

## Reading Response 2

In Aristophanes's speech in the *Symposium*, Aristophanes claimed that when humanity began, there existed three sexes; male, female, and one that was androgynous. The three were derived from the sun, earth and moon respectively. He also stated that every human used to have the appearance of two humans that were conjoined from their backs, facing opposite directions, very round and circular in shape. These humans were said to possess great ambition which led them to attack the gods. The attacks on the gods led to Zeus splitting each human into two. Zeus did not want to kill the humans because that would deprive the gods of the benefits of mortal praise. Anyways, this separation caused humans to long for their other half and as a result the separated halves often died neglecting all aspects of life. They only desired to be joined together as they once were. Zeus solved this issue by altering their genitals and having them reproduce. This allowed for not only reproduction but in the case of male to male unification, "they might find satisfaction and freedom to turn their pursuits and devote themselves to the other concerns of life" (Classical Mythology, 213). Furthermore, Aristophanes's speech also suggests that those who were sectioned halves of the androgynous type were lovers of women and many adulterers resulted from this separation. All those split from the female type were women and they were lesbians. Those who were split from the male type were men who pursued men.

Aristophanes's speech in the *Symposium* detailed gender and sexual orientation origins from the ancient Greek's point of view. In the myth when Zeus splits humans into two, the etiology of humans in the form of men and women of different sexual orientations is explained. This is very interesting to me because it means that homosexuality was prevalent and accepted in ancient Greece which makes me wonder where the discrimination of gay people in recent history originated. In my experience, it wasn't until the last couple of decades that

homosexuality began to be widely accepted in modern western society. Also, when we analyze the myth that details the separation of humans by the hands of Zeus, we can come to better understanding of why us humans seek partners in life. Because the myth says that we were separated from our other halves, we are forever in search of them. This has very deep meaning that needs to be interpreted with great philosophical wisdom. It suggests that as humans in the form of you and I, are not complete. We are missing our soulmate; our other half. When we are seeking our other halves, we are seeking love. The genitals were said to be the trauma and scars of the separation and when humans have sex, it feels so good because humans wish to be conjoined as they once were. The feeling of sex was said to be the same feeling humans felt when they were naturally conjoined with their soulmates before they were separated by Zeus. When thinking of life and how sex and relationships often don't work out, it is said to be because those people don't fit together in the right way and thus they are not soulmates.

When we analyze Greek mythology, it is clear that the ancient Greeks possessed great philosophical wisdom. In this case, we can understand how they perceived the concept of love. They saw love as a force of nature innate within humans that drove us to seek our soulmates. They understood love very thoroughly as they not only accepted heterosexual love but they even understood love between homosexuals. They didn't explain this just by simply saying that people like who they like. They explained it through stories that detailed the human's prior unitedness with their soulmate and how their separation is like a loss of wholeness in which they sought to reverse. It amazes me how complex ancient Greek mythology and philosophy can be and it makes me wonder at what point in history did humans evolve where articulation like this began.