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MODELS OF EDUCATION IN PLUTARCH*

Abstract: This paper examines Plutarch's treatment of education in the *Parallel Lives*. Beginning with a close reading of *Them*. 2, it identifies two distinct ways in which Plutarch exploits the education of his subjects: in the first, a subject's attitude to education is used to illustrate a character presented as basically static (a 'static/illustrative' model); in the second, a subject's education is looked at in order to explain his adult character, and education is assumed to affect character (a 'developmental' model). These two models are often associated with two different forms of discourse: anecdotal for the static/illustrative model and analytical for the developmental. The developmental model, furthermore, is closer to Plutarch's thinking in theoretical discussions of character in the *Moralia*; the static/illustrative model to Plutarch's treatment of character in the *Lives* more generally, where anecdotal treatments predominate. The coexistence of these two models is probably to be seen as the result of a tension between Plutarch's philosophical thinking and his biographical practice: those few passages in the *Lives* which assume a developmental model occur in contexts where either Platonic texts or the activity of philosophers are being discussed.

This paper will examine Plutarch's treatment of education and childhood in the *Parallel Lives*. It is well known that many Plutarchan *Lives* include in their early chapters material on the education of their subjects, and that good education is often associated with virtuous behaviour in later life and poor education with moral failings. But how did Plutarch see education as actually working? What is its relationship to adult character? The first half of this paper will consist of a close reading of ch.2 of the *Themistokles*. I hope to demonstrate through this case study that Plutarch's treatment of education contains within it a tension between two models for understanding the relationship of education to adult character. The first approach sees character as in the process of *being formed* in childhood, and education as affecting the way in which character develops; the second approach sees character as constant and unchanging, and as *revealed* in childhood behaviour and in attitude to education.[1] In the second half of this paper I will test this theory against the treatment of education in several other *Lives* (including the *Philopoimen*, *Coriolanus*, *Lysander*, *Perikles*, *Fabius*, *Marcellus* and *Marius*), and attempt to find an explanation for the coexistence of these two models.

I. PLUTARCH AND EDUCATION: A DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL OF CHARACTER

Education is an important theme in Plutarch's *corpus*. Two surviving treatises in the *Moralia* have the education of children as their main theme (*How a young man should listen to poems* and *On listening*).[2] Furthermore, Plutarch's popular-philosophical works, such as *On lack of anger*, repeatedly stress the importance of continuing adult education in order to improve character. In these texts education is assumed to be a key factor in determining character; good education promotes good behaviour and a virtuous character; poor or deficient education has correspondingly negative results. In the *Parallel Lives* too, Plutarch often has something to say of the education

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[1] Modern scholarship has tended to see Plutarch's presentation of education as characterized by the first approach alone. Gill (1983) and Pelling (1988) noticed that despite Plutarch's belief in character development, as seen in the *De virt. moral*., he paid little attention to it in many *Lives*. I discuss their views below, pp. 18-19.

[2] *Cf*. the fragmentary *Can virtue be taught?* (Εἰ διδακτὸν ἡ ἀρετή). Other works now lost appear in the Lamprias Catalogue: *On how to use school exercises* (Πῶς δεῖ τοῖς σχολικοῖς [Par. Ven.: σχολαστικοῖς Neap.] γυμνάσμασι χρῆσθαι, no. 106); *Achilles' education* (Ἀχιλλέως παιδεία, no. 187). The extant work *On the education of children* is not in the Catalogue and is considered spurious by most editors.

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of his subjects; recent work has stressed the importance which Plutarch ascribes to the education of his protagonists, especially the Roman ones. In several well-known cases, moral failure is linked to poor or unbalanced education; in some of these cases, Romans are particularly criticized for refusing to learn Greek.[3] In according such importance to education, and giving such primacy to *Greek* education, Plutarch no doubt reflects the important role that *paideia* (education, culture) played in the way members of the Greek élites defined themselves in the late first and second centuries AD.[4]

But how did Plutarch see education as actually working? More specifically, how did he conceive of the relationship between education and adult character? Plutarch's considered views on this topic are probably best set out in one of his more theoretical treatises, the *On moral virtue*. Here, in a polemic against Stoic views, he defends Plato's division of the soul into a 'rational' and an 'irrational' or 'passionate' part. Virtue, he argues, drawing on Aristotelian thought, consists in the attainment of the right 'mean' between opposing passions, that is, when passions are harmonized through the order or direction imposed by reason. Character (*êthos*), as he puts it, is a 'quality' of the irrational part of the soul; it is acquired through habituation (*ĕthos*), as the irrational part of the soul is 'moulded', or fails to be moulded, by reason (443c-d). In other words, a person's character, his ability to exercise 'moral virtue', depends on the extent to which the rational part of his soul is able to influence and change, through habit, the irrational in him. The most vital period for the formation of character is in childhood: hence the importance of good education in Plutarchan, as in Platonic, thought, whereby the character of the child is moulded by reason. Closely connected with the notion of the moulding or training of the irrational is the distinction which Plutarch observes throughout the *On moral virtue* between 'nature' (*physis*) and 'character' (*êthos*). A person's nature is what he is born with and is, generally speaking, unchanging.[5] A person's character is related to his nature but is produced and affected by the extent to which reason acts upon it through education, and by the kind of life he habitually leads.[6]

It is clear from this summary that, in the *On moral virtue*, Plutarch assumes what we might call a 'developmental' model to explain the relationship between childhood and education and adult character. Character, in other words, is assumed in childhood or youth to be in the process of formation. Nature provides the raw material; but education, and childhood influences and habits more generally, play a determining role in the formation of this adult character. By adulthood, a settled character has been attained – though adult character may still be improved through the continuing application of reason and good habits, as Plutarch argues in the *How to recognize that one is making progress in virtue*, and adult character may be more or less stable or unstable depending on the extent to which nature has been 'mixed' or tempered by education and reason.[7] At any

[3] *Mar*. 2.2-4; *Cato Maj*. 23.1-3. See Pelling (1989); Swain (1989) 62-6; (1990); (1996) 140-4.

[4] See e.g. Bowie (1991); Anderson (1993); Swain (1996); Whitmarsh (2001); (2005).

[5] Though, as Gill (1983) 478-9 has argued, *physis* is occasionally used by Plutarch to mean something not so far distant from character, and in such cases Plutarch does seem to accept that *physis*, without proper education, may change (*Sulla* 30.6; *Sert.* 10.6; cf. *Alk*. 16.9).

[6] On nature and character, cf. *De sera num*. 551d; 562b. See Dihle (1956) 63-4, 84-7; Bergen (1962) 62-94; Russell (1966) 144-7 (= repr. 1995, 83-6); Wardman (1974) 132-7; Brenk (1977) 176-81; Gill (1983) 473-4, 478-81; Swain (1989). For a more detailed summary of the *De virt. moral*., and further bibliography, see Duff (1999) 72-8; Gill (2006) 219-38.

[7] See Gill (1983) 473-5; (2006) 417-19; Duff (1999) 90-4. A settled character may, therefore, have instability as one of its settled, consistent features: see Pelling (1990a) 235-7 (= repr. 2002a, 315-16). Stability of character is a virtue, and implies control of the passions and obedience to reason; instability or inconsistency implies the opposite (and is e.g. the mark of the flatterer: *Quomodo adulat*. 52a-b, 52f-53a: discussed in Russell (1973) 93-6). Both can be reflected in the face or the gait: a 'fixed' face, for example (καθεστηκὸς or συνεστηκὸς πρόσωπον) is a good sign; mobility of features or posture is a bad sign: see Duff (1999) 214. In a few cases in the *Lives* Plutarch seems to suggest that under the stress of great sufferings or reverses character may deteriorate (e.g. *Sert*. 10.4-7); it is not clear whether this is to be seen as a result of underlying instability. On such cases of character-change, see Brenk (1977) 177-9; Gill (1983) 478-87; (2006) 416-21; Swain (1989); Lombardi (1997) 385-95.

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rate, in childhood character is still being formed; influences on children from education or environment will mould and affect their character.

This model, which is assumed in many texts of the *Moralia*, lies behind some of Plutarch's theoretical statements in the *Lives* too.[8] But, as I hope to demonstrate, it cannot simply be 'read across' from such texts of the *Moralia* into the *Lives*. As we shall see in the *Themistokles* and elsewhere, fundamental to the *Lives* is another model of childhood and the role of education, which coexists with and is in tension with the first.

II. THEMISTOKLES

Education and Themistokles' character: a static model (Them. *2.1-6*)

We begin with the education of Themistokles. The issue of Themistokles' education or lack of it was much debated in the ancient tradition in the centuries after his death: did he perform his great deeds by native ability alone, or must he have had a teacher to instruct him?[9] After an introduction on Themistokles' ancestry and the question of the legitimacy of his birth, Plutarch confronts the issue of his education head-on:

(2.1) Ἔτι δὲ παῖς ὢν ὁμολογεῖται φορᾶς μεστὸς εἶναι, καὶ τῆι μὲν φύσει συνετός, τῆι δὲ προαιρέσει μεγαλοπράγμων καὶ πολιτικός. ἐν γὰρ ταῖς ἀνέσεσι καὶ σχολαῖς ἀπὸ τῶν μαθημάτων γιγνόμενος, οὐκ ἔπαιζεν οὐδ' ἐρραιθύμει καθάπερ οἱ πολλοὶ παῖδες, ἀλλ' εὑρίσκετο λόγους τινὰς μελετῶν καὶ συνταττόμενος πρὸς ἑαυτόν. ἦσαν δ' οἱ λόγοι κατηγορία τινὸς ἢ συνηγορία τῶν παίδων. (2.2) ὅθεν εἰώθει λέγειν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ διδάσκαλος ὡς 'οὐδὲν ἔσει, παῖ, σὺ μικρόν, ἀλλὰ μέγα πάντως ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακόν'. (2.3) ἐπεὶ καὶ τῶν παιδεύσεων τὰς μὲν ἠθοποιοὺς ἢ πρὸς ἡδονήν τινα καὶ χάριν ἐλευθέριον σπουδαζομένας ὀκνηρῶς καὶ ἀπροθύμως ἐξεμάνθανε, τῶν δ' εἰς σύνεσιν ἢ πρᾶξιν † λεγομένων δῆλος ἦν ὑπερερῶν παρ' ἡλικίαν, ὡς τῆι φύσει πιστεύων. (2.4) ὅθεν ὕστερον ἐν ταῖς ἐλευθερίοις καὶ ἀστείαις λεγομέναις διατριβαῖς ὑπὸ τῶν πεπαιδεῦσθαι δοκούντων χλευαζόμενος, ἠναγκάζετο φορτικώτερον ἀμύνεσθαι, λέγων ὅτι λύραν μὲν ἁρμόσασθαι καὶ μεταχειρίσασθαι ψαλτήριον οὐκ ἐπίσταιτο, πόλιν δὲ μικρὰν καὶ ἄδοξον παραλαβὼν ἔνδοξον καὶ μεγάλην ἀπεργάσασθαι.

(2.1) It is agreed that when he was still a boy he was impetuous; he was intelligent by nature, but by choice fond of great action and politics. For in his times of relaxation and leisure, when he was free from his lessons, he did not play or take it easy like the majority of other boys, but he was always to be found composing speeches or rehearsing them to himself. These speeches consisted of indictments or defences of the children. (2.2) Hence his teacher used to say to him 'You will not turn out to be anything small, my child, but great, for sure, either good or bad.' (2.3) For even when it came to his studies he devoted himself reluctantly and unenthusiastically to those which form character or are pursued with a view to any pleasant or liberal accomplishment, but he clearly had a passion beyond his years for all that was said with a view to practical intelligence and action, because he trusted his nature. (2.4) Hence, when he was later mocked in those activities said to be liberal and cultivated by those who seemed to be educated, he was forced to defend himself in a rather vulgar way, saying that he did not know how to tune the lyre or play the harp but he did know how to take a small and inglorious city and make it great and glorious. (*Them*. 2.1-4)

[8] Especially in the *Lykourgos*, e.g. *Lyk.-Num*. 4.7-9: Lykourgos' first priority was education, 'in order that they might not differ or be confused in their characters but might be moulded and fashioned (πλαττόμενοι καὶ τυπούμενοι) from the onset to walk together in a single common path of virtue'. Lykourgos not only passed laws but by means of his education system 'fused them [the laws] into the characters of the boys', so that they remained in force for five centuries 'like a strong and penetrating dye' (*cf*. Plato, *Rep*. 4.429b-430c): below, n.90. *Cf*. also *Galba* 1.3.

