

THE TECHNOLOGY OF CHILD PRODUCTION:
EUGENICS AND EULOGICS IN THE
*DE LIBERIS EDUCANDIS**

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Among the most intriguing texts to claim Plutarch as author is a short treatise that, since Henri Étienne's Paris edition of 1572, stands at the head of Plutarch's works. *On the Education of Children* appealed to the humanists as a manifesto of the new education, in part because it included opponents to a classical education in a vivid drama of the child growing into a man.¹ The humanists cherished a text that promised the great good worked by a classical education and that paraded as opponents to this good work flatterers, the corrupt, the servile, and the illegitimate—useful stand-ins for the scholastics, reactionaries, indifferent nobles, and practical or even vernacular mercantile class who were, perhaps, not properly smitten by the advantages of reading Greek and writing Ciceronian Latin.

The recurring appeal of this educational treatise, unlike Quintilian's, does not stem from the organization of a wealth of detail and experience in a compelling, synthetic presentation. *On the Education of Children* is more hortatory than descriptive, yet a simplicity or economy of rhetorical form underscores a potent ideological message. The author, a follower or student of Plutarch, develops his argument on two analogical fronts: the father as

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1 On the popularity of the *de Liberis Educandis* in the Renaissance, see Babbitt 1927.xxviii. Guarino translated it into Latin in 1411 (thus before the rediscovery of Quintilian). The Aldine edition (1509) of the *Moralia* preserved its (second) position in the mss.

sire is the true educator, and logos as master is the true emancipator.² The exclusions created by this strongly gendered thinking are significant. The treatise promises that freedom of birth and freedom of speech will coincide if the reader (imagined as a father) remembers to keep at bay the forces hostile to master logos and father: the influence, but especially the speech, of wives, concubines, nurses, slaves, freedmen, flatterers, and the vile.

The work's conventional Latin title arose from the description of its topic in the first sentence: Τί τις ἂν ἔχοι εἰπεῖν περὶ τῆς τῶν ἐλευθέρων παίδων ἀγωγῆς καὶ τίνι χρώμενοι σπουδαῖοι τοὺς τρόπους ἂν ἀποβαῖεν, φέρε σκεψώμεθα. The sentence sounds more conversational than a title such as *On the Education of Children* might suggest (rather literally: "What someone might say about the rearing up of children and, with the application of this upbringing, these boys might turn out earnest and serious in their conduct of life, come let us consider"). The conventional title also misleads on three accounts. The author did not mean to limit education to formal schooling, and he assumes two specific things: the children are boys, and free boys at that. A title truer to the stated aim is "Child to Citizen Transformation" or "The Technology of Child Production," where "child," again, is to be understood as male and freeborn. The text covers child production from procreation through the age of puberty. The author, like many others, did not see childhood as a symbol of a beneficent nature or as a stage to which one should want to return. Where modern historians of childhood fault the absence of any mention of the child's psychology in this work, especially of the child's evolving point of view or mental capacities, we should recognize the particular vantage point of the treatise. Who should teach the child, whether the child should be beaten, and whether only the rich can afford the recommended education are the important questions (teachers of the wrong sort: 4B, corporal punishment: 8F, education for the rich alone: 8E). The recurrence of these concerns throughout the essay reflects the author's primary interest in providing directions for fathers.

The author aims to intervene in the process of childrearing with the restorative, ideological end of putting the father back in place and in charge. In the complex, slave-owning societies of the Roman empire, the idea that a father of the elite class would educate his own son was almost

2 See Berry 1958 for discussion of the similarities of the *de Liberis Educandis* to Plutarch's works and for bibliography on issues of authenticity. For a brief review of stylistic methods of dating Plutarch's works, see Ingenkamp 1971.116–18.

nonsensical. It might have been possible for some eccentric to direct the education of his son; Horace tells that his father served as his pedagogue. This exceptional practice testifies to the humility and the devotion to learning of the poet and his family (and to their straitened circumstances, see *Satires* 1.6.71ff.). But both Roman and Greek society had experts and institutions for all stages of education. An upper-class slaveholder would no more educate his son than he would change a diaper, plow a field, or set the table. It was not simply that these were menial tasks. The performance of such tasks by delegated agents, while partly functional and efficient, also advertised the status of the owner, the man who does not have to work—at least not in the conventional sense of manual labor. Having one's sons educated by others shows, in Veblen's term, a conspicuous waste. The impulse is at least double: the son as an extension of the father does not have to work, and the father's work of training the next generation is displaced onto his subordinates. In addition, there is a redefinition of the role of the son and of work itself. Mental labor belongs to the owners, menial and domestic tasks to others. And the mental work in which the young heir is being trained itself rehearses the need for subordinates and for the lavishing of resources upon this distinctly different member of the household.

The *de Liberis Educandis*' prescriptions and prohibitions are more concerned with creating ideal relationships among men—father, teacher, and young student—than with any particulars of curriculum or method.³ Education is thereby not theorized as a process of nature or of culture but of male bodies—the paramount site of natural excellence and cultural (linguistic) training. *Paideia* will establish *andreia*, “manliness”; indeed, its processes and relations *are*, in a sense, manliness.⁴ The author hopes to direct the growing boy with nature and culture, the family and the teacher conspiring in an ideal harmony. His work is then of greatest interest as a display of boys and their relations against the menacing background of inappropriate bodies, especially the female and the servile. But the author does not simply deploy cultural antitypes to define education negatively. He is interested in the routines that establish relations. These routines are patterns of human association and also habits or styles of reading, writing,

3 On the idea of prescriptive texts, see Foucault 1990.12.

4 Athenian ideas of manliness (including women and slaves as defective males) and, especially, the economic and social underpinnings and consequences of this ideology are well discussed in Cohen 2003.145–65.

and reciting. To ensure that the heir will turn out like the father, the treatise calls for the creation of a textual community, a fantasy community of male relations where bodies correspond to kinds of speech and both mirror the free status of the owner.

A defense of education necessarily requires explanation of why some children are pursuing a particular set of activities. Often such apologies do not acknowledge that any other thing or person is needed. Indeed, talk of curriculum, canons, and methods tends to displace or even suppress the requirements of material and human labor that fuel the approved education. The not-so-free constraints of time, labor, and money that enable the young to be free for education are easily lost in prescriptions about what the child should do. A particularly complex challenge faced our author as he wrote to explain, defend, and rationalize the schooling of boys. Other sets of children and of the educated and other pursuits of children lurk somewhat menacingly on the margins of his treatise.

Two aspects of ancient schooling are especially problematic: the educators were often of lower status than the students and children other than free, elite children were educated—at times to what can only be termed professional standards. The *de Liberis Educandis* must define its approved education so as to differentiate it from the highly skilled literacy and numeracy of the slave experts. Further, since its severe regimen of education seems to treat the student as a slave, requiring him, even beating him, to perform, the author will argue for a different conception of the work of learning (and vigorously oppose corporal punishment). In justification of elite education, an educationalist may denigrate the non-elite's activity as professionalism, trade knowledge, or even pedantry. With a kindred ideological response, the author of the *de Liberis Educandis* redefines the nature of work, *ponos*, in a way that exploits an existing Greek division between menial and mental labor, but then further defines the activity of the liberally educated boy as a free compulsion. The child does work, but his attitude, his willingness, distinguishes this work from the forced work of the slave. The author seeks to create a disposition in father and son, a *habitus* to use Bourdieu's renewal of Aristotle's term, that is both a set of attitudes and a daily practice. "Plutarch" imagines that this *habitus* actually sequesters the servile and the feminine. By redefining education as mental not menial labor and as a free compulsion that protects the family from attack (the stain of contagion, as the author terms it), the *de Liberis Educandis* constitutes a new chapter in educational thought.

