love are the same. What is required is a need and some recognition of that need. However, both this need and the recognition of it do not derive from the presence of some evil. Rather, they derive from our kinship with the good itself.

Importantly, as was seen, Socrates seems to indicate that all human beings belong in this category of intermediate beings and thus that everyone has a common kinship with the good.[40] At the same time, Socrates also seems to believe that there is variation among people with respect to their actual appropriation of the good. It is this variation that Socrates seems to draw our attention to by way of his distinction between a genuine and pretend lover (222a6-7). In drawing this distinction, moreover, we have reason to think that he is referring to himself as an example of a genuine lover and Hippothales as an example of a pretend one. This distinction thus raises the question as to how we are supposed to understand the basis or cause of this variation among intermediate beings.

The obvious answer is that this difference can be accounted for in cognitive terms. Socrates has an awareness of the proper object of erotic love, wisdom, and this awareness allows him to be genuinely beneficial to Lysis. By contrast, Hippothales lacks such an awareness, and thus lacks the quality of a genuine lover.

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[39] As I argued in ch. 6 (sect. 6), ch. 7 (sect. 2), and in the previous section of the appendix, Socrates does not dispense with the remedial account altogether but only as an account of our relationship to the highest form of the good or the good *per se*.

[40] As was seen in ch. 7, sect. 2(b), we have good reason to think that Socrates is referring to all human beings by the term 'πάντι' in the first horn of his final dilemma. the view that "the good belongs to all and the bad is alien to all" (222c3-5), which, as I argued there, Socrates implicitly endorses.

The problem with this explanation is that, as was seen, we also have good reason to see Hippothales as someone who possesses many of the important cognitive aspects of an intermediate lover.[41] As was noted there, the *Lysis* draws a strong connection between being a lover of wisdom and being a listener, a connection that is reinforced at the level of the dialogue's philosophical argumentation.[42] As Socrates explains in the context of defining an intermediate agent, what makes someone a lover of wisdom is their recognition of their own ignorance. It is this recognition, Socrates suggests, that is the source of one's desire and capacity to learn. As was seen at the beginning of the dialogue, it is precisely Hippothales who is open to learning what he does not know, for it is he who requests that Socrates join the company's discussions in the hopes that Socrates make provide advice on how a lover is to endear themselves to their beloved (206b9-c3). Hippothales seems, then, to exhibit the central characteristics of what constitutes a lover of wisdom as Socrates defines it here.

The *Lysis* thus presents a problem of how to distinguish between intermediate lovers, a problem that seems to exhaust the resources of the dialogue itself. In fact, one might think that Plato himself gestures towards this limitation at the dialogue's dramatic climax (221e5-222b2). In drawing the aforementioned distinction between a genuine and pretend lover, the text arguably hints at just what stands in the way of Hippothales' erotic development. As was noted in ch. 7, upon hearing Socrates' claim that a beloved must necessarily befriend a genuine lover, Hippothales is described as being overcome with pleasure (ὑπὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς, 222b2), a possible reference to the hedonistic motivations governing his interest in Lysis. However brief, the dramatic climax can be read as looking

[41] Cf. ch. 7, sect. 4 for discussion.
[42] See esp. pp. 233-34.

beyond the *Lysis* and its moral psychology. To account for cases like Hippothales, cases in which a love for what is genuinely good is somehow thwarted, what is needed is an appeal to additional, non-rational psychic forces.[43]

No doubt, there is good reason to interpret the *Lysis* in just this manner. And yet to do so without reservation would be to once again overlook the full resources of the dialogue. As was seen in the previous section, Plato's full treatment of the problems posed in the *Lysis* lie beyond any direct statement, even one that is implicitly endorsed. While the problem of desiderative failure may be left open at the end of the work, this does not entail that the dialogue itself does not provide the resources necessary to a potential solution.

