

Poetic Allusion in Plato's *Timaeus* and *Phaedrus*

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Plato's deft and playful artistry in composing allusions can be seen in two very different dialogues, *Timaeus* and *Phaedrus*. In these works Plato alludes to poetry and signals his use of allusion: to Hesiod in *Timaeus* and to Sappho and Anacreon in *Phaedrus*. Stephen Hinds begins *Allusion and Intertext* by quoting Christopher Ricks' perceptive insight on allusion: 'it is characteristic of art to find energy and delight in an enacting of that which it is saying'.¹ Hinds' important account of Roman poetry demonstrates how: 'alluding poets exert themselves to draw attention to the fact that they are alluding, and to reflect upon the nature of their allusive activity.'² Plato's art shares this 'energy and delight' as it offers teasing disclosure of its allusive activities. In *Timaeus* the epic poetry of Hesiod's *Theogony* becomes the model that Plato emulates in his own account of the creation of the universe. In *Phaedrus* the lyric poetry of Sappho and Anacreon provides important starting points for Plato's exploration of madness and self-control in the soul of the lover. The texts point to this creative engagement with poetry by presenting two pertinent images for allusion: in *Timaeus* poetic tradition is imaged as genealogy, while in *Phaedrus* poetic influence is imaged as flowing streams.³ In each case the image for allusive activity, positioned in the early parts of the dialogue, not only reflects the content of the poetic genres referenced but also gives notice of material to follow in the main body of the work. In the prologue of *Timaeus* the transmission of stories about origins is directly linked with family history and genealogy (21a-d). The emphasis on lineage recalls the content of Hesiod's genealogy of the gods and anticipates the family line that will for Plato generate the birth of the universe. Similarly, in *Phaedrus* the streams of poetic influence early in the dialogue (235c) recall the flowing waters of eroticized meadows in lyric and anticipate the 'stream of beauty' that will in the later myth flow into the lover's soul. In this way Plato's echoes of his poetic predecessors become thematic within his own compositions.

¹ Hinds (1998) 1 and Ricks (1976) 209.

² Hinds (1998) 1.

³ While a number of other poets and writers are named and referenced in these dialogues, the respective namings of Hesiod, Sappho and Anacreon are particularly entwined with the chosen images for allusions. While studies of the allusions in *Phaedrus* to other poets (particularly Pindar) would prove fertile and would further understanding of Plato's techniques, the three selected poets provide ample evidence to support the case here.

The significance of the poetic allusions is further highlighted as dramatic context indicates that the dialogues are performing their particular allusions. First, the specific occasion of Children's Day at the festival of the Apaturia is used as the setting for one of the introductory conversations of *Timaeus*. This enactment of family tradition signals how Plato's story of the birth of the universe is claiming its own place in a family line of creation myths going back to Hesiod. Second, in *Phaedrus* the story of love is receiving its own streams of poetic influence from Sappho and Anacreon, a process dramatized by the flow of the Ilissus. The careful choice of dramatic setting means that Plato's allusions to poetry are both verbal and situational.⁴ Commenting on the *Aeneid* Hinds speaks of how 'the landscape of ancient Italy serves to metaphorize a literary encounter' between Virgil and Ennius.⁵ The same technique can be seen in Plato, where the occasion of a festival and a landscape 'serve to metaphorize' similar encounters between Plato and the epic and lyric traditions.

A final aspect of the allusions concerns their self-reflexive function. Since the images of procreation and streams are themselves familiar expressions for the creative process, each with strong connotations of vitality, they work to draw attention to both the author's inheritance of literary tradition and his originality in departing from it. These complex and subtle interlacings of allusion and content have not yet been explored. Overall, the technique that emerges provides a commentary on the author's own creativity and establishes an intriguing intertextuality with epic and lyric, posing a challenge to the well-established view of the philosopher as hostile to poetry.⁶

Part 1: Genealogies and Creation Myths

Family Stories in the Prologue of *Timaeus*

The extended prologue of the *Timaeus* is dominated by a concern with the past, with telling stories about the past and with genealogies. Critias summarises a tale he heard as a boy from his grandfather (21a). The grandfather, also named

⁴ The terminology is from Hinds (1998) 136.

⁵ Hinds (1998, 13) on *Aeneid* 6.179-82.

⁶ This paper has developed out of my two, more detailed, studies of the significance of the poetic motifs used in the narratives of these dialogues: first, 'Chaos corrected: the creation myths of Plato and Hesiod'; and second, 'Sappho and Anacreon in Plato's *Phaedrus*'. I am grateful for comments and suggestions arising from discussion of earlier versions of these papers in research seminars at the Universities of Durham, Lampeter, Birmingham, Bolton, Liverpool and the Institute of Classical Studies, University of London.

Critias, had heard it from his own father, Dropides, to whom it was told by Solon, his 'relative and close friend' (*Timaeus* 20e1-4):

[Σόλων] ἦν μὲν οὖν οἰκειὸς καὶ σφόδρα φίλος ἡμῖν Δρωπίδου τοῦ προπάππου, ... πρὸς δὲ Κριτίαν τὸν ἡμέτερον πάππον εἶπεν, ὡς ἀπεμνημόνευεν αὐτὸς πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὁ γέρων.⁷

With the aged grandfather and great-grandfather Plato stresses that Critias is the third generation of his family to hear Solon's tale. Further, the tale itself tells how even earlier Greeks who told *their* most ancient stories (22a5, τὰ ἀρχαιότατα) were not aware of a pre-history dating back still further. Critias reports that Solon had travelled to the Egyptian city of Sais and conversed with the priests, the guardians of knowledge of the ancient past (21e-22a). Critias tells how the Egyptians made Solon aware of the relative youth of Greece (22a4-b8):

Once, wishing to lead them on to talk about ancient times (περὶ τῶν ἀρχαίων), he [Solon] set about telling them the most venerable of our legends (τὰ ἀρχαιότατα), about Phoroneus the reputed first man and Niobe, and the story (μυθολογεῖν) of how Deucalion and Pyrrha survived the deluge. He traced the pedigree of their descendants (καὶ τοὺς ἐξ αὐτῶν γενεαλογεῖν), and tried, by reckoning the generations, to compute how many years had passed since those events.

"Ah, Solon, Solon," said one of the priests, a very old man (εὖ μάλα παλαιόν), "you Greeks are always children (ἀεὶ παῖδες); in Greece there is no such thing as an old man (γέρων). . . . You are all young in your minds," said the priest, "which hold no store of old belief based on long tradition (δι' ἀρχαίαν ἀκοήν), no knowledge hoary with age (μάθημα χρόνῳ πολίων)." (tr. Cornford)

Attention is thus focused on the transmission of ancient stories through generations. Alongside explicit mentions of traditional genealogies (22b2, γενεαλογεῖν; 23b4, γενεαλογηθέντα), the theme of family lines is also highlighted by the specific dramatic context of the telling of the Solon story. For Critias heard it from his grandfather as they were celebrating the festival of Apaturia. Even more particularly, the very day of the festival is named – 'Children's Day' (21a7-b4):

ΚΡ. Ἐγὼ φράσω, παλαιὸν ἀκηκοὺς λόγον οὐ νέου ἀνδρός, ἦν μὲν γὰρ δὴ τότε Κριτίας, ὡς ἔφη, σχεδὸν ἐγγὺς ἤδη τῶν ἐνενήκοντα ἐτῶν, ἐγὼ δὲ πη μάλιστα δεκάτης· ἡ δὲ Κουρεῶτις ἡμῖν οὕσα ἐτύγχανεν Ἀπατουρίων. τὸ δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς σύνηθες ἐκάστοτε καὶ τότε συνέβη τοῖς παισίν· ἄθλα γὰρ ἡμῖν οἱ πατέρες ἔθεσαν ῥαψωδίας, πολλῶν μὲν οὖν δὴ καὶ πολλὰ ἐλέγχθη ποιητῶν ποιήματα.

⁷ Burnet, ed. 1902.

Critias (to Socrates): I will tell you the story I heard as an old tale from a man who was himself far from young. At that time, indeed, Critias, by his own account, was close upon ninety, and I was, perhaps, ten years old. We were keeping the Apaturia; it was the Children's Day. For us boys there were the usual ceremonies: our fathers offered us prizes for reciting. Many poems by different authors were repeated. (tr. Cornford)

The Apaturia was a festival based upon the *Phratriai* (or 'Brotherhoods') of Athenian society, the communities linked by birth, which stretched back to primitive Greece.⁸ Parke notes a further feature of the *Phratriai*: 'in theory all male members were descended from a common male ancestor' (89). Thus the *Apaturia* was an event celebrating the extended family's shared line of descent. On the rites of Children's Day, Parke explains (89):

The third day (*Koureotis*), the Day of Youths . . . , was the official occasion when new members were introduced to the *Phratia*. This was done in the case of boys when they were still infants. The official state registration for secular purposes did not take place till the boy was approaching manhood. Then his registration with his *Phratia* as an infant could be cited as evidence of birth and paternity, if necessary.

The festival marked both paternity and common ancestry, and the importance of the fathers is shown in the *Timaeus* passage by the reference to οἱ πατέρες as they participate in the official festivities with their sons.⁹

In these ways the prologue points up very clearly the issues of tradition, family lines and paternity. Interwoven with this is the use of the family line as a means whereby knowledge of the distant past is transmitted to the present. Plato thus sets the scene for his own account of the beginnings of the universe created by a Demiurge who is its father and the common male ancestor of all humanity. Through this prologue Plato shows that he, as author, is keenly aware of his own myth's place in the Greek genealogy of creation stories.

Hesiod is introduced by name as Critias speaks of the potential superiority of Solon over the epic poets (21d1-3):

⁸ Parke (1977) 88-9.

⁹ For a further literary mention of the Apaturia, see Aristophanes' *Acharnians* 146-7: ἤρα φαγεῖν ἀλλήντας ἐξ Ἀπατουρίων, / καὶ τὸν πατέρ' ἠντεβόλει βοηθεῖν τῇ πάτρῃ. I am grateful to Roger Brock for pointing me to these lines. In his commentary Olson (2002, 118) observes that 'the third day (Κουρεῶτις) [featured] the presentation of male children born within the last few years for registration in the phratry' and notes the pun between the festival's name and paternity: 'Note also the echo of the word in πατέρ' and πάτρῃ in 147.' It is noticeable how Plato also uses the words Ἀπατουρίων and πατέρες in close proximity at 21b2-4. The patriarchal nature of the festival is evident.

κατά γε ἐμὴν δόξαν οὔτε Ἡσίοδος οὔτε Ὅμηρος οὔτε ἄλλος οὐδεὶς ποιητῆς
εὐδοκιμώτερος ἐγένετο ἂν ποτε αὐτοῦ.

The context for this comparison is Socrates' discussion of the limitations of poets at 19d.¹⁰ These reflections on the poets and their stories draw attention to Plato's own credentials as story-teller. By choosing the form of a myth for his account of the birth of the universe, his text would compete with earlier Greek myths of creation. The references to the story-tellers of the ancient past therefore have a self-reflexive function: Plato creates a family tree for his own creation story and establishes Hesiod as one of the fathers of its line.¹¹ The particular epic text that will resonate in *Timaeus* is *Theogony* with its account of the birth of the gods. Plato will allude to *Theogony* as he creates an alternative genealogy for the divine universe. The vehicle of the allusion, family lines, prepares for the content of the myth, the genealogy of the cosmos, and indicates how the dialogue stands in relation to its epic predecessor. The Children's Day festivities, with their emphasis on paternity and their recitals of poetry, operate as a situational allusion for the references to Hesiod that will follow.

Plato's alternative creation myth

In revealing a universe built on principles of goodness, Plato has a new story to tell. Plato's myth of the birth of the universe challenges Hesiod and the poetic tradition by revealing radically different starting points and setting out its teleological vision in place of the strife and turmoil of the poetic theogony. Plato must correct Hesiod's *Theogony* since it gives a distorted picture of the gods as engaged in wrongdoing. He simply cannot accept stories of divine plotting, deception and acts of violence. Plato's criticism of ancient myths at *Laws* 886c applies directly to *Theogony* and Hesiod is named explicitly at *Republic* 377ff., as Plato explains why such tales of divine wrongdoing are unacceptable. At 377e Hesiod is singled out for specific criticism with his story of Cronos' castration (377e) and battles of Giants (378c), which are identified particularly as family strife.¹² The actual distortion is then spelled out at 379a: since god is definitively *good*, stories of wrong-doing do not offer a truthful ac-

¹⁰ Socrates' criticism of the poets at *Tim.* 19d-e as 'imitators' (μιμητικὸν, μιμήσεται, μιμῆσθαι) parallels *Phdr.* 248e where poets are similarly associated with mere imitation.

