

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP  
IN THE *LYSIS* AND THE *SYMPOSIUM*:  
HUMAN AND DIVINE

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**I. Introduction**

In this paper I wish to contribute to understanding of the connection between the *Lysis* and the *Symposium*. My purpose is not to suggest that the *Symposium* explains *aporia* at the end of the dialogue *Lysis*,<sup>1</sup> but that the *Symposium* and the *Lysis*, taken as a pair, offer an interesting insight into the nature of human philosophical striving.

Since this insight concerns friendship and love, my alternative interpretation further provides a response to an influential criticism of Plato that his conception of love and friendship is impersonal (i.e. oriented only to the idea of the person and not to the individual person herself).<sup>2</sup>

My strategy here is, first, to group the main arguments of the *Lysis* and the *Symposium* into five complex groups. This helps reveal the remarkable similarity in structure of both dialogues. Then, I interpret this similarity as an intertextual device that should convey a philosophical message.

In the course of investigation, it will be necessary to consider one recent criticism of the intertextual reading of both dialogues. According to Christopher Rowe, there are two fundamental possibilities of viewing the connection between the *Lysis* and *Symposium*: either we stress the connection between both dialogues and argue for intertextuality and read the *Lysis* in the

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<sup>1</sup> The assumption that the ‘middle’ dialogues succeed where the ‘Socratic’ dialogues fail is rather a scholarly commonplace. E.g. Rowe (2000); Moutsopoulos (2008).

<sup>2</sup> Vlastos (1981), 31-32.

light of the *Symposium* or *vice versa*; or we admit that what we encounter here is merely a correspondence of certain type, kind or structure of a complex argument.<sup>3</sup> Rowe warns that giving the preference to the intertextual reading would already imply the resolution of all serious issues about the unity and chronological succession of Plato's dialogues. Above all, we should still respect Plato's decision to give two formally different accounts. Therefore Rowe chooses second, more economical and safer alternative.<sup>4</sup>

In this paper, I will go for both Rowe's options, but I will not accept their exclusivity. Instead, I will advocate a different understanding of intertextuality: To think that we cannot understand Platonic doctrine of love and friendship properly if we read both dialogues independently does not necessarily imply denial of progress of Plato's thought.<sup>5</sup> Rather, in my reading, the problem of unity or progress in Plato becomes relatively minor.

Since the extent of such plan of investigation exceeds by far the possibilities of the present paper, it will not be possible to fully discuss the details of both dialogues and I will certainly have to cut numerous corners. However, I hope that a general sketch of the problem can be given and seen as a plausible interpretation of how the intertextual connections work in Plato.

## II. Connections between the *Lysis* and the *Symposium*

There is a very similar structure of five distinct arguments both in the *Lysis* and the *Symposium*. In case of the *Lysis*, the division in five parts is very natural: we can clearly distinguish an introductory dialogue between Socrates and Hippothales, three main parts of Socrates' interrogation of Lysis and Menexenus, and the last aporetic part closed by arrival of the *paidagogoi*. The *Symposium* is naturally divided by the 7 acts of different speakers (Phaedrus, Pausanias, Eryximachus, Aristophanes, Agathon, Socrates, and Alcibiades); these 7 speeches can nevertheless be arranged into five groups.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Rowe (2000), 210.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>5</sup> Similarly, when we deny that the later dialogue corrects the earlier one, we do not claim that the later does not bring anything new.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Krüger (1992). Although Krüger does not speak about five groups explicitly, he delivers cogent arguments for linking Pausanias with Eryximachus and Aristophanes with Agathon, respectively.

### 1) Naivety and ridiculousness of erotic love

The introductory part of both the *Lysis* and the *Symposium* is dominated by the naive pre-philosophical beliefs of the proponents of Greek pederastic love. In the *Lysis*, Hippothales is presented as a passionate lover of young and handsome Lysis. His erotic love, which governs the introductory conversation between him and Socrates, makes him ridiculous in the eyes of his fellows (*Lys.* 205c).

