

THE *LYSIS* ON LOVING ONE'S OWN

Cicero, *Lucullus* 38: '...non potest animal ullum non adpetere id quod accommodatum ad naturam adpareat (Graeci id *οικείον* appellant)...'

From earliest childhood every man wants to possess something. One man collects horses. Another wants gold. Socrates has a passion for companions.¹ He would rather have a good friend than a quail or a rooster.² In this way, Socrates begins his interrogation of Menexenus. He then congratulates Menexenus and Lysis for each having what he himself still does not possess. How is it that one gets a friend, Socrates asks?

Since the nineteenth century many who have read these lines have found them repulsive. Scholars have damned the *Lysis* for its selfish egoism, for regarding persons as personal belongings. At the turn of the century some sought to discredit the dialogue as a forgery and a calumny. Others debated the dating of the dialogue as Socratic or Platonic, seeking whom to blame rather than whom to credit.³ And those who have regarded the dialogue as Platonic have tried to redeem it by detecting hints of Plato's theory of Forms.⁴ A few have attempted to salvage reputations by understanding the argument of the *Lysis* as a *reductio* of egoism,⁵ or else by invoking the loyalty of Socrates' friends and the history of Plato's friendship for Dion of Syracuse to speak up for their defence.⁶ Guthrie has condemned the dialogue as a failure of method and presentation ('even Plato can nod'),⁷ and Vlastos has pronounced it a failure of love: 'The lover Socrates has in view seems positively incapable of loving others for their own sake, else why must he feel no affection for anyone whose good-producing qualities *he* did not happen to need?'⁸

The *Lysis* appears to make no positive contribution to the Greek tradition on friendship when compared to the *Symposium* or the *Phaedrus*. And in the subsequent tradition, whatever Aristotle might have borrowed from the dialogue he uses for his own purposes. Aristotle too is quite critical of specific points raised in the *Lysis*.⁹ Now it might seem that Aristotle made a place for the selfish love of the *Lysis* in his own theory, as an inferior grade of utility love. But even this cannot be so, if we are to

¹ 211d6–212a7. Note the variations on the theme of *ἐπιθυμῶν κτήματός του* at 211d7–8, e1, e2–3, e7; 212a2–5; also 210b6. Cf. Dirlmeier (12), p. 50, and Schoplick (30), p. 28. For complete references see the bibliography at the end of this article.

² 211e3–5. Compare *φίλον αγαθόν* (e3) with *τὸν ἄριστον ἐν ἀνθρώποις ὄρτυγα* (e4).

³ For the history of these debates see Schoplick (30), pp. 1–17, 67–85; also Levin (24), pp. 236–7.

⁴ Notably Glaser (16), pp. 47–67. Cf. von Arnim (4), pp. 379–82.

⁵ For example, Hoerber (21), pp. 19–22.

⁶ For example, Dirlmeier (12), pp. 56–8.

⁷ Guthrie (19), p. 143.

⁸ Vlastos (33), pp. 8–9.

⁹ It is of course impossible to verify specific borrowings. Nevertheless, some of the discussion of friendship in the *Rhetoric*, *Eudemian Ethics*, and *Nicomachean Ethics* neatly parallels the argument and vocabulary of the *Lysis*. Aristotle surely has Plato in mind when he remarks on the absurdity of supposing (as Plato did at 212d7) one could love wine, since in that case there is no possibility of reciprocation and certainly no interest in benefiting the wine itself (*E.N.* 1155b27 ff.). Aristotle might have had Plato in mind (cf. 214a–216b, also *Laws* 837a ff.) when he discusses metaphysical speculation concerning love between contraries (*E.N.* 1159b12–24). Cf. Annas (2), pp. 532–54, Hardie (20), p. 321, Grote (18) i, 525, Guthrie (19), p. 154, and Owen (26), pp. 182–3.

agree with recent studies of Aristotle's ethics.¹⁰ According to Aristotle, if a client is friendly to his benefactor because of the latter's usefulness, this utilitarian motive must accompany a genuine concern (εὐνοία) for the benefactor's own interest in that relation, if they are to be friends. Inferior and genuine friendship may differ in purpose but not in regard for the well-being of the beloved. This respect for the object of one's love has no parallel in the *Lysis*, according to the standard reading of the dialogue.

It happens that the Stoic theory of friendship has as its central tenet the same claim as one made in the *Lysis*: that man loves what is his own (οἰκεῖον).¹¹ Yet the Stoics understood 'loving one's own' in terms of a kinship all humans should feel for one another as they come to regard their neighbours as members of an extended family.¹² Accordingly, their theory of οἰκείωσις concerned the character of conscious intentions in human relations, getting persons to care for one another as they would for their own.¹³ By contrast, 'loving one's own' in the *Lysis* designates a situation (ownership, entitlement) rather than an intention (sympathy, fellow-feeling), a situation in which two individuals are said to belong together.¹⁴ And scholars note that the argument of the *Lysis* finally rejects 'loving one's own' as uninformative.¹⁵

The critics do not discriminate what is original in the dialogue from the traditional elements Plato is operating upon. We shall find that it is more revealing to study the character of the argument in the *Lysis* rather than the specific theses which are debated and discounted.¹⁶ It turns out that the issue of selfishness is not at all apposite to the argument of the dialogue. Selfishness concerns conscious purpose, intentional exploitation. But the characterization of intentions is not Plato's concern. Plato is not interested in how lovers of persons and things consciously regard themselves and the objects of their desire. Plato is interested in something else: the psychological function achieved by our loving the persons and things we do, regardless of our various motives.

I

The Greek φίλος is used by Plato as a noun and as an adjective. As a noun it is usually translated 'friend'. As an adjective it has the active sense of 'friendly' and the passive sense of 'dear' ('cherished', 'beloved').¹⁷ In the *Lysis* Plato occasionally uses the

¹⁰ cf. Adkins (1), pp. 40–1 and Cooper (10), pp. 619–48 and (11), pp. 290–315.

¹¹ Diogenes Laertius reports Chrysippus' doctrine of πρώτον οἰκεῖον at vii, 85 (cf. *SVF* III, 178–89, Posidonius, Galen *De plac.* 452. 3–10). The parallel phrasing with the *Lysis*' πρώτον φίλον (219d1) – subsequently explained in terms of the οἰκεῖον – could be misleading. In the Stoic discussions there is emphasis on the organism's self-consciousness, and the general doctrine is applied to all animals besides man. As we shall see, the *Lysis* does not understand the πρώτον οἰκεῖον in this way. Cf. Pembroke (27), p. 141, n. 8.

¹² Plato's gradual extension of family relations to relatives, to Athenians, and then to all men and women (210b1–c4, 209c1–d5) also parallels Stoic theory: cf. Pembroke (27), pp. 116–32. I should note here that another parallel between φύσει πη οἰκεῖοί at *Lysis* 221e6 and Theophrastus' οἰκείους φύσει (in Porphyry, *De Abstinencia* 25) attests not to borrowings from Plato but the commonplace use of οἰκεῖον. Cf. Brink (7), pp. 123–45.

¹³ Pembroke (27), p. 116.

¹⁴ cf. 208e4–210d8, esp. 210d2. On this use of οἰκεῖον in Plato see Brink (8), pp. 193–8, and Fraisse (15), pp. 128–50.

¹⁵ As we shall see, I cannot agree with Pembroke (27), pp. 137–8, that in the *Lysis* Plato 'effectively rejected the use of οἰκεῖον and αλλοτρίον as concepts... that Plato is anxious to discredit the idea'. Cf. Brink (8), pp. 196–7, and Fraisse (15), p. 147.

¹⁶ Only to this limited extent can I agree with the extensive discussion of Begemann (5). I particularly fail to understand why Begemann prefers to compare the *Lysis* with the second half of the *Parmenides*.

¹⁷ The English translation obscures the point that in Greek there is no morphological distinction between φίλος as noun or adjective; that distinction is first determined by syntactic

abstract *φιλία* ('friendship') and frequently the verb *φιλεῖν* ('to love').¹⁸ These translations are inadequate but entrenched. 'Friendliness' presupposes an empathy which the Greek *φίλος* does not. Although *φιλία* and *ἔρως* belong to different conceptual families they enjoy intimate relations.¹⁹ What we usually mean by friendship and sexual drive represents an even greater conceptual hiatus. Sexual drive is only the predominant element of the Greek *ἔρως*, which also includes the procreative impulse.²⁰ Sexuality with its concomitant aggressiveness is present in *φιλία* as well. Consequently an English reading of the *Lysis* can easily misconstrue the question at issue.

It is more instructive to turn to the Greek expressions traditionally associated with *φίλος*.²¹ This web of meaning was spun well before Plato wrote the *Lysis* where he highlights and scrutinizes the connecting strands. It quickly becomes evident that many of Socrates' proposed answers simply exploit these conceptual connections. And the rejection of those answers often turns on the same device. For example, time and again the same familiar adage is invoked to defeat a proposal: one cannot be friend (*φίλος*) to one's enemy (*ἐχθρός*) nor enemy to one's friend.²² These are cheap victories.²³ They are none the less persuasive and dramatically viable, for they too are spun from the same web of meaning which structured the proposals.

