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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Department of Classics

Plutarch on Marriage for Its Own Sake:

What Makes Marriage Good and What Marriage is Good for in the *Coniugalia Praecepta*

by

Patrick Andrews

A thesis presented to
Washington University in St. Louis
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: What Makes Marriage Good?.....	16
1.1 Unity as Goodness in Marriage	16
1.2 Patriarchy and Unity	23
1.3 Constraints on Patriarchal Marriage	27
1.4 Conclusion	35
Chapter 2: External and Internal Ends of Marriage.....	37
2.1 Marriage as a Testing Ground for Political Ability	38
2.2 Marriage for the Mutual Fulfillment of the Spouses	42
2.2.1 Common Property	45
2.2.2 Common Body.....	46
2.2.2 Common Offspring.....	48
Conclusion	52
Bibliography	54

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ἐνὸς δέ ἐστιν χρεία

Patrick Andrews

Washington University in St. Louis

August 2023

Introduction

Plutarch's *Coniugalia Praecepta*, or *Advice to the Bride and Groom*, offers counsel to a newly married couple through a widely varied collection of analogies, in which, for example, women are likened to tight shoes¹ and mirrors² and men are likened to an advancing enemy army.³

Plutarch explains the method of composition in his preface to the work:

Ἐν μὲν γὰρ τοῖς μουσικοῖς ἓνα τῶν αὐλητικῶν νόμων ἵππόθορον ἐκάλουν, μέλος τι τοῖς ἵπποις ὀρμῆς ἐπεγεργτικὸν ὡς ἔοικεν ἐνδιδόν τε περὶ τὰς ὀχείας· φιλοσοφία δὲ πολλῶν λόγων καὶ καλῶν ἐνότων, οὐδενὸς ἤττον ἄξιος σπουδῆς ὁ γαμήλιός ἐστιν οὗτος, ᾧ κατάδουσα τοὺς ἐπὶ βίου κοινωνία συνιόντας εἰς ταῦτ' ἑαυτοὺς τε παρέχει καὶ χειροῦθις ἀλλήλοις. ὣν οὖν ἀκηκόατε πολλάκις ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ παρατρεφόμενοι κεφάλαια συντάξας ἔν τισιν ὁμοιότησι βραχείαις, ὡς εὐμνημόνευτα μᾶλλον εἶη, κοινὸν ἀμφοτέροις πέμπω δῶρον, εὐχόμενος τῇ Ἀφροδίτῃ τὰς Μούσας παρεῖναι καὶ συνεργεῖν, ὡς μήτε λύραν τινὰ μήτε κιθάραν μᾶλλον αὐταῖς ἢ τὴν περὶ γάμον καὶ οἶκον ἐμμέλειαν ἡρμοσμένην παρέχειν διὰ λόγου καὶ ἁρμονίας καὶ φιλοσοφίας προσῆκον (138b–c).

In musical matters, they used to call one of the flute melodies the horse-mounting melody, a tune which stimulates an urge in stallions, so it seems, and incites them toward breeding. In philosophy, of the many and fine discourses which are in it, this discourse on marriage is no less worthy of serious study than any of them. By this marital discourse, philosophy charms through song those coming together to share their lives as one, and makes them mild and tame to each other. Of those things you have often heard while being nourished in philosophy, I have composed the principal points in some short comparisons, so that they might be easier to remember, and I send them as a gift to be shared by you both. I pray that the Muses be present to and work with Aphrodite, since it befits them to furnish neither lyre nor cithara more than to provide the tuned harmonious song about marriage and the household, through speech, harmony, and philosophy.

Plutarch is writing to a couple that has been “nourished in philosophy,” and so rather than give a complete picture of marriage, he chooses to write only “the chief points” (κεφάλαια) and describes the treatise as an “harmonious song” (ἐμμέλεια). And so the reader can expect a

¹ CP 141a

² CP 139e

³ CP 143c

summary of Plutarch's philosophical theory of marriage in the *Coniugalia Praecepta*; that is, a discourse about what sort of metaphysical unity a marriage is, and what sorts of obligations this unity entails for both of the spouses. However, Plutarch does not present a straightforward and explicit account of this philosophic theory. Rather, he has chosen to write the work "in some short comparisons;" that is, he has paired analogies with the injunctions he offers in the work, and so he forces the reader to decipher the meaning behind the images to learn more fully what Plutarch thinks leads to successful marriages if he wants to know the "principal points" that Plutarch believes constitute the philosophical discourse about marriage. This deciphering of the images to uncover Plutarch's summary view of marriage constitutes the aim of this paper. However, Plutarch's very choice to write in images contributes to our understanding of what he thinks marriage is, and understanding his choice to write in images will allow readers to decode them better. In the following section, I argue that Plutarch writes in short comparisons to charm the readers into adherence to the precepts, to make more memorable the lessons that he has taught the addressees already in the course of their education, and to demonstrate to Pollianus (the groom) how to use broad reading in literature to give instruction to his bride.

Before Plutarch explains his method of comparison, he uses a comparison, by drawing an analogy between music and philosophy. While in music, a certain melody gives horses the impulse to mate, in philosophy, the discourse on marriage charms couples into living together kindly. This comparison both instructs and explains. While animals gain urges to mate, human beings are coaxed towards gentle and kind relationships, presumably a higher end than mere breeding. But the comparison also explains, at least in part, why Plutarch has chosen to write the whole work in comparisons. Initially, it seems that music and philosophy have separate

purposes: while the horse-mounting melody is ‘stimulating of an urge,’ the discourse of marriage is ‘worthy of seriousness.’ The former encourages animal instinct, the latter encourages human virtue. What Plutarch offers spouses in his text, then, is a guide to living well together that surpasses mere sexual coupling.

However, as Plutarch goes on to explain how the discourse of marriage helps couples live together well, the varying roles of music and philosophy merge: first, Plutarch says that philosophy “charms by song” (κατάδουσα)⁴, and then he invokes the Muses to offer a “harmonious song about marriage and the household through speech, harmony, and philosophy.”⁵ The interpretation of this line depends on the interpretation of ἐμμέλεια, which I have translated as ‘harmonious song’ but could just mean ‘harmony.’ The difference is whether Plutarch is invoking the Muses to be present to the couple to help them achieve harmony, or if Plutarch is calling the Muses to make his writing into a harmonious song. Plutarch himself gives no definitive answer, but the structure of the passage indicates some answer: Plutarch’s prayer to the Muses follows the clause, “I send this as a gift to be shared by you both,” suggesting that ἐμμέλεια refers to the work that he is sending. This interpretation is confusing, however, because Plutarch has not written a literal song, so in what sense could the Muses have offered a

⁴ Plutarch follows Plato in describing philosophy as a charm. In *Charmides* 155e–157a, Socrates compares the philosophical discourse that he works upon Charmides with a charm (ἐπωιδή), and in *Phaedo* 77e–78a, Socrates describes philosophical discourse as a charm (also ἐπωιδή) that removes our fear of death. Most significant for the purposes of this paper, however, is *Phaedo* 114d, in which Socrates concludes his long tale of the underworld as a story people should “sing as a charm” (ἐπάδειν) to themselves every day. There the relation between imagery, philosophical principles for everyday life, and charms most closely parallels Plutarch’s usage here.

⁵ τὴν περὶ γάμον καὶ οἶκον ἐμμέλειαν ἡρμοσμένην παρέχειν διὰ λόγου καὶ ἀρμονίας καὶ φιλοσοφίας

harmonized song through him?⁶ Although this “harmonized song” might refer generally to the work’s excellence in arrangement and style, I contend that it also refers to the choice to write in short comparisons. Plutarch declares that he writes in short likenesses for the sake of memorability, and this explanation makes sense: the vivid and sometimes seemingly incongruous images of the work are likely to stick in the reader’s mind. However, Plutarch has also said that the philosophic discourse concerning marriage gives a grace and charm similar to what music can effect, and choice to write in imitative further contributes to this charming effect. For Plutarch is writing in a Platonic tradition that draws comparisons from imitative poetic language to music, such as Socrates’ discussion in Book III of the *Republic*. There he says a song is “composed of three things: speech, harmony, and rhythm;”⁷ Plutarch’s ‘song’ convinces through “speech, harmony, and philosophy.” Plutarch has not written a literal song, substituting rhythm for philosophy. Nevertheless, his work, like the music that Socrates worries about in the *Republic*, does not give an explicit and thoroughgoing account of the goodness of a thing—in this case, marriage—but instead is intended to charm its audience through its philosophical references and images.

This notion that ideas and imagery drawn from a variety of sources can charm the married couple is confirmed in the closing sections of the text, where Plutarch urges Pollianus to continue his own and his wife’s education. He tells Pollianus, “Collect for your wife what is useful from every source just as bees do, and carrying it within yourself, hand the best of

⁶ Di Meo 2020, 95 argues that these references to song show that Plutarch wishes to associate his own work with the tradition of the poetic epithalamium; such an interpretation, while likely true, does not fully explain the relation between philosophy and music in the work.

⁷ τὸ μέλος ἐκ τριῶν ἐστὶν συγκείμενον, λόγου τε καὶ ἁρμονίας καὶ ῥυθμοῦ

speeches over to her and discuss them with her, making them dear and familiar to her” (145b).⁸ Plutarch explains that a woman “will not receive the charms of potions when she has been charmed by the words of Plato and Xenophon” (145c).⁹ In his instructions to Pollianus to gather from every source useful ideas to share with his wife, Plutarch gives an image of the very work that he has given them, which draws ideas from philosophy (especially Plato), drama, history, botany, and astronomy. Plutarch enjoins Pollianus to carry on the project of education, both for himself and for his wife, after he has shown him how varied references and images, joined with philosophical injunctions, can produce a memorable, charming, and edifying work. It is true that for Plutarch philosophy (and not just any mere reference) is the charming element in his work, but he does state that references joined with philosophy (as in his own work) and philosophical references (as in Pollianus’s education of Eurydice) have charm; in other words, in this work he attributes charm not to philosophy alone, but to the memorable philosophic images. Thus Plutarch’s choice to join philosophy to images creates a work which the spouses will be able to remember, which will charm them into marital harmony, and which will instruct Pollianus on how to continue his wife’s education.

What remains to be known is what Pollianus and Eurydice learned about marriage during their upbringing in philosophy; that is, what are the teachings on marriage that Plutarch has disguised in his short comparisons? He has stated that he wishes to summarize the ideas they had learned while being raised in philosophy, but it is unclear if these ideas were a generalized and broad recommendations on marriage or if they specified a narrow definition of marriage and

⁸ τῆ δὲ γυναικὶ πανταχόθεν τὸ χρήσιμον συνάγων ὥσπερ αἱ μέλιτται καὶ φέρων αὐτὸς ἐν σεαυτῷ μεταδίδου καὶ προσδιαλέγου, φίλους αὐτῇ ποιῶν καὶ συνήθεις τῶν λόγων τοὺς ἀρίστους.

⁹ φαρμάκων ἐπωδὰς οὐ προσδέξεται τοῖς Πλάτωνος ἐπαδομένη λόγοις καὶ τοῖς Ξενοφῶντος.

marital success. Interpretation of the text depends on how specifically Plutarch wants to define marriage in the text. In the terms of the text's introduction, "philosophy" does not seem to pick out any specific philosophy on marriage, but instead refers to the spouses' use of reason with each other in order to achieve a gentle and mild marriage.¹⁰ But throughout the text, Plutarch makes assumptions about how the spouses think about marriage that imply a more specific vision of marriage: for example, in *CP* 34 (a pivotal section that I discuss at length in chapter 1), Plutarch presents a taxonomy of increasingly united marriages, then declares that spouses ought to be unified in all aspects of life. The premise behind this precept is that spouses ought to further unity between themselves in order to have a successful marriage. He also assumes at least some version of patriarchal marriage throughout the work.¹¹

Proving that Plutarch means to provide a thoroughgoing abstract theory on marriage would be difficult given the evidence. I aim to show that even if Plutarch does not have an utterly coherent theory on marriage to unearth from its pristine place between the lines of the text, the way he chooses to characterize marriage reveals several key ideas in Plutarch's vision of successful marriage. First, that the more unified a marriage is, the better it is. Second, that hierarchy (specifically patriarchy), mutual love, and persuasion are the means by which this unity is achieved.

Other scholars have already attempted projects similar to this thesis, that is, to explore the philosophic imagery and the marital relationship it indicates, especially with respect to Plutarch's recommendation of a patriarchal marriage. Some view patriarchy and the satisfaction of the

¹⁰ So Patterson 1999, 131 and Goessler 1991, 99.

