

Φιλία IN PLATO'S *LYSIS*

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INTRODUCTION

LYSIS HAS HAD A PARTICULARLY SORRY RECEPTION over the last half-century. Often viewed as deficient in comparison with *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*,¹ scholars who attend to it do so in a defensive posture. How many articles begin with the objective of showing that *Lysis* in fact contains substantive content regarding friendship? Among these, a common theme is the attempted rescue of the text from claims that its treatment of friendship is non-altruistic or instrumental—as though there were a sympathetic need to preserve Plato from accusations of weak morals.²

More recently and especially following Gadamer's article, scholars argue that the dramatic enactment of *φιλία* among the personae fulfills what the philosophical inquiry proper does not.³ Conceived in a negative light, one might say that such literary interpretations—however much they claim to be grounded in an important hermeneutic or philosophical position—succeed in illuminating the value of the text at the cost of demonstrating that the inquiry in the text is indeed lacking. And yet this has been conceived as part of the point. What friendship truly is cannot be said, it can only be shown. Hence, *aporia* is inevitable. Or so it is argued.

¹ See, for instance, Laszlo Versenyi's (1975n1) remarks on his predecessors.

² W. K. C. Guthrie's criticism is commonly cited. See Guthrie 1975 4:143. Those who argue for an instrumentalist conception include Terence Irwin (1977:300)—although for Irwin, of course, excellence is conceived as instrumental—and Don Adams (1992). Those who argue for a non-egoistic view include Gregory Vlastos (1981:3–11); T. F. Morris (1986); Michael D. Roth (1995); Lorraine Smith Pangle (2001).

³ Gadamer 1980, Tindale 1984, Tessitore 1990, Gonzalez 1995. Cp. also Haden 1983.

The attitude I advance here is that the philosophical investigation in *Lysis* is just as sophisticated and interesting as those in the other early definitional dialogues—however sophisticated and interesting those may be. There is no need to defend the philosophical content of *Lysis*, merely to explain it accurately. This has almost always not been well done. The main reason is that the text is consistently approached with presumptions about the nature of friendship, as this reciprocal, often exclusively human psychological, particularly emotional relationship is now conventionally experienced and conceived. This is anachronistic and otherwise misguided. Consider that the psychological conditions of empathy and compassion so common and fundamental to our experiences of love and friendship find no place in the discussion. Of course, the dramatic dimensions of the text seem to encourage the view that the dialogue is in essence about human friendship, insofar as the characters, Socrates, Ctesippus, Hippothales, Menexenus, and *Lysis*, are all involved in various forms of *φιλία*. But in fact, as I have argued elsewhere and as Naomi Reshotko has rightly emphasized, in *Lysis* Plato develops the view that human *φιλία* is one, albeit for us humans especially important, instance of a much more general condition.⁴ Remarkably, the conception of *φιλία* advanced is not necessarily psychological or even human. Once this is appreciated, the misapplication of familiar moral concerns becomes clear.⁵

Furthermore, it is false that the *ἔργον* of *φιλία* that the personae act out fulfills what their *λόγος* does not and cannot. Such a view aims at an enlightened synthesis of form and content in the text. But it fundamentally misunderstands the relation between the dramatic and explicit argumentative dimensions of the text. The theorizing, which is the centerpiece of the drama and from which conclusions about the relationships of the personae are drawn, precisely attempts to understand what underlies the familiar experiences we humans share in what we call our loves, affections, and friendships, including the relationships of the personae. This is the aim of the early dialogues:

⁴ Wolfsdorf 1997:198–254, Reshotko 1997.

⁵ Whether the treatment of *φιλία* in *Lysis* is an unsatisfactory treatment of *φιλία* seems to me of secondary importance.

to philosophize about human conduct in an effort to foster ethical knowledge. But—and this is the crucial point—in so doing, the texts reinterpret the meaning of that conduct contrary to conventional and traditional understanding and in light of Platonic philosophical conceptions. Thus, it is revealed that things are not as they appear and that values commonly held are held for the wrong reasons or should not be held at all.

The following discussion particularly focuses on the conception of *φιλία* that Socrates develops, namely the conception of *φιλία* as belonging (*οἰκειότης*). Once this is clarified, it will be explained why the *aporia* in which the investigation ends does not jeopardize this conception as well as why the *aporia* itself has nothing to do with the ineffability of *φιλία*. Finally, the discussion will touch upon the significance of the concept of belonging in *Republic* I and *Gorgias* and thereby clarify the concept of the first friend (*τὸ πρῶτον φίλον*) in *Lysis*.

SOCRATES' FIRST CONCEPTION OF *φιλία*

Throughout *Lysis* *φιλία* is analyzed as a two-place relation whose participants (*φίλοι*) may or may not be humans or even have what we would call mental states, although most examples considered do in fact involve humans.^{6, 7} The core of the analysis begins with the conventional, traditional, and Empedoclean view that *φιλία* is based on likeness (*ὁμοιότης*). Three arguments are made against this position.⁸ All

⁶ Of course, insofar as *φιλία* is enacted through Socrates' engagement with *Lysis* and Menexenus this relation is three-place.

⁷ Cp. Reshotko 1997:1: "Plato's *Lysis* is commonly read as an early dialogue which takes up the question: 'What is friendship?' However, 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. In the *Lysis*, Socrates develops a general theory of attraction to which he refers using the word *φιλία*. Socrates also uses the term *φιλία* to refer to human friendship, because he takes human friendship to be a special case of desire which is itself a form of attraction. In order to appreciate what Socrates says about *φιλία* between humans, we must first understand what he says about *φιλία* generally." Cf. also Reshotko 1993 and Bolotin 1979:130.