The first speaker in the *Symposium*, young Phaedrus, delivers somehow naive speech, which is not only deep rooted in mythical way of thinking, but it even contains a logical mistake.<sup>7</sup> What he wants is not to reveal truth about Eros, but to conform and maintain the traditional 'erotic madness'.<sup>8</sup> Phaedrus' conviction that there is not 'any greater blessing to a young man beginning life than a virtuous lover, or to the lover than a beloved youth' (*Symp.* 178c) would not only match the interests of Hippothales in the *Lysis*; it could also be very likely a conviction of Lysis himself, if he were educated by Hippothales. Phaedrus and Hippothales express the same state of consciousness, dominated by the traditional Greek erotic Pathos;<sup>9</sup> their ignorance must be corrected by subsequent more rational attempts to address the problem.

### 2) Erotic-educational poetry

In the *Lysis*, Socrates clarifies the principles of educational speech to *erômenos*. *Erastês* may not praise the boy, which is likely to make him harder to catch, but, on the contrary, lower him so as he becomes modest (*Lys.* 210E; cf. 206B). Socrates demonstrates such lowering of *erômenos* in that he persuades Lysis that he cannot expect being someone's friend until he proves to be beneficial and good for him (*Lys.* 210D). Menexenus, in turn, is brought into *aporia* by

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<sup>7</sup> Phaedrus supports his main point, namely that 'it is only lovers who are willing to die for someone else' (*Symp.* 179B) by an example of Achilles who, although he actually died for Patroclus, was not the lover, but the beloved one (of Patroclus). See Gill (1999), xxi.

<sup>8</sup> There are two actual couples: Eryximachus and Phaedrus, and Pausanias and Agathon. See *Prot.* 315C-E; *Phdr.* 268A and *Symp.* 223B. Third, though much more complex couple is Socrates and Alcibiades. See Salman (1991), 214.

<sup>9</sup> Despite the fact that Hippothales is *erastês* (of Lysis) and Phaedrus *erômenos* (of Eryximachus).

different meanings of the word *philon*.<sup>10</sup> As a result, both boys are lowered by having been shown their uselessness (Lysis) or ignorance (Menexenus).

In the *Symposium*, Pausanias and Eryximachus deduce on the basis of the distinction between two kinds of Eros – the better and the worse one (*Symp.* 180D ff. and 186B–D)<sup>11</sup> – that only a good man can be an object of ‘good’ Eros. This reminds us of what Socrates says to Lysis, namely that he cannot be loved by others unless he is beneficial and good (*Lys.* 210D). The shift from mythical to logical way of speaking can be interpreted as analogous to the shift from Hippothales’ erotic madness to Socrates’ rational erotic-educational speech in the *Lysis*. The fact that ‘erotic poetry’ of Pausanias and Eryximachus in fact contrasts with proper erotic poetry, displayed by Socrates in the *Lysis*,<sup>12</sup> does not spoil the argument; on the contrary, it seems to give evidence of an inner link between both dialogues.

### 3) Poetic understanding of friendship and love

In the *Lysis*, after the first attempt of definition of *philia* has gone wrong (*Lys.* 213c), Socrates suggests to proceed in another direction.<sup>13</sup> But he finds it hard to accept either of two ‘poetic’ (Homeric and Hesiodic) conceptions of friendship: that like is friendly to like or that unlike is friendly to unlike. Socrates decides to change his method again and skip from the ‘poetic’ to the ‘philosophical’ way of consideration.

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<sup>10</sup> In present context, the fact that this outcome of the discussion with Menexenus is based on confusion of two meanings of the word *philos*, does not play so important role. Cf. Annas (1977), 532-533; Schulz (2000), 33-34; Price (1989), 3-4.

<sup>11</sup> See Krüger (1992), 97-98.

<sup>12</sup> Self-confident Pausanias and Eryximachus express a belief in individual independence, which contrasts with the later humble speech of Socrates, who – although he delivers new, even revolutionary thoughts – does not dare to put the sovereignty of traditional Eros into question. Cf. Szlezák (2008). The contrast between Pausanias and Eryximachus in the *Symposium* and Socrates in the *Lysis* consists also in the different effects of two kinds of erotic-educational poetry. While Socrates’ *logoi* make the young boys Lysis and Menexenus being down-to-earth, which is necessary for becoming wise (*Lys.* 210D-E; cf. *Symp.* 215E f.), the speeches of Pausanias and Eryximachus would have rather made their *erômenoi* conceited and elitist (see *Symp.* 194B). Their goal is not to make the *erômenoi* better men, but to assure and strengthen the feeling of moral and intellectual superiority of the members of their pederastian circle.

