

SOCRATES ON LOVING ONE'S OWN: A TRADITIONAL CONCEPTION OF ΦΙΛΙΑ RADICALLY TRANSFORMED

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THE LAST POSITIVE PROPOSAL of the *Lysis* identifies what is loved (τὸ φίλον) with what is one's own (τὸ οἰκεῖον) and friends or lovers (φίλοι)¹ with those who naturally belong to one another (οἰκεῖοι, 221e3–6). While some interpreters have seen in this proposal the key to the dialogue as a whole,² most have regarded it as just more fodder for Socrates' rapid-fire eristic. What lends the latter view its plausibility is the appearance that this is just another ad hoc suggestion that does not solve the problems faced by the preceding ones and is itself refuted as they are.³ In the present paper, however, I aim to show that the identification of being φίλος with being οἰκεῖος, far from being abrupt and isolated, is already anticipated by Socrates' first conversation with Lysis and therefore unifies the dialogue by tying its end to its beginning.⁴ When the middle of the dialogue, in which

1. The dialogue clearly concerns itself with φιλία in the broadest sense of the word, a sense that includes ἔρως.

2. Pohlenz (1917, 577–84), Ziebis (1927, 26), and Fraisse (1974, 143–49) explicitly claim that the notion of τὸ οἰκεῖον is the key to the dialogue. Others who make this notion, and therefore the final definition, central to their interpretations are Westermeyer (1875, 98); Schoplick (1968, 64); Lualdi (1974, 132–40); Kaiser (1980, 212–25); and Bolotin (1979, 182–95).

3. Long ago, Backs (1881, 8, 12–13), in an otherwise excellent and constructive analysis of the dialogue's argument, claimed that the suggested φίλον-οἰκεῖον identification was a mere "Anhang" unrelated to the rest of the dialogue and added by Plato only on account of the identification's popularity. Backs' argument depends on the erroneous assumption that this last section of the dialogue introduces τὸ οἰκεῖον as "ein ganz neuer Begriff" (p. 13). The position that Backs had to defend at the time has more recently been accepted with little or no argument. Price (1989, 8), for example, asserts of the φίλον-οἰκεῖον identification that "this new suggestion comes to the scene abruptly and departs in failure." Guthrie, whose judgment that "even Plato can nod" is well known (1975, 143), describes the introduction of τὸ οἰκεῖον as "arbitrary" (p. 149). Levin (1971, 246–48) believes that this notion is introduced only to be quickly abandoned. In some cases (surprisingly many), the last suggestion of the dialogue is simply ignored, as it is, for example, by Annas 1977, 532–54 (see esp. p. 538, where one would expect her to mention it), and Carr 1996. A recent interpreter even confesses: "I am troubled by the fact that I can make little or no sense of roughly the last three Stephanus pages of the text and, consequently, I have no insight into how this concluding section bears on the rest of the dialogue" (Roth 1995, 3; at p. 19, n. 33, Roth calls the section "chaotic").

4. To my knowledge, the only interpreters who have explicitly noted this connection between the last definition and Socrates' introductory conversation with Lysis are Pohlenz (1917, 577–78); Glaser (1935, 49); Schoplick (1968, 26 and 71 [following Glaser]); Schmalzriedt (1969, 121, also 123 and 129); Lualdi (1974, 74, and 1998, 62, 82, 188 [also following Glaser]); Bolotin (1979, 189); Kaiser (1980, 199); and Bordt (1998, 141–43). None of them, however, explains the exact role that the notion of τὸ οἰκεῖον plays in the introductory conversation. One qualification must be made to the present interpretation: while the conversation with Lysis represents the beginning of the main discussion, it of course does not coincide with the beginning of the dialogue.

different characterizations of being φίλος are refuted, is seen as serving to clarify and develop the φίλος-οἰκεῖος identification that thus frames it, it ceases looking like aimless, futile eristic and acquires coherence and purpose. Furthermore, the οἰκεῖος theme also places the *Lysis* in its historical context: as will be shown, the φίλος-οἰκεῖος identification was a traditional one that during the classical period was being subjected to critique and reinterpretation by leading intellectuals, with the historical Socrates apparently foremost among them.⁵ Returning the dialogue to this context will in turn provide a better idea of its overall aim.

1. SOCRATES' INITIAL CONVERSATION WITH LYSIS

The conclusion of Socrates' initial conversation with Lysis is that only if Lysis is wise will others be φίλοι *and* οἰκεῖοι to him (210d1–2). Though this conclusion clearly associates the two notions that will be identified at the end of the dialogue, there are reasons why this anticipation normally goes unnoted: 1) most translators translate οἰκεῖοι differently in the two contexts: “attached to you” (Wright) or “feel close to you” (Lombardo) at 210d2 versus “belonging to each other” at 221e6 (the exception is Bolotin, who translates “akin” in both cases). In general, while they must take οἰκεῖος in the later passage as referring to some objective state of belonging together, they take οἰκεῖος in the earlier passage as expressing simply a psychological attitude; 2) the conclusion of the earlier discussion explicitly says only that the possession of wisdom will make others φίλοι *and* οἰκεῖοι to Lysis, not that the words φίλοι and οἰκεῖοι have the same meaning.⁶

However, the argument by which Socrates reaches this conclusion, an argument that usually receives scant attention from commentators, shows that here 1) οἰκεῖος is understood in the objective sense of “belonging” and that 2) being φίλος is at least very closely associated with being οἰκεῖος. In this case we have a significant anticipation of the final proposal.

Any interpretation of this initial conversation must explain why the word οἰκεῖος is in Socrates' conclusion, when the argument appears to concern only the conditions for being φίλος. Careful analysis, however, shows that the word οἰκεῖος does not come out of nowhere, but instead expresses an important component of the argument. The main steps of Socrates' argument are as follows:

1) The first step is a paradox: Lysis' parents do not entrust all of their belongings to him and do not let him do what he wants with them; they do not even give him free reign over *his own life*, but instead subject him to others (including slaves!). This behavior appears to contradict their love for Lysis (207d–9a).

5. Works devoted to the *Lysis* have almost universally ignored the historical context: the only significant exceptions known to me are Kaiser 1980 (esp. 193–97, 215–18), and Bordt 1998, 50–60.

6. Another, more general, reason why the anticipation normally goes unnoted is that some prejudice or another about what is and is not important in Plato's dialogues prevents the reader from giving serious attention to the conclusion of Socrates' discussion with Lysis. A good example is Bashor, who claims: “there is something in the fraternity atmosphere, the boyish subject, the school-recess conditions under which it occurs that prevents the reader from taking the conclusion seriously” (1968, 272). There is of course much playfulness here, but it does not therefore follow that the discussion seeks to make no serious point.

2) Socrates refutes Lysis' suggestion that *his youth* is the explanation by pointing out that his parents do entrust him with *some* things despite his youth (209a–c).

3) Socrates then shows that the problem is Lysis' *lack of wisdom* by arguing that a) people will entrust him only with those things of which he has knowledge because b) things naturally belong to the person who knows how to derive some advantage from them (209c–10c).

The first question that must be asked is how this argument resolves the initial paradox. One might think that the solution is as follows: Lysis' parents do not entrust some things to him because he lacks wisdom, not because they do not love him. Therefore, their behavior is not incompatible with their love. However, this is *not* Socrates' conclusion. Instead he tells Lysis: "So it turns out that your father does not love you, nor does anyone love anyone else, so far as that person is useless" (210c7–8; trans. Lombardo).⁷ What is the basis for this very strange claim? Why cannot Lysis' father love him despite not being able to entrust his possessions to him? What is assumed here is a necessary connection between loving someone and being able to entrust your possessions to that person. Given what Socrates says, the connection appears to be the following: if Lysis is not wise, his parents will not be able to entrust him with their possessions, therefore they will find him useless, therefore they will not love him.

