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PART I

*An analysis of the Lysis*

## CHAPTER I

*203A1–207B7: the cast assembles, and the main  
 conversation is set up*

We begin with a largely uninterrupted translation of the opening few pages of the *Lysis*, which serve to introduce and set the scene for the main argument. (For subsequent sections of the dialogue, our method will have some resemblance to a running commentary.) We shall provide, in footnotes to the translation, some preliminary comments on details of this first section of the dialogue, but for the most part we shall delay discussion of major points until after our analysis of the argument of the rest of the *Lysis* (see chapter 9). We begin with the expectation, though the proof of the pudding will be in the eating, that the design of the opening scene will have at least something to do with the concerns of that argument.

**203A1** I was on my way from the Academy straight to the Lyceum along the road that runs outside the wall, under the wall itself; but when I'd got to the small gate where the spring of Panops is, there I chanced on Hippothales son of Hieronymus and Ctesippus of the Paecania deme and other young lads (*neaniskois*) **203A5** with them, all standing in a group. And when Hippothales caught sight of me coming towards them, he said 'Socrates! Where is it you're on your way to, and **203B1** where from?'

'From the Academy,' I said; 'I'm on my way straight to the Lyceum.'

'Come straight here to us,' he said. 'Won't you come over? It really will be worth your while.'

**203B5** 'Where do you mean,' I said, 'and who are the "us" you want me to come over to?'

'I mean here,' he said, showing me just over from the wall a kind of precinct with its door standing open; 'and the ones passing our time there are those of us here now and others as well – quite a lot of them, and beauties too.'

**204A1** 'So what is this place, and how do you pass your time?'

'It's a wrestling-school,' he said, 'one just recently built; we spend most of our time in discussions (*logoi*), and would gladly make you a part of them.'

'Fine,' I said, 'if you do that; but who's teaching there?'

**204A5** 'It's actually a friend (*hetairos*) of yours,' he said, 'and an admirer – Miccus.'

‘Zeus!’ I said; ‘definitely no mean person (*ou phaulos*);<sup>1</sup> in fact a fair professional when it comes to wisdom.’<sup>2</sup>

‘So are you prepared to follow us,’ he said, ‘so you can see for yourself those who are there?’<sup>3</sup>

**204B1** ‘Before that I’d like to be told what I’ll be going in *for*, and who the beauty is.’<sup>4</sup>

‘One of us thinks it’s one person, Socrates,’ he said, ‘another another.’

‘But who do *you* think it is, Hippothales? This is what you should tell me.’

**204B5** At that question he blushed. And I said ‘Son of Hieronymus, Hippothales, *this* you don’t need to tell me – whether you’re in love with (*eraiis*) someone or not;<sup>5</sup> for I know that you’re not only in love (*eraiis*), but already pretty far along in your love (*porrō ēdē ei poreuomenos tou erōtos*).<sup>6</sup> I am, myself, of mean ability (*phaulos*), **204C1** indeed useless (*achrēstos*), in respect to everything else, but this much has been given me – I don’t know how – from god, the capacity to recognize (*gignōskein*) quickly a lover and an object of love (*erōnta te kai erōmenon*).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There seems no pressing need to adopt Schanz’s *hanēr* (i.e. *ho anēr*) for the manuscripts’ *anēr* here in 204A6.

<sup>2</sup> This rather elaborate rendering of the two Greek words *hikanos sophistēs* seems justified by the slipperiness of the second. In Plato, calling someone a ‘sophist’ (*sophistēs*: the form of the word suggests something like ‘professional wise person’) is not usually meant as a compliment (see, for example, Socrates’ warnings at the beginning of the *Protagoras* to the young Hippocrates about the dangers of associating with people – sophists – like Protagoras; though cf. also the partial defence of the sophists against Anytus at *Meno* 89E–95A2, esp. 91B2–92E6). Here, however (on the surface), the term seems to be used in a purely descriptive way; and that – so we take it – is the point: Miccus professes, and teaches, wisdom, and wisdom or knowledge will be one of the chief themes of the main part of the *Lysis*. (Nails 2003 has him down, on the basis of the present passage, as a wrestling-teacher; if that is right, his ‘wisdom’ will consist in his expertise in wrestling. Was he perhaps one of the professional types Socrates examined in his search, sparked off by the Delphic oracle, for someone wiser than himself? But see further n. 57 to Chapter 5 below.) The fact that Miccus neither subsequently appears in person in the *Lysis* nor is even mentioned again is probably sufficient indication of Socrates’ actual opinion of him. Wisdom and knowledge, however, will be among the central subjects of the dialogue, if not *the* central subject.

