

A REPLY TO ARISTIDES ON BEHALF OF DANCERS

1. I know that I will bring pleasure to all those who are not kindly disposed to me and embarrassment to the more strait-laced of my friends if I undertake to defend a matter which somehow or other has received a bad reputation. However, there are many things in life - some of which are of the better sort and some which are not such - which often don't have the reputation they deserve. Some of them are vulgar although considered of superior class, and there are others which although despised should rightly have been changed to a position of respect; if this were not so, then it would be right to blame people who choose to defend things which deserve condemnation. But since we don't see the right cause victorious everywhere, it is in no way unusual to speak in defence of things which have been unjustly blamed.
2. Actually it would be particularly proper, then, to defend these very things, in the same way as for those victims of blackmail who are on trial, and the man who tries to avoid defending a case because it was believed to be a bad one makes the fact that he is compelled to speak the excuse for his silence. Activities which are admired would need no allies, because they enjoy a favourable reputation; but we must come to the assistance of their opposites, just as for the poorer people of our acquaintances. For if we hesitate to speak on behalf of causes for which it is right to remove their bad reputation after they have been condemned, we shall remove completely the defence of those causes which are in good repute and do not need support, and of those causes which are in need of that support but deprived of it by our fear of appearing to defend things which are not good.
3. I don't have much to say to those who are hostile to me; for in fact if that wasn't their excuse they would find another, as it is certain that there is nothing easier than to speak abusively, if one doesn't mind having a bad reputation. But for those of my friends who are troubled, I say this: put aside for a little while the belief which you yourselves now hold about dancers, and accept my argument calmly. Should I clearly have a point, and should my arguments outweigh the condemnations, then stop considering bad something which is no such thing. But should my argument not be able to change your present

- opinions in any way, and should the verdict you held before remain in your minds even after hearing my arguments, then at length say that I am not well advised in offering myself as advocate for things which are most shameful.
4. My love for Aristides is, I think, clear to everyone, as is the fact that, given the choice either to outstrip Midas in wealth or to even approximate Aristides' skill, I would straightaway choose the latter. For it is surely not from what they have heard me claim to love that they know this (for actually this could perhaps be a lie), but they know from what is much more important in achieving credibility, that is to say from my very actions, how much affection I have for the orator. For the fact that whenever I make speeches I follow in the tracks of Aristides, and try to make my speeches resemble his as far as I am able, and regard it as my life's reward if one of the audience should say that I resemble him, is a huge indication, I believe, that I consider the orator to be one of the most eminent.
 5. Also a mark of a man who respects Aristides is contradiction of what he has said, since following the precepts laid down by him involves a certain respect for the one who laid them down. For in fact this is a man who above all has set out in detail arguments which are contrary to the writings of his predecessors, and who has won more renown in that way than in any other, a man who claimed that time does not carry more weight than the truth. The person, consequently, who hesitates to speak against his words attacks the doctrine according to which he claimed it right to speak against his predecessors, while the man who acts with regard to Aristides as he did with respect to his predecessors by the very matter of following his example makes his emulation a mark of praise of his actions.
 6. So if, in trying to persuade the Spartans to drive out these dancers of today, he were, in his reading of their laws, to put forward the argument that Lycurgus does not permit this, nor is it in what he wrote, nor is it traditional for them, nor lawful, then I would probably be able to put a counter-argument. What are you saying? Now that times have changed and so much novelty has come into everything, and some customs have disappeared while others have been introduced, and now that Sparta, instead of ruling the Hellenes both by land and sea, obeys, along with everyone else, those whom it is more fitting to obey, are you yourself now recalling the ancient

writings? And are you bidding tax-paying tributaries, at a time when they have changed their rank to that of being ruled, to practise now the ways in which they used to live when they were rulers?

7. If one were trying to show that this is not the right time to cling to Lycurgus, it would be possible to say countless things. But isn't it absurd to show no displeasure and not to reprimand the Spartans when they don't have a shield, but when they are getting some enjoyment out of present times to bring in Lycurgus against their pleasure?
8. Nevertheless, if, as I have said, Aristides were to base his argument against dancers only on the laws, I would have put up with it, considering this to be not at all a valid charge against the practice. For there are many things which are clearly held in respect among other people but proscribed for Sparta by the laws, such as hospitality for guests, which is considered a virtue everywhere, but not with them. And to trust to a wall is security, but for them it was a tradition to be exposed. Abundance benefits many cities, and there is much enthusiasm for wealth among Greeks and barbarians alike, but their laws had the Spartans persuaded that poverty was more powerful than money.
9. I would have no difficulty if he believed that in conformity with the ethos thus reflected dancers were prevented from setting foot in Sparta. But since he completely denigrates the practice, and calls it a disease and ruination of the spectators, and he attaches Syrians to his slander as well, it seemed to me to be a betrayal for me, both being myself a Syrian and equally able to speak, to remain silent and not to free the whole race from blame by a speech on the matter.
10. Perhaps it is not a bad idea to examine the reason why he omitted to advise everyone and conversed with the Spartans only. Well then, it seems to me that he didn't see enough material available for his arguments against the practice, so he took refuge in Sparta and the traditional customs of the Lacedaemonians. In this way he could conceal the deficiency of his arguments by praise of his audience, and by turning his argument from the narrow confines of this particular subject to wide open spaces introduce indiscriminately men like Brasidas and Leonidas and Heracles and the Dioscuri, since even to link the mimes with the dancers is not the mark of a man particularly

confident in his argument against the latter. For why did he have to bring those who differ with respect to their practices into one discussion, when it was possible to approach each separately and to use this division for his presentation?

11. Well, I suppose he hoped to demonstrate the practice with a better character to be worse by exploiting those who pursue a practice which has a worse reputation, and he hoped to drag in the reputation of the mime performers against dancing. I shall think it necessary at a later time to examine whether the role of the mime performers enriches life in any regard at all, but I wanted to make it clear that Aristides did not deceive me in craftily mixing up the two professions, and at the same time I wanted to warn those who hear his words to be on the lookout against his plots.
12. In the first place, it is remarkable that while we grant that duration of time is evidence of excellence in the other arts, we will not admit that dance is enhanced by time in itself. That it came into being along with this universe of ours, and that it is as old as heaven itself, and that the movement of the stars, keeping a course which proceeds by a certain harmony and divine law, has long been named a dance by the wisest men, these are matters which I leave to the astronomers themselves. But who, of people who are in any way ranked among the Greeks, does not know that Hesiod says that the Muses, when they fashion their songs on Helicon, do not neglect dancing? 'and around the darkly violet fountain on delicate feet they dance' - honouring, I suppose, the fountain which they thought worthy to be their bath.
13. And again, the chorus of Dionysus seems to me to delight the god in no other way than through its dances, and the task of the Satyrs and the Pans is none other than to play the syrinx and to dance. And even if I don't speak of the Bacchantes, you can add them yourselves. The association of words and dance is so great, that Pindar used to compose a song and Pan used to dance it, and we would find the same figure both a champion of words and a craftsman of dance.
14. So would it have occurred to the Muses to dance around the fountain, if this was something shameful? Or would Dionysus have considered his company to be living according to his wishes when it lived in the dance, or would he have admitted the naval dance, if he saw anything

wicked in it? And did the dance not snatch for us Zeus, about to suffer the same fate as his brothers and sisters, out of the hands of his father when the Corybantes actually danced around him and deprived Cronus of his perception?

