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THE INTERPERSONAL ASPECT OF EROS IN PLATO'S "SYMPOSIUM."

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I, PH.D., 1978

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THE INTERPERSONAL ASPECT OF EROS
IN PLATO'S SYMPOSIUM

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI\'I IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN PHILOSOPHY AUGUST 1978

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This dissertation is an investigation of the nature and rationale of the interpersonal aspect of human love (eros) as this is presented by Plato in the Symposium. The specific task is to establish the status and function of individual persons within the scheme of erotic possibilities designated in the speech given by Socrates in the Symposium.

The initial impetus of the study is provoked by a critical interpretation of Plato's position which is designated as the ideocentric view of love. Simply stated, this account maintains that inasmuch as Ideas (or Forms) are the only truly satisfying, real, and proper objects of human eros, individual persons are necessarily relinquished and rightly transcended as legitimate objects worthy in themselves of erotic attention. Interpersonal erotic relations function, in this metaphysical context, merely as a means or a beginning step in the ascending hierarchy of erotic relations which culminate in love of Ideas.

On the basis of my analysis of the dramatic action between Agathon and Socrates, especially, and the nature of erotic development, the intentional structure and constitutive mission of the erotic psyche, as presented in the teaching of Diotima, I maintain that the following propositions are substantiated.
(1) The ideocentric interpretation of the significance and status of other persons is mistaken. The beloved, personal other is not simply an object of erotic utility nor is this other excluded from the affairs of right eros.

(2) Idea-love and person-love are compatible; self-regard and other-regard are not mutually exclusive forms of love.

(3) Idea-love is the condition for proper love of others.

(4) Idea-love entails love of others inasmuch as it is virtuous and prosperous love which is generative of virtue. Conversely, non-interpersonal love is defective love because it is non-productive.

(5) The other is loved for his own good, as he is in himself for his own completion and consequent knowledge, virtue, and happiness. The other is loved with a love which encourages him to realize his own better, ideal self.

(6) Ideocentric love functions as generative, productive activity in relation to others in two basic forms: productive-guiding (elenctic, maieutic, etc.) love and, when the individuals involved are virtuous and knowledge-able, as flourishing, mutually productive friendship.

(7) Proper philosophy involves the engagement of the lover in the active exercise and expression of interpersonal love by means of rhetorically appropriate, psychologically effective, and dialectically accurate dialogue which is envy-free and bounteous in its love.
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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is an investigation of the nature and rationale of the interpersonal aspect of human love (eros) as this is presented by Plato in the Symposium. The specific task is to establish the status and function of individual persons within the scheme of erotic possibilities designated in the speech given by Socrates in the Symposium and ascertain thereby the intelligible existential basis and end, the phenomenological-dialectical structure, and the significance allotted by Plato to the interpersonal aspect of eros.

The initial impetus of this study is provoked by a critical interpretation of Plato's position which is designated here as the ideocentric view of love. Simply stated, this account maintains that, inasmuch as Ideas (or Forms: eide, ideai) are the only truly satisfying, real, and proper objects of human eros, individual persons are necessarily relinquished and rightly transcended as legitimate objects worthy in themselves of erotic attention. Interpersonal erotic relations function, in this metaphysical context, merely as a means or a beginning step in the ascending hierarchy of erotic relations which culminate in love of Ideas. Because persons are not the proper object of human

*All notations are placed at the end of each chapter.
eros, there can be no authentic interpersonal love for Plato. Interpersonal love relations cannot, by their very nature, fulfill the goal or end of eros and persons must rightly be replaced by the truly lovable objects for human existence such as beauty itself, goodness, and justice. The true beloved objects are, therefore, inevitably and necessarily non-human. The authentic **telos** of love is the true happiness of the virtuous (**arete**) and excellent (**kalon**) person which is produced by the intercourse not of individual with individual but by the intercourse of individual psyche and Ideas.

I propose to exhibit the inadequacy of the ideocentric interpretation of Plato's account of eros. Very briefly stated, this will be accomplished (1) by clarifying the status of individual persons as objects of love within the material which Plato sets forth in the *Symposium* to elaborate and specify possibilities of human erotic relationships. Attention devoted to Plato's presentation will reveal a kind of "dialectic of erotic relationships." At different phases of the process of personal transformation, the significance of an individual as an object of love will vary for the erotic agent according to the nature of erotic composure that is achieved. Examination of this advancement will confirm that the ideocentric analysis of interpersonal love is mistaken about the supposed incompatibility between Idea-love and person-love and, more generally, about the nature and function of person-to-person erotic relationships.
Further support is obtained (2) through an explication of the kind of activities and the dynamics of interrelationships that are appropriate for an erotic agent in the developed phases of erotic progression. The role of a cognitive spectator of the Ideas, where there is a realization of a kind of celestial (rational, mystical) contemplation of the ideal, an ecstasy of the eidetic realities, is not the terminal phase of human erotic performance. The ideocentric position adopts an illegitimately restricted position on the nature of the activities appropriate to the proper functioning of human eros and it thus fails adequately to appraise and appreciate the interpersonal consequences comprised in the constitution and operation of advanced eros. Other individuals do become implicated in the exercise of love in ways significantly different from that described by or entailed in the ideocentric view.

Each of these points is based upon material directly affirmed by Socrates in the dialogue when he is dealing with questions concerning the nature of eros. But there is additional, significant, corroborating evidence that can be derived (3) from the organizational structure and the dramatical composition of the work as well. By means of an appraisal of the ordering of ideas, events, and responses, the description of personal details and activities, especially regarding the manner of communication employed by Socrates, further clarification about the nature of the interpersonal aspect of eros is made available.
The material of the Symposium can receive additional clarification (4) from the Phaedrus. This other dialogue also addresses the question of eros, and because it contains important information about interpersonal erotic matters, some reference to it will provide not only confirmation of some of the details of the Symposium but it will also supply additional information which will positively supplement the account given in the Symposium.

On the basis of these considerations (1-4), I will argue that the ideocentric interpretation is a serious misrepresentation of the material in the Symposium bearing upon the character of erotic development, personal identity, and the good life for humans. Although Ideas have a definite and indispensible place within the context of proper erotic development, the ideocentric analysis nevertheless misconstrues the nature of interpersonal love and the status of individuals as objects of eros within the overall scheme of eros. The individual is neither eliminated nor reduced in status to an object of instrumental value for the benefit of superior erotic pursuits. Phenomenologically and dialectically the ideocentric view will be shown to be a mistaken analysis of the nature of interpersonal love in Plato's Symposium.

I intend to establish, therefore, that interpersonal love has a significant and integral place in Plato's depiction of legitimate human erotic possibilities and the achievement of the good life, what place it does have, how
interpersonal eros operates, and the purpose, goal, and value it has for human life. Although I do not purport to be a partisan of Plato's philosophy, I am one who wants to understand his position better, convinced that such examination and clarification is valuable in itself and in other respects which have a bearing upon alternative philosophical positions that are beyond the focus of this project. The interpretation that is developed in the text I claim to be a more adequate interpretation of the interpersonal aspect of Platonic eros than that given by the ideocentric position. It will contribute substantially to a better understanding of the nature and possibilities of eros in the dialogues and the prevailing personally constitutive, educative, and eudaimonistic value of human interpersonal relationships within the philosophical orientation and methodology of Plato.

A.

I have chosen to begin this investigation by setting forth the general, elementary problematics of interpersonal love through a brief analysis of the intentional structure of love. Chapter I identifies the basic components of interpersonal love and examines the determination of its meaning by assessing the nature of the object, the subject, and the relationship as constitutive factors of interpersonal love.

Two problems of special significance arise in the attempt to determine the nature of the object of love in the
context of interpersonal love. The **ontological** (or metaphysical) issue can be formulated in terms of the following basic questions:

What is the nature of an individual person as an object of love?

What precisely is loved when one individual loves another?

The **normative** issue can be formulated in terms of the following basic questions:

Why should another person be the object of love?

What precisely about another person should be loved by a lover?

An explication and justification of a lover's position on such a self-involving and important aspect of personal experience very quickly involves quite troublesome, complicating, and consequential issues. Yet, an understanding of these questions seems to be imperative for a proper determination of love.

Two significantly different ways of determining the lovability or erotic merit of another person can be distinguished. An individual may love another individual because of the properties (qualities, attributes) of the other individual or an individual may love the other person because that individual is taken to be an intrinsically lovable object as a person. These two ways of identifying and evaluating a lovable object I will call **property-love** and **person-love** respectively. Roughly construed, the
Platonic-Aristotelian tradition has expressed and operated according to the principles of property-love, whereas the Christian agape tradition has affirmed the value of person-love.

These two orientations reveal that interpersonal love can be rendered intelligible and significant according to two quite different ontological and normative schemas. Each is able to account for and justify itself by reference to formidable and convincing analytic considerations. These positions are also important in their own right because each develops explanations of love which are directly applicable to the practical love life of every person. Once we are cognizant of each position, both ways of loving seem important to us. But (i) inasmuch as a lover cannot love another person in both ways at once, i.e., these two ways of loving are not compatible with each other, and (ii) because each account of love, despite its persuasive character based upon impressive grounds, also appears to contain rather serious deficiencies in its analysis and method of human loving, the exposition of both forms of love (in Chapter I) as constituting significant options for human decision brings to the fore difficult and important issues which stand as a challenge for any concerned lover and any theory of love to resolve.

In Chapter I, the exposition and critique of these two basic forms of love is presented. These considerations are of interest in themselves but they are also important in
relation to the history of theories which attempt to explicate the nature of love. In the case of Plato, the type of analysis characteristic of property-love is actually exemplified in the ideocentric critique of Plato's theory of love. Seeing the relationship between property-love and the ideocentric critique is of value because it makes apparent that Plato's position is an extension of a type of love which is very natural to the way that people ordinarily administer their affections. But what is most important to realize is that the explanation of love presented in the Symposium contains an account of love which appears to avoid the major defects of the pure forms of property-love as well as person-love and which yet relies upon important aspects of each form of love. Hence, one way to formulate the main contention of this dissertation is in terms of the claim that Plato presents a view of interpersonal love which includes as part of the determination of its object, first, a recognition of intrinsic value inherent in the beloved person, second, an assessment of the personal characteristics of the beloved, an appraisal of his/her properties, and, third, a desire to associate with the other, to work with and strive together toward the realization of those things which are productive of the virtuous and happy life. The lover grants to the other a basic value, appraises the qualities possessed by the other, and aspires to develop a genial, enthusiastic, productive relationship devoted to the formation of a good life with the other.
Interestingly enough, I think that it is this aspect of Plato's theory which aligns it with a person's pre-theoretical (pre-conceptual, pre-thematized) "understanding" of the meaning available to human existence through love and it is this fundamental correspondence which makes the often maligned "Platonic love" or "Platonic friendship" a nevertheless very appealing and promising notion about human interrelationships. Plato's account of love combines the most intimate concern for "soul formation," it preserves and promotes independence and responsibility, it realizes the value of proper companion-ship and the benefits of interpersonal association and mutual discipline. His conception of love functions to promote the good and beautiful life for each person and it furthers the drive to apprehend and appreciate these qualities in the most comprehensive ways, in all facets of the world, but especially in association with other persons.

Because of these important factors, I have specified in some detail these basic alternate methods of selecting a lovable object as a significant problematical issue at the outset in order to gain a better measure of the nature and significance of Plato's position.

Chapter II is an elaboration of the ideocentric interpretation of the nature of love and the character of Socrates in the dialogues. The ideocentric structure of Plato's theory, though by no means unacknowledged or
unappreciated in the literature, has been delineated with acute and compelling clarity by several contemporary philosophers in such a way as to exhibit unmistakably a serious critical fault in Plato's philosophy of love and, more generally, his view of human beings and the nature of their interrelationships. Gregory Vlastos, for one, states that it is "the cardinal flaw in Plato's theory." In effect, the criticism amounts to an objection to the educational process which is central to Plato's view of the development of the individual and the polis. The way that is layed out (in the Symposium, Republic, and Phaedrus especially) for a person as an erotic being to progress is seen to be the exact portion of Plato's analysis that relegates other human beings to a role in which they are to be exploited and eclipsed for the self-benefit and cultural advance of the one who is learning about himself and reality. From the experience of sexual and aesthetic attraction, to socio-political engagements and enterprises, to theoretical and intellectual endeavors, this whole range of activities and accomplishments is set within an interpersonal context whose teleological (or axiological) structure confers upon other persons instrumental value for the lover. Other persons are of merit and are lovable only insofar as they may function in a relationship which leads the lover on to more lovable, remunerative objects and relationships. Since other persons function, by their very nature, as limited erotic objects to be utilized by the lover, all types of person-to-person
relationships turn out to be subordinate and dispensable relationships formed for the purpose of advancing the affective and epistemic conditions of the loving agent. Other individual persons, as erotic objects, are of inferior efficacy and value. Affiliation with them is to serve higher, non-interpersonal ends. Hence, no one person deserves either exclusive or primary erotic attention because every individual is by nature unable satisfactorily to fulfill the true aspirations of an erotic agent. As such, person-to-person love would be an erotic mis-match because other persons are not the objects ontologically suited to the erotic striving of an individual lover.

To be more precise, however, it is important to say that individuals themselves do have an erotic worth inasmuch as they embody (instantiate, represent, bear) properties such as beauty and goodness. But as it turns out, these properties have a reality, a "heritage" or an ontological linkage to that which is actually superior to the particular properties of persons themselves, and these properties are independently accessible in a more complete way than when manifested in the existence of any human being. Yet, these properties, as they appear in interpersonal relations, are the quantified properties of a particular person and they can function as an affective and cognitive stimulant which may entice the lover on to the better, purer manifestations of these properties. In this context, then, the other person is actually a rather low-grade aggregation of physical and psychical
properties which should function as the site where true reality begins to show itself. The experience of interpersonal erotic stimulation is an initiation into the power which propels and attracts the eros of a lover toward the discovery of things that extend far beyond those particular properties of a beloved person. And within such a context, when loved as congeries of valuable qualities, persons cannot compete with abstractions of universal significance, like schemes of social reform or scientific and philosophical truths, still less with the Idea of Beauty in its sublime transcendence, "pure clear, unmixed, not full of human flesh and color and other mortal nonsense" (Sym. 211e). The high climactic moment of fulfillment--the peak achievement of which all lesser loves are to be "used as steps"--is the one farthest removed from affection for concrete human beings. 4

To love such an individual human object, then, is comparable to a person loving a photograph (dream image, memory, or imaginative projection) of the beloved rather than the actual beloved as s/he exists in his/her own right. Ordinary human love takes as its object properties of a lesser degree of reality (i.e., copies, appearances) rather than relating to the more real properties themselves that are more truly lovable. The properly developing lover, however, learns to advance by passing from the love of properties of a person to the more complete manifestations of these properties in other objects. Becoming knowledgeable in the ways of eros, the lover comes to understand this progression to the truly real eidetic objects and, because of this more comprehensive experience, he becomes a lover of the ideal objects themselves.
In such a framework, persons are not really loved in themselves because these other more valuable and real properties are not identical with or reducible to the actual properties of the existent person. If it does make any sense at all to speak of personal love, then again Vlastos seems to state the matter succinctly:

As a theory of love of persons, this is the crux: What we are to love in persons is the "image" of the Idea in them. We are to love the person so far, and only insofar, as they are good and beautiful...(but) if our love for them is to be only for their virtue and beauty, the individual, in the uniqueness and integrity of his or her individuality, will never be the object of our love.

This would mean that a "person" is to be understood as an entity with numerous properties, some of which may represent the eidetic realities sufficiently to qualify him/her as a lovable object.

In order to set forth this sequence distinctly in terms of the experience of a lover, let us suppose, as the first aspect of erotic cathexis, that a person is an attractive presentment of virtue and beauty and exists as a concrete, in the flesh, manifestation of lovable properties. Although one might think it proper to state that the lover loves this person because of his/her beauty, the lover really loves this person-object for its link with the eidetic, with that beauty more whole, pure, and truly wonderous in nature which he unknowingly keys upon in his impulse toward the beloved. This link, as the second aspect of erotic cathexis, is composed of the lovable properties of the person identified as images of the Ideas. The properties are now "sub-ideal"
properties which depend for their being upon the eidetic elements. Their value comes not from themselves but from their dependence upon the eidetic. Hence, it is not correct to say that the lover has as his object of love the individual as a particular person. The lover may not actually realize it, may be deceived about it or refuse to acknowledge it, but the person loved is really loved for his/her beauty because (and only insofar as) this beauty is an image of the truly lovable object, beauty itself. Or more accurately put, the person is loved for the beauty that s/he presents because this beauty is an image of absolute beauty. In this sense, then, beauty which happens to be embodied in or borne by a person is the object of love and not either the person or any of that person's properties insofar as they are identified simply as that person's properties. The other person may very well become the object of appreciation because his properties function to reveal the eidetic, but this does not make the person himself the actual object of love.

One cannot terminate the matter here, however. According to Plato's metaphysics, these lovable properties have, as the third aspect, an ontological basis (original "archetype") that surpasses the properties of the actual individual as well as these properties taken as an image of the ideal. As such, the beloved person himself really becomes a means or medium (imitation, likeness) which the lover may use in order to transcend to the "divine" originals themselves. The knowledgeable lover quite rightly will pass beyond the
derivative and dependent properties of the individual person in order to contact the truly lovable primordial properties as they exist in themselves. One must recognize, then, that on this level of realization

One interesting aspect of this elevation of an intellectual vision of and union with the Beautiful itself is that it is at the same time a radical devaluation of all other human pursuits. Except for this union, man as a whole becomes mortal trash.7

Although 'trash' is a rather harsh translation of phyarias (Sym. 211e), it is still clear that, when this metaphysical orientation is allowed to determine the nature of human love, interpersonal love cannot amount to much more than mortal foolishness because it is made up of two persons who are brought together by aspirations the true goals of which are impossible to achieve by interpersonal relationship. The nature of the constituents involved and the type of relations effected by personal interaction preclude it.8

For the holistic benefit and the affective and cognitive well-being of all individuals, person-to-person erotic relationships must be relinquished for the sake of person-to-Idea relationships. Interpersonal relations should at best be allowed to function for the service of proper eros and one should never confer upon persons the value-status of intrinsically lovable objects.9 This does not mean that individuals should cease to interrelate and interact in numerous ways, for that possibility would be both unrealistic and unreasonable. But human relationships should be organized to enhance the proper formation and direction of the erotic
powers of individuals and not allow these powers to become fixated in futile ways upon inappropriate objects.

So even though one admits that eros does not take as its object whole persons, it is also important to realize that loving the image of the Idea in a person is not the same as loving that person as a particular person. The lover is faced with a continuum of ontologically distinct objects available for his erotic cathexis, from objects with physical (or psychical) properties, to these properties as copies or images of eidetic "properties," and finally the eidetic realities themselves. It may be that one stage in the erotic development of a lover requires the kind of love which relates to another person as embodying properties that represent to some significant degree the eidetic realities. But even this stage of eros is restricted, incomplete, imperfect, and preparatory. Its admission is based upon its pedagogical value and one should not simply present it as Plato's view of the true and fully realized stage of human eros nor as the authentic and proper object of human eros.

On the basis of these considerations, one is compelled to assert that true love is the love of Ideas and this eidetic love transcends the interpersonal realm completely. In Hippias I, Socrates uses this comparison: As the most beautiful of monkeys is ugly when compared to humans, so humans are ugly when compared to a god in beauty, wisdom,
and everything else (cf. 289ab). And if, as is stated in the Phaedrus, the gods are divine because of their communion with the Ideas (249c), the pre-eminent status of the Ideas as the true end of human eros is, for Plato, beyond question. It is not at all correct, then, to assert in this more general context that other persons are appropriate objects of love for human beings. The erotic natures of individuals have been cast into a differently ordered universe where the erotic goal is not other human beings but other, more worthy, objects of experience. Not to realize this terribly important fact about the overall nature of things is to prevent the realization of the true happiness that is possible for human existence. It is to confer value upon a deficient type of love; it is to support the incorrect principle that persons are made to love one another and that human erotic interrelationships are productive of real happiness and fulfillment.

C.
1.

The development of a justifiable response to the merits and deficiencies of this ideocentric position requires a careful rethinking and explication of the relevant Platonic texts. Chapters III and IV examine the nature and content of the speech given by Socrates in the Symposium. By attending to the intentional structure and constitutive mission of eros presented in this material, the following
sequence in the erotic development of the human psyche requires consideration:

Phase

1. common eros of the sensible (aisthetikon, horaton) realm,
2. aspiring eros of the eidetic-noetic realm,
3. productive-guiding eros of the interpersonal realm,
4. mutually progressive eros of philia.

By following the progressive constitution of erotic comportment as this is described in the dialogues, it becomes clear that the proper development of the erotic agent includes consequences that follow from the advancement of phases 1 and 2 which significantly alter the character of the operations and dynamics appropriate to effective eros. These changes entail a transformation in the nature of interpersonal relations for that erotic agent. In phases 1 and 2, the relationships of interpersonal eros serve the personal ends of the lover. Each is basically a self-referring and self-benefiting form of love. The lover is concerned to address himself to the properties possessed by the best beloved objects because this relation is productive of his own happiness and well-being. In phases 3-4, interpersonal eros serves ends which extend beyond the self of the lover. The activities become productive rather than acquisitive, the relationships become oriented to the other. The erotic agent is concerned to deal with, edify, enrich, be creative with, and make possible the genuine gratification
of the particular beloved. The person who became the natural exploited object of eros in phase 1 and who was necessarily surpassed in the purified form of property-love of phase 2 emerges again as a vital factor, becoming the object of erotic activity appropriate to phases 3 and 4. This latter form of interpersonal eros relates the lover directly and concretely to the beloved person with goodwill, care, affection, beneficial service, and inspiring mutuality. It endeavors to enhance the integrity and aid in the realization of the true freedom and self-enlightenment of the beloved. It relates to the other (i) as the particular unique individual that the other is, i.e., as he is in himself, and (ii) for just that person's sake, i.e., for the other's own good.

This position is directly opposed to the ideocentric interpretation of the status of persons in Plato's account of love. Although Plato's presentation contains numerous literary devices which employ metaphor, mythical stories, and other symbolic-indirect material, I maintain that Socrates' speech nevertheless provides support not only for the compatibility of eros-for-Ideas and eros-for-persons but they in fact exhibit a positive, inherent connection between the two forms of love in such a way that the right development and expression of one (phase 2) naturally effects the formation and exercise of the other (phases 3-4). Proper love gains, thereby, an important interpersonal aspect which functions in the world through words and deeds for the good
of a beloved who is met in the uniqueness of that person's own individual situation. In interpersonal eros the lover intentionally and artfully attends to the beloved's condition for the betterment of the beloved as this is made possible through the accessibility and effect of beauty and goodness.

A careful analysis of the dialogues does reveal the importance accorded by Plato to the significance, value, and achievement which is made possible by means of interpersonal eros and the communicative co-presence (or dialogical togetherness) constitutive of this love relation.

Negatively stated, then, the dissertation will show that the ideocentric interpretation is an inaccurate because incomplete representation of Plato's position on the proper formation and expression of human eros. It is mistaken, very simply, because it asserts that love of the beautiful (or the good) and love of a person are, in the strict sense, two mutually exclusive forms of eros. According to this account, Plato accepts Idea-love but he rejects person-love. This, I claim, is either simply incorrect or formulated in a seriously misleading way, one that certainly misrepresents the structure and contents of the dialogues.

In addition, the ideocentric interpretation requires correction because it limits the significance of other persons in interpersonal relationships to that of objects of erotic-philosophical utility, compounds which are material representations of ideal realities. Within such an elitist and transcendent setting, interpersonal relationship and
interpersonal communication become predominately exploitive, an opportunity for the lover to exercise his own erotic-dialectical proficiency and obtain thereby his own personal happiness. Such a lover is unabashedly egocentric and personally alienated from others because what matters is his own self (or the state of his own soul) and the perfect world of Ideas. The ideocentric orientation excludes other factors. This assessment, too, I claim is incorrect.

Upon reflection, however, what is perhaps most surprising about the ideocentric account is the crucial fact that it does not really attend sufficiently to the relation between a lover and the Ideas, or between self-love and Idea-love, i.e., the very thing that it emphasizes!

In some sense, the claim that the ultimate objects of eros for Plato are the Ideas is undeniably true. The dialogues leave no doubt about this. But is this not a simplistic claim that is not really comprehensible until an explanation of the nature of the relationship between the person and the Ideas is provided? Because eidetic love might function as the condition for the realization of both self-love and interpersonal love rather than the exclusion of either (or both), the position which reasons that (i) eros is directed toward Ideas; (ii) persons are not Ideas; (iii) therefore, persons are not the object of eros might very well be presenting a premature conclusion about the overall status of interpersonal eros and the operations
appropriate to erotic activity. Even the position which states that (i) **eros is directed toward Ideas**; (ii) persons present images (or modified versions) of Ideas; (iii) therefore, the images of Ideas in a person qualify that person as a legitimate but subordinate object of eros is not conclusive because the relationship between a person (whatever a person really is), "his" images (as being "of" the Ideas), and Ideas themselves is not clearly established. Besides, the dialogues never suggest that a lover should be willing to settle for the image of the Ideas--the earthly likenesses of goodness, beauty, and justice in other people. Rather, the effort of proper education in love is to behold in the images the nature of that which they imitate or resemble in order that, in the end, the lover will come to know what the Ideas are themselves, to know divine beauty itself in its unique form (Sym. 211c-e). At this point ideocentrism takes its leave and does not sufficiently take heed of the consequences which follow from this "final" stage, i.e., the actual way that the lover is effected by his experience of the eidetic realities.

It is important to see, in this regard, that the ideocentric orientation is enhanced considerably by formulating the problematics of this issue in such a way that the only viable response seems to be the ideocentric position. But the main question which it asks, i.e., "What is the object of love in Plato's dialogues?" is referring to a deceptively
complex situation. The question tempts one to view this matter too simply, as if the whole labor of eros is to be explained in the establishment of the relation between psyche and Ideas. Undoubtedly Ideas are the object of eros in a crucial and important sense. But might there not be other objects of eros where the term 'objects' has a different but nevertheless legitimate sense? Take, for example, a comparable context. A Christian theist might state that the ultimate object of love for humans is God. God alone is that object in relationship to which one may find fulfillment. Other possible objects of love such as persons cannot compete with God as meriting love...and so on. On the basis of this position one can elaborate a theocentric analysis of human love. The question at issue here, however, is whether or not such an analysis excludes per se love of other persons. Does the assertion that the only truly worthy, ultimately satisfying and real object of love is Ideas (God, Allah, Brahman) mean that all other expressions of love are excluded so that there are no other objects which function as legitimate conferees of love? The ideocentric position makes it seem as if persons are logically denied the status of lovable objects because of their ontological constitution, i.e., by virtue of the deficient nature of human beings, eros is (must be qua proficient) exclusively ideocentric. But this conclusion does not follow if other persons can be objects of a love which is a consequence of the establishment of Idea-love (or, in the other contexts, God-love, etc.).
I suggest that what can be shown in the case of Plato is that, in the same way that it is not correct to assert that a person can love the Ideas and not apply this love to himself (or exercise this love in relation to himself), so it is not correct to assert that a person loves Ideas and does not apply this love to (or exercise this love upon) others. But the application of this love to others means that the other person is an object of that person's love. As phase 2 necessarily includes the self-reflexive character of erotic development, i.e., Idea-love as a type of self-love, exercised in relation to oneself as lover, so phases 3-4 exemplify exactly the situation where a person's love is exercised in relation to other persons. Personal love becomes interpersonal love by means of an inherent manifestation of that which results from the relationship between psyche and Ideas. The ideocentric analysis, however, fails to deal with these aspects of Plato's position or it attempts to reduce these to a form of Idea-love or love for the sake of Ideas via images. This failure prevents one from appreciating the manner in which proper eros operates not only in a personal way but in significantly interpersonal ways, in love's exercise or applicability as being good, as being determined by the eidetic in relation to others.

This inadequacy of the ideocentric position makes problematical the analysis of personal (or self) identity in Plato's writings and the nature of the formation of
character (or the development of psyche) which is so important in the dialogues. And because of this lacuna, little sense can be made of what it might mean to love another person inasmuch as an understanding of the "inner workings" of personal eros (and what oneself is as a human person or how one becomes as a person) is required before one can begin to explain and evaluate interpersonal eros. But Plato's accounts do indicate an integral relationship (in phases 3-4) between self-love, Idea-love, and interpersonal love. So the ideocentric position, by proceeding in the way that it does, in fact excludes the very data which would allow for an explanation of the nature of interpersonal love.

Positively stated the dissertation will show that the lover who progresses rightly through the transforming process of erotic development will act in such a way as to love other individual persons. An intimate fidelity to and concern for the other is entailed in the erotic transformation of the lover. According to Plato's presentation, there is a significant and definite interpersonal aspect comprised in right love. Other persons are not simply relegated in status to the kind of object that is placed on a progressive (ontological-axiological) scale for the pleasure or benefit of a lover's own personal experience. Dialogue, learning, co-inspiration, mutuality, generosity, integrity, and liberation show themselves to be some of the important characteristics included in the higher expressions of erotic life described by Plato. In the effort to care for oneself
(or one's soul), the proper operation of eros has important, constitutive, interpersonal soul-forming functions. Love is a creative, formative endeavor which thrives on the pursuit, encounter, and realization of beauty and goodness. This process is at its best in proper interpersonal erotic situations and this process operates and works through the lover for the betterment of the beloved as he is in his own unique, concrete individuality.

Additional clarification of the status of interpersonal eros important for this thesis can be obtained reflectively by assessing the way that Plato structures his writing on this subject. Three quite different but interrelated aspects of his work require distinction. The first is necessary and most obvious. It is what faces one as one reads: the descriptive and phenomenological account of Eros. This ideational or conceptual organization is essential to comprehension and explanation. Secondly, Plato is also working with these contents in a consciously critical and existentially calculated manner. He is concerned with presenting what he presents in the most appropriate fashion. The practical utility and employment of his explanations in a skillful way is a principle factor. For his position, dialectical analysis and rhetorical technique go together. Plato executes philosophical examination and exposition with an intention to have this be psychologically and personally effective. Theory and practice are not separated;
they are brought together to constitute a skill or art that depends upon both knowledge and praxis. He not only builds this into the relationships that occur in the dialogues and actually employs this concern in a concrete literary way, he also sets forth this issue as a significant independent problem within some of the dialogues and treats it as being worthy of the most serious consideration. In the Phaedrus the problem of the relation between eros, eidos, and logos receives center attention. Introducing some of this material into an analysis of the Symposium makes it more evident that Plato deemed it necessary to develop at least the rudimentary elements of a "technology" or an "art" of eros which specifies in an organized and teleological manner the forces and factors of erotic life. This in turn reveals the special significance of the relationship between Socrates and Agathon at the banquet. Each of these aspects has as a purpose, thirdly, the effective development of a genuine lover. Learning which results in the affective and volitional reorganization of the lover is necessary for the effective cognitive cultivation of this lover. The dimensions of reason, emotion, and praxis all have their place in Plato's treatment of eros.

This is perhaps why Plato's presentation of Socrates includes not only information about his development as an erotic agent and an explanatory account of eros, but it also reveals the exercise of his concern to elaborate and utilize basic elements of a techne of eros. One finds
Socrates directing his own eros in an interpersonal way for the purpose of leading and forming other selves (*psychagogia*). That is, his own eros exhibits its dedication to the proficient expression and operation of itself in relation to itself as well as in its relation to others. Socrates is specifically concerned about the other's own erotic condition. His own example shows that the one who develops himself experientially in the possibilities of erotic comportment also begins to utilize himself according to procedures which will enrich the other. Socrates' "art of eros" is conjoined with the "art of logos" so that the true lover is really also the true speaker (dialectical rhetor and teacher) whose communicative activities serve and tend others. Right eros becomes, in this way, constitutionally interpersonal and dialogical. And right dialogue is able to identify lovable things, reveal something of their desirability, and, to this extent, aid in the directing of eros. Hence, the blessings of such a "scientific" effort are shared by both lover and beloved because right eros is a truly interpersonal effort and benefit. In content and structural design, therefore, support is found for the inclusion of the interpersonal. It is important to Plato on the experiential and existential level as well as the theoretical and eidetic level. And this is why it is possible for him to correlate the vocation of love, dialectic, and rhetoric.
Much of the difficulty involved in gaining an adequate conception of Platonic eros comes from the problem of appreciating two factors: (i) eros is actually presented as a duplex, ambivalent (*penia, poros*) phenomenon in human experience and (ii) it is set forth in a complex developmental context. Failure to incorporate fully each of these elements into one's picture of eros inevitably effects the way one views the nature and status of interpersonal love. The position of exclusive ideocentrism is due in great measure to an inadequate realization of these two factors as they occur within the systematically organized account of eros provided by Plato. Only by accommodating these factors within this more complete spectrum of erotic development can the value of the ideocentric position be adjusted to fit into a context which does justice to Plato's position. I maintain that the view of interpersonal eros detailed in this dissertation is a more correct interpretation of the information presented in the dialogues than that of the ideocentric interpretation. I do not, however, deny the crucial importance of the eidetic realities for Plato's account of eros. I will argue that the textual material substantiates a qualified version of ideocentrism and that this qualification is of great import in comprehending Plato's analysis of love, personal identity, and the establishment of meaning for human interrelationships and human community.
As the ideocentric proponents correctly underscore, eros is described in the dialogues as a desire (aspiration, craving, want, passion) which seeks to appropriate that which will yield personal satisfaction. But it also appears as a kind of giving (dispensing, affluence, contributing, transmitting) which seeks to share and nourish that which it has found and appropriated. The lover is in need and yet he becomes resourceful. His love is self-reflexive but it also operates in a constructive, mediating, and even sacrificial way. He is acquisitive and yet generous and productive. When considered from the point of view of an action or motion (kinesis) of the individual self (psyche), eros empowers the lover to transcend ordinary experience and inspires him to attend to the most beautiful and perfect, the most gratifying, realities. But this lover also presents himself immanently to a beloved in direct encounter. Through inquiry and various methods of direct and indirect communication (dialectic and rhetoric) he works for the betterment of the beloved by re-enacting, reflecting (or mirroring), and promoting interpersonally the stimulating dynamics of erotic progression and self-transformation.

In both aspects of expressions of love, valuation (appraisal, discrimination) becomes essential to the effectiveness of eros. The desiderative aspect must learn to discern and discriminate in its selection of objects; the generative aspect must administer itself with discrimination.
Each is a part of what it means to learn to love. For every lover, the former is presupposed (as a condition) by the latter and it clearly receives major emphasis in Plato's writings. But the former is not in itself a sufficient expression of love. And the latter without the former is clearly ungrounded.

The progress of the lover in being able to distinguish and appraise is far from simple or easy. It is a progress in apprehending the dialectical order of things, the proper eidetic-linguistic formulation of reality, and it is a progress in self-examination and self-mastery (sophrosune) performed by the lover upon himself. But his temperance and prudence in relation to this understanding enables the lover to exercise his eros in a proper way. The serious lover thus becomes a lover of wisdom (a philosopher) and a dialectician because only this synoptic and yet definitive approach enables him to understand the reality, value, and purpose of human existence and thereby the meaning and end of love.

As progress continues, the valuation process is not only operative for the lover's own good. It is also put to work in relation to the other for the benefit of the other. The lover engages in conversation which surveys the beloved by searching for an account of things from and for the benefit of the beloved (qua elenchus) but he does so with encouragement and the guiding effort of protreptic and dialectic. The activity of eros is interpersonal, it is a
disillusioning and a restructuring service (therapeia), a compelling invitation to recognize and transform oneself for the good. The valuative activity of the person who loves encounters the actuality of the beloved person but it also projects the ideality of/for the beloved so that the beloved will realize more fully the good which is possible for himself and thereby realize himself more completely.

As it turns out, then, the erotic endeavor has a transpersonal (eidetic), a personal (or intrapersonal), and interpersonal aspect. Each is included because the knowledgeable lover is one who himself responds in the right way to the eidetic and the phenomenal elements of experience. In practical living, proper loving is a matter of skill which is impossible without dialectical knowledge and disciplined self-control. Yet, again, the proficiency of the erotic agent in this "art of love" includes not only (i) a desiring by the lover of the right things in the right way. It also includes (ii) an appropriate expression and utilization of the benefit realized through the desiderative progression by the lover in relation to others. This second factor is compelled by the very nature of the fecund condition of the developing lover and it is evinced by the intrinsic merit and power of the good and the beautiful as these appear in human action and interrelationship. The interpersonal matrix includes the individual's own personal noetic-erotic relation to theeidetic realities and these
realities as they are potentiated in human encounter and human speech, in the visage and logos of the other.\textsuperscript{12}

That this is a complex, difficult affair is evident from the fact that, according to the dialogues, love extends throughout all dimensions of human experience. It includes the aesthetic, the ethical, and the ontological aspects; the somatic, the thumatic (spirited-volitional), and the rational elements; the family, the social-political, and the cosmic settings. Every person is by nature a lover in some qualified but elemental sense. Every form of life chosen by a person is a particular canalization of eros. Knowledge of reality and self are therefore incumbent upon the lover who desires to develop effectively. Although Plato is very concerned to accentuate the eidetic realities and the course of this self-development (phase 2), within this context the role of interpersonal erotic relations is definitely not eliminated but it is transformed by virtue of the transformation of the erotic agent who has come to understand in a new way the nature of himself, the world, and other persons. Eros becomes integrated throughout the activities and relationships established by the knowledgeable lover according to the dialectical assessment of the objects involved. The threat of egoism, elitism, and transcendentalism to interpersonal eros (or a beloved person) prove to be only preliminary dangers inevitably included in the developmental progression of the individual lover. Subsequent advance
finds the lover not simply content to pursue the eidetic objects as such for his own benefit but he becomes intent on exercising his refined eros in procreative activity by relating to others in order that the particular other may realize the good and thereby realize for himself his own developmental potential as a person and begin genuinely to engage in the beautiful and good life which is possible for human beings. The true work of love is not only oneself but includes the other as well. The other is taken in, welcomed, granted an intrinsic, irreducible value. This (phase 3) is the beginning of truly interpersonal engagement, the inauguration of a genuine self-to-self relationship. Relations with eidetic realities are essential to this phase, but they are not here competitors with the beloved person. They are rather the conditional factors which allow each person truly to satisfy themselves and thereby learn to appreciate the merit of personal and interpersonal existence where two individuals can aid each other and develop that special rapport arising in the process of realizing the good and beautiful life.

3.

The task of the dissertation, to state it differently, will be to establish that love-of-another is a legitimate form of love for Plato and to explain the nature and dynamics of this love to the extent that the material in the dialogues allows.
If one observes the characteristics of phases 1 and 2, it is important to see that the lover here is in the process of realizing himself, striving to advance from incompleteness of self toward completeness, right self-order, and happiness. Beauty and goodness are sought because they are what the lover most truly needs in order to become himself. One should come to look on Socrates' speech in the Symposium as a map to self-fulfillment. It surveys what and how to love, but this very effort is set forth to function as the condition for realizing one's own true self, for the development of excellence of self which is the condition for the attainment of well-being. The lover who progresses in the ways of eros must engage in a process of becoming by means of transformation of character from his actual deficit self toward an as yet unrealized, perfected (or ideal) self, from non-well-being toward well-being of psyche. This eros, by virtue of the value and reality of the eidetic, is able to develop the excellence of self which is productive of personal fulfillment. By means of right love, the lover comes to relate to himself as he is in himself and for his own sake, i.e., for his own good, that good which will enable him to actualize his own self. He relates to himself as a unique person, having (i) to accept and come to terms with what he actually is. And yet, because he (ii) appraises and judges himself to be naturally deficient, he (iii) strives "for the good to be his own always." But insofar as he is not yet himself, it is correct to say that the
lover's eros is love for himself as he really desires to be. He must find himself in relation to the eidetic objects because these function as formative and constitutive elements which allow the lover to become himself.

Right love is, in this way, generative of the true self of the erotic individual. But inasmuch as relating genuinely to the good is possible only by one who becomes good (in character, actions, speech; intellectually and morally) and this process of becoming good is possible only by relating to the good itself, the status of each, for the human condition, is co-conditional to the other. Love as (a) eros to become oneself is also (b) eros to "contact" the eidetic realities. Neither is attainable without the other. Love of self and love of eide go together by necessity. What from one perspective appears as the task of self-development and self-realization is also from another perspective the endeavor to know reality and experience happiness. These two ways are conjoined and co-determinative.

The genuine self of the genuine lover is, in this context, an out-standing self, one which is beyond the given self and is yet the self which the lover really desires to be because the state of self-completion or wholeness is the real formation of one's self. One cannot truly be oneself unless this process of realization of the good is effec-tuated. Such love is by its very nature a self-transforming, self-composing love. The lover is dependent upon the formative power of the eidetic to realize himself and this means
that his love must be a form of property-love in order for it truly to be a genuine person-love because the self which he is is most truly itself only as it becomes qualified and formed in its own properties according to the ideal properties. Hence, truly to love oneself or another qua person is to love the individual self as one who becomes the instantiation, manifestation, or embodiment of the ideal properties. Love is, in this sense, the active idealization of the real, a process which applies to oneself originally but it also applies equally to others as well.

This approach to the issue of interpersonal love must be further elaborated and clarified, but it is indicative of important aspects of Plato's position which have not been attended to by the traditional ideocentric approach. By fixing its analytic focus upon the Ideas, the ideocentric interpretation fails to include in its account the actual full range of operations of eros. Or, to put it differently, it fails to include the full range of effects which the eide­tic elements have upon the lover. Phase 2 is not the complete description of erotic development. The lover's love for himself, which is a love for his own good, for the good to be his always, does not limit itself to activities of an exclusively self-referential kind. The lover who, in becoming genuinely himself (qua good), strives to bring about the good in his life, he acts for the good, attempts to communicate the good, and naturally he does so (iv) in
relation to others. That is, in meeting and associating with others, the lover's eros for the good extends to the other, includes the beloved in the passionate, enthusiastic turmoil and critical rigor of this ecstatic, transform-creative process which is an inherent part of the erotic condition (i.e., poiesis, tiktein, mania) for the realization of true well-being. In the interpersonal, the lover's relation to the eidetic results in productive activity, an experience of fecundity and a desire to propagate. He is inspired and motivated by the power of the good-beautiful to act formatively for the good of the other. The eros of the interpersonal makes the progressing lover prolific in psyche and speech (logos) in his attempt to realize the good.

The interpersonal situation is thus formed for the sake of the realization of the good, i.e., it is formed in order that each person's erotic condition may, in operation or exercise, be improved, made more virtuous and excellent, more truly itself. The lover's own good and the other's good turn out not to be different. And for the lover to be empowered by eide is to be a part of the active-generative reality which is effected by the good. Plato's account of this is also presented as an account of eros as divine mania in human experience. And when this lover associates with the beloved, he becomes an aspect of the empowering of the other. This is part of the lofty inspiration and ergon (work) of interpersonal eros.
Although these two selves, the lover and the beloved, never fuse or merge (as Aristophanes' creatures vainly desire), they do have a unity in that which both identify as most valuable, i.e., the good. They are both participants in the good and they share through communication and action the experiences of the good which are included in this relationship. They each establish their self-identity primarily through the composition and structure of their love. This special kinship (of phase 4) is the philia of those whose ultimate vocation and destiny is determined by the eidetic. ¹⁴

D.

Plato of course calls the one who learns best how to love a philosopher. In the dialogues the relationship between the philosopher, the noble and excellent lover, and the personal other is shown to be an extension and application of the very love which makes that individual a lover of wisdom, the very love which initially sought its destination and fulfillment in the other. The primal constitution of this love remains fundamentally unchanged in its desired end but its structure becomes reorganized through the clarification involved in learning what and how to love. Love of "the fair one" progresses to understand the whole world of beauty. Although it properly and necessarily includes the eidetic determination, interpersonal love is not extraneous to this love. Erotic activity in
fact finds its supreme test, highest challenge, vocational locus, and greatest blessing with others. The dialogues support the position that interpersonal eros is an inherent part of the erotic life for humans. This is exactly what the ideocentric interpretation denies. But in doing this it must somehow remain oblivious to the explicit descriptions of interpersonal love in the Symposium (and the Phaedrus) as well as the procedure which Plato incorporates into his philosophical writings, usually by way of Socrates, to influence the other for this other's own good and yet to do so in such a way as to preserve the other's own individuality and freedom. Plato builds into the lover's art both directness and indirectness of relation because the lover (and Plato as writer-philosopher) realizes that his ability to benefit the other is limited by the awareness and willingness of the beloved to appropriate and alter himself for his own good. Plato was well aware that there is no direct, conclusive way for the lover to reproduce or duplicate his own good in/for the other. Only the beloved can perform this soul-directing and soul-forming work directly upon himself. Yet, the lover's communicative, elenctic, and dialectical effort, his persistent goodwill and encouragement, are still important contributing factors of this developmental process. Plato does not underestimate but in fact delineates with tremendous artistry (and employs Socrates to abide by) the indirect method appropriate to interpersonal relations. With theoretical and ethical
clarity and persuasive speech, he attends to the other in a personal and intimate way. This orientation evidences the value that he placed upon the activity of interpersonal love and the status of the other in such love.

It is this aspect of Plato's philosophy that endows his eidetic oriented universe with the humanistic character which supports personal significance. The world order and human destiny are qualitatively different when one's experience of the world and oneself can have a shared, affiliated determination. This earthly experience becomes the location where the personal and interpersonal destinies of all individuals are composed. Plato's world reveals itself to be hospitable to interpersonal relations, encouraging one to realize the goodness of intimate, soul-forming relationships. Human interpersonal activity has a lasting value which can rightly be prized and enjoyed by those whose eros is generative of true personal loving.

For Plato, a misrepresentation of eros which leads to the condemnation or demeaning of eros is a discrediting of philosophy itself. Plato realized that genuine philosophy required a defense as being love and that love required explication in terms of philosophy. Without proper love alienation reigns in the human realm. Virtues in the individual and the state are impossible, the quest for knowledge is without potence, and happiness is unattainable without right love. The misunderstanding of love is the crisis of philosophy. The misbehavior of lovers is the crisis of
human history and the peril of personal destiny. At stake are the most essential matters. Proper love is most needful because it is the greatest benefactor to personal, social, and political life. Because of their knowledge and affective goodwill, for Plato, philosophers are able to love others in the most responsible way. Philosophers love with consummate skill; they are the superior lovers, the superior poets and architects of authentic existence. Such lovers of wisdom have their place not only as ontologically and psychologically astute persons, they exist as individuals alongside others in spatio-temporal-linguistic interpersonal intimacy, exercising love with utmost care.

For Plato, philosophy's highest endeavors are erotic. The passion which turns theoretical gives rise to comprehension that is also moral or ethical in character. Knowledge and love are inseparably joined; the proficiency and advance of one is tied to the proficiency and advance of the other. Philosophy's erotic bearing in going beyond the experiences of the phenomenal world is nevertheless "brought down" into the realm of the interpersonal in a most real, genuine, and responsible manner. The "journey of the soul" which leads far beyond interpersonal relations in phase 2 reinstates itself within the context of others in phases 3 and 4. The changes, though, are most naturally and best performed not in solitude or isolation but in the context of intimate social encounter, in person-to-person interaction and candid dialogue. This setting is generative of the
lover's own self (phases 1-2), it is productive for the beloved (phase 3), and it functions for both lover and beloved as they may come to exist together in reciprocal friendship (phase 4). According to Plato, then, the journey of the good and happy life for an individual, although it may, by contrast to ordinary existence, appear at times to produce a somewhat detached, peculiarly inquisitive and preoccupied individual, nevertheless includes this individual whose own journeying also labors directly with the other so that the relation may become a creative co-journeying of the most beneficial and gratifying (because good, beautiful, just, courageous, temperate, and pious) sort. The lover's task of thinking and articulating is a genuine social dialogue and an act of self-involved, self-transforming communication, where the lover is truly concerned for the welfare of the other without jeopardizing the autonomy and dignity of either himself or the other. Individual self-identity and self-value are not compromised by right love. Rather, interpersonal eros enables both lover and beloved to develop in the best, most congenial fashion. This includes diligently guarding against confusion, temptation, deception, and error.

The world so viewed encourages such love, a love rightly devoted to the most perfect things. Although, as Socrates says in the Republic, great things are precarious and beautiful things are difficult (Rep. 497d), human life is yet an opportunity for this development; the cosmos is
set up for just such development. The life of proper eros then is a life which is an intimate, cosmic, metaphysical adventure that can be shared and advanced in the space-time, here-and-now activity of interpersonal eros. This activity is enriched and inspired by the eidetic realities which make possible and engender all good things including the progress of soul-formation which evolves the excellence of character and the friendship of lovers, and where even death can be considered extraneous to the real destiny of authentic lovers.

E.

A recent philosopher has asserted that a philosophical problem has the form: "I don't know my way about." Socrates would undoubtedly have formulated this in terms of the realization of one's own ignorance about something like love (beauty, justice, or goodness) which initially perhaps seems to be pretty obvious, definite, and clearly expressible. But one experiences aporia as one learns about the deficient state of one's understanding by attempting to explain this business of love. Having to travel along very devious passages in order to achieve satisfactory knowledge appears to be the appropriate process by which one comes to know one's way about the complex issue of interpersonal love. This may, of course, appear to make matters unnecessarily difficult and prolix. Should not one resist such an approach? Is not love really a very simple matter?
How does it come about that philosophy is so complicated a structure? It surely ought to be completely simple, if it is the ultimate thing....Philosophy unties knots in our thinking; hence its results must be simple but philosophizing has to be as complicated as the knots it unties.18

The chapter which follows concentrates upon the elementary question of structure. It investigates the nature of interpersonal love in the most rudimentary fashion, attempting to delineate the basic factors included in any formation of interpersonal love and supposed by any explanation of such love. It is an effort to identify and give some account of the basic options and the conditions required for an adequate comprehension and analysis of this aspect of human life.

This initial reconnaissance has two purposes. First is the development of a definite sense of the integral nature of interpersonal love. It shows itself to be constituted by three distinct yet interdetermined components. The exhibition of these rudimentary details will reveal the significance of the "intentional" approach to interpersonal eros. This position will be applied as a diagnostic tool to the accounts that Plato presents in the dialogues. Secondly, the analysis serves as a disciplining exercise which enables one to gain competence in thinking proficiently about this subject. Thinking through the issue of interpersonal love according to this approach will be a definite aid in coming to grips with the complexities and diverse potentialities which constitute this problem.
But because this orientation is in basic agreement with Plato's approach, it is perhaps the way of thinking that comes to know about such things which will enable one to approach results bearing the qualities of simplicity and ultimacy. Socrates, for one, does seem to assert something of this sort about his own position on eros. His synoptic achievement in the dialogues includes a unifying vision (synagoge) of the nature of eros and also a distinct diagnostic breakdown (diairesis) of the components and varieties of erotic possibilities. For Socrates, the problem of the nature of love becomes simple when it can be seen in its truth, because what is really loved is that ultimate, the good, which makes human life worthy to be lived, wonderful to be realized, and truly deserving of human aspirations. But the problem becomes complicated and knotty when a description, explanation, and evaluation of the relationships and objects that a lover desires to realize is sought. An assessment of the significance of the interpersonal aspect of love cannot be evaded in such a project.
I have adopted the term 'ideocentric' from Gregory Vlastos' work where it appears on page 30, Platonics Studies (Princeton, 1973). Otherwise, what I have called the "ideocentric interpretation" is found in rudimentary form in most analyses of and commentaries on the Symposium and the Phaedrus because it is a crucial part of those texts which is confirmed by even a cursory inspection of Socrates' speeches. It is, in this sense, a rather natural and traditional view of Plato's theory of love which could be supported by abundant references to numerous philosophical texts in addition to Plato's writings themselves.

The ideocentric position as presented in this work, although it follows closely in many points the analyses provided by the authors which I note, because the formulations elaborated are my own, the overall presentation cannot be attributed to any one individual author and no one author can be held responsible for the exact details of what I designate as the ideocentric interpretation. My thesis is a polemical response to an important type of philosophical interpretation of Plato's position on love rather than being directed against a particular interpreter of Plato. Each author referred to makes additional contributions to Platonic scholarship which I have not indicated because these materials are beyond the scope of this investigation though they are nevertheless valuable in other respects. What is common to each is their objection to Plato's analysis of interpersonal love. They do not simply attempt to make the point that Plato's account is ideocentric, their effort is to show that Plato's theory is deficient as a theory of love, i.e., they are uniformly critical of his position. But in developing their criticism, they contribute to the more general picture of what I call the ideocentric view. Hence, I have referred to their writings not to develop a comprehensive assessment of their individual positions but to utilize points which they make about Plato's position that are part of an important interpretation which will itself stand as the position assessed in this dissertation.

The importance of the more recent treatments referred to in this dissertation is their knowledgeable analysis and critical assessment of Platonic eros as regards person-to-person love. The issue of "The Individual as an Object of Love in Plato"-the title of Vlastos' paper--has not often been brought into central focus and given an independent, critical treatment in the traditional literature. It has rather quite simply and naturally been taken as a matter of course that Platonic love's proper object is beauty or
goodness in itself. I have, therefore, taken this material and this way of analyzing the dialogues to be a serious and valuable contribution to the literature on love as well as Plato. I maintain, however, that the analysis of the individual as an object of love given by the ideocentric position is applicable to and true of one major phase of erotic development but that it is not a true presentation of other advanced phases of erotic activity. Phenomenologically and dialectically the ideocentric interpretation is mistaken about Plato's account of interpersonal love.

2 I intend these to be descriptive and not normatively imbued titles. In each case, the object of love in the broad sense is another individual human being. So I do not mean that property-love does not have as its object another person. Cf. Chapter I, section 2. Nor should this distinction be equated with It-love and Thou-love as explained by someone like Martin Buber.


4 Ibid., p. 31-32.

5 Irving Singer states that "The Platonic lover does not love anyone: he loves only the Good, either in abstraction or in concrete manifestation." See The Nature of Love: Plato to Luther (New York, 1966) p. 87. As I understand this, the exact status accorded by Plato to love of concrete manifestations of the good in the form of individual persons is a point that remains at issue. Take the beloved person. How does one distinguish between that person and his/her being a concrete manifestation of the good? Can a person ever be his own goodness/beauty? Is personal identity constituted by the fact that one is a certain unique concrete manifestation of Ideas? If it is, then love of the person is the same as love of the concrete manifestation of the Ideas. If it is not, what is the principle of differentiation? What would the virtue of a virtuous person be?

6 Vlastos, Gregory, Platonic Studies, p. 31. I have inserted the parenthesized word.

7 Versenyi, Laszlo, Socratic Humanism (New Haven, 1966) p. 172. This applies to Plato's philosophy rather than to Socrates' humanism. Versenyi emphasizes the distinction between the two thinkers. The term 'trash' is also used in W. R. M. Lamb's translation (Loeb Classical Library); Walter Hamilton uses 'perishable rubbish' (Penguin); Jowett and Plochmann use 'pollutions of mortality.' Most accurate seems to be 'mortal nonsense' by Vlastos, Rosen, and Groten.
Socrates and Aristophanes seem to agree on this point. But for Aristophanes, human need and human incompleteness are not characteristics of the soul specifically. He views sex as less than an end in itself, but sex is the way that humans express their drive for completeness, the way that persons attempt to resolve their incompleteness. For him corporeal unity is the good, love is a desire for this wholeness, and happiness is physical reunification, a return to our original nature. The fact that individuals exist in the state of helpless incompleteness is sorrowful and Aristophanes provides some grounds for understanding this plight as a tragic situation. But the fact that this incompleteness is presented as a physical malady means that it becomes a captivating opportunity for the imagination which quickly transforms the pathetic predicament into a ridiculous, laughable scene. Aristophanes' excellent point that human love is the result of some kind of constitutional incompleteness is unfortunately sapped of its vitality by being portrayed on (confined to) the corporeal level. Formulated in this framework, it is a cruel contrivance and a joke unworthy of the gods, degrading to the aspirations of human beings, and it is a hostile and retributive view of human history and human destiny. The myth of primordial wholeness is a positive inhibition to psychological independence, health, and responsibility. It makes human personal meaning dependent upon external factors, loving becomes futile because impossible to consummate, and this guilt-plagued situation is due to human aspiration, to hubris and impiety. But all of these points lose their dramatic impact when juxtaposed with the absurd occupations of individuals devoted to solving the problem of wholeness by physical or somatic means.

Although Aristophanes may very well be making fun of the previous speeches and be performing as a "higher physician" in his description of human anatomical events and circumstances, he defeats his own conservative, culturally retrospective orientation by relying upon images whose inappropriateness turn his entertaining tragedy into a smile-evoking farce. Perhaps he is providing a humorous challenge to Eryximachus' medical profession: the development of operations to stitch all the half-people back together again. Physicians would thereby become the true therapists of mankind, able to heal the fundamental unhappiness of human existence. Or perhaps he is showing Pausanias the pretentiousness and futility of sexual endeavors (in any combination) whether performed as a barter by an ordinary earthly or an elite uranic personality. Or perhaps he is speaking to Phaedrus about the true character and serious menace of love in the form of heroic striving.

The fact that more recent readers of Plato have turned to Aristophanes' story for inspiration or for an apt image
applicable to the phenomena of human loving would probably indicate to Plato the destitute state of human understanding about such matters. And this would probably constitute exactly those grounds which gave rise to the speech itself as a humorous product, especially because of the gravity accorded sexuality (as the answer to human problems) and the continued investigative studies which regularly produce their circumscribed solutions to these difficult, comprehensive problems of human loving and psychic wholeness or fulfillment. One positive attribute of Aristophanes' speech, however, is its comprehensive scope which allows for a systematic and coherent application of his interpretation to the facets of human love life.

Ethical valuation is determined by what is the case ontologically.

As the fourth category--taking the Divided Line (in Rep. 510d) as a model--there are also images (the lowest grade of reality and knowledge) of the psychological and physical objects in works of literature, imagination, mirrors, etc. The ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy is based upon the confusion of this fourth realm with the nature and status of the objects of the other realms. I include reference to it here simply for the sake of categorical completeness. But in the Symposium, the comic and tragic poets are the main antagonists because they ingeniously develop views which have a deceptive reality that is so dangerous to the proper understanding of eros. Socrates takes them most seriously because of the fact that people are prone to such confusion and they fall in love with "unreal and poetic" objects rather than the truly loveable things.