The relation between *φίλος* and *οἰκεῖος* is much less informative than it might appear in English translation. Yet the connection is central to the initial conversation with *Lysis* concerning why his parents love him,²⁴ as well as the final proposal of the dialogue that one loves what is naturally one's own.²⁵ In Homeric Greek *φίλος* could be used as a possessive ('his own limbs' *φίλα γυῖα* *Iliad* 13. 85).²⁶ Its use as 'dear' or 'cherished' extends naturally from this sense of belonging – as in Plato's phrase 'my

location.' Unlike Homer (cf. *Iliad* 11. 407), Plato employs *φίλος* with the dative in an active sense (cf. 210d 1–3, 218d 10), as well as the Homeric passive sense (cf. 212e 6). Plato employs *φίλος* with the genitive typically in the active sense (cf. 219b 7), and on occasion he switches indifferently to the corresponding dative use (cf. 217a 6 and 218e 3). Where mutual reciprocation is involved, *φίλος* with the dative can take on either sense (cf. 214e 3–4, 216a 4–5). Where reciprocation is not assumed, I find that Plato is careful to indicate the active or passive perspective, often reverting to the genitive for this purpose (cf. 216c 3, 213b 5–c 4). Consequently, unlike others (cf. Levin (24), p. 255 n. 61), I find no philosophic lapse in Plato's use of case or voice involving *φίλος*. In fact Plato clarifies the active/passive sense of *φίλος* in his first conversation with Menexenus (212b–213d) where Socrates distinguishes the *φιλῶν* from the *φιλούμενος*.

¹⁸ Plato is quite casual in switching from *φίλος* to the abstract *φιλία*: cf. 207c 11, 214d 7, 215d 4, 216b 1, 217e 9, 219a 4, 220b 3, 221d 3, 221e 4, 222d 2. In fact Plato also shifts from *φίλος* to *ἐταῖρος* (cf. 211e 7–8, also 204a 5, 206d 4, 213b 3).

¹⁹ cf. Guthrie (19), pp. 136–7, Vlastos (33), p. 4, and Hyland (22), pp. 36–8, as well as Levin (24), pp. 240–2, 252–3. Contrary to Hyland and Levin, I maintain that throughout the *Lysis* Plato disdains a technical vocabulary (cf. 204e 1–6) and employs the rough-and-ready distinctions of popular expressions. Plato portrays a number of different relationships, from pederasty to maternal affection, without attempting to define their separate character (cf. 205a 1–2, 207c 8, 207d 6). Witness the shifting back and forth between *φιλεῖν* and *περί πολλοῦ ποιῆται* (cf. 219d 6, e 1–2, e 5–6; 220a 2, a 4), *ἐπιθυμεῖν* (215e 4, 217e 8), *ἀγαπᾶν* (215b 1–2, 215d 7, 220d 2) and similar expressions (cf. 211d 7, 212b 8, 217b 4). Cf. Versenyi (32), pp. 187–8.

²⁰ cf. *Symp.* 296e 1–5.

²¹ My estimate of the Greek tradition is based on the extensive documentation provided by Dirlmeier (12). Of the concepts traditionally associated with *φίλος*, *συγγένεια* receives the least mention in the *Lysis* (205c 8). Cf. Dirlmeier, pp. 7–21, esp. pp. 12–14; also Glaser (16), pp. 60–3.

²² Cf. 213a–c, 214d, 216b, 217c, 218a, 220e, 222d.

²³ In the notorious eristic argument with Menexenus (212b–213d), the refutations hang entirely on his refusal to admit that *ἐχθροὶ φίλοι εἰσίν*, although as the terms are carefully defined by Socrates such an admission would amount to the mere acknowledgement that there is such a thing as unrequited love. Cf. Annas (2), pp. 532–5, and Glidden (17).

²⁴ cf. 209a–210b.

²⁵ cf. 221d–222d.

²⁶ cf. Adkins (1), pp. 30–6, and Dirlmeier (12), p. 14. Cf. 213b 3.

dear friend' (*ὦ φίλε ἑταῖρε*). And that is the emotive force of the expression, whatever else one's views might be on the proper feelings one should have toward those who are *φίλοι*. Now the Greek household (*οἶκος*) can be understood as consisting of household goods (*οἰκεῖα*) including persons (relatives, slaves) and property (chariots, looms).²⁷ In this way the notion of kinship derives from a particular favoured class of belongings.²⁸ Here too one must distinguish the role played by *οἰκεῖον* in denoting one's own from the affection one might feel for particular *οἰκεῖα* (a favourite uncle, a beloved kitchen utensil). Consequently when Socrates proposes that the *φίλον* is what is *οἰκεῖον*, at a crucial point in the dialogue, it is another way of saying that one's own dear things belong to one. If Plato has something important to say here, it must be in the argument for this proposal, rather than the proposal itself. This practice is a familiar one, from the *Charmides* to the *Parmenides*.²⁹

Socrates' remarks with which I began this essay represent an established convention, established from Homer to Xenophon, from the poets to the rhetoricians.³⁰ Whatever their ironic force as a comment on Greek society, they portray the views of that society on the value of *φίλος*.³¹ And Socrates' interrogation of Lysis and Menexenus elicits their agreement to a string of commonplace conventions. For example, Socrates inquires whether the good (*ἀγαθόν*) is beautiful (*καλόν*). In this case what Menexenus affirms is merely an articulation of a popular idiom: 'the beautiful and the good' (*καλός τε ἀγαθός*).³² More importantly, the connection Plato draws throughout the dialogue between the good and the useful (*χρήσιμον*) simply draws upon their nearly synonymous relationship, due to the reflexive character of *ἀγαθόν* as 'good for someone (or something)'.³³ Lysis' parents would not turn over to him the management of their property unless he would be good at managing it for them, useful to them.³⁴ Something is *φίλος* (beloved) if it benefits or is *ἀγαθός* to the person to whom it is *φίλος*.³⁵ In this way the agent desires the good in the uninteresting sense that he desires the desirable. And whatever the desirable might be, it is good (*ἀγαθόν*) for the agent and useful (*χρήσιμον*) to him in the same way.³⁶ In a somewhat similar fashion we might say that the agent desires what serves his purpose. And this of course tells us nothing about the character of the agent's desire, whether it be selfish or altruistic.

²⁷ cf. *Iliad* 6. 14 and *Lysis* 210d2, d4. Note the use of *ἐπιτρέπειν* at 209d1–2 and throughout the passage.

²⁸ The Great King entrusts his most prized possession, his son, to Lysis' safe keeping, to cite the example at 209d–210a.

²⁹ The status of the argument concerning doing one's own in the *Charmides* at 161b ff. parallels the *οἰκεῖον* arguments in the *Lysis* (209a–210d, 221d–222d; cf. *Charm.* 163c3–8). On the use of *οἰκεῖον* as a popular concept see also *Symp.* 193d1–2, 205e5–206a1; *Rep.* 470a1–3, 485c6–8, 501d4.

³⁰ cf. Dirlmeier (12), pp. 27–9, 44–7.

³¹ For example, note the ironic *κύνα* at 211e6.

³² In other dialogues (*Prot.* 360b; *Hip. Maj.* 297b–c; *Symp.* 197c–e, 204e, 206a–b; *Phil.* 64e) Plato has made philosophic use of the relation between these two concepts. There is no evidence that he does so at 216d2–3 (cf. 205e6, 207a3), since the *καλόν* concept plays no role in the subsequent argument. In my view Plato introduces it as a commonplace (*κατὰ τὴν ἀρχαίαν παροιμίαν*, 216c6) to ridicule Menexenus' solemn agreement, just as Socrates employs sexual imagery which Menexenus would not yet comprehend (216c6–d2). On the popular use of this idiom see Dover (13), pp. 41–5, 201–5, 273–8. On this point I disagree with Schoplick (30), p. 44; Levin (24), pp. 254–5; and Irwin (23), pp. 57, 295 n. 14, and 323 n. 56.

³³ cf. 210d2–3, 214e–215c.

³⁴ 210b–d.

³⁵ Once one has control (*ἐπιτρέπειν*) over one's belongings, one is then in a position to make personal use of them (*ὀνησόμεθα*, 210b5, c4).

³⁶ The reflexivity of *ἀγαθός* and *χρήσιμος* need not be self-reflexive, but in this context it is assumed to be. Cf. Vlastos (33), pp. 7–9.

It is folly to understand the good under discussion in the *Lysis* as expressly referring to Plato's transcendent Form of that name.³⁷ Rather, ἀγαθόν is attached to χρήσιμον, οἰκεῖον, and φίλον as part of a tradition whose orientation is the individual acquirer, the agent. Yet it is just as foolish to understand the motivation of the agent portrayed in the *Lysis* as necessarily selfish or at best indifferent to the welfare of others. Lysis is both φίλος and οἰκεῖος to his parents. He belongs to them and is of use to them. He is of value to them. This is the relationship Plato is interested in examining. It is also obvious that Lysis' parents love him, in our sense of affectionate caring. They desire his own happiness.³⁸ They look out for his welfare.³⁹ One can even admire their patience in listening to his reading or, even worse, his lyre.⁴⁰ Having affection for others as well as respecting persons for their own sake are not issues here. Such feeling and respect are in fact presumed not only in this example but in all the relationships exhibited in the dialogue. Lysis and Menexenus obviously care for each other;⁴¹ Hippothales is rather in awe of Lysis;⁴² and Socrates kindly proposes to show Hippothales how to address the boy.⁴³ Despite the warmth and esteem present in the drama of the dialogue, the arguments ignore these matters. What makes someone φίλος is a separate question.

The value which being φίλος confers on something reflects its benefit for the agent and its utility as an acquisition. To appreciate the source of that value requires some further characterization. One needs to know what sorts of things are φίλα. Plato offers two positive proposals which just happen to cancel each other out. Both are commonplace: like loves like and opposites attract.⁴⁴ And in both cases Plato turns tradition against itself to defeat them. The source of these proposals may have been the metaphysical theories of certain cosmologists, say Empedocles and Heraclitus.⁴⁵ Both proposals are systematic ones, encompassing all of nature, not just human activity.⁴⁶ Yet it would be imprudent to regard them as metaphysical extracts rather than popular views expressed in poetry and taken up by cosmologists.⁴⁷ For now, let us consider the traditional elements in Plato's rejection of these proposals and postpone until later our examination of what is innovative and specifically informative about Plato's own views.

