

DIDASKALOS: THE INVENTION OF THE TEACHER IN CLASSICAL ATHENS

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DIDASKALOS: THE INVENTION OF THE TEACHER IN CLASSICAL ATHENS

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This dissertation deals with the role of the teacher in fifth- and fourth-century Athens through an examination of the scope of the Greek word *didaskalos*. The first part of this investigation consists of an analysis of the various types of educational figures whose roles overlapped to some extent that of the *didaskalos*, beginning with the legendary educators Cheiron, Phoenix, and Mentor, and touching upon the characters of the *erastês*, the *paidagôgos*, and the Sophist. The second part is a study of the mechanism and process for teaching as described in the literary sources, focusing in particular on the importance of imitation in the student-teacher relationship. The third part approaches the aims and effects of teaching as described by Greek authors, especially the various ways that *physis* can be influenced by one's teacher, especially for the worse. The final part deals with the figure of Socrates, in particular, the way he is portrayed as a *didaskalos* in the texts of Aristophanes, Plato, and Xenophon.

All in all, the pattern of Greek authors' usage of the word *didaskalos* suggests a strong societal belief in the potential power of the teacher - both inside and outside of the schoolroom - to improve or harm the *polis*.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lindsay Sears-Tam began studying Latin as a Junior at Cony High School in Augusta, Maine in 2001. In the fall of 2003, she matriculated at Smith College, where she endeavored to read as much Greek and Latin literature as possible. In 2007, she completed an honors thesis on etymological wordplay in Ovid's *Fasti*, and graduated *magna cum laude*, earning an A.B. with high honors in Classics. In the fall of that year, she began graduate studies in Classics at Cornell University, focusing on comparative linguistics, etymology and aetiology, and textual transmission. In the spring of 2010, she began working with Professor Jeff Rusten on ancient education. This collaboration led to her writing a dissertation on the development of the teacher figure in ancient Greek literature. She received a Ph.D. from Cornell in May 2013 and joined the faculty at Greenwich Academy as an Upper School Latin teacher starting in the 2013-14 school year.

*For Claire,
with the utmost love and appreciation
for your endless patience.*

*And for my mom:
the most inspiring teacher I know.*

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A NOTE TO THE READER

Unless otherwise marked, all translations of Greek text are my own.

For author and work abbreviations, I follow the list in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, online edition.

INTRODUCTION

As modern students, we have very specific expectations about what constitutes great teaching, and these expectations are deeply ingrained in us from childhood: we expect our teachers to be inspiring, compassionate, dynamic, and thorough. We can all tell the difference between a good teacher and a great one because as a society, we have established standards for great teaching and we know that our teachers have been systematically and uniformly trained to meet those standards. As a result, we expect that our teachers will all do their jobs equally effectively and as faithful representatives of our educational system. From time to time, we may have an especially memorable teacher, but on the whole, the specific educational practitioners are inseparable, and to a certain extent, indistinguishable from their institutional context.

In Ancient Greece, on the other hand, the situation could not have been more different. Whereas modern education has been established as an institution, no such institution existed in antiquity prior to the Hellenistic period. Hence, for philosophers, historians, and poets from Homer to Aristotle, individual, private teachers were at the center of Greek education. What's more, bad teachers were just as interesting for these writers as good teachers, and the unconventional or controversial teacher could be a polarizing figure. And yet, to date, no modern scholar has acknowledged the importance of the *didaskalos* in ancient Greek education. To understand why, we need to look deeper into the history of scholarship on Classical education.

1. Ancient Education Too Broadly and Too Narrowly Conceived

1.1 Beck and Marrou

There have been relatively few comprehensive treatments of education in Classical Greece, especially in the latter half of the 20th century. As Frederick Beck notes in the introduction to his 1964 work, *Greek Education 450-350 BC* (7), generally speaking, education scholars lack either the training or the interest to deal with Classical texts in detail and Classicists tend not to care about issues of educational philosophy. Beck himself is, of course, an exception to this trend, as is Henri-Irénée Marrou, whose groundbreaking monograph *A History of Education in Antiquity* (1956) is still valuable for the study of ancient education.¹ Indeed, after the temporally and thematically limited treatments of ancient education from the late 19th and early 20th centuries,² these two scholars' studies were viewed as extraordinarily thorough.³

¹ There has been a recent update and re-reading of Marrou (*Que reste-t-il de l'éducation classique? Relire << le Marrou >> Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité*, eds. Jean-Marie Pailler and Pascal Payen) published by the University of Mirail Press in 2004 which details both the strengths and weaknesses of Marrou's approach in each chapter. Rather than treat the entire work at present, I will cite and comment on various sections at the appropriate places below.

² There were two general trends in ancient education scholarship during this period: The first was to treat all ancient education as a synchronic phenomenon and to discuss the education systems of Greece, Rome, and Egypt simultaneously and without distinguishing between them. For example, see Lorenz Grasberger (1881) *Erziehung und Unterricht in Klassischen Alterthum*. The second (and more common) trend was to treat Greek and Roman education as completely separate and unrelated systems. For example, see Paul Girard (1891) *L'éducation athénienne*, Kenneth Freeman (1912) *Schools of Hellas*, Emile Jullien (1885) *Les Professeurs de Littérature dans l'ancienne Rome*, Aubrey Gwynn (1926) *Roman Education from Cicero to Quintilian*, and Werner Jaeger (1939) *Paideia*. The first approach has (fortunately) been abandoned, while the second has become the default method for studying ancient education. In fact, it is the second approach that I will employ in this study. Although Beck himself may appear to use the second method - after all, his major study on the subject is titled *Greek Education 450-350 BC* - he actually spends a good deal of time connecting Greek education practices with their later Roman counterparts.

³ For a comparison of Marrou's work with that of his predecessors, see Yun Lee Too "Une << Nouvelle Histoire de L'Éducation dans L'Antiquité >>" in Pailler and Payen 2004, 41-3.

Nevertheless, their works are by no means flawless. Both Beck and Marrou see themselves as historians rather than philologists, and as such, they both tend to stray from the ancient texts: neither quotes them at any length. Although this method makes for a smoother read, it is not without its costs. This type of scholarship often results in broad summaries of the texts with very little analysis, argumentation, or comparison between them. Their works are what Teresa Morgan (1998, 19) describes as “sweeping portraits heavily reliant on a few vivid details to back up a general impression.” On top of this, they each have their own scholarly tics: for Beck, this is the tendency toward making unsubstantiated generalizations⁴ and imposing modern educational structures on antiquity,⁵ and for Marrou, over-romanticizing⁶ and taking an anachronistic view of antiquity through the lens of contemporary politics.⁷

In addition, both of these scholars approach the topic of education in antiquity with limiting assumptions about the kinds of evidence that they should consider and the

⁴ For example, Beck begins his monograph with the claim that 450-350 BC is the “most important period in the whole history of education” (7).

⁵ Beck (1964) organizes the ancient material around modern assumptions about age divisions in schools (80-4), the routine of the school day (96-100), holidays from school (109-10), and the primacy of a reading-writing-arithmetic curriculum (114-26).

⁶ See Marrou’s treatment of the pederastic relationship as the ultimate realization of *paideia*, “a relationship on to which the fire of passion threw warm and turbid reflections”, and his description of pederasty as “the most beautiful, the perfect, form of education... carried out in the atmosphere of spiritual communion that was created by the disciple’s fervent and often passionate attachment to the master to whom he had given himself” (1956, 31-3).

⁷ To cite one example: concerning the Spartan education system, he draws connections between their militaristic training and the ideals of the Nazi Third Reich. According to Jean-Marie Pailler and Pascal Payen in the Introduction to *Que reste-t-il de l’éducation classique? Relire << le Marrou >> Histoire de l’éducation dans l’Antiquité* (2004, 13), Marrou felt the true historian researches the past in order to better understand and deal with the problems of the present.

conclusions that can be drawn from that evidence. In particular, the type of scholarship both Beck and Marrou engage in excludes texts from genres that aren't traditionally thought of as "educational" and privileges material that confirms the default understanding of ancient education (i.e. that it dealt exclusively with the training of young men in music, gymnastics, literature, and oratory and was entirely distinct from adult political activity). Further, they treat education in the fifth and fourth centuries as though it was already an institution, and as a result, they have neglected to focus in any depth on the specific figure of the teacher.⁸

1.2 Contemporary Scholarship

In contrast to Beck and Marrou, the current trend in scholarship on ancient education is to delve deeply into one sub-topic or to focus on a limited number of authors or texts. To list just a few examples: William Harris (1989) has provided a thorough analysis of the evidence for and against widespread literacy in the ancient world; Yun Lee Too (1995; 1998; 2000) has offered a new perspective on the nature of education in the works of Isocrates; and Jean Ducat (2006) has investigated the extant accounts of education in ancient Sparta. There is nothing inherently wrong with this type of study. In fact, many contemporary Classicists - like those listed above - who work on education have done exactly this and their contributions have added valuable depth to the field. I would argue, however, that something may be lost when one limits oneself to a subject without

⁸ More on this to come at the end of the following section.

reference to adjacent disciplines:⁹ it is all too easy to neglect the broader context and to ignore patterns that cross genres and subject matter.

1.3 A Third Approach

From my comments so far, it may seem that there is no kind of scholarship that I find satisfactory, but that is not at all the case. If I am equally critical both of general summaries and of hyper-specialized analyses, it is because I would like to propose a fusion of the two. My goal in the present study is to investigate all ancient Greek literature pertaining to education during a given time period (from Homer to approximately 320 BCE), but to do so using a lexical lens that helps bring into focus the centrality of the teaching dynamic in ancient education. That lens is the *didaskalos* and his sphere of activity (*didaskein*). Unlike the Sophists, the liberal arts curriculum, or a dozen other topics on which modern education scholars have based their studies, the *didaskalos* is found wherever education is being discussed. If you follow him through the literature, he will lead you to the most interesting and important passages and he will show you the broader patterns in the way the Greeks thought about education.

Now, it seems, we are better positioned to solve the conundrum with which we began this introduction: if the *didaskalos* is so central to an understanding of ancient Greek education, why hasn't anyone investigated him? The answer is this: no one has yet

⁹ This most often takes the form of neglecting other contemporary literature from different genres in favor of studying a single author. For example, although Yun Lee Too offers insightful and thorough analysis of the works of Isocrates, because she does not draw very many connections between his writing and those of contemporary authors like Demosthenes, Aristotle, Xenophon, and Plato, in some ways, Isocrates appears in her analyses as the lone representative of an educational school of thought, as opposed to what he actually was: one member of a larger philosophical movement.

done a study on the *didaskalos* because no one has seen him as more than a minor subordinate figure in a larger institution. That is to say, while other scholars have treated ancient education as if it were entirely contained by the broader concept of school - both the institution and the location -, the present study, on the other hand, treats it as inextricably linked with the dynamic of teaching, and the person of the teacher, specifically. In studying ancient education too generally, scholars like Marrou and Beck have underestimated the importance of the *didaskalos*, while on the other hand, in focusing too narrowly on a sub-topic of education, modern scholars like Too, Harris, and Ducat (among many others) miss how ubiquitous the *didaskalos* is in the ancient texts.

2. Studying Ancient Greek Education Through a *Didaskalic* Lens

As we saw above, ancient education has generally been treated via a purely thematic or single-topic-based approach. Although valuable work has been done using the thematic method, there are two potential problems with this type of scholarship: 1) scholars have tended to only use material from Greek authors who were already considered educational philosophers; and 2) scholars using this method often pay little or no attention to the vocabulary being used to describe the educational process.¹⁰

The present study takes a different approach. That is, I have focused my investigation on identifying and analyzing occurrences of key vocabulary items without regard for the genre or author of the texts in which they appear. Specifically, this study began as a lexical analysis of the word *didaskalos*, especially as it pertained to non-school-room

¹⁰ Juan Antonio López Férez is a notable exception to this trend.

contexts, and the first step in the process was to find and catalog as many instances of *didaskalic* vocabulary as possible. Although I initially only searched for *didaskalos* and *didaskein*, these items led to other words¹¹ - *trephein*, *paideuein*, *paideia*, *physis*, *ethizein*, *nouthetein* - and when we chart their usage and co-occurrences, there emerge similarities, oppositions, and subtle distinctions between lexical items that correspond to overarching patterns of thought. For example, as we will see in Chapter 1, someone who teaches (*didaskein*) does not necessarily also educate (*paideuein*) or nurture (*trephein*). Likewise, in Chapter 2 we will learn that although the verbs for teaching (*didaskein*), habituating (*ethizein*), and admonishing (*nouthetein*) are often linked in the literature, habituation is used as an alternative to teaching, while admonishment can be an action undertaken only after teaching has failed.

While others have been limited in scope by the types of evidence they were willing to consider, by seeking out the *didaskalos* before anything else and assuming that its occurrence in any text can potentially provide evidence, I have been able to cut across generic boundaries and open hitherto unexplored lines of enquiry. As a result, I have discovered that some of the most important texts dealing with the *didaskalos* are those that are not generally considered to be educational, and some figures previously assumed to be *didaskaloi* - Cheiron, the *erastês*, the Sophist - are not actually

¹¹ A few words about translation: in the interest of both being consistent and also not repeating myself excessively, I often alternate between a Greek word and a designated English equivalent. For *didaskalos*, that is “teacher” (and for *didaskein* “teach”); for *paideia* “education” and *paideuein* “educate”. A *paidagôgos* is a “tutor” or “pedagog”. *Physis* is “nature”, “natural ability”, or “innate ability.” When a broader category of educational figure not tied to a specific Greek word is intended, I use “educator” or “instructor”.

described in those terms, while others not traditionally thought of as *didaskaloi* - in particular, Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds* - are.

Despite the obvious and overwhelming benefits of this type of investigation, there are potential pitfalls. First, it is easy to fall into the trap of assuming in each case a historical reality from the textual evidence. My aim, however, is not to piece together a definitive account of actual educational practices, but to explore the ideas, philosophies and controversies in the air at the time. That is, I'm less interested in what a *didaskalos* actually *was* than in what contemporary authors thought he could or should be.

Second, it is potentially problematic to ignore a passage's context - both literary and historical. The world of Homeric epic is not the same as the world of Aristophanes, hence the mentor relationship will differ accordingly. Similarly, a poet recounting the wartime deeds of a small number of aristocratic heroes will have different priorities in terms of content than a democratic-era Athenian philosopher. While remaining aware of this potential pitfall, I have chosen not to restrict myself generically or chronologically, with the only self-imposed limitation being that I do not cross the temporal threshold between the Classical and Hellenistic periods (ca. 323 BC). That is, with a few notable exceptions - Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius, Strabo: all of whom treat the history of the Classical period - my study is limited to authors from the mid-fourth century and earlier. This means that, although they are rich with educational content, the texts of the Second Sophistic and the early Christian era are not discussed here. I conduct my investigation in this way in part because the education-related evidence from Greco-

Roman Egypt is abundant and of a completely different nature from the evidence of the Classical period (i.e. ostraca, inscriptions, and documentary papyri versus literature), and in part because there is a great body of thorough and up-to-date contemporary scholarship on the educational system in the Hellenistic period (e.g. see especially the work of Raffaella Cribiore and Teresa Morgan). Moreover, whereas the scholarship on Hellenistic education paints a largely unified portrait of the period, there is significant disagreement between scholars about even the most basic details of educational practice and philosophy during the Classical period. As Teresa Morgan observes in the introduction to her study on Hellenistic education (1998, 8), “we know almost nothing about the institutions of education in the Classical period”, and from a certain perspective, this is true. We don’t have any examples of student exercises; we can’t see how they wrote, how they thought, the mistakes they made; we don’t know where the schoolhouses were, what the teachers were paid, and which textual passages they taught from. We do not have students’ homework assignments, teachers’ journals, or letters from parents to their school-aged children. What we do have is literature, a lot of which was (probably) not intended to convey information about education. This is all to say that while we have copious and detailed evidence of day-to-day teaching practice from the Hellenistic period, the evidence from the Classical period is scarcer and considerably more abstract. If we know which texts to read, we can pick out scraps of information that hint at the authors’ ideas and philosophies of education and sometimes also those of their contemporaries. It is by painstakingly gathering and weaving together these seemingly unrelated strands of information, that we see gradually unveiled before us the broad tapestry of Greek educational practices with the *didaskalos* at its center.

3. An Initial Sketch of the Athenian Schoolteacher

From this investigation emerges a model of an ordinary Athenian schoolteacher. This portrait is consistent across the literature and provides a default for comparison over the course of this study. By using this model as the standard set of criteria for the *didaskalos*, we can see that some figures we might previously have assumed to be teachers are not actually described that way, and likewise, other figures we do not think of as teachers prove to be so. In addition, beginning with a standard point of comparison allows us to identify and analyze the way that the intellectual and political culture in Athens during the Classical period bred interesting variations on the default model that had not occurred before or afterwards in the ancient world.

Hence, the aim of this section is to answer the following questions, thereby providing a basic sketch of the Athenian schoolteacher: What are we to assume a teacher in Classical Athens did? What was his social standing? Where did he carry out his work?

3.1 Location for Teaching

The final question is the easiest to answer: the *didaskalos* taught in a designated, stationary location which was often referred to as a *didaskaleîon*. Although we have no

extant references to *didaskaleîa* in Athens before the fourth century,¹² both Herodotus and Thucydides provide evidence for the existence of schoolhouses in other city-states starting in the early fifth century and it does not seem unreasonable to presume their existence in Athens at this time as well. In his account of the events preceding the Battle of Lade in 494 BCE, Herodotus describes how the roof fell in on a group of boys learning their letters so that of the 120 students there, only one escaped (6.27.5: *παισὶ γράμματα διδασκομένοισι ἐνέπεσε ἡ στέγη, ὥστε ἀπ' ἑκατὸν καὶ εἴκοσι παίδων εἷς μόνος ἀπέφυγε*).¹³ Similarly, in recounting the Sack of Mycalessus in 413 BCE, Thucydides explains that the Thracians were so ruthless that they “even fell upon a schoolhouse full of boys, which was the largest in the area and where the boys had just entered, and they massacred all of them” (7.29.5: *καὶ ἐπιπεσόντες διδασκαλείῳ παίδων, ὅπερ μέγιστον ἦν αὐτόθι καὶ ἄρτι ἔτυχον οἱ παῖδες ἐσεληλυθότες, κατέκοψαν πάντας*). From these two passages, we can assume that there were large

¹² According to Beck (1964, 77ff), just because there is no mention of *didaskaleîa* prior to the 4th century, this does not mean there were no schools during the Archaic and early Classical period. He argues that Pausanias describes Tyrtaeos as an Athenian schoolteacher, which would mean that there had to be schools in Athens as early as 650 BCE. Given that this evidence is sketchy at best, Beck concedes that the earliest schools may actually have been established near the end of the 6th century. Since Cleisthenes introduced the institution of ostracism in Athens between 507 and 508, and this presupposes the widespread knowledge of writing among the majority of the citizenry, Beck assumes that letter schools existed at this time in order to teach writing. Harris (1989, 54ff), on the other hand, has expressed some misgivings about the use of ostracism to argue for majority literacy (and, by extension, elementary education), citing two post-Beck discoveries: 1. During the first decade or so after its start, ostracism probably did not require a 6,000 vote quorum, but rather only 200 votes; and 2. Archaeological evidence has revealed that there were likely mass-produced voting tiles for ostracisms - of the 191 ostraca we have against Themistocles, only fourteen different hands can be distinguished -, which means that voters did not have to be literate. He concludes (55) that ostracism “does not prove very much about schools, which are not otherwise attested quite as early as Cleisthenes’ time, but it certainly suggests that a number of elementary schools existed, and taught writing, by about the turn of the century.” This does not seem far-fetched, especially considering the evidence from Herodotus and Thucydides for schools during this period.

¹³ Pausanias (6.9.6) describes a similar event: in 496 BCE the athlete Cleomedes, angry because he was stripped of his winnings for killing his opponent, stormed into a school in Astypalaea and crushed 60 boys by pulling down the pillars supporting the roof.

buildings - capable of holding between 60 and 120 students, if Pausanias and Herodotus are to be believed - dedicated to *didaskalia* in the fifth century in Greece. Further, in each of the passages, the schoolhouse is a minor, incidental detail, mentioned only obliquely and as part of some larger event. This likely indicates that the system of schoolhouses was widespread at the point that these accounts were written: schools were so much a part of the Greeks' daily life that their existence did not merit special comment.

3.2 Curriculum and Methods

As for what and how the *didaskalos* taught, let us turn to the Douris School Cup (fig. 1 below), an early 5th century red-figure *kylix* which depicts a schoolroom scene.



Figure 1

In the center, there is a bearded *didaskalos* who is directing a youthful male student in what looks like some kind of poetry lesson, probably a recitation, while his *paidagôgos*, another bearded man holding a crooked staff, looks on at the far right. The youth is dressed in the typical style of the Greek schoolboy: bare-footed and wearing a *himation*. The *didaskalos*, who is always shown as an older male seated on a *thronos*, holds a scroll inscribed with a line of poetry that the student has presumably memorized and is now reciting. To the left, we see another bearded instructor, possibly a *hypodidaskalos*, or teacher's aide,¹⁴ conducting a music lesson. The two appear to be holding their harps in exactly the same way, and we can imagine the teacher demonstrating the proper fingering for a particular note and then instructing his student to copy him. Suspended behind the figures are spare harps, a flute case, two drinking cups, and a basket for holding book-rolls. From this depiction we can draw two major conclusions about the curriculum and methods of the *didaskalos*. First, we can see that a student would have learned two subjects from the *didaskalos*: letters and music. And second, the primary teaching methods used in this context were memorization - often followed by recitation -, and imitation.¹⁵

The literary sources corroborate this description. Xenophon tells us in his account of the Spartan education system (*Lac.* 2.1.6ff) that boys in the other Greek states (presumably

¹⁴ There is no evidence to suggest that more than one *didaskalos* would have worked at a single school, but there is also scant evidence to suggest that there were *hypodidaskaloi* working alongside *didaskaloi* already in the fifth century. To account for this discrepancy, Beck (1975, 15) has suggested that the scenes on this vase are probably not occurring simultaneously but rather represent a montage of the types of instruction that would have occurred at different times in the *didaskaleîon*. Hence, the second seated figure on the lefthand side would represent the same *didaskalos* as the center figure.

¹⁵ See Beck 1975, Chapter 2 for further discussion of the Douris Cup and related vase paintings.

including Athens) are first put under the care of a *paidagôgos*, and then, when they are old enough to understand what is being said to them, they are sent to a *didaskalos* to learn music (*musikê*), and letters (*grammata*).¹⁶ Likewise, in Plato's *Protagoras* (325d-327a), the Sophist describes how Greek youths learn both letters and music: first they learn letters by tracing over the outlines of the alphabet their teachers make for them, then once they are able to read, by memorizing the works of good poets, and they learn to play music by memorizing the songs and imitating the movements of their teacher.

The teaching exchange as described by Plato and Xenophon in the passages cited above was often described in the literature like a formula with three parts: 1) the innate ability of the student: *physis*; 2) the instruction of the teacher: *didaskalia* (or *didachê*); and 3) the investment of effort by the student (and sometimes also the teacher), which could take the form of *epimeleia* (attention), *askêsis* (practice), or *empeiria* (practical application).¹⁷ If all three elements were present, an ideal outcome for the educational exchange was possible.¹⁸ The clearest articulation of this idea comes from Isocrates' *Antidosis* (187-8):¹⁹

¹⁶ Both Plato and Xenophon also mention physical education (gymnastics or wrestling) as the third branch of the curriculum, but this would have been taught by a separate instructor, the *paidotribês*, and as such, it does not concern our discussion of the *didaskalos*.

¹⁷ For a complete discussion of the relative importance of these three elements in an educational context, see Chapter 3, Section 1. For other ancient examples of the three traditional elements of the educational exchange, see Hippocrates *Lex* 3.2, Plato *Protagoras* 323e.

¹⁸ There was some debate in antiquity about the degree to which each element could affect the outcome of the educational exchange or if all three were truly necessary. For example, see Plato *Meno* 70a or Aristotle *Eudamian Ethics* 1214a14-19.

¹⁹ For a thorough discussion of this passage as it pertains to the nature-versus-nurture debate in antiquity, see Chapter 3, Section 1.2.

Λέγομεν γὰρ ὥς δεῖ τοὺς μέλλοντας διοίσειν ἢ περὶ τοὺς λόγους ἢ περὶ τὰς πράξεις ἢ περὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἐργασίας πρῶτον μὲν πρὸς τοῦτο πεφυκέναι καλῶς, πρὸς ὅπερ ἂν προηρημένοι τυγχάνωσιν, ἔπειτα διδαχθῆναι καὶ λαβεῖν τὴν ἐπιστήμην, ἣτις ἂν ᾖ περὶ ἐκάστου, τρίτον ἐντριβεῖς γενέσθαι καὶ γυμνασθῆναι περὶ τὴν χρεῖαν καὶ τὴν ἐμπειρίαν αὐτῶν...Εἶναι δὲ τούτων προσήκον ἐκατέροις, τοῖς τε διδάσκουσιν καὶ τοῖς μανθάνουσιν, ἴδιον μὲν τοῖς μὲν εἰσενέγκασθαι τὴν φύσιν οἷαν δεῖ, τοῖς δὲ δύνασθαι παιδεῦσαι τοὺς τοιούτους, κοινὸν δ' ἀμφοτέρων τὸ περὶ τὴν ἐμπειρίαν γυμνάσιον·

I say that it's necessary for those intending to excel in the pursuit of words or deeds or any other work first to be naturally gifted in whatever activity they have chosen to undertake, second to be taught and acquire knowledge, whatever that entails for each pursuit, and third to become practiced and trained concerning the use and practical application of their art... And in this, there is a role for both those who teach and those who learn: **the learner alone provides the necessary innate ability, and the teacher alone has the power to educate, but together they undertake the exercise of practical application.**

According to the tradition to which this passage belongs, both teacher and student must participate equally in the educational exchange in order for learning to take place and for the student's nature to be assimilated to the teacher's. It follows, then, that if any one of the elements is missing, the educational dynamic falls apart and learning - in its traditional guise - cannot occur. This distinction will become important for our discussion of Socrates as a teacher in Chapter 4. For now, it is enough to note that a standard educational exchange was generally thought to comprise three elements - *physis*, *didaskalia/didachê*, and *askêsis/epimeleia/empeiria* - and that the goal of the exchange was assimilation.

3.3 The Teacher's Role

According to the literary tradition starting as early as Homer, a teacher was, first and foremost, a parental substitute.²⁰ Particularly in the early days of private education,

²⁰ For more on the Homeric educators Cheiron, Phoenix, and Mentor as surrogate parents, see Chapter 1, Section 1.

when teachers were few and far between, a young man might have had to stay away from his parents for great lengths of time in order to receive an education, and in the absence of the parental influence, the *didaskalos* stepped in.²¹ In this surrogate parent-child relationship, not only did the *didaskalos* take on the role and responsibilities of the parent, but the student actively adopted the role and responsibilities of the child. As Aristotle explains in the *Rhetoric* (1398b26), a young man is bound to obey and honor the gods, his parents, and his *didaskaloi*, in that order. An extreme articulation of this dynamic comes from the Hippocratic Oath (4-10):

ἡγήσασθαι μὲν τὸν διδάξαντά με τὴν τέχνην ταύτην ἴσα γενέτησιν ἐμοῖσι, καὶ βίου κοινώσασθαι, καὶ χρεῶν χρηρίζοντι μετάδοσιν ποιήσασθαι, καὶ γένος τὸ ἐξ ωυτέου ἀδελφοῖς ἴσον ἐπικρινέειν ἄρρεσι, καὶ διδάξειν τὴν τέχνην ταύτην, ἣν χρηρίζωσι μανθάνειν, ἄνευ μισθοῦ καὶ συγγραφῆς, παραγγελίης τε καὶ ἀκροήσιος καὶ τῆς λοιπῆς ἀπάσης μαθήσιος μετάδοσιν ποιήσασθαι υἱοῖσί τε ἐμοῖσι, καὶ τοῖσι τοῦ ἐμὲ διδάξαντος

[I swear] **to consider my teacher in this art equal to my own parents**; and to share my livelihood with him; and to share my money with him when he is in need; **and to hold his family as equal to my own brothers**; and to teach them this art - if they want to learn - without fee or contract; and to impart to my own sons and the sons of my teacher the precepts, lectures, and all the rest of the instructions.

In this passage, the student explicitly swears to treat the *didaskalos* and his sons as though they were his own family, even promising to share his income and livelihood with them and to train them alongside his own children. Given that this passage describes training in a specialized trade (i.e. medicine), however, we should be careful not to apply it too literally to elementary education. Rather, in conjunction with later texts from the

²¹ This practice appears to have been the precursor of the type of training relationship that would later come to be called apprenticeship. However, whereas apprenticeship involves training in a specialized skill (or *technê*), the kind of teaching dynamic described above was not limited to technical pursuits. In antiquity, this type of relationship seems to have existed primarily because of a shortage of teachers and/or great distances between where a *didaskalos* lived and where the student lived. Additionally, there are no specific terms in Greek either for an apprentice (or his instructor) or apprenticeship generally.

Classical period, it may be taken as evidence that *didaskaloi* were thought of in some ways as operating *in loco parentis*.

Another example comes from Plato's *Protagoras*, in which the Sophist explains how a boy is initially schooled at home by his parents and family servants, and when he reaches the proper age, he is sent to school to be taught further by a *didaskalos* (325d):

ἐπειδὴν θᾶπτον συνιῇ τις τὰ λεγόμενα, καὶ τροφὸς καὶ μήτηρ καὶ παιδαγωγὸς καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ πατήρ περὶ τούτου διαμάχονται, ὅπως ὡς βέλτιστος ἔσται ὁ παῖς, παρ' ἑκάστων καὶ ἔργον καὶ λόγον διδάσκοντες καὶ ἐνδεικνύμενοι ὅτι τὸ μὲν δίκαιον, τὸ δὲ ἄδικον, καὶ τόδε μὲν καλόν, τόδε δὲ αἰσχρόν, καὶ τόδε μὲν ὅσιον, τόδε δὲ ἀνόσιον, καὶ τὰ μὲν ποίει, τὰ δὲ μὴ ποίει... μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα εἰς διδασκάλων πέμποντες πολὺ μᾶλλον ἐντέλλονται ἐπιμελεῖσθαι εὐκοσμίας τῶν παίδων ἢ γραμμάτων τε καὶ κιθαρίσεως.

As soon as [a boy] can understand what is said to him, the nurse and the mother and the *paidagōgos* and the father strive hard so that the boy will excel, and for each act and word they teach and impress upon him what is just and unjust, what is good and shameful, what is holy and unholy, and what he should do and not do... and after this, [the parents] send their sons to the *didaskaloi* and they enjoin on these men to take even more care concerning the good behavior of the boys than concerning their letters and harp-playing.

It is important to note that Plato uses the same verb here to describe the actions of the parents and those of the teacher: *didaskein*. Both literally and conceptually, teachers are expected to take over where the parents leave off. Just as the parents have taught their child right from wrong and good from bad, the *didaskalos*, acting in place of the parent, is responsible for continuing the child's character education. In fact, Protagoras implies that over and above the standard curriculum of music and letters, the most important thing a *didaskalos* would have taught was proper behavior (*eukosmia*).²²

3.4 Social Status

²² This type of character education is subtly different from that which the *paigagōgos* was responsible for. Whereas the *paigagōgos* is often described as nurturing (*trechein*) like a parent, the *didaskalos* only teaches.

Given that *didaskaloi* were expected to act as surrogate parents to a child, one might think that the teaching profession would have been held in high esteem in ancient Greece, but this was not the case. Teaching was among the lowliest of professional pursuits; it was a common insult in Classical antiquity to call someone a teacher or the son of a teacher. Indeed, in the *Antidosis* (25), Isocrates recounts how Lysimachus once insulted him by calling him a teacher of men, and Demosthenes used this same insult to discredit his political opponent Aeschines (*De cor.* 258):

παῖς μὲν ὢν μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς ἐνδείας ἐτράφη, ἅμα τῷ πατρὶ πρὸς τῷ διδασκαλείῳ προσεδρεύων, τὸ μέλαν τρίβων καὶ τὰ βάθρα σπογγίζων καὶ τὸ παιδαγωγεῖον κορῶν, οἰκέτου τάξιν, οὐκ ἐλευθέρου παιδὸς ἔχων.

As a child, you were raised in abject poverty, helping your father in the chores of the schoolhouse: grinding the ink, sponging the benches, and sweeping the classroom. You held the position of a household slave, not that of a free-born boy.

Teachers were the ultimate *banausoi*, i.e. menial workers. Not only did they have to do the physical labor that went along with keeping up a classroom - as we see in the passage above -, but they also had to deal with a group of rambunctious boys all day every day. In the Classical period, the *didaskalos* did not have to have any special job training;²³ there was no certification process for teachers, and higher education was reserved for the wealthy. Ordinary schoolteachers simply had to be literate and passable at playing the harp. Since there was no government-run system of public schools in the Classical period, being a *didaskalos* was equivalent to running a private business, like a shoe shop or a bakery, except that instead of selling shoes or cakes, the *didaskalos* sold childcare and knowledge-transfer. Given that the knowledge on offer

²³ When we look later at the extension of the term *didaskalos* to describe a teacher of higher (i.e. secondary or post-secondary) education, we will see that this is not entirely accurate. Additionally, when *didaskalos* is applied to the teacher of a specialized skill like medicine, he obviously had some special job training. What all of these teachers lacked, however, was any special *education* training.

was very basic, and many families already had a nurse or *paigagôgos* to provide childcare, we begin to see why the *didaskalos* was so poorly regarded.

3.5 Summary

In short, the *didaskalos* of the Classical period was a low-status day laborer who worked in a dedicated schoolhouse (or at least a classroom) and acted as a parental substitute. He taught a basic two-part curriculum consisting of music and letters, although it was generally understood that in his role as surrogate parent he was also responsible for some degree of behavioral training. His lessons were conducted through a combination of memorization and imitation, depending upon the subject matter being taught. And finally, we can assume that a *didaskalos* would have taught a class containing more than one boy.

This somewhat crude sketch will be filled in and given nuance over the following chapters. Indeed, these details describe what a teacher did and what a teacher was, but they do not explain why the conceptual framework of teaching appealed to the Greek mindset in such a deep and metaphorical way. Specifically, the language of teaching was extended to nearly every sphere of Athenian public and private life. Moreover, because there was not yet an institution for education in the Classical period, the process and purpose of teaching, as well as the hypothetical role of the teacher, provided controversial and interesting material for Greek writers.²⁴ This study takes as

²⁴ Cf. Ober 2001, 179: “The issue of education was particularly salient for Athenian democracy and its critics in that it necessarily asks what premises should be common to the members of a political community, whose responsibility it should be to teach those common premises, and in what institutional framework they should be taught.”

its jumping off point the basic facts of the teaching profession as it was understood in antiquity and uses these facts to make sense of the widespread literary debate about teaching in the fifth and fourth centuries at Athens.

4. The Structure of This Study

The current study consists of four chapters and an epilogue. Each chapter explores a facet of the literary discourse concerning teaching during the Classical period (with some reference to earlier Archaic sources that treat these same issues) by seeking to answer a key question about the figure of the *didaskalos* and his role in Greek society.

4.1 Chapter 1 - Tutors, Mentors, and Sages

What makes the *didaskalos* distinct as an educational figure? Almost as important as knowing who the *didaskalos* was is knowing who he wasn't. This chapter uses the portrait of the *didaskalos* that we established above in order 1) to determine which other educational figures from the Archaic and Classical periods were thought of as *didaskaloi* and which were not, and 2) to work towards an understanding of the chronological development of the teacher in antiquity, and thereby to more clearly delineate the independent figure of the *didaskalos*. Specifically, this part of the study investigates the following figures: the legendary educators Cheiron, Phoenix, and Mentor; the *paidagôgos*; the *erastês*; and the Sophist.

4.2 Chapter 2 - The Process of Education

Is teaching - and should it be - a *banausic* pursuit, a *technê*, or a philosophical activity? In other words, the goal of this chapter is to pinpoint the nature of the educational process: Is it a type of menial labor requiring minimal qualifications? Is it the work of a skilled craftsman that is carried out via specific steps and mechanisms? Or is it an intellectual art to be undertaken by the greatest and most sophisticated minds? This investigation is conducted in three parts: first, through a comparison of the education systems at Athens and Sparta (as described by Plutarch and Xenophon), including their respective philosophies of education, their methodologies, and their curricula; second, through an analysis of the intra-Athenian debate between Aristophanes, Plato, Aristotle, and Isocrates over the ideal curriculum focusing on the importance of so-called useful versus useless subjects; and third, through an exploration of the ways Greek authors extended the concept of teaching into other spheres of civic life - i.e. political oratory and theater - and ultimately into the realm of metaphor.

4.3 Chapter 3 - The Teacher's Impact

To what extent is a teacher able to influence the moral development of a student and to what extent should he be held responsible for doing so? Specifically, is a student's nature or the teacher's influence thought of as a more important factor in the success of the teaching relationship, and did these ideas evolve from the Archaic to the Classical period? Through a diachronic treatment of the literature, this chapter seeks to identify and analyze the possible outcomes of the educational exchange and determine how these two factors - nature and teaching - are seen as contributing to the outcome. The

key authors whose views we will discuss are Pindar, Theognis, Euripides, Sophocles, Thucydides, Isocrates, and Xenophon.

4.4 Chapter 4 - Socrates the Teacher

How does the literary figure of Socrates personify both sides of the Classical Athenian debate over the role and responsibilities of the *didaskalos*? This chapter seeks to answer how the issues discussed in the previous chapters affected the literary accounts of the trial and execution of Socrates, and how our newfound understanding of the role of the *didaskalos* changes the way we interpret these accounts. In particular, this chapter focuses on the depiction of Socrates as a *didaskalos* in Aristophanes' *Clouds* and the way in which Plato and Xenophon responded to this depiction in their later defenses of Socrates.

4.5 Epilogue

What happened to Classical education after the death of Socrates? The epilogue aims to do three things: 1) to sum up the most important points of continuity and difference between Classical and Hellenistic education, 2) to trace the fate of the *didaskalos* and his curriculum and methods in the Hellenistic period, and 3) to track the development of the "Socratic movement" from the decades after Socrates' execution, through the philosophical schools of the Hellenistic period, and into modern day pedagogical discourse.

CHAPTER 1

TUTORS, MENTORS, AND SAGES

Although the primary focus of this study will be the role of the *didaskalos* in Classical Athens, in order to understand the importance of this figure we must take a conceptual step backward and consider the educational precursors and contemporaries of our *didaskalos*. In particular, it is crucial to distinguish the *didaskalos* from other figures whose roles - to varying extents - seemed to overlap his, specifically the parent, the Homeric educators Cheiron, Phoenix, and Mentor, the *erastês*, and the Sophist. If the Introduction sought to answer (albeit cursorily) the question “who was a *didaskalos*?”, then the purpose of this chapter will be to determine who wasn’t a *didaskalos*.

1. The First Educators

The one-on-one mentoring relationship did not begin with the emergence of the professional educator in Classical Athens. Rather, this dynamic had already existed for several centuries in Ancient Greece. Before there were schools and professional teachers - not to mention the words to describe them - there were the iconic educators of the Homeric texts: Cheiron, Phoenix, and Mentor.¹ Scholars have been tempted to see all three of these figures as interchangeable, fulfilling their respective instructional

¹ Although there are two different characters in the *Odyssey*, one named Mentor and one Mentès, there has been some conflation of the two and most scholars treat them together, if not as the same person. For the purposes of this section, when I refer to Mentor generally, I am also referring to Mentès. When I mention a specific passage from the *Odyssey*, however, I will refer to either Mentor or Mentès as appropriate.

roles in exactly the same way,² but this is not so. Each of these literary characters represents one of three distinct pre-Classical models for an educational relationship between an older teacher figure and his younger charge. By laying these three models alongside one another, we can begin to describe the boundaries of the specialized educational relationships that existed in the pre-Classical period, and in so doing, to understand the ways these figures developed into the educators of the fifth century.

1.1 Cheiron

We begin with Cheiron, the noble centaur of *Iliad* Book 11, educator of heroes, and expert in the healing arts. Despite his important role as friend of Peleus and teacher of Achilles, however, Cheiron is only mentioned a mere handful of times in the *Iliad*. At 16.143 and 19.390 Homer makes brief reference to the ashen spear of Peleus which only Achilles is able to wield, and which was a wedding gift from Cheiron:³ μελίην, τὴν πατρὶ φίλῳ πόρε Χείρων. (...the ashen spear which Cheiron gave to the dear father [of Achilles]). This implies that by the time that the Homeric epics were recorded there already existed a tradition of Cheiron as a skilled hunter and fighter, but the two passing mentions from the *Iliad* are the only textual evidence to support this assumption. There is a similar dearth of Homeric evidence for Cheiron as a teacher. At *Iliad* 4.217-19, Machaon, son of Asclepius, is summoned to help treat the wound of Menelaos, and we

² Marrou (1956) places Cheiron, Phoenix, and Mentor in one category: "And so at the very beginning of Greek civilization we see a clearly defined type of education - that which the young nobleman received through the precept and the practice of an older man to whom he had been entrusted for his training" (8). See also Beck 1964, 49-50.

³ Later sources are consistent with this account. See Apollodorus *Bibliotheca* 3.170 and Quintus Smyrnaeus *Fall of Troy* 1.592ff. One account has Cheiron simply cutting the wood, while Athena polished the spear and Hephaistos fashioned a head for it (*Cypria* fragment 5 from the Scholiast on Homer's *Iliad* 17.140).

learn in these lines that Machaon is thought to have inherited his father's knowledge of ἥπια φάρμακα (that is, soothing remedies), which Cheiron had given to him:

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ἶδεν ἔλκος ὅθ' ἔμπεσε πικρὸς οἴστος, / αἶμ' ἐκμυζήσας ἐπ' ἄρ' ἥπια
φάρμακα εἰδὼς / πάσσε, τά οἵ ποτε πατρὶ φίλα φρονέων πόρε Χείρων.

But when he saw the wound where the sharp arrow had been embedded, he sucked out the blood and he sprinkled the area with soothing medicines which he knew because Cheiron had once furnished them to his father with friendly disposition.

It is of note that the transfer of knowledge in this passage is described in the same terms as the transfer of goods or property, that is, with the verb πόρω, “to furnish, offer, or give.”⁴ Cheiron is not referred to as a teacher of Asclepius; he has given him the knowledge of medicine in the same way that he gave Peleus the ashen spear, as a gift motivated by feelings of deep friendship.

The third and most important (for our purposes) Homeric reference to Cheiron occurs at *Iliad* 11.829-32, where Eurypylos begs Patroclus to tend his wound, assuming that Achilles must have taught his companion the medical skill that Cheiron taught him:

μηροῦ δ' ἔκταμ' οἴστον, ἀπ' αὐτοῦ δ' αἶμα κελαινὸν / νίζ' ὕδατι λιαρῷ, ἐπὶ δ' ἥπια
φάρμακα πάσσε / ἐσθλά, τά σε προτὶ φασιν Ἀχιλλῆος **δεδιδάχθαι**, / ὃν Χείρων
ἐδίδαξε δικαιοτάτος Κενταύρων.

But cut the arrow out of my thigh, and wash the dark blood away from it with warm water, and sprinkle effective and soothing medicines upon it which they say you were taught by Achilles, he whom Cheiron, the most just of the Centaurs, taught.

This, then, is our first glimpse of the tradition that names Cheiron as the teacher of Achilles. For the first time, in this passage, Cheiron's method of imparting knowledge to Achilles is described by the verb *didaskein*, and his subject of instruction is the specialized application of the healing arts. It is worth mentioning that the speaker in this

⁴ This point may be weakened somewhat by the fact that πόρε Χείρων is a convenient line-end formula that fits easily into the dactylic hexameter.

passage is Eurypylos, and it is he who uses *didaskein* to describe the instructional relationship between both Cheiron and Achilles and Achilles and Patroclus. Homer's narrator uses different language to explain this kind of knowledge transfer,⁵ reserving forms of *didaskein* and its root verb *daêmenai* for divine and semi-divine teachers,⁶ but his human character Eurypylos has no other framework with which to conceptualize these educational relationships.⁷ Hence, according to the passage above, Cheiron and Achilles are both described as teachers of medicine, despite only one of them being so in terms of narrator-text. Regardless of this distinction, however, based on Homer's casual use of the language of teaching here without any further elaboration, I agree with Beck's conclusion that there must already have been some kind of pre-existing tradition of teachers and men of specialist knowledge providing individual instruction to selected students at that time (1964, 51). Cheiron is simply the best-known literary exemplar of this category of individuals.

If Cheiron in Homer is a teacher, then in Hesiod he is a surrogate parent, a figure somewhere between a foster father and a nurse.⁸ In each of the three passages in which he is mentioned in the Hesiodic corpus, the wise centaur takes on the responsibility for nurturing and bringing up his respective charges the way a *trophos* would, an act which is signaled by the verb *trephein*. As Beck (1964) has rightly noted:

⁵ See discussion above on *Iliad* 4.217-19.

⁶ In the handful of cases in the reduplicated aorist in which *daêmenai* is used transitively to denote a teaching relationship, the "teacher" is always a god and the "student" a mortal needing to acquire a specific skill from the deity (see *Od.* 20.72, 5.233, and 23.160). The focus of such passages is on the acquisition of a divine *technē* by a given mortal and not on the process of education itself.

⁷ Cf. *Il.* 8.442 for Phoenix' use of *didaskein* to describe his teaching role.

⁸ For Cheiron as a *trophos*, see Mathé 1995, 49-50.

In these references the verb τρέφω “rear” is used of his relationship to his pupil, not διδάσκω “teach”. This implies that Chiron was responsible for the whole development of his pupil, moral, physical, and intellectual, and not merely or solely for the imparting of specific aspects of knowledge. (49)

According to Hesiod, Cheiron reared Medeios, Jason, and Achilles. At *Theogony* 1001 he is described as raising Medeios, the son of Jason, in the mountains. Similarly, in a fragment preserved by the scholiast on Pindar’s *Nemean* 3 (Hes. fr. 40), we learn that he raised Jason in the Pelian glade (Ἰήσωνα..., ὃν Χείρων ἔθρεψ' ἐνὶ Πηλῖωι ὑλήεντι), and in another fragment from the *Catalogue of Women*, Cheiron is in charge of tending to (*komizein*) the personal development of the young Achilles. The verb *komizein* here is virtually synonymous with *trephein*, and most importantly, it also denotes the kind of nurturing relationship a boy might have with his parent, or at least with a parental substitute.⁹ Indeed, aside from acting the part of the nurse, the Cheiron of the Hesiodic corpus seems to be a stand-in for a missing parent:¹⁰ according to most versions Alcimedea (Jason’s mother), Medea, and Thetis were all absent from the lives of their young sons when they were handed over to Cheiron for tutelage. This represents an important extension of Cheiron’s character from a simple teacher of medicine in the *Iliad* to an all-out caretaker who reared his charges through their entire childhood, teaching them everything they needed to know to survive and thrive in the world. Although Hesiod does not mention his special subject of medicine, he does add another

⁹ For a complete discussion and analysis of the language of nourishing in Greek, see Moussy 1969. For the various uses of *trephein*, see Demont 1978.

Komizein was also frequently the verb used in later Greek literature to describe the act of entrusting a child to Cheiron.

¹⁰ According to some scholars, Cheiron is specifically a divine stand-in for a missing divine parent. If for whatever reason a divine (or semi-divine) mother could not raise her child, she would send him to study with the immortal, half-human Cheiron in order to get in touch with his divinity. See Mathé 1995, 52ff.

important element to the Cheiron myth: a location for instruction, i.e. in the Pelian glade.¹¹

It is also at the time of Hesiod that Cheiron's educational role splits into two distinct categories. The first is that of the parent/teacher/nurse described above; the second is that of the oracular sage who dispenses pithy advice and pearls of wisdom. It is this second role that gave rise to the pseudo-Hesiodic Ὑποθήκαι Χείρωνος, or *Precepts of Cheiron*, one of the earliest extant examples of the genre of advice poetry. What remains of this text, a small collection of fragmentary one-liners and gnomic statements, appears to be the beginning of the persistent later tradition ascribing to Cheiron "virtual omniscience and a practical monopoly of the art of teaching" (Beck 1964, 73). Both of these strands of the tradition continue in the *Odes* of Pindar and beyond, sometimes operating simultaneously. In *Pythian* 6, for example, the poet recounts some of the precepts which Cheiron handed down to Achilles when he was under the centaur's tutelage (21-7):

τά ποτ' ἐν οὔρεσι φαντὶ μεγαλοσθενεῖ / Φιλύρας υἱὸν ὀρφανιζομένῳ / Πηλεΐδᾳ
παραινέιν· μάλιστα μὲν Κρονίδαν, / βαρύοπα στεροπᾶν κεραυνῶν τε πρύτανιν, /
 θεῶν σέβεσθαι· ταύτας δὲ μή ποτε τιμᾶς / ἀμείρειν γονέων βίον πεπρωμένον.

The things which they say once the son of Philyra advised the powerful, orphaned¹² son of Peleus in the mountains: first of all, of the gods, to worship the deep-voiced son of Kronus, the ruler of thunder and lightning. And also to never deprive one's parents of honor during their allotted lifetime.

¹¹ For more on the importance of Cheiron having a set location for instruction, see Beck 1964, 73.

¹² The use of *orphanizomai* here requires some explanation, given that both Peleus and Thetis were still alive in the context of the passage. We have to assume that the implication of the verb is not that Achilles's parents are dead, but that they are absent from his life in any meaningful way, and for this reason there is a parental role available to be filled by Cheiron.

What initially seems like a simple mention of Cheiron as the teacher of Achilles is revealed to also be a reference to the tradition in which Cheiron is a master of gnomic statements on life. The verb παραινέειν “to advise” situates this passage in the same category as the *Precepts of Cheiron*, that is, the genre of advice poetry. As such, Cheiron’s wisdom is of use not just to Achilles but also to Pindar’s entire audience: we all could benefit from a little reminder about how to behave toward the gods and our parents. Cheiron’s sphere of influence is so great in Pindar’s *Odes*, in fact, that in *Pythian* 9, Apollo himself, the god of prophecy, seeks Cheiron’s advice on his intention to rape the maiden Cyrene (29ff):

αὐτίκα δ' ἐκ μεγάρων Χίρωνα προσήνεπε φωνᾷ· / 'σεμνὸν ἄντρον, Φιλλυρίδα
 προλιπὼν θυμὸν γυναικὸς καὶ μέγαν δύνασιν / θαύμασον.../ τίς νιν ἀνθρώπων
 τέκεν; / ὅσια κλυτὰν χέρα οἱ προσενεγκεῖν ἦρα καὶ ἐκ λεχέων κείραι μελιαδέα
 ποίαν;

Immediately Apollo summoned Cheiron from his halls and addressed him: “Son of Philyra, leave behind your hallowed cave and marvel at the spirit and great power of this woman...What mortal bore her?...Is it sanctioned for me to lay my glorious hand upon her and to crop the honey-sweet meadow of her bed?”

No better indication of Cheiron’s perceived omniscience can be found than an example of a god asking the centaur whether it is allowed that he pursue a particular mortal woman.¹³

Let us now set aside the evidence for Cheiron as a sage, and consider how Cheiron is treated elsewhere in Pindar’s *Odes*. Although the two strands of the Cheiron tradition at

¹³ Pindar is certainly playing with the tradition and his readers’ expectations here, but this does not mean that this passage should be discounted. On the contrary, in order for him to be able to manipulate the tradition in this way, there had to already exist a cultural notion of Cheiron as the omniscient sage. That being said, we should be careful to remember that Cheiron is a naturally paradoxical figure: the immortal who dies, the centaur who represents the height of civilization, the prophet to whom the god of prophecy turns for help.

times are intertwined in the poems of Pindar (and Hesiod), as time goes on, the strands diverge widely, and the tradition of Cheiron as teacher/parent will ultimately prove much more applicable to the present enquiry concerning the teachers of the fifth century.

In the rest of the Pindaric corpus there is a blending of the Homeric tradition of Cheiron as teacher and the Hesiodic tradition of Cheiron as parent. In *Pythian* 3, Cheiron is described as having reared (5: *trephein*) Asclepius and having taught him (45: *didaskein*) how to heal painful afflictions for mankind. The dual function of Cheiron as teacher and parent is evidenced again in *Pythian* 4 when Jason addresses Pelias (102-4):

Φαμὶ **διδασκαλίαν** Χίρωνος οἴσειν. ἀντρόθε γὰρ νέομαι / παρ Χαρικλοῦς καὶ
Φιλύρας, ἵνα Κενταύρου με κοῦραι θρέψαν ἀγ'ναί. / εἴκοσι δ' ἐκτελέσαις
ἐνιαυτοὺς οὔτε ἔργον / οὔτ' ἔπος ἐντράπελον κείνοισιν εἰπὼν ἰκόμαν οἴκαδε

“I say that I will bring the teaching of Cheiron, for I come from his cave, from the side of Chariclo and Philyra, where the holy daughters of the Centaur raised me. And having spent twenty years there and not having done or said anything shameful in their presence, I have come home.”

This passage is interesting for several reasons. First, in it Jason describes what he has learned from Cheiron as διδασκαλία, “teaching”, which implies that Cheiron taught him at least one specific discipline (perhaps hunting or warfare?). Second, here Jason offers a rare window into his life in the cave of Cheiron; we see that he was raised by the centaur, together with Cheiron’s mother Philyra, his wife Chariclo, and their daughters for the bulk of his young life, and that he was taught by them the correct way to behave in the outside world.

The most detailed Pindaric account of Cheiron as teacher/parent occurs in *Nemean 3*

(43-9 and 53-60):

ξανθὸς δ' Ἀχιλεὺς τὰ μὲν μένων Φιλύρας ἐν δόμοις,
παῖς ἔων ἄθυρε μεγάλα ἔργα· χερσὶ θαμινά
βραχυσίδαρον ἄκοντα πάλλων ἴσα τ' ἀνέμοις, 45
ἐν μάχῃ λεόντεσσιν ἀγροτέροις ἔπρασσεν φόνον,
κάπρους τ' ἔναιρε· σώματα δὲ παρὰ Κρονίδαν
Κένταυρον ἀσθμαίνοντα κόμιζεν,
ἐξέτης τὸ πρῶτον, ὅλον δ' ἔπειτ' ἂν χρόνον·...

βαθυμήτα Χίρων τράφε λιθίνῳ
Ἰάσον' ἔνδον τέγει, καὶ ἔπειτεν Ἀσκληπίον,
τὸν φαρμάκων δίδαξε μαλακόχειρα νόμον· 55
νύμφευσε δ' αὖτις ἀγλαόκολπον
Νηρέος θύγατ' ῥα, γόνον τέ οἱ φέρτατον
ἀτίταλλεν ἐν ἀρμένιοισι πᾶσι θυμὸν αὔξων,
ὅφ' ῥα θαλασσίαις ἀνέμων ῥιπαῖσι πεμφθεῖς
ὑπὸ Τροίαν δορίκτυπον ἀλαλὰν Λυκίων τε προσμένοι καὶ Φρυγῶν 60
Δαρδάνων τε.

And golden-haired Achilles, while staying in the house of Philyra (mother/daughter of Cheiron) as a child, accomplished great deeds. Brandishing a short-bladed spear in his hands and moving as quickly as the wind, he brought death in battle to savage lions, and he slew boars, and he brought their panting bodies back to the Centaur son of Kronus, for the first time when he was six years old, and then afterwards for the remainder of his time there...

Deep-thinking Cheiron raised Jason under his stone roof, and then later Asclepius, whom he taught the gentle-handed law of remedies. And he arranged marriage for the glorious-bosomed daughter of Nereus, and he nurtured her incomparable son (Achilles), fostering his spirit with all fitting things so that when he was sent to Troy by the blasts of the sea-winds he might stand his ground against the spear-shaking battle-cry of the Lykians and the Phrygians and the Dardanians.