To suggest otherwise is to court erotic self-defeat, deficiency, and guilt by engaging in inappropriate love--in addition to other more concrete, practical consequences which result from bad love.

If one may muse upon the etymology in the Cratylus (398c; 420d), the proficient lover is comparable to the hero (heros) who is a product of a consummated relation between the human (mortal) and the divine (immortal). The actions of this person flow (hreo) from his constitution in response to his particular worldly experiences. The lover's personal arete in word, deed, and thought develops from the interrelationship of two different orders of experience, the perceptual and the intelligible. The lover learns to love the loveable for himself and thereby comes to realize what is intrinsically loveable for himself as well as the other. Eros thus becomes constitutive of the self of the lover and is directly complementary and formative as a counter-love whose end includes the development of the
beloved as a further realization of the good life. There is an intimation of this orientation in Phaedrus' speech in the Symposium. But he is unable to lift it out of the traditional and sexual contexts.

13 I am aware of two analyses of this aspect of Plato's work that address this issue directly. One is Paul Friedlander's Plato (New York, 1958) vol. 1. He speaks of eros as being a two-fold phenomenon. "The dual movement toward the beloved and, with him, toward virtue becomes a gradual ascent leading to the intuition of the Ideas..." (p. 52). There is, he says, a necessary connection between the two dimensions, a unity of the erotic experience and the vision of the Ideas (p. 52; 54). From my point of view, several lacunae render Friedlander's treatment of interpersonal eros unhelpful despite the fact that I am in agreement with his general position and find it to be a very astute formulation of Platonic eros. Friedlander does not acknowledge the inherent conflict in erotic allegiance between love of Ideas and love of others. He states that a genuine lover loves both human and eidetic objects but he does not explain exactly how this two-fold expression is possible given the dissimilar nature of these two beloveds. He thus does not really come to terms with the basis upon which interpersonal love is justified. His reference to dual yet united eros fails to recognize the way that eros is determined in relation to these quite diverse objects of love. Briefly, his position needs further analysis and clarification. It is, vis-a-vis interpersonal love, incomplete.

The second analysis is that of L. A. Kosman in an article entitled "Platonic Love" (in Facets of Plato's Philosophy, ed. W. H. Werkmeister (Amsterdam, 1976) pp. 53-69). I find this to be one of the best brief critical yet positive treatments of Plato's position as regards the relation between the lover, the Ideas, and the beloved other. His treatment, however, could benefit from a closer linkage to the texts (of which he is undoubtedly well aware). Although he sets forth the kind of relationship that is to take place if there is to be love of another for Plato, I cannot see that he explains why a person would want to love another, i.e., exactly what sort of process of transformation occurs in the project of eros to produce a person who really loves another. And, in addition, it is not clear to me what this love really comes to as a kind of relation. What are the goals, both general and concrete, of such erotic involvement?

14 This should be seen in relation to Aristotle's third type of philia in books 8-9 of Nicomachean Ethics.

15 It is sometimes suggested by commentators that the Symposium presents an emotive ascent and the Republic an
intellectual ascent to the Ideas. I myself find three interrelated factors in the Symposium ascent: intellectual comprehension and elevation, emotive involvement and trans­formation, and productive responsiveness. All are important at each stage. With respect to the Republic, the issue of eros is crucial throughout the work. From Cephalus' comments on old age and the fierce power of sex in earlier life, to the tyrannical eros of Bk. 9, poetry and eros (Bk. 10), and the after-life events described by Er (Bk. 10), the problem of proper eros is always a decisive factor. Proper educa­tion depends upon right canalization of eros (485d; 495b) and, most significant, the philosopher-ruler is explicitly described in erotic terms. Philosophers are lovers (erastas) of reality and truth (501d), they consort (homilei) with the divine order (500c), and are ever enamored (aei erosin) with eternal being (485b). It is of import to note the variety of associated terms which Plato interrelates in one brief passage of Bk. 6 (485b-d) when discussing philosophers as lovers. Included are forms of the following words: philos, stergo, agapao, eros, oregesthai, epithymia. This occurs at the apex of the text, the most developed form of human personal and social existence. On the basis of considerations such as these, the emotive and intellectual ascent must, in any approach, be integrated. Satisfactory progress in one supposes the progress of the other.


17 In reference to the power and task of dialectic as it applies to the subject to be performed by Parmenides, Zeno says that "except by wandering throughout the passages of all things, it is impossible for the mind to attain the truth" (Par. 136e).

CHAPTER I

THE STRUCTURE OF INTERPERSONAL LOVE

The nature of love, its meaning and its very existence, is brought to question when an account of interpersonal love is attempted. A lover who begins seriously to examine the nature of his or her love of someone has ventured forth on a consequential investigation that touches the most essential matters. It is perilous because it raises doubts about the very determination of those matters which constitute what is essential. At jeopardy is the love, the beloved, and the lover himself or herself.

If, however, the lover does not choose to engage in the earnest appraisal of his/her own loving, then the supposed meaning of this love is rendered problematical and indeterminate. How, except by critical examination, can a lover establish for him/herself the nature of love and its possibilities? If the significance of what a lover is—and is supposed to be doing—is not decipherable by the person who loves, love is fundamentally an unintelligible phenomenon. It lacks specificity of meaning because its object, method, purpose, and suppositions remain unde-lineated. By not understanding and not being able to articulate adequately what love is, the lover can relate to himself as lover only opaquely and his activity must thereby
suffer from such a deficiency. The beloved, in turn, is similarly handicapped by this unrefined and ignorant love.

But to be a lover and yet not know what it means to be a lover is a pathetic situation the incongruity of which, though it may at times appear humorous, constitutes a peculiarly contradictory predicament. There may of course be numerous things that account for this predicament but none which absolve a person from the consequences of not endeavoring to comprehend it. The predicament is self-implicating in the sense that the lover exists the disparity of his love life. The simple living of it, however, by no means assures the felicitous solution of it. Self examination appears to be indispensable for the self-understanding required for genuine and effective love.

Yet, the incongruity of this situation is by no means extraordinary. We know that it is very easy and natural to love. We realize that the horizon of a lover's involvement continues to expand and develop in the course of love. But because this loving does not automatically include a clear conception of the nature, complexities, and implications of the involvement, the lover has the option of continuing to love without explicating this love or the lover can face the vexing task of attempting to spell out and comprehend fully the nature of his/her love. Such a choice is incumbent upon every lover. If the lover decides that his/her love must be self-critical and reflexive, the effort to come to terms with oneself authentically, to understand one's love,
and to become a more proficient lover leads the lover to an encounter with (and formulation of) a number of basic general questions whose exact resolution is far from assured, whose difficulties are formidable and beguiling, and whose implications are copious and cosmic in extent. A person asks the simple and unpretentious question "Why do I, person A, love you, person B?" only to discover that the question impenetrably undergoes a process of cleavage to generate a cluster of troublesome, interrelated questions:

What is the actual object of A's love?
What objects are lovable?
In what ways can and should A love?
Can A live without loving?
What is the nature of A that s/he exists as a lover?
What is the nature of B that s/he exists as a beloved?
Why, really, does A love?
What is the purpose of love?
What end does a lover attempt to achieve?
What precisely is the nature of love?

The question of interpersonal love is thus a number of difficult questions about the determination of the object, the subject, and the nature and purpose of the relationship. Each of these factors is an integral part of interpersonal love and nothing less than a treatment of all of these components seems sufficient to the task of analysis which is required for intelligible, responsible, and efficacious love--and for any theory which would account for, explain, and justify this love.
A. Components of Interpersonal Love

What is it, then, that must be supposed for there to be love or for a person to be a lover? There must be a lover who loves something in a certain way. There must be someone (a subject) who is modified or qualified so as to be a lover of (the relation to) something (the object)--in the case of interpersonal love, a person. There must be a person A who loves person B. The problem of interpersonal love is to be understood, therefore, in terms of these three basic constituents which are necessarily presupposed in any such relationship.

Stated in this way, however, it seems obvious to the point of triviality. But this brief formula which indicates the intentional structure of love in fact brings one to terms with the determining, fundamental factors of any kind (or any formation) of love. It provides the rudimentary elements and relations for any explanation, prescription, justification, or criticism of interpersonal love. To gain knowledge of love is to gain knowledge of these components. To be a proficient lover one must know the possibilities appropriate to each of these components so that the realization of the right relation to the right object can be attempted by the right kind of subject.

This point is fundamental because it identifies the basic formative factors of interpersonal love. It designates what is logically indispensable and a necessary condition for interpersonal love. It also has the characteristic of
being extensional in the sense that a determination of the basic elements of the interpersonal aggregate effect the operation and character of the whole love affair. The extensional composition of the relationship is itself diagnostic because the resulting situation of love is, in turn, an exhibition of the effects made by the determination of the basic elements of the relationship. The intelligibility of interpersonal love for the lover and the beloved— as well as anyone else—depends upon an understanding of these three primal components. Thus, it is evident on the basis of the structure characteristic of love that the success and skill in executing interpersonal love depends upon the lover's knowledge of himself as subject, his knowledge of lovable objects, and his knowledge of the method or means to love the objects so as to consummate the right sort of relationship. The fact that each of these components and their determination is involved in the formation of interpersonal love is a matter of great import and consequence, and the implementation of this realization is the task of every concerned lover, the labor which determines the quality of interpersonal love, the work whose product is love.

This analytic approach to the problem of interpersonal love has general application. Its importance in an educational context can be seen by inspecting some of the more recent, generally recognized texts that have been published on this subject. One discovers that many studies analyze
love by developing distinctions, classifications, and typologies which rely upon one or more of the following major factors:

1. objects of love such as a beautiful body, wealth, family, race, country, God;

2. relational forms of love such as sexual, conjugal, parental, aesthetic, vocational, friendship, religious love;

3. subjective factors of love such as feelings, desires, attitudes motives, dispositions, moods, beliefs, appraisals;

4. theories of love that specify the contents of (1-3): Mystic, Romantic, Christian, Freudian, Marxist.

Reflection on this material reveals that a recognition of the intentional structure of love is essential to an accurate understanding and organized appraisal of the various types and theories of love. It is crucial because it provides a formal pattern by means of which perspicacious description and evaluation of the whole of love can be achieved. It is a diagnostic key for critical analysis as well as a guide to the construction of systematic accounts of love. Although other approaches may contribute to a more elaborate understanding of the specific contents, conditional influences, and effects of interpersonal love in human experience, attention directed to the basic structural constituents of interpersonal love and their determination is required for effective thinking about this love which is foundational and comprehensive.

To pursue this orientation further by reflecting on the structural components of love will aid in clarifying an
understanding of their status and interconnection while displaying the fact that this approach is not belaboring the obvious. Significant progress can be achieved in examining the character of interpersonal love simply by marking out major, elementary possibilities of these three components. From the point of view of a lover, the question "What is the problem of interpersonal love?" indeed raises a complex issue that merits several different responses which refer directly to the individual components of interpersonal love. The brief considerations which follow will advance by delineating each component as if it functioned as the crucial determining factor for love. Each section of the analysis is an attempt to state clearly the nature of love from the standpoint of one component, either the object, the subject, or the relationship of love. Because each is, in its own right, a significant possible answer to the question, this procedure will allow for a more astute realization of the importance of the holistic and yet triaxial intentional structure of love. It will exhibit the requisite conditions of interpersonal love more specifically by providing an account of significant alternative proposals about the organization of these components, each of which offers a differing rationale of love, which must be rejected, substantially transformed, or otherwise qualified by any truly interpersonal love. The adequacies and deficiencies confronted in each section of the exposition will contribute to a more prudent
cognizance of standards which are appropriate for a coherent, complete, and responsible account of interpersonal love.

This exercise in thought is appropriate prior to a consideration of any particular theory of love because it is a project laboring on idealities, on rudimentary conceptual details, which are inevitably involved in any theory of love and thereby require resolution by any adequate account of love. The considerations will be of benefit when one turns to analyze Plato's presentation (or any other theory, for that matter) because it challenges his own position on love by exhibiting in advance the main problematics of interpersonal love. The dialectical interplay between exposition and critique which is employed in each section is meant to be neither novel, arbitrary, nor controversial but it is intended to enhance a clear and coherent specification and articulation of the basic ideal possibilities contained in the elementary structure of interpersonal love. It is an attempt to bring to the fore and make accessible the nature and dynamics of the interpersonal aspect of love. The presentation is intended to give the allusion of dialogical progression and it should be viewed as preliminary to further considerations. The basic issues themselves, I think, are by no means foreign to any lover. The formulations and counterclaims, though certainly open to further elaboration and clarification, should be sufficient for the purposes of this project.
Perhaps the most direct way to proceed is through a simple inquiry of the lover. Though this is contrived and artificial when presented in this way, the questions posed are intended to function as a challenge and encouragement for the (hypothetical) lover to give an exposition of his/her way of loving; they are a call to expose and explore the basic factors which guide the lover's conduct. When taken in this way, the effort to open up and articulate the matter will make accessible further systematic ramifications of the situation and function in such a way as to establish a kind of dialogical rapport between the lover and his experience of loving and, thereby, generate a productive, grappling orientation to the activity of exposition itself—a contest (agon) of the highest order—which will be both clarifying for the lover and constitutive of his continuing existence.

B. The Object of Love

The problem of love is most often treated as a problem of determining the proper object to love. The lover's effort is thus devoted to finding a lovable object so that by relating to this object the lover will be able to satisfy those factors which have given rise to the amorous condition. Because love is, in this sense, the love of something (or someone), an understanding and explanation of the nature of love is accomplished by ascertaining what it is that a lover pursues. The method or technique of love is then determined
by the nature of the beloved object that is sought. The task and meaning of love is comprised in the execution of the actions by which the lover establishes a relation to a lovable (beloved) object. The kind of consummation in this loving endeavor is dependent upon the nature of the object and the type of relationship that is effected. This means that an account of love necessarily requires reference to the object of love. Without an object there is, strictly speaking, no love because there is nothing to love.

In an interpersonal context, two distinct ways of specifying and realizing this relationship to a lovable object present themselves to the lover. One type, which can be called property-love, is a love that is conferred on a conditional basis according to the properties (qualities, attributes) possessed by an object. The second type, which can be called person-love, is a love that is conferred on an object because that object is an object of a certain type (or class), in this case, a human being or person.3

Supposing then that person A loves another person B, what is it that accounts for A's consideration and selection of B as an object of love? It is reasonable to assume that there is an explanation, a reason, motive, or cause of some sort that accounts for the commencement of the affective condition and the preference which is exercised by A in relation to B as a beloved object. Why then does A love B rather than someone or something other than B? What is the nature of this love?
1. Property Love

a. Exposition

Person A might very well begin to explain the selection of B by specifying certain qualities possessed by B. These may be, for example,

(1) physical attributes and/or natural abilities: B may be young, beautiful, strong, musical, healthy, deft in action;

(2) character or personality traits: B may be honest, kind, cheerful, high-minded, enterprising, courageous;

(3) intellectual or spiritual qualities: B may be prudent, lucid, quick-witted, far-sighted, judicious, sagacious.

Whatever specific factors are utilized by A as criteria for determining the lovability of B, the sufficient reason or cause of A's love for B is provided by B's particular properties. Through what amounts to a process of appraisal performed on the person-object B, A assesses the nature of B and concludes that B merits erotic involvement. B is loved because of his/her lovable features.

The situation may also, quite realistically, become more complex. The qualities of the object of love may themselves function as a means to a further effect which is itself the desired end of the love relationship. Person A may love B because B is beautiful, for example. Or A may love B because the beauty of B is pleasing to A. In this second case, the exercise of love is doubly conditioned in the sense that B is loved because of his/her beauty for the resulting pleasure experienced by A. Such a state of affairs
means that the objective properties which induce and determine A's love relation to B may not be limited to the direct, personal qualities of the individual B. B's properties may make B a worthy object of attention because of subsequent secondary or derivative determinants. One could not do better in specifying the major factors here than by employing distinctions drawn from Aristotle's judicious treatment of personal relations (philias).\(^4\) There are factors such as:

(4) pleasure, delight, enjoyment, bliss;

(5) utility, advantage, benefit, serviceability, functional efficacy;

(6) some special value accorded on the basis of
   a. autonomous, intrinsic merit
   b. heteronomous, extrinsic merit as established by some authoritative source such as a political leader, prophet, law, moral or aesthetic principle, book, inspiration.

Each of these factors may be involved in the assessment of the objects of love and they are, therefore, important elements which govern the commencement and the character of love. As such, they are determining factors which induce and validate amatory activity.

Two quite different sets of conditions are thus included in the deliberations of the lover. The first set (1-3) is composed of the attributes or properties of the beloved object itself. These make up specifically what is loved. The second set (4-6) refers to considerations which determine why an object is loved. The second set presupposes the objects of the first set in the sense that there must first be
properties that are given for there to be considerations of (4-6). The second set in turn provides a context of value which determines the significance of the properties given in/as the beloved object. Because reference to factors (4-6) is necessary for an explanation of the selection of factors (1-3), this reference is also required to justify the lover's behavior. Factors (4-6) are really, then, at the basis of the selection process. The rationale of any act of love, when carefully scrutinized, would end finally by referring to one or more of these considerations. Though not always explicitly realized or included in overt accounts of love behavior, a specification of the dynamics of human love activity reveals that these factors are major underlying conditional elements.

When giving an account of love, then, A may simply specify the attributes of B, i.e., factors (1-3). But it is always legitimate to ask for an account of that appraisal, i.e., why A chose those properties rather than some others. At this point, A has recourse to considerations of value, i.e., factors (4-6), which are related to the attributes of B, and these considerations function as terminal reference points in the explanatory and motivational process of A's interpersonal love.

Thus, conditional love in its actual operation may be multi-conditional and involve a complex sequence of conditions. Person A may, for example, love B because of B's wealth, which, in turn, is loved because it is useful to A because, further,
it allows A to provide a more enjoyable life for his/her family. This sequential arrangement functions by means of value priorities assigned to the elements of the sequence. There is, in effect, a scale (or hierarchy) of values involved in the selection made by the lover. Reflective appraisal of such personal relationships will disclose a kind of order of valuation which functions to connect, by reference to one or more of the factors (4-6), the mediate objects chosen by the lover to the more fundamental ends pursued by the lover.

But whatever the actual or anticipated ends may be for a particular lover such as A, insofar as B is selected by A for loving, B him/herself, existing as an object with particular properties, is included as a requisite condition for A's choice.

This account of A's love for B reveals a kind of love that is a qualified, appraisive, and regulated love. A will love B if and only if..., i.e., A loves B because of what B is. It is a type of love whose inception and execution is determined by properties possessed (directly or indirectly) by an object. Such love is founded upon acts of discrimination and assessment exercised upon the various objects involved in the lover's experience of others. Person A applies selective criteria to the objective properties of object-person B in order to exercise his/her erotic preferences. As such, this kind of love is clearly conditional and verdictive. Although the actual process may not be explicit, the conditions underlying the selection can
ordinarily be made accessible to self-conscious delineation, articulation, and evaluation. In the gradient of the affective relation, one would expect a good measure of variance. The precise specification of the intensity and duration of feeling and emotion is difficult to establish, but the subjective component is an undeniably important aspect of love. This affection, though, is naturally correlated to the value accorded the object. Each aspect is also open to infelicities. The property assessment may be mistaken; the emotive attachment may be excessive or deficient. But each is a part of the erotic cathexis.

Although this kind of description of the relation between the volitional-noetic process of valuation and the exercise (movement, power) of emotive attachment may give the appearance of being unrealistic, artificial, or overly mechanical, such an estimate involves an oversight of the actual workings of love even in an involuntary, un-self-conscious erotic involvement. Determinative influences are still operative in the valuative-emotive responses of the lover even though prima facie reflection may incline to deny this and have recourse to more non-cognitive (romantic, emotive, volitional) views of love.

Appearances to the contrary, then, one may become an analyst as well as a connoisseur of interpersonal involvement because an individual's love is not simply an irrational state of affairs or an indeterminate predicament which is by nature
impenetrable to examination and regulation. In fact, the very quality and success of the activity of loving is itself dependent upon analytic sensitivity to the factors involved in this grading process and the skillful employment of this sensitivity by the lover in relation to the objects available in his/her experience. It is, thus, inherently accessible to investigative scrutiny, reflection, and modification.

Conditional, discriminative love, therefore, appears to be a discerning and responsible form of love. It is based upon the nature of the objects encountered in a lover's experience and the lover functions according to certain principles of valuation which give his/her actions a rationale and justification. The lover's acts of conferring love are performed according to the merit of those properties belonging to the erotic candidate. Although provisional, such love does not neglect or disregard the uniqueness and individuality of the beloved object but seeks out, encourages, and prizes these meritorious qualities. The lover is thus safeguarded against the wastage and profligacy of his love and the beloved is respected for his/her individual attributes.

b. Critique of Property Love

Upon reflection, however, conditional love may become rather unsettling. If person A loves person B only because of B's properties or qualities, it is not clear that A really loves B in him/herself. The significance of B may not be so simply reducible to the properties that belong to B. B's
identity may not be assessible on the basis of a survey of the objective properties manifested by B. If this is correct, A's love of B for the properties possessed by B is actually a loving of ingredients which are independent of and extrinsic to the person of B. When the relation of these lovable properties to B is contingent and non-essential, they are separable from B and thus may very well change or be altered without significantly effecting the person of B. The evaluative procedure employed by A assumes that the attention and work of love must not only be determined by objective factors but it supposes that a beloved person is his/her objective factors simpliciter. When, then, the properties of B do change, A is justified and obligated to reappraise B and to eliminate B as a viable candidate for erotic involvement should the property analysis warrant it. For various reasons or causes, the beauty, cheerfulness, prudence of B may change. Supposing this did occur, B would quite justly be excluded by A as a love object on the basis of inadequate quality. Yet, person B remains. One is compelled to conclude that B himself was never really the true object of A's affection. Inasmuch as B never was just his/her beauty, cheerfulness, etc., B was always quite independent from these particular contingent properties. But, replies A, when the properties of beauty, cheerfulness, etc., are taken away from B, so also is the kindling for the fire of love taken away. Without these properties, there is really nothing to love. What
counts and only what counts for the conditional lover are the properties that belong to B.

Person B would rightly resent being limited in significance to the conclusions of this calculative love. A's love has omitted B in his/her whole and unique personhood. Conditional love, by its very nature, has disregarded the individual self who is not equivalent to the properties which a person happens to possess or exemplify at a particular time and place. Rather than being accorded special regard for being a precious, unique person, the individual person is merely a preliminary proviso to matters of further import to the conditional lover.

The dynamics of this kind of love are even more obvious when pleasure and/or utility, i.e., factors (4-5), are the determining elements of A's love for B. When B is loved for certain benefits which are made possible because of a relationship to B, the status of B becomes intermediate between A and the projected end result. B is not actually the end-object of A's love but the object-by-means-of-which A pursues his/her desired end. B is loved for the results that accrue from the relationship. The person of B, though involved in A's love affair as a necessary element, is nevertheless functioning in an instrumental role rather than a distinctly personal role. Instead of person B being the primary factor endowed with intrinsic lovability, pleasure and utility take precedence. Inasmuch as this choice of loving is made on the basis of the beloved object's capacity to benefit A, A's
love shows itself to be a form of self-love (or egoism) rather than love of B for B's sake. The use or serviceability of B for the sake of someone (or something) other than B is the heart of the matter. If B is judged to be of benefit to A, then A rightly loves B. Conditional love is, in this way, exploitive love. It makes use of B for what B has to offer A.

Conditional love need not be egoistic, however. Person A may love B because of certain advantages which are of benefit to C or principle Z or project 22, etc., rather than for A's own benefit or pleasure. Or B may be loved because the properties of B have a status of being worthy of love independently of A (i.e., factor (6)) so that A's action is not self-referring in an egoistic (selfish) manner but objectively determined on the basis of the value or rectitude of loving such properties. But in the case of either egoistic or non-egoistic love, conditional love is bestowed in response to properties of B. Even non-egoistic love remains exploitive; it capitalizes upon the properties of B. For the conditional lover, though, this is a thoroughly reasonable and sensible way of behaving for the erotic agent. To act on the basis of the merit of the objects available to love is to act prudently and in a praiseworthy fashion.

But, in addition, A-as-lover is not only verdictive of B's own individual qualities, s/he must also judge these qualities as compared to the qualities of other individuals. This means that love inevitably is a competitive affair. If person C, for example, rates higher than B on A's scale of
merit, then C deserves to be loved more than B. If the lover must choose between B and C, then B will be abandoned in favor of C. This is necessitated by right reason according to the operational principles of conditional love. A's love is simply and matter-of-factly warranted (purchased) by the most valuable object that is available. To love otherwise would be to administer one's loving capacity in a degrading, indiscriminate, and irresponsible fashion. It would, therefore, be an unjustifiable concession to love a lesser qualified object. Such action would be a deficient kind of love and a kind of love that implicates the lover because of his/her own participation in a lesser caliber love relation. And to love an ugly, bad, shameful, or evil object would be impossible for the conditional lover. Unmerited love would be mistaken and foolish love. Quality-determined love operates otherwise. The lover who loves well and becomes a good lover is one who pursues the best objects to love.

The stipulative nature of this love is important, therefore, because it functions to free the lover from the possibility of disgraceful, foolish love. It saves him from the threat of becoming fettered to a person whose properties become undesirable. Only high-grade love is acceptable, a love which requires the best from its objects. This provisional love maintains its fidelity to the beloved because (and only insofar as) specific remunerative benefits are derived from the properly propertied beloved object. The justice of conditional love is sensitive only to the properties
of B. B taken independently for B's sake or B in him/herself remains essentially overlooked. Comparable perhaps to glasses used by eyes searching to see the world felicitously, B functions to make the desired reality which is sought by A more accessible to A. Such love seeks the beloved primarily for the lover's own sake rather than the beloved's. Conditioned love is, in this way, acquisitive love directed toward objects whose properties offer the possibility of satisfying the pursuit of the lover.

If this reflective evaluation is correct, conditional love, by fixing upon the qualities of a thing in order to grade and select love objects, actually relates (directly or indirectly) to the qualities of a person rather than the person him/herself. This disturbing situation may produce an alternative approach to love and the manner of loving which involves a quite different account of the way to specify objects worthy of a person's love.

2. Person Love

a. Exposition

According to this other account, A does not love B because of properties possessed by B. Rather, B is loved in toto as an inherently valuable person-object. A's love is conferred without regard to particular qualities, without reference to merit or benefit, regardless of individual distinctions or unique characteristics. B is not treated as a bundle of properties to be graded for erotic merit.
This other type of love does not depend upon stipulative demands; it has no special provisos. It is, rather, an undifferentiating, non-discriminative, unconditional love which accepts B for whatever B may or may not be. B is loved "for nothing," freely without charge. The sufficient reason or cause of this love is simply the reality of the person of B as an object available for loving. Person A bestows love upon B not as the result of an appraisive act, not according to selective criteria, but by virtue of A's identification of B as a person. This acknowledgement of B's personhood, the inclusion of B in the class of human beings, elicits the love of A. A welcomes B as a beloved (lovable) object on the basis of B's self-presentation, B's presence as B, without specific judgment or particular demands.

This guileless, accepting kind of love appears not to do any disservice to the person of B inasmuch as B is wholly accommodated by A's erotic affection. The only distinction required for a proper love object is that of personhood or humanness.

b. Critique of Person Love

Upon reflection, however, unconditional love also becomes rather unsettling. If A loved B without reference to B's qualities, this seems to imply a fairly crucial indifference to or disregard of those details of the person B which make that person the individual that s/he is as B rather than some other person. If distinctive attributes are not relevant to A's love, then B's attributes are given an accidental and
independent status in relation to B and they are, in this way, separable from B without diminishing the identity and value of B as a beloved object. Yet, if this is the nature of B's identity, then, firstly, any other person will do as an object of A's love. B is replaceable without altering A's love. Person B is quite dispensable as far as the individual B is identified as being a unique combination of properties. It could not matter if the beloved person is C or D rather than B because A's love is not conferred on the basis of definitive criteria. What is loved by A is not the uniquely qualified individual who is B but that aspect of B which is really generic, i.e., the human being or person who happens to be B. Not that A loves the abstract universal 'person,' 'human being,' or mankind'; A does in fact love a particular human, B, but A does so on the basis of the humanness of B. Good/bad, rich/poor, young/old, beautiful/ugly, these and other similar distinctions are irrelevant to the love of unconditional love. The lovability of B is simply contained in the fact that B is a person.

In addition, A may love B in this way for any of the factors (4-6), even though the choice of B is not based on an evaluation of the properties of B. A may, for example, love B unconditionally for any of the following considerations: because it is in some sense a pleasure to love persons, i.e., (4); because it is believed that this love will bring peace or eternal reward (5); because B is an intrinsically valuable entity qua person (6a); or because the Bible commands it (6b).
That is, an unconditional lover may be quite well prepared to explain why s/he loves unconditionally. Unconditional love may in this sense be very strictly conditioned. There is, therefore, a method of justifying this type of love and developing a rationale of it. What cannot be justified, however, is the particular choice of B rather than C or D. This is especially evident when either C or D is obviously more highly qualified to be loved if one observes these persons according to their individual characteristics. The particular choice of the unconditional lover is not, then, justifiable by reference to properties of the object and does not need to be justified in this way because this love is not property-love.

The unconditional lover acts on the assumption that the personness of an individual is, in some way, a substantive reality with special value separate from the individual's particular properties. But if the object of love is construed as being independent from its properties, how does the personness and hence the lovability of B differ from C? Since one cannot rely upon properties to differentiate B from C, the purported distinctness of individual persons appears to be based upon bogus considerations and is, therefore, unfounded and empty. A's loving generosity must simply operate on person B who accidentally happens to be B rather than some other differently differentiated person.

Although this mode of operation is certainly equalizing, unconditional love is also promiscuous in a seriously
affronting way. When B is loved on the basis of nothing other than his/her being a person, B as B is an arbitrary recipient of A's indiscriminate attention. And because every other person presents an equivalent demand upon A's charitable love, A is also obliged to satisfy these demands unconditionally without exercising preference. Every person stands for the same supreme value and each is equally deserving of A's love. So, even though B becomes the beloved of A, B really has little influence in the matter because s/he will be loved no matter what happens. A's liberality in loving has thus bound him/her rather unfreely to dispense love arbitrarily without provision. Unconditional love is unrestricted, ready and willing for every candidate. Everyone deserves to win this reward. But since it is bestowed at no cost, without preference, it is by no means a unique distinction to be selected as conferee.

The egalitarian character of this (bhakti-like) devotion to the person-world of life is undoubtedly commendable for its truly marvelous philanthropy, but as for upholding and prizing the constitutive elements of individuality and the particularity and concreteness of each single person, unconditional love necessarily fails to do this and is therefore deserving of censure. A's unconditional love began looking as if it was directed at B as B is in him/herself. But it now appears to be directed not at B as B is uniquely himself but simply at what B is as a person. The remaining parts of B which are left over beyond this generic dimension
are essentially irrelevant. Since being a person is a state of affairs over which B has no choice, the value and intelligibility of this particular love relation must shift from what is loved to why the lover loves B as s/he does. The rationale of person-love must be clarified further. B may be loved for-the-sake-of lots of things other than B for his own sake. But that would make B an intermediate element and an instrumental part of A's love project rather than an end-object of A's love. And if A claims to love B for his/her own sake, as an end-object, then, again, B's lovability is grounded simply on his/her personhood and not upon any idiosyncratic properties that make B the individual that s/he is rather than C or D.

This means, secondly, that if B's identity is confined to his/her being a love object only qua person, then B's total individuality as a self-determined ethical being is excluded and emptied of significance by A's type of love. Being selected by A as an object of love irrespective of individual merit means that B's individuality signifies nothing of value to A as lover. B is the formal object of A's love but B's substantial, actual content of character and orientation to life are irrelevant to A.

This leads, thirdly, to the realization that unconditional love allows the victimization of itself because of the fact that it operates indiscriminately. A's love for B will rightly continue even though B may become indifferent, disagreeable, hostile, malicious or destructive. Never does B
become undeserving of A's unconditional love. Such unmindful-
fully tolerant, unremitting, unoffendable love seems quite
rightly to merit resentment by the particular beloved whose
specific mode of life and individuality matter not at all
to the lover. To the sycophant, the criminal, the enemy,
and other evil forms of life, this unrestricted dispensation
of love is a kind of incredible gullibility and naivety which
may function as an invitation to perform whatever a contorted
heart happens to desire. This type of uncritical valuation
accorded the beloved seems to pollute the lover as well by
virtue of the exorbitant permissiveness and unlimited accep-
tance essential to (entailed in) his/her way of loving. The
lover warrants licentiousness in the beloved through his own
example of unreserved liberality in administering his love
life. When love has no provisos and is guaranteed uncondi-
tionally, then no action risks this love. All is free and
everything is permitted. Love affirms and accepts everything.
The judgment which would terminate and refuse this love is
inoperative. Only as a blind, all-encompassing "Yes" does
this love exist.

The decisive consequence of this point is now made more
discernable. One begins to realize that when a lover allows
any behavior or personal trait to deserve care and solicitude,
then the very meaning of the love relation becomes suspect.
If anything at all counts as being lovable, then lovability
is rendered devoid of specific meaning. No determination of
its significance is possible because everything is included and nothing excluded. Such love, thereby, becomes unintelligible and vain.

Individual disregard, arbitrary and promiscuous selectivity, and evacuation of significance are characteristics which count rather decisively against this second exposition of the procedure by means of which a proper object of love is to be identified. As such, neither conditional, appraisive love nor unconditional, non-discriminative love seem adequate to the responsible execution of human loving. When each case is considered in its strictest sense, the individual person who is claimed to be the object of love is in fact excluded because a fundamental part of what is comprised in personal individuality is excluded from love's objective. With conditional love the person is separated from his properties; with unconditional love the properties are separated from the person. Both accounts thereby miss something essential to the conception of love and personal identity which must be included in an adequate account of interpersonal love.

This problem in the determination of the object of love is really only a part of a more general deficiency for this approach to the issue though. It cannot ever provide an adequate account of interpersonal love because, to put it most simply, it has chosen to attend only to that part of interpersonal love which comprises the object of love. It gives the appearance of being able to provide an account only
because it unwittingly attempts to include within its own determination considerations which really belong to the subject and relational components of interpersonal love. In response to the question "What is the nature of interpersonal love?" it launches off toward an answer by attempting to identify the nature of the lovable object. Along the way, recourse must be made to factors which are quite beyond the perview of the specification of the beloved object--which is a considerable problem in itself. The choice to address one's analysis to the object component is, however, a choice to neglect the other factors which are in fact also constitutive of any interpersonal love relationship. Because of this, this approach fails to account for the various determinations that are possible for the subject who loves and the kinds of relationships that can be affected by the subject. As these are requisite determining parts of any interpersonal love composite, the orientation to the object factor must of necessity be supplemented by reference to these other components.

C. Love as the Subject

a. Exposition

With respect to the second component of the intentional structure of love, the nature of love may be treated as a problem of the constitution of the proper subject (or lover) rather than being formulated as a problem about the proper
object (or beloved). As such, the existence and meaning of love is established in the very activity itself of loving by the loving agent. Only in the lover, in his/her way of being as an active subject, is love realized. Love is a manner of existing for a person, a way of living, experiencing, responding, thinking, feeling, and speaking as a subject-lover. It is a condition which is independent from outside objects and relations as such because it dwells only "within" the lover whose state of consciousness, disposition, and activity is the primordial source and site of love.\(^8\)

Although more could be said about this way of understanding love, it is adequate if one is clear that this love is dependent solely and exclusively for its existence and character upon the subjective determination of an individual person.\(^9\) The supreme architect and administer of love is the individual subject, the conscious agent who freely chooses to be (or not to be) a lover. Love happens because an individual lets it happen. It is of such-and-such a quality because the individual decides to generate that kind of love. The exercise and application of love, its termination, its alteration, its goals are all subject-dependent. Whatever the object, whatever the character of the relationship, when the subject component is granted the dominant role in the composition of love, these matters are brought to be—ultimately and in every case—by the individual subject.
b. Critique of Love as the Subject

But if the subject is so specified as the essential determinant of love, then interpersonal love is impossible. It is ruled out by the fact that all relationships are extrinsic to the subject—the one in whom love comes to be and resides—and all objects are separate from the subject's essential composure. Since it is only the condition of the subject that is the constitutive factor responsible for love, the question of love is converted into the problem of self-determination. As a pool which is full and overflowing does not require water from elsewhere nor does it necessarily require a receptacle to contain its produce, so the lover is resourceful in creating love without having a dependency upon a particular object to receive and respond to this love. The essential "relation" that is productive of love is a person's own relation to himself. Though this love may certainly be applied, bestowed, manifested in relation to other persons, love is strictly a quality of a particular, independent self, its very actuality and way of realizing itself as a subject. Being neither an object nor a relation to another, love exists as a type of individual self-experience, of subjectivity or inwardness.

Though this position must proceed to identify those characteristics or qualities required for such loving or self-composure, it need only be emphasized here that the meaning of love, according to this account, is not interpersonal. It is completely personal. As flying is to a bird
or singing to a singer, so loving is to a lover. The acts which generate the reality of love are not other-dependent or interrelational. They are an achievement of the individual agent.

That two persons who love may be associated and derive benefit from being together is interesting and important, but never does it mean that this love becomes interpersonal in the sense of being a love of one person who desires (needs, aspires to, longs for) the other person. There is always simply single individuals who exist in contiguous proximity as loving persons. Their objective is not one another (as beloveds) but their own way of existing as persons. The reality of this love is ("in") the individual subject. Though persons can be active as lovers in relation to one another, to be the object of these acts means that one is a recipient of deeds and expressions (of emotions, feelings, understandings) which are exercised in accordance with the lover's own self-determination. The status of B in relation to lover A is never more than that of an entity in the game which is always A's way of being himself as a loving person. The selection of B as an object of A's activity is simply a choice performed by fiat. It is arbitrary in the sense that the relation exists in the way that it does on the basis of the authority and resourcefulness of A. It is not mutual or stipulative or compelled, even if it happens to be reciprocated. B is by no means needed for the existence of this love. Although B may function as a provoking or
stimulative influence in the production and conferral of A's love, B is not the direct cause, immediate origin, or justification of A's love. Whether or not B loves A in return is of little consequence to the loving of A. B is in the direct and immediate sense an alien, extrinsic element in relation to the reality of A's love. A's love has its own inner teleology in relation to which B exists merely as an object for the exercise of A's self-being.

If, therefore, the problem of love is deciphered as a problem of the development and expression of a kind of subjectivity, then love is not really an interpersonal matter. The essential component and necessary condition for love is simply the subject. Other persons are extraneous.

D. Love as the Relation

a. Exposition

With respect to the third component, the nature of love may be treated as a problem of relationship. From this perspective, the existence and meaning of love is established in the very relation itself which is effected between lover and beloved. Love cannot be located in the subject component because the subject is only capable of dealing with his own side of a love relationship. Inasmuch as love is a relationship, the subject cannot himself constitute the being of love. Try as he will, love cannot be the result of his own autonomous activity because love supposes factors other than
the subject and these are quite beyond his own volitional powers. The object is a definite limiting and qualifying reality existing in its own right.

But neither can love be located in the object component because the object is only able to deal with his own side of a love relationship. Hence, the object cannot constitute love inasmuch as it is a relationship whose reality is beyond his own individual powers of influence. Neither the subject nor the object, taken in themselves, is able to produce interpersonal love. The reality of such love must be located in the relationship which is established between subject and object. The relationship is the necessary and determining factor because without it there could be no interpersonal love.

Interpersonal love, therefore, exists as a reality in the form of a relation. The subject or the object, when they are bereft of the relation, can by no means be engaged in interpersonal love. Love exists only as a conjunction, communion, association, mutuality, or betweenness. "I am" and "You are" become "We are" (or "Us"). Love is carried in no single heart, it is located in no individual object. Both lover and beloved are obliged to assert that love is not mine nor yours; it is ours only as us. Only as we are in togetherness is love realized. It is real only as relation. 10

Love is, in the strict sense, then, the relation. Without the "substance" of the relation which is qualitatively
different from the components that compose it, both the subject-lover and the object-beloved would be incomplete. They would not have the experience which is only constituted as relation.

b. Critique of Love as the Relation

Although a more detailed identification of the characteristics of this love must still be specified by proponents of this orientation to love, the logical character of the relation presents difficulties for an analyst. In contrast to the previous position, one need not question the reality of the love relation in the exposition because love is described as a relationship between two persons. Yet upon closer examination of the nature of this love, one begins to realize that neither person is specifiably independent from the betweenness which they are as love. The fusion, unity, or participation of lover and beloved is love. There is, therefore, no legitimate way to distinguish between the two persons as they are in love. They are the between, for in that site alone does love have its being and meaning. But this renders love subjectless and objectless. Neither a what object nor a who subject is included in fact in this love as it is actually constituted. The "we" is neither one person nor the other taken as separate individuals. The lover and beloved are not lover and beloved when they are in love because being-in-love is the relation between. The two persons converge upon one another to become what neither one
is separately. Love transforms the two into a unity which transcends each. The identity of love is not simply a combination of one person plus one person. In the between arises a new reality, a new horizon of significance and, although each person is a constitutive element required to produce this relation, neither person is nor can either have this significance for him/herself separately. Yet because they both are in love, they both have the same identity. Love is, in this way, not simply a duality but a synthesis of a duality which is not reducible to the summation of the individual members of the duality. The relation dawns forth from the meeting, progressively increasing itself with a wealth and reality of its own. It is a unique experience for an individual because in love an individual is recreated by the interpersonal elements of the relationship, gaining a new identity in that relationship, and the individual components, thus, become more than they were as subject and object.

There is, therefore, no love relation without the individuals yet if they are as subject and object, love is not. The pronoun 'we' (or 'us') has no distributive application for this kind of love. When 'I' and 'you' separate from the unity of 'we,' love as relation turns into an ordinary two-person association which is no longer love--except in the mode of remembrance, anticipation, etc.--or it reverts back to being a determination of the subject or the object component. In this sense, then, a characterization of love
is a characterization of neither lover nor beloved but of the 
actual composite which is produced by and dependent upon the 
togetherness. What one might ordinarily expect to be the 
major constituents of love, i.e., the subject and the object, 
are thus dissipated or exceeded and transformed to become 
something other than the individual components. The identity 
of the reality of love is (located only in) the relation and 
the identity does not reside in the individual components 
distinct from the relation. Such a position seems to relin­
quish the very elements that are required for the realization 
and continued existence of the relationship. That the love 
relation is allowed to consume both persons and abrogate 
individual delineation is, however, a questionable consumma­
tion. Or at least the description of this consummation is 
seriously questionable because of its attempt to focus 
exclusively upon the relationship of love at the expense of 
the other two components of interpersonal love. This pro­
cedure may have merit in a specialized phenomenological 
description of the experience of the unity of love, there may 
be certain important advantages in emphasizing the element of 
the relationship in this way, but a more adequate and com­
prehensive phenomenological analysis cannot allow the 
dissolution or the domination of any one element in the 
structure of love. Each element requires respect, the subject, 
the object, as well as the relation. There seems to be no 
justification to exclude any of the three components essential
to interpersonal love and rather serious objections to claims that either of the components is the primal determinant of interpersonal love.

E. Summary Comments

Although each of these positions on the nature of love may be infrequently maintained in an exclusive form by a lover or an analyst of love, each position nevertheless retains its individual attractiveness. This itself invites confusion and distortion in one's attempt to determine the basic constituents and determining factors of love. One not infrequently finds individuals asserting positions which approach one or the other of these orientations because they think it is reasonable to give one or another priority. In an effort to reduce this distortion and preserve the value of each component, I have attempted to set forth the alternatives to the intentional analysis and exhibit the defectiveness of each position with regard to interpersonal love.

The aim of this introductory analysis is to initiate contact with the rudimentary problematics of interpersonal love. The survey of elementary possibilities incorporated in the constitution of love has served

(1) to specify and emphasize basic formative factors of interpersonal love,

(2) to underscore the importance of each component and the significance that each can claim for itself as a determinant of love.
(3) to stress the need to include each component as an integral (rather than exclusive) determining element of the composition of interpersonal love.

This approach to the problem enables one to secure a sound sense of the grounding and formal structure of interpersonal love, the requisite logical and systematic factors involved, and the fundamental perspective essential for an examination of love which can be carried throughout an analysis and function as a guide to the extensional completeness and adequacy of the love relationship.

One of the most important consequences of these considerations is the realization that a holistic approach to the problem of interpersonal love is mandatory. The kind or quality of interpersonal love that a person is able to realize is dependent upon each factor of the intentional aggregate, each is a co-determinant of the resulting state. So, the effort to understand, analyze, and otherwise interpret the nature of interpersonal love depends upon a careful assessment of these points. Success in the activity and realization of love also depends upon knowledge of each component. The genuine and effective lover must know him/herself as subject. Interpersonal love includes the task of self-development and self-transformation. S/he must know the objects available to her/himself so as to be able to discover the values and priorities of these objects. The lover must also know the kinds of relationships possible which lead to the properly desired interpersonal consummation. Knowledge of this
complex situation is the condition (a) for the development and skillful ("artistic") execution of interpersonal love as well as (b) a judicious accounting of it.

As such, the analysis and the distinctions advanced so far should be directly applicable to the work of Plato. This will be demonstrated in what follows, and the utility of it will be confirmed throughout the dissertation. No matter to what extent the material may become qualified by contextual, historical, cosmological, or psychological detail, the legitimacy of this orientation to interpersonal love is beyond dispute. Logically and phenomenologically the intentional structure is necessarily supposed; systematically it composes the formal determinants and it functions as a methodological key; existentially it is the basic structural composite of the very project which is interpersonal love.

Plato's dialogues contain material that is addressed directly to the problem of the nature and significance of interpersonal love. In it, each component receives attention and each is set within a very sophisticated theory about the proper function and formation of human love. Traditional studies of the dialogues have most often simply concentrated upon the "ladder of eros" leading to the Ideas and have addressed themselves to the problematics of determining the proper object to be loved. Because of this, the issue of interpersonal love was usually relegated to an initial phase in the expression of eros and its significance was settled at least indirectly by passing beyond person-to-person
relations to consider more important matters. These other matters compose, for the most part, what I call the ideocentric interpretation of Platonic eros.

Although such passing beyond is perhaps a justified way of dealing with an issue that Plato should have cleared up more explicitly, it has been left to more recent philosophers to spell out the consequences of this traditional approach and to exhibit the status accorded to other persons within the scheme of erotic possibilities presented by Plato. Within the context of the traditional analysis, however, it seems as if one may take either of two basic positions. Call one a compatibilist position and the other an incompatibilist position. The compatibilist maintains that both Ideas and persons (who exhibit lovable qualities) can be the object of eros for Plato. There is no conflict between these two forms of love. Each is legitimate and proper in its own way as long as love of persons is always associated with the love of Ideas inasmuch as either one alone would be an incomplete and an inevitably distorted expression of love, i.e., it would not be distinctly Platonic. The incompatibilist maintains that one cannot love both Ideas and persons because the proper objects of eros are the Ideas. This form of love takes precedence and, on a normative basis, it excludes other forms of erotic commitment. I intend to show (A) the legitimacy of the incompatibilist position (or exclusive ideocentrism) in the next chapter as against the interpretation of
the traditional compatibilist. It is, I maintain, the position required by Plato's metaphysics. It deserves serious attention because it is essential for a proper understanding of Plato's account. Exclusive ideocentrism will thus be shown to supercede any form of the traditional compatibilist position and stand as an argument against the association of these two love-objects by denying the legitimacy of person-to-person love.

But beyond this, however, (B) I do not think that the status of other persons has been accurately analyzed by the ideocentric account because it has failed to recognize that exclusive ideocentrism itself is only one phase necessary to the proper exercise of human eros. Examination of the dialogues reveals that interpersonal love is not dispensed with but is included in the proper operation of eros. If individuals are not accorded the status of proper objects of love, one is very hard pressed to explain why erotic energy is specifically directed to individuals in conjunction with eidetic love in such a way as to constitute an inherent part of properly organized erotic activity. In the dialogues, much effort is devoted to the knowledgeable determination of how interpersonal eros is to be expressed, what is involved in such relationships, and how such relationships are technically to be cultivated. What seems to be impossible for the ideocentric interpretation of eros is precisely what I intend to defend. The task is to show exactly how love of
Ideas and persons do fit together and what this interpersonal love means. On the basis of my interpretation of the dialogues, an elaboration of what might be called a dialectical compatibilist position which (1) is ideocentric in a non-exclusive way and (2) affirms the value of interpersonal love will be advanced as the more correct analysis of Plato's view of the final, more complete, phases of erotic development. This position considers both Ideas and persons to be proper objects of eros but confers upon each a distinctly different role, value, and place within the scheme of love and thereby alters the character of love appropriate to each at each phase in the progression. It declares (3) that proper interpersonal love develops out of the erotic relationship established between a person and the Ideas. That is, without a proper psyche-to-eidos relationship, proper interpersonal love is impossible, and from a proper psyche-to-eidos relation, person-to-person love is naturally expressed by the erotic agent. It in fact becomes a special challenge and creative opportunity for the lover.

This analysis is distinguished from the traditional compatibilist because it explains the nature and status of interpersonal love on the basis of the developmental sequence available to eros. Although it is easy and perhaps, at least in some contexts, reasonable to say that both Ideas and persons are to be loved, it is by no means easy to show how and why this claim is correct. The process which leads to right interpersonal love involves very different components and
relationships in the erotic structure. Ideocentric love is very different from that of common eros; maieutic eros is very different from ideocentric love. In ideocentrism, every individual person as a possible object of love must be relinquished. This is a difficult modification. But in the love that results from the success of ideocentric love, the status of other individuals is changed into that of an object appropriate for erotic interrelationship of a kind determined by the changes effected in the previous phases. The traditional compatibilist seems never to be able to explain in an adequate fashion exactly how these two objects, persons and Ideas, become integrated within the developmental progression of an erotic agent.

So, I must first state as accurately as I can the ideocentric position and then, in the remainder of the dissertation, exhibit the status of ideocentrism in the overall development of eros by more accurately determining the place of other persons in this comprehensive orientation. In the end, neither the traditional compatibilist nor the ideocentric incompatibilist will merit credence.

I now proceed to formulate what I consider to be the mainline philosophical interpretation of Plato's position on the nature of interpersonal love. The ideocentric analysis of Socrates and his accounts focuses upon an essential part of Platonic love. One certainly cannot dispense with either the person of Socrates or the content of his conversations and speeches in the dialogues. For both cases, ideocentrism
is given as a necessary but conditional phase in the development of an erotic agent. The consequential conversion required by this form of eros is essential to further development.

The transition itself to ideocentrism involves a radical affective transformation of character for the lover, a demanding mental reorientation to the nature of things, and a commitment to objects of reality that are not available to ordinary sense-experience. The ideocentric phase of eros is truly momentous as a theory and as a form of individual existence. It deserves careful and earnest appraisal.
1 For the sake of simplicity and space I will discontinue the use of the masculine/feminine alternative in the remainder of the text except where occasional reminder might be of service. Recourse to the conventional linguistic bias in favor of the masculine forms of expression does not imply the acceptance of a view that neglects or reduces in value the feminine. Philosophical anthropology addresses itself to the problem of anthropos: the life form of the class human being or person, which ordinarily though not always (e.g. Aristophanes' speech in the Symposium) is divided into masculine and feminine types. In chapters more directly related to the Platonic texts, the feminine will usually be absent; I will simply follow Plato's example. Factors such as societal structure, norms, and aesthetic sensibilities can be used to explain the principles resulting in such discrimination, but these by no means justify it. On the other hand, the homo-erotic relationships that Plato delineates as superior examples of interpersonal love explicitly reject the value of the sexual expression of eros. Plato's position on homosexuality, though complex, is unambiguous in its condemnation. Not only does he not propose to sponsor it, he finds it unacceptable on biological-social grounds as well as ideological-moral grounds. From the perspective of pedagogy, homosexuality is (as K. Dover says) a spiritual dead end whereas homo-erotic relationships are the means by which the cultural development of young men (perhaps) advance to become proper lovers of the higher good and beautiful.

2 I have in mind such books as the following:

Fromm, Erich, The Art of Loving (New York, 1956)
Benoit, Hubert, The Many Faces of Love (London, 1955)
Nygren, Anders, Agape and Eros (New York, 1953)
D'Arcy, M. C., The Mind and Heart of Love (New York, 1956)
Stendhal, On Love (New York, n.d.)

3 In each case, the object of love in the broad sense is another individual human being. So, I do not mean that property-love does not have as its object another person. The subject matter is, in both types, person-to-person love. But in property-love what is loved is an individual's properties. The individual is loved because of his/her properties.
In person-love what is loved is the individual as a person. This love is not determined by certain properties or qualities that an individual may or may not have. It is, in this sense, holistic-love. It is all-embracing and accepts the other for what they are intrinsically and without discrimination, whereas the former type of love is particularistic and discriminative of the specific properties which make up the individual.

This way of formulating the issue is my own, but it is not altogether new in the sense that many of the individual points are made in various ways, in various contexts, by the above (footnote 2) authors as well as other works on this subject.

4 Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, VII, 3f. (1156a f.). I have qualified and complicated Aristotle's friendship-of-virtue (or the good) in the third point, i.e., (6).

5 This does not mean that B may not be the direct and exclusive object of A's love and the A's love of B includes kindness, generosity, respect, pleasure, benefit, etc., to person B. All of this can be true of interpersonal property-love. The kind of love that is conferred is to be distinguished from the exact object of conferral. The criterion which determines love's conferral is not the same as the criterion which determines the type of love to be conferred upon the appropriate object.

6 Sometimes this humanness or personhood of individuals is referred to by other names: spirit, self, soul, personal being, eternal being or destiny, thou, or presence. But such terms do not effect the nature of unconditional love insofar as love is bestowed on the basis of the nature of the person-object and not on its particular properties or qualities.

7 It is of value to note, first, that this typology of property and person love is also relevant to the context of family life: one type is exemplified as father-love, the other as mother-love. In a political context, one type is idealized as the beneficent ruler, the other as the restrictive, rigorous dictator. In social welfare policies, one finds an emphasis upon the unconditional value accorded a person as well as the application of stringent requirements to the potential recipients of the social benefits. People are treated as persons and as things. In theology, the deity is characterized as being infinitely loving, loving not on the basis of human merit but freely offering to all without qualification a gracious, saving love. On the other hand, the deity is also a severe and scrupulous judge whose concern for the right is uncompromising in its thorough assessment.
of the quality of a person's life. In speculative cosmology and psychology there are numerous references to a dualist operation in the processes of the universe and the human psyche which can be interpreted in the light of these two loves. There are forces which are negative/positive, masculine/feminine, conscious/unconscious, creative/destructive, etc. In ordinary interpersonal contexts, our normal intimate relations with others are often characterized by an ambivalent, ill-defined, and illogical mixture of each type of love. At certain times and in certain situations we act as conditional lovers; at others we act in an unconditional way. Sometimes in similar situations with the same people we reverse this, or we are uncertain how to act. We are apprehensive about both types of love when they are pushed to the extreme limit and yet we are attracted to the pure forms of both. When we love and when we are loved we desire both the unconditional and the conditional kind of love. And yet, do we really? We tend to disapprove and avoid the rigorous and strict application of either because each in its own way seems unfair to both lover and beloved. But as principles of actions, the two kinds of love appear to be conspicuously mutually exclusive. So, is our ordinary love a pathological mongrel or can it be a legitimate hybrid? Is there a solution to be found in a selective application of these two loves? Is one kind the preferable one?

It is important to take note of the range that this problematic situation characteristic of human love has and see that these two kinds of love appear rather extensively and in manifold forms throughout human interpersonal affairs.

Secondly, the differentiation between property-love and person-love is relevant to the eros/agape distinction emerging in Western history from Greek and Judéo-Christian sources. On the basis of comparing the accounts of love in Greek philosophy and the text of the Bible, an interpretation has been developed by more recent thinkers so as to uphold the distinctive merit of the agape model of love in contrast to that of the eros type of Platonic love. Agape love is described as an unselfish, gracious, sacrificial, non-discriminating, unmotivated, and resourceful love. An agape lover does not seek value in an object, he confers, bestows, or creates the value of the beloved without regard to its actual properties. Platonic love, in contrast, is a form of property-love. It seeks objective value in the beloved, it is stipulative, egocentric, acquisitive, aggressive, rationalistic, and calculative. The clarification of this matter as regards Plato's view of love is central to this dissertation, though it is not appropriate here to pit one theory against the other in direct combat. It will become apparent in what follows, however, that Platonic love is more preserving and edifying of the beloved than often given credit. Cf. Nygren, Anders, Agape and Eros (New York, 1953), pp. 27-58; 166-181; 208-226.
The writings of Søren Kierkegaard have much to contribute to the kind of determination which is involved in this position on the nature of love, although his own view (cf. especially, Works of Love) does not by any means exemplify this standpoint.

The brevity of part C. and D. does not signify any diminution in their significance as compared to part B. Each, taken in itself, is an important way of analyzing and interpreting what constitutes the nature of love. The latter two parts I have made less problematical in order to show that exclusive reliance upon one or the other component is at once attractive and yet inadequate. The attractiveness is derived from the fact that each of them is an important, crucial determinant in the love relation; the inadequacy is derived from the fact that neither can be taken as the exclusive determinant of the relation. Clarity on this matter enhances one's appreciation of the individual components while at the same time emphasizes the holistic character of the character of love relations. In addition, factors (1-6), pages 41-42, would also be a part of the considerations determining the nature of the relationship component and the subject component, or more generally the nature of the whole structure.

The writings of Martin Buber are especially relevant to the determination of this position. Although Buber and Kierkegaard appear (in various writings) to assert the priority of one component, neither one of them in fact does this. Cf. I and Thou, tr. Walter Kaufmann (New York, 1970); The Knowledge of Man (New York, 1965).
Two factors must take precedence in an evaluation of Plato's position on interpersonal love: the person of Socrates and the reality and status of the Ideas (or Forms). Each of these is at the heart of the matter of love for Plato. Socrates is the person who loves the right things in the right way—he is the exemplary lover. The proper objective of this love is the Ideas—they are the exemplary beloved. Yet both of these pivotal elements of Plato's presentation have been identified as the major defects of his position. Socrates is judged to be a failure as a lover and the Ideas are rejected for being inappropriate objects of love. Socrates' failure as a lover is directly attributed to the fact that he takes as the eminent object of his love the eidetic objects rather than individual human persons.