<sup>13</sup> See Justin (2005), 76-77.

The acts of the poets Aristophanes and Agathon in the *Symposium* recall the Socrates' turn to the poets in the *Lysis*. Aristophanes' myth about the original humans (*Symp.* 189D ff.) provides us with a mythical form of belief that are presented in logical form in the *Lysis*. So the cause of Eros, which is 'desire for my other half' (*Symp.* 191A ff.), can be seen in the light of the *Lysis* as *philia* to something that is like (*Lys.* 214A) (this would match Aristophanes' original same-gender humans) or unlike (*Lys.* 215C) (this would match Aristophanes' original androgynies) myself.

Agathon's speech<sup>14</sup> gives the main characteristic of Eros: besides being virtuous, he is young and tender (*hapalos*, *Symp.* 195D4).<sup>15</sup> But tenderness and youth (that make Eros an object of praise) should, in Agathon's speech, apply primarily not to Eros, but to Agathon himself. He is also young and tender;<sup>16</sup> the virtues of Eros that he enumerates are in fact virtues of a technically competent poet.<sup>17</sup> Socrates' double ironical criticism of Agathon's speech (*Symp.* 194A–C and 198A–199A) makes clear that it is no more sufficient than Homeric and Hesiodic accounts in the *Lysis*. But distinct logical (i.e. non-ironical) criticism of such conceited attitude can be found in the *Lysis*: as perfectly good and virtuous Agathon can hardly become anybody's friend, i.e. the subject of someone's love or friendship (*Lys.* 215A–B),<sup>18</sup> and as tender (or smooth) he can

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<sup>14</sup> It resembles a real poem and is formally flawless. See particularly the final part of the speech at 197c ff.

<sup>15</sup> This latter – seemingly minor – characteristic of Eros possibly alludes to what has Socrates said about *philon* in the *Lysis*, namely that it is soft, smooth and slippery (*malakos*, *leios*, *liparos*) (*Lys.* 216C7). While adjectives *leios* and *liparos* go together with *hapalos* only by means of association, *malakos* can be linked with *hapalos* semantically – the basic meaning of both Greek expressions is 'soft'. The belonging of all four words to the same metaphoric field is obvious. But while Socrates in the *Lysis* uses these characteristic to demonstrate the insufficiency of the poetic accounts on *philon* and *philia* in Homer and Hesiod, the poet Agathon is not only firmly convinced that he knows what is Eros, but the given characterisation shows that he even makes himself Eros-like.

<sup>16</sup> An obvious allusion to the identity of Eros and Agathon is at *Symp.* 198A3; cf. *Prot.* 315E. The fact that Agathon's oral poem celebrates himself reminds us of Hippothales in the *Lysis*, who seems to Socrates to be ridiculous in composing self-celebrating poems (*Lys.* 205D).

<sup>17</sup> Krüger (1992), 136.

<sup>18</sup> The preliminary argument from the *Lysis* 215A4-6 that 'the good may be the friend of the good in so far as he is good, not so far as he is alike' contains an implicit criticism of Aristophanes. His consideration about love does not take into account the moral notion of the good.

hardly be recognised as friendly or *philon*, i.e. as a object of love or friendship (*Lys.* 216D1).

#### 4) The main philosophical argument: Goal and cause of friendship

In both cases, the ‘poetic’ accounts are followed by the philosophically most important considerations of the dialogue.<sup>19</sup> In the *Lysis*, Socrates claims that what is neither good nor bad becomes friend of good. The presence of evil (as far as it does not spoil the subject entirely – 217C–E) causes the desire (*epithymia*) for good. But this outcome still needs to be supplemented: consideration of the purpose of friendship shows that the given definition eventually leads to infinite regress of the objects of friendship. To avoid this, one must presuppose something that is first, original friendly (*prôton philon*, 219D1). *Prôton philon* is friendly solely for the sake of itself (220B5); as such, it is the original goal of all other friendships (219E f.), which will be friendly even if all evil would disappear (220D). And since friendship must have some cause (besides its goal, which is *prôton philon*) and desires that are neither good nor bad would remain even if evil would disappear, it is desire that is identified as the cause of friendship (221D). Socrates’ makes explicit that this definition of the goal and cause of friendship – contrary to the previous attempts – could be right (220A–B, 221D2–6; cf. 218D8–9).

