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Socrates as Eros: the Models of *erastēs* in Plato's *Symposium*

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Abstract

In the *Symposium*, Plato presents six speakers praising the god Eros and his impact on human life. In this essay, I propose that each speaker describes a particular model of *erastēs* or *erōmenos*, which directly corresponds to the speaker's own social status and is present in Athens of the Vth and IVth B.C. At the banquet an unofficial contest unfolds among the speakers regarding the most prominent and superior model of *erastēs* in classical Athens. In Socrates' speech, Plato introduces a new model of *erastēs* in the city, the philosopher-*erastēs*. Plato intends to demonstrate the superiority of the philosopher-*erastēs* in comparison to the other models of *erastēs*. As it becomes evident in Alcibiades' speech, Socrates himself is the philosopher-*erastēs* in the city, who surpasses the other models of *erastēs* by implanting *aporia* in the Athenian people and leading them to self-consciousness through his philosophical *logoi*. In the conclusion of my essay, I argue that Plato's intention in the *Symposium* is to present Socrates as the embodiment of Eros, who turns everyone into a lover of true Beauty and redirects them to their inner self.

1. Introduction

The guests have already arrived; Aristodemus, Socrates' company at the banquet and Apollodorus' main source for what happened that night in Agathon's house, has taken a seat next to the doctor Eryximachus (175a4-5) and the host has his domestic *paides* serve his guests (175b4-c1), when Socrates, after a long time standing before the neighbor's threshold, enters Agathon's house and is prompted to lie down next to him, a request Agathon himself makes intending to take part in Socrates' wisdom by touch (175c4-d2). Many Stephanus pages below, we read that Alcibiades attempted to seduce Socrates several times, considering that he would gain philosopher's wisdom through intercourse, but his effort came to a failure because of Socrates' temperance (217a2-219d2). On that score, Alcibiades warns Agathon not to be deceived by Socrates' pretense to be a lover, as he himself and others had, whereas Socrates behaves more like a beloved boy (222a7-b7). Socrates himself doubts whether wisdom is transmitted from one to another by touch, or maybe by exchange of bodily liquids, as Alcibiades expects, like water flowing through wool from the fuller cup into the emptier (175d3-7). Yet Agathon and Alcibiades, and many others, are charmed by Socrates' wisdom and they are turned into his *erastai*.

Erōs is defined by Socrates as the desire for what one lacks (200e2-5) or for holding the desirable object over time (200b4-d7). The object of love, thus, functions as the base on which the model of *erastēs* is formed. Of course, Plato does not expect us to perceive Alcibiades and Agathon or any admirer of Socrates as aspiring philosopher-lovers, even though they all wish to receive a portion of Socrates' wisdom.[1] However, it is implausible that Plato unwittingly presents Socrates' wisdom as an object of desire at the opening and closing of the banquet, not only for Alcibiades and Agathon, but for the Athenian people in general.

In the *Symposium* there is a contest unfolding concerning the superior model of *erōs* in the Athenian society; six speeches are recorded and expected to be evaluated as praises in favor of the god Eros, the most neglected by the authors, as Phaedrus complains (177a1-c5). In my essay, I put forward that each speaker designs a specific model of *erastēs* or *erōmenos*, which is prominent in the culture of classical Athens, and intends his model to be endorsed as superior and worthy of imitation by his fellow citizens.[2] Each account of Eros coincides with the speaker's own image (Arieti 1991: 107), resulting in a self-referential dimension to the speeches (Sheffield 2006: 15) in the sense that they all present the benefits that the *erastēs* or *erōmenos* himself gains from Eros, as Agathon himself remarks on (194e5-195a1). I shall argue that Socrates' model of *erastēs* only surpasses that narrow self-referential framework by having a beneficial role for all Athenian citizens and that his superiority depends on the wisdom and the self-consciousness resulting from the philosophical *erōs*. On that ground it becomes evident why Socrates' wisdom is desirable for his company.