There is then, according to this critical approach, no true interpersonal aspect of Platonic love. It is essentially a personal and ideocentric kind of love, in spite of the fact that it is manifested in the form of communication which is pertinent to the well being of other persons.

Inasmuch as this dissertation disputes the conclusions of this analysis and argues against exclusive ideocentrism and for the assignment of an important and integral place to
interpersonal love within the overall account of the nature of love for Plato, a presentation of the critical approach to each of these factors is needed. This material will stand as a contrasting background to my interpretation in Chapters III-IV. I do acknowledge that the ideocentric interpretation is based upon a significant amount of material in the dialogues, and this gives it a degree of validity that can be very persuasive and should not be ignored. But as the depiction of Meletus, Lycon, and Anytus had sufficient support to gain the conviction of Socrates as a sophistical personality and yet did not adequately interpret the significance of Socrates, so the ideocentric interpretation is, I maintain, a depiction of Socrates' love that likewise interprets the nature of Socrates' eros in a seriously inadequate way. Socrates as an exclusively ideocentric lover is the "sophistical lover" who functions in relation to other persons with his own erotic, otherworldly interests determining his behavior. His love is always employed to benefit himself, so that whatever element of his behavior may appear to be for the benefit of others, it is really only deceptively so because the benefit accrued in this way is always inadvertently conferred. Socrates' other-regarding activity is beguiling because the other person really gets only the mask of Socrates, the outer husk of a quite alien soul, the action and speech in someone else's drama.

As will be seen, the characterizations that form this critique of Platonic love are so close in representative
value to the legitimate portrayal of this matter for Plato that the descriptions function in a way comparable to the relation between the sophist and the philosopher in the Sophist. The one is a counterfeit, inauthentic version of the other, but one that presents a close enough image (eιδολον) to be persistently mistaken for the genuine lover. The very difficulty involved in ferreting out and stating the true nature of genuine love on the basis of the dialogues emphasizes the need for a clear conception of the contrast between the "incompatibilist Socrates" and the "dialectical compatibilist Socrates." Because misrepresentation of Socrates and misunderstanding of the Ideas is a matter of utmost importance which Plato's dialogues attempt to set aright, the delineation of the exclusive ideocentric position will provide the kind of critical perspective which will enhance an accurate assessment and appreciation of Plato's work on this issue.

A. Socrates and Matters of Love

Socrates' interest in the nature of love is exhibited in several ways. First, it is the main topic of several dialogues. In the Lysis, for example, Socrates happily devotes some time to meet Hippothales' plight of love (τα ερωτικα, 206a) by exhibiting how a lover should speak to a beloved. Socrates performs this service while actually speaking to Hippothales' beloved, engaging him in an inquiry about what it means to be a friend (φιλος). The associated
concepts of love (eros) and desire (epithymia) are always imminent, but the main discussion is an attempt to provide an adequate definition of friendship. From this question of personal endearment and intimate association, Socrates is led in other contexts to deal with differing forms of love such as the excessive (hubristic) desire for physical pleasure (Phdr. 237f.), the fierce and lawless tyrannical eros of the disorganized and violent soul (Rep. 573f.), and the higher madness of love which can bring great blessings to human life (Phdr. 244f.). In the Symposium, Eros is the subject of each speaker's praise and is, for Socrates, the means by which the good life and ultimate realities are made accessible. In the Phaedrus, Socrates attempts to establish the connection between right eros and right logos by delineating in personal and interpersonal terms the possibilities of the self (psyche) as related to the eidetic elements. The development of the true politeia in the Republic is dependent throughout upon a proper utilization and transformation of the erotic nature of human life. Because virtue of the soul, knowledge of reality, and skill in political affairs depends upon proper love, the problem of love is a central one in the dialogues.

Secondly, Socrates himself was subject to the influence of eros and philia. They were potent and vital aspects of his life. From childhood he did not want to possess horses, money, or other distinctions, he says, but "I have a very passionate longing (pany erotikos) for the possession of
friends (philon)" (Lys. 211de). This orientation is evident in numerous erotically reverberating encounters described by Plato. Many of Socrates' discussions are set in motion and stimulated by his erotic-aesthetic appreciation of the beautiful, admirable characteristics possessed by the young men of Athens. So easily inspired is he by such experiences that he frankly admits that "almost everyone who has just grown up appears beautiful to me" (Chrm. 154b). Yet he is able to set aside natural attractiveness and pass beyond the stunning revelation provided by the open cloak of Charmides and the charm of the proud and talented Alcibiades to intercourse about "that one small point" (Chrm. 154d) concerning psychic well-being and true temperance or moderation (sophrosune) essential to right love. The erotic enthusiasm that impells Socrates manifests itself in the rather unerotic activity of exploring basic concepts and explanations--hence, almost anyone who speaks reasonably will in fact appear beautiful to him--and this love so dominates his affairs that it continues undaunted and unabated until he finally dies for the commitments of this erotic demeanor. He was quite convinced, however, of his ability to love truly. If the Theages authentically represents Plato's Socrates, in it one finds Socrates confessing that

I am in a position of knowing practically nothing except one little subject, that of love-matters (ton erotikon). In this subject, however, I claim to be skilled above anybody who has ever lived or is now living. (128b)
The account which he gives to Agathon and the others at the banquet is ample evidence to support such a claim. The fact that Socrates sought instruction from Diotima and was much later able to articulate it so appropriately in the context of the banquet, to exercise it with such craft in other settings, and his earnest extension and amplification of this learning whenever possible, this is a significant distinguishing characteristic of Socrates.  

Socrates also became the object of erotic attention. Though this may appear rather outlandish and humorous, it was by no means a frivolous or inconsequential involvement for those who succumbed to the formidable powers of Socrates. Alcibiades compares him to a satyric, luring piper, a creature whose words have power enough to strike one's soul as potently as a venomous snake. Even many of those individuals, like Thrasymachus, who were antagonistic and hostile toward Socrates' presentation of some issue were soon forced into circumspective deference over the rigorousness of his speech and his personal appeal. Others were won over completely by Socrates to become persistent followers of him, nourishing their erotic needs on the content of his conversations. His chief lovers were responsible for preserving in memory and recounting the events of his personal encounters. But even Aristodemos and Apollodorus, as lovers (erastes, manikos, 173b,d) who transmit the occurrences at Agathon's symposium, have a very much less spectacular affair with Socrates than does Alcibiades. Alcibiades' praises and
accusations of Socrates as an erotic agent are especially intriguing because they reveal the ordinarily concealed and disguised character of Socratic eros. Alcibiades claims to have been beguiled by Socrates who appeared initially in the role of a lover set on the "conquest" of a beautiful, talented creature but then daimonically maneuvers the relation to end up as the object of conquest, the pursued one, rather than the lover. Alcibiades refers to a significant number of other persons who have also experienced the acute befuddlement and reversion of roles produced by Socrates' way of loving (Sym. 222b). But Alcibiades' experience of the wonderful treasures that become available by relating properly to Socrates indicate something of the benefit that can be derived in such a liaison. In word and deed, Socrates clearly managed to endear himself to a number of persons who became intimate friends and enduring companions. He was not a solitary, disaffected, estranged, unamicable, ascetic personality. Yet his love undoubtedly made him unique and special to those who cared actually to meet and share in his concerns.

Thirdly, Socrates also made rather bold claims about the nature of his knowledge about love. In the Symposium, he admits at the beginning that he cannot but agree to the topic of conversation because "I set myself up to understand nothing but matters of love (ta erotikà)" (177a). Later in response to the previous speakers he asserts that he, in
contrast to what has been spoken by the others, is ready to speak the truth about love for he is one who has discerned (eidosi) and knows the truth (t'alethe, 199ab). He is an expert (skillful, powerful, clever, able) in erotic matters (deinos ta erotikia, 198d). He can tell of love's power, its activity or work, how to acquire it, and how to speak about it appropriately (198d; 201e). This understanding of the "science" of genuine love operates in the dialogues both as a theory and as a skill (techne) executed in the course of the dialogues. The nature of the art of eros is an explicit issue in both the Lysis and the Phaedrus and is covertly present in the very structure of the other dialogues.

Fourthly and finally, the discipline, method, and goals of philosophy are, for Socrates, realized only as the expression of a properly ordered love-life. From the point of view of principle, the realization of philosophy is dependent upon love. Philosophy is a form of human love. The human condition is made excellent and truly happy through rightly formed love (philosophy). The philosopher is the person who learns to love the good (beautiful) in the most effective and beneficial way. Central to philosophy and Socrates (as a person and philosopher) is the issue of love. This love is ontological by virtue of seeking the ultimate reality of things. By grounding this search in cognitively ascertainable experiences, love is self-consciously epistemic. By determining behavior according to the results of the
epistemic and ontological inquiry, love is normative (axiological). And by functioning in public, educative, persuasive ways, this love is social, political, and religious in its implications. Love and philosophy are not separate issues for Socrates. To neglect this point is really to misunderstand the nature and constitution of both.3

These brief references should be sufficient indication to establish the importance of love for Socrates. The problem of love is not a superficial, restricted, or transitional problem, it is a primary, systematic, and pervasive matter in the dialogues. It is crucial for Socrates because it effects his own personal identity, his ideals and commitments, his vocation in life, and his way of understanding other persons, the possibilities of their education, and the nature of the universe in which persons live. There is no doubt that Socrates is inherently and amenably implicated in this matter of love.

B. Socratic Intimacy

If one attempts to evaluate the connection between Socrates and love in personal terms, however, a brief characterization of his way of life seems to count decisively against considering him as either a model lover or a model beloved.
1.

As a lover, Socrates does not appear to be in love with persons at all but with Ideas (or Forms). His passion is spent in dialogue because it is his method of gaining access to the beloved Ideas. His physical eyes may prefer to rest upon the natural beauties of the flesh, but this aesthetic experience functions to stimulate his psychic perception which is always searching for the inspiring beauty of the eidetic realm. This orientation seems to pervade and effect every aspect of Socrates' life from family and vocation to politics and religion. The Ideas are always paramount and Socrates is always in pursuit, at times a mad genius, humorously pedantic, wonderfully tenacious, but always an enthusiastic lover of these ultimate objects of reality.

Given this high devotion, Socrates' intimacy and fellowship is charming and humorous when his love turns personal because in that form it is playful since it is knowingly contradictory. His intimacy is disarming and disconcerting because it convicts and humbles a person by exhibiting the disparate predicament of ordinary human life. The human condition is such that Socrates is compelled to associate with others by means of ironic communication because he himself must exist as an ironic being. Though his customary dwelling was the public places of his city, the true Socrates is also quite aptly located "in the clouds" because his heart is set on transcendent matters, his mind endeavoring to dwell upon the essential things and to separate these from the
derivative ones in every facet of his experience. The attempt to make the transcendent immanent is much the same task as to make Socrates a lover of persons. It is an ontological and normative misfit. His love is aimed at the highest matters, and to turn it elsewhere would be to defeat the inherent goal of his love.

As he persistently engaged in his own philosophical enterprise, Socrates' affiliations with other persons were thoroughly promiscuous. His life is spent as a kind of conversational transient, an enterprising idler. He willingly falls in with any available articulate individual. His liaisons are always the scene wherein he activates his dialectical intrigues. His time has only one overriding schedule; his direction has only one design and end. It does not matter what particular person happens by, he is always ready to strip and cohabit in conversation with any volunteer. What his love requires is simply a respondent; his daily needs put him in continual pursuit of an interlocutor. Some particular subject matter is always at hand to discern and speak aright. Any point seems to be a sufficient beginning for Socrates to initiate his own peculiar erotic art. And if it should happen that a person does not respond to Socrates' inquiries and pursuits, is not sympathetic with Socrates' own special vocation, then so much the worse for that person.

As a lover, then, Socrates loves everyone and no one. He excludes no one in advance and yet every single person
is essentially displaced as a candidate for love by being conducted into new complicating regions which convolute the ordinary flow of eros. To become an object of Socrates' attention is to be at once charmed, deceived, and wounded from within by being impugned by one's own inept utterances and affections. This mode of operation seems to be required for Socrates' love of wisdom because his love does not have as its objective or destination human persons. The context of the interpersonal for Socrates is treated more like the accidental locale of an individual's fate as a human being but one which nevertheless offers an opportunity to exercise proper love in the activity of dialectic devoted to the eidetic. This, in turn, transforms and uplifts the psyche of the person according to the education gained in dialectic. But it also diminishes to the point of actual illegitimacy a person-to-person erotic affair. The fact that other people happen to be included in one's existential predicament does not mean that they are to be accepted at face value as the appropriate lovable objects toward which one's passions (etc.) should be directed. Socrates is convinced that such a presumption is not justified.

2.

If, on the other side, one tries to love Socrates or view him as a beloved object, two things seem to occur straightoff. As a beloved (A), Socrates responds with rather nonchalant obliviousness to interpersonal affection. By
keeping busy with his own affairs, he remains at a distance, preoccupied, aloft, unsusceptible, functioning in a way that rebuffs the lover and thrusts him back upon his own resources. His conversations presuppose a personal separateness and an authentic distinctness that is not to be violated or nullified, and Socrates assumes very little in advance about who an individual really is according to his own self-understanding. If the other claims to know something valuable, Socrates gladly investigates the situation, taking nothing for granted, until it becomes clear that the other has gotten beyond his depth. At this next stage, Socrates attempts to align himself with the other in a kind of mutually benefiting inquiry in such a way that, at best, the two persons proceed as adventurers in search of valuable but usually very evasive prey. By comporting himself in this manner, Socrates himself evades direct erotic encounter. As an individual person, he disengages and frees himself from possible personal involvement. He avoids the beguiling entanglements of interpersonal solicitation because what is at issue is not a matter of individual personality or interpersonal proclivities. With unobtrusive simplicity, he disregards and disdains personal affiliation on the basis of affection because this kind of expression is taken to be irrelevant to himself and inappropriate for the other.

(B) In his behavior, however, Socrates persists with his own counter-love of dialectic. He does not reject the other unconditionally nor isolate himself or refuse his personal
presence. He speaks willingly and with circumspective care. He happily offers whatever assistance and encouragement he can contribute. But what he responds to when he is with another is the content of their speech, their ideas, arguments, reasons, etc. The other aspects of their existence are treated as extraneous, not worthy of consideration, quite out of the purview of Socrates' erotic interests. And Socrates treats himself in the same manner. The significant content of his own activity is ideational and not really personal—except in the obvious sense that it is Socrates who is involved and not someone else. His own individuality is always only indirectly present and either of problematic status because this is pertinent and amenable only to himself or it is employed for some didactic purpose to aid in clarifying some question—usually with a good bit of humor or irony. But by responding in this fashion, Socrates is able to exchange himself as a possible beloved object for the more worthy candidates, the eidetic objects. The pathway to the goal, the good, is public and communicable; the progression does not require seclusion as such but is best advanced in friendly, rigorous, dedicated discussion. Yet, the appropriation and exercise of the dialectical understanding which is gained is an individual matter. Hence, Socrates directs the erotic effort of the lover by means of dialogue away from the person of Socrates toward these other matters. And in this replacement, Socrates by no means endorses the
love of any other human being. He leads the lover altogether away from the earthly realm toward non-human realities.

As a beloved, then, Socrates steps to the design of a different, quite extraordinary, calling. What may have started as a playfully amorous conversation shifts to a type of companionship departing on an exceptional adventure of the soul. By diverting the focal objective of the erotic relationship away from personalities to the resolution of particular issues nevertheless pertinent to each, Socrates thus eludes the lover and diligently proceeds to substitute alternative love objects and ways of responding. The lover is given *amour propre* in the form of detachment and abstraction from the personal-emotive dimension. The lover discovers his own self and his way of projecting his loving intentions to be a significant problematic element in the affair of love. And love directed at the person of Socrates is, in this context, assured of failure in its objective, destined to be unrequited love. Socrates confounds and works disarray on any such effort. Both the quality of the relation and the objective are discredited by being undermined. He makes the lover experience irritation, confusion, disappointment, anger at being so affronted, and finally the deep bite into the emptiness of Socrates eventually humbles the lover to a state where proper self-recovery necessitates rigorous self-examination and self-transformation. The derailment of the lover is inescapably traumatic and Socrates feels no guilt in provoking and reinforcing the event. Nor does he
take any particular personal credit if he should happen to provide aid in the eventual progression toward a resolution of the plight of the lover. These other occurrences are simply out of his province.

C. Socratic Failure

Socrates seems therefore to have failed entirely to fulfill the role ordinarily accorded either the lover or the beloved. He refuses to love other people and he refuses to let himself be loved by other people. The erotic defect which prevents him from achieving intimate interpersonal relationships is explicable, however, once one surveys the nature of Socrates' love and specifies the objects which he selects as properly lovable for human beings. His love turns out to be a rather eccentric and uncompromising form of property-love. Socrates does not love persons as such but properties. These properties, however, are not exactly the properties of persons or anything like properties that are at hand in normal human experience. They are rather the essential constituents of being, the formative factors of reality, which somehow account for the existence of the properties belonging to particular persons and things. These real properties are separate from the temporal (generated, mutable, imperfect, etc.) properties of individuals. They are primordial, ideal properties, the real being (or substance) of all
properties as they are in themselves independent from their manifestation in individual persons.

In addition, Socrates' way of love is really grounded in his concern for his own psychic well-being and for the destiny which can be secured by his own proper loving. He is a follower of the Apollonian injunction to know oneself. Since the required objects for this project are non-physical and imperceptible, his method of loving must be mental and relative to the transcendent objects of reality. This way of understanding love, however, actually requires a kind of "Copernican Revolution" on the part of the lover. In order to realize the proper orientation, a radical (metaphysical) shift is required. The lover's universe must, according to Socrates' position, be transformed in its motivational operation and mission in order to function correctly in the dynamics of the real cosmos. The lover's erotic composure and directionality must be reorganized in relation to the ultimate reference points for human life. The objects which really determine, perfect, and gratify human behavior are not those objects or properties of the earthly domain but those beyond the earthly. The telos of individual and collective life is located in the realm of eidetic realities. And with the change from the (anthropocentric, Earthly Aphrodite) human region to the ("heliocentric," Heavenly Aphrodite) eidetic region, a new order reigns in the matters of love. Right love requires a reformation whose consequences are
all-pervasive because the contextual change is universal in scope. Nothing is left uneffected by it because the transformation is metaphysical and constitutional. The structure of this love, in order to be true, must be composed in a response that is gauged to the nature of this real universe.

Socrates himself is the illustration of the readjustment in perspective and personality that is required in these matters. The artistry of Plato is such that in the dialogues he portrays Socrates enacting the very love which, in the same dialogues, Socrates is attempting to clarify. So Socrates not only exemplifies this love, he also presents several detailed accounts of how this love is to be understood. Yet his behavior has been subject to the kind of criticism we have just indicated. The consistently overriding fault in his behavior is the obvious: Socratic love is not interpersonal. His love does not recognize other individuals as appropriate objects of human love. It is not a love of or for the sake of other persons. His love is not conferred upon other individuals as such but it is directed past them to another realm. He loves things different in kind from human beings and his primary concern is to orient his life to those objects.

Because the eminently lovable objects are only discernable by the psyche, Socrates' love must be intellectual and abstract--it is a cognitive erotic affair. In this sense, Socrates really makes himself into an alien being who exists in an alien universe. The story of Socrates is a story about
the romance of the eidetic, the heroic lover in the costume of a footsoldier in the daily polemic of dialectical skirmishes, the erotic visionary who speaks to the highest realities ("the gods") while he happens to be talking to an ordinary citizen, the plain man who becomes entranced in his own thought-world while proceeding along the pathways of earthly dealings. Socrates the lover is a truly daimonic (spiritual) and extraordinary person. His behavior and values are bound to be alien because of the objects that determine his behavior. There is no doubt that Plato presents him as an authentic lover, but as a lover he appears abnormal and deficient because he is off-balance, a metaphysical anomaly, an unusual madman whose inspiration comes from unusual sources. His wonder and his care are evoked by the transcendent. Quite simply, then, Socrates is a failure in interpersonal relations because of the very structure of his love. His love is ideocentric. It is directed exclusively toward the Ideas or Forms.

As such, it was not without good reason that Socrates was convicted as being a definite threat to the educational, political, and religious fiber of the Athenian community, even though the precise nature of his heresy was hardly surmised by the persons who condemned him to death. Had they understood the Socrates of Plato's dialogues, new additional evidence would quite conceivably have been introduced to show that Socrates' loyalty and love lay far beyond the men and the affairs of the polis. It appears to be both transhuman
and transpolitical, at odds in a formidable philosophical way with the natural attitude toward proper love and loyalty.

This is the kind of diagnosis that must be faced by anyone who attempts to explain that side of Plato's theory of love which is manifested in the behavior of Socrates. The problem of the interpersonal is even more conspicuously imperiled, however, when one turns to evaluate the details of love as formulated by Plato in the accounts given by Socrates in the dialogues. If the person of Socrates-the-lover is vulnerable to criticism, the view of love he expresses in the dialogues is an even more open invitation and challenge to the critic. The fact that Socrates (or Plato) articulates and exemplifies the ideocentric theory of love is existentially important but logically independent from the truth, coherence, completeness, feasibility, beauty, or benefit of the theory itself. Critical reference to the life and person of Socrates (ad hominem) cannot itself be used to demonstrate the falsity or inadequacy of the theory that Socrates (or Plato) presents. Inasmuch as the person and the theory are logically independent, the theory must be examined separately on its own merit. One must, therefore, turn from the intriguing person of Socrates to his ideology of love as it is expressed in the dialogues.

The logical distinction which necessitates this redirection in analysis should not, however, mislead one to conclude that Socrates is existentially disjoined from the subject matter of his speeches. The contents that Socrates presents
seem always intimately connected with his own self-knowledge and, as such, function as formative elements and guiding forces in his life (and, one presumes, the writing of the dialogues for Plato). Because his analysis purports to explain the nature and basic dynamics of any life including his own, Socrates' theoretical account of eros is also crucial to the meaning and interpretation of his own activity. What then is the interpersonal aspect of love in Socrates' account of the nature and work of love?

D. Ideocentric Love

1.

At issue is interpersonal love, person to person involvement which occurs when one person is attracted to another person personally. Most simply and minimally, one person (the lover) experiences desire for the other person (the beloved). The other becomes the object of interest and attention in such a way that the lover strives to contact, join, be part of, interact and otherwise come to know and be with this other person. The goal of this kind of love can be stated as personal intimacy, involvement, understanding, and enjoyment of the beloved object.

But the exact contents and bounds of such involvement are quite indeterminate. Despite the fact that interpersonal love seems to be a natural, general characteristic of human existence, it is not clear what this matter really comes to.
Such is made strikingly clear when one encounters Plato's account of the true itinerary of love. What begins quite ordinarily as person A being attracted to person B turns into an affair that appears to be quite foreign to the intention of any normal lover. By indicating the sequence of this erotic development as it is projected by Plato, it is possible to exhibit the rather astonishing outcome that he envisions for the lover.

Supposing that person A loves person B, what, according to the dialogues, is the nature and purpose of this love?

(A) Person A's love is a desire which is produced by a deficient condition natural to human beings (Sym. 199d-201c; 205a,d). The lover has needs (endees) which cause desires, wants, and wishes for the rectification and satisfaction of this condition. Loving is the way a person acts and expresses himself to fulfill his inadequate, incomplete state of being. What the lover lacks, accordingly, is that which would bring well-being or happiness (eudaimonia). In order to resolve this constitutional defect, A loves B because B, in some sense, presents the possibility of meeting A's needs.

(B) Person B is selected by A because B is an object which possesses the quality which A lacks and desires to obtain for himself, i.e., beauty (nobility, excellence: kalon). And, since "good things are beautiful, he must lack good things too" (201c), i.e., B is chosen as the beloved for the sake of his beautiful and good qualities. A's love
is an obvious case of property-love. The properties of B make B a lovable object for A. The intentional end of A's desirous condition is self-fulfillment achieved by establishing a relation to B. A exploits B; A's love is acquisitive.

(C) But inasmuch as A loves B for his beauty, the actual object of A's desire, what he needs and would like to possess, is not B in himself or B as a person but that desirable quality which B exemplifies. A's interpersonal love with B serves the purpose of stimulating A to relate to the beauty of B. But even if one could conquer and possess the beauty and goodness of B, these qualities as they are exemplified by B are inherently deficient. They are contingently connected to B and are instantiated (ontologically) so as to be mutable, imperfect, incomplete, limited, and short-lived. But the true lover cannot commit himself to love this sort of object. That would be to love foolishly. The interpersonal aspect must thus serve a higher, non-interpersonal end. The true objective of A's love really transcends person B and centers on the reality of beauty itself and not just a limited instance of it. The ideal object is separate from B and has an independent existence which is nevertheless available for A by means of rational discernment and noetic appropriation and is not to be acquired on the basis of perception or sense experience. Person B can at best satisfy A only to a limited and naturally inevitably frustrating extent while the satisfaction afforded by the eidetic realities is that which perfects and completes the lover.
(D) The ordinary lover does not normally realize the true end of his eros and this makes expedient the kind of guidance which is illustrated by the instruction of Diotima. The ladder of ascent which conveys the lover beyond the individual B, beyond the body and the psyche of B, leads ultimately to the reality of beauty (or good) itself (Sym. 210af). This object is the most lovable object and it functions to rectify and fulfill the condition of the lover. Despite appearances to the contrary, A's love is truly for this goodness and beauty to be his own always. The telos of human love and the good life for humans is realized through the relationship of an individual lover to this absolute beauty (auto to kalon). This "coupling" (en to kalo, 206e) consummates the quest of an individual's life and, through its resourceful and productive powers, the proper lover (philosopher) is truly able to live the excellent (arete) and noble (kalon) life which is the condition for the happiness ultimately desired by everyone (panton anthropon, 205a).

(E) Hence, a proper lover surpasses the dimension of the interpersonal and directs himself toward the eidetic objects.

2.

Two features of this position are axiomatic. (a) The lover (as the subject component) is egoistic, i.e., his love is exercised to satisfy and benefit his own existence. The aspiration of loving is a natural process of self-realization for all persons. Loving is the way of becoming for a person,
a process of actualization, a personal transformation which is required for happy, productive, knowledgeable living.

(b) The beloved or lovable object (the second component) transcends human sense experience. The two primary constituents of this situation are, therefore, the self (psyche) and the Ideas (eide). They are related (the third component) passionately by noetic (rational, mental, psychic) and creative means. The productive-generative (tou tokou, tes genneseos) aspect of this erotic experience is emphasized in the Symposium; the inspiring-ecstatic (entheos, manikos, existamenos) aspect is emphasized in the Phaedrus. Whether these processes are understood in a learning-developmental context or as a recuperation of previous experience, the context of anamnesis, the interpersonal aspect of the erotic aspiration appears to be restricted to the initial phase of the lover's progress and the beloved person functions in an instrumental way for the benefit of the lover. If, however, a person naturally knew and was properly related to the ideal objects, there would be no need for the interpersonal phase in erotic comportment. It could be dispensed with entirely (cf. Sym. 211d). But even as things are, the interpersonal functions in a preliminary way for ends other than those of the interpersonal per se. The endeavor to care for oneself and the primordial need of eidos, this human condition determines the status of interpersonal love in the scheme of erotic possibilities for human life in the dialogues.
According to Plato's account, then, human love is not person-centered or interpersonal but it is Idea-centered or ideocentric. This position can be formulated briefly as follows:

(1) A (any person) properly and truly loves only I (i.e., the beautiful, the good).

(2) B (any other person) is not and can never be identical or equivalent to I.

(3) If A loves B it is because A believes B has the property or quality I.

(4) But given (1) and (2), A can not (except mistakenly) love B himself but B only insofar as B is the bearer of (or means of acquiring) I. B is not loved in himself nor for himself by A but only for the sake of I.

(5) B himself, then, is not the real objective (final end, terminus, goal) of A's love.

On the basis of this view, it becomes (a) an error to choose a person as an object of love because human eros, being what it is, can only fulfill itself by relating to the ideal. In this sense, the selection of a person as an object of love is "wrong headed" because it is an incorrect choice the results of which would be an inherently imperfect and futile liaison. It is also (b) wrong because it mis-values the nature of this kind of object by conferring upon the person attention unequal and inappropriate to its worth. It is thus "wrong hearted" because it misappropriates vital human resources, it disregards significant potentialities of the lover, and it tempts the beloved into an appealing position fraught with
elements which provide excellent material for self-deception and subversion through delusion. Hence, interpersonal love appears to be devalued to the point of actual exclusion from the ideocentric view. A lover who favors an individual person over the ideal object can best be understood as engaging in a form of idolatry. He has chosen to replace the "divine" original by images or deficient likenesses of it. A beloved who lets himself become the object of love is likewise engaging in a form of self-deception and hubris by allowing himself to be a replacement of the "divine" original. Interpersonal love is, in itself, detrimental to both lover and beloved.

The fact that love is composed of an egoistic lover and a transcendent beloved is sufficient to entail the exclusion of intrinsic value to interpersonal eros. The subjective and the objective condition and end of eros are accounted for in such a way as to render fruitless any interpersonal eros. Person A can love B only out of ignorance, by not knowing anything better to love, or out of confusion, by not clearly understanding what it is that one is actually loving (or should love). But this initial phase of eros does still have significance as a means (an instrument, ladder, or vehicle) to more proper love if interpersonal eros is subordinated to the rank of a preliminary erotic affair within the developmental progression proper to right eros. A lover, in his educational experience, makes use of other individuals
to aid in the realization of himself, striving to achieve gratification of self (finally) by attending to the eidetic realities. The hope of finding substantive meaning and happiness in interpersonal relations is, however, pretty well vitiated. The total realm of human affairs is dependent for its meaning and fulfillment upon the eidetic realm. As potential objects of love, individual persons are shown to be bereft of value, certainly possessing no competitive edge on Ideas—except that of sensuous proximity. But even this is deceptive because the highest pleasures and benefits come not from the delights of sensuality and physical intimacy but from experiences which are effective in relating to the eidetic. Energy spent elsewhere is, to that extent, wasted.

The true destiny of human love as an expression of the desire for the personal integration and authenticity which brings true happiness is in a region of experience whose objects are other than those of the interpersonal. The claim that the proper object of love is another person is mistaken in the identification of the proper beloved as well as in the understanding of the human condition and its needs. Ordinary interpersonal love is composed of (or out of) untruth. The intrinsic, hedonic, and pragmatic value of interpersonal love does not allow the conclusion that it, in itself, merits commendation for the effective fulfillment of human existence.
This critical exposition of the interpersonal aspect of Plato's account of love is securely grounded in the dialogues and it is also abundantly represented in the secondary literature devoted to this part of Plato's philosophy. Karl Jaspers, for example, states that Plato's conception of love... concentrates so exclusively on the Idea, disregarding the historical possibility of love for a single, definite individual.... Plato's eros knows no agape, no love of man as man, no love of my fellow man. Consequently, Plato knows no human dignity as a claim of every man on every man.8

According to Gregory Vlastos, who has written a valuable and provocative article on this issue,9

What needs to be stressed most of all in this area is that Plato's theory is not, and is not meant to be, about personal love for persons....

As a theory of the love of persons, this is its crux: What we are to love in persons is the "image" of the Idea in them. We are to love the persons so far, and only insofar, as they are good and beautiful.10 Now since all too few human beings are masterworks of excellence... the individual, in the uniqueness and integrity of his or her individuality, will never be the object of our love. This seems to me the cardinal flaw in Plato's theory. It does not provide for love of whole persons....(31)

Plato was thus a fashioner of a utopian view of love which is, alas, tragically imperfect because it does not

...see that what love for our fellows requires of us is, above all, imaginative sympathy and concern for what they themselves think, feel, and want. He has, therefore, missed that dimension of love in which tolerance, trust, forgiveness, tenderness, respect have validity. (32)

In this way Plato's vision of love fails.

Plato is scarcely aware of kindness, tenderness, compassion, concern for freedom, respect for the integrity of
Irving Singer, in a fine book on the history of philosophical interpretations of the nature of love, writes that it is not the other person as a person that the Platonic lover cares about. He loves his beloved, not in himself, but only for the sake of goodness or beauty. The Platonic lover does not love anyone: he loves only the Good....

There is at least one kind of love that Plato's philosophy neglects. That is love of persons, the love between human beings who bestow value upon one another, each responding to the uniqueness of the other, each taking an interest in the other as a separate individual, regardless of imperfections and apart from satisfactions that also accrue.... Platonism...ignores, or wholly misrepresents, the love of persons.11

Because humans are not and cannot be the ideal, their selection as an object of love is eliminated in favor of more appropriate candidates. This amounts to an endorsement of the position that right love involves exclusive fidelity to the eidetic realm. As such, Plato could not think of love as a wishing another person's good for just that person's sake, looking upon the other as something precious in and of himself. Individuals in the uniqueness, integrity, and whole-ness of their individuality will never be the object of this love. The ideocentric nature of Plato's position on love makes interpersonal love actually illegitimate. The position is more extreme than it is often stated to be. It is not as if persons and Ideas could both be objects of love. The only objects worthy of love are the Ideas. Only because of ignorance or confusion about this do individuals aspire to love other individuals and misidentify the true object of
their love. Actually the two forms of love are incompatible. They are existentially exclusive disjuncts. The source of goodness and beauty for human life and the inspiration and resourcefulness to become like or participate in goodness and beauty come from the ideal objects which are the true end and ultimate ground for human existence. This determines the character of collective life: the political-social organizations of the Republic are realized in accordance to their relation to the eidetic. It determines the character of personal life: the psychological and vocational organization of individual existence depends upon a person's relation to the eidetic.¹²

Being human happens to involve being in this world of human sense experience, but it also involves being in a greater, differently oriented, world which centers on the Ideas. Authentic human existence requires the realization of this and the willingness to become a being-for-eide. Love is, in this sense, the way of self authentication for an individual existing in the real cosmos according to Plato. Existing rightly is not simply a matter of knowing or having theoretical knowledge as information obtained. For Plato even theoretical knowledge is self-involving and includes definite axiological implications. Love which comprehends, therefore, has to do with the kind of understanding which converts, transforms, or alters an individual's soul and character (psyche, ethos). Authentic and knowledgeable
existence has to do with love because love and self-formation are inseparable. The self becomes and progresses by means of proper erotic organization. The true lover learns to turn the "eyes of the soul" toward the transcendent. True love loves the eidetic objects in and for themselves, for their benefits, and for the accompanying pleasure and satisfaction. They are, on all counts, the supreme objects of human eros.

E. Summary Comments

1. Considering this ideology of love as it applies to person-to-person relationships, it is important to distinguish four main contenders which, according to critical accounts of the dialogues, vie for a lover's preference:

   (1) individuals as "whole persons" are the object of love;

   (2) individuals who are beautiful, good, courageous, etc., are the objects of love;

   (3) individuals are loved for their beauty, etc., i.e., the "image" of the eidetic is the object of love;

   (4) only the eidetic elements themselves are the object of love.

It is because Plato rejects option (1) and turns from (2) to (3) and finally to (4) that his account is judged to be a failure as a theory concerning interpersonal love. It is hard to see that Plato even considers option (1). To suggest that one should love another individual solely on the basis of the fact that that individual is a person would be for
Plato a recommendation to love indiscriminately, without prudence, irrespective of the quality of attractiveness (aesthetic or moral merit) of the other. It would, in short, be an invitation to engage in irrational behavior. So, if one employs criteria for interpersonal love which states that interpersonal love exists if and only if person A loves person B (a) in his whole individuality as the unique, total person that he is, and (b) for B's own sake, then these criteria would reveal that interpersonal love has no part in Plato's account. He rejects outright the possibility of loving ugly or shameful (aischyne) persons (Sym. 201a, 206c, 209b) and even though (2) may appear to qualify according to certain responses of Socrates, there is little doubt that persons themselves are not the actual objects of Platonic eros. As a matter of correct description, persons are not really the intended end of eros at all. This becomes clear once one sees the appropriateness of speaking of (3) as a legitimate option for Plato's position. What is really loved, even in ordinary experience, is the properties of a person understood to be (or identified as) images of the Ideas. But once the possibility of loving the Ideal directly is established, the erotic values of (1-3) are completely undermined and the question of compatibility is solved by eliminating the other supposed candidates. Why would a lover choose to love an inadequate embodiment or an image (copy, likeness, resemblance) rather than the complete and real thing itself? The third option may be "better" than flesh
and blood persons, but both (2-3) are still very deficient love objects when compared with the eidetic objects. Person A may come to love the beauty in person B, i.e., (3), and desire that property itself of person B. But B then becomes the bearer of properties that are lovable. And, when it is established that these properties are really (ontologically) independent from person B who happens to bear them (in diminished status) and that they are directly and more completely available without the required mediation of interpersonal relationships such as A's experience of B, then interpersonal relationships can be abandoned for erotic purposes. Person-to-person love is surpassed and in fact becomes counter-productive because it is antagonistic to the higher form of love. It is, in the strict sense, a waste of an individual's time and erotic energy.

On the basis of the establishment of (4), then, exclusive fidelity to the ideas is validated. Given the nature and value of the Ideas for personal existence and the deficient character of human beings, the only rational way to live is as a lover of Ideas. Interpersonal love is therefore eliminated by ideocentric love. Only a negligent, lax, confused, or indulgent lover could allow an illicit recourse to inappropriate love objects such as those of (1-3). An attempted person-to-person linkage, the desire for fusion, intercourse, or conjoining for the purpose of benefit and happiness is futile—comparable to the hopeless
struggle for reunification characteristic of the severed beings in Aristophanes' story in the Symposium (192a f.). Really, "What persons love is nothing other than the good" (Sym. 206a). Once one realizes the ontological nature of things, interpersonal love is revealed to have no intrinsic axiological justification. Hence, the incompatibilist (or exclusive ideocentric) position has demonstrated the incorrectness of the compatibilist stand, whether the compatibilist analyzes an individual person according to options (1), (2), or (3). Ideocentrism excludes interpersonal love, surpassing the dimension of the interpersonal for those ultimate transcendent objects required by human existence, those objects fully deserving the ultimate concern of every person.

Ideocentric love is to be understood as a refined form of property-love. The lover progressively learns to "home in" on that attribute which is lovable, eventually to exclude all objects other than the lovable objects themselves, the Ideas. The relationship moves from the physical-aesthetic to the eidetic-noetic dimension of experience. Persons happen to embody these Ideas, but what the lover desires is the pure and full Ideas themselves and not their physical or personal materialization. This development of property-love makes it completely non-interpersonal because the properties have a reality separate from the person-objects which exemplify (resemble, participate in) them. In this way, it can
be said that property-love becomes entity-love inasmuch as the real "properties" are parts of reality (or being: to on) existing independently from the objects which may instantiate them (kath' auto meth' hautou monoeides aeı on, Sym. 211b). It is clear, however, that ideocentric love is not a kind of person-love. Persons appear to be left in the dust far back along the trail of erotic pursuit, an initial step (or two) in the ascent of proper love. The quest for the eidetic necessarily relegates persons to a preparatory phase in the hierarchical ascent. And there seems to be no reason for a lover to return to them or to attempt to reconstitute them in some fashion for the purpose of love. The surpassing is normatively, affectively, and cognitively irreversible. The fact that dialogue and interpersonal associations continue for the lover signifies only that the lover sensibly concedes what is due to the realities of commonplace, everyday existence, making use of these circumstances for his own (metaphysical) life-project to whatever extent this is possible. Socrates is the person in the dialogues who illustrates the ideocentric kind of love. Socrates is the lover of Ideas, the lover of wisdom (philosopher): "For wisdom has to do with the most beautiful things, and Eros is love concerned with the beautiful (to kalon), so that Eros must be a lover of wisdom" (hoste anakaion Erota philosophon einai, Sym. 204b).
It is to the credit of the ideocentric analysis that it takes seriously the eminent status of the Ideas within the context of the dialogues and attempts clearly to set forth the status of human persons implied by Plato's ordering of things. The ideocentric view, which asserts the primal desideratum of Ideas, is undoubtedly essential to Platonic philosophy. To deny it would be an obvious denial of elements essential to his position. But even within the compass of this Platonic universe it is questionable that the exclusive ideocentric interpretation accurately represents Plato's position on the nature of eros. It may seem as if the lover must face an either/or: either bad love and inadequate objects by choosing persons or right love and perfect objects by choosing Ideas. Yet, this is a pseudo alternative if the options are in fact understood according to Plato's position because the choice will be mandated by right reason, i.e., no one will knowingly choose the worse. Hence, the commitment of the lover is determined by the nature of the reality of his psyche and the cosmos. In order, then, to gain a more refined assessment of this situation, one must abide by the basic features of the ideocentric interpretation while yet paying careful attention to the way that the development of this erotic transformative process is described in the dialogues. Let it be assumed that everyone desires happiness and well-being, that happiness comes only by way of goodness,
beauty, and justice, and that these are the things that we really love. What in fact takes place as a person proceeds to love the good? That is, is there a change in the composition of eros (or the character of the lover) as it develops such that the stage of desire-for-Ideas becomes constituted in a manner that alters the significance of interpersonal relations for the lover? Is there, in effect, a "post-eidetic" phase which includes an important interpersonal erotic dimension? Is there a kind of progression natural to the development of a proper lover that eventuates in the establishment of a non-exclusive erotic orientation which leads and challenges the lover to become, in some sense, a lover of other persons and not solely a lover of Ideas? Is there in Plato not only a dialectic of the eidetic but a kind of phenomenological dialectic of psyche as well which is structured in such a way that the proper lover

(A) becomes a lover of other persons, i.e., ideocentric eros develops into or includes a form of person-love;

(B) becomes a lover who meets the other individual as an individual person, i.e., in himself, intentionally and artfully;

(C) and becomes a lover of the other person for that person's own good, for his own sake?

If this can be established on the basis, primarily, of the analytic material contributed by Socrates and, if this material can be applied to the behavior of Socrates to produce a more insightful and revealing characterization of a lover's activity, and this, in turn, is supplemented by a teleological structure of the dialogues themselves, then
the "cardinal flaw" emphasized by Vlastos and others may not in fact be a flaw at all but an integral part of a picture qualified by an additional, sequential, more complex manifold which allows one to discern quite a different meaning and status for interpersonal relations. Is it possible that what the critics take to be lack of tolerance, lack of concern for the freedom and inherent value of the other, etc., is in fact quite otherwise. That is, does not the ideocentric aspiration really develop into productive, creative, generous, co-inspiring, liberating intimacy, where the care, transcendence, and transformation of a person-as-lover progresses to include the genuine erotic tendance and mutuality of loving which rightly comports itself with a beloved person under the auspice of the Ideas by means of dialogue (logos)? Is Socrates really the true lover of others, staunchly embodied in dialogical situations, loving souls as well as wisdom (philosophy), acting to serve others, to educate, to incite and otherwise inspire others toward care of self, guiding others toward more responsible friendship and good citizenship, toward proper love?

The clarification of this issue is not only important on its own, but it is crucial for an understanding of the function of elenchus, maieutic, and dialectic, the value of persuasive communication in the form of philosophical rhetoric, and the recurring emphasis in the dialogues upon the effort of pedagogy and paideia. It is also directly
related to the more general problems of the purpose and rationale of dialogue, the status and destiny of human selves, and the **ergon** (work, effort, endeavor) of philosophy. The misinterpretation of the significance of interpersonal eros could seriously jeopardize the possibility of gaining an adequate understanding of Plato's work.

The following chapters will examine the textual material in the *Symposium* which have a bearing on the interpersonal aspect of Platonic eros. Chapter III will concentrate upon the import of Socrates' dialogue with Agathon prior to his own speech. Chapter IV will analyze the content of Socrates' speech.
FOOTNOTES

1Cf. Alcibiades I, 131. Socrates argues that only he is the true lover of Alcibiades because only he has care for Alcibiades' psyche. He is able to address the welfare of Alcibiades because he can identify the true "belongings" of Alcibiades and the objects proper to his own love.

2If this were simply a historical issue one might seek independent evidence from Xenophon: Memorabilia I, iii; II, iv-vi; III, xi; Symposium IV ff.

3This neglect is not rare in writings on Plato. Even the recent article on Plato and his philosophy by Gilbert Ryle in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards (New York, 1967), vol. 6, pp. 314-333, contains nothing at all about the nature or status of love in Plato's dialogues.

4The educational program set out in the Republic has this reorientation as its goal. Socrates speaks of dialectic as functioning to take the eye of the soul which is sunk in the barbaric slough of ignorance and gently draw it forth and lead it up to the truth of reality (Rep. 533d).

5The following points (A-E) come primarily from material presented in the Symposium. Supplementary references are available (in passim) in the Lysis, Phaedo, Phaedrus, and Republic.

6I do not claim that Plato clearly explains the ontological connection between Ideas and their exemplification or instantiation in concrete, worldly things—in this case, human bodies and psyches. This is, of course, a celebrated problem in Platonic philosophy which Plato himself acknowledges in the Parmenides. In the context of eros, however, one should already sense that the issue of homosexuality and pederasty is set within a scheme of things which eclipses the reign of physical sexuality and the goals of carnal cohabitation. Ideocentrism entails the exclusion of merit from eros expressed in the form of sexual passion (aphrodisia). Even conjugal (masculine-feminine) relationships for the sake of children are rated as very low expressions of eros.

7Gregory Vlastos makes this point in Platonic Studies, p. 32.

As in this case, the formulations of the critics usually do not specify the spectrum of possible love objects, i.e., cf. above p. 20, (1-4). I suppose this procedure is justified because once it is shown that a lover does not love an individual for himself and for his own good but for the properties that he bears, then this is sufficient to exhibit the fact that Platonic love does not have as its object an individual person as such. But there is a significant difference between loving B for his beauty, loving the beautiful present in B, and loving the beautiful itself separate from B. The real or true object of love does not seem, in the strict sense, to be anything other than the beautiful itself. Other "mixed" objects are granted legitimacy in the context of educational (or recollective) progress only.

Singer, Irving, The Nature of Love: Plato to Luther (New York, 1966) p. 87-88. Singer does not argue that Plato's position is ideocentric, but that as a theory about love of persons, it is unacceptable. But the lack of acceptability seems to be caused by the fact that Platonic love is ideocentric.

Cf. Phaedrus 248f.

The dialectical compatibilist position will argue that Plato does indeed make a case for interpersonal eros which functions according to criteria (i) and (ii).

These are, I think, the three main dimensions of evidence.

Cf. Gorgias 481d; 482a.
CHAPTER III

THE PREAMBLE: SOCRATES AND AGATHON

Disillusion and the Socratic Prospectus

In the Symposium, Socrates speaks in praise of Eros. Although a festive drinking party (symposion) is not the setting in which one would normally expect to hear the presentation of substantive philosophical doctrine, the procedure of singling out the account given by Socrates for special examination is justified by several considerations. First, the speech is itself a complex yet coherently unified and strategically organized whole. Socrates is well aware that he is dealing with the highest, most consequential and yet most intimate and formative matters of human existence as he presents his account. Fundamental elements of ontology, epistemology, and axiology are set forth in a didactic context which begins with commonplace experiences of love and proceeds to indicate the gamut of erotic possibilities for human life. The speech is comprehensive in scope, amounting to what can justly be called an ideology of love, and it explicitly deals with the basic components constitutive of love. As such, it can be approached as an autonomous unit available for diligent and exacting independent analysis.

From the point of view of literary organization, secondly, the speech is the climax of the series of speeches
devoted to Eros. In being responsive to and critical of the previous accounts, it, above all else, deserves serious study.

The speech commands the focus of attention, thirdly, because of the claim that Socrates makes about his own expertise on the subject of love and the way that he contrasts the truth and propriety of his own account with that of the previous speeches. One may presume that, although his speech does not refer to everything that can be said on the subject, what he thinks must be said about love is contained in the account he provides. The unembellished remark that Socrates makes at the end of his speech exhibits his own appraisal: "This, Phaedrus and you others, is what Diotima told me, and I am persuaded of it; and because I am persuaded I attempt to persuade others as well..." (212b).

Because of his own commitment to this theory of love, one should expect an interconnection between the content of his speech, the particular formative influence of it upon his own personality, and the specific delivery of the speech as a public performance by Socrates at the banquet. As such, finally, one is required to attend to the details of the speech in order to understand the speech-event that Socrates presents as well as the personality and behavior formed by means of the theory. Because his own behavior is determined by the analysis he sets forth, i.e., he confesses that it is an influential part of his own experience in learning about love, this means that the account given by Socrates should
reveal the innermost workings of his own personality and thereby the interpersonal nature of his own activity. Yet, what he is doing should be an actual illustration of proper erotic behavior, an independent testimony in deed of what counts as appropriate erotic activity such that a proper deciphering of the speech would depend upon an understanding of the dramatic action and the motive-formative forces that determine the events of the evening. So, really, an understanding of the content of the speech and an understanding of the presentation of it would be interrelated. From a systematic point of view, the nature of eros would determine the life of Socrates and his own exhibition of eros, and both the exhibition and the speech should give evidence of and information about the nature and status of interpersonal relations.¹

This point is important in itself, but it is also significant in interpreting both Socrates' relationship to Agathon throughout the dialogue and the portrait of Socrates given by Alcibiades in the final speech of the Symposium. Alcibiades is one of a substantial number of people who became the object of Socrates' erotic attention (Sym. 173; 222b). When he enters the banquet and chooses to speak about Socrates, one would think: Who better to speak about Socrates than his long-term erotic companion Alcibiades. Yet, Alcibiades' own descriptions of his influential affair with Socrates, accurate and sensitive as they may be, still
require construal according to principles which determine Socrates' behavior and which are yet not adequately understood by Alcibiades. Proper interpolation of Alcibiades' account of Socrates as the erotic subject worthy of praise at the banquet depends upon seeing Socrates in action with Agathon because Agathon is the individual who most directly becomes implicated in matters involving eros with Socrates at the banquet. A delineation of their personal interaction will reveal that important evidence pertaining to the nature and significance of interpersonal eros is available in the dramatic dimension of the work. Valuable information about proper erotic demeanor is obtained by deciphering the behavior of Socrates as he responds to Agathon.

Plato's literary construction is complex, but by means of it he is able to present Socrates in action as a speaker of Eros, reflecting back upon and assessing his own education in eros, he is able to present independent truths about Eros and facets of the life of Socrates as Socrates is experienced in the course of a relationship with Agathon and Alcibiades. In effect, Plato organizes this symposium event so that Socrates himself really provides the means by which the listener/reader is able to discern more completely both the real Socrates whose appearances make him such a problematical character as well as the nature of Eros.² His treatment of Eros in the Symposium actually includes the element of interplay between the dramatic events (the deeds) and the content
of Socrates' speech (the words) in such a way that illumina-
tion is given to each dimension by what takes place in the
other dimension of the work. The interpersonal dramatic
action, therefore, deserves serious attention because it in
itself contributes to a more adequate appraisal of the
speech and enhances one's conception of the nature of Eros
by providing concrete illustration of the basic problematics
involved in erotic affairs. Hence, both the details of the
speech given by Socrates and his own behavior in the *Symposium*
assume further importance when allowed to "communicate" with
each other. This is especially so if these aspects of the
work also provide aid in comprehending the document as a
whole written by Plato. Could Plato himself be performing
an erotic act in executing the *Symposium*? Is the dialogue
itself a work of love, the very love that Plato surveys in
the course of the work itself? These considerations must be
carefully scrutinized for indications of the interpersonal
aspect of erotic behavior, for one can only obtain a clear
conception of this through diligent assessment of the textual
material itself, both the brief but rich ideological account
and the demeanor of Socrates.

One must bear in mind, however, that the restriction in
analytic focus appropriate to this study inevitably impo-
verishes one's view of the dramatic and developmental nature
of the total work. The approach admittedly neglects many of
the implications which Socrates' speech has for the other
previous speeches and it thereby diminishes the richness of the ramifications of his speech that develop from the interconnection and dynamic interplay between it and the other views previously presented. A proper and thorough reading of the text would require not only a critical response to the particular persons and their laudatory and brilliant construals of the meaning of Eros—where every detail of the text from sandals, trance, hiccups, wine, the wreath and judgment of Alcibiades-Dionysus, drowsiness, to the morning bath and the composure of a new day seems to play a relevant part—but also required is a tenacious meta-dialogue which evolves from the attempt to discern the intricate and complex (eidetic and existential) dialectical composition of the work as a whole. Although these considerations are certainly important, they are, for the most part, beyond the scope of this study. Since, however, much has been written about the status of and interrelation between the various speeches, I will simply acknowledge the importance of a holistic and reflexive approach to this Platonic dialogue without recapitulating available material on this issue, attempting simply to benefit from it wherever it relates directly to the interpersonal. Careful attention devoted to the performance of Socrates should be sufficient for the purpose of this project because primary value must, in any case, be placed upon the description and explanation itself of eros which is given by Socrates, i.e., the actual *logoi* of his account have
priority and only subsequently can one begin accurately to access other associated matters. Determining the nature and status of interpersonal love can only be secured by direct investigation of the position asserted to be true by Socrates. If Socrates is a knowledgeable lover who is willing to state basic truths about love, then the content of his position should disclose the nature of love and thereby provide criteria by means of which one may assess all other accounts of love. But inasmuch as his communication is always grounded in a particular context and determined according to the individuals who happen to be involved, an examination of this part of the work promises to make accessible important information that is not directly available in the speech itself which Socrates gives. This part of the Symposium will now be examined. I will follow the textual material sequentially, starting with the dialogue between Socrates and Agathon, and then, in the next chapter, turn to the speech itself.

A. Socrates And True Speech: 198b-199b

1. Bad Speech and Bad Eros

Socrates does not by any means begin his turn at speaking in a way calculated either to endear him to his companions or to win them over straightaway to his own version of things. He beings by balking at the prospect of even participating as an encomiast, and he proceeds immediately to disassociate himself from what had previously taken place
at the banquet. Far from gratifying the other speakers, he accused them, in his own genial fashion, of having spoken in an irresponsible manner by not praising Eros correctly and, in doing this, they have actually spoken what is untrue. Their speeches are bad "songs of praise" (egkomion) to Eros because they are false in content. The others are, in effect, clever liars!

One thing clearly amiss is lack of coherence and compatibility between the speeches. Eros is different for every speaker. Is it only natural and inevitable that each person, given the spirit of the occasion, has presented their speech based upon the attempt to insure their individual self-esteem by exercising their rhetorical cleverness rather than subordinating and determining both self-esteem and communicative skill according to justifiable truth that a person may have with respect to Eros? Socrates begins by calling into question the procedure of each previous speaker. If the proper method of communicating and praising something is to be determined primarily by standards of rhetorical success, i.e., by convincing and pleasing the audience and, since the speeches are eulogies, by saying what is (or would be) pleasing to the one to whom the speeches are directed, then speaking and praising should undoubtedly attempt to present well contrived conceptions in an eloquent and persuasive fashion. In the present case, one can then expect the ascription of splendid qualities and powers to Eros in order to make him appear to be the loftiest and loveliest of beings—whether such
This is why, I imagine, you stir up stories of every kind and attribute them to Eros. That is why you depict his nature and the influence of his activity as you do. Your intention is to make Eros appear to be the best and most beautiful of beings, and your praise is very fine and solemn in the eyes of those who do not know him. But such a description will never pass among those who see the true Eros. (198e-199a)

It is Agathon who has just completed his offering to Eros. Poor Socrates is put into such a turmoil by the eloquent Gorgias-like style of his speech that "when we drew towards the close, the beauty of the words and phrases could not but take one's breath away" (198b). Alluding to Odysseus who had fled from Hades after his successful journey to the land of the dead for fear that Persephony might send up the Gorgon's head, Socrates' journey into the depths of this nocturnal adventure also causes him to be apprehensive that Agathon's eloquence might come upon him with a Gorgon's power to turn him dumfounded into stone. And Socrates would surely be vanquished without speech! But if this is what being clever in erotic matters (einai deinos ta erotikha, 198d) means, then Socrates realizes that he is neither clever nor does he know how to compose an encomium. But, on the other hand, Socrates recognizes that those who have knowledge of Eros will see that the performances that have just been given are actually deserving of ridicule. A speaker like Agathon is quite justly liable to incur reproach from someone like Socrates because he has begotten a faulty product as a supposed worthy gift granted to Eros. The fact that Agathon's
words are powerful and wonderous to hear is an important asset, but it does not make them true. In effect, from Socrates' way of understanding matters of eros, the speeches that have been delivered are far astray from the most rudimentary distinctions required for a true disclosure of love; the banqueting spirit and rhetorical expertise can provide little excuse for the mistaken tribute they have presented in honor of Eros.

Each speech has a common defect: it does not eulogize Eros but concentrates upon either some of the effects of Eros (he makes one inspired, valorous, cultured, healthy and happy, whole and pious, creative and beautiful) or some of the things that are worthy of Eros' love (sacrifice, education, harmony, beauty, goodness). As a matter of practical procedure, what each speaker does is compose an appealing account which contains assertions that are, in epistemological status, opinions (hopos...egkomiazein doxei, 198e) of a sort appropriate to their particular way of approaching life. They emphasize how love can be beneficial and effective (or detrimental) or what they as lovers really find desirable and worthy to love in terms of their own vocation and lifestyle. Although they display in an admirably proficient way the superior characteristics of their own conception of Eros, of what eros means to them, there is a haunting discrepancy between what each of them describes as Eros. When Phaedrus "fathered" the topic of discussion by his complaint
about the lack of proper praise being bestowed upon Eros, did he anticipate such a diversity of representations of Eros? What sort of intrigue is Plato developing here? There does not seem to be one Eros at all but a number of conflicting stories each making reference to something called 'Eros.'

In the Phaedrus, Socrates himself explicitly emphasizes the need rigorously to identify the ambiguity of terms not only in order to avoid deceiving others but in order to avoid deceiving oneself as well.