<sup>3</sup> As it will turn out, Hippothales has a special reason for emphasizing autopsy: it’s the sight of his own beloved (*Lysis*) that matters most to *him*. One of the questions that Socrates will introduce early on will be whether Hippothales has got his priorities right. Socrates’ own interest in *Lysis* will be quite different; whether or not it will count as an ‘erotic’ interest will depend on whether it is being looked at from Hippothales’ or from Socrates’ point of view (Socrates’ view of the ‘erotic’ will be somewhat different from Hippothales’: see e.g. n. 7 below).

<sup>4</sup> Socrates immediately picks up what Hippothales is up to; it’s not ‘discussions’ (*logoi*, 204A3) that interest Hippothales, but something (someone) else.

<sup>5</sup> Socrates addresses Hippothales in mock-formal fashion (‘Son of Hieronymus, Hippothales’): there’s no point in his even trying to deny that – lit. ‘don’t any longer say whether . . .’ – he’s in love.

<sup>6</sup> The translation ‘pretty far along in it’ misses the relatively unusual construction of the Greek, one that parallels the English continuous present (‘you’re *going* far along in it’ would be closer). We should probably notice that the verb used is the same as the one that occurs as first word in the dialogue: *poreuesthai*, also echoed at 203B2; should we somehow or other be connecting Hippothales’ ‘journey’ in love with Socrates’ real one?

<sup>7</sup> All that Socrates will be doing here, at least as far as someone like Hippothales is concerned, is finding an elegant way of saying that *anyone* could tell that Hippothales is hopelessly in love; and certainly the reference to a gift from the gods – one given, as Socrates says, ‘I don’t know how’, or ‘somehow

When he heard me say this he blushed much more deeply still. At that Ctesippus said 'So very charming of you to blush, Hippothales, 204C5 and to be coy about telling Socrates the name! But if he passes even a little time with you, he'll be worn out by your saying it over and over again. At any rate, Socrates, he's deafened our 204D1 ears by stuffing them with "Lysis"; and then again if he has a bit of a drink,<sup>8</sup> there's every chance we'll wake up in the middle of the night too, thinking we're hearing "Lysis". And as terrible as the things are that he says in ordinary conversation, they are hardly terrible at all compared with the poems that he tries 204D5 to pour over our heads, and the bits of prose. And what's more terrible than these is that he even *sings* to his beloved, in an extraordinary voice that *we* have to put up with listening to. Now you ask him the name, and he blushes!'

204E1 'And Lysis, it seems,' I said, 'is some young person; I'm guessing, because I didn't recognize (*gignōskein*) the name when I heard it.'

'Right,' he [Ctesippus] said, 'people don't mention his own name all that much; instead he's still called by his patronymic because his father is so widely 204E5 known (*gignōskein*). Because I'm sure there's little chance of your not knowing (*agnoein*) what the boy looks like [his *eidōs*]; he's good-looking enough to be known (*gignōskein*)<sup>9</sup> just from that alone.'

