1-1-2010

Other-Centred Love: Diotima's lesson to Socrates

Colin A. Redmond
University of Notre Dame Australia, credmond@student.nd.edu.au

OTHER-CENTRED LOVE

Diotima's lesson to Socrates

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements

For the award of the Degree of

Master in Philosophy

By

C.A. Redmond, BA (Phil), BA Hons (Religious Studies)

School of Philosophy and Theology

University of Notre Dame Australia

2010

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I set out to determine the possible motivations in response to which Diotima agreed to teach Socrates the arts of love. In the process I develop a broader understanding of Diotima and her natural, feminine complexity.

This understanding of Diotima suggests an interpretation of her teaching to show that, for all that can be said of love it is, importantly a re-orientation from self-centred interest to other-centred interest and it is this re-orientation which impacted on Socrates and by which he was persuaded.

Such an impact and its explanation offers a clear rationale for the changes which are observed in the way Socrates engages with his correspondents in the dialogues which we read in Plato's work.

The coherence between the motivations, the teaching and the result of the impact on Socrates suggests that Diotima was of singular importance in Socrates' life. Moreover, rather than a fictional creation, the complexity and integrity of her character supports the argument that she is drawn from life.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis is my own work and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution.

I further affirm that, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed

C.A. Redmond.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I appreciate this opportunity to express my gratitude to my Supervisor, Dr G Naimo, for his assistance, encouragement, constructive criticism and his patience. Inevitably crises occurred and unfailingly he led me forward.

I also add my heartfelt thanks to my wife, Dr Janice L. Redmond for her forbearance and support and to my children whose own academic load was, at times, diverted to accommodate my own efforts.

Among the many academics who have helped, encouraged and enlightened my journey, to one who above all inspired me, my gratitude remains extended to the late Associate Professor Anthony Imbrosciano. He restarted my stalled project and maintained my enthusiasm to complete what I had, finally, begun even up to his untimely death. *Nunc Antonio requiescat in pacem*.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Background.

Dame Professor Susan Greenfield, in an ABC Television interview[1] suggested that "an idea is something that overrides facts ... that sees a connection between one fact and another ... That's taking two separate facts and seeing that there's a connection. In terms of brain connections I think it's just that. I think it's the brain cells making connections that haven't been made before that come together and you suddenly say, "Wow." In this thesis I make such a link between the two otherwise discrete pieces of information; that Socrates' manner, when dealing with his correspondents, changed between his early dialogues and his later dialogues as recorded by Plato[2] and that Diotima of Mantinea taught Socrates the arts of love.[3]

1.2 Purpose.

The purpose of making such a link is to recognise the change in Socrates and explore the possibility that Diotima and her teaching may have been the catalyst initiating the change or at the very least a significant contributing factor. In his paper Talisse, remarking on Vlastos[4], says

> "Plato crafted his earliest dialogues while he was still very much under the intellectual influence of his teacher; as such, Plato's early dialogues feature a character named Socrates which, it is safe to assume, resembles the historical Socrates. As Plato grew older, however, he developed his own distinctive philosophical perspective. The dialogues Plato wrote in his later periods

[1] ABC, http://www.abc.net.au/V/enoughrope/transcripts/s198694.htm accessed 15th November, 2009.
[2] R.B. Talisse, *Misunderstanding Socrates,* Arion, vol.9, no. 3, 2003. (pp. 111-121).
[3] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M .Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (201D-212C).
[4] G. Vlastos, *Socrates contra Socrates,* in Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher, Cornell, New York, 1991. (pp 45 – 80).

> feature a Socrates but the Socrates in these dialogues is not the same philosopher as the Socrates in the early dialogues; the later Socrates does not resemble the historical Socrates but rather functions as the mouthpiece for Plato's own philosophy"[5]

If this is the case then it can be said that the change is not in Socrates but rather in the author, Plato. I can see that, after the death of Socrates, it would be profitable for Plato to continue writing about Socrates even if it was necessary to create philosophies to put into the old master's mouth. If Plato's authorship of the dialogue 'Alcibaides 1' is accepted then it may be interpreted as a defence of Socrates insofar as he is shown trying to lead Alcibaides away from the follies of political life which later cost Athens so dearly. Thus, the pupil Plato honours his master, Socrates. However, I am left questioning whether the Academy did not provide Plato with a more than adequate forum for announcing his own philosophies without seeking support for them by issuing them from the mouth of Socrates? Again, since Plato was a man of means, influence and honour, it does not seem likely that he would demean his relationship with his old stonemason teacher by falsely attributing argument to him, even if it was a good argument. In consequence, therefore, some additional clarification would be helpful.

In the context of the Socratic canon of Plato the appearance of Diotima, as a recollection of Socrates at a Symposium, is brief and, since she never reappears, it is difficult to attach great significance to her character. Small wonder, therefore, that her existence, except as a fictitious creation of the author, is considered speculative. That a Symposium was held to honour Agathon's achievement is more than probable but the manner of its reporting by Plato, a story of what somebody else said, renders it with a mythological quality such as casts even more doubt on the authenticity of Diotima. Nevertheless, she is one of only two women with a voice in the entire canon, the other being Aspasia of Miletus. Moreover, she is the only person to evoke from Socrates the statement "this is what Diotima told me and I am persuaded of it"

[5] R.B. Talisse, *Misunderstanding Socrates,* Arion, Vol.9, no.3, 2003. (pp 111-121).

(212B)[6] in response to her argument. Either of these events would single her out as important and, together, they surely command our attention. Add to these the additional factor that Socrates chose *her* as his teacher (207C)[7] and she is manifestly unique. The paradox of such importance being hidden in insignificance, however Platonically ironic, borders upon the Biblical and invites the expenditure of some effort in search of understanding.

If, as Talisse states, Socrates' employment of *elenchos* (interrogative style) was in his search for moral truth (and his interlocutors were left in a state of *aporia* (only certain that they did not know what they thought they knew))[8] then he acted out of self-interest. His later manner "delivers speeches to meek and compliant auditors on themes as diverse as art, mathematics, politics and metaphysics"[9] suggests that he is passing on knowledge to the benefit of his audience, by Socratic tradition, freely. This can only be described as other-centred interest. Thus, the change in Socrates is from self-centred to other-centred interest. The change in the nature of his audience as mentioned by Talisse (above) does not cohere with the concept of "joyful involvement in discourse" described by Hamilton[10] but, the audience not being considered an element in the change in Socrates, it will not be treated with in this thesis. Rather, it seems more important to ask if the change in Socrates from self-centred to other-centred could be attributable in any way to the teaching of Diotima? This would be significant because, in patriarchal Athens, to record the assistance given by Aspasia to Pericles in the matter of the speech in praise of the Athenian dead (Menexenus)[11] may be acceptable, to attribute to Diotima the power to effect so fundamental a change in a man of Socrates' stature in society would be, for Plato, to invite both ridicule and rejection. This, however, is what this thesis argues.

---

[6] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M .Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (212B).
[7] Ibid. (207C).
[8] R.B. Talisse, *Misunderstanding Socrates* , Arion, vol.9, no.3, 2003, (pp. 111-121).
[9] Ibid.
[10] E. Hamilton, *The Greek Way to Western Civilisation,* Mentor Books edition, W.W. Norton and Company Inc., New York, N.Y., 1942. (p. 21).
[11] Plato, *Menexenus,* in *Plato Complete Works,* J.M. Cooper (Ed.), Hackett Publishing Company Inc., Indianapolis, 1997.

The impact of this is to suggest that, aware of the political risks, Plato deliberately minimised the character of Diotima and buried the event of her teaching Socrates in the Symposium by immediately distracting the reader's mind with the noisy arrival of the drunken Alcibiades and the titillations of his lascivious memories of Socrates on campaign and elsewhere. It also suggests that the Socrates throughout the Platonic canon has some measure of coherence with Socrates the stonemason. Moreover, if consideration is given to the fact that the teaching of Diotima is the only thing of which Socrates is convinced (212B)[12] then one may be led to ask if the teaching of love transforming self-centred interest to other-centred interest is not at the heart of Socratic and Platonic thought?

1.3 Methodology.

In many forms of research it is sometimes appropriate to assign a value to an unknown and test it against a paradigm of knowns in order to determine its true value. Something similar must be done to pursue the goals of this research. Therefore, in this thesis the characters of Diotima and Socrates are lifted from their literary setting and treated with as ordinary human beings with all of their characteristics of life – the coquettish tendency of Diotima, a woman, treating with Socrates, a man, and the tradesman's inherent precision of a stonemason. Similarly Thrasymachus, Phaedrus and Alcibaides are recognised by their human responses as described in the relevant texts and, therefore, the texts are treated as reports rather than as the allegorical bearers of hidden agendas. The context in which this research is located is, in consequence, acknowledged to be hypothetical but against this is set the fact that, insofar as is possible, it does, nevertheless, conform to the history and context of the day as described by scholars of recognised authority, for example Jane Ellen Harrison, Edith Hamilton and J.B. Bury. The use of Greek, ancient or otherwise, will be avoided wherever possible and explanations of such words whose use is unavoidable will be given in parentheses in the text to share the writers understanding of their meaning. I accept that this may be seen by many to be an

[12] Plato, S*ymposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (212B).

overly simplistic approach and I acknowledge that view but, I would offer in justification, that prudence suggests, in the pursuit of the answer to this research question, the simple approach is likely to be the most appropriate approach if one is to avoid the many tempting diversions offered along the way.

In order to evaluate the human context, as opposed to the literary or philosophical context, of the question 'could Diotima influence Socrates?' I use, as my preferred methodology in this thesis, the application of Kipling's 'Six honest serving men'[13] to what is given in the texts as knowns for the characters and situations in question. This schema, the text of which is given in full at Appendix 'A', forms the basis of all ethical interrogations, including military, civil, legal and even those of reputable investigative journalism. It assumes the deterministic value of external influences upon human beings as actors and the value of the pursuit of motive and opportunity leading to an understanding of the most probable course of events. It is multidirectional in that, given an event, it may be used to determine probable causes and, given causes leading to motives it may be used to predict possible events. It can also be used, as in this instance, to present possibly useful explanations of past events. This interrogative technique does not claim to produce any absolute truth but, within the range of the vagaries of humanity, it does offer some acceptable 'intelligence' and understanding. Its process is demonstrated by the construction of a simple syllogism:

If it rains, I take an umbrella.

It is raining.

Therefore, I will take an umbrella

Or, in the case of this thesis

Mantinea is in Arcadia

People from Arcadia are Arcadian

[13] R. Kipling, *I keep six honest serving men,* in 'Just so Stories', Purnell Books, London, 1987. (p.60).

Diotima of Mantinea is, therefore, probably Arcadian.

This does not preclude the possibility that Diotima may have travelled from Egypt or Crete to Mantinea and then, after a time, travelled to Athens from Mantinea, thus, making her an Egyptian or Cretan who has come from Mantinea. However, in Plato's records of Socrates he is commonly more precise in his observations and Socrates, following his father Sophroniscus, was a stonemason and, therefore, accustomed to such precision as the trade demanded. Thus, when Socrates says that Diotima was 'a Mantinean woman' (201D)[14] we can rely upon him to give all the necessary detail and, with some confidence, accept that Diotima is an Arcadian and is, indeed, from the town of Mantinea.

This methodology, dealing as it does with questions of 'who' and 'why' and 'when' and 'how' is commonly reliant upon and, therefore, reasonably categorised as qualitative research. Both inductive and deductive reasoning are used to arrive at the conclusion. In the end qualitative research offers a proposition based upon reasoned evidence rather than a claim to any certainty. In this research such a proposition offers a perspective different from those held hitherto. It suggests a conclusion which, in itself, suggests possible answers to other questions such as the nature of Diotima – fact or fiction? Much more importantly, I suggest, it offers an understanding of Diotima's teaching as akin to that of other great teachers in different times and different cultural milieu. This understanding can be seen as considerably elevating Diotima's importance while at the same time highlighting humanity's limited ability to recognise the value of the lesson.

[14] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (201D).

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Review of Literature informing this research.

The literature which has been generated by this single work of Plato appears to stretch from the early Christian Neo-Platonists and their translations from the Library of Alexandria to the present day. There is a certain Socratic irony in seeking to add to what one can only perceive as a plethora of voices among which there are so many streams of dissent. Indeed, even a cursory review of so much literature would exceed the capacity of the present work. Much of the literature concerning the *Symposium* has been devoted to a search for an understanding of love, a common human experience which, nevertheless, remains a mystery. In consequence it has tended to direct its attention to the concept of Eros, the central theme of the *Symposium*. This research diverges from that common track and follows a different path to show that Diotima's motivation was probably derived from rather more fundamental sources even though her teaching did offer a more elevated experience as its goal.

The primary text used is the *Symposium* of Plato[15]. The Lamb translation in the Loeb Classical Series is chosen and, for the purpose of this research the section between paragraphs 201D and 212C is central. This text provides a popular and widely accepted translation in a convenient format and with appropriate Stephanus referencing. Although modern, it is conservative in its presentation and in its introductory notes. It adheres to a widely accepted understanding of Plato's effort. In this research the recollections of Socrates, referred to in the paragraphs noted above, are central since they reflect the effects of Diotima's teaching upon Socrates and the possible influence it may have had upon the changes noted in his behaviour which provoke this consideration of Diotima's motivation.

[15] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991.

Because the idea that is being pursued is, paradoxically, both ephemeral and robust it will also be sought in other treatments of the text. The Hamilton translation issued by Penguin[16] is sourced from an eminent scholar but is found to be couched in the popular language which befits the purpose of the edition. This provokes some hesitation in the research application as the following comparison illustrates.

"once, before the plague, when the Athenians had been sacrificing to avert it, she succeeded in postponing it for ten years" (202B) Hamilton.

"once, by bidding the Athenians offer sacrifices ten years before the plague she procured them so much delay in the advent of the sickness" (202B) Lamb.

The Hamilton version could be interpreted to attribute Diotima with some divine or magical power whereas the Lamb version is coherent with her role as a priestess and, moreover, as her name implies, one who has favour with the gods. The translation by Nehamas and Woodruffe[17] is, likewise, presented in a contemporary idiom which, while facilitating the reading by a modern audience results in some loss of detail and thus, perhaps, some misunderstanding. By way of example:

"She burst out laughing" (202C) Nehamas and Woodruffe.

"At this she laughed" (202C) Lamb translation.

While the former can be seen to express an emotional, human response the latter can also imply rejection of a specific, proximate concept. Such cross referencing, where appropriate, can and does, expand the range of human understanding, in particular of human behaviour, and thus provide a useful tool for this type of research.

Mythology by Harrison[18] is a text which was catalytic in the emergence of the research question being pursued in this thesis. In her book Harrison, working by means of a process involving not just textual research but this augmented by archaeology, artworks and the decorations produced upon artefacts of the period,

---

[16] Plato, *Symposium,* W. Hamilton trans., Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, London, 1973.
[17] Plato, *Symposium,* in 'Plato's Complete Works', J.M. Cooper (Ed), Hackett Publishing Co. Ltd., Indianapolis, 1997.(202C).
[18] J.E. Harrison, *Mythology,* Marshall Jones Company, Boston, 1924.

offers a radically different perception of Eros. As does Diotima, she rejects the notion of Eros as a god and offers in its place the concept of Eros as a 'ker' or sprite. This apparent diminution, on the contrary, expands the understanding of erotic love. It is shown to include the appreciative experience of all of the best aspects of being alive. For example, the experience of food, particularly when hungry, of wine when celebrating, of effort in sport and play, of friendly relationships, indeed all of the facets of a 'good' life can, thus, be deemed to be erotic. Whilst this can coincide with much in the early speeches in the *Symposium* it does rather set Socrates, and particularly Diotima, apart. Of particular interest is Harrison's adamant rejection of the idea that Eros has anything to do with the procreative passion between a man and a woman (p.107)[19] because this, if accepted, leads to an important re-evaluation of Diotima's teaching.

