



Eros: Erotos

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EROS—EROTES

T. G. ROSENMEYER

THE industrious cupids of the House of the Vettii, like their cousins who decorate many an ancient wall, have long spelled one of the more delightful chapters in our classical tradition. Their buoyant and somewhat puckish charm is as irresistible today as it was in the days of Titus. It would be sheer boorishness to insist that the angelic creatures are, historically speaking, the last pitiful vestige of what was once a grand and inspiring symbol of poetic thought. Any resemblance between the cloud of pretty children flitting from tree to tree in the poem by Theocritus,¹ and the august deity clad in his Thracian cape who swooped down upon Sappho's startled senses,² is surely coincidental. What bonds of kinship could possibly unite the fertilizing divinity of Hesiod's Creation with the courtly pages who busy themselves about Alexander and Rhoxane in Aetion's painting described by Lucian?³ And yet, we must be boorish: the facts leave no room for doubt. The Greco-Roman putti are direct descendants of Hesiod's Eros. The present paper undertakes to find out precisely how this unlikely development came about. Let us formulate the question as follows: what circumstances, or what psychological motivation, induced the ancient god Eros to transform himself into several Erotes, with disastrous consequences to the majesty of his image?

Among classical scholars, Usener has been one of the very few to pay attention to the phenomenon which we might call "pluralization." In his *Goetternamen*⁴ he states that the use of the plural of a deity instead of the singular is very common in Latin. *Iunones* and *Veneres* and *Soles* are frequent enough. In Greece, he continues, the same freedom of expression does not obtain; nevertheless Eileithyia was early thought of in the plural,⁵ and the multiplicity of Nikai and Erotes proves that the Hellenic mind was not averse to the same tendency to make two, or more, out of one. Usener himself, in keeping with his special theory of *Augenblicksgoetter*, feels that the proliferation of Eros into Erotes is a reversion to an earlier mentality. A plurality of Erotes, each Eros being the image of one particular love experience, was the original concept which was later simplified into the vision of one god comprehending all the others. This is Usener's conjecture; perhaps it should be said at this point that if such an original plurality ever existed, its traces have,

¹Theocritus 15. 120-122. This paper was read at the fourteenth Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association in Toronto, on December 29, 1950.

²Sappho fr. 56 Diehl.

³Lucian *Herodotus sive Aetion* 5 (1. 392 ed. Jacobitz).

⁴H. Usener, *Goetternamen* (Bonn 1896) 298.

⁵*Cf. Iliad* 11. 270.

of course, vanished beyond recovery. The written word, and the artefact, are all we have, and for the purposes of this paper at least we must be content to draw upon them for our information.

In another article,⁶ Usener cites instances of the worship of several deities who are at the same time understood to be one. Nemesis, Meter, and even Athena were sometimes venerated in a dual, or a triple, form. Usener raises the question whether such multiple representations are due to "fission" (*Spaltung*), i.e., the splitting up of the original being into two or more beings each invested with a different share of the original attributes; or whether the process is caused by "multiplication" (*Vervielfachung*). He decides for the latter because he finds that the older the work of art, the more perfect is the identity of the two figures. Originally, he says,⁷ there was only one Muse, one Hora, one Cyclops.⁸ A spring was at first regarded as but one nymph; later the nymph was doubled, and in the end, often as late as the fifth century, duplication was followed by triplication. At that point the process of pluralization usually came to a stop.⁹

It is always wise to learn from Usener's researches. In the present case we should pay due heed to his insistence that the earliest dual and triple representations of deities prove that we are dealing with pluralization and not with fission. On the face of it, it may seem plausible to some that Eros became multiplied because he was split into Eros and Anteros, as did of course happen in the gymnasiums. But the term Anteros is late, and I suspect the influence of Plato. It probably originated at the same time as another idea of which Euripides is the first to present us with a clear formulation. In his *Stheneboea*, written before 422 B.C., we read: "There are two Erotes in the land . . .," and in the *Iphigenia in Aulis*, of the year 406, he extends the duplication to the very arrows of the god.¹⁰ One of the Loves produces *sophia*, and the

⁶H. Usener, "Dreiheit," *RhM* 58 (1903) 1-47, 161-208, 321-362; especially 189-208.