This passage offers the only definitive piece of pre-Classical evidence for Cheiron as a teacher of hunting and warfare,¹⁴ a theme which will come to dominate the Cheiron tradition in later texts. In the first six lines, we see Cheiron implicitly encouraging Achilles to treat wild animals like the foes he will one day face in battle, and indeed, this lesson is given real-life application a few lines later when Achilles is sent to Troy and he

¹⁴ Although it can be argued that the Homeric reference to the spear Cheiron gave to Peleus is, in fact, a veiled reference to his having taught Peleus to hunt.

must exhibit the same courage and ruthlessness that he showed with the lions and the boars in the woods surrounding Cheiron's cave. The centaur himself has provided all of the appropriate training for Achilles to be a skilled fighter (58ff). Just before, at lines 54-55, Pindar mentions that Cheiron also taught (*didaskein*) Asclepius the law of remedies, continuing the tradition begun with Homer. So in this one passage, then, Cheiron is said to teach hunting, warfare, and medicine, while also raising (*trephein*) both Jason and Asclepius and nurturing (*atitallein*) Achilles. Rearing and teaching go hand-in-hand in Cheiron's care, and he teaches morality and comportment just as much as medicine and other skilled pursuits. The use of the verb *atitallein* in line 58 underscores this point. While this verb is an *hapax legomenon* in Pindar, in pre-Pindaric archaic poetry (i.e. Homer, Hesiod, and the Homeric Hymns) *atitallein* nearly always occurs in conjunction with *trephein* (or *komeô/komizô*) and is used to describe the relationship between a child and a non-biological parental figure, usually when the child's mother is deceased, absent, or unable to care for her offspring.¹⁵ For example, in Hesiod's *Theogony* 479-80, Rheia gives up the baby Zeus to Gaia to take care of so he will be protected from the wrath of Kronus: τὸν μὲν οἱ ἐδέξατο Γαῖα πελώρη / Κρήτη ἐν εὐρείῃ τρεφόμεν ἄπιταλλέμεναί τε. (And vast Gaia received him (Zeus) in wide Crete to raise and nourish.) Similarly, in the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus* (3-5), the baby god is given to the nymphs of Nysa to raise (*trephein*) and nurture (*atitallein*) since his mother, Semele, had been burned to death. The combination of these verbs points to a holistic care-taking relationship, the purpose of which is to provide not only simple sustenance (food, shelter, etc), but also wisdom and important life skills. Pindar's

¹⁵ See *Hom. Hymn to Aph.* 115; Hesiod fr. 165.6; *Iliad* 14.202 and 303, 16.191, 24.60; *Odyssey* 18.323, 19.354.

singular use of *atitallein* (58) along with *trephein* (53) and *didaskein* (54) in the passage above from *Nemean* 3 emphasizes Cheiron's role as a surrogate parent - particularly for boys whose mothers are absent - as well as an educator.

After Pindar, Cheiron's literary and iconographic legacy takes on a life of its own. Beginning as early as Xenophon and continuing into the Roman period, the wise centaur quickly acquires an impossibly large number of students and subjects of instruction. In *On Hunting* 1-2, Xenophon recounts how Apollo and Artemis gave hunting as a gift to Cheiron, who taught this and many other noble things to his students, 21 in all, including not only the heroes mentioned in the earlier poetic tradition, but also Cephalus, Nestor, Theseus, Hippolytus, Telamon, Odysseus, Diomedes, Aeneas, and both Castor and Pollux. To this number Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 3.30) adds Actaeon, and one third-century bronze statue even includes Hercules among them.¹⁶ By the Roman period, Cheiron is not only the teacher of all students, but the teacher of all subjects. Statius' *Achilleis* 2.96ff lists hunting, warfare, wilderness survival, music, wrestling, medicine, and the precepts of divine justice among the subjects Cheiron taught to Achilles, while a well-known fresco from Herculaneum shows Cheiron teaching Achilles to play the lyre, and one of the reliefs of the *Tensa Capitolina* shows Cheiron instructing Achilles on how to throw the javelin.¹⁷ In Homer, Cheiron had one student - Achilles - ,

¹⁶ London, BM 1242. See *LIMC* on "Cheiron" p. 246.

¹⁷ For these specific works of art, see Marrou 1956, 360, n. 11. For many iconographical examples that match up to the text of the *Achilleis*, see *LIMC* on "Cheiron" pp. 242-5.

and one subject - medicine - ,¹⁸ but by the latter half of the fifth century he had become the teacher of all noble subjects to all extraordinary men, or at least to all men a respectable upper class person might want to claim descent from. I would suggest that this expansion of Cheiron's sphere is the result of poets recognizing a clear correlation between Cheiron's educational role and that of the Classical *didaskalos*. Cheiron was a teacher before a name for this profession existed in Greek, and later writers acknowledged this and assimilated his role to that of the *didaskalos*, the existing model closest to what he did. In other words, Cheiron is a proto-*didaskalos*, the functional predecessor of the *didaskalos*, and as such, he exhibits a number of characteristics (although not all) that will come to be associated with the *didaskalos* of the Classical period.

According to Beck (1964, 72-3), there are three aspects which define the public school system at Athens from 450-350 BC:

1. "The education provided was cultural, not technical, directed towards character training and citizenship, not towards craftsmanship and personal profit." This means that trades like tanning, carpentry, and metal-working would not be taught in schools.
2. "The teacher was a professional taking more than one pupil and offering instruction to all who could afford it. In this sense he is to be opposed to the private tutor."

¹⁸ As mentioned above, it is possible that Cheiron's gift of a spear to Peleus hints at his participation in the sphere of hunting and warfare as well, but there is no other evidence for his teaching of these subjects in Homer.

3. "The instruction offered was given in some definite building or locality." This place was separate from the student's home; the very necessity of travel to the schoolhouse is a defining characteristic of the educational system at this time.

To this list, I would add that the duration of instruction was traditionally on the order of years, but not a lifetime. This distinction will become important later when we compare the *didaskalos* with the *paidagôgos*.

How does Cheiron fit into this Classical paradigm? First of all, in Cheiron is combined both technical and cultural instruction. He specialized in medicine (although it is debatable whether he taught this as a craft to practice or simply for its usefulness as a survival skill),¹⁹ but he also sought to make his students whole people and functional citizens. This aspect of his teaching is brought to the fore in Statius' *Achilleis* with the increased number of non-technical subjects Cheiron teaches.

Second, although Cheiron was, by definition, a private tutor who only worked with one student at a time, he did have more than one student in total (at the very least he taught Asclepius and Achilles, and probably Jason), and this aspect is also exaggerated in the later authors who list all the heroes as students of Cheiron. He certainly can't be said to ever have taught a whole class of boys at one time like the *didaskalos*, but given his

¹⁹ Although medicine is likely exceptional as *technai go*, given that it was clearly not considered to be a low-class pursuit in the Homeric corpus, nevertheless, by the Classical period it was being equated - at least by some - with such *banausic* professions as cooking, captaining a ship, farming, and cobbling. For example, see Plato *Republic* 332c, Hippocrates *On Ancient Medicine*. For this reason, I follow Beck (1964, 143) in placing instruction in medicine in the category of technical education. For the status of medicine in Archaic Greek poetry, especially Homer, see Kudlien 1968, 310ff.

immortality he doesn't quite fit the traditional model of a private tutor²⁰ who could only have worked with one or two boys in his lifetime either. Despite his immortality, however, Cheiron was a temporary figure in a boy's life. The longest duration of stay we know of is Jason's: he lived with the centaur for twenty years. Unlike household slaves and nurses, Cheiron did not continue to see a boy after he reached the age of maturity. In this way, his function is much closer to that of a professional teacher than anything else.

Finally, starting with Hesiod, Cheiron's instruction did take place in a definite location outside of the home of his student where a boy would be sent or brought: a cave in the Pelian glade. Although the student lived in the cave with Cheiron, as opposed to making the journey daily, this is most likely a function of the relative isolation of Cheiron's cave from centers of civilization. Because of this difference, however, Cheiron had to function as a parental substitute and nurse for the boy, since he would not have been able to return home for his day-to-day care. Setting aside his working with only one student at a time, this role of substitute nurturer - marked by the use of the verb *trephein* - is the biggest difference between Cheiron and the Classical figure of the *didaskalos*.²¹

1.2 Phoenix and the *paidagôgos*

²⁰ I.e. the *paidagôgos*. For further discussion see below, Section 1.2

²¹ As we saw in the Introduction, the *didaskalos* also acted as a surrogate parent, but his role did not extend to the kind of nurture and rearing that Cheiron is described as performing for his students.

Although the relationship between Cheiron and Achilles looks very much like the type of relationship a modern reader might call "apprenticeship", there is no evidence for the specific language or concept of apprenticeship in ancient Greek literature. It is my contention that the primary reason why a student would live for a period of time with his teacher was because of the logistical difficulty presented by a long commute to the house of the teacher. While modern "apprenticeship" is, by definition, training in a skilled trade, the equivalent ancient relationships - like that between Cheiron and Achilles - were not necessarily about technical training alone.

If Cheiron is a proto-*didaskalos*, then Phoenix must represent a different model of education. At *Republic* 390e4, Plato refers to Phoenix as Achilles' *paidagōgos*, a Greek term which is most often translated as "tutor." However, this figure did not exist in the literature of the archaic period, so we must look at later evidence for an explanation of Plato's anachronism. The *paidagōgos* first appears in literature in Herodotus Book Eight (Ch. 75.1-7). In this passage, Themistocles undertakes a calculated deception in order to bring about the Battle of Salamis:

Ἐνθαῦτα Θεμιστοκλῆς ὥς ἐσσοῦτο τῇ γνώμῃ ὑπὸ τῶν Πελοποννησίων, λαθὼν ἐξέρχεται ἐκ τοῦ συνεδρίου, ἐξελθὼν δὲ πέμπει ἐς τὸ στρατόπεδον τὸ Μήδων ἄνδρα πλοῖψ, ἐντειλάμενος τὰ λέγειν χρεόν, τῷ οὔνομα μὲν ἦν Σίκιννος, οἰκέτης δὲ καὶ παιδαγωγὸς ἦν τῶν Θεμιστοκλέος παίδων· τὸν δὲ ὕστερον τούτων τῶν πρηγμάτων [ὁ] Θεμιστοκλῆς Θεσπία τε ἐποίησε, ὥς ἐπεδέκοντο οἱ Θεσπιέες πολιήτας, καὶ χρήμασι ὄλβιον.

Then Themistocles, since he had been defeated in the vote by the Peloponnesians, left the assembly in secret, and having gone out he sent a man by boat to the encampment of the Medes, enjoining on him what he should say. The name of this man was Sicinnus, and he was the household slave and *paidagōgos* of the children of Themistocles. Later on, Themistocles made him a Thespian when the Thespians were accepting new citizens, and he made him rich with money.

The success of Themistocles' plan in this scene depends upon the actions of the *paidagōgos* Sicinnus.²² It is worth noting that Themistocles did not entrust anyone else with the important mission of bringing the false message to Xerxes. Sicinnus is clearly a trusted member of his household, a point which is doubly determined in the *Histories* by the use of both "household slave" and *paidagōgos* to describe him. As Beck has rightly observed (1964, 105), *oiketês* often describes a servant who is seen as a member of the family and is frequently used in opposition to a lowly slave, or *doûlos*. Not only is Sicinnus trusted with the care of Themistocles' children, he also shares an intimacy with

²² This does not mean, of course, that in actual fact, Themistocles used the word *paidagōgos* to describe Sicinnus, but rather, by the time Herodotus was writing about this figure, *paidagōgos* seemed to be the best word to describe him.

the family that belies his social status. Given this, it comes as no surprise that Themistocles ultimately rewards Sicinnus with citizenship and wealth befitting a person held in high esteem.

Evidence of this intimacy and esteem can also be found in the tragedians. In Euripides' *Electra* (285-87), Electra counts her father's elderly *paidagōgos* among the number of those dear to her (ἐμῶν φίλων), recalling the way he once saved Orestes from death. Similarly, in the *Ion* (725ff), Creusa addresses her father's aged *paidagōgos* as φίλος (dear) and εὖνους (kindly) and assures him that she will take care of him as if he were her own father, to which he responds in kind by calling her θύγατερ, "daughter." The motif of *paidagōgos* as parent will prove important later in our discussion of Phoenix and Achilles. The most developed example of this theme comes from the opening scene of Sophocles' *Electra* (1-75). The play begins with the *paidagōgos* giving Orestes a sort of mini-lesson on the topography of his homeland as they pass through it, at the end of which he recalls the way the two of them had been forced to flee after the murder of Agamemnon when Orestes was still very young (11-14):

ὄθεν σε πατρὸς ἐκ φόνων ἐγὼ ποτε / πρὸς σῆς ὁμαίμου καὶ κασιγνήτης λαβὼν /
ἤνεγκα κάξέσωσα κάξεθρεψάμην / τοσόνδ' ἐς ἥβης πατρὶ τιμωρὸν φόνου.

Long ago I took you away from the murder of your father on behalf of your blood kin and sister and I saved you and raised you to adolescence to avenge your father's death.

The *paidagōgos* in this scene first treats Orestes like his student, pointing out all of the sites along their route, but he explains his relationship to Orestes in terms of rearing to manhood (*katatrechein*) like a parent. Then, acting in the role of advisor, he goes on to

lay out the plan of action against Clytemnestra and Aegisthus for his youthful charge, to which Orestes responds gratefully (23-4 and 29-31):

ὦ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν προσπόλων, ὥς μοι σαφῇ / σημείᾳ φαίνεις ἐσθλὸς εἰς ἡμᾶς
γεγώς... / Τοιγὰρ τὰ μὲν δόξαντα δηλώσω, σὺ δέ, / ὀξεῖαν ἀκοὴν τοῖς ἐμοῖς
λόγοις διδούς, / εἰ μὴ τι καιροῦ τυγχάνω, μεθάρμοσον.

Oh dearest attendant, how clearly you have shown yourself to be loyal to our family...Therefore I will explain my idea, and you, give a sharp ear to my words and correct me if I miss the mark in some way.

In this brief passage Orestes demonstrates neatly the multiplicity of the roles encompassed by the figure of the *paidagōgos* at this time. In the first two lines, he addresses his companion as “dearest”, and “loyal”, but hints at a status disparity with the word *prospolos*, which is most often used to denote a member of the servant class. In almost the same breath, however, Orestes shows a student’s respect for the *paidagōgos* by seeking his advice and offering to defer to his judgment concerning their conspiracy. Like Themistocles’ *paidagōgos*, the *paidagōgos* in this play is trusted with delivering a very important message on which subsequent events depend. In the *Electra*, in fact, the *paidagōgos* is responsible for coordinating and executing the plot to take vengeance on Clytemnestra and Aegisthus; he comes up with all of the lies to be told and manipulates everyone beautifully, giving Orestes very specific instructions about how he should carry out the plan (660-770; 1326-70). In addition, he even intervenes to rebuke Orestes and Electra for making too much noise in their reunion scene, and in this way, he also enacts the usual role of the *paidagōgos* as disciplinarian. It must be pointed out, however, that the *paidagōgos* does not teach (*didaskein*) per se in the *Electra* or in any of the other extant literature, nor does he instruct in any

particular subject. His specialty seems to be in moral and behavioral advice; he is a guide and a governor, not a teacher.

One of the tragedians' most important additions to the *paidagôgos* tradition is his age. The *paidagôgos* in Sophocles and Euripides is always elderly; he is described as a *presbus*²³ or a *gerôn*²⁴ who takes care of a child. By the end of the fifth century, this system was already established to the point that Euripides could make a pun in the *Bacchae* wherein Cadmus offers to act as a *paidagôgos* for his blind friend Teiresias, even though they are both elderly (193): {Κα.} γέρων γέροντα παιδαγωγήσω σ' ἐγώ; (I myself, being an old man, will be your *paidagôgos*, although you are also elderly).

Less than fifty years later, the *paidagôgos* had become intimately linked with the day-to-day life of the family and was frequently mentioned in conjunction with parents, nurse, and *didaskalos* as one of the key formative figures in the life of a young boy.²⁵ At the same time, he was no longer thought of as a dear friend, although he was still treated with great respect considering his slave status. In Plato's *Lysis* (208c), Socrates questions the boy Lysis about the authority figures in his life, and we learn the basic

Classical function of the *paidagôgos*:

ΣΩΚ: Ἄλλ' ἄρχει τίς σου; ΛΥΣ: Ὅδε, παιδαγωγός.
ΣΩΚ: Μῶν δοῦλος ὢν; ΛΥΣ: Ἀλλὰ τί μήν; ἡμέτερός γε.

²³ See Euripides *Medea* 53, *Ion* 725. It is possible that these terms denote some degree of honorific in addition to, or even instead of, actual years of life.

²⁴ See Euripides *Electra* 287, Sophocles *Electra* 73.

²⁵ See Plato *Republic* 373c, *Protagoras* 325c; Xenophon *Constitution of the Lacedaimonians* 2.1.6; and later Plutarch *Aemilius Paullus* 33.6.3 and *Alexander* 5.7.2.

ΣΩΚ: Ἡ δεινὸν ἐλεύθερον ὄντα ὑπὸ δούλου ἄρχεσθαι. τί δὲ ποιῶν αὐτὸς οὗτος ὁ παιδαγωγὸς σου ἄρχει; ΛΥΣ: Ἄγων δῆπου εἰς διδασκάλου.
 ΣΩΚ: Μὴν μὴ καὶ οὗτοί σου ἄρχουσιν, οἱ διδάσκαλοι; ΛΥΣ: Πάντως δῆπου.
 ΣΩΚ: Παμπόλλους ἄρα σοι δεσπότης καὶ ἄρχοντας ἐκὼν ὁ πατήρ ἐφίστησιν.

SOC: But does someone rule over you? LYS: This man here, my *paidagōgos*. SOC: He isn't a slave, is he? LYS: Sure he is, but he is our slave. SOC: It is remarkable that a free person is ruled by a slave. How does this *paidagōgos* rule you? LYS: He brings me to my teacher's place. SOC: Don't they also rule over you, your teachers? LYS: By all means. SOC: Well then, your father intentionally sets up all kinds of rulers and authority figures for you.

It is clear from this passage that by Plato's time, the *paidagōgos* was little more than an escort. He was a slave assigned to stay with one boy throughout his youth (and sometimes beyond),²⁶ to work as a parental substitute in conjunction with the *trophos*, and to act as the intermediary between the safe spaces of the home and the schoolhouse. He protected his boy from the advances of an *erastês*,²⁷ attended classes with him,²⁸ carried his books,²⁹ disciplined him when necessary,³⁰ and taught him comportment and good behavior.³¹ As a live-in care-taker, the *paidagōgos* would have dealt with all aspects of a boy's raising, from infancy through young adulthood.

Now we can return to Phoenix, the anachronistically-labeled *paidagōgos* who makes only one significant appearance in the *Iliad*. In Book 9, when the embassy is sent to

²⁶ See Plutarch's *Life of Demosthenes* 5 for the *paidagōgos* as an escort for the adult statesman when traveling to and from the assembly.

²⁷ See Plato *Symposium* 183c.

²⁸ See discussion of the Douris Cup at Introduction Section 3.2

²⁹ See Iulius Pollux X.59.

³⁰ See Plato *Protagoras* 325c. For the comedic literary afterlife of the *paidagōgos* as failed disciplinarian see Plautus *Bacchides* 420-45.

³¹ See Plutarch *An virtus doceri possit* 2.

Achilles to beg him to return to the fight, Phoenix presents his case as surrogate parent and caretaker of the youth:

πῶς ἂν ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ σεῖο φίλον τέκος αὔθι λιποίμην
οἶος; σοὶ δέ μ' ἔπεμπε γέρων ἱππηλάτα Πηλεὺς
ἥματι τῷ ὅτε σ' ἐκ Φθίης Ἀγαμέμνονι πέμπε
νήπιον οὗ πω εἰδόθ' ὁμοίου πολέμοιο 440
οὐδ' ἀγορέων, ἵνα τ' ἄνδρες ἀριπρεπέες τελέθουσι.
τοῦνεκά με προέηκε διδασκόμεναι τάδε πάντα,
μύθων τε ῥητῆρ' ἔμεναι πρηκτῆρά τε ἔργων.
ὥς ἂν ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ σεῖο φίλον τέκος οὐκ ἐθέλοιμι
λείπεσθε

How then could I remain here alone, apart from you, dear child?
Peleus, the aged horseman, sent me with you
on that day when he sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon
as a mere child who knew nothing of joining battle
nor of assemblies, where men become outstanding.
For this reason he sent me along to teach you all of these things,
to become a capable speaker and a man of action.
Therefore I would not be willing to be left behind apart from you, dear child.

Here we see Phoenix acting as both parent and teacher to the youthful Achilles. He addresses his charge as “dear child” and expresses great distress at the prospect of ever being separated from his adopted son, but in the same breath he recalls how Achilles’ actual father Peleus had sent him along with the boy in order to teach him proper conduct. Although the verb Phoenix uses for his instructional relationship with Achilles is *didaskein*, the “subjects” he teaches him are oral communication and proper behavior - the domain of the private tutor or later *paidagōgos*.³² The juxtaposition of *muthôn* and *ergôn* in line 443 also hints at the later literary use of the combination of “word” and “deed” to describe a well-rounded, properly-educated person. In this way, Phoenix, like Cheiron, is a general educator of sorts, blurring the boundaries of the

³² I qualify the topics Phoenix teaches in this way in order to make clear that I do not believe Homer was actually arguing for a developed curriculum of any kind that was taught by the noble *paidagōgos* at this time. Instead, oral communication describes the broad skill of being able to express one’s opinion in a group discussion, and proper behavior describes all of the interpersonal actions a Homeric hero might need to take part in, including battlefield etiquette, hunting, sports, etc.

paidagôgos and the *didaskalos*. In fact, it seems likely that Beck's observation on this phenomenon is accurate:

In early times the Classical functions of *paidagôgos* and teacher, that is, of moral training and of technical, including literary, instruction, were combined in the one person. In fact, since in those early aristocratic days there was little technical and literary instruction, the paedagogic function would predominate. (1964, 107)

This is certainly what we see in the speech Phoenix gives to try to convince Achilles to stay. He begins by reminding his charge of the ways he took care of him as a child (9.485-95):

καί σε τοσοῦτον ἔθηκα θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ' Ἀχιλλεῦ, ἐκ θυμοῦ φιλέων, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἐθέλεσκες ἄμ' ἄλλῳ οὔτ' ἐς δαῖτ' ἵεναι οὔτ' ἐν μεγάροισι πᾶσασθαι, πρὶν γ' ὅτε δῆ σ' ἐπ' ἐμοῖσιν ἐγὼ γούνεσσι καθίσσας ὄψου τ' ἄσαιμι προταμῶν καὶ οἶνον ἐπισχών. πολλάκι μοι κατέδευσας ἐπὶ στήθεσσι χιτῶνα οἴνου ἀποβλύζων ἐν νηπιέῃ ἀλεγεινῇ. ὥς ἐπὶ σοὶ μάλα πολλὰ πάθον καὶ πολλὰ μόγησα, τὰ φρονέων ὃ μοι οὔ τι θεοὶ γόνον ἐξετέλειον ἐξ ἐμεῦ· ἀλλὰ σὲ παῖδα θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ' Ἀχιλλεῦ ποιεύμεν	485 490
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And I made you what you are, godlike Achilles,
 loving you from my heart, since you would not go to
 feast with anyone else nor would you eat in the halls
 until I had sat you down on my knees and had cut up
 your food and given you all you wanted, and held your wine for you.
 Often you soaked the chest of my robe, spitting up your wine
 in the troublesomeness of your childhood.
 So I have suffered many things because of you and I have endured much trouble,
 thinking about how the gods would not bring about any offspring for me.
 But I made you my child, godlike Achilles.

Aside from demonstrating the deep, paternal love Phoenix has for his young charge, this speech is clearly intended to remind Achilles of his familial obligations to his aged tutor and to engender enough guilt to nudge him in the right direction. In case this is not effective, Phoenix goes on to recount a thinly-veiled allegorical tale whose outcome

parallels the worst possible outcome of Achilles' current situation.³³ Like a *paidagôgos* whose job it is to guide his charge toward the most prudent course of action, Phoenix presents Achilles with an instructional parable in the hopes that the lesson of another's experience might make clear to the young man his own folly (*Il.* 9.529-605). To this lesson, however, Achilles responds with impatience and anger, addressing his ἄττα γεραιὲ διοτρεφὲς (aged, illustrious, father) like the *paidagôgos* whose advice he believes he has outgrown.

So what makes Phoenix more of a proto-*paidagôgos* than a proto-*didaskalos*? How is he so different from the model represented by Cheiron?³⁴ While Cheiron and Phoenix both serve as teachers and parental substitutes selected by the boy's parents, their similarities end there. Phoenix, like the *paidagôgos* with whom he shares so many characteristics, stays with the boy to whom he is attached, only serving as tutor to one boy in his lifetime. In contrast, Cheiron has many students over the course of his life,³⁵ and they come to him, stay for a limited time, and then return to their lives apart from

³³ For discussion of the method of teaching by example, see Chapter 2, Section 1.3

³⁴ At this point, it is worth addressing the controversial and much-discussed question of why Homer included both Cheiron and Phoenix as teachers of Achilles in the *Iliad*. In this, I follow the argument of Mackie (1997) that goes as follows: Homer included two different teachers for Achilles in order to account for his extraordinary nature. He couldn't very well have a centaur be the primary teacher of behavior and morals for an aristocratic hero, so he gave the role of community instructor to Phoenix. This meant that Phoenix taught Achilles all of the standard things that every prince needs to know to participate in community life (i.e. interactions in the army). However, Achilles is far too unusual to just have an ordinary education, so to account for his less ordinary qualities, including his training in medicine and marksmanship, Homer provided the figure of Cheiron. This seems to me a tidy and reasonable solution to the problem of the presence of both Cheiron and Phoenix in the *Iliad*, while not discounting either of their roles. I would simply add to this argument that if we view Cheiron and Phoenix as acting in different educational capacities (i.e. as proto-*didaskalos* and proto-*paidagôgos*, respectively), the issue of both their continued - and potentially conflicting - presences in the *Iliad* is minimized even further.

³⁵ If we are to take as fact the list of Cheiron's students, then there would inevitably have been some overlap between their tenures with the centaur. However, for our purposes, it is only important to note that Cheiron is never described as leading a class or as teaching more than one student at a time.

the centaur. While Cheiron does provide a complete education in the way a *paidagôgos* would have, he also has specialties that a general educator would not have (medicine, music, hunting). Phoenix, on the other hand, is almost solely a behavioral coach with no specific areas of specialization.³⁶

1.3 Mentor

When placed alongside the figures of Cheiron and Phoenix, Mentor does not appear to fit into either of these two models, despite some scholarly arguments to the contrary.³⁷ Mentor is an older adult male who advises Odysseus' son, Telemachus, in the *Odyssey*, and that role earned him immortality as the namesake of the English word for an older adviser to a younger person, i.e. a mentor. The word "mentor" is thought to have been brought into English in the mid 1700's via the French political novel *Les Aventures de Télémaque* by Mothe-Fénelon, in which there was great emphasis on the role of Mentor as a counselor. Following the novel's translation into English in 1700, the word "mentor" began appearing in English literature of all genres, and until the late 1800's it was always capitalized, presumably because it came from the character of Mentor.³⁸ As the derivative noun implies, Mentor does indeed act as a counselor to a young man in the *Odyssey*, but that educational relationship does not take the same form as those we have discussed above.

³⁶ It is certain that agonistic skill and military conduct would not have been considered specialized subjects in the heroic age, but rather more general areas of knowledge necessary for success as an aristocrat.

³⁷ See Marrou 1956, 8; Beck 1964, 49-50.

³⁸ See "mentor, n." in *Oxford English Dictionary*, online version. June 2011.

Mentor's role is complicated by the fact that Athena impersonates him throughout the *Odyssey* in order to intervene in Telemachus' life.³⁹ That the goddess chooses Mentor as the individual to impersonate is most relevant, since this indicates a recognition on her part that Mentor, as a trusted friend of Odysseus and counselor to Telemachus, is the most appropriate person to dispense the sort of advice she wishes to give. Athena's approach here stands in contrast, of course, to the way she intervenes with Achilles in the first book of the *Iliad* (188-214), when she appears as herself and grabs him by the hair in order to prevent him from attacking Agamemnon. This implies that Achilles needs a different kind of instruction than Telemachus, a fact which underscores the differences between the respective educations offered by Mentor, Cheiron, and Phoenix.

While Cheiron shares his most salient features with the *didaskalos* and Phoenix with the *paidagôgos*, Mentor seems to represent a third category. However, these three figures do share one important characteristic: like Phoenix and Cheiron, Mentor does act as a stand-in for a missing parent. At *Odyssey* 1.307-8, Telemachus compares the kindly advice Mentos has given him to the way a father would treat his own son, and at 2.225ff Mentor is described as the person to whom Odysseus had entrusted the care of his home during his absence:

Μέντωρ, ὃς ῥ' Ὀδυσῆος ἀμύμονος ἦεν ἐταῖρος, / καὶ οἱ ἰὼν ἐν νηυσὶν ἐπέτρεπεν
οἶκον ἅπαντα, / πείθεσθαι τε γέροντι καὶ ἔμπεδα πάντα φυλάσσειν·

And Mentor stood up, who was the companion of blameless Odysseus, and when he went away on the ships, Mentor was the one to whom he entrusted his whole household, so that they might obey the old man and keep everything safe.

³⁹ In fact, Mentor's sole existence for us in the *Odyssey* is as a disguise for Athena. We never meet the "real" Mentor/Mentes.

For all intents and purposes, Mentor is Odysseus' designated representative for the duration of the war, and that means not only overseeing the day-to-day workings of the estate, but also acting as a surrogate father to his son.

Other than this one similarity, however, Mentor represents an entirely different educational model than either Phoenix or Cheiron. Unlike the other two models, Mentor does not live with his young charge,⁴⁰ and there is no set locale where his interactions with Telemachus occur. In fact, the most important conversation between Mentor and Telemachus (in Book 2) takes place in a neutral location, outside of the Ithaca assembly building, while a similar conversation between Mentos and Telemachus (in Book 1) takes place outside the banquet hall at the house of Odysseus.

The most important difference between Mentor and the other archaic educators is his mode and subject of instruction. Mentor does not teach; he gives advice, and only on a very limited and specific set of topics. His tenure with Telemachus is designed to be short, since his literary purpose is to help resolve a specific problem in the story, after which time he is no longer needed. Mentos is only in Ithaca for a day, but that is time enough to help Telemachus sort out his confusion around the fate of his father and how to deal with the uncontrollable suitors at his house (Book 1.269-71):

σὲ δὲ φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα, / ὅπως κε μνηστήρας ἀπώσσει ἐκ μεγάροιο. / εἰ δ' ἄγε
νῦν ξυνίει καὶ ἐμῶν ἐμπάζεο μύθων·

⁴⁰ In fact, Mentos is the leader of the Taphians, and has only just arrived on ship from far away, allegedly to check in on Odysseus, but we know that he is actually the disguised Athena, come to encourage and advise Telemachus. See *Odyssey* 1.105ff.

And I urge you to think about how you might get the suitors out of your house. So come now, listen up and take heed of my words.

He goes on to advise Telemachus first to call an assembly of all the statesmen in Ithaca in order to force the suitors to go home, and second, to fit out a ship to go looking for his father. Then he leaves. In similar fashion, after the assembly in Book 2, when Telemachus seems to be disheartened from the harassment of the suitors and in need of a pep talk, Mentor offers the youth some practical advice (281-95):

τῷ νῦν μνηστήρων μὲν ἕα βουλήν τε νόον τε
 ἀφραδέων, ἐπεὶ οὐ τι νοήμονες οὐδὲ δίκαιοι·
 οὐδέ τι ἴσασιν θάνατον καὶ κῆρα μέλαιναν,
 ὥς δὴ σφιν σχεδὸν ἐστὶν ἐπ' ἡματι πάντα ὀλέσθαι.
 σοὶ δ' ὁδὸς οὐκέτι δηρὸν ἀπέσσεται ἦν σὺ μενοινᾷς·
 τοῖος γάρ τοι ἐταῖρος ἐγὼ πατρώϊός εἰμι,
 ὅς τοι νῆα θοὴν στελέω καὶ ἅμ' ἔψομαι αὐτός.
 ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν πρὸς δῶματ' ἰὼν μνηστήρσιν ὁμίλει,
 ὄπλισσόν τ' ἥϊα καὶ ἄγγεσιν ἄρσον ἅπαντα,
 οἶνον ἐν ἀμφιφορεῦσι καὶ ἄλφιτα, μυελὸν ἀνδρῶν,
 δέρμασιν ἐν πυκινοῖσιν· ἐγὼ δ' ἀνὰ δῆμον ἐταίρους
 αἶψ' ἐθελοντήρας συλλέξομαι. εἰσὶ δὲ νῆες
 πολλαὶ ἐν ἀμφιάλῳ Ἰθάκῃ, νέαι ἡδὲ παλαιαί·
 τᾶων μὲν τοι ἐγὼν ἐπιόψομαι ἢ τις ἀρίστη,
 ὧκα δ' ἐφοπλίσσαντες ἐνήσομεν εὐρέϊ πόντῳ.

Now, leave alone the plot and intention of these senseless suitors, since they are not thoughtful or just. And they do not know that death and black doom are near them so that they will all die on one day. And that journey for which you are eagerly desiring is no longer far off, for I will be the same sort of companion to you that I was to your father, and I will make ready a fast ship and I myself will accompany you on the journey. But you should go home now and join the company of the suitors, and prepare the provisions and pack everything into containers, the wine in two-handled jars and the barley, the marrow of men, in leather vessels. And straightaway I will gather a group of volunteers from the area to be companions on the voyage. Further, there are many ships in seagirt Ithaca, both old and new, and I will look over these to find which one is best, and once we have made it ready we will swiftly set sail on the wide sea.

Counseling Telemachus to stop worrying about the situation with the suitors, Mentor urges him instead to focus his energies on finding out what happened to Odysseus. To that end, he offers to do all of the planning: he will find a crew, select a ship and fit it out, and go along himself on the voyage. All Telemachus has to do is gather the very specific

list of supplies Mentor provides him. This, then, is Mentor's main educational function in the *Odyssey*; he steps into the story briefly to take charge when Telemachus is overwhelmed and unable to make decisions on his own.

Although there is no named category in Greek for the type of educator that Mentor is, we can see later literary examples that indicate a continuity of this model from the *Odyssey* through to the Classical period. The one-to-one counseling relationship that Mentor shares with Telemachus seems to have a later parallel in the relationship of the sixth-century elegiac poet Theognis to his youthful friend Cyrnus, and this relationship, in turn, has later parallels in the relationship of the poet to his addressee in the genres of wisdom literature and didactic poetry. It is tempting, on the basis of this connection, to retroject the erotic elements of Theognis' *Elegies* onto Mentor's relationship with Telemachus, assuming this interaction to be one of the first literary examples of the institution of pederasty. However, this assumption has no textual basis, and in fact, as will be discussed at length in the next section, the assumption that Theognis' pedagogical relationship with Cyrnus was in any way erotic is equally problematic.

1.4 Three Different Models for Educators

By way of summation, I offer this graphic representation of the way Cheiron, Phoenix, and Mentor each embody a different archaic educational model. Through an examination of the characteristics of these figures in the literature, an evolutionary tree emerges which connects each of them to a respective later educational paradigm. The vertical axis of this chart represents the chronological development of these three

teaching figures from the archaic period to the fifth century and beyond into the Roman period, while the horizontal axis depicts the way each of these figures acts as a different kind of surrogate for the parent based on tenure and methodology.

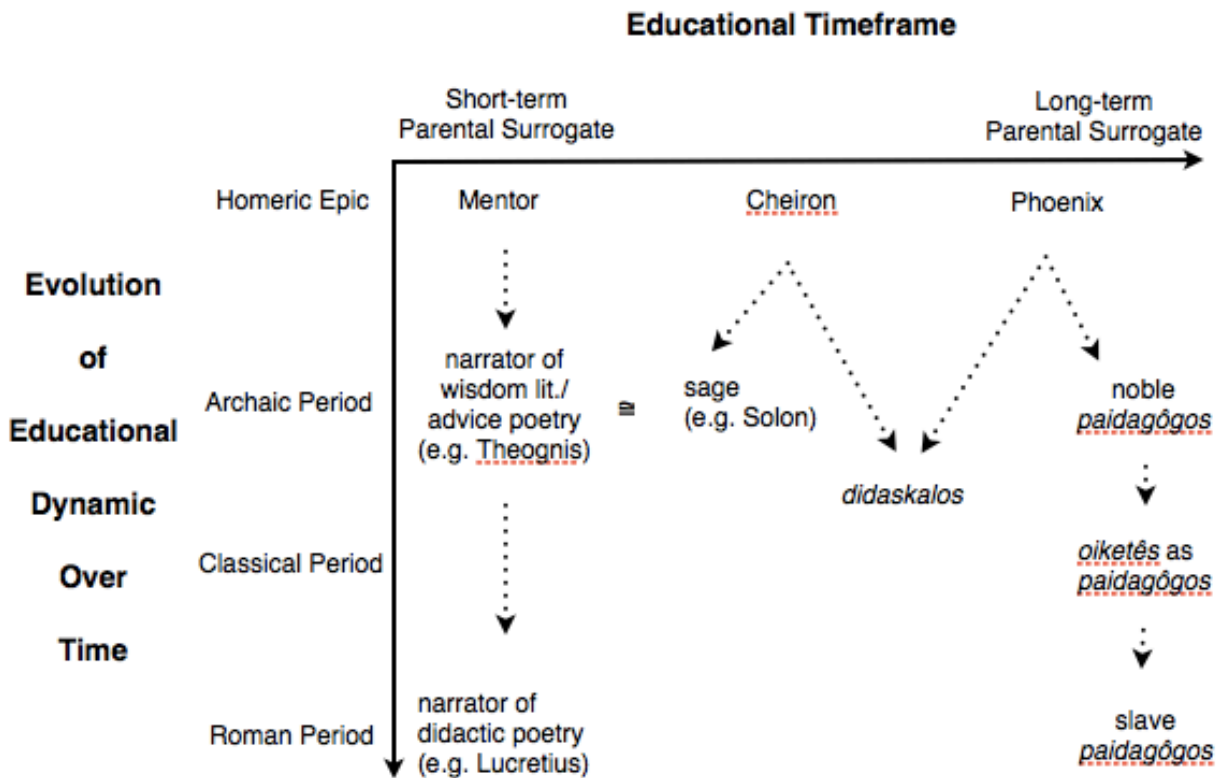


Figure 2

The table below lays out the specific differences between the educational figures of Cheiron, Phoenix, and Mentor systematically.

Table 1

	Cheiron	Phoenix	Mentor
Tenure with “student”	Medium (a number of years)	Long (life-long)	Short (during a particular event)
Subject matter	general education and medicine	general education, behavior, ethics	advice on specific situation
Locational relationship to “student”	“student” came to him and stayed there for duration of instruction	lived in the same household as the “student” and followed him to war	lived apart from “student” and they met in a neutral location
Number of “students”	probably one at a time; several in total	one total	one at a time (possibly only one ever)
Educational role	surrogate parent due to location; proto- <i>didaskalos</i>	surrogate parent; nurse; proto- <i>paidagôgos</i>	surrogate parent; counselor

2. Pedagogical Pederasty?

As we determined in the previous section, of the three iconic literary educators from the archaic period, Cheiron is the one who shares the most characteristics with the *didaskalos*. Be that as it may, it seems unlikely that Cheiron is the only pre-Classical embodiment of this figure. The question to be addressed in the following section is this: was the *erastês* a *didaskalos*? Or to put it another way, did the older partner in a pederastic relationship represent a stage in the development of the teacher figure in ancient Greece? If we were to look exclusively at the evidence presented by Plato and Xenophon, the answer would unquestionably be “yes”. However, there is no evidence of educational pederasty prior to the fourth century, and it was not until the advent of the idealized Platonic love extolled by Pausanias in Plato’s *Symposium* and Socrates in

Xenophon's work of the same name that Greek literature began to associate educational relationships with eros and vice versa. It is mainly Plato's description of this new type of relationship that has led scholars to make broad, poorly-supported statements about the nature of Greek education throughout the ages, like Dover's generalization that "the philosophical *paiderastia* which is fundamental to Plato's expositions in *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* is essentially an exaltation, however starved of bodily pleasure, of a consistent Greek tendency to regard homosexual eros as a compound of an educational with a genital relationship" (1978, 202). A mere two decades earlier, Marrou had boldly concluded on the basis of the same scant evidence that "Παιδεία found its realization in παιδεραστεία... Throughout Greek history the relationship between master and pupil was to remain that between a lover and his beloved...a relationship on to which the fire of passion threw warm and turbid reflections" (1956, 56-7).⁴¹ This view of the educational system in Classical Athens is characteristic of a certain type of romanticizing scholarship based on the projection of a faultless heroic ideal onto all aspects of antiquity. There is no textual (or material) evidence to support the assertion that Greek education at any point involved a passionate relationship between teacher and student, let alone that this was the case for the entire course of Greek history.

2.1 Reinterpreting Plato and Xenophon

⁴¹ Hubbard (2003) has also declared his allegiance to this viewpoint, using this very passage from Marrou to defend his theory that the athletic trainer was also an *erastês*. Hubbard's argument will be discussed in more detail below.

The texts we have, however, do provide some cause for confusion. Hence, I would argue that the evidence presented by Plato and Xenophon in this connection is misleading and ultimately inaccurate for determining whether pederastic relationships were by nature educational and vice versa. In fact, far from describing historical reality, Plato and Xenophon are trying to re-envision erotic relationships, especially in the context of the symposium, in more idealized terms. Just as the gymnasium had an ideal purpose - cultivating a healthy body and mind through athletic competition - which was corrupted by the reality of older men ogling attractive adolescent boys,⁴² in the same way the symposium had an ideal purpose - the exchange of philosophical eros - which was corrupted by the reality of drunken debauchery. In other words, in order to restore the institution of the symposium to a place of honor, these Greek writers had to reinvent it in terms of an exchange of wisdom and inspiration rather than alcohol and bodily fluids.⁴³ The homoerotic interactions that took place in this context (for which vase paintings provide ample evidence) were no longer about unbridled lust but rather about the transfer of philosophical eros from one party to another. For example, in Xenophon's *Symposium* (8.12-28) Socrates reminds the assembled friends at length that spiritual love is far superior to carnal and should be the basis of all homoerotic relationships, and furthermore it is this kind of philosophical eros that Achilles felt for Cheiron and Phoenix, his tutors (8.12.5-13.2 and 8.23.1-5):

βούλομαι αὐτῷ μαρτυρῆσαι ὥς καὶ πολὺ κρείττων ἐστὶν ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς ἢ ὁ τοῦ σώματος ἔρως. ὅτι μὲν γὰρ δὴ ἄνευ φιλίας συνουσία οὐδεμία ἀξιόλογος πάντες ἐπιστάμεθα...
ὥς δὲ καὶ ἀνελεύθερος ἡ συνουσία τῷ τὸ σῶμα μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀγαπῶντι, νῦν τοῦτο δηλώσω. ὁ μὲν γὰρ παιδεύων λέγειν τε ἃ δεῖ καὶ πράττειν

⁴² See below, Section 2.3 for more detailed discussion of pederasty in the gymnasium.

⁴³ Plato executes a similar reinvention of the gymnasium in the *Lysis*. See below for discussion.

δικαίως ἂν ὥσπερ Χείρων καὶ Φοῖνιξ ὑπ' Ἀχιλλέως τιμῶτο, ὁ δὲ τοῦ σώματος ὀρεγόμενος εἰκότως ἂν ὥσπερ πτωχὸς περιέποιτο.

I wish to bear witness to him that the love of the soul is far better than the love of the body. For we all understand that no *sunousia* is worth mentioning without friendship... And now I will show that *sunousia* is servile when one loves the body rather than the soul. For the man who can instruct how to say what is necessary and how to act justly may be honored just as Cheiron and Phoenix were honored by Achilles, but the man who seeks after the body may be rightly treated like a beggar.

Here we see the literary beginning of the conflation of the ideal educational relationship with the ideal pederastic relationship; nowhere before this has there been any hint of eroticism in Achilles' relationships with his teachers, nor has there been any mention of teaching in the context of pederasty. However, in order to legitimize the homoerotic relationships that he claims are utterly ubiquitous in Athens (Xen. *Symp.* 8.1-3), Xenophon's Socrates makes these relationships essential to the health of the city by casting them as educational. Similarly, in Plato's *Phaedrus* (253b5-c2), Socrates describes the way the lover in a pederastic relationship teaches the beloved in order to make his conduct and nature more like the gods, and he admits that in this process some physical intimacy is necessary for true inspiration or exchange of wisdom to occur (255b3-d3), but he is quick to qualify this with the warning that if the lover allows his lust to overcome him and he engages in homoerotic contact that oversteps the bounds of friendship, they two will never reach the height of philosophy and virtue that is the goal of such relationships (255e5-256d12). Physicality is explicitly made secondary to philosophy, a view which is taken further in the speech of Pausanias from Plato's *Symposium*. Here Plato's mouthpiece describes the ideal pederastic relationship, insisting that the only circumstances in which it is acceptable for a beloved to gratify his lover physically are when the two have come together with the understanding that the

lover will make the beloved wiser in some way and the beloved will repay him for this accordingly (*Symp.* 184d4-e5):

ὅταν γὰρ εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ ἔλθωσιν ἐραστής τε καὶ παιδικά, νόμον ἔχων ἑκάτερος, ὁ μὲν χαρισαμένοις παιδικοῖς ὑπηρετῶν ὅτιοῦν δικαίως ἂν ὑπηρετεῖν, ὁ δὲ τῷ ποιοῦντι αὐτὸν σοφόν τε καὶ ἀγαθὸν δικαίως αὐτὸν ὅτιοῦν ἂν ὑπουργῶν <ὑπουργεῖν>, καὶ ὁ μὲν δυνάμενος εἰς φρόνησιν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετὴν συμβάλλεσθαι, ὁ δὲ δεόμενος εἰς παιδείυσιν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην σοφίαν κτᾶσθαι, τότε δὴ τούτων συνιόντων εἰς ταύτῳ τῶν νόμων μοναχοῦ ἐνταῦθα συμπίπτει τὸ καλὸν εἶναι παιδικὰ ἐραστῇ χαρίσασθαι, ἄλλοθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ.

For whenever the lover and his beloved come together, each one holding fast to his own rule, the one that he is justified in doing any service to the beloved who has gratified him, and the other that he is justified in doing anything for the one who is making him wise and good; the former having the power to add to the intelligence and other virtue of his beloved, and the latter needing to acquire *paideusis* and other *sophia*, then when these two principles come together in one place, only at that time can it happen that a beloved can honorably gratify his lover, and at no other time and place.

Hence, according to Plato, just like Xenophon, the true purpose of the pederastic relationship is the exchange of philosophical eros; pederasty is defensible and even honorable when it is primarily about education rather than sex.

At this point it is important to note that the pederastic educational exchange (idealized or not) described by both Plato and Xenophon is written about not in terms of *didaskalia*, but rather in terms of *paideia* and *sophia*. This vocabulary indicates that the perceived nature of the pederastic relationship was like the nature of the relationship a boy would have with his *paidagōgos*; there was a formal and semantic distinction between education (*paideia*) and teaching (*didaskalia*).⁴⁴ According to Plato and Xenophon a lover could help his beloved to acquire wisdom and virtue and would undoubtedly shape his character, but he did not teach him a concrete set of facts or a body of knowledge, per se. This task was left to the private instructor (like Cheiron), and

⁴⁴ For the differences and similarities between a *paidagōgos* and a *didaskalos*, see the preceding section.

later to the *didaskalos*. Be that as it may and despite the prevailing belief in the modern scholarship, it must be emphasized that there is no pre-Platonic textual support for *paideia* (or education of any kind) in the context of pederastic relationships. Based on the evidence we do have, in actual fact pederasty and *paideia/didaskalia*, although both dealing to some degree with the formation and socialization of young men, were two distinct cultural institutions in ancient Greece.

2.2 Pederasty and Education in Theognis

The earliest textual evidence (setting aside vase paintings)⁴⁵ for pederasty and homoerotic desire in Greece is from the sixth century and consists primarily of the second book of the *Elegies* of Theognis,⁴⁶ in one of the most famous passages of which he extolls the virtues of loving boys and compares his passion to Zeus' love for Ganymede (1345-50):

Παιδοφιλεῖν δέ τι τερπνόν, ἐπεὶ ποτε καὶ Γανυμήδους / ἦρατο καὶ Κρονίδης,
ἀθανάτων βασιλεύς, / ἀρπάξας δ' ἐς Ὀλυμπον ἀνήγαγε καὶ μιν ἔθηκεν / δαίμονα,
παιδείης ἄνθος ἔχοντ' ἐρατόν. / οὕτω μὴ θαύμαζε, Σιμωνίδη, οὐνεκα κάγώ /
ἐξεφάνην καλοῦ παιδὸς ἔρωτι δαμείς.

There is some pleasure in pederasty, for once even the son of Cronus, / king of the immortals, fell in love with Ganymede, / and after he seized him, carried him to Olympus and made him / a divinity, preserving the lovely flower of his boyhood. / So don't be amazed, Simonides, that I / also have been revealed as having been tamed by the love of a beautiful boy.

The explicit homoerotic content of this poem and many others of the *Elegies*⁴⁷ is indisputable, and this combined with the fact that Book One of the *Elegies* comprises a

⁴⁵ For just a handful of examples, see *ABV* 102 no. 99, *ABV* 315, Boston 08.292, Oxford 1967.304.

⁴⁶ For much more complete discussion of the homoerotic content of Theognis' poetry, see Dover 1978, 57-9.

⁴⁷ See *Elegies* 1235-8, 1249-52, 1263-6, 1267-70, 1287-94, 1299-1304, 1329-34, 1335ff, et al.

collection of advice poems written to a young man named Cynrus has led some scholars to conclude that herein lies the origin of Plato's educational pederasty.⁴⁸

After all, Theognis himself (that is, his poetic persona) begins the *Elegies* by stating his intention to advise Cynrus (and later others)⁴⁹ in a variety of matters, both personal and political (27-8):

Σοὶ δ' ἐγὼ εὖ φρονέων ὑποθήσομαι, οἷά περ αὐτός, / Κύρν', ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγαθῶν παῖς
ἔτ' ἐὼν ἔμαθον·

And I, since I feel kindly toward you, will advise you in the same way that I, / Cynrus,
when I was still a boy, learned from noble men.

However, the vocabulary item Theognis uses to describe the transfer of information is neither *paideuein* nor *didaskein*, but rather *hypothêsesthai*,⁵⁰ the verb characteristic of advice poetry (also called wisdom literature) of the same stripe as the pseudo-Hesiodic Ὑποθήκαι Χείρωνος, Hesiod's *Works and Days*, and the Old Testament books *Ecclesiastes*, *Wisdom*, and the *Song of Songs*.⁵¹ This must have been a well-thought-out decision on the poet's part, since specific teaching terminology (and presumably the attendant concept of knowledge transfer) already existed at the time Theognis was writing. In fact, others are said to teach (*didaskein*) in the *Elegies*, including Poverty, who teaches lies, deceit and many bad things (388-91 and 649-52), and a wise man at a dinner party from whom a young man might learn all kinds of skills (563-6). Theognis wholeheartedly ascribes the role of teaching to those entities whose practice it is to pass on some essential truth or body of knowledge to their "students" while he himself

⁴⁸ For example, see Kurke 1990, 94-5.

⁴⁹ For Theognis' declaration that he will advise all men, see 1007-8.

⁵⁰ *Elegies* 27, 1007, 1049.

⁵¹ For a more extensive discussion of the genre of advice poetry in the archaic period, see Kurke 1990, 89-91.

claims only to offer advice concerning his own experiences and beliefs. He does not view himself as a teacher, but rather as a counselor. The bulk of his advice is dedicated to helping his reader(s) avoid the same pitfalls that he has endured; in particular, he offers principles on which to determine the character and trustworthiness of a friend, warnings against disrespecting the gods and the fates, and strategies for avoiding poverty, as well as a number of pithy one-liners about things like obeying one's parents (131-2), drinking wine in moderation (211-12), and treating one's servants and neighbors well (301-2).

This sort of advice is a collection of life lessons that a father might share with his son⁵² or an uncle with his nephew, and it is clearly a piece of wisdom literature,⁵³ as opposed to some kind of educational treatise.⁵⁴ The character of the named addressee (in Theognis' case, most often Cynos),⁵⁵ far from disqualifying the text from inclusion in this body of literature, may well have been a trope of the genre, like Hesiod's use of his

⁵² At 1049-54 Theognis declares that he will give good advice of the sort which a father gives to his son: Σοὶ δ' ἐγὼ οἶά τε παιδὶ πατρὶ ὑποθήσομαι αὐτὸς ἐσθλά

⁵³ According to many textual critics, much of the Theognidean corpus is actually a collection of anonymous extracts from prior wisdom literature. See Martin Litchfield West "Theognis (1)" *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, online edition. For a discussion of archaic Greek wisdom literature and its Near Eastern antecedents, see Adrados 2009, 45-55.

⁵⁴ For this part of my argument, *paideia* and *didaskalia* are categorized together under the heading of "education" as opposed to *hypothêkê*, "advice".

⁵⁵ For other addressees: 453-6 and 595-98 are addressed simply to "man", 753-56 are addressed to "dear friend", and many other poems are not addressed to anyone, and yet use a first or second person verb. 903-30 are addressed to Democles in advice about being careful with money. 1211-16 are addressed to the woman Argyris, asking her not to mock the speaker's parents. 1059-62 are addressed to Timagoras concerning how to tell the true disposition of a person. 1085-86 are addressed to Demonax, an apparently irritatingly indecisive person. 467-96 (although debated to be written by Euenus), 667-82 and 1341-50 are all addressed to Simonides, 503-08 to Onomacritus, 511-22 to Clearistus, 825-30 to Scythes (the latter three in the context of the Symposium). He also frequently invokes various deities and abstracts (Artemis, Apollo, the Muses, Zeus, Castor and Pollux, Wealth, Poverty, wine, etc). On occasion he even addresses his own heart (1029ff, for example).

brother Perses or Lucretius' (admittedly much later) address to his associate Memmius. It only seems natural that advice intended to influence a reader's beliefs and behaviors on a personal level be addressed to a specific (if hypothetical) person; the named addressee becomes a stand-in for the reader himself.

So, it is apparent that the *Elegies* are not *didaskalic* poems. Nor could one argue that the advice poems of the first book are pederastic or even erotic. Theognis routinely addresses Cynus simply as "friend" rather than "beloved" or "darling"⁵⁶ and none of the poems which address Cynus contain any erotic material whatsoever. In fact, 1225-6 provides evidence against an erotic relationship between the poet and his addressee. In this short poem, Theognis raves to Cynus about the sweetness of having a good wife, asking his friend to attest to the truth of this statement:

οὐδέν, Κύρν', ἀγαθῆς γλυκερώτερόν ἐστι γυναικός· μάρτυς ἐγώ, σὺ δ'έμοι γίνου ἀληθοσύνης.

Nothing, Cynus, is sweeter than a good wife; / I will testify to this fact, and you can be a witness to the truth of it.

There is no other literary example of an *erastês* writing to his beloved about how wonderful his wife is. This is undoubtedly because (with very few exceptions) pederastic relationships were undertaken by unmarried men, and generally these interactions ceased after the marriage of one or both parties.⁵⁷ Besides the lack of erotic language in any of the poems addressed to Cynus, Theognis' mention of his wife is the most

⁵⁶ See 38, 99, 181, etc.

⁵⁷ See Dover 1978, 171: "In general the pursuit of *eromenoi* was characteristic of the years before marriage." See also Blundell 1995, 103: "Since the majority of men in Athens probably married at about the age of thirty, homosexual activity may therefore have been confined by and large to unmarried men, although we do hear about a few homosexual relationships which were maintained after marriage."

definitive piece of evidence we could hope for against his taking part in a homosexual/pederastic relationship with his addressee.

Pederasty and advice do not mix in the Theognidean corpus, let alone pederasty and teaching. Indeed, none of the poems which might be argued to be “advice poems” contain any explicit or implicit eroticism, and as for the explicitly erotic poems in Book Two, these are mostly addressed to an unnamed *país* - never to Cyrnus -, and they are very definitely not advice poems. Given the mere coincidence of advice and pederasty in the poems of Theognis, scholars have been too quick to use this as a basis on which to argue for a correlation in the *Elegies* - and in Greek literature more generally - between the relationship of lover to beloved and teacher to student.

2.3 Gymnasium Literature

One other category of texts has been brought to bear as evidence in this discussion, a set of works that I will refer to as gymnasium literature. These texts, including an inscribed Hellenistic decree from Verroia, several of the plays of Aristophanes, and at least two Platonic dialogues, are relevant to this issue because they describe the intersection between pederastic practice and the educational institution of the gymnasium in Athens. More specifically, each of these texts addresses the pervasive (and not unjustified) Greek concern with and recognition of the potential for homoerotic encounters at the gym. Across a hundred-year-span of literature (and certainly after the texts mentioned here as well), it remained evident to Greek writers just as it has to modern scholars that where young men in peak physical condition wrestle naked, there

will be sexual predators. The gymnasium had its seedy underbelly just as the symposium did; despite the philosophical rationalizations of Plato and others, pederasty and athletics were understood to be unfortunately but unavoidably linked. As Hubbard (2003, 4) has rightly observed: “The private wrestling school (*palaestra*) is certainly identified as the prime arena of pederastic courtship in a range of texts from a variety of genres in both the fifth and fourth centuries. Numerous Greek vases depict scenes of clothed men or youths admiring, crowning, or presenting gifts to naked athletes”. This is clearly borne out in Plato’s *Lysis* (203-7), a dialogue set in the gymnasium and describing a scene where an *erastês*, Hippothales, is desperately in love with the boy Lysis and seeks advice from Socrates and others on how to approach him. Socrates, of course, obliges and demonstrates for Hippothales a purely philosophical conversation with Lysis concerning the nature of friendship and the role of parents and educators in society. The image of the gymnasium where *erastai* and would-be *erastai* hover around the edges of the ring watching their youthful beloveds is common in ancient texts, but while Plato tries to frame the scene as purely noble, Aristophanes offers a somewhat more likely (albeit comedically exaggerated) picture.⁵⁸ At *Clouds* 973-85, the Better Argument describes the traditional Athenian education system, focusing on the ways the boys in the past had to guard against unwanted sexual advances from spectators at the trainer’s place - even going to the extreme of smudging out the marks of their genitals in the sand after wrestling practice:

ἐν παιδοτρίβου δὲ καθίζοντας τὸν μηρὸν ἔδει προβαλέσθαι
 τοὺς παῖδας, ὅπως τοῖς ἔξωθεν μηδὲν δείξειαν ἀπηνές·
 εἴτ' αὖ πάλιν αὐθις ἀνιστάμενον συμψηῆσαι καὶ προνοεῖσθαι

⁵⁸ For a further Aristophanic exaggeration of pederasty connected with the gymnasium, see *Birds* 137-42. For more examples from Aristophanes and other comic poets, see Dover 1978, 135-52.

