

“Opening Socrates”: The Εἰκῶν of Alcibiades¹

HELEN F. NORTH

When Plato introduced formal oratory into his dialogues, his preference was for the kind designated in the fourth century as epideictic or panegyric. The *Apology* necessarily imitates forensic oratory, but the *Menexenus*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus* all exploit various categories of epideictic—the *epitaphios logos* and other types of encomium, including the paradoxical. Both because of this preponderance of epideictic in Plato’s dialogues and because of its brilliance, he became for rhetorical critics of the Graeco-Roman period the supreme model for such oratory, under whatever name.

Aristotle, who established the tripartite division of rhetoric—forensic, deliberative, and epideictic—best known in antiquity,² used “epideictic” to refer to the oratory of praise and blame. The word “panegyric” always had a broader field of reference and at some time, not as yet precisely determined, it became part of a twofold classification different from Aristotle’s: πολιτικός, which includes Aristotle’s forensic and deliberative types, and πανηγυρικός, which embraces not only Aristotle’s epideictic, but non-oratorical prose, and poetry as well.³

Hermogenes of Tarsus, a contemporary of Marcus Aurelius, employs this bipartite division in his influential treatise *Peri Ideon* (*On Types of Style*), and within the category of panegyric he recognizes two subdivisions, pure (αὐτὸ τοῦτο) panegyric and another kind confusingly called

¹ It is an honor to contribute to this collection of essays dedicated to Miroslav Marcovich, and I am particularly happy to offer a paper dealing with encomium, as part of the greater encomium constituted by this issue of the journal that he has edited for so many years and with such distinction.

² *Rhet.* 1. 3, 1358a1–13. For the suggestion that this division may have originated in the Academy, see F. Solmsen, *Kleine Schriften* II (Hildesheim 1969) 185 n. 26. For a contrary view, see A. Hellwig, *Untersuchungen zur Theorie der Rhetorik bei Platon und Aristoteles* (Göttingen 1973) 113 n. 5. Plato introduces his own tripartite division in *Sophist* 222c: δικανική, συμβουλευτική, προσομιλητική (conversational). His third genre, appropriate to its context (see Hellwig, 114 n. 12), would also accommodate most of Plato’s dialogues, but he does not elsewhere apply the term.

³ On the appearance of πολιτικός and πανηγυρικός as terms for rhetorical genres, evidently first in Philodemus, *Rhet.* 2, quoting the *Symposium* of Epicurus, see I. Rutherford, “Inventing the Canon: Hermogenes on Literature,” *HSCP* 94 (1992) 355–78, esp. 365–68, with notes 42 and 43. T. C. Burgess, “Epideictic Literature,” *University of Chicago Studies in Classical Philology* 3 (1902) 89–261, reviews the sources for the various terms (91–92).

πολιτικός, which is panegyric adapted to a real case. For both varieties he finds that Plato offers the most beautiful example, and he identifies in his dialogues many stylistic qualities appropriate to the various kinds of panegyric, including some that result in grandeur (μέγεθος) and others that produce simplicity (ἀφέλεια), sweetness (γλυκύτης), and certain kinds of intensity (δεινότης).⁴

Menander Rhetor, in the age of Diocletian, uses the term "epideictic," referring narrowly to speeches of praise and blame. He too mentions Plato in connection with several types of encomium and salutes him in extravagant terms as highest and best (ἄκρον καὶ ἄριστον) where writing is concerned.⁵ Like Hermogenes he finds in Plato the model for certain virtues of style appropriate to epideictic, notably purity (καθαρότης), freedom from excess (τὸ ἀπροσκορέξ), and charm (χάρις).⁶

Pseudo-Dionysius of Halicarnassus, perhaps a contemporary of Menander, prefers the term "panegyric" to "epideictic" in his *Techne*, and he too admires Plato extravagantly, if Russell and Wilson are correct in identifying as Plato the stylistic model described as ruler and leader of the chorus (χοροῦ ἡγεμόνα τε καὶ κορυφαῖον).⁷ Of this exemplar, evidently so familiar that his name need not be mentioned, ps.-Dionysius says that the matter dealt with gave him the impetus for each stylistic character. Among the kinds of subject-matter mentioned is that which involves comparison and contrast (παραβολῶν καὶ συγκρίσεων).⁸