Socrates’ speech in the *Symposium* matches in several important points this part of the *Lysis*. Eros’ ‘middleness’ strikingly corresponds with the ‘neither good nor bad’ subject of friendship from the *Lysis*. The subsequent substitution of the beautiful by the good in the argument (*Symp.* 204D) agrees with the parallelism of both expressions in the main part of the *Lysis* (cf. 216C–D). This substitution prepares the field for the next stage of the argument, in which the ultimate goal and cause of love is revealed. Happiness, which has no other purpose (*Symp.* 204E–205A), recalls the finality of *prôton philon* in the *Lysis* (219C);<sup>20</sup> but this is still too general account of love. The final goal, the true object of love is the good (*Symp.* 205E); the cause of love is desire to have it continuously (*Symp.* 206A). The assertion that the object of true love is the good and not something akin or ‘one’s own’ (*Symp.* 205E) is not only criticism

<sup>19</sup> Annas (1977), 535, to the contrary, regards this part of the *Lysis* as a blind passage of argumentation.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Euthyd.* 278E3–282A6; *Men.* 77B6–78B2.

of what Aristophanes has previously claimed about 'seeking one's other part', but it also disproves the final wrong turn in the argument of *Lys.* 221D–222A. The final stage of Socrates' speech (210A ff.) reveals in a somehow mystical way (compare the 'prophetic inspiration' in the corresponding passage in *Lys.* 216C–D) the gradual character of the pursuing the object of love – the good (*Symp.* 210A–212A).

### 5) The closing part

But the philosophically most important passage in both dialogues does not remain the last word: the dialogue is 'eased' by a comic part. In the *Lysis*, Socrates first commits a mistake in logical inferring.<sup>21</sup> Then, using an emotional sophistic means, which makes Lysis and Menexenus agree with next partial proposition,<sup>22</sup> Socrates arrives at the surprising conclusion, which benefits the lover Hippothales:<sup>23</sup> if anyone loves anyone else, he is related (*oikeion*) to the beloved one and (by the previous premise) must be loved by who is related to him (221E7–222A3). No wonder that, after involving the question of relation between *oikeion* and the good (222C), the dialogue ends in *aporia*. Finally, the aporetic situation is intensified by the wild intervention of the *paidagogoi* who brake off the discussion.

The comical act of Alcibiades in the *Symposium* along with what follows forms the last part of the dialogue. The author of the dialogue, similarly as in the *Lysis*, obviously did not want to finish with a positive account of love. The appearance of drunken Alcibiades and begin of the informal drinking party could be seen as corresponding to Socrates' deliberate corruption of the discussion and to the rude irruption of drunken *paidagogoi* in the *Lysis*.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> P1: Anyone who desires desires what he lacks (object of desire that is friendly to him). P2: That what he lacks is something that he is deprived of. C (partial): Thus the object of love, friendship and desire is something own and relative to him (*oikeion*) (*Lys.* 221E). [Failing (and questionable) premise P3: That what he is deprived of is something relative to him.]

<sup>22</sup> 'If you are *philo*, you are naturally related to one another' (*Lys.* 221E5-6)

<sup>23</sup> Note that Socrates suddenly begins to speak about erotic love instead of friendship (*Lys.* 222A).

<sup>24</sup> See the parallels between Alcibiades and Diotima drawn by Nussbaum (1986), 165-199; Rosen (1999), 278-327.

### III. Intertextual connections

It seems to be clear that both the *Lysis* and the *Symposium* operate with the same structure of five complex groups of belief. This striking similarity raises the question whether the author of the *Symposium* does not simply repeat the tried and tested scheme from the *Lysis*. What is more, Socrates uses in both dialogues very similar strategy of argumentation, disproves wrong belief and persuades the interlocutors by very similar means. We have even seen substantial correspondence between the ideas: Socrates in both dialogues arrives at the distinction between the cause and the goal of friendship and love (*Lys.* 218D8–9; *Symp.* 206A3–4). The cause is desire in both cases; the goal is the good in the *Symposium* and *prôton philon*, the last friendly thing, which must necessary be good (*Lys.* 219A–C, 221C), in the *Lysis*.