15. And Homer says the Shield of Achilles was decorated by dancers, and again, when he listed sleep and love and song and dance, he named the dance as excellent, which you are striving to classify among the shameful things. And we see in Homer that the Phaeacians are both dancers and hospitable people. And yet if it is characteristic of those who respect the gods to behave benevolently towards strangers, and if it is characteristic of those who always practise justice to try to please the gods, and if it is not possible simultaneously to be just and of a corrupt nature, then those who are concerned with dancing are in no way of bad character but it is possible simultaneously to be morally excellent and not to avoid dancing.
16. But, if you like, let us leave the myths and the poets and come to those of the cities which had a reputation for being well-ordered. It is agreed then, that the Cretans lived under the best possible laws, and the Spartans as well, whether they took their laws from the former or from the Pythian god at Delphi, just as the Cretans got theirs from Zeus through Minos. And whether gods really gave them both their laws or whether the excellence of the laws spread around the story about the gods, in either case it must be our judgement that their laws are the best.
17. Well then, dancing was obviously held in great esteem among both; it was not the case that, to the extent that it was not forbidden, it was permitted to those who wanted, but it was something which was actually performed under legal compulsion, so that to give up dancing was equal to leaving the ranks of battle. And most important, in Sparta other activities were divided among age groups, but dancing prevailed through all and thus encompassed old men and young alike and those in between.
18. But the man whose witness is worthier than that of whole cities, that is Socrates, the wisest of all men by the vote of the god, he too believed the dance to be part of the things which were proper for him, and at times he used to discuss it and at other times obviously practised it. So a practice which is ancient and which, in the opin-

ion of such noble men, was so noble and fair - shall we lightly and casually believe it belongs among what is worthless?

19. 'Yes', Aristides says, 'for the dance now is a different matter compared to the one before, and it has not stayed in the same state as it was'. And what of it? In the name of the gods, has anything else remained in the same state as before? Have buildings, weapons, ships, bronze-work, painting, rhetoric, poetry, statuary, navigation? Is it not the case that the first homes were no different from a hut, and not what they were said to be? And that it was impossible to grasp a shield with a hand and wield it as needed? And that at first the sea was not used for sailing, but when it was, it didn't receive triremes straightaway, and when it did, it had sailors who had no experience of long voyages, so that the Greeks were afraid to be carried beyond Delos?
20. And what was the art of Glaukos of Chios in the beginning? and that of Zeuxis not much later? And when did men fear statues in case they might use their feet and flee? This fear was the work of the hands of Daedalus; Pheidias, who came later, overshadowed him to a greater extent than Daedalus did those before him. And further, in fact, we hear that up to Archilochos and his times poetry was something straightforward and simple, but with the passing of time it made progress.
21. Well, then. And what are we to say is your opinion about rhetoric? Were Antiphon and that Menestheus who prosecuted Theseus equal in the use of words? or again, this Antiphon himself, and Demosthenes? And yet if the older is better, then Demosthenes is inferior to Antiphon, and the latter, Antiphon, is inferior to Menestheus. But the man from Rhamnous would not concede that he was not considered better than Menestheus, and he would not claim to be considered better than Demosthenes. For he knows that he was much superior to the one but not a little inferior to the other.
22. And yet you say that you yourself have advanced the art of words in no small or insignificant ways, and I bear no ill-will in this regard; no, by the gods, I do not even call it a false claim. But I do say that it is not right on one hand to assert that one's own additions are of benefit to the art of speaking, and that one should not marvel at what has gone before; and yet, on the other hand, if this

very thing, that is an addition, has actually made dancing better, to claim that the fact that what has gone before has not been preserved is proof of inferiority.

23. 'Previous generations used to dance differently', you say. Yes, and those that went before did not fight at sea in the same way as their successors; for example Minos against the Carians, Paris against the Sidonians, Achilles against the Lesbians, the Corinthians against the Corcyraeans, whether you want the oldest sea-battle or the one fought over Epidamnus. What was the style of these battles? There was not a great task for the ships, but the struggles were decided by the hoplites on deck, and although the sea was underneath them, what was done in no way differed from action on land. At all events you can listen to Thucydides when he says 'they were still rather inexpertly prepared in the old fashion' and how 'the sea-battle was conducted with a fury that was not matched equally with their skill, but for the most part it was like a battle on land'.
24. But later on, Naupactus didn't see such inexperience in naval warfare, when the Athenians in a single line sailed around the Peloponnesians who were drawn up in a circle, and attempted to crowd them into a small space almost touching some of the enemy; the Athenians put them into the constant expectation of being rammed but they put off the action waiting for the assistance of the wind. When it began to blow, the Peloponnesians were thrown into disorder, and the moment was ripe for the Athenians to attack. And in this way twenty Athenian ships were victorious over forty-seven Spartan ships, with skill confuting numbers.
25. Well, then, in the second sea-battle there is much to praise on both sides, but the greatest credit goes to the Athenians, because an Athenian ship being pursued sank its Leucadian pursuer. It used a merchant ship which happened to be lying at anchor as a turning-post and sailed around it and was itself able to ram the side of the pursuer.
26. If someone then remonstrated with Phormio and said, 'Why are you making changes? Why are you looking for open water? What do you want with these concepts, *sailing through and out, wheeling round, ramming?* Why are you introducing the versatility of chariot-drivers to the sea?' Don't you think he would have said to you, 'This is what a

sea-battle is, when ships give the victory, not archers firing from ships'. But you, instead of sympathising with the people of old, because they didn't fight on the sea this way, you blame those who brought the art to perfection. Well then, I have the same argument in the present case. It is not possible for contemporary dancing to be worse than dancing of old if some advance beyond it has been achieved; I find no fault with the latter, but I regard the former as having reached the culmination.

27. 'The present style', he says, 'is different from the one before'. Very well. Is this because it has subtracted from what existed or has added to it? For if dance has pruned this and reduced it to an inferior state, then it does harm, and would with reason be banished from the whole earth, not just from Sparta. But if dancing has with comprehensive effort achieved enhancement and advancement so that it has become the most pleasant of spectacles, for what reason is it to be condemned?
28. Come then, do you not define the dance as the vigorous motion of the limbs along with certain figures and rhythms? Do you suppose then that the man who is more slow in these respects is an inferior dancer, and the man who is sharper is a better? This must be so. Do the dancers of today then move less than their predecessors? But who would dare to say this? In fact they move more than those before, in the same proportion as they moved more the audience. Shall we count the advantage gained, then, as their loss? And shall they seem to be thought worse, because of that in which they excel? And those who are doing as best as possible what characterises the dance - shall we rank them second to those who are inferior in movement? Shall we go on to place the sharper runner second to the slower, and the man who kills foemen on one side and another second to the one turned to face a single opponent?
29. In fact you might as well accuse the charioteers of today, because of their great experience and their bold deeds and tricks and their fear of nothing, who in addition to guiding their own chariots also lay their hands onto the chariots of others in front of them, who are confident for the most part in the speed of their horses and not inexperienced in skill but don't possess it so such a degree. Accuse too the Pyrrhic dancer who displays a style of dance which has something more than the earlier one; don't allow him the licence to make

an addition and so stop his successors who are capable from making any discovery.

30. People used to dance differently. That style was held in esteem before. Now movement has developed. So be it. Or shall we allow other skills to advance according to what is discovered, but despise this one if it has discovered something more clever? And shall we not heed the man who says that 'in the arts the new prevails?'

31. 'No', you say, 'by Zeus, they are the bane of cities and homes; whoever watches them is corrupted, and not to be rid of them is the uttermost of evils'. Indeed, what a classic torrent-like invective there is in your argument, laying all the worst vices on their heads; but it is in no way a proof in any degree. So if it is enough just to call something most evil, and if the word has credibility, then there is nothing more repulsive than dancers, as the man has omitted nothing from his slandering of them. But if proof is one thing and abuse another, these men are badly spoken of but there is no basis on which we must trust what has been said.

32. It is worthwhile also to hear the words themselves. 'I think that if someone divided all the evils among men into two parts, one of those which attach to these men, the dancers, and the other of those which attach to the rest of mankind, the latter would seem to be as nothing compared with theirs.' These words display much spirit, but his argument is damaged by this spirit. For in falling prey to exaggeration and not examining the matter closely, he has been debarred from credibility; for who would agree that the outrageous activities of dancers are more frequent and more shocking than all of the others dared by human beings? To put these men on a par with the best, of whom some have displayed their innate talents in words, others in deeds, is probably neither right nor proper, but on the other hand, to treat these men as worse than the most depraved is not fair either.