¹¹ E.g., *CP* 6, 8, 20, and 33.

husband as the goal of Plutarch's marriage, whereas others view Plutarch's statements on mutual love as undoing the patriarchal marriage in favor of some egalitarian marriage. My contention is that the latter group is wrong, since patriarchy is a necessary means to Plutarch's successful marriage, but the former group is also wrong in making patriarchy the essential goal of marriage, rather than a means to marital unity.

Victoria Wohl is among the scholars who regard Plutarch's marriage as solely for the satisfaction of the husband. She reads the following passage as indicative of Plutarch's overall attitude: "It is necessary that a husband rule his wife not as a master rules over possessions, but as a soul rules its body, feeling what it feels and grown together with it through goodwill" (142e).¹² Wohl uses this soul-body analogy as Plutarch's characterization of the anxious male philosopher, who seeks to subjugate and sublimate the corporeal. For Wohl, Plutarch identifies the female as everything low, bodily, unreasonable, sexual, and dangerous, as she argues: "The male subject constructed through this relationship is one who, by mastering his wife, aims to master his unruly body and its pleasures, in the hopes of becoming master of himself through a simultaneous domination and transcendence of the corporeal."¹³ In this interpretation, Wohl argues that Plutarch draws a strong connection between the wife and the husband's body, and thus marriage must entail a philosophic quest to subdue the wife, who poses a threat to the husband's spiritualized existence. Her argument rests on reading the relationship between soul and body as agonistic: unless the husband controls corporeality, whether his own body or his

¹² κρατεῖν δὲ δεῖ τὸν ἄνδρα τῆς γυναικὸς οὐχ ὡς δεσπότην κτήματος ἀλλ' ὡς ψυχὴν σώματος, συμπαθοῦντα καὶ συμπεφυκότα τῇ εὐνοίᾳ.

¹³ Wohl 1997, 171.

wife, he will be dominated himself and will lose all possibility of perceiving himself to be a successful philosopher.

Plutarch is concerned with bodies throughout the text, but not exclusively in the view that husband is soul and woman is body. He compares spouses to two sides of one body (*CP* 20) and characterizes marriages for various causes (cohabitation, dowry or children, and love) with physical bodies with varying levels of cohesion (*CP* 34). Here there is clearly no identification of husband with soul and woman with body, nor is there any apparent agonism between soul and body that Wohl attributes to Plutarch. That is, Plutarch does not regard the body as a danger to be suspected and oppressed in these passages (thus striking at Wohl's argument that for Plutarch, femininity is aligned with corporeality and danger). The contrasting metaphors could indicate a pluralistic vision of marriage on Plutarch's part: some marriages are of equal partners like sides of one body, and some are of one ruler and one subordinate, like the composite of soul and body. More likely, however, is that Plutarch believes that successful marriages are not created by mere patriarchy or mere reciprocity, but by some combination of the two. For Plutarch, the husband rules the wife, but also shares in her feelings. Wohl's formulation of a dominating, suspicious, and oppressive patriarchy does not account for Plutarch's recommendations for some mutuality.

This notion of mutuality is clear from the very passage where Plutarch identifies husband with soul and wife with body, cited above. The exhortation to rule the wife not as a possession but as soul rules the body remains open to some interpretation. If Plutarch has in mind his Platonist views, perhaps he is viewing a wife as a practical necessity of life that inhibits a man's ability to philosophize and which he must seek to overcome. But if the body's passions are so unruly and destructive, Plutarch would not describe the proper action of the soul as "feeling what

it feels and grown together with it through goodwill” (142e).¹⁴ Perhaps this passage can be read as advocating for a patronizing paternalism, in which the husband feigns interest in the woman in order to cajole her into conforming to his will. Even that interpretation must explain the powerful verbs that Plutarch employs: the husband should not only feel what the wife feels (sympathize), but he should also grow together with her, that is, to grow into a common whole with her. If Plutarch wishes the husband to be suspicious of his wife and his own body, these hardly seem like the proper recommendations. This sympathizing does not imply that equality exists between the spouses, just that Plutarch does not advise the husband to treat his wife as dangerous and to be oppressed without regard to her happiness, as Wohl would have him say.

Wohl’s article, however, does raise important considerations for the interpretation of this text. Plutarch’s text bounces between concepts of hierarchy, unity, and mutual love, and the interrelation of these ideas in the text needs measured consideration. In Wohl’s view, the husband’s hierarchical domination of his wife is always in a fragile state, and by maintaining a unity in which the wife’s behavior is dominated by the husband’s mind, he maintains his position. Mutual love, on this view, is not quite mutual, since Wohl emphasizes so strongly the husband’s attitude toward his wife (and not the reverse), nor does it really seem like love, as the husband is supposed to view his wife with the same suspicious oppression that a Platonist should view his own body.

Another advocate for patriarchy and the husband’s satisfaction as the ends of Plutarch’s marriage is Ann Chapman, who argues that though the text might seem to value mutual love, it

¹⁴ συμπαθοῦντα καὶ συμπεφυκότα τῇ εὐνοίᾳ.

ultimately “proposes conjugal love as another instrument by which a husband exercises power in a marriage”¹⁵ and that the harmony of the married couple is “grounded in male hegemony.” Here, mutual love is just a way to maintain hierarchy, and the harmonious unity vitiated by hierarchy on which it stands. In the first chapter of this thesis, I argue that while Chapman is wrong in arguing that Plutarch sees love as an instrument of masculine power, she is correct in identifying Plutarch’s elevation of husband over wife as central to his vision of marital unity.

I am not the first to argue against Plutarch’s more ardent detractors while also acknowledging that he does belittle women in his writing. Anastasios Nikolaidis argues in defense of Plutarch that this patriarchal tendency is derived not from man’s absolute superiority over woman, but from his intellectual and moral superiority.¹⁶ He argues that Plutarch acknowledges that a wife can be socially and financially superior to her husband, and that he only makes man the master because of his superiority in what really matters—character.¹⁷ Nikolaidis also defends Plutarch by showing Plutarch’s preference for reciprocity between spouses: as a wife cares for her husband’s feelings, so he also should care for hers.¹⁸ Such an approach reveals how Nikolaidis interprets Plutarch on the interplay of hierarchy, unity, and

¹⁵ Chapman 2011, 27.

¹⁶ “The husband superiority — and this point usually escapes our attention — is not based on gender; it is rather founded on some moral and intellectual qualifications which the husband supposedly possesses and his wife lacks.” Nikolaidis 1997, 76

¹⁷ Nikolaidis 1997, 76. For some reason, Nikolaidis begins by citing Plutarch’s belief in man’s intellectual and moral superiority, but quietly drops mention of intellectual superiority. Perhaps he thinks this move makes his argument easier, as he only has to apologize for Plutarch’s misogyny in one area, but in the end it mars his position: Plutarch is more easily defended if the woman bows not to her husband’s character but to her husband’s *reasonability*.

¹⁸ Nikolaidis 1997, 63.

mutual love: if hierarchical superiority of husband over wife is taken as a given, then they will achieve unity together, if they treat each other with reciprocal care. My argument differs from Nikolaidis in this way: I think that Plutarch does not necessarily treat the husband's superiority in the eyes of his wife as a given; rather, Plutarch himself supplies the basis of the husband's trustworthiness in his introduction. He says,

For the ancients set Hermes next to Aphrodite, on the grounds that the pleasure of marriage is most in need of reason, and they also set Persuasion and the Graces next to her, so that spouses, by persuading each other, might achieve what they want from each other, and not by fighting nor being attached to quarrels (138c-d).¹⁹

Here reason, persuasion, and charm are given pride of place in maintaining marital satisfaction. The husband in Plutarch's vision of marriage is tasked with using persuasion to get what he wants from his wife. As I show in chapter one of this thesis, what Plutarch thinks the husband should want is a unity that asks a lot of the wife—she must give up personal finances, friendships, emotions, and more in order to enter true unity with her husband. However, the important point at this stage in the argument is to show that Nikolaidis's argument is incomplete in treating the husband's predominance over the wife as a secure fact with which the wife must comply. He is tasked with persuading her: he must win her trust with the power of reason and charm.²⁰

¹⁹ αἱ γὰρ οἱ παλαιοὶ τῇ Ἀφροδίτῃ τὸν Ἑρμῆν συγκαθίδρυσαν, ὡς τῆς περὶ τὸν γάμον ἡδονῆς μάλιστα λόγου δεομένης, τὴν τε Πειθὴ καὶ τὰς Χάριτας, ἵνα πείθοντες διαπράττωνται παρ' ἀλλήλων ἃ βούλονται, μὴ μαχόμενοι μηδὲ φιλονεικοῦντες.

²⁰ Here I interpret Plutarch's inclusion of the Graces as that part of persuasion which is different from but unopposed to reason and which makes accepts reason more pleasing. I call this "charm."

In this paradigm, persuasion could be a subordinate means for achieving patriarchy: that is, the husband employs persuasion to secure his rule (whether his rule is the point or it is pursued as a means to marital unity). In this way, the elevation of persuasion offers an opening for Wohl's discourse that the husband constantly seeks to secure his self-perception of philosophic reasonability by mastering his wife with his mind. However, persuasion and reason in this exhortation are not granted solely to the husband; both spouses are exhorted to use persuasion in their common dealings. The woman is also capable of using her own reason to achieve what she wants in her marriage; at least so far as the introduction goes, she is given some personal agency in the intellectual and moral development of herself and her husband.²¹ By this argument, persuasion is not merely a means to achieving patriarchal rule, but instead is an equally necessary part of successful marriage. Secondly, the ends of marriage in this work are multiple: perhaps the verified self-image of philosopher is a part of Plutarch's marriage, but that does not make it the ultimate purpose of marriage as Wohl would make it.

David Konstan offers another path to defending Plutarch from accusations of misogyny. He takes the various messages to be communicating an "implicit message," which can be perceived by "attending to understated hints supplied by the author."²² If his two former students have properly learned such skills of reading between the lines, argues Konstan, then they should be prepared to read the true meaning behind the text, which is a vision of a more equitable and

²¹ Stafford 1999, 169–171 identifies Plutarch's use of Peitho as primarily describing sexual seduction, in contrast to the use of force. Perhaps Plutarch includes this sort of persuasion in the invocation of Peitho, but throughout the work persuasion means more than just convincing sexual advances (e.g., *CP* 12, where persuasion works to rid the wife of her vanity).

²² Konstan 2022, 130.

symmetrical marriage. Thus, the hierarchy argued for by the text is an illusion, the result of a faulty interpretation that lacks sufficient sensitivity to the clues showing such a hierarchy is not actually what Plutarch advocates for. In such a way, Konstan tries to give an explanation that reconciles all the conflicting images of the text. Surface level contradictions are entirely acceptable because a single and unsaid meaning behind the text is derived from them. This argument is attractive because it accounts for what some might perceive as inconsistencies in Plutarch's argument: how can Plutarch ask the wife to have no feelings of her own (*CP* 14) and no friends of her own (*CP* 19) while also urging her to get what she wants from her marriage through persuasion?

On this line of reasoning, all the traditional messages of the work are only presented to be subverted. However, Konstan's argument does not properly account for the many, repeated statements in the text that set husband over wife. Yes, some of the particularly overstated rejection of the wife's friends and feelings are softened by other places in the text that instruct the husband to care for the wife (e.g., *CP* 15). However, that does not imply that male headship is not part of Plutarch's vision of marriage. It seems that Konstan wants to interpret selectively among Plutarch's statements those ideas most palatable to a modern reader and then claim that those are Plutarch's real ideas on marriage. Like Nikolaidis, Konstan downplays Plutarch's inclusion of hierarchy in a marriage and emphasizes the mutual love that the couple is instructed to pursue. However, I will show that rule by the husband is necessary for Plutarch's marriage, because he views hierarchy as a way to unite spouses into a single agent—and because marriage is unimaginable without it.

In chapter one I will argue that Plutarch sees the marital unity of lovers as the best sort, since it unifies them most completely. He instructs spouses to act as a single subject as much as possible to be united most completely. For spouses to act as a single subject, he instructs wives to submit to their husbands, and he instructs husbands to act as rulers under specific constraints—namely, he ought to acknowledge and care for her feelings and he ought to persuade her with reason.