⁷*RhM* 58 (1903) 322.

⁸O. Kern, *Die Religion der Griechen* (Berlin 1926) 1. 255; M. Mayer in W. H. Roscher, *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, vol. 5 (Leipzig 1924) s.v. "Titanen" 1005. Mayer quotes a strange remark by Wilamowitz to the effect that the plural Meteres, Nemeseis, Artemides, and not the singular forms, were original.

⁹The reason given by Usener is intriguing, if hypothetical: at an early stage of their cultural development the Greeks, like other savages, were unable to name a figure higher than 3; "three" was identical with "many." This primitive situation prevailed for such a long time that it fixed itself ineradicably in the imagination of the people and their descendants. Usener brings in a wealth of anthropological evidence to prove his point. Cf., however, E. Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* (Berlin 1925) 2. 187; also D. G. Brinton, *Religions of Primitive Peoples* (New York and London 1897) 120-121.

¹⁰H. v. Arnim, *Supplementum Euripideum* (*Kleine Texte* 112, Bonn 1913) p. 44, line 29; Euripides *Iphig. Aul.* lines 548-551. I suspect, in spite of Lasserre (cf. note 11) 88, that it was Euripides who equipped Eros with his bow and arrows. If so, his intentions were not entirely honourable. As we learn from the *Hercules Furens* 160-162 some people considered the bow a cowardly weapon.

other destroys a man's soul. In a recent work it is suggested that it was the sophists, chiefly Gorgias, who created this new iconography of a double Eros.¹¹ Obviously a diaeresis of this sort is a comparatively sophisticated operation; it requires the capacity to think in terms of near-identical opposites. However, as we shall see, the sophistic split into good and evil Eros has little or nothing to do with the much more subtle phenomenon under discussion. Pluralization, not fission, is our concern.

In another respect, Usener's analysis is somewhat less relevant to our aims. For the drama of Eros is not played on the same stage as that of the characters on whom Usener lavishes his investigation, the Charites and the Graiai and the Erinyes and Mousai, the Oceanids, and Nereids and Kabeiroi and so forth. True enough, they are all groups of identical twins or triplets or nonaplets: perfect examples of the trend of pluralization. It is also true that most of them occur in the singular as well as the plural. Achilles' horses speak of the action of the Moira, in the singular, only to have their voices silenced by the Erinyes, in the plural.¹² In fact Homer gives the plural of Moira only once¹³ whereas Hesiod introduces us to the canonic trinity of the Moirai, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos;¹⁴ in other words, where Homer is just beginning to multiply his Moira, Hesiod already advances beyond mere pluralization and endows the triplets with individual traits. At one point in the *Iliad*¹⁵ the Ker is personified as a raging virago, her cloak stained with blood; on other occasions Homer speaks of the Keres as we would of Gorgons and Sirens and Harpies. All this is true and important; but is there not a difference between the demons and sprites with whom Homer peoples his overcrowded world, the post-animistic monsters and beauties who keep man from being lonely, and the great god of life and fertility, the all-pervading power of love and procreation?¹⁶ Let us suppose we discover that the Muses were originally one;¹⁷ the Alexandrian writer Rhianos tells us as much:¹⁸ "It does not matter which of the Muses one invokes: they all stand for one." But this does not help us at all in our search; for it is only natural that the mental image of the Muse, by all accounts an ordinary mountain nymph, should be subject to laws quite different from those which apply to Eros.

¹¹F. Lasserre, *La figure d'Eros dans la poésie grecque* (Paris 1946) 100. The book, a painstaking collection of the available literary evidence, has been of great help to me. But I am highly sceptical of the author's view that the distribution of the worship of Eros in Greece follows racial lines.

¹²*Il.* 19. 410, 418.

¹³*Il.* 24. 49.

¹⁴Hesiod *Theog.* 217-218.

¹⁵*Il.* 18. 535-540, as against 2.302, 4.11, 8.528, etc.