or other': *pōs* – must be ironic. Socrates detects that Hippothales is in love from the fact that he blushes (there are three references to blushing in quick succession: 204B5, C3, C4), and to be able to see that blushing, in response to the question 'And who do *you* find a beauty?', is a sign that someone is in love is not much of a gift. (Later on, in 216D–217A, Socrates will talk in a similar way of having a kind of 'prophetic insight' – talk which undoubtedly represents little more than a marker for the introduction of a point not, so to speak, organically produced from an interlocutor other than the useless/ignorant Socrates. That the gods are really meant to have had much to do with his expertise on lovers/beloveds is, we suggest, equally in doubt here in 204B–C.) But there is a little more to what Socrates is saying. Take, first, 'I'm of mean ability, *phaulos*, indeed useless, in everything else': this general profession of ignorance evidently puts him at a disadvantage with Miccus (not *phaulos*, indeed a *hikanos sophistēs*, Socrates said at A6). Hippothales, and we, will no doubt take this too as ironic; but whether, or to what extent, that is the appropriate reaction will require the rest of the *Lysis* to show. As for the particular capacity Socrates does claim to have, of 'recogniz[ing] quickly a lover and an object of love', a central feature of the situation with Hippothales is that Socrates can only tell who the lover is, not who it is that is loved: at this point in the action, he certainly doesn't know, and has no way of knowing, that it's Lysis. In reaching any final conclusions about what to make of the claim in question, we shall need to take into account certain later developments in the dialogue. Most importantly, we shall find Socrates arguing that *erōs*, in common with any sort of desire, will involve more than a simple relationship between lover and beloved as ordinarily understood. (It will turn out that the true beloved is always *the good* – and also, as it happens, that *everyone* is a lover, insofar as everyone loves the good; to that extent Socrates' claim to be able to recognize one loving may be quite as complex as his claim to be able to recognize the one loved.) Another idea in the passage that will play a role later on is the association of ignorance with uselessness (see 207B8–210D8, *passim*).

<sup>8</sup> The same verb (*hupopinēin*) will be used at the end of the dialogue, of the slaves who look after the boys Lysis and Menexenus (223B1).

<sup>9</sup> The repeated use of *gignōskein* (with *agnoein* in 204E5) looks significant, coming as it does after Socrates' remark about the one thing he can *gignōskein*, i.e. lover and object of love, and in light of the fact that Lysis actually is the beloved (the one Socrates couldn't in fact *gignōskein* at 204C) in this case. Cf. n. 7 above.

‘Please let me be told whose son he is,’ I said.

‘Democrates,’ he said, ‘from the deme of Aexone – Lysis is his eldest son.’<sup>10</sup>

‘Well now,’ I said, ‘Hippothales, how noble and dashing 204E10 a love this is that you’ve discovered, from every point of view!’<sup>11</sup> So<sup>12</sup> come on, give me just the displays 205A1 you give these people here, so that I can establish whether you know<sup>13</sup> the things a lover should say<sup>14</sup> about a beloved to him or to others.’<sup>15</sup>

‘But do you attach weight, Socrates,’ he said, ‘to any of the things this person says?’

‘Are you denying,’ I said, ‘even that you’re in love with the one “this person” says?’

205A5 ‘No, I’m not,’ he [Hippothales] said, ‘but I do deny that I write poetry to my beloved, or put things in prose to him.’

‘He’s not well,’ said Ctesippus; ‘he’s delirious, raving!’

And I said ‘Hippothales, I’m not for a moment asking to hear 205B1 your *verses*, or any *song* you may have composed to the young lad (*neaniskos*); what I’m asking