Now let us turn to Socrates' final summary of the conclusion: "If you become wise, my boy, all people will be φίλοι to you and all people will be

7. Some scholars try to attribute to Socrates the weaker conclusion mentioned above by either ignoring, misinterpreting, or explaining away the much more radical conclusion he actually draws. Fraisse, for example, paraphrases Socrates' conclusion as follows: "Envers celui qui ne sait rien, même ceux que la nature a destinés à l'aimer restent défiants *et en apparence hostiles, leur philia ne pouvant se manifester*" (1974, 129, my emphasis). The italicized qualification not only corresponds to nothing in the Greek, but contradicts the whole thrust of the argument, which clearly aims to show that Lysis' parents and others will *in reality* not love him if he is not wise. Bolotin claims that "Socrates, despite appearances to the contrary (cf. especially 210d4), does not seriously deny that Lysis' parents love him dearly as their very own son" (1979, 89–90). Yet Socrates does explicitly deny this. Why assume that he does not really mean it (at least in the sense that parental love is not true love)? (Bolotin otherwise recognizes the subversive character of what Socrates says: see pp. 85–86.) Roth (1995, 8) and Bordt (1998, 80) go so far as to claim that parental love is paradigmatic for Socrates in this discussion. Bordt recognizes that Socrates' conclusion explicitly makes wisdom and utility, and not natural kinship, the criterion for love. However, he attempts to show that this conclusion is not meant seriously. He argues first that Socrates is providing here a *reductio ad absurdum* (pp. 137–38). Yet Bordt shows only that Socrates' conclusion is absurd in the sense of contradicting common opinion: the King of Persia and most other parents obviously would prefer their own children to a much wiser or more useful stranger. There is no hint in the text that Socrates shares this opinion. The evidence from other texts provided below in fact shows that Socrates was notorious for contradicting common opinion precisely on this point. Bordt also argues that the conclusion contradicts the earlier claim that Lysis' parents love him for his own sake (pp. 136–39). But as Bordt himself admits, this claim is never explicitly made nor, I would add, is it even necessarily implied: Lysis' parents are said to aim at his happiness, but we are not initially told why. Bordt's third argument is that the conclusion is invalid: from the claim that Lysis is not loved insofar as he is useless (210c8), it does not follow that he is loved only insofar as he is useful: he could be loved insofar as he is a son (p. 139). The existence of a fallacy, however, does not prove that Socrates does not take the argument seriously. Furthermore, it is not clear that there is a fallacy. The point summarized at 210c8 is stated more fully at 210c5–6: "Well, then, are we going to be anyone's friend, or is anyone going to love us as a friend in those areas in which we are good for nothing?" (trans. Lombardo). It does not seem a fallacy to infer from this that we will be loved only in those areas in which we are useful. If Lysis' parents, then, love him only in those areas in which he is useful, it is reasonable to infer that they do not love him simply insofar as he is their son. In short, what we have here is a clear case of scholars not liking what Socrates says and trying desperately to make him say something else. An exception is Nancy (1997, 216), who points out that in Socrates' argument σοφία "efface la distinction entre parents et étrangers." Carr (1996, 20) finds in Socrates' argument a "gross distortion of the nature of parental affection"; see also Santas 1988, 89–94.

οἰκεῖοι to you, since you will be useful and good; if, on the other hand, you are not wise, no one will be φίλος to you, not even your father nor your mother nor your οἰκεῖοι" (210d1–4). We have already seen the connection Socrates makes between being wise and having φίλοι. But why does he add that if Lysis is wise people will also be οἰκεῖοι to him? What does οἰκεῖοι mean here? In its second occurrence in this passage, οἰκεῖοι as a substantive clearly refers to family members. But it cannot have that meaning in its first occurrence: Socrates is clearly not claiming that if Lysis is wise everyone will be his blood kin. Does the word then have only the weak meaning of "attached" or "feeling close" that most translators give it here? In this case it would be rather pointless and unnecessary. The argument, however, warrants a stronger meaning that gives the word an important place in the conclusion. As careful analysis shows, the notion of "belonging" plays an important role in the argument and is interpreted in a novel way. Part 3b of the argument as outlined above is especially important and striking in this regard. In areas of which we have knowledge, Socrates asserts, "things will belong to us, because we will derive some advantage from them" (210b5–6, trans. Lombardo). In areas of which we are ignorant, "things are not going to be ours because we are not going to derive any advantage from them" (210c3–4).⁸ If we are wise, then, people will entrust their possessions to us, because these things are properly ours. Wisdom determines what is our own; to the extent that we are ignorant, nothing is our own, not even our own lives. For the truly wise person, therefore, everything is οἰκεῖον, that is, his own.⁹ But then can we not also conclude that to the wise person everyone is οἰκεῖος in the strong sense of "belonging to him"? The argument clearly shows two ways in which everyone will belong or be akin to the wise person: 1) they will see their own possessions as belonging to him, since he knows how best to derive advantage from them; 2) they will see even *themselves* as belonging to him because he will best know how to lead them. This last point is implied by Socrates' description of the wise as ruling others (ἄλλων ἄρχοντες, 210b5) and the ignorant as being ruled (ἄλλων ὑπήκοοι, 210c3).

Thus the argument shows that wisdom not only wins the love of others, but also establishes a strong kinship with them; if the kinship is unequal (others belong to the wise person, not vice versa), so is the kinship between father and son. And there is a parallel between the two cases. Just as traditionally the son and his possessions were thought to belong to the father (and we are told in the present dialogue that Lysis is still known only by his father's name, 204e3–5),¹⁰ so Socrates is claiming that all possessions and all people truly belong to the wise person. But this very parallel shows that Socrates' characterization of "kinship" and "belonging" rivals the traditional understanding of kinship in terms of blood ties. Just as Socrates' argument denies that Lysis' parents could love him just because he is their own flesh and blood, so does it deny that they are in an important sense οἰκεῖοι to him:

8. See Bolotin 1979, 97–99.

9. This view is also attributed to the Socratic Antisthenes: αὐτάρκη τ' εἶναι τὸν σοφόν. πάντα γὰρ αὐτοῦ εἶναι τὰ τῶν ἄλλων (Diog. Laert. 6.11). A related idea may be expressed in another claim attributed to Antisthenes: τῷ σοφῷ ξένον οὐδὲν οὐδ' ἄπορον (Diog. Laert. 6.12).

10. See Dover 1994, 273–75.

they do not see themselves or what is theirs as his because he lacks the wisdom that alone entitles one to possess anything. The converse is also implied, if not explicitly stated: Lysis will love his parents and feel that he belongs to them only to the extent that he considers them wise; that they are his own flesh and blood is not granted any importance by Socrates. The crucial thing to see is that Socrates is characterizing both being φίλος and being οἰκεῖος in a way that completely disassociates them from familial kinship. Perhaps the reason why Socrates in the conclusion cited above uses the word οἰκεῖοι to refer to family immediately after having used it in the other very different sense is to highlight this contrast.¹¹

This contrast is apparently also the point of Socrates' otherwise bizarre example of the Great King's royal stew (209d–e): the king will not entrust the preparation of his stew to his own eldest son, but will hand it over to two complete strangers who can demonstrate a superior culinary acumen, allowing them to do whatever they want with it, even throw in fistfuls of salt. The general point is that a person will fully entrust to someone who displays wisdom what he would not at all entrust to his own family. Socrates is trying to show that wisdom creates a bond between people that transcends any family ties.

We can therefore conclude both that the word οἰκεῖοι at 210d2 has the meaning of objective "belonging" that it also has at the end of the dialogue and that it is at least closely connected to the word φίλοι: people, including Lysis' parents, will love Lysis (be his φίλοι) only to the extent to which they can see themselves and what is theirs as belonging to him (can be οἰκεῖοι to him). What next needs to be shown is 1) that this association of being φίλος with being οἰκεῖος was a traditional one in ancient Greece; 2) that Socrates, however, radically reinterprets both terms in such a way as to uproot them from the original source of their unity, that is, blood kinship (συγγένεια); and 3) that this radical reinterpretation, rather than being new to the *Lysis*, has precedents among the Sophists and is described elsewhere as a central feature of Socratic thought. For this we must go outside the dialogue, but in a way that will illuminate the significance of the introductory conversation and so of the dialogue as a whole.