2. The models of *erastēs* in classical Athens

The praise of Eros begins with Phaedrus who is the father of the discourse and holds the first seat at the banquet (177d4-5). Phaedrus is known to us from Platonic texts, in which his great interest in rhetoric and sophistry is often remarked on.[3] That interest may also be detected in his praise of Eros in the *Symposium*. Phaedrus' encomium is supposed to stand as a typical model of its kind. In his speech the main rhetorical rules for encomia are maintained. He begins by stressing the oldness and ancestry of Eros (178a6-9). To enforce his statement, Phaedrus quotes a few lines from Hesiod's and Parmenides' poems about Eros' lineage (178a9-c2), who, including Acusilaus, are considered as specialists in divine genealogy (Dover 1980: 90) (178b2-3). Hereupon, Phaedrus refers to the benefits of Eros in a pederastic context. As Phaedrus puts it, the greater benefit for the beloved boy is a virtuous lover, and for the lover the beloved boy (178c3-5), since both are encouraged to avoid shameful actions and pursue the brave and noble ones because of the possibility of being humiliated before the eyes of their companion (178d1-e3), and it is on that ground that a person and a city achieve great things (178d2-4). Here, Phaedrus sounds like an orator, whose main interest is to give prominence to the advantages of *erōs* and to convince his audience about the validity of his

arguments. He underlines the pedagogical role of pederasty in relation to the moral configuration of the individual. He continues by claiming that, if there was ever a community consisting of lovers and beloveds, it would become evident that all its members would be occupied with the acquisition of virtue (178e3-179a5). Thus, the pederastic *erōs* does not benefit the individual more than it contributes to the public interest.

His oratorical account concludes with a reference to legendary examples of humans in love, viz. Alcestis, Orpheus, and Achilles (179b4-180b5). To Phaedrus, a person in love is inspired by god and pursues virtue (179a7-8), and thus they become capable of the bravest action, i.e. self-sacrifice. Alcestis and Achilles represent an ideal model of *erōmenos*, whose pure love for their lovers surpasses the love for their lives, while Orpheus' mythical paradigm is distorted, so the hero is presented as a counterexample of a lover. The rhetorical consideration of *erōs* is proven by the fact that the worthy beloved and the unworthy lover are designed as examples for imitation or avoidance, respectively. Phaedrus' intention is to indicate that the beloved boy imitates willingly his lover's virtuous example, and he is destined to take his place in the city as an equally virtuous man. In any case, the lover is regarded as more divine in comparison with the beloved, because he is inspired by the god Eros (180b3-4).

To be accurate, Phaedrus' perspective of Eros is not easily clarified. Both lover and beloved are exalted resulting in confusion of his actual perspective. However, even though the lover is considered god-inspired, it is the beloved who is ready to die for love.[4] In Phaedrus' speech there may be hints of a beloved turned to a lover, a point of transition from one state to another. In this case, Phaedrus' perspective is the one of an *erōmenos*.[5] Taken for granted that in the *Symposium* each speaker describes Eros based on his own image, it may be conjectured that Phaedrus represents a model of a beloved, common in classical Athens. As a model of *erōmenos*, he appears to admire the lovers as inspirers of morality; moreover, he presents an example of a beloved worthy enough to inspire bravery and courage to his audience and, hence, prepared to replace his own *erastēs* in politics and the Assembly. Yet, in its core, Phaedrus' consideration of *erōs* is fittingly connected with the rhetorical and sophistic character of his account in the sense that in both cases the subjects involved in a pederastic relationship are morally developed. In this case, Phaedrus' praise of Eros should be seen more as a rhetorical exercise than a genuine exercise of virtue.