⁸ *Ly.* 213e4–215c2.

presume that *φιλία* is beneficial,⁹ an assumption that Socrates maintains throughout the discussion.¹⁰

First, it is agreed that that which is bad (τὸ κακόν, hereafter the bad) is not φίλον to the bad, because those who are bad are harmful.¹¹ As such, the bad cannot be a participant in *φιλία* at all. Second, it is agreed that likes (τὰ ὅμοια), insofar as they are alike, cannot participate in *φιλία* since, insofar as they are alike, they do not need anything from one another and so cannot derive benefit from one another.¹² Third, it is agreed that that which is good (τὸ ἀγαθόν, hereafter the good), insofar as it is good, cannot participate in *φιλία* since the good, insofar as it is good, needs nothing, and so cannot be benefited.¹³ Accordingly, the good cannot be a participant in *φιλία* at all. In sum, if *φιλία* is beneficial, then *φιλία* cannot be based on likeness.

Subsequently, Socrates and Menexenus briefly entertain the contrary view that *φιλία* is based on opposition (ἐναντιότης). This view is initially thought to be attractive since certain relations between opposites appear beneficial. For example, the rich may assist the poor, the wise the ignorant.¹⁴ However, this view is not seriously entertained since it is assumed to imply that *φιλία* exists between the bad and the good, and this was previously rejected.¹⁵

Socrates now questions the assumption that participants in *φιλία* should be distinguished according to the dichotomy of good and bad types. He suggests that there exist not simply the like and the opposite, but also that which is in between, the neither like nor opposite.

⁹ This idea has been repeatedly assumed in the discussion already. For example, when Socrates converses with Hippothales about Hippothales' treatment of Lysis, Socrates is interested to know whether Hippothales is treating Lysis well. Socrates subsequently rebukes Hippothales for spoiling Lysis. In Socrates' exchange with Lysis, it is implied that Socrates is benefiting Lysis by humbling and instructing him; and Lysis is ostensibly benefited by being provoked into philosophical investigation.

¹⁰ So, for instance, at the end of the investigation, Socrates claims "to admit that that which is useless (ἄχρηστον) is φίλον would be mistaken" (Ly. 222c1).

¹¹ Ly. 214b7-c3.

¹² Ly. 214e2-215a4.

¹³ Ly. 215a4-c2.

¹⁴ Ly. 215d4-7.

¹⁵ Socrates stresses the irrationality of claiming that ὁ ἐχθρός (the hateful or the hated) could be engaged in *φιλία* with its opposite (Ly. 216a6-b1).

Accordingly, entities are categorized according to a trichotomy of types (γέννη): the good, the bad, and that which is neither good nor bad (τὸ μήτε ἀγαθὸν μήτε κακόν, hereafter the neither good nor bad).¹⁶ Since the bad cannot participate in *φιλία* and since *φιλία* cannot be based on likeness, it remains that the neither good nor bad and the good are participants in *φιλία*. Note that this does not contradict the previous claim that the good can derive no benefit from another, for Socrates does not assume that the benefit of *φιλία* must be reciprocal. As in this case, it is unilateral.

Socrates then suggests that the cause of *φιλία* is the presence of the bad in the neither good nor bad.¹⁷ This point compels him to distinguish two ways in which an entity may have a property.¹⁸ Precisely, if the bad is present to the neither good nor bad, then it must be present in such a way that the neither good nor bad is not itself bad. So Socrates claims:

some things are such as that which is present (τὸ παρόν) to them, and other things are not.¹⁹

Socrates gives the following example: if one tints one's blonde hair with white lead, then the whiteness is present to the hair, but the hair itself remains blonde. However, if old age turns one's hair white, then the whiteness present to the hair is, as he says, "such as" the hair.²⁰ The passage may have implications for the interpretation of the self-attribution of properties and the relation of properties and their instances. But I will not dwell on these here. It suffices to note that this way of conceptualizing the relation of the bad and the neither good nor bad accommodates the alleged cause of *φιλία* with the notion that the bad cannot participate in *φιλία*.

¹⁶ Ly. 216d5-7.

¹⁷ In the passage under consideration, Socrates uses the expression "διὰ κακοῦ παρουσίαν" (Ly. 217b5-6). However, when he later rejects this causal account Socrates uses the word αἴτιον (Ly. 221c2).

¹⁸ However, Socrates does not use any word for property; he simply speaks of entities being a particular way.

¹⁹ Ly. 217c3-4.

²⁰ τότε ἐγένοντο οἷόνπερ τὸ παρόν, λευκοῦ παρουσία λευκαί. (Ly. 217d8-e1).