[9] E.g. Thuc. 1.138.3; Xen. *Mem*. 4.2.2; Aischines Soc. *SSR* VI A 48; Stesimbrotos *FGrH* 107 F1 (= Plut. *Them*. 2.5): all discussed below. On the literary tradition on Themistokles, see Frost (1980) 3-39; Piccirilli (1983) ix-xiv.

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For Plutarch, Themistokles, even 'when still a boy' (i.e. as well as later when he was an adult), was impetuous, and 'by nature intelligent', but 'by choice fond of great action and politics'. This is plainly a reworking of Thucydides' famous description of Themistokles as having a powerful nature and operating by 'his own natural intelligence' (οἰκείαι … ξυνέσει) without study (Thuc. 1.138.3).[10] The μέν and the δέ mark a contrast, which runs throughout this passage, between *physis* ('nature') and *proairesis*. The latter is a common word for character, almost equivalent to *êthos*.[11] Themistokles' brilliance, then, is a natural endowment; but his bent to action, and specifically to politics, is an aspect of his settled character. But the literal meaning of the word *proairesis* ('choice') is important: Themistokles will later in the passage be seen to focus *deliberately* on practical training, and in the process to reject real education.

Themistokles' deliberate concentration on practical action is confirmed in the next sentence, where Plutarch remarks on his tendency not to play with the other children but on the contrary to spend his free time composing speeches of prosecution or defence: he has an eye to the practical from the beginning.[12] Because of his precocious concentration on practical skills ('hence'), Themistokles' teacher tells him, 'You will not turn out to be anything small, my child, but great, for sure, either good or bad'. In the first instance the teacher's words are a confirmation of and a comment on his energetic activity in the schoolyard. But the notion, which the teacher's words imply, of a talented young man with great natural potential who would perform either great good or great evil for his city, confirms Themistokles' talents but also suggests that there was some doubt as to the end to which his talents would be used and throws the spotlight on to his education.[13]

Plutarch has noted the attention paid by the young Themistokles to the practical in his leisure time. He now turns to his attitude to his lessons, and finds that the same bias extends there too. Once again we have a contrast marked by μέν and δέ. On the one hand (the μέν clause), Themistokles neglects 'character-forming' studies (τὰς μὲν ἠθοποιοὺς sc. παιδεύσεις).[14] On the other hand (δέ), he had 'a passion beyond his years' (ὑπερερῶν) for practical training, 'since he put his trust in his nature'.[15] The contrast works along the same lines as the contrast earlier in the paragraph between nature and character, although now Themistokles' 'choice' is made more specific: he rejects real education but concentrates on practical training.

No information is given about what exactly such character-forming education consisted of, though Plutarch does go on to talk of Themistokles' inability in 'liberal and cultivated pursuits' and his being unable to play the lyre or harp (2.4). It is in fact a feature of Plutarch's *Lives* generally that, although lack of education and its effects are often commented upon, Plutarch is never very

[10] …βεβαιότατα δὴ φύσεως ἰσχὺν δηλώσας …· οἰκείαι γὰρ ξυνέσει καὶ οὔτε προμαθὼν ἐς αὐτὴν οὐδὲν οὔτ' ἐπιμαθών …. Hornblower (1991) ad loc. translates 'from his own native acuteness', 'without any study either before or at the time'. Gomme (1945) ad loc. notes the obscurity of the sentence (is οὔτ' ἐπιμαθών 'not learning *later*'?). Martin (1961) 327-31 discusses Plutarch's exploitation of the Herodotean and Thucydidean material on Themistokles' *synesis*; see also Piccirilli (1983) xiv-xv. Arrian 7.28.2 also exploits the Thucydidean description of Themistokles to describe the foresight of Alexander the Great.

[11] On the meaning of *proairesis* in Plutarch, see Duff (1999) 39, with further bibliography. As Gill (1983) 479-80 points out, the use of *proairesis* for character reflects a common ancient view that virtue 'is not just a habit or conditioned reflex but depends on some kind of rational decision'. *Cf.* Gill (1996) 71-2, 249-50.

[12] Frost (1980) ad loc. may be right in claiming on the basis of Cic. *Brut*. 12.46 that formal speeches of defence and prosecution did not exist at this period (though Plutarch does not claim that Themistokles' speeches obeyed the formal rules of rhetoric). But whether the anecdote is apocryphal or not, it is one of a number of schoolyard stories that foretell the rise of great figures: e.g. Hdt. 1.114 of Cyrus I. *Cf.* also Xen. *Oik*. 11.22-5, where Ischomachos practises making forensic speeches, and *Cyrop*. 1.2.6-7, where boys press charges against each other.

[13] See below, pp. 9-10; there may be allusion to *Republic* 6.491d-495b and Xen. *Mem*. 4.1.3-4. The teachers' words also recall and confirm the notion of Themistokles' 'greatness', which was introduced in the first chapter in what is probably his mother's epitaph in which she is imagined to say, 'I declare that for the Greeks I gave birth to the great Themistokles' (1.1). See Duff (2008) 159-68.

[14] For ἠθοποιός in this sense, see Duff (1999) 37 and the passages cited there.

[15] ὑπερερῶν is Madvig's emendation of MS ὑπερορῶν. On the textual problems of this sentence, see Duff (forthcoming, b).

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informative about what *good* education might actually have consisted of, perhaps because he considered the answer to be obvious and uncontroversial.[16] Music and literature, athletics, and perhaps philosophy, are probably intended here – to be contrasted with the practical training which Themistokles did receive.[17] In other cases in the *Lives* where real education is shown to be lacking, there is often, as here, a contrast with what the subject concentrated on instead, that is, 'practical' training: here apparently rhetorical and political, in other cases military.[18] What is clear here is that Themistokles deliberately rejects what Plutarch presents as the kind of 'real' education which would lead to virtue. The emphasis is not, though, on the bad results of Themistokles' lack of education. Rather Plutarch sees in Themistokles' attitude to education that same bias in favour of practical action, which he saw in his behaviour in the schoolyard. So it is not a question of education *influencing* the way his character turned out. Rather, Themistokles' *attitude to education* is seen as revealing pre-existing characteristics.

Themistokles, then, paid passionate and excessive attention to his practical studies at the expense of real character-forming studies. There remains the phrase ὡς τῆι φύσει πιστεύων ('since he put his trust in his nature'), which is tagged on to the end of the sentence in a very Plutarchan way.[19] The point is that Themistokles considered his natural abilities to be great enough that he did not need real education, which 'formed character' (ἠθοποιούς), only the practical kind. This continues the contrast between nature and character which runs throughout this passage: Themistokles rejects activities which would improve his character and shows an excessive interest in practical training – i.e. training which did not 'form' character – since he trusted nature alone. This interpretation is confirmed by what is given later as Themistokles' own assessment of his youth, when 'he employed his nature just as it was, without reason or education' (2.7: ἅτε τῆι φύσει καθ' αὑτὴν χρώμενος, ἄνευ λόγου καὶ παιδείας).

'Hence' (ὅθεν), Plutarch continues (2.4) – i.e. because of his rejection of character-forming education and concentration on the practical – 'when he was later mocked in those activities said to be (λεγομέναις) liberal and cultivated by those who seemed to be educated (τῶν πεπαιδεῦσθαι δοκούντων)' he replied that, although he had not learnt music, he had learnt 'how to take a small and inglorious city and make it great and glorious'. This *bon mot* of Themistokles was plainly well known and goes back at least to Ion of Chios (*FGrH* 392 F 13 = Plut. *Kim*. 9.1). But as so often Plutarch uses what he may have found as an isolated anecdote in his sources to make or illustrate a point about character. Themistokles' saying suggests not only his rejection of liberal education in favour of practical politics. It also suggests an arrogance and boorishness (*cf*. φορτικώτερον); δοκούντων is probably to be taken as representing Themistokles' own thoughts or 'focalisation', and contains a sneer at those 'seemed to be' (or 'thought they were') educated.[20] Similar might be the case with λεγομέναις ('activities *said to be* liberal and cultivated'). These words convey Themistokles' disdain for proper character-forming education, and give an insight into his psychology. This story, then, continues the contrast between practical skill and artistic ineptitude set up in the previous sentences. The 'hence' is important: this anecdote is meant to confirm the

[16] See Pelling (1988) esp. 266 (= repr. 2002a, 290); (1990a) esp. 232-5 (= repr. 2002a, 313-15); (2002b) 321-2. For music, athletics and literature (the first of which is confirmed by *Them*. 2.4) cf. *Per*. 4.1, with Stadter (1989) ad loc., and *Alex.* 7.2, with Hamilton (1969) ad loc. For 'liberal pursuits' (ἐλευθέριοι διατριβαί) see also *Alk*. 2.5-7; *Dem*. 4.4 (τῶν ἐμμελῶν καὶ προσηκόντων ἐλευθέρωι παιδὶ μαθημάτων ἀπαίδευτος). Plutarch's description of Dion's attempts to reform the young Dionysios, later II, of Syracuse combines some of the elements and vocabulary noted here (*Dion* 9.1).

[17] Plutarch may well here be influenced by Platonic notions: Plato in the *Republic* had talked of education as working in two stages: the first stage consisted of music (or literature: *mousikê*) and athletics, the second stage consisted of philosophical education (e.g. *Rep*. 3.401d-e, 403c-d, 7.525b-c). See Gill (2006) 134, with further bibliography. Themistokles' inability in music would thus be significant, as well as the fact that he did not study with a real philosopher (*Them*. 2.4-6).

[18] E.g. *Phil.* 3.2-4.10; *Aem*. 2.5-6; *Pyrrh*. 8.3-7; *Mar*. 2.1: all discussed below.

[19] On this feature of Plutarch's style (viz. the tendency to pile up subordinate clauses or phrases after the main verb) see Yaginuma (1992).

[20] Noted by Holden (1884) ad loc.

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statements of the previous sentence, where the stress was on neglect of liberal studies combined with concentration on practical studies: Themistokles did not know music, but he did understand and love practical action and politics.[21]

What is at stake so far, then, is not how Themistokles' poor education affected his development, but what his rejection of proper education revealed about his character, which is presented here as basically static. This interpretation is supported by the following sentences, where Plutarch goes on to discuss the teachers under whom Themistokles studied. It was a commonplace from the fourth century onwards to associate leading statesmen with teachers.[22] Plutarch rejects on chronological grounds Stesimbrotos' claim that Themistokles studied under Anaxagoras and Melissos and rather assigns him to one Mnesiphilos,[23] who taught 'what was then called wisdom (*sophia*), but was in reality political cleverness and active intelligence' (2.6: δεινότητα πολιτικὴν καὶ δραστήριον σύνεσιν) – that is, practical political skills rather than what Plutarch had earlier termed character-forming studies.[24] In asserting that Themistokles did not in fact learn wisdom, Plutarch might be thinking of Herodotos, who had several times called him wise (*sophos*) (8.110, 124). For Plutarch Themistokles was not wise in the true sense, but merely – though impressively – intelligent and skilful.[25] For readers who remember their Herodotos, the point is not so much a correction of Herodotos, but a piece of sophisticated literary criticism: *sophia*, as Plutarch says, had a different meaning in the fifth century, and so his reader should take Herodotos' ascription of it to Themistokles in this light.[26]

The contrast here between intelligence and wisdom is important; it is aligned with the contrast, central to this passage, between practical training and true education, and between nature and character. Plutarch has already emphasized Themistokles' devotion to what he termed τῶν … εἰς σύνεσιν ἢ πρᾶξιν † λεγομένων ('what was said with a view to practical intelligence and action'?).[27] The phrase δραστήριον σύνεσιν ('active intelligence') recalls this: his studying under Mnesiphilos is an example of this devotion to practical training.[28] It also recalls τῆι μὲν φύσει συνετός ('intelligent by nature') in 2.1 and Thucydides' description of the uneducated Themistokles trusting in 'his own natural intelligence' (1.138.3). All this provides a new and very Plutarchan twist to the Thucydides passage, which Plutarch presses and the implications of which he draws out, emphasising Themistokles' lack of education in real character-forming pursuits, though assuming that he must have had some practical training.

