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Ch. 6. Education for the Good Life: The Schools and the Philosopher as Wise Man.*

Introduction.

The teaching of the schools in the Hellenistic period centred on the notion of the Good Life. Philosophy was after all the Art of Life (Ars Vitae) and the philosopher as wise man was considered the ideal model and moral teacher of that life.

The acquisition of the happy life was predicated on the acquisition of knowledge. Thus the tenet that Virtue is Knowledge was accepted by the schools as axiomatic. Virtue can be taught, for the getting of wisdom was an educative process and the school philosophers were its teachers. Whether the good life was to be found in active participation in politeia, wealth, art, knowledge, contemplation, pleasure or virtue, the schools each offered a paideia of the summum bonum. In the form of wise man, the schools theorised the philosopher as: ethical teacher, advisor, culture bearer, hero, saviour, king and even god.

This chapter examines the teaching of the schools as it was embodied in their theorisation of the philosopher-teacher as wise man.
6.1. The Academy and the Philosopher-King.

For the Greeks paideia meant basically politeia. * Schooling in the political culture of the polis was the primary function of its educative institutions. It was their business to prepare their students for political life. For a polites, the ethical life was intimately tied with political life. This was taken for granted. Both sophists and philosophers as professional educators claimed to teach political virtue. It was on the means that they primarily differed. In higher education, in the Academy, in Isocrates' school, the Minor Socratics, and the Lyceum, the nexus between paideia and politeia was not simply a theoretical one but a real attempt on the part of educators to realise their teaching in practice. The practical part of the nexus was in the training of youths for political life.

We have ample evidence of this in the Academy's own political activities as Plato tried to implement his teachings regarding the philosopher-king. It is sometimes forgotten that over half of Plato's works deal with political problems; and, in two of his longest works, the Republic and Laws, politeia is his chief concern. Plato's attempt to turn Dionysius II into a philosopher-king has been more than sufficiently dealt with in scholarship to require further attention here, (1) although a consequence of the emphasis that the episode has received, has been to obscure the fact that this case, the personal project of Plato himself, was by no means all that there was to the
Academy's political activities abroad. Plutarch's (2) and Athenaeus' (508d) lists of Academic "Lycurguses and Solons" (Plut. Ad. Col. 1127c), court-philosophers, advisors, rulers (mostly tyrants) and tyrannicides provide material for a more balanced picture.

At the same time that Plato was engaged with Dionysius II, the Academy was also establishing political links with Macedon and with Greek cities, especially through its alumni. Plato was able to advance Euphræus, a disciple trained in politics, to the court of Perdicas III of Macedon where he became an influential member of the advisory council. (3) Plato apparently rejected offers to legislate for cities, (eg. Cyrene) (4) but there are instances where he offered advice, (5) or was represented by former pupils or himself recommended disciples to legislate, advise and reform poleis. Thus Leodamas, a graduate of the Academy, was involved in the reformation of his native Thasos. Plato further recommended Socrates the Younger to Thasos, though nothing came of it. (6) Aristonymus was recommended to the Arcadians, (7) Phormion to the Elians (8) and Menedemos to his native Pyrrha. (9) The most famous and successful case of reformation was that of Eudoxus legislating for his city of Cnidus. (10) Coriscus and Erastus were other instances of Academic graduates forging successful political careers abroad. These two became intimate friends and advisors to the tyrant Hermeias of Atarneus (11) who gave them Assos to administer. After Plato died, Aristotle and Xenocrates left Athens and visited these Academic philosopher-rulers.
Then there were the various tyrants and tyrannicides. There is Dion, who with the aid of the school made himself tyrant of Syracuse, and Calippus his Academic associate who murdered him and briefly took his place. Other cases exist where former Academic pupils made themselves tyrants and where they were often assassinated by other members of the Academy. (12) Thus Clearchus, tyrant of Pontic Heraclea c.364 B.C. (13) was overthrown and assassinated in 353/2 b.c. by Chion and Leonides of Heraclea, former pupils of Plato and main instigators of the coup. Dusanic (14) says that "the murder seems to have been at least partly inspired by esprit de corps: the desire to save the face of the school, compromised by Clearchus' despotism". The school looked after its own, one way or another. In the tradition of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, tyrannicides were often honoured as liberators and saviours, and this is how the Academy viewed its own tyrannicides. In 360/59 B.C. another pair of Academics, Python and Heracleides of Aenus killed Cotys, tyrant of Odrysis and were honoured publicly with citizenship in Athens. (15) Scholars have pointed to the "kill and banish" passage (293c. ff) of Plato's Statesman as an instance of the Academy's theoretical justification of its own tyrannicides. Plutarch puts these Academics on the same par as its reformers, legislators, advisers, etc, while Athenaeus paints a contrasting picture of would-be philosopher-kings who were, in reality, cruel tyrants. (16) Such were Chaeron of Pellene, a vicious despot; Timaeus of Cyzicus and Euaeon of Lampsacus who unsuccessfully tried to usurp power in their native cities.
Diogenes Laertius (III.46) lists them all as Plato's pupils.