The characteristics of Diotima as a priestess may be understood by reference to an illuminating work of Harrison, *Prolegomena to the study of Greek religion.* [20] Hamilton [21] points out (p.24) that Greek men kept their formal religion separate from their ordinary life but Harrison[22] gives a more detailed gender differentiation in that men sacrificed to the gods in expectation of a return that is out of self-interest, whereas women dealt with the gods in a more intimate way on behalf of their group, that is out of other-centred interest. This variation in fundamental attitude is recognised as bearing upon the content as well as the style of Diotima's teaching and is, therefore of central importance to the context of this research.

The validation of the answers to questions asked of the actions within the text starts with reference to the social background of the time. The first of three important texts used for reference in this area was Hamilton's *The Greek Way.* [23] A well known

---

[19] J.E. Harrison, *Mythology,* Marshall Jones Company, Boston, 1924.
[20] J.E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the study of Greek religion,* Meriden Books Inc., New York, 1955.
[21] E. Hamilton, *The Greek way to western civilisation,* (Mentor edition) W.W. Norton and Co. Inc., New York, 1955. (p 24).
[22] J.E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the study of Greek religion,* Meriden Books Inc, New York, 1955.
[23] E. Hamilton, *The Greek way to western civilisation,*(Mentor), W.W. Norton and Co. Inc., New York, 1955.

scholar of Greek history and mythology, in this book she distinguishes Greek civilisation from others in a particular way. By comparing it with Egyptian civilisation of the same period she draws a sharp distinction between the Egyptian pre-occupation with the spirit and death and the Greek pre-occupation with reason, or mind, and the celebration of life. She draws attention to the Egyptian priesthood and its dominating effect upon the people and notes the limitation of power, by comparison, attending the Greek priesthood. In this she seeks to show the Greeks as people of the mind rather than the spirit and this differentiation also bears upon the teaching of Diotima.

Antony Andrewes, an equally well known Greek Scholar, in the second text, his book *Greek Society*[24] takes the topography of Greece as the cradle of its culture. Of particular interest to this research are the geographic location of Arcadia and the long term impact of the Minoan and Mycenaean cultures on the Arcadian population. The combination of these influences, filtered, as I will show, by the terrain, led to a specific world view in their community which underpins and informs Diotima's teaching. It is, in fact, this which leads me to argue for a separation of focus as the offering of Diotima's teaching as recalled by Socrates.

H.D.F. Kitto's book *The Greeks*,[25] the third text in which I place considerable trust, considers the Greeks from a different point of view, their own, as the only 'free' people. He considers them, appropriately from the formation of the people to the decline of their *polis* or city-state structure. More importantly, as he describes their structures formulated by reason, he provides this thesis with examples of the rigidity which derives from their natural focus on the individual, even when in relation to the state. It is this focus, manifest in the early speeches in the *Symposium*[26] which is, I argue, being attacked in Socrates' recollections of Diotima's teaching.

[24] A. Andrewes, *Greek Society,* (Pelican edition, 1971), Hutchinson, London, 1967.
[25] H.D.F. Kitto, *The Greeks,* Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, London, 1987.
[26] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991.

There is much written about Arcadia and one can readily recognise two distinct Arcadias. One is located to the west of Mycenae, on a high plain surrounded by mountains. The other is in the minds and hearts of humanity and it is an idyllic place where the joys of life are everlasting. Such a place is represented in Nicolas Poussain's painting of The Arcadian Shepherds which can be interpreted as indicating that the dead are in an eternal Arcadia. It is also clearly represented in the *Eclogues* of Virgil [27]. There is a link between these two. Physical Arcadia was an inaccessible place where life was lived in small communities of shepherds. They shared their difficulties and their joys and celebrated both in poetry and song. It is this celebration, found in the *Eclogues*, that is longed for by humanity and which underpins Diotima's thought as an Arcadian. Many people dream of variations on this theme but Socrates was *'persuaded of it'* (212B)[28] and it is for this clarification that Virgil's book is important.

A History of Greece by J.B. Bury[29] provides a detailed history of Greece and her evolution from the Neolithic period to the death of Alexander the Great. The methodology chosen for this research has required such an authoritative point of reference for validation purposes. Bury's text is reliable and well supported by archaeological evidence. The third edition has many revisions including those resulting from Sir Arthur Evans excavations on Crete and also those derived from the accumulation of new evidence which affect other areas and periods. It is my opinion that the ongoing search for understanding is one of the great pleasures of research into antiquity even if it reverses a previously held opinion.

Many links are made between Minoan Crete, Mycenae and Arcadia and, as a source of understanding these links, *Prehistoric Crete* by R.W. Hutchinson[30] was most valuable. As an archaeologist who was curator in Crete between 1934 and 1947, his knowledge and understanding of Minoan Crete is authoritative and clear. "Hera and

---

[27] Virgil, *The Eclogues,* C Day Lewis trans., Jonathon Cape, London, 1963.
[28] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (212B).
[29] J.B. Bury, *A History of Greece,* 3rd Edition, Revised R. Meiggs, McMillan, London, 1955.
[30] R.W. Hutchinson, *Prehistoric Crete,* Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, London, 1965.

Themis" he notes "seem to reflect the great Mother goddess of the Minoan Cretans" (p.199) and I will argue that this figure was greatly influential upon Diotima and, through her, also upon Socrates.

For the purpose of identifying and showing the change in Socrates' manner three dialogues are considered. The first is the dialogue with Thrasymachus which occurs in Plato's *Republic*. [31] The Lee translation in the 1955 Penguin Classic edition was used as the primary text for convenience. For comparison, however, reference was also made to the translation by F.M. Cornford.[32] As he was a colleague and sometime student under Harrison I felt that a commonality of mindset might have given a more incisive view of the material but, in the end, for my purposes I was adequately served by Lee.

The second dialogue is the dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus which constitutes the Platonic text *Phaedrus* [33] This edition is also in the Loeb Classical Library series and is of the same quality with Stephanus numbering and valuable introductory notes. The work is described in the introduction as "pre-eminent among the dialogues of Plato for the variety of its contents and style"[34] characteristics which are of singular interest to this research. The dialogue, although initiated by Phaedrus on the topic of erotic love, is taken in several different directions by Socrates and this, together with the mixed methods of his presentation are indicative of him in a state of transition.

The third dialogue chosen is that between Socrates and Alcibaides and is known as Alcibaides 1[35] and, although Plato's authorship is questioned by Schleiermacher in

[31] Plato, *The Republic,* H. Lee trans., Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, London, 1955.
[32] Plato, *The Republic,* F.M. Cornford trans., Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1951.
[33] Plato, *Phaedrus,* H.N. Fowler trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1995.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Plato, *Alcibiades 1,* in The dialogues of Plato, vol. 1, B Jowett trans., Sphere Books, London, 1970.

Friedlander (p.231)[36] it is affirmed by Iamblichos on the same page. Although the matter is still the subject of discussion I have chosen to accept it as the work of Plato for the purposes of this research. I have used the Jowett translation and have found it suitable for my purpose notwithstanding that in the 1937, Random House edition of his text Jowett has a marginal note with which I totally disagree. I believe that had Jowett been able to recognise the changes effected in Socrates as they are presented in this thesis he may have recognised that Socrates was motivated very differently from the manner imputed by his marginal note.

For the purposes of widening the field of reference and of gaining a better understanding of Socrates the stonemason, rather than Socrates the philosopher idealised by Plato, I have used *Socrates, a source book* compiled by Professor John Ferguson.[37] This proved to be a useful text produced for use by the students of the Arts Foundation Course of the Open University in the United Kingdom. Apart from his own research Ferguson has drawn upon Diogenes Laertius, Plato and Xenophon. He has also used Aristophanes, Andocides, Isocrates and Aeschines among many others. Of value to this research, apart from some specific elements, is the facility offered by a text of this nature to see the gloss applied to Socrates by different writers in different eras. By way of example Origen of Alexandria used Socrates as an example of one who was treated in the same way as a Christian and, therefore, for his own purposes, Origen drew parallels between Christians and Socrates (Para Celsus 1, 3 cited in *Socrates a source book* (p.307).

The text *On Plato's Symposium* written by Professor Leo Strauss and edited by Seth Bernardete[38] was published by the University of Chicago Press in 2001. A record of a series of lectures given by Professor Strauss on the *Symposium* by Plato it provided an in depth analysis of the text with three of the chapters, or lectures, devoted to Socrates contribution. Although Professor Strauss approached the Platonic work

[36] P. Friedlander, *Plato, the dialogues ... first period,* H. Meyerhoff trans., Pantheon, Random House, New York, 1964. (p 231).
[37] J. Ferguson, *Socrates, a source book,* McMillan and Co, London, 1970. (p 307).
[38] L. Strauss, *On Plato's Symposium*, S. Bernardete Editor, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001.

from a very different perspective to my own, his observations were both stimulating and thought provoking and reinforced my will to complete my own work.

Published in the same year was Professor Martha Nussbaum's book *The Fragility of Goodness.*[39] This book also is one which cannot be overlooked by anyone giving consideration to the *Symposium* because of the depth of Professor Nussbaum's insight in her contemporary approach. I found myself to be in close agreement with her but, towards the end, our paths diverged. She states,

> "I believe that a deep understanding of the *Symposium* will be one that regards it not as a work that ignores the pre-philosophical understanding of *Eros* but is one that is all about that understanding, and also about why it must be purged and transcended, why Diotima has to come once again to save Athens from a plague (perhaps also why she can't save us – or at any rate can't save *us*)"[40]

It is here that I find myself in disagreement for, as my thesis hopes to show, Diotima's teaching is much greater in scope than is indicated by this position statement.

L.A. Kosman[41]states "To recognise my erotic stirring as fundamentally directed toward my true being is to recognise, with Aristophanes, Eros as that "great god who leads us... who restores us to our native selves, to our true and original nature" (p.60).

This draws attention to an interesting point in the speech of Aristophanes which can be interpreted as a precursor to the teaching of Diotima, that is that Eros is a tool of love rather than love itself. Moreover, 'our true and original nature' is itself open to interpretation, possibly as humanity before the biblical 'Fall'.

---

[39] M.C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.
[40] M.C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001. (p.167).
[41] L.A. Kosman, *Facets of Plato's Philosophy,* Van Gorcum, Assen, 1976.

In '*The individual as an object of love in Plato'* in Vlastos' '*Platonic Studies'*[42] he draws from his concept of a Platonic tripartite ontology the problem that this "would burden the Platonic Form with the logical difficulties of self predication" (p.106). This parallels the philosophical/theological problem of 'causa sui' and its argument is no part of my thesis. However, given that the absolute beauty which Diotima describes (210E ff) can be perceived as the primary or fundamental Platonic Form whose attributes are comparable with those of the monotheistic 'causa sui' it might quite reasonably be deduced that we are dealing with a metaphysical concept which is not amenable to rational explanation. In light of Diotima's occupation this would be a wholly appropriate topic for her. That Socrates the rationalist was convinced suggests that there was something beyond rational argument in her teaching and this must be sought from sources other than the simple text itself.

Talisse[43] picks up on Vlastos' recognition of changes in Socrates' methodology over time from *elenchos*, a vigorous dialectical method, to 'doctrinal' a sharing of information by way of lecture. The ten Theses Vlastos offered on these changes are unilaterally rejected by Talisse who doubts "the prospects of arranging the dialogues in chronological order" (p.112). I do not consider myself to be capable of arguing for or against a chronology but believe that this thesis does offer a plausible explanation for the changes observed in Socrates' relational methodology in various dialogues at various times.

In the Paper '*Physician, Heal Thyself'* [44] Professor Swearingen presented a most stimulating lesson. Rather than bind the mind into the confines of argument, however erudite, she posited a series of challenging concepts and associated questions. Inevitably, the reader's mind tries to make connections, often in the manner proposed by Baroness Greenfield, which achieve new ideas and a new perspective is born. The paper itself functions as Perictone, as Socrates' mother and as Socrates himself as a midwife of ideas. On page two, for example, two statements, each worthy of at least an individual paper by way of elucidation, are:

---

[42] G. Vlastos, *Platonic Studies,* Princeton University Press, Princeton N.J., 1973.(p.106).
[43] R.B. Talisse, *Misunderstanding Socrates, Arion* , vol.9, no.3, 2002, (pp 111 – 121).
[44] C.J. Swearingen, *Physician, Heal Thyself: Diotima teaches Socrates a lesson in love,* in A. Lunsford (ed.), *A Lover's Discourse : Diotima, Logos and Desire,* Reclaiming Rhetorica, Pittsburgh, 1995.

“The harmony that must be sought lies in teaching our physical and spiritual natures to work together.”

and

“Her [Diotima] message: you cannot get to the Greater Mysteries before you have endured the lesser.”

To recognise this latter as having been repeated by both Charles Darwin and Erik H. Erikson in the form of the Epigenetic Principle almost 2500 years later must surely be noteworthy? This paper was indeed a stimulus to my own research.

Naturally there have been a number of other sources which have been read both before and during the production of this thesis but those listed are the ones which have been the most instrumental in its development.

Chapter 3 – Diotima

3.0 Introduction.

In this chapter I consider aspects of Diotima and what we might know of her that would inform us as to her likely motivations as a teacher of Socrates. From the text it is known unequivocally that she is "a woman from Mantinea"[45] and that she was instrumental in delaying the onset of the plague in Athens[46]. However, by a process of deduction, it is possible to consider two other characteristics. Mantinea is in Arcadia and thus it is likely that Diotima is Arcadian. Moreover, since the advice she gave the Athenians was related to sacrifice and rituals[47] it can reasonably be deduced that she was a priestess. In consequence I will primarily consider these characteristics: that Diotima was an Arcadian woman priestess.

3.1 Characteristics of Diotima.

The characteristics of Diotima are briefly indicated in the Introduction to this chapter. In this section I want to delineate them further. It is important to recognise the precision of Plato as a writer, particularly where these two women are concerned. Both are resident aliens in Athens and therefore are identified by their place of origin. Aspasia, consort of Pericles, is recognised as being from Miletus[48]. Diotima is from the town of Mantinea which lies in Arcadia. I trust that Plato and Socrates would have been precise in her case and identified her as 'the Egyptian woman from Mantinea' had such or similar been the case. Mantinea being in Arcadia I am prepared to accept that Diotima was Arcadian by birth. Inherent in this I recognise that she represented a relatively isolated community whose language and culture had not suffered the ravages of the Dorian invasion[49]. Further, as a child of Mantinea she represented a community isolated, even within the Arcadian community, by virtue of

---

[45] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (201D).
[46] Ibid. (201D).
[47] Ibid. (201D).
[48] Plato, *Menexenus,* in *Plato Complete Works,* J.M. Cooper (Ed.), Hackett Publishing Co. Inc., Indianapolis, 1997.
[49] J.B. Bury, *A History of Greece,* 3rd edn., Revised R. Meiggs, McMillan, London, 1955. (p 60).

their spiritual practices which led to them being perceived as a city of seers and prophets. With such a background she would have been recognisably different in Athenian society.

