

TRUE LOVE IS REQUIRED: THE ARGUMENT OF *LYSIS* 221D-222A

INTRODUCTION

Any argument is open to objection. These objections sometimes lead us to view an argument as fallacious, even laughably so. It is not unusual for interpreters to find laughably fallacious arguments in Socratic dialogues. A case in point is the *Lysis*. This is not the place to defend every argument in that dialogue: I limit myself here to defending only its argument that true love is requited.¹ In what follows I state the argument, the main objections, and my replies. I begin with a synopsis of the dialogue.

1. SYNOPSIS OF DIALOGUE

Plato sets the *Lysis* in the context of Athenian pedophilia.² Socrates narrates how he meets Hippothales, Ctesippus, and other young men who are probably past their adolescence and evidently old enough to be pedophiles (203a). The young men invite Socrates to see their wrestling club, where there are beautiful boys, boys who are perhaps at the beginning of adolescence and evidently young enough to be objects of the pedophilia of the young men, including Hippothales' favorite, the beautiful *Lysis*, and

Lysis's best friend Menexenus (204a-d, 206d). The youth Hippothales in his infatuation has been writing foolish lyrics about his beloved boy (204d-205d). Socrates offers to show the proper way for a lover to converse with his beloved (206c). So it is arranged: Socrates enters the club and starts a conversation with the boys Menexenus and Lysis, while Hippothales listens in the background.

First, with Lysis, Socrates establishes that wisdom is the cause of friendship and belonging: "If ever you come to be wise, boy, everyone will be friendly to you and everyone will belong to you"³ (210d1-2). The conditional in this context indicates causation, as the context makes clear: Socrates uses the word "cause" earlier in discussing an example illustrating this principle (209b8).

Second, with Menexenus and Lysis, Socrates looks for an answer to the question "how someone becomes a friend of another" (212a5-6). A number of accounts of friendship are shown to fail. Friendship cannot be explained in terms of like attracted to like (214c) nor opposite attracted to opposite (216a). With the conversation in perplexity, Socrates postulates that it is the beautiful that is loved in friendship (216c), and "like a mantic" divines that "what is neither good nor bad loves what is beautiful i.e. good" (216d). Socrates suggests a cause for the friendship

that the intermediate has for the good: the presence of bad. For example, people (an intermediate) become friends to medical doctors (a good) because of the presence of illness (a bad, 216e-217b). But he rules out badness as the cause of friendship on the grounds that (i) some desires and hence friendship would exist even if all badness were destroyed and (ii) desire is sufficient for one to be a friend (221b-c). This leads him, in the argument I examine here, to postulate that desire is the cause of friendship, while the lack of what belongs is the cause of desire, with the consequence that true love is required.

In linking friendship with belonging, this argument with Lysis and Menexenus is reminiscent of the earlier argument reached with Lysis alone.⁴ It is also dramatically linked. Socrates narrates the reaction of Hippothales to his display of the proper way to speak to one's beloved only twice, at these two conclusions. At the first conclusion, that wisdom is the cause of friendship and belonging, Socrates observes that Hippothales is "in a state of conflict and distress by the argument" (210e5-6). At the second conclusion, that true love is required, Socrates observes that "Hippothales beamed every color of the rainbow in his delight" (222b2). Evidently having now completed his promised display on the proper way to address

one's lover, Socrates then "reviews the argument" (222b3) by putting three pairs of alternatives to the boys, and they fall into perplexity. Socrates wants at this point to "move one of the older people" (223a1-2) to join the inquiry, but the boys are called away by their pedagogues and the dialogue ends.

2. CAUSAL RATHER THAN CONDITIONAL PREMISES

In Socrates' argument that true love is requited we find natural language use of:

- Causation, as in "desire *is the cause of* friendship" (221d3).
- The verb of being, as in "that which desires *is* a friend" (221d3-4).
- The direct object of a verb cognate with the subject, as in "the thing *desiring desires this*: whatever it lacks" (221d7-e1).
- The verb of becoming and an objective genitive, as in "Something *becomes* lacking *of* whatever it is deprived" (221e2-3).
- The verb of turning-out-to-be and an objective genitive, as in "love, friendship, and desire *turn out to be of* what belongs" (221e3-4).

