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Item Type	Article
Authors	Brill, Sara A.
Publisher	Studies in the History of Ethics
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Download date	2026-11-11 04:47:29
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/171737

Studies in the History of Ethics

Medical Moderation in Plato's *Symposium*

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Historically, interpretations of Eryximachus' character in the *Symposium* have risen and fallen with an author's interpretation of Plato's position on *technē*. For Werner Jaeger, for instance, Eryximachus' speech falls into place with Plato's frequent use of medicine as a metaphor for his 'ethical science'.[1] This interpretation does of course assume that Plato has an 'ethical science'. Stanley Rosen, rejecting this assumption, reads the sketch as illustrating the necessity of maintaining a critical stance toward medicine and toward the tendency for technical over-specialization of which, Rosen claims, medicine is the epitome.[2] The view, shared by both Jaeger and Rosen, that Plato sketches his Eryximachus as representative of the medical art and uses medicine as a paradigm for *technē* is at least as old as Ficino[3] and is nearly ubiquitous in contemporary scholarship on the *Symposium*, even amongst scholars who otherwise sharply disagree about the content and significance of Eryximachus' speech.[4]

However, significantly less investigation has been made into why Plato would have chosen medicine as a primary representative of *technē* in the first place. As G. E. R. Lloyd has noted, medicine was not at all an obvious choice for this role.[5] Ronald Polansky echoes this sentiment when he remarks that while the ancient Greeks conceived of medicine as a *technē*, they did so as an exceptional and peculiar art.[6] Medicine's peculiar status as a *technē* can be partially attributed to the word *technē* itself which embraces both very broad meanings—much broader than that of the English word 'technology'—and a narrower sense of bodies of

knowledge that were teachable and that resulted in the production of some object, action or condition,[7] although these exact criteria were subject to debate.[8] However, that medicine stood out as peculiar even in the context of larger debates about the nature of *technē* is attested to by the Hippocratic corpus itself. For instance 'On *Technē*' devotes itself entirely to an explicit defense of the status of medicine as a *technē*, and both 'Law' and 'Regimen in Acute Diseases' note that medicine's status as a *technē* has been threatened by the bad repute into which it has fallen.[9] Thus, while there is wide agreement that the ancient Greeks thought of medicine as a broadly conceived *technē*, it is necessary to concede that the kind of *technē* medicine was, and the quality of service this *technē* provided, were contentious topics. Consequently, we should be wary of assuming that it would have been self-evident to conceive of medicine as a paradigm of *technē*, and should ask ourselves why Plato would have chosen a physician to voice the praise of *technē* that is offered in Eryximachus' speech.

Further, we should be careful not to assume too quickly that Eryximachus is taken by Plato to be representative of medicine as a whole. As Robert Bartz has aptly emphasized, the diversity of approaches to medicine exhibited by the texts that comprise the Hippocratic corpus prohibit attributing to this corpus a single cohesive practice of medicine above and beyond the many and variant practices of physicians that are depicted within its texts.[10] An investigation of the character of Eryximachus should involve discerning what kind of doctor Eryximachus represents, and in order to contend with this question we will have to attend to Plato's portrayal of Eryximachus throughout the dialogue.[11]

The following pages attempt to address the two questions raised here: First, in light of the peculiar status of medicine as a *technē*, why would Plato choose a physician to act as a representative of *technē*? Second, given the heterogeneous nature of ancient Greek medical

practice, what kind of medicine is represented by Eryximachus and what is Plato's evaluation of this kind of medicine? It is my claim that in the *Symposium* Plato's interest in medicine is not reducible to an interest in *technē*. Rather, Plato focuses upon medicine in order to draw out a tension between a grasp of the whole of nature and a specialized knowledge of parts of nature that marks the practice of medicine contemporary to him. Further, I will argue that Plato's portrayal of Eryximachus is indeed critical, but that it is critical not of medicine as such but of the kind of medical practice, namely technical specialization, that Eryximachus represents. As I hope to show, Plato is interested in wresting medicine from an increasingly specialized practice in order to reserve for other activities and concerns a certain clinical comportment that cannot be reduced to the activity of the medical technician; his sketch of Eryximachus reflects this interest. Rather than simply dismissing medicine, Plato's critique of Eryximachus actually opens up the possibility of appropriating certain medical themes and vocabularies for philosophical reflection. Thus, Eryximachus' speech should be read in light of Plato's critical incorporation, within both the context of the *Symposium* and the broader Platonic corpus, of certain medical concepts and concerns.

In order to make good on these claims, the following pages will first focus on those qualities of ancient Greek medicine that mark it as a unique and peculiar *technē*, thereby calling into question its capacity to serve as a paradigm of *technē*. Section II explores Plato's treatment of medicine outside of the *Symposium* in order to provide a broad context within which to view Eryximachus' speech. Section III offers a reading of this speech that highlights how Eryximachus himself deals with, or fails to deal with, those qualities of medicine that are only uneasily captured under the rubric of technical proficiency. This section then illustrates the appropriation of a certain clinical concern from the interests of the medical technician, as

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represented by Eryximachus, to the interests of the comic poet Aristophanes in order to provide an example of the manner in which Plato transplants certain medical concepts from a technical orientation that would obscure them.

I

A curious tension surrounds the ancient Greek reception of the medical art. On the one hand, its benefits are lauded by poets in both the archaic and classical ages. Homer praises Machaon and Podaleirios as the sons of the great healer Asclepius and as accomplished healers in their own rights.[12] Aeschylus' Prometheus lists the use of drugs to treat diseases and wounds as the greatest of all his gifts to humanity.[13] On the other hand, the poetic treatment of mythic figures such as Circe and Medea, famous for their knowledge of herbs and charms, indicates a deep seated anxiety about the very use of drugs that is praised by Prometheus. Given the awareness of the power of drugs to ease pain and the equally strong concern about the misuse of this power, it is safe to say that the ancient Greek reception of the medical art was ambivalent.

Many of the texts that comprise the Hippocratic corpus respond to this ambivalence and the suspicions that surrounded the practice of medicine by attempting to firmly establish the technical character of medical practice; however, their manners of doing so, like their style of writing and time and place of origin, admit a great deal of variety. For instance, a number of texts devote themselves to imparting detailed information about parts of the body and offering practical advice on how to heal particular wounds and diseases.[14] The devotion to detailed information and careful recording is shared by a series of texts entitled 'Epidemics' that consist of painstaking descriptions of maladies that affected a particular region and case studies of individual patients. Some texts temper their observations about the human body with the development of a sophisticated theoretical lens and well developed conceptual schema[15] and

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assert the need to extend medical knowledge beyond the borders of the body to include knowledge of the whole of which the human body is a part.[16] Given the wide variety of approaches to medicine, the presence of a sharply critical tone in a number of these writings is not surprising.[17]