Yet, is this enough to claim intertextuality? Let us consider Rowe's point, namely that to admit a weaker correspondence of certain kind offers safer and more economical interpretation of the connections between the *Lysis* and the *Symposium*. Rowe's argument seems – if slightly specified – to be of crucial importance: What could have led the author to write two different dialogues on very similar topic, with very similar structure and succession of argumentation? A possible solution occurs, when we ask a related question concerning the similarity in structure: Is there any point in covering the most serious findings about friendship and love with a veil of mystical induction or prophetic inspiration and then even palliate them by a comic act? In what follows, I will consider the comical endings of both dialogues and, in light of it, somehow peculiar behaviour of Socrates in them.

#### 1) Contrasting ends

The aporetic ending of the *Lysis*, stressed by invasion of uncivil slaves and Socrates' exclamation of his ridiculousness (*Lys.* 223B), leaves the reader with an impression of unrest. The mature participants of the dialogue have been left to themselves, and the consequence is their alleged ridiculousness caused by their inability to give an appropriate account of friendship; moreover, their young pleasant companions have been taken away from them (*Lys.* 222D–E, 223B). The 'intonation' of the dialogue rises sharply to a question mark.

In the *Symposium*, by contrary, everything seems to support the impression that the answer has actually been given. Not even the wild entrée of Alcibiades, which disrupts the common praise of Socrates' performance, can spoil that impression. Since Alcibiades repeatedly acknowledges Socrates' victory (*Symp.* 213E, 219C, 220A, 222A), his act rather stresses the fact that Socrates' speech was



the final and correct pray of Eros. What happens thereafter is a slow calming of the scene by drinking and informal entertainment. Socrates, who is always drinking but never drunk, lulls his companions to sleep. The 'intonation' falls to complete peace of a sleeping man. Nothing could be more appropriate in this situation when answer has been given.

## 2) Socrates' behaviour

What is the reason of this striking contrast of the endings of both dialogues? Why does Plato give the full account of love in the *Symposium* but not in the *Lysis*? What does this strange combination of similarity in structure and direct contrast in the endings mean? A possible answer may be found in Socrates' somehow peculiar behaviour in both dialogues.

### a) Socrates' pretence

According to Szlezák, Socrates features in different roles in the *Symposium*.<sup>25</sup> Two most apparent of them stand opposed to each other: the role of 'elenchian' dialectician, who knows that he knows nothing (expressed by his position of Diotima's disciple), contrasts with the role of knowing, supreme and admired teacher (expressed in Alcibiades' apotheosis of Socrates). As Szlezák claims, the far more important and, in fact, the only authentic role of Socrates is the latter one.<sup>26</sup> Socrates knows about love and he only pretends his ignorance about it (and he also pretends to be but Diotima's student). The reason that leads him to pretend ignorance is his moderation and respect to the discussing society. Ironical fiction of his ignorance should protect him against the danger to behave like a self-confident expert. Such behaviour would have destructive effect on character of present youth.<sup>27</sup>

Socrates' behaviour in the *Lysis* seems to be similar; but, given the extraordinary youth of his audience, it is not surprising that he pretends even more here. Though Socrates is far from being ignorant about the nature of friendship and though he has already made important allusions to it (*prôton philon* as the goal of friendship, its closeness to the good, desire as the cause of friendship, and the 'middleness' of the loving subject), his aim is much more

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<sup>25</sup> Szlezák (2008).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> We have already seen educational fiasco of such conceited 'experts' like Eryximachus and Pausanias.

complex than simply give everything away. *Lysis* and *Menexenus* are young, inexperienced boys and Socrates knows that he should display a great deal of respect and moderation in relation to them. Thus one reason to pretend ignorance could very plausibly be analogical to Socrates' motives in the *Symposium*.

But why does Socrates not use the same figure as in the *Symposium*, i.e. to put the truth about friendship into the mouth of someone else? Educational poetry obviously does not exclude using narration. The reason for putting the plausible ideas of the philosophical part of the *Lysis* aside must be sought elsewhere than only in educational principles. In a word, though Socratic pretence plays an important role in both dialogues, the *Lysis* hides more. If we succeed in explaining the reason of this 'more', it can tell us much about the aims of the author.