εἶδωλον τοῖσιν ἐρασταῖσιν τῆς ἥβης μὴ καταλείπειν.
 ἡλείψατο δ' ἂν τοῦμφαλοῦ οὐδεὶς παῖς ὑπένερθεν τότ' ἄν, ὥστε
 τοῖς αἰδοίοισι δρόσος καὶ χνοῦς ὥσπερ μήλοισιν ἐπὶ νῦνθαι.
 οὐδ' ἂν μαλακὴν φυρασάμενος τὴν φωνὴν πρὸς τὸν ἐραστὴν
 αὐτὸς ἐαυτὸν προαγωγεύων τοῖν ὀφθαλμοῖν ἐβάδιζεν.

At the trainer's the boys had to cross their thighs when sitting, so they wouldn't reveal anything that would torment the onlookers; and when they stood up again, they had to smooth the sand and take care not to leave behind an image of their pubescence for their lovers (*erastai*) to find. And in those days, no boy would oil himself below the navel, and so his privates bloomed with dewy down like apricots. Nor would he liquefy his voice to a simper for his lover (*erastês*) and walk around pimping for himself with his eyes.⁵⁹

The setting Aristophanes presents in the *Clouds* is one in which pederasty is just an expected (if sometimes distasteful) aspect of gymnasium culture; every boy had an *erastês*, and the gymnasium was the place where the two could interact publicly.

Pederasty was simply the natural byproduct of the older system of education described by the Better Argument. However, although these types of erotic encounters were envisioned as taking place in an educational setting (i.e. the gymnasium), it is important to note that there is no mention in the *Clouds* of an erotic relationship between teacher and student, nor is the erotic encounter between older male and younger boy described in specifically educational terms. Aristophanes presents a stage in the development of education that includes pederasty, and one can see why other scholars have linked the two institutions. But despite pederastic courtship and gymnastic education having taken place in the same physical space, there is no clear evidence from archaic or even

⁵⁹ Translation by Jeffrey Henderson

Classical times for a pederastic relationship between a teacher (or trainer)⁶⁰ and a student at the gymnasium.

2.4 Aeschines' Against Timarchus

One final text must be mentioned in this connection because it is often wrongly cited⁶¹ as evidence that teachers were frequently sexually involved with their students, or at least wanted to be. In Aeschines' speech *Against Timarchus* the speaker begins by enumerating and explaining the laws of Athens in order to ultimately show how Timarchus violated all of them. In this process, he explicates the existing laws concerning the operating hours of educational institutions, namely the *didaskaleion* and the *palaestra* (sections 9-12). More specifically, these laws dictate that educational centers may not be opened before sunrise or remain open after sunset, and that a certain number of *paides* must go to school together, and finally, that during school hours no person except the teacher (or his immediate kin) who is older than the *paides* may enter the *didaskaleion*. Aeschines takes these things primarily as regulations against teachers taking advantage of their students (9.1-4):

Ὁ γὰρ νομοθέτης πρῶτον μὲν τοῖς διδασκάλοις, οἷς ἐξ ἀνάγκης
παρακατατιθέμεθα τοὺς ἡμετέρους αὐτῶν παῖδας, οἷς ἐστὶν ὁ μὲν βίος ἀπὸ τοῦ
σωφρονεῖν, ἡ δ' ἀπορία ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων, ὅμως ἀπιστῶν φαίνεται

⁶⁰ Hubbard (2003, 7-16) cites a number of Attic red-figure vases as evidence for trainer-student pederasty, arguing that these scenes between a trainer and a youth parallel traditional pederastic courtship scenes in composition and visual motifs. His argument, although thorough, is not compelling from an art historical standpoint, as it is often unclear in the vases he cites if the older figure is in fact a trainer. Furthermore, none of the so-called pederastic trainer-student vases depict any physical contact between the parties, an element which is present in most of the classic pederastic vase scenes. Hubbard himself agrees in his conclusion (16) that none of the evidence he cites, either textual or iconographic is by itself definitive.

⁶¹ See Hubbard 2003, 5.

First of all, concerning teachers, to whom we necessarily entrust our children, and whose livelihoods are dependent upon their self-discipline, and for whom poverty would result from behaving contrary to this, nevertheless the lawmaker is apparently distrustful.

However, as Aeschines states, *didaskaloi* (and *paidotribai*) were trusted authority figures who exercised a tremendous amount of power and responsibility over the youth of the city. Since their livelihoods depended upon their outstanding moral character, it follows that instances of inappropriate relations between a teacher and his student would be almost unheard of. Hence, it seems much more likely that these laws were intended not to prevent educational authority figures from corrupting their charges, but rather to prevent any other sexual predators from having access to the youths. Since the laws limit the people other than the *didaskalos* who may enter the school with the *paides*, this would imply that it is other men who are the risk, not the teacher. Similarly, by limiting the operating hours of schools to the daylight hours and requiring the boys to travel in groups, the lawmakers were probably trying to protect the boys from traveling alone through the dark streets where they could more easily be accosted by older men. This interpretation is further supported by the stated requirement that the *chorêgos* be over forty, so that he will have reached an age when he can most easily exercise self-control around the *paides* (section 11), and the subsequent warning that if the *gymnasiarchos* allows anyone to enter the gymnasium who is outside of the age limits, he will be subjected to the punishments befitting one who has seduced a freeborn person (section 12). These laws indicate a real societal concern in Classical Athens about older males preying on youths at the gymnasium, a concern which continued into the Hellenistic period. According to an early Hellenistic decree tablet found at Verroia in Macedonia, the *gymnasiarchos* must be over the age of thirty (presumably for the same reason as

above), nor can he allow any person to enter or disrobe in the gymnasium who has prostituted himself (*hêtaireukôs*).⁶² This concern, however, does not indicate an understanding even in the Hellenistic period that education (particularly physical education) and eroticism belong together; rather, it indicates a recognition that the latter is often an unfortunate side-effect of the former and one that must be guarded against.

2.5 Was the Erastês a Didaskalos?

Now, at last, we can return to the question with which we began this section. After a careful examination of the evidence, it is clear that a *non-sexual* one-on-one mentoring relationship - a *sunousia* of sorts - between an older male and a youth represents a specific stage in the development of the teacher figure in ancient Greece, beginning with the relationship between Mentor and Telemachus in the *Odyssey*. By the time of Plato's *Symposium* and the works of his contemporaries (especially Xenophon), this *sunousia* was being described as overtly and explicitly erotic as well as educational, but as we have seen above, there is no other evidence to support this characterization.

So, if the *erastês-eromenos* relationship provides the wrong framework for these interactions, what is the right framework? According to Robb, this type of relationship was in origin a benign relationship between an older adult mentor figure and a younger adolescent associate, often along the lines of the relationship a boy might have to his

⁶² For a translation of the Verroia tablet, see Miller 2004, 137-42. For the Greek text of the inscription see "Beroia. Gymnasiarchical law, middle of 2nd cent. B.C. (SEG 27-261)." *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. Current editors: A. Chaniotis; T. Corsten; R.S. Stroud; R.A. Tybout. Brill, 2011. Brill Online.

uncle or a trusted friend of his father. I believe he has pinpointed the essence of these relationships in his 1994 monograph *Literacy and Paideia in Ancient Greece* (203):

Fundamentally, Greek *sunousia* was familial, tribal, and civic, not sexual. The essential male virtues are transmitted across generations by constant association of younger men with older, the guiding elders of the group, its Mentors and Nestors; this is what Greeks in the fifth century understood to be the purpose behind *sunousia*.

Pederasty could - and did - exist as a separate institution based on erotic exchange and intended as a sort of cultural initiation, and although there was inevitably some overlap between the values and customs transferred to the youthful recipient in each type of relationship, the ancient literature points to a pre-existing and entirely distinct system of mentorship based on non-sexual bonds of kinship and guest-friendship.⁶³

3. The Sophists as Educators

No treatment of categories of ancient educators would be complete without addressing the Sophists. Whether they are described as maligned philosophers, practically-omniscient sages, charlatans, superstar teachers, or whipping boys for their contemporaries (including Socrates), the Sophists loom large not only in the modern scholarly debate over education in Athens during the Classical period, but also in the ancient texts from this era. However, despite their ubiquity in philosophical and historical accounts from the fifth and fourth centuries, there has been a considerable amount of ink spilled over the questions of who these Sophists really were, what profession they practiced, and in what ways (if any) they represented a new category of educator, distinct from their predecessors. The following section will attempt to answer these questions in order to determine whether the Sophist was a *didaskalos*.

⁶³ On which, see discussion above on Mentor at Section 1.3.

3.1 The Development of the Word “Sophist”

In order to make sense of the Sophists, we must first understand the development of the term “sophist”, especially prior to the fourth century. According to Diogenes Laertius in the Prologue to *Lives of the Philosophers* (1.12), in the past, any wise man was called a sophist (*sophistês*),⁶⁴ including the poets of old:

οἱ δὲ σοφοὶ καὶ σοφισταὶ ἐκαλοῦντο· καὶ οὐ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ ποιηταὶ σοφισταί, καθὰ καὶ Κρατῖνος ἐν Ἀρχιλόχοις τοὺς περὶ Ὅμηρον καὶ Ἡσίοδον ἐπαινῶν οὕτως καλεῖ.

And, in fact, wise men were called sophists. And not only they, but the poets, too, and for this reason Cratinus, when praising Homer and Hesiod in the *Archilochoi* calls them sophists.

This is evidently also the case in Herodotus’ *Histories*, where Solon (1.29.1), Pythagoras (4.95.2), and Melampus and his followers (2.49.1) are all referred to as *sophistai*, and in the works of Herodotus’ contemporary, Diogenes of Apollonia, where he labels the Ionian natural philosophers as sophists (Tell 2010, 25). Indeed, as Kerferd has rightly observed (1981, 24):

The term *sophistês* is applied to many early “wise men” - to poets, including Homer and Hesiod, to musicians and rhapsodes, to diviners and seers, to the Seven Sages and other early wise men, to Presocratic philosophers, and to figures such as Prometheus with a suggestion of mysterious powers. There is nothing derogatory in these applications.

By the final decades of the fifth century, the situation could not have been more different. Not only does the label of “sophist” come to be treated as tantamount to a dirty word, but the variety of its usage seen in earlier authors is greatly reduced in the literature of the Classical period. However, although much less, variety of usage was not

⁶⁴ See also Photius *Lexicon* 528 and Clement of Alexandria *Stromata* 1.3.24 for wise men as sophists.

nonexistent. In Aristophanes' *Clouds*, in particular, the word *sophistês* seems to have two different meanings, one as a general wise man,⁶⁵ and another as a specific type of sophistic educator.⁶⁶ For this reason, Guthrie has speculated that Aristophanes represents a transitional author in the development of the term *sophistês*, and that by applying it to a specific set of people and then satirizing this group so harshly, he may have been partly responsible for the word's semantic shift (1971b, 33). Outside of Aristophanes, however, the usage of the term narrows even further, to the point where Plato lists as sophists only Hippias, Gorgias, Prodicus, and Protagoras, and Isocrates names Empedocles, Ion, Alcmaeon, Parmenides, Melissus, and Gorgias. Tell has recently argued - contrary to popular scholarly opinion - that the discrepancy between these two sets of names means that there was no defined group of Sophists representing a distinct category of educator in late fifth and early fourth century Athens. Rather, he sees the Sophists as individuals continuing the wisdom tradition of the Seven Sages (2010, 6-7). I would argue, however, that these two theories are not mutually exclusive, that is, the Sophists could easily have functioned in two separate capacities simultaneously, one as wise men and the other as teachers. Furthermore, as we will soon discover, there is another reason for the discrepancy between the lists of Sophists according to Plato and Isocrates.

⁶⁵ For another usage of this kind during the Classical period, see Plato *Protagoras* 316c-e. This is the only such usage in the Platonic dialogues, and I would argue that it is an intentional move on Plato's part to put this word in the mouth of a Sophist whose goal is to legitimize his own profession by connecting it lexically with past educational models.

⁶⁶ This ambiguity and the use of *sophistês* in the *Clouds* will be treated in much greater detail in Chapter 4, Section 2.1 below.

No matter the cause, it is clear that by the time of Plato and Isocrates, the semantic category demarcated by the word “sophist” had narrowed considerably from its earlier use. A Sophist was not simply any man who possessed *sophia*, but a man who exhibited certain other defining characteristics in his educational methodology and self-presentation. As such, it did not matter which men were labeled as Sophists, only that they all shared the distinctive traits that defined the practice of “sophistry,” and hence, they could all be referred to by category - as Sophists - and a reader or audience was guaranteed to understand what was meant. For this reason, as Romilly has noted, although they do refer to certain individuals as Sophists, “neither Plato nor Aristotle nor Isocrates nor Xenophon ever attacks those major Sophists whom we have mentioned by name. But all do criticize the “Sophists” in general or the “Sophists of today”” (1992, 27). While Tell (2010) sees this use of the term as “vague and unspecific” (51), the opposite is true. Within the sphere of contemporary literature that dealt with education, the word *sophistês* could be used by so many different authors in such different types of texts precisely because it had a very specific connotation for an Athenian reader. A Sophist was a charismatic, itinerant polymath who competed with other Sophists in speeches and debates, proudly called himself a Sophist, taught disputation, and promised to make his students wise or virtuous for a fee. Plato and Isocrates place different people into this category because they have widely divergent agendas for their respective texts. Since Isocrates believes education should be concrete and practical, consisting of realistic lessons and specifically aimed at producing skilled teachers and

orators,⁶⁷ he scoffs at the Sophists' extravagant promises and vague claims.⁶⁸ For this reason, he emphasizes the number of natural philosophers and sages among the Sophists, highlighting his implicit claims that the lessons these men impart cannot be as practical as those Isocrates himself provides. Likewise, Plato's educational theory is based on the belief that virtue can't be taught, so he lists as Sophists men who claim to teach exactly that. For each of these authors (and their contemporaries), the Sophists serve as a foil for their respective intellectual positions. That is to say, for Plato and Isocrates, the Sophists represent a category of people onto whom a number of unattractive qualities can be projected and subsequently criticized.⁶⁹

That the Sophists became the whipping boys for the authors of the fifth and fourth centuries may have been due in part to their novelty. According to Marrou, they were "the first teachers of advanced education, appearing at a time when Greece had known nothing but sports-trainers, foremen, and in the academic field, humble schoolmasters" (1956, 49).⁷⁰ On the arrival of the Sophists in Athens and the way they overturned the existing status quo in which private educational interactions were free and athletics had pride of place over intellectualism, Romilly writes:

⁶⁷ See Too 1995, 64-71; Marrou 1956, 80ff.

⁶⁸ See *Against the Sophists* 291-293.

⁶⁹ This means that the list of the defining qualities of the Sophists that follows is inevitably colored and shaped by Plato's and Isocrates' political and intellectual agendas. Hence, it is not our goal to recover the historical reality of the Sophists' practices so much as to understand the ways they were portrayed and viewed (especially as these portrayals differed from those of Socrates) in contemporary and later literature.

⁷⁰ Cf. Teresa Morgan 1998, 17: "Young men of intellectual inclinations attached themselves to a Sophist, perhaps more than one, as fancy and fashion took them, and none of the disciplines they were taught constituted a normal or necessary part of the education of a free man in the way that *mousikê* and *gymnastikê* did."

Suddenly, these ambulant teachers appeared upon the scene, offering, or rather selling, an education. They taught how to speak, how to reason, how to make decisions... And they purveyed this knowledge to young people who had already gone through a traditional education... The Sophists gave them arms to win the kind of success that did not depend on strength or courage, but on the deployment of their intelligence. (1992, 33)

The consensus of these two scholars is that the Sophist as a category of educator *per se* (and not simply as a synonym for a wise man) did not exist prior to the Classical period. As with any paradigm shift, however, the new thing is inevitably compared with the old, not necessarily favorably. According to Isocrates in the *Antidosis* (sections 235 and 313), the name of “sophist” which is now associated with dishonor, wasn’t always a bad thing:

Σόλων μὲν τῶν ἑπτὰ σοφιστῶν ἐκλήθη καὶ ταύτην ἔσχε τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν τὴν νῦν ἀτιμαζομένην καὶ κρινομένην παρ' ὑμῖν...

Οὐκ οὖν ἐπὶ γε τῶν προγόνων οὕτως εἶχεν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς μὲν καλουμένους σοφιστὰς ἐθαύμαζον καὶ τοὺς συνόντας αὐτοῖς ἐζήλουν.

And Solon was called one of the seven sophists and he had that title which has now been dishonored and is on trial here before you...

But it wasn’t like this in the time of our ancestors, for they admired the so-called sophists and envied those who associated with them.

The contrast here between the earlier, admirable figure of the wise man and the contemporary, base figure of the Sophist emphasizes the newness of the category; determining the exact ways in which this figure was novel has been a favorite task of scholars, both ancient and modern. Defining the category of the Sophist is, in fact, the focus of Plato’s *Sophist*, in which the Stranger and Theaetetus attempt to quantify and pinpoint the origin of the Sophists’ newness via deductive logic, eventually narrowing their definition to a short list of guises in which the Sophist commonly appears (231c9-e2, 233 b1-2, and 235 a1-2):

{ΞΕ.} Πρῶτον δὴ στάντες οἶον ἐξαναπνεύσωμεν, καὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς διαλογισώμεθα ἅμα ἀναπαυόμενοι, φέρε, ὅποσα ἡμῖν ὁ σοφιστὴς πέφανται. δοκῶ μὲν γάρ, τὸ πρῶτον ἠυρέθη νέων καὶ πλουσίων ἔμμισθος θηρευτής. {ΘΕΑΙ.} Ναί. {ΞΕ.} Τὸ δέ γε δεύτερον ἔμπορός τις περὶ τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς μαθήματα. {ΘΕΑΙ.} Πάνυ γε... {ΞΕ.} τῆς γὰρ ἀγωνιστικῆς περὶ λόγους ἦν τις ἀθλητής, τὴν ἐριστικὴν τέχνην ἀφωρισμένος...

...δυνατοὶ τοῖς νέοις δόξαν παρασκευάζειν ὥς εἰσὶ πάντα πάντων αὐτοὶ σοφώτατοι...

περὶ δ' οὖν τοῦ σοφιστοῦ τόδε μοι λέγε· πότερον ἤδη τοῦτο σαφές, ὅτι τῶν γοήτων ἐστὶ τις·

STR: First, let's stop and take a breath, and while we are resting, let's go through for ourselves all the forms in which the Sophist has appeared to us. For I think, first of all, that he has been found as a wage-earning hunter of the young and the wealthy. THE: Sure. STR: Then second, he is a trafficker in the lessons of the soul. THE: Absolutely... STR: Further, he is a competitor in the contest of words, appropriating for himself the art of disputation...

...and they are able to manipulate young men into thinking that they are the wisest of all men in every respect...

And so, concerning the Sophist, tell me this: first, is it not now clear that he is one of the sorcerers?

3.2 What Makes a Sophist a Sophist?

From these passages we can begin to narrow down the qualities that make a Sophist a Sophist:

1. The Sophist is a professional, that is, he is paid for his associations with young men. He is described as a hunter, which implies that he actively seeks out - indeed, some would say preys upon - associates, and while he is said to rub elbows with young men, it seems safe to assume these are not boys, since the word *pais* is conspicuously absent and the word *neos* is commonly used for youths in adolescence or later. By stressing that the Sophist seeks out wealthy young men, Plato is implying that Sophists are greedy, or at the very least, are driven by desire for profit.

2. The Sophist is itinerant in his trade. The word *emporos* means a wayfarer or traveller, and by extension, a traveling merchant or trader who sells his goods wherever he can. In the case of the Sophist, the goods are *mathêmata*, lessons, but instead of lessons of the sort that a boy would learn at school, the Sophist sells the less tangible and more complex lessons for the soul. Hence, we learn here that the Sophist is a traveling educational salesman who specializes in lessons for more advanced students.
3. The Sophist is an expert in disputation. It is unclear from these passages whether this means that the Sophist himself engages in competitive argumentation (presumably against other Sophists), or whether disputation is simply the subject about which he teaches his youthful associates. I would argue that both of these are true.
4. The Sophist is thought to be a manipulator and (probably facetiously) a sorcerer. He is able to persuade young men that he is the wisest person in every subject, which implies that the Sophist a) is very charismatic, b) wants to come across as a polymath, and c) probably makes extravagant promises about his abilities as an educator in order to attract students.

In short, the qualities that define the distinct and novel category of the Sophist are polymathy, charisma, mastery of disputation, itinerancy, the promise of results, and professionalism in the field of advanced education. It must be noted here that very few of these qualities taken individually are unique to the Sophists. Hence, although none of them is a sufficient condition (logically-speaking) of Sophistry, each of these traits is necessary to our understanding of the Sophist, and taken altogether they define and

delimit the semantic and conceptual category. Given this list, our next task is to make a brief survey of these traits and relate them to the educational tradition of which the Sophists are indisputably a part.

3.2.1 Polymathy

One of the more remarkable qualities of the Sophists is their seeming ability to teach almost any subject. As Marrou has said, “The perfect Sophist...had to be able to speak and hold his own on any subject whatsoever: this meant his competence had to be universal, his knowledge had to extend over every kind of specialized study” (1956, 54-5). In the passage above from the *Sophist*, the Eleatic Stranger emphasizes the way the Sophists marketed themselves as the wisest of men in every respect, and according to Jacqueline de Romilly, “They knew everything and taught everything, even the sciences” (1992, 35). In Plato’s *Hippias Major*, Socrates questions Hippias on the subjects that he taught to the Spartans when he traveled there, and during the conversation we learn that Hippias is capable of teaching a wide variety of things including astronomy, geometry, critical thinking, poetry, musical theory, and mythology, as well as advanced mnemonics (285cff). In the *Hippias Minor*, this list is expanded to include the skilled crafts of metalworking, weaving, and cobbling, and the literary arts of epic, tragedy, and dithyramb (368bff). Gorgias is said to have been an expert in rhetoric, but there is also some evidence that he was interested in theoretical astronomy (DK 82 B31 and 82 A17). Protagoras, too, is said to have been qualified in a number of different subjects. According to Diogenes Laertius (9.55), he wrote treatises on topics as diverse as wrestling, mathematics, politics, ambition, virtue, history, and justice, as well as a few

tracts of general advice, one of which is simply titled *A Book of Precepts*. Further, in Plato's *Sophist*, the Eleatic Stranger lists a number of subjects about which Protagoras and many others (presumably the other Sophists) are able to teach, including things divine that are mostly unseen, the coming into existence and the being of all things, laws and all matters of politics, and each and every *technê* (232b11-e2).

The most important byproduct of this polymathy is that the Sophists were treated as all-knowing sages and consultants on major political decisions. According to Hippias in the *Hippias Major*, his services were employed most frequently in the role of envoy from one state to another, since he was seen as articulate and wise (281a1ff):

Οὐ γὰρ σχολή, ὦ Σώκράτες. ἡ γὰρ Ἑλῖς ὅταν τι δέηται διαπράξασθαι πρὸς τινα τῶν πόλεων, αἰεὶ ἐπὶ πρῶτον ἐμὲ ἔρχεται τῶν πολιτῶν αἰρουμένη πρεσβευτήν, ἡγουμένη δικαστὴν καὶ ἄγγελον ἰκανώτατον εἶναι τῶν λόγων οἱ ἂν παρὰ τῶν πόλεων ἐκάστων λέγωνται. πολλάκις μὲν οὖν καὶ εἰς ἄλλας πόλεις ἐπρέσβευσα·

I don't have any free time, Socrates. For whenever Elis needs any business conducted with one of the city-states, she always comes to me first of all the citizens and chooses me as envoy, considering me to be best-suited judge and messenger of the words that are spoken by each of the city-states. So I have often traveled as an envoy to the other city-states.

A little later in the dialogue, Socrates confirms this claim of Hippias' and goes on to describe the ways that Gorgias and Prodicus also have taken part in the public political life of their respective cities (282b-c):

Γοργίας τε γὰρ οὗτος ὁ Λεοντῖνος σοφιστὴς δεῦρο ἀφίκετο δημοσίᾳ οἴκοθεν πρεσβεύων, ὥς ἰκανώτατος ὢν Λεοντίνων τὰ κοινὰ πράττειν, καὶ ἔν τε τῷ δήμῳ ἔδοξεν ἄριστα εἰπεῖν, καὶ ἰδίᾳ ἐπιδείξεις ποιούμενος καὶ συνῶν τοῖς νέοις... εἰ δὲ βούλει, ὁ ἡμέτερος ἐταῖρος Πρόδικος οὗτος πολλάκις μὲν καὶ ἄλλοτε δημοσίᾳ ἀφίκετο, ἀτὰρ τὰ τελευταῖα ἔναγχος ἀφικόμενος δημοσίᾳ ἐκ Κέω λέγων τ' ἐν τῇ βουλῇ πάνυ ἡυδοκίμησεν καὶ ἰδίᾳ ἐπιδείξεις ποιούμενος καὶ τοῖς νέοις συνῶν...

For this man, Gorgias, the sophist from Leontini, came here from home in the public capacity of envoy, since he was the most qualified of the citizens of Leontini to act on behalf of the common interest, and he was said to have spoken eloquently in the public

assembly, and in his private capacity he gave demonstrative speeches and associated with the young... but if you like, take our companion Prodicus, who often has come at other times in a public capacity, but the most recent time he has just now come in a public capacity from Ceos and he gained a lot of renown by speaking in the assembly and in his private capacity he gave demonstrative speeches and associated with the young...

This, then, is the primary way in which the Sophists continued the intellectual legacy of the Seven Sages, and the way in which they took part in the genre of wisdom literature extending back to Hesiod and Theognis, that is, by acting as public consultants and envoys. It is worth noting, however, that their wisdom serves them in both the public and private spheres; Socrates makes a point of mentioning that both Hippias and Gorgias not only acted publicly as envoys, but they also associated privately with young men and taught them through *epideixeis*. In this way, the Sophists' teaching is bound up in both the wisdom tradition and the tradition of one-on-one education. Their polymathy serves them in both capacities, as sages and as teachers.

3.2.2 Charisma

Without a doubt, the Sophists as a group were unusually charismatic. According to Tell, "Empedocles, Protagoras, Hippias, and Thrasymachus all figure in contexts where they are said to have enchanted or made their audience possessed... This Orphic power of attraction is intrinsically linked to their connection with Delphi, and consequently, to its divine protector as the ultimate authority and guarantor of their *sophia*" (2010, 124). Tell calls this power, "philosophical magnetism", but based on the textual evidence and the implication of his statement about Delphi, the Sophists' power comes across more as magical than intellectual. As we learned above in Plato's *Sophist*, the Sophists were

described - albeit mockingly - as having some share of mystical power that enabled them to ensnare young men and convince them to pay money for lessons. In other parts of the dialogue, the Sophists are variously described as conjurers (235a9), wonder-workers (235b7), imitators of reality (235a2), and ones who are capable of bewitching the young through their ears with words (234c3-4). In fact, in the *Protagoras*, Socrates uses this trope against Protagoras, mocking the Sophist by claiming that he feels himself to be under Protagoras' spell,⁷¹ and he even jokingly compares Protagoras to Orpheus, describing his band of followers in the same terms as one might describe the followers of Dionysus (315a7-b2):

τούτων δὲ οἱ ὀπίσθεν ἠκολούθουν ἐπακούοντες τῶν λεγομένων τὸ μὲν πολὺ ξένοι ἐφαίνοντο – οὓς ἄγει ἐξ ἐκάστων τῶν πόλεων ὁ Πρωταγόρας, δι' ὧν διεξέρχεται, κηλῶν τῇ φωνῇ ὥσπερ Ὀρφεύς, οἱ δὲ κατὰ τὴν φωνὴν ἔπονται κεκλημένοι – ἦσαν δὲ τινες καὶ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ἐν τῷ χορῷ.

Of these, the ones who followed behind listening to the speech seemed for the most part to be foreigners - those whom Protagoras brought from their respective cities through which he travels, enchanting them with his voice like Orpheus, and they, bewitched, follow the sound of his voice - but there were also some local youths in the chorus of students.

The group of students following Protagoras around the courtyard has - like the coterie of Dionysus - accompanied him from far away, drawn by the sound of his voice, and they appear to Socrates now in the manner of a chorus. The implication is, of course, that these young men had no choice; they were held spellbound by the Sophist, whose mystical power - not his skill as an educator - is the real cause of his students' loyalty.

This quality of potentially-magical charisma certainly set the Sophists apart as educators. Contemporary *didaskaloi* were never described as inescapably compelling or

⁷¹ 328d: Πρωταγόρας μὲν τοσαῦτα καὶ τοιαῦτα ἐπιδειξάμενος ἀπεπαύσατο τοῦ λόγου. καὶ ἐγὼ ἐπὶ μὲν πολὺν χρόνον **κεκλημένος** ἔτι πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔβλεπον ὡς ἐροῦντά τι, ἐπιθυμῶν ἀκούειν.

even charming; having a connection to Orphic (or Delphic) powers would put the Sophists much more in line with the seers of old like Calchas and Tiresias and the natural philosophers like Democritus and Empedocles, than with modern schoolteachers.

3.2.3 Mastery of Disputation

The Sophists were experts in agonistic oratory, both as teachers and practitioners. In Plato's *Sophist*, the Eleatic Stranger and Theaetetus conclude exactly this, namely that the Sophist is both a disputer and a teacher of disputation (232b7-8):

{ΞΕ.} Ἀντιλογικὸν αὐτὸν ἔφαμεν εἶναί που. {ΘΕΑΙ.} Ναί. {ΞΕ.} Τί δ'; οὐ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων αὐτοῦ τούτου **διδάσκαλον** γίνεσθαι; {ΘΕΑΙ.} Τί μήν;

STR: So we said that [the Sophist] is given to disputation. THE: Yes, we did. STR: Well then, didn't we also say that he is a *didaskalos* of this art for others? THE: Certainly.

As teachers of disputation, the Sophists are seen, by Plato at least, as akin to *didaskaloi*. As practitioners, they are described as skilled in the art of contradiction (Pl. *Soph.* 268c9), and they were said to have given public speeches (*epideixeis*) which often turned into debates⁷² or competitions with other Sophists (*antilogikoi*),⁷³ presumably both in order to attract potential students and also to win glory. Most famously, these speeches took place at the Panhellenic games; there is evidence for Zeno and Parmenides presenting at the Panathenaea (Pl. *Prm.* 127b), for Hippias giving speeches and answering audience questions at Olympia (Pl. *Hp. mi.* 363c-d),

⁷² See Hippocrates *On the Nature of Man* 1

⁷³ For example, Protagoras is said to have written works entitled *Overthrowing Arguments* (DK 80 B1) and *Contradictory Arguments* (DK 80 B5), and Antiphon is said to have engaged in opposing argumentation (*antilogoumenos*) (DK 87 B98).

and for Gorgias appearing at the festivals at Delphi, Olympia, and Athens.⁷⁴ According to Hippias in Plato's *Hippias Minor*, he would offer to speak on one of a number of prepared topics and to answer subsequent audience questions. At this time, another Sophist could make an opposing speech, but Hippias expresses confidence that he would always win these sorts of encounters (363c7-364a9):

{IP.} Καὶ γὰρ ἂν δεινὰ ποιοίην, ὦ Εὐδিকে, εἰ Ὀλυμπίαζε μὲν εἰς τὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων πανήγυριν, ὅταν τὰ Ὀλύμπια ᾗ, ἀεὶ ἐπανίων οἴκοθεν ἐξ Ἥλιδος εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν παρέχω ἑμαυτὸν καὶ λέγοντα ὅτι ἂν τις βούληται ὦν ἂν μοι εἰς ἐπίδειξιν παρεσκευασμένον ᾗ, καὶ ἀποκρινόμενον τῷ βουλομένῳ ὅτι ἂν τις ἐρωτᾷ, νῦν δὲ τὴν Σωκράτους ἐρώτησιν φύγοιμι... ἐξ οὗ γὰρ ἦργμαι Ὀλυμπίᾳσιν ἀγωνίζεσθαι, οὐδενὶ πώποτε κρείττονι εἰς οὐδὲν ἑμαυτοῦ ἐνέτυχον.

HIPP: It would be pretty strange, Eudicus, if I should, on the one hand, always go up to the festival of the Greeks at Olympia to the sacred precinct there from my home at Elis and present myself whenever the Olympics are being held both speaking on whatever subject anyone chooses of those things I have prepared for *epideixis* and answering whatever questions anyone wishes to ask, were, on the other hand, now to avoid the questions of Socrates... for from that time when I began to compete at Olympia, I have never encountered anyone who is better than I am in anything.

This competitive spirit and extreme confidence are hallmarks of the Sophists as a group, and not just Hippias. According to a fragment of Gorgias preserved by Clement of Alexandria, Sophistic speech competitions require daring and skill, and the winner is the ablest of those who are called to compete (*Strom.* 1.11.51.3 = DK 82 B8):

καὶ «τὸ ἀγώνισμα» ἡμῶν κατὰ τὸν Λεοντίνον Γοργίαν »διπτῶν [δὲ] ἀρετῶν δεῖται, τόλμης καὶ σοφίας· τόλμης μὲν τὸ κίνδυνον ὑπομεῖναι, σοφίας δὲ τὸ αἰνίγμα γνῶναι. ὁ γάρ τοι λόγος καθάπερ τὸ κήρυγμα» τὸ Ὀλυμπίᾳσι «καλεῖ μὲν τὸν βουλόμενον. στεφανοῖ δὲ τὸν δυνάμενον.»

According to Gorgias of Leontini, "A contest such as we have requires two kinds of excellence, daring and skill; daring is needed to withstand danger, and skill to understand how to trip the opponent {?}. For surely speech, like the summons at the Olympic games, calls him who will, but crowns him who can."⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Philostratus *Lives of the Sophists* 1.9, and Plutarch *Advice to Bride and Groom* 43p (DK 82 B8a)

⁷⁵ Translation by Rosamond Kent Sprague

In similar fashion, Protagoras boasts that he has competed in many speech contests (Pl. *Prt.* 335a5: ἀγῶνα λόγων) but that his methods are far superior to those of the other Sophists.

Given that their public speeches are one of the Sophists' means of attracting prospective students, it seems only natural that they would offer disputation and competitive speechmaking as a major part of their curriculum. As a teacher of this kind, Hippias promises that he can teach Socrates how to answer any question in a way that cannot be debated (*Hp. mai.* 287b):

{Π.} καὶ γάρ, ὃ νυνδὴ εἶπον, οὐ μέγα ἐστὶ τὸ ἐρώτημα, ἀλλὰ καὶ πολὺ τούτου χαλεπώτερα ἂν ἀποκρίνασθαι ἐγὼ σε **διδάξαιμι**, ὥστε μηδένα ἀνθρώπων δύνασθαι σε ἐξελέγχειν.

HIPP: So, as I just said, this question is not a big deal, but I could teach you how to answer much more difficult questions than this in such a way that no man would be able to refute you.

This is, of course, the ultimate aim of a Sophistic education: to be capable of articulating policy positions compellingly in the context of democratic debate. The language used here is that of traditional schoolroom education; the Sophist is called a *didaskalos* by the Eleatic Stranger,⁷⁶ and Hippias describes his own method with the verb *didaskein*. This implies that at least some of the Sophists viewed themselves (and were sometimes viewed by others) as belonging in part to the same category of educator as the humble *didaskalos*. Each of these figures has a given body of knowledge he needs to transmit, and as Isocrates scoffs in *Against the Sophists* (10.2ff), the Sophists “undertake to pass on an understanding of disputation as simply as they would teach the letters of the

⁷⁶ See above on Plato's *Sophist*

alphabet”.⁷⁷ It is important to note, however, that while a *didaskalos* would have taught the alphabet and other basic lessons,⁷⁸ the Sophists began their instruction at the secondary or post-secondary level.⁷⁹ Although Kerferd is correct in stating that there was no such thing as a standard sophistic curriculum (1981, 37), the Sophists were linked instead by their methodology. They all taught about and through disputation, and they treated their subjects as a discrete body of knowledge which could be transmitted to their students through traditional educational interactions.

3.2.4 Itinerancy

A life of near-constant travel was one of the perks of being a Sophist in the fifth and fourth centuries.⁸⁰ This is another way in which the Sophists were distinct from other educational figures of their time. Whereas a *didaskalos* was a stationary figure with a specified place of employment (the *didaskaleîon*) where his students would come to receive his services, the Sophist had no headquarters. He traveled from place to place, presumably only staying as long as he had work or a place to stay. It is likely that while the Sophist was in each city, he would stay at the home of a friend, and young men would come there to call upon him.⁸¹ Naturally, as a result, a Sophist’s teaching engagement in any city was temporary. This meant that when a Sophist left town, the

⁷⁷ See also Plato *Protagoras* 312b-c for comparisons of Sophists with schoolteachers.

⁷⁸ Here begins the tradition of the *didaskalos* as dim-witted drill master who only engages students in mental acrobatics of limited value, as he appears in the Hellenistic period. See Cribiore 2001, 55-6.

⁷⁹ See Kerferd 1981, 37 and Romilly 1992, 33; *Protagoras* 328 a-b

⁸⁰ For textual evidence of the itinerancy of the Sophists, see Plato *Protagoras* 309d3 and 310e5, *Hippias Major* 281a1, and *Gorgias* 447b.

⁸¹ See the beginning of the *Protagoras* when Hippocrates and Socrates call upon Protagoras at the home of Callias.

young men who studied under him either had to find a new teacher, or (more rarely) accompany their instructor on his travels, as seen above in the *Protagoras*.

The system of Sophistic travel is summed up elegantly in the *Apology* (19eff):

ἐπεὶ καὶ τοῦτό γέ μοι δοκεῖ καλὸν εἶναι, εἴ τις οἷός τ' εἴη παιδεύειν ἀνθρώπους ὥσπερ Γοργίας τε ὁ Λεοντίνος καὶ Πρόδικος ὁ Κεῖος καὶ Ἱππίας ὁ Ἠλεῖος. τούτων γὰρ ἕκαστος, ὧ ἄνδρες, οἷός τ' ἐστὶν ἰὼν εἰς ἐκάστην τῶν πόλεων τοὺς νέους – οἷς ἔξεστι τῶν ἐαυτῶν πολιτῶν προῖκα συνεῖναι ᾧ ἂν βούλωνται – τούτους πείθουσι τὰς ἐκείνων συνουσίας ἀπολιπόντας σφίσιν συνεῖναι χρήματα διδόντας καὶ χάριν προσειδέναι.

Then this seems to me to be a good thing, that is, if anyone is able to educate men the way Gorgias of Leontini and Prodicus of Ceos and Hippias of Elis can. For each of these men, gentlemen of the jury, is able to go to any of the cities and persuade the young men there - who can associate with whomever they wish of their fellow citizens for free - to abandon those relationships and pay money to associate with them instead, and what's more, to be grateful to do so.

Under this model, the Sophists traveled for the sake of business, and this set them apart from the tradition of travel by wise men before them; they each had a limited number of stock lessons prepared, and once they had dispensed their prepared lectures and received as many fees as possible in a given place, it was time to leave. In the *Hippias Major* (282e), Hippias talks of earning an immense sum of money in a brief period of time when he traveled to Sicily and made 150 minas there, with over 20 minas coming from one very small town called Inycus. Despite the likely exaggeration of the monetary figures involved, the point is that the Sophists made many lucrative but brief trips all over the Greek-speaking world. Although constant travel was also characteristic of the earlier sages, while Solon and company traveled to learn more about the world and to foster guest-friendships in foreign lands, the Sophists traveled to practice their profession and to increase their wealth.⁸² In this respect, they are an entirely unique

⁸² See Tell 2010, 98-9 and 105

category, and fundamentally different from both the sages and the *didaskaloi*. It is likely that, in this respect, the Sophists are the precursors of the later Hellenistic *kathêgêtai*, itinerant private teachers who traveled in search of better employ and who only taught advanced students.⁸³

3.2.5 Professionalism: Title, Pay, and Promised Results

Three different qualities fall under the heading of professionalism as it relates to the Sophists, but these qualities are intricately connected and must be treated together. First, Sophistry was a self-conscious profession, i.e. the Sophists had a title that they used to describe themselves: *sophistês*. This is perhaps the most basic distinction between earlier *sophoi* and the later *sophistai*; men like Protagoras, Hippias, and Gorgias were proud to call themselves Sophists. According to Xenophon in *On Hunting*, the Sophists choose to go by this name even though (in Xenophon's view) it is an insult among intelligent folk (13.8):

ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀρκεῖ ἐκάστῳ σοφιστὴν κληθῆναι, ὃ ἐστὶν ὄνειδος παρὰ γε εὖ φρονούσιν.

But it is enough for each of them to be called "Sophist", which is a term of reproach among sensible people.

He elaborates on this view in the *Memorabilia*, where he insults anyone who offers wisdom for a fee, in the manner of a prostitute, claiming that whoever does this is called a Sophist.⁸⁴ This animosity is surely what Protagoras is referencing when he explains to Socrates why he has agreed to go by the name of Sophist (Pl. *Prt.* 317b):

⁸³ For more on this Hellenistic educational figure, see Cribiore 2001, 53.

⁸⁴ *Memorabilia* 1.6.13.7: τὴν τε γὰρ ὥραν ἐὰν μὲν τις ἀργυρίου πωλῇ τῷ βουλομένῳ, πόρνον αὐτὸν ἀποκαλοῦσιν, ἐὰν δὲ τις, ὃν ἂν γινῶ καλὸν τε κάγαθόν ἐραστὴν ὄντα, τοῦτον φίλον ἑαυτῷ ποιῇται, σώφρονα νομίζομεν· καὶ τὴν σοφίαν ὡσαύτως τοὺς μὲν ἀργυρίου τῷ βουλομένῳ πωλοῦντας σοφιστὰς [ὥσπερ πόρνους] ἀποκαλοῦσιν

καὶ ὁμολογῶ τε σοφιστὴς εἶναι καὶ παιδεύειν ἀνθρώπους, καὶ εὐλάβειαν ταύτην οἶμαι βελτίω ἐκείνης εἶναι, τὸ ὁμολογεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ ἔξαρνον εἶναι·

And I agree that I am a Sophist and I educate men, and I think that this precaution, namely agreeing, is better than denying it.

Indeed, the self-proclamation of sophistry seems to be an integral part of what makes a Sophist. Later in the same dialogue, Socrates facetiously praises Protagoras for being open about his profession (*Prt.* 348e10-349a3):

σὺ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀγαθὸς εἶ καὶ ἄλλους οἷός τ' εἶ ποιεῖν ἀγαθοὺς, καὶ οὕτω πεπίστευκας σαυτῷ, ὥστε καὶ ἄλλων ταύτην τὴν τέχνην ἀποκρυπτομένων σύ γ' ἀναφανδὸν σεαυτὸν ὑποκηρυξάμενος εἰς πάντας τοὺς Ἕλληνας, σοφιστὴν ἐπονομάσας σεαυτόν, ἀπέφηνας παιδεύσεως καὶ ἀρετῆς **διδάσκαλον**, πρῶτος τούτου μισθὸν ἀξιῶσας ἄρнуσθαι.

But you are yourself good and are able to make others good, and you are so confident in your ability that while others conceal this art, you have had yourself publicly proclaimed to all the Greeks by the name of Sophist, calling yourself a *didaskalos* of culture and virtue, and you are the first to demand payment for this.

Three things about this passage are worth noting. First, Protagoras and the other Sophists boldly proclaim themselves as such in comparison to other educators who are unwilling to operate under the title of Sophist.⁸⁵ Socrates links this self-proclamation directly to Protagoras' confidence in his educational skills; we will return to this issue shortly when we discuss the promises of the Sophists. Second, again we see the Sophist being placed in the same category as the *didaskalos* with respect to the subject matter of culture and virtue. Third, and most important for our current discussion, Socrates reveals that Protagoras is the first to demand payment for teaching wisdom, a practice which sets the Sophists apart as educators. They were professional teachers and related in this way to the *didaskalos* as opposed to the sage. Some modern scholars have argued that the Sophists as paid teachers is a trope invented by Plato in

⁸⁵ For Hippias describing himself and his colleagues as Sophists, see Plato *Hippias Major* 282e.

an attempt to invalidate their intellectual program and undermine their educational method,⁸⁶ and given the widespread contemporary antagonism against the Sophists, and in particular Plato's disdain for them as a group, this is a logical conclusion to make. However, at the very least, regardless of whether the Sophists actually took fees, the belief that they did was not confined to Plato.

The final aspect of the professionalism of the Sophists was their practice of promising particular results for those who engaged their services. As Romilly points out in her discussion of the ways the Sophists were unusual as educators, "there was no limit to their promises, no end to their claims" (1992, 35). In the *Protagoras*, the title character tells Hippocrates that he promises his students constant improvement with the ultimate result being that he will make them good citizens (318a, 319a):

ὦ νεανίσκε, ἔσται τοίνυν σοι, ἐὰν ἐμοὶ συνῆς, ἢ ἂν ἡμέρα ἐμοὶ συγγένῃ, ἀπιέναι οἴκαδε βελτίονι γεγονότι, καὶ ἐν τῇ ὑστεραίᾳ ταῦτα ταῦτα· καὶ ἐκάστης ἡμέρας ἀεὶ ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον ἐπιδιδόναι... Ἄρα, ἔφην ἐγὼ, ἔπομαί σου τῷ λόγῳ; δοκεῖς γάρ μοι λέγειν τὴν πολιτικὴν τέχνην καὶ ὑποσχεῖσθαι ποιεῖν ἄνδρας ἀγαθοὺς πολίτας. Αὐτὸ μὲν οὖν τοῦτό ἐστιν, ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες, τὸ ἐπάγγελμα ὃ ἐπαγγέλλομαι.

[Protagoras said,] "Young man, this will be the benefit to you if you associate with me, that on the very day you first attend, you will go home a better person, and on every subsequent day it will be the same. Every day will bring constant improvement"... "Well then", I (Socrates) said, "Am I following what you are saying? For you seem to be talking about the political art and promising to make men good citizens." "That is exactly the promise I am making, Socrates", he said.

This attitude is not limited to Protagoras, either. In the *Gorgias*, the title character promises to make his students rhetoricians like himself (449b), and in the *Hippias Major*, Hippias claims that his wisdom makes men better with respect to virtue (283c). This is a

⁸⁶ See Tell 2010, p. 8 and Chapter 2. For the Sophists' fees see Blank (1985), especially pp. 2-6. For ancient sources on the Sophists and fee-taking, see Plato *Protagoras* 310d, 313c; *Meno* 91b; *Laches* 186c; *Hippias Major* 282b4-c1, 300d; *Hippias Minor* 364d; *Gorgias* 467b, 519c-d; Xenophon *Cynegeticus* Chapter 13; *Memorabilia* 1.2.6, 1.5.6, 1.6.5; and Isocrates *Antidosis* 155-8; *Against the Sophists* 291.3.

new development in ancient education; a person receiving lessons from a sage or a *didaskalos* might have certain expectations about the outcome of his instruction, but these educators never made specific professions or guarantees about results. The *didaskalos* undoubtedly realized that too many things are left to chance in an educational relationship and each student is different from one another. However, the Sophists did not acknowledge this subtlety, and for this reason, they were often maligned as being overly cocky and for treating the teacher-student relationship like a formula into which one simply plugged preset values in order to produce a perfectly educated person.⁸⁷ As Romilly notes, “The Sophists’ most revolutionary innovation was, precisely, that, faced with nature, they set up teaching to counteract it and considered that virtue could be learned by attending their classes” (1992, 45). In the *Protagoras* (357e), for example, Socrates pokes fun at Protagoras, Prodicus, and Hippias for professing to cure ignorance, while in the *Cynegeticus* (13.1) Xenophon complains that the Sophists promise to lead men to virtue but do just the opposite. It is Isocrates (*Antid.* 147.9), though, who is most offended by what he considers the extravagant promises (καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ὑποσχνομένους) of the Sophists. His work *Against the Sophists* (1) opens with a denouncement of those educators who give teaching a bad name by promising results they cannot produce:

Εἰ πάντες ἤθελον οἱ παιδεύειν ἐπιχειροῦντες ἀληθῆ λέγειν καὶ μὴ μείζους ποιεῖσθαι τὰς ὑποσχέσεις ὧν ἔμελλον ἐπιτελεῖν, οὐκ ἂν κακῶς ἤκουον ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν· νῦν δ’ οἱ τολμῶντες λίαν ἀπερискέπτως ἀλαζονεύεσθαι πεποιθήκασιν ὥστε δοκεῖν ἄμεινον βουλεύεσθαι τοὺς ῥαθυμεῖν αἰρουμένους τῶν περὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν διατριβόντων.

If all those practicing the profession of education were willing to speak the truth instead of promising greater things than they can possibly provide, they would not be thought of

⁸⁷ See Marrou 1956, 75

so badly by the public. But as it is now, those who have the audacity to brag thoughtlessly have brought it about that it seems like a better idea to choose idleness than the pursuit of philosophy.

Isocrates' greatest concern in this passage is that the Sophists give all teachers a bad name, and his denouncement is designed to put distance between their indefensible practices and his own educational methods. He recognizes - as the Sophists do not - that people are repelled by excessive confidence. As Romilly has observed, "In the case of many Athenians, who were certainly attracted but also alarmed by the Sophists' teaching, amazed yet at the same time inhibited by their own experience of daily life, it was this overweening assurance that provoked their antagonism" (1992, 51).

3.3 The Sophists as Didaskaloi?

As educators in fifth and fourth century Athens, the Sophists represented an important nexus of and point of divergence from several pre-existing instructional models. While they shared their polymathy and their itinerancy with the sages, they used their knowledge of many subjects for private gain as much as to benefit the public, and the motivation for their travel was monetary as opposed to intellectual. On the other hand, this type of travel combined with their focus on post-secondary education connects them with the later Hellenistic figure of the *kathêgêtês*, since the Sophists appear to have been the first paid teachers for advanced students. Their seemingly-divine charisma can be traced back to the mystics and seers of old, but their practice of agonistic speech appears to have originated with them, although it did persist in rhetorical education well after their time.

The most significant comparison to be made is, of course, between the Sophist and the *didaskalos*. It is undeniable that these two figures shared a common paid profession - education - by which they earned their respective livings. They even seem sometimes to have shared a methodology, as evidenced by the occasional use of the verb *didaskein* to describe the teaching of both Sophists and *didaskaloi* and by at least one reference implying that the Sophists treated disputation like the lessons of a schoolteacher.

However, this is where their similarities end. While the *didaskalos* was the ancient equivalent of an elementary school teacher, the Sophist taught at a level closer to that of a college professor; and where the *didaskalos* gave instruction straightforwardly with no guarantee about results, the Sophist claimed he could teach any student wisdom and virtue regardless of character or age.⁸⁸

What distinguished the Sophists most as a new category of educator, though, was their self-awareness of their role. They practiced a type of education that was conscious of its own potential by identifying themselves as outstanding teachers and professing to produce results via intellectual instruction. Romilly has summed this quality up neatly:

[The Sophists'] totally novel ambitions marked an absolutely new point of departure in our history: an advance was made over ground that has never been lost since. As we have seen, the idea of an intellectual education from which each and every adult could benefit, an education designed to improve their aptitudes in every domain, thanks to intellectual techniques and human knowledge, was completely new. (1992, 55)

Although related to and undoubtedly exercising influence upon many other types of educators, including our *didaskalos*, the Sophists clearly represent an entirely distinct category of teacher in the Classical period. To sum up with the words of Marrou, "It is no

⁸⁸ For example, see Plato *Euthydemus* 303-4.

exaggeration to say that in the field of Greek education the Sophists accomplished a veritable revolution” (1956, 59).

4. *Didaskaloi* and Non-*Didaskaloi*

In the preceding sections, we established that although there were a number of educational predecessors and contemporaries who shared certain characteristics with him, the *didaskalos* was a distinct figure in the landscape of Classical Greek education. He fulfilled some but not all of the same functions as the parent, the *paidagôgos*, and the mentor. Unlike the *erastês*, his role did not include any erotic element, nor did he make any promises about the results of his instruction the way the Sophists did. While all of the other figures (except the proto-*didaskalos*, Cheiron) followed their “students” around and interacted with them in whatever place was convenient, the *didaskalos* had his own center of operations. And, most importantly - as we will see illustrated in the next chapter - his methods differed dramatically from those of the other educators we discussed above. Keeping all of this in mind, let us turn now to a detailed investigation of the process of Athenian education as it was conducted by the *didaskalos*.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION

So far we have distinguished between the *didaskalos* and other figures whose roles might be interpreted as instructional, namely the parent, the *paidagôgos*, the Mentor, the *erastês*, and the Sophist. However, in the process, we have come to know the *didaskalos* and his methods only as they differ from the other figures under consideration. That is, we have learned who the *didaskalos* was by determining who he wasn't, and for this reason, till now our enquiry has inevitably focused on the traits of the non-*didaskaloi*.

The goal of this chapter, then, is to refocus our investigation on the *didaskalos* and the mechanism, process, and purpose of his instruction. Specifically, now that we understand the "who," we must seek to understand the "what," the "why," and the "how" of Athenian education. We have to ask ourselves how our Classical Greek authors define the relationship between a *didaskalos* and his student and what precisely they think his day-to-day work consists in. But most importantly, we need to interrogate the assumptions implicit in the texts in order to understand why the Athenians chose to structure their education system the way they did (and not, by extension, the way any other city did). To this end, I will use the same technique favored by ancient authors like Thucydides, Xenophon, and Plato for the purpose of analyzing their city's institutions: a comparison of Athens and Sparta.

1. Athens versus Sparta

Before we commence with the comparison, however, a word about methodology. At this point, one might rightly ask: why Sparta? Why not compare Athens with Crete or Corinth or even Persia (as Xenophon did in his *Cyropaedia*)? For my part, I take a page from Isocrates' *Panathenaicus*. In this text, the elderly orator lays out the praise of his city in the form of a comparison of Athens with Sparta, which he prefaces with the following rationale (39-40):

I think that for those wishing to accurately and justly praise any given city-state, it is necessary not to simply praise the one city they have chosen, but just as we examine purple and gold and test them by placing them side by side with items of similar appearance and of the same estimated value, in the same way with city-states, one should not compare small ones with large ones, nor ones which usually dominate with ones which are usually subjugated, nor ones which need aid with ones which are able to provide it, but rather ones which have similar powers, and have engaged in the same deeds and enjoyed a similar freedom of action. For this is how one may best arrive at the truth.

While Isocrates claims that his program aims at uncovering the historical truth about Athens and Sparta, my goal is much less ambitious. I seek, in laying the educational systems of these two cities side-by-side, not to uncover the reality of their systems, but to tease out how Athenian authors distinguished the two.¹ Hence, my comparison is not meant to be a thorough examination of the nuts and bolts of Spartan and Athenian education as much as of the difference in the attitudes towards education of these two cities. By measuring Athenian institutions alongside those of their greatest political rival and by identifying the ways Athenians believed themselves to be different and even

¹ For a similar approach to Athenian and Spartan education but with a focus on Spartan education see Ducat 2006, Chapter 2.

unique, we can begin to grasp far more clearly the fundamental character of their education.

1.1 The Basics of Spartan Education

While we already made a survey of the basic format of Athenian education in the Introduction, we have not yet given Spartan education the same treatment. Fortunately for our purposes, among the minor works of Xenophon there is a short, informative treatise on the Constitution of the Spartans (*Lacedaimonion Politeia*, hereafter referred to as *Lac.*), in which several chapters are dedicated to summarizing their educational system and the ways it differs from that of the other Greek states (*Lac.* 2.1-2):

τῶν μὲν τοίνυν ἄλλων Ἑλλήνων οἱ φάσκοντες κάλλιστα τοὺς υἱεῖς παιδεύειν, ἐπειδὴν τάχιστα αὐτοῖς οἱ παῖδες τὰ λεγόμενα ξυνιῶσιν, εὐθύς μὲν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς **παιδαγωγούς** θεράποντας ἐφιστᾶσιν, εὐθύς δὲ πέμπουσιν εἰς **διδασκάλων** μαθησομένους καὶ γράμματα καὶ μουσικὴν καὶ τὰ ἐν παλαίστρᾳ. πρὸς δὲ τούτοις τῶν παίδων πόδας μὲν ὑποδήμασιν ἀπαλύνουσι, σώματα δὲ ἱματίων μεταβολαῖς διαθρύπτουσι· σίτου γε μὴν αὐτοῖς γαστέρα μέτρον νομίζουσιν.