The prominence accorded to these figures by ps.-Dionysius reflects their importance in epideictic oratory, early acknowledged by Aristotle, who in the *Rhetoric* recommends comparison (σύγκρισις, παραβολή) as a source of amplification (αὐξήσις), which is itself most appropriate to epideictic (1. 9. 38–40). Their significance is recognized in practical terms by most of the *progymnasmata* (preliminary exercises) taught for centuries in Greek and Roman schools.⁹ They regularly include an exercise on encomium, immediately followed by one on comparison (*encomium* and *synkrisis* in the Greek handbooks, *laudatio* and *comparatio* in the Latin).

⁴ *Hermogenis Opera*, ed. by H. Rabe (Stuttgart 1969) 387–88. See also 403–04, where solemnity (σεμνότης), purity (καθαρότης), diligence (ἐπιμέλεια), charm (ἡδονή), ornament (κόσμος), and clarity (σαφήνεια) are mentioned as characteristic of the most beautiful panegyric. Hermogenes holds that what Demosthenes is to practical oratory and Homer to poetry, Plato is to panegyric (389). See C. B. Wooten, *Hermogenes' On Types of Style* (Chapel Hill and London 1987) Appendix 2 (138–40).

⁵ *Menander Rhetor*, ed. with trans. and comm. by D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson (Oxford 1981) Treatise I, p. 8 (334,7–8 Spengel).

⁶ Russell and Wilson (previous note) Treatise I, p. 20 (340,24–30 Spengel) and Treatise II, p. 158 (411,29–31 Spengel).

⁷ Russell and Wilson (above, note 5) 365 n. 17, on D.H. *Opuscula* II 260 Usener-Radermacher.

⁸ II 260,14–15 Usener-Radermacher. The author regards the variety of diction exemplified by Plato as ἐπιδεικτικώτερον, more appropriate to epideictic.

⁹ See D. L. Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education* (New York 1957) 177–212 and Russell and Wilson (above, note 5) xxv–xxix.

The *Exercises* attributed to Hermogenes (probably not the same as the author of *Peri Ideon*) are twelve in number, eight preparing the student for deliberative and forensic rhetoric, four for epideictic. Encomium, the seventh exercise, becomes invective with the reversal of the standard encomiastic topics. Comparison, the eighth exercise, uses these topics as reference points against which persons or things can be rated as equal, superior, or inferior.¹⁰ The first example Hermogenes gives of encomium of a particular person is praise of Socrates,¹¹ but he does not cite any specific encomiastic passage, whether by Plato or another. He might well have pointed to the speech of Alcibiades in the *Symposium*, which for many readers constitutes the most memorable eulogy of Socrates in the dialogues, and, what is more, accomplishes its praise through comparison. This paper will address itself to certain features of Alcibiades' encomium of Socrates, especially its adaptation of epideictic conventions and its use of comparison.

No reader of Plato needs to be reminded that one of his greatest gifts is for analogy in all its forms, used in contexts great and small and introduced in a variety of ways. Marsh McCall in his historical review of such terms as εἰκὼν, παραβολή, and ὁμοίωσις credits Plato with the earliest use of παραβολή and ὁμοίωσις, but cites Aristophanes, *Clouds* 559 and *Frogs* 905–06 for εἰκὼν in contexts suggesting comparison.¹² Plato often describes as an εἰκὼν a particularly vivid image to which someone or something is compared, as when Socrates compares the licentious soul to a leaky sieve (*Gorgias* 493d6), or the Athenian Stranger likens men to puppets manipulated by the gods (*Laws* 644c1–2).¹³ Since the basic meaning of εἰκὼν is "image" or "likeness," it is the *vox propria* for the kind of comparison that Plato puts into the mouth of Alcibiades in the final speech of the *Symposium*.