2. THE TRADITIONAL ΦΙΛΟΣ-ΟΙΚΕΙΟΣ IDENTIFICATION IN ANCIENT GREECE

In a well-known gloss on *Iliad* 2.261, where Odysseus threatens to strip Thersites of his φίλα εἴματα, Eustathius interprets φίλον as meaning οἰκεῖον. Some modern scholars have accordingly suggested that the adjective φίλος in Homer, while sometimes having an affective sense ("dear"), has sometimes a merely possessive sense ("one's own"),¹² while other scholars have gone so far as to claim that it always has only a possessive sense.¹³ Both views have been recently challenged by David Robinson (1990), who argues that φίλος

11. Lualdi appears to be the only one who notes this contrast but, unable to explain its significance, she dismisses it as "una specie di gioco di parole" (1998, 188).

12. This is in fact the majority opinion. For an especially good example, see Kakridis 1963, 3–23.

13. See Rosén 1967, 12–41, and the critique of Hooker 1987, 47–51.

in Homer never has a merely possessive sense. This is a dispute I cannot enter here,¹⁴ except to express my doubt that the sharp dichotomy between possessive and affective senses of φίλος assumed by the debate is very helpful: the two senses do not necessarily exclude each other, since something could be *dear* precisely because it is *one's own*.¹⁵

The thesis to be defended here, because it provides the *Lysis* with an important historical context, is one that is less contentious: that in archaic Greece the substantive φίλος referred primarily to one's kin (οἰκεῖος or συγγενής), and only secondarily or derivatively to those not related in blood. This usage is repeatedly noted by Homer's scholiasts. A scholion (EQT) on *Odyssey* 1.238 claims: "οἱ φίλοι are οἱ οἰκεῖοι and those belonging to the family." Eustathius makes the same identification (1414, 33) and also elaborates it in a scholion on *Iliad* 3.163: "In many places the poet uses the word φίλος to refer to those related by blood . . . φίλους are those of the same blood." The most thoroughly documented discussion of this usage, both in Homer and in other texts, is probably still that of F. Dirlmeier (1931, 7–21), whose conclusion has been echoed by more recent discussions, for example, those of J.-C. Fraisse (1974, 40) and L. F. Pizzolato (1993): that in archaic Greece one's kin were φίλοι in the strictest sense and συγγένεια was the primary instance of φιλία. In other words, even φίλοι who were not related in blood were seen as "like family," but normally less than family.¹⁶ Such a ranking is most clearly stated by Hesiod: "Do not make a friend (ἑταῖρος)¹⁷

14. A good summary of the debate with documentation can be found in Fitzgerald 1997, 15–18.

15. Even Hooker, who argues that the possessive sense of φίλος is subsequent to the affective sense and thus derivative, acknowledges that "there is not that firm dividing-line between what is 'dear' to a person and what 'belongs' to him which we usually find in other types of literature" (1987, 63). Finding many passages in Homer in which φίλος can have either a possessive or affective sense, Kakridis explains: "la notion d'appartenance est apparentée à celle d'affection et peut très bien impliquer et entraîner cette dernière" (1963, 23). Bordt (1998, 51) likewise denies that the possessive and affective senses can be sharply distinguished in Greek (just as they cannot be sharply distinguished in the case of the German word "eigen"). Robinson, on the other hand, in arguing that the adjective φίλος never has a possessive sense in Homer, must completely disassociate "being dear" from "being one's own": "Not all that is beloved is one's own; not all that is one's own is particularly valued; and not all that is one's own, and is valued, is so valued *because* it is one's own" (1990, 100). The first claim can be granted, but the second and third, while perhaps accurately describing our own attitude today, seem not to be true of the ancient Greeks. Consider the words Electra speaks over the corpse of her mother Clytemnestra in Euripides' play: "φίλα yet not φίλα, we drape you in this cloak" (1230–31). The reason why Clytemnestra is not φίλα to Electra is clear. But why does Electra at the same time call her φίλα? The most natural explanation is that Electra, despite everything else, must still value Clytemnestra as her own mother and because she is her own mother. To deny this is to miss the real tragedy in the situation. A similar idea is expressed in Euripides' *Phoenissae* when Polyneices says the following of his brother Eteocles after they have mortally wounded each other in combat and Eteocles has died: "[My] φίλος became an enemy (ἐχθρός) and yet is still φίλος" (1446). Why would Polyneices' enemy remain φίλος, if not because he is still Polyneices' own brother? These examples should prevent us from joining Robinson (1990, 100–101) in dismissing as inappropriate Homer's description of Meleager's mother, Althaia, as φίλη in the same verse that describes the wrath her son feels against her (*Il.* 9.555). This is no more inappropriate than is Electra's description as φίλα of the mother whose murder she has sought and seen successfully carried out. To mention that the mother whom Meleager hates so intensely must also as his own mother be dear to him adds special poignancy to his situation.

16. Dover (1994, 273) outlines a hierarchy of duties in ancient Greece, starting with one's duty towards one's parents, descending to duties towards ever more distant relations, and then descending further to ever wider and more distant circles of non-relations. This hierarchy of duties appears to parallel, at least in the archaic age, a hierarchy of φιλία.

17. The meaning of ἑταῖρος here is broad, apparently including all relationships based mainly on shared activities as opposed to shared blood. See West 1978, 330.

equal to a brother" (*Op.* 707).¹⁸ As both Dirlmeier and Fraisse recognize, even the exceptional cases in which Hesiod's injunction is contradicted and friends are said to be even closer than family (*Hom. Il.* 19.321, *Od.* 8.584–86) still make the family the reference point.¹⁹ It is precisely because οἰκεῖοι and συγγενεῖς are the paradigm to which friends are compared (see, e.g., *Il.* 15.439)²⁰ that an extremely intense friendship is described as even closer than family (in the way that we describe something especially sweet as sweeter than honey and something especially bright as brighter than sunlight).

But does kinship or συγγένεια retain this paradigmatic status during the classical period? A text often cited to show that it does is Xenophon's *Hiero* 3.7–8, where there is an apparent ranking of the firmest (βεβαιόταται) φιλίαι: first comes the φιλία of parents towards their children, then that of children towards their parents, then that between brothers, then that between husband and wife, and finally that between companions or friends (ἐταῖροι).²¹ One might also cite Sophocles' *Antigone*: Antigone explains her duty to bury her brother Polyneices by emphasizing that he is her own (45–46, 48) and her φίλος (73). While she does not explicitly connect his being her own with his being φίλος, it is certainly not farfetched to see an implied connection here. However, friendship during this period is certainly freeing itself from the kinship paradigm. Creon, after all, rejects the primacy Antigone accords the family in favor of friends who uphold the state (182–90). Most importantly, David Konstan has shown that the noun φίλος in the classical period is often used to refer to friends in contrast to relations.²² A good example is *Meno* 91c2, where there is an implied distinction between φίλοι

18. For the same idea in other texts, see Dirlmeier 1931, 9. Wilamowitz comments as follows on the Hesiod passage: "Mit dem Bruder ist jeder durch das Blut unlöslich verbunden, so eng soll die Kameradschaft nicht werden. Noch herrscht die Familie: Blutsbrüderschaft kennt man nicht" (1928, 122). Pizzolato observes that what will later give friendship its primacy over kinship, i.e., the fact that it is freely chosen, is in Hesiod seen as a weakness that prevents friendship from attaining the security, stability, and solidarity that characterize kinship (1993, 18). The idea expressed at *Op.* 707 might appear to be contradicted by line 345: "for if mischief happen in the place, neighbors come ungirt, but kinsmen stay to gird themselves." On a superficial reading, this line might seem to say that neighbors are more willing to help than are kinsmen and are therefore more worth being possessed as φίλοι: an idea similar to one that will find expression much later in Euripides' *Orestes*. Hesiod is, however, making a more mundane point. The word translated as "kinsmen" is πηοί, which refers specifically to kin by marriage, i.e., those relations who would normally live at some distance, as opposed to immediate family (see Verdenius 1985, 169). Hesiod's point is therefore that literally "distant" relatives will need to prepare and arm themselves for a journey before being able to come to one's aid; neighbors, on the other hand, having no journey to make, will be able to come immediately. This is how Evelyn-White (1914, 29) and Verdenius (1985, 168–69) interpret the passage. Even West, whom Verdenius criticizes for commenting incorrectly that "going ungirt or unshod is a mark of urgent haste" (West 1978, 243), nevertheless adds later: "Someone living further away will be more concerned to attire himself properly before setting out, besides taking longer over the journey" (1985, 243). Therefore, what is both clear from the text and agreed by most commentators is the following: Hesiod is not even referring here to the immediate family; and of "distant" relations he is saying, not that they are less willing to help than neighbors and therefore less truly φίλοι, but only that they are not able to help as quickly.