This is a fine-grained and suggestive language. For my purposes, I treat it as a series of explanatory causes from desire to belonging: friendship is caused by desire; desire by lack; lack by deprivation; and deprivation by belonging (premises 1-5 below). My treatment overlooks some finer points of the argument, but allows me to display its soundness.

Despite the absence of conditionals from premises 1-5 of the argument, some interpreters represent the argument in terms of conditional premises (e.g. Bordt 1998: 221-223, Bordt 2000: 169, Rowe 2000: 212). Such representation is unsatisfactory. For each cause is meant to provide necessary as well as sufficient conditions (sufficient, at least, relative to appropriate background conditions): immediately before this argument began, it was agreed that a cause is necessary for its effect: "when a cause is abolished, that of which it was the cause cannot exist," (221c3-5).

Biconditionality is also inadequate as a representation of premises 1-5.⁵ Causation is distinct from biconditionality: the biconditional is symmetric, but causation is anti-symmetric. (A relation R is *symmetric* just in case, for arbitrary a and b , Rab if and only if

Rba. A relation R is *anti-symmetric* just in case Rab if and only if it is not the case that Rba.) For example, suppose that something is *loved* by all the gods if and only if it is *pious*. Obviously, then, from the symmetry of biconditionality, it is also *pious* if and only if it is so *loved*. In contrast, to take Socrates' example from the *Euthyphro* (10a-11a), if being *pious* is the cause of being loved by all the gods, then being so loved is *not* the cause of being *pious*.

3. OVERVIEW OF ARGUMENT

Desire is not a symmetric relation: A can desire B without B desiring A. But *belonging together* is symmetrical: if A belongs with B, certainly B belongs with A. There are two stages to the argument. First, from the hypothesis that desire is the cause of friendship, Socrates argues that, whenever there is desire and hence love and friendship, the cause of the desire is the symmetric relation of belonging together. Then, from the symmetry of belonging, he infers that if A loves B, B will befriend A. The details are as follows.

4. FROM NON-SYMMETRIC DESIRE TO SYMMETRIC BELONGING

1 *Desire causes friendship* (221d2-4).

The language Socrates uses to introduce this premise ("can it really be?") and of Menexenus's reply ("There's a good chance,") tells us that this premise is stated as a hypothesis to test, not as an obvious truth.

2 *Lack causes desire* (221d6-e1).

Premise 2, in contrast to premise 1, is not stated as a hypothesis, but as a statement which Socrates and Menexenus see to be true. It should be unobjectionable to us, too. In the *Protagoras*, after that sophist's great speech, Socrates says of it that he is "lacking only a small thing to have got it all" (329b6). Evidently, according to Socrates' use of "lacking" there, the thing lacking need not formerly have been possessed. Just as you can desire something you never possessed, so too you can lack something you never had. We use this sense of "lacking" in English: we can speak for instance of a man lacking knowledge, even if he never possessed the knowledge.⁶

3 *Therefore lack causes friendship* (221e1-2).

This inference follows from the transitivity of causation. (A relation R is transitive just in case, for arbitrary a, b, and c, if Rab and Rbc then Rac.)

4 *Deprivation causes lack* (221e2-3).

This text is offered by Socrates without hesitation and is accepted as undeniable by Menexenus. Thus we should find an interpretation of "deprived" (221e3) that explains the ready acceptance.⁷ In an earlier passage Socrates and the boys agree that the presence of the bad can "deprive" (217e8) that which is intermediate of its desire for the good. As Socrates there (217e6-218a1) illustrates, ignorance, when we recognize it (which means that we are intermediate) makes us desire wisdom, but ignorance can deprive us of the very desire to become wise (when we cease to be intermediate and become bad). Bad ignorant people (as opposed to intermediate ignorant people) have no desire for wisdom, because ignorance has deprived them of that desire. It is not necessary that bad people at some earlier time were neither good nor bad, desired wisdom, and then lost the desire at some point. That sort of life is possible, but the dramatic evidence of Socrates with the youth in the *Lysis* itself (see also *Ap.* 21a-23c for Socrates' experience with the variety of humanity) suggests that it is more natural for youths never to have suspected the depths of their own ignorance (hence to be bad) until they are wakened to a sense of wonder by Socrates and become

desirous of gaining wisdom (whence they become intermediate). In terms of Socrates' example, when x "has ignorance in such a way as to be bad" (218a4-5), then the ignorance deprives x of desire for wisdom. In this example, something (the presence, in a particular way, of ignorance) causes or explains why something else (that which is neither good nor bad) is lacking a third thing (its desire for good). Let us generalize this point in a definition: "C deprives A of B" means C is the cause of A lacking B.⁸ So the point of "A has been deprived of B" is not "A had B, and then lost it" but rather "there is some cause explaining why A does not have (and perhaps never had) B." On this reading, premise 4 will be undeniable: lacking-for-cause causes lacking.