¹¹ The three poets mentioned at *Tim.* 21c-d, Solon, Hesiod and Homer, are also mentioned together at *Symp.* 209d in the context of the image of poetic creation as the fathering of spiritual children (παῖδας 209c8; ἔκγονα 209d2; and γέννησι 209d7). Phaedrus is similarly hailed early in *Symp.* (177d5) as the 'father' of the discourse (πατὴρ τοῦ λόγου).

¹² *Rep.* 378c3-6: πολλοῦ δεῖ γιγαντομαχίας τε μυθολογητέον αὐτοῖς καὶ ποικιλτέον, καὶ ἄλλας ἔχθρας πολλὰς καὶ παντοδαπὰς θεῶν τε καὶ ἡρώων πρὸς συγγενεῖς τε καὶ οἰκείους αὐτῶν (Burnet, ed. 1902).

count of the divine nature. As the *Republic* passage continues god is identified as the ‘cause’ (αἴτιον) not of all things but only of good, since his good nature will not allow him to cause evil or harm (379b-c). The identification of the Demiurge as the cause (*aition*) of the universe at *Timaeus* 28c recalls and builds on this *Republic* passage: the *aition* of the universe is explicitly identified as good and working with entirely good motive (29d7-e2):

Λέγωμεν δὴ δι’ ἥντινα αἰτίαν γένεσιν καὶ τὸ πᾶν τόδε ὁ συνιστὰς συνέστησεν. ἀγαθὸς ἦν, ἀγαθῶ δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος·

Let us, then, state for what reason becoming and this universe were framed by him who framed them. He was good; and in the good no jealousy in any matter can ever arise. (tr. Cornford)

The emphatic negatives and repetition of *agathos* stress god’s goodness and at 29e4 this drive towards goodness is identified as the ἀρχὴν κυριωτάτην, the supremely valid principle, of becoming and the whole cosmos (29e4). Unlike Hesiod’s Ouranos, Kronos and Zeus, Plato’s supreme god is not seeking to create a world-order that will allow him simply to gain and then hold on to power. Rather, the Demiurge and those he creates are themselves good and their aim is to create further goodness. Thus the dynastic strife and political power-play of Hesiod’s myth must be firmly set aside. But nevertheless echoes of Hesiod can be heard within the text.

Hesiod in *Timaeus*: family stories

Giving a true account of the very beginnings of the gods and the universe clearly carries some hazards. It is not easy to gain access to the first actions of eternal beings. In *Theogony* Hesiod’s stance is to claim that his account of the birth of the gods and the universe was told to him directly by the Muses on Mount Helikon. But even with this very bold move, the poet still feels it necessary to draw attention to the truth-status of the account they deliver. Thus in the prologue he has the Muses say to the poet as representative of human beings (26-8):

ποιμένες ἀγραυλοὶ, κάκ’ ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον,
ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,
ἴδμεν δ’ εὖτ’ ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.¹³

Shepherds of the field, base reproaches, mere bellies,
we know how to speak many falsehoods that are like truths,
and we know how to utter truths, when we wish to.¹⁴

¹³ Solmsen, ed. 1970.

The Muses make clear their contempt for mankind and stress the gulf between their own knowledge and power and that of the poor shepherd, subject to all the usual human limitations. As a result of their caprice (line 28) a question mark remains: will they tell the truth this time? Similarly, in the *Timaeus* before the cosmogony begins, the issue of truth-status is flagged in the prologue. In the tale reported by Solon, the Egyptian priest tells how the Athenians were born 9,000 years previously, at the point when Athena 'took over the seed of your people from Earth and Hephaestus' (23e1-2, ἐκ Γῆς τε καὶ Ἡφαίστου τὸ σπέρμα παραλαβοῦσα ὑμῶν). Despite this evident mythological reference, Socrates approves the tale as 'genuine history' (26e4-5): μὴ πλασθέντα μῦθον ἀλλ' ἀληθινὸν λόγον. Will Timaeus' account of creation also be genuine history? The challenge of revealing the beginnings of everything is implicit in Timaeus' invocation to the gods at the opening of his speech. Socrates bids him to call on the gods as custom (*nomos*) requires, and Timaeus replies (27c1-d1):

That, Socrates, is what all do, who have the least portion of wisdom: always, at the outset of every undertaking, small or great, they call upon a god. We who are now to discourse about the universe – how it came into being (ἢ γέγονεν), or perhaps had no beginning of existence (ἀγενέες) – must, if our senses be not altogether gone astray, invoke gods and goddesses with a prayer (ἐπικαλουμένους εὔχεσθαι) that our discourse throughout may be above all pleasing to them and in consequence satisfactory to us. Let this suffice, then, for our invocation of the gods. (tr. Cornford)

Invoking the gods is a traditional gesture and although the gods are not asked to *narrate* through the speaker, nevertheless Timaeus' invocation clearly recalls those of epic, including Hesiod's invocation to the Muses at *Theogony* 105-15. Since Hesiod's Muses speak through him he can deal with the question of knowledge of origins by simply deferring to their divine knowledge. But Plato's approach to the truth-status of his account takes a different turn as he famously establishes that this cosmogony is merely a 'likely story' (*eikôs muthos*).¹⁵ Two reasons are given. First, since the cosmos itself is merely a likeness, the account of it cannot be as secure as an account of the actual model and must itself merely be likely (29c). But as the explanation continues a more familiar reason also emerges (29c4-d3):

If then, Socrates, in many respects concerning the many things – the gods and the generation of the universe (θεῶν καὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς γενέσεως) – we prove unable to render an account at all points entirely consistent with itself and exact, you must not be surprised. If we can furnish accounts no less likely than

¹⁴ My translation. Other translations of *Theogony* will be from West (1988).

¹⁵ Timaeus' cosmogony as 'likely' story: 29d2; 44d1; 48d6; 53d5; 55d5; 56a1; 56b4; 56d1; 68b7; 72d7; 90e8.

any other, we must be content, remembering that I who speak and you my judges are only human (φύσιν ἀνθρωπίνην ἔχομεν), and consequently it is fitting that we should in these matters, accept the likely story and look for nothing further. (tr. Cornford)

Here the limitations of human knowledge and the gap between human and divine become a further reason why the tale is merely likely. This gap recalls the Muses' taunts in Hesiod and the same theme of human limitations sounds later as Plato makes a direct reference to traditional theogonies.¹⁶

At 40d6, at a key transition point in the structure of the myth, Plato incorporates a traditional theogony that contains a clear allusion to Hesiod (40d6-41a3):

As concerning the other divinities, to know and to declare their generation is too high a task for us; we must trust those who have declared it in former times: being, as they said, descendants (ἐκγόνοις) of gods, they must, no doubt, have had certain knowledge of their own ancestors (προγόνους). We cannot, then, mistrust the children (παισὶν) of gods, though they speak without probable or necessary proofs; when they profess to report their family history (οἰκεῖα), we must follow established usage and accept what they say (ἐπομένους τῷ νόμῳ πιστευτέον). Let us, then, take on their word this account of the generation (ἡ γένεσις) of these gods. [40e5] As children of Earth and Heaven (Γῆς τε καὶ Οὐρανοῦ) were born Oceanus and Tethys; and of these Phorkys and Cronos and Rhea and all their company; and of Cronos and Rhea, Zeus and Hera and all their brothers and sisters whose names we know; and of these yet other offspring. (tr. Cornford)

The myth-makers who claimed divine descent are such figures as Orpheus and Musaeus, but the particular theogony here alludes to that of Hesiod at *Theogony* 133-8 and used throughout the poem.¹⁷ In the preceding sections of *Timaeus* Plato has been presenting his account of the divine planets, with a section devoted to earth (40b-c), where it is described as 'our nurse' and as 'the first and eldest/most venerable of the gods in heaven' (40b8-c3, γῆν δὲ τροφὸν μὲν ἡμετέραν . . . πρώτην καὶ πρεσβυτάτην θεῶν ὅσοι ἐντὸς οὐρανοῦ γεγονάσιν), which accords with Hesiod's account of Gaia (*Theogony* 116-8). Plato's theo-

¹⁶ This gap between divine and human knowledge is also stressed at 53d6-7 where knowledge of the remote beginnings of matter is said to be open only to gods themselves or to those especially favoured by gods: τὰς δ' ἔτι τούτων ἀρχὰς ἄνωθεν θεὸς οἶδεν καὶ ἀνδρῶν ὃς ἂν ἐκείνῳ φίλος ᾗ (the principles yet more remote than these are known to Heaven and to such men as Heaven favours (tr. Cornford)). Thus Plato leaves room for the sort of divine communication claimed by Hesiod with the Muses.

¹⁷ *Theogony* 132-8 lists the family of Gaia and Ouranos including Oceanus and Tethys; for Phorkys, son of Pontos and Gaia, see *Th.* 237; for the children of Cronos and Rhea, including Zeus and Hera, see *Th.* 453-8.

gony follows at 40e5-41a3, and in the immediately following section (41a3-d3) Plato will develop his own mythological sequence in the story of how the Demiurge addresses the lesser gods, his children,¹⁸ to arrange the birth of humankind and thus carry on their family line (41d2, ἀπεργάζεσθε ζῶα καὶ γεννᾶτε). Thus the parallel with Hesiod at 40e, with its traditional mythology of Earth and Heaven as parents of the gods, provides a transition between the scientific account of earth as a planet and the mythological account of the Demiurge as father of gods (and thereby of man): Θεοὶ θεῶν, ὧν ἐγὼ δημιουργὸς πατήρ τε ἔργων (41a7).¹⁹ Plato thus incorporates the Hesiodic theogony and the reference to established usage makes clear that he is content to follow and respect poetic tradition so long as it can be blended with his new teleological account.

Tales of family life: from strife to harmony

Hesiod's myth of creation involves gender conflict and a recurring theme of male control over unregulated female procreation. The *Timaeus'* account of the birth of the *cosmos* transforms the male and female gender relationships of *Theogony* into a tale of harmony and co-operation as the universe is built on principles of goodness. Nevertheless, echoes remain of the primal conflict and the male role continues to be that of regulating the female. In Hesiod's poem the theogony proper begins at 116-22 with the emergence of the first beings:

Ἦτοι μὲν **πρώτιστα Χάος γένηται**· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
Γαί' εὐρύστερνος, πάντων ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ
 ἀθανάτων οἳ ἔχουσι κάρη νιφόεντος Ὀλύμπου,
 [Τάρταρά τ' ἠερόεντα μυχῶ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης.]
 ἠδ' Ἔρος, ὃς **κάλλιστος** ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι,
 λυσιμελής, πάντων τε θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων
 δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν.

First came the Chasm [Chaos]; and then broad-breasted Earth, secure seat for ever of all the immortals who occupy the peak of snowy Olympus; [the misty Tartara in a remote recess of the broad-pathed earth]; and Eros, the most handsome among the immortal gods, dissolver of flesh, who overcomes the reason and purpose in the breasts of all gods and all men. (tr. West)

I follow the view that Tartara is here the interior of Earth and that there are therefore three primal figures: *Chaos*, *Gaia* and *Eros* – one neuter, one female

¹⁸ For lesser gods as 'children' of the Demiurge, see also 42e6 and 69c4.

¹⁹ Demiurge as father of universe: 28c3, 32c1, 34a7, 34b9, 37a2, 37d4, 38b6, 38c4, 38e5, 39d7, and 68e4. On the metaphor of god as father as an image of both creation and control, see Pender (2000) 104-6 and 238-9.

and one male.²⁰ There is no indication that *Gaia* and *Eros* are generated out of *Chaos*. Rather the three seem to have been generated independently but with *Chaos* as the first to come into existence. *Chaos* means ‘chasm’, its gender is neuter; it is a gap or empty space. At the very first point of the universe, then, there is for Hesiod one entity in existence – a gap – but this does not on its own generate the many beings that will follow. *Chaos* does, however, initiate its own family line by producing from itself two offspring: Erebus and Night. Erebus is male and Night female and the two children join in the first sexual union of many in the story and produce their opposites Aither and Day (122-5).²¹ The sexual union and reproduction of *Chaos*’ children is made possible by the prior existence of *Eros*, who interestingly gives birth to no line of his own. Both *Chaos* and *Gaia* reproduce independently from within themselves and so each becomes a primal parent for successive generations. However, of these two it is *Gaia* who is by far the most prolific and thus the chief generator of the many beings to come.