These examples and others more than illustrate the Academy's preoccupation with politics, and not simply at the theoretical level. As his works show, Plato was intensely preoccupied with the subject. His ideal of the philosopher-king was the result of the school's theory and practice of politeia. The philosopher was not just an educator, or a lover of wisdom. He had to return to the cave, (socio-political life of the sensible world) and rule by virtue of his wisdom. After a life spent in study, learning and the acquisition of knowledge, (17) the philosopher was considered the best qualified person to rule. (18)

Until philosophers become kings in this world, or until those we now call kings and rulers really and truly become philosophers, and political power and philosophy thus come into the same hands... it is not easy to see that there is no other road to real happiness, for either society or the individual. (19)

The educational programme of the philosopher-king expounded in the Republic, Book VII, may ultimately be an ideal one, but it was not for lack of effort that it was not realised in practice. (20) We have already noted this above. Marrou (21) calls the Academy "a seminary for philosopher-kings and advisors" and Chroust, (22) "a political institute" where a person could graduate with skills in the latest techniques for political office. Although somewhat of an exaggeration, it is not all that far from the mark. It is

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important to keep in mind that higher education, being a private and costly enterprise, was reserved for the minority ruling class culture where its youth, comprising the student population of schools like the Academy, were further initiated in the dominant culture. This was the philosophy of how to rule. Political life was the outcome of higher education. In Plato's Academy they received general as well as specialised and sophisticated training in political theory and practice.

In his later years Plato modified his ideal of the philosopher-king, and in his last work the Laws, the city-state that is theorised is a falling off from the ideal politeia of his earlier Republic. It is the second best state possible and is governed not by philosopher-kings but by a nocturnal council of legislators who enforce the rule of law. Rather than ruler, the philosopher is advisor, reformer, all-round citizen. There were not a few Academicians who were active politicians, and as such they had a much greater success in the political arena. Plato was accompanied by Speusippus and Xenocrates on his second Sicilian visit. During Dion's expedition against Dionysius II, many Academicians took part. Aristotle (c.350s) made overtures to Themison, prince of Cyprus, advising him to study geometry and philosophy. (23) Speusippus continued to cultivate the Macedonian rulers, recommending his pupil Antipater of Magnesia to Phillip II. (24) At about the same time, (c.343/2 b.c.) Aristotle became tutor to Alexander. Xenocrates maintained the school's ties with Macedon, serving on an embassy to Phillip (D.L.IV.8-9) and as envoy
to Antipater. (D.L.IV.9) He wrote a work on kingship specifically for Alexander, (25) and the latter, showered him with gifts, as did Antipater. (D.L.IV.8,11) We also come across a certain Delias of Ephesus, an Academic and active member of Alexander's staff. (26) Professional service in city politics or at court especially, was a growth area which the schools capitalised on. The students of the schools graduated into political life, although school philosophers themselves progressively started to retreat from active socio-political life and into full-time professional education. This was part of the process of division in the professions and the specialisation in intellectual labour; of the work done by the philosopher, rhetor, physician, scholar, politician, and others. The third and fourth generation Academics: Polemo, Crates, Crantor and associates demonstrate this by their specialisation in teaching, and this with a view to practical ethical concerns. Active politics played little part in their own lives. Xenocrates was noted as a severe moralist; Polemo for his sobriety and insensibility, in stark contrast to his early life of revelry and dissipation. (D.L.IV.17-8). The Academy was now drawn fully into the Hellenistic age where the equation, - Virtue is Knowledge, - was retheorised not with a view to active politeia, for most Greek cities no longer enjoyed political autonomy, but with a view to personal and individual conduct within a cosmopoliteia. This was particularly so of Academic Sceptics. (see ch.6.2 below). The ethical life, which was the good life, became the main concern of
philosophy. Virtue as knowledge was an ethical consideration and essential for happiness. (27) For Polemo it was living according to nature and in accepting her gifts. (28) Diogenes Laertius represents these Academics as retiring and his account of their lives revolves around their personal and professional roles as educators; as ideal moral examples and models of the wise man as teacher.

6.2. The Academy and the Thoroughgoing Sceptic.

The advent of thoroughgoing negative scepticism in the Academy under its sixth head, Arcesilaus, had fundamental consequences for the school in its subsequent history. In his reformulation of Academic teaching, Arcesilaus made *epoche* (suspension of judgement) the *telos* of philosophy and of the good life. (S.E.P.H.I.232) Happiness was a by-product of the epistemological search for truth ending in suspension of judgement. It was pure theory that was put forward as a guide on how to live the life of leisure.

The most interesting aspect of the teaching of Academic scepticism is that the school offered this new philosophy as a competing alternative of the good life. At the level of theory, at any rate, the Sceptic wise man was no less possible than a Stoic or Epicurean one, and this is where the battle was fought, not in any detailed consideration of how the wise man translates in practice. Certainly the *Stoicorum paradoxa* (see 6.5 infra) regarding the wise man were no less suspect, though they were certainly more extravagant claims, in theory and practice
than the sceptic position on the wise man, knowledge and ethics.

To talk of a thoroughgoing sceptic as a wise man is itself a contradiction. Wisdom for a sceptic could at best be a kind of disposition, attitude or state of mind. It consisted not in the acquisition of knowledge, since this was impossible on sceptical grounds, but in the act of epoche itself. The sceptical paradigm of the wise man was itself a product of the dominant model of philosophical theorising which was predicated on that of the philosopher as wise man, a response to rival formulations within the framework and, as are all negative epistemologies, parasitic on that very framework. It was most effective as refutative polemic of the views of others. In the form of statements (guarded ones) (1) about what makes a sceptic wise in a "non-dogmatic" sense, the view was that: based on an examination of positive claims to knowledge, the sceptic, showing them all to be contradictory or absurd and, weighing all things equally, suspends judgement by withholding assent. The sceptic wise man is therefore one who suspends judgement and is therefore not deceived. This produces peace of mind, a state of well-being.

Regarding practice itself, Academic sceptics could offer little in the way of official positive doctrine. This would have been fatal to their whole enterprise. Arcesilaus settled for a strengthened version of Stoicism's to eulogon (the reasonable). (2) while Carneades could not be pinned down on any definite position one way or the other. (3) In any case, subsidiary theories of action,
whether they were an appeal to common sense, the reasonable, or the probable or assent to phenomena, played a modest part in Sceptic theorising and teaching, which was confined mostly to polemic.