In like manner she was different as a priestess. Athens was, by tradition, under the protection of Pallas Athene and the noble families whose "general expertise was that they knew the right ritual and could conduct it" provided the *exegetai* [50]. That Diotima's advice on matters of ritual and sacrifice in the matter of the plague[51] might suggest that there was doubt in the minds of some people about the protective value of the recommended rituals and sacrifices of Pallas Athene. Certainly it was Diotima's advice that was remembered as successful in Plato. This prompts the question that, if not Pallas Athene, which deity did Diotima serve? I will argue that it was Aphrodite.

The importance of Diotima's characteristic as a woman is manifold given that women were not commonly held in high regard in Athens. "A woman could not inherit or hold property or enter into any transaction that involved more than the value of a bushel of grain."[52] "Intellectual discourse with the other sex was wanting entirely . . . Indeed her duties and achievements were hardly considered, by the husband, in a much higher light than those of a faithful domestic slave."[53] This invisibility of women in Athenian society is illustrated by the appearance of only two women in the Socratic canon of Plato – Aspasia of Miletus[54] and Diotima of Mantinea[55]. Thus, the contribution of a woman in this context signals a matter of some importance. It is, I suggest, noteworthy that both relate to spiritual or non rational topics, that is Aspasia constructed the speech in praise of the Athenian dead which was delivered by Pericles and Diotima's topic, love, is hardly to be thought of as rational.

---

[50] A. Andrewes, *Greek Society,* (Pelican edition, 1971), Hutchinson, London, 1967. (p 263).
[51] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (201D).
[52] A. Andrewes, *Greek Society,* (Pelican edition, 1971), Hutchinson, London 1967. (p 124-5).
[53] E. Guhl & W. Koner, *The Greeks, Their Life and Customs,* Senate, Twickenham, Middlesex, 1994. (p 185).
[54] Plato, *Menexenus,* in *Plato Complete Works,* J.M. Cooper (Ed.), Hackett Publishing Company Inc, Indianapolis, 1997.
[55] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (201D – 212B).

3.2 Diotima the Arcadian.

In order to consider Diotima the Arcadian in the context of a possible source of motivation it is necessary, firstly, to answer the question 'what is an Arcadian' and this is commonly answered in terms of in what ways they are different from us. We often differentiate by physical appearance but we differentiate more accurately, I suggest, by behaviour and this, commonly is a manifestation of the effects of history and culture. By way of example, a long cultural history of valuing the human characteristic of honour prompts even a 21st century Japanese businessman to bow when he is introduced to people although such an acknowledgement has long died out from western business cultural practices. In consequence, therefore, I will consider the topography and historic events in Arcadia and how they combine to influence what it means to be Arcadian.

Arcadia consists of a plain at a height of some 1000 metres surrounded by mountains which rise to a height of 2000 metres. Historically the soil quality on the plain was too poor to support arable farming and the climatic conditions left it dry in the summer. It was, however, suitable for grazing sheep and goats which could be driven to higher ground in the summer where melting snow provided water and local vegetation provided forage for the animals. Thus the topography and climatic circumstances led to the development of a pastoral lifestyle of great simplicity which was satisfying to the people "who claimed to be 'autochthonous' or born of the soil . . . who were settled in Arcadia before the birth of the moon."[56] Cheese and wool were the principle products and these were exchanged "for the oil and cereals grown at lower levels."[57] Because it was remote, inaccessible and the land of such poor quality Arcadia was of no interest to expansionists nor to invaders. As Bury,[58] among many other historians, noted, the location of Arcadia was such that when the Dorian invasion overwhelmed the original Greek language it was retained in Arcadia where it developed, interestingly, into what became known as the 'Arcadocypriot' dialect. In such circumstances it is not surprising that the Arcadian population

[56] A. Andrewes, *Greek Society,* (Pelican edition, 1971), Hutchinson, London, 1967. (p 14).
[57] Ibid. (p.10).
[58] J.B. Bury, *A History of Greece,* 3rd edition, Revised R. Meiggs, McMillan, London, 1955. (p 59).

evolved into the simplistic, contented pastoralists whose pace of life was regulated by seasonal change and the gestation period of their flocks of animals. Given that good seasonal grazing and weather together with good fecundity for their sheep and goats lay in the gift of their deity, Aphrodite, it is also not surprising that she should be their divine patroness to whom their most serious supplications would be addressed.

They traded the product of their labours for the oil, cereals and foods they could not produce for themselves[59] and it must be recognised that this involved a trek up the range of mountains on their own side and all the way down the mountains on the other side with the journey reversed on the way back. The mountains, I argue, thus provided a natural filter for the imported goods which could impact upon the Arcadians' lifestyle. For example the weapons appropriate to a shepherd's defence of himself and his flock against the depredations of such wild animals as might attack them would not compare by weight with the weapons used by a soldier in war, for which they would have no use. Thus, grain and oil which would sustain the community would not be sacrificed from a return load for unnecessary weaponry. It would be equally difficult to justify the carriage of ornaments of gold or silver and jewellery for which they had equally little use. Indeed, only the starving would have a rational motive to attack them upon their journey in either direction. By this pragmatic filtration enforced by the terrain the tenor and quality of their lives would have been protected through many generations.

Even a cursory look at the history of international trade highlights the fact that, along with trade goods, aspects of culture is also exported. There was extensive trade between Crete and Mycenae and aspects of the Minoan culture became shared as a result. Indeed, after the cataclysm of Thera and its impact upon Crete, Mycenae became the centre of Minoan culture. "The most permanent feature of Minoan culture, however, was their religion which deeply affected the classical religion of Crete and to a lesser degree that of Greece as a whole."[60] "The chief divinity seems to have been a nature-goddess, mistress of animals . . . who symbolised the descent of a deity; she was served by priestesses. She was closely connected with a male

[59] A. Andrewes, *Greek Society,* (Pelican edition, 1971), Hutchinson, London, 1967. (p.10).
[60] R.W. Hutchinson, *Prehistoric Crete,* Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1965, (p.23).

divinity who seems to have been subordinate to her."[61] As pointed out in the previous paragraph, the Arcadians did not carry anything heavy that did not sustain the life of their community back up to their mountain home but an idea has no weight. This idea, with the power of religion, could be seen to complement their lifestyle and meet their needs for a deity as they arose.

Arcadian men tended their flocks upon whose performance the wellbeing of their entire community depended. To have a goddess who is a mistress of animals to call upon in times of need was excellent. That she was also a nature goddess was also advantageous because she could ensure supplies of water and grazing and fertility in the flocks as well. That she was served by a priestess meant that care of the goddess was, like the Minoans from the earliest time, a wifely function with shrines in the home to which she attended.[62] Now, as in the earliest Minoan culture, men were responsible for material things and women were responsible for spiritual things (as can be recognised to be the case in the instances of Diotima and Aspasia in Plato's Socratic canon). Harmonious relationships dominated and music and the arts flourished. As can be recognised without difficulty, the scene was set as for the *Eclogues* of Virgil and a life of concern for others motivated by love was the norm for all. It is from this ground of concern that Diotima the Arcadian would have been motivated to operate.

3.3 Diotima the priestess.

What of Diotima the priestess, was she, perhaps, of a proselytising bent – Aphrodite or Athena? It would be surprising if she were not, even in days when people were more attentive to their gods. Notwithstanding the reputed rustic, simplicity of Arcadia, in Athens Diotima was serving her goddess amongst a people who, while acknowledging their gods, were seeking by intellectual effort, to provide rational explanations for the events of their daily lives and the world around them. Indeed, in accord with humanity's tendency to make its gods relevant to its own age, Athena was known as the goddess of wisdom, the pursuit of many Athenians of that age.

[61] J.B. Bury, *A History of Greece,* 3rd edition, Revised R. Meiggs, McMillan, London, 1955. (p.19).
[62] J.B. Bury, *A History of Greece,* 3rd edition, Revised R. Meiggs, McMillan, London, 1955. (p.19).

"Athens had entered upon her brief and magnificent flowering of genius which so molded the world of mind and spirit that our mind and spirit even today are different. We think and feel differently because of what a little Greek town did during a century or two, twenty-four hundred years ago."[63]

If it is accepted that the Arcadian religion evolved from the Minoan of early Crete then the dominant deity was the nature goddess whose image was the female donor of the goods of the earth which gave humanity not only the means of survival but also joy. Indeed, among the early rituals indicated by the archaeology were those practices which led to altered states of consciousness engendered by movement, light and dark[64,65] including ecstatic states. Arcadia did not suffer the cataclysmic events which beset Crete and the passage of time in their own environment led to the evolution of the deity, formerly deemed to be Rhea, into the more gentle and part human Aphrodite. Her origin was preserved in the myth of her birth on Crete although some stories suggest Cyprus, another trading partner of Minoan Crete which also preserved the pre Dorian invasion language, and other stories suggest the island of Cythera. The attributes attending Aphrodite, unending beneficence and the great natural beauty which won for her the judgement of the shepherd Paris over Athena and Hera, together with her motherhood of Eros, all combined to bring her closer to the heart of the Arcadians than the more remote, primitive deity of earlier times and far off land. Thus did she attract more loyalty and devotion than other deities.

Harrison[66] states "The real object of adoration to the Athenian was not a goddess but the city itself "immortal mistress of a band of lovers" and in the passion of this adoration they would lift her from all earthly contact." and again "It is this that lends to the figure of Athena an aloofness . . . she is Reason, Light and Liberty, a city." Acceptance of this view makes it easier to explain the apparent failure of the priestesses of Athena in their supplications to avert the plague but, at the same time,

---

[63] E. Hamilton, *The Greek Way,* Mentor by arrangement with W.W. Norton and Company Inc, New York, 1957.(p 7).

[64] E.R. McGowan, *Re-embodying the sacred gestures of Neopalatial Minoan Crete,* Archeological Review from Cambridge, Issue 21.6, Nov.2006. (pps 32 – 57).

[65] F. Matz, *La Crete et La Grece Primitif,* Albin Michel, Paris, 1962. (p.106 – fragemente de fresque provenant du palais de Cnossos).

[66] J.E. Harrison, *Mythology,* Marshall Jones Coy. Boston, Mass, 1924. (p.101).

easier to understand the success of Diotima's appeal to the more human goddess, Aphrodite. There is, however, an important difference in this circumstance which, I claim, is worthy of note. As Harrison points out[67] the object of Athenian adoration was the city itself and this is simply of human construction whether one considers the product of the stonemason's labour in building the structure or the work of the lawmakers who constructed the fabric of the society. Thus there is an almost narcissistic self interest in the object of their adoration. The adoration provoked by Aphrodite, however, is focussed on 'other' rather than 'self' and one can see that the sacrifice and rituals recommended by Diotima in defence against the plague are likely also to be other-centred, that is in the interest of the whole population, not just the individual. Pragmatic speculation suggests that a ritual of hygiene may well have been an element in Diotima's prescription and human nature, having been afforded protection for so long a period is likely to have become complacent and lax in its practice allowing the plague a degree of success in the end. This theme of 'other-centred' versus 'self-centred' is, as becomes increasingly apparent, central to Diotima's teaching.

Coming, as she did, in the role of a priestess to Aphrodite, Diotima was most likely to have interacted with the female rather than the male population, hence her anti-plague recommendations, perhaps bringing higher standards of hygiene to domestic life where it mattered most. However, the power latent in the knowledge she bore would only be fully realised in their patriarchal society if the knowledge was propagated by a man, specifically a man who could understand the logic of an apparently illogical process. The goddess she served, as she had already learned, met all of humanity's needs in the way in which humanity experienced those needs; water for thirsty, food for the hungry, joy for the sad, company for the lonely and love for those whose heart was predisposed to receive it. Whilst Aphrodite gave all things to all people she gave her best only to those who sought her gifts from the ground of other-centredness, that is from the same ground from which she herself gave. Her son, Eros, gave lesser gifts to those who were seeking them from the ground of self-centredness but those gifts, being finite, were less durable and in constant need of renewal. If, in the process of the experience of these transitory gifts, the ground of

[67] J.E. Harrison, *Mythology,* Marshall Jones Coy. Boston, Mass, 1924. (p.101).

desire shifted to that blest by Aphrodite, the ground of other-centredness, then she might, at her will, enhance the gift proportionately. To the initiated, within the altered states of consciousness obtained by sacred ritual, was the knowledge of immortality and with that knowledge the experience of metanoia. This was the knowledge with which the priestess Diotima was pregnant, this and the knowledge that it was only capable of apprehension by the heart rather than the mind. Over two millennia later the French, aeroplane pilot Antoine de Saint-Exupery wrote "Only with the heart can one see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye"[68]offering identical wisdom in the form of an aphorism.

3.4 Diotima the woman.

Diotima was Arcadian by accident of birth and a priestess by vocation and training but beyond both of these she was a woman. What does it mean to be a woman is not a question that a woman can answer fully, much less can it be approached by a man. Although there are many words in our vocabulary which signify aspects of womanhood, perhaps akin to love, it defies definition. In consequence, therefore, this section being a necessary part of this thesis, what is written is, like the words used, an approximation only with no claim to definitive authority, for no such claim can be made with honesty and integrity.

Diotima was a woman with womanly attributes. As a mother to a child, when Socrates made a wild generalisation "I mean everybody in the world" [69] "Diotima laughed."[70] She asked Socrates[71] what causes the "amorous condition in these animals?" To his reply that he did not know she responded "How do you design ever to become a master of love matters if you can form no notion of this?"[72] By this question she invited, and received, the compliment "because I noted my need for an instructor . . . "[73] More importantly, for the purposes of this thesis, attention is drawn to Diotima's statement "Therefore when a person is big and teeming ripe he feels

[68] A de Saint-Exupery, *The Little Prince,* K. Woods trans., Wm. Heinemann Ltd., London, 1945. (p.70).
[69] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London 1991. (202B).
[70] Ibid. (202C).
[71] Ibid. (206B ff).
[72] Ibid. (206C).
[73] Ibid. (206C).

himself in a sore flutter for the beautiful, because its possessor can relieve him of his heavy pangs."[74] Whilst it is recognised that this was a step in Diotima's argument I propose that it can also be recognised as a description of Diotima herself - hence she speaks with the authority of experience. She too was pregnant with an Arcadian's love of peace and the beauty of nature together with her knowledge of love and the ways of Aphrodite. In the way of a woman she would not reject those who asked for her help in these matters even when their needs were for the simplest of things. Her own need to share the entirety of her knowledge with a suitable recipient was not met until she had Socrates as her student. Nonetheless, even he was evaluated at each stage to ensure that her effort would not be wasted by rejection. "All this instruction did I get from her at various times when she discoursed of love matters"[75] as Socrates said.

Notwithstanding that Diotima was "big and teeming ripe"[76] her Arcadian background would lead her to recognise that for everything there is a season and her womanhood would protect that with which she was pregnant in order that it might be brought to birth in circumstances which would give it the optimum opportunity for survival. It would be, I suggest, in the nature of womanhood to exploit with almost infinite joy and enthusiasm the happy conjunction of these two elements. I believe that it is true to say that it would be a rare man indeed who was present at the bringing to birth of a desired offspring and remained unaffected by it. Socrates, the seeker after truth, the inquisitor would not be such a man and that he was changed by the event in which both he and Diotima participated can not be considered to be surprising. Hence he said "This Phaedrus and you others is what Diotima told me and I am persuaded of it; in which persuasion I pursue my neighbours, to persuade them in turn."[77]

3.5 Deduced Motivations.

Diotima's motivations, conscious and unconscious, arise from very deep grounds. As an Arcadian she inherits the wealth of wisdom found in material poverty at the

---

[74] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London 1991 (206D, E).
[75] Ibid. (207A).
[76] Ibid. (206D).
[77] Ibid. (212B).

root of which is recognition of the inestimable value of other. This wisdom is reflected in her description of the parentage of love – poverty and resource.[78] The topography and climate of Arcadia made for poverty but resourceful co-operation with others led to survival and, in the engendered gratitude, love was born. Love, however, cannot survive in isolation as the myth of Narcissus shows; love flourishes best when it is shared.