Under the force of *Eros* *Gaia* reproduces her first partner Ouranos (126-8):

Γαῖα δέ τοι πρῶτον μὲν ἐγένεατο ἴσον ἑωυτῇ
 Οὐρανὸν ἀστερόενθ’, ἵνα μιν περὶ πᾶσαν ἔέργοι,
 ὄφρ’ εἴη μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ.

Earth bore first of all one equal to herself starry Heaven, so that he should cover her all about, to be a secure seat for ever for the blessed gods. (tr. West)

Although *Gaia* will continue to reproduce by parthenogenesis and with other partners, *Ouranos* is *Gaia*’s most important partner and the marriage of Earth and Heaven stands at the head of the dominant genealogy that will lead to the birth of Olympian Zeus. Vernant is astute in observing that the marriage of *Gaia* and *Ouranos* involves ‘incessant copulation’ and that this copulation ‘obeys a sort of raw desire, a blind and ongoing cosmic compulsion’ (Vernant 1990, 466). The respective roles of male and female are in some ways balanced in this procreative model but, as Strauss Clay has shown, there is a pattern in the story whereby it is the female principle that constantly promotes change and procreation. In the context of the succession myth of *Theogony* *Gaia* and *Ouranos* are set in conflict with each other due to *Ouranos*’ desire to block the birth of their children. The male prefers continued sexual access and no generational change, while the female wishes to secure the abundant births and

²⁰ Whether ‘misty Tartara’ is one of the primal entities has been debated since antiquity, see Strauss Clay (2003) 15-16.

²¹ Night will also bear another brood of children (211-224).

consequent future generations. Commenting on the castration story, Kronos' later swallowing of his children and Zeus' swallowing of his wife, *Metis*, Strauss Clay notes the repeated power struggle between male and female:

Gaia will always be on the side of birth and of the younger against the older generation. ... Left to itself, procreation would continue, infinitely multiplying and proliferating without brakes. Countering this force for constant change, however, is the male principle, first embodied in Uranus ... In fact, the history of the gods as a whole can be viewed as an account of the various attempts on the part of the supreme male god to control and block the female procreative drive in order to bring about a stable cosmic regime.²²

This male/female conflict of the succession story is resolved by the victory of Zeus and the continued regulation of the female procreative drive through various marital arrangements. Zeus' dynastic marriages help to strengthen his powerbase and earn him the honorific title of 'father of gods and men' (line 47, Ζῆνα, θεῶν πατέρ' ἠδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν.²³ As father of all, the single patriarch provides stability. Bearing in mind these male efforts at containment and regulation of an 'infinitely multiplying' female procreative drive, let us return to the creation myth of the *Timaeus*.

While Hesiod's cosmogony begins with the coming into existence of the three primal entities, Plato's cosmogony starts with eternal entities already present and it is through the interaction between them that the cosmos is created. While Plato's narrative presents a complicated array of eternal entities and agents, three can be identified as fundamental: Demiurge, Form and Receptacle. Various triadic configurations underlying existence are offered throughout *Timaeus* but these can be regarded as variations on this essential trio.²⁴ In addition, as the cosmogony proceeds through its three different stages,²⁵ a number of different eternal figures come to light, all of which must be present at the 'beginning', however such a point is to be understood in a context of

²² Strauss Clay (2003) 17-18.

²³ See also lines 457, 468, and 542.

²⁴ For an account of the relationship between the various triads, see Pender (2008), forthcoming. The triads are: 28a Demiurge/model/copy; 48e model/ copy/ Receptacle; 50c that which becomes/ that in which it becomes/ that which provides the model; 52a Form/the sensible/Space; and 52d Being/Space/Becoming.

²⁵ Part 1 sets out the work of the Demiurge in creating the parts of the universe that are to be everlasting. This work is summarised at 47e as 'the craftsmanship of Reason' (τὰ διὰ νοῦ δεδημιουργημένα) and Part 2 is launched with a second invocation (48d-e). Part 2 presents the irrational factors that Demiurge/Reason has to contend with – factors subsumed under the title of 'Necessity'. Part 3 tells how Reason and Necessity co-operate to create the human body in all its detail, a new section marked with a clear recapitulation at 69a-d

eternity. In total, eight eternal beings can be identified, of differing genders as can be deduced both from the nouns that form their names and from the phraseology used to present them. These figures are: (1) the Demiurge (masculine), the male creator who works as a craftsman; (2) the eternal model he uses, later identified as the 'Form of Living Creature' (neuter); (3) Reason (masculine); (4) Necessity (feminine); (5) the Wandering Cause (feminine); (6) The Receptacle of Becoming (feminine); (7) disorderly proto-matter variously described, e.g. plural 'powers' (feminine); and (8) Space (feminine).²⁶ Much critical effort has gone into trying to interpret the precise nature of each of these entities. My limited aims are to trace the male/female relationships in the narratives presenting these different figures (or factors) of Plato's pre-cosmic vision and to show the allusions to Hesiod's divine family in the *Theogony*. The essentials of the gendering are clear: the supreme Demiurge and Reason are masculine/male; the divine model used for the creation of Becoming is neuter/neutral and the irrational features of the Receptacle are all feminine/female. Let us now consider the dynamics between the rational males and the irrational females who together create and constitute Timaeus' *cosmos*.

In part 1 of the cosmogony (29d-47e) the agent of creation is the male Demiurge. As well as being the craftsman of the universe, he is also simultaneously its father, as set out above. The personification of the Demiurge as a father is most pronounced where we hear of his emotional reaction to the birth of his child (37c6-d1):

Ὡς δὲ κινηθὲν αὐτὸ καὶ ζῶν ἐνόησεν τῶν αἰδίων θεῶν γεγονὸς ἄγαλμα ὁ γεννήσας πατήρ, ἠγάσθη τε καὶ εὐφρανθεὶς ἔτι δὴ μᾶλλον ὅμοιον πρὸς τὸ παράδειγμα ἐπενόησεν ἀπεργάσασθαι.

When the father who had begotten it saw it set in motion and alive, a shrine brought into being for the everlasting gods, he rejoiced and being well pleased he took thought to make it yet more like its pattern. (tr. Cornford)

He is also the father of the lesser gods, as discussed above. There is no mother of the universe in part 1 of the cosmogony. But this situation changes in part 2 (47e-69a). A second invocation to the gods (48d-e) heralds the new beginning and there follows the arrival of the mysterious and eternal trio of Necessity, the Wandering Cause and the Receptacle – all female and non-rational. The

²⁶ These figures are introduced at the following points and related as follows: Demiurge (28c) closely related to Reason (48a); eternal model (29a/30c) later identified as the Form of Living Creature (37d); Necessity (47e) closely associated with the Wandering Cause (48a), the Receptacle of Becoming (49a), disorderly proto-matter (49e/52e) and Space (52a).

Receptacle is introduced at 49a and described in the arresting simile 'οἶον τιθ-
ήνην' ('as it were a nurse', 49a6), an image repeated at 88d6. Further, she is the
'mother' (μητέρα) of the sensible world as a primal family is revealed in a more
extended simile at 50c7-d4:

ἐν δ' οὖν τῷ παρόντι χρὴ γένη διανοηθῆναι τριττά, τὸ μὲν γιγνόμενον, τὸ δ' ἐν ᾧ
γίγνεται, τὸ δ' ὅθεν ἀφομοιούμενον φύεται τὸ γιγνόμενον. καὶ δὴ καὶ προσεικάζσαι
πρέπει τὸ μὲν δεχόμενον μητρί, τὸ δ' ὅθεν πατρί, τὴν δὲ μεταξὺ τούτων φύσιν ἐκγόνῳ,

Be that as it may, for the present we must conceive three things: that which
becomes; that in which it becomes; and the model in whose likeness that
which becomes is born. Indeed we may fittingly compare the Recipient to a
mother, the model to a father, and the nature that arises between them to their
offspring. (tr. Cornford)

The identification of the Receptacle as the mother of Becoming is completed at
51a4-6, as the account of physical matter progresses:

διὸ δὴ τὴν τοῦ γεγονότος ὄρατοῦ καὶ πάντως αἰσθητοῦ μητέρα καὶ ὑποδοχὴν μήτε γῆν
μήτε ἀέρα μήτε πῦρ μήτε ὕδωρ λέγωμεν,

For this reason, then, the mother and Receptacle of what has come to be vis-
ible and otherwise sensible must not be called earth or air or fire or water. (tr.
Cornford)

In part 1 of the cosmogony the Demiurge is the father but at 50c-d, following
the idea of family likeness, the father of the cosmos is the Form. The Form as
'father' cannot interact directly with the 'mother', since a static Form cannot
act at all, and so in the story overall a second father is needed in the Demiurge.
Although the father figures change, the model in each case is that of a family.
In part 1 therefore the primary triad is 'Demiurge as father/model/copy as
child' (28a), while in part 2 the primary triad is 'model as father/copy as
child/ Receptacle as mother' (48e).

Since these figures themselves are in many ways obscure, it is not surprising
that the dynamics between them are given only vague description. *Timaeus*
himself is evidently struggling to handle his subject matter. In the midst of the
launch of the new beginning, he says his previous method of exposition in-
volved 'difficulty' (48c5, τὸ χαλεπὸν) but that his new method will also be
'strange and unfamiliar' (48d5-6, ἀτόπου καὶ ἀήθους διηγήσεως). Further, on the
nature of the Receptacle, he comments (51a7-b2):

we shall not be deceived if we call it a nature invisible and characterless, all-receiving, partaking in some very puzzling way (ἀπορώτατά πη) of the intelligible and very hard to apprehend (δυσάλωτότατον). (tr. Cornford)

The clearest point at the new launch is that all three figures, Necessity, the Wandering Cause and the Receptacle are non-rational and part of the imperfect nature of the pre-cosmic state. But also a helpful contrast is set up at the outset of part 2 (47e-48a), that between Reason and Necessity. The arresting phrase ‘the craftsmanship of Reason’ (47e4, τὰ διὰ νοῦ δεδημιουργημένα) is used to sum up the creative activity of the Demiurge in part 1. Set in contrast to this will be the work of ‘Necessity’ to follow in part 2. Thus Timaeus identifies the Demiurge with Reason and Necessity with the lack of rationality. The ‘Wandering’ Cause is a further attempt to express the irrational forces at work in the creation story. When the account turns to the details of how exactly inchoate matter was shaped by Reason, Timaeus needs to explain how Reason organises the proto-matter provided by the Receptacle. The proto-matter is presented as originally moving around in a disorderly fashion within the Receptacle, which is conceived of, *inter alia*, as a space. Following the tradition of *nihil ex nihilo* the Demiurgic act of creation is that of ordering or organising what already exists but is in chaos. Timaeus needs a way of speaking about the transactions that occur between reason and disorderly matter. He therefore aligns Necessity with the Receptacle so that Necessity becomes the active force responsible for both the disorderly motion and the disorganised matter. Therefore the very moment of creation is presented as a dynamic between the male figure of Reason (in lieu of the Demiurge) and two female figures, the Receptacle and Necessity, representing non-rational matter and motion. At this crucial point Plato’s story diverges most markedly from the strife of *Theogony*. For the new myth presents a vision of cosmic order and harmony. As Reason seeks to impose order on matter or becoming, he turns not to force or containment but to persuasion. The two key passages on this remarkable negotiation are 47e-48a and 56c:

(47e5-48a5) μεμειγμένη γὰρ οὖν ἡ τοῦδε τοῦ κόσμου γένεσις ἐξ ἀνάγκης τε καὶ νοῦ συστάσεως ἐγεννήθη· νοῦ δὲ ἀνάγκης ἄρχοντος τῷ πείθειν αὐτὴν τῶν γιγνομένων τὰ πλείστα ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιστον ἄγειν, ταύτη κατὰ ταῦτά τε δι’ ἀνάγκης ἡττωμένης ὑπὸ πειθοῦς ἔμφορος οὕτω κατ’ ἀρχὰς συνίστατο τόδε τὸ πᾶν.