The reason why Academic sceptics were able to spend so much time in considering the purely theoretical (mental) aspects of the makeup of the wise man and living the good life has to do with the very activity in which they were themselves engaged; namely, the practice of such a life which they recommended and endorsed as the best. It also has to do with the nature of the framework where epistemology was both the starting point and justification of ethics. Epistemology, with logic at its centre, became the main part of the debate, just about displacing ethics from the scene. It became the dominant mode of philosophising, made possible by the clear separation between theory and practice with the former dominating. That is the reason why a thoroughgoing negative epistemology with an impoverished ethical theory was able to dominate the teaching of a school for two hundred years, as well as to significantly influence philosophical developments outside the school. It was mental labour for its own sake. This was the teaching of the Sceptical Academy; and, as our sources inform us, a most prosperous time for the school. Adhering to a strict division between theory and practice, the social life of the sceptic wise man was kept separate from his professional life, both being pursued and justified separately. Thus, despite their philosophy, Academic sceptics like Arcesilaus led very
active social lives. Arcessilus was a model dialectician, teacher, friend and diplomat. (4) Princes and kings were his pupils and associates. (5) The kings of Pergamum were the school's patrons (6) and Academic graduates no doubt found favour with them. (7) Arcessilus recommended pupils to the court of Eumenes. Another Academic, one Panaretus, went to the court of Ptolemy III. (Athen.552c) Lacydes sent his pupil Euphorion of Chalcis to Antiochus III. (8) In the Hellenistic period, when political disputes were more often than not settled by arbitration, philosophers at times found themselves serving on embassies. Arcessilus (D.L.IV.39) and Carneades did this.

However, despite these occasional forays into high level politics, the social life of the sceptic philosopher was mostly concerned with his role as professional educator. The school was still engaged in educating youth for public life. Its rigorous polemic and method of arguing pro and con everything made it an ideal technique for training orators, politicians, lawyers and rulers. Cicero noted this especially. (De Orat.III.80) Academic scepticism offered a powerful dialectic and this is where the value lay for its students who could take or leave its ethical system. Carneades scandalised the Roman senate with his speech against justice the day after he had delivered a lecture in defense of it. (Lact.Div.Inst.V.14.3-5, Epit.50.8)

Academic Sceptics were thus professional educators who espoused a negative epistemology for its own sake. Virtue is knowledge; but for a Sceptic knowledge is not possible,
so this form of the equation breaks down. For a Sceptic, then, virtue would have to lie in _epoche_. Ethics was a matter for logic (epistemology) to solve. It was a theoretical problem to be worked out at leisure, a mental game of chess and above the exigencies of day to day living. This is why Academic scepticism continued for so long: the sharp separation between theory and practice, between mental and manual labour made possible by the surplus wealth of others (9) that was appropriated for the pursuit of a non-productive life devoted purely to mental culture.

6.3. The Lyceum: _Theoretikos_ vs _Praktikos_ _Bios_.

Like his teacher Plato, Aristotle grew up and was educated within a _polis_ ideology where the link between _paideia_ and _politeia_ was taken for granted. Aristotle, as long time member of the Academy, built up over the years a career not only as teacher, author and researcher, but also as a man of action: as ambassador, lawgiver, royal-tutor and court-philosopher.

This dual and at times contradictory role that Aristotle played received substantial theorisation in his works, manifesting itself in the tension between the political life of the citizen and the contemplative life of the philosopher: where the _bios praktikos_ was at odds with the _bios theoretikos_; _phronesis_ with _sophia_.

This ambiguity, which was not entirely resolved by
Aristotle himself, did not go unnoticed in the school or by rivals and some heated debates resulted over the years. I think it had to do with Aristotle's own activities both as philosopher and as man of affairs. As he says: "Man is a political animal", (1) and for him, the ethical life is a political life where the purpose of politeia is to provide the happy life (life of leisure) for as many citizens as possible. Ethics, a practical science, thus belongs to the branch of the science of politics. (2) Its telos is the happy life. On the level of the political life it belongs to practical wisdom. This is phronesia. (3) External goods such as wealth, health, friends, beauty, leisure, etc. are useful, though not indispensable. (4) As with all forms of knowledge, the acquisition of political wisdom and the happy life are not a matter of divine or natural gift, though the capacity is endowed by nature, but are something which must be learnt through teaching and training. It is an educative process. The Virtues (N.E.II-IV) are acquired through practice until they become a habit (hexis). That is why children are not capable of the happy life, being too young and lacking in education. (5)

All studies and undertakings are directed to the attainment of some good... (N.E.I.IV.1)

To criticise a particular subject, therefore, a man must have been trained in that subject: to be a good critic generally, he must have an all-round education. Hence the young are not fit to be students of political science... (N.E.I.III.5-8)
Here we have the pedagogical justification of Aristotle's own teaching practices. He accepted the tenet that Virtue is Knowledge, that virtue can be taught. A person who knows can teach and "the sign of knowledge or ignorance is the ability to teach". (Met.I.I.9-10) Aristotle was in the business of paideia. But before he settled in Athens to a regular teaching job, he had spent the years between 347-335 in Assos, Mytilene, and Macedon as court-philosopher and researcher. This was Aristotle the practical citizen theorised in the Nichomachean Ethics, Book I. Depending on the hospitality of kings and patrons did not make for an autonomous, self-sufficient life spent in uninterrupted leisure and it is no wonder that in Book X of the same work we get a severe rebuttal of the practical life and of the good life based on politeia and practical wisdom (6) in favour of the contemplative life based on sophia. (7)