The spirituality in which Diotima grew, matured and served had its origins on the island of Crete from whence it was exported to Mycenae and thence to Arcadia. In the peaceful isolation of Arcadia the belief in the female deity, the source of goodness to humanity, was refined by their own experience to Aphrodite, the admixture of Divine and Common, who, together with her son Eros, cared for humanity in every aspect of its experience of life from birth to death. "When a man dies his spirit, his life force, escapes from his mouth in the guise of a small winged figure, a *ker*, . . .just such a *ker* is Eros."[79] No other deity had such complete care for humanity and she was served in the home by the wife/mother and, in public, by a priestess. In accord with the experience of being an Arcadian, she was the goddess of love and sharing with other was the consummate ritual to which her followers were inevitably led.

In isolation a woman gathers only sufficient to meet her needs but, in community, be it of two or family or tribe, she gathers to share with all. The influence of love may well predicate degrees of happiness in response to her sharing – her children, her beloved, her extended family for a hierarchical view – but sharing is her nature and she will sacrifice herself to save another she deems worthy. From a position of excess she cannot resist the urge to share, but not to waste.

Each individual element is a powerful motive in its own right. In combination they could lead to obsessive behaviour. Diotima had a powerful drive to share what she knew about love. Many would ask, but only in search of romantic answers. Socrates, the stonemason, was known for his obsessive search for truth but his dialectical method had shown him that what passes for truth among humans is, almost inevitably, fallible. When he asked her to teach him about love, I suggest that

[78] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (203B).
[79] J.E. Harrison, *Mythology,* Marshall Jones Coy., Boston, Massachusetts, 1924. (p. 107).

her already burgeoning need to share her knowledge became the irresistible force which moved for Socrates the obstacle to his vision of divine truth. In the way of love each met the other's need – willingly – and their consummation led to Socrates experience of metanoia, the reorientation of his life values manifest in his change of methodology.

Chapter 4 – Socrates' Recollection

4.0 Introduction.

In this chapter I examine Socrates' recollection of his lessons with Diotima as he offered them to his companions at the Symposium in lieu of a speech in praise of Eros. The purpose of this examination is not in search of Socratic wisdom but rather to seek the relevance of Diotima's motives as they are suggested in Chapter 3. In consequence, therefore, I look for thematic patterns which are indicative of motivations rather than intellectually impressive rhetoric and argument or examples of Plato's literary genius although both abound in the work. The information gleaned from these patterns, together with the motives attributed to Diotima, is then used to interpret the elements of Diotima's teaching in search of the lesson which lies at its heart.

4.1 Socrates' Recollection.

This section of this chapter is presented in tabular form (Table 1) to avoid the necessity of reproducing large pieces of the text when the essence required for the purpose can adequately be represented by small extractions.

Table 1. Quotations taken from Plato, *Symposium, W.R.M.* Lamb translation, Harvard University Press, London, 1991.

Notes	Quotation	Stephanus No.
1a	At this she laughed	202C
b	My dear Socrates	211D
2a	I also had my lesson from her in love matters	201D
B	Very well then, madam, you are right	204C
C	I fancy you are right	205D
D	Ah Diotima, in that case I should hardly be admiring you and your wisdom and sitting at your feet to be enlightened on just these	206B
E	questions	
	All this instruction did I get from her at various times when she	207A
F	discoursed on love matters	
	And one time she asked me "What do you suppose, Socrates, to be	207A
G	the cause of this love and this desire?"	
	Why it is just for this I tell you, Diotima, as I stated a moment ago,	207C
H	that I have come to see you because I noted my need for an	
	instructor	212B
	This Phaedrus and you others is what Diotima told me and I am persuaded of it; in which persuasion I pursue my neighbours to persuade them	
3a	What then, I asked, can love be	202D
B	From what father and mother sprung?	203B
C	That you should have formed your other notion of love is no	
	surprising accident	204C
D	Imagine that the object is changed and the inquiry is made about the	
	good instead of the beautiful	204E
E	(Love) It is of engendering and begetting upon the beautiful	206E
F	Well then, if you believe that love is, by nature, bent on what we	
	have repeatedly admitted	207C
G	Those who are teeming in body betake them rather to women and	
	are amorous on this wise	208E
H	Everyone would choose to have got children such as these rather	
	than the human sort	209C
4a	Into these love matters even you, Socrates, might haply be initiated but I doubt if you could approach the rites … to which these … are	
	merely the avenue	209E
B	When a man has been thus far tutored in the lore of love, passing from view to view of beautiful things ... and this Socrates is the final	
	object of all those previous toils	210E
C	In that state of life above all others my dear Socrates, said the	
	Mantinean woman, a man finds it truly worthwhile to live	211D ff
D	What if he could behold the divine beauty itself in its unique form?	
	Do you call it a pitiful life for a man to lead ... ?	212A ff

The following observations are of a general nature but, as additional background to the proposition, are considered to be worthy of note.

Section 1 of the table illustrates something of the nature of the relationship between Diotima and Socrates. Their relationship was sufficiently cordial, even at the outset, for her to feel comfortable with a laugh at the expense of his childlike exaggeration – "everybody in the world"[80]! It must be remembered here that he is telling the story, even the unfortunate elements likely to cause him discomfort in the present company which included the irreverent playwright Aristophanes. Closer to the end of his education in love matters Diotima refers to him as 'my dear Socrates' and this, I believe, is meant to be indicative of a growing warmth in their relationship. In contemporary use such an expression might be deemed to be patronising but in the Athenian society of their day such a thing would be unthinkable. Given that he has been for her the apt pupil who was able to (see 4a) apprehend even the highest mysteries of love and thus relieve her of her teeming motivations, it is wholly appropriate that she should develop a close affection for him. I suggest that, in the process of this teaching, she has found the inherent beauty of his spirit and recognised it as exceeding even the beauty of his mind, thus, 'my dear Socrates', can coherently indicate her recognition of him as a kindred spirit.

In Section 3, at 3e, her definition of love can, by one consideration, be seen not to be limited to an exercise in human biology nor even specific instantiations of the beautiful but rather appears to encompass the notion that there is beauty in all things and in them love is recognised as 'begetting' or increasing the presence of beauty. This concept of love being all beneficent fits well with the attributes of Aphrodite and any concomitant attribute of infinity to love would, no doubt, be theologically acceptable in this consideration of Diotima's definition. In further support of this concept, in Section 2 at 2h, Socrates illustrates the force of his conviction by saying that 'in such persuasion I pursue my neighbours to persuade them'[81] thus love is begetting and increasing beauty in the process.

[80] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb translation, Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (212B).
[81] Ibid. (212B).

4.2 Motivated by Diotima the Arcadian.

In Table 1 it can be shown that Sections 3e, f, g and h all contain elements which are readily identifiable as having Arcadian motivation.

3e – "It is engendering and begetting upon the beautiful." An Arcadian comes from a pastoral background where, in every flock, there are preferred animals. Some are the more fecund and will increase the herd size with desirable progeny. Some yield more milk or more wool. These are the ones who have particular beauty and upon whom begetting is most desirable. The very core of life in a pastoral community is the engendering, begetting and bringing to birth with everything valued according to its gift to the community. Even the phraseology of this quotation is Arcadian in its nature.

3f – "Well then, if you believe that love is, by nature, bent on what we have repeatedly admitted." This too is as Arcadian in its nature as 3e above. It follows the rustic predisposition of a rural people.

3g – "Those who are teeming in body betake them rather to women and are amorous on this wise." In small, rural communities the survival of the very community itself is dependent upon the birth of sufficient numbers of future generations. A child is a gift from their god to their community and thus in many such communities the parents of a child are often only of consequence if a child is likely to be born with invaluable gifts such as finding fish and an ability to navigate in a fishing community. The preservation of the community is, by their values, more important than the propriety of parentage

3h – "Everyone would choose to have got children such as these rather than the human sort." Arcadians were simple not stupid people. They could recognise that something of enduring value which could provide for the community as a whole was more important than a single child who may or may not be gifted, who may or may not be fecund. Thus, the pride a community could take a share in over something akin to the works of Homer or Hesiod could sustain that community through almost any challenge. It would take only one member to survive something like the Cretan cataclysm and the community could be reborn on the traditional pride it had held in the past.

4.3 Motivated by Diotima the priestess.

In table 1, in Sections 3a, b, e and f there is evidence of motivation by a priestess.
3a – "What then, I asked, can love be?" As has been said before, the effects of love can be described but love itself defies definition. It is manifestly spiritual by nature and who else could Socrates ask but a priestess, particularly a priestess who served Aphrodite and one whose wisdom he could admire.

3b – "From what father and from what mother sprung?" In asking this question the same reasoning for the reply as applied above might be sufficient but the answer, although it is a convenient myth, is better suited to Diotima's purpose. Although it does not account for the fact that Eros, the topic of the Symposium, was the child of Aphrodite,[82] indeed, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the myth Diotima used might seem to deny the goddess she served, but it did fit the circumstances prevailing in Athens at the time. The predisposition to man-boy love disadvantaged Aphrodite and this, together with the search for intellectual solutions to all problems, led to a predominantly self-centred, almost narcissistic society. By redirecting attention to other-centred values the myth was, at the same time, working towards the restoration of Aphrodite to her rightful position. Thus, there is here a most clear intimation of the motivation of a priestess.

3e – "It is of engendering and begetting upon the beautiful." As suggested under the general notes above, this is, when considered from the spiritual position of a priestess, an example of love perpetuating beauty and thus, at the same time, perpetuating itself to infinity.

3f – "Well then, if you believe that love is, by nature, bent on what we have repeatedly admitted." Given that love is begetting upon the beautiful and in so doing increasing both love and beauty in the world then it is reasonable to perceive its nature as perpetually beneficent after the manner of Aphrodite, the goddess served by the priestess Diotima.

[82] J.E. Harrison, *Mythology,* Marshall Jones Company, Boston, Massachusetts, 1924. (p.107).

4.4 Motivated by Diotima the woman.

In table 1 the quotations in Sections 3c, d, e and g carry the motivational hallmarks of Diotima the woman.

3c. – "That you should have formed your other notion of love is no surprising accident." As Harrison[83] points out Athens at this time was predisposed to man on boy love which is an expression of self-interest by which love becomes objectified and, therefore, commodified. A woman of the time held that love was other-centred and therefore different to the male concept. The explanation of such a difference would be almost mandatory for a woman with a man who would listen.

3d. –" Imagine that the object is changed and the inquiry is made about the good instead of the beautiful." By this ploy Diotima makes Socrates shift his ground to something more tenable – possession of good things makes a man happy. Love, of course, cannot be possessed; a simple fact known to women.

3e. – "It is engendering and begetting upon the beautiful." Women inherited their position in relation to the spiritual world from the times when men, who could not reproduce, held women, who could, to be akin to the deities. This ability, no matter how well understood in biomechanical terms, is still held in awe by men and there is no doubt that Diotima, the woman, virginal and childless though she probably was, would have no compunction about reminding a male of this difference. The fact that both Socrates' and Plato's mothers were midwives would have had little or no impact upon this aspect of their masculinity.

3g. – "Those who are teeming in body betake them rather to women and are amorous on this wise." The comments on 3e above are equally applicable to this quotation.

4.5 The perceived lesson of Diotima.

It would be incomplete to propose an identity for the lesson of Diotima without also noting the elements of the fourth theme. Here Diotima sheets home the notion of love being a spiritual concept but points out that the human experiences taken

[83] J.E. Harrison, *Mythology,* Marshall Jones Company, Boston, Massachusetts, 1924. (p.109).

appropriately do lead to the experience of the spiritual. In this manner she is motivated by all three characteristics, the spirituality of the priestess, the humanity of the woman and the Arcadian which encompasses both.

The evidence shows that the lesson of Diotima is essentially simple; it is that love is other-centred by nature. Love experienced in this way is mutually beneficial and its benefit is not limited to those involved in the experience. Moreover, the experience of other-centred love can gift an individual with metanoia, a life changing experience. Such was Socrates' experience that he was so convinced he set out to convince others likewise – he felt a need to share his own good fortune. This conclusion of Socrates' recollection, I argue, underlines the core of Diotima's lesson as being that a life of love is an other-centred life.

Chapter 5 – The Dialogues

5.0 Introduction.

In this chapter I consider the demeanour of Socrates, with particular reference to the focus of his interest, in the setting of three different dialogues. I agree that there is evidence of a change in Socrates' approach, as noted by Vlastos [84] and Talisse [85]and observed in Section 1.2 above, however, in this thesis, I attribute that change to the influence of Diotima and her teaching rather than to changes in the author, Plato reflected in his work.

The first is the dialogue with Thrasymachus in *Republic I and II* (336a10 – 357a4) and this shows Socrates as self-interested and the master dialectician. The second is the dialogue with Phaedrus in the text *Phaedrus* (277b4 – 279c7) which shows Socrates in transition as the process of metanoia initiated with Diotima evolves. The third chosen dialogue is with Alcibiades in the text *Alcibiades* (103a1 – 104c7, 131c6 – 131d7, 133e5 – 135e7) and this, I suggest, shows an enlightened and other-centred Socrates striving, in part to save Alcibiades from himself but, perhaps, also Socrates sacrificing himself on the altar of Alcibiades self-centred ego in an attempt to save his beloved Athens from the disasters threatened by Alcibiades weak character. Consideration of these dialogues will also take into account some of the events of the times, for example the plague in Athens, which, while not specific to the dialogue, do have some relevance to the context of this research.

5.1 Thrasymachus.

In *The Republic* Plato described, among many other things, the confrontation between Socrates and Thrasymachus. Socrates, a stonemason, like many Athenians of his day, spent much of his time enjoying the pleasure of discourse.[86] Thrasymachus, a professional teacher of rhetoric, perceived the well known Socrates as something of a competitor insofar as, although demonstrating his dialectical

[84] G. Vlastos, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher,* Cornell University, New York, 1991. (pp45-80).
[85] R. Talisse, *Misunderstanding Socrates,* Arion, vol.9 No.3, 2002. (pp 111-121).
[86] A. Andrewes, *Greek Society,* (Pelican edn. 1971), Hutchinson, London, 1987. (p.216).

method to one and all, Socrates made no charge for the skills he passed on. Finding Socrates with a group of young men discussing the contentious issue of the nature of justice, Thrasymachus could hardly contain himself and sought to seize the opportunity to demonstrate the superiority of his own skill as a teacher of rhetoric by humbling Socrates in public.

> "He coiled himself up like a wild beast about to spring, and he hurled himself at us as if to tear us to pieces. Polemarchus and I were frightened and flustered as he roared into our midst".[87]

Thus Socrates describes the entry of Thrasymachus into the discussion he had been having with Polemarchus. Why, I must ask, was Socrates frightened? "Thrasymachus had often tried to interrupt but he had been prevented by those sitting near him.[88] Naturally, as Socrates, no doubt, knew, Thrasymachus was suffering mounting frustration and could no longer contain it. How would this have been sufficient to cause Socrates to be frightened? Given that he was surrounded by friends[89] it seems unlikely. Moreover, Socrates was not simply a dialectician, he was also, following in his father Sophroniscus' footsteps, a stonemason and such men were made physically strong by the demands of their trade. This raises doubts in a critical mind, that Socrates had any reason to feel fear.