<sup>10</sup> Father–son relationships will play a not inconsiderable role in the succeeding argument, as will questions about the importance of age and beauty – and also of power: we should perhaps note that ‘Democrates’ is literally ‘People-Power’. Lysis’ beauty and parentage will already be enough to explain his being chosen for what will be the role of one of the two main interlocutors in the dialogue. Lysis’ tombstone, probably dating from before the end of the second quarter of the fourth century, has been found; he appears to have married well – hardly a surprise, given what Plato says in the *Lysis* about his family. On other people in the dialogue: Nails 2003 has rather little to offer us about Menexenus, but he turns up as Socrates’ sole interlocutor in another of Plato’s dialogues (the *Menexenus*), and in light of the fact that one of Socrates’ sons had the same name ‘it is natural to wonder whether he might be related to Socrates’ family’ (Nails 2003: 202). About Hippothales we know absolutely nothing, though a Hippothales turns up in Diogenes Laertius III.46 – ‘perhaps on the basis of this dialogue’, Nails 2003: 174 – as a pupil of Plato’s. Nails makes Lysis ‘apparently [only] slightly younger than him’, on the basis that both are called *neaniskoi* (Hippothales at 203A, Lysis at 205B1; Lysis is then *pais*, ‘boy’, at B8). But to the extent that (a) *neaniskos* is a pretty imprecise description (the application of which will often depend on context, the age of the speaker, and so on), and (b) it may not be *quite* certain that Socrates means to treat Hippothales as a *neaniskos* at 203A (see LSJ s.v. *allos*, II.8: ‘Hippothales and Ctesippus and young lads besides/with them?’), this is not a certain inference. Hippothales at any rate is no ‘boy’; he *may* be the same age as Ctesippus, Menexenus’ cousin, who is the one who uses this word of Lysis. But we know hardly anything more about Ctesippus, either, than we may learn from Plato’s dialogues (for the most important context, in the *Euthydemus*, see Chapter 2, §1(c) below).

<sup>11</sup> ‘Dashing’ is an attempt to render *neanikos*, literally ‘belonging to a young man’, so ‘youthful’, ‘fresh’, ‘flourishing’, ‘fine’; also ‘impetuous’, ‘headstrong’. The immediate sense is probably given by the ‘from every point of view’: Socrates is responding to the news that Lysis is not only outstandingly beautiful, but (eldest) son of a famous father. But the very next sentence (do you, Hippothales know what a lover should say about a beloved?) marks the beginning of a process that will put in doubt how important such qualifications are in a beloved; see the analysis of the initial conversation between Socrates and Lysis in Chapter 2 below.

<sup>12</sup> ‘So’ for the Greek *kai* may appear a little odd; the aim is merely to convey the sense of *continuity* implied.

<sup>13</sup> The verb is *epistamai*, a cognate of *epistēmē*, one of the commonest terms for ‘knowledge’, ‘expertise’.

<sup>14</sup> I.e. the sorts of things that an expert lover would say.

<sup>15</sup> ‘What a lover should say about a beloved to him or to others’ will turn out, in a (so far unexpected) way, to be a possible description of the main part of the *Lysis*.

to hear is what your *thought* is,<sup>16</sup> so that I can establish the way you're applying yourself to your beloved.'

'I'm sure *he'll* tell you,' he said; 'for he knows it in detail, 205B5 off by heart, if as he says he's deafened from hearing it from me.'

'Heavens above [By the gods]!' said Ctesippus; 'For sure I do. Because the things he says are ridiculous into the bargain, Socrates. He's a lover, with his mind fixed more than anyone else's on the boy, and yet he doesn't 205C1 have anything of his own [*idion*] to say that even – a *boy* couldn't say: is that ridiculous, or isn't it?'<sup>17</sup> But what the whole city celebrates, about Democrates, and Lysis, the boy's grandfather, and about all the boy's ancestors, things like wealth and racehorses and victories

<sup>16</sup> I.e., what the thought is behind your verses/songs. What Socrates will suggest is that Hippothales is composing encomia to himself (205D5–6, E1–4), and in the process actually making his prey more difficult to catch (206A6–7). Hippothales protests (205D7–8) that he's *not* composing to himself: 'you don't *think* you are', replies Socrates (D9). It regularly happens to Socrates' interlocutors in the Platonic dialogues, as here with Hippothales, that what their thought is on any given topic emerges only after some considerable dialectic. (In fact, as Hippothales' response at 205B4–5 shows, he does not even properly understand Socrates' question.)