Then, my companion, the one who knows not the truth but pursues opinions will, as is likely, attain an art of speech which is ridiculous, and not really an art at all. (262c)

Instead of realizing the character of this disputed topic and setting out to clarify and resolve questions about Eros, the problems regarding the nature and activity of Eros simply become more blatant. Even when the speakers' descriptive characterizations approach the adequacy of a general definition and a comprehensive view of Eros, their accounts are defective because their interpretations are based upon piecemeal and arbitrary details of erotic information. They are, in effect, inadequate and uncritical inductive generalizations drawn from their own experience of erotic events. The speakers, therefore, show themselves to be inappropriately disposed to Eros because their Eros conforms to (mirrors) their own individual interests and, by virtue of the limited perspective that they unjustifiably presume, the speakers are also inappropriately disposed to themselves, i.e., to
their own possibilities as human lovers. Because of these deficiencies, it is only natural that their erotic disposition to their fellowmen also suffers from these inadequacies.

As Socrates begins to speak, then, the insinuation of impiety is directly at hand. At issue in this matter is the composure of each speaker's own love, their own virtue, and the epistemic presumptions that each makes about the nature of Eros on the basis of inadequate scrutiny of the subject matter and inadequate self-examination. Should not one expect, though, that in presenting the views of Eros that they have, each person has actually delineated the nature of his own (best) love? Plato seems to affirm that each eulogy of Eros is a basic sketch of the structure and value of the eros each of them has formed for their own life. Each speech would, in this sense, represent the speaker's own normative ideals about legitimate erotic possibilities. The traits of divine Eros are, in effect, the traits of human love as well. Each speech provides specific information which exemplifies erotic acts or relations, and these function as paradigmatic standards of true eros for each speaker. But if their personal eros were indeed proper and true eros, then their praise and their standards would be on the mark rather than amiss. In a sense, Socrates draws a tally line at the end of the speeches he has just heard and calculates the sum of the substance of these contributions to result not in truth, excellence, or beauty but in mistake, deformity, and incompleteness. Inasmuch as each speaker has presented what
he has seen to be true of Eros, each has presented a misleading representation of the real Eros. Their vision has misled them and they are, as lovers, ill-formed because of their misunderstanding. One cannot legitimately be enamored or convinced by what has been spoken because an examination based upon right understanding will display how each speech is a shamefully (aischyne) deficient portrait of Eros. Because they have celebrated the love that each has for himself even as they have eulogized the god of love, it is perhaps befitting if the gifts of love that they each receive in their own erotic experience be as untrue and incomplete as the gifts they give in eulogy to Eros. But it is certain that their deficient views of Eros effect the nature and quality of their interpersonal relations.

Socrates' own response to this in fact serious situation is to set in motion a process of disillusionment so that a passage from the realm of mistaken identification to the realm of true identification can be achieved. He thus agrees to proceed with this business only on the condition that the others allow him to speak (the truth) in his own way, a way that happens to be appropriate to the subject matter and to the listeners. Having thus consent to speak as he chooses, Socrates begins by questioning Agathon.

2. Responsible Speech

What exactly is the underlying rationale of Socrates rather brash behavior at this point? His procedure is such
that he does not launch off immediately into a discourse on Eros. Though he may at first appear to be at odds with the cultured revelry of the evening, rather pedantic, polemical, and somewhat arrogant, Socrates proceeds with a great deal of irony, caution, and an off-beat, intriguing seriousness that lends a light humor to his behavior and heightens dramatic interest in his own speech.

His major methodological tactic, though it appears rather tangential to the matter at hand, is to address himself to several factors which must, initially, be remedied before genuine communication can be effected. The activity of speaking for Socrates involves speaking to the other person(s) about, in this case, Eros in the right way. According to his own procedure, this means that it is necessary (a) to secure mutual agreement on as uncontrovertible a starting point as is possible for the issue at hand (199b). As a practical matter, a shared understanding and reciprocal evaluation of the basic points under consideration needs to be achieved in order for meaningful communication to proceed and this can only be accomplished as each person participates in forthright inquiry and dialogue. In addition (b), the discussion must proceed by extending and expanding the content of what is disclosed to and agreed upon by the participants, i.e., there must be a kind of truthfulness and adventure of speech achieved by careful and accurate representation to one another of the nature and implication of the things under consideration.
And finally (c), there must be forthright, self-conscious (or reflexive), critical awareness of the method which one employs to explicate and elaborate the issue being considered. Clarity of content and mission, systematic arrangement, logical continuity and coherence, appropriate rhetorical technique, these are conditions which serve the task of intelligibility, appropriation, and veracity.⁹

Without the first of the above factors (a-c), effective communication and cooperative learning is precluded. A person who speaks would be talking primarily to himself and the interpersonal dimension in which reciprocal testing, evaluation, and development can be exercised would be inoperative. Speaking of the sort that Socrates has in mind is inevitably self-involving for each participant and the content of such dialogue calls for the best kind of independent assessment by each participant. Without the second, knowledge and demonstration would be impossible; expressions of belief and conviction would be lacking in evidential support. Without the third, clarity of purpose and surety of achievement would be unavailable. The responsibility of speaking has, therefore, this threefold bearing:

(1) to the other person--the object of communication,
(2) to reality--the object communicated, as referent,
(3) to method--the order and technique of communication.

These matters are elements underlying Socrates' initial nigglng. Each can be exercised truly or untruly. Socrates' sense of propriety in relation to others and his respect for the importance of the subject matter under consideration are
rigorously and deftly engaged. If Socrates is to speak in a proper way about Eros to his friends at the banquet, he must begin by tending to and providing a remedy for their misprojected accounts of Eros. But in order to do this effectively, he must redress their misprojecting eros which has enabled them to present themselves as they have. When one speaks authentically, with proper erotic and rhetorical demeanor, what one says must be worthy of oneself and the subject, but one must also speak the truth for the sake of the other person. Each is a crucial element, a co-determinant, essential to proper speech and personal existence. One should see that Socrates is being depicted by Plato as a genuine communicator (rather than a clever persuader). He is self-involved in each of these projects, attempting to "win" the understanding of the other(s) as well as the truth in the best, most complete, way possible.

Hence, an authentic lover must bear toward reality and the person to whom he communicates. Neither object can be neglected. In doing this, the speaker really begins by performing a kind of service (therapeia) because he must start with the actual condition or state of affairs given in the personal encounter by determining "how it is" with the other, the recipient. This normative, empirical, and very practical element is included in the structure of interpersonal conversation. Because the degeneration of the communication situation is a degrading of the other person, the relationship, and oneself as participant in it, one cannot afford to deny to
either of these elements their respective place within the communicative relationship. To do so would be to mistake the contents, possibilities, and values present. So, not to locate the other, speak truly and with careful style to the other person, is to relinquish the prospects of an effective and qualitative relationship. For Socrates, this appears to be the orientation required in order to proceed (hegeomai) in company (koinonia) with the other toward what should be taken into account as truly worthy of communication, understanding, and self-existence.

B. Socrates, Agathon, and Eros: 199b-201d

1. The Point of Departure

The best that Socrates can apparently do in the situation of the banquet is to begin with a brief, tactful, but decisive demonstration of the ignorance of the others, one which will display the fact that they have gone awry on factors (1-3). The identification of the true status of the speeches (and the speakers) must be clearly established. This process of disillusionment and disclosure is the condition for beneficial communication. The brief elenchus with Agathon serves as Socrates' point of departure. Or, to put it more personally, Agathon himself serves as Socrates point of departure. Proper speech begins with the other and, from that point, progresses toward the subject matter at issue. But inasmuch as the other is always the intended object, it leaves the
other only to come back again with the relationship constituted in a better way. Because Socrates' relationship to Agathon is sustained throughout the banquet and serves as a distinct yet integral part of the progress that is made, several things (which Plato has deliberately incorporated in his writings) about Agathon should be kept in mind as one considers his place in the dialogue and Socrates' responses to him.

(a) He is, firstly, and most obviously, an attractive, young, well-disposed person. He appears as a beautiful individual. He thus embodies the most obvious qualities of erotic merit, of lovability, and represents the "idolatrous" temptation present to erotic striving, a concrete, personal, seductive objective along the journey of love. He offers beauty in a species which is visible, at hand, but categorically distinct from the beauty which Socrates manifests and that about which he will soon speak.14

(b) He is a literary and poetic talent. In his role as a playwright, he is an agent under the influence of Dionysus and a figure representing Dionysian dispensation. In Socrates' speech, in contrast, one finds other and higher species of "poetry" and a different source of inspiration.

(c) As Socrates indicates after Agathon's speech, his articulate manner of speaking also reveals that, in his education, he has been influenced by the sophist-teacher and expert in rhetoric, Gorgias. He is thus a young man of exemplary culture, a true aristocrat.

(d) And because Agathon has just won the prize for composing a tragic drama for the seasonal festival of Dionysus, he is a celebrity and acclaimed social figure in the city and he is the evening dinner party's "good," the subject of celebration. It is a happy coincidence indeed that the affairs of the evening develop in such a way (as Socrates puns at 174b; 201c) that Socrates is able to speak his praises to a beautiful man named Agathon about the nature of beauty, a topic that bears upon that special subject also named agathon (good).
(e) It should be noted, finally, that Agathon is an erotic figure. In the dialogue he exhibits a turbid, rather diffuse but persistent erotic interest in Socrates. He is anxiously on the lookout for Socrates to appear at his house, ready not only to receive Socrates' adulation but to probe and challenge him to show and share himself as soon as he arrives. In the course of the evening, they play out what amounts to a love-drama which is a parallel, concrete counterpart of the structure of erotic progress described in Socrates' speech. This erotic pairing is also an instance of the problem to which Socrates' speech is most directly addressed. And in terms of dramatic horizons and background complication, Socrates and Agathon are themselves in the forefront of the other erotic relationships subsisting at the banquet between the other individuals present.15

Because an examination of Socrates' behavior in the Symposium provides significant information about the relationship between the dramatic action, the content of the speech, the dialectical character of the dialogue, and the nature of interpersonal eros, it is important to note that the banquet begins with a kind of erotic intrigue between Agathon and Socrates. Throughout the evening Socrates continues to sport with and minister to major elements of Agathon's life-world. They remain together even through the amorous rivalry introduced by Alcibiades until, in the final scene during a discussion of comedy and tragedy, Aristophanes and finally Agathon dozes off and is put to rest by Socrates. On the level of interpersonal action, this is the main dramatic relationship of the dialogue. The structure and development of the dialogue is played out in terms of this relationship. The public "preliminaries" and development of this affair should be compared to the private affair described by
Alcibiades in the final speech. Agathon is preparing himself, rather unknowingly (like Alcibiades before him), to become initiated into the perplexing realities of Socratic eros. Agathon's inquisitive and provocative appeal for the wise secrets that Socrates may have discovered in the experiences that have caused him to be late to the banquet and Socrates eventual opening of himself and his display of special "treasures" to Agathon in his speech (via Diotima) is an approximate reproduction of Alcibiades' previous experiences of Socrates. Their relation at the banquet duplicates in brief not only the pre-initiated and initiated stages of erotic experience contained in Alcibiades' speech (cf. 217e), it also mirrors this distinction as it is delineated in the stages given in Diotima's instruction (cf. 210a). And, more generally, the parallel structure in the realtionship between the dramatic personnel and the dialectical content of the dialogue is made evident. The teleology of Eros, of the human erotic psyche, and the individuals at the banquet is revealed to be alike. When the truth of one becomes known, it makes accessible and supports the truth of the other.

As such, these playful, personal interchanges are not inconsequential. Already Agathon is on the way to discover not only two 'Socrates,' the everyday one and the esoteric (beautiful) one, but also becoming evident, in terms of a formal differentiation, are the beginning two phases of erotic experience which are essential to the formative
development of love in human experience: (i) the common sense-experience type of love directed to beautiful things, bodies, and personalities, and (ii) the psychical or rational type of love directed to the eidetic things, especially to the reality of beauty itself as an ultimate goal.

2. Erotic Intimacy

Agathon's first words to Socrates upon his entrance are a dramatic anticipation of the theme of the evenings conversations, what is in fact the basic stumbling block of the dialogue as a whole, that in the intimate, personal contact of an erotic relation between a lover and a beloved lies the means to happiness, virtue, and wisdom. The question of sex and the sensuous is the immanent problematic issue to be confronted, assessed, and resolved. It is directly at hand as an aesthetic experience, a live and happy issue, obviously present in the symposium, and the task is set to articulate it, reveal its possibilities, state its meaning, significance, and beneficial effects for human existence.

Here, Socrates, come sit by me so that by contact with you (so that by touching you: haptomenos) I may have some benefit from (partake of) the wisdom which has come to you on the porch.... (175cd)

The issue of love-contact is primary throughout the dialogue. In fact, every speech can be analyzed by means of the key question: What kind of contact, to what kind of object, is love? Even Diotima's "ladder" begins by having the lover establish contact with the body of the beloved (cf. 209c;
210a f.) and continues to progress by means of a series of erotic contacts.

Socrates responds to this welcoming invitation given by Agathon with an ironic reversal of the role bestowed upon him by Agathon and his words of reply have sexual connotations that could not but stimulate the erotic demeanor of any good-blooded Athenian gentleman:

How fine it would be, Agathon, if wisdom were the sort of thing that could flow out of one of us who is fuller into him who is emptier, by our mere contact with each other, as water will flow through wool from the fuller cup into the emptier one. If such is indeed the case with wisdom, my sitting next to you would be a great privilege. For I think that you will fill me with beautiful wisdom drawn in abundance from you. My own is meager, as ambiguous as a dream, but yours glistens and is so expansive. The other day it shone forth from your youth with splendor for the observation of more than thirty-thousand Greeks. (175de)

Socrates is provocative but his stimulation is antithetical. He is interested in Agathon's proposal but, firstly, he is rather dubious about the connection between spatial intimacy and the interchange of wisdom. When the matter intimated by Agathon's frisky demeanor is formulated more sharply as "Wisdom Gained Through Erotic Intercourse," then Socrates seems coyly to acknowledge that the applicability of sensual images or a sexual paradigm to the pursuit of wisdom must be considered. Can the desire to obtain wisdom be explained when this pursuit is understood as a kind of activity that is supposed to be effectively executed by means of a physical relation, a process of interchange, between one who has and one who has not? What kind of proximity and conveyance is conducive to the reception and possession of wisdom?
Agathon, in effect, represents the most formidable challenge to the whole Platonic orientation because he advances (in person and speech) the proposition that successful sensual and poetic intercourse can effectively communicate wisdom and result in the sort of pleasure that everyone really desires. For Socrates, the mechanics of sensual relations offer a simplistic but profoundly intriguing prospect of significant results because of the effects that such experiences can have upon individuals. But precisely what are the relationships and objects of such erotic endeavor? From a physical relationship or a somatic interchange, what can a person expect to get (or give) other than (at best) physical-somatic gratification? Can an interpersonal linkage result in a lover being able to obtain from a beloved what he really desires (or conversely)? In proximity to what or whom can the love of wisdom (philosophy) be advanced and consummated? How exactly is wisdom conveyed or appropriated? Socrates suspects the suitability and effectiveness of this simple interchange process when the object of interchange concerns wisdom and the end desired is personal, enduring well-being.

In response to this basic problematical liaison of eros and wisdom, Socrates moves to clarify his own position in this context of playful interpersonal erotic coercion. He deftly steps out of the role of a potential object of love and possessor of wisdom into that of one who is himself aspiring toward such "beautiful wisdom." He claims not to be a giver of that which Agathon desires. But he does leave
open the question about the exact source from which wisdom might flow to one who, being empty like himself, seeks fulfillment. Perhaps the source is the beautiful, talented, articulate Agathon!

Agathon responds immediately and perceptively to this inversion by charging Socrates with being hubristic—the very charges (echoed by Alcibiades) which Socrates will have justification to make against Agathon, firstly, when he arrogantly underestimates the capacity of his theater audience (194b) and, secondly, when he presumptuously underestimates the subject matter of his own encomium to Eros and the prospects of his own erotic challenge put to the person of Socrates. In both cases Agathon plays the role of an elitist, a sophist, by assuming unjustifiably that his own comprehension of things and his prospects of success lack the inadequacy common to most men. And as Socrates would have it, a contest over this erotic business of wisdom is forthcoming: "A little later on," Agathon said, "we will adjudicate these matters by making use of Dionysus to judge" (175e). Already the kind of challenge and conquest that Agathon may have in mind has been made a matter of dispute.

3. The Somatic as Symbol

But when Socrates does begin to speak, his address not only contains a response to each of the above factors (a-e, p. 104) which compose the actual make-up of Agathon's life-world and his own unique meaning in life, Socrates also
exhibits precisely the kind of contact that is appropriate to erotic striving and the pursuit of wisdom--each of which is included in what 'philosophy' means to him. This is, of course, one way to express Socrates' prime role or vocation in life, i.e., he is a philosopher, and philosophy is what he is doing at the symposium. But in this context, one wonders about the relationship between the potential of sexual involvement and the pedagogical, edifying, erotically disposed way that Socrates functions. What does Socrates' apparent erotic purity of heart entail with respect to interpersonal physical involvement? Why does Diotima call right love 'pederasty' (paiderastein, 211b)?

Although the models, symbols, or images of sexual and sensual relationships are depreciated by Socrates (often with good humor) when they are limited in reference to the physical dimension of experience, Socrates will continue to utilize terms whose denotation or connotation is obviously sexual because they function in a perspicacious way to express the type of experience which a person can have as a lover of wisdom. There is at work here, in effect, another kind of reversal. The dynamics of sexual phenomenology are coming to be utilized by Socrates to express specifically noetic experience. Socrates will rely upon the sexual as a suitable but yet inadequate physical symbol (low-level instance, deficient replica) of the more real psychic operation of eros. Sense-experience terms and terms of somatic passionate involvement such as desire to see, touch,
impregnate, procreate, etc., are incorporated into Socrates' formulation of a person's experience of other individuals in relation to the higher psyche-related realities. 19

On the basis of the approach, sexual relations will become a primitive erotic event, one by which persons attempt to relate to and "communicate" the reality of goodness and beauty, but one which nevertheless produces experiences with correspondingly primitive results. Eros has other "higher" manifestations in psyche-determined relations. Because the composition of love can be reorganized to relate to non-physical objects, the discourse of love can also be transposed so that the reference value of sexual terms can be transferred from the physical to the psychical realm. Socrates retains and employs many of the same terms for the experiences and relationships which occur in this other dimension of psyche-erotic experience so that, in effect, the sexual itself is demoted while the language of the sexual becomes transfigured. Sex is no longer the primary or fundamental erotic determination of human existence but is actually made into an image of the more truly originary determination of eros. Sensual images thus become related back to the sensual only as symbols that reveal the sexual to be a qualitatively lower degree of erotic experience than that to which the old terms have now come to apply. As the people in the cave would use the terms 'light,' 'shining,' 'bright,' in talking about their own experiences, so would the person
who journeyed up into the sunlight and returned also use the same terms. But in such a case, the old cave-vision terms become symbols for the more real psyche-vision experience, etc. Sex and the sensual are, in like manner, a pale shadow of the intercourse with real beauty, as comparable as a dream is to waking experience. The sexual terminology is then employed by Socrates to indicate the dynamic involvement, process of interrelationship, and consummation that is possible in a non-sexual yet truly erotic way.

Given this approach, one would expect eros to appear in Plato's works as a polymorphous phenomenon. Eros will manifest itself in numerous ways, from flesh to purified, exclusively mental relationships. This means that linguistically the term itself must have application to the whole diverse range of erotic phenomena. But the virtue of such extensive generality seems also to involve obscurity and lack of specificity in the employment of the term. It is no wonder that so many accounts of eros can be presented, each of which will have some relevant reference to an aspect or kind of eros possible for human experience. The difficult task is to maintain this comprehensive approach by providing a framework in terms of which one can establish the meaning, order, and purpose of eros in its manifold possibilities. Acceptance of this task would lead one to expect several different consequences which must be spelled out in Socrates' account by means of an identification and specification of
kinds of love ("division") and an arrangement of the kinds into a unified and comprehensive schema ("collection"). He must explain the details and particularities of eros by means of a general definition of eros. Socrates' task is at least threefold:

(i) he must attempt to establish the legitimacy of using 'eros' to refer to non-sexual experiences and relationships involving non-physical objects;

(ii) he must attempt to establish a continuity in the usage (reference value) of the term by not denying to eros the legitimacy of extensive applicability to a whole range of different but kindred experiences and relationships;

(iii) he must begin to set forth a value-system in terms of which justice can be done to all forms of eros and communication can proceed with surity of reference by clear identification of the nature of each distinct form of eros within the overall scheme of possibilities of eros.

Although this remains to be accomplished in the Symposium, it is not only forthcoming, the task is also performed in a different context but on the same topic in the Phaedrus. It is obviously not a simple task, but it is one that Socrates (Plato) certainly accepted as essential to philosophy, the formation of psyche, and effective loving and communicating.

So, after Socrates has recovered somewhat from the effects of Agathon's astonishing speech, a brief encounter and cross-examination of Agathon must be accomplished for the sake of Agathon and the others because only in this manner can the way be prepared for Socrates' speech and an understanding of its radical import be achieved.
4. The Intentionality of Eros

The first "small question" asked by Socrates appears to be a rather unportentous tack in the on-going treatment of love. It is a question concerning the nature of eros (tis estin ho Eros, 199c) and the "basic grammar" of the term, but once it is set forth by Socrates it turns out to be a watershed, what might be referred to as the shibboleth which every entrant into the realm of Eros must learn. Socrates asks very simply, "Is Eros eros of nothing or something?" (ho Eros eros estinoudenos e tinos, 199de). Is love of such a character as to be love of some object or of none?

The admission of the legitimacy of this consideration as regards (talk about) Eros alters the kind of account that is appropriate for explicating this topic. Turning from the characterization of Eros which portrays him as a divine, mythic character or cosmic force, Socrates takes his stand on a specification of the properties inherent in any state of affairs (or any experience) that can be referred to as love. Love becomes, in this way, not a special being (person, subject) with certain attributes but love becomes an attribute or quality of a personal being with certain specific operations and cathexes available to it. Socrates explains and supports the correctness of his approach in two different but interrelated ways.

(A) Considered strictly in terms of its logical and conceptual character--as it is according to itself (auto touth' hoper estin)--one can demonstrate (epideixai) that love
has the determination of love-of. It is like other relational concepts such as 'brother' and 'father' (199d). Someone is a brother, for example, of and only if he is a brother-of someone. The term (concept, idea) 'brother' includes in its composition (meaning, definition) this referential feature. The concept of eros has this same logical feature. Love is, by its very nature or meaning, love-of some object. It has the grammatical-logical character which functions with connectors such as 'of,' 'for,' 'toward,' or 'with.' As such, love is a relational and transitive term whose determination includes reference to an objective. Without this relational component the term is logically incomplete, for the nature and use of the term is such that the relational-intentional aspect is essential to its meaning. An analysis of love must, therefore, take account of its end or object of reference.

(B) Considered in terms of its phenomenological structure, love is an intentional act. The personal agent who loves is a being who is directed toward an object in a certain way. The lover's somatic-psychic composure is a complexly structured unit which includes several distinct and necessary components. Socrates delineates these basic components in a very systematic manner while speaking with Agathon (199c-201c) and it is possible to connect together these elements in the following formulation: Eros is
According to Socrates, every act or experience of love is composed of these three components. This structured composite is presented as the necessary condition for human eros and the meaning of any act of love would thereby be constituted according to the determination of each of these factors—the object, the subject, and the relation between—as they are qualitatively unified in the particular experience. Hence, an adequate analysis and theory of love must, according to Socrates, come to terms with each of these components. A person who chooses to love properly must come to be the kind of subject/who loves in the right way/the right sort of object(s). Each of these components poses a task for the lover which is by no means easy to accomplish or realize. But by setting forth the nature of eros in terms of this basic unit having a three-component composition, Socrates (Plato) has provided an extremely significant general determination of structure applicable to and diagnostic of all instances of love.
5. The Confused Poet

The intentional character of love appears to be at least an important part of the truth of erotic matters to which Socrates referred in the initial remarks regarding his own understanding of love. It is really the skeletal structure of Socrates' response to Agathon which is "fleshed out" by Diotima's instruction. It is the primary axiomatic principle of eros, the formal architectonic element required for the existence or realization of love. And if one observes the status accorded the statements which are set forth, Socrates is certain and Agathon becomes convinced that they must be taken to be necessary and uncontroversible. It is, he admits, not possible to speak against them (200b, 201cd).

Agathon has thus accompanied Socrates in this brief examination and he has been shown to be inept at speaking the truth about Eros. Despite his prowess, he is in fact impotent in persuading those who do have knowledge of Eros. Even though he is given an excellent opportunity to exercise his capacity for creative and inspiring speech--to the point of winning over the listeners--he is humbled by a few direct questions asked by Socrates. He forthrightly faces his ignorant condition, however, when he finds no way to escape agreement with Socrates' analysis. Agreement about fundamentals has thus been achieved (201d) and a basis has now been established for further progress. Agathon learns truths about love as well as truths about himself. And about
his previous speech he now admits: "I greatly fear, Socrates, that I knew nothing of what I was talking about" (201b).

As Agathon had earlier-on challenged Socrates on the matter of wisdom (peri tes sophios, 175e) and proposed that Dionysus, the god associated with an affair such as this symposium (i.e., wine, passion, night, celebration, productivity, persuasive speech, group unity, the cycle of dying and rebirth) be accorded the power to judge the affairs of the evening, the judgment appropriate to Agathon is now pretty well settled by his own admission thanks not to the audience's applause nor "the spirits of the wine" but to Socrates' rather austere Apollonian guidance. Although Socrates concedes that Agathon's speech did have a beauty of presentation and an admirable methodological approach, Agathon unfortunately confuses the basic structural components of love by ebulliently and promiscuously attributing all praiseworthy properties to Eros without discrimination. According to Agathon's description, Eros is

--the most happy (eudaimonestaton) of all the gods
--the most beautiful (kalliston)
--the best (ariston)
--the one who possesses all virtues (aretai)
--the cause of all excellences in things other than himself
--the master of desires and pleasures
--the cause and propagator of all forms of living things
--the cause of all composing (poiesis) in others
--a guide and leader of both the gods and humans
--the new ruler of the gods who replaces the ancient reign of Ananki (necessity to bring philia and peace. (cf. 195-197)

Love is ever-young, delicate, shaped with grace and pliant of form, richly endowed with courage, goodness, strength,
temperance, wisdom, fecundity, possessing excellence and beauty that is unsurpassed. It is a splendid characterization! But according to Socrates, although Eros is one who loves beauty and goodness, Eros is not himself these things, and in this sense he does not in fact possess them himself. Yet, while Eros lacks these things, beauty and goodness are still attainable by means of Eros because Eros has (and provides) access to these things. Eros is an intermediary (metaxy), a transporting power, functioning to produce interrelations (sundedesthai en meso, 202e) and intimacy (homilia, 203a) with the desired objects.

So Agathon requires refutation because his description of Eros is false. Although he begins by distinguishing between Eros and the effects of Eros, which the others have failed to distinguish, Agathon has himself united the lover and the beloved—after Aristophanes had just previously depicted the severance of such an erotic unity and completeness because of its hubristic exuberance. This means that Agathon has confused the passion and creativity of love with the object of love in relation to which such passion functions. He has therefore not really described Eros at all but he has presented a confused account which nevertheless, because of its excessive attempt to be complementary, contains several important factors about the objects of love, the process of loving, and the virtue of a lover—all of which Agathon has attached to the god Eros in an exorbitant compilation. But
by understanding the intentional character of love, one can see that he has at least indicated (quite unknowingly) (a) some of the objects which are themselves lovable, i.e., the ideal qualities. Eros is provoked by beauty and goodness, and such qualities are what Eros loves to possess and propagate. In addition (b), Agathon has hit upon the process and activity by means of which Eros functions, i.e., creativity (poiesis, gignetai, phyein). He has also noted (c) virtuous states of character that are the conditional aspects of a person which determine the quality of the individual's erotic experience.

But in the passion of his oration, the words he employs actually surpass his own understanding. His opinions make a marvelous appearance, but their substance evaporates upon examination because they are not grounded in the eidetic discernment which would allow Agathon to provide an accounting for the ascriptions that he claims apply to Eros. The genius of his own imaginative power functions in relation to objects residing most truly in the realm of reality beyond that of the appearances which are actually relied upon by Agathon. His poiesis is indeed impressive but it is at the mercy of its inadequate, confused because pre-eidetic, context. One who listens to Agathon is edified briefly by attractive illusions; the presentation is terrific but little is left after that cognitive-aesthetic experience is consummated--except Agathon! And that is, in a way, exactly the triumph
and failure of his speech. Near the conclusion of Socrates' cross-examination, Agathon himself confirms the true but stark results that derive from his speech--they are exactly the same as his own understanding of Eros: not much is to be seen (ouden eidenai, 201b). Agathon is deceived about Eros and about his comprehension of Eros because he lacks a standard of comparison other than himself, his own productive vitality, and his own opinions. Yet, Agathon is rightly placed closest to Socrates at the banquet. As an erotic agent he presents himself in a most appealing fashion. In being dynamic, attractive, persuasive, poetic, and inspiring, he corresponds and actually manifests (or represents) in person the Eros whom he depicts. Because of this powerful presentment of erotic aspiration and goodwill, Agathon deserves his proximity to Socrates in the drama honoring Eros. Agathon relishes Eros as well as himself. His Eros is a reflection of his own ideals and it is a joy to his heart to be able to represent him. Although Agathon has mistaken the nature of Eros, he has shown his own dauntless enthusiasm for the goodness and beauty which he attributes to Eros. He is a most formidable lover. He is, of all the others present, the one who seems to be most approachable, to be most "ripe" as a person, to take advantage of Socrates' knowledge about erotic things.
6. Three Kinds of Erotic Fault

To one like Socrates who knows about these things, Agathon embodies the kind of existential tension and conflict that can exist in a person where there is a disparity between what seems to be the case for that person and what actually is true about him. Agathon is a man in contradiction with himself because he does not know what he supposes he knows and yet his thoughts and actions are based upon the assumption that there is no more true existence and way of communicating than his own.

Consider a contrasting case. As is known from the Symposium, the Apology, and elsewhere, there are also disparities in Socrates' existence.

--He is not an attractive person and yet he is.
--He is not a good speaker and yet he is.
--He is not a virtuous, outstanding citizen and yet he is.
--He does not know anything significant and yet he does.
--He is poor and rather transient and yet he is not.

These appear to be very apt characterizations of Socrates. Socrates, though, seems to be thoroughly aware of these many incongruities. He does not mistake, distort, or mis-value one or another aspect of himself. He realizes that he can happen to appear in one way and yet actually be something else. He is, for himself, in conscious alliance with himself because he does not mis-identify himself or exceed the bounds of that which he has established for himself. He has learned about his body and outward things; he has learned about his psyche and its operation. He accepts the connection and disparity between these aspects of himself with good humor, and he puts
them to use with a sure sense of priorities. Because he does have such a discriminating awareness of these factors and is very careful not to act or speak in a way which is not supported by the understanding that he has gained through self-examination of each of these aspects of himself, Socrates does not have the existential tension which is considerably present in Agathon. Socrates is able to relate to himself in such a way that there is not a disparity between (A) what he thinks he knows (i.e., what he claims or assumes to be certain about and yet cannot establish) and what he really knows and is able to establish. Neither is there a disparity between (B) what he knows about himself and what he is. Agathon, though, is a person existing at odds with himself in both of these ways.

In relating to Agathon, then, Socrates must really awaken him to two different discrepancies about which he has remained oblivious:

(A) The one fault involves a difference which can be altered and resolved by Agathon himself. Through the kind of examination which Socrates undertakes with him, Agathon can realize that he does not really know what he thinks he knows. He can learn the difference between opinion and knowledge and learn how to distinguish between them. He can escape the dangers of mistaken beliefs which result in error and self-deception.

Agathon does in fact make substantial progress on this first discrepancy because he does come to acknowledge that he does not know what he thought he knew when he spoke of Eros. His suppositions did not have support, he was mistaken about Eros, and he had deceived himself because he did not carefully assess his position.
(B) The second fault involves a discrepancy which includes certain constituent factors that are given as determinants of a person's being and which he cannot change. These are of a sort, however, that Agathon can come to identify, clearly authenticate for himself, and relate to accordingly. Through the kind of examination which Socrates undertakes, Agathon can come to realize the nature of himself as an individual person. There can be little doubt that, for Socrates, it is a fact about the human condition that all individuals include a hiatus between what a person is as a body and what a person is as a soul. Agathon too has the opportunity to come to terms with this predicament.

Everyone is obliged to work within this duplex condition or dualistic, compound structure of self-existence, having to deal, on the one (public, objective) side, with one's own particular physical, social, historical determinants and, on the other (private, subjective) side, with the special endowment of consciousness and the axiological formation of one's own soul (psyche). In the Symposium, Socrates is Agathon's opportunity to learn about this inherent consequential characteristic of himself. Socrates is in the process of driving home to Agathon these two facts: (A) that he does not know what he thinks he knows and (B) that he is not what he thinks he is (or: he is not what he appears to be to himself).

From the perspective of erotic interrelationship, the fact that a beloved (like Socrates) is not what he/she appears to be has serious implications. A lover cannot identify the other person simply by means of an acquaintance with the observable properties of that person. It means that relating to the observable properties of the person is not the same as relating to the person. The endeavor of common inter-
personal love is put in a quandary. And this is doubly so when the lover realizes that this predicament applies to his own self as well. Socrates is presenting this complex prospect to Agathon. Knowledge gained by acquaintance, by sense-perception knowledge, of oneself and others must become the point not of the identification of oneself but the point of departure to oneself. In one respect, however, Socrates is emphasizing a very simple point: the significance of oneself and others is to be found in the psyche of each individual rather than other properties or qualities of individual existence. But the turning (metastrophe) required for the realization of the significance of this for oneself and one's relation to others is a radical conversion that is difficult to accomplish and extremely consequential for any person, but perhaps especially so for a young, well-endowed person like Agathon. In contrast to ordinary ways of identifying things, the turn seems to be a turn away from oneself, the other, and reality. A most direct consequence of this orientation for interpersonal love is that loving another person's body (physical qualities and accoutrements) would not be loving the other, but only relating to something which, for whatever reason or cause, happens to belong to them.

It is at this juncture that a realization of the second discrepancy opens up a third element that is crucial to personal and interpersonal eros. For one is now obliged to confront the significance of oneself and the other as psyche. This in turn brings one to a consideration of the possibilities
of the development of the psyche or self that a person "is" essentially. The problem which results from this new prospect of soul-formation and development constitutes the major ethical predicament of human existence and it is that to which Socrates most persistently addressed himself.

(C) The third discrepancy becomes apparent when a person recognizes that goodness of self or excellence of psyche (conditional to one's happiness) is not a natural attribute somehow built in or automatically available to oneself as a person. Goodness of self is realized only through a process of forming oneself according to certain independent values. It is a unique labor which must be performed essentially by oneself in relation to oneself. This position involves a conception of the self which operates in terms of a distinction between what an individual is and what an individual can be, between a real self and an ideal self, between an incomplete and unfulfilled self and a complete and fulfilled self. Because eros is a striving of the individual for happiness and value, erotic effectiveness and success depend upon (i) recognition of this distinction and (ii) self-conscious activity directed in such a way that the real self who actually exists at a certain phase or level of development attempts to become his own better ideal self and be able thereby to realize his own good.

This third element involved in the process of learning what it means to care for oneself and to gain self-knowledge is surely the progress which Socrates' elenctic procedure and his dialectical conversations are designed to accentuate. Contact with Socrates, then, seems to be organized in such a way that Agathon will be thrust back upon himself so as to encounter his own individual poverty in relation to which the wisdom that he curiously seeks and seriously needs for himself will become more appropriately determined. So, in addition to (A) and (B) above, the ontological and ethical factors involved in (C) are also being introduced into the
state of affairs which constitute the personal existence of Agathon and his erotic camaraderie with Socrates.

7. Alcibiades as Clue

At this point, one can prepare to anticipate the kind of difficulties awaiting Agathon in his relationship to Socrates by being aware of Alcibiades' own experiences in attempting to relate to Socrates. What are the effects of an erotic relationship upon a person when the beloved does not reciprocate as one expects but instead has quite unanticipated tasks and goals in mind that seem so foreign to the nature and seemingly facile destiny of interpersonal intimacy? Perhaps Plato has added Alcibiades' speech onto the others not only to highlight the eros of Socrates--Socrates as the personification of Eros--but to provide a case study of the formidable consequences that a relationship to someone like Socrates can have upon even a spectacular personality such as Alcibiades. His example is a caution and clue to those who want seriously to encounter Socrates and to realize the truth of Eros. It is, as well, a judgment upon every lover who is unwilling to surpass the foibles of a person like Alcibiades in order to compose oneself as a lover prepared to pursue the truly lovable and satisfying things of human experience, to get one's own "belongings" together, and turn from those endeavors which may seem lovely and gratifying but whose meaning and significance are problematical. A brief consideration of the dynamics of this important personal relation-
ship can be of aid prior to an analysis of Socrates' speech because it illustrates the difference and discrepancy between two ways of loving and it reveals the possible trauma involved in making the change from one orientation to the other— an aspect of erotic transformation that is not accentuated in Diotima's instruction, although it is included in it. 24

With respect to this type of predicament, then, consider Alcibiades. He ultimately failed to realize the implications of these details (A-C) for himself and, consequently, his appearance in the Symposium can be taken as a kind of "last supper" tribute to a man whose pathway has turned away from himself (and the good which could be his) to other things—and, hence, to perdition. Alcibiades had, earlier in his life and somewhat at the instigation of Socrates, made Socrates the object of his own erotic strivings. Socrates' responses were not only disappointing, they in fact became enigmatic and positively extraordinary to Alcibiades. According to his story, he was effected by Socrates rather like the bite of a snake from which has was unable to provide an adequate remedy (218a) or like the sounds of a pied piper which lures one forth into an intriguing but intimidating adventure (216c). But although Alcibiades became attracted to Socrates, he apparently never got beyond the preliminary phases of his own erotic development. Socrates remained amicable, but he seems always to have had a very different sense of the purpose of interpersonal relations and erotic
aspirations than Alcibiades. Alcibiades' limited perception of Socrates is exhibited by the fact that he is only able to speak of Socrates by employing images that indicate his daimonic and hence his alien character. Socrates became for him more like a god who happens to inhabit a body and use human speech. For Alcibiades, Socrates not only casts peculiar spells upon a person's heart or soul, he threatens to become an object of fascination.

...the strange effects I personally have felt from his words, and I still feel even now. For when I hear him I am worse than any wild fanatic (corybantes). I find my heart leaping and my tears gush forth at the sound of his speech...(215de). For he compels me to admit that, while I am deficient in many respects, I still neglect myself while I attend to the affairs of Athens...(216a). So I withhold my ears as from the Sirens and run away in order not to grow old sitting beside him! Before him alone I feel ashamed. For I realize within myself that I am powerless to contradict him, that I ought to do what he bids me, but then I turn from him and submit to the favors of the masses. (216b)

In his own personal history, Alcibiades is obliged to shift the placement of himself in his relationship to Socrates in a most drastic and unsettling way. He began his relation to Socrates in the superior position of the object of love. But eventually he was obliged (he thought) to transpose himself into a willing sacrifice to Socrates, becoming the one who loves the other, pursues, and gives himself to the beloved rather than being the one who is himself loved. But even this astonishing reversal of roles does not really change the eros of Alcibiades. He still desires the same things from both roles, either as master or as slave. His
shift is a futile "dialectical movement" which does not result in progress for Alcibiades. The failure of each of his orientations confounds Alcibiades and leaves him in ambivalent disarray in his relationship with Socrates. He never really comes to terms with the significance of (C). Although the distinction was not unknown to him in an ordinary sense of possible improvement of one's own status in life, he in fact never proceeded from (A) to (C) in such a way as to realize that (to use the dialogue of Alcibiades I)

"You or anyone else who is to rule and care not merely for his own person and his private belongings but for the city and its affairs must first acquire arete himself....and you will act with your eyes turned on what is divine and bright...and looking thereon you will behold and understand both yourself and your good. (134cd)"

Socrates had never really set himself forth to function as a direct object of eros. With Agathon and Alcibiades (and others) he works, according to Plato's presentation, fundamentally as a medium to a better, more direct understanding and encounter with basic ethical problems of individual existence and the manifold expressions of eros. Socrates attempts to provoke eros and to create conditions conducive to the proper guidance and control of eros. And even within the process of such a relationship, one should begin to realize that Socrates is also functioning as a model of how to use one's own eros. He not only guides by speaking as he does, he is also available and worthy as a personal case study. He can speak frankly and truly about the nature of eros, but he is also around the city (and this symposium) acting as a special erotic agent.
But even so, as an individual, Socrates is really given, in spite of his almost constant availability, only indirectly, with an obliqueness which is at best to serve as a companion and fellow journeyman in the activities of right eros, ready to emphasize factors other than himself which nevertheless determine his own behavior. He is, in this sense, given the kind of subjective privacy and personal discretion which approaches not only that of Plato himself but is in fact a characteristic of every individual's life. There is always something elusive about Socrates, even when the subject matter or circumstance requires him to be very direct and candid. The closer a conversation comes to consider ultimate and personal matters, the more oblique and distant does the idiosyncratic Socrates and his mode of expression seem to become. The data of his own life either falls by the wayside or it is turned completely into material for philosophical reflection. Add to this his persistent maintenance that he is actually ignorant in some fundamental sense, and one begins to suspect that the evidence which really tells about Socrates (and Plato) is really to be found in the structure and content of his dialectical conversations, his existence in the interpersonal world of communication (dialogue). Observable individual properties and idiosyncracies of Socrates do not add up to anything much in themselves (and in this sense it does not matter that the person of Plato does not appear in the dialogues) because what counts is the analysis and the way that it is performed, the organized
progressions and properly formed contexts which make up the various accounts. What matters is the meaning that is articulated, that is appropriated by means of being employed with discernment by the individual. Plato makes use (in dialogue) of whomever is appropriate to the task at hand, and this is usually Socrates. And this Socrates himself uses his own personal erotic intentionality in such a way as to be beside other persons as a proper lover. That is, the composure of his own personal eros, in being properly directed, can be used to illustrate and guide another toward right and truly effective eros. Through the example of the person and speech of Socrates, the other can discover for himself his own proper function as an erotic agent. Socrates' way of dialogue is his way of establishing meaning and identity for himself and it is his way of making accessible the establishment of meaning and identity for the other. The personal dimension of his own eros has a definite purpose and task in the interpersonal context. Socrates' own eros can operate without self-conflict in relationship to other persons because the constitution of his personal eros depends upon the eidetic. As Socrates is aware of his own unique subjectivity (psyche), so he adopts a way of living and relating to others that is based upon his acceptance of this for himself and the other. His conversations work on the assumption that this authenticity is a fundamental feature of the other's existence such that dialogue actually communicates with him by having the other come on his own terms to the ideas that are involved.
This engages the process whereby the other's psyche can begin to relate to the power and content of the eidetic according to its own ability. Socrates' eros is active and is exercised in interpersonal ways because what each person really needs is to be able to locate himself in relation to the ideal by means of (dia) language (logos). The quest of eros for the good-beautiful can be affected in interpersonal relations because such a communicative context contains the elements which are most conducive for any such progress. The constitution of one's own eros and its operation in the interpersonal dialogical situation can be structured in such a way that the telos of one's own self-formation can be duplicated in the other's erotic orientation so that the mutual orientation can be of benefit to both. A love of the good can operate through language to enhance intimacy by contributing to a shared understanding and appreciation of the most essential and valuable things.

Alcibiades, however, had not really been able to comprehend this Socrates and Socrates' commitment to authentic personal existence. The only one he encountered and the one he did not ever get beyond was the enigmatical Socrates, the one who had surpassed the perimeter of his own game of love and the one who Alcibiades would not really follow to find out exactly what Socrates was about and discern that toward which Socrates' eros was really directed. Yet, Socrates' eros was directed toward that from which Alcibiades could have achieved the gratification that was really desired by him.
From the point of view of an erotic agent like Alcibiades, the point being emphasized here is the danger involved in the tendency to become distracted into pursuing an evasive, intriguing person like Socrates. Yet, what counts for Alcibiades also applies to any other person as well. The question is, what is being pursued when one seeks one's own most gratification from another person? What is the appropriate goal of such pursuit? What are we to love in our relations to others? For Socrates, Alcibiades' seductive, exploitive passions were focused in a mistaken direction. He was somewhat comparable to a person who mistakes the pointing finger for the moon to which the finger points or a person who experiences hunger for food by perceiving a painting of food. Socrates is not himself to be taken as the goal of the erotic quest. He is an ordinary human, unique only in the sense that he knows himself as psyche, knows about his own ideal or better self, and thus can be of some aid to others because of the way that he lives, because of the orientation of his life, because of his own erotic, philosophical, dialogical activity.

8. Love's Conquest

In seeing this about the status of the person of Socrates, one can discern further the nature of Alcibiades' mistake. The treasure of love (the true beloved) that Alcibiades really desires and needs is not a special person (like Socrates) but what a special person (like Socrates)
loves. It is only this that makes Socrates the wonderous person that he is. To conquer Socrates the individual in a love relation, to treat him as the end-object of interpersonal love, was a part of Alcibiades project which he assumed to be the proper operating procedure for an aspiring person. But this kind of interpersonal "dialectic of domination" has no legitimate place in erotic aspiration because it turns the beloved into an object required for and determinative of the lover's fulfillment. This however imputes to the beloved powers that he does not, by his very nature, possess. For both the beloved and the lover, to engage in such a project is to participate in a game whose goal is impossible and whose accomplishment is thereby illusory and futile. Thus, to try to turn such rightly directed love (as Socrates has) onto one's own self, i.e., to possess the other for oneself, would be analogous to severing that person from his own good. Two such incomplete persons put together, however, do not add up to personal completeness for either. There must be a different personal and interpersonal remedy for eros than that pursued by Alcibiades. 27

Even if his love is tendered in the form of a Pausanias-like barter between one who is cultured and one who is not (cf. 218cd), the attempt, secondly, to conquer Socrates' wisdom, to treat him as a means or instrument to obtain benefit for oneself, to strive to possess what Socrates himself understands in a way that assumes that wisdom (goodness, etc.) is contained as information that can be conveyed
directly from one person to another person as a listener, this orientation to wisdom (and knowledge) neglects the intentional character of wisdom, the crucial fact that wisdom is learned only by an individual in the proper associated state of personal character and formation of soul which relates in a proper way to the proper objects. And this cannot, of course, be transported straightforwardly from one person to another. To try to obtain the good of another by some sort of trade with the other (intimate or otherwise) is impossible except as the pursuer go through the process of making that good his own by himself actually finding and becoming good according to and on the basis of his own contact and discernment of the good.

Alcibiades' penchant for conquering concreteness and his high self-esteem which is expressed in the concern to be a popular and powerful figure, a socially beloved person at almost any expense, makes him unable to love Socrates for what he is, for his virtue and goodness. Wrong eros and wrong understanding go together. This is revealed in his speech by the fact that, although his depiction of Socrates is sensitive, charming, affectionate, Alcibiades does not really know Socrates. He is still at a distance; his "initiation" into the mysteries of Socrates and Eros is only introductory in nature. His discernment is deficient and incomplete; his description must of necessity employ mythical images because Socrates is an alien creature to him. Yet his only worthy knowledge of Eros has apparently come by way of
Socrates and it is only fitting that his praise be of Socrates. So he elaborates Socrates' special lovable-because-wonderous properties. And his speech accomplishes what he wants it to by virtue of its success in revealing Socrates as an unusual person. Ironically, though, the success of his speech actually rides on his own failure to understand Socrates.

The very fact that he chooses to praise Socrates rather than talk of Eros likewise reveals Alcibiades indiscretion and weakness. He allows himself to succumb to appearances, to immediacy, to the challenge of winning short-range, mundane contests ready to hand. The alienness and yet attractiveness of the person of Socrates appears as a projection of Alcibiades' own potentialities as a person, potentialities which are in a state of estrangement from his (ideal) self. He, like the Sicilian ruler Dionysius (in Letter VII), has no time to wait for the results of cumulative study and theoretical investigation. He chooses to set his ideal self at a foreign and hardly acknowledged distance from his real self, which he completely de-mythologizes, and through this process he turns his own self away from those "mythical" and noetic qualities whose achievement would allow him to obtain the good things which he desires so much. Instead, Alcibiades chooses to pursue and take pleasure from the images of good, beauty, and courage in the objects of his own sense-experience. And on the night of the banquet, his main objective is Agathon.

But he is put in the lurch by the unexpected presence of Socrates who introduces an entirely different dimension into
his evening mission. As he is asked to speak on the subject of love, he calls for more wine and then he too, like Socrates, reflects back upon his past erotic experiences. He can at least perhaps keep himself free from controversy with Socrates if he simply gives an account of what has happened to him in matters of love. And it is, besides, an interesting subject for the audience, especially Agathon. Perhaps Alcibiades can even use Socrates to win Agathon over to himself? But of course the praise that he gives, though it comes from one who considers himself an unrequited lover (a warning intended for Agathon), is more of a praise than Alcibiades realizes because the one who is shown to have been composed properly, ready for erotic progress and development of psyche, is Socrates. His speech is aptly like the truth that comes from children and wine (217e) because it is at once true and yet ambiguous. Socrates' "lofty disdain" in response to Alcibiades' seductive wiles was exactly that, but his mode of behavior was also set to reveal that the methods and goal appropriate to the relationship were other than those admitted by Alcibiades. In this sense, then, it is really Alcibiades who did not requite in the affair because he continued to engage in his own presumptive and persistent self-indulgence. Had he been willing to pursue matters diligently later on, as Socrates had recommended (219ab), then the affair would surely have been different.

But as the situation has come to be at the symposium, Alcibiades continues the merriment by recollecting on the
wonderous character of Socrates. Alcibiades, however, is not really any closer to knowing Socrates than Agathon is to knowing Eros because he does not himself know what Socrates loves. Both Alcibiades and Agathon are guilty of what might be called "the fallacy of misplaced ideality" because each, in his own way, has attempted to locate the eidetic or ideal realities of love (the Ideas) in particular objects. For Alcibiades, the lovable and fascinating object is the daimonic being Socrates; for Agathon it is the daimonic being Eros. Both are wrong. Agathon projects the objects onto a transcendent being; Alcibiades locates them immanently in a particular human being. For Plato, Socrates is the person who loves the truly lovable things and Eros is (at best) the loving of these things. Because Alcibiades and Agathon do not pursue the good (the Ideas) which Socrates and Eros pursue, they do not know what to love nor how to love it. They are confused about Socrates as well as Eros. Yet only by following the arduous dialectical investigations that Socrates engages in would either of them come (i) to know Socrates and to love him (to exercise their love in relation to him) in a proper fashion (as a philosopher) and (ii) to know the course of eros appropriate to effective and gratifying love, and thereby to their own erotic strivings. Alcibiades' abundant yet misdirected eros threatens to make Socrates into a kind of enticing idol to which Alcibiades would then be willing to sacrifice himself in order to obtain the good which is supposedly Socrates. But he slowly
realizes that his effort to take Socrates in this manner is futile, for Socrates' love is more demanding and directed elsewhere, quite beyond the carnal and pragmatic destination assumed by Alcibiades. Alcibiades does admire Socrates for his incredible arete (219de) and he also recognizes that Socrates' eros is manic (218b), daimonic (219c), and deceptive, but he is not prepared to track down the meaning of these things which are far beyond the purview of his own goals of conquest. Alcibiades does not know exactly where Socrates' 'elsewhere' is, but he does seem to suspect that he would have to transform his entire life in order to find out. At this prospect, he balks. Yet it is at this threshold that Alcibiades' not knowing what to love becomes a not wanting to know what to love. He chooses simply to love what he thinks he desires. Because his ignorance makes him a victim of his lost love, his love eventually becomes progressively more straightforwardly self-destructive. The desires which compel him lack discernment and because he does not want to know how best to direct them, they lead him to his own ruin. Any goal that he may set for himself would eventually be dissipated by his own underlying ambivalence. Though Alcibiades senses his own disparity and the possibility of realizing good for himself, he in fact never addresses himself to that which he acknowledges actually makes him ashamed: "I neglect (do not care for, tend to, discipline: amelō) myself" (Sym. 216a). Because of this condition, no matter what "good" he might achieve, the value of the achievement would be rendered
problematical because Alcibiades could not obtain the assurance that the "good" was in fact truly good.

When he encounters Socrates in later life, he is again honestly ashamed as he had been before and must again choose either to give himself over to Socrates (an abandonment which he is not willing to carry out) or he must flee from entering into considerations of the good and the state of one's psyche, questions which Socrates persistently entertains. This ambivalent characteristic of Alcibiades' life is a predicament similar to what Kierkegaard called angst. "Dread (angst) is a sympathetic antipathy and an antipathetic sympathy." In face of Socrates and a surmisal of the good, Alcibiades experiences the ambivalence of dread. He is at once attracted and repelled. In a way, Socrates himself represents Alcibiades own best self which, because he is unwilling to undertake the project to realize it, he must treat it as a quite perilous project. But at such a dreadful point, the anxiety and longing of his freedom for the good falls away from the good at the very prospect of the good. In his actions as a lover, he persistently fails by misdirecting (harmartia) himself. Still able to recover and be prolific in his authentic ambivalence in his drunken state before the person of Socrates, he is nevertheless like the men in the cave who are attracted to the visages of that illusory world, men who darkly pine for superior light and clarity, and who yet, in their intractible unwillingness, choose not to turn to other matters which offer the chance to find this true light. They
desire the light but refuse to accept the challenge of such a pursuit when it would mean turning away from the familiar and attractive glimmerings of events and possibilities that are present at hand. At the banquet, Alcibiades revels in high spirits before the group about the daimonic man Socrates—and it is, in its way, a true testimony of Alcibiades' experiences of Socrates which Socrates does not deny—but he also confesses, in effect, that his own life has turned away from the ideals of Socrates toward a commitment to the practical, social-political affairs of his time. He does not choose the good of the higher world, i.e., the true good, the good of/for himself, but the fleeting goods of the contingent, changing world. When Alcibiades decides to talk about some of the highlights of his past love-life, he admits, in effect, that he is not up to becoming his own best self. The opportunity of learning to love the right things in the right way has somehow passed him by, and the fact that he misses the highlight speech of the evening (and its potential benefits) is a part of this forfeiture. His praise of Socrates is like that of a man who is committed to a mission and who gives praise to an opportunity whose plausibility is beyond his own realization. His own love becomes a counter-image of the true daimonic eros. The heights which he will achieve are rather antipodal to those of Socrates. The eros of Socrates was available as a model and guide for Alcibiades' own best self which Alcibiades did not follow and become. As a dramatic personage in the dialogue, Alcibiades plays the role of a
kind of secular guide who proceeds down from the wonderous character of Socrates to the state of order in contemporary Athens. He leads the procession of the evening down from the strange and wonderful one who had commenced on a heavenly banquet to the entrance of the many and the breakdown of the order of the evening symposium.29

9. Agathon's Opportunity

Emphasizing the elements of the dramatic action in this manner shows that Plato is providing more than one way to comprehend the nature and dynamics of erotic interrelationship. The distinctions (A-C, p. 117-119) indicated so far are given in the person of Socrates, in the way that he relates to himself, orients himself to life, and responds to others. But when Socrates begins his own eulogy, these distinctions are also included in the words he speaks and the way that he articulates issues. Socrates authentically and with self-conscious discernment participates in the human condition and it is that about which he continually converses. Hence, to contact and talk with Socrates is to confront aspects of human life that are essential to the understanding of oneself. In his affiliations with Socrates, then, Agathon himself is just beginning to face these perilous and promising distinctions. His maneuverings during the evening begin to set him up for an existential confrontation with his own predicament. In the ordinary world, Agathon has shown himself to be a winner (cf. a-e, p. 104). Now his further capacities are
being brought to a test by Socrates. His time is right. He has made himself accessible to Socrates personally and on the basis of his speech which Socrates knows is not what it purports to be. As a lover, Agathon is coming up against the undeniable reality of formidable disparities in attempting to relate to Socrates. Because of the fact that every person has a duplex nature, Socrates can make himself available to Agathon at this phase in his development primarily as an ironical being, i.e., Socrates is not what he is and yet he is what he is not. In one sense, I suppose, Socrates' existence is a paradox. He is a duplex being (as a matter of fact) and yet he is not that (as a matter of essence) because he is psyche. This not-being-what-he-is (qua duplex) and being-what-he-is-not (qua psyche) is always the haunting element which pervades both the humor and the irony of Socrates. He plays himself off both parts of the paradox in order continually to preserve his own purity in this unusual predicament and to signal this predicament to others. Yet it is understandable that this behavior could perplex and irritate many of his associates. But, in a direct and authentic way, this is what Socrates is. If he can make Agathon (and others) aware of this predicament characteristic of human life, perhaps the realization will rebound back upon Agathon himself.

One consequence of the dawning realization of this distinction is clear. It deals a crushing blow to the goals of common eros because it makes the other person, as the object of love, problematical (or incompletely determinate).
The other is not really equivalent or reducible to his appearance, he is not really given in sense-perception experience, he transcends his physical appearances. This automatically renders the achievement and successes of common eros incomplete, inadequate, and incongruous. This of course opens to reconsideration the nature of the pursuit of eros, its true end or goal. So, although Socrates is existing for Agathon as an ironical being, he nevertheless provides authentic access to himself and a resolution to the difficulties of eros in the speech that he delivers.

Alcibiades was obliged to acknowledge the problem of Socrates' ironical existence and to recognize that the hidden but real beauty and marvelous character of Socrates was really due to the quality of his psyche. But Alcibiades never seemed to have learned about that which accounted for this beauty of Socrates and hence did not come to realize the significance of (C) and the phases ("ladder") of development available to the psyche and the objects and relationships appropriate to one's own self-fulfillment through the realization of one's ideal self. Perhaps Agathon will fare better on this course.

