

Compare Two Educations in *Cyropaedia*

He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear.
And you all know, security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy

Shakespeare, Hecate in *Macbeth*

Cyrus is a cold king according to Chrysantas, which is confirmed by his own laughter¹ as well as others' (VIII 4.22). One reason for that coldness could be found in his dialogue with Araspas about Panthea when he emphasized the danger of being enslaved by love, from which Strauss deduced that Cyrus' single desire for ruling.² This scene (V 1.2–18) will be elaborated as follow.

Before this conversation, Cyrus' relation with Panthea was merely indirectly administrative. We wonder what would happen if he did see her accidentally instead of being informed of her existence verbally. It is Araspas that started this conversation by asking Cyrus whether he had seen this woman. Cyrus said no and Araspas continued by giving a detailed description of Panthea's overall superiority despite her dejection³ (which enhanced her virtue) and urged Cyrus to see her by himself. Cyrus said a harder no and gave a reason which was rather a joke (that he would do nothing but gaze at her after seeing her). Araspas the youth laughed and started his philosophical speech on beauty and love.

Araspas said beauty is not sufficient to compel people to act justly if they do not wish to. Then he spoke of the word "naturally" which could be taken as "necessarily" and thus opposed "natural" to "voluntary". His first example built a connection between necessity and universality: if love is natural as fire which burns all in a similar way, it would compel all in a similar way. In fact, not everybody love the same person.⁴ Though fire burns all in a similar way, it could be caused by various firefighters and burn different things. The universality is neither of what burns nor what is burnt but how burns. We could say that it

1. Compare this laugh with his laughing at Araspas (VI 1.34).

2. Leo Strauss, *Lectures on Xenophon: A course offered in the winter quarter, 1963*, ed. Christopher Nadon (2016), 317, <https://leostrausscenter.uchicago.edu/xenophon-winter-1963-2/>.

3. She became sadder when "the oldest of us" told her Cyrus was no less good and noble then Abradatas thus would be also suitable for her. Another woman who withdrew from Cyrus' greatness is Tigranes' wife in *Cyropaedia* III 1.41.

4. The proposition is problematic for a king who aspires to be universal and benevolent and whose goal is to be loved by everybody.

is not the compelling subject (beauty or the one being loved) or the compelled object (the loving one) that is universal but the compulsion itself (love) might be universal. One remaining question is: does everybody love?

The second example Araspas gave was of incest. A brother/father would not love his sister/daughter due to “fear and law”. Love is less compulsory than law. Does law aim at compelling all in a similar way like nature? Where does the compulsion of law come from? One possible explanation is about fear. If a person obeys law because he is compelled by his fear of punishment, could this obedience still be regarded as a voluntary action?

The problem of law extends into the third example. We can divide this example into two parts: 1. The effectiveness of law (nomos); 2. The relationship between love and other bodily needs (physis).

A law could not prevent a cold person from being cold but could prevent an erotic person from committing incest. An erotic person might not be able to cease to feel (passively) the love towards the incorrect lover (like coldness). He nevertheless could keep himself from conducting (actively) unjust action towards the incorrect lover, which might cause more feeling of “bittersweet” (glykópikros). The effectiveness of human law is indeed (or only) present in voluntary human action. In the case of love, law is not sufficient to prevent the feeling of love but somewhat the action of love. The we can also see the difference between love and other bodily needs. Taking Araspas’ example, “hunger” is a pure feeling and is separated from “eat” the action. Thirst-drink. Coldness-clothe. Tiredness-rest. Love, however, includes both feeling (passivity) and action (activity).

Human beings are naturally overcome by hunger, thirst, coldness, hotness, and other alike situations. The outcome of this being overcome is bodily death. In contrast, people would not die if they do not love. To make love more bodily: people also would not die if they do not have sex. But the species would die if all the people choose not to have sex (based on today’s technology).⁵ Sex connects love with other bodily needs through death and becomes necessary like other bodily needs when it operates on a generic level.

Araspas the clothes receiver ended this speech by making an analogy between love and clothes regarding suitability, which reminds us of the tunic lesson. Is everybody able to be a matchmaker like Cyrus?⁶

Though Araspas’ argument is not very articulate it is philosophical. His statement is bold and idealistic⁷. Cyrus, on the other hand, replied with a pragmatic and empiricist attitude. Moreover, he had little interest in the process of Araspas’ reasoning and only wanted to refute Araspas’ conclusion by the

5. If I have not overlooked, there is no mention of offspring of the two erotic couples in *Cyropaedia* — Tigranes & his wife and Abradatas & Panthea. The unerotic couple Cyrus and his wife had children.