There are four stages in the argument against 'like loves like'. Each narrows the scope of the thesis but is unable to save it. (1) Socrates remarks that individuals who are good-for-nothing (πονηροί) are like one another but cannot be φίλοι. When they

³⁷ Glaser held this view, and Schoplick has recently taken it up by reading τὸ ἀγαθόν (particularly at 216b–217a) as denoting an abstract entity (the Good) rather than as a definite description ('that which is good'): cf. Schoplick (30), pp. 44–6. Yet 216e3–4 demonstrates that one should read τὸ ἀγαθόν as a definite description to parallel τοῦ τοιούτου οἶον. The other neuter phrases in this passage (τὸ ὁμοῖον, τὸ ἐναντίον, τὸ μήτε ἀγαθὸν μήτε κακόν) are also clearly definite descriptions. When Plato does use abstract nouns in the *Lysis* such as φιλία at 220b3 or λευκότης at 217d4, they are used as shorthand for definite descriptions: the relation between persons, the particular colour dyed into the hair. It is more prudent to say that Plato is interested in predicates ranging over the properties of things, rather than abstract entities themselves.

³⁸ *Contra* Vlastos (33), p. 8, it is hard to give a 'selfish' reading to 207d6–7.

³⁹ 208a–209a.

⁴⁰ 209b2–7.

⁴¹ cf. the charming scene at 207a5–c11.

⁴² As at 207b4–7, 222b1–2.

⁴³ cf. 206b9–c7.

⁴⁴ 214a1–215c2; 215c3–216b9.

⁴⁵ cf. Glaser (16), pp. 51–3, and Schoplick (30), pp. 36–40.

⁴⁶ Plato emphasizes this point at 214b2–5 and 215e1–9. In doing so, his analysis purports to go beyond the character of conscious intentions to the actual structure of the relation between φίλα. It is the difference between liking someone because I take him to be similar/opposite to me and liking someone because he is similar/opposite to me, regardless of how I take him.

⁴⁷ cf. 213e5–b1, 215c4–d7.

get together they are in fact enemies, because they mistreat (*ἀδικεῖν*) one another.⁴⁸ This argument exploits the utility of *φίλος*; indeed *φίλος* and *πονηρός* are a contradiction in terms. There is as well a veiled allusion to the adage invoked earlier that enemies cannot be friends. (2) There remains the class of persons who do have utility, positive or negative. Of these Socrates excludes those who confer negative utility, the *κακοί*, on the grounds that they are so at odds with themselves (hence bad for themselves) that they cannot be said to be like anyone else.⁴⁹ Socrates supports his argument with a simple appeal to public opinion. The scope of 'like loves like' is now limited to those with a positive utility, the *ἀγαθοί*.⁵⁰

At this mid-point in the argument Plato is operating with two common opinions: 'like loves like' and 'the *ἀγαθοί* are the *φίλοι*'. He then unravels each by pulling at a central strand in this web, the utility concept. (3) Like is *φίλος* to like because of the utility each carries.⁵¹ But from their very similarity it follows that there is no utility (positive or negative) which an individual can derive from a similar thing which he could not derive from himself.⁵² And this of course applies to both terms of the relation.⁵³ Socrates concludes that similars cannot be valued by each other, because they make no contribution to each other, and consequently they cannot each be *φίλον*.⁵⁴ (4) There remain the actual members of the class of *ὅμοια*: the *ἀγαθοί*. But the agent who is of good use to himself is self-sufficient and has no need to value anything besides himself. If he cannot love anything, if he cannot be a *φιλῶν* (lover, friend), he cannot thereby be *φίλος*.⁵⁵ At the same time what is not valued cannot be *φίλος*. Socrates invokes the adage 'out of sight, out of mind' to assure the wavering Lysis that men are not missed by absent 'friends' who are of such value to themselves that they have no need of other goods.⁵⁶ Plato's argument here contains much that is important toward understanding his own views. But let us first recognize what makes this elenchus persuasive as well as uninformative. Plato turns the commonplace back upon itself, exploiting the conceptual connection of *φίλος* with utility. It is a carefully constructed argument. Plato is careful to avoid the active-passive ambiguity of *φίλος* (friendly, beloved) by treating each case separately.⁵⁷

⁴⁸ cf. 214b8–c6. My reading of this entire argument differs in many details from those offered by others: notably Levin (24), p. 246, Schoplick (30), pp. 35–8, and Versenyi (32), pp. 190–1. For example, Versenyi discusses the argument in terms of 'the perfectly alike', which has no basis in the Greek. Rather, to the extent to which (a) is similar to (b), to that extent (b's) utility to (a) is at best gratuitous (cf. 214e2–5, καθ' ὅσον ὅμοιος...). On *πονηρός* see *Rep.* 334c–335b, 352c7.

⁴⁹ 214c6–d3.

⁵⁰ 214d8–e1.

⁵¹ 214e3–5; cf. 214e6, 215a2, also 206b5–8, 215a6.

⁵² 214e5–7: Plato's phrasing here neatly sidesteps the obvious objection about the lover's perspective. The lover might love an object because he falsely thinks that object can offer him something he could not get for himself. But Plato shows that he is not concerned with the lover's intention as opposed to the actual situation: what benefit can (a) derive from loving (b) which (a) could not derive from himself, given that the two are similar?

⁵³ 214e5–215a1.

⁵⁴ 215a1–3.

⁵⁵ 215a6–b3. Again, Plato ignores the intention of the agent, who might falsely see value in something of no use to him. Instead Plato stresses the real situation: 215a7–8.

⁵⁶ 215b3–7 (cf. 215a3). This seems to contradict *Phaedrus* 255b2, which led von Arnim (4), pp. 372–6, to conclude that many of the arguments in the *Lysis* were 'nicht ernst gemeint'. But in fact Plato retained this thesis in the *Symp.* as well as at 202c–d. Plato does mention in the *Lysis* views which we know he did not himself accept: as at 215d2–4 on the envy of good men. Cf. Schoplick (30), pp. 41–4.

⁵⁷ I cannot agree with Shorey's long-unchallenged and often-cited claim: 'The confusion in the *Lysis* is favoured by the ambiguity of the Greek word *φίλος*, which can be applied both to one who has the feeling of friendship or love and to the quality of the object that excites it.' Shorey (31), p. 67. Cf. Robinson (28), pp. 98 and 107, also Annas (2), pp. 533 and 551.

Plato is interested in the contradictory character of the accepted tradition on friendship, where one adage ('opposites attract') runs against another ('no one is friend to his enemy nor enemy to his friend'). As was the case with 'like loves like' Plato begins to explain the attraction of opposites in terms of interpersonal relations – the attraction of the poor for the wealthy, the weak for the strong, the patient for the physician, and the ignorant for the wise. He then generalizes upon all relations of that character, including as well the desire of the dry for the moist and the cold for the hot.⁵⁸ Plato derives the principle: something is especially *φίλον* to that to which it is most contrary.⁵⁹ The use of the neuter here is instructive, as it often is throughout the *Lysis*.⁶⁰ The attraction of opposites concerns the character which makes someone or something *φίλος*: what sort of character must one have to love, what sort of thing must it be to be loved. Accordingly, the principle singles out the opposition between, say, heat and cold, as opposed to this fire and that piece of snow. As unobtrusive as it might seem, this shift from individuals to their characters prepares the way for Plato's own views. For one thing it gives the predicate *φίλος* a more complex status. Not only is it said of persons and things, Lysis and wine, but it also ranges over properties – for example, the good in a man, what is just in a man, what is temperate in a man.⁶¹

The attraction of opposites is brought down by what Socrates apologetically calls a logic-chopping argument.⁶² Since friendship and enmity themselves are especially contrary, the principle in question requires that each be *φίλον* to the other, an unacceptable absurdity. Similarly it would require that the *ἀγαθόν* in someone be *φίλον* to the *κακόν* in someone, and other such absurdities which run against the adage already agreed upon: no one is friend to his enemy nor enemy to his friend.⁶³ Once again a commonplace conception of friendship proves inadequate. At the same time Socrates takes the unsuspecting Menexenus on a precarious excursion where the old adage about enemies and friends now enjoins a relation between properties (the just cannot be *φίλον* to the unjust) and even universals (enmity cannot be *φίλον* to friendship). In the initial conversation with Menexenus the question was which of two persons is *φίλος* whenever one loves another, the lover (*φιλῶν*) or the beloved (*φιλούμενος*).⁶⁴ One might say that the answer to that question is neither, as Plato shifts our attention away from persons and things and focuses instead on properties as being *φίλα*. In doing so Plato manipulates the commonplace tradition on friendship into something philosophical.

Toward the very end of the dialogue Socrates sees no use for further argument.⁶⁵ Like a sophist in a courtroom he makes a final summation:

If neither those who are loved (*φιλούμενοι*) nor those who love (*φιλούντες*), neither those who are similar (*ὅμοιοι*) nor those who are dissimilar (*ἀνόμοιοι*), neither those who are good (*ἀγαθοί*) nor those who are our own (*οἰκεῖοι*), nor any of the other cases we went through (they are too many to remember) – if, I say, none of these is *φίλον*, then I no longer know what to say.⁶⁶

Yet in all these separate cases the arguments were the same, from the initial proposals of Lysis to the final proposal of Socrates that one loves what is naturally one's own.