Themistokles' cleverness and skill will, of course, have important results: Plutarch will later ascribe the victory at Salamis partly at least to 'the judgement and cleverness of Themistokles'

[21] This same contrast will recur in *Them*. 5.3, the only other mention of music in the *Life*: Themistokles 'when still young' persuades the famous harpist Epikles of Hermione to practise at his house. He did this not because he was interested in music, but 'because he was eager (φιλοτιμούμενος) that many people would ask for his house and come and visit him'.

[22] Frost (1971); Cooper (2002) 318-19.

[23] Mnesiphilos is mentioned in Hdt. 8.57-8 as giving Themistokles advice just before Salamis, a story which Plutarch rejects in the *De Herod. malig*. (869d-f) and does not include in the *Life* (see below n.34); his name appears on some ostraka. He appears as a speaker in Plutarch's *Symposium of seven wise men*. On Themistokles and Mnesiphilos, see Ferrara (1964) 55-60; Frost (1971); Piccirilli (1983) ad loc.

[24] Compare Plutarch's similar claim in *Per*. 4.2 that Perikles' teacher Damon, who was reputed to be a teacher of *ta mousika*, was really an 'extreme sophist' (ἄκρος σοφιστής) and used the name of music as a cover to conceal his *deinotês* (see below, pp. 14-15). *Deinotês* is cleverness or skill, even cunning – as Aristotle puts it, the ability to attain one's aim, whether good or bad (*NE* 1144a). On *deinotês* in Plutarch, see Frazier (1996) 210-12; for 'political cleverness' (δεινότης πολιτική) cf. *Lys*. 2.4.

[25] Notably Plutarch characterizes the tricking of Xerxes to withdraw after Salamis, which Herodotos saw as showing Themistokles to be truly 'wise and of sound judgement' (σοφός τε καὶ εὔβουλος) as an act of *phronêsis* (*Them*. 16.6 ~ Hdt. 8.110). In 17.3 Plutarch admits that Themistokles won the prize for wisdom (σοφίας ἀριστεῖον), as in Hdt. 8.124. But this is historical fact: Plutarch has already pointed out that wisdom meant something different then.

[26] See Pelling (2007) esp. 153-4, for how knowledge of Herodotos is assumed in the *Them*.

[27] For the textual problem, see Duff (forthcoming, b).

[28] Plutarch also says that Mnesiphilos' successors transferred the application of his teaching 'from deeds to words'. So what Mnesiphilos taught was action.

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(γνώμηι ... καὶ δεινότητι τῆι Θεμιστοκλέους) (15.5).[29] But note that the section on Mnesiphilos is not really about *influences* – the point is not that Themistokles *learnt* from him, that Mnesiphilos encouraged him to develop the skill he would later use. He has already, after all, been described as *by nature* intelligent. Rather Themistokles' studying under Mnesiphilos is confirmation of Themistokles' character, of his single-minded pursuit of the practical. This, presumably, is part of the point of the denial that Themistokles studied under Anaxagoras. The chronology, of course, as Plutarch points out, rules out study under Anaxagoras. But the denial of association with Anaxagoras, and the assertion of association with Mnesiphilos, also make a point about Themistokles' character: he was not the sort of person to have associated with a true philosopher, only with one who offered merely practical training. A similar logic can be found in Plutarch's treatment of the tradition of Solon's meeting with Croesus in *Solon* 27. There too, Plutarch examines the tradition in the light of chronological evidence, concluding that Solon and Croesus cannot have met; but whereas in the *Themistokles* both chronological accuracy and Plutarch's notions of the sort of behaviour that one might expect of Themistokles converge, in *Solon* 27 Plutarch is prepared to reject chronology in favour of an explanation which better 'fits Solon's character'.[30] The tendency, then, to start with a conception of character and to look for evidence to back this up is much more blatant and obvious in *Solon* 27, which, it must be admitted, is rather an extreme case. But the same logic is at work in *Them*. 2: Themistokles studied not with Anaxagoras but with Mnesiphilos – and that is consistent with, and both confirms and illustrates, his character as sketched out so far.[31]

Plutarch ends the section on Mnesiphilos by adding that Themistokles 'began associating with him when he [Themistokles] was already involved in public life'. This is of course in one sense another example of a scrupulousness as regards chronology: such phrases as 'but this happened later' occur relatively frequently in the *Lives*, and warn the reader that an anecdote or other information has been placed out of chronological order.[32] In a similar way, earlier in the passage the story of his remark about not knowing how to play the lyre was explicitly introduced as having taken place 'later' (ὕστερον). But the fact that Plutarch has felt able to place in the context of his discussion of Themistokles' education two stories which relate to later in life confirms our analysis of how *Them*. 2 has been working so far. Plutarch has been assuming that character is basically constant, and has been looking for confirmation of this character in Themistokles' attitude to education. It is irrelevant for this purpose whether the material he so uses relates to when Themistokles was a child, a young man or even rather late in life.[33] All are equally useful to illustrate that Themistokles was excessively concerned with the practical and neglected true education.[34]

Education and Themistokles' character: a developmental model (Them. *2.7-8*)

So far, then, the emphasis has been not on how Themistokles' poor education affected his character, but on what Themistokles' rejection of real education shows about his character – although the

[29] Other examples of Themistokles' cleverness: 10.1-7; 12.3; 19.1-3; *cf.* πανούργως in 1.3. See Larmour (1992) 4187-8.

[30] πρέποντα τῶι Σόλωνος ἤθει καὶ τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλοφροσύνης καὶ σοφίας ἄξιον. On *Sol.* 27.1 and its implications, see Pelling (1990b) 19-21 (= repr. 2002a, 143-5); Duff (1999) 312-13. Plutarch makes another judgement on chronological grounds in *Them*. 27.1-2 (which Persian king did Themistokles meet in exile?).

[31] Argument based on coherence of character (e.g. Aristotle, *Ath. Pol*. 6.3) is common in Plutarch: see Barbu (1934) 139-43; Lombardi (1996); Stadter (1987) 266 (see n.64, below).

[32] E.g. *Crass*. 3.8; *Pomp*. 2.12; *Alk*. 7.6; *Ant*. 5.1 with Pelling's note ad loc. Of course the absence of such an explicit declaration should not be taken as confirmation that Plutarch's organization of material does conform with the chronological order of events.

[33] Marr (1998) ad loc. sees Plutarch as suggesting that Mnesiphilos was advisor to Themistokles in his youth, and rightly points out that chronological considerations make it likely that Mnesiphilos was instead 'a political associate of Themistokles'. But Plutarch is in fact quite explicit that their association occurred after Themistokles had grown up.

[34] It suits Plutarch's purpose, of course, to deal with Themistokles' relationship with Mnesiphilos early, as it allows him to avoid mentioning the major role which Herodotos gave him at Salamis: *De Herod. malig.* 869d criticizes Herodotos' account. See Pelling (2007) 157-9.

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use of the term 'character-forming' (ἠθοποιός) does hint at the possibility of development. Themistokles' disdain for true education and his excessive concentration on the practical has been presented as reflecting, confirming and illustrating a character which is assumed to be constant. We have here, then, not a developmental model of character, but what I would call a static/illustrative one, a model which assumes that the same characteristics evident in the adult will also be discernible in the child, and looks for anecdotes or other material which will reveal them.

But Plutarch now changes direction and turns to examine the way in which Themistokles' education might actually have affected his character. In so doing, he abandons anecdotes and alludes rather to theoretical discussions of education and character in Plato and Xenophon:

> τούτωι μὲν οὖν ἤδη πολιτευόμενος ἐπλησίαζεν. ἐν δὲ ταῖς πρώταις τῆς νεότητος ὁρμαῖς ἀνώμαλος ἦν καὶ ἀστάθμητος, ἅτε τῆι φύσει καθ' αὑτὴν χρώμενος, ἄνευ λόγου καὶ παιδείας ἐπ' ἀμφότερα μεγάλας ποιουμένηι μεταβολὰς τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων, καὶ πολλάκις ἐξισταμένηι πρὸς τὸ χεῖρον, ὡς ὕστερον αὐτὸς ὡμολόγει, καὶ τοὺς τραχυτάτους πώλους ἀρίστους ἵππους γίγνεσθαι φάσκων, ὅταν ἧς προσήκει τύχωσι παιδείας καὶ καταρτύσεως.
>
> He began studying with this man [Mnesiphilos] when he was already involved in political life. But in the first impulses of his youth he was uneven and unstable, because he employed his nature just as it was, without reason and education, and it produced great changes of habit both to good and bad, and often deviated for the worse, as he himself later used to admit, saying that even the most intractable colts become excellent horses, when they get the education and discipline they require. (*Them*. 2.7)

Themistokles' words on his own youthful character are at first sight in keeping with what has gone before: he employed his nature 'just as it was', 'without reason and education'.[35] But there seems also to be implied here some sort of later reform: that later on in life he did get at least some of the 'the education and discipline' which he required. There is, however, a certain lack of clarity about how Themistokles' association with Mnesiphilos might relate to this. It is not clear, for example, whether we take the ὕστερον ('later') to refer to the time when Themistokles was in contact with Mnesiphilos, or to a later undefined period. But, as we have noted, Plutarch was earlier careful to make the point that what Mnesiphilos taught was practical skill not real wisdom, and his association with Mnesiphilos was used to provide evidence for Themistokles' over-concentration on the practical. The emphasis here, then, is not on Mnesiphilos' making up for some of Themistokles' early educational deprivation: it is on early lack of proper education rather than later recovery.

But the paradigm has subtly shifted. Until this point, Themistokles' attitude to his education has been invoked in order to illustrate a static character. Now Plutarch turns to explain *why* Themistokles turned out the way he did. The young Themistokles is unstable (ἀνώμαλος ... καὶ ἀστάθμητος). The reason for this (ἅτε…) is that through lack of education (ἄνευ λόγου καὶ παιδείας), he 'employed his nature just as it was', and his nature, untutored as it was, was unstable: it produced great changes of behaviour 'to both sides', i.e. to both the good and the bad, and 'often deviated for the worse'. The participle ἐξισταμένηι has sometimes been translated here 'degenerating', but this introduces a notion not present in the Greek.[36] The idea is rather that Themistokles' nature, without the benefit of education, was unstable, and that this caused his behaviour to 'veer widely', as Marr has translated it; some of these changes were for good and some for bad, but 'often' these changes really were 'for the worse'.

[35] *Cf*. Demades, who was famous for being able to speak on the spur of the moment – unlike Demosthenes who prepared his speeches – and is described in *Dem*. 10.1 as 'using his nature' (τῆι φύσει χρώμενον). Contrast e.g. Plutarch's Alexander, whose nature is 'easily led by reason to the path of duty' (ῥαιδίως δ' ἀγομένην ὑπὸ λόγου πρὸς τὸ δέον) (*Alex*. 7.1: *cf*. below, n.39).