At this point we need to alert the reader to the fact that we think a major philosophical issue is involved here. How can it be said that Hippothales, unbeknownst to himself, is singing his own praises? How can it be that he doesn't realize that what he is saying (what he believes), when *apparently* saying something of the sort 'The boy I love is a paragon' is that he himself, Hippothales, is worthy of praise? (Incidentally, as the context indicates, the real subject of this sentence is not the boy Hippothales loves, but, *how one should speak to one's darling*.) Do people not *know* what the content is of their assertions or claims? Well, the question is whether 'the content of our assertions or claims' is to be taken in terms solely of *what we mean* by the sentences asserted (what our sentences mean or say), or in terms of *the actual things and attributes that the different parts of the sentences (really) refer to* (what we, the speakers, presumably *intend* to be speaking of). We take up these issues in a more theoretical way in Chapters 10 and 11 below. For now, what we need to say is that it comes naturally – even to modern philosophers and logicians – to take what *we* are saying, i.e., what any of us is saying, by means of our sentences in terms of what we *mean* (this being in turn explained in terms of something called the 'logical powers' of the sentences in question: see Chapter 10, nn. 3, 17); and to suppose that in general we know what we mean (also, by virtue of 'knowing the language' that we know what our *sentences* mean); so that modern philosophers and logicians are as likely to be as surprised as Hippothales himself that Socrates should suppose that what Hippothales was actually doing in 'singing Lysis' praises' is actually singing his own praises. At any rate, departing from this approach – as we see it, with good reason: see Chapters 10 and 11 – Socrates takes people not even to be aware of what their thought *is* until it has been laid out for them by the process of dialectic. That process, through which he hopes to lay out what the speaker is saying by means of the original sentences under examination, is such that it may well turn out that there is no one coherent position the interlocutor holds, and so no one coherent assertion the interlocutor is making. If a baffled interlocutor, at the end of a dialectical examination at Socrates' hands, says or thinks 'By Zeus, I no longer know *what* I was saying,' we think this is exactly right. The dialectic, in the present case, will reveal that Hippothales really was singing his own praises, even if he didn't understand it at the time. (See nn. 26 and 33 below for the particular application of the idea to Hippothales' case.)

The point here is connected with what we call below, in Chapter 10, 'the principle of real reference'. (What is the real thing out there that the interlocutor intends to be picking out by means of his words?) Clarification of the line we take here is postponed to Chapter 10; for the moment, what matters is just that this seemingly banal context involves something philosophically important; and to add – our justification for the addition is also postponed – that on the philosophical point at issue, Socrates is right, and all too many modern philosophers and logicians are wrong.

<sup>17</sup> In Greek idiom, 'how is it not ridiculous?' Ctesippus suggests that mere age brings wisdom; Lysis' (and Menexenus') performance later on ought to surprise him.

at the Pythian and 205C5 Isthmian and Nemean Games with the four-horse team and the single horse and rider – *that's* what he puts in the poems he recites, and stuff that's even older news than that. It was the reception given to Heracles that he was going through in some poem the day before yesterday – how because of their kinship with *Heracles* their ancestor 205DI received *Heracles* as a visitor, the ancestor being himself descended from Zeus and the daughter of the founder of the deme; things old women sing about,<sup>18</sup> and lots of other things of the same sort, Socrates. These are the things that this person talks and sings about, forcing us as well to be his audience.'

205D5 On hearing that, I said 'Ridiculous Hippothales,<sup>19</sup> are you composing and singing an encomium to yourself before you've won?'

'But it's not to myself, Socrates,' he said, 'that I'm composing or singing.'

'You certainly don't *think* so,' I said.<sup>20</sup>

205D10 'But how's that?' he said.