The scholarship's various approaches to the internal state of the marriage naturally yield competing accounts of the extrinsic, political purposes of marriage. As stated before, Wohl's opinion is clear: marriage's purpose is the self-realization of the philosopher-husband. Wohl argues, "Political power is not the *telos* of Plutarch's program. Instead, the man who can manage the state reveals that he can manage his household and therefore he can manage himself; this is the goal."²³ In Wohl's eyes, Plutarch believes the status of the husband as philosopher remains the central and ultimate goal of marriage. Chapman argues the contrary point: "In *Advice* Plutarch is speaking to a concern which exercises him greatly, namely the preservation of the traditional marriage of the *polis*, and of the patriarchal society it supports."²⁴ She believes that Plutarch speaks of marriage's "sacred nature and primary functions as 'the ploughing of children '(142b)."²⁵ For Chapman, Plutarch wishes to preserve marriage as a political institution and as a source of new life. On my view, the political purposes of marriage coexist with the private. In chapter two of this thesis, I will show that Plutarch believes the husband needs a

²³ Wohl 1997, 186.

²⁴ Chapman 2011.

²⁵ Chapman 2011, 57.

successful marriage in order to achieve his political ambitions and that the mutual fulfillment of husband and wife is also a purpose of marriage.

Chapter 1: What Makes Marriage Good?

This chapter will prove that Plutarch believes that the more unified a marriage is, the better it is and that unity is most completely achieved when the spouses choose marriage for the sake of their beloved spouse (and not for an external end). Then I will show that he believes unity in marriage is achieved by a combination of patriarchy and mutual love, which involves sympathy, goodwill, and persuasion.

1.1 Unity as Goodness in Marriage

In *CP* 34, Plutarch shows that he believes the more unified a marriage is, the better it is. First, I will list and describe the three levels of increasingly unified bodies featured in this section and their corresponding level of marital unity. Then, I will show that Plutarch unity as the cause of good marriage, and thus he believes the most unified marriage is the best one.

In *CP* 34, Plutarch declares, “Philosophers say of bodies that some are made of distinct parts, like a fleet or an army, and some are made of things tied together, like a house or a boat, and some are united and are naturally grown together, just as each of the animals is” (142f).¹ Plutarch goes on to compare each kind of body to marriage: “Generally, also the marriage of lovers is united and naturally grown together, the marriage of those who marry on account of the dowry or children is of people tied together, and the marriage of those who sleep together is of distinct persons” (142f).² Plutarch is arguing for three kinds of marriage, all in comparison to different sorts of ‘bodies’ (τῶν σωμάτων), understood in this context as composite physical

¹ Τῶν σωμάτων οἱ φιλόσοφοι τὰ μὲν ἐκ διεστώτων λέγουσιν εἶναι καθάπερ στόλον καὶ στρατόπεδον, τὰ δ’ ἐκ συναπτομένων ὡς οἰκίαν καὶ ναῦν, τὰ δ’ ἡνωμένα καὶ συμφυῆ καθάπερ ἐστὶ τῶν ζώων ἕκαστον.

² σχεδὸν οὖν καὶ γάμος ὁ μὲν τῶν ἐρώντων ἡνωμένος καὶ συμφυῆς ἐστίν, ὁ δὲ τῶν διὰ προΐκας ἢ τέκνα γαμούντων ἐκ συναπτομένων, ὁ δὲ τῶν συγκαθευδόντων ἐκ διεστώτων.

unities. The three sorts of unities contain different sorts of relationships between the parts and the whole. The first sort of body that Plutarch describes is the unity in which the parts have independent and individual existence and form a loose association. In an army or a fleet, the soldier or the boats do not depend on the existence of the organizing whole for their own continued existence. The status of the soldier as soldier does depend on his being a part of his army, but in order to be a part of the army, he does not have to give up his identity as a distinct individual. Furthermore, the soldiers of the army are united for an external purpose—winning battles. Plutarch compares this first sort of unity with the third sort of marriage he describes (the comparison is arranged chiastically). Marriage that resembles the unity of an army, that is, a unity of distinct parts, is achieved by those who merely sleep together (a lower baseline than those who marry for a common purpose like children or those who marry for love). Now in this sort of marriage, the unity is a rather loose association of distinct individuals, and these individuals unite not for the sake of unity per se, but for an external reason—sex. Plutarch’s choice to characterize this least united sort of marriage as a unity of distinct individuals is striking, as it seems to imply the higher level sorts of marriage diminish the individuality and distinctiveness of the two spouses.

Plutarch’s comparisons vindicate this implication. The second sort of bodily unity that he discusses is that of “things tied together, like a house or a ship.” The use of ship here is especially fitting given the prior use of fleet: Plutarch has now moved to a more fundamental bodily unity. What then is the difference between a unity of distinct parts and that of those bound together? Ships and houses are single wholes, of which the individual parts do not carry much individual identity: walls exist for the sake of their house, and without that organizing whole their purpose unintelligible. This relationship between part and whole is important, but even

more important is how it implies a specific relationship between the parts (after all, the relation of the parts is how Plutarch distinguishes between the two categories discussed so far). The walls of a house, because they are unified strongly in their identity of constituting a single whole, are not as distinct from each other as soldiers of an army are, but in their common identity are “tied together.”³ The bond in this sort of unity is still external: the planks of a ship are united for a purpose independent of the ship itself (seafaring) and a house’s walls are similarly united for an external purpose (providing shelter). And so, Plutarch describes the sort of marriage that corresponds to this kind of bodily unity as belonging to those who marry for the sake of children or the dowry.⁴ Husbands and wives in this marriage unite in a stronger way than those who merely sleep together. Dowry laws in the time of Plutarch required the husband to consult his wife when selling lands received in the dowry, even though he was considered the owner,⁵ and thereby made the husband dependent on the wife in matters of finance. Such an example shows how marrying for the sake of dowry reduced the identity of the spouses as independent financial agents: the husband cannot act independently of his wife in financial matters, at least with respect to elements of the dowry.

The unity generated by marrying for the purpose of children is less clear. It does not seem sufficient to say that children give a common purpose to the two spouses that ties them together more than the marriage of those who merely sleep together, as it is simple to supply some

³ “Tied together” is an ambiguous term because it can refer to either the very act of construction (e.g., the fastening together of a ship’s planks) or to the tying together created by the overarching unity. In describing parts that constitute wholes, however, such a distinction does not amount to much of a real difference.

⁴ *Amatorius* 767c–d also describes marriages for the sake of dowry and children, and characterizes them as lesser than marriages done for love.

⁵ Justinian, *Institutes* 2.8. See Dixon 1985, 370–2 for further discussion of dowries in the Imperial period.

common goal for that couple as well (e.g., pleasure). I will leave further examination of the role of childbearing to later considerations in this chapter, when there is opportunity to analyze Plutarch's other statements on reproduction. In this context, however, perhaps an easier explanation is available: dowries and children create a commitment that ties the spouses together more than their merely sleeping together. This reasoning is not as philosophically satisfying in determining the difference between parts which are "distinct" and parts which are "tied together," but it is perhaps the most natural explanation. At the very least, the grant of a dowry and the generation of children along with the assumed sleeping together produce some stronger common interest than merely sleeping together. This category of marriage is similar to the one between those who marry for the sake of sleeping together insofar as these marriages are contracted for the sake of an external end. Like the ship and house, marrying for the sake of a dowry or for children is marrying for a reason external to the marriage itself; that is, the spouses have not united for the sake of the other or for the marriage itself.

The highest level of unity that Plutarch considers is that of the unified (literally, "made one;" same root as *henosis*) and naturally united ("of one body" is an alternate translation for *symphuēs*), and the example he gives are the bodies of animals. The difference between this category and the prior one, that of things tied together, is not immediately evident. The organic nature of these sorts of bodies does create a stronger unity of the parts, as each part depends on the whole and vice versa. In this sort of unity, the whole prevails over the parts to such an extent that their identity and existence depend utterly on that whole: if a limb of an animal is removed, it decays and rots. And so in this sense, the parts are more unified to the whole than in the other sorts of unities. The dependence of these body parts on the whole for their existence arises from the end or purpose of this unity: the members of the body unite with each other not for an

external purpose, but for the sake of the body itself, that it may be alive. Once that purpose ceases with death, the parts lose the reason for their common bond and disintegrate.

Plutarch compares this sort of unity with the marriage of lovers. The choice to select *lovers* (τῶν ἐρώντων) as the subjects of the most unified form of marriage is fascinating, as is the choice to compare such a marriage to an animal's body.⁶ The role of the erotic in Plutarch's description of the closest marriage unity is complicated. Given the distinctions that Plutarch has drawn in *CP* 34, the marriage of lovers cannot just mean the love of those who sexually desire each other, as this criterion would not distinguish it from the marriage of those who just sleep together or of those who just want children, as both of these would include some sort of sexual desire. Plutarch makes a similar distinction between those who marry just for children or dowries and those who marry for love in the *Amatorius*. In that dialogue on love, one of the characters is described as thinking that marriage is pursued only for the sake of dowry or children.⁷ This viewpoint is then contrasted with the marriage of lovers:

But the one whom Eros strikes and inspires will first out of Plato's city consider something 'mine' and something 'not mine;' for not simply is the property of friends in common, but also that of lovers, who, though divided in their bodies, lead together their very souls and fuse them together by force, neither wanting nor thinking that they are two (767d–e).⁸

This passage is helpful in explaining *CP* 34: the framework is quite similar, but here Plutarch offers a bit more explanation. Lovers in this context are not compared directly to the

⁶ See Jazdzewska 2020 for Plutarch's comparison between the love of non-human animals and the love of human beings. Here, however, the comparison is between the bond two human beings and the bonded unity of a single animal body.

⁷ *Amatorius* 767c.

⁸ ᾧ δ' ἂν Ἔρως ἐπισκήψη τε καὶ ἐπιπνεύσῃ, πρῶτον μὲν ἐκ τῆς Πλατωνικῆς πόλεως 'τὸ ἐμὸν' ἔξει καὶ 'τὸ οὐκ ἐμὸν'· οὐ γὰρ ἀπλῶς 'κοινὰ τὰ φίλων' καὶ ἐρώντων ἀλλ' οἱ τοῖς σώμασιν ὀριζόμενοι τὰς ψυχὰς βία συνάγουσι καὶ συντήκουσι, μήτε βουλόμενοι δὴ εἶναι μήτε νομίζοντες. Note that this reference to Plato's *Republic* 5.462 also appears in *CP* 20, and I will return to the use of this Platonic quotation in chapter two.

single unity of an organic animal body. Rather, they are characterized as overcoming the divide that their separation into two bodies creates. *Eros* leads lovers to reject and even deny that they are separate in their souls; they use force (*bia*) to create a unity in their souls. Here the bond is pursued not for the sake of an external end, as in the ship or army, but an internal one: the lover wants to be made one with the other just for the sake of being one with that other, and for this reason enters marriage. So marriage, as the state of being one with one's beloved, is pursued for its own sake.⁹ This sort of bond results in a married couple who resemble a single, unified whole as much as possible

So Plutarch has discussed three levels of marital unity, now it must be shown that he regards the marriage of lovers as the ideal sort of marriage, because it is most unified. He follows the taxonomy of marital unity with the following statement: “Just as philosophers of nature say that the blending of liquids happens through the entirety of the liquids, so too ought the bodies, property, friends, and relatives of married people be mixed together throughout one another” (142f–143a).¹⁰ After giving a taxonomy of varying unities, Plutarch urges married couples to be thoroughly blended, in the way that liquids thoroughly blend. Plutarch importantly begins this

⁹ Beneker 2008 argues that the descriptions of *eros* in the *Amatorius* show that Plutarch believes it to be the “emotional glue” that gives marriage cohesion, as a counterpart to friendship (*philia*). Beneker's focus is on the possibility of love motivated by and directed toward virtue, and so this is why he discusses Plutarchan marriage as Aristotelian *philia* combined with *eros*. However correctly this captures the motivations and dispositions of loving spouses as described by Plutarch, nevertheless Plutarch's metaphors exceed the description of marriage as an environment of *philia*, in that Plutarch is advocating for the creation of a new single whole, just like a single organic body.