5 *Therefore belonging causes friendship* (221e3-5).

The inference to premise 5 is the decisive step in the argument, since lack and deprivation are non-symmetric relations, while belonging-together is symmetric.

Premise 5 follows from premises 3, 4, and the unstated premise that *belonging causes lack*. To illustrate this unstated premise, consider the following contrasting facts about my chess set:

- (i) My chess set came lacking a piece (say, the white queen).
- (ii) My chess set did not come with any alien pieces from other games (such as the queen of hearts from a deck of cards).

The reason why, in the absence of both the white queen and the queen of hearts, my chess set *lacks* only the white queen is because the white queen *belongs with* my chess set but the queen of hearts does not.⁹ The argument is tracing causation in the background condition of lack and desire, as stated at premise 1: "whenever something does desire" (221d4). We ought to understand a similar condition implicit at premise 5: *Whenever someone loves, the love is of what belongs*. On my interpretation, then, premise 5 is consistent with the fact that things can belong to me that I do not love; this is the case when they are in my possession.

6 *Therefore friends belong with each other* (221e5-7).

This premise or aside merely makes explicit the symmetric nature of the relation *belonging-together*, developed in premise 5. In terms of my illustration there,

my chess set belongs with a white queen just in case,
obviously, that white queen belongs with my chess set.

5. FROM SYMMETRIC BELONGING TO REQUITAL

7 *Therefore the lover belongs with his beloved* (221e7-222a4).

Only Menexenus agrees to premise 7; Lysis is "silent" (222a4). I agree with many interpreters (e.g. Bolotin 1979: 185, Gonzalez 1995: 84-85, *pace* Rowe 2000: 212) that Lysis is here anticipating Socrates' argument for love being requited, which, given premise 5 and the symmetry of *belonging-together*, is now plain:

(i) Suppose, for arbitrary A and B, that A *loves* B.

(ii) It follows [from (i) and premise 5] that B *belongs with* A.

(iii) It follows [from (ii) and the symmetry of *belonging together* illustrated in premise 6] that A *belongs with* B.

(iv) It follows [from (iii) and premise 5] that B *loves* A. Q.E.D.

8 *But belonging causes friendship* (222a4-6).

Premise 5 says that "love turns out to be of the *oikeion*" (221e3-4). Premise 8 says that it is "necessary for us to love the *oikeion*" (222a5-6). On my causal interpretation of the argument, both premises are saying that the *oikeion*, namely, the relation of belonging together, causes love and friendship (in the background condition of non-presence). Thus premise 8 simply restates premise 5. Socrates shows he is aware he is making this restatement by his use of the perfect tense to say premise 8 "was made evident", a reference back to his use of the same verb in the present tense—"it is evident"—to describe his inference to premise 5.¹⁰

Why is Socrates restating this premise? Lysis did not assent to premise 7, foreseeing the undesirable conclusion that boys must receive their pederasts. So Socrates restates the crucial premise 5 to *Lysis*, reminding him of its agreed necessity.¹¹

9 *Therefore, true love is requited* (222a6-222b1).

Given premise 5 (= premise 8) and the symmetry of belonging together illustrated in premise 6, the conclusion is undeniable, as shown by the argument 7(i)-(iv) above.

6. THE MAIN OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

An equivocation on oikeios? One main objection is that Socrates' argument equivocates. According to this objection, premise 5 and the unstated premise that belonging causes lack are true only in a *non-symmetric* sense of *oikeion* as *belonging-to*, while premise 6, that friends belong together, requires a different, *symmetric* sense of *oikeion* as *belonging-together*.¹²

As shown above, I interpret the *oikeion* relation everywhere it occurs in the argument as *symmetric belonging together*, never as *non-symmetric belonging-to*. So I have defeated the equivocation objection. But my reply raises another objection, which I state as follows.