¹⁶I cannot subscribe to the attempts of some members of the Cambridge school to make just another Ker out of Eros: cf. A. B. Cook, *Zeus* (Cambridge 1925) 2.315, note 3.

¹⁷Cf. M. Mayer, *RE* 31. Halbband (1935) s.v. "Musai" 680-757, particularly 687-691.

¹⁸Schol. Apollonius Rhodius 3.1 cited by Mayer (see n. 17) 691.

At this point someone might counter that perhaps the god of love is no more sublime in origin than many of the lesser demons who fluctuate between the singular and the plural. It has been suggested, for instance, that he may be related to the winds.¹⁹ Beazley himself was once at a loss whether to interpret a certain winged figure carrying off a woman as Eros or a wind god.²⁰ This objection is, however, rather beside the point. The fact remains that not only in Hesiod who is our first authority for the existence of the god, but also in early lyric poetry Eros is constantly, without exception, featured in resplendent singularity. That curious vacillation between the numbers, a malady affecting all the other demons we have spoken of, fails to shake the imposing oneness of the oldest god of them all, the first-born as even Euripides appears to call him in his *Hypsipyle*.²¹ And it is indeed difficult to picture how the Eros of Hesiod and Sappho, of Ibycus and Anacreon, the mysterious Master of the Orphic Hymns and the irresponsible tyrant of the Aeolic lyric—how this uniquely individual creature could ever have succumbed to the humiliating fate of pluralization. If there ever was such a thing as the Greek creative genius it must have had a sorry trick played upon it before it gave up its allegiance to the merciless blacksmith of Anacreon,²² or the exquisite vegetation spirit of "Theognis."²³

Was it a trick? Perhaps the genius was forced off its path by certain external needs which were stronger than tradition? Did the pediments, or the friezes, or the painted vases, through the operation of formal laws peculiar to them, compel the sculptors and artists to adapt the old iconography, or rather to throw it out and substitute something entirely new? Our evidence from early friezes and pediments being what it is, we have to confine ourselves to pottery. Now it might well be thought that the pluralization of Eros was given its start when painters decided to put an Eros on each side of a vase. There is a lecythus by the Pan Painter²⁴ which has one Eros painted on each shoulder. Similarly the Charmides Painter²⁵ placed an Eros with a hare on one side of his amphora, and a second Eros on the other. Unhappily these cases, and others like them, do not prove anything because Zeus, and Dionysus, and many other gods are likewise portrayed twice on the same vase without, at least in the classical age, giving up their individuality. By the same token it is more than doubtful whether the frieze and the pediment, conducive as they

¹⁹Lasserre (see n. 11) 220.

²⁰J. D. Beazley, *Etruscan Vase Painting* (Oxford 1947) pl. 12.1 and text.

²¹*Pap. Oxyrh.* (London 1908) 6.852, p. 59, lines 22-23. Cf. Lasserre (see n. 11) 136.

²²Anacreon fr. 45 Diehl. In the *Anacreontea*, the plural of *eros* occurs in seven poems.

²³Theognis 1275 Diehl.

²⁴J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford 1942) 366: Cassel, Prince Philip of Hesse.

²⁵Beazley (see n. 24) 440: London E 293.

are to the representation of groups, would have been able by themselves, by purely formal means, to bring about so radical a change.²⁶