Instead of eulogizing Eros; like all the previous speakers, Alcibiades proposes to praise Socrates, encouraged by Eryximachus, who has constituted himself symposiarch, and even by Socrates himself, provided he speaks the truth (214d–e). The recurrent claim to truth-speaking is one of several traces of conventional rhetoric, either forensic or epideictic, in the speech of Alcibiades. In addition to promising to speak the truth and inviting correction if he lies (214e–15a, 216a), Alcibiades employs an adaptation of one of the familiar topics of the proem, the attempt to allay suspicion of being δεινὸς λέγειν. He exploits his obvious tipsiness by warning his listeners not to be surprised if he relates his memories ἄλλο ἄλλοθεν (haphazardly), since it is hard for someone in his condition to

¹⁰ Rabe (above, note 4) 14–18 (*encomium*), 18–20 (*synkrisis*).

¹¹ Rabe (above, note 4) 14–15.

¹² M. H. McCall, Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theories of Simile and Comparison* (Cambridge, MA 1969) 8–18.

¹³ Aristotle cites three uses of εἰκὼν from the *Republic* (*Rhet.* 3.4, 1406b32–07a1), discussed by McCall (previous note) 34–36.

describe the ἀτοπία (oddness, uniqueness) of Socrates in a fluent and orderly way (215a3–5). This ploy is akin to the ἀπειρία-topos (“inexperienced as I am”) used to such effect by Socrates himself at the beginning of the *Apology*.¹⁴ Another topos frequent in forensic oratory, this one a commonplace of the epilogue, is appropriated by Alcibiades when he maintains that his purpose in telling the humiliating story of his rejection by Socrates is to save Agathon from a similar fate (222b5–9). This is a variant of the σωτηρία-topos, with which the orator seeks to win favor by making it seem that his motive in prosecuting the accused is to protect the members of the jury, or the entire *polis*, or all the Greeks.¹⁵

If these two devices recall forensic oratory (specifically invoked when Alcibiades addresses his hearers as ἄνδρες δικασταί, “gentlemen of the jury,” and reminds them that they are judging Socrates on a charge of insolence, ὑπερηφάνια [219c7–8]), the body of the speech is solidly epideictic in its reliance on the topoi of ἀρετή and πρᾶξις, virtue and accomplishment. The *aretai* are with one exception identical with the cardinal virtues that Agathon in his textbook example of encomium had ascribed to Eros: *sophrosyne*, *andreia*, *sophia* or *phronesis* (196d5–7), with *karteria* in the speech of Alcibiades replacing Agathon’s *dikaiosyne*, and they are validated in the manner prescribed throughout the history of ancient rhetorical theory: by the description of appropriate *praxeis*.¹⁶ The subject of the speech is the paradoxical ἀρετή of Socrates, and the entire structure of the encomium consists of the step-by-step development and amplification of the comparison introduced in the very first sentence, when Alcibiades announces that he will attempt to praise Socrates δι’ εἰκόνων, through images (215a7). Aristotle might have had this speech in mind when he recommended amplification through comparison in the *Rhetoric*.

Although εἰκόνων in its extended meaning can be translated as “comparison” or even “simile,”¹⁷ its basic meaning of “image” is precisely what Plato needs to introduce Alcibiades’ characterization of Socrates, by turns mocking and suffused with admiration and chagrin. He likens Socrates to those statues of silenoi holding pipes or flutes which, when opened up (διχάδε διοιχθέντες), prove to have within them images (ἀγάλματα) of gods (215b4–5).¹⁸ Thus with one vivid analogy Plato not only directs attention to the physical appearance of Socrates, which obviously inspires the silenoi-comparison, but also introduces the

¹⁴ 17d2–18a7.

¹⁵ I have discussed the topics of ἀπειρία and σωτηρία in *From Myth to Icon: Reflections of Greek Ethical Doctrine in Literature and Art* (Ithaca and London 1979) 163–64, 168.

¹⁶ See, e.g., for theory, *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* 35; for practice, Isocrates, *Evagoras* and Xenophon, *Agésilas*; for commentary, Russell and Wilson (above, note 5) xiv–xv and Burgess (above, note 3) 123–25.

¹⁷ See McCall (above, note 12) for an exhaustive discussion of the implications of εἰκόνων as a term of comparison in the fifth century and thereafter.