19. "On peut assurément voir là le caractère primordial des relations de parenté, qui constituent une sorte de point de référence, mais ce point de référence n'est lui-même acceptable que parce que la continuité l'emporte sur la distinction" (Fraisse 1974, 41). "Um die Enge der Beziehung auszudrücken, vergleicht Homer den Gefährten gern mit dem Verwandten, der ja den ursprünglichen und höheren Grad von Freundschaft darstellt" (Dirlmeier 1931, 22).

20. As Pizzolato observes, "il vincolo dell'amicizia è affine, per origine e intensità, ai legami di sangue" (1993, 12).

21. See Bordt 1998, 56.

22. Konstan 1996, and 1997, 53–92, esp. 53–56.

and οἰκεῖοι (see also *Grg.* 456d8, *Prt.* 313a5–6). Konstan nevertheless goes too far in claiming that the substantive φίλος is no longer normally used to refer to relations.²³ The passage from the *Meno* is counterbalanced by other passages of Plato's dialogues in which the nouns φίλοι and οἰκεῖοι are not sharply distinguished.²⁴ A passage from the *Republic* describes a person's father as the τῶν φίλων ἀρχαιότατος (574c3). Furthermore, Konstan fails to explain away the case of *Antigone*²⁵ and does not make much of a dent in Dirlmeier's well-documented argument (1931, 9–12) that “the φίλος-concept of the tragedians mainly signifies ‘relation’ or ‘closest relation’” (10).²⁶ Konstan in any case admits that the abstract noun φιλία continues to refer to the relationship between kin, there being no distinct word for the affectionate relationship between friends. Since this usage seems hard to reconcile with Konstan's claim that during the classical period friendship and kinship were seen as completely distinct forms of love, the acknowledged failure of his book to explain it (1997, 23) is a serious omission. It is no wonder that Konstan has no time for the *Lysis*, since the discussion of this dialogue moves easily and unconcernedly from Hippothales' infatuation with Lysis to the love between Lysis and his parents to the friendship between Lysis and Menexenus.²⁷

Dirlmeier draws our attention to what Konstan's analytical rigor seems to miss: that the φίλος-concept during the classical period is characterized by unresolved tensions and contradictions. Having shown that Greek tragedy preserves the traditional paradigmatic status of συγγένεια within φιλία,

23. Konstan 1996, 72–73, and 1997, 53. Cf. the critique of Konstan in Bordt 1998, p. 50, n. 29, and Belfiore 1998, p. 142, n. 6.

24. See especially *Republic* 1 328d6 where Cephalus asks Socrates to stay in his house ὡς παρὰ φίλους τε καὶ πάνυ οἰκεῖους. At 375c1–2 οἰκεῖοι, as contrasted to πολέμιοι, appears to include friends, as also apparently at 376c1. It is also significant that the adjectives are used as near synonyms at *Phaedo* 89e1 and *Laws* 873c2.

25. At the beginning of the *Antigone*, Antigone asks her sister Ismene if she has not heard about the evils threatening οἱ φίλοι. Ismene replies that she has had no word of φίλοι, either pleasant or painful, since she and Antigone were deprived of their two brothers. Antigone is of course referring to her dead brother Polyneices, whom she therefore calls a φίλος. Does this contradict the thesis that the substantive φίλος does not during the classical period refer to family relations? No, asserts Konstan, because Antigone means no more than that Polyneices is not an enemy (1996, 83). If this seems rather arbitrary, Konstan's interpretation of Ismene's reply is even more so: “When she replies that she has heard nothing concerning φίλοι, Ismene means precisely ‘friends’ or ‘friendly parties’” (p. 83). But the sense of Ismene's reply is clearly that she has not heard anything about φίλοι since having received the bad news about the deaths of her two brothers (otherwise, the mention of the fate of her two brothers is pointless here); in this case, she clearly includes her two brothers among her φίλοι. A general strategy of Konstan in dealing with passages in the play that refer to a family relation as φίλος is to take this word adjectivally rather than as a substantive (see pp. 83–84). It might seem that this is possible only when φίλος is not preceded by an article, but Konstan does not allow even the article to stand in his way. Ismene at one point describes her sister as τοῖς φίλοις ὃ ὀρθῶς φίλη (*Ant.* 99). Since τοῖς φίλοις is obviously a substantive and not an adjective and since it must at least include Antigone's brothers, do we not have here a clear contradiction of Konstan's thesis that the substantive φίλος no longer refers to family? No, because Konstan reads even τοῖς φίλοις adjectivally, claiming that the article only serves to pick out the group of those who are loving (1996, p. 84, n. 31). But then what would provide a counter-example to Konstan's thesis? His thesis becomes unfalsifiable and thereby loses credibility.

26. Konstan admits that “In tragedy, there are some borderline cases, perhaps reflecting archaic or epic diction, in which the adjectival sense of ‘dear ones’ seems to extend to the nominal usage as well” (1996, 84–85). This not only is an understatement, but also begs the question, to say that the adjectival sense is transferred to the nominal usage is to assume what is in question, that the nominal usage in itself no longer has this sense. On pp. 85–86, n. 35, Konstan reviews some of the problematic passages and tries to force them to fit his thesis, but not very plausibly.

27. Konstan claims that the *Lysis* is “not about friendship as such” and therefore gives it no detailed consideration in his book (1997, 73). While the *Lysis* is not only about friendship, it is certainly in part, and

Dirlmeier proceeds to show how it at the same time renders this status problematic (1931, 12). Likewise, in reviewing the critiques of the traditional conception of *φιλία* during the classical period, Dirlmeier also documents the hold it continued to have on the popular consciousness.²⁸ Indeed, that family relations were not only still included in *φιλία*, but also preserved something of their earlier paradigmatic status, is shown precisely by the attacks directed against the family by several thinkers of the classical period and later, Socrates included. It is to these critiques that I now turn.

3. CRITIQUES OF THE ΦΙΛΟΣ-ΟΙΚΕΙΟΣ IDENTIFICATION

The most famous poetic statement of this critique is Euripides' *Orestes*: "That's it!²⁹ Possess friends, not kindred only! / Someone who is not of one's household but shares one's ways / Is more worth possessing as a φίλος than a whole host of blood relations!" (804–6). While there are precedents in Homer for valuing a friend above kindred, we have seen that these cases are exceptional and affirm, rather than repudiate, the primacy of blood relations. This passage from Euripides, however, is not just an exception to Hesiod's advice that we not make a friend equal to a brother, but a complete repudiation of the primacy it grants to blood relations: rather than recognizing blood kinship as the standard against which friendship is measured, this passage asserts in essence that there is no comparison between a blood relation and the infinitely greater worth of a true friend.³⁰ Where and when did this repudiation of the traditional view originate? We find a similar idea in Democritus: "Not all of those who are related to us are φίλοι, but only those who

perhaps even mainly, about friendship (see n. 1 above). Its omission from an account of "friendship in the classical world" is therefore unjustifiable.

28. "Daß man φίλος so oft zu οἰκεῖος stellt, ja synonymisch das eine durch das andere ersetzt, zeigt gleichfalls, wie sehr φίλος = verwandt ist" (1931, p. 14, n. 1). Dirlmeier also cites evidence from the orators, especially Isaeus, to show "wie sehr der Griechen bei 'φίλος' noch den Begriff 'verwandt' überall mitempfand" (p. 15); see also Bordt 1998, 55.