In contrast to Phaedrus' occasion, in Pausanias' speech the model of *erastēs* described is clearly his own image. In his speech the typical pederastic lover is outlined. Pausanias represents the lover of *paidika*, a figure mostly present in aristocratic cycles in classical Athens, given that his erotic association with Agathon is known among the symposiasts and, as it seems, to Athenian citizens in general (193b6-c2).[6] However, things are more complicated in Pausanias' account of Eros than it seems. His consideration of pederasty implies a great awareness of the subject and its problematic aspects. On that purpose, Pausanias starts his account by stressing that it is not each aspect of *erōs* that should be praised and, so, he is making a crucial and necessary distinction of Eros between heavenly and vulgar, and he contends that it is only the first one which is worthy of praise. In contrast to vulgar *erōs*, which is the kind of love men have for women or immature boys according to the subdivision in the case of pederastic *erōs*, focusing on the beloved's body rather than his soul and pursuing pleasure (181a7-c2), as Pausanias puts it, the heavenly *erōs* is the love strictly towards to males, and the ethical and intellectual forming of the beloved boy is defined as its main criterion (181c2-182a6). For Pausanias as heavenly can only be regarded the pederastic love given that the motives of the lover and the beloved boy are pure. It is more than evident that Pausanias is interested in defending the custom of pederasty in Athens.[7] On that ground, he comments on the way the law for pederasty has been established in Athens and in other Greek cities (182a7-185b5). As his juristic investigation of pederasty points out, the law in Athens, and Sparta, is more complex in comparison to Elis and Boeotia, where the pederasty is allowed without strict rules because of the incapability of the people to convince the rest of the citizens of its benefits (182b1-6), or Ionia and in other barbaric cities, where pederasty next to philosophy as well as gymnastics is prohibited and is regarded as a threat for tyrants due to the strong bonds created among the citizens (182b6-d2). The complexity of the Athe-

nian law for pederasty, as Pausanias detects it, lies in the fact that, though the law encourages the lover to pursue the beloved boy, fathers charge *paidagōgoi* with the protection of their sons from the aspiring lovers by virtue of those lovers who care only for the satisfaction of their sexual appetites (182d5-183d3).[8]

The distinction of *erōs* between noble and mean, and the juristic consideration of the pederastic law in Athens and in other cities, serve Pausanias' main interest to regain a better treatment of that aristocratic custom on behalf of pederastic lovers in classical Athens. On that score, Pausanias proposes a new framework for pederasty, according to which the Athenian law will guarantee the required ethical background on which a pederastic relationship should be built (183d3-184b5); that ethical background lies in the investigation of the motives which *erastēs* as well as *erōmenos* have, so their erotic association will be discouraged in the case they covet other's side wealth or power and will be allowed, if they both aim at virtue (184b5-185b5). In that sense, the model of *erastēs* outlined in Pausanias' speech is not just the pederastic lover, but first, as his interest in the domain of legislation indicates, reflects the lover of the Athenian law and custom in general.

A different model of *erastēs* we find in Eryximachus' speech. Eryximachus, as it is indicated from the very first moment he emerges (176c1-d4), is a doctor and, we may assume, represents the typical scientist in classical Athens. His figure has often been interpreted as a pedant or a caricature of the physician because of the simple medical advice he gives about drinking (176c8-d2) and Aristophanes' hiccups (185c4-e5).[9] Yet Eryximachus' account of Eros provides a great variety of images of *erastēs* of crafts and sciences present in the Athenian culture of the V and IV century B.C. Eryximachus claims that there are two kinds of *erōs*, as Pausanias did; starting from medicine, he makes a distinction between *erōs* for healthy bodies, which is inferred to be *good*, and *erōs* for unhealthy ones, which is *bad* (186b2-c5). As an expert in medicine is regarded the one who can detect the kind of *erōs* existing in the human body and, if need be, restoring the love and harmony among the opposites (e.g. hot and cold, etc.) in it (186c5-e3). The human body, as each physical body to Eryximachus, is composed of opposites and the dominance of one opposite over the other entails disorder to the whole body. Hence, the *erastēs* of medical science is the one who reconciles the opposites and restores the harmony in the human body. But Eros is not confined to the narrow framework of human activity; its power is expanded to all contents of the physical world, i.e. animals, plants, and gods (185e6-186b2). In that sense, Eros is dominant over all crafts and sciences, such as gymnastics and farming (187a1), music (187a1-d4), astronomy (188a1-b6) and divination (188b6-d3), functioning as a unifying agent of the opposite qualities in each field. Therefore, according to Eryximachus' account of Eros, as *erastēs* may be considered each man who is an expert in any craft or science and, as such, able to restore order or detect disorder in any field.

To Eryximachus *erōs* is not just a moral affair, as Phaedrus and Pausanias pointed out, but it has a central role all over reality. It is extended from human's biological structure to the heavenly construction and metaphysics. The model of *erastēs* portrayed in Eryximachus' speech includes a variety of different kinds of lovers, such as the lover of music, and so forth. In a word, Eryximachus sketches the *erastēs* of crafts and sciences with whom many Athenian citizens of the V and IV century B.C. might be identified.