¹⁸ No such statues are extant.

distinction between the outer and the inner, appearance and reality, on which the revelation of the real nature of Socrates will be based. The musical instruments associated with sileni might well be pipes (with subliminal links to Pan), but the reference to flutes (αὐλοί) is more telling because it prepares for the transition to the satyr Marsyas, to whom Socrates is next compared.

Sileni and satyrs are often confused (Marsyas is elsewhere described as a silenus),¹⁹ and Alcibiades makes no generic distinction between them, but he exploits elements specific to the story of Marsyas, not to sileni in general. Whereas Socrates resembles both sileni and satyrs in appearance (εἶδος), beyond that he is like Marsyas in being ὑβριστής and ἀύλητής. Sileni and satyrs are generically hybriatic, in the sense of being sexually aroused and given to pursuing maenads, nymphs, and other targets, but Marsyas is hybriatic in a different sense as well, is in fact a famous exemplar of insolence,²⁰ and his appropriation of the αὐλός discarded by Athena is a crucial element in the story of his hybris. The first development of the εἰκόν requires us to contemplate the superiority of Socrates to Marsyas where the αὐλός is concerned. Within the ring composition that determines the structure of Alcibiades' speech, Plato at this point introduces a chiasmus, taking up in reverse order the charges of hybris and of being an ἀύλητής, in both of which Socrates not only resembles but surpasses Marsyas. Yet a third element in the myth of Marsyas—the most important of all—is not mentioned, but will make its impact at a later point.

Socrates as ἀύλητής

The ἀύλητής segment of the εἰκόν, which ignores the imagery of "opening," centers on the theme of enchantment (ἐκπληξίς).²¹ Both Marsyas and Socrates enchant their hearers, but Socrates is superior to Marsyas because, while the satyr needs an instrument to effect his enchantment, Socrates uses *logoi* alone. Both have pupils, and in both cases those who imitate their teacher also have the power of enchantment. Even an indifferent (φάυλη) flutegirl can enchant by playing the melodies of Marsyas, and even an indifferent (φάυλος) speaker can enchant by speaking the *logoi* of Socrates. (Here it is tempting to see one of the elusive Plato's rare references to himself.)

Socrates' power to enchant is emphasized by two further comparisons. When Alcibiades hears him, he is moved more powerfully even than are the

¹⁹ As by Herodotus 7. 26, describing the cave where the flayed hide was exhibited.

²⁰ Cf. North (above, note 15) 64–65.

²¹ See also 218a5–b4 for the philosophic madness. On the topic of enchantment by the Sophists and by Socrates, see North, "Swimming Upside Down in the Wrong Direction": Plato's Criticism of Sophistic Rhetoric on Technical and Stylistic Grounds," in ΠΑΡΑΔΟΣΙΣ: *Studies in Memory of Edwin A. Quain* (New York 1976) 11–29.

Korybantēs, far more than he is moved when he hears Pericles and other excellent orators. The explicit comparison to Pericles is strong praise, especially coming from his ward, but stronger still is the implied comparison of Socrates to whatever orgiastic deities—Bacchus or the Great Mother—produce the emotional reaction in the Korybantēs. Still another comparison, suggestive of irresistible powers of enchantment, follows. To avoid the disaster of spending his life with Socrates, at the cost of renouncing his political career, Alcibiades deafens his ears to him, as to the Sirens (216a7–9).

This section of the encomium comes to a climax with Alcibiades' insistence on the uniqueness of Socrates. He is the only person capable of making Alcibiades ashamed (216b1–4): ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτον μόνον αἰσχύνομαι. His shame stems from the realization that, while he is himself in great need, he neglects his own interests in order to cater to those of the Athenians. Like the timocratic youth in *Republic* 8, who observes that those who attend to their own affairs are regarded as fools, while those who attend to the affairs of others are honored, and who therefore gives himself over to φιλοτιμία (550a2–b6), Alcibiades is overwhelmed by desire for the honors within the gift of *hoi polloi*. The ironic result is that, in this unique moment of self-knowledge, he perceives the consequence of his thirst for honor to be its direct opposite—slavery.²² Immediately after comparing himself explicitly to the Korybantēs and implicitly to Odysseus (who resisted the Sirens), he likens himself to a fugitive slave escaping from Socrates and the unacceptable demands of genuine self-interest (216b7–8; cf. 215e7, 219e4). Even now, long after the events that he is about to record, he is torn by the most profound ambivalence where Socrates is concerned, sometimes wishing him dead, then realizing what his death would mean to him (216c2–5). It is the most tragic moment in the *Symposium*.