These doubts would be further fed by the knowledge of Socrates' bravery at the battle of Delium when he saved the life and 'the armour' of the young Alcibaides.[90] Indeed, in the years of the Peloponnesian war he had served as a Hoplite, a role requiring 'property qualification' and the means to pay for his own armour[91] which reasonably indicates that his stonemason's business was thriving at that time. In sum then, it is most unlikely that Socrates was frightened. However, this does not mean that he did not adopt the appearance of one who is frightened. Why would he do such a thing, to pretend to be what he is not, is a reasonable question? In response

---

[87] Plato, *The Republic,* D. Lee trans., 2nd edn. (Revised), Penguin, London, 1987. (336B).
[88] Ibid. (336B).
[89] Ibid. (336B).
[90] J.B. Bury, *History of Greece,* 3rd edn. (Revised R. Meiggs), McMillan, London, 1955. (p.459).
[91] J. Ferguson, *Socrates, a source book,* McMillan, London, 1970. (p.11).

attention is drawn to two known characteristics of Socrates; he is an accomplished dialectician and a battle hardened soldier. Both of these points indicate a person who is no stranger to the concept of tactical advantage. By adopting this appearance he gains the advantage of knowing that it is false whereas his opponent can only suspect that to be one possibility but remains uncertain. The famous example of the Trojan Horse was no doubt well known to Socrates and it is arguable, therefore, from what is known, that this is the most probable reason for Socrates' action.

Additional support can be drawn for this position from his subsequent behaviour.

> "I was staggered by his attack … but I had noticed him when our argument first began to exasperate him, and so I managed to answer him, saying diffidently: 'Don't be hard on us, Thrasymachus. If we have made any mistake in our consideration of the argument I assure you we have not done so on purpose".[92]

There is no evidence of aggression here, nor even of retaliation, but rather, in "Don't be hard on us"[93] there is the hint of a note of submission. To submit so early in the conflict is not natural to the Athenians nor is it, for that matter, natural to Socrates and so, again, the question 'why' is raised. What is there to be gained by Socrates in adopting such a position? Following the previous reasoning and noting that a hint of submission is not an immediate surrender, a tactically supportable position is that Socrates has made a satisfactory assessment of his opponent and has concluded that he can, and will be beaten; he is merely spreading the 'fog of war' in preparation for the engagement. In his scheme, it is a safe assumption, Socrates also calculated that his own victory will be enhanced by being won from the underdog position and, therefore, he has adopted precisely this position from the outset. His appearance of fear was the bait and the hint of submissive, low morale was the hook upon which he planned to land Thrasymachus. Thus, there are plausible answers to the questions 'why' and 'what' that arise from his actions.

This tactical position is further supported by Socrates' response when Thrasymachus probes him with the suggestion that his old tactics have been recognized and seen

---

[92] Plato, *The Republic*, D. Lee trans., 2nd edn. (Revised), Penguin, London, 1987. (336D).
[93] Ibid. (336E).

through[94]. "That's because you're so clever, Thrasymachus" I replied "and you know it".[95] To this is added a challenge which engages Thrasymachus in what Sir Desmond Lee describes as 'some introductory argumentative sparring'.[96]

Socrates, having further flattered Thrasymachus with the description of 'no mean antagonist'[97], observed "it was obvious that Thrasymachus was anxious to get the credit for the striking answer he thought he could give"[98]. Why does Socrates attribute sufficient importance to Thrasymachus' motive to observe and note it? A simple answer may be that he is denigrating such self-interest as a less worthy motive for dialectical discourse than the pursuit of truth, however, in light of his own preparations for the defeat of Thrasymachus it is equally possible that he is observing the mirroring of his own motivation and is, thus, well able to understand it.

F.J.E. Woodbridge[99] could have summed up his list of the shortcomings of Socrates in the expression 'egotistical self-interest' and, probably, eliminated the words 'Overstated, of course' from Ferguson's assessment. Certainly, notwithstanding his intellectual prowess, Socrates, as a human being, was more likely to identify with his own motivation to win the argument than with the purist notion of 'the pursuit of truth'.

Thrasymachus' provocative opening position was given as "I say that justice or right is simply what is in the interest of the stronger party"[100]. Many, today as then, basing their judgement upon their life experiences, might be inclined to agree with him. Socrates, however, concluded the first part of the argument with the following.

> "And therefore, my dear Thrasymachus,' I concluded, 'no ruler of any kind, qua ruler, exercises his authority, whatever its sphere, with his own interest in

[94]Plato, *The Republic*, D. Lee trans., 2nd edn. (Revised), Penguin, London, 1987 (337A).
[95]Ibid. (337A).
[96] Ibid. (p.74).
[97] Ibid. (337E).
[98] Ibid. (338A).
[99] F.J.E. Woodbridge, *The Son of Apollo,* Boston, 1929.,cited in J. Ferguson, *Socrates, A source book,* McMillan, London, 1970. (p.13).
[100] Plato, *The Republic,* D. Lee trans., 2nd edn. (Revised), Penguin, London, 1987. (338C).

view, but that of the subject of his skill. It is his subject and his subject's proper interest to which he looks in all he says and does"[101].

In this refutation Socrates appeared to have served his own ends and defeated Thrasymachus by providing a tenable view in direct contradiction to that of his opponent. This, however, was not the end of the dialogue.

Thrasymachus responded with a crude *ad hominem* attack which was treated with contempt by Socrates. Thrasymachus replied with a tirade in support of his original position after which he attempted to leave. He was constrained by the others, together with Socrates, to remain and continue the discussion. Socrates concluded by saying "And so, my dear Thrasymachus, injustice never pays better than justice"[102]. Thrasymachus did not acquiesce but observed "This is your holiday treat, so enjoy it Socrates"[103]. Socrates' acceptance, however, attributed the enjoyment to Thrasymachus because he had been "most agreeable since you stopped being cross with me"[104]. He continued then to devalue the whole argument by announcing "For so long as I don't know what justice is I'm hardly likely to find out whether it is an excellence or not, or whether it makes a man happy or unhappy"[105].

Once again this poses the question why would Socrates so devalue the argument? A possible answer is suggested by the motives which have been attributed to him from the outset. Winning the argument was not in doubt for Socrates but, more than winning, he wanted not only to deny Thrasymachus the pleasure of winning; he wanted for himself the credit of defeating him. In military terms he did not want just a victory, he wanted a rout. This was beyond the argument itself and can be seen as a personal attack against Thrasymachus. There is a patronising tone to "my dear Thrasymachus"[106] and, by devaluing the entire argument with the remark "so that I still know nothing after all our discussion"[107], he is suggesting that Thrasymachus is not a good teacher and certainly not worth paying for instruction[108] nor, indeed, was

---

[101] Plato, *The Republic,* D. Lee trans., 2nd edn. (Revised), Penguin, London, 1987 (342E).
[102] Ibid. (354A).
[103] Ibid. (354A).
[104] Ibid. (354A).
[105] Ibid. (354B).
[106] Ibid. (354A).
[107] Ibid. (354B).
[108] Ibid. (337D).

he a worthy opponent. As will be suggested later in this thesis, the question of Socrates' worth as a pupil may also merit consideration.

Giving consideration, here, only to Socrates' acts and asking the question why did he do that for each one, a picture emerges which, in the case of this particular dialogue, is less than flattering for Socrates. He acts in a way, arguably, motivated by self-interest with his goal being the destruction of Thrasymachus' professional identity rather than his own enlightenment much less the enlightenment of anyone else who is present. Thus, as Ferguson says of Woodbridge's criticism of Socrates "not without foundation"[109]. By deduction one is led to conclude that, at this time and in this instance, Socrates was focussed upon self-centred interests.

5.2 Phaedrus.

The circumstances out of which this discourse arises and the actions which are initiated as a result invite observation and comment even before a word is spoken. Socrates was commonly to be found in the Agora or at a gymnasium or sports ground, in fact anywhere people gather and discourse of value might be found[110]. On this occasion he agreed to accompany Phaedrus on a walk outside of the city walls and limits. They walked along the bank of the river Ilissus and passed the day in the shade of a plane tree. Socrates himself commented upon the extraordinary nature of the event since in the city, amongst people there is always the chance of learning something new whereas sitting under a plane tree on a river bank, however pleasant, the chances are reduced. As he says the trees and streams cannot teach him anything[111]. Why then would a mature man sacrifice his chosen comfort zone and accompany a young boy to what is, for him, a sterile area? In the Athenian context of the time, and given Socrates alleged lustful proclivities, one might be forgiven for jumping to a conclusion. However, Socrates precludes any possible physical relationship between himself and Phaedrus[112]. Thus, there must be a different motive for his action and, since his own self-interest is not apparently being served; there

[109] J. Ferguson, *Socrates, a source book,* McMillan, London, 1970. (p.14).
[110] Ibid. (p.11).
[111] Plato, *Phaedrus,* H.N. Fowler trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1995. (230D) .
[112] Ibid. (240D).

remains only the interest of his companion, Phaedrus, to be served. Deductively then one can say with some confidence that, on this occasion, the focus of Socrates' interest is other-centred in contrast to his self-centred focus in his confrontation with Thrasymachus. As the 'time line' at Appendix B shows, the period between the Plague (430 BCE) and Aristophanes play 'The Clouds' (423 BCE) there is a period when Socrates may be deduced to be a widower and it seems possible that this may well have been the time when Socrates was taught by Diotima. The Phaedrus dialogue appears to have occurred some five years after 'The Clouds' and this may well have provided Socrates with the opportunity and time to begin to implement his change from focus on self-interest to focus on other-centred interest. The motives for Phaedrus, although manifold, have the transparency of youth. He is clearly enamoured of Lysias and wishes to show off to Socrates, who provides Phaedrus with an intellectual benchmark, a speech on love written by his lover. By so doing he hopes not only for Socrates' approval of the work but also to gain the great man's approval for his own endeavours in intellectual appreciation. In this way the youth will also receive affirmation of this aspect of his personal self-worth. Apart from the other-centred focus deduced earlier, Socrates' motives may prove to be less easy to access.

It is suggested by Cooper in his notes to the translation by Nehamas and Woodbridge[113] that Socrates was unfamiliar with the countryside and this is supported to some extent by "You have guided the stranger most excellently, dear Phaedrus."[114] However this notion is surely in conflict with his documented life as a soldier? Moreover, his appreciation of the rural environment[115] strongly suggests at least a remembered familiarity with the area in general and their chosen location on the bank of the Ilissus in particular. Cooper's position is further rationalised, however, by Socrates' claims to learn more from people than from trees.[116] This apparent rejection of the rural setting is of interest to this thesis since it appears to show Socrates as focussing his attention on others for the self-interested motive of learning that which he claims not to know. Noteworthy as this is, it must be

[113] Plato, *Plato Complete Works,* J. Cooper Editor, Hackett Publishing Co. Indianapolis, 1997.
[114] Plato, *Phaedrus,* H.N. Fowler trans., Harvard University Press, London. 1995. (230C).
[115] Ibid. (229B).
[116] Ibid. (230D).

considered, also, that Socrates is reported as having spent a number of years studying the natural sciences before moving to the metaphysical[117] and during this time trees, streams and their inhabitants would have taught him much. We are left, therefore, with a question; what is true for Socrates? I offer the possible answer that it is neither the city and its and its people nor the countryside and its nature in isolation but both together as constituting the entirety which caught his attention and stimulated his curiosity but I note that the pastoral nature of the place can be seen to have Arcadian overtones.

This discourse arose because Phaedrus wanted to rehearse a speech about love composed by Lysias with who he was greatly enamoured. He persuaded Socrates to accompany him on a walk along the bank of the Ilisus and, when comfortably seated under a plane tree, he read the speech out loud to him. While it is open to interpretation as a dialogue on the nature of rhetoric it is also open to interpretation as a dialogue on the nature of erotic love. Both interpretations are accepted in this research and I suggest that there is evidence to support the concept of Socrates in a state of transition away from his former self-interested position and towards a position of other-centred interest. As he pointed out himself "I am still unable, as the Delphic inscription orders, to know myself . . . Am I a beast . . . or am I a tamer, simpler animal with a share in a divine and gentle nature?"[118]

Phaedrus offered the speech of Lysias from the text, therefore acting as Lysias' voice, and its opening position was given as "[non lovers] do their kindnesses to the best of their ability, not under compulsion [the divine madness of eros] but of their free will, according to their view of their best interest"[119]. This is a very clear statement of a self-interested position and, moreover, one which could gain popular acceptance even in the present day. Given that the favours are valued, the whole relationship can be considered to be couched in rational terms to the benefit of both parties, each "according to their view of their best interest"[120]. Socrates response was an almost vintage example of Socratic dissembling. He responded in an other-centred way designed to affirm Phaedrus but in such terms that even the youthful

[117] J. Ferguson, *Socrates a source book,* McMillan, London, 1970. (p.10).
[118] Plato, *Phaedrus,* H.N. Fowler Trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1995. (230A).
[119] Ibid. (231A).
[120] Ibid. (231A).

Phaedrus could feel the sting of his criticism[121]. Phaedrus challenged Socrates with the accusation that he was making fun of Lysias' work[122]. In giving the young man reassurance, Socrates pointed out that he had praised that which was praiseworthy but acknowledged that there were points on which he could not agree[123]. He pointed out that he had heard differently from Sappho and Anacreon and possibly prose writers but could not remember the references; however, he could provide a speech at least as good as that of Lysias[124]. Phaedrus took him up on the offer and challenged him to make good the claim[125]. Socrates' reply "Have you taken my jest in earnest[126] can be seen as an attempt to placate the young boy by the elevation of his hero to a status superior to that of Socrates but is also recognisable as Socratic dissembling. This apparent prevarication leads to a most interesting and noteworthy act on Socrates' part, that is to cover his head while he speaks[127] allegedly not to be embarrassed before Phaedrus. At this time Socrates in his late fifties and Phaedrus is a teenage boy and the question of embarrassment seems highly speculative. Given that he is delivering this speech in what he has already recognised as a sacred spot [128] and knowing that what he is about to deliver is not true, shame before the gods of the place seems a more likely reason for covering his head. However, his speech having observed that the lover acts "Just as the wolf loves the lamb, so the lover adores his beloved"[129], can be seen to conform to the view put forward by Lysias. This can also be recognised as being contrary to Socrates' normal position. Thus, his motive for covering his head is just as likely to be that he did not want to be recognised as the author of such nonsense. Indeed, in references to dithyrambic and hexametric constructions he proclaims himself to be "inspired' and "in a frenzy"[130]. The fact that he stepped so far out of character in order to please Phaedrus is interesting and the question, why did he do that, follows naturally from human curiosity. It is not, as might have been suspected, for the purposes of seduction, since Socrates, on several

---

[121] Plato, *Phaedrus,* H.N. Fowler Trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1995. (234D).
[122] Ibid. (234D).
[123] Ibid. (235B).
[124] Ibid. (235C).
[125] Ibid. (236A).
[126] Ibid. (236B).
[127] Ibid. (237A).
[128] Ibid. (230B).
[129] Ibid. (241D).
[130] Ibid. (238C, 241E).

occasions in the dialogue, indicated that his presence there is simply because he is a lover of discourse[131]. This love of ideas, it should be recognised, is of a higher order on the *'scala amorati'* than the physical love of Lysias displayed by the young Phaedrus and, indeed, the topic of Lysias' speech. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that Socrates' motive is of a similarly higher order, that is the bringing to birth of an idea of beauty rather than the ugly notion with which Phaedrus is so clearly pregnant.