In fact, the Hippocratic corpus portrays ancient Greek medicine as an agonistic practice in which the most basic terms, concepts and approaches were subject to disagreement. Debates about the merits of prognosis and the universality of symptoms,[18] the status of dietetic medicine,[19] the benefit or lack thereof of rhetorical displays of technique,[20] and the status of theological accounts of disease[21] fill the pages of its texts. What is common to all of these debates, however, is a tension between an emphasis on the need for detailed information about the human body and an emphasis on the need to possess a firm grasp of the broader context of natural phenomena of which the human body is a part.[22]

There are a number of cultural factors that lent themselves both to this tension and to the variety of approaches to medicine exhibited by the Hippocratic corpus.[23] For one, lacking the mediation of a professional certifying body, the competition between physicians for patients often took the form of contending public displays of expertise in which training in rhetoric was not without is benefits.[24] Further, strict prohibitions on the handling of human corpses limited knowledge of human anatomy and physiology to what could be gleaned from careful observation of the sick or wounded.[25] In the absence of detailed anatomical information, Greek medical knowledge relied upon and contributed to theories about cosmic principles, the elemental constituents of the universe, and the behavior of opposites that could be conceived of as broadly philosophical. That the nature of the universe was subject to fierce debate only increased the degree to which argumentation was a necessary part of medical practice. Finally, it is not clear

that such debate would have been resolved simply by the possession of more sophisticated knowledge of human physiology. The interaction in classical Greek culture between political and medical vocabularies[26] suggests that for the Greeks of this time period the commitment to treat human beings brings with it the burden of the knowledge not only of the bodies of humans but of their interactions with a variety of things and people. Anatomical knowledge alone does not solve the need for a robust account of the living body. Dietetic medicine, with its extensive focus on regimen, attempted to provide such an account, although the particular efforts of dietetic physicians were often met with criticism.[27]

The operation of these and other cultural forces created a demand both for detailed information about the human body and for broad understanding of the workings of the cosmos; the texts of the Hippocratic corpus suggest that the field of medicine was rife with disagreements stemming from the tension between these two demands. While such disagreements need not be destructive, this tension does make demands on the practitioner to balance between its two sides for the sake of treating the sick.

The first three texts entitled 'Epidemics' are particularly illustrative of the effort, within the Hippocratic corpus, to attain this balance. The case histories and extended discussions of types of diseases that comprise these texts reveal a careful attempt to describe and anticipate the course of a sickness on the basis of the kind of fever undergone by the patient.[28] To this extent they require very detailed, specialized knowledge of the symptoms of certain fevers and diseases. However, that fevers occur with a somewhat stable periodicity suggests that diseases are subject to certain general and discernable patterns.[29] Further, it is not the disease alone that behaves consistently. The healthy human body is similarly subject to consistent periodic change, as is perhaps most clearly observed in the cycle of its growth and diminishment. Thus, in

investigating the development of the human body, the physician is offered insight into the motion of things that grow and diminish, that can become replenished and depleted. The belief that human development is analogous to, and dependent upon, the orderly motion and action of other living things, and of the heavens themselves, grants the student of the human body a certain perspective on the orderly motion of the cosmos. In order to be such a student, the doctor must be amongst the sick and immersed in the workings of nature. [30]

At the same time, this immersion must be tempered with a capacity for observation in order to produce the necessary knowledge of nature. Thus, in these very 'Epidemics' we can see an emphasis on a comportment of detached observation and recording. The author(s) of these texts made every effort to offer what they believed to be the most salient facts about the course of the disease itself, rather than telling the story of the diseased person. That such a comportment might ultimately prove insufficient on its own to fulfill the demands of medicine is an observation to which Jones gives voice in the introduction to his translation of Epidemics I and III:

> Of the forty-two cases, twenty-five end in death, very nearly sixty percent. The writer's aim is not to show how to cure—treatment is very rarely mentioned—but to discover the sequences of symptoms, to set down the successes and failures of Nature in her efforts to expel the disease. The physician is acting, not *qua* physician but *qua* scientist; he has laid aside the part of the healer to be for a time a spectator looking down on the arena, exercising that *theōria* which a Greek held to be the highest human activity.[31]

Speculations about what the ancient Greeks held to be the highest human activity aside, Jones' summary serves to punctuate the detached 'fact gathering' comportment that permeates these case histories, and speaks to the need for the sophisticated theoretical structure we identified as

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one part of the medical art.[32] By observing nature and attempting to delineate its parts, wholes, and functions the doctor is actively engaged in a process of inquiry designed to determine what something is.[33] However, Jones also implies that this detachment and the body of knowledge it creates cannot be sufficient in and of itself to comprise the medical art. Detached observation and speculation must be balanced with the investment in healing that is also required by the art. The employment of knowledge for the purpose of healing, whether it be detailed anatomical knowledge or broad cosmological knowledge, requires both investment and detachment. Success with respect to this balance results in the clinical distance necessary for medical practice; failure to achieve this balance results in a failure to embody fully the requirements of medicine.

When coupled with the appropriate clinical investment, the tension between detailed knowledge of the parts of the body and comprehensive knowledge of the workings of nature is a productive one, and throughout the Hippocratic corpus we can see a fluctuation between its two poles. At the same time such a fluctuation defies easy categorization into a single body of knowledge or series of practices; it thus had no small part in shaping the peculiar status of medicine as a *technē* and in creating the critical milieu out of which the essay 'On *Technē*' emerged. The following pages will highlight three effects of this tension within texts in the Hippocratic corpus, effects that lent themselves to medicine's peculiar status as a *technē* and that help explain why this 'greatest of benefits', to paraphrase Aeschylus, would need to be defended as a *technē*.

For one, the global and comprehensive character of what many of the Hippocratic texts claim the physician must know extends the bounds of medicine well beyond the borders of the human body, and encroaches upon the spheres of any number of other arts. The author of the

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text ‘Airs, Waters, Places’ captures this quality well. After having enumerated the many things the physicians must know in order to pursue the art of medicine correctly—the effects of the seasons and of hot and cold winds, the capacities of water, the location of the town with respect to the winds and the rising of the sun, and the mode of life of the inhabitants—the author concludes with the following words: “If it be thought that all this belongs to meteorology, he will find out, on second thoughts, that the contribution of astronomy to medicine is not a very small one but a very great one indeed. For with the seasons men’s diseases, like their digestive organs, suffer change.”[34] The author of this text considers it perfectly appropriate to encroach upon the domains of the other arts and to use their findings for medical purposes.