Will the good reciprocate? In his first conversation with Lysis (207d-210d) Socrates developed a *non-symmetric* sense of *oikeion* as *belonging-to*. On the basis of seven examples, ranging from mule-carting to weaving to household and civic management, Socrates established that if you are wise in any matter, others "will entrust" their affairs in that matter to you (210b1) and will be friends to you and *belong to* you in those matters (210d1-2, quoted above, sec. 1). They will belong to you, in other words, as a dependent belongs to a guardian in whatever matter they depend upon your wisdom. This dependency/guardian model of

belonging and friendship is consistent with the lengthy account of friendship as a relation between the intermediate and the good (216d-220b), though belonging is not mentioned in that account.

Now the problem with conceiving the relation of belonging together as the relation between dependent and guardian is *not* caused by the fact that dependency and guardianship are anti-symmetric: I am your dependent (guardian) if and only if you are *not* my dependent (guardian). Such an anti-symmetry of *belonging to* does not affect the symmetry of *belonging together*, since dependency and guardianship are *reciprocal*. (Two relations R_1 and R_2 are reciprocal just in case R_1ab if and only if R_2ba .) And exactly this reciprocity exists between guardians and dependents: I am your dependent if and only if you are my guardian.

The problem, rather, with conceiving the relation of belonging together as dependency/guardianship is that it appears to provide for friendship only in one direction. Let us grant that the dependent loves his guardian: the dependent is imperfect, and the guardian completes his lack. But why must the guardian reciprocate the love of the dependent? After all, qua guardian, she has no imperfections and no lacks.

I find this objection in Robinson:

The suggestion Plato sets out at the greatest length about what might be [lovable] is the theory that the good will be [lovable] to the intermediate. . . . Perhaps . . . this could be applied to men, so that an intermediate man would be attracted to a good man. But Aristotle would have asked: very well, and how is the good man attracted to the intermediate man? To which Plato would have no answer, since on the one hand only goodness is attractive, and on the other the man who is already good is self-sufficient. Plato has not . . . made any provision which would allow this one-way attraction to become an element in a mutual friendship (1986: 79).¹³

But Plato certainly has made provision, if we allow ourselves to look at book 1 of the *Republic*, where Socrates elicits a functional thesis about the good from Polemarchus:

-- It is not, I take it, the function of heat to chill but of its opposite.

-- Yes.

- Nor of dryness to moisten but of its opposite.
- Assuredly.
- Nor yet of the good to harm but of its opposite
(335d).

We ought to grant Socrates that, just as it is the function of the bad to harm, so also it is the function of the good to benefit. But then Socrates can ask us: "Suppose that you are intermediate and love a good. Will not your love be requited if you receive favors and benefits from your darling?" We ought to admit this, too.¹⁴

It seems to me that this argument from the function of goodness can only be escaped, if at all, by taking an extreme, Thrasymachean, attitude to goodness, that is, by denying that good people insofar as they are good need have any care for bad and intermediate people. Thus, to test Socrates' reply, let us now make precisely this objection. "Socrates," we shall say, "You are so far wrong about the nature of the truly good that you do not know that guardians care for their dependents only as sheep to be fleeced" (see *Rep.* 343b-c): "Consider *this* type of good man, then!" (344a1).

As it happens, Socrates refutes even this extreme position with a remarkable two-premise argument:

(S1) "Strictly speaking" (341c4-5) and "correctly" speaking (341c9), the good man or guardian or ruler "is so-called because of his expertise" (341d2-3).

(S2) "Expertise does not seek its own good but the good of its object" (342c4-6).

The conclusion is inescapable:

(S3) The good man, speaking precisely and correctly, does not seek his own good but the good of the object of his expertise.

Socrates' argument S1-S3 confirms his thesis with Polemarchus that the good is functionally beneficent.

We find this same requiting beneficence of the good explicit in the *Lysis* itself, as an explanation why, when you become wise, "all will be dependent upon and belong with you: because you will be useful to all" (210d2-3).