In sum, the *de Liberis Educandis*, Plutarch's various writings on

education, Quintilian's great treatise, the encyclopedia of Celsus, and a wealth of ethical writings *might* suggest that fathers in the first century A.D. needed advice on how to doctor their household or farm their estate or raise their sons. The pretense that a book is needed serves authors well, and the appearance of one self-declared "useful" book may encourage imitators. At the start of Roman prose literature, the elder Cato set a strong precedent: the Roman father need only consult his text to put house and son, estate and servants, whatever their expertise, in proper order, viz., well-subordinated to the father's wishes. Perhaps for the literary culture of the early empire, Augustus's own policies and image-making contributed to a sense of the importance and possibilities of a hortatory, moralizing, paternal mode of presentation. Certainly, the *de Liberis Educandis* privileges the role of fathers, who have decidedly not, as in Plato's *Laws*, lost their place to experts and a state apparatus.⁵

In practice, education does not replicate paternal order (both the established institutions that maintain social and cultural norms and, especially, the attitudes and the dispositions that aid the existing hierarchy of power) with rigorous systematicity. Whereas the teaching and reading of the *Aeneid* in the schools provided each generation with a strong dose of the ideal father-son relationship, ancient literature did not always represent the father in charge: comedy, especially, dramatizes the failure of his control, and in an extended family, a father's control could not match the idealized order of Cato's writings. The gap between the strong figure of the idealized father and the actual dynamics of power in the family had been shaping Roman literature from the first Roman comedies of the third century B.C. In addition, Augustan political ideology,⁶ which depicted the emperor as father and made so much of family values, may have contributed to a concern over paternal order, perhaps because the realities of family life did not correspond to the political ideals. What is novel and interesting in the *de Liberis Educandis* is not so much the stance that education will reinforce the rule of fathers but the prescriptions on how to ensure proper growth in the son.

5 Crito had urged Socrates to escape, in part so that he, Socrates, might tend to the education of Crito's sons (*Crito* 45c8–d6). Plato's indifference or resistance to the argument of a strong, essential bond between father and son can be seen in the *Cratylus*; see Rosenstock 1992.385–417.

6 See Zanker 1988.156–59 (Augustus and family legislation) and 193–210 (the family mythology of Augustus, including treatment of him as *pater Aeneas*).

GROWING SONS

The *de Liberis Educandis* does not celebrate this period of training. The scholar of ancient education must give up the hope that he is going to find enthusiasms over the glorious days of childhood, those fine days of awakening at school. Emerson could rouse his reader's nostalgia with: "Cannot memory still descry the old school-house and its porch, somewhat hacked by jack-knives, where you spun tops and snapped marbles?" (*Works and Days*). Plutarch's follower has no such feeling for the place of education, nor does he communicate any sweet longing. It is not simply that school was some bleak exile, a soul parching, interminably rainy setting from a nineteenth-century Bildungsroman. The author is not interested in the individual subjectivity of the young, nor does he see the school years as a site of nostalgia or a time for the formation of identity. First, the child's education will culminate with philosophy, which is the conduct of life, not a professional career or technical field.⁷ In modern terms, the child is to be trained toward an ethical disposition, the habit and outlook of an ideal adult man. Second, the child strikes the author as vulnerable. Nurse, mother, slave, pedagogue, teacher, base men, and rhetorical training itself threaten the child in line after line of attack upon his maturing male style.⁸ According to the author, education may fail through a neglect of oversight that leads inevitably to the malformation of the child.

The child is imagined as a soft body, liable to an injury in its growth that will deform it for all time. At 3E, infants' bodies must be massaged so that their limbs will grow straight; at 3F, children are like soft wax ready for the seal (cf. other comparisons of the child to wax, Leyerle 1997.265 n. 159). The nurse must be Greek—a simile explains the aim: to avoid bodily

7 Berry 1958.389 distinguishes the philosophy here advocated, a kind of education in traditional Greek literary culture, from Stoicism. Berry goes on to describe the debt of the *de Liberis Educandis* to Xenophon.

8 Nurse: 3C, 3E, 3F (the last cites Plato *Rep.* 377e as authority that nurses should not tell chance stories to children); servile mother: 1A–C; slave: 3C (mothers are better than wet nurses), 4A (list of wrong sort of slaves for pedagogues), 5F (delineation of what makes a good slave agemate); bad teachers: 4B; base men (*ponêroi*): 12D. Plutarch *de Audiendis Poetis* 36E contrasts what the boy hears from mother or nurse or even father or teacher with the precepts of philosophy. The *de Liberis Educandis* seems to concern the penultimate stage in education, where the boy is still under a father's care. Slave influence would continue to worry parents and educational moralists; see Leyerle's 1997.262 n. 133 discussion of John Chrysostom: children are to be protected from the disedifying stories of slaves.

deformity (3E). The child is imagined as a young plant in need of stakes (4C). At 5F, the admonitory proverb again cautions that the child's companions must be the right sort ("If you dwell with a lame man, you will learn to limp"). The metaphor of 1B (those not well born—he means those of mixed birth—have an indelible mark of reproach, ἀνεξόλειπτα, and are liable for all their lives to vituperation, insult) suggests that the soft bodies of such children are permanently, visibly marred. Bodily purity parallels verbal purity, for example, 7B: "As the body ought to be not merely healthy but also sturdy, so also speech should be not merely free from fault but vigorous too." Corporal punishment has a similarly indelible, physical effect: the children "grow sluggish and bristle at undergoing labor" (8F).

The propensity to be educated, to become the right sort of man, is a given (a consequence of free birth, apparently). It is in keeping with Plutarch's thinking to summon a metaphor from the body and from medicine. Like health, educability is the default or natural condition. A famous Greek tag maintains that letters are the physician of the soul. We do not know what the comic poet who used this had in mind, but like so much new comedy, it was excerpted as a commonplace.⁹ A romantic reading of the aphorism might conclude that literature communicates a positive force that shapes the human self and instills imagination and insight. An ancient interpretation, however, might think of literature as more consolatory, advisory, and sapiential; letters provide object lessons in dealing with adversity. More positively, the reading man relies on his texts and decidedly not on experience for the lessons of life. Παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνων, "Only the fool learns from experience," runs another Greek tag (Hesiod *Works and Days* 218). In line with this commonplace thinking, literary schooling and study make the growth of the soul healthy. They prevent deformity and sickness and dispose men toward mental self-sufficiency, although decidedly not the psychic salvation or personal emancipation imagined by modern educationalists.

The educated man possesses a stock of reading, examples, and aphorisms, along with a capacity to read, write, and speak without the assistance of another, yet this mental self-sufficiency depends on external, material realities. His state of mind is marked by a freedom of speech,

⁹ The encyclopedist Stobaeus preserves this fragment of the new comic poet Philemon from a play called Ὁ Ὑπολις ("The Man without a Country"), frag. 11, line 6 (Edmonds 1961 = Stobaeus *Flor.* 2.4.10).

which is, in fact, a social and material condition as well as a disposition to understand and talk of the world in certain textual patterns. The author's science of text therapy has little of the magical about it. Specific texts are not charms or remedies. Rather, the freeborn are disposed to develop freedom of speech through the *paideia* that is the reading and writing of texts. One need do little to prepare for this text medicine since *eugeneia*, the legacy of good birth and upbringing, has given this right to culture to the freeborn.¹⁰ On the other hand, one must do much to maintain and develop these "innate" distinctions from the lowborn. Disease has to be avoided, actively and by design. And so education, and more broadly, we might say, the ongoing ethical conduct of life, is a kind of preventative dietetics and calisthenics. The *de Liberis Educandis* offers fathers a health program for growing sons.

