

SECTION THREE:

THE AMATORIOUS

AS LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION THREE: PLUTARCH AS A WRITER

Plutarch's response to Platonic and other philosophies as a philosopher and critical scholar has been explored but what of Plutarch the writer? There are several areas of interest; Plutarch's handling of the subject-matter in the Amatorius, of Eros and conjugal philia; his style and techniques which may have influenced Lucian and included elements of parody; and the complexity of structure of this dialogue, the dramatic aspects of which seem to draw on the romantic plays of the New Comedy.

The Amatorius is primarily a work of serious philosophical discourse, and this will be emphasised by a comparison to literary writers on "erotic" themes, such as Maximus of Tyre and the unknown author of the Amores (Ἔρωτες) once attributed to Lucian. Plutarch's originality and the complexity of style and structure of the Amatorius becomes all the more striking in comparison with the more sophisticated handling of erotic themes found in Maximus's works and the Amores, whose author seems to have been familiar with both Plutarch and Lucian but not their equal in quality of creation.

The Amatorius, as a work of literature, also has several interesting features revealed by careful analysis of this philosophical dialogue, which, while still marking it as "Platonic", are distinctly "Plutarchean", including structural variations within the work, a "mosaic" technique of fusion, and elements of parody, used in a manner which may possibly have influenced Lucian's "blended" technique. Plutarch's literary skills and inventiveness support his originality of insight and expression as a Platonist writing about Eros and also his methodology as a critical scholar responding to negative views of Eros.

A use of parody to criticise other philosophies is not the only element of humour in the Amatorius whose structure seems to be that of a play inverted, a play in the New Comedy style of Menander. While there are dramatic elements in the structure of certain of Plato's dialogues, Plutarch's use of drama follows different patterns. The technique of interweaving the critical elements, philosophical discourses, and monologues by Plutarch creates something special.

CHAPTER TEN

WHAT IS DIALOGUE?

What unique characteristic does dialogue, especially philosophical dialogue, have as a genre of prose within classical literature? A dialogue is a discussion, but not every discussion is a dialogue. Hirzel (1963, p. 2) described the genre thus:

"Ein Dialog ist ein Gespräch. ... Zwar ist jeder Dialog ein Gespräch, aber nicht umgekehrt jedes Gespräch ein Dialog."

This is not merely a tautology. Philosophical dialogues are not just records of conversations on topics of philosophy. There are other differences.

Hirzel also emphasised the relationship of this genre to drama (p. 203) - "Drama und Dialog sind eben zweierlei" - and described Plutarch's work (p. 137) in general as a "Neuerung", an innovation, but he also denied the authenticity of the Amatorius (p. 234), claiming Plutarch was not the author. However, in this last opinion he was in a minority. Most authorities on Plutarch have no doubts as to the authenticity of the Amatorius.¹ Hirzel based his criticism on the presence of anachronisms, or what he regarded as such, and the stress on the divinity of Eros which he felt contradicted Plato's discussion in the Phaedrus of Eros as a daimon. These however may be a mark of fictionality or a stylistic technique, for deliberate anachronisms are also found in Plato's dialogues and Plutarch was a writer of

¹ See Flacelière 1987, Introduction, Section 2, Date, pp. 7 - 8, on the problems of whether the mention of Sabinus' son dying in Egypt is an anachronism. He provides a summary of Konrad Cichorius' discussion and cites Ziegler and Jones on the chronology problem. See also Section 5, pp. 31 ff., where he answers Hirzel's allegations concerning the "anachronism" and differences between Plutarch and Plato on the issue of whether Eros is a daemon or god. A possibility none of the defenders of the authenticity of the Amatorius seem to have considered is that this dating problem may be a simple error on Plutarch's part or a deliberate echo of the "anachronism" concerning Diotima in the Symposium - a kind of stylistic "in-joke".

"Platonic" dialogues. What Hirzel viewed as an deviance from Platonism could be argued for as a further proof of Plutarch's Platonism.

The word dialogue (διάλογος) itself comes from a verb meaning to speak alternately - διαλέγεσθαι. A dialogue requires two speakers at least for colloquy to occur and preferably a small group. The literary dialogue requires a triad of persons, the minimum of two speakers and a reader or listener, whereas dialogue in a play needs an audience of many, the silent chorus beyond the stage. The two kinds of dialogue are close kin, perhaps half brothers or fraternal but not identical twins.

Philosophical dialogue has been described by Levi (1985, p. 334) as being "Plato's original device"

"... with real characters, often a real setting and precisely conceived dramatic date, with remembered or adapted arguments that shade off into invented speeches".

So philosophical dialogue required a mixture of truth and fiction for a performance constructed of prose on paper.

Quintilian commented on the dialectic method used within philosophical dialogues that (Bk. 5. 14. 27)

"Dialogis enim et dialecticis disputationibus erit similior quam nostri operis actionibus, quae quidem inter se plurimum differunt."

Dialogues (in oratory) and in philosophy used a similar method of action. The differences seem to lie more in structure and intent.

Nussbaum (1986) has pointed out that, unlike modern critics, who tend to analyse the philosophy of a dialogue separately from its literary aspects, the Greeks themselves did not make such distinctions of form and content (p. 12)

before Plato's time (p. 123) and that, although there were dialogue-writings, Plato had created something new (p. 122) that was neither history nor drama. Seeskin has reminded us however that (1937, p. 1)

"Philosophy does not become literature merely because it is written in dialogue form. ... It is only when form and content work together that a piece of philosophy can claim literary significance."

He argued further that in philosophical dialogue there was an alliance of dialectic or elenchus with literary devices (pp. 7 - 8) to stimulate the reader and trigger the process of anamnesis. Dialogue had a practical purpose as a tool, and as an aid to awareness, and literature, though a mortal artifact, could, like physical beauty, divert the reader into higher realms of thought and being. There must be an alliance of literary technique with insight in which narrative structure and dialogue work together to portray and stimulate processes of thought. The literary value of an artifact in this genre is ideally linked to its effectiveness as a tool for changing perceptions of reality.

Plutarch also approves of using literary skills to discuss philosophy in Table Talk (614 C - D), stating that philosophers should use persuasion rather than forcefulness and noting that Plato, in his Symposium, used a methodology of simple premises, examples and mythology to support his arguments.

Diogenes Laertius defined dialogue (Book 3. 48) as discourse through questions and answers about philosophy and politics.

"ἔστι δὲ διάλογος ἐξ ἐρωτήσεως καὶ ἀποκρίσεως συγκείμενος περὶ τίνος τῶν φιλοσοφουμένων καὶ πολιτικῶν μετὰ τῆς πρεπούσης ἠθοποιίας τῶν παραλαμβανόμενων προσώπων καὶ τῆς κατὰ τὴν λέξιν κατασκευῆς."

He further distinguished dialectics, as an art of shaping words into patterns of inquiries and responses, from dialogue in general, and eristic oratory also, by

defining it as the art of proving one's proposition and refuting another's by question and answer - dialectics aims at results.

"διαλεκτική δ' ἐστὶ τέχνη λόγων, δι' ἧς ἀνασκευάζομεν τι ἢ
κατασκευάζομεν ἐξ ἐρωτήσεως καὶ ἀποκρίσεως τῶν
προσδιαλεγομένων."

Dialectics, then, is an essential feature and method of philosophical dialogue for seeking truth and wisdom through logical disputation, ideally for the sake of gaining wisdom, rather than honours or entertainment. Plato himself in the Sophist (230 C) described dialectics as a method for the purgation of the soul by cross-questioning.

The main features of philosophical dialogue seem then to be the use of the dialectic method in combination with a narrative-frame to change awareness. Platonic dialogue in particular was balanced by or inserted into a narrative-frame of monologues and myths mixed with a historical setting, preferably the recent past rather than the remote. Multiple examples of this can be found in dialogues by Plato, Cicero and Plutarch in which the conversations are frequently presented as having occurred in the speaker's lifetime or no earlier than one generation before.

It is important to remember that Plato was not the first prose writer to create dialogue, although his talents as both a philosopher and a writer ensured that his works have survived where others have been lost. Diogenes Laertius (3. 48) recorded a claim that Zeno the Eleatic was the first writer of dialogues and also said that Aristotle claimed that Alekamenos of Styra or Teos was the first such writer. The sophists created writings too. Quintilian (3. 1. 8) stated that the earliest writers about rhetoric were the Sicilian sophists, Corax, Tisias and Gorgias. Plato parodied their writings about rhetoric and their actual styles of speech and techniques in his own dialogues. Later Platonists paralleled Plato's criticism of the

sophists with their criticism of, and attacks on, other philosophies. Criticism is another feature of Platonic dialogue.

Plato placed the primary focus onto dialogue and used the narrative as a support and setting, like stage props, or an elegant introductory monologue in a drama, to mark off an area of time and space as his theatre, and dedicate it to the pursuit of wisdom. What he created was a new genre of prose different from history, rhetoric or drama. Platonic dialogue differs in structure as well as content.

In summary then philosophical, Platonic dialogue appears to be a balance of drama and discussion used to change or challenge awareness. The drama or action lies in the use of inserted speeches and stories linked to the subject under discussion. The discussion includes criticism of other philosophies and the dialectic method of question and answer.

Plutarch was a scholar and a student of Plato and other writers. The Amatorius certainly reflects this careful scholarship in its knowledge of Platonism and critique of other philosophies, but though it was written as a Platonic dialogue, it can still lay claim to an originality of expression and structure that marks it as Plutarch's creation.

The Amatorius is not mimicry of Plato. It is Platonic but not merely an echo of Plato. Plutarch studied Plato's techniques and those of other writers as carefully as Plato surveyed the methods of the sophists and dramatists. Plutarch was not afraid to differ from his master.

A CHAPTER ELEVEN

A LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE AMATORIUS

A first reading and initial analysis of the Amatorius reveals a strong resemblance between Plato's Symposium and Phaedrus and Plutarch's Amatorius (which has previously been commented on by Brenk 1988, p. 461, Martin 1984, p. 84, and Trapp - in Russell 1990, pp. 141 - 73). All three dialogues, the Amatorius by Plutarch, and the Symposium and Phaedrus of Plato, used a mixture of speeches and speakers, in their first part, on related subjects, and included a discussion of Eros, an apology for Eros (by Plutarch), and a palinode or encomium (both), and make use of historical events, religious myths and legendary heroes to illustrate the arguments put forth by various speakers.

Martin (ibid.) assessed the Symposium and Phaedrus to be the two major influences on the Amatorius as sources of Platonic doctrines in Plutarchean arguments and of other minor reminiscences and resonances. Trapp did not mention influences from the Symposium in his article but noted (p. 160) the many "Phaedran echoes" which occurred regularly throughout the dialogue and listed (pp. 171 -3) sixteen of them at the end of his article. Brenk (1988, p. 461) drew attention to the differences in style between the two authors, noting how Plutarch's "baroque style" seemed more theatrical, particularly at the beginning of the Amatorius, in contrast to the more static openings of Plato's Phaedrus and Symposium.

There seem to be as many differences between these three dialogues as there are similarities. These variances between Plato's and Plutarch's composition of dialogues can be found not only in the structure but also in the style and technique.

A - STRUCTURE

An analysis of its structure reveals that the Amatorius has two major divisions of unequal size. The emphasis in its first part is on morals, centred around a debate between "Stoics" and "Platonists". The second part is more focused on metaphysics and theology with its defence of Eros. Both parts, however, echo the other and are linked by continuous themes, the most important being conjugal philia.

The Symposium has three parts and its prologue and epilogue. The first is the symposium proper with multiple speakers giving their opinions on a set topic. The second is the inserted dialogue with Diotima, which gives us Socrates' views on Eros. The third section features Alcibiades' Encomium to Socrates.