But let us stay a while with the paintings, before we return to literary works. One of the oldest artistic types is the mother supporting two children. The type is so common that it is often impossible to decide whether the artist had a particular myth in mind or not.²⁷ On occasion the woman is Aphrodite who is then said to clutch to her bosom Himeros and Pothos, if the little figures are both male, or Himeros and Peitho, if they are not the same sex. Charles Seltman believes that an Attic votive plaque which he has published in the *Annual of the British School*²⁸ represents Aphrodite with Himeros and a figure whose name he makes out to be Eros. There is not a doubt that we have here, on a sixth century tablet, two small figures which may be called Eroles. The number is raised to three on a somewhat later vase, the famous stamnos by the Siren Painter²⁹ which shows Odysseus and the Sirens on one side, and on the other three Eroles of the well-known archaic type, ephebes with large stylized wings hovering above the sea. One of the Eroles is named Himeros, the others simply *Kalos*. Perhaps the Siren vase is a somewhat confusing example. The named Eros may bear the inscription Himeros because one of the Sirens on the other side is called Himeropa; and again perhaps there are three Eroles because the Sirens on the reverse are also three. To conjecture, as some have done,³⁰ that the other two Eroles are Eros and Pothos is not warranted. But in any event it is clear that we have, both on Seltman's plaque and on the Siren Painter's stamnos, i.e., in the late sixth century if not earlier, instances of more than one Eros-figure appearing in the same scene. In the fifth century the name Himeros gradually disappears, and such examples of Eroles as occur are allowed to speak for themselves, without the superscription of names.³¹ A column crater by the Harrow Painter³² shows a young man talking with a young woman, each assisted by a smallish Eros extending a branch (fillet?) over the shoulder of his protégé. On

²⁶We have no sculptured representation of Eroles similar to the Parade of Victories on the Nike Parapet, from this early period. From the second half of the fourth century B.C. we have a frieze of ephebic Eroles whose appearance shows traces of Praxitelean influence. Cf. *Hesperia* 4 (1925) 143-148.

²⁷Cf. the example in Ch. Lenormant and J. de Witte, *Elites des monuments céramographiques* (Paris 1844-1861), vol. 2 atlas pl. 2.

²⁸*ABSA* 26 (1923-1925) 88-105.

²⁹Beazley (see n. 24) 177: London E 440.

³⁰Cf. F. Hauser in A. Furtwaengler and K. Reichold, *Griechische Vasenmalerei* (Munich 1921) Serie 3, pl. 124 and text.

³¹How different the problem of Eros is from that of the Muse or the Moira is once again proved by the fact that the Eroles tend to rid themselves of any names which were attached to them in the course of pluralization, and to preserve their anonymity, while the Muses and Fates, originally anonymous, eagerly adopted names and distinctions.

³²Beazley (see n. 24) 180: Villa Giulia 1054.

another ripe archaic vase, an aryballos by Douris,³³ two Erotes are shown pursuing a boy. In a Judgment of Paris by Makron³⁴ a veiled Aphrodite is surrounded by four small, though still ephebic Erotes with flowers, chaplets, and necklaces in their hands. And it is only a little later that the four Erotes are degraded to serve in a purely ornamental capacity, as an integral part of the floral pattern which decorates the handles of a stamnos by Hermonax.³⁵ From the end of the sixth century on, then, several Erotes occasionally appear together on the vases of the Attic painters. It is worth mentioning that the group picture is not as common as the portrait of the single Eros; down to the time of Polygnotus and even beyond, Eros continues to outnumber the Erotes at the rate of better than seven to one.³⁶ But there it is, and we must ask why. Is the image of the mother goddess with her two children responsible for the pluralization? Hardly, for otherwise the number would not immediately have risen above two as it does on the Siren stamnos. Also Aphrodite was by no means as closely associated with Eros as is often believed; the François Vase which stars the marriage feast of Peleus and Thetis in its main zone pictures Aphrodite, but no Eros, much less a group of Erotes. In none of the tragic passages of the fifth century is Eros the son of Aphrodite.³⁷

No, the explanation cannot be sought in art, or at least not solely in art. I have made reference to the vases merely in order to show that the group representation of Erotes started towards the end of the sixth century.³⁸ It is in this period that pluralization began to weaken the power of Eros; and it is in the literature of this period that we must now look for the first symptoms of the disease. For literature, it is generally

³³Beazley (see n. 24) 293: Athens 15375.

³⁴Beazley (see n. 24) 301-2: Berlin 2291.

³⁵Beazley (see n. 24) 318: Munich 2413.

³⁶This figure was arrived at by a rough collation of the items listed by Beazley (see n. 24).