In ch. 7, I discussed the importance that the theme of listening, and being a listener, plays in the *Lysis*. But one may think that there are limitations to being a listener as well, and that Plato provides clues as to what these limitations are. The first such clue is not necessarily one suggested either directly or indirectly by the *Lysis* itself, but rather one that any reader of Plato's dialogues might reasonably be expected to grasp. The dialogues as a whole contain a number of examples of characters who can follow philosophical argumentation, and even in some cases enjoy doing so, without subsequently having their desiderative states changed in the process.[44] As soon as these interlocutors leave Socrates' presence, we as readers are led to expect that they slip back into their prior modes of life, modes dictated by philosophically uninformed desires.

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[43] See again fn. 35 above.

[44] E.g. Callicles in the *Gorgias* (481 ff.) and Alcibiades in the *Symposium* (213a ff.). It is just such a fault that the more mature Acibiades is self-consciously aware of committing in the *Symposium*: "For [Socrates] compels me to admit that, sorely deficient as I am, I neglect myself while I attend to the affairs of Athens. So I withhold my ears perforce as from the Sirens, and make off as fast as I can, for fear I should go on sitting beside him till old age was upon me. And there is one experience I have in presence of this man alone, such as nobody would expect in me — to be made to feel ashamed by anyone; he alone can make me feel it. For he brings home to me that I cannot disown the duty of doing what he bids me, but that as soon as I turn from his company I fall a victim to the favors of the crowd" (216a-b). On the corrupting force of culture, see the discussion that follows.

The source or cause of the ineffectiveness of listening stems from the morally ambivalent nature of listening itself. While it may be the starting point for philosophy, it is also the source of our unphilosophical opinions as well. Plato is keen to caution his readers about this double-sided nature of listening at the very outset of the *Lysis*. This warning comes by way of Ctesippus' critique of Hippothales' effort to seduce Lysis by way of his encomia.[45] As Ctesippus explains, Hippothales' poems are exclusively about the athletic victories of Lysis' family. What makes this ridiculous, according to Ctesippus, is that Hippothales' poems consist of "what the entire city sings of" (205c2).[46] What Ctesippus' comment reveals is that Hippothatles is a mouthpiece for his own culture's account of Lysis' family history.

Hippothales' celebration of Lysis' family's athletic victories mirror his own adherence to the cultural norms of pederasty themselves. As was seen in ch. 1, the institution of pederasty in Athenian culture was understood as a type of contest (ἀγών).[47] The goal of this context was for the ἐραστὴς to subdue the παιδικὰ and for the παιδικὰ to resist the former's advances as long as possible. The fact that Hippothales is unaware of his own intentions in writing these poems, as Socrates goes on to suggest (205e1-206a4), is all the more indication that he is an unreflective adherent to his society's cultural norms.

In addition to cautioning about the dangers of uncritical listening, the *Lysis* also indicates that what is required in addition to simply being capable of listening to, or following, philosophical conversation is the active engagement or participation in it. This

[45] Cf. ch. 2, sect. 2 for discussion.
[46] It is important to note that Ctesippus criticizes Hippothales not for the latter's method but rather for his execution of it. What makes Hippothales ridiculous, in Ctesippus' eyes, is not the fact that he writes poems for Lysis; after all, this was a conventional practice in Athenian culture (cf. ch. 1, sect. 1c). Rather, what makes Hippothales ridiculous is the content of these poems; in Ctesippus' words, Hippothales has "nothing particular to say that a mere boy could not say" (204b8-c2).
[47] See again ch. 1, sect. 1(c).

condition is also made evident early in the dialogue. Upon granting Hippothales' request to provide a lesson in erotic seduction, Socrates stresses that he could not easily tell to Hippothales how to speak (εἰπεῖν) to one's beloved; instead, he proposes to demonstrate it (ἐπιδεῖξαι) for him through conversation with Lysis himself (206c4-7). Socrates' message here is clear: learning erotic seduction is not something that can simply be transferred and absorbed orally. What is required is something further. Insofar as Socrates proposes to demonstrate how to speak with Lysis for Hippothales' sake, he implies that Hippothales will eventually have to engage in this manner of conversation himself.[48]