I will speak of this as Socrates' first conception of *φιλία*, that is, the first conception that he himself develops. His initial reaction to it is this:

So now, Lysis and Menexenus, I said, we can count on having discovered what τὸ φίλον is and what it is not. For we say that in the soul and in the body and everywhere the neither good nor bad, which has the presence of the bad, is φίλον of the good.²¹

Two examples are given. First, the human body, which is neither good nor bad, is said to be φίλον of medicine, which is good, on account of disease, which is bad.²² Second, the human soul, which is neither good nor bad, is said to be φίλον of knowledge (σοφία), which is good, on account of ignorance, which is bad.²³ Observe the broad connotation of the verb φιλεῖν. The second example makes sense because loving is a psychological condition. However, the first example in which the diseased body loves medicine only seems sensible if interpreted figuratively. But, as mentioned above, throughout *Lysis* *φιλία* is not merely treated as a human psychological relationship. *φιλία* includes relations of both a psychological and a physical nature. In fact, these categorical distinctions are not crucial to the analysis. For example, in analyzing the view of *φιλία* based on opposition, Socrates speaks of the wet desiring (ἐπιθυμεῖ) the dry and the cold desiring the hot.²⁴ Note also, again, that while we conceive of friendship as involving mutual affection, the type of *φιλία* in these examples is non-reciprocal. The ignorant soul loves wisdom, but wisdom does not love in return; the diseased body loves medicine, but medicine does not love the diseased body.²⁵ In short, it is prudent in interpreting the conception of *φιλία* developed in the

²¹ Ly. 218b6-c2.

²² Ly. 217a4-b6.

²³ Ly. 218a2-b3.

²⁴ ἐπιθυμεῖ γὰρ τοῦ τοιοῦτου ἕκαστον, ἀλλ' οὐ τοῦ ὁμοίου: τὸ μὲν γὰρ ξηρὸν ὑγροῦ, τὸ δὲ ψυχρὸν θερμοῦ, τὸ δὲ ὀξὺ ἀμβλέος, τὸ δὲ κενὸν πληρώσεως, καὶ τὸ πλήρες δὲ κενώσεως (Ly. 215e4-8).

²⁵ The view that *φιλία* in *Lysis* is treated as non-reciprocal has been noted by other scholars. See, for example, Robinson 1986. Cf. also Reshotko 1997:2-3.

text not to import certain familiar preconceptions about the nature of friendship. Indeed, Reshotko has suggested that *Lysis* is primarily concerned with the nature of attraction. One might also say it concerns the nature of bonds.

SOCRATES' SECOND CONCEPTION OF *φιλία*

Socrates' satisfaction with his first conception of *φιλία* lasts only momentarily. At once he is overcome with a sense that this conception is incorrect:²⁶

[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 φίλον we have come upon arguments that are no better than a set of braggarts.²⁷

In the ensuing discussion Socrates criticizes the first conception of *φιλία* and develops an alternative. He perceives two problems with the first conception: they concern the object and the cause of *φιλία*. First, Socrates suggests that a φίλος (lover) is φίλος (loving) of something good because of (διὰ) something bad and also for the sake of (ἔνεκα) something good.²⁸ For example, a patient loves a doctor because of disease and for the sake of health. This notion presents two difficulties. First, a φίλος (lover) becomes φίλος (loving) of a φίλος (beloved), and, as Socrates says, "thus like becomes φίλος (loving) of like which we said was impossible."²⁹ However, this is a trivial difficulty, for it prevents participants in *φιλία* from existing at all since they are alike insofar as each is a participant in a relation of *φιλία*. But in this case, φίλοι are only alike insofar as they are participants in the relation of *φιλία*, they are not φίλοι because they are alike. Furthermore, since the relation of *φιλία* is non-reciprocal each participant is not φίλος in the same way; one loves, the other is loved. As Socrates' first exchange with

²⁶ Ly. 218c4ff.

²⁷ Ly. 218c5-7, d2-4.

²⁸ Ly. 218d6-219b8.

²⁹ Ly. 219b6-c1.

Menexenus has already made evident, the adjective φίλος can be used in both senses.³⁰

The second point is treated as more substantial. The claim, hereafter *L*, that a φίλος (lover) is φίλος (loving) of a φίλος (beloved) for the sake of a φίλος (beloved) entails a regress, for if a beloved is in every case loved for the sake of another beloved, the beloved for whose sake the beloved is loved will in turn be loved for the sake of a beloved *ad infinitum*. Socrates expresses this point as follows:

Now are we not bound to wear ourselves out with going on in this way, unless we can arrive at some governing principle (ἀρχή) that will not keep leading us on from one φίλον to another, but will reach the first friend (τὸ πρῶτον φίλον) for whose sake all the other things are said to be beloved (φίλα)?³¹

Socrates' point is that *L* misrepresents the condition of φιλία. The drive that governs φιλία is, in fact, not interminable. There is some object that is desired for its own sake, for the sake of nothing else, and for the sake of which every other beloved object is loved. Note that this idea is not defended.³² (The nature of this object will be discussed below.)

The introduction of the concept of the first friend enables Socrates to distinguish types of φιλία according to their objects. He says that φίλα that are loved for the sake of other φίλα cannot be thought of as φίλα proper, insofar as the real φίλον is that which is pursued for the sake of nothing else. Accordingly, the following division of φιλία results. φιλία between the neither good nor bad and the first friend is intrinsic φιλία. φιλία between the neither good nor bad and some beneficial φίλον that is not the first friend is extrinsic φιλία. Socrates describes extrinsic φιλία as a phantom (εἶδωλον) of intrinsic φιλία.

³⁰ Ly. 211d6–213d5.

³¹ Ly. 219c ff.

³² The claim of a πρῶτον φίλον has both an ethical and a psychological—or rather, since φιλία need not involve entities with souls, motivational—implication. On the one hand, it entails a species of ethical monism; on the other hand, it implies that love depends upon a state of deficiency.

Furthermore, extrinsic φιλία should be distinguished from inauthentic φιλία, which, as we will see, are relations that, according to conventional understanding, appear to be φιλία, but are actually harmful and so not, properly speaking, φιλία at all.