Interestingly the first part of this process follows the more feminine ritual *'do ut abeas'* or purification[132], the clearing out of the bad seeds sown by Lysias and now germinating in the mind of Phaedrus but also the purification of Socrates himself in order that he may worthily undertake the task ahead. At some level the links with Diotima the Arcadian priestess can be detected in this. The contents of the speech of Socrates was something of which he was ashamed, hence the covering of his head, but the speech was necessary in order to be seen, at least at the outset, aligned with the mind of Phaedrus. This is the fundamental starting point from which Socrates can develop his teaching, his gift to Phaedrus. As the *'scala'*[133] indicates, this higher order motivation argues for an other-centred Socratic position, the more so since they are alone, thus minimising any serious enhancement of Socrates' reputation as possible source of self-interest. Taken together, all of this indicates a shift from the self-interest manifest in the Thrasymachus dialogue[134] to a mid level, in reference to the *'scala'* of Diotima, other-centred interest in this dialogue at this stage.

Socrates, having delivered the speech of which he was ashamed, declared his intention to cross the stream and make his escape before Phaedrus persuaded him to speak further. However, he appeared to have a sudden change of heart and offered Phaedrus a new discourse. The reason he gave for this was that "the spirit and the sign, that usually come to me, came – it always holds me back from something I am

---

[131] Plato, *Phaedrus,* H.N. Fowler Trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1995. (228E, 236E, 240D).
[132] J.E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the study of Greek religion,* Meriden Books Inc., New York, 1955. (p.ix and 162).
[133] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991.
[134] Plato, *The Republic,* D. Lee trans., 2nd edn. (Revised), Penguin, London, 1987.

about to do – and I thought I heard a voice from it which forbade me going away before cleaning my conscience, as if I had committed some sin against the deity"[135].

Clearly, covering his head did not hide him from the sight of the god. He expanded on his reason saying "Now I am a seer, not a very good one ... so now I understand my error ... while I was speaking my discourse, something troubled me and I was distressed ... lest "I be buying honour among men by sinning against the gods." But now I have seen my error"[136] (242c6 – d2).

Having shifted his ground with Phaedrus, a sensitive youth, Socrates condemned both Lysias and Phaedrus "your speech that was spoken through my mouth that you bewitched"[137] of saying that Eros was evil. "Now I, my friend, must purify myself"[138]. "I will try to atone by my recantation, with my head bare this time, not, as before, covered through shame"[139]. The covering and uncovering the head may seem theatrical in modern, secular society but such behaviour was part of the ritual of rhetorical delivery in Socratic Athens, however, it may be that in this case, in light of Socrates' references to his "spirit and sign"[140] and his own gift as a seer[141], it has more to do with his personal spirituality. This, taken with the shift from self-centred to other-centred interest prescribed by the *'scala amorati'*[142] suggests, not only Socrates in a state of change but also, possibly, a clear influence of Diotima. I put this no higher than a possibly clear influence because, in light of Erikson's developmental view of the human life cycle[143] Socrates may have been making this change simply by virtue of his development. I do, however, give some attribution to Diotima because of the subject matter together with Socrates' acknowledgement that she taught him the arts of love[144] and the two contextual elements, Socrates the seer

---

[135] Plato, *Phaedrus,* H.N. Fowler trans. Harvard University Press, London, 1995. (242B).
[136] Ibid. (242C).
[137] Ibid. (242E).
[138] Ibid. (243A).
[139] Ibid. (243B).
[140] Ibid. (242B).
[141] Ibid. (242C).
[142] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991.(209E-212B).
[143] E.H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society,* W.W. Norton, New York, 1963.
[144] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (212B).

and Eros the offended being coincident with Diotima being Mantinean and a priestess[145].

Socrates' penitent discourse ends[146] and, although sensibly grateful, Phaedrus observes that "Lysias will make a poor showing if he competes with it"[147]. Following the young man's lead, Socrates left the higher topic for the lower, pragmatic occupation of Lysias as a speech writer and the less than uplifting qualities of public life[148] at which point he proposed a discussion of the "theory of good (or bad) speaking and writing"[149]. Socrates then posed a question concerning the art of rhetoric "which leads the soul by means of words, not only in law courts . . ." [150] When Phaedrus gave a stunted answer, Socrates criticised it, alleging deficiencies in those who taught Phaedrus whose names he disguised, albeit thinly. Phaedrus identified Gorgias and Thrasymachus or Theodorus and Socrates gave a partial admission[151]. Was Socrates simply criticising their influence on Lysias or, perhaps, them also because they were competitors in the activity in which he too was engaged? In either case it is to Socrates' benefit that Phaedrus accepts him as their superior and, thus, an active pursuit of positive self-interest is seen, alive and well, in Socrates' character. Socrates identified himself as a dialectician, a practitioner of "the processes of division and bringing together as aids to speech and thought"[152]. He challenged Phaedrus to identify the name given to those taught by him and Lysias or Thrasymachus "if they are willing to pay ... a royal tribute"[153]. Subsequently he added Evenus, Gorgias, Tisias, Prodicus, Hippias, Polus and Protagoras to the list[154] and highlighted their characteristics prior to devaluing them before Phaedrus[155]. Socrates concluded his gift to Phaedrus with the summary (addressed to Lysias) to

[145] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London,1991. (p.173).
[146] Plato, *Phaedrus,* H.N. Fowler trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1995. (257B).
[147] Ibid. (257C).
[148] Ibid. (257D, 259E).
[149] Ibid. (259E).
[150] Ibid. (261A).
[151] Ibid. (261B).
[152] Ibid. (266B).
[153] Ibid. (266C).
[154] Ibid. (266E).
[155] Ibid. (268A, 269C).

Homer and to Solon that, who has the power to "show by his own speech that the written words are of little worth should be known as 'philosopher'"[156].

While it is reasonable to see an element of truth and a characteristic tactic of argument in Socrates' dialogue here, the self-interest noted in Socrates earlier can still be identified, even though the aim of his speech is the benefit of the individual 'other' that is, Phaedrus, to whom he is speaking. Thus, within this dialogue Socrates appears to be motivated by a mixture of self-centred interest in his criticisms, however justifiable, of others and other-centred interest in his gift of wisdom to Phaedrus from whom he seeks no return. This juxtaposition can, I suggest, be taken to represent the transition from the lower level to the median level of the *'scala amorati'* or from Eros to Aphrodite Common who is concerned with welfare in the affairs of humanity. Moreover, I suggest that this can be taken as illustrative of Socrates on the upward path taught to him by Diotima.

5.3 Alcibiades.

The dimensions of Alcibiades' character, both real and literary, have the potential to skew any analysis of this dialogue. His 'larger than life' reputation can seem to diminish even Socrates in this juxtaposition. It may indeed be that such a reaction was behind Jowett's note to the effect that Socrates sought to control Athens through the use of his manipulation of Alcibiades. This analysis supports the view that in this matter Jowett was misled.

When Socrates addressed Alcibiades at the opening of the dialogue he did so as the loyal and constant friend who, when all the hangers on have left, "still speaks to you"[157]. He went on to explain that his silence over the years was neither petty jealousy nor even choice but rather was the influence of his spiritual guide."When you were younger and not yet full of these high aspirations, I should have wasted my

[156] Plato, *Phaedrus,* H.N. Fowler trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1995. (278D).
[157] Plato, *Alcibiades 1, in The Dialogues of Plato,* B. Jowett trans. Sphere Books, London, 1970. (103A).

time, and therefore, as I conceive, the god forbade me to converse with you, but now he has invited me to speak, for now you are disposed to listen to me" [158].

Moreover, he stated his position *vis a vis* Alcibiades very clearly.

> "For, as you hope to prove your own surpassing value to the state, and having proved it, to attain at once to absolute power, so do I indulge a hope that I shall have the supreme power over you, if I am able to prove my own surpassing value to you, and to show you that neither guardian nor kinsman, nor anyone is able to deliver into your hands the power which you desire, but I only, god being my helper"[159].

Taken at face value this would be supportive of Jowett's position in his note. However, given that Socrates indeed tasted high office and rejected it for philosophical values, for example refusing to put the illegal motion of an hysterical Assembly after the victory at Argusinae or refusing Critias who, as one of the Thirty tyrants, ordered him to illegally arrest Leon of Salamis[160] it is evident that material power was neither attractive nor motivational to him. As Diogenes Laertius, cited in Ferguson[161] said of him "He was a contented and venerable man. And he was continually repeating these iambics "For silver plate and purple useful are –for Actors on the stage, but not for men."" Therefore, in asking why did he say such things to Alcibiades it seems appropriate to look beyond material gain for his motivation.

Alcibiades asked this very question "But granting if I must, that you have perfectly divined my purposes, why is your assistance necessary to the attainment of them? Can you tell me why?[162] In his reply Socrates pointed out that Alcibiades is neither authentically learned nor skilled in the areas of expertise needed in the Assembly. Socrates did this in his normal dialectical fashion, gaining agreement from Alcibiades at each step along the way. "A man is a good adviser about anything, not

---

[158] Plato, *Alcibiades 1, in The Dialogues of Plato,* B. Jowett trans. Sphere Books, London, 1970 (105E).
[159] Ibid. (105D).
[160] J. Ferguson, *Socrates a source book,* McMillan, London, 1970. (p.7).
[161] Ibid. (p.23).
[162] Plato, *Alcibiades 1,in The Dialogues of Plato,* B. Jowett trans., Sphere Books, London, 1970. (106A).

because he has riches but because he has knowledge"[163]. To which Alcibiades replied "Assuredly"[164]. Socrates, in this statement, discounted Alcibiades position of wealth as a qualification to lead the Greeks. Further, he continued to show Alcibiades that in many areas many men were better qualified to give the best advice to the Assembly. From this point of skill and knowledge Socrates led Alcibiades to evaluate critically the choice of words.

"Well, then, consider and strive to explain what is the meaning of 'better' when used alike of living in peace and going to war with those against whom one ought to go to war? To what does the word refer?" [165]

This shift of ground is from the practical, for example the navigation of a ship, to the higher plane of thought and the meanings available for the words used. In particular, in this section, Socrates was seeking Alcibiades' knowledge of 'just' and 'unjust', fundamentals in a democracy of worth. Alcibiades was as incapable of their definition as anyone else, leading Socrates to point out "However, what you said was true: indeed, my dear fellow, the design which you meditate, of teaching that which you do not know and have not taken any pains to learn, is downright insanity"[166].

At this point Alcibiades expresses the position "Many persons have done great wrong and profited by their injustice, others have done rightly and come to no good"[167], a common position but no answer to Socrates' observation of 'downright insanity'. This disparity in perspectives, I suggest, is also indicative of the disparity in their motivations. Socrates is interested in the future welfare of Alcibiades and the Athenian people whereas Alcibiades is only interested, at heart, in his own gain. Socrates did not stop here but I suggest that he projected a much better character to be latent in Alcibiades and continued with further persuasion in order to be allowed to lead him to the future of which he believed him to be capable. This perception of the good latent in others is a characteristic of other-centred people and, as this dialogue displays, characterises Socrates also.

---

[163]. Plato, *Alcibiades 1,in The Dialogues of Plato,* B. Jowett trans., Sphere Books, London, 1970. (107B).
[164] Ibid. (107B).
[165] Ibid. (109A).
[166] Ibid. (113C).
[167] Ibid. (113D).

Again Socrates offered a challenging observation to Alcibiades."My good friend, you are wedded to ignorance of the most disgraceful kind, and of this you are convicted, not by me, but out of your own mouth and by your own argument; wherefore, also you rush into politics before you are educated. ... I might say the same of most of our statesmen, with few exceptions including perhaps your guardian, Pericles"[168]. However, he then expeditiously lead him to recognition of the fact that no one, not even Pericles, grew wiser other than being in the society of Philosophers, with which Alcibiades agreed. However, Alcibiades observed that since most of the statesmen are uneducated as he himself is, having superior natural endowments he would still win. To which Socrates replied "My dear friend, what a sentiment! And how unworthy of your noble form and your high estate"[169] but when he continued in answer to Alcibiades it was to show him that his lineage, although back to Zeus, was not comparable with that of Artaxerxes of Persia or even the Spartan king. Further, that by comparison in terms of wealth and power he was abysmally equipped, thus, were Alcibiades to challenge them they would first wonder what possessed him and upon what he might rely to win the conflict[170].

The advice Socrates offered Alcibiades to meet this deficiency was to follow the Delphic Oracle – Know Thyself, a journey upon which Socrates would accompany him because he too had the same need. He did, however, add that he had a better and wiser guardian than Alcibiades, a guardian he identified as god[171]. He then took him through a further dialectical exercise to recognise that to know himself a man must know his own soul[172] (mind) [*my parentheses*.] The value of the soul was demonstrated by Socrates showing that his own love of Alcibiades' soul had kept him there even after his youthful beauty faded and all his other lovers had gone away[173]. Again, I suggest, that this is characteristic of other-centred focus. However, Socrates cautioned Alcibiades "I will never desert you, if you are not spoiled or deformed by the Athenian people; for the danger I most fear is that you

[168] Plato, *Alcibiades 1, in The Dialogues of Plato,* B. Jowett trans., Sphere Books, London, 1970 (118B).
[169] Ibid. (119C).
[170] Ibid. (120E, 124A).
[171] Ibid. (124B).
[172] Ibid. (130E).
[173] Ibid. (131C).

will become a lover of the people and will be spoiled by them"[174]. Against this risk Socrates gave Alcibiades this caution "Practice yourself, sweet friend, in learning what you ought to know, before you enter politics; and then you will have an antidote which will preserve you from harm"[175].

Moving on from this Socrates sought to show Alcibiades how to know and care for his soul[176]. He showed him the elementary example that by looking into another person's eye one sees an image of one's physical self. In like manner the soul must look at the soul "and especially at that part of the soul where resides her virtue, which is wisdom"[177]. "Then this is that part of the soul which resembles god; and he who looks at this and the whole class of things divine, at god and at wisdom, will be most likely to know himself"[178]? "You and the state, if you act wisely and justly, will act in a manner pleasing to god"[179]? Going even further Socrates said "In which case I will be security for your happiness"[180]. This undertaking was accepted by Alcibiades who further agreed to become Socrates attendant with him the master[181]. Socrates' reply was equally optimistic, "Oh that is rare! My love breeds another love: and so like the stork I shall be cherished by the winged creature whom I have hatched"[182].

At this point Socrates can be recognised as being close to the peak of the *'scala amorati'*[183]. The position "My love breeds another love and ... I shall be cherished"[184] is clearly open to interpretation as self-interest but, I suggest, there is also an interpretation possible that, instead of self-interest, can be deemed to be a surrender of "my love" to "another love" and the progeny by which I am loved is also love. From this can be derived a *'con moto perpetuo'* concept of creation. However, the doubt, and indeed prophecy, of his concluding sentence "I see the

---

[174] Plato, *Alcibiades 1 in The Dialogues of Plato,* B. Jowett trans., Sphere Books, London, 1970. (132A).
[175] Ibid. (132B).
[176] Ibid. (132C).
[177] Ibid. (133B).
[178] Ibid. (133C).
[179] Ibid. (134D).
[180] Ibid. (143D).
[181] Ibid. (135D).
[182] Ibid. (135E).
[183] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (211C).
[184] Plato, *Alcibiades 1 in The Dialogues of Plato,* B. Jowett trans., Sphere Books, London, 1970. (135E).

power of the state, which may be too much for both of us"[185] may itself have been the obstacle to his own experience of the peak of the *'scala'*.