As was discussed in ch. 7, commentators have debated the significance of this and related remarks in the *Lysis* to the issue of whether or not the friend can be defined.[49] But it is worth pointing out that Socrates' remark has import regardless of whether or not the friend can be fully articulated. The point of philosophical inquiry as demonstrated by Socrates and the boys in the *Lysis* is not simply the discovery of a coherent account of the friend. Central to the purpose of the activity is also the divestment of one's incoherent beliefs about the friend, beliefs generally assimilated from one's culture. As was argued through the course of this dissertation, Plato's project in the *Lysis* is a clarificatory one. It is meant not to reject conventional notions of love and friendship wholesale, but rather to show how a careful scrutiny of them reveals their true significance. Socratic inquiry in the *Lysis*, then, is the opposite of passive listening of the type exemplified by Hippothales.

The critical role that philosophical conversation plays in becoming a lover of wisdom also helps to explain the difference between the respective senses in which both Hippothales and Socrates are seen to be ridiculous (καταγέλαστος). As Socrates points out

[48] As was discussion in ch. 7, sect. 4, this is also Plato's implied message to his readers.
[49] Cf. ch. 7, sect. 3.

(205e-206a4), Hippothales' ridiculousness stems from a lack of self-awareness of his own motivations for writing encomia in the first place. Rather than to celebrate Lysis, they are meant to celebrate his premature victory over the boy. Hippothales' ridiculousness derives from his own passive acceptance of cultural practices. He not only buys into the practices themselves, but the 'official line' regarding these practices.[50] By contrast, Socrates and the boys' ridiculousness is brought about through an awareness of his and the boys' own refutation at the hands of the λόγοι themselves. Their 'defeat' at the hands of the arguments is in truth a victory, for they acquire a type of clarification that they would not have acquired without it. In this way, by the dialogue's end Socrates and the boys inhabit a more advanced intermediate state of recognition of their own ignorance.

In the previous section I suggested that the *Lysis* advocates for a loosening not only from conventional norms but from physical necessity itself. While true, both forms of liberation are in fact connected. For while some aspects of our physical nature alone may compel us to pursue remedial goods, another major influence in this respect is culture.[51] The question regarding the source of our moral corruption — nature vs. nurture — has a long history in ancient philosophy and Plato plays a large role in shaping it.[52] The *Lysis*, at

[50] On the ideology of Athenian paederasty, cf. Davidson (2007), p. 50 and my discussion in ch. 1, sect. 1(d), pp. 11-12.

[51] The deep connection between material and conventional goods is central to Socratic philosophy in general, as indicated by his proclamation in the *Apology* 29d-e: "'I shall never give up philosophy or stop exhorting you and point out the truth to any one of you whom I may meet, saying in my accustomed way: "Most excellent man, are you who are a citizen of Athens, the greatest of cities and the most famous for wisdom and power, not ashamed to care for the acquisition of wealth and for reputation and honor, when you neither care nor take thought for wisdom and truth and the perfection of your soul?"

[52] This view is of course taken up by the Stoics, who thought that false opinions we the source of moral corruption and that society was the source of all false opinions. For example, Cato, Cicero's spokesperson for Stoicism in *On Ends*, denies that infant children have a natural inclination for pleasure for its own sake (3.16–21). For further discussion of sources, cf. Graver (2007), ch. 7.

any rate, has a story to tell about the corrupting force of culture.[53]

4. Living in the *Lysis*

In light of these considerations, then, can we confidently situate the *Lysis*? Does its final account of the friend prefigure the account of beauty and its relation to the special type of good that is wisdom found in the *Symposium*? Is the conception of the soul and its descent as depicted in the *Phaedrus* meant to address desiderative failure as it is problematized in the *Lysis*? Or does the *Lysis* in fact constitute Plato's culminating account of love and friendship, one fully accessible only to the most attentive of readers?