10. The Love of Another

Is it possible to state more precisely the nature of the contrast between Socrates' and Alcibiades' way of love? The attempt to spell it out briefly will lead to a differentiation between two different operative principles of loving, and this will assist in the recognition of the nature of Socrates'
relation to Agathon at the symposium and, as such, provide
support for my own reading of Socrates' speech. So, some
further reflection on the relationship may prove to be of
value. The conflicting dynamics of their association can be
stated simply as follows:

1. Alcibiades wanted to love Socrates for his, Alcibiades',
own good. When Socrates does not reciprocate but also
does not terminate the relationship, Alcibiades is stymied.
Only on Socrates' terms will Alcibiades' love be respected,
i.e., only as Alcibiades' love is good love will Socrates
honor it and reciprocate in kind. Only in this way can
the relationship progress and become an experience worthy
to merit the concern and positive action that it deserves.
Even Socrates' patient (distant, frigid) non-approval and
everwillingness to proceed and provide guidance in a
correct expression of eros, however, are important
expressions of his "higher" love.

2. Socrates wants to love Alcibiades for his, Alcibiades',
own good. Socrates refuses to love Alcibiades as Alci-
bidades desires to be loved and refuses to honor the way
Alcibiades expresses his love. Socrates' refusal to
reciprocate is based upon that which he considers to be
worthy of love and the other person. In a sense, Socrates
loves Alcibiades more (better) than Alcibiades loves
himself because Socrates loves the true Alcibiades.

This conflict in procedure brings out an ambiguity involved in
a proviso that seems to be so crucial to proper interpersonal
love: love another for the other's own good. I think that
Plato would have us see that Socrates utilizes this principle
in an absolute and not a relative way. He does not love
another (i) for whatever the other happens to consider to be
his own good or for whatever the other desires for himself,
thinking that what he desires is his own good. Rather,
Socrates can be said to love the other in the sense that he
loves the other (ii) for the good and the realization of the
good which will be of benefit for the other. He loves them
for what they should desire and what they really need; he loves them for what they should be in their best condition; he loves the good and the happiness that they can have for themselves; he loves them for the self that they really are qua ideal but are not qua real (or actual); he loves them for their most perfect existential possibilities.

From this point of view, the acceptance of the principle that one is to love another for what the other considers to be his own good may or may not actually be loving the other for their own best sake. Only by a love that sharply discerns and accurately assesses the other in his actual condition can an evaluation be made about the parity between what the other considers to be his own good (what he takes to be desirable or needful) and what is really good for him. Love without a critical standard is subject to arbitrary regulation and may very well be an indulging concession to the other that does not contribute to the betterment of the other but to the corruption and further deception of that person. It may fit under the rubric: "A loves B as B is in and for himself" or "A loves B as a whole person," but such acceptance of another is actually a kind of false and indiscriminate love if the lover simply makes the beloved the authority in the relationship. It implicates the lover in the misidentification of (a) the more real identity of the beloved as contrasted with what the beloved may actually think he is or what he simply happens to be. In addition, there is a misidentifica-
tion of or lack of concern about (b) what is really desirable for the beloved.

This approach would willingly accept the other for whatever the other happens (wishes, desires) to be even when the other is not either being himself in the (good, virtuous, fulfilled) way that he could be or desiring what is really desirable. Such love that loves the other simply for whatever the other is and according to the other's own desires or supposed needs would be loving a degraded instance of that person rather than loving the true (though not actualized) instance. So, in this sense, it can be said that Socrates actually loves the other for what they are not! Or, for what they are not yet and yet could become. They could become their true selves, and a lover should, according to this position, love the other for what they are in themselves qua ideal, for what they could become. A's love of B for his (B's) own sake, in this sense, means that A loves B for his (B's) own good. This it seems, for Socrates, is right love between persons. It is a form of property-love because it confers love according to the properties of the beloved and because it attempts to effect certain property changes in the beloved. This approach is the interpersonal, caring, and productive way that an individual lover is able to love the good.

Yet, his way of loving can also be considered a type of person-love inasmuch as the real object of his love is the complete person who is truly himself only by virtue of
possessing (or conforming to) those properties which make him his most real self. The preferential nature of property-love has as its goal the person as this individual can become as a properly qualified (good, virtuous) individual.

By exercising property-love and person-love in this way, i.e., by loving the good self of the other, the other for his own good, the lover encourages awareness of the disparity between what the beloved actually is and what the beloved could be (i.e., (C), p. 119). It provokes consciousness of self-deficiency and generates an appreciation of the value of a better self as a possibility for oneself. This sense of lack and the growing appreciation for one's own good are conditions which contribute to the increase of desire and aspiration to become one's better self. The eros of a proper lover appears to be committed to aid in this developmental process by virtue of his own love of the good.

In terms of a potential conflict between love of one's own good (self-regarding love) and love of another's good (other-regarding love), other-regarding love does not seem to be heterogeneous by having its ground in the forces and factors independent from right personal love. Rather, right love seems to extend and express itself in a very homogeneous and intrinsically determined way so as to act in relation to another for the good—both lover and the other. But this does suppose that self-regarding love is love of the good and can thereby function also as an object of love for the well-being of the other. Establishing the fact that both loves can
have the same ground is most consequential because it also validates the compatibility of these two loves insofar as the good is indeed their ground. And it establishes, in effect, the legitimacy of talk about loving the other which is a form of love structured in such a way as to benefit both individuals. We should be on the look-out for this feature to appear in the speech of Socrates.

As a matter of fact, a look at Socrates' procedure in interpersonal eros shows that his love is more than an assessment of the individual and a conferral of love according to property standards, it is also a desire for the other which exerts positive and constitutive effort to aid the other in the realization of himself. The true lover's way of loving would thus be a constitutive endeavor aimed at generating the good of the other. It would be a formative love, a kind of interpersonal poiesis (making), a sunergon (co-working), which is, strictly speaking, separate from the question of just reciprocity, equitable mutuality, or complementary self-benefit for the lover. At this stage, given the condition of the beloved, what is required for erotic achievement is the development of the beloved's self, i.e., the transformation of the other into his own best self (or excellence of soul). The lover's aim is to assist in this process. The lover does not make himself dependent upon the beloved for his own benefit but receives benefit from acting well, from engaging in the task of becoming good and doing good things, with and for the beloved.
As a kind of interpersonal love, this kind of love identifies a (beloved) person by means of certain properties and participates to the extent that this is possible in the development of the ideal object, the superior individual person. Hence, as a matter of procedure, the true lover of interpersonal love must have two objects in view: the beloved person as the person actually exists and the beloved person as that person can become. A knowledge of both the real and the ideal self is required for proper love because otherwise one's loving would be unavoidably ineffective, missing either the actuality or the ideality of the other. The lover must have contact with both in order to be productive in relating the two.30

More fully stated, though, the lover must have "in view" the ideal and the actual person because love of the ideal person itself supposes an understanding of the ideal itself, i.e., a third object. The good is that which makes possible the identification of the ideal person, and subsequently the realization of the person as good. And inasmuch as proper self-love is the condition for understanding the ideal, a fourth object is in turn implicated. On the basis of this interrelated sequence, proper interpersonal love would suppose proper self-love in the form of effective (self-reflexive) love of the good. And inasmuch as proper self-love includes the differentiation between a real and ideal self for the lover himself, true interpersonal love which is for the (good) sake of the other requires that this complex unit become
duplicated in relationship to the beloved. There is a definite sense in which the lover can be said to love the other as he loves himself because the other, in effect, is approached as a second self. The structure of one's own love of the good is what the other needs to have duplicated in his own love life. Persons begin in an individual state of actuality that is not yet good. Providing a connection and a means (or method) of progression from actuality to ideality (from the not-realized to the more fully realized) seems to be the essential feature and distinguishing criterion of true interpersonal love. The same goals that apply to self-love would then also apply to other-love. The other, however, is independent. He can realize the relationship between his actual and ideal self only in relation to himself. So every lover is inevitably limited in his power to effect this process, but the lover can structure the relationship for the duplicative and realization process.

11. The Limits and Autonomy of Love

This orientation to the beloved does not need to mean that the lover is really loving a phantom beloved. Nor does it signify that, by splitting up the real and the ideal person, the lover is doing a grave disservice to the actual reality of the person by loving something that the other, as a beloved, actually is not himself and may seem to have no desire to become. This latter sort of love would be alienating and offensive, but it does not seem to apply to Socrates'
orientation. Although it is not incorrect to state that his way of loving does love the other for what they should be, for their ideal and happy self, his love is not what might be called a spectator view of interpersonal love. The ideal self is simply a well-formed self, one that realizes the valuable potentialities of his own self. And in actual practice, the lover functions to implement the development of the beloved for their own best interests and hence to aid in the development of a person who will hopefully come to understand and desire what is to their own best interests. How better can one love the good of and for another? Rather than simply attaching himself to an abstract version of a person (as a romantic lover or a moralistic lover might do), Socrates actually loves the other person toward his more complete self. His idealism involves commitment to practical action. It is a creative and other-enhancing love which is dedicated to the clarification (not imposition) of what a person can become and also will, through a process of becoming, be able actually to realize their own true selves by realizing the good for themselves. In this way, the beloved would be the principal benefactor of such loving, although love has altered the actual person in the process. But the lover has also benefited, if from nothing else, from the intrinsic worth of such right loving itself, i.e., from engaging in the action to associate with and realize better the good.

Such a procedure does not guarantee that a lover will be effective, however, because even the best lover is limited in
his capacity to communicate, influence, and better the beloved. Change toward the good is contingent upon the independent initiative of the beloved. If the beloved chooses not to transform himself—as is the case with Alcibiades—then love's own best efforts cannot be realized. Right love is suspended and put in abeyance as far as the interpersonal realization process is concerned. It can, in such a situation, only be maintained by the lover in a form such as hopeful readiness or undesparring patience. In this sense, then, Socrates can be said to love Alcibiades in spite of himself. There is no evidence that his relationship to Alcibiades was evangelistic, moralistic, or overbearing. Though he was ready to convict Alcibiades by having Alcibiades realize the importance of whatever was entailed in their conversations, he does not directly encroach upon the "inwardness" or subjectivity of Alcibiades. Socrates' relationship takes as its task, in a rather matter of fact fashion, the need to await Alcibiades' own realization that change is imperative, that his life is indeed shameful, wrong, and unhappy. Socrates attempts to help prepare the way for this realization and is prepared to follow up after such a turn is made. But until Alcibiades is ready to become his own best self and desire those things truly worthy of human aspirations and thereby to partake of the good life, well-being, and genuine happiness of right love and friendship, until this change occurs, Socrates must exercise his love as patience put in the guise and active mode of irony, humor, and good cheer.
Alcibiades as a matter of fact does not take the turn. Socrates' love, in this instance, was not effective, it was not sufficiently convicting to convert Alcibiades, it was unrequited, and, as an interpersonal project, the erotic relationship between them was a failure. Socrates' good intentions and maieutic services were not sufficient. The tragedy of Alcibiades is that he seems to have surmised exactly what the situation was between him and Socrates and yet he fled from this convicting influence. And in so doing this, he chose not to be himself, he chose against the good, and he forfeited his life to the forces and factors of unreality. He filled his ears with the sirenic music that dissipated, distracted, and corrupted his soul. His profligacy was without redemption not because of Socrates' love or lack of love but because of the love of the many (which Alcibiades chose for himself) who loved him in the beauty, talent, and ambitious articulateness of his incomplete self, the self of his own natural determinations rather than the self of the eidetic determinations. And these two options for the constitution of one's own self, as Socrates states in the Theaetetus, makes all the difference.

Two patterns, my friend, are set up in the world, the divine which is most happy, and the godless which is most wretched. But these men do not see that this is the case and their frivolousness and ignorance blind them to the fact that through their unrighteous acts they are growing like the one and unlike the other. They therefore pay the penalty for this by living a life that conforms to the pattern they resemble. (176e-177a)
Socrates' love, in this context, can be seen as a love for the righteousness of Alcibiades, a divine uplifting kind of love, the same kind of love that was appropriate for Socrates himself. But as a bird must be willing to spread his wings in order to be uplifted by the wind, so Alcibiades must be willing to make his turn from the world to the "meta-world," from his phenomenal existence to his psychical self and the context appropriate to his own goodness and enrichment.

12. Love and Self-Knowledge

In apparent beauty, Agathon is comparable to Alcibiades. And in the actual operation of their psyches, they are both rightly linked to Pausanius (Prot. 315e; Sym. 218cd). But whereas Pausanius is a rather contrived sophistical individual, Agathon exhibits a more contagious form of sophistical existence and persuasive communication. He is naturally skillful, convincing, and gratifying; he fits the role of one who deserves success. Even if one is able to discern the disparity between this Agathon and the true Agathon who puts on such an impressive show but who is actually ignorant of his subject matter and his own soul, one might carelessly let oneself be won over to Agathon simply on the basis of his appearances. If even someone like Socrates must shake off the effects of Agathon's speech, the alarming potency of his personal presence really deserves careful and tactful consideration and censure. Socrates' handling of him, however, appears to be both skillful and generous, honestly intended for Agathon's
edification. For a man who can appear so wonderful and speak so persuasively while being ignorant about himself and the referent of his discourse, this man is a definite threat to all other persons who share his condition of not knowing but yet are sufficiently opinionated to encounter an account and be swayed by it.

If Socrates is unable to reveal to Agathon that he is wrong and get him to redirect his psyche and his eros toward the truth, then Agathon will inevitably use his persuasive powers arbitrarily, undoubtedly for exploitive purposes, ones which he himself will in fact not be able to assess and justify although, in his deceived epistemic condition, he will not know that he does not know, and his explanations will seem right and perhaps even lovely to himself as well as others. Because of his status as a playwright in the community, the polis is obviously vulnerable to a person like him. Hence, Socrates' speaking to Agathon is a way of tending to the condition of Agathon's soul, and, by virtue of this process, he is also dealing with the condition of the polis. The consequences of their relationship extend far beyond their evening celebration.

Socrates' actual therapy here, however, is simply to introduce that which can become persuasive to a person because a person can come to understand its truth by means of critical cross-examination and dialogue—something which neither Agathon nor the others have achieved. The more extended horizon of the city is definitely implicated as
everyone's background. It is the place from which Socrates
and the others have come and to which they will return after
the banquet. For Socrates, in particular, the city is his
special "post," the site of his divine duty (Apol. 28e).
Beyond both persons and the polis, however, is that realm in
relation to which everything receives its determination.
Socrates' eros includes contact with these other factors
because only in the setting of the actual cosmos can the
interpersonal aspect of love be rightly composed.

At this juncture, though, the main point at issue for
Socrates can be stated as the distinction between the identi-
fication of oneself on the basis of the determination of one's
own psyche and the identification of oneself on the basis of
other elements which are a part of one's own personal exis-
tence. The question of love is directly related to this
issue because knowledge of self appropriate to erotic progress
and success includes a determination of (i) what the self is,
what it needs, what its requirements and possibilities are;
(ii) what objects satisfy and benefit the self; (iii) how to
acquire or relate to the objects which will fulfill the self;
and an assessment (iv) that one is succeeding in acquiring in
the right way the right objects for one's true self-formation
and that one is exercising this love in the right way. These
are conjoined and inseparably interrelated issues for every
erotic agent. Proper love must become knowledgeable love
otherwise the advance of eros would be debilitated. Because
the advance of knowledge depends upon the transformation and
development of the self of the person who pursues the good, proper love involves self-knowledge. And this involves the establishment of personal value-priorities for oneself. To decide about the nature of love is to decide about the nature of oneself and the proper objective of one's eros. Because knowledge discloses what is lovable and because the lovable is that which produces the virtue and happiness of the lover, right love, knowledge, and self-knowledge are the generative conditions required for the fulfillment of personal existence. The good person who, in loving the good, has come to be effected by the beautiful and the good, will become productive of the good by exercising the knowledge and the self-knowledge that has been achieved on other persons with whom contact is established. Activity which is generative of the good is a constitutive part of the knowledgeable and virtuous living of the proper lover. In the affairs of human life, this activity directly implicates other persons. By the very nature of this process, these others become the object of the formative love exercised by the good individual. This seems to be the very basic structural dynamics of erotic development of a lover's relationship to objects of love, of psyche to eide, in the context of person-to-person relationships.

Agathon's speech about Eros is the medium by means of which Socrates is able to diagnose the condition of Agathon's soul. Because the issue of soul-formation and proper love are not different, it is possible for Socrates to deal with the problem of Agathon's soul by addressing himself to the
problem of eros. Socrates' speech and his relationship to Agathon show that he is still up to his old persistent trick of examining others so that they will come to care for themselves, for intelligence, truth, and the improvement of soul (phronesis de kai tes psyches, hopos hos beltiste estai, Apol. 29e; peithonta epimeleisthai aretes, Apol. 31b). Since he cannot engage in an extended conversation with Agathon, he instead presents a speech which is in the form of a conversation directly appropriate to both the evening's topic and Agathon's state of understanding. Socrates' talk about Eros is directly entangled with the problem of knowing oneself—even though he does not state this explicitly.

13. The Judgment of Agathon

So even though Agathon shines forth with youthful, attractive beauty in person and speech, he soon afterwards discovers that this illumination is a rather flimsy poetic presentment when put alongside the wonderful yet work-a-day clarity of Socrates who long ago had presented himself to another expert in such matters. Neither Agathon nor his Eros can function as a model for love simply because he is unable adequately to locate and identify those realities in relation to which one becomes truly virtuous, happy, and good (agathon). For Socrates, the ultimate reference points ("Archimedean points") are either missing or misplaced in Agathon's account—as well as the others—and it is, thereby, exposed to be ungrounded eloquence. His poetics is inevitably a kind of
vain cultivation of his own self because it is a product of his own arbitrary, passionate psyche. Agathon is a talented flounderer and his Eros does indeed represent a being comparable to himself (cf. 198a).

It is Socrates, then, who must introduce real beauty and aletheia to disclose to Agathon the fundamental inadequacy of his presentation as well as to explicate the real import of the erotic interest which Agathon displays in the person of Socrates and his wisdom. When Alcibiades speaks, one learns that he is himself a privileged character because he has already pursued and sensed the hidden reality of Socrates and he has experienced, by way of Socrates, something of the madness and ecstasy of philosophy (218b)--the wisdom-loving into which Agathon is now being initiated. But prior to the arrival of Alcibiades at the banquet and his own representation of Socrates' erotic comportment, the others have an instance of Socrates relating to someone comparable to Alcibiades which should enable them (and the reader) to evaluate better Alcibiades' eulogy of Socrates and the character of his (ambivalent and convicting) self-confessional. Prior to Alcibiades entrance, Socrates has, in effect, allowed the other banqueteers to have privy to his own inner, golden secrets about matters most dear to himself. Socrates has given a bit of his own inner history to function as an aperture (or medium of revelation) to himself and Eros by way of Diotima. The presentation does involve an
indirect procedure but nevertheless is genuinely reflective of Socrates' primary concerns.

As it turns out, Socrates' response to Agathon is the third judgment delivered upon Agathon's beauty and wisdom as a composer. It is the most serious judgment and the most personal, yet Agathon is good enough to recognize and appreciate his reparation. He remains congenial throughout the banquet and there is good evidence to hope that his previous victory in drama before the Athenian populace (the first judgment) and before the banqueteers of the evening (the second judgment) may yet develop into a worthy, real-life performance, a higher victory (and "final" judgment), in the sight of those who have a true understanding of these other matters. 32

14. The Hermeneutical Agent

Socrates' preliminary conversation with Agathon, then, turns out to be consequential in an interpersonal and very soul-involving way. But it is, as well, a kind of preamble which sets forth the fundamental structure and logical character of eros. His dialogue serves as a kind of prospectus which makes transparent the essential factors of eros. It is the initiation of an act of responsible communication which respects the subject matter, the persons addressed, and the technique of speaking (p. 101 f.). It is an example of the way that Socrates respects the works within the interpersonal dimension of his situation. His frugal initial
remarks provide the basic intentional aggregate (cf. p. 111 f.) by means of which one can appraise the adequacy of analyses of eros—most directly the accounts given in the previous speeches. Socrates' critical response is by no means lightly tendered or included merely as a literary ploy. Fundamental flaws of the other speeches emerge into visibility even before Socrates begins on his own encomium. He is, in this way, beginning "to meet the needs" of those to whom he speaks right from the outset.

Once the intentional character of eros is established, the distinction between the noesis and the noema (to eron and to eromenon) of erotic activity already disallows a description such as Agathon's. The achievement of the separation between the one who loves and the object that is loved is unavailable if one depends upon mythic details that personify eros as a divine being who possesses all the lovable qualities in himself. When Eros is rendered in eros-of, one has turned away from the heavenly-uranic realm and is no longer dealing with characteristics that are directly or exclusively appropriate to divine beings. Socrates has thus performed his own kind of radical surgery upon the supposed divinity of Eros by cleaving him into component parts and he thereby makes speech about love directly applicable not to the gods in the strict sense but to any personal self-consciously determined being. Eros can no longer be treated simply as a god. One can no longer speak naively in traditional religious or historical ways about Eros, as does Phaedrus and Agathon. Yet, neither
can Socrates eliminate or abandon the divine aspects of love by reducing Eros either to the natural-material (cosmological) part of life, as does Eryximachus, or to the natural-human (anthropological) part of life, as does Aristophanes.

Socrates' project, therefore, should not be viewed as an attempt to perform some drastic, reductive form of demythology on Eros. He seems more concerned to reveal the relationship between talk of Eros and talk of human eros, recognizing a crucial gap and yet also providing a bridge for this gap, attempting to "re-humanize" eros and "re-Eroticize" the human by revealing the area of the intermediate (metaxy), the realm between, appropriate to both Eros and human eros. But this involves, nevertheless, a radical re-positioning of man (and Eros) in the universe and it reveals the fact that love implicates people in the daimonic (spiritual) dimensions of reality, destined to pursuits that are beyond the mundane determinations of everyday existence. Somewhat ominous overtones seem to accompany Socrates' perspective because reality is being constituted differently and unusual emphasis is being placed upon the powers and responsibilities of the individual psyche existing within this universe.

So, in a rather miraculous way, Socrates does not sever the human from the divine. It becomes evident in his speech (especially via Diotima) that he instead provides a connection between the two realms, establishing an intermediate sphere between man and the divine in the daimonic. The two quite different "language games" appropriate to each, the
discourse pertaining to the mythical (divine-daimonic) being Eros and the discourse pertaining to the human (psyche-daimonic) being who loves, are made congruent. When Socrates allows himself to speak a language which personifies Eros as a divine being and also a language which describes eros in terms of human desire and passion, he in effect validates the logical significance of both and he does so in such a way as to express reference to both orders simultaneously. His speech affects a coincidence in the meaning deployed and yet a difference in objects referred to. By relying on a correlation between these two orders, Socrates affirms the basic agreement and conformity of the fundamental distinctions relevant to each order in the sense that what is said of divine Eros, i.e., his nature, origination, activity, function, and end, can also be applied to human eros. The characteristics of Eros are formally the same as those of human eros. Thus it is that this kind of duplex, ambi-valent significance of talk about love allows Socrates and Diotima to praise Eros by speaking truly about what Eros is and how he works, etc., while at the same time displaying the true characteristics (qua possibilities) of human eros. In one account, therefore, it is possible to do justice to both orders, the human (desiderative) as well as the divine (daimonic). Socrates' speech is able to serve (therapeia) both realms.

In addition, this position allows Plato to present Socrates as a person who is able to personify Eros and thus to present Eros as being personified in a human being. By
employing a descriptive explanation which has dual reference, the listener/reader is invited to see Eros by means of Socrates and Socrates by means of Eros. Plato is able to link together the concrete-individual-human with the transcendent-abstract-divine without necessarily exposing the subject of such praise (or himself) to the charge of hubris or impiety by degrading the divine or excessively elevating the human. In fact, he (Diotima) is able at times to shift from talk about Eros to talk about eros with little acknowledgement. Plato himself exploits this ambiguity artistically in the *Symposium* in numerous ways. This is why one finds Socrates performing quite different roles in the work. He is

- a pupil of eros, developing through different phases of eros
- an expert in giving an account of eros, an initiated one
- a proper lover in actions and speech
- a personification of daimonic Eros.

All of these aspects are included as part of the significance of Socrates and the meaning of Eros, and it is done without eliminating the importance of any part.

Although Alcibiades is to be commended for his insight into the worthiness of the person of Socrates, still, his way of presenting Socrates by employing models or similes (*di' eikonon*) to reveal Socrates' likeness to daimonic beings has a definite drawback. It makes Socrates into an unusual (*atopian*) being and this orientation, although it attracts attention and sets Socrates apart from both common and sophistic individuals, tends not to facilitate clear thinking
about what it is that makes Socrates as he is. Despite the fact that Alcibiades portrays Socrates as the extraordinary specimen of the virtuous, heroic, and philosophic individual, his approach seems rather to alleviate disciplined thinking by making Socrates into a fascinating creature whose unique characteristics set him apart from the human race. Such a portrayal provides an excuse for thought to stop at such an anomaly. This does disservice to the person of Socrates and to ordinary human potentialities. As such, one must carefully attend to Socrates' speech because it is a definite corrective against the pseudo admiration of Socrates as well as the mystification of human erotic concerns.

By being aware of Plato's position here, the wonderfully disparate nature of Socrates becomes more accessible and one can more intelligibly appreciate the apparent incongruities of Socrates. He combines what Alcibiades considers paradoxical attributes. But are they really paradoxical and incongruous? Socrates is both ordinary and extraordinary, a regular citizen of Athens but also a singular erotic citizen of the cosmos, a playful erotic flirt and one whose lofty disdain renders him impeccable. Socrates is at once a model lover, one who is able to speak rightly about Eros, and one who also retains the quality of being a pious human subject. He can be a daimonic person and yet personally virtuous, a transcending, uranic personality and yet immanently (socially and politically) good, master of himself and servant of the divine, an inspired madman and yet perfectly rational and self-controlled.
But the position presented by Plato in fact affirms that all humans are themselves erotic in a potentially Socratic way, i.e., the way of Diotima— a "god honoring" way— a way that desires the beautiful and the good in an active, productive, and interpersonal way. Plato does not provide excuses for people who do not learn to become like Socrates, he seems rather to set forth Socratic existence as exemplifying a legitimate representation of the extension and achievement appropriate to human existence.

Even before Socrates commences with his encomium, then, one should begin to sense that he is engaged in a special hermeneutical project that conveys the meaning of the mythical and the human by a kind of parallel signification which is appropriate to each realm. In interpersonal communication, Socrates as well as his logoi begin to function as intermediate (metaxy) elements, messengers, that link together the two realms while nevertheless preserving the validity of the distinctness of each order. Socrates does not expunge either system of references nor attempt to reduce one to the other. His wisdom is not, therefore, destructive of piety— one virtue that Alcibiades and Agathon manage not to see. But neither is this piety conservative and restrictive as it is in Aristophanes' "story of the fall." In speaking as he does, Socrates specifies crucial points of intersection where characteristics of Eros are shown to have a correlate in human erotic aspiration and Socrates is able to emphasize the existential human import of his speech about Eros in an
inescapable, definite, and impressive way. His performance is not only confessional and self-involving, it is a judgment on every form or expression of eros as well as other accounts of Eros because it presents an ideal standard for the operation and goal of eros. But his effort is also erotic in the strictest and finest sense because his activity functions to achieve in his speech what Eros performs in his hermeneutic tasks. As Eros is mediator, so Socrates most dramatically raises up a daimonic "ladder to heaven" provided to him by the prophetess Diotima. He bids the others to progress through the medium of love in the best manner.

From a political-historical perspective, one should also be prepared to see that Socrates' symposium speech contains the element of apology which allows one to interpret the nature of Socrates' behavior—a ladder of sorts to Socrates—the character of his companionship, and the destiny of his own eros (as philosophy). For it is Socrates who is, in his later life, accused of bad love in relation to his fellowmen and the gods. This dimension becomes apparent as one relates the Symposium to other dialogues and as one reflects upon the merit of Alcibiades' picture of Socrates and the other indications of Socrates' affiliations and responses at the banquet.

Socrates thus exploits the "bi-directional" ambivalence inherent in his characterizations. He steps forth in speech before the gods and Eros in the court of Dionysus with careful words of praise. He presents himself to men of diverse talents with words intended for their own benefit, their own
paideia. His address is directly intended for those who are present at the banquet. I have considered at length some of the personal dramatic factors and the kind of dynamic interpersonal issues that are so determinative of the actual content of the dialogue because this element of the dialogue is often not given its proper place and shown to embody covertly a kind of erotic teleology which is the explicit framework utilized by Socrates (Plato) in his speech. Awareness of this part of Plato's work makes clearer the underlying rationale of Socrates' speech and his banquet behavior. One should realistically observe that Socrates' behavior as well as the content of his speech serve to meet the problems and deficiencies of the individuals involved. While being determined by the personal and the good, the context and rationale are interpersonal, dialogical, and pedagogical. Socrates' speaking is definitely meant for the other person and his end-in-view is the communication of truth to this other individual for his benefit. From this perspective, the dialogues are adventures of the interpersonal, with definite teleological challenges for each person involved. They are self-implicating and they aim at the self-conviction and self-edification—the self up-building—of the participants.

In these efforts, Socrates is enacting the very process which he describes in his account of Diotima's teaching. One can best describe Socrates' evening adventure at Agathon's celebration by paraphrasing his own speech: it is by contact with these fair stimulating, provocative persons that Socrates
is provided with an excellent opportunity to bring forth some of his long-felt conceptions, to share with them in the nourishing of these ideas, so that men in this condition may enjoy a far fuller community (koinonian) and achieve a surer friendship (philian bebaioteran) with each other (Sym. 209c).

In his effort to tell what or who Eros is (tis estin ho Eros), the sort of being (poios tis) that he is, and the works or deeds that he performs (ta erga autou), Socrates journeys forth and his progression leads from the playful and personal relations of the evening to the heights of psychic appropriation and productivity, a striving quite in line (not with the cycle of Dionysus as such but) with the ladder of eros presented by Diotima. For himself, Socrates is loving in the best way what he loves to do most: he is traveling in thought and logos toward the good and the beautiful, from the visible to the invisible-intelligible realm, from becoming to being, from the human to the divine. For the others, he is portraying the essential aspects of this love in a creative, systematic, and stimulative way, quite ready and able to pursue the eidetic as well as to progress along with the others, envisioning for himself and the others the true realities of proper love in a properly loving way. This ergon (work) has its formative beginnings in Socrates' preliminary dialogue with Agathon. It serves as a kind of rehearsal (or prelude) for the speech which he presents as an autobiographical report of the instruction given to him quite some years earlier by the prophetess Diotima. The "wisdom" evidenced by
Socrates so far has shed light most directly on the elementary formal characteristics of eros. But he has evidenced his concern for the others and exhibits his skill in bringing someone like Agathon to an encounter with his own lack of knowledge and good (i.e., distinctions (A-C)) by setting forth basic points of truth which he and the other speakers need. Further specification of Eros comes by way of Diotima, but the basic details established so far will not be changed by her account. They are only developed and amplified.

Yet, Socrates' recounting of Diotima's teaching is itself a re-enactment of and personal testimony about erotic progression, a story about the beginning and end, the nature and activity, of Eros, of human eros, and of Socrates' eros as well. Symbolically we are invited to partake of and assimilate a sacrificial piece of Socrates' life, to discern through the veil of Diotima (and later Alcibiades) the shining and wonderful beauty of Socrates' inner treasures, to listen to the music of his words and begin the process of inner resonation and recollection. In offering his truth in this way, Socrates also does honor to Dionysus by willingly being borne forth on this evening to celebrate a Dionysian victory, by struggling through the forces and factors of the various speeches, finally to generate and offer up his own essential self in words of praise to his fellow celebrants, participating in the eventual destruction and demise (to sleep and the night) of the order and striving which has unified and sponsored the evening benefit, eventually to rise up and go forth
into the dawning of a new Athenian morning, to bathe himself in the Lyceum (temple of Apollo) and to complete the day in his regular fashion. And as John A. Brentlinger comments:

Socrates leaves the tragedian and comedian to their sleep. His departure is like a step upward beyond the realm of death and rebirth, into the clear light of eternity.37

In this sense, Socrates even transcends the Dionysian realm of becoming and genesis. His "inner treasures" are the treasures of his love which can enable him to enjoy the best, unchangeable, enduring, most gratifying elements of reality. What pays its dues to Dionysis is yet other than Dionysian. Because of Socrates, the human banquet and the initiation process also becomes an enactment of a divine banquet. Socrates' erotic interplay with Agathon appears to be a particular instance in which Socrates' eros strives for the transcendent in response to and in relation with a personal counterpart. The Dionysian cycle turns out to be an image of the more real and appropriate cycle for persons, the cycle of Eros that involves the transport of the human psyche in relation to the divine eidetic factors.38 The life-giving forces of reality are not simply those of nature and its regenerative powers but those of complete and eternal being. Dionysian inebriation is an image of erotic inspiration. The one intoxicates the soul into dark, convoluted, and non-cognitive ecstasy; the other stimulates the soul toward the light, temperate, and comprehending ecstasy. To the first, Socrates has become unsusceptible; to the second kind, Socrates is a
willing initiate, expert practitioner, ever launching forth at the slightest provocation.

From this perspective, Socrates himself seems to be beyond the categories of the comic and the tragic because his existential setting is determined by and identified through proper eros of the divine factors which, by their very nature, preclude the Dionysian predicaments as essential to and truly applicable of the sound working of human aspiration. Socrates' ascension to this other realm apparently occurs on the way to the banquet, it certainly occurs in his speech at the banquet, Alcibiades refers to a past incident of this kind, and Socrates seems to step forth from the affairs of the night into the light of a new day, firmly earth-bound, but with his psychic wings already prepared to soar up by means of conversation in the company of whomever is willing and able to consider these divine things in the city. Though this does not compare in extent with the cycle (periodos) capable of being performed by the divine souls (Phdr. 247b-e), Socrates nevertheless appears to be engaged in his own human-psyche "soul travel" to those realities which nurture, gratify, and formatively effect the soul for the good. These images of "psychic space" indicate something about the possibilities available to the properly disposed erotic individual. And, as Diotima says, "Whoever has skill (sophos) in these matters is a spiritual (daimonion) man" (Sym. 203a). Such hermeneutical movements on the part of Socrates are truly worthy of analysis and recollection, especially so because his eros
shows itself as operating in personal and transpersonal ways as well as interpersonal ways. There is little doubt that Socrates' love puts itself to service in relation to other individuals. But there must be a more explicit account of proper eros and its objects. A more thorough explanation of eros is required that directly informs about the nature and activity of eros before a substantiated appraisal of interpersonal eros can be accomplished.

15. Recourse to Diotima

At this point, Socrates finds it appropriate to rely upon the insights of a prophetess to say what should be said about this business of love. He uses Diotima to instruct and to initiate the others into the details of eros. The special merit of her instruction is that it clearly delineates the major possibilities appropriate for each of the three components of the erotic situation which are identified by Socrates at the outset. Attention is focused upon each aspect of eros and Diotima leaves little doubt about what is to be loved, how it is to be loved, and the personal demeanor required of the lover.

In this direct and immediate way, Socrates exhibits his continuing obligation to communicate with the others by giving a speech that is in the form of a dialogue quite clearly intended to execute an account of Eros which is a progressive, persuasive, and inspiring enactment of what each of them must, in their own way, re-enact in their own existence as erotic
beings if they are to gain true happiness for and genuine understanding of themselves and reality by loving the beautiful properly. The dialogue sets forth in *logos* the way by which (dia) a lover can truly learn the praiseworthy power and operation of eros. Only by having an accurate understanding of Diotima's instruction can one proceed to appriase the nature and place of interpersonal love in the overall analysis of the nature of love which Socrates advocates. Examination of this position is mandatory. This will provide the support required for the interpretive remarks made about the dramatic action which is the setting of Socrates' contribution.
FOOTNOTES

1 There is no necessary logical connection between these points but an ethical or existential one. Neither are they mandated by natural or historical causal forces. They are possibilities available to human existence. Such contingency means that discrepancies between them are always possible and the appropriate procedure would seem to be to assume that Socrates means what he says and that what he says of himself is true.

2 By "real Socrates" here I mean the Socrates that Plato presents in the dialogues. He is a fictional construction of Plato's imagination, undoubtedly corresponding in many ways to the historical Socrates but also diverging from the actual incidences of his life and his conception of things. Exactly where the historical Socrates leaves off and the Platonic Socrates begins is a matter of conjecture. It may have been a concern of Plato to indicate points of differentiation within the dialogues themselves, e.g., Sym. 210a, or by means of the overall character of a group of dialogues, but such references are also open to alternative interpretations. In general, the character of Socrates is delineated by Plato in a coherent and distinct manner as a very unique individual concerned with ethical-existential and definitional-eidetic issues. This is so in the inconclusive early dialogues and the more positive middle dialogues. Other matters which do not bear directly on these human-ideal problems are discussed by other personalities in Plato's later works, e.g., problems of cosmogony, cosmology, "second best" political structures, et al. Cf. Guthrie, W. K. D., A History of Greek Philosophy (Cambridge, 1969-1975), vol. III-IV.

3 The following texts are especially valuable:


4 One can explore this allusion further. Odysseus himself is comparable to Diotima's description of Eros. Odysseus is in-between, in transit, a wayfarer. He is in need and
desires to return home. But he is also wily and incredibly resourceful. He must exert himself to the utmost in order to pass through all that the forces of the cosmos present to him. Socrates is comparable to Odysseus in this "spiritual" sense. He too is in-between, on his way to where ultimate realities dwell, living in poverty and need, desiring his true destination, exercising skill by employing his crafty examinations in order to gain surety of orientation and progress. And such progress composes the supreme contest (agon) of his life.

In the Theaetetus Socrates describes the task of maieusis as follows:

The greatest and noblest work (kalliston ergon) of the midwife would be in distinguishing between what is true and what is not true (150b). But the greatest thing about my art (techne) is that it can test in every way whether the understanding of a young man is bringing forth a mere image and pseudo product or a real and genuine offspring (150bc).

It is of interest to note that when Socrates finishes his speech, Aristophanes immediately begins to respond to Socrates' rather obvious reference to his own speech (205e). But he is interrupted by the "sudden" which enters Aristophanes' communication in the person of Alcibiades who represents the Dionysian revelation of Eros qua Socrates. Aristophanes had himself emphasized the hubristic fault of human aspirations. In order to prevent these "vertical" strivings, the gods decided to dissect humans and thus turn this hubristic-erotic energy into the "horizontal" strivings for self-reunification. After Socrates sets up his own "ladder" to the divine and Alcibiades enters to charge him with being hubristic, arrogant, disdaining, the question arises: is Socrates' own erotic strivings for the transcendent really (even more seriously so than Alcibiades is able to articulate) an illustration of the sort of hubris that Aristophanes has referred to? Does Socrates' "vertical" directionality pose a threat both to himself as a lover (vis-a-vis tragedy) and to the "horizontal," interpersonal needs and responsibilities of human communal existence? I suggest that one look for the inclusion of both "vectors" in Socrates action and speech. But the integration is such that the horizontal is determined and redeemed by the vertical. The problem with Aristophanes' vertical dimension is that its terminus was not the good-beautiful which would have resulted in theophilos but conquest and displacement of divine by non-divine entities. (cf. Duncan, Roger, "Plato's Symposium: The Cloven Eros," The Southern Journal of Philosophy, 1977, 3, XV, 277-291. Duncan employs this "vector" type of analysis.
There is no wholesale rejection of the other speeches indicated. What appears to be required is a proper dialectical (systematic and hierarchical) appropriation of them, a reconstructive assessment according to the truth of eros. On the analogy of the Sophist, each speech (and each speaker) represents sophistical aspects of eros which are persuasive and similar to genuine eros but they are really counterfeit, incomplete, inadequate depictions. And, if the listeners fail to realize the significance of Socrates' speech for them, they themselves leave the banquet convicted of what Robert Cushman calls "double ignorance." They are not only ignorant about eros, they are also ignorant of their ignorance. This is a more serious condition. Cf. Therapeia (Chapel Hill, 1958).

At this point, Socrates' responses illustrate the principle of behavior which he gives as an advisor in matters of love to Lysis. Cf. Lysis 206a. In addition, the procedure is the reverse of that utilized in the Phaedrus where Socrates first of all gives his speeches and then afterwards he speaks about the nature and responsibility of speaking.

These three points (A-C) receive thematic treatment in the latter part of the Phaedrus, 257-279.

One's own eros is at stake!

In this context, Aristotle's statement that a friend is a second self is perhaps applicable (N.E. 1166a32; 1170b6). Socrates strives for ideal conditions of communication and relationship, at least the kind of association Aristotle calls "friendship of the virtuous." When other factors than the eide take precedence, the quality of the relation is diminished and the progress of psyche is less complete. According to the Phaedrus, one cannot be a philosopher and also engage in relationships that perform acts which turn one away from loving wisdom.

Rhetoric, in the dialogues, is generally disparaged because it is employed only for persuasive-exploitive purposes without regard to considerations of truth. In the Gorgias and Phaedrus especially this knack and cleverness of communication is contrasted with true rhetoric which knows the truth because it depends upon dialectic, and it is truly able to lead the soul by means of words.

The fact that Socrates' speech is intentionally composed as a response to and operates "in dialogue with" what Agathon has said, this is taken by commentators as a sign that Socrates' contribution is thereby limited in its designs, contextually determined, and cannot be taken to represent Socrates' (or Plato's) own views on the subject. This, however, does not follow. If it did, then, inasmuch as every dialogue is, by
its very nature, also related to the persons who participate in it and is delimited by the context, it would be impossible for any Platonic dialogue to communicate the truth. But is there really any reason to suppose that Socrates' way of responding to Agathon does not in fact lead precisely toward where both Socrates and Plato would want any lover, including themselves, to go? The fact that the personage of Diotima is employed as communicator does not mean that either Socrates or Plato think that the presentation is untrue. Though it may be far from thorough and complete (as is every communicative event), insofar as what is said needs to be said because it gets to the truth about something, that truth is not necessarily undermined by further amplification. The common elements of the Symposium and Phaedrus substantiate the validity of this. The concrete, personal, aspects of conversations are not detrimental to their disclosure of the truth. In a sense, each is a point of access; dialectical clarification and specification can begin at any point. So, the fact that Socrates' speech is addressed specifically to Agathon and the others and derived from Diotima does not in itself mean that what is said is defective.

Wouldn't Agathon like to play the role of Poros in relation to Socrates? Or is it Penia? He, like Alcibiades, fluctuates without unifying or integrating these aspects of himself.

There are indications of several "love pairs" and hence several love-dramas included within the horizon of the banquet. Phaedrus is linked to Eryximachus, Pausanias to Agathon, Aristodemus (and later Alcibiades and others) to Socrates. Only Aristophanes seems not to be erotically disposed to link up with any person. One wonders if perhaps a partial cause of the involuntary disruption of his abdominal diaphragm comes from his own existential status, semi-completed and yet lack of interpersonal yearning--without eide and friends! But, as Apollodorus' preliminary remarks to Symposium emphasize (172b), the interest in the banquet centers on Agathon, Socrates, and Alcibiades. Socrates himself seems, on the surface of things, to be rather promiscuous. He becomes involved with Agathon and then the beautiful-good. Later Alcibiades creates a "love triangle," and finally it is Aristodemos who emerges again and the Athenian populace to whom he returns and continues his previous erotic affairs--all of this itself being retold by a present lover, Apollodorus, to other interested parties.

This is pointed out in a somewhat qualified but nevertheless very insightful way by Helen H. Bacon in "Socrates Crowned," Virginia Quarterly, 1959, 3, pp. 416-430.

As the three waves which threaten the Republic are eros related; the problem of women, reproduction of children, and
philosophers, so the current of the Symposium has eros which can flow into physical-sexual, social-political, and contemplative-noetic channels is being encountered in its prominent interpersonal expression.

18 It is important to note that in the various dialogues, both the early and the later dialogues where Socrates is an active participant, Socrates encounters most of the youthful individuals at some point in the course of the conversation by playfully engaging in humorous erotic references of one sort or another. This interplay reveals a realistic sense of the reign of eros and it also functions as an enticement which works to exploit this common erotic interest for superior erotic pursuits. It is a way of establishing a rapport which is significant although preliminary and, as such, rather deceptive to all but Socrates (and those who are aware of Socrates' techniques and concerns).

19 Taking the Phaedrus and the Symposium together, a rather wide gamut is included: desire, excitement, sweating, heartbeats, panting, passionate flow and exchange of resources, impregnation, birthing, and nourishment.

20 My references to the processes of division and collection do not mean that the Symposium contains explicit mention of this technique. It is not delineated until the time of the Phaedrus. I only maintain that Socrates' expression of Diotima's teaching is formed according to the dialectical structure of Eros. So, her guidance proceeds according to the principles of division and collection. Diotima is continually performing this type of analysis throughout her speech. Clear understanding of the speech and the nature of Eros depends upon understanding the importance of this--what in the Sophist (226c, 227c) is called the art of discrimination.

21 Socrates, in the Phaedrus, says that communication depends upon two principles: "That of perceiving and bringing together in one idea the scattered particulars...by this means a discourse acquires clearness and consistency" (265d).

22 This bears out what was set forth in Chapter I of this work regarding the structure of interpersonal eros.

23 Much that goes on in the Phaedo provides abundant evidence for Socrates' concern over this distinction and its orientation. See, e.g., 98c f, where Socrates talks about the explanation of his sitting in prison.

24 This change certainly is emphasized in the Phaedo and, in another way, the Apology.

25 Søren Kierkegaard, more than anyone else, has emphasized the negativity of Socrates (in his early works) and
Socrates' subjectivity or private inwardness (in his later works).


27 In a sense, one can say that Socrates plays a role analogous to Eryximachus in relation to a human situation similar to Aristophanes' severed beings in that Socrates is a kind of physician who attempts to "stitch together" a proper relation between psyche and the good.


30 Speaking of a "real" and "ideal" self is, I think, an expedient way of formulating this matter, one that is not found directly in the Platonic texts but neither is it an arbitrary formulation that misrepresents Plato's way of treating this issue. This can, however, be expressed in other terms which I have also used in various places as optional expressions, such as more complete or less complete, more or less virtuous, better or worse, psyche. I generally use the term 'self' as equivalent to Plato's term 'psyche' when he uses it in a broad sense. What must not be obscured in this formulation is the element of change, transformation, conversion which carries with it the element of contrast between a prior self and a subsequent self, and the associated elements of choice, responsibility, and freedom to become. Love is, in this sense, the process by means of which the psyche becomes good. The process of relating to the eidetic elements, of realizing the good, is the becoming of the incompletely formed (qualified) psyche to the more completely formed psyche, the real to the ideal self. It is the realization of one's own nature, that which one needs in order to achieve well-being. In the interpersonal relationship, the awareness of the "ideal pole" of the beloved person itself depends upon the lovers relation to the ideal, the Ideas, upon self-knowledge.

31 For the sake of accuracy it should perhaps be said that a lover can love the good of another but never can the lover love the good for the other. Everyone must, in the strict sense, love the good for their own self because only by such self-determination can one appropriate or contact the good for oneself and thus "make the good one's own," for oneself.
"But this ability he will not gain without much diligent toil, which a wise person ought not to undergo simply for the sake of speaking and acting before humans, but that one may be able to speak and do everything, so far as possible, in a manner pleasing to the gods" (Phdr. 273e).

(1) The seriousness of the problem of right love for these individuals is borne out by the consequences that occurred in Athens to the historical individuals that are depicted in this Platonic writing. Agathon becomes associated with the tyrant Archelaus; Alcibiades becomes a destructive religious culprit and traitor; Phaedrus and Eryximachus are exiled.

(2) It is perhaps this "final" creative-existential aspect that Socrates has in mind when, in the concluding scene with Agathon and Aristophanes, he discusses the relation between comedy and tragedy. He states that the same man can have knowledge and skill in composing both. Are we to say that the "higher victory" is achieved by the composition and knowledge that is gained from/by philosophy which can deal with both the comic and tragic aspects but which also transcends each perspective by means of proper love? Socrates is neither comic nor tragic when placed within the real cosmos (of Plato) on the true sojourn of life because the quality of his psyche is not simply determined by phenomenal influences and is not to be judged by comparisons drawn from ordinary values. But he is both comic and tragic to the viewer whose perspective is limited to ordinary considerations due to the incongruities and contradictory combinations so characteristic of Socrates' life and death.

This leniency on Plato's part is the source of exasperation for critics and theologians. Despite Plato's vigorous and consistent striving for an ethical purification in the properties ascribed to the divine beings, he is never much of a demographer of the uranic realm. Although this appears to be theologically perilous, it is exegetically resourceful and put to full advantage by him. Also, Plato applies the term 'divine' to both divine beings such as Zeus, Apollo, etc., and the eidetic elements. Humans may be spoken of as divine in a derivative because representative sense. Ontological priority is given to the Ideas. The divine psyches are, however, eternal and apparently perfect in their own way.

Consider one important definition of piety advanced by Euthyphro:

This then is my opinion, Socrates, that righteousness and piety are that part of justice which has to do with the careful attention (service: therapeia) which ought to be paid to the gods; and the remaining part of justice has to do with the careful attention which ought to be paid to humans." (Euth. 12e)
Unfortunately, Euthyphro is unable to explain what this "careful attention" amounts to.

35 The components of 'Diotima of Mantinea' are: Dio(s)=Zeus, godlike, divine; tima=honor; manti=inspired, prophetic, divination; nike=victory, conquer. Literally this can be construed "Honor of God from Victorious Inspiration." Scholars disagree about the historical authenticity of Diotima. A. E. Taylor, for example, accepts the reference as genuine, while R. G. Bury asserts that she is a fictitious personage. The exact reason why Plato chose to include such a person is not altogether evident. It is clear however that a woman can be an expert in matters of eros. And inasmuch as Eros is a philosopher, a woman is quite capable of expertise in loving wisdom. This provides a corroborating example of what is maintained in the Republic about the possibility of a woman achieving the status of a philosopher ruler. And it means, among other things, that, for Plato, women are capable of the highest love and the highest friendship available to human beings.

36 In this context, piety is related not to punishment or a penal attitude but to human limitation and inadequacy. As such, a person's status should be appraised in the light of this situation.

37 Brentlinger, John A., ed., The Symposium of Plato (Massachusetts, 1970), p. 31. Brentlinger's stimulating introduction emphasizes the Dionysian "cycle of becoming" as the central theme or motif of the Symposium. For further details, see pp. 1-32.

38 The celestial feast and banquet of the souls is referred to explicitly in the Phaedrus, 247b.
CHAPTER IV
LESSONS IN EROS

In his interchanges with Agathon, Socrates has already asserted his superiority in understanding eros and assuming the responsibility of proper speech. Though he does not relinquish his prime concern to deal with Eros in a truthful way, Socrates is now obliged to change his mode of operation in order to be able to perform in proper fashion as an encomiast. He has shown himself to be an astute analyst of the notion of Eros. He is continuing his refusal to let himself, his own eros, and his experience in erotic affairs be used improperly by Agathon or the others. He is refusing to let Eros be employed and praised improperly by the others. When he begins to give his own speech, Socrates settles on a technique of communication that employs two very different roles in order to proceed with this matter: that of a teacher of Eros, in the person of Diotima, and that of a novice in erotic affairs, in the person of younger Socrates. Although Socrates is explicitly put in the role of student, one must not neglect (the third role) that it is Socrates who is giving the speech which sets forth the information required by a learner. It is the contemporaneous Socrates who uses this (apparently genuinely historical) pair of persons for his own purposes. He lets them assume his basic task of communicating truly and effectively. His methodology has a
rationale that is really quite simple and ingenious despite the fact that the configuration of the various operations taking place has rather extensive implications which are complicated to explicate.

There is, for example, an existential element which is made most apparent in the person of the pupil who is faced with the responsibility of learning and the part of the speech which emphasizes the way that love can (and ought) to be formed as a matter of practical experience. There is a metaphysical aspect which is made apparent in the person of the instructor who leads (educatio) the other by specific teachings. Diotima's speech makes definite ontological truth claims and definite claims about the nature and prospects of human experience.

Socrates' decision to use a speech which is composed of a dialogue allows him to function not in just two different roles though. It actually lets him utilize three different roles in one performance. He can speak through the role of a learner, a teacher, and a personality who transcends and stands behind both of these roles. I only suggest at the outset that these three roles, very simply, comprise a representation of the major phases of erotic development that are possible for human existence (cf. p. 11). The student is progressing from common eros to ideocentric eros; the teacher is employing eros in a productive-guiding relationship; Socrates-the-speaker is himself personally in the background awaiting to engage in the philia which can be affected
between good persons who together aspire toward the further realization of the good life. The question is: Is this developmental schema actually borne out by the contents of the speech? Do the dramatic roles which Socrates chooses correlate with and exemplify the pragmatic principles of the speech and the ideological content?

In a very immediate way, the rhetorical tack taken by Socrates allows him, first off, to recover his status of congenial companion at the banquet and lets him realign himself with the ordinary human condition (of being "in the same boat") by confessing that he too had once held a view of Eros similar to that of Agathon and had sought out information from an expert in these matters (201de). He too had encountered a rather traumatic refutation (elegche, 201e) and he thereafter experienced puzzlement and much wonder in the course of his instruction. Because of the relevance of these experiences to the topic of discussion for the evening and the condition of the banqueteers' understanding of these matters, Socrates can thus propose to continue the sequence of the discussion he has advanced so far by giving a speech that recounts in dialogue form the education he received from Diotima. For at that time, Socrates was also obliged to acknowledge that he too did not know what he thought he knew about Eros.

As an autobiographical report, the speech functions as an act of recuperation, a performance of recollection for Socrates himself. It is his way of placing himself in
relation to Eros through a testimony of his previous experiences as an aspiring lover. A retrieval of the past is at once a continuation of it and a renewal of it in the present. It is an act of self-elicitation for him which involves a happy participation in the details of the recounting. It is, in this sense, an expression of his own conversion to and alliance with the ways of Eros. It also operates as an expression of appreciation to Eros for the experiences which have proved to be so positively formative of his own well-being, an act of thanks to both Diotima and Eros.

For the listener, this confessional oration provides insight into the constitution of the person who is himself speaking, into Socrates' own initiation into the "higher mysteries" of eros. In offering his tribute to Eros, Socrates also offers very much of his own personal orientation to Eros. His speech thus has definite existential value for him because what he says is authenticated and supported by his own personal experience. But it also contains metaphysical truth claims because it involves a specification of the fundamental nature of love, beauty, and the human soul. The account he gives includes a comprehensive survey of love objects and it includes truths applicable not only to the erotic psyche of Socrates but to the make-up of all other persons as well. In this way, Socrates can conveniently employ the details of his own paideia to serve the paideia of others. He provides instruction that has been gained by himself in his own quest to understand Eros. His effort does not rely upon abstract
or purely theoretical speculation; it does not depend upon hearsay. In this sense, his speech is a kind of existential testimony based upon experiences of his own personal life. His praise of Eros has a very practical objective inasmuch as it functions to produce better lovers, to give to Eros new, qualitatively superior converts, and to do so as a proper exercise of his own love of the good and beautiful and his respect for the powers of Eros. And the production of better lovers is indirectly the production of better citizens, a better community, and, most immediately, better friends and companions.

Socrates is thus able to utilize the Dionysian setting to have a wise woman priestess proceed (by proxy) through a by no means insignificant initiation session, in effect to initiate the others into truths about the reality of eros by going through with them (and handing on to them) a rather esoteric itinerary containing information about that which they have just displayed their profane and dilletante incompetence.

In another respect, the whole enterprise of the evening for Socrates can be seen as a love contest in relation to objects which present a most formidable challenge. He must take his stand in relation to the other individuals present and in relation to Eros. He must rely upon his own skill in logos and the state or condition of his own psyche in order to relate himself properly to the others and Eros in an authentic and persuasive way. But actually Socrates knowingly
sets to work within three differing horizons: he speaks in relation to his own experiences in/of Eros; he speaks as one among other individuals for each one's benefit; he speaks in relation to the being and reality of Eros. The dimensions of reference comprised in Socrates' speech include the personal, interpersonal, and the transpersonal (or divine). He performs simultaneously before himself, before others, and before Eros, the other uranic beings, and the eidetic realities. Each is an object of concern present to Socrates as he speaks and one should look for his response to each of these objects in the form and content of his performance. He does, therefore, quite surpass the ordinary dimension of the evening supper party, transposing it into an affair of truly daimonic significance, relevant to the most intimate and consequential aspects of the love life of every person present. In the language of the Phaedrus, Socrates begins to expand his psychic wings and soar forth on an inspired journey to the nourishing region of the eide (cf. Phrd. 246f). In the language of the Symposium, Socrates begins to give birth to and propagate a speech that will be of service to the others, the gods, and his own experience and understanding of these matters. His own virtue (arete), his own psyche, is on the line when he speaks. The personification of Eros by the banqueteers makes the nature of Socrates' responsibility especially conspicuous. The quality and effectiveness of Socrates' own psychical, social, and religious make-up are being tested. His performance of the evening is at once a
happy, authentic celebration and a sober, clear-minded effort to praise Love by providing a disclosure of his significance and actual workings. But as such, Socrates' speech also makes apparent that all of the other persons' psychical make-up are also on the line and being judged in the same way as that of Socrates. Everyone's existential situation is, in this respect, equivalent. And though Socrates speaks as the skilled one in matters of eros, his art of communication brings with it the highest responsibility.

In this consequential context, the speech also has the virtue of functioning as a rite of purification (katharsis) the goal of which is to save and liberate lost and confused souls from their own state of bad loving. Socrates does not exclude his valuable information from the others or introduce it to berate them. He attempts to guide by relying upon the surety and stern rigor provided by this extraordinary lady who is quite capable of exposing the deficient nature of any erotic agent. In a sense, Socrates seems only too happy to let the substance of his speech be presented in an indirect form. Although this does not lessen his responsibility for it, it does put him in a position to be able to explore and advance its content further should such an occasion arise at a later time. Besides, presenting it as instruction from a strange, wise, mantic person encourages the listeners to attend to the lessons and not be distracted by (ad hominem) personal considerations relating to Socrates himself that might lessen the impact of the substance of what is presented.
Socrates provides true information and yet his instruction can be presented in an indirect fashion because he relies not upon his own authority or reputation but upon the content of the speech itself. As he says to Agathon, "You can without difficulty contradict Socrates, but you cannot dispute the truth" (201c).