The Phaedrus has two parts like the Amatorius. The first section is divided into interludes and transitions between three speeches about love and lovers. The second part gives us Socrates' views on communication and rhetoric.

Plutarch, like Plato, offers us various viewpoints on the subject of Eros. In the Symposium we have Phaedrus the student of the arts, Pausanias a scholar, Eryximachus the doctor and Aristophanes the comedian, and finally Agathon the dramatist, aesthete and romantic, speaking on Eros. Then the wise man Socrates addresses them all on Eros as a mystery just as Plutarch does in the Amatorius.

In the Amatorius we also have a variety of characters speaking, Daphnaeus, Pusias, Protogenes, Anthemion and Soclarus, and finally Plutarch's long speech on Eros. However, this first section of the Amatorius includes a critique of other

philosophies. The parallel in Plato's works would be the frequent critique of sophists or rhetors, such as his criticism of Lysias' oratory in the Phaedrus.

Daphnaeus appears to play the role of Phaedrus in Plato's Symposium within the Amatorius, for he too is the first major speaker but discusses marriage rather than Eros. It is left to Plutarch to define Eros and discuss his army of lovers, and it is also Plutarch who takes up Pausanias' discussion of various laws and customs about lovers in the Symposium and spreads it throughout the Amatorius using various examples rather than having it focused in one spot.

In the place of Eryximachus the doctor, who speaks for "science" in the Symposium, in the Amatorius we have discussions of physiology apparently taken from the writings of the Peripatetics, an appropriate association of medicine with science. There seem, however, to be no parallels to the characters of Agathon and Aristophanes in the Amatorius. Instead we have the misanthropes Pusias and Protogenes claiming to be "true" lovers and Epicurean sympathizers like Zeuxippus speaking later on.

The parallels are not exact. Plutarch is not simply copying the Symposium. Themes and topics which are linked to certain speakers in the Symposium are either discussed more generally in the Amatorius or handled by Plutarch exclusively.

The speeches in the Amatorius also seem to be dealt with in a more informal manner. Instead of using set topics, as in the Symposium, each new subject and answer arises out of a question in a previous conversation creating a more naturalistic effect and greater interplay between the speakers in the first part of the Amatorius. The second part of the Amatorius also differs from the Symposium, in that where Plutarch moves from a defence of Eros' divinity back to the theme of

marriage and friendship, in a circular composition, illustrated by the activities of famous historical figures, in the Symposium Alcibiades breaks in, disrupting the supper and offering us a portrait of one individual instead of many, giving us a biography of Socrates, offering his life as the exemplar of the philosophical lover. Plutarch preferred to use a balance of history, legend and myth to demonstrate love's power, to portray many love's not just one.

Plutarch knew the Symposium form thoroughly from study and practice. He had written in this particular sub-genre of dialogue before, creating The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men (Τῶν ἑπτὰ σοφῶν συμπόσιον - Septem Sapientium Convivium) and the Table Talk (Συμποσιακῶν προβλημάτων βιβλία - Quaestionum Convivalium), a "mini-series" of symposia. Yet structurally his works appear to deviate from Plato's. Table Talk has minimal narrative setting and The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men was set in the remote (age of the legendary tyrants) rather than recent past. Plutarch liked to experiment with a diversity of forms rather than be bound by narrow parameters.

Further analysis of the Amatcrius, after comparison with Plato's Symposium and Phaedrus, reveals a more complex structure with seven divisions overall.

The first section (Chapters One and Two, 748 E - 750 A) is the prologue including a narrative introducing the setting. The format of one speaker asking another for the story of events set in the past is one found in several Platonic dialogues, as is the background of a major religious festival. This is not Athens though. The setting is both urban and yet rural with two parallel plots introduced. First there is the action within the city of Thespieae with the feud of the harpists at the festival. This is contrasted with the debate between the two factions of Ismenodora's supporters and detractors, occurring outside the city, at the temple of the Muses and Eros and on the road leading back down from it to the city.

The second section focuses on the first major debate, that between the "Stoics" and "Platonists", which covers Chapters Three to Nine (705 A - 754 E). This debate is divided itself into three sections, the debate between Daphnaeus and Protogenes which introduces us to the two major linked themes - Eros and marriage and two opposing views thereof. There is a brief interlude or interjection of a comment by Plutarch (Chapter Six - 752 C - D), then Protogenes, joined by Pusias, attacks both marriage in general and Ismenodora in person. The debate is concluded by Plutarch giving a monologue in defence of women, marriage and Ismenodora.

The third section (Chapters Ten to Twelve, 754 E - 756 A) is a narrative interlude but not simply one that changes the scene or time. As in a drama, a messenger arrives with a story to tell, and yet it is not just his report that changes the direction of the dialogue but also a question from one of the speakers. Three of the cast exit in response to the actions down in the "mundane", unphilosophical world of the polis below. This departure allows Plutarch to take centre stage.

The fourth section (Chapters Thirteen to Eighteen, 756 A - 763 F) begins, acting as a second prologue in which Plutarch introduces the question of Eros' divinity by discussion of love, madness and inspiration. The question of Eros' divinity brings us to the fifth section (Chapters Nineteen to Twenty, 764 A - 766 B) which perhaps could be called the analogy-section, since Plutarch focuses on drawing analogies between Eros, the Sun, the Good and the Beautiful, revealing parallels in their effects and activities to his audience.

The sixth section is hypothetical. The pattern of themes and the structure of the Amatorius as a whole, along with the appearance after the break in the text of a discussion of Epicurean physics, whereas the text had broken off with the

beginning of a story about Eros as an Avenger, strongly suggest that what went missing was a discussion of negative aspects of Eros. A possible reconstruction is that the story of Eros as an Avenger led into a criticism of Eros by an Epicurean (Zeuxippus?) and Plutarch responded with a critique of Epicurean ethics and physics.² It probably was largely a critique of their ethics or theology, since their physics had been dealt with elsewhere (765 C, 769 F).

Certainly the seventh section (Chapters Twenty-one to Twenty-five, 766 E - 771 C) includes a critique of Epicureanism, although its major subject mirrors that of the second section. It is a defense of marriage and Plutarch's concept of conjugal philia, supported by illustrations from history, philosophy and physiology.

If we regard the hypothetical sixth section as part of seven, this mirrors section two, as well giving us two parallel debates, "Stoics" versus "Platonists" and "Platonists" versus "Epicureans", each balancing the other. If we link section four to two, we have the discussion of Eros' divinity possibly paralleled by criticism of Eros' negative effects. Also Chapter Twenty-six, the Epilogue, becomes the final section (771 D - E), in which all the elements of the structure and the various discussion of themes and the parallel plot of the actions in the polis are finally drawn together, sealed and clasped, forming a necklace of braided strands, like a twisted rope of pearls.

² See Helmbold 1961, pp. 412-3 notes a - d, in the Loeb edition of the Amatorius.

B - THEMES

Plutarch's approach was innovative in that rather than just copying Plato's linear method, he enhanced the balance of his work as a whole by dividing up long speeches into subject-areas arranged around general themes, linking topics and themes to the structure of the whole dialogue. The diversity of subjects in the later parts of the Amatorius forms a counterbalance to the variety of speakers in the earliest sections. The critiques of Stoicism and marriage were balanced by an opposing defence of conjugal philia and exposition of Platonic teachings, and a possible section in the middle on Epicureanism.

Brenk (1988) has drawn attention to several differences between Plutarch and Plato. As well as his comments (p. 461) on the "baroque style" at the beginning of the Amatorius and its "theatricality" of contrasts and movements, he also noted (p. 469) the interesting ring composition of the Amatorius and importantly the counterpoints of disharmony and harmony in the movement of the narrative.

Plutarch's style in the Amatorius seems to be "braided" rather than linear like Plato's. There are two parallel plots which cross over, joining at the interludes (see chapter entitled Comedy - The Parallel Play), but the structure itself is circular, as previously stated, with the circle formed like a necklace. This braiding of the structure also appears in the arrangement of the themes.

The Amatorius starts with a festival. The narrator, Autobulus, introduces the theme of festivals (749 B), describing why his father Plutarch had been at Thespieae. Festivals were occasions when the normal social order could be reversed and temporarily inverted by chaos. Strife and disorder had brought

Plutarch and his wife to the festival in an attempt to restore harmony, but disorder was also present at Thespieae with the contest amongst the harpists (749 C) and the existing quarrel (749 D) between Anthemion and Pisisas about Bacchion and Ismenodora.

Disruption of social harmony and its restoration by bonding through rituals inspired by Eros is a continuous theme from the prologue onwards in the Amatorius. There is more chaos in the city when Ismenodora "abducts" Bacchion. Plutarch continually attempts to restore harmony and invoke Eros' power by using dialectics as a healing art through his exposition of Platonic doctrine and his citations of positive love stories. Meanwhile his wife is playing her role in the partnership by performing religious rituals to balance Plutarch's "ritual" or process of dialectic. Timoxena (unnamed in the dialogue) personally makes a sacrifice and prayer to Eros (749 B), "καὶ γὰρ ἡ ἐκείνης ἡ εὐχὴ καὶ ἡ θυσία."

This theme of disruption introduced in the initial narrative resumes in the First Interlude (754 E - F) in which a messenger arrives to report a new disturbance in the city which interrupts the flow of the dialogue as Pisisas and his ally Protogenes depart and the report of a second messenger bearing news of the tumult in the city summons Anthemion away next (756 A). There may have been a third messenger, who arrived later in the dialogue, for after the lacuna when the debate resumes its participants have departed the temple and are returning to the city below. The final report (771 D) brings a surprise, not a war but a marriage. The chaos, strife and confusion have been ended by the actions of the god Eros who, with a wedding, restores all to harmony and laughter.

The next major theme introduced into the Amatorius is that of the conflict of philosophies (750 A) with the debate between "Stoics" and "Platonists" started by Daphnaeus' rebuttal of Protogenes' remarks. This is used by Plutarch to lead into

the marriage theme (750 B ff.) which flows into discussion of Eros, and the two themes continue to be interwoven until the First Interlude (754 E - F), after which the subject shifts to Eros' divinity. The marriage theme is resumed later (767 D), but instead of focusing on one individual, Ismenodora, Plutarch offers various examples of historically successful marriages and contrasts them with the instability of paederastic relationships, a neat reversal of the first part in which the opposition defended such relationships and attacked marriage.

The next major theme, discussion of Eros the God, has been dealt with in Section One, but it should be noted how this exposition of Plutarch's Platonic theology concerning Eros supports both structure and other themes by its central location within the dialogue's structure. Plutarch's Platonic Eros stands between that of the Stoics and probably that of the Epicureans. Interpersed through all these sections are frequent quotes from various poets, lyric and dramatic, so that we have multiple viewpoints of Eros within the dialogue.

While the Amatorius shares with the Symposium certain common topics and themes, and some structural resemblances, the "Phaedran echoes" consist more of shared doctrines (already discussed in Section One) and similarities in setting than themes. Trapp has argued (in Russell 1990, p. 141) that the Phaedrus was used as a cultural model by several writers and orators of the first and second centuries A.D. and cites various examples from Dio Chrysostom (his Orations on Kingship and also Oration 36), Maximus of Tyre (his Dialexeis 18 - 21), Lucian (De domo 4) and the pseudo-Lucianic Amores, and Plutarch's Amatorius.

Certainly the Phaedrus shares with the Amatorius an interest in Eros and multiple speeches on the subjects of Eros, lovers and the art of loving. However, the use of the rural setting seems to be the most conspicuous echo. Philosophy becomes a form of exercise.