The aim of this dialogue is to show Alcibiades how ill prepared he is for a role in the Assembly and, at the same time, to offer him the considerable help of Socrates tutelage, free. That Socrates recognised this as a herculean task is manifest in his closing comment. His elevation of the aims of Alcibiades above and beyond their material goal to the goal of ideals also shows that Socrates was neither motivated by self-interest nor thoughts of personal gain. This behaviour is unlike anything in his earlier life therefore, by deduction; there must have been some external and probably superior influence which acted upon Socrates to produce this altruism. He claims that influence to be that of god [186] however, if so, I consider that it is likely to be through the influence of Diotima.

5.4 Summary.

Socrates was a stonemason and a good tradesman. Were it to be otherwise he would not have been able to meet the financial requirements of service as a Hoplite. His bowed legs and strange gait, the source of comment and even ridicule later in life, were appropriate to the activities of carrying heavy pieces of stone and the strength he developed in the process was invaluable to him in battle. Without patience he would not have been able to deal with the natural intransigence of stone with any measure of success. Such a person, with some obvious anomalies, is characterised in the dialogues reported by Plato. Like the stone he worked with, he was slow in formation, hard to change, persistent but, when convinced, he retained his new position against others, even if he had, at some time, held the same views which they proffered.

---

[185] Plato, *Alcibiades 1 in The Dialogues of Plato,* B. Jowett trans., Sphere Books, London, 1970. (135E).
[186] Ibid. (123D).

Socrates' dialogue with Thrasymachus started from diametrically opposed positions. It would be wrong to conclude that Socrates actually convinced Thrasymachus although, technically speaking, points were conceded. This was a clash of wills, each with only the self-interested goal of winning the argument notwithstanding that it could be argued that Socrates was in pursuit of truth which has the potential to be universalised. Like the majority of such arguments it generated rather more heat than light. As an old adage has it "a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still". The dialogue with Phaedrus lacked heat but certainly illuminated the character of Socrates the stonemason, the soldier and, in this case, like Sir Philip Sidney (1554 – 1586), the poet. That Phaedrus was protected from a fallacious notion of love was Socrates gift to him. That Phaedrus was reminded of his spiritual duties by his older friend, although noteworthy in contemporary society, was not so uncommon in the Athens of the time. In this dialogue Socrates can be seen as a stonemason protecting the young work which was Phaedrus from flaws and their consequential future damage. Not an ultimate conclusion but a work in progress, in a state of change. The Socrates observed in the Alcibiades dialogue may be the totality of Socrates or at the very least point to it. This man, eschewing the favours of the day, in a purely other-centred act offers his strength, his experience, his intellect and even the tutelage of his god to Alcibiades in an attempt to save him from the folly known today as 'believing his own publicity'. That Alcibiades had natural gifts of looks and stature alloyed with a natural flair for leadership together with wealth and social position was not in question. Whether or not he had the integrity and moral strength to use his advantage wisely and to the common good, thereby enhancing his reputation, most certainly was in question. Alcibiades was recognised as the playboy of his day yet Socrates could see in him the future hero, the young Henry V at Agincourt, and committed himself to the achievement of the young man's potential. Although he was well aware of the risk of failure and the cost it would incur, Socrates did not flinch. Beyond the scope of the dialogue, I suggest, Socrates could also see the ramifications of that failure for the Athenian people and, in consequence, they were the intended beneficiaries of his commitment to Alcibiades. What, other than unconditional love, could motivate such self-sacrifice?

From such observations it is possible to take an image of Socrates the man, perhaps a little different from the one conventionally held of Socrates the philosopher. As a stonemason his work was on permanent display and open to common praise or criticism. He valued excellence, the *arête* which is not born of the moment but which is the reward for protracted, well directed effort. His characteristics are shown in these three dialogues but the dialogue that affects us most is the Alcibiades. In this we are shown the magnificence of the sacrifice of love, the one thing that Socrates claimed to know, in spite of his many protestations to know nothing, and this he learned *in toto* from Diotima."This , Phaedrus and you others, is what Diotima told me, and I am persuaded of it; in which persuasion I pursue my neighbours to persuade them in turn that towards this acquisition the best helper that our human nature can hope to find is love"[187].

It is certainly possible to speculate on the likely changes in history if Alcibiades had found room in his heart for the message of Socrates instead of only room for Alcibiades the ill fated Sicilian Expedition may never have occurred, Athens may not have been overrun and Socrates may never have been accused of corrupting the youth of Athens. However, of interest to this thesis is the question why did Diotima teach Socrates this uniquely important lesson? Considering her probable motivations and seeing the changes wrought in him it seems not impossible that out of love she taught him about love and under the influence of love he changed from self-centred to other-centred in his focus when dealing with people. This change could harm none but could benefit all with whom Socrates came into contact.

[187] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991 (212B).

Chapter 6 – Correlation

6.0 Introduction.

In this chapter I review, in a broad way, the links between what I believe can reasonably be seen as motivational to Diotima, the lesson which such motivation would lead her to teach, the impacts that she would desire as a result and those outcomes of which Socrates is capable. The purpose of this is to separate the concept 'Diotima teaches Socrates about love' and 'Socrates changes between Thrasymachus and Alcibiades' from the arguments supporting 'why Diotima taught Socrates' and 'what she taught Socrates' and 'how this changed Socrates'. All of these were derived, by deductive interrogation of the small amount of information Plato gave us. To test the arguments the process is reversed. Does a rational projection from early Minoan Crete lead to an Arcadian priestess teaching other-centred love in Athens? Using the same process, Kipling's *Six Honest Serving Men,*[188] the rule of the argument will be tested.

6.1 Motive and Diotima.

In Chapter 3, I considered the evolution of two populations, the early post Neolithic evolution on the island of Crete and the population evolving on the high plain of Arcadia. A study of the early Minoan civilisation[189] shows, in place of the violence which commonly arises out of aggressive competition, arts and music flourished, an appreciation of the good things in life as one might say. This civilisation, with its dominant female deity and priestesses to mediate on behalf of humanity, was essentially gentle. Menfolk were traders rather than warriors and established the largest mercantile fleet operating in the Mediterranean at the time. Sailors then, as now, deemed a bath, a meal a drink and female company at the end of the voyage 'a good run ashore' and so the culture which accompanied their trade goods was, by nature, gentle and appreciative of the good things of life.

---

[188] R. Kipling, The Elephant's Child in *Just So Stories,* Purnell Books, London, 1987. (p.60).
[189] R.W. Hutchinson, *Prehistoric Crete,* Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1965.

Again, in Chapter 3, when considering the evolution of the Arcadian people I drew attention to the development of a civilisation with no pretence to wealth and only the value of the surplus of their rustic production to trade for locally unobtainable elements, such as oil, in their diet. In their poverty, as a matter of survival, they learned to co-operate and share. Their occupation as shepherds required that they be patient and gentle people if they were to succeed and long hours of watching over their flocks led to their development as poets, singers and musicians. What little wherewithal they had was recognised by them as being by way of gift from their god. The fecundity of their flocks giving adequate increase in numbers, the health of their animals and increases in their yield of milk and wool were all attributed to the beneficence of their nature goddess, Aphrodite.

Common to these two populations, as a trading partner, was Mycenae through whom they shared facets of the Minoan culture. The supreme feminine deity, the service of priestesses and the domestic shrines to the goddess who was the source of all good things which were served by the women are examples. She was known to the Arcadians as Aphrodite whose birthplace (notwithstanding the claims of other places such as Cyprus and Cythera) was Crete. Her offspring, the Erotes or Graces included Eros who encouraged the enjoyment of all the pleasures of life such as food when hungry, wine for celebration, a good poem or song and even the attraction of 'other' to be a source of immortality through procreation. This culture of peaceful celebration survived the cataclysm of Thera and its destructive effect on Crete and, as a result, Mycenae became the dominant centre for the Minoan culture. Its Arcadian form continued, by virtue of their isolation, its distinctive purity for many years and, even after the invasion of Tegea in the south by Spartan forces, in the north, Mantinea maintained its independence and its religious practices.[190]

In consequence, in her childhood, Diotima inherited and maintained a religion and culture which was already some 2500 years old. This tradition was of a female deity who, year after year provided the necessities of life for the Mantineans and the joy of companionship in their shared celebrations. Then, as in the present day, there was, perhaps, a degree of secularisation within the general population but Diotima became a priestess and thus became privy to even the secret rites of their deity. Inevitably

[190] J.B. Bury, *A History of Greece,* 3rd edition, Revised R. Meiggs, McMillan, London, 1955.(p 598,599).

Diotima was influenced by her environment, in particular the aspects which gave rise to pleasurable experiences and the expectations which such experiences could generate. The absence of those environmental characteristics would motivate her to seek them out and, when necessary, provoke her to regenerate them. This acknowledges the known that she was human and thus prone to human behaviours.

The Athenian culture was intrinsically different to the Arcadian culture insofar as, at heat, it was competitive. It was recognised that to the victor went the spoils and, therefore, the more spoils one had demonstrated that one had enjoyed more victories. The victor at the Games won not only the crown of laurels but also the reputation which materially affected his life. In like manner winners of public debate and discourse could demand higher fees for teaching others their art and skills. Their beloved rhetoric was always designed to persuade others to the speaker's viewpoint thus demonstrating their own form of winning a victory. Co-operation, where necessary, was acknowledged but only as an aid to winning a competition. Such rivalry provided an alien world for Diotima to experience.

The structure of Athenian society was not such as to record the events in the lives of their womenfolk, indeed it seems only by virtue of Socrates' recollections at the Symposium [191] that Diotima is known to us at all. What happened on her arrival in Athens we don't know? If we surmise that her priesthood was exercised principally among women and so her activity was not recorded we could justify our position on the grounds that, apart from a rustic population, the main followers of Aphrodite were likely to be women and their activity was rarely considered noteworthy by the men of their time. Again, as Socrates observed,[192] Diotima gave assistance over the matter of the plague in Athens. This, possibly, being mainly a matter of hygiene, it is likely that, while the physical work may well have been done by slaves, women would supervise on behalf of the household. Moreover, in any situation threatening their domestic environment, women, by nature, co-operate with each other in order to survive it and this co-operation may well have been, for Diotima, reminiscent of life in Arcadia. If, as Ferguson[193] suggests, Socrates lost his wife, Myrto, to the plague, it would give him a very personal cause to remember it and, perhaps, Diotima's role

[191] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991.
[192] Ibid. (201D).
[193] J. Ferguson, *Socrates, a source book,* McMillan, London, 1970. (p.10).

in delaying it. Further, it may even have provided the opportunity for the meeting from which his tutelage arose. We have no evidence to confirm this, however, the arrival of Socrates asking to be taught would surely have triggered in Diotima, as in any teacher, a long quiescent motivational response. As Socrates' recollections indicate,[194] as the lessons progressed so Diotima became increasingly motivated to share with him, even the most sacred details of her beliefs indicating a possible union between them beyond simply that of mind.

6.2 Motive and lesson.

As the end of the last paragraph indicates, as Diotima's motivation was provoked so the content of her lessons increased in complexity. In the beginning, as Socrates told Agathon[195], he started from similar assumptions and, in the manner of a Socratic dialectician, Diotima, rebutted his arguments. She then, like a teacher, drew him onto the correct path[196]. As he responded in an appropriate way to her teaching[197] he stimulated her motivation to teach him even more. Beyond the basic mythology, with its analogous messages about poverty and other-centredness, she explained to him the process by which love is experienced through life. Again, Socrates' 'appropriate responses encouraged her to teach him the deeper mysteries she knew of love. At 210E[198] Diotima took a leap of faith because she could not know if Socrates would be able to follow her and apprehend the mysteries she was about to share. Why did she make that leap? I suggest that it is because of her love of her subject and her longing to share it with someone who might share her feeling for it. In the extraordinary adulation given to Socrates both during and after his life, it would be easy to attribute her acts to the force of his personality. I, however, believe that the sharing of her innermost conviction derived from her own inner motivation rather than any response to his 'fame'. Notwithstanding his position in Athenian society, I suggest that the answer to the question 'why was her lesson so complete?' lies in the power of this alien woman's own cultural gods and daimons, that is, her own

[194] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb translation, Harvard University Press, London, 1991.
[195] Ibid. (201D).
[196] Ibid. (204C).
[197] Ibid. (204C).
[198] Ibid. (210E).

motivations. Why was she so convincing? This, I suggest is a measure of the power of her motivation which led her to discourse not only with passion but also with authority. For a man, like Socrates, with an insatiable desire for rationally justified knowledge, the resolution of the irrational elements of the experience of love by acceptable and authoritative metaphysical explanation provided both the conviction he sought and the motivation to share his knowledge with others.[199] Thus the duration and content of Diotima's teaching, including her 'leap of faith' in Socrates' capacity to comprehend the metaphysical element, derived from the motivation that her cultural background and occupation engendered within her.

6.3 Motive and Socrates' change.

If it is accepted that Diotima's cultural and spiritual background gave her the motivation to provide Socrates with a teaching so complete and so authoritative that he was convinced by it to the degree that he too was empowered to seek to convince others likewise[200] then it must reasonably be expected that this influence will be manifest in the changes it has engendered in him.

Taking his discourse with Thrasymachus as a starting point, as shown in Chapter 4, Socrates is clearly self-centred as was common among Athenian men. Although he did not degenerate to the acrimony of Thrasymachus, Socrates did manipulate the dialogue in such a way as not only to demonstrate the error of Thrasymachus' position but also to show him and his profession in a bad light. Moreover, Socrates did not provide a satisfactory resolution to the question concerning the nature of justice which had been the topic of their discussion. Indeed, his own self-interested need for understanding was still unmet.

His dialogue with Alcibiades, also described in detail in Chapter 4, is of a totally different nature. Here Socrates started off with considerable intimacy admitting to love of Alcibiades but denying any physical desire for him and, simultaneously raised the question of spirituality by attributing his past behaviour towards Alcibiades to the daimon who controlled his life by advising him when and when not

[199] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb translation, Harvard University Press, London, 1991 (212B).
[200] Ibid. (212B).

to act. This dialogue recognised Alcibiades desire for power over the Assembly and thus over Athens. Socrates advised him that this will be impossible without Socrates as a mentor. Socrates' motives for making this offer were complex and included a love of Alcibiades but a greater love for Athens and her people. He could foresee problems if Alcibiades gained power simply through his popularity rather than ability. The crux of Socrates' offer was that power is exercised on behalf of others and it can only be exercised appropriately by those who, as the Delphic Oracle suggested, 'Know Thyself'. Alcibiades' hedonistic lifestyle had blinded him to his spirituality and thus he could not know himself. Socrates explained to him that to see into the soul it was necessary to examine the reflection in the eye and see with the heart, a notion better expressed by the French author Antoine de St Exupery[201] "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly, what is essential is invisible to the eye." Alcibiades, out of self interest, took up Socrates' offer and Socrates committed to it out of love for Athens, her people and for Alcibiades. The deceit of Alcibiades cost, as history shows[202]Alcibiades, Athens and her people and, arguably, Socrates' reputation and ultimately his life.

In this dialogue Socrates operated, demonstrably, from the ground of the welfare of others and without self interest. He sought to offer spiritual and metaphysical solutions to the protracted and intractable problems of Alcibiades for the sake of Athens, her people and Alcibiades himself.