29. The expression τοῦτ' ἐκεῖνο with which this passage begins has sometimes been thought to show that what follows is an old saying. In this case it might be objected that what I am characterizing as a radical idea is presented by Euripides as a traditional one. Three responses, however, can be made here: 1) Willink's commentary characterizes τοῦτ' ἐκεῖνο as "a colloquialism . . . similar to Eng. 'That's it!'" (1986, 211). Willink cites other passages from Euripides in which τοῦτ' ἐκεῖνο clearly does not introduce a quotation. Recent translations agree with this suggestion. West translates, "There you are—get yourselves comrades, not just family!", and comments: "a colloquial exclamation to the effect that something previously indicated, or familiar in principle, is here confirmed" (1987, 237). Peck and Nisetich (1995) translate, "That's what I meant." But even if τοῦτ' ἐκεῖνο signals a quotation, 2) what Orestes quotes need not be an ancient saying (going back, for example, to Homer and Hesiod), but could be a contemporary saying: as I show in the main text, the importance of friends over and against blood kin was certainly an idea very much "in the air" during the classical period, especially in intellectual circles. Finally, and most importantly, the quotation could not include more than the phrase: "possess friends, not kindred only!" This phrase is by itself not radical at all and therefore could be traditional: it is perfectly compatible with the ranking of kindred above friends found in Hesiod and Homer, since it need say no more than the following: "While kindred are of course to be loved and cherished much more than friends, you need friends too." The radical part of the present passage is the part that clearly is not a quotation: Orestes' reflections on the maxim "possess friends, not kindred only," reflections that go well beyond, and are much more radical than, the maxim itself. To say that we need friends as well as kindred is clearly not the same as to say that a friend is worth more than a whole host of kindred. In short, no matter how τοῦτ' ἐκεῖνο is translated, it provides no evidence against the present interpretation.

30. A repudiation of Hesiod's advice could perhaps also be found in the passage from *Iphigenia in Tauris* (497–98) in which Orestes describes himself and Pylades as brothers (ἀδελφῶ) through friendship (φιλότητι), though not brothers in blood (καταγνήτω).

agree with us concerning what is advantageous" (DK 2:68, B 107). Isocrates, in the course of giving the young man Demonicus some ethical advice, praises the young man's deceased father for, among other things, prizing more those who were devoted to him than those who were his kin by blood (1.10). These passages suggest that the critique had its origin in intellectual circles, perhaps even, as Dirlmeier suggests (1931, 14), among the sophists (on whom more below). In any case, these passages would lose their force and become trite if it were not the case that many people at the time still believed that all of their relations were φίλοι and φίλοι in the truest sense of the word. Furthermore, it is important to note that these passages do not entirely break away from the traditional view: Euripides does not explicitly deny that a blood relation as such merits being possessed as a φίλος, but only claims that someone who shares one's ways is much more worth possessing as a φίλος;³¹ Democritus allows that some of those who are related to us are φίλοι.

From what non-Platonic sources tell us, Socrates and his followers were more extreme, since they refused to grant any value to family ties as such. Xenophon records the following accusation against Socrates—apparently that of Polycrates, but also, according to Xenophon's *Apology* (20), one made during Socrates' trial: "He caused those conversing with him to dishonor not only their fathers, but their other relations (συγγενεῖς) as well, by saying that those who are sick or those who seek justice are helped not by their relations, but by doctors or lawyers" (*Mem.* 1.2.51).³² Xenophon must admit that Socrates said such things (1.2.54) and even provides other examples of Socrates' view that what is "our own" is as worthless as the saliva we spit unless it is useful, a view that contrasts sharply with Antigone's determination to defend and love what is her own. This view is also one that Plato's *Symposium* has Socrates put into the mouth of Diotima (205e): in critique of Aristophanes' complete identification of what is loved with what is our own (an identification that takes to an extreme the traditional association between the two concepts: Aristophanes describes love as drawing us toward τὸ οἰκεῖον, 193d2), Diotima denies that people love what is their own as such, citing in support their willingness to cut off their own arms and legs if they think they are diseased.³³ Aristophanes in the *Clouds*, on the other hand, brilliantly satirizes Socrates' view by having Pheidippides learn in the φροντιστήριον, among other things, how to justify disobeying and even beating his own father with the argument that the duty of respecting one's parents is purely conventional (it was created by a man just like any one of us) and has no basis in nature (animals do not recognize it, 1420–29).

There is some evidence to suggest that Socrates' critique of the importance traditionally granted kinship per se was taken up by his followers Aristippus, Antisthenes, and Aeschines. When criticized for exposing his own begotten

31. This point is missed by Konstan (1997, 59).

32. This passage implies a distinction between relations and φίλοι, though Socrates is described as making the same point about both: neither friend nor relation is to be valued unless he benefits one. The important point is that for Socrates, in both the *Memorabilia* and the *Lysis*, relations and non-relations are in exactly the same position: being a relation gives one no special claim to love.

33. Implied here is a critique of a common usage in Homer: the description of parts of the body as φίλα.

son, Aristippus is reported to have replied that we also beget phlegm and vermin, which we do not hesitate to get rid of on account of their uselessness (Diog. Laert. 2.81). Antisthenes is quoted as saying that “the just man is to be valued much more highly than a relative (τοῦ συγγενοῦς)” (Diog. Laert. 6.12). Aeschines’ dialogue *Aspasia* reports a conversation between Aspasia, Xenophon, and Xenophon’s wife. After asking Xenophon’s wife if she would prefer her neighbor’s gold jewelry, clothes, and other ornaments to her own if she thought they were better, Aspasia asks her if she would not by the same logic prefer her neighbor’s husband to her own if she thought he was a better man. When Xenophon’s wife blushes, Aspasia subjects Xenophon to the same interrogation: just as he would prefer his neighbor’s horses and estate to his own if he thought they were better, would he not also prefer his neighbor’s wife to his own if he thought she was a better woman? When Xenophon proves as unwilling to respond as his wife, Aspasia offers to express for them their true thoughts: that what they desire is to be married to the best man or woman in the world and that they therefore will not be happy in their marriage—and presumably will not love each other more than they love anyone else—until they manage to become the best man and woman in the world (frag. 27 Giannantoni). This argument denies that a person can be worthy of one’s love just because he or she is “one’s own,” in contrast to Achilles’ claim that any good man with sense would love the woman who is his own (*Il.* 9.341–42).³⁴ According to Aspasia, we desire not what is our own, but what is best. This, as we have seen, is also Diotima’s point.

Socrates’ first conversation with Lysis thus seems to be Plato’s version of what was apparently a notorious “paradox” of the historical Socrates, one that can be understood only against the background of the primacy granted kinship in the traditional conception of *φιλία*. Socrates’ argument that Lysis’ parents have no reason to love him if he is ignorant and useless and that, by implication, he has no reason to love them if they are ignorant and useless, rather than being an ad hoc argument serving no more purpose than the humiliation of Lysis, was central enough to Socrates’ thought to be both threatening in the eyes of many Athenians and apparently influential among Socrates’ followers.³⁵ While this critique of kinship’s traditional claim to love was not, as we have seen, unique to Socrates, he seems to have carried it out with extraordinary consistency and extremism.

4. REINTERPRETATIONS OF THE ΦΙΛΟΣ-ΟΙΚΕΙΟΣ IDENTIFICATION

On the interpretation I have offered, however, Socrates at the beginning of the *Lysis* does more than argue that one’s blood relations are not as such φίλοι: he also suggests that they are not truly οἰκεῖτοι, that they do not truly belong

34. While husband and wife were not usually or necessarily related by blood, the Greeks considered their relationship to be very close to blood kinship, for reasons presented by Belfiore (1998, 145).