¹⁰ δεῖ δέ, ὥσπερ οἱ φυσικοὶ τῶν ὑγρῶν λέγουσι δι' ὅλων γενέσθαι τὴν κρᾶσιν, οὕτω τῶν γαμούντων καὶ σώματα καὶ χρήματα καὶ φίλους καὶ οἰκείους ἀναμειχθῆναι δι' ἀλλήλων. For Stoic viewpoints on mixture and their opponents (especially Alexander of Aphrodisias), see Kupreeva 2004. For discussion of Stoic influence on Plutarch's vision of marriage in the imagery of mixing, see Chapman 2011, 20–21 and Goessler 1999, 107.

sentence with the verb *dei*, which I have translated as “ought.”¹¹ That is, Plutarch declares that spouses ought to be unified thoroughly in several important areas, so that the bodies, possessions, friends, and relatives of each are thoroughly blended together; neither spouse retains anything as properly his or her own.¹² So Plutarch has linked his taxonomy of unities with a command to be more unified; so spouses ought to seek out the most thoroughly blended sort of marriage, that of the lovers.¹³ His belief that unity increases goodness has its roots in Platonic thought, which avows unity as a chief source of goodness (e.g., *Republic* 5.462a–b). Furthermore, the marital unity he regards as closest is that between lovers, who choose marriage just to be in unity with their spouse, which is an end internal to the marriage itself.¹⁴

So Plutarch has shown which form of marital unity he regards as the closest sort of unity, and he has made clear exactly what that unity is, in philosophic terms. It is the organic unity of a living creature, of a single body. Of course, how the spouses achieve a unity like this is a central concern of the *CP*, and remains to be discussed, since there are limitations to how a husband and wife can be described as being a single and interdependent whole through their marriage. But

¹¹ LSJ s.v. δεῖ, A states “the sense of moral obligation, prop. belonging to χρῆ, is later.” Plutarch certainly is “later,” so the moral sense found in “ought” could be at play here and makes my argument stronger: Plutarch offers a moral imperative for the spouses to be unified. In this context, moral necessity makes more sense than logical necessity. It is, after all a work of advice, and the logical necessity meaning would not make sense given the taxonomy of unities that Plutarch has just sketched out, for that would imply that mixing through entireties is a logical result of marriage, a notion which the lack of unity in two of the levels of marriage contradicts.

¹² Plutarch qualifies this notion in *CP* 20, when he argues that if either of the spouses is to be considered the owner of property, it should be the husband.

¹³ See Stadter 1999, 182 for a similar conclusion that Plutarch believes working toward the unity of one’s social units is the highest human act. Such an interpretation is confirmed by *Amatorius* 767b–e. There the main speaker of the work, Ismenodora attacks the cynical view that marriage is about dowry or child-bearing, and ought to be about creating the unity that love desires.

¹⁴ This point will be pursued more in Chapter 2, where I discuss the ends of marriages.

what must be emphasized is that Plutarch is not speaking merely poetically, given his repetition of the principle and the philosophical context in which it appears.

1.2 Patriarchy and Unity

In this next section, I will discuss how Plutarch advises the husband and wife to achieve the unity of lovers. He believes that patriarchy plays an indispensable role in achieving marital unity, but that this patriarchy is limited by persuasion and mutual love; in Plutarch's eyes, patriarchy alone is insufficient for creating the unity of lovers. First, I will examine how Plutarch sees patriarchy as necessary for marital unity, then I will show how this sort of patriarchy is limited by mutual love and the possibility of persuasion.

In *CP* 34, Plutarch advises spouses to be unified thoroughly with their spouse, to be made into a single composite, just like a members of a body make up a single whole. To accomplish this unity, he says that spouses ought to blend their bodies, property, friends, and family. He thinks that if spouses can treat their bodies, property, friends, and family as one, so that neither spouse considers any of these categories as merely his or her own, but as the common possession of both, then they will have the unity of lovers. However, in *CP* 34, Plutarch gives no specifics about how to achieve this state in practice,¹⁵ but he does discuss three of these areas—property, friends, and family—elsewhere in the *CP*, and his recommendation throughout the work is that in order to achieve unity, marriage must be patriarchal. That is, Plutarch believes for spouses to have one common estate, set of friends, and family, they ought to adopt the preference of the husband, and that acting on the preferences of the husband allows spouses to pursue a marriage

¹⁵ He cites the Roman law forbidding spouses to give gifts to each other as a way to ensure spouses view their property as common. He does not seem to endorse this law as the proper way to achieve common property, but to advise that treating property in common is the proper attitude of spouses.

bond for its own sake. I will examine his statements on common property, common friends, and common family in turn.

His recommendation on achieving a sense of common property through the husband is found in *CP* 20. There Plutarch declares, “Sharing of property is fitting especially for those who marry, who pour everything into one estate and mix it all together, so that they not think that this part is one’s own and that part the other’s, but that it is all one’s own, and nothing is the others” (140f).¹⁶ This statement corresponds to the thorough blending described in *CP* 34. Now, one might expect Plutarch to have said the opposite of what he says: that each spouse should consider the common fund as wholly the property of the other (*allogtrion*), and not belonging to oneself (*idion*). In this way, Plutarch would have said that each spouse should not consider money as his or her own, but as belonging to the other. The way he actually describes it might be interpreted as advocating for an entirely selfish attitude, in which each spouse considers the money as his or her own and resents the other’s use of it.

But the couple that treats common finances this way has disregarded the unity for which Plutarch is advocating. The descriptions of the marriage bond as that of parts of a single body work to eliminate notions of one’s spouse as ‘the other.’ Rather, the marriage bond dissolves the two spouses into a single subject, in which to call something ‘one’s own’ always implies both spouses, at least insofar as this is possible. The difficulties of using a single subject to describe two people, as well as Plutarch’s own cultural biases, lead to the concluding sentence of this precept: “Just as we call a mixture wine, though it contains more water, thus it is necessary to

¹⁶ αὕτη τοίνυν καὶ χρημάτων κοινωνία προσήκει μάλιστα τοῖς γαμοῦσιν, εἰς μίαν οὐσίαν πάντα καταχεαμένοις καὶ ἀναμείξασι μὴ τὸ μέρος ἴδιον καὶ τὸ μέρος ἀλλότριον ἀλλὰ πᾶν ἴδιον ἡγεῖσθαι καὶ μηδὲν ἀλλότριον. Taking οὐσία to mean more than just wealth (i.e., ‘being’ or ‘substance’) might be tempting here, but the use of the word χρημάτων (‘property’) excludes this possibility.

refer the estate and household to the husband, even if the wife has contributed more” (140f).¹⁷ There are practical details of acting as a single subject with regard to finances, especially when the property the wife brings with her constitutes the majority of the spouses’ collective wealth. Plutarch advises spouses to act as a single subject, and when the spouses are not unified in their attitude to their property or are not in agreement about how to dispense that property, and even when they are in total agreement, Plutarch advises that it is best for the spouses to attribute the wealth to a single owner.¹⁸ That is, if the husband acts as the owner of the property, and the wife sees herself as the possessor of the common whole through her marriage to that person (and not through her own personal and original possession of some portion of that property), then it is more clearcut how the spouses act as a single subject.

In this way, the wife contributes property to the whole for the sake of the whole; that is, she views wealth not as a reason to marry, but as a contributor to being a single whole with her husband. The husband too could view the common fund of which he is the owner, properly speaking, as a joint possession indicative of a unity joined not for external ends but for the bond itself;¹⁹ nevertheless, he is clearly in a far less vulnerable position than the wife who surrendered all her wealth to her husband. Obviously, my argument in this section is speculative: one could object that Plutarch only cares about hierarchy because marriage should serve the husband’s ends, and making him the ruler of his wife readily accomplishes that goal. However, *CP* 20 and 34 urge marital unity for its own sake, that is for the sake of being with one’s beloved spouse,

¹⁷ ὥσπερ τὸ κράμα καίτοι ὕδατος μετέχον πλείονος οἴνον καλοῦμεν, οὕτω τὴν οὐσίαν δεῖ καὶ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ ἀνδρὸς λέγεσθαι, κἂν ἢ γυνὴ πλείονα συμβάλληται.

¹⁸ I do not mean to be naïve about the notion that the sex of this sole owner is and always (perhaps with a few exceptions) will be male in Plutarch’s thought and world. However, I am examining that how hierarchy and unity interact in Plutarch’s view, and whether there is a reason he advocates for hierarchy as such.

¹⁹ As it appears Plutarch encourages him to do in *CP* 34.

and Plutarch's patriarchal views must be fit to that goal. Moreover, he does not just advocate for unity and patriarchy as such, but for unity with respect to money and for patriarchy with respect to money. While he provides no explicit reasoning to connect unity and patriarchy as I have provided here, he clearly sees that they are connected.

Plutarch's statements on holding friends in common confirms the idea that Plutarch contrasts common possession with possession of one's own (*idios*). In *CP* 19, he advises that "A wife should not have friends of her own but should use the friends of her husband as a common possession" (140d).²⁰ The command in *CP* 34 for spouses to blend their friends thoroughly is complemented by this precept, which urges the wife to have no private relationships which the husband has no share in. That is, she is to enjoy friendship only through her husband; any friends she might bring with her to the marriage cannot be had without having them in common with her husband. This provides a neat and misogynistic²¹ path to unity: they act as a single subject with respect to their friends. In this way, the wife pursues friendship not necessarily for the sake of the marriage, but within constraints that prevent her from having friends only her own and not her husband's. These patriarchal constraints ensure that she always acts in unison with the husband.

Plutarch asserts that thorough blending of family is also fulfilled by a patriarchal method. In *CP* 36, Plutarch gives the following advice to the wife: "This is refined behavior: if the wife is seen to incline to the parents of her husband in respect, rather than her own, and if she is hurt somehow, to refer the matter to them, forgetful of her own. For seeming to trust makes oneself

²⁰ Ἰδίους οὐ δεῖ φίλους κτᾶσθαι τὴν γυναῖκα, κοινοῖς δὲ χρῆσθαι τοῖς τοῦ ἀνδρός·

²¹ Misogynistic because the husband is not under the same injunction to have no private friends of his own, at least not in this passage, though one might regard such an injunction as a corollary of *CP* 34's command to blend thoroughly.

trusted, and loving makes oneself loved”(143b–c).²² This passage is not as forceful as the ones regarding property and friendship, but it relies on the assumption that the wife ought to seek acceptance by her in-laws, even if it means discarding her own family. In this way, patriarchy once again provides a rule when the spouses are working to blend their lives together: it is just better if the wife assimilates to her husband’s life when the possibility of marital disunity exists.

1.3 Constraints on Patriarchal Marriage

Plutarch, then, has shown that he regards patriarchy as a contributor to marital unity, insofar as it prevents the wife from holding any private possessions and thus posing risks to the thorough blending of married lovers. However, this patriarchy is constrained by the need for mutual love between the couples. After all, Plutarch’s describes the most unified and best sort of marriage as that of loving spouses, and so it is clear that mutual love must be present in the best sort of marriage. The need for mutual love dictates the terms on which patriarchy contributes to the best sort of marriages. In this next section, I will discuss three sets of passages that detail how mutual love constrain patriarchy in Plutarch’s model marriage, and show that the need for mutual love makes sympathy, persuasion, and goodwill key ideas of the text.

In Plutarch’s model marriage, love is a force that urges the couples toward unity, toward acting as a single subject, as he shows in *CP* 34 and the *Amatorius* passage cited above. If patriarchy becomes an obstacle to the couple’s desire to act as one, then it becomes a force against unity, not for it. In this scheme, the patriarchal aspects must be limited so as not to give either spouse excessive difficulties in pursuing unity. In particular, then, Plutarch instructs the husband to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of the wife. *CP* 14 and 15 offer a pair of

²² ἐκεῖνο δ’ ἀστεῖον, ἂν ἡ γυνὴ μᾶλλον ἀποκλίνασα τῇ τιμῇ πρὸς τοὺς γονεῖς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἢ τοὺς ἑαυτῆς βλέπηται, κἄν τι λυπῆται, πρὸς ἐκείνους ἀναφέρουσα, τοὺς δ’ ἑαυτῆς λανθάνουσα. ποιεῖ γὰρ τὸ πιστεύειν δοκεῖν πιστεύεσθαι, καὶ τὸ φιλεῖν φιλεῖσθαι.

commands that begin with a command for the wife to be subject to the husband's preference, which is then qualified by insisting the husband cannot disregard his wife's feelings. Plutarch ends *CP* 14 with this statement:

Just as the geometers say that lines and surfaces do not move according to themselves, but they move together with their bodies, so the wife should have no feelings of her own but have in common with her husband her seriousness and her playfulness, her pensiveness and her laughter (140a).²³

Plutarch urges the wife to match her husband's feelings in order to form a single whole body with him (here a geometric rather than an animal body). Once again, she is instructed to discard something private (*idios*), in this case, her personal emotions.²⁴ However, Plutarch then instructs the husband not to disregard the emotions of his wife in *CP* 15:

Men who look with displeasure on their wives while they eat with them teach their wives to fill themselves up while alone. So they who are not cheerful with their wives and do not share in their playfulness and laughter teach them to seek out their own pleasures apart from their husbands (140a)²⁵

²³ δεῖ δέ, ὡς περ οἱ γεωμέτραι λέγουσι τὰς γραμμὰς καὶ τὰς ἐπιφανείας οὐ κινεῖσθαι καθ' ἑαυτὰς ἀλλὰ συγκινεῖσθαι τοῖς σώμασιν, οὕτω τὴν γυναῖκα μηδὲν ἴδιον πάθος ἔχειν, ἀλλὰ κοινωνεῖν τῷ ἀνδρὶ καὶ σπουδῆς καὶ παιδιᾶς καὶ συννοίας καὶ γέλωτος. Plutarch uses the same image in *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* 63c–d. In that context, Plutarch describes the flatterer as having no emotions of his own, as a negative. Here, Plutarch views such emotional mirroring as a positive characteristic of a good wife. This suggests that in Plutarch's opinion the qualities of a good wife are not the qualities of a good friend (not a surprising idea), but that question goes beyond the scope of this paper.