If the foregoing considerations suggest anything, it is that the *Lysis* contains the resource to be read *either* prospectively *or* retrospectively. Plato leaves open the possibility of reading the dialogues according to different criteria of ingressive exposure that are not necessarily mutually exclusive. That Plato meant for his readers to ponder this very possibility is suggested by the setting of the *Lysis*.[54] Whereas the *Symposium* occurs in the heart of the city and the *Phaedrus* outside its walls in the countryside, the *Lysis* takes place

[53] However we are understand the relation between the *Lysis* and the *Phaedrus*, it is clear that the basic view presented in the *Lysis* that the φίλος or good as what is οἰκεῖον or belongs to us is related to the view presented in the *Phaedrus* of the soul as 'fallen' and as seeking to return to its home among the Forms. My aim in this section has been the limited one of showing that the *Lysis* can be read as containing the resources to explain desiderative failure. In fact, as Annas (1999) points out, many ancient commentators saw the moral psychology found in Plato's so-called 'middle' or 'later' works as further articulation of the same basic view found in the 'early' dialogues. "There are two ways in which Plato regards the divided soul, especially in the *Republic*. In one he is trying to do justice to the way in which some aspects of us may fail to go along with right reason, and may need habituation and training to develop in rational ways and in pursuit of ends sanctioned by reason. … This is the side of the *Republic*'s moral psychology which later Platonists and Stoics rightly thought compatible with the reciprocity of the virtues and the kind of importance of practical wisdom for virtue that we find in the Socratic dialogues. But Plato also sees the idea at times in a different way, one in which the person isolates his 'true self' in his reason and then externalizes the parts other than reason as something subhuman, rejected and kept under harsh external control. We can agree that this is a new idea in the *Republic* (and *Phaedrus*), It is an idea which does not fit the rest of the moral psychology, which can be, as we have seen, so interpreted as to be thoroughly consistent with the claims of the Stoics and of the Socratic dialogues" (p. 136). However, as Annas also points out (pp. 129-30), the Stoic Chrisippus apparently thought that the account of the soul in the *Phaedrus* was reconcilable with a Socratic view. Chrisppus appears to have adopted some of the conceptual framework in the *Phaedrus* — in particular, the chariot metaphor — in developing his own account of the emotions. Cf. Gill (1997) and Price (1995).

[54] As Nichols (2009) astutely observes, p. 157.

near the walls of the city, right on the city's boundary (203a1-2), in-between the settings of the other two dialogues. As this setting would suggest, the *Lysis* can be seen either as a common starting point towards each of these other works or as a synthesis that bridges the two.

I began this dissertation by suggesting that the key to understanding the *Lysis* is to view it as a work about transitions, in particular, those transitions that mark the emergence of ἔρως and φιλία and the problems posed by these relations in their conventional forms. It is fitting that such a theme should be central to a work that can be read both forward- and backward-looking. For the notion of transition as a fundamental element of human life is one with which Plato never dispenses. It is worth noting that, even at Plato's most metaphysical moments, there is no full disclosure; transition is never fully overcome.[55] Whether for Lysis and Menexenus, who are at the beginning of their lives, or Socrates, who is near the end of his, living with a recognition of one's transitory nature is the only way of living a genuinely human life.

[55] Kahn (1996) writes: "The second consideration that lies behind Plato's reluctance to disclose his philosophical position [i.e. in addition to the pedagogical advantages of *aporia*] goes deeper and is more difficult to formulate. The ingressive mode of exposition has been chosen by Plato because of his acute sense of the psychological distance that separates his world view from that of his audience. The frame of mind implied by Diotima's final revelation in the *Symposium*, more fully expressed in the extra-celestial vision of the *Phaedrus*, taken for granted in the allegory of the Cave and the otherworldly longings of the *Phaedo*, is essentially the frame of mind of a metaphysical visionary" (p. 66). While this rationale may well be accurate, it is worth emphasizing that even these 'revelations' — the ladder of love, the chariot metaphor of the soul and its fall, and the analogue of the cave — are still nothing more than pedagogical aids in themselves. Socrates' warning to Glaucon in the *Republic* not to take his own account of the Good as anything more than a series of analogues (506d-507a) is hardly one mean to be seen as restricted to this account alone.

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