Socrates' second criticism of his first conception of φιλία concerns its cause. Socrates suggests that the presence of the bad in the neither good nor bad does not cause φιλία.³³ Instead, he argues that if the bad did not exist, the neither good nor bad would nonetheless desire and love the first friend. Socrates grants that it is difficult to imagine just how things would be if bads (τὰ κακά) did not exist.³⁴ But he suggests that some desires, such as hunger and thirst, are not in themselves harmful or beneficial and so neither bad nor good. Rather, they are good or bad insofar as their objects are beneficial or harmful. Thus, he says, there is no reason why desires that are neither good nor bad would cease to exist if bads did. One could still have these desires, but they would only be for the good.³⁵ Therefore, he concludes that desire, not the presence of the bad, causes φιλία.

Socrates now explains the nature of desire as follows. That which desires is deficient (ἐνδεές) and desires that in which it is deficient.³⁶ Since desire is the cause of φιλία, that which is deficient loves that in which it is deficient.³⁷ An entity is deficient when it is deprived of something (τι ἀφαιρηται).³⁸ That of which an entity is deprived is its belonging (τὸ οἰκείον).³⁹ Therefore, what belongs to an entity is the object of its love (ἔρωσ), friendship (φιλία), and desire (ἐπιθυμία).⁴⁰

³³ Cf. Socrates' question: "For if there were nothing left to harm us, we should feel no want of any assistance . . . Is not this the nature of the good—to be beloved because of the bad by us who are midway between the good and the bad, whereas separately and for its own sake it is of no use?" (Ly. 220c7–d2).

³⁴ Cf. his statement, "Or is this a ridiculous question—as to what will exist or not exist in such a case? For who can tell?" (Ly. 222a).

³⁵ This argument is presented at Ly. 221a–b.

³⁶ Ly. 221d7–e1.

³⁷ Ly. 221e1–2.

³⁸ Ly. 221e2–3. Cf. the use of the verb ἀφαιρέω to describe the confiscation of one's property at Gorg. 466c1, 468d2, 511a7).

³⁹ This proposition is not expressed, but is derivable from that which precedes and that which follows it.

⁴⁰ Ly. 221e3–4.

It should be emphasized that in *Lysis* ἐπιθυμία is treated as a condition more general than what we call desire. In the same way that what we call friendship is conceived as one manifestation of the broader condition of φιλία, so what we call desire is conceived as one manifestation of the broader condition of ἐπιθυμία. Entities that do not have souls experience ἐπιθυμία. Again, recall Socrates' claims that the body desires medicine and that the wet desires the dry and the cold the hot.

Socrates' conception of desire among the early dialogues is a subject of considerable debate. The controversy turns on whether Socrates commits to the view that everyone desires what is really good or rather what one fallibly regards as good.⁴¹ The main passages discussed in the debate are *Meno* 77b2–78b6, *Gorgias* 466a4–468e5, and *Protagoras* 352b1–357e8.

Regarding the *Meno* passage, I have elsewhere defended the view, consistent with the dominant interpretation of the passage, that desire for an object follows upon a fallible evaluation of that object as good.⁴² I will refer to this as the subjectivist conception of desire.

Regarding the *Gorgias* passage, I support a view somewhat akin to the one advanced by McTighe.⁴³ McTighe argues that Socrates' argument against Polus is *ad hominem* and therefore that the claim within the argument that everyone desires the good—which here means everyone desires what is really good—does not provide sound evidence of Socrates' or Plato's conception of desire among the early dialogues. Unlike McTighe, I do not regard the argument as *ad hominem*; however, I do regard the premise that everyone desires the good as a dialectical expedient. Note that this premise follows the claim that health, wealth, and so on are (intrinsic) goods. This surely is not a position that Plato endorses among the early dialogues. It is, however, convenient

⁴¹ For example, some who have recently argued that Socrates is committed to the view that all people desire the real good include Heda Segvic (2000), Terry Penner (1991), Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith (1994:87–102); Terry Penner and C. J. Rowe (1994), Naomi Reshotko (1997). But cf. McTighe 1984. Note that Brickhouse and Smith's and Penner's arguments are of a very different character. Crucially, Brickhouse and Smith suggest that Socrates is committed to a true self. Penner rejects this move.

⁴² Wolfsdorf 2006a.

⁴³ McTighe 1984.

in the present context, for Socrates merely needs Polus to assent that the Athenians normally pursue as ends such objects as wealth, health, and so on. In short, I regard the claim in *Gorgias* that everyone desires the good as carrying no weight in the debate over Socrates' or Plato's conception of desire among the early dialogues.

The *Protagoras* passage strongly supports the subjectivist conception of desire in *Meno*. The denial and intellectualist analysis of *akrasia* concludes that all desires for particular objects or courses of action are rational just insofar as all actions follow upon a fallible evaluation of a given course of action, including objects pursued, as good.

The conception of desire in *Lysis*, which I will call the deficiency conception, explains the cause of desire: desire is motivated by deficiency; more precisely, a subject's deficiency of its belonging causes desire. Here it becomes an important question whether belongings are tokens or types. For example, consider that Menexenus may be hungry and desire a particular fish at the fishmonger's stall in the agora. Is Menexenus' belonging that particular fish, fish in general, or still more generally food? The first option, that the particular object of any desire is the subject's belonging, seems absurd, for then whatever particular object one desires is one's belonging. Charity, therefore, suggests that belongings must essentially be types. But how general these types are and according to what taxonomy they are to be conceived is not discussed in *Lysis*.