The need and claimed right to make use of and contribute to the findings of other arts reflects the medical art’s possession of a domain larger and with more malleable boundaries than *technai* like house-building or flute-playing and aligns medicine with other *technai* possessed of similarly broad scope like that of the judge and the statesman.[35] This malleability has been with Western medicine since its inception and is attested to by the difficulty met by its efforts to separate itself from its early kinship with cult followings, ritual healing and mythic narrative. That such a separation was consciously attempted is clearly attested to in texts such as ‘The Sacred Disease’ and ‘On Ancient Medicine’. However, despite the efforts of some practitioners to found medicine on a body of knowledge other than that of the workings of the gods, the cult of Asclepius and temple incubation occurred alongside ‘scholarly’ debate about the nature of the body.[36]

Thus, while the medical art involved an understanding of harmony that gave its practitioners a certain purchase on the whole of what is, this very same understanding of the whole served to call into question the ease with which medicine could be classified as a *technē* of

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the same kind as carpentry or shoe-making because of the blurring of stable boundaries such an understanding requires. The very possibility of attaining specialized knowledge of the whole flirts with paradox.[37] The breadth required of medical knowledge makes for an uneasy relationship with the demands of narrower technical knowledge and marks medicine as distinct from some kinds of *technē* while aligning it with a select group of other *technai*.

Secondly, the role the doctor plays with respect to the patient's health is significantly different from the role that other practitioners of a *technē* play. In several Hippocratic texts health, construed as a condition of balance,[38] is considered to be the natural state of the individual to which the body attempts to return once the individual has fallen ill.[39] The human doctor's job is to assist a process of healing that has already begun, and to refrain from intervention when such intervention would be either useless or harmful. Thus, in these texts the role of the physician is that of servant or assistant to nature.[40] The doctor does not seek to produce something that did not previously exist; rather, the doctor attempts to reproduce a condition that preceded his[41] intervention and thus separates himself off from any number of other practitioners of a *technē*.[42] Gadamer makes the following observation about this characterization of medical intervention: "Among all the sciences concerned with nature the science of medicine is the one which can never be understood entirely as a technology, precisely because it invariably experiences its own abilities and skills simply as a restoration of what belongs to nature."[43] The carpenter can make a claim to the chair he has produced, even if that chair is then purchased by another. According to the understanding of health exhibited in a number of Hippocratic texts, the health of the patient is nothing to which the doctor can lay claim, precisely because that health had already been possessed by the patient, only lost, and the doctor, rather than creating something new, has re-established what had been present before,

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namely the harmony or balance that is synonymous with health. Thus, medicine cannot properly be said to produce anything; its work is found not in production but in reproduction. The doctor acts in such a manner as to bring his patients to the state in which his intervention is unnecessary; he acts so as to make his intervention superfluous.

Thirdly, one strand of Greek medical practice required of its practitioners a willingness to refrain from treatment under certain circumstances. Cited as one of the main complaints against medicine's status as a *technē*, [44] the practice of refusal of treatment is explicitly defended in the essays 'On *Technē*' and 'Prognostic'.[45] These texts suggest that the doctor's awareness of his own capacities and the limits of his art is a necessary element of medical practice.[46] In order to appropriately refuse treatment, a physician must be aware of the limits of the practice of medicine, and must have firmly in mind his own capacities. The physician is implicated and at stake in his practice in such a way as to make self-knowledge a requisite part of his practice. The necessity for such self-knowledge and restraint is another element that marks medicine off from many other *technai*. A carpenter can refuse to build chairs for a person, but the art of carpentry does not depend on the ability to do so.

We have thus far identified three effects of the general tension within ancient Greek conceptions of medicine that contribute to the peculiarity of its status among other technai. First, it requires of its practitioners a wide knowledge not only of the human body, but of the natural order of which that body is a part; it thus possesses markedly malleably boundaries that encroach upon the spheres of other *technai*. Secondly its purpose is unique amongst most *technai*. Rather than producing an object or state of affairs that did not previously exist, medicine is charged with re-creating a natural condition of balance that has become disrupted. Consequently, the physician's job is to reproduce a condition that does not belong to the physician, but to the

patient. This job is not so much a creative process as a service to nature itself and thus not a production but a reproduction. Thirdly, the physician must possess a firm awareness of the limitations of medicine in order to know when to practice and when to refrain from practicing.[47] We are now in a position to see how these elements are dealt with by Plato.

II

The frequency with which Plato refers to medicine is striking. At times, Plato uses medicine as simply one example of *technē* amongst others (as is the case with the first book of the *Republic*, for instance). However, Plato also makes frequent use of medical concepts and concerns outside of immediately medical contexts. In fact, the dialogues suggest that Plato considered the significance of certain elements of medicine for philosophical inquiry to be sufficient to necessitate an explicit critique of other elements of medicine that hinder such inquiry. As Ludwig Edelstein has pointed out, it is not sufficient to note that Plato makes use of a medical vocabulary in order to supply metaphors for philosophy, although this is certainly the case.[48] It is important to recognize as well that medicine also acted as a competitor to philosophy insofar as it promoted a model of the good, health, that preyed upon a fear of death that philosophy explicitly attempted to dispel. Because of the role a concern for health played in Athenian society, Plato was compelled to contend with medicine, and he is at times very specific about what in medicine he conceives to be philosophically valuable and what is a dangerous distraction. Frequently, Plato's positive evaluation of medicine involves an emphasis on precisely those elements we identified above as marking medicine as a peculiar *technē*.[49]

For instance both the *Charmides* and *Phaedrus* emphasize the first element we identified, namely, the grasp of the whole it is necessary that the medical practitioner have. In the *Charmides* this emphasis takes the form of a conversation Socrates purports to have had with a

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priest of Zalmoxis. The priest claims to have been told by Zalmoxis that one will never cure a part of the body until one cures the whole body, and one will never do that until one attends to the soul (156d-e). In the *Phaedrus*, as has been frequently noted, it is to Hippocrates that Socrates and Phaedrus attribute the claim that to understand the nature of the body one must understand the nature of the whole (270c-d).[50]

Plato also emphasizes the service that the physician offers to the reproduction of the natural balance that is health. In both the *Timaeus*' discussion of health and disease, and that of the *Republic*, health is characterized as a balance and disease as an imbalance: in the *Timaeus*, between body and soul (87c-88c), and in the *Republic* between various parts of the body (444d). In the *Republic* in particular, the balance that is health is a function of a natural order between parts; thus, the physician's job consists of returning the body to a state of natural order. This characterization of health and disease is useful to Plato because it furthers a larger aim of the dialogue, namely, Socrates' commitment to give an account of justice and injustice in themselves. Socrates draws an analogy between the health and disease of the body and the justice and injustice of the soul in order to combat the valorization of tyranny that Glaucon and Adiemantus have pointed out in Book II and to persuade them that a life of injustice is undesirable.

The *Republic* is of particular interest to a study of Plato's use of medical metaphors because it contains an explicit critique of medicine, or, more precisely, a purgation of one kind of medicine and an idealization of another. In Book III Socrates levels criticism against the trainer Herodicus because Herodicus' obsession with health rendered him incapable of leading a normal life (406a-c). Instead, says Socrates, one should practice medicine like Asclepius, who knew both when to treat and when to refrain from treating on the basis of his knowledge of what is

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good for the city (406c). At 407d Glaucon will go so far as to call this Asclepius *politikos*. Thus, the idealized divine physician has an awareness not only of how to heal, but of when to heal because he also possesses knowledge of the good of the city. Socrates then goes on to construct an image of the ideal human doctor, and this figure is one to which we should pay close attention.[51] "Doctors would prove cleverest if, beginning in childhood, in addition to learning the art, they should be familiar with very many and very bad bodies and should themselves suffer all diseases and not be quite healthy by nature" (408d-e).[52] Clearly this is an odd construction of the cleverest doctor—after all, a doctor is only allowed to practice if he is not killed by the diseases to which he is exposed. Why would Plato characterize the clever medical practitioner in this manner?