The speakers in the Phaedrus have left the confines of the polis for the tranquillity of a shady tree beside a river. They break their walk and rest in what seems to them a sacred place. Likewise in the Amatorius the speakers have left the city for the sacred precinct of the Muses up on Mt. Helicon and are trying to relax and reduce tension by discussing matters of love to resolve the feud that has started about Ismenodora and Bacchon. But the cast of the Amatorius is far larger than that of the Phaedrus. The Amatorius is dominated by group discussion, unlike the Phaedrus or the Symposium.

There is no exact parallel of the whole of the Symposium and Phaedrus to all of the Amatorius. (See comparison diagram over page.) The Amatorius is not a copy of either. It has a structure and integrity of its own with a unity due not to a linear flow of ideas but a balanced pattern, an interwoven diversity of themes that support the structure.

Possibly Plutarch may have started out with the intention of blending features of both dialogues, hence the strong resemblances, but the fusion changed it. The Amatorius is not a construction with obvious welds but an organic whole. Plutarch's scholarship, craftsmanship and inspiration gave it an originality of its own as a dialogue. Part of this originality is due to the insertion of new elements from other genres. Plutarch's work is a serious discussion of philosophy, though, unlike the contrasting work of a sophist like Maximus of Tyre, who dealt with the subject of Eros.

PHAEDRUSAMATORIOUSSYMPOSIUMSTRUCTURE

TWO SECTIONS

First Lysias' views,
Socrates response, the
Palinode
Second Socrates on
communication and
oratory.

TWO SECTIONS

First the defence of
Ismenodora then the
second section with the
defence of Eros.
Both sections discuss
marriage.

THREE SECTIONS

First the symposium with
a variety of mixed
speeches, then the
defence of Eros which
includes Socrates'
dialogue with Diotima.
Finally Alcibiades'
encomium.

CAST

Three speakers

Socrates

Phaedrus

Lysias (quoted)

Plutarch dominates

"Chorus" -

Daphnaeus

Protagoras

Pisias

Anthemion

Soclarus

Pemptes

Zeuxippus

Socrates and "chorus"

Phaedrus

Pausanias

Eryximachus

Aristophanes

Agathon

"Diotima"

Alcibiades.

FOCUS OF CRITICISM

Sophists on Love
False Lovers who abuse
beloved
Abuse of persuasion

Non platonists and
misogyrists
"Philosophical"
Lovers
Incorrect views of Eros

Inadequate views of
Eros

SUBJECTS AND MAJOR THEMES

Types of lovers
Communication
Arts of persuasion in
both sections.

Eros, Marriage Women,
Lovers,
Friendship
All linked by Eros

Definitions of and
discussion about Eros
and Love
A portrait of Socrates as
lover and beloved.

CHAPTER TWELVE

MAXIMUS OF TYRE ON THE AMATORY ART

Suidas described Maximus of Tyre as a "φιλόσοφος" who lived in the second century A.D. and was at the height of his fame in the era of Commodus. Eusebius also recorded his name (Chron. act. Olymp. 232 = 149 - 152 AD) as being amongst the prominent philosophers of that reign. Although his contemporaries and some Byzantine writers regarded him as a philosopher, later commentators have judged him to be an orator or sophist, or one of those strange chimeras of the Second Sophistic period, a scholar skilled in oratory. His collected, surviving works are known usually as the Dialexeis.³

Bevan (1927, p. 138) has also described him, stating

"All we know of the dates of Maximus is that he lived and discoursed at Rome in the middle of the second century. Like Plutarch, he took Platonism for the basis of his theory of the world. His discourses, unlike Plutarch's conversational tracts, are rhetorically constructed sermons."

Sandys (1921, p. 314) has noted that

"As a Platonist of eclectic tastes, while he opposes the Epicureans, he borrows at will from the Peripatetics, Stoics, and Neo-Pythagoreans; and, like Plutarch, he may be regarded as a precursor of the Neo-Platonists. But, while Plutarch is a genuine philosopher and a wise counsellor on the conduct of life, Maximus is merely a rhetorician, who happens to write by preference on philosophic subjects."

³ Dialexeis from ἡ διάλεξις = διάλεκτος. They are sometimes referred to as Discourses. Hobein called his edition (1910) the Philosophumena and Taylor entitled his English translation thereof (two volumes published in 1804 which appear to be the only extant English translation) the Dissertations.

Zeller labelled him (1886, p. 311, p. 314) one of the "Pythagorising Platonists" and also an "eclectic rhetorician," while Soury (1942, p. 7) classified him along with Plutarch and Apuleius as an eclectic Platonist - "au groupe des platoniciens éclectiques".

Lucian, in his life of Demonax, may well be referring to Maximus of Tyre (Ch. 14) with his description of a visiting orator, whom he calls the Sidonian sophist, who is quoted as being a self-admitted eclectic, and stating in public during a lecture that he would follow whichever philosophy summoned him.

"Τοῦ δὲ Σιδωνίου ποτὲ σοφιστοῦ Ἰσθηνησιν εὐδοκιμοῦντος καὶ λέγοντος ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ ἔπαινό τινα τοιοῦτον, ὅτι πάσης φιλοσοφίας πεπείραται – οὐ χεῖρον δὲ αὐτὰ εἰπεῖν ἄν ἔλεγεν.
 Ἔαν Ἀριστοτέλης με καλῆ ἐπὶ τὸ Λύκειον, ἔψομαι. ἄν Πλάτων ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀκαδημίαν, ἀφίξομαι. ἔν Ζήνων, ἐν τῇ Ποικίλῃ διατρίψω. ἄν Πυθαγόρας καλῆ, σιωπήσομαι."

Demonax at that point got up and cried out that Pythagoras was calling! Lucian does not tell us if that retort silenced the Sidonian. As Sidon is very close to Tyre and a common epithet for Phoenicians, given the self-description of the speaker's eclectic style, it seems possible that this could be a reference to Maximus, for if Lucian was born about 120 A.D. and the height of Maximus' career was about 150 A.D. this certainly overlaps with Lucian's own life and he could very well have heard Maximus speak as a young student.

Thomas Taylor, a noted Platonist of the early nineteenth century, who translated Maximus' works into English, described him as someone who (1804, vol. one p. 3)

"... cultivated philosophy, and principally that of Plato; ... one of those sophists who, like Dio Chrysostom, united philosophy with the study of rhetoric, and combined sublimity and depth of conception with magnificence and elegance of diction."

He also noted the balance in Maximus' writings (p. 9) of a rhetorician's skills with a "weight of sentiment peculiar to a philosopher".

Kennedy (1972, p. 590) described Maximus of Tyre as being someone who used the manner of a sophist in the form of diatribes with Platonism as his material. He defined a diatribe as (p. 469) an ethical lecture of a popular nature, often rather loosely constructed of commonplace arguments or examples. Certainly many of the examples Maximus used were clichés by his time.

The themes treated by Maximus were diverse. There exist essays on subjects both philosophic and rhetorical, Platonic and general, such as Socrates' Daemon, the aims of philosophy, the Cynic's life, how to pray to the gods. He also wrote several sophistic doublets which debated questions from both sides, such as Orations 15 and 16, on the subject of whether the practical or theoretical life is better, and Orations 23 and 24, where the question was which profession creates greater benefits for a city, soldiering or farming?

Maximus seems to have given attention to both Platonic doctrines and rhetorical techniques in his studies but not much to dialectics or metaphysics, for he displayed little of the originality of thought and expression to be found in Plutarch's or Plato's writings, save for some striking imagery in a few descriptive passages. As Szarmach has commented in a more recent study (1985, p.44) Maximus is more an orator than philosopher "nicht so sehr Philosoph als vielmehr Rhetor ist," and concluded (p. 126) "Maximos ist kein erstrangier Original-Autor", more a minor writer whose work gives us a picture of his era.

M. B. Trapp generously sent me copies of two as yet unpublished studies,⁴ when contacted after reading his article in Russell's Antonine Literature (1990) in which he discussed the use of the Phaedrus as a model by several authors, including Plutarch. He had written on the influence of the Phaedrus (1990) on later logoi erotikoi in the second century, including Maximus' Dialexeis 18 - 21, which he collectively entitled What was Socrates' Art of Love? and described as a collected sequence. In this article he notes Maximus' tendency to move from the general to the specific (p. 161) and to create particularly in his Encomium to Beauty in Oration 21 (p. 163) an "interpretative paraphrase of the doctrine of the Phaedrus."

In his 1992 seminar paper ("The ἐρωτικοὶ λόγοι of Maximus of Tyre" delivered at the Institute of Classical Studies in London) he affirmed again his earlier assessments of the philosophy of the Dialexeis having a "doctrinal coloring" which is "clearly Platonic" (p. 2), but also noted, as did Sandys (p. 313), that the style Maximus used (p. 9) is Asianic and Gorgianic in its rhythm and symmetry, therefore complex and rhythmic.

By contrast to that of Maximus of Tyre, Plutarch's style has been described by Kennedy (1972, p. 554) as being "simple and not particularly Attic". Kennedy regarded Plutarch (1972, p. 554) as being the "greatest Greek writer of the early empire". Stadter has also written on Plutarch's style and language (1965 - see Introduction), emphasizing its mixture of Platonic terms, creative verb compounds and new words coined from Koine. Russell described Plutarch's idiolect as (1973, p. 22) "a reformed Hellenistic Greek". Perhaps the best description of Plutarch's

⁴ One a seminar paper (1992) and the other an article due to appear in ANRW sometime in the near future.

style is to say that he made literary Koine Platonic and avoided the excesses of both the neo-Attic and the Asianic modes of oratory.

Trapp also draws our attention (1992, p. 15) to a peculiarity of Maximus' imagery, the way in which the Platonic motifs were used like "magnetic points round which ... iron filings of imagery, anecdote and quotation gather." The Platonic doctrines are a conspicuous part of the framework to which rhetorical imagery and colouring are attached. Maximus "meant his audience to be aware" (1992, p. 10) of his use of Platonic resources. He gives a demonstration of knowledge delivered with an experienced showman's illusion of ease disguising complexity.

"This is prose in which the informality of the philosophical teacher blends with the showier tendencies of the epideictic orator." (p. 9)

In his as yet unpublished article for ANRW ("Philosophical Sermons: The 'Dialexeis' of Maximus of Tyre") Trapp noted how Maximus is (p. 2) "consistently Platonic" but unlike Plutarch's Moralia which contain frequent critiques of the other major schools, there is limited criticism of other philosophies. Maximus seems to have avoided the difficulties of dialectics in order to preach a simplified doctrine, showing a bias towards Ethics and Theology and rarely mentioning Physics or Logic. Trapp is in agreement with Szarmach's description of Maximus not being an original thinker (p. 4). Rather, a major characteristic of Maximus' presentation is what might be called almost an ostentatious clarity and definitely a calculated informality towards his audience. Trapp described Maximus' language as that of a moderate Atticist in his vocabulary (p. 11) and (p. 12) his "Platonising verbal style".

Even more so than Plutarch, when using literary references, Maximus avoided references to contemporaries and cited no Hellenistic author later than

Aratus (p. 15). He used the standard authors taught in the schools of that era, the "classics" of Hellenic culture. The major source of citations and quotations is firstly Homer, then Plato and the poets, tragic and lyric, and then various prose authors, mostly historians, with Xenophon being a favorite.

What the Dialexeis seem to be, to Trapp, is a combination of two subgenres, that of oratorical προλαλία, short informal discourses, often used as prefaces to longer speeches, with that of philosophical προβλήματα (such as Plutarch's Table Talk, a collection of discussions of "problems"), and ζητήματα, or inquiries (an example again being from Plutarch - the Platonic Questions - Platonicae Quaestiones - Πλατωνικά ζητήματα). Maximus' portrayal of Eros and lovers, and other matters "erotic" is contained in 4 linked essays.