It suffices for the present discussion that belongings are types and of an unspecified degree of generality. Consequently, the deficiency conception can be conceptualized as compatible with the subjectivist conception as follows. Deficiency of a belonging, which is a type, causes desire. For example, Menexenus is deficient in food and therefore desires food. Desire for a particular object is governed by desire for a corresponding type. For example, Menexenus desires this particular fish because Menexenus desires food. Belongings are not good or bad; there is good food and bad food. Particular objects of desire are good or bad. For example, the particular fish at the fishmonger's stall may be spoiled or fresh. The subject may err in his evaluation of the particular object of desire. In short, pre-rationally and pre-evaluatively the motivation arising from deficiency orients us toward the right type of

objects, but we must judge whether tokens of those types are good or bad.

In sum, Socrates' second conception of *φιλία* is this: The neither good nor bad loves the first friend because the first friend is its belonging. The first friend is the belonging of the neither good nor bad because the neither good nor bad is deprived of and so deficient in and so desires the first friend.

Finally, Socrates applies his second conception of *φιλία* to the relationships of the interlocutors:

"Then, if you two [Lysis and Menexenus] are φίλοι with one another, you would belong to one another somehow by nature (φύσει)." "Precisely," they said. "And if, boys, one person desires or loves another, he would not desire or love or befriend him unless the lover belonged in some way to the beloved, either in soul or some characteristic, manner, or form of soul." "Yes, entirely," said Menexenus. But Lysis fell silent. "Well," I said, "it has been shown that what belongs to us by nature (φύσει) is necessary for us to love." "So it seems," he [Menexenus] said. "Then it is necessary for the genuine (γνησίῳ) and not the inauthentic (προσποιήτῳ) admirer⁴⁴ (ἔραστῆ) to be loved by his darling (τῶν παιδικῶν)." Then Lysis and Menexenus gave a faint nod of assent, whereas Hippothales, full of pleasure (ὑπὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς), turned all manner of colors.⁴⁵

The passage clarifies how human psychological relationships can be instances of *φιλία*. The ostensible problem with human relationships as instances of *φιλία* is that the souls of most humans are neither good nor bad. But when Socrates suggests that people can belong to one another with respect to their souls, he adds "or some characteristic, manner, or form of soul." Accordingly, he allows that the soul is complex and so that some parts or aspects may be extrinsically good while others are not or neither good nor bad. In that case, human *φιλία* can occur

⁴⁴ I refrain from translating "ἔραστής" as "lover" since that would lead to confusion.

⁴⁵ Ly. 221e5–22b2.

in cases where one person possesses some psychological benefit that another lacks and so desires. Human *φιλία* are, then, extrinsic *φιλία*.

Granted this, Socrates distinguishes between a genuine and an inauthentic admirer and says that the darling ought to love the genuine admirer. Here he employs the vocabulary of homosexual discourse. He is making a general statement about homosexual relations, but also specifically alluding to Hippothales' love for Lysis. This is clear from the fact that Socrates notes Hippothales' response to his remarks and that this is the first time since the beginning of Socrates' conversation with the boys that Hippothales' presence has been mentioned. This also explains Lysis' and Menexenus' distinct reactions to Socrates' statements. When Socrates says that when "one person desires or loves another, he would not desire or love or befriend him unless the lover belonged in some way to the beloved," Menexenus consents, but Lysis falls silent. This is because Lysis assumes that Socrates is implying that Hippothales and Lysis belong to one another because Hippothales is attracted to Lysis—whereas Lysis does not want to reciprocate Hippothales' affection and does not want to feel that he ought to. However, once Socrates makes the distinction between a genuine and an inauthentic admirer, this reveals to Lysis the possibility that he need not feel bound to reciprocate Hippothales' affection since Hippothales may not be a genuine admirer. Finally, Hippothales assumes that he is a genuine admirer and so interprets Socrates' statement as compelling Lysis to reciprocate his affection. Accordingly, he is filled with pleasure. There are several indications that Hippothales is deceived. The first is that the word Socrates uses for *inauthentic* (admirer), "προσποιητός," alludes to the bathetic and hackneyed poetry Hippothales composes for Lysis. The second, more obvious indication is that Hippothales is described as being filled with pleasure (ἡδονή), which suggests the hedonistic motivation governing his interest in Lysis. Insofar as goodness and pleasure are not identical and Hippothales' hedonistic interest in Lysis is not beneficial, Hippothales is not a genuine admirer. Recall that early in the dialogue Socrates criticizes Hippothales for not knowing how to conduct himself with respect to his darling and thereby corrupting him.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Ly. 210e1–5.

The distinction between the genuine and inauthentic admirer implies the distinction between genuine and inauthentic desire as well as *φιλία*. Hippothales does not authentically desire or love Lysis, where "authentically" means beneficially and so in accordance with nature. Accordingly, a distinction between genuine and inauthentic belongings can be inferred, where a genuine belonging is a good type of the belonging and an inauthentic belonging is a bad type of the belonging. Moreover, a natural belonging is an authentic belonging.