Familiar to the Athenian citizens may be the model of *erastēs* outlined in Aristophanes' speech. Scholars have often been surprised by the fact that Plato put such a wonderful myth in Aristophanes' mouth (Hunter 2004: 60). Aristophanes narrates an aetiological myth for the birth of *erōs* as a sentiment after the bifurcation humankind suffered (Manuwald 2012: 92) having tried to surpass the Olympian gods and take their place in the government of the world, as Titans had (189d6-191c8). According to Aristophanes' myth, a human's primeval form was a union of two human beings, consisting of either two males, either two females or a male and a female. Zeus divided that superhuman kind into two parts as a punishment for their impiety, and from then on humans are condemned to be incomplete and search for their lost other half. Then, Eros appears as the healer and the most philanthropist of the gods and contributes to the unifying of the divided parts by bringing humans as close as possible to their primeval form, and hence to *eudaimonia* (189c8-d3).

It is striking that Aristophanes' comic mood, as established in the hiccups scene, is suddenly aban-

doned and his tone becomes remarkably severe; the man who is used to ridiculing his interlocutors, is now afraid of being ridiculed (189b3-7, 193d7-e1).[10] He prompts his audience to be reverent and honor the gods (193a3-b6, 193d2-4), especially Eros, the healer of human suffering, to preserve their current form and not suffer a second division (190d4-6, 193a1-7). Piety towards the gods is the central point of Aristophanes' speech. He emphasizes the pious character of the lover as a prerequisite for any relationship. On piety and religiousness Aristophanes establishes the love for the individual and defends pederasty in Athens (191e6-192e9). In Aristophanes' speech the *erastēs* of piety and religious custom is portrayed, a model with a strong presence in classical Athens. Although, as he remarks, even at that moment Eros is falling short of the proper worship and his own sanctuaries (189c4-8), whilst the view of the incision recalls the first *pathos* of humankind (190e2-5).

To figure out the model sketched in Agathon's speech, we must keep in mind his relationship with Pausanias. Pederasty is the constant background in his praise of Eros, though Agathon makes no clear reference to that custom, perhaps owing to his status as *erōmenos*. However, the beloved's perspective is betrayed in the two sections of Agathon's speech: Eros' outer appearance (195a5-196b3), and the virtues acquired through *erōs* (196b4-197b9). As far as Eros' appearance is concerned, the god bears a great resemblance to Agathon himself: he is young (195a8, 195c1) and beautiful (195a7, 196a4-6), delicate (195c6-196a1), living in flowery fields (196b2-3; cf. 212e-213b) etc.[11] The virtues, which *erōs* provides, are justice (196b6-7), moderation (196c3-8), courage (196c8-d4) and wisdom (196d6-197b3); all contributing to the formation of the moral character of the beloved, as Pausanias puts forward in order to defend the custom of pederasty. There is a coincidence between Agathon's and Pausanias' view of *erōs*; both attribute to *erōs* a pedagogical role, which is explained through their own pederastic bond. The features Agathon attributes to Eros are reminiscent of the beauty of a beloved boy, on the one hand, and his moral and political development into the democratic society through a pederastic relationship, on the other hand. Below, Agathon describes Eros as a *wise teacher* of any creation or productive activity, such as poetry (196d6-e6), procreation (196e6-197a3), and craftsmanship (197a3-b3), just as Pausanias did defending the moral background of the pederastic law in Athens (184d3-e4). Agathon presents Eros as an object motivating desire and, at the same time, as a mentor. This approach to *erōs* mirrors a beloved boy behind. Like Agathon, Eros is desirable, a feature that befits the self-sufficiency of an *erōmenos* (Nussbaum 1986: 188), not the longing of an *erastēs*. In this regard, Agathon's account of Eros is a projection of his own self (Hunter 2004: 71, 76). Agathon speaks on behalf of the *erōmenoi* in classical Athens and reveals their view of the subject of love.