An Analysis of Dialexeis 18 - 21.⁵

Oration 18

Τίς ἡ Σωκράτους ἐρωτικά – ἄ

Maximus may have imitated the Platonic manner but not the structure of Plato's dialogues. There is no distinct introduction to this piece but rather an immediate plunge into the story of the Corinthian Actaeon. He is described as a "modest" youth (1. 4 ἐσωφρόνει) who rejected a would-be lover characterized by hybris (1. 5 "ὑπερεφρόνει ὑβριστοῦ ἐραστοῦ). The unfortunate boy is killed by his lover and a gang of drunken lackeys during a kidnap attempt, as a result of the lover's hybris. Maximus linked this to the other (legendary) Actaeon, of Boeotia, a victim of his own hybris in approaching a goddess unwisely, and then to the story

⁵ The Greek text for this section is taken from Hobein's edition (1910) of Maximus and the English translations are based partly on Taylor (1804 vol. one) but updated by me, particularly where the vocabulary is notably archaic.

of Periander, a tyrant slain by his boy-concubine. The moral of these comparisons was that base or unjust love is punished by destruction (p. 217, l. 8): "Αὕτη δίκη ἀδίκων ἐρώτων. "

Plutarch also knew and used these stories. Actaeon of Corinth appeared in the Amatoriae Narrationes 2 (Ἐρωτικὰ διηγήσεις) and Periander's destruction is referred to in the Amatorius (Ch. 2:3 768 F). Plutarch used these "historical" incidents though to demonstrate that the (physical) union of male to male, in his view, was not just an unnatural, wanton assault, an action of Hybris (Amat. 768 E)

"τὴν μέντοι πρὸς ἄρρεν' ἄρρενος ὁμιλίαν, μᾶλλον δ' ἀκρασίαν καὶ ἐπιπήδησιν, εἴποι τις ἂν ἐννοήσας..."

It was also a process of corruption by violence leading to more violence. The "beloved" (768 F), once abused (κατεβιάσθησαν), becomes violent. Friendship destroyed by actions against nature becomes vengeance. Plutarch has an equal interest in process and results. Maximus however has a marked preference for describing effects.

Maximus offers us two contrasting images, one of an object of desire being destroyed by a lover whose actions are hybriatic, and the other of a "loving" tyrant slain by his beloved. Hybris is a common factor in Plutarch's and Maximus' use of these tales. Maximus however offered his listeners and readers two matched but contrasting opposites - mirror images. Plutarch presented us with a triad of tyrants and also a three-fold process of unnatural love, leading to, or resulting from, hybris which brought death to Archelaus, Alexander of Pherae and Periander. That Hybris destroys love seems a common belief of both writers.

Maximus continued this theme with the famous story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton which both Plato (Symp. 182 C) and Plutarch (Amat. 760 C) had written about. For Maximus the story was an illustration of the power of just love

(p. 217, ll. 9 -10), "ἐρώτων τοῦ δικαίου". To Plutarch it is proof that love is stronger than tyrants.

Maximus' intention is finally stated. He wishes to demonstrate that there are two kinds of love - one with the object of virtue (p. 218, l. 17) "τὸ μὲν ἀρετῆς ἐπήβολον," and the other (l. 18) "τὸ δὲ μοχθηρία συμπεφυκός".⁶ Maximus concludes that the name of Eros can be applied to both a divinity and a disorder (p. 219, l.1) "καὶ τὸν θεὸν καὶ τὴν νόσον,".

Maximus then uses an image not borrowed from another (known) writer, seemingly at first unconnected with his theme. Using the image of silversmiths (= ἀργυρογνώμονας ? or silver evaluators?) he points out that an expert is one who can evaluate and distinguish the true coin from the counterfeit through his "art". This is woven back into philosophy and the previous descriptions of lovers by shifting the subject to lovers of beauty who are contrasted with false lovers, such as the tyrants discussed (p. 219, ll. 6 -16), with the conclusion being that the amatory art judges true beauty.

Maximus reveals his rationale for mentioning these lovers. He means to investigate both amatory discourse in general and one special lover - Socrates (p. 220, l. 1) "ἐρωτικὸν καὶ λόγον καὶ ἄνδρα". Although as Taylor pointed out in a footnote (p. 85) while Socrates described himself as being skilled in three sciences, erotics, dialectics and maieutics or midwifery, Maximus overlooked the other two to focus on the first, Socrates' (p. 222, l. 5) "ἐρωτικὴν τέχνην". Irony and enigmas Maximus left for others to analyse and discuss (p. 222, ll. 9 -11), the true philosophers such as Plato, Xenophon and other noted Socratic disciples.

⁶ Μοχθηρία μοχθηρός are related words that appear frequently in this dialogue - Taylor usually translates them as licentiousness, wantonness or adultery.

Whereas at this point Plutarch would probably cite and discuss various Platonic writings about Socrates as a practitioner of erotics, Maximus again turns away from the philosophers to the poets, with a digression criticising Socrates for excluding Homer from the Republic. Maximus is no radical. His questions about Plato's actions are general and he answers them by commencing an apology for Homer's depiction of lovers, be they gods or mortals.

Like Plutarch Maximus believed in the allegorical method and stated so, saying that stories about the gods as lovers had two levels of meaning (p. 223, ll. 18 -19)

"καταμαντεύεται τοῦ λόγου, ὡς φησὶ μὲν ταῦτα, ἕτερα δὲ αἰνίττεται".

One could enjoy reading poetry regardless of its allegorical meaning according to Maximus, but reading about Socrates seemed dangerous to him, for there seemed to be a contradiction between Socrates' behaviour as a lover and his philosophy (p. 224, l. 9): "Πῶς γὰρ ὅμοια ταῦτα φιλοσόφῳ βίω...". Maximus claimed (p. 225, ll. 1 -2) that, when talking as a lover, Socrates sounded like a sophist, Thrasymachus or Callias or Polus, not a philosopher!

Maximus then changed persona from critic to defending lawyer.

He pointed out that none of Socrates' accusers ever criticised his behaviour as a lover although he was attacked for other flaws by Anytus, Melitus and Aristophanes. Maximus claims that this was because Socrates was not the discoverer of amatory discourse (p. 227, l. 12 -13) "πάντως γε οὐκ ἴδιοι οἱ τοῦ Σωκράτους ἐρωτικοὶ λόγοι, οὐδὲ πρώτου"; rather this art began with the poets.

Plutarch used poets and quotations from poetry, lyric or drama, as examples to illustrate philosophical statements, and to support his arguments for the divinity and antiquity of Eros, along with examples from history and law in a triadic alliance but Maximus made poetry itself the focus and centre of the discussion. He

described the varieties of love depicted in Homer's works (p. 230, l. 6) "Ταῦτα μὲν τὰ Ὅμηρου ἐρωτικά" and argued that poets like Homer and Sappho did in poems, what Socrates strived to practise as a philosopher with dialectics. In his view both Homer's poetry and Socrates' life abounded in 'amatory examples'. Poetic art is like philosophical erotics because both praise the beautiful.

Oration 19

Ἐπιπερὶ ἔρωτος – β

Maximus resumed his erotic discourse with an invocation addressed to these Gods: Hermes, the Persuasions and Graces, and lastly Love. This seems an odd place for an invocation, for Maximus makes it clear in his opening paragraph, using the words "ἀναλαμβάνοντες" and "ἔρωτος λόγους," that this work is to be the second part of a linked sequence. Invocations more usually appear at the beginning of speeches. Maximus' choosing to place the invocation here seems to suggest a deliberate display of his skills of arrangement yet may just be a simple oversight on his part.

Maximus stated that Socrates' aim was to defend youth against what he calls unjust lovers (p. 234, l.13), ἀδίκων ἐραστῶν", tying this work to the first in the sequence. Maximus claimed Socrates' method was to act as a shepherd to lambs, and he illustrated this by inserting an Aesopian fable (p. 235, ll. 12 -13) "κατὰ τοὺς τοῦ Φρυγιῶντος λόγους μῦθον πλάττων" about a stray lamb, a wise shepherd and a cook. One wonders if he was addressing an audience of younger students, for Quintilian (1. 9. 2) has commented on a practice of setting as a composition exercise, to achieve simplicity of style, the paraphrasing of "Aesopi fabellae".

Socrates, according to Maximus, was like the shepherd but also like a man trying to deceive criminals by pretending to be one. He was a lover of virtue competing with lovers of pleasure (p. 239, l. 16), the difference being in his intentions. By pretending to be a hunter he will outrun the rest of the pack and rescue youth from corruption.

Maximus follows this with a digression, or rather perhaps a "descent", into "colourful" prose, on the topos of the flower of beauty. Plutarch referred to this in the Amatorius (767 B), usually to criticize the Stoics. Maximus however talks loosely about beauty as the flower of the body passing through the eyes (p. 237, ll. 6 - 7) "ἄνθος σώματος ἐρχόμενον εἰς ὀφθαλμούς," so that physical beauty stimulates the soul. He then compared this to the flower of the soul (p. 237, l. 12) which is displayed by the body. This is a simplification of a Platonic doctrine that Plutarch also refers to in the Amatorius (766 A). Maximus' purpose for using this image seems to have been demonstrative rather than didactic or critical.

Maximus liked to use parallels and balanced contrasts, describing love as a duality in a series of oppositions contrasting the virtuous lover to the depraved and stating that the two kinds of love should not share the same name (pp. 239 - 40, l. 17)

" Ὅποταν τοίνυν ἀκούσης ἐρώντα μὲν τὸν φιλόσοφον, ἐρώντα δὲ καὶ τὸν μοχθηρὸν ἄνδρα, μὴ προλείπης τὸ γιγνόμενον ὄνοματι ἐνί."

Some of the contrasts which Maximus makes (p. 240, ll. 7 - 11) about the behaviour of lovers, using a striking but rather obvious pattern of assonance, follow: ἀρετή – ὕβρις, virtue to hubris or excellence to arrogance, φιλία – ἔχθρα, friendship to hatred, ἄμισθος – μισθόφορος, generosity to greed, ἐπαινετός – ἐπονείδιστος, praiseworthy to reproachable, ἑλληνικός – βαρβαρικός, Hellenic to Barbarian, ἄρρηγν – ἀπαλός, manly to decadent, ἐστώς – ἀβέβαιος, stable to unstable.

Plutarch also contrasted the behaviour of lovers but he compared the behaviour of a lover possessed by Eros to his previous "UN-erotic" behaviour to show how Eros improves, changes, and converts a person for the better. Such conversions are not discussed by Maximus. Plutarch also makes use of assonance and internal rhythm too, but less blatantly than Maximus, to describe and praise lovers and Eros. Rather than using doublets of words, he devotes a paragraph to the positive attributes Eros creates in a lover and then, after giving this positive image, contrasts it to his previously wanton behaviour. He also uses different terminology from Maximus to describe these gifts of Eros (Amat. 762 B - C, E), clever - συνετός, brave - ἀνδρείος, generous - δωρητικός, "simple" (= sincere?) - ἀπλοῦς and more.

Maximus discussed Eros in general terms of abstract behaviour and contrasts of true and false lovers or good and bad love. Plutarch specifically discussed true and false Eros (Amat. 751 F - 752 B) and made his image of the false Eros less abstract by describing his actions as those of a thief and scavenger. Again and again a reader encounters the contrast between Maximus' generalisations and Plutarch's specific illustrations, of sophistic abstractions versus philosophical concepts.