205E1 'It's to you most of all,' I said, 'that these songs of yours refer. For on the one hand, if you catch your beloved when he's as you describe him, what you've said and sung will be an ornament to *you*, and truly encomia, as if you were the victor, for having succeeded with a beloved like that; but on the other hand, if he escapes you, 205E5 the greater the encomia you've uttered about your beloved, so much the greater the beautiful and good things<sup>21</sup> you'll seem to have been deprived of, 206A1 and ridiculous as a result. So the person who's an expert [or 'wise': *sophos*] in erotics (*ta erōtika*), my friend (*philos*),<sup>22</sup> doesn't praise the one he loves until he catches him, out of fear for how the future will turn out. And at the same time whenever anyone praises them and builds them up,<sup>23</sup> the beautiful ones get full of proud and arrogant thoughts; or don't you think so?'

206A5 'I do,' he said.

'Well, the more arrogant they are, the more difficult they become to catch?'

'Yes, that's likely.'

<sup>18</sup> So Hippothales' stuff is boyish/childish if it's 'his own', i.e. original, and ends up being old wives' tales if it's not.

<sup>19</sup> Socrates picks up the adjective Ctesippus chose ('Ridiculous Hippothales') – but applies it for a different reason (205E4–206A1).

<sup>20</sup> In a way that would surprise many moderns as much as it surprises Hippothales, Socrates suggests that he (Socrates) knows better than Hippothales what Hippothales is affirming in 'singing *Lysis* praises'. See n. 16 above, with n. 26 below.

<sup>21</sup> The two adjectives used here, *kalos* and *agathos*, frequently go together as a pair, virtually making up a single word (thus at 207A3; Socrates, as narrator, describing *Lysis*) to denote people (or things) of the highest degree of quality – whatever quality is in question; but here, of course, in losing his beloved Hippothales would be losing something (someone) beautiful as well as something good for himself, or so everyone would say ('you'll seem . . .'), and he would certainly agree. (Later, the beautiful will apparently be identified with the good: see 216D2.)

<sup>22</sup> The root *phil-*, connoting love/friendship, will be central to the *Lysis*; here is its first occurrence – though *hetairos*, which in some contexts can be used interchangeably with *philos*, has been used at 204A5, and most of the conversation so far has centred around *erōs* (denoting passionate, usually sexual, desire/love) and its cognates. It is in fact to *erōs* that the whole dialogue will ultimately return, if indeed it ever leaves it behind.

<sup>23</sup> I.e. adds to their reputation (*auxēi*).

‘So what sort of hunter would it be, in your view, that started up 206A10 his prey and made it more difficult to catch?’

206B1 ‘Clearly, a poor (*phaulos*) one.’<sup>24</sup>

‘And what’s more, to use words and songs on a subject not to soothe it but to drive it wild would be a matter of a distinct lack of musical ability, wouldn’t it?’

‘It seems so to me.’

206B5 ‘Watch out then, Hippothales, that you don’t make yourself liable to all these things with your poetry-making. And furthermore, I myself think you wouldn’t wish to (*ethelein*) concede that a man who’s doing harm to himself with poetry is ever a good poet, in being harmful to himself.’<sup>25</sup>

‘Zeus! No indeed,’ he said; ‘that would be quite senseless. But these 206C1 are just the reasons, Socrates, that I’m telling you everything: if you’ve something else up your sleeve, give your advice about the line a person should take in conversation (*tina . . . logon dialegomenos*), or what he should do, to become an object of love for [*prophilēs* to] a beloved.’<sup>26</sup>

‘It’s not easy to say,’ I said. ‘But if you were prepared to get 206C5 him to come and exchange words with me (*moi . . . eis logous elthein*), perhaps I’d be able to

<sup>24</sup> For the same adjective (*phaulos*), also of lack of expertise, see 204A6 (Miccus: ‘no mean person; in fact a fair professional when it comes to wisdom’), 204B8 (Socrates: ‘of mean ability’, except when it comes to ‘recogniz[ing] quickly a lover and an object of love’).