For the generation of this universe was a mixed result of the combination of Necessity and Reason. Reason overruled Necessity by persuading her to guide the greatest part of the things that become towards what is best; in that way and on that principle this universe was fashioned in the beginning by the victory of reasonable persuasion over Necessity. (tr. Cornford)

(56c3-9) καὶ δὴ καὶ τὸ τῶν ἀναλογιῶν περί τε τὰ πλήθη καὶ τὰς κινήσεις καὶ τὰς ἄλλας δυνάμεις πανταχῆ τὸν θεόν, ὅπηπερ ἢ τῆς ἀνάγκης ἐκούσα πεισθεῖσά τε φύσις ὑπεῖκεν, ταύτη πάντη δι' ἀκριβείας ἀποτελεσθεῖσων ὑπ' αὐτοῦ συνηρόσθαι ταῦτα ἀνά λόγον.

and with regard to their numbers, their motions, and their powers in general, we must suppose that the god adjusted them in due proportion, when he had brought them in every detail to the most exact perfection permitted by Necessity willingly complying with persuasion. (tr. Cornford)²⁷

As Reason/the god persuades Necessity into co-operating with him, the order of the universe can be seen as the product of an alliance. Further, as befits a teleological account, this alliance is one of male and female figures working together to produce the good. Zedda has rightly seen that Reason/the Demiurge cannot simply subordinate Necessity but has to work with it and that the result is a harmony born of compromise:

By having two such disparate entities work in partnership, the Demiurge can truly claim that the universe as generated is all-encompassing. Even more importantly, the maker can claim to have constructed a universe based on principles of true *harmonia*. The universe generated by the Demiurge and Necessity embodies all that exists, both rational and non-rational into one single relationship: φιλία.²⁸

With the images of the Demiurge and the Form as fathers and the Receptacle as mother, Plato uses the gender relations of the procreation motif in a parallel fashion to the many liaisons of Hesiod's *Theogony*. For the dominant model of creation is again that of a family and a line of ancestry leading to the birth of mortals (*Theogony* 1019; *Timaeus* 41b-d). In tracing the respective family lines in the creation stories of Hesiod and Plato, it is interesting to note that as Hesiod's Gaia is described as 'ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ' ('secure seat for ever', 117 and 128), so Plato's Receptacle similarly provides an eternal 'ἔδρα' for becoming, ensuring a space that is also everlasting 'αἰεὶ' (52a8-b1). These primal females make an interesting parallel since each offers security and stability within their own sphere. While Gaia as planet earth has her own place in Plato's cosmogony (40b-c), it is apparent that Hesiod's Gaia is also reverberating in the female Receptacle, out of which the material universe emerges. Like Gaia 'infinitely multiplying and proliferating without brakes', the Receptacle is the female procreative drive: always receiving (50b8, δεχεταιί ... αἰεὶ), she is the eternal 'matrix for everything' (50c2, ἐκμαγεῖον γὰρ φύσει παντὶ κείται), into which

²⁷ Cornford's translation masks that the compliance of Necessity is actually with the 'god' who must be understood as the Demiurge, although not named as such.

²⁸ Zedda (2003) 155-6.

and out of which everything moves. But the primal female and her partner are refashioned by Plato. For while Hesiod's Gaia and Ouranos set a template for power struggle and gender conflict amongst the gods, Plato's Demiurge and Receptacle create a picture of greater harmony and co-operation at the birth of the universe. The process is not only more orderly and rational but also gentler – with persuasion instead of force and plotting. While the children of Ouranos are explicitly 'hated' by their father (155), the Demiurge is joyful at the birth of his child (37c7). While Ouranos 'is jealous' (619, ἀγόμενος) of the strength, form and stature of Briareus, Kottos and Gyges, the Demiurge has no *phthonos* (29e2). The crucial difference is that the Demiurge is good and so creates order in all his relationships and acts. The universe is therefore brought to birth in an atmosphere of harmony where the procreative drive of the female consents to the regulation of reason and where the male and female figures cooperate in *philia*. Thus Plato draws on Hesiodic motifs and vocabulary while shaping a radically different myth of creation. Moreover, Plato is careful to preface his allusions to Hesiod's *Theogony* with an account of how stories are passed down the generations (20e-22b), and with the addition of an appropriate dramatic context in the ritual of 'Children's day'. Such a process of transmission through the family line serves as an apt image for artistic creativity and marks the author's own genealogical relationship with traditional Greek theogonies and the poetry of Hesiod.²⁹

Part 2: Streams and Love Stories

Socrates' second speech in *Phaedrus* can be regarded as a philosophical love story, crafted to rival and indeed correct traditional Greek views on the nature of *eros*. In composing this alternative story Plato draws on the motifs and vocabulary of Greek lyric poetry.³⁰ In *Timaeus* the allusions to Hesiod follow the naming of the poet in the prologue, and in the same way the naming of Sappho and Anacreon early in *Phaedrus* (235c-d) heralds specific allusions to their poetry. Further, just as family lines work on different levels within the content

²⁹ The image of 'fathering children' is used extensively in *Symp.* for artistic and intellectual creativity (see note 11 above). For discussion and further bibliography, see Pender (1992). The image is also used in *Phdr.* 275e-276a, where writing is imagined as needing its 'father' (πατὴρ) to come to its aid and has a 'brother' (ἀδελφόν) in dialectic. The image continues at *Phdr.* 278a (ὕεις γνησίους ἔκγονοί τε καὶ ἀδελφοί).

³⁰ While a number of other poets and writers are named and referenced in *Phdr.*, I shall discuss here only the lyric poets, since the engagement with poetry and literature in this text is too large a topic for the current treatment. While this study opens up broader questions of Plato's response to the Greek literary tradition at large, it seems worthwhile to isolate and analyse one specific case.

and framing of *Timaeus*, *Phaedrus* uses the imagery of streams to interweave the dramatic context of the dialogue, a walk along the Ilissus river, with both the content of Socrates' second speech and his naming of the poets. For at the moment when the poets are named, Plato uses the image of a speaker being filled with 'streams from elsewhere', an image which in turn prefaces the 'stream of beauty' that will feature in Socrates' account of the soul in love. Finally, just as genealogy in *Timaeus*, the stream serves in *Phaedrus* as an apt image for artistic creativity and marks Plato's own engagement with poetic tradition. Through its allusions to Sappho, Anacreon and other poets the *Phaedrus* itself is filled with 'streams from elsewhere' and by challenging the lyric poets Plato's work claims its own, dominant, place in the tradition of writings on love. I shall argue that the Ilissus stream works as a situational allusion for the influence of the poets on Plato.

The Ilissus as situational allusion

While others have identified the setting of the *Phaedrus* as a *locus amoenus*, Calame, considering evidence from a broad spectrum of poetry and myth, classifies it more precisely as an 'eroticized meadow' (1999, 154-7, 166 n. 2).³¹ Within this genus he marks it out particularly as a 'prelude meadow' and cites examples of similar abductions elsewhere in Greek poetry.³² He explains (156) that the meadow represents 'a space filled with Eros, which serves as an immediate prelude to the gratification of sexual desire' and further clarifies (163-7) that these places represent sexual initiation, especially for young girls innocently at play. Calame identifies Plato's Boreas and Oreithuia meadow as just such a 'prelude meadow' (154). Eroticized prelude meadows feature in the verses of Sappho, Anacreon and other lyric poets. Calame notes prelude meadows at Anacreon 346 and Ibycus 286 and their close affinity with Sappho's grove of Aphrodite in poem 2.³³ Other erotic meadows in lyric include those of Anacreon 417; Alcaeus 115 (a) and 296 (b); Theognis 1249-52 and 1275-8; and Ibycus, 282c fr 1, 286, and 288. In the prologue to *Phaedrus* Plato appropriates the traditional *topos* of the eroticized, prelude meadow, drawing on both its land-

³¹ On 230b-c as *locus amoenus*, see Foley (1998) 45; Rowe (1986) 141; and de Vries (1969) 56. Calame (1999, 153) observes that the 'mythological and theological paradigm' of an eroticized meadow is that at Homer's *Iliad* 14. 312ff., and (154) compares Hesiod's *Theogony* 276ff.

³² Calame (1999) 155-157: *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 19.19ff.; *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* lines 5ff. and 417ff.; Euripides, *Ion* 881ff.; Eur. *IA* 1291 ff.; and Eur. *Helen* 241ff.

³³ Calame (1999, 168) draws the parallel with the flower-filled meadows of Sappho 96 (line 11, πολυανθέμοις ἀρούραϊς). A further parallel is Sappho 122 where a 'tender girl' is 'picking flowers' (ἀνθε' ἀμέργοισαν παιδ' ... ἀπάλαν).

scape and the activities associated with it. One of the purposes of the allusion is to highlight that a seduction is about to be attempted – that of Phaedrus, and hopefully the reader, into the philosophical life.³⁴ But the allusion also serves to mark the ‘literary encounter’ between Plato and the lyric genre.

The allusion begins as Phaedrus leads the way to the spot beneath the plane tree (229) and refers to some of the features of the landscape. The allusion is completed as Socrates intensifies the description of the scene and its sensuous effects as he signals their arrival at the tree (230). The relevant passages in full are:

229a1-c3

ΣΩ. Δεῦρ' ἐκτραπόμενοι κατὰ τὸν Ἴλισσον ἴωμεν, εἶτα ὅπου ἂν δόξη ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ καθιζησόμεθα.

ΦΑΙ. Εἰς καιρὸν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀνυπόδητος ὢν ἔτυχον . . . ῥῆστον οὖν ἡμῖν κατὰ τὸ ὑδάτιον βρέχουσι τοὺς πόδας ἰέναι, καὶ οὐκ ἀηδές, ἄλλως τε καὶ τήνδε τὴν ὥραν τοῦ ἔτους τε καὶ τῆς ἡμέρας. . . . Ὅρᾱς οὖν ἐκείνην τὴν ὑψηλοτάτην πλάτανον; . . . Ἐκεῖ σκιά τ' ἐστὶν καὶ πνεῦμα μέτριον, καὶ πόα καθίζεσθαι ἢ ἂν βουλόμεθα κατακλιθῆναι. . . . Εἰπέ μοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐκ ἐνθένδε μέντοι ποθὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἴλισσοῦ λέγεται ὁ Βορέας τὴν Ὠρείθυιαν ἀρπάσαι; . . . Ἄρ' οὖν ἐνθένδε; χαρίεντα γοῦν καὶ καθαρὰ καὶ διαφανῆ τὰ ὑδάτια φαίνεται, καὶ ἐπιτήδεια κόραις παίζειν παρ' αὐτά.

ΣΩ. Οὐκ, ἀλλὰ κάτωθεν . . . καὶ πού τις ἐστὶ βωμὸς αὐτόθι Βορέου.

230a6-c5

ἀτάρ, ὦ ἐταῖρε, μεταξὺ τῶν λόγων, ἄρ' οὐ τότε ἦν τὸ δένδρον ἐφ' ὅπερ ἦγες ἡμᾶς; . . . Νῆ τὴν Ἑραν, καλή γε ἡ καταγωγὴ. ἢ τε γὰρ πλάτανος αὐτὴ μάλ' ἀμφιλαφῆς τε καὶ ὑψηλὴ, τοῦ τε ἄγνου τὸ ὕψος καὶ τὸ σύσκιον πάγκαλον, καὶ ὡς ἀκμὴν ἔχει τῆς ἀνθῆς ὡς ἂν εὐωδέστατον παρέχοι τὸν τόπον· ἢ τε αὖ πηγὴ χαριεστάτη ὑπὸ τῆς πλατάνου ρεῖ μάλᾳ ψυχροῦ ὕδατος, ὥστε γε τῷ ποδὶ τεκμήρασθαι. Νυμφῶν τέ τινων καὶ Ἀχελφῶου ἱερὸν ἀπὸ τῶν κορῶν τε καὶ ἀγαλμάτων ἔοικεν εἶναι. εἰ δ' αὖ βούλει, τὸ εὖπνον τοῦ τόπου ὡς ἀγαπητὸν καὶ σφόδρα ἡδύ· θερινόν τε καὶ λιγυρὸν ὑψηλῆι τῷ τῶν τεττίγων χορῷ. πάντων δὲ κομψότατον τὸ τῆς πόας, ὅτι ἐν ἡρέμα προσάντει ἰκανὴ πέφυκε κατακλινέντι τὴν κεφαλὴν παγκάλως ἔχειν.