33. But is there anyone who believes Aristides that the dancer today, who imitates the customs of the gods, does more terrible things than those who pull down altars and plunder offerings and destroy temples and burn down statues? Or those who betray their own country or those who by means of slaughter achieve desolation or those who sail the sea for criminal ends or those who dig up tombs or those who mix

poisons? Are parricides trivial compared with them? Are those who commit perjury? Are those who write forged documents in violation of justice? Are those who killed their mothers or their children? From where ever did it occur to you to consider every crook more an exemplar of moderation than a dancer?

34. Do you see the prisons here? With whom are they full? With those who commit such crimes or with dancers? And yet what sense is there for cities to allow these men by whom they suffer their greater wrongs to dance, but to drag off to prison those who cause small distress; to collect money for the former and provide them with resources, but to deprive the others of their lives and to run to assemble together whenever they are having their heads cut off? Or by Zeus, is it the case that of the wrongs which cities incur at the hands of others even the trivial ones are intolerable, while the very essence of intolerability, namely a wrong-doing dancer, would be trivial? Or when a father would not put up with a child doing wrong, do people who suffer harm from dancers grovel to them like Persians before their lord and master?

35. How is it then they are not brought to judgement? How is it they are not punished when they have left all men behind in wickedness? Tell me. But you can't. Unless, by Zeus, when they are doing wrong they have the helmet of Hades or the ring of Gyges, by means of which they escape notice. And yet in fact they have not escaped your notice, since you so conspicuously dramatise their activities, if indeed it is their actions which attract your attention.

36. And those who hold office, who are the guardians of the cities, when they send robbers to the pit but sitting in the theatre shower presents on dancers - what do you think they are doing? Are they taking pleasure in those who do no harm, or are they honouring wickedness? Are they both punishing and honouring the same things? Or rather, are they punishing the lesser of evils but honouring the greater, if in fact dancers are more of a problem than thieves?

37. 'These men', he says, 'have personal lifestyles which are disgraceful and in addition they corrupt their audiences by attracting them to what is less good'. In this, some think he has a point, but the truth votes against his argument. And I will discuss each point separately should the audience grant me what I asked from them at the

start, and that is, not to make an uproar.

38. For in fact how can you justly claim all dancers have involved themselves in the sex market? Did you hear it from prophets, or by seeing a vote cast by the jurors, or catch them confessing it? Indeed if anyone is going to arrive at an indisputable agreement about those who have done wrong, these things must lead the way; indictment, testimony, defence, proof, decision, but failing these, then a confession. In this way you will pronounce so-and-so as a murderer, an adulterer, a traitor. But without these, a man who calls them such simply utters abuse. Surely it is appalling that in other cases a man who has been tried but not convicted is considered innocent, but these, against whom there is not even an accuser, are subjected to insults which are proper to men who have been convicted? And that for others a charge is not harmful to their reputation, but these men, who have not even been charged in court, endure things which are appropriate to those proven guilty?
39. Well, listen to another point. There are some people who sit in a brothel foully abusing nature and who do not reject the name which comes from the foulest experience. For these people, when they have been struck by anybody or even, by Zeus, have been beaten up, there is no possibility of running to court or creating an uproar or of calling upon help from the law, or of demanding to receive justice. And quite right. For on the day that they wronged nature, they deprived themselves of these rights. So, will you confidently trample on a dancer, and when you have torn off his clothing and wounded his head, will you bid him to keep quiet? No, rather you will know well what rights they have from the law when he runs to the judge and is able to speak, and very many people get angry at the same time and the man who has won the authority of the vote punishes the offender. So excited by what do you fasten prostitution to this group?
40. 'And do you', he says, 'strongly maintain that all dancers lead a temperate life?' No, but I would not say that they all prostitute themselves either. For if, in fact, it is proper to make our judgement from what is said, it is possible to hear some people saying, about some, that they did not protect their youthful beauty, but that there are some who are actually much praised for self-control. And it is said that a certain dancer in Palestine has made such a prac-

tice of decorum that he is brought forward by the highest authorities in the cities in front of women and children and in no way has given cause for blame.

41. And moreover even the man who was once conspicuous among us with the same name as the ancient herdsman in whose presence the goddesses were judged with respect to their beauty, was so lamented on his bier by a sophist of Tyre, who had in his tongue the strength of Poseidon in shaking and overturning everything, and given such a magnificent tribute in his speech that I don't know what greater tribute one would have sought, if he had been honouring a departed sophist. For he in fact thought it fit to call the dancer precisely that. So completely did he choose to tarnish his reputation in the prostitute's encomium!
42. And then we ourselves see most people being guarded in their youth, some by mothers, some by fathers, and for others in place of these, brothers have been appointed, and we see those who take these things seriously cursing their guardians. Do we not, then, see the same situation with respect to the children of dancers? When time has passed by these dangers, it frees them from such surveillance. Let it be granted, indeed, that those who are not watched make a slip and fall. But those who have received this care do not slip. Surely then it is possible in dancing for a man to live temperately.
43. How then are all dancers prostitutes? For while a single person engaged in the art has manifestly led a moral life, it is not inevitable for dancers to have sold their charms. For if this actually were a single constituent of what makes up the art, and if it were not possible to take up that art without the disgracing of the body, the reproach would be common against all men in dancing. But if it is possible also for a man who is virtuous to be a good dancer and all the more so in proportion as he is not dragged with respect to (his) intention eagerly into pleasures, why do we consider that which is separated from the art to be a part of the art? For it is not right to consider the wickednesses of those engaged in an occupation to be accusations against it. For instance, there was a certain philosopher who succumbed to money. Was he induced by philosophy to be the slave of money? And yet its teaching, in fact, was to despise all money, whatever its actual or potential sum. But if the wickedness of his nature proved stronger than the injunction, he is pitiful

but it is excellent.

44. Again, a certain doctor, for whom it had been prescribed by his art to save lives, deliberately killed his patient. Is this the function of medical skill, to kill? No, by Zeus, but to save. He proved to be evil in his profession. But this is not a wickedness of the profession. For even if a student of rhetoric chose to put himself on the sex market, or if someone who is a chariot driver shared his charm with lovers, the latter has not brought into disrepute the gifts of Poseidon, nor the former that of Hermes. The men are ill-starred, but the gifts have not lost their intrinsic virtues. And now, if some dancer gave himself to those who wish to act wantonly, may he, bad as he is, come to a bad end along with his lovers; for he has not taken good counsel concerning his own interests, but it is not the case that he has shown dancing to be bad.
45. I can also make the following comment, a powerful one, as I am persuaded: if all men who spend their lives in other occupations had become, one after another in turn admirers of Narcissus, and by their own self-restraint made their parents happy and respected, and if the fault of licentiousness had been confined among those who dance, it would be very stupid, or rather, madness, to contradict those whose abuse is appropriate. But if self-control is not part and parcel of professional expertise and not an element of its definition, and if immoral and moral behaviour are both a matter of the dominance of innate disposition, why do we abhor dancing rather than the character of its practitioners?
46. For with regard to nature, I both follow the opinion of Pindar in defining it as the strongest power anywhere, and I am not ashamed to trust to the opinion of Euripides. What is it Euripides says where Helen begrudges her hair when she must honour her sister's grave?
'Oh nature, among men what a mighty evil you are
and yet what a great salvation for those whom you have well
endowed.'
From nature, he says, men get both goodness and wickedness.
47. And in fact, he makes clear the immutability of nature elsewhere when he says:
'The wicked man is nothing but bad,
and a worthy man, worthy.'

Here he means that nothing is more powerful than nature and nothing has so much power as to change its determinations. He puts it in the same way as Sophocles, who, as you well know, states:

'That which nature gives to a person
you could never take away.'

So in vain do you introduce lessons with the intention of altering nature. For that which she has given stands rigid, and people's natures do not yield to habits, but their power is stronger than habits. So what does this argument indicate? A man who by innate disposition takes pleasure in self-control would not become a prostitute through dancing; the man who is naturally inclined to licentiousness would not improve by being guided towards self-control.