6.4 Summary.

Gregory Vlastos[203] sees Socrates change from a dialectician to a teacher. The shift from seeker to knower and ultimately teacher is part of the normal lifecycle described by Erik H. Erikson[204], a fact which those who would choose to deny Socrates' change may well consider. I believe that a psychohistory of Socrates, after the style of Erikson's *Young Man Luther*,[205]would show him to follow normal

[201] A de St Exupery, *The Little Prince,* K. Woods trans., Wm. Heinemann Ltd., London, 1945. (p.70).
[202] J.B. Bury, *A History of Greece,* 3rd edn., Revised R. Meiggs, McMillan, London, 1955.(p 467 ff).
[203] G. Vlastos, *Platonic Studies,* Princeton University Press, Princeton N.J., 1973. (p 106).
[204] E.H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, W.W. Norton, New York, 1963.
[205] E.H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther,* W.W. Norton, New York, 1962.

cyclical changes over his seventy year lifespan. However, there is an interesting variation insofar as the stonemason let go of his trade and followed that of a teacher and mentor instead. In the modern world this may represent someone following the process of a mid-life crisis, but 2500 years ago it would possibly be a different story. Rather, consider a man, between his first wife and his second, meeting a teacher who can satisfy his thirst for knowledge concerning love and do so with such authority and energy that he is convinced to the point of becoming a proselytiser himself.[206] This, I suggest, is what in modern parlance is referred to as a 'pivotal experience'. Socrates changed from his traditional occupations of stonemason, soldier and dialectician to become a peripatetic teacher of philosophy. At the core of his change was the change of ground from which he operated, from self-centred to other-centred. This is a change by which he became coincident with the ground of his Arcadian teacher. From this other-centred ground he defended himself at law rather than allow another to put themself at risk on his behalf. Even though he lost the case and was sentenced to death in accordance with the due process of Athenian law he did not accept any of the options of mitigation and went to his death[207] happy that he had been true to the 'self' he had come to know. It is, I suggest, difficult to see the pivotal role of Diotima's teaching, in light of his subsequent life experiences and deem it to be fictional. Rather, from the perspective of this analysis it would seem that Diotima was the right person, carrying the right burden of learning and motivation, in the right place, at the right time, for the right man and such was her impact that Socrates became the only man in Athens who suffered death for his opinions[208].

[206] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb translation, Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (212B).
[207] Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates,* H. Tredennick translation, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1971.
[208] E. Hamilton, *The Greek Way,* Mentor Books edition, W.W. Norton and Company Inc., New York, 1942. (p 28).

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

7.0 Introduction.

In this chapter I draw the essential threads together and recognise, for the last time, the nature of Diotima, the very real, life defining impact she had on Socrates and the value of the lesson she taught. Further, I consider the value of her lesson today. Where is there evidence of recognition of her lesson and its contemporary application? Lastly I indicate the potential application of this research and where, with future research, it may be extended further.

7.1 Diotima's Nature.

In considering Diotima's nature it was, in my view, reasonable to consider the topographical features which impacted upon the evolution of the people who formed the community in which she was born and raised. Small communities, such as the one on the isle of Aran of the west coast of Ireland, are relatively taciturn because the topography and climatic conditions on their island do not encourage conversations. Nevertheless, because of their community, their feelings and emotions run very deeply indeed and, when aroused, are strong and enduring. The pastoral community in Arcadia, in addition to not being so impoverished by comparison had a more pleasant Mediterranean climate, albeit between 1000 and 2,000 metres above seal level, up in the mountains. In consequence, like many mountain communities they tended to be less taciturn and generally happier. Being, however, similarly isolated, their feelings and emotions were also strong and enduring. Thus, Diotima can be seen to be both happy and passionate by virtue of the environment in which she grew up.

Grinding poverty as a lifelong experience can result in a certain meanness of spirit but the experience of poverty accompanied by hope promotes sharing as a way of life. The survival of the community being recognised, pragmatically, as transcending that of the individual engenders an other-centred philosophy from which all members benefit and an environment of mutual love follows naturally. In such a community

the worship of a loving, caring, nurturing and inevitably female deity would flourish and attract the service of people with similar attributes. Given that the worship stems from gratitude at having needs met, joy and celebration are most likely to constitute a major part of the rituals. Thus, again, Diotima is predicated to be happy and passionate by nature.

In consequence then, either Socrates was attracted by or Plato gave literary creation to a woman, with a happy disposition, a sense of fun and celebration and having a deep passion. A woman who, having few needs herself, was concerned for others, that their needs were met so that, like her, they too had just cause for celebration. This woman could make friends easily and thus was able to live and work securely as a resident alien amongst the people of Athens. Her deep passion could provoke some people and so she would have learned to maintain a high degree of self control. Given the opportunity, however, as she was by Socrates (or Plato), she was both willing and able to release her control and give of her very best as the occasion required. Her view of her best was her gift to Socrates[209]"and you must keep up as best you can." In sum then Diotima's nature was passionate, intelligent, generous and with the sense of fun of one who celebrates the gifts of life; an ideal, if you will, who was 'beloved of god' as her name implies.

7.2 Impact on Socrates.

In considering the impact of Diotima on Socrates it is necessary to envision the Socrates that she met. Before thinking of Socrates the well known philosopher it is appropriate to remember the Socrates introduced by Ferguson.[210] Born to Phaenarete, a midwife and to Sophroniscus a stonemason, Socrates' parents were able to give him a good, in ancient Greek terms, education. He learned his father's trade and made a good, arranged, marriage to Myrto, a descendent of Aristides the Just. The trade of a stonemason, learned by apprenticeship, involved moving pieces of stone, some of which may have been very heavy. The effect of this on a young man would have been, over time, to bow his legs. The handling of stone would also

[209] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb translation, Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (210A).
[210] J. Ferguson, *Socrates a source book,* McMillan, London, 1970.

have developed powerful shoulders and, together with the use of chisel and maul, very strong arms. In the gymnasium he would have been a ferocious wrestler in the Greek style. Together these factors can add up to a simple and stable life but, in the trade of a stonemason, there is also the plumb line, the square and the dividers which add up to the pursuit of that truth without which a building will collapse. The pursuit of 'truth' since childhood and a society which revelled in the discursive pursuit of truth combined to make Socrates the man who asked Diotima to teach him the truth about love. Two other factors may have had a bearing upon the man. The meeting with Diotima may have been after the death of Myrto in the plague and prior to his marriage to Xanthippe, his second wife. Also he may have seen service as a Hoplite in the Peloponnesian war and saved the life of the young Alcibaides. These events may have had an emotional impact on the stolid, pedantic stonemason seeker after truth. Consider the durability and precise quality about a granite headstone in a cemetery and think of the man that wrought such work. Of such men was Socrates.

Putting himself under the tutelage of Diotima most certainly impacted upon Socrates. He was convinced by her argument and announced it to the world at large.[211] She taught him that the authentic experience of love lay in being other-centred, that is giving primacy to the interests of others. Moreover, the pursuit of the experience of love leads, by a process of steps, to the point where a lover experiences a vision of eternal perfection[212] a vision over which the lover has no control but one in which they would spend their entire life, given the choice. And of this he was convinced.

We cannot know if in the process of 'keeping up as best he could with Diotima' Socrates was led to such a vision but we can observe that the change in his demeanour in dialogue is from the ground of self-interest in Thrasymachus to the ground of other-centred in Alcibiades 1. We can also recognise that this was no instant change but one which took time and consideration. In Phaedrus he was still in a state of transition, however, he continued in the same direction even to the events of the last days and his death. The change in Socrates which seems to reflect the impact of Diotima persisted to the end of his life. Thus, the impact upon Socrates which can reasonably be attributed to Diotima, was desirable, welcomed and durable.

---

[211] Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M. Lamb translation, Harvard University Press, London, 1991. (212B).
[212] Ibid. (211A).

7.3 The Value of Diotima.

The value of Diotima is understated to the degree that her existence, other than as a literary fiction, remains questioned. The value of her teaching, that of other-centredness as a way of life, is, where it is adopted, immeasurable. Perceived from the intensely biased perspectives of economic and political theories it can be deemed to be unsustainable and people operating from those perspectives have put to death the proponents of other-centredness including, by way of example, Socrates and Jesus of Nazareth. Nevertheless, other stonemasons and carpenters, out of their care for others, have put their best efforts into building the great Temples, Cathedrals and Mosques in order that long lasting statements of approval of the concepts of other-centredness and community might remind contemporary proponents of the durability of the lesson.

7.4 Value of the lesson today.

There are many more people walking the world today than there were in the time of Plato, Socrates' and Diotima and thus many more targets for other-centred love. World Health Organisation, Community Aid Abroad and U.N.E.S.C.O. are three public faces but less public are the altruists like Bill Gates and Warren Buffet. In any disaster the response of humanity is such that it is clear that the message of other-centredness is alive and well. Global recession, when examined in detail, is a failure of self-interest. As Mr Bob Hawke , former Prime Minister of Australia said "The essence of power is the knowledge that what you do is going to have not just an immediate effect but perhaps a lifelong effect on the happiness and wellbeing of millions of people, and so I think the essence of power is to be conscious of what it can mean for others."[213] Care for others is in the nature of humanity and is ineradicable. The value of the lesson for today remains as it appears to have been for all time, that is, for successful life in community operation of the individual from the ground of other-centredness is essential.

[213] ABC TV, Andrew Denton *Elders – Bob Hawke,* viewed ABC1, 8.00pm 11 January, 2010.

7.5 Future Research Directions.

Attributed to Epicurus is the thought that a philosophy that does not reduce human suffering is a philosophy of no value. With this in mind and considering what may be derived from extant philosophic texts by virtue of the exercise of psychohistory or even the simple interrogation techniques applied in this current work, research and development in this area would seem a useful supplement to existing evaluator techniques.

During the research for this thesis a paradigm considered to be of use in marriage counselling and pre marriage guidance was generated from the consideration of 'self-centred' relationships and 'other-centred' relationships as underpinning the structure of a marriage. This paradigm appears to indicate possible pathways and probable outcomes and is being considered by professionals in the field in Australia, Switzerland and Canada. Along similar lines paradigms may possibly be generated for use in the generation of political and economic theory also. The diversification into other fields is coherent with the notion of Philosophy as a multidisciplinary field and one in which everyone can participate.

References

ABC, http://www.abc.net.au/V/enoughrope/transcripts/s198694.htm accessed 15th November, 2009.

ABC TV, Andrew Denton *Elders – Bob Hawke,* viewed ABC1, 8.00pm 11 January, 2010.

Andrewes, A. *Greek Society,* (Pelican edn. 1971), Hutchinson, London, 1987.

Bury, J.B. *A History of Greece,* 3rd Edition, Revised R. Meiggs, McMillan, London, 1955.

de St Exupery, A. *The Little Prince,* K. Woods trans., Wm. Heinemann Ltd., London, 1945. (p.70).

Erikson, E.H. *Childhood and Society,* W.W. Norton, New York, 1963.

Erikson, E.H. *Young Man Luther,* W.W. Norton, New York, 1962.

Ferguson, J. *Socrates, a source book,* McMillan, London, 1970.

Friedlander, P. *Plato, the dialogues ... first period,* H. Meyerhoff trans., Pantheon, Random House, New York, 1964.

Guhl, E. & Koner, W. *The Greeks, Their Life and Customs,* Senate, Twickenham, Middlesex, 1994. (p.185).

Hamilton, E. *The Greek Way,* Mentor by arrangement with W.W. Norton and Company Inc, New York, 1957.

Harrison, J.E. *Mythology,* Marshall Jones Company, Boston, 1924.

Harrison, J.E. *Prolegomena to the study of Greek religion,* Meriden Books Inc., New York, 1955.

Hutchinson, R.W. *Prehistoric Crete,* Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, London, 1965.

Kipling, R. *I keep six honest serving men, The Elephant's Child* in 'Just so Stories'.

Purnell Books, London, 1987.

Kosman, L.A. *Facets of Plato's Philosophy,* Van Gorcum, Assen, 1976.

Kitto, H.D.F. *The Greeks,* Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, London, 1987.

Matz,F. *La Crete et La Grece Primitif,* Albin Michel, Paris, 1962. (p.106 – fragemente de fresque provenant du palais de Cnossos).

McGowan, E.R. *Re-embodying the sacred gestures of Neopalatial Minoan Crete,* Archeological Review from Cambridge, Issue 21.6, Nov.2006.

Nussbaum, M.C. *The Fragility of Goodness,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.

Plato, *Alcibaides 1, in The Dialogues of Plato,* B. Jowett trans. Sphere Books, London, 1970.

Plato, *Menexenus,* in *Plato Complete Works,* J.M. Cooper (Ed.), Hackett Publishing Company Inc, Indianapolis, 1997.

Plato, *Phaedrus,* H.N. Fowler trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1995.

Plato, *Symposium,* W. Hamilton trans., Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, London, 1973.

Plato, *Symposium,* W.R.M .Lamb trans., Harvard University Press, London, 1991.

Plato, *Symposium,* in 'Plato's Complete Works', J.M. Cooper (Ed), Hackett Publishing Co. Ltd., Indianapolis, 1997.

Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates,* H. Tredennick translation, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1971.

Plato, *The Republic,* F.M. Cornford trans., Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1951.

Plato, *The Republic,* D. Lee trans., 2nd edn. (Revised), Penguin, London, 1987.

Strauss, L. *On Plato's Symposium,* S. Bernardete Editor, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001.

Swearingen, C.J. *Physician, Heal Thyself: Diotima teaches Socrates a lesson in love,* in A. Lunsford (ed.), *A Lover's Discourse: Diotima, Logos and Desire,* Reclaiming Rhetorica, Pittsburgh, 1995.

Talisse, R. *Misunderstanding Socrates,* Arion, vol.9 No.3, 2002.

Virgil, *The Eclogues,* C Day Lewis trans., Jonathon Cape, London, 1963.

Vlastos, G. *Platonic Studies,* Princeton University Press, Princeton N.J., 1973.

Vlastos, G. *Socrates contra Socrates,* in Socrates : Ironist and Moral Philosopher, Cornell, New York, 1991.

Vlastos, G. *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher,* Cornell University, New York, 1991.

Woodbridge, F.J.E. *The Son of Apollo,* Boston, 1929.,cited in J. Ferguson, *Socrates, A source book,* McMillan, London, 1970.

Appendix A

I Keep Six Honest Serving Men

I keep six honest serving men

(They taught me all I knew);

Their names are What and Why and When

And How and Where and Who.

I send them over land and sea,

I send them east and west;

But after they have worked for me,

I give them all a rest

I let them rest from nine 'til five,

For I am busy then,

As well as breakfast, lunch and tea,

For they are hungry men.

But different folk have different views;

I know a person small –

She keeps ten million serving men,

Who get no rest at all!

She sends 'em abroad on her own affairs,

From the second she opens her eyes –

One million Hows, two million Wheres

And seven million Whys!

Rudyard Kipling, The Elephant's Child in *Just So Stories*, Purnell Books, London, 1987 (p.60).

Appendix B

Table 2. Approximate Time Line.

B.C.E.	Socrates	Event	Ref Source
469	Born		Ferguson, p.6
435	34	Arranged marriage to Myrto, descendant of Aristides the Just	Ferguson, p.10
432	37	Revolt of Potidaea – saved Alcibaides at Spartolus	Plato, Symposium 220D. Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy
431	38	Peloponnesian war, The Republic	Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy
430	39	Outbreak of plague in Athens, possible death of Myrto	Ferguson, p.10
424	45	Battle of Delium under Laches, Socrates heroic again	Plato, Symposium, 221A
423	46	Aristophanes – The Clouds – no reference to wife – widower?	Ferguson p.10
418	51	Phaedrus	Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy
416	53	Symposium – 16 Feb. Married to Xanthippe	Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy
415	54	Alcibiades involved in invasion of Sicily	Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy
399	70	Socrates death	Ferguson, p.6