There are seven points of correspondence between the Ilissus landscape and the seduction meadows of lyric: the stream, plants and flowers, shade, breeze, sleep, presence of divinity and erotic play.³⁵ This allusion to the poetic prelude meadows results from the cumulative effect of the motifs rather than any single particular detail. Nevertheless, the stream appears to be the most significant marker of the relationship with lyric.

³⁴ On the philosophical ‘seduction’, see Lebeck (1972) 290; duBois (1985) 95-96; Nussbaum (1986) 228-33; and Calame (1999) 186-7.

³⁵ See Pender 2007 for discussion of each of these points of correspondence between the Ilissus and the eroticized meadows of lyric.

The Ilissus is first mentioned, by Socrates, at 229a. He suggests that they turn off the road on their walk and 'go along' the river (κατὰ τὸν Ἴλισσον). Phaedrus immediately responds by suggesting that they can walk *in* the water, since they are both barefoot 229a3-5:

Εἰς καιρόν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀνυπόδητος ὢν ἔτυχον· σὺ μὲν γὰρ δὴ αἰεὶ. ῥᾶστον οὖν ἡμῖν κατὰ τὸ ὑδάτιον βρέχουσι τοὺς πόδας ἰέναι.

It seems it's just as well I happened to be barefoot; you always are. So we can very easily go along the stream with our feet in the water. (tr. Rowe)

Socrates assents – the day is hot³⁶ – so the two men get their feet wet and conduct the first part of their conversation, up to their arrival at the plane tree, from within the stream – an unusual dramatic setting. At 230b as they reach the tree Socrates speaks of the water (ὑδάτιον) now flowing (ρεῖ) as 'a most delightful stream' (πηγὴ χαριεστάτη).³⁷ While the water was merely implicitly cool at 229a, it is now described explicitly as 'very cold' (ρεῖ μάλα ψυχροῦ ὕδατος). That the characters are actually in the water is reaffirmed in the second reference to feet as Socrates uses his own foot (τῷ ποδί) as proof of this temperature. Plato's cold stream which flows directly under the plane (230b) recalls Sappho's holy grove in poem 2 where the cold water (ὑδωρ ψυχρον) runs through the apple branches. Cool streams also appear in seduction meadows in Alcaeus (115a, ψυχρον ὑδωρ) and Theognis (1252, κρήνην τε ψυχρήν).³⁸

The stream is linked more explicitly with the prelude meadow motif at 229b as Phaedrus asks Socrates whether this is the place where Boreas abducted Oreithuia. Musing on the location, he observes (229b7-9):

χαρίεντα γούν καὶ καθαρά καὶ διαφανῆ τὰ ὑδάτια φαίνεται, καὶ ἐπιτήδεια κόραις παίζειν παρ' αὐτά.

The water of the stream certainly looks attractively pure and clear, and just right for young girls to play beside it. (tr. Rowe)

The reference to 'young girls playing' (κόραις παίζειν) gives a plausible reason why the abduction of Oreithuia might have happened at that spot. But its more important role is as a marker of the traditional activities within a prelude

³⁶ For the midday heat, see 242a3-6 (τὸ καῦμα, μεσημβρία, ἀποψυχῆ) and 279b4-5 (τὸ πνίγος ἠπιώτερον γέγονεν).

³⁷ At 242a1 the Ilissus is 'this river' (τὸν ποταμὸν τοῦτον).

³⁸ See also Ibycus 286 (lines 1-3): αἶ τε Κυδώνια / μηλίδες ἀρδόμεναι ῥοαν / ἐκ ποταμῶν.

meadow, as Plato knowingly introduces the literary *topos* of girlish games.³⁹ Anacreon 417 provides a good example of the *topos*, as the ‘Thracian filly’ ‘grazes’ and ‘plays’ (line 5, παίζεις) in the ‘meadows’.⁴⁰ That Oreithuia was ‘playing’ in this prelude meadow is stressed again at 229c8 (παίζουσας). Later at 234d παίζειν is repeated twice, indicating that Socrates and Phaedrus have now assumed the roles of participants within the prelude meadow by playing their own conversational ‘games’.⁴¹ This point is confirmed in the conclusion to the work, as Plato draws attention again to the setting (278b) and again highlights the element of play (278b7): ‘So now we have had due amusement (πεπαίσθω μετρίως) from the subject of speaking.’ The stream, erotic play and the seduction of Oreithuia indicate that the Ilissus landscape is a counterpart to the prelude meadows of lyric. But the identification is not complete until 230.

Socrates’ description of the meadow at 230 provides an intensification of each of the features mentioned by Phaedrus at 229. Expressing his explicit approval and delight Socrates heightens the sensual impact of the scene. While Phaedrus leaves the season unspoken, Socrates identifies the high summer chorus of the cicadas. The tree is now both ‘very spreading (μάλ’ ἀμφιλαφής) and tall’, and is joined by an agnus, equally tall and shady. The plane tree and the agnus with its scented flowers provide lush growth and scents (ὡς ἀκμήν ἔχει τῆς ἄνθης ὡς ἂν εὐωδέστατον παρέχοι τὸν τόπον) which recall the trees and blossoms of the lyric seduction meadows. In Sappho poem 2 the flowers bloom (τέθαλεν . . . ἄνεσιν) and in Anacreon’s meadow of Aphrodite the fields are of hyacinth. Lush growth is also a feature of the erotic landscapes at Alcaeus 115a (λεξάνθιδος . . . εὐωδες) and 296b (ὀσδόμενοι); and at Ibycus 286, lines 4-5 (αἶ τ’ οἴνανθίδες / ἀυξόμεναι). The shade at 229 (σκιά) is intensified at 230 by the height and spreading growth of the trees and by its description as τὸ σύσκιον πάγκαλον. This feature echoes the ample shade of Sappho’s roses in poem 2 (ἐσκίαστ’), as well as Theognis’ ‘shady grove’ (1252, ἄλσεά τε σκιερά) and Ibycus’ ‘shady vine branches’ (286, line 5, σκιεροῖσιν ὑφ’ ἔρνεσιν). At 229 the πνεῦμα is μέτριον and Phaedrus suggests that beneath the plane will be grass (πόα) upon which they might sit or lie down. At 230 the moderate breeze has

³⁹ See Hinds (1998) 34: ‘As normally defined, the *topos* is an intertextual gesture which . . . is mobilized by the poet in full self-awareness.’

⁴⁰ Anacreon also links the erotic prelude with ‘play’ at 358 (line 4), where Eros ‘summons me to play’ (συμπαίζειν).

⁴¹ Whereas in a lyric meadow the seduction is sexual, here the ‘game’ with similar attendant force and persuasion is conversation and speech-making. Foley (1998) 45-6: ‘Nevertheless, the playful link with the Oreithuia myth lingers, as Socrates is more or less abducted by Phaedrus into these environs, seduced into a speech against his will (see 236d).’

become the 'fresh breeze' (τὸ εὐπνοῦν) of the place, which is both 'welcome' and 'very pleasant' (ἀγαπητὸν καὶ σφόδρα ἡδύ) and Socrates' positive judgement on the landscape, 'exceedingly pleasant' (σφόδρα ἡδύ), replaces Phaedrus' litotes 'not unpleasant' (οὐκ ἀηδές). The 'fresh breeze' recalls the gentle winds of the meadows in Sappho 2 (ἄηται μέλλιχα πνέουσιν) and Alcaeus 296b. At 230 the sensuous pleasures of the place culminate in the grass, which slopes gently and is thick enough to provide a comfortable head-rest. Resting the head κατακλινέντι involves lying down rather than sitting, a suggestion borne out by Socrates' further proclamation at 230e that he does indeed intend to 'lie down' (κατακείσεσθαι). Finally, whereas at 229c2 an altar of Boreas is thought to be 'nearby', at 230 the divine quality of their actual resting place is left in no doubt. Plato echoes Sappho's adjective ἄγνον (line 2, 'come to this *holy* temple', ἐπ[ὶ τόνδ]ε ναῶν / ἄγνον),⁴² when he points out that his spot too 'seems to be sacred' – ἱερὸν, as indicated by the presence of figurines and statuettes of 'some Nymphs' and Achelous the river god.⁴³ The divinity of the place is further emphasised at 236d10-e1, as the plane tree itself is identified as a 'god' (τίνα θεῶν; ἢ βούλει τὴν πλάτανον ταυτηνί), and at 238c9-d1 where the whole place is regarded as 'divine' (θεῖος... ὁ τόπος).

This intensification in the description of the meadow between 229 and 230 marks a highly stylised transition. Indeed Plato pauses the text to emphasise the full transformation of the scene. For as the dramatic scenario of the walk unfolds, the point of arrival at the plane tree is underlined when Socrates not only interrupts the conversation but also draws attention to the interruption: 'But, my friend, to interrupt our conversation, wasn't this the tree you were taking us to? . . . By Hera, a fine stopping-place!'⁴⁴ The stopping of the flow of discourse alongside the punning καταγωγή (halting place) works beautifully to signal the significance of the moment: Socrates and Phaedrus have crossed a generic boundary and have now entered the familiar landscape of the poetic prelude meadow.⁴⁵ The Ilissus scene itself is thus a situational allusion that dramatises Plato's engagement with the lyric tradition. The point is further re-

⁴² On 'Holy Sappho', as love's priestess, see Gentili (1988) 216-222.

⁴³ See Rowe (1986) 142, citing de Vries (1969).

⁴⁴ Foley (1998, 46) makes the point that since Hera is the goddess of marriage, the oath picks up the theme of seduction and sexual initiation.

⁴⁵ The river is again highlighted as a boundary marker at 242a1 (κἀγὼ τὸν ποταμὸν τοῦτον διαβὰς) and 242b8-c2 where it becomes the 'very spot' from which Socrates seems to hear his *daimonion* ('Ἡνίκ' ἔμελλον . . . τὸν ποταμὸν διαβαίνειν, τὸ δαιμόνιον. . . ἐγένετο . . . καὶ τινα φωνὴν ἔδοξα ἀντόθεν ἀκοῦσαι). At a literary level, Socrates cannot leave the Ilissus scene because the context of the seduction meadow is relevant for the lyric allusions to follow in his second speech.

inforced when the naming of Sappho and Anacreon at 235c recalls the prologue through a further image of streams used for poetic influence and inspiration.

‘Streams from Elsewhere’

At *Phaedrus* 235c Plato makes direct reference to Sappho and Anacreon as Socrates responds to Lysias’ speech on the benefits of the non-lover. After listening to Phaedrus’ excited performance of the speech, Socrates explains why he cannot agree with his friend’s positive assessment of it (235b7-d3):

ΣΩ. παλαιοὶ γὰρ καὶ σοφοὶ ἄνδρες τε καὶ γυναῖκες περὶ αὐτῶν εἰρηκότες καὶ γεγραφότες ἐξελέγξουσί με, ἐάν σοι χαριζόμενος συγχωρῶ.
 ΦΑΙ. Τίνες οὗτοι; καὶ ποῦ σὺ βελτίω τούτων ἀκήκοας;
 ΣΩ. Νῦν μὲν οὕτως οὐκ ἔχω εἰπεῖν· δῆλον δὲ ὅτι τινῶν ἀκήκοα, ἢ που Σαπφοῦς τῆς καλῆς ἢ Ἀνακρέοντος τοῦ σοφοῦ ἢ καὶ συγγραφέων τινῶν. πόθεν δὲ τεκμαιρόμενος λέγω; πλήρες πῶς, ὦ δαμόνιε, τὸ στήθος ἔχων αἰσθάνομαι παρά ταῦτα ἂν ἔχειν εἰπεῖν ἕτερα μὴ χεῖρω. ὅτι μὲν οὖν παρά γε ἑμαυτοῦ οὐδὲν αὐτῶν ἐννεόηκα, εὖ οἶδα, συνειδῶς ἑμαυτῷ ἀμαθίαν· λείπεται δὲ οἶμαι ἐξ ἄλλοτρίων ποθὲν ναμάτων διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς πεπληρῶσθαί με δίκην ἀγγείου. ὑπὸ δὲ νωθείας αὐτὸ καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐπιλέλησμαι, ὅπως τε καὶ ὄντινων ἤκουσα.