⁵⁸ 215e4–9. Note the use of *ἐπιθυμεῖν* describes a fact (the dry desires the moist), not some conscious motive. The discussion of digestion at e9 parallels the *Phaedo* 96d.

⁵⁹ 215e3–4 and 216a4–5.

⁶⁰ Glaser (16), p. 63, who first pointed this out, unfortunately took this shift in grammar as evidence for the theory of Forms in the *Lysis*.

⁶¹ 216b4–5.

⁶² 216a6–b1. It is interesting that Plato's use of *ἀντιλογικός* is found elsewhere only in the middle or late dialogues: *Rep.*, *Phd.*, *Phdr.*, *Tht.*, and *Symp.* Cf. esp. *Phd.* 101e1–3.

⁶³ Note the parallel between 216a6–b2 and 215e3–4, also between 216b2–8 and 216a4–6.

⁶⁴ 212a8–213c8. Cf. Glidden (17).

⁶⁵ 222e1, with the ironic *χρησαίμεθα*.

⁶⁶ 222e3–7.

Time and again each search for the *φίλον* foundered on the received tradition that something is *φίλον* because it is *ἀγαθόν* and hence *χρήσιμον*,⁶⁷ which itself explains why no one can be friend to his enemy. And Plato makes no effort to overturn this tradition. On the contrary, he makes every effort to exploit it. The concept of *φίλος* with which Plato is operating is not a subjective one. It does not depict the state of mind of the agent, his feelings for someone or something. Rather it denotes an achievement of the agent, his acquisition of someone or something – whatever his purpose, however he might feel. Plato is interested in the behaviour of the agent, his taking something for his own.⁶⁸ In this way the agent establishes a relationship between himself and something else. And Plato inquires whether the structure of that relationship is one of similarity ('like loves like'), dissimilarity ('opposites attract'), or simply that of belonging ('loving one's own'). Now once someone or something is *φίλον* ('dear') to an agent, it is sought by that agent who is then said to be a *φίλος* ('friend') of whatever it is he seeks.⁶⁹ Consequently, Plato's inquiry is also a psychological one: what makes someone or something *φίλον* to an agent? But this inquiry is not conducted in terms of the conscious intentions of the *φίλος* (what Lysis' parents think and feel about their son); rather it is in terms of the objective structure of such relationships, how the *φίλοι* behave toward each other, the roles they play for each other (Lysis' utility to his parents).

II

Throughout the dialogue Plato presents intentional situations in which someone loves something under a particular description. A father values a certain wine because he takes it to be an antidote which will save his son from poisoning. For that matter he even values the cup which holds this precious medicine.⁷⁰ Many prize the purchasing power of gold and silver.⁷¹ Now it often happens that the description under which an agent values something fails to obtain. In such cases the intentional description cannot refer to some non-existent fact; yet it nevertheless does succeed in describing the intention of the agent.⁷² For example, the wine may not be an antidote. Yet the father prizes the wine because he takes it to be such. Valuing wine as an antidote tells us something about the father's purpose, his intention. It may or may not tell us anything about a cure for hemlock poisoning.

Plato certainly understood as well as anyone that the intentional descriptions under which one values something may fail to refer. He indicates as much in the *Lysis*: when it comes to cooking, the Great King would favour those whom he took to be competent cooks over his own son, even if his cooks were Lysis and Socrates, even if his cooks would heap salt on the food.⁷³ And if his son's eyes were diseased, the Great King would let those whom he took to be expert physicians do what they could for his son, even if he thought Lysis and Socrates were the experts, even if they should want to pour ashes into the patient's eyes.⁷⁴ With a veiled reference to the love-crazed Hippothales, Socrates remarks elsewhere that lovers often think that their boys do not love them in return, even that the boys hate them.⁷⁵ These examples would seem

⁶⁷ That Plato is operating on the level of truism is supported by evidence in the *Laws*. At 716c 1–4 Plato refers to the *λόγον ἀρχαῖον* that like loves like and at 837a–d he discusses two commonly recognized forms of *φιλία* and *ἔρως*: that between *ὁμοία* and that between *ἐναντία*. Cf. Dirlmeier (12), pp. 29 and 52; Schoplick (30), pp. 41–2.

⁶⁸ cf. 220e6–222a3; 215e4, 217c1.

⁶⁹ 220a 1–6.

⁷⁰ See the discussion of 'intentional inexistence' in Chisholm (9), pp. 168–85.

⁷¹ 209d 5–e 6.

⁷² 212b 7–c 3, cf. 222a 6–b 2.

⁶⁸ On Homer see Adkins (1), pp. 30–6.

⁷⁰ 219d 5–220a 1, esp. 219e 4–7.

⁷⁴ 209e 6–210a 5.

to suggest situations in which the intentional description only succeeds in describing the state of mind of the agent (the Great King, Hippothales) by its failure to describe the actual state of affairs. Lysis and Socrates, after all, are neither cooks nor physicians. Too much salt spoils food just as ashes damage the eye. Lysis does not hate Hippothales. Plato certainly recognizes these intentional situations for what they are, by their counterfactual character. What is extremely interesting is that Plato assumes for the sake of argument that the Great King and the unrequited lover are in fact correct in their estimates. By making these assumptions Plato shifts the reader's attention away from the state of mind of the agent and back to the situation itself. And if we attend to the logic of such arguments in the dialogue, we find that this is Plato's general policy.

Consider this sequence of questions from Socrates' first conversation with Lysis:

1. Doubtless your father and mother love you very much?
2. They would wish you then to be as happy as possible?
3. Does it seem to you that a man is happy who is both a slave and not allowed to do what he desires?
4. Well then, if your father and mother love you and desire you to be happy, it is clear that in every way they are eager for you to be happy?
5. Therefore they allow you to do what you wish and never punish you nor prevent you from doing what you desire?⁷⁶

Yet Lysis' parents will not let him race the chariot, drive the mules, play with his mother's loom, and they even send him off to school.⁷⁷ The dilemma with which Socrates confronts Lysis is manufactured by a difference in estimate concerning the boy's welfare. The happiness which Lysis' parents envisage for their son competes with the vision of happiness which Lysis pictures for himself. Since Lysis and his parents have different opinions concerning what constitutes his well-being (*εὐδαιμονία*), obviously their opinions cannot be substituted for each other. Since Socrates makes such substitutions at (4) and (5), the dilemma is a false one. It is also obvious from the irony of Socrates' questions that Plato appreciates the illegitimacy of the substitutions.⁷⁸ The elenchus succeeds because Lysis confuses what is actually in his welfare with what he takes to be so – driving chariots, for instance.

Plato treats what Lysis takes to be in his interest as a case of false belief. Lysis is simply wrong about what would constitute his *εὐδαιμονία*. At the same time the argument assumes that Lysis' parents correctly understand what is in the boy's interest.⁷⁹ Similarly the Great King is said to be correct in his judgement about who should be his cooks and physicians.⁸⁰ And in other passages it is assumed that the wine is actually an antidote, that silver and gold have the enormous purchasing power that they do, that the unrequited lover is actually hated by his beloved.⁸¹ In making these assumptions Plato contrasts false estimates with factual claims which succeed in describing the situation in which the lover finds himself. The father is correct to value wine as an antidote, because it will save his son from poisoning. Lysis is wrong to think that chariot racing will promote his happiness. It is a familiar contrast between false belief and true belief. The question of knowledge does not yet arise, as is clear from the irony of Plato's counterfactual assumptions – for example, that the Great King

⁷⁶ 207d5–e7. Note the status of *παντὶ τρόπῳ* at e4–5. The elenchus succeeds only if we read 'in every way' factually ('in every way there is'), although the normal way would be to read it as expressing an intention, as follows: 'it is clear that in every way (they conceive of) they are eager for you to be happy'.

⁷⁷ 207e9–209a4.

⁷⁸ cf. 208c5–6; also 209e5–6, 210a3–4.

⁸⁰ 209e2, 210a2–4, 210a6–7.

⁷⁹ cf. 209b8–c2.

⁸¹ 219e3–4, 220a1–6, 212c6.

would be wise to let Lysis and Socrates heap salt on his food. What is conspicuously missing, however, is any attempt on Plato's part to concern himself with the lover's conscious state of mind. Whatever Lysis imagines for himself might seem to be important in giving a picture of Lysis' desires. But that does not interest Plato, once it is shown that Lysis' beliefs about his welfare are incorrect. Similarly, if we are to learn what makes Lysis dear to his parents we can ignore what his parents feel about their son and concentrate instead upon what Lysis does for his parents. Plato's resolute avoidance of speculation into the conscious attitudes of *φίλοι* suggests the conviction that it is more instructive to study the function which cherished objects play for those that love them than to explore the lovers' states of mind. Furthermore, it suggests that what makes someone or something *φίλος* has entirely to do with the role those cherished objects play in the lives of those that love them. Consequently, the lover's avowals concerning those he cherishes are only relevant when they correctly describe the role those objects play for them.