6. See *Cyropaedia* VIII 4.18 and cf. I 6.21 where Cambyses spoke of voluntary obedience: “...human beings obey with great pleasure whomever they think is more prudent about their own advantage than they are themselves.”

7. Cf. Leo Strauss, *What Is political Philosophy? and Other Studies* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 32 where Strauss spoke of fearlessness and sobriety.

empirical fact of people being enslaved by love and the defeat of volition (though he only experienced this enslavement indirectly by observation).

Araspas despised those people. There are two traits of them: 1. They act minimally: When they are in misery, the only thing they do is praying that they may die; 2. If they do act, they lose control over their desire and act unjustly: They desire gain by stealing⁸ which unfortunately predicts Araspas' own uncontrollable desire for Panthea who "belongs" to Cyrus not to mention Abradatas. Stealing is not compulsory so that it is blamable, so is wretched love. Wretched love could then be distinguished from noble love. Araspas talked confidently about human nobility, which could overcome natural compulsion and form bodily desire according to what is just. Araspas did anything but contrary to what he said. After Artabazus (who once stole a kiss from Cyrus) sent by Cyrus scolded him, Araspas "had all but perished from the fear that he would suffer at Cyrus' hands." Cyrus summoned Araspas after learning his reaction, comforted him and forgave human failing as before. Araspas was full of emotion and ready for any task ordered by Cyrus (VI 1.34–40). If we can be forgiven to ignore the possibility that Artabazus could deliver a more accurate thus more mild message to Araspas, we could say this education of Cyrus is rooted in fear, which reminds us of the trial of the Armenian in which Tigranes persuaded Cyrus that after this defeat the Armenian had immediately become moderate — the virtue derived from fear — so as to save his father's life. This parallel has certain significances and I will remind us of that scene in the following.

Benefit (III 1.14–15): Tigranes spoke to Cyrus by bringing up the problem of benefit ("shall I advise what I think is best for you"). Cyrus showed interest. Tigranes advised Cyrus not to imitate the Armenian for "he seems to you to have done wrong in everything." Cyrus began his reply mentioning justice ("δίκη", on which Tigranes kept silent during this whole conversation) and suggested if he did not imitate the unjust Armenian he would punish him.⁹ Tigranes brought the focus back to benefit — does punishment keep with your good?

Fear A (III 1.16–19): Tigranes elevated moderation to the highest virtue. Explicitly he was proposing that his father (as a possession of Cyrus) transformed from being unjust to moderate so that punishing-killing him would be harmful. Implicitly he might be telling Cyrus to be moderate in dealing with the defeated. Cyrus doubted the immediate transformation philosophically by suggesting that that "moderation" of Tigranes' father was a dubious affection/passion rather than real knowledge/prudence. Tigranes resorted to some empirical facts of defeat making people moderate and "defeat" meant be-

8. Deborah Levine Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia: Style, Genre, and Literary Technique* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 227. Gera offers some interesting observation of the connection between multiple stealing activities in *Cyropaedia* as well as other writings of Xenophon.

9. This paragraph is "sophistic". The Armenian would have been killing the people who betrayed him according to his own answer to Cyrus (I 3.12). Is "killing traitors" included in that "everything"? If Cyrus did not want to imitate who did wrong, then he should not do anything that the Armenian would do including killing traitors. Cyrus was tricked here while Tigranes chose not to follow up this sophistic — which might be irritating thus risky in the current situation — logic but switched to the topic of benefit.

ing defeated by force¹⁰ and tactics (rather than the knowledge of justice).

Fear B (III 1.20–25): Tigranes reaffirmed his idea that fear has a special relationship with knowledge. The fear which makes people moderate consists of the experience of moderate punishment and the knowledge or anticipation of intense punishment: Fear could be a peculiar genesis of knowledge.¹¹

Guilt A (III 1.26–27): Cyrus almost accepted this theory but was still concerned with the lasting effectiveness of fear. Tigranes bargained and gave several practical suggestions of compensation and constraint. Any pain caused by those moderate punishments (which is already forgiveness) would be balanced by a sense of guilt which becomes even a great benefit for future obedience.

Guilt B (III 1.28–30): Cyrus was picky: he wanted friendly obedience out of goodwill.¹² Tigranes made a bold move: turning the sense of guilt into the condition of friendship and goodwill. This sense of guilt which originates from 1) doing wrong, 2) deprivation by force, and 3) being forgiven becomes a stronger measure than mere fear.