Soc: For ancient and wise men and women who have spoken and written about these subjects will refute me, if I agree simply to please you.

Phdr: Who are these people? Where have you heard anything better than this?

Soc: Right now, I can’t tell you straight off. But I’m sure I’ve heard something better from someone – perhaps from the fine Sappho or the wise Anacreon or indeed from some prose writers. What am I basing my judgement on as I say this? Well, my fine friend, it is because my breast is somehow full that I feel that I might have other words, no worse, to say beyond these of Lysias. And that I’ve developed none of these from my own ideas I know very well, since I am fully aware of my own ignorance. So what remains, I think, is that I have been filled up, from streams from elsewhere, through my ears, just like a vessel. But again because of my stupidity I have forgotten this very point: how and from whom I heard it.⁴⁶

Socrates suggests that he has been ‘filled up from streams from elsewhere, through my ears, like a vessel’ but mischievously says he has forgotten the particular source. The image of streams used for the influence of ancient authors is charged with significance. Flowing streams are an established image of poetic inspiration which Plato himself probes elsewhere in his discussions

⁴⁶ This translation is based on Rowe (1986) but is made more literal, at the expense of fluency, in an attempt to secure the most neutral reading possible. Elsewhere Rowe’s translation is used without modification.

of poetry.⁴⁷ At *Laws* 719c the poet inspired by the Muses is said to be like a fountain (οἶον δὲ κρήνη τις) and in the satire on poets in *Ion* the image of flowing water is used twice at 534a-b. There Socrates is discussing poetic inspiration and how the Muses work like a magnet which creates a chain reaction through iron rings (533d-e). Turning to the lyric poets he compares their possession to that of the Bacchantes as 'they draw milk and honey from the rivers' (534a1-5): οἱ μελοποιοὶ . . . ὥσπερ αἱ βάκχαι ἀρύονται ἐκ τῶν ποταμῶν μέλι καὶ γάλα κατεχόμενα. The river image is continued when Socrates reports what the poets say about their own inspiration (*Ion* 534a-b):

Λέγουσι γὰρ δήπουθεν πρὸς ἡμᾶς οἱ ποιηταὶ ὅτι ἀπὸ κρηνῶν μελιρρῦτων ἐκ Μουσῶν κήπων τινῶν καὶ ναπῶν δρεπόμενοι τὰ μέλη ἡμῖν φέρουσιν.

For the poets tell us, don't they, that the songs they bring for us are gathered from honey-flowing streams from the gardens and valleys of the Muses.⁴⁸

Socrates' reference here is to images of poetic inspiration going back to early Greek poetry. Aside from milk and honey (which recall different verses),⁴⁹ the image of poets drinking from the Muses' springs of pure water is used by Pindar at both *Olympian* 6.85-6 (ἐρατεινὸν ὕδωρ / πίομαι) and *Isthmian* 6.74-5 (πίσω . . . ἄγνὸν ὕδωρ).⁵⁰ Socrates thus likens himself to the poet receiving streams from the Muses. Such a pointed poetic image, full of irony from a character readily identifiable as determinedly prosaic, punctures the sense that the reference to the poets is casual. In case of any doubt about his negative view of such a passive process of transmission, he spells out that this means he is 'like a vessel' (δίκην ἀγγείου). The playful quality of these lines is also evident in the fact that unlike the more elegant image of the poet drinking from streams, Socrates is 'filled up . . . through my ears' (διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς πεπληρωσθαί). While the reference to hearing is appropriate to the cultural context of performance poetry, the ungainly picture, not to mention the heavy-handed addition of 'like a vessel', signals irony, if not actual sarcasm. Socrates seems to be suggesting that his own claim – that he has been inspired by ancient authorities – is patently ludicrous. This is the line taken by Hackforth (1952, 36) who argues that the suggestion of inspiration from the poets is indeed 'not to be taken seriously'. This interpretation is given fuller development by Rowe (1986).

⁴⁷ In *Phdr.* see also 238c7 for the knowing pun on poetic inspiration and running water in εὔροια (lit. 'good flow').

⁴⁸ Burnet, ed. 1903; translation mine.

⁴⁹ See Murray (1996) 116-7 on the 'whole complex of traditional imagery' in this passage.

⁵⁰ For useful discussion on these images for creativity and inspiration, see Steiner (1986) 44-6.

Rowe begins his note with incredulity (1986, 151): ‘How on earth could Socrates have heard anything in praise of the *non-lover* from Sappho or Anacreon, of all people – two of the best-known love poets of antiquity?’ He argues that since ‘Plato’s Socrates normally displays a thoroughgoing hostility towards poets of all descriptions’, this praise cannot be sincere: ‘it is scarcely conceivable that he should now even suggest an appeal to their authority for his second, and more serious, thoughts on love.’ He therefore concludes: ‘The tone of the expressions “the excellent . . . Sappho” and the “the wise . . . Anacreon” is thoroughly ironical.’ Rowe argues that Socrates’ mention of Sappho and Anacreon is consistent with ‘Plato’s general attitude towards poets’ (151), since Socrates’ actual point is that the irrational desire graphically presented by the poets provides far stronger arguments *against* love even than those of Lysias. Rowe’s reading of the passage as Socratic irony provides one explanation of why the lyric poets are mentioned: they depict the madness of the lover so graphically that any sane person would wish to avoid this state. I accept this as *one* level of meaning but suggest that another arises from the juxtaposition of this comment with the actual use of Sapphic and Anacreontic material in the dialogue and from Platonic irony evident in the passage itself.

First, as commentators have observed, the reference at 235c must be understood in the light of allusions to the poetry of these two that follow in the speeches of Socrates. Robin (1950, *ad loc.*) suggests that the praise is sincere since Socrates is referring to the love poets as the source of ideas that will feature in his later second speech. De Vries (1969, 74-5) notes that although the positive terms *kalos* and *sophos* can convey irony, they are used here ‘in a pregnant sense’ and supports Robin’s view that they foreshadow Socrates’ second speech. De Vries holds that the authority of the poets is fully acknowledged and moreover that the naming of Sappho is ‘spontaneous homage to the poetess who knew love’ (75).⁵¹ Fortenbaugh accepts this view and maintains that the naming at 235c is more than a reference to love poetry in general (1966, 108):

The proper names ‘Sappho’ and ‘Anacreon’ have a particular significance and are not a general reference to lyric love poets. These two names are introduced to alert the reader that the poems of Sappho and Anacreon will play a role in Socrates’ subsequent speeches. Indeed the primary and so far unnoticed purpose for naming these poets is to anticipate poetic reminiscences occurring in Socrates’ two speeches.

⁵¹ Demos (1999, 68) also regards Socrates’ comment as a sincere point about poetic tradition and authority.

More recently, Foley has judged the mention of Sappho at *Phaedrus* 235c as 'pointed' in line with her reading that Sappho serves 'in some critical respects' as the 'mother' of Socrates' argument in his second speech on love.⁵² Second, Platonic irony can be detected as the image of streams is designed to raise the issue of poetic inspiration directly before a set of speeches which will themselves draw increasingly heavily on lyric discourse. The image seems to be humorous, since inspiration is evidently more than a matter of being mechanically and passively 'filled up' with ideas.⁵³ The passage seems to pose challenging questions: so how *does* inspiration work? How do traditional poetic ideas influence current understandings of love? Is there any wisdom in the ancient sources? Moreover, the passage also seems to have a self-reflexive function.

On the identity of the 'prose writers' at 235c Rowe observes that although this reference 'naturally follows' that to poets, there may be another meaning (1986, 151): 'where else would "Socrates" get his ideas from, if not from a prose-writer (i.e. Plato)? A deliberate wink at the reader?' I think that Rowe is right to see Plato pointing up his own authorship here and I take the move as part of one of the chief games⁵⁴ of the *Phaedrus*: the attribution of speeches to various authors. Waterfield⁵⁵ notes that while Phaedrus recites Lysias, Socrates cites Sappho and Anacreon and identifies Phaedrus, the Muses, the nymphs and even Stesichorus as the authors of his speeches. Through this multiple attribution Plato is ultimately prompting us to consider his own role as author and at 235c as well as wryly hinting at his character's reliance on him may also be making, through the subtext, a serious point about his own intellectual debts. Since the praise of Sappho and Anacreon is supported by positive reminiscences of their poetry elsewhere in the dialogue, this forces a reading that is non-ironic in relation to Plato himself. The point would seem to be that Plato

⁵² Foley (1998, 40) takes the phrase 'mother of the argument' from Maximus of Tyre's essay on Socratic Love in which he argues that Socrates' erotic *logoi* were not original to him but far older (*Oration* 18.7): 'But whether the mother of the theory [ἡ τοῦ λόγου μήτηρ] was a Mantinean or a Lesbian, it is at any rate quite clear that Socrates' discussions of Love are not unique to him [οὐκ ἴδιοι] and do not begin with him either [οὐδὲ πρώτου].' (tr. Trapp (1977) 165-6). Foley (1998, 42) also considers the question of the irony or sincerity of 235c.

⁵³ See duBois (1995) 85-6 on the image of the vessel at 235d: 'This little joke both recapitulates Socrates' critique of poetry in the *Ion*, that poets know nothing but are simply conduits of divine inspiration, and takes a gentle swipe at Phaedrus himself, who has only Lysias' discourse, nothing of his own to say about love.' See also Nightingale (1995) 135-7: 'Socrates is engaging in a sort of ironic mimicry'; and Foley (1998) 44.

⁵⁴ On the playful elements, see Mackenzie 1982.

⁵⁵ Waterfield (2002) 84 on 242d.

by having Socrates mock the idea that he might have learnt anything useful from the poets is actually raising the possibility – in a playful manner⁵⁶ – that he, as author, has. On this reading, the author, in a moment of Platonic irony, uses his principal character's reactions to the poets as a means of highlighting his own position as inheritor of a poetic as well as philosophical tradition.⁵⁷ And while Socrates has pointedly forgotten his source, Plato explicitly recalls two of those who have influenced him. Further, the unusual inclusiveness of the mention at the start of the passage of both wise 'men *and women*' of antiquity (237b7, παλαιοὶ γὰρ καὶ σοφοὶ ἄνδρες τε καὶ γυναῖκες) seems a careful preparation for the naming of Sappho alongside Anacreon.⁵⁸ My conclusion on 235c is that the praise of Sappho and Anacreon is both ironic (from Socrates) and non-ironic (from Plato) and that the praise for the poets is revealed as sincere when Plato later uses particular insights of the poets. I maintain that Plato pays sincere tribute to Sappho and Anacreon in order to mark their success in capturing and expressing the force of love.

Sappho and Anacreon in *Phaedrus*: the force of love

In *Phaedrus* the various speeches on love share the view of *eros* as holding and exercising power upon the lover, a conception shaped by the Greek poetic tradition and in particular by lyric. The force of love is a constant theme of this genre, expressed in direct language of power, in graphic images of physical impact and through the theme of the lover's madness.⁵⁹ Plato uses Sappho and Anacreon as representatives of the lyric genre but also alludes to their particular portrayals of the force of love. In poem 1 Sappho entreats the goddess of love not to 'overpower' her heart (lines 3-4): μή μ' . . . δάμνα, / πότνια, θῦμον and again uses the verb δαμνάω for Aphrodite's power at 102 (πόθῳ δάμεισα). Anacreon similarly uses for Eros the title 'subduer' – δαμάλης Ἔρωτος (357) and speaks of the lover seeking an escape 346 fr. 4, line 4, ἐκφυγὼν Ἔρωτα, and 400, Ἔρωτα φεύγων. At 505 (d) Anacreon hails Eros' power over gods and men (lines 4-5): ὄδε καὶ θεῶν δυναστής, / ὄδε καὶ βροτοὺς δαμάζει. Sappho uses the theme of madness when she speaks (poem 1, 18) of her 'maddened heart'

⁵⁶ The playfulness evident in 235c accords with Hinds' view on allusive methods, since he regards the setting up of allusions as involving 'teasing play between revelation and concealment' (1998, 23).