35. Seeing the connection between Socrates’ first discussion with Lysis and the accusation of Polycrates reported at *Memorabilia* 1.2.51, Mutschmann infers that the *Lysis* was actually used by Polycrates and must therefore have been written at least prior to 390 (1918, 429–30): “Platon selbst hatte, ohne es zu ahnen, dem Ankläger die Waffen geliefert” (431). However, Socrates’ critique of familial love appears to have been so notorious and so influential among his followers that Polycrates certainly did not need the *Lysis* itself to formulate his accusation.

to one. This is a much more interesting critique of the traditional view, one also found outside the *Lysis*: while rejecting the view that a person is φίλος just by virtue of being οἰκεῖος in the sense of “belonging to one’s family,” this critique also takes the more positive step of redefining what it means to be οἰκεῖος, thus leaving open the possibility that one’s φίλοι are οἰκεῖοι in this new sense. That the sophists carried out such a critique is suggested by *Protagoras* 337c7–d3 where Hippias claims that he and his fellow “wise-men” are οἰκεῖοι and συγγενεῖς according to nature, suggesting that what is normally taken to be kinship is mere convention (cf. Antiphon frag. 64 DK). The coupling of οἰκεῖοι with συγγενεῖς shows that Hippias is not talking about some feeling of intimacy: he means that he and his fellow sophists by nature belong together and are related. That Hippias should in contrast characterize blood relations as unnatural or conventional shows the extent to which his view inverts the traditional priorities. The same inversion is found in Isocrates’ oration *To Demonicus* cited above: the father of Demonicus “prized more those who were devoted to him than those who were his kin by blood, for he considered that in the matter of companionship nature (φύσις) is a much better guide than convention (νόμος)” (1.10, trans. Norlin). The “natural” companionship is here not blood kinship. The father of Demonicus and his relatives belong together only by convention, not by nature.

In the *Symposium*, Phaedrus interprets Euripides’ *Alcestis* as making a similar point, when he describes Alcestis’ action as showing that Admetus’ parents were foreign (!) to him (ἄλλότριοι) and belonged to him in name only (179c2–3).³⁶ Once again, those commonly taken to be οἰκεῖοι are asserted to be really ἄλλότριοι, a point that redefines what it means to be οἰκεῖος.³⁷ A similar redefinition is found in Isocrates’ *Aegineticus* in which the speaker, though unrelated to the deceased, defends his right as heir against a woman who claims to be the legitimate daughter of the deceased: he asks the jury to side with those who “have not the name of relative (συγγένεια) but have shown themselves οἰκειότεροι in times of crisis than blood relations (ἀναγκαῖοι)” (19.33; trans. Konstan). While the speaker could have said simply that he was a better friend to the deceased than his blood relations, he instead claims to be more οἰκεῖος, where the meaning must be, given the contrast with “the name of relative,” that he was “more nearly akin”³⁸ to the deceased than were those called his relatives.

Thucydides describes a similar redefinition as having occurred during the Corcyrean revolution (3.82.6): “Even kinship (τὸ συγγενές) became ἄλλοτριώτερον than comradeship (τοῦ ἐταιρικοῦ) because of the latter’s greater readiness for daring without justification.” One’s kin became strangers and one’s unrelated comrades became one’s true kin. Unlike the three preceding

36. Most translations have the passage say only that Admetus’ parents were made to appear foreign to him, as if they belonged to him in name only. I see no justification for this in the Greek. Since nothing there corresponds to “appear” or “as if,” this translation must take the verb itself, ἀποδείξει, to mean: “to make it seem as if.” But this meaning is not to be found in LSJ.

37. In Euripides’ play (646–47), Admetus asserts that even though Alcestis is not related to him by blood, he can with justice consider her to be both mother and father to him. On the extent to which this play departs from traditional conceptions, see Snell 1965, 160–62.

38. This is Larue van Hook’s translation from the Loeb edition, which is to be preferred to Konstan’s weaker translation of “more intimate” (1996, 88).

passages, however, this one describes the redefinition of οἰκειότης, one that disassociates it from blood ties, as something entirely negative, as indeed a symptom of civic disorder. This is an important reminder of the threat some saw in what Socrates and the sophists were doing.

These passages show that to reject family kinship as a basis for φιλία is not necessarily to disassociate φιλία from any objective “kinship.” The aim is instead to define a “kinship” consisting of something other than shared blood. That, I suggest, is precisely the aim of the *Lysis*, and it is because Socrates has such an aim in view that he begins the discussion by both associating φιλία with an objective “belonging together” and opposing it to family kinship. What remains to be shown in the concluding part of this paper, even if only in outline, is how the other arguments of the dialogue lose the appearance of being unconnected and unconstructive when interpreted from the perspective of this aim.³⁹

5. THE *LYSIS* AS REINTERPRETATION OF THE ΦΙΛΟΣ-ΟΙΚΕΙΟΣ IDENTIFICATION

It might at first seem that Socrates' initial discussion with Lysis has already sufficiently explained what makes one person both φίλος and οἰκεῖος to another: wisdom.⁴⁰ Yet this conclusion leaves important questions unanswered: 1) What is the nature of this wisdom? Socrates' use of examples in which knowledge is misused (not only fistfuls of salt in the King's stew [209e], but even ashes rubbed into his poor son's eyes [210a]) encourages the reader to think specifically about the relation between wisdom and the good; 2) How can this wisdom provide the basis for reciprocal love? Presumably, two wise people could not be φίλοι since they would not find each other useful. An ignorant person will love a wise person and hand over his possessions to him, but the wise person would have no reason for returning this love. On the other hand, kinship or οἰκειότης appears to be necessarily reciprocal: if A is οἰκεῖος to B, B must be οἰκεῖος to A. To the extent that love is associated with some sort of kinship, must it not be itself reciprocal? These questions will be answered throughout the course of the dialogue, with the result that when the φίλος-οἰκεῖος identification returns it will have a much more determinate sense.

1) The refutation of Menexenus (211a1–213d5) raises these questions without yet answering them. On the one hand, it seems that what you love cannot be φίλος to you unless it returns your love. For example, you would

39. For a more detailed account of the dialogue's argument, and from a somewhat different, though complementary, angle, see Gonzalez 1995.

40. This is the view of Nancy, who believes that the initial discussion with Lysis contains the positive teaching of the dialogue, a teaching that is not modified by the rest of the dialogue, but only put into practice and illustrated (1997, 217–18). The crucial modification he neglects is that by the end of the dialogue it is not the possession of wisdom that is the basis of friendship, but rather the desire for a wisdom that neither friend possesses. Santas surprisingly sees the notion of τὸ οἰκεῖον at the end of the dialogue as reintroducing familial love and claims that all of Socrates' attempts to give this word a nonliteral meaning fail (1998, 87). Santas thereby fails to see not only how this notion has been developed throughout the argument of the dialogue, but also that it was already disassociated from familial love in the introductory conversation. Schmalzriedt sees the return of the last part of the dialogue to the first part as a retreat from the height attained in the central part with the notions of what is neither good nor bad and the πρῶτον φίλον (1969, 123 and 129).

not say that someone who hates you is your φίλος even if you yourself loved that person (212b–d). On the other hand, wisdom is φίλον to the lover of wisdom, even though it does not return his love (212d7–8). Of course, the easy solution to this contradiction, and therefore the one considered “obvious” by most interpreters, is to assert that there are two distinct and unrelated meanings of φίλος, one implying reciprocity and the other not.⁴¹ But then the reason why Socrates refuses to offer such a solution is perhaps to suggest that the unreciprocated love of an object such as wisdom is not unrelated to the reciprocated love between two people, but that, on the contrary, the former is an essential, and perhaps even foundational, component of the latter. In other words, perhaps love, while a reciprocal relation between two people, at the same time has some nonreciprocal component directed towards some higher object that is its ultimate explanation.⁴² In this case, the present episode challenges us to reconcile the reciprocal and non-reciprocal aspects of love. The traditional paradigm of love, i.e., blood kinship, clearly fails to account for the nonreciprocal component: blood ties are reciprocal. On the other hand, we have seen that Socrates’ own account of being φίλος in the introductory discussion with Lysis, despite its appeal to a radically new kind of kinship, leaves the reciprocal dimension obscure.