³⁷Lasserre (see n. 11) 135. Pausanias 9.27.2 and schol. Apollonius Rhodius 3.26 report various ancient accounts of the descent of Eros. There seems little doubt that at first Eros was Aphrodite's competitor as a deity of love and fertility. The well-known tendency of mythopoeic art to establish family relations between kindred gods finally led to Eros discarding his other parents and becoming the exclusive son of Aphrodite. Whether Eros was ever, like Aphrodite, worshipped in a sanctuary by himself is a moot question; cf. the final paragraph of this paper. I am inclined to believe that there was once a very real worship of Eros. For his altars, cf. the summary of O. Broneer in *Hesperia* 1 (1932) 49. In the end, however, when Aphrodite established her religious monopoly, the worship of Eros detached itself from the sanctuary and invaded the study of the poet. But the figure of the god never completely lost the traces of his more solemn past, and that distinguishes his status from that of his associates, Pothos and Himeros.

³⁸It is only fair to mention that the earliest representations of a single Eros do not occur very much earlier: cf. Beazley in *AA* 25 (1921) 333 and the same author's *Red-Figured Vases in American Museums* (Cambridge 1918) 7.

agreed,³⁹ is often ahead of the visual arts in the explicit formulation of new esthetic trends.

Let Bacchylides be chosen to head the chorus of our literary witnesses. Rhys Carpenter⁴⁰ once called him another Polyclitus; he said that he found his “highest artistic opportunity in that minute and subtle modulation of the unrealities of formalism which would approximate more closely the real world. . .” True as this is of his poetic temper in general, in the passage which interests us⁴¹ Bacchylides merely adds a new convention to the mass of old ones: he addresses a goddess, probably Aphrodite, as “Mother of the Inflexible Eroses.” Bacchylides and Simonides and Pindar are the first writers in Greek history in whose work the plural form *erotes* occurs. There are two poems by Simonides containing the new form; unfortunately neither the one in which *erotes* means simply “desires,”⁴² nor the one in which it might be spelled with a capital *E*,⁴³ is definitely ascribed to the pen of Simonides. Since the one occurrence of the word in Bacchylides’ extant fragments does not warrant any conclusions, we shall have to turn to Pindar. He is our last resort, for he is the only other poet close enough to that critical era, the outgoing sixth century, to provide us with the necessary clues.

On six occasions Pindar uses the noun *eros* in the plural.⁴⁴ In fact the total of his plurals outnumbers that of his singulars. That is a very startling tally. Let us look at some of them in detail. In one case⁴⁵ *erotes* is used in the Homeric sense of “violent desire”:

οἶδ’ ἀλλοτρίων ἔρωτες ἀνδρὶ φέρειν κρέσσονες.

Passions for things alien are not best for a man to have.⁴⁶

The only difference between Homer and Pindar is that the latter employs the plural where Homer had known the singular. A similar notion seems to underlie another passage:⁴⁷

ἀπροσίκτων δ’ ἐρώτων δξύτεραι μανίαι.

Too bitter are the pangs of madness after loves that are past attainment.

³⁹Cf. C. Robert, *Bild und Lied* (Berlin 1881) 28.

⁴⁰R. Carpenter, *The Esthetic Basis of Greek Art* (Bryn Mawr 1921) 135.

⁴¹Bacchylides fr. 9.73 Snell.

⁴²Simonides fr. 42 Diehl, perhaps by Pindar.

⁴³Simonides fr. 126 Diehl, probably by a later author.

⁴⁴Pindar *N.* 3.30, 8.5, 11.48; frs. 107, 108, 113 Bowra. Even if we take into account the occurrence of related words, such as *pothos*, *himeros*, and *philotes*, the picture remains by and large the same. I am of course fully aware of the purely tentative character of statistics drawn from a fragmentary body of literature.

⁴⁵*N.* 3.30.

⁴⁶Tr. R. Lattimore (*The Odes of Pindar*, Chicago 1947), as will be the other quotations from the *Nemeans*.

⁴⁷*N.* 11.48.

In three other instances, “love-experiences” rather than “desires” would seem to be the best prose rendering of *erotes*; here they are, with translations by Sandys.⁴⁸

Χρῆν μὲν κατὰ καιρὸν ἐρώτων δρέπεσθαι, θυμέ . . .