²⁴ Nikolaidis 1997, 79–80 argues that Plutarch says more than he means to in this comparison, claiming that in this precept “Plutarch has been trapped, I believe, by his own rhetoric, in particular by his for similes” and that the geometric figure simile is “rather uncouth and inept comparison” which ends up “wrecking the common sense of the context.” But the sense of the metaphor as a whole does not contradict Plutarch's general attitude throughout the *CP*.

²⁵ Οἱ τὰς γυναῖκας μὴ ἠδέως βλέποντες ἐσθιούσας μετ' αὐτῶν διδάσκουσιν ἐμπίπλασθαι μόνως γενομένας. οὕτως οἱ μὴ συνόντες ἰλαρῶς ταῖς γυναῖξι μηδὲ παιδιᾶς κοινωνοῦντες αὐταῖς καὶ γέλωτος ἰδίας ἠδονᾶς χωρὶς αὐτῶν ζητεῖν διδάσκουσιν. Konstan 2022, 137 offers the interpretation that this precept offers a recommendation which contrasts with the prior one: now the husband is tasked with responding to the emotional state of the wife, and she is thus given a primary role in the relationship. Konstan argues that the *CP* in general offers a much more egalitarian vision of marriage than meets the eye, and takes the ordering of these two precepts as evidence of that fact, but the text should be interpreted more straightforwardly than his esoteric method.

Here Plutarch places limitations on how much the husband can demand from his wife. Though in general she ought to conform her emotions to his, Plutarch demands that he offer some degree of reciprocity. If the spouses are to maintain emotional unity for the long haul, the husband ought to take stock of his wife's emotions. Otherwise, he will push her to pursue her own private pleasures (*idias hēdonas*). In Plutarch's model marriage, the spouses work to remove private feelings and possessions, especially those of the wife, but they must work together to achieve this aim.²⁶ So one constraint placed on patriarchy is the wife's ability to match the emotional state of her husband: he must, at least on occasion, respond to her emotional needs. He must try to make life easier for his wife, by attending to her emotions and behavior, and, even more ideally, as the invocation of Peitho in the introduction urges, either spouse can persuade the other to accept his or her own position, creating unity through persuasion rather than mere hierarchy.

This bar of occasionally acknowledging the wife's feelings is quite low, and Plutarch offers more stringent limits on patriarchy in *CP 20*. In this precept, he demands not mere occasional attention to the wife's emotions, but sympathy, so that the husband in fact feel what his wife feels. Throughout *CP 20*, he is once more urging against privatization, as he begins the precept with this declaration:

Plato asserts that happy and blessed is the city in which they hear people saying 'mine and not-mine' the least, since the citizens treat objects worthy of serious use in common

²⁶ McNamara 1999, 160 points out the paradox in Plutarch's acknowledgment of the wife's freedom while also recommending she submit to her husband's will. However, for Plutarch the wife's freedom is exercised well when she elects to submit to her husband, not for any external purpose, but for the marriage itself. In Plutarch's eyes, the wife's love pushes her to make herself one with her spouse. So when she takes Plutarch's commands as allowing "the truly superior woman to manipulate her inadequate husband," she assumes that the wife's aims are in competition with her husband's. But Plutarch's ideal wife is not interested in manipulation, which implies ends external to the marriage.

as much as possible. This sort of sound [i.e., ‘mine’ and ‘not-mine’] should be removed much more from a marriage (140e).²⁷

Implicit in this passage is the logic present throughout the *CP*, that unity makes for good marriage and privatization (here indicated by *emos*—“mine”—rather than *idios*—“one’s own”) harms marriage. He continues by comparing spouses to two sides of the same body: “Rather, just like doctors say that the blows to the left side carry the sensation over to the right, thus the wife should feel the feelings of her husband, and the husband should feel the feelings of the wife” (140e).²⁸ Both spouses are instructed to feel what the other person feels, and unlike *CP* 14 and 15, Plutarch does not prefer the husband’s feelings over the wife’s. One might be tempted to think, therefore, that for Plutarch emotional unity seems to be possible in multiple ways: if there is irresolvable conflict between how the spouses feel, the wife should defer to the husband, but if possible, they should just seek to sympathize with the other’s feelings as much as possible. However, for the husband to feel what the wife feels does not mean that his emotions are dictated by hers; that is, even if he and she should reciprocally share feelings, that does not mean that their feelings have equal standing. It just means that for the spouses to achieve the unity of a

²⁷ Ὁ Πλάτων φησὶν εὐδαίμονα καὶ μακαρίαν εἶναι πόλιν, ἐν ἣ “τὸ ἐμὸν καὶ τὸ οὐκ ἐμὸν” ἦκιστα φθεγγομένων ἀκούουσι διὰ τὸ κοινοῖς ὡς ἐνὶ μάλιστα χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἀξίοις σπουδῆς τοὺς πολίτας. πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον ἐκ γάμου δεῖ τὴν τοιαύτην φωνὴν ἀνηρῆσθαι. The relationship between marriage and the state, especially regarding the quotation of the *Republic*, will be discussed in chapter two.

²⁸ πλὴν ὡσπερ οἱ ἰατροὶ λέγουσι τὰς τῶν ἐωνύμων πληγὰς τὴν αἴσθησιν ἐν τοῖς δεξιοῖς ἀναφέρειν, οὕτω τὴν γυναῖκα τοῖς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς συμπαθεῖν καλὸν καὶ τὸν ἄνδρα τοῖς τῆς γυναικός. Here, no distinction is made between husband and wife, and they are urged to follow this injunction together. One might argue that the wife is compared with the left side of the body, and the husband with the right, thus granting some form of primacy to the husband (on the grounds that the right side of the body is the privileged one). However, if the comparison identifies either of the spouses with the left side, it would be the husband, given the structure of the comparison: just as the right side of the body feels the blows of the left, so too the wife should feel the feelings of the husband. And in any case, because Plutarch explicitly declares that both spouses should share the feelings of the other, it seems clear that neither of the spouses is to be identified with a particular side of the body.

single whole, they should not consider only their own feelings; rather, they should feel sympathy for their spouse and treat their spouses feelings as their own.²⁹ This sympathy is a stronger constraint on patriarchy than merely acknowledging the wife’s feelings on occasion; rather, the husband is instructed to feel what she feels—sympathy guides the husband’s acknowledgement of the wife’s feelings.

Plutarch continues by offering one more guiding principle for achieving mutual love. He says, “Just as ropes receive strength from each other from their interweaving, so is the community saved by both when each gives back reciprocal goodwill ” (140e).³⁰ Once more, no distinction is made in this comparison between husband and wife, and the goodwill of both is needed to preserve the well-being of the marriage. Plutarch does not explain what goodwill (*eunoia*) involves, but the term itself denotes a care for the other’s well-being. So Plutarch is instructing both husband and wife to care for each other’s well-being. This *eunoia* will definitely put constraints on how the husband is to rule the wife: he ought to act with care for her well-being. This care also gives strength to their common bond, as the image of the rope suggests; that is, their unity of mutual love, in which each seeks to be made one with the other, is confirmed by their desire for the other’s well-being.

Plutarch himself clearly sees *eunoia* as putting constraints on how the husband acts toward the wife. In *CP* 33, Plutarch qualifies the sort of rule husband has over his wife. Plutarch characterizes husband and wife as a biological whole, but not as two sides of one body, but as the composite of soul and body. He declares,

²⁹ Treating one’s spouses feelings as one’s own demands a level of reciprocation that might approach equality, but more crucial to Plutarch’s vision of marriage is that no feeling belongs solely to the husband or solely to the wife; rather, they share each other’s feelings.

³⁰ ὥσπερ οἱ δεσμοὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐπάλλαξιν ἰσχὸν δι’ ἀλλήλων λαμβάνουσιν, οὕτως ἑκατέρου τὴν εὐνοίαν ἀντίστροφον ἀποδίδοντας ἢ κοινωνία σφύζεται δι’ ἀμφοῖν.

The man should rule the wife not as master rules his property, but as the soul rules the body, feeling the same emotions and growing together with her in goodwill. For just as it is possible to care for the body without being a slave to its pleasures and desires, so too it is possible to rule one's wife while comforting and gratifying her (142e).³¹

Here the sympathy and goodwill of *CP* 20 are present once more, but unlike *CP* 20, they are recommended not to both spouses, but to the husband in particular, in his role as ruler.

Patriarchy in marriage must take the wife's feelings into account (through sympathy) and must care for her well-being (through *eunoia*). But the husband is still clearly the ruler. David Konstan argues that tension exists between *CP* 33 and the *CP* 34. Konstan argues in general that the arrangement of contrasting precepts indicates that Plutarch does not always mean what he says in the *CP*, if the reader can pay attention to the contrasts. He states the following in regard to these passages:

There is a tension here between the distinct roles that Plutarch assigns to husband and wife, by which the husband is the ruling partner and the wife ideally submits to his authority, and a competing vision of the couple as so closely united that they form a single substance, even as each retains his or her own identity.³²

Konstan seems to interpret the close unity described in *CP* 34 as affording some equality between husband and wife: they love each other so much that they view themselves as a single whole, without distinction and thus as equals. *CP* 33, however, prevents interpretations of *CP* 34 as advancing a form of equality between the spouses by showing that unequal and distinct parts (body and soul) can see their unity as a single subject, in this case, a single human being. Especially difficult for the equality-interpreters to square is the use of the phrase “growing

³¹ κρατεῖν δὲ δεῖ τὸν ἄνδρα τῆς γυναικὸς οὐχ ὡς δεσπότην κτήματος ἀλλ' ὡς ψυχὴν σώματος, συμπαθοῦντα καὶ συμπεφυκότα τῇ εὐνοίᾳ. ὥσπερ οὖν σώματος ἔστι κήδεσθαι μὴ δουλεύοντα ταῖς ἡδοναῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις, οὕτω γυναικὸς ἄρχειν εὐφραίνοντα καὶ χαριζόμενον.

³² Konstan 2022, 140. He relies on Goessler 1999 for the idea that the *CP* is arranged carefully, but he certainly goes beyond her project by arguing that dissonance in the text indicates esoteric views.

together” (*sumphuō*) in *CP* 33, as the word describing the ideal unity between spouses is “grown together,” or “of one body” (*sumphuēs*). I do not think that *CP* 33 corrects *CP* 34. Rather, in *CP* 33 Plutarch describes how husbands ought to exercise rule over their wives, and in *CP* 34, he describes how the closest sort of marital unity is accomplished. As this paper has argued, these two purposes coincide, since he sees patriarchy as a contributor to marital unity.

Nevertheless, *CP* 33 does need further explanation to show how Plutarch envisions the role of patriarchy in marriage and how this patriarchy is limited. The image preceding the body-soul image helps explain what Plutarch is arguing for:

Rich men and kings adorn themselves and the philosophers by honoring philosophers, but the philosophers who serve the rich do not make rich men more esteemed, but instead make themselves more disreputable. This fact applies also to wives: those who subordinate themselves to their husbands are praised, but those who wish to rule disgrace themselves more than their husbands who are being ruled (142d–e).³³

This image is confusing because the person compared to the rich person and king is not the husband, as we might expect in a discussion of who rules in a marital unity, but the wife. She brings herself praise by subordinating herself to the husband, just as the rich man or king receives decoration by honoring the philosopher; but the husband and she are both blameworthy if he is subject to her, just as the philosopher is blameworthy if he subjects himself to a rich man.³⁴ So, the wife, if she wishes to be identified as a good wife, should willingly subordinate herself to her husband and resist desires to rule over him. What is interesting to note, however, is Plutarch’s insistence that the wife’s position of subservience is up to her. In Plutarch’s image,

³³ Οἱ πλούσιοι καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τιμῶντες τοὺς φιλοσόφους αὐτοὺς τε κοσμοῦσι κακείνους, οἱ δὲ φιλόσοφοι τοὺς πλουσίους θεραπεύοντες οὐκ ἐκείνους ποιοῦσιν ἐνδόξους ἀλλ’ αὐτοὺς ἀδοξοτέρους. τοῦτο συμβαίνει καὶ περὶ τὰς γυναῖκας. ὑποτάττουσαι μὲν γὰρ ἑαυτὰς τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐπαινοῦνται, κρατεῖν δὲ βουλόμεναι μᾶλλον τῶν κρατουμένων ἀσχημονοῦσι.