As many commentators have noted, each speech advances our conception of *erōs*. Taken together, the first five speeches seem to fashion a kind of ladder, whose summit will be revealed at Socrates' praise of Eros. It might be assumed that in each stage of Diotima's ladder, the philosopher-lover encounters a specific model of *erastēs* of the previous speakers and embraces his knowledge to the extent that it is useful for his own moral and intellectual development. The philosopher-lover is the only one who has this privilege, and it becomes apparent in the way he acts in relation to his fellow citizens.

What we see so far is an unofficial contest unfolding among the speakers. By presenting Eros as their own image, they are all confined to a self-referential consideration of love; each speaker represents a small group of citizens in classical Athens and gives prominence to their own interests. Phaedrus and Pausanias stand for the morality of individuals bound with a pederastric relationship; Eryximachus focuses on the cosmic activity of Eros and his contribution to the development of scientific knowledge; Aristophanes highlights the piety as a fundamental feature of every relation between individuals or towards the gods; and Agathon advocates the creating power of Eros. In this regard, they are all interested in establishing their own model of *erōs* as superior in comparison with the model of the others. In all early speeches, Eros manifests himself to contribute only to the self-improvement of the members belonging to a particular social group.[12] Socrates challenges this prospect by showing that the philosopher-*erastēs* benefits the Athenian citizens altogether; as I shall point out, the superiority of Socratic model of *erōs* is owed to its widespread impact on his contemporaries. How does the philosopher-lover manage to stand

out from the rest and benefit Athens overall?

3.The philosopher-erastēs

In the contest unfolding at the banquet Socrates takes part too. He designs a unique model of *erastēs*, aspiring to surpass all other *erastai* in Athens and stand as the ideal model for all citizens. Socrates' model is no other than the philosopher-lover. According to Diotima, Socrates' veneer[13] or a fictitious figure serving to articulate the Platonic theory of Forms,[14] Eros is neither a god, given that gods are beautiful, good, and wise, nor a mortal, but he stands between gods and men, as well as between knowledge and ignorance (202a2-10); he is an intermediate, binding divine and human realm by delivering prayers and sacrifices to the gods, rewards and orders to men (202e3-203a4); Eros is counted among *daimones*, a category of minor deities in ancient Greek religion,[15] and is called *daimon megas* by Diotima (202d13). The man who follows Diotima's teaching is named *daimonios anēr* in turn (203a4-5), since he shares Eros' nature, if not his outer appearance as well! The budding *erastēs* absorbs Eros' *aporia* and is identified with the philosopher, who realizes his own deficiencies and stands between wisdom and ignorance as well (204a1-b5).

In contrast to the other *erastai*, Socrates presents the philosopher-lover as a *pupil*, seeking wisdom all the time and giving birth to *logoi* for virtue (208e5-209c2, 210a7-8, 210c1-3), until he reaches his erotic end, which is the Beauty itself (210e1-212a7), and brings forth philosophical ideas and great *logoi* (210d3-e1). The differentiation of the philosopher-*erastēs* from the other *erastai* lies not only in the object of his desire but also in the ascending procedure he follows; according to Diotima, the philosopher-*erastēs* is prompted to be apprenticed to a mentor (210a6-7, 210e2-3), who protects him from being attached to bodily beauty and helps him look towards spiritual ends. Climbing the erotic ladder, the philosopher-lover becomes aware of every stage of *erōs*[16] and acquaints himself with each aspect of *erōs* in the city, which means he knows every single model of *erastēs*, as they have been sketched by now; in that way, the philosopher-*erastēs* manages to affect beneficially the Athenian people by delivering *logoi*, which make them seek virtue and lead them closest to immortality, if this is possible for humankind at all (207c8-208b6). In that sense, Socrates' model of *erastēs* is certainly unique and superior to others.