[36] E.g. Perrin, Carena, Duff (1999) 62. LSJ (II 4) cite Plato, *Rep*. 2.380d, ἐξίσταιτο τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ἰδέας and translate '*depart from*, *degenerate from* one's own nature'. But

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Note that this is not about character change in the way in which scholars have tended to understand that concept: those few instances where Plutarch or Tacitus note a sudden reversal in a subject's behaviour and wonder whether this really was a radical change of character or merely a revelation of what had lain hidden before.[37] Rather, instability is presented here as a constant feature of the young Themistokles. It may indeed be that whatever improvement in later life is implied here (and it is not wholly clear to what extent this *is* implied), it is to be seen not as coming about through education but through a process of maturation, resulting in Themistokles' attaining a more stable character.

The idea, furthermore, is not that Themistokles' lack of education caused his youthful instability of character and behaviour; he was born unstable. But *had he had proper education* he might have attained the kind of stability which Plutarch elsewhere associated with virtue.[38] It is not a question here then of bad education damaging Themistokles, but rather that he failed to get the benefit that good education might have brought. But either way, Plutarch is not now looking at Themistokles' attitude to education in order to discern his character; he is instead assuming that education affects character development. The comparison with horses is apposite: the point is not about horses revealing their pre-existing character by the way in which they react to their training; rather, it is about the good *effect* which such training brings; even the wildest horses turn out well 'when they get the education and discipline they require'.[39] So Themistokles, who lacked reason and education, turned out, if not bad, at least inconsistent and unstable.

In fact, this passage probably alludes to a passage of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, where Xenophon discusses how Sokrates treated his pupils: 'He used to teach', Xenophon says 'those who thought that they were good by nature but despised learning that the natures which seem to be best most need education. He would point out that those horses which have the best natural endowment (τοὺς εὐφυεστάτους), which are spirited and vehement, become the most useful and best, if they are broken in from youth, but, if they are untamed, become the most uncontrollable and worthless…' So talented men, Sokrates argued, would either turn out very well ('for the good things that they do are very numerous and very great') or very badly, depending on their education (Xen. *Mem*. 4.1.3-4). Xenophon's words here were probably meant in the first instance to bring Alkibiades to mind, but shortly after it one of Sokrates' companions asks him about Themistokles: had he become great 'through conversation with some wise man, or by nature'? Sokrates replies that when to practise even minor arts requires competent teachers, it would be simple-minded to imagine that statesmanship comes 'of its own accord' (*Mem.* 4.2.2: ἀπὸ ταὐτομάτου) – a striking correction of Thucydides.

The comparison with horses that Plutarch puts into Themistokles' mouth,[40] combined with the emphasis on his great natural abilities but inadequate education, make clear that allusion to the

the Plato passage is talking precisely about inconsistency: God cannot be inconsistent or have as many forms as the poets represent him. In the other examples LSJ cite, the idea is likewise 'deviation' from a norm, though, as in Arist. *Pol*. 5.1309b 30-1 ('deviating constitutions') or *HA* 488b 19-20 (a thoroughbred is one that 'does not deviate from its own nature'), the implication can be negative, and in Plut., *Quaest. conv*. 3.649e definitely so (ivy planted in Babylon ἐξίστατο καὶ ἀπηγόρευεν). But *cf*. Thuc. 2.61.2 (cited in LSJ II 5), καὶ ἐγὼ μὲν ὁ αὐτός εἰμι καὶ οὐκ ἐξίσταμαι· ὑμεῖς δὲ μεταβάλλετε ('I remain the same and *do not deviate* [from my opinion]; you are the ones who are changing').

[37] See above, n.7.

[38] See above, p. 2.

[39] Other horse metaphors for education are used in this way: *Lyk*. 30.4; *Ages*. 1.3; Plato, *Apol*. 20a-b; *Laws* 808d. But cf. *Alex*. 6.1-7, where Plutarch implies a parallel between the good nature of Boukephalas (he was full of *thymos* and *pneuma*), and that of Alexander, which was 'unyielding but easily led by reason' (7.1): Stadter (1996) 292-4. There the point seems to be *both* that they benefited from training (with allusion in 7.1 to *Laws* 808d-e) *and* that their good nature was revealed by their reaction to training.

[40] Though Themistokles seems to have been particularly associated with horses, *cf*. Plato, *Meno* 93d; Athenaios 576c and 533d (= Idomeneus, *FGrH* 338 F4a-b); Aischines Soc. *SSR* VI A 48, 50 (below, n.44). At the end of the *Life* one of Themistokles' sons dies from a horse-bite (*Them*. 32.2).

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Xenophon passage is intended. Indeed the earlier remark of Themistokles' teacher, that he would 'not turn out to be anything small … but great, for sure, either good or bad' (2.2), exploits the ideas of and is explained by this passage.[41] The comparison with horses might well also bring to mind Plato's famous image of the disobedient horse of the soul which needs to be controlled by reason, to which Plutarch often refers (*Phaidros* 253c-254e).[42] But the idea of a talented but uneducated man, who would veer to both good and bad, probably alludes also to Plato's paradigmatic discussion in *Republic* Book 6 of the man of 'great nature', who, depending on his education, would do either great good or great ill to his city (491d-495b).[43]

Xenophon seems to imply that Themistokles, although he started life badly, must in the end have had access to proper education.[44] This may be the implication of *Them*. 2.7, though this is not really spelt out and the idea may be at least as much one of maturation. That indeed is the way Themistokles' reform is presented in *God's slowness to punish*. There Themistokles is an example of someone who had a wild youth but – despite this – later did great services to his country (*De sera num.* 551e-552b). There is no mention of education as a cause of reform; the stress is on the fact that uneducated and wild but talented youths, like Themistokles, can later do great good. The passage of time is key; hence God's forbearance in not punishing sins at once. Significantly, Plutarch goes on to invoke explicitly the Platonic paradigm (*Republic* 6.491d-495b); the point seems to be one more about maturity than about education correcting wrongs – though, as in *Them*. 2.7, there is the suggestion that education ('reason') later in life may also play a role.[45] In *Them.* 2.7, then, as in the *God's slowness* passage, the allusions to Xenophon and Plato reinforce the notion of the young Themistokles' brilliance but instability and lack of real education. In both there is a certain ambiguity about the cause of his later reform. But more importantly for our purposes both passages, like the Xenophon and Plato passages on which they draw, assume a developmental model in which education has the potential to affect character.

But if 2.7 betrayed traces of a developmental model of character, in the two stories about Themistokles' wild youth that follow Plutarch returns to a static model, in which behaviour in childhood or youth reveals rather than determines character. These two stories are made to seem to flow logically from the discussion of Themistokles' youth ('as for the fictional stories which some connect with this [i.e. his wild youth]'). The first story – that Themistokles' father renounced him and his mother committed suicide at her son's dishonour – is mentioned only to be dismissed

[41] Frost (1971) 22 notes this passage in his discussion of Themistokles and Mnesiphilos, but does not see Plutarch as alluding to it.

[42] *Ant.* 36.1-2; *De virt. moral*. 445b-c; *De gen. Soc.* 588f; *Plat. quaest*. 1008c-d; 1009b; cf. *Galba* 6.4 (with Ash (1997) 192-4); *De tuenda sanit.* 125b; *De cohib. ira* 453c. See Duff (1999) 78-9, 85, 88-9 and esp. Trapp (1990) *passim* and 172. The story of Alexander's training of Boukephalas, and of his own education by Aristotle, narrated in *Alexander* 6-7, exploits the same image and presumably alludes to the same passage: Stadter (1996) 293-4.

[43] The *Republic* passage, which was almost certainly also intended to bring Alkibiades to mind, probably influenced Xenophon too. Plutarch frequently alludes to this passage elsewhere, especially in the *Alk.-Cor*. and *Demetr.-Ant*. For the details, see Duff (1999) 45-9, 60-5, 205-8, 224-8.

[44] Stesimbrotos had associated Themistokles with Anaxagoras and Melissos, as Plutarch notes (2.5). The chronology is wrong, but the motivation may have been similar: to provide him with an education and a teacher. This seems to have been the line taken by the Socratic writer Aischines in his dialogue *Alkibiades.* In a fragment of this work, Alkibiades seems to have praised Themistokles for his innate ability; Sokrates responds by stressing the great knowledge that Themistokles had and arguing that although Themistokles was originally low-born (φαῦλος), uncultured (ἄμουσος), and ignorant of horsemanship (ἄφιππος), he became later in life cultured (μουσικός) and skilled at riding (ἱππικός) (*SSR* VI A 48, 50).

[45] 'For great natures produce nothing small, and, because of their keenness, the vigour and activity within them do not lie inactive, but they drift in the flood before they come to an abiding and settled character'. Instability, then, is here a feature of men like Themistokles. 'We', Plutarch claims, do not recognize their potential, just as one may not recognize the potential of rich and untended land (an allusion to *Rep*. 6.491d-492a); but 'the better judge' sees its value and 'waits for the maturity which works with reason and virtue (λόγου καὶ ἀρετῆς συνεργὸν ἡλικίαν), and for the season when its nature brings forth its proper fruit' (552c-d).

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by Plutarch.[46] The second anecdote is introduced to disprove the first: there was no rift with his father because the latter used to try to dissuade him from entering politics by suggesting the dangers it entailed: 'he pointed out to him the old triremes lying on the beach cast aside and overlooked, saying that the people behave in the same way towards its demagogues, when they have no use for them'. The anecdote has a predictive function: the image of the triremes abandoned on the shore looks forward both to Themistokles' success in building up Athens' navy and to his victory at Salamis, as well, of course, to his own rejection by the Athenian people. It also confirms and illustrates Themistokles' early ambition and desire for practical action. It has already been made clear that Themistokles' love of the practical was taking him in the direction of politics. Now he is intent on entering politics, and it is from this that his father attempts to dissuade him. The anecdote is not used to *explain* his ambition; there is no sense here that this incident, or his father's experiences of an ungrateful people, actually influenced Themistokles' development, made him more or less ambitious, more cautious or fearful of the people. On the contrary, the anecdote is *illustrative* of Themistokles' character. We are back here, then, in an anecdotal mode of discourse, where anecdotes are deployed to provide evidence for a static character.[47]

III. EDUCATION IN OTHER *LIVES*

We have, then, in *Them*. 2 a combination of two ways of looking at education, two ways of understanding the relationship between childhood and adult character: what I have called a static/illustrative model and a developmental model. The combination of the two, moreover, though not logically impossible, might be thought to cause a certain circularity of argument: Themistokles' poor education, which concentrated only on the practical, caused his unbalanced character; and his unbalanced character is revealed in his rejection of proper education. We shall return to this point. In fact, however, the tension between the developmental and static/illustrative models of character is not uncommon in treatments of education elsewhere in the *Lives*. It is sometimes elsewhere combined with the pattern which we noted in the *Themistokles*, in which attention to practical training is combined with neglect of liberal education.[48]

Philopoimen

A good example is the case of Philopoimen, statesman and general of the Achaian League in the late third and early second centuries BC. Plutarch begins in ch.1 with an extremely positive picture of his education, and praise of his educators. Upon being left an orphan, Philopoimen was raised by his guardian Kleander 'just as Homer says Achilles was raised by Phoinix'. 'Right from the beginning', Plutarch says, 'his character took on a noble and kingly mould and growth (πλᾶσιν καὶ αὔξησιν)'. We are plainly thinking here in terms of character development; the metaphor of moulding or shaping is significant: education is seen as forming character.[49] When Philopoimen was an *antipais*, which probably means 'a little more than a child', he was taught by two academic philosophers, Ekdelos and Demophanes.[50] These men, Plutarch claims, had more than any of their contemporaries applied philosophy to practical action, expelling tyrants and instituting laws. Nevertheless, they considered the education of Philopoimen a particular success of theirs, 'on the

[46] Such stories were evidently part of the negative tradition on Themistokles. Aelian mentioned the renunciation (2.12). It is also mentioned by the Socratic writer Aischines (*SSR* VI A 48); see Piccirilli (1982). On the negative tradition on Themistokles generally, see Frost (1980) 15-39 *passim*; Piccirilli (1983) x-xii; (1989) 7-8.