³⁴ This comparison engages the stereotype of the parasitic philosopher, a frequent object of satire in literature of the Imperial Period. See König 2012, 244.

she is the king, she is the rich patron;³⁵ she can be unruly and even dominate her husband. In this way the image of the soul and body is clarified: the soul should acknowledge the wishes of the body and care for it (as indicated by Plutarch's use of *eunoia* and *kēdesthai*), aware of its ability to be unruly. So too the husband should care for his wife with a full realization of the willing subordination of this wife. After all, this willing subordination of the wife creates a unified whole, just as the rich man makes the judgments of the philosopher his own and as the body takes on the directives of the soul. As stated earlier, Plutarch believes that the hierarchy he establishes is not just for the purpose of masculine rule, but also marital unity.

Furthermore, as I have discussed in the introduction, the wife's deference to the husband is not just to his power, but to his reason and power of persuasion. The same applies here: the rich man honors not just any subject, but the philosopher. The wife subordinate herself to her husband's reasonability, and as Plutarch instructs both spouses in the introduction, she is instructed to persuade him if she is not getting what she wants. So, the wife in Plutarch's vision of marriage is to submit willingly, but the husband ought to "sympathize with her and grow as one with her in goodwill" (142e)³⁶, as Plutarch says in *CP* 33. Plutarch confirms that if the husband wants a willingly submissive wife, it is his duty to persuade her. He says in *CP* 12 that "Wives quarrel and cause trouble when husbands remove their luxuries and extravagance by force, but if they are persuaded by reason, they meekly put these things away and act with moderation" (139e).³⁷ The husband's patriarchal rule over the wife should not use force, but persuasion, if he wants her to submit willingly, as is necessary in the most unified marriage.

³⁵ Perhaps a nod to Eurydice social and financial status above that of Pollianus. See *CP* 8 and 20 for special references to wives of prestige and wealth.

³⁶ συμπαθοῦντα καὶ συμπεφυκότα τῇ εὐνοίᾳ.

³⁷ ἀφαιρουμένοις τοῖς ἀνδράσι βία τὴν τρυφὴν καὶ τὴν πολυτέλειαν διαμάχονται καὶ χαλεπαίνουσιν· ἂν δὲ πείθονται μετὰ λόγου, πρῶως ἀποτίθενται καὶ μετριάζουσιν.

These interpretations can be supplemented by the notion that Plutarch urges the husband to care for the wife not only for the sake of making his patriarchal rule more bearable, but that caring for the wife naturally generates unity. That is, the loving husband also seeks to be one with her as parts of a body are one, that is, just for the sake of existing as one. Caring for the needs and feelings of the wife as if they were his own is how Plutarch characterizes the highest sort of love. So it must be admitted that caring for the wife is not a mere constraint to the creation of unity in the person of the husband, but a contributor to unity *simpliciter*. On this view, the husband in Plutarch's model marriage does not merely grant concessions to his wife, but pursues unity with her by feeling what she feels and caring for her well-being.

1.4 Conclusion

For Plutarch, marriage is made good by unity, and in the *CP*, Plutarch argues that spouses should be united with respect to emotions, finances, friends, gods,³⁸ relatives, bodies, children, and knowledge.³⁹ Though this list seems comprehensive, two areas are missing. First, no consideration is given in the *CP* to how husband and wife ought to share work. It is likely that Plutarch does not see this as a source of unity for the spouses; instead, he would probably advocate for a strict division of labor between the spouses, putting the wife in charge of domestic tasks and giving the husband work outside the home.⁴⁰ Second, Plutarch does not offer any recommendations on how the two ought to participate in politics. Three explanations are possible: one, Plutarch might exclude politics from sources of unity because the wife ought not participate in politics; two, Plutarch might consider politics subsections of the intellectual and social unity he has advocated for; and three, Plutarch might exclude a discussion of politics

³⁸ *CP* 19.

³⁹ *CP* 48.

⁴⁰ So Beneker 2012, 36 and Stadter 1999.

because he does not wish to make politics the purpose of the marriage. That is, Plutarch might not believe that marriage's ultimate purpose is the welfare of the state, and so he excludes a discussion of political unity to preserve marriage from becoming merely about politics. Because Plutarch discusses women who engage in politics,⁴¹ the first option—that women and politics do not mix—seems incorrect. The second option is possible, but it seems that politics goes beyond the dimensions of philosophy and friendship that Plutarch has discussed. In the next chapter of this thesis, I will argue for the third option: that Plutarch wants to keep marriage from becoming an institution that merely serves the state.

⁴¹ Such as the dedicatee and subjects of the *Mulierum Virtutes*.

Chapter 2: External and Internal Ends of Marriage

Plutarch, as has been shown, is clearly interested in creating a strong bond between husband and wife that embraces many aspects of their common life. What remains to be shown is why Plutarch insists on such a close and thoroughgoing bond. As Cynthia Patterson has noted, Plutarch “jettisons the larger framework of cosmos, *polis*, and even (in this essay) *oikos* in the interest of emphasizing the importance of practical marital harmony.”¹ In this chapter I aim to discuss what Plutarch thinks the external ends of marriage are. I argue that Plutarch envisions the mutual fulfillment of the spouses and the increased reputation of the husband as coexisting purposes of marriage in the *Coniugalia Praecepta*. In this way, politics does not exhaust the purpose of marriage. While both spouses can achieve fulfillment in marriage, the sort of fulfillment available to the wife is limited but present.

Discovering what Plutarch believes to be the external purposes of marriage is difficult because the central purpose of the *CP* is not to discuss what Plutarch thinks the point of being married is; rather, the work is composed as pieces of advice so that spouses can be happy in marriage. However, Plutarch reveals some of what he regards as the purpose of marriage in his advice to the spouses, because his exhortations seek to engage and direct their motivations to work on their marriage. That is, if he urges them to pursue marital harmony or else suffer some external consequence, then he implicitly draws a link between the reason to have good marriage and external purposes. And this sort of implicit linking is exactly what he does in the *CP*. However, in interpreting what Plutarch regards as the external ends of marriage, one must keep

¹ Patterson 1999, 136.

in mind that a full-blown account of the external purposes of marriage is not presented in the *CP*.²

2.1 Marriage as a Testing Ground for Political Ability

One potential purpose of marriage for Plutarch is to be a proving ground for the husband's ability to order society. That is, through the proper administration of his household, a husband can show that he is capable of ordering society. This treatment of marriage as a test case for public leadership can be seen in *CP* 43:

When Gorgias the orator was discoursing about concord to the Greeks on Olympus, Melanthius said of him, 'This man gives counsel concerning concord, this man who could not in private persuade himself, his wife, and his slave, who are just three people, to be concordant. For there was, it seems, some desire of Gorgias for the slave and some jealousy of his wife (143b–c).'³

This story distinguishes between the realm of the public, which is implied in the acts of recitation (*anagignōskō*) and giving counsel (*symbolouō*), and the private (*idia*), and it draws a connection between the two in the action of creating concord (*homonoia*).⁴ Through this story, Plutarch reminds the reader once more of the importance of concord, which he prayed in the preface would contribute to the unity of the spouses (138c), but he has added some stakes to the concord:

² In this way, *CP* is unlike *Amatorius*, which is more explicit on political purposes of marriage (though it similarly does not argue that marriage is exhausted by these political concerns). See Tsouvala 2008.

³ 43. Γοργίου τοῦ ῥήτορος ἀναγνόντος ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ λόγον περὶ ὁμονοίας τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ὁ Μελάνθιος, “οὗτος ἡμῖν,” ἔφη, “συμβουλεύει περὶ ὁμονοίας, ὃς αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὴν θεραπαινὴν ἰδίᾳ τρεῖς ὄντας ὁμονοεῖν οὐ πέπεικεν.” ἦν γὰρ ὡς ἔοικέ τις ἔρωσ τοῦ Γοργίου καὶ ζηλοτυπία τῆς γυναικὸς πρὸς τὸ θεραπαινίδιον. εὗ τοίνυν ἡρμοσμένον τὸν οἶκον εἶναι δεῖ τῶ μέλλοντι ἀρμόζεσθαι πόλιν καὶ ἀγορὰν καὶ φίλους· μᾶλλον γὰρ ἔοικε τὰ τῶν γυναικῶν ἢ τὰ πρὸς γυναῖκας ἀμαρτήματα λανθάνειν τοὺς πολλούς.

⁴ In *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 8, Aristotle also points to harmony (*homonoia*) as a connecting point between public and private life (1155a and 1167a). Aristotle is an important comparandum because he describes *homonoia* as “thinking the same thing about the same person” (τὸ αὐτὸ ἐκάτερον ἐννοεῖν ὀδήποτε, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ, 1167a). This thinking the same thing about the same person is precisely what Melanthius accuses Gorgias and his wife of lacking, in thinking and feeling different things about the same person.

if the husband cannot cultivate concord in his home, he cannot be trusted to cultivate concord elsewhere.⁵

After relating this story, Plutarch offers his commentary: “Whoever is going to harmonize the state, the assembly, and his friends must have a harmonized home.”⁶ Apparently, well-harmonized marriage is not only a prerequisite for good political leadership, but also for good social life. This continuity between a husband’s private home and his public activity provides strong reasons for cultivating a good marriage—as well as for Plutarch to offer an account of a marriage bond that includes so many aspects of the spouses’s life. If the unity of the spouses is up for public examination and testing, then a husband ought to cultivate as thorough a bond as possible with his wife, to demonstrate the breadth and strength of his harmonizing prowess. This account would explain Plutarch’s insistence on the couple maintaining a single voice (that of the husband) in public expression. He declares in *CP* 11 that “just as when two notes are plucked in unison, the melody belongs to the lower note, so all activity in the household should be done with discretion by both spouses in agreement, but should show the leadership and resolution of the husband” (140c–d).⁷

In this analogy, the spouses must be in agreement (*homonoeō*)—they must have unity in “all activity”—as a prerequisite for the single public expression of the husband’s thoughts. The nouns used to describe these thoughts are important: both leadership (*hegemonia*) and resolution (*proairesis*) both carry political connotations. The spouses’ unified activity discloses to the

⁵ As Swain 1999, 95 discusses. The payoff in his view, however, is not political prestige, but the dowry that the husband receives.

⁶ εἴ τοίνυν ἡρμωσμένον τὸν οἶκον εἶναι δεῖ τῶ μέλλοντι ἀρμόζεσθαι πόλιν καὶ ἀγορὰν καὶ φίλους

⁷ Ὡσπερ ἂν φθόγγοι δύο σύμφωνοι ληφθῶσι, Διοῦ βαρυτέρου γίγνεται τὸ μέλος, οὕτω πᾶσα πρᾶξις ἐν οἰκίᾳ σωφρονούσῃ πράττεται μὲν ὑπ’ ἀμφοτέρων ὁμονοούντων, ἐπιφαίνει δὲ τὴν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἡγεμονίαν καὶ προαίρεσιν.

public the husband's political abilities, presumably for the same purpose discussed in the Gorgias story. Although in this instance Plutarch has limited the husband's primacy to the external appearance of the marriage's unity, in the rest of the *CP*, unity often means the wife's conformity to the husband's decisions. In other words, the hegemony of the husband displayed in public reveals the hegemony of the husband found in the private relationship of the spouses.

The results for the wife of this sort of public unity are stringent. It obviously entails that she not speak ill of her husband, but Plutarch adds as a further requirement that she not listen to detractors. In *CP* 40, Plutarch quotes Euripides—"The visits of bad women have destroyed me"—(143f),⁸ and then applies this as advice for wives, that they "when differences and jealousies towards their husbands open not only their doors but also their ears to such women," they ought to "shut their ears and guard against whispered slandering" (143f).⁹ In this precept, Plutarch draws complex ties between the private and public dimensions of marriage. First, he recommends that when the wife experiences disconnection from her husband, and thus their unity falls short of ideal discussed in Chapter 1, she ought to close the doors of her home. This directive has two effects: the wife is insulated from external encouragement to be frustrated with her husband; however, it also prevents the private disagreements from being aired to the public. This latter purpose is not explicitly stated by Plutarch, but elsewhere he restrains the wife from any public expression whatsoever. In *CP* 31, he declares the wife ought to "feel shame about and guard her speech to outsiders as a stripping naked, for in speech the feeling, character, and

⁸ κακῶν γυναικῶν εἴσοδοί μ' ἀπόλεσαν.