At the very least, this characterization, in which the doctor is just as likely, if not more so, to be a patient than anyone else, goes out of its way to associate medicine with a prioritization of self-knowledge. Such an association is in keeping with the restraint from healing advocated by some Hippocratic texts. Plato employs it to suggest that in order to practice medicine well, one must capitalize upon one's capacity to be both practitioner and patient. Thus, the medical art requires a capacity for self-diagnosis, and the clever doctor, as Plato has sketched out in the *Republic*, emerges as a particularly powerful example of the importance of self-knowledge.

Plato also draws our attention to the fact that the clinical distance indispensable to the practice of medicine is not reducible to an entirely disinterested and unaffected comportment toward disease. Rather, it is the need for immersion and investment on the part of the doctor that Plato contrasts to the distance and remove of the judge, for whose soul, "it is not possible for it to have been reared and been familiar with bad souls from youth on, and to have gone through the list of all unjust deeds and to have committed them itself so as to be sharp at inferring from itself

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the unjust deeds of others like diseases in the body" (409a). Whatever distance a doctor has, it is a distance won in conjunction with immersion, and requires a capacity for self-reflection that cannot be cultivated in isolation from others. Thus, this image of the doctor diagnosing others by merit of a similarity he detects between the other's condition and one he himself has experienced becomes a model of self-evaluation and reflection. The doctor offers a paradigm of the successful use of experience for the sake of knowledge and is able to do so because his art demands a balance between immersion and distance.

In this second section we have attempted to demonstrate that each of the three elements of ancient medicine that we identified in section I are highlighted in various Platonic dialogues. Both the *Charmides* and the *Phaedrus* emphasize that medicine requires its practitioners to have knowledge not simply of the human body it must heal but of all of the natural forces that affect the body—it requires, ultimately, that one have knowledge of the whole of nature. Secondly, the *Timaeus* and the *Republic* highlight the fact that medicine does not produce an object to which it can lay claim as its creator; rather, the medical art is actively engaged in reinstating a previously existing condition and thus cannot lay claim to this condition as something that belongs to it. The medical art's service to nature makes the health it attempts to produce something radically external to the art itself. Finally, in the *Republic* we see that, in order to act as the servant of nature, the medical practitioner must avail himself to and be in constant awareness of his own capacity to be, at any time, in need of his art. Plato specifically emphasizes that his ability to be a patient, and thus to contract the very diseases he attempts to cure, is the very means by which he attains excellence in his practice. Thus, the physician emerges as uniquely determined by a need for self-knowledge and self-critique.

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III

The three elements of ancient medicine that mark it out as a peculiar *technē*, and that Plato emphasizes in several dialogues, have a number of implications for the character of the physician. Medicine's claim to grasp the whole leads to a malleability with respect to its borders that potentially predisposes its practitioners to the hubristic presumption that they may speak with authority on all things that deal with nature, including other arts. Our discussion of why the doctor does so revealed a counterbalancing possibility for humility, namely, the recognition that all medical ministrations are in the service of nature and are designed to render themselves superfluous. Finally, we have seen this intimation of humility made even more explicit by investigating how it is possible that the doctor could come to have the knowledge of nature necessary for his art. By demanding an awareness of one's own limitations and the limits of one's art, the practice of medicine requires a strong capacity for self-criticism.

As we noted earlier, these three elements are functions of the general tension within ancient medicine between the need for detailed knowledge about the human body and the need for comprehensive knowledge of the whole of nature. The successful negotiation of the possibilities that these three elements present to the individual practitioner requires the physician to strike a balance between appropriate clinical investment and technical proficiency. Failure to strike this balance results in ridiculous self-forgetting, in pedantic displays of expertise, or both. Plato plays with the possibility of this failure in the character of Eryximachus.

Present by invitation and provoked, perhaps by his love for Phaedrus, to structure the evening's conversation around a comment Phaedrus once made to him about love (177a-d), Eryximachus plays a double role in the *Symposium*. As initiator of the discussion,[53] Eryximachus acts as a moderator of the conversation, exercising a certain degree of authority

over the members of Agathon's dinner party. This role is particularly appropriate insofar as his field is one that trades in balance and moderation. As participant, Eryximachus involves himself in the fray of the conversation, giving one speech among many about Eros. His participation acts as subtle illustration of the physician's intimate implication in the cultivation of his knowledge by calling attention to the fact that the physician, for all his expertise, can also become the patient. Eryximachus' dual role as progenitor and participant underscores his need to temper his expertise with an awareness of his own limitations, but by no means guarantees this.

In fact, that the physician's cultivation of knowledge may lend itself to expositions about nature that his audience might find tiresome or patronizing is an occupational hazard Plato attributes to his Eryximachus early on in the *Symposium*. Upon discerning that the strongest drinkers in the group are too hung-over from the night before to accomplish much serious drinking, Eryximachus expresses relief, and then offers a brief but uninvited lecture on the effects of inebriation, beginning with the words, "perhaps it would not be amiss if I speak truly about what intoxication is [*isōs an egō tou methuskesthai hoion esti talēthē legōn hētton an eiēn aēdēs*]" (176c-d).[54] On the one hand, few would dispute the doctor's capacity to say true things about the effects of inebriation. On the other hand, few would be above resenting the little lesson that Eryximachus is determined to give. Perhaps this is why Phaedrus interrupts [*hupolabonta*] him to assure him that his expertise is respected (if not appreciated at that exact moment) (176d). Eryximachus has seemed to have forgotten the purpose of his own investigation into what *is:* to re-establish health in his patients, not to chastise them for their behavior nor present himself as somehow superior to them on the basis of the knowledge he possesses. In this brief exchange Eryximachus falls into a pedantic comportment that overlooks that which his knowledge serves. Because he loves his own possession of this knowledge, he

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does not take into account whether or not extolling it in this fashion is appropriate to the situation. Thus, Eryximachus exhibits a distance from the general tenor of the gathering and risks alienating his companions by forcing his knowledge onto them. If the practice of medicine requires a balance between informed detachment and affective investment, Eryximachus has briefly tipped the scale toward a distance that delights in the technical at the expense of the social.