At the conclusion of his initial conversation with Lysis, Socrates makes a remarkable statement, as stunning as any of the so-called Socratic paradoxes in the *Gorgias* and the *Meno*:

In those matters in which we would become prudent (*φρόνιμοι*), everyone will entrust them to our management, both Greeks and barbarians, men and women. And in these matters we will do whatever we should wish and no one will willingly stand in our way. Rather we ourselves will be free with respect to them and we shall rule over others and these things will be ours, since we shall be in a position to derive benefit from them.⁸²

It is not just that Lysis' father and neighbours would turn all their property over to him once they knew that he would manage it better,⁸³ but that all humanity would do so. The irony of this passage results from the difference between purpose and function, intention and fact. In so far as we consider conscious motivation – the beliefs, desires, and ambitions peculiar to individuals – it is inconceivable that everyone would willingly indenture themselves and their property to the *φρόνιμος*. In so far as we consider the actual advantage to be gained, it is best for everyone to do so. Plato makes no attempt to draw a psychological portrait of the individual about to entrust his property to the prudent caretaker, depicting why such a person would want to do such a thing. Instead Plato concentrates upon the function served by this trusteeship, the objective benefits: 'If therefore you become wise, my boy, all will be friendly (*φίλοι*) to you and all will be your own (*οἰκεῖοι*), since you will be useful (*χρήσιμος*) and good (*ἀγαθός*). Otherwise no one else will be friendly (*φίλος*) to you, neither your father nor your mother nor the members of your household (*οἱ οἰκεῖοι*).'⁸⁴

This utopian fantasy is unintelligible as a statement about the conscious motivation of the agent. It is simply false that people inevitably apprehend what is actually in their own interests and act accordingly. It is just as obvious that one cannot infer the state of mind Lysis' parents would have toward their son on the basis of his actual utility, as opposed, say, to their estimate of his value for them, among other subjective factors. In order to make the situation intelligible, Plato roots out its intentional character – that is to say, he ignores how agents themselves regard the objects of their desires. The argument succeeds by taking the description under which an agent values what he does, not as a description of the agent's state of mind at all but rather as a description designating some actual state of affairs in which the agent finds himself: the actual utility which a son serves for his father as opposed to the intentional attitude which a father is aware of feeling toward his son. In his conversation with Lysis,

⁸² 210a9–b6.

⁸³ 209c4–6.

⁸⁴ 210d1–4.

Socrates draws conclusions concerning the circumstances in which others will be friendly to Lysis so as to allow Lysis to take advantage of their friendship. These circumstances designate actual value, as opposed to intentional estimates. In taking this approach Plato is aided by the conceptual web of meaning attached to *φίλος*, which is similarly indifferent to the intentions and affections between friends.

Socrates' conversation with Lysis demonstrates to Hippothales the proper way of carrying on with the boy, in contrast to Hippothales' poems and praises. Hippothales is ridiculed for two reasons. First of all, although Lysis was the object of all his attention, Hippothales had nothing unique to say to him which could not have been said by any boy.⁸⁵ While his behaviour toward Lysis was clear enough, his affection expressed in his praises failed to designate their particular object.⁸⁶ Exploring Hippothales' state of mind, then, cannot explain why he loves the particular person he does. In effect the subjectivity of his feelings renders them useless in any analysis of his particular relationship with Lysis. Secondly, Socrates remarks that the ridiculous Hippothales is merely singing his own praises.⁸⁷ Such egoism is self-deceptive and futile. The affection which Hippothales expresses at great length toward Lysis merely describes Hippothales' own state of mind. It refers back to himself, since it fails to refer to Lysis the actual person, as opposed to Lysis as conceived by Hippothales, the figment of his affection. In this way Plato turns the subjectivity of intentional attitudes into a moral criticism of narcissism. At best Hippothales merely loves himself, although he thinks he is in love with Lysis.⁸⁸ And his vain praises of Lysis would probably have the same effect on the boy.⁸⁹

Plato contrasts the selfish conceit of Hippothales with the generosity of those who would give all their goods over to Lysis. The contrast conjoins an epistemic point with an ethical one, giving a new twist to the familiar theme that virtue is knowledge: one cannot succeed in loving another, as opposed to oneself and one's fantasies, unless the intent of one's love actually designates some real object and not one's own state of mind. Nor is one in a position to know that he loves someone or something unless he knows that his intent succeeds in its reference. Regardless of what he must feel, the lover must know his situation. Only those who have this knowledge are in a position to know what it is they love, and it is only those persons whose avowals are worth taking seriously.⁹⁰ Otherwise it is best to ignore what lovers say. Consequently Plato reworks the intentional situations in the *Lysis* to mark out the structure of the relationship between lovers, as opposed to giving a psychological representation of the lover's attitudes. And Plato wants to single out those features of that structure which make it possible for one person to be *φίλος* to another. In doing so, Plato himself presents a psychological theory explaining the function love plays in our lives, without resting on the testimony of lovers and their descriptions of the objects of their feelings. In most cases such testimony is tainted with self-deception. It is the difference, Plato remarks, between thinking that we love gold and silver and finding out that what we really love is what we can purchase with these metals.⁹¹ It is the difference between what we say we love and what we really seek.⁹² The suggestion is that once the lover has knowledge of his situation and the function love serves, he is then in a position to bring his desires into conformity with reality. In this way unrequited love, or vacuous love, becomes impossible.⁹³

⁸⁵ 205b7–c2.

⁸⁷ 205e1–206a1; cf. *Laws* 731e–732b.

⁸⁸ 205d5–9.

⁹⁰ cf. 212a4–6, 215d7, 221e7–222a7; 218a6–b1. Cf. Irwin (23), pp. 90, 294 n. 3.

⁹¹ 220a1–5.

⁹² 219d2–5.

⁸⁶ 205d5–e1, esp. 205d6–7.

⁸⁹ 206a3–4.

⁹³ 222a6–7.

III

Plato passes over the feelings and avowed purposes of agents to examine their actual needs. Such an approach appears to have a distinct limitation: it apparently cannot explain why any particular individual would on some occasion want to befriend someone else in particular. By ignoring psychological motivation Plato's approach would seem not to be able to explain why particular persons got to be friends, although it could explain the character of such friendship once established. It ignores the love of whole persons.⁹⁴ Yet that is exactly Plato's concern: Why does Hippothales love Lysis in particular? How is it that Lysis and Menexenus became friends? And in fact Plato adjusts the traditional conception of friendship to incorporate not only the external exchange between friends but also to explain the function of that exchange in the psychology of the individual agent. We can detect signs of Plato's innovation by attending to his efforts to single out elements within the soul which direct our desires toward those we love.⁹⁵

Socrates asks Lysis to explain why it is that his parents prevent him from doing some things and yet give him his freedom in other matters.⁹⁶ The kind of explanation (*αἴτιον*) Socrates wants turns out to rest entirely on Lysis' actual value to his parents. Similarly the self-sufficient *ἀγαθός* is said not to love anyone or anything because he is in need of nothing.⁹⁷ This statement makes sense only because it ignores the conscious attitude of the agent, since it is obvious that someone might think he needs something when in fact he does not. In this way Plato explains the motivation of the agent in terms of the reality of his situation. Yet such an explanatory technique is by no means indifferent to the psychology of the individual. Plato asks: 'What is the benefit or what is the harm which a like thing could do to any other like thing which it could not also do for itself?'⁹⁸ The form of this question directs our attention toward the inner character of the agent's *ψυχή* which would explain the mechanism of his desire, transferring our interest from the personal attitudes of agents to the inner basis for those attitudes.⁹⁹ To take another example, Plato describes the attraction of persons who stand as opposites toward each other (the patient and the physician, the client and his patron) in terms of characteristics within the separate individuals, characteristics which stand in opposition to each other and which are then supposed to be *φίλον* to the other.¹⁰⁰ Although Plato subsequently rejects the principle of opposition, he succeeds in shifting our attention from the *φίλος* to the *φίλον* within the *φίλος*. In this way an underlying structure is revealed which in principle can explain why agents love the persons and things they do.

With the rejection of the two proposals ('like loves like' and 'opposites attract'), Socrates offers a third explanation of *φιλία* which is more schematic: what is itself neither good nor bad is the *φίλον* of that which is *ἀγαθόν* for that condition.¹⁰¹ On the

⁹⁴ cf. Vlastos (33), pp. 8–11; Irwin (23), p. 296 n. 21.

⁹⁵ cf. Glaser (16), pp. 63–5; Levin (24), p. 247; Vlastos (33), pp. 35–7.

⁹⁶ 209b8–c1: *Τί... τὸ αἴτιον ὅτι...*

⁹⁷ 215a6–b3; cf. 218a2–4.

⁹⁸ 214e5–7.

⁹⁹ cf. Schoplick (30), pp. 44–6. Although neuter constructions are used in the earlier proposals ('like loves like', 214e5–7 and 'opposites attract' at 215e–216b, esp. 216a4–5, b3) to designate the relata of *φίλα*, the use of such constructions to suggest theoretical elements in the *ψυχή* begins in earnest at 216c2 and continues to the explicit statement at 222a2–3: *ἡ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν ἢ κατὰ τὴν ψυχῆς ἡθὸς ἢ τρόπους ἢ εἶδος* (cf. 218b8–c2). Note the emphasis on the personal *φίλος* in the initial conversation with Lysis (as at 207c8, 210c5) in contrast to the emphasis on the impersonal *φίλον* (as at 216c2, e2, 219d1) as the dialogue continues. For example, see 217b4–6, 217e4–6, 219a5–b3, 220b4–5.

¹⁰⁰ 216a4–5.