APORIA IN LYSIS

The core of the analysis of *φιλία* in *Lysis* begins with the conventional and traditional conception of *φιλία* based on likeness and concludes with Socrates' second, novel conception of *φιλία* based on belonging. The aporia in which the investigation ends occurs as a conflict between these two positions. After Socrates has articulated his second conception of *φιλία* and applied it to the relationships between the personae in the text, he urges Lysis and Menexenus to draw a conclusion from the discussion:

If there is any difference between the belonging and the like, it seems to me . . . that we might give some account of what *ὁ φίλος* is. But if like and belonging are the same it is not easy to get rid of our former statement that the like is useless to the like insofar as they are alike; and to admit that the useless is *φίλον* would be a gross mistake. So how about if we agree now . . . since we are rather drunk from the discussion, to say that the belonging and the like are two different things? [Lysis and Menexenus consent.] Then shall we maintain that the good belongs to all (*παντί*), while the bad is alien (*ἀλλότριον*)? Or does the bad belong to the bad, the good to the good, and the neither good nor bad to the neither good nor bad? [Lysis and Menexenus agree that the last three pairs belong together.] So here again, boys . . . we have dropped in the very statements regarding *φιλία* that we rejected at first; for now the unjust will be as much *φίλος* of the unjust, and the bad of the bad as the good of the good . . . And what is

more, if we say that the good and the belonging are the same, we cannot avoid making the good *φίλον* only to the good . . . But this again, you know, is a view of which we thought we had disabused ourselves; you remember, do you not? . . . So what more can we do with our argument? Or is it clear that we can do nothing? . . . We have not yet been able to discover what *ὁ φίλος* is.⁴⁷

At the end of a dense conversation, the participants verge on a mutually satisfactory account of *φιλία*. Socrates suggests that this requires a distinction between the like and the belonging. The boys agree to make the distinction. However, when asked which *φίλοι* belong together, they claim that likes do. This choice results in a contradiction of what Socrates calls

the very statements regarding *φιλία* that we rejected at first; for now the unjust will be as much a friend of the unjust, and the bad of the bad, as the good of the good.⁴⁸

Socrates is referring to the first stage of the core of the analysis where, as we have seen, three arguments are made against the popular view of *φιλία* based on likeness. In describing these arguments I emphasized their shared assumption that *φιλία* must be beneficial. At the end of the investigation Socrates again stresses that *φιλία* must be beneficial.⁴⁹ Thus, Lysis' and Menexenus' failure to distinguish the belonging and the like draws the argument back to the grounds upon which the conception of *φιλία* based on likeness was rejected.

If, however, the belonging and the like are distinguished, as Socrates advises, and the alternative is adopted, a consistent account of *φιλία* based on belonging can be maintained. The option Lysis and Menexenus do not choose is that the good belongs to all (*παντί*), while the bad is alien to all.⁵⁰ It is not obvious what *παντί* refers to in this sentence. According to the trichotomization of all entities as either

⁴⁷ Ly. 222b3–223b8.

⁴⁸ Ly. 222d1.

⁴⁹ Ly. 222b8–c9.

⁵⁰ Ly. 223c3–5.

good, bad, or neither good nor bad, it might be thought that παντί ranges over all three kinds. However, the fact that in the same sentence it is stated that the bad is alien to all undermines this interpretation. Nothing can belong to the bad; therefore, παντί cannot range over all kinds of entities. Furthermore, παντί cannot range over only the good since in this case the good would belong to the good, the belonging and like would be indistinguishable, and, according to both the arguments that like cannot be φίλον of the like insofar as they are alike and the good cannot be φίλον of the good insofar as they are good, this would lead to the same contradiction as the option Lysis and Menexenus choose. It remains that παντί ranges over the neither good nor bad, and I suggest that Socrates intends this interpretation. In short, Socrates must be using παντί as a masculine rather than a neuter noun where “everybody” or, with emphasis on human relationships, “each one of us [humans]” is to be understood. This makes sense since although φιλία is not necessarily a human relationship, in the movement of the discussion immediately preceding the passage under discussion where Socrates applies his second conception of φιλία to the relationships of the personae, the focus narrows to human relationships.

In conclusion, the alternative option yields a conception of φιλία that is consistent with the second one Socrates developed, while the option Lysis and Menexenus choose depends on the conception of φιλία based on likeness that was rejected early in the investigation. Thus, the answer to the question of who belongs to whom is that the good and the neither good nor bad belong to one another. In making this point, I am merely drawing attention to the fact that, as interpreters, we have no compelling reason to believe that the aporia itself in which the investigation ends is an indication that Plato did not intend to advance the conception of φιλία based on belonging that Socrates develops. Rather, as I will suggest below, the treatment of the concept of belonging in a couple other passages among the early dialogues strengthens the view that Plato did intend to advance this conception of φιλία.

As I have argued elsewhere, the aporia in which the discussion ends reflects a particular dramatic theme common among the early dialogues, the tension between conventional and traditional beliefs and novel Platonic ones, and serves a distinct philosophical-pedagogical

objective: to encourage the intended reader to reach an understanding for himself.⁵¹ In sum, Socrates and the boys make progress toward a mutually satisfactory conception of φιλία, but ultimately they do not reach one. Although the familiar view of φιλία based on likeness is rejected early in the investigation, Lysis and Menexenus do not entirely extirpate it from their sets of beliefs. This view of φιλία reemerges at the end of the investigation, conflicts with the conception of φιλία based on belonging, and perplexes the interlocutors. The final scene of the dialogue casts some light on why the investigation regresses in its final stages. In describing the aporetic conclusion, Socrates says:

We have been unable (οὔπω . . . οἷοί τε ἐγενόμεθα) to discover what ὁ φίλος is.⁵²

The use of the first person plural rather than the singular is significant insofar as the limitations owe to the limitations of the group collectively. Although Socrates contributes to the development of the conception of φιλία far more than Lysis and Menexenus, the aporetic conclusion of the investigation owes to Lysis' and Menexenus' decision to choose one option Socrates presents over another. Despite the progress of the investigation, Lysis and Menexenus are ultimately bound to the conventional view that φιλία is based on likeness.