Maximus used the flower image again in his conclusion that beautiful bodies are to be praised and not interfered with but helped to flourish. This is a harvest, if not stolen or spoiled, he reassures his audience, that not only philosophers can reap but any lover (p. 242, ll. 3 - 4):

"Οὐ χαλεπὸν τὸ ἔργον. οὐ γὰρ Σωκράτους μόνον. οὐδὲ φιλοσόφου μόνον."

He offers an untrained Spartan as an example, one of Xenophon's heroes, Agesilaus the king (v. 4. 5), who was famous for his restraint, although not trained

in the Lyceum or the Gymnasium or in philosophy at all. (Was Maximus addressing an Athenian audience?) He concludes with a claim that the soul which exercises and chastises itself will also receive such a harvest (p. 242):

" ψυχῆς τῷ ὄντι ἡσκημένης καὶ μεμαστιγωμένης."

Oration 20

Ἐπιπερὶ τῆς Σωκράτους ἐρωτικῆς – γ

Maximus' subject continued to be more art than Eros despite its title. This work may be an erotic discourse but it is more about things and techniques than people.

Again Maximus begins directly with a story (p. 243), going straight into the narrative, as he did with the first work in this sequence. This time the tale is not of a Greek youth but of a barbarian, Smerdies the Thracian, who had two lovers, Polycrates the famous tyrant of Samos and Anacreon the lyric poet. Maximus has continued the topos of the two kinds of lovers and invites his audience to compare the two and join him in concluding that poetic love is divine, ἐνθεώτερος, and celestial, οὐράνιος, and hence named after a goddess, ἐπονομάζεσθαι (p. 243, l. 11 -12), the heavenly Aphrodite.

Maximus briefly describes love versus necessity and then moves into an Encomium of Eros (p. 244, ll. 5 -18). His list is strongly rhythmic, with a distinctive pattern of negative, noun, verb, phrases of three words repeated five times. This is followed by another section with rhythmic superlative compounds, εὐ - prefix, radical, superlative suffix - τατα, three times.

Sophistic and rhetorical prose was marked by a usage of internal rhyme and metre, with phrase and clause endings rhyming or being of an equal length and

even numbers of letters as well as words. Plutarch would never have used such conspicuous rhythms as Maximus does. His prose may be just as carefully balanced with phrases arranged in to patterns but when reading Plutarch's prose, deliberate analysis by the reader is necessary to discover such patterns. He does not display them for skill's sake, like Maximus.

Maximus next (p. 245) discussed the similarities of good and bad love. He informed us that the difference lies in the intentions of the lover, (l. 8) τοῦ δὲ τέλους ἀστοχεῖ. As proof he offered another set of oppositions, of persons whose professions can seem similar but whose aims diverge. He contrasted the apothecary (φαρμακοπώλης), with the physician or healer (ἰατρός), and then a sycophant with a rhetor (l. 9). Finally he contrasts the sophist to the philosopher (l. 10). All the professions he chose involved mastery or abuse of an art - τέχνη, in the first case medicine, then speech, and lastly knowledge.

Duality is a continuous theme in Maximus' works. He seems to have had a fascination with it, remarkable even for the Second Sophistic era. Balanced opposites, couplets and doublets of imagery and theme feature in a majority of his works. Like the earlier sophists he likes to argue both sides of the case and play with words and definitions.

Maximus next tries to define Eros as a thing of great worth (p. 245, l.1), "Πολλοῦ γε ἄξιον τὸ ἐρᾶν, τοιοῦτον ὄν". After discussing reason and passion, and associating them with virtue and vice he concluded, drawing on Aristotelian terminology, that Eros is an impulse ὁρμή, towards friendship (p. 246, l. 10), and yet also an appetite, ὄρεξις.

Maximus then argues that if Eros is a passion or emotion it must have an overseer, ἐπιστάτης (l. 13), which is reason, λόγος. He is trying to be "scientific"

but his attempts at using physiology seem simplistic, compared to Plutarch's. The image he invokes is the need for balance in the humours or tempers of the body. Love like biochemistry needs balance - *συμμετρία*. However Maximus also claimed Eros was an appetite of the soul - *ὄρεξις τῆς ψυχῆς*. This remark seems to have been made for the sole purpose of a change of subject so that Maximus can display his knowledge of both Platonic and Peripatetic doctrines.

Plato in his Phaedrus had stated that the passionate element of the soul was like a horse that needed a bridle for guidance. Maximus takes this horse image and states (p. 247, l. 8) that a horse without restraint, *ἵππος ἄφρετος*, is equivalent to, and the image of, the bad love(⁷), *ὕβριστῆς ἔρωσ*, creating chaos and drama, various illegalities and a multitude of legends with unhappy endings.

Despite his frequent references to Platonic doctrines, Maximus seems not to have been familiar with, or perhaps to have rejected, the classification of the three kinds of lovers and love used by Albinus and other Middle Platonists.⁷ There is no "mixed" love or intermediate category of lover in his schema of good versus evil. His love is twofold only, a contrast of the best and the worst.

From his comparison of a wild horse to evil love he moves to a statement (p. 248, ll. 7 - 8) that "good" love begets its like. Love is creative but the creation he is referring to here is not Platonic midwifery, simply reproduction. He waffles about gods and guardians of marriage somewhat loosely, using personifications (p. 248, l. 9 - 10), *"Γαμηλίων ... Ομογνίων ... Γενεθλίων"* and then changes the subject yet again, talking about how both animals and humans needed guidance for the gods guide and guard mortals just as mortals protect domestic animals. Where Plutarch would specifically discuss the reason it seemed logical to him that Eros was the

⁷ See Διδοσκαλικός Ch. 33, and Apuleius De Platone et eius dogmate Ch. 13 and discussions thereof in Section One.

guide and guardian of love, Maximus makes generalizations about gods. He uses abstractions and does not mention the deities most commonly regarded as guardians of marriage, Hera, Aphrodite, Hymen, Hestia or Eros. Maximus's "theology" is shallow compared to Plutarch's.

Maximus next observes how humans, unlike animals, have received one special gift from the gods - reason. Unlike animals humans can learn to control themselves eventually if they consent to the guidance of the wise.⁸

Maximus wanders back to the theme of bad lovers. He offers us Paris of Troy (p. 250, ll. 1 - 11) as an example of the lover compelled by pleasure, and compares such a lover to barbarians and tyrants, using Paris (a Trojan, hence a non-Greek), as an example, to shift the subject to Xerxes the famous Persian king who like Paris was allegedly an adulterer. Tyrants and bad lovers alike are wanton - ἀκόλαστος.

Maximus then mentions some customs and laws about love (like Plato's Symposium 182 B) and shifts the subject again to avarice - desire for wealth which leads us back to the barbarians with the story of Darius (p. 253). He gives his work here a bizarre conclusion by linking Darius and avarice to necrophilia, comparing Darius' treasure hunt for Egyptian gold to men digging into the body (p. 254, ll. 12 -13) "νεκρὸν ἀνορύττει; ... θίγειν σαρκὸς ἄρρενος," seeking for beauty by touching male flesh unlawfully. He compares Darius' past madness to present insanities stating that both behaviours are unnatural "unjust the mingling, barren the joining" (p. 254, l. 14), "ἄδικος ἡ μίξις. ἄγονος ἡ συνουσία," and his prose suddenly changes rhythm, breaking into very short sentences.

⁸ One begins to wonder if Maximus was not addressing some second century equivalent of a school assembly. The moralizing and generalizing, the loose flow of imagery, the sudden changes of subjects ... many of us have endured similar types of "inspirational" speeches this century.

The next section criticises certain types of sexual activity, since Maximus suddenly starts referring to "unnatural" activities and connexions being unfruitful and as futile as sowing rocks or plowing sand. Then this oration ends. Its structure is somewhat of a Minoan labyrinth, winding and turning until one sights the exit. Maximus' final statement in this essay is that the sane lover unlike the insane should seek creative pleasures (p. 254, l. 17).

Oration 21

Ἐπὶ περὶ ἔρωτος – δ

The final portion of the sequence starts out as a palinode. Maximus quotes Stesichorus and then briefly states that Eros is a god (p. 255, l. 10), "θεὸς γὰρ καὶ οὗτος," without elaborating this with proof or linking it to any previous discussion of Eros' powers as Plutarch did in the Amatorius. He also calls Eros (l. 16) a daimon without commenting on the contradiction of stating "ἀδέκαστον δαίμονα" after calling Eros a god. Suddenly Eros is a god and remains so during the rest of this oration.

The only reason Maximus seems to have for using this statement at all is as an excuse to mention the story of Anacreon and Cleobulus. This links back to the art theme with the argument that the proper offering to Eros, as a god, is not sacrifices of oxen or gifts of tripods or temple slaves, but Art itself. A discourse or palinode must be offered as Anacreon and Stesichorus did, and Maximus now also does to the god.

The next theme is that love equals love of the beautiful only (p. 258, l. 16), "ἔρως ἡμῖν κάλλους ἦν ἔρως". Therefore he was wrong before. If Eros is love for the beautiful, then the other bad love is desire, ἐπιθυμία, for pleasure only. But

this is yet another generalisation. Analysis and illustration are avoided for another comparison, that of the difference between food for nutrition and food as art, food which has had seasonings and culinary techniques applied to its preparation. Maximus compares pleasure to art: in that food feeds the body but pleasure passion (p. 261 - 62).

Another digression is made into the drinking customs and preferences of various nations until Maximus circles back to his main point (p. 262, l. 18). Beauty differs from pleasure, "διάκρισιν καλοῦ καὶ ἡδονῆς". He redefines Eros yet again as being reason, virtue and art (p. 263, l. 5), "ὁ μὲν ἔρως λόγος, καὶ ἀρετὴ, καὶ τέχνη", linking his themes of virtue and art together. This ties back into the theme of the Platonic doctrine of beauty, which is reviewed (p. 264 - 65), and the descent of Beauty from the realms above is compared to the flowing and dilution of a river from its source downwards into the sea. His conclusion is that what Socrates and other true lovers were doing was seeking the recollection of beauty through beautiful bodies, suggesting but not stating that the amatory art is validated by its aims.

Conclusion - Maximus' Sophistry

Maximus defended Socrates' practice of amatory art by identifying Eros with art and virtue. Dialexeis 18 - 21 is a complex tapestry of images and themes linked to these three subjects, art, Eros and beauty. Eros is linked to virtue by the discussion of good and bad lovers and the virtue-thread includes also the stories of Actaeon, Periander, Darius, Xerxes and Polycrates. Eros as a thread or continuous theme includes the discussions about Socrates, the encomiums to love, and descriptions of amatory art. Art is discussed with amatory art being linked to the poetic as illustrated by the stories of Anacreon and Stesichorus and Sappho. Art also features in the use of imagery, that firstly of the jewellers

evaluating coins and next the reworking of the horse image from Plato and the general discussion of beauty and the image of the river in the fourth part. All three are plaited loosely together.

However, while Plutarch takes a complexity of knowledge and unifies it into one structure always linked to Eros, whether his topic is marriage and women, or the divinity, power and functions of Eros, his detours into digressions are never simply decorative but usually informative. Most of Maximus' digressions are primarily decorative, lovely indeed but not always essential to the line of argument. Maximus' work seems to be complexity paying at simplicity. He strives for an illusion of clarity. Whereas Plutarch offers us new ideas and criticism of the old, plus his own insights into Platonic doctrine and an analysis of Eros, Maximus only offers us polished surfaces, no deep truths, just descriptions, imagery and sentiments. Maximus does create some striking alternations of imagery, but like his own image of the river descending from the source, in the course of all its twistings and turnings, it loses strength. His attempts to arrange his structure to make it seem simple actually obscure both structure and argument. He makes a valiant attempt to popularise Platonic teachings but in doing so waters them down.