Socrates represents the model of the philosopher-*erastēs* in Athens. Socrates' appearance and demeanor, as adumbrated by Alcibiades and they are historically known, bear a great resemblance to the description of Eros' image and nature in Socrates' speech, as many scholars have noted.[17] Like Eros, Socrates is barefoot (220b6), rough at look (215a6-b6), and poor; concerning his character, he is courageous (219d5, 220d5-221c1), a lover of wisdom and virtue, spending his lifetime philosophizing (175a7-9, 220c1-d5), having endurance at cold (220a6-c1), detesting wealth (219e1-3) and whatnot. Further, Alcibiades likens Socrates to the Sileni statues,[18] which are sold in agora and contained a smaller statue of an Olympian god inside them (215a4-b3, 216c7-217a2),[19] and to satyr Marsyas (215b3-4), whose musical abilities charm whoever listening to his flute (215c1-6). They both belong to the class of *daimones* (Sheffield 2001: 204). Marsyas shares the same intermediate status with Eros (215c3-6); thus, in the light of Alcibiades' simile, Socrates partakes also in this intermediate status and, as such, he is characterized as *daimonios anēr* (219b7-c1). Therefore, Socrates, or else the philosopher-*erastēs*, works in the city as *daimon* Eros, namely as a mediator who connects his fellow citizens with the Beauty itself, just as it is expected from the released prisoner to do in the allegory of the cave in the *Republic*. Socrates redirects the humble desires of his fellow citizens and makes them pursue wisdom and virtue. He achieves it by the *logoi* or discourses with the Athenian citizens. In this regard, the philosopher-*erastēs* is opposed to all other *erastai*, since his erotic end, the view of the Beauty itself, contributes to the self-improvement of the whole Athenian citizens, not merely to a small group or community in Athens. In that sense, philosophical *erōs* is not ego-centric or self-referential, as many scholars suggest.[20]

Alcibiades describes vividly the way Socratic *logoi* work (215a4-222b7). Socrates like Eros implants *aporia* in anyone with whom he associates or converses.[21] In *Meno* Socrates is likened to the torpedo seafish, which benumbs anyone who touches it, implying how Socratic *aporia* is spread over his interlocutors (80a4-b8). In such a way, Socrates' pupils or interloc-

utors are captured by his *logoi* and are filled with *aporia*. The moral influence that Socratic *logoi* have over Athenian citizens becomes apparent in Alcibiades' example. At first, Alcibiades follows accurately the Socratic instructions of composing an encomium; he insists on telling the truth about the character and the virtues of Socrates (214e10-215a1, 216a2, 217b2-3, 219c2, 220e2-4), as Socrates himself did before by claiming that the principle of the encomiastic method is to tell the truth (198d3-7, 199a6-b5), not to exploit rhetorical formulas in order to exaggerate the attributes of the praised object (198d7-e2), as Agathon did imitating the Gorgian way (198c1-5). Searching the truth, then, is a hint of Socrates' moral impact on his companion. Furthermore, Alcibiades is aware of his own *aporia*, confessing his intense desire for fame and glory (216b3-5) and feeling shame about his passions (216a8-b3, 216b5-6). Socratic *logoi* affect Alcibiades' view of life, making him realize his moral deficiencies. Yet Alcibiades loses his direction in the absence of Socrates. As Alcibiades himself attests, Socratic *logoi* have such an influence upon the souls of his audience regardless of gender or age (215d1-6) that surpasses even Pericles' rhetoric (215e4-216a2). As I suggested, Socrates essentially redirects anyone into their inner self. For instance, even though Alcibiades never turns to a philosopher-lover, since he continues to pursue power, glory, and sexual pleasure as well, he gets morally improved, since his longing for Socrates' wisdom—even if it is expressed as a bodily desire—has a positive result: it is leading Alcibiades to self-consciousness, as he himself affirms (216a4-6).

On the contrary, Aristodemus and Apollodorus appear to follow the Socratic way of life successfully. Aristodemus is barefoot (173b1-4), and he is calling himself *phaulos* next to wise Agathon, when Socrates invites him to Agathon's feast (174c5-7), exactly as Socrates does (175e1-6). Apollodorus, on the other hand, always defames himself and everyone else except Socrates (173d4-10), such as Socrates regards himself as worthless (219a1-2). Based on the details the Platonic text provides, Aristodemus and Apollodorus attempt to follow the Socratic way of life, which presupposes that they both have realized their *aporia*. In the Socratic context, *aporia* is the awareness of oneself deficiencies, foremost moral and intellectual; as such, *aporia* equates to self-consciousness. Declaring himself to be an expert in matters of love then (177d7-e3, 198d1-2),[22] Socrates essentially affirms that he is always in a state of *aporia* and searches constantly the truth.