⁹ τοῦτο δ' οὐχ ἀπλῶς γιγνόμενόν ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ὅταν αἱ πρὸς τοὺς ἄνδρας διαφοραὶ καὶ ζηλοτυπία ταῖς τοιαύταις γυναιξὶ μὴ τὰς θύρας μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἀκοὰς ἀνοίγωσι. τότε οὖν δεῖ μάλιστα τὴν νοῦν ἔχουσαν ἀποκλείειν τὰ ὄτα καὶ φυλάττεσθαι τὸν ψιθυρισμόν, ἵνα μὴ πῦρ ἐπὶ πῦρ

disposition of the one speaking are seen” (142d).¹⁰ Plutarch takes for granted that the wife should not want these aspects of her person to be exposed to outsiders. Her feeling, character, and disposition are like her naked body—to be viewed by her husband alone, and not outsiders. In this way, however, she also preserves a wifely *sympatheia* with the husband, in which she matches her husband in all matters. Even if the two are in full agreement, Plutarch does not grant the wife any chance at public expression, as shown in the next precept, *CP* 32. Instead, he instructs the wife to “speak either to her husband or through her husband, not getting annoyed if, like a flute-player, she sounds more noble through another’s tongue” (142d).¹¹ Perhaps Plutarch makes a concession to the wife by likening the husband to an amplifying instrument of her own speech in the image of a flute-player, but more important is the utter exclusion of wife’s own voice from anywhere except the marriage itself. Plutarch’s advice attempts to guarantee that the marriage be perceived as unified to the public, with the result that the husband’s reputation as an effective unifier of his household be secured. And Plutarch adds a final consolation—or perhaps an exhortation—to the husband in *CP* 43 (the precept containing the Gorgias story): even if a husband’s wife behaves poorly, he can still escape with his reputation intact, because, after all, “transgressions of wives are more likely to escape the majority’s notice than transgressions against wives” (144c).¹² So long as the husband acts rightly to the wife, he might escape censure for her errors.

¹⁰ καὶ τὴν φωνὴν ὡς ἀπογύμνωσιν αἰδεῖσθαι καὶ φυλάττεσθαι πρὸς τοὺς ἐκτός· ἐνορᾶται γὰρ αὐτῇ καὶ πάθος καὶ ἦθος καὶ διάθεσις λαλούσης

¹¹ δεῖ γὰρ ἢ πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα λαλεῖν ἢ διὰ τοῦ ἀνδρός, μὴ δυσχεραίνουσαν εἰ δι’ ἀλλοτρίας γλώττης ὥσπερ αὐλητῆς φθέγγεται σεμνότερον.

¹² μᾶλλον γὰρ ἔοικε τὰ τῶν γυναικῶν ἢ τὰ πρὸς γυναῖκας ἁμαρτήματα λανθάνειν τοὺς πολλούς.

2.2 Marriage for the Mutual Fulfillment of the Spouses

Thus far I have discussed that a purpose of the thorough unity that Plutarch recommends to the spouses is that it shows the husband's ability to engage in public enterprises, whether political or social. However, that does not mean that marriage's contribution to politics exhausts its value. Simply because a concordant marriage is necessary for public leadership does not mean that its purpose is public leadership. Furthermore, declaring this as the sole purpose of marriage come at the cost of making Plutarch's lengthy commentary on the unity of the spouses, with its concerns for mutual affection and care, successful only if it prevents the wife from spoiling her husband's political career. That is, on this reading, if the marriage fails to secure the husband's political career, then despite any mutual fulfillment and happiness gained between husband and wife gained through the marriage, the marriage is a failure.

As discussed in chapter one of this thesis, Plutarch believes that in the best, closest sort of marriage, spouses pursue unity not for any external end, but for the purpose of being unified with their spouse. That is, marriage is pursued for an internal reason, for the purpose of being in the state of marriage. Although Plutarch believes the husband's political career is one purpose of marriage, I argue that the mutual fulfillment of the spouses coexists as another purpose of marriage. That is, Plutarch believes that marriage should be pursued for its own sake, without reference to its political benefits. In this way, he emphasizes aspects of marriage quite different from his philosophical forebears, especially Plato. In the *Republic*, Plato argues that in the ideal state, marriage ought to be subordinated to political concerns; Plutarch, on the other hand, avows that in ordinary circumstances, marriage is worth pursuing regardless of its political benefits. In fact, Plutarch repurposes Plato's discussion of marriage in the *Republic* to show how his viewpoint differs from that of Plato. Whereas Plato is concerned with idealistic questions and

upending traditional political institutions like marriage, Plutarch is concerned with the everyday questions of how to pursue marriage well. In this section I will show how Plutarch highlights the possibility of marriage as worth pursuing for its own sake and is not exhausted by its political purposes in his repurposing of Platonic ideas.

In *CP 20*, Plutarch quotes from *Republic V*, in which Socrates theorizes that for the city they have designed in speech, marriage, procreation, and child-raising be altered from monogamy to a eugenic program of breeding and holding children in common, at least for the guardians. Plutarch begins *CP 20* with this paraphrase of the *Republic*: “Plato asserts that happy and blessed is the city in which they hear people saying ‘mine and not-mine’ the least, since the citizens treat objects worthy of serious use in common as much as possible” (140e).¹³ Plutarch uses this reference to establish the principle that husband and wife ought to share their property totally. At first glance, it appears that Plutarch is straightforwardly using the Platonic principle of the guardians’ common property as an authority to ground his recommendations on marriage,¹⁴ but a deeper investigation yields a more complicated picture. In the rest of *CP 20*, Plutarch uses several images from the same passage in *Republic V*. He follows the quotation from Plato with this analogy: “just as doctors say that the blows of the left limbs carry over the sensation in the right limbs, thus the wife sympathizes with the husband’s concerns, and the husband with his wife’s¹⁵ (140e). This comparison to a body is exactly like Plato’s in the corresponding passage of

¹³ Ὁ Πλάτων φησὶν εὐδαίμονα καὶ μακαρίαν εἶναι πόλιν, ἐν ἣ “τὸ ἐμὸν καὶ τὸ οὐκ ἐμὸν” Εἴηκιστα φθειρομένων ἀκούουσι διὰ τὸ κοινοῦ ὡς ἐνὶ μάλιστα χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἀξίοις σπουδῆς τοῦ πολίτου. The relevant passage in the *Republic* is 5.462c.

¹⁴ Pomeroy 1999, 50. See also Goessler 1999, 103, who says, “This discussion of unreserved sharing in every area of life is crowned in no. 20 by a quotation from Plato—of special significance for Plutarch the Platonist.” Both of these interpret the use of Plato as authoritative.

¹⁵ ὥσπερ οἱ ἰατροὶ λέγουσι τὰς τῶν εὐωνύμων πληγὰς τὴν αἴσθησιν ἐν τοῖς δεξιοῖς ἀναφέρειν, οὕτω τὴν γυναῖκα τοῖς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς συμπαθεῖν καλὸν καὶ τὸν ἄνδρα τοῖς τῆς γυναικὸς,

the *Republic*. “And this city is most like a single human being,” says Socrates, “for it’s just like this: whenever the finger of one of us is in pain, the whole sharing in common, which stretches throughout the body to the soul into a single arrangement of its ruler, perceives it and altogether as a whole feels pain when one member is in pain, and thus we say that the man feels pain in his finger” (462c–d).¹⁶ Plutarch has transplanted this image, that the pain of one part of the body is shared by all its members, with alterations for the context for a marriage of two people.

Another reason to consider that Plutarch has this context of the *Republic* in mind is that he mentions begetting children in relation to sharing property in common. He says, “Nature mixes us through our bodies, so that after taking a part from each and pouring them together, it gives back an offspring common to both, so that neither spouse can divide or discern what is one’s own and what belongs to the other” (140f).¹⁷ He then goes on to say that this same mixing ought to occur in property as well as bodies. This sharing of both property and offspring just is what Plato is investigating in the *Republic*, though in radically different circumstances, and the discussion of children is especially marked in Plutarch, who, perhaps surprisingly for a treatise on marriage, spends very little time discussing begetting and raising children in the *Coniugalia Praecepta*.¹⁸ The connections of section 20 to three Platonic ideas that are all found in the same

¹⁶ ὅταν που ἡμῶν δάκτυλός του πληγῆ, πᾶσα ἡ κοινωνία ἢ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν τεταμένη εἰς μίαν σύνταξιν τὴν τοῦ ἄρχοντος ἐν αὐτῇ ἥσθητό τε καὶ πᾶσα ἅμα συνήλγησεν μέρους πονήσαντος ὅλη, καὶ οὕτω δὴ λέγομεν ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος τὸν δάκτυλον ἀλγεῖ

¹⁷ ἡ φύσις μίγνυσι διὰ τῶν σωμάτων ἡμᾶς, ἵν’ ἐξ ἑκατέρων μέρος λαβοῦσα καὶ συγγέασα κοινὸν ἀμφοτέροις ἀποδῶ τὸ γεννώμενον, ὥστε μηδέτερον διορίσαι μηδὲ διακρίναι τὸ ἴδιον ἢ τὸ ἀλλότριον

¹⁸ Goessler 1999, 110.

place in the *Republic* show that Plutarch had the *Republic*'s discussion of marriage in mind while composing *CP* 20.¹⁹

Now I will address how *CP* 20 repurposes the *Republic*. After citing Plato and before using the image of the body, Plutarch adds, “This sort of sound [i.e., ‘mine’ and ‘not-mine’] should be removed much more from a marriage” (140e).²⁰ Plutarch argues that what for Plato was a quality of the best city is even more important for a marriage. In the next three sections, I will examine how Plutarch uses Platonic imagery to describe marriage, and by doing so, contrasts his own vision of ordinary marriage—where marital unity is pursued for its own sake—with the *Republic*'s radical vision of marriage and citizenship.

2.2.1 Common Property

The application of this Platonic principle to property is most straightforwardly used by Plutarch. Just as the guardians of the best state share their property, so too will the spouses of the best marriage share their property. This principle seems to be the gist of *CP* 20, as it concludes with the following: “This sharing of money is fitting most of all for spouses, who pour out and mix together everything into one fortune, so that they not consider a part one’s own and a part the other’s, but all together their own and nothing belonging to anyone else” (140f).²¹ In the

¹⁹ Pelling 2020, 24 argues that in another passage where Plutarch references Plato, “In neither case will a reader who does not catch the reference be floundering, and that too is typical of [Plutarch’s] intertextuality. It deepens suggestions that are there anyway rather than being their sole carrier.” This typical dynamic, in which the reader need not understand exactly the textual reference in order to get Plutarch’s point, applies also here: Plutarch’s main objective in the *CP* is to give advice to the reader, and his engagement with the *Republic* is an ancillary or ulterior aim.

²⁰ πολὺν δὲ μᾶλλον ἐκ γάμου δεῖ τὴν τοιαύτην φωνὴν ἀνηρῆσθαι.

²¹ αὕτη τοίνυν καὶ χρημάτων κοινωνία προσήκει μάλιστα τοῖς γαμοῦσιν, εἰς μίαν οὐσίαν πάντα καταχεαμένοις καὶ ἀναμείξασιν μὴ τὸ μέρος ἴδιον καὶ τὸ μέρος ἀλλότριον ἀλλὰ πᾶν ἴδιον ἡγεῖσθαι καὶ μηδὲν ἀλλότριον.

Republic, to be good means to be unified,²² and the sharing of property among the guardians effects that goal (464c–d). By using this quotation about ‘mine’ and ‘not-mine,’ Plutarch endorses that position in the case of marriage.²³ The application to marriage reworks Plato’s argument by massively reducing the scope: rather than abolishing distinctions of property among a whole class (the guardians), Plutarch abolishes property distinctions just among individual couples. In this way, Plutarch invokes the same logic that to be good means to be unified (as discussed in chapter one), but now applies it to marriage. In this way he argues that unity in marriage is worth seeking in its own right, an idea Plato does not engage with in the *Republic*. By repurposing the *Republic*, which discusses marriage only insofar as it can benefit or detract from politics, Plutarch contrastingly picks out his own view as attentive to ordinary marriage and its benefits to the spouses themselves.