When the group's powers of investigation finally reach exhaustion, Lysis' and Menexenus' pedagogues emerge to take the boys home:

Having thus spoken, I was minded to stir up somebody else among the older people there, when like otherworldly spirits (δαίμονες), there came upon us the pedagogues of Lysis and Menexenus. They were bringing the boys' brothers and called out to them the order to go home, for it was quite late. At first we tried with the help of the group around us to drive them off; but they took no notice of us and went on angrily calling, as before in their foreign accent (ὑποβαρβαρίζοντες). We decided that they had taken a drop too much at the

⁵¹ Wolfsdorf 1997. Cf. also Wolfsdorf 2004.

⁵² Ly. 223b7-8.

festival and would prove awkward people to deal with. So we gave in and broke up our party.⁵³

By referring to the slaves as "otherworldly spirits" and as speaking in "barbarian accents," Socrates characterizes the boys' pedagogues as foreign to the discussion group. Since pedagogues were slaves, Lysis' and Menexenus' pedagogues must have literally been foreigners. The conclusion of *Lysis* shows the boys returning to their familiar roles under the care of their customary pedagogues. But Socrates' emphasis on the foreignness of the pedagogues, immediately following an investigation that has developed a theory of *φιλία* based on belonging, intimates that these pedagogues are foreign to their wards in a philosophical sense too.

Socrates, the boys, and the other attending youth are reluctant to break off the discussion when the slaves come to fetch Lysis and Menexenus to take them home. It is remarked that the slaves have been drinking wine during the rites of the Hermaia, the day on which the discussion at Mikkos' palaestra occurs, and Socrates says that it seemed on this account that the slaves would be intractable. The word Socrates uses to describe the slaves' demeanor is *ἄποροι*.⁵⁴ This image of the drunken intractable slaves serving as Lysis' and Menexenus' pedagogues contrasts with the image of Socrates as Lysis' and Menexenus' temporary pedagogue. At the beginning of *Lysis* Socrates describes himself as making his way from the Academy to the Lyceum. The word Socrates uses to describe his walk, the first word of the dialogue, is *ἐπορεύμην* ("I was making my way").⁵⁵ The *aporia* or intractability of the slaves at the end of the dialogue contrasts with Socrates' passage (*πόρος*) at the beginning of the dialogue. While Socrates is engaged in philosophy, the drunken slaves literally disband Socrates', Lysis', and Menexenus' convivium (*συνουσία*).

The drunkenness of the slaves also recalls Hippothales' drunkenness and suggests that the slaves, like Hippothales, may have a detrimental influence on the boys. In this particular case, as they hinder the

⁵³ Ly. 223a1-b2.

⁵⁴ Ly. 223b2.

⁵⁵ Ly. 203a1.

boys from philosophical inquiry, they are perhaps intended to appear as doing so. To this extent the slaves are, like Hippothales, also *προσποιητοί* (inauthentic) *φίλοι* with whom Lysis and Menexenus do not belong. The harmful drunkenness of the slaves and Hippothales may be contrasted with that beneficial drunkenness from which Socrates describes himself and the boys as suffering as a result of the tortuous investigation:

Since it is as if we were drunk (*μεθύομεν*) from the *λόγος*⁵⁶

As Lysis and Menexenus leave Socrates' company they leave the site of beneficial extrinsic *φιλία* and risk the dangers of the inauthentic *φιλία* surrounding them. The final scene of the dialogue, with the entrance of the slaves and the disbanding of the group, indicates that this highly unconventional philosophical investigation has occurred within a space governed by the counter-philosophical conventions of the polis. The *aporia* of the investigation may be seen to result from this condition of the investigation as well. While Socrates' communion with the boys has sought to provoke philosophical inquiry and develop understanding beyond conventional, received views, nonetheless, the boys remain deeply entrenched in the conventional practices of their daily lives.

οἰκειότης IN REPUBLIC I AND GORGIAS AND τὸ πρῶτον φίλον

In *Republic* I, Socrates concludes his discussion of justice with Thrasymachus with the argument that the just person is happier than the unjust person. The argument begins by defining the function (*ἔργον*) of an entity *e* as that which only *e* can do or that which *e* can do best.⁵⁷ The function of an entity is here conceived as an operation or activity. For example, seeing is the function of the eyes and trimming vine branches is the function of a pruning knife.⁵⁸ Notably, Socrates attributes functions both to artifacts and to natural kinds.

⁵⁶ Ly. 222c2.

⁵⁷ R. I 352e2-3.

⁵⁸ R. I 352e5-53a2.

Next, Socrates elicits Thrasymachus' assent to the claim that there is a particular excellence (ἀρετή) for each thing that is suited to its particular function.⁵⁹ That is to say, for each entity to perform its particular function properly or optimally that entity must have a particular excellence. For instance, Socrates asks:

Could the eyes perform their distinct ἔργον well if they lacked their own proper excellence (οἰκείαν ἀρετήν)?⁶⁰

From other contexts, it is clear that sight (ὄψις), conceived as the power to see, is the distinct excellence of the eye.⁶¹ By this I mean that if the eye has a particular condition, say, a particular physical constitution, that enables it under the appropriate conditions to see. In particular, note Socrates' use of the phrase οἰκεία ἀρετή ("proper excellence"). This suggests that for each type of entity there is an optimal condition specifically suited to that type that enables it to perform the function particularly suited to that type. Socrates does not here use the correlative phrase οἰκείον ἔργον ("proper function"), but it is reasonable to supply it as well.