ὁ δὲ Λυκοῦργος, ἀντὶ μὲν τοῦ ἰδίᾳ ἕκαστον παιδαγωγούς δούλους ἐφιστάναι, ἄνδρα ἐπέστησε κρατεῖν αὐτῶν ἐξ ὧν περ αἱ μέγισται ἀρχαὶ καθίστανται, ὃς δὴ καὶ **παιδονόμος** καλεῖται, τοῦτον δὲ κύριον ἐποίησε καὶ ἀθροίζειν τοὺς παῖδας καὶ ἐπισκοποῦντα, εἴ τις ῥαδιουργοίῃ, ἰσχυρῶς κολάζειν. ἔδωκε δ' αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν ἡβώντων μαστιγοφόρους, ὅπως τιμωροῖεν ὅποτε δέοι, ὥστε πολλὴν μὲν αἰδῶ, πολλὴν δὲ **πειθῶ** ἐκεῖ συμπαρεῖναι.

Those of the other Greeks professing to give their sons the best education place them under the care of a *paidagōgos* as soon as the boys understand what is said to them, and they send them to a *didaskalos* to learn letters and music and wrestling. And in addition, they soften the boys' feet with sandals, and they pamper their bodies with changes of clothing and it is customary to allow them as much food as will fit in their stomachs.

But Lycurgus, on the other hand, instead of allowing each citizen to appoint a slave to act as *paidagōgos*, set up to rule the boys a man chosen from the class from which the highest offices are filled, and he is called the *paidonomos*, and Lycurgus gave him the power to gather the boys together and to inspect them, and, if any one of them should misbehave, the *paidonomos* has the power to punish the offender violently. And Lycurgus also gave him a staff of young men to be whip-bearers (*mastigophoroi*), in

order to chastise the boys when necessary, with the result that respect and obedience go hand in hand in Sparta.

The passage begins with the information we already know: Athenian boys are placed by their parents under the authority of a *paidagôgos* and a *didaskalos* in order to learn the standard curriculum of letters, music, and gymnastics. For their Spartan counterparts, on the other hand, the situation is much different. There are no kindly slave tutors or schoolmasters here. Instead, the boys are taken from home young - Plutarch tells us they were probably around the age of 7 (*Lyc.* 16.4) ⁻² and subjected to group training and discipline by an all-powerful *paidonomos* and his band of whip-bearing lackeys. In the chapters that follow (*Lac.* 2.3-9), Xenophon tells us that (as we might have guessed) in contrast with the Athenian system wherein boys are allowed comfortable and seasonally-appropriate clothing and satisfying meal portions, in Sparta the boys wear no shoes, possess a single cloak for all seasons, and are given less food than they need. Purportedly the smaller portions both teach Spartan boys to endure the discomfort of hunger and encourage them to resort to theft in order to survive, with the goal being that they become more resourceful and skilled fighting men.³ However, if they are caught in the act of stealing food, they are beaten severely, not for the theft itself, but for carrying it out sloppily.

² On which, see Ducat 2006, 85: "From [Xenophon's] silence it is normally inferred that in this respect Sparta was no different from other Greek cities, and thus that Spartan education began around the age of 6 or 7. And since Plutarch gives the figure of 7 years, Xenophon's implied position is generally accepted." According to the literature, Athenian boys started school sometime between the ages of five and seven. For example, see Aristotle *Politics* 7.1336.

³ *Lac.* 2.7: ταῦτα οὖν δὴ πάντα δῆλον ὅτι μηχανικωτέρους τῶν ἐπιτηδείων βουλόμενος τοὺς παῖδας ποιεῖν καὶ πολεμικωτέρουσ' οὕτως ἐπαίδευσεν.

When an Athenian boy becomes a young man (*meirakion*), Xenophon tells us that he is released from his *paidagôgos* and *didaskalos* and is free to live as an adult under his own authority. In Sparta, however, Lycurgus imposed on young men at this age a period of mandatory community service, and the penalty for shirking this would be exclusion from all future civic honors (*Lac.* 3.1-3).

The picture of Spartan education that emerges from this text is harsh and unforgiving. As Freeman has observed in his 1972 article on the topic, “The objects of the Spartan education were not intellectual acuteness and the accumulation of knowledge, but discipline, endurance, and victory in war. Discipline was taught by the perpetual presence of authority, and by very severe punishments” (22). Even the word *paidonomos* emphasizes the authoritarian nature of the system; whereas the Athenian *paidagôgos* guides and accompanies a boy, the Spartan *paidonomos* lays down the law upon him. Spartan education expert Jean Ducat is right to note that the *paidonomos* with his coterie of *mastigophoroi* “symbolized the authoritarian and repressive face of education” (2006, 160). Regardless of its apparent strictness, however, as Xenophon points out above, the system seemed to be effective, since its natural byproducts were respect and obedience.

1.2 Philosophy of Education: Nature or Nurture?

It is worth pausing for a moment here to consider what it was about being a Spartan that resulted in such a different philosophy of education from that of an Athenian. I would submit that this disparity comes down to a fundamental difference between Spartan and

Athenian attitudes toward innate nature and character development in their citizens. In particular, the Spartans viewed children as if they were unformed lumps of clay needing to be shaped and habituated in order to fit properly into their society. Good qualities were not innate but had to be acquired through careful and thorough training; Spartan citizens were not born, they were made.⁴ As Freeman has noted:⁵

Education was the most important thing at Sparta. It was both regulated and enforced by the State. It was exactly the same for all. The boys were taken away from home and brought up in great boarding schools, so that the individualizing tendencies of family life and hereditary instincts might be stamped out, and a general type of character, the Spartan type, alone be left in all the boys. (1972, 19)

This certainly sounds to a modern ear like a cruel form of cultural brainwashing, but it should come as no surprise in light of what Plutarch tells us about Lycurgus' interest in a program of eugenics as a way of controlling the education of his citizens (*Lyc.* 14.1):

Τῆς δὲ παιδείας, ἣν μέγιστον ἡγεῖτο τοῦ νομοθέτου καὶ κάλλιστον ἔργον εἶναι, πόρρωθεν ἀρχόμενος εὐθύς ἐπεσκόπει τὰ περὶ τοὺς γάμους καὶ τὰς γενέσεις.

Concerning education, which he considered the greatest and most noble task of the lawgiver, he began at the source by carefully regulating marriages and births.

This meant that all women of marriageable age had to undergo a strict program of physical fitness in order to be completely prepared for the ordeal of childbirth and to produce offspring with the greatest likelihood of being healthy and capable of enduring hardship. It also meant that there were incentives in place surrounding early marriage so that young people of ideal child-bearing age might pair off and produce the best possible offspring (*Lyc.* 14.2-15.2). Already before conception, Lycurgus sought to begin

⁴ This is not to say that the Athenians did not believe education to be valuable or potentially formative, or that the Spartans did not recognize the role innate nature plays in the process of education. Rather, it is to point out the fundamental dichotomy between the educational philosophies of the two cities: on the whole, Spartans placed more value on education than nature, and Athenians placed more value on nature than education.

⁵ See also Marrou 1956, 22: "The whole purpose of Spartan education was to build up character according to a clearly defined ideal."

shaping his future citizens into ideal Spartans; he left no part of their children's educational process in the hands of individual citizens.

For the Athenians, on the other hand, simply living in Athens was believed to turn people into citizens whose values lined up with the city's own. Not only was it thought that the city's philosophical values would inevitably rub off on any person who spent time there, but the Greeks even felt that certain places were naturally superior at producing men of a particular type,⁶ and Athens was perfectly suited for producing model citizens. In fact, according to Plato (*Tim.* 24c-d), Athena chose the location for the city because she believed it to have the greatest potential to bring forth men just like herself. Hence, in his debate with Protagoras over whether virtue is teachable (*Pl. Prt.* 319c-d), Socrates points out (perhaps sarcastically) that it must be innate for when the Assembly seeks expert advice on matters pertaining to the administration of the city, any citizen is equally qualified to serve in this capacity just by virtue of being an Athenian. Thucydides takes the point even farther: not only does Athens produce innately virtuous citizens, it even acts as an education of sorts which distills their virtue into a more concentrated and refined form. As Pericles famously brags in the funeral oration in Thucydides Book 2 (Ch. 41), Athens herself is the school of Greece (λέγω τήν τε πᾶσαν πόλιν τῆς Ἑλλάδος παιδευσιν εἶναι), a sentiment that is echoed and expanded upon in Isocrates' *Panegyricus* (47-50):

ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν κατέδειξεν, καὶ λόγους ἐτίμησεν, ὧν πάντες μὲν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν, τοῖς δ' ἐπισταμένοις φθονοῦσιν, συνειδυῖα μὲν ὅτι τοῦτο μόνον ἐξ ἀπάντων τῶν ζῶων ἴδιον ἔφυσεν ἔχοντες καὶ διότι τούτῳ πλεονεκτῆσαντες καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν αὐτῶν διηνέγκαμεν... Τοσοῦτον δ' ἀπολέλοιπεν ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν περὶ τὸ φρονεῖν καὶ

⁶ On which, see Plato *Laws* 747d.

λέγειν τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους, ὥσθ' οἱ ταύτης μαθηταὶ τῶν ἄλλων διδάσκαλοι γεγόνασιν, καὶ τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὄνομα πεποίηκεν μηκέτι τοῦ γένους, ἀλλὰ τῆς διανοίας δοκεῖν εἶναι, καὶ μᾶλλον Ἑλληνας καλεῖσθαι τοὺς τῆς παιδείας τῆς ἡμετέρας ἢ τοὺς τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως μετέχοντας.

Our city introduced [philosophy] to the world, and she honored eloquence, which all men desire and envy in those who have it, for she realized that this is the only part of our nature that distinguishes us from all other living things and by taking advantage of this we have surpassed them in all other respects as well... And so far has our city outstripped the rest of mankind in thought and speech that her students have become the teachers of others, and she has brought it about that the name “Hellenes” no longer denotes a race but rather an intellectual spirit, and those people are called “Hellenes” who share our common *paideia* rather than those who spring from a common stock.

By this token, being Athenian is not a common bloodline, but a state of mind that is cultivated and perfected in Athens, and for those living in the city it requires no further training. For this reason, Athenians were inherently distrustful of formal education. They generally believed that they were good by nature⁷ and did not need to be taught to be citizens, and while they recognized that education could enhance a person’s preexisting qualities,⁸ they also knew that it could just as easily harm them.

Ultimately, this difference between the Athenian and Spartan approaches to character formation came to influence every aspect of their respective education systems. What they chose to teach their youth, who they made responsible for teaching it, and how it was taught were all shaped by these views. As Ducat rightly notes in this connection, “each method of education reflected and at the same time conditioned the political and

⁷ As opposed to the Spartans. On which, see Thucydides Book 2, Chapter 39: Spartans are trained from an early age to pursue courage by discipline and hard work, while Athenians have an unrestricted mode of life and yet do not fare worse in battle for it.

Plato was a notable exception to this trend. See *Laws* 7.808d-e for boys as savage before experiencing the mellowing influence of education.

⁸ For a complete discussion of the various possible outcomes of the educational exchange according to Greek authors, see Chapter 3, Section 2.

social system of the city in which it functioned” (2006, 40). In the case of Sparta, the resulting education took the form of a strict, tradition-based, State-regulated (i.e. public), military training program characterized by harsh corporal punishment. Athenian education, in contrast, was a private institution distinguished by formative (rather than punitive) interactions between students and teachers. Unlike the Spartan system, which sought to instill particular qualities in its students, education at Athens aimed to improve and foster the preexisting qualities of the citizenry - particularly the well-known Athenian tendency toward self-reflection and philosophical enquiry.⁹ And while Spartan education was structured in such a way as to produce blindly obedient citizens, the Athenian system endeavored to produce citizens who were obedient by choice.¹⁰

So, with an eye to answering the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, the following sections will explore in more detail the ways these two cities’ different approaches to citizen formation were manifested in their respective education systems. In particular, the discussion will center on aspects of the interaction between the teacher-figure and his student, especially curriculum and methodology.

1.3 Methodologies: Emulation, Habituation, and Punishment

In Sparta, the ideal outcome of education was unquestioning obedience to the laws of the city. According to Xenophon (*Lac.* 8.3), the Spartans believed that obedience was the greatest good, whether it be in the city, on campaign, or in the household (ἐγνώσαν

⁹ As described by the Corinthians speech in Thucydides Book 1, Chapter 70ff.

¹⁰ See below on Thucydides 1.39; see also Plato’s *Laws* Books 1 and 2.

τὸ πείθεσθαι μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν εἶναι καὶ ἐν πόλει καὶ ἐν στρατιᾷ καὶ ἐν οἴκῳ), and they looked down on the Athenians for holding a different view. In his speech in Thucydides Book 1 (Ch. 84.3), the Spartan king Archidamus claims that Spartans “are educated too crudely to scorn the laws and with too much severity of discipline to disobey them” (δὲ ἀμαθέστερον τῶν νόμων τῆς ὑπεροψίας παιδευόμενοι καὶ ξὺν χαλεπότητι σωφρονέστερον ἢ ὥστε αὐτῶν ἀνηκουστεῖν), while the Athenians are so arrogant as to believe themselves above the laws. While Archidamus clearly views his city’s education as superior, as Ducat has observed, “the image of Spartan education to which this text bears witness is that of a harsh education...which prefers integration of the individual into the collective to his own development, and which disciplines above all because it scarcely teaches” (2006, 39). In similar fashion, in the *Laws* (634d-e), Plato describes how young men in Sparta are not allowed to either question the laws of the city or tolerate any person who does, but they must declare in solidarity that all of the laws have been justly enacted by divine decree. Although Plato is generally complimentary of the Spartan education system, in this passage he is clearly uncomfortable with the idea of a whole city of Spartans blindly pledging obedience to the laws, no matter how unreasonable those laws might be. Plutarch would later expand upon Plato’s image of the Spartan youths declaring allegiance to the laws “in unison and with one mouth and one voice” (634e1: μιᾷ δὲ φωνῇ καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς στόματος) in his own description of Spartan education:

Τὸ δὲ ὅλον εἴθιζε τοὺς πολίτας μὴ βούλεσθαι μηδὲ ἐπίστας κατ' ἰδίαν ζῆν, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τὰς μελίττας τῷ κοινῷ συμφυεῖς ὄντας ἀεὶ καὶ μετ' ἀλλήλων εἰλουμένους περὶ τὸν ἄρχοντα.

In sum, [Lycurgus] accustomed the citizens to have neither the desire nor the ability to live for themselves, but, like bees, they were to make themselves always integral parts of their community, clustering together around their leader.

This depiction is far from flattering. In Plutarch's estimation, the Spartans are as brainless as worker-bees whose entire existence consists in following their leader's every command. The use of the verb *ethizein* here is telling;¹¹ Plutarch is making it plain that he believes the Spartans only achieve this degree of assimilation and obedience through habituation. In other words, they educate their youth by subjecting them to endless repetition of the same action until the desired outcome is attained. It is this same theory that underlies the educational practice of rote memorization; if you walk a specific path over and over for long enough, you will inevitably wear a groove in the earth.

For the Athenians, on the other hand, the habituation method was inherently flawed. While Spartan citizens were courageous because they were required to be by their city, the Athenians wanted their citizens to possess the courage of personal conviction. In fact, the trait for which Archidamus ridicules the Athenians is the very trait which they most prized in their citizens: the ability to think for themselves. Instead of simply punishing them into obedience, the Athenian education system taught the citizens to understand why the laws existed and why it was right to obey them. As Pericles says in his praise of the Athenians in the funeral oration (Thuc. 2.39):

καὶ οἱ αὐτοὶ ἤτοι κρίνομέν γε ἢ ἐνθυμούμεθα ὀρθῶς τὰ πράγματα, οὐ τοὺς λόγους τοῖς ἔργοις βλάβην ἡγούμενοι, ἀλλὰ μὴ **προδιδασθῆναι** μᾶλλον λόγῳ πρότερον ἢ ἐπὶ ᾧ δεῖ ἔργῳ ἐλθεῖν. διαφερόντως γὰρ δὴ καὶ τόδε ἔχομεν ὥστε

¹¹ Isocrates also uses this verb to describe the education of the Spartans. On which, see *Panathenaicus* 209.

τολμᾶν τε οἱ αὐτοὶ μάλιστα καὶ περὶ ὧν ἐπιχειρήσομεν ἐκλογίζεσθαι· ὃ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀμαθία μὲν θράσος, λογισμὸς δὲ ὄκνον φέρει.

And we Athenians decide matters for ourselves or we at least endeavor to thoroughly understand them, and we do not consider discussion a hindrance to action, but rather not having been taught by discussion when the time comes for action. For we excel others in this respect also, that we are most daring in action but also most given to reflection on the actions we intend to undertake. For other men, however, boldness entails ignorance and reflection brings hesitation.

According to Thucydides' Pericles, then, it is preferable to deliberate freely, and in so doing, create the potential for improvement, than to simply obey without question or reflection, as he implies the Spartans do. It was as a result of this mentality that the Athenians were open to innovation and creativity in their education where the Spartans were conservative and rigidly traditional. In the *Protagoras* (342d), Socrates observes that the Spartans do not allow their young men to travel lest they unlearn what they have been taught at home. At the same time, as Plutarch notes (*Lyc.* 27.3-4), Lycurgus placed limits on who was allowed to enter the city so that visitors could not become teachers of wickedness (διδάσκαλοι κακοῦ) to the youth,¹² for with new people come new ideas, and he viewed new ideas as more dangerous to the health of the city than a plague. Meanwhile, at Athens, Thucydides tells us (2.39), no person is excluded simply because he might, by learning about Athenian methods, be able to hurt the city. Rather than rely on secrecy and deception or strict discipline for victory, as we are meant to understand the Spartans do, the Athenians depend upon the innate courage of their souls.

¹² For Sparta as an intellectually-conservative society, see also the speech of the Corinthians in Thucydides 1.70-71.

So if the Athenians did not conduct their education through habituation, what method did they use to create free-thinking yet willingly-obedient citizens? One answer is emulation.

In Plato's *Protagoras* (325e-326a) the title character explains the process in this way:

παρατιθέασιν αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν βάθρων ἀναγιγνώσκειν ποιητῶν ἀγαθῶν ποιήματα καὶ ἐκμανθάνειν ἀναγκάζουσιν, ἐν οἷς πολλαὶ μὲν νοουθετήσεις ἔνεισιν πολλαὶ δὲ διέξοδοι καὶ ἔπαινοι καὶ ἐγκώμια παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν, ἵνα ὁ παῖς **ζηλῶν μιμῆται καὶ ὀρέγεται τοιοῦτος γενέσθαι**.

[The teachers] place before the boys the works of the good poets to read at their benches and they are required to learn by heart these poems, in which there are many admonitions and descriptions and praises and eulogies of the great men of the past, in order that the boy **in envy may imitate them and strive to become the same as they**.

According to this passage, the Athenian education system took advantage of the universal human desire for greatness. It held up before the youth examples of praiseworthy men with the implicit promise that if they were to imitate these exemplars, they too would become praiseworthy. Indeed, as modern pedagogical expert Bryan Warnick has observed (2008, 32), “Human examples function in education as representations of a self that is not yet realized. They act as mirrors that reflect not who we currently are, but who we could one day be.” For the Athenians, the most readily available models for emulation would, of course, have been the heroes of the Homeric epics, but given that any effective pedagogy must appeal to an individual’s personal circumstances,¹³ an Athenian *didaskalos* would inevitably have sought additional exemplars closer to home. For this, one possible paradigm he would have offered was himself. From tracing the alphabet on a student’s tablet for him to copy over, to delivering a practice speech for students to use as a template, Athenian teachers encouraged their students to emulate and imitate them.

¹³ See Warnick 2008, 17 on the educational philosophy of John Locke and the need for children to have excellent exemplars within their own sphere of knowledge.

In fact, a *didaskalos* came to be thought of as a person who operated specifically by offering himself as a paradigm for others to imitate, and this meant he had to exhibit behavior that was worthy of imitation.¹⁴ As Xenophon points out in the *Memorabilia* (1.2.17), all *didaskaloi* show their students how they practice what they teach (πάντας δὲ τοὺς διδάσκοντας ὁρῶ αὐτοὺς δεικνύοντας τε τοῖς μανθάνουσιν ἥπερ αὐτοὶ ποιοῦσιν ἢ διδάσκουσι). Isocrates is even more specific in his description of this process in *Against the Sophists* (17.5-6):

τὸν δὲ διδάσκαλον τὰ μὲν οὕτως ἀκριβῶς οἷόν τ' εἶναι διελθεῖν ὥστε μηδὲν τῶν διδασκῶν παραλιπεῖν, περὶ δὲ τῶν λοιπῶν τοιοῦτον αὐτὸν παράδειγμα παρασχεῖν ὥστε τοὺς ἐκτυπωθέντας καὶ μιμήσασθαι δυναμένους εὐθύς ἀνθηρότερον καὶ χαριέστερον τῶν ἄλλων φαίνεσθαι λέγοντας.

The *didaskalos* needs to expound as precisely as possible so that he leaves out nothing that is teachable, and as for the rest, **he must provide himself as a paradigm** with the result that those who have been shaped on this model and are capable of imitating him will immediately show themselves to be more eloquent and charming speakers than other people.

In this passage, the education process has two distinct parts. The first part is the transfer of knowledge: the *didaskalos* hands over whatever factual knowledge he can to his students in as precise and straightforward a manner as possible. Not all knowledge can simply be handed over in this fashion, however, so the second part of the educational interaction consists in the teacher providing himself as a paradigm to be imitated. In this way, *didaskalia* is not synonymous with imitation; rather, teaching and imitation are complementary parts of the process of education. The *didaskalos* teaches what he can, but for what is not teachable, he must rely on his students' desire to imitate an outstanding exemplar. In other words, after doing as much lecturing as possible,

¹⁴ On which, see Marrou 1956, 313: "As the mainspring of all education is imitation, the most important thing was a good example."

Isocrates, the skilled orator, offers himself as an example for his students to imitate so that they might turn into skilled orators, too. He does not simply issue directives to his students with the expectation of blind obedience. Rather, he gives them an ideal template to work within in the hopes that they will become at least identical to and possibly even better than their teacher.

At this point, a few words need to be said concerning the role and responsibility of the teacher in each of the cities in question. In Sparta, youths were absorbed into the collective; they were trained by the State and when their education was finished they became a part of the State. The figure of the individual instructor (the *didaskalos*) is completely absent from discussions of Spartan education because this figure did not exist in their society. Although there were undoubtedly authority figures in the Spartan education system (i.e. the *paidonomos*, the *eiren*, etc), their duties are described in the sources as directed toward either military training or disciplinary action. At no point are they described as teaching (*didaskein*). Instead, every Spartan adult could and did take part in the education of the youth. Plutarch tells us (*Lyc.* 17.1, 24.1) that older men watched over the boys during their training with the understanding that they were the fathers and *paidagogoi* and governors of all of them, and according to Xenophon (*Lac.* 6.1), Lycurgus gave every father authority over other men's children as well as over his own. While in other cities it was the father's job to make sure that his son one day would be fit to discharge his duties as a citizen, in Sparta all the citizens felt themselves involved in the education of every boy and personally bound to take an active part in this process.

The situation at Athens could not have been more different. Because an Athenian student interacted so closely with his teacher not only in the exchange of information but even in the imitation of behavior, the lion's share of the responsibility for the outcome of the interaction naturally fell upon the teacher. As long as students turned out correctly and the education system functioned as it was intended, this did not pose a significant problem and could even lead to renown for a teacher if his students became outstandingly good citizens. For example, in the *Antidosis* (95), Isocrates tries to persuade his imaginary jury that they should praise him for his students' achievements:

Ἦν τε γὰρ ὑπολάβητε σύμβουλον εἶναί με καὶ **διδάσκαλον** τούτων, δικαίως ἂν ἔχοιτέ μοι πλείω χάριν ἢ τοῖς δι' ἀρετὴν ἐν πρυτανείῳ σιτουμένοις· τούτων μὲν γὰρ ἕκαστος αὐτὸν μόνον παρέσχε καλὸν κάγαθόν, ἐγὼ δὲ τοσούτους τὸ πλῆθος ὅσους ὀλίγῳ πρότερον διήλθον ὑμῖν.

For if you suppose that I was the counsellor and teacher of these men, you would rightfully hold me in greater esteem than the men who dine in the Prytaneum because of their excellence. For each of the latter has only provided his own goodness, but I have provided all of those many men whom I have just named for you.

This appeal is clearly based on the understanding that the praiseworthy behavior of any given citizen can and should be attributed to the positive influence of his teacher.

Hence, the teacher of many outstanding citizens should, at least according to Isocrates, receive the greatest possible reward for his contribution to the city. However, with reward comes responsibility, and in the cases when education failed and a boy committed some transgression, the Athenians turned to that boy's teacher to place the blame.¹⁵ In Plato's *Laws* (808e), the Athenian stranger tells his companions that in Athens, if a boy does something wrong, any freeman may punish him and his

¹⁵ For which see a little farther on at *Antidosis* 104. See also Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 1385a5: men should and do feel shame for the base actions of those whose *didaskaloi* they themselves have been.

paidagôgos and his *didaskalos* for it. Similarly, in Plutarch's *Life of Galba* (17.2.6), he informs us that in all civilized cities the people have the right to demand punishment for the *paidagôgoi* and *didaskaloi* of men who become tyrants. Furthermore, it is this very societal belief that Socrates is calling on in the *Euthyphro* when he jokes that he should become Euthyphro's student in order to pass off blame for his own behavior onto his "teacher" (5b):

“καὶ εἰ μὲν, ὦ Μέλητε,” φαίην ἄν, “Εὐθύφρονα ὁμολογεῖς σοφὸν εἶναι τὰ τοιαῦτα, [καὶ] ὀρθῶς νομίζειν καὶ ἐμὲ ἡγοῦ καὶ μὴ δικάζου· εἰ δὲ μή, **ἐκείνῳ τῷ διδασκάλῳ λάχε δίκην** πρότερον ἢ ἐμοί, ὥς τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους διαφθείροντι ἐμέ τε καὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ πατέρα, ἐμὲ μὲν διδάσκοντι, ἐκείνον δὲ νοουθετοῦντί τε καὶ κολάζοντι”

I would say to him, “If, Meletus, you agree that Euthyphro is wise in these matters, consider me, too, to have the right beliefs and do not bring me to trial. If you do not think so, then prosecute that *didaskalos* of mine, not me, for corrupting the older men, me and his own father, by teaching me and by exhorting and punishing him.”¹⁶

Even Socrates, who himself was prosecuted (at least in part) for being the *didaskalos* and corruptor of a group of irresponsible young men - as he refers to in this passage with the verb *diaphtheirein* -, recognized that the buck has to stop somewhere. And if teachers are given practically unlimited control over the formation of young students into proper Athenian citizens, then those teachers must expect some repercussions when their efforts do not produce acceptable results.¹⁷

¹⁶ Translation by G.M.A. Grube.

¹⁷ For more on educational outcomes as they pertain to teacher responsibility, see Chapter 3, Section 3.

One final thing needs to be discussed in connection with methodologies of education, and that is the purpose of punishment in a pedagogical setting.¹⁸ Without a doubt, punishment (or, as we might call it today, discipline) had its place in the classrooms of both Sparta and Athens. Indeed, authority figures in both cities used punishment to deal with unwanted behaviors in the youth,¹⁹ but they did so with approaches that differed in the same way that their respective educational systems differed. Concerning the Spartans, Xenophon tells us (*Lac.* 2.8) that they chastise (*timôreîn*) any boy who gets caught stealing for carrying out the crime badly. The beating the boy receives is not meant to stop him from stealing; on the contrary, it is intended as a kind of reprisal for getting caught in the act. As Ducat has noted, “stealing was considered as a test in Sparta; the blows were a sanction against failure” (2006, 205). By this token, punishment at Sparta worked through the understanding that if a boy were to make a mistake, he would be punished, and when he did in fact slip up, the punishment was harsh enough that the fear of further punishment prevented repeat failures.

¹⁸ I qualify my discussion of punishment in this way in order to avoid the complex discussion of political and civic punishment in antiquity. Hence, this section will not treat capital punishment for crimes against the state or the theories behind this type of punishment in Athens or Sparta. For paradigms of punishment in the Classical world, see Danielle Allen (2003) *World of Prometheus*, especially Chapters 2, 3, and 7-9; for theories of punishment more generally, see Michel Foucault (1995) *Discipline and Punish*, especially Parts 2 and 3. The discussion here will be limited to the pedagogical use of punishment on youths and the differing attitudes toward this practice at Athens and Sparta.

¹⁹ There is some question about whether it would primarily have fallen to the *paidagôgos* or the *didaskalos* to punish in the Athenian schoolroom. See Beck 1964, 103: “The teacher, though empowered to punish, was not expected to have to use this power very often; his function was to teach, not to police. Policing was done for him by others.” Indeed, some of the texts do not specify who in the classroom is doing the punishing, and it could arguably be either authority figure. However, there are several texts that name the *didaskalos* as disciplinarian specifically. (For these, see discussion below.) This would certainly imply that even if he was not always the one carrying out the punishment, the *didaskalos* did possess that power and at least occasionally wielded it.

In addition, as Xenophon explains, for the Spartans, punishment and obedience to authority were inextricably linked. At *Lac.* 4.6, he points out that if any boy refused to obey the *paidonomos*, he was severely penalized (ζημιοῦσι μεγαλείως) in order that he realize he should never yield to the sudden impulse to disobey the laws. The use of the verb *zêmioûn* here is telling; rather than *kolazein*, a verb which Danielle Allen argues places the focus on the “idea of how the nature of the wrongdoer is affected by the punishment” (2003, 70), Xenophon uses a verb which emphasizes the necessity that a penalty be paid by the wrongdoer in retribution for his failure. Hence, Spartan punishment was - at least in Xenophon’s estimation - more about retribution than reform. That is, the Spartans punished boys to discourage behavior that was incompatible with their societal values, instead of punishing to transform the boys into individuals whose behavior naturally fit with those values.

In Athens, on the other hand, punishment in an educational context was designed to correct and reform, so it was aimed not so much at removing the behavior as improving the character.²⁰ As part of the process of educating the youth, punishment was seen as a way of teaching people how to be good citizens.²¹ However, while for the Spartans - as we saw in the Xenophon passage at the beginning of this chapter (*Lac.* 2.2) -

²⁰ There is extensive evidence in the form of vase paintings for the use of corporal punishment in the Athenian schoolroom (and in other educational contexts, as well). The *paidagôgos* or *didaskalos* would have beaten a disobedient boy with a sandal (see Leipzig, University T 643, Tübingen 1609, Leningrad 317), with a *narthex* or walking stick (see Bari R 150, Berlin (East) F 3043), or simply with his hand (see Melbourne 1644/4). The most complete extant schoolroom punishment scene comes from the last of these (Melbourne 1644/4), an Attic red-figure cup from approx. 450 BCE, which depicts what appears to be a musical contest in which two boys competed on the lyre. The victorious boy is being crowned by the goddess Nike, while the loser holds out his hand to his teacher, who has a hand raised and ready to slap his pupil’s knuckles. All of the vases mentioned above can be found in Beck 1975, Chapter 6.

²¹ See Allen 2003, 70, and Foucault 1995, 211: “punishment functions as a technique for making useful individuals.”

punishment was a central component of the educational process, for the Athenians, punishment was a measure of the last resort. An Athenian teacher would only punish his student when teaching and admonishment had failed. The clearest articulation of this can be found in Plato's *Apology*, when Socrates claims that Meletus has not followed the proper protocol by taking him to be punished in court without first teaching (*didaskein*) him about his transgressions:

εἰ δὲ ἄκων διαφθείρω, τῶν τοιούτων ἀμαρτημάτων οὐ δεῦρο νόμος εἰσάγειν ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ ἰδίᾳ λαβόντα **διδάσκειν** καὶ **νουθετεῖν**.²² δῆλον γὰρ ὅτι ἐὰν μάθω, παύσομαι ὃ γε ἄκων ποιῶ. σὺ δὲ συγγενέσθαι μὲν μοι καὶ **διδάξαι** ἔφυγες καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλησας, δεῦρο δὲ εἰσάγεις, οἷ νόμος ἐστίν εἰσάγειν τοὺς **κολάσεως** δεομένους ἀλλ' οὐ μαθήσεως.

If I corrupt the youth unwillingly,²² the law does not require you to bring people to court for these kinds of wrongdoings, but to take them aside privately and to teach and admonish them. For it is clear that if I learn better, I will stop doing what I am unwillingly doing. But you have avoided conversing with me and you were unwilling to teach me, but you bring me here, where the law requires you to bring those who need punishment, not instruction.

According to this text, punishment is the last of a three-step educational process beginning with teaching (*didaskein*), followed by admonishment (*noutheteîn*).²³ Only if a student has still failed to exhibit the appropriate behavior after the first two steps is punishment undertaken. In the *Apology*, the punishment is carried out in the legal sphere: Socrates is being taken up on criminal charges. However, in the context of elementary education, the punishment would most likely have come in the form of a

²² The distinction between a crime that was committed willingly/intentionally (*hêkôn*) and one that was committed unwillingly/unintentionally (*akôn*) was considered to be essential for the determination of the proper punishment. See Plato *Laws* 859c and following.

²³ For the conjunction of teaching and admonishment in education, see also Plato *Protagoras* 325c, *Republic* 399b, *Laws* 788a and Plutarch *De Recta Ratione Audiendi* 39a and 46b. In the Hellenistic period and beyond, these two concepts were treated as essentially synonymous, especially in the Scholia (e.g. *On Aristophanes' Nubes* verse 369c, 929a, 987b, 1442a, 1483c and *On Aeschylus Prometheus Vincit* verse 264) and in the work of later Christian writers (e.g. New Testament *Letter of St. Paul to the Colossians* 1.28.2; Eusebius *Praeparatio evangelica* 6.6.12.2; Gregory of Nyssa *De Instituto Christiano* vol. 8, 1, p. 58.10; Joannes Chrysostomus *De Sacerdotio* 3.6.49; etc).

beating. In the *Protagoras* (325d), the Sophist describes how parents and *paidagōgoi* teach (*didaskousi*) and admonish (*nouthetoûsin*) the boys from early childhood on by demonstrating to them what is right and what is wrong. If a boy readily obeys, fine; but if not, they subject him to corporal punishment:

ὥσπερ ξύλον διαστρεφόμενον καὶ καμπτόμενον εὐθύνουσιν ἀπειλαῖς καὶ πληγαῖς.

Just like a piece of bent and twisted wood, they straighten him with threats and blows.

Here we see clear evidence of the reformatory goals of Athenian pedagogical punishment. A boy who is disobedient is likened to a bent piece of wood: there is a flaw in his character which punishment must reform. Just as the proper application of torque upon the bent stick will eventually straighten it, so the proper application of threats and blows upon the boy will eventually reform him. As was mentioned above, this type of punishment was not aimed at the wrongdoing, but rather at the wrong-doer.²⁴ As such, its goal was not to exact retribution for past offenses but rather to prevent future ones, an opinion which is expressed by the title character a little later on in Plato's *Protagoras* (324a-b):

οὐδεὶς γὰρ κολάζει τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας πρὸς τούτῳ τὸν νοῦν ἔχων καὶ τούτου ἕνεκα, ὅτι ἡδίκησεν, ὅστις μὴ ὥσπερ θηρίον ἀλογίστως τιμωρεῖται· ὁ δὲ μετὰ λόγου ἐπιχειρῶν κολάζειν οὐ τοῦ παρεληλυθότος ἕνεκα ἀδικήματος τιμωρεῖται – οὐ γὰρ ἂν τό γε πραχθὲν ἀγέννητον θεῖη – ἀλλὰ τοῦ μέλλοντος χάριν, ἵνα μὴ αὖθις ἀδικήσῃ μήτε αὐτὸς οὗτος μήτε ἄλλος ὁ τοῦτον ἰδὼν κολασθέντα.

No one punishes a wrong-doer in consideration of the simple fact that he has done wrong, unless one is exercising the mindless vindictiveness of a beast. Reasonable punishment is not vengeance for a past wrong - for one cannot undo what has been

²⁴ However, just because pedagogical punishment in Athens was aimed at reform did not mean it was any less brutal than the retributive punishment in Sparta. For example, see Stalley 1983, Chapter 13 on punishment in Plato's *Laws*. Athenian literature is littered with descriptions of the harshness of the teacher's discipline. To cite just a few examples, in the *Anabasis* (2.6.12), Xenophon describes the relationship between a *didaskalos* and his students as harsh and severe; in Aristophanes' *Knights* (1228ff), the sausage-seller recalls how he was taught to behave by the blows of his schoolmaster; and again in the *Clouds* (980ff) the Better Argument explains how the boys would be subjected to a shower of blows by their music teacher if they deviated from the traditional mode of singing.

done - but is undertaken with a view to the future, to deter both the wrong-doer and whoever sees him being punished from repeating the crime.²⁵

So along with being reformatory, Athenian pedagogical punishment was also intended to be a deterrent. Punishing a boy who misbehaved would simultaneously turn him away from the wrong path and help to transform him into a person who would automatically choose the right path in the future.²⁶

The preceding section has dealt with the methodology, that is, the “how” of teaching in Athens and Sparta. Our next move from here is to take stock of the curricula - the “what” - of these two education systems.

1.4 Curricula: Military Training versus the Liberal Arts

According to the ancient sources, Spartan education consisted almost exclusively in military training. In a fit of anti-Spartan exaggeration in the *Panathenaicus*, Isocrates claims that the Spartans are so backwards that their children do not even learn letters in school (209), and Plutarch compares the city to a military encampment (*Lyc.* 24.1) where the boys learn only enough letters as is strictly necessary, and the rest of their training is directed toward teaching them to obey commands, endure hardship, and conquer in battle (*Lyc.* 16.6). Indeed, Sparta’s unusual educational ideology concerning the learning of letters has led some modern scholars to improbably assert that Spartan youths didn’t learn their letters at all and that this is evidence of the intellectual poverty

²⁵ Translation by Stanley Lombardo and Karen Bell.

²⁶ Stalley (1983, 150) observes that there is, paradoxically, a depersonalizing effect from this kind of punishment: “To punish someone as a deterrent is to treat him, not as an end in himself, but as a means to some supposed social good. “Curing” or “reforming” the criminal may in practice mean “brainwashing him” or remoulding his character to a pattern approved by the authorities.”

of the Spartan system.²⁷ On the contrary, Spartan education did not prize illiteracy, but the Spartans simply placed far less emphasis on learning letters than the Athenians did. The Spartans believed literature was only worth learning for its usefulness in civic life and for continuing the transfer of traditional knowledge from generation to generation.²⁸ In fact, the famed Sophist Hippias tells Socrates that when he visited Sparta, the inhabitants didn't want to hear about astronomy, geometry, or eristic, but rather about history and archaeology, specifically the genealogies of heroes and the founding of cities (Pl. *Hipp. Maj.* 285d). Any field that offered the opportunity for discovery and innovation would have held little value for the Spartans; instead, they wanted to understand the origins and history of their society. For the Spartans, the subjects we refer to as the liberal arts were simply a practical supplement to the standard military curriculum that formed the real basis of their education system.

Unfortunately, our comparison between Athens and Sparta becomes a bit less fruitful at this point because Athenian authors universally agreed that in contrast with an almost-exclusively military training system, a program of instruction in the so-called liberal arts was far superior.²⁹ However, whereas in Sparta, education was a static institution with

²⁷ For this view, see Freeman 1972, 25: "While the boys' bodies were developed and trained almost to perfection, their minds were almost entirely neglected"; and Marrou 1956, 19: "In its Classical form, Spartan education...always had one clear aim - the training of the hoplites, the heavy infantry who had been responsible for Sparta's military superiority...they learned to be soldiers: everything else was sacrificed to that. The intellectual side of their education was reduced to a minimum."

²⁸ See Ducat 2006, 120-2; Plutarch recounts in *Lyc.* 4.2 and 4.4 how Lycurgus made the poetry of Homer and Thales a mandatory part of the curriculum because these works taught boys to follow the time-honored ways and to be obedient and disciplined.

²⁹ By the liberal arts, I simply mean the non-military, non-technical branches of study, the subjects Aristotle claims at *Politics* 1337a-b (as we will see later) are most suited for a free-born person. Hence, under this definition, music, letters, astronomy, arithmetic, drawing, gymnastics, etc would all potentially be considered liberal arts, while military strategy, medicine, blacksmithing, etc would not.

no room for dissenting opinions, the Athenian tendency toward debate and intellectualism resulted in significant disagreement about precisely which subjects constitute the liberal arts and what the ideal school curriculum should look like. So instead of comparing the curricula of Athens with that of Sparta, let us now entertain a comparison between differing attitudes within Athens herself.

2. Internal Athenian Curriculum Debate

Public opinion about the curriculum in Athens during the Classical period was divided along both practical and philosophical lines.³⁰ Aristotle sums up the situation best at the beginning of his discussion on education in Book 8 of the *Politics* (1337a35-b1):

νῦν γὰρ ἀμφισβητεῖται περὶ τῶν ἔργων. οὐ γὰρ ταῦτ' ἅπαντες ὑπολαμβάνουσι δεῖν μαθάνειν τοὺς νέους οὔτε πρὸς ἀρετὴν οὔτε πρὸς τὸν βίον τὸν ἄριστον, οὐδὲ φανερόν ποτερον πρὸς τὴν διάνοιαν πρέπει μᾶλλον ἢ πρὸς τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἥθος· ἔκ τε τῆς ἐμποδῶν παιδείας ταραχώδης ἢ σκέψις καὶ δῆλον οὐδὲν ποτερον ἀσκεῖν δεῖ τὰ χρήσιμα πρὸς τὸν βίον ἢ τὰ τείνοντα πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἢ τὰ περιττά (πάντα γὰρ εἴληφε ταῦτα κριτὰς τινες).

For currently there is a dispute about the tasks [of education]. For not everyone assumes that it is necessary for the young to learn the same things with an eye to virtue or the best life, nor is it apparent whether it is fitting for education to be directed toward the mind or the character of the soul. Because of the current state of education, this investigation is confusing and it is not clear whether it is necessary to be trained in matters that are useful for life, or aimed at virtue, or out of the ordinary (for all of these have some advocates).

According to this passage, dissenting opinions are expressed in Athens concerning both the goals and content of the school curriculum, and for every possible curricular model there is at least one proponent. As it turns out, Aristotle himself is among those who have a stake in this debate, along with other noted intellectuals of the period writing in

³⁰ For the duration of this section, we will be leaving aside our primary discussion about the *didaskalos*. For whatever reason, in the context of the debate about a theoretical ideal curriculum, all of the authors discussed here neglect to mention the person doing the teaching; they focus entirely on the subjects that should be taught.

all different genres, including the comic poet, Aristophanes; the orator and teacher of rhetoric, Isocrates; and the philosopher - and Aristotle's own mentor -, Plato.³¹

If we were to lay the curricular models presented by these four authors along a spectrum from most conservative to most progressive, Aristophanes would sit near the conservative end, Plato and Aristotle would fall somewhere in the middle, and Isocrates would represent the most progressive. For our purposes, a conservative curriculum is defined as one that trains boys exclusively in the traditional, heroic pursuits of music and gymnastics, with the primary focus on conditioning the body, and admits little or no innovation in terms of content. A progressive curriculum, on the other hand, places the training of the intellect above that of the body, and it recognizes the value of inventiveness for the health of the state. With these definitions in mind, let us turn to the texts.

2.1 Aristophanes

Aristophanes' *Clouds* is a uniquely valuable text for the study of Classical Athenian education. Not only does it shed light on the issues surrounding Socrates' role as an educator and his consequent indictment,³² but it also rehearses in miniature, in the *agôn* between the Better and the Worse Arguments, the contemporary debate between conservative and progressive curriculum models. First, the Better Argument

³¹ These four authors can be assumed to provide a diverse sample of the types of concerns Athenian intellectuals had with different curricular models. Hence, they were probably not the only writers who addressed educational topics during this time, but they offer remarkably straightforward articulations of their respective philosophies.

³² For a complete discussion of which see Chapter 4, Section 2.

summarizes the ἀρχαία παιδεία that he offers, the curriculum of which is strictly limited to the traditional study of music (965) and gymnastics (973-4), and which is enforced with corporal punishment (969-72). He points out that in his system, self-control (σωφροσύνη) goes hand-in-hand with physical discipline (961-5), and that the best education must be conducted by conditioning the body in the gymnasium and not by chatting about current events and philosophy in the agora (1002-4). If this curriculum seems somewhat rigid, that is only because it has been proven to work; at lines 985-6, the Better Argument boasts that it is in this way that “my education bred the men who fought at Marathon” (ἄνδρας Μαραθωνομάχας ἡμὴ παιδευσίς ἔθρεψε). An Athenian can hope to achieve no higher level of virtue or valor than this. The conservative curriculum Aristophanes’ Better Argument describes, then, is aimed at producing citizens who are as physically fit, brave, and dedicated to the service of the city as those men who fought in the legendary battle of Marathon.

The Worse Argument, on the other hand, offers a curriculum composed mainly of lessons in oratory, specifically how to argue what is contrary to established principles of justice (1038-40).³³ He scoffs at the Better Argument’s concern with being decent (1061: σωφρονεῖν), instead encouraging his listeners at line 1078 to “indulge your nature, romp, laugh, think nothing shameful” (χρῶ τῇ φύσει, σκίρτα, γέλα, νόμιζε μηδὲν αἰσχρόν). The goal of this instruction is to become capable of talking your way out of

³³ Aristophanes probably also intended the subject matter of the natural scientists to be included in this curriculum. Based on the unflattering treatment of them at the beginning of the *Clouds* (135ff), their area of expertise certainly did not fit into Aristophanes’ ideal curriculum, and he does lump them in with the Sophists as a type of “intellectual.” See Chapter 4, Section 2 on Aristophanes’ views concerning “intellectuals” and the “New Education” in Athens.

any problem (880ff), and the way Aristophanes describes it, there is very little redeeming value to this type of education. It is contrary to what is right and it flies in the face of traditional Athenian values.

As if all this were not incentive enough to choose the conservative model of education, the Better Argument finishes his pitch with a comparison of the outcomes a student can expect from each of the two curricula (1009-23):

ἦν ταῦτα ποῆς ἀγὼ φράζω / καὶ πρὸς τούτοις προσέχης τὸν νοῦν / ἔξεις αἰεὶ /
 στήθος λιπαρόν, χροῖαν λαμπράν, / ὦμους μεγάλους, γλῶτταν βαιάν, / πυγὴν
 μεγάλην, πόσθην μικράν· / ἦν δ' ἄπερ οἱ νῦν ἐπιτηδεύης, / πρῶτα μὲν ἔξεις /
 χροῖαν ὠχράν, ὦμους μικρούς, / στήθος λεπτὸν, γλῶτταν μεγάλην, / κωλὴν
 μικράν, ψήφισμα μακρόν, / καὶ σ' ἀναπεῖσει τὸ μὲν αἰσχρὸν ἅπαν / καλὸν ἡγεῖσθαι,
 τὸ καλὸν δ' αἰσχρὸν, / καὶ πρὸς τούτοις τῆς Ἀντιμάχου / καταπυγοσύνης
 ἀναπλήσει.

If you follow my recommendations, and keep them ever in mind, you will always have a rippling chest, radiant skin, broad shoulders, a wee tongue, a grand rump and a petite dick. But if you adopt current practices, you'll start by having a puny chest, pasty skin, narrow shoulders, a grand tongue, a wee rump and a lengthy edict. And he will persuade you to consider all that's foul fair, and fair foul, and furthermore he'll infect you with Antimachus' faggotry.³⁴

According to this, alumni of a conservative curriculum can expect to become physically magnificent and (presumably by extension) morally upright. Meanwhile, students of the Worse Argument can look forward to physical infirmity, moral relativism, and sexual deviance. This is, of course, a greatly simplified and intentionally polarized depiction of the two curricula. It must be said that although Aristophanes presents the Better Argument's education in a much more positive light than that of the Worse Argument, he does not wholly endorse either one. The concern that underlies Aristophanes'

³⁴ Translation by Jeffrey Henderson

assessment of both models of education is civic stability.³⁵ He sees in the traditional curriculum a model that has worked for generations to create Athenians who understand their duties to the city. If this model is tainted a little by pederastic voyeurism, at least it is still the lesser of the two evils. The progressive curriculum, in contrast, is untested and untenably risky. And when it comes to the health of the polis, in Aristophanes' view, one cannot be too careful.

2.2 Plato and Aristotle

Although their views fall in the middle of the spectrum, Aristotle and Plato offer a significantly different take on the ideal curriculum from that of Aristophanes. While they both agree with the conservative belief that innovation and creativity in the schoolroom should be strictly prohibited,³⁶ and that the training of the body should be given precedence over the training of the intellect,³⁷ this is where their similarities with Aristophanes end. According to Plato in the *Laws*, education is a form of “right nurture” (ὀρθὴ τροφή; *Leg.* 643d) that affects the souls of the youth and draws them toward virtue (643e-644a):

τὴν δὲ πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἐκ παίδων παιδεῖαν, ποιοῦσαν ἐπιθυμητὴν τε καὶ ἐραστὴν τοῦ πολίτην γενέσθαι τέλεον, ἄρχειν τε καὶ ἄρχεσθαι ἐπιστάμενον μετὰ δίκης. ταύτην τὴν τροφὴν ἀφορισάμενος ὁ λόγος οὗτος, ὥς ἐμοὶ φαίνεται, νῦν βούλοισι' ἂν μόνην παιδεῖαν προσαγορεύειν, τὴν δὲ εἰς χρήματα τείνουσαν ἢ τινα πρὸς ἰσχύν, ἢ καὶ πρὸς ἄλλην τινὰ σοφίαν ἄνευ νοῦ καὶ δίκης, βάνανυσόν τ' εἶναι καὶ ἀνελεύθερον καὶ οὐκ ἀξίαν τὸ παράπαν παιδεῖαν καλεῖσθαι.

Education [consists of] training from childhood with an eye to virtue (*aretê*), which makes a man eagerly desirous of becoming a perfect citizen, understanding how to both rule

³⁵ See longer discussion in Chapter 4 on Aristophanes' concerns about the role of education in the polis.

³⁶ Aristotle *Politics* 1336b and Plato *Laws* 656d-e

³⁷ Aristotle *Politics* 1336a and 1338b; and Plato *Laws* 659d and 790-91

and be ruled justly. And this is the type of nurture which, it seems to me, our current argument would wish to call “education”; meanwhile that which is directed toward making money or gaining strength, or toward obtaining any other type of wisdom that is lacking reason and justice, is *banausic* and illiberal and entirely unworthy of being called “education.”

Hence, in this passage, the ultimate goal of education is to produce citizens who possess the proper degree of virtue in their souls. On the flip side, a proper education must be limited to those subjects which help to achieve this end; any other pursuit is unsuitable for a free person and will be labeled *banausic*. For Plato, then, it is essential to distinguish between trade-based education and liberal education. Only the latter is appropriate for creating “perfect citizens”, while the former is the way farmers and carpenters and peddlers are trained for their professional lives.

So, what are the subjects that Plato suggests his “perfect citizens” pursue? For starters, military training and gymnastics, then lyre-playing, literature, arithmetic, and astronomy.³⁸ In his explanation, he takes the reasons for undergoing physical training and learning the traditional curriculum of music and letters to be self-evident, but he makes a point of justifying the study of arithmetic and astronomy (*Leg.* 809c):

πέρι καὶ λογισμῶν, ὧν ἔφαμεν δεῖν ὅσα τε πρὸς πόλεμον καὶ οἰκονομίαν καὶ τὴν κατὰ πόλιν διοίκησιν χρῆναι ἐκάστους λαβεῖν, καὶ πρὸς τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα ἔτι **τὰ χρήσιμα** τῶν ἐν ταῖς περιόδοις τῶν θείων, ἄστρον τε πέρι καὶ ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης, ὅσα διοικεῖν **ἀναγκαῖόν** ἐστὶν περὶ ταῦτα πάση πόλει

Also arithmetic, of which I have said that that every person should know enough as is needed for the purposes of war, and of household management, and of civic administration; and for these same purposes, one must also learn what is useful of the courses of the heavenly bodies, that is, the stars and the sun and the moon, inasmuch as this information is necessary for the administration of every state.

³⁸ See Stalley 1983, 132ff for a discussion of the subjects Plato chooses for his curriculum.

Plato uses two words in this passage that bear heavily on his (and Aristotle's) philosophy of education: χρήσιμος (useful) and ἀναγκαῖος (necessary). Certain subjects - namely the traditional pursuits of music, letters, and gymnastics - are both useful and necessary for life. A non-traditional subject like arithmetic can be useful, but not too useful;³⁹ if it offers the opportunity for profit, then it is *banausic* and no longer suitable for study. Under Plato's curriculum, there is no such thing as a useless subject. Every one of the subjects he lists is useful insofar as it contributes to the virtue of the student's soul.

Just like his mentor, Aristotle also believed that education should aim for what is virtuous and noble in every person and that the *banausic* must be avoided at all costs. He, too, struggled with finding a balance between teaching what is useful and necessary and teaching too many useful things and thereby making someone unfree and *banausic* (*Pol.* 1337b4-14). He followed Plato's lead in describing the subjects of the ideal curriculum as "those useful things that leave the mind free to pursue virtue" (1337b10). But he was unsatisfied with the way Plato's system did not account for the possibility of studying some things that are not useful or necessary. So he expanded upon his teacher's curriculum, and in his programmatic statement for his own educational philosophy, Aristotle famously says that "there is a kind of education that sons must be given not because it is useful or necessary but because it is free and noble" (ἔστι παιδεία τις ἣν οὐχ ὡς **χρησίμην** παιδευτέον τοὺς υἱεῖς οὐδ' ὡς **ἀναγκαίαν** ἀλλ' ὡς **ἐλευθέριον** καὶ **καλήν**). This idea forms one of the three branches

³⁹ In particular, Plato sees arithmetic as a preliminary study on the path to the pursuit of dialectic. On the mathematical curriculum at Plato's Academy, see Fowler 1999, 103-112.

of Aristotle's curriculum. First, we must teach things that are useful and necessary for life, like letters, drawing, and gymnastics: letters because they help with money-making, household management, and political activities (1338a15); drawing because it helps one to make better judgements about the products of craftsmen (1338a17); and gymnastics because it contributes to courage (1337b27). Second, we must teach those things, like music, that are neither useful nor necessary but are the domain of the noble and free person. Finally, - and in Aristotle's view, most importantly - we have to teach some subjects not because they are useful but because many other studies become possible through them (1338a37-b2). For example, drawing should be studied not because it helps in commerce but because it makes people contemplate the beauty of bodies. Although he spends a great deal of time discussing the proper way to teach useful things to the youth, it is clear that Aristotle's main concern is with those subjects that are not particularly useful for life. Indeed, he finishes the discussion of his curriculum at 1338b3 with the reminder that "to search everywhere for what is useful is what least suits those who are great in soul and free" (τὸ δὲ ζητεῖν πανταχοῦ τὸ χρήσιμον ἥκιστα ἀρμόττει τοῖς μεγαλοψύχοις καὶ τοῖς ἐλευθερίοις).

As the moderates on our imagined curriculum spectrum, Plato and Aristotle offer a mixture of traditional and innovative approaches to education. Like Aristophanes, they seek to limit students' exposure to potentially-damaging unapproved subject matter, but they have a much more relaxed view of what constitutes unapproved material. Whereas Aristophanes' Better Argument represents a heroic, physically-focused training program, Plato and Aristotle are concerned with the education of the soul. However, while these

three authors have some disagreement about what types of subjects the curriculum should consist of - music, gymnastics, letters, arithmetic, etc - they all are concerned with the same thing: the consistent formation of Athenian citizens. In this way, Plato and Aristotle fall closer to the conservative end of the spectrum than one might have initially thought; they do not want to introduce anything unstable into the curriculum. The non-heroic subjects they advocate including are in the first instance useful and necessary for life. The most progressive thing about the curriculum described by Plato and elaborated upon by Aristotle is the focus on fostering the life of the mind. Whereas Aristophanes' *Better Argument* might view the intellectual pursuit of drawing for its philosophical value as too similar to the education offered by the Sophists, for Aristotle especially the education of free and noble adults requires some philosophy.