Socrates as ὕβριστής

To introduce the next section of the encomium, Plato returns to his original εἰκὼν, the comparison of Socrates to a satyr or silenus. The resemblance now lies in his erotic disposition and his affectation of ignorance, his celebrated irony. Here begins the treatment of Socrates as ὕβριστής, the other Marsyas-like aspect of his character, and it is here that the contrast between outer and inner makes its impact. Just as the silenus-statues, when opened up, prove to contain images of the gods, so Socrates, outwardly erotic, proves, if opened up, to be laden (γέμει) with *sophrosyne*. This is the first of the *aretai* to be ascribed to Socrates; it will be demonstrated by the *praxis* consisting of his rejection of Alcibiades' attempt to seduce him.

²² For other instances in which successful politicians are compared to slaves, see North (previous note) 26.

Plato's use of the myth of Marsyas is subtle in the extreme. He makes no explicit reference to the flaying of the satyr, which was a familiar element in the story, even though not portrayed in Greek art until the Hellenistic period.²³ Knowledge of it is taken for granted when at a later stage of Alcibiades' speech the comical surface of Socrates' *logoi* is compared to the skin of a hybristic satyr (221e3–5). The "opening" of the silenus-statues is substituted for the flaying. Moreover, as noted above, the *hybris* of Marsyas is not just the standard sexuality generic to sileni. He is a *hybris*-figure in Greek traditional morality because of his challenge to Apollo in the musical contest between the *αὐλός* and the lyre—*hybris* in another sense. But both senses are important for the portrait of Socrates; he is erotic, like all sileni and satyrs, and he is insolent, like Marsyas himself. An underlying unity is provided by the fact that *sophrosyne*, the *ἀρετή* that Alcibiades has discovered in Socrates, is the antithesis of both forms of *hybris*.

The proof of Socrates' *sophrosyne* begins with the accusation that he despises (*καταφρονεῖ*) beauty, wealth, and honor—the three elements that traditionally impede the care of the soul in the ethics of Socrates (*Apology* 29d). The verb alerts us to accusations of *hybris* yet to come, especially when Alcibiades continues with the charge that Socrates considers not only possessions but "ourselves" worth nothing and spends his life making fun of his fellow-men (216e3–6). His behavior is described as *εἰρωνευόμενος δὲ καὶ παίζων* (treating his fellows with irony and ridicule), but Alcibiades, and perhaps he alone, has seen him *σπουδάσαντος* (being serious) and *ἀνοιχθέντος* (opened up). Inside were *ἀγάλματα* so divine, so golden, so totally beautiful, and so marvellous that he felt obliged to do whatever Socrates commanded (217a1–3). In short, he was inspired by the sight of the Socratic *ἀγάλματα* to attempt to gratify their owner. Thus, with yet another allusion to the *εἰκόν* of the sileni, he embarks on the tragicomic (or perhaps better satyric) story of his efforts at seduction (217a–19d).

The tale is told with infinite artistry, proceeding by stages from mere conversation, alone with Socrates, to wrestling with him in the palaestra, to dinner à deux, and finally to the climax of the failed seduction. (One is reminded of the *βαθμοί*—rungs—by which in the speech of Diotima the lover arrives at the vision of beauty absolute [211c1–d1]).²⁴ The outcome—Socrates' withering contempt for what Alcibiades offered—is described in a series of four verbs linked by *καί*, all denoting contemptuous and insulting conduct: *περιεγένετό τε καὶ κατεφρόνησε καὶ κατεγέλασε . . . καὶ ὕβρισε* ("he was superior and disdainful and he mocked . . . and insulted," 219c5–

²³ Consult C. W. Clairmont, "Studies in Greek Mythology and Vase-Painting," *YCS* 15 (1957) 161–78.