In the exchange that immediately follows Eryximachus' statement about the nature of inebriation, we see Eryximachus keel in the other direction and exhibit a degree of unselfconsciousness that borders on self-contradiction. Specifically, he claims that he always refrains from heavy drinking (176d); however, just prior to this statement he appears to be complaining of suffering from the same effects of having had too much to drink the night before (176c). Perhaps he is not equating heavy drinking with drunkenness; however, that he always exercises sufficient restraint to escape unscathed from a night of drinking is belied by his own description of his state after the previous evening's celebration. Thus, while Eryximachus extols the virtues of moderation, he himself seems a less than perfect model. This introduction to Eryximachus serves to illustrate an imbalance on the part of the character who, by his own admission, practices an art that trades in the re-establishment of balance. This early sketch is filled out in Eryximachus' speech, in which his tendencies towards pedantic, technical detachment and unreflective immersion are clearly illustrated in his encomium to Eros.
From the beginning of his speech, Eryximachus exhibits the attempt to grasp the whole that characterizes one strain of ancient conceptions of medicine. Praising Pausanius' distinction between noble and shameful love, he then states the following: "But if I have learned a single lesson from my own field, the science of medicine, it is that Love does not occur only in the

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human soul; it is not simply the attraction we feel toward human beauty: it is a significantly broader phenomenon (186a).[55] Eryximachus will go on to elaborate upon the power of Eros by extending its sway to the bodies of all animals [*tois te sōmasi tōn pantōn zōōn*] to that which grows upon the earth [*kai tois en tē gē phuomenois*], and to nearly all that is *[kai hōs epos eipein en pasi tois ousi*], and its direction to the affairs of both gods and humans (186a-b). He then specifies what his art has to say about human bodies in particular—"The point is that our very bodies [*hē phusis tōn somatōn*] manifest the two species of love" (186b)—and that his art is defined by its treatment of human bodies—"In short, medicine is simply the science of the effect of Love on repletion and depletion of the body, and the hallmark of the accomplished physician is his ability to distinguish the Love that is noble from the Love that is ugly and disgraceful" (186b). We cannot ignore that he attributes to his knowledge of medicine his awareness of Eros as extending not only to humans but to plants, animals, the gods, and all that is. This purchase on 'all that is' that is granted to him by his profession also gives him license to speak about the technai of music, agriculture, astronomy and divination (187a-188d). Eryximachus also extends his expertise to the realm of philosophical reflection, going so far as to correct what he takes to be the muddled thinking of Heraclitus by offering an interpretation of Heraclitus that would 'clarify' him (187a-c). The service Eryximachus takes himself to offer an inquiry into Eros, and thus the praise that he can offer to the god, consists in his revelation of the scope of Eros' power. He is the first to speak of love in terms that draw together plants, animals and gods under a single rubric. And according to Eryximachus, it his acquaintance with medicine that has given him this insight.

However, while Eryximachus extends the effects of Eros to everything that occurs, his maintenance of a dual love—noble and base—involves a subtle diminution of Eros' power. Eros

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is not sufficient to bring harmony because love can be either noble or base (188a-d). It is *technē*—medicine, agriculture, music, astronomy, divination—that promotes one kind of love and controls the development of the other. Thus, *technē* is elevated above the power of Eros. Eryximachus' extension of the scope of love involves a limitation of Eros' power insofar as it is now subjugated to a series of technai that function to control its dual manifestations. What began as an encomium to Eros subtly shifts into a praise of *technē*.[56] Eros is revealed as a cosmic principle at the same time as it is subjugated to *technē*. Thus, what connects medicine and other *technai* for Eryximachus is not simply the overarching power of Eros within the sphere of *phusis* (187a), but the need for the artful manipulation of processes that lack, on their own, a determinant and motivated motion towards the good (188d). This is, of course, an interpretation of *technē*, and one that tacitly denies the possibility of a harmony adhering to things and to nature outside of ministrations of *technē* is ignored. Thus, it is an interpretation of *technē* that conceives of its relation to *phusis* not as an attendant but as an improvement.[57]

Eryximachus' limitation of Eros and his elevation of *technē* can be seen in his characterization of his own field. According to Eryximachus, medical treatment consists of a kind of seduction: "the physician's task is to effect a reconciliation and establish mutual love between the most basic of bodily elements" (186d). The physician's attempt to return order to the body consists of engendering a certain kind of love and discouraging another kind of love. The dual aspects of love, noble and base, emerge as the goal of treatment and the cause of treatment respectively. Thus, Eros possesses both salutary and pathological effects. The doctor attempts to facilitate one kind of love and cure his patients of the other. This balancing act would seem to imply some conception of how to moderate between the two forms of love, and herein lies the possibility of the doctor's own moderation and the doctor's association with

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moderating. However, without the recognition of one's own need for moderation, such a possibility risks turning one's intervention into unselfconscious tee-totaling or arrogant displays of knowledge. And, as we have seen, Eryximachus' speech maintains much that is immoderate. As James Hecht aptly puts it, "If moderation is the *telos*, the thing toward which the doctor aims, we may well wonder whether this is the sort of argument that is likely to achieve it."[58]

Ultimately, Eryximachus misuses the epistemological privilege that he is afforded by his association with a practice that calls for both the cultivation of knowledge and the awareness of one's own implication in order to heal. He oscillates, both in the introductory exchanges of the dialogue and in his encomium to Eros, between pedantic distance and thoughtless involvement. This imbalance defines his relationship with medicine such that he allows his knowledge of medicine to degenerate into a crass hedonism that attempts to precisely and technically gauge how much pleasure one can afford before becoming ill (187e).[59] The Eryximachus of the *Symposium* offers us an image of one who, in celebrating *technē* above all else, betrays the very medical practice to which he claims allegiance. In his critical portrayal of Eryximachus, Plato makes clear that whatever benefit medicine may provide for an account of philosophy, it is not the technical manipulation of the body that medicine makes possible which does so. Eryximachus' preoccupation with particular kinds of pleasure and his attempt to derive knowledge of the whole of nature from knowledge of the nature of the body produces a limited account of love. Such an account may be necessary in order to arrive at some understanding of what love is, but it is not sufficient. Thus, Aristophanes mocks the emphasis Eryximachus places on the orderliness of the body, stating that his having to apply a sneeze (one violent bodily action) to cure his hiccups (another violent bodily action) made him, "wonder whether the 'orderly sort of Love' in the body calls for the sounds and itching that constitute a sneeze"

(189a). In the end, Eryximachus provides an image of one who has disrupted the very relationship between distance and investment to which his vocation made him privy. However, Plato's critical portrait of one medical practitioner does not result in a dismissal of the medical art overall. While Eryximachus may have failed to provide us with the image of the perfect balance between investment and distance, he does introduce us both to the possibility of such a balance and to its salutary, therapeutic effects. It is Aristophanes who will pick up this possibility and develop it further.