2.4 Isocrates

At the far end of the spectrum, Isocrates stands as the champion of the progressive intellectual curriculum for which the Sophists were so often maligned. Although he does not neglect gymnastics - indeed, he believes it to be a parallel art to philosophy (*Antid.* 179ff) -, for Isocrates, the primary goal of education is to lead students to the pursuit of philosophy. In the eyes of an orator, of course, philosophy and oratory amount to one and the same thing, and in fact, at *Antidosis* 271, Isocrates explains that he considers a man to be a philosopher who occupies himself with the studies from which he will most quickly gain the insight to know what to do or say in any circumstance. One can only assume that the studies he is referring to include oratory. However, a person cannot simply set out to study philosophy from scratch, so Isocrates' ideal curriculum consists

of a program of study in subjects which prepare a student for philosophy. At *Panathenaicus* 26, he argues that young men should pursue geometry, astronomy, and eristic, since there is no more helpful or fitting pursuit to be found. He does not elaborate on the reasons for this in the current speech, but at *Antidosis* 264-6 he takes up the same subject again in greater detail:

Τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλα τότε ὠφελεῖν ἡμᾶς πέφυκεν ὅταν λάβωμεν αὐτῶν τὴν ἐπιστήμην, ταῦτα δὲ τοὺς μὲν ἀπηκριβωμένους οὐδὲν ἂν εὐεργετήσειεν πλὴν τοὺς ἐντεῦθεν ζῆν προηρημένους, τοὺς δὲ μανθάνοντας ὀνίνησιν... ἐν τούτοις γυμνασθέντες καὶ παροξυνθέντες ῥᾶον καὶ θᾶπτον τὰ σπουδαιότερα καὶ πλείονος ἄξια τῶν πραγμάτων ἀποδέχεσθαι καὶ μανθάνειν δύνανται. Φιλοσοφίαν μὲν οὖν οὐκ οἶμαι δεῖν προσαγορεύειν τὴν μηδὲν ἐν τῷ παρόντι μήτε πρὸς τὸ λέγειν μήτε πρὸς τὸ πράττειν ὠφελοῦσαν, γυμνασίαν μέντοι τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ παρασκευὴν φιλοσοφίας καλῶ τὴν διατριβὴν τὴν τοιαύτην.

For the other subjects help us after we gain an understanding of them, whereas these studies (geometry, astronomy, eristic) are of no benefit to us after we have mastered them unless we have chosen to make our living from them, but the very process of learning them is beneficial to us... For after we have been exercised and sharpened on these subjects we are able to grasp and learn much more quickly and easily those subjects that are of more importance and of greater value. I do not think it is right to term “philosophy” a pursuit that is of no help to us at present either in word or in action, but rather I call this occupation an exercise of the soul and a preparation for philosophy.

Like Aristotle, Isocrates sees the basic subjects of the curriculum as a stepping stone toward a deeper study. Elsewhere in the *Antidosis* (85), Isocrates describes his teaching as inherently useful (*chrêsimos*), and as with Aristotle and Plato this articulation is essential to our understanding of Isocrates’ views on curriculum.⁴⁰ Whereas Aristotle termed useful those pursuits that were applicable to daily life, for Isocrates, a subject is only useful if it leads directly to the study of oratory, and by extension, philosophy. So, as he sees it, astronomy, geometry, etc are not useful in and of themselves, but they do bring the learner one step closer to learning what is useful. In fact, this is the heart of

⁴⁰ On which, see Too 2008, 218: “Utility and benefit are the prime imperatives of Isocratean discourse and education.”

Isocrates' progressiveness. He does not really believe that there are core subjects that must be taught in order for students to achieve success; instead, they must take enough steps along the path of learning how to learn so that they can begin to study philosophy. By this token, Isocrates' curriculum is much more open-ended than any of the others we have looked at, since its progression depends upon the cumulative skills of the student and not on the sequence of a set body of knowledge. This means that there was far less regulation of the material Isocrates' students learned, a prospect that would have been unthinkable for the other authors. Indeed, the creative oratorical spark that Isocrates so carefully cultivated in his students was precisely the thing Aristophanes, Plato, and Aristotle feared in theirs.

Ultimately, the major differences between the curricular models we have examined in this section can be attributed to differing views on what is best for the health of the city. For Aristophanes, it is creating citizens who respect the values of their forefathers above all; for Plato and Aristotle, it is creating citizens whose souls are directed toward virtue; and for Isocrates, it is creating citizens who can think for themselves and speak eloquently in order to contribute to civic life.

3. *Didaskaloi* and *Didaskalia* Beyond the Classroom

It is apparent from the preceding discussion that there was something about the relationship between a student and a *didaskalos* that the Athenians were intensely interested in. Unlike the Spartans, for whom education was confined to a straightforward interaction between authority figures and students, the Athenians found in education a

productive conceptual framework for many other types of instructional interactions. The following section will examine this uniquely-Athenian extension of *didaskalia* to the civic and even the metaphorical realm.

3.1 Civic Instruction: Public Speakers and Dramatists

In literary discussions of the city, educational vocabulary was applied to nearly every activity of Athenian life, including warfare, and especially public business. In fact, one could say that the Athenians saw their democracy as nourished and defined by the educational process.⁴¹ As Neil Croally has observed, “All the main institutions of the *polis* were presumed to have educative effects” (2005, 65).⁴² Even more specifically, I contend that Athenian authors viewed the civic instruction offered by public figures in the *polis* as an extension of the classroom; both the relationship between a public speaker and his listeners and that between a dramatist and his audience were often described in terms of *didaskalia*.⁴³ In other words, while formal childhood education taught Greek youths the basic skills to function in civilized society, taking part in the

⁴¹ Indeed, Athens saw herself as the *paideusis* of Greece. On which, see above Thucydides 2.41 and Isocrates 4.47-50. See also Demosthenes 9.73 for Athens as duty-bound to instruct the rest of the Greeks because of her superior knowledge.

⁴² See also Croally 2005, 59 for the power of rhetoric in the democratic/educational process: “Athens was a *logopolis*, a “city of words”, and the Athenians were, according to the Thucydidean Cleon, “spectators of words”, (3.38.4). Athens took a tradition that was already astonished by the powers of language and added to that a political system in which language, and more particularly rhetoric, was essential.”

⁴³ For the purposes of this discussion, the term “public speaker” will be used to encompass all men who stood up and delivered speeches before large groups in the *polis*, including litigants, political leaders, and professional orators.

democratic life of the city by attending speeches and theatrical performances taught Greek adults how to be citizens. To quote Paul Cartledge:⁴⁴

Participation in the democratic process, including being present to hear public civic orations, was conceived primarily as an education for Athenian citizens, most of whom had received no formal schooling during childhood beyond the inculcation...of basic literacy, numeracy and musical appreciation. For such average citizens, ...theatre was an important part of their learning to be active participants in self-government by mass meeting and open debate between peers. (1997, 19)

However, while Cartledge, Croally, and others (Dover, Ober and Strauss) have recognized the public institutions of Athens as generally educative, none have drawn an explicit connection between the vocabulary and methods of school-room *didaskalia* and those of political instruction.

If democratic life was thought of as analogous to formal education, then the students were not only the individual citizens but also the *polis* as a whole, and the teachers were the leaders of the city. As Dover notes (1974, 30), "There existed a traditional role...into which a man addressing an Athenian audience was permitted to step", and I submit that the role in question was that of the *didaskalos*. Like a schoolroom teacher, a public speaker in Athens was believed to possess a specific body of knowledge that he needed to transmit to his audience. As Ober and Strauss point out (1990, 251) "The public speaker's role was, in its essence, a didactic one: he attempted to instruct his listeners in the facts of the matter under discussion and in the correctness of his own interpretation of those facts." Whereas Ober and Strauss argue that he did this through his superior rhetorical skill, I maintain that a public speaker instructed the *polis*, in fact,

⁴⁴ See also Ober 1990, 159-60: "A major part of a citizen's education came through performance of his political role."

by appropriating and exploiting the pre-existing authority of the *didaskalos*. By stepping into the traditional role of the teacher, a public speaker could present the information he communicated as true and authoritative without coming across as patronizing or bombastic. In turn, the Athenian audience, viewing him as a beneficent and trustworthy instructor, was much more receptive to his advice. This kind of information transfer took place in every sphere of Athenian political life, including legal proceedings, public assemblies, and military strategy sessions.⁴⁵ When it occurred in the courtroom, it was used by a litigant in laying out for the jury his side of the case and the reasons why his opponent's side was wrong.⁴⁶ For example, in *Against Andocides* (35), Lysias insists that it is necessary to instruct (*didaskein*) the jury in the defense that his opponent will make in order that they may form a better decision, and in *Plataicus* (7), Isocrates explains that it is his responsibility to counteract the opposing side's deceptions with his teaching. The clearest formulation of this idea can be found in the *Antidosis* (197):

Δεῖ δὲ μὴδ' ἡμᾶς προαπειπεῖν **διδάσκοντας** καὶ λέγοντας, ἐξ ὧν δυοῖν θάτερον, ἢ μεταστήσομεν τὰς γνώμας αὐτῶν ἢ τὰς βλασφημίας καὶ κατηγορίας, αἷς χρώνται καθ' ἡμῶν, ἐξελέγξομεν ψευδεῖς οὔσας.

I must not stop teaching and speaking until one of two things happens, either I manage to change the minds of [my accusers] or I prove that the slanders and charges they are using against me are false.

According to this passage, it is the duty of the litigant-cum-*didaskalos* to shed the clarifying light of truth on the false arguments given by the opposition. In the same way, a speaker in the assembly could also act as a *didaskalos* in order to give the people

⁴⁵ This is not to say that every public speaker who stood up before an Athenian audience was an expert political instructor, but rather that the *didaskalic* role existed and was available for a qualified public speaker to step into.

⁴⁶ For examples, see Lysias 3.21, 7.3, 9.3, 12.3, 12.62, 13.4, 14.3, 19.12, 32.3; Demosthenes *Against Timocrates* 71.3, *Against Aphobus* 1 3, *Against Aphobus* 3 1 and 5, *Against Oneitor* 1 5, *Against Timotheus* 59, *Against Evergus and Mnesibulus* 13; Isocrates *Antidosis* 29.3, and 58.7, *On the Peace* 18.2.

clearer information about a matter of civic importance.⁴⁷ For example, in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (8.1.2.1), an assembly is held at which one of Cyrus's political advisers, Chrysantas, attempts to clarify some aspects of the king's policy decision:⁴⁸

Κῦρός τέ μοι δοκεῖ νῦν συμβουλεύειν ἡμῖν ἀφ' ὧν μάλιστ' ἂν εὐδαιμονοῦντες διατελοῖμεν· ὃ δέ μοι δοκεῖ ἐνδεέστερον ἢ ὡς ἐχρῆν δηλῶσαι, τοῦτο ἐγὼ πειράσομαι τοὺς μὴ εἰδότας **διδάξαι**.

Cyrus seems to me now to be giving us counsel how we may best continue to prosper. But there is one thing that he hasn't made as clear as he should have, and I will try to teach this to any who don't know about it.

Again, as in the examples above, we see that the goal of political instruction is increased clarity resulting in improved decision-making. This also holds true when the instruction occurs in the context of war, as when a designated authority figure explains a tactical or strategic matter to the army or their allies.⁴⁹ As the Spartan general Brasidas in Thucydides (4.126.4) explains, where an enemy seems strong but is actually weak, a true *didachê* of the facts makes his adversary bolder (καὶ γὰρ ὅσα μὲν τῷ ὄντι ἀσθενῇ ὄντα τῶν πολεμίων δόκησιν ἔχει ἰσχύος, **διδασχὴ** ἀληθῆς προσγενομένη περὶ αὐτῶν ἐθάρσυνε μᾶλλον τοὺς ἀμυνομένους.) In other words, the best way to dispel someone's misconceptions and correct his mistaken opinions is to teach him the truth. And, as the examples above all show, public teaching was the job of a person with some claim to true information and the ability to convey it.

⁴⁷ For examples, see Thucydides 2.42.1; Demosthenes *Against Aristocrates* 25.9; Isocrates *Panathenaicus* 23.3

⁴⁸ Although it's true that this passage describes a political assembly taking place in Persia, Xenophon's depiction is clearly that of a democratic Athenian assembly. For other examples of political *didaskalia* in the assembly, see the preceding note.

⁴⁹ For examples, see Demosthenes *Third Phillipic* 71.3, *Second Olynthiac* 11.3, *For the Freedom of the Rhodians* 26 and 27; Thucydides 2.93.1, 4.126.1, 4.46.5, 5.27.3, 5.86.1, 7.18.1; Xenophon *Cyropaedia* 2.1.8.6, 3.1.13.8, 5.3.14.4; Isocrates *Archidamus* 13.6, *On the Peace* 68.4, *Euagoras* 55.3, *Panegyricus* 15.2, *Phillip* 6.7.

This meant that any public figure possessing some specialized knowledge and rhetorical skill could present himself as a *didaskalos* to the city. The only requirement was that a teacher had to know more than the people he claimed to be teaching, since, as Thucydides tells us (6.80.3), it is useless to try to teach someone what they already know as well as you do.⁵⁰ For this reason, we never hear about ordinary citizens acting as *didaskaloi* to the *polis*, but only politicians and orators whose professions endow them with a greater-than-average degree of expertise in civic affairs. Indeed, according to Meletus in Plato's *Apology* (24e), it is the jurymen, council members, and assemblymen who are responsible for educating the citizens, and in Thucydides Book 2 (Ch. 2.60.5-6), Pericles claims that he is an extraordinary political leader in large part because of his ability 1) to discern (*gnônai*) what policies are expedient and 2) to teach (*didaskein*) those policies clearly to the city. Specifically, Pericles provides the demos with practical information about current military and financial conditions that is vital for them to make informed decisions.

This is the key to the equation of public speaker and *didaskalos*: the shared goal and methodology. Just like the teacher we saw above in Isocrates' *Against the Sophists* (17.5-6), the public speaker acts, in the first instance, as a knowledge transfer professional. He offers a specific body of information to his students through his rhetorical skill, with the aim of improving their ability to make decisions in the context of

⁵⁰ See above on *Cyropaedia* 8.1.2.1. For other examples, see Aristotle *Metaphysics* 981b8, *Eudemian Ethics* 1245a16-18, and especially *Physics* 257a13: teaching necessarily implies possessing knowledge and learning not possessing it.

the democratic process. As Yunis has observed (1991, 185-7), “The crucial factors of Athenian decision-making are an exemplary interaction of leader and demos... A mature demos decides best because, when properly instructed, it tends to act with intelligence and responsibility.” This is the same kind of instruction that Pericles refers to in the funeral oration (Thuc. 2.40.2).⁵¹ It is the kind of instruction that is necessary for the city to receive prior to making an important decision. As Demosthenes explains (*Lept.* 166), it is the job of the courtroom orator to instruct (*didaskein*) the jury thoroughly about the case so that the best verdict can be reached; after all, the more accurate one’s knowledge of the facts is, the more just the verdict will be (*Aphob.* 34). In fact, as he points out in *Against Aristocrates* (25), it is unconscionable for a jury to hand down a verdict and punish the accused without first being taught (*didaskomenos*) the facts of the case.

What’s more, there seems to have been a conceptual link for the Athenians between the improvement of the citizens’ decision-making process and the improvement of the *polis* as a whole.⁵² According to Isocrates in *Nicocles* (10.1-9), the best forms of discourse are those that teach the city how to be the most prosperous:

Ἐγὼ δ' ἀποδέχομαι μὲν ἅπαντας τοὺς λόγους τοὺς καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν ἡμᾶς ὠφελεῖν δυναμένους, οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καλλίστους ἡγοῦμαι...τοὺς περὶ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων καὶ τῶν πολιτειῶν παραινούντας, καὶ τούτων αὐτῶν ὅσοι **διδάσκουσι** τοὺς τε δυναστεύοντας ὥς δεῖ τῷ πλήθει χρῆσθαι, καὶ τοὺς ἰδιώτας ὥς χρὴ πρὸς τοὺς ἄρχοντας διακεῖσθαι· διὰ γὰρ τούτων ὁρῶ τὰς πόλεις εὐδαιμονεστάτας καὶ μεγίστας γιγνομένας.

⁵¹ For a more complete discussion of this part of Pericles’ speech, see the comparison between Athens and Sparta above. See also Demosthenes *Against Aristocrates* 25.9 for another example.

⁵² For example, see Demosthenes *On the Chersonese* 72 and *Against Aristocrates* 21

For my part, I welcome all forms of discourse that can benefit us, even in a small degree; however, I regard those as best which advise about habits and civic life, and especially those that teach how leaders should treat the masses, and how the people should be disposed toward their leaders. For I see that it is in this way that cities become the greatest and most prosperous.

In this way, public speakers - like teachers - can have a significant impact on their students. Ideally, the result for the *polis* will be as Isocrates describes: prosperity.

However, not all public speakers have the city's best interests at heart. As Demosthenes warns in *For the Megalopolitans* (3.6), he considers himself duty-bound to do what is best for the city by preventing it from being led astray by bad speakers. The understanding in this passage is that a good speaker should operate in a fundamentally different way from a bad speaker. A good public speaker (or political *didaskalos*, if you will), must not try to impose his own will on his audience either through persuasion or exhortation without first informing (*didaskein*) his listeners of all of the facts.⁵³ As Isocrates points out in the *Panathenaicus* (271.10), he has written the preceding speech as a good public speaker, that is, one who aims at the truth rather than seeking to lead astray the opinions of the listeners (καὶ τοὺς τῆς ἀληθείας στοχαζομένους τῶν τὰς δόξας τῶν ἀκροωμένων παρακρούεσθαι ζητούντων). To do otherwise would be to stray into the realm of the demagogue, whose highly persuasive and self-serving discourse represented a real threat to the autonomy of the *polis*.⁵⁴ As Ober notes (1990, 161ff), "Good political decisions would improve the citizenry; poor decisions might worsen it... Hence, the orator who could deceive the people into voting wrongly was a manifest danger to all other citizens."

⁵³ See also Demosthenes *On the False Embassy* 156; Thucydides 4.17.3 and 5.98.1.

⁵⁴ On which, see Yunis 1991, 186-90.

Public speakers weren't the only authority figures in classical Athens who took on the role of *didaskalos* to the *polis*. The comic and tragic poets, too, thought of themselves - or were thought of by their audience - as teachers, but unlike the public speakers, they had a pre-existing educational tradition to draw on.⁵⁵ Beginning already in the late archaic period, long-deceased poets like Homer, Hesiod, and Orpheus were described as *didaskaloi* because their poetry was used to teach school-age children. It is for this reason that Xenophanes describes Homer as the teacher of all (ὁ διδάσκαλος πάντων),⁵⁶ and at *Frogs* 1030ff Aristophanes' Aeschylus explains the ways the poets of old teach their readers:

Σκέψαι γὰρ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς / ὡς ὠφέλιμοι τῶν ποιητῶν οἱ γενναῖοι γεγέννηται.
 Ὀρφεὺς μὲν γὰρ τελετάς θ' ἡμῖν κατέδειξε φόνων τ' ἀπέχεσθαι,
 Μουσαῖος δ' ἐξακέσεις τε νόσων καὶ χρησμούς, Ἡσίοδος δὲ
 γῆς ἐργασίας, καρπῶν ὥρας, ἀρότους· ὁ δὲ θεῖος Ὀμηρος
 ἀπὸ τοῦ τιμὴν καὶ κλέος ἔσχεν πλὴν τοῦδ' ὅτι χρήστ' ἐδίδαξεν,
 τάξεις, ἀρετάς, ὁπλίσεις ἀνδρῶν;

Just consider how beneficial the noble poets have been from the earliest times. Orpheus revealed mystic rites to us, and taught us to abstain from killings; Musaeus instructed us

⁵⁵ The conception of drama as teaching can probably be found in the poetry of the archaic period. See Woodbury 1986, 248-9: "There is an important element in early, archaic, and classical verse that might be called, broadly, "educational" or "culturally formative." Homer, Hesiod, Solon, Xenophanes, Theognis, to name a few, all address themselves in greater or lesser degree, to the information and admonition of their audiences... To say then that a poet was a *didaskalos* and his poetry *didaskalia* would have been to compare him with a school-master and his poems with lessons for children" and Croally 2005, 56-7: "Poetry was generally regarded as having educative effects...and poets were viewed as teachers."

This educative type of poetry is not to be confused with the separate and specific genre of didactic poetry as described by Katharina Volk (2002, Chapter 2, especially pp. 36-40): "The view that one can, or ought to be able to, learn from poetry remains commonplace throughout antiquity. However, even if it is true that the *Iliad* can teach us about the Trojan War, and perhaps even about the art of generalship, as the rhapsode Ion contends in Plato's dialogue (540d1-541d7), this does not make it a didactic poem. Whether one can in fact learn something - anything- from a text is a useless criterion since by that token, there would be very few, if any, poems that could not pass as didactic." With a few notable exceptions (e.g. Hesiod's *Works and Days*), the genre of poetry that modern scholars describe as "didactic" was not fully realized until the Hellenistic period (see Volk pp. 56ff), although it undoubtedly developed from the early Near Eastern tradition of wisdom/advice poetry. For more on the place of advice poetry in the *didaskalic* tradition, and the work of Theognis in particular, see Chapter 1, Section 2.2.

⁵⁶ DK 21 B10. For more examples of poets - especially Homer - and their poetry as teachers see Heraclitus DK 22 B57, Xenophon *Symposium* 3.5, Isocrates *Panegyricus* 159, and Aristophanes *Birds* 912.

on oracles and cures for diseases; Hesiod on agriculture, the seasons for crops, and ploughing. And where did the godlike Homer get respect and renown if not by giving good instruction in the tactics, virtues, and weaponry of men?

As Aristophanes makes clear, the works of the ancient poets were thought of in the Classical period as indisputable reference guides for living, and as fellow poets, the dramatists could follow directly in their footsteps.

Over and above the question of poetic lineage, however, there is also evidence that comic (and to a lesser extent tragic)⁵⁷ poets occupied the same political space as public speakers.⁵⁸ Indeed, as Ober and Strauss point out (1990, 237-8), “Political rhetoric and drama can be seen, and analyzed, as closely related forms of public speech... In each case, the mass audience faced, listened to, and actively responded to, the public discourse of individual speakers.”⁵⁹ In addition, both public speakers and dramatists aimed at the improvement of the citizens, but they went about it in slightly different ways. While public speakers (and comic poets in their parabases) sought to improve the

⁵⁷ Given that comedy will play a much greater role in our discussion in Chapter 4, and because its instruction operated in a fundamentally different way than that of tragedy, the following section will focus mainly on the political and dramatic instruction offered via comedy, particular Aristophanic comedy.

⁵⁸ On which, see Dover 1974, 29: “We can observe a striking continuity from the didactic and moralizing tradition of archaic poetry, through the late fifth- and early fourth-century comedy, to the lashings which Demosthenes administers to his fellow citizens”. Tragedy, on the other hand, operated a little differently, since it lacked the meta-theatricality offered by the comic parabasis. Instead of giving explicit political instruction in the same way comedy did, tragedy’s teaching worked at a deeper level. See Gregory 2005, Cartledge 1997, Croally 2005, 64-5: “The language of tragedy, though often stylized and poetic, is on other occasions strikingly similar to that used and heard in both the assembly and the law courts”; and Ober and Strauss 1990, 270: “Oratory drew on the audience’s experience of theater; drama drew on the audience’s experience of political and legal speeches. By so doing, each genre implicitly taught its audience that being an Athenian was a comprehensive experience, that there was no compartmentalized division between esthetics and politics... Athenian political culture was created in part in the theater of Dionysos, theatrical culture on the Pnyx.”

In opposition to the view that either comedy or tragedy were intended to act politically, see Heath 1987a, Chapter 2 and Heath 1987b, 28-9.

⁵⁹ See also Cartledge 1997, 3.

polis by increasing their knowledge and thereby helping them to make better political decisions, dramatists hoped to improve the citizens mainly by presenting them with models of behavior to imitate. In this way, dramatic *didaskalia* represents the second part of the teaching interaction described by Isocrates (*C. soph.* 17.5-6): mimesis.⁶⁰

Prior to the fifth century, poetry was often thought of as generally instructional, but it was Aristophanes who first described it as analogous to political oratory.⁶¹ Indeed, in the parabasis of *Peace* (735ff), we learn that Aristophanes sees himself as the best *kômôidodidaskalos* for having elevated comedy to a serious and important art from its traditional role as sheer buffoonery. As Henderson has pointed out (1990, 271-2):

The comic poets pictured themselves as...public voices who could, indeed were expected to, comment on, and seek to influence public thinking about matters of major importance - the same matters that were being or might be presented to the voting *dēmos* in other settings and in different ways, by competitors in a tragic competition, for example, or by speakers in an assembly, or by litigants in a law court.⁶²

In fact, we can observe several major correspondences between the textual descriptions of dramatic and political instruction. For example, echoing Demosthenes' claim above in *For the Megalopolitans* (3.6), in the parabasis of *Acharnians*, the chorus leader tells his audience that the poet (i.e. Aristophanes) believes himself to be deserving of rich rewards for keeping the city from being deceived by foreign speakers (633ff). Similarly, when the chorus leader tells us that Aristophanes promises to continue teaching the citizens good things in order that they might be happy (656: Φησὶν δ' ὑμᾶς

⁶⁰ In using mimesis in this way, I follow Gebauer and Wulf (1992, 34): "Mimesis is thus defined as the imitation of role models, whereby the goal is to become like the models."

⁶¹ Comedy, at least. In addition, if we are willing to take it as such, Aristophanes' *Frogs* provides some evidence for the *didaskalic* function of tragedy and the tragic poets in particular.

⁶² Although Henderson speaks of the comic poets in the plural, the only examples we have for comic *didaskalia* come from Aristophanes.

πολλὰ διδάξειν ἀγάθ', ὥστ' εὐδαίμονας εἶναι),⁶³ we can see a clear parallel with Isocrates' praise of speeches that teach (*didaskein*) the people good habits so that the city will prosper.⁶⁴ In this way, as Ober and Strauss note (1990, 248), "Both dramatic poets and political orators could see themselves as teachers: both aimed at the improvement of the citizen, both communicated through rhetoric."⁶⁵

However, there was an added sense in which a dramatist taught that a politician did not, that is, through dramatic directorship. Most likely originating from the head (*didaskalos*) of the lyre schools of the archaic period,⁶⁶ in the Classical period, the director and composer of a play (or of a dithyrambic chorus) was called by the technical theatrical term *didaskalos*.⁶⁷ To quote Claude Calame (1997, 230):

The poet retains a specific function marked with the feature "to compose." In this function, his role is the intermediary between the community and the chorus members to whom he transmits the cultural patrimony, of which he is the traditional repository in Greece...The poet is thus the perfect instructor, since he can communicate through his musical skill and his songs the knowledge necessary to maintain the social system.

Hence, a poet like Aristophanes taught his audience 1) as a composer and director of plays, 2) as a public speaker of sorts addressing the polis through the chorus leader, and 3) as a poet whose plays presented paradigms of behavior for his audience. In other words, by addressing the Athenian audience in the first person through the mouth

⁶³ See also *Frogs* 687 for another example of this.

⁶⁴ See above on *Nicocles* 10.5

⁶⁵ See also Gregory 1991, 2 : "...the improvement of the *polis* is the goal of the poet's instruction."

⁶⁶ On which, see Calame 1997, 221-38.

⁶⁷ This is the standard terminology of the dramatic records, including the hypotheses of the plays and the *didaskalic* inscriptions. For textual examples see Demosthenes *Against Midias* 58.7, 59.8; Aristophanes *Birds* 1403, 1405.

of the chorus leader, Aristophanes could interact with his listeners in a way that was similar to a public speaker giving political instruction to the city. At the same time, he could also take advantage of the *didaskalic* function of poetry to instruct his audience through the actions and words of his characters. For example, in *Assemblywomen* (583), Praxagora says that she will teach (*didaskein*) useful things to the spectators, but it is unclear whether she is referring to the political instruction that she will give to the assembly in the internal context of the play, or to the teaching she will give to the Athenian audience as a character in a drama. It is likely that we are meant to understand both types of *didaskalia* to be operating simultaneously.

In a way, dramatic *didaskalia* both encompassed and expanded upon political *didaskalia*. As we have seen from the above examples from Aristophanes, comic poets could interact with their audiences in the same way and for the same reason that public speakers did with theirs. However, because of the mimetic response poetry naturally engendered,⁶⁸ all dramatic poets (not just comedians) could also improve the *polis* in a way that politicians couldn't: through paradigms. Aristophanes' Aeschylus refers to this process explicitly in *Frogs* during the contest between himself and Euripides. At line 1009, Euripides proclaims that poets should be admired because they make people better citizens (ὅτι βελτίους τε ποιοῦμεν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν).

Aeschylus agrees, bragging (1021ff) that by staging (*didaskein*) *Seven Against Thebes*,

⁶⁸ For example, see Plutarch *Life of Solon* 29.4-5: Solon attended a tragedy of Thespis after which he asked the playwright if he was ashamed to tell lies to so many people. When Thespis responded in the negative and asked Solon why it mattered, he answered that if you put something in front of the masses in jest it will eventually show up in serious matters, too. That is, the people will imitate what they see on stage and apply it to inappropriate situations.

a warlike play, he made his audience hot for the fight and (1038ff) by depicting the deeds of brave men like Patroclus and Teucer he inspired men to measure themselves against their heroes in war. In other words, his depictions provoked a mimetic response in the audience. This is fine if you are composing a play that is “full of Ares” (1021) in order to incite the Athenians to courageous action, but problems arise when you write about something shameful or controversial, as Aeschylus believes Euripides to have done with his depictions of Phaedra and Stheneboea. As Justina Gregory rightly notes in this connection, Aeschylus is concerned that “Euripides has made people worse instead of better because his characters exhibit moral weaknesses that have inspired the audience’s imitation” (1991, 2). According to Dionysus (1012), this is an offense punishable by death,⁶⁹ and Euripides clearly should have known better. Both he and Aeschylus must be aware that as dramatists they are doubly accountable in offering guidance to the city: they have to teach the Athenians how to become better citizens, yes, but they also need to provide appropriate examples of statesmanship for them to follow. At lines 1053-6 Aeschylus explains this second aspect of the duty of the dramatic poet in more detail:

ἀλλ' ἀποκρύπτειν χρὴ τὸ πονηρὸν τὸν γε ποιητήν,
καὶ μὴ παράγειν μηδὲ διδάσκειν. Τοῖς μὲν γὰρ παιδαρίοισιν
ἐστὶ διδάσκαλος ὅστις φράζει, τοῖσιν δ' ἡβῶσι ποιηταί.
Πάνυ δὴ δεῖ χρηστὰ λέγειν ἡμᾶς.

It is necessary for the poet to hide what is shameful,
and not stage or teach it. For in the case of small children
it is the *didaskalos* who explains things, but for young men it is the poets.
So it is essential that we say good things.

⁶⁹ This is, of course, a joke, since Euripides is already dead. However, the consequences Dionysus jokes about will become very serious when Socrates is later taken to court.

On this view, the *polis* cannot operate without the constant guidance of the poet; everything the citizens are exposed to must be filtered through him so as to prevent imitation of the wrong example. Euripides doesn't agree; he wants to present the citizens with un-doctored scenes of complex, everyday situations so that they will be forced to think critically about which example to imitate (*Ran.* 953-79).

Ultimately, the argument between the two poets comes down to the question of oversight and regulation in the context of civic instruction.⁷⁰ If the *polis* cannot be trusted to decide the correct paradigms to imitate, is it then the task of the dramatist to limit which paradigms are put before them? If the answer is yes, and the dramatist takes full control of the citizens' education, he also takes on the responsibility for the outcome of that education. And as we saw above in the discussion of Athenian school-room instruction, a *didaskalos* - or in this case, a political adviser - who fails in his duty can rightfully be punished.⁷¹

In classical Athens, democracy was not just a form of government, it was a process, a mentality, and a way of life. It was carried out in the theater, the courtroom, and the

⁷⁰ This is also Plato's main concern in setting up the training for the guardians of the ideal state in *Republic* 376-7.

⁷¹ On which, see Henderson 1990, 275-6; for an ancient example, see Demosthenes *Against Aristocrates* 97: a juror who doesn't understand a point that is explained to him should not be punished, but instead, the litigant who made his case so poorly must be held responsible.

In some examples, a public speaker expresses concern that his listeners will hold him responsible for the outcome of his advice, whether he is truly to blame or not: Thucydides 1.140.1, 7.14.4. This will become especially important later in our discussion of Socrates in Chapter 4.

assembly, but especially the theater.⁷² For the average Athenian citizen, the fulfillment of his political role consisted in attending theatrical performances, and it was in this setting that he would receive civic instruction. As Neil Croally has observed (2005, 65), “Tragedy filled a real need in fifth-century democratic Athens. On the one hand, there was no public system of formal education;⁷³ on the other, the Athenians were very interested in education... and also believed - along with Pericles in the Funeral Oration - that their whole city could be an education, to themselves no doubt, but also to others.” And if Athens herself was an education and all her citizens students, then the public figures of the city - the beacons of learning and rhetorical skill - were its teachers. Any collective political experience had the potential to improve the citizenry, both on an individual level and as an entire *polis*.

3.2 Metaphorical Teachers: Need, Poverty, and War

It isn't surprising then, in the circumstances described above, that the vocabulary and concept of education was extended by Greek authors even further - well beyond the civic sphere - and into the realm of abstracts and metaphors. That is to say, any

⁷² For the theater as a site for the fulfillment of civic and democratic duties, see Winkler 1990, 20-21 and Goldhill 1987, 60-70, esp. p. 68: “The four moments of ceremonial preceding the dramatic festival are all deeply involved with the city's sense of itself. The libations of the ten generals, the display of tribute, the announcement of the city's benefactors, the parade of state-educated boys, now men, in full military uniform, all stress the power of the *polis*, the duties of the individual to the *polis*. The festival of the Great Dionysia is in the full sense of the expression a civic occasion, a city festival. And it is an occasion to say something about the city, not only in the plays themselves. The Great Dionysia is a public occasion endowed with a special force of belief. This is fundamentally and essentially a festival of the democratic *polis*.”

⁷³ This does not mean, of course, that there was no education at all in Athens other than the democratic institutions (cf. Cartledge quote above) As we have seen in the preceding sections of the chapter, there was already structured schooling by a *didaskalos* in Greece as early as the beginning of the fifth century. However, the formal schooling that existed was not available to all and it could vary widely from *didaskalos* to *didaskalos*.

abstract noun which was seen to profoundly affect the nature of the *polis* (and its individual citizens) could be personified and described as a *didaskalos*. This was possible because the use of *didaskalic* language to describe metaphorical teaching relationships was anchored in the understanding that a teacher always interacts with his student in a particular and recognizable way, whether that teacher is Pericles, Protagoras, or Poverty. In this final section of the chapter, we will examine a few especially fruitful examples of metaphorical teachers in order to identify what was for a Greek author the practice of the *didaskalos*.

In the example below from Theognis (1.387-92), using the same subject - Need - the poet contrasts the teaching metaphor in a very suggestive way with the metaphor of giving birth:

τολμᾶι δ' οὐκ ἐθέλων αἴσχρα πολλὰ φέρειν
 χρημοσύνηι εἴκων, ἥ δὴ κακὰ πολλὰ διδάσκει,
 ψεύδεά τ' ἐξαπάτας τ' οὐλομένας τ' ἔριδας,
 ἄνδρα καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλοντα· κακὸν δέ οἱ οὐδὲν ἔοικεν·
 ἢ γὰρ καὶ χαλεπὴν **τίκτει** ἀμηχανίην.

Although unwilling, a man brings himself to endure much that is shameful,
 like Need, which teaches many evil things,
 including lies and deceptions and deadly strife,
 even against his will. And there is no evil like Need,
 for it gives birth to painful helplessness.

The view of Need expressed in this passage is pessimistic in the extreme. According to Theognis, when a man is set upon by Need (*chrêmosunê*), he will resort to any manner of base behavior in order to survive. Even though he does not want to, he will lie, steal, cheat, and fight. In other words, with Need as his teacher, a previously morally upstanding person is fundamentally changed, in Theognis' opinion, for the worse. This characterization of the teaching process is consistent with the accounts we examined

earlier in the chapter: a *didaskalos* is described as a constant companion who interacts with an individual (or group) and as a result of this interaction changes him for better or worse.⁷⁴ Surprisingly, after first describing Need using the metaphor of teaching, the poet provides us with additional insight by further characterizing the same abstract as a mother. In purely theoretical terms, the former type of interaction is seen as changing an existing situation while the latter produces a new one. Specifically, the metaphor of birth - unlike that of teaching - entails the independent creation of offspring by a parent, in this case helplessness and need, respectively. This means that in the role of a parent, Need naturally produces helplessness, regardless of the disposition - or even the contribution - of the affected person. That is to say, where there is Need, there is always helplessness, but only when a person has had a sustained educative relationship with Need is he made capable of doing evil things.

It is clear, therefore that the metaphor of teaching was thought of in antiquity as essentially different from the metaphor of giving birth, the latter being a generative relationship and the former a transformative one. Further, we are given to understand that when the teacher is a powerful negative force - like Need - the transformation does not always take place with the willing participation of the student. Elsewhere (1.649-52), Theognis curses Poverty for similarly forcing its education upon him:

Ἄ δειλὴ πενίη, τί ἐμοῖσ' ἐπικειμένη ὦμοις
 σῶμα καταισχύνεις καὶ νόον ἡμέτερον;
 αἰσχροὶ δέ μ' οὐκ ἐθέλοντα βίῃ καὶ πολλὰ διδάσκεις
 ἐσθλὰ μετ' ἀνθρώπων καὶ κάλ' ἐπιστάμενον.

Ah wretched Poverty, why do you lie across my shoulders

⁷⁴ For a complete treatment of the outcomes of the teaching relationship, see Chapter 3, Section 2.

and debase my body and mind?
 Forcibly and against my will you teach me many shameful things
 although I know what is good and noble among men.

As Theognis presents it, Poverty drapes itself like a heavy mantle over the poet's shoulders and teaches him shameful things by force (βίη), even though he is an unwilling student (μ' οὐκ ἐθέλοντα) who knows better. Unlike in the previous passage, we are not told exactly what Poverty teaches,⁷⁵ but Theognis describes the training process and its outcome in consistently violent and negative terms: wretched (δειλός) Poverty teaches its own brand of wretchedness to its student.

Theognis isn't alone in his pessimism about education. The same process of forced conditioning and assimilation by a (metaphorical) teacher is explained in greater detail by Thucydides in reference to War (3.82.2):

ἐν μὲν γὰρ εἰρήνῃ καὶ ἀγαθοῖς πράγμασιν αἱ τε πόλεις καὶ οἱ ἰδιῶται ἀμείνους τὰς γνώμας ἔχουσι διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐς ἀκουσίους ἀνάγκας πίπτειν· ὁ δὲ πόλεμος ὑφελὼν τὴν εὐπορίαν τοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν βίαιος **διδάσκαλος** καὶ πρὸς τὰ παρόντα τὰς ὀργὰς τῶν πολλῶν ὁμοιοῖ.

For in peace and prosperity cities and individuals have better sentiments because they do not experience imperious necessities. But war is a violent *didaskalos* that takes away the easy supply of daily sustenance and assimilates the temperaments of the people to their circumstances.

As in both of the Theognis passages above, according to Thucydides, the education given by War is compulsory (βίαιος; cf with Theognis βίη) and profoundly debasing. By forcibly taking away the people's access to the necessities (presumably clothing, food, and shelter), War teaches them the violence that comes from desperation. Using the teacher's tool of assimilation, it changes their personalities (ὀργαί) to match their

⁷⁵ According to Antiphanes (fr. 293-4.2), Poverty is the teacher of character: πενία γάρ ἐστιν ἡ τρόπων διδάσκαλος.

situation, that is, life in wartime. In short, a ruthless teacher makes his students ruthless, too.

So far, we have seen that in Theognis' and Thucydides' view, a wicked teacher inevitably transmits his villainy to his students through assimilation. However, just as there was disagreement about the goals and methods of schoolroom education in Athens, there were also conflicting viewpoints about education when the teacher is a personified abstraction. For example, Need (or Necessity) was thought of by three different Greek authors as teaching three different things. In other words, teaching wasn't seen as a straightforward equation wherein one teacher plus one student always equals a positive learning outcome. Depending upon one's beliefs about teaching, the role of the teacher himself, and human nature more broadly, the same teacher-student interaction could be seen as resulting in a number of different outcomes.⁷⁶ So while Theognis' view of Need's teaching is downright negative, Aristotle and Xenophon each offer an alternative to this scenario.

For Aristotle, Need is the universal motivator of human progress and development from a bestial existence to civilization. All societies begin with Need and progress to luxury, and as a result, he sees Need as a very powerful positive force (*Pol.* 1329b.25-30):

σχεδὸν μὲν οὖν καὶ τὰ ἄλλα δεῖ νομίζειν εὐρῆσθαι πολλάκις ἐν τῷ πολλῷ χρόνῳ, μᾶλλον δ' ἀπειράκις. **τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἀναγκαῖα τὴν χρεῖαν διδάσκειν εἰκὸς αὐτὴν**, τὰ δ' εἰς εὐσχημοσύνην καὶ περιουσίαν ὑπαρχόντων ἤδη τούτων εὐλογον λαμβάνειν τὴν αὐξησιν· ὥστε καὶ τὰ περὶ τὰς πολιτείας οἶεσθαι δεῖ τὸν αὐτὸν ἔχειν τρόπον.

⁷⁶ This will be important for our argument in Chapter 4 concerning Socrates, since this phenomenon explains why Plato, Xenophon, and Aristophanes can each have such different views on the teaching of the same person.

In fact, it is necessary to realize that nearly everything has been discovered over and over again over a long period of time, or rather infinitely often. **For Need itself is likely to teach the necessities**, and then, once these things are present it is reasonable to assume that things that contribute to refinement and abundance will increase. And so it is necessary to suppose that what pertains to politics happens in the same way.

On this model, every person is a student of Need, and as we are faced with a lack - of food, clothing, etc - , Need teaches us how to provide for ourselves. In this way, Need's teaching is the mode by which humans attain survival and eventually civilization.⁷⁷ And as the final line of the passage implies, Aristotle believes this process applies not only to the development of primitive civilizations, but even to the formation of political society: a city needs leaders, and so Need teaches men to rule; it needs craftsmen to build houses, and make textiles, and bake bread, so Need teaches these skills. As Aristotle sees it, far from teaching us to be cruel and immoral through assimilation - as Theognis argues - Need teaches us the practical skills to survive and to fulfill our potential as social and political beings.

Unlike both Theognis and Aristotle, Xenophon sees Necessity as teaching physical endurance through habituation to unpleasantness. According to Xenophon, Necessity does not teach by breaking your moral spirit and reducing you to lawlessness, nor does it teach by inspiring the discovery of new skills. Rather, it teaches by habituating you to painful circumstances and forcing you to develop self-discipline.⁷⁸ In fact, according to Pheraulas' speech in the *Cyropaedia*, the poor soldiers hold a distinct advantage over

⁷⁷ This passage may be based on Democritus' description of the rise of humanity as quoted by Diodorus Siculus (DK 68 B5.60): **καθόλου γὰρ πάντων τὴν χρεῖαν αὐτὴν διδάσκαλον γενέσθαι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις** [For on the whole, in all things necessity itself became the teacher for mankind.]

⁷⁸ This is strikingly similar to some aspects of the Spartan education system as described by Xenophon and Plutarch in the first section of this chapter.

their upper-class counterparts since they have received their training from Necessity

(2.3.13):

καίτοι, ἔφη, οἶδα ὅτι οὗτοι μέγα φρονοῦσιν ὅτι πεπαίδευνται δὴ καὶ πρὸς λιμὸν καὶ δίψαν καὶ πρὸς ῥίγος καρτερεῖν, κακῶς εἰδότες ὅτι καὶ ταῦτα ἡμεῖς ὑπὸ κρείττονος διδασκάλου πεπαιδεύμεθα ἢ οὗτοι. **οὐ γὰρ ἔστι διδάσκαλος οὐδεὶς τούτων κρείττων τῆς ἀνάγκης**, ἣ ἡμᾶς καὶ λίαν ταῦτ' ἀκριβοῦν ἐδίδαξε.

“And yet,” Pheraulas said, “I know that these [upper-class] men pride themselves on having been trained to endure hunger and thirst and cold, but they don’t know that we have been trained in these same things by a better teacher than they have. For in these matters **there is no better teacher than Necessity**, which has taught us exceedingly thoroughly.”

The educational model in this passage is clear: Necessity’s teaching operates through continuous exposure (i.e. habituation to cold, hunger, and thirst) to produce a desired quality (i.e. physical endurance) in its students. It is worth noting that the teaching is described as a positive thing, even if it is carried out by unpleasant means.

Ultimately, the three above depictions of Need/Necessity as a *didaskalos* have a common thread: they all highlight the way a teacher can form and transform his student’s character. But although all three texts treat the same teacher, they depict very different outcomes of the teaching exchange. The democratic Athenian view as expressed by Aristotle and Xenophon is decidedly optimistic. That is to say, they describe teaching as an improving process by which a person can reach his potential as an individual and a citizen of the *polis*. However, there also existed a pre-democratic tradition, beginning with Theognis in the Archaic period and later taken up by Thucydides, that describes teaching as a potentially damaging influence that results in students being worse off than when they started.

Generally speaking, beyond simply making someone better or worse, teaching was seen by Greek authors as resulting in a number of different outcomes ranging from fulfillment to perversion. A thorough investigation of these outcomes will be the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

THE TEACHER'S IMPACT

In the preceding chapters, we investigated the textual tradition surrounding the figure of the *didaskalos* and his methods. What remains to be treated is the literature concerning the respective roles played in the educational exchange by the influence of the *didaskalos* on the one hand, and the *physis* of the student on the other, and the degree to which the potential outcomes of the exchange depended upon these two factors. That is to say, in the following chapter we will explore the range of possible effects of the teaching relationship upon a student's innate nature as described by the Greek authors, and whether teaching or innate ability (or something else altogether) was seen as playing the greatest role in creating these effects.

1. Nature versus Nurture¹

1.1 *The Primacy of Nature*

As we saw in Chapter 1, the earliest examples of a structured teacher-student relationship come from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. But the noble centaur Cheiron and

¹ This debate, which in contemporary educational theory is referred to as the nature-vs-nurture problem, was already being discussed in these terms in antiquity. For nature, the Greeks used *physis*, and for nurture sometimes the more general *trophê*, but more often *paideia* or *didachê*. As early as Homer, Greek authors were interested in the potential value of education and the role played by nature in the attainment of virtue. For a survey of the Greek texts that address these issues, see Lesky 1939. Lesky concludes (378-81) that although the Sophists tried to elevate teaching above all other factors in the educational exchange, the rest of the Greeks remained unconvinced and gave teaching the lowest priority in the teacher-student relationship after nature and effort on the part of the student. As we shall see below, this is not entirely borne out in the texts.

the aristocratic Phoenix and Mentor didn't simply offer their services to anyone needing advice or instruction. On the contrary, education in the Homeric period was strictly limited to the children of kings. Beyond the fact that a working-class family could spare neither the time nor the money to send their children to a tutor, there was also a prevailing belief (as expressed by Pindar and Theognis) that education would be wasted on such people because virtue was innate to the aristocracy and unattainable by education alone.² As Theognis explains (1.429-38) it comes down to the fact that nature is a stronger force than nurture in character formation:

οὐδείς πω τοῦτό γ' ἐπεφράσατο,
 ὥι τις σώφρον' ἔθηκε τὸν ἄφρονα κακὸς κακοῦ ἐσθλόν...
 εἰ δ' ἦν ποιητόν τε καὶ ἐνθετον ἀνδρὶ νόημα,
 οὔ ποτ' ἂν ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ πατὴρ ἐγεντο κακός,
 πειθόμενος μύθοισι σαόφροσιν· ἀλλὰ **διδάσκων**
 οὔ ποτε ποιήσει τὸν κακὸν ἄνδρ' ἀγαθόν.

No one has yet devised a way in which one has made a fool wise and a noble man out of one who is base... if it were possible to place good sense in a man, there would never be a base son of a noble father, since he would listen to words of wisdom. But you will never make a base man noble through **teaching**.

For Theognis and his contemporaries, no amount of coaxing will turn lead to gold; a base nature will never be made noble by external intervention.³ Rather, a person was believed to be capable of achieving greatness because he could trace his lineage back to a hero or demigod: virtue traveled along bloodlines via divine endowment.⁴ In the

² Of course, from a purely political standpoint, it was advantageous to the aristocracy to insist that their superior position was a result of heredity and therefore inaccessible by learning. See Beck 1964, 307 and Kerferd 1981, 37: "The widening of education throughout Athenian society...was not popular with those who looked back to an age of greater aristocratic privilege in such matters...If *aretē* or excellence can be taught then social mobility is immediately possible."

³ The idea of a person who cannot be improved by teaching (or any other means) will return in the next chapter in our discussion of the figure of Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. In the play, Strepsiades represents a base nature that Socrates cannot affect any positive influence upon, and he is subsequently expelled from the *Phrontistērion*.

⁴ On which, see Pindar *Olympian* 11.11 and 20 and Romilly 1998, 45: "In an aristocratic society virtue is regarded as innate. If one possesses it, it is either a chance of birth or, more usually, a result of heredity."

minds of the Greeks, this meant that a man was born who he was and there was no sense pretending otherwise. As Pindar notes (*Ol.* 13.13), it is impossible to hide one's inborn qualities (ἄμαχον δὲ κρύψαι τὸ συγγενὲς ἦθος), and (*Ol.* 11.20) like the fiery fox and the loud-roaring lion, man cannot change his innate nature (τὸ γὰρ ἐμφυὲς οὐτ' αἶθων ἀλώπηξ / οὐτ' ἐρίβρομοι λέοντες διαλλάξαιτο ἦθος).⁵ Rather, a person begins with a certain amount and type of virtue, which education can refine so as to help him reach his full potential. At *Pythian* 2.72, the poet encourages his aristocratic addressee to “by learning, become who you are” (γένοι' οἶος ἐσσι μαθών). Pindar is not fundamentally against education, but in his view, it only makes sense when given to a person of noble birth, and he has nothing but contempt and outright insults for the non-aristocratic educated man. At *Olympian* 9, he scorns the learned man because a god had no part in his excellence (103ff), and reasserts the superiority of innate virtue over education (100-02):

τὸ δὲ **φυῆ** κράτιστον ἅπαν· πολλοὶ δὲ **διδασκαίς** / ἀνθρώπων ἀρεταῖς κλέος /
ὥρυσαν ἀρέσθαι·

What is **inborn** is always best; but many men strive to pluck glory by means of virtues that have been **taught**.

Similarly, at *Olympian* 2 (86-88), he describes the man who has only learned compared with the man who is skillful by nature as a squawking crow compared with the divine bird of Zeus.⁶ According to Pindar, true excellence is only accessible to those with the proper pedigree; all others, no matter how learned, are simply pretenders. This doctrine was always implicit in the aristocratic mindset, but it was only when educational

⁵ See also Sophocles' *Philoctetes* 79, 88, and 1310-11: “You have shown the nature that you were born with” (τὴν φύσιν δ' ἔδειξας, ὦ τέκνον, ἐξ ἧς ἐβλαστες)

⁶ See also *Nemean* 3.42ff and Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 1365a30.

opportunities began to become available to those in the lower classes that staunchly elitist writers like Pindar were forced to articulate it.

For several decades the debate seems to have died down, but by the mid fifth century, the question of nature or nurture had reappeared in the public consciousness, and this time it took hold. Overnight, writers from all genres, including Euripides, Democritus, Protagoras, “Hippocrates”, and Isocrates became fixated on the questions of whether virtue can be taught and if teaching is more important than heredity.⁷ On one side, continuing a modified version of the aristocratic view, Euripides has one of the characters in the *Hippolytus* point out that education is a fine thing, but on its own it is not enough.⁸ Like Theognis, he describes nature as the crucial factor in the acquisition of virtue: nurture can never turn a base man into a good one (τὸ γὰρ κακὸν οὐδεὶς τρέφων εὖ χρηστὸν ἂν θείῃ ποτέ).⁹ Moreover, like Pindar, he also recognizes that for a noble person, education has an enhancing power. For instance, in the *Suppliants* (911ff), he has Adrastus tell Theseus to have his children educated since noble nurture can remove unwanted behaviors:

τὸ γὰρ τραφήναι μὴ κακῶς αἰδῶ φέρει·
αἰσχύνεται δὲ τάγάθ' ἀσκήσας ἀνὴρ
κακὸς γενέσθαι πᾶς τις. ἢ δ' εὐανδρία
διδακτόν... / οὕτω παῖδας εὖ παιδεύετε.

For noble nurture brings reverence with it. Every man, once he has practiced good things is ashamed to be base. And courage is teachable... so have your children educated well.

⁷ See Romilly 1998, 45-53, esp. 49: Athens in the fifth century was “positively obsessed with the problem.”

⁸ See Euripides *Hippolytus* 79ff: those who are innately chaste may pluck the flowers of the pure meadow, but not those who have been taught for they are base men.

⁹ See Euripides *Phoenix* fr. 810; see also *Hecuba* 592ff

This passage hints at what may have been the Greeks' understanding of how education could change a person. That is, education is described here as a way of altering one's behavior and thereby his character. Put another way, a person's actions can shape his personality; he literally becomes what he does.¹⁰ Of course, this process is strictly limited by a person's nature: you can only change as much as your *physis* has the potential to allow.

1.2 The Potential Power of Teaching

Despite seeming to lean toward the aristocratic view, Euripides also acknowledged that there was a conflict brewing in Athens and that others were either strongly opposed to or at least somewhat-less-than-supportive of this old-fashioned educational philosophy. In the *Hecuba* (595-602) he has the title character express some internal turmoil over the validity of the aristocratic view, initially agreeing with it but ending her speech on a note of uncertainty:¹¹

...ἄνθρωποι δ' αἰεὶ / ὁ μὲν πονηρὸς οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν κακός,
 ὁ δ' ἐσθλὸς ἐσθλὸς οὐδὲ συμφορᾶς ὑπο
 φύσιν διέφθειρ' ἀλλὰ χρηστός ἐστ' αἰεὶ;
ἄρ' οἱ τεκόντες διαφέρουσιν ἢ τροφαί;
 ἔχει γε μέντοι καὶ τὸ θρεφθῆναι καλῶς
 δίδαξιν ἐσθλοῦ· τοῦτο δ' ἦν τις εὖ μάθηι,
 οἶδεν τό γ' αἰσχρὸν κανόνι τοῦ καλοῦ μαθῶν.

Among men is it the case that the base man is nothing other than wicked,
 and the noble man is noble and his *physis* is not changed by misfortune
 but he is always good?

¹⁰ On the idea that environment, education, and personality reinforce one another, see Galen *Quod animi mores...*, especially sections 798-803 on Hippocrates' *Airs, Waters, Places* and the ways physical environment can affect someone's natural disposition.

¹¹ Despite the significance of this passage for our purposes, it does not express an important sentiment in the play, but rather represents a mere random digression. At line 603-4, immediately following the passage quoted here, Hecuba chides herself for straying from her point and the subject is never revisited.

Do they differ then by birth or upbringing?

Positive nurture has the power to provide noble instruction, and if someone learns this well, by learning he knows what is shameful by the measure of the good.

In sharp contrast with the bold assertions of Pindar and Theognis that a base man can never be made good by teaching, this passage touches on the key educational philosophy question of the time: can a man's personality be traced back to his parentage or his education, to nature or nurture? Euripides' Hecuba does not claim to know the answer to the question she poses, but the end of the passage implies that she is leaning toward nurture. After all, even a base man, she theorizes, can be taught right from wrong, and then, even if his own nature opposes, he can always act nobly by comparing possible courses of action with what he knows intellectually to be right. It should be recognized that this is not quite the same as turning a base man into a noble one. The base man in this case would only be acting like a noble man and ignoring his own natural impulses; perhaps it is Hecuba's belief that by being nobly trained and acting nobly a base person may eventually become noble.

It was in response to the elitist view as expressed by Pindar, Theognis, and more recently, Euripides, that Democritus¹² is reported to have said that more men are virtuous through practice than by nature (fr. 242: πλέονες ἐξ ἀσκήσιος ἀγαθοὶ γίνονται ἢ ἀπὸ φύσιος), a sentiment that paved the way for the Sophists¹³ who set themselves up as the anti-aristocrats. In terms of education, when faced with the

¹² Most likely, this fragment attributed to Democritus was not actually spoken (or written) by him, and should be more properly labeled Pseudo-Democritus. However, for our purposes, it does not so much matter whether the fragment is truly from Democritus, but rather that it represents one side of the educational philosophy debate that was raging during this particular period in Athens.