In example, theme, and argument, the author returns again and again to concerns of purity. Above all, the body and speech of the son must be kept from tainted bodies and speech. Common diction and metaphor collapse care of the body and of the soul. The author engages in an intellectual zeugma that is more developed and significant than simply an embellishment of the commonplace *mens sana in corpore sano*. Body and soul are not sundered. The author realizes that injury to the body taints the soul, and here a social ideology of the hierarchy of the free and the slave informs his categories. The preservation of health depends on the subordination of the bodily to the mental, but internal self-composure, wherein the individual orders his own wants and capacities, does not suffice to produce the desired state. Since his untainted body naturally and appropriately produces unsullied speech, the educated man rightly orders those about him. His eugenics is proved by his eulogics, his excellent, orderly, and ordering speech. With this mutually affirming cycle, the author can assure all fathers that their offspring are legitimate, that the child bodies of their sons are growing straight into speaking subjects without contagion from subordinates within the house or from the school.

10 Berry 1958.391 notes that the essay begins with the theme of eugenics and cites Jaeger 1947.246, who traced the theme to fourth-century interest in the subject. I use the term eugenics not as an ancient version of the pseudo-science of the twentieth century nor as the science fiction of the twenty-first century that imagines the genetic improvement of the species, but to describe the ideological cluster of rationalizations justifying the advantages of free birth in ancient society and the thinking about the body that devolved from these mystifications.

The treatise begins with the conception of the boy. Here the author develops his argument against bastards by using what will be typical forms of argument for this work, the especially schoolmasterly forms of citation from the poets, *chreia*, gnome, and historical exempla (paradeigmata). So after asserting that fathers should not have children with the lowborn, he supports this point with one nasty consequence: the child of such a union is subject to verbal insult all his life, but then turns to his poetic and academic proofs (1B):

καὶ σοφὸς ἦν ἄρ' ὁ ποιητὴς ὅς φησιν
 ὅταν δὲ κρητὶς μὴ καταβληθῇ γένους
 ὀρθῶς, ἀνάγκη δυστυχεῖν τοὺς ἐγγόνους.
 Καλὸς οὖν παρρησίας θησαυρὸς εὐγένεια, ἥς δὴ
 πλεῖστον λόγον ποιητέον τοῖς νομίμου παιδοποιίας
 γλιχομένοις. καὶ μὲν δὴ τὰ φρονήματα τῶν ὑπόχαλ-
 κον καὶ κίβδηλον ἐχόντων τὸ γένος σφάλλεσθαι καὶ
 ταπεινοῦσθαι πέφυκε, καὶ μάλ' ὀρθῶς λέγων ὁ ποιητὴς
 φησι
 δουλοῖ γὰρ ἄνδρα, κἂν θρασύσπλαγχνός τις ᾖ,
 ὅταν συνειδῇ μητρὸς ἢ πατρὸς κακὰ.

Wise was the poet who declares:

The home's foundation being wrongly laid,
 The offspring needs must be unfortunate.

A goodly treasure, then, is honourable birth, and such a man may speak his mind freely, a thing which should be held of the highest account by those who wish to have issue lawfully begotten. In the nature of things, the spirits of those whose blood is base or counterfeit are constantly being brought down and humbled, and quite rightly does the poet declare:

A man, though bold, is made a slave when'er
 He learns his mother's or his father's disgrace.¹¹

11 Text and translation from Babbitt 1927. His "A goodly treasure, then, is honourable birth" is a notable mistranslation. The Greek says: "Free birth is the honorable treasure chest of free speech!"

The author cites two passages of Euripides, *Hercules Furens* 1261 and *Hippolytus* 424, and then will bring on the historical exempla of Themistocles and of King Archidamas. The passage performs in miniature the argument of the treatise: the educational mode of reading, excerpting, and applying texts will guarantee the legitimacy of the son. The texts of the classical authors are guides for the imperial citizen. Tim Whitmarsh (2001.6) argues more generally that imperial education sought to found identity on the “prestigious past,” although the author of the *de Liberis Educandis* seems to fear that the present generation may show itself a bastard race (on the sense of belatedness, secondariness in the literature of the empire, see Whitmarsh 2001.41ff.).

Anxieties riddle the directions for growing sons; not the child’s worry that he may not grow, but the father’s worries that this growth may not be his own or may not be “proper.” The child climbs a ladder of perils; each rung, from mother’s milk to slave playmates and nurse, to pedagogues, and, at last, out of the house to school, has its special threat to the bodily well-being of the child, and to his language. The catalogue of potential culprits makes interesting reading: nurse, mother, slaves, pedagogues, immoral teachers, and those fathers swayed by the flattery of underlings or simply indifferent to the process of education. Through his admonitions, the author reassures the father that the education here revealed is the mark of legitimacy.

A reader might reasonably expect the treatise to discuss the nature of the freeborn male. What makes man and not woman or slave fit for education and for his governing role? And since there are highly literate and numerate women, slaves, and freedmen, why should culture—education—be viewed as the defining essence of the free man? The rather indirect answer comes in a series of comments, anecdotes, and rhetorical figures that serve to describe divisions of labor. The manual exploits a rhetorical understanding of bodies and speech to present a census of those who help and those who hinder the eulogics of the free boy.

The author is masterful in his techniques of rationalization. Through metaphor and anecdote, he entwines the spheres of agriculture and education so as to champion natural growth. The child grows away from woman and slave as much as he does toward any positive attributes of virility. At the same time, his body is celebrated as something distinctly different (if vulnerable). Nature, *physis*, is thereby represented not as the common condition of human beings but as a special birthright. Tied to this division of *physis* is the division of labor, *ponos*, whereby the free son alone can learn

to speak properly. Nicole Loraux describes the social semantics of *ponos* as a valorized effort that distinguished, starting in the classical period, master from slave, male from female, citizen from non-citizen.¹² The educational theorizing of toil can be best appreciated from the extant fragments of Musonius Rufus's treatment of the theses "Is *ponos* an evil?" (frag. 1) and "That toil matters little" (frag. 7). By the latter, Musonius means that great toil means nothing for the man intent on becoming a philosopher; compare Seneca *Epistles* 31.4. The present treatise delivers a little encomium on *ponos* (2C). Proper speech becomes the proper labor for the proper body: eugenics and eulogics coincide through the application of *ponos*. 2C–F expounds the importance of *ponos* for repairing the defects of nature and illustrates the point with a series of similes that begins with an almost Lucretian set of hard objects changed by the constant action of nature or man and moves on to agriculture, arboriculture, physical education, equiculture, and the domestication of animals—education implicitly, then, is a kindred hard, male labor at the top of this series of those processes that bend nature to man's use.¹³ Eulogics are not neutral linguistic skills (e.g., the memory of historical exempla, the ability to use metaphor, practice in extemporaneous speaking) but the trained disposition to produce a certain register of speech and to regard it as a medium of hierarchy. The vision of education as emancipatory, a tendency stemming from the origins of the curriculum in democratic Athens and from Platonism's grand claims for the powers of philosophy, is severely curtailed by the doctrines of eugenics and eulogics.

"PLUTARCH'S" EUGENICS

Καλὸς οὖν παρρησίας θησαυρὸς εὐγένεια, "Free birth is the honorable treasure chest of free speech." This aphorism, coming at the outset of his work (1B), assures those fathers desirous of worthy sons that their contribution is all important.¹⁴ Legitimacy will abide as social, cultural, and

12 Loraux 1982; see also Johnstone 1994.219–21. On the Cynic and Stoic backgrounds to this thinking, see van Geytenbeek 1962.40–50 and Berry 1958.392.

13 The (often self-conscious) role of ancient *paideia* in making men is described and analyzed for the imperial Greek world in Gleason 1995. Whitmarsh 2001 explores the relationship between writing Greek literature and Greek identity under Roman rule. See also Swain 1996 and Connolly 2003.