²⁴ R. G. Bury, *The Symposium of Plato* (Cambridge 1909) lxiv, calls attention to this parallel. For further discussion, see R. Hornsby, "Significant Action in the *Symposium*," *CJ* 52 (1956) 37–40.

6). Polysyndeton emphasizes climax, with ὕβρισε coming last in the series. Thus Socrates is convicted of being ὕβριστής, as promised, and the paradox is that his hybris is identical with his *sophrosyne*.

Not only *sophrosyne*, however, but other cardinal virtues are perceived by Alcibiades in consequence of this episode. *Andreia*, *phronesis*, and *karteria* are mentioned as additional reasons why he continued to be enslaved to Socrates (219e). Thus a transition is made to the second major use of the topos of ἀρετή/πρᾶξις: the proofs of Socrates' *andreia* and *karteria*, evinced by his behavior at Potidaea and Delium (219e–21c). This section too comes to a climax with an assertion of the uniqueness (ἀτοπία) of Socrates (221d3–8). While Brasidas can be compared to Achilles, or Pericles to Nestor, Antenor, and others, Socrates and his *logoi* are comparable to no human being, now or in the past, only to sileni and satyrs. Once more the εἰκῶν is invoked to focus our attention on the outer/inner theme, and now we are reminded of the actual fate of Marsyas, the flaying, which was interpreted by the Florentine Neoplatonists to mean the revelation of the inner self.²⁵

The flaying, though not explicitly mentioned, is irresistibly brought to mind by the comparison of Socrates' *logoi*—seemingly ridiculous with their talk of pack-asses, smiths, cobblers, and tanners—to the hide of a hybristic satyr. Any person inexperienced and thoughtless would laugh at them, but anyone who saw them opened up and got inside them would find them unique among *logoi*, first in having intelligence (νοῦς), then in having the most divine and numerous ἀγάλματα of ἀρετή within, and finally in being supremely relevant to the search for excellence (καλῶ κάγαθῶ ἔσεσθαί, 222a1–7), another example of polysyndeton enhancing climax.

What is most notable here is the substitution of Socrates' *logoi* for Socrates himself. Just as it was earlier said, in the ἀύλητής section of the encomium, that his *logoi*, uttered even by the poorest speaker, continue to have power to enchant hearers (215d3–6), so now, in the ὕβριστής section, rather than imagining Socrates opened up like a silenus-statue and revealing images of gods within, we are made to think of his *logoi* as being opened up and beneath their ludicrous surface revealing those images of ἀρετή that are equivalent to images of gods. The function of such images is now for the first time explicitly revealed: They are supremely fit to be the object of scrutiny (σκοπεῖν) by one aiming to be καλὸς κάγαθός (fine and noble). The choice of the verb σκοπεῖν is reminiscent of all the verbs meaning to look, behold, contemplate, with which Diotima describes the behavior of one who has achieved the sight of beauty absolute (211d3–12a5). Thus briefly Plato hints at the parallel between the upward progress of the lover capable of climbing from rung to rung on Diotima's ladder and the insight into the hidden beauty of Socratic teaching.

²⁵ See E. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (Hammondsworth 1967) 171–76.

The *Symposium* is a dialogue whose fabric consists of many intricately interwoven themes and images. One such theme, and a basic one, is that of *logoi* repeated by someone other than the original speaker. The elaborate framework with which the dialogue is introduced (172a–73c) prepares us to encounter speeches delivered on a long-ago occasion, reported to us now by a speaker who heard them from someone else (and checked certain elements with Socrates himself). The central speech consists of the *logos* of Diotima, as reported by Socrates (as reported by Aristodemus and then by Apollodorus). Just before reporting Diotima's *logos*, Socrates has corrected Agathon's admission that he cannot refute Socrates, by saying that it is truth, not Socrates, that cannot be refuted (201c7–d2). Alcibiades has already told us that anyone, even a poor speaker, can enchant hearers by the use of Socrates' *logoi* (215d3–6). And now the last reference to the εἰκόν of the silenus-statues completes the equation of Socrates with his *logoi*.²⁶ The recurrent emphasis on the importance of the speech, rather than the individual speaker, contributes to the effect of distancing the reader from the accidental historical aspects of characters and events, while encouraging him to attend to the inner meaning of what is said, that which is revealed when the hide of the satyr is stripped away or the exterior of the statue is opened up.