It is quite telling that Aristophanes immediately employs the standard of health and the practice of curing. In fact, it is the character of Aristophanes who makes the most use of the verb *iaomai*, 'to heal or cure'.[60] Just before he launches into his speech, Aristophanes notes that everyone has missed the true power of Eros, though he should be the most celebrated of the gods because, "he loves the human race more than any other god, he stands by us in our troubles, and he cures [*iatros*]those ills we humans are most happy to have mended [*iathentōn*]" (189d). In the course of his speech, Aristophanes will add an element of violence and fear to the orderly structure of the cosmos with which Eryximachus left off. Human nature has suffered for impiety by being severed from itself and made perpetually aware of its wound. Throughout this account, the curative capacity of love to heal this wound is emphasized. Aristophanes states, "Love is born into every human being; it calls back the halves of our original nature together; it tries to make one out of two and heal [*iasasthai*] the wound of human nature" (191d). He concludes his speech with the following words: "But for the future, Love promises the greatest hope of all: if we treat the gods with due reverence, he will restore to us our original nature, and by healing [*iasamenos*] us, he will make us blessed and happy" (193d). Aristophanes' conception of human nature requires him to remind his companions that healing involves both their investment in one

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another and the distance exhibited by the gods who must be propitiated properly if they are to intervene; he thereby heals what Eryximachus rent asunder. Aristophanes re-establishes the relationship between informed detachment and appropriate investment, the relationship between what the doctor must know and why he must know it. In a sense, Aristophanes restores to Eryximachus the dignity of his livelihood. It is perhaps for this reason that Eryximachus praises Aristophanes' speech when he had been previously disposed to criticize it (189b). By granting to the comic poet Aristophanes this relationship with health Plato wrests a certain clinical concern and aim, that of healing, from the activities of the medical technician, who is at turns pedantic and unaware, and shows how it is possible for him to reserve a place for healing in the character who has proven most persuasive to Socrates, Diotima, a woman whose wisdom is evinced by her having, "put off the plague for ten years by telling the Athenians what sacrifices to make" (201d).

Conclusion

This paper began by calling into question the assumption that Plato privileges medicine because he takes it to be a paradigmatic *technē*. In the course of this investigation we have identified three elements of the medical art that reveal it to have a peculiar status with respect to *technē*, and that Plato goes out of his way to emphasize. For one, we noted that the medical art must attempt to grasp the whole of nature if it is to understand the place of the human body within nature. It is thus an unruly art that is unwilling to remain within the confines of a single domain; rather, it encroaches upon the domains of other technai and kinds of knowledge, not even stopping at the limit between the human and the divine. Secondly, we noted that medicine's efforts to reproduce a condition of harmony that pre-existed its intervention marks it as distant from the general aim of other technai to produce some object or state of affairs.

Finally, we have noted the curious degree of self-reflection, self-knowledge and self-critique required by medicine's combination of immersion and distance. In order to practice medicine neither unaffected knowledge nor thoughtless engagement is sufficient. Rather, medicine requires the presence of both learning and investment in order to function.

Plato's characterization of Eryximachus serves as an illustration of what happens when the balance between investment and detachment is not present in the medical practitioner. It is when Eryximachus represents the more narrowly defined and most technical elements of the medical practice that we find Plato the most critical of him. However, this critique of certain dangers that the practice of medicine presents to its practitioners does not result in a dismissal of medicine in its entirety. Plato's sketch of Eryximachus serves to highlight the importance of the balance between investment and detachment for the art itself, thus, what is criticized in Eryximachus is not medicine as such, but a certain failure to embody all that is demanded of medicine. Eryximachus reveals himself to be a proficient medical technician but also as one who has betrayed medicine itself. Plato's characterization of Eryximachus of opens up the possibility of an approach to medicine's aims that does not result in the pedantic technician of health. Through the speech of Aristophanes, Plato illustrates the manner in which the concerns and aims of medicine prove themselves to be meaningful outside the scope of a narrowly defined medical technology. Throughout the dialogues Plato maintains the standards of health and sickness, the possibility of treatment and salutary effects of self-knowledge, extending them to the acts of the statesman, the judge, the educator, and ultimately to Socrates himself.

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[1] Jaeger, Werner. *Paideia: The Ideas of Greek Culture*, v. III. Trans. Gilbert Highet (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), n. 1.
[2] Rosen, Stanley. *Plato's* Symposium (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 1968), n. 1.
[3] Ficino's commentary on the *Symposium* correlates Eryximachus speech with the thesis that "love is the teacher and ruler of all arts" [see Jayne, Sears Reynolds. "Marsilio Ficino's Commentary on Plato's Symposium." *The University of Missouri Studies*, v. XIX, n. 1, 1944, 120-153, p. 150.]
[4] Cf. Jaeger, *Paideia* p. 3; Edelstein, Ludwig. "The Relation of Ancient Philosophy to Medicine." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 26/4, 1952, 299-316, p. 300; Rosen, *Plato's* Symposium, p. 90-96. In many instances, the observations that Eryximachus is the representative of medicine and medicine is the representative of *techne* brings with it sharply critical evaluations of both. Eryximachus' speech has been described as "marked by professional jargon" and as presenting a "technicians vision of the world" [Gotshalk, Richard. *Loving and Dying: A Reading of Plato's Phaedo, Symposium and Phaedrus* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), p. 149], and as "monotonous" [Brisson, Luc. *Platon: Le Banquet* (Paris: G. F. Flammarion, 2000), p. 50]. The tenor of Plato's presentation of Eryximachus has been described as, "a parody of traditional philosophical theories of the natural world" [Cobb, William. *Plato's Erotic Dialogues* (New York: SUNY Press, 1993), p. 67]. The character of Eryximachus himself has been described as "ridiculous" [B. Piettre. Platon. Le Banquet (Paris: Nathan, 1998), p. 28] as "pedantic" [Strauss, Leo. *On Plato's* Symposium. Ed. Seth Benerdete (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 96 and Rosen, Stanley. *Plato's* Symposium (see above)], as a "self-centered pedant" [Anderson, Daniel E. *The Masks of Dionysus: A Commentary on Plato's* Symposium (New York: SUNY Press, 1993), p. 39], as a "pretentious crank" who is "the representative of rationalism and technique" [Hecht, James. *Plato's* Symposium*: Eros and the Human Predicament* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1999), p. 57], and as a specialist and thereby, according to Allan Bloom, an imperialist [Bloom, Allan. "The Ladder of Love." In *Plato's* Symposium, ed and trans by Seth Benerdete (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 96-97].
[5] "Plato uses the model of the doctor to construct his image of the expert in moral and political matters. Yet the real-live doctors of Plato's day were—to judge from the evidence in the Hippocratic corpus—far from being all the confident authorities that Plato's ideal would have us believe. Quite the reverse in certain cases." Lloyd, G. E. R. *In the Grip of Disease: Studies in the Greek Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 149.
[6] Polansky, Ronald. 'Is Medicine Art, Science, or Practical Wisdom?' in *Bioethics: Ancient Themes in Contemporary Issues*. Ed. Kuczewski & Polanski. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000, p. 31-56. Polansky concludes his examination of medicine from the perspective of the Aristotelian demarcation of the sciences with the observation that ancient Greek medicine involved practices that could not be reduced to productive science.
[7] This narrower sense of *techne* I have paraphrased from the extensive discussions of various competing models of *techne* summarized by David Roochnik in his *Of Art and Wisdom: Plato's Understanding of Techne* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996, see especially p. 44-45).
[8] See note 41 below about the contemporary debates concerning this issue. For ancient discussions of what comprises a *techne* and what distinguished between various *technai* the reader should consult Plato's *Charmides*, *Gorgias* and *Philebus*, and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* Book VI. In general, Plato tends to use the term much more broadly than Aristotle. Certain practices that might casually have been referred to as *techne* would not pass the muster of a narrow conception of *techne* and so debate about the kind of and criteria for *techne* is present throughout classical Greece.
[9] The essay 'Law' opens with the observation that, "Medicine is the most distinguished of all the arts, but through the ignorance of those who practice it, and of those who casually judge such practitioners, it is now of all the arts by far the least esteemed." Hippocrates, 'Law', LCL, v. II Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967, p. 263. See also 'Regimen in Acute Diseases' in the same volume, sect. 8, p. 69.
[10] Bartz, Robert. "Remembering the Hippocratics: Knowledge, Practice, and Ethos of Ancient Greek Physician Healers." In *Bioethics: Ancient Themes in Contemporary Issues*. Ed. Kuczewski & Polanski. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000, p. 3-29, see especially p. 18.
[11] It is certainly nothing new to claim that we must read Eryximachus' speech in the context of both the other speeches in the *Symposium* and the role he plays in that dialogue outside of the speech in praise of Eros that he offers; however, often such a focus serves the larger purpose of 'rescuing' Eryximachus from those who would claim Plato portrays him merely as pedantic and tiresome. Such attempts have been made by Edelstein [Edelstein, Ludwig. "The Role of Eryximachus in Plato's *Symposium*." *Transactions of the American Philological*