Right it were, fond heart, to cull love's blossom in due season.

. . . χαρίτας τ' Ἀφροδισίων ἐρώτων . . .

. . . and (may I delight in) the graces of Aphrodisian loves.

And finally:

. . . ματέρ' ἐρώτων οὐρανίαν . . . Ἀφροδίταν . . .

Aphrodite, the heavenly mother of loves.

Pindar speaks of desires and longings, and of the actual sensation of love. There is one more quotation, and it shows us how short is the step from these rather abstract designations of human events to the divine beings who watch over them.

ἀγαπατὰ δὲ καιροῦ μὴ πλαναθέντα πρὸς ἔργον ἕκαστον
τῶν ἀρειόνων ἐρώτων ἐπικρατεῖν δύνασθαι.

It is a glad thing not to fail opportunity, and come in time to each thing done, possessing those loves that are stronger.⁴⁹

On the face of it these loves are once more the amorous—or chivalrous—pursuits which Pindar commends to his clients' attention. But he goes on:

οἶοι καὶ Διὸς Αἰγίνας τε λέκτρον ποιμένες ἀμφεπόλησαν
Κυπρίας δῶρων.

Such were they who dispensed the gifts of Kypris and tended the bed of Zeus and Aegina.

The Eroses watch over the union of the great Zeus and his nymph; the human experiences have become near-Hellenistic *amoretti*. It might be argued that this is a metaphor, that Pindar uses his abstractions on several levels, and that it is far from his intention to duplicate an ancient god. But that is exactly the point. Pindar availed himself of the plural of Eros, and he used the form as a mere decorative metaphor, because as far as he was concerned Eros was no longer the god that rode roughshod over the sensibilities of the writers before him. In a sense, of course, Eros had always been a metaphor. But we must distinguish between the conventional arabesque, the stenographic formula which adds a certain finish to an already assembled whole, and the basic metaphor, the life-giving symbol which forms the very nucleus of a poet's imaginative conception—such as the Drought of Eliot's *Waste Land*, or the Eros of Sappho's songs.

⁴⁸Frs. 108, 113, 107 Bowra, in this order.

⁴⁹N. 8.5.

In sculpture and painting we cannot tell to what extent the pluralization of a deity mirrored a change in the relations between the god and his public; in writing we can. In Pindar's poem we have not only the first traces of pluralization, but also its inevitable consequences, the domestication and prettification of the symbol of Love. Pindar and his age begin the trend, and the goal of the journey is reached without delay. Eros becomes Eroses, and straightway the new brotherhood is enrolled to minister to the needs of a royal couple in their luxurious quarters. It is true that especially in Attica, as we have already learnt from the vase paintings, the plural Eroses do not become as common as the singular Eros until a much later period. Aeschylus has two plurals as against thirteen singulars, Sophocles has two as against seventeen, and in Euripides the relation is about ten to one in favour of the singular. Thus our evidence indicates that it was Pindar himself who, almost single-handed, bequeathed his Eroses to a grateful and responsive Alexandria.

What is the secret of Pindar's remarkable role? One author⁵⁰ hints at a certain lassitude or lack of imagination on the part of the last makers of erotic poetry. This is correct as far as it goes; but then the writer gives this lassitude a positive twist, with the result that he discovers a close relationship between the Eroses of Pindar and the depersonalized Eros celebrated in Attic drama, as in Sophocles' great hymn in the *Antigone*.⁵¹ Nothing could be further from the truth. Sophocles' Eros is vague and ill-defined, in spite of the echoes of lyric vocabulary, because the dramatist is fully sensitive to the disturbing and paralyzing power of Love. No contemporary of Euripides could presume to trifle with Eros for whose shocking might there was then as much respect and compassion as at any other period. Only a handful of the early lyric poets could justly be compared with the dramatists for their appreciation of the inescapable workings of Eros. Sophocles' Eros is as mysterious, and as sublime, as the Zeus of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. Pindar's Eroses, on the other hand, are pale and anæmic, not because their author wishes to strip the traditional symbol of its externals in order to enhance its profundity, but because he has lost all interest in it as a personal force, as a facet of his own vitality. And here, if I am not mistaken, we have at last come within sight of our objective. As compared with Sappho and Archilochus, or again with Theognis, the emotional capacity of Pindar is strikingly limited, as was that of his contemporaries Simonides and Bacchylides. It is true, of course, that their medium did not lend itself to an indulgence in private passion or sorrows; it was not expected of them that they should pour out the suffering of their souls.⁵² But even with these qualifications, the

⁵⁰Lasserre (see n. 11) 80.