In line with his view of philosophy (see ch.2.3) and its division into theoretical, practical and productive disciplines, Aristotle's conception of sophia and of the wise man receives its clearest expression in the life of the philosopher engaged in pure thinking for its own sake. The uninterrupted life of the intellect in thinking and contemplation is the telos of philosophy. Wisdom consists in knowledge of universals and this type of life constitutes a state of happiness. (N.E.VI.XII.5)

Hence it is clear that Wisdom must be the most perfect of the modes of knowledge. The wise man therefore must not only know the conclusions that follow from his first principles, but also have a true conception of
these principles themselves. Hence wisdom must be a combination of intelligence and scientific knowledge. (N.E.VI.VII.3 seq)

The happy life thus becomes the intellectual life. It has no other end, being self-sufficient. This had important consequences for the pedagogical and social life of the philosopher-wise man which was based on a life of leisure. Learning is a pleasant activity (8) and a natural condition of the soul. (9) In the school it meant the uninterrupted pedagogical activities of teaching and research practices. The philosopher will spend as much of his time as possible in contemplation, and a good part of this time will be spent in producing justifications as to why it is right that he should do so, for the life of the intellect is akin to the life of God. (10)

The activity of God, which is transcendent in blessedness, is the activity of contemplation, and therefore any human activity which is most akin to the divine activity of contemplation will be the greatest service to happiness. (N.E.X.VIII.7)

Among the alternative ideals of conduct, they [the Peripatetics] gave the highest place to the life of retirement, devoted to contemplation and to study. This was pronounced to be the most worthy of the wise man, as most nearly resembling the life of the gods. (Cic.Fin.V.4.11)

The justification of intellectual labour in the conception of the life of the philosopher as the life of
the intellect is well summed up in the *Metaphysics* (I.I.17-II.1.1.seq) where knowledge for its own sake constitutes the highest wisdom and the philosopher-wise man is the ultimate human being. This translates in social life as: *knowledge is power*, for "the wise man should give orders, not take them; nor should he obey others, but the less wise should obey him". (*Met*.I.II.13) This was clear legitimation of pedagogic authority. It was further defense of the not so pure intellectual life of Aristotle, his associates and students; that is, of their participation in political life. In addition to purely theoretical reasons, appeals were made to common sense also in that insofar as we are mortal and live in *politeia*, (*N.E*.X.VIII.6) we should take part in it; and who is better qualified to engage in politics than an educated person?.

Aristotle, who was a metic in Athens, and through his close ties with Macedon (11) could not ignore the political situation of the day, having, for instance, to quit Athens after a charge of *asbeia* was made against him in 323 b.c.. As noted in chapter 1.4. (12) the Lyceum was more than once the target of anti-Macedonian outbursts. The Peripatetetics themselves were by no means pure exponents of the contemplative life. On the contrary, many of them adopted the practical life (13) as a career and in the likes of Demetrius of Phalerum, we have the best representative of the educated man of action: orator, statesman, ruler, philosopher and scholar. (14) The Lyceum was an expert institution when it came to producing such persons. Its graduates were very successful in political life,
especially in the service of the diadochoi. The Macedonian and Pergamene rulers, the Ptolemies, Seleucids, and others, patronised the school. Ptolemy I sought Theophrastus (D.L.V.37) who sent Strato instead as court-philosopher and royal tutor to Ptolemy II. (D.L.V.58, 60) Hieronymus and Lysimachus were at the courts of Antigonus Gonatas (15) and Antiochus respectively. (D.L.V.67-8) Just as school philosophers and their students were competing for positions in the bureaucracy, Hellenistic rulers themselves engaged in keen rivalry in their acquisition of philosophers and other intellectuals, as they were in accumulating books for their libraries, and cities to their empires. As court philosophers and men of affairs Peripatetics made excellent candidates. Lyco is a good example. He was a model of the philosopher as cultured gentleman; a man of the gymnasium, symposium and of public affairs. (D.L.V.6 ff) Lyco and his successors continued to represent the rhetoricopolitical tradition of the school rather than its scientific work. Diogenes (V.65-6) calls him a master of expression and a stylist (16) who probably did not endorse the contemplative life as the telos of the good life. (17)

The Peripatetics were not as a rule as doctrinaire as were their Stoic and Epicurean rivals, although as they, too, were drawn into the debate regarding teaching and the wise man, they appealed to different aspects of the Aristotelian legacy whether it was the political, ethical or scientific tradition of the school's philosophy to justify pedagogy.
6.4. The Garden and the Disinterested Philosopher.

The Macedonian rule shattered the Greek polis worldview and made many of its political institutions redundant. It also made the ideological representation of those institutions obsolete and the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle dated. They could do little to inform policy and practice or aid the restructuring of new institutions. Emerging institutions such as the rule of monarchy, the influx of mystery cults and religions, new structures of administration and law, a professional army, etc. needed new justifications.

The practice of the apotheosis of kings was one way to legitimate monarchy. The reaction of the propertied classes was to align themselves to the new state of affairs. The schools of philosophy followed suit by offering legitimations of the dominant Hellenistic culture; after all this is where the sons of rulers and of the ruling class in general went to school.

In an age where the gap between the rich and the poor was getting wider, where Tyche became an influential deity, and where the feeling that anything could happen to anyone at any time was a constant cause for anxiety to people and hard to dispel, it was thus no surprise to find people preoccupied with ways of securing their own personal safety. In philosophy a materialist ontology and empiricist epistemology predominated, replacing the idealistic metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle. Parmenides' static
ontology was dropped in favour of a revival of Heraclitus' ontology of flux and Democritus' atomism. In line with the Greek habit of constructing isomorphisms between their socio-political existence and their view of reality, and in the wake of the collapse of traditional forms of politeia, it is not too difficult to see why Hellenistic people identified themselves more readily with displaced and individual free moving atoms in a cosmopolis that was in a state of flux. As a result there occurred the sharp increase in religious, political, private, social and literary clubs and associations which flourished. The cult of Asclepius is an example of this.