These concepts from *Republic* I suggest that what belongs to or is οἰκείον to an entity of a certain type is an excellence of a particular kind and that the possession of this excellence enables that entity to operate properly and optimally. In *Republic* I Socrates characterizes such activity or operation as happiness (εὐδαιμονία):

And did we not agree that the excellence of the soul is justice . . . Then the just man lives well . . . And he who lives well is blessed and happy (εὐδαίμων).⁶²

Insofar as excellence is good (ἀγαθόν), this accords with Socrates' claim at the end of *Lysis* that the good is οἰκείον to all humans, who are neither good nor bad. It is this that humans lack and that would enable them to function optimally, which is to say, to live well.

⁵⁹ R. I 353b2-4.

⁶⁰ R. I 353b14-c2.

⁶¹ This is rather uncontroversial.

⁶² R. I 353e7-354a1.

In *Gorgias* Socrates assumes that all that is good—"we and everything else that is good"—is good through the presence of a certain excellence.⁶³ Moreover, he claims that the excellence of each thing—"whether of an artifact or body or soul or any living creature"—entails a certain structure (τάξις) and order (ὁρθότης):

So the excellence of each thing is something organized and ordered in a particular structure . . . And so a certain order belonging (οἰκείος) to each thing and present in it makes each thing good.⁶⁴

Soon after this remark, Socrates makes the following general statement about the nature of the cosmos:

Wise men tell us, Callicles, that heaven and earth and gods and men are held together by communion and φιλία and orderliness and sound-mindedness and justice, and this is the reason why they call this universe a cosmos.⁶⁵

These remarks from *Gorgias* dovetail nicely with those from *Republic* I. They are also suggestive with respect to Socrates' conception of φιλία based on belonging in *Lysis*; and they help clarify the nature of the first friend. When the concept of the first friend is introduced in *Lysis*, no clear indication is given of its identity. However, it is suggested to be desired for its own sake and to be that for the sake of which all other desiderata are desired. Desire for the first friend is, then, intrinsic desire.

In *Euthydemus* Socrates claims that happiness (εὐδαιμονία) is the ultimate object of desire insofar as it makes no sense, when one speaks of desiring happiness, to seek a further explanation for the desire. Vlastos describes this as the eudaimonist axiom.⁶⁶ In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle, appropriating Platonic ideas, writes:

Now if there exists an end in the realm of action which we desire for its own sake, an end which determines all our other

⁶³ *Grg.* 506d2-4.

⁶⁴ *Grg.* 506e1-4.

⁶⁵ *Grg.* 507e6-a3.

⁶⁶ Vlastos 1991:203.

desires; if, in other words, we do not make all our choices for the sake of something else—for in this way the process will go on infinitely so that our desire would be futile and pointless—then obviously this end will be the good, that is, the highest good.⁶⁷

Shortly after, he continues:

To resume the discussion—since all knowledge and every choice is directed toward some good, let us discuss what is in our view the aim of politics, that is, the highest good attainable by action. As far as its name is concerned, most people would probably agree—for both the common run of people and cultivated men call it happiness and understand by 'being happy' the same as 'living well' and 'doing well.' But when it comes to defining what happiness is, they disagree, and the account given by the common run differs from that of the philosophers.⁶⁸

Returning to Plato: scholarly interpretations principally divide over whether the first friend in *Lysis* is the Form of Goodness or happiness.⁶⁹ Within the discursive context of *Lysis* there is no mention of Forms whatsoever. For this reason I regard the former option as misguided. I endorse the identification of the first friend with happiness. However, this identification must be qualified.

We have seen that the distinction between inauthentic and genuine *φιλία* is not analogous to the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic *φιλία*. Intrinsic *φιλία* may be genuine or inauthentic; likewise extrinsic *φιλία*. This entails that intrinsic *φιλία* is not necessarily good. And this further entails that that which is desired or befriended for its own sake is not necessarily good; in other words, the first friend is not necessarily good. Consequently, the first friend cannot be happiness *qua* objective good.

⁶⁷ 1094a18–22.

⁶⁸ 1095a14–22.

⁶⁹ In Vlastos 1991:230, the first friend is identified with *εὐδαιμονία*. Scholars who have suggested that the first friend is to be identified with the Form of the good include Samb 1991. See also Krämer 1959:500.

But this is just as it should be. Happiness *qua* belonging, albeit superordinate belonging, is a type that should admit both good and bad kinds. This is consistent with the principle that everyone desires happiness, for, as Aristotle notes, there is substantial disagreement over what happiness is. Accordingly, while we are all motivated toward happiness, we are compelled to distinguish between genuine happiness and its inauthentic semblances.

APPENDIX

This paper was composed in 2002 and accepted for publication in 2003. Since that time I have published or have forthcoming a number of discussions of desire in Plato's early dialogues that amplify or, in certain respects, supplant the present discussion. On page 245, end of first paragraph, I write that "I regard the claim in *Gorgias* that everyone desires the good as carrying no weight in the debate over Socrates' or Plato's conception of desire among the early dialogues." See Wolfsdorf: 2008.

Again on page 245, beginning of second paragraph, I write that the "Protagoras passage strongly supports the subjectivist conception of desire in *Meno*." See Wolfsdorf: 2006b.

Finally, on page 246, end of first paragraph, I write "... but we must judge whether tokens of those types are good or bad." I provide a fuller account of desire in *Lysis* in Wolfsdorf 2007.

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