

Agathon at the Symposium with Socrates

Agathon's Character

Agathon was the consummate host of the Symposium's *BIG* party and he fulfils the role of the 'perfectly gregarious and sophisticated party holder' - enabling Socrates [philosopher king] to take centre stage and fulfil the 'starring' role.

Agathon's *character* is commonly associated as being akin to his '**tragic**' poetry. In contrast to Socrates, Agathon is the anguished [anxious] persona while Socrates the consummate clear 'thinker'.

Agathon was the first playwright to write choral parts.... thus the character of Agathon is associated

with the '**anguish of the Greek Chorus**' – what we today are most familiar with as liturgy;

...as the peoples say, 'what shall become of us?

...how shall we survive life's tragedies?'

The pun on the name Agathon means, '**good**'. Thus good.... man \ host \ poet \ tragedian.

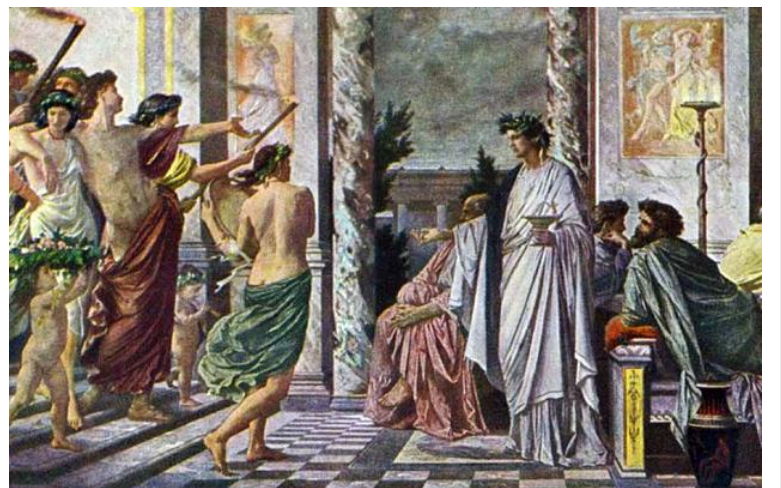
Agathon's character is commonly associated with **resilience** - having a strong ego – since he seemed to volunteer to be the butt of jokes [taking female roles] in order to make [good] 'comic theatre'. The reference to 'milk' in Agathon's surviving quote... 'Every mammal in the world haveth at least once fed from the milk', implies he emphasised **genus** or **alethics** [originating foundations]; which is to say the '*religious*' [beyond rational answer] questions of, 'how shall we respond to *where* we have all come from?' and, 'how shall we respond to *how* we have all come about?', and, 'how shall we respond to the question, '*whither* shall we all go?''

Agathon's Philosophy

While Agathon remains very much a second rate philosopher compared with Socrates he none the less provides a necessary counter [alternative \ foil] to the kingship [sovereignty] of philosophy. Sovereignty for Agathon is **drama; primal response**. Home-base for Agathon [and humanity] in first instance is, 'as Actor' in 'life-as-drama'. Agathonic. For Agathon life is.... only as a second response... a thought-full enquiry and only then an inquiry into the drama [action] that is unfolding before our eyes on the world's theatrical stage. Thus Agathon's response to life is more primal than that of Socrates; Agathon remains pre-philosophic – a genuine dramatist.

Agathon's Legacy

Agathon reinforces for us that our initial response is firstly always 'an action of and from the body'; the abreactions of actors. We grasp - while still in the womb - long before we are cognisant. Our thoughts and questions spring only from our reflexivity about our bodily reflexes that have already transpired. Why, in this moment of time, did I reach out or why did I flinch? Agathon's challenge to Socrates is to ensure our praxis grounds 'mind-in-body' such that we are never tempted to be dis-embodied minds. Our Mind-Soul-Imagination-Creativity remaining grounded [naturalised] via our Body. To ensure our praxis demonstrates good reasons for us all becoming better agents in our world when the nature of our reflexivity is psychodramatic - one of either flight [dis-embodiment] or fight [being overly embodied].



This painting by Anselm Feuerbach - imagines a scene from Plato's Symposium, in which the tragedian Agathon welcomes the drunken Alcibiades into his home. 1869.