14 The connection of free birth with freedom of speech, although often identified with classical Athens, certainly antedated Greek democracy. Noble bodies are expected to speak nobly, with Thersites as the epic antitype. Speech is often understood as an extension or

intellectual capital that cannot be alienated.¹⁵ The author does not delineate how one achieves free or independent thinking, nor, like some Stoic or transcendentalist or ascetic, does he advocate that man become self-sufficient so that he may be an independent agent, able like Thoreau from his spare sanctuary of surroundings and self to cry against injustice. Rather, the author has a more mundane and material point of view: the freeborn will not suffer the inequality of status or resources that requires the subordinate to keep silent. Free birth is a freedom from physical and material constraint and, importantly, from doing the bidding of another. Aristotle had expressed this memorably: ἐλευθέρου γὰρ τὸ μὴ πρὸς ἄλλον ζῆν (*Rhet.* 1367a33: “The free man need not live at another’s beck and call”). The *de Liberis Educandis* applies this thought literally: the freeborn child will not feel the lash and will be able to speak out.

In writing to reassure an elite that it is independent, despite all the slaves and women directing its young heirs, the author delivers a tripartite message that blends social apologetics with protreptic to education: 1, education is all important to train and distinguish the freeborn. Indeed, educability is their natural characteristic; 2, genius is not sufficient for education; 3, free birth is all but a necessity. The author does not argue this in an explicit, sustained fashion. Rather, his values and preferences emerge and are underscored by his preferred rhetorical modes of demonstration. So at 5D, a priamel offers the things judged good by men as the unworthy foils for his preferred value, education. The first of the series is *eugeneia*, good birth. Despite a thoroughgoing conventionality of outlook (e.g., the denigration of wealth compared to education), the author will later admit that wealth is necessary (at 8E), and despite the presence of *eugeneia* as

reflection of the body of the speaker. Teucer reassures Ajax in Sophocles’ play that “no one will say you have spoken a suppositious (bastard) word” (482). The scholiast explains (ad *Ajax* 485): “It is necessary that he say such words because he speaks freely because of his free status” (Αἴαντα· δεῖ οὖν τοιούτους λόγους λέγειν) ὅτι διὰ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν παρρησιάζεται. Here the scholiast responds to the lines of Teucer, but he may have been influenced by such tags as the one attributed to Demosthenes by the collector Stobaeus (*Flor.* 13.17 = Oration 13 frag. 21): Οὐδὲν ἂν εἴη τοῖς ἐλευθέροις μείζον ἀτύχημα τοῦ στερέσθαι τῆς παρρησίας, “There is no greater misfortune for free men than the loss of freedom of speech.”

15 Bourdieu 1984 relates cultural preferences to the indices of gender, locale, class; see, e.g., pp. 105 and 114–25 for, respectively, the relation of variation in cultural practices to geographical variation and the distribution of economic and cultural capital. The interest of the social institution of education in replicating qualifications and restrictions is well discussed in the various essays in Cook-Gumperz 1986; see also Apple 1982.

a foil in the priamel, the author's focus returns repeatedly to the status of the bodies of the agents of education. In this passage, however, he asserts at the end of his priamel that the two most important aspects of *physis* are intellect and reason (5E).

The reader of this text may begin to feel that he swims in a soup of unrealized propositions to be arranged into syllogisms or, better, rhetorical enthymemes as the topics and arguments demand: The man with *nous* and *logos* is the educated man; only the man with *nous* and *logos* is worthy of education; to have *nous* and *logos* one must have *eugeneia* and wealth. The author is not able to maintain a consistently high-minded protreptic to education; bodies and status keep interrupting the "argument." Other ancient accounts of education certainly could leave unexpressed the prerequisites of resources and status needed for an education. So Cicero was repeating customary knowledge when he said there were three elements necessary to become an orator: *ars, exercitatio, ingenium*, "learned technique, practice and experience, and talent" (see Cicero *de Oratore* 113ff. and cf. the opening of the *pro Archia*). The author of the *de Liberis Educandis* recognizes that these are as necessary for moral excellence (*aretê*) as for the skilled professions (*technai* and *epistêmai*, 2A).¹⁶ Plato did not interrupt his dialogues on how or what to learn, or how to achieve philosophical *noêsis*, with the codicil "this is only for me and you, Glaucon, Euthyphro," although it was no doubt self-evident that one had to be Greek and citizen of a polis. For Plutarch, it was not so evident, partly because his contemporary the slave Epictetus was a great philosopher, and Epictetus's teacher had written an essay recommending that women study philosophy (Musonius Rufus frag. 3. Plutarch wrote a treatise advocating the education of women; Stobaeus preserves a few fragments, *Flor.* 15.125–27). In the imperial Roman world, the ranks of slaves and ex-slaves were the true treasury of literate teachers and experts.

Plutarch's contemporary, the great Roman teacher Quintilian, had similarly restricted who could be educated. His repetition of the elder Cato's definition of the orator as the *vir bonus dicendi peritus* ("a good man skilled in speaking") asserts that expertise in language will not suffice for

16 The tripartite terminology may derive from Chrysippus, see (pro) Dryoff 1897.239ff. and (contra) Pohlenz 1955.76. Van Geytenbeek 1962.29 cites these scholars and also a fragment (*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* III.214) that attributes to Aristotle the dependence of *aretê* on *physis*, ethos, and logos (*ascêsis* is used as a synonym for ethos in Stoic and Aristotelian writers).

his educational ideal. The “good” in Roman terms is as much a social as a moral term.¹⁷ The first socio-political use of the term *bonus* comes in the earliest extant prose treatise, the elder Cato’s *de Agricultura*. While there is nothing surprising in the conflation of moral with political terms (or the mystification of social divisions as moral differences), this first usage has a surprisingly strong literary afterlife. In the preface to his work, Cato wrote that, of old, when men wanted to praise another, they called him a good farmer (*bonus colonus*). Cicero describes his idealized readership as the *boni omnes*. Quintilian is following both Cato and Cicero in insisting that only the good can be the educated. For the author of the *de Liberis Educandis*, the ideological impasse that culture, a form of nurture, is all important and only the free man can be a philosopher, requires a redefinition of the nature of (the free) man. It would seem that education cannot make every man free or good (socially worthy).

Whereas Quintilian relied on a definition of *bonus* to restrict the set of the educated, in the *de Liberis Educandis*, the tension between education’s emancipatory, universal tendency and a restricted claim for its true practitioners surfaces in a number of metaphors, aphorisms, and anecdotes. The author must redefine *physis*, the concept of the natural, so as to accommodate this contradiction between education as a natural right and education as a restricted social practice. The text’s exclusive interest in the freeborn boy and his father suggests that there is only one growth and one *physis* worthy of record. Indeed, growth seems to define male difference and superiority. The free boy grows away from woman and slave as the text details how fathers may reproduce the free. There is much association and little argument in this prejudice, but such an association—the equation of natural growth with the developing ability of the boy in intensively trained literate skills (most often represented as skills of speech)—is crucial for the success of this educational rationalization.

The text had begun with child generation and production (*agôgê* and *genesis* at 1, *paidopoiia* at 1B). The author insists on a natural division: those born of a free father and unfree mother (he uses the expression “chance women,” which he glosses as prostitutes and courtesans) are tainted. This point he makes again and again, with all the tools of his rhetoric (e.g.,

17 Hellegouarc’h 1963.444–50 explicates the term. See also the valuable discussion of the criteria, process, and agents in the Roman aristocratic practice of *existimatio* in Habinek 1998.45–60 and n. 50.

quotation of poetry, the sententia already noted concerning the treasure of free speaking found in good birth, and metaphor). It is natural, he says, that those who are counterfeit sully their thoughts. He does not elaborate the metaphor of the surreptitious insertion of base metal, although he refers to the unexpungible stain of illegitimate birth (he means always free father and unfree or libertine mother).¹⁸

While impurity draws from him various metaphors of contagion (the son feels shame when he realizes the *kaka* [evil deeds but also the crap in his lineage] of his parents), purity is presented in a sustained and recurring metaphor of agriculture.¹⁹ Pure sower produces pure offshoot. The agricultural metaphor elides the mother's role.²⁰ The author will develop the simile: father is to son as farmer is to plant, but the first agricultural metaphor comes in his discussion of the role of nature, technique, and practice (2B). After the sweeping generalization that *aretê*, like any art or science, requires three things, he "proves" this with his statement that each of the three is necessary but not sufficient. The synthetic comparison of plant and child production then constitutes the second argument. Farming depends on good soil, an expert farmer, and potent seed (σπέρματα σπουδαία, 2B), and child production likewise on nature, the teacher, and verbal injunctions.²¹ *Physis*, the teacher, and *logos* seem collectively to have displaced

18 On archaic Greek texts' use of a language of metals to represent a hierarchy of values, see Kurke 1999.41–60 and 101–11. Carson 1990.158–60 describes Greek ideas of women as polluting and polluted.