¹⁰¹ 216c2–3. Cf. Schoplick (30), p. 46. The argument of 216d5–217a2 is important. Plato examines the character of this neutral condition in the lover which dictates that which the lover

one hand, there is some neutral condition in the lover which dictates the real explanation of why he loves the things he seeks. Such a condition is initially neither good nor bad for the lover. Yet it manifests itself in the lover's desire and is the source of that desire. For this reason such a condition itself is properly called *φίλον*. On the other hand, there is some actual feature in the loved object which dictates its real value for the lover – that is to say, the loved object has some property which is good for the initial condition of the lover and for this reason presents itself as the source of satisfaction for the lover's desire. And so the relationship between a lover and a loved one is to be explained in terms of a theorized relationship between the *φίλον* in the lover and the *ἀγαθόν* in the object. In the remainder of the dialogue Plato proceeds to examine both sides of this postulated relationship, the *διὰ τι* of the agent's desire and the *ἐνεκά του* of the particular thing desired.¹⁰² The first question concerns the real motivation of the agent, the nature of this initially neutral condition.¹⁰³ The second question scrutinizes the ultimate goal or function of the agent's love, what it is among the actual features of the loved object which coincides with the real source of satisfaction for the lover's condition.¹⁰⁴ Both questions address the psychology of the *φίλος* without resorting to the avowals of lovers which Plato finds typically uninformative. In this way, understanding the origin of the lover's desire as well as the role which the loved object actually plays for the lover can provide a portrait of the lover's situation which the typical lover (Hippothales, for example) is unable to provide for himself. Armed with such an understanding the knowledgeable lover – in contrast to Hippothales – would be in a position to avoid self-deception and to obtain genuine satisfaction.

To investigate the initial condition of the lover, Plato draws an analogy between the physician's patient and the *φίλος*, an analogy which compares the state of the body, and in particular what the diseased body craves, with the state of the soul – that is, what the lover's condition seeks.¹⁰⁵ Plato draws our attention away from the patient himself and focuses instead on the diseased condition, for it is that condition which forces the patient to seek a physician in the first place.¹⁰⁶ And Plato describes the patient's physical condition in psychological terms (*Ἀναγκάζεται δέ γε σῶμα διὰ νόσον ἱατρικὴν ἀσπάζεσθαι καὶ φιλεῖν*): it is the body which seeks relief, which desires its medicine.¹⁰⁷ In the same way one can employ psychological language to describe the condition of the lover's soul, suggesting a level of desire and need which the lover himself may or may not apprehend, in comparison with the diseased condition of the body which the patient may or may not be able to diagnose. In both cases the condition dictates and explains the agent's behaviour, why the patient goes to his physician, why the *φίλος* falls in love or at least seeks out some object. Furthermore, one can describe

seeks: whether it be *ἀγαθόν*, *κακόν* or itself neutral (*τοῦ τοιούτου οἶον αὐτό ἐστιν*). What support Plato's conclusion that it is a neutral condition seeking its good are the principles excluding friendship between similars or between anything and something *κακόν*. The result is an asymmetry (216e7–217a2), where the neutral condition of the soul can only love its *ἀγαθόν*. This asymmetry can only be interpreted on a theoretical level as a point about the character of the soul and its unconscious desire, since Plato is of course willing to admit that two friends can care for each other (207c8, 221e7–222a7).

¹⁰² 218d7–8.

¹⁰³ The *διὰ τι* explicates the character of the soul which is neither good nor bad: 217a1–218c3. On this use of *διὰ* to explain an initial condition see for example 217a6, a7; 220d2, d5. Cf. Annas (2), p. 537.

¹⁰⁴ Plato first invokes this principle of explanation at 215d5–6: ...τῆς ἐπικουρίας *ἐνεκα*. He then explains the point at 218d7–220b5.

¹⁰⁵ cf. 217b2–3 and 218b8–c2. Cf. Schoplick (30), pp. 26, 30, 31–3, 46.

¹⁰⁶ cf. 217a7 and 217b2–3.

¹⁰⁷ 217b3–4; cf. 217c1 (*ἐπιθυμοῖ*) and 215e4 (*ἐπιθυμεῖν*).

the body's desire in a number of different ways – as wanting its medicine, for instance, or desiring what will be good for it, as being *φίλον* toward such a good. All such descriptions are true, not because that is the way the patient conceives it, but because that is the body's condition.¹⁰⁸ So too there is an independent way of describing the lover's condition, independently of the lover's conscious feelings. And the self-diagnosis of the patient or the lover must give way to the proper authority who can explain why the patient or the lover feels the way he does. What attracts the patient to his physician is a physical need which can be described on its own terms.¹⁰⁹ What attracts the lover to his loved one can be similarly explained.

Students of the Socratic paradoxes have often been puzzled over the psychological descriptions which Plato gives concerning what individuals must really desire or wish for themselves, although it is clear that the individuals themselves admit no such thing.¹¹⁰ The argument of the *Lysis* suggests that we understand these paradoxes not in terms of Plato's errant logic but in terms of Plato's emerging psychological theory. The *Lysis* postulates psychological elements in the personality which might remain unknown to the agent himself. It is then possible to claim that an individual would desire something, even though that individual might not make that claim himself. Conflicting explanations would result when the agent's conscious desire presented a different description of his state of mind from that given by the theory. In such a case Plato clearly prefers the theoretical explanation over the conscious avowal. The man who loves gold and silver really loves the purchasing power of these metals.¹¹¹ The paradox that an individual may not know what he really desires or may not really desire what he thinks he does can be explained by a psychological theory which provides an independent description of the state of the agent's soul.¹¹² Nor should we find it so paradoxical that Plato conceives there to be such a difference between an agent's self-conscious avowals and their truth. It is the rare lover who knows the state of his soul, the rare individual who knows his own intentions, what he really wishes, what he really desires. Similarly for Plato knowledge is rare, belief common.

As anachronistic as it might seem, Plato's *Lysis* provides a foundation for psychoanalysis in the invention of a deeper level of psychological explanation which takes precedence over the agent's own estimates of his state of mind. Plato takes inner need to be the basis for *φιλεῖν*, so that the truly self-sufficient agent would no longer be in a position to love.¹¹³ The traditional conception of friendship explained that *Lysis* was cherished by his parents because of his utility (*χρήσιμος*) and value (*ἀγαθός*) for them. Plato takes this traditional account and turns it into an observation of human relations in need of further explanation. Something in the soul searches for its *οἰκείον*, loves what is its own, seeks what has been torn away. This yearning in the soul does

¹⁰⁸ cf. 217b1–3 and 217b4–6.

¹⁰⁹ cf. 215d6 and 217a7.

¹¹⁰ cf. Santas (29), pp. 147–64.

¹¹¹ 219e7–220a6: (a1–5) οὐχ ὅτι πολλάκις λέγομεν ὡς περὶ πολλοῦ ποιούμεθα χρυσίον καὶ ἀργύριον· ἀλλὰ μὴ οὐδέν τι μᾶλλον οὕτω τό γε ἀληθὲς ἔχῃ, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνό ἐστιν ὁ περὶ παντὸς ποιούμεθα, ὁ ἂν φανῇ ὄν, ὅτου ἕνεκα καὶ χρυσίον καὶ πάντα τὰ παρασκευαζόμενα παρασκευάζεται.

¹¹² While Versenyi comes the closest toward grasping the point, he shares with other scholars, such as Annas (2), p. 536, the error of reading the *Lysis* as if it were giving descriptions of lovers' intentions from their first-person viewpoints: 'the intentional movement of love' (32), p. 195, also pp. 191–2.

¹¹³ cf. 215a4–c1; 217a4–6; 218a2–4. Plato claims that love originates out of need. Consequently, the objects of love benefit the lover instrumentally. But such an origin for love does not require the lover's intentions to take on any specific character, egoistic or altruistic. Cf. Irwin (23), pp. 99–100.

not describe the conscious purpose of the lover; rather it explains it. There is no evidence for the so-called selfishness of Platonic love in this context. To say that love is selfish (or altruistic) is to represent lovers' intentions toward one another, how they see each other. Plato resolutely avoids such speculation. *Lysis'* parents fervently desire their son's well-being, or *εὐδαιμονία*. Yet they could not do so unless the *διά τι* of their desire expressed a need which loving *Lysis* would fulfil.¹¹⁴ The lover seeks what his inner nature has been deprived of, but which belongs to it none the less (*φύσει οἰκεῖον*).¹¹⁵ In this way deprivation generates love, whatever the character of that love might be – generous or selfish, directed at whole persons or rare wine.

The *Lysis* also shares with the psychoanalytic tradition an emphasis on education as the primary means toward fulfilment. The knowing lover¹¹⁶ is the only one in a position to understand his inner needs and to bring his conscious desires into harmony with them, so that his intentions become transparent. Such a lover contrasts with the ridiculous Hippothales who does not know what he really wants,¹¹⁷ the kind of person who is totally ignorant of his own soul.¹¹⁸ And between these extremes of knowledge and ignorance comes the case of *Lysis* himself, the *φίλος* who at least believes that he does not know what he does not know.¹¹⁹ Plato suggests that love and knowledge go together as the *φίλος* tries to match what he seeks with what he needs. In this way only knowledge brings fulfilment to the lover. And with this suggestion Plato casts the lover's satisfaction into an epistemic form which has preoccupied the psychoanalytic tradition as well.

Plato goes no further in the *Lysis* toward describing the exact character of the soul which provides the motivation for *φιλεῖν*. Instead he offers two broad alternatives: either the initial condition (*διά τι*) is something contaminating the agent like a disease in the body,¹²⁰ or else it is something natural to the soul just as thirst is biologically natural to the body.¹²¹ In his discussion of the first alternative, Plato draws his famous analogy between the condition of the soul and the presence (*παρουσία*) of white dye in blond hair.¹²² This analogy suggests a contrast between the real character of the soul¹²³ and the condition it happens to be in due to some contaminant. Perhaps it is the presence of this external contaminant which explains the soul's yearning, as long

¹¹⁴ cf. 221d6–222a3.