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Association, 1945, v. 76, pp. 85-103], by David Constan and Elisabeth Young-Breuhl [Konstan, David and Young-Breuhl, Elisabeth. "Eryximachus' Speech in the Symposium" *Apeiron*, v. XVI, n. 1, 1982 40-46], and by Robert Mitchell, who considers Eryximachus a technician but not one who can be dismissed as simply pedantic [Mitchell, Robert Lloyd. *The Hymn to Eros* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993), p. 49]. I maintain that the need to do such rescuing is lessened if we avoid viewing Plato's treatment of Eryximachus as revelatory of his approach towards medicine as a whole.

[12] Homer. *Iliad.* trans. Richmond Lattimore. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), Book 2, 730, p. 95 and Book 4, 210-219, p. 118-119.

[13] Aeschylus. *Prometheus Bound*. Tr. David Grene. *Greek Tragedies*, v. I. Ed. Grene and Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 82.

[14] See, for instance, 'On Wounds to the Head,' 'In the Surgery,' 'On Fractures,' and 'On Joints.' LCL v. III.

[15] See for instance 'On the Nature of Man,' 'Regimen I,' and 'Diseases I.'

[16] This is particularly the case with the text 'Airs, Waters, Places'

[17] See in particular the criticism in 'On Ancient Medicine' [sect. 15] of attempting to treat on the basis of a '*hupothesis*' about Hot or Cold.

[18] Compare, for instance, the essays in favor of prognostication like 'On Prognostic', 'On the Nature of Man' and ' On the Number Seven' with the discussion of the limits of prognosis in 'On Diseases I'. See also Edelstein's treatment of this issue in "Hippocratic Prognosis" [Edelstein, Ludwig. *Ancient Medicine: Selected Papers of Ludwig Edelstein*. Ed. Owsei Temkin and C. Lilian Temkin (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), p. 65-85].

[19] See Edelstein, "The Dietetics of Antiquity," *Ancient Medicine* (n. 8), p. 303-316.

[20] Compare the texts 'In the Surgery' and 'On Joints' with 'On Fractures' and 'On the Physician'.

[21] See 'On the Sacred Disease' and Edelstein, "Greek Medicine in its Relation to Religion and Magic", *Ancient Medicine* (n. 8) p. 205-246.

[22] One can see in this tension the seeds of the oppositions between practice and theory, sense perception and reason and experience and rationality that would prove so significant in the history of philosophy in the West. However, care should be taken not to import these oppositions to the very context in which they were in the process of being formed. There are a number of examples from the Hippocratic corpus in which the practitioner's capacity for reason and his capacity for perception are conceived as complementary rather than opposed, see for instance the account of treating clear and obscure diseases in 'On *Techne*' [sect. 11].

[23] What follows is by no means an exhaustive list, but a rough sketch of cultural forces that proved influential to the particular course of development of ancient Greek medicine.

[24] See Edelstein's 'The Hippocratic Physician' in *Collected Writings*, p. 87-111.

[25] For a discussion of the effects of funerary law on Greek anatomical knowledge, see Von Staden, Heinrich. 'The Discovery of the Human Body: Human Dissection and its Cultural Contexts in Ancient Greece" *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine*. 65(1992), 223-241.

[26] As attested to by Alcmaeon's characterization of disease and health with the political terms *isonomia* and *monarchia*, respectively, and Simonides' characterization of political health in his poem to Scopas [see Bowra, C. M. "Simonides and Scopas" *Classical Philology*, XXIX, July 1934, p. 230-239,esp. p.238.].

[27] See Edelstein's 'The Dietetics of Antiquity' in *Collected Writings*, p. 303-316.

[28] According to Jones, one hallmark of Hippocratic medicine is its attention to critical days and the life span of fevers. This attention is present not only in the series of case studies that comprise the essays Epidemics I-V but also in the texts 'Prognostic' and 'Regimen in Acute Diseases'. See also Jones' discussion of critical days in his introduction to v. I of the LCL translations.

[29] In Plato's *Timaeus*, *Timaeus* claims that harsh drugs are to be avoided in the treatment of diseases whenever possible, on the grounds that, "in its structure every disease is in some manner like the nature of the living creature" (89b).

[30] Such investment is implied by the Greek word *epidemios* which means literally 'among the people', and was the title of these Hippocratic treatises not in order to indicate the presence of epidemic disease, in the contemporary sense of the word, but rather in order to indicate that the texts contained the recording or case histories of what the physician found while amongst the people (consequently, an alternate translation to the 'Epidemics' is the 'Visits').

[31] Jones, op. cit. p. 144.