<sup>25</sup> As it is put, this will look, to moderns, like something that neither Hippothales nor anyone else would have reason to agree with: why *shouldn’t* one be a good poet, and still suffer bad consequences from one’s poetry (as if it could be a necessary condition of any expertise that it not lead to any damage to oneself)? But although there is no *general* case for the poems of good poets always being beneficial to their authors, Hippothales precisely went into writing poetry because he thought to benefit himself from it. So *he* will have to agree that a good poet will not harm himself. Perhaps that is enough to explain the present point: that anyone who *thinks* it a good thing to indulge in poetry (or even to become a poet) will think poetry benefits the poet. See also our remarks, in Chapter 11, n. 24 below, in opposition to the modern treatment of ‘good of its kind’. At the same time, it is not perhaps inconceivable that we are meant to do a double-take on *poiein* in the sentence in question by reading it also as ‘. . . I . . . think you wouldn’t wish to concede that a man who’s harming himself with/by *acting* [i.e. doing, *poiēsis*] is ever a good doer, in being harmful to himself: cf. *Symposium* 205B–C, where the two kinds of *poiēsis/poiein* – po[i]etry, and doing/(making) – are explicitly set side by side. That ‘no one goes wrong willingly’ (*oudeis hekōn hamartanei*) is one of the best-known claims of Socrates’ (see e.g. *Apology* 25E–26A, *Protagoras* 345D–E, *Gorgias* 509E), though he would have no reason for expecting Hippothales to accept *that*, at any rate straight off (‘I think you wouldn’t wish to concede . . .’). Some readers, however, will no doubt regard this reading – exploiting a double take on *poiein* – as too much of a stretch.

<sup>26</sup> Hippothales can reasonably be claimed to be setting up the theme of the *Lysis* here: the final conclusion to the main argument (or the closest to a final conclusion that it comes) will be that ‘It’s necessary . . . for the genuine lover, one who’s not pretended, to be loved by his darling’ (222A6–7). So all Hippothales has to ‘do’ is to be a genuine lover (and isn’t he that already?). But leading up to that conclusion there will also, of course, be an extended example of the kind of line a lover should take in conversation with his intended – a line Hippothales would never have dreamed of on his own, but presumably in harmony with his ‘thought’ (205B2), if that has to do with his ‘becoming an object of love to [his] beloved’ (206C3); that is, if it has anything to do with *becoming an object of love to one’s beloved as such a becoming will have to be in the real world*, and not as it might be in some dream-world of Hippothales’. Cf. n. 16 above, from which it will be readily seen why we hold that *whatever false beliefs Hippothales may (unbeknownst to himself) have about the matter*, it is *this becoming an object of love to one’s beloved* that Hippothales wants to talk about, and is referring to.



demonstrate to you what one should say in conversation (*dialegesthai*)<sup>27</sup> with him instead of the things these people claim that you actually do say, and sing as well.’

‘Not difficult at all,’ he said. ‘For if you go in with Ctesippus here and sit down and have a conversation (*dialegesthai*), my thinking is that he’ll 206C10 actually come over (*prosiēnai*) to you himself, because you see, Socrates, he’s got this outstanding love 206D1 of listening [“he’s outstandingly *philēkoös*”]. And another thing is that it’s the Hermaea festival, so that the younger people and the boys are all mixed up together. So he’ll come over to you, and if he doesn’t, he knows Ctesippus well enough through Ctesippus’ cousin Menexenus, because in fact it’s Menexenus he goes around with [is *betairois* of] more 206D5 than anybody else – so let’s have Ctesippus call him over in case he doesn’t come over himself after all.’

‘That’s what we should do,’ I said. And as I said it, I took 206E1 Ctesippus and made my approach,<sup>28</sup> into the wrestling-school; the others came behind us.