The sentiment of *aporia*, which Socrates' interlocutors experience, is the strongest evidence of Socrates' coincidence with Eros. Alcibiades' love symptoms betray Plato's intention to present Socrates as the embodiment of *daimon* Eros in the *Symposium*.[23] The seduction scene is representative (217a2-219d2). Alcibiades is confused and construes his intense desire for Socrates' wisdom as a sexual need, and, as such, he is plotting to have intercourse with the philosopher, accusing him of pretending to be a lover, while he is in fact a hidden beloved (222b3-4).[24] Socrates personifies Eros in Athens, and Eros, as Diotima puts it, is a lover, not a beloved (204c1-6). Hence, Socrates, as the personification of Eros, implants *aporia* in the citizens of Athens and makes them wonder about what they already know and search the truth. In that sense, Socrates' disciples and interlocutors are becoming *erastai*; that is what happens to Alcibiades. Yet, only a few can grasp divine Beauty (211e3). As a result, the novice *erastai* are directed to Socrates' wisdom as a guide to acquire virtue and achieve moral and intellectual development, and, in that way, Socrates becomes an object of desire for anyone with whom he associates, e.g. Agathon.[25] Xenophon affirms Socrates' captivating power. In *Memorabilia* Xenophon narrates Socrates' visit to Theodote, a woman who earns her income by pleasing her friends (3.11.4-5). Socrates is illustrated as an admirer of Theodote's famous beauty, though at the end there is an exchange of the roles between Socrates and Theodote. Socrates' talk power enchants Theodote, so that she asks for his friendship, while Socrates plays hard to get with her (3.11.15-18). Thus, Socrates becomes an object of desire by virtue of his *logoi*.[26] Socrates is desirable for all Athenian people because of his inner beauty, which undoubtedly originates from the transcendent views of the philosopher.

Hence, Socrates' desirability is explained only if he is seen as the embodiment of Eros, who instantiates in the city of Athens the true Beauty once viewed and shares the experience of that transcendent view by bringing forth philosophical *logoi*, which stimulate the intellect of the citizens and make them look upward. If his *logoi* are opened up and they are thor-

oughly investigated, it becomes apparent that they are divine and contain *agalmata aretēs* (222a1-6).[27] If Socrates himself is opened, then a soul full of *sō-phrosynē* would be discovered (216d6-7).[28] Alcibiades says that he had viewed Socrates' hidden *agalmata* once and describes them as divine, gold, gorgeous and marvelous (216e5-217a2). These *agalmata aretēs* are Socrates' bravery, moderation, love for wisdom, and so forth. Of course, Socrates' virtues do not differ from Eros' virtues. In this regard, we are justified to suppose that the *daimonios anēr* walking around the streets of Athens, implanting *aporia* in its fellow citizens and bringing them closer to the truth and the divine, is Socrates as the personified Eros. For Alcibiades the view of inner Socrates is reminiscent of the Sileni statues sculpted in such a way as to contain a second god statue inside. I would envisage only one deity hidden in Socrates, and that deity is Eros!

Notes

[1] Reid (2017: 45-46) has a different view of Agathon, arguing that he has the proper soul for philosophy in contrast to Alcibiades.

[2] As Bury (1932: lvii) points out, the first five speakers represent a variety of human types and articulate various opinions on the subject of love existing in the classical period. See also Rowe 1998: 9.

[3] For Phaedrus' interest in rhetoric see *Phdr*. 227d6-228c5. In *Protagoras* (315b9-c7) we find Phaedrus together with Eryximachus at Callias' house attending the sophist Hippias lecturing on nature and astronomical stuff.

[4] For the Greeks *erōs* was a one-sided feeling, fitting only for *erastēs*, the admirer or pursuer of a young man or woman, as Davidson 2007: 23-32 notes, while an *erōmenos* or a *pais* was expected to experience the sentiment of *philia*; see also Younger 2005: 92; for a different approach see Johns 1982: 101.

[5] Hyland (1965: 35) argues that Eryximachus was the lover of Phaedrus, but I have not found textual evidence.