#### b) Socrates' conflict of roles

The key consideration consists in connecting the interplay between the particular characters in the *Lysis* with what is said about different purposes of friendship at *Lys.* 210D. In order to understand this connection, one should focus closely on what is Socrates really doing in the *Lysis*.

In fact, Socrates' explicit aim in the *Lysis* is not to reveal the nature of friendship, but to show Hippothales how should one talk to one's beloved and (implicitly) to help him win *Lysis*. The argumentative fallacy at the end of the dialogue (*Lys.* 221D–E) has obviously been committed in favour of Hippothales (222A8; see above). This makes clear that Socrates in the *Lysis* is motivated not only by educational concern for the boys. We can even see that Socrates is somehow torn between wanting to be a good teacher and loyalty to Hippothales. The latter motive is obviously responsible for the failure of the argument, since it goes against the educational motives that would require a clear, un-sophistic reasoning. In other words, though it is obvious that 'true' educational speech should lower students' self-confidence, it seems hard to accept that it should proceed at the expense of logical trick.

We find Socrates in unusual situation, in which he is forced to choose between education and loyalty, and, moreover, between truth and cheating. Why does the author trap Socrates in such regrettable conflict of roles?

Loyalty appears to be something that has a value of its own. In present context (i.e. context of the dialogue about friendship), it is very likely that this loyalty is but another term for alliance or friendship. Socrates' motivation in this case would be then to become ally or friend of Hippothales. Since friendship is, according to *Lys.* 210D, motivated either by good or by usefulness, we can

consider Socrates' conflict of roles in the dialogue to be a dilemma between being a true teacher and being a useful or good friend.

### c) Socrates' self-irony

But Hippothales is not the only person whose friendship Socrates desires. There are altogether three passages in the dialogue, in which Socrates in somehow confidential spirit turns to his companions in order to attract their favour. The means, which should contribute to this intimacy, is Socrates' comicality of his self-characterization and openness to others.

When Socrates offers Hippothales to show how one should talk to *erômenos* he claims not to know about anything except the matters of love (*Lys.* 204B8–c2). At 211D–212A Socrates describes himself as a lifelong lover of friendship who nevertheless is far away from achieving it and who admires the lightness with which the young boys become friends. At *Lys.* 223B, Socrates' another self-characterisation addresses the difference of age again: Socrates presents himself as an old man (among other old men) who is ignorant about the question who is friend.

A common feature of all these characterisations (whose importance can also be seen in fact that they appear at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the dialogue) is the presence of self-ironic humour.<sup>28</sup> It is worth noting that in all three mentioned passages, Socrates' self-irony is directed to some of the present persons: in the first case it should promote trust in Hippothales, in the last case it should foster the feeling of solidarity among old men after the youth has been taken away.

In the second passage (*Lys.* 211D), where Socrates turns in confidence to Menexenus (though his speech is undoubtedly directed to both boys), the ironically tinged humour culminates. Socrates evokes a mood of confession; the humour of the situation is derived from the fact that it is not the young student who opens his heart to his experienced and sovereign teacher, but the old man who seeks pity and sympathy of the younger for his condition. The inversion of roles is distinct here and the author obviously wants us to notice it. Socrates confesses his age-long love for friends, which he equates to someone's soft spot for horses and dogs. At the moment when he – seemingly accidentally – follows up his comic swearword 'by dog' with a mention about passion for dogs,<sup>29</sup> the reader cannot resist thinking that Socrates wants to amuse the boys.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. *Lys.* 204E, 205C-D, 207A, C, 211C, E.

<sup>29</sup> '... horse or dog. I believe, by dog (!) ...' (*Lys.* 211E6)

In present context, I incline to believe that Socrates is motivated by his desire to make friends with the boys, the thing which he finds so hard to achieve.

If we look at the connection between the interplay of the particular characters and the motivation for friendship at 210D again, we can conclude that Socrates is surely beneficial to Hippothales (because he is helping him to achieve his goal) and good and beneficial to both Menexenos and Lysis (because his educational erotic poetry helps make them better men) and therefore, he can be considered friend of them.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, he still regrets that he cannot make friends with them in a spontaneous way such as they can. It does not play any role here whether this regret is or is not an irony; the fact of matter is that Socrates sees their spontaneous friendship which persists despite their character differences and he attempts to approach their spontaneity by humour.<sup>31</sup> Being humorous can thus be seen as, besides being good and being beneficial, the third motive for friendship. A short look at the Aristotelian account of friendship (*EN* VIII.3), which Plato surely anticipates here, offers the lacking conceptual framework for this third motive: being pleasant.