19 According to Lucian (*Conv.* 8), at a Greek wedding feast a child distributed bread to the guests, repeating "I have fled *kakon*, I have found the better." Carson 1990.162 interprets this element of the rite as a preperformance of the marriage's redemption of the bride. Women of the family who prove unchaste are reintroducing the evil, *kakon*. Characteristically, the *de Liberis Educandis* depicts the consequences for the father who cannot keep to his precepts, who is not rightly educated, in terms that stress his feminization.

20 The author had demonstrated the importance of having a free mother and a free father with the authority of Euripides (by citing *Hippolytus* 424–25 at 1C). The father's faults also receive "Plutarch's" attention. Just as he had warned against marriage with chance women, the author repeatedly prescribes a father's actions. The father is imagined as the good planter: 2B (the conceit continued at 2E). The student takes on this role when he culls passages from his reading like a farmer reaping his harvest (8B: συλλογὴν κατὰ τὸ γεωργῶδες, "a harvest agriculture-wise." Agricultural metaphors are ubiquitous, e.g., 13B, challenging the student with too onerous tasks is like over-watering plants). This book (papyrus roll) of excerpts he then calls a tool, an *organon* (thereby explaining his own simile).

21 The adjective *spoudaios*, a favorite in this text, helps to unite the fields of the metaphors: fathers and planters are serious/zealous, so are seed, studies (5C: ἀγὼγὴ ἐστὶ σπουδαία; 1A:

the underlying simile of sowing father and mother earth. The author then continues to discuss how the defects of nature can be remedied by instruction—he is back in his proper subject, having attempted a redefinition of nature. Plato's concerns about whether moral excellence can be taught and the social reality of the role of the mother are ignored when *aretê* is but a matter of teacherly, paternal farming of the boy.

In fact, the author continues here to develop the idea of *ponos*, of the proper work that improves or repairs nature.²² This brings him easily again to agriculture at 2E (and compare 4C, where the good teacher is like the good farmer who stakes his tender plants). No doubt the economy of his metaphors, the restricted, systematic quality of his symbolic field, contributes to the rhetorical unity of his piece. At the same time, the author seems to have approached the early life of the child as an opportunity to embellish and develop the commonplace of the need for talent, training, and practice. His vignettes of the theme *labor omnia vincit* show sturdy growth as the sure result of the farmer's or the horseman's toil. So in his conceit of land requiring man's labor, trees will prove fruitful if they receive the right *paidagôgia*.²³ His crowning example is the story of the Spartan lawgiver Lycurgus, that all-but-mythic figure of paternal order. Lycurgus gave a different *agôgê*, upbringing and training (and also the key term of the Greek title of the *de Liberis Educandis*), to two puppies from the same litter. One he made wild (a scavenger for food), one obedient. These he exhibited as a visual parable for the Spartans (who did not get the point;

the point of the treatise is to find the system of education that will make children *spoudaioi* in their character; 9A: *spoudê* is all serious pursuit, activity in life, as opposed to rest and relaxation [cf. 11E]; the adjective is used at 2B of seed; 3E: nurses must be *spoudaias*; 4B: men use their *spoudaioi* slaves for their farmers, sailors, merchants, household managers, stewards, yet most important is to have the *spoudaion* pedagogue; 4E cites Socrates' words from *Cleitophon* 407a that men put all their *spoudê* to the making of money rather than the care of sons). Berry 1958.391 points out Xenophon's use of *spoudaios*.

22 The cultivation of his son is thus another aspect of the *ponos* of a father. When he engaged in sexual intercourse for the sake of children, the Greek father worked. The activity of the marriage bed is *ponos*; his other erotic behavior is *eros*—a distinction elucidated by Carson 1990.149 (citing Xenophon *Mem.* 2.1.11). Carson also discusses here the agricultural language for male, married intercourse.

23 At 2E, this term is used in a sustained illustration meant to demonstrate the point that labor is necessary in education. The author turns to agriculture and arboriculture, and says that even good earth requires cultivation. Trees left alone will grow crooked; they require *paidagôgia* to become straight and productive.

the law writer then gave the proper interpretation). The author concludes with this powerful image, but what has been illustrated? The importance of toil and training and the relative non-importance of *physis*, a category that lumps together parentage, birth, and talent? Unlike Rousseau, nature is not a state of savagery. The first dog is made fierce and self-reliant, made into a good Lacedaemonian like the Spartan boys who had to steal their supper.²⁴ Beyond stipulating the status of the mother, the author has little interest in birth; growth is his main concern.

Growth will emerge as the arena of men (the farmer who stakes the tender plants has displaced good soil as a generative force). Indeed, as the narrative traces the development of the boy, the reader witnesses him growing away from the mother. Ancient fathers are often imagined as cultivating, seeding, plowing their wives. Theocritus, in singing the praises of Helen's marriage, asserts that she will leave behind her childhood play for the work and deeds of a wife: she has hitherto been a field without grain, a garden without trees, a horse without a rider.²⁵ The father who follows the *de Liberis Educandis* seems to have transferred this cultivating activity from wife to son. Indeed, this account of the process of maturation suppresses the role of agents other than the father. An education of men and for men sounds more like social fiction than social history. Yet the mother does have a role to play in the text's directives. She is distinguished from improper women, and her duties can be recovered from those of the slave

24 The exemplum has more resonance because of the Spartan training of boys (indeed, it could well have served as an aetiological explanation for these practices). In the *pheiditia*, clubs with common meals, the fare could be improved by hunting. Grouped into *ilai*, packs of boys had to forage or steal their food (Plutarch *Lycurgus* 17, Xenophon *Const. of Lac.* 2.6–11). Older boys belonged to *krupeteiai* (Xenophon *Anabasis* 4.6.14, Plato *Laws* 633C). The custom became a commonplace, e.g., the exemplary story of the boy who hid a stolen fox, and when the rightful owners came to inquire, said nothing while the fox chewed through his side (*Apophthegmata Laconica* 35 [234 A], Plut. *Instituta Laconica* 12 [237 D 12], Isocrates *Panathenaicus* 214, Heracleides Ponticus frag. 2.8 [*FHG* 2.211]).

The artistic future of Plutarch's story of Lycurgus would prove remarkable. A dog eating from a dish occurs frequently in Dutch art of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, alongside depictions of children or of the well-ordered family table (the parable of Lycurgus is itself only directly depicted once, in the c. 1600 Lycurgus of Caesar van Everdingen)—see Bedaux and Ekkart 2000.19–20 and Franits 1993.148–60. The artists depicting the exemplary family and upbringing knew of Lycurgus's pup as the emblem of appetite.

25 See the discussion of Theocritus 18 in Carson 1990.151.

wet nurse. The father-reader is warned away from intercourse with chance women: “First, I advise fathers intent on producing respectable children not to cohabit with chance women” (1B: *πρῶτον τοῖς τοίνυν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἐνδόξων τέκνων γενέσθαι πατράσιν ὑποθείμην ἂν ἔγωγε μὴ ταῖς τυχούσαις γυναιξὶ συνοικεῖν*), as later he is told, if a wet nurse must be employed, not to use chance women (3D: *τάς γε τίτθας καὶ τροφούς οὐ τὰς τυχούσας*).