[47] A longer analysis of these anecdotes can be found in Duff (2003) 92-3; *cf*. idem (forthcoming, a).

[48] For this combination, *cf*. Pelling (1996) xxvi-xxix; (2000) 332-3 (= repr. 2002a, 340-1).

[49] For moulding or shaping as a metaphor for education, see *De virt. moral*. 443c: τὴν ποιότητα ταύτην καὶ τὴν διαφορὰν ἔθει λαμβάνει τὸ ἄλογον ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου πλαττόμενον; *Lyk.-Num*. 4.7 (above, n.8).

[50] Ziegler's emendation. The MSS have Ekdemos and are divided between Demophanes and Megalophanes. See Ziegler (1934) 228-33.

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grounds that through philosophy they had made this man a common benefit to Greece' (*Phil*. 1.2-5). Good education, then, formed Philopoimen's character and did it well.

After a discussion of Philopoimen's appearance in ch.2, Plutarch turns in ch.3 to his character, and here things are rather more negative. Plutarch first states Philopoimen's character flaws: 'The ambitiousness of his character was not totally devoid of contentiousness nor free of anger'. Thus, Plutarch says, although Philopoimen tried to model himself on the great Theban general Epameinondas, he only succeeded in imitating the latter's indifference to money, and 'his energy and intelligence' (τὸ δραστήριον καὶ συνετὸν αὐτοῦ); his anger and contentiousness made him unable to maintain the latter's 'calm, weighty and humane disposition in political disputes'. In consequence 'he was thought to be more suitable for military than for political virtue' (*Phil*. 3.1).

Philopoimen's character, then, was unbalanced. How does this relate to his education? Plutarch continues, 'For from his childhood he loved soldiering and devoted himself to lessons useful to soldiering – fighting in armour and horse-riding' (3.2). The 'for' (καὶ γάρ) is important here: is his unbalanced education to be seen as *causing* the imperfections of character? In other words, does it explain why his character was the way it was? Or does Philopoimen's own unbalanced application to his education flow from and provide evidence for his imperfection of character? We should almost certainly take it in the latter way. Plutarch has already told us that it was Philopoimen's 'anger and contentiousness' which prevented him from attaining Epameinondas' virtues, and in ch.1 we have learnt that the educational opportunities which Philopoimen had were excellent – taught not only by Academic philosophers but by ones successful in politics too. His over-concentration on military training, then, should not be blamed on his education but on his own character. There may not necessarily, of course, be an either–or choice here: it is not logically impossible to see Philopoimen's over-concentration on military lessons, stemming as it did from his own pre-existing character, as itself then influencing the way his character developed. But the dominant model in ch.3 is illustrative and static.

Philopoimen, Plutarch continues, loved wrestling, but rejected athletics, as being unconducive to a soldier's physique; this bias, which has its parallel in Themistokles' rejection of music, he continued later in life, when he was a commander (*Phil*. 3.3-5). For the rest of the chapter we are dealing with the character of the adult Philopoimen, and the actions which reveal it. But the transition from the section on childhood is smooth, as it too assumes a static character, and merely looks at childhood for early manifestations of the adult character: 'When', Plutarch goes on, 'he had freed himself (ἀπαλλαγείς) from teachers and tutors' – a phrase which perhaps conveys Philopoimen's own disdain and his eagerness for action[51] – he devoted himself to soldiering and spent his free time hunting, working on his farm or in public affairs (4.1). He did, says Plutarch, listen to speeches and read the work of philosophers, but only those which he considered helpful to him in obtaining virtue (that is, his brand of virtue). In a similar way, he read Homer as a stimulant to manliness (ἀνδρεία) and was particularly keen on the *Tactics* of Evangelos and on works about Alexander the Great, but despised other kinds of literature as being done 'merely to pass the time and for fruitless small talk' (4.8). 'This man', Plutarch concludes, 'seems to have pursued military matters more than was necessary …' (4.10). We are plainly here dealing not with childhood educational influences but with how his attitude to *paideia* revealed his character. That the transition from childhood to adulthood is handled within a discussion of the same topic – devotion to the military, rejection of *paideia* (athletics, literature) – confirms our earlier conclusion: ch.3 uses Philopoimen's unbalanced education as a confirmation of rather than an explanation for his unbalanced character. The rest of his Life will continue in the same vein, showing how successful he was as a general, but how marred his character and his career were because of his excessive rivalry and his inability to control his anger.[52]

[51] *Cf*. above p. 5 on a similar focalization in *Them*. 2.4.

[52] On this passage, see also Pelling (1997) 125-9. For Philopoimen's rivalry and anger, see Pelling (1989) 208-14;

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We have, then, once again, two models for viewing education. Philopoimen's character was moulded by good education; but his contentiousness and anger were also revealed by his attitude to his studies; as with Themistokles, deficiencies of character are seen as *reflected in* rejection of proper education and over-concentration on the practical.[53] And as with Themistokles, these two models (developmental and static/illustrative) are probably to be seen as in tension with each other rather than as contradictory. It is not so illogical after all, to claim both that Philopoimen's development was improved by a good education, and that his own innate character caused him to concentrate too much on military training – especially if we see the good education as being chronologically prior. Nor is it totally illogical to claim both that his over-concentration on military training *affected* his character, and that this over-concentration *revealed* how imbalanced his character was. Both positions can be held simultaneously.

Coriolanus

Occasionally Plutarch seems to employ only the developmental model. Coriolanus is famously introduced as an illustration of Plato's assertion 'that even if nature is noble and good but is deprived of education, it brings forth many bad fruits along with the good, just like rich farm land which has not received the proper care' (*Cor*. 1.3). The allusion is to the same passage of *Republic* Book 6 that is alluded to at *Them*. 2.7 (491d-492a), and as at *Them*. 2.7, it is a developmental model which Plutarch is here using. The raw material of Coriolanus' nature, it is implied, was good, but his education was deficient or unbalanced and so, notwithstanding his good nature, produced an unbalanced character. To illustrate Coriolanus' character, Plutarch declares that while people admired his manly qualities, 'in political relations' they found him offensive and arrogant (1.4). 'For', he continues, 'men can enjoy no greater favour from the Muses than the taming (ἐξημεροῦσθαι) of their nature by reason and education, having received moderation by means of reason and having got rid of excess' (1.5).[54]

Coriolanus' inability in dealing with people, then, was a result of his poor education. That way of understanding this passage is confirmed later in the *Life*, when Coriolanus is rejected in his bid for the consulship. He seethes with rage, and Plutarch explains this failure to react moderately by an appeal once again to Plato (*Epistle* 4, 321c) and a statement that 'the weighty and self-restrained part of his soul, which is the chief component of political virtue, was not mixed with reason and education' (15.4). But might his poor education have reflected a choice of Coriolanus' own? Plutarch makes clear in the next sentence (1.6) that this was not the case: in this period of Roman history, he says, Roman society in general saw virtue as consisting chiefly in manliness (ἀνδρεία). So Coriolanus, 'who was naturally passionate for warlike struggles' and who 'began to handle weapons from boyhood', must be partly at least excused for his poor education – he did not have the opportunities which, say, Philopoimen or Themistokles had.

Coriolanus, then, had an unbalanced education and this was the cause of his unbalanced character. That Plutarch is using here a wholly developmental model should not perhaps surprise us, given the central role the passage from the *Republic* plays in setting the agenda for this *Life*, and given the overlaps in the analysis of Coriolanus' psychology with what we find in the *On lack of*

(1997) 128-35; Swain (1988); (1990) 135 (= repr. 1995, 245); Walsh (1992). Cf. *Flam*. 1.4, where Flamininus, who is paired with Philopoimen, is said in passing to have had only a military education.

[53] The opposite case is provided by Aemilius, though here what counts is his attitude not to his own studies, but to those of his sons (and does not concern his childhood): his good character is revealed in his devotion to their education, for which he procures the services of Greek teachers (6.8-10; 28.11). His good character is also revealed in his positive attitude to Greek learning in general; *cf*. Swain (1990) 132-3 (= repr. 1995, 240-1); Pelling (1989) 215-16. Contrast *Cato Maj*. 22-3, where Cato's harsh character is illustrated by his rejection of philosophy and hatred of Greek philosophers and doctors.

[54] On this passage, and the Platonic allusion, see Pelling (1996) xxvii-xxix; Duff (1999) 206-10. On Coriolanus' education, see also Russell (1963) 23, 27-8 (= repr. 1995, 361-2, 370-1); Swain (1990) 136-7 (= repr. 1995, 247-9).

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anger.[55] As we noted earlier, in his theoretical pronouncements in the *Moralia*, where Plutarch is more consciously influenced by Platonic psychology, he seems more inclined to a view of character as moulded by education. Furthermore, the discussion of education in the *Coriolanus* is handled wholly by means of analysis; there are no anecdotes. This is obviously related to the first point; it is no surprise that particularly Platonic sections are not anecdotal. It also fits with the pattern that we have also noted before, that analytical passages tend to assume a developmental model and anecdotal sections a static/illustrative model.

Lysander

A similar pattern can be seen in the treatment of Lysander's education. Plutarch begins by noting Lysander's susceptibility to considerations of praise and honour (*Lys*. 2.2). He goes on to explain that it was a particular aim of the Spartan education system to instil in young Spartans such sensitivity to public opinion. Plutarch presumably has in mind here Plato's description in *Republic* Book 8 of the Spartan state as a 'timocracy' – a state in which competition for honour was rife – and of the citizen characteristic of this state as particularly fond of victory and honour (τὸν φιλόνικόν τε καὶ φιλότιμον) (545a). Indeed, when Plutarch continues, it is with a paraphrase of the Platonic passage: 'So fondness for honour and victory, then (τὸ μὲν οὖν φιλότιμον … καὶ φιλόνικον), were firmly implanted in him by his Lakonian training, and his nature should not be blamed too much for this' (2.4).[56] Education is here clearly assumed to affect character; indeed the distinction drawn here between nature and character makes this plain: one should not assume, Plutarch argues, that Lysander was ambitious *by nature*; his ambition was to some extent at least a result of his Spartan education. And having raised the issue of the distinction between innate qualities and those instilled by education, Plutarch goes on to note some features of the adult Lysander, which *were* his by nature: his obedience and ability to cultivate the powerful; his *melancholia* (tendency to anger, violence). This passage from the *Lysander*, then, is notable for its attempt to separate out which features of Lysander's character were natural endowments, and which were engendered by education.[57] In accepting the possibility of the latter, it assumes a developmental model of character, even if the scope of such development as presented here is rather limited.[58]

Perikles

It might be that Plutarch felt that unbalanced character, like that of Themistokles, Coriolanus and Lysander, required more explanation than did good, balanced character; that the former, in other words, required an analysis of childhood development, whereas the latter, as it was much less problematic, did not. This does not hold good, it is true, in all cases. An exception to this rule would be the *Perikles*, where Plutarch devotes a long section, chs 4-6, to a discussion of Perikles' teachers.[59] We are not, as Stadter points out, dealing here with education in childhood but in later life;[60] but Plutarch does not really make this clear, and this section plays the same role as discussions of education in childhood play in other *Lives*.

Plutarch begins by naming Damon as Perikles' teacher of music, though he then goes on to claim that this was a cover and that Damon was really a sophist and taught Perikles political skill

[55] See Duff (1999) 212-13.

[56] οὐδέν τι μέγα χρὴ τὴν φύσιν ἐν τούτοις αἰτιᾶσθαι.