2) The refutation of the cosmologists and poets (213d6–216b9) shows that the οἰκειότης or kinship that provides the basis for φιλία can be identified with neither “similarity” nor an attraction between opposites. The former view might have been one defended by Hippias and perhaps other sophists, if one of Plato’s dialogues can count as evidence. In the passage from the *Protagoras* cited above, Hippias explains his claim that he and the other sophists are οἰκεῖοι and συγγενεῖς by nature by asserting that like is naturally related to like (τὸ γὰρ ὅμοιον τῷ ὁμοίῳ φύσει συγγενές ἐστιν, 337d1–2).⁴³ We thus see how, even though οἰκειότης is not explicitly mentioned in this part of the dialogue, its *interpretations* are very much at issue. But Socrates shows not only that like cannot be φίλος and οἰκεῖος to like, but also, more specifically, that those who are alike in being good (and therefore, given the connection asserted earlier, wise) cannot be φίλοι and οἰκεῖοι (since they need nothing from each other and therefore cannot find each other useful or beneficial). This more specific view Socrates criticizes is also that of Hippias in the *Protagoras*, since the natural similarity Hippias sees between the other sophists and himself is that they are all wise. On the other hand, the opposed interpretation, namely, that *opposites* are φίλοι and οἰκεῖοι, is suggested by Socrates’ own claim in the introductory conversation with Lysis that the ignorant will love and be οἰκεῖοι to the wise person. Socrates here shows an important problem with this view: how could the bad be φίλος to the good? (216b4–5). Clearly the good cannot love the bad. But can the bad love the good? While a bad person could certainly benefit

41. This solution of course goes back to Aristotle who simply asserts that the love of soulless things is not φιλία, but φίλησις (*Eth. Nic.* 1155b27–28).

42. This is what Fraisse sees as the message of this episode (1974, 133 and 145, 148); see also Bordt 1998, 97, 156.

43. This is also apparently how the Stoics would later understand it: see Diog. Laert. 7.124.

from loving a good person, how could the bad person recognize this? How could someone who is truly bad and ignorant recognize and love the good and the wisdom in someone else? The good and the bad are simply too opposed for any kinship or love to exist between them.

3) Socrates' "inspiration" (216c1–218c3) solves this problem by introducing a class of lovers intermediate (μεταξύ) between good and bad, where what distinguishes such an "intermediate" from what is simply bad is precisely a desire for wisdom and the good (217e–218b). Socrates can now claim that love occurs neither between good and good nor between bad and good, but rather between the intermediate and the good. Furthermore, by suggesting that we humans belong to the "intermediate" class⁴⁴ and identifying the good with the "first beloved" (πρῶτον φίλον), the object towards which all love is ultimately directed (219c5–d2), Socrates finally explicates that nonreciprocal component of love suggested by the refutation of Menexenus. When two people love each other, the ultimate object of their love cannot be each other, since they as "intermediates" cannot be fully good or wise, but must instead be the complete good they desire without ever fully possessing.

4) But then why would two people love each other at all rather than simply the good? In fact, Socrates has not yet explained even why they love the good. What is "intermediate" is neither like the good nor its opposite; therefore, neither opposition nor similarity can explain its love for the good. Furthermore, the "intermediate" cannot love the good for the sake of something else, since the good is the ultimate object of love; nor can it love the good on account of the presence of evil, since this love does not appear to be contingent on the existence of evil (218c4–221d6).

5) To explain why we love the good as well as why we love each other, Socrates must return to the notion of τὸ οἰκεῖον. According to his final suggestion, we love the good because, while lacked by us, it still in some sense belongs to us and is our own (οἰκεῖον, 221d6–223b8). While Socrates does not explicitly identify τὸ οἰκεῖον with the good, this identification is suggested by the direction of the argument: what eventually leads the discussion to the identification of what is loved with what is οἰκεῖον is the problem of why the good is loved.⁴⁵ Furthermore, Socrates explicitly suggests the possibility that the good is οἰκεῖον to all things while the bad is foreign

44. Socrates' reference at 220d5–6 to "us" as being "intermediate" includes at least Lysis, Menexenus, and himself, but more probably all human beings. His identification of being "intermediate" with the love of wisdom suggests this, given his view elsewhere that humans are capable of no more than the love of wisdom. At 218a3 he indeed leaves open the possibility that humans as well as gods might possess wisdom, but he never affirms that this is the case, and such an affirmation would contradict what Plato at least depicts as a central Socratic tenet. On the other hand, Socrates' characterization of "us" as intermediate appears to imply that we can no more be absolutely corrupt than we can be perfectly good. This presumably means that no human being is completely devoid of any desire for the good, however confused and weak. Even so, the "intermediate" class obviously includes many degrees of relative goodness and badness; see Bordt 1998, 194.

45. After providing a survey of the literature that shows most scholars (up to 1974) agreeing that τὸ οἰκεῖον is to be identified with the good, Lualdi concludes that this identification is the key to the dialogue (1974, 124–32). See also Lualdi 1998, 83–84, for her argument that the final suggestion completes rather than refutes what precedes it.

(ἁλλότριον) to all things (222c3–4).⁴⁶ While one interpretation of this suggestion is refuted, another, more plausible, interpretation is not refuted.⁴⁷ To see this, we must look carefully at Socrates' concluding comments.⁴⁸ Socrates first points out that being οἰκεῖον cannot be identified with being like, since this identification would return us to the view that has already been refuted, that is, that like loves like (222b3–c3). Furthermore, this identification is also clearly incompatible with Socrates' characterization of τὸ οἰκεῖον: what is οἰκεῖον to us is what we lack and therefore what is not like us. Next, Socrates suggests two alternatives: that the good is οἰκεῖον to all things, or that the good is οἰκεῖον only to the good, the bad to the bad, and what is neither good nor bad to what is neither good nor bad (222c5–7). When Lysis and Menexenus affirm the latter alternative, Socrates points out that it implies a view that has already been refuted: that the bad can be a friend to the bad as much as the good can be a friend to the good (222d1–5). Socrates next turns to the view that the good and τὸ οἰκεῖον are the same (ταὐτόν, 222d5); this appears to be a return to the first alternative: that the good is οἰκεῖον to all things. But Socrates asks whether this alternative is not simply a return to the already refuted view that the good is φίλος only to the good (222d6). At this point the attentive reader must reply, "No." While the good obviously cannot be οἰκεῖον and φίλον to the bad, it does not follow that it therefore can be οἰκεῖον and φίλον only to the good. Another interpretation of the identification of the good with τὸ οἰκεῖον remains that not only is not refuted by Socrates' concluding objections, but is also the natural conclusion to the whole preceding argument: the good is οἰκεῖον to that "intermediate" type of thing that Socrates has described as neither good nor bad. Here we need to recall the original problem: why does the intermediate love the good that it does not possess? The answer suggested by Socrates' final explanation is that the good, while not possessed by the intermediate, nevertheless belongs to it. The intermediate, unlike the bad, desires the good because, while the corruption of alien evil has deprived it of the good, the good still belongs to its nature.⁴⁹ The suggestion, then, is that the good is loved by the intermediate because, being neither like it (it is like only the good) nor opposed to it (it is opposed only to the bad), it is οἰκεῖον to it. Here οἰκειότης finally provides an alternative to similarity and opposition as the basis of love. Socrates' initial suggestion is indeed that the good is οἰκεῖον to all things, but this may be because he believes that all things are intermediate: nothing is absolutely bad, nothing completely lacks a share in the good. But the most important point is that we are members of the intermediate class: we pursue the good because, though deprived of it, it is properly our own.

46. Interestingly, a similar view is attributed to Antisthenes: τὰ πονηρὰ νόμιζε πάντα ξενικά (Diog. Laert. 6.12).

47. Bordt apparently thinks that it is refuted (1998, 230–31).

48. Conversations with Christopher Rowe at the 1998 meeting of the International Plato Society, where I presented an earlier version of this paper, have helped to clarify this part of the dialogue for me.

49. This idea is stated explicitly in the *Republic*: "what is best for each thing is also what is most proper to it" (τὸ βέλτιστον ἐκάστω, τοῦτο καὶ οἰκειότατον, 586e2).

In the passage from the *Symposium* cited above, Diotima, after rejecting Aristophanes' view that we love what is our own, adds that this view would be acceptable if it could show that "what is our own" is the same as "what is good" (205e6–7). This is precisely what the *Lysis* shows.