The advocacy of marital fidelity is centered on the ensuing child: the legitimate son will have no stain, no shame, no verbal abuse. If courtesans are women of chance (*tukhê*), and the father is a figure of technology (*technê*), how does he represent this proper mother? She interests him as a feeder; the mother’s role is essentially that of milk provider. This has two consequences: she replaces a slave in this function, and she thereby performs her natural role, as indicated by her bodily differences. Again nature is invoked to argue for a social practice. 3C declares that nature instructs us (*δηλοῖ δὲ καὶ ἡ φύσις*) that mothers should nurse their young. Nature has written the evidence on women’s bodies: they have milk and two breasts in case there are twins.

This argument from the female body illuminates the author’s gendered, class-sensitive typology of bodies. In advising the father on the production of a male body without blemish, the author sets the father the task of reading the bodies around him. At the same time, growth caused by the father is distinguished from the feeding of the mother (*trophê* at 3C versus the *agôgê* that is his subject). Improper women are marked by chance (so, again, nurses are not to be selected from this random set, 3D) and by pay (*misthos*, 3C). Maternal love is superior to the bought affection of the nurse, but the illustration also distinguishes it from a father’s training. It is perfectly reasonable that mothers who nurse will love their children more, for even animals separated from their “fellow-feeders” feel some pang (ἡ συντροφία γὰρ ὥσπερ ἐπιτόνιον ἐστὶ τῆς εὐνοίας. καὶ γὰρ τὰ θηρία τῶν συντρεφομένων ἀποσπώμενα ταῦτα ποθοῦντα φαίνεται. μάλιστα μὲν οὖν ὅπερ ἔφην αὐτὰς πειρατέον τὰ τέκνα τρέφειν τὰς μητέρας, 3D). This commonplace, dignified as it is since it is drawn from Xenophon’s treatise on education (*Cyropaedia* 2.1.28), responds to the puppies raised by Lyncus. The untrained, homebound cur eats from a dish; the other, disdaining the food set out for him and showing his master’s training, chases a rabbit. Father trains the child to leave home and chase his dinner. Mother has an indefinite longing for her fellow-feeder.

In themselves, these notices are instances of male talk about women

and women's place. In this manual of education, with its thematically restricted, often metaphorical thinking about nature, such reflections on naturalness and the body's functions and roles communicate a quasi-systematic view of the social order as a natural order. The impression of systematicity arises from a general ideological tendency to represent divisions of labor as natural and from the rhetorical mode of presentation and of hermeneutics that presents a unified reading of slave, woman, child, father. The author relies heavily on metaphor, *chreia*, exemplum, and commonplace to argue his case. In male metaphors, the child is imagined as a crop, the fruit of powerful seed, watered, with soil well-broken and plowed by farmer father. Or he is the well brought up, aggressive hound, on show for a larger body of male spectators. In female symbols, he is the babe at the breast compared to less useful animals, not the master's dear hound, his servant in that essentially non-essential, leisured, and high status activity, hunting, but the more productive and hence menial cattle and sheep (though *theria* includes wild animals as well). Such traditionalist thinking presents the bonds of status, friendship, and well-directed appetite as the higher calling. These reflections further distinguish the boy's body and his proper training; indeed, the two come to be understood as naturally associated.

The lack of theoretical analysis given to early periods of childhood and to the processes of acquiring language and subjectivity are, then, not simply an omission in the development of the science of human psychology. Nor should we believe, as have some historians of medieval and early modern Europe, that the lack of theoretical discussion of childhood and adolescence implies that there was no concept of childhood.²⁶ Just as the agents of childrearing are all but passed over in silence, the educational treatise stigmatizes the early stages as preliminary or puerile. The stages during which others had control, influence, time for the child are explained away as early and insignificant, worthy of comment only in so far as the author feels he must advise the master in the proper administration of subordinates. Writing in this disciplinary mode recreates an idealized hierarchy of the house where no individual or class or woman is granted large and ongoing authority, and the father's control is exhibited in the virtues

26 Ariès 1962 maintains that childhood was not recognized as such until the sixteenth century. Orme 2001.3–5 reviews scholars' reception (and, increasingly, refutation) of Ariès's views. Orme's work is itself a thorough recuperation of the experience denied by Ariès (and others).

of delegation, choice, and taste. And the father can monitor his child, the author assures, by checking the boy's language.²⁷

“PLUTARCH’S” EULOGICS

By speaking well, the boy gives living proof that he has not been tainted by woman or slave. Speech guarantees that he is his father's son. Thus the text consistently allies faults of speech with slaves. The author had worried that a father's union with chance women would produce the stain that cannot be removed. The directions for the selection of a wet nurse repeat this characterization of women. The author allows the use of this sort of slave only if the mother's body is weak or pregnant. In this exceptional situation, recourse may be had to wet nurses, but avoid chance women, the adviser inveighs (3D). He here describes a second best, but his recommendations for the ersatz mother reveal his criteria of feminine worth: she must produce milk and Greek.²⁸

The association of this latter product with a healthy body is the author's, who gives the justification again not by argument but by illustrative comparison: just as physical deformity is to be avoided, so is deformity of speech (3E). His worry about the visible physical contamination of the body by speech is evident in the directives for the selection of proper *agemates* for the freeborn boy. A socio-linguistic distinction maintains their differences from elite children: they are *ta paidia* (5F), the legitimate children *hoi trophimoi* (in Latin, the distinction between *pueri* and *liberi*). Speech and character are seen as one, as in the rhetorical commonplace: “*talīs hominibus fuit oratio qualis vita*” (Seneca *Epistulae* 114.1: “Men's speech is a mirror of their character,” although one is tempted to translate: “The tongue makes the man”). The author insists on this linguistic characteristic. He does not say the slave boys must be moral, loyal, kind; he offers a rather general qualification: these slaves must be earnest in their manners. This vague moralization he then concretely defines (4A): *πρώτιστα μὲν σπουδαία τοὺς τρόπους, ἔτι μέντοι Ἑλληνικὰ καὶ περίτραπεα λαλεῖν, ἵνα*

27 “Plutarch” is steering a course between the overzealous and the neglectful father and recommends that fathers test their sons every few days. He continues to say that teachers will do better if they know a *euthunē*, “accounting,” is coming (9E). Here his diction echoes the end-of-year accounting the Athenian magistrate owed the people.

28 For a discussion of Greek medical attitudes to the female body (and its liquids), see Hanson 1990.309–38.

μὴ συναναχρῶννύμενοι βαρβάροις καὶ τὸ ἦθος μοχθηροῖς ἀποφέρωνταί τι τῆς ἐκείνων φαυλότητος.²⁹ Their speech is to be Greek and very distinct, or else they will contribute a degree of servility to the boy. He will become barbarian, base (*moxthêros*), and cheap (*phaulos*)—all of which characterize the slave.

The author sees these faults as corporal (again he uses quasi-medical language: contagion or contamination are inherent in the verb συναναχρῶννυμι); his final comparison makes his corporal contagious thinking clear. He offers the proverb: ἂν χωλῷ παροικήσης, ὑποσκάζειν μαθήσῃ (“If you dwell with a lame man, you will learn to limp”). The maimed man verges on the female.³⁰ The Greek word for the lame is *khôlos*. Perhaps the Greek reader heard another censorious gnome as a latent echo. A Hellenistic epigram has as much time for wives as does Plutarch: “Every woman is bile (*kholos*): she has two good moments: / One on the marriage bed, one at the deathbed” (*AP* 11.381). “To dwell with the lame” is a deformed echo of marrying bile, *sunôiken* responds to *paroiken*, *khôlos* to *kholos*. The good father will, unlike the bad woman, stick to his own house in this respect. The wish to keep the son distinct and free from any visible mark of inferior status is theorized as physical protection. The bodies about him, even though slaves, must be unslavish, and the only way to achieve this exemption from servility is to have the slaves speak like free men.