If one views Socrates' behavior here as an expression of proper erotic activity and an illustration of distinct phases of erotic expressions, two different forms of erotic life become prominent right from the outset of his speech: (1) eros is displayed as an aspiration of an individual, a quest or striving of a self, for the beautiful and good things that will produce happiness; (2) eros is displayed as a guiding, instructing, aiding of another individual in the process of this aspiration. The former receives major emphasis in the speech itself where Socrates-the-pupil is engaged in the personal task of learning how and what to acquire in order to obtain the happiness which happens to be the common goal of every human life. The latter form of eros is assumed in the structure of the speech, it is also included in the contents of the speech, where the developing lover himself provides guidance to a beloved, but it is straightforwardly exemplified in Socrates' behavior as the actual speaker of the speech. This type of eros is interpersonal and dialogical, it is benevolently elitist in intent and structure, and is itself dependent upon (pre-supposes as a required condition) success by the speaker in the quest of eros-as-aspiration.
Considering these basic features, Socrates' speech-event in the Symposium is a rather complex package. One finds that Socrates is enacting the route of aspiration, engaged in actually progressing along the way of experience and understanding of eros available for any lover who (like himself) is willing and able to learn. Dramatically he is in the role of the student or novice who is the intended "victim" of the encounter and personal involvement. Yet he is also doing what Diotima is doing, i.e., Socrates is attempting to guide the erotic agent (Agathon and the others) along the route itself by giving the speech that he does, with Diotima as his own proxy. He not only praises and describes Eros in a true and appropriate fashion, he does so in a critical, convicting, challenging, encouraging manner by refusing to relinquish the pedagogical context. Socrates the speaker (who is also Socrates the guide) exhibits wise strategy because his reliance here naturally mobilizes the dynamics characteristic of a teacher-learner situation and permits the kind of procedural advance which sets out from an ordinary, elementary, undeveloped state in the affairs of personal eros and progresses in a persuasive and very deliberate fashion toward the most complete realization of erotic potentialities for an individual. This orientation allows the listener to use Socrates-the-pupil as a model, to duplicate that development for himself by learning to identify with the progression contained in the instruction (the conceptual-eidetic dimension) and to apply the information gained to his own condition.
wherever appropriate (the existential dimension). Hence, Socrates' speech encourages individual participation in the dialectical education provided and it challenges the listener to evaluate and judge himself in terms of the content of the instruction itself. Both the conceptual-eidetic (metaphysical) as well as the personal-existential (ethical) dimension are crucial to the benefits available through the instruction of Diotima-Socrates. Because cognitive discernment and personal transformation are both requisite to the successful enterprise of love, one must come to understand what is lovable and prepare oneself to love these objects in an effective way.

In light of these considerations, Socrates' communicative effort at the banquet seems to be much more positive and instructive than the description of his maieutic skills which is given in the Theaetetus. There he speaks of practicing his art of midwifery on the psyches of men, encouraging begetting, arousing pangs of labor, executing the timely act of cutting the cord, and testing the resulting products. But Socrates claims that he himself is not productive of wisdom.

...the reproach which is often made against me, that I ask questions of others but do not give answer to anything because I myself have no wisdom, is a true charge. The cause of (or reason for) this is that (the) god compells me to be a midwife but does not allow me to give birth. I am myself not very wise about anything nor has any invention ever been born to me as an offspring of my psyche. But those who come to be with me and associate with me, although at first they may appear very ignorant, they advance in the togetherness, and all of them to whom (the) god is gracious make wonderful progress, according to their own opinion as well as others. It is clear that they have learned nothing from me but have discovered in themselves and given birth to many beautiful things. But the god and myself are the cause of the delivery. (Thet. 150cd)
As a midwife (and assistant to the god), then, Socrates usually asks questions and examines answers. It is clear, from the *Theaetetus*, *Meno*, and elsewhere, that his elenctic and hypothesizing procedure can be very effective in guiding the responding agent. It is not automatically negative and critical but functions more like intentional "pre-natal" care at the beginning and then, after the person does execute some kind of "birthing," Socrates turns to test and evaluate this product. The examination is again used as a form of "pre-natal" conditioning for further birthing. But in the *Symposium* Socrates himself is obliged to give birth to a speech, one which can be, if his claims earlier-on are genuine, based upon his own knowledge of the truth of eros. Yet, since Socrates is not a teacher, he finds himself in a real pickle of a situation. Can there be such a thing as a maieutic teacher or a maieutic teaching? This certainly seems impossible inasmuch as a midwife is not the one who is to be productive. How does Socrates abide by the maieutic principle and yet generate a product for the educational benefit of others?

Socrates is committed to the position that he cannot teach if by 'teaching' one means the dispensing of information the reception and remembrance of which would result in the person knowing or being wise about what was conveyed. He cannot make another person wise because another can become wise only by that person himself producing from himself and his own individual discernment the articulate products that
show themselves to be true and which can be defended and supported by the begetter in spontaneous conversation (cf. Phdr. 276a; 278c). This, of course, means that teaching is an impossible occupation. But because so many people are being taught by so many teachers—which Socrates realizes is a deception and fraud—he can only maintain his own and another's integrity by persistently maintaining that he is not a teacher and that each person must consult themselves about that which he discusses. The "serious pursuit" which underlies all communication, whether oral or written, is the determination of knowledge (episteme) and the formulation of an account (logos) "written in the psyche" of the individual (cf. Phdr. 276a). Socrates resolutely maintains that he has nothing to do with these affairs in relation to others because in fact he, as with everyone else except oneself, does not. Conception is an intrapsychic occurrence for every person. Socrates can only encourage the opportunity for the other to come to terms with this crucial process for himself and, thereafter, aid in the evaluation of that which is produced.

So, one way to view Socrates' behavior in the Symposium is to see him abiding by the maieutic example by producing for the others not his own product but someone else's "baby," i.e., Diotima's ideas which he himself has found to be correct. What he gives is not information to be memorized but a conversation to "take into oneself" (cf. Th. 189e; Sph. 263e) and use to be self-productive of what the psyche desires to become. One can then even see that Socrates is utilizing
in the context of the *Theaetetus* the model of midwifery in order to suit his own end in that particular dialogue by simply trying to elicit ideas from Theaetetus and then to examine whatever Theaetetus thinks is true. So Socrates even employs the metaphor of maieusis as a device to stimulate genuine and useful learning. In any case, it can be seen that Socrates is functioning in all such relationships with an intent to be a proper erotic personality, a good lover, either as a true midwife of the soul, or as a pragmatically operating philosopher who assumes the role of midwife, gadfly, physician of the soul (et al.). Socrates assumes each of these roles (personas, masks) because he exists as an erotic agent who works as a mediator. And this is, as will be seen, very much in line with the way that Diotima describes the activity of eros. The object in these cases involves a "birthing" on the basis of individual psychical productivity, while being aided in the process through the medium of language by one who has experience in such matters. So Socrates' indirect procedure (in using Diotima) can be seen as a maneuver which would allow him to distance himself from the positivity of the speech itself. This in turn aims at generating a kind of independent heuristic relationship and response on the part of the listener to what is said in the speech itself. As such, the speech itself would function to induce productivity and begetting in the other. It would really be an obstetric device to provoke and inspire the listeners. Teaching cannot be the primary objective of
Socrates' speech. It should be viewed as a tool (i) to effect propagation in the other to whom it is addressed and (ii) to aid in the evaluation of that which is produced. If this is correct, then Socrates will have used a technique which is at once productive (positive and enriching) and also maieutic (negative and individuating). He will have accomplished what amounts to a maieutic instruction insofar as what he produces has as its end the fruition and begetting of the other individual.

With these considerations in mind, one can observe that the kind of eros which expresses itself in an interpersonal guiding and educative relationship includes at least two quite different aspects. In one part there is the "curriculum" of eros, the route of advancement by way of which the individual erotic agent may best exercise his own aspirations. Though the lover-guide may go alongside and in some sense accompany the beloved in this itinerary, he can really only do so effectively by utilizing the role of a mediator, employing skillful articulation, as an agent concerned with the progressive welfare of the other. In this interpersonal erotic relationship, some type of indirect-maieutic activity is the appropriate expression of a lover for his/her beloved. It is the way to advance the effective operation of eros for both lover and beloved because it upgrades the relationship by being productive of better erotic agents individually. This phase seems to be the condition required for relationships of friendship insofar as equal regard is supposed by
reciprocal or mutual relationships devoted to the realization of true happiness. At any rate, some type of mediating maieutic relationship would definitely be required in a comprehensive appraisal of erotic interrelationships if persons who differ in their way of understanding and existing as lovers are ever to become significantly related. Plato includes love relations between unequal and qualitatively different lovers by showing that one legitimate operation of love is the exercise of a love which upgrades, edifies, arouses, and benefits the beloved person. Right love between unequal lovers properly takes the form of educative and maieutic love where the lover attempts to provide guidance for the beloved by participating in the production of a good lover by having the beloved himself become productive and active in relation to the good.

As an act of communication, the mediation of love must come to include a proficient utilization of (i) the art of rhetoric by the lover. It involves the technique of getting the other to change, shift over, bring himself into another place, to be led in a different direction (meta 
bebazein). And this rhetorical-maieutic involvement must itself rely upon (ii) the art of dialectic in order to know where to lead, in order that the beloved will himself come to be inspired and have himself empowered by good and beauty itself in its own eidetic reality. And in order to relate effectively to the actuality of the other, the lover must also be proficient in (iii) the art of "psychology" in order to know how
and when to lead that particular other (psychagogia), so that "by planting and sowing in a receptive psyche intelligent words" (Phdr. 276e) the beloved will himself be encouraged to activate his own eros in a better way. Subsequent maieutic-elenctic activity would then be the appropriate follow-up procedure. Such tendance would then begin to function as a condition and means for the parity which can result in the development of relationships of true mutual advance and dialogical collaboration, the kind of equal regard (philia) which is based upon a corresponding and reciprocal state of understanding and aspiration in both individuals. I suggest that Plato would have us see that the rather seductive art of maieutics is the path not only to proper love and self-fulfillment but to real friendship (friendship in the good-beautiful) as well. And, can we not say that, as the contemporary Socrates was himself in the offing of the banquet, so also was Plato ready and awaiting behind his own maieutic products?

Having said these things, however, it is important to note the dissimilarity in the composition of the two forms of eros exemplified in Socrates' speech. Aspiring eros is acquisitive and meant to be of benefit to the erotic agent. The direction of the agent's eros is turned away from the immediate common sense-perception goals of erotic involvement onto other and better kinds of objects. It is transmuted from a somatic to a psychic orientation in the lover's search for gratification. The aspirant's eros begins to activate itself
in new ways and to participate in different kinds of relationships as a result of the alteration appropriate to the aspiration characteristic of common eros. Guiding eros, in contrast, employs its own powers to be a formative force for the true, eventual gratification of the beloved. The guide endeavors not only to fashion the beloved person into a properly composed, independent, active erotic agent and lover, the guide also works to turn the aspirations of the other agent away from himself and all other selves toward those objects which will effectively meet the underlying needs of the aspirant. The erotic guide, in effect, provides a pattern or duplicate of his own progression in eros for the benefit of the aspirant. He (she) proceeds to attempt to lead the other through the progressive reorientations required for psychic and epistemic development and achievement. In each of these two forms of eros, direct personal reciprocity is excluded from the interpersonal relationship. The erotic relationship between aspirant and guide is necessarily asymmetrical and lacking in mutuality and genuine friendship. The guide serves the other who is in need. His love is a generous love. The aspirant receives the services of the other and utilizes these for his own personal benefit.

One thing that is not clear at this point is how an aspiring erotic agent ever allows himself to become a guiding erotic agent. Why does the lover become a sponsor for the beloved, working to change this beloved into an independent lover of objects other than himself? Does not a guide, in
effect, have to suspend his own erotic project, put it in abeyance and devote himself to the project of another in order to teach the other how to love? Is there something in the transforming, developmental process required of right love that somehow alters the characteristics of aspiring love when the aspirant has himself achieved success in the quest for the really lovable things that are available to human experience? The generosity, charity, and goodwill of the erotic guide all seem to be at odds with the aspiring eros which he encourages and helps to direct. To say the least, his love is unusual and suspicious from the perspective of erotic aspiration. Further clarification about the end product and goal of acquisitive eros and the end product and goal of guiding eros must be obtained. Further attention to the texts that deal with the nature of erotic development must be relied upon to provide the information required to explain the dynamics of this unusual kind of interpersonal erotic relationship which includes within itself these two very different forms of eros.  

I must say, at this point, that I do not mean to belabor, overstate, or overestimate these various interpersonal factors and forces of Plato's work. But they do deserve clarification because they reveal, on the level of structure and dramatic action, details about the nature of erotic demeanor correlated to the descriptive details about erotic development elaborated in the speech, and to that extent reveal the reflexive,
sophisticated richness of Plato's communicative effort. The delicate strands that nevertheless appear to be laid out so casually are like a web of intrigue which, if one can follow them, result in the progressive discovery of unrealized unity in the project as a whole. If one views the speech itself as a gift of love presented by Socrates to Agathon (and, derivatively, to the other banqueteers, as well as the anonymous audiences of Apollodorus and Plato), then the interpersonal significance of the speech receives its just recognition. For this very deed of the speech itself raises the question which the deed itself answers: What better way could one relate to another, what better thing could one confer upon another person, than a gift which can aid in the overall betterment of the other? Such a bestowal would offer the opportunity for the other to learn, to grow, to relate more significantly to themselves, to the beauty and goodness of reality, to others, to the content and quality of their future relationships, and thus to their own well-being, excellence, and happiness. The speech as a deed (and a gift) reflexively requires one to ask: Does this kind of relationship constitute the essential intention and value of interpersonal eros. To this question, the content of the speech unequivocally replies in the affirmative.

The instruction given in Socrates' speech is linked together by a series of eight main questions, some of which (the first five) are raised by Socrates but all of which are not only expected by Diotima, they are really answered by her
as well. Three main topics (Parts A-C below: cf. 201e) take precedence from the outset, however, and these determine the scope of the considerations throughout the series of questions. The following list indicates the major sections of the speech.

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The brief exposition of these sections now to be given will attempt to abide by the guidance contained in the dialogue between Diotima and Socrates. I do not intend to dispell the obscurity necessary to proper and effective myth (because it speaks of the unspeakable), but a clarification of concepts and distinctions proper to Eros is a hermeneutical necessity. My interpretive remarks do not by any means pretend to be a thorough commentary on the speech but they are a concentrated gathering together of elements which
Socrates-the-novice encounters in his instruction that bear upon the issue of interpersonal eros. It is a way of attending to the way of Socrates' development, a way of being guided by the account that he gives, a way of following after Eros as he exists "in the between," a way of following Diotima from the mythical-daimonic realm to the earthly (demotic and somatic) realm and on to the philosophical-eidetic realm, a way of surveying the soul and its major intentional formations as an erotic entity. Socrates' speech allows one to learn not only about the nature of love, about what to love and how to love it, it also makes evident the value of such loving.

A. What is Eros?

1. The Metaxy (metaxy): 201e-202e

It was not unusual for a Greek of Socrates' time to think and talk of Eros as a god. Socrates himself considered Eros to be a great god (megas theos). Diotima, though, immediately refutes this opinion by showing that Eros is no god at all. By comparing the two beings, Eros and theos, in terms of their respective characteristics or properties, the dissimilarity and incompatibility between them becomes obvious.

a. All gods are happy and beautiful (noble, excellent).
b. Those beings who are happy possess good and beautiful things.
c. Eros does not possess good and beautiful things.
d. Eros is neither happy, beautiful, nor good.
e. Therefore, Eros is not a god because the characteristics of divine existence do not apply to Eros.
Eros desires the ideal things that would make him divine and fulfilled, but he lacks them. Eros is excluded from the realm or category of the divine by virtue of the fact that he is in his very nature deficient, imperfect, incomplete. Eros is, therefore, a being in need (endees). Because of his inherent, constitutional lack, Eros desires (epithymei). He desires to possess (kekemenous) those objects, the beautiful and the good, that will eventuate in his being happy (eudaimonia).

The basic intentional components of Eros are set forth immediately by Diotima, and, as is evident from Chapter III (page 144) above, this is a rather straightforward repetition of what Socrates has already established with Agathon. Diotima elaborates further, however. Although Eros is not divine nor ideal, it does not follow that Eros is the opposite of these. It is important to identify clearly the "location" and actual composition of Eros. Because Eros is neither of these contrary determinations, it must be admitted that Eros is something between (ti metaxy) these opposites. He is a being between, and the following set of properties are mentioned by Diotima as constituting the limiting determinants composing the reality of the cosmos of Eros:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
god & + & human \\
beautiful & + & ugly \\
good & + & bad \\
wise & + & unlearned \\
knowledgeable & + & ignorant \\
happy & + & unhappy \\
without need & + & needy \\
\end{array}
\]
In a strict sense, Eros is never simply identified nor reduced to one or the other of these opposites. One set of properties composes the positive or plenum factors; the other set composes the negative factors or factors of relative privation. According to Diotima, though, Eros does exhibit and have a limited share in and access to both sets of opposites. His status and constitution is not absolutely neutral but rather involves a combination or mixture of both factors (cf. section 3. below), and this clearly includes the potentiality of associating more closely with one set than with the other. But apparently the metaxy predicament is not itself alterable in the sense of being a condition that can be transcended, completely resolved, or relinquished. Eros is always in the metaxy, existing always in terms of a relationship.

Also comprised in the constitution of Eros is his orientation toward fulfillment. This means that Eros is by nature directed toward goodness, beauty, wisdom, and immortality. He operates in relationship to all those objects that manifest superiority in their quality or state of being. Eros has thereby a natural normative and teleological orientation in his way of existing. Though Eros is not himself inherently (by nature) good, beautiful, wise, or immortal, and can, apparently, become bad or shameful in his way, Eros naturally desires the good-beautiful elements because these
are the things that bring happiness and completion to his condition. But Eros' success will apparently never be such as to remove the separation between himself and the ideals in that his relationship to them will never fuse into a unification with the ideal realities. As such, Eros never becomes one with the ideal. The fulfillment of Love must come about by means of a relationship which secures and abides by the independence of both entities.  

Identifying Eros as having its existence in the between of this onto-axiological structure of reality is a general determination of the nature of his being which will be maintained throughout Diotima's account. The remainder can be read as a specification of this essential characterization. In terms of conceptual structure, Diotima is beginning to elaborate a basic metaphysical scheme in terms of which everything that can be said about Eros will find its place. In one sense, Diotima is beginning at the "top of the tree" of conceptual specification. Further diagnostic divisions and subdivisions ("branches," "joints") will be distinguished as she proceeds, and the resulting structural interconnections will make up a coherent and hierarchically ordered account so that a complete picture of Eros will develop which will constitute a comprehensive depiction of the nature of Eros--the kind of account that surely achieves the ideal of good instruction with respect to content, organization, and methodological astuteness. As Socrates says in the Phaedrus,
...unless a person takes account of the nature of his listeners and is able to divide things by classes (eide) and to comprehend particulars under a single, general idea, he will never attain the success that is possible for a human in the art of communicating. But this ability cannot be gained without considerable diligence. (Phdr. 273de)

Identifying Eros as an intermediate being also provides an explanation of his unique characteristics, i.e., why he is needful and desirous. He is so because he is in a situation and condition where he does not possess what he needs. Eros is not a complete or self-sufficient being. But neither is he an utterly imperfect, insufficient, or helplessly dependent being. Eros is active and he is determined by the desire to possess what is needed. This way of understanding Eros also enables one to realize the importance of the objects that are desired by Eros. One cannot understand Eros without being able to determine those objects which are capable of meeting the needs of Eros' aspirations. Love's success in achieving fulfillment depends upon his success in identifying the objects that are truly lovable and good for his own consummation as Eros.

Socrates presses Diotima to explain more about the nature of this intermediate being. "What then can love be, Diotima?" Diotima now explicitly denominates this being of the metaxy: Eros is "A great daimon (or spirit: Daimon megas), Socrates. For all (or, for the whole: pan) of the daimonic is intermediate between the immortal and the mortal" (202e). The metaxy, considered in terms of individual beings, is the place where daimons exist. Eros himself is a great daimon-
spirit. This mytho-poetic identification emphasizes the cosmic scope and grandeur of Diotima's conception of Eros. Neither an earthly nor a completely divine being, the daimon Eros is a being who exists between these two dimensions of reality. But besides being his cosmic location, the metaxy is also characteristic of Eros' own personal existential condition. He is composed in such a way as to be between mortality and immortality (et al.), not outside the bounds of either of these determinations. This means that Eros is a very unique duplex being, having within the scope of his own experience and influence the divine-heavenly sphere and the human-earthly sphere of things.

2. The Power of Eros: 202e-203a

"What power (function, capacity: dynamis) does Eros possess?" asks Socrates. Being midway (en meso) between the mortal and the immortal, says Diotima, Eros "helps to fulfill ("bridge the gap," fill up, supplement: sumplroi) both domains so that the whole (everything: pan) will be united with itself" (202e). The cosmos is, accordingly, given responsive orderliness through Eros. He is clearly a worker against the forces of separation, strife, disorder, conflict, and estrangement. This function Eros performs by hermeneutical (hermeneuon, 202e) activity. He interprets, conveys, transports, communicates human affairs to the gods (requests, entreaties, prayers, sacred rites, etc.) and divine affairs to humans (injunctions, recompense, rewards, etc.). Eros
enables each realm to respond effectively to the other. Considered as areas of Eros' personal responsibility, his own self-mastery as a duplex being depends upon his sensitivity to both of these dimensions of his metaxy condition.

As a distinct cosmic being, Eros is not merely a connecting link between the earthly and the heavenly, he is specifically set to serve as a mediator who provides assistance by performing the task of joining or binding together (syndedes-thai) the two realms into a whole. It is Love who makes it possible for each realm to maintain contact with the other. Eros is the means of such interrelationship, the operant factor of such intercourse and interchange. He is, in effect, an agent responsible for bringing about order in the world and for contributing to things the arrangement of affairs which compose the whole into the true cosmos as against disorder, separation, or chaos. And inasmuch as the kosmos is made a more elegant, harmonious, and ideal order through the effort of Eros, the performance of his own essential vocation actually functions to produce a more lovely because more beautiful world. His role is, therefore, by no means insignificant.

This section of Diotima's instruction seems to be formulated quite directly in terms of a mythical-traditional view of the cosmos. There is a fundamental dualist view of reality composed of the heavenly-divine sphere and the earthly-human sphere. Between these two spheres Eros is placed as an active daimon-spirit. He is the one who assumes
responsibility for the relationship between the two inherently separate domains. His active role in commuting back and forth from one sphere to the other is very important because, according to Diotima, the divine§ does not have direct intercourse (mix, mingle: mignytaï, also a sexual term) with humans (203a). As a result of this, it is the daimonic or spiritual reality of Eros who serves as the means of all intimacy (homilia) and communication (dialektos) between the two realms. Hence, Eros is involved in essential cosmological functions that have the most direct and personal consequences for every individual human. Love is the agency by which a person may establish an active, positive, enhancing relationship with the divine. By means of Love a person is able to respond and be responsible to the divine. One can participate actively in the unification of reality with itself by acting according to the guidance of Eros and one can contribute thereby to the betterment of both oneself as well as the more general order of all things.

According to Diotima, the person who becomes skillful and wise (sophos) in these matters becomes a daimonic man (daimonias aner). Aside from the somewhat ironic employment of the masculine gender here by a woman who obviously qualifies as being wise in these affairs, the concept of a daimonic man seems, on the basis of what has just been asserted about the divine, the daimonic, and the human, to be a categorical anomaly, a conceptual misfit. Cosmologically (or ontologically) the three realms have been presented so far as being
discrete and the three types of beings one would expect to be distinct and impossible to combine or coalesce. So the concept of a daimonic-erotic person is somewhat confounding at this point because it threatens to obscure the distinction between the powers of a person and the powers of Eros. One wonders: Is a person who loves in a skillful way somehow performing the job of Eros by effecting a relationship to the divine, good, beautiful? Does Eros become, in such a case, an immanent human power, incorporated into an individual as part of a person's capacity, so that as an erotic agent this individual becomes himself an independent daimonic-erotic agent? Is Eros simply a human potentiality? Or, perhaps more pointedly, can a person become an incarnation of Eros?

In the light of what is said about philosophers in 204ab (cf. section 4. below), this approach cannot be completely dismissed. But a less extreme interpretation seems to be closer at hand. Diotima appears to be introducing a distinction that sets forth a hierarchy of beings in terms of an identification of the respective powers of individual beings. There are the gods who do not mix with humans, the humans, and there is Eros who transports himself between these two. Diotima simply distinguishes between two levels of human sophistication with respect to daimonic-divine matters. Some individuals become wise in activities that relate to the daimonic, activities such as divination and religious practices that involve praying, sacrificing, mystery rites, etc. (202e-203a). Any such person may be spoken of as being
wise in the ways of the daimonic, a "spiritual man." Individuals who become skilled in other vocations such as some technical job or trade (peri technos e cheirourgias), these are called, says Diotima, common (vulgar, base, mechanical: banausos) workmen. Their skill in "handcraft" type of enterprises makes them experts in activities other than that which concerns the relation between mortals and immortals. Hence, there is a differentiation of beings into four levels or types: gods, daimons, spiritual persons, and common persons. And as Eros is a reconciling element between men and gods, one would surmise that "daimonic persons" (such as Diotima) would likewise utilize themselves as reconcilers at least between Eros and other individuals less skilled in realizing these relationships. But it is nowhere suggested that any person could ever replace Eros. Everyone is made rather to depend upon Love for their continued association with and possible benefits derived from the divine.

Given this structural organization, the question arises: Does Eros, as a means or mediator and a being between, function as a limit to human power and to a person's capacity to relate in some more direct way to the divine? Since it seems to be the case that human beings would never be able to establish a relation to the divine if they were reduced to their own earthly powers, the grace and propitious service supplied by Eros reveals itself to be a truly wonderful boon for all persons. Through the mode of Love, humans would then
be able to achieve their fulfillment inasmuch as Eros promotes the communication whereby the whole becomes bound together with itself. There does not seem to be any reason why this wholeness and integration cannot be the work of Eros performed specifically in relation to individuals as well as the collective totality. The mediative powers of Eros would thus be applicable to personal microcosmic wholeness as well as to macrocosmic wholeness because the idea of unified integration would entail both concerns. And responsibility for affecting this relationship, says Diotima, is the primary power and function of Eros.

What has not been clearly settled, however, is how, specifically, this power of Eros helps to meet the needs of Eros. How does the work of being a messenger and mediator make this daimon eu-daimonic, i.e., happy? Two separate but interrelated answers are suggested. First, the "filling together" and "binding up" of the whole to itself (202e) may be the condition required for Eros' own fulfillment. The orderly and purposeful arrangement of the cosmos, as a complex and diverse organic unit, might just qualify as that which enables Love to satisfy its own needs through the maintenance of a proper and positive relation to the goodness and beauty which he as well as humans desire. Macrocosmic wholeness and unity produced by the right relation to the divine realities would thus constitute the eudaimonia of Eros.

Secondly, it might be the case that the needs of Eros are met through the actual enterprise of establishing the
proper metaxy, i.e., by high-spirited Love being able to communicate and in this way make accessible the good and the beautiful throughout all parts of the cosmos, through the work of establishing wholeness from the standpoint of micro-cosmic mediation and redemption. Eros' good is thereby identified as the dynamic mediation of the good to every individual, the stirring delivery of the divine into the hearts and minds of persons to bring about a collective erotic cohesion, a true community of friends who are bound together by an individualized yet common Eros. As a daimon, Love's good would then be achieved by performing the functions appropriate to his daimonic-spiritual existence, especially involving the actual transacting of good between the two spheres by bringing the earthly into accord with the divine. The striving of Eros thus includes the rectification of that part of reality (or being) which is in need of the good.

The function of Eros which is productive of his well-being would thus be (i) the effectuation of the state of unified order and wholeness for the cosmos, to be achieved especially (ii) through the activity of communicating the good and the beautiful to all persons. Accordingly, Eros is the means for human eudaimonia because love would be the state and activity by which the good comes to be for man. For humans, the development of skill (sophos) in the appropriation of the disclosures brought by Love and the realization of relationships sought by Love demands a kind of proficiency that is beyond the methods and achievements
possible by mundane contrivance, empirical techniques, and manipulative feats of human engineering. Man's own rectification is to be achieved through the mediating power of Love as Love bears the good and binds the human to the divine in a way appropriate to each. By means of Love a person can be brought into contact with those (good, wise, immortal, beautiful) realities that are productive of the happiness which comes only as a result of personal fulfillment and excellence of self. Love and personal virtue would thus seem to be necessarily connected.

If these remarks are correct, their tenuousness needs to be remedied by the further instruction given by Diotima.

3. The Parentage and Birth of Eros: 203a-e

The question concerning the origin of this being Eros is a very logical one within the context of a mythological view of the world. It is appropos because heritage in such stories provides information which indicates significant factors about the constitution of the being in question. Eros himself is to be thought of as part of the created order of things, a genetically determined being, one whose main characteristics are derived from the identity of his parents. Further clarification about the nature of Eros can be achieved, therefore, if one can learn about the "genetic essence" of Eros by identifying the historical sources and circumstances of his origination (genesis).
Diotima's tale about this does not agree with any of the mythological references made by the other speakers at the banquet. The story also presents the coming-to-be of Eros in what appears to be a quite unsavory moral light inasmuch as the circumstance of his conception seems to be not only uninspiring but positively debased. The accomplishment of his birth is the result of a deceitful and exploitive relationship which takes place in a situation of drunkenness and seduction.

When Aphrodite was born, the gods made a great feast. Among the group was Poros (resource, plenty, contrivance, means) the son of Metis (invention, cunning, crafty, wise). When they had dined, Penia (poverty, need) came along begging since there was a feast going on and good cheer, and she hung about there at the doors. Meanwhile Poros, having gotten rather drunk from nectar—for there was no wine (discovered) then—went out into the garden of Zeus, and there, overcome with heaviness, fell asleep. So Penia schemed (epibouleuousa), being herself without resource (thinking to alleviate her poor (aporian) condition), and she devised to create from Poros (poiesasthai ek tou porou) a child, lay down with him and conceived Eros.

Since Eros was begotten on the day of Aphrodite's birth and since moreover he has an innate passion concerned with the beautiful (hama physei erastes on peri to kalon), with Aphrodite's being so beautiful, Eros became the follower and servant (akolouthos kai therapon) of Aphrodite. (203bc)

Love is a child whose coming into existence is an effect of the influence that the generation of Aphrodite has in the lives of two very different individual beings. The date of their births is synchronized in the sense that the birth of Eros is made possible by the birth of Aphrodite. Her own birth furnishes the appropriate occasion (coincidence) which leads to the birth of Eros.
The actual mechanics of this situation reveals the kind of forthright behavior that was so natural (as the stories go) to the Greek gods. The individual beings involved and the relationships that occur in Diotima's account give no hint of a moral perspective or moral sensitivity. The description portrays what amounts to a kind of "physics" of complex special entities, where the forces and factors of the states and conditions of these particular beings come together in such-and-such a situation, in such-and-such a way, to result in...and so on. Need (Penia) is knowingly in need and Resource (Poros) is resourceful. They both exist as independent, qualitatively distinct realities. Things being what they are, when given the opportunity, Need naturally seeks fulfillment, firstly, by coming to the banquet and, secondly, by devising a plan to achieve her goal by utilizing a satiated being who is conveniently disposed, at hand, and naturally able to supply what is needed. The design of Poverty is thus consummated and she is able to redeem her condition by bringing to birth Eros. Now she has Love as the result of her cohabitation with Resource. The tale appears to be rendered amoral and innocent by virtue of its naturally determined pragmatics. Penia actively and quite naturally attempts to rectify her destitute condition; Poros passively succumbs and easily yields to her suit.

In a sense, the appropriate remedy to both Poverty's lack and Resource's surfeit is Eros. They each get what they really deserve. By means of their intercourse, each of
them has initiated into reality a product, and this product is a being (who is a process of becoming) called Eros. In terms of historical continuity, they each will now have their own way of becoming in time by way of Eros. For Eros is what they have made of and for themselves historically and progenitively. In the dynamics of the story, Eros is the result of a kind of naturalistic process of justice which secures a better order for things. The conditions and states of affairs of living beings happened to involve needs and desires of individuals. The endeavor to satisfy needs gives birth to aspiration. Eros thus comes to be as a way of redeeming the lack of beauty and goodness prevailing in an individual's life. And, as Plato would have it, the progression of the tale itself becomes more inherently axiological by virtue of the actualization of Eros. This begins to become evident in the two main traits that characterize Eros: (1) he follows after and serves Aphrodite; (2) he is a rather contraplex product as a consequence of the contrary or opposite characteristics contributed to his being by his progenitors.

(1) Three aspects of the relation between Eros and Aphrodite are suggested. (a) The pleasure and exhilaration coming from the initial realizations of sensible or sensory beauty, i.e., "because of the birth of Aphrodite," brings together two beings who combine the qualities of resource and need. As a result of their conjuncture, they give birth to a new being, Eros. The advent of erotic desire for
sensory or physical beauty is the pre-condition for the birth of distinctive erotic desires which would thereafter follow and serve the presentiment of beauty in the person of Aphrodite (i) by stimulating profoundly a beholder of beauty with the power of beauty and yet (ii) by also working to overcome the usurpation of the power of the beauty of sensuality (or the sensuous) in the beholder by refining these desires into erotic aspirations that will more effectively allow the realization and gratification of a lover's true and whole condition from its needful and initial condition of raw ingenuity (as resourceful desire).

(b) When beauty comes, when it presents itself, then Eros is in the offing and drawing near, ready to be conceived. The development or progression of this desirous condition, this Eros, its primal drawing and thrust, is toward beauty. Aphrodite is goddess of love because she is a stunning concrete manifestation of beauty. She invites and initiates loving because of her attractiveness. But her virtue is her limitation. She is beauty manifested, and this resolves itself into: she is the kind of beauty to be experienced for the lover's pleasure. The lover desires to possess for himself this sacred, wonderful beauty, to make lovely Aphrodite his own. Aphrodite thereby inevitably becomes the goddess of sensual pleasure and her beauty is used to gratify the passions that are in fact never capable of being satisfied in the way offered by the Aphrodite. Hence, Aphrodite's beauty becomes prostituted to the more base, immediate, concrete,
ephemeral form of beauty consummation and she lends herself to innumerable affairs whose pleasures benefit the lovers in short-term, inadequate ways that inevitably prevent the realization of the true beauty that every lover really needs and which Aphrodite might herself represent as her own transcendent ideality. But, as it happens, Aphrodite-love is really very deceptive precisely because there is a disparity between what she offers and what she actually confers. And this makes manifest the ambivalence contained in the being of Aphrodite: a non-sensory Aphrodite seems to be impossible. But, on the other hand, a sensory Aphrodite is not a gratifying, fulfilling form of loving (or love object), even for the gods. She cannot therefore really be what she is supposed to be; she is desirous, compelling, and seductive, but she is inherently incomplete and unfulfilling. Aphrodite-love will never meet the true needs of an individual without the vital help of Eros. Aphrodite's stunning success is in her appearance. She always operates, however, in the same way, continuing her wiles by offering new prospects of the same pleasures to fulfill the love that she motivates. It is really Eros who must save Aphrodite-love by allowing the lover to transcend the dimension of love offered by Aphrodite, and to become aware of that which is responsible for the power of Aphrodite.

This, however, is a difficult transition for a lover to make because, strictly speaking, Eros does not love Aphrodite. To translate this point with the help of atrocious grammar
but perhaps more obvious distinctness: Eros does not **aphrodisia** (desire to possess, lust after) beauty as Aphrodite, rather, Eros **eroses** (aspires to, pursues) beauty as pure beauty, nobility, excellence, as **kalon**. Eros is linked to Aphrodite because Aphrodite is beautiful and thus manifests in a significant measure the **kalon** that Eros truly desires (203c). In the strict sense, Aphrodite represents beauty for Eros but she is not simply to be identified as either the beautiful (thing to be desired) or the direct object of love **qua** eros. Eros in effect denies to Aphrodite the ascription of absolute beauty and thereby the role of supreme object of love. Aphrodite merits the attendance of Eros because without her Eros would lack the occasion for his conception and he would lack the opportunity to exercise the vocation which by nature he has received, i.e., to love the beautiful. Aphrodite introduces the power of beauty into experience, and it is this vibrant stimulous and awakening that allows Eros to enter these "divine" affairs (somewhat like Penia), to exploit the resourcefulness of Aphrodite-love and Aphrodite-beauty (somewhat like Poros), in order to express and make known the actual needs of the "region at large." In this sense, Aphrodite is in fact put to significant service in the developmental program of Eros!

With the encounter of the beauty of Aphrodite, erotic behavior commences which routinely involves a kind of aesthetic-somatic passion for the beautiful object. Plato sometimes specified this condition as **aphrodisia**. Yet,
this primitive desiderative condition has not yet actually realized its true make-up and destiny as an erotic desire in pursuit of beauty. It has not yet become adequately thematised and structurally differentiated. From this perspective, Eros can be viewed as the "articulation" or "canalization" of this primitive constitutive sympathy for beauty; and Aphrodite-love can be seen as a preliminary phase of erotic love. The point to be emphasized at this juncture is that Eros is not limited exclusively to his service of Aphrodite. He functions by nature in response to the high calling of kalon, and this beauty's first inspiring visage is Aphrodite-beauty.11

This exegesis is significant because it provides, in this literary genre, a presentment of traits which are characteristic of erotic behavior to be elaborated in later sections. The fact that it is thoroughly coherent with the remainder of Diotima's account, that it adumbrates basic Platonic categories, deserves notice.

Taken so far, the first point, (a) above, concerns the phenomenological development of desires into a specifically erotic determination. The beauty of Aphrodite provokes the birth of Eros, a qualitatively different form of love. The second point, (b) above, concerns a clarification of the object of Eros by distinguishing between Aphrodite and beauty (kalon).

(c) In each case (a-b), the vocation of Eros introduces radical reform into the reign and power of Aphrodite. Although Eros is determined by his own being to attend to Aphrodite, the
love which is determined by Eros does not fix upon the goddess herself (except in a symbolic and pedagogically surpassing way) but upon that beauty which makes such a goddess possible. The allegiance of Eros is to serve the appearances of Aphrodite beauty-love, to follow after such events, so as really to discern and pass beyond the dimension of the visual-sensual gratification which Aphrodite so successfully represents to the gratification derived by way of non-sensible beauty, the encounter with noetic or eidetic beauty, which is the true object(s) of pursuit for distinctive Eros-love.

One can view this as the utilization of a distinction similar in kind to that drawn by Pausanias between Demotic (earthly, ordinary, vulgar) and Uranic (heavenly, divine) Aphrodite (cf. 180 e f.), but in fact the status of Aphrodite in Diotima's account seems to be limited and eventually resolved into an element of kalon, something really significant on the scale of beauty-love and the experience of beauty but something really quite other than the status which she possesses as the supremely lovable object and goddess of love in the traditional accounts. She now begins to play the role of an initiator of beauty-love and subsequently functions as a symbol of the (truly divine) beautiful that surpasses the mode of sensory-experienced beauty.

Inasmuch as Eros loves beauty, and one kind of beauty is Aphrodite (physical, sensuous, aesthetic) beauty, Diotima is in fact delineating two different phases of Eros: a common eros which aspires to beauty in the mode of Aphrodite-
love and a transcending (ideocentric) eros which aspires to higher, more perfect, kinds of beauty-love. Common eros pursues sensory beauty; transcending eros pursues ideal beauty. The transformation in the projection of love begins with common attraction to and desire for beautiful human persons, the supreme representation of whom is Aphrodite. Eros may then pass on to more "general and abstract" instances of beauty (such as is found in the encounter of political systems, mathematics, the theoretical sciences, metaphysics) which appear to manifest, for the one who experiences them, more real and essential beauty. Without the skill and facility of Eros' guidance toward the higher realities of beauty itself by way of sensual or sensory love, love would be reduced in its potentiality to the common love of things that appear beautiful to sight and feel, i.e., lesser manifestations of kalon as Aphrodite. Never would an attachment to the non-temporal, non-spatial reality of the other instances of real beauty be plausible. One would be caught up in the predicaments natural to historical-physical love affairs—the sort of affairs in which the goddess Aphrodite herself, so the stories reveal, continued to become entangled.

(2) Considered in himself, however, Eros is no paragon of consummation. He does not possess the beautiful, the truly divine beauty, nor does he automatically supplant the goods and pleasures of sensual gratification with a gratification from the new realities of higher beauty. He seems to be introducing a world which promises grandeurs that far surpass
those of Aphrodite, but introducing tremendous difficulties as well. In character, he exhibits the traits of his parents. From his mother's nature, he is impoverished, in much need of delicacy and beauty, in a state of perplexity, an outsider, transient, in alienation, at a loss, without means, always dwelling in need (203d). Yet he is also, from his father's nature, skilled at plotting against the beautiful and the good, he is brave, bold, eager, resourceful, clever, a master of juggling, drugs, and sophistry, desirous of and able to provide shrewd, practical discernment, and he is a lover of wisdom throughout his life (203d).¹²

But Eros does not merely include within himself these inherited parts of his nature in a mechanical way. He is a kind of dialectical combination of these two diverse life-forms, and they function in a dynamic interplay of oppositely operating factors and forces. This allows Eros to become a flourishing (porizo, euporia) being, resourceful and able to procure things and yet also to become resourceless (aporia), to ebb away, be at a loss, to degenerate as a pursuer of beauty. He is in the process of gaining satisfaction and yet realizing his own incumbent distress, confronting his lack of knowledge and his defective condition while yet striving to be made wise and complete by pursuing the prospects of knowing and obtaining beauty and goodness.

From birth he is neither immortal nor mortal, but on the very same day he is flourishing and alive when he is abounding in resource and then he will die away, only to be brought back to life (invigorated) again through the
powers of his father. But his resources are always expended (flow out, ebb away) so that Eros is at no time either utterly at a loss (resourceless) nor utterly wealthy but he is in the middle between wisdom and ignorance. (203e)

Eros thus has great proficiency and yet has limited resources and capacities which become exhausted and require repletion. His condition is one of struggle to gain, advance, increase, but then he suffers loss and depletion. Yet, he has inherent recuperative powers which allow him to exert himself anew. Eros is by nature agonistic, aggressive, aspiring. He struggles and expends himself. His way of life seems to be restricted and confined to being-on-the-way. His consummations are always quickly consumed and he must set out again in pursuit of further consummations. While dwelling ever in need (aei endeia synoikos), Eros is yet charged with continuous desire to resolve or overcome his habitat in the metaxy. His existential destiny seems however to involve ceaseless fluctuation between a positive and a negative state of being, in conquest of a terminus—the beautiful, which now assumes the title of sophia (203e)—and yet unable to succeed in procuring that end which would provide the wealth of true well-being and the cessation of the ceaseless striving incumbent upon/within his nature.

This further delineation of the nature of Eros by reference to his historical lineage, though brief and difficult to extrapolate, provides valuable and intriguing information about the natural composition of Eros and leads on to the connection between Eros and wisdom and philosophy, to which we now proceed.
4. Eros and the Identity of Philosophers: 203e-204c

No one of the gods loves wisdom (philosophhei) nor desires to become wise (epithymei sophos genesthai) for they all are wise already inasmuch as they are divine beings (203e). More generally, the principle holds that whoever is wise is not and cannot be a lover of wisdom (a philosopher) simply because the wise are already wise (or already possess wisdom) and hence cannot desire to become (or to possess) that which they already are (or have).¹³

Perhaps just as important to realize is that those who are ignorant likewise do not love wisdom (are not philosophers). They do not do so because, in their ignorant condition, they are not aware of their own inadequacy and are therefore satisfied with themselves.

That is exactly the problem of ignorance. One who is devoid of beauty and goodness and intelligence seems quite sufficient to himself. One who does not think of himself as lacking anything will not desire what he does not think he lacks. (204a)

It would seem, then that Eros, who is intermediate between wisdom and ignorance, must be a philosopher. But Socrates expresses uncertainty about who these lovers-of-wisdom are. Diotima chides him by asserting that even a child understands this. Philosophers are beings of the metaxy, she says, they are between ignorance and wisdom, as is Eros.

(a) Because wisdom is one of the most beautiful (noble) things,
(b) and because Eros loves beauty
(c) Eros is of necessity a philosopher (anagkaion Erota philosophon einai, 204b).
Eros is, therefore, separate from wisdom and is desirous of it. He who desires wisdom is a lover of wisdom, a philo-sopher.

This elementary point is important because it makes clear an essential characteristic of the intentional structure of Eros. Eros loves, and the object of his love (the beloved or lovable object) must be distinguished from the one who loves (Eros). The object of love is distinct and qualitatively different from the subject who loves. The characteristics of Eros apply to the lover and not to the object of love. Younger Socrates (and among the banqueteers, especially, Agathon) had confused this distinction in his attempt to describe and praise Eros by thinking that love was beautiful, good, wise, etc. As a consequence of this, he failed to understand the nature of love, his own condition as a lover, and that to which a lover's love should be directed. The true beloved object, says Diotima, is "beautiful, delicate, perfect, and most blessed" (204c), but the lover himself is quite otherwise because he is the one who needs and desires. One must not, therefore, confuse the lovable-beloved and the lover. Eros is the activity of a being who desires that which is lovable, a being who is not himself lovable (and praiseworthy) but one who (if praiseworthy) comes to love the truly lovable (and fundamentally praiseworthy) things. Because he is not wise and wisdom is most desirable, Eros loves wisdom. Eros is a philosopher, then, because he desires the desirable, because he loves wisdom.
In terms of Diotima's formulation, though, it is not clear that philosophers are themselves erotic. She says (1) that philosophers are of the intermediate sort of beings, in the metaxy; (2) that they are thus daimonic; (3) that there are numerous daimons; and (4) among them is Eros. Inasmuch as daimons other than Eros have a different identity from and are not themselves Eros, then one is led to admit the existence of non-erotic philosophers--or daimonic beings who strive for wisdom and who are yet devoid of eros. This, however, is problematical and open to dispute because all beings who are philosophical are (a) separated from one of the most beautiful things--wisdom--and, by virtue of this very fact, (b) they are desirous of this beautiful thing. But those who desire such an object are manifesting erotic behavior because that which determines a beings' aspirations toward beautiful things is Eros. Hence, to desire the beautiful or the wise is to be erotic. One could not be a philosopher and be unerotic, i.e., be undesirous of wisdom. Even if one translates the term 'philosopher' as 'friend of wisdom' or 'the endearment of/to wisdom,' the relationship between a philosopher and wisdom clearly involves the desire and aspiration to contact and possess this "most beautiful wisdom." And such aspiration is the drive and activity of Eros.

Further considerations provide support for this position. First off, take the two ideas 'wisdom' and 'beauty.' The assertion that wisdom is "one of the most beautiful things"
(204b) would mean that wisdom is included in the class of beautiful things so that included in the love of beauty is the love of wisdom's beauty (or the beauty of wisdom). The question is, are these ideas co-implicating? Does wisdom eidetically contain (or implicate) the beautiful so that the assertion that "wisdom is one among other beautiful things that can be loved" is misleading if this is taken to mean that one can love beauty without loving wisdom or that one can love wisdom without loving beauty? Yet it seems that they include one another by necessity so that it is impossible to love one without the other. Expressed ontologically, this eidetic co-implication means that the two are co-constitutive. Within the dialectical structure of this ontology, the nature of one includes the other (and vice versa). Although it is conceivable and logically possible to focus upon one without the other so that a person can very well consider each independently as it is in itself, in truth they are impossible without the other inasmuch as the determinative completeness of each depends upon its inclusion of the other. This also seems to be the case with other eidetic elements such as justice and goodness. They are logically and ontologically distinct (discrete) and yet they also mutually incorporate and implicate each other.

This dialectical clarification demonstrates that the concept of a non-erotic philosopher or an erotic non-philosopher is an impossible and self-defeating notion. To say that "...it is not necessary to love beauty in order to be a
philosopher\textsuperscript{14} is to mistake the nature of philosophy as well as the nature of beauty and wisdom. The wise individual is not wise if beauty has not been comprehended; the lover of wisdom cannot relate to wisdom or become wise without desiring both wisdom and beauty. To suggest otherwise is to have recourse to an incomplete (or simply incorrect) determination of these Ideas.

In addition to this, if erotic desire strives for or aims at the highest beauty and good, and if the beauty desired is seen to be absolute beauty, unique and uniform in itself, then in fact the love of beautiful things other than wisdom is necessarily united with wisdom inasmuch as it is comprised as a part of the beautiful which is loved and has a kinship, in the beautiful, with all other species of beauty, and it would not, as a systematic matter, be disjoined from other species of beauty. In one sense, everyone who loves any beautiful thing does so ultimately because they really love it (whatever they love) on account of the beautiful. But inasmuch as the beautiful would not be itself, i.e., perfect, noble, excellent, without including wisdom, to love the beautiful necessarily includes or encompasses wisdom. Hence, all lovers love the beautiful and the wise. Though all lovers may not acknowledge this ultimately determining factor in their love, the more they realize their love of the beautiful, the more they become consistent, coherent, truly effective lovers, and they will come to realize that love is philosophy.
With respect to these objects, then, Eros and all philosophers are erotic. And any other being who takes as an object either wisdom, beauty, good, or immortality would also inevitably be erotic and philosophical. They are all united because of the interconnected nature of the desirable objects that they desire and because of the desirous state into which each of them must come in order to pursue the objects that they need.

Philosophers themselves are beings of the metaxy. As with Eros, philosophy too loves kalon and is thus connected with Aphrodite. But also like Eros, philosophical-erotic power is to become devoted to establishing a proper relation to the divine-beautiful, gaining skill in such erotic affairs, and yet being obliged to exist in a duplex condition which includes both resourcefulness and poverty. As an activity, philosophy is an aspiration toward the desirable ideals and it functions as a way of mediating the conditions of the loving agent and a way of resolving by fulfilling the nature of this agent by integrating the agent into the real order of things. Insofar as an individual realizes that he is ignorant and deficient, and because of this desires to overcome this condition, any such individual is an erotic being and a philosopher. Once this predicament is established and authenticated as one's own, the task of Eros and philosophy become that of learning to love proficiently in order to fulfill and complete oneself by relating to the best things in the best way. Because the desire for the beautiful (good,
wise) is common to all persons (205ad), philosophical passion and erotic aspiration are, to whatever measure, a part of the common lot of all human beings.

On the basis of the material presented so far, there are three "horizons" within which the aspect of interpersonal erotic relations has significance. The first and most general is the cosmic context. By being mediated by Eros, the universe is made harmonious in its arrangement and in the interrelations that occur between all entities, including humans. From this standpoint, individuals may exist in harmony with one another and their environment, adapted to all things and integrated as amicable parts in a greater whole, because (or insofar as) Love's power is operative.

The second and more specified context is the human community itself. Love operates in this area to produce communal order and friendly relations between the individual members. From this standpoint, a person may exist in peace with others and take his place as an integral, caring, contributing member of the society through the mediating effect of Eros. With Love comes cooperation, communication, and the establishment of mutual understanding and a sharing in the benefits accruing from communal fellowship. In the site of the cosmos (including the gods) and the community, an individual can relate effectively to other persons with the help of Eros.

The third and most specified context is the individual person himself. Love operates in relation to persons by
empowering them individually toward the good, beautiful, and immortal elements of reality. Because of Eros, a person aspires to those things which enable him to rectify his own needy condition. Eros commutes the goods to individuals and aids in the right ordering and forming of every individual's own self. It provides the opportunity by means of which each person can become good and thereby take an authentic and genuine place beside others in intimate and productive friendship. For the individual, love is responsible for the happiness that fulfills and completes the self in such a way that beneficial sharing can commence therefrom. By becoming daimonic and philosophic, a proper lover can himself begin to function as an intermediary in relation to other individuals and the good which can be theirs. Eros, working in the context of individual relations, can be productive of itself and its own goals. One good lover can, with goodwill and inspiration, stimulate and help guide the operation of love in another and thus be contributory to the happiness and goodness of another in the most personal soul-moving way.

The presentation thus far, though in fact not directly concerned with human existence as such, nevertheless reveals implications for human interpersonal existence in each of these three spheres of Eros' operations. These contexts provide vital information about the place of persons in the world and the significance that one can have as a cosmic, communal, and personal being by way of Eros. For it establishes that we can love others in the universal-divine setting,
in the communal setting, and in the individual setting. In each case, Love brings the order, completion, and unity that constitutes the perfection and well-being of the one (whole) and the many.

B. What Sort of Being is Eros?

5. The Use of Eros: 204d-206b

Having thus completed his statement of the first main section (Part A: 201e-204c) of Diotima's teaching, i.e., the part regarding the nature and origin of Eros and the fact that Eros is eros of beautiful things (ton kalon), Socrates-the-pupil assents to what has been said (204c) but he wants more straightforward and obvious information. He proceeds to raise a more concrete and practical question about this subject matter: "Whatever use (advantage, function: cheian) does Eros have for humans?" (204c). What need have we of Eros? If daimons are philosophers and philosophers are daimons, and if Eros is a daimon and Eros is a philosopher, what exact relevance does this have for specific human beings? Can an individual person be daimonic, erotic, philosophic? Can an erotic-daimonic-philosopher be a human person? Must every person who loves beauty and wisdom in fact be an erotic-daimonic-philosopher? Or, if Socrates' question is taken more simply, he asks: Why does anyone need love? Of what use and advantage is it? Why have recourse to it? Can we not dispense with love? These are very sobering, pragmatic
questions which, in effect, challenge Diotima to prove the need and utility of eros in the process of clarifying what Eros actually means for individual personal and interpersonal existence.

In this second stage of the initiation experience (Part B: 204c-206b), Diotima begins to unravel the problem that Socrates raises by formulating the next issue in her own way. "What," she replies, "is the love of the lover-of-beautiful-things?" (204d) (or: "In what does the love of beautiful things consist?"). The question seems to be more technically composed and systematically measured. It more explicitly involves an analytic probe that reaches for two different disclosures: Exactly what is the aim or desired result (telos) of this love? Exactly how is this result obtained?

In effect, Diotima responds to Socrates' question not by attempting to enumerate the useful properties of Eros or by turning to display results, she attends strictly to the task of describing the nature of eros by emphasizing the need to provide more detailed information about the intentional components of eros. Socrates will be given his answer in the form of an orderly "scientific description" whose pragmatic, persuasive, and edifying value will be derived from the knowledge and insight gained from a careful delineation of eros itself. Once Socrates knows what love is and what love is of, his question about its use will receive an explanation. And this explanation, in turn, will set the stage for further delineation.
The special merit of Diotima's account is its dialectical progression. She is leading toward a comprehensive understanding of eros by establishing in an orderly, sequential, and coherent way the nature of eros "from head (to kephalaion) to foot" (205c: cf. Phdr. 264c). The experience involved in this process of establishing also appears to be the right way to learn about eros, the way to appropriate the structure of eros and to begin to realize the "dialectical canalization" of proper eros. As the Phaedrus presents this, the procedure that Socrates-Diotima employ to tell about Eros is actually "the art of leading the soul by means of words" (Phdr. 261a).

Through the skillful and truthful employment of logos, talk of eros also becomes a kind of "healing art" (technes iatrikes, 270b) inasmuch as the instruction can be effective in curing the soul of its disordered and unwell condition of inexperience and inadequate love. So the realization that proficiency in love and skill in clarifying, explaining, justifying love through the art of logos and rhetoric (in the form of the method of division and collection) is embodied in Diotima's presentation. Each is required, for knowing, articulating, and exercising love are inseparable and co-determinative elements of erotic life. It does not do disservice to read Socrates' speech as an attempt to construct a map of the logical classification appropriate to eros. He has Diotima sketch out the basic structure of eros, even though this can only really be understood and effective to the loving agent to the extent that the lover follows it himself.
One virtue of Diotima's reformulation of Socrates' question is that it leaves the subject component of the intentional structure of eros undetermined. Attention is focused upon the relationship in such a way that the instantiation appropriate for the subject-lover component is left open and can thus be supplied by referring to any being who loves, i.e., either to Eros or to human beings. Diotima's response preserves continuity with the previous section and yet it also allows her to proceed with the development of an account more directly related to the issue of human eros. Once it is established that the relationship of love is (generically) "all the desire of good things and of being happy" (205cd) and that this love is "common to (shared by: koinon einai panton anthropon) all humans" (205a), talk about Eros and talk about human eros is made commensurate.

This type of open reference to the subject component of eros would also mean that the properties which have previously been exemplified by Eros can also be ascribed, at least in some measure, to human lovers. They too should be thought of as (1) creatures in the metaxy, (2) capable of realizing certain cosmically significant relational powers, (3) composed of divergent (penia-poros) determinants, and (4) existing as philosophers. If this transposition holds, the human condition turns out to be truly daimonic and inherently philosophical. The mythical explanation of Eros suddenly reveals itself to be quite applicable to and revelatory of human beings. In providing an account of the nature
of Eros, then, it also functions to indicate essential characteristics of human nature and human love-life. The mythical projection does not cease to be what it explicitly is (about Eros), but it also shows itself to be implicitly about human love as well.

Because the mythico-poetic account of Eros, the Eros of the world-order described in the historical-literary tradition, has quite reasonably been used by Diotima to initiate an explanation of Eros, his nature and praiseworthiness, Diotima proceeds now to describe more directly the sort of being that Eros is (poios tis, 201ε), the particular quality that Eros has, as it functions as love. This further consideration of necessity includes the anthropological part of Eros, the Eros of the world-order relating to human earthly existence and the personal relationships affected by the nature and orientation of Eros. Socrates' rather practical question regarding the relevance of daimonic Eros to human life inaugurates this transition.

An indication of the nature of the transition that takes place in this section of the speech can be gathered by taking note of the structure of Socrates' speech as a whole. The focus so far has been primarily on the mythical being Eros, with consideration being given to four different aspects of Eros: his intermediacy, his power to commute and unify, his birth and consequent characteristics, and his love of beauty and wisdom. The present section begins to focus upon the "quality" of eros as a desire for beauty, with consideration
being given to the function, activity, cause, and the specific affairs available to eros. One can read this progression as a rather straight-line systematic movement from the mythical-transcendent aspects of Eros to the human-immanent aspects of Eros qua eros. In the former part the object investigated is a personified divine-daimonic being; in the latter part, the object is a daimonic-human individual being, with love being treated as a feature of personal existence.