¹¹⁵ cf. 210d1–4 and 221d–222a.

¹¹⁶ cf. 222a6–7: τῷ γνησίῳ ἔραστῇ.

¹¹⁷ Note the irony of 222a6–b2: Hippothales blushes with relief under the false belief that the argument has proved that unrequited love is impossible for the knowing lover and hence (*sic*) for himself. The scepticism of *Lysis* and Menexenus toward the significance of this general conclusion attests to their proper condition of believing they are ignorant, 218b1.

¹¹⁸ cf. 218a4–6 and 214c6–d7.

¹¹⁹ cf. 218a6–b1.

¹²⁰ cf. 217a3–218a2.

¹²¹ cf. 220e6–221c1: (a3) καὶ δίψα δὴ καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι ἐπιθυμίαι.

¹²² cf. 217c3–e1. Although this *παρουσία* passage is often cited as an anticipation of the distinction made famous by Aristotle between essential and accidental predication, this cannot be accurate. Plato's point here is that the hair cannot be coloured at all by the dye: (217d4–6) ἀλλὰ παρούσης λευκότητος οὔτε τε λευκαὶ οὔτε μέλαιναί εἰσιν. 'Being white' in this case is not even an accidental feature of the hair. Unless the colour inheres *κατά τινα τρόπον* (217e3 cf. 222a3), it cannot be the case that the hair can be called white at all. This is clear from the use of *τοιούτων ἔσται τὸ ἔχον* (217e2) which governs all the properties of a thing, incidental as well as essential (cf. 217c4, 217e1–3).

¹²³ cf. 217e4–218a2. Consequently, the *παρουσία* of *κακόν* in the soul is a condition which cannot strictly be part of the soul, not even characterizing it accidentally. This point is relevant to the general problem of evil in Platonic theory (cf. *Phd.* 63e8–69e5). The soul itself, being the immortal and immaterial thing it is, can only be contaminated by the physical world without at the same time being characterized by it. Plato's doubts about the *κακόν* being the *διά τι* of *φιλία* at 220e6–221d2 reflect this difficulty. Cf. 217b7–c1, 217e8–9.

as the soul still retains its real character.¹²⁴ Once the soul actually becomes *κακόν* it would no longer be in a position to desire its good, because the *κακόν* cannot be *φίλον* to the *ἀγαθόν*.¹²⁵

Although much has been made of this passage as an anticipation of the theory of transcendent Forms,¹²⁶ such a claim is premature. It would be better to say that the *παρουσία* discussion has something in common with the foundations of Plato's metaphysics: namely, a concern for the changing character of individuals. The analogy seizes on the difference between hair that is actually white from old age and hair that is dyed to look white, in which case the hairs themselves are neither white nor dark, due to the presence of white dye.¹²⁷ The soul is in a similar neutral condition (*μήτε κακόν . . . μήτ' ἀγαθόν*) because of the presence of some contaminant, or *κακόν*. In this condition the soul has not yet deteriorated, like the white hair of old age, but it is no longer healthy. And so it desires what can restore it to its former condition, namely its *ἀγαθόν*.¹²⁸ This desire arises out of need, not out of the agent's will. There is no suggestion here of participation in Forms.¹²⁹ But the passage does raise an issue which is familiar from Plato's metaphysics. The dye is not said to make the hair white, but only to make the hair look white – that is to say, the presence of white colour never inherently belongs to the hairs themselves. And Plato suggests that what makes the lover *φίλος* is similarly not a consequence of what he is.¹³⁰ In this respect, Socrates' being *φίλος* is like Socrates' smallness, he could still be Socrates without being either *φίλος* or small. In both cases what makes the individual *φίλος* or small has less to do with the nature of the individual himself and more to do with the situation he happens to be in. Our passage calls attention to the existence of characteristics which do not belong to the individuals in which they are present. And in the metaphysics of the *Phaedo* such characteristics inherently belong to the Forms themselves. Nor should it surprise us that being *φίλος* is a characteristic of this sort. What makes the lover *φίλος* is relative to the contamination of his soul. As the lover regains his health his needs change. What the soul desires becomes progressively narrower in scope; what is good for his soul becomes more defined.

Toward the end of the dialogue Plato compares the conditions which give rise to friendship with the physical compulsions of hunger and thirst, compulsions which are biologically necessary even when there is apparently nothing wrong with the body.¹³¹ In this way Plato offers an alternative account of the initial condition of the lover, although it is not clear whether this alternative is inconsistent with the contamination theory.¹³² Plato here suggests that an intrinsic desire (*ἐπιθυμία*) provides the antecedent explanation (*αἴτιον*) for friendship.¹³³ Again, what Plato understands by *ἐπιθυμία* does not depend for its existence upon the recognition of the lover. Rather, the *ἐπιθυμία* describes some actual condition of the soul, just as thirst describes a condition of the body. What this condition might be, Plato does not tell us.¹³⁴ In this respect the *Lysis* stands as a prolegomenon for some future study, a characteristic it shares with Plato's

¹²⁴ cf. 217e4–8.

¹²⁵ cf. 217e8–218a2.

¹²⁶ cf. Schoplick (30), pp. 46–51, Levin (24), p. 247, and Glaser (16), pp. 55–6.

¹²⁷ cf. 217d1–6; cf. Vlastos (33), pp. 259–60.

¹²⁸ cf. 217b2–c2, 217e1–218a2.

¹²⁹ It is a difficulty for those who read this passage transcendentally, as does Schoplick (30), pp. 48–9, that the passage would be then arguing for a Form of Evil.

¹³⁰ Note the use of *λευκότης* (217d4, d5–6) and the use of *λευκαί* (217d3, d6, d8, 217e1). When the hairs only look white because of the dye, Plato writes *παρούσης λευκότητος*. When the hairs are white because of old age he writes *λευκοῦ παρουσίᾳ*.

¹³¹ cf. 220e6–222d2, esp. 221a2.

¹³³ cf. 221d3.

¹³² cf. 221d4–6.

¹³⁴ cf. 221d2–4.

earlier writings.¹³⁵ Nevertheless the *Lysis* has invented a new kind of explanation to account for why any particular individual selects what he does as precious to him, sketching out a means for understanding, say, why Lysis loves Menexenus, in terms of the role Menexenus plays in the structure of Lysis' soul.¹³⁶ The portrait of the soul developed in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* fills in this explanation in greater detail.¹³⁷

IV

By examining the antecedent conditions in the lover's soul and by asking the question *διὰ τί*, we come upon the existence of a basic desire which motivates the lover to cherish the various things he does. By examining the objects of his choice and by asking the question *ἔνεκά τοῦ*, we can define the character of that desire. In this way we can give a retrospective explanation for the lover's particular choice, by explaining the consequences such a choice has for the agent's basic desire. The *ἔνεκά τοῦ* locates the object of the lover's affection in a wider context, establishing the function such an object plays for the individual. Analogously, a father is said to value some wine (which is an antidote) for the sake of his son (who has been poisoned).¹³⁸ The value which the father places on the wine is to be explained by the supreme importance which the son plays for his father. And over the history of the individual one could reveal the structure of his various predilections against the foundation of this basic desire. In this way a theory of love could emerge which would explain the full range of human affection. But if the *ἔνεκά τοῦ* is to be properly explanatory, it need not – and often should not – characterize the intention which the agent gives for his actions.¹³⁹ After all, the agent may be deceiving himself. Plato argues, for example, that the reason why people cherish gold and silver is because of the purchasing power these metals enjoy, regardless of the fact that people might say that they cherish gold and silver intrinsically.¹⁴⁰ Consequently, the *ἔνεκά τοῦ* of a cherished object explains its functional value for the lover, not necessarily the value the lover himself takes it to have. In some cases, of course, the two will coincide. The father's behaviour demonstrates the supreme value he places on his son, and the father might know this as well. Yet the consumer's behaviour belies his impression that he loves gold and silver intrinsically.¹⁴¹

The *ἔνεκά τοῦ* characterizes what it is the agent really seeks, in the special sense of giving an explanation for the value which the agent places on something. Now Plato says that there is a single *πρῶτον φίλον* for the sake of which all the other things we cherish are cherished.¹⁴² There is supposed to be a single basic desire underlying all our wants and wishes; the *πρῶτον φίλον* defines the object of this desire. And Plato describes that for the sake of which all the *φίλα* are loved as an *ἀρχή*, an explanatory principle which is at the same time the paradigm of desire.¹⁴³ The kind of explanation

¹³⁵ I agree with Schoplick's detailed argument for dating the dialogue as transitional, perhaps contemporary with the *Gorgias*: cf. (30), pp. 67–85.

¹³⁶ Note the parallel between the two differing accounts of the initial condition of the lover (*κακόν*, biological desire) and the earlier theses of love between opposites or love between likes.

¹³⁷ cf. Irwin (23), pp. 166–7.

¹³⁸ cf. 219d5–220a1.

¹³⁹ Contrary to Annas (2), pp. 536–7; Irwin (23) pp. 51, 85, 167, 184; Schoplick (30), pp. 51–5; Versenyi (32), pp. 192–6; and Vlastos (33), pp. 6–11.

¹⁴⁰ 220a1–6.

¹⁴¹ The characterization of the cherished object which explains the reason why (*ἔνεκά τοῦ*) the agent cherished it takes on the grammatical form of the third person: for example, he loves the cloak because it reminds him of Simmias. This is a matter of judgement, not an avowal.

¹⁴² 219c5–d2.