¹³ With the exception of Protagoras, whom we will discuss shortly.

argument for nature, the Sophists established teaching to counteract it and claimed that they could make anyone virtuous through their lessons.¹⁴ For example, in Plato's *Protagoras* (318a-319a), the famed Sophist promises that any person who attends his classes will experience constant improvement and will eventually become a good citizen. Similarly in the *Gorgias* (449b), the title character informs Socrates that he makes all of his students into skilled rhetoricians.¹⁵ This is, as we will see in the next chapter, the same promise that Aristophanes' Socrates makes to Strepsiades in the *Clouds*, that is, to take a student of any type and produce a capable public speaker. However, like the uncompromising elitism of the aristocrats, this view, too, proved untenable when it became clear that the Sophists (and Aristophanes' Socrates, for that matter) could not possibly deliver all that they had promised. As Isocrates famously says in *Against the Sophists* (10), the Sophists "do not attribute any power either to practical application or the innate ability of the student" (καὶ ταύτης τῆς δυνάμεως οὐδὲν οὔτε ταῖς ἐμπειρίαις οὔτε τῇ φύσει τῇ τοῦ μαθητοῦ μεταδιδόασιν) but assert the supremacy of teaching above all else.

While the Sophists and the elitists sat staunchly at either end of the educational spectrum, many of the thinkers of the period, including Protagoras, "Hippocrates", and Isocrates, sought a workable compromise between the two views. The first to bridge the

¹⁴ The Sophists' apparently democratic view of teaching does, of course, present us with a paradox: it is easy to say that you can make any of your students virtuous when you only accept upper class students who can afford to pay your exorbitant fees.

¹⁵ For other examples of Sophistic promises, see Plato *Protagoras* 357e, *Hippias Major* 283c; Xenophon *Cynegeticus* 13.1; Isocrates *Antidosis* 147.9, *Against the Sophists* 1. For more on the extravagant promises of the Sophists and the way these promises distinguished them as educational professionals, see Chapter 1.

gap was Protagoras, who stood with the other Sophists in asserting that virtue could be taught to all, but he insisted that the process required a combination of nature, teaching, and practice in order to be successful (φύσεως καὶ ἀσκήσεως διδασκαλία δεῖται).¹⁶ In similar fashion, the Hippocratic corpus describes nature as the most important factor in all good qualities and a prerequisite to learning while emphasizing that many other elements are needed for education to take place (*Lex* 2.2ff):¹⁷

Χρὴ γὰρ, ὅστις μέλλει ἰητρικῆς ξύνεσιν ἀτρεκέως ἀρμόζεσθαι, τῶνδὲ μιν ἐπήβολον γενέσθαι· φύσιος· διδασκαλίας· τόπου εὐφυέος· παιδομαθίης· φιλοπονίης· χρόνου. Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν πάντων δεῖ φύσιος· φύσιος γὰρ ἀντιπρησσοῦσης, κενεὰ πάντα· φύσιος δὲ ἐς τὸ ἄριστον ὁδηγεοῦσης, διδασκαλίη τέχνης γίνεται·

It is necessary for anyone intending to acquire a precise understanding of medicine to be in possession of these things: the proper *physis*; *didaskalia*; an appropriate location for learning; the chance to learn from an early age; an industrious spirit; and time. But above all, it is necessary to have the proper *physis*, for if *physis* opposes, everything else is pointless. But with *physis* guiding someone toward the best outcome, a *didaskalia* in the [medical] craft can happen.

So, in addition to the usual duo of nature and teaching, according to Hippocrates, the student must also make an investment of effort in the form of good work ethic (*philoponia*),¹⁸ and a number of other circumstantial factors must align with these (time, location, etc). However, he makes a point of emphasizing the primacy of *physis*. A student could have all of the other elements of the exchange, but without *physis*, it would all be in vain.

Isocrates takes this two-part *physis-didaskalia* formulation to heart, on the one hand criticizing the elitists for their scorn of education (*Antid.* 210ff, 291) and on the other

¹⁶ DK 80 B3. Cf. Plato *Protagoras* 323c and 327c. See also Beck 1964, 158-9.

¹⁷ See also *De Decente Habitu* 4.3ff.

¹⁸ Cf. with *askêsis/epimeleia/empeiria* at Introduction, Section 3.2.

rebuking the Sophists for refusing to take into account the innate natures of their students and giving too much credit to teaching (*C. soph.* 10).¹⁹ He clearly still clings to the aristocratic belief in the importance of inborn talent in the attainment of virtue, but as a teacher himself, he also has faith in the power of education to shape and improve the character of his students. The compromise he settles on is one in which virtue is produced through the combination of nature, experience (or practice), and teaching, in that order of importance.²⁰ However, he is quick to point out (*Antid.* 185-6; *C. soph.* 15) that teachers (of oratory) cannot make capable orators out of just anyone. It's true, they can contribute to the results, but these powers are never perfected except in those who also possess preexisting talent and engage in practice. At *Antidosis* 187-92 he explains this belief in detail:

Λέγομεν γὰρ ὡς δεῖ τοὺς μέλλοντας διοίσειν ἢ περὶ τοὺς λόγους ἢ περὶ τὰς πράξεις ἢ περὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἐργασίας πρῶτον μὲν πρὸς τοῦτο πεφυκέναι καλῶς, πρὸς ὅπερ ἂν προηρημένοι τυγχάνωσιν, ἔπειτα παιδευθῆναι καὶ λαβεῖν τὴν ἐπιστήμην, ἣτις ἂν ᾗ περὶ ἐκάστου, τρίτον ἐντριβεῖς γενέσθαι καὶ γυμνασθῆναι περὶ τὴν χρεῖαν καὶ τὴν ἐμπειρίαν αὐτῶν... Εἶναι δὲ τούτων προσήκον ἐκατέροις, τοῖς τε διδάσκουσιν καὶ τοῖς μανθάνουσιν, ἴδιον μὲν τοῖς μὲν εἰσενέγκασθαι **τὴν φύσιν** οἷαν δεῖ, τοῖς δὲ δύνασθαι **παιδεῦσαι** τοὺς τοιούτους, κοινὸν δ' ἀμφοτέρων τὸ περὶ **τὴν ἐμπειρίαν** γυμνάσιον... εἰ δὲ δή τις... ἔροιτό με, τί τούτων μεγίστην ἔχει δύναμιν πρὸς τὴν τῶν λόγων παιδείαν, ἀποκρινάμην ἂν **ὅτι τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἀνυπέρβλητόν ἐστιν καὶ πολὺ πάντων διαφέρει**... Καὶ μὲν δὴ κάκεινους ἴσμεν τοὺς καταδεεστέραν μὲν τούτων τὴν φύσιν ἔχοντας, ταῖς δ' ἐμπειρίαις καὶ ταῖς ἐπιμελείαις προέχοντας, ὅτι γίνονται κρείττους οὐ μόνον αὐτῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν εὔ μὲν πεφυκότων, λίαν δ' αὐτῶν κατημεληκότων· **ὥσθ' ἐκάτερόν τε τούτων δεινὸν ἂν καὶ λέγειν καὶ πράττειν ποιήσκειν, ἀμφοτέρὰ τε γενόμενα περὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ἀνυπέρβλητον ἂν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀποτελέσειεν**. Περὶ μὲν οὖν τῆς φύσεως καὶ τῆς ἐμπειρίας ταῦτα γινώσκω· περὶ δὲ τῆς παιδείας οὐκ ἔχω τοιοῦτον λόγον εἰπεῖν· οὔτε γὰρ ὁμοίαν οὔτε παραπλησίαν ἔχει τούτοις τὴν δύναμιν.

I say that it's necessary for those intending to excel in the pursuit of words or deeds or any other work first to be naturally gifted in whatever activity they have chosen to undertake, second to be taught and acquire knowledge, whatever that entails for each

¹⁹ In fact, Isocrates repeats the established aristocratic doctrine that there is no way to make base natures good through education. See *Against the Sophists* 21 and *Antidosis* 274.

²⁰ On which, see Beck 1964, 288. Cf. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1103b.

pursuit, and third to become practiced and trained concerning the use and practical application of their art... And in this, there is a role for both those who teach and those who learn: the learner alone provides the necessary **innate ability**, and the teacher alone has the power **to educate**, but together they undertake the exercise of **practical application**... But if anyone were to ask me which of these is the most important for oratorical training, I would answer that ***physis* is paramount and comes before all else**... Indeed, we know that those men who are lacking in innate ability but excel in practical application and diligence not only improve themselves but surpass others who are naturally talented but have been too negligent of their gifts. **This means that either of these things can produce a capable orator and man of action, but both of them together might result in a man surpassing all others.** These are my thoughts concerning *physis* and practical application. But I can't say the same thing about education for its power is neither the same nor comparable to theirs.

This passage sums up Isocrates' own personal conflict over the issue of nature versus nurture in the achievement of virtue. In the beginning, he expresses a definitive opinion about the relative importance of nature, teaching, and practice in education, claiming that they are all part of the pursuit of excellence in any field since nature is provided by the student, teaching by the *didaskalos*, and practice by the two of them working together. However, he then qualifies his previous statement by reasserting the importance of *physis* above all. But only a few lines later, he equivocates, insisting instead that practice and diligence can result in the same level of success as innate ability alone, especially if a naturally talented person neglects his gifts. Of course, it would be best, in Isocrates' view, to combine innate ability with practice, but either of the two alone will suffice. Despite being a teacher by trade, he does not place this same degree of faith in education, saying that its power cannot hope to rival that of *physis* or *empeiria*. In the section that follows the passage above, he goes on to contradict himself yet again by reminding us that an orator can have all the training and practice in the world, but if he gets up to speak and is lacking the proper innate ability, he will always fail. In the end, Isocrates could not quite reconcile his profession with his

aristocratic beliefs, and the formula he settles upon is one in which nature, practice, and teaching are all important elements in education, but nature is essential.

This passage from Isocrates perfectly encapsulates the spirit of the nature-versus-nurture debate in fifth- and fourth-century Athens. Despite a growing interest and faith in the potential improving power of education, for the Athenians, innate nature was what made them who they were,²¹ and it was unthinkable to suggest that with enough teaching and practice a foreigner (or a commoner, for that matter) could achieve the same things as a noble-born Athenian citizen. Hence, according to all of the literature, education is, at best, a supplement to natural ability, and none of the authors abandon nature altogether: after all, teaching must have something to act on.²² This was, arguably, the Sophists' fatal flaw - they tried to remove nature from the discussion. As Lesky (1939, 378) has noted, "The concept of nature as determined by birth was planted too deeply in Greek thought for it to have been easily swept away by the new confidence in the power of education and teaching."²³

2. Outcomes of Teaching

²¹ See Chapter 2, Section 1.2 discussion on the Funeral Oration and the Athenian view of their own innate nature versus Spartan habituation.

²² This explains Galen's observation at *Quod animi mores...* 817 that children who have had the exact same upbringing often turn out very differently; the deciding factor is each child's innate nature.

For a further ancient example see Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1179b21-23: virtue may be obtained through teaching, but only if the student possesses the proper nature.

²³ This discussion would continue in the literature well past the Classical period. Cf. Plutarch's *De Liberis Educandis* 2a: Nature without teaching is a blind thing, teaching without nature is an imperfect thing, and practice without both is an ineffectual thing.

By the end of the fifth century, it was more or less established that the process of education consisted at the very least of a contribution on the part of the teacher - *didachê* - and one on the part of the student - *physis*.²⁴ However, the potential outcome of the educational exchange was thought to depend heavily on the type of *didachê* and *physis* involved. Specifically, good and bad teaching could have vastly different effects on a student's *physis*. Three different categories of outcome are described in the literature based on whether the student's nature and the teaching are good or bad:²⁵ fulfillment, mitigation (often followed by relapse), and perversion.

2.1 Fulfillment

When a noble *physis* is acted upon by positive teaching, the result is, in a Greek author's mind, the default educational outcome: fulfillment (τέλος). That is to say, for the Greeks, a human *physis* is designed to do a particular thing and it is good teaching that helps them do it. Put another way, the proper role of teaching is to help a person turn into what he has the potential to become.²⁶ So, for Isocrates, the ideal teaching outcome was the production of the best possible orator, for Hippocrates it was the best possible doctor, and for Protagoras, the best possible citizen. As Teresa Morgan (1998,

²⁴ Some kind of practice or attention on the student's part was also expected, but for some reason this element of the teaching exchange attracted much less interest in the literature. For the three traditional elements of the teaching exchange, see Introduction, Section 3.2.

²⁵ The Greek terms of this discussion καλός and κακός are used just as vaguely as the English "good" and "bad". Occasionally the word for "good" will be ἐσθλός and the word for "bad" πονηρός, which implies that the distinction is one of moral disposition, e.g. noble versus base, at least when discussing a person's preexisting nature. Concerning the types of teaching, however, I take "good" and "bad" to designate both the intent and the result of the teaching; that is, "good" teaching is both kind-hearted, and it also is likely to produce a "good" person, while "bad" teaching might be described as both mean-spirited and corrupting. In the following section, I will refer to good nature as "noble" and good teaching as "positive", likewise bad nature as "base" and bad teaching as "negative".

²⁶ Cf. Pindar *Pythian* 2.72; on which, see discussion above at Section 1.1.

256) has noted, “[Education] is presented [by ancient authors] as natural because it complements and fulfils the pupil’s natural tendencies.” Because the specific nature of each student would have dictated the proper outcome of his educational experience, Greek authors tended not to write about this type of outcome with any degree of specificity. Instead of recounting the particular educational exchange of a given person, they chose to describe the interaction in much more abstract terms by using the metaphor of instruction as farming.²⁷ The earliest complete articulation of this idea comes from the Hippocratic corpus (*Lex* 3.3ff):²⁸

Ὅκοίη γὰρ τῶν ἐν τῇ γῇ φυομένων ἢ θεωρίη, τοιήδε καὶ τῆς ἱητρικῆς ἢ μάθησις. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ φύσις ἡμέων, ὅκοιον ἢ χώρη· τὰ δὲ δόγματα τῶν διδασκόντων, ὅκοιον τὰ σπέρματα· ἡ δὲ παιδομαθίη, τὸ καθ' ὥρην αὐτὰ πεσεῖν εἰς τὴν ἄρουραν· ὁ δὲ τόπος ἐν ᾧ ἡ μάθησις, ὅκοιον ἢ ἐκ τοῦ περιέχοντος ἡέρος τροφή γιγνομένη τοῖσι φυομένοισιν· ἡ δὲ φιλοπονίη, ἐργασίη· ὁ δὲ χρόνος ταῦτα ἐνισχύει πάντα, ὥς τραφήναι τελέως.

Instruction in medicine is like the culture of the products of the earth. For our *physis* is, so to speak, the soil; the lessons of our teachers are like the seeds; instruction in childhood is like the planting of those seeds in the ground during the proper season; the place of instruction is like the nourishment provided to the plants by the surrounding atmosphere; diligence is like working in the fields; and time imparts strength to all things and brings them to maturity.

For Hippocrates, there are a number of elements that must be present for effective education to take place. Not only do the expected pieces of the puzzle - nature, teaching (and a teacher), and work ethic - have to be provided, but also the right season of life for education, a good location for instruction, and a sufficient duration of time to complete the lessons. Recalling the earlier passage from Hippocrates, we know that the most important of these is *physis*, but it is unclear from either passage whether the author felt that education would fail if any of the other elements were missing.

²⁷ On which, see Morgan 1998, 255-60.

²⁸ For a brief mention of this idea in the contemporary literature, see Antiphon DK 87 B60.

The assimilation of teaching to agriculture here shows us that a student's growth and development were conceived of by the Greeks as a natural process involving set steps and a predetermined outcome. As with a healthy seedling that is planted in the right kind of soil and given the proper nutrition and cultivation, positive lessons when imparted to a person with a noble nature and reinforced with the appropriate practice will yield the best possible fruit: a fully developed Greek citizen. This concept is taken up in even more simplistic terms by (Pseudo-) Plutarch in *De Liberis Educandis* (2b-c):

ὥσπερ δ' ἐπὶ τῆς γεωργίας πρῶτον μὲν ἀγαθὴν ὑπάρξει δεῖ τὴν γῆν, εἴτα δὲ τὸν φυτουργὸν ἐπιστήμονα, εἴτα τὰ σπέρματα σπουδαῖα, τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον γῇ μὲν ἔοικεν ἢ φύσις, γεωργῶ δ' ὁ παιδεύων, σπέρματι δ' αἱ τῶν λόγων ὑποθῆκαι καὶ τὰ παραγγέλματα. **ταῦτα πάντα διατεινόμενος ἂν εἴποιμ' ὅτι συνῆλθε καὶ συνέπνευσεν εἰς τὰς τῶν παρ' ἅπασιν ἀδομένων ψυχάς**, Πυθαγόρου καὶ Σωκράτους καὶ Πλάτωνος καὶ τῶν ὅσοι δόξης ἀειμνήστου τετυχήκασιν.

Just as in agriculture first of all the soil must be good, second, the farmer must be skilled, and third, the seeds must be sound, in the same way *physis* is like the soil, the educator is like the farmer, and the verbal precepts and lessons are like the seeds. And I would strenuously insist that **all of these things met together and formed a unity in the souls of those who are praised by all**, namely Pythagoras and Socrates and Plato, and all those who have achieved everlasting fame.

The focus here shifts from all of the other elements that will make for a successful educational exchange (location, timing, etc) in the Hippocrates passage, to the three most important: the teacher, his lessons, and the student's *physis*. Not only must all three of them be present in an ideal educational exchange, but the *physis* must be good, the *didaskalos* must be skilled, and the precepts must be sound. When these three things are found together, Plutarch tells us, they form a unity (*sumpnein*) in the soul of the student which allows him to achieve the same level of excellence as the most virtuous men of all time (e.g. Plato, Socrates, and Protagoras). Although this is clearly an exaggeration - most men will never attain the same degree of virtue as Plato

et al - the intent of the passage is clear: successful education consists of a positive contribution on the parts of both teacher and student. By this token, the task of the teacher is to use his precepts to foster and enhance the preexisting qualities of a student in the hopes that if the exchange operates as expected, a good citizen will emerge, and if it operates flawlessly, an extraordinary one will emerge.

These examples of ideal teaching outcomes demonstrate two things about Greek attitudes concerning education: 1) that it was possible - indeed, expected - for a student to emerge from a teaching interaction having been changed for the better; and 2) that Greek authors were much more interested in the negative outcomes than the positive ones. In other words, when the system functioned as it was intended, there was no need to describe the outcome of education in detail, hence we hear about the straightforwardly positive outcomes infrequently and only in theoretical terms. The negative outcomes, however, were a different story, as we will see below.

2.2 Mitigation and Relapse

Being Athenians, and therefore in their own estimation innately virtuous, the authors of this period clearly preferred not to admit that on occasion a teacher might encounter a person with a base nature.²⁹ In those few cases (e.g. *Hecuba*) where a base nature was met with positive teaching, the result was a significant improvement of the student's preexisting character to the extent that even savage natures might be tamed by

²⁹ Plato is a notable exception to this. At *Laws* 7.808d-e he explains that all boys must have a teacher for without education, they are insolent and treacherous, not to mention sly, wild, and ignorant.

teaching. For example, the so-called “Sisyphus Fragment”³⁰ describes an early period of human history when lawlessness ruled and men behaved like beasts (1-12) until an unnamed person introduced “the sweetest of teachings” (24-5: τοῦσδε τοὺς λόγους λέγων διδασμάτων ἡδιστον εἰσηγήσατο). However, the message of the fragment is not that of the unqualified success of teaching. The early lawgiver is credited with eradicating lawlessness, but he does so by tricking the people into fearing divine retribution for criminal behavior. His instruction does not remove their desire to act criminally, but rather it creates a disincentive for doing so. Hence, teaching is seen here as a mitigating force on base natures, but not a transformative one.

In fact, some Greek writers believed that all it takes for a student’s nature to lapse into wickedness after any improvement is the removal of the positive influence that brought about the change. In practical terms, this meant that without the constant exercise of self-discipline, a person - whether initially virtuous or not - would fall into base behavior. Indeed, this is exactly what Xenophon describes in Cyrus’ speech to his men in the *Cyropaedia* (7.5.75):

οὐ γάρ τοι τὸ ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας γενέσθαι τοῦτο ἀρκεῖ ὥστε καὶ διατελεῖν ὄντας ἀγαθοὺς, ἢν μὴ τις αὐτοῦ διὰ τέλους ἐπιμελῆται· ἀλλ' ὥσπερ καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι τέχναι ἀμεληθεῖσαι μείονος ἄξιοι γίνονται... οὕτω καὶ ἡ σωφροσύνη καὶ ἡ ἐγκράτεια καὶ ἡ ἀλκή, ὁπόταν τις αὐτῶν ἀνῇ τὴν ἄσκησιν, ἐκ τούτου εἰς τὴν πονηρίαν πάλιν τρέπεται.

Having been noble men at one point is not sufficient for the continuation of goodness in the future if one does not maintain this quality continuously. But just as other arts retrograde when neglected, in this same way self-control and temperance and strength will turn back to vice as soon as one stops cultivating them.

³⁰ Attributed to either Critias or Euripides; DK 88 B25, quoted in Sextus Empiricus *Against the Mathematicians* 9.54

According to Cyrus in this passage, the catalyst for relapse may simply be neglect.

Although Cyrus does not describe his men as having been especially wicked prior to their victory, the concern he expresses is that any man - especially one who feels safe and relieved after a long battle - can fall victim to laziness and greed. In the context of education, this means that when separated for long enough from the improving influence of his teacher, a student is likely to revert to a lesser state of virtue or, as the case may be, even to relapse into baseness.

Although he describes this principle as it applies to all people's natures in the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon applies it very specifically to students with base natures in an important passage about Socrates and his pupils Critias and Alcibiades in the

Memorabilia (1.2.24-5):³¹

Καὶ Κριτίας δὴ καὶ Ἀλκιβιάδης, ἕως μὲν Σωκράτει συνήστην, ἐδυνάσθη ἐκείνῳ χρωμένῳ συμμάχῳ τῶν μὴ καλῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν κρατεῖν· ἐκείνου δ' ἀπαλλαγέντε, Κριτίας μὲν φυγὼν εἰς Θετταλίαν ἐκεῖ συνῆν ἀνθρώποις ἀνομία μᾶλλον ἢ δικαιοσύνη χρωμένοις, Ἀλκιβιάδης δ' αὖ διὰ μὲν κάλλος ὑπὸ πολλῶν καὶ σεμνῶν γυναικῶν θηρώμενος, διὰ δύναμιν δὲ τὴν ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ τοῖς συμμάχοις ὑπὸ πολλῶν καὶ δυνατῶν ἀνθρώπων διαθρυπτόμενος... τοιούτων δὲ συμβάντων αὐτοῖν, καὶ ὠγκωμένῳ μὲν ἐπὶ γένει, ἐπηρμένῳ δ' ἐπὶ πλούτῳ, πεφουσημένῳ δ' ἐπὶ δυνάμει, διατεθρυμμένῳ δὲ ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐπὶ δὲ πᾶσι τούτοις διεφθαρμένῳ καὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἀπὸ Σωκράτους γεγονότε, τί θαυμαστὸν εἰ ὑπερηφάνῳ ἐγενέσθην;

And so Critias and Alcibiades, as long as they were with Socrates, were able - with him as an ally - to master their wicked desires. But when they left his company, Critias fled to Thessaly where he associated with men who practiced lawlessness rather than justice; and Alcibiades, because of his beauty, was hunted by many great women, and because of his influence in the city and among her allies, was spoiled by many powerful men... Such was the fortune of these two men, **and when on top of pride of birth, confidence in wealth, arrogance concerning ability, and temptation by many men, were added complete corruption and the fact that they were apart from Socrates for a long time, is it any wonder that they became overweening?**

³¹ For a more thorough discussion of this passage as it relates to the trial and execution of Socrates, see Chapter 4.

As Xenophon points out, Critias and Alcibiades were already arrogant and overly proud before they went to study under Socrates, but his mitigating influence kept these negative traits in check for the duration of their association. It was only when they had been away from him for a long time and had spent that time in the company of other base-natured people that their original personalities took over again.

The view of education that emerges from these two Xenophon passages is a decidedly pessimistic one. It's true that teaching can have a positive impact on a base nature, but that impact will almost certainly be temporary. Teaching is not conceived of here as producing a permanent effect, and despite the best efforts of the teacher, a student's *physis* must revert to its original state (or at least degrade to a less desirable state), even after instruction directed to the opposite end. In this way, Xenophon shows himself to be aligned with the prevailing contemporary view that *physis* is the most important element of an educational exchange and as we saw in the passage from Hippocrates above (*Lex* 2.2), if *physis* opposes, everything else is pointless.³²

2.3 Perversion

The least desirable but most interesting outcome of the educational relationship for Greek authors was perversion: when misguided or intentionally wicked instruction degraded a noble *physis*. Already in the Archaic period it was believed that a person's good qualities were vulnerable to corruption simply through casual contact with less

³² It is presumably for this reason that there is no mention in the literature about educational exchanges wherein negative teaching is applied to a base *physis*: nothing wholly good or even good enough to be worth discussing can possibly come of it.

virtuous people. In his advice to his young friend Cynrus, Theognis warns him not to associate with base men but only to cling to the noble, for “from noble men you will learn noble things; but if you mingle with base men, you will lose even the sense that you have” (1.35-6: ἐσθλῶν μὲν γὰρ ἅπ' ἐσθλὰ μαθήσεται· ἦν δὲ κακοῖσιν / συμμίσγηις, ἀπολείς καὶ τὸν ἐόντα νόον).³³ On the face of it, this passage would seem to contradict the aristocratic view that virtue is innate and therefore beyond the control of the individual who possesses it. However, it is worth noting that the passages touting the supremacy of the aristocratic *physis* do not claim that this *physis* is necessarily immutable. Just because you are born possessing *aretê* does not mean you don't have to work to hold onto it. In fact, as we saw above, Pindar, Isocrates, and others believed it was the duty of those who had been endowed with natural talents to cultivate them through education rather than allow them to be corrupted or to wither away from neglect.

But what if the teacher to whom you turn to preserve and enhance your noble *physis* turns out to himself be base?³⁴ This is the very scenario Aeschines warns about in *Against Timarchus* (11):

ὁ νομοθέτης ἡγήσατο τὸν καλῶς τραφέντα παῖδα ἄνδρα γενόμενον χρήσιμον ἔσεσθαι τῇ πόλει· ὅταν δ' ἡ φύσις τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εὐθύς πονηρὰν ἀρχὴν λάβῃ τῆς παιδείας, ἐκ τῶν κακῶς τεθραμμένων παίδων παραπλησίους ἡγήσατο πολίτας ἔσεσθαι Τιμάρχῳ τουτῷ.

³³ The same theme is taken up later by Menander in the famous fragmentary maxim from Thaïs, “bad company corrupts good character” (φθειρουσιν ἥθη χρηστὴ ὁμιλία κακά). This passage is quoted in St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians and in the later Christian tradition seems to be a piece of cautionary advice about minding the company you keep.

³⁴ The theme of the bad teacher will also be important for our later discussion of Socrates, especially as he is portrayed in Aristophanes' *Clouds*.

The lawmaker believed that a well-nurtured boy would be a useful member of the city when he had grown up, but when a person's *physis* is subjected at the outset to base education, the lawmaker believed that the children produced by this kind of wrong nurture would become citizens like this man Timarchus.

Timarchus, of course, is presented as an immoral villain in the speech, and the last type of person a parent would want his/her child to turn out like. With this passage, Aeschines is able to simultaneously malign Timarchus and emphasize the importance of maintaining regulations concerning the types of people who are allowed to have educational interactions with children. This only makes sense given that children were (and still are) perceived as especially vulnerable to corrupting influences, particularly by those whom they are expected to emulate,³⁵ i.e. their teachers. However, a teacher is still a teacher, even when his students have grown up, and a teacher's potential ability to ruin his student's *physis* does not necessarily diminish if the student is no longer a child.

For example, in the passage from Thucydides that we discussed in Chapter 2, War is seen as a negative teacher (3.82.2):

ἐν μὲν γὰρ εἰρήνῃ καὶ ἀγαθοῖς πράγμασιν αἱ τε πόλεις καὶ οἱ ἰδιῶται ἀμείνους τὰς γνώμας ἔχουσι διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐς ἀκουσίους ἀνάγκας πίπτειν· ὁ δὲ πόλεμος ὑφελὼν τὴν εὐπορίαν τοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν **βίαιος** διδάσκαλος καὶ πρὸς τὰ παρόντα τὰς ὀργὰς τῶν πολλῶν ὁμοιοῖ.

For in peace and prosperity cities and individuals have better sentiments because they do not experience imperious necessities. But war is a **violent** *didaskalos* that takes away the easy supply of daily sustenance and assimilates the temperaments of the people to their circumstances.

For our purposes, the most telling word in the passage is βίαιος, “violent, forcible”.

When Thucydides says that War is a violent teacher, the implication is that War not only

³⁵ For the role of emulation in education, see Chapter 2, Section 1.3.

conducts its teaching violently, but also that the result of the instruction for the people is an increased level of violence in their natures. Indeed, this is what we learn in the next line when the author tells us that War assimilates the personalities of the people to their circumstances. Given that desperation, ruthless self-preservation, and wanton violence are all characteristic of life in wartime, according to Thucydides, previously noble people living through war will inevitably take on these negative traits as a result of their (albeit metaphorical) teaching relationship with War. In other words, when a noble nature comes into contact with a negative teacher, the result will never be improvement of the *physis*. On the contrary, a noble *physis* cannot withstand the degrading effects of a base influence like War, especially when that influence is acting in the role of the *didaskalos*. As we saw in the previous chapter, Athenian education operated in large part by exploiting a student's natural tendency to admire and emulate his teacher, and when that teacher was War, there were only negative traits for a student to emulate. If we apply the metaphorical teaching relationship from this passage of Thucydides to a hypothetical Athenian classroom, it is clear what would have happened: a group of impressionable, noble-natured youths would have paid rapt attention as their base-natured teacher encouraged them to conduct themselves wickedly, and by imitating their *didaskalos*, in no time they would also have become base.

Indeed, if what Thucydides says about the teaching influence of War is true, this paints a rather bleak picture of the positive potential of education, i.e. a noble student who comes into contact with a negative teacher will always be corrupted. Fortunately, as the passage above tacitly implies, at least in the case of War, the effect may have been

temporary. That is to say, the first lines of the passage describe how people are kinder and happier when living in peace and prosperity, but it is the intervention of War that causes them to become base. Thucydides doesn't say so in as many words, but by reading between the lines we can envision a time after the war when peace has returned and with it the better natures of the people. As in the Xenophon example above where the positive influence of a teacher only lasts as long as his association with the student and in his absence the student's original base nature reasserts itself, perhaps the unspoken implication of the passage from Thucydides is similar: the negative influence of the βίαιος διδάσκαλος only lasts for the duration of the war and in its absence the people's original noble natures reemerge.

The most detailed example of the perverting effect of base teaching upon noble natures can be found in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*. The premise of the play is simple: the Trojan seer Helenus has told the Greeks that in order to win the war they will need to recover the crippled archer Philoctetes and his bow - the bow of Heracles - from the island of Lemnos where they abandoned him ten years prior. Given that Philoctetes harbors extreme hatred toward the Greeks who left him alone on the island, the cunning and amoral Odysseus is sent to persuade him. As part of his plan to win Philoctetes over, Odysseus enlists the help of Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, who will earn the archer's trust by pretending to have been similarly maltreated by Odysseus. At lines 383-8, Neoptolemus tells Philoctetes:

πλέω πρὸς οἴκους, τῶν ἐμῶν τητῶμενος
 πρὸς τοῦ κακίστου κάκ κακῶν Ὀδυσσέως.
 Κούκ αἰτιῶμαι κείνον ὥς τοὺς ἐν τέλει·
 πόλις γὰρ ἔστι πᾶσα τῶν ἡγουμένων

στρατός τε σύμπας, οἱ δ' ἀκοσμοῦντες βροτῶν
 διδασκάλων λόγοισι γίνονται κακοί.

I am sailing home, deprived of what is mine
 by the most wicked of wicked men, Odysseus.
 And I do not blame him as much as those in authority.
 For a city, like an army, is entirely dependent upon its leaders,
and those men who do wrong
become wicked because of the lessons of their teachers.

In this way, as in the Thucydides passage, Odysseus's wickedness is the result of the influence of wicked *didaskaloi*. Hence, Neoptolemus does not hold Odysseus entirely responsible for his base actions, since a negative teacher can destroy even the noblest of natures. However, regardless of whether Odysseus is to blame for his own wickedness, as Philoctetes points out later in the play, he is certainly responsible for the wickedness of his protégé, Neoptolemus (1013-15):

Ἄλλ' ἢ κακὴ σὴ διὰ μυχῶν βλέπουσ' ἀεὶ
 ψυχὴ νιν ἀφυῇ τ' ὄντα κοῦ θέλονθ' ὅμως
εὖ προὔδιδάξεν ἐν κακοῖς εἶναι σοφόν.

But your wicked soul, always looking out [for opportunity] from hidden corners, **taught [Neoptolemus] to be skilled at wickedness**, even though he is neither willing nor well-suited.

Again we see a significant point of connection between the description of teaching in this play and the Thucydides passage above. In both texts, the training given by wicked *didaskaloi* (Odysseus and War, respectively) is seen as both compulsory and contrary to the natural disposition of the student.³⁶ Like Thucydides' citizens whose natures in peacetime tend toward kindness and virtue, Neoptolemus is described here as lacking the predisposition toward wickedness (ἀφυῇ). But in the same way that War forcibly assimilates the people's natures to their circumstances, Odysseus, acting in the role of the *didaskalos*, imposes his own baseness upon his student anyway. Neoptolemus may

³⁶ For another example of negative education given to unwilling students, see Plato *Timaeus* 86d-e.

not be innately base, but that won't stop Odysseus from exerting influence to make him act basely. In this passage, we receive a harsh reminder that in the Greek view, paradoxically, the teacher held far more power than the student over the outcome of an educational exchange.³⁷

From an educational philosophy standpoint, the situation described in the *Philoctetes* is distressing on another level as well. According to this play, base teaching can be seen as setting in motion a kind of domino effect. That is, base teachers make base men (like Odysseus) who, by imitating their teachers and assimilating their own students to themselves, go on to make more base men (like Neoptolemus). In this way, the harmful influence of a single bad teacher could spread exponentially, and the whole virtuous Greek world might be corrupted very rapidly.³⁸ However, the final scene of the *Philoctetes* offers some hope. After successfully tricking the crippled archer out of his bow, Neoptolemus is preparing to depart with Odysseus when he undergoes a crisis of conscience. Ignoring his teacher's orders to stop, he runs back to Philoctetes, returns the bow to him, and offers to bring him back to Troy so he may receive the proper medical treatment for his foot. Upon receiving the bow, the surprised and grateful Philoctetes praises Neoptolemus for living up to his innate potential (1310-13):

...τὴν φύσιν δ' ἔδειξας, ὦ τέκνον,
ἐξ ἧς ἔβλαστες, οὐχὶ Σισύφου πατρός,
ἀλλ' ἐξ Ἀχιλλέως, ὃς μετὰ ζώντων ὅτ' ἦν
ἤκου' ἄριστα, νῦν δὲ τῶν τεθνηκότων.

³⁷ For teachers as always more blameworthy than their students for negative educational outcomes, see Plato *Timaeus* 87b. Cf. above Chapter 2, Section 1.3 on teacher responsibility.

³⁸ For the way this idea informed the contemporary discourse concerning Socrates' teaching, especially as depicted in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, see Chapter 4.

Child, you have shown the *physis*
 from which you were born, and Sisyphus was not your father,
 but Achilles, who was the greatest among the living,
 and is still so even now among the dead.

The message here is clearly that even despite the most corrupting of teaching, a noble nature can still win out in the end, for teaching can affect how you act but it cannot change who you innately are. In the same way that Critias and Alcibiades relapsed into wickedness once they had left Socrates' noble company, in this play, Neoptolemus' innate goodness was able to overcome Odysseus' base teaching once the latter had ceased actively trying to influence his student. In short, in this particular battle between nature and nurture - and in the one described by Xenophon -, nature prevails.

3. Character Formation and the Role of the *Didaskalos*

The above discussion of education in the *Philoctetes* brings us full circle to the point where we began this chapter: with the importance of *physis*. Despite their authors' varying degrees of conviction in the matter, all of the passages we have examined exhibit a belief in the power of nature to shape personality in a way that nurture alone can never achieve. As Heraclitus is quoted by Strabo as professing (DK 22 B119), "A man's character is his destiny" (ἡθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων). Try as he might, an innately base person can never hope to attain the same degree of virtue as one who is innately noble.

However, this does not mean that character formation was thought to be impossible. When faced with concrete examples of the ways teaching could change a person's behavior (and possibly even his nature) for better or worse, Greek authors reconciled

this information with their long-held beliefs about the primacy of *physis* in a variety of ways. As the passages in this chapter attest, teaching was seen to profoundly affect both base and noble natures. Exemplary teaching was believed by Greek authors to have a positive effect on all types of *physis*, while unscrupulous teaching could only result in debasement of the student's *physis*.

As a result, writers like Thucydides and Xenophon came to the conclusion in their writing that although nature is a prerequisite to virtue, nurture can sometimes overcome it, at least temporarily. Specifically, a base nature can be improved by good teaching, but the improvement will only last as long as the teaching relationship. However, in the opposite circumstance, that is, noble natures acted upon by base teaching, the outcome was slightly less predictable. Negative teaching corrupted noble natures without exception, but in some cases the corruption was temporary. The Greek writers themselves do not explain why this could happen with some students but not others, but by setting the examples side-by-side as we have done above, we may come to some tentative conclusions.

First, the corrupting effects of base teaching seem to have been more permanent for younger students. As both Aeschines and Theognis warn, a young person who is exposed to bad nurture will be made wicked, and neither author mentions the possibility of reversing this effect. This only makes sense given that children were believed to be more vulnerable than adults to the influence of an authority figure, particularly a teacher.

Second, the likelihood of a person's nature returning to its original noble state correlated to some extent with the duration of the corrupting influence. That is, it may have been that the longer the base teaching went on, the less likely a person's *physis* was to recover from it. Hence, in the examples from Thucydides and Sophocles, both War and Odysseus have only short-term interactions with their students, and as a result, the students' original natures are able to overcome the negative effects of the teaching. This would also explain why a well-known Menander fragment (φθείρουσιν ἥθη χρηστὴ ὁμιλίας κακάι)³⁹ tacitly implies that the corruption of good character by bad company is a permanent state. The noun ὁμιλία meaning "company" or "association", is often used to describe continuous and ongoing contact between two parties, and if that is the case with the bad company in the fragment, it would be nearly impossible for a noble person's *physis* to recover from it. After all, people tend to act in ways that correspond with the behavior of their associates - through emulation or otherwise -, and if one behaves badly for long enough, his *physis* may change to match the behavior.

These conclusions raise an important question about the character of the *didaskalos* that will prove vital to our discussion in the next chapter. That is, given that it is possible for a base teacher to permanently corrupt a noble child through the process of emulation, should some steps be taken to ensure that base teachers are held accountable for doing so? More specifically, is it acceptable to punish a *didaskalos* for ruining a previously noble *physis*?

³⁹ As we will recall, this is the same thing that Socrates is accused by Meletus of doing to the youth of Athens: διαφθείρειν

As we saw in Chapter 2, for the Athenians, the answer to this question was undoubtedly “yes”. Indeed, it is this very thing for which charges are brought against Socrates by Meletus and for which Aristophanes lampoons him in the *Clouds*. Socrates himself tries to refute the accusation by denying that he is actually a *didaskalos*, or that *didachê* as such even exists.⁴⁰ As we know, the jury was unconvinced by Socrates’ defense, and it was only posthumously that Xenophon was able to redeem his friend by explaining that Critias and Alcibiades had never had noble natures to begin with so Socrates could not have corrupted them. He simply mitigated their preexisting baseness and as soon as they parted from him, they relapsed completely. In Xenophon’s view, far from receiving blame, Socrates should have been commended for the ennobling influence he exerted upon his pupils while they were in his company (*Mem.* 1.2.26).

Let us turn now in Chapter 4 to a more complete investigation of the issues surrounding Socrates’ trial and execution and the question of whether or not he was a base - or indeed any kind of - *didaskalos*. We will begin our discussion with Aristophanes’ *Clouds* where we will see many of the ideas presented above - the unteachable student, the bad teacher - recurring in the most sustained ancient depiction of the teacher-student relationship from its promising beginning to its catastrophic end.

⁴⁰ For complete discussion of the passages in which Socrates denies the existence of teaching, see Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

SOCRATES THE TEACHER

At this point, in light of our earlier investigation of the *didaskalos*, we can undertake the re-interpretation of the literary accounts about Socrates. In this chapter, it will be seen that the whole complex of ideas surrounding teaching and the role of the teacher in Classical Athens had a large part in shaping the depictions of Socrates by Aristophanes, Plato, and Xenophon.

1. The Real Problem of Socrates

The overwhelming trend in scholarship about Socrates has been to try to reconcile the picture of him in Aristophanes' *Clouds* with his defense speech in Plato's *Apology*, and then to look for a way to fit the evidence from Xenophon's *Memorabilia* into this framework. To do this, scholars have come up with all sorts of more or less plausible theories: one or the other or all three of these authors were incorrect about Socrates' personality; they each were writing about different times in Socrates' life; one or more of them lied in their depictions of him. The goal of the final part of this study is not to add another theory to the already vast collection; instead, I submit that theories of this sort are unnecessary.

In the following chapter, I hope to show that the previous approaches to how Socrates is characterized in the literature have been missing the crucial point. There is no need to

massage the texts in order to achieve a unified picture of Socrates, for there is a substantive continuity between the charge against Socrates in the *Clouds* and the defenses of him by Plato and Xenophon. The point of Aristophanes' depiction of Socrates in the *Clouds* is not mischaracterization, stereotyping, or mockery, but rather crime and punishment. The crime, as Aristophanes presents it, is improper *didaskalia*, and the punishment is the burning of the *Phrontistêrion*. In other words, the most serious charge against Socrates in the *Clouds* is that he teaches in the manner of a *didaskalos*, and it is for this crime that he is punished both in the play and (at least in part) in reality. Even more importantly, in response to this depiction in the *Clouds*, it is the charge of being a *didaskalos* that Plato's Socrates contests most strongly in the *Apology* and the *Euthyphro* and that Xenophon spends the bulk of the *Memorabilia* qualifying and accounting for.

2. Aristophanes' Accusation: The Case of the *Clouds*

Aristophanes' *Clouds* is the only extant work about Socrates that was written during his lifetime, and as such, the portrait of Socrates in it inevitably influenced the later depictions of him by Plato and Xenophon. The premise of the play is simple enough – after attempting unsuccessfully to get his spendthrift son Phidippides to go to school, the middle-aged, bumbling Strepsiades goes to the *Phrontistêrion* himself to learn from the eccentric, subversive, and somewhat pompous Socrates figure how to talk his way out of his debts. At the *Phrontistêrion*, Strepsiades interacts with a variety of ridiculous characters: some of Socrates' students who are learning natural science; the Clouds, who are the patron deities of argumentation in the play; and Socrates himself, who

attempts to give Strepsiades a one-on-one lesson in grammar and music. When Strepsiades fails to learn what Socrates teaches, he is expelled from the *Phrontistêrion*. As a last resort, he finally convinces his son Phidippides to submit to Socrates' teachings instead, and Phidippides is subsequently courted by two Arguments, each representing a contemporary educational model on offer at the *Phrontistêrion*, before choosing to learn disputation from the Worse Argument. The play concludes with Strepsiades talking his way out of his debts, then coming to fervently regret his decision to send his son to school when Phidippides uses his skill in disputation to justify beating his father. Desperate for revenge, Strepsiades seeks advice from Hermes on the proper punishment for his son's teachers, and the final scene depicts a crazed Strepsiades burning down the *Phrontistêrion* with Socrates and all of his students inside.¹

As was mentioned briefly above, Aristophanes' Socrates is interested in a variety of ordinarily unrelated fields of study.² In this connection, Konstan has pointed out (2011, 85), "Aristophanes assembled a hodge-podge of intellectual pursuits, from eristic

¹ The final scene of the play described above is, of course, the re-written and possibly re-staged version that survives. It is not part of my argument to speculate on the changes that may have been made between the first version of the play and the one we have. The only thing that matters for our purposes is that the extant version of the play was written and made public during the last quarter of the fifth century.

² Some scholars (e.g. Vander Waerdt 1994, 61) have made much of the distinction to be drawn based on who is speaking in the play, arguing that the educational and intellectual practices of the Socrates character must be kept separate from the ideas and practices of his students, the Clouds, and the two Arguments. For example, Vander Waerdt has asserted that because Socrates says at line 882ff that the Worse Argument will teach Phidippides because he himself will be elsewhere, we cannot associate the Sophistic training of the Worse Argument with Socrates. However, this claim has been thoroughly refuted by Nussbaum (1980, 48) et al who point out that the Socrates character is probably just following theatrical convention whereby (excluding the chorus) only two actors could be present on stage at a time, and further, Socrates is not exempt from the abuse heaped on the two Arguments in the play and his teaching is never clearly distinguished from the other intellectual activity taking place at the *Phrontistêrion*. It seems clear to me that Aristophanes intended his audience to associate all of these activities with Socrates, and this is certainly the impression we are left with at the end of the play.

argumentation to speculation about the gods, astronomy, meteorological phenomena, biology, poetry, and grammar and combined them all in Socrates.” The resulting amalgamation has drawn much scholarly attention, and a number of different explanations have been given for the portrayal of Socrates in the *Clouds*.³ Most commonly, Aristophanes’ Socrates is said to be a Sophist, like Hippias or Prodicus.⁴ Sometimes he is seen as a natural philosopher of either the Ionian or Milesian school.⁵ Occasionally, he is called some combination of these two things as a sort of neo-intellectual figure or *phrontistês*,⁶ and for a handful of scholars Aristophanes’ character

³ All of the current scholarly theories will be treated below, save one: There are undeniably some aspects of mystery cult parodied in the *Clouds* (e.g. 140ff), and some scholars have made much of this in their analyses of the play (e.g. Konstan 2011, 86), but since I do not believe these bear directly on the question of Socrates’ teaching, they will not be treated in this chapter.

⁴ This is the prevailing view. Robb 1993, 97: “In fifth-century conservative eyes, the differences between Socrates and a Sophist - ones that Plato was at such pains to demonstrate - were, it seems, not perceived as overly relevant, as the nomenclature used in Old Comedy reveals. Socrates is never a *philosophos*; he is another *sophistês*, one of the *sophoi*, figures who were, in the fifth-century literature, often considered too clever by half. It is in their role as innovative educators, teachers of the young, that they were most deeply resented.” Konstan 2011, 77: “Aristophanes’ Socrates will thus emerge as a composite figure, representing not a single individual but Sophists in general, bearing whatever traits were most striking and likely to amuse.” Guthrie 1971a, 51: “[Socrates in the *Clouds*] is in fact a replica of Protagoras.” For further examples, see Strauss 1966, 3; Guthrie 1971a, 39-57; Kerferd 1981, 56; Dover 1968, lli-liv; Romilly 1992, 43-4; Blackson 2011, 92 n. 3.

⁵ Burnet 1914, 118: “The *Phrontisterion*, in fact, is a burlesque of an organized scientific school of a type which was well known in Ionia and Italy... If [Aristophanes] had voluntarily or involuntarily confused Sokrates with anyone, it is not with sophists like Protagoras and Gorgias or their followers, but with Anaxagoras and Archelaos.” Vander Waerdt 1994, 61: “Socrates is consistently represented in the *Clouds* as an adherent of the views of Diogenes of Appollonia.” Konstan 2011, 80-1: “Aristophanes aligns his Socrates principally with the mechanistic views of thinkers such as Anaxagoras and the Ionian cosmologists.” Blackson 2011, 47: “Socrates was firmly within the tradition of the Milesian revolution.” See also Taylor 1911, 135ff; ; Edmunds 2006, 416; Woodruff 2011, 95; Navia 1993, 50.

⁶ Scott 2000, 185: “Socrates was some kind of marginal Sophist crossed with a natural philosopher.” Woodruff 2011, 94: “Aristophanes imagined a school, run by Socrates, that promotes both natural science and persuasive argument; thus Aristophanes conveniently painted one human target for the conservative wrath that both of these trends aroused.” Guthrie 1971b, 100; Navia 1993, 49. For the coinage of φροντιστής by Aristophanes to describe Socrates and his circle in the *Clouds*, see discussion below, and also Edmunds 2006, 416-18 and Taylor 1911, 134-5.

primarily represents the historical Socrates with all of his well-known idiosyncrasies.⁷

Still others resist a simple classification, settling instead on a multi-stranded argument, like Guthrie's claim that in the Socrates of the *Clouds*, "we can recognize at least three different types which were never united to perfection in any single person": first, the Sophist, who teaches the art of making a good case out of a bad one; secondly, the atheistic natural philosopher like Anaxagoras; and thirdly, Socrates himself, the ascetic moral teacher, ragged and starving through his indifference to his own worldly interests.⁸

In my view, none of these theories is entirely wrong. However, despite this variety of treatments and analyses, no one has yet associated the character of Socrates in the *Clouds* with the figure of the *didaskalos*, and this, I would argue, is his primary function in the play.

In the rest of this chapter, I hope to show that scholarly neglect of the *didaskalic* elements in Aristophanes' portrayal of Socrates has been a critical error for our understanding of the Socratic works of Plato and Xenophon, and of ancient education more broadly. I am not arguing that Socrates in the *Clouds* was simply a *didaskalos*. Rather, I would submit that Aristophanes' character is a blend of all types of contemporary intellectual - including the Sophist, the natural philosopher, Socrates himself, and the *didaskalos* - but that the evidence for the *didaskalos* is most pervasive

⁷ Andic 2001, 163: Socrates is "the same person that we find in the Platonic dialogues." Edmunds 1986, 210: "We are facing the same Socrates known to us from Plato and Xenophon." See also Nussbaum 1980, 70ff; Mignanego 1992, 98.

⁸ On which, see Guthrie 1971a, 52. The issue is further complicated by the fact that there was significant overlap between all of these categories in antiquity, and the categories themselves were far from the black-and-white labels scholars use today to refer to them by. For category confusion in the *Clouds*, see Konstan 2011, 80: "Comedy has its own license, and the picture of Socrates that emerges from *Clouds* is, as one might have expected, inconsistent."

in the play, and for our purposes, this final figure is the most important. In order to show this, in the remainder of this section, I will make a brief survey of the evidence for each of the theories presented above - including the hitherto unacknowledged evidence for Socrates as a *didaskalos* - and conclude with analyses of two important scenes from the *Clouds*.

2.1 Socrates as a Sophist

The prevailing view concerning Aristophanes' Socrates is that he is presented as a Sophist. According to Blackson (2011, p. 92 n. 3), "The parody of Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds* shows that the Athenians were not concerned to distinguish Socrates and his methods from those of the Sophists." But what exactly were the methods of the Sophists, and how are these portrayed in the *Clouds*? The following table presents the seven qualifications of a Sophist as they were determined in Chapter 1 and lays the evidence from the play alongside them.⁹

⁹ Numbers in the table denote line numbers from the *Clouds*.

Table 2

Qualities of a Sophist	Evidence for Socrates as a Sophist in the <i>Clouds</i>
Polymathy	He studies geometry, astronomy, geology, geography, meteorology, and biology: 144-407; He teaches grammar and music: 636-95
Charisma	n/a
Mastery of Disputation	He teaches how to make the Weaker Argument the Stronger: 112-16, 429-36, 1229, 1000-1105, 1399-1405
Itinerancy	n/a
Promise of Results	After instruction, Strepsiades will be identical to Chaerephon (one of Socrates' students): 500; Phidippides will be made into a clever sophist by the Worse Argument: 1111
Self-Professed Title of <i>sophistês</i>	n/a
Pay	Strepsiades says the men at the Thinkery will train people in disputation for pay: 98; Strepsiades offers to pay tuition: 245, 1146

Clearly, there are some key points of connection between Socrates and the Sophists in the *Clouds*, namely the character's promise of results and his instruction in disputation. As for the others, there has been some debate about whether Socrates actually accepts any money from Strepsiades;¹⁰ regardless, the evidence of pay to denote sophistry is not very strong, given that a *didaskalos* would also have taken money for teaching.

¹⁰ See Vander Waerdt 1994, 59; Nussbaum 1980, 73; and Dover 1968, *liv*.

Furthermore, Socrates' polymathy, since it comprises science¹¹ and music,¹² works better as evidence that Socrates is a natural philosopher and/or a *didaskalos*. The most definitive difference between Aristophanes' Socrates and a Sophist, however, is the latter's itinerancy. The Socrates figure in the *Clouds* is clearly stationed in a specific building longterm;¹³ no parallel for this exists with any of the Sophists. Additionally, Socrates in the *Clouds* never claims the title either of *sophistês*¹⁴ or *sophos*,¹⁵ nor is he ever described as being enchanting or irresistible, as Protagoras and others were.¹⁶ In sum, then, Socrates in the play displays 3 (perhaps 4) traits that are associated specifically with the Sophists. Yet as we determined in Chapter 1, the Sophists themselves shared a number of characteristics with other categories of intellectual, specifically public wise men like the Seven Sages, and it is only by taking *all* of their defining qualities together that we can distinguish a separate category of the Sophist. Since Socrates in the *Clouds* possesses some, but not all and not only Sophistic traits,

¹¹ The experimental and observational science were the field of the natural philosophers. According to Kerferd 1981, 39, "The sophists were simply not interested in physical speculations." Cf. Beck 1964, 142 for the Sophists, "astronomy, geometry, and the like could be studied, but rather as a basis of philosophical speculation than as experimental or observational sciences. Hypotheses might not be tested experimentally in nature - the only test was that of internal logical consistency."

¹² Which would have included grammar. For grammar and music as more *didaskalic* than Sophistic, see the discussion below under "Socrates as a *didaskalos*."

¹³ See discussion under "Episode One" below for more on Socrates' schoolhouse in the play.

¹⁴ At line 360, the *Clouds* lump Socrates together with Prodicus under the heading of μετεωροσοφισταί, but it seems unlikely that this is being used in the specialized sense of a Sophist qua educator, but rather like *phrontistês* to describe the general type of intellectual who studies both argumentation and celestial phenomena.

¹⁵ At lines 94, 491, 517, and 841 Strepsiades refers to the Thinkery as a place where one can find wise men and/or learn wise things, and at lines 955 and 1024 the Chorus refers to the two Arguments as practitioners of *sophia*. At no point in the play does anyone refer to Socrates specifically as *sophos*. I would argue as well that there is a significant difference between the connotations of *sophos* and *sophistês* in Aristophanes' plays. For *sophos* as a value-neutral term for intelligent folk in the *Clouds* see Dover's (1968, 106) discussion on line 94.

¹⁶ See Chapter 1, section 3.2.2 for examples.

he cannot simply be a Sophist, as we have defined this type. The character of Socrates may resemble a Sophist, but he is not identical with one.

2.2 Socrates as a Natural Philosopher

The evidence for Socrates as a natural philosopher in the *Clouds* comes primarily from lines 144-424. This episode consists of Strepsiades' discovery of the scientific subjects that are studied at the Thinkery - astronomy, geometry, geography, and experimental biology (144-216) - and then a lesson from Socrates on meteorology (220-424). Each of these fields was known already in antiquity as the pursuit of one or more of the pre-Socratic natural philosophers, specifically Anaxagoras, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Thales, and Diogenes of Apollonia, and it is in their footsteps that Socrates and his students are following in this scene.¹⁷ As with the previous section on Socrates as a Sophist, the evidence for this character as a natural philosopher is undeniable. Certainly scholars who have made claims to this effect are not wrong, but in this analysis they are leaving out the rest of the play. How can Socrates' promise to teach Strepsiades to make the Weaker Argument the Stronger be reconciled with the view of Socrates as a

¹⁷ Astronomy and meteorology were the province of Anaxagoras: see Navia (1993), 50; Plato's *Phaedrus* 270a3-8; Diogenes Laertius *Lives of the Philosophers* 2.4. Geometry was the field of Thales, who was said to have been the first person to measure large distances on land and at sea using geometry: see Diogenes Laertius *Lives of the Philosophers* 1.24. Geography belonged to Anaximander, who was listed in Strabo's *Geography* (1.1.1; 1.1.11) as one of the first cartographers. Experimental biology was dominated by Diogenes of Apollonia: see Vander Waerdt 1994, 74 for Diogenes as an experimental scientist; see DK 64 B8 for a Diogenean parallel with the gnat buzzing problem that Socrates solved at *Clouds* 155ff. In fact, the famous image at *Clouds* 232-4 of Socrates observing the sky from a basket suspended in midair draws on a theory of Diogenes of Apollonia that moisture inhibits the mind, since the mind itself is made up of Air. On which, see Vander Waerdt 1994, 61; for the texts and translations of the fragments of Diogenes of Apollonia, see Laks 1983.

Lines 220-424 provide a further example, for Socrates is seen worshipping a set of female deities that he calls Clouds (316-18; 365) and some relatives of theirs he refers to as King Air (264) and Dinos (378-81), the latter of whom has displaced Zeus from his position as ruler of the gods. According to Diogenes of Apollonia, Air is the single source from which everything comes into being (DK 64 B2), and Air is the ruler of all (DK 64 B5), while Anaximenes claimed Air as a deity (Burnet 1914, 19).

natural philosopher? The pre-Socratics did not take theoretical interest in rhetoric and argumentation, just as the Sophists did not study observational science.