This way of structuring the speech can be further delineated by placing the two parts, 1-4 and 5-8, into a parallel arrangement, with the second part being positioned with each section set as a counterpart of the first section. The correlation is quite straightforward although the details are necessarily adjusted to the new developments appropriate to the latter considerations. The following outline indicates this further feature of Socrates' speech:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eros</th>
<th>eros</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intermediacy</td>
<td>Function: mediation to beauty, good wise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power to commute and unify</td>
<td>Activity: power of generating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth and consequent</td>
<td>Cause: the quest of eros in birthing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>characteristics</td>
<td>Procedure: the task of wise loving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This arrangement is of value because it displays the contrast between the two parts of the speech while nevertheless allowing the similarities between the two orders to be recognized. It produces a kind of acoustic reverberating
effect that enriches both sections because it encourages reflection upon the details of the relationship between the two parts from both a sequential and a correlative perspective. Something new is occurring (or being introduced) and yet it is a direct extension of what has previously been treated. While it does not controvert or deny the value of the straight-line interpretation, the parallel correlation highlights the qualitative transition and emphasizes the importance of a detailed and coherent specification of the elements of the speech. This further complexity itself can aid in one's appreciation of the sophisticated character of the speech as a whole as well as the comparisons (and contrasts) between the two parts. Although it is not to the point to elaborate on this structural feature here, it is significant to note the nature of the transition that is occurring in the discussion. Had Socrates been interested in a thorough demythologizing of Diotima's instruction, he could have quite easily chosen to dismiss the former part and concentrate his attention upon the latter half of her account.

What sort of being is Eros? How does Love function? Clarification of this major issue is not difficult to obtain. Firstly, lovers love good things because from them they are made happy. To acquire (boulesis) the good is to gain happiness. In addition, lovers love good things in such a way that the good will become their own so that by means of having (or possessing) the good, happiness also will be
secured. A lover is one who is eager for good and beautiful things to be made his own. Through love he aims at the fulfillment and satisfaction of himself and he gauges the success of his love by the happiness (gratification, fulfillment) which ensues.

Rather vital information emerges from the clarification of these two points.

(A) This love (wish, desire) turns out to be a universal characteristic of human beings. All human behavior is determined by the resolve (wish, will: boulesis) and the desire (epithumia) to be happy.

(B) The lovable is the good. Whatever is loved is loved because it is good (or is thought to be good). The object of love is the (supposed) good. Everyone is a lover; everyone loves the good. Decisive insight about human behavior is achieved by realizing that "Persons do not love anything other than the good" (206a).

(C) The end or goal (telos) of love is happiness. Happiness is that towards which all human activity is directed. Good is the condition required for the realization of happiness. "So, she said, it is by the possession of good (things) that happy people are happy, and there is no longer a need to ask why a person wishes to be happy. Rather, this answer seems to be the end (complete, the ultimate: telos)" (205a).

(D) In his Symposium speech, Aristophanes has constructed an ingenius account of love (189c-193d) which explains that every individual person is an incomplete organism who strives for wholeness by attempting to find and "be joined and fused with his beloved so that the two might be made one" (192e). The point at issue, says Diotima, is not concerned with organic wholeness produced by uniting with another person because people are willing to sacrifice parts of themselves for something if they think that that something is good. When love is considered to be a search for some object, what everyone seeks is the good. With respect to persons, it has not been established that some other individual person per se could qualify as the good needed by a lover, the good which would complete the lover. Although Aristophanes supposes in his story that everyone once existed in primordial wholeness and everyone desires now to recover this condition, it has not really been established that
another person can function as a source of the happiness sought by the lover. For even when humans were whole they were not complete and satisfied. The supposition that another person is required to complete and fulfill oneself as a lover must be legitimized by demonstrating that the other person is in fact the good required. It supposes that one knows (i) the requirements or needs of oneself as a subject-lover, (ii) what the good is that will satisfy oneself, (iii) that this good is comprised in the other, and (iv) that there is a method of appropriating the good of the other for oneself. The only thing that Diotima maintains at this point, however, is that the object of love is the good. So it is not clear that another person can function as the good for humans and satisfactorily gratify the erotic aspirations of a lover. Further specification about the object of love is required before the assumptions of Aristophanes can be accurately determined. But from what has been said so far, his account is rather fantastic especially because its procedure is uncritical and presumptuous.

(E) Happiness is forthcoming from love of the good. Beauty must find its place in relation to the good, for if beauty were not itself good, the resulting project of the self toward eudaimonia would be miscarried. The priority of the good is not abandoned by Diotima when she turns to discuss the work of love. Her focus upon love-of-beauty is expedient because the operational dynamics of eros function most naturally in response to beauty. Hence, Diotima is obliged to concentrate upon a complete explication of the love of beauty in order to reveal the possibilities that are available to human experience through the proper exercise of eros in relation to beautiful things. As the Phaedrus explains this, humans find beauty shining most clearly through the clearest of their senses, for vision is the sharpest of the physical senses. Clear images of beauty are granted in this aesthetic experience, but it is true of beauty alone that it has the privilege to be most manifest and hence most immediately lovable in this way (Phdr. 250de).

(F) It is a lover's intention to achieve the continual possession of the objects that bring happiness (206a). It is only by having the good-beautiful for oneself always (forever: aei) that the desired state of happiness can be achieved.

The specification or logical division (diairesis) which Diotima is in the process of executing can be set forth simply as follows:
(1) Eros is a desire
(2) for good (beauty, happiness)
(3) to become one's own
(4) always (forever, immortally)

These are the initial steps provided by the dialogical-analytic operation employed to define eros. The procedure itself is dialectical. Each step is a division (or class specification) of the previous step, and each step has at least one opposite alternate on the same level as itself. (The slanting arrangement to the right is to indicate this. The left side alternatives are not often included, perhaps because most are fairly obvious.) The ordered distribution proceeds from the most general identification, through the individuating gradations appropriate to the particular features which compose the subject matter, and all of these details in proper arrangement should provide a comprehensive classification of the thing itself under consideration. Diotima's account, from beginning to end, is advancing dialectically to present a complete and coherent logical-conceptual map of the ontological structure of eros. It becomes apparent that she is on her way to present eros in individualized detail (diairesis) and in unified wholeness (sunagoge). The adequacy of her instruction is thus at the mercy of her proficiency in this dialectical analysis and her proficiency in having discerned the essential forms of erotic cathexis in relation to the eidetic structure. And at this point she is primarily concerned with the middle component of the intentional unit: a lover/loving/the beloved object. When one comes to what is
often called the "higher mysteries" of love (210a f.; cf. section 6 below), Diotima becomes most directly concerned with a specification of the other component, the object of love. The Phaedrus gives one some idea of the significance of this kind of project. Socrates there says that one who ventures to find one who is able to perform such dialectical analysis we "should follow after and walk in his footsteps as if he were a god" (Phdr. 266b). The learning of such "joints and junctures" is crucial to the achievement of love, knowledge, and personal virtue.

As presented so far, however, eros itself is obviously an acquisitive mode of behavior. As a desire, its form is that of a desire for. The lover is a person who is eager to get what he desires. He is actively engaged in a quest to acquire and be the recipient of the lovable objects that are available to him for his own benefit. The goal of this phase of love is to meet the needs and enhance the condition and experience of the lover. The necessary condition and defining characteristic of love is that it intends to satisfy and edify the individual who loves. From this general condition, four different aspects of the activity of loving can already be discerned.

(i) Loving is intentional because its composition necessarily includes an objective referent. All love is a love of some object.

(ii) Loving is also reflexive because its intentionality is exercised to serve the subject who loves. Love is directed toward objects so that this extension or expression of desire will bring back (reflexus) to the subject the good which it needs. Love is not directly love of
self ("I desire myself") but it always includes self-regard in the sense of a desire to realize and fulfill the conditions of the self which generate the erotic drive. The lover desires, and these desires are desires that belong to a lover who wants satisfaction for these desires. Yet, instead of calling this love selfish, egoistic, or egocentric, it is perhaps more accurate to call it self-augmenting, self-regarding, or self-benefiting love (as contrasted to other-augmenting, other-regarding, other-benefiting love). Love endeavors to rectify the needs of the individual lover, true, but the blanket statement that eros is selfish desire obscures clear understanding of the nature of the operation of eros because it assumes the unjustified principle that what is $\emptyset$ in one phase is always simply $\emptyset$. It might be the case that the condition for the proficient realization of the erotic agent is altruistic activity--either as a matter of personal process or collective circumstance. The realization of the good of another might be the condition for the realization of one's own good. At any rate, it cannot be assumed in advance that the acquisitiveness of eros is a thoroughly self-serving exploitation of love objects. The requirement to satisfy the basic conditions of a person does not mean that this principle of operation is characteristic of the total operational life of that person. Perhaps it is the case that individuals must serve themselves before they can be of service to others. The terms genesthai (to become) and echein (to have) (204de) are apparently used to emphasize that this love is a process of finding and procuring, an activity that endeavors to make the good-beautiful objects of the world one's own, to have them for oneself, that they may belong to oneself, without temporal-spatial disruption.

(iii) Loving is also by necessity discriminating. Since all objects are not equivalent and do not equally benefit or gratify the lover, the lover is compelled to engage in the discrimination of objects in order to be successful in love.

(iv) This means that loving must include a process of adjudication. The organization and exercise of love's endeavor must involve a deliberation and selection among the options made clear by its discriminating activity. The development of love includes appraisal which leads to preferential decisions. Loving thus becomes an inherently normative process; it is inescapably verdictive.
The natural exercise of love requires these various aspects (i-iv) inasmuch as they are constitutive parts of the process of effective loving.

With respect to the object of love, Diotima here provides only a general identification. What is loved is whatever is taken to be good and beautiful. A lover is one who singles out something and attempts to gain happiness by relating to the object selected. What every lover is after in every experience of love with every object chosen is the realization of beauty and goodness to be obtained by associating with the object. Because there is no reason to suppose, at this stage, that beauty is in some sense separate from the person who is beautiful, that person is loved and identified by means of his/her properties. The lover loves the beautiful other and desires to possess that person because that person is especially desirable. The principle of selection and the properties appropriate to lovability are evident from the outset by the lover. A person becomes an object of love if and only if s/he is beautiful and good. The person is loved for the happiness that results from the relationship. The justification for the relationship is its effect upon the lover, his resulting state of being. This type of love certainly appears to be a kind of property-love, but what remains unclear at this point is the relation to the beauty that the beloved exemplifies.

There is no doubt that the lover encounters many good and beautiful things in normal, everyday experience. But
precisely because these objects are numerous and varied, Diotima must aid Socrates in his appreciation of this complex situation and begin to show him how to discriminate and encounter a whole complex world of beauty, some of which is by no means conspicuous to everyday experience. To encourage expertise in the ability to love, she will proceed to identify and classify the main kinds of beauty and reveal the major means to appropriate such beauty. The point of this section, however, is to explain how this love is love-of-beauty and what this love involves. This itself involves a rudimentary specification of what it means to be a lover and how this aspiration is of use to humans. The work of clarification which Diotima is now performing is preparing the way for an ascent to that beauty by means of which all other beautiful objects are beautiful. This section is part of the purification required for any initiate, a part of the process that will make discernible the primal objects of love, a process or way of disclosure which will avail the true (alethes) reality of beauty, a pathway to eudaimonia. Diotima herself performs as the hermeneutical agent within this teleological setting, putting herself at the service of Socrates by guiding him along this way of eros with words that become progressively more intimate with Socrates as an erotic agent, the nature of erotic activity, and the reality of beauty.

Diotima also exhibits her awareness of the linguistic or conceptual status of her dialectical analysis by pointing out a significant feature of the definition which she is
advocating. If it is the case that love is "common to all humans and they all desire good things for themselves," then there is no person who does not love. Everyone is a lover. But the virtue of such generality in the use of the term 'love' also includes lack of specificity as its vice. This feature of generality seems to render the term exceedingly vague and ambiguous because it allows the application of it to everyone regardless of what they happen to do or how they happen to live. To classify individuals by means of a concept whose range of reference is all inclusive is to the detriment of that classification because it then lacks the distinctive and definite meaning which would allow one to select and assess the individual referents and make judgments about possible variations or counter-instances. 'Love' would have reference to absolutely any kind of aspiring behavior. Yet, if the activity of every person counts as being love-activity, then the ascription 'love' does not seem to add any distinctive meaning to 'activity' which would allow one to differentiate one kind of activity from another vis-a-vis love. But in fact we do find it quite feasible and very useful to distinguish between lovers and non-lovers and various types of lovers. Inclusive usage is therefore abusive usage insofar as it makes impossible the kind of distinct reference and standards of application which we consider to be imperative in the useful operation of a term. One can compare this difficulty, says Diotima, to the use of the term
'poetry' (poiesis: making, 205bc). If one applied the term to anyone who makes, produces, or otherwise constructs something, then everyone would be a poet. But surely it is an infelicitous use of the term to apply it in such a blanket fashion. And so it is also with eros. The characteristics that have been identified so far in the discussion are not specific enough. To leave the analysis of eros at this stage would result in a deficient definition because the characterization required for adequate communication and articulation of human love experience is incomplete.

On the other hand, however, there is a definite advantage to be realized from this stage of the defining process. Generality can inspire synoptic insight; it can reveal something essential about the nature of human behavior which provides one with a comprehensive vision of the underlying universal dynamics of human actions. The world of human existence and human interrelationships become accessible and vitalized in a new way once it is seen that every human life is an expression of eros. All persons are really lovers no matter what they do and, in doing what they do, they are loving or exercising their love. To realize this perspective is a significant contribution to one's understanding of human life and personal existence.

Such a universal, synoptic perspective also produces further consequences. It emphasizes, firstly, the need for an accurate descriptive classification of types of love. Diotima gives a clue about this by identifying, at this point
in the conversation, three distinct types of love: (a) thing-related eros such as love of money and possessions; (b) body-related eros such as love of sports; (c) and psyche-related eros such as love of wisdom (philosophy) (205d). Each of these pursuits can be a serious life-involving commitment and each can justly be referred to as a significant, distinct area of loving activity, a canalization of eros, an attempted realization of the good life. This orientation, Secondly, sets up the conditions for a transition from descriptive ontology to normative axiology. Once one realizes that all persons are lovers and that lovers love different objects in very different ways, i.e., that loving is a very diverse phenomenon, the next issue on the horizon becomes: Are there not better and worse ways to exist as loving agents? Are there not better and worse objects to love? Diotima's instruction is developing precisely this context. Her descriptive ontology of love, by proceeding to identify the different ways of loving and the spectrum of objects available for loving is, in effect, setting forth a schema which is to be used for axiological or normative purposes. Ontological identification will include the kind of differentiation that will entail axiological gradation, and this can be used as a criterion to judge the normative character of any expression or form of erotic behavior. So, although it would be premature at this point to suppose that the specification of love given in the statements (1-4 above) is a complete definition of love, it is yet insightful to realize that no
one is really exempt from the class of lovers and that all of one's desiderous actions, as directed toward the beautiful and the good, are to be analyzed as expressions of love. And because this love is a personal creative-poetic response of the most intimate self-involving kind, the realization that so much of human activity is erotic activity (or is a result of erotic impetus) will enable one to come to better terms with one's own self-potentiality, that of others, and to appreciate the truly wonderful and beneficial part that knowledgeable love can play in everyone's life. Love is, as Diotima says, "most mighty and all-beguiling" (205d), and everyone resorts to love in one way or another. Only by means of an analysis that can provide due measure of love's magnitude will the bewildering spell of love's multifarious appearances allow the kind of superintendence sometimes called by Socrates: self mastery.

C. The Works of Eros

6. The Activity and Work of Love: 206b-207a

At this stage of the process of instruction, Diotima begins to initiate the leading questions herself. Each succeeding section of her discussion will leave Socrates with less to say because he does not have answers to her questions. He is brought to a state of wonder (the rudimentary stage of philosophy, cf. Thet. 155d) because he does not know his way about the territory of eros. He has obviously been a very
perceptive and retentive student, however. The progression, as Socrates reports it, forms a very rigorous, coherent sequence. The oracular quality of Diotima's statements never abandon the didactic enterprise and she pays very strict attention to both the person of Socrates and the demanding character of the subject matter. Plato has provided a very compact, stringent, systematic presentation which integrates eros into a whole world-view and, in effect, invites every person to find their place within this cosmos as discriminating and stout-hearted lovers.

Notice that the next three questions of Part C (206b-212c) are advanced and yet very rudimentary questions. Each asks for the most fundamental information about eros. Although they are starkly formulated, they involve profoundly perplexing issues comprised in the effort to understand the nature of love. It is no wonder that Socrates-the-novice takes a more receptive role by simply following Diotima's lead.

If the object of human love is the good-beautiful and everyone really desires the good to be their own always, then, Diotima asks, "What is the manner (way, course: tropon) of those who pursue it, and in what does the eager and intense behavior (actions: praxeî) which is called eros consist? What actually is the work (labor, effort: ergon) of love? (206b)

Two complete, additional steps of the dialectical specification of eros are achieved in one sentence: "It is
(5) begetting (childbirth, procreating, bringing forth: tokos) in the beautiful (6) according to the body and according to the psyche" (206b). One must extend the dialectical definition as follows:

(1) Eros is a desire
(2) for good (beauty, happiness)
(3) to become one's own
(4) always
(5) by begetting
(6a) according to body (6b) according to psyche

With this information, Diotima has introduced a crucial, pivotal, qualifying determination into her characterization of the nature of eros. Eros is now disclosed to be a generative activity. The lover, in his eagerness to get good and beauty for himself, begins to utilize personal productivity as his mode of operation. The original expression of eros as acquisitive desire is now exhibited as an eagerness to produce. This specification significantly effects and has abiding consequences on the demeanor and activity proper to the erotic enterprise. Whatever else erotic life may involve, it now includes some form of procreative-generative activity. This now becomes a decisive factor in a lover's development, his comportment, and his success. Loving becomes a prolific activity, expressive, positively responsive, and creative. The exercise of love is a self-involving output of products generated in response to the experience of beautiful things. The erotic power of an individual becomes genuinely fruitful. Eros is not only a seeking activity, it is also a producing activity. It is not only desirous, it is also copious. The
main property of aspiring acquisitiveness which has so far characterized eros is now being complemented with a property that certainly alters the overall character and operation of eros. A significantly new dimension has been introduced into the exposition.

This means that proficiency in erotic matters will require several quite different yet coordinated techniques. The lover must become skillful in the art of erotic acquisition in order to obtain or otherwise relate to the objects desired. The lover must also become skillful in the art of erotic generating (bearing forth, expressing) in order actively to realize the elements (effects, benefits) acquired in erotic acquisition. The general art of eros is thus at least a two-fold endeavor. Yet, as has already been noted previously (p. 203-204), erotic acquisition is itself dependent for its success upon discrimination and adjudication of the kinds of objects available to it. So one must also include what amounts to an art of discrimination to these other elements involved in the erotic endeavor. This latter art is usually simply referred to as dialectic, involving the methods of generalization (collection) and specification (division).

The realization that these three techniques are involved in the proficient exercise of eros is an important clarification which greatly contributes to one's understanding of the operation of love. And it means that Diotima must have
these arts in hand as she gives instruction to Socrates. Diagnostically, an erotic agent's understanding of eros can be evaluated and tested by determining what is acquired, discriminated, and produced. This also means that language or communication (logos) will be an essential part of erotic proficiency because erotic selection must be set forth and evaluated in language in order to be explicitly understood and "of account." The inclusion of these three fields in the overall art of eros is mandatory and crucial to the effective exercise of eros.

But this realization also carries with it the realization that the structure of erotic activity is complex. Because it is important not to mistake or neglect the particular elements that are involved, one must attend to the fact that the activity of love includes (i) being productive (ii) in beauty (iii) with (in relation to) another person (iv) according to body and psyche.

a. Erotic Begetting

According to Diotima's description, the nature of human nature is such that all humans (regardless of sex) are pregnant (kuousi) and they are so in body and soul (206c). She maintains that through the natural course of individual development, a person reaches a certain level of maturity and, at this time, the person's nature (phusis) becomes "ripe, ready to blossom," and s/he desires to give birth. Such is most obviously illustrated, says Diotima, in the consorting that takes place between a man and a woman, where
each comes to the other through mutual attraction in a condition prepared for engendering. Everyone is thus constructed by nature to become resourceful. Pregnancy is an innate process included as a developmental aspect of the normal experience of all human beings.

Something happens to a person and he finds himself in pursuit of a beautiful person, yearning to engage in generative-productive activity. Through very normal physiological and psychological development, erotic agents begin to effect a remedy for their own desirous condition. Fecundity is a consequence of nature; deliverance, however, is conditional. It really depends upon both individual receptivity and initiative as regards a qualitatively satisfactory object in relation to which begetting can occur. The pregnant one is dependent upon contact with a beautiful person. So he must, in his fullness, seek out an appropriate object so that deliverance can be successfully executed.

This activity cannot be reduced to a receptive acquisition of objects in the sense that it is not accomplished by a physical possession of another beautiful person or a psychic-cognitive possession of information about beauty, i.e., accumulating beautiful ideas. It is a dynamic process whose generative results are decisive for the lover in the most personal way because the erotic activity is a constitutive aspect of his own self. The lover is personally implicated because generation is a highly arousing, self-involving endeavor which is directly linked to the achievement of the
happiness which will complete and perfect his own nature. So at this point Diotima is certainly emphasizing that loving activity is self-productive activity; the way of eros is this special kind of praxis. It is a definite task, and the lover must be viewed as a special kind of laborer. The lover proceeds by way of personal engagement and productive responsiveness.

b. Objects Involved in Begetting

Engagement and response to what, exactly? The answer to this question is certainly critical to the proper assessment of the nature and status of interpersonal love because the answer, though it is not difficult to state at the outset, is nevertheless extremely difficult to assess in the overall logistics of Diotima's account. The present section reveals (by assuming) that a lover's loving activity really involves three distinct elements: the lover himself, beauty, and another person. Love becomes a process of mediation, a kind of two-ply mediation where the lover attempts to affect a relationship between himself and beauty and between himself and the other person. Yet, both of these relationships are themselves reflexive in the sense that they both involve a relationship projected from a personal condition of self-need and self-regard for the purpose of providing the self with what it needs in order to fulfill its own deficit self. The lover's response is a response to beauty and a utilization of this experience for his own fulfillment. The actual self is loving beauty "toward itself" and thereby attempting to
realize and better itself by means of beauty. Love is a way of moving from a real qualitatively deficient self to a more efficient and virtuous self whose qualities are a result of its "appropriation" of the beautiful and good available to it. The other person is also approached as an object in relation to which benefit can be realized. Both elements are involved in the productive endeavor. The phenomenon of erotic generation requires both, and they each "bear back upon" the subject because each, in its own way, becomes determinative of the self of the erotic agent. In this interplay, erotic involvement is consequential for the self in relation to itself (personally), to the ideal (trans-personally), and to others (interpersonally).

From this point on in Diotima's discussion of love, this configuration of elements is presented as being characteristic of erotic activity. Although all humans are pregnant, the actual process of begetting takes place in an interpersonal as well as an eidetic context.

Beauty is one conditional factor of erotic genesis that is extrinsic to the lover and yet available to his experience. Although everyone becomes pregnant, creative urges and inspirations occur when a person comes into the presence and formative influence of beauty. It is beauty (nobility, excellence) that functions as a stimulous to erotic fruition and it is beauty that serves as the setting in which the delivery is performed. The desire to beget is thus qualified and made selective because it depends upon an encounter of
the lover with a beautiful object. The labor of love, in effective begetting, is not simply a volitional act over which a lover has complete control. In a sense, he is at the mercy (grace) of beauty because pregnancy is only brought to consummation in an association and intimate being-in (en to kalo) of the lover and beauty. This conjunct is a requisite condition for productive love.

It is in this way that Diotima can refer to Eileithyia, the goddess who comes to the aid of women in times of childbirth, and say that Beauty (he Kallon) is the fate (destiny) and birth-goddess ("Lady of Travail") who presides over erotic birthing activity.

The particular reference provided by Diotima to illustrate the working of eros in this section is the being-with (intercourse, communion, cohabitation, conversation: synousia) of a man and a woman. The togetherness of two erotically disposed persons is a birthing or procreation for them, and such procreation is a desirous and fulfilling communion of man and woman (he gar andros kai gynaikos tokos estin, 206c). Pregnancy is completed as a result of a person-to-person relationship. Beauty serves as the empowering, formative element of this begetting, the propitious condition in which the two are conjoined and made fruitful. The other person is the site of beauty and the material base required for the realization of begetting. Such togetherness enables the fecund individuals to release their resourceful produce with the delivery being presided over by the gracious power of


kalon. Personal interaction is thus a definite part in the
erotic process.

c. Erotic Exuberance

As a lived experience, loving is clearly a dynamic
process. Diotima's description of it here and in the follow­
ing sections can be viewed as a brief phenomenological
illumination of this event.

Whenever the pregnant approaches (draws near to, has inter­
course with: prospelaze) the beautiful, he becomes gra­
cious and so gladdened that he pours forth (flows over)
with engendering and begetting. (206d)

Within the pregnant one who is already swelling and ripe,
there is a great commotion (passionate distress, wild
fluttering) in confronting the beautiful one because the
beautiful one can relieve (allow the delivery of) the
severe pangs from the possessor. (206de)

Although every pregnant erotic agent seeks a person who
manifests beauty and thereby utilizes the other for the
purpose of generation, the description of this process does
not suggest some kind of gross usurpation or exploitation of
the other simply for the lover's own good. The occurrence
is one of abundance and plentitude. The relationship estab­
lished seems to involve something more like the initiation of
a partnership or alliance, where the two individuals become
integrated in beauty and productivity--at least for the
duration of their erotic relationship. They become parti­
cipants in erotic activity, conjoined in beauty and harmony
which makes possible their genetic fruition, and each of them
shares in the achievement accomplished by their togetherness.
Such a relationship, however, is clearly instrumental in the sense that it serves as the stimulus and proper setting for begetting. The beautiful is loved, sought out, for this procreative end. No individual is complete and sufficient unto himself. Everyone must have recourse to objects other than himself. The other person, however, is not him/herself approached as the final goal of the erotic activity inasmuch as the point of their relationship is to be productive in beauty for their own good. Yet both persons are really a beneficiary of their love on the basis of both pragmatic and intrinsic merit. The other "works" as a beloved object in the sense that s/he is a required operative part of the production process. But this "working" is reciprocal and interperson because they both share in it and are constitutive of the results. Although the beloved is loved for his/her properties--the love is discriminative and stipulative--the lover's intentionality is structured in such a way that both participants are integral elements of the whole creative endeavor. The other is a requisite condition, wanted for their beauty for the purpose of propagation, and this other person him/herself significantly effects and qualifies the erotic process and the erotic product. And inasmuch as the generative act is a labor whose product is not an insignificant after-effect of the erotic relation but bears the influences of its progenitors, the importance of the erotic couple is itself highlighted.
d. Strange Philosophy

Upon reflection, one begins to realize how very concrete and practical this section has become. The daimonic lover of wisdom and good shows himself straightway in a liaison for the purpose of reproduction. Eros' effort is to beget, and he works to mediate the beautiful-good by means of a communion with another person of the opposite sex. Eros has certainly fallen into quite a strange state of affairs and is laboring in very unusual ways! The philosopher is pregnant and becoming sorefully ripe and enthused by contact with beautiful individuals. His resourcefulness compels him to seek an appropriate object in relation to which he can release the goods that have developed in him. He needs a beautiful object because in that relation only does he gain the harmony and accord which will allow him to bear the fruit of his womb with the other. Who could have imagined that a philosopher would have such a beginning and find himself engaged in such behavior? But this predicament is true of all persons, in both their body and their soul.

Such a way of describing eros not only drives us to think about ourselves and love in a different way, it also brings to the fore another main trait of love. Eros is a daimon in the metaxy, a philosopher, and he is now revealed to exist as genesis, as becoming, as being in process, as originating things through his activity. It is not simply change, but eros is productive genesis. It actively participates in relation to the ideal and the eternal (in being qua
Ideas) through genesis. Love's relations are inherently creative because they evince from the individual resources which are comprised in his own natural conditions. Love brings out from the lover his own inner wealth because the reception of beauty leads to the experience of bountifulness and exuberance. Effective acquisition thus results in fruition and emanation.

e. Erotic Generation as a Divine Affair

Diotima also maintains that this business of pregnancy and generation is a divine affair (theion to pragma). This claim can perhaps be made intelligible by seeing that it brings together three interrelated factors: beauty, begetting, and immortality. Loving is related to the divine because it is the establishment of an affiliation with beauty. Whatever is beautiful is not ugly (disgraceful, shameful, deformed) and is thus not discordant or unsuitable (disproportionate, unattuned: anarmostos) but harmonious and concordant. Erotic generation is a divine occurrence, a thing of beauty, as a process because it conjoins two elements of reality that are naturally matched (the self and beauty) in such a way that is productive of beauty and a consequence of the beauty that inspires the conjunction of the lover and the beloved. Erotic generation does not take place in the midst of ugliness or shameful conditions because such a setting is naturally inimical to and unsuitable for the generative process. In being determined by the auspices of the divine qua beauty, erotic activity itself is to be thought of as a divine affair,
an expression and extension of divine influences—the productivity of beauty! By coming into relation with the beautiful, one succumbs to the divine, comes under its power, and (to whatever extent) partakes of divine reality.

In addition, this pregnancy and generation is divine because it introduces an element of immortality (deathlessness: *athanasia*) into the life of mortal beings (206c). Generation is a ceaseless, ever-becoming aspect of mortal productive activity. Erotic behavior manifests itself as perpetuating activity. Eros is not only a striving after the beautiful, it also includes a desire for continuation so as not to cease and thereby lose the prospect of participating in or perpetually possessing the good by "generating and begetting in the beautiful."

Why is it of giving birth? Because procreation is something ever-beginning (ever-existence, everlasting: *aeigenes*) and immortal (athanasias) in mortal existence. As it has been agreed that love aspires to the perpetual possession of the good, it is necessary, then, for it to desire immortality as well as the good. And from this logos, it is necessary that love be of immortality. (206e-207a)

In this sense, then, Diotima claims that love projects itself not only toward the good-beautiful objects of experience, it necessarily intends to be included in immortality as well. The aspirations of a lover are lofty indeed and truly associated with the divine because the lover desires the good and the everlasting (godly) condition required to possess the good without end. The lover's means to accomplish this enterprise, though, is human creativity that is linked up with the beautiful.
And here Diotima qualifies what was previously accepted about the nature of love as being of the beautiful (tou kalou, 206e). Loving is not simply a pursuit of beautiful objects and the receptive acquisition of these objects. Loving is not a spectator sport; it is not a kind of possessive admiration; it is not a having or proprietorship of the beautiful-good. Loving is productive, active involvement in the reality of the beautiful (en to kalo, 206e). The lover responds to the beautiful by coming into the reign of the beautiful through begetting. Loving as the desire for beauty also becomes the desire to be generative of beauty, to make oneself beautiful, to be a part of beauty, to be productive in beauty. This giving birth from within oneself in response to beauty is a way of aligning oneself with beauty so that the agent may be spoken of as actually an agent who generates beauty in products. And as beauty is something immortal in one's experience, the lover of beauty also desires immortality for himself. The lover is one who wants to be ever creative in beauty. Yet, the access to this immortality for humans is apparently available only through genesis, as a process of becoming. This is rather crucial because it means, for one thing, that the state of perpetual contemplation of the ideal can be realized by humans only insofar as it is integrated into generative activity. Otherwise that blessed reality would never really become constitutive of the existing self. Although such becoming may approach the state of
being (to on), it does not seem possible for genesis to
culminate in or to achieve this condition of being for itself.

f. Eros and Immortality

When the section quoted above (206e-207a) is approached
as an argument, Diotima's position is by no means untinged by
troublesome considerations. If a person desires beauty-good
to be his own always, it does not follow from this alone that
he desires immortality or that immortality per se is desir-
able. But one must not dismiss or discount what Diotima says
because of the foibles of the logical formulation here. What
she says functions as a way of spelling out an element which
is a decisive, underlying, determining factor of human erotic
behavior. Her point seems to be, at its simplist, that the
beautiful is desirable without end. Beauty is so lovable that
one would never want not to have it. Desiring to have this
beauty always means that one must also desire the everlasting
condition which would secure the unending possession of beauty.
In this sense, everlasting life is logically comprised in
everlasting love of beauty. As one must desire angles in
order to have a triangle, so one must desire immortality in
order to have beauty immortally. The logic is secure, but,
more important, the psychology also appears to be apt. A
lover's highest striving is for the everlasting possession of
the lovable object which will bring completedness to his own
nature. A lover's passionate yearning thus appears to
embrace the eternal because it is the condition which will
bring his own eternal happiness. As a matter of phenomeno-
logical description of love's intentionality, Diotima's position seems to be quite applicable to the nature of love's projection. The way of eros, the method of eros, to realize that which it intends is dependent upon its own limited capacities for creative-productive activity. The remainder of her account will explain the means that persons employ to achieve immortality. One must carefully note that immortality is a constitutive part of erotic aspiration and begin now to notice how it is so, because its achievement seems to be so fugitive.

The crucial contribution of this section is its claim that loving is a generative process implicated in human striving for happiness. Eros is propagative, i.e., generation is the condition for effective and proper love. Two conditions apply: the influence of the eidetic and person-to-person interrelationship. The lover becomes an active participant in beauty and, by realizing it for himself in creative responsiveness, is happy to transmit it as an exercise of his own loving. This propagative perpetuation and enhancement of self and beauty, though it involves travail and labor, is nevertheless one of profound gladness and exhilaration. As an interpersonal endeavor, such activities are undeniably beneficial to both individuals.

7. The Cause of Eros: 207a-209e

The groundwork has now been set for further dialectical advance. The problem is to provide an account for love
being the way that it is. Diotima asks Socrates, "What do you think is responsible for (the cause or source of: aition) this eros and this desire?" (207a) How does one explain the nature of the phenomena identified as eros? The data that reveals the power and the magnitude of the influence of eros is truly astounding. The whole realm of animal life and that of humans alike plainly exhibit the operation of eros. But how does one explain the nature of it? Why is it as it is?

The logos for this, says Diotima, is that "immortal nature always seeks, as it is able, to be immortal. In one way only is this possible, by genesis" (207cd). These two statements will stand as principles in terms of which the remainder of Diotima's account will be developed. Eros seeks immortality through generative (creative, productive) activity.

Consider for a bit the ramifications of Diotima's blunt juxtapositioning of eros and immortality. According to this formulation, eros is a way of responding not only to the beautiful and the good, it is also a way that a mortal being responds to his own mortality. To acknowledge mortality is to become aware of the presence of Thanatos, to become aware of the implication of death. From this perspective, loving can be viewed as the striving of an individual to save himself from dying, to attain a life exempt from the toll of time and change. Love of the-good-to-become-one's-own-forever seems necessarily to require for its attainment the achievement of an everlasting life. The lover desires the desirable to be his own always, he wants no end to come to his acquisition of
happiness. Toward the good and the beautiful he aspires with a desire set also upon undying affiliation. But the recognition of his need for immortality is accompanied by the realization of the fact that he is mortal, that he is destined to death.

The impact of what Diotima is saying here remains rather subdued, but its force is nonetheless protracted and consequential throughout the rest of her account. In the positive sense, creatures strive to attain immortality through procreative activity. But this has another side about it. Eros is, as well, a response to the profound foreboding of one's own personal extinction. Erotic behavior has a darker, more desperate aspect. The "cave" of ordinary existence reveals itself to have death lodged in its parameters. This means that the striving toward the splendorous light of everlasting beauty and goodness already of necessity bears the impress of death. In whatever form it may take, then, loving is the way humans strive to overcome their mortality. The life of love is this contest and struggle, a challenge to overcome what appears to be inevitable.

A most formidable adversary of human life suddenly appears on the scene of eros. Humans are dancers on the dance floor of existence, obliged in this life to dance with the thought of death. This prospect, the realization of finitude, is an element comprised in the audacious and yet expedient movements and steps performed by the erotic agent. The victory sought against death is immortality. Against
the thought of having one's life become resolved into insignificance, one seeks a way to endure and preserve oneself. Thanatos, however, appears to rule triumphantly over all forms of life and to be the ultimate conclusion of every dance. Human eros, though, is resolute to perform within this domain by utilizing two basic elements available to it: body and psyche.

But what hope is there? Is not this exertion a Sisyphean and ultimately ineffective labor? What viable options are available that do not turn out to be merely feeble human contrivances? Perhaps the romance of erotic assertion and the high hopes of a redeeming conquest in the experience of beauty are simply illusions of the imagination which allow one to turn from death and to neglect its ceaseless encroachment. Can love deliver one from death, release one from the fate of worldly things, and somehow enable one to gain access to an enduring life exempt from death, to secure a dwelling in the edifying realm of eternal reality? How could it? For time will surely give every person over to death in short measure. Individual human life is brief. Persons are like all other existing things, they come into being and are eventually resolved to extinction by time and change.

a. Loving as Dying

It is of interest to reflect on the fact that the Symposium has been approached as a kind of "alter ego" to the Phaedo. The two dialogues, composed roughly during the same period of Plato's life, seem to be diametrically opposed in
mood, theme, and setting. In the prison scene we find Socrates, an old man, confronting the prospects of death with some of his friends. In the banquet scene we find Socrates, in high and happy spirits, confronting the prospects of love and beauty with some of his friends. But it is quite clear at this point in the affairs of the banquet that death is not and cannot be a stranger to love. Loving is not such an innocent affair. Death is implicated in the very condition of the exercise of love. The lover who may experience the exotic splendor and sublimity of loving is also a lover who faces death, whose very own end is imminent. Finding this rather ominous note struck in the Symposium, one might consider whether the problem of death introduced into this analysis of eros is really a very shrewd repetition of the theme concerning the "practice of dying" which is, according to the Phaedo, characteristic of proper philosophical existence. Is this theme taken from the Phaedo and integrated into the Symposium to be expressed from the very different standpoint of the joyful life of eros?

This suggestion gives one pause. From Plato's depiction of Socrates in the Phaedo, we know, for example, that Socrates was already a "dead" man (according to his definition of death, Phd. 67d, f.) as he spoke with his friends about death and immortality. Does this mean that he is calling his banquet listeners to a similar destination? Or, as his ironical advice to Evenus would have it: "if he is wise, tell him to come after me as quickly as he can" (Phd. 61b).
Is Socrates (Plato) even in the *Symposium* utilizing an extraordinary daimonic-mantic, foreign (*he zene*, 201e) female to indicate that the way of love, despite appearances, is really the way of dying?

But again, Socrates in the *Phaedo* relates the problem of death to the problem (need) of conversion and purification. And inasmuch as Socrates is here, in the *Symposium* (with Agathon and the others), being initiated into the mysteries of eros, this would mean that one should look at the instruction in eros as involving a process of katharsis for the participants, the lovers, and a process of personal transformation to a proper orientation of soul.

When construed along these lines, though, death becomes specifiable in relation to the objects of love, the eidetic objects, and love becomes a way of mediating between death and immortality. Death is, very simply put, not being good (beautiful, just, etc.). Being good is itself not associable with death because the properties applicable to the good exclude the possibility of death being predicated of it. If the death which is purification involves becoming good, which it does, then this death is in actuality a detachment from death-like existence and a transition to becoming completely alive. It is the true existing-without-death, a dying away from death, which assures the condition of everlasting life. Because the good is of this nature and because love is of the good, the only kind of death possible for the lover is either a death due to the failure of love, i.e., due to
untrue or improper love, or it is a "higher death" due to the becoming of the lover who frees himself from death by dying away from mortality and the not-good. Regular non-kathartic death is, then, really the consequence of bad love, for proper love is a cure for the mortal condition of human existence, it is process of liberation and fulfillment of individual life.

But this way of explaining the is, it means that ordinary, everyday living is itself the real condition of death. One who does not understand this (like young Socrates, Agathon, and the others to whom Socrates later speaks) must come to sense the impact of this reorientation to life, this trans-valuation of life and its values, which is comprised in Diotima's teaching. Everyday human existence where love is exercised in ordinary ways is the realm of affairs where sequential time and mutability abide. As earthly-physical beings, individuals live a life whose real worth and character is that of death. It is impermanent and it involves a futile love of the impermanent. But this death is due to the incompleteness and ignorance of the lover. In contrast, the lover who is able, through proper purification, to die away from the orientation to and identification by means of the earthly-physical realm (of cave existence), this person will be admitted (in "death") to immortal life and to the eudaimonia of this good life. As ordinary existence, persons do not attain to the life of the good and the deathless and are thus dying beings worthy of death. Right lovers who are purged and refined of the seductive forces and factors of the
world of death do not necessarily become absent from existence in the physical world, but, by becoming free from existence in terms of values limited to this world, these persons attain a life worthy of immortality. To desire worldly life, then, would be to desire the death inevitably implicated in such a life. To desire the life in the good-beautiful, however, would be to desire and take for oneself a life immune to or delivered from death. Hence, it is quite the case that the way of death is the way of love. To love this world would be to desire to gain it, but the gain would be temporary and all would eventually be lost. To love the good, in contrast, would be to gain the world of eidetic eternality--even though this is not completely or fully available to humans in worldly experience.

If this is on the mark, Diotima is saying, in effect, that the answer to the meaning of death and the answer to the nature of love is the same. The whole enterprise of love, obscure as it may appear, can be understood as a response of the living to the inevitability of death and to the question of the significance of human existence in the physical world. Diotima's "ladder" to the beautiful would thus constitute an answer to both death and the world. Learning to love would involve a progressive transition away from each of these, to the undying-immortal realm, a way of coming-to-be-with the unchanging absolute and gratifying realities. Diotima's correlation of these issues is truly divinistic, for now the way of right love shows itself to be the way of liberation
from mortality and futile desire. Loving the beautiful and desiring immortality are truly kindred aspects of the same venture.

Can one be inspired by what seems to involve a rather traumatic loss of the world and self? Yet Diotima presents this as a turning toward a higher celebration, the true acquisition of a self who aspires to resolve his incompleteness. In speaking as she does, Diotima can speak abstractly, like a professional sophist (208c), and yet do so by introducing and relating to the most crucial, personal, and intimate matters while preserving and advancing the independent realization of the other.

b. The Success of Death

That death is not lacking in success is clear from Diotima's comments. Human beings give evidence of existing as dying entities through and through. Her description of the fate of every individual human being allows little doubt about the effectiveness of the conquest of death. It leaves little doubt about her unwillingness to take the problem of death lightly.

First off, consider bodies. Every body is itself always changing and becoming. Nothing physical ever (in the long run, over time) stays the same or retains the same identify.

It is only for a period that any living being is described as being alive and the same, as a person who grows from childhood to old age is said to be the same person. In reality, however, the person does not, through time, possess the same attributes whereby one can call that life the same. Becoming anew is continuous. (207d)

So, even though the body is renewed through a continual pro-
cess of reorganization, it does not remain the same body and it is destined to eventual death and dispersion. The unity and identity of the human body is not permanent.

The psyche is also subject to change. One's manner, habits, opinions, desires, pleasures, pains, and fears do not remain static (207e). There really is no unchanging sameness of self or invariable identity for anyone. Consciousness (soul, mind) is continuously changing and being changed. Thoughts, hopes, memories, all aspects of mental life, are in a state of alteration. Everything in the psyche changes, becomes, remains until it is altered, and eventually perishes or departs. The unity and the personal identity of the psyche also is not permanent.

Even the knowledge that we gain is in the process of modification and adjustment. It accumulates as we learn and it leaves us as we forget. Knowledge too grows and perishes. As a temporal cognitive process, possessing knowledge is a transient affair. Every single instance of knowledge, as accumulated information, is a temporary resident. As such, no person is ever the same in what they know. Knowledge suffers the same fate as body and psyche because it too, through change, is never the same, never simply itself in complete self-sameness for any person. The unity and identity of the knowledge of the psyche is, finally, not permanent.

According to this account, then, it seems that the totality of human existence and human experience is thoroughly transient. It is composed of ingredients related to
each other on a temporary, transitory basis. Nothing stays the same; everyone, in every aspect of their existence, changes their identity through a gradual process of replacement, interchange, becoming, according to the forces and factors which happen to be a part of their individual situation.

It is no surprise that Socrates expresses wonder in response to this rather radical appraisal of human finitude and the view it presents of a person's spatial-temporal predicament. But according to Diotima, love does provide a means of salvation. The earnestness and vigorous drive of eros is set precisely to meet the threat of death.

In this way everything mortal is saved (or preserved), not by being altogether the same always, as is the divine, but by replacing what is old and departing with something new which is like the predecessor. It is by this devise, Socrates, that the mortal partakes of (participates in) immortality, physically as well as in other ways. But the immortal has immortality in another way. Do not feel wonder, then, if everything by nature honors its own offspring, for in all mortal beings the same eagerness and love pursues the joy of immortality. (208ab)

Some comments at this point for the purpose of clarification are called for before proceeding to Diotima's description of a lover's attempt to overcome mortality.

(1) If one takes the properties of the psyche such as manners, habits, desires, etc., and the psyche's epistemic elements considered as "pieces" of knowledge insofar as these are identified as being equivalent to 'psyche' and 'knowledge,' then both of these, as Diotima says, participate in the condition of mortality. Hence, in terms of the determinants that the psyche may acquire in sensory experience, these very
qualities mean that the psyche, so construed, will inevitably suffer the consequences of death. And, likewise, considering the determination of cognition or consciousness, the elements acquired by the mind in its experiences of life mean that knowledge is also mortal. In each case the elements or properties are acquired by the psyche and can be lost; they are mutable and temporary.

Strictly taken, however, neither of these claims imply (a) that psyche itself is not immortal should the psyche be shown to be independent from these factors, or (b) that some objects of the psyche are not immortal, i.e., objects themselves that can be known and can be shown to exist independently from a person's knowledge of them. That is, the possibility that both psyche and Ideas, in particular, are immortal has not been entirely excluded by Diotima's account of death. Exclusive identification of oneself by means of what Diotima designates at this point as body, psyche, and knowledge would then really be a misidentification of oneself. The independently objective correlates of experience and the independent subject are not reducible to the properties of the psyche acquired through experience or to the information gathered by the experiencing psyche during its experience of life. Both the qualities and the information of psyche are mutable, while the psyche itself and the objects to which the psyche relates may not be. It may be that all three factors of body, psyche, and knowledge, as Diotima describes
them, are subject to change, that they do not have sameness of self, and that they suffer death, but it has not been established that this is all there is to human life or reality. In the next section of her instruction, Diotima in fact asserts that Ideas are immortal (211a; e), and the issue of immortality is the direct issue of contention from this point on in her account. It is no accident that the three types of immortality which she specifies are clearly correlated to the three elements she has just examined. For she discusses immortality in stages (roughly) according to this division: body: 207b-208e; psyche: 209a-209e; and knowledge: 210a-212a. The significant problematic aspect remains however, because Diotima does not relinquish the principle of genesis as the means, at each stage, utilized to achieve immortality.

(2) Note, secondly, that Diotima distinguishes between the immortality of immortals and the immortality of mortals (208b). Since Diotima has already asserted that "pregnation and begetting impart immortality to a living being who is mortal" (206c), human earthly-physical beings are capable of at least what might be termed propagative immortality. This immortality, based on generation is a kind that depends upon productive change and procreative activity. Human beings are without doubt to be thought of as creatures of genesis, change, and activity. Even in the Phaedrus where Socrates (Stesichorus) states positively that psyche is immortal (245c), the immortality is a kind that involves motion. The psyche is
described as ever-moving and self-moving. This kind of immortality, however, is in contrast with the immortality characteristic of the divine beings and the Ideas. Although there are differences between the immortality of the Ideas and the gods, neither of these kinds of being involve mortality. Neither of them suffers change in physical make (basic cosmological properties) or temporal duration as do all physical, temporal beings. Their immortality is contained in the fullness of their being always themselves (Ideas: \( \text{aei on} \), 210e; 211b; divine: \( \text{to ayto aei} \), 208ab). They are eternally complete and unchanging in their constitution. So, by talking in terms of activity and genesis, Diotima has not simply ruled out all possibility of immortality for humans, only that kind of immortality characteristic of the gods and the Ideas. She herself takes on the task of clarifying the kinds of immortality that are attempted by humans, the kinds that can be brought to realization through erotic behavior.

(3) It is also important at this point to make another connection. Previously the nature of love was shown to be a desire to relate to or possess beauty-good. Now love turns out to be a desire to exist always or to be immortal. These should not be thought of as either two different or two alternative forms of love because there seem now to be good grounds to suggest that immortality and beauty are mutually inclusive. Eros is still a being of the metaxy, and that toward which eros strives in its need is that which will constitute its well-being. Ontologically this includes by
necessity both beauty and immortality. Beauty as it is in itself is immortal and it is not inappropriate to say that immortality is itself beautiful (kalon) because it is itself the most excellent and perfect state of existence or being, that without which beauty and goodness would surely lack the excellence which they do have--since non-existence (or non-being) certainly is a crucial defect for any object. Eros would therefore naturally (logically) be in quest of both end it would attempt to take leave of the conditions of ugliness and mortality (and other imperfections). Both ugliness and mortality degrade and stymie the essential business of love because they put a halt on love's ability to express itself, be prolific, to ascend, to become more complete, and thereby overcome the impediments of earthly existence so as to realize the good.

It is quite right then that Diotima should include both objects, beauty and immortality, in her exposition of erotic aspiration. The primal object of eros has not changed, however. The specification of the object has simply revealed it to be complex in constitution, complex in dialectical setting or determination. Both beauty and immortality are included in the aspiration of eros because they are both elements entailed in the good (perfect) life.

(4) It is also pedagogically crucial that the significance of death be implicated in that condition in which a human lover operates. Reference to death and immortality are important diagnostic-hermeneutic factors required for a
proper understanding of life. If Diotima's instruction is an expression of her own love, her care for Socrates at this point reveals something interesting about the nature of interpersonal erotic intimacy appropriate to this stage of their relationship. Diotima addresses Socrates with an almost supra-personal intimacy. He is simply the other person (and possible ideal self) who happens to be Socrates. Yet her concern is evident in the careful way that she constructs a kind of gracious relationship which allows the other person to come into acquaintanceship with their own most intimate self-predicament. Learning to love involves coming to terms with death (body, world, mortality) just as much as it involves coming to terms with goodness (beauty, immortality) because in each case it brings to realization the significance of one's special status as a being in the metaxy, as a generative being. As a loving guide to better love, Diotima introduces the problem of dying into Socrates' curriculum so that he may be able to realize not only his own mortality but also the contrasting (dialectical and existential) revolutionary character of eros as involving the daimonic aspiration to immortality. She does this by approaching the issues as Socrates himself will have to approach them so that her own encounter clarifies and illustrates while it yet preserves the independence and autonomy of Socrates' own genesis and assures the importance of his own initiative, comprehension, appropriation, and activity. Loving as loving-the-beautiful is a radically hubristic endeavor (as Aristophanes, in his
way, saw) because it not only involves a loving away from mortality, it also involves loving immortality for oneself. It is not, however, impious or threatening to the gods (as with Aristophanes) because the object and formative power involved is the good. Humility and reverence is preserved and the sought after state of being is one of philia which even the gods honor and hold dear (theophilos).

Yet, as we can gather from Diotima's example (and the Socrates who presents Diotima), productively loving beauty and immortality also begins quite naturally to function interpersonally and to implicate (invite, challenge, inspire) others such as Socrates into this post-common phase of love. What takes place in the development of erotic life presupposes individuality, self-transformation, and the eidetic objects, but it also takes place in the active responsiveness of interpersonal life. So Diotima's guidance of Socrates to the issue of death is set forth as a necessary preparation to a more thorough understanding of the manner of love and what is responsible for love's being in the way that it is.

Diotima's love seems to be set on leading Socrates down a pathway to a solitary, unique, and individualized realization of mortality and immortality. Yet, the pathway is social and dialogical because it includes responsiveness to other individuals. Loving involves the singular realization that human persons exist in this temporal between, and this guidance functions to underscore the shared nature of this predicament. The guidance itself works to clarify the nature of the
options available to every lover and thereby makes one capable of better love.

Diotima's pedagogical love, at this point, can be viewed as a very shrewd kind of maieutic operation. It is what might be called the "pre-natal phase" of maieutics because it actually involves an instructional enactment and preparatory rehearsal of the birthing processes which can only truly be performed by an individual on his own--effected by the beloved and not simply a teacher. It introduces information about pregnation and generation, and thereby actually assists and promotes the process of gestation and upgrades the quality of the prospective generative process. Or, differently put, Diotima's instruction on erotic generation provides a standpoint for understanding the nature of maieutics and the activity appropriate to public erotic affairs--those to which Socrates was subsequently to assume for himself. Even though Diotima utilizes the role of obstetrician in a minor way through her elementary dialogue with Socrates about Eros, she passes on and becomes more like an impregnating agent, contributing to the resources of Socrates' soul prior to his own birthing activity (e.g., the banquet speech itself, the Republic, the Phaedrus speeches, et al.) and his own maieutic activity (e.g., the aporetic dialogues) by leading and challenging him to associate with those objects that truly exhilarate the productive resources of a person. If this suggestion is correct, the information provided in Socrates' speech in the Symposium allows a much more liberal view of the
nature of Socrates' "vocation" as gadfly, perennial questioner, etc. His usual characterizations of himself as a non-contributing partner to a discussion are obviously misleading. His effort is really quite positively constructive despite the incompleteness of his many conversations. His tactics are always to encourage conversational begetting--challenging the other to take a stand\textsuperscript{21} and then proceed to examine this product. So even questions, the development of hypotheses, likely stories, mythical depictions, can, when properly tendered, be employed as useful tools in the trade of productive interpersonal eros. Strictly speaking, the teacher is always a midwife. Though he can be influential in the developmental process and even give birth himself to a multitude of answers, he can never give birth to an answer for another. For the educational erotic guide, all talking and instruction is maieutic. His most effective service comes in dialogue by provoking and then examining the productive achievement made by other (as well as himself). Only from that point can the teacher be of concrete, direct service to the learner, perhaps progressing on in their relationship to the \textit{philia} of mutual erotic aspirants. This interpersonal productive facet of the work of Diotima certainly deserves the merit of serious attention, especially because it is included within the horizon of proper erotic activity as she herself speaks of it--and as Socrates later employs it.

Diotima's love seems set, then, upon turning a rather unattractive and unenlightened person into a fine specimen of
human goodness and a good lover to boot! Her object, Socrates, appears to be rather dumfounded by the rigorous logistics of Diotima. Her own productive-provocative love sets itself to attain a most noble and high-hearted transformation, the success of which would result in the coming to be of a true lover of the Ideas, a true associate and fellow artist in erotic affairs, a successful pupil who would become a kindred soul.

How does a lover (we are all lovers) contrive to overcome mortality and gain immortality? Returning first to the principle identified in this section: "In this way only does eros have power to achieve immortality: by generation" (207d), Diotima now proceeds to delineate three distinct methods that are available to erotic beings: immortality mediated by children, by deeds and works, and by personal virtue. The first kind of immortality is gained through physical reproductive replacement; the second is gained through production of memorabilia; and the third is gained through the realization of arete itself. A brief examination of these three ways will provide important information about the status of interpersonal eros. The discussion which follows sets out details of erotic life that not only lead to a higher echelon, each will itself become an object taken up again by the erotic agent in the immediacy of his own development. As "steps on the stairway" of love, the following kinds of immortality are related, in sequential fashion, to the ascent surveyed in that final "mystery session." The hierarchical schema is
beginning to develop even at this point in her description and it is by no means irrelevant to the love life of any person. Each kind of immortality attempted by the lover is a level of experience of beauty and immortality possible for humans. It is a way of achieving virtue by means of one's body and one's psyche.

c. Immortality (And Beauty) Mediated by Children

The most common way that people attempt to realize the project of self-preservation and goodness is by begetting children through whom one's own name, life, and works will be carried on in time. It is an immortality gained by family heritage. Through the generation of physical offspring by sexual productivity, it is possible to develop an historical extension of oneself beyond one's own individual life and time, a kind of preservation by means of replacement which enables one to give an answer to the warrant of death. One very natural way to express one's passionate yearning for and devotion to beauty and goodness is by using one's life to conceive new life which will be an effect of a happy consummation with beauty and a gift (verification, remembrance) exemplifying the influence of the realization of beauty upon oneself as a loving agent. A lover relates to a beloved with passionate enthusiasm, desires to unite with that instance of beauty and good, and the two pregnant aspirants engage in activity devoted to the prosperity of their lives. Their mutual giving and receiving of one another can result in a further concrete, physical extension of their own love and joy.
It is an extremely pleasing and happy miracle that the loving pair can, from their selves and their own loving relation, bring forth new beings as expressions of their delight to be together in a beautiful and prosperous relationship. The lovers naturally drive for the unending well-being of their living in love-of-beauty, their yearning for continuity, ceaselessness, and their again-forever-always conjunction in beauty. This is the cause of their birthing activity. The creative result is a generous reproduction of their own life, a transmission of their own selves into another life, and yet this other is still "their own" because the new one bears the identity of the progenitors.

A man and a woman can thus perpetuate themselves by pooling their resources, intercoursing in mutual need, laboring to generate children for themselves, giving to the new the contributions of material, social, and spiritual achievements which they have accumulated in their own life so that the children can proceed through their own lives as biological and social products constituted from their parental stock. In their children the parents have survival value. Their identity is preserved and conveyed into future time. Their own good and beautiful life can thereby be carried over to become a part of the lives of their children and their children's children, continuing on without end. In this way permanence and perpetuity of identity is achieved.

This erotic endeavor does not however succeed in achieving individual immortality. It is an immortality through
continued replacement of one individual by another, the production of physical replicas, "always leaving another behind." Such a lover is effective in the parentage of descendants, and he creates lasting value through physical reproductive processes.

Those who are pregnant in body (whose productivity is physical) take themselves to women and are, in this way lovers, so that through the birthing of children they achieve immortality, a memorial, and a state of happiness because they think that they will have provided for themselves to all succeeding time. (208e)

Through this procedure personal identity is preserved in geneology. This historical sequence can afford an experience of immortality that is only sequentially vicarious. One's own immortality is dependent upon other persons and their own continued existence, their own propagative fruition. The immortality by means of generation is thus also a propagation of the species and hence a way of securing the immortality of the human race. As such, this expression of eros is essential to both personal and collective perpetuity.