[57] On the *Lys*. passage in general, see Pelling (1988) 268-74 (= repr. 2002a, 292-7); Duff (1999) 177-80.

[58] A similar attempt to separate out nature, character and the influence of education is found at *Ages*. 1.3-5 and *Brut*. 1.2-3. In the latter passage, the first Brutus is said to have had an *êthos* which was 'hard by nature and not softened by reason' (οὐ μαλακὸν ἔχων ὑπὸ λόγου τὸ ἦθος). 'But this [i.e. the later] Brutus … having mixed his *êthos* with education and reason through philosophy, and stimulated his nature, which was weighty and calm, with active impulses, seems to have been most harmoniously mixed for the good'. See below, p. 22.

[59] Also *Brut*. 1 (see previous note).

[60] Stadter (1987) 257-8; (1989) 68. As Stadter (1991) points out, the evidence is in fact against Perikles having been much influenced *at all* by such intellectuals.

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(*Per*. 4.1-3).[61] Zenon, too, was a teacher of Perikles – though here again Plutarch emphasizes that it was technical skill in argument that he taught (4.5). As in the case of Themistokles, such teachers of technical skills are not considered to offer real education. 'But', Plutarch continues, 'the one who associated most with Perikles and did most to clothe him with dignity and a sense of pride that was too weighty for him to remain a mere demagogue (φρόνημα δημαγωγίας ἐμβριθέστερον), and who in general elevated and promoted the dignity of his character (τὸ ἀξίωμα τοῦ ἤθους), was Anaxagoras of Klazomenai, whom his contemporaries called Mind' (4.6). Anaxagoras, then, with whom Plutarch was concerned to deny any association on Themistokles' part, not only taught Perikles but actually influenced his character. Plutarch goes on to explain that Anaxagoras' influence produced in Perikles not only a dignified pride (φρόνημα σοβαρόν) but also a calmness of character which showed through in his manner of speech and bearing (5.1), and made him superior – i.e. not a prey – to superstition. This then is clearly a case of education affecting character. There is no hint here of any suggestion that Perikles merely learnt his way of speaking or walking as a technique: Anaxagoras' influence really changed him. Of course there may well also be here a sense that Perikles' openness to the influence of such a teacher as Anaxagoras proved what a good character he had. But in fact Perikles' agency is not stressed beyond saying that he admired Anaxagoras 'exceedingly' (ὑπερφυῶς).

We should note, however, that within this discussion, Plutarch places two anecdotes. One immediately follows the statement in ch.5 on the composure and calmness which Perikles learnt from Anaxagoras. Perikles once endured someone's insults and jeering all day; when the perpetrator even followed Perikles' home with no let-up, Perikles remained calm and had a servant escort him home with a torch as it was now dark (5.2). This story is plainly intended to illustrate and confirm Perikles' calmness and composure. It also has a predictive function, like the anecdotes of *Them*. 2.8: Perikles' ability to endure the criticism of the masses and of his political opponents will be an important feature of his successful leadership of Athens.[62] We are back then here with anecdotes which illustrate character, rather than show development. A similar point can be made of the anecdote in 6.2-5 which shows Perikles' unsuperstitious attitude towards the appearance of a one-horned goat. Once again it has a prophetic function: the seer Lampon declares that the portent signified that the leadership of Athens would devolve on one man; this, Plutarch says, is what actually happened. But equally importantly the anecdote is illustrative of the rationality of Perikles' character. Neither anecdote is explanatory: there is no sense that Perikles *learnt* how to be calm in the face of opposition, or received a bolstering to his rationality by the successful dissection of the goat. The combination here of *analysis*, which assumes a developmental mode, and *anecdotes*, which assume an illustrative mode, is unproblematic, as neither of the anecdotes is presented as happening in childhood and the chronology remains vague throughout. It is perfectly logical, after all, to claim that Perikles' character developed the way it did because of the influence of Anaxagoras, and then to illustrate that character through two anecdotes, which are presumably to be taken as having occurred after the association with Anaxagoras.[63] But *Per*. 4-6 does confirm what we have noted before, that anecdotes – even when inserted into a context which is arguing for development of character – never concentrate on the learning experience itself and are always used illustratively.[64]

[61] See Stadter (1989) 70-1, who links this passage with *Them*. 2.6 and points out that *Per*. 4.2 is dependent on Plato's claims in *Prot*. 316e about other sophists who disguised their real profession.

[62] Stated explicitly at *Per*. 2.5. See Stadter (1975) 80-5 (= repr. 1995, 159-64); (1989) 30-1.

[63] Though in fact there is nothing to suggest that Plutarch conceived the association with Anaxagoras as happening in childhood either. Chronology is simply not made an issue here (and, as Stadter (1989) 68 and ad loc. notes, these events or influences are not treated in chronological order).

[64] *Cf*. Stadter (1987) 266: 'This *Life* is meant to portray the *ethos* of Pericles, but it also uses his *ethos* to convince us of the truth of the portrait. Thus the importance of the early chapters on the influence of Anaxagoras, which serve to establish a preliminary notion of Pericles' character. This notion, once accepted, then helps us to interpret his other actions'.

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Fabius Maximus

The treatment of education in the *Fabius*, which is paired with the *Perikles*, is rather different. Fabius' education is treated wholly from a static/illustrative point of view. First Plutarch introduces his character: his nickname Ovicula ('little lamb') was given to him 'with reference to the calmness and gravity of his character when he was still a child' (*Fab*. 1.4). 'His stillness and silence', Plutarch continues, 'his great caution in indulging in childish pleasures, the slowness and labour with which he learned his lessons' led people to suspect him of stupidity. Only a few could see 'the deep-rooted steadfastness, magnanimity and lion-like quality of his soul' (1.5). As time went on, it became clear that his apparent inactivity was really lack of passion (*apatheia*); he trained his body, 'like a natural weapon' (ὥσπερ σύμφυτον ὅπλον) for the wars which he foresaw, and his voice as an instrument for persuading the people (1.6-7). Fabius' slowness at his lessons when a child, and his devotion to military and rhetorical training, which are probably to be taken as happening when he was older, are not here offered as explanations for his character. Rather they are given as evidence of a pre-existing character, which, although only a few could discern when he was a child, was nevertheless present even then. Later those same qualities of calm and steadfastness under attack will be central to his leadership and his successful resistance of Hannibal.[65]

There is some similarity here with the way in which Coriolanus' education is described: Coriolanus too was admired for his *apatheia* (*Cor*. 1.4), and trained his body, 'his natural and native weapon' (τὸ σύμφυτον ὅπλον καὶ συγγενές) (2.1). But Coriolanus, unlike Fabius, did not have any ability in politics and in getting on with people. His calmness is a mere unsociability, and in the end he gives way to the passion of anger and resentment. To the reader who approaches the *Coriolanus* after reading the *Fabius*, the contrast will be all too clear.[66] But as we have already noted, there is also a contrast in *how* Plutarch has handled the education of the two men. Fabius' good character is *confirmed* by his attitude to his studies; Coriolanus' flawed character is *explained* by his poor education.

Marcellus

A variation on this pattern is provided by Marcellus. He was 'by nature, a lover of war' (τῇι … φύσει φιλοπόλεμος) but otherwise 'self-controlled, humane and such a lover of Greek education and literature that he honoured and admired those who excelled in it, even though he himself was too busy to attain the level of application and learning for which he was eager' (*Marc*. 1.3) – for, as Plutarch explains, the Romans at that time were engaged in a long series of wars (1.4-5). Marcellus, then, wanted to master Greek *paideia* but was prevented by circumstances beyond his control. This is not a developmental model: if it were, Marcellus' unbalanced education – for all that it was not his choice – might have been expected to have some negative consequences. Rather, we are invited to see in his attitude to his studies confirmation of a good character. He did not have the chance to get a really good education, but he wanted it, and that shows what his character was like.[67] Once again, *attitude* to education is used to throw light on character.

Pyrrhos and Marius

The *Pyrrhos and Marius* has the same stress on unbalanced education that we have seen in several other *Lives*, and, like the *Themistokles*, is rather ambiguous as regards the paradigm. Pyrrhos, Plutarch notes, devoted himself to military studies alone, rejecting all other studies – a statement confirmed by an anecdote similar in content and purpose to the one in *Them*. 2.4, in which Pyrrhos

[65] And find their parallel in Perikles' calmness under attack (cf. *Per*. 2.5). See above, n.62.

[66] The *Per.-Fab*. was Book 10 in the series (*Per*. 2.5), the *Cor.-Alk*. later: see e.g. Jones (1966) 66-74; Nikolaidis (2005) esp. 312-14.

[67] On Marcellus and Greek culture, see Swain (1990) 131-2 (= repr. 1995, 239-40); Pelling (1989) 199-208.

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refuses to express a judgement on music, only on generalship (*Pyrrh*. 8.3-7). Plutarch does not make clear whether this over-concentration on military training is to be seen as causing or merely confirming his addiction to warfare; but nothing in the passage indicates that he is talking of the young Pyrrhos, so we should probably take it in the latter sense.

Plutarch says rather more about Marius' education. After noting that the surviving statue of Marius at Ravenna well captures his bitterness of character, Plutarch continues:

> (2.1) … ἀνδρώδης γὰρ φύσει καὶ πολεμικὸς γενόμενος, καὶ στρατιωτικῆς μᾶλλον ἢ πολιτικῆς παιδείας μεταλαβών, ἄκρατον ἐν ταῖς ἐξουσίαις τὸν θυμὸν ἔσχε. (2.2) λέγεται δὲ μήτε γράμματα μαθεῖν Ἑλληνικὰ μήτε γλώττηι πρὸς μηδὲν Ἑλληνίδι χρῆσθαι τῶν σπουδῆς ἐχομένων, ὡς γελοῖον γράμματα μανθάνειν ὧν οἱ διδάσκαλοι δουλεύοιεν ἑτέροις.
>
> (2.1) … For being virile and warlike by nature, and having partaken of military rather than civil education, his *thymos* was extreme when he was in power. (2.2) And he is said neither to have learnt Greek nor to have used the Greek language for anything important, saying that it was ridiculous to learn a literature whose teachers were other people's slaves. (*Marius* 2.1-2)

Marius' *thymos* was extreme, literally 'unmixed'. *Thymos* in this context probably means primarily anger, a common meaning in Plato. But there is almost certainly in view here its more technical Platonic meaning of 'spirit', that part of the irrational which is necessary for action but which can so easily get out of control and which needs the 'mixing' or harmonising provided by education.[68] Either way, Marius' passions get the better of him. The first part of the sentence seems to present a reason for this: not only was his nature warlike, but his education was unbalanced; like Philopoimen, he had a soldier's education only. That we are dealing with cause-and-effect, though, is not quite as clear as it might be: the link between the raw material of his nature, his unbalanced education and his character is not made explicit; there are no causal particles with the participles γενόμενος and μεταλαβών to indicate that the logic of the sentence must be taken in this way ('*since* he was virile and warlike … *sinc*e he had partaken of military rather than civil education'), though sense makes it likely. More problematic is the relationship between the two participle phrases: is Marius' concentration on military education to be seen in parallel to his warlike nature? Are both phrases, in other words, to be taken as two separate causes of his poor character? Or is his concentration on military education to be seen as reflecting and stemming from his naturally warlike nature? Is, in other words, his unbalanced attitude to his studies to be taken as illustrating a pre-existing 'virile and warlike' disposition? It remains open, then, that both explanations might exist in tandem: Marius' lack of a broad education damaged his character, but, given his warlike nature, he might himself have deliberately chosen to reject it.