⁵⁷ On this apparent self-reflexivity, see further Pender 2007.

⁵⁸ See Foley (1998) 54: 'the mention of women (see also *Meno* 81a) is initially striking in a Greek context.'

⁵⁹ Pender 2007 traces the allusions in *Phdr.* to Sappho and Anacreon and to other lyric poets – Stesichorus, Alcaeus, Theognis and Ibycus. From a close reading of the evidence I argue that Plato uses the lyric vision of the force of love as the departure point for his account of the uneasy balance between *mania* and self-control in the soul of the lover.

(μαινόλα θύμω), while Anacreon gives succinct expression to the lover's plight (359): Κλεοβούλου μὲν ἔγωγ' ἐρέω, / Κλεοβούλω δ' ἐπιμαίνομαι, / Κλεόβουλον δὲ διοσκέω. In *Phaedrus* Socrates echoes the lyric poets as he speaks of *eros* as an inner ruler (237d-238c), using a number of political metaphors: ἄρχοντε; κρατοῦσα; τυραννεύσασα; and δυναστευούσης. Equally, towards the end of the dialogue (265c2) Socrates uses lyric language when he refers to the god of love as 'my master and yours' (τὸν ἐμόν τε καὶ σὸν δεσπότην). The theme of madness begins in *Phaedrus* in the prologue with Socrates' characterisation of himself as 'sick' and 'frenzied with passion' for hearing speeches (228b6-7). The portrayal of love itself as madness underlies Lysias' speech in its terminology of 'sickness' and 'being out of one's mind' (231d2-3, νοσεῖν ... κακῶς φρονοῦσιν), but the *mania* of love first appears in Socrates' opening speech (240d1, ὑπ' ἀνάγκης τε καὶ οἴστρου ἐλαύνεται; 241a3-4, νοῦν καὶ σωφροσύνην ἀντ' ἔρωτος καὶ μανίας). Love-as-madness is then foregrounded at the start of Socrates' second speech (244a5, μαίνεται) and thereafter given full expression.

It is in Socrates' second speech that Plato alludes specifically to Sappho and Anacreon when he echoes particular poetic lines on the impact and dynamics of love. Plato's allusion at 251a to Sappho 31 (*phainetai moi*) is well known. Here the man who has recently seen the vision of the Forms (ἀρτιτελής) reacts strongly to the sight of beauty on earth. As a result he undergoes a series of bewildering changes. First he is afraid (251a4) 'he *shudders* and experiences something of the *fears* he had before' (ἔφριξε ... δειμάτων).⁶⁰ The verb φρίσσω denotes the sensation experienced in 'goosebumps', capturing both the effect of cold ('to shiver') and the effect of fear ('to shudder'). A sudden and extreme change (μεταβολή) follows as this chill gives way to fever (251a7-b2): ἰδόντα δ' αὐτὸν οἶον ἐκ τῆς φρίκης μεταβολή τε καὶ ἰδρῶς καὶ θερμότης ἀήθης λαμβάνει. The allusion here is to Sappho's description of the lover overcome by the sight of her beautiful beloved. Page duBois (1995, 66, 85-7) speaks of the 'remarkable similarities between descriptions of erotic suffering in Plato's prose and Sappho's verse' and rightly notes four points of correspondence between 251a and Sappho 31: trembling; cold sweat; the gaze; and the 'flame beneath the flesh' (1985, 100).⁶¹ Ferrari observes that the experience of Plato's lover (1987, 153-4) 'has been compared to that of the feverish lover who speaks Sappho's famous

⁶⁰ 'Before' (τότε) is a reference to the period prior to incarnation when the soul was able to view the Forms directly.

⁶¹ DuBois (1995, 87) discusses the alternating experiences of the soul in this passage. Calame (1999, 188-9) notes the influence in *Phdr.* of traditional Greek views on the 'physiology of desire'. See esp. 189: 'The philosopher takes over the processes of the traditional physiology of love-in-the-Greek-fashion and incorporates them into his metaphysics.'

poem'.⁶² Price notes the parallel in passing (1989, 36) and Nightingale in her more extended treatment of Plato's use of lyric in *Phaedrus* (1995, 133-71) sees this poem as the 'most obvious incursion' of the genre (158). Foley (1998, 46) discusses the allusion briefly and adds that Plato's audience was likely to have been alert to the similarity between the two texts.

Critics have also noted in Socrates' second speech specific allusions to Anacreon. Fortenbaugh (1966, 109) identifies Plato's image of charioteer and horses at 246a as an allusion to Anacreon's 'Thracian filly' poem (417), noting 'Plato uses a metaphor of driving horses to illustrate the phenomenon of conflicting desires.' In Anacreon 417 a power-struggle is implicit as the lover observes the natural force of the Thracian filly and responds with his claim that his own expertise in charioteering would be enough to impose control on the animal (Anacreon 417):

πῶλε Θρηκίη, τί δή με / λοξὸν ὄμμασι βλέπουσα
 νηλέως φεύγεις, δοκεῖς δέ / μ' οὐδὲν εἰδέναι σοφόν;
 ἴσθι τοι, καλῶς μὲν ἂν τοι / τὸν χαλινὸν ἐμβάλοιμι,
 ἡνίας δ' ἔχων στρέφοιμί / σ' ἀμφὶ τέρματα δρόμου·
 νῦν δὲ λειμῶνάς τε βόσκειαι / κοῦφά τε σκιρτῶσα παίζεις,
 δεξιὸν γὰρ ἵπποπείρηγ / οὐκ ἔχεις ἐπεμβάτην.

Thracian filly, why do you look at me from the corner of your eye and flee stubbornly from me, supposing that I have no skill? Let me tell you, I could neatly put the bridle on you and with the reins in my hand wheel you round the turnpost of the racecourse; instead, you graze in the meadows and frisk and frolic lightly, since you have no skilled horseman to ride you. (tr. Campbell)

As a 'skilled horseman' in command of the 'bridle' and 'reins', the would-be lover is confident of his ability to exert control. The natural and untamed energy of the horse is evident in its playful 'frisking' or 'bounding' in the meadow: σκιρτῶσα. It is clear that Plato does indeed allude to this poem when he speaks of the horses of the soul (246a and 253c7-256e2), of the charioteer's attempts to control them with 'reins' and 'bridle' (τὰς ἡνίας 254c1; τοῦ χαλινῶ 254c6; τὸν χαλινόν 254d7 and 254e3) and of the 'frisking' of the bad horse (σκιρτῶν 254a4). Fortenbaugh has concluded on the allusion (1966, 109): 'The

⁶² When Ferrari notes on this allusion (1987, 154 n. 19): 'as seen by Fortenbaugh 1966', he is confused, since Fortenbaugh is concerned only with Sapphic influence on Socrates' first speech. But the allusion had indeed been seen by duBois in 1985. For Ferrari the main significance of the comparison lies in Plato's displacement of the symptoms of the lover from body to soul (154). Ferrari (107, n. 25) further compares *Phdr.* 252b1 and its idea that the beloved can cure the lover's sickness with the alleviation of suffering in Sappho 31.

uncommon word σκιρτάω, which occurs in both authors, suggests borrowing. Plato is the only prose writer cited by LSJ to use the word, so that we may suspect a conscious lifting from Anacreon's vocabulary.⁶³ DuBois (1985, 44) also notes the parallel with the Thracian filly and compares a further Anacreontic verse (346 fr. 1, line 4ff.):

καί σε δοκεῖ μὲν ἐ[ν δό]μοισι[ν / πυκινῶς ἔχουσα [μήτηρ
ἀτιτάλλειν· σ[.] . . . / τὰς ὑακιν[θίνας ἀρ]ούρας
ἴ]να Κύπρις ἐκ λεπάδνων / . . . α[ς κ]ατέδησεν ἵππους·
. . .]δ' ἐν μέσσοι κατῆξας / . . . ωι δι' ἄσσα πολλοὶ
πολ]ιτῆων φρένας ἐπτοέεται.

and (your mother) thinks that she tends you (at home), keeping a firm hold on you; (but you escaped to?) the fields of hyacinth, where Cyprian Aphrodite tied her (lovely?) horses freed from the yoke; and you darted down in the midst of the (throng?), so that many of the citizens have found their hearts fluttering. (tr. Campbell)

On this parallel she comments: 'Horses often connote the exciting of desire, the will to tame an unbroken filly (Anacreon 84 [417]), or the indomitable will itself, as in Plato's representation of the charioteer of the *Phaedrus* (246a).' Ferrari (1987, 265, n. 21) observes, albeit briefly, Anacreon's influence on Plato's tripartite image of charioteer and horses through a further poem – Anacreon 360:

ὦ παῖ παρθένιον βλέπων / δίζημαί σε, σὺ δ' οὐ κοεῖς,
οὐκ εἰδὼς ὅτι τῆς ἐμῆς / ψυχῆς ἠνιοχεύεις.

Boy with the girlish glance, I seek you, but you do not notice, not knowing that you hold the reins of my soul. (tr. Campbell)

Speaking of Plato's use of 'snatches' from Sappho and Anacreon Ferrari comments on the Anacreontic parallel: 'Where the latter declares a beautiful boy to be the 'charioteer' of his soul (Anacreon 360, Page), Socrates describes the effects of the boy's beauty *within* the lover's soul in terms of an allegorical charioteer (253c7 sq).' Nightingale makes the same connection (1995, 158, n. 51): 'Note, too, that Plato's depiction of the tripartite soul echoes Anacreon's address to a boy whom he calls the "charioteer of my heart".'

⁶³ The verb also occurs, within similar equestrian imagery for erotic arousal, at Theognis 1249: Παῖ σὺ μὲν αὐτῶς ἵππῳ ἐπεὶ σκιρτῶν ἐκορέσθης / αὐθις ἐπὶ σταθμοὺς ἤλυθες ἡμετέρους / ἠνιοχόν τε ποθῶν ἀγαθὸν λειμῶνα τε καλὸν / κρήνην τε ψυχρὴν ἄλσεά τε σκιερά (Edmonds, ed. 1931).

Anacreon's equestrian imagery interacts closely with the motif of the seduction meadow in poems 346 and 417, where horses appear as an element of the erotic landscape. The same interaction is also evident in Sappho 2 (line 9: *λείμων ἰππόβοτος*).⁶⁴ Thus when horses are introduced at *Phaedrus* 246a the motif can be read as a deferred completion of the erotic meadow established in the prologue. The equestrian imagery provides Plato with an established erotic vocabulary that can be adapted to express also the impact of love on the dynamics of soul.⁶⁵

Plato's alternative love story

Plato alludes to the poetry of Sappho and Anacreon in order to acknowledge the value of their insights on the shock of love. Both poets present graphic depictions of the force of *eros* impacting upon the passive lover. But Plato confronts this tradition with his exposition of what needs to happen *after* the initial impact. In Plato's alternative vision the soul is a highly mobile and active set of powers. When love strikes, Plato's lover is stunned but there follows a dynamic and forceful response from within.⁶⁶ For Plato the *mania* of love that unbalances the lover impacts upon all three parts of the soul. But he explains how the philosophical-lover, rather than simply withstanding this force, can actually channel its impact through the different parts of soul in order to support the effort of recollection. This act of rebalancing is achieved by redirecting the energy of the lower part of the soul away from its own object of desire and towards that of reason, through the decision to forego satisfaction of the physical desires. In this way reason receives from the *mania* of *eros*⁶⁷ an added energy and stimulus in its quest to reunite with its own beloved, the Forms.⁶⁸

Within the imagery of tripartition Plato depicts *eros* from the differing points of view of bad horse (appetites) and charioteer (reason). He shows how the

⁶⁴ See also Theognis 1251: ἠνίοχόν τε ποθῶν ἀγαθὸν / λειμῶνα τε καλὸν (Edmonds, ed. 1931).

⁶⁵ On the power relations of the charioteer image, see Pender (2000) 219-23.

⁶⁶ See Pender 2007 for a more detailed account of the transfer of powers within the lover's soul.

⁶⁷ The philosophical-lover does not cease to feel the *mania* of desire. Rather, remaining in a state of 'divine possession' (ἐνθεον, 255b6) he develops a way of experiencing the madness and its benefits without losing control over his appetites. Nussbaum (1986, 203-23) offers a powerful analysis of the relation between *mania* and reason, showing how madness benefits reason by stirring its erotic memory for the Forms and thus its impulse to make contact with the divine.