48. Because of this some people for instance, who used to live in the midst of tutors and many eyes, surrounded by threats everywhere and fears and the expectation of punishment, have overcome all these barriers and have had converse with their lovers - to put it euphemistically - and because of what? because it is an effort to fight nature. And on my part, I know some people with charms surpassing that of Hyacinth, but separated from their parents, free of tutors and bereft of followers, who in spite of drawing the eyes of countless people with their bodies have never yet glanced at anyone, and who, having stood in the midst of many predators, flew over them all as if they had wings. And I wouldn't add the self-control of orphans in case anyone imagines I am speaking of myself.
49. Why then is this the case? Accept the answer of Euripides, who says that a chaste woman would not be corrupted even in Bacchic orgies. So stop falsely accusing the dance, and if you see a licentious dancer, say to yourself that this man would be womanish even if he were a shoemaker or a carpenter, and if you see a self-controlled carpenter, again say to yourself that this man would not lose his self-control even in the dance.
50. 'But', he says, 'they adorn their hair more than Phaedra'. In what way more than in the manner of the Thessalians who grew their hair for Spercheius? Since dancers too don't cut their hair except in honour of Dionysus, the patron god of the theatre, just as those men did for the river. And if it is this very thing, the allowing the hair to grow, which you blame, you hear about the 'longhaired Achaeans'. But if it is the introduction of care paid to the hair, you

see the Spartans at Thermopylae combing themselves, and after attention to their hair, going on to accomplish the most glorious deed. And yet if forethought for one's hair destroyed one's manliness, how is it that on the moment of trial they paid attention to their hair? and how is it after that when they came to battle they were real men?

51. But if one wants to be precise about the parts of the head and censures the long hair at the back of the head, those who sailed to Troy from Euboea will not endure it, no by the gods, the 'Abantes who breathed forth might' will not consider themselves to be any less insulted than the dancers, for they used to grow their hair long in the same way.
52. Again, I can't condemn the life-style of the dancers from their clothing. For neither would the embroidery of gold on a tunic force into dishonour a man who is by nature above this, for in such a case surely we would see the priests classified among prostitutes, those priests in festivals whom gold adorns scattered over their clothing. Nor, supposing anyone says that the part that reaches down to the ankles and any features of the rest of a tunic's arrangements disposes a person to effeminacy, is the style of the garment an indisputable indicator of prostitution.
53. For if the types of clothing had so much power, and character took its alterations from that it would be a godsend for those in an establishment to dress themselves up like Heracles and by means of a lionskin and club to alter their life-style. But it is not possible, just as the slave cannot change his fortune either if he ever puts on the tunic of the master, either surreptitiously or indeed, when his master actually allows him for fun.
54. So, for instance, some athlete taking long steps and soaked with oil of the worst odour, with his cloak hitched up, in archetypical male attire appeared to be behaving like a woman. And yet in the name of the gods, what is remarkable if, just as the philosopher's cloak did not keep that other man in self-control, his character kept this man in his discretion even with such trappings? Consider the case of those who killed Megabazus' companions in Macedonia when under the influence of drink they were intent on the dishonourable work of Aphrodite, and those who later overthrew the tyranny at Thebes and expelled the Spartan garrison. Although both groups at the time had

the appearance of women from their dress, they were not women in fact but men, just as before. Certainly nothing so great had been accomplished by them previously.

55. Well then, there are two things everyone agrees, that Achilles was the best man of those who went to Troy, and that this very man gave himself the appearance of a girl, hiding his nature by his clothing. And yet it would be proper, if such behaviour had the power to do harm, to consider Achilles the worst man who went to Troy. But in fact, everything for the Greeks depended on that man who had taken upon himself the rôle of girls; and those who were far from the fashions of women were in need of the man who had put them on, just as they were of the wisdom of Odysseus after his feigned madness. For the deceit he practised with the yoke did not at all harm that man's wits. Thus neither gait nor mask nor shape of dress nor hair style nor any other of all these factors would in any way ever carry greater weight than moral commitment.
56. Zeus did not depart from his own nature in the transformations which we hear of, but while attending to the occasion he was still himself. And with regard both to Athena and all the other gods to whom alteration happened, one would say the same thing; that although they appeared in worse forms they preserved their own distinctive excellence. And these gods appear to me to be the parents of today's dance, through their own changes leading on those of men who were dexterous to the imitation of anything. For it no longer seemed shameful to take on any shape after the gods had done so.
57. But now I will come to the audience who, as I would say, are not corrupted, but who, according to your argument, are ruined. I think they would be justified in confronting you with these remarks first: we, Aristides, who have wives and are bringing up children and administer our own and public affairs go to the theatre for relaxation and we sit, watching to see if there is any beauty present in what is being shown. If any pleasure elicited by the dance enters into our soul through our eyes, we go away in a more agreeable form of mind, and once again we resume our involvement in the troublesome cares of deliberation, of planning, of words, of action. Then, oppressed by these, we go back to the same pleasure and examine the beat of the feet, the flow of the hands, the fine harmony of gestures which you slander, and in general the elegance of the whole show.

58. And if the man who performs is good or bad, harsh or gentle, in control of his desires or not, we do not take any of these matters into additional consideration when we are sitting as judges of dancing on its own merit, just as when we watch boxers, we judge the damage inflicted and do not ask if the man from whom the blows are greater, is equable towards his parents.
59. How then are we corrupted by the dance? because 'a gesture made by these people contributes more to corruption than the schemes of others to influence a city'. Goodness me, what power these gestures have. More, in fact, than the siege machines of the Spartans which they were sending continually against the Plataean wall. And by corruption, exactly what do you mean? Do they stir up the spectators against themselves? Do they make an attempt on the spectators? For if in fact you view these things with suspicion, I suppose you should urge the young men not to dance, so the spectators don't get excited by their youthful charm, and forbid the bringing of young spectators to see the dancing of men, to ensure that the young avoid the attacks of the dancers. For when both parties are men - that is all who go to watch and all who put on the performance - there is no danger with adults. But in fact you employed the words of a hostile person rather than those of a concerned person.
60. Well then, it is the easiest thing in the world to see that not even if they are bent and twisted does this corrupt the spectators. For is there anyone who doesn't know that we spend whole days in the theatres because of the number and variety of the spectacles, where it is possible to see boxers, others in single combat, men who approach close to wild beasts, others who are tumblers? So then do we go straight out of the performance to become as close as possible to what we have seen? Do we become confident because of the boxers? Do we lust for slaughter because of the men under arms? Do hunters arouse us to take on a lion? Do we become more buoyant in leaping because of the tumblers? And has anyone observed any of this either in his neighbour or in himself?
61. And again, if we become like those we see, how is it we haven't actually acquired this from these performers? And if nothing has flowed from them to the spectators, it is not likely to come from the dancers either. Or is it that performances of dancers take possession of our souls but the acts of others don't do the same? How is

- it then that you don't reason with the Greeks that there be no boxing, no pancration, and that the gymnastic games are purged of the athletes who make the spectators more savage? Because to strike a man met by chance is the mark of a more savage nature, not a corruption of character which has arisen from the games; indeed the same thing appears to be the case in regard to the dissolute as well, that is, that they are not fortunate in their nature, not that they have been harmed in their nature by the sight of dancers.
62. 'Gestures', he says, 'are harmful'. Obviously those which resemble those of women. For if they are going to be popular, dancers must imitate, and good imitation is, I suppose, getting as close as possible to reality. So what we can see among them in a small part of the day in imitation we continually see in the real world all the time. At least, every house is full of women, and if full of women, also full of gestures. For gesturing, I think, is intermingled with actions. When a woman is ordering and asking and promising and being alarmed and reproaching and rushing around everywhere, at one moment she will speak along with gestures and at another she will gesture without speech. And for men, it is not possible to avoid seeing these things with which they have to live. All those who have eyes assuredly have, too, the sight of female gestures.
63. So, are all we men corrupted by the gestures of women, and would it be an advantage to be shot of the yoke of mother, sister, daughter, or maidservants, and to close our eyes, whenever they appear? For if that which falls far short of reality, that is imitation, is capable of corruption, how is it possible to stay safe when in fact we are looking at reality itself? For just as for military training it is more effective to see battles themselves than to come into contact with pictures which have likenesses of what has been done, so if a female gesture is harmful, the one which is set in motion through need is more harmful than the one which is feigned for entertainment. But you, while not afraid of the former, make war on the latter on the grounds of doing damage.
64. And don't think I am saying that no-one before now who paid attention to women has turned out effeminate, someone who could possibly have received damage from dancers as well. But we will neither wipe out women, should someone who is wicked assimilate to their ways, and we will not make it a mark of the wickedness of dancers that some spec-

tator has appeared worse. Now, in the arguments which have just been put forward, it was shown that self-discipline exists among dancers. If the imitating does not corrupt the imitators themselves in any way, how is it completely inescapable that the spectator be corrupted?