Indeed, when Plutarch continues it is with the notion of deliberate rejection: Marius refused to learn Greek *grammata* ('language', 'literature'?) and refused to use Greek 'for anything important', with an arrogant insult to the Greeks (2.2). It is well known that Plutarch places a particularly high valuation on the extent to which Roman heroes learnt Greek and adopted Greek mores.[69] But Marius' rejection of Greek education is surely presented here not just as a cause of his deficient character, but also as *evidence* for it: his refusal to learn Greek, and his arrogance towards the Greeks, *demonstrate* what an unpleasant character he had. As with Themistokles, a subject's attitude to his education, the choices he makes, is used as an illustration of what his character was like. Indeed, Marius' refusal to use Greek 'for anything important' surely refers to his behaviour later in life, as much as, if not more than, in his youth. Confirmation of this reading is found in the next sentence:

[68] On Plutarch's frequent use of metaphors of mixing to describe harmony or its lack in the soul, see Duff (1999) 89-94. On *thymos* in Plutarch's *Lives*, see Duff (1999) 73, 88-9, 210-15.

[69] Pelling (1989); Swain (1990).

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when, after his second triumph, he celebrated Greek-style games, he left as soon as he could, thus showing his contempt for Greek culture. This is not a childhood experience which moulded character, but an illustrative anecdote of the kind of which Plutarch was so fond. Here, then, Marius' scorn for Greek education and Greek culture illustrates a constant of his character. And as so often in such static/illustrative treatments of childhood, supporting anecdotes can be drawn from any part of a subject's life regardless of chronology, and statements about childhood can be mixed with statements about or stories from adult life. The unifying and constant feature is the character thus illustrated.[70]

In the rest of the passage, however, which continues the theme of Marius' rejection of Greek culture, Plutarch slides back into a developmental mode. Plato used to tell a rather morose pupil of his, 'My dear Xenokrates, sacrifice to the Graces';[71] in the same way, 'if anyone had persuaded Marius to sacrifice to the Greek Muses and Graces, he would not have put a most ugly ending on to his most illustrious career as general and politician, when he ran himself aground on a most premature and savage old age under the influence of *thymos*, an untimely love of office and uncontrollable greeds' (*Mar*. 2.4). If, in other words, Marius had had good education, he would not have made such a mess of his life.[72]

IV. CONCLUSION: THE TWO MODELS AND THEIR CONTEXTS

We see, then, in the *Marius* that same combination of two different approaches to the education of the subject, which assume what I have called either a developmental model of character or a static/illustrative model. We also see the same pattern which we have noted elsewhere, that passages which assume a developmental model of character tend to be restricted to explicit analyses of character, and passages which assume a static/illustrative model tend to be anecdotal. How are we to explain the coexistence of these two models, and their association with two different forms of discourse?

It is perhaps easiest to explain the presence of the static/illustrative model and its connection with anecdotal discourse. Both can be seen as natural results of the ancient tendency to perceive character in moral terms. This is the argument of Christopher Gill, who related Plutarch's lack of interest in character development in the *Lives* to his ethical concerns and those of ancient historians and biographers in general: ancient writers were interested in making judgements on the moral character of their subjects rather than in explaining what made them the way they were (their 'personality').[73] In a similar way, Christopher Pelling attempted to explain Plutarch's so often 'banal and unpenetrating' treatment of childhood, against the background of the quite sophisticated theories of development in the *On moral virtue*, by arguing that ancient conceptions of character led him not to look, as a modern biographer might, for what was unique in an individual, what was idiosyncratic or 'quirky'; rather, Plutarch tends to see the characteristics of his protagonists as somehow 'integrated', as clustering naturally. On Pelling's view, then, not only are ancient

[70] The evidence is, of course, against Marius' rejection of Greek culture being a feature of his youth: Swain (1990) 138-9 (= repr. 1995, 252) citing Carney (1961) 12-14. But Plutarch does not imply that it was: there is no reason to expect that *Mar*. 2 should contain only events relating to early life, nor that the material be in chronological order.

[71] The story also occurs in *Con. praec.* 141f and *Amat*. 769d. We do not know the provenance.

[72] A developmental model is also implied at *Mar*. 46.3-5, where 'forgetful and foolish people' – like, it is implied, Pyrrhos and Marius – are swept away by greed 'before they have laid a base and foundation from reason and education': see Duff (1999) 108-9. On Marius and education in general, see Pelling (1989) 206-7; Swain (1990) 137-40 (= repr. 1995, 249-54); Duff (1999) 107-11.

[73] Gill (1983); *cf.* esp. 469-70 and 472-5: despite Plutarch's having quite a sophisticated theory of character development, passages which suggest character development are in the *Lives*, as in ancient biography and historiography more generally, surprisingly rare. Gill's distinction between 'character' and 'personality' is set out more fully in id. (1990). Gill (1996) revises it to one between 'subjective-individualist' and 'objective-participant' conceptions of personality. For a critique, see Pelling (2002b) (the postscript to Pelling 1990a).

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biographers interested in judging more than in explaining, but there is in the way they construct adult character simply less to explain, less need to invoke peculiar childhood influences.[74]

Genre probably plays a role here too. Biographies of intellectuals (poets, philosophers, etc.) do tend to have a more consistent interest in education than do 'political' biographies (biographies of statesmen) – naturally so, perhaps, as in the former the intellectual abilities of the subject will plainly be paramount.[75] Conversely, the focus of political biography on *action*, conceived as the great deeds of illustrious men on the grand stage of politics and war, will have tended also to discourage much of a focus on childhood. The interest is naturally in the adult, and it is in adult deeds that character is made manifest – and certainly not in any inner 'person' which childhood might explain or on which it might throw light.

This takes us a long way to explaining the presence of the static/illustrative model. A tendency to view character in moral terms, to concentrate on the adult and to eschew explanation, naturally brings with it a basically static conception of character. And childhood, from such a viewpoint, is of interest not for the light it throws on *why* someone turned out the way he did; rather it is of interest only to the extent that actions in childhood may throw light on adult character. This explains why the most frequent mode by which Plutarch analyses childhood in the *Lives* is by anecdote. Indeed, once one assumes a static character, anecdotes from any part of life can be used to illustrate that character.

The function of anecdote in illuminating character is laid out most clearly in Plutarch's famous declaration in *Alex*. 1.2 that 'there is not always in the most outstanding deeds a revelation of virtue or vice, but often a little matter like a saying or a joke hints at character more than battles where thousands die …' Anecdotes, then, *reveal* and *illustrate* character; they do not explain it. Indeed, in all the passages at which we have looked, anecdotes always work on the assumption that character is static and are always introduced as illustrations of that character. That is why Plutarch can mix indiscriminately anecdotes relating to childhood and later in life without regard to chronology.

The tendency to see childhood in static/illustrative terms and to deploy anecdotes from childhood to illustrate adult character is in fact the dominant model in the *Lives*. It can be seen particularly clearly in the long series of anecdotes in the first half of the *Alkibiades*, where Plutarch sees in the young Alkibiades those same characteristics of ambition, cunning, ability to court the people, sexual excess and effeminacy which he sees in the adult.[76] Or take the stories of the young Alexander, especially his taming of Boukephalas. That story illustrates how the decisiveness and courage which we see in the adult Alexander were already discernible in the young one.[77] Similar can be said of the story in *Cato Min*. 2.1-5 of the young Cato being dangled out of a window by an angry Poppaedius Silo. This is not told, as it might have been by a modern biographer, as a traumatic incident that affected the young Cato. It is told, rather, as an example of how he showed in early life exactly the kind of fearlessness and commitment to principle that he was later to show as an adult. In none of these stories is there any hint of character-development; the model of character assumed is static, and the mode anecdotal.

Anecdotes, then, are particularly suitable for indicating a static character. One might also add that the sources Plutarch used on the childhood of his subjects, especially those drawn from the rhetorical tradition, will have already had built into them both an assumption that character remains static and a tendency to view character in moral terms. Law-court speeches in particular aim to construct character in terms of ethical norms; arguments from plausibility based on what 'a man like this' would do are common, and evidence is provided by anecdotes from all parts of life. The

[74] Pelling (1988) esp. 257-63 (= repr. 2002a, 283-8). The quotation is from p. 257 (= 283).

[75] Pelling (1990a) 213-20 (= repr. 2002a, 301-5). Intellectual and political biography are best regarded as distinct forms of writing, though with lots of room for overlap: see Pelling (1990a) 214 n.5 (= repr. 2002a, 330 n.6). For text and discussion of some biographies of authors, see Lefkowitz (1981).

[76] Duff (2003).

[77] Stadter (1996).

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interest is in adult character and adult behaviour, and this adult character is often *projected back* into stories about the child.[78] In this context, it is easy to see why there is little interest in the process by which adult character is formed. To claim that the childhood anecdotes which Plutarch used already had built into them a static model is not to say, of course, that Plutarch was the victim of his sources, and merely followed them slavishly; rather, that the interests of those writers who preserved stories about childhood, especially those within the rhetorical tradition, will have cohered rather well with Plutarch's own.[79]

The tendency, then, of ancient writers to approach character in moral terms, and the tendency of political biography to focus on deeds, explains the dominance of the static/illustrative model. Why, then, does Plutarch occasionally, and against his usual practice in the *Lives*, invoke the developmental model? How can we explain the coexistence of the developmental and the static/illustrative models both within the *Lives* as a whole, and within the same passage? Or to put it another way, the more difficult question is not why Plutarch looks for development so rarely, but why against this background he employs it at all.

One way in which we might explain the presence of the developmental model in some of the passages we have been looking at, and its combination with the static/illustrative model, might be to think in terms of chronology. It might be argued, for example, that Perikles received good education from Anaxagoras, and so *later in life* was able to act calmly in the fact of provocation. But that assumption finds no support in Plutarch's text, and in truth Plutarch is never very clear about chronology in these early sections, and tends both to mix anecdotes from childhood and later life, and to disregard chronological order.[80] And nowhere does Plutarch suggest that he visualized a decisive cut-off point where education stopped affecting one's development; indeed, elsewhere in Plutarch's works, even though childhood is presented as particularly amenable to the influence of *paideia* and habituation, the possibility of improvement in adult life is also contemplated.[81] Furthermore, in the *Themistokles*, if one does try to reconstruct some sort of broad chronological movement, things seem to be the other way round: reform came later in life, after Themistokles' imbalanced character had led him to reject proper education. The two models which we have identified, then, are distinct ways of thinking about the relationship of childhood and education to adult character, and are not related to two chronological phases in a person's development.

Another, more fruitful, approach might be to argue, as I have attempted to do, that these two models, while they may in theory lead to a certain circularity of argument, are not as contradictory as they first appear. In those passages, that is, where Plutarch invokes a developmental model, education or its lack is to be seen as reinforcing, modifying or mitigating the traits that were already there. One has, in other words, certain innate leanings, and education may correct or reinforce these; without proper education, innate traits become features of settled character. This is implied in the contrast drawn between nature (*physis*) and character, which is expressed explicitly in the *Themistokles* and *Lysander* passages, and assumed elsewhere,[82] as well as in the metaphor of moulding which is occasionally used in such contexts.[83] Thus Marius was bitter, warlike and virile *by nature*, and showed that throughout his life. He did not have the benefit of good education (in fact, he rejected it), so he stayed so. Perikles was calm and statesmanlike by nature and his association with Anaxagoras reinforced this. Themistokles was passionate for fame and success, which revealed itself in his over-concentration on the practical and in his rejection of

[78] See Moreno (2007).

[79] *Cf.* Hands (1974) on Tac. *Ann*. 6.51: the notion there that Tiberius' real, bad, character was a constant and merely kept hidden till the end of his life is a rhetorical technique derived ultimately from the law courts.

[80] On the *Per*. see n.63, above. Cf. *Phil*. 1.3: Philopoimen is educated by Ekdelos and Demophanes 'when already an *antipais*'; 3.2 'right from childhood' (ἐκ παίδων εὐθύς) he concentrated on lessons useful to soldiering.

[81] See above, pp. 1-2. The Stoics, on the other hand, may have envisaged a definite change of some sort at age 14: Gill (2006) 141.