⁵¹Sophocles *Antigone* 781-800.

⁵²Pindar strikes a somewhat more personal note in his *Encomiums*; but the difference is only slight. For an excellent appreciation of the cerebral quality of Pindar's art, cf. F. Dornseiff, *Pindars Stil* (Berlin 1921) 66.

emotional side of Pindar's personality is perhaps the least impressive of his attributes. His anger, when he allows it to enter into his verse, is a petty anger. His words about love are mostly sententious. His Eros is the pederastic ephebe of the Dorians rather than the wild sorcerer of the lyric; and yet, what a difference between the rich and breath-taking vision of "Theognis"⁵³ and the half-hearted courtesies and lukewarm hints which Pindar addresses to his heroes. It seems as if in the hard and brilliant light emanating from Pindar's skilfully complex imagery the true emotions are scorched to ashes. And so, while the poet continues to use the traditional symbol, he has lost access to the source whence the symbol used to draw its vigour and its meaning. And he is unable to replace that vigour with any contribution of his own. The god Eros is dethroned, and as in Homer the word once more comes to mean merely "love," with a small *l*.

The poet himself is not interested; one love, therefore, is like any other on earth; there are as many loves as there are men, or hours, or pledges. Long before the sophists undertook to split the solid complex of ancient morality into relative values and individual customs, Pindar contributed to the destruction of the old order by withdrawing his support, or at least his sympathy, from the one great God of Love, and allowing him to degenerate into a flurry of Loves, one indistinguishable from another because they have turned into hollow shells. This is the picture as we have witnessed it in the art of the *fin de siècle*: Eros has become a band of youths hovering in mid-air, one holding a hare and another a lyre, but all looking alike because the artist has ceased to be sensitive to the unique personality of the one Eros. The Erotes of Makron, no less than the Erotes of Pindar, are indicative of the end of an era; of the old Eros only the contour is left, and lacking the burden of passion which had once held it securely to the ground, the contour begins to float in a vacuum, to lose its identity, and to give itself over to a kind of compensatory multiplication. In discussing a period which offers many parallels, J. Huizinga has said:⁵⁴ "One of the fundamental traits of the mind of the declining Middle Ages is the predominance of the sense of sight, a predominance which is closely connected with the atrophy of thought. Thought takes the form of visual image." If for the "atrophy of thought" we substitute "atrophy of the emotions," I believe the statement would apply to Pindar and his circle. It has often been remarked that Pindar's world is an exceedingly visual one; his poetry stands and falls with the beauty of its imagery. But this very imagery betokens a withering of that emotional abandon which had been the special gift of lyric poetry before him.

⁵³Theognis 1275-1278: Ὠραῖος καὶ Ἔρως ἐπιτέλλεται, ἠνίκα περ γῆ
ἀνθεσιν εἰαρινοῖς θάλλει ἀεξομένη.
τῆμος Ἔρως προλιπὼν Κύπρον, περικαλλέα νῆσον,
εἶσιν ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους σπέρμα φέρων κατὰ γῆς.

⁵⁴J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (London 1937) 261-262.