¹⁴³ 219c6, d4–5.

which the *πρῶτον φίλον* affords is a teleological one, explaining why things are cherished by an agent in terms of their consequences for him, the ends they serve, their real value. Now teleological explanation need not be purposive, reflecting the conscious plan of an agent. One can, for example, explain the heart as functioning in order to circulate the blood. The *ἕνεκά του* in this case does not ascribe some conscious purpose to the heart. Rather it makes sense of the heart's contractions because of the circulation of blood achieved by those contractions.¹⁴⁴

The *πρῶτον φίλον* in the *Lysis* offers this kind of non-purposive teleological explanation; it describes the function served by the agent's loving what he does. And this is distinct from ascribing some conscious strategy to the agent, as he pursues various objects. The *πρῶτον φίλον* represents a theoretical strategy which organizes the agent's wants into a coherent pattern. It does not necessarily represent what the agent himself consciously strives for. Plato's analogy comparing the soul with the body is then all-important. The diseased body seeks medicine for the sake of regaining its health, and health explains the reason why the diseased body needs its medicine as well as why the patient goes to the physician. The *πρῶτον φίλον* explains why persons love the things they do, because it explains why something in the soul seeks out things it represents as its own, its *οἰκεία*. The theory of health and the theory of the *πρῶτον φίλον* each provide a universal paradigm whose application to particular cases varies appropriately.¹⁴⁵ At the same time both paradigms preserve a theoretical perspective open to further refinement. One needs to determine what constitutes the *πρῶτον φίλον* of the soul. The reports of the patient and the avowals of lovers provide at best additional information which needs to be organized and interpreted by the theory.

The relation between the *πρῶτον φίλον* and the *φίλα* men cherish has been misunderstood. On the one hand, some have compared the *πρῶτον φίλον* to Plato's Form of the Good.¹⁴⁶ They have detected a transcendental solution lurking in the *Lysis*, anticipating the argument of the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*. Yet in the *Lysis* Plato stresses the individual character of particular souls at the expense of the transcendental. The *πρῶτον φίλον* is relative to the construction of the soul. And depending on one's views of the relation between Forms and individuals in Plato's metaphysics, one must judge the status of the *πρῶτον φίλον* accordingly. At the same time those who have read the *Lysis* in terms of the theory of Forms have been correct to notice that the *πρῶτον φίλον* and the other *φίλα* are of a different logical order. It is not that the *πρῶτον φίλον* is one *φίλον* among others, some one preferred object among the myriad objects of human desire. The *πρῶτον φίλον* on the contrary explains why the objects men cherish are cherished at all. As an *ἀρχή* and *αἴτιον* the *πρῶτον φίλον* shares with Plato's Forms their explanatory role. Moreover, in providing a theory of ultimate value to explain what it is the soul seeks in the history of particular individuals' various attachments, the *Lysis* casts this theory in the form of a paradigm, the ultimate object of the basic human desire.

More recently, others have understood the relation between the *φίλα* men cherish and the *πρῶτον φίλον* as a means-end relation.¹⁴⁷ This suggestion is misleading, because

¹⁴⁴ cf. Wright (34), pp. 139–68 and the subsequent discussion by Boorse (6), pp. 70–86. Cf. also Wright (35), pp. 73–116.

¹⁴⁵ Versenyi (32), pp. 192–4, raised the possibility of multiple *πρῶτα φίλα* relative to different individual needs. And one might find support for this view in the phrase at 220a4: *ὁ ἄν φανῇ ὄν*. But this view is clearly denied at 220b1–3: *φίλον δὲ τῷ ὄντι κινδυνεύει ἐκείνο αὐτὸ εἶναι, εἰς ὃ πᾶσαι αὐταὶ αἱ λεγόμεναι φιλῖαι τελευτῶσιν*.

¹⁴⁶ For example, Schoplick (30), pp. 54–5.

¹⁴⁷ cf. Owen (26), pp. 182–3 and Irwin (23), pp. 82–6.

it represents the *πρῶτον φίλον* as the conscious purpose of the agent, and this leads to a number of obvious absurdities. For instance, it would follow that 'when we seem to want a subordinate object chosen for the sake of something else, and appear to be concerned about it, our concern is really for the primary object, or final good'.¹⁴⁸ This interpretation also commits the *Lysis* to the view that 'there is a single end for all desires' – in the sense that the conscious intention behind any and all desire would always be the same, so that every agent would be single-minded throughout his lifetime.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, it is evident from Plato's own examples that the subordinate *φίλα* are not constituent elements of the *πρῶτον φίλον*.¹⁵⁰ Accordingly, the *Lysis* might seem to suggest the general principle: 'nothing chosen for the sake of something else is chosen for its own sake'.¹⁵¹

The means-end relation represents a rational, wilful strategy. It ascribes a conscious end-in-view to an agent, where the means he selects to achieve that goal are themselves strictly without value to the agent. It is inappropriate to apply such a model to the *ἔνεκά του* in the *Lysis*. Plato does state that the subordinate goods are *φίλα* in name only, in contrast to the *πρῶτον φίλον* which is truly *φίλον*.¹⁵² But this is not a claim about what interests a person, what suits his purpose. Rather, it is a claim about what is in a person's interest, what suits his nature. Plato is quite willing to admit that men consciously desire all sorts of things. What makes these objects of desire subordinate and *φίλα* in name only is not that they are mere devices to fulfil some conscious ulterior motive on the part of the agents. Indeed these objects of desire are genuine enough. But as objects of desire these *φίλα* in name only fail to represent what motivates the agent to desire what he does. They stand in need of further explanation. Consider once again the case of the poisoned son:

Do you mean to say, then, that he sets an equal value on both, on a cup of earthenware and his own son, or on three half-pints of wine and his son? Or is it like this: everything like this which is worthwhile is sought out not for those things which are procured for the sake of another but for that for the sake of which all such things are procured.¹⁵³

The *ἔνεκά του* represents an analysis of human desire, not a portrait of some ulterior motive, 'the determinate end everyone pursues'.¹⁵⁴ After all, the father values the cup and the wine; it is just that their value is derived from his desire to save his son. In the same way any fetish is a genuine object of desire, although a consequence of a more basic desire which can explain the fetish for what it is. Such a case has nothing in common with opening a door to get into one's apartment, where the door is only a means and nothing more.

Although Plato says that the subordinate goods are *φίλα* in name only, he does not say that they are good in name only. The *Lysis* does not in fact make the claim that 'nothing contributing to another good is a good in itself'.¹⁵⁵ Had Plato made such a claim it would indeed follow that 'no person's interests can be valued for their own sake, but only for the sake of some separate good... that someone needs subordinate objects of love only until he has achieved the final good, and then needs them no longer'.¹⁵⁶ The *πρῶτον φίλον* explains the source of value of the things men cherish. It does not thereby deny their value. People set their hearts on all sorts of things. *Lysis*

¹⁴⁸ Irwin (23), pp. 51–2.

¹⁴⁹ Irwin (23), pp. 51–2; cf. Annas (2), p. 538.

¹⁵⁰ cf. Irwin (23), pp. 82–6, 166–7.

¹⁵¹ Irwin (23), pp. xv and 85.

¹⁵² cf. 220a6–b3, 219d1–2.

¹⁵³ 219e5–220a1: (e7–a1) *πάσα ἡ τοιαύτη σπουδὴ οὐκ ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐστὶν ἐσπουδασμένη, ἐπὶ τοῖς ἔνεκά του παρασκευαζομένοις, ἀλλ' ἐπ' ἐκείνῳ οὐ ἔνεκα πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα παρασκευάζεται.*

¹⁵⁴ Irwin (23), p. 86.

¹⁵⁵ Irwin (23), pp. xv and 85.

¹⁵⁶ Irwin (23), p. 99. Cf. Vlastos (33), p. 9.

wants to race chariots; the consumer wants his gold. And then there is the full range of human relations, from family and friends to lovers. Far from denying the variety and authenticity of human affection, Plato sets out to explain it. Each and every thing we cherish is an expression of a basic human desire searching time and again for its good, the *πρῶτον φίλον*. And when we place our affection on a particular person or a particular object, we may or may not be successful in our selection, so that the thing we cherish coincides at least for the time being with what it is our soul needs. When we are successful the *πρῶτον φίλον* is instantiated, as it were, in the object of our choice. But as long as we remain ignorant of what it is that suits our nature (*φύσει πῃ οἰκεῖοι*) we run the risk of continual frustration as we set our hearts (like poor Hippothales) on fictional, imagined objects which bring us not a step closer to satisfaction. In such cases we confuse what we consciously want with what we actually need, trapped by ignorance and false belief in our imaginations.¹⁵⁷ And we also run the risk of ignoring those objects of affection which really will fulfil our nature. In this way there remains a constant conflict between the value and utility which our inclinations project on the things we cherish and the actual value such objects offer our souls. Now Plato suggests that ultimately what gives value to what we cherish does so because of what we are. Accordingly, the *Lysis* combines two major themes of Platonic philosophy: that the proper conduct of our lives is a question of knowledge and that understanding reality is our only way of understanding appearances. These two themes are nicely encapsulated in the concept of *οἰκεῖον*. 'What is one's own' points in both directions at once, namely what belongs to us and what is rightfully ours. And so Plato ends with the tradition with which he began: man loves his own.*

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¹⁵⁷ cf. 219d2–5: τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν ὃ λέγω, μὴ ἡμᾶς τᾶλλα πάντα ᾧ εἵπομεν ἐκείνου ἕνεκα φίλα εἶναι, ὥσπερ εἶδωλα ἅττα ὄντα αὐτοῦ ἑξαπατᾶ, ἥ δ' ἐκείνο τὸ πρῶτον, ὃ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐστὶ φίλον.

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