We also find this requiting beneficence implicit at the end of the *Lysis*, immediately following the present argument. There Socrates states the doctrine that the good belongs with everything as part of a disjunction:

Shall we assert either (a) that the good belongs with everything and the bad is alien to everything, or (b) that bad belongs with bad, good with good, and intermediate with intermediate? (222c3-7)

It is significant that there are far more than the two possibilities Socrates mentions.¹⁵ An interpretation of the *Lysis* ought to tell us why Socrates mentions just these two, and then immediately eliminates disjunct (b) as untenable (222d1-5). On my reading, Socrates mentions only one alternative to disjunct (b) because he wants to dangle before his audience, as Plato dangles before his reader, disjunct (a). As, for example, Fraisse 1974: 144 notes, that the good belongs with everything is "the true conclusion of the *Lysis*." Disjunct (a) is the key to understanding both the ultimate aporia of the dialogue and the penultimate paradox that true love is requited.¹⁶

My defense of Socrates' argument that true love is requited adds a premise about the beneficence of the good, a premise that is mentioned, although not defended in the *Lysis* itself. This premise completes the Socratic account of love and friendship. According to Socrates' "divinely inspired" (216d3) account, in any friendship one party is good, the other intermediate. These two belong with each

other as guardian and dependent. The intermediate lacks and hence desires and loves the good as a dependent needily loves its guardian. Because of and in requital of this need, the good cares for and benefits the intermediate just as a guardian loves its dependent. The *Lysis* spends most of its time elaborating the structure of dependent-love. Guardian-love, that is, the requiting beneficence of the good is mentioned twice, as shown above. Moreover, the model of guardian-love, aiming at the happiness of its dependent, is taken for granted at 207d: "Lysis, I suppose your parents love you." "Of course they do." "And so they would want you to be as happy as possible?" "Certainly."

A contradiction in the guardian/dependent model? On my view, lover A is needy and desirous, while beloved B is good, needing nothing. As Socrates has argued, since A loves B, A and B belong together and B therefore is a friend to A. But, one might object, it must follow from B's friendship for A that therefore *B desires A* and therefore *B lacks A*. But B's lacking A or anything else is inconsistent with B's goodness.¹⁷

To reply, the inconsistency arises when we infer from B's friendship for A that B must desire A. The objection makes this inference on the basis of premise 1:

(1) *Desire is the cause of friendship (a necessary and sufficient cause).*

But premise 1 as stated does not license us to say that B's friendship for A entails that B desires A. To get this license, we would need to interpret premise 1 as:

(1_{both}) *The cause of friendship between A and B is desire on both sides, by both A and B.*

Given 1_{both}, B's being a friend to A entails that B desires A, leading to inconsistency. But there is no need to interpret premise 1 as 1_{both}. For there is a superior alternative:

(1_{one}) *The cause of friendship between A and B is desire on one side, by either A or B.*

According to interpretation 1_{one}, premise 1 is parallel to the preceding, rejected hypothesis that *the bad* is the cause of friendship, a hypothesis developed and then rejected at 216d-221c. There is no doubt that, according to that prior account, the statement *the bad is the cause of friendship* would mean only that *one* side suffers from

badness: the other side of such a friendship is explicitly described as good. Thus for example "the body (which is neither good nor bad) *because of illness* (a bad thing), is a friend to medical expertise (a good thing); and the medical expertise takes upon itself the friendship *for the sake of health* (a good thing)" (219a). Interpretation 1_{one} allows us to provide a strictly parallel account, caused by *desire* instead of *the bad*, as follows. Suppose that A needily loves B because of desire, and is *in that way* a friend to B, it *does* follow that A and B belong together and that B requites this love by being a friend to A. But it does *not* follow that B loves A with needy desire. B may, consistently with 1_{one}, be a friend to A without desire, lack, or deprivation, just as in the preceding model (taken from 219a) medical expertise befriended sick bodies without itself needing to suffer anything bad. According to the desire model I propose, B's beneficence to A is one part of the friendship between A and B (A's neediness for B is the other part of it). And that friendship *is* caused by desire, just as S1 states, *but not by both A and B's desire, only by A's desire*. In this way there is no inconsistency.

7. SOCRATIC METHOD

One problem remains: the nature of guardian-love, while defended in the *Republic*, is not elaborated in the *Lysis* itself. This raises a question about Plato's and Socrates' method. Let me assume that I have succeeded in giving Socrates a sound argument and in showing how his conclusion is true, however paradoxical it may seem. I turn now to the question whether it is plausible to interpret Socrates the character and Plato the author as intending to set this puzzle and solution for the audience and reader. What Robinson says about another interpretation applies to my reading as well: "If Plato was . . . leaving it to the reader to follow the thread of the dialogue without further signposting, it must be said that he constructed a highly teasing maze for the purpose of this exercise" (1986: 80-81).