When we got in, what we found there was that the boys had made their sacrifice and the business surrounding the sacred rituals was pretty well already done with, 206E5 so that everyone was playing knucklebones, all dressed up as they were. Well, most of them were playing outside in the courtyard, but a few were playing odds and evens in a corner of the stripping-off room with a large quantity of knucklebones that they were selecting (*proairoumenoi*) out of some little baskets; others were standing around and forming an audience.<sup>29</sup> Now one of these was actually Lysis, who was standing there among 207A1 the boys and the younger people with a garland on his head and standing out by his looks (*tēn opsin*) – worth talking about not just for his beauty but for his beauty-and-goodness.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> What *dialegesthai* is for Hippothales is no more than ‘conversation’ (so just now in c2). But for Socrates it is something more substantial: (philosophical) *discussion*, of the sort represented by the following exchange between him and Lysis and Menexenus. We have chosen to translate the verb standardly as ‘converse’, but the reader will need to bear this difference in mind. (When Socrates ‘converses’, it’s not a normal sort of ‘conversation’. See further Chapter 4, n. 20, below, with text to n.)

<sup>28</sup> The verb used (*prosiēnai*) is the same as the one Hippothales used (three times) for Lysis’ ‘coming over to’ Socrates; but is there also the slightest suggestion, with the mention of the wrestling-school, of (verbal) wrestling to come?

<sup>29</sup> Whatever the rules of ‘odds and evens’ might have been, the picture is of the company playing a game of chance, with a few protagonists attempting to apply some skills (especially of selection, or choice: *proaireisthai* is a central term in the context of practical decision-making). The situation thus resembles the one that is about to take shape, with Socrates, Lysis and Menexenus in conversation on practical matters, watched by others.

<sup>30</sup> We meet here the combination of adjectives (*kalos te kai agathos*) referred to in n. 21 above. In ordinary contemporary usage at Athens the expression will have tended to be associated with the rich, powerful and leisured; ‘gentleman(ly)’ would have been the nearest equivalent in, say, Victorian Britain, i.e., when everyone knew who the ‘gentlemen’ were. But to translate ‘gentlemanly’ here (Lombardo goes for ‘well-bred young gentleman’) is to hide from view the presence of the notions of beauty and goodness, which separately as well as in combination will be central – and contested – in the following conversation between Socrates, Lysis and Menexenus (hence the manufactured rendering adopted, i.e. ‘beauty-and-goodness’: a Nietzschean sounding ‘nobility-and-goodness’ would get the tone about right, but would be liable to the same objection as ‘gentlemanly’).

For our part, we went off and sat down opposite the group – it was quiet there – and conversed (*dialegesthai*) 207A5 a bit among ourselves. Well, Lysis kept turning round to look at us, and it was clear that he wanted to come over to us (*prosiēnai*).<sup>31</sup> So then for a time he was at a loss (*aporein*) about what to do, hesitating to come over to us on his own, but at that point Menexenus 207B1 came in from the courtyard in the middle of his game, and when he saw me and Ctesippus, came to sit beside us;<sup>32</sup> and so when Lysis saw him he followed and sat down beside us together with Menexenus. Then others came over too, and Hippothales took his opportunity, 207B5 since he could see several people placing themselves close to, to use them as a cover and take a close position himself in such a way that he thought Lysis wouldn't catch sight of him, because he was afraid of annoying him; and positioned like this he set to listening.<sup>33</sup>

As for me, I looked at Menexenus, and said 'Son of Demophon . . .'

The scene, then, is set for Socrates' demonstration to Hippothales of 'the things a lover should say about a beloved to him or to others' (Socrates' words at 205A1–2), or 'the line a person should take in conversation; or what he should do, to become an object of love for his beloved' (what Hippothales asks for from Socrates at 206C2–3); or 'what one should say in conversation (*dialegesthai*) with [Lysis] instead of the things these people claim that you [Hippothales] actually do say, and sing as well' (206C2–3).

<sup>31</sup> 'Come over to us': cf. n. 28 above.

<sup>32</sup> So, by implication, giving up his game for something that will turn out to be rather more serious.

<sup>33</sup> As he made others listen to him (205D4; the verb used is the same); Socrates is about to show him what he *should* be saying instead of that other stuff – which is simultaneously about becoming whatever is involved in becoming a genuine lover (n. 26 above) *and*, clashing with this, and foolishly so, in praise of the *lover* (n. 16 above). The thought of Hippothales, as promised in n. 16, will fall to pieces under detailed examination.