The school of Epicurus was one such association where through the medium of paideia, its members were offered a means to the good life. Frischer (1) puts it well when he says that "Epicurus attempted to make conscious the hitherto unconscious practices of healthy men". It became the business of the school to provide its members with a philosophy of physical and mental well-being. (Cic.Fin.I.20.71) It did this with its philosophy of hedone. (2)

We call pleasure the alpha and omega of a blessed life. Pleasure is our first and kindred good. (X.129) When we say, then, that pleasure is the end and aim... we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul. (D.L.X.132)

In direct contrast to the philosophy of the Academy and Lyceum, Epicurus located the good life not in any search for immortality, (3) political office or knowledge for its
own sake, but in the quiet pursuit of hedone which led to tranquility and peace of mind: happiness.

He who has a clear and certain understanding of these things will direct every preference and aversion towards securing health of body and tranquility of mind, seeing that this is the sum and end of a blessed life. (D.L.X.128)

Epicurus took a major step when he separated ethics from politics, rejecting the latter as being positively harmful to one's well-being. He negated Aristotle's definition: "Man is by nature a political animal" with his own: "Man is not by nature a political animal". For Epicurus paideia did not culminate in politeia. The ideal of politeia was, for Epicurus, the minimum of government; whereas for Plato, it was the maximum. This is the difference between the two. Thus his strictures of don't engage in politics and live unnoticed. Nor was the ethical life identified with the search for pure knowledge. Wisdom was not the end of philosophy, hedone was. (4) Epicurus chose phronesis over sophia (D.L.X.132) that is, the practical over the theoretical bios and stressed the importance, contra Stoicism for example, of the importance of the social and interpersonal life of a community bound together by friendship and intimacy. Unlike the Stoic, the Epicurean wise man was very much a reality for the faithful, for he was Epicurus himself and no rare self-sufficient phoenix, needing no friends. (5) Furthermore, for Epicurus, Virtue was Hedone, not Knowledge, (6) for hedone was the sine qua non of virtue. Knowledge was not
pursued for its own sake but for the sake of *hedone*. The Virtues themselves converged in the life of pleasure. (D.L.X.132) His concern for physical investigations, his study of the human condition, of political society and rival philosophies was intended to inform his followers on how to live the simple life of *hedone*. (7)

Given this, Epicurus' philosophy was also a *haeresis bios*, a mode of life which was exemplified by the philosopher as wise man, a title which Epicurus arrogated to himself. While both Plato and Aristotle talked of themselves as philosophers and the Stoics theorised an ideal wise man to which they aspired but found very hard to live up to, the Epicureans freely and readily conferred the title of sage to its diadochoi and, in some cases, to senior members of the school, and these no doubt included its women philosophers. Thus the use of the masculine gender to designate a wise person in the school may well have been a generic one. The same thing cannot be said for the other schools.

Epicurus' view of the wise man as summarised by Diogenes Laertius(8) is notable for its opposition to that of the rival Cynic, Stoic and Academic models.

he will be more susceptible of emotion than other men (X.117) [namely Stoics] ... he will not take part in politics... nor will he make himself a tyrant [as Academics do] ... nor will he turn Cynic... [or] mendicant... (X.119) he will be a dogmatist, but not a mere sceptic (X.120).

His definition of the *telos* of philosophy was a negative
response in the form of: "to be free from [bodily and mental] pain and fear, and, when once we have attained all this, the tempest of the soul is laid". (D.L.X.128) Epicurus responded to these sorts of problems by constructing a model of the wise man who was to serve as teacher, friend, culture-bearer, father-figure and saviour. (9) Unlike previous efforts by others, he did not construct so much an ideal city-state as an ideal wise man whose life was an undisturbed state of blessedness (to makarion). Like the Gods who do not rule the universe but enjoy living in it without care for human affairs, the wise man seeks also to withdraw from the world, not to rule it. Thus Epicurus projected his ideal community into the past to a time of simplicity and association based on friendship. (10) Nor is it an accident that the Epicurean wise man in his happiness resembled the Gods. (11) The school's teaching centred around Epicurus as educational and social model. Everything was referred back to him for authority. The philosophy acquired something of the character of a Gospel for its believers and was held to be the only path to the good life. (12) It had great success in propagating itself outside the school. Considering the present day culture as by and large antithetical to the good life, (13) Epicurus' attitude to it was a practical one of mutual peaceful co-existence and of minding one's own business. (14)

When tolerable security against our fellow-men is attained, then on a basis of power sufficient to afford support and of material prosperity arises in
most genuine form the security of a quiet private life withdrawn from the multitude. Maxim.14.

Within the comfort of their Garden, the Epicureans went about their usual business of leading the quiet life. It was an educative process (15) where the idea of a succession of sophoi was also a pedagogical device in ensuring the transmission of doctrine for future generations.

6.5. The Stoa, Virtue and the Wise Man.

As in the other schools, the Stoa based its teaching on that of the model of the wise man. Philosophy in Antiquity was considered first and foremost a hairesis bios, (a mode of life) not just an abstract body of doctrine. Wisdom was the art of life and the Stoa claimed to teach it. (1) The wise man became the supreme moral example of ethical conduct and the ideal educative model. All the schools accepted this. (2) The Stoics also accepted the dictum that Virtue is Knowledge (3) and that it was the task of philosophy to teach it. (4) The Stoa thus characterised itself as a place where virtue is taught. This was the study of philosophy based on knowledge of things human and things divine with virtue and the good life as its end. (5) This was all the more important, because the Stoic view of humans as tabula rasa at birth committed them to nurture as opposed to nature regarding the ethical attributes of persons. The Stoics held that although we are born with a share of reason (divine logos)
and the capacity for virtue, we are by no means born wise and virtuous. This is something that needs to be developed through learning, study and teaching. (6)