This structure almost foreshadows the Araspas event. Cyrus intentionally or unintentionally (but Xenophon wrote that intentionally nevertheless) applied what he learned from Tigranes to the education of Araspas. The normal knowledge failed on both sides — Cyrus' suggestion and Araspas' philosophy — but this failure became extra beneficial due to the triumph of fear and guilt. It is beneficial for both the teacher and the student: Cyrus got a perfect spy while Araspas developed a theory of two souls (just like Tigranes saved his family from death and slavery while Cyrus got an ally). And we should not forget the consideration of benefit started before the actual education of fear: “this woman could become something quite opportune for us.” (V 1.17)

Tigranes' teaching was a success. But to what extent? It seems to be merely a practical thus cynical success. He first offered the possibility of benefit.¹³ Then the political virtue — moderation — proposed by Tigranes has a notorious foundation in fear¹⁴ not to mention guilt. Tigranes should know another kind

10. We could recall that little Cyrus learned the tunic lesson through not persuasion but whipping.

11. Cf. Leo Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1958), 167: “Machiavelli's return to the beginning means return to the primeval or original terror which precedes every man-made terror, which explains why the founder must use terror and which enables him to use terror...The primacy of Love must be replaced by the primacy of Terror...The beginnings of men were imperfect and low. Man is exposed, and not protected, essentially and from the beginning.”

12. Cf. *Hiero* 7.5–6.

13. If we adopt Tatum's description of the omniscient (at least politically) Cyrus, Tigranes' appeal to Cyrus' self-interest was the only argument Tigranes had thus he was merely used by Cyrus. See James Tatum, *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 145. We might treat Tatum's Cyrus with reserve for Xenophon depicted the reason for Cyrus' satisfaction after communicating with Tigranes is that “he remembered saying that he thought he would make the Armenian even more a friend than he was before.” (III 1.31) Moreover, even if Tigranes is not a wise man because he reasons “lamely” and is completely controlled by Cyrus the fashioner of strategies, Xenophon is such a man who “does not attempt futile things.” Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 187.

14. Strauss, *Lectures on Xenophon*, 270.

of virtue — virtue-knowledge — for he was close to the killed Armenian Socrates but he only mentioned that as a surplus after a dinner. We could say Tigranes' teaching is necessary but not noble.

But are we not expecting too much for even characters in a romance?¹⁵ Compared with Simonides, Tigranes communicated with Cyrus in a crisis. Being in a more hazardous and intense situation, his teaching affected immediately (though we should acknowledge that Cyrus is an improved Hiero). He understood the “philosophic politics”.¹⁶ The content of Tigranes' teaching is the power of interest, fear and guilt, but the form of it is dialectic, in another word, knowledge. Cyrus received this education primarily neither through fear nor guilt but knowledge. Could we say by keeping fear and guilt in speech, Tigranes remains a student of Socrates in deed?

Xenophon's readers receive those educations as knowledge as well. We also have the leisure to philosophize the content of those two very political educations. I would try to recycle those concepts used by Araspas, Cyrus and Tigranes in their educations to understand the symbolism of those three characters.

Araspas is a young lover of beauty thus a potential philosopher. His theory of love is a bit facile but not completely wrong: he would be a gentleman if he could act according to his theory of action of love. He values *nomos* over *physis* but his *nomos* is overcome by his *physis*. Nevertheless, in the end, when his love for Panthea triumphed over his loyalty to Cyrus, the worst crime he committed was threatening a wonderful woman: he did not carry out the content of the threat. He remained a man of speech (that might be an advantage for being a spy). After being warned, he feared naturally but still came to Cyrus instead of fleeing: loyalty triumphed over fear. We could imagine that if his object of loyalty is not Cyrus but a true philosopher, in which case the latter object of “Amicus Plato” would be much more justifiable. In his final philosophizing (which is the only mentioning of “*φιλοσοφείω*” — philosophy — in *Cyropaedia*), he replaced the hierarchy of *nomos*/reason and *physis*/desire with the one of the good soul and the bad soul.¹⁷

Cyrus is a cold king. This coldness is caused by fear: fear of being ruled. It is this fear that teaches Cyrus to be unerotic. To need is to be ruled. Cyrus doesn't want to need. The only thing he needs is the people who need him regardless of their qualities. And to feel is the first step of to need. Araspas believed in human nobility but failed by exposing to feeling while Cyrus kept his nobility

15. “A sensible man like Simonides would think that he had deserved well of his fellow men if he could induce the tyrant to act humanely or rationally within a small area, or perhaps even in a single instance, where, without his advice, the tyrant would have continued an inhuman or irrational practice...The general lesson is to the effect that the wise man who happens to have a chance to influence a tyrant should use his influence for benefiting his fellow men. One may say that the lesson is trivial. It would be more accurate to say that it was trivial in former ages, for today such little actions like that of Simonides are not taken seriously because we are in the habit of expecting too much. What is not trivial is what we learn from Xenophon about how the wise man has to proceed in his undertaking, which is beset with great difficulties and even with dangers. Strauss, *On Tyranny*, 188.