65. And I am amazed if Aristides looked sharply at the gestures through which he thought to abuse the dance on the grounds that it was harmful, but was not willing to look at gestures which were exactly opposed to those, and that too even though the latter happened in the same day, or rather in the minimal space of an hour. What is it that I mean?
66. If the dance took everything of female style, avoiding what is appropriate to men, and was making the former its entire concern and its art consisted in this, the imitation of women, not even so would it be destroying a noble nature; but it would probably be blamed, with reason, for not encompassing each sphere of imitation in its art, although there would be a greater degree of entertainment and no appearance of dishonouring the race of man. But if it shows now this and now that, with frequent change to each, and before it shows the woman clearly it turns aside to a man, why do you divide the dance in two, leave aside some things and bring forward others, and dig a trench through the activity?
67. The theatre saw Deianeira, but also Oeneus and Achelous and Heracles and Nessus. It saw Daphne fleeing but Apollo pursuing as well. It saw Atalanta, but not without Meleagros. A dancer showed Phaedra in love, but also added Hippolytus, a self-controlled young man. Briseis is led away from Achilles' tent, but by the heralds. You saw the woman, you also saw the men. You saw a chariot on the sea, the gift of Poseidon, carrying a bride as prize for the horse-race. In the same chariot you will also notice Pelops.
68. The dancer displayed for you the many Lycomedian maidens and the work and tools of girls, the distaff, the spindle, the wool, the warp, the woof, and he has represented Achilles playing the part of a maiden. Don't worry. He won't stop the dance at this point, for Odysseus is coming to the door, and Diomedes with his trumpet, and the son of Peleus is revealing what he really is instead of what he seems to be. And if it is necessary to show Achilles the man in Troy, you will see

the hero killing and shaking his ashen spear and creating fear and confusion and slaughtering Hector and dragging his corpse and leaping further than the pentathletes.

69. In fact this is what you are abusing in your argument. A man might be surprised at this, if you don't throw out of Olympia what the pentathletes do, but what surpasses their actions, you see fit to condemn. And the proverb says 'beyond the jumping pit', expressing admiration of those who go past the limit with their leap but you, on the other hand, heap blame on this very act of defeating the pentathletes in the jump. And yet what greater feat than this could you have sought when you were eager to praise? So great is the strength of truth. It often overcomes malicious prosecution and it makes the plaintiff an unwilling supporter of the defendant.
70. But I will return to the point that imitation operates in each of two ways, whether the dancers wear the mask of men or of gods. For the man who displays Hera and Aphrodite and Persephone will also show Zeus and Ares and Pluto. And if anyone says that the dancer imitates weddings or a revelry or a choral dance, reply to him about the battle of the Lapiths against the Centaurs, and Theseus overcoming criminals and the Bull and the Minotaur, and Heracles who extended his labours as far as the golden apples. So, because they imitate women, do they corrupt the audience more, or because they imitate men, do they benefit them? For if, when they do the former, they cause souls to waste away, but when they portray the latter, they stir up souls, surely they are not harming the spectators more than they are making them better men?
71. And I am not at this stage saying that what belongs to oneself makes a powerful invitation to emulation but what belongs to someone else is ineffective, so that necessarily men follow male movements, and do not give in to female ones. I omit this; let an equal impact be assumed in each case, so that the effect of one is harm, of the other is salvation. Therefore, if the dancers portrayed entirely the one or the other, either they would be completely harmful with the female gestures, or they would be completely beneficial with the male ones; but since they dance in mixed style, let us say some gestures suitable to benefit are prevented from being beneficial by harmful ones, and other gestures which are capable of harm suffer the same fate at the hands of better ones, so that the former are made non-beneficial

through the harmful gestures, while the latter are made harmless by good ones. So don't you condemn the dance on the grounds that it causes harm and I won't claim that it leads to virtue but that its function is simply to delight the spectator. Harmless pleasure is a thing highly desired by those who are sensible and it is found not so much in things which are worthy of blame as in those which are worthy of praise.

72. So I am on the side of the arguments on behalf of the dance and on the side of the poets, but Aristides is convicted by his arguments against the dance of persecuting the poets as well, Homer, Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Menander, and many others. How? because all these men portray women and they are maximally praised when their portrayal is maximal and when what is appropriate for each female character is preserved. And in fact their portrayal is greater than that of the dancers, in proportion as a coherent narrative has more impact than movement without speech. The text takes a position with respect to a character's disposition and the conception is fixed, but it is sufficient for the dancers not to leave out any of the choreography.
73. Come forward then and say, 'The ancients were corrupted by tragedy, they were corrupted by comedy. And Homer destroyed Greece and before Greece, himself, portraying Briseis lamenting, and Penelope, and Aphrodite wounded'. Say it is necessary even now for schools to be closed to poets and for theatres to be closed to actors, so that a tragic actor may not enter and portray Pasiphae who ran aground on the reef of a bizarre desire, nor again a comic actor portray women who give birth in Menander and many other things.
74. Why ever then do you allow these people to perform, who portray women in both ways, in words and movement? Or do you not in fact know that whoever does not make gestures appropriate to the words loses the total effect by inactivity if it is a right time to move? Consequently many men who are stronger with respect to the voice have given less pleasure by not including fine movement, but many who are deficient in voice have been placed above those better than them through their advantage in making gestures. Then again the actor entering the rôle of Plangon with mask and dress and portraying the woman in everything which is absolutely possible does not plunge the theatre into shameful pleasures; but if a dancer should move his

hand, do those who are present go away replete with effeminacy and does the actor leave the stage before them in the same state?

75. And then again, fighting with Plato on behalf of tragedy and comedy, you necessarily have to praise their dances. Yes, but kordax performance of course is included among them too. Is it not then bizarre that there is a place for the kordax in the theatre and that it incurs no blame for corrupting the audience, but with regard to dancing, in which there is the utmost effort not to expose oneself at all, you yourself adopt a more negative viewpoint and lead others to the same view?
76. But I shall not focus more on your words than on the facts. And what do the facts say? Or rather, you tell me the answer: is ruling over cities and providing for the populace and giving happiness to many at the same time the prerogative of a soul which is badly led, corrupt, full of pleasures and weighed down by spiritual illnesses, or is it the contrary, the prerogative of a soul which is educated, self-disciplined, purified, buoyant, sharp-sighted, in control of pleasures, manfully seeking and carrying out what is just more forcefully than injustice?
77. I think that there is nothing greater than ruling as a test of judgement, and I think the proverb has the same import, which says that a man is revealed in office. Well then, Aristides, of those who are not unfavourably disposed towards the dance, some have been appointed to office; how, if indeed they had been corrupted, would they have administered the cities? Would you like me to give you details? They would have despised the gods, they would have driven out justice, they would have violated the laws, they would have sold their vote, they would have spent their time aligned with the most lawless men and fighting with the most virtuous, stealing money and plundering it, pandering to the stomach, devoting themselves to drunkenness, abusing women and children alike.
78. But you see none of this; you see what a person would ask in prayer for his children and his friends. For not a few of these became and were proclaimed saviours of the state, having won a crown in terms of praise more fair than that from Pisa after employing fear and persuasion and punishment to promote justice and whatever was needful in each case, cutting out by punishment what was incurable, inducing by

persuasion what was capable of yielding, checking by fear potential licentiousness. They did not overlook self-control in poverty, they blocked the roads to unjust wealth, pushed away wine, eschewed luxury, proved the strength of sleep, fought on the side of justice with their vote, guarded the aspects of cities in which they were great and transformed their pettiness, and kept their hands the same both when taking up office and when leaving it. I am not saying that they have become good men because of dancers; but I do say that they were not hindered through the dancers from becoming good.