To reply to this interpretive (rather than philosophical) objection let me state two assumptions of my method. First, I assume that the intellectualist Socrates portrayed in a number of Platonic dialogues has a coherent overall position. As Irwin puts it, "Socrates claims that his different arguments and inquiries support the same conclusions" (1995: 31, citing *Cr.* 46b3-c6, 49a4-b6; also *G.* 482a5-c3, 509a4-7). I take this assumption to justify

my importing arguments from book 1 of the *Republic* in order to defend an argument in the *Lysis*. We ought not expect any single philosophical conversation to consider every possible objection, and we should be satisfied if the objection is answered in another conversation by the same character.

Second, I assume that the aporia we find explicitly at the end of many Socratic dialogues, including the *Lysis*, and implicitly in paradoxical conclusions reached within dialogues, such as the conclusion of the present argument that true love is requited, has a pedagogical motivation. If the *Lysis* were a conventional expository treatise, we ought indeed to judge it a failure if its readers were unable to identify the conclusion for which it argues. But my assumption is that Plato's aporetic dialogue style is not a primitive forerunner to the style of the philosophical treatise, but a sophisticated alternative. My assumption is that he wants to avoid giving his readers a make-believe understanding, the pretence of wisdom, even more than he wants to persuade them to affirm some particular conclusion of his. The author Plato, I assume, shares the values of the character Socrates, who thinks any such theoretical results as might be reached in a conventional exposition of the conclusions of the *Lysis*

are, like the rest of Socrates' insights, nothing to speak of (*Ap.* 23a-b), a Socrates who says it is better not to possess such meager wisdom if the risk is to lose consciousness of one's own ignorance about what really matters (*Ap.* 22d-e; see Rudebusch 1999: 9-17 for further discussion of this aporetic pedagogy). I take this second assumption to answer the charge that my reading would force us to condemn Plato's dialogue as a failure to communicate. On the contrary, my method throughout this paper assumes that Alcibiades' characterization of Socratic argument is accurate: upon examination, their laughable superficial appearance proves to contain an argument of godlike truth and value (*Symp.* 221e-222a).

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NOTES

¹ The perceived low quality of the argument led some interpreters to deny that the *Lysis* is authentically Plato's (Ast 1816, Socher 1820) and others to place it early in Plato's career, before his reasoning skills had developed (Hermann 1839). Glidden (1981: 39) lists other negative appraisals of the *Lysis*. Versenyi (1975: 185) is probably correct in his explanation of the relative neglect of the *Lysis* in the early and middle twentieth century on the grounds of a "negative appraisal of its substantive content." He himself entirely neglects—for the same reason, I presume—any discussion of the particular argument that true love is requited. Rowe (2000: 211) describes this particular argument as "not only poor but appalling."

² Bordt (1998: 108-119) gives excellent information about the dramatic and cultural context. See also Dover (1978) on ancient Greek pedophilia.

³ Where the English translation differs from Lombardo's, whom I have followed, it is my own.

⁴ These two arguments might appear at odds in identifying the cause of friendship. According to the first argument, the cause is wisdom. According to the second, it is desire. In fact these causes are

complementary in the same way that fuel, oxygen, and heat are complementary causes of fire: each could be named as the cause against a background of the other.

⁵ This may be the view of Reshotko 1997: 12, who speaks of a "direct equation" in this argument.

⁶ One might reasonably add that lack causes desire only with the background condition that there is perception of lack (as at *Phb.* 43b-c). On Socrates' reliance upon background conditions in developing his causal account, see note 4 above.

⁷ I thank Christopher Rowe for getting me, in correspondence, to worry about premise 4 (see Rowe 2000: 213 n. 31 for a record of his helping hand to me). Rowe (2000: 212), apparently from misplaced charity to the argument, mistranslates the Greek text of premise 4 as "whatever has something taken away from it comes to be lacking," commenting that "the best that can be said for this" is his interpretation: "If something (some part) is taken away from x, x will be lacking (that part)."