The contradiction lurking in the social protocol that the ideal householder’s slaves sound like free men (and perhaps thus deserve to be free men) does not elicit a direct response. Rather, the author develops a far from seamless argument that attempts to stratify implicated layers: linguistic, corporal, and social. The slave body approaches the free in so far as it partakes of clean Greek. The free body teeters on the brink of servility every time its tongue makes a mistake (or its body is subjected to physical punishment). Free and slave seem to have as a common ground the tongue, as if this were the one true constituent of what it is to be human (the organ customarily understood as common to men has remarkably been displaced; the author addresses the control of the tongue directly at 10F).

29 ἔτι μέντοι signals the specification of the general point (“still however”). It is a cluster of particles used in later Greek. In Plutarch’s works, it occurs here and at *Solon* 18.6 and had sufficient precedent in, e.g., Demosthenes *de Corona* 58.5.

30 For the idealized behavior of the wife as within the house, see Carson 1990.156, who cites Woodbury 1978. The father who fails to heed “Plutarch” brings contagion to his family, i.e., he acts like an unchaste daughter or an adulterous wife.

In addition to being a rationalization, indeed mystification, of a difference grounded in social practice, the belief that language reflects and creates character is a reflex of rhetorical thinking. The treatise aims to create personae fit for the young man, and, as in any prosopopoeia or ethopoeia, speech must fit character. The author views approved speech as a corporal attribute. Again he thinks rhetorically: speech is a physical characteristic not because of any materialist theory of sound production but because of the physical process of language acquisition at school and because speech marks the body as free. One consequence of the training in linguistic skills, aside from the disciplining of the boy's own body through handwriting, reading, reciting, writing and voice exercises, and beating, was the final division of speakers into those who had received schooling and now as free citizens had unmarkable bodies and those whose bodies continued to be subject to physical chastisement (just as they continued to be called boys, *ta paidia*, whatever their age).

According to the understanding propounded and modeled by the treatise, freedom of speech, Hellenism of speech, marks the boy as free. Contact with unfree bodies (chance women, foreign or slur-speeched slaves) mars freedom of speech in a distinctly physical, perceptible fashion. The author here betrays an anxiety about what happens inside the house, where women and slaves come and go and where father cannot see everything. He had warned the father not to "dwell together" (*sunoikein*, "to marry") with a prostitute or concubine; it is significant that the author does not want the stain of such a union to be in the house (*oikos*).³¹ Likewise, his proverb about the lame man warns that if you dwell with a cripple you will learn to limp (the verb "dwell," *paroikeo*, is a compound from the same stem). Similarly, pedagogues must not be prisoners of war, barbarians, or *palimboloi* (4A). This word means something like "throwbacks."³² The positive message is not given, but it is clear: use homegrown slaves (in Latin, *vernae*). We are still in the confines of the house and the family, for the author laments the division of slave labor in some households. There are masters who use their

31 Stadter 1999 ad 24.8 notes that *sunoikein* is "a normal word for married to"; so, too, LSJ.

32 As LSJ say, citing *Men.* 445, it is a synonym for *palimpratos*, "sold again," a good-for-nothing slave who passes from hand to hand—the lack of fidelity, the ease of passage, even the backwardness of the *palim* prefix have sexual connotations unremarked by the lexicographers.

diligent and worthy slaves (4B: *spoudaiôn*) as farm stewards, ship captains, factory managers, and bankers, and save the most servile (he says drunkards, gluttons, and the untrained) for the management of their sons. The text has been following the life of the child, and now with the selection of pedagogues, the sons are ready to leave the house. So the topic turns to the selection of teachers (4C).

The treatment of these more advanced agents of education differs significantly, primarily because these men were not slaves. Here he does use moral language to describe proper teachers, and, for the first time, the author is concerned not with fathers' worries about education but about the role of fathers in the education of their sons. "Plutarch" worries that fathers, on the verge of this most important of decisions, will fall prey to cheapness or to flattery and the requests of friends. He had just introduced yet another agricultural metaphor: children, like tender plants, need stakes to support them. The expected items of this analogy, given that the analogy is illustrating the need for blameless teachers, are teacher is to student as stake is to young shoot. The author swerves from this to have the teachers as the farmers, the stakes are their words. So children need the precepts and instruction of teachers to grow straight. The slippage, which helps to downplay the influence of the teachers themselves, reintroduces the linguistic into the formative, creative process of education. Father's farmer role is taken over by the teacher's words.

Occasionally the father himself seems like a weak growth. The text's parade of threats to proper education now includes those misguided fathers subject to ignorance, inexperience, and flattery. Similes liken these fathers to someone who prefers his shoe to his foot (4E), or who entrusts himself to a bad skipper or an incompetent doctor (4D). These are all mistakes of choice and delegation, and, importantly, they are imagined by metaphorical association as imperiling the body or body part of the father.

The child does not risk destruction, however; he risks being turned into a slave. The author employs an anecdote, a *chreia*, to make his moral: Aristippus once told a cheapskate father that he would charge a thousand drachmas to teach his son. The father said he could buy a slave for that, and Aristippus's somewhat predictable punch line was "then you will have two slaves, your son and your purchase" (5A). The boy become a slave is a recurrent bogeyman in the text's tactics to have dad ante up for education. At 5A, the reader is warned of the result of poor education: a youth addicted to irregular and slavish pleasures (τὰς ἀτάκτους καὶ ἀνδραποδώδεις ἡδονὰς). The author holds out two courses of life to his students: either become a

practical father or study with “Plutarch”; the third sort of life after the practical and the contemplative is dissolute and a slave to pleasures (8A). The father fails if he credits the winning words of inferiors. Such a father was not properly staked with the teacher’s directives. For all his profession of philosophy, the author consistently represents errors of judgment or of morality as rhetorical failures: the father, unable to see that the words do not match the man, falls prey to false rhetoric and so imperils his son.

The author attributes the status of slaves to all those who interfere with education. His habitual slander develops into a generalized rhetorical social census where everyone has his place and his speech. Any departure from this scheme is a form of slavery. Thus he denigrates flatterers who would convince a father to send his son to a cheap teacher. They upset his tidy arrangement, where only the morally and socially good speak well. So he terms their free birth accidental: “free-born by freak of fortune, but slaves by choice” (13C: τῇ τύχῃ μὲν ἐλεύθεροι, τῇ προαιρέσει δὲ δοῦλοι, Babbitt’s translation). The oxymorons are strong, especially since the son of chance is a bastard.³³ The author is making a rhetorical gnome out of the commonplace opposition of chance against choice, slavery and misfortune against freedom and happiness. The author is also twisting a Stoic sentiment for his own polemical point. So a fragment of Menander (722, lines 9–10), a sentiment dear to Epictetus (*Gnomologium Epicteteum*, sent. 31 p. 485 Schenkl): “Freedom and slavery . . . are both works of choice.” Compare a gnome of Plutarch from his lost work *Parallels*, preserved in Cassius Dio (Dindorf-Stephanus p. 31): διὰ φρονήματος ἀξίωμα φιλελεύθερον καὶ προαιρέσεως εὐγένειαν ἥκιστα ἐθελόδουλον, “Because of the dignity of lofty thinking, men desire to be free, and because of the nobility of choice, they are least attracted to slavery.”