Thus, addressing themselves to the same problem of: How is one to live?, the Stoics, too, adopted the model of the wise man around which to base their teaching. In contrast to both the Epicurean, Academic and Peripatetic models, Zeno and his successors offered a contrasting theory of virtue, the wise man and the good life. Their view of the good life was captured in the formula: homologoumenos zen kata physin (life according to nature). (7)

Zeno was the first... to designate the telos "life in agreement with nature"... which is the same as a virtuous life... for our individual natures are parts of the nature of the whole universe. (D.L.VII.87) Following a strictly materialist ontology, (8) the Stoics defined virtue as "the permanent internal state (diathesis) of the ruling faculty of the soul (hegemonikon)". (9)

The Stoic wise man is perfect. He has complete knowledge of things and provides an unconditional guarantee of the good life. (10) His virtue is absolute and his possession of it makes him totally autonomous and self-sufficient. (11) Virtue is the only good and all that is required for happiness. (12) This conception of virtue led to the drawing of sharp distinctions in ethical issues, for example, between the virtuous (the wise) and the rest, between good and bad, between what one should and should not do. In the Stoic ethical system it manifested itself in
its most extreme form as paradoxes. (13)

Do you wish to say something paradoxical and extraordinary and original? Say that the wise man has use for nothing and he has no need of anything: it is he who is blessed, he who is free from all other wants, he who is self sufficient, blissful, perfect.

(Plut.Stoic.Rep.1068c-d)

The Stoicurum paradoxa regarding the wise man were a notable feature of the Stoic system. Stated in the form of "X or Y, with nothing in between", the Stoics argued that one is either good (virtuous) or bad, wise or foolish, beautiful or ugly, learned or ignorant. Thus all wise beings are equally wise, all foolish beings, equally foolish. All goods are equally good, all sins equally bad. (14) By the same token, virtue admits of no degrees. It is a unity (15) and a constant which once acquired, could not be lost. (16) The Stoic wise man is the only truly virtuous being, other than God, and therefore the only being capable of the truly good life, (Sen.Ep.87.37) of friendship, love, health, wealth, authority, etc. Thus the paradox that the Stoic wise man is the best friend, lover, advisor, king, and God.

This conception of the wise man raised some important ethical and pedagogic questions regarding the nature of virtue itself, the status of the emotions and the position of externals in ethics. The Stoics could not avoid these problems and responded by constructing a separate category of things morally indifferent (aidaphora). (17) In this group were included the emotions and all externals:
physical and mental goods and evils. The latter were further subdivided into things morally to be preferred, rejected and neutral things. Thus although morally indifferent, we could do with things like wealth, health and beauty, which are preferred, while we could do without poverty, pain, and sickness, which are to be rejected. By this device, the Stoics maintained a clear separation between a strict ethics based on a purely theoretical conception of virtue and the wise man on the one hand, and a wider ethical system that had to take into account aspects of socio-political life on the other. The first kind of ethical life applied to the Stoic philosopher, and as such it was a kind of self-legitimation of that philosopher and of an ideal which few could fulfil. (18) Certainly, few could be expected to conform to it, so a subsidiary theory was required in order to provide the educated classes with a philosophy of leisured life as well as of practical life (one for theory, another for practice) where wealth, power and beauty were indeed preferred to poverty, sickness and powerlessness, and why it was just for some (e.g. Stoics, the well-to-do, rulers) to be in the former state and the rest (the majority) in the latter.

In educational practice, it also solved the pedagogical problems engendered by the paradoxes, namely, how can virtue which is knowledge be taught, how is wisdom and moral progress possible if one admits no degrees of wisdom or goodness. Yet the Stoics argued that moral progress was possible, that virtue is taught. (19)

It was a response to a theoretical (but real) problem
regarding pedagogy and practical life and the Stoics of the third generation and following spent a good deal of their time on the social aspect of their philosophy.

They tasted the lotus of leisure and spent all their lives, and very long lives too, with talk and books and strolling in the schools. (Plut. Stoic. Rep. 1033c) As Plutarch notes, they talked about what one should do in politeia, but they themselves did not do it; instead they produced an apologia for and a defense of their life of theoria and why it was just, namely, the inherent superiority of mental over manual culture. Under Antipater, Diogenes, and Panaetius especially, (20) the Stoic philosophy developed a comprehensive system of duties and linked paideia with politeia in the category of things preferred. (21) The reasoning (ideology) was that having wealth, power, and position is a burden to which one has to sacrifice oneself, although the good life really does not lie in these things. However for an ideal of the good life like the Stoic which was near impossible to achieve in the first place, this was not a bad second. The former ideal was a cover for the latter real life they were in fact leading.

We notice reformulations of the telos formula itself (22) which was acquiring a political dimension with its greater emphasis on the doctrine of oikeosis mediating social life. (23) This was the view that there is a natural and ethical (social) affinity and community (civitas) between humans (24) which went hand in hand with the Stoic acceptance of the doctrine that humans are social-political
beings. This was a far cry from the earlier stress on *apatheia* (insensibility), *aidaphoria* (indifference) and *askesis* (asceticism, severity) as Stoics began to temper and make more palatable their philosophy. Thus the Stoa’s view of political life and of the wise man as ideal citizen was itself partly the result of the political orientation of the school and of its participation in political life. It was part of the general process of alliance between the propertied cultured classes, philosophy and monarchy. It is at this stage that Stoicism aligned itself to Hellenistic and later, to Roman power and became the philosophy of Roman rule. (25)