Before Rowe, Bordt (1998: 222) likewise made deprivation a sufficient but not necessary condition of lack: "Someone has a lack of something, if it has been taken away from him" (*Man hat an etwas dann einen Mangel,*

wenn es einem entzogen worden ist). But on p. 223 he indifferently stated premise 4 as making lack a sufficient but not necessary condition of deprivation: "Someone only has a lack of something if it has been taken from him" (*man nur dann an etwas einen Mangel hat, wenn es einem entrissen worden ist*). Bordt refers to Aristophanes' myth (*Symp.* 189d-193b) to give a "certain plausibility" to premise 4 on the basis of its felt existential appeal (1998: 223). But as Socrates rejects Aristophanes' account of desire in the *Symposium*, it seems unreasonable that he would tacitly rely upon it in the *Lysis*.

⁸ This interpretation is consistent with the use of "deprive" at *Rep.* 360e4 and 367b5.

⁹ Following *Rep.* 1 (352e-353b), we might explain belonging together, in its turn, in terms of performing a function. The white queen and the rest of the chess set have a function they perform together; the queen of hearts and the chess set do not. I thank Howard Curzer for pointing this out to me.

¹⁰ No interpreter to my knowledge has noticed that premise 8 is and is intended as a restatement of premise 5. Bordt (1998: 223) takes premise 8, in his terms, "(c)," as a "distinct consequence."

¹¹ No interpreter to my knowledge has indicated that premise 8 is addressed to Lysis. Bolotin (1979: 185) claims without support that Menexenus, not Lysis, assents to it. But *to Lysis* is implied by the Greek grammar: the immediate antecedent of "he said" (222a6) is "Lysis" at 222a4; hence premise 8 is addressed to Lysis. This grammatical construction makes sense if we recognize that premise 8 restates premise 5, as shown above.

¹² Bolotin, who defends the argument, does not consider this objection. Robinson raises this objection as a criticism of the argument. Bordt and Rowe say the equivocation is intentional and done for artistic reasons. Mackenzie and Gonzalez describe the inference as "suggestion" only, though in a later work Gonzalez defends the inference.

Bolotin (1979: 186) defends the structure of the argument: "Socrates' conclusion . . . follows directly from the understanding of love as love of one's kindred, since kinship, as distinct from mere ownership, is by its nature reciprocal. One cannot be akin to another without the other being akin to oneself. Accordingly, a genuine love of one's natural kin is of necessity returned."

Unfortunately he does not consider objections such as equivocation.

Robinson (1986: 76) states the equivocation: "The sense of *oikeios* in which a possession which has been taken away from one is *oikeion* = "one's own" is not normally a symmetrical sense: my possessions belong to me but I do not belong to them." At the Archelogos website: "*Lysis* Overall Interpretation" he writes (in 2002): "The Greek term *oikeion* which stands for 'appropriate' and 'akin' . . . has its own ambiguities; not all that is 'appropriate' to me is such that I am reciprocally 'appropriate' to it; so to infer 'kinship' of some kind from 'appropriateness' of one or other kind is a dangerous move."

Bordt (1998) perceives an equivocation (*eine Schwierigkeit in der argumentation*) between non-symmetric (*einseitigen*) and symmetric (*gegenseitigen*) relations (p. 225). On his reading, Plato intentionally constructs the fallacy but means to make us aware (*macht uns . . . aufmerksam*) of the need for such a distinction by leading the discussion into perplexity (p. 226).

Like Bordt, Rowe (2000: 212 with n. 29) thinks the fallacy is too obvious to be intentional: "There are no

grounds for Socrates' implicit claim that . . . it is what is akin that is *philon*. [Fn. 29 continues: The text] suggests that *philia* must therefore involve a reciprocal relationship, but presumably only for humorous purposes: so Hippothales, being a genuine lover of Lysis, must be the object of his *philia*."

Although Mackenzie (1988: 30) does not call it fallacious, she describes what is certainly an *inference* in the text as merely a "suggestion": "The desire will thus be of what properly belongs to the desirer. . . . And that, in turn, gives us a further suggestion, that the friendship relation exists between two who are naturally akin (221e6)."