2.3 Socrates as Himself

Some scholars have advanced an interpretation of the *Clouds* wherein the figure of Socrates reflects more or less the person we have come to think of from Plato and Xenophon as the historical Socrates. As Kierkegaard famously stated in the seventh thesis of his dissertation (1965, 349), “Aristophanes has come very close to the truth in his depiction of Socrates.”¹⁸ Although most people would not go quite that far, all would agree that as a public figure in Athens in the fifth century, Socrates came to be associated in the historical record with a number of odd personal characteristics and unusual teaching methods which must have offered irresistible fodder for comedians like Aristophanes, as we can see from the evidence of the other surviving fragments of Old Comedy,¹⁹ as well as from the *Clouds*. For example, in the play, Socrates is depicted as unshod (103; 363) and casting his eyes sideways as he walks (362),²⁰ both

¹⁸ See also Andic 1992, 161.

¹⁹ Ameipsias in *Konnos* (fr. 9 = Diogenes Laertius 2.27-8) says that as well as “being foolish, going hungry, having no decent coat and being “born to spite the cobblers” (since he never wore shoes), Socrates had great powers of endurance and never stooped to flattery” (Guthrie 1971a, 40). Eupolis is said to have described Socrates as a beggar who contemplates everything but doesn’t know or care where his next meal will come from (fr. 386 = Asclepiades on Aristotle, *Metaphysics (Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* VI.2.135.21) and Olympiodorus on Plato, *Phaedo* 70b), and in one fragment he is said to have been attacked by Eupolis even more than by Aristophanes in the entirety of the *Clouds* (fr. 395 = Scholia on Aristophanes’ *Clouds* 96). For a translation of these fragments, see Rusten 2011, 356-7 (Ameipsias) and 271-2 (Eupolis).

²⁰ The other Socratic traits that are most frequently referred to in the play (and which match up with the other fragments of Old Comedy) are the ability to endure unpleasantness and a concomitant tendency toward asceticism. For example, at lines 415-17, this takes the form of being on one’s feet all day (415), being constantly cold and hungry (416), and abstaining from wine and gymnastics (417). Socrates himself was said to have spent all of his time walking around and conversing with young men, he supposedly did not care about physical discomfort, and he made a point of living like an ascetic, particularly with respect to drinking (see Plato *Symposium* 200, *Crito* 34b; Xenophon *Memorabilia* 1.1.10, 1.2, 1.3).

of which were unique traits of the historical Socrates as described by Plato.²¹ In addition, at lines 385 and 740-5 Aristophanes references specific Socratic teaching methods: maieusis, *diairesis*, and aporesis.²² At line 385, Aristophanes' Socrates offers to teach Strepsiades "from himself" (ἀπὸ σαυτοῦ γώ σε διδάξω), which recalls Socrates' maieutic methods from the *Meno* and the *Theaetetus*.²³ Then, at lines 740-5, the character of Socrates employs a kind of deductive reasoning with his student that closely resembles Socratic *diairesis*,²⁴ and he follows this by applying the doctrine of *aporia*.²⁵ Aristophanes clearly exploited the most recognizable Socratic traits as material for parody and lampoon in several scenes in the *Clouds*.

2.4 Socrates as a *Didaskalos*

Up to this point, with each of the other types of intellectual, I have merely summarized the arguments that other scholars have made concerning Socrates in the *Clouds*. Here, however, I will shift tactics. Whereas it was sufficient above to make a general survey of the well-established evidence for each category, with the *didaskalos* we are on an

²¹ Cf. *Symposium* 174, 220

²² For a survey of each of these methods in the Platonic corpus, see Beck 1964, 190-8. For further elaboration on the Aristophanic parody of the methods of the historical Socrates, see Konstan 2011, 83-4, especially note 14.

²³ More on this below under "Plato's Response".

²⁴ First, at 740-2, he instructs Strepsiades to "cut up his thinking and refine it; examine the problem piece by piece, correctly sorting and investigating," a method that echoes the way Socrates, Theaetetus, and the Eleatic Stranger go about categorizing the figure of the Sophist in Plato's *Sophist*. This is also the method used in Plato's *Statesman*.

²⁵ At lines 743-5, when Strepsiades has expressed resistance to the first method, Socrates tells him that if he hits a dead end (*aporia*) in his thought process, he should simply skip to another train of thought and come back to the first one later. Aristophanes makes the connection with the Socratic doctrine of *aporia* clear by using the verb *aporein* at line 743. On which, see Konstan 2011, 83: "This sounds like a parody of the Socratic procedure of driving deliberation to the point of *aporia* (the scholia...already noted the resemblance)." See also *Clouds* 702-5.

untrodden path. Not even Konstan, the scholar who recognizes the greatest number of Socrates' pursuits in the play, has acknowledged his role as a *didaskalos* in it. Hence, since the evidence below represents a new interpretation of Aristophanes' *Clouds*, I will spend much more time analyzing each passage, focusing on specific word choices and turns of phrase in the Greek text.

From a *didaskalic* standpoint the two most important passages from the *Clouds* are 1) the one-on-one lesson between Socrates and Strepsiades (476-790), and 2) the *agôn* between the Better and Worse Arguments over who will teach Phidippides (889-1113). Although both of these scenes have been described as generally Sophistic by other scholars, it is my aim to show that the curriculum and methodology employed by Socrates and his representatives (i.e. the Arguments) in the given passages are the first sustained statements of what would come to be associated with the traditional work of a *didaskalos*.

First, let's consider the individual lesson between Socrates and Strepsiades at lines 476-790, beginning with the curriculum Socrates offers his student (476-7, 636-8, and 655-8):

{Χορ.} ἀλλ' ἐγχείρει τὸν πρεσβύτην ὅτιπερ μέλλεις προδιδάσκειν καὶ διακίνει τὸν νοῦν αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς γνώμης ἀποπειρῶ...

{Σω.} ἄγε δὴ, τί βούλει πρῶτα νυνὶ μανθάνειν ὧν οὐκ ἐδιδάχθης πώποτ' οὐδέν; εἰπέ μοι. πότερον περὶ μέτρων ἢ περὶ ἐπῶν ἢ ῥυθμῶν;...

{Στ.} οὐ γὰρ ᾤζυρε τούτων ἐπιθυμῶ μανθάνειν οὐδέν.

{Σω.} τί δαί;

{Στ.} ἐκεῖν' ἐκεῖνο, τὸν ἀδικώτατον λόγον.

{Σω.} ἀλλ' ἕτερα δεῖ σε πρότερα τούτου μανθάνειν, τῶν τετραπόδων ἅττ' ἐστὶν ὀρθῶς ἄρρενα.

CHOR: So go ahead and give the old man whatever preliminary lessons you want and stir up his mind and test his intelligence...

SOC: Okay then, what do you want to learn first of the things you've never been taught before? Tell me, would you rather learn about measures or words or rhythms?...

STR: The truth is, poor man, I don't want to learn any of these things.

SOC: What then?

STR: That one there, the Very Worst Argument.

SOC: But you have to learn other things before you can learn that, for instance, which of the quadrupeds is actually masculine.

Socrates' curriculum, as Aristophanes describes it, has three characteristics: 1) It covers measures, rhythms, and words (638); 2) It begins with the most basic level of instruction (636-7); and 3) It proceeds in a set sequence (476-7; 655-8). All three of these characteristics are specific to the instruction of a *didaskalos*.

Concerning characteristic (1), course content, according to Beck (1964, 311), at the elementary level of education, a student would receive instruction from a *didaskalos* in basic arithmetic, music, literature, poetry, and often grammar.²⁶ This matches up with Socrates' offer to teach Strepsiades "measures" - which could refer to both mathematical lengths and volumes and also musical meter - "rhythms", and "words". Similarly, at lines 641-54 Socrates' dispute with his student about which measure is the most beautiful is clearly a parody of an elementary music lesson,²⁷ while the instruction on grammatical gender at lines 660-93 is an exaggeration of the "incessant mental

²⁶ See also Marrou 1956, 142.

²⁷ For rhythms and meter as a subject of elementary education, see Plato *Protagoras* 326b.

gymnastics” taught by a grammarian or *grammatodidaskalos* (Cribiore 2001, 205).²⁸ As Cribiore (2001) has pointed out regarding the lessons of the grammar teacher:

Not only did exercises include unusual tenses and forms that were rare in... correct common usage, but they also called for practice with nonexistent forms, purely artificial constructions such as future imperatives, born out of artificially logical thinking. In his niche of expertise, the grammarian was king and he dictated the rules of the game. (215)

This fits the ridiculous drills Aristophanes’ Socrates puts Strepsiades through on the grammatical gender of various common nouns and personal names, and although some scholars have associated this episode with the linguistic teaching of Prodicus or Protagoras, the kind of language play seen in these lines is without a doubt the province of the *didaskalos*. The Sophists, inasmuch as they were interested in language and linguistic theory, are known for their concern with the philosophical basis of words, not with the specifics of usage.²⁹ Even so, it would not be surprising if there were some intentional blending of Sophistic and *didaskalic* traits in this passage. In this way, Aristophanes could hint at (and therefore make fun of) the linguistic interests of some of the Sophists, while still keeping the focus of the scene on his parody of the lessons of a *didaskalos*.³⁰

²⁸ This person was often simply referred to as a *didaskalos*, although more specialized terms existed, e.g. *grammatistês* or *grammatikos*. Complicating this matter is the fact that the boundaries between the functions of the elementary schoolmaster and the grammarian were often nonexistent and “secondary teachers might be called simply *didaskalo*” (Cribiore 2001, 53).

²⁹ See Kerferd 1981, 46. Cf. Plato *Cratylus* for the sort of linguistic theorizing that Protagoras and Prodicus were thought to have engaged in.

³⁰ Aristophanes may be doing something similar in the *Banqueters*. In fr. 205 and 233 of the play, the father who has sent one of his sons to a *didaskalos* and one to a Sophist engages in a back-and-forth with the latter over useless Homeric glosses he has learned from his smooth-talking teacher. However, compilations of Homeric glosses and related grammatical minutiae were not the domain of the Sophist, but of the *didaskalos* (Cribiore 2001, 142). Aristophanes, knowing that it would make the scene even more laughable, may have put this material in the mouth of the Sophist-trained boy, with the expectation that his audience would recognize the conflation of the two types of teacher. For a translation of the fragments of the *Banqueters*, see Henderson in Rusten 2011, 302 and 304.

As for the starting point of the curriculum (characteristic (2) above) provided by Aristophanes' Socrates, only a few things need to be mentioned. First, Socrates, like a *didaskalos* starting a new student off on his initial course of study, offers to begin teaching Strepsiades one of the subjects about which he has not previously learned. This is made more comical, of course, by the fact that Strepsiades is a middle-aged man, and the normal starting age for elementary education would have been somewhere between ages five and seven. As a result, Strepsiades has already had a small amount of education - enough to read his account books, at least - and does not have to begin with the alphabet. So, Socrates in the play begins with the level of instruction immediately following basic familiarity with letters and words. This contrasts sharply with the way the Sophists operated - that is, by teaching students who had already completed their elementary and secondary education and were sufficiently advanced in literacy to study rhetoric and argumentation.

The last thing to note about the curriculum in the *Clouds* is its rigid sequencing (characteristic (3) above). At lines 476-7 (see above), the Chorus leader tells Socrates to give Strepsiades his "preliminary instruction" (προδιδάσκειν) before the Clouds will teach him how to make the Weaker Argument the Stronger, and at lines 655-8, when Strepsiades throws a tantrum because he is being made to study grammar and music instead of learning the Very Worst Argument, Socrates insists that there are other things that must be learned first. Strepsiades does not have the requisite background in the basic rules of syntax to attempt the study of advanced rhetoric. The curriculum at the Thinkery, like that of a *didaskalos*, was organized into stages of ascending difficulty and

complexity, beginning with the alphabet and progressing all the way up to rhetorical theory; each preceding stage had to be completed before the student could advance to the next. In this way, as Raffaella Cribiore argues (2001, 222), “learning was organized into a series of tightly connected links, each joined to the previous and giving a base to the next” in a system that was very familiar to a student from the earliest levels of schooling onward. Although the discussion about grammatical gender that follows at lines 660-93 is certainly exaggerated for comedic effect, the strictly enforced progression of Socrates’ lessons, and the focus on the nuts and bolts of the Greek language seem to reflect the curricular practices of a typical school-teacher.

From the discussion above, we can conclude that Socrates’ curriculum at lines 476-790 is indistinguishable from that of a *didaskalos*. But what of his teaching methods? Before Socrates begins his course of instruction with Strepsiades, he takes some time to learn about his pupil’s innate abilities (478-80; 481-8):

{Σω.} ἄγε δὴ, κάτειπέ μοι σὺ τὸν σαυτοῦ τρόπον, ἵν' αὐτὸν εἰδῶς ὅστις ἐστὶ μηχανὰς ἤδη 'πὶ τούτοις πρὸς σὲ καινὰς προσφέρω... ἀλλὰ βραχέα σου πυθέσθαι βούλομαι, εἰ μνημονικὸς εἶ.

{Στ.} δύο τρόπω, νῆ τὸν Δία. ἦν μὲν γ' ὀφείληται τι μοι, μνήμων πάνυ, ἐὰν δ' ὀφείλω σχέτλιος, ἐπιλήσμων πάνυ.

{Σω.} ἔνεστι δὴτά σοι λέγειν ἐν τῇ φύσει;

{Στ.} λέγειν μὲν οὐκ ἔνεστ', ἀποστερεῖν δ' ἔνι.

{Σω.} πῶς οὖν δυνήσεται μαθάνειν;

{Στ.} ἀμέλει, καλῶς.

SOC: Well then, tell me about your character, so that I, once I know about that, can apply the appropriate current teaching methods... so I want to ask you a few questions, for example, do you have a good memory?

STR: Yes and no, by Zeus. If I am owed something, it's very good, but if I am wretchedly in debt, I am quite forgetful.

SOC: Then are you naturally gifted at speaking?

STR: Not at speaking but at fraudulence.

SOC: Then how will you be able to learn?

STR: Don't worry; I'll be fine.

This passage reflects the importance of natural ability, especially memory,³¹ in elementary education. As Leo Strauss (1996, 21) has noted with respect to the methods of Classical *didaskaloi* and their connection with modern teaching techniques, “different pupils need different approaches.” The first step for a *didaskalos* is to determine the basic ability level of the student, and according to Socrates in the *Clouds*, the two most important innate characteristics for learning are a good memory and eloquence. Without them - as he wonders in the passage above - how will a student learn anything at all? Strepsiades tells him breezily not to worry, but his teacher is not reassured, and with another nod to the practices of a *didaskalos*,³² at line 493 Aristophanes has Socrates suggest that perhaps his difficult student will need to be literally whipped into shape (δέδοικά σ', ὦ πρεσβῦτα, μὴ πληγῶν δέει). The threat is defused when Socrates decides to turn it into a teachable moment,³³ and he has almost convinced his pupil to doff his cloak and enter the *Phrontistêrion* when Strepsiades asks him one more thing about the educational transaction about to take place (500-3):

{Στ.} εἰπέ δὴ νυν μοι τοδί· ἥν ἐπιμελὴς ὦ καὶ προθύμως μανθάνω, τῷ τῶν μαθητῶν ἐμφορῆς γενήσομαι; {Σω.} οὐδὲν διοίσεις Χαιρεφώντος τὴν φύσιν.

STR: Tell me this, then: if I am attentive and study hard, which one of your students will I become like? SOC: You will be indistinguishable in your nature from Chaerephon.

³¹ See also line 414 for the *Clouds*' statement that memory (*mnēmōn*) is the most important pre-requisite for admission to the Thinkery. For the importance of memory in ancient elementary education, see Cribiore 2001, 166-7: “A more capacious and elastic memory had to be nourished with tender care from the early years of childhood. Early education was not so much concerned with developing artificial memory, but rather with nurturing the natural memory of children: memory was the “store-house of education” and had the capacity to create and foster.” For the role of memory in antiquity, and esp. education see Carruthers 2008, Chapter 1 and Small 1997, Chapter 7.

³² For corporal punishment in ancient education, see Cribiore 2001, 65ff and Beck 1964, 104-5.

³³ Socrates asks Strepsiades what he would do, legally speaking, if someone were to assault him.

Taken along with the preceding dialogue about innate qualities (478-88), this passage describes what were thought of in antiquity as the three key elements of a traditional educational exchange - *physis*, *epimeleia* and/or *askêsis*, and *didaskalia/didachê* -, ³⁴ and the result to be expected if all elements of the exchange are present. The student himself provides the first two of these: he must have some innate ability (i.e. a good memory, eloquence, etc); and either he must devote his whole attention to the endeavor or he must work hard at whatever his teacher tells him to do. The teacher, in return, offers his expertise in the form of instruction. If all goes well, the student can expect to be assimilated to a model, either a paradigm of some kind or the *didaskalos* himself. ³⁵ In the case of Strepsiades, his educational exchange with Socrates will result in his becoming identical to Socrates' close friend and presumably his model student, Chaerephon. Whereas a Sophist would educate through *epideixis* and expect his students to absorb whatever was given to them on their own, regardless of their ability level, ³⁶ the instruction of a *didaskalos* was based on innate ability and often tailored to the individual needs of each student. ³⁷ Paradoxically, despite the Sophists' extravagant promises of results, they didn't adapt their teaching to each student to produce those results, relying instead on their own skill to bring about the learning outcomes they

³⁴ For a complete discussion of which, see Introduction, Section 3.2.

³⁵ For a more thorough treatment of imitation and assimilation of the *didaskalos*, see discussion under "Episode Two" below. See also Chapter 2, Section 1.3 for Athenian education as characterized by emulation of the *didaskalos*.

³⁶ On which generally, see Chapter 1, Section 3. For an example of a Sophist promising instruction and results to all comers regardless of age or innate ability, see Plato *Euthydemus* 303-4

³⁷ For the afterlife of this practice by grammar teachers in the Roman period (approx. first century CE), see Aelius Theon *Progymnasmata* 134.24-135.1

guaranteed and not taking responsibility if the student did not turn out as promised.³⁸ A *didaskalos*, on the other hand, while generally refraining from making promises about the results of his instruction, was much more likely to achieve the desired results because he took his students' innate abilities into account. Hence, in this scene from the *Clouds*, Socrates' grammatical lesson would, under normal circumstances, most likely have been followed by a more in-depth study of poetry. However, Strepsiades, having proven himself to be a terrible learner (627-31), would certainly not have succeeded in studying poetry, and so Socrates substitutes some preparatory instruction on how to think about one's own affairs instead (694-790).³⁹ Even in this he approaches the situation the way a *didaskalos* would have, by leaving Strepsiades with a specific problem to solve and in the care of the Chorus Leader, his *hypodidaskalos*,⁴⁰ while he goes back into the Thinkery, presumably to check on the progress of his other students. It is clearly Socrates' hope that this independent problem-solving will spark Strepsiades' intellect, but it is not to be. At line 780ff, when Strepsiades suggests that he might escape impending litigation via suicide, Socrates gets fed up and expels his elderly pupil from the *Phrontistêrion*. In this way, just as innate ability makes a difference in the course of instruction a *didaskalos* will choose for his student, it also makes a difference for learning outcomes; a teacher provides as much as he can in whatever way will help

³⁸ For Gorgias denying any responsibility for his students' behavior, see Plato *Gorgias* 456c-461b. Isocrates criticizes the Sophists for this very practice at *Against the Sophists* 3-6, where he argues that the problem is not teaching for pay (since he himself does this), but making promises that you cannot keep about individual results and requiring your students to pay *in advance*. According to Gray 1998, 45, this practice is proof that the Sophists know they are not successful teachers.

³⁹ On which, see Strauss 1996, 25.

⁴⁰ For the *hypodidaskalos* working one-on-one with a student while the *didaskalos* is busy with other students, see the Douris Cup (ARV 283, number 47) and discussion thereof at Introduction 3.2.

a student to be successful, but not all educational exchanges result in knowledge transfer. In the admittedly extreme case of Strepsiades, a student who proved to be impossible to teach could simply be expelled.⁴¹ The entire scene between Strepsiades and Socrates at lines 476-790 can be lined up, point for point, with an educational exchange between a student and his *didaskalos*, and it seems indisputable that Aristophanes intended this parallel to inform the way his audience understood the play.

Next, let us turn to the *agôn* between the two Arguments at lines 889-1113. In this scene, the Better and Worse Argument spend seventy lines insulting one another before each presents his case for why Strepsiades should choose him to educate Phidippides. As with the scene above, it will be easiest if we examine these lines with two different points of comparison in mind: 1) curriculum, and 2) methodology.

The place where parallels with the *didaskalic* curriculum are evident in this scene is the speech of the Better Argument.⁴² At lines 961-972, he describes what is essentially the teaching of a *didaskalos*: the boys would travel in orderly groups to the *didaskaleïon*, or house of the music master (964: βαδίζειν ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδοῖς εὐτάκτως εἰς κιθαριστοῦ) who would teach (966: ἐδίδασκεν) them songs in the traditional mode (968: τὴν ἁρμονίαν ἣν οἱ πατέρες παρέδωκαν), and would punish them (972: ἐπετρίβετο

⁴¹ Although there is scant literary evidence for *didaskaloi* expelling students, it only makes sense given that *didaskaloi* were poorly paid (so the money did not matter very much), and unlike the Sophists, they did not profess to be able or willing to teach absolutely anyone regardless of innate ability. For the power of the teacher to choose his own students in the Hellenistic period, see Cribiore 2001, 54.

⁴² Due to the length of this scene, I will not provide the full text, but will summarize the most relevant points for our discussion, providing small passages from the text where useful.

τυππόμενος πολλὰς) if they tried to modify the traditional music.⁴³ Although the word *kitharistês* is used here for the music teacher, the audience would almost certainly have understood - especially given the use of the verb *didaskein* to describe the way the music master teaches - that this was another word for a *didaskalos* in this case.

According to Beck (1964, 89), “letters and music were normally taught in the same establishment, and the *grammatistês* and the *kitharistês* would often have been the same person.” Indeed, the famed Douris Cup shows a student being instructed in both poetry and the lyre by a single *didaskalos*, and writers from all genres in antiquity were known to refer to *musikê* as the domain of the Muses in the widest sense, that is, it encompassed reading and writing as well as musical performance.

The remaining content of the Better Argument’s curriculum is basic training in τὰ δίκαια and ἡ σωφροσύνη (justice and decency, 962). He boasts about how the students under his care were seen and not heard (963), knew how to smudge out the marks of their genitals in the sand of the gymnasium to avoid tempting their lovers (975-6), ate delicately (981-3), obeyed their elders (994) and avoided bathhouses and the agora (991-2). This resembles, more than anything, the basic moral training that Protagoras describes in Plato’s *Protagoras* 325d-e, where he explains that when parents send their sons to the *didaskalos*, they expect him to take even greater pains over their child’s behavior than over his letters or music, and accordingly, the *didaskalos* teaches his pupils about the admirable men in the Homeric epics in the hopes that his charges will seek to emulate them. This seems quite the opposite of the traditional conception of

⁴³ See discussion of *Clouds* 493 above on corporal punishment in elementary schools.

Sophistic education.⁴⁴ Certainly it is the opposite of the case presented by the Worse Argument wherein he promises that Phidippides will not have to consider anything shameful for he will be able to talk his way out of anything if he studies disputation with him (1077-80):

ἐμοὶ δ' ὁμιλῶν χρῶ τῇ φύσει, σκίρτα, γέλα, **νόμιζε μηδὲν αἰσχρόν**. μοιχὸς γὰρ ἦν τύχης ἀλούς, τάδ' ἀντερεῖς πρὸς αὐτόν, ὥς οὐδὲν ἠδίκηκας.

If you associate with me, indulge your nature, run around, laugh, consider nothing shameful. For if you happen to get caught playing the adulterer, say this in reply: that you've done nothing wrong.

So it is clear that the Better Argument represents the education offered by a *didaskalos*,⁴⁵ and the Worse Argument - in content, at least - the education offered by a Sophist. However, we mustn't neglect our discussion of methodology, for even though the Worse Argument teaches a Sophistic curriculum, he does so as a *didaskalos*. At lines 916-19, the Better Argument accuses the Worse Argument of ruining traditional education, using the verb *didaskein* to describe what the Worse Argument does:

{Κρ.} διὰ σὲ δὲ φοιτᾶν οὐδεὶς ἐθέλει τῶν μειρακίων.
καὶ γνωσθήσει ποτ' Ἀθηναίους οἷα **διδάσκεις** τοὺς ἀνοήτους.

BETTER: Because of you, none of the youth wants to come to [my] school,⁴⁶ and one day it will become clear to the Athenians what sort of things you are teaching the idiots.

⁴⁴ i.e. An education made up primarily in learning disputation. For the Sophists as above all teachers of disputation, see Chapter 1, Section 3.2.3.

⁴⁵ This is true for both curriculum and methodology. At line 929, the Worse Argument states that his adversary will never teach (*didaskein*) Phidippides, and at 936 the Chorus Leader tells the Better Argument to describe how he used to teach (*didaskein*) the ancestors, both of which show that the Better Argument teaches like a *didaskalos*, or is at least viewed by the other characters as doing so.

⁴⁶ Although its basic meaning is simply “to frequent”, the verb *phoîtân* is used regularly in the fifth century and after to describe the action of a boy going to the schoolhouse: Aristophanes *Knights* 1235; Plato *Symposium* 206b, *Protagoras* 326c, *Alcibiades 1* 109d, *Gorgias* 456d, *Laws* 804d; Xenophon *Cyropaedia* 1.2.6; Demosthenes *De Corona* 265.4; Isocrates *Antidosis* 183.4

By choosing the verb *didaskein*, Aristophanes is signaling that in the *Clouds*, the Sophists are above all *didaskaloi* of disputation, and given this, we can see that the training offered by the Worse Argument, although Sophistic in content, is *didaskalic* in mode of instruction.⁴⁷ In fact, this is clearly the impression Aristophanes wishes to leave the audience with; the temporal particle *ποτε* foreshadows that it is this crime - i.e. *didaskalia* - for which Socrates will be punished at the end of the *Clouds* and, of course, in his actual trial. Indeed, the Worse Argument's final question for Strepsiades is framed in these same terms (1105-6): τί δῆτα; πότερα τοῦτον ἀπάγεσθαι λαβὼν / βούλει τὸν υἱόν, ἢ διδάσκω σοι λέγειν; (What now? Do you want to take your son home, or shall I teach him to make speeches for you?) When Strepsiades agrees to the training in public speaking, the Worse Argument reassures him by promising that Phidippides will be made into a clever sophist (*dexios sophistês*), that is, a *didaskalos* of disputation, just like the Worse Argument himself. Once again, an aspect of the play that initially seemed to be directed at the Sophists turns out to actually be about the *didaskalos*.

At this point, a note is needed on Aristophanes' motivation and rationale. The problem of authorial intent is one that I cannot hope to solve at present, nor is it in the purview of this study to do so. However, insofar as we can speculate on the reasons for Aristophanes' depiction of Socrates in the *Clouds*, it may prove useful to our investigation to follow this speculation through. In this connection, two questions present

⁴⁷ This simply means that the instruction provided by a *didaskalos* would have been carried out like a simple exchange of goods for money, the transmission of a finite body of knowledge to another person in the manner of handing someone an object. This exchange would have been conducted at least in part via imitation, and as will be discussed below at length, it would have resulted in the student being a copy of his teacher (or an idealized model).

themselves: 1) Why does Aristophanes lampoon Socrates specifically? and 2) What exactly is the nature of Aristophanes' concern about education, or, in other words, why does he use this particular depiction of Socrates and the *Phrontistêrion*?

The answer to the first question is simple. Socrates was an unmistakable public figure with peculiar physical characteristics; he never left Athens, was known to associate with Sophists, and famously held long dialogues with young men all over the city on such novel ideas as whether virtue is teachable. As Konstan (2011, 88) has noted, in an Athens where so many new types of intellectuals seemed to spring up overnight, Socrates "was typical enough to represent the movement as a whole and at the same time sufficiently idiosyncratic enough to be identifiable as a unique personality." The combination of these factors must have made him the ideal proprietor for Aristophanes' *Phrontistêrion*.

The answer to the second question is more complicated, as it depends upon some speculation about Aristophanes' views on education as they can be extrapolated from the play itself. As the historians tell us, Athens in the fifth century was a hotbed of political and social change, and educational institutions were far from immune to these forces. In the *Clouds*, we see Aristophanes venting his (or at least some Athenians') fears about the ways that new educational systems may affect the stability of the entire polis. Guthrie (1971a) has summarized these fears:

Aristophanes was deeply concerned at the decay of the old ideals of conduct, the lowering of moral standards which was corrupting the youth of Athens. This he attributed to a variety of influences in the education and environment which all alike tended to undermine the sense of loyalty to the old-fashioned values and virtues formerly accepted

without question. To attack these tendencies through the medium of comedy, they must all be embodied in a single individual, and the obvious person was Socrates. (51)

Aristophanes, like many social critics before and since, recognized that the values of a given society are safeguarded and perpetuated by its teachers.⁴⁸ For this reason, it is absolutely imperative to separate the positive teachers from the harmful. Hence, in the *Clouds*, Aristophanes does not distinguish between Socrates, Sophists, natural philosophers, *phrontistai*, and *didaskaloi*. Rather, as Dover has pointed out:

He drew one basic distinction, between the normal man and the abnormal man. The normal man works and fights, and takes as much as he can of song, dance, food, drink, sex, sleep, and good company. The abnormal man is essentially parasitic on the normal; he does no real work, he undermines the loyalties on which the city's continued existence depends, and he casts a shadow over the ordinary pleasures of life by the unspoken implication that there may be other, secret pleasures accessible to him alone.

Aristophanes characterizes the abnormal men with words like ἀργοί, “idlers”, and φροντισταί, “intellectuals,” and at *Clouds* 331ff he lists under the same category sophists, seers, medical writers, and dithyrambic poets. As becomes clear early on in the play, in Aristophanes' view none of the men at the *Phrontistêrion* is suitable for inculcating the youth with the proper values,⁴⁹ and to the contrary, association with these sorts of people could actually do harm to the fabric of Athenian society. It is telling that the word Aristophanes coined for Socrates' school in the play is *Phrontistêrion*.

According to Goldberg (1976, 255), Aristophanes almost always used words for places, and for places of business in particular, that had been formed by adding the nominal

⁴⁸ This is a theme of several of Aristophanes' other plays, specifically *Knights*, *Wasps*, and *Frogs*.

⁴⁹ Even though Aristophanes presents the Better Argument (i.e. the “Old Education”) as the most favorable of the many choices at the Thinkery, he doesn't make it out to be very good either. According to Nussbaum 1980, 89: “We cannot read the play as advocating a simple return to the old education...we have been given reason to be suspicious of his intolerance and irrationality.” However, this characterization may have simply served a comic purpose. See Strauss 1996, 312: “By presenting as laughable not only the unjust but the just as well, he brings it about that his comedy is total: there is no Aristophanean character of any consequence who does not act laughably, let alone who is good sense incarnate.”

suffix -εῖον to the chosen stem.⁵⁰ By using the far less common suffix -τήριον, Aristophanes added the *Phrontistêrion* to the pre-existing small number of politically and socially significant Athenian locations like the βουλευτήριον, the δικαστήριον, and the χρηστήριον. However, instead of a place where the traditions of Athens were perpetuated, Aristophanes' Thinkery was a center for anti-traditional innovation.

Keeping this in mind, let us return to our previous discussion about the type(s) of intellectual being parodied in the *Clouds*. We have seen that there is evidence for all of the theories about Socrates in the play, including and especially the *didaskalos*. A brief analysis of two further episodes should serve to demonstrate that Aristophanes is intentionally blending several different figures together in his depiction of Socrates and company, but that in each instance the characterization of Socrates as a *didaskalos* is the most important for our understanding of the play.

2.5 Episode One

The first episode takes place at the very beginning of the *Clouds*, and as such, it is an opportunity for Aristophanes to demonstrate early the types of people he intends to mock in the rest of the play. At *Clouds* 94-118, Strepsiades argues with his son, Phidippides, about the kind of education offered at the *Phrontistêrion* in an attempt to convince him to go study there:

{Στ.} ψυχῶν σοφῶν τοῦτ' ἐστὶ φροντιστήριον. / ἔνταῦθ' ἐνοικοῦσ' ἄνδρες οἳ τὸν οὐρανὸν / λέγοντες ἀναπείθουσιν ὥς ἔστιν πνιγεύς, / κάστιν περὶ ἡμᾶς οὗτος,

⁵⁰ For just a few examples, βαλανεῖον, a bathing place (*Clouds* 837, 1054; *Frogs* 1279; *Wealth* 952), κουρεῖον, a barbershop (*Birds* 1441; *Wealth* 338), and πανδοκεῖον, an inn (*Frogs* 550).

ἡμεῖς δ' ἄνθρακες. / οὗτοι διδάσκουσ', ἀργύριον ἦν τις διδῶ, / λέγοντα νικᾶν καὶ δίκαια κᾶδिका.

{Φε.} εἰσὶν δὲ τίνες;

{Στ.} οὐκ οἶδ' ἀκριβῶς τοῦνομα. / μεριμνοφροντισταὶ καλοὶ τε κἀγαθοί.

{Φε.} αἰβοῖ, πονηροί γ', οἶδα. τοὺς ἀλαζόνας, / τοὺς ὠχριῶντας, τοὺς ἀνυποδήτους λέγεις, / ὧν ὁ κακοδαίμων Σωκράτης καὶ Χαιρεφῶν.

{Στ.} ἦ ἦ, σιώπα. μηδὲν εἵπης νήπιον. / ἀλλ' εἴ τι κήδει τῶν πατρώων ἀλφίτων, / τούτων γενοῦ μοι, σχασάμενος τὴν ἵππικὴν.

{Φε.} οὐκ ἂν μὰ τὸν Διόνυσον εἰ δοίης γέ μοι / τοὺς φασιανοὺς οὓς τρέφει Λεωγόρας.

{Στ.} ἴθι, ἀντιβολῶ σ', ὦ φίλτατ' ἀνθρώπων ἐμοί, / ἐλθὼν διδάσκου.

{Φε.} καὶ τί σοι μαθήσομαι;

{Στ.} εἶναι παρ' αὐτοῖς φασὶν ἄμφω τῷ λόγῳ, / τὸν κρείττον', ὅστις ἐστί, καὶ τὸν ἥττονα. / τούτοις τὸν ἕτερον τοῖν λόγοις, τὸν ἥττονα, / νικᾶν λέγοντά φασι τᾰδικώτερα. / ἦν οὖν μάθης μοι τὸν ἄδικον τοῦτον λόγον, / ἃ νῦν ὀφείλω διὰ σέ, τούτων τῶν χρεῶν / οὐκ ἂν ἀποδοίην οὐδ' ἂν ὀβολὸν οὐδενί.

STR: That is a Thinkery for sage souls. Some gentlemen live there who argue convincingly that the sky is a barbecue lid, and that it surrounds us, and that we're the coals. These people train you, if you give them money, to win any argument whether it's right or wrong.

PHI: And who are they?

STR: I don't know the term exactly. Thoughtful cogitators, fine and genteel people.

PHI: Yuk! That scum. I know them; you mean the charlatans, the pasty-faced, the unshod, like that miserable Socrates, and Chaerephon.

STR: Hey, hey! Be quiet, don't say anything so childish! Now, if you care at all about your father's daily bread, cut out the riding and please become one of them.

PHI: No way, by Dionysus, not even if you gave me those fancy pheasants that Leogoras breeds.

STR: Come on, I'm begging you, dearest of all to me, to go and be trained.

PHI: And what am I supposed to learn?

STR: I'm told they have both Arguments there, the Better, whatever that may be, and the Worse. And one of these Arguments, the Worse, I'm told, can plead the unjust side of a case and win. So, if you learn this Unjust Argument for me, then I wouldn't have to pay anyone even a penny of these debts that I now owe on your account.⁵¹

In this fairly short exchange, we can see mention of four (arguably five) different categories of intellectuals mixed together to make up the club at the Thinkery. As far as Strepsiades is concerned, they all fall under the heading of *sophoi* (94), and despite the fact that certain characteristics belong to each type, he makes no distinction, simply assimilating all of the traits to one category.

⁵¹ Translation by Jeffrey Henderson

The most obvious figure here is, of course, the *phrontistês*, or neo-intellectual for whom the *Phrontistêrion* is named. At line 101, Strepsiades refers to the inhabitants of the Thinkery as μεριμνοφροντισταί, which Henderson translates as “thoughtful cogitators,” but in fact, μέριμνα is a favorite word of the pre-Socratic natural philosopher Empedocles,⁵² and φροντιστής is (most likely) an Aristophanic coinage⁵³ used by the characters in the play as a *nom de profession* that covers both the sophistry and natural science practiced at the Thinkery.⁵⁴ Indeed, in this passage, the figure of the natural philosopher is present - albeit at least in part for the sake of a joke - in Strepsiades’ claim that the wise men at the Thinkery argue that the sky is a barbecue lid⁵⁵ and we humans are the coals (95-7).⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the Sophists can be seen at lines 98-9 where Strepsiades tells his son that if he pays them, the men at the Thinkery will train him to win any argument, and at lines 112-16, where he claims that they teach

⁵² See DK 31 B2.2, B11.1, and B110.7

⁵³ There has been some scholarly debate about this based on a testimonium from Athenaeus (218 C) about Protagoras that says that Ameipsias in *Konnos* “οὐ καταριθμεῖ αὐτὸν (sc. Πρωταγόραν) ἐν τῷ φροντιστῶν χορῷ.” I agree with the conclusion of Dover (1968, *I-II*) and Guthrie (1971a, 41) that there is no reason to believe from this fragment that Ameipsias actually used the word φροντισταί in the play, and I think it likely that Goldberg (1976, 254) is correct in calling this an Aristophanic coinage.

⁵⁴ For example, at line 1039, the Worse Argument describes himself as a *phrontistês* because he can make the Weaker Argument the Stronger. For more on this word, see Edmunds 2006, 416; φροντιστής occurs 5 times in the *Clouds* (101, 266, 414, 456, and 1039), while φροντιστήριον occurs 6 times (94, 128, 142, 181, 1144, and 1487)

⁵⁵ This view is attributed in the scholia to the pre-Socratic scientist Hippon: see Dover, loc. cit. It is possible the scholia on Aristophanes’ *Clouds* is correct and he was following the lead of Cratinus, who made fun of Hippon in his play *Panoptai* (fr. 167). For Jeffrey Henderson’s translation of this testimonium from the scholia, see *Birth of Comedy* 2011, 279.

⁵⁶ This probably refers to a view preserved in a fragment of Heraclitus (DK 22 A16).

two Arguments at the Thinkery, and one of them can plead the unjust side of a case and win.⁵⁷

Socrates himself can be identified in this passage by Phidippides' reference at lines 102-4 to unshod people like Socrates and Chaerephon.⁵⁸ In addition, καλοί τε κάγαθοί in line 101 may be a reference to Socrates' concern (as recorded in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*) with the proper way for a man who is καλὸς κάγαθός to live.

Finally, we come to the *didaskalos*. Although pushed into the background a bit by the other figures crowded into this passage, the *didaskalos* is present here in a couple of important ways. First, in the location for instruction. Although the building where Socrates teaches is called the *Phrontistêrion* and not the *didaskaleion*, the fact that he conducts his classes in a stationary and specific location is a definite point in the *didaskalos* column. The Sophists certainly did not have schoolhouses that they operated out of, and Socrates can be argued to have taught in a different location in each dialogue. While the natural scientists may have had physical school buildings in Ionia,⁵⁹ there is no evidence for the existence of any establishment of this kind in Athens by the fifth century, nor do any contemporary authors mention such locations.

⁵⁷ See *Clouds* 419 for an echo of this: **νικᾶν** πράττων καὶ βουλευόντων καὶ **τῇ γλώττῃ πολεμίζων**. "Fighting with the tongue", meanwhile, sounds a lot like the καταβάλλοντες λόγοι, "overthrowing arguments," of Protagoras and Gorgias (see Tell 2010, 142-3). This recalls Hippias' claim at *Hippias Major* 287b that he can teach Socrates to answer any question in such a way that no one will be able to dispute him.

⁵⁸ See Plato *Symposium* 174 and 200 for Socrates as "shoeless". For Chaerephon as a close companion of Socrates, see Plato *Gorgias*, *Charmides*, *Apology*; Xenophon *Memorabilia*; and Aristophanes *Wasps*, *Birds*.

⁵⁹ On which, see Burnet 1914, 147.

The second, and most important set of references to the *didaskalos* in the passage above is lexical. The verb that Strepsiades uses at lines 98 and 111 to describe the methodology of Socrates and the other intellectuals at the Thinkery is *didaskein*. Aristophanes could easily have used *sophizein* or *paideuein* for the training of the Sophists; both of these verbs existed and were in use for instructional interactions during the Classical period,⁶⁰ and Aristophanes himself uses both of these verbs in other plays,⁶¹ yet he did not use them here. Even the verb *epideiknunai* (and the noun *epideixis*), which was frequently used by Aristophanes' contemporaries to describe an educational demonstration,⁶² especially in connection with the Sophists,⁶³ only appears 3 times in the play.⁶⁴ In fact, when one conducts a basic lexical analysis of the *Clouds*, the results are overwhelmingly *didaskalic*. The words *phrontistês*, *phrontisma*, and *phrontistêrion* together show up 12 times in the play, while *sophistês* and *paideusis* each occur 4 times, as compared with 30 times for all forms of *didask-* (including the verb *didaskein*, and the nouns *didaskalos* and *didagma*). Clearly, Aristophanes' choice

⁶⁰ *sophizein* occurs as early as Hesiod *Works and Days* 649, Ibycus fr. S162.3, and Theognis fr. 6.2 in the sense of "to instruct" (especially in the middle-passive "to be educated in something") It is also used frequently by Aristophanes' near contemporaries including Euripides, Sophocles, Demosthenes, and Herodotus. *paideuein* is used specifically to describe the teaching of the Sophists in Isocrates *Against the Sophists* 291.1, and in Plato's *Sophist* 223b4 and *Hippias Minor* 364d2.

⁶¹ *sophizein* is used at *Knights* 299, 721; *Birds* 1401, 1619, and 1642; the latter two references describe sophistic disputation. *paideuein* is used at *Knights* 636, 1099; *Frogs* 1502.

⁶² This was a value-neutral term, for it is the word Plato's Socrates uses in the *Apology* for his own defense (22a7, 24c9), in the *Phaedo* when he is explaining something to Cebes (99d2), and in the *Sophist* for his investigation with Theaetetus (217e2); Isocrates also uses it frequently to describe his own speeches to the imaginary jury in *Antidosis*. See also Thucydides 5.77.8, 6.47.1, 3.16.1.

⁶³ See for example Isocrates *Antidosis* 1.2, 55.5, 147.6; Plato *Sophist* 224b5; *Euthydemus* 293b5, 278c5; *Protagoras* 320b8; *Gorgias* 447b2.

⁶⁴ And only one of these occurrences describes a Sophistic-type *epideixis* (935): the Chorus tells each of the arguments to demonstrate (*epideiknunai*) how he teaches.

of *didaskein* is integral to an understanding of his depiction of Socrates in the play, indicating as it does a definite acknowledgement of the connections between Socrates and a *didaskalos*.

2.6 Episode Two

The second episode is much shorter than the first. Consisting of only six lines and located near the end of the play, this passage offers a neat summation of the outcome of a course of instruction at the Thinkery, and a reminder of all that is wrong with this type of education. At lines 1399-1405, Phidippides waxes poetic about the way his newfound skills in argumentation will allow him to justify beating his father:

{Φε.} ὥς ἡδὺ καινοῖς πράγμασιν καὶ δεξιοῖς ὁμιλεῖν καὶ τῶν καθεστώτων νόμων ὑπερφρονεῖν δύνασθαι.	1400
ἐγὼ γὰρ ὅτε μὲν ἵππικῇ τὸν νοῦν μόνη προσεῖχον, οὐδ' ἂν τρί' εἰπεῖν ῥήμαθ' οἶός τ' ἦν πρὶν ἐξαμαρτεῖν· νυνὶ δ', ἐπειδὴ μ' οὐτοσὶ τούτων ἔπαυσεν αὐτός, γνώμαις δὲ λεπταῖς καὶ λόγοις ξύνειμι καὶ μερίμναις, οἶμαι διδάξειν ὥς δίκαιον τὸν πατέρα κολάζειν.	1405

PHI: How sweet it is to be familiar with new and clever activities, and to have the ability to scorn established customs! Back when I only paid attention to horse racing, I couldn't say three words in a row before making a mistake. But now, since this man here has stopped me from engaging in those pursuits, and I'm at home with subtle ideas, arguments, and contemplations, I think I can teach that it's right to punish one's father.

Most scholars would say that Aristophanes' primary concern with the "New Learning" (Woodruff 2011, 91) is summed up in the first two lines of this passage. And indeed, it is clear throughout the play that he sees a real threat from men who use new (*kainos*)⁶⁵ and clever (*dexios*) things to scorn the established *nomoi* of Athens. At line 1404, he has Phidippides list the types of interests these men have, and we are

⁶⁵ Cf. *Clouds* 896 for the Worse Argument's claim that he will defeat the Better Argument by inventing new ideas (γνώμας καινὰς).

reminded once more how many different types make up the category of abnormal men for Aristophanes. *Leptai gnômai* and *logoi* recall the slippery argumentation of the Sophists, while *merimnai* reminds us of Empedocles and the natural philosophers.⁶⁶ The most important part of the passage for our purposes, however, is the final line, where Phidippides claims that as a result of his training at the Thinkery, he now feels confident that he can teach (*didaskein*) his listeners that it is acceptable to beat one's father. This, I would argue, is the real source of Aristophanes' fear about new types of ideas. As we have seen in the previous chapters, a *didaskalos* does his work through *mimêsis*; that is, he provides his students with a paradigm which they should imitate. Sometimes this paradigm comes in the form of a piece of literature, particularly Homer,⁶⁷ but most often, the model for correct behavior is the *didaskalos* himself.⁶⁸ If we apply this information to the above episode from the *Clouds*, we can begin to see why Aristophanes was so concerned about teaching. Socrates in the *Clouds* is depicted as a *didaskalos* who teaches his students how to win any argument regardless of what is just; his students learn through imitation with the ultimate goal of becoming just like their teacher.⁶⁹ This means that Socrates is not only teaching values that contradict the established customs of Athens, but he is also teaching his students how to become *didaskaloi* of this material in their own right. Indeed, this is what we see at line 1405 above, where Phidippides, after learning this lesson from his own *didaskalos*, turns

⁶⁶ See Episode One above for citation.

⁶⁷ On which, see Plato's *Protagoras* 326a.

⁶⁸ For the role of imitation in ancient education see Chapter 2, Section 1.3 above, and also Cribiore 2001, 132ff. For examples of the ancients' understanding of the teacher as model for his students to imitate, see Xenophon *Memorabilia* 1.2.3 and *Cyropaedia* 2.29.3; Thucydides 3.82.2; Plato *Euthyphro* 3c-d and *Protagoras* 312a, Antiphon (fragment in Stobaeus, DK 87 B62); Isocrates *Against the Sophists* 17.5-6.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Apology* 23c, discussed below in Section 3.

around and offers to *didaskein* the audience why it is just to do something that contradicts all established principles of decency and honor, i.e. to physically assault one's parent. On this model, the Thinkery could be turning out impious, disrespectful, subversive *didaskaloi* every day, with the result that a small group of intellectuals like these could hypothetically overturn the entire social order in a short time. It is this very threat that Aristophanes is responding to in the *Clouds* when at lines 1478-92, he has Strepsiades consult Hermes to determine how he should properly punish the men at the Thinkery for destroying his son's morals. The outraged father had been intending to take the *phrontistai* to court, but given that these men know how to refute any argument regardless of justice, Hermes advises him to take more drastic action by burning down the Thinkery. As he is climbing up onto the *Phrontistêrion* and setting fire to the roof, Strepsiades mockingly spouts Socrates' own words from the beginning of the play (225ff) back at him (1496-1503). Hence, we are given to understand that in Aristophanes' estimation, improperly conducted *didaskalia* should not and will not go unpunished; an immoral *didaskalos* (i.e. Socrates in the *Clouds*) must be prevented at all costs from producing more copies of himself.

From the examples above, we can see that the evidence for Socrates as a *didaskalos* in the *Clouds* is truly pervasive, whereas the evidence for each of the other intellectual figures is limited in scope to individual scenes and episodes, and even when a characterization seems straightforwardly just Sophistic or natural philosophic or Socratic, Aristophanes often evokes the *didaskalos* at the same time with his word

choice. With this in mind, we are now ready to address the literary backlash from Aristophanes' *Clouds* in the works of Plato and Xenophon.

3. Plato's Response

That the accusation of sophistry and natural philosophy was not so threatening to Socrates and his followers as that of *didaskalia* is apparent in the way Plato's Socrates treats both the implicit and explicit charges presented by Aristophanes.⁷⁰ At *Apology* 18a8-b10, Socrates recounts the charges of his first accusers, emphasizing that he believes these to be the most dangerous of the accusations against him:

Πρώτον μὲν οὖν δίκαιός εἰμι ἀπολογήσασθαι, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, πρὸς τὰ πρῶτά μου ψευδῆ κατηγορημένα καὶ τοὺς πρώτους κατηγοροὺς, ἔπειτα δὲ πρὸς τὰ ὕστερον καὶ τοὺς ὑστέρους. ἐμοῦ γὰρ πολλοὶ κατήγοροι γεγόνασιν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ πάσαι πολλὰ ἤδη ἔτη καὶ οὐδὲν ἀληθὲς λέγοντες, οὓς ἐγὼ μᾶλλον φοβοῦμαι ἢ τοὺς ἀμφὶ Ἄνυτον, καίπερ ὄντας καὶ τούτους δεινοὺς· ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνοι δεινότεροι, ὦ ἄνδρες, οἱ ὑμῶν τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐκ παίδων παραλαμβάνοντες ἔπειθόν τε καὶ κατηγοροῦν ἐμοῦ μᾶλλον οὐδὲν ἀληθές, ὥς ἔστιν τις Σωκράτης σοφὸς ἀνὴρ, τὰ τε μετέωρα φροντιστὴς καὶ τὰ ὑπὸ γῆς πάντα ἀνεζητηκῶς καὶ τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιῶν.

First, gentlemen of the jury, it is right for me to defend myself against the first false accusations and the first accusers, and then against the later accusation and accusers. For many accusers against me have appeared before you and they have been speaking false things for many years now, and I fear these men more than those in Anytus' circle, although the latter are also dangerous. But the former are more dangerous, gentlemen, since they, getting ahold of you as children, have convinced you, and they have accused me entirely untruthfully, saying, "There is a certain Socrates, a wise man, a *phrontistês* who has discovered the things in the heavens and all that is beneath the earth, and one who makes the weaker argument the stronger."

The charges leveled by the first accusers here are two:⁷¹ 1) Socrates is a *phrontistês* who studies geology and astronomy; and 2) he is a Sophist who practices disputation. It

⁷⁰ On Plato's subtle recognition that most Athenians would have viewed Socrates as a teacher, see Pucci 2002, 9: "In the mind of the Athenians Socrates was a political teacher... Plato thought it important to discuss, even if indirectly and elusively, this deep-seated image his fellow citizens had of Socrates."

⁷¹ Cf. Xenophon *Memorabilia* 1.1.1

is clear from the language and phrasing of the accusation that Plato's Socrates is responding to the depiction of himself in Aristophanes' *Clouds* and his supposed interest both in natural science and unjust argumentation.⁷² However, Plato's Socrates spends almost no time rebutting the two above charges,⁷³ choosing instead to redirect the beginning of his speech toward what he sees as a more troubling accusation. At *Apology* 19b, using the *didaskalic* language from the *Clouds*, he takes the charge against himself (above) - which does *not* mention teaching - and rephrases it in an attempt to clarify his role as an anti-*didaskalos* (as opposed to an anti-Sophist or an anti-natural-philosopher):

τί δὴ λέγοντες διέβαλλον οἱ διαβάλλοντες; ὥσπερ οὖν κατηγορῶν τὴν ἀντωμοσίαν δεῖ ἀναγνῶναι αὐτῶν· “Σωκράτης ἀδικεῖ καὶ περιεργάζεται ζητῶν τὰ τε ὑπὸ γῆς καὶ οὐράνια καὶ τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιῶν καὶ ἄλλους ταῦτά ταῦτα διδάσκων.” τοιαύτη τίς ἐστίν·

What then did those who slandered me say? I have to read their affidavit, so to speak, as if they were plaintiffs: “Socrates breaks the law and is a busy-body, since he investigates what is under the earth and in the heavens and he makes the weaker argument the stronger and he teaches these things to others.” The accusation would be something like that.

Whereas the earlier accusation in the *Apology* only condemns Socrates for investigating things in the sky and below the earth and for making the Weaker Argument the Stronger, Plato's Socrates claims the real accusation is not that he studies certain subjects, but that he *teaches* these things to others. Indeed, this is the same charge that Socrates describes in more detail to the title character in the *Euthyphro*, when asked to explain why Meletus is taking him to court (3c):

⁷² See discussion above on *Clouds* for examples.

⁷³ As will be discussed below, scholars who have seen Socrates' defense as primarily about Sophistry are neglecting the nuance of the evidence. For example, see Leibowitz 2010, 52ff. For Socrates' comparison of himself with the Sophists in the *Apology*, see 19e.

᾽Ω φίλε Εὐθύφρων, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν καταγελασθῆναι ἴσως οὐδὲν πρᾶγμα. Ἀθηναῖοις γάρ τοι, ὥς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, οὐ σφόδρα μέλει ἄν τινα δεινὸν οἴωνται εἶναι, μὴ μέντοι **διδασκαλικὸν** τῆς αὐτοῦ σοφίας· ὃν δ' ἂν καὶ **ἄλλους οἴωνται ποιεῖν τοιούτους**, θυμοῦνται, εἴτ' οὖν φθόνῳ ὥς σὺ λέγεις, εἴτε δι' ἄλλο τι.

My dear Euthyphro, perhaps their ridicule doesn't matter. For it seems to me that the Athenians don't get upset when they think someone is clever, as long as he does not teach his own wisdom. But if they think that he is making others like himself, they get angry, either out of jealousy, as you say, or for some other reason.

In Socrates' view, the Athenians are most concerned with men who act as *didaskaloi* and in so doing, make their students similar to themselves, as Socrates in the *Clouds* is believed by Strepsiades to have done with his son Phidippides (*Nub.* 1338-41). Hence, instead of rebutting the original charges of Sophistry and natural science, Socrates uses a disproportionate measure of his defense contesting what he perceives as the real - and most dangerous - accusation of the *Clouds*, i.e. that he is a *didaskalos*.⁷⁴ At *Apology* 33a-b, Socrates denies being a *didaskalos* outright⁷⁵ and proceeds to list the reasons why the Aristophanic picture of him as such is wrong:

ἐγὼ δὲ **διδάσκαλος** μὲν οὐδενὸς πώποτ' ἐγενόμην· εἰ δέ τις μου λέγοντος καὶ τὰ ἐμαυτοῦ πράττοντος ἐπιθυμοῖ ἀκούειν, εἴτε νεώτερος εἴτε πρεσβύτερος, οὐδενὶ πώποτε ἐφθόνησα, οὐδὲ χρήματα μὲν λαμβάνων διαλέγομαι μὴ λαμβάνων δὲ οὐ, ἀλλ' ὁμοίως καὶ πλουσίῳ καὶ πένητι παρέχω ἐμαυτὸν ἐρωτᾶν, καὶ ἐάν τις βούληται ἀποκρινόμενος ἀκούειν ὧν ἂν λέγω. καὶ τούτων ἐγὼ εἴτε τις χρηστὸς γίγνεται εἴτε μή, οὐκ ἂν δικαίως τὴν αἰτίαν ὑπέχοιμι, ὧν μήτε ὑπεσχόμην μηδενὶ μηδὲν πώποτε μάθημα μήτε **ἐδίδαξα**.

I have never been anyone's *didaskalos*. But if anyone wishes to listen to me speaking or going about my business, whether he is a young man or an old man, I have never

⁷⁴ As Leibowitz (2010, 50) has noted, teaching was not on the minds of Socrates' first accusers when they made the accusations described at the beginning of the *Apology* (except, perhaps, Aristophanes).

⁷⁵ There is considerable modern debate over whether we can take this statement of Socrates at face value. A number of scholars have opted in reading this passage to take Socrates' rejection of the role of teacher as ironic, therefore removing the necessity for an explanation of what many have seen as a paradoxical situation, i.e. Socrates who is clearly a teacher denying being a teacher. For Socrates' defense as ironic, see Vlastos 1991, 32; Leibowitz 2010, 21-37. Contra see King 1976, 223; Brickhouse and Smith 1989, Introduction; Reeve 1989, xi and 3-9. Given the interpretation I offer in this chapter, I do not believe the theory of Socratic irony is needed to explain Socrates' denial. I agree with Nehamas 1992b, 295ff: "It is true that both his enemies and his friends considered Socrates a teacher, but that is no reason to refuse to take his own disavowal of that role at face value."

begrudged this to anyone, nor do I converse with someone who pays me and not with someone who doesn't, but I provide myself equally to rich and poor, and I ask questions, and if anyone wishes to answer they can hear what I say in response. And whether any of these people turns out good or not, I should not rightfully be held responsible, since I never promised any learning to nor did I teach (*didaskein*) anyone.