79. And indeed, a crowd of orators and of politicians from everywhere keep streaming in, almost all of whom go to see dancers, nor again will any of them quietly accept a complaint from you, that he is corrupted, as he has proof from his very actions that he is sound. And by Zeus, would you yourself be happy to display your speeches to corrupted men and to be admired among people like this? And to spend time in cities so afflicted? But I will pass over the matter of where you spend your time, for there are many compelling reasons why someone may spend time where he may not wish.

80. But is it not shameful to hunt for the praise that comes from the corrupted? Well then, you, the man who claims to advise the Spartans only, because you know the others would be annoyed at your speech, where was it you used to work up your many fine speeches? In what kind of cities did you used to deliver them? By whose applause used you to become airborne? You did not, I imagine, make Sparta workshop for your art, nor did you send your words to flow alongside the Eurotas, but you used to go to the Hellespont, Ionia, Pergamon, Smyrna, Ephesus and to 'Egypt, the first to spawn the evil', as you say yourself. And you even set foot in Rome, in which the business of dancing is held in honour.

81. So you say, in your condemnation of these things, that the cities have been corrupted, but in your repeated actions you admit the cities demonstrate self-control. Make one of two choices, then; either that you appear to desire what is corrupted, or that you accuse dancers in an ugly fashion. Because of some unknown previous experience, you hate them so much that in order that you may proclaim their viciousness you are prosecuting the inhabited world for prostitution, if they have in fact advanced so far in evil that they would not even endure your advice about stopping, while the Spartans, after

having already for a long time accepted and loved this corruption, do things which are so foreign to their laws that they would not even endure the face of Lycurgus should he suddenly appear.

82. Don't you realize then you are pushing the sword into the others through yourself? For it were not possible, surely, for a person who had no experience of the sight of dancers to go through details of the matter like this, and you say the person who as much as participates in the spectacle straightaway participates in the outrage. So our noble Aristides does not avoid having become one of those who are corrupted. 'But he saw, and he was not corrupted.' And in fact you speak well, and I believe you. So let him concede that others also have remained decent men during the spectacle, and let him consider that among others too there is some thought and consideration of the contribution of the good.

83. 'These men', he says, 'are the destruction and ruination of cities'. But before this dancing came into existence, tell me, were all men living the life of priests and seers? And was it through dancers that Cleisthenes, Philoxenos, Amyntas, Aristodemos, Bathyllus, Diognetos, Demos, Cleinias, Agathon, Chrysippus, Polypaides, Harmodius, Ctesippus, Philippus, Timarchus, and countless others assumed the female rôle? And how were Eumnestos, Thrasyllus, Laius, Aristogeiton, Pammenes, Democrates, Chabrias, Misgolas, Callias, Critias, Pausanias, Archidamus, the Spartan kings of the city you praise - how were they trained by them to pursue the part of the male?

84. Why is it necessary to list them all, the work of a whole five years, but not to say this, that is, that if unconventional Aphrodite had come upon these men by means of dancers, the charges would be appropriate for the sophist to make. But if, when the dance had not yet come into our midst, there were those who were doing wrong to nature, how could anyone associate things so much prior to dancing with an art that emerged later in time? It would be like claiming that fever and other illnesses were the inventions of dancers.

85. And you claim that Menelaus himself threw his sword away, as you don't have a dancer to blame for cowardice except Meriones. And what dancer instituted for the Boeotians the worst of laws, that it is the finest thing to oblige a lover? And who persuaded Elis to use those very practices and to open the track to young males for those excited

by beauty? Neither the fact that dancing did not exist in ancient times persuaded the cities to practise self-control, nor, when it made an entry, did it lead them to licentiousness, but these evils follow, just as do other things, the laws which people choose, being checked by harshness and encouraged by mildness.

86. And where there is encouragement, there is much activity; where there is moderate restraint, there is moderate daring; when the penalty becomes heavy, daring is repressed to a fair degree. Well then, from the time when dancers appeared (I mean the dancers of today) death has been the punishment for such wrongdoers. So that if, among the Boeotians, the absence of fear used to induce all males either to love actively or to submit to love, the fact that the utmost sanction is now applied keeps some in a state of self-discipline and it does not permit others to offend without restraint, since their desire for unlovely pleasure is overcome by their desire to live. Given, therefore, that people had freedom for outrage before there were dancers, but in the period of their existence death has been the penalty for those who behave outrageously, how does the corruption of cities stem from the time when dancers appeared?

87. He attacks the songs and the choir, on the grounds that the latter is not assembled from worthwhile men and women and the former are too soft and harmful to masculinity, as if both he and I would not willingly have seen a finer chorus and have heard better songs. Some emanation from the muse of Anacreon would be necessary to create the songs for them; the same thing would have enhanced their dance and would have increased the festivity for the audience. But if they don't reach the level of Sappho, are they doing anything criminal by this? It is just as if someone were to find fault with the gentility of the aristocracy because of the social inferiority of the baggage-carriers. It would be better, I think, to leave dancing alone and to set the business of the choir right, than to do away with dancing because of accusations against the choir-members.

88. So although I would not say that the songs are in accordance with musical precision, I am unable to discover how they harm those who listen. And you, when you examine the character of the music, are saying things which are true, but they are irrelevant to the present case. For it is not to hear and to pay attention to noble songs that we turn up, nor is the fact that a person doesn't retain what he

hears any loss; we ask only that the sound supports the movements. For dancing is not made complete by the songs, but it is for the sake of the dancing that the songs are worked out. We judge the day by the beauty and ugliness of the dance, not by the words and rhythms of the songs. Our consideration of these is brief, and our criticism is of the sailor, the huntsman and the shepherd.

89. And if you say the music sinks into the soul, you mean that music which they used to receive as they were walking to the house of the cithara player, I mean the young men who used to go to Connos' house, attending Lampros' lectures; they paid more attention to this man than to the wrestling schools and to their books or, if you prefer, an equal amount, in time and effort and study, while they acquired the benefit of music. So therefore the one who had learned used to mock the man who hadn't, and the one who didn't know how to put his hands on a barbiton used to be ridiculed. If superficial listening were the same as learning and it made souls the same, then the theatre would make all men the same, since listening is common to all there.

90. So too now, unless you prove that the composers of these songs are surrounded by students and give instructions in lyrics and that there is equal concern to associate with them and with sophists, no harm comes from the chorus to souls ranged on the side of dancing but valuing the song less. So that they are not broken in spirit nor do they go away completely insensible, for I imagine that as far as you are concerned, being broken in spirit leads to this.

91. But if in fact songs prevent the spirit from boiling up in each person, they are unobtrusively performing well the greatest benefits to the world. For when peoples are enjoying freedom from military service the spirit of aggression, unless it is soothed, provides the masses with a stimulus for revolt since it is unable to be expended in wars. So if songs calm them down by their enchantment just like some snakes, and condition them to cherish peace, then their cities, though being saved by the songs, have neglected those who benefit them the most, that is, the poets.

92. Consequently, even if we admit that what you say is completely true, the argument with respect to songs is cogent, and it is perfectly clear from it that they do not wholly over-excite the nature of our

spirit nor once and for all release it, nor does each spectator sit a nervous ruin. For whenever people who are divided in their enthusiasms - some for this man, some for that, some for another - raise a raucous clamour and fall to quarrelling with each other, as each person advances the man he chooses before the others, and while keeping their two hands to themselves out of self-control fight with words because of their commitment, they then show those who watch that they have not become excessively placid through songs.