Like Mackenzie, Gonzalez (1995: 84) calls the inference a "suggestion" and "explanation" but not an inference: "Does the identification of *to philon* with *to oikeion* allow love to be in any way reciprocal? This is clearly suggested by Socrates when, immediately after making the identification, he turns to Lysis and Menexenus and explains that they are friends because they are by nature *oikeioi* (221e5-6)." However, Gonzalez (1998: 14) does identify premise 6 as an inference from premise 5: "Immediately after defining the object of love as *to*

oikeion he infers that if Lysis and Menexenus are *philoï* to one another they must also be *oikeioi* to each other (221e5-6).” See next note for discussion of Gonzalez’s defense of the inference.

¹³ Also: “There is very possibly also a rapid suggestion, not formally refuted, that the good is *oikeion* to the intermediate. But if Plato took this seriously, he would have been left with the continuing problem about reciprocity if he wished to apply *this* sense of *oikeiotēs* to the explanation of friendship” (Robinson 1986: 76 n. 23).

Gonzalez (1998: 14) endorses the following solution to this problem, a solution he attributes to Ziebis (1927: 26-7) and which I also find in Fraisse (1974: 145): “the Good engenders relations of *oikeiotès* among all of which it is the end” (see also p. 148). “(i) The fact that the good by nature belongs to all of us is what enables us to belong by nature to each other. In other words, (ii) our shared kinship with the good provides the basis for our kinship with one another. . . . A good example of such kinship is Socrates’ relationship with the boys in the present dialogue, a relationship constituted by the mutual pursuit of wisdom.” There are three problems with his solution.

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1. His inference by restatement from statement (i) to statement (ii) seems to equivocate between a non-symmetric relation, *belonging-to*, and a symmetric relation, *kinship-with*.
 2. Socrates nowhere argues that two intermediate objects ever become friends with each other. On the contrary, the present discussion is still working under the model of friendship that Socrates "like a mantic" divined (216d3), namely, that "what is neither good nor bad loves what is beautiful i.e. good" (216d3-4). The discussion has not abandoned that model, but is seeking to elaborate it by identifying the cause of the love of the intermediate for the good. Socrates has ruled out badness as this cause (221b-c). This has led him, in the present argument, to postulate that desire is the cause of friendship, while the lack of what belongs is the cause of desire. Not only would it be illogical for him to adopt a different model without notifying his audience, he evidently has argued against the model that intermediate can be friend to intermediate on the grounds that like is not

friend to like (214c), a point he reiterates at the end of this argument (222b6-8).

3. Even if we admit the dubious proposition that the fact that two intermediate objects are *oikeion* to the good causes the two intermediate objects to become *oikeion* and friends to each other, we have not answered the problem at issue here: why would the good love the intermediate?

¹⁴ Objection: A's love for B is not requited if B merely benefits A by providing A with goods. If B is to requite A's love, B must love A back with emotion and need.

Reply: This objection's conception of love as requiring emotional need is too narrow. It is at odds, for instance, with the standard theological claim that a perfect God may love humanity. I thank Roslyn Weiss for leading me to consider this objection.

A similar objection is raised by Fraisse (1974: 130). For Fraisse, true requital requires not needy emotion but a Kantian good will: "In no part of this first discussion [at *Lys.* 209] does Plato indicate that the sage may be himself *philos* [i.e. a lover; Socrates takes pains to emphasize he will be beloved]. He is wise, he is useful, he is good,

but his good deeds are not the result of any particular good will: [the sage] will be content to act as a consequence of his expertise [not as a consequence of his good will]." Surely this is another excessively narrow conception of love.

¹⁵ There are in fact 256 possibilities, if we include reflexive, non-symmetrical, and non-transitive relations. I thank Janet McShane for demonstrating 256 to me.

¹⁶ Haden (1983; 355) finds four forms of friendship in the *Lysis*, the third being "between one who has achieved the Good and one who has not. Here the former in virtue of his very fulfillment and self-sufficiency freely uses the power flowing from his completeness to help the other; the good (person) really is the friend of the bad and the friend the friend of the enemy in this case." On my interpretation, it is false that the good is friend to the bad. The good *belongs with* the bad, to be sure (it belongs with everything!), but the bad does not desire the good (see 217e, discussed above in section 4, at premise 4). When the bad, under the influence of Socratic examination, comes to desire wisdom (the good), then bad is transformed into intermediate. It is at precisely that moment that friendship begins between good and what is now no longer

bad but intermediate, a friendship caused by the desire of
the intermediate, a desiring love requited by the good.

¹⁷ I thank Sara Rappe for leading me to consider this
objection.