The criticism that Tacitus applied to the first users of sophistic style in Latin oratory may well be applied to Maximus as well. Tacitus in his Dialogus de oratoribus (Ch. 26) criticised contemporary fashions of oratory as having a wanton style, far too theatrical,

"ut lascivia verborum et levitate sententiarum et licentia compositionis histrionales modos expriment."

with speeches that could be sung and danced to,

"iactant cantari saltarique commentarios suos"

and justified the epigram being heard in Rome at that time,

"ut oratores nostri tenere dicere, histriones diserte saltare dicantur."

Oratory had become a performance art. Maximus' work is evidence of this, for in it style is as important as structure and symbol.

The differences between Maximus' and Plutarch's styles can be summarized by two words describing the respective virtues of the two men's works, ornament and argument. While both men may have had mutual didactic intentions and persuasive aims, the same two words can describe their differing methods also, one sophistic and the other philosophical

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE AMORES - A LUCIANIC DIALOGUE

Plutarch created a philosophical dialogue and Maximus, a sophistic dialexis on the subject of Eros. But there was a third approach to Eros - laughter, as in satiric dialogues.

The Amores were originally thought to be by Lucian, due to Lucian's use of the pseudonym Lycinus in several authenticated dialogues, but are now regarded as the work of a later writer (McLeod 1967, p. 147), familiar with Lucian's style, who worked some time in the later part of the third century A.D., post - 275. It is a pastiche with no definite conclusion, which like Plutarch's Amatorius and other dialogues, included as features, the use of historical and heroic examples, and summaries, often in place of more detailed discussion, of philosophical doctrines, used for proof of arguments.

The writer's style is not as strongly marked by the quality of παρρησία, or free speech, as Lucian's work is and the overall tone is flatter than Lucian's barbed prose, or Plutarch's vigorous simplicity. Nevertheless the work is of some use for this comparison for it shows us how lesser writers dealt with the subject of Eros.

Like a "proper" dialogue, the Amores opened with an invocation of the gods, or rather one goddess, Aphrodite, with no mention of Eros. Theomnestus is invited by one Lycinus (Ch. 1) to continue telling stories about love because of his various experiences with both sexes. Theomnestus is described (Ch. 3, p. 155) as being what we would call bisexual for he has had frequent love affairs with both sexes and associates with (p. 154) "γυνοῖξιν ὠραίαις καὶ μετὰ παίδων τὸ καλὸν

ἀνθούτων". Theomnestus invites Lycinus to judge between the two kinds of love, heterosexual and homosexual (Ch. 4, p. 156),

"ποτέρους ἀμείνονας ἢ γῆ, τοὺς φιλόπαιδας ἢ τοὺς γυναίκοις
ἀσμενίζοντας"

choosing him for this task because Lycinus is as unaffected by either passion (Ch. 4)

"σὺ δ' ἐκτὸς ὦν ἀδεκάστῳ κριτῇ τῷ λογισμῷ τὸ βέλτιον αἰρήσῃ",

as Theomnestus has been by both, continuously (Ch. 2, p. 152),

"ἄλλαις ἀπ' ἄλλων ἐπιθυμίας βουκολοῦμαι."

Lycinus (Ch. 5) recalls a debate he once heard between two men, one a boylover and the other heterosexual, at Rhodes, where he had stopped en route to Italy. There (Ch. 9, pp. 162 - 3) he met with Charicles of Corinth, a handsome young man suspected of wearing makeup and known as a lover of girls and women. Also present was Callicratidas of Athens, an orator, politician, amateur athlete, boylover, τοὺς παιδικοὺς ἔρωτας and a woman hater (Ch. 9, p. 162):
"τῷ πρὸς τὸ θῆλυ μίσει".

Here we have our first contrast, Corinth and Athens, the city of luxury and pleasure whose patron goddess was Aphrodite, to the city of (masculine) culture and learning, dedicated to Athena. Correspondingly as individuals, the two lifestyles of Charicles and Callicratidas also contrast (Ch. 10, p. 165). Charicles' house is depicted as being full of women, female dancers and musicians, but having no adult males present, "ἄνδρὸς οὐδ' ἀκαρῆ παρόντος," unless infants or elderly, "εἰ μή τί που νήπιον ἢ γέρον". Callicratidas' home is full of handsome young boys, "εὐμόρφους πασίην", who are sent to the country, shortly after puberty's first signs appear on their faces to become stewards and overseers. Their sexual interests stand at opposing ends of a spectrum, with Charicles loving

women only (Ch. 5, p. 158 - 9), "ἐς γυναικῆς ἐπτόητο", and Callicratidas described as taking excessive delight in boys, "ὑπερφυῶς παιδικοῖς ἤδετο" (pp. 176 - 7).

Lycinus, Charicles and Callicratidas journey together to Aphrodite's temple at Cnidus though Callicratidas is reluctant and Lycinus states he believes that the Athenian would rather have been visiting the temple of Eros at Thespieae. This gives us the rural setting which later dialogues had inherited from the Phaedrus, for the temple (Ch. 12) is surrounded by trees and vines, a paradise of fruit and flowers. The writer seems to have been familiar with the Amatorius for he makes a further pointed reference to hearing love stories at Thespieae (Ch. 17, pp. 176 - 77)

"εἰ πολλῶν ἀκουσόμεθα τοιούτων διηγημάτων, ὅταν ἐν Θεσπιαῖς
γενώμεθα."

There is also a further reference to the Phaedrus with Lycinus making a point of describing their exit from the temple to seek for a shaded spot where the cicadas sing (Ch. 18, pp. 178 - 9).

"ἐπεὶ δ' ἤκομεν εἷς τι συνηρεφές καὶ παλίνσκιον ὥρα θερούς
ἀναπαυστήριον, Ἡδύς, εἰπά ν, ὁ τόπος. ἐγώ, καὶ γὰρ οἱ κατὰ κορυφήν
λιγυρὸν ὑπηχοῦσι τέττιγες,"

Here Lycinus, like Plutarch, or Socrates in the Phaedrus, will sit in judgement.

Chapters 1 to 18 form the introduction. As in a Platonic dialogue, two men have met and conversed, with one invited to be a narrator and a divinity has been invoked or suggested. The time is past not present and there is something special about the location - it is outside the normal conventions of the polis, in this case the gardens of a temple dedicated to the goddess of Love.

In the Phaedrus also, the two speakers were outside the city, but still in a sacred place, being near a shrine. In the Symposium, the dialogue is outside the polis, in the sense of being outside normal social restraints on discussing matters

of erotica because the speakers are permitted to discuss any subject at a symposium, an event dedicated to Dionysus, a god of ecstatic release. Likewise in the Amatorius the dialogue takes place outside of a polis, starting on sacred ground, for the speakers are traveling back from Mount Helicon, sacred to the Muses and Eros, and in the polis below normal social conventions have been overturned by the festival.

Maximus the sophist, and the unknown author of the Amores, while also using this topos of being beyond the city, rarely transcend any conventions, philosophical, social or rhetorical. They both seem to have been content to rework other people's ideas and turn concepts into adornments. Whoever the author of the Amores was, like Maximus and Plutarch, he was well-read in previous erotica.⁹

In the Amores, Charicles' speech in defence of heterosexuality (Ch. 19, pp. 178 - 9) begins with a prayer to and invocation of Aphrodite as being the only true mother of discourses on love, not mentioning the Muses or Eros. Charicles also described her as a universal creatrix shaping both sexes, "σὺ γὰρ αὐτῶν γνησιωτάτη μήτηρ", identifying Aphrodite with Isis and other Asian mother-goddesses just as the Middle Platonists, Plutarch and Apuleius did.¹⁰

Charicles first argues (Ch. 20) that the earliest humans were exclusively heterosexual, obeying the laws of nature, "ἡ φύσις ἐπειθάρχει," whereas homosexuality is described as an anti-natural by-product of modern society and

⁹ The term 'erotica' is used here in its ancient and original sense of writings about Eros and Love, philosophical or literary, not with its modern connotation of art which stimulates erotic feelings.

¹⁰ See Apuleius' Golden Ass or Metamorphoses, Book 11, Chs. 2 - 6 for the prayer to the goddess and the corresponding vision in which the goddess states she has many names. As for Plutarch see De Iside passim and Amatorius 764 B and D.

hedonism. He illustrates this (Chs. 22, pp. 184 - 85) with the example of animals not engaging in homosexual activity, which Plutarch cited in his Gryllus (988 F - 989 F). Both (Plutarch in Gryllus 992 D) argued that luxury led humans to transgress the laws of nature with Charicles stating (Ch. 20 p. 182 - 3)

" εἶθ' ἡ πάντα τολμῶσα τρυφή τὴν φύσιν αὐτὴν παρενόμησεν".

Next Charicles criticizes the Platonic association of the beautiful with the good, with virtue. If this is valid, then all ugly people are automatically evil and if so (Ch. 23 - 24) how does one explain or defend the behaviour of the handsome but dangerous Alcibiades, the man who offended gods and humans by mutilating the Hermae and parodying the mysteries of Eleusis?

Then he offers an argument (Ch. 25) based on pleasure not virtue. Women (Ch. 25, pp. 188 - 89) offer more pleasure than boys,

"ἐπιδείξω παιδικῆς χρήσεως· τολὺ τὴν γυναικείαν ἀμείνω"

even older women for they offer the advantage of experience and unlike boys (Ch. 26, pp. 190 -91), who grow up into hairy adult males, beautiful adult women are relatively hairless. Furthermore, he argues (Ch. 27, pp. 190 - 93) that heterosexual intercourse (in his experience) offered a more equal mutual sharing of pleasure and joy for both partners. Our unknown author finally has Charicles hypothesise (Ch. 28, pp. 194 - 5) that perhaps in matters of Eros women should come to play the male role, or rather become as aggressively promiscuous as men, a better thing than men becoming like women (θηλύνεσθαι).

This is not a philosophical dialogue nor exactly sophistic. Charicles' speech starts out as a straight argument against homosexuality in males and then twists itself around, like the mythical snake swallowing its tail. The argument has transmuted itself into a satire of treatises on virtue with the claim that women should equally share the male privilege of wantonness (Ch. 28, pp 194 - 5).

Callicratidas' speech in reply (Chs. 30 - 49) also uses stereotypes. He lists wise women such as Sappho, Theano, Telesilla and Aspasia, two poets, a philosopher and a woman reputed to have taught rhetoric to men, as a concessionary, diversionary tactic (Ch. 30), and then argues that love for males is an activity that combines pleasure and virtue (Ch. 31),

"ὁ ἄρρην ἔρωσ κοινὸν ἡδονῆς καὶ ἀρετῆς ἐστὶν ἔργον."

Perhaps Callicratidas the Athenian, as a character in the dialogue, is meant to remind the readers of one or several Platonic writers, for he is next depicted as praying to Eros for help (Ch. 32), invoking him (p. 198) as a heavenly spirit, "δαίμον οὐράνιε", who is described as the hierophant of the mysteries of friendship, "ἱεροφάντα μυστηρίων", and even as a creator, "δημιουργός", of order and harmony and friendship. This citation of Orphic mythology in which Eros is described as a creator and also called Phanes or Protogenes is a Neoplatonic usage, supporting the argument of this being a work written later than Lucian's time.

A concept is introduced next, that marriage is only for reproduction but Love for males is a noble duty for those with philosophic spirits, "μόνος δὲ ὁ ἄρρην ἔρωσ φιλοσόφου καλόν ἐστι ψυχῆς ἐπίταγμα." Beauty is superior to biological necessity in Callicratidas' view. These philosophical males also create more beauty (Ch. 33 - 4, pp. 202 - 5) through the arts and it is (Ch. 35) a natural cultural development that homosexual loving only arose recently. For only in modern times did human males have the leisure to combine philosophy, pleasure and boy-loving. Merely physical loving (Ch. 36) is simply a biological need for reproduction but Love between males, a most enduring (βεβαιότατος ἐρώτων) relationship.