In the long history of the development of epideictic oratory (both theory and practice) Isocrates claims a position of primacy. He was the first, he says in the *Evagoras*, to write an encomium of an actual, rather than a mythical person (190–91). His subject, the ruler of Cypriot Salamis, died in 374 B.C. and presumably the encomium came not much later. The date of the *Symposium* cannot be determined with certainty, but most estimates locate it a decade earlier than the *Evagoras*. The question arises whether priority in composing an encomium of an actual person should be assigned to Plato on the basis of the speech of Alcibiades. The relative chronology of the two encomia involves, however, the question whether Plato here (and indeed elsewhere in the dialogues) eulogizes an actual person. Those who regard the Platonic Socrates as essentially mythical²⁷ might seem to concede the primacy to Isocrates. Yet the Socrates who is the basis of the Platonic character, however mythologized he may be in the dialogues, is an actual person, and for this reason Plato deserves to be recognized as an innovator in the history of encomium. Nevertheless, his use of the εἰκόν of the silenus-statues in the speech of Alcibiades encourages us to focus on the *logoi* of Socrates, not the man, who, despite (or because of) the vividness and immediacy of the dialogue, is transformed into a unique sort of image,

²⁶ Cf. S. Rosen, *Plato's Symposium* (New Haven and London 1968) 319: "This use of the Silenus enforces the insight that Socrates' interior is coincident with the interior of his speeches."

²⁷ See J. F. Callahan, "Dialectic, Myth and History in the Philosophy of Plato," in *Interpretations of Plato: A Swarthmore Symposium*, ed. by H. F. North (Leiden 1977) 72–75.

carved by a supreme craftsman (like the δεινὸς πλάστης of *Republic* 9)²⁸ both to conceal and to reveal—though only to the initiate—the true nature of his master.²⁹

Swarthmore College

²⁸ The δεινὸς πλάστης moulds by his *logos* an εἰκὼν of the soul in which the image of a tripartite creature—a many-headed monster combined with a lion and a man—is enclosed within the εἰκὼν of a human being, an εἰκὼν misunderstood by one who cannot see what is inside (*Rep.* 588b7–e2). The many references to the verb πλάττειν in this and other passages in the *Republic*, where the image of a sculptor appears, might have reminded readers of Plato's name. H. H. Bacon, in her unpublished presidential address to the American Philological Association, "Plato and the Greek Literary Tradition," December 28, 1985, cites many other examples of the analogy to sculpture and the use of πλάττειν to describe the activity of the philosopher in the *Republic*.

²⁹ For some remarkable changes in the figure of Socrates as the symposiac genre develops out of Plato's dialogue, see J. Relihan and the Members of the Greek Seminar 420, "Rethinking the History of the Literary Symposium," *JCS* 17 (1992) 213–44. Particularly interesting are references to later echoes of the disruptive figure of Alcibiades, of whom it is said (215) that Plato's Alcibiades is the other half of Socrates' own self, and that the uninvited disrupter is himself a Socratic figure. According to the view expressed in this article (221), the entrance of Alcibiades represents the intrusion of the social order of Athens, forcing a reevaluation of the character of Socrates (left unchallenged in the *Apology* and *Phaedo*). W. S. Cobb, *The Symposium and the Phaedrus: Plato's Erotic Dialogues* (Albany 1993) 7–9, 178–79, cites recent interpretations of Alcibiades' speech as conveying Plato's criticism of "the Socratic way of life and love." Such interpretations, especially those that charge Socrates with responsibility for the disaster of Alcibiades' subsequent career, depend to varying degrees on an exaggerated faith in the historicity of the Platonic Socrates.