93. So once again Aristides shows himself to be one of those who have been broken down. For he says that 'the man who has opened his ears to them is corrupted'. Well then, it seems to me he himself is one of those who opened their ears. For in fact some slaves, running to the market and back home doing errands for their masters, sing whatever songs they have memorised as they hurry through the narrow lanes, so that even those who do not want to listen are compelled to listen, and due to the repetition even in the case of those unwilling to listen the memory is sometimes fixed. So you yourself have been corrupted as well. Or did you spend your time underground like Salmoxis and so avoid the brine? Or did you go around having stuffed wax into your ears and sail past the Sirens? And yet you condemn songs. This you cannot deny, that you are not acting properly unless you have examined, exhaustively so it seems, the harmful element in them. And this cannot be done by a person who has not heard the songs. Well then, you have become one who has heard the songs and you have thrown away your shield.
94. What need is there to speak at length? For the arguments in which I proved that the spectators are not corrupted by the dance, when I mentioned the governors as well, are also valid concerning the songs. For if those who share along with the dance in songs as well have been seen to be good men, they bear witness that neither of the two is the cause of corruption. For if dancing was not an evil, but songs were, people would in any case be corrupted, if not from the former, then at least from the latter. But as it is, they were not corrupted. Each, then, is divorced from corruption. But you are unnecessarily puritanical and you crop the joys of peace just like those of a meadow.
95. Well then, the proposal by which he has won over the majority, and which a great many people have on their lips - but those who know how

- to admire fail to understand why they do admire - this resembles the speech of a tyrant rather than a convincing statement. For mentioning those who contribute to the performances with the foot, he says for them a piece of their feet as long as the part of the sandal which sticks out should be removed. In the name of the gods, for what reason? Is it simply because you have so decided? So then, with the status of an orator, are you seizing that of a judge, avoiding demonstrating that they do wrong but saying what they should suffer, if in fact they are convicted? Don't carry on like this; offer proof. You are the prosecutor; someone else determines the punishment. But in my opinion, unable to say how those who make the noise cause moral degeneration, he has, at a loss for proof, laid down the penalty.
96. 'They are breaking the stage', he says, 'with their feet'. So are you grieving over the wooden boards, and this is the accusation? Do you cope badly with noise in general? So those who strike their shields with their swords in the battle-line and who cause minds to shake with fear before the battle commences - is it right that they have the length of their swords cut off their arms? And those who serve the gods with cymbals - and often there is a rôle for the feet there too - and those who propitiate the divine with tympanons - how do they deserve to be treated? How much is to be cut off?
97. The dancers need noise, my fine friend, a louder noise, which will control the role of the choir as required, and which will contribute to the rhythmical movement of the dancers. But from the foot itself this wouldn't be enough. In fact, there must be a strip of iron, projecting from the sandal, to make enough sound. For this reason, then, you deprive the contributors of their feet, and you imitate ancient cruelty in advising the cutting off of feet, just as some recommend the cutting off of hands, or rather on the same reasoning hands and heads; all the hands which carry rattles, since they sought something more than the noise produced by hands alone, and heads because they put on a helmet and over it they mounted plumes.
98. Go on to make tragic actors shorter by cutting through their knees, since when they climbed into their high boots they contrived to rise above the others. It remains for you to bury the trumpeter alive, since no part of his body, or rather not even his whole body, is the same size as the trumpet. And I omit many things, such as the bow,

arrow, javelin, spear, mattock, plough, which will cause those using them to be mutilated, should your opinion prevail. For if in activities where men stand in need of tools it is necessary to cut off from the body a piece equivalent in length to the tool, some will receive the death of Hippolochos, but others, if they are not going to delay being punished, must become equal to the children of Aloeus, so as to create the possibility of inflicting a penalty even for the siege engines which they move up to walls. Do you see the direction the matter is taking because of this anger of yours against the sandal?

99. Well then, perhaps someone will retort, 'And how is it, if in fact you consider the practice harmless, you yourself stay away and you deter the young men?' Because my situation, my fine friend, is such that I scarcely have the benefit of enough time for essentials. For when Hermes approaches and drags me from the table and the baths, I must set aside all outside pleasures and devote myself to oratory. So that I actually seem to most people to be unsociable, if they fail to consider the nature of the necessity which keeps me confined. I have become the betrayer of my health as well, through my greed for work, and in not acceding in any way to the advice of my relatives and friends I seem to be a raving lunatic. So how was I likely to catch a performance and to respond to dancers inviting me, when I am tied down at home by such pet diversions?
100. And the day will come when it will be permitted for a young man to watch a dancer, but he is not permitted now, and although in his enthusiasm for it he will not be doing wrong later on, if he gets attached to it now he will not be sensible. Why? The advice from Delphi commending the 'right time' keeps coming back to you. For what, then, is the present 'right time'? For labour and for learning. And for what the subsequent 'right time'? For serious matters and pleasures at the same time. The man who is in haste violates the social code by his haste and is punished because of his bad timing.
101. Watching out for the 'right time' does not mean that dancing constitutes a vice. For I consider that horse-racing as well, which you do not censure anywhere, is harmful for the young if they should remove themselves to it away from their studies. For playing a part in civic life and marrying are fine and just and for cities the greatest guarantee and security; but if those for whom these things are not

yet fitting marry and take part in civic life, and if what they do is not in harmony with their age, what is by nature a fine thing turns out otherwise, through it having been deprived of the 'right time'. Let the young man be now with respect to studies just as the sailor is with respect to the sea; when they both reach harbour, then it will be possible for the merchants of each to gratify their minds with theatrical concerns. And the man who takes the fact that young men are not allowed to watch as a condemnation of the dance does very much the same as the man who abuses the dance because it is not possible for those who cross the open sea to be spectators during the voyage.

102. Well these are the arguments with which I myself was able to rescue the dance from vexatious prosecution. There would perhaps be greater help for the dancers from a better orator. I would be ashamed, however, if after placing dancing far from blame I were not to show it as deserving its share of honour as well.
103. First of all, then, it is not within the capability of everyone's body to take up the profession, but just as in the case of puppies and foals and those who intend to become athletes, the men who are skilled in examining each of these apply a test, and select all who, through their physical type, show promise of excellence in the actions involved, but reject others who will not be appealing enough for the work, so it is necessary also for a boy to show that he will attain a moderate height and will not become plump. And also he needs a straight neck and a look which is not furtive, and fingers naturally well-formed, and in a word beauty, which is an essential attribute in matters to do with stage performances and especially in the case of the dancer.
104. And when he has taken him on, the gymnastic trainer will twist him round into more numerous and more remarkable bends than a wrestler, bringing up both his feet over the back onto his head and in addition even forcing them back to project further past the face so that his heels approach his elbows. And when he has made the body into a circle, like some willow cane, he sets it in motion for running like a hoop, and it runs. And the running does no harm to the limbs. For each of them has long been trained to be supple, with the trainer almost separating the limbs from each other, both keeping an eye on the joints and at the same time drawing them apart, so that hands and

feet follow to whatever point of the rest of the body one brings them, just like, I imagine, the property of wax.

105. Such will the trainer render the body for the dancing teacher, and he, when he has taken it over, will render the framework of the limbs obedient with a view to the imitation of each figure. And the labour of both is not small, of the one that he might give instruction, and of the other so that he might take it in. And part of the time involves practising and part involves reflection on what has been practised. For the pupil who has ceased from movement must also retain in his heart what has been won by his toil. So that these men too know clearly that the gods sell all good things at the price of toil.
106. For just as for people whose passion it is to gather together words, toil is the greatest resource for achieving their desire and it is not possible at the same time to fatten the body and to tend the soul, so it is not possible for dancing and gluttony to be united, but it is essential that the man who longs for the one keeps away from the other. So that if you are ever standing near a dancer who is dining, and you see the man over-eating, judge that the man is not much better than stones. For his skill has been destroyed by luxury.
107. And one would be more likely to find serious speeches composed along with wine than to find dancing preserved in a body if the stomach is not checked. For it is not possible to take up the activity to start with except through self-discipline, and for the person who does so this very thing, his self-discipline, is the safeguard of what has been acquired. For the man who lets himself loose upon the eating table turns into a piece of lead instead of a winged thing. So if 'in surfeit there is the Cyprian, but in the hungry man there is not', those who are close to real dancing are far away from sex, and are in fact in this a model of what is good, not of what is reprehensible. Such a gateway to the art and bastion of the art are, for the extravagant and pestilent, one could well say, entirely impassable.
108. It is not possible to claim that dancers work hard but on something which is useless for people, as it seems to me that of all things it is the most useful as things are now. And consider this. I think