Yet an important problem remains: the love and kinship just described are clearly nonreciprocal: we lack the good, it does not lack us; we love the good, it does not love us. How, then, can the stated conclusion help us explain the reciprocal love and kinship between two people? Socrates clearly thinks it can. Immediately after defining the object of love as τὸ οἰκεῖον, he infers that if Lysis and Menexenus are φίλοι to one another they must also be οἰκεῖοι to each other (221e5–6). But what is the connection here? Is not Socrates arbitrarily jumping from one sense of οἰκειότης to a radically different and unrelated sense?⁵⁰ This problem has been forcefully stated by D. Robinson (1986, 76). However, it was solved long ago by W. Ziebis (1927, 26–27), whose solution is as follows: the fact that the good by nature belongs to all of us is what enables us to belong by nature to each other.⁵¹ In other words, our shared kinship with the good provides the basis for our kinship with one another. This view of course makes all human beings akin, but it can also explain more local kinship: two people who explicitly recognize their mutual kinship with the good and therefore pursue the good together will be οἰκεῖοι in the strictest sense. A good example of such kinship is Socrates' relationship with the boys in the present dialogue, a relationship constituted by the mutual pursuit of wisdom and described by Socrates himself as friendship (223b6–7).⁵² In short, the notion of οἰκειότης Socrates has developed by the end of the dialogue enables him to reconcile the non-reciprocal and reciprocal dimensions of love that the initial discussion with Menexenus left disparate.

One of the things that prevents Robinson from seeing this solution is his assumption that the description of φίλοι as οἰκεῖοι expresses only "some congeniality or matching of temperament" (1986, 76). Yet as we have seen, even in the initial discussion with Lysis, οἰκεῖοι has the stronger meaning of "naturally belonging to each other." Socrates makes this stronger meaning explicit at the end of the dialogue when he describes those who are οἰκεῖοι as being so in some way by nature (φύσει πη, 221e6). This description is also important for its suggestion that kinship in the more usual sense of familial

50. This appears to be the view of Bordt 1998, 225–26.

51. A similar solution is offered by Glaser 1935, 63, and is already hinted at, though not clearly expressed, in Pohlenz 1917, 583.

52. Nancy (1997, 213–14) and Bosch-Veciana (1998) see the friendship between Socrates and the boys as the positive outcome of the dialogue and recognize that what makes them friends is not knowledge of some definition of friendship, but the practice of dialectic itself. It should also be noted that the φιλία between Socrates and the boys is not separable from ἔρως; indeed, Socrates applies the final definition to the relation between ἐραστῆς and τὰ παιδικά (222a6–7). What makes Socratic φιλία "erotic" is both its inequality and, even more importantly, its grounding in a desire for a transcendent, never fully attainable object (the good). Aristotle's ideal φιλία, on the other hand, is completely divorced from ἔρως because it requires complete equality between the friends and its ultimate object is not some transcendent, unattainable good, but rather the friends themselves. On this latter difference, see Dirlmeier 1931, 75.

kinship is *not* natural.⁵³ This inversion of the traditional view, as we have seen, is found among the sophists and Isocrates. However, Socrates in the present dialogue has given natural kinship his own unique interpretation. This interpretation distinguishes kinship from both similarity and the attraction between opposites. It also does not see kinship as something merely immanent in the two people who are akin, as it would be if it were nothing but shared blood or shared character traits. Instead, it grounds the kinship between two people in a shared kinship with a good that belongs to them without ever being possessed by them.⁵⁴

It should also now be apparent how the notion of τὸ οἰκεῖον has developed since its initial appearance in the first conversation with Lysis and how each stage of the argument has made an essential contribution to this development. Probably the most important development is that τὸ οἰκεῖον has ceased to mean “what is possessed.” Initially, all those lacking wisdom and goodness were said to be οἰκεῖτοι and φίλοι to the person possessing wisdom and goodness in the sense that their possessions and even they themselves were rightfully his possessions: a view that appeared to undermine reciprocity in human love. By the end, what is both οἰκεῖον and the ultimate object of love (πρῶτον φίλον) has been identified, not with a good person, but with a good that belongs to all of us without being possessed by any of us. This eliminates any justification for some of us to enslave and possess others. Another important and related development is that wisdom has both acquired content as knowledge of the good (a content that distinguishes it from the value-neutral skills of, e.g., medicine and cooking) and become something that we “intermediate” beings can only pursue without ever fully attaining (in other words, we can only desire wisdom or philo-sophize). This characterization of wisdom and the good reintroduces reciprocity into human love understood as the shared pursuit of a good that belongs to all of us without being possessed by any of us and that thus enables us to belong to each other without possessing each other.

What has been at issue throughout the dialogue is brilliantly dramatized in its closing scene. Those slaves to whom Lysis' parents have enslaved their son (according to Socrates, 208c) suddenly arrive to take the boys home (οἴκαδε, 223a4). Socrates and his new friends at first protest and try to send the παιδαγωγοί away. In the end, however, they must give way to their superior force, since the παιδαγωγοί are inebriated (ὑποπεπωκότες, 223b1) and, rather than listen to reason, persist in calling the boys with their foreign accents

53. This important point is made by Bolotin 1979, 184–85.

54. The conception of φιλία I find in the *Lysis* agrees with that found in the *Seventh Letter*. At 333e1–4, Plato (?) suggests that *philosophy* is the only stable ground for friendship and dismisses the other grounds on which most friendships are based. He then proceeds to describe his own friendship for Dion as coming about through “the sharing of a liberal education” (διὰ ἐλευθέρας παιδείας κοινωνίαν), rather than through some “kinship of soul or body” (συγγενεία ψυχῶν καὶ σωμάτων), in which no sensible person should put any trust (334b4–7). It is significant that Plato rejects *both* the physical kinship traditionally considered the most solid ground for φιλία and the kinship of soul which, as we have seen, was put in its place by, among others, Euripides, the sophists, and Isocrates. Against both views Plato claims that the only solid basis for friendship is the common pursuit of philosophy. Such a common pursuit is itself a kind of “kinship,” but not one based on some physical or spiritual similarity between the friends: it is instead based on the ultimate object of their shared pursuit (the good).

(ὁποβαρβαρίζοντες, 223a7).⁵⁵ This scene shows Socrates competing with the family for the boys' allegiance. Indeed, it could be taken to confirm the charge that Socrates corrupted the youth. Early in the discussion Lysis expressly said that he would stay until it was time to go home (211b5). Now at the end of the discussion he and the other boys refuse to go home, despite the lateness of the hour. Socrates' responsibility for this change in attitude cannot be denied: not only does he openly encourage disobedience to the παιδαγωγοί, but his whole argument has had the effect of undermining the importance of familial kinship as a basis for love. However, the dialogue has shown us that the boys' true home is indeed with Socrates, since he can offer a form of οἰκειότης-φιλία that far surpasses parental love and even the alternatives to such love offered by the sophists and the poets.⁵⁶ Here perhaps lies the significance of a detail mentioned at the beginning of the dialogue: the palaestra in which the discussion takes place has been newly built (νεωστὶ ῥκοδομημένη, 204a2). By providing the boys with a new sense of belonging and love, Socrates has indeed built a new οἶκος for them.⁵⁷ The boys' kinship with Socrates has its basis not in shared blood, but in a common kinship with the good, and is realized in the shared and willing pursuit of the good through the kind of rational discussion that takes place in the new palaestra (ἡ δὲ διατριβὴ τὰ πολλὰ ἐν λόγοις, 204a2–3). Contrasted to this Socratic kinship, the claims of familial kinship cannot but appear slavish, irrational, and even foreign.

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55. Nancy ignores all of these details in characterizing the παιδαγωγοί as beneficent δαίμονες (1997, 212–13).

56. The *Phaedrus* explicitly makes this claim when Socrates asserts that the boy who is loved will eventually come to see "that all his other φίλοι τε καὶ οἰκεῖοι put together offer no φιλία at all compared to the divinely inspired φίλος (255b5–7)."

57. I owe this suggestion to Antoni Bosch-Veciana.

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