Callicratidas invokes the idea of a two-fold "διπλοῦς θεός" Eros, one being a philosophical Eros which excludes women as a source of pleasure or virtue, the other being the irrational (ἄφρόνων) childish (νήπια) Eros (Ch. 37 pp. 206 - 7) of poets and painters who creates desire for females, "αὐτῷ γυναικεῖοι πόθοι μέλουσιν". The higher, true Eros is the steward of temperate passions, "σωφρονούντων ταμίαι παθῶν", leading to a combination of pleasure and virtue, "ἡδονὴν ἀρετῇ μεμιγμένην ἀσπαζόμεθα". Women (Ch. 38 pp. 210 - 11) after all were only a biological necessity, "ἀνάγκη", for making children. In relationships they were an evil to be avoided not persons to be valued,

"ἄχει τέκνων γυναικες ἀριθμὸς ἔστωσαν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἄπαγε, μή μοι γένοιτο."

Chapters 38 to 43 are a prolonged attack on women, using arguments that women's use of makeup (Ch. 39) proves they are actually ugly. They fuss over their hair (Ch. 40), jewellery and shoes (Ch. 41), and are also superstitious (Ch. 42), prone to joining exotic cults, such as that of Cybele, "τὴν Φρυγίαν δαίμονα", and Attis, "τῷ ποιμένι". For Callicratidas an orderly, female lifestyle (Ch. 43) "εὐσταθοῦς βίου" is one that seems wretched "ὁ δυστυχής".

Callicratidas (Chs. 44 - 45) argues that boys are pure, clean, disciplined, orderly and study literature and philosophy. He then praises the ideal boy (Ch. 46, pp. 44 - 45) as being a wrestler like Hermes, a lyre player like Apollo, with Castor's talents for horsemanship. This is a hero striving for virtue, a romantic vision not a real boy.

Callicratidas then contradicts himself. After citing further heroes (ch. 47) and the relationship of Orestes and Pyades and claiming (ch. 48) that Socrates discovered boy-loving, "τὸ παιδεραστεῖν", as a blessing, which is certainly not Platonic doctrine, he then argued in Chapter 49 that the true lover should only

approach virtuous boys, "σωφρόνως παισὶν ἀγαθοῖς πρόσιτε", and develop a lasting affection for them that will grow into adult friendship. However, we have been told Callicratidas is in the practice of shipping his slave boys off to the country when they start approaching adulthood. He apparently has one standard for the freeborn adult and another differing one towards slaves making his ideals seem as twofold as his god. The contrast between Callicratidas' ideals and his actual behaviour here may be one of those rare (in ancient literature) criticisms of slavery.

The ending of this dialogue appears inconclusive, in terms of both ethics and structure. A verdict is offered (Ch. 51) that marriage is a boon and blessing but also that boyloving should continue to be the privilege of philosophy. All men should marry but only the wise love boys for perfect virtue grows the least amongst women. Corinth yields to Athens' masculine oratory and Lycinus is rewarded for this compromise with the promise of a feast by Callicratidas the Athenian.

The dialogue reverts to the present, and Theomnestus praises the physical aspects and pleasures of lovemaking with Lucianic graphicness. The readers are reminded, that lovemaking involves sex not just philosophical speeches, but a final decision or decisive comment by Theomnestus or Lycinus is avoided. They go off to attend the feast of Hercules instead. The word-game has finished with no clear victory or defeat but a checkmate and yet it is noteworthy both speakers seem to want to balance virtue with pleasure rather than reject one for the other. Plutarch would have declared pleasure secondary to virtue and Maximus condemned pleasure as immoral.

The problem is that our anonymous author wants us to think of Lucian (hence his use of the pseudonym *Lukinos*) while reading his imitation but is not a

good enough parodist or satirist to fully master the Lucianic style. The parodic elements and the inconstant shifting between seriousness and humour actually weaken the tone of the structure and the argument overall. The writer seems to have been trained as a sophist just as Lucian was but has not mastered that technique of Lucian's mature satirical style that Anderson (1976b, p. 21) calls the "Lucianic blend" which balances elements of Platonic dialogue with themes from Comedy and Cynic diatribe (see pp. 6, 21, 90 and 103).

"Lycinus" informs us at both the beginning (Ch. 1 and 5) and end of this work that his intention was to produce a piece of light literature, a holiday delicacy, appropriate for a feast day (Ch. 53):

"λαληθέντα σπουδὴν ἰλαρὰν ἅμα καὶ παιδιὰν εὐμουσον ἐσχηκότα
τῆδ' ἐπεὶ διεκρίθη."

The speeches however seem too heavy for the comedic structure. Although Lycinus planned his story (Ch. 5) to be both γέλωτος yet σπουδαῖον, the two tones clash rather than balance.

There are several interesting oppositions in this work, just as in Maximus of Tyre's writings. Charicles is opposed to Callicratidas and Theomnestus, the oversexed, has his corresponding match in Lycinus, the indifferent. They are not convincing though as characters in a dialogue but tend rather to be stereotypes delivering set pieces on heterosexuality versus homosexuality. Many of the speeches consist of various commonplaces cobbled together, well written but with no central thread of argument. What originality they have lies in the occasional twist of irony and well turned adornments of expression. The author seems to be trying to achieve a style which is both sophistic and satirical and hence does not succeed in achieving either.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PLUTARCH, LUCIAN AND PARODY

Relihan (1993, pp. 6 - 7) described 14 characteristics of Menippean satire, and Rose (1993, and 1979 *passim*), the characteristics of parody and satire in general. Combining their observations produced a list of five major features.

- 1) Comedy - There is a greater use of humour than in Socratic dialogue, including the use of parody and irony, probably derived from Cynic diatribes.

- 2) Fantasy - Our viewpoint of "normal" reality is shifted by the use of invented fictional plots and intense comic reversals, plus the conjunction of other levels of reality to our own reality through mock journeys of discovery or observations of our world from the other, often the underworld of the dead or the realm of the gods.

- 3) Psychology - The examination and evaluation of abnormal behaviours and psychic states is a frequent theme. (Lucian depicts and criticizes various bizarre behaviours and Plutarch in the Amatorius looks at Love and Madness.)

- 4) Antithesis - A technique of using contrasts and balanced opposites is borrowed from the professional orators.

(Maximus of Tyre's epideictic works contain many examples. In satire, though, it is usually imaginary characters who are contrasted not just imagery.)

- 5) Criticism - There is a concern with serious social issues and philosophical ideas. Satire is used to reveal flaws in society and human folly, sometimes to entertain, and at other times to educate.

The Amores shares some of these features, to a limited extent. Four characters are in opposition. The asexual Lycinus is contrasted with the bi- or omnisexual Theomnestus, and boy-loving Callicratidas with Charicles the heterosexual. All demonstrate extreme forms of sexual behaviour rather than the Hellenic ideal of moderation in behaviour. There are no elements of fantasy present though and criticism is limited. Parody is minimal in this work.

Plutarch's Amatorius, however, shares with Lucian's works these parodic elements to varying degrees, despite the overall differences in tone. Plutarch is gentler than Lucian. Russell (1993, p. ix) has noted that gentleness (πραότης), along with humanity (φιλανθρωπία), are keywords in relation to Plutarch. To describe the main characteristic of Lucian's style and work the best word is παρρησία, licentia, or free speech. Both authors use what Russell called (1993, p. xv) a mosaic technique and Anderson (1976, p. 21) a blend, although the proportions and ingredients vary.

Lucian refers to this blending technique in his works, which he called a μίξις of dialogue and comedy, in his Prometheus in words (Ch. 6), stating that he dared to combine the two into harmony. He also discusses his originality throughout this dialogue and in Chapter 7 denies without giving details a charge of theft. Perhaps

one of his contemporaries had pointed out the similarities of his technique to that of another author.

Lucian like Plutarch criticised various philosophies in his works. The Hermotimus, Ἑρμότιμος ἢ Ἰαετίων, attacks Stoics, and then there is also criticism of various philosophies in the Twice Accused (Bis Accusatus, Δίς κατηγοούμενος), the Fisherman (Piscator, Ἀλιεύς) and Philosophies for Sale (Vitarum Auctio, Βίων πρᾶσις) with Lucian often choosing to create a mock drama when judging false philosophers.

Plutarch and Lucian also shared an interest in psychology and excesses of human behaviour. Lucian's works included several portraits of types of obsessions, such as that of the manic yet semi-educated bibliophile (Adversus Indoctum), or his attack on sophists striving for the perfect Attic dialect in the Lexiphanes. His Nigrinus, although mainly an encomium of a Platonic philosopher, who may be modelled on Albinus, also attacks the life style of the wealthy who indulge in ostentatious displays of luxury and false philosophers more concerned with wealth than virtue.

Plutarch also depicted various negative behaviours and gave suggestions for their cure. In one particular essay, Talkativeness (De garrulitate, Περὶ ἀδολεσχίας) he even appears at the end (Ch. 23) to tease his readers with a little self - parody by recommending that the loquacious have their energies diverted into scholarship and become compulsive writers instead, 'shouting pens', like Antipater the Stoic. Given Plutarch's output as a writer perhaps he too was a compulsive talker as a young man

There are also elements of parody and fantasy in another short piece of Plutarch's called the Gryllus (Brutæ Animalia Ratione Uti - Περὶ τοῦ τὰ ἄλογα λόγῳ

χρησθαί) on the rationality of animals, including a comic role reversal. Gryllus, a talking pig, once a human sophist, is condemned as a hedonist by Odysseus when he shows no interest in being restored to human form. However this remarkably intelligent pig, perhaps a portrait of Plutarch again (a traditional insult used by Athenians for Boeotians was to refer to them as swine), turns the tables on Odysseus, the trickster, by out-talking him and ends up instructing him about the superior virtue of animals in contrast to humans.

On a larger scale again there are elements of parody in the Amatorius. As discussed in section one Plutarch criticised the Stoics and other philosophers by parodying their terminology which was a favourite method of his. In his character portrayals, Stoics who should be above emotions are depicted as using vulgar speech to insult a woman, Ismenodora, who fits the standards of a Stoic heroine, according to the writings of that school. However, this is an ideal which they can not recognise in reality.

Ismenodora's relationship with Bacchon, whether fictional or not, is the mirror image of an ideal pederastic romance. A wealthy and wise older person befriends and loves a younger, virtuous beauty and in doing so saves the beloved from 'immoral' lovers of lesser quality, though here the older lover is not a male but a woman. Worse still, if Ismenodora and Bacchon were real people and Plutarch's story in the Amatorius had a historical basis, then Plutarch was rebuking the misogynists by reminding us of the contrast between ideal romance and reality. Whether the story of Ismenodora and Bacchon was history or fiction it has a parodic role in the Amatorius because its "reality" mocks the idealism of the philosophers, and its historicity or illusion thereof contrasts with the other stories.

In the Amatorius parody is a significant element. Parody as a process of critical imitation features in other Plutarchean works, along with the "mosaic"

technique. Plutarch's and Lucian's writings share the use of this technique of fusion as a stylistic feature. This blending technique is also found in Maximus' works, and that of other sophistic writers. Anderson has drawn our attention (1976b, see p. 21, pp. 48 - 9) to what he described as "typical 'Lucianic' blends", and also to the tendency for a sophistic work of the second century A.D. to be (1993, p. 71)

"an ingenious pastiche ... evoking several classical authors".