[82] E.g. *Cor*. 1.3; *Marc*. 1.3; *Mar*. 2.1; *Brut*. 1.2-3; cf. *Alk*. 2.1.

[83] E.g. *Phil.* 1.2; *Lyk.-Num*. 4.7 (above pp. 2-3, 11).

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proper education; by not having the benefit of proper education, only practical training, the characteristics which had led him to be so unbalanced and inconsistent were reinforced. As we have seen, it may not, in other words, be totally illogical to claim both that Themistokles' over-concentration on the practical and rejection of proper education *affected* his character, and that this over-concentration *revealed* how imbalanced he was by nature. The two modes of thinking, then, are in tension but not in outright contradiction.

But we should note that in those cases where education does reinforce or modify pre-existing traits, its effect is always positive. Thus, even though it is those with problematic sides to their characters or behaviour who tend to elicit an interest in causation, in none of the passages which presuppose a developmental model is it the case that Plutarch looks to *bad* education for *bad* effects on character; rather what we have seen is that Plutarch sometimes comments on the *lack* of a *good education*, that might have affected character for the good. In some cases, it is true, Plutarch does seem at first sight to comment on the negative influence which environment or wider society had on a person's development; this is the case where, as we have noted, he appears to explain the deficiencies of character of some Romans through reference to their environment. But the point is in each case the lack of availability or access to good, often Greek, *paideia* rather than that their environment *per se* harmed them (*Cor*. 1.6; *Marc*. 1.3-5).[84] Without the benefit of such good education, their natural traits were not modified. Similarly, although Plutarch blames Lysander's excessive ambition on his Spartan upbringing, this is still really a comment on the *lack* of good education in Sparta; indeed, as we noted, Plutarch seems to allude to Plato's analysis in *Republic* Book 8, which saw Sparta as an example of a state which had declined from the ideal through neglect of true education and concentration on military training (545a-550c).[85] Much the same can be said of the picture in the *Alkibiades* of the young Alkibiades being corrupted and drawn away from Sokrates' influence by his flatterers; this is drawn from the picture in *Rep*. 6.491b-495a of the talented young man who is seduced away from philosophy by the attractions of fame and flattery. What is emphasized in all these cases is the lack of the beneficial effects of good education, rather than that poor education or a poor environment is itself harmful.[86]

Mention of Plato, brings us to a final, and I think the most satisfying, explanation, which is to see the coexistence of these two different models as the result of a tension between Plutarch's philosophical *thinking* and biographical *practice.*[87] The static/illustrative model of character is, as we have seen, the norm in the *Lives*, and is a feature of political biography; it works predominantly through anecdote. Passages, on the other hand, which assume a developmental model of character tend to be restricted to explicit analyses of character, and tend to occur, moreover, in contexts where philosophical modes of thinking are dominant. In fact, in all such passages not only are Platonic conceptions of human psychology presupposed and Platonic terminology used, but there is always allusion to, or discussion of, Platonic texts themselves, especially the *Republic*, or the activity of philosophers.

This is clearest in the *Coriolanus*. Here, as we have seen, Plutarch's treatment of Coriolanus' education assumes a developmental model. But significantly the discussion begins with a paraphrase of a passage from Plato's *Republic*; and when later Plutarch explains Coriolanus' rage by reference to his education (15.4), it is with an explicit reference to Plato, this time to the *Epistles*. The same pattern can be observed in the *Themistokles*. When, after a long section in which

[84] Cf. *Lyk.-Num*. 4.11-12 where Roman militarism after Numa's death is presented as a result of lack of education: the doors of the Temple of Janus were thrown wide and 'they filled Italy with blood and corpses. Thus, not even for a short time did that most beautiful and just institution [Numa's] remain in place, because it lacked the cement of education'.

[85] Esp. *Rep*. 8.548b-c. The youth who grows up in such a state does not possess true virtue 'because he lacks the best guardian … reason mixed with *mousikê*' (549b-c).

[86] *Cf.* Pelling (2002b) 321-2.

[87] Gill (1983) 470 notes the possibility of a generic distinction, but is more concerned with exploring what is shared in all ancient thinking about character, across the genres, in contrast to modern assumptions.

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attitude to education has been used as evidence for character, Plutarch looks to Themistokles' education as an explanation, he draws on key Platonic and Xenophontic passages, including the same passage of the *Republic* alluded to in the *Coriolanus*. And when Plutarch talks of the effects of Lysander's Spartan education, it is with another passage of the *Republic* in mind.[88] Something similar can be said of the comparison of the younger and the older Brutus at the start of the Life of that name (*Brut*. 1.2-3). The character of the first Brutus, the regicide, was 'like tempered steel, hard by nature and not softened by reason', whereas that of the younger Brutus was 'mixed by education and reason, through philosophy', and so he 'seems to have been most harmoniously mixed for the good'. This is an allusion to a passage of *Republic* Book 3, where Plato talks of the need for harmony in the soul, which is created by the correct harmony or 'mix' in education between gymnastics, which toughen the 'spirited' part of the soul (*to thymoeides*), and music, which softens it (409d-412b).[89]

And recognition of these passages matters; it deepens the reader's understanding: both Themistokles and Coriolanus are assimilated in different ways to the Platonic and Xenophontic 'type' of the man of great potential whose lack of good education will lead him to achieve both great good and great ill. Lysander is introduced as a product of Plato's timocratic state (even if later the presentation becomes a good deal more complex). And Brutus, whom Plutarch introduces as a follower of Plato, is assimilated to the type of the well-balanced individual, neither driven by anger nor with the spirited element in him so softened as to be unable to act. It is in that light that his involvement in the plot against Caesar should be seen.[90]

References or allusions to Platonic texts, then, signal the use of developmental conceptions of character. The same applies to references to the activities of philosophers. Ch.3 of the *Philopoimen*, as we have seen, employs childhood behaviour to illustrate adult character. But when in ch.1 Plutarch talks about education 'moulding' Philopoimen's character, he is talking specifically about the influence on him of two Platonic philosophers. The situation is similar with Perikles. Much of chs 5 and 6 is anecdotal and assumes a static model. But the section which assumes a developmental model concerns the influence on Perikles of the philosopher Anaxagoras. Or take Marius, whose unbalanced education is invoked to explain his inability to control his *thymos* – which, as we have seen, is a term drawn directly from Plato and which brings with it a set of ideas about reason and passion in the soul and the importance of education and habituation. When Plutarch makes his memorable saying that Marius would not have turned out so badly 'if anyone had persuaded him to sacrifice to the Greek Muses and Graces', this follows on immediately from a reference to Plato's famously telling a particularly morose friend of his to 'sacrifice to the Graces'.

So those rare passages which assume a developmental model of character all occur not only where Platonic conceptions of the soul are being invoked – that is, a tendency to see character as a product of innate nature, habituation or education, and one's own moral choice – but also where Platonic passages are cited or alluded to, or the work of philosophers discussed. And it is not

[88] He then goes on to refer explicitly to a passage from Aristotle's *Problems* (30.1, 953a10-955a40), 'that great natures … have a tendency to *melancholia*' (*Lys*. 2.5).

[89] In particular, as Gill (1983) 474 points out, *Brut.* 1.2 (ὥσπερ τὰ ψυχρήλατα τῶν ξιφῶν, σκληρὸν ἐκ φύσεως καὶ οὐ μαλακὸν ἔχων ὑπὸ λόγου τὸ ἦθος) alludes to *Rep.* 3.411a-b (ὥσπερ σίδηρον ἐμάλαξε καὶ χρήσιμον ἐξ ἀχρήστου ἐποίησεν). The mention of the older Brutus' *thymos* ('he ran himself aground … through his *thymos* against the tyrants') also makes clear that allusion to this passage is intended.

[90] Cf. *Lyk.-Num*. 4.7-9 and *Galba* 1.3 (above, n.8). Both these passages are discussing education in general, rather than the education of a particular individual, and so it is perhaps to be expected that they would have much in common with Plutarch's theoretical discussions in the *Moralia*. But the image of education as a dye in *Lyk.-Num*. 4.9 makes clear that this is an allusion to Plato's discussion of the first phase of education at *Rep*. 4.429b-430c (cf. *Cic*. 32.7 with Moles (1988) 180-1). Similarly the reference in *Galba* 1.3 to the need for soldiers to have 'a noble nature and a philosophical training, which blends the spirited (*to thymoeides*) and active with the calm and humane' is introduced explicitly as a Platonic idea, and probably alludes to passages such as *Rep*. 2.376b-c which discusses the training required of the guardians.

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surprising that it is these passages which look to good education to change the subject, and that these rare passages have much in common with the concept of education and character which Plutarch propounds in his own philosophical works.

To claim that the coexistence of these two models within the *Lives*, or within the same passage of a single *Life*, is the result of a tension between philosophical thinking and biographical practice is not, of course, to say that Plutarch was confused in his thinking. We ourselves employ both models in different contexts. When thinking in a primarily psychological or sociological context, or when we are minded to be sympathetic, we tend to think of development and to have an interest in understanding; when thinking in the context of judgement or when we are minded to condemn – especially in a legal context – we ourselves tend to think in terms of a static character. Indeed within our own legal systems childhood may be used both ways for different purposes: to explain and therefore *excuse*, or alternatively to provide early indications of delinquency.[91]

Nor are we dealing with two thought-out positions. We are dealing rather with two *ways of thinking*, which are in tension, not in contradiction, but which are deployed for different purposes. Presumably the developmental model might have been closer to Plutarch's considered views on childhood and education, though even considered views tend to fluctuate according to context. But an approach to character which saw it as static was more appropriate for the project of the *Lives*, and to the genre of political biography, with its moral concerns and its focus on 'great' deeds. It is not, then, that in cases where Plutarch presents character as static the possibility is excluded that development might have taken place. The difference is rather one of emphasis: in such cases (and they are the majority in the *Lives*) Plutarch *does not invite the reader to think in those terms*; the static/illustrative mode of thinking, which works so well for the presentation of moral exemplars, is dominant.[92]

How, finally, does the developmental model square with Plutarch's ethical concerns? Even though the static/illustrative model is particularly suited to making moral judgements, it is not the case that the developmental model excludes a moral sensibility. As Gill points out, Plutarch's own ethical works, which show a great interest in the process by which virtue is attained, have a profoundly moral bent and are concerned above all with how to act virtuously.[93] And those few passages in the *Lives* which show an interest in the way in which character is formed are written equally from a moral perspective.[94] But the moralism in such contexts is different: it is of a more thoughtful, less brittle, kind. It makes a difference to the way we judge Coriolanus if we know that his unsociability was caused by a lack of proper education, itself a result of Rome's own cultural impoverishment. And when Plutarch explains Lysander's excessive ambition by reference to his Spartan education and claims that 'his nature should not be blamed too much for this', we are dealing with a softer, more understanding sort of moral attitude.[95] These passages, then, open a moral register which is altogether deeper and more complex. But such passages are, as we have seen, rare and only occur where philosophical texts or terms, or the activity of philosophers themselves, are discussed; only in such contexts does Plutarch adopt a mode of thought common elsewhere in his writings, and look to education as an explanation.

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[91] As Pelling (2002b) 322 has pointed out, much of modern debate about justice and the courts is concerned with how to reconcile these two approaches: how far do we aim to condemn or to understand?

[92] *Cf.* Gill (1983) 476-7.

[93] Gill (1983) 473-4.

[94] Pelling (2002a) 312-3 ('Explanation is … at the service of ethical assessment').

[95] Pelling (1988) points to the *Lys*., with its tragic features, as an example of 'descriptive' moralism ('pointing a truth of human experience rather than building a model for crude imitation or avoidance', p. 274 = repr. 2002a, 297). The complexity of the moralism in the *Lys*. and the lack of easy answers are certainly striking: see also Duff (1999) ch.6. But my point here is a narrower one: the presence of the developmental model necessarily brings with it a softer moral register.

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