This first type of immortality, it is important to realize, is effective only insofar as it is interpersonal and heterosexual. It is a result of interpersonal eros which is expressed in physical-sexual relationships. Eros as a personal desire for self-fulfillment, in order to succeed in its proclivities, becomes actively and productively engaged in interpersonal erotic behavior on the somatic level. The lover seeks out and cohabits with an appropriate other. Pregnancy and begetting "according to the body" is a mutual
endeavor which involves definite interpersonal and historical commitments. It is the achievement of virtue in physical-productive erotic activities. To limit this quest to the brief though intense pleasures of copulative activity, to the romance of the immediacy of interpersonal physical togetherness, is to render the true expression of this eros incomplete. The production, preservation, and nurturing of the young is to be included as an essential part of somatic propagative eros. For only in this way can one effectively cultivate oneself anew and be engaged in the full realization of the somatic consequences of eros. Only in this way is the fruition of beauty truly perpetuated.

From this standpoint, sexual eros can be understood as a form of communication, a way of articulating by means of one's body the significance of that which is involved in the aesthetic experience of beauty, and the expression of one's desire to continue this "being in beauty" by active involvement with another person for specific erotic ends.

The mediation which enables the effective perpetuation of beauty is the mutual relationship and the union of two such beings is creative in a way that is impossible by any other expressions of eros. The product is a result of mutual creation, it is a transmission of something new that is a consequence of a unique, dynamic unification (symmigneai allelois) of the two persons as they each participate in beauty and goodness with one another. The "message" of
love clearly involves an affirmation of life and the value of being together and working with another person for the purpose of mutual benefit. The interpersonal coupling is sought and prized because it constitutes the "in" by means of which each individual may participate and contribute to the reality of beauty. It is a way of being in love with beauty, a way that allows the pair to be creative "in the beauty" that they share. Although very routine, it is somewhat astonishing to realize that the human race can be perpetuated by being conceived in beauty. It is wonderful that beauty empowers the perpetuating process, and this passionate vitalizing relationship can result in the birthing of another individual person. That this happens to require the interpersonal is no less marvelous in reflection than in actualization.

In many respects the connection between love and sexual relationship is very commonplace. But what is not often clear is the underlying rationale of this erotic activity. As a consequence of this lack of realization, many individuals never achieve the complete execution of eros on this level of experience. They never realize the significance and value of propagative eros, its interpersonal, familial, social, and historical structure, and the consequent happiness that can be achieved in this way. It is one element which comprises an integral part of the virtuous life. The quality of loving experience is decidedly effected by such lack of realization, though, and the lovers' own personal identities are constituted accordingly. But inasmuch as such love is a human possibility,
and not a necessity, its realization is contingent and not compelled.

It is obvious, in addition, that the peril of death remains for this kind of immortality. One's children may die in any number of ways at any time and thus terminate the sequence and substance of one's immortality. One's own contribution to the future in terms of the procreation of children remains problematical because it (the lineage, supposing one can produce children) is itself contingent. The destruction of one link may be the destruction of the chain. The series would thus come to a future moment of time that contains nothing of oneself or one's heritage. One's immortality would thus be finished. Fortunately enough, there is another way by means of which an individual may attempt to mediate his own mortality through love. It is a way, in certain respects, that secures immortality in a more thorough way than does the project of physiological eros.

\section*{d. Immortality (And Beauty) Mediated by Deeds}

The next kind of immortality that an individual may gain for himself depends upon the type of conception, pregnancy, and birthing that is due to the psyche rather than the body. An individual may be involved in erotic generative activity of the soul or mind and, by means of productive achievement executed in this way, give birth to "psychic children" who will secure for the progenitor a kind of immortality that far surpasses not only his own individual existence but that of any physical children which he may have as well.
In this section, Diotima really delineates two different psyche-related methods of begetting in beauty and loving toward immortality. The first is associated with the spirit (thumos) part of the psyche and is an active, deed oriented aspiration. The second is associated with a kind of discerning, cognitive prudence which aspires to formulate and express ideals in works of literature and political-legal policy.

So, on the one hand, eros is devoted to notable activity and involves the invention of deeds and pursuits. On the other hand, eros is devoted to the display of examples of individuals with regard to their virtuous qualities and to the establishment of policies regarding virtuous behavior, an invention of characters and conventions (nomoi).

Considering now the former kind of behavior, love may manifest itself in the eagerness, ambition (philotimia), and serious aspiration for honor, fame, distinction, reputation, eminence. The erotic psyche may begin to activate and express itself by propagating valuable deeds. The most obvious of such lovers are the courageous adventurers in life who establish an everlasting place for themselves in history because of their glorious deeds.

...they are affected with eros to win a name and to lay up a store of fame immortal for all time to come. For this, they are ready to run all risks, even more so than those they run for their own children, for they exhaust their wealth, perform any kind of task and even sacrifice their lives. (208cd)

Such behavior might seem to lack good sense (be unreasonable: alogias) but upon further consideration it proves to be quite
intelligible and sound because these lovers believe that their actions will allow them to gain undying fame and to secure the glory of immortal distinction.

In this manner, a person's erotic aspiration may lead him to perform certain acts because these acts are outstanding. The need for happiness and fulfillment may manifest itself as a quest to succeed in notable exploits, to realize courageous, just, good, pious pursuits, to gain the good and beautiful life for oneself by accomplishing distinguishing deeds. Eminence, veneration, renown, honor, memorability are attained by executing actions that are noble, that have the beauty of excellence that shine forth in goodness. The individuals who perform such acts are honored, esteemed, and of high repute because their actions do manifest the good. They become identified as the originators of this good on the basis of their virtuous acts. The quality of their life becomes dependent upon and directly attributed to the actions or deeds that they perform. Their goodness and honor resides in their movements in time and space. Through volitional activity they wrest beauty and goodness into existence, sometimes through the most hazardous conduct. Fearless of all because they are convinced of the rightness of their endeavor, their erotic struggle is a most worthy and notable agon of birthing noble deeds. The prospect included in such action is self-beauty and undying recognition. The conferral of such esteem is a verification of the value of such activities, for this
kind of love brings about the everlasting association of the actor with the values which are exemplified in his deeds. Such achievement is not only wonderful and edifying, it is constitutive of the eudaimonia of the erotic agent. Their exploits give these individuals a superior status and an identity according to the character of the acts they perform.

Such a way of living is a way of forming one's self by means of deeds whose excellence insures that the performer will share in the excellence of what is done. Diotima makes reference to a married woman (Alcestis), a warrior (Achilles), and a king (Codrus), each of whom willingly sacrifice themselves, respectively, for a beloved husband, a beloved friend, and a beloved family and kingdom (208d). By giving birth to honorable deeds, persons of this calibre are saved from temporal extinction and preserved in a way more complete and lasting than by that which can be achieved through the birthing of children. Personal uniqueness can itself serve as an answer to the problem of common mortality. These individuals gain an identity by means of their actions and, because they incorporate the quality of virtue into the actions that they generate, their immortality is directly derived from the virtue or excellence of their deeds. They become honorable persons because they do honorable deeds. It is not just any type of behavior that will achieve immortality, nor can it be good intentions which combine with feeble execution. Immortality can only come about because the person truly achieves the immortality of the virtuous deed itself.
The reason why one cannot sacrifice oneself at the drop of a hat or arbitrarily perform honorable deeds on any street corner is because the actions must be the embodiment of virtue and rectify, complete, or otherwise perfect some concrete situation or need. And in such a case, the act as well as the actor becomes beautiful and desirable to both the doer and the spectator. Thus, the agent who attains immortality through actions himself experiences and can forever live in terms of that timeless reality of the good which he has achieved.

In this sense these persons can be said to possess immortal virtue by means of their actions. That is, an individual achieves an immortality which is mediated by (virtuous, honorable) deeds. He becomes, in this way, an instance of virtue or arete. And by participating in arete, which is itself immortal (or of the immortal because involving the good, just, courageous, or pious), he also partakes of the immortality embodied in his deeds. Hence, the begetters of virtuous deeds are in the act of begetting their own virtue, of forming their self and life so as to be virtuous and honorable actors. They, in effect, beget their own immortality by having their act conform to the eidetic-immortal reality. The self, according to this orientation, becomes its own projection into the activity it performs. It is externalized at least in the sense that the prime content (substance, identity, meaning) of the person is to be located in the
activity performed. Hence, the person's virtue, his honor and his immortality, is in the activity he produces.\textsuperscript{23}

From this characterization, it may appear as if this expression of eros is not significantly interpersonal. This appearance, however, is a serious misrepresentation of the actual nature of deed-oriented eros. Erotic aspiration and generation of this kind is not simply interpersonal by happenstance. Such occurrences receive the significance they merit precisely because they are activities which are of benefit to other persons, either personally or collectively. They are valued because they enhance the lives of those involved, because they bring into existence something of value which is at once valuable in itself and valuable to/for others. Such behavior is prized because it illustrates and shows the way from deficiency to something more excellent. Honor is conferred to the agent and the deed on the basis of the recognition and the appreciation of the value of the achievement, because of its being good and thus having a quality which all persons can share in and benefit from. These acts "let shine through" something which "speaks" of a universal value that truly compels and deserves acknowledgement because it contributes to the well-being of others. So, in this sense, the double or two-ply structure of erotic aspiration still pertains. From the hero to the simple man of good deeds, the two ingredients always implicated in such behavior are other persons and the ideal. Any account other than this mistakes the real factors which are operative
in the actual constitution of honor bearing activities and deeds. Such events are always interpersonal; they receive their significance from the fact that they are acts which realize or actualize (beget) ideals into the human scene in response to particular human needs. The agent gives to others what they really need because he brings something to completion or makes something better. His eros responds to the situation by attempting to rectify it, seeing it for what it is and exerting himself to overcome and transform the needful into a state or condition of qualitatively superior well-being. His eros engages in a contest to win objective, in-the-world excellence.

Considered from this standpoint, these deeds and pursuits can be identified as gifts bestowed upon persons from one who can be likened unto a god because of the "divine" qualities he has generated. Renown and honor comes to him because he has ventured forth in love to mediate the divine and the human scene, the mortal and the immortal, the good and the bad. That such acts are sometimes misconstrued and not identified as acts of love and as having interpersonal significance is only an indication that a proper understanding of eros is lacking.24

The significance of such personal action, then, is not simply contained in the memory of observers. It is also a substantive experience undergone by the erotic aspirant, a particular type of erotic experience which alters and supplements the ordinary characteristics of that individual.
That is, the "immortal remembrance or everlasting memorial" deserved by someone like Achilles is a constitutive element of that honorable one. Such a person has willfully begotten himself by means of the deeds he has generated; he has intentionally pursued one course of action toward an end that shows itself to be worthy of execution. The person himself strove to accomplish what "must" (qua value) be done in time. And what is completed in time is forever contained in that time as completed. When a person's activity is meritorious and worthy of distinction, it is set in time with absolute guarantee that it will be preserved in that temporal sequence and be ever available for remembrance and always retain those qualities which make it worthy to be remembered. Remembrance is conferred upon what was worthy to be done, because in that doing and the remembering there is a realization of the nobility of the deed. Goodness somehow shines through, for the doer to accomplish it, for the rememberer to admire and reflect upon it as a valuable example. The actions of a noble, heroic person thus become a unique treasure securely deposited in the course of time for the benefit of those in relation to whom it is performed and all of those who can learn and benefit from historical recollection. The benefit of such erotic exploits definitely contribute to and involve the interpersonal and the social aspect of life.

Those who honor the honorable do so because that person represents in action what is truly honorable and virtuous. They express their attraction to and approval of the actions
because of the desirable quality possessed by the actions. The honorable individuals function as a model or image of the virtuous quality. Hence, those who do the honoring are simply one place removed, as personal agents, from the honorable person who acts honorably. If they are not themselves honorable, they differ from the honored one because their own love is not as productive of virtuous deeds, not as proficient a representative of the honorable in their behavior. And, as Socrates analyzes this sort of arrangement in the Republic (595 ff.), the memory of the honored one is two places removed from the reality of the honorable or virtuous itself. This orientation to these relationships sets one to realize that persons (especially poets) may communicate inspiring memories and tales of honorable men and their actions, but the actions themselves are (like the carpenter's constructing of a bed) a kind of communication (of form to historical events) in its own right. The erotic agent, by loving in a virtuous way, articulates virtue and himself through his deeds. He is resourceful in response to a beautiful beloved object of some kind—husband, friend, children, kingdom, for example. In intimate relation to the beloved (and the beloved's situation) the agent gives birth to deeds for the sake of the attainment and preservation of the beauty and good of the beloved, delivering noble deeds to the inspiring object, even if these deeds jeopardize the continued physical existence of the agent. The nobility of deeds surpasses the value of the existing agent (per se) such that when a conflict
arises between the two, the way of virtuous activity wins out for the agent. Better to give oneself up to right conduct than to live on irresponsibly by allowing the non-good to persist. The agent dedicates himself to the virtuous deed and achieves the gift that time is able to confer upon such feats: historical validation of honor-winning love.

From the standpoint of the personal agent, this expression of eros functions as a kind of mediation in a personal as well as an interpersonal and social way. When a person becomes outstanding in the world of human events, the noble-heroic person displays himself as a mediator between routine human existence and the inspiring reality of the good, between the self which does not win honor and the self which does, between the self that accepts mortality and one that delivers itself from mortality to the splendid sense of immortal achievement. The erotic person strives toward distinction, and his own personal deeds shed a light on an area of human potentiality that is good and beautiful and beneficial to all. He thus becomes the exemplification and revelation of universal human virtue, the extraordinary site where goodness and excellence become manifest in and for the human condition. More important than the fact of the passage of time and the perpetual victories of Thanatos, the person who is in quest of the virtuous and who is guided by his erotic sensibilities toward the power of the virtuous must himself come to terms with temporal sequence, change, impermanence, and be willing to take his stand in his own spatio-temporal setting. Through
personal action at some particular time and place he launches out on the project of his desires and he transfigures a particular moment or span of time, treating an individual segment as being of utmost importance. He fashions it to function as a birth-point of immortal virtue which time, though it passes on, must contain and forever bear witness to. In this way an individual does not yield his acts to death but actually rides on time to be displayed in fine array far beyond the temporal extent of his own physical presence as the performer of these deeds.

This kind of productivity is indeed a splendid achievement that attains a kind of immortality quite different in substance from that derived from physical progeny. The lover's aspiration has become a more lofty passion which is determined by higher realities of beauty and which utilizes in a more personal and sophisticated way than somatic passion the natural abilities and endowments of the loving person. For now the aspiration is directed to honorable and virtuous deeds as the most beautiful-good things in which to bear one's resources and meet one's needs.

From this standpoint, it is really a quite marvelous thing to realize that the course of history can be determined by love expressed in the form of noble deeds. Generated from the resources of one's own orientation to other persons and the good-beautiful-courageous life of arete, one can form within time events and states of affairs that will remain influential for all future time. One can beget into space
and time undying pieces of beauty and goodness for the benefit
of oneself, for those who now are, and for those who are yet
to be. This allows one to attain individual significance and
to do so by contributing to the significance of historical
process. It enables one to relate to the historical realities
of the human community as the site where ideal qualities can
be actualized. This involves an inspiring conception of the
prospects of history and a lofty and hope-filled conception
of the significance of personal and interpersonal human
activity and human potentiality.

e. Immortality (And Beauty) Mediated by Creative Works

At this point Diotima introduces further specification by
asking for a more exact determination of what it is that is
conceived and brought forth through the productive processes
of the erotic psyche. Attention so far has been focused upon
the performance of praiseworthy deeds. Insofar as this activ-
ity is determined by consciousness, one would suppose that
it is a kind of psychical begetting, but further specification
seem to be required because deeds that yield immortality have
a value which is derived not simply from the deeds themselves
but from the fact that they are instances of virtue, i.e.,
because they conform to enduring ideals and thereby manifest
goodness and beauty. There seems to be an introduction of a
distinction between deeds per se and virtue, on the one hand,
and the personal character and knowledge of the agent who
executes these deeds, on the other.
The previous erotic agent is like the builder who constructs a fine bed. The question arises: Is this kind of person sufficient enough in his "vocation" to explain what he is doing and hence develop an art or theory of good works generally? Can he, so to speak, become an architect of virtuous action and nobility of character? Does he have a grasp of the nature of the good to which he aspires in his actions? The next level of erotic aspiration comes in the form of that kind of inventing and skill which has to do with formulating conventions, policies, laws, principles, norms, that themselves are productive of virtues such as prudence, temperance, and justice (209bd). Diotima turns from deed oriented eros to eros that is devoted to composing accounts and principles which display, identify, and can affect virtue in human behavior.

Hence, we are moved on to a consideration of those "demi-gods" who aspired to realize virtue by articulating standards of virtue. These individuals have given birth to excellence in the form of descriptions and prescriptions which function as formative elements in the development of a good human person.

Homer and Hesiod are mentioned first in the account because they are "makers" who have borne forth representations of human life that provide information about characterological traits involved in human action. They provide illustration of the importance of value-determined character and personal virtue. Their works of literature are erotic ventures on
their own part which attempt to formulate and provide a more thorough discernment of human behavior. They endeavor to communicate to others the value contained in the determination of one's own character and aid in the development of virtue by providing models which can be used to guide individual behavior. They provide perspective and skillful portrayal of the significance of human agents. As such, they mediate between the hero and the ordinary citizen in order to produce a better calibre of human existence. Their works are "children" of their own psyche, but they are beautiful dramatic gifts for mankind which allow everyone to form for themselves better selves and better children as well by revealing the importance in character formation of such qualities as valor, intelligence, and self-regulation. Such children will endure throughout time and be prized by an endless number of people, bestowing upon such authors eternal recognition, appreciation, and remembrance.

The next illustrations specified by Diotima are the actual law-makers, Lycurgus and Solon, who were able to beget conventions which provided a way to form not only virtuous individuals but actually give rise to a virtuous civic organization or community. These men are even more to be admired because their eros led them to mediate the good and beautiful life into the form of prescriptive principles and policies that can mold a whole society into a state of well-being and virtue. By means of their inventive genius, their erotic striving to gain beauty and goodness, to see virtue realized on a grand
scale, their own prosperous logos concerning virtue, goodness, and right practices, became of benefit to all persons. The impact of their contribution can be gathered from the fact that their regulations (to paraphrase 209ab) can be used to make pregnant the psyches of every youth so that when these persons attain adulthood they will themselves desire to bring forth and beget virtue in relation to others. Such eros becomes epidemic, so that the virtue produced by these inventors in the form of general standards thus begins to function as an agent which is formative of virtue throughout society. The real children effected by their conventions (their own "psychical children") are actual children, individual psycho-somatic beings, who are better able to realize the good for themselves because they were molded by virtue-determined principles. In this fashion, eros becomes responsible for the production of a good society.

The consequences of erotic demeanor now being to show their truly astounding implications for both personal and collective life. Acts of love in communicating the good and virtuous in the form of public policy can transform the quality of the totality of human experience. This eros, nourished on rules which sensitize a person to the beauty and goodness of virtue, will itself "take in hand to educate (paideuein) others" (209c).

By channeling desires toward certain goals and providing education in the experience of beneficial pleasures, the inculcation of such a program of moral training and character
development (if effective) produces a yearning in every erotic agent to achieve virtue and immortality himself and to give expression to this virtue in conversations about the good life. The individual's begetting is psychical rather than physical and it takes the form of intimate discourse, so that when the lover has contact and becomes friendly with another person of beauty—not keying simply on physical beauty, but seeking a generous, excellent, well-endowed psyche (209b)—then he becomes resourceful in the relationship, begins to thrive, and he "bears and brings forth his long-felt conceptions" (209c). And this process becomes most consequential, for with the other he shares in the nurturing of what is begotten so that those in this condition have a much greater communion than that which comes with children, and they possess a much more secure friendship (philian) since they have taken part in the production of more beautiful and immortal progeny. (209c)

In this expression of eros, the work of eros which gives rise to "soul-molding" policies provides the conditions for the proficient employment of eros by those who are effected by these standards. A new quality of interpersonal relationship begins to emerge from the somewhat ambiguous because still quite erotically diffused state of the participants. Friendship based upon intimate sharing and communication of conceptions that are generated starts to develop between the two erotically disposed individuals. In this most elementary way, the birthing of laws and conventions is thus truly worthy of honor because it saves and delivers (soteras) other
people from inefficient moral training by having them become their own better selves. Moral and political principles are themselves productive of well-formed persons who are able to attain the happy and prosperous life that is possible for morally virtuous individuals. Both personally, interpersonally, and collectively, goodness and beauty are accrued by properly erotically disposed individuals. And to these authors, especially, goes immortality because their birthing brings into being psychical products of the highest quality for the benefit of all persons.

It is undoubtedly no accident that Diotima can now make a transition to the "higher secrets" of the work of eros. For upon reflection one realizes that she has indicated the basic constitutive factors of a well-ordered society which is itself the condition for the realization of the more sophisticated affairs of eros. Eros has engaged itself in the production of children, the material and familial base of any society. It has led persons to deeds of distinctions which reveal the scope of human possibilities in the face of the world at large. It has lured men to compose in language and thereby to bring into the medium of public communication and implementation, ideas and principles which become formative for the behavior and thought of a whole community. By begetting according to soma and psyche, erotic aspiration has given birth to cities with order, domestic regulation, and moral intelligence and sensitivity.
The underlying intentional character of eros has not changed, however. It still is the desire for good-beauty-immortality-wisdom to be made accessible through generative activity. But by delineating how eros works and by spelling out what such aspiration really amounts to, Diotima has revealed how this very personal, intimate, individualized motivational orientation in fact aspires to satisfy basic needs and progresses to generate better and more effective conditions for the further advance of eros. Loving the good and the beautiful, whatever form it takes, is productive of good and beauty appropriate to the character of its operation. And in every phase of this progression the interpersonal aspect of the creative endeavor shows itself to be an essential and integral part. Inasmuch as everyone is involved in erotic pursuits of one kind or another, the successful realization of one person's love project is naturally of benefit to another's because some other person is always immediately, concretely, and personally involved. The work of the lover's own eros is to produce excellence and he cannot relate to others in an excellent way without endeavoring to have the relationship also be an expression of this qualitative determination. Whether it is somatic "communication," the communication of deeds, or the communication of norms in logos, others are always implicated and effected by such erotic inspiration and expression. Self-regard and love of the ideal do not work to the detriment of others.
Rather, what is acquired is always acquired through the activity of erotic pursuit and generation.

This means that what is at once appropriated is also transmitted and mediated into interpersonal results. And all such works, all such instances of erotic flourishing, are at once for the good, for oneself, and for the other. No element is excluded. The reason why the interpersonal is not relinquished is because this very dimension of erotic experience is not only edifying and sustaining, it is itself productive of conditions which allow for the further advance of erotic aspiration, the site where eros can exercise its own conceptions, and advance further in the pursuit of goodness. What is done is done because it appears good to the agent. His discernment of its value naturally manifests itself in relation to others because this is the natural mechanism by which his own realization of it is consummated. In being of the good, eros becomes an agent responding for the good, mediating unrealized ideals for the betterment of actuality. To be inspired by beauty is to want to transmit this beauty, to make it formative of oneself and others, to see its form become affected in others so that they too can flourish.

The present section has identified the cause of erotic behavior. The lover strives for an undying identity so that he can remain always allied with the beautiful and good things which he has come to realize in his experience. In an effort to succeed at this he employs body and soul. He
has found that the way to success is through the exercise of his own creative resourcefulness and responsiveness. He has thus aspired to the immortal and the good by birthing children, honorable deeds, pursuits, practices, and, finally, ethical-political works. Each type of achievement secures a kind of immortality for the lover and each is productive of a kind of erotic interrelationship and a corresponding dimension which comprises an element important to social life. Although each of these levels in the realization of erotic aspiration has its crucial limitations, each is also contributive to a part of the structure of human life which in general supplements the further advance of eros. From the personal-familial to the social-political, from the sexual-materialistic to the communal-moral, from the beloved as a body, a personality, a lover of value, special significance has accrued to erotic striving.

The next and final part (the "superstructure") to be described by Diotima is that attempt on the part of an erotic agent to realize immortality itself and to partake of its reality in the most personal way possible. It is the erotic assault on the absolute by a psyche who becomes skillful in the ways of experiencing and discussing "pieces" of immortality-divinity-beauty in their lesser and greater manifestations and thereby learns to approach that final, complete, immortal beauty from which all other beauty comes and in relationship to which a truly flourishing (eudaimonic) life can commence. For only with this realization can the
individual himself give birth to true arete by way of his own
discernment of it. Only by this means can he truly potentiate
himself and be the sort of creature that he is (qua capacity),
and come to live the sort of life that is most worthy to be
lived. Let us examine the relevant elements of Diotima's
account.

8. The Telistic Affairs of Eros: 210a-212e

Diotima begins her description of the special "affairs"
(pragma) of eros by taking as her point of departure exactly
the situation which was last delineated. A policy regulated
society has given birth and nurtured a young man to maturity.
He has been given moral training and has become, one supposes,
disposed to behave virtuously, to deliberate and reason well
about proper action, and is now ready for guidance in order
to achieve a more direct encounter with that goodness and
beauty which itself stands as the condition for the practices
and conventions (and the other forms of eros-production) that
have enabled him to develop as he has. Though he has learned
about virtue and developed excellence of character, his actual
encounter with beauty and goodness has only been commonplace
and derivative. Given the fact that the society in question
only cultivates males in the way of virtuous character, the
setting assumed by Diotima is quite naturally limited to
masculine interrelationships. The procedure is simply prac-
tical and the site chosen to continue the initiation is most
realistic because it meets a Greek like Socrates in exactly
that life-world where he is presently residing.
These kinds of erotic matters, Socrates, perhaps even you have been initiated. But whether you will grasp the end to which these lead and what this is, if one proceeds correctly, I do not know. (210a)

a. The Case of Diotima

Let us begin by not neglecting to state the obvious. Diotima, the guide, instructs Socrates by telling him (at this point) about a lover who learns to love properly. This supposes (i) that Diotima is herself an excellent, knowledgeable lover in the ways of love and (ii) that she is presently exercising this virtuous love in a proper way. This means that, from the outset, proper love and love which guides another are two forms of love that are compatible. The two simple points are of considerable import. The former point means that the effective and knowledgeable love of the beautiful (ideocentric love) is the condition for the effective dispensing of information about the proper way to advance as a lover. The latter point means that an advanced lover can accept a less advanced (and less beautiful) lover and take this other person as an object of the exercise of their own proper love. Properly constituted love can love the other toward the beauty that is most lovable and most beneficial to the other. Such love is productive of a better lover and self and is itself an instance of the right operation of love.

In fact, a glance at Diotima's procedure reveals that she loves the other as she herself loves. She in effect duplicates the curriculum of love which is her own as well. But what is at once for her prosperity as an individual lover is
also for the other person's prosperity as well. In this sense, she can love the other as she loves herself because the very structure of love that provides for her own fulfillment is what is needed by the other. As such, Diotima can exercise her love for another who is needful and ignorant and yearning for a better life and do so for this other's own good.

Her instruction functions as an offering of love to the other. Her own love is put to service (therapeia) for the other. Its underlying assertion concerns the significance of the other as having his whole prospect of experience available to him. She is giving him the grandeur of his own human existence, making his own completedness and well-being of self available to him, by giving him access to the absolute, eternal goodness of kalon. Her own happiness can become his own happiness, his own means to the immortality of the virtuous. Diotima's love operates as saving love, a love whose aspiration strives to have the other liberate himself into prosperous loving activity.

This itself is accomplished by communication or conversations devoted to aid the other in understanding the nature of his own love and potential excellence. This procedure would indicate that interpersonal dialogue is at once the proper expression of virtuous love and the method by which such love becomes effective in relating to the other. From Diotima, through Socrates, Aristodemus, Apollodorus, to Plato, one senses that the coherence of this claim is
impeccable. Plato's own eros has been reflected into written works, not simply set to be generative of prescriptive-determined moral virtue, but generative of eidetic-determined virtue, the truly authentic and knowledgeable virtue, by employing mimetic discussions to exercise the soul of others, to strengthen and nourish it so that a person can then continue on in person toward more direct realization of virtue.

These points lead one to the realization that Diotima's way of ascent is a way to mutuality and likeness in the exercise of each person's eros. Sharing can begin as instruction and guidance. Progress will make the other person accessible to himself in his greater capacity to experience and live in excellence and it will thereby make each person accessible to the other as intimate, similarly constituted friends, co-workers, co-journeyers, and artists in the ways of love. The prosperous exercise of love is thus set to generate the prosperity of others by enabling them to become prosperous through the right exercise of their own love. This is the flourishing love of the virtuous and happy lover, existing in the form of self-regard and other-regard, both being operative for/in the good of kalon.

Attention to the example of Diotima, which is, of course, being duplicated by Socrates himself at the banquet, is sufficient evidence to support the thesis of this dissertation. It demonstrates by example that the love of the ideal and the love of other persons (in themselves, for their own good) are compatible forms of love and that the love of the ideal
operates as legitimately flourishing and excellent love when it devotes itself to generating further better instances of love and beauty through the effective communication of goodness and beauty. In effect, interpersonal love is the primary site of virtuous activity.

This, I think, is a substantial clarification of the nature of "Platonic love." I do not think that this position can be denied if one carefully looks at what is actually occurring in the performance of Socrates and Diotima, the way they operate as erotic agents, and the way they describe the operation of love. However, some explanation of the lack of perception regarding the nature of the interpersonal would seem to be called for in order to understand more thoroughly the dynamics of this situation which is so prone to misconstrual. This can be accomplished, I think, by attending to the way Diotima describes the affairs of the learning lover. Two points require clarification: (1) the transcendence of the lover beyond the mean and petty and utterly ignorant slave-love of the beautiful particular, and (2) the statement that the happy, blessed life is in contemplating (the Idea) beauty in itself. These two aspects of the ascent seem, to many commentators, to cinch the case for the exclusive ideocentric view. I think that these points only cinch the position, already admitted, that the understanding love of the ideal (the eidetic) is the condition for proper other-regarding, educative, edifying, other-enhancing love. So I will argue that love of the ideal without love of others is a
deficient form of erotic existence which is actually precluded by the dynamics of love of the ideal, i.e., love of the ideal is inherently determined to function in beneficial interpersonal ways. Or, to put it otherwise, the life of a virtuous person (arete) entails interpersonal love. Or, finally, the good life which is productive of the happiness which everyone individually desires is the life which operates by means of interpersonal love.

b. The Case of the Lover

The following "stairway" of objects is specified by Diotima as objects necessary to the erotic experience of a developing lover:

1. human physical bodies
2. psyches
3. practices, customs, laws, pursuits
4. branches (systems, areas) of knowledge
5. the "vast sea" of beauty
6. beauty in itself, pure, complete, immortal, singular, immutable

What I want to emphasize in my comments is not all of the particular details of the ascent passage but the kind of interrelationships that are involved so that an assessment of the overall significance of Diotima's "ladder" can be applied to interpersonal relations. Diotima emphasizes certain operations of erotic response which seem to be required at every step.

(i) A lover must learn to love the single object, be drawn to it, contact it, become intimate with it in order to learn from direct actual encounter the nature of its beauty. Discernment, appraisal of properties, passionate involvement go together.
(ii) Contact with the beautiful object stimulates the generation of conversations which are interpersonal communications of beautiful quality corresponding to the type of beauty encountered.

(iii) Detachment from the single object is mandatory at every stage. The lover must transcend the particular by recognizing that the beauty evidenced by one is related (akin) to the beauty of another. This "unification" is the condition for the realization of the complete quality of the kind of beauty involved. Freedom from the one is required in order that one can see, actually get an idea of, that whole class of beauty. Attachment to the single instance is persistently characterized as a kind of slavery and utterly ignorant behavior (210b) which makes proper progress and development impossible. The general or the universal is more highly valued as an object of erotic experience because it makes the whole of that kind of beauty available to the lover. Without it, he cannot know what this beauty is.

(iv) As the progression of kinds continues, so must the lover continually transform the character of his self-involvement and the quality of the intentional structure of his erotic relationship until a synoptic cognitive vision and love of the great "ocean" of beauty is achieved. Consideration of this totality, the one and the many of the whole, is the condition for the seeing of beauty itself.

c. Self-Regarding Eros

If one looks at the whole composition of the stairway, one can see the lover ascending, in a sense, through his own essential self, from the dimension of body to intellect. Yet, these objects (and their associated values) are independent objects in relation to which a person's cognition must receive its determination. So the ascent is also directly educational because it does provide knowledge. But these objects are the objects which constitute self-knowledge. That is, the whole ladder of objects is a mirror of one's own essential self. To learn of it is to come to know oneself. It does not contain anything other than a person's
ownmost possibilities as a psycho-somatic being. The primary ground is body. The psyche and individual personality is the next dimension. This itself is the basis for social practices and conventions. And these, in turn, allow for the development of fields of knowledge.

From this perspective, one can see that a lover who learns to love these objects will also be learning to love that which he himself most needs to become himself. Such love will bring about a completion and unification of the lover. Love of all these things beautifies his own self, brings beauty to him on every level (or of every kind). He partakes of it all, in particular and in kind, and the constitution of his own cognitive, emotive-volitional, evaluative, and productive capacities are formed in the love of these things. He can begin to exercise the totality of his capacities, to experience and refine himself in his entirety. Because the fulfillment of himself can come only when one's knowledge is complete, this obligates the lover to the complete ascent if he is to become himself, become virtuous, knowledgeable, and happy.

d. Toward Other-Regarding Love

The general point of the guidance, then, is to have the person contact every kind (eidos) of lovable object and learn to discern, feel, and be formatively affected by these instances of beauty through the actual exercise of the lover's own eros. It is the most existential type of education
because it will demand self-involving acquisition, discriminatory proficiency, and productive response on the part of the agent at every level of beauty. It will also disallow the fixation of the agent's erotic focus upon any one instance or kind of beauty throughout the whole progression. The ascent is the way of death because it requires the lover to die away from the reign of petty beauty. It is, by means of this detachment, a liberation of the lover to realize himself as a free lover of all beauty. The ascent functions as the way to learn about the whole spectrum of beauty as it manifests itself throughout human experience so that, by becoming nourished, formed, strengthened in these encounters of beauty, the lover will finally be in a condition to have come to him the insight into beauty as it is in itself, separate from its particular manifestations.

This process of realization is the beautification of the lover, the catharsis and purification of his soul. The agent comes to be empowered by the excellence he experiences and can thereafter carry with him and have opportunity to review, rehearse, and reenact, that magnificent beholding with others. He is thereby able and is himself moved to propagate true virtue on the basis of his own contact with and erotic involvement in kalon. He is able to become virtuous by generating it from his own conception (vision) of this excellence. So the ascent to beauty is also the ascent to the lover's own complete self. Production in (and according to) beauty-excellence itself constitutes the virtue of the
good life which is desired by every person. It is the realization of the happy life available to human experience. Happiness, however, is not a static state, it is the actual flourishing of the individual self, the prosperous way of existing as a metaxy being in association with ideal being. The contemplation or cognitive seeing of kalon on the basis of his own synoptic vision and his continued deliberations and discussions concerned with these experiences of beauty is the generative condition for true self-productive existence. His passion now sees its way to beauty, from bodily beauty to beauty itself.

The grandeur of the whole world of the experience of beauty available to human experience now becomes available to the lover in its unity and its multiplicity. This is the "on account of which" (heneka, 210e) and the "in order that" (hina, 211c) for which guidance has been given. A new feature of the metaxy becomes apparent. For the erotic self is now able to mediate between the absolute one and the many, between being and beings, the whole and the part, the eternal and the temporal of beauty. On the basis of a more thorough realization of his situation, the agent can now truly become proficient in dialectic, able to pass from one to two, from two to the many (211c), from kind to kind, from ultimate to instance. Guidance that will be productive of such results deserves the keenest attention by any lover.

It is important to emphasize that every instance of beauty identified by Diotima is in the province of human
competence. It is either a personal property, a social-political property, or an epistemic property. The design of the progression of love is obviously intended to acquaint the learner with the whole world of beauty open to humans. It is geared to produce a realization of that ideal beauty which can be experienced in every aspect of a person's own range of powers. The discernment and sentiment required is that which is concerned with those things that can definitely become a part of oneself as an individual agent. In this sense, the ascent comprises the challenge for the lover to potentiate all of his human capacities, from aesthetic eros, through social-moral eros, to theoretical eros. It is a program of self-realization, self-actualization, the result of which will be excellence of self. It would develop knowledge of all lovable objects, skill in appraising every kind of object, mastery in the employment of one's own erotic powers. Such Eros would be intelligent, temperate, and just eros.

At this point, let us distinguish between what it means for another person to be an object of love in the various phases of erotic development.

(i) In common erotic interrelationships the lover loves another for that person's qualities of beauty. The lover desires these qualities and wants them for his own. Common love is acquisitive love.

(ii) In aspiring, ascending eros the lover loves the other to appropriate the beautiful qualities in order to learn of beauty. The lover must achieve a separation between the eidetic quality and the person. Such separation exempts the beloved from carrying the burden of having to manifest beauty for the other, for a lover cannot legitimately seek what he needs in the other. The other is not that kind of
source. So, separation frees both lover and beloved from personally exploitive and obligatory love in order to seek the ideal itself (which they both need). This places the task of realizing the good upon the lover himself and cannot legitimately approach the other as the object possessing what the lover needs.

Let us now review what actually occurs in the relationships that are established and then transcended by the lover.

e. Interpersonal Progression

The lover is actually exercising his love in relation to another person. It is a live and real love affair. The lover learns to love this instance of beauty and then engages in communication with the other in aesthetic-poetic (210ab), ethical (210bc), and philosophical ways (210d). At each of these stages, the other is intimately involved and himself becomes the recipient of and participant in these efforts to articulate the beauty of that type of experience. So the beloved is at once exploited as an erotic object with dimensions corresponding to that of the lover's own experience and yet the beloved is implicated in the attempt to determine the significance of the experience. Both persons are to be bettered by the relationship and to progress on the basis of the conversations that are generated. The beloved is, in effect, integrated into the lover's enamorment with the Idea of each type of beauty. So, even though the lover uses the other for his own self benefit, significant reciprocity does in fact take place. It is the way that progress is to be effected. Such sharing exerts formative influence for the betterment of both individuals. It is the way that the
individuals in such a dual relation personalize the ideal for themselves. By contacting the form of beauty at the physical, psychical-moral, and theoretical level, the very form which is prized from the acquisitive, discriminative experience is what the lover attempts to commute in relation to the other by producing excellent discourse. The event of loving-knowing-producing on the part of the lover is decidedly interpersonal because the beloved too has a chance to learn from participating in the consummation of the eros that is at work. Even though personal detachment takes place at each step in the progress, this detachment is not to the detriment of either individual. It is in fact what is required for the proper development of each person as an erotic agent. Sympathy for the relinquished beloved is certainly out of place because the movement of transcendence releases the beloved to progress in proper fashion in his own right so that he too can have the experience of the realities of the world of beauty as a part of his own way of existing.

Erotic ties to a particular instance of beauty-love is deceptive because it fosters false expectations. Learning what can be loved is impossible for a fixated lover, anyway. One's own natural capacities yearn to have themselves exercised in relation to their appropriate kind of objects. A person as a whole self needs the whole world of beauty to meet his own erotic needs, to meet his own innate capacities, so that he can begin to function on all levels of his self
and attain integrity and justice within himself. Bonds to particulars constricts this and allows unjust projections onto the other.

In effect, then, the guidance is, despite appearances to the contrary, to the good fortune of everyone involved and Diotima is actually arousing eros in both individual participants in qualitatively beneficial ways. As Diotima duplicates her own erotic striving for the good of Socrates, so the lover in the instruction duplicates his own love in his response to the beloved at each level. The method appropriate for the lover's own advance is exactly the method that is appropriate to the advance of the other.

With respect to the various levels of experience, the productive responsiveness appropriate to the experience of physical beauty is aesthetic-poetic communication. For the experience of psychical beauty the conversations generated are of a moral type suited "for the betterment of the young person" (210bc). For the beauty of knowledge, magnificent accounts and beautiful thoughts in philosophy are proper. Whether as an aesthetic, moral, or theoretical partner, the experience of the developing lover involves, from bottom to top, an interpersonal relation which is essential to their development.

The quality of the communication is always intended to be beautiful and thereby beneficial at that stage. This is not only obviously so in the moral relationship, in the communication of philosophical understanding, the very exercise of
conversation is the way that the lover himself becomes nourished and strengthened so that at some time during this process, that single knowledge of the beautiful will suddenly dawn upon him and he will see: what beauty is. So, in the progress, each encounter and productive response contributes to the consummation of that stage and thereby enables the lover to transcend and build up that dimension.

From these considerations, two points can be extracted. Firstly, the relation to and transcendence of the beloved object is not to the detriment of that beloved. Secondly, transcendence is required by the very nature of the progress needed to develop the understanding of every lover. Each must, to become his own well-operating self, make the ascent. It is conditional to self-knowledge and progressively more authentic and beneficial interpersonal eros.

Thus, the fact that the lover transcends to the eidetic does not in itself mean that the other is excluded or relinquished in the long run. Transcendence is not the end of the matter. Authentic, holistic, and truly fulfilling interpersonal love only becomes possible if such transcendence is achieved.

f. The Blessed Life of Contemplation

As the lover comes to the place where the "vast sea" of beauty can be contemplated, this seeing "gives birth to many fine and magnificent discourses and thoughts in plentiful philosophy" (210d). It is important to note that the 'plentifullness' (aphthonos) of the love-of-wisdom is what it
is because it is (etymologically) free-from-envy. It is a love that does not need to contrive or barter. It is detached from lesser obligations and callings because it is now more purely devoted to beauty than ever before. In being so detached and allied to his high calling, the lover can find no place within himself for envy or jealousy. He is intent on increasing and nourishing his own strength in beauty by generating conversations befitting of greatness and directing himself toward further realization of beauty. The interpersonal dimension has now been exorcised of personal acquisitiveness in relation to the other. What counts now is understanding and cognitive vision provided by excellent and disciplined dialogue.

Exercising philosophy in this way, such a person will eventually come to experience the sudden, wonderful vision of beauty itself. This kalon has its being in itself separate from all else. It is pure, unchanging, the source of all other beauty, and an astoundingly wonderful sight to behold.

The experience of this beauty is truly consequential and of utmost worth for the erotic agent and the character of his continued existence. One should not underestimate the potentiating power and enhancement of a lover whose aspirations are so gracefully rewarded. Several observations about Diotima's description of this experience are, however, important to this study. She affirms that this beauty is the goal of the erotic ascent. It, more than any other experience, makes human life worth while (211d). It gives a wonderous vision of the nature
(phusis) of kalon. Yet, this experience is not static nor self-absorbing nor does it withdraw one from the world. It, like all other previous experiences of lesser kinds of beauty, stimulates productivity. What is distinct and unique about this experience is that it alone enables the lover to beget true arete and to rear up and foster this arete in his own continued existence. The gaze upon pure beauty reveals to the lover the beauty that human life offers.

Do you think, she went on, that the life of a person who could observe (view, contemplate) that object by the proper means and be with it is a petty life to live? (212a)

This contact frees the lover from his dependence upon derivative determinants of his behavior and allows him to generate virtue from his own intercourse with this ever-being (aei on) reality. By means of this contact and appropriation the lover himself becomes god-loved (dear to god: theophilei) and achieves above all humans the immortal life desired by every lover (212a).

At this point, the human philosopher and erotic daimonic agent of the metaxy appears to realize a secure relationship to the divine-eidetic realm of reality. Only now can such a person really begin to realize and communicate the eidetic and knowingly perform as a responsible and proficient hermeneutical agent. The proper lover is not evacuated from the world or his body, he rather becomes integrated into the real cosmos in a genuine self-authenticated manner.
As such, the vision of *kalon* is not isolated from the *genesis* type of existence which composes human life. It functions to form that genesis according to its own immediate and enduring impact upon human activity in its entirety. Such a human life can become beautiful and excellent by means of such divine influence.

There is no reason to suppose that this tremendously significant occurrence denies significance to interpersonal *eros*. The work of realizing the good life is still implicated in the communication of the good in the form of virtuous behavior.

It is of interest to note that the progress that is described in Socrates' second speech in the *Phaedrus* is just the reverse of the *Symposium* progression. Three scenes are depicted. The first is the cosmic setting with psyches soaring toward the *eide* and finding nourishment. The second setting finds the lover struggling in the world to master his erotic impulses in the face of beautiful beloveds. The final and concluding setting finds the proper lover loving beauty and the beloved to the betterment of both. In goodwill and as an enthused friend (*enteleon philon*), the lover serves the beloved to develop in character and practices, aiding the beloved in the experience of beauty to animate his psyche, and,

If now the better elements of the understanding that lead to a regulated life and to philosophy prevail, they will be blessed and live in harmony, master of themselves and being ordered, they hold in subjection the causes of evil in the psyche and give liberation to that which makes for virtue. (256ab)
These blessings, so great and so divine, the friendship of a lover (erastou philia) can confer upon you. (256e)

Proper love liberates the lover for just such interactions. The fact that life is made worth while because of the achievement of a vision of beauty, does not detract from interpersonal relations but in fact grounds this love imperishably and prosperously in such an existence as can be achieved in this life.

Neither the transcendence of the ascent nor the vision of the beautiful, then, have adverse effects on the nature of interpersonal love. Each in fact is an essential ingredient of the happy life which is most capable and productive of genuine philia.

6. Other-Regarding Love

What does loving the ideal self or the good of another mean? It means to love him in the light of the fact that life is available to him as a place filled with beauty to be experienced, a place where this very beauty can become constitutive of his ownmost being, a place where he can participate in the beauty of friendships that themselves duplicate in their own way the whole spectrum of beauty. It is to love the other toward the realization of this quality of life, to inspire the other toward this with realistic goodwill. It is to love the other with appreciation for whatever kind of beauty manifests itself in him.

By knowing what is possible for a person, one can see the other in the light of his yet-to-become self and, by
expressing the beauty and goodness of such possibilities, one can aid in the impetus of the other to realize these qualities for his own self-benefit. The other cannot rightly be reduced to the collection of his own matter-of-fact properties. The other, as a self, always transcends himself in his own potentiality. There is always more to the other than what he happens to be. He has other qualities available to himself as his very ownmost qualities which can come to form, complete, perfect his actual self. To relate to the other by excluding these other properties is to do an injustice to him. It is to use one's own love unjustly by not inviting the realization of such arete in some manner.

In this sense, it is not unjust to prize the other for what he is not-yet insofar as this not-yet is the not-yet-goodness of life which he truly needs. Such love is appraising: it loves and responds to the properties of the other. Such love is discriminative: it loves the other for his good, for his ideal self. Such love is generative: it works for the realization of this better self by conducting the other in conversation toward the good which would allow him to transform, better, and complete himself.

h. Some Gathering

To realize that eidetic love is inherently implicated in the venture of interpersonal, dialogical love is a realization with quite astounding consequences. For it means that a (Platonic) philosopher is, by his very make-up, one who flourishes in relationship to others. His virtue is exercised
in the very impetus of the generosity so forthrightly comprised in his own interpersonal projects to manifest the good and liberate others from inadequate love. Eidetic love is congenial love because it is fundamentally in contest with deficiency. It aspires to deliver the good. That is, the antique, other-worldly notions of Platonic philosophy: (1) the theory of Ideas which states that the ultimate and most lovable objects of experience are the eidetic objects; (2) the theory that knowledge entails virtue and virtue supposes knowledge, that both are constitutive of the good life; (3) the theory that the good life is one in which a person is devoted to the procurement of happiness, i.e., knowledge, i.e., the Ideas, these principles surprisingly show themselves to have very concrete, practical implications. For the actual setting and generative context in which these three principles are set to function and made effective is the context of interpersonal love. This is perhaps somewhat disconcerting because it means that the diagnosis of the health and vitality of philosophy is to be gauged by the actual, operative pulse of interpersonal eros. Philosophy exists in the form of erotic dialogue which is in pursuit of the realization of the good by "idealizing" (qualitatively) the participants into better selves and lovers. And this process itself extends to found a virtuous and flourishing community of lovers and friends. Such lovers are adventurers in the realization of the good life. They become, as Socrates indicates in the concluding remarks about his speech, valorous co-workers for the beautiful available to human experience.
FOOTNOTES

1 In the Phaedrus, the love of truly liberated individuals can only be achieved by respecting this personal integration process essential to individual development (256be).

2 Does this approach a fair approximation of a combination of eros and agape?

3 When it comes to a strict appraisal of human knowledge about gods, Plato willingly concedes that "we have never seen nor adequately conceived a god" (Phdr. 246cd). But, for him, this does not mean that certain concepts and way of speaking and thinking about the gods are not better or worse. Definite criteria can be specified, e.g., Rep. 379 f.

4 The transition from the mythical-cosmic dimension to the human personal and interpersonal dimension and on to the ideal-philosophical dimension is also included in the structure of Socrates' second speech in the Phaedrus. Although many of the details given in that speech are different from his Symposium speech, the similarity in overall structure is of interest because it encourages one to reflect upon further similarities and affinities in the details of the two speeches, especially since both speeches are about Eros and both are dedicated to Eros.

5 The opposites that Diotima specifies are relative contraries which are descriptive of ontological incompatibilities and not opposites in a strict sense qua logical contradictions. The strict opposite of immortal existence would not ordinarily be mortal but lifelessness, non-existence, inanimate.

6 In this respect, Plotinus goes quite beyond what Plato was himself willing to assert about the erotic psyche's capacity vis-a-vis the ultimate character of reality.

7 Cf. Empedocles and Eryximaches' speech.

8 In this passage, Plato uses both singular and plural forms of the term god.

9 It is insightful to correlate, as Rosen has done (p. 231f.), the birth of Eros to the transition from the pre-Olympian to the more civilized Olympian gods.

10 In the Philebus, when Philebus calls upon the goddess herself to witness his own exemption from the conversation,
Socrates replies to Protarchus: "We must try (to finish the
discussion), and let us begin with the very goddess who
Philebus says is spoken of as Aphrodite but is most truly
called Pleasure" (hedonen, 12b). Socrates is apparently
pointing out a common and significant identification that
people make between Aphrodite and pleasure. It is important
to note that nothing is said about pleasure in the Symposium
by Socrates. Note also Socrates' comment in the Republic:
"Do you know of greater or keener pleasure than that con­
cerned with things of Aphrodite (peri to aphrodisia)." This
mad love is contrasted with sober and right love (orthos eros).
Cf. Rep. 403a, 329ac, 559c, 580e, 606d.

In the Phaedo Socrates, after claiming that those who
engage in philosophy correctly study nothing by dying and
death, says specifically that such a person does not take
things of the body such as aphrodisian pleasures seriously
but rather turns away from the body to things of the psyche
(64).

It has generally been recognized that these traits
seem to be most clearly exemplified in human nature in the
person of Socrates. He is most often wandering about shoe­
less, unrefined, physically unattractive, always expressing
special needs, weaving some strategem, bold, eager for under­
standing, and, of course, a persistent lover of wisdom.
This is the first obvious indication that Eros is really a
creature in universal limbo because, while he is linked to
the divine world, he begins to manifest properties that
are simply characteristics of fallible, fragile, and incom­
plete human beings. The references to the mythical-heavenly­
divine realm are eventually made more determinant by the
explicit inclusion of the heavenly-divine elements of eide
which begin to dominate the ontological cosmic scene of Eros.
In addition, it is not clear why Eros is neither mortal nor
immortal, but intermediate. Is Penia his mortal side? If
so, how does she have access to a celestial feast and to the
gods themselves? Is Poverty part of the divine scene? If
she is divine, do the divine beings also have desires for the
good-beautiful. That the Ideas are determinants of the gods
is affirmed in Socrates' second speech in the Phaedrus.

I suppose that the answer to the dilemma posed by
perfect beings desiring something is substantially met by
maintaining that the gods are perfect because they not only
desire the most desirable, their desire obtains the good and
they execute the good so that their desire is really the
desire to continue to possess and do the good and this is a
natural-divine part of their perfection. A God could then,
a la Aristotle, quite reasonably be said to love himself
because he is perfect and lovable, because he desires and
wills to be what he is, now and always.
14. Cf. Rosen, Stanley, *Plato's Symposium*, p. 38. This book is a valuable scholarly text. It is, as far as I know, the most extensive philosophical commentary currently available on the Symposium.

15. The dialectical structure is not itself temporal but it is one of ontological structure, of eidetic interrelationships. The process of learning is a temporal process. A lover's striving for the good seems to be as close as Plato comes to including teleology in the processes of worldly, changing reality.

16. This analysis provides additional rationale for the maieutic interpersonal relationship inasmuch as productivity is a crucial part of the erotic endeavor.

17. It is of interest to note that these three arts are delineated and employed in the Sophist (219bc, 226c).

18. The conclusion is analytically true.

19. It should be recognized that it is not Diotima's immediate task to provide a demonstration for the immortality of the soul. Nor is it clear that her dramatic role in the dialogue would allow such a project. Plato does write the Phaedo to meet this issue, and the older and wiser Socrates is allotted the task. The fact that Diotima does not clearly establish the immortality of psyche may thus be accounted for by her dramatic character and task and, additionally, save Socrates from having to discuss this matter at the banquet along with Eros. Diotima's emphasis is upon the nature of eros as a response to beauty and death, each of which leads eros to "divine" immortality according to body and psyche. She does not argue for immortality but provides a description of a lover's attempt to deal with his metaxy. In addition, it is not clear that Plato presents the doctrine of the immortality of the soul as being absolutely and conclusively established. Despite the many considerations which favor this belief, Plato seems to concede that human knowledge of the psyche is not really adequate to the task of decisive proof of it.

20. As in the previous references to immortality, one can sense the rattle of something Anselmian here. Is 'immortality' a property word? Is it on a par, logically, with 'beauty,' 'goodness'? Can they be the objects of eros in the same sense? Additionally, one cannot argue that immortality is itself inherently desirable and that, therefore, eros necessarily love it. Only by establishing that immortality is good-beautiful can one establish its desirability. Dialectically it is conditional, receiving its merit from its linkage to the good.
21 Note the question Socrates wants to ask Gorgias: (ask him) Who are you? That is one destination to which Socrates' questions always lead.

22 The suggestion that a person have children so as to create a body-location for discarnated souls--one of which will soon be one's own--is not suggested by the text. It does, at any rate, suppose a kind of immortality of souls not mentioned by Diotima. Sexual productivity may have a rationale within a system of thought involving reincarnation, so it is thus compatible with some other material in Plato's dialogues.

23 Can one achieve immortality by acting viciously, unjustly, cowardly, impiously? This is not considered, but I do not think that it is objectionable to allow this, providing that a determination of what this immortality amounts to for both agent and the rememberer is clearly established, especially its ethical and pedagogical (dis)value.

24 One might reflect upon the fact that Socrates claimed that he himself was a gift of god sent to benefit others by means of his own gift of free examinations for the excellence of psyche. He even compares his situation to that of Achilles (Apol. 28c).
This dissertation has been an investigation of the interpersonal aspect of eros in Plato's Symposium. I have based my position on two different kinds of evidence available in the work, the nature of the interrelationships in the dramatic action of Socrates and the details of the speech that he presents. His own relationship to Agathon (especially) and his conversation prior to his speech is a preamble which prepares the way for his encomium. Both dimensions of evidence support the thesis that love of others (or other-regarding love) is an integral and constitutive element of properly developed erotic existence. This love loves the beautiful by opening up the prospects of the experience of this beauty to others in the form of dialogue. The following dialectical specification of eros—which is also the existential "route of canalization" for the erotic energy of an erotic agent—is as follows:

1. Eros is a desire
2. for the good (beautiful)
3. to become one's own
4. always (forever, immortally)
5. by producing (generating, birthing)
6. in and by the psyche
7. true virtue and beautiful logos
8. through love of wisdom
9. for the prosperity and fullness of the happy life.

This is the map of effective eros provided by Diotima and Socrates. It is the pathway to self-realization in the
active life of philosophy. The exercise of this love involves the establishment and refining of the following relational constituents:

1. intentionality;
2. reflexivity;
3. discrimination;
4. adjudication; (for more on 1-4, see p. 203-204)
5. in being analytic and normative in discernment, love becomes ordered or systematic in its orientation, developing a sense of priority in the establishment of any and every relationship;
6. this unification gives rise to a perspective that grows in synoptic power and wealth;
7. this wealth is "possessed" by generous productive activity in personal interrelationships.

On the basis of the foregoing work, I maintain that the following propositions are substantiated.

1. The ideocentric interpretation of the significance and status of other persons is mistaken. The beloved other is not simply an object of erotic utility nor is this other excluded from the affairs of right eros.

2. Idea-love and person-love are compatible; self-regard and other-regard are not mutually exclusive forms of love.

3. Idea-love is the condition for proper love of others.

4. Idea-love entails love of others inasmuch as it is virtuous and prosperous love which is generative of virtue. Conversely, non-interpersonal love is defective love because it is non-productive.

5. The other is loved for his own good, as he is in himself for his own completion and consequent knowledge, virtue, and happiness. He is loved with a love which encourages the other to realize his own better, ideal self.

6. Ideocentric love functions as generative, productive activity in relation to others in two basic forms: productive-guiding (elenctic, maieutic, etc.) love and, when the individuals involved are virtuous and knowledgeable, as flourishing, mutually productive friendship.

7. Proper philosophy involves the engagement of the lover in the activity, exercise, and expression of interpersonal love by means of rhetorically appropriate, psychologically
effective, and dialectically accurate dialogue which is envy-free and bounteous in its love.

Propositions 1-5 are sufficient to secure my own interpretation of the place and significance of interpersonal love in the Symposium. From this perspective one can see that Plato's works not only exhibit proper love at work, they actually provide evidence for the fact that right love inherently involves interpersonal love. They are themselves guides to better love and excellence of self. They are expressions of Plato's own love which can arouse other lovers to their own bountiful good. To see and appreciate the interpersonal aspect of eros not only sheds a different light on the nature of Platonic "Idealism" and Platonic "Rationalism," it provides insight into the fundamental rationale of his whole way of understanding and executing the primordial task of philosophy. For philosophy is loving and realizing the good and the beautiful, without exception or exclusion. As the way of philosophy is the way of dialogue, so the way of dialogue is the way of love.
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