[32] In order to assist nature, the physician must determine when the time is right for medical intervention, thus, the notion of *kairos* was foundational for articulating how it is that the physician could ever provide successful

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treatment. See, for example, the discussion of *kairos* in 'Diseases I', especially section 5. Hippocrates, v. V, op. cit. p. 107-111.
[33] Such an investigation into the 'what it is' or the *ti esti* of a thing lends itself to the philosophical investigations of Plato and his Socrates, as Rosen has noted [Rosen, *Plato's* Symposium (n 1), p. 94]
[34] Jones, W. H. S. *Hippocrates,* v. I. Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923), p. 71-73. Unless otherwise noted, all translated citations from the Hippocratic corpus are taken from the Loeb Classical Library collection.
[35] That medicine requires of its practitioners a certain comportment towards phusis and towards their own practice that may set it off even from law and politics is at least suggested in the other two elements explored in this section; however, I would not want to insist on this separation, nor is doing so necessary in order to make the claim that medicine possesses certain features that call into question its merits as a paradigm of *techne*.
[36] Edelstein, "Greek Medicine and its Relation to Religion and Magic." *Ancient Medicine* (n. 8), p. 241 and 246.
[37] Allan Bloom makes a similar observation about the nature of specialization [Bloom, "The Ladder of Love" (n. 1) p. 96-97]; however, he assumes that medicine is comprised of such specialization. My claim is that the practice of medicine, as conceived by the ancient Greeks, cannot be reduced to a demand for medical specialization. Consequently, one who, like Eryximachus, is completely preoccupied with specialization fails to embody fully the demands of medicine.
[38] Perhaps the earliest western formulation of health as balance is made by the 5th century philosopher Alcmaeon and is maintained throughout the Hippocratic corpus.
[39] See Jones' Introduction to *Hippocrates*, v. I, op. cit, p. xvi-xvii and also the essays 'Prognosis' 'Regimen in Acute Diseases' and Epidemics I and III whose emphasis on critical days and types of fevers serves to aid the physician in determining when and which human intervention is called for.
[40] While Aristotle's extensive and controversial references to medicine well exceed the inquiry undertaken in this paper, it is worth noting that this characterization of the role of the physician differs from that put forward by Aristotle in Book Zeta of the Metaphysics [1032b1-15].
[41] Practitioners of medicine in ancient Greece were predominantly, if not entirely, male. In order to avoid a charge of anachronism I have chosen, whenever the use of a personal pronoun could not be avoided, to employ the masculine pronoun in this paper when dealing with ancient Greek conceptions of medicine and medical practice.
[42] The extent to which *techne* must involve a product that is independent of the activity of the *techne* is subject to debate. See, for instance, Nussbaum's critique of Terry Irwin [Nussbaum, Martha. *The Fragility of Goodness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, n. 13 p.74.]. However, for our purposes it is sufficient to note that health is significantly distinct from the products of most other arts because it is not really a product at all, but a recovery of a previously maintained position. Thus, medicine is associated more with law and statecraft than with carpentry, and Plato calls our attention to this. For instance, Plato points out in the *Gorgias* that another art that functions in order to return one to a previous condition is that of the judge, who attempts to reinstate a condition of justice (464b-c).
[43] Gadamer, H.G. *The Enigma of Health.* Trans. Gaiger and Walker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), n. 12, p. 39.
[44] 'On *Techne*' sect. 8, p. 203.
[45] 'On *Techne*' sect. 8 , 'On Prognosis' sect. 1, p. 9. For the use of prognosis in general, see in particular the essays 'On the Nature of Man' LCL v. IV, 'Nutriment', LCL v. I and 'Dentition', LCL v. II.
[46] This awareness of the limits of her art is necessary even if her main concern is her own well-being.
[47] These three elements of medicine represent a condensation of the criteria David Roochnik identifies as comprising a stochastic *techne* (or *techne* 2 as Roochnik labels it, distinct from *techne* 1), which is itself a combination of factors compiled from the texts 'On *Techne*' and 'On Ancient Medicine'. As Roochnik points out, the author of 'On *Techne*' attempts to challenge his audience to reconsider what they believe a *techne* to be in order to persuade them that medicine is a *techne*. [Roochnik. *Art and Wisdom* (n. 13), p 46]. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that such a revision is necessary in order for us to make the case that medicine was anything but a typical *techne*. Consequently, the claim that Plato privileges medicine because he conceives it to be a paradigmatic *techne* needs to be reconsidered.
[48] Thus, Edelstein takes Jaeger to task for having failed to comment sufficiently upon the necessary strife between medicine and philosophy [Edelstein, "Relation of Ancient Philosophy to Medicine" (n. 1) p. 310, fn. 21].
[49] In the following several pages, I will not attempt a summary of Plato's references to medicine and use of medical metaphors in the dialogues as a whole. Space constraints do not allow for such a project here. For our purposes it is

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sufficient to provide examples of an appropriation of medical concerns that problematize the claim that Plato uses medicine as a paradigm of *techne*. The general relevance of these appropriations for the concerns that inform Eryximachus' speech in the *Symposium* does not rely upon a chronological ordering of dialogues.

[50] The question of whether or not Socrates is referring to a specific text or set of texts that expound this theory is highly vexed and has plagued commentators for decades. For our own purposes it is sufficient that Socrates attributes such a conception to Hippocrates and to note that we have already cited a number of Hippocratic texts that emphasize the need for broad knowledge of natural phenomena. Note Edelstein's citation ["Greek Medicine and its Relation to Religion and Magic" (n. 8), p. 218] of Jones' translation of the following passage in the corpus: "All things were arranged in the body in a fashion conformable to itself by fire, a copy of the whole, the small after the manner of the great and the great after the manner of the small."

[51] In what follows I do not take Plato's depictions of the ideal doctor to be necessarily revelatory of what the average Athenian thought made the best doctor, but rather as indications of those elements of medicine that Plato found to be philosophically salutary.

[52] All citations of the *Republic* are taken from Allan Bloom's translation: *The Republic of Plato*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

[53] As Edelstein puts it, "If Phaedrus is 'the father of the subject (177d) that will be discussed, Eryximachus, one might say, is 'the father of the debate' that is about to take place." Edelstein, Role, p. 162-163.

[54] My translation.

[55] Unless otherwise noted, all translated citations of the *Symposium* are taken from that of Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruf (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989); Lamb's translation for the Loeb edition has been consulted as well (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932).

[56] Eryximachus' celebration of *techne* at the expense of Eros is a matter of concern to a number of commentators. See, for instance, Strauss, *On Plato's* Symposium (n. 1), p. 112-113, Mitchell, *The Hymn to Eros* (n. 5), p. 64 and Hecht, *Eros and the Human Predicament* (n. 1), p. 56.

[57] Bloom arrives at a similar conclusion [Bloom, "The Ladder of Love" (n. 1) p. 101]

[58] Hecht, *Eros and the Human Predicament* (n. 1) p. 56

[59] Benerdete characterizes the result of Eryximachus' speech as follows: "Eryximachus proposes, then, a set of theoretical sciences which would guide our exploitation of nature and tell us how much we could get away with in our tinkering." [Benerdete, Seth. *On Plato's* Symposium (Carl Freidrich von Seiemens Stiftung, 1st June 1993), p. 45.]

[60] Eryximachus uses words from the same family as this verb at 188c3 and 188c9. In both cases, interestingly enough, he is characterizing the work not of medicine but of divination. When, at 185d Aristophanes asks to be cured by Eryximachus and Eryximachus agrees, both use a form of the verb *pauo*, to cease, that works nicely with the pun on Pausanias' name that Apollodorus makes at 185c in his narration of the dialogue.

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