[6] Pausanias' erotic association with Agathon is firstly mentioned at *Protagoras* (315d6-e3), where it is implied that their relationship is not yet widely known, since Socrates meets Agathon for the first time, calling him *μειράκιον*.

[7] For a historical analysis of pederasty based on Pausanias' speech in the Platonic *Symposium* see Davidson 2007: 418-423.

[8] For the origins of pederasty and its treatment in Athens see Dover 1964.

[9] This interpretation was dominant among the scholars of the first half of the 20th century, when Edelstein (1945) offered a different evaluation of Eryximachus' character. Nonetheless, Trivigno (2017) has relived the interpretation of Eryximachus as a caricature of a pedant.

[10] Obdrzalek (2017: 70-78) characterizes Aristophanes' approach to *erōs* tragic by virtue of its pessimistic content, since in fact human never achieves completeness through *erōs*.

[11] On the beloved's appearance see Phaedrus' account of Achilles (180a4-7); cf. Diotima's denial of Eros as a beautiful *erōmenos* (204c1-6).

[12] Sheffield (2006: 27-28) suggests that, taken together, the five speeches mirror the role of *erōs* in the good life.

[13] For Diotima as Socrates' veneer see Bury 1932: xxxix; Rowe 1998: 173; Prior 2006: 148-152.

[14] For Diotima as device for the articulation of the Platonic theory of Forms see Dover 1980: 137.

[15] For *daimones* in ancient Greek religion see Nilsson 1949: 165-171; Burkert 1985: 179-181; for *daimones* in Plato's thought see Kidd 1995: 219-221; Mikalson 2010: 22-27.

[16] For Socrates in all stages of Diotima's ladder see Blondell 2006: 162-178.

[17] See Bury 1932: lx-lxii; Dover 1980: 164; Osborne 1996: 93-101; Sheffield 2001: 198, 205-206; Hadot 2002: 42-50; Hunter 2004: 87; Blondell 2006: 176; Reeve 2006: 138; Sheffield 2006: 187-188.

[18] For Socrates' simile with Silenus see also Xen. *Symp*. 4.19, 5.7.

[19] For the Sileni statues sold in ancient agora see Dover 1980: 166.

[20] Commentators of Platonic love theory argue that the philosophical *erōs* is self-centered because of its distant character, since the philosopher cares only for the view of the Beauty itself and carries no true feelings for the individual. For instance, Vlastos (1999: 153-157) (esp. 156) claims that the Platonic *erōs* leaves no room for genuine love for the individual, but the individual functions as a springboard to the contemplation of the Beauty itself. Gagarin (1977) suggests that Socrates fails to affect positively his pupils, namely to contribute to their moral configuration, because of his pretense of ignorance and his superiority, i.e. to cold, which are perceived as scorn and mockery by his fellows. For the scholars supporting the interpretation of the self-centered character of Platonic love see Schindler (2007: 201-202), who though challenges the ego-centric view of Platonic *erōs*.

[21] For Socrates causing *aporia* to his interlocutors see *Euthphr*. 11b, *Tht*. 149a.

[22] See also *Lys*. 204b5-c2, *Phdr*. 257a6-9.

[23] For Alcibiades' love symptoms see 215e2-3, 215e6-216a2, 216a4-6, 216c1-3, 219d6-e1, 217b4-5, 217c7-8, 217d3, 219b3-c2, and 219e3-5.

[24] According to Edmonds III 2000, Socrates' role reversal from lover to beloved is easily understood considering Socrates' simile with a midwife in *Theaetetus*. Edmonds III suggests that Socrates as a beloved assists his interlocutors to beget their own philosophical ideas, as he does in *Theaetetus* as a midwife.

[25] For Socratic elements in Agathon's views of Eros see Sedley 2006.

[26] For Socrates' role reversal from Theodote's admirer to Theodote's object of desire see Goldhill 1998: 120-122.

[27] For the term *agalma* and its link to the philosophical inquiry see Reeve 2006.

[28] According to Vlastos (1991: 40), what Socrates experiences is the happiness as a result of *sōphrosynē*, a gift any physical beauty could offer to him.

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