By enumerating here the ways he is not a *didaskalos*, Socrates also reveals what he believes to be the salient characteristics of an actual *didaskalos*: 1) A *didaskalos* may reject prospective students on the basis of age (and presumably, ability level); 2) A *didaskalos* demands payment for instruction; 3) A *didaskalos* gives lessons that consist in more than just asking and answering questions; and 4) A *didaskalos* is thought to be responsible for the conduct of his students.

The qualities Socrates emphasizes in the passage above are the same traits that Aristophanes focuses on in the *Clouds*. As was discussed in detail above, Aristophanes' Socrates charges tuition and expels Strepsiades for being too old and forgetful to learn - characteristics (1) and (2) above -, and although Socrates in the *Clouds* does ask a lot of questions, many of his lessons are conducted through persuasive exposition (characteristic (3)).⁷⁶ As for characteristic (4), at *Clouds* 1446-66 Strepsiades curses Socrates and the Clouds and the Worse Argument for ruining his life and turning his son against him, but when he asks Phidippides to come destroy Socrates, the young man refuses to harm his teachers (1467: ἀλλ' οὐκ ἂν ἀδικήσαιμι τοὺς διδασκάλους). At the morbid and unsettling end of the play Strepsiades burns down the Thinkery as revenge for the wrong he believes Socrates, his son's *didaskalos*, has perpetrated against their family. We are left with the understanding that for many an

⁷⁶ For example, see *Clouds* 350ff.

Athenian a bad *didaskalos* would absolutely have deserved to feel a parent's ire for not holding up his end of the educational bargain.

This gets at the heart of the rationale for Socrates' denial in the *Apology* that he has ever been anyone's *didaskalos*. As we saw above, there are several specific *didaskalic* traits that Plato's Socrates tries to distance himself from, and I would argue that he does this in order to escape the jury's pre-existing expectations about the way a *didaskalos* operates. In particular, a panel of Athenian citizens would have understood three things about the profession of a *didaskalos*:

1. Teaching was a *banausic* (i.e. low social status, wage-earning) profession. Teachers in antiquity were paid only slightly better than skilled laborers, and there were no specific qualifications for becoming a teacher.⁷⁷ Given that for most boys, their formal schooling only covered the barest essentials - the alphabet, simple arithmetic -, teaching was thought to be a very low career. In the *De Corona* (258), for example, Demosthenes mocks Aeschines for growing up in poverty since he was the son of a *didaskalos* and for helping his father with the preparatory tasks of the schoolhouse in the manner of an *oiketês*. That Socrates would probably have agreed with this is evidenced by a passage from Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* (4.2-3) in which his Socrates character denounces all *βαναυσικά τέχνη* for the ill effects they have on philosophers and laborers alike.

⁷⁷ For the low social status of teachers, see Marrou 1956, 145-7, Cribiore, 2001, 59ff; see also Introduction, Section 3.4.

2. A *didaskalos* was, by nature, a knowledge transfer professional. That is, he was contracted by a parent to transmit a specific body of knowledge to his student in exchange for payment. Socrates, a man whose entire persona was built on the premise that he knew nothing, was very uncomfortable with the contractual nature of *didaskalic* instruction through which he would be required to deliver something to students who were paying customers. At no point in the extant literature does Socrates endorse the commodification of knowledge. As distinguished philosopher and Plato scholar Gary Alan Scott has observed (2000, 26), “Socratic education is incompatible with a conception of the education process as some kind of knowledge transfer and of the teacher as a mere “content provider”.”

3. Because one of the *didaskalos*’ primary teaching methods is assimilation, he is held responsible for the conduct of his students - both current and former. For Socrates, this is by far the most dangerous implication of *didaskalic* instruction. It was widely known that he had conversed with Critias and Alcibiades, and in order to exculpate himself from any responsibility for their crimes, he had to convince the jury that he had never been in a position to influence his associates’ behavior in the first place. A friend or companion cannot be held legally responsible for another man’s bad behavior, but a person whose very job description includes moral instruction is a different matter altogether. In the fraught political climate at the end of the fifth century

at Athens, Socrates could not afford to be mistaken for a behavioral coach.⁷⁸ As Scott rightly points out (2000, 19), “In declaring, “I have never been anyone’s *didaskalos*,” Plato is, in the first place, making Socrates respond to quite concrete circumstances and very recent political events. What the philosopher is denying is playing the role of mentor or advisor to anyone, since if he never advised anyone at all, he could not have been a mentor or advisor to the Thirty oligarchs.”

It is quite clear, then, why Socrates would have eschewed the title of *didaskalos*. The question that inevitably follows is, if Socrates does not want to be called a *didaskalos*, then what words does he use to describe the educational interactions in his dialogues? For the answer, we turn to the *Meno*, in which the title character claims that it is impossible to learn without a teacher, and in response, Socrates attempts to demonstrate that it is not only possible to learn without a teacher, but that it is not possible to learn any other way.⁷⁹ The example he uses is a slave boy who has not been taught any geometry, but who Socrates will demonstrate can solve a geometric proof because he has correct opinions which simply need to be transformed into knowledge through intensive questioning. At 82a1 Socrates sets the stage for his reinvention of education by telling Meno that there is no teaching, but only recollection

⁷⁸ Someone could point to *Apology* 23c as evidence that Plato’s Socrates is a *didaskalos* since he admits that his young companions (*neoi*) imitated him. He could not simply deny that they did this, considering that his dialectic style was so distinctive, so in this passage Socrates emphasizes that his associates did this of their own accord (*automato*) since they enjoyed hearing people being examined dialectically. At worst, this would make him an unintentional *didaskalos*, i.e. someone whose associates treated him as a *didaskalos* despite his own protestations. Although Plato has Socrates deny that he is a *didaskalos*, and Plato never characterizes Socrates as one, Socrates’ associates could still have seen him as one, just as Aristophanes did in the *Clouds*. This corresponds with the way Socrates defends himself in the rest of the *Apology* and the way Xenophon defends him in the *Memorabilia* (on which, see below).

⁷⁹ On Socratic teaching in the *Meno*, see Devereux 1978, 118-20.

(οὐ φημι διδαχὴν εἶναι ἀλλ' ἀνάμνησιν), and so, he will do his best to demonstrate (ἐπιδείξεσθαι) this by conversing with the slave boy. The demonstration begins the way most Socratic interactions do, with the *elenchus* that proves the interlocutor's ignorance. At 84b-c, after proving the slave wrong in all of his assumptions, Socrates convinces Meno that he has helped the slave boy to find the truth, namely that he does not actually know what he previously thought he knew. He has awakened the boy's desire to learn, and it is only at this point that the true Socratic education can begin, when his interlocutor recognizes his own *aporia* and wishes to reverse it. Hence, at 84d, Socrates explains to Meno the instructional method he plans to undertake now that he and the slave boy are on the same page:

Σκέψαι δὴ ἐκ ταύτης τῆς ἀπορίας ὅτι καὶ ἀνευρήσει ζητῶν μετ' ἐμοῦ, οὐδὲν ἄλλ' ἢ ἐρωτῶντος ἐμοῦ καὶ οὐ **διδάσκοντος**· φύλαττε δὲ ἄν που εὗρης με **διδάσκοντα** καὶ διεξιόντα αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ μὴ τὰς τούτου δόξας ἀνερωτῶντα.

So observe how, because of this *aporia* he will discover something by joint enquiry with me, while I do nothing other than question him and do not teach (*didaskein*) him. But be on the lookout if you find me teaching (*didaskein*) and expounding to him rather than simply questioning him about his opinions.

Socrates is careful to point out that the only way he will contribute to the learning of the slave boy is through his questions.⁸⁰ At this point, he still needs to emphasize that he is not a *didaskalos* as much as he needs to present an alternative model. So he will not teach (since he does not believe teaching exists) and he will not expound; he will only investigate the question together with the boy by seeking out his interlocutor's pre-existing opinions. In this way, Socrates shifts the emphasis of his learning model to the autonomous intellectual capacities of the answerer, and as a result, he is able to give

⁸⁰ For an echo of this method, see *Apology* 29e.

over responsibility for the boy's answers to the boy himself.⁸¹ As Scott has aptly concluded concerning Socrates' pedagogy (2000, 46):⁸²

His educational approach is not designed to instill in others something that was entirely absent before, as the "additive" or "knowledge-transfer" method of pedagogy presumes to do. In his role as teacher, this philosopher knows that he can only nourish seeds that are already within his students. He is depicted in the dialogues as teaching primarily by guiding and questioning, leading others to pay attention to, to recollect, what is in some pre-philosophic way already within them.

This theory does, of course, depend upon the boy having some correct opinions in his soul at the outset. As Socrates explains at 86a5, the slave boy has always had true opinions inside him which needed only to be awakened by questioning to become knowledge (ἐνέσονται αὐτῷ ἀληθεῖς δόξαι, αἱ ἐρωτήσει ἐπεγεργεῖσθαι ἐπιστήμαι γίνονται).⁸³ On this view, education does not involve teaching at all, and the established educational exchange wherein the teacher provides the lessons and the student provides his memory and attention is utterly invalidated.⁸⁴ All that are needed for a Socratic education are the recognition of one's own general ignorance, a few correct opinions, and the willingness to learn. Add to these some questions from a person who is admittedly ignorant, too, and anyone can recollect real knowledge.

⁸¹ On which, see Teloh 1986, 153-8.

⁸² While Scott's primary aim is to show that Plato's Socrates is not a *didaskalos*, but a failed educator of a different sort, it is my aim to demonstrate that Plato's Socrates isn't an educator at all.

⁸³ This claim by Socrates has surprising implications concerning the so-called "Socratic method" of education. According to the passages discussed above, investigation and questioning - far from being the ideal mode of teaching - are, in fact, Socrates' alternative to teaching and the most important way in which he distances himself from the methods of traditional education.

⁸⁴ For more on the three elements of educational exchange, see Introduction, Section 3.2 above. For an example of this trope in antiquity, see Isocrates *Antidosis* 187ff. See also Teloh 1986, 154-5.

In this dialogue, Socrates begins with the traditional mode of education, that is, *didachê*, which he rejects in favor of questioning and joint enquiry, and ends with a new theory, *anamnesis*. In this way, the *Meno* acts as a transitional dialogue, a sort of way station between the familiar world of *didachê* and the novel Socratic methods of *anamnesis* and *maieusis*. By the time we see Socrates treat this subject again in the *Theaetetus*, the transition is complete. At no point does he call himself a teacher, nor does he refer to his associates as students.⁸⁵ We can clearly see that he has moved beyond refutation of the Aristophanic picture of him as a *didaskalos*,⁸⁶ and his focus now is on recasting his relationship with his associates. However, the role he chooses in the *Theaetetus* is more metaphorical than any of his previous guises; he sees himself as a midwife of men's souls (150b-d):

Τῇ δέ γ' ἐμῇ τέχνῃ τῆς μαιεύσεως τὰ μὲν ἄλλα ὑπάρχει ὅσα ἐκείναις, διαφέρει δὲ τῷ τε ἄνδρα ἀλλὰ μὴ γυναῖκα μαιεύεσθαι καὶ τῷ τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν τικτούσας ἐπισκοπεῖν ἀλλὰ μὴ τὰ σώματα... καὶ ὅπερ ἤδη πολλοὶ μοι ὠνεΐδισαν, ὡς τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους ἐρωτῶ, αὐτὸς δὲ οὐδὲν ἀποφαίνομαι περὶ οὐδενὸς διὰ τὸ μηδὲν ἔχειν σοφόν, ἀληθὲς ὀνειδίζουσιν. τὸ δὲ αἴτιον τούτου τόδε· μαιεύεσθαι με ὁ θεὸς ἀναγκάζει, γεννᾶν δὲ ἀπεκώλυσεν. εἰμὶ δὴ οὖν αὐτὸς μὲν οὐ πάνυ τι σοφός, οὐδὲ τί μοι ἔστιν εὖρημα τοιοῦτον γεγονὸς τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς ἔκγονον· οἱ δ' ἐμοὶ συγγιγνόμενοι τὸ μὲν πρῶτον φαίνονται ἔνιοι μὲν καὶ πάνυ ἀμαθεῖς, πάντες δὲ προΐούσης τῆς συνουσίας, οἷοιπερ ἂν ὁ θεὸς παρείκη, θαυμαστὸν ὅσον ἐπιδιδόντες, ὡς αὐτοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις δοκοῦσι· καὶ τοῦτο ἐναργὲς **ὅτι παρ' ἐμοῦ οὐδὲν πώποτε μαθόντες, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ παρ' αὐτῶν πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ εὐρόντες**

⁸⁵ On which, see Hansen 1988, 221.

⁸⁶ There has been much ink spilt over the question of whether the Socratic “midwife” image was already well-known enough by the time Aristophanes wrote the *Clouds* for him to have been referencing it at line 137 when the student at the Thinkery berates Strepsiades for causing the “abortion of a newfound idea” (φροντίδ' ἐξήμβλωκας ἐξηυρημένην). Dover (1968, xlii-xliii) offers what I find to be a compelling answer to this question: “If this is a genuine point of contact [between the *Clouds* and the *Theaetetus*], some remarkable conclusions follow. The first is that Aristophanes is so well acquainted with Socrates' terminology that he can allude to it in a single word, without any enlargement - without even ending the line within the same field of metaphor. The second is that, if this is so, the play should be full of similar allusions; yet, as we read on, we find that the words and phrases which sound like allusions...are not attested in Plato... The third conclusion is that a Socratic metaphor so important and well known that one word in *Clouds* sufficed to make a humorous allusion was wholly neglected by Plato in his earlier representations of Socrates (including *Apology*) and exploited, at a comparatively late date, in one dialogue alone.” For further discussion see Nussbaum 1980, 73 n. 60; Burnyeat 1977.

τε καὶ τεκόντες. τῆς μέντοι μαιείας ὁ θεός τε καὶ ἐγὼ αἴτιος.

Now my art of midwifery is just like [traditional midwives'] in most respects. The difference is that I attend men and not women, and that I watch over the labor of their souls, not of their bodies... The common reproach against me is that I am always asking questions of other people but never express my own views about anything, because there is no wisdom in me; and that is true enough. And the reason of it is this, that God compels me to attend the travail of others, but has forbidden me to procreate. So that I am not in any sense a wise man; I cannot claim as the child of my own soul any discovery worth the name of wisdom. But with those who associate with me it is different. At first some of them may give the impression of being ignorant and stupid; but as time goes on and our association continues, all whom God permits are seen to make progress – a progress which is amazing both to other people and to themselves. And yet it is clear that this is not due to anything they have learned from me; it is that they discover within themselves a multitude of beautiful things, which they bring forth into the light. But it is I, with God's help, who deliver them of this offspring.⁸⁷

This, then, is the true Socratic education: *maieusis*. There can be no blame laid on Socrates in this type of interaction. We would never say that it is the midwife's fault if a child is born with a birth defect; only the mother and father (and chance) are responsible. As with the slave in the *Meno*, Socrates' associates here bring ideas and seeds of beautiful things within themselves to their conversations with him, and it is through this *maieutic* gift that the God forced upon him that Socrates is able to help them give birth to the fully-developed offspring from those seeds. At the end of the passage, he points out that no learning (*mathein*) takes place in these interactions, only self-discovery (*heuriskein*) with the God's help. In this short passage, the God compels, permits, and aids; Socrates sets himself up simply as a divinely-appointed facilitator of God's will for other wise men. Hence, he takes all responsibility for the educational exchange off of himself. He has no wisdom of his own, nor does he claim to, so he cannot teach anything, and when he offers his aid to others who have ideas needing to be delivered, he is only fulfilling his obligations to the God.

⁸⁷ Translation by M.J. Levett

This approach allows Plato's Socrates to finally address the issue of Critias and Alcibiades from a position of blamelessness. At *Theaetetus* 150e, Socrates observes that there have been some people who, believing that they themselves were responsible for the delivery of their ideas, left his company too soon and either miscarried or gave birth but did not know how to properly rear their offspring. He does not mention these two men by name, but there can be no doubt that he is referring to them. Under this model, Socrates could no more be responsible for the conduct of his associates than the midwife can be responsible for the personality of a child she delivers.⁸⁸ Socrates, acting under instruction from the God, took Critias and Alcibiades, pregnant with the seeds of ideas, into his company and spent time with them so that they could progress to a point of self-discovery where they might deliver full-grown offspring. But all did not go to plan. Critias and Alcibiades terminated their association with Socrates before they had delivered their offspring, and the results were malformed children who did not bear any marks of Socratic influence.

4. Xenophon's Response

That Socrates' concern about being perceived as a *didaskalos* is not just Plato's invention is also suggested by passages from Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and *Apology of Socrates to the Jury*. As we have seen above, Plato tries to eliminate the problem of Socrates as a *didaskalos* by having his mentor deny the very existence of teaching

⁸⁸ This matches up with the discussion above on *Apology* 23c. Socrates admits that his youthful companions imitated him, but he implies that because they did so under their own steam, he should not receive any share of the Athenians' blame or anger for their behavior.

(*didachê*). Xenophon, on the other hand, simply sees Socrates as a good teacher (*didaskalos*) who was treated unjustly, despite his denial of this role. For this reason, Xenophon begins the *Memorabilia* by faithfully restating Socrates' own rebuttal of the various premises of the charge against him - especially the accusation of being a *didaskalos* -, but proceeds to demonstrate that despite his denial, nevertheless, both Socrates' associates and detractors attempted in their conversations with him to understand these interactions in terms of traditional education (*Mem.* 1.2.2-3):

πῶς οὖν αὐτὸς ὦν τοιοῦτος ἄλλους ἂν ἢ ἀσεβεῖς ἢ παρανόμους ἢ λίχνους ἢ ἀφροδισίων ἀκρατεῖς ἢ πρὸς τὸ πονεῖν μαλακοὺς ἐποίησεν; ἀλλ' ἔπαυσε μὲν τούτων πολλοὺς ἀρετῆς ποιήσας ἐπιθυμεῖν καὶ ἐλπίδας παρασχών, ἂν ἑαυτῶν ἐπιμελῶνται, καλοὺς κἀγαθοὺς ἔσεσθαι· καίτοι γε οὐδεπώποτε ὑπέσχετο **διδάσκαλος** εἶναι τούτου, ἀλλὰ τῷ φανερόν ἐστιν τοιοῦτος ὦν ἐλπίζειν ἐποίει τοὺς συνδιατρίβοντας ἑαυτῷ **μιμουμένους** ἐκείνον τοιούτους γενήσεσθαι.

How then can such a man have made others impious, criminal, gluttonous, lustful, or lazy? On the contrary, he stopped many from doing these things by instilling in them the desire for virtue, and providing them with the hope that if they were prudent, they would become *kalos k'agathos*. And yet, he never promised to be a *didaskalos* of this, but he caused his companions to hope that by imitating such an exemplary person as himself they would become the same as he.

In Xenophon's view, it is true that Socrates never promised to be a *didaskalos*, but he did set himself up in his relationship to his associates in the same way as a *didaskalos* does to his students. As Xenophon points out here, Socrates encouraged his companions - whether implicitly or explicitly - to imitate him in order to become *kalos k'agathos*. As we have seen above numerous times, this is the same method a *didaskalos* would have employed with his students, and although there was - strictly speaking - nothing wrong with being a *didaskalos*, with this title came specific connotations of responsibility.⁸⁹ For this reason, Xenophon's Socrates also refuses to

⁸⁹ See above on Aristophanes' *Clouds* "Episode Two" and Plato's *Apology* and also Chapter 2, Section 1.3 above for a thorough discussion of imitation in education and the resulting responsibility of a teacher for his students' actions.

take on the title of *didaskalos*, claiming instead that he simply interacts with his associates as friends on whom he hopes to confer some moral benefit through his friendship.⁹⁰ However, despite allowing his Socrates character to distance himself from the role of *didaskalos* and even agreeing with Socrates' self-portrayal as helpful to others with respect to virtue,⁹¹ Xenophon himself,⁹² in practice, presents him otherwise. Throughout the *Memorabilia* and the *Apology*, Xenophon's Socrates is described by the narrator and treated by his interlocutors the way a *didaskalos* would have been. He adapts his instructional approach depending upon the innate nature of each student⁹³ (*Mem.* 4.1.3ff); he believes the teaching relationship must consist of the three traditional elements of *physis*, *epimeleia/askêsis*, and *mathêsis* - the flip side of *didachê* - (*Mem.* 3.9.1-3); and both he and his students explain what he does with the verb *didaskein* (*Mem.* 2.6.32-3; 3.5.24; 3.13.2; 4.2.4-6). At the end of the text, at *Memorabilia* 4.7.1-2, Xenophon sums up the ways that Socrates embodied the ideal *didaskalos*:

πάντων μὲν γὰρ ὧν ἐγὼ οἶδα μάλιστα ἔμελεν αὐτῷ εἰδέναι ὅτου τις ἐπιστήμων εἴη τῶν συνόντων αὐτῷ· ὧν δὲ προσήκει ἀνδρὶ καλῷ κάγαθῷ εἰδέναι, ὃ τι μὲν αὐτὸς εἰδείη, πάντων προθυμότατα ἐδίδασκεν·... ἐδίδασκε δὲ καὶ μέχρι ὅτου δέοι ἔμπειρον εἶναι ἐκάστου πράγματος τὸν ὀρθῶς πεπαιδευμένον.

Of all the men I have known he was the most careful to learn what knowledge each of his associates had. And he taught most zealously everything that is fitting for a man who

⁹⁰ For example, see *Memorabilia* 1.2.8 and 1.6.13-14. Cf. Pucci 2002, 19: Socrates' "main activity (see *Mem.* 1.6.14) consists in teaching what is good, and in providing an enticing and happy model of spiritual control over needs and desires."

⁹¹ See Xenophon *Apology of Socrates to the Jury* 34: "If among those who make virtue their aim any one has ever been brought into contact with a person more helpful than Socrates, I count that man worthy to be called most blessed."

⁹² That is, the *persona* of Xenophon in the *Memorabilia*, at least.

⁹³ According to Morrison (1994, 183), Socrates in the *Memorabilia* used three traits as requirements of the people he associated with: 1. the ability to learn quickly; 2. the ability to remember what has been learned; and 3. the desire to learn. These things, Morrison argues, are natural gifts, varying from soul to soul, and they determine the outcome of Socrates' interactions. This is also true for a *didaskalos*.

is *kalos k'agathos* to know, in as far as he himself knew it... And he taught the degree to which it is right for a well-educated person to make himself familiar with each subject.

In this depiction, Socrates was careful, zealous, thorough, and moderate - the very image of a *kalos k'agathos* himself.⁹⁴ However, not everyone saw Socrates this way. In a conversation with Antiphon at *Memorabilia* 1.6.3, the Sophist accuses Socrates of being a *κακοδαιμονίας διδάσκαλος*, or teacher of unhappiness. The premises of his argument are these: 1) Socrates must be miserable since he eats and drinks poorly, his cloak is thin and tattered, and he does not charge money for his company; 2) Socrates is a *didaskalos*; and 3) The other *didaskaloi* at Athens try to make their students imitate them. Therefore, according to Antiphon, Socrates is a teacher of misery. This conclusion, like Antiphon's later claim (1.6.15) that Socrates makes others into politicians, demonstrates a dangerous lack of understanding of Socrates' methods on the part of his contemporaries. They saw him as indistinguishable in teaching technique from a garden variety *didaskalos*, but with much more subversive ideas. According to Xenophon, this treatment resulted in the people of Athens unfairly blaming Socrates for the criminal behavior of his so-called former students Critias and Alcibiades.⁹⁵ As Morrison astutely points out (1994, 182), as a *didaskalos*, "Socrates gave his young associates a mental training that amounted to a powerful tool or weapon that they could then use for the good or ill of the society around them. If Socrates were to hand out this weapon indiscriminately, that is without regard to the character of the recipient, Socrates

⁹⁴ For another example of Socrates as an ideal teacher in the *Memorabilia*, see 1.2.17.

⁹⁵ For example, Aeschines (1.173) takes as a foregone conclusion that Socrates was executed because he was shown to have taught Critias, who was one of the Thirty. See Morrison 1994, 181: "The most important test cases for the charge of Socrates' corruption of the young were Critias and Alcibiades." For a thorough discussion of Xenophon's treatment of the problem of Critias and Alcibiades in the *Memorabilia* see Gray 1998, 45-51.

himself would be a danger to society.” For this reason, Xenophon works hard to show that Socrates was not just a *didaskalos*, but a good *didaskalos*; he encouraged positive moral values in his associates, he taught them prudence before political science, and he was choosy about the moral character and intellectual gifts of his associates. However, the Athenians - like some modern scholars ⁻⁹⁶ believed Socrates to have been criminally negligent in this process. At *Apology of Socrates to the Jury* 26.8-27.1, Xenophon’s Socrates is clearly responding to this implicit charge when he denies ever having made anyone more wicked through his teaching:

οἶδ' ὅτι καὶ ἐμοὶ μαρτυρήσεται ὑπὸ τε τοῦ ἐπόντος καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ παρεληλυθότος χρόνου ὅτι ἡδίκησα μὲν οὐδένα πώποτε οὐδὲ πονηρότερον ἐποίησα, εὐηργέτουν δὲ τοὺς ἐμοὶ διαλεγόμενους προίκα διδάσκων ὅ τι ἐδυνάμην ἀγαθόν.

I know that both the time to come and the time past will bear witness to the fact that I did not do anything wrong, nor did I ever make anyone more wicked, but rather, I benefitted those who conversed with me by teaching them for free whatever good thing I could.

Quite the opposite of Plato’s Socratic *Apology*, this passage shows Socrates as a self-professed misunderstood and mistreated *didaskalos*. Xenophon chooses not to take the route that Plato did in defending Socrates against the Athenians’ charges by denying the role of *didaskalos* for him, so other grounds are needed for his defense. At *Memorabilia* 1.2.21, Xenophon explains that even the best teaching can be forgotten by those who do not care to follow it, and so it was with Critias and Alcibiades. Before they began to

⁹⁶ For example, Nussbaum (1980, 70) argues that Socrates in both Plato and Xenophon was not a good teacher because he did not take students’ innate ability into account: “Socrates teaches everyone he encounters; he neither conducts an initial test of the interlocutor to determine whether his moral training has prepared him adequately for questioning and dialectic, nor takes the responsibility for having concluded the educational process in a satisfactory way before discharging the pupil.” Concerning the Socrates of Plato and Xenophon (and even Aristophanes), the first part of this seems patently false. Time and again we see Socrates conducting an initial *elenchus* on his would-be interlocutors, and in the continuation of the passage of the *Theaetetus* discussed above, Socrates explains how he has turned some people away, either because he was not the right associate for them or because they were not properly suited to the process of birthing ideas. This is, in fact, one of the few ways one could argue that Plato’s Socrates is actually similar to a *didaskalos*.

study with Socrates, Critias and Alcibiades had base natures, which were kept in check by Socrates' influence, and after they had spent some time away from his company they forgot his precepts and their original personalities reemerged by association with other wicked men (*Mem.* 1.2.24-6):

Καὶ Κριτίας δὴ καὶ Ἀλκιβιάδης, ἕως μὲν Σωκράτει συνήστην, ἐδυνάσθην ἐκείνῳ χρωμένῳ συμμάχῳ τῶν μὴ καλῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν κρατεῖν· ἐκείνου δ' ἀπαλλαγέντε, Κριτίας μὲν φυγὼν εἰς Θετταλίαν ἐκεῖ συνῆν ἀνθρώποις ἀνομία μᾶλλον ἢ δικαιοσύνη χρωμένοις, Ἀλκιβιάδης δ' αὖ διὰ μὲν κάλλος ὑπὸ πολλῶν καὶ σεμνῶν γυναικῶν θηρώμενος, διὰ δὲ δύναμιν δὲ τὴν ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ τοῖς συμμάχοις ὑπὸ πολλῶν καὶ δυνατῶν ἀνθρώπων διαθρυπτόμενος... τοιούτων δὲ συμβάντων αὐτοῖν, καὶ ὠγκωμένῳ μὲν ἐπὶ γένει, ἐπηρμένῳ δ' ἐπὶ πλούτῳ, πεφουσημένῳ δ' ἐπὶ δυνάμει, διατεθρυμμένῳ δὲ ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐπὶ δὲ πᾶσι τούτοις διεφθαρμένῳ καὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἀπὸ Σωκράτους γεγονότε, τί θαυμαστόν ἐστι ὑπερηφάνῳ ἐγενέσθην; εἴτα, εἰ μὲν τι ἐπλημμελησάτην, τούτου Σωκράτην ὁ κατήγορος αἰτιᾶται; ὅτι δὲ νέῳ ὄντε αὐτῷ, ἡνίκα καὶ ἀγνωμονεστάτῳ καὶ ἀκρατεστάτῳ εἰκὸς εἶναι, Σωκράτης παρέσχε σώφρονε, οὐδενὸς ἐπαίνου δοκεῖ τῷ κατηγόρῳ ἄξιος εἶναι;

And so Critias and Alcibiades, as long as they were with Socrates, were able - with him as an ally - to master their wicked desires. But when they left his company, Critias fled to Thessaly where he associated with men who practiced lawlessness rather than justice; and Alcibiades, because of his beauty, was hunted by many great women, and because of his influence in the city and among her allies, was spoiled by many powerful men... Such was the fortune of these two men, and when on top of pride of birth, confidence in wealth, arrogance concerning ability, and temptation by many men, were added complete corruption and the fact that they were apart from Socrates for a long time, is it any wonder that they became overweening? If these men did wrong, then, is the accuser going to hold Socrates responsible for it? And does Socrates not seem to his accuser to be deserving of some praise for keeping these men disciplined when they were young and most prone to be lawless and ungovernable?

He goes on to argue that no other cases are judged in this way. For example, no one would hold the previous flute teacher responsible if his student left to study with another instructor and then turned out incompetent. For Xenophon, there is nothing inherently wrong with being a *didaskalos*, but there are limits to the influence of *didachê*, even that of an extraordinary *didaskalos*. Far from proving Socrates to be a bad teacher, the case

of Critias and Alcibiades simply shows that his *didachê* - like any teacher's - is fallible.⁹⁷ Successful teaching depends almost as much upon the student as upon the teacher, and a teacher cannot really be said to teach what a student does not actually learn. As Morrison has noted (1994, 190), "Critias and Alcibiades came to Socrates, met his tests, and learned reasoning and dialectical skills from him, as well as temperance. Later when they parted from Socrates their temperance left them; but the reasoning and dialectical skills they learned from him presumably remained, to be put to evil ends."⁹⁸ In other words, just because a student turns out badly, this does not mean he had a bad teacher, or that his teacher is responsible for the student's villainy. In the case of Socrates as the ideal *didaskalos*, it is Xenophon's goal to show that a good teacher can only make his students better, not worse, and we see an echo of this concern in Socrates' conversation with Critobulus in the *Oeconomicus*. At 3.11.6, Socrates explains to his friend that if a man instructs (*didaskein*) his wife in the correct things and she behaves badly, it is her own fault, whereas if he had not taught her the correct things and she behaved badly, he would be to blame. The reader is clearly meant to connect the former case with that of Socrates and his two wicked ex-associates. As Xenophon implies, Socrates is like the man whose wife, having been taught the correct things, still misbehaves, and like that man, he should not be held to account for the misbehavior.

⁹⁷ Cf. Gray 1998, 58: "[Xenophon] does not deny that Critias and Alcibiades were corrupt, but argues about Socrates' influence. Nor does he deny outright any of the specifics that the accuser says he taught - merely that he was not properly understood, or deliberately misinterpreted."

Pucci (2002, 32) presents an interesting paradox inherent in this argument: at *Memorabilia* 1.6.15 "Socrates implies that those whom he instructs as politicians will act in accordance with his teaching, in fact, as mere clones of himself. Should we think of Critias and Alcibiades as two clones of Socrates or consider them, as Xenophon states, pupils with a limited interest in Socrates' teaching, and a corrupt nature (*Mem.* 1.2.16, 24-25, 39, 40-46)?"

⁹⁸ See also Navia 1993, 102 for the reason for the reversion of Critias and Alcibiades to wickedness after associating with Socrates

Instead, the Athenians should simply be grateful that Socrates was able to restrain the wicked impulses of his associates for so long through the beneficial influence of his company. By reminding his readers of the positive – if temporary – affect Socrates had on the base natures of Critias and Alcibiades, Xenophon is able to portray Socrates as a praiseworthy *didaskalos* while simultaneously releasing him from Meletus' charge of corrupting the youth.

5. Socrates the *Didaskalos*

My aim in the preceding two sections has been to demonstrate that despite their differing approaches, Plato and Xenophon both consider it to be essential to refute the perceived accusation present in Aristophanes' *Clouds* that Socrates was by trade a *didaskalos* who should be held responsible for his students' misconduct. Plato finds it easier to do this by having Socrates simply deny the existence of teaching – especially the teaching of virtue – thereby relieving the philosopher of the title of *didaskalos*;⁹⁹ Xenophon, on the other hand, believes not only that good teachers exist, but that Socrates exemplifies this category. He balks, however, at subscribing to the preexisting cultural conception of a teacher as the sole source of moral influence and responsibility for his students, choosing instead to focus attention on the ways the outside world can corrupt a student despite his teacher's best efforts and preparations to the contrary.

⁹⁹ Cf. Morrison 1994, 207: "By denying that dialectic is teaching, Plato's Socrates emphasizes that the origin of the views arrived at is within the interlocutor himself; and he deflects responsibility for the outcome from himself onto the pupil... By accepting the designation "teacher", Xenophon's Socrates - quite properly - accepts responsibility for the moral consequences of his dialectical conversations." For more on this view, see also Morrison 1994, 191; Teloh 1986, 106.

In opposition to common scholarly prejudice, I hope to have shown that Socrates was treated by his contemporaries not as a Sophist, but rather as a *didaskalos*, a charge which can only be understood in the context of the preexisting literary debate over what constitutes a good or bad teacher.¹⁰⁰ Socrates was thrust into this debate and thereby focused attention on the figure of the *didaskalos* much more keenly than had been done before, not as a theoretical or methodological issue but as a personal day-to-day issue concerning the functioning of the city. Using Socrates as their exemplar, Aristophanes, Plato, and Xenophon each confronted in a different way the idea that a bad teacher posed a threat to the fabric of Athenian society as no other corrupt or incompetent professional could. A teacher's job was to shape the natures of his students into the appropriate forms to provide for their success as adults in society, and in the eyes of many of his friends and detractors, Socrates claimed to do just that. Despite his unwillingness to be a figurehead for traditional pedagogical practice – indeed, he thoroughly rejects the existing models of *didachê*, especially concerning the teaching of virtue –,¹⁰¹ among his contemporaries, Socrates came to stand for both the best and worst possible teacher in a way that no one before or after him has.

¹⁰⁰ See especially Chapter 3 above.

¹⁰¹ See Griffin 1995, 7: “The Sophists believe that one can, through their teaching, exchange money for virtue. But Socrates, although he makes speeches about virtue every day, does not believe in the exchange of money for it.”

EPILOGUE

1. Looking Back

As the preceding chapters have shown, it is neither an oversimplification nor an exaggeration to say that the *didaskalos* was invented in Classical Athens. In all of extant Archaic Greek literature, there is only one occurrence of the noun *didaskalos* and fewer than three dozen occurrences of its attendant verb *didaskein*, whereas these words occur over 1,000 times in the extant literature of the fifth and fourth centuries.¹ Based on this evidence, even taking into account the relative sizes of the corpora under consideration and allowing for some distortion of the numbers due to the differences between poetic and prose conventions, it is still undeniable that starting around 480 BCE, there was a sudden surge in literary concern with the teacher and his work. All at once, the *didaskalos* became ubiquitous in Classical literature of all genres.

Further, this new focus on the *didaskalos* corresponded with a growing concern in Athenian culture about the importance of teaching and the effect a teacher could have on the stability of the polis. Specifically, during this time, authors from Euripides to Xenophon to Thucydides used the *didaskalos* as an entrée into a practical and philosophical discussion about citizen formation and its impact on the future of the city. This discussion took many forms during the fifth and fourth centuries: in some cases, it

¹ It should come as no surprise based on my argument in Chapter 4 that the Classical text with the greatest concentration of *didaskalic* vocabulary is Aristophanes' *Clouds* (with a relative occurrence rate of 29 times per 10,000 words), followed by Xenophon's Socratic works, including the *Memorabilia* (with a relative occurrence rate of 17 times per 10,000 words).

was a debate over the subjects that should make up the ideal curriculum; in others, it was a comparison of Athenian education with Spartan; and sometimes, it was a dispute over the relative value of teaching versus natural ability. What was almost-universally understood, however, was the tremendous power a teacher had to shape his students' natures - to change them for the better or the worse - and the responsibility that accompanied that power. What's more, the discussion about education in Athens spilled over into other types of civic discourse, and the teacher-student relationship came to be seen as the default dynamic for many kinds of political interactions. Orators, playwrights, and other political leaders were thought of as - and often framed themselves as - *didaskaloi* of the city: capable of guiding the citizens toward virtuous behavior and rightly held responsible for leading them into vice.

Into this situation stepped Socrates, whose indictment and trial marked the culmination of a crisis in Athens that was neither military nor political, but philosophical. Socrates, as he is depicted in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, and to a certain extent, also in the Platonic dialogues, was a proponent of the use of certain novel methods and principles in secondary education. These methods simultaneously drew both praise and criticism from his contemporaries, and by the last quarter of the fifth century, the literary figure of Socrates had become a framework upon which both sides could hang their opposing ideas about education.

As an educational philosopher, Socrates encouraged his associates to think differently and to question their assumptions. In a way, then, Socrates' trial and execution sent a

message to the people of Athens - and especially Socrates' proponents - that the traditional content and mode of education were not to be tampered with. However, the literary discussion about education did not disappear with Socrates' execution, but rather, over the course of the following century, it shifted away from both the familial *sunousia* of the heroic age, and the imitation-based *didachê* of the fifth century, and toward the establishment of a systematic, institutionalized *paideia*.

Despite the Classical conception of Socrates as a teacher, the afterlife of Socratic education does not overlap very much with that of the *didaskalos*: the two strands of our inquiry diverge widely in the Hellenistic period and beyond. While the teacher has faded into the background of institutionalized education, Socrates still looms large in modern pedagogical theory and practice. In the following pages, our purpose will be first to track the ways the *didaskalos* (along with his curriculum and methods) developed in the Hellenistic period, and second to trace the evolution of Socratic education from the decades immediately following the death of Socrates through the Hellenistic and Roman periods and into modern day.

2. Looking Forward

Because teaching in the Classical period had not yet been systematized, discussion about education at that time was uniquely theoretical, self-reflective, and wide-ranging. Arguments were made and sustained over whether education was even a worthwhile endeavor, and if so, what its aims should be, and who should be responsible for

carrying it out. By the Hellenistic period, however, it was more or less agreed upon that education was important, and the institution was well on its way to being organized and regulated. It was no longer up for discussion whether education should be undertaken and why; the focus shifted instead to reflection on the pros and cons of existing practices. That is, for the most part, authors in the Hellenistic period stopped speculating as much about the potential of education and turned their attention to the reality of it.

2.1 What Became of the Didaskalos and His Curriculum?

The move toward institutionalized education had unexpected consequences for the *didaskalos*. In a world where education was being increasingly systematized into a standard set of subjects and practices, the role of the teacher came to be taken for granted; teachers were everywhere, uncontroversial and uninteresting, all-but-invisible in their ubiquity. Any person whose role could be interpreted as even vaguely instructional was called a *didaskalos*: everyone from the humble grammarian up to the teacher of rhetoric and philosophy, as well as anyone who taught a specialized technical skill like hairdressing or sewing.² And, in fact, this continued to be the case throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and into Late Antiquity, when even the scripture teachers in the early Christian schools were called *didaskaloi*.³ In other words, paradoxically, during the Hellenistic period (and beyond), references to the *didaskalos* increased in all other types of literature while simultaneously disappearing from

² See Cribiore 2001, 50-51; Morgan 1998, 27-28.

³ See Marrou 1956, 342; Watts 2006, 14-17.

substantive discussions about educational philosophy. If one could say that the *didaskalos* had been elevated to a place of philosophical prominence and influence for a brief time in Classical literature, by the Hellenistic period he had been relegated to the schoolhouse once more.

At the same time that education at all levels was being institutionalized, the teaching profession was undergoing an accompanying move toward further specialization.⁴ Any kind of teacher could be called a *didaskalos*, but not every *didaskalos* taught all subjects. To cite just a few examples, although any of these instructors might also have been referred to as a *didaskalos*, the *grammatistês* specialized in elementary level reading and writing, while the *rhêtôr* taught secondary- and post-secondary-level oratory and rhetoric, and the *kathêgêtês* tutored individual advanced students in literature and mathematics.⁵

But in spite of the changes the Hellenistic period brought to the terminology and institutional nature of the teaching profession, the practices, curriculum, and social - albeit not philosophical - status of the *didaskalos* at that time were consistent with those of the Classical period.⁶ In other words, we should not make the mistake here of

⁴ Alongside this specialized system of formal education there also emerged a new and complementary concept of *paideia* as not simply general education, but the participation in and possession of culture and refinement. See Marrou 1956, 98-99; Watts 2006, 2-8.

⁵ For more on the delineation of tasks in formal Hellenistic education and the names given to educational professionals, see Cribiore 2001, 50-57.

⁶ On the social status of teachers in the Hellenistic period, and the teacher's role as disciplinarian, see Cribiore 2001, 59-65 and 65-73, respectively. On the Hellenistic teacher's curriculum and methods, see Cribiore 2001, Chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 160-219), Morgan 1998, 67-73.

overstating the differences between Classical and Hellenistic education. It is tempting to assume that the abrupt late-fourth-century change in the quantity and type of evidence we have concerning education must have accompanied a similarly dramatic change in its content. This is not at all the case. In the Hellenistic period we do finally get evidence of the daily life realia of education that we so desperately wanted for the Classical period,⁷ but instead of revealing Hellenistic education to be a completely new system, the evidence shows that it had much in common with Classical education. For example, the ideal Classical curriculum as described in detail by Plato and Aristotle and that we can see evidence of in the description of the *Phrontistêrion* in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, persisted in the Hellenistic period. In fact, the sequential study of grammar, geometry, astronomy, literature, music theory, rhetoric, and dialectic was referred to as *enkyklios paideia*, and these subjects came to be considered the basis for advanced study in any field.⁸ All of them were taught in some form in Classical Greece, but in the Hellenistic period they were expanded and developed into a regularized curriculum (Morgan 1998, 38).

This Hellenistic curriculum was admittedly very different from the original trio of subjects - *grammata*, *musikê*, and *gymnastikê* - championed by the Better Argument in Aristophanes' *Clouds* and described in detail by the title character in Plato's *Protagoras*.

⁷ This includes a large number of schoolroom papyri and ostraca of homework assignments and other scholastic exercises written by both teachers and students, sets of letters between parents and their children who had been sent away to school, journals and other personal documents kept by teachers, and even, in the case of Graeco-Roman Egypt, a few schoolhouses complete with intact wall paintings and inscriptions.

⁸ For example (Morgan 1998, 35), in the opinion of Philo and Plutarch, they were a preparation for philosophy; in Vitruvius' view, for architecture; and for Strabo and Pliny the Elder they were the necessary foundation for any other activity in life. On *enkyklios paideia* generally, see Morgan 1998, 33-39.

Indeed, as we saw in our discussion of the Classical Athenian debate about the ideal curriculum in Chapter 2, the notion of the three-part Old Education was already coming into question during the later Classical period. By the early Hellenistic period, *grammata* had been given pride of place in the new curriculum, while the traditional pursuit of *musikê*, which consisted in learning to play and sing along with the lyre, was demoted to the status of a skilled *technê*, and from this field only the study of music theory continued as a core subject (Morgan 1998, 13). The physical side of education (i.e. *gymnastikê*), was removed entirely from elementary schooling and was conducted in part as a specialized pursuit under the supervision of *paidotribai* in the gymnasium,⁹ and in part in the context of the recently established Athenian institution for military training: the *ephêbeia*.¹⁰

As we saw above, if we were to identify the most important point of departure between Hellenistic and Classical education, it would be their respective degrees of

⁹ The gymnasium was, starting in the Hellenistic period, a state-controlled building and institution for physical training (both military and athletic) that was open to all free-born citizens. Although the *ephêboi* are thought to have undergone some of their military training in the gymnasia, these facilities were primarily dedicated to general athletic training in competitive physical activities (like wrestling) for post-adolescent young men (aged approximately 18-30). Athletic training for boys and adolescents (under age 18) took place at the *palaistra*, or wrestling school.

For the gymnasium as a location for physical education only, see Gauthier 2010, 90-94, esp. 91: "The *gymnasion* was entirely dedicated to athletic and military training." It was only much later and in certain prosperous cities like Athens that some intellectual education began to be offered at the gymnasium in addition to athletic training.

¹⁰ According to Ober (2001, 203), the *ephêbeia* was "Athens' first major concession to the idea that it might be desirable to teach the youth of the city about their civic obligations in a structured and state-sponsored setting." The set-up of the system was as follows: at age 18, Athenian males were inducted into a two year program of conjoined military and moral education in which they were personally overseen by *paidotribai* operating under the command of ten *sôphronistai* (one from each tribe). In the first year, they underwent extensive physical training, and in the second year, they served at frontier military outposts.

It is likely that there was some form of military training in Athens prior to the late fourth century, but there is no hard evidence for a formal ephebic system prior to the mid-330's when Epicrates introduced a law about it, and no ephebic inscription has yet been found dated securely before 334 BCE.

institutionalization and concomitant specialization. Whereas education in the Classical period can legitimately be described as a disorganized collection of individuals teaching whatever they wanted or were able, by the Hellenistic period, the system had developed into a consistent sequence of subjects and set of educational practices. In light of this fact, the movement toward separating letters, music, and gymnastics into three distinct educational systems is revealed to be just another manifestation of the Hellenistic shift toward systematizing every aspect of civic life. As Teresa Morgan (1999) has observed in reference to this shift (61):

The achievement of Hellenistic Greeks was to turn literacy and literate education into a state-encouraged instrument of socio-political regulation... But though the status of education in the early Hellenistic kingdoms changed significantly, its contents and taxonomy did not. Those had all been put into place by the mid-fourth century.

In other words, in many ways, Hellenistic education simply built upon the foundation that Classical education had established.¹¹ Far from being an anomaly in the history of education, the Classical period turns out to be the seminal era in the development of pedagogical practices that persist even in the present day.

Keeping in mind our observations about the development of education as a whole between the Classical and Hellenistic periods, let us turn now to a discussion of the aftermath of the educational crisis brought on by Socrates.

2.2 The Heirs of Socrates in the Hellenistic Period and Beyond

Despite the focus of the final chapter of this study, Plato and Xenophon do not represent the last word on Socrates in Greek literature and thought. On the contrary, the quarter

¹¹ On which, see Marrou 1956, 95ff.

century after his trial and execution saw the publication of approximately 300 texts about or involving Socrates, and the emergence of a specific genre of Socratic dialogues and recollections called *Sôkratikoï logoi* (Ford 2008, 30). Among the participants in this “Socratic movement”¹² were not only Socrates’ contemporaries, Plato and Xenophon, but also Plato’s students Aristotle and Heraclides Ponticus who continued to compose prose dialogues,¹³ in addition to the numerous fourth- and third-century members of Plato’s Academy - especially the Stoic Zeno and the Academic skeptic Arcesilaus, originators of the two most influential Hellenistic schools - who recognized Socrates as their chief authority and who viewed their own philosophical activity as a continuation of his (Vander Waerdt 1994, 4).

Different philosophers, however, took up different parts of the Socratic legacy. Specifically, both the early Stoics and the Academic skeptics represented themselves as Socrates’ true heirs, with the latter claiming the mantle of Socratic dialectic and the former developing a philosophy based on Socratic ethics, and both groups believing their interpretation to be best (Vander Waerdt 1994, 7-8; 12). That is, the Stoics, led by Zeno, took up Socratic doctrine concerning virtue, and existence, and the nature of good and bad, and turned it into the basis of their philosophy.¹⁴ They were not

¹² On the scope of the term “Socratic movement”, see Vander Waerdt 1994, 3-4.

¹³ Unfortunately, none of the dialogues of Heraclides Ponticus have survived, and of Aristotle’s dialogues we have only fragments preserved in later authors like Cicero.

¹⁴ On which, see Long (1992, 68-94), esp. 68: “Stoic philosophers had drawn heavily on Plato’s and Xenophon’s Socrates... the details cover numerous doctrines in ethics, moral psychology, and theology, including the priority of the soul’s good over everything else, the unity of the virtues, the identity of virtue with knowledge, and divine providence... The Stoics also treated Socrates’ life as a virtual paradigm of Stoic wisdom’s practical realization, and they were especially impressed by accounts of Socrates’ fortitude, self-control, and imperviousness to physical and emotional stress.”

interested in the dialogue form as a vehicle for communicating philosophy, Socratic or otherwise. The early Academic skeptics, on the other hand, were headed up by Arcesilaus, who continued the Socratic tradition of conducting elenctic-style dialogues that were only preserved in writing by his students, most notably Pythodorus.¹⁵ Like Socrates, the Academic skeptics believed that they knew nothing - and, further, that nothing is knowable - and their dialectic interactions were designed to reveal this fact. Quite unlike the Stoics, they did not subscribe to a common set of ethics or beliefs save for their belief in the nonexistence of knowledge. To put it another way, generally speaking, the Stoics believed Socrates' true legacy was the content of his interactions, while the Academic skeptics believed it was his method of non-didactic questioning.

These two philosophical schools - the Stoics and the Academic skeptics - represent Socrates' afterlife via Plato. Yet Xenophon's Socrates also lived on in the philosophy of the Hellenistic period. In fact, Xenophon's interpretation of Socratic ethics provided a model that competed with Plato's for the allegiance of Socrates' Hellenistic heirs. As Paul Vander Waerdt (1994, 12) observes:

Xenophon does not accept the Platonic characterization of Socrates as the wisest of human beings on account of his knowledge of his own ignorance...; he rather finds the foundation of Socratic virtue to consist in ἐγκράτεια, or self-control, in a kind of self-sufficiency to which knowledge makes some, but perhaps not even the most important contribution. The central differences in the Platonic and Xenophontic accounts of Socratic ethics - on such questions as the unity of virtue, the possibility of ἀκρασία, the relation of virtue to the goods of fortune - all are related to this fundamental difference.

¹⁵ For more on Arcesilaus and the beginning of the school of Academic skeptics, see Brittain 2008.

The chain of Skeptic Socratic teachers whose ideas were only written down by one of their students continued after Arcesilaus. The ideas of Arcesilaus' student Carneades were recorded by his student, Clitomachus, whose pupil Philo of Larissa was likewise memorialized by his own student, Cicero.

Hence, while the Stoics and Academic skeptics primarily developed Plato's model of Socratic ethics and methodology, according to Vander Waerdt, a third philosophical school, the Cynics, followed Xenophon's (12).

Further, in terms of genre and structure, Xenophon's prose memoirs of Socrates prefigured the biographical tradition that was later taken up by Plutarch and Diogenes Laertius. Plato's dialogue form, on the other hand, appears not to have played a big part in Hellenistic philosophy from 300 to 100 BCE.¹⁶ After the Socratic dialogues of Plato's contemporaries and students in the late Classical period, this form effectively died out until Cicero all-but-single-handedly revived it briefly in the Roman period.¹⁷

Only a few decades after his death, Socrates' philosophic legacy had been separated into two distinct strands: the dialectic of the Academic skeptics and the ethics of the Stoics. Finally, in the second century CE, these two strands seem to have been drawn back together by the Stoic sage Epictetus, who conducted elenctic-style dialogues on Socratic ethics that were recorded by his student Arrian.¹⁸ Unlike his Stoic predecessors, in both his methods and the content of his lessons, Epictetus modeled himself on Socrates. As Anthony Long (1992, 67) has observed, "It is Socrates who

¹⁶ On which, see Robb 1994, 239: "The dramatic prose dialogue devoted to a philosophical topic is a transition piece that will soon give way to the expository prose treatise that became so firmly established in Aristotle's school. The Athenian philosophical dialogue, like the Sicilian mime before it, was a feature, perhaps a necessary one, of the developing alliance between literacy and paideia that marks the fifth and fourth centuries but becomes an anachronism when that alliance has at last been completed."

¹⁷ On the ways Cicero responded to the dialogues of Plato and Aristotle, see Schofield 2008, 63-84.

¹⁸ In almost every way, Arrian positioned himself as the new Xenophon, both in the subjects of his other prose treatises (e.g. the *Anabasis of Alexander*, or *On Hunting with Dogs*), and also in his role as memoirist to a great Socratic philosopher. In particular, he greatly admired Xenophon's straightforward prose style and he modeled his *Discourses of Epictetus* directly on Xenophon's *Memorabilia*.

authorizes everything Epictetus is trying to give his students in terms of philosophical methodology, self-examination, and a life model for them to imitate.” In one important way, however, Epictetus diverged from his Socratic model: he fashioned himself as a teacher. Tad Brennan has summed this difference up neatly in his chapter “Socrates and Epictetus” in the 2009 Blackwell *Companion to Socrates* (291-2):

[Epictetus] has students - there is no coyness or qualification, none of the Socratic dance of disclaimers, in his institutional relation to them. He wants to teach them, and takes his role as teacher seriously... He sometimes expresses annoyance at his own limitations and failures,... but it is fundamentally different from the Socratic stance of being in principle incapable of teaching, of having nothing to teach.

As we saw in Chapter 4, it was fundamental to Socrates’ self-presentation that he not be seen as teaching his associates, in large part because of the potential responsibility and punishment that would have come down on his head with such an admission. One can only surmise that for Epictetus, on the other hand, there was no inherent risk in being thought of as a teacher. Indeed, it may even have been an imperative part of his role as a philosopher to teach the correct doctrine to his companions.¹⁹ Socrates’ fate was, in large part, a result of the socio-political climate in Athens at the beginning of the fourth century. With the institutionalization of education in the Hellenistic period, being a teacher became essentially harmless, and by the time of Epictetus in the Roman period, most of the earlier negative and dangerous implications of teaching seem to have faded away. Today we don’t usually speak of bad teachers as ruining their students so much as inadequately preparing them for later pursuits.

¹⁹ See Long 1992, 94: Epictetus “was obviously aware that Stoicism, however much it was prefigured by Socrates, was a subsequent development. Under his Stoic identity he presents himself as a pedagogue with a range of definite lessons to teach his students.”

Although the written dialogue ultimately died out in the Christian era, some of Socrates' methods continued in a different form, and they persist in contemporary education in a way Plato, at least, could never have anticipated. Ironically, Socrates, the man who was executed in part on the accusation of being a bad teacher, is memorialized today as the ideal educator and the originator of one of the most effective pedagogical techniques of all time: the so-called "Socratic method". The modern Socratic method, however, represents quite a departure from the literary Socrates' characteristic *elenchus*, wherein the educator (i.e. the Socrates-figure), while making no positive claims of his own, interrogates and breaks down the interlocutor's beliefs until the latter reaches the point of *aporia*, or recognition of his own ignorance. Only then does the educator, through a process of question and answer, move with his student toward the apprehension of some basic truth. While Plato's Socratic method pre-supposes Socrates and his interlocutor to be equally ignorant co-travelers on the road to truth, the modern Socratic method is based on the understanding that the teacher knows something his/her student does not. So instead of questioning with the goal of dismantling the student's beliefs, the modern Socratic educator uses the technique of question and answer to build up his/her student's knowledge. Further, in contemporary education, the Socratic method might be employed in a class of 20 or more students, almost as a way to encourage general class participation, instead of one-on-one as a tool for deep investigation of a designated philosophical question.

In the most fundamental way, what we call the Socratic method bears very little resemblance to the educational practices described by Plato, and is, in fact, antithetical

to Socrates' beliefs about education.²⁰ Socrates vehemently denied being a teacher, but as we saw in the last chapter of this study, he was tried and executed in large part because he was seen as one, and both Plato and Xenophon worked hard to posthumously defend their idol against this very charge. And yet, regardless of what Socrates and his followers wanted, today he is remembered as the paradigm of the good teacher. Over the past two centuries, entire books - not to mention hundreds of articles in scholarly journals - have been devoted to praising the Socratic method and demonstrating its relevance and usefulness in teaching every possible subject. Unlike with Plato, for whom the dialectic method was a way for Socrates to educate without teaching, for us, using the Socratic method is considered one of the best ways to teach effectively. Paradoxically, Socrates, the self-professed anti-teacher, unintentionally originated one of the most influential teaching techniques in the history of Western education.

²⁰ For modern misconceptions about the true Socratic method, see Fishman 1985, 185-88.

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