16. Strauss, 206.

17. Cf. Callicles blames Socrates for making people contradict themselves by deliberately cancelling the difference between *nomos* and *physis*. Plato, *Gorgias*, 481-487.

by radically refusing to feel¹⁸. By being less confident of human nobility, Cyrus gains more security and security leads to confidence. His superb nature makes him almost an anti-naturalist (he also respects ownership and legality). His love is only a half of love: the active love (benefiting others in a particular way), which might be also called *libido dominandi*. Cyrus' goal is to be the Overman. He more or less succeeds for he rules human beings like herdsman rules animals. But he is not Zarathustra — who is not the Overman but the father of the Overman and the ultimate subject of the Overman¹⁹, which is confirmed by his biological sons. By gazing at the corpse rather than the beautiful, Cyrus decides to be a man of thumos and gives up the opportunity to beget.²⁰

Tigranes is a wise man of certain moderation. He taught Cyrus the theory of fear. We do not know how he knew about fear. He might be taught about that by the Armenian Socrates. He might learn it by observation like Cyrus. He might improvise this theory during the conversation under pressure because of his own experience of fear. Xenophon makes us guess the source of Tigranes' knowledge. His theory of guilt is wild and should have a strong echo (at least philosophically) but is shadowed by his seemingly florid rhetoric and the context of a stressful trial. He loves his wife so much that he would rather die for her freedom. Afterward, his wife did not stay at home like Croesus' wife (VII 3.28) but campaigned with him courageously, which was acknowledged by Cyrus (VIII 4.24): Her supposedly womanly nature was changed. He became silent after the trial and spoke again only of being silent in one sentence: “Never be surprised, Cyrus, if I am silent, for my soul has been made ready not to deliberate but to do whatever you order.” (V 1.27) As Strauss points out, Tigranes obeys Cyrus both in deed and speech but with reserve somewhere else.²¹ He is quite mysterious.

The only ones whom Cyrus could not beat effortlessly is the Egyptians.

18. Cf. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Proposition 42, Scholium: “The ignorant man, besides being driven hither and thither by external causes, never possessing true contentment of spirit, lives as if he were unconscious of himself, God, and things, and *as soon as he ceases to be passive, he at once ceases to be at all*. On the other hand, the wise man, insofar as he is considered as such, suffers scarcely any disturbance of spirit, but being conscious, by virtue of a certain eternal necessity, of himself, of God and of things, never ceases to be, but always possesses true spiritual contentment.”

19. “Then was there again spoken unto me without voice: ‘What matter about thyself, Zarathustra! Speak thy word and succumb!’ And I answered: ‘Ah, is it MY word? Who am I? I await the worthier one; I am not worthy even to succumb by it.’” Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, “The stillest Hour”.

20. Plato, *Symposium*, 206b. Cf. Strauss' comment on the relationship between beauty and the good, thumos and eros in Leo Strauss, *On Plato's Symposium* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 241–247. I am curious about Strauss relates thumos with the love of one's own and what does that mean for a universal king. Could we say that this king aims at the ultimate ownership of the world as a result he is the king with the most thumos? If thumos means repelling the hostile, would the end of the king be no thumos at all? Strauss also opposes the love of one's own and begetting to the highest form of eros — beholding the good. Speaking metaphorically, what if begetting happens in the unconscious or in the case of orphanage?

21. Strauss, *Lectures on Xenophon*, 320: “He does not say that Cyrus is the natural ruler or that he is filled with eros for Cyrus.”

The pious Cyrus almost got killed by the ultra-pious Egyptians. Towards the end of the battle, the Egyptians did nothing but suffered. We might say this Xenophontic equivalent of Christianity has a clue in Tigranes as well as Araspas. Maybe a pious anti-naturalist is less pious than an impious naturalist. Maybe fearing less being ruled is more courageous than ruling with fear.

References

- Gera, Deborah Levine. *Xenophon's Cyropaedia: Style, Genre, and Literary Technique*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Strauss, Leo. *Lectures on Xenophon: A course offered in the winter quarter, 1963*. Edited by Christopher Nadon. 2016. <https://leostrausscenter.uchicago.edu/xenophon-winter-1963-2/>.
- . *On Plato's Symposium*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- . *On Tyranny*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- . *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1958.
- . *What Is political Philosophy? and Other Studies*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- Tatum, James. *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.