Branham (1989, pp. 26 -7) has also noted Lucian's awareness of earlier traditions and techniques of humour and his literary debts, which ranged from the use of Aristophanic plot structures to a Platonic style of philosophical conversation. Plutarch's technique was described by Russell (1993, p. xi) as a "mosaic of reference and illusion", citing in support of this (p. xv) Erasmus's description of this technique (Opera Omnia 4.2 p. 264) in Plutarch's writings. A successful mosaic uses skilfully matched stones or glass with balanced and blended colors and tones to create a larger picture. As Lucian is of the generation after Plutarch, it seems possible that perhaps his sharper tone of satire was for Lucian a logical response and extension of Plutarch's use of parody for criticism.

Branham (1989, p. 235 note 7a citing Grant) states in his study of Lucian that "Laughter helps us to understand serious things", and also (pp. 26 -7) describes both Plutarch and Lucian as "serious jesters". While Plutarch's humour is gentler than Lucian's and sometimes less obvious and quieter in tone it is there and is not the only commonality between the two writers.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

COMEDY - THE PARALLEL PLAY

The structure of the Amatorius has elements drawn from comedy, particularly in the interludes which have resonances not merely of satire and parody, but of drama, especially the plays of Menander. While the interludes may be modelled on Plato's use of them in the Symposium¹¹ as a counter-balance to the longer speeches, this is not their only function in the Amatorius. They are narrative passages, mainly featuring responses to the reports of others, just as in drama, tragic or comic, various heralds and messengers report on actions offstage, with their messages leading to a change in the plot onstage.

Now Plutarch was a great admirer of Menander. He wrote a comparison of Menander's style with that of Aristophanes (Moralia 853 A - 854 D) and in his Table Talk (Bk. 7) also comments on a recent trend of performances during symposia, when in Question 8 (711 C) he discusses what are appropriate ἀκροάματα, or entertainments. Apparently a recent trend in Rome was to train slaves to perform or recite during dinners Plato's dramatic dialogues, as if they were actors reading a play. As part of the discussion that follows the Old Comedy (712 A) is condemned as being unsuitable, ἀνάρμοστος, for dinner parties but Menander's works are approved of (712 B) because their style is ἡδέϊα with a blend of seriousness and humour.

One wonders if Plutarch may have attended one of these symposia while visiting Rome and incorporated ideas from this new performance art into the

¹¹ Unlike Plato or Lucian who both are influenced by Old Comedy Plutarch prefers Menander for a model. See Table Talk 7, Q. 8 711 B - 713 F for a full discussion of Plutarch's reasons for preferring Menander. For more information on the influence of Old Comedy on Plato and Lucian see Branham 1989 and Anderson 1976 a and b.

creation of his own dialogue. For this would explain the use of the "back" story of the affair of Ismenodora and Bacchion if what we see "onstage" is a comic reversal of a typical New Comedy structure with the normal on-stage action moved into the background. Plutarch chose to add more humour to his dialogue in a manner differing from Plato or Menander yet reflecting both.

His central focus is the conversations of the chorus which in a comedy or drama is normally side or off stage between scenes. By chorus I mean the dialogues of the older, philosophical males. In the Amatorius, as in many plays, the chorus is split into opposing groups.

The scenes described in front of Ismenodora's house sound very like the actions that take central stage in a Menandrian comedy, yet they are off stage here. Both the arguments about love, off- and on-stage, join into one action at the end when guests and lovers join for the wedding. For then philosophical anamnesis or recollection has become transformed into dramatic recognition, of the truth of the god Eros' power and presence.

There are two basic settings in the Amatorius, both also used in dramas - city and countryside, secular and sacred. The front of Ismenodora's house in its urban setting is typical of New Comedy and likewise the rural setting on Mount Helicon with the shrine in the background, reminding us of the presence of the gods. The settings are the minimum necessary to support the story.

Webster (1974, p. 13) observed that all known plays of Menander conform to a basic type - a pattern of man and woman uniting after various obstacles and differences (pp. 23, 24, 34) have been overcome. This love match usually involves a difference in wealth or status which is resolved by the end of the play by adoption, recognition, or some other change of status or a change of mind or heart

by some one in a position of authority over the lovers. Unlike Menander (at least in any of the known plots or extant plays), though, Plutarch has a rich woman marrying a poorer youth.

Frye (1957, p. 44), writing on New Comedy, noted that

"The hero himself is seldom a very interesting person ... he is ordinary in his virtues, but socially attractive."

Bacchon's personality, what there is of it, conforms to this observation. All we ever really learn about him is that he is handsome and popular and has many admirers (749 D) but otherwise he seems a somewhat passive figure in contrast to Ismenodora whose actions shape both dramas. In this drama the heroine becomes the active hero.

Ismenodora causes the events that led up to the start of the Amatorius and her actions also resolve it. Her courtship of Bacchon is the cause for the gathering of rival lovers on the mountain-side, one of the major themes and subjects of discussion and makes the cause of Plutarch's defence of Eros and conjugal philia. Her kidnapping of Bacchon leads to Pusias and Protogenes departing the stage, clearing it for Plutarch's major speeches and also produces the wedding that ends both plays, the philosophical one of the chorus and the urban comedy in the polis.

Each of the narrative sections of the Amatorius, beginning, end, and interludes, seems to describe scenes similar to those in plays, and unlike the interludes in Plato's Symposium, marks not only a change of speakers but also a change in action, direction or subject. The narrative of the comic actions happening off-stage frames and supports the philosophical activities on-stage, giving them perspective.

The opening narrative serves the same role as a narrator's introduction in a drama. Autobulus himself noted (749 A) that the story had all the necessary elements of a drama: a situation, a debate, a stage and a chorus of sympathizers. He then describes the history of the events (Ch. 1, 748 F - 750 A) leading up and into Plutarch's dialogue and performs the invocation to a god, in this case the mother of the Muses, the Titaness Memory (749 A). The action then spirals inwards from the present back to the past, to a time when lovers were sundered. Plutarch and his new wife had come to Thespieae to sacrifice to the god of lovers. In Thespieae meanwhile dissension has arisen between the music-lovers (749 B) with fans arguing about the harpists at the (arts) festival being held. These feuds are soon overtaken by that between the lovers of boys and women.

At dawn two of the main characters enter the stage, Anthemion and Piasias, while the narrator is still describing Ismenodora. The chorus (Ch. 3, 750 A) splits into two semi-choruses, consisting of the opposing speakers in the first act of the dialogue, Anthemion and Daphnaeus, versus Piasias and Protogenes. So with all our characters on stage, the opening narrative ends with the sun dawning on the sacred mountain of Helicon and the Muses' shrine in the background as the dialogue proper begins.

The first interlude begins (Ch. 10, 754 E) with the arrival of a messenger on horseback galloping towards them. He brings an amazing story of Ismenodora's actions. She has taken Bacchon "captive" (754 E - F) and is about to marry him (755 A). As a result the city's streets have become a theatre, for all the spectators in the theatre have abandoned it for the more interesting show before her doors.

This report of an action off-stage leads to a change on stage. Piasias and Protogenes depart for the city (755 C), clearing the stage for a transition to Plutarch's monologue for Eros. There is a short discourse between Anthemion,

Soclarus, and Pemptides ended by the arrival of a second messenger (756 A) who summons Anthemion away, clearing the stage again for the next scene.

There is also a possible interlude at Chapter 18 (762 D) when Plutarch's speech is broken by Zeuxippus expressing his delight at Plutarch's encomium. This gives Plutarch an opportunity to invite Daphnaeus (762 E) to recite one of Sappho's odes so that we have a lyric interlude (763 A). After this finishes, Plutarch changes the subject again to another theme and there appear to be no further breaks.

There may, however, possibly have been another interlude during the "great lacuna" before chapter 21 starts (766 E), for when the speech resumes the group is returning from Helicon. Zeuxippus has engaged Plutarch in a debate about Epicurean physics of which the beginning is missing. Given the pattern so far a change of subject may have been due to another messenger arriving or perhaps someone interrupting Plutarch's stories with a question.

Finally (Ch. 26, 771 D - E) we have one last messenger arrive whose report will join the two plots. He is the only messenger whose words are in direct speech. He arrives running on foot, announcing like a herald in a drama that the wedding sacrifice is about to begin just as the company draw near to Thespieae. The sacred and secular have been joined in harmony with Pisisas leading the procession to the sacrifice.

Plutarch gets the last word. His epilogue is an invitation to the celebration. He invites all his readers to acknowledge the comedy by laughing and also to salute the god Eros; for this transformation of Pisisas from misogynist to celebrant is the final proof of the theories Plutarch has been teaching and discussing.

The drama off-stage has undergone a comic inversion away from what would be the central location in a stage play. Plutarch's creation of two parallel "plays" has created an unusual and innovative dramatic structure for his dialogue. The philosophical drama about Eros "on-stage" balances the comic romance "off-stage" just as with the arrangement of the themes Eros and conjugal philia are linked yet separate. The ring composition, that Brenk commented on, is a circle formed of parallel strands twisted around each other.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

WHAT IS THE AMATORIUS?

What is the Amatorius? It appears to be a Platonic dialogue with parodic elements using mimesis for criticism, philosophical and social. However it has uniquely Plutarchean features, in its balancing of the various themes and subjects dealt with, its use of ring composition to tie the two parallel plots together and its use of counterpoints of disharmony and harmony in its actions and its dedication to Eros as a God. Plutarch's Amatorius varies from Plato's dialogues in style and structure although obviously inspired by them. Furthermore his "mosaic" technique and use of parodic elements appear to have influenced Lucian's blending of sophistry and satire.

The Amatorius seems to have a triadic structure. As a drama it is similar to a three act play and as a dialogue it also has three parts or aspects. The first is as a Platonic dialogue with positive views of Eros and marriage, secondly it functions as a critique of other philosophies with negative views of Eros, and finally there is the Amatorius as a play in terms of its dramatic structure with the action in the background forming a narrative frame for the dialogue. Dialogue, critique and drama are bound or rather braided together.

One is hesitant to refer to the Amatorius by such modern terms as "metafiction" (see Rose 1993) because of its use of inserted texts and quotations or to call it an example of "spoudaogelation",¹² for this second word is not one Plutarch would have used himself, even though the Amatorius may well be one ancestor of sophistic works of this kind. It is primarily a philosophical dialogue, yet

¹² Branham (1989, p. 27) discusses spoudogelios and the history of this term which he describes as "poorly documented" and first appearing in Strabo 16. 2. 29 and D. L. 9. 17.

the strong secondary element of comedy can not be overlooked. Plutarch in the Table Talk (613 F) stated that philosophy could be practised by silence or humour, whether the philosopher is the joker or the butt of a jest and that true philosophers (614 A) could move men by humour. Further on in this same work (621 D) he states that laughter can be useful and seriousness pleasant,

"ἔστι γὰρ καὶ γέλωτι χρῆσθαι πρὸς πολλὰ τῶν ὠφελίμων καὶ σπουδῆν ἠδεῖαν παρασχεῖν".

Given the various clues Plutarch provided in the Table Talk perhaps we can justly regard the Amatorius as being Plutarch's philosophical comedy.

Why use philosophical comedy as a description of this work instead of just dialogue? Plutarch combines laughter with solemnity, serious philosophical exploration of the nature of Eros with criticism involving parody, within a structure which mirrors that of plays in the New Comedy style of Menander. There is even a happy ending with a festival. Finally let us remember Eros' aspect as a "young" mischievous deity, a cause of trouble as well as its solution. There is the echo of Eros' laughter ringing throughout the Amatorius. A work which combines wisdom and humour can justly be called philosophical comedy. This is Plutarch's Amatorius.

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