As regards the figure of Eros, pluralization was the first fruit borne by the new temper of classic restraint, by the death of Sapphic "enthusiasm." Infantilization was to be next. Eros became a babe because the heirs of Pindar, unable to re-establish contact between themselves and the God of Love, became increasingly interested in his genealogy. Whenever his name was mentioned he was now the child of this or that god or goddess, until ultimately he became the child *par excellence*. By himself he meant little to the writer; the tutelage of his parents was needed to furnish him with at least a semblance of individuality.⁵⁶ Again, therefore, and more obviously so, it was the writers who fashioned the types for the painters. The writers who handled the old mythological symbols, the robust figures of a full-blooded tradition, were unable to do justice to them because of a contraction of their own emotional range. Pindar represents a Homeric reaction to the exuberance of the Sapphic age. Homer had taken the sting out of the popular Hephaestus and Hermes by robbing them of their elemental power and casting them in slightly comic roles; just so the weapon which Pindar employed against the popular Eros was, consciously or not, designed to strip him of his virile strength. He almost succeeded. For centuries the Hesiodic Eros led a shadowy existence in the hymns of the secret sects and the incantations of popular philosophers. It needed the revivifying climate of Greco-Roman syncretism, the age of Harpocrates and Mithraic Cronys,⁵⁶ to awake Eros from his sleep and to re-establish him in all his masculine glory, far away from the sexless circle of the Eroles.

As an afterthought it may be asked whether these remarks throw any light upon another problem which has recently become acute again. This is the question whether Eros was ever the object of a religious cult, or whether he was merely a poetic and artistic image, a symbol worshipped by means of spiritual obeisance. It is well-known that Wilamowitz subscribed to the latter view,⁵⁷ and the same explanation is also given by the latest scholar to have dealt with Eros on any large scale.⁵⁸ The leading historians of Greek religion,⁵⁹ however, tend to accept the ancient testimony concerning several cults of Eros, and the finds on the north slope of the Acropolis in Athens have at least rendered it probable that the Athenian dramatists were not unacquainted with a precinct of Eros.⁶⁰ The followers of C. G. Jung⁶¹ go further and believe that the worship of

⁵⁶For another explanation of why Eros became an infant, cf. A. D. Nock in *CR* 38 (1924) 152-155.

⁵⁶Cf. A. B. Cook (see n. 16) 2.1053 fig. 910; also 1052 fig. 909.

⁵⁷U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Sappho und Simonides* (Berlin 1913) 115.

⁵⁸Lasserre (see n. 11) 11-12; 14.

⁵⁹O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte* (Munich 1906) 870-871; also Kern (see n. 9) 1.251; H. J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology* (New York 1929) 123.

⁶⁰See O. Bronceer's reports in *Hesperia* 1 (1932) 31-55; 2(1933) 329-417; 4(1935) 109-188; 7(1938) 161-263.

⁶¹Cf. e.g., C. G. Jung and K. Kerényi, *Essays on a Science of Mythology* (New York 1949) *passim*. Cf. also L. Klages, *Vom kosmogonischen Eros*³ (Jena 1930).

Eros was one of the fundamental features of all Greek culture. The problem seems insuperable: did Hesiod model his Eros on the Eros of Thespieae? Did Anacreon invoke Eros because he was familiar with him through some "college," as Robert Graves would say? There are various ways to worship a god, even outside of the sanctuary. At this stage of our knowledge, I fear, no definitive answer can be found. But I would like to suggest that any future attempt to deal with this thorny dilemma should take notice of the fact that the morphological history of Eros is a very exceptional one. For a long period of time, practically down to the close of the sixth century and the threshold of the classical age, Eros valiantly resisted the natural tendency—for natural it is, as Usener has shown—to relinquish his singularity. His resistance was so stubborn that even the word *eros* which Homer had used in the sense of "desire" was never, before the age of Pindar, employed in the plural. Would a mere poetic fiction, an allegorical cypher, or even the vigorous projection of a poet's particular love, have sufficed to put off so long the inevitable doom of pluralization?

EDITORIAL NOTES

COPIES of the three numbers of Volume I of THE PHOENIX, especially Volume I, Number I, and Supplement to Volume I, are urgently needed to fill requests from Libraries for complete files of THE PHOENIX. The Editor will be grateful if any subscribers who have extra copies of these numbers, or do not wish to keep their copies, will send them to her at Trinity College, Toronto, as soon as possible. They will be reserved for Libraries.

WE announce with regret that due to the closing of the Department of Photographic Service of the University of Toronto, it will be impossible to supply prints or slides of the sets published by the Classical Association of Canada.