The practical life of the Stoic philosopher was theorised separately from his life as teacher and aspiring wise man. Stoics did not theorise the wise man as citizen, ruler and king for its own sake. It was the expression of themselves in social life and of the institutions in which they participated under the *Diadochoi* and, later, Rome. Graduate Stoics made "good" statesmen, ambassadors, advisors and court-philosophers. (*Plut.Stoic.Rep.*1033e-f). Seneca’s (*Ep.*73.1) claim that "no class of man is so popular with the philosopher as the ruler is, and rightly so" was no less true of Stoics, than of Academics or Peripatetics. (26)

Again, since we see that man is designed by Nature to safeguard and protect his fellows, it follows from this natural disposition, that the wise man should desire to engage in politics and government. (*Cic.Fin.*III.25.68)
Zeno himself set the precedent. He was on excellent terms with the Athenian (D.L.VII.6,10) and Macedonian authorities. (27) He rejected personal invitations to the courts of the Ptolemies, but sent pupils in his place. (28)

The Stoic concept of the wise man as king corresponded to their view of the cosmic God who is basileus. In social life it reflected their sympathy for Hellenistic monarchy and rule of the few. (29) Stoicism was itself the philosophy of the dominant classes. The view that the educated Roman classes of the late Republic and the empire were converted Stoics is well supported in the sources and literature. (30) In relation to the ruling authority, the Stoic ethics, then, was one of active support. It likened conformity in social life to the dominant power to conformity in metaphysics to the inexorable rule of Necessity-Fate (heimarmene). (31) Acceptance of and submission to the divine logos, to a determined cosmic order, was declared the proper ethical attitude. In social life this translated in the submission to and acceptance of the political order, existing institutions and structures of authority. In other words, the Stoics theorised an isomorphism between political life and the structure of divine order. There obtains an isomorphism between the structure of social logos and the structure of divine logos. (32) The harmonious life consists in knowledge and acceptance of this. One submits to the rule of temporal law and its kings, just as one submits to the rule of the cosmic basileus. In pedagogy, a student submits to the authority of the teacher in order to be educated. Virtue is
an act of submission and philosophy teaches one how to submit.

Philosophy will encourage us to obey God cheerfully, but Fortune defiantly; she will teach us to follow God and endure Chance. (Sen.Ep.16.4)

This engendered the problem regarding freedom and necessity which was a major topic of discussion in the schools. (33) In Epicurus, we get the strongest reaction against the rule of necessity to which philosophy had succumbed. For this reason Epicurus introduced the uncaused atomic swerve in his physics, as well as to retain individual freedom in ethics.

It were better, indeed, to accept the legends of the gods than to bow beneath the yoke of destiny... The one holds out some faint hope that we may escape if we honour the gods, while the necessity of the physicists is deaf to all pleas. (D.L.X.133-4)

There is no necessity to live under necessity. (Epicurean maxim)

For the Stoics, freedom, like virtue and well-being, was an internal state of the soul, and had little to do with the emotions and externals which were outside moral consideration. Thus with Seneca, Musonius Rufus, Dio Chrysostom, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius and others, the concern is not with whether one is actually free or slave, rich or poor, oppressed or at leisure, but whether this is so in respect to one's inner life. Philosophy was not out to make social life better for the majority, but to make
the intellectual life better for the few. The rejection, in principle at any rate, of externals such as health, wealth, power, etc. was nothing difficult for those who possessed and did not lack them in real life, but it made perfect sense in declaring them as *aidaphora* (indifferent) when it came to denying them to those who did not have them in the first place, and why they were the better off for it; why it was just for slavery, poverty and exploitation to exist. Thus the ideology that the poor are really better off than the rich and powerful. (34) It was not the business of philosophy (Stoic philosophy in particular) to concern itself with such things and it felt no obligation to do so. Being ethical was purely a matter of intention, not action and outcome, therefore moral responsibility had no application outside one's soul. (35) It does not matter that one is a slave, in pain or oppressed, as long as the soul is free. This was the message that Epictetus offered (36) and it wasn't difficult to accept by those who were not afflicted by such misfortunes, but it was cold comfort to actual slaves, the poor and exploited masses who neither had the goods or leisure time to benefit from philosophy which had turned inward, retreating from public-political life; making the life of the mind its primary concern. (37)

6.6. **Syncretism, Mysticism and Magic: The Philosopher in the Centuries A.D.**

It was noted in Chapters 2.4 and 3.2.5 that the intellectual and pedagogical tendencies centring around an
established body of philosophical tradition with its well-defined sets of problems dealing primarily with issues in ethics and theology and with the nature and knowledge of God, continued to occupy the efforts of the philosophers in the centuries a.D. Thinking about God. This summarises the dominant tendency of philosophers who were engaged in the interpretation, teaching and reinterpretation of the ancient tradition. They were first and foremost professional teachers who as philosophers made theology their main concern. These were their priorities. The tenet that Virtue is Knowledge was retained, and in answer to the question, knowledge of what?, the reply was: knowledge of God. This was not in itself new. The wisdom of the philosophers of Middle Platonism, Neoplatonism and late Neoplatonism was in setting different priorities regarding what the philosopher should do, and in theorising new means to the knowledge of God.