⁶⁸ See *Phdr.* 250a-e for the erotic attraction of reason to the Forms (ἐκπλήττονται 250a6; πόθος 250c7; δεινὸς . . . ἔρωτας 250d4-5; ἐρασιμώτατον 250e1). On this alternative love story of the Forms, see Pender 2007.

charioteer can assert control over the physical desires of the bad horse through repeated training and subjection (253e-256e). The bad horse's innate response to the sight of the beloved boy is to 'spring forward' towards him, with the energy of Anacreon's filly (254a4): σκιρτῶν δὲ βία φέρεται. But once the horse has been 'humbled' by the power of the charioteer, it reacts to the sight of the beloved by 'nearly dying with fright' (254e7-8): ὅταν ἴδῃ τὸν καλόν, φόβῳ διόλλυται. Thus the bad horse now shares the lover's stricken reaction of Sappho 31: τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω. While the bad horse is suffering in this way the charioteer can more easily control it and thus gains an extra impetus for his own erotic activities. In this passage Plato is transposing the erotic subjection from the lyric lover to the appetites-as-lover, whilst showing how reason can benefit. The exchange of powers and interaction of imagery is artful. Anacreon's lover in 417 would like to engage in sex with the 'filly' and so impose a form of control on its natural energy. Plato's bad horse feels this same urge for sex but accepts restraint as a result of its training by reason. Similarly, whereas in Anacreon 360 the boy is the 'charioteer' of the lover's soul, Plato's philosophical lover regains his self-control through the exertions of his own inner charioteer. In contrast, then, to Anacreon, a Platonic lover would not wish to subject the 'Thracian filly' to his control because the bad horse in his own soul would already be subjected.

The re-direction of erotic energy is at the centre of Plato's thoughts on love. In telling this new story Plato appropriates and reshapes traditional understandings of love's energy and vitality. It is therefore apt that he should place his account of the soul's horses within a context of flowing streams and the lush growth of plants

Streams and plants

In key passages of the myth (251a-252a and 255b-d) Plato connects his portrayal of the soul in love with the erotic meadow of the prologue by employing the language of streams and organic growth to explain the impact of beauty on the three parts of the soul

As Plato describes the lover at 251a-b suffering the impact of the sight of his beloved, he uses Sappho's image of erotic heat (ιδρώς καὶ θερμότης) and goes further by specifying a particular source of that heat: the 'warming' stream of beauty flowing into the lover's soul through his eyes (251b1-2): δεξόμενος γὰρ

τοῦ κάλλους τὴν ἀπορροὴν διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἐθερμάνθη.⁶⁹ The image of the stream entering the soul is continued at 251 in verbs which further reinforce the image of water: the whole soul ‘boils’ (ζει 251c1 and c4) and ‘gushes forth, bubbles up’ (ἀνακηκίει 251c1). Despite the irritation and discomfort, the entry of the stream of beauty is beneficial for the soul since it is by this means that the feathers of the lover’s soul are ‘watered’ (251b2-3, ἦ ἢ τοῦ πτεροῦ φύσις ἄρδεται), which thus allows its wings to regrow (251b-d; 255d).⁷⁰ The water imagery continues at 251e3 where at the sight of beauty the lover’s soul is again able to ‘channel desire’ into itself: ἰδοῦσα δε καὶ ἐποχετευσαμένη ἕμερον.⁷¹ As beauty enters the soul, the effect of its warming moisture is to allow growth, for now the feathers of the soul are spoken of as plants (251b5–6, βλαστάνειν; ἀπὸ τῆς ρίζης). Lebeck has explained very well the interaction of plant and physiological imagery in this rich passage.⁷² Water and plants are here combined in an effective image of natural growth.

Under the stimulus of *eros* at 251b the parched soul, now watered, springs forth with new shoots. Earlier in the myth the very same erotic effect was represented through the idea of Beauty as a shining light (250b5-6, κάλλος δὲ τότε ἦν ἰδεῖν λαμπρόν). This conjunction of light, water and plant growth for the effect of beauty on the lover further echoes Sappho’s verses. Sappho uses the light image for beauty in poem 16 where the lover remembers ‘the bright sparkle’ of Anactoria’s face (line 18, κάμαρυχμα λάμπρον . . . προσώπω) and in 34 where again a girl is compared to the ‘lovely’ shining moon (κάλαν σελάνναν / . . . ὅπποτα πλήθοισα μάλιστα λάμπη / γᾶν).⁷³ In Sappho 96 the absent beloved’s beauty is similarly likened to the moonlight that extends over the sea and fields (8-10, ἀ βροδοδάκτυλος σελάννα / πάντα περρέχοις ἄστρα· φάος δ’ ἐπί-

⁶⁹ See also 251c8 θερμαίνηται and 253e6 διαθερμίννας τὴν ψυχὴν. The stream of beauty is also featured at 255c5–7 in the description of the beloved’s experience of *anteros*: οὕτω τὸ τοῦ κάλλους ρεῦμα πάλιν εἰς τὸν καλὸν διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἰόν, ἦ πέφυκεν ἐπὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἰέναι.

⁷⁰ The wings of the soul represent its rationality and perfection. See Pender (2000) 155-62.

⁷¹ Empedoclean ideas of ‘effluences’ within vision seem to be active in this image of the stream (see e.g. Rowe (1986) 184). Although my concern is with lyric, such philosophical poetry is also an important part of the literary background to the *Phdr.*, as are other poetic genres such as epic and epinician. Prose writings are also clearly significant in its critique of literature at large. See Nightingale 1995 for an illuminating account of the interaction between different literary genres in *Phdr.*

⁷² Lebeck (1972), esp. 273-5. Further, Lebeck (1972, 273), Nussbaum (1986, 217), Ferrari (1987, 154-7) and Nightingale (1995, 160) are all alert to the sexual connotations of various aspects of the plant and other images in this passage. Note also that in lyric the beloved’s beauty is often conveyed through the beauty of the natural world, e.g. Sappho 94 and 132; Archilochus 25; Anacreon 414.

⁷³ The more fragmentary poem 4 also uses shining within what seems to be a description of a beloved’s face (ἀντιλάμπην . . . πρόσωπον).

/σχει). In poem 96 the light is then associated with water through the idea of the night-time dew. The moon is said to send the dew 'which is shed in beauty' (12, κάλα κέχυται). The final effect of the moon (or the girl's beauty) is that through its dew it allows the flowers to bloom (96, 12-14):

ἅ δ' ἔρσα κάλα κέχυται, τεθά- / λαισι δὲ βρόδα κάπαλ' ἄν- / θρυσκα καὶ
μελίλωτος ἀνθεμώδης

the dew is shed in beauty, and roses bloom and tender chervil and flowery
melilot. (tr. Campbell)

In *Phaedrus* the influence of beauty similarly waters the soul's wings, which then like a plant are able to grow. In Sappho 112 the same verb (κέχυται, 'is shed, poured') is used for the effect of love itself as *eros* is described as 'poured over a lovely face': ἔρος δ' ἐπ' ἰμέρτω κέχυται προσώπῳ. This language of 'pouring' features in *Phaedrus* as the philosophical lovers are compared to Bacchants who 'draw' from Zeus and 'pour the draught over the soul of their loved one' (tr. Rowe) (253a6-7, ἀρύτωσιν, ὡσπερ αἱ βάκχαι, ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ ἐρωμένου ψυχὴν ἐπαντλοῦντες). This 'pouring' is part of the lovers' attempts to make their beloveds' souls more like the gods.⁷⁴ The interacting images of light, water and growth in Sappho 96 provide a poetic antecedent for Plato's intricate depiction of the stirrings and motives of erotic desire.⁷⁵ Since the entry of the 'stream of beauty' represents a moment within the process of recollecting the Forms, the intellectual act is thus aligned with the emotional response to the beloved's beauty through terms already familiar from lyric poetry. By transposing the language of water and lush growth from the outer landscape of the Ilissus to the inner workings of the soul, Plato reanimates established erotic imagery in a move that both draws on tradition and ultimately subverts it.⁷⁶

Thus Plato incorporates into his new love story particular vocabulary and motifs from the lyric poetry of Sappho and Anacreon, allusions that are prefaced with an explicit naming of the poets at 235c. The naming itself is carefully interwoven with the dominant theme of the prelude meadow through the image of 'streams from elsewhere'. As Socrates has received these streams of influence from earlier sources, the soul will, in the myth, receive the stream of

⁷⁴ Lebeck (1972, 278) observes the parallel within the *Phdr.* myth between the lovers as Bacchants and the stream of beauty.

⁷⁵ See Steiner (1986) 47 on Pindar's images involving both water and light for poetry's powers, esp. *Nem.* 7. 11f.

⁷⁶ Lebeck (1972, 280) notes how the prologue is intimately connected with the imagery of the myth: 'the setting introduces elements used later to describe love's symptoms and the soul's regrowth of wings: heat, flowing liquid and vegetation.'

Beauty. In this way the motif of streams interlaces the dramatic context of the dialogue, the citing of Sappho and Anacreon as influences and the actual allusions to their poetry in Socrates' second speech. The Ilissus meadow works throughout as a situational allusion to lyric poetry at large and provides an overarching theme within which Plato can harmonise Anacreon's equestrian imagery (246aff.) and Sappho's depiction of the stunned lover (251a). The point of the allusions to their poetry is to support the presentation of the tripartite soul as both passive and active within the erotic experience. That the motif of the stream is important for interpreting the speeches on love is confirmed at the close of the work where the Ilissus is referenced as (278b9): τὸ Νυμφῶν νᾶμά τε καὶ μουσεῖον ('the stream of the Nymphs and the sacred place of the Muses'). This echo of 235c through its use of the same noun (ναμάτων) provides a ring-composition for the whole piece.

Finally, the image of streams, alongside the related image of plant growth, is itself an established way of speaking about creative inspiration. The *Ion* shows that the language of flowing streams was standard for the possession of the poets. Here the lyric poets are likened to Bacchants who draw from the rivers when inspired. In Sappho the conjunction of water and plant growth is used for the stimulating erotic effects of beauty, an idea echoed in *Phaedrus* in various images including the stream of beauty and the lovers who 'pour' divine water over the souls of their beloveds. In this latter image Plato connects the motifs of 'stream-as-inspiration' and 'stream-as-effect-of-beauty' when he likens his lovers to Bacchants drawing water from Zeus (253a-b): ἀρύτωσιν, ὥσπερ αἱ βᾶκχαι, using the same image as that in *Ion* for the lyric poets (534a4-5): ὥσπερ αἱ βᾶκχαι ἀρύνονται ἐκ τῶν ποταμῶν. I would argue that, despite the evident irony of the *Ion* passage, the use of the same imagery in the *Phaedrus* is part of a more open exploration of creative inspiration and its effects. Further, since the stream imagery is used explicitly for poetic influence itself at 235c, I read the Ilissus theme as self-reflexive, indicating the author's awareness of both his debts to the literary past and his own creativity.⁷⁷

Conclusion

In *Timaeus* and *Phaedrus* Plato alludes to the poets and draws attention to his use of their material. In each case Plato competes with the poetic tradition and offers an alternative account to correct the poetic visions. Nevertheless, in con-

⁷⁷ The related lyric image of plants and vegetal growth is also used for creativity in the final part of the *Phdr.* itself, where in an extended simile (276b-277a) dialectic is likened to sowing seeds that will either fail or prosper depending on the method of cultivation. Steiner (1986, 97-8) discusses Pindaric plant imagery for poetic creativity.

structuring his own narratives of creation and love, Plato draws on poetic vocabulary and motifs and, in his naming of the poets, seems concerned to mark his debts to epic and lyric tradition. His sureness of touch as an artist is evident in the skilful composition of these allusions. In both dialogues the allusions are prefaced by introductory remarks where particular motifs – genealogies and streams – signal the actual poetic material that Plato will recall. Further, Plato uses these motifs to highlight his own poetic inheritance: *Timaeus* is presented as part of a family line reaching back to Hesiod; while *Phaedrus* is situated appropriately to receive the influence of Sappho and Anacreon. However, when set against Plato's deliberate rewriting of the poets' stories, these self-reflexive allusions become a teasing means of marking the author's original, and inspired, contribution to the Greek literary tradition.

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