### 3) Socrates' 'tragedy'

However, Socrates' attempt is vain; he does not succeed in making spontaneous friends with the boys. The dramatic function of the arrival of the slaves is to symbolically highlight his failure. The connection between Socrates' behaviour and three different motives for friendship makes obvious that Socrates' failure has to do with his role of philosophical educator. The educator, whose goal is to make students good and wise, cannot – despite being self-ironical – be a pleasant friend. Being a genuine educator and not a sophistic courtier, he asks difficult questions, corrects and supervises the students.

This might be seen rather as a common experience from everyday life; but the *Lysis* shows that the situation is essentially tragic in nature: knowing of friendship implies inability of it. Friendship requires spontaneous and reciprocated committing oneself to another person. There is actual embodiment of such friendship in the *Lysis*, which needs no further comments – the relation between Lysis and Menexenos; they are real, sincere friends, even though their characters are quite different (and Plato spends a lot of time on making this obvious in the dialogue) and even though they have no real knowledge about

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<sup>30</sup> See Scott (2000), 74-80.

<sup>31</sup> And he succeeds sometimes, cf. 207c.

friendship they actually practice. On the other hand, Socrates, who obviously has knowledge of friendship, is not able to make friends with them. He is but a ridiculous comedian who is at the same time stuck in the tragic fate of an old philosopher.

Now, I wish to claim that the intertextual connection between the *Lysis* and the *Symposium* conveys that that failure of educating philosopher to make friends happens not accidentally, but necessarily. This failure could be in light of the *Lysis* alone seen as caused by the fact of Socrates' 'double allegiance' (to the boys and to Hippothales): who keeps a foot in both camps cannot become a real friend of anybody; and the arrival of the slaves makes the situation impossible to improve.

However, the ending of the *Symposium* shows that Socrates could hardly succeed even if he were not in conflict of roles and even if slaves would have not appeared. In the *Symposium*, Socrates is obviously not burdened by double allegiance. He successfully ignores every attempt to distract him from the substantial core of what he wants to say; he even seems not to be moved by Alcibiades' profession of love. It might look that the *Symposium* presents more matured Socrates whose developed metaphysics and dialectics have helped him solve his dilemmas of friendship from the *Lysis*.<sup>32</sup>

But in fact, the tragedy of philosophical educator happens in the *Symposium* again. Agathon, who is absolutely ignorant about true love, is the beloved of Pausanias; the same goes for Phaedrus and Eryximachus. Socrates, on the other hand, having complete knowledge of love, cannot help correcting and preach at others as Alcibiades rightly condemns. He is the one who is always right and who cannot help cheating and humiliating in actual love relationships (though with good intentions).

It would be mistake to think that there is not a sign of double motivation in what Socrates does in the *Symposium*. His conception of middle Eros is not a purely theoretical concept; its other task is to show that Socrates, who seemingly is motivated only by the heavenly good and beauty, is still capable of human friendship. This is what could go unnoticed unless we consider the *Symposium* together with the *Lysis*. The difference in endings of both dialogues brilliantly reveals their profound similarity; the disquieting end of the *Lysis* shows that Socrates in the *Symposium* has overcome the gap between human and divine love only seemingly. In fact, he is doomed to leave the symposium alone after lulling everyone to sleep.

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<sup>32</sup> This is a standard genetic account of the development of Plato's thought.

If this interpretation is correct, then both the *Lysis* and the *Symposium* need each other in order to give full account of Socrates' problem. Without the *Symposium*, *aporia* in the *Lysis* can be considered as an outcome of Socrates' double allegiance. Without the *Lysis*, one could oversee the hints to the same point in the *Symposium*. Shortly, both dialogues obviously represent parts of the same project. But what is exactly the nature of this project and does it provide an answer to Rowe's problem?