Predicated on the sharp distinction between the intelligible and sensible worlds, the contemplative life (the life of the intellect) was separated from the life of the body and manual labour, and was endorsed as the philosophic life spent in study, learning-teaching, purification and contemplation. (1) This was the good life (Plot. Enn. I.4, I.5). Its aim and that of the philosophic enterprise went beyond Plato's homoiosis theos, kata dunaton (likeness to God, as far as possible) of the Theatetus, to that of union with Theos (2) via methods of purification, contemplation, ecstasis, ritual, magic, etc. This was the telos of philosophy. The wisdom of the
philosopher was the practice of Virtue (3) which was knowledge of God. Happiness was a concomitant state of leading such a life which was concerned purely with the inner self, with the life of the soul. (4)

Trading on the distinction between the Intelligible and Sensible World, knowledge concerned itself mainly with contemplation of God. (5) The best action was that of contemplation, which was soul in activity. This was its virtue. Thus the model of the philosopher as wise man in Plotinus and Neoplatonism generally was that of the intellectual life. Life was Thought. (Plot. Enn. III. 8) Unlike Plato, Plotinus was not interested in any return to the cave as philosopher-king. All his efforts were directed on the epistrophe (reversion) to the One, and the first thing that was jettisoned on the way up was the life of the sensible world. This meant socio-political life. In the Plotinian duality of Intelligible and Sensible, the latter was shed as part of the purification process. This process applied in particular to externals as well as to the irrational parts of the soul such as feelings and emotions. (6) This was in keeping with actual activities of philosophers which had very little to do with political life as they restricted themselves more and more to their professional roles as educators. Thus the political dimension of the wise man drops out from their philosophy. The sophists' monopoly of public intellectual culture in the second sophistic made sure of that. The philosophers themselves offered next to no social theory or ethics in respect to existing politeia, other than tacit endorsement

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of the current state of affairs. (7)

Interested primarily in metaphysics, Plotinus' philosophy is the personal attempt at intellectual unity with God. Contemplation was a rational exercise of the highest order, and the mystic union was the result of life-long study, teaching and training of the intellect (Plot.Enn.III.8) towards that momentary glimpse of the One where even the intellect itself was transcended since the One is a unity and beyond the intelligible principle (the Dyad).

His pupil Porphyry stressed this purely intellectual ethical life of the wise man as the same life-long work spent in philosophy as the practice of the knowledge of God.(8) The virtuous life was the inner life of the soul and a means to God, for the soul was his dwelling place.

In Iamblichus and his associates, although the telos was the same, the means were reformulated. In contrast to philosophy as theory, later Neoplatonism rejected Plotinus' intellectual mysticism in favour of theurgy and the hieratiken (priestly, sacred) arts and practices of the cult and mystery religions. There is more than one way to get to know God, and some ways are faster than others. Plotinus' path was intellectually too demanding and it took too long. Late Neoplatonism constructed shorter and shorter detours. Iamblichus' theurgy was classed a rung higher than theory and made a direct link to God. The wise man as theurgist (magician) or priest, or both, gained immediate knowledge of the deepest mysteries of nature and God by appeal to and use of magic, rite and ritual. Iamblichus and
his associates are represented as formidable practitioners of these arts, (9) and in the tradition of the mysteries, a woman (e.g. Sosipatra) was one of its most powerful exponents. Philosophy was itself propaideutic to the great mysteries.

One should not be deceived by Marinus' account of Proclus' life where the latter is portrayed in the tradition of the ideal citizen, scholar, teacher, philosopher, saviour and master theurgist; for what we have here is the late Neoplatonic obsession with the attribution of virtues to the philosopher corresponding to the different levels in the grades of reality; from the lowest natural, political and moral, to the highest cathartic, theoretic, and theurgic disciplines. (10) The mental life of the philosopher was envisaged in every detail as a microcosm of the great chain of being. The whole enterprise turned inwards upon itself as elaborate systems were constructed in the epistrophē to the One. But the end was imminent.
Conclusion to Chapter 6.

In the early Academy and Lyceum, *paideia* meant *politeia*, and the schools were engaged both in its teaching and practice. Plato’s position on the philosopher as ruler had its counterparts in practice as the Academy tried to realise its political education. The Lyceum did not just train pure philosophers. Its graduates, like their teacher Aristotle, were as much men of action as any other educated citizen. Both schools had a long and fruitful association with Greek political culture. Academic Sceptics represent a good example of the division between mental and manual work and the ability of the leisured class to participate in intellectual culture for its own sake. While the Cynics took their *paideia* to the streets and marketplace, the Epicureans withdrew from public political life. It was Epicurus that separated ethics from politics, declaring the latter a positive hindrance to attaining the good life. Thus his well known maxim *me politeuesthai* went hand in hand with his advice of *lathe biosas*. Happiness consisted of cultivating one’s own garden. This was the life of *hedone* (joy) and virtue was pleasure leading to peace of mind. He was, however, the exception in practising his philosophy, not simply in theorising it. This was not a model of the wise man or of the good life that other schools endorsed. The Stoics endorsed the wise man as the epitome of *logos*: rational, *apathes*, autonomous, self-sufficient, equal to and under certain conditions better than a god, but rare as a phoenix. The Stoic paradoxes
concerning the wise man are an indication of the level to which Stoics invested their teaching in an ideal model which was very hard to live up to. In fact it was impossible and in practice it served as justification of the virtuous life as one of conformity to the existing order, whether social or divine. Hellenistic and Roman political culture found in Stoic philosophy a powerful legitimation for the dominant status quo.

In the centuries a.d. the separation of paideia from politeia was maintained. The public, and political educational arena was mostly surrendered to representatives of the second sophistic. The good life was linked exclusively with the bios theoretikos. Virtue was knowledge and contemplation of God and most of the philosopher's activities as professional educator, mystic, theurgist, iatrosophist were directed to this goal. The concern was wholly with the mental life of the philosopher. Well-being was itself located in intellectual labour.

Each school produced its own competing theory of the nature of virtue, the good life and the ideal wise man, but whatever the disagreement over doctrine, all the schools agreed on one basic thing, namely, that Virtue can be taught, and furthermore, that the philosopher is the teacher of virtue. As wise man, the philosopher is the ideal pedagogue. They also agreed that the good life was a life of pedagogic leisure, the life of scholé for its own sake. It was self-justification and legitimation of their pedagogy in their model of the philosopher-educator as wise man.