- the poets were held in good reputation and admiration and report and enjoyed every honour right from the beginning and are still in the same position now, not because in taking men away from their work they, singing uselessly, wasted men's time by listening to epic poems, but because by the recalling of ancient deeds they taught those gathered about the past and did not allow forgetfulness to prevail with respect to those still living.
109. For in fact the person who is filled with the intent and fortune of the heroes is better placed to grapple with affairs, as he guides his own life in the light of their experiences. For when he hears how passions for bodies, for money, and for tyrannies, have ended in disaster for those who obtained them, and that wrong-doers perish and that the wronged prevail, then in discovering the disposition of the just person to be safer he counsels himself to honour justice.
 110. And that by which a person is especially distressed, namely the death of children, how would one not endure this, if he has seen fifty children lying dead before their fathers' eyes, and a daughter slaughtered by the tomb in place of a victim and again, others killed at the hands of their mothers, one woman in madness, one in full comprehension. And that there was no profit even to her, the Colchian woman, for acting in concert with a stranger against her own country, nor indeed to the man who was saved for despising the woman who had saved him - all these are lessons restraining us from similar acts.
 111. Perseverance too is a fine thing for the purpose of living. This is something the man of Ithaca will teach us who, after his long time at sea and the cave of the Cyclops and the creature projecting her many heads over the strait, put up back home with the slaves hitting and leaping at him. In a nutshell, hearing of the achievements of those who love honour, or of the blunders or excesses of misfortunes of the headstrong, we are instructed to imitate the former and to avoid the latter.
 112. So while the race of tragic poets was flourishing, they came into theatres as universal teachers for the people; but when they were extinguished, and only the more prosperous had a share of instruction in the liberal arts, while the majority had been deprived, one of the gods took pity on the lack of education of the populace and introduced instead the dance as a form of instruction for the masses in

the deeds of the ancients. And now a goldsmith will converse not badly with someone from the schools about the houses of Priam and Laius.

113. And the art, concerned that the soul should be alert, often stops the voice of the chorus and through gestures instructs the spectator to grasp what is happening. For to get the idea of Athena when Athena is being shown and Poseidon when he is, and Hephaestus in the same manner, is no big deal, but to put Poseidon in the mind by way of Athena, and Athena by way of Hephaestus, and Hephaestus through Ares and Zeus through Ganymede and Paris through Achilles - are not these things more suitable to sharpening the soul than any sort of riddles?
114. Accordingly anyone who is sharp in these matters is not the easiest person to deceive in others. The same spectacle is useful both for the majority and for those who are more clever; for it is able to teach the former what they don't know, and it reminds the latter of what they do know. And if in fact we consider duller intelligence in actions to be less useful, surely we will say that an intelligence which is sharpened up by the dancers is more suitable to engage in day to day activities?
115. Do you want to learn how you will have the strength to lift up a soul plunged in grief and make it feel easier? Take a man deprived of his dear ones or his money, or wantonly insulted or beaten, and bring him to the theatre; show him, through the dancer, ancient kingdoms destroyed, and you will buoy him up. Divert his attention from tyrants to revels and festivities and you will soon see his dejection going away, if not completely, at least for the greater part. So the dancer comes a close second to the orator in the matter of giving help to those who are grieving.
116. And further, if looking at statues of gods makes men more self-disciplined by the sight, the dancer allows you to see portrayals of them all on the stage, not representing them in stone, but rendering them in himself, so that even the top sculptor would yield the first places to dancers in a judgement of beauty in this respect. For what kind of picture, what meadow is a more pleasant sight than dancing and the dancer as he leads the spectator round to groves and lulls him to sleep under the trees as he evokes herds of cattle and flocks of goats and of sheep, and their shepherds on guard over the young,

- some playing the pipe and others the flute, as they attend to their different tasks? And who would not be more gentle both to his wife and his slaves when he takes his dinner after such a sight, when the pleasure which dwells in his mind from the performance is the highest possible? And what sort of dreams is it likely that the man resting after these performances will encounter? It seems to me the sort which transport the soul.
117. And in respect of movement what old man would not rise above his age, or a sluggish person his nature, after being stirred by a dancer's leaps? Is it more reasonable to liken in respect of their speed the ships of the Phaiacians or the turns of the dancers to a thought and a wing? Mind you, the possibility of each of the actions being accurately observed has been taken away by the speed of their body repeatedly undergoing a change to whatever you like. Each one of them is almost Proteus the Egyptian. You would say through the wand of Athena, which transforms the shape of Odysseus, they take on every guise; old men, young men, the humble, the mighty, the dejected, the elated, servants, masters. With respect to their feet, one might even question whether they possess the advantage over Perseus.
 118. Would one admire more the continuity and number of their whirling, or the suddenly rigid position after this, or the posture maintained in this position? For they spin around as though they have wings, and they finish in a motionless position as if they are fixed with glue. And with the position the picture presents itself. Another greater effort is to come to a stop at the same moment as the song; so great is the concern of dancers for due measure. The pleasure given by them to whole cities has no admixture of evil.
 119. In fact before now a wrestler has crushed a wrestler, a pancratiast has lost an eye in his toil, and a chariot-driver has overturned and killed a rival, and before now the slaying of a horse has divided a whole city and has led to stoning and fire and slaughter; but the dance has borne no evil nor is it going to bear it ever. And rightly so, for the occasion which bore it was the most peaceful and the most sportive, the occasion which brings sickles to the grapes, and grapes to the wine-vats, and makes the gift of Dionysus a feast. Consequently the very name for dancers stems from the original leaping around the rows of vines.

120. Well then, as regards an accomplishment which is of the greatest importance in the ambitions of some philosophers, that is, the solving of difficulties for their own countries, for this a dancer of Priene too is honoured. He was with Antiochus the King. And when the latter had taken Priene, he ordered the dancing of a song, and the song was Freedom. And when the man said he would be doing wrong if he were to dance such a song when his city was enslaved, Antiochus made Priene free again.
121. Well then, Aristides, do you consider this justice and freedom of speech were the products of a corrupted soul? And will you pronounce this fine and noble citizen, a man who considered helping his fatherland more important than flattering a possessor of power, an agent of corruption? If so you will not appear to be beyond seeking a victory at any cost.

VI. COMMENTARY

Chapters 1-5: Libanius uses the beginning of his oration to set forth his reasons for making a speech which is not only in defence of a matter generally held in bad repute but is also in direct contradiction to the position held by Aristides on the same matter. He argues that in this way he is demonstrating how much honour and respect is due to Aristides. He argues also that any cause, regardless of its reputation, deserves not only a defence but the dignity of a respectful hearing. This is a stock rhetorical theme. At the outset Libanius must demonstrate to his listeners, in order to gain their immediate approval, a number of rhetorical devices deftly handled.

1. Libanius begins his proem with the usual aims: to make the audience well disposed to him, willing to listen, and attentive. He defines his objective and, in the manner of a forensic speech in defence, he apologises in advance for being presumptuous but says he intends to defend a cause held in bad repute. He begins with a chiasmus, a strong thesis and antithesis, and a syllogistic deduction.
2. Libanius is saying that if a man wants to get out of defending something which is seen as a bad cause (or a guilty party) he excuses himself from the task because he has been forced to speak; he, on the other hand, is speaking because he wishes (or feels compelled by altruism) to do so, and he will continue to be available for the defence of anyone justly or unjustly accused - a little advertising. He is noted for speaking on behalf of others not of his social class, such as the shopkeepers, the prisoners, the poor, etc. See Liebeschuetz (1972, 7) for what he calls his 'urge to right their wrongs' and his 'strong sensibility towards the sufferings of others'.
3. As the subject of his oration has not previously been disclosed, which is normal, the audience is now surprised and interested by the fact that he is going to speak on the subject of dancers - an unexpected topic, as he was not generally in favour of actors and dancers, some of whom had treated him badly in the past. Was this oration composed simply as a display of his rhetorical skill, or did he feel some sympathy towards fellow performing artists, or think some injustice was being done to one particular group?

φάσκειν: Libanius uses the infinitive for imperative, as the author