#### 4) Destiny of the philosopher

There are in fact two conceptions of love and friendship: human and divine. Although Socrates knows that value of divine love is much higher (and – knowing this – he is familiar with divine love), he equally knows that he lacks lower, human love. Although Socrates tries to overcome the gap between human and divine love by the conception of 'middle' Eros that is able to link both spheres (the link to which is the 'middleness' of the subject of friendship in the *Lysis*), his actual behaviour convicts him of a failure. Socrates, much like his Eros, to whom he has been compared, cannot narrow this tragic gap. The *Lysis* shows that Socrates is aware of this tragedy; his awareness gives evidence that he was far from ignoring personal love, as Vlastos puts it.

But despite the tragic comedy, one of the answers to the problem of love and friendship still remains higher. Socrates is unpleasant, but he has the divine answer. Plato reminds us of this fundamental possibility of human life again.<sup>33</sup> Decision for philosophy inevitably means decision for solitude. This holds even though Socrates is constantly surrounded by the crowd of students; his behaviour in both dialogues about friendship and love shows that educational-philosophical partnership is not able to do justice to everything which man could hope for in loving. The genuine comic tragedy of the philosopher lies in the fact that he, in important respects, remains solitary. In this very sense, Socrates before his death, far from taking into account those who remain,<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> It is entirely possible that Plato himself never felt it necessary to narrow the gap between human and divine love. Since divine love offers the most ample recompense for all the human trouble, Plato could be content with what we call 'destiny of the philosopher'. Yet, it is the stamp of Plato's greatness as a philosopher that even though he developed this 'philosophical' solution of the problem he endeavours not to conceal the other side of story, which may be considered tragic by others.

<sup>34</sup> See especially *Phaed.* 60A.

displays the attitude of philosopher. Just in this sense, Jan Patočka said about Heidegger's death (only several months before his own death) that it was the most meaningful thing Heidegger could ever do.<sup>35</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

The *Lysis* and the *Symposium* represent a pair, in which intertextuality works. Both dialogues can be divided into five complex groups that are mutually connected. These intertextual connections strengthen the given ideas, among which the most important are the principles of education and the distinction between the goal and the cause of love and friendship.

What is more, conceived as a pair, the dialogues answer one of the most acute questions that philosophers have to face, namely: How does philosophy affect relation of the philosopher to his fellowmen? This question is not directly addressed in either of the dialogues (and is thereby one of the great topics that Plato does not want to make explicit). But both dialogues, being the parts of a continuous project, suggest, in the intertextual context, an answer to this question.

To be sure, this is not to say that nothing has been changed between the *Lysis* and the *Symposium*. On the contrary, the philosophical theory of love could possibly have been improved; at any rate, it is now explicitly founded in Plato's metaphysics. Yet, this improvement applies primarily to what we have called divine love; the key insight concerning the human love is held unchanged throughout both dialogues. Again, this cannot occur as long as we consider the dialogues separately. Reading the *Lysis* in the light of the *Symposium* clarifies the philosophical theory of love and friendship; reading of the *Symposium* in the light of the *Lysis* reveals that some dilemmas concerning the human love remain and must be displayed again. Thus, despite Rowe's doubts, intertextuality does not necessarily imply resolution of all questions about chronological succession of Plato's dialogues.

As we have seen, the answer to above mentioned question emerges when we ask: What reason could have let Plato to discredit his substantial findings about love and friendship by the mystic and humorous factor at the scene? While mysticism is an educational means of the knowing but humble teacher, who wants to raise the soul of his students to the philosophical heights, humour is a means through which he tries to be an amusing companion. It need not

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<sup>35</sup> See Rezek (1993), 54.

be stressed that these two tasks pull against each other. Socrates spends a lot of time in trying to overcome this opposition. While in the *Symposium* the involvement of 'middle' Eros makes this attempt more theoretical, his comic acting in the *Lysis* can be interpreted as a practical attempt to become friend.

Nevertheless, the *Lysis* shows that though Socrates succeeds in being a good educator he fails in being an amusing companion. In the *Symposium*, though he has convinced everybody of the connection between divine and human love, he still has not overcome solitude of the philosopher. We have seen that in the contemporary philosophy the same point has been recognised; it can hardly be expressed more lucidly than Heidegger puts it: 'Im Denken wird jeglich Ding einsam und langsam.'<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Heidegger (1983), 81.