2.2.2 Common Body

Plutarch also repurposes Plato’s image of the body to apply it marital unity. In Plato, the body has many members, and the whole body experiences all the pain of each individual member. Such a metaphor naturally fits into the image of a city, which has many citizens and a ruler that unites and experiences the fortunes of each of the citizens. Plutarch, on the other hand, takes the image of the body and applies it to a married couple, as was outlined above. The original Platonic image focuses on the many arranged under one ruler: “the whole sharing in common, which stretches throughout the body to the soul into a single arrangement of its ruler, perceives it

²² Brown 2017.

²³ Swain 1999, 95 argues that “The payoff for the preservation of dynasties is the merging of their fortunes, and Plutarch puts this beautifully in ch. 20.” For Plutarch, however, the merging of fortunes does not seem to be the goal of marriage; rather, the merging of fortunes allows a married couple to escape jealousies and selfishness. This at least is a generous reading of Plutarch; perhaps a more cynical reader believes the whole section is intended to turn over all the fortune to the husband for the preservation of masculine power.

and altogether as a whole feels pain when one member is in pain” (462c).²⁴ One might have expected Plutarch to mirror this relationship between soul and body in characterizing husband and wife, as he does elsewhere in the *Coniugalia Praecepta*.²⁵ Wohl, arguing against interpretations that Plutarch is interested in a mutual relationship between the spouses, documents how Plutarch uses soul-body imagery to establish man’s hegemony over woman.²⁶ But in this section at least, Plutarch does not characterize man as mind and woman as body; rather, he treats them as equal sides of one body.²⁷ In fact, this characterization forgoes the body-soul imagery of the *Republic*, which conveys the feeling of a member of the body to the whole through the arrangement created by the soul.²⁸

Regardless, Plutarch has changed the image from a man and his finger to two sides of one body. This change is obviously necessary because the relationship under description is not a city of many members but a marriage of two. However, it remains unclear what this image means for Plutarch’s vision of marriage, especially in relation to the view of *Republic* Book V. The key appears to be the πολὺ μᾶλλον—“much more”—with which Plutarch transitions from talking

²⁴ πᾶσα ἡ κοινωνία ἢ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν τεταμένη εἰς μίαν σύνταξιν τὴν τοῦ ἄρχοντος ἐν αὐτῇ ἦσθετό τε καὶ πᾶσα ἅμα συνήλγησεν μέρους πονήσαντος ὅλη

²⁵ e.g., 142E.

²⁶ Wohl 1997.

²⁷ Wohl might respond that this passage is a cover for Plutarch’s real desire to set man over woman in marriage, which she characterizes as exclusive to the notion of mutual cooperation in marriage. It is unclear to me if Plutarch saw the relation between the man-as-soul and woman-as-body as excluding any mutual respect and cooperation. Patterson 2011, 20. Goessler 1999, 111 too declares that “The equal rights that Plutarch advocates for the wife are nothing like the total equality between the sexes envisaged by Plato in the *Republic*.” Goessler is right to argue that Plutarch is not arguing for total equality of the sexes, but I would hesitate to say that Plato is arguing for total equality himself: “And woman according to nature has a share in all pursuits, as do men, but in all of them the woman is weaker than the man” (καὶ πάντων μὲν μετέχει γυνὴ ἐπιτηδευμάτων κατὰ φύσιν, πάντων δὲ ἀνὴρ, ἐπὶ πᾶσι δὲ ἀσθενέστερον γυνὴ ἀνδρός 455d–e).

²⁸ The choice to forgo body-soul imagery might be for the sake of simplicity (he avoids a complicated psycho-somatic theory), or it might be to emphasize the mutual relationship of the husband and wife.

about cities to marriage. In Plutarch’s eyes, it is much more appropriate to use a bodily unity to describe the unity of spouses than the unity of a city. The intimacy of this imagery and the refusal to say “mine” and “not-mine” applies most of all to married lovers. This position is consistent with Plutarch’s use of this quotation in the *Amatorius* cited above, in which Plutarch argues that lovers mesh their souls together.²⁹ While Plato argues for a system in which sexual couplings of the guardians are made by the rulers’ matching together the best men and the best women (459d–e), Plutarch’s marriage is dependent on the mutual bond of husband and wife.³⁰ Plutarch, by applying the image of a body to husband and wife, affirms that marriage is an intimate bond between two people that meshes together their souls, not merely a means for reproducing better children or creating unity among rulers for the advantage of the city. Once more, the internal unity of marriage is regarded as worthwhile, without having to produce children or to create political harmony.

2.2.2 Common Offspring

In the *Republic*, the principle that citizens share all in common is introduced to justify the sharing of children and wives. The sharing of wives and offspring precipitates the discussion of this principle (461e), and it also concludes the discussion: “The cause of the greatest good for the city is the sharing among the guardians of children and wives” (464b).³¹ Plato argues that shared offspring (and the unity that having offspring in common generates) is the conclusion of the premise that people in the city ought to share their possessions. Plutarch, on the other hand, gives the converse argument, exchanging the premise and the conclusion; that is, he argues that the

²⁹ As Demulder 2022, 340 has argued.

³⁰ D’Ippolito 2020, 53; Georgiadou 2019, 288; Goessler 1999, 113.

³¹ τοῦ μεγίστου ἄρα ἀγαθοῦ τῆ πόλει αἰτία ἡμῖν πέφανται ἡ κοινωνία τοῖς ἐπικούροις τῶν τε παίδων καὶ τῶν γυναικῶν.

sharing of children in marriage should encourage husband and wife to share their possessions. In the same way that in generating children nature “mixes us through our bodies” and “taking a part from each pours it in common,”³² so too should married couples “pour together and mix up everything into one fortune.”³³ The argument now applies in the opposite direction: just as spouses share children, so too they ought to share their fortune.³⁴ By this reversal, the scope of the argument becomes much more narrow, constraining it to those who biologically share children; that is, generally, spouses.

This reversal returns the reader’s perspective to traditional, everyday marriage. In the *Republic*, the complicated mating scheme did not just accomplish a eugenic program; it also resulted in familial ties between the citizens: “everyone whom he encounters, he will think that he is meeting a brother or a sister or a father or a mother or a son or a daughter or an ancestor or descendent of these” (463c).³⁵ Plato applies to the bonds of the city the bonds of a family. Plutarch, by citing Plato as discussing the best city, applies to the bonds of a family the bonds of the city. One usually expects the city to be the looser bond and the family the stronger bond, and Plutarch’s ordering preserves this expectation: if a city has this quality of cooperation, the family should have it too.³⁶ This method is consistent with his usage of the same *Republic* passage in *On Brotherly Love*, where he declares, “The man in the household exhorts his brothers most of all in

³² καὶ γὰρ ἡ φύσις μίγνυσι διὰ τῶν σωμάτων ἡμᾶς, ἴν’ ἐξ ἑκατέρων μέρος λαβοῦσα καὶ συγγέασα κοινὸν ἀμφοτέροις ἀποδῶ τὸ γεννώμενον

³³ εἰς μίαν οὐσίαν πάντα καταχεαμένοις καὶ ἀναμείξασι

³⁴ cf. Goessler (1999), 103.

³⁵ παντὶ γὰρ ᾧ ἂν ἐντυγχάνη, ἢ ὡς ἀδελφῶ ἢ ὡς ἀδελφῆ ἢ ὡς πατρὶ ἢ ὡς μητρὶ ἢ υἱεὶ ἢ θυγατρὶ ἢ τούτων ἐκγόνοις ἢ προγόνοις νομιεῖ ἐντυγχάνειν.

³⁶ Patterson 1999 argues that Plutarch offers “an intimate focus on the marital relationship itself unencumbered by a concern for its larger social, political, or cosmic purposes.” This reading, in which the political and marital spheres are separated, is somewhat consistent with my own argument here about the disentangling of marriage bonds and political bonds.

the way Plato exhorts citizens to remove ‘mine’ and ‘not-mine’” (484b).³⁷ Here too Plutarch de-radicalizes Plato’s message for everyday life by applying the characteristics of a weaker bond to a stronger one, not in the reverse way that Plato does. He is arguing that one owes his brother and wife what he owes his fellow-citizens and more, but he refuses to claim that one owes his fellow-citizen what he owes his brother and his wife; this latter principle is the one Plato was trying to instill in the citizens of the *Republic*. Plutarch recycles the images of the *Republic* for an altogether different purpose: unlike Plato, Plutarch wishes to place emphasis on everyday life, on the relationships of married people and families. His choice to use the *Republic* while leaving out a larger political vision allows him to contrast his own position with that of the *Republic*: he is interested in marriage as mutually fulfilling for spouses, not as politically beneficial. In this way, he matches his approach in the *Lives*, as described by Hugh Liebert: “Plutarch develops a subtle critique of Plato’s best regime that indicates how his general approach to politics in the *Lives* will be distinct from, and more practical than, that of Plato.”³⁸ Subtle critique might be too far, but certainly in the *CP* Plutarch differentiates his own work from Plato’s as being more practically minded.

This long discussion on the images in a pivotal section of the *CP* shows that Plutarch prioritizes his belief that marriage can be a source of happiness and fulfillment for the spouses, without consideration of politics. The possibility of mutual fulfillment is present in Plutarch’s work from the beginning. Plutarch’s introduction to the work, which I discussed in the introduction of this thesis, includes the following line: “Spouses, by persuading each other, might achieve what they want from each other, and not by fighting nor being attached to quarrels”

³⁷ ὁ δ’ ἐν οἰκίᾳ παραινῶν ἀδελφοῖς μάλιστα μὲν ὡς ὁ Πλάτων παρήνει τοῖς πολίταις, “τὸ ἐμὸν” ἐξαιρεῖν “καὶ τὸ οὐκ ἐμόν.”

³⁸ Liebert 2009, 271.

(138c-d).³⁹ Here Plutarch, as he sets the direction of this work of marriage advice, shows his interest in the mutual fulfillment of the spouses. This passage shows one way in which the thoroughgoing unity of the spouses is achieved—by persuasion. A close unity, achieved by the mutual persuasion, sympathy, and goodwill of the spouses, offers the husband and wife a path to getting what they want out of their marriage. And this close unity ought to be that very thing which they want out of the marriage if they are lovers. This is a natural conclusion of *CP* 34, which advocated for loving spouses to pursue marital unity for the sake of being one, which implies that being one just is worth choosing for spouses who love each other. In this way, despite the sacrifices the wife would have to make to achieve unity (and it need not be always sacrifice, if she can persuade her husband), that very unity might be what she, and her husband, want out of the marriage.

³⁹ πείθοντες διαπράττωνται παρ' ἀλλήλων ἃ βούλονται, μὴ μαχόμενοι μηδὲ φιλονεικοῦντες.

Conclusion

In this paper I have discussed the complicated elements of Plutarch's successful marriage and the external benefits that he thinks marriage can accrue to its spouses, with the ultimate and relatively simple conclusion that he thinks marriage is good for its own sake. In writing the *CP*, it seems that Plutarch's goal was to help spouses come together for the sake of their own happiness and to show that their fulfillment in this common project depended strongly on each's willingness to relinquish his or her own private possessions. In this way, this paper contributes to the scholarly discussion by examining how Plutarch places patriarchy at the service of marital unity; rather than downplaying the patriarchal elements or making them the whole of Plutarch's concern, I hope I have shown that Plutarch offers a vision of marriage that stretches both husband and wife to unite as lovers in their everyday life.

However, it must be acknowledged that this work of idealistic yet practical ethics originates from a collision, a collision between the hard-edged world of law and tradition and the idealistic world of philosophical desire and intellectualism. The conclusions of this paper would be fruitfully supplemented by further consideration of both of these worlds: how would Plutarch's advice be practically implemented with respect to Roman law? Does his marriage advice so strongly focus on the wife's relinquishing of property because the law of his day had liberated her from traditional financial constraints? And questions remain on how Plutarch views *eros* itself: in this paper I have examined how Plutarch sees *eros*'s pursuit of unity with its beloved as characteristic of good marriage, but what he thinks *eros* is remained a secondary concern. Further work on this theme, especially in comparison to Platonic ideas on *eros* in the

Symposium and *Phaedrus*, would help clarify his use of the word in the *Moralia* as a whole.¹

Nevertheless, such concerns would constitute a much larger project, and I must rest content for now with Plutarch's conclusion that loving one's spouse brings one closer to her, and that being thus united with her is enough reason to be married to her.

¹ Beneker 2012 discusses well Plutarch's use of *eros* in the *Lives* and could provide a model for similar approaches to the *Moralia*.

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