During a son’s adolescence, a new corrupter may threaten fathers. Even with a proper teacher and a father not subject to flatterers, slaves in hiding, the boy must be kept from another threat. This target is quite similar to the flatterer; the text describes them as *ponêroi*—in slightly old-fashioned English we might say “vile” or “base,” which collapses the economic and the moral fields exactly as does the Greek. Again the author fears contagion, and to ward off this threat, he summons a most schoolmasterly weapon, a list of aphorisms with exegesis. These form an incantation of moralizing

33 The most famous son of chance is Oedipus, so he thinks at any rate (OT 1080).

practicality, especially the one that directly takes up the theme (and vocabulary) of the vile, 12F: “‘Do not put food into a chamber-pot’; this means that it is not fitting to put urbane speech into a vile soul. For speech is the food of thought, and vileness in men makes it unclean” (Babbitt’s translation, slightly adapted). The good father is further directed to steer a middle course: do not be harsh, but mix honey with the wormwood (13D).

This advice mongering may seem to the modern reader soupy scare tactics that mix proverb, school forms, and tags from the poets and Plato. Repeatedly, this familiar fare presents education as a species of delegated labor wherein the father protects that important symbol, the body, and hence the status of his son. Fathers who fail to heed the various directives not to put something where it does not belong risk marring that body or even enslaving their own. In the course of his admonitions, the author can deliver a tired bit of misogyny: the maxim “‘Keep to your own place’ is wise, since those who take to wife women far above themselves unwittingly become not the husbands of their wives, but the slaves of their wives’ dowries.” This explanation, however, reinforces the place of the free father: heeding the text, he will not be subject to slave, flatterer, rich wife—in sum, the figures of appetite, of reason misled, of bodies that perhaps counterfeit the male. The enemy of education is conveniently social and moral; he or she is reducible to memorable types, rhetorically arranged. Aphorism, *chreia*, metaphor, and notions of rhetorical decorum (the fitting, especially) create an orderly social and intellectual continuum.

In striving to create a definite subjectivity in the boy and the father, the treatise deploys received categories of gender and class so as to specify how the male is not servile and not feminine. The author promises to produce speaking bodies healthier, more forceful, and more confident than the uneducated. The circularity of the argument is clear: the free body is the vessel of free speech, free speech marks the worthy body and person. Only those with the resources to follow the author’s heady plan are really free and educated.

The strongest evidence of the complex relation of rhetorical argument to concerns with the body comes in the treatise’s most dramatic protection of the boy: the earnest disapproval of corporal punishment. The author’s position, shared by Plutarch’s contemporary Quintilian, has been celebrated as a fundamental statement of humanism. In fact, it is but one part of the effort to prevent the deformation of the boy into a slave. The author disapproves primarily because the boy will look and feel like a slave. And the boy will be confused about his own identity. Blows and torture (*πληγαίς*

μηδ' αἰκισμοῖς) are not to be used—the Greek words suit slave punishment and slave interrogation. The author then offers a rhetorical argument, one that depends on the notion of the fitting (τὸ πρέπον): Κἀκεῖνό φημι, δεῖν τοὺς παῖδας ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἄγειν παραινέσσει καὶ λόγοις, μὴ μὰ Δία πληγαῖς μηδ' αἰκισμοῖς. δοκεῖ γάρ που ταῦτα τοῖς δούλοις μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς ἐλευθέροις πρέπειν· (8F: “And I believe that children should be encouraged to noble pursuits not, by god, by blows and torture but by praise and words, for somehow it seems (right) that the former suit slaves more than the freeborn,” my translation). Beneath the που (“somehow”) much lurks, but we get no explanation. Instead, a rhetorical division again helps to ally the free and words, on the one hand, and slaves and the maimed body, on the other. He writes that praise and reproof are more helpful for the freeborn (better than torture, αἰκία, he says). He describes the effect of corporal punishment upon boys in medical terms (8F): “They grow sluggish and bristle at the prospect of work” (ἀποναρκῶσι γὰρ καὶ φρίττουσι πρὸς τοὺς πόνους). Words preserve the health, the *physis*, of the free; blows are right for the unfree body.

On the verge of the topic of adolescence, the author has one more worry about the young man's body. For the sexually precocious, early marriage is the answer (13F). More discomfiting for the author is homosexual activity. He is most unsure if he should talk of it (11D: πολλὺς δ' ὄκνος ἔχει με, “a great reluctance takes me,” and cf. 11E: εὐλαβοῦμαι ταύτης εἰσηγητῆς γενέσθαι καὶ σύμβουλος, “I am hesitant to become the sponsor and proponent of this”). Amid this general section, where he has urged the father again and again to keep his son from low speech and low men, where he has urged passions be checked and warned of the perils of over-indulgence and excessive severity from the father, he has a most revealing answer to the query that troubles him so: he resorts to textual authority. “Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Aeschines, Cebes, and that whole chorus” (11E) say yes, so the author will hardly say no. The status of the authors and, perhaps, of the male bodies of the lovers suggests for the author that homosexual practices may not enslave or degrade. The subject makes him uneasy. He quickly passes to a brief treatment of the vices of adolescents before taking refuge in the scholarly tour de force, the exegesis of proverbs (attributed to Pythagoras), which nicely combines his idea of conventional morality with schoolmasterly authority.

The educational treatise has rationalized socially differentiated practices of punishment, education, and labor through a rhetorical scheme of different bodies and their appropriate characteristics. The greatest challenge

to this rhetorical division comes from education itself, and the expert slave. The author manages to resist treating the mind as an overarching category, one not susceptible to divisions of status, by tying certain kinds of speech, and thus thinking, to certain bodies. Further, he theorizes distinctions in the activities of two classes of bodies. Again he relies on a common substratum of diction with an all-important division. Slave and free both engage in labor (*ponos*), but the slave's labor is menial, manual; the free's is higher and mental. This heavy-handed distinction attempts to represent the division of labor between owned and owner as orderly, bodily, and natural. As mind governs body and as metaphor governs thought or argument by making a hierarchy out of similitude, the free is always the dominant, organizing item. An association of the governors with the mind and the governed with the body is a frequent feature of a ruling class's parables, speeches, religion, and literature. The author strengthens the commonplace by means of the strong symbol of the (free) child. The boy grows away from manual labor and becomes a figure of intellectual labor.

In fact, children of school age, perhaps especially boys, most closely resembled slaves. In the name that summoned him, in the labor he was commanded to perform, and in the physical compulsion that harried, threatened, and beat him to perform, the boy was not only treated like a slave but was subject to slave or freedmen pedagogues and teachers. Despite the high valuation and social restriction of education, in learning to wield stylus and tablet, brush and papyrus, the boy was performing manual tasks. He was undergoing a physical regimen, walking to and from school at set times, sitting and standing, reciting, answering, learning gesture, learning when to speak and when to keep silent. The author presents this educational process as a *ponos* not simply analogous but superior and rival to the servile. The ancient schoolboy was to internalize his developing distinctiveness by such repeated actions as the laborious copying out, time after time, of lines set by the master: φιλοπονεί μὴ δαρῆς (“Love *ponos* lest you be beaten”).³⁴ Studying hard, expressed in the oxymoronic “love toil,” is the alternative to being treated as a slave. The author, like other teachers, worked hard himself to instill in his pupil and father the sense that their common activity

34 Cribiore 1996.xiv uses the expression to conclude her preface; see her discussion of model writing texts, p. 127: φιλοπόνει (*philoponia* often appears in Hellenistic inscriptions as a heading for a contest in the gymnasium). Cf. Menander *Monost.* 422: ὁ μὴ δαρεῖς ἄνθρωπος οὐ παιδεύεται, “Without beating, a man is uneducated.”

was a mental labor, the superior correspondent to productive work. The moralizing injunction to work hard tells even the lazy scholar that he is at work. To the daydreaming boy, the alternative may seem to be play, but the ideological other half is work that actually is of some more immediate or more material use. Whether or not the boy learns his lesson well, continues on to study philosophy or to become a successful pleader in the courts, he will have learned to view certain literate activities as distinct spheres—if not quite the life of the mind, at least the work of the freeborn.

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